Jan Bažant

CHILDREN ON CHOES

Propylaeum
SPECIALIZED INFORMATION SERVICE CLASSICS

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Drawings by Nina Bažantová

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INTRODUCTION

Athenian vases painted between the sixth and fourth centuries BC are unique in their aesthetically perfect shapes and attractive painted decoration. The figurative scenes on these vases tell stories about Greek gods, mythical heroes and Athenians.[1] However, scholars have recently disputed the interpretation of the scenes on Athenian vases and what they reveal about Athenian life and thought.[2] This book revolves around a specific vase shape and theme - the choes and illustrations of children that adorn them. The main emphasis is on the period from the latter half of the 5th century BC to the first quarter of the next century, which witnessed a significant rise in the number of Athenian choes. Although the iconography of these vases is varied, the depiction of children was the most prominent.[3] Children are rarely seen on other Athenian vase types and at other times, so it appears that choes and children were closely related.

To understand the meaning of individual scenes depicted in vase paintings, it is best to take a holistic approach. Although each scene on a vase conveyed only what was depicted, Athenians of that time did not interpret them individually. Instead, they saw them as part of a larger whole that included all the vase representations. As a result, the context in which these scenes were viewed determined how they were associated with and interpreted. Therefore, to grasp the meaning of individual scenes in vase paintings, one must always consider the series to which they belong. Scenes with children on choes must be seen in the context of overall development. Before the end of the sixth century BC, Athenian vases predominantly featured scenes from men's lives, focusing on war-related themes.[4] However, in the 5th century BC, new themes emerged on Athenian vases. In them dominated scenes from women's lives, which broke away from traditional pictorial representations.[5] Within this framework, scenes with children on choes emerged and developed.

The book is divided into three parts. The first and last parts talk about vase paintings in general. In the first chapter, 'Athenians and Painted Vases', the author outlines principles for analysing the iconography of these vases that will be used throughout the book. The second and longest chapter focuses on choes. It provides a detailed analysis of their decoration, which children dominate. Other subjects depicted on choes include mythical creatures, Dionysos, satyrs and maenads, adult feasters, athletes, musicians, and actors.

The author argues that only by systematically analysing all the themes depicted on choes and their interrelationships can we understand how the depictions of children may have been perceived by Athenians of the time. In the book, the author

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[1] The Beazley Archive in Oxford now records around 130,000 vases dating, with a few exceptions, from the sixth–fourth centuries BC, three-quarters of which were made in Athens. https://www.carc.ox.ac.uk/carc/pottery [accessed 24 March 2024].

[2] The titles of the most recently published syntheses testify to this: Lissarrague 2001; Neer 2002; Schmidt 2005; Oakley 2013; Osborne 2018. Cf. earlier contributions by the author of this book: Bažant 1975, 1980, 1981, 1985, 1987, and 1990.

[3] Beazley Archive Pottery database https://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/xdb/ASP/testSearch.asp?searchBy=Date+Range: 35 choes (575–475 BC) 132 choes (500–425 BC), 476 choes (450–400 BC), 119 choes (400–300 BC) [accessed 24 March 2024].

[4] Stansbury-O'Donnell 2006; Filser 2017.

[5] Bažant 1985; Schmidt 2005.

does not proceed chronologically but starts with the most frequently occurring scenes from the second half of the fifth and the beginning of the fourth century BC 'Children'. The interpretation of these scenes is subsequently refined by analysing the less frequent ones. First, the author discusses the roots of iconography on choes, going back to around 500 BC, 'Children's Feast' and 'Dionysos'. He concludes by discussing scenes where the protagonists are adults and slaves appear, 'Athenian Citizens' and 'Slave Children'. The third chapter, 'Rise and Fall of Athenian Painted Vases', returns to the relationship between iconography and Athenians. It places the conclusions about children and choes in a broader context.

I. ATHENIANS AND PAINTED VASES

By examining the painted vases of 5th century BC Athens, we can gain a wealth of knowledge about customs, beliefs, and daily life of the people who made them. However, it is essential to note that just because there was a close relationship between the depictions and real life, it does not necessarily mean that the vase painters depicted what was most important or most frequently seen during that time. One of the main issues with understanding the motivations behind the vase painters' choices is that there is no evidence from ancient literature to help us understand how they chose their subjects and how the intended audience perceived their works.[6] We only possess the vases themselves, and none among them can definitively be said to have been created to represent the daily life of Athenians. Scholars have assumed that Athenian vase painters depicted life during that time because of analogies drawn from a much later period and a vastly different cultural context, namely that of 19th- and 20th-century Western civilization.

Between 1840 and 1880, a surge of paintings in Europe aimed to depict life objectively.[7] Honoré Daumier's painting of a washerwoman climbing the steps of the Paris waterfront is a notable example of this (Fig. 1). Despite the weight of the laundry she just washed, the mother leans tenderly towards her daughter, who carries her washing paddle and struggles with the stairs. This painting is a profound commentary on the societal norms of the time and showcases how Realist painters used their art to criticize their society. Daumier's painting: 'illustrates how working women were also primary caregivers to their children and had to combine these two roles when alternative child-care arrangements were unaffordable or unavailable'.[8] During the emergence of the Realist movement in Europe, classical archaeologists discovered that Athenian vases contained precursors to French Realism.[9] In 1843, Theodore Panofka published 'Bilder antiken Lebens' (Images of Ancient Life), which started a series of books to reconstruct ancient life using Athenian vases.[10]

Around 500 BC, Athenian vase painters made a revolutionary change in their traditional schemes of depicting the human figure by observing reality. This effort greatly aided scholars in believing that Athenian vase paintings depicted Athenians precisely as they looked, behaved, and thought. This concept led to the notion that these vase painters were forerunners of the French realist artists of the time. Jules François Félix Husson (Champfleury), the theorist of that artistic movement, encouraged scholars to stop focusing exclusively on famous ancient artworks inspired by myths and devote themselves to works depicting life. Champfleury wrote:

> The art of antiquity is widely known and admired, but we should not overlook the art of everyday life (l'art domestique), the portraitists, the decorators, the painters of scenes from life (des tableaux familiers), can teach us more about the

[6] Schmidt 2005, 12–18; Dietrich 2018.
[7] Nochlin 1971, 13.
[8] Sussman 2018, 92.
[9] Bažant 1980; Topper 2012, 2–3.
[10] On the depiction of life on Athenian vases, most recently: Oakley 2020.

> way people lived (moeurs) than images of gods and emperors. Therefore, modern scholars should broaden their horizons by studying this type of art.[11]

In twentieth-century classical archaeology, the belief that Athenian vases 'give us a picture of contemporary Athens' became dominant.[12] Some scholars have argued that the vase paintings give us: 'absolutely true picture, while […] the picture provided by the literature must be corrected as necessary by evidence that is both concrete and contemporary'.[13]

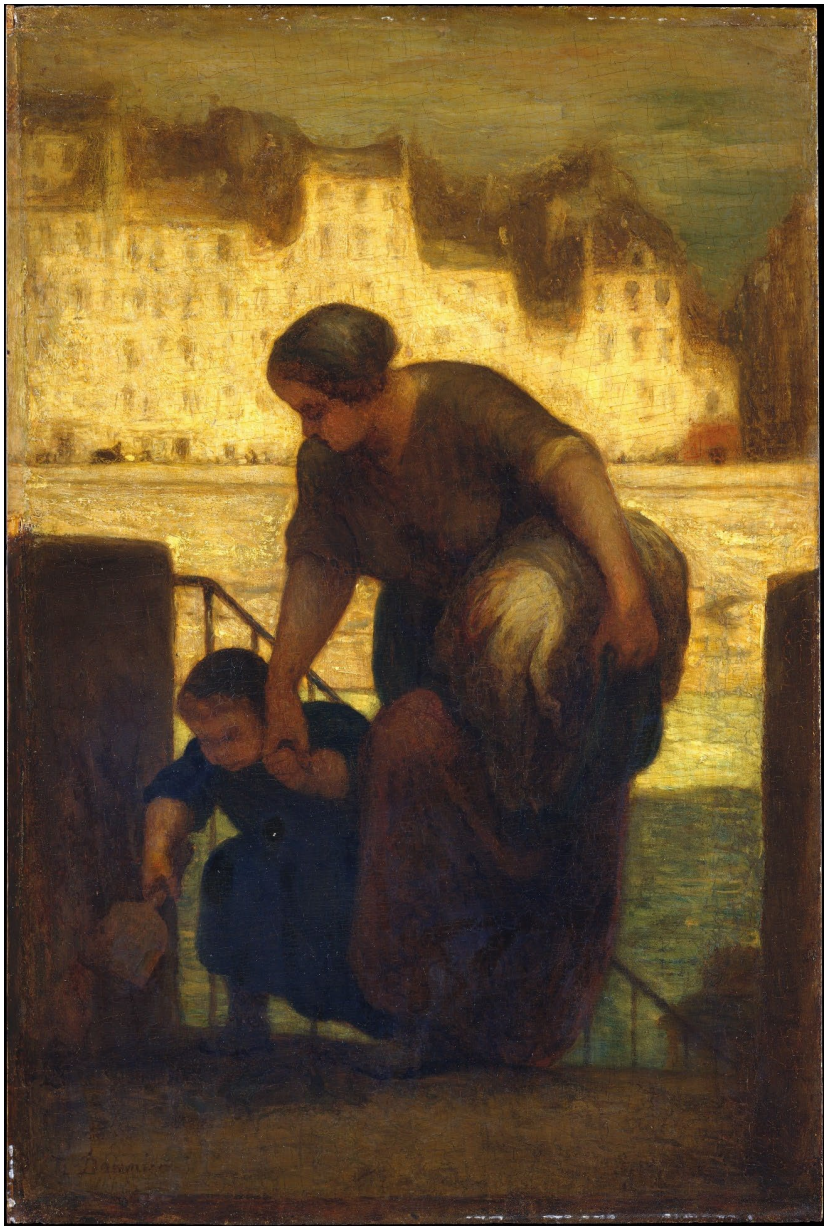

Figure 1. Honoré Daumier, The Laundress, oil on wood panel, 186(3). New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 47.122. Bequest of Lillie P. Bliss, 1931. Public domain.

[11] Champfleury 1865, 41.
[12] Gomme 1925, 6.
[13] Seltman 1956, 79 (the book was reprinted in 2018). Cf. also Bennett 2019.

In the 1970s, scholars radically reinterpreted the traditional concept of scenes from life on Athenian vases. They believed the vase painters portrayed the Athenians as they envisioned them, not as they lived. They did not depict the world but created it. Inspired by the structuralist interpretation of myth and ritual, they suggested that these stories do not refer to anything outside themselves. Instead, they only develop their agency and ritual actions.[14] Similarly, scenes from life on Athenian vases were understood to be not an image of reality but a means of expression in which reality was only a tool. The vase paintings did not refer to the Athenian reality of the time but provided the substance for creating the myth of reality. According to the author of the first study of this type, the animals, hunters, warriors, cohabiting couples, or various mythical figures depicted on red-figure askoi should not be taken literally. Instead, they were intended as signs emphasizing the necessity of sacrifice.[15] Scholars from Paris and Lausanne collaborated on a new approach that became popular. They believed that the scenes of life on Athenian vases depicted Athenians, but only as they existed in the imagination of the time. To promote this new approach, they created a successful travelling exhibition of photographs of Athenian vases and published a book called *A City of Images*.[16]

Claude Bérard wrote of Athenian vase paintings:

> In fact, the system of imagery, like any system, is closed: the formal combinations are limited in number. For this reason, recourse to language remains the only possible alternative […] The image-maker […] is more or less prisoner of a repertoire of grammatical and symbolic elements, figures, and relations out of which he can only make a kind of bricolage.[17]

Bérard argued that the vast array of representations of life on Athenian vases is not as varied as it appears. Instead, it is like looking through a kaleidoscope, where a new image is formed by rearranging the coloured pieces of glass each time it is turned over. The vase images created a city that shared commonalities with Athens of that time by making its unchanging essence visible. However, some Paris-Lausanne scholars were aware that the depiction of life evolved, as was emphasized by the author of this book in his Prague works influenced by the structuralism of the Prague Linguistic Circle.[18]

The structuralist interpretation of vase paintings is not a closed chapter in the history of classical archaeology. Athenian scenes of life understood as a sign system, were still encountered at the beginning of the twenty-first century. On a hydria at Harvard (Fig. 2), Sheramy D. Bundrick wrote:

> The lady of the oikos hands her infant son to a second woman, perhaps a nurse; if this is a nurse or servant, then her presence quickly characterizes this particular oikos as prosperous, reminding the viewer that overseeing servants

[14] The main inspiration was the works of Claude Lévy-Strauss, about him cf. Wilcken 2011.
[15] Hoffman 1979.
[16] Bérard, Bron, and Lisssarrague 1984 (English translation: Bérard 1988). Cf. Topper 2012a.
[17] Bérard 1988, 168.
[18] Schnapp 1988, 85–86. Bažant 1981, 13–22; 1985; 1987. Cf. Karul 2019.

Figure 2. Red-figure hydria, 440–430 BC. Cambridge (MA), Harvard University, inv. no. 1960.342. BA 8184. © President and Fellows of Harvard College.

> was an essential aspect of a wife's duties. Gesture and gaze unite the central trio of wife, child, and nurse (?). They are framed in turn by two vertical compositional elements, a standing loom (with textile in progress) at left, and a standing, beardless man at right with a staff, almost assuredly the husband. The loom, serving as a visual counterpoint to the husband, suggests the wife's contributions to the oikos, whether she is doing the weaving herself or supervising someone else's work.

This passage explores the interpretation of a depiction that follows the tradition of the Paris-Lausanne school and the customary notion of life scenes from the 19th century. According to Bundrick, each element in the depiction has a metaphorical significance. However, the view is conceived as a glimpse into the room where the lady of the house resides. The author appears to be looking through a keyhole into the room where a married couple, a child, and a maid have just gathered. It is important to note that the life scenes depicted on Athenian vases were never meant to be similar to the paintings of the French realists or the subjects of a television report about people's lives.

The hydria in Harvard features a woman sitting on a chair holding a child, which is being taken away by a woman who appears to be an enslaved person, maid or wet nurse. Behind the maid is a loom, and behind the lady of the house is a male bystander. A similar scene can be seen on a vase of the same shape and period, where two women are depicted, one sitting on a chair, and the other standing up in what could also be the women's section of a Greek house (Fig. 3). However, unlike the seated woman who is clothed, the standing woman is naked, and her clothes are on the chair. The traditional explanation for this scene was that the nudity characterizes the standing woman as a prostitute, and it is a scene from a brothel. However, this interpretation has recently been challenged, with Sian Lewis writing: 'To ask why the woman is naked is to look for a story which is not present'. She was right, but only partly, because it should be added that there is no story as we know it. The hydria in Copenhagen, like the vase in Harvard, does not have a story in the spirit of modern European paintings. However, that does not mean the Athenian vases do not have a story.

Figure 3. Red-figure hydria, 440–430 BC.
Copenhagen, National Museum, inv. no. 153. BA 214971. After Schröder 1915, pl. 3.

The Athenians loved stories; their painted vases were full of stories. However, they are different stories, and they are told in a different way than we are used to. Nudity characterized hetairae, but also brides because bathing was part of the wedding ritual. If the vase painter of the hydria in Copenhagen did not feel the need to indicate whether the woman standing was a prostitute or a bride, the audience for whom the vase was intended did not expect it. Spinning emphasized her industriousness, which she shared with aristocratic Athenian women. The nudity emphasizes the erotic appeal of the woman in question, which she shares with the prostitutes without necessarily belonging to them. Scenes with wives and scenes with prostitutes are not distinguished. While at one pole, there are wedding-related scenes that depict wives, at the other pole, there are depictions of revellers having group sex with women who are prostitutes. In between these two poles are scenes that may depict both wives and prostitutes. The absence of boundaries between the series of Athenian vase paintings depicting wives and prostitutes demonstrates that the art of professional sexual partners was not antithetical to marital sex. The polyvalence of nudity was an integral part of the story of women told by the Athenian vase painters of the fifth century BC.

The relationship between the scenes depicted on Athenian vases and daily life in Athens differs from that of French Realist paintings and French reality. A vase adorned with a scene from everyday life was likely desirable to buyers in Athens precisely because such a scene was not typically seen in real life. Athenian women did not undress while spinning, whether they were prostitutes or wives. The scenes of life on Athenian vases were not meant to be viewed as keyhole peeks, nor were they a sign system. There is no evidence to suggest that these scenes conveyed any message other than what they depicted. The loom on the Harvard vase was a loom, and the naked woman on the Copenhagen vase was simply a naked woman. These statements raise the question of why the scenes of life on Athenian vases were created. In short, they were produced for the same reason that scenes from myths were created or that some vases were covered entirely with an ornament. Whatever the decoration, it increased the market potential of the ceramic vase. The notion that there was some sophisticated meaning behind the vase paintings is unlikely, as these were inexpensive products intended for immediate consumption.

In ancient Greece, ceramic vases were decorated with painted scenes to increase their marketability. However, these scenes were not just for show; they reflected how people lived in Athens. Robin Osborne recently emphasized this point:

> Painters wanted to attract buyers' attention, and might do that by being thought provoking, but they did not seek to teach. Insofar as the market for pottery was a discriminating one, it was certainly not narrow in its discrimination. The pattern of choice of scene to depict on pottery therefore have a strong chance of reproducing the way in which painters saw the world, unconstrained by any need to persuade others or conform to others' views.. The scenes of life depicted on Athenian vases do not necessarily show how Athenians lived, nor do they have to be accurate. Often, they portrayed the opposite of what Athenians saw around them. However, these scenes still had to relate to the reality of the time and represent the status and values of their potential buyers. If they did not do

this, they would not have been able to attract buyers. Herein lies the hitherto not fully appreciated documentary value of Athenian scenes of life.[19]

Ancient Athenian scenes depicted on vases offer valuable insights into their reality. However, we should avoid imposing modern-day expectations on them, influenced by 19th-century realism. Above all, we cannot interpret solo scenes in isolation. Every scene on an Athenian vase, for which we have no comparable representations, must be treated cautiously because nothing definitive can be said about it. Even if we form an idea of what it might represent, we can never verify it. We do not have a time machine to take us back to Athens at that time, and we cannot ask the Athenians of that time how they interpreted such a scene. Therefore, it is impossible to verify how accurately it corresponds to Athenian reality objectively. We must not assume anything about isolated representations. The Athenian vase painter may have painted something he saw, but he could have also depicted what he wanted to see or what his customers would have wanted to see. He could have painted something he had read about, seen in the theatre, or heard being told about. It is also possible that he painted something he remembered, which, as we know from experience, may not be reliable.

It is unlikely that Athenian vase painters could have painted anything without the viewers being able to understand the scene depicted. Therefore, the scenes of life on Athenian vases were not sophisticated metaphors.[20] In interpreting these depictions, the Athenians could only rely on the scenes, just as we do today. While knowledge of the verbal tradition may have facilitated Athenians' understanding of the depictions of myth, the scenes depicting Athenian life were not connected to any such thing. Athenians were familiar with heroes of Greek myth, but there was no "myth of the child", "myth of the wife", or the "myth of the prostitute". Instead, there were only civic ideals and social norms shared by the Athenian community.

Focusing on mechanical replication and the idealization of originality defines our current culture. However, this was not the case in classical Athens. In this society, the norm was the absence of repetition and the constant renewal of familiar themes. The most notable example was in the theatre, where each play was performed only once but was always part of a series that renewed traditional mythical stories. Unlike today, the Athenians of the fifth century BC did not have reenactments of plays but instead relied on this cyclical pattern of renewal.[21] Nor do we find replicas in Athenian vase paintings.[22] The painters of ancient Greek vases were motivated by the demand for their creations. However, they could only partially mechanically copy successful paintings, as we currently do with our porcelain mugs. If they had done so, they would have produced more painted vases and increased their profits. However, this did not happen. It means that the buyers of the vases were cautious and selective, scrutinizing the vase paintings closely. The vase painters, therefore, had to be innovative to meet their expectations. However, these innovations had to be limited, and the painters had

[19] Ferrari 2003.
[20] As we read in Ferrari 2002.
[21] Lissarrague 2013, 21.
[22] Osborne 2018, 37. The examples given by Anne Steiner in her work on repetition in Athenian vase painting demonstrate the opposite (Steiner 2007). Vase painters always more or less varied their themes.

to stick to the themes that the Athenians preferred. Each vase painting had to be unique yet familiar and overlap with what was already painted on the vases. The painters drew on these existing themes but added variations to emphasize their creativity and attract buyers' interest. By doing so, they increased the marketability of their products.[23]

Athenian vase painters had a tendency to create various versions of popular scenes in order to boost their sales. As a result, the existing collection of vase paintings is likely to be a good representation of the main trends in portraying each theme, [24] even though only a small percentage of the painted vases made in Athens have survived till date. [25] We can gain insight into their evolution by analyzing the frequency of different themes and their changes over time.[26] Fortunately, John D. Beazley's work has enabled us to date individual vase paintings to the exact decade and attribute them to specific artists.[27] The Beazley Archive Pottery Database provides access to most information about Athenian vases online.[28] By analyzing the details of the scenes depicted, such as attitudes, clothing, gestures, and attributes of figures, we can learn about the interaction and hierarchies of the characters, as well as the environment in which the scenes are set.[29] This knowledge helps us understand how the Athenians interpreted these vases by exploring the vocabulary used by the vase painters and the grammar based on which they constructed their scenes.

In New York, there is a lekythos that shows a girl playing the diaulos (Fig. 4). Although it is not clear for whom she is playing, it is evident that she is putting all her effort into it, as evidenced by her raised head and determined expression. To convey the atmosphere, the painter has included a stool with a cushion in front of the girl and a diaulos case hanging behind her. The scene could be interpreted as a girl practising to play the flute at home. The interior characterizes the stool and the diaulos case hanging behind it. However, the girl is dressed in elaborate clothing, wearing an undergarment, a chiton, over which she has a neatly draped overcoat, a himation, a sakkos cap, shoes, earrings, and a striking red bracelet on her arm.[30] The stool pointing to the interior and the girl's elaborate dress pointing to the scene outside the house should not be taken literally; the stool and dress are attributes of the girl being depicted.

On another lekythos from the same period, there is a similar scene where a young man is playing the diaulos, which is the same instrument as before (Fig. 5). In the background, we can see a diaulos case and in front of him is the Athenian citizen's cane that he carried when he went out. Although these objects may be part of the setting, they are there to characterize the characters depicted. The way the flute player is portrayed suggests that he is not at home or school but out on the street after a boisterous drinking party. He is shown in a drunken revel called a komos.[31] During

[23] On the advertising and marketing of Athenian vases see Volioti 2017.
[24] Osborne 2018, 40.
[25] Cook 1959; Sapirstein 2013; Sapirstein 2014.
[26] Bažant 1990.
[27] Williams 1996, 245–50.
[28] https://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/carc/pottery [accessed 24 March 2024].
[29] Yatromanolakis 2009.
[30] On ancient Greek dress: Lee 2015.
[31] Bron 2002.

ancient Greek times, there used to be festive processions that would happen at night. These processions were usually associated with a Greek after dinner party called symposion, and they would usually involve wine drinking, dancing, and playing musical instruments while singing.[32] Vases depicting these processions show a cloak thrown carelessly over the shoulders or arm, along with a precarious stance and contorted dance figures, as common attributes of the komos participants called komasts. The komasts would not hold back and would dance freely, causing their cloaks to flutter behind them or sometimes even losing them altogether. Even the flute player in the procession would be half-naked, and his cloak would be draped over his shoulder and arm, recoiling behind him as he walked, making it likely that he would lose it at any moment.

Figure 4 (left). Red-figure lekythos, *c*. 480 BC. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fletcher Fund, 1924) , inv. no. 24.97.28. BA 204117. Public domain.

Figure 5 (right). Red-figure lekythos, 480–460 BC.
Prague, National Museum, inv. no. NM-H10 773. BA 208094. © Prague, National Museum.

The same artist who painted the flute player in the Metropolitan Museum also painted the flute player being embraced by a half-naked symposiast on a cup in Florence (Fig. 6). They met at the symposium, as indicated by the floral wreaths they wear on their heads. The man is characterized similarly to the young man playing the flute at the lekythos in Prague; he is half-naked with a cane in his hand. His intentions are clear; he walks before the flute player but turns his head towards her and holds

[32] On symposion: Topper 2012.

her shoulder firmly with his right hand. Flute players performing at symposia may have ended up in the arms of the symposiast, as we see in the bottom of a late sixth-century BC cup (Fig. 7). A naked symposiast with an erect penis embraces a flute player in a chiton on a bed who no longer needs her instrument, as indicated by holding it in her raised hand. In the background on the left is a basket in which the man has brought food to the banquet, as was the custom in Greece, so he is not at his home but a guest at the symposium. The flute player is, therefore, a prostitute.[33]

Figure 6 (left). Red-figure cup, tondo, 490–480 BC.
Florence, Museo Archeologico Etrusco, inv. no. 3921. BA 203929. After Hoppin 1919, vol. 2, 495.

Figure 7 (right). Red-figure cup, tondo, 520–510 BC.
New Haven (CT), Yale University, inv. no. 1913.163. BA 200208. Public domain.

Sian Lewis believed that the depiction of an emotional relationship between the flute player and the guest suggested that she was not a prostitute.[34] However, we must remember that we are not in the world of 19th-century realist paintings. In the second half of this century, prostitution became an issue in Europe, and painters of the time often commented on it. Nevertheless, there is no indication that prostitution was a problem in classical Athens. Therefore, there is no reason to assume that a vase painter would depict a flute player as a victim of sex work. A real flute player in classical Athens might have sold her body and pretended to enjoy it, or she might have genuinely enjoyed it. The vase painter could have painted her as enjoying it because that is how it would have appeared to the men who bought his cup. However, it is unclear from the vase painting itself whether or not the flute player is a prostitute. This ambiguity is consistent with the image of flute players in ancient literature.[35]

Around 500 BC, the popularity of ancient vase paintings depicting sex was at its zenith. These paintings often featured flute players in scenes that portrayed erotic fantasies. For instance, in a now-lost painting, a woman was depicted engaging in

[33] Corner 2012. But cf. Topper 2012b.
[34] Lewis 2002, 173.
[35] Goldman 2015.

sexual activity with an overturned amphora.[36] The flute player on a lekythos in New York might have symbolized a daughter from a respectable family during a flute lesson. However, this depiction was part of a broader context that included depictions from the world of the hetaira, a class of highly educated courtesans, as well as ordinary prostitutes.

Simultaneously, the scene on lekythos in New York was related to scenes from the virtuous world of brides and wedding ceremonies, where flute players also appeared. In the third quarter of the fifth century BC, vase painters began to portray the flute player in the company of other women, as seen on the hydria in the British Museum.[37] The standing flute player is positioned on the far left, accompanied by a woman seated on a chair and playing the lyre. Eros is garlanding the lyre player, and on the right, we can observe a woman with a box and lyre and another woman with a cross in the background, likely used for tuning. The presence of Eros hints at the scene's connection to wedding scenes, where female musicians were often present.[38] Thus, the flute player accompanies the lyre player, who might be the bride.

During our discussion on Athenian vase paintings, we noted that they do not convey any moral message or promote any particular viewpoint. The depiction of scenes involving a flute player leads us to believe that Athenians of that era might have viewed her as a schoolgirl, a bridesmaid at a wedding, or a professional musician whose performance might have ended in sexual intercourse. Interestingly, the vase painters did not need to clearly differentiate between these categories of girls. This observation widens the possibilities of identifying the girl and underscores the scene's significance in understanding life during that period.

Athenian painted vases are best understood as a whole. The scenes depicted on them were related to the scenes on other vases and, most importantly, to the vase itself.[39] The shapes of Athenian vases were determined by their function, and their painted decoration was often closely related to that function. Painting on a vase presents a specific challenge. In illustrations of books on vase paintings, we have to deal with the vase's rounded surface.[40] It is a challenge for photographers, who can only capture part of the drawing. However, vase paintings were not intended to be perceived in two dimensions. The Athenians gradually discovered the drawings on vases as they used them. Sometimes, the drawing could not be visible initially, even when the painting was on a flat surface, like on the bottom of the cups. When an Athenian man received a full cup of wine, he had no idea what awaited him at the bottom. Only when he drank the wine did the painting on the bottom appear before him. [41] The Athenian ceramic vase was not analogous to the wall or canvas on which one paints today, or the paper on which one draws, as Charles Dugas thought of it in his time. [42]

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[36] Cup, c. 510 BC, lost. BA 200559. Gerhard's Apparatus of drawings, in the Berlin Museum, xxi, 57, whence Vorberg 1926, pl. 22.

[37] Hydria, 440–430, London, British Museum, inv. no. E189. BA 213779.

[38] Oakley 2013, 114.

[39] On the relationship between function and decoration of Athenian vases cf. Shapiro 1997; Schmidt, 2005.

[40] Mayer and Petsalis-Diomidis 2023.

[41] Osborne 2018, 134–135.

[42] Dugas 1936, cf. Martens 1992, 11–22.

Ceramic vases carry images and co-create their meaning, which cannot be said of a wall, canvas, or paper. The vase's shape, function, and decoration all refer to each other. The vase and its function were part of the meaning of the painting's decoration, which used the vase's shape to comment on its function.

The methodology used in this book emphasizes the importance of the Athenian vase form for interpreting the paintings on it. We will not focus on a specific subject but on the vase shape, which is known as choes. Although scenes with children are prevalent on these vases, their interpretation is based on a systematic survey of all the scenes depicted in them. Therefore, we will study the complex problems associated with Athenian vases and their decoration on a small sample, the limits of which are well-defined. Our findings from this sample may or may not differ from those of other themes depicted on Athenian vases. However, the undeniable advantage of a detailed and easily verifiable micro-analysis, which is the first of its kind, is that it can be followed up by further research. Even if the conclusions we have drawn from this analysis are shown to be erroneous, the findings will remain valid. These generalisations will be discussed in the last chapter of this book, in which we will consider the reasons for the rise and fall of Athenian painted vases.

II. CHOES

CHILDREN

Choes (singular chous) were stocky jugs with one handle, a smooth profile running from the mouth to the foot, and a trefoil-mouth that made pouring wine easier.[43] Thousands of examples of choes with children are preserved. The series began around 500 BC, with most dating from 430–400 BC, and continued at least into the mid-fourth century BC, although without significant innovations.[44] On one chous, we find several typical features of depictions of children on choes - a boy holding a rattle in his raised hand, a child's toy cart on the right, and a chous standing on the ground on the left (Fig. 8).[45] A child, a boy judging by his hairstyle, sits in a ceramic potty seat, lasanon. Objects depicted on vases undoubtedly existed; coincidentally, ceramic child seats were found with leg holes on the side and a hole in the middle, under which was a potty (Fig. 9).[46] These realistic details and probable actions convinced the researchers that everything else depicted on Athenian vases existed as it was represented.

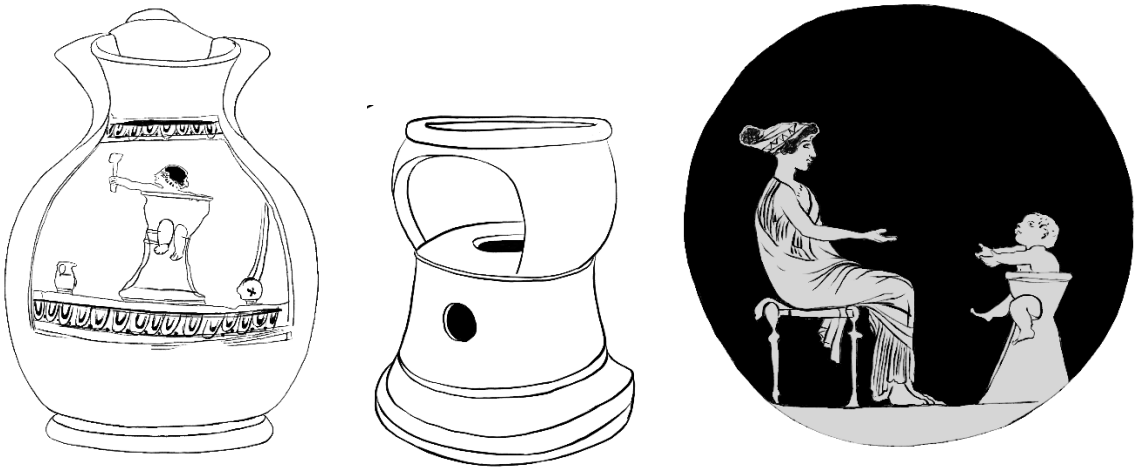

Figure 8 (left). Red-figure chous, 440–430 BC.
London, British Museum, inv. no. BM 1910,0615.4. BA 11041.

Figure 9 (middle). Potty seat, 575–560 BC. Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P18010.

Figure 10 (right). Red-figure cup, *c.* 460 BC. Brussels, Musée royaux, inv. no. A 890. BA 209536.

These potty seats restrict the child's movement, as shown by the painting on a cup, on which a child tries in vain to get out of the device (Fig. 10). However, the mother's distance from the child may also have had another level of meaning. The scene was depicted in the centre of the inside of the cup, which was otherwise entirely

[43] Oinochoe III, cf. Beazley 1963, xl–l.
[44] Children scenes (but without choes) on squat lekythoi (Hamilton 1992, 92–94) and lekythoi (Hamilton 1992, 114).
[45] On rattles see Dasen 2017.
[46] Lynch and Papadopoulos 2006.

covered with a white coating, making this non-functional vase for the ritual use only. Together with a series of other vases decorated with a similar technique, it was placed as a grave offering in an Athenian tomb.[47] Given the subjects depicted on the other vases from this grave, it is assumed that a woman was buried in it. It was further assumed that the mother and child may reach out to each other in vain because the deceased woman has left the child forever. This example demonstrates the impossibility of interpreting what is shown only once on Athenian vases. Nevertheless, the painting on the cup, dated around 460 BC, is significant because it gives a terminus post quem for the interest in children's lives in Athenian vase painting. It is one of the earliest correct depictions of child anatomy, characterized by a large head, a chubby body and equally chubby and short limbs. Prior to this, children were depicted as miniature adults.[48]

The chous was the Athenian liquid measure (3.283 litres), but the choes depicting children are mostly much smaller, so they could contain at most one deciliter of wine. These small choes are also represented on choes; we find them placed on the ground, on a table, or in children's hands.[49] Thus, these small choes announce exceptional situations, often emphasized by their festooned appearance. We also find tendrils painted on the necks of actual specimens. These jugs were related to some significant event or events in the lives of the children depicted on them. Scholars have yet to reach a consensus about what that event was and what role the choes played in it, but a connection with the Anthesteria is probable.[50] We shall return to this subject in the chapter 'Children's Feast'.

Before focusing on children on the choes, it is appropriate to mention the aspects of childhood that were never shown on Athenian vases. For the Athenian children, the crucial moment was when they were admitted to the oikos (family economic unit), which was the first step towards becoming citizens of the city-state, the polis.[51] In fifth-century BC Athens, the father could refuse the newborn without risk of prosecution.[52] The infant mortality rate was as high as 25% at the time, so ritual acts of acknowledging a child as a member of the oikos did not begin until a week after birth when the child was likely to survive the most critical days of its existence.[53] The most important ritual, Dekate, took place, as its name suggests, ten days after birth, and only then was the child given a name.[54]

The act of presenting a newborn to the father was never depicted on Athenian vases, although the painters were undoubtedly aware of such events. However, a distant echo of this tradition can be found in the dramatic depiction of the subterfuge Rhea resorted to after the birth of Zeus. In the representation of this myth, Rhea holds her newborn son in her hands to show him to Cronus, who raises his hand in surprise (Fig. 11). Both are depicted as Athenian citizens, but Cronus holds a royal sceptre,

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[47] Williams 2006.
[48] Beaumont 2003.
[49] There are 203 depictions of choes on choes, 9 on other shapes (Bron 2003b, 18). Cf. also Gericke 1970, 147–
[50] Hoorn 1951; Hamilton 1992; Schmidt 2005, 152–221 Seifert 2011, 108–33.
[51] Sutton 2004.
[52] Phillips 2013, 185–187.
[53] Crelier 2008; Kossatz-Deissmann 2011; Sommer and Sommer 2015; Räuchle 2017; Moraw 2021.
[54] Plat. *Tht*. 160e. Cf. Garland 2013, 208–10.

while Rhea wears a headdress, and her chiton has ornamental trim. Cronus knew his children would overthrow him, so he ate them immediately after their birth. Rhea's plan was to present him with a stone wrapped in bandages instead of Zeus.[55] The plausibility of the mythical narrative was because Greek babies were wrapped in their first six months, a tradition that did not end in Europe until the seventeenth century.[56] Greek swaddling cloths, spargana, were richly decorated, as indicated in the depiction by the large piece of cloth with a decorative border hanging down from the wrapped 'baby'. The scene proves that the vase painters could have depicted the child's acceptance into the oikos. If they did not do so, their aim was not to show the most critical moment in a child's life.

Figure 11 (left). Red-figure pelike, 460–450 BC.
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 06.1021.144. BA 214648. Public domain.

Figure 12 (right). Red-figure hydria, detail, *c.* 450 BC.
Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. no. F2395. BA 7011. After Archaeologische Zeitung 43, 1885, pl. 15.

Even in ancient Greece, breastfeeding must have been a characteristic of every newborn, but it is rarely found on Athenian vases.[57] The situation is depicted only in the context of a mythical story; according to the attached inscription, the mythical breastfeeding mother is Eriphyle, and the infant is Alcmaeon (Fig. 12).[58] The baby's hand presses on the breast, and the mother holds its head from behind, details observed from real life. The effect of reality is also enhanced by the fact that the woman has her right arm raised and resting comfortably on the back of a chair, a motif taken from a new type of depiction of Aphrodite that appeared in Greek sculpture around

[55] Hes. *theog*. 453–87.
[56] Dasen 2014; Lee 2015, 97.
[57] Räuchle 2016, 123–27; Waite and Gooch 2023, 85. Negative attitude to breastfeeding: Salzman-Mitchell 2012. The exceptional depiction: Acropolis Museum NA-57-Aa1872 (Sabetai 2019, fig. 2.2).
[58] Sutton 2004, 345–346.

the middle of the fifth century BC when the vase painting was being created.[59] However, the intimate moment in the life of the child's mother, depicted in such a way as to appeal to the emotions, was chosen because the Athenians knew the tragic ending of the story. They knew that Eriphyle was not the model wife she claimed to be because she sent her husband to death for a necklace. When Alcmaeon grows up and discovers her treachery, he kills her with his hand. Thus, the intimate moment of breastfeeding is depicted here only to make the tragic fate that the two protagonists have prepared for each other in the future all the more apparent.

Artificial nutrition has been mentioned as a supplement or replacement for breastfeeding since the eighth century BC.[60] Soranos of Ephesus, who lived in the first century, recommended weaning food from six months onwards.[61] Athenians used a specific drinking vessel for baby food, on which we can find images of children.[62] One infant feeder shows two toddlers crawling towards a table on which a bird sits (Fig. 13). The other vase shows a dog following the crawling toddler (Fig. 14). We recognize the Maltese dog, characterized by its small erect ears and long fur, the most common pet in Athenian households.[63] The toddler crawls towards a chous standing on the ground, an essential detail for our investigation, even if the depiction is not on the chous. The chous represented on the infant feeder indicates that in the minds of the Athenians of the time, the small chous was an integral part of a child's life from the beginning when it started to crawl.

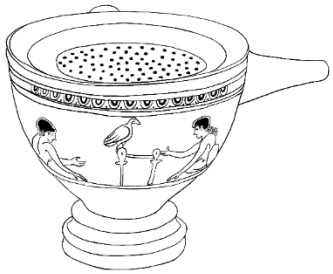


Figure 13 (left). Red-figure infant feeder, late fifth century BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 18554.

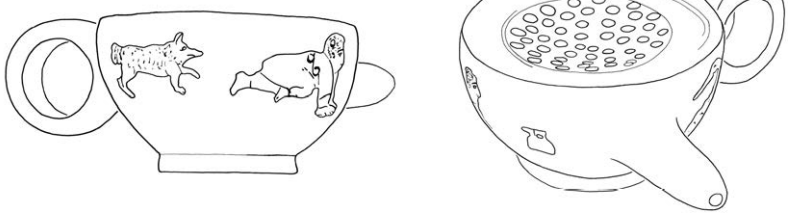


Figure 14 (middle and right). Red-figure infant feeder, 420–400 BC. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, inv. no. GR 6. 1929. BA 12840. After Heinemann 2016, fig. 335.

In this chapter, we will discuss the representation of children on choes during the second half of the fifth and early fourth century BC. This period produced three-quarters of all surviving Athenian choes with painted decoration. In this collection, there are several series of representations of children that form definable units of meaning. These series are often closely interconnected, with one flowing into the next. Together, they form a clearly defined field of imagery complemented by a series of unique scenes. We will cover all of these scenes, except for the unique ones unrelated to these series. Athenian vase painters could also paint a scene on the chous that was

[59] Bažant 2022, 23–25.
[60] Hom. *Il.*, IX, 485–91.
[61] Soranus, *Gynaikeia*, II, 21, 46.
[62] Kern 1957.
[63] Kitchell 2020, fig. 14. On Maltese dogs: Busuttil 1969; Margariti 2024.

part of a different field of meaning associated with a different vase shape. However, certain limitations existed on what could be painted on choes during the fifth and fourth centuries BC. For instance, depictions of warriors or erotic scenes were not permitted. Additionally, in the last few decades of the fifth century BC, there was a significant increase in demand for children's depictions on choes. This increase did not result in a broader range of subject matter but hundreds of similar compositions with relatively similar content.

As mentioned above, vase paintings depict specific features of the anatomy of the child's body around the middle of the fifth century BC. In the next half-century, painters also attempted, with more or less success, to distinguish the different stages of the child's body's development. On choes, we find all the stages we know from ancient literature. Children were breastfed by their mothers until the age of two or three. After this, they were already able to walk and talk, and they became more physically active and started playing independently. You can often find depictions of them playing with animals and carts designed for babies on choes. When they reached the age of six or seven, they would start school and leave their homes to socialize with their peers. This is when they would begin playing with other children. You can find many scenes on choes that depict children playing various collective games at this stage. It is important to note that vase painters did not favour any particular developmental stage of a child, and many of the scenes depict children of different ages interacting with each other.

Figure 15. Red-figure chous, *c.* 450 BC.
New Haven (CT), Yale University, inv. no. 1913.142. BA16137. Public domain.

Boys predominate among toddlers on choes. A typical scene is a vase at Yale, in which a toddler leans on both hands to look at a chous (Fig. 15). However, one can also find little girls who can be identified because their hair is tied in a knot on the top of their heads. On a vase in Athens, a little girl throws a ball at a chous (Fig. 16). The toddlers are naked. However, exceptionally, a toddler may be depicted clothed (Fig. 17). Toddlers usually have protective amulets in the form of a ring, sickle, lotus flower, double axe, and other magic objects, which are suspended from a string draped over one shoulder so that it hangs diagonally across the chest and back to protect as much of the body as possible. Children with amulets are found on other shapes of vases and in other contexts, so they were a common childhood attribute. Judging by the scenes on choes, the protective effect of the string with amulets was often enhanced by bracelets on both legs and arms. For Greek parents, it was essential to protect toddlers from the influence of evil forces and older children who had already learned to walk and did not put away their amulets until they were about six or seven years old.

Boys also clearly predominate among the children already walking. Girls are characterized by their knots of hair and clothes. Boys, however, may also have festive clothes, as shown below. Girls are depicted on choes with the same attributes and in the same situations as boys and interacting intensely with each other. On a chous in Paris, a girl in a chiton places a chous on a table, which is enjoyed by a boy with amulets sitting at the table, who apparently cannot yet walk (Fig. 18). In a similar scene, a naked little boy is kneeling at a table, his right hand reaching out to a little girl, bringing him a rattle and cake (Fig. 19). On the left, we see a naked boy standing with a roller, watching the scene with his arm resting on his hip. In these scenes, the children are playing the father being served by the mother.

Figure 16 (left). Red-figure chous, 410–400 BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 1739. BA 16317.

Figure 17 (right). Red-figure chous, *c.* 420 BC. Bryn Mawr, Bryn Mawr College, inv. no. P.104. BA 1600.

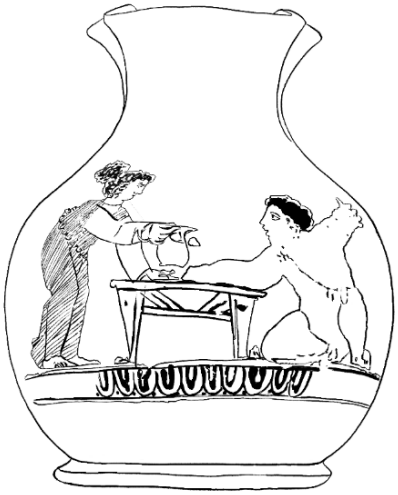


Figure 18 (left). Red-figure chous, *c*. 400 BC. Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. L73. BA 16516.

Figure 19 (right). Red-figure chous, after 400 BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. CC1878 (1268). BA 16174.

Figure 20. Red-figure chous, late fifth century BC.
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 2021.40.29. Public domain.

Treats and fruits are displayed together with choes. A typical scene is found in New York, a boy sitting on the ground and looking intently at a decorated chous on which a cake is placed (Fig. 20). Two toddlers are fighting over a cake on one of the choes at the National Museum of Athens (Fig. 21). Such motives demonstrate that choes allowed vase painters to exercise their authentic experience of children and their world. To increase the likelihood of these scenes, vase painters distinguished different types of cakes, most often with a raised spherical centre from which rays diverged so that it resembled an omphalos cup, which was used for ritual libations. A cake of this type is depicted in the two scenes just mentioned. In addition to the omphalos cake, we often see a streptos cake that is rolled up and looks like a roll. It was difficult for children to choose, and on one vase, we see a child with an omphalos cake in his hand, looking back to a streptos cake that is propped up behind him (Fig. 22). Streptos cakes were sometimes on a stick, so it is difficult to distinguish them from an obelias cake, a large loaf or pancake baked on a spit, which then served as a handle.[64]

Figure 21 (left). Red-figure chous, *c.* 400 BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. CC1301. BA 16338.

Figure 22 (right). Red-figure chous, 430–425 BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 15875. BA 1072.

On choes, we repeatedly meet animals that children play with or accompany. On one chous in Athens, a Maltese dog runs in front of a girl (Fig. 23). The dog is on the left side of the picture panel and a chous on the ground on the right side, a common

[64] Grotesque supports of a large obelias cake are found on one of the unglazed choes with polychrome painting from *c.* 400 BC, found in a well on the Athenian Agora (Agora Museum P23907). Cf. Crosby 1955.

strategy Athenian vase painters used to sparingly indicate the field of meaning in which the depicted children moved. The girl balancing a pole on the finger of her outstretched hand plays a typically girlish game since we have no depiction of boys playing similarly. Adult females were also frequently depicted in this test of dexterity. It was not just a matter of keeping the bar horizontal; players are often shown running, as on this vase, which made balancing considerably more difficult.[65] A typical game involving dexterity was the spinning of a top, found on another vase in Athens, on which the chous is drawn tilted up in the background as if suspended by the handle. In front of it stands a boy in a carefully arranged himation, holding the rod of a whip in his high raised hand, probably to whip top (Fig. 24).[66]

Figure 23 (left). Red-figure chous, late fifth century BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 1322. BA 4188.

Figure 24 (right). Red-figure chous, 440–430 BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. CC1326. BA 16265.

A naked toddler is shown with amulets, among which we can distinguish crescents, crosses and wheels (Fig. 25). The child wants to pet a Maltese dog, but the dog backs away from him because animals have bad experiences with children. Children often play with dogs but are also shown with domesticated birds.[67] A toddler with amulets in the shape of a circle and crescent tries in vain to make contact with a bird that sits on a perch and watches him warily (Fig. 26). An empty perch is above the bird, which indicates that they were used to keep birds in the depicted house. Above, there is a festooned chous as if hanging on the wall. On a vase in Corinth, a boy, among whose charms we also find a lotus flower, prances merrily in front of a duck; behind the boy, we see a roller (Fig. 27**).** In a similar scene on a chous in Boston, a boy with amulets teases a bird sitting on a stool with a streptos cake. However, the bird clearly shows no interest (Fig. 28).

[65] Neils and Oakley 2003, 272.
[66] Wolters 1913.
[67] Pollard 1977, 135–140.

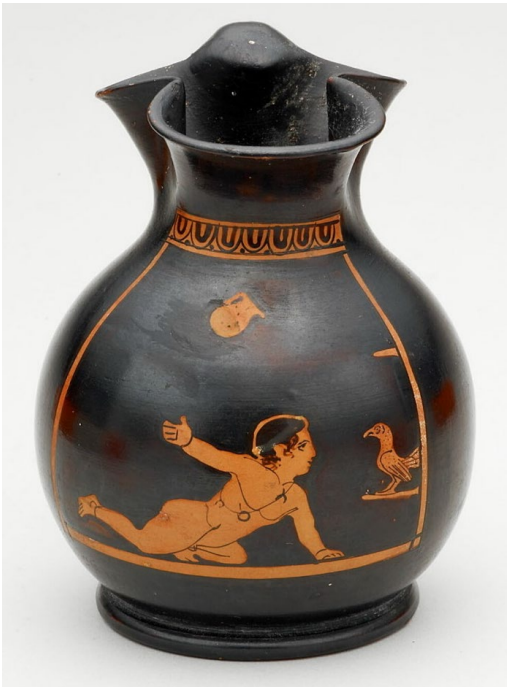


Figure 25 (left). Red-figure chous, 420 BC. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 95.52. BA 4199.

Figure 26 (right). Red-figure chous, 430–410 BC. Chicago, Art Institute, inv. no. 1907.14. Gift of Martin A. Ryerson through The Antiquarian Society. BA 16259. Public domain.

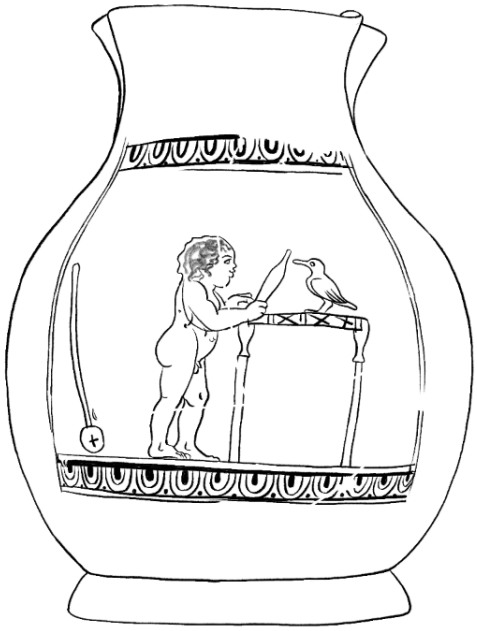


Figure 27 (left). Red-figure chous, last quarter of the fifth century BC. Corinth, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. MP113. BA 16151.

Figure 28 (right). Red-figure chous, 425–420 BC. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 01.8086. BA 4200.

Children can often be found playing with rabbits, goats or birds on choes. In Amsterdam, there is a depiction of a boy who raises his hand with a rabbit who raises its paw as if saluting. This idea was invented by a vase painter, as real rabbits do not actually salute anyone (Fig. 29). The vase painter also imagined a boy with a cake in his hand, pulling a cart with a rabbit sitting upright on its hind legs (Fig. 30). Similarly, on a chous in Berlin, a vase painter depicted a toddler crawling towards a chous standing on a block with a small bird perched on his head (Fig. 31). The child tried to get rid of the bird by raising his head and legs.

On a vase from the Museum on the Athenian Agora, a little girl with an omphalos cake and a Maltese dog runs towards a boy approaching with a laurel branch (Fig. 32). Behind the little girl is another boy. Both children are wearing headdresses with thorns, indicating a festive occasion. The girl is wearing a long chiton and the chiton cheirodotos, one of the earliest depictions of girl's clothing often encountered on choes in the fourth century BC.[68] Children depicted on choes are usually active, running, throwing their arms around, and their violent movements can be dangerous to pets. The Worcester vase showcases a little girl swinging a roller or rattle toy aggressively at a bird that managed to escape by flying away (Fig. 33). Similarly, on a vase in Utrecht, a toddler is seen swinging a streptos cake at a Maltese dog, which looks up at the cake to avoid being hit (Fig. 34). This can be interpreted as the toddler either protecting the cake from the dog or threatening it. The scenes, though roughly sketched, accurately capture the child's fearless attitude and the animals' reactions. Vase painters enjoyed creating such scenes, hoping that buyers would find them amusing. The prevalence of such scenes indicates that Athenians found them humorous.

Figure 29. Red-figure chous, *c.* 425–320 BC.
Amsterdam, Allard Pierson Museum, inv. no. 6254. BA 4913.

[68] On chiton cheirodotos cf. Lee 2015, 121–122.

Figure 30. Red-figure chous, 430–420 BC. Tübingen, Universität , inv. no. S101380. BA 10234.

Figure 31 (left). Red-figure chous, 425–420 BC. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. no. F2423. BA 16257.

Figure 32 (right). Red-figure chous, *c*. 400 BC. Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P7685. BA 10223.

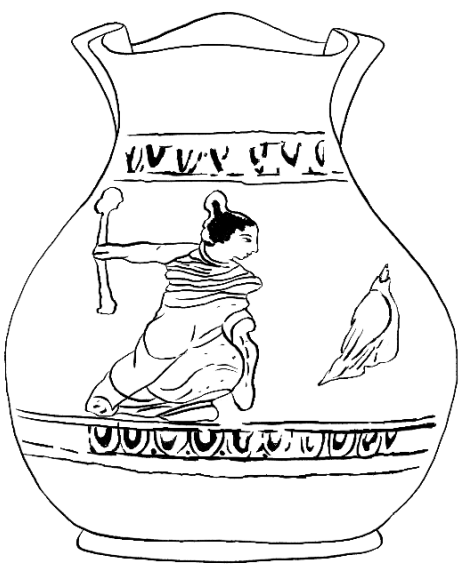


Figure 33 (left). Red-figure chous, late fifth century BC.
Worcester (MA), Art Museum, inv. no. 1931. BA 16277.

Figure 34 (right). Red-figure chous, *c.* 420 BC. Utrecht, University, inv. no. 27. BA 16261.

Figure 35 (left). Red-figure chous, h. 89 mm, 400–370 BC.
Providence (RI), Rhode Island School of Design, inv. no. 25.067. BA 14785.

Figure 36 (right). Red-figure chous, h. 125 mm, 400–390 BC.
Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, inv. no. AN1924.67. BA 1289.

Several scenes shown on choes display unusual situations and unexpected company, placing them in the realm of fantasy. These scenes emphasize that the depictions do not show the children having fun or experiencing a feast, as indicated by the festooned choes.[69] We find children with deer on the choes, which were not a standard part of the Athenian households and, in the forest, would have fled before a child approached them. In nature, indicated by olive branches, a naked child with a headdress and bracelets on her arms and legs rides a fawn (Fig. 35). The child is painted white, a convention used in vase painting to distinguish women from men, but also used for Eros from around 400. Children shared with women that they were subordinate to Athenian men, so the same artistic conventions could be applied to them. On the Oxford vase, a boy with a chous in his hand salutes a boy sitting on a fawn equipped with a bridle (Fig. 36). This detail shows that riding on a fawn was seen as a child's horse-riding game. On another vase, a toddler protests vehemently when a boy attempts to mount him on a fawn; another boy calms the animal to stand still during this operation (Fig. 37). A small cheetah is also an unusual partner for the child's play, yet the scene is set at a festival, to which the scenes on choes relate, as behind the child is a table with treats, often found on choes (Fig. 38).

Figure 37 (left). Eretria Painter, chous, last quarter of the fifth century BC.
Athens, Ephoreia, inv. no. A1876. BA 44824.

Figure 38 (right). Red-figure chous, h. 110 mm, *c.* 420 BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 1265. BA 4194.

Children love animals but have no mercy for them; a cruel game is depicted on one of the chous in the Athens National Museum (Fig. 39). A swan stands on a table and is offered a grape by a boy standing in front of it, but behind the swan sits another boy on the ground who holds its leg to prevent it from approaching the fruit. Another chous depicts an equally ingenious game, two boys teasing two dogs by offering them meat or balls tied to sticks. However, they flinch when the dog approaches the bait (Fig. 40). Whatever the game consists of, the dogs' attitudes show their reactions, well observed from life - the left one persistently jumps upwards, while the right one

[69] Golden 2015, 37.

crouches menacingly. On the Tarquinia vase, on the other hand, the dog threatens a boy fleeing from him, but the animal bites into his cloak (Fig. 41). The boy raises his chous to strike the animal, which crouches. A different adversary is depicted in the scene where the subject of the dispute is a small chous (Fig. 42). The little boy, still wearing his amulets, extends his left hand with the chous towards a strange bald creature with a large nose and bracelets on its legs and arms. The creature, which looks like a dwarf, is afraid of the stone, which the boy holds in his left hand, so it cowers but refuses to let go of the chous.

Figure 39 (left). Red-figure chous, *c*. 400 BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 1224. BA 4308.

Figure 40 (right). Red-figure chous, 430–426 BC.
Athens, 3rd Ephoreia, inv. no. A15272. BA 9024922.

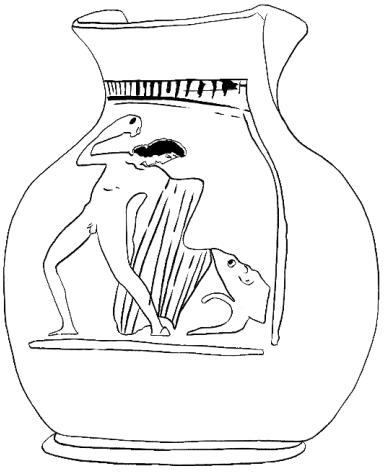


Figure 41. Red-figure chous, h. 125 mm, *c*. 425 BC.
Tarquinia, Museo Nazionale, inv. no. RC 7461. BA 15903.

Figure 42 (right). Red-figure chous, h. 80 mm, *c*. 420 BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 14528. BA 2536.

The struggle of children with animals was a frequent theme of vase painters. One of the Paris choes shows a fight with a mouse over a grape. The toddler struggles with his left hand and grasps the grape stem with his right. As he does so, he looks up at the wall on which the fleeing mouse is climbing (Fig. 43). On another vase, a naked boy holds both hands over a cake on which a rabbit is about to jump (Fig. 44). These scenes are crucial for understanding the depiction on choes. They prove that the common denominator of most children's depictions on choes was a play and not some festive event.

Figure 43 (left). Red-figure chous, h. 51mm, *c*. 420 BC.
Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. CA 2505. BA 10226.

Figure 44 (right). Red-figure chous, late fifth century BC.
Munich, Antikensammlungen, inv. no. S69. BA 10229.

Figure 45 (left). Red-figure chous, *c.* 460 BC.
Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, inv. no. GR.5.1929. BA 208430.

Figure 46 (middle). Red-figure chous, 410–400 BC.
Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. MNC 198 (L75). BA16354.

Figure 47 (right). Red-figure chous, 425–420 BC. Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P12522. BA 16142.

Figure 48. Red-figure chous, *c.* 410 BC.
Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, inv. no. 48.206. BA 10221. Public domain.

Choes often depict children with choes and cakes, but it is unclear who gave them and why. However, on a chous in Cambridge, made before children were the main focus on choes, there is a scene with a goose pulling a cart with two decorated choes (Fig. 45), suggesting the gift-giver's identity was hidden. Another scene shows Nike, the goddess of victory, giving gifts to a child who extends their hand to greet her (Fig. 46). Nike points to a garlanded chous on the ground and a table of fruit, indicating abundance. Nike has wings, but she has a bun on her head, making her look like a child. Eros is also sometimes shown with a tray of treats on a vase in the Agora museum (Figure 47).[70] On the Baltimore vase, Eros is wearing a ceremonial headdress with thorns on his head and a string of charms, so in this case, too, he is a child Eros (Fig. 48). The god approaches the table with the child's cart on which the chous is placed. At the same time, his hand with the fruit is extended forward as if to place it on the table. It is uncertain in vase paintings featuring Nike and Eros whether the choes and cakes are being presented to the children or if they are portrayed as the children's companions or alter egos. In other words, it is unclear if the girl celebrating is meant to represent Nike and the boy Eros.

Figure 49 (left). Red-figure chous, 420–410 BC.
Athens, National archaeological museum, inv. no. 1555. BA 16513.

Figure 50 (right). Red-figure chous, c. 425 BC.
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 5.78.48. BA 3753.

Boys' collective games completely dominate in a small series of choes. The children depicted are only older boys, some of school age, as they no longer have amulets. In these scenes, the children exist in an exclusively childlike world where nothing exists except games. Judging from these paintings, the little Athenians played something like today's baseball, with the player hitting a ball thrown by a teammate standing opposite him with a stick (Fig. 49). Another game was similar to cricket; the ball was thrown at a wicket, the player had to throw the ball through, and his opponent had to catch it. On the New York chous, the wicket is shown from the side; a young man is about to throw the ball, and his opponent is already waiting in a kneeling position with both hands outstretched in front of him (Fig. 50). Ephedrismos was a popular game in which the player had to reach the goal quickly, with his opponent on

[70] Ammar 2021.

his back, covering his eyes. The game depicted on the vase in Berlin began by erecting a pointed stone in the middle of the playing area, which two players had to knock down by throwing a ball or stone (Fig. 51). The loser could still reverse the result by finding the fallen stone. However, he had to carry the first-round winner on his back, which covered his eyes. The young man kneeling by the fallen stone supervises the regularity of the game.

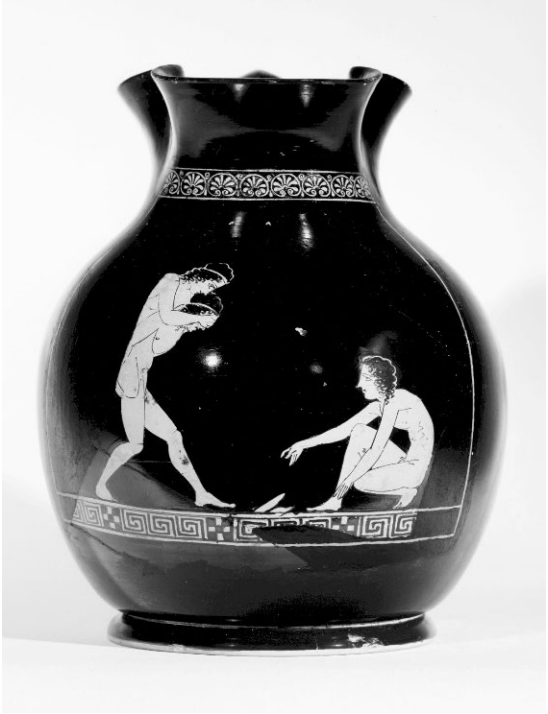


Figure 51. Red-figure chous, 430–425 BC.
Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. no. F2417. BA 215994. Public domain.

A popular children's game in ancient Greece was played with astragali, the ankle bones of sheep, which players brought in nets.[71] The game consisted of players throwing astragali to remove their teammates' astragal from the board or playing to see who could throw the higher number; the sides of the astragal were different so that a number line could be assigned to them. On a chous in the British Museum, both players, still wearing their amulet strings, are holding the astragal bags in their hands, the right player standing up and pointing with his upraised right hand (Fig. 52). On the Malibu vase, three players are seated on the ground, and the middle one has a pile of astragali in his left hand and is picking them up from the ground with his right hand. The boy on the right has just thrown with his left hand an astragal, painted in the air (Fig. 53). This player is showing something to the boy on the left side of the scene, who looks up at him. So, presumably, it was he whom the right player was addressing and not the middle boy facing away from him.[72]

[71] Neils and Oakley 2003, 276–77.
[72] The theme of children playing with astragali also appeared in monumental sculpture in the second half of the fifth century BC; according to Pliny, a sculpture of two naked boys with astragali was made by the famous sculptor Polykleitos: Plin. *nat.* XXXIV, 19, 55. Cf. Beschi 1978.

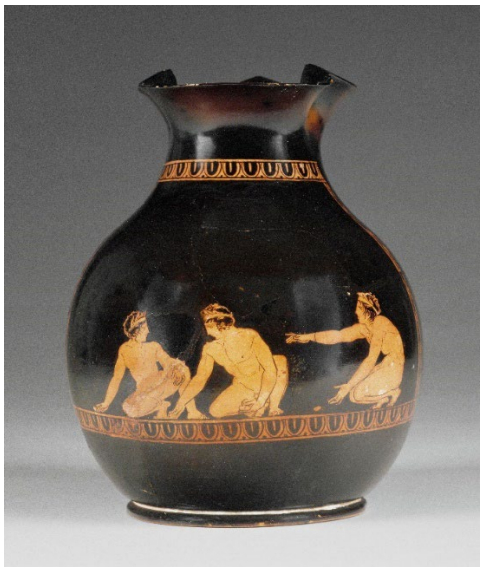


Figure 52 (left). Red-figure chous, 420–400 BC.
London, British Museum, inv. no. 1842,0728.928 (E537). BA 4184.

Figure 53 (right). Red-figure chous, 420 BC.
Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum, inv. no. 96.AE.28. BA 220532. Public domain.

A favourite pastime of the adult Athenians, which the children imitated, was cockfighting.[73] In Plato's *Laws*, the Athenian discusses bird-keeping as a special Athenian hobby.[74] The moment before the fight is depicted on a chous in the Vatican (Fig. 54). On a now-lost vase, the match is already in full swing. The school-age of the players is indicated by the lyre hanging in the background, and the connection with the other depictions in this series is pointed out by the chous on the ground (Fig. 55). However, we do not find cakes or serving tables in these pictures. The poultry feeding on a chous in Athens was probably not motivated by an interest in farm work but was related to preparation for the cockfight (Fig. 56). This pastime was the prerogative of the older boys, as indicated by the fact that they are dressed in himatia in all these scenes.

Any interpretation of the Athenian painted vases must be based not only on what is depicted on them but, above all, on what was never depicted. Individual theme variations were limited, which defined their field of meaning. In theory, children's play is unlimited because the imagination makes everything possible. However, the repertoire of children playing adults depicted on choes is limited, lacking several activities, among which were the very ones that children most often play at. Athenian girls played at being mothers, but the dolls we know from the art of the time and as surviving specimens from children's graves are never found on choes. Athenian boys never play soldiers on choes, and we never find the weapons we know from boys' graves in their hands.[75] On choes, we find only children playing athletes, pupils, priests, and feasters.

[73] Dundes1994; Csapo 2008.
[74] Plat. *nomoi*, VII, 789b–c.
[75] On children's graves in classical Greece: Houby-Nielsen 2000, 153. Child soldier games in antiquity: Dasen 2022.

Figure 54. Red-figure chous, *c.* 400 BC. Rome, Museo Vaticano, inv. no. 16522. BA 6173.
After Furtwängler and Reichhold 1932, pl. 170, 3.

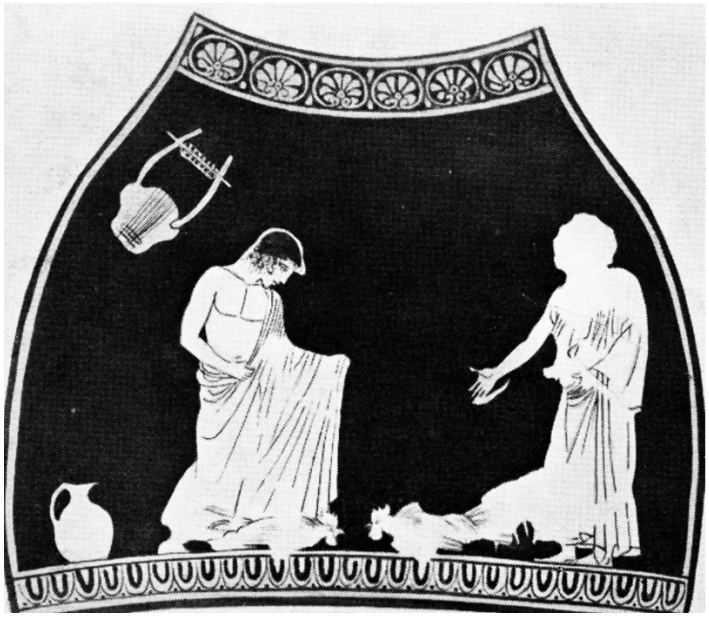


Figure 55 (left). Red-figure chous, *c.* 430 BC. Once Koenigsberg, Universität, inv. no. A26. BA 15852.
After Lullies 1937, pl. 12.

Figure 56 (right). Red-figure chous, last quarter of the fifth century BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 1654. BA 10220.

The mainstay of Greek sport was the pentathlon, which was a combination of running, discus and javelin throwing, long jump and wrestling.[76] However, it is not to be found in the children's scenes on choes, the only sport being two small boxers (Fig. 57). The posts at the sides marked the finish of running or racing events in Greek gymnasia. On choes, we find several school scenes with a chous on the ground which

[76] Kyle 1987.

certainly did not stand there in actual schoolrooms. On a chous in Bonn, the school setting is suggested by a lyre in the background, a boy dressed in a himation sits on a chair playing the diaulos, with a naked boy (Fig. 58) standing before him. The chous stands on the ground in an unmissable position between the 'teacher' and 'pupil.' On a vase from around 400 BC, the 'pupil' is chanting, indicated by the back of his head tilted back (Fig. 59).[77] The 'teacher' conducts him with an outstretched hand, and a chous is behind him.

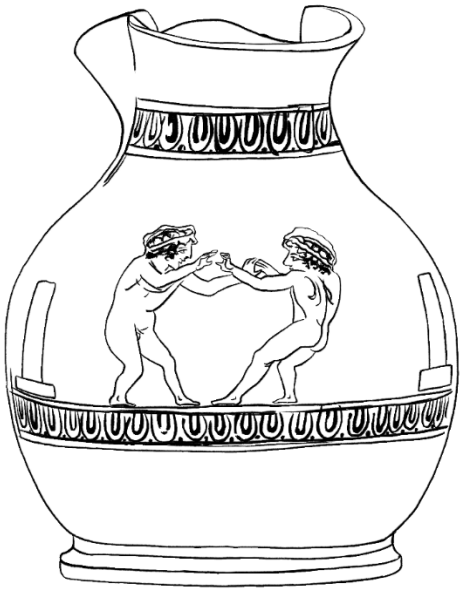


Figure 57. Red-figure chous, *c.* 425 BC. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 95.53. BA 3401.

On some vases, the attributes or the environment depicted do not match the age of the child. In these cases, it is important to understand these elements as a commentary from the vase painter. For example, a chous in Munich portrays a young child wearing amulets and playing with a ball. Above the child is a strigil, a scraper used to cleanse the body of oil and dirt (Fig. 60).[78] The child depicted is too young to use the strigil, but the painter is suggesting that as the child grows up, he will become a skilled athlete. The scene is meant to show that sport was an integral part of Athenian life.

Several other scenes hint at the use of a toilet, but these are not playful depictions, as it is unlikely that children would play at washing themselves. In Athens, another vase shows a chous on the ground to the left and a water basin (luterion) to the right. This basin was typically found in Greek gymnasia, further emphasizing the importance of physical activity and sport in Greek culture.[79] In the middle stands a naked young man with his legs bent and arms stretched forward, standing on a plinth like a statue; he is represented as if he were washing in a luterion (Fig. 61). On another vase, we find a similar composition, with a chous on the ground on the left and the

[77] The meaning of the convention of the backward tilted head: Lissarrague 1990a, 131–32.
[78] Kotera-Feyer 1998.
[79] Ginouvès 1962, 305.

luterion on the right, but a youth is leaning forward with his hands raised, a gesture familiar from depictions of cult scenes (Fig. 62).

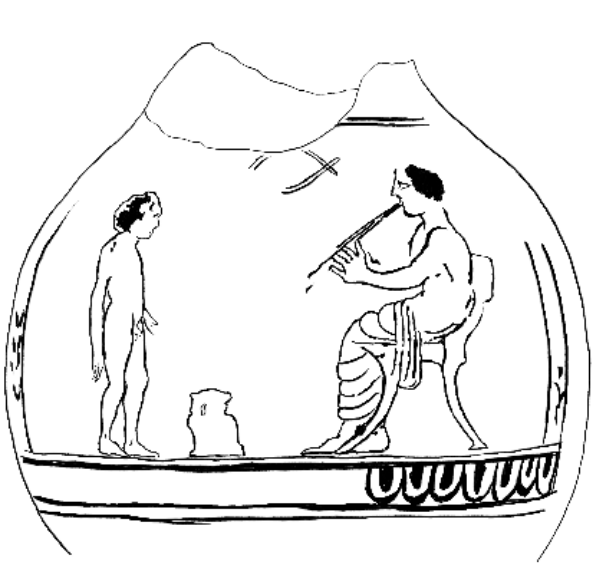


Figure 58 (left. Red-figure chous, *c.* 430 BC.
Bonn, Akademisches Kunstmuseum , inv. no. 2043. BA 12328.

Figure 59 (right). Red-figure chous, *c.* 400 BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 14555. BA 16143.

Figure 60 (left). Red-figure chous, third quarter fifth century BC. Munich, private, Preyss. BA 16114.

Figure 61 (middle). Red-figure chous, 450–400 BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 1264. BA 15975.

Figure 62 (right). Red-figure chous, *c.* 450 BC. London, market, Christie's. BA 2380.

The most commonly depicted toy on choes is a cart, which was popular because chariot-drawn chariot racing was the most prestigious sporting event in ancient Greece. The cart was a familiar toy of the little Greeks, as we encounter it on other vase

shapes and contexts. In Aristophanes' Clouds, one of the characters mentions that on the children's festival of the Diasia, which was celebrated in the month of Anthesterion, he bought a six-year-old boy a cart, the hamaxis. It was not, however, exclusively a boy's toy, as girls are also depicted with it. The cart usually consisted of two wheels on one axis, between which there might be a platform, so that children could pull the cart behind them and carry choes and treats on it, as they often do in children's scenes on choes. On the Leiden chous, a boy with charms has an omphalos cake in his right hand and holds a cart up with wheels in his left hand, with tables on either side with festooned choes and spherical cakes (Fig. 63).

From these scenes, we may infer that the cart was a gift, such as the festooned chous, cake, and other treats. On a chous in the British Museum, there are two boys with carts; the boy on the right pulls his cart behind him, on which is a chous, and with his other hand, he hands the toddler a grape of wine (Fig. 64**)**. The toddler who reaches for the grape has a double axe among the charms around his neck. He is sitting by his cart, with a chous on the ground to his right. On a vase in Amsterdam, a naked boy carries a round omphalos cake; the atmosphere is heightened by a chous in the background, which is shown as if suspended by its handle (Fig. 65). On a chous in New York, a boy carries his companion on a two-wheeled cart with a backrest (Fig. 66). A chous is suspended from its pole; the boy pulling the cart holds another chous in his right hand.

Figure 63 (left). Red-figure chous, *c.* 420 BC.
Leiden, Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, inv. no. KvB 64. BA 15980.

Figure 64 (right). Red-figure chous, 420–400 BC.
London, British Museum, inv. no. 1873,0111.11. BA 1333.

Figure 65 (left). Red-figure chous, 430–425 BC.
Amsterdam, Allard Pierson Museum, inv. no. 643. BA16251.

Figure 66 (right). Red-figure chous, 440–420 BC.
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 41.162.182. BA 13451.

Figure 67. Red-figure chous, 425–420 BC.
London, British Museum, inv. no. 1910.06-15.5 (GR148). BA 13723.

The children's carts were imitations of two-wheeled carts with a pole, and the connection of the children's carts to adult racing is also demonstrated by scenes of children harnessing themselves to a cart as if they were racing horses. On one of the choes in the British Museum, two boys pull a cart with their companion holding an outstretched whip (Fig. 67). While the boys representing the horses are naked and still wearing their amulets, the boy playing the charioteer is clothed. One of the harnessed boys turns his head back, indicating that he has grown tired of the game. The cart's

body may resemble those used in real racing, although the wheels may not be spoked but solid (Fig. 68). A boy has the dress of a real charioteer, a long decorative chiton, the xystis, but it is only a license of the vase painter, as two goats replaced horses.[80] In front of the chariot runs a festooned boy with amulets, holding a chous in his forward outstretched hand, his cloak thrown carelessly over his arm so that the scene combines evocations of racing and komos.

Figure 68. Red-figure chous, *c.* 400 BC. New York,
Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 21.88.80. BA 9024658. Public domain.

A chous from the Athenian Ceramicus depicts a real racing chariot with spoked wheels (Fig. 69). However, it is also a fantasy of the vase painter, for the chariot is driven by a girl in a chiton and pulled by a team of deer. These animals were chosen because they were dedicated to Artemis, the patroness of unmarried girls.[81] On a vase in the Hermitage, a cart is pulled by goats, and a naked boy with amulets sits in a canopied carriage such as those used in religious processions, which were also models

[80] On xystis: Lee 2015, 112. A purely imaginative scene is on a fourth century BC chous in St Petersburg, inv. no. B 2786 (BA 16241): Eros rides a chariot pulled by a boy, with an obelias cake and a column in the background.
[81] Stansbury-O'Donnell 2015, 324.

of children's games (Fig. 70). A naked boy runs ahead with a cake on a tray. Behind the pair of goats is a large obelias cake, which in this context may have been meant as a prize in a race. This interpretation is indicated by a vase in Boston, which shows not only the obelias cake behind a chariot drawn by a pair of Maltese dogs but also a tripod on a column in the background (Fig. 71). [82] A white-painted child rides in the cart, a boy runs behind it and leans toward the charioteer, holding out his arms as if to stop the cart, and a boy in a tunic runs in front of it.

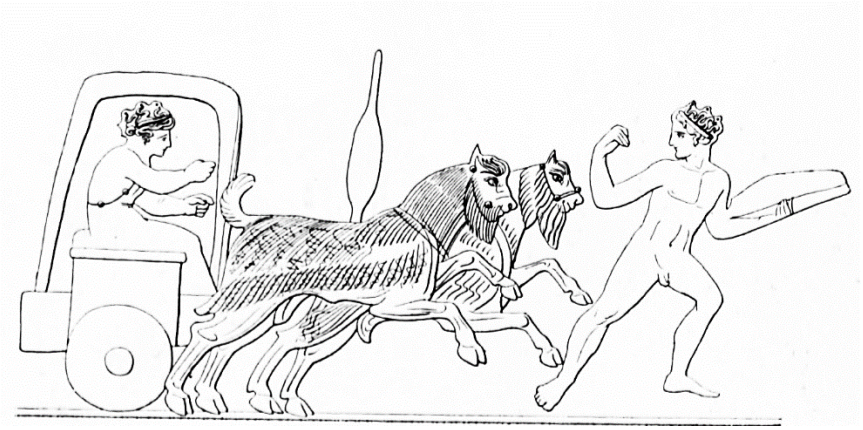


Figure 69 (left). Red-figure chous, h. 127 mm, 430–420 BC. Athens, Ceramicus, inv. no. 1067. BA 16342.

Figure 70 (right). Red-figure chous, early fourth century BC.
St. Petersburg, Hermitage, inv. no. St. 2255. BA 10228. After Pfuhl 1923, fig. 599.

Figure 71. Red-figure chous, *c.* 400 BC. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 95.51. BA 2691.

[82] Similar scene: Athens, National Museum, inv. no. CC 1875. BA 220549. On Choregic monuments: Csapo 2010.

The symbol of victory, a tripod on a column, is present on one of the Louvre's choes. A boy representing the judge stands next to it, wearing a richly decorated himation and holding a wreath intended for the victor in his outstretched hand (Fig. 72). The victor is not a charioteer or an athlete, but a couple embodying a children's festival - a naked young man holding a festooned chous carrying on his back a small child waving a doubled branch. On another chous in the Louvre, a boy in a decorative robe and sceptre stands at a tripod on an Ionic column. He is widely straddling, with his right arm raised and his head slightly bowed, indicating a singing contestant (Fig. 73–74). From the right comes Nike with a taenia. On either side of the central group are naked boys, the left one carrying a situla.

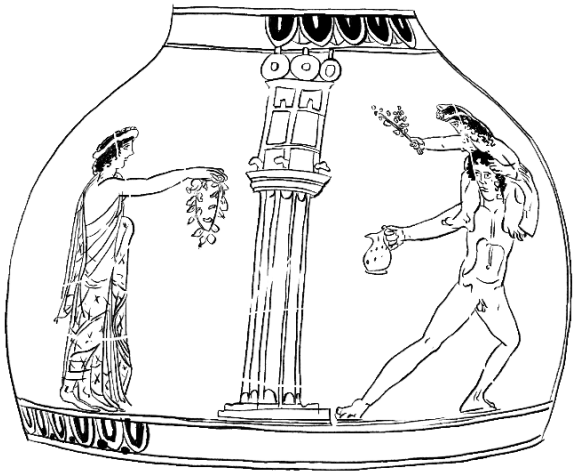


Figure 72. Red-figure chous, 425–400 BC. Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. CA1354. BA 4186.

Figure 73–74. Red-figure chous, h. 100 mm, *c.* 400 BC.
Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. ED 273 (N 2703). BA 4094.

The tripods appear so frequently on choes that the Athenians probably associated this vase type with victory. This idea is expressed on a chous from the Athenian Agora, which shows two goddesses of victory at a tripod on a pedestal.[83] On the left, Nike is holding a lyre, so this scene is about winning a musical competition, the glory of which is proclaimed by the tripod monument. On another chous, we also find a tomb monument, a column with a palmette, in the background (Fig. 75).[84] In the foreground, a naked boy raises a chous with his right hand and, with his left, pulls the cart's pole in which his exuberant companion sits, arms raised high, carrying a chous with fluttering taeniae. However, we should not interpret the scene to mean that children on toy chariots rode through the cemeteries of Athens. Similarly, we can interpret the scenes in which tripods are depicted. Like the tomb stele, the tripods may have emphasized some aspect of the festivities in which choes played a vital role and referred to the associated rituals. However, they may also have merely illustrated the festive atmosphere of the children's race.

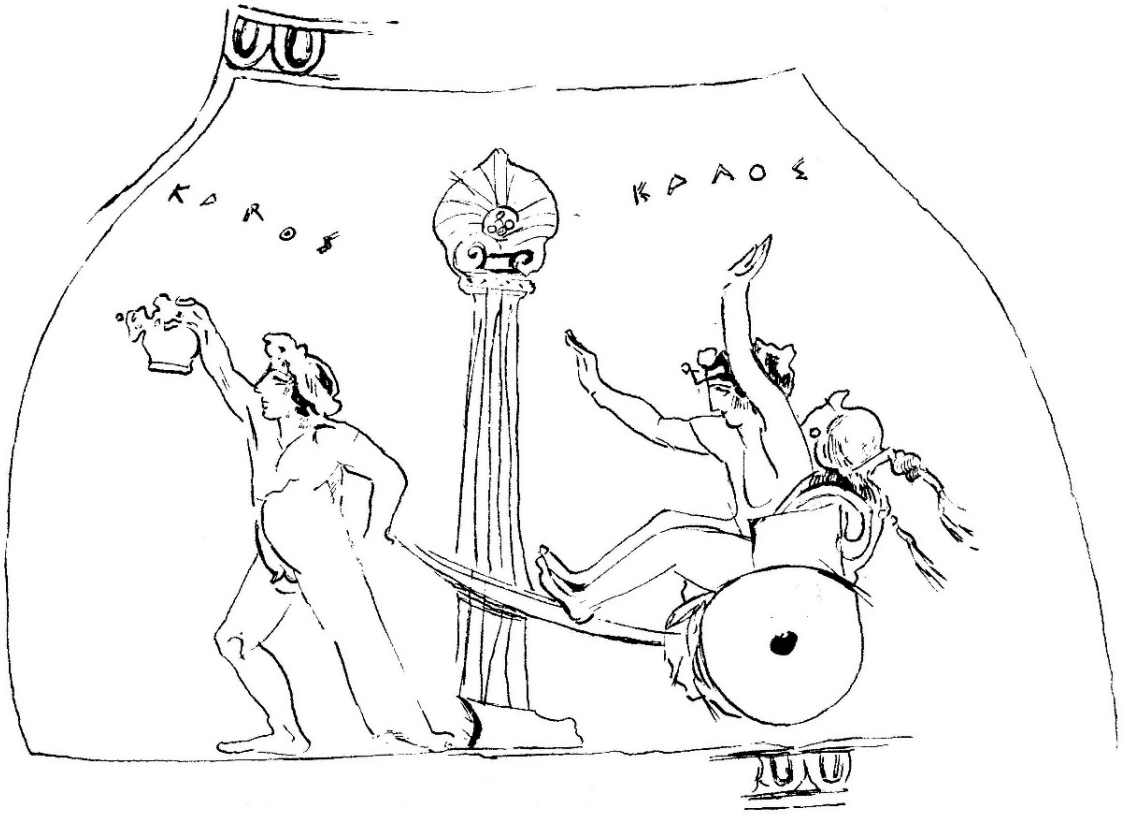


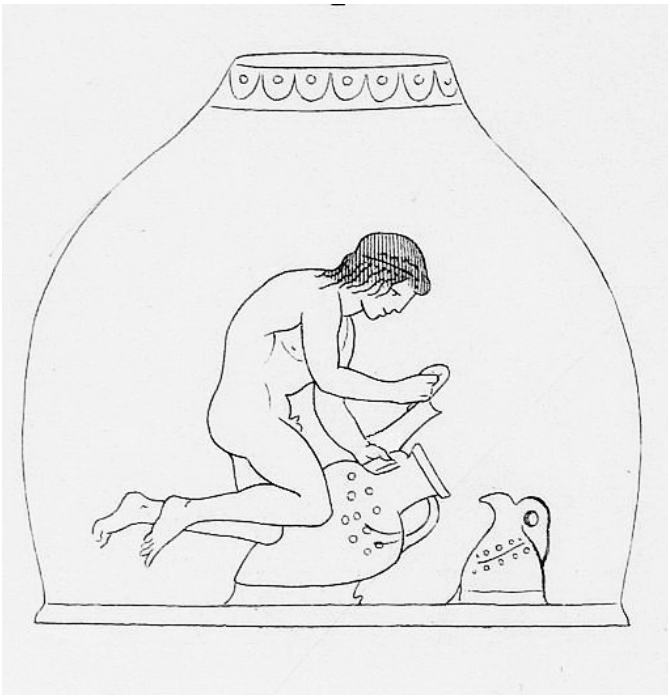
Figure 75. Red-figure chous, *c.* 425 BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 17286. BA 11082. After Karouzou 1946 p. 124 fig. 4.

Children's imitation game of playing the feasting is the most frequently depicted game on choes because the vessel's primary function was pouring wine. On choes, this series transitions into its central motif, a child with a chous and cake. Given

[83] Chous, 410–400 BC, Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P23896. BA 220593.
[84] Papaspyridi Karouzou 1946, 124. Chous with a visit to the grave: Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. no. 3393.

the many scenes of children feasting on choes, it is not surprising that they evoke all aspects of the Greek way of feasting, the symposium.[85] A chous in the National Archaeological Museum of Athens depicts the preparation of a feast, a boy kneeling on a festooned amphora with wine, one hand holding its handle and the other holding a ladle, the kyathos. A festooned chous stands on the ground in front of him (Fig. 76). The scene must be understood as poetic shorthand since the wine was first poured from an amphora into a krater, where it was mixed with water. Only then were ladles used to fill cups.

A naked boy imitates a symposiast on the Louvre vase, lying on a dining table using it as a symposium couch (Fig. 77).[86] He is depicted as a symposiast, leaning on his left elbow. However, in his raised right hand, he is not holding the obligatory cup but an obelias cake, which is never found at adult symposia. Moreover, on the ground to the left is a baby cart and to the far right is a chous. On a chous in Tübingen, a child is also depicted as the symposiast, playing with a dog, and a festooned chous is behind him (Fig. 78). In depictions of the symposium, guests are welcomed by reclining symposists. This theme is depicted on a chous from a private collection as children's play (Fig. 79). It depicts two naked boys with amulets and bracelets, one half-sitting on a table and leaning his left hand on an omphalos cake as if it were a pillow.



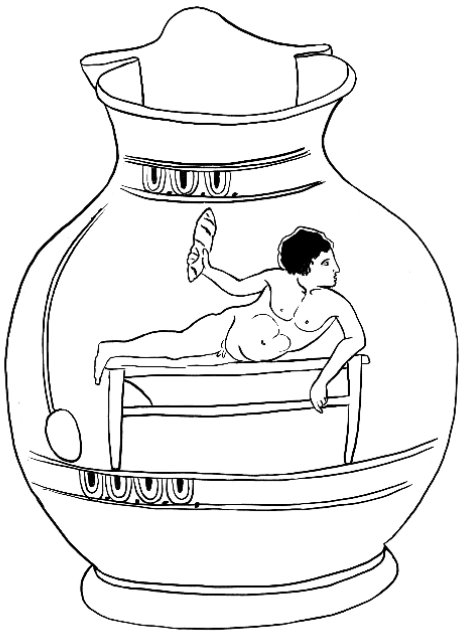


Figure 76 (left). Red-figure chous, *c.* 425 BC. Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 1229. BA 15568. After Dumont and Chaplain 1888, pl. 21, 1 (corrected).

Figure 77 (right). Red-figure chous, 420–400 BC. Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. CA 2989.

[85] Corner 2015.

[86] Boy climbing onto a dining table, on the ground Chous: Chous, third quarter fifth century BC, Toronto, Royal Ontario Museum, inv. no. C370. BA16274.

Figure 78 (left). Red-figure chous, 430–410 BC. Tübingen, Universität, inv. no. S101391. BA 11642.

Figure 79 (right). Red-figure chous, the second half of the fifth century.
Hamburg, private collection. BA 240.

The komos, a drunken procession of symposiasts, was the model for scenes with children running around with choes, cakes and animals. On a chous in the Louvre, a naked boy with amulets and a taenia on his head is depicted in the dynamic posture characteristic of the komos participants, komasts (Fig. 80). The boy is characterized by the usual attributes of children on choes, a cart, cake and dog, but he also holds a torch in his left hand. No one would entrust a torch to a small child, so this is a pun; the vase painter gave the child with his typical attributes a torch to evoke komos. A similar pun is a scene on the Copenhagen chous fragment; in the centre, a naked child sits on a stool and plays the diaulos (Fig. 81). Behind the musician dances a boy with a string of amulets, and in front of him stands a boy with a cart, his head bowed to indicate that he is singing. Small children with amulets were not playing the diaulos, dancing or singing.

Figure 80 (left). Red-figure chous, 400–375 BC. Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. CA2929. BA 15835

Figure 81 (right). Red-figure chous fragment, *c.* 400 BC.
Copenhagen, National Museum, inv. no. BA 9612.

The scene on a vase in Athens imitates the komos in every detail (Fig. 82). The participants are children, as their proportions suggest. However, they are depicted in poses typical of adult komasts who engage in the most demanding dance figures because they no longer entirely control their minds and limbs. On the right is a staggering child playing the tympanum; on the left is a boy with his arms stretched forward towards the dancing boy, perhaps to catch or protect himself from him. The middle boy stands wobbly on one leg with his body bent and his head thrown back, one arm extended backwards and the other clasped above his head. In a similar scene on the Munich chous, the boy on the left is naked, with a cloak thrown over his arm, but he is wearing bracelets and amulets. Hence, he is still a very young child (Fig. 83). He is wearing a taenia on his head like the adult komast and is also shown in a typical komast's dance figure with his arms raised and his leg raised high with his foot bent towards the ground. He is dancing with a boy wearing a taenia. Beneath his outstretched left arm are two gilded bulges, presumably representing fruit. A bun and earrings characterize the girl on the left; she wears bracelets and is dressed in the long chiton.

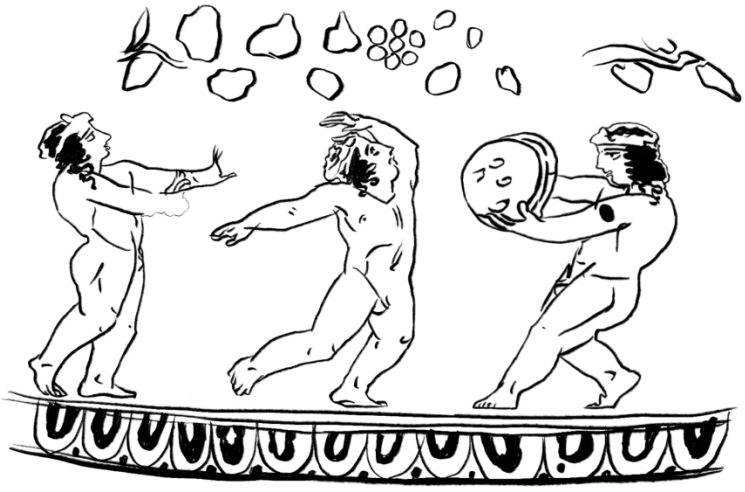


Figure 82. Red-figure chous, *c.* 425 BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. N1047. BA 220547.

Figure 83. Red-figure chous, *c.* 410 BC. Munich, Antikensammlungen, inv. no. 2466. BA 11380.

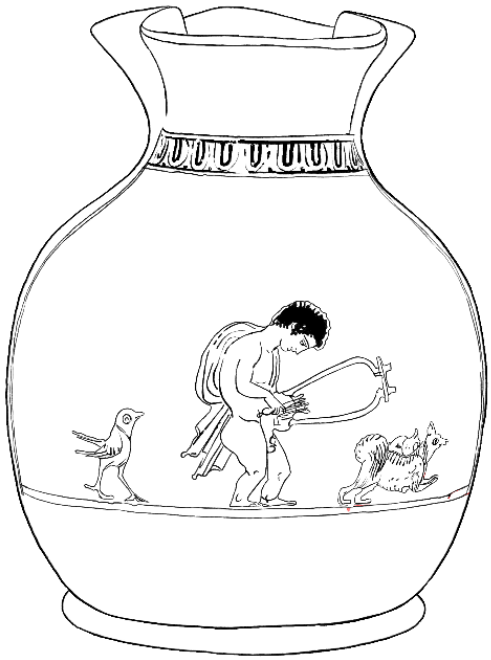


Figure 84 (left). Red-figure chous, 420–400 BC.
London, British Museum, inv. no. 864,1007.231 (E257). BA 10232.

Figure 85 (right). Red-figure chous, 420–410 BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 1321. BA 9594.

A boy as a komast characterized by a barbiton, the string instrument used also in Greek symposia, is depicted on a chous in London (Fig. 84). His appetite for dancing has passed, he walks with the languid step of a drunk returning home, his head hanging, but it is only child's play, which is suggested by other amusing motifs; the procession is led by a Maltese dog with a chous strapped to its back, and a tame bird struts after the boy. Another vase of this shape from the same period shows two children with amulets pulling a cart with spoked wheels on which sits a boy with a lyre, so this is probably also a play on komos (Fig. 85). The procession is led by a Maltese dog with a chous tied around its neck. Real dogs would not tolerate a ceramic vase hung around their necks. On one chous in Munich, a chubby boy with amulets walks, holding a rattle in his outstretched hand; in this procession, fellow komasts are replaced by geese (Fig. 86).

A vase in New York also depicts a children's komos, with a Maltese dog accompanying the komasts (Fig. 87). The participants have their cloaks casually draped over their shoulders, and two komasts with torches have their heads thrown back to indicate that they are singing. A tambourine player accompanies them. The middle komast, wearing a decorative cassock with sleeves, raises a festooned chous. The children were seen as closer to women than to men from the Greek point of view, and therefore, one of the middle komasts is depicted in white, which was the convention for depicting women in Greek painting.

Figure 86. Red-figure chous, *c.* 410 BC. Munich, Antikensammlungen, inv. no. 1747. BA 11383.

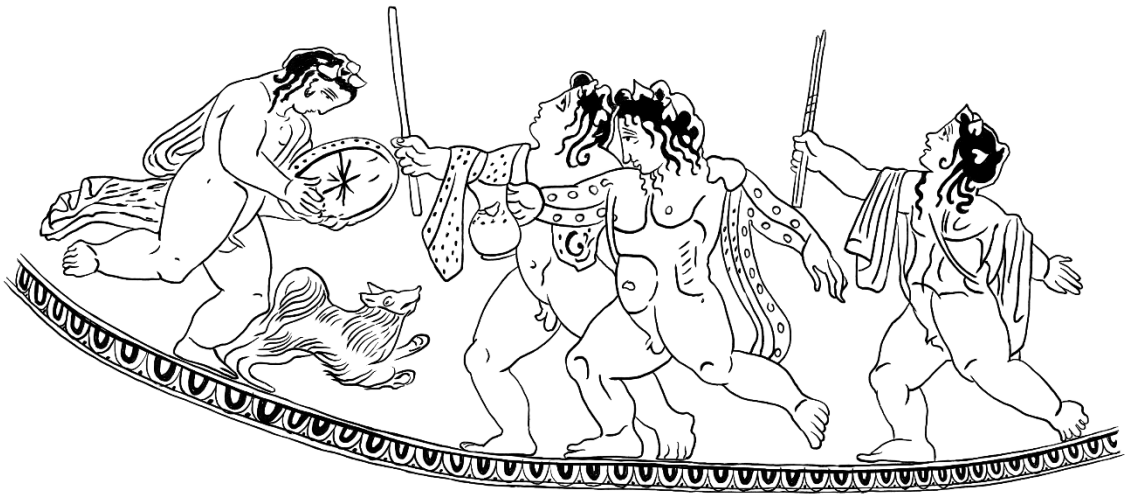


Figure 87. Red-figure chous, *c.* 400 BC.
New York, Metropolitan Museum, inv. no. 06.1021.196. BA 10225.

Three vases of this shape demonstrate the close connection of the scenes on choes to komos. In the representation of child komos, one of the participants is explicitly identified by an inscription as its personification.[87] A chous in Berlin has names attached to all the little komasts, all holding festooned choes (Fig. 88). In scenes depicting adult komos, we never find all the participants holding the same vessel, so the point here was to emphasize the role that a vessel of this particular shape plays in the depicted celebration. The first small komast, identified as Kalos (Beautiful), is dancing, wearing a wreath on his head and holding a streptos cake to his mouth. In the centre are two embracing small komasts with taenias on their heads, who are depicted as drunkards - their posture is unsteady, one with his head drooping, the other with his head thrown back. Both are stretching forward a hand with a chous, called Neanias (Young Man) and Komos. A boy leads the procession with a wreath on

[87] Smith 2007.

his head and a lighted torch held high so his companions can follow him. He is called Paian, a hymn in honor of the gods.

The figure marked Komos appears twice on a chous in London. The boy called Komos walks with a chous, as do all the other small komasts on this vase, wearing a wreath on his head (Fig. 89).[88] In front of him walks a boy called Kallinikos (Beautiful Winner), putting a kantharos to his mouth and holding up a branch, the attribute of the winner. In the center of the scene, a goat is about to jump onto a table where a chous is placed, but another child named Komos prevents it by extending both hands towards the goat with palms turned upwards. On the right is a boy called Chrysos (Golden), who looks up to an older boy with a kantharos, whose name has not survived.

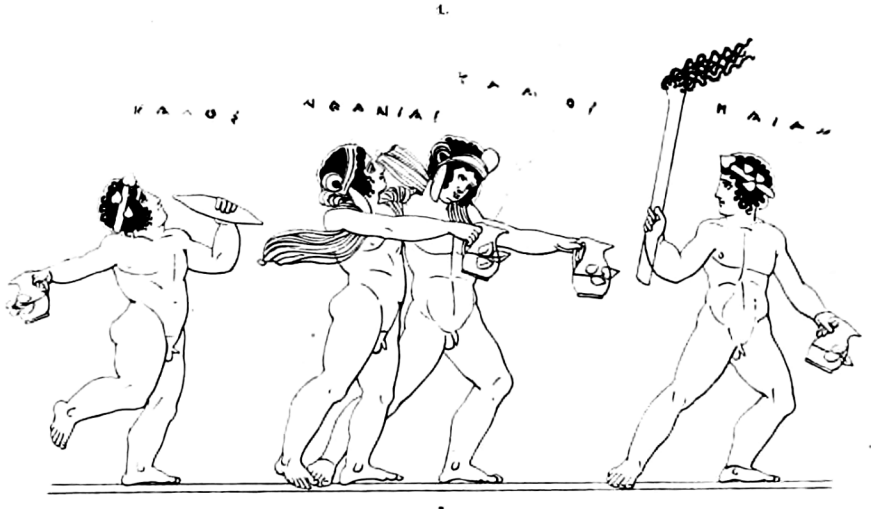


Figure 88. Red-figure chous, *c.* 410 BC.
Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. no. F 2658. BA 220530. After Archäologische Zeitung 1852, pl. 37.3.

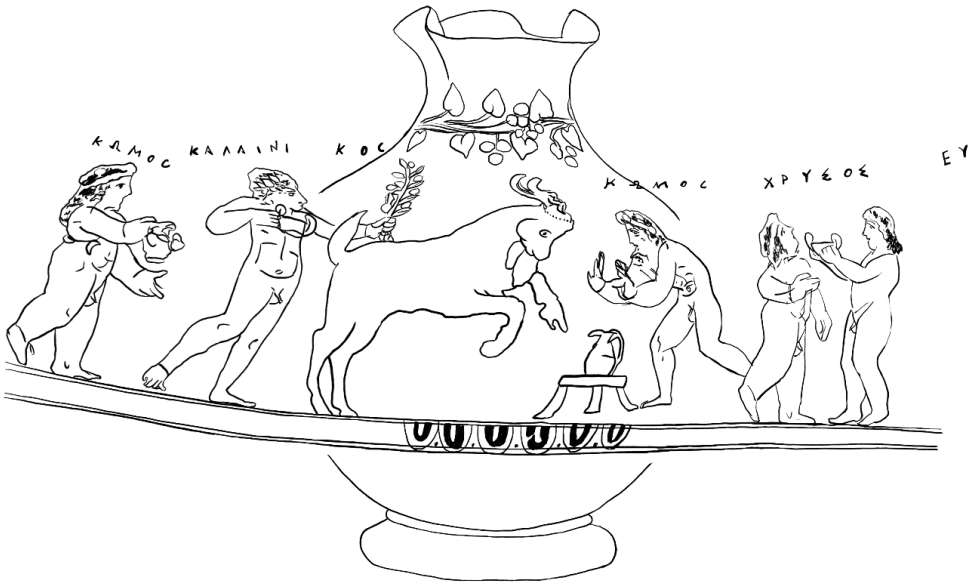


Figure 89. Red-figure chous, 410–400 BC, London, British Museum, inv. no. 1929.1016.2.

[88] Smith 2007, 161, fig. 8.6 and 8.7.

On a fragment of a vase, a boy called Komos participates in a children's music competition.[89] The elbow of a young man called Kalos (Beautiful) rests on his shoulder, symboling camaraderie and shared joy. Komos is wearing a decorative tunic of players performing in public, with a plectrum in one hand and a lyre in the other. In the middle is a young man in a decorative tunic with a kithara standing on a two-tiered platform as a sign that he won the contest. On the right is the seated goddess of victory, Nike, on a hydria, here presumably representing the prize for the winner, with a barbiton player standing behind her. The komos was related to the musical competitions in that a feast was held to celebrate the victory, which included a merry procession.

The scenes with choes, treats, animals and baby carriages that decorate most choes can be seen as a child's komos, a charming and innocent reflection of the adult festivities. In particular, the scenes of toddlers crawling awkwardly must have seemed like a comic inversion of the frolicking nocturnal processions of the adult Athenians. This playful twist brings a smile to the face. The message of these children's processions is summed up by a scene on a chous in Berlin, on which the individual protagonists are credited with speaking names (Fig. 90). In the centre rides Nike on a chariot drawn by a team of winged horses, a symbol of victory and triumph. Behind her walks a boy carrying a chous, wearing a richly embroidered chiton that is entirely in keeping with his name, Chrysos (Golden), a testament to the innocence and purity of childhood. On the right is a young man named Ploutos (Wealth); he is depicted as a komast, characterized by his dynamic stance and sloppy clothing, his cloak thrown over his arm so that he is naked. His right hand is raised in salutation towards the goddess of victory or the tripod monument, promising of future victories, a hopeful and optimistic gesture.

Figure 90. Red-figure chous, *c.* 400 BC.
Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. no. F2661. BA 220548. Drawing after Lenormant and Witte, pl. 97.

[89] Chous, late fifth century BC, Basel, Herbert A. Cahn, inv. n. 649. Cf. Smith 2007, fig. 8.8 on p. 163.

CHILDREN'S FEAST

Choes with children's scenes are also known from Greek Southern Italy, but most of the Athenian choes were not only made in this city but also found here. The occasion on which they were used was probably the Dionysian festival of Anthesteria, echoes of which may be found in the decoration of the choes.[90] The Anthesteria were celebrated in Athens in early spring and were a significant event of the religious year, after which the whole month, Anthesterion, was named. Not surprisingly, it was a celebration of nature waking up after winter, as the name of the festival, derived from the word 'anthos', a flower, suggests. Grapes of wine appear on Athenian choes, indicating an autumn vintage rather than a spring festival. However, what is depicted on the Athenian vases can never be taken entirely literally; the grape may have been depicted here as a general Dionysian motif.

The Anthesteria were a feast of wine; on the first day, called Pithoigia, new wine casks (pithoi) were inaugurated. The second day was called Choes because that was when wine-drinking contests were held. There was a competition to see who could drink a set amount of wine first, hence the festival's name, since chous was the Athenian liquid measure (3.283 litres). From Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, which premiered in 425 BC, we know that the Choes were celebrated both in private homes and in the sanctuary of Dionysos, where Athenians brought not only a basket of food, as was common at symposia but also a chous of wine.[91] The hero of Aristophanes' play returns from the competition to his house in the company of paid dancers as the winner, having emptied his chous first.[92] The return of the drunken hero from the Choes festival, with chous in hand and accompanied by the dancers, evokes what we know in the performance of children in the decoration of choes. Aristophanes' play even features a hero raising his chous in triumph, a motif depicted on many choes with children.[93] Choes could be an important holiday in the lives of children.[94] In Aristophanes' comedy of 411 BC, a character asks whether a child has celebrated three or four Choes.[95] This question implies that it was a big event not only for adults but also for children. However, this is all we know from literary sources about the role of children in this celebration.

Although he did not explicitly name Anthesteria, the Athenian historian Thucydides mentioned the temple: 'τὸ <τοῦ> ἐν Λίμναις Διονύσου, ᾧ τὰ ἀρχαιότερα Διονύσια [τῇ δωδεκάτῃ] ποιεῖται ἐν μηνὶ Ἀνθεστηριῶνι, ὥσπερ καὶ οἱ ἀπ᾽ Ἀθηναίων Ἴωνες ἔτι καὶ νῦν νομίζουσιν. ἵδρυται δὲ καὶ ἄλλα ἱερὰ ταύτῃ ἀρχαῖα' (of Dionysos in the Marshes in whose honour the more ancient of the Dionysia are held on the twelfth day of the month Anthesterion, a festival still observed also by the Ionians of Athenian descent).[96] The origin of the Feast of Choes is mentioned in Orestes' monologue in *Iphigenia in Tauris*, which premiered in 412 BC. Orestes tells of having fled Athens after killing his mother but returning to the city at the command of Apollo:

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[90] Hamilton 1992; Noël 1999; Heinemann 2016, 467–87.
[91] Aristoph. *Ach.*, 1086–94.
[92] Aristoph. *Ach.*, 1203.
[93] Aristoph. *Ach.*, 1227.
[94] Doria and Giuman 2017.
[95] Aristoph. *Thesm.*, 746. Cf. Ham 1999, 204
[96] Thuk. II,15,4. Translation Martin Hammond.

ἐλθὼν δ᾽ἐκεῖσε — πρῶτα μέν μ᾽ οὐδεὶς ξένων | ἑκὼν ἐδέξαθ᾽, ὡς θεοῖς στυγούμενον: |
οἳ δ᾽ ἔσχον αἰδῶ, ξένια μονοτράπεζά μοι | παρέσχον, οἴκων ὄντες ἐν ταὐτῷ στέγει, | σιγῇ δ᾽ ἐτεκτήναντ᾽ ἀπόφθεγκτόν μ᾽, ὅπως | δαιτὸς γενοίμην πώματός τ᾽ αὐτοῖς δίχα, |
ἐς δ᾽ ἄγγος ἴδιον ἴσον ἅπασι βακχίου | μέτρημα πληρώσαντες εἶχον ἡδονήν. |
κἀγὼ 'ξελέγξαι μὲν ξένους οὐκ ἠξίουν, | ἤλγουν δὲ σιγῇ κἀδόκουν οὐκ εἰδέναι, |
μέγα στενάζων οὕνεκ᾽ ἦ μητρὸς φονεύς. | κλύω δ᾽ Ἀθηναίοισι τἀμὰ δυστυχῆ | τελετὴν γενέσθαι, κἄτι τὸν νόμον μένειν, | χοῆρες ἄγγος Παλλάδος τιμᾶν λεών.

(I came there — at first, no host would willingly take me in, as one hated by the gods; then some who felt shame offered me a table apart, as a guest, themselves being under the same roof, and in silence they kept me from speaking, so that I might be apart from them in food and drink, and into each private cup they poured an equal measure of wine and had their delight. And I did not think it right to blame my hosts, but I grieved in silence and seemed not to know, while I sighed deeply, that I was the murderer of my mother. I hear that my misfortunes have become a festival at Athens, and they still hold this custom and the people of Pallas honor the cup that belongs to the Feast of Pitchers).[97]

Typically, the Greeks at feasts mixed wine in kraters, filling jugs (oinochoai) and pouring the diluted wine into cups. In this case, each man got his share of the wine in the chous, a particular type of oinochoe, so each had his entire portion from the beginning. The point of this inversion of the usual procedure was that they were not drinking from the same krater as Orestes. The mixing of wine in Greece also had a symbolic aspect, as it foreshadowed the integration of the participants in the feast, which the Athenians wanted to avoid in the case of Orestes. Euripides' interpretation of the origin of the Feast of Choes was not the only one, but it shows that on this occasion, the Athenians changed how wine was served and drunk. The choes of the individual participants in the feast replaced the usual cups. The Choes was thus an anti-symposium; the participants drank directly from the jugs and, instead of sipping slowly, drank as quickly as possible while remaining silent, whereas the symposion was characterized by conversation.

Based on the depiction of children at the choes, scholars have concluded that the adult drinking contest at the Choes festival was followed by a children's festival in which Athenian three-year-olds were given a miniature chous to taste wine for the first time. The significance of this ritual, and the reason for its perpetuation on the choes, was that during this ritual, children were formally admitted into the community, which was supposed to be the first step towards later gaining citizenship rights.[98] The turning point in the children's lives would have been a logical continuation of the feast of Pithoigia, where the transformation of grape juice into wine was celebrated.[99] The

[97] Eur. *Iph. T.*, 947–60. Translation Robert Potter. Cf. Hamilton 1992, 15–25; Perego 2020.
[98] Deubner 1932, 93–122, 238–47.
[99] Lonsdale 1993, 123.

long-accepted thesis about the role of choes in the Athenian festival of the same name was rejected by Richard Hamilton, who argued that the literary references on which it was based dated back to late antiquity.[100] However, this critical view was not universally accepted. Robert Parker summarizes the current position of historians of Greek religion as follows:

> The specialized association between a type of vessel and a type of scene evidently requires an explanation. It is usually and plausibly sought in the epigraphic and literary evidence which represents the Choes as an acknowledged milestone in a child's life. This evidence is late but also clear […] The miniature choes allow this late attested function of the Choes as a rite of passage to be backdated to the classical period.[101]

Another question is whether the course and nature of the rituals at the Choes festival related to children can be reconstructed. Scholars today are much more sceptical than they were in the previous century. The scenes on choes and their relationship to the Anthesteria have been most thoroughly dealt with recently by Stefan Schmidt, who has quite rightly stressed the importance of the depictions on choes from the first half of the fifth century BC.[102] As in other depictions of life, one can never rely on the scenes on choes alone in interpreting them. They must be seen in the context in which they were seen in their time, which in this case means what was depicted on choes before children dominated them in the second half of the fifth century BC. Only a systematic analysis of the genesis of children's depictions on choes can show us how Athenians understood the relationship of depictions on choes to the feast of the same name.

Until the end of the sixth century BC, themes that can be found on other types of vases used at symposia appeared on ceramic vessels of the choes type. On a New York chous attributed to Amasis Painter from around 560 BC, for example, we find a hoplite formation with men on one side and young men on the other (Fig. 91). The theme is far from the playful atmosphere prevalent on most choes of the following century, on which we no longer find depictions evoking war.[103]

References to the Feast of Choes first appear on choes around the turn of the sixth and fifth centuries BC. These choes are decorated using a simplified technique. The surface of the vast majority of Athenian vases at that time was covered with black glaze, omitting the rectangular panel in which the painting was placed for black-figure and often also for red-figure vases. On small choes, the black glaze may have been confined to the neck and base of the vase, and the decoration was painted into the unglazed band. On one of the earliest vases of this type, we find a young man blowing a salpinx, a military trumpet, and a woman with a processional basket on her head, with large vine leaves at the bottom, a reference to Dionysos (Fig. 92). The woman with the processional basket indicates a connection of the chous with the Dionysian

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[100] Hamilton 1992, 121.
[101] Parker 2005, 298.
[102] Schmidt 2005, 152–221.
[103] But see naked warrior with shield and spear, chous fragment, 420–410 BC, Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P10771. BA 22381.

procession, even though the salpinx trumpet was not a standard part of it.[104] The salpinx allows us to connect the scene with the Choes because, according to Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, the sound of this trumpet announced the beginning of the wine-drinking contest held at this festival.[105]

Figure 91 (left). Black-figure chous, *c.* 560 BC.
New York, Metropolitan Museum, inv. no. 1978.11.22. BA 7287. Public domain.

Figure 92 (right). Red-bodied black-figure chous, h. 158 mm, *c.* 500 BC.
Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P33644. BA 9023338.

Children appear on a chous in Munich belonging to the same group, alongside the reference to the Feast of Choes. The protagonist is a naked, somewhat chubby young man holding a cup in his raised hand and a chous to his mouth (Fig. 93). In a typical scene from a symposium or komos, the young man raises the cup to his mouth. However, the vase painter did not want to depict ordinary feasting but a ceremony in which chous played an important role. Children played some role in the Feast of Choes at that time, as indicated on this vase by the actions of the two boys accompanying the young man. Behind him stands a boy who extends his arms, presumably to the chous in the young man's hands. This action is indicated by the fact that another chous is on the ground in front of the young man, towards which the other boy is bending. He shows his enthusiasm not only by bowing his head but also by gestures; his right leg

[104] The only other analogy: a black-figure lekythos, London, British Museum, inv. no. B648. BA 12383. Cf. Neils 2014.
[105] Aristoph. *Ach.*, 1000–01.

is raised as if he is jumping, his right hand is at his forehead, and his left hand is extended upwards.

There is a similar scene on a red-figure chous in the Louvre (Fig. 94). Here, the young man is characterized as a komast with his cloak thrown carelessly over his shoulders, his right arm raised as if in greeting, and holding a chous decorated with a taenia in front of him in his left hand. Below the chous he holds in his hand, another chous, also festooned, is depicted on the ground, over which a small boy is bending as if sniffing its contents.

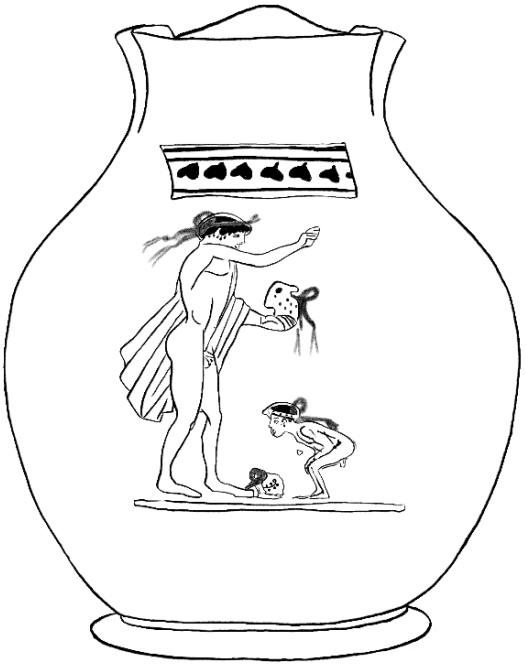

Figure 93 (left). Red-bodied black-figure chous, h. 60 mm, fifth century BC.
Munich, Antikensammlungen, inv. no. S57. BA 44522

Figure 94 (right). Red-figure chous, h. 120 mm, *c.* 470 BC.
Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. CA 493. BA 10233.

Children with no direct connection to the Feast of Choes may appear on small choes with a reduced type of decoration in the first half of the fifth century BC, foreshadowing the development of decoration on these vases in the late fifth century BC. A chous in Munich depicts a boy with a child's cart, and the ivy tendril on the neck of the vase may or may not have referred to the Dionysian feast here (Fig. 95). A ball game scene is situated in the gymnasium through a pillar with a draped garment and a leaning spear (Fig. 96). A young man sitting on a plinth throws a ball at a boy sitting on the back of another boy. A variation on the ephedrismos was the ball's throw, which had to be caught by a player sitting on his opponent's back, who made it difficult.

Around 450 BC, we also encounter another way of reducing the painting on small choes, further evidence pointing to using these vases in some rituals. Decoration in the so-called Six's technique simplified the effect of red-figure painting. In this case, the vase's surface was entirely covered with black glaze, and the figural decoration, including the rectangular frame of the panel, was painted on top with added white

paint.[106] The Six's technique is used to decorate a chous with a naked komast with a barbiton on which a chous is suspended, and to the right are what appear to be a vine leaf or gymnasial implements, a sponge, strigilis and aryballos (Fig. 97). Another example of a small chous with reduced decoration is decorated with a dancing youth (Fig. 98). However, his stance in a bowed position with his arms extended forward can also be interpreted as a starting position in the running or jumping; whether the youth is depicted as a komast or an athlete, the chous adorned with a taenia standing on the ground behind the youth characterizes him as a participant in the Choes festival. This vase is of interest to us because it was part of the equipment of a child's grave.

Figure 95 (left). Red-bodied black-figure chous, h. 91 mm, 480–450 BC.
Munich, Antikensammlungen, inv. no. S56. BA 44514.

Figure 96 (right). Red-bodied black-figure chous, h. 139 mm, *c.* 450 BC.
Munich, Antikensammlungen, inv. no. 6092. BA 16322.

Figure 97 (left). Six's technique chous, *c.* 450 BC.
Munich, Antikensammlungen, inv. no. 2750 (J754). BA 15833.

Figure 98 (right). Six's technique chous, h. 95 mm, *c.* 450 BC.
Athens, Ceramicus, inv. no. 1054. BA 16336.

[106] Green 1970.

A chous in Utrecht shows a naked young man with a vine leaf or a sponge and strigilis behind him in the background; a lyre lying on the ground before him also points to the gymnasium (Fig. 99). The scene on a chous in the Louvre, which shows a dancing naked young man with a helmet and spear, is also related to the gymnasium (Fig. 100). In addition to sports, the gymnasium taught a war dance, pyrrhichios. The young man's posture was one of the offensive dance figures described by Plato.[107] This dance was not a scene from a school lesson, but either a scene generally characterizing a young man celebrating Choes or a dance performed during the celebration, as evidenced by a chous standing before the dancer. On a late fifth-century BC chous at Harvard, a dog on a two-step platform wants to jump up for what the boy in a himation standing in front of him is holding in his raised hand (Fig. 101).

Figure 99 (left). Six's technique chous, *c.* 450 BC. Utrecht, University, inv. no. ARCH-23. BA 16331.

Figure 100 (middle). Six's technique chous, h. 127 mm, *c.* 425 BC.
Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. CA8. BA 15596.

Figure 101 (right). Six's technique chous, h. 58 mm, *c.* 420 BC.
Cambridge (MA), Harvard University, Arthur M. Sackler Museum, inv. no. 24.1908. BA 13419.

Small red-figure choes have also been found in the child's grave. One chous was adorned with Dionysos,[108] another with maenad, who has a chous hanging from her thyrsos,[109] or a woman in chiton and himation seated on a chair and playing the diaulos, with a chous standing behind her on the ground (Fig. 102). This scene is similar to the image on a chous, which shows a young man with a himation wrapped around his lower body playing the diaulos (Fig. 103). A dog sits in front of the youth and listens attentively with its head erect, foreshadowing later scenes of children playing. The Feast of Choes indicates a scene dating from before the mid-fifth century BC, depicting a running boy with long hair wearing a chitoniskos (Fig. 104). He holds

[107] Plat. *nomoi* VII, 815a. Cf. Delvaud-Roux 1993, 89–94.
[108] Red-figure chous, 460–450, h. 85 mm. Athens, Ceramicus. BA 351.
[109] Red-figure chous, *c.* 450, h. 81 mm. Knigge 1976. nr. 276.

two branches, which were commonly used as offerings, in his right hand. He turns backwards to a garlanded chous, which he holds in his raised left hand. The painter accidentally painted over the bottom of the vase, but despite its distorted form, it is still identifiable as a chous.

Figure 102 (left). Red-figure chous, *c.* 450 BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 16236. BA 15824.

Figure 103 (middle). Red-figure chous, *c.* 460 BC. Paris, Cabinet des Medailles, inv. no. 467. BA 208215.

Figure 104 (right). Red-figure chous, h. 90 mm, *c.* 460–450 BC.
Karlsruhe, Badisches Landesmuseum, inv. no. BA 1006330.

In the previous chapter, we observed that during the second half of the fifth century BC, children were commonly depicted as komasts on choes. The portrayal of their ostentatious interest in choes filled with wine was consistent with this. In various scenes, we can see toddlers crawling towards these choes, while some children are depicted as bending down to the chous or lifting it up as if to smell the wine. On a chous in Berlin, a boy is shown pulling a cart behind him. However, he has just stopped with a chous in front of his face (Fig. 105). While young children are usually drawn towards sweets, there is no reason to assume they would feel the same intense attraction to wine.

In scenes with children on choes, the wine takes on a primarily symbolic and ceremonial significance, as exemplified by the lekythos in Freiburg (Fig. 106). Here, a naked boy is depicted standing in front of a table, upon which rests a skyphos. Above him, a chous hangs on the wall, and a ladle is suspended behind him. The depiction conveys a message through the unnatural stance of the boy, who stands upright with his arms lowered as if at attention. This scene underscores the ceremonial nature of the wine, which is not merely a beverage but a symbol of cultural and social significance.

Figure 105 (left). Red-figure chous, *c.* 420 BC. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. no. F2420. BA 16248.

Figure 106 (right). Red-figure lekythos, mid-fifth century BC.
Freiburg, market, Günter Puhze Gallery. BA 30275.

Characteristically, on choes with children, the choes are never depicted as functional objects - no one fills them with anything or pours anything from them. As mentioned above, adult Greeks mixed wine with water in large open containers, kraters, from which they then ladled the wine into a jug, the oinochoe. The chous, as a variant of the oinochoe, was not used for drinking, although it was possible to drink from it; its primary function was to pour wine into drinking vessels, which were most often cups. However, drinking vessels in children's hands are rarely found on choes. The only known depiction of a figure with a chous in one hand and a drinking vessel in the other is not on a chous but on a small cup in Munich (Fig. 107).[110] A naked youth with a wreath on his head stands between two pithoi, large ceramic wine vessels decorated with ivy tendrils festooning. The young man holds the garlanded chous, at which the vase painter has carefully drawn a trefoil mouth, in his lowered hand. His left-hand raises the drinking vessel, a skyphos, which he has just filled with wine.

[110] Vierneisel and Kaeser 1992, fig. 81.1.

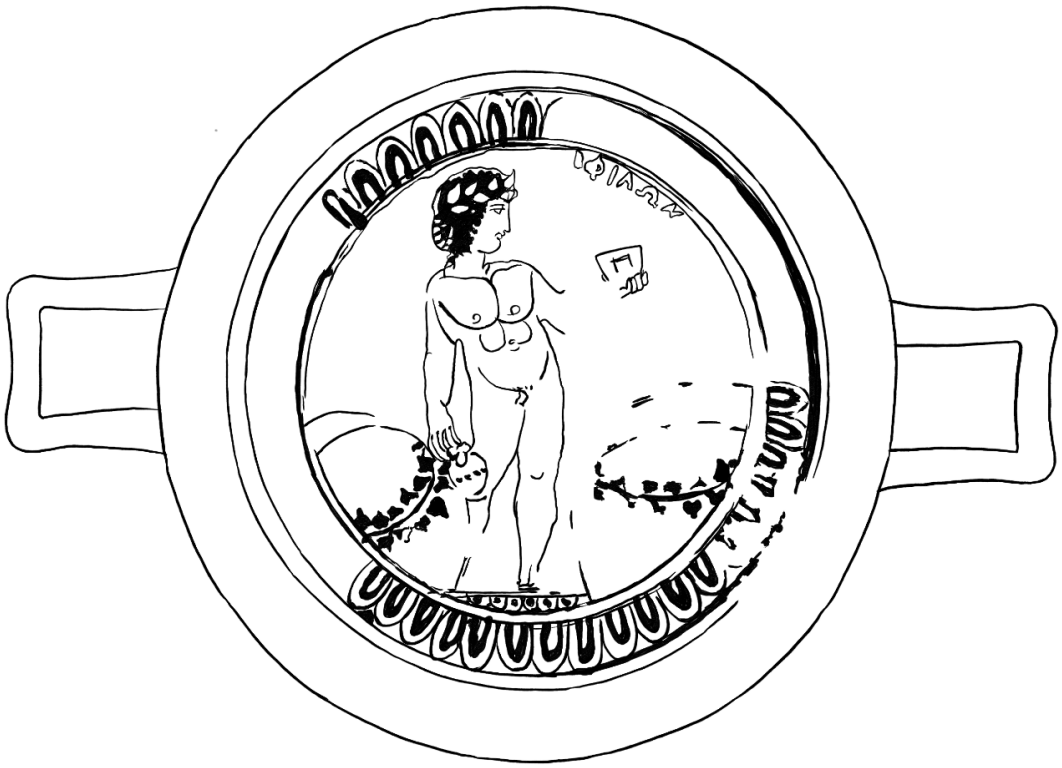

Figure 107. Red-figure small cup, *c.* 410 BC. Munich, Antikensammlung, inv. no. 7491.

The choes depicted on choes are often held in hand, which may imply showing them to someone. Choes further characterize the setting; they are often placed on the ground but may also be on a table or hanging on the wall in the background. In the London chous, the boy is shown with another drinking vessel, the kantharos, but holding it as if pouring into a festooned chous (Fig. 108). The chous stands on a three-legged table, on which food is often served in these scenes, in this case, the fruit indicated by the white dots. Another boy approaches the table from the right to place a tray on it, making the whole scene look like a treat being prepared. Only one scene on the choes shows drinking. A boy is depicted here in an acrobatic action with wine, in which satyrs are usually depicted in the Athenian vase paintings.[111] The boy stands on his hands by the bowl as if to grasp it in his teeth and drink from it (Fig. 109). Behind him stands a chous, from which the bowl has been filled. Notably, the boy still wears a string of amulets, indicating his low age. His sports performance must be taken as a comic exaggeration, which the vase painter intended to amuse the audience. No child would have done such a thing, but above all, he would not have had the motivation to do so. Equally unlikely is the child's behaviour with the amulet charms in Oxford, who jumped headfirst off the table to reach the chous standing on the ground (Fig. 110).

[111] Heinemann 2016, 482–83.

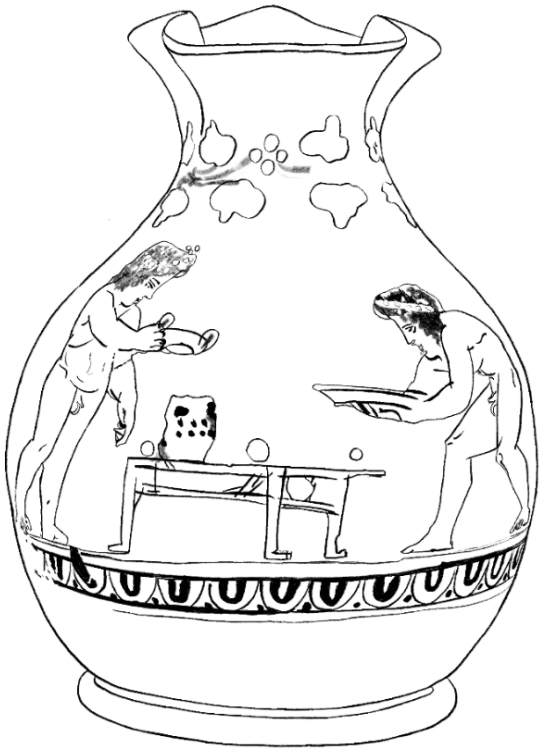

Figure 108. Red-figure chous, 420–400 BC.
London, British Museum, inv. no. E551(1869,0614.2). BA 10224.

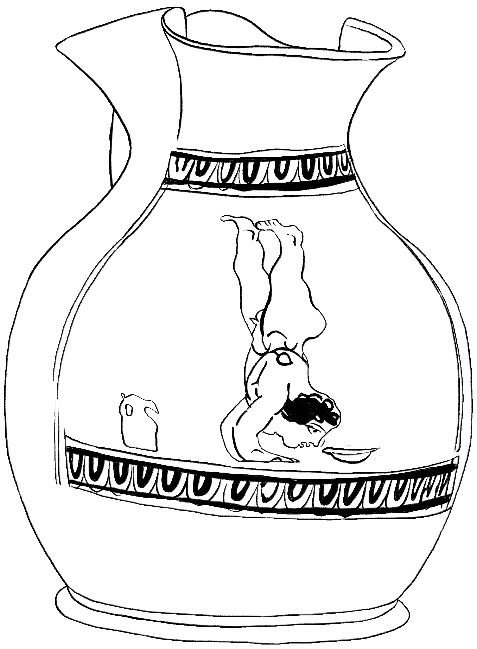

Figure 109 (left). Red-figure chous, the second half of the fifth century BC. Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 14527. BA 10236.

Figure 110 (right). Red-figure chous, 440–420 BC.
Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, inv. no. 1920.102. BA 11970.

The solemn occasion that the scenes with children on choes were meant to evoke is evidenced by scenes in which they are depicted either as making a sacrifice or in the environment where religious ceremonies took place. On one chous in Athens, the sacrifice is combined with the evocation of child's play; a naked boy holds two ivy tendrils in front of him and pulls a cart (Fig. 111). On another of the choes in Athens, the cultic atmosphere is emphasized by the fact that a boy is dressed in a carefully arranged himation (Fig. 112). He carries a bundle of myrtle or laurel branches over his shoulder and holds a skyphos or cup in his forward outstretched hand. The deity worshipped here may be indicated by the satyr-shaped mask at the upper end of the handle. Another chous in Athens shows a boy on the left also wearing a himation, though holding a cart, while on the right is a naked boy with a chous in his hand (Fig. 113).

Figure 111 (left). Red-figure chous, 450–425 BC. Athens, 3rd Ephoreia, inv. no. A15526. BA 24550.

Figure 112 (middle). Red-figure chous, 450–425 BC. Athens, 3rd Ephoreia, inv. no. A15528. BA 24548.

Figure 113 (right). Red-figure chous, 440–410 BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 14509. BA 16339.

The depicted children and choes are usually festooned, sometimes using ivy or taenia, which shows the connection with religious ceremonies. The taenia was a woollen ribbon with two laces at the ends used for tying, which is used in Greek rituals. In most scenes, it is not indicated where the scenes occur, whether in the house, in front of the house or in a public space. All the more significant are the exceptional scenes in which the connection with the cult is clearly expressed. On a fragment of a chous in the Piraeus Museum, there is a thymiaterion, in which incense was burned in Greece (Fig. 114).[112] Three childish komasts with raised festooned choes dance around it, one holding a chous and a laurel branch. The thymiaterion appears also on a chous from the Athenian Agora (Fig. 115).[113] A toddler sits at the table on which it is placed, and a boy approaches from the left with an omphalos cake in his forward outstretched

[112] Steinhauer 2001, no. 401.
[113] Zaccagnino 1998.

left hand.[114] Children are depicted more than once at altars on which parts of sacrificed animals were burned in Greece. On one Berlin chous, a boy has a problem with a dog that seems intensely interested in his omphalos cake (Fig. 116). The child runs away from the dog while holding the cake before him so the dog cannot get to it. The altar on the left suggests the link to the cult, its counterpart being the festooned chous on the right, which frames the scene from this side.

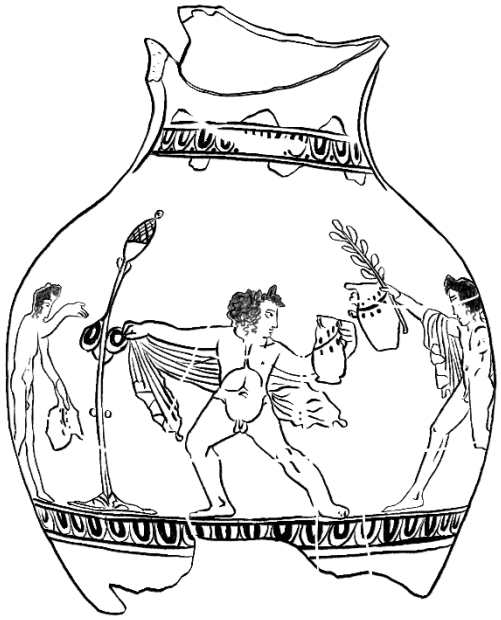

Figure 114. Red-figure chous, last third of the fifth century BC. Piraeus, Museum.

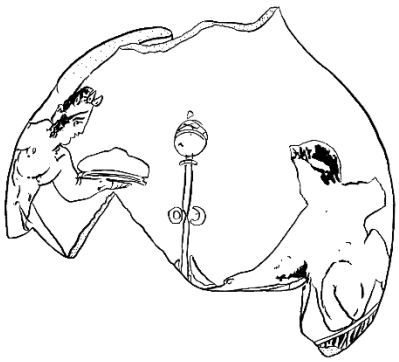

Figure 115 (left). Red-figure chous fragment, late fifth century BC. Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P16421. BA 15979.

Figure 116 (right). Red-figure chous, *c.* 425 BC. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. no. F2425. BA 14989.

[114] See also choes: New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 08.258.24 (young men at thymiateria, on the ground, an oinochoe); Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 13031. BA 2312 (boy riding a deer, thymiaterion, boy with amulets leans toward thymiaterion, holding a branch in one hand, chous in the other).

On a vase in the Louvre, a boy with a cart stands at a festooned altar, behind which is a herm of a beardless god (Fig. 117). The boy is slightly bent over and has his hand outstretched towards the altar as if performing some ritual act. Behind the herm is a chous on the ground to make it clear that the deity is the young Dionysos. The altar and the chous on the ground also suggest the setting in the depiction of the little boy with the grape of wine, which is often found in scenes with children on choes.[115] On one of the chous in the British Museum, a boy in an intricate dancing figure is depicted between the chous and the altar, defining where the scene occurs (Fig. 118). The dancing figures of the children are reminiscent of the wild dances of the komasts, and a boy is shown in a dynamic stance running with a cart slung over his shoulder towards the altar (Fig. 119). The scene is meant to be comical, as shown by the small dog that does not run but stands still and looks up to the boy in surprise.

Figure 117. Red-figure chous, *c.* 425 BC. Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. CA 1683. BA 15556.

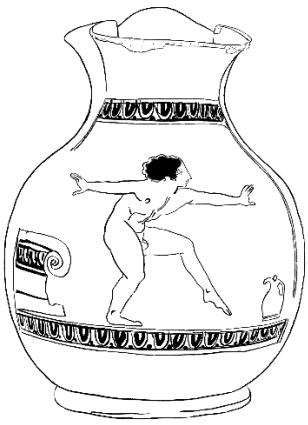

Figure 118 (left). Red-figure chous, 420–400 BC.
London, British Museum, inv. no. 1842,0728.927 (E533). BA 15948.

Figure 119 (right). Red-figure chous, h. 115 mm, 430–420 BC.
Munich, Antikensammlungen, inv. no. 8933. BA 31979.

[115] Chous, late fifth century BC. Istanbul, Museum, inv. no. 2495. BA 15950.

The choes with children may also have temples depicted in the background. A chous in Munich shows a garlanded chous on the ground between two lively gesturing boys (playing with an astragalus?), with the temple facade towering above them in the distance (Fig. 120). The temple is on top of a rock, as the boy on the right rests his foot on a stone, suggesting rocky terrain. On the Melbourne vase, we see a young lyre player with a cloak wrapped around his lower body sitting on a chair inside the house, but the temple frontage with four columns is shown above (Fig. 121). In front of the seated boy are two naked boys with lyres. The clothing is characteristic of the teachers, and the nudity characterizes the pupils. The musical competition is indicated by the wreath above the naked boys, next to the temple. The scene can be seen as a musical competition in a religious festival, showing the temple in the background, or as a children's play at school. The table with fruit and ivy-decorated chous is an essential part of the scene, which connects it with other scenes with children. A fragment of a chous from the Agora Museum shows two figures in the temple precinct (Fig. 122). On the left, a man or youth in a himation approaches a deity statue on a pedestal with a garlanded chous in his right hand, a drinking horn, and a processional basket with three horns in his left. On the right, a figure in a himation stands at the altar. Another fragment of a chous from the same collection belongs to this series; on the left is a building with a pediment, probably a small temple, and on the right is an olive twig with fruits and a raised cart (Fig. 123).

Figure 120 (left). Red-figure chous, *c.* 410 BC. Munich, Antikensammlungen, inv. no. 2464, BA 9638.

Figure 121 (right). Red-figure chous, *c.* 400 BC. Melbourne, University, inv. no. 1931.0004. BA 2540.

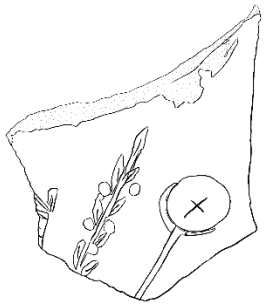

Figure 122 (left). Red-figure chous fragment, *c.* 425 BC.
Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P5270. BA 1500.

Figure 123 (right). Red-figure chous fragment, late fifth century BC.
Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P19083. BA 16194.

On a chous at Harvard is a scene from a religious procession, two young men in himation leading a bull to the sacrifice (Fig. 124). One of the choes in the Louvre shows children making offerings to a woman wearing a chiton and carrying a lighted torch sitting on a chair, with a chous on the ground behind her, so the scene is related to the festival of Choes (Fig. 125). A boy wearing amulets but a loosened cloak typical of the komasts approaches the woman from the left, carrying a branch, and a boy in a cassock, initially carrying a large wreath on which a bird sits, walks in front of him.

Figure 124. Red-figure chous, h. 240 mm, *c.* 420 BC. Cambridge (MA), Harvard University, inv. no. 59.129. BA 13467. © President and Fellows of Harvard College.

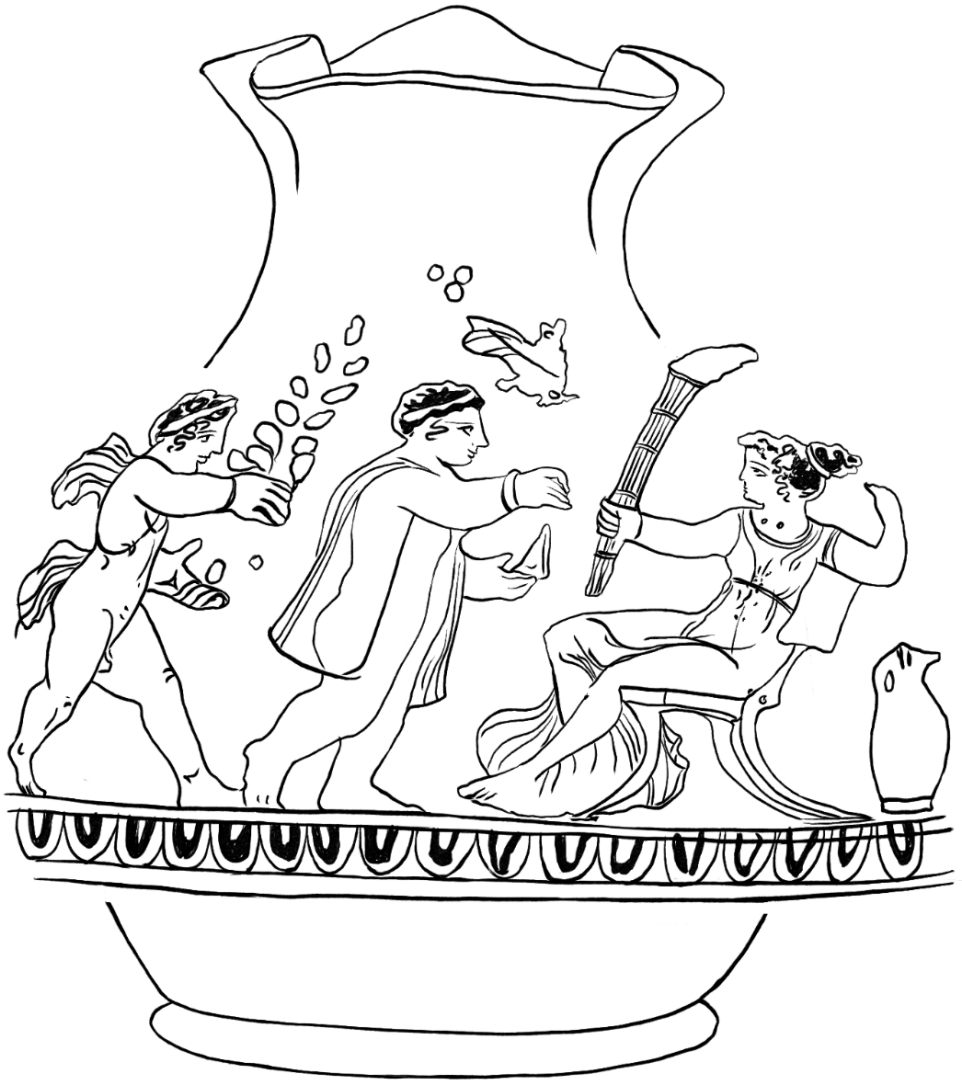

Figure 125. Red-figure chous, 400–375 BC. Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. CA2527. BA 9509.

The theatrical performances were part of the Greek Dionysian festivals, and their resonance can be found on choes with the children's feasts. On one chous in Athens, a boy, who is painted white, sits on a stool in the middle and raises a festooned chous (Fig. 126). From either side, the child is approached by komasts with exaggeratedly twisted canes, a parody of the usual attributes of Greek men.[116] The one on the right is a naked boy, holding a fruit and a branch, with a garment over his arms like adult komasts. The left wears the mask of a bald older man and a theatrical costume with a stuffed chest, belly and buttocks and a large phallus. The intermingling of scenes with children's plays and theatrical performances is documented by a late fifth-century BC chous, in which on the left, a child with a cloak over his shoulder hurries along with a cake in his hands, and on the right, a Maltese dog leads the procession (Fig. 127). In the centre is a child in a tunic with a stuffed bottom and a mask of a bald older man with a beard, holding a torch.

116 Zewadski 1999.

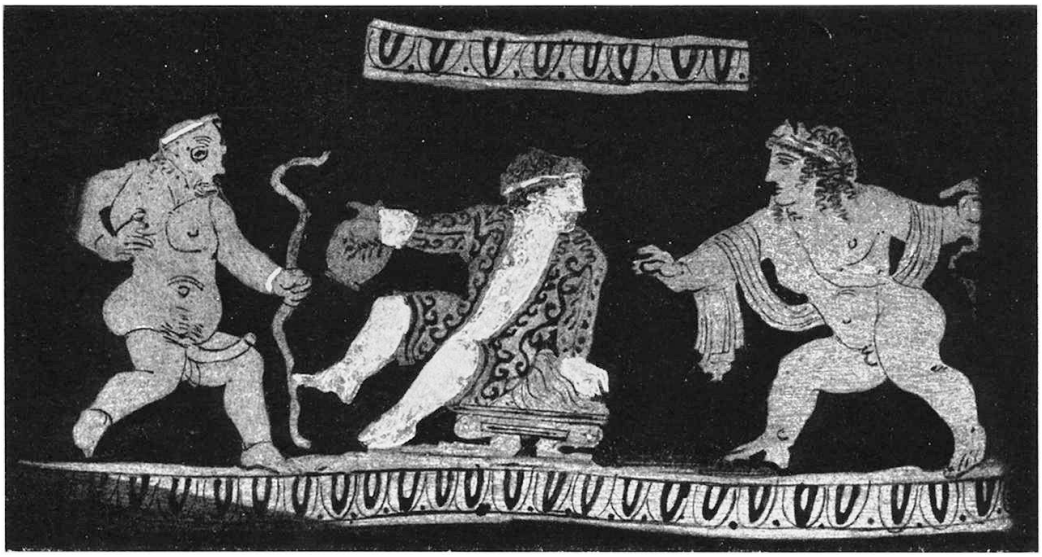

Figure 126. Red-figure chous, *c.* 400 BC. Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 17752. After Karouzou 1946, fig. 10. BA 15483.

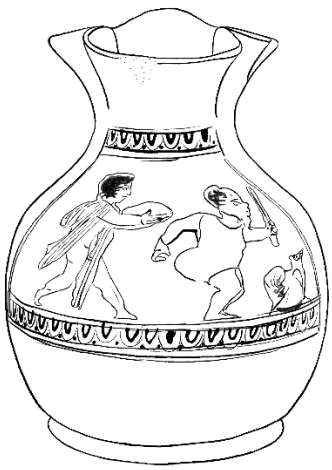

Figure 127 (left). Red-figure chous, 420–410 BC. Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. CA2938. BA 2721.

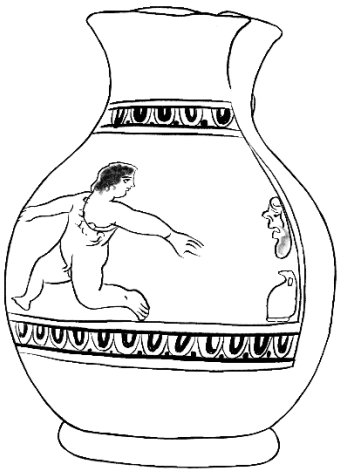

Figure 128 (middle). Red-figure chous, 420–410 BC.
Syracuse, Museo Archeologico Regionale Paolo Orsi, inv. no. 14941. BA 16008.

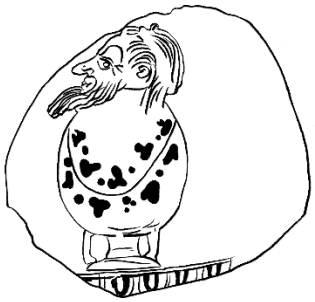

Figure 129 (right). Red-figure chous fragment, *c.* 400 BC.
Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P13094. BA 7665.

On a chous in Syracuse, we see on the right side a chous on the ground and above it, as if on a wall, hangs a grotesque mask of a bearded man (Fig. 128).[117] The naked boy with amulets scarred by the mask runs away from it, turning his head back. A fragment of the chous from the Athenian Agora may relate to this scene in some way (Fig. 129). On the ground is an overturned, festooned amphora, on which is perched a

[117] Depiction of a boy scaring his comrade with a theatrical mask: chous, *c.* 420 BC. Eleusis, Archaeological Museum. BA 5953.

grotesque mask of a bearded man with a taenia around his head; to the left was a child pointing to the head, but only his white-painted finger survives.

Several unique depictions on choes in which the protagonists are children evoke some unspecified Dionysian feast. On a chous in New York, children are depicted playing a Dionysian procession with a chariot (Fig. 130). The chariot has an ivy-covered canopy. Under the canopy is a statue of Dionysos seated on a chair with a kantharos and thyrsus. A boy steps into the chariot and shakes hands with the boy behind him, both dressed in himatia. On the left, the three naked boys are carrying a stand with garlands hanging from it.[118] The front boy has a comical expression due to his bulging cheeks and the drooping corner of his mouth; the back boy is smiling. On the Louvre chous, a naked boy with amulets runs away, holding a streptos cake in front of him. With his other hand, he is pulling a cart with an ivy-covered canopy (Fig. 131). In the cart, a boy with a himation wrapped around his lower body sits; a miniature woman in a chiton playing the flute is on the cart pole.

Figure 130. Red-figure chous, h. 75 mm, *c.* 450 BC.
New York , Metropolitan Museum of Ar, inv. no.t 24.97.34. BA 4091. Public domain.

[118] Csapo 2022, 90–94.

Figure 131. Red-figure chous, h. 108 mm, 425–400 BC.
Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. MNB1158 (L71). BA 21380.

Small children cannot be left alone even for a minute, and they do not want to be alone either. However, on many depictions of the celebration of the Choes holiday, children, including the youngest, are seen alone without adult supervision or interaction. The absence of adults could suggest that the Choes festival marked a transition for children from a state of absolute dependence to the beginning of their independence journey. Childhood games that involved sports and performing arts competitions, as well as children's feasts, may have been related to the start of children's journey towards adulthood.

However, it is evident in many of the scenes with children that adults were nearby when the children celebrated the festival of Choes. Vase painters depicted them helping, cuddling or teasing the children. On a chous in Munich, a young man is wearing a himation wrapped around his lower body, indicating he has free hands for work or home life (Fig. 132). The young man sits on a chair, his left hand holding a bird and his right hand reaching out to the chous held by a boy standing before him. He is teasing the child and wants to exchange the chous for the bird, which the child refuses, holding his right hand to the young man with his palm up.[119]

[119] See the chous with the boy with the baby carriage and the young man by the tree: Chicago (IL), Art Institute, inv. no. 1907.13. BA 16123.

On the Erlangen vase (Fig. 133),[120] a woman lifts a child to pluck a grape from a bush. There is a Maltese dog under the bush and a chous on the ground to the left, so the scene is connected with the festival of Choes, though not directly; at the turn of February and March, when the festival was celebrated, the grapes had long since been harvested, and the new ones had not yet ripened. Grape is thus a Dionysiac attribute. On another vase, a woman entertains a boy by feeding grapes of wine to a fawn (Fig. 134). The boy does not yet know how to walk, for he pushes a two-wheeled cart in front of him, which looks like a walker for practising walking.

The celebration evoked by the scenes of children on choes from the second half of the fifth century BC was primarily a celebration of their parents, especially their mothers, as some of the vase paintings suggest. On one choes in London, the scene is set in the home, but a woman and boy, presumably mother and son, are wearing the formal dress so that it may be a preparation for the Feast of Choes (Fig. 135). In the background above is a taenia, as if hung on a wall, which enhances the festive atmosphere. The woman is dressed in a chiton and himation, wearing a sakkos on her head, and the boy is dressed in a neatly arranged himation so both could be out of the house immediately. The woman, however, is seated on a chair at a three-legged table used at symposia, with food under a cover. The boy is standing with a skyphos in his hand and, like the woman, is occupied with something on the table in front of him, presumably some food.

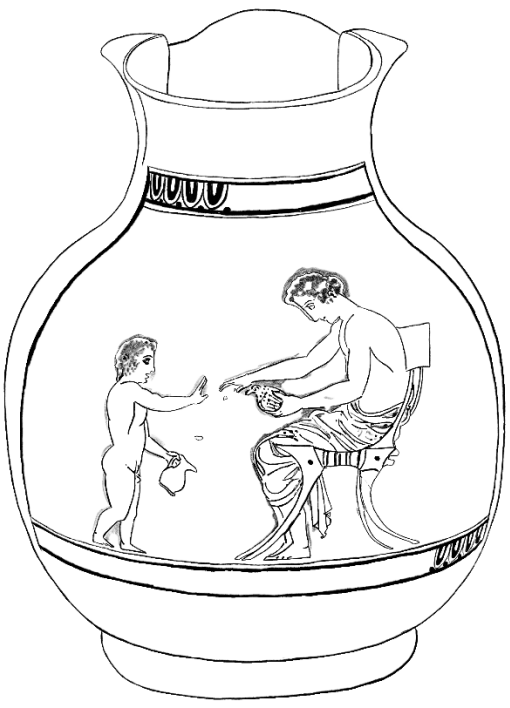

Figure 132 (left). Red-figure chous, *c.* 420 BC. Munich, Antikensammlungen, inv. no. 8742. BA 216568.

Figure 133 (right). Red-figure chous, 420–410 BC. Erlangen, Universität, inv. no. 1321. BA 10227.

[120] She wears a crossband over the upper part of her chiton typical for girls, so she is an older sister or a maid, cf. Moraw 2021, 150.

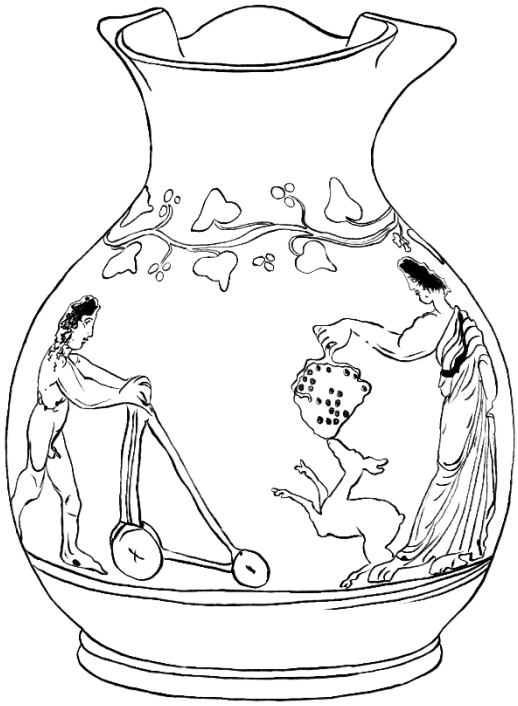

Figure 134 (left). Red-figure chous, early fourth century BC.
Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. CA2961. BA 16011.

Figure 135 (right). Red-figure chous, 430–410 BC.
London, British Museum, inv. no. 1910,0615.3. BA 15462.

Women may be depicted on choes in the context of the Choes festival, but without children. On a chous in Tübingen, which was painted before the middle of the fifth century BC, a woman or girl wearing a chiton and himation performs the libation ritual, she holds a chous tilted towards the ground, and the painter has also indicated a trickle of wine flowing out (Fig. 136). In a private collection in Florence, there is a vase depicting a woman playing the diaulos (Fig. 137). She is shown wearing a chiton and himation, and an ivy wreath on her head which indicates the solemn Dionysian atmosphere. In the background, another wreath is also depicted. A woman standing next to her, who is wearing a chiton and has short hair, offers the player a cup. This woman is likely a slave girl, as the short hair is one of their attributes.[121] In her other hand, she holds a ladle, filling the cup from a chous standing on the ground. In this case, the chous is an attribute of the seated woman and a prop in the story depicted. There is only one instance of a naked woman bathing that is recorded on a choes (Fig. 138). The woman is shown squatting on the ground with her hair down and washing it while a bronze water vessel stands in front of her. On one of the chous in St. Petersburg, a woman sits on a rock, a cake in one hand and a bunch of grapes in the other, with which she is teasing a Maltese dog; behind her on the ground is a decorated chous (Fig. 139). The attributes depicted point to the Feast of Choes, in the evocation of which children were not necessary.

[121] Oakley 2000, 227-247.

Figure 136 (left). Red-figure chous, *c.* 460 BC. Tübingen, Universität, inv. no. S101378. BA 11646.

Figure 137 (right). Red-figure chous, *c.* 440 BC. Florence, private collection. BA 15820.

Figure 138 (left). Red-figure chous fragment, last third of the fifth century BC.
St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, inv. no. 1872.15. BA 216952.

Figure 139 (right). Red-figure chous, fourth century BC.
St. Petersburg, Hermitage, inv. no. 14851.1904. BA 16285.

There are also several scenes on choes that are not directly connected with the holiday. On a chous in Copenhagen, a naked young man stands with a scroll in his hand, and a woman sits on a chair pointing to a heron standing between them (Fig. 140). On a chous in the Louvre from the mid-fifth century BC are the Muses, or women as Muses, as announced by the attached names (Fig. 141). On the left is Urania, with a carefully groomed chignon and headdress, dressed in a chiton, standing with her hand resting on her hip, reading in an open diptych, a wax-coated tablet for writing. In front of her on the ground is a box, presumably used to store diptychs. In the centre, sitting on a chair is Calliope, who looks the same but wears earrings in her ears and has a himation draped over her chiton; both hands are clasped together, and she holds a flute in each. On the right stands Melpomene with a chignon and a ribbon over her head. She is wearing a peplos and playing the double flute. The scenes depicted on these vases are not directly related to any particular feast. However, the vase painter chose to include them on the choes, most likely because they were consistent with the various themes and ideas that Athenians associated with the Feast of Choes during that time.

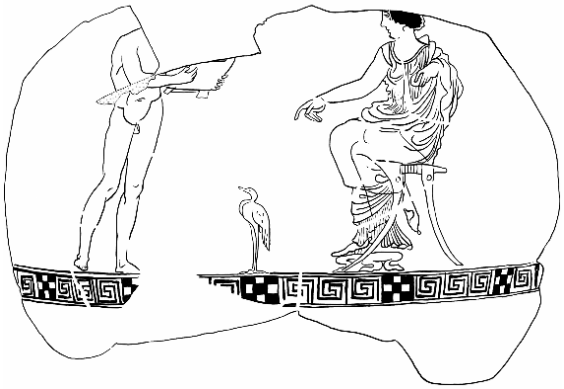

Figure 140 (left). Red-figure chous fragment, 450–425 BC.
Copenhagen, National Museum, inv. no. 4997. BA 216564.

Figure 141 (right). Red-figure chous, *c.* 450 BC. Paris, Musée du Louvre G 440. BA 207346.

During a time when depictions of children were prevalent on choes, there are also Athenian vase paintings that depict a toddler being attended to by two adults (Fig. 142).[122] With a gesture of both hands, a woman urges a toddler to try to stand up; behind the child stands a man with a cane; he has just arrived or, on the contrary, is about to leave the house. One of the figures in the painting is interpreted as the father, while the other figure is believed to be the mother or a nurse. This rare scene is not on a chous but on a pelike. On choes, we also have figures that most likely depict parents with children, but they are few and never on the smallest ones.

We have several narrative scenes on the larger choes from the last third of the fifth century BC, utterly different from the scenes with children on the smallest choes. They depict private Dionysian ceremonies in detail, whose solemn atmosphere distinguishes them at first sight from the playful and mostly only sketched scenes on

[122] Sutton 2004, 338-339; Räuchle 2016, 267.

mass-produced small choes. Two choes depict rituals set in Athenian private homes. In both vase paintings, on the right is an empty chair with a backrest draped with a richly decorated garment - a chiton, an embroidered himation and sandals. The chair is almost twice as oversized as the commonly used armchairs with backs, so it has a symbolic meaning that is the subject of scholarly debate. Another common feature of both scenes is the stool hanging in the middle. The rituals by which Dionysos was worshipped were typical of what one experiences on the swing - the violent rhythmic movements induce vertigo and thus lead to a change in mental state.[123]

Figure 142. Red-figure pelike, 430–420 BC.
London, British Museum, inv. no. 1864,1007.189 (E396). BA 215016.

One of these choes is in New York (Fig. 143). On the right is a festooned boy wearing a meticulously draped himation. In the center, there is a suspended stool over burning logs. Two women wear solemn attire to emphasize the importance of the ritual. The woman on the left wears a chiton and an ornate, sleeveless garment.[124] She bends down to the fire and carefully pours perfume from a lekythos to scent a dress, placed on the improvised swing by the woman standing on the right.

[123] Isler-Kerenyi 2014; Doria and Giuman 2016.
[124] 'Ependytis', cf. Miller 1989; Lee 2015, 123–124.

Figure 143. Red-figure chous, 420–410 BC.
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 75.2.11 (GR 1243). BA 220503.

The second vase is in Athens; on the left stand two boys of different ages, wearing himatia and wreaths on their heads (Fig. 144). On the chair to the right is a wreath laid on a decorative shawl; near the chair is a footstool and a table on which are three omphalos cakes and a phiale, which was used in Greece for ritual libations. In the centre is a swing with wreaths on ropes from which it is suspended. A garlanded man lifted to a hanging stool a garlanded boy in a himation, the youngest of the three children. The man does not have a himation, but his cloak is wrapped around his hips, the characteristic feature of artisans or priests who need to keep both hands free. The himation, designed for leisure, did not allow this, as it covered one arm. Below the swing are twigs, and between them and the two boys on the left is a large object, probably an overturned ceramic potty seat with a high conical leg. Its overturning may have been a symbolic punctuation of childhood and the beginning of the journey to adulthood.

The child in the himation is also in another depiction of the Dionysian ritual on a chous in Athens (Fig. 145). On a table lies a liknon with the head of Dionysos placed in a sprig of ivy. The liknon was a basket with one side open so that grain could be scooped into it and then shaken to separate the grain from the chaff. In this basket, the representation of Dionysos was carried in processions. A woman with a bowl of fruit stands at the table on the left, and a woman with a kantharos on the right. On the right side is a smaller, three-legged table, on which stands a chalice krater with indicated figural decoration; on the left is a partially preserved child figure holding a torch, but it may not be the celebrant, but an enslaved person.

Figure 144. Red-figure chous, 430–420 BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. S319. BA 216950.

Also related to the Dionysian ritual and choes is a scene on a vase found in Athens (Fig. 146). In the centre are a youth and a man, both garlanded and with cloaks around their loins, standing at a table with a liknon. The young man depicted on the left is drinking wine from a skyphos while the man is placing another twig in or removing twigs from the liknon. The head of Dionysos, which had been in the liknon in the previous scene, has already been moved to a stone stele, on the side of which it has been hung and decorated with a branch. A column krater with a garland stands on the ground between the stele and the youth drinking wine. At the far right stands a naked boy holding a chous. Like in the previous scene, he is an enslaved person assisting in the ritual. The central figures in the scene are labelled with the names of the Titans. The man depicted almost as a caricature, bald, with a scraggly beard, is Prometheus, and the young man drinking from the skyphos is Epimetheus. Referring to these Athenians by mythical names may have been hyperbole, befitting the carnivalesque nature of Choes.[125]

[125] For a different interpretation cf. Hedreen 2014, 274–276.

Figure 145. Red-figure chous, *c.* 425 BC. Athens, National Museum, inv. no. VS318. BA 216949.

Figure 146. Red-figure chous, 430–425 BC.
Athens, 3rd Ephoria 3500. BA 28128. After Alexandri-Tzachou, 1997, fig. 11.

A chous in Paris has a similar scale, level of ambition, and festive atmosphere (Fig. 147). In the center of the drawing is an altar with a tree adorned with hanging pinakes and ceramic plates with painted decorations. These items were brought to

shrines as offerings. To the left stand two women in decorated chitons. The woman at the altar is holding a sacrificial bowl, phiale, and an oinochoe. The woman behind her has her hand to her mouth, a gesture in this context presumably expressing astonishment. To the right of the altar is a young man with a horse, the object of her astonishment. The rider wears a travelling hat, petasos, armour with scales, two spears and high boots. Since the depiction is on a chous, it may have been an apparition of the mythical hero Orestes, whose visit to Athens explained the feasting on the Feast of Choes.[126] A young horseman is also found on a chous in Providence (Fig. 148). He stands before a seated man with a sceptre, wearing a petasos and chlamys and leaning on two spears. Behind him, in front of a stele, is a horse with head bowed as if grazing. The stele can be interpreted as marking the end of a horse race, serving as a reminder of equestrian competitions.

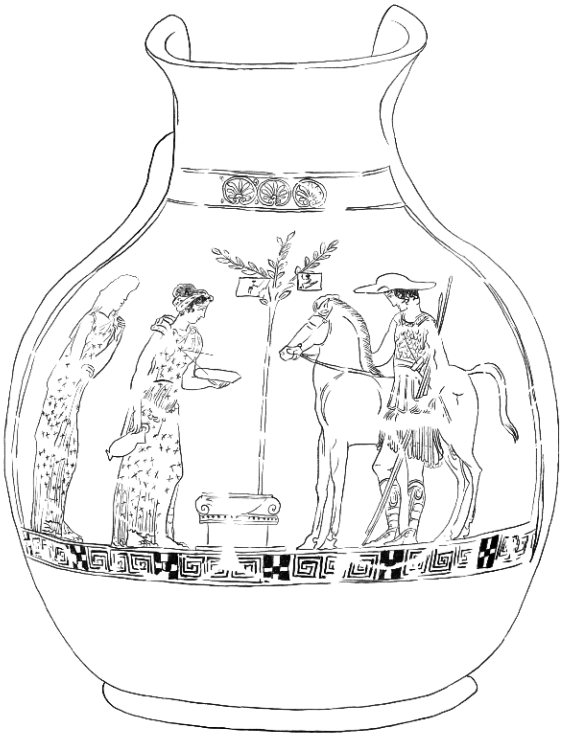

Figure 147 (left). Red-figure chous, h. 226 mm, 425–400 BC.
Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. L64 (S1659). BA 15906.

Figure 148 (right). Red-figure chous, h. 222 mm, *c.* 430 BC.
Providence (RI), Rhode Island School of Design, inv. no. 25.090. BA 216567. Public domain.

The horsemen are also found on the Bochum chous; a young man in a chlamys rides a horse, Eros flies in front of him with a torch, and the procession is led by a young man also holding a torch (Fig. 149**).** The scene evokes the nocturnal procession, which, as we shall see below, was an essential component of the festival of Choes. The Athenians referred to this type of vase as choes, as evidenced by the word CHOES engraved on the base of the foot of this vase (Fig. 150). The inscription suggests that it

[126] Shapiro 2022, 304–06.

was added after the vase was fired in the pottery workshop but before it was sold. As it is not on the vase's body, it was probably used to handle and trade the vase.[127]

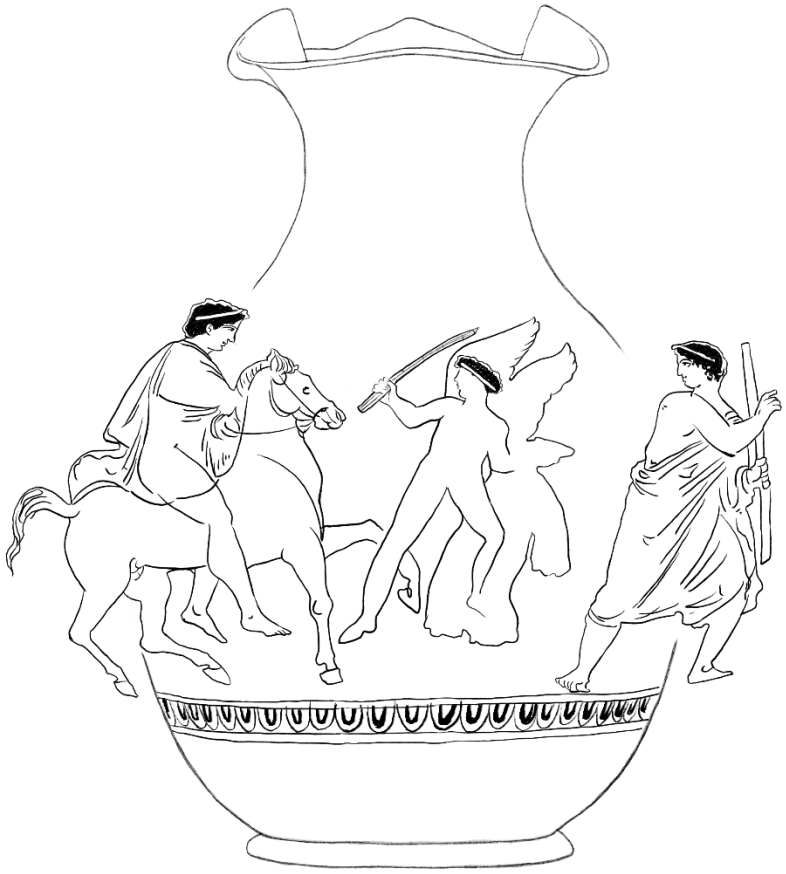

Figure 149 (left). Red-figure chous, *c.* 375 BC. Bochum, Universität, inv. no. S1018. BA 4967.

Figure 150 (right). The engraving under the foot of no.149.

So what was the relationship between the children, the choes and the Feast of Choes? At the beginning of the fifth century BC, isolated scenes with children evoking the Feast of Choes appeared on vases with the same name. Choes with this iconography suggest that some Athenian children participated in this event. The decoration used a simplified red-bodied black-figure technique, making it cheaper to produce by omitting the black glaze. These vases were thus intended for one-time use and were likely used in ceremonial functions like funerals. Interestingly, several vases of this kind have been found in children's graves, while none have been discovered in adult graves.[128] Placing choes in children's tombs continued in the second half of the fifth century BC.[129]

Scenes featuring children began to appear on vases around the middle of the fifth century BC. At that time, the vase painters opted for a simplified technique, which was likely not coincidental. Half a century earlier, they had used a red-bodied black-

[127] Hamilton 1992, 173–74
[128] Schmidt 2005, 206.
[129] Schmidt 2005, 213–15.

figure technique for scenes with children celebrating choes feast, but around 450 BC they were using Six's technique. As the decoration in the red-bodied black-figure technique, the Six's technique was cheaper, but it deteriorated much quicker than black-figure or red-figure painting because the added paint fell off quickly after the firing process.[130] Decoration using Six's technique, which continued into the late fifth century BC, indicates that at least some small choes with children were intended for one-time use in which the quality and durability of the decoration were not necessary. Therefore, these small choes had a demonstrably ceremonial function and may have been used, for example, as gifts to children at the feast of the Anthesteria.

Six's technique was used to conduct experiments with scenes involving children and choes as a market test. The encouraging results led the vase painters to switch to the more laborious but expensive red-figure technique. Customers started buying these vases in large quantities, which significantly increased the number of preserved choes. In the entire second half of the 5th century BC, there was a high demand for these vases. The choes started featuring scenes with children in various activities, holding multiple attributes associated with the festival of Choes, such as tables, cakes, and festooned choes. Unlike miniature adults, specific anatomical features of children were respected and depicted in these vase paintings, which were first introduced around 450 BC.

The smallest choes, which were, on average, 75 mm tall and reached a maximum height of about 150 mm, contained the greatest concentration of children's scenes. Not one of these smallest choes has a scene unrelated to children or the festival of Choes. The simplest explanation would be that the smallest choes containing one decilitre of wine diluted with water were given to children celebrating the festival of Choes.[131] We have no literary evidence to support the claim that children received something at the Choes feast, but the choes depicting small children did not increase in size over time.[132] This feature may indicate that at least some small choes were given to small children until the end of the fifth century BC, so they must not have been too big.[133]

This survey of the evolution of the function of choes and their decoration shows that Athenian vase painters did not meet a pressing need. Throughout the first half of the fifth century, the feast of the choes was celebrated without choes with a specific decoration. It was the opposite; the vase painters created this demand by producing products that could be used at this feast. It was a successful strategy. Small choes with children's scenes sold well for half a century, but then customers lost interest. This development did not affect the Feast of Choes; even without choes with children's scenes, the feast was celebrated in Athens until the Roman era.

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[130] Cohen 2006, 79.

[131] Bažant 1975. Aristotle recommends only milk for the youngest children and does not recommend wine (*pol.*, 1336a), which implies that the Greeks at that time gave them wine to drink as well.

[132] Teachers were given gifts at the feast of the Choes: *Athen.* X, 337d.

[133] The size of ceremonial vases not intended for use can increase dramatically. The white lekythos used as tomb offerings at that time were used initially as a container for precious oil, so they were relatively small. Over time, however, they ceased to be brought to graves full of oil, their function as a display vase completely took over, and their height increased to a metre. Cf. Kurtz 1975, 68–73; Oakley 2004, 6–9.

DIONYSOS

Above, we have mentioned a series of choes evoking a feast in which choes figured from the first half of the fifth century BC. In this series, we can see depictions of Dionysos and his companions, the satyrs and maenads. In the earliest depiction of satyrs and maenads, on the François vase of *c.* 565 BC, Dionysos' attendants are identified by inscriptions as 'Silenoi' and 'Nymphai', but later the designation was settled on the satyrs and maenads.[134] Satyrs were depicted as men with animal features, such as horse ears, legs, and a tail. Their main characteristic was their insatiable sexual appetite, so they were often portrayed with an erect phallus. Their primary role was to accompany Dionysos, and they were shown in various human activities, except for sports.[135] While satyrs had no counterparts in the Dionysian cult, maenads, characterized by thyrses, were depicted as women worshipping Dionysos and as companions of satyrs.[136] The vase painters never distinguished these two fundamentally different categories of maenads.

Figure 151 (left). Red-bodied black-figure chous, h. 95 mm, *c.* 500 BC.
Athens, Ceramicus, inv. no. 662. BA15923.

Figure 152 (middle). Red-bodied black-figure chous, h. 180 mm, *c.* 480 BC.
Ferrara, Museo Nazionale di Spina, inv. no. 14309. BA 351400.

Figure 153 (right). Six's technique chous, 500–475 BC.
Amsterdam, Allard Pierson Museum, inv. no. 2594. BA 1342.

On a chous with an omitted black glaze from the Athenian cemetery at Ceramicus, which may have been made in the late sixth century BC, we find a very cursory sketch of a seated Dionysos in a long robe, holding a huge kantharos (Fig. 151). On a chous in Ferrara decorated with the same technique, we find maenad playing the flute and opposite her stands satyr, who points with his right hand to a pointed amphora standing on the ground between them (Fig. 152). In his raised left hand, satyr

[134] Florence, Museo Archeologico Etrusco, inv. no. 4209. BA 300000.
[135] Lissarrague 2013.
[136] Moraw 1998; Villanueva-Puig 2009.

holds a skyphos, and below it on the ground is a chous that connects the scene with the festival of Choes.

The Six's technique was used to decorate the chous on which we find a komos of satyrs, one playing the lyre, the other carrying a lighted torch (Fig. 153). The object in the background between them may be a strigilis with a sponge or a vine leaf. A vase from a cemetery in the Athenian Ceramicus was decorated with the same technique, showing a dancing satyr with a drinking horn on the ground beside him (Fig. 154). The satyr holds a chous in his backward outstretched hand, a motif later found in children's scenes. The so-called Vatican G 50 Class are black-figure choes with cursory paintings, mostly Dionysian themes.[137] The vase that gave the class its name features Dionysos with a drinking horn and a dancing maenad (Fig. 155). Vases of the so-called Haimon Group stand out for their similarly simplified decoration.[138] On a chous from the first quarter of the fifth century BC, we find a dancing satyr, in front of whom a drinking horn lies on the ground (Fig. 156).

Figure 154 (left). Six's technique chous, h. 120 mm, 470–450 BC.
Athens, Ceramicus, inv. no. 1055. BA16328.

Figure 155 (middle). Black-figure chous, *c.* 500 BC. Rome, Museo Vaticano, inv. no. G50. BA 330018.

Figure 156 (right). Black-figure chous, 500–475. BC.
Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, inv. no. AN1925.142. BA 331527.

One might associate the black-figure scene with two satyrs at a great pithos with the opening of the wine pithoi on Anthesteria, but we have no evidence for this assumption (Fig. 157). Their restless attitudes and excited gestures indicate wine in the pithos. The same painter created a similar scene with crouching satyrs, showing a mask of Dionysos instead of a pithos (Fig. 158).[139] The god of wine's face, with an ivy wreath and ivy tendrils around it, is depicted frontally and fixes the viewer with wide-open eyes. On a fragment of a black-figure chous from the early fifth century BC,

[137] Beazley and Magi 1939, 48.
[138] John D. Beazley distinguished a class referring to the shape of the vase, and a group referring to the style of drawing.
[139] Frontisi-Ducroux 1991, 252, no. L 71.

Dionysos lies on a symposium couch.[140] On another fragment of a black-figure chous from the same period, Dionysos is depicted with Ariadne.[141] From the early fifth century BC comes a red-figure chous representing Dionysos as the god of vintage (Fig. 159).[142] He is seated on a folding stool, holding a kantharos in his right hand and a branch laden with wine grapes in his left. In front of him is a basket where satyr places the grapes.

Figure 157 (left). Black-figure chous, *c.* 500 BC.
Leiden, Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, inv. no. K94.9.20. BA 340841.

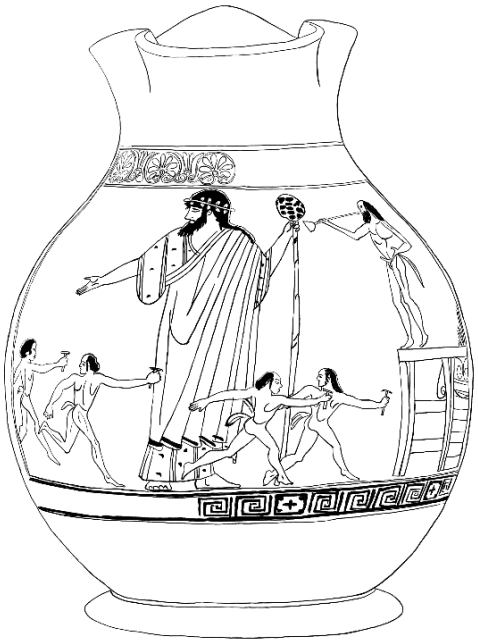
Figure 158 (middle). Black-figure chous, *c.* 500 BC.
Athen, National Archaeological Museum.

Figure 159 (right). Red-figure chous, 500–490 BC.
Thessaloniki, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 799. BA 202429.

On a chous in Berlin, Dionysos supervises the little satyrs racing in a torch relay, their contest initiated by satyr with a trumpet standing on a platform (Fig. 160). The depiction is related to later children's scenes and the Choes festival by depicting the little satyrs and the theme of the torch relay, often found later at the Choes. On choes from the second half of the fifth century BC, Dionysos is explicitly associated with choes and thus with the eponymous feast of Anthesteria. On a chous from the Athenian Agora, the god stands dressed in a chiton and a himation in his left hand, holding a thyrsos (Fig. 161). He holds a kantharos in front of him in his right hand, as if pouring from it into the chous, which stands below the kantharos. A similar scene is on a chous in the Villa Giulia (Fig. 162). The majestically standing god is also characterized by thyrsus and kantharos, from which he seems to be pouring into the chous standing on the ground. Beside Dionysos stands satyr with a chair. From beginning to end, Dionysos was a stranger in Greece. He came from afar, and a chair must be brought to him in order to settle him in his new location for a time.[143] The

[140] Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P6091. BA 31486.
[141] Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P15723. BA 31484.
[142] Zaphiropoulou 1970, 363.
[143] Isler-Kerenyi 2014, 142. For a list of similar scenes cf. Lissarrague 2013, 294–95.

chous standing on the ground in the middle of the scene emphasizes that the god came to Athens to attend the festival of Choes, with which vases of this shape were associated.



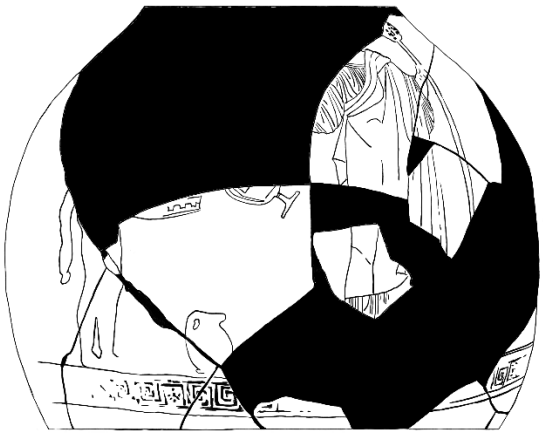


Figure 160 (left). Red-figure chous, *c.* 460 BC. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. no. 1962.33. BA 275288.

Figure 161 (right). Red-figure chous, 445–440 BC. Agora, Museum, inv. no. P5729. BA 213899.

Figure 162. Red-figure chous, 435–420 BC.
Rome, Museo nazionale di Villa Giulia, inv. no. 50511. BA 526.

Satyrs and maenads appear more often than Dionysos on choes and were associated with the festival of Choes before the god himself. The chous mentioned above in Ferrara from around 480 BC evidences this (Fig. 152). Even more closely associated with the Choes festival is a scene on a chous in the British Museum, painted sometime between 470 and 460 BC (Fig. 163). The depiction evokes the festival both thematically and in its comic character. A satyr with an animal skin over his shoulder swings a cane at a snake slithering up a tree with choes hanging from its branches. The depiction parodies the myth of Heracles and the Apples of the Hesperides. A chous dating from around the middle of the fifth century BC depicts a satyr at a miraculous spring of wine (Fig. 164).[144] He stands with a prepared drinking horn in his right hand and a chous in his left hand under a mouth of the fountain, from which a stream of wine, indicated by a red line, flows. The stream bends to fill the vase.

Figure 163 (left). Red-figure chous, 470–460 BC.
London, British Museum, inv. no. 1873,0820.361 (E539). BA 209570.

Figure 164 (right). Red-figure chous, *c.* 450 BC. Athens, National Museum, inv. no. 1225. BA 15989.

Satyr may also be bent over a chous as if irresistibly attracted by the scent of wine wafting from it (Fig. 165). On the Würzburg vase, satyr rides an ithyphallic donkey with a chous tied to his upraised hand (Fig. 166).[145] The donkey has the same taenia tied to its head as the satyr, so both are komasts. On a chous in London, satyr rides a fawn with a drinking horn in his raised right hand, sitting on it backwards, which was quite normal in his world of satyrs, where everything was the other way around (Fig. 167). The destination of his journey is also clear; the fawn has a chous tied around its neck.

144 Fountains of wine: Lissarrague 2013, 284.
145 Lissarrague 2013, 107–08.

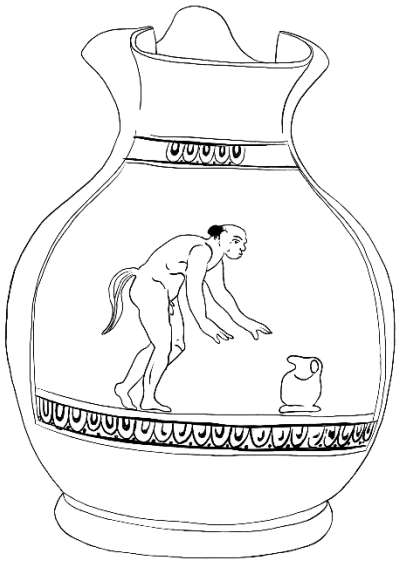


Figure 165. Red-figure chous, *c.* 430 BC. Manchester, University, inv. no. III.I.15. BA 16306.

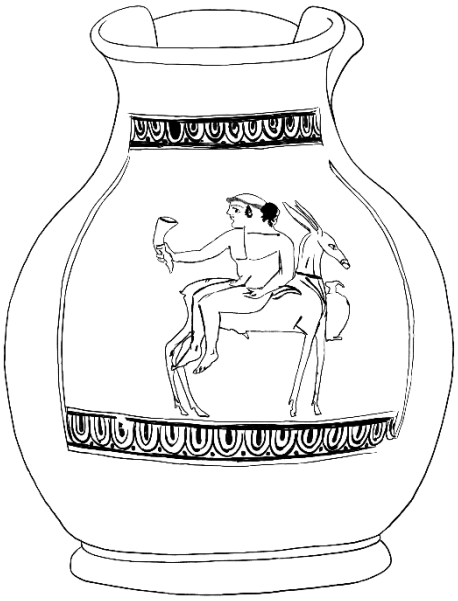


Figure 166 (left). Red-figure chous, 450–440 BC. Würzburg, Universität, inv. no. H5387. BA 6388.

Figure 167 (right). Red-figure chous, 420–400 BC.
London, British Museum, inv. no. 1894,0718.8 (E529). BA 16019.

Satyrs can be depicted on choes in erotic situations unrelated to the children's world. On a chous in Athens, a naked bald satyr offers a cock to a young man in a chiton, who raises his hand in fear and flees (Fig. 168**)**. It is not the counterpart of scenes with children and animals but of scenes of wooing boys, in which men bring them all sorts of gifts to please them, which was also sometimes quite explicitly depicted on older vases. By the second half of the fifth century BC, however, satyrs depicted on vases were no longer the fierce erotomaniacs we know from the older vases. The

characteristic of the satyrs' new image is that they sometimes appear clothed, making them indistinguishable at first sight from the Athenians.[146] The 'citizen satyr', engrossed in debate with the young man, differs from him only in having horse ears (Fig. 169). [147]

Figure 168 (left). Red-figure chous, *c.* 440 BC. London, British Museum, inv. no. 1882,0225.1 (E532). BA 3405

Figure 169 (right). Red-figure chous, second half of the fifth century BC. Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 1552 (CC 1298). BA 19893.

Satyrs about to rape a sleeping maenad appear in Athenian vase paintings in the mid-sixth century BC, and the theme was popular until the early fourth century BC.[148] By the time the theme appeared on the choes, it had radically changed. Whereas previously, satyrs were sexual predators who would hold maenad's hands so that she could not defend herself, rolling up her dress and spreading her legs, now they do not touch her and merely circle her. At the same time, the vase painters expose maenad's naked body much more, making her an infinitely more attractive erotic object. This unveiling is only an apparent paradox because the vase painters now tell a completely different story. Whereas earlier, they had detailed how satyrs could treat the maenad as they pleased, in the second half of the fifth century BC, the vase painters entrusted them with a new task. Satyrs are meant to make the viewer aware of how beautiful and desirable maenad is.[149]

On a chous in Moscow dating after the mid-fifth century BC, a naked bald satyr cautiously approaches a sleeping maenad with a tendril of ivy dangling limply in his right hand and a thyrsus in his left (Fig. 170). Maenad has fallen asleep on a wedge with her head thrown back, and her cloak has rolled down so that her chest is exposed,

[146] The satyr dressed as a maenad: chous, Athens, National Archaeological Museum inv. no. 1220, BA 7664. Cf. Surtees 2014, 284–285.
[147] Lissarrague 2013, 205–10.
[148] Osborne 1996.
[149] Osborne 2018, 196.

to which the satyr reaches out his hand, but only from a distance. The connection with the festival of Choes is due not only to the scene being on a chous but also to the fact that behind satyr is painted a garlanded chous standing on the ground. On the Oxford chous, maenad is asleep on a panther skin spread over a boulder covered with ivy, wearing an ivy wreath on her head (Fig. 171). She is completely naked, which explains the excited pose of satyr. Another satyr is cautiously stealing towards the half-naked sleeping maenad with her right arm raised to support her head (Fig. 172).

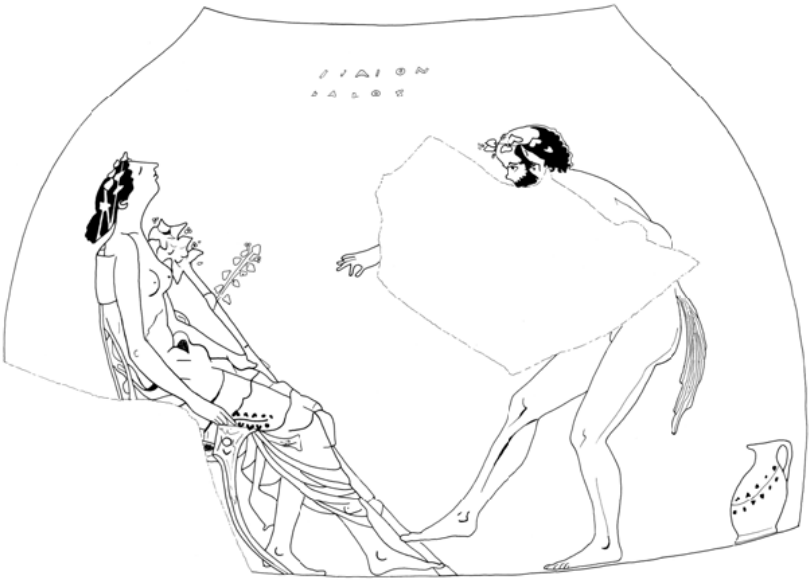


Figure 170. Red-figure chous fragment, 450–440 BC. Moscow, Pushkin Museum, inv. no. M 1360. BA 30688. After Heinemann 2016, fig. 320.

Figure 171 (left). Red-figure chous, *c.* 430 BC. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, inv. no. V534. BA 217069.

Figure 172 (right). Red-figure chous, *c.* 420 BC.
Frankfurt, Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte , inv. no. B 146. BA 5001.

Related to these scenes is a depiction on a chous from 430–420 BC in which four satyrs ambush a woman in a chiton going to fetch water with a hydria (Fig. 173).[150] The undulating terrain with vegetation indicates the natural setting. The scene is much more dynamic than that with the sleeping maenads, as the woman is spread wide as she escapes from satyrs, but this allowed the painter to show the graceful curves of her body looming beneath the chiton. The scene's drama is also heightened by the fact that the woman is in eye contact with her closest pursuer, to whom she turns her head as she flees. She thus lets the viewer know that she is well aware of the arousal her body has provoked in the satyrs who stare at her. There are four of them, and each is depicted in a different posture, expressing the same thing. The first leap up, bends forward and clasps his outstretched hands; the second stands up and points the finger at the woman, placing his other hand on the back of his head in a sign of trance; the third leans back from the woman's axis and raises both hands in the air; the fourth steps vigorously towards the woman and points at her, but at the same time touches his chin with his other hand, thus showing his impotence. None of these satyrs has an erect penis, which used to be their typical attribute.

Figure 173. Red-figure chous, 430–420 BC.
Athens, Ceramicus, inv. no. 4290. BA 2947. After Lissarrague 2013, fig. 68.

The depictions of satyrs circling a sleeping maenad or a woman fetching water were not intended for children but are closely related to the scenes depicting children celebrating the festival of Choes, which simultaneously appear on vases of the same type. As Heinemann pointed out, satyrs approached maenads as enthusiastically as children approached choes, cakes and animals.[151] The maenad in these scenes is not a victim of violence but a divine revelation, which was also the gift that children received at the Feast of Choes. Related to this feast is a scene on a krater from around 430 BC, in which Dionysos, seated on a chair, gives a drink of wine to a little satyr, called Komos (Fig. 174).[152] The little satyr drinks from Dionysos' kantharos, into which the wine is poured from an oinochoe by a woman standing nearby, identified by the inscription as Ariadne. Behind Dionysos is a maenad, identified as Tragoidia, holding

[150] Lissrrague 2013, 92; Heinemann 2016, 286–93.
[151] Heinemann 2016, 479–82.
[152] Lissarrague 2013, 35–36.

a thyrsos and a hare in her hand outstretched towards the satyr child. Thus, in the Dionysian setting, the satyr child who tasted wine for the first time and the pet she received on this occasion are depicted, much like the children at the Feast of Choes. Dionysos is an integral part of the human world; on festivals such as Anthesteria, the god enters the world of humans, and in the Dionysian world, what humans do on Anthesteria also has a counterpart.

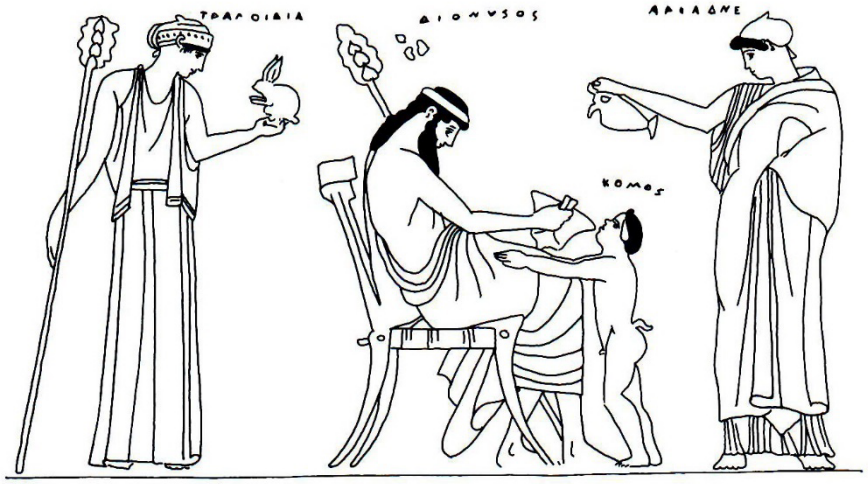


Figure 174. Krater, *c.* 430 BC.
Compiègne, Musée Vivenel, inv. no. 1025. BA 213708. After Lissarrague 2013, fig. 15.

Infant satyr made its first appearance in Athenian vase painting circa 480 BC. It was depicted standing on the back of an adult satyr who held it by both hands to keep it from falling.[153] This little satyr appeared on choes before the middle of the fifth century BC, also playing with an adult satyr, presumably his father, foreshadowing later depictions of children's games (Fig. 175). The satyr climbs on all fours, and the little satyr dances on his back, but he is now bald and bearded, holding a thyrsos in one hand and raising a chous in the other; his penis is larger than that of the satyr who carries him.[154] On a chous in Berlin from the mid-fifth century BC, a little satyr sits on a fawn fitted with a bridle, which a maenad with a thyrsos leads (Fig. 176).[155] The scene is analogous to scenes of children riding fawns on choes. Little satyrs may also be depicted rejoicing at the discovery of a festooned chous. One vase shows two little satyrs by two festooned choes standing on the ground, the left one bending down to the vase, the right one standing up and expressing his joy with his arms outstretched and his head thrown back, holding a wreath in his forward outstretched hand over the vases (Fig. 177). The satyr has a wreath of flowers drawn in white on his head, and a similar wreath is on the head of a satyr approaching a chous on a vase in Würzburg (Fig. 178).

[153] Amphora, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 98.882. BA 202711.
[154] Lissarrague 2013, 65.
[155] Maenad with a thyrsus on which a chus is suspended: chous, *c.* 450 BC, Athens, Ceramicus, inv. no. 7499. BA 9049597.

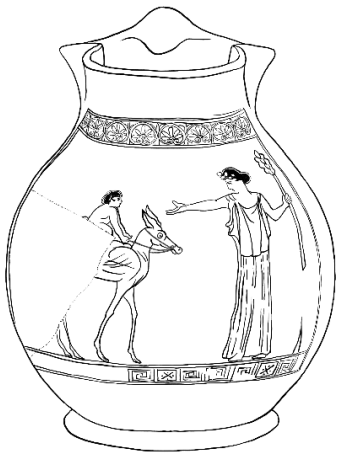


Figure 175 (left). Red-figure chous, *c.* 460 BC. Athens, National Museum, inv. no. 12139. BA 212130.

Figure 176 (right). Red-figure chous, *c.* 450 BC. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. no. V.I. 3242. BA 275902.

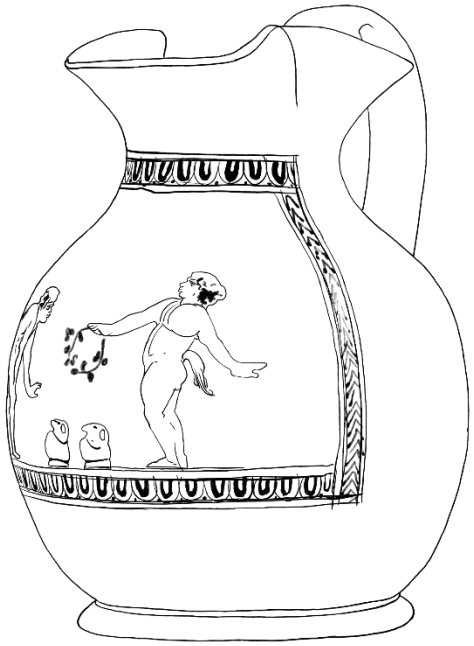


Figure 177 (left). Red-figure chous, *c.* 420 BC.
London, British Museum, inv. no. 1864,1007.83. BA 16402.

Figure 178 (right). Red-figure chous, *c.* 420 BC. Würzburg, Universität, inv. no. L601. BA 9602.

Infant satyrs can receive choes from maenads (Fig. 179). On another chous, a satyr is the giver (Fig. 180). He serves rhyton and streptos cake to a satyr toddler, who, like the adult satyr, is bald; by their comic baldness, both father and son are defined as the opposite of humans. The toddler lounges on an animal skin laid on a rock like a symposium couch. While in the human world, the symposiasts are served by young servants, in the inverted world of the satyrs, the elder serves the younger. On the Leipzig chous is a scene from a satyr household - on the left is a maenad with a barbiton; in the middle, a satyr is bending down to a small satyr; on the right, another

maenad is putting on a himation, behind her is a thyrsos (Fig. 181). The names attached move the scene to the general level. Above the satyr bending down to the small satyr is Kissos (Ivy); the dressing maenad is called Tragoidia. On a fragment in the museum at the Athenian Agora, the satyr brings a table of treats, fruits, and a conical-shaped cookie, the pyramis (Fig. 182).

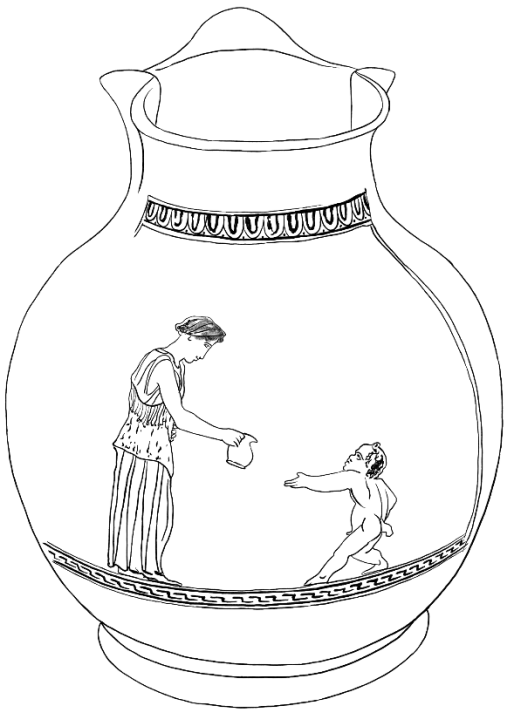


Figure 179 (left). Red-figure chous, 440–430 BC. Atlanta (GA),
Emory University, Michael C. Carlos Museum, inv. no. 2001.1.1. BA 9029555.

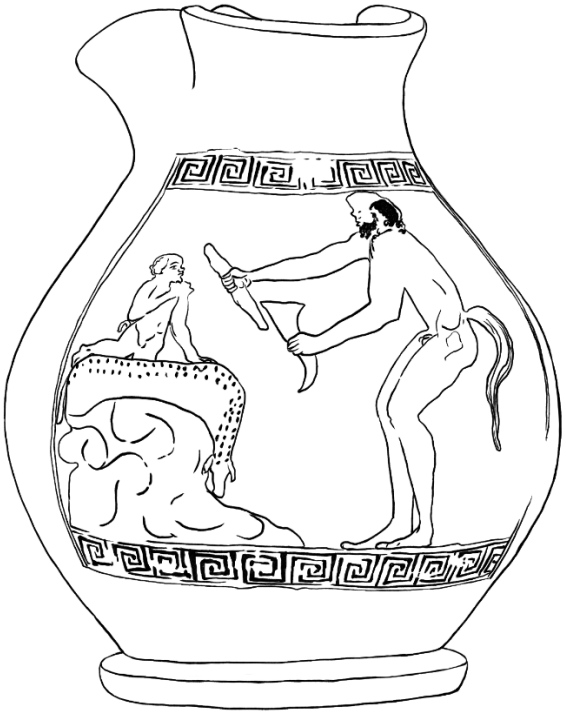


Figure 180 (right). Red-figure chous, 460–450 BC.
Athens, Museum for Cycladic and Archaic Art, inv. no. 751. BA 15413.

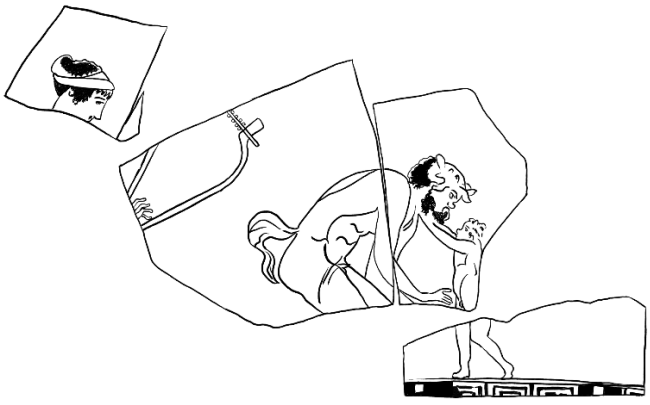


Figure 181 (left). Red-figure chous fragment, last quarter of the fifth century.
Leipzig, Universität, inv. no. T727. BA 217070.

Figure 182 (right). Red-figure chous fragment, late fifth century BC.
Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P16914. BA 16399.

On a now-lost chous from the early fourth century BC, infant Dionysos is depicted celebrating the Feast of Choes (Fig. 183).[156] He is naked, with long hair and a string of amulets across his chest. He is seated on a skin like on a throne and extends his hand to a woman in a long dress who hands him a grape of wine; in the other hand, he holds an obelias cake. Behind him stands another woman, handing Dionysos a tray of delicacies; she holds an obelias cake in her other hand. To the left is an altar emphasising the festive atmosphere of the scene.

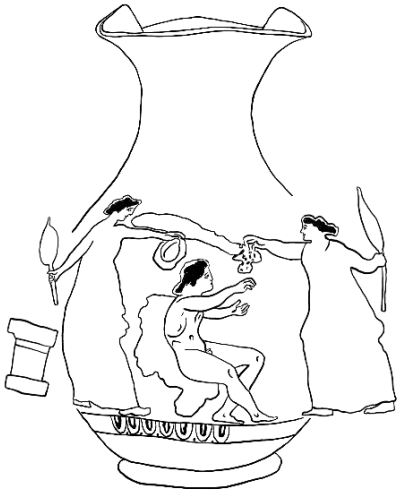


Figure 183. Red-figure chous, 400–380 BC.
Once Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. no. V.I. 4982/31. BA 230899.

Figure 184–185. Red-figure chous, early fourth century BC.
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 06.1021.183. BA 15851. Public domain.

[156] Heinemann 2016, 282.

The Dionysian depictions on choes continued in the fourth century BC when they gradually displaced the children's depictions altogether. On one of the choes in New York, Dionysos, lying on a couch under a vine, is approached by two komasts, one with a torch and the other with a chous, proving the connection with the Choes festival. The god faces the left and greets the torch-bearing komast with an upraised hand, bringing him a half-naked girl, presumably Ariadne (Fig. 184–185). The following episode is on another chous; the bride is seated beside Dionysos (Fig. 186).

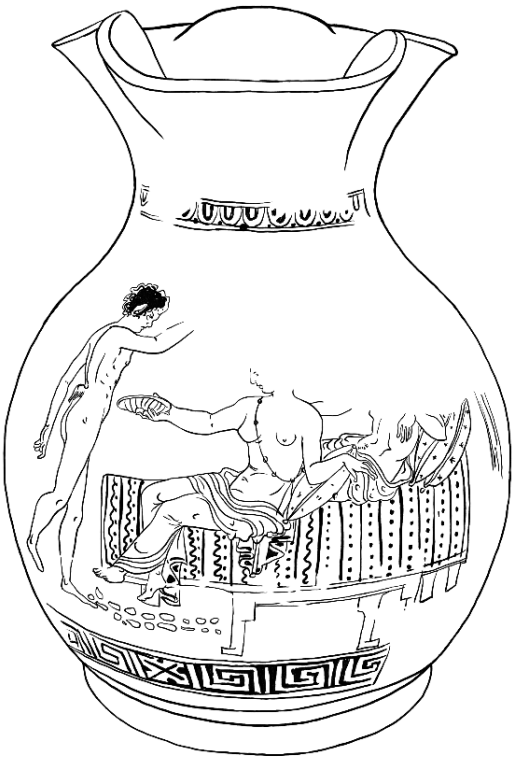


Figure 186 (left). Red-figure chous, fourth century BC.
Brindisi, Museo Archeologico Provinciale. BA 46016.

Figure 187 (right). Red-figure chous, *c.* 350 BC.
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 25.190. BA 503. Public domain.

The atmosphere of the preparations for the Dionysian procession is evoked by the often reproduced chous in New York (Fig. 187). Dionysos is seated in a chair with a back, holds a thyrsos, and looks back at a woman standing next to him, who has just revealed herself. The inscription identifies the naked woman as Pompe, the personification of the procession. Her attribute, a three-horned processional basket, stands at her feet. Next to Pompe, Eros is depicted tying his shoe, indicating that he is preparing for the procession.

The world of Dionysos and the world of men were connected, but they were not two parallel worlds, a point emphasized by satyrs and maenads, who ignored human conventions and taboos. This difference was, after all, the reason for their immense popularity in vase painting. The Athenians could never get enough of the

sight of satyrs and maenads, who did things humans cannot or will not do but love to look at. Around 450 BC, there was an important change and satyr children started appearing alongside adult satyrs. The satyrs, who used to wear animal skins, started wearing himations, settled down, formed families, and celebrated with their children the Choes festival. Unlike human children who had to search for their treats, satyr and maenad provided their children with treats. It is still unclear why human parents did not do the same, but satyrs and maenads were depicted as being beyond conventional human norms.

ATHENIAN CITIZENS

Komos appears on choes as early as *c.* 530 BC; in the centre is a young man with ivy tendrils wearing a carefully arranged himation, and a flute player wearing a chiton and himation; the solemnly dressed couple is flanked by two naked dancing komasts (Fig. 188). From around 500 BC, feasting Athenians and anything related to the symposium and komos began commonly depicted on choes alongside Dionysian themes. These vase paintings demonstrate that the feasting children on choes from the second half of the fifth century BC are part of the imagery, whose tradition goes back to the sixth century BC.

Figure 188. Black-figure chous, *c.* 530 BC.
Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, inv. no. AN1965.122. BA 310472. After Vickers 1982, fig. 20.

A fragment of a chous from the Athenian Agora shows a wine shop. On the left, a row of amphorae is in racks. In front of it stands a seller, a man in a loincloth, holding a chous and leaning towards the amphora (Fig. 189).[157] To the right of this amphora are the preserved feet of a boy, presumably a customer. It was, therefore, not a feaster but an enslaved person sent to buy wine, which the merchant filled into his chous. On another chous fragment from the Agora, two young men are walking, the first hunched over because he carries a festooned amphora on his back and holds an oinochoe in his right hand; the second is dancing before him (Fig. 190). The dancing figure proves that this is not a scene from the life of the wine merchants but a komos.

Figure 189 (left). Red-figure chous, the second quarter of the fifth century BC.
Agora Museum, inv. no. P104408. BA 15988.

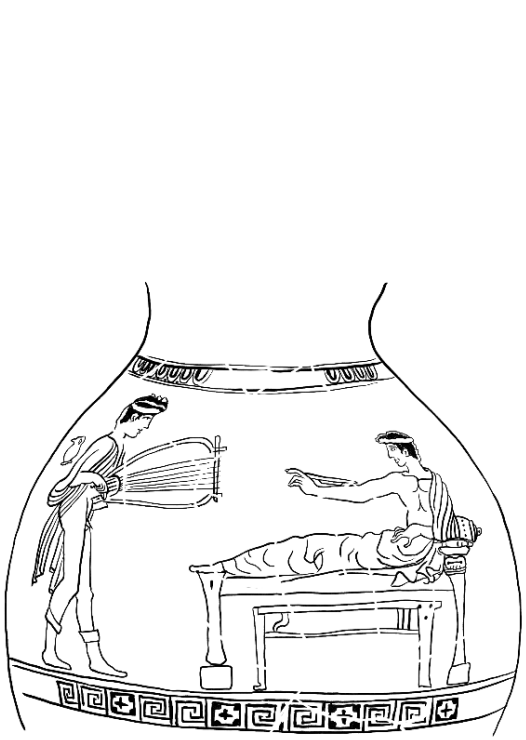
Figure 190 (right). Red-figure chous fragment, *c.* 490 BC.
Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P25965. BA 202430.

On the black-figure chous in Adria, two bearded symposiasts recline on couches; in the background are two baskets in which they have brought food (Fig. 191). On a red-figure chous, a young feaster lies on a couch, wearing a taenia on his head (Fig. 192). The feaster on the right holds a cup by the handle as it was held in a game called kottabos, a favourite pastime at symposia; the game consisted of throwing the dregs of the wine at a target. A young man approaches the feaster with a barbiton in his hand, wearing a taenia on his head, but is about to make a komos or is returning from one because he is wearing shoes. These were worn by the komasts so that they would not get their feet dirty while wandering the winding streets of Athens at night and could then lie back down on the couches when they returned to the symposion. Behind the young man is a chous in the background, depicted obliquely, as if hanging on a wall. Its inclusion suggests that the scene is related to the festival of Choes.

There is a similar scene with a feaster on a chous in Athens; a young man is depicted on a couch with a taenia and wreath on his head, listening to the harp being played (Fig. 193). A harpist, draped in a chiton and himation, is seated with her instrument by the couch, but she is completely absorbed in her playing, as indicated by her drooping head. The symposiast holds the cup in his lowered hand, as it was held during the kottabos' playing. In both scenes, the empty food tables in front of the couches show the symposion ending.

[157] Williams 2018.

Figure 191. Black-figure chous, 490–480 BC.
Adria, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 22786. BA 45154.



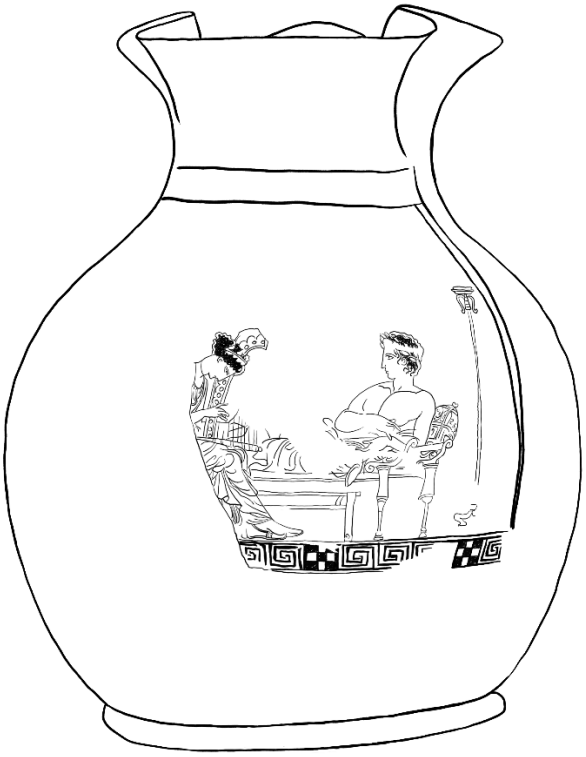


Figure 192 (left). Red-figure chous, 460 BC. Paris, art market. BA 206201.

Figure 193 (right). Red-figure chous, 430–425 BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 15308. BA 216953.

A narrative scene with several feasters, where the play in kottabos is also hinted at, is on a fragmentary chous in Oxford (Fig. 194). It shows a kottabos stand with hanging paraphernalia for visiting the gymnasium, aryballos and strigilis. The feasters are entertained by a naked dancer with a helmet on her head and two shields, a subject we know from only two vases.[158] Xenophon wrote of the dance with two shields used to create the illusion of a fight between two combatants and for spectacular sound effects.[159] A naked, armed dancer, also wearing only a helmet, is found on a chous in Vienna (Fig. 195). Holding a shield in one hand and a spear in the other, she runs towards a man wrapped in a cloak, who watches her leaning on a cane. On top, between the two figures, is an unidentified object, perhaps a piece of meat.

On a fragment of chous from the Athenian Agora from the late fifth century BC, the scene is set in the interior where a festive feast is prepared (Fig. 196). On the left is a young man with his foot propped against a box, holding an olive branch with fruit, a naked lyre player standing next to him, another naked young man sitting on a stool with a crumpled cloak on it, a young man bent at his feet, and an empty lamp stand behind them. To the right, the scene closes with a woman approaching with a fruit tray, turning backwards. On a chous in Ferrara from the same period, the central figures are two naked young men, one dancing with a wine bellow, the other with two sticks (Fig. 197). The dancing is accompanied by a woman seated on a couch with a lamp beside it, and in front of the couch is a table with two festooned choes, obviously belonging to the dancers. Speaking names are attached to the figures; the flute player is called Thirsty, perhaps because she was a slave and had to play nonstop. The dancer with the bellows is called Proper, which means this is the correct way to celebrate Choes.

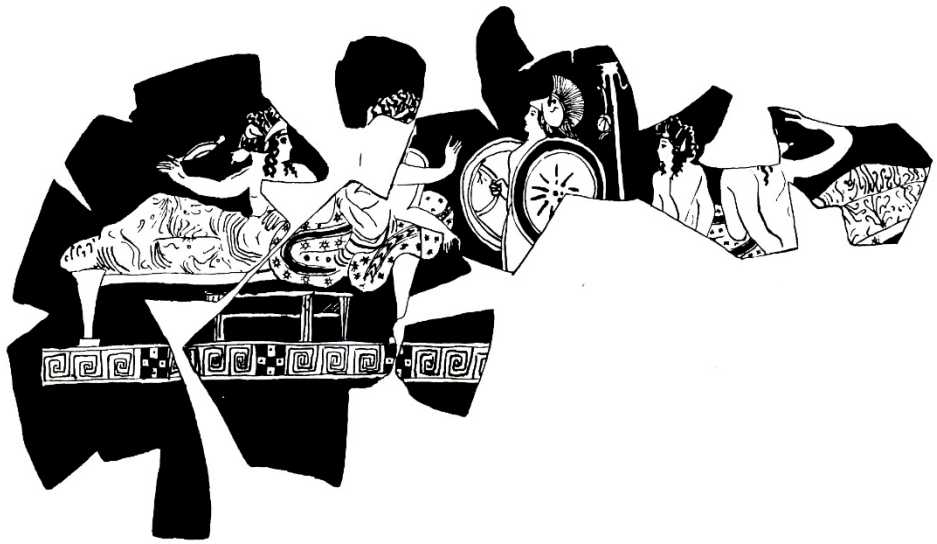


Figure 194. Red-figure chous fragment, 420–410 BC.
Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, inv. no. 1966.877. BA 15332. After Delvaud-Roux 1993 no. 56.

158 Delvaud-Roux 1993 nos. 47 and 56.
159 Xen. *an.* VI, 1, 9.

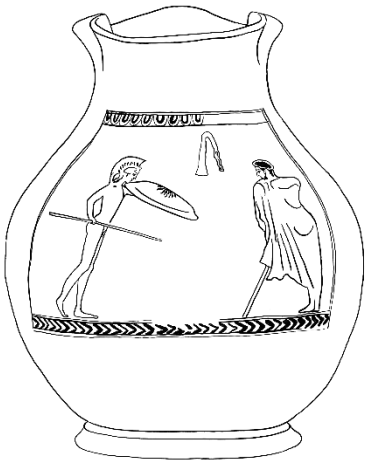


Figure 195. Red-figure chous, *c.* 440 BC.
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. no. IV1043. BA 216045.

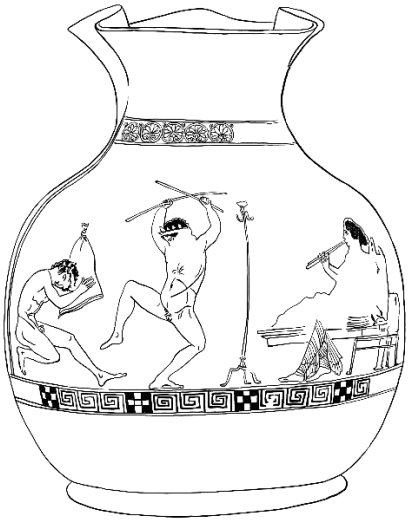


Figure 196 (left). Red-figure chous fragment, *c.* 410 BC.
Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P9527. BA 15822.

Figure 197 (right). Red-figure chous, *c.* 410 BC.
Ferrara, Museo Nazionale di Spina, inv. no. 4776. BA 220504.

A chous in Berlin depicts a woman playing kottabos, which may have been a cutout from a symposium depiction showing a stand used for this game (Fig. 198).[160] The woman is seated in a carefully arranged chiton and himation, her left arm resting comfortably on the back of a chair, her feet resting on a low footstool. In the variant of the game of kottabos shown on this vase, the throw was made on a discus loosely placed on top of the stand. The aim was to knock it down so that its impact would make the large disc in the centre of the stand ring as loudly as possible. Two vessels

[160] Oakley 1990, pls. 76B–C, 78B, fig. 12C, no. 99.

near the rack were not there by accident; another game variation involved the player striking the vessel's surface. The larger vessel is made of bronze, with a drooping handle, and a large chous is behind it so that the scene may have been related to the festival of Choes. A naked boy stands at the stand, ladle in hand, looking up, like the woman, to the disc on the stand. The boy is wearing a wreath on his head, but his placement in the scene and upright posture indicate that he is probably a slave of the seated woman.

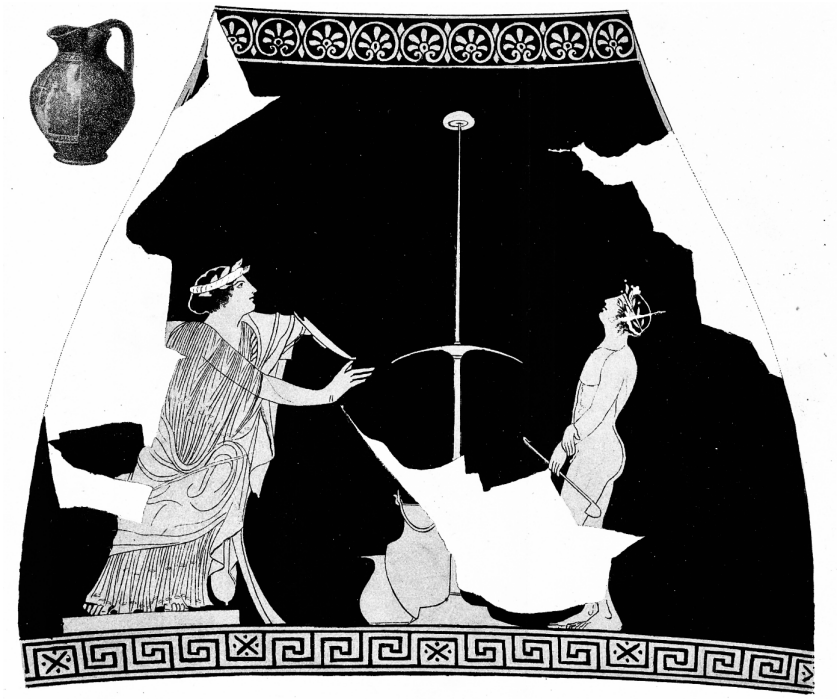


Figure 198. Red-figure chous, *c.* 430 BC.
Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. no. F2416. BA 214279. After Annali dell'Istituto di Correspondenza Archeologica 1876, pl. M.

On a chous in Urbana-Champaign are komasts; on the left is a man playing the flute, and in front of him walks a young man with a cloak over his shoulders, a chous in his right hand and a cane in his left (Fig. 199). The fact that the scene is on the chous suggests a possible connection of the scene to the Choes Feast. The connection with the festival is more direct in the scene on a chous in the Japanese collection (Fig. 200). In this scene, a komast has a chous suspended on his left arm, which he points backwards. He holds a diaulos in his left hand, over which is draped a cloak, and on his feet are high boots, one of the attributes of the komast. A pelike in Basel shows a bearded man with a cloak over his shoulders with a barbiton on which he has a chous suspended (Fig. 201).[161] On the late sixth-century stamnos in Brussels, a symposion is on one side, and the preparation of wine is depicted on the other. In the centre is a lebes, two men pouring wine and water into it from amphorae, and on the ground are two pouring jugs, one of which is a chous.[162]

[161] Young man with barbiton on which a chous is suspended, in the background a sponge and strigilis: *c.* 450 BC, Munich, Antikensammlungen , inv. no. 2750 (J754), Hoorn 1951 fig. 110.
[162] Brussels, Musée royaux, inv. no. A717. BA 200102.

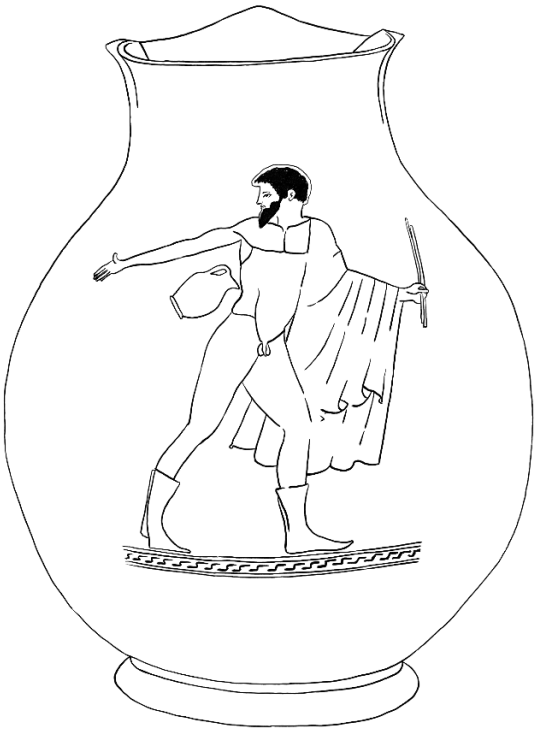


Figure 199 (left). Red-figure chous, *c.* 475 BC.
Champaign-Urbana (IL), Krannert Art Museum, inv. no. 70.8.6. BA 5158.

Figure 200 (right). Red-figure chous, 480–470. Kurashiki, Ninagawa Museum. BA 5929.

Figure 201. Red-figure pelike, 480–470 BC.
Basel, Antikenmuseum und Sammlung Ludwig, inv. no. BS1906.301. BA 202581.

The role of the chous is further emphasized on a chous at Würzburg, where Nike flies in front of a komast with her left hand raised as if showing him the way while carrying a festooned chous in her right hand (Fig. 202).[163] The chous may indicate that the komast is a winner of the Choes competition. The komast is wearing a taenia on his head, playing the barbiton while pressing a cup of wine to his chest with his other hand. The barbiton was a stringed instrument associated with poetry, so perhaps the man was reciting verses about wine.[164] A dog is part of the procession, as in scenes with child komasts on choes. On a chous from the Agora, Nike flies with a chous, ribbon, and branch, but the context of victory is not specified in this scene (Fig. 203).

Figure 202 (left). Red-figure chous, 460–450 BC, Würzburg, Universität, inv. no. H4937. BA 211488.

Figure 203 (right). Red-figure chous, 470–469 BC. Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P20076. BA 207680.

On some choes, the komos is parodied, in line with the mischievous atmosphere of the Choes holiday.[165] On a chous in New York, a komast walks with a chous on his back; he wears an ivy wreath on his head, a cloak over his shoulder, and high boots on his feet (Fig. 204). His head tilted back indicates that he plays the barbiton while singing. The connection with the festival of Choes is suggested not only by the chous on which the scene is painted but also by the painted chous that the komast carries on his back. In ancient Greece, it was common for men to appear naked during sporting contests or komos. However, it was essential to prevent the foreskin from slipping and revealing the glans, which would be considered shameful. To avoid such accidents, men would tie their foreskin with a string called kynodesme. According to the standards of the time, the komast's appearance in the painting is considered perfect, as he had carefully groomed hair and beard and his kynodesme was securely tied.[166]

[163] Bron 2007.
[164] Bundrick 2005, 21–25.
[165] Thompson 2010.
[166] Hodges 2001; Heinemann 2016, 137–48.

His opposite, the dancing dwarf depicted before him with dishevelled hair and an unkempt beard, is not only small but has a disproportionately large penis. However, this scene does not indicate that the Athenian komast could not be caricatured, as the chous in Dresden proves (Fig. 205). He is leaning on a cane and raises a skyphos in front of him; the festooned chous is on the ground, with a symposium basket of food in the background.

Figure 204. Red-figure chous, *c.* 450 BC, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 1982.474. BA 9023352. Public domain.

Figure 205. Red-figure chous, 460–450 BC.
Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, inv. no. ZV1827. BA 16395.

The series of choes with adult komasts continued in the last three decades of the fifth century BC when depictions of celebrating children predominated on vases of this shape. Thus, both child komasts and their adult counterparts appear on choes in parallel. On a chous in Bodrum, there are two young komasts with wreaths on their heads and cloaks over their shoulders, the left one playing the diaulos, the right holding a cane and dancing (Fig. 206).[167] There is a chous on the ground between the komasts, an altar on the right, and a garlanded chous on top of it; the scene thus relates to the festival of Choes and emphasizes the connection of these scenes to the cult. A similar scene is found on a chous in Berlin, on which a naked komast plays the lyre, and his companion with a cloak over his hands dances while raising a garlanded chous (Fig. 207). Another chous decorated with a horizontal stripe stands to the right on an altar or rock. A fragment in the Agora museum shows a komast with a cane and a komast carrying a festooned chous on his shoulder (Fig. 208). On a special kind of polychrome choes without a glaze, there is a caricature of a komast with a cane, high boots, and a chous hanging on his arm (Fig. 209).

[167] Bron 2003a, fig. 21,1.

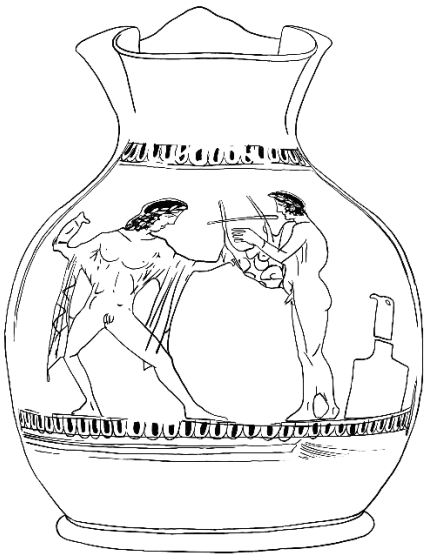


Figure 206 (left). Red-figure chous, third quarter of the fifth century BC.
Bodrum, Museum, inv. no. 4240.

Figure 207 (right). Red-figure chous, 430–420 BC.
Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. no. V. I. 3122. BA 15818.

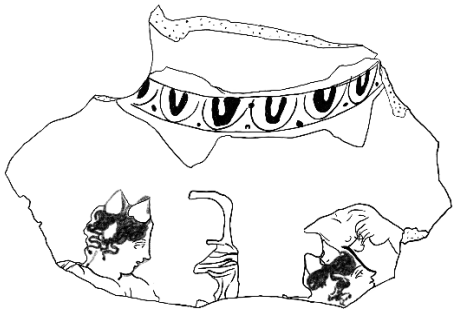


Figure 208 (left). Red-figure chous, *c.* 420 BC. Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P 23741. BA 22383.

Figure 209 (right). Polychrome chous, *c.* 400 BC. Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P23900. BA 9026461.

One chous in Munich shows a running komast with a lit torch, with a chous on the ground behind him (Fig. 210). A similar scene is on a chous in Brussels, where a komast is running with a lit torch and holding a chous in his outstretched hand; the vase can also be associated with the festival of Choes (Fig. 211). The scene is linked to the children's scenes by a dog running behind the komast. One chous in Athens shows three komasts, a flute player, a tympanum player, and a young man with a torch. On the ground is a festooned chous (Fig. 212).[168] The ages of these only cursorily sketched youths cannot be accurately determined, so the absence of amulets and children's toys points to adult komasts.

[168] Lonsdale 1993 fig. 17.

Figure 210 (left). Red-figure chous, 410–400 BC. Munich, Antikensammlungen, inv. no. 7502. BA 12478

Figure 211 (right). Red-figure chous, 410–400 BC. Brussels, Musées Royaux, inv. no. A906. BA 12119.

Figure 212. Red-figure chous, *c.* 420 BC. Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 1222.

Adult komasts were also encountered on choes in the fourth century BC when women usually accompanied them. One chous in London shows a naked komast with a tympanum and a woman with a torch and chous, wearing a chiton cheirodotos, the usual female dress of the time (Fig. 213). One chous in the Hermitage shows a komast with a torch and another with a festooned chous, to which a Maltese dog jumps (Fig. 214). We know dogs from scenes of children playing from the second half of the fifth century BC. In the fourth century BC, children's scenes and scenes with adult komasts merged.

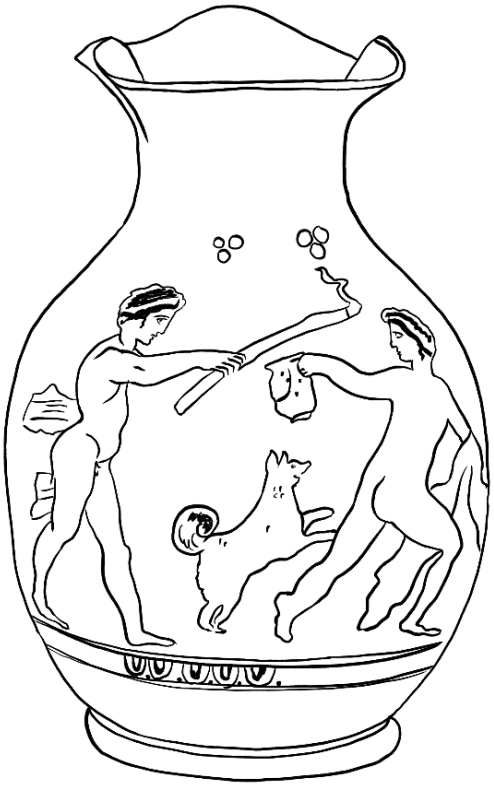


Figure 213 (left). Red-figure chous, *c.* 350 BC. London, British Museum, inv. no. E554. BA 230900.

Figure 214 (right). Red-figure chous, fourth century BC.
St. Petersburg, Hermitage, inv. no. ST2257. BA 16139.

On several choes, vase painters gave adult komasts child carts, with which they certainly did not set out on drunken nocturnal revels. On the Zurich chous, there is a woman with a phiale in the middle and, on the sides, a komast with a chous and another with a child's cart, which he lifts by the pole, as we know from scenes with children on choes (Fig. 215). A chous in Moscow shows two naked komasts, the first with a tympanum, walking towards a clothed woman with something in her hand, perhaps a cake, while to the right sits a naked young man with a baby cart beside him (Fig. 216).

On one of the choes in New York, there is clear evidence of the mingling of adult and child komos (Fig. 217). The procession is brought to a close by a young man with a tympanum, which is the typical musical instrument of the wild komos. In front of him, a young man walks, dressed in the usual sloppy clothing of the komos. He has a cloak thrown over his arm, and he is turning backward while holding out a garlanded chous to a toddler, who extends his hand to take it. The parade of the komasts took place at night, and it is unlikely that any toddler could participate in a night revel. It is important to note that drunken komasts never give children choes. The scene does not depict an actual situation but rather emphasizes that the Feast of Choes is for both adults and children.

Figure 215 (left). Red-figure chous, fourth century BC. Zurich, Universität, inv. no. 2503. BA 1499.

Figure 216 (right). Red-figure chous, fourth century BC.
Moscow, Pushkin Museum, inv. no. II1B1100. BA 9008445.

Figure 217. Red-figure chous, early fourth century BC.
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 06.1021. BA 230893. Public domain.

Sporting competitions appear on choes at the same time as adult feasting, around 500 BC.[169] As mentioned above, the sporting competition was also echoed in the depictions of children on choes, among whom we find two boxers (Fig. 54). The choice was probably not because children prefer to play boxing but because boxing children look comical. The selection of disciplines with youngsters playing sports on choes should also have appealed to potential buyers. Of the Greek pentathlon, running and wrestling can be found, and among the remaining disciplines, jumping is the most frequently encountered. A jumper in the starting position - bending forward with arms outstretched and knees bent - is often depicted (Fig. 218). A column marking the starting line may be next to a jumper (Fig. 219). The starting position of the young men had a symbolic meaning as a metaphor for the leap of life. This interpretation is perhaps indicated by a scene where Eros is depicted next to a jumper ready to leap, with a staff of the referee as his attribute (Fig. 220). Evocations of adult boys' sporting competitions continued on choes until the late fifth century BC when a depiction of a jumper with weights and a naked youth with two spears was created (Fig. 221). In the centre stands a referee or instructor in a himation with a staff, which was his attribute. A shaggy dog looks up to a javelin thrower, linking the scene to the childhood imagery prevalent on choes at the time.

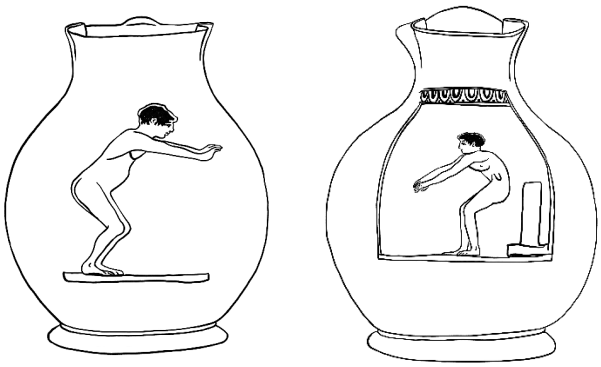


Figure 218 (left). Red-figure chous, 480–470 BC.
New Haven (CT), Yale University, inv. no. 1913.141. BA 15853.

Figure 219 (right). Red-figure chous, second quarter of the fifth century BC.
Huntington, Hambuechen. BA 211524.

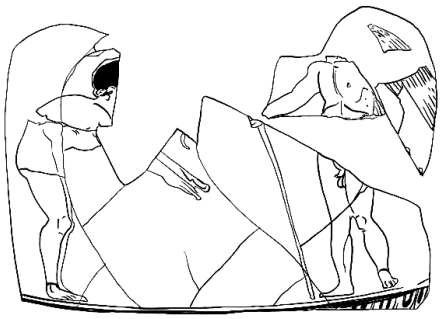


Figure 220. Red-figure chous fragment, late fifth century BC.
Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P24147. BA 22423

[169] Athlete with discus and athlete with jump weights: chous, art market (New York, Christie's). BA 9019243. Cf. Conlisk-Solomon 1994.

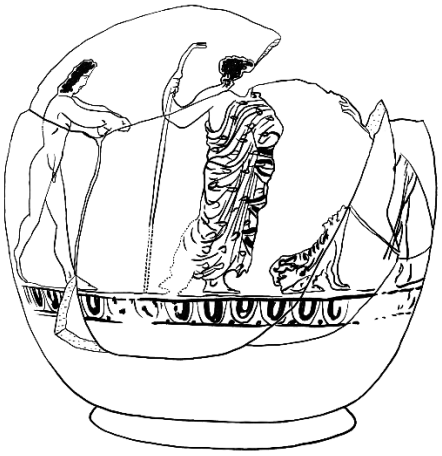


Figure 221. Red-figure chous, *c.* 400 BC. Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P18800. BA 22428.

Torch rice may have been part of the sporting events at the Anthesteria, which would explain why this particular sport is encountered on several choes.[170] A chous from the Athenian Agora depicts a naked runner bending over with a torch. In front of him lies a partially preserved goalpost where the athlete was supposed to place his torch (Fig. 222).[171] A hydria, likely the prize for the winner, is on the ground near the finishing post.[172] Behind the competitor is the starting post, and next to it is a figure in a himation with a staff, probably a referee. Another vase from the same collection shows runners passing the torch (Fig. 223). On a fourth century BC chous, on the right, is a naked athlete holding a torch at an altar, with Nike standing by him (Fig. 224). Behind Nike is a naked athlete holding an aryballos and strigil.

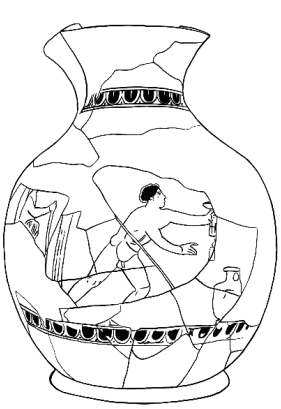


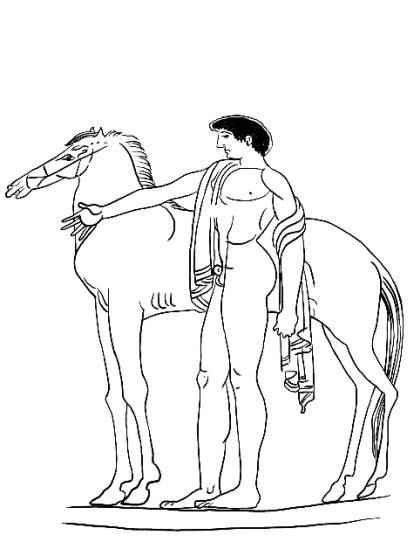
Figure 222 (left). Red-figure chous, late fifth century BC.
Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P10675. BA 15836.

Figure 223 (right). Red-figure chous, late fifth century BC.
Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P28245. BA 29545.

[170] Torch race: Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P10675 and P28245; Rome, Museo nazionale di Villa Giulia (Painter of Munich 2335).
[171] Corbett 1949, 315–16.
[172] Musical competition with Nike sitting on a hydria: chous, late fifth century BC, Munich, Antikensammlungen, inv. no. 2471. BA 220592 .

Figure 224. Red-figure chous, fourth century BC. Munich, Preyss. BA 20222.

We also repeatedly encounter equestrian sports on choes. On a chous in the art market, a young man with a cloak over his shoulders stands by a horse and reaches out his hand to take hold of the reins of its bridle (Fig. 225). He is not a slave caring for the horse but a member of the elite, as indicated by the careful grooming of his hair and kynodesme. A chous from the Athenian Agora museum shows a young man walking away from a standing horse, the taenia on his head indicating that the race is over and the young man has won (Fig. 226). This series also continues beyond the mid-fifth century BC; on a chous in Oxford, two horses pull a chariot, a charioteer has a long chiton and a scaly cassock, and a male figure in a himation stands beside him (Fig. 227). On a chous in the British Museum, a finishing post is behind the chariot pulled by two horses (Fig. 228).



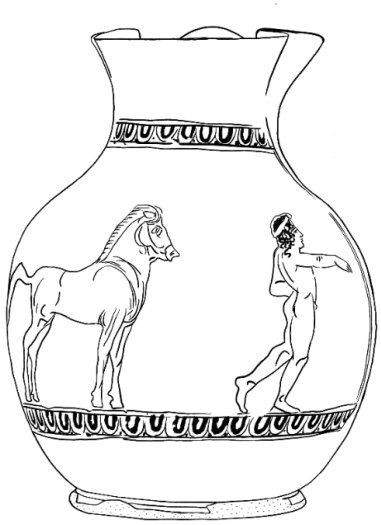


Figure 225 (left). Red-figure chous, second quarter of the fifth century BC. New York, market (Christie's). BA 211484.

Figure 226 (right). Red-figure chous, *c.* 400 BC. Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P23850. BA 46560.

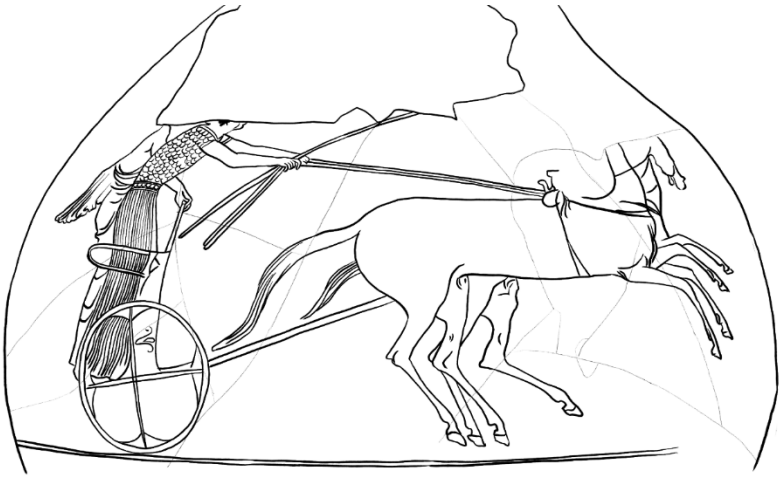


Figure 227 (left). Red-figure chous, third quarter of the fifth century BC.
Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, inv. no. 1945.1. BA 20207.

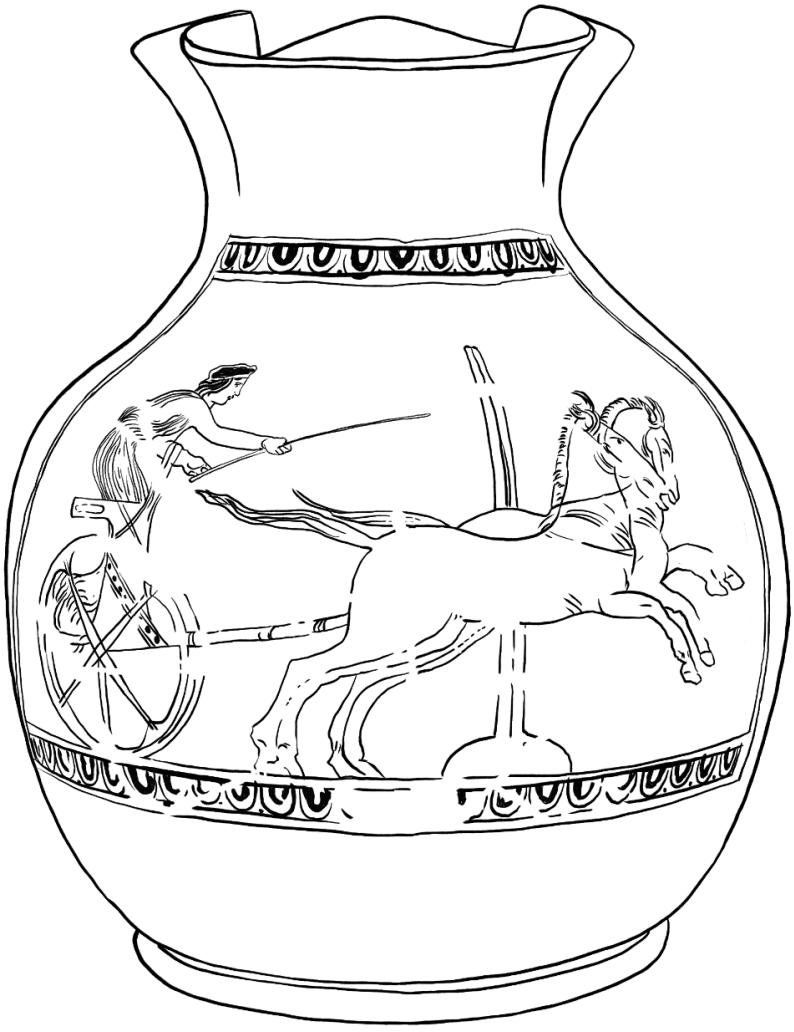


Figure 228 (right). Red-figure chous, 420–410 BC.
London, British Museum, inv. no. 1928,0519.1. BA 5283.

On a chous in Munich, three horsemen, adorned in elaborate attire, ride horses with panther-skin caparisons (Fig. 229). In a display of their prowess, they throw spears at a target while in motion. The target, a shield suspended on a pole, serves as their mark. The scene captures the leftmost horseman in the midst of preparing to throw his spear, the middle one having successfully hit the target, and the rightmost horseman, unfortunately, missing. The victor is adorned with a crown by Nike. A prize, a Panathenaic amphora bearing a representation of the rider, is displayed on a post behind him. A similar chous from the same period in Boston features a horseback race between two young men with a post on the left side (Fig. 230).

Figure 229. Red-figure chous, *c.* 410 BC.
Munich, Antikensammlungen, inv. no. S71. BA 260014. Wikimedia Commons (User:Bibi Saint-Pol).
Public domain.

Figure 230. Red-figure chous fragment, *c.* 410 BC.
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 13.171. BA 220594.

Races of riders on horses and horse-drawn chariots were among the earliest themes found on Athenian vases, but they were rarely encountered after 500 BC. This change is most striking on the amphorae that served as prizes in the Panathenaic games. On the oldest surviving Panathenaic amphora from around 560 BC, there is a chariot race, which appears again and again afterwards, only to disappear from these vases for a time around 470 BC and reappear at the end of the fifth century.[173] However, the horse riders did not stop competing in the Panathenaic Games. Equestrian scenes are attested on choes even in the second and third quarter of the fifth century BC. The racing of young men on choes was probably related to scenes of children playing with carts in preparation for the actual race. Chariot races may have been another attraction of the Anthesteria, or the festival of Choes, alongside torch races. The actual chariot races would explain why this sport is so often remembered on choes and why we see its resonance in children's plays.

The theme of komos and horse racing intertwining is found on a chous in Boston, where three young men are characterized as komasts by their rapid movements, cloaks thrown casually over their shoulders, and typical attributes (Fig. 231). The left has a lyre, the middle a torch, and the right a cane, but the middle rides a horse, which is unknown from the depiction of komos and would not be practically possible. The scene must be understood as a poetic evocation of the festivities of Anthesteria; the vase painter combined the horse race and the nightly komos in one scene because these were probably the main distinctive aspects of this festival.[174]

[173] Rider on the Panathenaic amphora: 425–475 BC, Athens, Ceramicus, inv. no. PA568. BA 45397. Cf. Hamilton 1996.
[174] Schmidt 2005, 196–97.

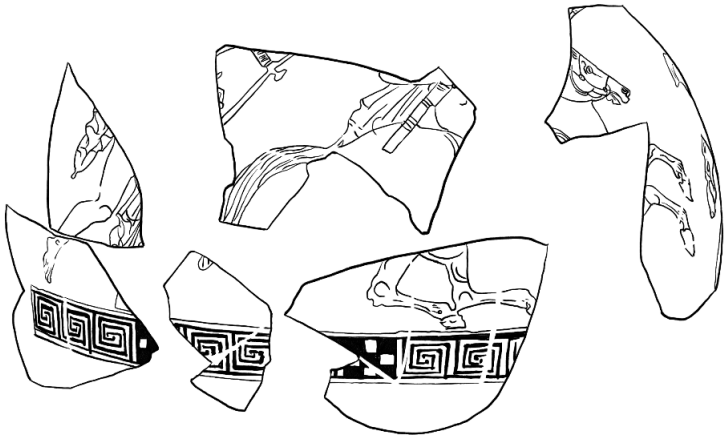
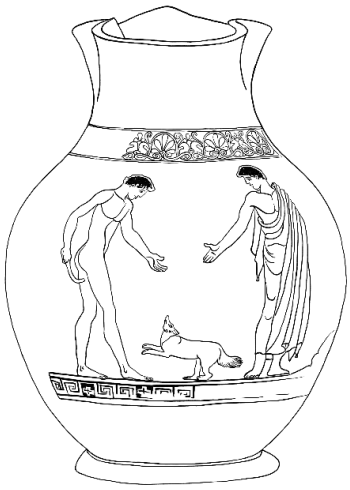


Figure 231. Red-figure chous fragment, *c.* 400 BC. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 01.8255.

Resting athletes are found on choes from the early to the late fifth century BC. One of the earliest is on a chous in Munich, where on the right is a young man in a himation and on the left a naked youth with a strigil (Fig. 232). Both young men point with one hand at a Maltese dog, which responds to their gestures by jumping up so they are playing with it. This action links this scene to later scenes on choes where children play with dogs. Another chous, made before the middle of the fifth century, shows two naked youths with wreaths on their heads, one with a strigil, the other with a staff. (Fig. 233). A finishing post on the right indicates the gymnasial setting. A similar scene can be found a generation later on a chous in the British Museum, where three athletes are shown (Fig. 234). The left holds a staff; the middle extends his arms towards him with a wreath, and the right holds a strigil and leans against the finishing post. A fragment of a chous with an aryballos, in which the athletes bring oil, dates from the late fifth century BC; on the right is part of a naked athlete scraping oil from his thigh with a strigil (Fig. 235).



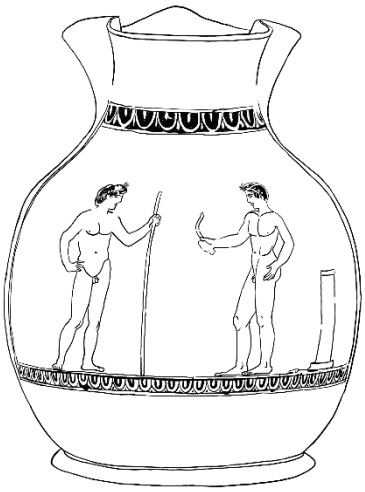
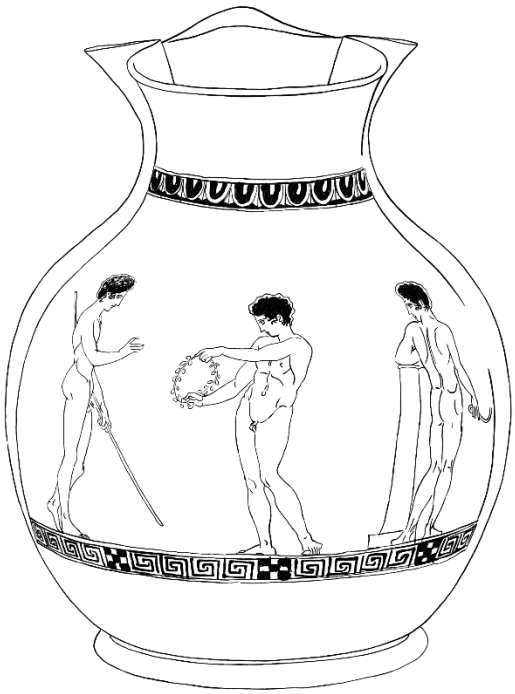


Figure 232 (left). Red-figure chous, 480–470 BC.
Munich, Antikensammlungen, inv. no. 2453. BA 202005.

Figure 233 (right). Red-figure chous, rhird Quarter of the fifth century BC.
Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. G579. BA 214171.



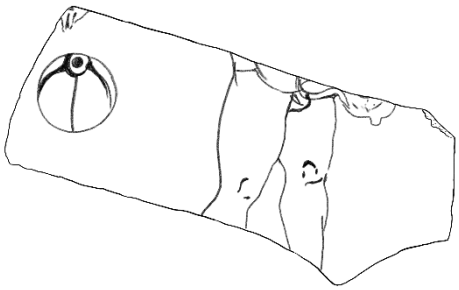
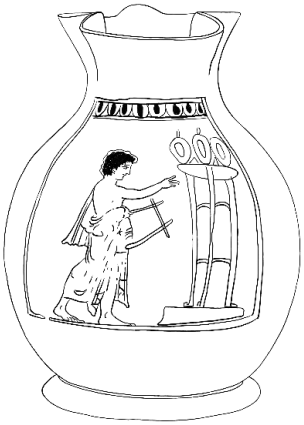


Figure 234 (left). Red-figure chous, 430–410 BC.
London, British Museum, inv. no. 1873,0820.349 (E524).

Figure 235 (right). Red-figure chous, fragment, late fifth century BC. Athens.
Agora Museum, inv. no. P22174. BA 22437.

On several choes from the second half of the fifth century BC, we find references to music competitions or the school teaching that was their prerequisite. A contestant at a monument to the winner is found on a chous in Athens (Fig. 236).[175] A young man in a himation with a lyre approaches a tripod on a pedestal, extending his right hand to it. On one vase from the British Museum, a young man in a himation sits in a chair, holding a partially opened scroll, on which the vase painter has painted nonsensical text (Fig. 237). In front of him stands a naked young man with a lyre; the object above is a plectrum or bag. The painting belong to a series of scenes evoking the preparation for musical performances. On a chous in Brussels stands a naked young man with a writing tablet; the other two tablets are in the background above (Fig. 238). In front of the naked young man stands a young man in a himation, with his right hand extended forward as if to take the young man's tablet from him; behind him is a box on the ground. On a chous in Ferrara, in the background is a lyre on the left and a diaulos case on the right (Fig. 239). A young man in a himation is seated in a chair, holding a bird on his lap with his right hand, gesturing with his left hand, and a young man draped in a himation stands before him. The bird, which has no justification in this context, connects this scene with the children's scenes dominating choes in the second half of the fifth century BC.

[175] Winner at the tripod: Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. ED273; Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P16911; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 10.206.



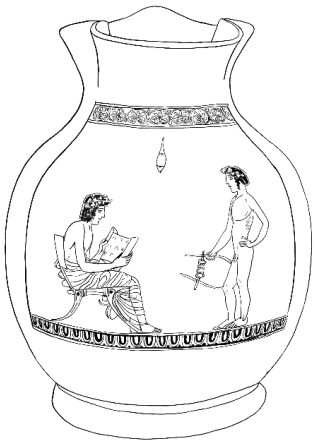


Figure 236 (left). Red-figure chous, 430–425 BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 12961. BA 216269.

Figure 237 (right). Red-figure chous, 440–410 BC.
London, British Museum, inv. no. E525 (1772,0320.221). BA 215997.

Figure 238 (left). Red-figure chous, 450–400 BC. Brussels, Musées Royaux, inv. no. A1911. BA 3409.

Figure 239 (right). Red-figure chous, *c.* 450 BC.
Ferrara, Museo Nazionale di Spina, inv. no. T697A. BA 210251.

A musical performance is depicted on a chous in Oxford. Three young men with long hair and headdresses are seen wearing sleeveless tunics. The middle one holds a flute in each hand, while the two outermost ones carry what appears to be costumes they will wear for the performance (Fig. 240).[176] On a fragment of a chous with a laurel wreath around its neck, we see a long-haired boy, holding a kithara and plectrum, ascending a stepped platform (Fig. 241). On the left side, Nike holds a wreath; on the right, Nike has a phiale and wreath. On one of the choes in London, three young men with long hair perform, wearing headdresses with prongs above their ears (Fig. 242). In the centre is a dancer in an ornate chiton belted at the waist and crossed over the chest; on each side is a naked youth with a lyre. On one of the Louvre's choes, we find a similar scene with a chorus of three dancers wearing headdresses with high prongs

[176] The bundled mantle motif: cf. Oakley 1997, 63.

preparing for a performance (Fig. 243). In the centre, a girl in decorative chitoniskos dances, and her partners look on. The left is tying a sandal, and the right is holding a branch. On the right side of the scene, a naked young man comes forward with a bag slung over his shoulder, possibly containing costumes for the young men watching.

Figure 240 (left). Red-figure chous, *c.* 400 BC.
Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, inv. no. 1927.4468. BA 11817.

Figure 241 (right). Red-figure chous fragment, early fourth century BC.
Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P16910. BA 22439.

Figure 242 (left). Red-figure chous, 410–400 BC.
London, British Museum, inv. no. 1864,1007.122 (E531). BA 15891.

Figure 243 (right). Red-figure chous, h. 175 mm, 425–400 BC.
Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. CA 21 (L70). BA 217494.

On choes, all children's imitative games have their counterparts in scenes with young men and adult Athenians, and models for the child actors also can be found on this vase shape. A fragment of a chous from the Athenian Agora shows a naked actor holding a mask of a woman (Fig. 244). He was probably performing in a tragedy since the woman has her hair cut short as a sign of grief.[177]

[177] Talcott 1939.

Actors in some comedy play in theatrical costumes and wearing masks are on a chous in St. Petersburg, found in a rich grave in the Black Sea Phanagoria (Fig. 245).[178] On the left is a young man holding a mask in a belted, decorative, long-sleeveless tunic and a young man with a mask in one hand and a sceptre in the other. He is wearing a stuffed theatrical costume, but over it is a long cloak. On his head is a cap, which the actors wore under their masks to prevent head injuries.[179] The dignity of this character is emphasized by the form of his mask, which may have represented Zeus. In the centre sits a young man on rolled up travelling blankets, holding a mask in one hand and a twisted staff in the other, wearing a theatrical costume (somation) with a stuffed chest, belly and buttocks and a large phallus; beside him stands a third actor in a similar costume but with a rolled up phallus, holding a mask. Behind him, a theatrical mask lies on the ground, and next to it, there is a young man with a pipe in his outstretched hand at the right edge of the scene. He is wearing similar clothing to the young man on the left, but the clasps on his shoulders suggest he is wearing a peplos.

Figure 244. Red-figure chous fragment, c. 450 BC. Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P11810. BA 205573.

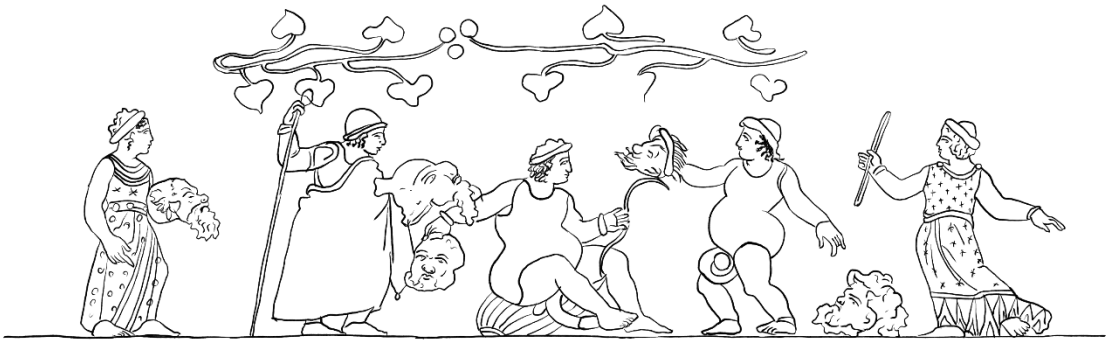


Figure 245. Red-figure chous, h. 95 mm, *c.* 400 BC. St. Petersburg, Hermitage, inv. no. 1869.47. BA 10930. After Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts 8, 1893, 69, fig. 1.

A fragment of a chous from the Athenian Agora shows a Dionysian performance (Fig. 246). In the centre is a stand of ivy leaves; on the left is a naked man with a large phallus, perhaps satyr; on the right, a small figure in a tunic with a stuffed belly and a grotesque mask of a bearded man playing the diaulos.

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[178] Rusten 2019.

[179] Scholia on Demosthenes' *On the False Embassy* (19.421).

Figure 246. Red-figure chous fragment, late fifth century BC.
Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P15116. BA 7761. After Hoorn 1951, fig. 161.

Figure 247. Red-figure chous, *c.* 420 BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, ex Vlasto, inv. no. 518. BA 216566.

The close connection between choes and theatre is evidenced by the fact that this vase shape contains the first depiction of a theatrical performance on a stage (Fig. 247).[180] On the left, we probably see two spectators, a bearded man and a young man, sitting in chairs, both with ribbons in their hair. They are fully absorbed in the conversation, so one wonders if they represent the judges in a theatrical competition. To the right is a wooden stage, with a ladder leading up to it, and in front of it is what looks like an outstretched curtain or the hull of a ship. On the podium is an actor representing Perseus, with a harpe, the sickle for beheading Medusa, in his hand and a kibisis, the bag for storing the decapitated head of the monster, slung over his arm. The man is a comic actor. He is not naked but is wearing a costume representing a naked body, which the painter has indicated by double stripes around his neck, wrists

[180] Hughes 2006.

and ankles. The costume also includes accentuated genitals, which was part of the costumes in Greek comedies.

A theatrical farce of the ascension of Heracles to Mount Olympus can be seen on one of Louvre's choes (Fig. 248). The scene shows the hero riding in a chariot driven by Nike and pulled by Centaurs with bound hands, and an actor with torches prancing in front of the chariot. All the characters are exaggeratedly deformed and comical. This type of scene is typical of choes as it does not depict a particular theatrical performance but rather evokes the upside-down world and burlesque atmosphere of the Dionysian festival, which included nightly torchlight processions.

Nike, Heracles, and Centaurs are not actual actors in costume since it would not be possible in the case of Centaurs. Instead, they are caricatures of the image types commonly depicted in Greek art. However, the leading figure in the chariot resembles the appearance of actors in the comedies of that period. It portrays a barefoot actor wearing a grotesque theatrical mask, a costume with a padded chest, a belly, and an enormous phallus. The costume is accurately represented, particularly on the legs, where multiple folds of fabric are visible. Nevertheless, it also exaggerates the appearance of a komast, as seen in the art of that time, as evidenced by a cloak over his shoulders.

Figure 248. Red-figure chous, h. 224 mm, *c.* 410 BC.
Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. MN 707 (N 3408). BA 217495.

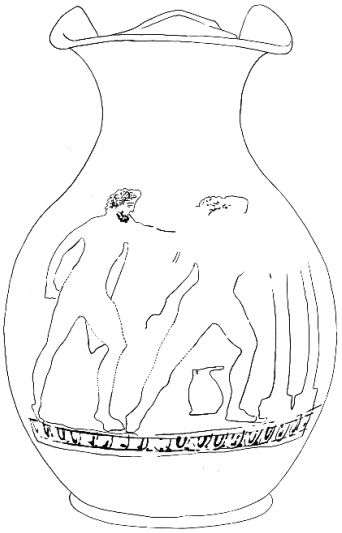

Figure 249 (left). Red-figure chous, 400–390 BC.
Ferrara, Museo Nazionale di Spina, inv. no. 6406. BA 9037563.

Figure 250 (right). Red-figure chous fragment, *c.* 400 BC.
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, inv. no. 98.936. BA 1337.

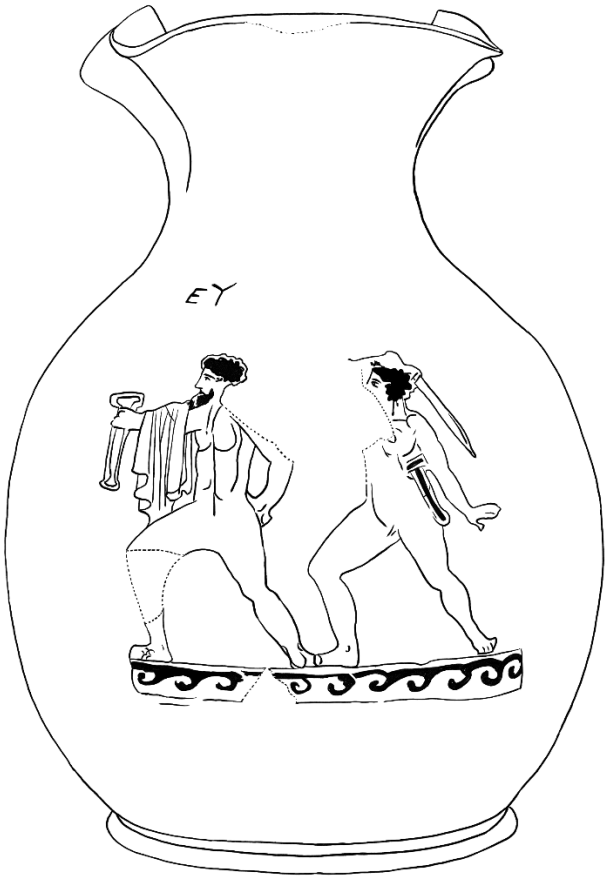

Figure 251. Red-figure chous, C. 400 BC.
Rome, Museo nazionale di Villa Giulia, inv. no. 44255. BA 9037562.

In the 5th century BC, Athenians decorated choes with references to notable Athenian statues that they identified with at the time. The most famous statue was the monument to the Tyrannicides, which was the first secular sculpture ever made in Greece. On a chous in Ferrara, two choes are on the base of the Tyrannicides group sculpture, as a sign that the patrons of the Athenian state are also taking part in the celebration of this crucial Athenian festival (Fig. 249).[181] We do not find choes in the other two depictions of the Tyrannicides, but it was certainly no coincidence that these depictions are on choes (Fig. 250–251). Statues are rarely depicted on Athenian vases. So we can assume that chous was the most suitable vase shape for Athenians to evoke the famous patriotic group sculpture and thus emphasize their Athenian identity.[182]
The Tyrannicides sculpture group, an icon of the Athenian way of life, symbolized the victory of the new political system over the tyranny of the Peisistratus in 507 BC. The Tyrannicides, Harmodios and Aristogeiton, were not just lovers but also individuals of immense courage. In a society where relationships between younger and older men were the norm, they fearlessly stood up against the Athenian tyrant Hipparchos. Despite the tragic outcome of their attempt to kill Hipparchos and his brother Hippias, their bravery was celebrated as a beacon of the democratic revolution in classical Athens.

On the Athenian Agora were two sculptures of the Tyrannicides, the first dating after 508 BC, but was taken away in 480 BC by the Persians, who then occupied Athens. This sculpture was later returned to Athens, but by 477/476 BC, the group sculpture taken was replaced by a new one by the sculptors Critias and Nesiotes. Neither the first nor the second sculpture has survived, but Roman copies of the latter are known.[183] This second sculpture appears on choes as an emblem of Athens and its exceptionalism, which legitimized Athenian political goals. It was, in fact, one of the first works of the new artistic style that emerged in Athens.[184] We know and admire it as a classical style. However, for the Athenians of the time, it was, above all, an expression of their uniqueness and an embodiment of the new macho ideology of the Athenian state. It was expressed by the aggressively dynamic attitudes of Harmodius and Aristogeiton and their perfect interplay, fighting side by side, protecting each other, their synergy multiplying the effect of their joint action. This aspect of the sculpture group was emphasized in depictions on choes.

On a chous in Berlin, we find another famous sculpture in Athens at the time. It was a group sculpture of Athena and Marsyas by Myron from around 450 BC (Fig. 252).[185] It shows Athena throwing away the diaulos because the musical instrument deformed her face while playing, but satyr Marsyas is about to seize it. The juxtaposition of the Dionysian world of sensuality and Athenian civilization under the patronage of Athena was a particularly appropriate subject for choes, but most important was that it was a famous Athenian sculpture. However, the vase painter, like his predecessors and successors, while referring to the actual model known to the

[181] Schmidt 2005, 199.
[182] Schmidt 2009; Williams 2022, 151–55.
[183] Azoulay 2017.
[184] Neer 2010.
[185] Junker, 2002.

Athenians, combined the form of the sculpture with an illustration of the story that inspired the sculptor.

The sculpture must have depicted diaulos already lying on the ground. The vase painter, however, took advantage of the medium at his disposal and depicted the event as a story yet unfinished. Athena has her right hand extended in front of her, with which she dropped the diaulos a split second ago, but the musical instrument has not yet fallen to the ground. Similarly, vase painters, in depicting children, constantly oscillated between what the audience of the time could see and what they knew about children and the festival of Choes. Capturing actual shapes and probable actions was never their ultimate goal; each vase painting was primarily an evocation of how the festival of Choes lived in the Athenian imagination.

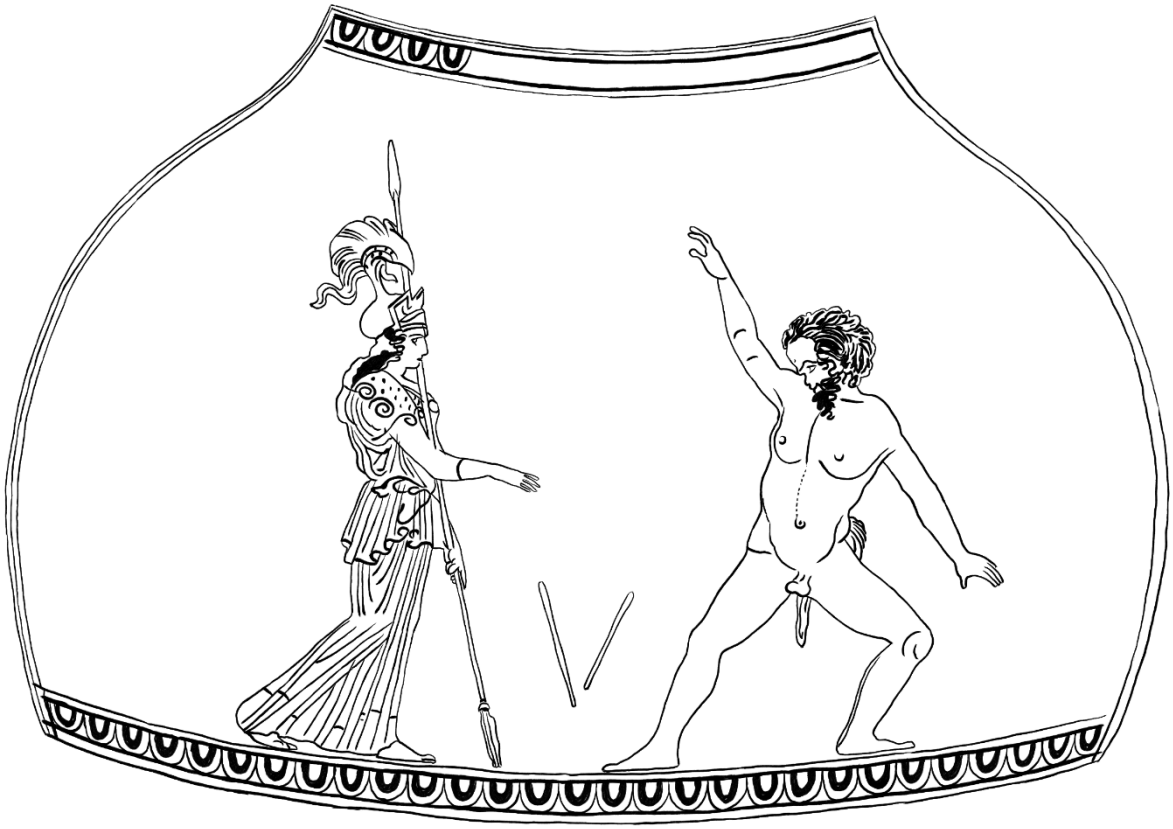

Figure 252. Red-figure chous, after 450 BC. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. no. F2418. BA 6982.

Also associated with the Athenian children and the festival of Choes was a scene on a chous, which depicts Athena and a statute of a toddler on a column extending her hand to the goddess (Fig. 253). The scene is related to children and Anthesteria and emphasizes the patronage of Athena.[186] At the same time, we encounter depictions of the birth of Erichthonius, a mythical Athenian ruler whom Athena, the divine patroness of the Athenian community, adopted at this age.[187] In these depictions, the goddess Gaia, whose attachment to the earth is indicated by the fact that only the

[186] Kron 1988, 935 no. 41.

[187] Neils 1983, 274–89; Kron 1988, 929–31, n. 3–12; Avramidou 2011, 34–36.

upper half of her body is visible, presents a naked Erichthonius to Athena with a string of amulets, looking much as children are depicted on countless choes (Fig. 254). When Erichthonius came of age, he became an Athenian cultural hero who, among other things, founded the Panathenaic games. Scholars have linked the rise in popularity of Erichthonius' birth scenes to the development of the Athenian state, which legitimized its current power ambitions by pointing to its mythical origins.[188]

During the fifth century BC, Athens underwent significant political and social changes that affected the lives of its children. The Athenian community became more democratic, and the state aimed to provide education to more Athenian children. The emergence of the middle class allowed their children to have an extended childhood and participate more in religious life and public festivals, such as the Anthesteria. The popularity of choes and the new subject matter of children, closely linked to them, were undoubtedly connected to these revolutionary political changes happening in Athenian society. However, the scenes with children on choes did not reflect changes in the child's status or perception.

Children have been depicted on choes since the early fifth century BC when the specific iconography of choes began to take shape. Athenian children may have received small choes as gifts, choes may have been used as grave offerings. Nevertheless, from the beginning to the end of choes decoration, children's themes were derived from the themes that evoked the life of adult Athenians. In the first half of the fifth century BC, the choes were dominated by Dionysian themes, which included scenes related to feasts and life at the gymnasium and sporting and musical competitions. These themes were unsurprising, as the choes were related to Dionysian rituals, probably to the Anthesteria, during which competitions were also held. The choes may have played an essential role in this feast, reflected in the fact that the second day of the festival was named after them, Choes. Festooned choes were often incorporated into the decorations, reflecting this connection.

During the second half of the fifth century BC, choes were used to depict children in various situations and activities that were common during that time. However, all scenes with children on choes were poetic creations. The aim was not to convince the viewers of the reality of the painting but often the opposite, namely to amuse them with its then apparent impossibility. The pattern of children's games was similar to how adults were depicted on choes. Children were shown mimicking sports activities, competitions, feasts, and even nightly drunken parades. Most choes did not portray actual children's games, but rather, the atmosphere of the Dionysian festival, which was associated with competitions and feasting, was transposed into the children's world. The depictions on choes suggest that they were not primarily about children; instead, children were used to expressing the festival atmosphere and adult activities.

[188] Forsdyke 2012.

Figure 253. Red-figure chous, 440–430 BC. Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. L63. BA 212479.

Figure 254. Red-figure cup, *c.* 440 BC. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. no. F2537. BA 217211.

SLAVE CHILDREN

Some scholars have attempted to interpret changes in the iconography of painted vases as a direct result of changes in Athenian society. The scenes with children were presented as manifestations of the child's new status and role in the Athenian state. The impetus was supposed to be the Pericles law of 451/450 BC, according to which Athenian citizens had to prove that they had an Athenian father and an Athenian mother.[189] Furthermore, the role of children in Athenian society was supposed to have increased dramatically after the devastating Peloponnesian War and the plague of 430 BC, which decimated the population of Athens.[190] According to Martina Seifert, the amulets with which the children are depicted were meant to announce that the child in question had been officially accepted into the Athenian community.[191]

In 2008, Froma I. Zeitlin rejected this interpretation: 'The idea that children are more valued in the fifth century, first because of citizenship laws in the polis, as has also been suggested, and secondly as a reaction to depopulation in the face of catastrophe, remains pure speculation'.[192] In 2015, Mark Golden, in his synthesis of children in classical Athens, wrote:

> it is attractive to regard the increased visibility of children - especially the more and better differentiated images in more artistic genres and the more and more prominent tombs and memorials - as signs of enhanced status. But what exactly are we to understand by this? Did more visibility and status lead to any change in adult behaviors toward children or to any change in children's roles in the community, for example, to less corporal punishment or more child priests? So far as we can tell, the answer is no.[193]

Zeitlin and Golden were right; the paintings on choes, a summary of which was the content of the previous chapters of this book, are in no way indicative of a rethinking of children in the Athenian society of that time.

The iconography of the choes forms a unified whole, but its protagonist is not the Athenian child. Even though children appear most frequently on choes of the second half of the fifth century BC, their status varies. In the scenes in which the children appear alone, they are probably the children of Athenian citizens. In scenes with adult Athenians, however, children are usually slaves.[194] Enslaved people were commonplace in Greece and performed the most demanding work in agriculture, mines or artisanal workshops.[195] We do not know precisely how many were in Athenian households, but it is usually assumed that there were three or four slave

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189 Blok 2009.

190 For the first time: Stern 1978. Cf. Raepsaet and Decocq 1987, 14–15; Müller 1990, 47–54; Ham 1999, 209–13; Beaumont 2003a, 108–10; Beaumont 2003b, 75; Beaumont 2012, 74–75; Vlachou 2020.

191 Seifert 2011, 125145, 271–71. According to Seifert the choes are not related to the spring Anthesteria, but to the autumn festival of Apaturia, which was significant not only for toddlers but for Athenian children in general.

192 Zeitlin 2008, 311.

193 Golden 2015, 150.

194 On Greek slaves: Weiler 2013, on child slaves: Rehak 2007; Deissler and Heinen 2012.

195 Raeck 1981.

forces. The poorest households had no enslaved people, so their depiction in vase painting defined the status of the depicted Athenian man or woman as an upper-class member. Athenian women were often depicted with child slaves who helped them in the household; Athenian men attended gymnasia and evening banquets with their child slaves.

Enslaved individuals in Athens looked no different from free people in terms of their appearance and clothing. However, they could be identified in vase paintings by their subordinate status. They carried out their masters' tasks and assisted them in their activities.[196]

In Greek art, until the mid-fifth century BC, children and enslaved people or servants were depicted as miniature adults. This convention is unsurprising, as it was consistent with the Greek worldview, according to which only a free man was a complete human being, and children and slaves had equal social status.[197] The Greek philosophers justified this by their nature. According to Plato, children, enslaved people and women are not able to resist desires and pleasures and cannot endure pain: 'ἡδονάς τε καὶ λύπας ἐν παισὶ μάλιστα ἄν τις εὕροι καὶ γυναιξὶ καὶ οἰκέταις καὶ τῶν ἐλευθέρων λεγομένων ἐν τοῖς πολλοῖς τε καὶ φαύλοις' (appetites and pleasures and pains one would find chiefly in children and women and slaves and in the base rabble of those who are freemen in name).[198] According to Aristotle:

> πᾶσα γὰρ σύγκειται πόλις ἐξ οἰκιῶν. οἰκονομίας δὲ μέρη ἐξ ὧν πάλιν οἰκία συνέστηκεν: οἰκία δὲ τέλειος ἐκ δούλων καὶ ἐλευθέρων. ἐπεὶ δ' ἐν τοῖς ἐλαχίστοις πρῶτον ἕκαστον ζητητέον, πρῶτα δὲ καὶ ἐλάχιστα μέρη οἰκίας δεσπότης καὶ δοῦλος, καὶ πόσις καὶ ἄλοχος, καὶ πατὴρ καὶ τέκνα
>
> (every state is composed of households. Household management falls into departments corresponding to the parts of which the household in its turn is composed; and the household in its perfect form consists of slaves and freemen. The investigation of everything should begin with its smallest parts, and the primary and smallest parts of the household are master and slave, husband and wife, father and children).[199]

The common denominator of these Aristotelian pairs is that they always consist of a ruler and a ruled, and it is characteristic that the wife forms a pair only with her husband. The child forms it not with the mother but with the father.

A parody of the festival of Choes is found on a skyphos, which also depicts a child slave (Fig. 255).[200] The central figure is a woman drinking from a vase of the same shape as the vase on which the painting is placed. Behind her, a slave girl is shown carrying a heavy load and distinguished also by her shorter hair. The girl has a wineskin on her head, holds a large chous in her hand, and carries a sack on a strap on her back, which she holds at her shoulder with her left hand. It was necessary for the

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[196] Neils and Oakley 2003, 258.
[197] Golden 1985, 97; Golden 1990, 4–10.
[198] Plat. *polit*. IV, 431c. Translation Paul Shorey.
[199] Aristot. *pol.* I, 1253b. Translation H. Rackham.
[200] Schmidt 2005, 163; Topper 2012b, 112–113.

comic effect of the picture that her mistress drink unmixed wine without stopping. The Greek women were forbidden to drink wine lest it endanger their children's health, so they did not get to wine until after they had stopped giving birth.[201] The woman depicted was already old, judging by her unattractive features and double chin.

Figure 255–256. Red-figure skyphos, 460–450 BC.
Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum, inv. no. 85.AE.265 (A–B). BA 10146. Public domain.

[201] Pfisterer-Haas 1989, 78, note 293.

Where the woman brings the wine from is indicated on the other side of the vase, where the larder is (Fig. 256). To the left is a bronze stand standing on three legs topped with lion's paws; the equipment for the feast hangs from hooks: a ladle, a strainer and a small oinochoe, and a skyphos is set on the stand. In the middle, on top, is a kitchen pot with a lid and spout (chytra) and a grill grate. To the right is a chest on which rests a wine amphora. On the chest is a chous festooned with ivy; it is not shown together with the symposium kit, which suggests that it was not an ordinary piece of household equipment but a vessel used once a year on the festival of Choes.

Figure 257. Red-figure chous, 490–480 BC.
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 22.139.32. BA 202004. Public domain.

Child slaves accompanying the komasts appear on choes from the early fifth century BC.[202] On a chous in New York, a naked komast with a cloak draped over his

[202] List of views: Heinemann 2016, note 1100 at p. 730. The strikingly frequent occurrence of depictions of a komast and a slave at choes in the fifth century BC is explained by Heinemann (2016, 470–74) as

arms stops to play the barbiton; since he needs both hands to do so, a child slave standing in front of him holds a cane which the Athenians took to the streets. (Fig. 257). Actions, attitudes, and emotions distinguish the master and his slave. The young man is shown in motion, his slightly bowed head suggesting he fully engages in music. The boy who serves him is depicted without emotion as he stands upright, watching his master so that he can immediately fulfil his wishes.

The boy's status as an enslaved person serving the komast is indicated on a Malibu vase from around 470 BC, in which a young slave holds an oinochoe for his master to urinate into (Fig. 258). On the ground is a festooned chous, making the scene explicitly situated in the context of celebrating the festival of Choes. The oinochoe and the chous are distinguished not only by shape but also by function. The garlanded chous standing on the ground was filled with the delicious drink given to humanity by Dionysos. Into the oinochoe, held by a slave, flows the urine that the young man celebrating the Choes needed to get rid of.

Figure 258. Red-figure chous, *c.* 470 BC. Malibu,
J. Paul Getty Museum, inv. no. 86.AE.237. BA 10147. Public domain.

the fact that feasting at choes differed from the usual way in that the participants drank alone, from their own Chous.

A chous from the Athenian Agora depicts the komos, which we also know from several other choes (Fig. 259). An undersized bearded man leads the procession in a himation, fully engaged in singing, as indicated by his tilted back head and right hand, with a cane extended backwards in a sweeping gesture. Behind him follows a young man playing the lyre with unsteady steps, his cloak carelessly draped over him. On the left is a boy, smaller than the young man with the lyre. It is a slave; he is encumbered with the things needed to celebrate the Choes. He holds a lighted torch in front of him in his right hand, a box of food slung on his back, and he carries a festooned chous in his left hand. Unlike the other participants in the komos, he walks with a firm step and shows no enthusiasm. While the man looks up, the young man looks down; the slave looks straight ahead.

As mentioned above, from the mid-fifth century BC, children on Athenian vases began to be anatomically distinct. On a chous in Bologna is a typical depiction of Athenian children celebrating choes, the individual components of which we know from dozens of other depictions on choes (Fig. 260). On the right is a boy with a cloak thrown over his shoulders like adult komasts, holding a lyre in his left hand. In the middle stands a girl in a decorated dress with a cake tray, and beside her is a three-legged table of food and two festooned choes. On the left, where a slave is in the previous scene, is a naked boy with long hair, wearing a garland of amulets across his chest, holding a festooned chous in one hand and the other holding the cart he is pulling behind him. Thus, in these two scenes, the two boys walking with the chous in their hands appear on the left side of the scene, but while one is celebrating, the other is serving. One will soon be an Athenian citizen who will co-determine the fate of the entire community; the other will remain a slave whose fate will be decided by his owner.

Figure 259. Red-figure chous, h. 220 mm, 425–400 BC.
Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P18799. BA 22397.

Figure 260. Red-figure chous, early fourth century BC. Bologna,
Museo civico archeologico, inv. no. PU295. BA 21636. After Lenormant and Witte 1857, pl. 89.

On choes with children celebrating the Feast of Choes, a child repeatedly appears lifting a festooned chous, and a similar figure is also found in contemporary depictions of adult komos, where they are slaves. On a fragmentary surviving chous in Boston, a young komast is in the centre of the scene, with a taenia on his head and a wreath (Fig. 261). He appears to be drunk, his cloak has been pulled off and is about to fall to the ground. He is barely on his feet, his head dropped on his chest, his arms stretched out in front of him like a blind man, and he holds a cane in one hand. A woman, apparently a hired flute player, walks in front of him with a flute in her hand, but she does not play it because she has another task. She shines a torch, which she holds behind her, in the way of the komast. The procession is closed by a naked child slave, carrying a lyre in one hand and a festooned chous in the other. The boy on the left and the girl on the right only participate in the procession to serve their master.

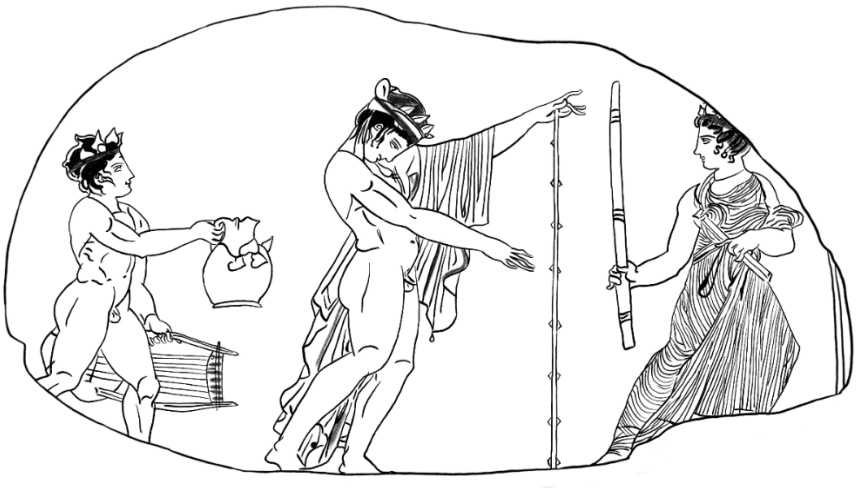
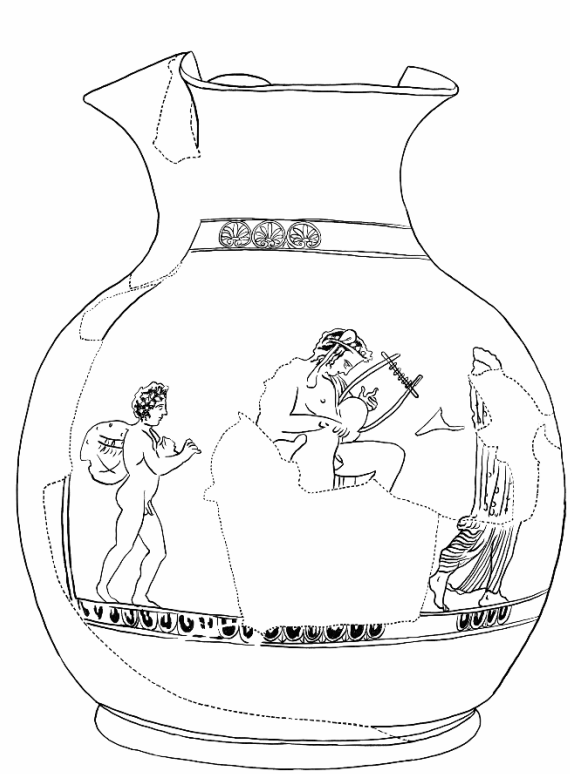


Figure 261. Red-figure chous fragment, *c.* 400 BC.
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 10.190. BA 220531.



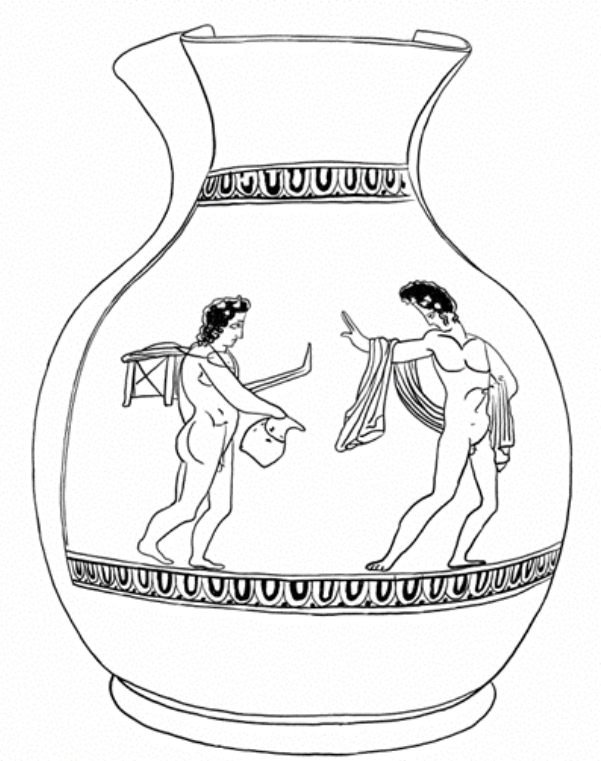


Figure 262 (left). Red-figure chous, *c.* 410.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum (ex M. Vlasto). BA 16140.

Figure 263 (right). Red-figure chous, h. 151 mm, *c.* 400 BC.
Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, inv. no. 1920.101. BA 11966.

There is a similar scene on a chous in Athens, where a central figure is a young man with a cloak over his shoulder, playing the lyre (Fig. 262). As in the previous scene, he is accompanied by two servants, a flute player in a chiton walking in front and a boy with a basket of provisions on his back. On a chous in Oxford, a young man, whose maturity is indicated by genital hair, dances with a cloak draped over his arms (Fig. 263). Behind him walks a slightly smaller naked boy, komast's slave, holding a lighted torch in one hand and a festooned chous in the other.

On choes, slaves burdened with feasting equipment, who also had to light the way on the road, often appeared on the left side. However, they can also be found on the right as they lead the procession. On a chous at the University Museum of Mississippi, the man on the left, with a cloak over his arms and a cane in his hand, is barely on his feet and leaning dangerously backwards (Fig. 264). A naked boy slave walks in front of him with a box of provisions on his back, a torch in one hand and a festooned chous in the other. The central figure on a New York chous is a naked bearded man dancing with a cane in his right hand and a chous in his raised left (Fig. 265). The man is naked but wearing high leather boots, and behind him stands a young man in a himation leaning on a cane, his hands initially holding a wreath in his forward outstretched hands. To the right stands a naked youth with a torch, with a dancing man's cloak bunched on his back, so he is his slave.

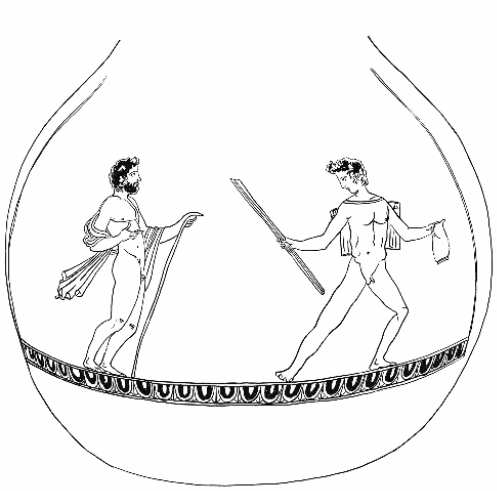


Figure 264. Red-figure chous, h. 233 mm, *c.* 420 BC. Oxford (MS),
The University of Mississippi Museum, inv. no. 1977.003.0107. BA 13456.

Figure 265. Red-figure chous, *c.* 420 BC. New York,
Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 37.11.21. Fletcher Fund, 1937. BA 16269. Public domain.

These depictions cannot be interpreted in isolation. When we try to base the interpretation of a chous on what it depicts, we inevitably risk projecting into it our contemporary ideas that have nothing to do with ancient Greece. A good example is a chous in Copenhagen (Fig. 266). Hilde Rühfel described the scene in the following way:

> Three boys reach for the cloak cloth in the evening chill […] They walk along slowly. The boy in the middle sinks into his lyre and sings his song to it. His friend joins in the melodies with the double aulos. The beautiful sounds make the one in front with the wine jug and torch turn his face. Isolated in the picture, the boys are closely connected by the bond of music.[203]

But why are only the two young men shown on the sides cold, while the middle is practically naked? The explanation may be found in the fact that only the middle young man is the komast. His cloak is draped over his arm, and his posture is unsteady, but he does not use his cane because he wants to play the lyre. The meticulous dress, the firm step and the attention paid to the central figure characterize the young men at the sides as slaves of the komast. The rear one plays the flute for him, and the front carries his torch and chous. In all these scenes, the komast is shown naked or half naked in a wobbly, drunken stance while the appropriately dressed enslaved person walks steadily, with the torch held up for the master to see the way. These servants may be depicted on the left or right, but they are never in the scene's centre, as this place was reserved for their masters.

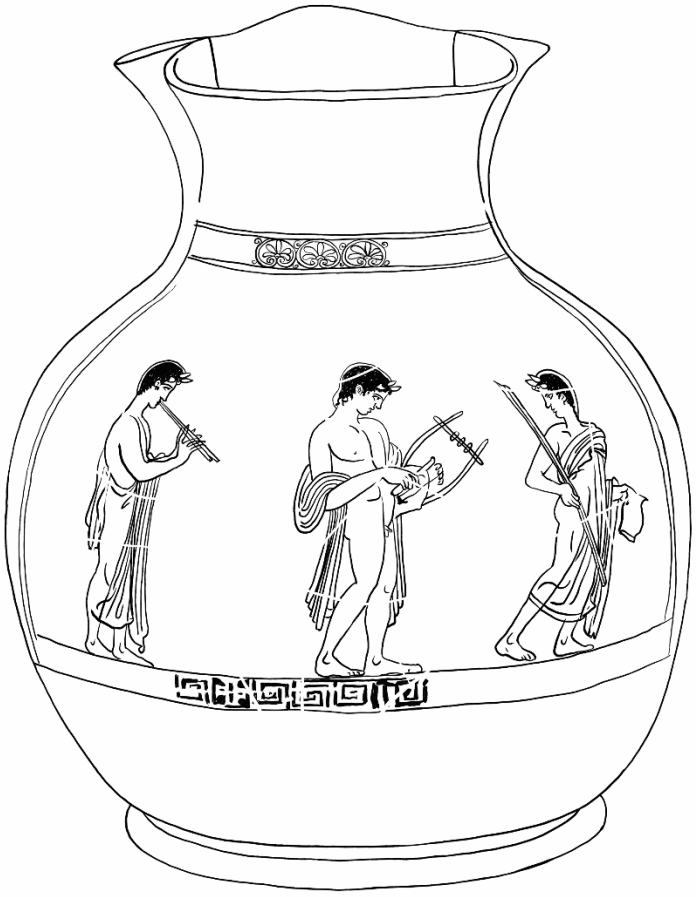


Figure 266. Red-figure chous, h. 212 mm, *c.* 430–420 BC.
Copenhagen, National Museum, inv. no. 5377. BA 216206.

[203] Rühfel 1984, 156

In some scenes, the status of depicted children was not clearly defined. On the Bologna chous, a boy is folding his cloak, with a symposium basket for provisions in the background and a festooned chous on the ground in the lower right.[204] When a komast lost his cloak during a night revel, someone had to find and fold it. The chous at Utrecht depicts a boy with a folded garment in his hand that may belong to his master; on the ground is a festooned chous, so the depiction refers to Choes (Fig. 267).

Figure 267. Red-figure chous, 460–450 BC. Utrecht, University, inv. no. 25. BA 16141.

Figure 268 (left). Red-figure chous, 430–420 BC.
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no.75.2.12. BA 16403.

Figure 269 (right). Red-figure chous fragment, *c.* 400 BC.
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 98.934. BA 2578.

[204] Chous, *c*. 450 BC, Bologna, Museo Civico Archeologico, inv. no. 353. BA 208214.

A parallel mythical scene depicts Dionysos with satyrs or maenads in a slave-like role. One chous in New York depicts Dionysos in a chiton, draped in a himation, walking with a thyrsus, with a naked satyr walking in front of him, shining a torch on his path, a basket with symposium equipment on his back (Fig. 268). On a chous in Boston, Dionysos walks in the middle, with a kantharos, preceded by a satyr, the procession being closed by a maenad with a torch and chous in her hands (Fig. 269).

On one chous in Athens, a satyr supports a completely drunken Dionysos with a thyrsus, with a maenad walking in front with a flute (Fig. 270). A small satyr at the end of the procession with a chous and torch is the counterpart of the child slaves who were depicted in similar situations in depictions of Athenian komasts. Another chous from the same Athenian workshop shows Dionysos with a thyrsus in his limp right hand, singing with his head thrown back, led by a bearded satyr with a barbiton (Fig. 271). At the head of the procession is a small satyr, whose head has fallen on his chest from fatigue, dragging a lighted torch across the ground. When satyr played the role of a komast, his slave had to be distinguished from him. A chous in a private collection shows a nude satyr as a komast playing the flute, with a thyrsus over his shoulder; behind him walks his slave with a torch, a basket on his back and a large chous (Fig. 272). The slave is depicted as a smaller and ostentatiously ugly person with a beard, long grey unkempt hair, and a large penis.[205]

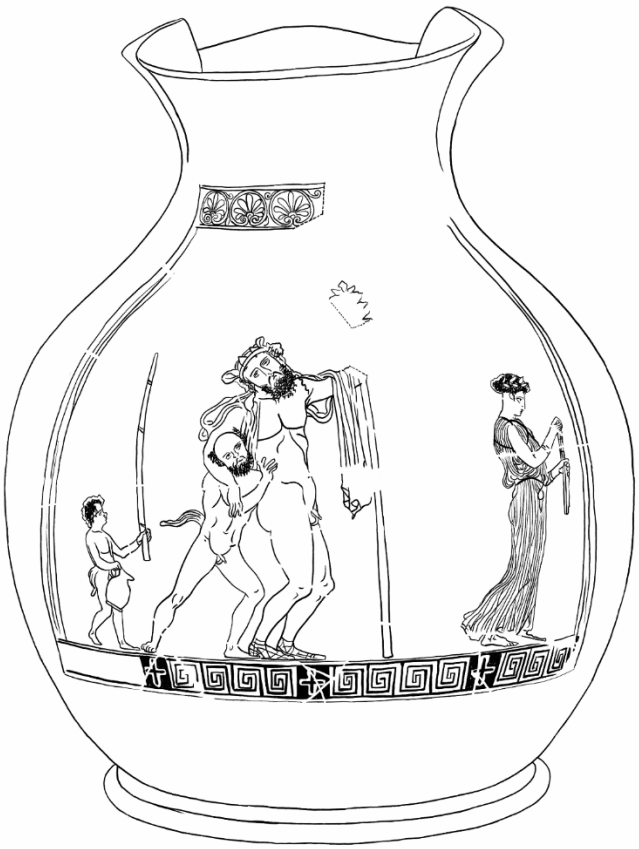


Figure 270. Red-figure chous, 440–425 BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. CC1283. BA 216549.

[205] Heinemann 2016, 121

Figure 271. Red-figure chous, 440–425 BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. CC1282. BA 216548.

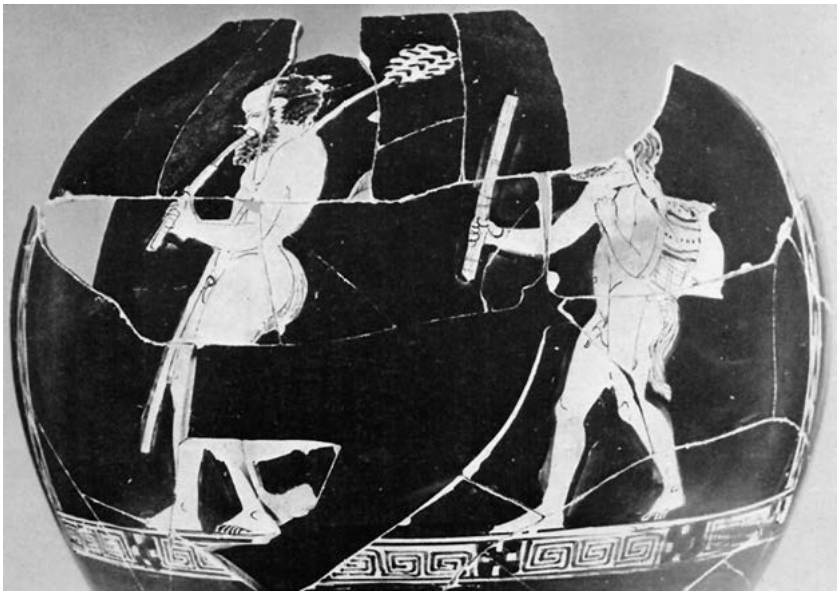


Figure 272. Red-figure chous, 430–420 BC.
Düsseldorf, private collection. BA 726. After Heinemann 2016, 121 fig. 62.

On a calyx krater in Tarquinia, Dionysos returns home from a banquet with a wobbly step, wearing a taenia on his head and high boots on his feet; he is pretty drunk, his cane does not help him walk at all, his cloak slipped to the ground (Fig. 273). A small satyr with a chous in his hand lights his way; another satyr sits on

the house's threshold, through whose open door a seated woman can be seen. Satyrs and kantharos, Dionysos' usual attribute, suggest that the komast is the god of wine. However, the house with the waiting wife points instead to a mortal komast, who is thus likened to Dionysos. In a similar scene on a chous in New York, nothing points to Dionysos - an exuberant half-naked feaster with a taenia on his head, shoes on his feet and a barbiton under his arm, demands entry by beating on the door with the end of a torch (Fig. 274). His membership in the elite is revealed not only by the fact that he is depicted as a participant in the komos but also by the detail of the kynodesme.[206] He is a man who takes care of his appearance and knows what is fitting and proper. With a lighted lamp in her hand, the woman cautiously walks to the door but is afraid to open it, as indicated by the finger put to her chin. The woman is depicted in a subordinate position in the last two scenes; a free Athenian woman did not go to open the front door.[207]

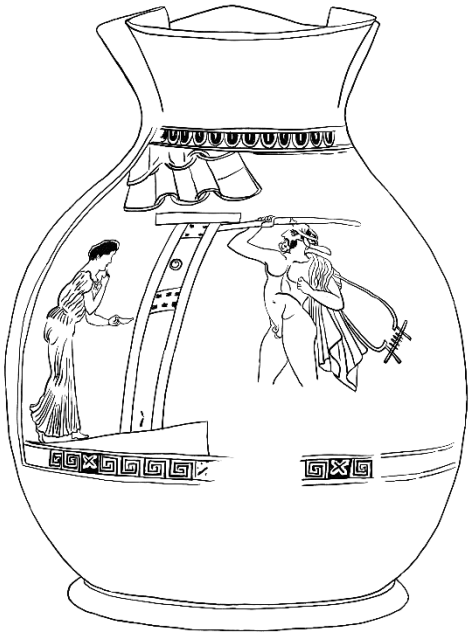


Figure 273 (left). Red-figure chalice krater, 440–420 BC.
Tarquinia, Museo Nazionale Tarquiniese, inv. no.RC4197. BA 213726.

Figure 274 (right). Red-figure chous, 420–410 BC.
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no.37.11.19. BA 539.

There is a myth of the return of Hephaestus to Olympus on a chous in New York (Fig. 275).[208] The depiction can only be understood in the context of the komos of adults celebrating the Choes, as the story it refers to cannot be connected to the celebration of children. When Hera gave birth to a lame child, she threw it off Olympus, but little Hephaestus survived the fall and became an incomparable blacksmith when he grew up. He avenged his mother by sending her a golden throne, as if to appease her, with an ingenious mechanism that imprisoned Hera. None of the

[206] On kynodesme cf. Lee 2015, 58-59.
[207] On the identity of this woman cf. Sutton 2004, 331-333.
[208] Hedreen 2004.

gods succeeded in getting Hephaestus to return to Olympus and free his mother. Dionysos was the only one to succeed. He got the divine smith drunk; the scene depicts their journey to Olympus, Dionysos with the kantharos and Hephaestus with the smith's tongs riding on a donkey led by a young satyr with his thyrsus held high, the adult satyr playing the diaulos leading a merry procession that was analogous to the drunken processions at the festival of Choes. The deities depicted have their names added, and above satyr is inscribed Komos, the personification of the procession, which was a common name for these beings in vase paintings.[209]

Figure 275. Red-figure chous, 430–420 BC.
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 08.258.22. BA 216948. Public domain.

Enslaved children can also be depicted in other contexts on choes. A man is lying on a couch, holding a kantharos in his left hand, his right hand raised above his head in a gesture indicating that he is listening with interest to the play of a young man with a lyre who is sitting on a stool (Fig. 276). Behind the musician stands a naked slave with a basket of food, which he has brought to the man on the couch, but he waits for the music to finish. The slave can also be found on choes, with scenes from the gymnasium where he serves the young men practising. On a chous in Basel, two naked young men cleanse themselves with the help of strigils (Fig. 277). Between them stands a naked boy with an aryballos hanging from a strap. The boy is a slave who has brought his master an aryballos with oil.

[209] Fränkel 1912.

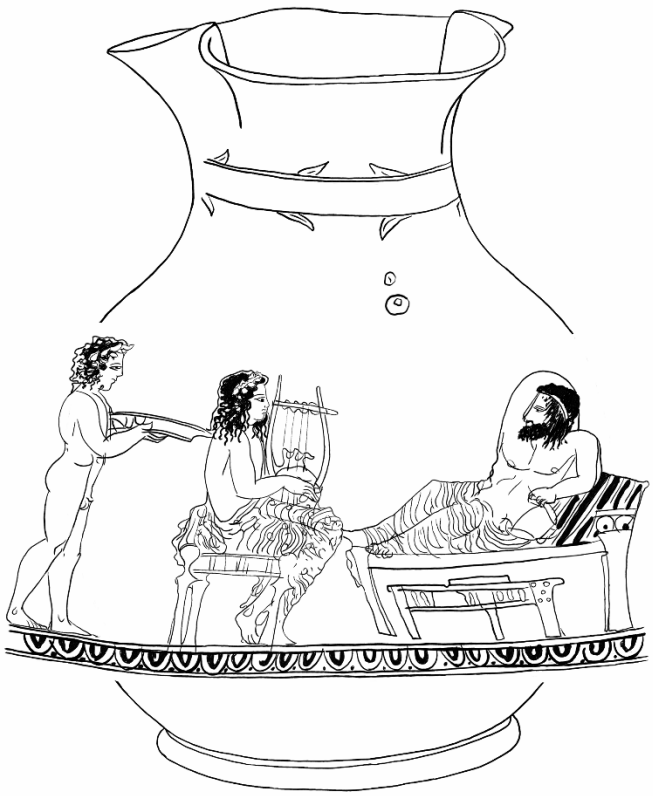


Figure 276. Red-figure chous, 420–410 BC. Germany, private collection. BA 19741.

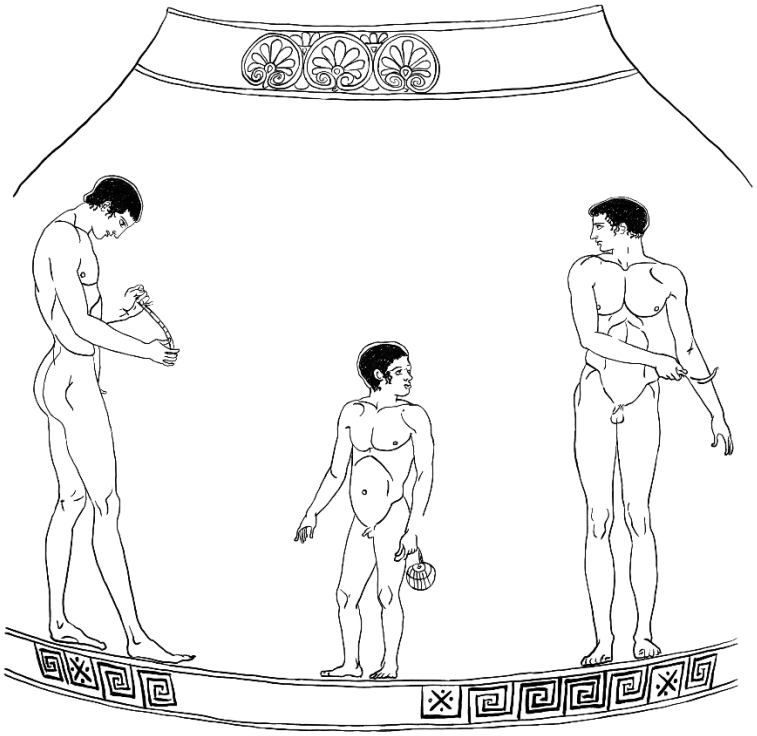


Figure 277. Red-figure chous, 450–440 BC.
Basel, Antikenmuseum und Sammlung Ludwig, inv. no. BS485. BA 275428.

Figure 278. Red-figure chous, 420–410 BC. Athens, Agora Museum, inv. no. P15210. BA 922.

Exceptionally, we also find on choes an artisan celebrating a festival, probably Choes, assisted by his slave (Fig. 278). The man, dressed in a festively decorated chiton, has a high forehead, jutting chin, and messy hair and beard. In front of him stands a boy, a cloak wrapped around the lower part of the body, with a sacrificial basket with three horns. The boy, too, has comically distorted features - a high forehead, pointed nose and tousled hair; behind the craftsman is a blast furnace for melting metal, and between the two figures is an object that looks like an anvil.

Children appear in both dominant and subordinate roles on choes. In the first case, the descendants of Athenian citizens celebrate the festival of Choes, and these children are depicted at all ages, from toddlers to adolescents. In the secondary roles, enslaved people merely assist in the activities depicted. These child slaves are boys from about six who can already work. Their slave status is indicated by the fact that

they do not engage in the activities depicted in these scenes. While the free Athenians exercised, or entertained themselves, the slaves worked. Their subordinate status is indicated by the fact that they carry lighted torches and things their masters do not currently need, such as their canes or clothing, or will need, such as musical instruments, choes with wine, or baskets with food. While free Athenians are often so drunk that they can barely move their feet, their child slaves are always sober. Moreover, their presence at the komos automatically classifies them as enslaved people since the descendants of free Athenians could not attend such events at such a young age.

The central theme linking most scenes on choes is the feast of Anthesteria, with which a series of Dionysian scenes and scenes of children playing were closely related. The games in which children imitated the activities of adults involved two areas - feasting and sporting or musical competitions. These thematic areas had a counterpart in the thematic areas in which the adults appeared. Children's feasters, athletes and musicians on choes had their counterparts in adult feasters, athletes and musicians. However, the children on choes do not form a coherent whole because they were presented in two fundamentally different roles. Alongside the children of the Athenians, these vases depict children slaves.

The scenes of adults being served by enslaved children date mainly from the first half of the fifth century BC. They are found on dozens of vases, all taller than 150 mm. Scenes with Athenian children predominate on choes in the second half of the fifth century BC, forming a much more numerous set, and are found on vases, which are generally less than 150 mm tall. The difference between the two groups of scenes lies in the time of creation, the relative frequency and the size of the vases. Nevertheless, the series of scenes with child slaves continued into the second half of the fifth century BC, so both child slaves and children of Athenian citizens were depicted on choes simultaneously. Although we have no evidence, Athenian children were possibly given wine in the smallest vases, on which they were never depicted as slaves. However, the scenes with child slaves cannot be separated from those with the children of free Athenians because the themes were closely related. The adult komos with enslaved children were the model and semantic counterpart of the scenes with children imitating komos.

Simultaneously, a similar pattern was found in the depiction of women, who were depicted as daughters, brides and wives of Athenian citizens, as well as hetairae and sex slaves. As mentioned above, there was no clear divide between these thematic strands, with one strand flowing into the other. [210] A connection to a specific vase shape also links the depictions of children and women. By the second quarter of the fifth century BC, women had become dominant on hydrias. This vase was primarily used to handle, carry, and store water, which was a woman's task. When women prevailed on hydrias, vases of this type became predominantly ceremonial objects used in cult and funerary ceremonies, with either bronze hydria or their undecorated versions used for practical purposes. This practice is indicated by the fact that hydrias are disappearing among archaeological finds from houses. At the same time, hydrias that were too small or too large to be used started to be produced.[211]

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[210] Bažant 1985.

[211] Schmidt 2005, 222–78.

Scenes with children who are not characterized as slaves are much more numerous on choes, but scenes with child slaves flow seamlessly into this series, with the children's social status changing fundamentally. It follows that the vase painters did not want to record faithfully how the children of Athenian citizens lived and how their parents perceived them. As we stressed above, the children on choes were not the aim of the representation, but only its object. If we want to understand how these representations were understood by the Athenians of the time, we must answer why they were buying painted vases. We will try to answer this complicated question in the last chapter. Be the answer as it may, the explanation of the children's scenes on the choes is not to be found in these scenes alone.

III. RISE AND FALL OF ATHENIAN PAINTED VASES

In Greek art before 530 BC, the human figure is often shown in a static pose that has remained unchanged for centuries, giving the impression of timelessness. The best athletes have been given a tripod as a prize since immemorial (Fig. 279). These vase paintings and sculptures seemed authoritative because they were part of the tradition and unrelated to the changing visual experience. Between 530 and 400 BC, Athenian vase painters introduced a new way of depicting life. Painters began to evoke a visual experience by breaking away from the conventions of Near-Eastern art. In these representations, human figures were representerd in finite postures. Athenian painters stopped combining angles of view for the human figure, head and legs from the side, chest frontally. Instead, they started to depict man from one angle, resulting in infinite postures. This approach required a mastery of human anatomy and proportions. Additionally, Athenian vase paintings began to suggest movement and three-dimensionality through perspective foreshortening. This development was also observed in sculpture, which underwent dramatic changes at the beginning of the fifth century BC.[212]

Figure 279. Black-figure amphora, c. 550 BC.
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 56.171.13. BA 310310. Public domain.

The new depiction of life on Athenian vases shifted from the traditional conceptual approach, where the world was depicted according to what was known about it. Vase painters started to depict not only what they knew but what they saw. This perceptual approach began to prevail, and artists began to compete to depict

[212] Stewart 2008; Tanner 2016.

people and things as they appeared to them, aiming to achieve the maximum effect of reality. Unusual points of view served this purpose, as seen in the depiction of a symposiast from behind (Fig. 280). He is half sitting on a couch, leaning his left elbow on a pillow and raising his right hand with a cup. In the background is a cup shown from below and a wine-pouring jug. Next to the couch is a three-legged table, and below is a basket where the feasters bring food. This view did not introduce anything new about the symposium that the audience of the time needed to learn, but the scenes matched the visual experience. The angle of view corresponded to what the symposium participant saw when he entered the andron, where the symposium took place. The coaches were set up along the walls, so the first thing he saw at the door was the back of the couch with a symposiast.

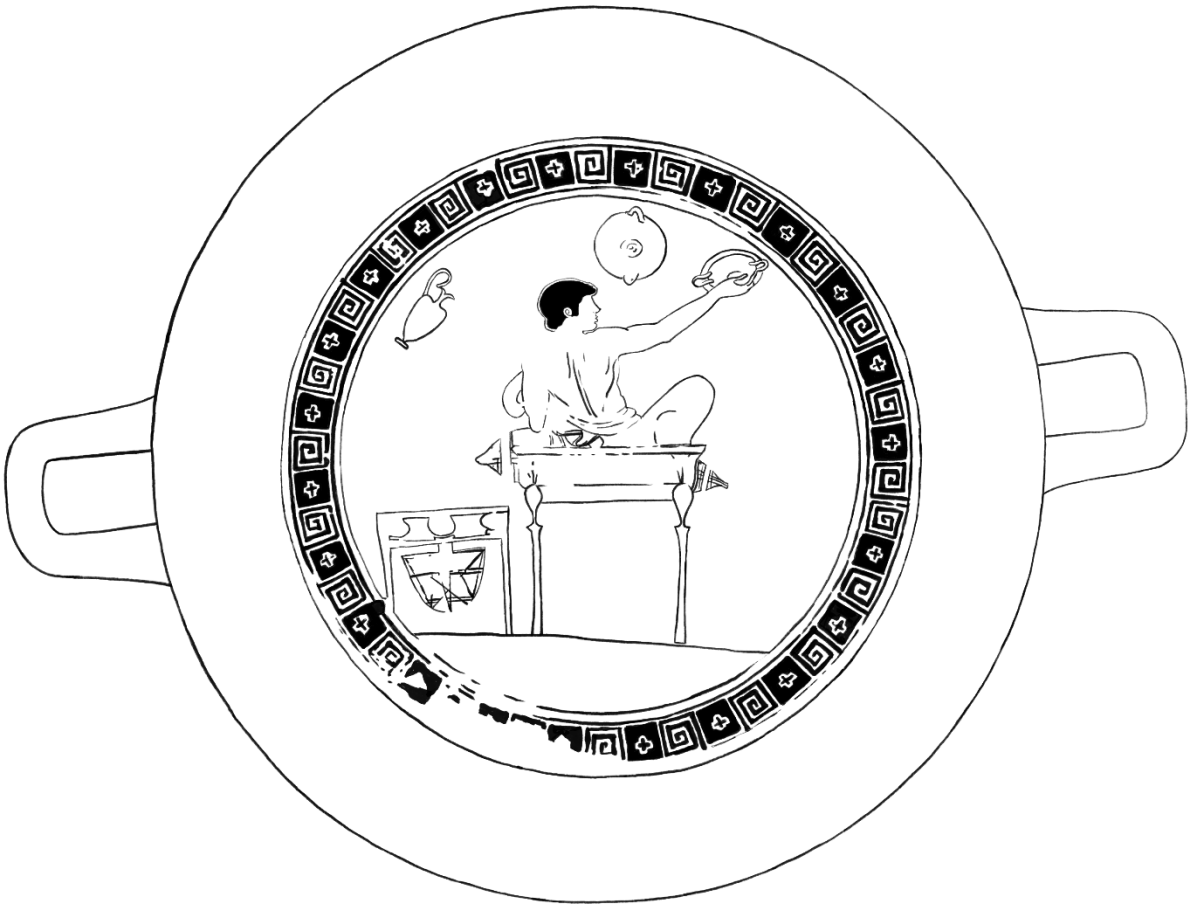

Figure 280. Red-figure cup, 490–480 BC. London, British Museum, inv. no. 1892,0518.1. BA 205273.

In archaic Greek art, viewers formed strong connections with depicted people due to the unchanging nature of pictorial conventions. However, around 500 BC, the new way of portraying human figures emerged, which altered their relationship with the viewer. The figures were now depicted in a relaxed posture, with their legs often pointing in a different direction than their gaze. This new technique made the figures come alive, breaking the connection with the viewer's world and continuing to exist in their own world, absorbed in their environment, stories, and emotions. The new way of representing people captured them in a fleeting moment, making it contingent

and ambiguous, and it could no longer have the binding force of the previous archaic epoch. Jaś Elsner's now-classic article on the 'Greek Revolution' discusses this shift in representation:

> In place of participant observer, whose viewing fulfilled the work of art by creating a temporary bridge across worlds in archaic art, the Classical generated its viewer as voyeur. What we look at in naturalistic art […] is a world in which we might participate but cannot, to which we relate by fantasy, wish-fulfilment and imaginative contextualisation. All the stories we may tell ourselves about such art - fictions generated by the conjunction of the specific moment and gesture in which a naturalistic object appears to have been caught and the desires of the particular viewer - are ways of reading ourselves into its world.[213]

With the change in the display method, what was being displayed also changed. As Robin Osborne pointed out, the 'Greek Revolution' was a revolution in style and content*:*

> The artists of classical Greece saw and represented things differently from the artists of late archaic Greece, but that was part of their seeing different things. We are never going to understand 'the emergence of the classical style' unless we understand the emergence of this style was bound up with the emergence of a new content, a different subject for art. [214]

The two changes in Greek art were not merely shifts in style and themes but significant transformations that reshaped the artistic landscape. The new style of representation revolutionized traditional themes and birthed entirely new characters and themes. This new way of depicting life can be better understood through the vase paintings that rejuvenated traditional themes. The depiction of men feasting and engaging in immoderate drinking was a reflection of a deeply ingrained cultural practice. It was a way for Greek men to assert their privileged social status. However, Athenians could be portrayed in a less flattering light from the late sixth century BC.

The Würzburg cup, for instance, depicts a young man vomiting (Fig. 281). The ivy wreaths on his head, and the girl holding his head symbolize this act. Ivy, a symbol of the worshippers of the god of wine, Dionysos, was also believed to be a hangover reliever, adding another layer of cultural significance to the artwork.[215] However, it did not help the young man, who had already lost complete control of his body, his knees buckling. At the last moment, however, a slave girl held his head so that he vomited only on her legs. Her actions point to her subordinate social status, as indicated by her short-cropped hair. The scene's attractivity was enhanced because it was placed at the bottom of the cup. When the cup was full, only the outer wall of the goblet was visible, with the revellers having a good time and their exuberant procession seemingly endlessly circling. Only after the cup was emptied did the feaster see what awaited those who overdid their drinking.

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[213] Elsner 2006, 85–86

[214] Osborne 2018, 249.

[215] Athen. XV, 17.

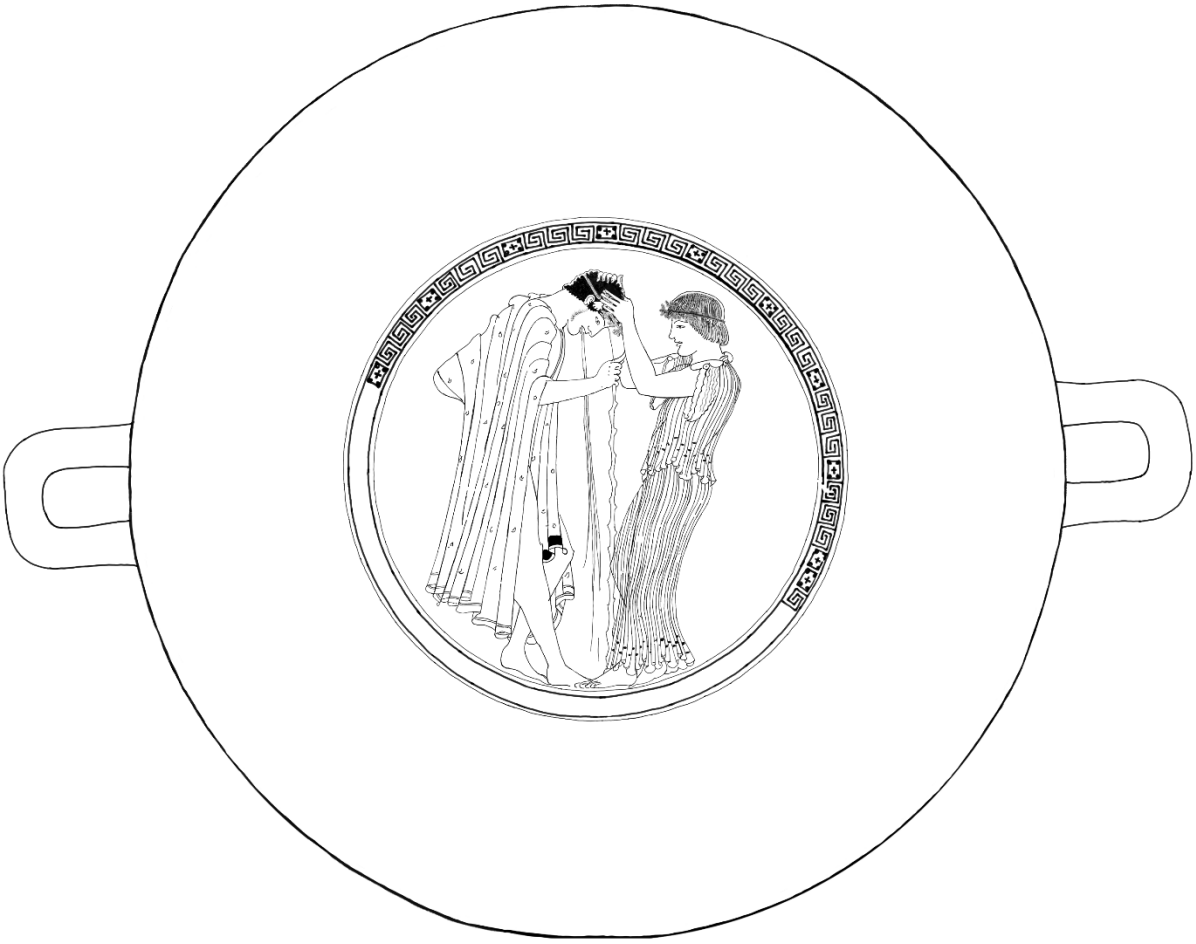

Figure 281. Red-figure cup, *c.* 490 BC. Würzburg, Universität, inv. no. 479. BA 203930.

However, these scenes were not about morality, as evidenced by the scene at the bottom of another cup, which shows a defecting man wiping his bottom with a stone (Fig. 282).[216] He was also apparently at a feast, as indicated by an ivy wreath, walking cane, and cloak hanging around his neck. He is naked, which was an attribute of the komasts, who had ceased caring for their clothes in the wild night revels. The scene takes place on an Athenian street where such a thing could be seen, as Aristophanes' comedy *The Assemblywomen* from around 389 BC shows. Blepyros appears on stage, telling the audience that it is early in the morning and he is looking for a suitable place to relieve himself outside his house. However, a neighbour appears in the window of a nearby house, recognizes him, and calls out to him.[217] As it turns out, he can see him clearly, having noticed that he has worn a woman's dress. Characteristically, the neighbour does not comment on Blepyros defecating in the street.

[216] Aristoph. *Ach.* 1168–73, cf. Papadopousos, 2002.
[217] Aristoph. *Eccl.* 320–28.

Figure 282. Red-figure cup, 510–500 BC. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. RES.08.31b.

Until the sixth century BC, Athenian vases depicted important and laudable events, such as sports competitions, battles, or funeral rituals. When revelling was depicted, the emphasis was on the person having a great time and enjoying his privileged position in society. However, why depict him vomiting and defecating? These events are of no importance; they will have no consequences. The young man will sleep off his hangover, and everyone will soon forget what happened to him at the feast. Of course, the incident did not increase the man's social prestige, but it did not harm it. In the case of the defecating man, the painter did not depict something that Athenians of the time should have done or should have known. This depiction does not hint at a message integral to all previous life scenes. Fighting soldiers, athletes in training, men and women performing religious ceremonies or feasting and all the other depictions of human activity that we find on Athenian vases of previous centuries may have positively motivated those who bought and used the vases. These depictions created patterns to follow. From the late sixth century BC onwards, however, depictions appear alongside these scenes that neither promote nor hinder anything. They do not criticize anyone or anything; they merely state what has happened to someone. They describe something that we have no choice but to accept.

At the bottom of a cup, a symposiast could find a man with a woman at the symposium (Fig. 283). On the left is a barbiton and on the right a basket, in which the symposiasts brought their food. The man is sitting on a stool and holding a cane, so he is not in his home but has just come from outside. He is wearing shoes because he might have stepped in something on the night streets of Athens. The woman is, therefore, not his wife. She is young and exquisitely dressed, wearing an ornate cap on her head, but she is untying a belt of her translucent chiton.[218] She came to the symposium to satisfy men, so she is a prostitute. The man extends his hand to her lap in a gesture that betrays his eagerness. The man is bald, and male baldness was

[218] Lee 2015, 135–136.

associated with sexual activity in Greece, so satyrs were depicted as bald.[219] However, hair loss always signals the loss of youth, a negative fact. The prostitute is well aware of the man's advanced baldness and wrinkled forehead, but she does not lower her head to her hands, which untie the belt; she looks stoically at the man's old, unattractive face.

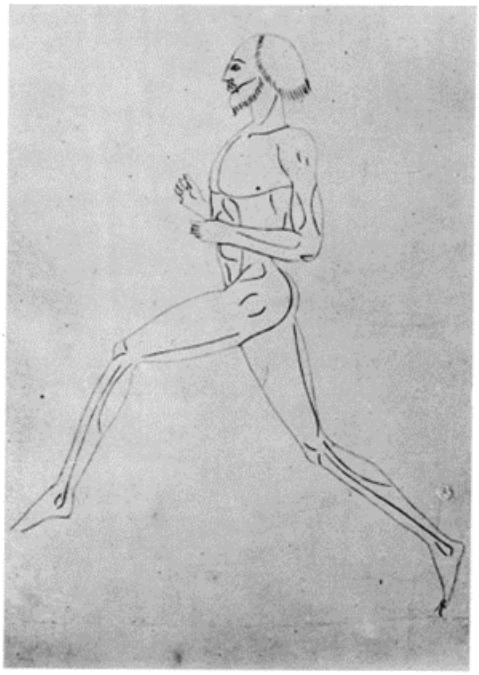

Figure 283 (left). Red-figure cup, the beginning of the fifth century BC.
London, British Museum, inv. no. E 44. After Furtwängler and Reichhold 1904, pl. 23.

Figure 284 (right). Black-figure Panathenaic amphora, 480–470 BC.
Trade Arts Investment. BA 303085. Drawing after Beazley 1929, 14, fig. 7.

While in the preceding and following centuries, men were systematically idealized in Greek art regarding their hair, in classical Athens, we often encounter bald men on vases. Nevertheless, it was not always to make people laugh at such scenes. The Panathenaic amphora was a type of vase that served as a prize in competitions at the Panathenaic games.[220] It always had the goddess Athena on the obverse and an illustration of some discipline in which Greeks competed. A Panathenaic amphora filled with sacred oil was an object of prestige, so it was not appropriate to decorate them with jocular scenes that would diminish their importance. One Panathenaic amphora depicts a cross-country race with the finishing post in front of the first runner, but a bald man lags behind a group of three runners at the head of the peloton (Fig. 284). The painter pointed out that he is still in good physical condition, but it is no longer enough for his younger rivals. John D. Beazley remarked:

> I have drawn the man who is running fourth because on the whole he is the best-preserved of the four, and because his bald forehead is rather touching.

[219] Heinemann 2016, 110–13; Cf. Harlow 2021.
[220] Streicher 2020.

> The race is the dolichodromos and not the sprint: let us hope that this is not the finish but the end of a lap. [221]

These depictions are by no means caricatures, a pictorial genre popular in European art since the eighteenth century, whose name derives from the Italian word 'caricare', meaning to exaggerate. The depicted person is meant to be ridiculed by the caricature, but the authors of the above vase paintings do not exaggerate. A pyxis in Berlin depicts a scene typical of the new iconography, confusion in a cellar (Fig. 285). The environment is characterized by two bowls of food, stacked skyphoi, two bronze stands, and palaestra utensils (bag, sponge, and strigilis) hanging on the wall. Two young men came in with their canes outstretched, presumably because a suspicious rustling was coming from the chamber. The reason for the young men's intervention is small animals that climb on the racks (mice or foxes); cats or dogs entered the chamber with the young men, but instead of chasing away the vermin, they took advantage of the situation and set about eating in the bowls.

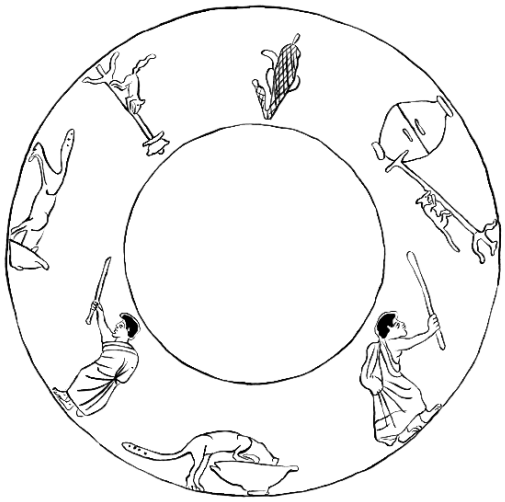

Figure 285. Red-figure pyxis, 460–450 BC. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. no. F2517. BA 211142.

A similarly banal episode is depicted on a pelike in Rome, in which a young man is about to punish a boy standing before him, presumably an enslaved person (Fig. 286). Both the youth and the boy are wearing the ivy wreaths worn by the feasters, so the scene takes place at a feast that the children of free Athenians did not attend. This scene is unlikely to have been painted to make anyone laugh. There is nothing funny about punishing a slave; furthermore, the punishment did not occur. A young man in a himation wrapped around the lower half of his body sat on a chair with a back. Suddenly, he rose from it, grabbed the departing boy's shoulder with his left hand and reached out with his right hand to strike a blow. The next moment, the boy would walk away, and the young man's blow would miss his buttocks. The nature of the boy's transgression is not explicit but related to his erect penis. Whatever preceded the scene depicted, the punishment was not successful. A hydria in Würzburg shows a boy with sandal prints all over his body (Fig. 287). The executor may have been a feaster; above is his basket where he brought food to the symposium. The boy could

[221] Beazley 1929, 13.

just as easily have been beaten by a naked hetaira with a bracelet in the form of a snake on her arm, who kneels before the feaster with her head bowed imploringly. In ancient Greece, the sandal was an attribute of erotic scenes but also an instrument of corporal punishment used to maintain discipline in school.[222]

Figure 286. Red-figure pelike, 510–500 BC.
Rome, Museo nazionale di Villa Giulia, inv. no. 121109. BA 200073.

Figure 287. Red-figure hydria, *c.* 500 BC. Würzburg, Universität, inv. no. 530. BA 2723.

It seems that vase painters were sometimes quite indifferent to what the Athenians thought of the incidents depicted. A frequently reproduced cup depicts a young man being waited on by an old prostitute with a sagging face, two beards, sagging breasts, and fat folds on her belly (Fig. 288). The young man is, therefore, not looking at her; his head is thrown back, and he is only motioning to her with his left hand to keep going. On the other side of this cup is a similar naked couple, the krater they both hold setting the scene on a symposium (Fig. 289). In this depiction, the young man pleasers himself while looking at the hetaira. However, he is not looking at her flaccid body, but at her genitals, which she shows him; her legs spread so that from her left leg, placed on the ground, we see her thigh shown from the side and her foot turned out so that it faces the viewer. That the painter spared the prostitute is not surprising, but that the young man should have settled for such an unattractive partner does not speak flatteringly of him either.

[222] Young 2020.

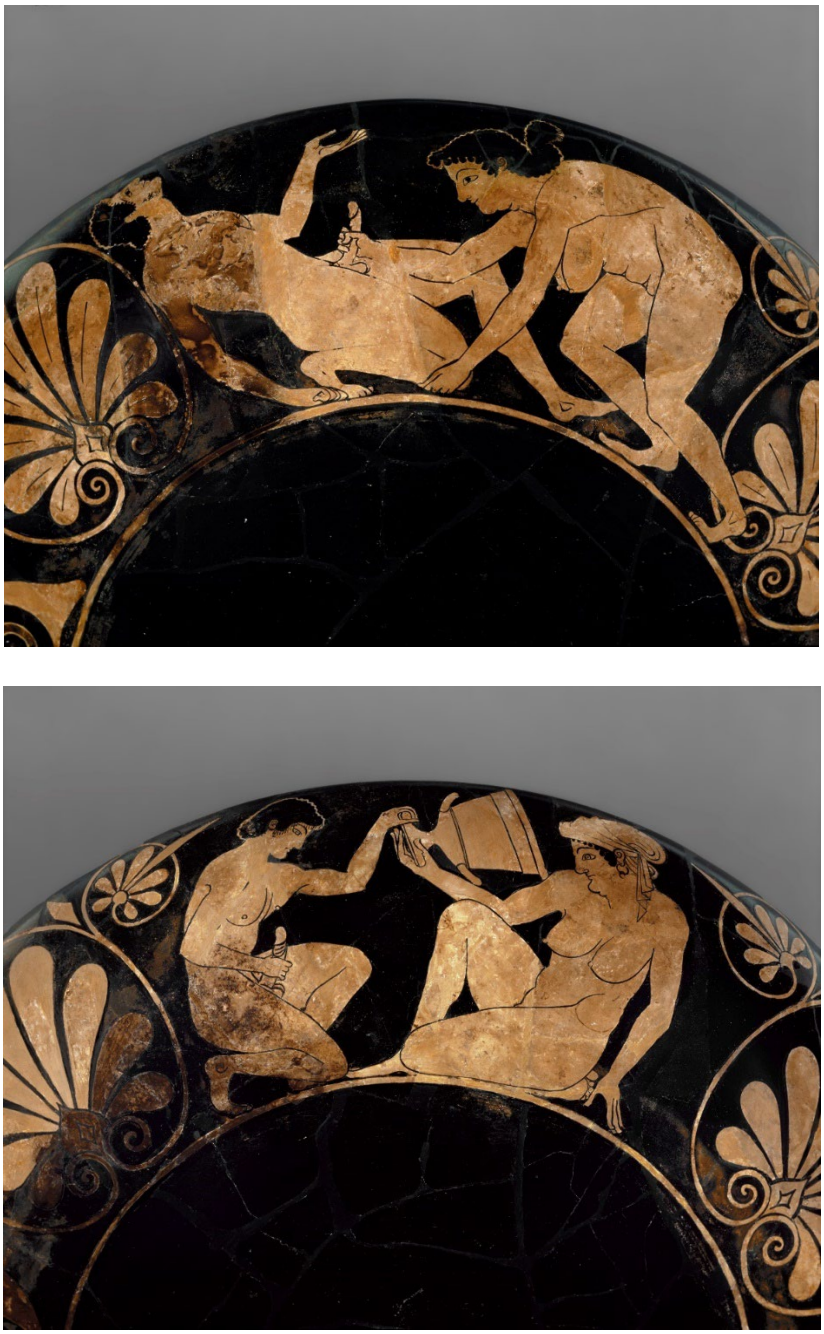

Figure 288–289. Red-figure cup, late sixth century BC.
Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum, inv. no. 80.AE 31, A and B. BA 275008. Public domain.

Couples in sexual intercourse were often depicted on Athenian vases between 520–470 BC.[223] They do, however, appear rarely later, as on an oinochoe in Berlin (Fig. 290). On the chair sits a young man with long hair, whose himation has been brought down to his knees so that his erect penis is visible. In front of him stands a naked girl with her hair carefully groomed, who has placed her right foot on the chair, grabbed the back of the chair with both hands and is about to swing herself into the young man's lap. The young man prepared himself for this by holding tightly to the edge of the seat with his hand so that he would not slide down. The attitudes and

[223] Paleothodoros 2012, 24; Lear and Cantarella 2008, 174–81.

gestures of the two figures are so logical that this was an action that the painter had seen, experienced, or imagined in every detail. This feature has the scene in common with the depiction on the Malibu cup described above. However, it differs fundamentally from it in depicting the relationship between the protagonists. On the cup, their gazes do not meet on either side, but on the oinochoe, by contrast, eye contact is an essential motif in the scene.[224] The young man and the girl are touching head-on, so they must look upwards. The intense eye contact between the acting characters also invites the viewer to empathize with them, just as the two empathize with each other.

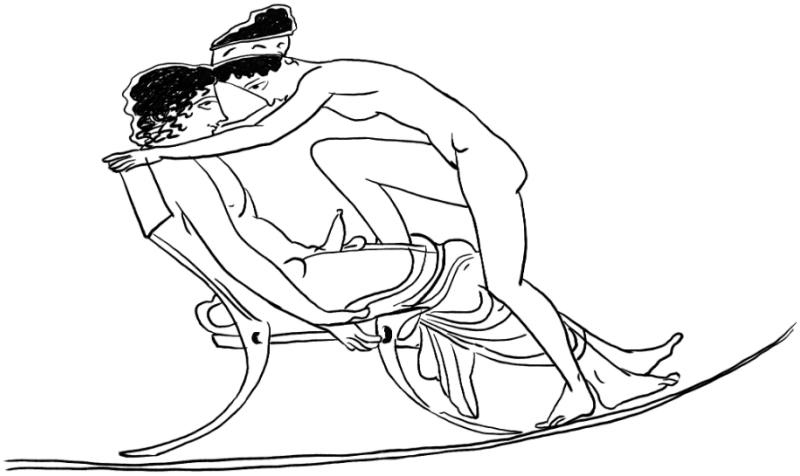

Figure 290. Red-figure oinochoe, *c.* 430 BC. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. no. F2412. BA 216500.

The scene on the Berlin oinochoe is very similar to the scene on the roughly contemporary painting on a bell krater in London, which deliberately excludes identification with the figures depicted (Fig. 291). On the left, we see an almost identical couple to the oinochoe in Berlin, but it is a homosexual encounter. The naked young man sits on a chair on which his cloak is draped, his right arm bent at the elbow, comfortably draped over the back of the chair. His mental state is betrayed by his left arm raised and bent at the elbow, a conventional gesture of trance. There is no doubt about what has aroused him: he has a firm erection, and a young man is about to sit on his lap, looking into his eyes. This action is not some improvisation but a deliberate action. The standing young man's right hand grips the shoulder of the seated one, his left hand rests on the cane, his left leg is raised, and his foot rests on the edge of the chair. In the next moment, he performs a final acrobatic act and coitus, apparently anal, occurs. The standing young man is not acting instinctively, as indicated by the absence of an erection. Both young men are wearing crowns of thorns on their heads, and on the right is a house with a door and a column suggesting a colonnade. Inside the colonnade stands a bearded man in a himation and with a taenia on his head. His stance suggests that he has not stopped here by chance but has been watching the scene from the beginning. The woman in the doorway is equally mysterious, the lower half of the door closed and the upper half ajar. The woman is wrapped in a himation and looks at the young men having sex. Scholars cannot explain the scene; it has also been

[224] Osborne 2018, 141.

associated with the Anthesteria, but there is no convincing reason.[225] It is not a scene inspired by a theatrical performance, as theatrical costumes are not indicated. It is also certainly not something that would have been seen on an Athenian street at the time.

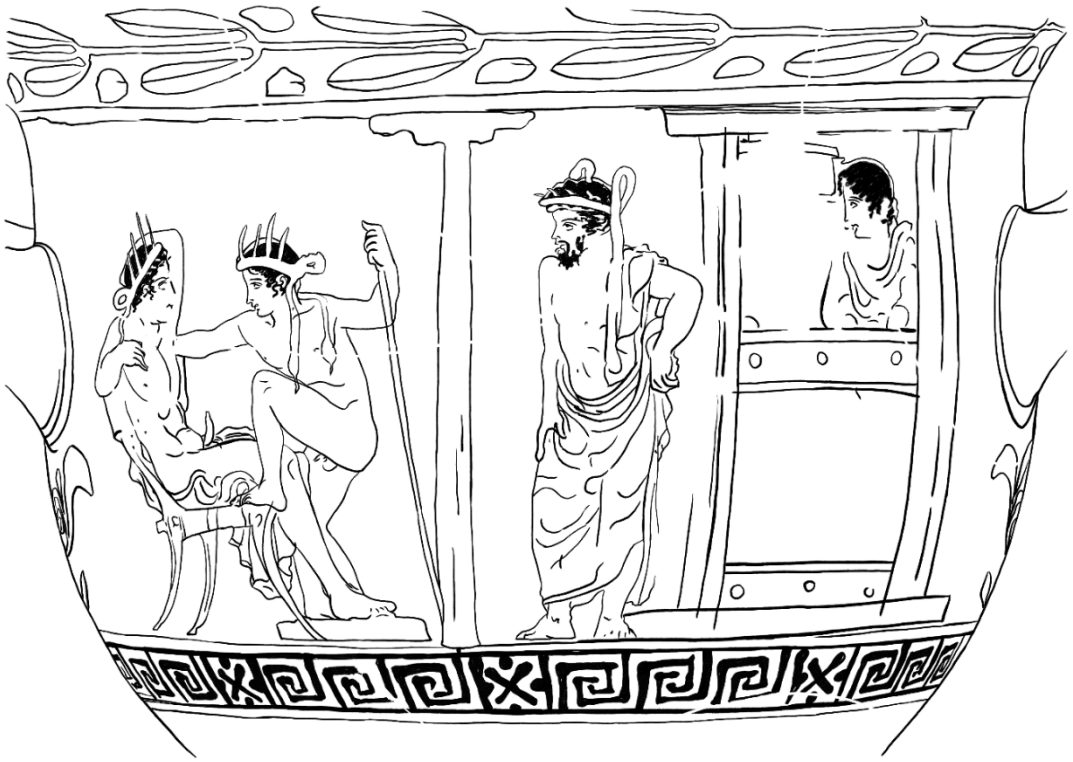

Figure 291. Red-figure bell krater, *c.* 420 BC. London, British Museum, inv. no. F65. BA 215288.

Whatever the scene depicts, it is clear that it is of the same type as the Malibu cup scene. Again, the viewer cannot identify with either protagonist. The seated young man is the only one who experiences anything pleasurable, as suggested by his relaxed posture, hand gestures, and erection. However, his pleasure can have unpleasant consequences. The cane on which the standing young man is leaning is covered by a column so that everything takes place right in front of the man standing in the colonnade. The man has a severe expression, as does the woman in the doorway, neither amused by what they see. So, they are watching the coitus, most likely because they disapprove of it.

The man cranes his neck to get a better view of the pair; he has one hand on his hip and the other resting on the thigh of his forward leg, which is bent at the knee. The woman also has her head tilted forward, but at the same time, she is distancing herself from the coitus couple, not only standing hidden behind a half-closed door but also wrapped in a himation so that her hands are invisible. However, the man and woman are passive, as is the young man sitting in the chair facing them but ostentatiously ignoring them. The only one active in this scene is the young man who is about to satisfy the young man in the chair sexually. He is facing the same direction as the man and woman but is doing the opposite of what the two would like him to do. Whereas

[225] Interpretation of the scene as a parody of a sacred wedding: Blanckenhagen 1976. Against this interpretation: Parker 2015, 66.

in previous centuries, the depiction of life was based on clarity, in the fifth century BC, ambiguity prevailed and gradually gained intensity.

Erotic scenes, however, were only one aspect of a new way of depicting a life characterized by its disregard for established conventions. The Malibu cup features komasts with long beards, who, at first glance, are distinguished from the others by their feminine dresses, chitons and himatia, earrings on their ears, and hair hidden beneath a scarf (Fig. 292). These feasters, sometimes called booners, are distinguished by their exquisite elegance, their passion for music and dancing, and their attitude to wine and women, which was, on the contrary, much more reserved than that known to the other komasts.[226] Below the cup's handle is a column krater festooned with ivy tendrils; next to it stands a booner with a kotyle in one hand that likens him to Dionysos. In his other hand is a cane, so he has his hands full, yet he is depicted in a wild dancing figure, his left leg extended far forward, his right bent at the knee with the foot raised high. His himation nevertheless remained perfectly arranged.

The ordinary komasts were characterized by sloppy dress, often wholly discarded. The booner next to him also dances while opening his himation wide in an elegant gesture. In the scene's centre is a woman playing the diaulos, whom the vase painter has depicted in the same clothes as the booners so that she could be a young man. Another booner walks in front of the flute player, again with an elegant dance step, his hand hidden under the himation raised high. Beside him walked a figure with a parasol, another attribute of the booners.

Figure 292. Red-figure cup, *c.* 480 BC. Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum, inv. no. 86.AE.293. BA 275963. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.

Scholars cannot agree on whom the booners represent, whether they are Greeks, foreigners, or Greeks imitating foreigners from the Near East or merely a figment of

[226] Kurtz and Boardman 1984; Frontisi-Ducroux and Lissarrague 1990.

the imagination of the vase painters.[227] Whether they stirred laughter or scandal, the themes adorning Athenian vases were genuinely one-of-a-kind. These captivating motifs graced Athenian vases for a significant period, from 520–460 BC, and there was no parallel in Greek art before or after. These vases served as a testament to the elite members of Athenian society, showcasing their opulent attire, refined manners, and a touch of effeminate decadence.

Figure 293. Red-figure cup, *c.* 500 BC.
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 07.286.47. BA 201603. Public domain.

Simultaneously, starting in the late sixth century BC, the vase painters focused on the underrepresented figures of Athenian society, such as women, children, and even foreigners. A prime example of this shift is the depiction of an old man with a Maltese dog on the bottom of a cup in New York (Fig. 293).[228] The man's strikingly non-Greek physiognomy, elongated skull, distinctly hooked nose, and fleshy lips indicate ancestry from the Near East. He is wealthy, as indicated by his ornate cloak studded with crosses and dots, but he is ugly, and his hair and beard are grey, with prominent corners. The stranger is hunched over, his face is wrinkled, and he rests his right hand on his cane as he walks so that he might have looked ridiculous to some. Others may have been sad, for the stranger's dog is as haggard and ugly as his master.

[227] Osborne 2018, 178.
[228] Moore 2008; Kitchell 2020.

Both bowed their heads because they knew nothing good awaited them anymore; the man and his dog had grown old together, which had inextricably linked them.

Figure 294. Red-figure hydria, *c.* 470 BC. Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. CA 2587. BA 205691.

Equally atypical but without comic potential is the scene on a hydria in Paris where the Thracian women draw water (Fig. 294). The hydria was a vase for water, so the Athenian women depicted on it were often at the fountain, but in this case, all three women were slaves. They are dressed in simple tunics and have short hair, and their slave status is primarily indicated by their Thracian origins, which are revealed by the distinctive tattoos on their arms and necks.[229] The scene is not set in the city; the women have not come to the fountain in the square but to the rock on which vegetation is indicated. They are in the wild but not free; they are slaves, foreigners who cannot return to their homeland.

[229] Tsiaphaki 2000; Lee 2015, 84..

In addition to foreigners and enslaved people, other figures on Athenian vases were the opposite of the ideal Athenian citizen. A pelike in Boston depicts a young man draped in a himation, followed by a bearded dwarf leading a large dog (Fig. 295). Moreover, the dwarf may be a foreigner because of his African physiognomic features. Dwarfs are encountered in scenes of gymnasia or banquets and are depicted as komasts on either side of a vase at Yale (Fig. 296–297). They are bald, with blunt noses, and are wholly engaged in dancing, having laid aside their clothing. The scene is on skyphos, a vase designed for drinking wine, and just such a vase is on the ground in front of the dancing dwarfs. At the same time, we find on choes representations of children dancing with choes set on the ground. Of course, choes were closely associated with the essential Athenian festival, the Anthesteria, and children played an infinitely more important role in Athenian life than dwarves. Indeed, the Athenians loved their children, something that can in no way be said of the dwarfs. However, the reason why dancing children were depicted on vases was similar. It was amusing.

Figure 295. Red-figure pelike, *c.* 440 BC. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 76.45. BA 214151.

Figure 296–297. Red-figure skyphos, *c.* 450–440 BC. New Haven (CT), Yale University, inv. no. 1913.160. BA 21361. Courtesy Yale University Art Gallery.

Starting around 500 BC, Athenian vase painters began to depict the outside world without any bias for the first time. They portrayed everyday events such as visiting a tomb, a warrior bidding farewell to his family, or an Anthesteria celebration. However, only some paintings conveyed an important message. This innovation was a significant departure from the previous era. Post-500 BC, vase painters did not always have to follow the traditional pictorial tradition. Their paintings often turned inward, focusing more on what was happening within the depiction while completely ignoring the outside world. The characters in the scenes did not have to care about the established norms; the key was always to engage the viewers. What mattered most was to surprise them with something new, never before captured in a painting. It was even better if the viewers could relate to the scene based on their life experiences, no matter what is or is not to be done.

The famous pelike in St. Petersburg, which shows a first swallow, is typical for the new way of narrating stories (Fig. 298).[230] A man and a youth are sitting opposite each other on stools, obviously outdoors somewhere, as they look up at a swallow flying over their heads. Inscriptions come out of the mouths of each figure, reproducing their speech. The young man on the left points to the swallow and speaks first: 'ἰδοῦ, χελιδόν' (look! swallow). The inscription ends at the bird's tail to clarify what he is talking about. The man sitting opposite him turned around, pointed upwards, and said: 'νὲ τὸν ηερακλέα' (indeed, by Heracles!). A boy standing to the right interjected into the adults' conversation, holding his hand to the swallow and exclaiming with childlike directness, 'ηαυτεῖ' (there it is). All gestures and inscriptions point to the subject of the conversation, the swallow flying in the sky.

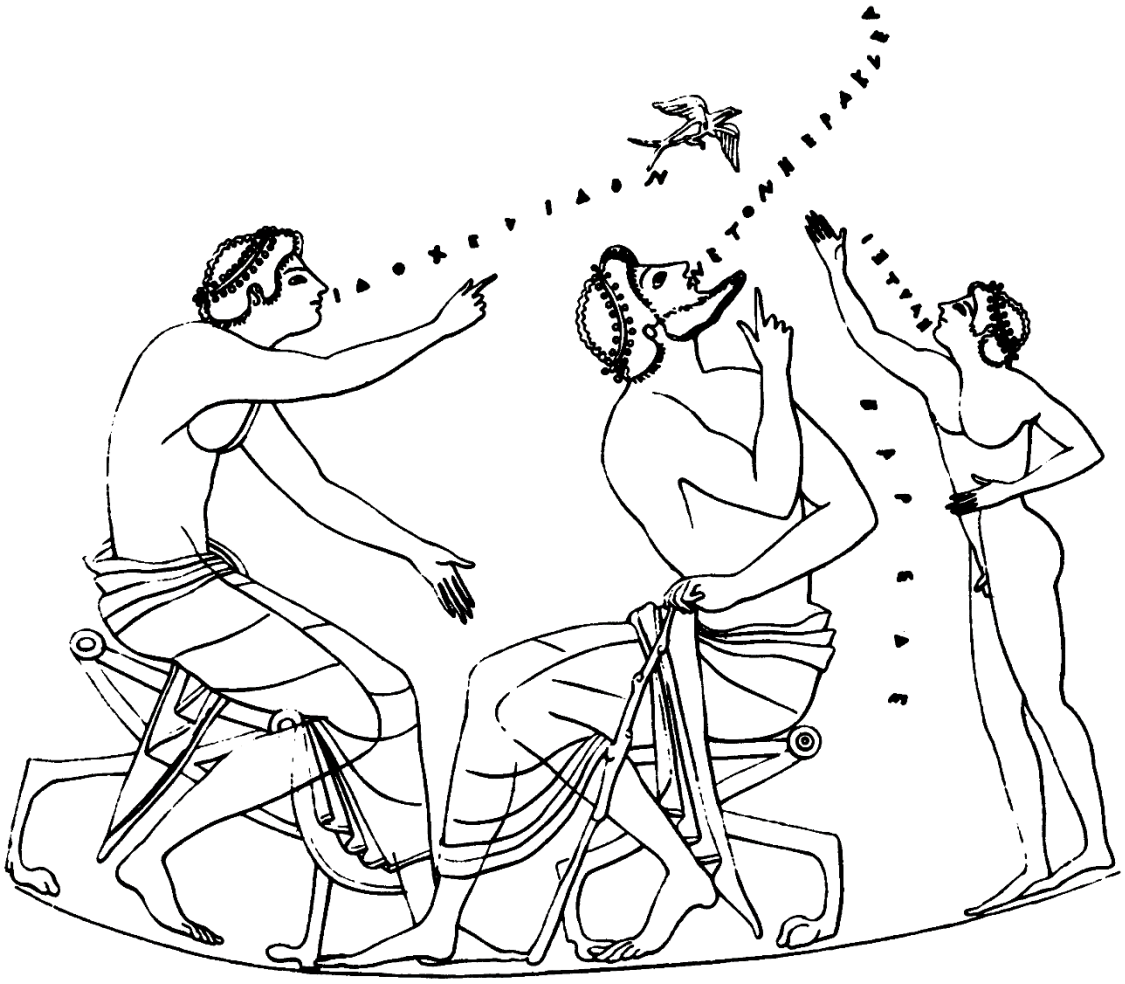

Figure 298. Red-figure pelike, *c.* 510 BC. St. Petersburg, Hermitage, inv. no. 615. BA 275006. After Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Monumenti inediti, Monuments inédits, vol. 2, Rome 1835, pl. 24.

The fourth inscription, 'ἔαρ ἔδε' (it is spring already), is placed vertically between the man and the boy. This inscription points not upward but downward toward the ground; in this way, the painter made it clear that these words were not spoken by anyone represented in this scene. It is a comment by the vase painter who

[230] Panofka 1843, pl. 17,6.

has thus entered into the depicted action. However, it may equally be the viewer's assumed reaction, who similarly evaluated the situation with which he or she was confronted. In this statement, the action's temporal determination refers to the depicted action and the time of the one who painted, is looking at, or will look at the painting. Internal and external time have merged in this representation, so that even today, millennia later, it is 'right now.'[231] We, too, are participants in the coming of spring and all the joys it brings.

The participation of the vase painter connects all the scenes mentioned above because what is depicted is not part of the pictorial tradition. It is an individual statement that invites the viewer to enter the scene. Previously, vase painters were merely renewing what viewers already knew or could know. The painters referred to their colleagues and predecessors, who, in this way, confirmed the importance of the themes and motifs depicted. On the other hand, the author of the scene with the first swallow based the depiction's significance on its uniqueness, and all of the other examples mentioned above are also unique. It is not a tradition that guarantees the importance of a representation but rather a uniqueness. The vase painter is sharing his personal experience with the viewer; maybe he has seen something like this or imagined it; it does not matter, and the viewer may not care. What matters is that it is a personal statement, which always carries more weight than the anonymous source of information.

The meaninglessness, randomness and ambiguity guarantee the authenticity of this testimony. Athenian depictions of life since the turn of the sixth and fifth centuries BC do not come close to how Athenians lived then, but neither do they deviate from it. Only the source from which artists draw inspiration changes, which also changes the content of these representations. The vase painters depart from collective memory, which they replace with individual memory. Instead of universally shared and, therefore, anonymous attitudes, they offer the viewer individual memories and personal experiences.[232]

The social dimension of memory was first nalysed by Maurice Halbwachs in 1925.[233] In the 1980s, Jan Assmann distinguished two components in social memory: cultural and communicative memory in which recollections dominate. [234] Recollections are unique because they are tied to the person who recalls them. Unlike art based on cultural memory, which is conservative and tends towards clearly defined messages and highly polished forms, the depiction of recollections is constantly changing. Cultural memory is passed down from generation to generation, while recollections are random and non-binding. They can never be fixed and are recalled only to disappear, making their essence ephemeral and elusive. Therefore, recollections are a unique and personal way of depicting life, different from the traditional depictions of cultural memory in art.

The fundamental difference between cultural memory and recollection is that only the former can be learned. Recollections cannot be learned; Philip K. Diks used this feature in his short story 'Blade Runner,' which was made famous by the film of

[231] Kim 2017.
[232] Bažant 2004.
[233] Halbwachs 1925.
[234] Assman and Assmann 1988; Assmann and Czaplicka 1995; Assmann 2008; Fragoulaki 2020.

the same name. In this story, the escaped androids are indistinguishable from humans at first glance but can be easily identified by a test that proves they have no memories of their own. The representation of life in Greece up to the sixth century BC was based on cultural memory, and this artistic tradition was characterized by continuity and stability. In contrast, the art inspired by recollections is essentially discontinuous. This incoherence makes it fundamentally different from an artistic tradition based on cultural tradition and myth. However, there is no polarity between collective memory and individual recollections because memory is always a collective phenomenon, regardless of how we define it.

The foundation of recollections is, undoubtedly, personal experience. However, our perception is always shaped by the attitudes of those we interact with and to whom we recount our experiences. As time passes since the event, our interactions with others increasingly color our memory of it. The communicative memory type is always shaped by cultural context, leading individuals to see and remember what is expected of them. Unspoken recollections are subject to societal taboos and are eventually forgotten. Conversely, sharing a memory alters it, as the retelling is based on the narrative rather than the original experience. Each iteration may change the memory and become embellished with fictional elements. However, the resultant communicative memory is fundamentally distinct from cultural memory. The former is always informal, shaped solely through everyday interactions, lacking fixed boundaries and evolving without constraints. The latter, in contrast, is always codified in some manner, and its formalisation can reach an extreme where no part of it can be altered. This extreme is exemplified by sacred texts or icons, where no omission or addition is permissible.

Art inspired by communicative memory does not negate art based on cultural memory. The vomiting feaster, for instance, was a part of communicative memory. Athenians often encountered it at feasts, yet without the figure assuming any universally binding form in literature. The vomiting feaster could have coexisted with the feasters depicted on the seventh-sixth centuries BC vases, revelling in earthly pleasures. Whether the feaster was enjoying himself or suffering the consequences of excessive drinking, he remained a member of the elite. His privileged status could not be undermined by such a triviality as an upset stomach. He, too, was part of the collective memory celebrating the Athenian citizen, even if he was confined to its communicative dimension. This interplay of communicative and cultural memory is a hallmark of vase paintings inspired by recollections.

The pictorial tradition could be supplemented or entirely replaced by the recollection of what the vase painter saw with his own eyes and what he heard, dreaded, or only dreamed about. One can think of something that happened but also something that did not and could not happen. The unreality probably characterizes the scene with bathing girls (Fig. 299). On the trees, they hung their dresses, which they took off, and also the aryballos they brought to the water the oil the Greeks used after bathing. One girl is swimming in the water; two are standing on a high block that serves as a diving board; one of the girls is leaning over to jump down. Trees and rocks outline the bathing area on the sides, and water springs from the right, above one of the girls who washes her hair. Behind her, a girl holds a comb, and another girl with a comb is on the left side.

The scene takes place in the countryside but not far from the city, as indicated by an architectural element - a high block with a cornice and a broad base. The girls may be Nymphs because on the opposite side of the vase is Dionysos sitting in the middle of a vineyard where satyrs, seven in number, are harvesting grapes, the same number as the bathing girls. However, nothing in the bathing scene rules out the possibility that these are mortal maidens. Every man wants to watch women undress and bathe; it does not make a difference whether they are Nymphs or mortal girls. The dreamlike nature of the scene is suggested by the vantage point from which we observe the girls; we are, as it were, in the depths of a dark cave. In any case, what this scene has in common with the previous ones is that it is unique; no other vase painter has painted anything like it.

Figure 299. Black-figure amphora, *c.* 520 BC.
Rome, Museo nazionale di Villa Giulia, inv. no. 106463 (B). BA 351080.

In the late sixth and fifth centuries BC, the artist's recollection could inspire the Athenian vase paintings, resulting in unique scenes that existed only in a single specimen. This innovation tempted researchers to interpret vase paintings as personal accounts. A banquet depicted by one of the best Athenian vase painters is a good example (Fig. 300). Young feasters holding cups of wine sit on three couches, in front of which are tables with food. However, they are occupied by elegant prostitutes wearing chitons and himations adorned with earrings and bracelets. The prostitute on the left couch removes her headscarf and begins to undress, and the eager young man extends his arm to her bosom; on the right couch, the prostitute and the young man embrace. The prostitute stands and vigorously plays the diaulos by the middle couch, as indicated by her upraised chin. The play carries the young man away, as indicates his hand on the top of his head tilted back.

The scene differs in no way from a thousand similar scenes from the lives of the Athenian elite, except that names are attributed to each character. According to the attached inscription, the middle young man is named Smikros, which in Greek means Little One. The young man's name is placed so that everyone will notice that it is a continuation of the inscription identifying the author of the painting: 'Σμικρος εγραφσεν' (Smikros painted). According to some scholars, the inscriptions on the vase represent the first self-portrait of an artist. However, this interpretation may have seemed amusing to an Athenian who saw the vase at the symposium. Vase painters were considered craftsmen at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Working with their hands, they were considered closer to enslaved persons. Smikros depicted slaves on the back of this vase and distinguished them from the feasters by representing them with loincloths. Therefore, the idea of a vase painter being present at a symposium was so absurd that it was ridiculous.[235]

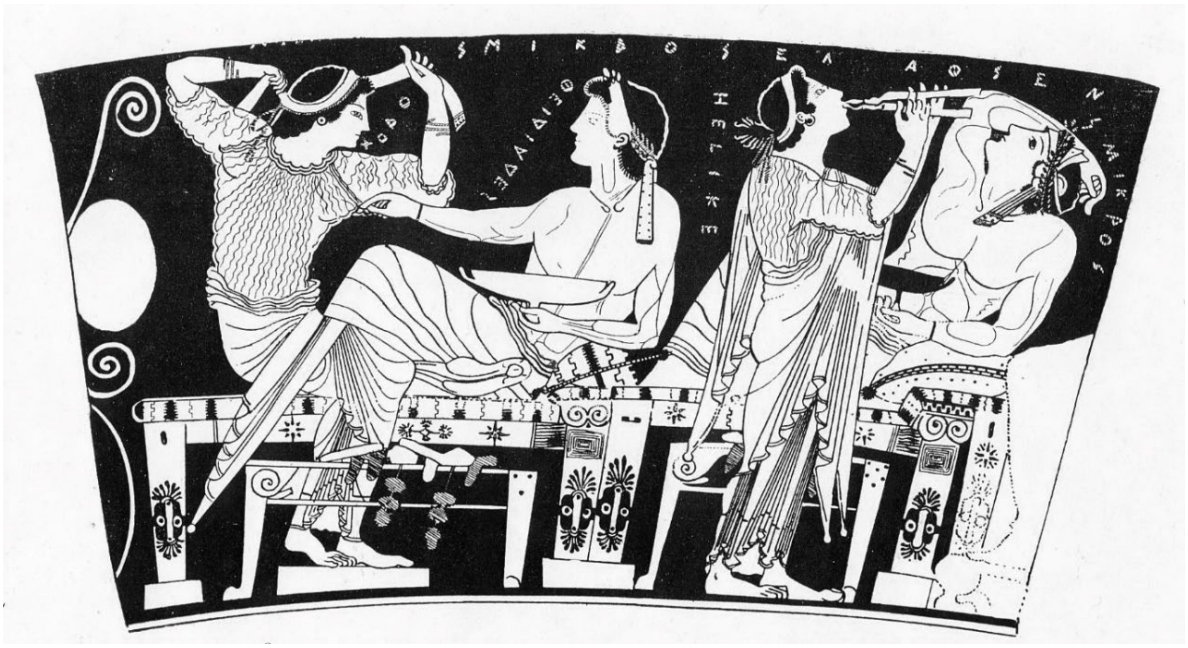

Figure 300. Red-figure stamnos, 510–500 BC. Brussels, Musées Royaux, inv. no. A 717. BA 200102. After Pottier 1904, fig. 3.

[235] Hedreen 2016.

Various forms of memory inspired the depiction of life on Athenian vases, but in many cases, it was also fiction, intended to amuse with apparent impossibility. These scenes did not depict reality but a comic alternative to it. The myth of the Athenian warrior, the hoplite, was a deadly serious matter because the power and prosperity of the Athenian state were based on it. Nevertheless, Athenians in the fifth century BC allowed permutations of this myth in which the exemplary Athenian citizen was replaced by his true opposite. On a pelike, we see a naked satyr with a helmet on his head, putting on knemides and shin guards (Fig. 301). In front of him stands a maenad. The scene reverses similar scenes with hoplites and their wives. On an oinochoe, a naked bearded man also puts on knemides, his helmet resting on the ground beneath him (Fig. 302). Behind the hoplite stands a Scythian archer; in front of the hoplite stands a woman, perhaps his wife, holding his two spears, with a hoplite shield leaning behind her. In the scene with satyr, maenad parodies the citizen's armament by holding a Dionysian attribute, the thyrsus, in her hand outstretched towards the satyr. With thyrsus he will threaten no one. The scene is part of a group of similar scenes with impossible warriors, satyrs.[236]

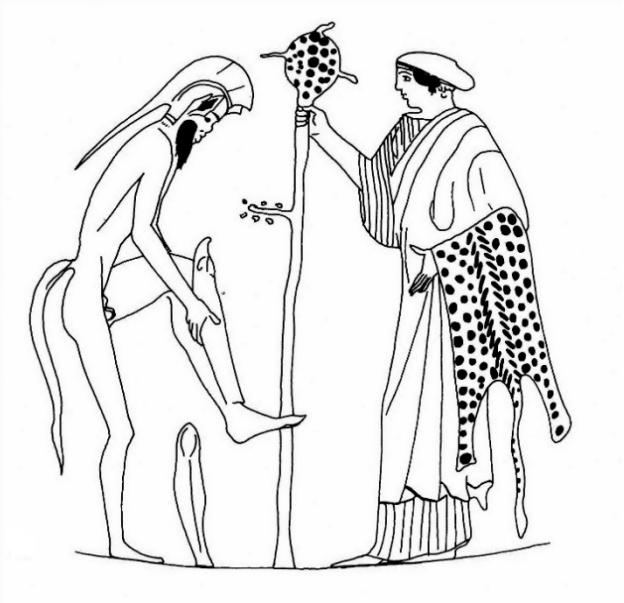

Figure 301 (left). Red-figure pelike, 460–450 BC.
London, British Museum, inv. no. 1865,0103.16 (E377). BA 205622. After Lissarrague 2013, fig. 154..

Figure 302 (right). Black-figure oinochoe, *c.* 500 BC. Ruvo, Museum Jatta, inv. no. 1605. BA 305654.

Their absurd weaponry can emphasize the comicality of the warrior satyrs. At the turn of the sixth and fifth centuries BC, Athenians knew from vase paintings of a warrior running with a light shield called a pelta and a spear in his hand (Fig. 303). At the same time, however, on vases, one could encounter satyr covering himself with animal skin and attacking with a spear in the form of a penis (Fig. 304).

[236] Lissarrague 1990b, 174–75; Osborne 2000, 34–40.

Figure 303 (left). Red-figure cup, c. 500 BC.
Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. MNC736. BA 200940. After Hoppin 1919, 69.

Figure 304 (right). Red-figure skyphos fragment, c. 480 BC.
Thebes, museum. BA 204074. After Lissarague 1990, 155, fig. 88a.

Similarly, a satyr was depicted as a warrior with a pelta at this time, holding a drinking horn in his other hand instead of a spear (Fig. 305). On the other side of the same cup is depicted another satyr with a pelta, blowing an attack on a military trumpet but holding a wine vase in the other hand (Fig. 306). These satyrs also have a penis erect, their primary weapon. A cup with satyrs armed with light shields is decorated on the outside with the new red-figure technique, while the bottom of the bowl is painted in the traditional black-figure, a young warrior with two spears on horseback (Fig. 307). The traditional theme was combined with its parody on the same vase. These inversions of the relationships between Athenian warriors and Dionysos worshippers, men and women, Greeks and barbarians were later never formalized. We often encounter armed satyrs on Athenian vases but find no myth of satyr hoplites. These amusing inversions remained in communicative memory and did not enter cultural memory.[237]

The emergence of communicative memory in vase painting, which draws on personal memories, coincided with the most significant expansion of Athenian vase painting in quantity and quality. Even today, we are captivated by the vase paintings that date back to the end of the sixth and fifth centuries BC, as they were a revelation in their time, constantly surprising with their novelty. Unlike cultural memory, which has limits and constraints, the organic memory that supports communicative memory is limitless and free. It has no taboos or boundaries, and its potential is endless. However, these creations appear effortless, as if sketched in passing. They seem unexplored yet familiar, linked to a shared communicative memory that includes personal memories. The lightly sketched drawings of children playing on small choes are fascinating to scholars and the general public, and they depict the first anatomically correct representations of children's anatomy and psychology in European art.

[237] Osbore 2018, 188.

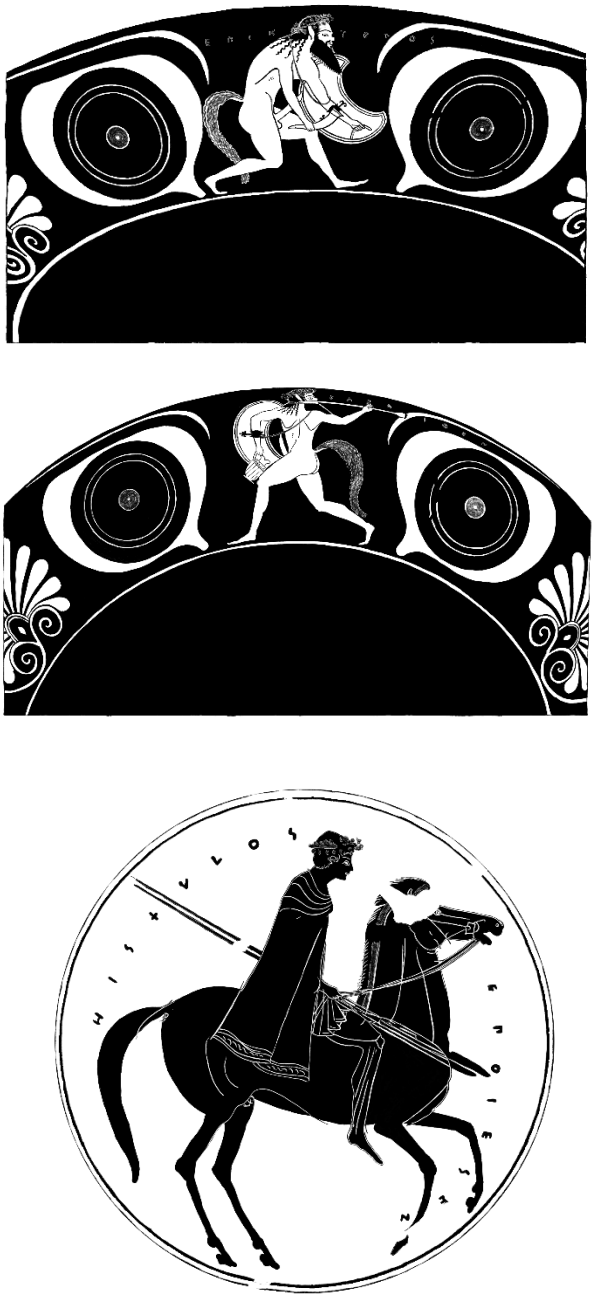

Figure 305–307. Red-figure cup with the black-figure tondo, 520–510 BC.
London, British Museum, inv. no. 1842,0407.23. BA 200309.

Cultural and communicative memories, like the written and spoken word, are distinct. They operate on different codes associated with unique contexts. Cultural memory tends towards unification, its refinement indicating a selection process and reaching perfection over generations. In contrast, communicative memory is egalitarian, lacking specialists or hierarchies that could impede its two-way flow. In everyday communication, we are all equally competent, fostering a diversity of perspectives. Representations of life inspired by communicative memory are informal, aiming for a close connection between experience and its depiction. Authenticity is ensured by naturalness and spontaneity, avoiding established schemes, orthodoxy, and uniformity.

Nevertheless, art inspired by communicative memory cannot exist without art inspired by cultural memory, which it deconstructs. If communicative memory becomes the predominant source of inspiration in some artistic genres, it will erode them sooner or later. From the seventh century BC onwards, the number of Athenian painted vases gradually increased until it peaked in the first half of the fifth century BC and then declined sharply at its end.[238] The evolution of quality follows a similar curve. At the end of the sixth century BC, there was a dramatic rise towards naturalism, and in the following century, vase painters perfected this new style. However, no further innovations were made from the beginning of the fourth century BC, and by the end of that century, the production of painted vases ended altogether. The fall of Greek vase painting was not the result of a crisis of form but of the representation's content.

The revolution in depicting life caused an unprecedented flowering of Athenian painted vases. However, at the same time, it caused their decline, which began in the early fourth century BC and ended at the end of this century, when this millennial tradition came to an end. The scenes that sold painted vases in the previous epoch were integral to tradition. They were handed down from father to son, from generation to generation, so their roots can be traced back to ancient times. The fighting soldiers, training athletes or feasters who dominated Athenian vases up to the sixth century BC had a clear message that could be articulated and conveyed because its meaning was understandable. They were calls to action that benefited society and those who made them. Vase paintings urged men not to be afraid to fight, to prepare for battle by doing sports, and to enjoy food, drink and sex. In the fifth century BC, cultural memory continued to influence the themes depicted in the visual arts. Traditional subjects were often portrayed, sometimes with alterations due to the influence of communicative memory. Nevertheless, the depictions inspired by the communicative memory prevailed.

The vases inspired by communicative memory are deliberately ambiguous. The painter does not identify with the figures depicted, but he does not criticize them. His attitude towards what he depicts cannot be formulated, so it cannot be passed on either. Scenes on Athenian vases drawing on communicative memory have always necessarily crossed the unwritten boundaries of cultural memory. Scenes from life that had become a universally shared norm over the centuries were revived and updated by personal memories precisely because they did not respect this norm. Traditional themes and motifs continued to be depicted, but they lost their binding force, eventually emptying their content. They turned into stereotypically repeated platitudes that no one cared about anymore. The deconstruction of the traditional iconography of the depiction of life was much more interesting because, on the contrary, it constantly brought something new; each such depiction was a sensation.

Deconstruction is a process of breaking down established norms or traditions. However, this process cannot continue indefinitely because once a norm is dismantled, there is nothing left to deconstruct. The more successful the deconstruction process is, the quicker it progresses towards its end. It is also important to note that deconstruction requires a norm to exist, without which it loses all significance. The depiction of life on Athenian vases was a cultural tradition that eventually lost its

[238] Bažant 1990, 106.

justification. Recollections faded from these representations around 400 BC, and although scenes from life still appeared in the fourth century BC, their content was no longer fundamentally innovative. This made them only a faint shadow of the depictions that adorned Athenian vases in previous centuries.

CONCLUSIONS

This book delves into the fascinating depictions of children on Athenian choes, which classical archaeologists have long studied for insights into the lives of Athenian children. However, it was found that the depictions of children on these vases were closely tied to the use of choes - the shape of the vase played a crucial role in determining the meaning of the depiction. While the iconography of choes formed a cohesive whole from the late sixth to the fourth century BC, with various thematic strands interwoven, it was discovered that the depictions on choes were not a comprehensive view of children's lives.

Some choes depicted young Athenians, while others depicted slaves of the same age with the same attributes but in entirely different situations. The depictions of slave children on choes were much less numerous. Still, the two series flowed into one another, blurring the distinction between the two. A systematic analysis of the paintings revealed that they were not a direct reflection of social reality and could not be used to draw definitive conclusions about the lives of Athenian children. Furthermore, no evidence suggests that these vase paintings formed a coherent sign system.

The negative findings of this study are of profound significance as they allow us to view the depiction of children on choes as a legitimate historical source for the first time. The fact that choes were not adorned solely for the sake of the children raises compelling questions. Why were these scenes produced in such a large series? What was the subject of these depictions? Moreover, what was the subject of the depictions of women that appeared on Athenian vases simultaneously? These questions form the heart of this study, and the proposed answers are just one possible interpretation. However, one thing is certain. The changes in late Archaic and Classical Athens were not merely swapping the old hero for the new anti-heroes, men for women and children.

During the sixth century BC, Athenian painted vases predominantly featured depictions of warriors, athletes, and feasters. However, in the next century, there was a significant shift towards children celebrating a wine festival and portraying women at home, in wedding or funeral ceremonies. By the end of the fifth century BC, this trend had accelerated, with women and children becoming the central focus of Athenian painted vases. Nevertheless, the change was not in the subjects but in how life was depicted on Athenian vases.

Between 530 and 450 BC, vase painters drew inspiration from cultural and communicative memory, creating a wide range of representations of life. This innovation led to a significant increase in the thematic repertoire, which increased the production of painted vases. Vase painters continually surprised the public with new motifs and themes. However, this creative explosion carried with it a foreboding of the inevitable end. Between 450 and 370 BC, Athenian vase painters were confronted with a slow but steady decline in interest in their production. They started placing new subjects on vases, such as choes, linked to religious and social rituals, to reverse the trend. With this ingenious marketing ploy, Athenian vase painters secured a temporary market.

However, the lack of direct connection to Athenians' civic values may have contributed to these depictions' gradual loss of meaning, leading to a decline in customer demand. Painted vases began to lose their raison d'être, and by the end of the fourth century BC, the depiction of children and the production of painted vases had ended. After five centuries of successful and sometimes turbulent development, life-inspired representations on vases finally vanished from the Athenian cultural landscape.

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Between the second half of the fifth century BC and the first quarter of the following century, there was an increase in Athenian choes featuring images of children. A systematic analysis of these vase paintings has discovered that the painters did not document the lives of Athenian children, their activities, and how their parents perceived them. However, the choes with depictions of children is a valuable source of historical information on the self-image of Athenian men.