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SCENES FROM THE AETHIOPIS  
ON A BLACK-FIGURED  
AMPHORA.

BY

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REPRINTED FROM  
TRANSACTIONS, DEPARTMENT OF ARCHÆOLOGY,  
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA,

Vol. I., No. 1.

1904.



### SCENES FROM THE AETHIOPIS ON A BLACK-FIGURED AMPHORA.

IN 1896 the Free Museum of Science and Art of the University of Pennsylvania acquired, by gift, a large number of fragments of Greek vases from Orvieto in ancient Etruria. The fragments came from several tombs which were discovered at that time. From the pieces thus obtained several vases were put together in a more or less complete form, and among them was the vase with which this paper is concerned. This is a black-figured amphora, 59.3 cm. or 23 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches high. The body of the vase is black, but upon each side of it there is a panel 23.3 cm. high, in the natural color of the vase, upon which the figures are painted in black and the details scratched in in the manner usual on black-figured vases. At the top of each panel is a border consisting of a double palmette design. The handles are black, except the edges, which are of the natural color of the clay adorned with a border of ivy leaves in black (Figure 1). At the base of each handle is a palmette ornament in black upon a background of the red clay. Above the base is a ray ornament in a band 5.2 cm. broad, the black rays pointing upward. There is no further ornamentation. The diameter of the base of the vase is 19.7 cm., and that of its top 26 cm.

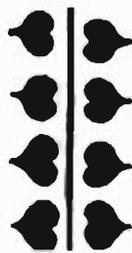


Fig. 1.

On one of the panels (Plate I.) there is seen a dead warrior lying on his back, his head toward the left. He has a red beard and a fringe of red hair. His breastplate is white—that is, of silver—and below it part of the tunic (*χιτών*) is represented in black with a pattern scratched upon it. His greaves are red. To the left is a retrograde inscription  $\text{ΖΟΧΟΙΤΥ}$ . On the left-hand side of the panel are two nude figures running toward the left. Their heads are gone, but their nude state, together with their anatomy, and a comparison with one of the figures on the other panel, make it certain that the painter had represented these as negroes. Pursuing these negroes are three warriors in armor. Of the foremost of the three only the lower part of the head, the neck, right elbow, part of the right hand, and left foot exist. His beard is red, and he wore a helmet of which a small piece is visible. The upper border of his tunic also shows. Next to him came another warrior in armor.

Part of his helmet, which had a red plume, is visible, also a bit of his neck, part of one leg, and the point and part of the handle of his spear. He carried a round black shield ornamented with a broad red band. The third figure is better preserved. His head, encased in a helmet, with a red crest and plume, appears above his round shield. The crest is adorned with a "Greek border" or "wall of Troy" pattern, as in the case of the crests of the two warriors on the other panel. His right arm, right thigh and foot, and part of his left thigh are the only other parts preserved. In his right hand he grasps a spear. He carries a white shield, with a rim on it, and in the middle, as an emblem, a raven in black. Beside his head, and to the right of it, is the inscription Ε Ψ Φ Ο Ρ Β Ο Σ. These letters are faint and at first sight not noticeable, but in a good light they are perfectly distinct, with the exception of the second letter, across which a break in the vase occurs. It is clear from the inscription beside the dead warrior that the artist has represented here the death of Antilochus.

The second panel (Plate II.) is better preserved. In the middle of the vase, and to the right, is a dying warrior on his back, with his head to the right. He wears a white—that is, silver—breastplate, with an elaborate design upon it, and over it a black garment adorned with a highly ornate design, and having a border in the "wall of Troy" pattern. The star in the middle of this garment is white. Below the breastplate are the leather flaps, also in white, and below them the tunic appears in black, highly ornamented. Below the tunic the thigh is seen, adorned with a double spiral and a flower ornament. He wears greaves of black. The helmet is black, with a red crest, also adorned with the "wall of Troy" pattern. Leaning over the dead warrior and facing to the right is another warrior. With his left hand he grasps the dead man by the upper part of his right arm, and with his bent right arm holds the dead man's left arm up to his right shoulder. The dead man's head falls back as he is raised. A bit of red garment shows at the dead man's neck. The lower part of his face, his right arm, and left hand are lost. Beside him lies a spear, and above him is the retrograde inscription > Ο Ξ Ι Ι.

The warrior picking up the dead man has a black breastplate adorned with two scrolls, the upper of which is red. On his chest appears a bit of red, which may have belonged to such a garment as the dead warrior wears. Red appears on the folds of his tunic below the breastplate. He wears greaves of red, ornamented with a face in black, at the knee. On his back is a large, bulging shield, cut out at the sides. It has upon it an elaborate design of a leopard seizing a fawn,<sup>1</sup> and below this group a serpent, with head raised to strike. A red border runs about the inner edge of the shield. Part of the right thigh of the figure is gone.

<sup>1</sup> A leopard or panther attacking a deer appears as the emblem on a shield carried by Athena on a panathenaic amphora published in *Monumenti Inediti dell' Istituto*, vol. i, pl. xxi. On a signed amphora of Amasis in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts Thetis is represented with a shield decorated with a lion attacking a deer.



PLATE I.



Beside this group, to the left, is a warrior advancing to the left and holding in his raised right hand a spear, which he is thrusting into a negro. He wears a helmet with a crest, supported by a writhing serpent. The crest is adorned with the "wall of Troy" pattern. The plume is red, as is the tunic, which shows on the hips and on the right shoulder. This, too, is ornamented with the "wall of Troy" pattern. On the thighs are scroll ornaments. He also wears greaves, and carries a round white shield with a rim, and upon it as an emblem a black dog tearing a piece of meat. To the right of him is his name, ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ.

Further to the left is the negro running away, but partially turned around as the spear of the warrior is thrust into him. He is nude, and carries a moon-shaped shield on his left arm and a club in his right hand. Although running to the left he is facing to the right. His left, and part of his right, thigh, and likewise his left foot, are gone. The Greek warrior's spear pierces his shield and the point comes out in front, and from the wound a stream of blood in red gushes. Above him is written the word ΑΜΑΣΟΣ. The inscription over the dead warrior can only be restored as Ἀχιλλεύς, *i. e.* Achilles. The painter, then, has depicted here the death of Achilles, or rather the rescue of his body. On the two panels, therefore, we have represented two of the most important events described in the lost epic poem, the *Aethiopsis*, namely, the death of Antilochus and the death of Achilles.

The *Aethiopsis*, as is well known, was a work in five books, which took up the story of Troy where the *Iliad* left off. It was the work of Arctinus of Miletus. According to Proclus<sup>1</sup> it began with the arrival at Troy of Penthesilaea and her Amazons, and continued with the story of her death at the hands of Achilles, the arrival of Memnon and his Aethiopians, the death of Antilochus at Memnon's hands, Memnon's battle with Achilles and death, and finally the death of Achilles, the rescue of his body by Ajax, and the quarrel between Ajax and Odysseus. A scholium to Pindar (*Isth.* III, 58)<sup>2</sup> implies that the narrative was also carried through the suicide of Ajax, which Proclus assigns to the *Little Iliad*. The exact limits of the poem are thus seen to be somewhat uncertain;<sup>3</sup> but there can be no doubt but that the deaths of Antilochus and Achilles were two of the important events in it. In fact these two events were connected. According to Pindar (*Pyth.* VI, 28 ff.) Nestor was in danger, and called his son Antilochus to defend him. The son came to his

<sup>1</sup> *Chrestom.*, p. 237, ed. Westphal.

<sup>2</sup> It runs as follows: ὁ τὴν Αἰθιοπίδα γεγραφὼς περὶ τὸν ἄρθρον φησὶ τὸν Αἰάντα αὐτὸν ἀνελεῖν.

<sup>3</sup> It is not my purpose here to discuss the contents of the *Aethiopsis*. In the absence of something better, the words of Proclus, or whoever wrote the account which has come down under his name, must be depended upon. Bethe, in *Hermes*, vol. xxvi, p. 503 ff., tries to throw discredit upon this account.

father's aid and was slain by Memnon. This version of the story differs from that found in Quintus of Smyrna, where Antilochus boldly attacks Memnon and slays one of his friends, when he is in turn slain. It is a well-known fact that the first part of the *Post-homerica* of Quintus is based upon the *Aethiopsis*, but how closely the story of the epic was followed cannot, of course, be determined. Quintus relates that after the death of Antilochus Nestor calls upon another son, Thrasymedes, to avenge his brother, and the latter, accompanied by Phereus, makes an attack upon Memnon, but in vain. Nestor is at length obliged to withdraw, leaving Antilochus in the dust. He goes to Achilles and begs for his aid (II, 388 ff.). Achilles attacks Memnon and, after a fierce battle, kills him. The hero then rushes against the Trojans still more fiercely, is warned by Apollo to desist, and is finally slain by an arrow directed by Apollo (III, 148 ff.). The fight then rages about his body, which is at length carried off by Ajax, who is defended by Odysseus.

This account is of some assistance to us in identifying the figures on our vase. The dead Antilochus is recognized by the name written beside him, which can be nothing else than 'Αντίλοχος. The two nude figures at the left are Aethiopians from Memnon's army. The first two warriors pursuing them would then probably be intended for Thrasymedes and Phereus, if we are to trust to Quintus. The third warrior has his name, Εὐφωρβος, beside him. Here arises another difficulty. The only Euphorbus of whom we have any knowledge was the Trojan warrior slain by Menelaus (*Il.* XVII, 43 ff.), but the warrior on the vase is a Greek. We must conclude, therefore, either that there was a Greek Euphorbus mentioned in the *Aethiopsis* and not elsewhere, which is probably the right interpretation, or that the painter used the name Euphorbus without knowing who he was. In this connection it may be pointed out that in the *Iliad* we find two Trojans and likewise a Greek named Melanippus; and Robert has published<sup>1</sup> a vase in which a Melanippus apparently played a different rôle in the *Aethiopsis* from any of the heroes of the same name in the *Iliad*. It is likely, therefore, that the *Aethiopsis* had some characters which were distinctly its own.

On the second panel Achilles is identified by the inscription above him, and the warrior who is picking him up can be none other than Ajax, as we learn from Proclus. Ajax is, however, defended by Menelaus, who is identified by an inscription, and not by Odysseus, as in the account of Proclus. Here, then, is a variant from the usual story. Above the Aethiopian whom Menelaus is slaying is the name Ἀμασος. This must be intended for the name of the negro, but the word is not found elsewhere in Greek. Amasos is not far from Amasis, and one naturally thinks of the painter of that name, but this cannot be his signature, first because on none of his signed vases is his name so

<sup>1</sup> *Scenen der Ilias und Aithiopsis auf einer Vase der Sammlung des Grafen Michael Tyskiewiez.* This vase is now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

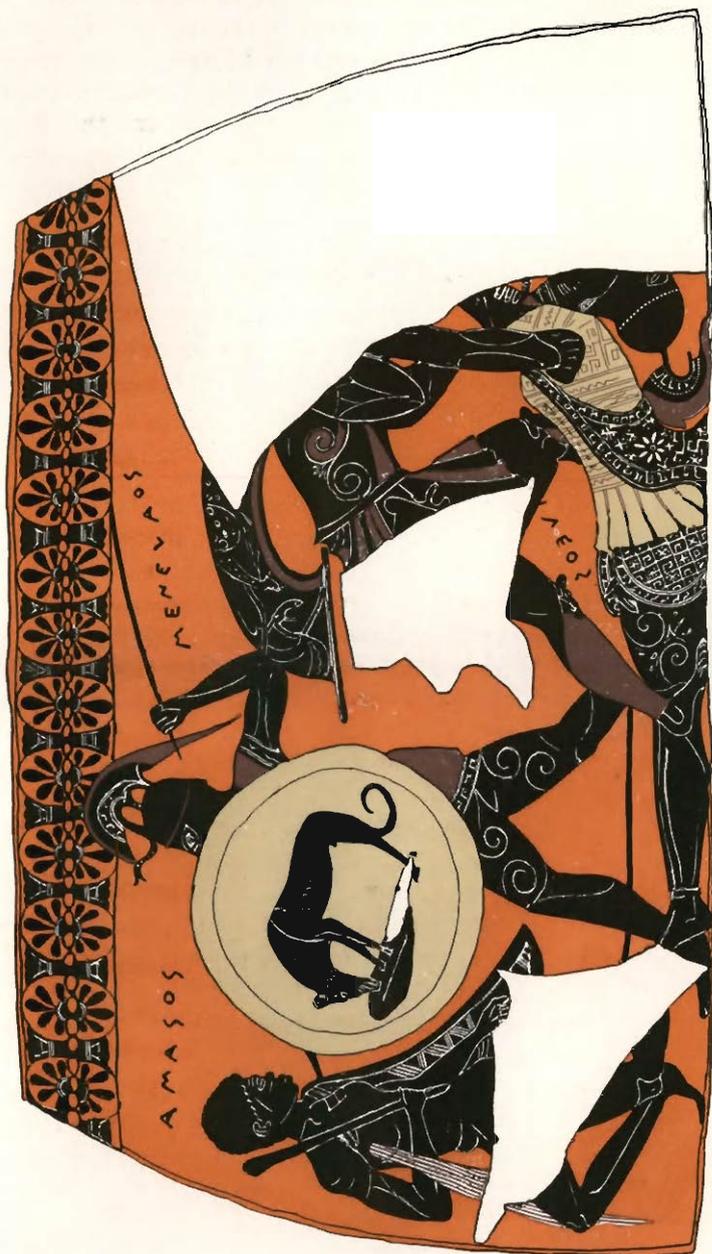


PLATE II.



written; and second the vase is perfectly preserved in this part and there is no trace of ἔγραψεν or ἐποίησεν. The only conclusion which can be reached, then, is that this is the name of the Aethiopian. Whether it occurred in the *Aethiopsis*, or is an invention of the artist, cannot be told.

Scenes from the *Aethiopsis* are not common on Greek vases. Battles with Amazons are, to be sure, frequent enough, but in most of these cases the painter had in mind no thought of the *Aethiopsis*.<sup>1</sup> The combat between Achilles and Memnon occurs several times, but so far as I have been able to discover there are only two other vases in existence upon which the death of Antilochus is surely represented. So, too, the death of Achilles is not often found on Greek vases. The Museum vase is unique in having both these scenes together.

The question now arises as to the date of the vase, and whether or not there is sufficient evidence for connecting it with any known painter. I take up the consideration of the second of these points first.

The vase is of Attic make. That is clear from the inscriptions, which are written in the old Attic alphabet. The presence of the test letters √, and × having the value of χ, not ξ, make this certain. The fact that the vase was found in Etruria is simply one more proof of the extent of the trade in vases carried on between the Athenians and the Etruscans in early times.

If now our vase is examined with a view to determining its authorship, it is surprising to notice how many points of resemblance it bears to the work of the well-known Attic painter Amasis. And, in fact, I think we have good reason for believing that in this vase we have a work by that master. Amasis, as his name shows, was not an Athenian, but he was probably one of the artisans who came to Athens during the reign of Pisistratus. Studniczka<sup>2</sup> has argued from his name and from some of the costumes which he depicts that he came from Egypt, and this seems probable. Loeschke<sup>3</sup> argues that it is more likely that he came from Samos, for the black-figured technique was not employed at Naucratis in the time of Amasis, and various details in his work show familiarity with Ionic rather than Attic armor. The first of these points is, however, no argument, for Amasis would naturally make the kind of vases for which he found there was a demand upon his arrival in Athens. In his work he followed closely the black-figured technique, and was very little influenced by the red-figured style which began to come in during his lifetime. His compositions in general seem to have been simple in character, but he took great pains in working out the ornamental details. Klein<sup>4</sup> enumerates seven signed vases

<sup>1</sup> Bethe denies that the Penthesilaea episode was part of the *Aethiopsis*, cf. op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> Εφημ. Ἀρχ. 1886, p. 117 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Pauly Wissowa, *Encycl. s. v.* Amasis.

<sup>4</sup> *Die griech. Vasen mit Meistersignaturen*, p. 43 ff. The Boston Museum of Fine Arts has two amphorae and a fragment of a cylix bearing the signature of Amasis.

of Amasis, and on the basis of these Studniczka,<sup>1</sup> Adamek,<sup>2</sup> and others have attributed to him certain unsigned vases. The points of resemblance to his work on the Museum vase are these: (1) The drawing and general appearance of the figures is the same. (2) The ornamental details are carefully worked out, *e. g.*, the breastplate and garment of Achilles, and the helmet of Menelaus. (3) The ornamental patterns used on this vase are also found on signed vases of Amasis, *e. g.*, the star ornament on the armor of Achilles occurs on a vase published by Gerhard and now in the British Museum;<sup>3</sup> and the other ornament consisting of crossed lines and dots  appears on a signed vase published in the *Archäologische Zeitung*, 1884, pl. 15. The "wall of Troy" pattern upon the helmets appears also upon the vase published by Gerhard just mentioned. It should be stated here, however, that some doubt has arisen as to the interpretation of the signature upon this vase. (4) The face of the Ethiopian is certainly drawn by a man who had seen negroes, and if Amasis were a native of Egypt, or came from the East, he would be more familiar with black men than the native Athenian artists. As a rule, the negro is most absurdly drawn on Greek vases.<sup>4</sup> The only other vase that I know upon which negroes are well drawn is the vase in the British Museum mentioned above. On this vase, too, they carry clubs, and one a shield similar to the shield upon our vase. (5) Furthermore, under each of the handles of the vase is a palmette design, which, it has been pointed out, was one of the characteristics of the work of Amasis. (6) If the vase in the British Museum is really the work of Amasis, we have in that case also scenes from the *Aethiopsis* painted by him. (7) Then, too, his vases are known to have been exported to Etruria, for a signed vase of his has been found at Orvieto, the place where the Museum vase was found, and part of its decoration was of the same ivy-leaf pattern found on the handles of our vase. When we consider all these points together, there is considerable probability, I think, that our vase actually is from the workshop of Amasis. If by any possibility the lost parts of the panels could be recovered, it would not be at all surprising if the name of Amasis were found written upon them.

If then the vase is to be attributed to Amasis, its date, which might have been approximately settled by the style, becomes more certain. It must have been painted in the last quarter of the sixth century, perhaps not far from 525 B.C.

WILLIAM NICKERSON BATES.

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *Unsignierte Vasen des Amasis.*

<sup>3</sup> Gerhard. *Auserlesene griech. Vasenbilder*, pl. ccvii.

<sup>4</sup> Compare, for example, the vase in Vienna published in *Monumenti Inediti*, vol. viii. pl. xvi, representing Heracles slaying the army of Busiris.

<sup>5</sup> If the contention of Loeschke and Karo be correct that this is not a signature of Amasis and that the vase should really be assigned to Execias, there would be some ground for attributing the Philadelphia amphora also to him. Furtwangler would refer both vases to Execias.