

THE GRYPOMACHY  
IN  
FOURTH-CENTURY ATTIC VASE-PAINTING

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FOURTH-CENTURY ATTIC VASE-PAINTING

By

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## ABSTRACT

In the fourth century B.C. the depiction of the grypomachy, a battle between griffins and a group of Eastern barbaroi identified as the Arimasps, became popular in Attic vase-painting. The presence of a non-Greek scene upon Greek ceramics at this time indicates a continued interest in the representation of Orientalia and implies a desire to design wares that would appeal to foreign markets. The Introduction considers Greek and Near Eastern representations of the griffin and its role in vase-painting prior to the fourth century. Chapter 1 examines the ancient sources that deal with the griffins and Arimasps, singly or in relation to each other. In Chapter 2, the grypomachy scenes found on Attic pottery are discussed, with emphasis on the representation of the griffin and the Arimasp, in an effort to ascertain the degree to which the visual representations correspond to those found in the literature of Chapter 1. Catalogue A lists, with illustrations, the vases decorated with grypomachy scenes. Chapter 3 discusses a scene related to that of the grypomachy: Arimasps and griffins working in co-operation with each other. This type of scene parallels others found on fourth-century pottery, those of gods riding griffins, and suggests iconographic contamination. The scenes examined in Chapter 3 are described and illustrated in

Catalogue B. Chapter 4 examines the art of ancient Iran and Scythia, the lands most closely associated with the Arimaps in ancient sources, in an attempt to discover the source of the grypomachy scene. In Chapter 5, the possible sources of the fourth-century grypomachy are discussed, along with the influences which affected the representation of its participants and the market for which the scene may have been developed.

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3. Ibid., fig. 7.
4. Ibid., fig. 8.
5. Ibid., fig. 9.
6. Ibid., fig. 10.
7. Ibid., fig. 11.
8. Ibid., fig. 17.
9. Ibid., fig. 18.
10. Ibid., fig. 20.
11. Ibid., fig. 25.
12. Ibid., fig. 26.
13. Ibid., fig. 28.
14. Ibid., fig. 29.
15. J. Boardman, Athenian Black Figure Vases, fig. 8.
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#115. LIMC, fig. 364\*.

#121. LIMC, fig. 464.

## INTRODUCTION

As the eighth century B.C. began, the production of representational art resumed in Greece, most notably upon Attic pottery of the Geometric style. While vases of the preceding Proto-Geometric period had occasionally displayed animal figures, such figures were the exception to the rule of the period's style of decoration, which utilised motifs of circles, semicircles and wavy lines. The succeeding Geometric style saw greater experimentation and innovation in vase decoration, and the employment of new motifs and patterns of abstract decoration. Gradually the Geometric vase-painter began to incorporate figures, first animal and then human, with the patterns drawn on his works,<sup>1</sup> but it was not until the later stages of the period, after the mid eighth century, that the use of figural decoration became a widespread practice.

The adoption of a more figural style by the Greek artist was precipitated by an increased interest in the art of nearby civilizations, specifically those of the Near East. Although the Greeks had been in contact with Oriental peoples prior to the mid eighth century, this contact does not appear to have exerted a great influence on the art forms of the early Geometric period.<sup>2</sup> During the latter half of the eighth century however, as the Greek population grew in size

and prosperity, developments in the areas of trade and colonisation were accelerated. These developments brought Greeks into closer contact with foreigners, giving them increased exposure to a wide variety of artistic ideas, styles, and motifs, many of which the Greeks willingly borrowed or emulated. This Orientalising phase of Greek art saw a gradual abandonment of Geometric traditions, both in style and subject matter. Greek artists adopted and adapted the methods of representation which dominated Eastern art and the very motifs and subjects included in such representations, among which was the griffin.

The griffin was but one of the exotic animals found in the art of most Near Eastern civilizations. Depictions of the creature may be found in Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, and other Oriental works, varying in overall concept and specific characteristics.<sup>3</sup> Many or all of the types of griffins thus found may have wielded some degree of influence upon the Greek griffin of the Orientalising period, but the most probable prototype appears to be the Late Neo-Hittite griffin.<sup>4</sup> This form of griffin displays the usual characteristics found upon Greek representations of the animal, especially in regard to its head.

Fashioned like an eagle, the Late Neo-Hittite model provided for the Greek artist sported short and stubby ears projecting from the top of the head, large and wide-open eyes, and an open beak, the upper portion of which was

executed as that of a predatory bird and the lower as the muzzle of a lion. A long volute beginning at the back of the head ran along the neck of the griffin, terminating in a tight curl, and a spiral curl ornamented the griffin's forehead.<sup>5</sup> Typically such creatures existed as protomes, a form of projecting decoration found upon large bronze tripod cauldrons. This type of vessel, which seems to have originated in the kingdom of Urartu,<sup>6</sup> was imported to both the Near East and Greece. The Greeks imitated this vessel form and similarly adorned it with the griffin, but the creature gradually assumed a form which allows it to be designated as a Greek creation.

Greek griffin protomes of the seventh century B.C. found at sanctuary sites such as Olympia, Delphi, and Samos display many of the same features found upon their models, such as the wide eyes, stubby ears and open beak.<sup>7</sup> However, some modifications are also present on such works. Ears become longer, the forehead's tight curl is replaced by a tall, vertically projecting knob, the beak begins to curve over dramatically, and the lower portion of the mouth becomes more bird-like, with an elongated and prominent tongue seen projecting from it.<sup>8</sup> Necks appear longer and more sinuous than previously and the general appearance of the seventh century griffins is slenderer than that of their models.<sup>9</sup>

The works of the Near Eastern civilizations that were most influential in the Orientalising phase of Greek art were

found in media other than ceramics, such as the bronze works described above and textiles which have not survived, since the Near Eastern ceramics are mostly unassuming in character. However, the survival of such a great quantity of Greek pottery makes it possible to trace the inspirations derived from Near Eastern cultures in this medium. In particular, the style of Eastern art which saw animals organized in heraldic disposition or in files travelling around the body of a vessel<sup>10</sup> exerted a strong influence on Orientalising pottery and was readily adopted by the Greek vase-painter.

Griffins found upon vases from the Orientalising period can be seen in both of the Eastern compositions described above. (fig. 1-7) The heads of these griffins, presented in profile, are rendered in similar fashion to those found upon the bronze cauldrons from the same period, with open and curved beaks, raised and pointed ears, a round and wide frontal eye, and a volute descending along the neck. Forehead ornamentation may also be seen on some examples. Generally these are smaller than those found on the bronzes, and may assume a T-shaped form as well as that of a rounded knob. The long, serpentine neck displayed by the bronze protomes, however, is not present upon vase griffins, whose eagle heads rest directly upon thick lion necks.

The medium of vase painting allowed the depiction of the complete figure of the griffin, and there is remarkable consistency in the rendering of the creature as a whole.

Greek Orientalising griffins are conceived of as composite creatures, with eagle's head placed upon a winged lion's body which in turn rests upon feline paws. The wings of the griffin are quite simply drawn, their feathers marked only by solid lines. Originating from a point directly above the forepaws of the griffin, the wings lie tightly against the torso and then project upwards above the animal's back. In the initial stage of the Orientalising period the uppermost tips of the wings appear practically straight and vertical, but gradually curve until they form a pronounced semi-circle, similar to that of the creature's beak, in the last stages of the period.<sup>11</sup>

Griffins adorning vases of this period adopt a variety of stances. Many are found in a stalking pose, crouching on forepaws with hind legs straightened as if in preparation to leap forward (fig. 1,7). Others are seen as if marching or walking sedately (fig. 2,3), or crouching with rear limbs folded beneath their bodies and forepaws stretched slightly forward (fig. 4,5,6).

The tendency to decorate the surfaces of vases with animal figures is especially strong in the pottery of the Proto-Corinthian and Corinthian styles, and the griffin is one type of fantastical creature shown thereon. As the city of Corinth was responsible for the invention and development of the black figure technique which came to dominate Attic pottery, and was the probable source for the animal friezes

used in its decoration, it is worthwhile to examine the griffins found on works from this region.

Generally, the Corinthian griffins are drawn like those from other areas of Greece, displaying similar features and found in the same poses as those mentioned above. The most frequently seen variations in the representation of the griffin are found in the ornamentation of the creature's head. While volutes running along the neck are still seen on some examples (fig. 10), this area may also be decorated by a larger circular or ovoid section (fig. 8,9,14). In some cases the overall appearance of the head is changed, appearing now as an oversized beak (fig. 12). Often there is no appendage attached to the griffin's forehead (fig. 8,13); but this does not seem to indicate a total abandonment of the feature, which is still seen on other representations (fig. 10,11).

The few representations of griffins found upon vases of the Attic Black Figure style, which began its development late in the seventh century, occur in works dating from the end of that century to the middle of the sixth century, and therefore from the early Black Figure period (fig. 15,16,17). Typically these representations follow the same trends in depiction seen on Proto-Corinthian and Corinthian vases, with similarities extending beyond the actual form of the griffin to the larger compositions in which it was found. By the end of the seventh century when Attic vase-painters adopted the Black Figure technique, the overall concept of



how a griffin was to be portrayed had been established and only subtle changes, again focused about the creature's head, occur after this time. Attic Black Figure artists then borrowed not only the technique of the Corinthians, but also the manner in which they drew the animal. However, the Attic vase-painter was also capable of innovation and this may be seen both in regard to the physical appearance of the griffin and its stance. An unusual griffin is found upon the shoulder of an amphora, among birds and horses (fig. 18). This griffin possesses the standard features of all other representations, but is marked as female by the teats found on her lower torso, one of only two such griffins from the archaic period.<sup>12</sup> Her pose is also unusual for she is seen in a "flying gallop" position, as if chasing someone or something. This amphora appears as the only example from the early stages of Black Figure which involves the griffin in some form of action.

As noted above, animal figures were predominantly incorporated into Greek vase decoration in one of two manners, either as one element of a procession of figures running around a vase, or in a more stationary, heraldic pose. These trends continued from the Geometric period up until the time of the production of Corinthian ware. During this long period griffins were also shown singly, decorating large surfaces of vessels such as oinochoai.<sup>13</sup> In whichever of these three compositions the griffin was depicted, its

function remained the same, and that function was purely non-narrative. The griffin had also been seen in non-narrative purposes in the Bronze Age of Greece, as on wall paintings of the palaces of Knossos and Pylos where griffins flank the rulers' thrones, and upon Minoan and Mycenaean seals.<sup>14</sup> The larger works of the Bronze Age upon which griffins are found may not have been known to later Greek artists, but chance discoveries of smaller pieces may have influenced the manner in which the animal was shown when it re-emerged after Greece's Dark Age.<sup>15</sup> A more direct influence was certainly found in the Oriental art forms emulated by the Greeks.

As adapted by the vase-painters of the Geometric period, the Eastern manner of depicting animals allowed no representation of vigorous action nor did it encourage the connection of any creature, including the griffin, with a particular scene or setting. This concept of the use of animals continued in the Corinthian ware that so influenced Attic Black Figure pottery, and so it is not surprising to find the same treatment of griffins on Corinthian vases and those of early Attic Black Figure. However, as the technique of Black Figure developed in Athens, those artists who practised it moved away from purely decorative representations to paint narrative, figural scenes. The new direction of Attic vase-painting may shed some light upon the disappearance of the griffin from the repertoire of Attic vase-painters.

As interest in narrative scenes developed, more and more of the surfaces of vases were devoted to their depiction, leaving little room for the purely decorative animal friezes of earlier times. The griffin, a decorative motif borrowed from another civilization, played no role in native Greek mythology and legend, upon which Black Figure narrative scenes were based, and so was drawn less frequently. In Classical times the griffin was relegated to a truly subordinate role upon Attic pottery, appearing only as a device on the shields of Athena, Amazons or other warriors.<sup>16</sup>

The lesser role granted the griffin by Attic vase-painters of the Classical period is echoed in other media of the era. During the seventh and sixth centuries, griffins were frequently seen on works executed in terracotta, stone relief, bronze, gold and gems, but few examples of the griffin are found upon such types during the fifth century. Seals display more griffins than any other media, showing the creature in combat with other animals, in heraldic composition, or singly. In two instances,<sup>17</sup> a griffin may also be seen attacking a human figure. Two terracotta plaques from Melos, dated c. 480-440/30, also depict griffins, these ones pulling chariots occupied by Eros and a goddess.<sup>18</sup> Griffins were also seen during the fifth century as ornamentation on the helmet of Phidias' Athena Parthenos.<sup>19</sup> The few examples of griffins from media other than pottery

during the fifth century indicate that the decreased representation of the creatures was common to all.

The end of the fifth century saw a gradual renaissance in the depiction of griffins in all artistic media, and they enjoyed great success throughout the fourth century. At this time the griffin became an all-important component in a popular narrative scene found on Attic Red Figure pottery, which saw the creature doing battle with a legendary people, the Arimasps.

## NOTES

1 J. Boardman, Pre Classical. From Crete to Archaic Greece, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1967, pp. 58-60.

2 M. Robertson, A Shorter History of Greek Art, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, p.4.

3 Concise discussions of the various forms of griffins found in the art of these ancient civilizations may be found in Furtwangler's article "Gryps" (pp. 1742-1777 Ausführliches Lexikon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie, ed. W.H. Roscher, Leipzig, 1884-1890) and in C. Daremberg and E. Saglio, Dictionnaire des Antiquites grecques et romaines, Vol. II, Part II, Paris, 1896, p.1668-1673.

4 E. Akurgal, The Birth of Greek Art, London: Methuen, 1966, p. 183.

5 As seen on a bronze protome from Praeneste, Etruria executed in Late Neo-Hittite style (Akurgal, pl. 18).

6 Robertson, op. cit., p.4; T.J. Dunbabin, The Greeks and Their Eastern Neighbours, reprint of 1957 edition, Chicago: Ares Publishers Inc., 1979, p. 42; See also J. Boardman, The Greeks Overseas, London: Thames and Hudson, 1980, p. 55 for the general influence of Urartian art on Greek; M. van Loon, Urartian Art, Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archeologisch Instituut, 1966, pp. 110-111 for specific reference to the importation of Urartian cauldron protomes, including the griffin, to Greece; B. Piotrovsky, Urartu, London: Evelyn and Mackay, 1967, pp. 36-43 for cauldron ornaments generally and pp. 41-43 for importation of the type to Greece and Etruria.

7 e.g. Griffin protome from the Acropolis at Athens, Oxford 1895.171 (Dunbabin, pl. VII).

8. e.g. Griffin protome from Olympia, c. 650 B.C., Olympia Museum (Akurgal, pl. 57).

9. e.g. Bronze protome from Rhodes, 7th C. B.C. (Robertson, fig. 6).

This development is well illustrated by the series of griffin attachments found at Olympia. The two earliest examples from the site possess short, rounded ears, bulging eyes, fairly rounded beaks, and squat forehead ornaments. An example from the mid seventh century is fashioned with longer ears and the tip of its beak curves over more sharply than

those of the earlier griffins. Four other protomes, dated from the mid seventh century to ca. 620 display slimmer ears, more sharply curved beaks, and higher forehead ornaments. See Deutsch/German Archaeological Institute. Die Funde Aus Olympia. ed. Alfred Mallwitz and Hans-Volkmar Herrmann. Athens: S. Kasas, 1980, pl. 30 -37.

10 The inspiration for the decoration of vases with animal friezes may have been derived from pieces such as a bronze vase from Luristan in Northwestern Iran. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, acquisition # 64.259.1A) Although this particular piece is early, ca. 10th - 9th c. B.C., it may be assumed that similar pieces continued to be produced at later dates. See "Ancient Near Eastern Art", reprinted from Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin (Spring 1984), New York, fig. 62.

11 Delplace, Le Griffon, p.18.

12 Another example of a female griffin may be seen on a plaque from Olympia. See Delplace, Le Griffon, p. 40 & 83, and fig. 108.

13 Ibid., p.17; as in fig. 9,14.

14 e.g. Gold seal from tomb at Pylos with recumbent griffin. R. Higgins, Minoan and Mycenaean Art, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1967, fig. 237 and Anna Maria Bisi, Il Grifone: Storia di un motivo iconografico nell'antico oriente mediterraneo, Rome, 1965, Tav. XIII.

15 Boardman, Pre-Classical, p. 105. Here Boardman discusses seals dating from the seventh century found on the island of Melos. He states that these seals copied those from the island's Bronze Age tombs both in shape and in decoration, as in the case of the griffin. The Melian seals are also discussed in Delplace, Le Griffon, pp. 70-71.

16 Delplace, op. cit., p. 123.

17 Ibid., p. 182 and fig. 221.

18 Ibid., fig. 173.

19 References to the many representations of the Athena Parthenos may be found in Delplace, op. cit., p. 123-124 n. 543 and 544. The griffins on her helmet are also cited in Pausanias, I.24.6

## CHAPTER 1 - LITERARY SOURCES

Beware the sharp-beaked hounds of Zeus that bark not,  
the griffins, and the one eyed Arimasbian folk,  
mounted on horses, who dwell about the flood of  
Pluto's stream that flows with gold. Approach them not.

Aeschylus, Prometheus Bound,

803-806

So spoke Prometheus to the distraught Io as he described the long wanderings which lay before her, and in these few lines Aeschylus was able to enumerate succinctly the most essential elements of a legend which gained great popularity in the works of Attic potters during the fourth century B.C. Present here are the two all important characters of the legend, griffins and Arimasps, the gold in which they share a mutual interest and, implied in Prometheus' warning, the dubious nature of both beings. Aeschylus' passage remains as the earliest extant commentary dealing with the legend, the details of which are more fully drawn in the works of Herodotus.

In the third book of his Histories, Herodotus digresses from his recounting of the expedition led by Darius, king of the Persians, against the Scythians, a people who inhabited

what is now known as Southern Russia, to comment upon the geography and customs of that country. In recording the fact that the northern reaches of Europe abound in gold, Herodotus admits that the method by which it is obtained is a mystery, but that it was commonly related that the one-eyed Arimaspians stole it from griffins who kept watch over the precious metal.<sup>1</sup> This story may have reached Herodotus' ears during his own travels to the Black Sea, the northern shore of which comprised part of the Scythian territory, but it was also known to him through the writings of a certain Aristeas who came from Proconnesus, an island in the Propontis.

As recorded by Herodotus, Aristeas had ventured to northern Europe, travelling past the Black Sea settlements of the Scythians to the land of the Issedones, beyond whom dwelt the Arimaspians, beyond whom dwelt the gold-guarding griffins.<sup>2</sup> After his journeys were over, Aristeas returned to his native island of Marmora and wrote a poem of epic proportion,<sup>3</sup> no longer extant, which dealt with the Arimaspians and presumably included an account of their battles with the griffins for possession of the creatures' hoards of gold. As Aristeas himself did not travel into Arimaspians territory, he encountered neither griffin nor Arimaspians, but based his account on tales told him by the Issedones.<sup>4</sup> It was with these people, according to Herodotus, that the stories of Arimaspians and griffins originated, and they were in turn handed down to the Greek world by the



Issedones' southern neighbours, the Scythians.<sup>5</sup> Having reached the Greek world in such a fashion, Herodotus categorizes the legend of the Arimasp and griffins as one based merely on hearsay and is openly skeptical about its veracity.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, the legend captured the imagination of both the Greek and Roman world, as is evidenced by its reappearance in the works of later writers of both civilizations.

In the first half of the first century A.D. Pomponius Mela of Tingentera compiled a geographical survey of the inhabited world, De Chorographia. The second book of his summary deals, in part, with the land of Scythia. Here, it is told that part of the Scythian territory was totally uninhabitable due to the presence of a race of wild beasts, the griffins, who mined gold from deep within the earth. The griffins fiercely and tenaciously guarded and protected their gold from the Scythians, among whom were the one-eyed Arimasps, and the Issedones, both of whom attempted to gain possession of it.<sup>7</sup>

Similarly, Pliny the Elder in his Natural History, while discussing the various tribes of Scythia gives an account of the Arimaspians. He too notes that they are "remarkable for having one eye in the centre of the forehead," and that they are known to wage continual war with the griffins for the gold the beasts have recovered from the earth. Writing in the second half of the first century A.D.,

Pliny was removed in time from the height of this legend's pictorial popularity, and openly acknowledges that his sources for its telling are Herodotus and Aristeas of Proconnesus, two among many authorities on the subject.<sup>8</sup>

Pausanias, who composed his Description of Greece in the mid second century A.D., again acknowledging Aristeas as his source, also makes mention of this version of the legend.<sup>9</sup> Its longevity is attested to by the writings of Gaius Julius Solinus, a Roman writer of the third century A.D., who does not remark upon the one eyed physiognomy of the Arimasp but does elaborate on other details; the especially savage and brutal nature of the griffins, and their jealous guarding of both gold and precious gems.<sup>10</sup>

Although these ancient sources span eight centuries they are remarkably similar, in fact almost identical in the basic details of the legend. This kinship is not surprising considering that three sources trace their respective versions back to the poem of Aristeas,<sup>11</sup> and the others may have drawn upon not only his work but also that of Herodotus. The veracity of some details are questioned, as by Herodotus who doubts the existence of one-eyed men,<sup>12</sup> and Pliny who judges the griffins to be fabulous,<sup>13</sup> but all are duly recorded. One detail of particular importance is the location of the battles between Arimasp and griffin, for in other sources the home of the griffin is far removed from this northern setting.

India occurs as the second most frequently cited setting for the gold mining activities of the griffin. First to make mention of this location is Ktesias, who wrote both a history of Persia and a separate work on India. Writing just after Herodotus and probably basing his work on that of the older historian, Ktesias placed the griffins in northern India where they busied themselves by extracting gold from the ground, which had a high content of the metal.<sup>14</sup> There is no mention made in Ktesias of the Arimasps, a fact not surprising in view of the great geographical distance separating their Scythian home from India.

The second century A.D. Greek writer Lucian, while disregarding the occupation of the griffins, supports Ktesias' belief that their home was in India.<sup>15</sup> This opinion is also adhered to in Philostratus' Life of Apollonius, a work of the third century A.D. Apollonius lived in the first century A.D. and had made a pilgrimage to the Brahmin sages of India while a young man. According to Philostratus, one of the Brahmins confirmed to Apollonius the existence of the griffins in India, and their employment in the quarrying of gold.<sup>16</sup> And finally, while refuting the claim to their existence, Arrian, in his second century A.D. history of Alexander the Great, the Anabasis, does acknowledge the stories which speak of griffins in India who guard gold mined not by themselves, but by an extraordinary species of ant.<sup>17</sup>

This connection between a race of ants concerned with

the procurement of gold and the race of griffins, also involved in such a task, is not peculiar to Arrian alone. A connection between the two groups is also found in the De Chorographia of Pomponius Mela,<sup>18</sup> and the Aethiopica of the third century A.D. writer, Heliodoros.<sup>19</sup> These accounts appear as a bridge between those which treat the mining of gold from beneath the earth's surface as a pursuit belonging exclusively to the griffin, and those which view it as an activity performed solely by the "fox-sized" ant, and may represent an attempt to quell the confusion created by the existence of the two traditions.

A fragment of a late work of Sophocles has been interpreted as being descriptive of the gold mining ant, and thus as an allusion to the gold of India.<sup>20</sup> This early reference to such ants is followed by other, similar references found in a variety of sources. Strabo, working in the first century B.C., makes mention at least twice of such inhabitants of India, ants who guard the gold they dig up as fiercely as the griffins were said to guard theirs.<sup>21</sup> And Arrian, in his work on India, an account based on those of the fourth century B.C. writers Nearchus and Megasthenes, also relates the same tale, albeit with strident reservations.<sup>22</sup>

Sophocles alone among these sources does not provide a location of the activities of these ants, but they do appear in the works of Herodotus. The section in which he deals with

the tribes of India contains a reference to ants large in size, who, while burrowing into the ground create large heaps of auriferous sand, from which the Indians extract the precious ore.<sup>23</sup> Thus it appears as if the tradition of such creatures located in India was equally as old as that of the griffins in Scythia, and both may be no more than an attempt to explain the difficulties involved in the mining of gold.<sup>24</sup> Herodotus' reference to the ants is, however, of particular importance in regard to Ktesias' account of the griffins.

Ktesias remains as the first extant source to locate the griffins in India, and as it is likely that Herodotus figured as a prominent source for his work it is easy to conclude that his episode of the griffins was a borrowing of Herodotus' Indian ant episode. The two are remarkably similar not only in location but also in the manner in which their respective creatures perform their tasks. The only glaring difference is that of the nature of the creature. It has been stated that Ktesias' aim in writing his work was to discredit Herodotus, and that in attempting to prove Herodotus wrong he may have fabricated facts or recorded false or inferior tales simply because they were different from those of Herodotus.<sup>25</sup> The episode of the griffins in Ktesias appears as one in which he has deliberately altered the work of Herodotus, and in doing so has transported the animal far from Scythia which, if Ktesias' tale is a mere amplification of previous stories, appears to be the true home of the

griffin. This setting was certainly that accepted by the fourth century B.C. Attic potters who chose to portray the griffins engaged in battle with a group of exotic foreigners, identified as the Arimasps of northern Europe.

## NOTES

- 1 Herodotus, Histories, III.116, ed. C. Hude, Oxford: 1927.
- 2 Ibid., IV.13.
- 3 Ibid., IV.14.
- 4 Ibid., IV.16.
- 5 Ibid., IV.27.
- 6 Ibid., III.116.
- 7 Pomponius Mela, De Chorographia, II.1.1-2, ed. C. Frick, Leipzig: Teubner, 1935.
- 8 Pliny, Natural History, VII.2.10, ed. T. Page. Loeb ed., London: W. Heinemann, 1967.
- 9 Pausanias, Description of Greece, I.24.5-6, trans. W.H.S. Jones, Loeb ed., London: W. Heinemann, 1978.
- 10 Gaius Julius Solinus, Collectanea Rerum Memorabilium, XV.22, ed. T. Mommsen, Berlin, 1864.
- 11 The question of whether or not the latter two of these sources, Pausanias and Pliny, derived their account directly from the account of Aristeeas is discussed in J. Bolton, Aristeeas of Proconnesus, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963, pp. 27-33.
- 12 Herodotus, Histories, III.116.
- 13 Pliny, Natural History, X.70.136.
- 14 Ktesias, Fragment 45.26, Jacoby, F., Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker, Vol. IIIc, Leiden, 1958.
- 15 Lucian, Dialogues of the Sea Gods, XV.327, ed. H. Rabe, Leipzig, Teubner, 1906.
- 16 Philostratus, The Life of Apollonius of Tyana, III.48, trans. F.C. Conybeare, Loeb ed., London: W. Heinemann, 1912.
- 17 Arrian, Anabasis, V.4.3, ed. A.G. Roos, Leipzig: Teubner, 1910.

- 18 Pomponius Mela, De Chorographia, III.7.62.
- 19 Heliodorus, Aethiopica, X.26, ed. I. Bekker, Leipzig: Teubner, 1855.
- 20 Sophocles, Fragment 26, preserved by Photius, Sophocles: The Plays and Fragments, Vol. II, ed. Lewis Campbell, Heildesheim, 1969.
- 21 Strabo, The Geography, XV.1.44 and XV.1.37, trans. H.L. Jones, Loeb ed., London: W. Heinemann, 1959.
- 22 Arrian, Indica XV.4-8.
- 23 Herodotus, Histories, III.102.
- 24 W.W. How and J. Wells, A Commentary on Herodotus, Vol. I, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912, p. 307.
- 25 J. Bigwood, "Ctesias as Historian of the Persian Wars", Phoenix XXXII; 1, 1978, pp. 23-24.



## CHAPTER 2 - GRYPOMACHIES

Although literary references to griffins are numerous, they rarely include physical descriptions of the creatures. The most detailed account of the appearance of the griffin is found in Ktesias,<sup>1</sup> who writes of the griffin as a beast with the beak and head of an eagle, white wings, dark blue throat, black plumage on its back, and red plumage on its chest. Even this description gives only a minimum of detail, but a clearer picture of the common perception of the griffin may be arrived at via a study of Attic pottery of the fourth century B.C.

The griffins found on fourth century pottery share several common features. Essentially the beast is a composite of eagle and lion, possessing feline body, limbs and tail, an eagle's head and beak, and large wings. A particular type of ear, resembling those of a horse or donkey, also adorns the creature's head, and either a mane or, more frequently, a comb like that of a rooster is attached to its long neck.

The colouring of the griffins on Attic pottery differs dramatically from Ktesias' description. In contrast to the white winged creatures of his account, the majority of these griffins are white throughout torso, limbs and head, with wings executed in what appears to be a red or brown wash. There is no differentiation between the plumage on the

chests or backs of the griffins; in fact there is no plumage on these areas. It may be assumed, since the griffins are drawn with lion bodies, that their bodies were meant to be perceived as covered in fur, and this fur is depicted consistently as being of one colour, whether white or some other shade. In one instance (cat. #65), three griffins are shown with a dark ring around their throats, which recalls Ktesias' description, although these rings are black, not dark blue. The use of few colours in the depiction of the griffin on pottery was no doubt related to the red figure technique and its chromatic limitations. Working within the boundaries of this technique a fairly consistent colour scheme was developed by the fourth century vase painters, and its most noteworthy component was the use of additional white. Commonly used for purposes of highlighting in fourth century vase painting, the white here covers entire figures in dramatic contrast to the black ground of the vases. This extensive use of white is perhaps indicative of a desire to focus upon the griffin in scenes of grypomachies, as the fantastic participant of the battles, and to give emphasis to its exotic and other-worldly nature.

The same consistency displayed in the colouring of the griffin appears in the form given the creature by fourth-century vase painters, which adheres to the brief descriptions found in ancient sources.<sup>2</sup> The picture of the griffin set forth by the vase painters is however much

more elaborate than those found in literature. Several details of decoration found singly or in combination re-appear on numerous fourth-century griffins, and focus especially upon the neck and head of the creatures.

As previously stated, the griffin was conceived of as having the head of a bird of prey, usually designated as an eagle. The most prominent feature of an eagle-headed griffin is its curved beak, generally depicted as slightly agape. Upon fourth-century vases, the precision with which this feature is rendered varies greatly. Some are very pronounced and extremely realistic, their tips curving down into a sharp point and enclosing the lower portion of the beak (e.g. cat. #23 lower left figure), others are quite rounded and short. (e.g. cat. #60, #67).

Other facial features display the same variation in rendering as the beaks. Many griffins are drawn with realistically furrowed brows and penetrating eyes, others with oddly shaped beaks and strangely vacant eyes, both of which give them the look of a dinosaur rather than a bird of prey. Nonetheless, all remain recognizable as eagle-headed. The noted variations appear as a reflection of the skill of the artist and the care taken in the execution of the figure, and not as an attempt to alter the conventional depiction of the eagle-headed griffin. However, at least one instance occurs in which such a deviation is clearly the intention of the artist, and quite a different griffin is presented.

In form, the griffin found on a pelike now in Leningrad (cat. # 62) is the same as all others, possessing the standard feline anatomy and large wings. However, it also possesses a face which, while difficult to identify as that of another specific creature, is definitely not that of an eagle. The sharp and curved beak of the eagle is absent and seen instead is a short and rounded snout. This griffin is also remarkable for the ornament found upon its head. Projecting out from the top of its head and between its two ears is a long tendril which curves backward and terminates in a tight curl above the back of its head. In addition, a thick black line travels down the length of its neck, bringing to mind the image of a lion' mane. These deviations from the conventional depiction of the griffin aid in designating this example as a lion-headed griffin, unusual in grypomachy scenes but seen occasionally on other Greek-executed works.<sup>3</sup>

While the Leningrad griffin is unique in the shape of the projection on top of its head and the mane along its neck, decoration of these two areas is quite common on other representations of the griffin. Head projections are commonly seen as quite rounded and squat knobs, sometimes drawn as totally separate entities (e.g. cat. #27, #43, #46), sometimes as an extension of the comb which travels up the neck of the beast (e.g. cat. # 65). Great diversity is displayed in the rendering of the griffins' combs. They may consist of

only a few or very many teeth, rounded and squat or long with definite points. In some instances (cat. #48, #59, #67), the teeth of the comb are rectangular and project horizontally from the neck rather than changing their angle as they travel along its length. One black line often travels up the middle of each individual tooth, running from base to tip. Again, while the comb is a regular feature of the griffin, its inclusion in the rendering of the animal is not a hard and fast rule. Apart from the lion-headed griffin mentioned above who sports a mane in lieu of a comb, there exists at least one example of an eagle-headed griffin who also carries this feature (cat. #13). Running along its neck is a decorative strip divided into small, rounded sections more suggestive of a mane's hair than the stiff teeth of a comb.

Some other variations in the depiction of the heads of griffins are worthy of mention. On one vase a griffin is definitely bearded (cat. #43), and another may be similarly drawn (cat. #88), although the damaged state of the vase makes this uncertain. The ears of the griffin, like the teeth of its comb come in a variety of sizes. All project vertically from the top of the griffin's head, but they may be very tall and narrow (e.g. cat. #12, #23, #32, #55, #59), quite rounded and stubby (cat. #1, #65), or somewhere in between these two extremes.

Without exception the griffin is depicted as a winged creature. The wings vary in their placement on the body,

being situated low on the torso, directly above the animal's forequarters (e.g. cat. #3,#27,#38), or sitting higher on the shoulder (cat. #55). These placements appear to affect the general shape and direction of the wings. If the wing sits high on the shoulder it extends far above the shoulder and out into the air in a basically straight and vertical projection. If the wing begins directly above the forequarters, its height is not so pronounced and its projection is more horizontal than vertical. This second type of wing generally breaks at or just above the shoulder level, from which point it extends back along the torso, although on some the angle from the break is downward. Wings of this second larger category are more apt to be drawn in two sections than are those of the first type. Pronounced tips exist on all wings regardless of their placement on the torso.

The decoration applied to the griffin's wings may vary dramatically. Sometimes only straight black lines, drawn following the incline of the wing, are used to designate individual feathers (cat. #7,#38,#48,#49). More attention to such detail is paid on other vases, where two distinct types of feathers can be seen (cat. #13,#23,#32). The first type, a series of shorter feathers, occurs on the fore section of the wing. Longer feathers project back from this section, decreasing in length from bottom to top. The dividing line between these two sections is often demarcated by rows of

black dots, but such a motif is used, as are others, for purely decorative purposes.

The other most common decorative motif found on the wings of griffins consists of a wave-like pattern delineating the front edge of the wing (e.g. cat. #94). This pattern is also seen in combination with the row of dots in one example (cat. #91), where rows of dots are also used to mark the lower edge of the wing, found along the torso. In another instance (cat. #65), the front section of the wing is very closely decorated, with its border of waves and dots followed by a scattering of dots over a fairly large area, and another row of dots marking the outer edge of this section.

While known as a winged creature and one therefore capable of flight, the griffin is seldom shown in this attitude. One example does exist of a griffin flying in mid-air (cat. #32), but the majority of griffins share one common profile pose. This pose may be classified as the standard stance of the griffin, and identified as a "prancing" pose. So drawn, the rear paws of the griffin are planted firmly on the ground, its body bent at the hips with torso elevated. The forepaws are held in front of the torso, one raised above the other, and the neck is extended with head held high. As is the case with regard to the physical features of the griffin, exceptions to this standard do exist. Sometimes the figure is totally extended in a vertical line (cat. #43), or the head and neck of the griffin are curved downward (cat.

#46). The use of this pose is largely dependent upon the action of the griffin. If opposing or attacking a human figure this stance is quite acceptable, but another must be adopted if the griffin is falling upon a downed horse or human (cat. #84). The imagination of the artist must also have played a role in the positioning of the griffin, as in one isolated instance where two griffins crouch in most atypical poses (cat. #66).

The consistency apparent in the many renderings of the griffin on fourth-century Attic pottery suggests that the vase painters responsible for these works shared some common understanding of the form of the griffin. It is therefore unlikely that the individual artist drew from his own imagination because there is such conformity in all depictions of the griffin. To be sure, there was room for personal expression within the standard type, and in many instances the image of the griffin is enhanced by the artist's own perception of the animal, seen in the particular choices made for the decoration of specific examples. The legend of griffins and Arimasps may have been known to the vase painter or his clients, thus providing the impetus for his creations, but if the precise form of the griffin was arrived at via a written tradition, that tradition has not survived to the present day. Extant literary references concerned with the griffin provide either minimal or no description of the creature, presenting a very basic outline



at best. An oral tradition dealing with the Arimasps and griffins may also have existed, but it is impossible to ascertain to what extent, if any, such a tradition may have influenced the form assumed by the griffin of fourth-century Attic pottery. It has even been suggested that the griffin was identified as the monster with which the Arimasps did battle by a Greek, namely Aristeas, and thus was not indigenous to the Scythian legend.<sup>4</sup> Be that as it may, and the theory seems difficult to prove or disprove, the griffin was definitely the animal which became attached to the legend of the Arimasp in the literary tradition, and the animal which did battle with Eastern-looking figures on Attic pottery.

While the griffins found upon fourth-century Attic pottery appear, in the basics, true to the literary descriptions which precede and follow their era, their opponents, the Arimasps, differ quite drastically. Characterized as a one-eyed, uncivilized breed in a manner suggestive of both the appearance and nature of the Cyclopes of Greek legend,<sup>5</sup> they are nowhere visually depicted in this fashion. The extreme ferocity of the race suggested by ancient accounts is not apparent in scenes of grypomachies, although something of the tribe's remoteness from the "real" world, or at least the Greek world, is retained. This removal from reality is achieved not through the depiction of physical abnormalities, but through appearance of the

Arimasps which marks them as barbaroi.

The most telling indication that the human figures battling with griffins are foreigners is the manner in which they are clothed. The Arimasps seen on illustrated vases wear, in combination, two separate, major articles of clothing customarily designated as Oriental. These two types of garments are the one-piece, long-sleeved "pyjama" ensemble and, worn over the pyjamas, the ependytes.

In descriptions of vases upon which Arimasps appear they are most often referred to as wearing long sleeves and anaxyrides, or trousers. Such descriptions imply that these are separate items, and nowhere is a relation between long sleeves and leggings made. However, a study of the decoration applied to these two areas upon any given figure clearly establishes such a relationship. A great variety of motifs adorn the sleeves and leggings of the Arimasps, ranging from intricate patterns formed from the combination of alternating rows of dots, horizontal, zig-zag and wavy lines and closely drawn criss-cross patterns (e.g. cat. #21, #33, #43, #65), to simple horizontal or vertical stripes and rows or scatterings of varying sizes of black dots (e.g. cat. #3, #7, #27, #87). Regardless of the intricacy (or lack thereof) of adornments upon sleeves and leggings, they are drawn in like manner on both parts of all figures. This correspondence in decoration suggests that in the mind of the painter the two comprise a single garment, the torso of which

lies hidden beneath the outer covering of the ependytes.

The term ependytes seems most applicable to the article of clothing worn over the Arimasian "pyjamas".<sup>6</sup> Such a garment may be defined as sleeveless, varying in length from hip to knee. If the long sleeves seen on the figures are accepted as part of a single piece undergarment, then the over-tunic is indeed sleeveless and thus conforms to the above definition in this respect, as it does in regard to length.

A study of the vases in the following catalogue reveals that the majority of ependytai depicted fall to the knee. In some cases (e.g. cat. #3, #27, #38, #59), the ependytes appears to be of a shorter variety, ending mid-thigh. This variation is definitely connected to the position of the figures upon whom the garment is found. All are seen on horseback, and thus a practice of donning a less cumbersome garment when such activity was anticipated may be what is being shown here. The seemingly shorter length of the ependytes may, however, simply be an accurate reflection of the effect a particular body position exerts over positioning of clothing.

The length of the ependytes, while seemingly a minor consideration, gives some insight as to the very nature of the garment. It would seem that such an article of clothing is of little practical use upon the battlefield, being more of a hindrance to continuous and quick movement than an aid.

This would then suggest that the ependytes served an ornamental purpose, its chief function being one of personal adornment and decoration. Such a theory is supported by the extensive decoration found upon many of the garments, generally contained between distinct borders at their hems and necks.

While not every ependytes displays borders at both its upper and lower edges (e.g. #32 with no neck border; #34, #49 with no lower border), the majority are distinctly defined at these areas. Often the distinction is shown only by one or two black lines (e.g. cat. #3, #38), but wave-like projections and hooks may also be found (e.g. cat. # 23, #43, #46 two R. fig., #55), and occasionally large, more elaborate borders are presented (cat. # 23, #65). In these instances, rather than serving a subsidiary purpose, the border becomes a more integral part of the total decoration of the piece, and serves to enhance the rich appearance of the Arimasps' clothing.

As with the patterning found on the "pyjamas" of the Arimasps, the decoration of their ependytes displays a wide variation of intricacy and detail. In their simplest form, the motifs applied to the ependytes consist of a large doubled-ended swirl on either side of the chest (cat. #13, #38), in which cases the lower portion of the garment remains undecorated; or of two black lines, fairly closely spaced, travelling up from the lower border, which end in

hooks or swirls, again upon the chest (cat. #7, #87). This concept of a central division of the ependytes is elaborated upon elsewhere ( e.g. cat. #32, #34), where we see central decorated panels and bumpy black lines closely followed by rows of black dots found on either side of a narrow strip are seen. Dots and circles frequently appear to fill the space on either side of this central panel, either in random scattering (e.g. cat. #46, #25 fallen Arimasps on frieze), or rosette pattern (e.g. cat. # 33, #62), and rays, usually projecting up from the lower border and down from the upper, are equally popular in these areas (e.g. cat. #33, #65). On the most extensively patterned ependytai various of the above-mentioned motifs are combined to produce a very richly and closely decorated garment (cat. #23, #33, #65).

The outfit of the Arimasps is generally complemented by two accessories: shoes and cap. None of the vases illustrated provide a graphic depiction of the type of shoe worn by the Arimasps; nonetheless it may be seen that the individual toes of their feet are nowhere differentiated. This omission is indicative of the presence of closed shoes upon the figures, for even at this late date in the history of Attic vase painting the artist was careful to include such anatomical detail. By the fourth century B.C. closed shoes were not exclusively worn by barbarians, but also by the Greeks themselves. This however would not detract from their suitability as standard foreign garb, and long association of

the shoe with Oriental peoples would warrant their inclusion in any rendering of such a race.

Covering the heads of the Arimasps is the tiara, a soft felt or cotton hat possessing a peak, which in most instances flops forward, and cheek and neck flaps. The word tiara is employed several times in Herodotus and elsewhere to describe typical Persian headgear.<sup>7</sup> It is from such descriptions that an understanding of the nature of the cap is derived, being described as ἀστυή, unstiffened or soft (Hdt. 7.61), and used in association with the Greek word for a felt cap, πῖλος (Hdt. 3.12). A variation upon this tiara, one which is stiff and projects upright, is also known in Persian fashion, but permissible only upon the head of the king.<sup>8</sup> This type of tiara is illustrated upon at least one of the vases in the following catalogue (# 65), but most often seen is some form of the floppy tiara, varying in its height and the length and disposition of its neck flaps (e.g. cat.#23,#46,#62), and, in two instances, sparsely decorated (cat. #62,#65).

Thus the costume of the Arimasp is complete. Few exceptions to the standard garb of "pyjamas", ependytes, tiara, and closed shoes are found. It may be noted that just as the interest of the artist in rendering detail upon the griffins varied widely, so too did his interest in the precise detailing of Arimaspsian costume. In studying the image of the griffin it was noted that the most important

element of that image was their extraordinary anatomy, to which decoration played a subsidiary role. The same train of thought is applicable to the details of Arimasbian clothing.

In order to remain true to the legend upon which grypomachy scenes were based the Arimasp had to display a certain air of exoticism. This was most easily achieved by painting them as Oriental barbaroi. The decoration of the clothing must also play a subsidiary role in the rendering of the Arimasps, although not a superfluous role. Addition of elaborate detail upon Arimasbian garb would serve to enhance further their exotic appearance and connect them to the Oriental world of opulence and luxury so well known to the Greeks by the fourth century B.C. But even in the absence of such detail the figures remain identifiable as the barbarian Arimasps.

The arms born by the Arimasps, as well as their clothing, are in keeping with their foreign status. The spear is the most frequently depicted weapon employed against the griffin (e.g. cat. #3, #23, #33, #55, #84), but daggers, known as weapons particular to Amazons, Persians and Scythians (Hdt. 7.61, 7.64) are also seen (e.g. cat. # 43, #78, #49 fallen fig.). Rarer is the ~~σαῦρα~~<sup>σάρα</sup>, a single-edged battle axe connected to the Scythians in Herodotus (Hdt. 7.64; cat. #24, #65, #21 -left fig.) Another important element of the militaristic iconography of the Arimasp is his pelta, a round shield with crescent-shaped cut-out. The pelta is not always

included upon grypomachy scenes (e.g. cat. #1, #3, #13, #49, #62, #78, #84, 88, 89), but does appear on the majority of vases. Usually the pelta is carried by Arimasps who battle on foot with the griffins (cat. #24, #33, #48, #65), while those on horseback bear no such protection. However, the pelta is often depicted in these instances also, seen lying on the ground beneath the raised forelegs of horse or griffin (e.g. cat. #27, #55, #69). The presence of the pelta in such cases where the rider is unable to bear it in hand, being occupied with both wielding his weapon and controlling his mount, indicates the existence of an important association between the object and its owner which warranted its inclusion as often as possible.

The clothing and arms of the Arimasps share much in common with those of another group of legendary beings portrayed in Greek vase-painting, the Amazons. Known as a race of warriors, Amazons, like Arimasps, were drawn engaged in battle, albeit with human opponents. The confusion of Arimasp with Amazon extends beyond accoutrements and activity, for Arimasps were generally drawn in poses which had been used by fifth-century vase-painters dealing with the subject of Amazonomachies.<sup>9</sup>

These similarities point to a cross-contamination of Arimasp-Amazon iconography, which causes difficulty in the identification of the figures who battle griffins. In some cases the figures are identified by the editors of the vases



as Amazons (cat. #1, #7, #19, #29, #43, #6, #91, #92), in others as either Amazons or Arimasps (cat. #2, #59), and in one case as a female Arimasps (cat. #37). In only one instance are the figures battling with griffins clearly female (cat. #43), as indicated by the breast present on them. The lack of illustration for other vases renders it difficult to assess if these figures are also so distinguished (cat. #19, #29, #37, #66, #91, #92). However, the vases for which illustrations are provided do not in anyway indicate that their figures are female, and so they may be identified as Arimasps.

Arimasps are seen in four general stances; on foot, on horseback, having fallen to the ground, and driving chariots.<sup>10</sup> Within the first two categories they may be seen attacking their opponents head-on (on foot-cat. #1, #33, #48, #67; on horseback-cat. #12, #27, #59), from the rear (on foot-cat. #7, #27 left fig., #33 right fig., upper register; on horseback cat. #3-left fig., #24), or turning back to make their assault (on foot cat. #27, #43, #65; on horseback cat. #6 right fig., #43 & #49-left fig.). Fallen Arimasps are also seen turning round to defend themselves from the griffins who fall upon them (cat. #50 right fig., #24 & #25-frieze fig.), and this same pose is adopted by those who do battle from chariots (cat. #60, #78).

Accompanying these general poses are specific positionings of the weapons employed by the Arimasps. Those

who turn back to meet the griffins, whether from chariot, horseback, on foot or on ground, display right arms raised above their heads, either drawn back slightly or bent at a ninety degree angle at the elbow, ready to strike. The same positioning may be seen on those Arimasps who meet the griffins head on (e.g. cat.#1,33,49), or attack from the rear (e.g. cat.#7,#22-left fig.) while on foot. Weapons deemed appropriate to such poses are the short dagger and the sagaris. The spear is most often employed by mounted Arimasps, who angle their weapons downwards or draw them alongside the flanks of their horses, attitudes which anticipate the quick thrust of the spear to follow (cat.#3,#55,#59,#28bis).

Apart from the major participants of the grypomachy - griffin, Arimasp, and, on occasion, horse - there are other elements worthy of notice in these scenes. In some cases these elements comprise an indication of setting, on others they appear more simply as decoration applied to the scene.

As would be expected, where setting is indicated upon grypomachy scenes it is suggestive of the out-of-doors, the logical location for any battle. Rocks, or a rocky ground line are seen in several instances (cat. #3,#49,#65), and figure especially when Arimasps are seen having fallen before their adversaries (e.g. cat. #23,#24,#25,#48). In these cases the warrior rests upon the rock on bended knee.

Strange vegetation also indicates the natural setting

of many scenes. The plant life depicted upon the vases does not always appear to be realistically drawn, as it adopts fantastic and odd forms. Upon two similarly decorated vases (cat. #24,#25), there are several very spindly trees. Most are devoid of any growth on their meagre branches, with the exception of that shown on Side A of #25, which carries a few blossoms. The remainder of the vegetal forms are not readily identifiable.

Beneath the figures of either griffins or Arimasps on three separate vases are scroll-like vines (cat. #24,#33,#34), some of which have petals attached to them (cat. #33,#34). The petals help to distinguish the forms as plant, as do their curving lines, but their general appearance is abstract. Another abstract form of vegetation consists of a dot rosette with long white line, representing a stem or petal, flowing from it (cat #28bis). Such a form is perhaps what is meant to be perceived in one instance where it has been further abbreviated and consists only of the dot rosette (cat. #1), and in another where five large white dots are seen (cat. #34).

One other recurring element is worthy of mention. This is a small, round object seen lying upon the ground in several scenes (cat. #1,#24,#25,#38,#67,#86). In all but one case (cat. #38), it is divided into four sections by two perpendicular black lines. An identification of the object seems impossible, but its purpose may have been like that

of the odd vegetation - to help create a suitably exotic environment in which to place the fantastic griffin and his equally intriguing opponent, the Arimasp.

## NOTES

1 See Chapter 1, n.13.

2 The griffin is described as a beast like a lion but with the beak and wings of an eagle in Pausanias, Description of Greece, I.24.5/6; as a wild beast with wings, ears, and a hooked beak in Pliny's Natural History VII.2.10 and LXX.136; as a creature with a strong beak and wings, resembling the lion in size and strength in Philostratus' Life of Apollonius of Tyana III.48. Herodotus mentions the griffin three times (Histories IV.13, IV.79, IV.152), but does not describe its physical appearance. (Editions for above texts cited in Notes to Chapter 1)

3 Lion-griffins may be seen on works produced by Greeks for Scythian patrons, in whose tombs they were found e.g. gold scabbard from Tolstaya Mogila, 4th c. B.C., with lion-griffin on upper triangular projection, and gold scabbard from Chertomlyk, 4th c. B.C., with heraldic lion-griffins at the guard of the hilt. (Seen in From the Lands of the Scythians, The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1975, pl.30 left, and M.I. Artamonov, Treasures from the Scythian Tombs, London: Thames and Hudson, 1969, pl. 185, respectively.)

Two lion-headed griffins also figure on a vase of fourth century Greek manufacture, decorated with an unusual hunt scene. (See Appendix A)

4 Bolton, J., Aristeas of Proconnesus, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962, pp. 92-93; Furtwängler, "Gryps," Ausführliches Lexikon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie, ed. W.H. Roscher, Leipzig: Teubner, 1884-1890.

5 As described in Pausanias, I.25.5/6; Pliny, VII.2.10; Aeschylus, Prometheus Bound, 803-806; Herodotus, III.116; and Pomponius Mela, De Chorographia, II.12-18. Editions cited in Notes to Chapter 1.

6 The term is simply identified as an upper garment in LSJ. Herodotus makes mention of such a garment in connection with Assyrian dress, describing it as a woolen garment worn over a long linen tunic (I.195). This in itself is not proof positive of the accuracy of the word's application to the garment illustrated on the vases here, but the term has gained acceptance among scholars of barbarian clothing (e.g. M. Vos, in Scythian Archers in Archaic Attic Vase-Painting, Groningen, 1963, pp. 43-44), and so seems suitable and convenient for this discussion. I am grateful to Dr. Margaret Miller for allowing me the use of her Ph.D. dissertation,

which introduced this term to me.

7 The tiara is mentioned in Herodotus, I.132, III.12, VII.61 and VIII.120; in Strabo, The Geography, XV.3.15; and in Xenophon, Anabasis, II.5.23. and Kyropaedia, VIII.313. (Xenophon, ed. W. Vollbrecht, Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1896; ed. K. Hude, Leipzig: Teubner, 1933. Strabo cited in Notes to Chapter 1)

8 Xenophon, Anabasis, II.5.23 and Arrian, Anabasis, III.25.3. (Edition cited in Notes to Chapter 1)

9 Such identifications are found, respectively, in the following sources: Ant. Bos. Cim., p. 107; Metzger, Rep., p. 328; British Museum, Catalogue of the Greek and Etruscan Vases, p. 29; Ibid., p. 112; CVA USA 7, p. 24; British Museum, Catalogue of the Greek and Etruscan Vases, p. 54; Ibid., p. 268; Ibid., p. 268; Perdrizet, Delphes V, p.166; Ant. Bos. Cim., p. 107; Metzger, Rep., p. 327.

10 Although included in grypomachy scenes, these charioteers are not clothed in typical Arimasbian fashion.

### CHAPTER 3 - GRIFFIN RIDERS

While most often depicted in an adversarial relationship, there are instances where griffin and Arimasps are shown working together. This type of relationship finds the griffin serving as mount for the Arimasps, replacing the horse so used in grypomachy scenes. The griffins found serving in this capacity are drawn like those opposing the Arimasps, with the standard features of wings upon a lion's body, comb running up the neck, ears, and eagle's head. Their pose is also the same as that of the griffins found in the battle scenes: - rear paws planted firmly on the ground, front paws raised and prancing.

The Arimasps shown riding griffins are also drawn like those in the grypomachies. Tiaras rest upon their heads, they wear shoes upon their feet and typical costume of "pyjamas" and ependytes. In some cases (e.g. cat. #95, #103), the torsos of the Arimasps are hidden behind the front wing of the griffin they ride and so no ependytes is seen. However, the "pyjamas" of these figures are visible and it seems logical to assume that they were meant to be perceived as wearing the complete Arimaspsian outfit.

Arimasps who ride griffins are seen involved in one of two occupations, either confronting someone or something (e.g. cat. #94, #95), or pursuing a maiden (cat. #96-103). The

hostility displayed by the Arimasps of the grypomachies is therefore still in evidence, although to a much lesser degree. The decreased air of hostility is implied by the lack of weaponry found in these scenes. With one exception (cat. #94), the Arimasps neither bear arms nor carry peltai. On two vases (cat. #95, #100), one of which shows two mounted Arimasps facing each other in opposition, the other of which shows an Arimasp in pursuit of a maiden, the arms of the figures are drawn back as if in preparation to launch a spear or lance, but these weapons are not depicted.

Other Arimasps found in co-operation with griffins raise their right arms, which are bent at the elbow with hand facing back towards themselves (cat. #96 two central figures and L. figure; #100). This positioning is of interest for it is also that displayed by a majority of the females found on the vases under consideration. In the case of the Arimasps who are seen in this attitude, it may be that the weapon-bearing pose was modified for inclusion in less hostile scenes. This theory would be plausible if it were not for the female figures. It seems unlikely that the maidens were also meant to be thought of as bearing weapons, but there may be some other significance attached to their gesture.

There are other fourth-century vases that show fleeing maidens holding their arms in similar fashion, many of whom carry a thyrsus or tympanum and so may be called maenads, and in similar position. When chased by Arimasps, most female



figures are found in front of their would-be assailants (e.g. cat. #96 Right maenad, #100, #103), turning round to look at them. With one exception (cat. # 104), this is also the standard placement of maidens who are pursued by a divinity, either Apollo or Dionysos, who has chosen the griffin as his mount. The different identity of their pursuer does not alter the pose of the maidens in such scenes, but it may help to explain the pose.

Upon two vases, one whose pursuing divinity is identified as Dionysos and the other whose deity may be either Dionysos or Apollo (cat. #104, #109), the female figures carry, respectively, a tympanum and a tympanum and torch. It may be that the iconography of female figures of this type of scene has been abbreviated in the case of those maidens who do not carry anything in their upraised arms. If so, it would create a situation parallel to that of the Arimasps who may have lost their weapons but are still drawn as if carrying them. The presence of the tympanum and/or thyrsus-bearing maidens is acceptable in scenes associated with Dionysos, but puzzling in an Arimaspsian context where it seems to indicate iconographical contamination. This contamination becomes clearer when Dionysiac and Apolline griffin scenes are examined more closely.

The similarity between the scenes of gods chasing maidens and Arimasps likewise occupied does not end with the manner in which the maidens are drawn. The gods are mounted

as the Arimasps, so that in some depictions their bodies are concealed behind the wings of their mounts (cat. #105, #107), but where the torso of a figure is shown it is bare of any clothing (cat. #104, #109). Legs are seen dangling at the griffins' sides and these too are bare, as are arms, when seen (cat. #104, #109). The lack of clothing of these figures aids in their designation as gods rather than Arimasps, and in some instances is the only indication that the scene does not involve humans.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes other indications are present which suggest that the figure mounted on the griffin in such scenes is the god Dionysos, as in cat. #104 and #112 where both tympanum-bearing female(s) and satyr(s) form part of the composition, and in cat. # 109 where the female carries both a torch and a tympanum, attributes associated with the worshippers of Dionysos.<sup>2</sup> Probable identification of the god Apollo as a pursuer of the maidens is aided by a comparison between these vases and others where it is definitely this god shown on a griffin (cat. #110, #111, #115), especially when he is seen with the same arm positioning as the maidens and Arimasps found on scenes of pursuit. In the case of Apollo, the gesture may be related to his bearing of a laurel branch, as in cat. # 111.

It is quite clear that a definite relationship exists between the vases showing Arimasps in pursuit of maidens and Dionysos or Apollo engaged in the same activity. The composition of such scenes is essentially the same, as are

the subsidiary figures. The only discrepancy between the two is the identity of the griffin-riding figure. Apollo's connection with the griffin on Attic pottery definitely precedes that of the Arimasp. Two works from the late fifth century show the god mounted on a griffin and bearing a laurel branch (cat. #114, #115). The presence of the laurel as well as additional figures - Leto, Artemis, Hermes - aid in the identification of the god. These examples do not represent the first association of the griffin with Apollo. Such an association had been established in the archaic period and was often depicted.<sup>3</sup> The connection may perhaps be explained through the legend which saw Apollo journey each year to the land of a mythic people, the Hyperboreans. This race lived at the very edge of the world and were neighbours of the griffins and their gold. Since he was thus connected to their neighbours, it would have been quite natural for Apollo to adopt the griffin as one of his retinue; whether because of the gold which the creature guarded or because of its fantastic nature which made it an appropriate guardian for a deity. Once established as a symbol of the god, the griffin continued to be seen at his side into Imperial Roman times.

In the case of Dionysos, it seems that his association with the griffin sprang from his association with Apollo, especially in the Greek cities of Delphi and Delos where the two gods were often seen side by side. This alliance between

the gods aids in explaining the infiltration of the griffin into the Dionysiac scenes and the infiltration of Dionysiac elements into Apolline griffin scenes. The latter phenomenon is illustrated by two pieces where Apollo is shown with the maenad and satyr followers of Dionysos (cat. # 119,120).

Dionysos is also found mounted on a griffin in scenes depicting him among his typical retinue (cat. # 121,122,123).

There appears to have been a gradual expansion of the types of scenes showing Apollo on a griffin from the late fifth to the fourth century. First he is seen riding the creature, accompanied by females, and then riding in pursuit of females. Although the association of the griffin with Dionysos may be later than that of the creature with Apollo, he too was depicted in the same types of scenes. Thus, by the fourth century the griffin came to be equally at home with either deity.

It has been seen that the griffin was most comfortably connected with the Arimasps upon fourth century pottery. Although seen with both Apollo and Dionysos as described above, the battle scenes between Arimasps and griffins remained the most widely used type to display the creature, whether because such scenes involved two intriguing beings or because there was a particular demand for such representations. The strongest connection between the griffin and human-like figures was therefore that found between Arimasp and griffin, and this may perhaps best explain why

Arimasps and deities are found in similar compositions upon fourth century vases. The occupation of pursuing maidens is one not assigned in literary sources to the Arimasp, who chose instead to battle for gold, but could easily be assigned to either Apollo or Dionysos. Thus it would appear that the vase painters of the fourth century confused the activities of legendary and divine beings, due to the association of each with the griffin, and the Arimasp came to adopt the role of the gods in one particular instance.

## NOTES

1. See cat.# 104. The figure on the griffin is described as a man by Schefold, but comparison with vases where the same figure is said to be Dionysos or Apollo helps draw the conclusion that a deity is also pictured here.

2. A problematic bell krater from Olynthus (cat.# 113) depicts what appears to be a Dionysiac scenes with maenads and satyrs surrounding the god, who is seated on some winged creature. Whether the creature is a griffin or panther and whether the god is really Dionysos or Apollo, it is interesting to note that the female figure directly ahead of the god is drawn just as those found on the other vases in this catalogue.

3. A detailed account of the works depicting Apollo and griffins may be found in Delplace, Le Griffon, pp. 365-375.

## CHAPTER 4 - SCYTHIAN AND IRANIAN ART

The depiction of Arimasps battling griffins upon Attic pottery saw the return to that medium of a motif which had almost totally disappeared in the preceding century, the griffin. Prior to this one hundred year hiatus the griffin had been seen on Greek vases, always in a non-narrative role. Thus the use of the griffin to decorate pottery was not a new concept but a renewal of past procedure. Placing the griffin in a particular setting and involving the griffin in a specific type of action were, however, new practices in the fourth century. In attempting to explain the re-emergence of the griffin and the new iconography assigned the creature it is necessary to look for possible sources of inspiration for the Greek artist, and the most natural starting point for such a search lies with the culture most closely associated with the Arimasps, that of the Scythians.

As Herodotus relates ( IV.27), it was through the Scythians that the Greek world became familiar with the Arimaspsian people whose exploits so captured artistic fancy in the fourth century. The territory of these people, which lay to the south of Arimaspsian lands, lay between the mouths of the Danube and Don rivers in southern Russia. Various people inhabited this area in ancient times, among whom the

Scythians comprised the principal group. Early in the seventh century B.C. the nomadic Scythians had gained permanent possession of the Pontic steppes, those lands lying north of the Black Sea.<sup>1</sup> This is not to say that all of what is now Southern Russia was inhabited by Scythian tribes. The term Scythian in its most precise usage refers to a relatively small number of tribes who, by the fifth century B.C. are said to have formed a confederation consisting of those peoples living on the north shores of the Black Sea, on the shores of the Sea of Azov, and in the districts of the Kuban and Dnieper rivers.<sup>2</sup> Under the auspices of this small group Scythian culture extended over the larger territory and was shared by many tribes, all of whom were indiscriminately given the same name by the ancients. But it is this dominant group with which the Greeks came into contact, and also this group which was linked with a variety of semi-legendary people, including the Arimasps. The Scythians left no written documents or literary works, and in the absence of such material it is the art of these people which must be studied in an attempt to discover what importance, if any, they placed upon Arimasp and griffin.

Characteristic of Scythian art is a prevalence of both patterns and motifs that originated in the art of Near Eastern civilizations. The dependence of Scythian art upon Near Eastern tradition appears to have manifested itself prior to the settlement of the Scythians in the Pontic



steppes, for even finds from the earliest burial mounds in this area display such a tendency.<sup>3</sup> Once established, they continued to be followed throughout the culture's history. Included among the Near Eastern motifs borrowed by the Scythians are many animal forms, the most favoured and often depicted being the griffin.

The popularity of the griffin is attested to by its many representations upon works from Scythian burials of the sixth, fifth, and fourth centuries. Griffins found upon such works are depicted in one of three manners. They may be seen singly, in heraldic pairs, or with another animal which they generally are attacking. Examples of single griffins may display only the head of the creature, as on two bronze standards and a bronze belt plaque.<sup>4</sup> In these instances the head of the griffin is somewhat stylized, but nonetheless recognizable, especially when compared with Greek bronze griffins of the archaic period. Common to all three is the wide-open, curved beak of the animal and its large eyes, but additional features such as upright ears and forehead ornaments may or may not be present. These latter two features are present, in identical form, upon a pair of gold earrings and a gold diadem, where griffins are shown with very high, pointy ears and a large round ball resting upon their foreheads.<sup>5</sup> An exceptional example of a griffin head is found as a sword pommel.<sup>6</sup> While its appearance varies from the bronze works above, this griffin with its sinuous neck,

prominent comb, and dramatically curved beak is closely related to depictions of the animal found upon fourth century pottery.

Besides these few examples there exist a greater number showing the full figure of single griffins. Two fourth-century bronze standards display marching griffins,<sup>7</sup> while a great many small gold plaques, the majority of which date from the fifth century, portray standing griffins.<sup>8</sup> In general, these full figure griffins are quite simply drawn. The essential components of the griffin - eagle's head, wings, lion's body - are clearly seen and pointy, upright ears are present on all. Wings are rendered in thick comma-like shape and marked into only a few sections, with no attempt to provide a detailed account of feathers. Further details are seen on some of these pieces, such as on the gold plaques whose griffins display two short, pointed ornaments on the top of their heads, and one of the marching griffins whose tail is that of a bird, not a lion. These griffins, like the bronzes described above, have more in common with early depictions of the griffin on Greek pottery than with fourth century depictions. However, at least one example exists upon which the griffin more closely resembles the fourth century Greek griffin, being drawn in like manner and with like attention given over to details such as the drawing of feathers.<sup>9</sup>

Single griffins resembling those of fourth century

Attic pottery are also found on problematic pieces from Scythian burials,<sup>10</sup> as are the majority of heraldic pairs of the creature and scenes involving the attack of the griffin upon other animals.<sup>11</sup> Although a precise date is not assigned to any individual piece, all are dated from the fourth century and thus from the same era that grypomachies are found upon Attic pottery. The labelling of these pieces as Scythian art is questionable, for their production cannot always be assigned to native artisans. Many of the objects from fourth century burials which features griffins are characteristically Scythian, such as the gorytus, a quiver which held both bow and arrows, but the style of their decoration is more in keeping with the precise workmanship and complicated contexts favoured by Greek artists than with the bold stylization and simplification of forms and composition characteristic of native work.

By the fourth century a strong Greek presence existed in the Scythian world, and therefore it is not surprising that Greek works are found in Scythian burials. As early as the late seventh century, by which date the Scythians had established themselves on the Pontic steppes, Greek settlements had begun to arise on the shores of the Black Sea.<sup>12</sup> Trade with the native population was certainly the origin of Greek settlements on the coasts of the Sea and sites such as Olbia, Panticapaeum, and Phanagoris flourished and attracted colonists according to the commercial advantages of their

respective locations. By the fifth century settlements such as these were expanding into city-states and the following century saw the greatest flowering of trade between the Greeks and Scythians.<sup>13</sup> The Greek culture brought to the Black Sea by its proponents had exerted an influence on the native culture at an early period, and some of the oldest barrows of the area, dating from the seventh and sixth centuries, contained objects and motifs Greek in origin. The quantity of such objects increases in later burials, a reflection of the greater degree of contact between Greeks and native people.

The heightened contact between these two groups would naturally have affected the art works produced in Scythian territories, and the rendering of specific elements, like the griffin, found on those works. Thus a piece such as the gold scabbard from the Tolstaya Mogila burial,<sup>14</sup> whose decorative scheme is Greek although its execution may be Scythian, displays two eagle-headed griffins on its sheath drawn in the same fashion as those found on a pectoral definitely assigned to Greek workmanship.<sup>15</sup> In each instance the griffins seen possess sharply hooked beaks and pointy ears on their heads, prominent combs running down their long necks, and detailed wings with several sections of feathers shown. Similar griffins adorn other works which fall into the category of problematic pieces, and so may be seen as examples of the typical Graeco-Scythian griffin.

In spite of the similarities of form between the

griffins found upon works from later Scythian burials, whether of native or Greek manufacture, and those of Attic fourth-century pottery, the context in which the Scythian griffins are seen is quite different. It must be remembered that Near Eastern traditions exerted a strong influence upon the art of the Scythians, and this is quite evident in the settings in which griffins are placed. The heraldic disposal of composite creatures, including griffins, and their involvement in combat with other creatures were well known motifs in the art of Oriental civilizations, and motifs that were adopted by the Scythian artists. Greek artists executing work for Scythian patrons, for certainly many pieces found in burials were produced for such a market, seem to have been careful to involve their griffins in the same contexts. Even upon works definitely ascribed to Greek artisans where narrative scenes are found, griffins are shown only in their own separate areas of the piece and not interacting with the human figures of the narrative.<sup>16</sup> It would then appear that the depiction of the griffin in any scene which placed them in contact with humans was not a part of the Scythian repertory, and this is also the case in regard to the art of other cultures bordering upon Scythian territory.

While geographically distant from the Scythian world, the Altai culture of Siberia bears many affinities to the Scythian, especially in regard to their art. Pieces displaying griffins found in the burials of the Altai region

show them in attitudes similar to those found in Scythia proper. From tombs at the site of Pazyryk come several small ornamental plaques embossed with two confronted griffins, a saddlecloth with applique felt scenes of griffins pouncing upon ibexes, a knotted carpet whose innermost and outermost decorative bands consist of a row of squares each containing a single griffin, and several figures of single griffins.<sup>17</sup> Griffins were also found at nearby Tuekta where they are seen in the same general types of settings as those from Pazyryk.<sup>18</sup> The general appearance of griffins from both sites is similar to those found on Scythian pieces, although minor variations such as a longer and more slender beak, a jagged crest running along the neck, and a prominent forehead ornament resembling a lock of hair may be seen. More important than the physical appearance of the griffin are the scenes in which it is found, for these indicate that the art of the Altai culture, like that of the Scythians, was symbolic, not narrative, and therefore did not involve the griffin in scenes of a mythological nature.

Bordering upon both Scythian and Altai territory were the lands of the Achaemenid empire which, by virtue of its inheritance of the artistic traditions of the ancient Near East, may well have transmitted these traditions to the steppe cultures. A certain relation is found between Altai works and those of Achaemenid production, and this may be illustrated by viewing a griffin from each area. A gold

armlet from the Oxus Treasure displays two horned griffins facing each other.<sup>19</sup> Seen upon the bodies and rear legs of these griffins are depressions in the shape of dots and thick commas. This depiction of musculature is characteristic of Achaemenid art, occurring on all types of animals. Equally characteristic are the griffins' wings, also shaped as thick commas. While the griffin on a felt applique from Pazyryk does not have this type of wing, the comma and dot found on the Achaemenid pair are also seen on its flank.<sup>20</sup> The Scythian artist does not seem to have adopted this particular mode of decoration, but some griffins from the burials do display the comma-like wings of Achaemenid type.<sup>21</sup> The similarities between the depictions of griffins in all three cultures aid in proving that connections between the art of all three did exist, and so all were likely derived from the same source. These connections extend beyond the physical representation of the griffin to the very settings the griffins were placed in, for Achaemenid griffins are seen in exactly the same contexts as those found in Scythian and Altaic works.

Clearly the art of the Scythians, like those related to it, did not tend towards narrative decoration. The influences of Near Eastern traditions upon the art of the Scythians appear to have been strongly rooted, for the contact of Scythians with Greeks does not seem to have greatly altered the basic concepts governing their art.

Narrative scenes are displayed on some pieces from Scythian burials, but these works are executed by Greeks and appear to involve depictions of the day to day life of the native people rather than any legend drawn from their culture.<sup>22</sup> In these works the Greek artist appears to have taken great care to render his Scythian subjects as realistically as possible. Great attention is paid to the detail of their costume, which differs slightly from that of the Arimasps found on fourth-century pottery. Scythians are seen wearing the tiara and soft boots, but they are not clothed in "pyjamas" and ependytes. Rather, they wear a long-sleeved, one-piece jacket, wrapped round the body and belted at the waist, over trousers. Similar care is taken in the rendering of the physical appearance of the Scyths, who sport long hair and thick, shaggy beards, in contrast to the clean-shaven Arimasps of grypomachy scenes. Clearly the human figures are meant to represent Scythians accurately, as the scenes they are found in are meant to represent their typical activities. These works reveal a deliberate attempt on the part of the Greeks to produce scenes appropriate for and acceptable to Scythian patrons. They also reveal that the Scythian patron was not interested in scenes that did not pertain to his own life, and into this category fall grypomachy scenes.

One grypomachy scene is, however, shown on a piece from a Scythian burial of the fourth century.<sup>23</sup> A gold kalathos, the headdress associated with priestesses of



fertility deities such as Demeter, Artemis, and Dionysos, displays griffins and Arimasps battling. The griffins are depicted in the same manner as those seen on Attic pottery, both in regard to pose and physical appearance. The barbarian figures adopt the same stances and bear the same weapons as the Arimasps seen on pottery, and are similarly beardless. However, their clothing is not identical. All wear tiaras and boots, but it is difficult to ascertain if they wear the ependytes and "pyjamas" of the Attic figures, or the costume of the Scythians.<sup>24</sup>

The date of the kalathos reveals that it could not have been a model for the grypomachy scenes found on Attic pottery, and the unique character of the tomb in which it was found, containing objects connecting its female corpse to the Eleusinian mysteries,<sup>25</sup> marks it as that of a highly Hellenized Scythian. This piece must be viewed as the exception that proves the rule of the nature of the depiction of the griffin in Scythian art. While often seen, the griffin is nowhere else connected to the legend of the Arimasp. Thus, it does not seem likely that the fourth-century Attic vase-painters drew upon a tradition found within the culture of these supposed neighbours of the Arimasps as they painted grypomachies on their wares.

## NOTES

1 Farkas A., Introduction to From the Lands of the Scythians, The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1975, p.8 and Borovka, N., Scythian Art, 1st published London 1928, New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1967.

2 Piotrovsky, B., "Early Cultures of the Lands of the Scythians," in From the Lands of the Scythians, p. 20.

3 Artamonov, M.I., Treasures from Scythian Tombs, London: Thames and Hudson, 1969.

4 Bronze standard from Kelermes, first half 6th c. B.C., Artamonov, op. cit., pl.4.

Bronze standard from Ulski, second half 6th c. to 5th c. B.C.; Artamonov, op. cit., pl. 59 and From the Lands of the Scythians, pl.6.

Bronze belt plaque from The Golden Barrow, 5th c. B.C., Artamonov, op. cit., pl.73.

5. Gold earrings from Dort Oba, 4th c. B.C., Artamonov, op. cit., fig. 135.

Gold diadem from Kelermes, 6th c. B.C., Artamonov, op. cit., pl. 25 and 26.

6. From Seven Brothers Barrow, 5th c. B.C., Artamonov, op. cit., pl. 137.

7. From Alexandropol Barrow, 4th c. B.C., Artamonov, op.cit., pl. 190 and from Krasnokutsk Barrow, 4th c. B.C., Artamonov, op. cit., fig. 124.

8 Seen in From the Lands of the Scythians, p. 157, fig 4; p. 158, fig. 7; p. 160, fig. 15; all pieces from the Maikop Treasure 5th c. B.C.; and in Artamonov, op. cit., fig. 86 from Solokha, 5-4th c. B.C.

9 From Chertomlyk, 5-4th c. B.C., Artamonov, op. cit., fig. 93.

10 Gold mounting of a gorytus with griffin seen on rectangular plate covering a projection in the upper part of the gorytus, from Dort Oba, Artamonov, op. cit., pl. 193 and 194.

Gold eagle-griffin heads from Great Bliznitsa, Artamonov, op. cit., pl. 312.

11 e.g. Gold scabbard from Chertomlyk, Artamonov, op. cit., pl. 183 & 185 and From the Lands of the Scythians, pl. 10 where it is identified as Greek workmanship; from Kul Oba a gold plated scabbard, gold bracelets and a silver vase seen in Artamonov, pl. 208 & 209, 236-238, 242; a bronze bowl from Peschanoye village, From the Lands of the Scythians, cat. # 168. All of these pieces depict griffins attacking other animals.

Heraldic griffins are seen on a gold casing for a sword hilt from Chertomlyk, a rectangular silver plate from Krasnokutsk Barrow, and an openwork gold plaque from Alexandropol Barrow, as illustrated in Artamonov, op. cit., fig. 118, 129, and 133 respectively.

12 Piotrovsky, op. cit., p.20. and J. Boardman, The Greeks Overseas, London: Thames and Hudson, 1980, pp. 240-242.

13 Piotrovsky, op. cit., p.21.

14 Seen in From the Lands of the Scythians, 4th c. B.C., pl. 30.

15 From Tostaya Mogila, 4th c. B.C., gold; From the Lands of the Scythians, pl. 31-33.

16 e.g. Gold scabbard from Chertomlyk, 4th c. B.C. with Greeks fighting Persians along sheath and griffins seen on guard of the hilt and triangular projection at top of scabbard. From the Lands of the Scythians, pl. 10 and Artamonov, op. cit., pl. 185.

Gold pectoral from Tostaya Mogila, 4th c. B.C., one register with Scythians engaged in domestic work and separate register with griffins and lions attacking horses. From the Lands of the Scythians, pl. 31.

Gold bottom and upper plating of a gorytus from Solokha, 4th c. B.C., upper register with griffin attacking stag and lower register with battle scene. Artamonov, op. cit., pl. 160.

Silver-gilt amphora from Chertomlyk, 4th c. B.C., with griffins attacking stags on upper shoulder and Scythians breaking horses on lower shoulder. Artamonov, op. cit., pl. 162, 163.

17 Seen in Jettmar, K, Art of the Steppes, New York; Crown Publishers Inc., 1964. Saddlecloth from kurgan I, pl. 16; carpet from kurgan V, fig. 99; small figures from kurgan II mentioned on p. 99; gold plaques from kurgan II, fig. 77 and also seen in From the Lands of the Scythians, pl. 24.

18 Wooden roundel, 6th c. B.C. and wooden harness plaque, 6th c. B.C. seen in From the Lands of the Scythians. pl. 24 (lower left) and cat. # 108.

19 Porada, E., The Art of Ancient Iran, New York: Crown Publishers Inc., 1962, pl. 51.

20 Jettmar, op. cit., pl. 16.

21 Gold plaque from Kul Oba, 4th c. B.C., Artamonov, op. cit., pl. 225.

22 e.g. Gold comb from Solokha, 4th c. B.C., Artamonov, op. cit., with Scythians engaged in battle. pl. 147 & 148 and pl. 13 in From the Lands of the Scythians.

Gold bottle from Kul Oba, 4th c. B.C., four separate scenes showing one Scythian stringing his bow, two Scythians engaged in conversation, one Scythian examining the tooth of another, and one Scythian bandaging the leg of another. Artamonov, op. cit., pl. 226-229 and From the Lands of the Scythians, pl. 17 & 18.

Gold pectoral from Tolstaya Mogila, 4th c. B.C., with Scythians engaged in domestic activities such as milking a ewe and sewing a shirt. From the Lands of the Scythians, pl. 31.

Silver-gilt amphora from Chertomlyk, with Scythians breaking in horses. Artamonov, op. cit., pl. 162-170.

23 Gold kalathos from Great Bliznitsa, 4th c. B.C., Artamonov, op. cit., pl. 284, 285, 291-94.

24 As described above, p. 62.

25 Artamonov, op. cit., p. 74.

## CHAPTER 5 - CONCLUSIONS

If the fourth century Attic vase-painter did not derive his inspiration to paint grypomachies from traditions found outside his own culture, then the traditions of his own culture must be explored for possible sources of inspiration. Unfortunately, there is nothing found within Greek artistic tradition and little within Greek literary tradition that suggests an interest in the battles of griffins and Arimasps prior to that displayed in the fourth century. To be sure, extant literature from the Greek civilization records the legend of gold-guarding griffins and, in some cases their struggle to keep their hoards from covetous Arimasps.<sup>1</sup> However, the majority of these sources fall after the fourth century and those that do not post-date the floruit of the grypomachy pre-date it by at least one generation. The initial source of the legend, the epic poem of Aristeas, was written in the seventh century, three centuries before its illustration on pottery. Aristeas' version did survive well into the fifth century as evidenced by Aeschylus' brief mention and Herodotus' recording of the same tale,<sup>2</sup> but these appear as its only survivals.

The existence of Aristeas' work in its entirety after the fourth century seems doubtful. It was not contained within the collection of the Ptolemaic library at

Alexandria,<sup>3</sup> an omission which indicates that a written form of the work did not survive into Hellenistic times. Fragments of the poem, concerning the Arimasps only, are contained within the first century A.D. work of Longinus, de Sublimitate, but it does not appear that his source was the epic itself, or that he knew the authorship of the work he was quoting.<sup>4</sup> While other post fifth-century authors acknowledge Aristeas as the source of the tale of griffins and Arimasps, it appears that they too derived their material from unacknowledged secondary sources.<sup>5</sup>

The tale reported first by Aristeas may have reached only a very small audience, as is indicated by the fact that only two other early Greek sources make mention of it, one of whom, Herodotus, collected many obscure facts and tales as well as more commonly held beliefs and knowledge in his large work. It is difficult to assess how well-known the works of Herodotus and Aechylus would be by the fourth century, but certainly they would still have been familiar to some of the Greek population. However, it would appear that the Greeks most familiar with Aristeas' poem were those of the sixth and fifth centuries. If the pottery produced in those two centuries displayed the grypomachy scene, Aristeas would exist as a probable source of inspiration for the vase-painter. Certainly the scene would have been in keeping with the tendencies of both seventh and sixth century vase-painters who often chose to portray human figures battling

fantastic monsters,<sup>6</sup> but in spite of this conformity to one tradition followed by early vase-painters, no grypomachies are seen prior to the fourth century.

The legend of Arimasps and griffins did not fall within the corpus of native Greek mythology, scenes of which, including those with human versus monster motifs, began to appear on Attic pottery in the mid seventh century, and this may be one reason why it was ignored. But the paucity of references to the grypomachy renders it difficult to assume the fourth century vase-painter owed his depiction of the scene to an existing literary tradition. If the depiction of grypomachies cannot be explained as a phenomenon arising from a previous literary or artistic tradition, it must then be viewed simply as a motif which suddenly became fashionable, but not without reason. The appeal of such a scene to the Greek market and the acceptance with which it was greeted may be explained in terms of a shifting of relations between Greece and the civilizations of the ancient Orient.

It has been seen that the initial appearance of the griffin upon Greek ceramics was precipitated by a strong wave of Oriental influence which swept through the Greek world in the seventh century.<sup>7</sup> As this wave subsided and Greek artists developed their own interests in subject matter, many motifs borrowed from Eastern sources, including the griffin, played an ever diminishing role in the decoration of Attic vases. The griffin did not totally fall from favour in the centuries

which followed the Orientalising period of Greek art, but it was definitely seen with decreasing frequency on vases in the sixth and fifth centuries. The re-appearance, or rather increased appearance of the griffin upon Attic pottery follows an event which initiated another great period of contact between East and West, the Persian Wars.

Following her wars with Persia, Greece was more open to and accepting of Persian influence than she had been previously. The aftermath of the wars brought a greater influx of Persian goods to Greek shores, and many of these may have displayed upon themselves the griffin, a creature which had always been a part of the artistic repertory of Eastern civilizations, including that of Persia. In the late fifth century the griffin again worked its way into the corpus of creatures found on Attic pottery, adopted once more by Greek artists as it had been two centuries previously. But it was not until the fourth century, and therefore approximately one hundred years after the Persian Wars, that the griffin attained its period of greatest appeal, a period which saw it depicted over and over again albeit in a somewhat different manner than that of earlier periods.

The basic scheme of the griffin of Greek art did not change from the seventh to the fourth centuries. Griffins of grypomachy scenes are drawn with lion's body and limbs, prominent wings and the head of an eagle, thus displaying the same composite nature as those found on earlier ceramic



works. Variations in depiction centre around the head of the griffin. Prior to the fourth century, griffins were usually seen with short and squat lion's necks, but those of the fourth century possess long, attenuated necks reminiscent of those seen upon seventh century bronze protomes. Volutes running from the top of the griffin's head and along its neck were common from the seventh to fifth century but these are not seen on grypomachy griffins. Other head ornamentation, such as the forehead attachments common to so many early griffins, are found less frequently upon fourth century representations. A feature which gains new importance is the comb, usually quite prominently drawn, which runs along the length of the griffin's neck. While the beaks of the latest griffins are drawn as those of a predatory bird, in respect to both their upper and lower portions, the protruding tongue found on earlier works has disappeared.

Changes in the drawing of the griffin may also be noted in the stance in which it is most often seen. Early works, especially those from the Proto-Corinthian and Corinthian periods, depicted the griffin in various poses - crouching, stalking, and walking. A much more limited range of positions is seen in the fourth century, where, with few exceptions, the griffin is seen in one standard attitude, the "prancing" pose.

The remarkable consistency apparent in the many renderings of the griffin on fourth century Attic pottery

suggests that the vase-painters responsible for these works shared some common understanding of the scheme of the griffin. There was room for personal expression within the standard type, and in many instances the image of the griffin is enhanced by the artist's own perception of the animal. It seems unlikely that the precise form of the griffin was arrived at via a written tradition as extant literary references concerned with the griffin provide either minimal or no description of the creature, presenting a very basic outline at best, and at any rate were probably not known by the fourth-century vase-painter. An oral tradition dealing with the Arimasps and griffins may also have existed, but it is impossible to ascertain to what extent, if any, such a tradition may have influenced the form assumed by the griffin of fourth century Attic pottery. However, the vase-painters did possess a visual framework for their depictions of the griffins, provided by previous Attic works, and previous and contemporary Eastern works.<sup>8</sup> Drawing on an already existing type or types, the artist was then able to arrive at a new concept of the griffin which was able to sustain its popularity throughout the era.

The most notable change in the depiction of griffins in the fourth century lies in the setting in which they are placed. Previously, the scenes in which the Greek artist places his griffins are those drawn from Near Eastern tradition. Such scenes typically find the griffin marching in

procession with other animals, confronting another griffin in heraldic disposition, or preying upon some other animal. Such tendencies of depiction do occur on later Greek works of other media, most noticeably on fourth-century metalwork executed for Scythian patrons,<sup>9</sup> whose artistic traditions were closely connected to those of the Near East. However, the Greek vase-painter gradually altered or abandoned the patterns supplied him by Eastern models and developed a narrative tradition of vase decoration. Within that tradition, fantastic monsters were seen in combat not with other animals but with human, although heroic figures. In view of the general narrative bent of Greek vase decoration and the penchant for pitting monster against human within that tradition, it is not surprising that the fourth century vase-painter set his griffins against similar characters, the Arimasps.

Because the griffin was an Eastern monster it called for an Eastern adversary. By the fourth century, Greeks were as familiar with the clothing of some Eastern people as they were with motifs of Eastern art. Persian costume had been seen by Greeks prior to the Persian Wars, but again, increased contact with this group following the Wars provided all Greeks with a greater understanding of and familiarity with the clothing of these people. Continuous contact with the tribes of Scythia had also given the Greeks intimate knowledge of their costume.<sup>10</sup> The typical attire of both

Scythians and Persians was so well-known to the Greek population that it could not be utilised as the attire of those people who did battle with the griffins. Apart from its use in the art of both civilizations, the griffin does not appear to have been connected to the Scythians or Persians, particularly in a hostile context, and it would have been quite unbelievable to have portrayed the fantastic creature in battle with these very real people. More suited to the needs of confrontation with a monster and in keeping with the previous tradition of depicting heroic figures engaged in such pursuits was a legendary race. The Arimasps, who appear to have been purely legendary, certainly would have fit the requirements of the opponent of the griffin, but again this is making the decidedly tenuous assumption that the fourth century vase-painter was aware of the legend as recorded by Aristéas and others. It may well be that the Greeks themselves did not identify the griffin-fighters as Arimasps, or as any particular race. The intention may have simply been to depict a vague, nameless race, drawn in suitably exotic costume and with definite Oriental ties.

The idea that the figures identified as Arimasps on fourth-century pottery were examples of generic Orientals is supported by the depiction of other Orientals on Attic vases. After the mid fifth century, the Attic vase-painter appears to have abandoned any attempt to portray realistically the clothing of particular Eastern races. Rather, components of

Oriental garb are drawn from one or more civilizations and combined to produce a composite costume which would designate its wearer as Oriental. Thus, Scythians, Phrygians, Persians and Amazons are all depicted with common costume consisting, in various combinations, of trousers, the kandys, a long-sleeved knee-length garment, the "pyjama" ensemble, and ependytes, worn with the standard accessories of tiara and shoes.<sup>11</sup> The mixing together of elements of dress from several civilizations reveals that the vase-painter was not drawing realistic barbaroi, but creating an image of the Oriental which would be recognized, but not particularized by those who viewed it. The creation of a composite Oriental figure would allow the vase-painter to insert such a figure into scenes of an extraordinary nature, such as the grypomachy.

The literary sources which tell the modern scholar of battles fought between Arimasp and griffin reveal a legend fantastic in nature, arising from a land no man had ever visited and involving a race of people and an extraordinary breed of animal no man had ever seen. Whether or not the legend was still in circulation, much less believed, in the fourth century, the artists who painted grypomachy scenes were concerned with projecting a similarly fantastic image upon their wares. The griffin easily complied with the effect the artist desired of his work, for by its very existence it suggested an exotic ambience and removal from the mundane.

The Arimasps were not depicted as so extremely of another world, but they were still drawn in a manner which marked them as decidedly foreign and thus as suitable participants in a battle which must surely have been viewed as occurring at the ends of the earth.

The same consistency noted in the depiction of the griffins upon fourth century pottery is manifest in the rendering of the human participants, both their costume and their poses, who battle with the creatures. A certain formula for the drawing of grypomachy scenes therefore seems to have been established in the fourth century, and this is perhaps best viewed in regard to the artists who produced such works.

As noted in Catalogue A, almost half of the grypomachy vases have been attributed to a single workshop, that of Group G, and four other painters have been assigned three or more vases.<sup>12</sup> It is inviting to cite Group G as having formulated the pattern for the grypomachy, if only on account of the quantity of such scenes ascribed them, but there is no evidence to support this theory and the Group may have chosen to specialize in the scene in imitation of any one of the other painters, or perhaps in imitation of grypomachies found in other media. The depiction of the griffin in the fourth century did not confine itself to the medium of ceramics. Griffins began to appear on works from all media, and while many retained the archaic compositions of heraldic and lone griffins, others involved the griffin in more narrative

scenes, including grypomachies.<sup>13</sup> Examples from other media reveal that the grypomachy was not solely a motif of the Attic vase painter. However, the scene was most often shown on ceramic works, and what is evident from the above brief statistical analysis is that while many grypomachies appear in the fourth century, the sources from which they hail are relatively few and that among those few sources an even lesser number saw fit to repeat the motif.

While it is clear that the grypomachy scene enjoyed a great measure of popularity as a motif of vase decoration in the fourth century, the reasons for its appearance and continued success remain obscure. The unknown provenance of many of the works hinders the drawing of firm conclusions concerning the patrons for which they were executed, and thus for the possible motivations behind their execution. Vases bearing grypomachy scenes are often cited as having been thus adorned specifically for the Scythian market.<sup>14</sup> By the fourth century a very active trade existed between Greece and Scythia and the wealth of finds in the Scythian tombs indicate the prosperity of the region's native population, suggesting that a lucrative market existed on the shores of the Black Sea. The Greek artist would then naturally be drawn to such a market and eager to create wares which would find acceptance in it. If the legend of the Arimasps and griffins was still known in fourth century Athens, it would be connected with the Scythian lands, and so deemed an

appropriate subject for importation to that area. However, the finds from the Scythian tombs also reveal that while the griffin was a popular motif, the grypomachy was not, whether because it held no meaning for the Scythians or because the narrative form of representation displayed by the scene played no role in their artistic style.<sup>15</sup> Greek artists working in Scythia appear to have been conscious of the subjects acceptable to the Scythians for whom they worked and the grypomachy is not found among them.<sup>16</sup> If the Attic grypomachy vases were designed for the Scythian market, the connection between their subject and their destination appears to have existed only in the mind of the vase-painter.

The lack of knowledge on the part of the Attic vase-painter in regard to what types of scenes were most suitable to the Scythian market does not exclude the possibility that they were nonetheless designed for that market. Approximately half the vases with grypomachy scenes to which a provenance has been assigned, while representing only a small percentage of the total, were found in Southern Russia<sup>17</sup> and so must have met with some success in the area, whether among its native or Greek population. However, an equal number of the vases hail from Northern Italy, and isolated examples were found at locations throughout Greece and Italy. These provenances suggest that the grypomachy scenes were generally popular in the fourth century, appealing to patrons who may never have heard the legend and were in no way connected to



it in the mind of the artist who drew the scene. For whatever market vases displaying the grypomachy scene were intended, it is obvious that the appeal of the scene itself was strong as evidenced by the many various locations in which grypomachy vases and other types of works displaying the scene are found, as well as by its many depictions in these artistic categories. The grypomachy motif which suddenly arose in the fourth century remained in vogue throughout the century, and so can be seen not as passing fancy, but as an enduring fashion within the art of the period.

## NOTES

- 1 For literary sources see Ch. 1, pp. 13 -20.
- 2 Herodotus 3,116; Aeschylus, Prometheus Bound, 803-806.
- 3 J.D.P. Bolton, Aristeas of Proconnesus, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1962, p. 26 &38.
- 4 Ibid., p. 26-27.
- 5 For Aristeas acknowledged as source by Pausanias and Pliny see Chapter 1, pp. 15-16. Bolton, op. cit. also provides a detailed discussion on the question of sources for later writers. Pausanias and Pliny are discussed on pp. 32-33 and 28-31 respectively.
- 6 e.g. Bellerophon vs. the chimaera; Herakles vs. the hydra, Nemean lion, and others; Perseus vs. the gorgon, Medusa.
- 7 See introduction, pp. 1-2.
- 8 Previous examples of the griffin in Attic pottery and other media found above, pp. 1-10.
- 9 See Chapter 4 above, p. 56 and n.11.
- 10 See Chapter 4 above, p. 62.
- 11 E. Minns, Scythians and Greeks, Part I, New York: Biblo and Tannen, 1965, p. 55.
- 12 See Catalogue A, p. 82.
- 13 Examples of other griffins found in 4th century media may be found in Delplace, Le Griffon, pp.150 - 221. Specific examples of grypomachies include appliques from Taranto, and a sarcophagus from the necropolis at Monterozzi, as cited in Delplace p. 151 and n. 674,676 and fig. 174,175; p. 168 and fig. 200 respectively.
- 14 Bolton, op. cit., p.181; E.H. Minns, Scythians and Greeks, New York: Biblo and Tannen, 1965, p. 113; Boardman, The Greeks Overseas, p. 258 & 260.

15 See Chapter 4 above, pp. 54-56, 60-61.

16 With the exception of the kalathos from the unusual burial at Great Bliznitsa. See Chapter 4, p. 61-62.

17 See Catalogue A, p. 82.

## CATALOGUE A: GRYPOMACHY SCENES

An examination of grypomachy scenes on Attic pottery is somewhat hindered by the lack of specific points of identification for many of the vases on which they are found. Of the ninety-three vases contained within this catalogue, only twenty-five, approximately one-third of the number, have been assigned a provenance. These twenty-five vases are almost evenly distributed between two locations; Spina in Northern Italy, and Southern Russia. All vases are assigned a broad date of the 4th century B.C., and some the classification of early, mid, or late fourth century, but few are granted more specific dates. Greater success is met in the attribution of the vases. Seventy-six, just over three-quarters of the number have been attributed. Of these, forty-six, approximately two-thirds, are attributed to one workshop, that of Group G. The remainder of the vases are divided among eleven other workshops or painters. Some are assigned only one or two vases, like the Painter of Munich 2365. The Amazon Painter and The Painter of the London Griffin-Calyx are each assigned four vases, The Painter of the Oxford Grypomachy and The Retorted Painter are each assigned three, and seven have been attributed to The Filottrano Painter.

A) Aryballoi

#1. Delphi, inv. #4320

Ht. 0.155m

Perdrizet, Delphes V, p. 166

Described by Perdrizet as a scene with Arimasp on horseback being attacked from the rear by a griffin. The Arimasp turns back to throw his spear at the griffin. To be noted are the additional colours on the vase - gold and yellow in the horse's mane, blue on the cap of the Arimasp and wings of the griffin, and red on the comb and crest of the griffin.

#2. Leningrad

Ht. 0.13 m

Ant. Bos. Cim., pl. LVIII/6,7

One of several vases showing Arimasp and griffin face to face. The griffin is a typical example of the eagle-headed griffin in prancing pose. Weaponry and clothing of the Arimasp are not clearly seen owing to the damaged condition of the vase, but tiara and shoes are visible. This Arimasp is unusual in that he is depicted as white-skinned.

B) Bell Kraters

## #3. Adalia Museum

Metzger, Rep., p.329A. Akarca, Bulleten XIV, 1950, p. 31ff, pl. VI/1,2

Two mounted Arimasps, one on the right and one on the left, attack a centrally placed eagle-griffin. Both Arimasps are clothed in typical costume. The Arimasp on the left attacks the rear flank of the griffin with a spear; the Arimasp on the right turns back to assault the beast with short sword drawn back behind his head. The griffin is one of those with decorated wings - a dark wave pattern marks the front edge of both front and rear wing, the latter of which is seen projecting past the griffin's neck.

## #4. Athens, Agora P 10346

The Amazon Painter

from Athens

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1479,34

## #5. Athens NM

fr. Phyle

Schefold, UKV, #60Metzger, Rep., p.328Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1430,20



cat. #1



cat. #3



Described as an attack of two griffins upon a team of horses led by a young Arimasp.

#6. Musee d'Enserune, Collection Mouret

Ht. 0.31m Diam. 0.295m

Schefold, UKV, #67

Metzger, Rep., p.328

CVA France VI, pl. 239/1

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1455,1

An Arimasp on a white horse turns to meet a griffin attacking him from the rear. Another griffin attacks from the front.

#7. Musee d'Enserune, Collection Mouret

Ht. 0.39m Diam. 0.40m

Schefold, UKV, #66

Metzger, Rep, p.328

CVA France VI, pl. 238/2,4

A centrally placed griffin, beneath whom lies a fallen Arimasp, is attacked by two other Arimasps. The Arimasp on the left is on foot and turns back to attack the griffin with a spear. The Arimasp on the right is mounted and turns back with arm drawn behind head to strike the griffin with his sword. Worthy of note is the visible leg of



this figure, executed in white, which does not bear any covering. This Arimasp also wears a boot on the leg visible. The atypical clothing and white flesh of this Arimasp may be the basis of Metzger's description of the figure as an Amazon. However, white flesh is also seen on the fallen figure, dressed in typically Arimaspien fashion, and also on the figure in #1.

#8. Enserune

The Amazon Painter

from Enserune

CVA France VI, pl.9/2&4

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1479,33

#9. Eton

Painter of the Oxford Grypomachy

fragment from Al Mina

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1428,3

#10. Ferrara T. 130

The Reverse Group of Naples 977

from Spina

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1448,2

Side A



■ 2

cat. #7



284

cat. #12



280

cat. #13

## #11. Ferrara T. 212 C VP

The Filottrano Painter

from Spina

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1454,17

Side A

## #12. Ferrara T. 228 C VP

Group G

Ht. 0.33m Diam. 0.32m

from Spina

Alfieri, Guide (Spina), #284Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1468,142

One centrally placed mounted Arimasp is attacked by eagle-headed griffins, one of whom he faces and one of whom is at his rear. His weapon is indistinguishable, but a pelta is seen beneath the torso of the griffin on the right.

## #13. Ferrara T. 266 A VP

The Filottrano Painter

Ht. 0.46m Diam. 0.49m

from Spina

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1455,1; 1694,16bisAlfieri, Spina museo archeologico:La ceramica,

fig.280

Side A

From left to right are seen a eagle-griffin, a mounted Arimasp, another griffin, and another mounted Arimasp. The Arimasps are almost identically posed, turning back to attack the griffins setting upon them from the rear, and drawing swords behind their heads. Their clothing is also decorated in like fashion, with plain lower ependytes and two double swirls over the chest.

#14. Ferrara T. 897

The Filottrano Painter

from Spina

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1455,2; 1694,19bis

#15. Ferrara T. 1131 VT

The Filottrano Painter

ca. 360 (Alfieri)

from Spina

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1454, 21

Alfieri, Spina museo archeologico:La ceramica,  
fig. 282 (Side B only)

#16. Ferrara T. 1170

The Filottrano Painter

from Spina

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1454,20

## #17. Ferrara T. 1210

The Filottrano Painter

from Spina

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1454,19

Alfieri, Spina museo archeologico:La ceramica,  
fig. 281 (Side B only)

## #18. Genoa

The Retorted Painter

from Genoa

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1430,19

## #19. London, BM F6

Painter of London F6

Ht. 10.80 "     Diam. 11.25"

British Museum, Catalogue of the Greek and Etruscan  
Vases, Vol. 4, p. 29.

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>,1453,1

Described as two Amazons engaged in battle with a single griffin. The Amazon on the left is said to wear a long chiton, anaxyrides, and a white tiara. She is thrusting her spear into the griffin, who moves towards the Amazon on the right. This figure turns back to meet the griffin with her spear. In the absence of an illustration it is difficult to state whether the figures are indeed

Amazons, as could be distinguished by the depiction of breasts, or whether the name has been arbitrarily applied.

#20. Montauban 3

Painter of London F6

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1453,3

#21. Moscow, Hist. Mus. 5539

Painter of London F6

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1453,2

#22. Naples 932

Group G

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1469,144

#23. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum 1917.61

Ht. 0.33m

Painter of the Oxford Grypomachy (name vase)

c. 400-375 B.C.

Metzger, Rep, p.327

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1428,1

M. Vickers, Ashmolean Museum Greek Vases, fig.65

CVA Gr. Britain III, pl. 116/4

This is one of the grypomachy scenes containing a relatively large number of figures: three eagle-griffins and three Arimasps. Two of the griffins, that on the lower right



4 (1917. 61) 9 10 cm.

cat. #23



cat. #24

and that on the upper left, are executed in white with brown details. The griffin on the lower left appears to be totally brown. This griffin attacks an Arimasp who has fallen to the ground and turns back towards his assailant with arms raised in defense. An Arimasp on the register above this one holds pelta in left hand and spear, aimed at the lower right griffin, in right. He is attacked from the rear by another griffin. The Arimasp on the upper right wields an axe, grasped with both hands behind his head. All Arimasps wear extensively patterned clothing. Their faces are executed in relief contour, some of which is now missing.

#24. Paris, Louvre G529

Group G

Ht. 0.435m Diam. 0.185m

Schefold, UKV, #136

CVA France VIII, pl.383/4

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1470,162

This is one of two vases Beazley classifies as Bell Kraters of the Falaieff type. (see also cat. #25) Grypomachies are depicted both on the high circular frieze which runs around the vessel's neck and on Side A of the vase. Seen on Side A are two figures, one on the right and one on the left, who attack a griffin placed between them. The Arimasp on the left is mounted and thrusts a spear



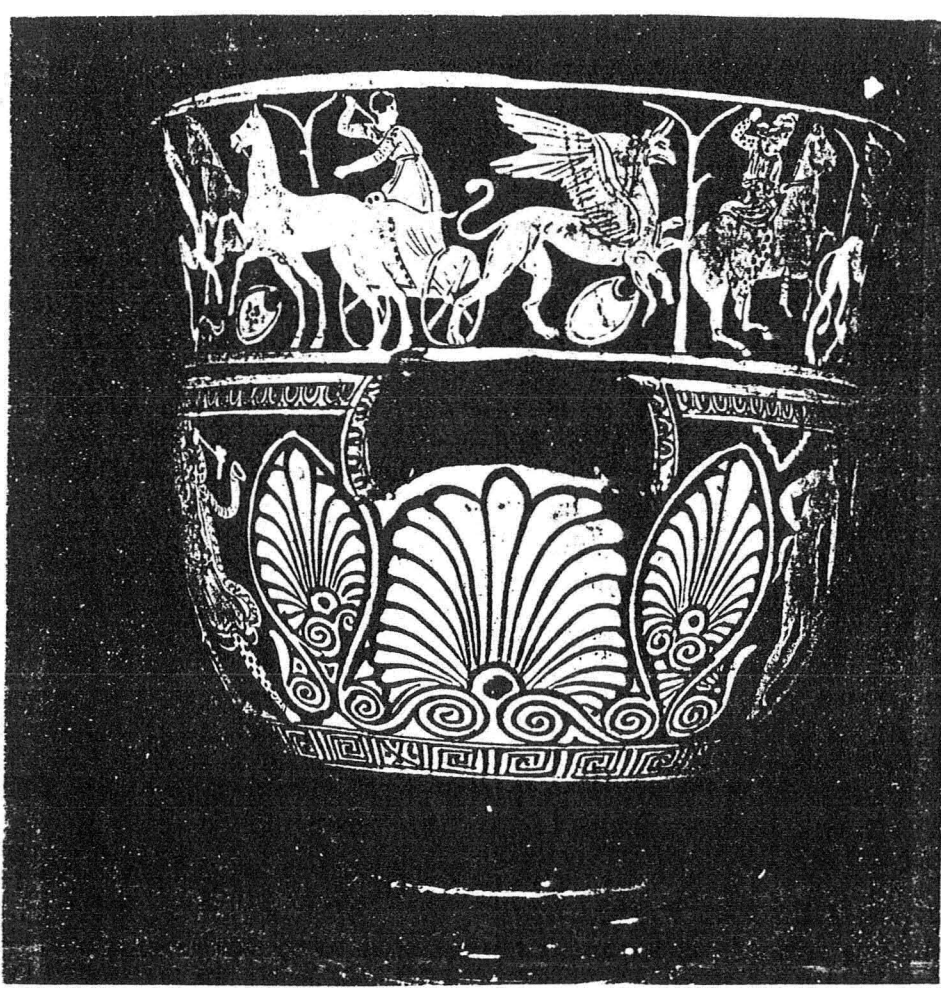
towards the griffin, whom he faces. The figure on the right may be identified as an Arimasps on the basis of the subject matter of the scene, but he wears a typically Persian garment. This is the kandys, a cloak-like garment with long sleeves which are not worn but hang down freely from the shoulder. Neither figure carries a pelta but again one is seen lying beneath the griffin's torso.

The frieze of the krater contains six Arimasps and six griffins. With one exception the Arimasps are seen in typical poses - mounted and spear bearing, on foot with weapon-bearing arm drawn up and back, fallen to the ground. All of the Arimasps on foot are notable for their lack of head covering. The exceptional figure is seen driving a two-horsed chariot. His costume as well as his pose is remarkable, for he wears a long-sleeved ankle-length garment. The outfit appears as a mixture of Greek charioteer dress and foreign. Although not usually seen in grypomachies, there is one other instance where a charioteer is shown in similar clothing. (see cat. #78) Both instances seem to indicate the contamination of the grypomachy scene by Greek elements. Figures fighting on foot carry the pelta and the shield is seen several times beneath both griffins and horses.

#25. Louvre G530

Group G

Ht. 0.43m Diam. 0.38m



cat. #24



Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1469,161

CVA France VIII, pl. 384/1,4-8; 383/3,4,7,9

Grypomachy scenes appear on the circular frieze of krater's neck and on Side A. The frieze is similar to that of #24, with several Arimasps and griffins in typical poses.

Side A displays a single mounted Arimasp attacked by two eagle-griffins, one on either side. The Arimasp turns back to assault the griffin at the rear of his mount. The pelta, as usual, is not carried but lies beneath the forelegs the horse.

#26. Stockholm 2

Group G

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1470,163

#27. Wurzburg 635

The Filottrano Painter

Ht. 0.26m

Langlotz, Wurzburg, #635

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1454,22

A single mounted Arimasp, spear in hand, faces a single griffin, perhaps entirely in red figure. A pelta lies beneath the torso of the griffin.



cat. #25



#28. Once Lewes, Warren

Painter of the Oxford Grypomachy

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1428,2

#28bis. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches

Museum 1074

CVA Austria III, pl.137

A single mounted Arimasp is attacked from either side by an eagle-headed griffin. The Arimasp carries a spear but no peltae are seen on the vase. The griffins are executed in red figure. The ependytes of the Arimasp is executed in added white.

### C) Hydria

#29. London, BM F230      Hamilton Collection

Ht. 18" British Museum, The Greek and Etruscan Vase, Vol. 4, p.112.

Described as a single Amazon encountering a single griffin. The Amazon has dismounted from her white horse, whom the griffin seizes by the throat, to aim her spear at the beast. The figure is said to be wearing cap, jerkin,



cat. #27



cat. #32

anaxyrides, chiton, and sandals, and carrying a pelta  
on her right (?) arm.

D) Kalyx Kraters

#30. Athens 13898

The Painter of the Louvre G508

from Tanagra

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1436, 11

#31. Athens 1673

The Retorted Painter

from Boeotia?

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1431, 31

#32. Athens NM 14899

Painter of the London Griffin Calyx

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1455, 1

Schefold. UKV, #227, pl. 40/2

Side B

Single Arimasp on foot, bearing spear and pelta,  
attacks single griffin.

#33. Brussels

Ht. 0.365m Diam. 0.34m



CVA Belgium II, pl.83

Scene with five Arimasps, four on foot and one fallen to the ground. One griffin is seen flying through the air on the upper left; another attacks the fallen human. All Arimasps wear very detailed clothing.

#34. Copenhagen, inv. 3846

Painter of the London Griffin-Calyx

Prov. unknown

mid 4th c.

Ht. 0.483m Diam 0.44m

CVA Denmark VIII, pl.359

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1455,3

The figures found here form a continuous frieze around the vase but it is those found on Side B which are of importance here. (Figures on Side A will be discussed in Catalogue B, # 96) Seen on Side B are a single griffin and single Arimasp as on # 32. These two depictions are strikingly similar and CVA remarks that they are undoubtedly by the same painter.

#35. London 1931.1-13.

Painter of the London Griffin-Calyx

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1455,2





cat. #33



cat. #34

On Side B of this vase a grypomachy scene is shown. On Side A (Cat. B. # 98), Arimasps riding griffins are seen among other Arimasps and maenads.

#36. Paris, Cabinets des Medailles 922

The Retorted Painter

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1430,30

E) Lekythoi

#37. Leningrad, St. 2258

Ant. Bos. Cim., pl.LVIII/6,7

Metzger, Rep, p. 327

Described as a female Arimasps rushing to encounter with a griffin.

F) Pelikai

#38. Altenburg, inv. 318

Group G

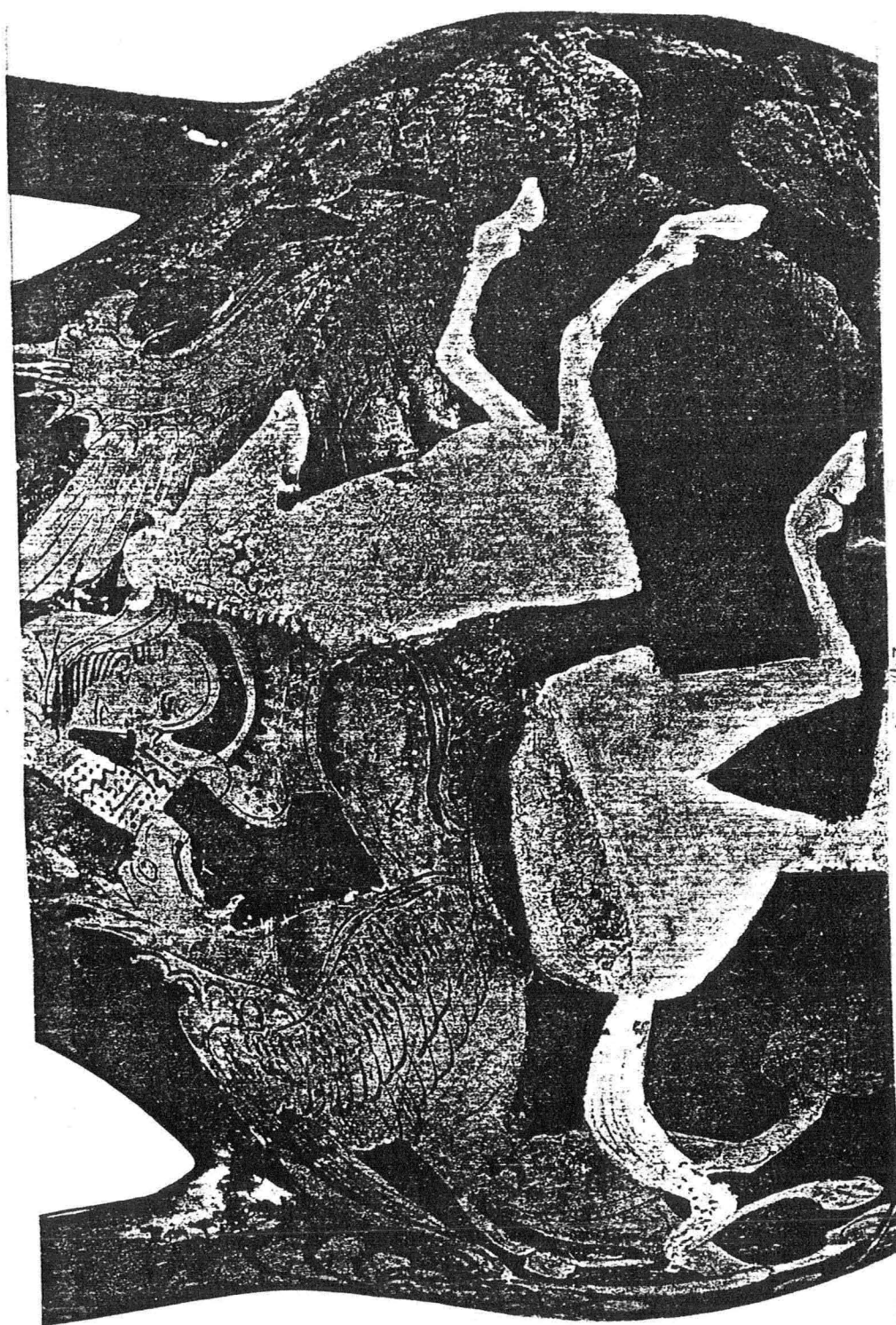
from Apulia

CVA Germany XVIII, pl.838

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1463,29



cat. #38



cat. #43

Single mounted Arimasp with spear attacks single griffin head-on. Pelta seen between and beneath forelegs of horse and griffin.

#39. Athens, private

Group G

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1462,3

#40. Athens, private

Group G

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1463,20

#41. Once Athens, private

Group G

from Kythnos

Beazley, ARV, 1463,21

#42. Athens 1448 (CC 1862)

Group G

from Cyrene

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1462,6

#43. Robinson Collection, Baltimore

from Olynthos

Workshop of the Griffin Painter

360-350 B.C.

Ht. 0.28m Diam 0.202m

CVA U.S.A. VII, pl.309/2. 310/1a

Side A

Seen here are two eagle-griffins, executed in red, and two female Arimasps. Dressed in typical Arimasbian fashion, the figures are identified as female by the presence of one (right) breast on each. The other breast may be obscured by the pelta of the right figure and the horse's neck on the left figure, or may not have been drawn.

#44. Boston 85.709

Group G

late 4th c.

from Crete

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1464,41

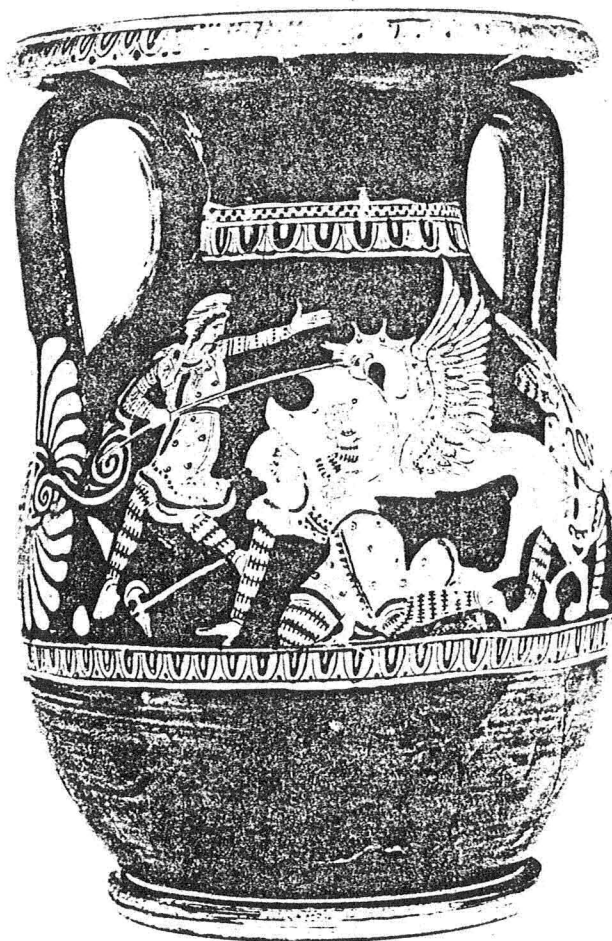
#45. Once Carlsruhe, Vogell, 124

Group G

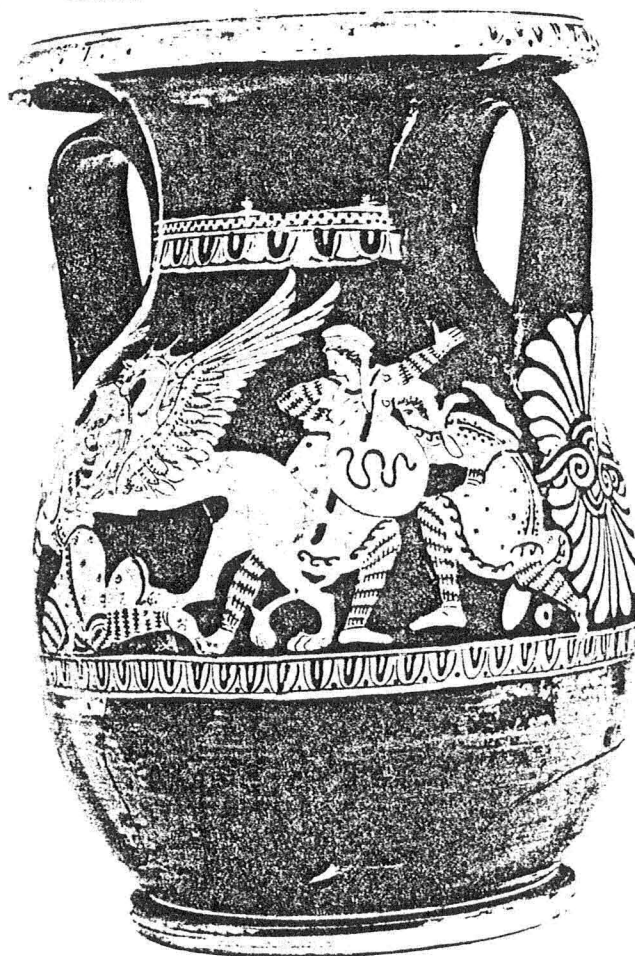
Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1463,30

#46. Castle Ashby

Ht. 0.282m



cat.#46



CVA Gr. Britain XV, pl.699

Four Arimasps are pictured here with one eagle-headed griffin. Two of the Arimasps, those on the far left and far right, bear spears. The figures on the far left and fallen to the ground carry pelta and a sagaris lies between the legs of the figure on the far left. The two Arimasps on the right are shown in somewhat unusual pose; that on the far right crouching behind his shield and that on the near right running from the griffin with left arm raised and hand outstretched.

#47. Chania

Group G

from Phalasarna

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1463,27

#48. Cracow, Musee Archeologique, inv.#3591

Ht. 0.22m

Kertch Style

CVA Poland II, pl.93

A single griffin attacks a single Arimasp on foot as in #1.





cat. #49



cat. #48



cat. #55

#49. Geneva, inv. # I 680

Group G

Ht. 0.335m Diam. 0.208m

CVA Suisse I, pl.22

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1462,1

Two Arimasps, one on the right fallen to the ground, one on the left mounted, turn back in identical poses to meet eagle-headed griffins attacking from the rear. Instead of the tiara the Arimasp on the right wears a fillet about his head.

#50. Ferrara T. 159 A VP

Group G

from Spina

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1463,13bis

#51. Ferrara T. 166 T VP

Group G

from Spina

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1462, 10

#52. Ferrara T. 203 A VP

Group G

from Spina

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1463,25

#53. Ferrara T. 230 B VP

Group G

from Spina

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1462, 11 & 12

#54. Ferrara T. 312 B VP

Group G

from Spina

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1462, 13

#55. Japan, Pelike 45

CVA Japan I, pl. 15/3

Side B

Single mounted Arimasp facing single eagle-headed  
griffin as in #26.

#56. Kerch, V.I

Group G

from Kerch

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1463

#57. Leningrad?

Group G

from South Russia

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1463,24

#58. Leningrad (ex Novikov)

Group G

from South Russia

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1463,35

#59. Leningrad

Ht. 0.28m

Ant. Bos. Cim., pl.LVIII/1,2

A single mounted Arimasp attacks a prancing griffin with spear. The Arimasp's pelta lies beneath the forepaws of the griffin.

#60 Hermitage, KAB 51g

Group G

Ht. 0.33m

Schefold. UKV, # 453,pl.24/2

Metzger, Rep,p.329

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1463,38

A chariot driven by an Arimasp is attacked by griffins at front and rear. The Arimasp's face is not clear but could be bearded. He turns back to strike his pursuer,



cat. #59



cat. #60



cat. #62

with arm drawn back in typical fashion.

#61. Leningrad 57b

Group G

from Kerch

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1463, 18

#62. Leningrad St. 1873

Painter of the Lion-Griffins

Ht. 0.24m

Schefold, UKV, #381, pl. 5/1

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1473, 1

A representation of a lion-headed griffin appears centrally on this vase. His head differs dramatically from those of the eagle-headed griffins, as previously discussed. (See Chapter 2, pp. 25) His wings are also depicted in different fashion, with feathers differentiated only by thick black lines. Three thick black curves also run along his torso, and are seen upon each of his rear flanks.

The griffin is placed between two Arimasps, both are running from the griffin but turn back to face the animal and each other. Dressed in typical fashion the Arimasps are remarkable in that they bear no weapons. Not even a lone pelta is depicted on the vase. Instead the

Arimasps each raise one arm, in attitudes reminiscent of those Arimasps who draw their arms back to strike at griffins.

#63. Hermitage St. 2084

Ht. 0.20m

Schefold, UKV, 3411

Metzger, Rep., p.328

Described as a single Arimasp on horseback doing battle with a griffin.

#64. Leningrad St. 2173

Group G

from South Russia

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1463,23

Ant. Bos. Cim., pl. LVIII/1-2

#65. London, BM E434

Ht. 0.30m

Schefold, UKV, #513

Metzger, Rep., p.328

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1474

A centrally located Arimasp defends himself against three griffins. Wielding a sagaris and carrying a



cat. #65



cat. #67



pelta he turns back to face the griffin attacking from the left. The two griffins approaching from the right are seen in most atypical poses, crouching with torso bent down and forward from the hips, rear legs extended and weight resting on forepaws.

The Arimasp under attack is aided by two companions. On the far left an Arimasp directs his spear towards the left griffin; from an upper register another Arimasp emerges from behind a knoll or rock to heave a boulder at the left griffin. All Arimasps wear closely decorated clothing and stiff tiaras.

#66. London, BM F85 Durand Collection

from Apulia

Ht. 10"

British Museum, Catalogue of the Greek and Etruscan Vases, Vol.4

Described as an Amazon wearing anaxyrides of spotted skin, a Phrygian cap, jerkin, and short chiton, who thrusts a spear at a single griffin from her rearing horse. A pelta lies on the ground.

#67. Madrid, Museo Arqueologico, #11210

Group G

fr. Kyrene

Ht. 0.21m Diam 0.478m

Schefold, UKV, 3516, pl.23/2

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1464,39

An Arimasps is seen here defending himself against the attack of a griffin on foot. He carries a pelta in his left arm, and an additional pelta is seen between his legs.

#68. Moscow, Hist. Mus. 3.7

Group G

late 4th c.

from South Russia

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1464,40

#69. Moscow, Hist. Mus. 49468

Group G

from South Russia

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1463,31

#70. Moscow, Pushkin Museum 205

Group G

from South Russia

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1463,17

#71. Moscow, Pushkin Museum 377

Group G

from South Russia

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1463,14

#72. once seen in ancient collection Metaxas at Mylasa

Schefold, UKV, #541

Metzger, Rep., p. 329

Described as a mounted Arimasp fighting with lance  
against a griffin.

#73. Naples, inv. 147320

Group G

from Naples

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>. 1462,5

#74. Naples 2892

Group G

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1462,4

#75. New York X.21.21 (GR 825)

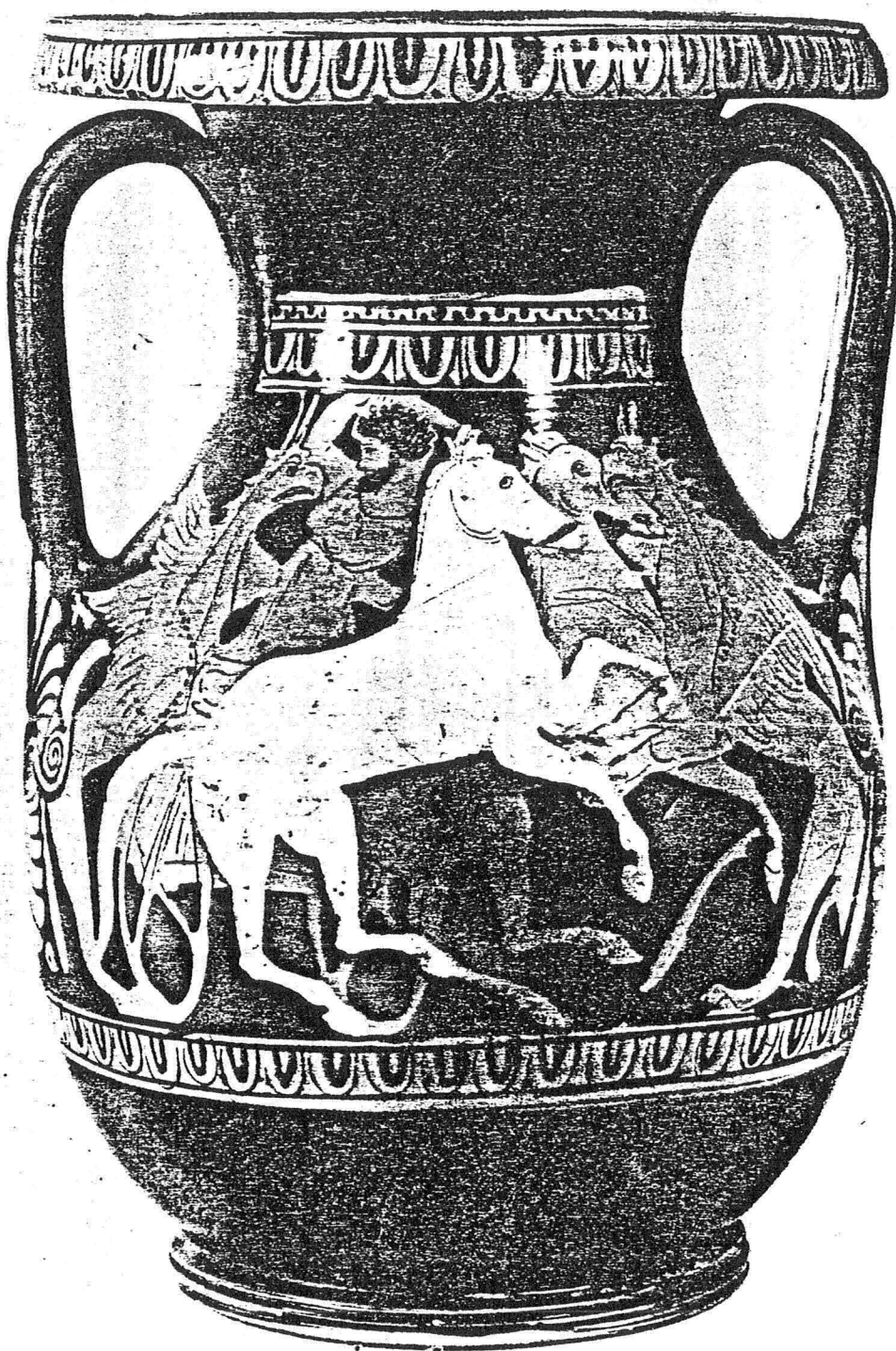
Group G

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1462,8

#76. Odessa iii 12

Group G

from South Russia



cat. #78

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1463,15

#77. Odessa iii 8025

Group G

from South Russia

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1463,16

#78. Oxford 1970.6

possibly The Amazon Painter (Catling)

Ht. 0.28m

M. Vickers, Ashmolean Museum Greek Vases, fig. 64

H.W.Catling, AR (1974-75), pp.31-32, pl.27/8

An Arimasp in two-horsed chariot defends himself against two griffins. Griffins are executed in red figure; one horse, in foreground, is white. The Arimasp is notable for his dark beard, unusual in representations of Arimasps. His costume is not decorated and consists of the ankle-length, sleeveless garment typical of Greek charioteers.

#79. Paris, Cabinet des Medailles

Group G

from Cyrenaica

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1462,7

#80. Paris, Louvre CA 2269

Group G

from South Russia

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1463,34

#81. Paris, Louvre G 553bis (N3454)

Group G

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1463,32

#82. Pilsen 8316

Near Group G

from Kerch

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1471,3

#83. Prague National Museum 1056

Group G

from Crimea

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1462,2

#84. Syracuse, New York

Group G

from Greece

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1463,32bis

#85. Theodosia 321

Group G

from Theodosia?

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1463,37

#86. Warsaw, ( ex Choynowski 253) inv. 31978

Group G

CVA, Poland III, pl. 106

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1462,9

Scene as in #26, but no discernible weapon is carried by the Arimasp. The Arimasp's head is bare of any covering. Pelta lying beneath the forequarters of the horse is extremely small.

#87. Warsaw, Mus. Nat., inv. 138531

The Amazon Painter (Schefold)

second half 4th c.

Schefold, UKV, #572

CVA Poland VI, pl. 255, 256

Side B of this vase presents two Arimasps attacking a single griffin. The Arimasps face each other from either side of the griffin. Both carry short swords drawn back to strike in typical fashion. Three peltae are seen here; one between the legs of the Arimasp on the right,



22

cat. #86



Cat. #87



one between the head of the Arimasp on the left and the griffin, and one on the left arm of the Arimasp on the right. The griffin here appears to be executed in red figure, as opposed to the more typical added white.

#88. Worcester, Mass., 1906.129

Group G

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1463,22

#89. Wurzburg 633, fr.

Group G

from Athens

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1463,26

#90. Vatican, inv. 9097

Group G

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1463,28

G) Rhyta

#91. London, BM G189, Temple Collection

from Ruvo



cat. #88

Ht. 8"

British Museum, Catalogue of the Greek and Etruscan Vases, Vol. 4, p. 268.

Scene upon the rhyton described as battle between an Amazon and a griffin. The Amazon, dressed in short tunic, boots and tiara seizes the griffin by the throat with her left hand in preparation to attacking him with the sword she holds in her right. The griffin has pinned the Amazon down, his left forepaw placed on her body and right hind leg on her feet.

#92. London, BM G190, Millingen Collection

Ht. 8"

British Museum, Catalogue of the Greek and Etruscan Vases, Vol. 4, p. 268.

Described as bearing same subject matter as BM G189, #92 above.

CATALOGUE B - GRIFFIN RIDERS

#94. Pelike, Paris, Cabinet des Medailles, De Ridder 408

Ht. 0.305m

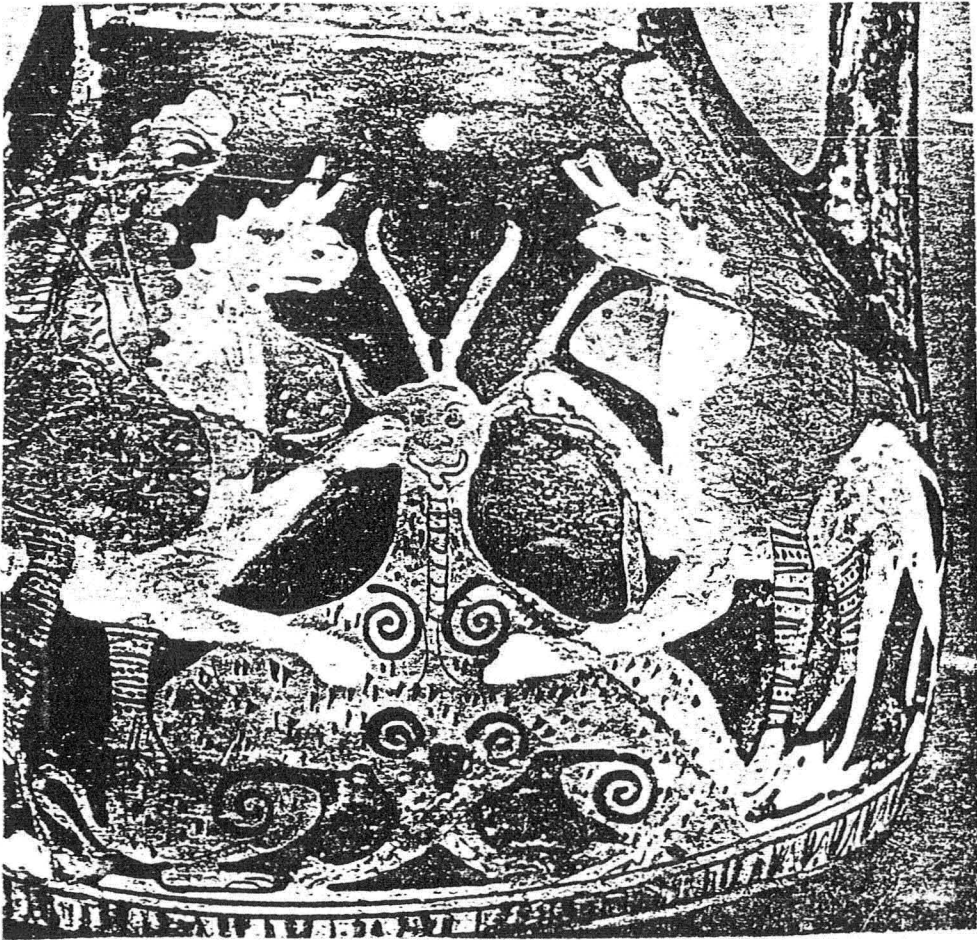
Metzger, Rep., p. 328, pl. XLII

Schefold, UKV, #550

Museum catalogue, pl 16

The unusual scene on this vase portrays two Arimasps, each mounted on an eagle-headed griffin, who attack a strange monster with their spears. The monster, centrally located, is single-headed and double bodied. It is shown frontally from head to chest, at which point its two feline-like bodies are seen reclining in profile. Metzger identifies the monster as a griffin. If the identification is correct, it is definitely not an eagle-headed griffin. It could be a lion-headed griffin, its two long horns roughly corresponding to the long tendril found atop the griffin in Catalogue A, # 62.

The Arimasps are seen in typical costume, and carry spears, which they direct down toward the monster. The change in mount has not altered the position of the Arimasps, which is identical to that adopted by many of the grypomachy griffins.



cat. #94



cat. #95

#95. Plate, Copenhagen inv.9411

fr. Greece

Kerch style

CVA Denmark 8, pl.861

Seen on the face of this plate are two Arimasps, mounted on eagle-headed griffins. Although the torsos of the Arimasps are obscured by the wings of their mounts, their limbs are visible and appear to conform to standard dress of "pyjama" emsemble. A tiara is seen on the head of each and shoes cover their feet. One arm of each Arimasp is raised and drawn back in the same manner as those Arimasps in grypomachy scenes who prepare to strike their opponents with lance or spear from horseback, but the figures on this plate hold no weapons. The griffins here are in slightly different pose than those of grypomachy scenes. They face each other with three paws placed firmly on the ground. The griffin on the right raises one paw in mid-air but it is not clear if the griffin on the left was drawn in similar fashion or if all four of his paws are on the ground. Above the Arimasps and griffins Eros is seen playing with a goose.

#96. Kalyx Krater, Copenhagen inv.3846

Painter of the London Griffin Calyx

Kerch style

mid 4th C. B.C.



cat. #96





Diameter 0.444m

CVA Denmark 8, pl.359

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1455,3

Side A of this krater displays a scene involving five Arimasps, three of whom are mounted on griffins, and two maenads. At the extreme of either side of the scene is seen an Arimasp dressed in standard fashion, astride a typical griffin in prancing pose. A similar figure is also found at the vase's centre. Behind and above this central Arimasp is another who carries a thyrsus in his left hand. His legs are not depicted. One other Arimasp, this one kneeling on the ground, is seen to the left of the central figure. The two maenads, each dressed in a peplos and carrying a tympanum, are seen on either side of the legless figure. The kneeling Arimasp also holds a tympanum, and the instrument is found again in front of this figure and beneath the forepaws of the griffin on the right. A thyrsus also lies on the ground before the fallen Arimasp.

This krater is of particular interest because its reverse shows a grypomachy scene. (See Catalogue A, #34) The same combination of grypomachy and griffin-mounted Arimasp seen with female figures may also be seen on vase #98 (Side A and #33 in Cat. A for Side B).



#97. Kalyx Krater, Laon 37.1039

Painter of the London Griffin Calyx

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1455,5

Side A described as showing Arimasps riding griffins, Arimasps, and maenads.

#98. Kalyx Krater, London 1931.1-13.1

Painter of the London Griffin Kalyx

Beazley. ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1455,2

Side A also described as displaying Arimasps riding griffins, Arimasps, and maenads. Its reverse (Cat. A # 33) displays a grypomachy scene.

#99. Kalyx Krater, Paris, Petit Palais 328

Painter of the London Griffin Kalyx

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1455,4

CVA France XV, pl. 24/5,7,9 and 25/5,7

Seen on Side A of this vase are Arimasps riding griffins, Arimasps and maenads.

#100. Pelike, Mainz 0.17298

ht. 0.023m diameter 0.163m

CVA Germany 42, pl 2053

This pelike displays a male figure mounted on a griffin preceded by a woman. The griffin is a typical eagle-headed griffin and shown in regular prancing pose. The figure mounted on the griffin is definitely an Arimasp, dressed in "pyjamas", shoes, decorated ependytes and tiara. His right arm is raised in the manner of one about to throw a spear, although no weapon is present. The griffin upon which the Arimasp is mounted is drawn in standard fashion in regard to both appearance and pose. The woman seen on the right side of the vase wears a peplos of diaphanous material drawn with a belt over its top fold-over and bloused over the belt. A wide hairband is tied round her head and she is barefoot. Her torso twists back in order to allow her to face her pursuer and her right arm is raised and bent at the elbow as is the case with many of these figures. Nothing is carried in the raised right hand, but a blockish object is held in her left.

#101. Pelike, Royal Ontario Museum inv. 414

Painter of Munich 2365

from South Italy

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1473,3



cat. #101



cat. #103



cat. #104

Robinson, A Catalogue of the Greek Vases in the Royal Ontario Museum, Vol. I & II, p. 210-211 and pl. LXXVIII, fig. 414.

Side A of this pelike shows a male figure at its far left and another male figure, with a torch or club, at its far right. In between these two are seen a female in peplos, pursued by a figure on horseback. The figure is identified as an Amazon, but wears the costume seen on Arimasps.

#102. Kalyx Krater, Paris 2035

ht. 0.355m

Metzger, Rep., p.52

Schefold, UKV, #261

Described as an Arimasp on griffin pursuing a maiden.

#103. Bell Krater, Ferrara T.758

Group G

from Spina

Alfieri, Spina Museo archeologico:La ceramica, p.112, fig.285

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, p. 1469,146

From left to right on this krater are seen a satyr, Arimasp mounted on griffin, and a woman. The satyr is shown nude, with long dark hair and full beard. Both griffin and Arimasp are shown in typical fashion. The female figure is seen in the same attitude as that on vase #103, but wears a long peplos decorated above the waist. A fillet is seen round her head.

#104. Krater, Cracow, Collection de l'Universite  
ht. 0.325m  
CVA, Poland 2, pl.83

Central to the scene on this krater is a male figure mounted upon a griffin. The figure, shown bare-chested and bare-legged, is identified as Dionysos. His mount is executed in white, with gold details. On the far right of the scene is a nude satyr who carries a tympanum and looks back towards the god. A woman, also carrying a tympanum is seen on the far left of the scene. She is dressed in peplos and wears a fillet around her head. Her tympanum is carried in her left hand while her right arm is raised in typical pose. This figure is unusual for its placement in the scene, behind the god instead of before him.

#105. Pelike, Leningrad 1903, 14582

Group of Mytilene 590 (near Amazon Painter)

from Southern Russia

ht. 0..024m

Schefold, UKV, #492, pl.23/4

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1480,3

This pelike displays a scene similar to that found on #103, with one notable exception. It is not an Arimasp mounted on the griffin of this vase but a god. As on vases with griffin-mounted Arimasps, the torso of the figure is covered by the griffin's wing, but his legs are shown, one dangling on either side of the creature. These legs are bare, and the feet do not appear to be covered, especially obvious in the case of the right foot where toes are indicated. No tiara rests upon the figure's head, but a filet may be tied around his short curly hair. The woman before this group is dressed in typically Greek fashion, with long peplos and sleeveless chiton. Her pose is as that of the female in #103, but nothing is carried in her left hand.

#106. Pelike, Leningrad St. 2075

ht. 0.027m

Schefold, UKV, #404

Metzger, Rep., p. 52

Described as Dionysos riding a griffin, in pursuit

of a young maiden, probably similar to #107 and #108.

#107. Pelike, Leningrad 2079

Group G

ht. 0.21m

Ant. Bos. Cim., pl.LVIII/5&8

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1465,78

The figure mounted upon a griffin is identified as either Dionysos or Apollo. It is difficult to give a detailed description of the mounted figure, but the griffin is drawn with standard features and in standard pose. A white-fleshed female wearing peplos and with right arm upraised turns back to face the deity.

#108. Pelike, Leningrad St. 2081

ht. 0.027m

Schefold, UKV, #409

Also described as Dionysos on a griffin chasing a maiden.

#109. Pelike, Leningrad St. 2083

Group G

ht. 0.027m

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1465,81



cat. #105



142

cat. #107



cat. #109



cat. #110



Ant. Bos. Cim., pl. LVII/3&4

On the left side of this pelike is seen a male figure, identified as Apollo or Dionysos, mounted on a typical prancing griffin. The god is bare-chested and bare-legged and may possibly hold something in his hands, which are extended in front of him and raised to eye level. A fillet is tied round his head. The female figure on the right side of the scene wears a short chiton over a long peplos, and a fillet binds her hair. A tympanum is carried in her right hand which is seen in typical position, and a torch in her left. The attributes of the female figure support a more definite identification of the male figure as Dionysos.

#110. Plate, Enserune, Collection Mouret

The Painter of Vienna 202

beginning 4th C. B.C.

CVA France 6, pl. 240/1-3

Schefold, UKV, #589

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1523,6

The figure here mounted on a griffin has been identified as Dionysos by Schefold, but Beazley is not firm on such an identification. The long-haired god is shown with bare chest and legs. His left hand is wrapped around the

griffin's throat, while his right arm is bent at the elbow and raised. This gesture could indicate the bearing of a thyrsus and thus support the identification of the god as Dionysos.

- #111. Cup tondo, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum inv 202  
beginning 4th C. B.C.  
Painter of Vienna 202  
ht. 0.009m diameter 0.026m  
Schefold, UKV, 3591  
Metzger, Rep., p.170  
CVA Austria 1, pl.30  
Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1523,1  
LIMC, "Apollon," p. 230 and fig. 367\*

The tondo of this cup displays the god Apollo riding a typical eagle-headed griffin. Apollo is seated side-saddle upon his mount. He carries a cithara in his right arm and laurel branch in his left. The god is clothed in a long, flowing robe which may be long-sleeved. The composition of the scene is very similar to that of #113, and so may also depict the god being borne across the sea on his mount.

- #112. Hydria, Barcelona 34



cat. #111



cat. #115

ht. 0.36m

Metzger, Rep., p.140

Schefold, UKV, #141

Described as Dionysos mounted on a griffin, in the midst of an entourage of satyrs and maenads.

#113. Bell Krater, Olynthus, Thessaloniki Museum, inv. 8.74

ht. 0.038m

beginning 4th C. B.C.

Metzger, Rep., p.170, pl. XXIV

Robinson, Excav. Olynthus V, pl.86&87, #142, p.

120-123

The obverse side of this krater has been said to depict Apollo, seated upon a griffin in the midst of a group of male and female figures (Beazley). This identification has been disputed in favour of an identification of Dionysos upon a winged panther, surrounded by maenads and satyrs (Robinson). The creature is definitely winged but a positive identification is difficult owing to a missing fragment which would have included its head. It does seem likely that the god here depicted is Dionysos, as indicated by the presence of the typical companions of the god, but Apollo is also known to have been depicted in the same company, as in cat. #118. I think the creature must be a griffin, having found no

reference to any other representation of a winged panther.

#114. Bell Krater, Berlin Museum F2641

c. 420 B.C.

Manner of the Dinos Painter

Metzger, Rep., p. 169, pl. XXIV/1

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1156,8

LIMC, "Apollon," p. 229 and fig. 363\*

Here is seen Apollo, carrying a laurel branch in his left hand, mounted on a griffin. He moves to the right where Leto, Artemis and Hermes stand.

#115. Oinochoe, London, British Museum E 543

The Painter of London E543

from Vulci

end of the 5th c. B.C.

Metzger, Rep., p. 170, pl. XXIV

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1348,1

LIMC, "Apollon," p. 229 and fig. 364\*

Here is seen Apollo, identified by the laurel branch he holds in his left hand, riding a griffin. A laurel wreath may also be placed on his head. His feet and chest are

bare. The griffin is seen with typical features and in standard pose. Apollo moves to the left of the vase where a female figure, identified as Artemis, holds out a phiale towards him. On the far right of the vase, to the rear of Apollo and the griffin stands another female figure, identified as Leto. A staff is seen in her right hand while in her left she holds a head-band, perhaps also intended for the god.

#116. Bell Krater, London, private

The Black Thyrsus Painter

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1433,27

Described as Apollo on a griffin, surrounded by two maenads, one carrying a tympanum and the other a thyrsus, and a satyr.

#117. Two cup fragments, Jena 384

The Jena Painter

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1512,14

The interior of the cup shows Apollo riding a griffin, Side A of the exterior shows Dionysos and maenads.

#118. Bell krater, Ferrara T. 559 A VP

The Filottrano Painter

from Spina

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1453,8

Described as Dionysos on a griffin, seen with Eros,  
Pan, a maenad and a satyr.

#119. Bell krater, London 1925.10-15.1

The Filottrano Painter

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1453,9

Side A described as Dionysos with Eros, Pan and satyrs.

#120. Bell krater, Ferrara T. 515 C VP

The Filottrano Painter

from Spina

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1694,9bis

Described as Dionysos on a griffin, with maenad and  
satyr.

#121. Pelike, Paris, Louvre MNB 1036

Pasithea Painter

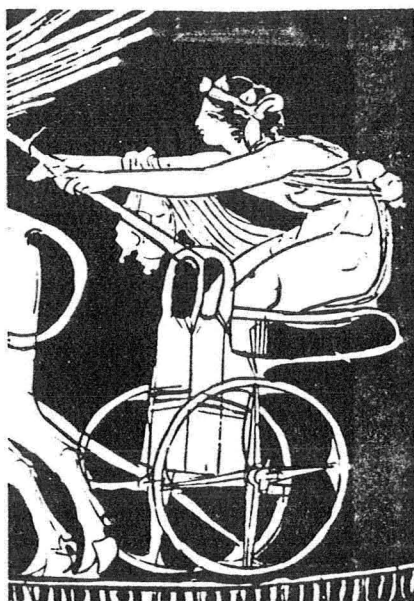
CVA France XII, pl. 528, fig. 6-8

Schefold, UKV, fig. 556

LIMC III, Part 2, fig. 464



cat. #121





Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1472, 3

Dionysos is seen here in a chariot which is pulled by a lion, a bull, and a griffin.

Other vases decorated with deities or youths mounted on griffins and pursuing maidens are listed in Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>. The vases contained within this catalogue are those for which illustrations were most easily accessible.

## APPENDIX A

### Illustration A      Aryballos by Xenophontos

Hermitage inv. no    1837.2

Ht. 0.38m

early 4th c., ca. 380

Ant. Bos. Cim., p. 98, pl. XLV, XLVI

Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup>, 1407

### Illustration B      Volute Krater

Naples MN H 3251

ca. 440

Schauenburg, Jagddarstellungen auf

Griechischen Vasen, Hamburg and Berlin: Paul Parey, 1969,  
p.13 and pl.16

While not strictly speaking a grypomachy scene as defined in Catalogue A, the aryballos of Xenophontos does display some similarities to that scene. A hunt scene ranges over the surface of the vase, and the hunters are definitely Orientals. Those at the extreme edges of the scene, who are painted directly on to the surface of the vase, are seen in the same outfit as the Arimasps of the grypomachy scenes. Their arms - spear, pelta, single-edged axe - are also the

same, but one figure also carries a bow (upper far right). The other human figures, executed in relief, wear the same tiara as the painted figures, but the rest of their costume is different, consisting of a long-sleeved knee length garment worn over trousers, and a kandys. All figures participate in the hunt, and among the animals they attack are two griffins.

Both griffins are shown in the vase's lower register. That on the left is an eagle-headed griffin, drawn like those of the grypomachy scenes with one noticeable exception, the absence of ears. The griffin on the right is an example of a lion-headed griffin, possessing a mane in lieu of a comb, and two long, backward-curving horns that project from the top of his head. Each griffin is attacked from the rear by a relief figure, whose arms are drawn up above the head in similar attitude to many of the Arimasps found on vases in Catalogue A.

The scene on the aryballos certainly displays an affinity to the grypomachy vases, but it also resembles other vases that depict hunt scenes. An example of this type of scene is found on a volute krater which dates approximately sixty years before the aryballos (Illustration B). On the krater, Orientals clothed like the painted figures of the aryballos are seen attacking a large boar. One is shown carrying a spear and another wields an axe above his head.

It is tempting to label the figures of the aryballos as

Arimasps, but the clothing of the relief figures is more suggestive of Persians, as is the theme of the hunt. The only cause for a classification as Arimasps would be the presence of the griffins. However, the volute krater illustrates that humans could be depicted in Arimasbian clothing when they were not involved with griffins, and so it seems best to designate the painted aryballos figures as generic Orientals.

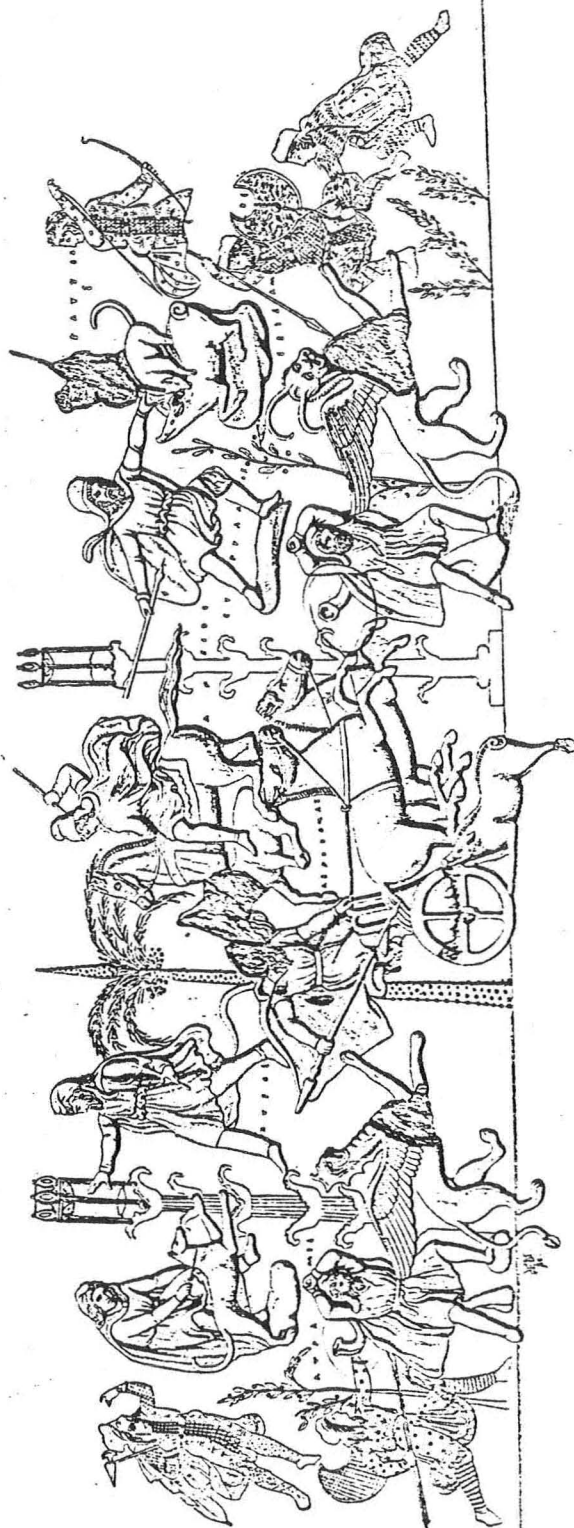


Illustration A

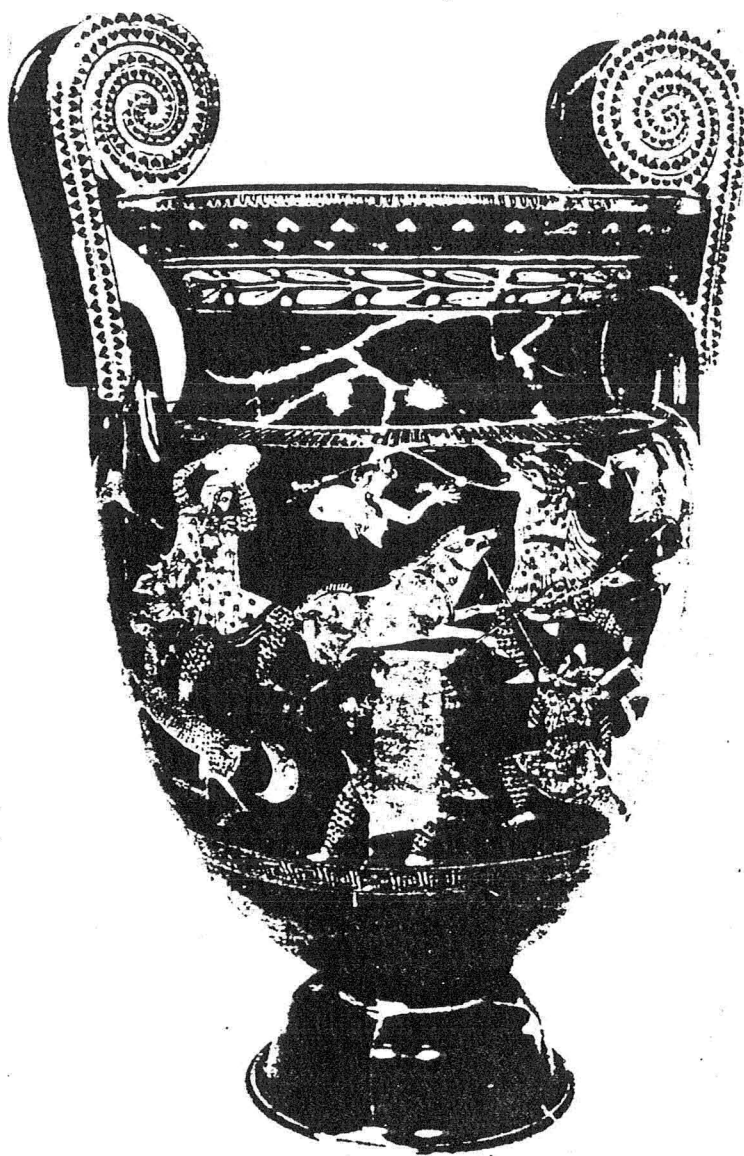


Illustration B



fig. 1



fig. 2



fig. 3



fig. 4



fig. 5



fig. 6



fig. 7





fig. 8



fig. 9



fig. 10

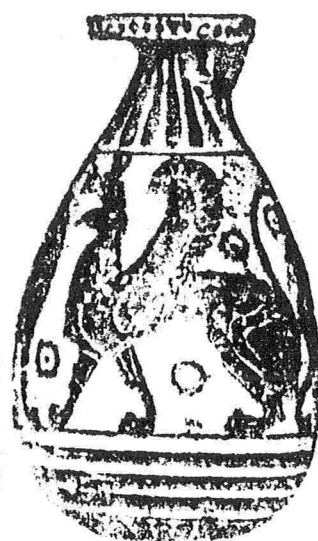


fig. 11



fig. 12



fig. 13



fig. 14



fig. 15

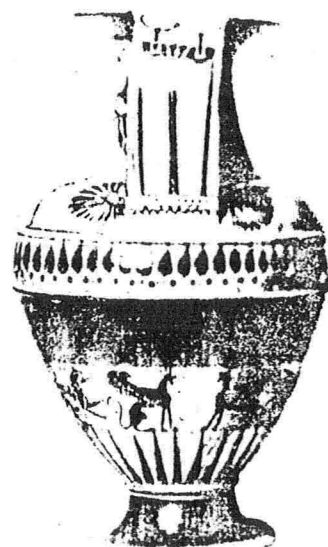


fig. 16



fig. 17



fig. 18

## ABBREVIATIONS

- Alfieri, Guide (Spina) = Alfieri, N. and P. Arias. Spina. Guida al Museo archeologico di Ferrara. Florence, 1960.
- Ant. Bos. Cim. = Reinach, S. Antiquités du Bosphore Cimmerien. Paris: Librairie de Firmin-Didot et Cie, 1892.
- Beazley, ARV<sup>2</sup> = Beazley, Attic Red Figure Vase Painters<sup>2</sup>. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963.
- British Museum, The Greek and Etruscan Vases = British Museum, A Catalogue of the Greek and Etruscan Vases in the British Museum. Vol. 4. London, 1893.
- Catling, H.W., AR 1974-74 = Catling, H.W., Archaeological Reports for 1974-75.
- CVA = Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum. Paris and elsewhere from 1922.
- Delplace, Le Griffon. = Delplace, C. Le Griffon de L'Archaïsme A L'Époque Impériale: étude iconographique et essai d'interprétation symbolique. Brussels: Institut Historique Belge et Rome, 1980.
- Langlotz, Würzburg = Langlotz, B. Griechischen Vasen in Würzburg, Rome, 1968.
- LIMC = "Apollon". Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae. Vol. II, Parts 1 & 2. Munich: Artemis, 1984. pp.
- Metzger, Rep. = Metzger, H. Les Représentations dans la céramique attique du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle. Paris: Bibliothèque des Ecoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 1951.
- Perdrizet, Delphes V = Perdrizet, P. Fouilles de Delphes Vol.5. Monuments Figurés. Petits Bronzes. Terres-Cuites. Antiquités Diverses. Paris: Ancienne Librairie Thorin et Fils, 1908.
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Schefold, UKV = Schefold, K. Untersuchungen zu den Kertscher Vasen. Berlin and Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1934.

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