

CRAFTSPEOPLE'S

SOME NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE STUDY OF ~~CRAFTSMEN'S~~ MOBILITY IN THE RED-FIGURE POTTERY PRODUCTION OF MAGNA GRAECIA AND SICILY

Marco Serino

DIPARTIMENTO DI STUDI STORICI, UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI TORINO

The analysis of South Italian red-figure vases includes, among other questions, studying the people who made these artefacts and often moved themselves and their technological know-how from one region to another. As a preliminary note, ~~however~~, South Italian red-figure production cannot be compared to the Athenian system. Concerning the Attic tradition, when a vase is found outside Athens, it is usually automatically assumed that ~~the piece comes from foreign parts~~, because of trading and commercial activities and the high production level of Athenian manufacturing¹ (bearing in mind, of course, that ancient maritime trade was, indeed, significant at the time).² Yet, the red-figure production in Magna Graecia and Sicily beginning in the mid-5th century BC³ provide new insights into the ancient ~~craftsmen~~ who created them, ~~taking~~ into account the dynamics of connectivity characteristic of these 'communities of practice'.⁴

In recent years, various attempts have been made to move beyond the systematic framework proposed by A. D. Trendall and A. Cambitoglou.⁵ These new studies have reconfigured what could be defined as a very rich, complex and articulated ~~conception of the subject~~, especially in relation to the dynamics that prompted the various local beginnings of red-figure productions. Of course, these analyses focus on a range

1. For analyses of Athenian productivity, from various perspectives, see Cook 1959; Webster 1972; Johnston 1979: 50-51; McDonald 1981; Arafat & Morgan 1989: 326-327; Giudice 1992: 195-199; Acton 2016; Saperstein 2020.

2. For a distributive analysis of Attic vases, see G. Giudice 2007. For a comparative distributive analysis of Attic and early South Italian vases, see Serino 2014: 248-254, and 2019: 17-26.

3. For some general and recent overviews of early South Italian red-figure workshops, see Denoyelle & Iozzo 2009: 97-136 and 165-170; Gadaleta 2012: 93-95. To mention some of the most important post-Trendall studies related to Sicilian workshops: Spigo 1996 and 2001; Barresi 2002, 2013 and 2018; de Cesare 2009; Madella 2010; Elia 2012. For a brief overview of the last two decades of studies, see Soleti 2012: 66-71.

4. For the definition of 'communities of practice', see Lave & Wenger 1991; Wenger 1996.

5. To mention some of their milestones: *LCS* and its supplements (*LCS I*, *LCS II*, *LCS III*); *RVAp* and its supplements (*RVAp I*, *RVAp II*) and the most recent handbook by Trendall 1989.

this artifact
was found
"abroad" in
respect to its
manufacturing
location
craftspeople

it is worth
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of problems, but one of their most important contributions has been to highlight the strong propensity for mobility among certain South Italian **craftsmen**.⁶

craftspeople

In the last decade, studies have begun to focus systematically on the strong regional footprint of some productions. Scholars have confirmed that red-figure vases were not only artefacts of Athenian manufacturing; rather, various other parallel and contemporary productions appeared in various areas of the Mediterranean, especially Greece and Italy, in order to satisfy local and regional demands. These ~~pieces~~, moreover, developed autonomous stylistic, iconographic and morphological features.⁷ Another very recent and significant topic—a further step in this process of rethinking the dynamics related to South Italian red-figure production—is mobility.⁸

industries

artisans

In fact, a number of **craftsmen** have been linked to migratory movements from Attica to South Italy, for example, in the early phase alone (mid-5th century), the Pisticii Painter and Mesagne Painter.⁹ However, regarding ~~displacement~~, an in-depth analysis must look at more than migration from Greece to Magna Graecia. The exceptional case of the so-called Arnò Painter/Perugia Painter, studied by M. Denoyelle and published in 1993, is particularly intriguing in this respect.¹⁰ Vases attributed to these workshops probably belong to the same painter who migrated from the area of Metaponto to Etruria. Different regions, different shapes¹¹ and the same painter constitute a crucial combination for better understanding the dynamics of mobility, as explored further below. Moreover, other productive traditions around the area of Metaponto and Apulia testify to some important stylistic connections between various workshops located in different regions.¹²

the likely
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mobility

6. For a general overview of this renewed attention to mobility in the ancient world (not only from an archaeological perspective), see Horden & Purcell 2000: 342-400; Rouillard 2007, 2009 and 2010; Jockey 2009; Archibald 2011: 53-55; Isayev 2017.

7. *The Regional Production of Red-figure Pottery: Greece, Magna Graecia and Etruria*, published by Aarhus University and edited by V. Sabetai and S. Schierup, provides a very good account of these multiform ancient artisanal dynamics.

8. The concept of mobility in South Italian red-figure production was also recently explored in the volume published by the Centre Jean Bérard and edited by C. Pouzadoux, M. Denoyelle & F. Silvestrelli 2018.

9. For the Pisticii Painter, see Denoyelle 1997; for the Mesagne Painter, see Barresi & Giudice 2011. For some more recent analyses of artisanal mobilities related to red-figure pottery traditions, see the case studies of the Darius Painter, the Underworld Painter, the Baltimore Painter, the White Saccos Painter, the Lucera Painter and the Arpi Painter (see previous bibliography in Pouzadoux, Denoyelle & Silvestrelli 2018).

10. Denoyelle 1993.

11. On the importance of the graphic enhancement of morphological studies in academic publications on red-figure vases, see Morel 2009 and Pouzadoux 2019.

12. The close stylistic relationship between Amykos and Sisyphus was highlighted by N. R. Jircik. She considered a direct contact between these two workshops, going so far as to hypothesize a collaboration

Moving on to Sicily, a recent general review of the early Sicilian workshops argues various 'beginnings' (not only one 'beginning') must be taken into consideration with regard to this regional production. Furthermore, recent studies of this area reconsider these dynamics from a new perspective, that of mobility.¹³ Workshops that fall within this framework include that of the Himera Painter, whom recent studies have suggested trained in Apulia,¹⁴ and the Locri Painter who, on the other hand, seems to have begun in Sicily and then moved to the Ionian area, as studies by S. Barresi and D. Elia demonstrate.¹⁵ Alternatively, it is attested that the Santapaola Painter may have begun in Himera and passed through Lipari in Campania. Finally, the workshop of the Chequer Painter had important stylistic connections to both Campania and Sicily.

There is no doubt about the Atticizing stylistic elements on the vases attributed to the workshop of the Chequer Painter.¹⁶ At the same time, a close link between this workshop and the Campanian productive tradition of the end of the 5th century BC was first suggested by A. Pontrandolfo¹⁷ and, more recently, demonstrated by I. McPhee thanks to the case study of the Spinelli Painter (i.e. Figure 1).¹⁸ Looking more closely at the Chequer Painter and his likely Campanian production,¹⁹ it is possible to see details that are stylistically very similar to those on Sicilian vases. A Berlin Painter bell-krater (probably found in Campania)²⁰ (Figure 2a) contains the combination of stylistic features observed on both Campanian and Sicilian vases by the Chequer Painter, such as the chest and abdominal muscles of the male figures on the calyx krater at the British Museum (Figure 2d),²¹ the face of the female figure on the Berlin vase, the two maenads

on

A bell-krater stored in Berlin

within the same workshop for the later phases of their production (Jircik 1990: 140). This issue was also explored by M. Schmidt (2001: 263): '*Dove questi due pittori avevano occasione di coltivare questi contatti?*'. Twenty years after Jircik's insights, archaeometric analyses performed by the University of Cincinnati and the University of Missouri, coordinated by J. Thorn & M. Glascock, appear to confirm this hypothesis (Thorn & Glascock 2010: 787).

13. Serino 2017, 2019a: 191-193, and 2019b.

14. See previous note.

15. To mention some: Elia 2010, 2014 and 2018; Barresi 2013 and 2018.

16. For the *ethmos* of the Chequer Painter, see Spigo (1996: 52) and Barresi (2002: 71). See also Serino 2019a: 28-33, and 2019b.

17. Pontrandolfo 1996: 35-38. On the contrary, S. Barresi (2002: 69) considers the vases by the Chequer Painter found in Campania clues of commercial and maritime contacts between Campania and Sicily, and he disagrees with the hypothesis of a migration phase for this painter/workshop.

18. McPhee 2018.

19. Cf. McPhee 2018: 301-302.

20. Berlin, inv. V.I. 3165 (Effenberger 1972: 128-130, 159-162, plate 17.1).

21. London, British Museum, inv. F37 (LCS: 197, n. 2, plate 78,2; Serino 2019: tab. 198, n. CK9-Sc2).



MOVE TO
THE
RIGHT
JUST A
LITTLE
figs. 1g
and 1h

Figure 1. Iconographic scheme: Eros with pearl necklace, fig. (a) calyx krater, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid, inv. 11022; (b) calyx krater, private collection; (c) calyx krater, Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, Città del Vaticano, inv. U51; (d) calyx krater, Museo Archeologico Regionale Paolo Orsi, Siracusa, inv. 37171; (e) calyx krater, Museo Archeologico Regionale Antonio Salinas, Palermo, inv. 2199; (f) calyx krater, private collection, Naples; (g) kylix, Athens, Logothetis collection; (h) kylix, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples, inv. 164371 (after Serino 2022: fig. 4)

depicted on the Centuripe calyx krater (Figure 2b) and the unique wavy border of the male figure on the Berlin krater, which looks identical to those attested on the Syracuse kraters (Figure 3c).

However, the focus of this paper is the fluidity in style attested in numerous artefacts that may well testify to the difficulty of establishing clear geographical borders,

“borders”

However, the scope of this paper does not allow me to explore these stylistic features more thoroughly. It’s focus is on

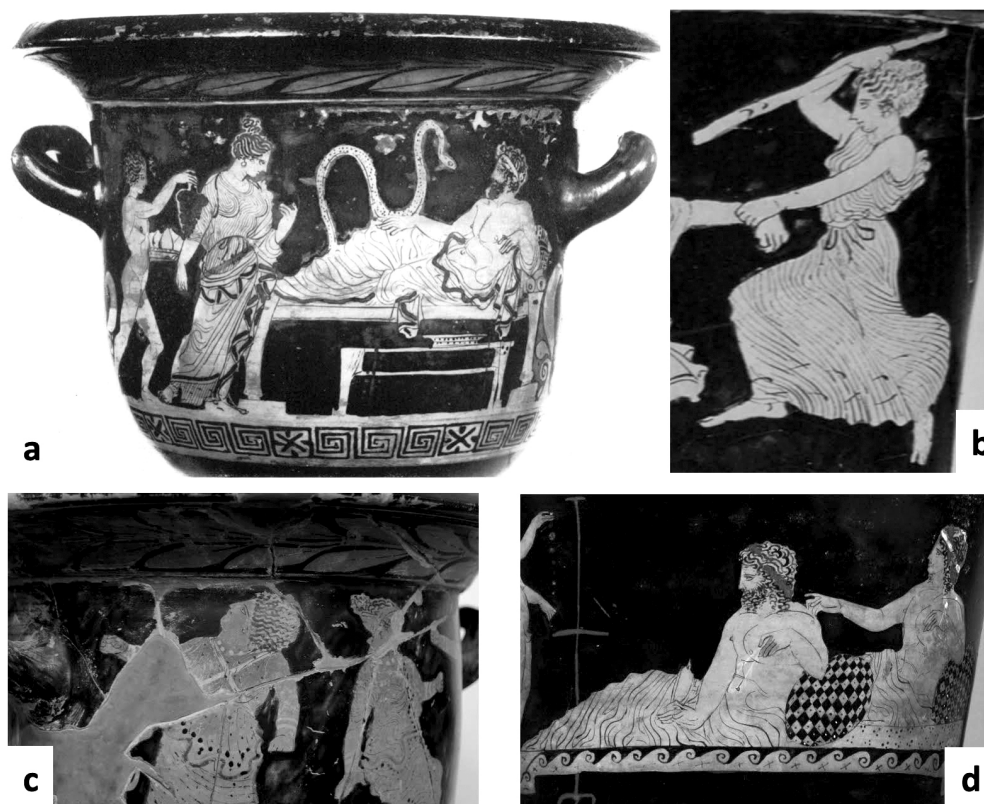


Figure 2. Workshop of the Chequer Painter, stylistic comparanda. (a) bell-krater, Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Antikensammlung inv. VI. 3165; (b) calyx krater, Università di Catania, inv. 9421; (c) bell-krater, Museo Archeologico Regionale Paolo Orsi, Siracusa, inv. 35196; (d) calyx krater, British Museum, London, inv. F37 (after Serino 2022: fig. 5)

especially between vases from different areas, as in the case of the Chequer and Spinelli Painters (Figure 3). One possible explanation is that the Chequer Painter may really have worked in Campania for some time, in the same workshop as the Spinelli Painter, before or after his experience in Sicily. Beyond the stylistic analysis, the presence of some kylikes decorated by the Spinelli/Chequer Painter only in Campania—as opposed to their total absence in Sicily—is significant in this context.

Likewise, ~~vases from the early Sicilian workshop of~~ the Santapaola Painter ~~were found~~ whose vases were mostly found in the eastern part of Sicily, at Himera, and on the island of Lipari.²² Not only is this craft hand found on Sicilian vases, but also on a kylix discovered at Suessula in Campania

22. On the Santapaola Painter's workshop and its development, see Serino 2019: 34-42, and 2020: 375-377.

it is possible to discern a similar situation for another early Sicilian workshop, that of



Figure 3. Workshop of the Chequer Painter and the Spinelli Painter: stylistic comparanda. (a) kylix, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples, inv. 164371; (b) bell-krater, Museo Archeologico Regionale Paolo Orsi, Siracusa, inv. 36333; (c) bell-krater, Museo Archeologico Regionale Paolo Orsi, Siracusa, inv. 35196; (d) kylix, Ackland Art Museum, University of North Carolina, INC Art Department Collection, 58.11.1 (after Serino 2022: fig. 6)

(Figure 4, a-c).²³ Indeed, there are some very close stylistic connections with some vases from Sicily (Figure 4, d-g). ~~The~~ kylix was, ~~of course~~, one of the favourite shapes during this period in Campania, and kylikes, as noted above, are totally missing from early Sicilian productive tradition. Consequently, the presence of ~~this painter~~ on a kylix in Campania may quite well be more than a coincidence.

the
Santapaola
Painter

23. *CVA Italia* 78: 82-83, tab. 80, inv. 164407. M. Borriello recently attributed this kylix to the Attic production near the Meleager Painter. Thanks to an in-depth stylistic review, it is possible to consider it a product of the workshop of the Santapaola Painter. For some stylistic comparanda, see also Serino 2019: 197, nn. CK29-Sa9 (a female figure's face on side A and all the mantle figures on side B) and CK26-Sa3 (a male figure's face on side A) and fragments no. Sk11-Sa12.



Figure 4. Workshop of the Santapaola Painter: stylistic comparanda. (a-c) kylix, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples, inv. 164407; (d, f, g) calyx krater, Museo Archeologico Regionale eoliano Luigi Bernabò Brea, Lipari, inv. 11839; (e) skyphos, Museo Archeologico Regionale Paolo Orsi, Siracusa, inv. 56961 (after Serino 2022: fig. 7)

artisans

These very brief examples show how it may also be possible to interpret the presence or absence of some specific shapes found in different regions as further clues to help detect the possible movement of ~~craftsmen~~. In this analysis, potters and painters must be considered independently. Indeed, some shapes are found only within a specific regional area, but decorated by craft hands that usually painted in a number of regions. The traditional archaeological perspective tends to justify this by saying that the products were exported from one region to another, and some peculiar shapes were made following the demands of local markets. To some extent, this is true. However, the example of the Santapaola Painter in Campania raises a question: did the Campanian market turn to a Sicilian workshop like the Santapaola Painter for specific shapes (kylikes, in this case) rather than going to a local workshop?

processing
in a
different
way

Considering the traditional framework for the Athenian tradition of potters and painters, and processing the data provided by J. Beazley and A. D. Trendall, which aims to define single painters, ~~in a different way~~, it is clear that the focus must be shifted, as E. Lippolis recently suggested ‘from research on individual personalities to a concrete analysis of possible groups, relationships, dependencies and all the elements that can explain the existence of a tricky productive network’.²⁴ While the term ‘network’ may be overused today, in this case it is key. Large workshops were run by a few masters with proven design skills ~~who~~ engaged a number of collaborators ~~who~~ ^{were} specialized in different manufacturing processes, also relating to the shaping of the pottery itself.²⁵ Various studies have already demonstrated how South Italian painters, at least in the early phases, tended to settle where a local workshop was already active. They were usually employed in these workshops for a period of time, ~~before moving on to another workshop somewhere else~~.²⁶

and

and then,
sometimes,
they moved
on towards
another
workshop,
somewhere
else.

~~The potters and painters of the Attic model are quite familiar, as the three volumes of Athenian Potters and Painters testify (Figure 5).²⁷ In Athenian production, the inclusion of a signature makes identification quite simple. In contrast, in western production, most vases~~

Considering the Attic model, we are familiar with “potters” on one hand, and “painters” on the other,

24. Lippolis 2018: 87, author’s translation. On the importance of an in-depth study of production processes and the internal organization of workshops also considering the various specialists engaged in the manufacturing procedures of red-figure vases, see also Pouzadoux 2013; Iozzo 2019.

25. See Lippolis 2018: 82-89.

26. Mannino 1996 and 2008. On the introduction of specialists (mainly painters) of red-figure production into local workshops already active *in loco* during the last decades of the 5th century BC, see Silvestrelli 2018 and 2019 (for Metapontum); Elia 2001, 2010: 221-227, and 2019: 554-558 (for Locri Epizephyrioi); Fontannaz 2014: 81-90; dell’Aglio & Masiello 2019 (for Tarentum).

27. Oakley, Coulson & Palagia 1997 (vol. I); Oakley & Palagia 2009 (vol. II); Oakley 2014 (vol. III). The attribution studies in western Greek ceramics had to rely exclusively on stylistic affinities, as we have only a handful of signatures among the thousands of vases. The Athenian connoisseurship system similarly



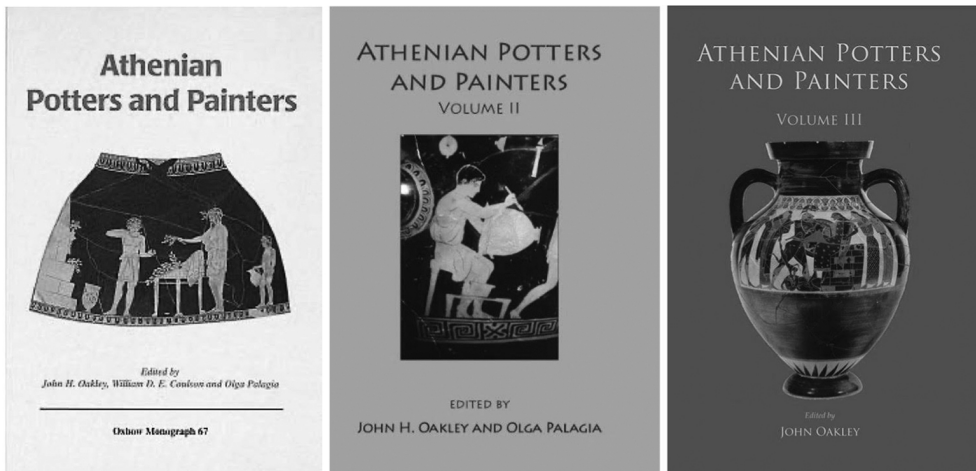


Figure 5. Athenian Potters and Painters, Vol. I, II, III; book covers

lack a signature. However, this absence does not justify any decision to make no distinction between potters and painters in the South Italian organization system. As noted above, the Athenian tradition is completely different; however, its productive system does offer some good starting points for rethinking the traditional approach to South Italian red-figure production. Indeed, the presence of local workshops, even before the beginning of red-figure production, would have made ~~the presence of~~ ^{to host the} red-figure specialists in painting possible. The consideration of the potter could, in fact, be fundamental to better understand certain associations of shape and image, and to grasp possible connections between different productive traditions ~~in~~, as noted above, ~~the~~ ^{for the} workshops ~~like those related to~~ ^{of} the Chequer and Santapaola Painters. Certainly, many other cases can be considered, for instance, specific shapes limited to a regional area, but done by a painter in no way limited to a specific area. In these circumstances, while the potter is the fixed part, the painter is the moving part, the one with an itinerant aptitude within a complex and varied productive network.

This study suggests the crucial role that could have been played by itinerant craftsmanship that 'does not leave traces', in the words of Ch. Feyel. Feyel used a very intriguing expression for these ~~craftsmen~~: 'birds of passage'.²⁸ Clues of such 'birds of passage' in the form of potters and painters are not easy to find. One of the rare pieces of evidence

He

relied on stylistic ties as the signatures there although the more common do not surpass 200 in number (see Hurwit 2017: 71-96).

28. Feyel 2006.

is an inscription from Ephesus (I *Eph.* IV 1420). As J. K. Davies argues,²⁹ this inscription testifies the stipulation of a contract for the transfer of two potters from Athens to Ephesus, and the document indicates the intense artisanal mobility that must have also characterized this category of workers. In his book *The Craftsman*, R. Sennett explains how artisanal exercise becomes narrative.³⁰ According to Sennett, 'narrative' is the result of a long series of corrections and adjustments as essential moments of a craftsman's apprenticeship. In the context of this chapter, these 'gestures', to use Sennett's terminology, help to explain the displacement of craftsmen, because corrections, adjustments and technological procedures are typical of every workshop.

For all these reasons, there is a need to develop an 'archaeology of gesture': narrative is not only the scene depicted on the vase; narrative is the vase itself and the invisible gestures behind it. Now, these invisible gestures can be seen, thanks to modern technology. The time has come to unveil these 'invisible' clues: on drafts, on adjustments and on the variability of the local artisanal technological process, in other words, on the material clues of ancient apprenticeship, which are sometimes invisible to the naked eye.³¹

For these reasons and with this aim in mind, an international research project supported by the European Union, the A.G.A.T.H.O.C.L.E.S. ("The "Archaeology of Gesture": Apprenticeship, Tools, Hands, Organization, Collaborations, Learning Experience and Social Network Analysis" project, was initiated in 2021) (Figure 6).³² The research related to this project combines traditional studies with some innovative diagnostic techniques, such as archaeometric analysis, computational imaging, dactyloscopic investigations, experimental archaeology and digital humanities. The archaeometric analyses will focus on some technological features related to black-glaze, such as firing temperature, firing defects, the different uses of the pigment *miltos* and the chemical compositions of overpainted colours. Innovative photographic techniques such as reflectance transformation imaging will be used to capture the sketches made before the glaze treatment that are invisible to the naked eye, before examining the sequence of gestures. Dactyloscopic investigations will also be carried out on both

29. Davies 2011: 184.

30. Sennett 2008.

31. A methodological approach already pursued by Serino 2017: 154-155.

32. A.G.A.T.H.O.C.L.E.S. will be jointly conducted in Italy–University of Turin, Department of Historical Studies–and the United States–the University of Arizona, Tucson, School of Anthropology: <<https://klinai.hypotheses.org/1905>; <<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/893629/it>; <https://ni.openaire.eu/search/project?projectId=corda_h2020::cf862116bc42bd523a4399fba676b6fa> [Accessed 29/09/2021]; <https://frida.unito.it/wn_pages/contenuti.php/441_studio-del-passato-dellumanit/585_agathocles-i-gesti-degli-artigiani-sui-vasi-a-figure-rosse-di-magna-grecia-e-sicilia/> [Accessed 29/09/2021]; <<https://ciao.hypotheses.org/1794>> [Accessed 29/09/2021].

clay and glazed surfaces in search of fingerprints that belong, respectively, to potters and painters and to evaluate the possibility of better defining the internal organization of some workshops. **Experimental archaeology sessions** will attempt to reproduce some technical procedures related to the tools used by the painters. Finally, an important part of the research will focus on the potential offered by the digital humanities, an innovative approach for this field of study, aimed at revising Trendall's and Cambitoglou's catalogues using social network analysis (SNA), following the ongoing studies by E. Hasaki and D. Harris Cline of the lists of Attic vases provided by Beazley.³³

In light of these new methodological perspectives, perhaps the time is ripe to try to formulate new research questions, most particularly: how can new hermeneutic perspectives be applied to the mobility of potter and painter communities? The potters' craft and workshops have a footprint that is deeply anchored in the local landscape and what have been termed their 'communities of practice'.³⁴ At least until the mid-5th century BC, local sources and traditional recipes for clay, technical procedures for wheels, firing control in the kilns, in addition to the local visual formulas and internal organization of the various aspects of decorative process in a workshop were all the result of a long process of apprenticeship whose dynamics were nested in familiar contexts.

Various studies that have observed these phenomena from a number of perspectives³⁵ suggest that the Athenian system worked in this way for a certain period of time.

33. Harris Cline & Hasaki 2019; Hasaki & Harris Cline 2020.

34. For the definition of 'communities of practice', see Lave & Wenger 1991; Wenger 1996.

35. To mention some more recent perspectives: Acton 2016; Hasaki & Harris Cline 2020; Sapirstein 2020.



Figure 6. A.G.A.T.H.O.C.L.E.S. project, official logo

However, the question remains open for the other regional productions. Moreover, the new artisanal dynamics of the second half of the 5th century BC also require further investigation. Were painters and potters still anchored to their familiar context? When considering the emigration (or the return emigration) of some painters from Attica to South Italy (like the Pisticci Painter), the kind of mobility to study needs to be defined: should it entail the mobility of the entire workshop or of the individual painters? And which painters should be studied? The master or some assistants/pupils in his workshop? Furthermore, questions regarding mobility within South Italian regions during the last decades of the 5th century BC and the first half of the 4th century BC (related to, e.g., the Arnò Painter, Locri Painter, Santapaola Painter, Himera Painter, Chequer Painter) must be addressed: how did they move? Who moved (entire workshops or only some **craftsmen**)?³⁶ How long did they stay in the new place? ‘link in the chain’

artisans

Of course, these are complex technological, social and economic issues, and knowing whether the mobility involved the entire workshop or only one **link in the chain** could be quite significant. Moreover, every local workshops’ internal organization—related to the various aspects of the decorative process—were the result of a long process of apprenticeship whose dynamics were mostly unknown and, above all, very difficult to detect from an archaeological point of view.³⁷ In addition, social dynamics were different in the South Italian and Athenian *poleis*. For example, in terms of apprenticeship, family contexts may or may not have always been important, or the dynamics of apprenticeship may have been distinct in different areas. Perhaps, considering the South Italian production system, **craftsmen** from different workshops, located in different *poleis*, may have sometimes worked together. **More questions abound: how were the newcomers integrated into the new local networks of the host region/polis? Would previously established trade networks have facilitated these relocations? Would it have been easier for a vase painter to relocate first and, once established, invite a potter from his original workshop to join him?**

artisans

issues research
 These **questions**, among others, need to be addressed as part of new **academic** challenges. It is not known if it will be possible to answer them all, but there is no doubt that only a highly interdisciplinary approach will make it possible to accomplish this.

36. For discussions of embeddedness of the ceramic manufacturing stages within the local landscapes and for successful relocation strategies of potters and painters (together or separately), see Hasaki & Serino (forthcoming).

37. One of the most important recent attempts to connect archaeological and anthropological perspectives related to the apprenticeship in the ancient world is in the volume *Archaeology and Apprenticeship* edited by W. Wendrick (2012).

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