

The 'Meidias' hydria: a visual and textual journey of a Greek vase in the history of art of antiquity (c. 1770s–1840s)

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Figure 1 Attic red-figure hydria, attributed to the Meidias Painter, (420–400 BC), Trustees of the British Museum, London.

The cultural history of artefacts is a rewarding field of enquiry for understanding the many different ways that certain objects have been seen and valued in the past by different people and for various reasons. Not least, these stories in all their variety can provide fresh insights into our own way of seeing how people make things meaningful and why they ascribe value to them.¹ In examining a particular

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¹ For example, the excellent work by Adolf Greifenhagen on the artistic interpretation of ancient Greek vases and their impact on late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century art was exemplary in discussing the extent to which such objects featured in various paintings, although it is limited by the

monument, for example, it is possible to illustrate the ways that it becomes invested with meaning and cultural significance through the antiquarian networks it is caught up in.² Additionally, a closer view of these processes can provide an understanding of the relations between the practices of artistic creation and the reception of ancient art that has been assimilated into the body of aesthetic thought of a certain period in time. In regard to ancient ceramics, most studies of individual vases concentrate on explaining the shapes, pattern-work, figure style and iconography; in the case of the Meidias³ hydria (Fig. 1), for instance, any discussion of the extent to which the iconography has been studied and interpreted by scholarship in modern times is brief and selective.⁴ This study thus is not primarily concerned with the object itself as an archaeological product of a late fifth-century

evidence which was available at that time. He considers the extent to which the perception of ancient vases was materially reframed and aesthetically reconstructed by various artists, a subject which I intend to pursue in greater detail here; Adolf Greifenhagen, 'Griechische Vasen auf Bildnissen der Zeit Winckelmann's und des Klassizismus', *Nachrichten von der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen* 9: 7, 1939; Adolf Greifenhagen, 'Nachklänge Griechischer Vasenfunde im Klassizismus (1790–1840)', *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen*, 1963.

² Although a notion of the appeal that Greco-Roman art has exerted on artists since the Renaissance is not absent from these approaches, as the work of Leonard Barkan indicates, one theme that dominated the historiography of ancient pottery in the mid-twentieth century is the emphasis on the understanding of the style of their paintings as well as on the recreation of the prominent and lesser personalities in Athenian potteries and individual workshops; see Leonard Barkan, *Unearthing the Past: Archaeology and Aesthetics in the Making of Renaissance Culture*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999; John Davidson Beazley, *Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956; Moreover, by investigating the establishment of various collections of objects, scholars have recently begun to discuss the extent to which theories of artistic progress and philosophical inquiry influenced and modified the aesthetics and various manifestations of collecting and the interpretation of objects; see Ian Jenkins and Kim Sloan, eds., *Vases and Volcanoes: Sir William Hamilton and his Collection*, London: British Museum Press, 1996; Pascal Griener, *Le Antichità Etrusche, Greche e Romane 1766–1776 di Pierre Hugues d' Hancarville. La Pubblicazione delle Ceramiche Antiche della Prima Collezione Hamilton*, Rome: Edizioni dell'Elefante, 1992; Arthur MacGregor, *Curiosity and Enlightenment: Collectors and Collecting from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007.

³ The Meidias Painter is named from the potter's signature ΜΕΙΔΙΑΣ: ΕΠΙΟΙΗΣΕΝ on the shoulder of an Attic red-figured hydria in the British Museum (BM Cat. Vases E224), once the property of Sir William Hamilton (1730–1803), British representative to the Bourbon Court of the Two Sicilies in Naples from 1764 to 1800. To the Meidias Painter Beazley attributed twenty-two vases or fragments; together with those he assigned to particular artists or groups (those among his artistic following, and those painting in his style), the number goes up to 192. The hydria was the most favourite vase shape of the Painter and his followers. Their main stylistic characteristics include the distinctive heads, the large eyes, the small mouths, the slim and long-legged women, and the long, tapering toes and fingers of both sexes. In matters of composition, one characteristic aspect of the Meidias Painter's style is the absence of a single ground line; the figures are set at different levels over the surface of the vase, 'occasionally shown only in part', as Burn remarks, 'as if emerging from behind a hillock'; Lucilla Burn, *The Meidias Painter*, Oxford Monographs on Classical Archaeology, Oxford: Clarendon, 1987, 3-5; John Davidson Beazley, *Attic Red-figure Vase-painters*, Second ed., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963, 1690; John Davidson Beazley, *Additions to Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters and to Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971, 477.; for the manner of his composition and his ability to use the shape of the vase in order to enhance the scene, see Burn, *The Meidias Painter*, 5. See also Burn, *The Meidias Painter.*, chapter 2; Jenkins and Sloan, *Vases and Volcanoes: Sir William Hamilton and his Collection*, 180-81.

⁴ See Burn, *The Meidias Painter*, 1-3; Beazley, *Attic Red-figure Vase-painters*, 1313.. By reviewing the literature, for instance, Burn briefly traces attitudes to the hydria, and how the Meidias Painter 'continued to enjoy the approbation of scholars and artists alike throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.'

BC Athenian workshop – an area in which exceptional work has already been undertaken by Burn.⁵ The broader scene of collecting and appropriating ancient vases in the late-eighteenth century is likewise not a major theme here.⁶ It aims, instead, to examine how the subject-matter of the Meidias hydria (the hydria bears two distinct scenes: the lower scene, encircling the vase, showing Heracles and others in the garden of the Hesperides; and the larger scene above, covering the shoulder and presenting the abduction of the daughters of Leucippus by the Dioscuri; Castor and Pollux – both scenes of the vase, which seem to introduce the fashion for paradise gardens on vases and an enticing prospect of how life might be like after death, demonstrate many of the primary characteristics of Meidian iconography), enjoyed the approbation of scholars and so to trace how this was subsequently developed over a particular period of time. More specifically, it focuses on the history of the reception of a single vase: that is, on the early textual and visual responses to the painted scenes and the shape of the hydria. My aim here is to consider these responses, and to present evidence to study them reflecting on how one of Hamilton's most prized possessions was featured through text and pictures.

By examining all this, new light may be shed both on the status of the hydria and of the antiquarian publishing culture of which it became a part; and by reviewing the evidence on which various antiquarian projects showed an interest in it, this study will attempt to explain how, through the mechanics of publication, the Meidias hydria was textualised by being reworked as engraved plates in various folios and scholarly accounts. Moreover, considering that the textual and artistic interpretation of ancient vases is embedded in the social fabric of visual culture before and after 1800, this essay also concentrates on how the reception of the hydria emerges from the intellectual and socio-cultural transaction between the scholar (or publisher), the visualised motifs, and their interpretation. Thus, I show how these interpretative choices responded to contemporary trends in the copying and 'translating' process of ancient imagery into engraved illustrations; in particular, I argue that the textual and visual interpretation of the myths featured on the hydria had been gradually configured from a late eighteenth-century aesthetic-based model of (vase) scholarship (not really related to any intrinsic interest in the vase, or any vase, as an object) into a more critical consideration (of modern art-historical nature) and attention to previously hidden characteristics and a gradual shift of interest in the late-1830s and 1840s. What I establish here is that although every writer or publisher was the product of his time and culture, only one of them

⁵ Burn, *The Meidias Painter*.

⁶ In recent decades, scholars have drawn attention to a wide range of ways in which our engagement with ancient material culture is mediated by the interventions of later periods (e.g. showing how far any single object can enchain a long series of people and processes). Meanwhile, thematic studies have been made of topics such as collection, classical reception studies, and artefact biography. See, for instance, Michael Vickers, 'Value and Simplicity: Eighteenth-Century Taste and the Study of Greek Vases', *Past & Present*, 116, 1987; Jenkins and Sloan, *Vases and Volcanoes: Sir William Hamilton and his Collection*; Maria Emilia Masci, 'The Birth of Ancient Vase Collecting in Naples in the Early Eighteenth Century', *Journal of the History of Collections* 19: 2, 2007; Claire Lyons, 'The Museo Mastrilli and the Culture of Collecting in Naples', *Journal of the History of Collections* 4: 1, 1992; Claire Lyons, 'The Neapolitan Context of Hamilton's Antiquities Collection', *Journal of the History of Collections* 9: 2, 1997.

(Gerhard) really advanced the study of the vase or Greek ceramics in general, and he did so because he was more thorough, more imaginative, and had a glimmering of the ways classical learning could be harnessed to the advancement of this type of material: so he had the bright idea of looking at the actual object, which led him to notice there were inscriptions naming the characters in the scenes and so he was able to pronounce definitively and unarguably on their subject-matter.

Although this approach would be worth applying to other vases, the Meidias hydria is a particularly suitable case for this attempt. The large numbers of images and descriptions inspired by this vase indicate that it is certainly one of the best documented, and arguably the most interesting, candidates. The visual and textual dissemination of its painted scenes in scholarship will be surveyed in the first part of this article. This will be followed by an attempt to present a critical overview of the artistic reception of these scenes by various art publications, as well as how one such publication influenced another.⁷

First encounter: Hamilton's engraved folio-volumes in *Antiquités*, by d'Hancarville

One of the major forces that played a critical role in the development of European antiquarian culture, and decisively affected aesthetic attitudes towards classical antiquity around 1800, was the interpretation and artistic appropriation of ancient pots. This includes the idea of tracing the nature of ancient beliefs and customs through classical texts in conjunction with ancient art. Books, like archaeological objects, revealed a new view of antiquity, in which pottery yielded hitherto hidden delights and aesthetic pleasure. By the last quarter of the eighteenth century ancient art had become expensive and only a few could afford to buy, while impassioned antiquaries were the most energetic guardians of the local archaeological landscape. James Clark (c. 1745–1800), a Scottish painter and antiquary, wrote to a traveller named Thomas Chinnal Porter (c. 1759–1839) with excitement:

I have dealt pretty considerably in Etruscan [art, i.e. vases] ... acknowledged by antiquarians to be the most ancient monuments of the Fine Arts that now exist. The subjects represented upon some of them exhibit certain religious Rites of the ancient Greek ... Mythology, and more particularly of the Eleusinian Mysteries, which neither the Paintings of Herculaneum nor even Antique Sculpture have hitherto handed down to us.⁸

⁷ However, this is not an exhaustive investigation of the wider reception of the hydria; the article does not claim to include every extant image of the hydria during the period under investigation. The excluded examples, which could well have been listed here, either have already been discussed elsewhere, and, therefore they would not drastically alter the overall picture which emerges from this study; or they belong to various other print media (e.g. paintings and drawings) which are to be separately published in an article by the author.

⁸ John Ingamells, ed. *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy, 1701-1800*, New Haven and London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art/Yale University Press, 1997, 208-09.

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Moreover, the fascination with ancient monuments helped to bring together what had mostly been two distinct areas of concern: the antiquarian and the artistic. The new wave of enthusiasm fostered a more fruitful discussion and exchange of ideas than had existed before between antiquarians, collectors, and publishers, who either were mostly interested in the cultural or religious practices of the ancient world, or who could decode and recognize artistic styles in antique artefacts.⁹

Sir William Hamilton¹⁰ acquired the Meidias hydria as soon as he set foot in Naples in 1764. Despite the prestige and fame that this vase had met afterwards, it seems that Hamilton himself did not speak of it that much in his correspondence;¹¹ other issues, such as one of his most beloved paintings, the Correggio,¹² occupied his mind most of the time. However, one of the very first to recognize and express on

⁹ The rediscovery of Greek vases in the mid-eighteenth century was also connected with the rise at that time of 'Etruscomania'. This, myth, according to which the vases found in South Italy were of Etruscan origin, was to have a lasting influence. However, as reverence for the glorious past increased, the vogue for vases and the recognition of their Greek origin should be seen as separate from the neo-classical movement, the 'Greek Revival' that occurred in Europe from around 1750 to 1820. This, in turn, had prepared a solid ground for 'Athenocentricity', what has been considered to be 'another feature of Hellenist writing'; see Ian Jenkins, 'Athens Rising Near the Pole': London, Athens and the Idea of Freedom', in *London-World City, 1800-1840*, ed., Fox Celina, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992; Ian Jenkins, 'Ideas of Antiquity: Classical and Other Civilizations in the Age of Enlightenment', in *Enlightenment. Discovering the World in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Kim Sloan, London and Washington: The British Museum Press and Smithsonian Books, 2003, 168.. For the Greekness debate, see Lucilla Burn, 'Sir William Hamilton and the Greekness of Greek Vases', *Journal of the History of Collections* 9: 2, 1997; Vickers, 'Value and Simplicity: Eighteenth-Century Taste and the Study of Greek Vases'; Jenkins and Sloan, *Vases and Volcanoes: Sir William Hamilton and his Collection*, 51-52, 57-58; see also Lyons, 'The Museo Matsrilli and the Culture of Collecting in Naples.'

¹⁰ Hamilton was the British Ambassador to the Bourbon Court of the Two Sicilies (based in Naples) between 1764 and 1800. While living there, he became a prodigious collector of Greek vases and other antiquities. The bibliography on Hamilton and his collection is vast and can be summarized here: Jenkins and Sloan, *Vases and Volcanoes: Sir William Hamilton and his Collection*; Thora Brylowe, 'Two Kinds of Collections: Sir William Hamilton's Vases, Real and Represented', *Eighteenth-Century Life* 32: 1, 2008; David Constantine, *Fields of Fire: A Life of Sir William Hamilton*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2001; Brian Fothergill, *Sir William Hamilton Envoy Extraordinary*, repr. 2005 ed., London: Nonsuch, 1969; Ian Jenkins, 'Seeking the Bubble Reputation', *Journal of the History of Collections* 9: 2, 1997; Carlo Knight, *Hamilton a Napoli*, 2 ed., Napoli: Electa Napoli, 2003; Nancy Ramage, 'Sir William Hamilton as Collector, Exporter and Dealer: The Acquisition of and Dispersal of his Collections', *American Journal of Archaeology* 94: 3, 1990; for the artistic reception of his collection, see also Emmanouil Kalkanis, 'The Visual Dissemination of Sir William Hamilton's Vases and their Reception by Early 19th-Century Scholarship (c. 1800s–1820s)', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 75: 4, 2012.

¹¹ In a letter to his nephew Charles Greville from Caserta in 2 March 1790, Hamilton speaks of his second collection as a 'a treasure of Greek, commonly called Etruscan, vases [that] have been discovered within these 12 months ... tho' at a considerable expense; that you may have some idea of their beauty and preservation, they are equal to the best preserved to the British Museum, and equal in drawing to the famous, but unfortunately broken, vase of Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides, and the Atalanta with chariot races ...' Alfred Morrison, *Catalogue of the Collection of Autograph Letters and Historical Documents Formed Between 1865 and 1882 (The Hamilton and Nelson papers)*, 2 vols. London: Privately Published by A. Morrison, 1893–1894, 142-43., letter no. 180, vol. I

¹² See, for instance, Hamilton's letters to his nephew Charles Greville and from Lord Abercorn to Hamilton in Morrison, *Catalogue of the Collection of Autograph Letters and Historical Documents Formed Between 1865 and 1882 (The Hamilton and Nelson papers)*., letters no. 115, 197, 209 & 220; see also Kim Sloan, 'Picture-mad in Virtu-land'. Sir William Hamilton's Collection of Paintings', in *Vases and Volcanoes: Sir William Hamilton and his Collection*, ed. Ian Jenkins and Kim Sloan, London: The British Museum Press, 1996.

paper the beauty and quality of the Meidias hydria was Johann Joachim Winckelmann. His view of the design of the vase, in a letter of 1767, was that it was nothing less than 'the finest and most beautiful drawing in the world, only when someone lays his eyes on it, he will get an idea of the magnificent painting of the ancients'.¹³ Winckelmann's imprimatur, 'in a characteristic outburst of hyperbole,' as Sparkes remarks,¹⁴ occurred at a time when Hamilton had already formed his collection of Greek vases, which were to be sumptuously published with texts later that year by Pierre François Hugues (who went by the name of Baron d'Hancarville).¹⁵ Through the pages of Hamilton's *Antiquités*, one gets the sense that both he and d'Hancarville saw vase-painting foremost as art and a matter of aesthetics and, thus, brought vases to the attention of a much broader readership than simply antiquarians. Equally, the usefulness of material culture as a means of transmitting knowledge of the past and the reconstruction of its intellectual significance in the cultural sphere of the late eighteenth century did not go unnoticed by Hamilton. In this context, antiquity was exported and replicated by

¹³ [... der schönsten und reizendsten Zeichnung von der Welt, die man nur zu sehen braucht, um sich einen Begriff von der herrlichen Malerei der Alten zu machen']; Joseph Eiselein, ed. *Sämtliche Werke*, repr. 1965 ed., 12 vols. Osnabrück: Zeller, 1825, 449, vol. xi.. Winckelmann's preference of the engravings over the text in the *Antiquités* can be found in Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*, 2 ed., Wien: Im Akademischen Verlage, 1776, 199.. The first volume of Hamilton's *Antiquités* was not issued until late 1767 and, thus, the German scholar must have seen the real object during his fourth and what was to be his last visit to Naples; Jenkins and Sloan, *Vases and Volcanoes: Sir William Hamilton and his Collection*, 46; Griener, *Le Antichità Etrusche, Greche e Romane 1766–1776 di Pierre Hugues d' Hancarville. La Pubblicazione delle Ceramiche Antiche della Prima Collezione Hamilton*, 54; David Constantine, 'Winckelmann and Sir William Hamilton', *Oxford German Studies* 22, 1993: 61, 78-81.. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from French, German and Italian are my own.

¹⁴ Brian A. Sparkes, *The Red and the Black: Studies in Greek Pottery*, London: Routledge, 1996, 54..

¹⁵ D'Hancarville was an itinerant French scholar who passed through life, assuming innumerable aliases and identities. He was instructed in art and historical painting since his early teenage years, and he often lived as an adventurer, frequently in debt, and had even been imprisoned. His writings, on the other hand, stem from his investigation of the irrational and exotic sources of creativity. After his acquaintance with Townley and Payne Knight in late 1770s, for instance, d'Hancarville published on the religious and mythological origins of art entitled *Recherches sur l'origine, l'esprit, et les progrès des arts de la Grèce*, examining fertility symbols and themes of sexuality in Greek and Indian art. In the 1760s, he found himself resident at Naples, where he managed to convince Hamilton that he was the man who could publish an edition of the diplomat's first collection of vases; P. F. Hugues D'Hancarville, *Antiquités Étrusques Grecques, et Romaines Tirées du Cabinet de M. Hamilton (Collection of Etruscan, Greek, and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of the Honble. Wm. Hamilton)*, Naples, 1766–1777 [hereafter *Antiquités*]. On d'Hancarville and the troubled printing history of Hamilton's *Antiquités*, see Francis Haskell, 'D'Hancarville: an Adventurer and Art-Historian in Eighteenth-Century Europe', in *Oxford, China and Italy: Writings in Honour of Sir Harold Acton*, ed. Edward Chaney and Neil Ritchie, London: Thames and Hudson, London, 1984; Alain Schnapp, 'La Pratique de la Collection et ses Consequences sur l'Histoire de l'Antiquité le Chevalier d'Hancarville', in *L'Anticomanie: La Collection D'Antiquites Aux 18e Et 19e Siecles*, ed. Annie Laurens, F and Krzysztof Pomian, Paris: Ecole des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1992; Alain Schnapp, 'Antiquarian Studies in Naples at the end of the Eighteenth Century: from Comparative Archaeology to Comparative Religion', in *Naples in the Eighteenth Century: The Birth and the Death of Nation State*, ed. Girolamo Imbruglia, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000; Griener, *Le Antichità Etrusche, Greche e Romane 1766–1776 di Pierre Hugues d' Hancarville. La Pubblicazione delle Ceramiche Antiche della Prima Collezione Hamilton*; Philippe Rouet, *Approaches to the Study of Attic Vases: Beazley and Pottier*, Oxford Monographs on Classical Archaeology, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, 15-18.

contemporary craftsmen at a greater rate than ever before. For instance, Josiah Wedgwood, together with his partner Thomas Bentley, found in Hamilton's vases the shapes and forms of beauty and extravagance that would pique their customers' interest at once.¹⁶ Moreover, the *Antiquités'* influence was amplified by their products, which in turn introduced designs from Hamilton's vases to a whole new section of the public. Indeed, the opening of *Etruria*, marked by the creation of the 'First Day's Vases' in red encaustic enamel, took place just after the first volumes of Hamilton's collection had been accepted for publication, and therefore, had been widely circulated through collectors and connoisseurs across Europe. Notably, one among them borrowed a painted scene from one of the engraved plates of Hamilton's Meidias hydria.¹⁷



Figure 2 The Meidias Hydria, engraving, *Antiquités*, d'Hancarville, I, dated 1766 (issued late in 1767), pl. 130, reprinted in Florence in 1801, Heidelberg University Library

¹⁶ Wedgwood and Bentley were both aware at a relatively early date of the potential importance of Classical Greek models and commercial possibilities in decorating blackware with scenes taken from eminent sources, such as Hamilton's engraved plates. At the opening of their new Ornamental Works named *Etruria*, six black pots subsequently decorated with red 'encaustic' enamel with a scene from the Meidias hydria; see Nancy Ramage, 'Owed to a Grecian Urn: The Debt of Flaxman and Wedgwood to Hamilton', *Ars Ceramica* 6, 1989; Hilary Young, *The Genius of Wedgwood*, London: Victoria and Albert Museum (exh. cat.), 1995, 58-62, 71-72.

¹⁷ The figures are taken from plate 129 of volume I of *Antiquités* and from the right-hand side of the plate depicting Oineus and Demophon, two of the tribal heroes of Athens, and the Hesperid Chryseis; Vicky Coltman, *Fabricating the Antique: Neoclassicism in Britain, 1760-1800*, Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2006, chapter 1; Vicky Coltman, 'Sir William Hamilton's Vase Publications: A Case study in the Reproduction and Dissemination of Antiquity', *Journal of Design History* 14: 1, 2001; Jenkins and Sloan, *Vases and Volcanoes: Sir William Hamilton and his Collection*, 182-83; Rouet, *Approaches to the Study of Attic Vases: Beazley and Pottier*, 21-23.. It was figures from Hamilton's Meidias Hydria which were again transferred from the pages of *Antiquités* into a set of silverware, now at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, commissioned by the Courtauld family; Campbell Hatfield, 'A Set of English Condiment Vases from Kedleston Hall', *M Bulletin (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)*, 79, 1981.

Since then, there have been many studies devoted to the Meidias hydria. The visual journey of its late eighteenth-century rediscovery begins with Hamilton's magnificent catalogue of ochre and black engraved plates. Giuseppe Bracci's¹⁸ flat images of the curved surfaces of the vases framed by richly decorated borders are nowhere more impressive than in the interpretation of the main theme of the hydria, in which Castor and Pollux are abducting the daughters of Leucippus (Fig. 2). However, although d'Hancarville correctly identified the theme of the lower body, he misinterpreted the larger scene encircling the vase as the race between Atalanta and Hippomenes in the presence of Atlas and the Hesperides.¹⁹ Interestingly, no outline drawings recording the shapes and measurements of its architectural form with views of the vase in cross-section giving the exact measurements and proportions of its different parts are given here; a notable omission considering the high regard for this vase and the ambitious plans of Hamilton and d'Hancarville alike.²⁰ Seeing what use collectors and artists could make of vase-paintings as models, by abstracting and correcting the figures from them, the French artist Laurent Pécheux was employed to produce a second, less faithful to the original, composition of the abduction scene (Fig. 3).²¹ The white gouache laid on the draperies of the figures, so that they stood out in sharp relief, was one of the major stylistic changes introduced by Pécheux – in addition to the usual manner of reproducing the figured scenes in the first volume of *Antiquités*, the front figures on the scene on the shoulder are highlighted in lead white. Likewise, the picture's composition had been altered to a great extent while some other details have been also omitted or added.²² Thus, by offering a distinct but rather odd image

¹⁸ D'Hancarville, *Antiquités Étrusques Grecques, et Romaines Tirées du Cabinet de M. Hamilton (Collection of Etruscan, Greek, and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of the Honble. Wm. Hamilton)*, 170., vol. I; Nancy Ramage, 'The Initial Letters in Sir William Hamilton's Collection of Antiquities', *Burlington Magazine* 129, July 1987.

¹⁹ Jenkins and Sloan, *Vases and Volcanoes: Sir William Hamilton and his Collection*, 180-81; D'Hancarville, *Antiquités Étrusques Grecques, et Romaines Tirées du Cabinet de M. Hamilton (Collection of Etruscan, Greek, and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of the Honble. Wm. Hamilton)*, 142-43, 66-68.; on the iconography of the vase, see Burn, *The Meidias Painter.*, chapter 2.

²⁰ D'Hancarville, *Antiquités Étrusques Grecques, et Romaines Tirées du Cabinet de M. Hamilton (Collection of Etruscan, Greek, and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of the Honble. Wm. Hamilton)*, 172, vol. I.. For the colour technique of the plates, see Caecilie Weissert, 'Kunsttheorie versus Wissenschaft. D'Hancarville's Kritik an den bemalten antiken Vasen', in *Hancarville und die Hamiltonsche Vasensammlung*, ed. Maria Petras (Stendal: Herausgegeben von der Winckelmann-Gesellschaft, 2005).; for the reproduction of the plates and a history of the publication, see also Ian Jenkins, 'Contemporary Minds: Sir William Hamilton's Affair with Antiquity', in *Vases and Volcanoes: Sir William Hamilton and his Collection*, ed. Ian Jenkins and Kim Sloan (London: British Museum Press, 1996); Griener, *Le Antichità Etrusche, Greche e Romane 1766–1776 di Pierre Hugues d' Hancarville. La Pubblicazione delle Ceramiche Antiche della Prima Collezione Hamilton.*

²¹ D'Hancarville, *Antiquités Étrusques Grecques, et Romaines Tirées du Cabinet de M. Hamilton (Collection of Etruscan, Greek, and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of the Honble. Wm. Hamilton)*, 168, vol. II.; see also Rouet, *Approaches to the Study of Attic Vases: Beazley and Pottier*, 19-20.. A very useful discussion – but unfortunately neglected in recent English-language scholarship on Hamilton and his collections of Greek vases – can also be found in Weissert, 'Kunsttheorie versus Wissenschaft. D'Hancarville's Kritik an den bemalten antiken Vasen', 9-13.

²² The most obvious changes are: i) the background three-dimensional perspective indicates the line on the ground; ii) the arrangement of the figures in the foreground had been freely adapted from the original; iii) shadows were marked on the ground from figures and objects alike; iv) the two laurel

– given the nature of the project as well as d'Hancarville's clear argument for faithful reproduction of originals – as Raphael might have painted it, Hamilton's French editor encouraged 'an examination of Raphael' as 'an infinite service to the Antique'.²³



Figure 3 Laurent Pécheux's *trompe l'oeil* of the upper body of the Meidias Hydria, engraving, *Antiquités*, d'Hancarville, II, dated 1767 (published 1770), pl. 22, reprinted in Florence in 1802, Heidelberg University Library.

Additionally, while trying to enhance the status of the painters of the pots that Hamilton was trying to sell, d'Hancarville was also attempting to create 'artificial classical exempla', as Vickers remarks, in order to improve the status of the artist in his own world.²⁴ Already in the 1750s, the comte de Caylus considered Greek pottery found in Etruria 'as precious' and to be made with as much care as porcelain 'by the hands of the most famous artists'.²⁵ Thus, it is not difficult to see

bushes at each extremity of the lower level had been omitted; and v) a new female figure, standing next to Zeus on the extreme left had been added.

²³ D'Hancarville, *Antiquités Étrusques Grecques, et Romaines Tirées du Cabinet de M. Hamilton (Collection of Etruscan, Greek, and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of the Honble. Wm. Hamilton)*, 32, 38, 46., Vol. II; Jenkins, 'Contemporary Minds: Sir William Hamilton's Affair with Antiquity', 48-50.. Interestingly, the topic of painted pottery is only breached by d'Hancarville near the end of Volume I. In a treatise entitled 'Of the Sculpture and Painting' (dealing with the literary sources for these arts in antiquity) two pits, a Corinthian column crater and the Meidias hydria, are discussed in some depth: the latter, as d'Hancarville characteristically remarks was said to be 'not ... unworthy of Raphael himself'; D'Hancarville, *Antiquités Étrusques Grecques, et Romaines Tirées du Cabinet de M. Hamilton (Collection of Etruscan, Greek, and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of the Honble. Wm. Hamilton)*, 166., vol. I.

²⁴ Vickers, 'Value and Simplicity: Eighteenth-Century Taste and the Study of Greek Vases', 110..

²⁵ A. C. P. Caylus, Comte de,, *Recueil d'Antiquités, Egyptiennes, Étrusques, Grecques et Romaines*, 7 vols. Paris: Desaint & Saillant, 1752-1767, 88-89., vol. I.

why Hamilton's (Greek) vases found a ready and enthusiastic market on the Continent.²⁶

During his stay in Paris in 1785, d'Hancarville contacted the French copper-engraver F. A. David with the aim of producing a new edition of *Antiquités* with a minimum of cost. David, who was also responsible for the French edition of *Le Antichità di Ercolano* (i.e. *Antiquités d'Herculaneum gravées par F.[rançois] A.[nne] David; avec explications par Pierre-Syloain Maréchal*, 1780–1789) produced a five-volume work in which the text was of primary importance, not the images. Presumably intended to advertise Hamilton's original publication to the French book market, this rather tiny edition bears the full title *Antiquités Étrusques, Grecques et Romaines Tirées du Cabinet de M. Hamilton Envoyé Extraordinaire de S. M. Britannique à la Cour de Naples*, and was published in Paris between 1785–1788. Together with the Florentine edition, which appeared in late-1780s and was re-issued in early-1800s (following the original in size), neither of these two editions came close to the quality of the original plates. The main scene taken from the Meidias hydria is a characteristic example of such lower quality and lesser detail (Fig. 4). Although the text follows d'Hancarville's original,²⁷ the image of the vase in the French edition is inferior in graphic quality while a reddish colour does not have the effect of the original plates. Due to the small size of the French folio-volumes (19.8 x 12cm), the illustration of the vase appears smaller in size and detail; the arrangement of objects is different from the original Neapolitan edition as well.²⁸



Figure 4 The Meidias Hydria, engraving, *Antiquités* (French edition), d'Hancarville, II, dated 1785, pl. 23, Heidelberg University Library

²⁶ As Vickers explains, 'in a world where the potter and the painter could be persons of some prominence, it was easy to imagine that they were equally important in antiquity...' Vickers, 'Value and Simplicity: Eighteenth-Century Taste and the Study of Greek Vases', 121.

²⁷ P. F. Hugues D'Hancarville, *Antiquités Étrusques Grecques et Romaines Tirées du Cabinet de M. Hamilton Envoyé Extraordinaire de S. M. Britannique à la Cour de Naples*, 5 vols. Paris: Chez l'Auteur, F.A. David, Rue Pierre-Sarrazin, 1785-1788, 115-19, Vol. II.

²⁸ Plates 127-130 (vol. I) & plate 22 (vol. II) of d'Hancarville's original edition have been transferred in the second volume of the French edition (pls. 20-23, 26); the text expands in 5 pages (115–119).

Arguably, Hamilton's lavishly published engravings established an ideal for the production and interpretation of Greek pots for many decades. They are also a prime indicator of a collector's desire to spend an even larger sum of money on having his objects engraved rather than on further acquisitions. The project shows that, even 40 years after *Antiquités* had been published, d'Hancarville's views on vases were still generally held in high regard. James Millingen wrote in 1817 that the introduction of the collection of vases of the Chevalier Hamilton had 'a great influence on public taste in England. The account of it given to Europe by the publication of M. d'Hancarville had elsewhere the same happy effect'.²⁹ This article turns in more detail to the following sections in order to interrogate how subsequent writers, publishers or scholars partake in the complex reception of the theme (i.e. mythological scenes) of the hydria, and its intrinsic qualities (vases shape). We will see how these acts of textual and visual interpretation – that they have received surprisingly little attention – seek to understand and visualise the same source and, therefore, signal various expressive possibilities in regard to an art-historical consideration of ancient imagery.

Outlines, by T. Kirk

It has been suggested that recovering the material culture of the human past 'affects the flow of information arising from objects', while they also become part of a new cultural context with a new set of interactions.³⁰ It is essential therefore to recognize the extent to which an object can be modified simply through being used or re-interpreted by human agency. Over the course of, and following, Hamilton's life there were several other initiatives transforming these relations and influencing the distinction between fine arts and antiquarianism. One such example, in which the plates embody the close relationship between the early-modern aesthetics of classical art and the culture of the ancients (and in which images from the Meidias hydria are also present) is a book, engraved by Thomas Kirk (c. 1765–1797), a Royal Academy painter and engraver. The book was published in London in 1804 (shortly after Hamilton's death) and reissued in 1814. This exclusive – and of limited size³¹ – posthumous retrospective of Hamilton's vases, entitled *Outlines from the Figures and Compositions upon the Greek, Roman, and Etruscan Vases of the late Sir William Hamilton*, contained designs in the form of outlines which were drawn and engraved from sixty vases from Hamilton's two collections.³² The vases were selected by Kirk 'on account of the beauty of their composition and the elegance and truth of individual

²⁹ James Millingen, *Peintures Antiques de Vases Grecs de la Collection de Sir John Coghill Bart*, Rome: De Romanis, 1817, ii.

³⁰ M. Linda Hurcombe, *Archaeological Artefacts as Material Culture*, London and New York: Routledge, 2007, 36.

³¹ Kirk's *Outlines* was smaller in size format than *Antiquités* ((32cm instead of 49cm). Thus, the price of *Outlines* was listed, as £2/2 [two pounds and two shillings], while the subscription costs for *Antiquités* were £5 to £10 per volume (*The Edinburgh Review*, 4, 1803, 487).

³² Thora Brylowe has shed light on this publication recently. Her main argument is that Kirk 'demonstrates a thoroughgoing shift in the images associated with Hamilton's vases, rejecting and replacing the idea of the collection offered in earlier times', and embracing 'the idealization of classical beauty'; Brylowe, 'Two Kinds of Collections: Sir William Hamilton's Vases, Real and Represented', 44.

forms', while those 'which tended in any degree to indelicate expression' were rejected.³³ In the final introductory pages, we find the author at his most visionary, praising 'the composition of these paintings, the manner in which they are treated, the elegance of the actions, the beauty of their expression, the singularity of their character ... and above all, the great genius of those artists who have invented them ...' as something that was 'highly valuable for the true lover of the art'.³⁴ This process also occurred in the context of the emergence of a demanding publishing culture partly concerned with social improvement and moral instruction rather than merely pleasure and style.³⁵ As such, *Outlines* can best be understood as an anthology whose images were 'not confined merely to the purpose of giving a collection of beautiful designs to please the eye, but to present ... a series of chaste compositions, that may tend to ... a pure and correct taste...' This aesthetic and moral interpretation of 'perfect models' was used in 'forming and spreading a purer taste ... dependent upon our feelings rather than upon learning independent of feeling'.³⁶

Considering the Meidias hydria, in particular, Kirk's *Outlines* re-imagined the vase motif and fully transformed the original illustrations Hamilton commissioned forty or so years before. While on the one hand, the text in d'Hancarville's volumes consists of long disquisitions on ancient aesthetics including Greek and Etruscan history, and as such does little to illuminate the images in the engravings, it is not difficult to ascertain that in Kirk's case the text is a sort of contextualized encounter with the outlines of the engravings from the *Antiquités*. Thus, through six pages, Kirk discusses only the three plates (pls. xxvii–xxix) taken from the lower scene of the red-figured hydria depicting Heracles in the Garden of Hesperides; these appeared in d'Hancarville's first volume (pls. 127–129). Kirk begins with the Greek historian Diodorus Siculus, who speaks of the Hesperides and the great beauty they possessed; they have been captured by pirates upon request of Busiris, the King of Egypt, and held until Heracles saves them from their kidnappers. The 'complicated design' that continues 'entirely round the vase' features Argonauts and the god himself seated upon the Nemean lion-skin waiting

³³ Kirk's *Outlines* begin with a seventeen-page introduction to Hamilton's vases followed by the outlines of the plates along with 'such slight explanations of them as their subjects afforded'. The introductory text deals with the painting techniques of the ancient artists, the subjects of the painted scenes, the division of the vases according to their use, their discovery and estimated age, based on ancient literature; the compositions of the figures, and the customs depicted upon them. Furthermore, it proclaims the importance of Hamilton's motives by glorifying his love for the arts as: he was ... 'engaged in collecting the most beautiful specimens of antiquity ... and having even less pleasure in the possession of these treasures, than in gratifying the good taste of the world in making them public, he permitted engravings to be made from them'; Thomas Kirk, *Outlines from the Figures and Compositions upon the Greek, Roman, and Etruscan Vases of the Late Sir William Hamilton, (drawn and engraved by the late Mr. Kirk)*, London: W. Miller, 1814, ii–iv.

³⁴ Kirk, *Outlines from the Figures and Compositions upon the Greek, Roman, and Etruscan Vases of the Late Sir William Hamilton, (drawn and engraved by the late Mr. Kirk)*, vi–vii.

³⁵ See, for instance, M. Barbara Benedict, *Making the Modern Reader: Cultural Mediation in Early Modern Literary Anthologies*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996, 210.

³⁶ Kirk, *Outlines from the Figures and Compositions upon the Greek, Roman, and Etruscan Vases of the Late Sir William Hamilton, (drawn and engraved by the late Mr. Kirk)*, v–vi.

to receive the golden apples³⁷ from the daughters of Atlas, the Hesperides; the standing man behind him seems to be Jason. Merope, her mother Hesperis, Taygete and Alcyone are also identified on either side of the tree.³⁸ He then goes on to explain plate XXVIII where Atlas stands prominently holding a sceptre next to Orpheus ('at least such is the conjecture of d'Hancarville', as Kirk remarks); Electra is wearing a veil 'spangled over with stars' ... and 'with her head hanging down, as if she were absorbed in grief'.³⁹ The female seated figure on plate XXIX appears to be Maya while the other male seated figure Typhis, the son of Neptune appears to be the pilot of the Argo, and, therefore, according to the author, he is depicted without armour.⁴⁰ Kirk's description ends with a rather flattering comment on the figures, which 'possess in the highest degree the various marks of grandeur, grace, elegance ... simplicity ... purity and true taste.'⁴¹ In visual terms, the reddish (ochre) illustration of the *Antiquités* has been replaced by chaste outline in much smaller size (as mentioned above, p. 22, note 22); a few minor details, such as the laurel bush between Lipara and Heracles and next to Clytios in plate 27 (possibly because Kirk did not want to interrupt the emotion – as they gaze into each other's eyes – between the two figures) have also been omitted (Figs. 5 & 6).

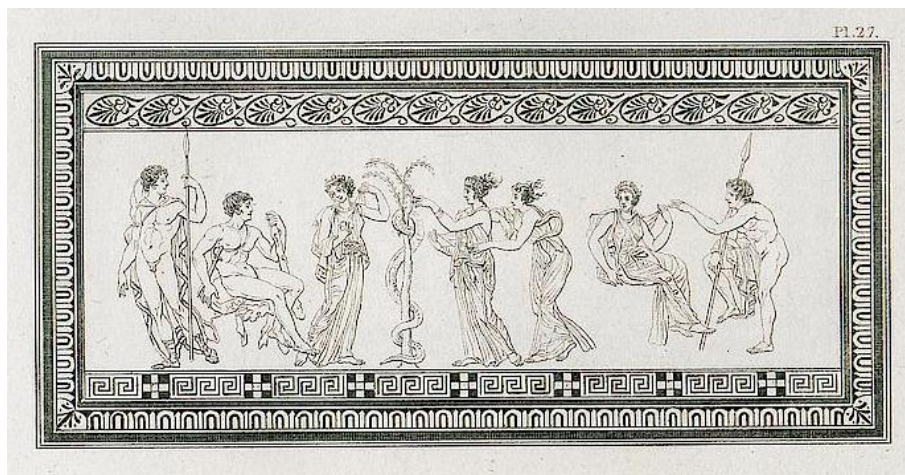


Figure 5 The Meidias Hydria, engraving, *Outlines*, Thomas Kirk, 1814, pl. 27,
Heidelberg University Library

³⁷ For a brief discussion on the role of apples in Greek mythology and culture as the fruit of love and death and the link between death, and life after death, see Burn, *The Meidias Painter*, 19-21.

³⁸ Kirk, *Outlines from the Figures and Compositions upon the Greek, Roman, and Etruscan Vases of the Late Sir William Hamilton, (drawn and engraved by the late Mr. Kirk)*, 20-21., pl. 27; see also D'Hancarville, *Antiquités Étrusques Grecques, et Romaines Tirées du Cabinet de M. Hamilton (Collection of Etruscan, Greek, and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of the Honble. Wm. Hamilton)*., pl. 127, Vol. I.

³⁹ Kirk, *Outlines from the Figures and Compositions upon the Greek, Roman, and Etruscan Vases of the Late Sir William Hamilton, (drawn and engraved by the late Mr. Kirk)*, 21-22., pl. 28; see also D'Hancarville, *Antiquités Étrusques Grecques, et Romaines Tirées du Cabinet de M. Hamilton (Collection of Etruscan, Greek, and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of the Honble. Wm. Hamilton)*., pl. 128, Vol. I.

⁴⁰ Kirk, *Outlines from the Figures and Compositions upon the Greek, Roman, and Etruscan Vases of the Late Sir William Hamilton, (drawn and engraved by the late Mr. Kirk)*, 22., pl. 29 ; D'Hancarville, *Antiquités Étrusques Grecques, et Romaines Tirées du Cabinet de M. Hamilton (Collection of Etruscan, Greek, and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of the Honble. Wm. Hamilton)*.pl. 129, Vol. I.

⁴¹ Kirk, *Outlines from the Figures and Compositions upon the Greek, Roman, and Etruscan Vases of the Late Sir William Hamilton, (drawn and engraved by the late Mr. Kirk)*, 22-23.

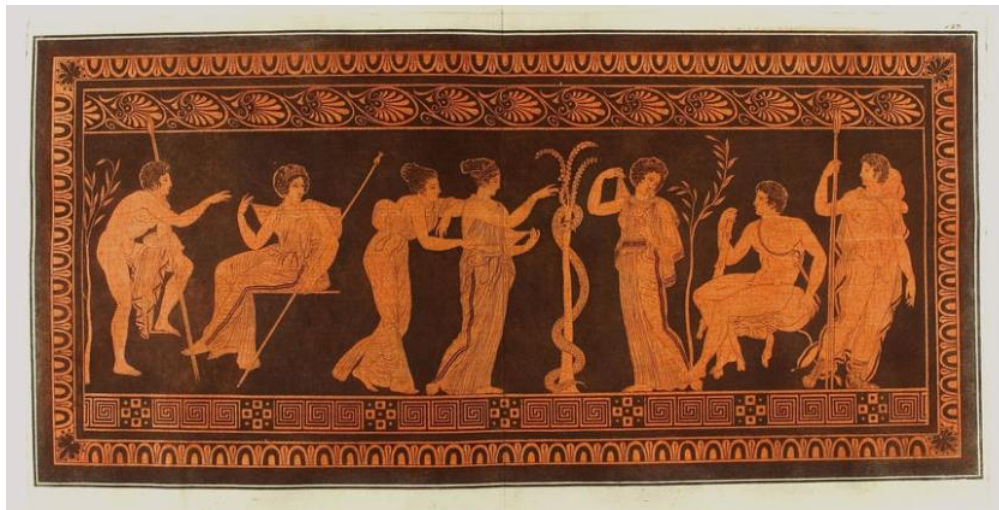


Figure 6 The Meidias Hydria, engraving, *Antiquités*, d'Hancarville, I, dated 1766 (issued late in 1767), pl. 127, reprinted in Florence in 1801, Heidelberg University Library

Whether or not Kirk's antiquarian idealization distorted d'Hancarville's conceptions of the classical world, Kirk's approach to describing ancient art was slightly different. Describing the Meidias hydria, for instance, the text in the *Outlines* is informative but rather uncritical of d'Hancarville's or Winckelmann's (or anyone else's) approach to its painted scenes and their meaning. Surprisingly, the main scene (the kidnapping, Fig. 2) has been omitted in Kirk's book though Hamilton's French editor had considered it as quite representative of the rise of Greek art, which was subsequently equivalent to that which Raphael occupied in the history of modern European art.⁴² In this complex process of interpretation, decoding and translation, it is difficult to ascertain why such an important omission occurs; an explanation in Kirk's text is absent too; it is only concerned with the rest of the Garden scenes. Considering Kirk's decision to present a selective group of objects, with the most tasteful scenes from both of Hamilton's (folio-volume) publications, we have to assume that either he did not wish to describe the upper (Garden) scene (presumably due to his ignorance of the subject matter) and, therefore, he neglected it on purpose; or, it could have simply been of no interest to him.⁴³ However, given the fame of the hydria by the time Kirk's *Outlines* was published, the second choice does not seem probable at all.

***Introduction l'Étude des Vases Antiques*, by Dubois-Maisonneuve**

⁴² D'Hancarville, *Antiquités Étrusques Grecques, et Romaines Tirées du Cabinet de M. Hamilton (Collection of Etruscan, Greek, and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of the Honble. Wm. Hamilton)*, 166-68., Vol. II.

⁴³ Interestingly, Kirk's choices are not restricted to vases once in Hamilton's possession. He also includes eighteen vases, eleven of which are unidentified (that is, they cannot be matched with any collection currently known). Among them, five can be matched to well-known museum collections; the remaining two can be found in the British Museum's database and thus, they presumably were part of Hamilton's first vase collection in 1772. Additionally only twelve of the total number of the scenes that appeared in Kirk's volume are presented on a black background, similar to the red-figured pottery technique. The rest are in outline.

Fifty years after the publication of Hamilton's *Antiquités*, the Meidias hydria appeared in another typical album of this period – in terms of size (57.7 x 43.3cm), scope, and subject matter. Dubois-Maisonneuve's *Introduction l'Étude des Vases Antiques d'Argile Peints Vulgairement Appelés Étrusques*, which featured vases from several collections,⁴⁴ was published in Paris in 1817 and contained 97 engravings in 101 plates, of which over 60 were of complete engraved vases with their scenes. A further three were drawings outlining several types of vases, and the rest were plates with engravings of the painted scenes without any reference to the objects' type and form. Despite d'Hancarville's extensive interpretation of the Meidian scenes in 4 engraved illustrations and the complex but partly improbable textual exegesis in the first and second volumes of *Antiquités* as well as in the manuscript catalogue of 1778,⁴⁵ the upper scene does not merit more than one page of commentary in Dubois's work.⁴⁶ Instead, the latter seems mostly interested in an accurate interpretation of plate 130 of *Antiquités* (Fig. 2) depicting the abduction scene (Fig. 7).⁴⁷



Figure 7 The Meidias Hydria, engraving, *Introduction l'Étude des Vases Antiques*, Dubois-Maisonneuve, 1817, pl. III, Heidelberg University Library

⁴⁴ These including those of the duchess of Weimar, The Vatican Museums, Count Lamberg, Thomas Hope, M. le duc de Blacas, M. Cousineri, Edmé-Antoine Durand, the Royal Museum of Naples, and the Museo Pio Clementino. Presumably due to his acquaintance with ancient vases, gained while working as a publisher of Millin's *Peintures de Vases Antiques* (1808–1810), Dubois-Maisonneuve occasionally uses Millin's previous vase publications as his main visual source where there is no reference to a particular collection. Although vases from Hamilton's first collection do not have a prominent place in this book, we encounter nine of them in nine different plates (all featured in *Antiquités*), eight of which were part of his own collection; see Emmanouil Kalkanis, *Reception and Artefacts in the Making of Late Eighteenth-Century Visual Culture: The Cultural Biography of Sir William Hamilton's Vases*, Doctoral thesis, Durham University, 108 (note 157).

⁴⁵ MS Catalogue of Hamilton Collection, British Museum, p 660, cited in Jenkins and Sloan, *Vases and Volcanoes: Sir William Hamilton and his Collection*, 181.; see also note 12.

⁴⁶ A Dubois-Maisonneuve, *Introduction l'Étude des Vases Antiques d'Argile Peints Vulgairement Appelés Étrusques* (Paris: De l'Imprimerie de P. Didot l'Aîné, 1817), 3-4.

⁴⁷ Dubois-Maisonneuve, *Introduction l'Étude des Vases Antiques d'Argile Peints Vulgairement Appelés Étrusques*, 4, note 1.

The author praises the composition of the scene, noting that it deserves particular attention for the charming and graceful movement of the figures and for the richness and elegance of the clothing.⁴⁸ With the exemption of a few remarks on the description of the vase (e.g. shape, size, the white colour on the statue's face, hands and feet, the positioning of the figures, the depository, and origin, all included in a footnote⁴⁹), Dubois-Maisonneuve refers to d'Hancarville's (correct) interpretation of the frieze around the belly showing Heracles in the Garden of the Hesperides. Interestingly, Dubois-Maisonneuve juxtaposes to the latter's (false) interpretation of the main scene Winckelmann's own in the French translation (published in 1801) of the revised posthumous German edition of his *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* (1776),⁵⁰ which came rather closer to the actual subject of the scene. Although Winckelmann's first thought was of the established chariot-race for the suitors of Hippodamia by Oenomaus, King of Pisa,⁵¹ Dubois-Maisonneuve only refers (in the last paragraph of the text) to the former's assumption that the subject of the scene could represent the games with which Danaus, King of Argos, celebrated the marriage of his daughters, the Danaides.⁵² Winckelmann's change of mind in favour of the race, which Icarus required of the suitors of his daughter Penelope of Sparta,⁵³ is not mentioned either. Moreover, the author does not seem to be in favour of a certain explanation for the interpretation of the scene and he rather cites what had been written already without any further critical observations. We have to assume that Dubois-Maisonneuve did not agree with d'Hancarville's suggestion and, therefore, he dedicates more space to the idea expressed by Winckelmann, whose work on Greek art had already had a far-reaching effect on the artistic and literary culture of the late Enlightenment.

In terms of visual appearance and in contrast with other vase illustrations in the same volume, there are no obvious stylistic details that make the engraved illustration look much different from the original. The band of palmettes, which decorates the upper part of d'Hancarville's engraving, has moved to the bottom of the image laying obliquely to the right. However, a very close examination of the scene shows that although the interpretation remains exactly the same, it seems that

⁴⁸ Dubois-Maisonneuve, *Introduction l'Étude des Vases Antiques d'Argile Peints Vulgairement Appelés Étrusques*, 3.

⁴⁹ Dubois-Maisonneuve, *Introduction l'Étude des Vases Antiques d'Argile Peints Vulgairement Appelés Étrusques*, 4, note 1.

⁵⁰ Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Histoire de l'Art chez les Anciens* (Paris: Chez Étienne Gide, Rue Dominique, 1801).; Although a French translation became available within two years of the *Gechichte's* original publication in 1764, a series of new French translations appeared after the revised and considerably enlarged German edition came out in 1776 offering 'as up-to-date a reference book on ancient art as possible'. These new editions 'incorporated further new material and critical commentary by way of notes and even supplementary articles that corrected and added to the contents of Winckelmann's text.' Francis Mallgrave and Alex Potts, *Johann Joachim Winckelmann: History of the Art of Antiquity*, Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2006, 15.

⁵¹ Winckelmann, *Histoire de l'Art chez les Anciens*, 305.; Winckelmann's description is part of Livre III, Chapitre III of the French translation (which Dubois-Maisonneuve must have consulted) entitled 'De l'Art chez les Nations Limitrophes des Etrusques', [The Art of Etruscans and their Neighbors].

⁵² Winckelmann, *Histoire de l'Art chez les Anciens*, 306; Mallgrave and Potts, *Johann Joachim Winckelmann: History of the Art of Antiquity*.

⁵³ Winckelmann, *Histoire de l'Art chez les Anciens*, 305.

in some instances the thin line brushes from the horses have been omitted, presumably, as the author states, in order to 'keep clean all beauty'.⁵⁴ Considering this static repetition of previously published material in the rest of the volume, Dubois-Maisonneuve seems hesitant and reluctant to engage in a discourse between the objects, their subject matter and what they represent, albeit with a few exemptions, as in the case of the Meidias hydria; the result is a rather generic reproduction of previously published material that offers a superficial view of a textualised encounter only with the upper (abduction) scene.

Galerie Mythologique, by A. L. Millin

Six years before the *Introduction l'Étude des Vases Antiques*, Aubin-Louis Millin (1759–1818), the founder of the journal *Magasin Encyclopédique*, published his ambitious study of Greek vases in two volumes. The project was published in Paris and bore the full title *Galerie Mythologique: Recueil de Monuments pour Servir a l'Étude de la Mythologie, de l'Histoire de l'Art, de l'Antiquité Figurée, et du Langage Allégorique des*



Figure 8 The Meidias Hydria, engraving, *Galerie Mythologique*, Aubin L. Millin, II, 1811, pl. 94, Heidelberg University Library

Anciens.⁵⁵ In the first volume, which is dedicated to the history of gods and other allegorical divinities, there are no images derived from the painted scenes of Hamilton's vases. The latter do not hold a prominent place in *Galerie Mythologique's*

⁵⁴ Dubois-Maisonneuve, *Introduction l'Étude des Vases Antiques d'Argile Peints Vulgairement Appelés Étrusques*, 4, note 1.

⁵⁵ Apart from gems and sculpture, *Galerie Mythologique* was devoted also to ancient vases from the cabinets of several collectors, which were reproduced mostly from representations in books and collectors' catalogues (e.g. Winckelmann's *Monumenti Inediti*, Passeri's *Picturae Etruscorum*, the Musée Napoleon, the Museo Pio Clementino, Visconti's *Iconographie Grecque*, Caylus's *Recueil*, Vanuti's *Museo Albani*, Tischbein's *Collection* (Hamilton's second published collection of vases), James Stuart's *Antiquities of Athens* and d'Hancarville's *Antiquités*).

second volume, either.⁵⁶ Here, the engraved illustration taken from the Meidias hydria is one of the three that came from vases already published in *Antiquités*.⁵⁷ In a very short description of the (abduction) scene (Fig 8), Millin identified (though without further explaining the reason that led him to do that) the games introduced by Danaus, celebrating the second marriage of his daughters. His rather plain description is restricted to the two chariots 'at the top of this beautiful vase-painting', and to the several Danaïdes 'in various positions' in the foreground. In the same passage and in contrast to previous treatises on the same scene, the author further suggests that the laurel branches on both sides of the altar allude to their atonement for the murder of their first husbands, while the seated male figure on the left is Neptune, 'the patron of equestrian games'.⁵⁸ Interestingly, Millin did not follow d'Hancarville's interpretation of the scene as the race of Atalanta and Hippomenes; neither did he mention Winckelmann's source and description. Due to the limited information provided in the text, we should consider that either Millin was unaware of Dubois-Maisonneuve's and Winckelmann's accounts of the same scene (though this is quite improbable), or that he did not agree with them as well as he did with d'Hancarville's interpretation. His identification of the scene should therefore be considered mere guess-work, if not a repetition of others' opinions without credit.

Millin's visual approach to the abduction scene follows the *Antiquités* version although with some minor stylistic differences and alterations in the positioning of the figures (e.g. in Millin's *Galerie* the laurel bush at the very edge of each side is featured with significantly fewer leaves than in the case of d'Hancarville's *Antiquités*). The above plate represents a simplified and rough image of d'Hancarville's original. In contrast with the latter as well as with Dubois-Maisonneuve's previous project, the scene is produced in a simple but rather harsh outline with no detailed engraving. Moreover, instead of claiming – as d'Hancarville did – to be an expert in ancient art, with an equal emphasis on mythology and a desire to portray antique art through his own notion of history, Millin introduced classical art to his readers simply by re-animating only the historical and cognitive qualities of the object, as in the case of the Meidias hydria. However, his method of interpreting and reproducing ancient material culture mirrors the dominant intellectual trends of the early nineteenth century. Among these trends, the interpretation of figured scenes from well-known collections – in order to provide a universal explanation for mythological systems as well as a framework through which their aesthetic qualities could be briefly, if at all, explained and further discussed – are the most characteristic.

As all the above publications indicate, the examination of the past within the broader cultural framework of the decades around 1800 by different authors,

⁵⁶ The second volume concentrated on a history of heroes from Greek mythology (from Thebes, Argos, Corinth and Arcadia), also including the *Odyssey*, the *Argonauts*, *Iliad*, and the *Aeneid*.

⁵⁷ These include an Apulian bell-krater (although this was never in Hamilton's possession), No. 428, pl. cviii/*AEGR*, IV, pl. 105 (bearded actor with a head stuck in ladder/ithyphallic actor with hat and caduceus of Hermes, Vatican, Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, U19, 18052); and a fragment from an Attic kylix, No. 456, pl. cxviii/*AEGR*, IV, pl. 31 (centaur Nessus carries off Deianira, BM E42).

⁵⁸ Aubin Millin, L, *Galerie Mythologique*, 2 vols., Paris: Chez Soyer, 1811, 5., no. 385, vol. II.

publishers or engravers offers valuable perspectives on the development of interpretative methodologies for artefacts of aesthetic value. In all these approaches, the illustration is of paramount importance but only in aesthetic terms; there was hardly any effort on the author's part to engage himself in a descriptive analysis of how he sees what he sees – unless it can be explained in terms of ancient mythology, but it was not explored beyond that. Thus, the text is a rather autonomous force, upon which, as this study will further show, a more detailed iconographical analysis only starts to develop from the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

Furthermore, the analysis and reproduction of individual artefacts, based either on their inherent physical attributes or the historical (as related to ancient mythology) value of the vase-painting itself, was of fundamental importance for the establishment of more systematic approaches to the visual reconstruction of the past and the aesthetics of its imagery. Millin's outline drawings, however, did not meet art writer and watercolour painter Cumberland's expectations for such artistic reproductions of ancient motifs, who felt they should be 'carefully avoided'.⁵⁹ As demonstrated by the harsh drawing of the above illustration (Fig. 8), Millin's intention was not to produce a costly and excessive work that promoted art above the text. Rather, his intention was to publish a portable collection, a kind of handbook of various enquiries into mythology, in which works of art play only a secondary albeit crucial role. Therefore, by copying the monuments after the 'best available sources', Millin's very short explanations of the plates may describe the 'primitive simplicity' of the objects, although they certainly do not serve as a primary means for a contextual discourse between mythology, art history and antiquarianism, as the author claims.⁶⁰ This desire to access mythology through the knowledge of a 'figured' antiquity conflicts with the absence of a comparable approach to previous or current scholarship of that time, as well as with a lack of an explanation of the reasons for not following the interpretations of his main sources. For instance, although in the short description of the plate taken from the Meidias hydria Millin states that his main source is d'Hancarville's *Antiquités*, he does not follow the latter's interpretation; no explanation is given for this lack of a comment.

***Vasi Fittili*, by F. Inghirami**

⁵⁹ Cumberland goes on to explain that the thickness and harshness of the outline drawings in general, should not be confused with the lines of unequal thickness found on the Greek Vases. He justifies his opinion by arguing that 'they are never found on them studiously or systematically inserted; they were only occasioned by the instrument they used, and the necessity of being quick, not from any intention of the artists ... a distinction, which, if generally known, would help the buyers, not a little, in making their purchases'; George Cumberland, *Thoughts on Outline, Sculpture, and the System that Guided the Ancient Artists in Composing their Figures and Groups* (London 1796), 115-19., Vol. II.

⁶⁰ Millin, *Galerie Mythologique*, viii, x.



Figure 9 Cav. Francesco Inghirami (1772–1846), *Pitture di Vasi Etruschi*, 1852, I, Heidelberg University Library

After Millin's inquiry into ancient art and mythology, a discussion related to the Meidias hydria appeared in Francesco Inghirami's lengthy account, which was published less than a decade later. According to James Christie,⁶¹ Inghirami (Fig. 9) was an antiquary 'of superior intelligence', whose work echoed his own opinion and 'maintained it with ingenuity and success'. Inghirami went, however, very much further than Christie in that he enriched his work with many luminous juxtapositions 'that must be deemed ... most frequently satisfactory and convincing'.⁶² Inghirami's *Pitture di Vasi Fittili* (1833–1837), republished in 1852–1856 as *Pitture di Vasi Etruschi*, was one the most comprehensive and best-illustrated albums of ancient vases after Hamilton's *Antiquités*. His acquaintance with ancient ceramics began in 1824 when he published *Vasi Fittili*, in two parts. This remarkable but short-scale work was part of a bigger publishing project entitled *Monumenti Etruschi o di Etrusco Nome*, which was completely drawn, engraved, illustrated and

⁶¹ Christie's *Disquisitions upon the Painted Greek vases, and their Probable Connection with the Shows of the Eleusinian and other Mysteries*, originally intended for private circulation, was first published anonymously in 1806 in 100 copies. A second revised and expanded edition was published in London in 1825. Based upon the connection between the figures of the painted scenes on the vases and the Eleusinian and other mysteries, Christie proposed evidence linking vase shapes and iconography to Greek mystery cults, about which little was known. One of Christie's similar literary efforts was a short essay on the *Worship of the Elements*, published in London in 1814.

⁶² James Christie, *Disquisitions Upon the Painted Greek Vases, and Their Probable Connection with the Shows of the Eleusinian and Other Mysteries* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1825), xii-xiii.

published by Inghirami himself. The two volumes consist of seventy plates accompanied by 632 pages of text. Sixteen plates depict 15 vases which were in Hamilton's possession and copied from *Antiquités's* four volumes.⁶³ Among them plates 11 and 12 of the first volume are taken from Hamilton's Meidias hydria and depict both the upper and lower scenes.

In the long description of the upper (abduction) scene (Fig. 10), which runs through seventeen pages,⁶⁴ Inghirami first introduces the reader to the Pécheux's 'modern' version of the scene as presented in d'Hancarville's second volume. Here, he states that 'you can see various additions and changes in the groups of figures, clearly indicating that the modern painter did not understand the subject represented here'.⁶⁵ To him, the hydria, which was 'for a long time regarded as one of the most beautiful and the most precious' of ancient vases, deserves very special attention both 'for the beauty of the composition, gracefulness and movement of the figures, and the richness and elegance of the clothing'. In the same passage, the author delivers a brief description of the vase (e.g. height, handles) with an emphasis on the 'simple and elegant' decoration and composition.⁶⁶ He goes on to



Figure 10 The Meidias Hydria, engraving, *Monumenti Etruschi o di Etrusco Nome* (Band 5,1): Vasi Fittili, Francesco Inghirami, 1824, pl. 11, Heidelberg University Library

⁶³ These are: an unidentified vase, pl. 6, I/*Antiquités*, IV, pl. 76; an Attic hydria, pl. 10, I/*Antiquités*, I, pl. 32; an Attic hydria (The Meidias Hydria), pls. 11–12, I/*Antiquités*, I, pls. 127–130; a red-figured Campanian neck- amphora, pl. 17, I/*Antiquités*, III, pl. 94 (BM F148); an Apulian (Greek) pelike, pls. 18–19, I/*Antiquités*, III, pl. 123 (Catania, Museo Civico del Castello Ursino, MB4402, L768); an Apulian (Greek) oinochoe, pl. 20, I/*Antiquités*, III, pls. 111–113 (BM 1977,0522.35); an Apulian (Greek) kylix, pl. 22, I/*Antiquités*, IV, pl. 98 (BM F454); an Apulian (Greek) kylix, pl. 23, I/*Antiquités*, IV, pl. 69 (BM F456); a Nolan amphora, pl. 37, I/*Antiquités*, III, pl. 49 (Paris, Louvre, G203); an Apulian (Greek) bell-krater, pl. 44, I/*Antiquités*, III, pl. 43 (Vatican, Museo Gregoriano Etrusco T2, inv. 1941); an Attic ball-krater, pl. 45, I/*Antiquités*, II, pls. 54–56, *Antiquités*, III, pl. 62 (Stockholm, Nationalmuseum); a black-figured Corinthian column-krater (The Hunt Krater), pl. 56, II/*Antiquités*, I, pl. 24 (BM B37); a black-figured Chalkidian neck-amphora, pl. 57, II/*Antiquités*, I, pls. 93–94 (BM B17); a black-figured Attic lekythos, pl. 65, II/*Antiquités*, I, pls. 60, 62–63 (BM B573).

⁶⁴ Francesco Inghirami, *Vasi Fittili*, 6 vols., *Monumenti Etruschi o di Etrusco Nome* (1821–1826) (Firenze: Politografia Fiesolana, dai Torchi dell' Autore, 1824), 72–88.

⁶⁵ Inghirami, *Vasi Fittili*, 72.

⁶⁶ Inghirami, *Vasi Fittili*, 73.

mention briefly all the printed representations of the same hydria by previous publications such as Winckelmann's, Dubois-Maissonneuve's and *Antiquités'* subsequent editions; a brief remark on their explanation (though without further comments) of the scene has also been added here.⁶⁷ After expressing his disagreement with d'Hancarville's interpretation, he goes on to give his own opinion. The scene, which according to Inghirami ought to represent a Hippodrome or a stadium, has been conceived by the ancient artist presumably by a servile imitation of the work of a poet (presumably criticizing – indirectly – the original painter's lack of creativity).⁶⁸ After justifying his opinion through quoting a description of Pausanias, Inghirami considers the seated male figure with beard and a sceptre on the extreme left as the judge.⁶⁹ Inghirami further argues that the painting alludes to the kidnapping of the daughters of Leucippus, Phoebe and Ilaria, by the Dioscuri; the first correct identification without the help of the inscriptions (though not without doubts) as Inghirami had never seen the vase in the flesh. He also noted the fact that the '[scene on the] vase does not correspond exactly to the narrative of the Latin author Hyginus and, thus, assumed that the painter of the hydria 'moved away from any common writers' or that the same painter did not follow the poets slavishly.'⁷⁰ Before his concluding remarks on the scene, Inghirami admits that the opinion of Winckelmann, and the more recent interpretation by Maissonneuve in favour of the suitors of the Danaides, might be his favourite of those who want to equate the Dioscuri with two of the kidnapers. According to him, this opposition is partly aroused from 'an absolute diversity' that the painter had shown to the subject.⁷¹

This description of the main scene is accompanied by an account of the lower scene, which itself runs through sixteen pages and discusses plate 12. All three engraved illustrations from around the belly of the Meidias hydria, which had been separately presented in d'Hancarville's *Antiquités*,⁷² – have been arranged here in one plate. After some brief notes on d'Hancarville's interpretation, Inghirami begins his narrative by identifying Maya (Maia, *Latin*) as the seated woman figure among the seven Pleiades depicted in the two lower rows of the plate (Fig. 11). Presumably thus guided by d'Hancarville's identification (though it was mere guesswork given that he was unaware of the names inscribed above them) of the figures as the

⁶⁷ Inghirami, *Vasi Fittili*, 74.

⁶⁸ Inghirami, *Vasi Fittili*, 76.

⁶⁹ Inghirami states here that the seat of the judge as described by Pausanias has been omitted as an unnecessary accessory, but it appears clearly on plate xiii of the former's work. Referring to Pécheux's version of this feature, he remarks that the latter's modern design of a wooden seat is 'beyond any analogy with the description of Pausanias'; Inghirami, *Vasi Fittili*, 77.

⁷⁰ Inghirami, *Vasi Fittili*, 79-80.

⁷¹ 'Noi vediamo per esempio che nel disegno del Vaso posto alla Tav. XV e in un cocchio Pelope ed Ippodamia, I cui cavalli sono già in movimento. Oenomaos dovrebbe essere nella corsa con pelope, ma siccome il pittore volle esprimere nel tempo stesso l'azione del sacrificio, così rappresento il cocchio di Oenomaos, ma trattenuto da Mirtillo auriga, perché il rappresentare I cavalli uniti al cocchio senza un cocchiere disdice all'occhio e all'immaginazione.' Inghirami, *Vasi Fittili*, 81.

⁷² D'Hancarville, *Antiquités Étrusques Grecques, et Romaines Tirées du Cabinet de M. Hamilton (Collection of Etruscan, Greek, and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of the Honble. Wm. Hamilton)*, pls. 127-129, Vol. I.

daughters of Atlas (Pleiades) and the Argonauts, he goes on to explain that the three sections of the vase represent three major events of the latter's expedition. To justify his opinion, he uses the narrative of Apollodorus, considering the seated female figure as Hypsipyle, who is posing as a Queen holding a sceptre (though he later remarks that we can rarely see a sceptre in a woman's hand)⁷³ upon receipt of the Argonauts, who had been 'accidentally landed on the island of Lemnos.'⁷⁴ After arguing that Jason could not be present with Heracles in the garden of Hesperides, he identified (based on d'Hancarville's interpretation) the last two figures on the extreme left of the middle part as the mother of Hesperides and Jason; in this case, Inghirami seems absolutely certain that the male figure must be one of the Argonauts.⁷⁵ As he further explains – and in contrast with all the previous accounts of the subject – the painter of the vase must have viewed the scene with the tree and the snake as the main subject of his work. Here, Alcyone and Taygete surround the tree, while Merope, the youngest daughter, seems to be hiding behind one of her sisters as an expression of the shame of marrying a mortal.⁷⁶ In considering the third scene at the bottom of plate 12 (Fig. 11), Inghirami wrongly interprets the seated male figure on the extreme right, with right foot crossed over left, as Atlas. Regarding the woman in the middle (known today as Medea based on the name written above the figure) dressed in a long chiton decorated with dotted

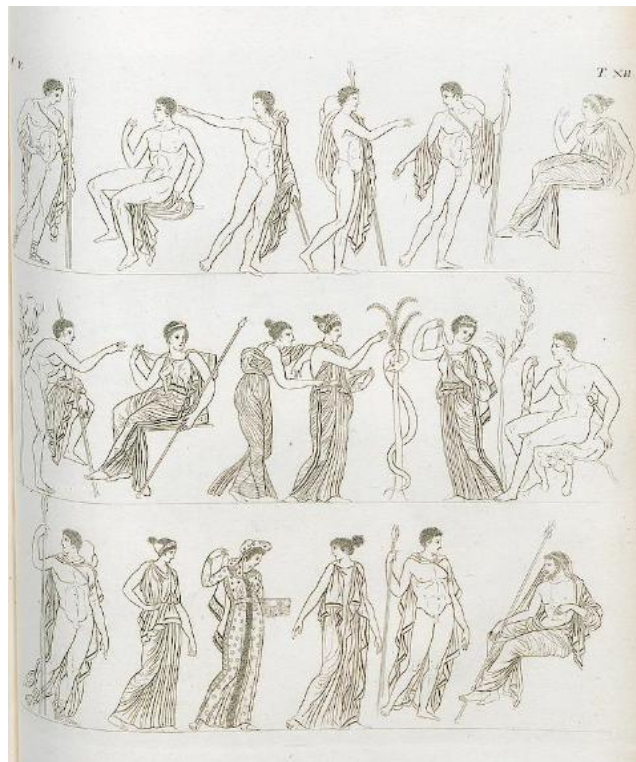


Figure 11 The Meidias Hydria, engraving, *Monumenti Etruschi o di Etrusco Nome* (Band 5,1): *Vasi Fittili*, Francesco Inghirami, 1824, pl. 12, Heidelberg University Library

⁷³ Inghirami, *Vasi Fittili*, 95.

⁷⁴ Inghirami, *Vasi Fittili*, 91.

⁷⁵ Inghirami, *Vasi Fittili*, 96.

⁷⁶ Merope married Sisyphus (*se-sophos*, 'very wise'), king of Ephyra. She bore Sisyphus sons Glaucus, Ornytion, and Sinon.

circles, the author further comments on the painter's desire to give grace and 'express the passions of the soul';⁷⁷ the very first critical comment on the positioning and gestures of the figures. In contrast to d'Hancarville's interpretation of the figure as Electra, one of the Pleiades, Inghirami states that it may be Medea. He justifies his opinion based on the rich dress which is absent in the other two female figures, and which makes her appear physically isolated from the other figures in the scene. Inghirami also adds that if we are to agree with d'Hancarville's interpretation that Sterope and Celaeno (both members of the Pleiades) surround Electra, why then is the woman in the middle dressed differently, and is also wearing a *kidaris* decorated with stars on her head? He also refers to Apollonius of Rhodes, according to whom Jason saw Medea in the temple of Diana and, therefore, this meeting can be expressed in Medea's gently tilted head.⁷⁸

Interestingly, all the forty-six plates of *Vasi Fittili* do not follow a specific pattern of interpretation. Rather, Inghirami presents them using various interpretative approaches. For example, although the majority of the scenes are in the outline style on a white background, many of them are presented in full colour while others include a two-dimensional view of the form and shape of the vase in between the scenes. In a few instances, however, the vase is interpreted three-dimensionally, either standing alone on the page or with an illustration underneath.⁷⁹ Generally, the majority of the illustrations on the sixteen plates taken from Hamilton's volumes are quite accurate – if not identical – copies of *Antiquités's* images. Despite Inghirami's occasional remarks that it was d'Hancarville who has given 'inaccurate, incomplete and unexplained figures of the vases and paintings',⁸⁰ as he does in the explanation of plate 37 (depicting a Nolan amphora), Inghirami's interpretation of their contents is not very different from Hamilton's publishing endeavour half a century previously. His criticism of d'Hancarville's pictorial appropriation of ancient ceramics, however, must have forced Inghirami to consult previously published interpretations of the Nolan neck-amphora, shown in plate 37 (I); this was very characteristic of his diverse approach towards the interpretation of ancient imagery.⁸¹ Given the particularities of these similar but not identical – to

⁷⁷ Inghirami, *Vasi Fittili*, 99.

⁷⁸ Inghirami, *Vasi Fittili*, 101-02, 04.

⁷⁹ A characteristic example of the alternative perspectives from which Inghirami chose to illustrate ancient vases is seen in the case of a Campanian neck-amphora. Instead of copying the scene horizontally as in *Antiquités*, he positions Heracles supporting the heavens and Hera on the upper half of the plate, while the remainder of the scene including the bearded Atlas, the tree in the garden of Hesperides and a Hesperid, is shown on the bottom half. Additionally, a two-dimensional short version of the shape of an amphora in outline is pictured in between the two scenes, incorporating a material dimension to his interpretation; Inghirami, *Vasi Fittili*, pl. 65, vol. II.

⁸⁰ Inghirami, *Vasi Fittili*, 389, Vol. II.

⁸¹ Although it was a well-known vase and thus there was no need for a new impression, he states that it was a necessary exercise in order to discover the meaning of similar monuments in other endeavours Inghirami, *Vasi Fittili*, 389.. Interestingly, the amphora depicting Athena and Heracles, which had belonged to the collection of the neoclassical painter A. R. Mengs (now at the Louvre, G203), was initially shown to the public by Winckelmann Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Monumenti Antichi Inediti*, 2 vols. (Rome: A Spese dell'Autore, 1767), pl. 159, Vol. I. Winckelmann's interpretation of the vase seems more likely to be the source for Inghirami's approach. Indeed, the latter chooses not to interpret the scene separately as d'Hancarville did D'Hancarville, *Antiquités Étrusques Grecques, et*

d'Hancarville's *Antiquités* – interpretations of the Meidias hydria, we may argue that the copying process in Inghirami's work was more complex in terms of visual approaches to ancient imagery than had hitherto been the norm. While this view is triggered by a desire for a more personal approach to the interpretation of ancient art, as well as for practical reasons, the author seems to rely on previous publications with some degree of resistance and sometimes with direct influence. Plate 12 (Fig. 11), for instance, where three separately illustrated scenes from Hamilton's 'Meidias Hydria' are interpreted together in a single plate with some inconsistencies (which are, however, related to those present in *Antiquités*), is quite characteristic of such an approach. Here, while Iolaos, who moves away from the seated Heracles, is featured with the group depicted with the apple-tree in the centre in d'Hancarville's volume,⁸² Inghirami – presumably due to the particularities of a balanced vertical representation and a matter of convenience – positioned him with the group depicting Acamas, the Athenian tribal hero.⁸³ Once more, there is no explanation for such interventions and alterations on the author's part.

Über die Vase des Midias, by E. Gerhard

While the painted scenes of the Meidias hydria did not appear in Inghirami's subsequent larger vase publications *Vasi Fittili* and *Vasi Etruschi*, which were both published in Florence several years later,⁸⁴ they were included in Eduard Gerhard's

Romaines Tirées du Cabinet de M. Hamilton (Collection of Etruscan, Greek, and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of the Honble. Wm. Hamilton)., pl. 49, Vol. III, but instead includes a two-dimensional, coloured impression of the vase in the middle of the plate, together with the back scene of the vase on the top. Moreover, In his attempt to approach the subject more comprehensively and to be comparatively critical as well, Inghirami also dismisses Millin's textual exegesis of the same scene as arbitrary and not in accordance with Homer's representation [Millin reproduces the main scene of the vase which is also accompanied with a short explanation. He also refers to d'Hancarville and Winckelmann's previous but unfaithful interpretations Aubin Millin, *L, Peintures de Vases Antiques, Vulgairement Appelès Étrusques*, 2 vols. (Paris: P. Didot, 1808-1810), 61-62, pl. 41, Vol. II.]; Francesco Inghirami, *Pitture di Vasi Fittili [republished as Pitture di Vasi Etruschi in 4 vols., 1852-1856]*, 4 vols. (Firenze: Poligrafia Fiesolana, dai Torchi dell'Autore, Fiesole, 1833-1837), 390-92.. He did not follow Millin's interpretation and the horizontal positioning of the figures either. Although the shape of the amphora in Inghirami's work is quite disproportionate compared to Winckelmann's plate, we can assume that the latter was the only accurate source for Inghirami if he had not seen the real object in Meng's collection, as Winckelmann had. However, although he knew that at least Winckelmann's illustration had been made using the original object, he presents it with some additions of his own, which may also indicate that he did not have access to the amphora itself.

⁸² D'Hancarville, *Antiquités Étrusques Grecques, et Romaines Tirées du Cabinet de M. Hamilton (Collection of Etruscan, Greek, and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of the Honble. Wm. Hamilton).*, pl. 127, Vol. I.

⁸³ D'Hancarville, *Antiquités Étrusques Grecques, et Romaines Tirées du Cabinet de M. Hamilton (Collection of Etruscan, Greek, and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of the Honble. Wm. Hamilton).*, pl. 128, Vol. I; Inghirami, *Vasi Fittili*, 89.

⁸⁴ Both editions were in four folio-volumes and contained 400 plates, the biggest assemblage of images from ancient ceramics in a multi-volume publication since *AEGR*. Of these plates, 74 are related to *Antiquités* and represent scenes from 67 vases, 39 of which were part of Hamilton's own collection. Although according to Inghirami, the concepts expressed in these paintings remained to be understood rather than simply interpreted, his extensive catalogue includes vase paintings that had never been illustrated before. This appears to have been the reason for the quite accurate copies of *Antiquités'* representations, which featured in his own volumes, as he did not seem to be interested in creating his

treatise on the hydria which appeared in the *Philologische und historische Abhandlungen* of Berlin's Royal Academy in 1839 under the title *Über die Vase des Midias*. The text, which runs through nine pages and is also accompanied by two engraved plates of the upper and lower scenes (the latter also includes two three-dimensional representations of the whole vase), is the very first published encounter with the inscriptions on the Meidias hydria. Gerhard's dedication to studying and publicizing antique objects through first-hand acquaintance is evident in this short but rather paramount treatise of art historical research into the aesthetics of ancient vases.⁸⁵ Here, he not only interpreted the subject of the upper scene correctly (as the abduction of the daughters of Leucippus) but also identified the Meidias' name and, therefore, the artist has become known as such ever since.⁸⁶

Based on first-hand examination and analysis, Gerhard sought to acquire a concrete knowledge of the object itself. His account of one of the most 'eminent and controversial' Greek artefacts shed a new and correct (in contrast with all previous endeavours) light on the upper scene of the vase.⁸⁷ The correct use and understanding of the inscribed names above the figures forced him to explain the scene in a 'clear and straightforward' manner (though he could have identified the scene with fewer inscribed details, as he characteristically observed in the same passage). After identifying Castor [ΚΑΣΣΤΩΡ] and Pollux [ΠΟΛΥΔΕΥΚΤΗΣ] in the process of seizing Elera [ΕΛΕΡΑ] and Eriphyle [ΕΡΙΦΥΛΗ], he states with confidence that the young charioteer standing ready to the right is 'without doubt' Chrysis [ΧΡΥΣΙΠΠΟΣ]. The author goes on to add a more critical approach to his brief analysis and, therefore, to elaborate on his own model of art historical analysis, which proceeded by freeing itself from the primacy of text and ancient

own elaborate interpretations rather than presenting exact copies from his source material; Inghirami, *Pitture di Vasi Fittili* [republished as *Pitture di Vasi Etruschi in 4 vols., 1852-1856*], 5., Vol. I.

⁸⁵ A student of Friedrich August Wolf and August Böck (he received a thorough training in classical philology and Greek antiquities at Halle, Breslau and Berlin), and at once a museum curator and a university professor (Berlin), Eduard [Friedrich Wilhelm] Gerhard (1795–1867) was the co-founder and supporter of what was to become later the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, the 'Istituto di Corrispondenza Archeologica' (1829). His accounts on the Roman Forum, the sculptures of the Museo Archeologico in Naples, and the Etruscan excavations at Vulci, his inventory on Etruscan mirrors, and his long-lasting preoccupation with Greek vases all represent a desire for a serious, systematic scholarly treatment and impeccable philological erudition of a wide range of ancient art; they are also evidence of his belief that only the systematic classification and publication of antiquities would allow for their understanding and their protection; Henning Wrede, ed. *Dem Archäologen Eduard Gerhard 1795–1867 zu seinem 200. Geburtstag* (Berlin: Willmuth Arenhövel, 1997), 54–60; Suzanne L. Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1970* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996); Alain Schnapp and Matthew Tiews, 'Eduard Gerhard: Founder of Classical Archaeology?', *Modernism/Modernity* 11, no. 1 (2004); M. Robert Cook, *Greek Painted Pottery*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 1997), 190–91, 93.

⁸⁶ However, since the signature of Meidias had not been spotted until then, it was the discovery of another signature by Taleides as potter on an Attic black-figured amphora from Agrigento about 1800 (now in New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 47.11.5) that made Taleides the first Greek potter known by name; see also Beazley, *Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters*, 174., 1; Beazley, *Additions to Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters and to Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*, 72.

⁸⁷ F. W. Eduard Gerhard, 'Über die Vase des Midias [Vorgelegt in der Akademie der Wissenschaften am 24 October 1839]', in (*Philologische und historische*) *Abhandlungen der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* (Berlin: Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1839), 295.

sources over the monument. What captivates us, Gerhard remarks, is not only the beauty of the scene but also the cheerfulness of the whole composition. Indeed, any trace of violence has been excluded in this pleasing adaptation of the carrying away of the daughters of Leucippus; a 'cheerful moment ... blessed by gracious deities ... as the guardians of the action'.⁸⁸ By noting that in Doric and Italic customs brides were acquired by kidnapping [ἐγάμουσιν δι' ἄρπαγῆς], his text is moving toward examining the conditions under which research into Antiquity became independent from universal histories in favour of a recognition of diversity on a more regional and local scale; he then points to the Meidias hydria as an exquisite proof of this.⁸⁹ In Gerhard's words, everything indicates 'a fully prepared wedding whose statutory "rape"' [Raub, *archaic*] reinforces the importance of the prevalent image of the goddess standing on a pedestal in the middle of the scene.⁹⁰

Interestingly, although Gerhard's analysis focused solely on the main scene, the reader can find a short index of the inscribed names above the figures of the lower frieze in the last part of his text.⁹¹ The visual interpretation of the hydria,

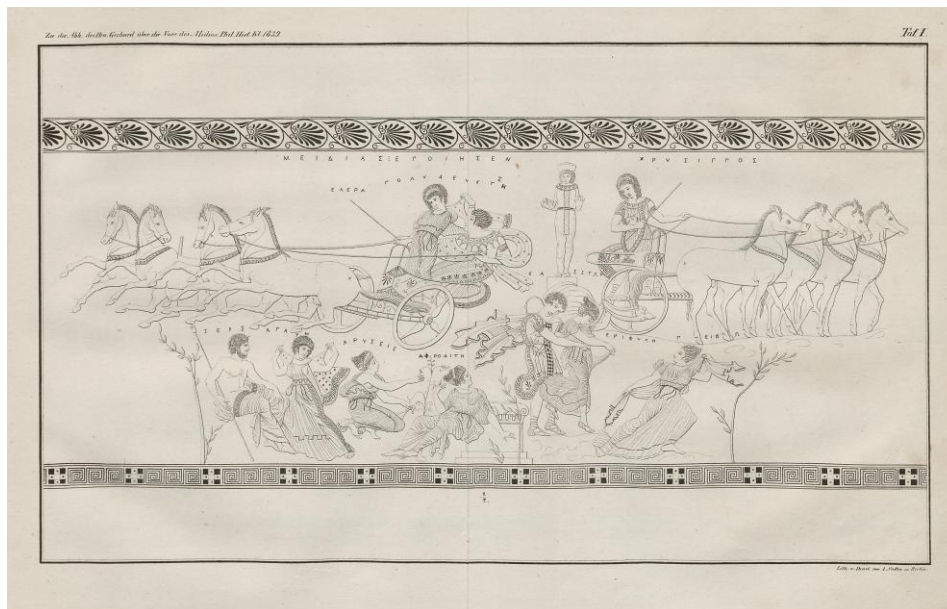


Figure 12 The Meidias Hydria, engraving, (*Philologische und Historische*) *Abhandlungen*, Eduard F. W. Gerhard, 1839, pl. I, Heidelberg University Library

⁸⁸ Gerhard, 'Über die Vase des Midias [Vorgelegt in der Akademie der Wissenschaften am 24 October 1839]', 297-98.

⁸⁹ Gerhard, 'Über die Vase des Midias [Vorgelegt in der Akademie der Wissenschaften am 24 October 1839]', 298.

⁹⁰ In the absence of other references, Gerhard states that our miscellaneous knowledge of Messenian cults helps us identify (though presumably) the female deity wearing a long tied chiton as Artemis; Gerhard, 'Über die Vase des Midias [Vorgelegt in der Akademie der Wissenschaften am 24 October 1839]', 298-99.

⁹¹ These are divided into three categories under the titles 'Hesperidenbild', 'Argonautenbild', and 'Attische Brautwerbung' referring to the Hesperides, Argonauts and Attic wedding preparations. Interestingly, Gerhard includes at the end a postscript, according to which Jean De Witte corrected the former's reading of the name of ΑΣΙΧΕΡΘΗ (standing behind ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ) as ΑΣΤΕΡΟΠΗΗ; Gerhard, 'Über die Vase des Midias [Vorgelegt in der Akademie der Wissenschaften am 24 October 1839]', 302-03.

however, does not follow the quality and correctness of his textual exegesis. The details on the first plate (Fig. 12) are of low quality and the composition has been freely adapted without any attempt to follow the original engraving (though his main source was the original object); the arrangement of the figures of the lower level is also disproportionate. For instance, the wheels of the left chariot, the altar with the Ionic capital against which Aphrodite is seated, the laurel bushes at each extremity of the lower level, and the outline details on the clothing of most of the figures have all been either omitted or harshly interpreted. Although the details of plate II have been better presented (e.g. the band of meanders dividing the upper and lower part of the hydria follows the original on the vase) and the composition has not been distorted as in plate II, the overall presentation deserves our attention. The scene of the apple-tree with the serpent is featured separately in the upper part of the plate; a three-dimensional image of the front and back side of the vase is also featured on both sides of the engraved scene expressing most potently the tension between concrete materiality and aestheticizing abstraction (Fig. 13). In the absence of such views from d'Hancarville's *Antiquités*, we must consider Gerhard's visual alternative to these scenes (though of secondary importance in previous endeavours) as an attempt to measure and delineate the monument on the plates themselves. Moreover, the inclusion of a low-quality disproportionate illustration (in comparison to d'Hancarville's *Antiquités*) should be considered a natural outcome of his overall dependence on the real object displayed at the British Museum.

Plates 128 and 129 of Hamilton's original publication depicting Athenian tribal heroes are both presented in a single horizontal scene at the bottom of plate II; another result of Gerhard's source material, the object itself. Here again, the inferior

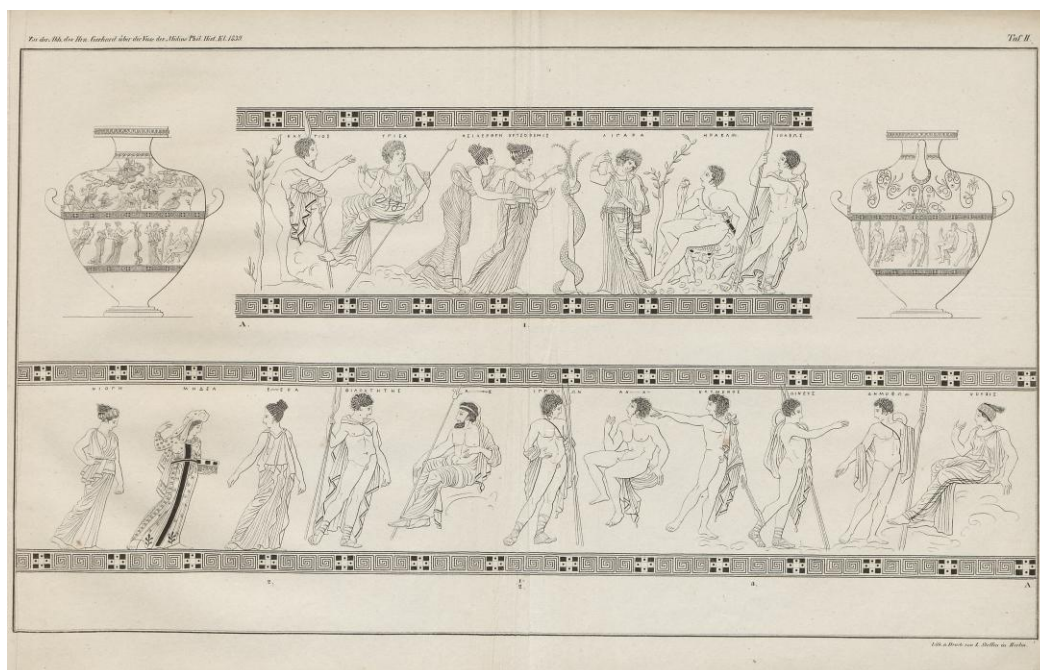


Figure 13 The Meidias Hydria, engraving, (*Philologische und Historische*) *Abhandlungen*, Eduard F. W. Gerhard, 1839, pl. II, Heidelberg University Library

but rather informative “unrolled” plate shows the extent to which Gerhard’s first-hand acquaintance with the hydria offers a contrasted aesthetic conception of the object: rough and misinterpreted in terms of the figured scenes (Figs. 12 & 13); instructive and illuminating in terms of the featured inscribed names and the intrinsic qualities of the object (Fig. 13). More importantly, Gerhard’s choice of study and interpretation of the object offers a valuable perspective on the extent to which, unlike all the previous cases examined here, he was the first ‘qualified’ – in today’s terms⁹² – investigator interested more in fine scholarship than in the aesthetics of representation. It would not be an exaggeration to consider his treatise as the outset of a new scientific inquiry into antiquity which, beginning with Comte de Caylus and continuing since then, has basically emphasized the primacy of the object over texts.⁹³

Nouvelle Galerie Mythologique, by J. D. Guigniaut

The last appearance of the Meidias hydria in this story was in Joseph-Daniel Guigniaut’s *Nouvelle Galerie Mythologique* published in Paris in two volumes in 1850.⁹⁴ Formed of nearly three hundred engraved plates containing monuments from India, Persia, Egypt, Asia, Italy, and Greece, the work was basically a new (reworked) edition of Millin’s *Galerie Mythologique*, revised and supplemented by Guigniaut himself.⁹⁵ The scope of this enlarged version, as the author states in his preface, is to offer a book for artists as well as for ‘scholars and professionals’; a book that could also serve as a course about monuments and mythology. Referring to Friedrich Creuzer’s work on mythology⁹⁶ as his main source (either by ‘loans ... or by a system of references that satisfy the dual requirement of curiosity and

⁹² Gerhard’s Ph.D., the first given by the newly founded Friedrich-Wilhelms University in Berlin, was on Apollonius Rhodius with a supplementary thesis on the *digamma*; see Cook, *Greek Painted Pottery*, 193.

⁹³ He wrote in the preface of his monumental work on Egyptian, Etruscan, Greek and Roman antiquities: ‘I am restricted to publishing ... only monuments that belong to me or were owned by me ... Objects can explain particular practices ... they bring the progress of the arts to our attention ... But antiquaries have seldom seen them thus; they have regarded them only as ... isolated texts that require elaborate commentary’; Caylus, *Recueil d’Antiquités, Égyptiennes, Étrusques, Grecques et Romaines*, 1-2., preface.

⁹⁴ Born in France and studied at the *École Normale* and the Sorbonne, Guigniaut (1794–1876) became a Hellenist and mythographer. After he served as Maître de Conférences at the *École Normale Supérieure*, where he was promoted to director in 1830, he was elected to the *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres* in 1837, and made secretary general of the *Conseil de l’Université* (1845–1850). He became widely known through the translation and reworking of Creuzer’s *Simbolica*, the *Religions de l’Antiquité Considérées Principalement dans leurs Formes Symboliques et Mythologiques*, issued in 10 volumes between 1825 and 1851.

⁹⁵ Preceded by an introduction containing generic views on the characters, shapes and successive epochs and religious cults of antiquity, the author inserts a very useful (for the reader) table of deities, characters, and symbolic objects represented on the monuments of this collection; Joseph Daniel Guigniaut, ed. *Nouvelle Galerie Mythologique Comprenant la Galerie Mythologique de feu A. L. Millin* (Paris: Firmin Didot Frères, 1850), i-xxxix.

⁹⁶ For Creuzer’s work, see S. George Williamson, *The Longing for Myth in Germany: Religion and Aesthetic Culture from Romanticism to Nietzsche*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

research'), Guigniaut's work itself forms a collection of '(by far) the largest and most complete mythological monuments, blazing all religions from India and Egypt to Greece and Italy'. Thus, the author remarks with confidence that the two plates dedicated to the Meidias hydria 'are explained ... with all the necessary details'.⁹⁷

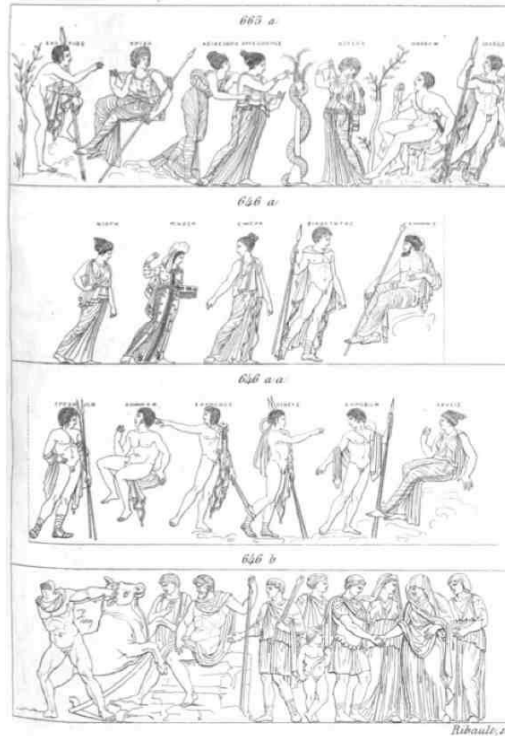


Figure 14 The Meidias Hydria, engraving, *Nouvelle Galerie Mythologique*, II, Joseph-Daniel Guigniaut, 1850, pl. CLXXXVI

In regard to the plate 737a, which depicts the main scene of the vase and is identically copied from Millin's book (though with all of the inscribed names), Guigniaut begins his description by referring to the statue figure of Artemis. In contrast with Millin's and other previous interpretations, he simply describes the scene in terms of what he sees, particularly pointing to the whips held by Pollux and Chrysippos without any further critical considerations; the same name-identification applies to the rest of the scene, where he identifies all the inscribed names though without further comments.⁹⁸ After mentioning Gerhard, as the first who discovered the inscriptions, he goes on to admit that the main (abduction) scene has been explained in rather different ways (e.g. Millin has shown that the scene depicts the marriage of the daughters of Danaus). Here the author remarks that the idea of marriage carried out in these symbolic representations can also be identified in other monuments in his catalogue.⁹⁹ However, the plate of the lower

⁹⁷ Guigniaut, *Nouvelle Galerie Mythologique Comprenant la Galerie Mythologique de feu A. L. Millin.*, preface.

⁹⁸ Guigniaut, *Nouvelle Galerie Mythologique Comprenant la Galerie Mythologique de feu A. L. Millin*, 337.

⁹⁹ Guigniaut, *Nouvelle Galerie Mythologique Comprenant la Galerie Mythologique de feu A. L. Millin*, 338.

scene of the hydria is more interesting, for our purposes in this study, in terms of interpretation and textual exegesis. Here, the scene is divided into three parts presented one above the other in one plate. In contrast to Gerhard's own view of the subject, Guigniaut follows d'Hancarville's positioning of the figures. For those incomplete inscribed names of the lowest part of the plate (646aa), he adds Gerhard's and Jean de Witte's own identification, as in the case of ΑΙΗΤΗΣ and ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΣ; for the subject of the scene, an Attic wedding, he only refers to the former.¹⁰⁰ Likewise, the description of the apple-tree scene offers nothing new. For instance, apart from a very few words that show some more critical view of the topic and the figures from the author's part (i.e. a note on the 'peaceful' look of Heracles at ΑΠΠΑΡΑ, ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ, and – according to Gerhard – ΑΣΙΧΕΡΘΗ, or – according to de Witte – ΑΣΣΤΕΡΟΠΗΗ – is quite characteristic of such an approach), the rest remains static with no further explanations or hypotheses.¹⁰¹

Conclusions

Arguably, the history of early nineteenth-century antiquarian publications is as central to scholarship about the vases as the artefacts themselves were to early nineteenth-century intellectual circles. During this time vase-scholarship began to advance on all fronts, and antiquaries realized they could make sense of historic objects in the same way they did written sources, thereby producing a material history from which 'a narrative of the past could be viewed, engraved and written'.¹⁰² It was thanks to these modern adaptations that ancient pottery enjoyed such an exceptional fame. Moreover, in the case of Hamilton's (Meidias) hydria, this study has attempted to show that the various reproductions of ancient material culture were not merely isolated projects, made on the basis of a particular insight into the classical past; rather all the visual and textual strategies demonstrate a continuing interest in this object among those who were seeking to profit financially, or to enhance their own professional, social or intellectual status.¹⁰³ Those who instead had something different or new to say or discover, such as Gerhard, are an exception. By focusing on one of the most prominent – in terms of visual dissemination – objects of late eighteenth-century antiquities collecting, and by reviewing the evidence on which various antiquarian projects showed an interest in it, this study has explained how, through the mechanics of publication, the Meidias hydria was textualised by being reworked as engraved plates in various folios and scholarly accounts. It took the usual treatment of d'Hancarville on and

¹⁰⁰ Guigniaut, *Nouvelle Galerie Mythologique Comprenant la Galerie Mythologique de feu A. L. Millin*, 277.

¹⁰¹ Guigniaut, *Nouvelle Galerie Mythologique Comprenant la Galerie Mythologique de feu A. L. Millin*, 292–93.; see also Jean de Witte, *Noms des Fabricants et Dessinateurs de Vases Peints*, (Paris: Leleux, 1848).

¹⁰² Susan Pearce, 'Antiquaries and the Interpretation of Ancient objects, 1770–1820', in *Visions of Antiquity: The Society of Antiquaries of London 1707–2007*, ed. Susan Pearce, Volume 111 of *Archaeologia*, 159: 2007, 159; for an understanding of neoclassicism as the material trace of how the antique was reproduced, copied and purchased, see Coltman, *Fabricating the Antique: Neoclassicism in Britain, 1760–1800*.

¹⁰³ See also Rouet's comment on the extent to which profit and investment were 'ill-matched' to a vision of the ancient world and a general context of a return to antiquity; Rouet, *Approaches to the Study of Attic Vases: Beazley and Pottier*.

showed the nature and range of the engagements with the object, and the role played by the latter's publication, in treatments up to the middle of the nineteenth century (see plate I). It also discussed how it became part of an artistic discourse, which operated between the archaeological remains of classical antiquity and late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century approaches to the reproduction and visual dissemination of ancient art. But why do we need to know this?

On the one hand, the above discussion has given some unexpected insights into how an artefact might be illuminated from the perspective of Classical Reception Studies, and how some of the themes and questions that have been articulated in relation to the textual and visual appropriation of its painted scenes might be applied to the contemporary understanding of the material object. The Meidias hydria thus stands at the centre of this narrative, providing an excellent focal point and extensive opportunity for a more critical discussion of aesthetic and textual responses to a new collecting habit;¹⁰⁴ one that was sufficiently evolved – especially by the 1830s – into a desire to go beyond mere artistic taste and embrace other forms of scientific knowledge.¹⁰⁵ The value of these responses lies not only in the various art theories as they were distinctively expressed by various scholars but also in the medium of reproduction as a means to strengthen the scientific knowledge of the past.¹⁰⁶ It is in this context that the interpretation of the Meidias hydria by similar antiquarian projects in engraved form reflected the historical sequence of its aesthetic reception. It was also in this context that this study attempted to discuss two interrelated – and previously unexplored – aspects related to the impact of certain of Hamilton's collected objects on late eighteenth- and early nineteenth- century print culture. A closer look at the extent to which artistic interpretation in print created a link between visual reception, aesthetic value and historical/mythological narratives was initially considered. D'Hancarville's historical imagination, for instance, mingling with the dazzling beauty of the

¹⁰⁴ The sale, for instance, to the British Museum in 1772 of his first collection of vases (including the Meidias hydria) gave the British nation a class of objects that had previously been only sporadically and casually displayed by elite intellectuals.

¹⁰⁵ For instance, the vogue for Greek vases reached its peak, as Jenkins observed, 'at a time when British collectors were prevented by Napoleon's occupation of Europe from collecting in Italy; the competition in the salerooms at home, therefore, was all the more intense Jenkins, "'Athens Rising Near the Pole": London, Athens and the Idea of Freedom', 147, 50. ; see also Ian Jenkins, 'La Vente des Vases Durand (Paris 1836) et leur Reception en Grande- Bretagne', in *L'Anticomanie: la Collection D'Antiquites aux 18e et 19e Siecles*, ed. Annie Laurens, F and Krzysztof Pomian, Paris: Ecole des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1992; Ian Jenkins, 'Adam Buck and the Vogue for Greek Vases', *The Burlington Magazine* 130, no. 1023, 1988; Lucilla Burn, 'Words and Pictures: Greek Vases and their Classification', in *Enlightenment. Discovering the World in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Kim Sloan, London and Washington: The British Museum Press and Smithsonian Books, 2003. As Burn also remarks, 'although the original focus of research was still interpretation and iconography, gradually, and perhaps as a response to the positivist philosophical theories sweeping through mid-nineteenth-century Europe, 'objective facts' such as measurements and precise descriptions of shapes and subjects (as in the case of Gerhard and the Meidias hydria) began to drive out interpretation; Burn, 'Words and Pictures: Greek Vases and their Classification', 149..

¹⁰⁶ Weissert, 'Kunsttheorie versus Wissenschaft. D'Hancarville's Kritik an den bemalten antiken Vasen', 18.

Emmanouil Kalkanis The 'Meidias' hydria: a visual and textual journey
of a Greek vase in the history of art of antiquity (c. 1770s–1840s)

Antiquités's colour images and Hamilton's ambitious plans¹⁰⁷ (though not without the certainty of providing a more authentic image of ancient vases than ever before),¹⁰⁸ may have made the published engravings less likely to realize their documentary value, and therefore less popular with various scholars such as Alexandre Laborde and Jean de Witte.¹⁰⁹

However widely practised, the copying of images from Hamilton's original catalogues or – in rare circumstances – the real object in several other antiquarian projects revealed substantial divisions within the world of antiquarianism and print culture around 1800. The distinct nature of such antiquarian practices (including the transformation of monuments into reading material) clearly demonstrates that the reasons for publishing ancient pots were accordingly wide-ranging and often incompatible.¹¹⁰ Where some authors, for instance, used Hamilton's hydria in order to focus on ancient mythology, ritual, religion and known literary narratives (e.g. the elusively immaterial engravings of Millin, Maissoneuve, Inghirami, and Guigniaut), others published this monument as part of a scheme designed to advertise well-known collections or boost the value of the originals (i.e. Kirk). Additionally, some tended to textualise it by transforming monuments from visual or tactile objects into reading material, as in the case of Gerhard's treatise, whose great fidelity was solely based on a more textual analysis of the Meidias hydria rather than on the author's sympathetically but insufficiently engraved plates). Meanwhile, the majority of publishers were more keen to reproduce the aesthetics of ancient imagery simply by copying the figured scenes, and offering a non-critical approach to its iconography. Gerhard's description of the painted scenes of the hydria is rather an exception and it should be seen as a decisive moment in the history of vase scholarship; a moment that saw a more critical insight into the extent to which ancient imagery was being interpreted and perceived, based not on a static interpretation of what the eye could see, but on a more conceptual approach to and analysis of the style, movement and expression of figures on the vase paintings.

¹⁰⁷ See also Weissert, 'Kunsttheorie versus Wissenschaft. D'Hancarville's Kritik an den bemalten antiken Vasen'; Caecilie Weissert, *Reproduktions-Stichwerke. Vermittlung alter und neuer Kunst im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Reimer, 1999), 99-111; on how d'Hancarville set about presenting a theory of the value of painted vases in the ancient world, which would fit in with his system of fine art, see Michael Vickers and David Gill, *Artful Crafts: Ancient Greek Silverware and Pottery*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994; repr., 1996, 6-14.

¹⁰⁸ D'Hancarville, *Antiquités Étrusques Grecques, et Romaines Tirées du Cabinet de M. Hamilton (Collection of Etruscan, Greek, and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of the Honble. Wm. Hamilton)*, viii., Vol. I.

¹⁰⁹ Jean de Witte, *Études sur les Vases Peints*, (Paris: Bureaux de la Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1865, 18; Alexandre de Laborde, Count, *Collection des Vases Grecs de Mr le comte de Lamberg*, 2 vols., Paris: Didot l'Ainé, 1813-1824, ix., Vol. I. However, in his pioneering work on vase-painters and potters known to him until 1848, de Witte regarded the Meidias hydria one of the most beautiful of all signed vases ... a masterpiece' [A la tête des plus beaux vases signés, il faut placer sans contredit l'hydrie de Midias au Musée Britannique, connue depuis environ un siècle par plusieurs publication ... ce chef-d'oeuvre de l'art céramographique]; Witte, *Noms des Fabricants et Dessinateurs de Vases Peints*, 7.

¹¹⁰ See Maria G. Lolla, 'Monuments and Texts: Antiquarianism and the Beauty of Antiquity', *Art History* 25, no. 4 (2002); Coltman, *Fabricating the Antique: Neoclassicism in Britain, 1760-1800*, 39-64; Coltman, 'Sir William Hamilton's Vase Publications: A Case study in the Reproduction and Dissemination of Antiquity.'

As the reception of Meidias hydria by print culture over a period of eighty years has shown, the dematerialization of ancient pots mirrors a distinct approach to antiquity. Neo-classicism was able to approach antique art only through the idealized view of published engravings or through authors' and collectors' desires to see antique art more as a source for (art-) historical narratives than archaeological knowledge. It is also worth trying to ascertain whether or not the metamorphosis of ancient objects into valuable artefacts was influenced by the cultural worthiness attached to them after they were featured in a number of publications. Through a multiple exchange of printed engravings, Hamilton's hydria became a work of art simply by virtue of being 'displayed' in engraved illustrations. This is evidenced by the way in which the potter Josiah Wedgwood looked at this object with such intense enthusiasm?¹¹¹ Arguably, in order to satisfy the emerging market for new styles entirely derived from classical art, the influence of Hamilton's most prized possessions could be seen in wall paintings and tapestry;¹¹² they even influenced Florentine interior decoration long after they appeared on the market.¹¹³ Notably, regarding the context of cultural and intellectual exchanges between Italy, France and England in particular, the reception of the Meidias hydria was not always driven simply by people's own purposes and desires. Rather, access to the source material was of premium importance. For instance, the majority of the individuals who became familiar with it, either as part of their antiquarian inquiry into ancient ceramics or as part of their search for antique prototypes of the Greco-Roman world, had never had the chance to examine carefully the original object. As soon as this had happened, Gerhard was able to identify the theme of the upper scene correctly.

In any case, the journey of the Meidias' most profound creation does not end here; scholars' interest in this painter, as Rouet remarks, 'continued long after the fad for neo-classicism was over'.¹¹⁴ A comparison of the corpus of its visual interpretation and reworking in various art media (e.g. paintings and drawings) of the decades before and after 1800 suggests that it is the aesthetic dimensions of objects that open the way to consideration of the visual role and cultural worthiness of ancient art in early modern Europe. This comparison can also determine whether the biographical possibilities inherent in this new status of ancient vases and their meanings were realized, expressed and received by artists themselves. Artists such as Antoine Gros, Joshua Reynolds, James Stephanoff, James Gillray, and Henry

¹¹¹ Wedgwood, for instance, who reaped enormous profits from his pottery reproduction of ancient vases, was pivotal in stimulating the public's interest in and excitement about the form and painted scenes of Hamilton's vases; see also Coltman, 'Sir William Hamilton's Vase Publications: A Case study in the Reproduction and Dissemination of Antiquity', 8-12; Coltman, *Fabricating the Antique: Neoclassicism in Britain, 1760-1800.*, especially chapter 3.

¹¹² For instance, the wall-paintings and tapestry furnishings on the outer hall of Newtimber Place in Sussex were not only inspired by the Meidias hydria but by other illustrations from the *Antiquités* too; see Jenkins, 'Contemporary Minds: Sir William Hamilton's Affair with Antiquity'.

¹¹³ Griener, *Le Antichità Etrusche, Greche e Romane 1766–1776 di Pierre Hugues d' Hancarville. La Pubblicazione delle Ceramiche Antiche della Prima Collezione Hamilton*, 106.

¹¹⁴ Rouet, *Approaches to the Study of Attic Vases: Beazley and Pottier*, 20.. The Meidias Painter continued to be held in high regard until the early years of the twentieth century. During this period there were sporadic publications of individual Meidian vases such as those by Adolf Furtwängler, Karl Reichhold, Georges Nicole, and Pericle Ducati; see Burn, *The Meidias Painter*, 2-3.

Fuseli have all been expressed a – direct or indirect – interest in the aesthetic and physical qualities of this particular object.¹¹⁵ Moreover, the majority of its visual appearances in art and literature of the decades before and after 1800 show that its aesthetic status is a combination of image and an idea located between a signal and symbol. Jacques Maquet's remark on this matter is quite characteristic of such a combination. 'Reading objects as instruments', Maquet remarks, 'and reading objects as signs require two different perspectives. In the former the observer considers the object and draws inferences from its design and its situation in the social and physical environment. In the latter the observer considers the meanings ascribed to the object'.¹¹⁶ Thus, considering the discussion made here about the figurative, representational, and symbolic values attached to the Meidias hydria, one further comment should also be made. The aesthetic appeal of certain objects to various personalities demonstrates that some objects were thought to be more beautiful than others, although this aesthetic value rarely exists outside the context of form, design and symbolic efficacy. Various publishers and scholars, for instance, chose the above hydria not as an individual item for its own sake. It was rather selected to act as symbol, and a figurative as well as contextual element, necessary to add visual documentation to a particular textual and intellectual context. Thus, the distinct character of such a practice serves here as a vehicle for understanding the role that this object played in a more systematic approach to classical antiquity. At the end of the day, it was through that approach that this period saw antiquity in its own image; editing, improving, appropriating and adapting it according to its own needs.

Emmanouil Kalkanis received his doctorate on late eighteenth-century visual culture and the cultural history of Greek vases from Durham University in 2012. His main research specialism is the reception of classical art in Western modernity from the mid-eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries. He is particularly interested in changes of the purposes and methods of art-historical writing and image interpretation, and the interaction of art-historical scholarship with antiquarianism, collecting and artistic practice. His current research is concerned with comparing late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century copies of Greek painted vases as presented, for instance, in the work of the French artists David, Gros, Gagneraux and Montagny. He is also preparing a book on the wider reception of the Meidias hydria by nineteenth-century art and art literature. He is currently working as a Senior Academic Consultant in art history and archaeology for Mouseion Professors Ltd.

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¹¹⁵ A related publication is prepared by the author (forthcoming, 2013).

¹¹⁶ Jacques Maquet, 'Objects as Instruments, Objects as Signs', in *History from Things: Essays on Material Culture*, ed. Steven D. Lubar and W. D. Kingery, Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993, 30.

THE MEIDIAS HYDRIA IN VASE SCHOLARSHIP		APPEARANCES IN PRINT MEDIA/ART BOOKS (c. 1770s–1840s)						
		D'Hancarville <i>Antiquités</i> (1766–1777) Vols. I & II [+French/Italian Eds]	Thomas Kirk <i>Outlines</i> (1804–reissued in 1814)	Dubois-Maisonneuve <i>Introduction l'Œuvre</i> (1817)	Rubin L. Millin <i>Galerie Mythologique</i> (1811) Vol. II	Francesco Incrignani <i>Vasi Etruschi</i> (1824) Vol. I	Erhard F. W. Gerhard <i>Über die Vase des Meidias</i> (1839)	Joseph-Daniel Guichard <i>Nouvelle Gal. Mythologique</i> (1850)
IMAGE, TEXT, & COVERAGE	IMAGE: <i>Aesthetics & Interpretation</i>	Reddish (ochre) colour over black background; richly decorated borders – faithful to the original (pls. 127–130); white gouache showing the figures standing in a landscape with shadows on the ground (pl. 22)	Chaste outline; re-imagination of d'Hancarville's classical motifs; smaller formatted outline-style engravings (in pl. 27 the laurel bush between Lipara & Heracles and next to Clytios)	Light reddish (ochre) colour on black background; white colour on the statue's face, hands & feet; less detailed drawing in horses & figures; slight difference in the decorated border patters	White but rather harsh outline (general of good quality); minor stylistic differences	Outline style on white background; a few differences in the ordering of the figures in the vertical representation of plate 12; no borders; good quality engraved illustrations	Low quality engraved plates with no particular details; disproportionate ordering of the figures in the foreground of plate I; three-dimensional image of the hydria	Identical copy of Millin's plate though with inscriptions above the figures (737a); he follows d'Hancarville's interpretation (665a, 646a/aa)
	TEXT: <i>Textual exegesis & description of the painted scene</i>	Frieze around the belly: Heracles in the Garden of the Hesperides; shoulder of the vase: the race of Atalanta and Hippomenes [pl. 22 was drawn more correctly according to d'Hancarville]	Frieze around the belly: Heracles in the Garden of the Hesperides (he also refers to Heracles – who saved Hesperides from the pirates – Jason, Atlas, Orpheus and Electra)	Frieze around the belly: reference to d'Hancarville's exegesis (only); shoulder of the vase: (possibly) Danaus celebrates the marriage of his daughters Danaides (based on Winckelmann's identification)	Frieze around the belly: no description; shoulder of the vase: Games introduced by Danaus for the marriage of his daughters; short explanation for the laurel branches on the very edges	Frieze around the belly: seven Pleiades, Atlas & Argonauts; he identifies Medea (more critical comments); shoulder of the vase: brief remarks on previous explanations; disagrees with d'Hancarville; kidnapping of the daughters of Leucippus	Frieze around the belly: no description; shoulder of the vase: identified inscriptions; kidnapping of the daughters of Leucippus; more critical comments; short index of the inscribed names	(Revised text based on Creuzer's work on mythology; no critical comments) Frieze around the belly: Attic wedding (he refers to Gerhard); shoulder of the vase: kidnapping of the daughters of Leucippus
	SPECIFICS	ILLUSTRATED in vol. I, pls. 127–30 & in vol. II, pl. 22 (for Laurent Pécheux's <i>trompe l'oeil</i>); DESCRIBED & DISCUSSED in vol. II, pp. 166–8	ILLUSTRATED in pls. 27–29; DESCRIBED & DISCUSSED in pp. 18–23	ILLUSTRATED in pl. III; DESCRIBED & DISCUSSED in pp. 3–4	ILLUSTRATED in vol. II, pl. 94; DESCRIBED & DISCUSSED in vol. II, p. 5, no. 385 (XCIV)	ILLUSTRATED in vol. I, pls. 11–12; DESCRIBED & DISCUSSED in vol. I, pp. 72–105 [Vol. I is Band 5,1 of <i>Monumenti Etruschi</i>]	ILLUSTRATED in pls. I–II; DESCRIBED & DISCUSSED in pp. 295–303 [as part of the <i>Philogische und Historische Abhandlungen</i>]	ILLUSTRATED in pl. CVXXXVII (665a, 646a/aa, 737a); DESCRIBED & DISCUSSED in pp. 337–338, 277, 292–293