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VICTORIA SABETAI, WITH THE CONTRIBUTION  
OF EFTHYMIA NIKITA

›Ptoiketas kalos‹. A view from the Boeotian grave

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# ›Ptoiketas kalos‹

## A view from the Boeotian grave

VICTORIA SABETAI, WITH THE CONTRIBUTION OF EFTHYMIA NIKITA

À la mémoire de François Lissarrague

›Ptoiketas kalos‹. Der Blick aus einem böotischen Grab

**ZUSAMMENFASSUNG** Dieser Beitrag präsentiert die verzierte und mit Inschriften versehene Keramik eines böotischen Grabes des ersten Jahrzehnts des 5. Jahrhunderts v. Chr., welches zumeist schwarzgefirnisste Kantharoi sowie ein Messer enthielt und bespricht es im Zusammenhang seiner Grabgruppe. Der Textteil wird von einer osteologischen Analyse sowie einer Fundliste ergänzt. Die einzigen mit Bildern verzierten Gefäße sind zwei schwarzfigurige Skyphoi, während ein Kantharos mit dem Graffito ›Ptoiketas kalos‹ beschriftet ist. Der Zeichenstil ist mittelmäßig und dargestellt sind generische Szenen aus dem Wettkampf (Faustkampf und Ringen) sowie eine sitzende Frau. Folgende Themen werden erörtert: 1. Die bestattete Person in Verbindung mit den Grabbeigaben. 2. Verzierte Gefäße und solche mit Inschriften als Teil einer Inszenierung, die geschlechtsspezifische und soziale Identitäten hervorhebt. 3. Die wechselseitige Ergänzung der gemalten Szenen und der Inschrift im Gedenken an den männlichen Verstorbenen. 4. Konsum- und Niederlegungsmuster von Grabbeigaben im frühen 5. Jh. v. Chr. in Böotien.

**Schlagwörter** Akraiphia; 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr.; (geschlechtsbestimmte) Bestattung; verzierte und mit Inschriften versehene Keramik; *agon* um die Braut.

**ABSTRACT** This paper presents the figured and inscribed pottery from a Boeotian tomb of the first decade of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C., which contained mostly black-glazed kantharoi as well as a knife, and discusses it in the context of its grave group. The text is supplemented with an osteological analysis and a find list. The only vessels decorated with images are two black-figure skyphoi, while there is one inscribed kantharos bearing the graffito ›Ptoiketas kalos‹. The style of drawing is mediocre and the depicted scenes are generic ones of athletics (boxing and wrestling) as well as the one of a seated woman. The paper discusses the following topics: 1. The tomb's occupant in association with his grave offerings. 2. Figured and inscribed vessels as part of a *mise en scène* exalting gender values and social identities. 3. Complementarity between painted scenes and inscription in commemoration of the male deceased. 4. Patterns of consumption and deposition of grave furnishings in early 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Boeotia.

**Keywords** Akraiphia; 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.; burial (sexed); figured and inscribed pottery; *agon* for the bride.

«Πτωικέτας καλός». Άποψη από τον Βοιωτικό τάφο

**ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ** Στο άρθρο παρουσιάζεται η εικονιστική και ενεπίγραφή κεραμική ενός Βοιωτικού τάφου της πρώτης δεκαετίας του 5ου αιώνα π. Χ. ο οποίος είχε κτεριστεί κυρίως με μελαμβαφείς κανθάρους καθώς κι ένα εγχειρίδιο. Τα ευρήματα συζητώνται στο ταφικό τους πλαίσιο και, κυρίως, ως συναπαρτιζόντα ενιαίο σύνολο. Η μελέτη πλαισιώνεται με οστεολογική ανάλυση και κατάλογο ευρημάτων. Τα μοναδικά εικονιστικά αγγεία είναι δύο μελανόμορφοι σκύφοι, ενώ υπάρχει κι ένας μελαμβαφής κάνθαρος που φέρει την χαρακτηριστική επιγραφή «Πτωικέτας καλός». Οι απεικονιζόμενες αθλητικές σκηνές (πάλη και πυγμαχία) καθώς και μια καθιστή γυναικεία μορφή λειτουργούν συμπληρωματικά εικονοποιώντας την έννοια του νυμφικού αγώνος. Στο άρθρο θίγονται τα εξής: 1. Τα κτερίσματα του τάφου σε σχέση με τον κάτοχό του. 2. Εικονιστικά και ενεπίγραφα αγγεία ως μέρος ενός ταφικού «σκηνικού» που εξαίρει την κοινωνική θέση του νεκρού ανακαλώντας συνδηλώσεις που σχετίζονται με το κοινωνικό φύλο. 3. Διαλεκτική σχέση μεταξύ εικόνων και επιγραφής στην κατασκευή ενός μνημονικού τόπου. 4. Μοτίβα στη διευθέτηση ταφικών συνόλων στη Βοιωτία του πρώιμου 5ου αιώνα π. Χ.

**Λέξεις-κλειδιά** Ακραίφια. 5ος αιώνας προ Χριστού. Ανδρική ταφή. Εικονιστική και ενεπίγραφή κεραμική. Νυμφικός αγών.

## INTRODUCTION: THE GRAVE T. 166

In the pit grave T. 166 at the necropolis of Akraiphia an adult male was buried with an iron knife and 17 vases laid on and around his body (*fig. 1 a. b; 2*)<sup>1</sup>. Only two skyphoi in the pottery group bear figured decoration: one depicts combat sports, the other a woman and they date to ca. 500–490/480 B.C. The rest of the ceramic assemblage is comprised of five Corinthian vases (three exaleiptra and two skyphoi), a Droop cup of local make and nine black-glazed pots (seven kantharoi, one mug and one skyphos) of which one kantharos bears the graffito ›Ptoiketas kalos‹ (*fig. 3*)<sup>2</sup>. In what follows I focus on this specific grave as a case-study to argue that vase-imagery plays an important role in the funerary context, and plead for a holistic approach in the treatment of each burial as a totality. The discussion revolves around the following points, all reflecting the cultural performance of death in early 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Boeotia: 1. The tomb's owner in the mirror of his grave offerings. 2. Figured and inscribed vases as part of a *mise en scène* exalting gender values and social identities. 3. Complementarity between painted scenes and inscription in the commemoration of the male dead. 4. Patterns of consumption and deposition of grave furnishings in early 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Boeotia.

## ›PTOIKETAS KALOS‹: A GRAFFITO FOR THE PRAISE

Before examining the tomb's figured pottery, we may inquire about the dead man's identity and the interaction between text and image on the basis of the glazed kantharos 10 which bears the graffito ›ΠΤΟΙΚΕΤΑΣ ΚΑΛΟΣ‹ in the Boeotian alphabet (*fig. 4 a. b*). Its two words were incised in small and regularly spaced letters in a slanting line. Although apparently not engraved by a professional, it is legible and visible, unfolding across the conspicuous place below the vessel's lip<sup>3</sup>. The graffito constituted a sort of decoration meant to be seen and read. In addition, a single crossed theta which was scratched on its resting surface was visible only when the vase was held horizontally for drinking (*fig. 4 c*)<sup>4</sup>. Since this was the only inscribed vase in its pottery group, we may assume that it was the dead man's own kantharos, which es-

I thank the staff of the Ephorate of Boeotia for study amenities. An earlier version of this article was presented at the conference ›Oikos – Taphos – Temenos, Iconography in Greek context‹ which was organized by the Dutch School at Athens and the University of Thessaly (W. van de Put and D. Paleothodoros) on 26.–27.02.2016. A related version was presented in a conference organized by F. Villard in Paris, EHES, on 27.11.2021. Sadly, this occasion proved to be my last encounter with François Lissarrague, influential scholar and cherished colleague before he left us all too soon. This paper is a small tribute to his memory.

The following abbreviations are used throughout the paper, in addition to those commonly employed under DAI guidelines:

BAPD Beazley Archive Pottery Database. <http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk> (12.07.2019)

Dm<sub>Rim</sub> Rim diameter

Dm<sub>Base</sub> Base diameter

<sup>1</sup> Fieldwork and drawings: Dr. Olia Peperaki. For this excavation (Highway Athens – Thessaloniki; kilometric point 102.350) see Sabetai 1995, 301 f. The

pit was covered with irregular limestones. Dimensions: 1.87 × 1.10 m (exterior); 1.70 × 0.60 m (interior). Height of pit: 0.33 m. Depth from ground surface: -2.04 / -2.29 m (slabs); -2.35 / -2.41 m (pit's rim); -2.55 / -2.65 m (skeleton); -2.68 m (floor). Orientation: North-South, head at North. Finds: Appendix, 1.; osteological data: Appendix, 2. The depth of the pit and the weight of the earth above it, the hard soil and the inundation of the cemetery by lake water over the centuries resulted in a taphonomic environment that caused damage on the surface of the vases, most of which were found cracked or broken, with some of the sherds smashed into tiny fragments or pulverized.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the non-figured vases may date after 490 B.C., to ca. 480 B.C. All finds were retrieved from the tomb's interior; nothing was found at its exterior.

<sup>3</sup> For a professional potter's graffito see, e.g., the kantharoi by Teisias: V. Sabetai, CVA Thebes (1) pl. 6. »His incised signature as artist was an additional beauty to his black glaze vases«: Burrows – Ure 1909, 340.

<sup>4</sup> For the aesthetics of words on vases see Lissarrague 1999; for their viewership including the space of the grave see Pappas 2012.



Fig. 1 a. b Akraiphia, grave T. 166

Fig. 2 Akraiphia, grave T. 166 with grave-goods in situ

corted him to his grave in order to praise him by name as ›kalos‹, handsome. *Kalos* inscriptions praise the beauty of boys in a homoerotic context usually related to the realm of athletic education and pederasty and thus in the sphere of socialization of youths in the polis system<sup>5</sup>. However, since the man was middle-aged at the time of his death, the inscribed kantharos may have had a more complex ›biography‹. It may have been a love-gift at adolescence or at his funeral in order to commemorate a fulfilled stage in his life or praise his beauty in general<sup>6</sup>. The exact date

<sup>5</sup> Scanlon 2002, 64–97. 199–273.

<sup>6</sup> For a kantharos with the graffito ›ANTIXΑΡΟΣ ΚΑΛΟΣ‹ from the grave of an adult male (30–40 years old) in Rhitsona and for questions regarding its owner see Burrows – Ure 1909, 308. 315 f. 343 (grave 40, ca. 550 B.C.). Other hypotheses regarding our kantharos' owner could comprise the *eromenos* of the deceased who may have brought it to the grave as a memento of their former relationship or even a woman, as suggested by Attic examples: Lang 1976, 11.

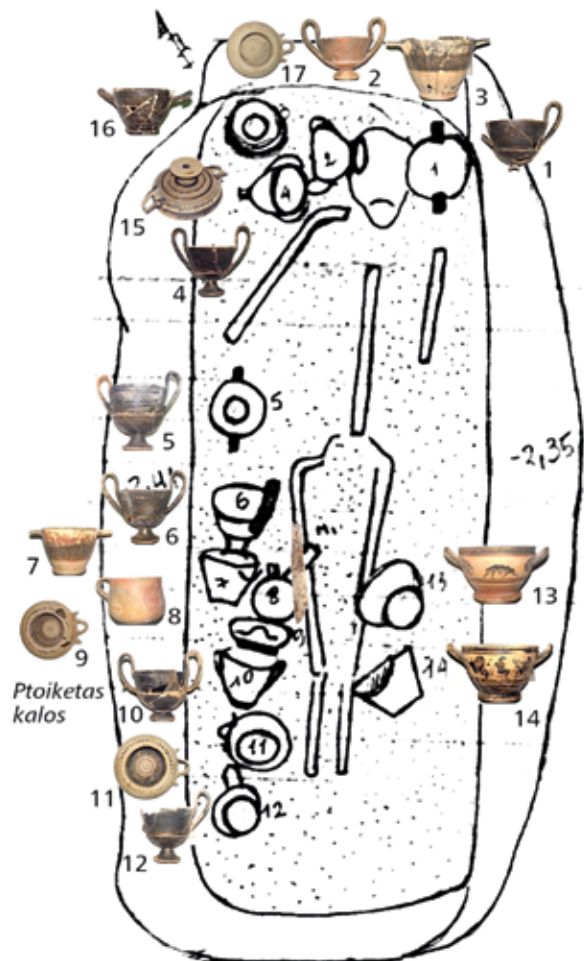




Fig. 3 Akraiphia, grave T. 166, vase-group

of the vessel is difficult to ascertain on the basis of shape morphology. Its form with conical foot and spurred handles, unique in its group of kantharoi, occurs usually in the last quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C., but may cross this border. If the kantharos is dated earlier than the rest of its counterparts, a use-life prior to its deposition in the grave could be hypothesized. However, shape morphology is not always a sound criterion for too close a dating as kantharoi of the late 6<sup>th</sup>–early 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. present variation, may continue earlier forms and differ from one another even when they are part of the same grave group<sup>7</sup>. As to the inscription, although dating graffiti is notoriously difficult, the letter forms here seem of the first decades of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.<sup>8</sup>, so perhaps contemporary to the man's funeral and written for the event. A complexity for the scholar is the aforementioned crossed theta on its underside, perhaps the potter's, the merchant's or somebody else's initial<sup>9</sup>. It is notable that the Ptoiketas kantharos accompanied the deceased together with items such as a cup and a knife, objects associating him with the symposium and war. Regardless of its exact date, antedating its assemblage or contemporaneous with it but fashioned in an archaizing form, the inscribed kantharos is here regarded as the deceased's own and is interpreted as an index which evaluates him as a person of status.

<sup>7</sup> Typology of glazed kantharoi: Ure 1913, 4–19 pls. 1–8; Ure 1927, pls. 10–11. For parallels to ours see Rhitsona graves 12, 26, 31 and 80 dated from 515 to 480 B.C.: V. Sabetai, CVA Thebes (1) 99. The simultaneous presence of several kantharoi with different formal features (as seen in their feet and bowls) in the same late Archaic assemblages may be variously explained. One possibility is that different people purchased them from various potteries, each mourner bringing his own kantharos as a grave offering. For a funerary assemblage of kantharoi with engraved initials of various individuals, possibly their owners, see Andreiomenou 2019, 15–17, nos. 21–26 (ca. 520 B.C.). Men bearing vases in a (non-funerary) procession: cf.

M. Pipili, CVA Athens (4) pl. 3. In the Classical period kantharoi from graves present greater uniformity.

<sup>8</sup> The E is not tailed, perhaps suggesting a date at the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> cent. B.C.: Jeffery 1990, 89 (E4). For the A and the Π see ibidem (A4, Π3).

<sup>9</sup> The crossed theta occurs as late as ca. 470 B.C.: Jeffery 1990, 89. Single engraved letters presumably referring to initials are common on Boeotian ceramics: Burrows – Ure 1909, 338–344; Andreiomenou 2019, 5. Inscriptions by different hands and at subsequent moments occur in Boeotia from the 7<sup>th</sup> cent. B.C. on. Polignac 2005, 20 f. thinks that the most important aspect of graffiti is the »performance« of writing in a ritual context.



Fig. 4 a. b. c Akraiphia, grave T. 166, inscribed kantharos

Having discussed the date and function of the inscribed vessel in its grave group, we may now examine the role of such objects in the Boeotian cultural milieu. The kantharos as carrier of the *kalos* inscription enhances the dead man's elevated status, for it was the Boeotian ritual vessel par excellence and was charged with religious, heroic and ethnic symbolism. It has a copious and diachronic presence in Boeotian public space and is associated with gods and heroes of local origin such as Dionysos, Herakles, the Kabiros and Ptoos<sup>10</sup>. In this grave two kantharoi flanked the head of the deceased. A further two were found in the area of his right hand, while the inscribed kantharos lay by his right knee, set between two exaleiptra and slightly below his knife and mug.

Glazed vases bearing graffiti with *kalos* names are known in the Boeotian funerary record from around the (late?) second quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. They occur usually

<sup>10</sup> Kantharoi in sanctuaries and tombs: Kilinski 2005; Tomei 2008; Sabetai 2012a, 129; Segal 2014.

on drinking pots, i.e. kantharoi, skyphoi, a mug and a cup and are mostly in Boeotian lettering. About a dozen are known, almost all from graves except for one from the Kabirion, but unpublished examples may also exist<sup>11</sup>. *Kalos* names appear also as dipinti on Boeotian black-figure vases, but rarely, the earliest being an exaleiptron inscribed with ›Polytimidas kalos‹ and dating to the second or early third quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C., thus a little earlier or contemporary with its first Attic counterparts<sup>12</sup>. They are further attested among Attic imports, as, e.g., three lekythoi by the Providence Painter from Thebes naming ›Hippon kalos‹<sup>13</sup>. ›Ptoiketas‹ is a compound name formed with Πτωι- and ἰκέτας, meaning suppliant or pilgrim. The adjective Ptoios is cult epithet of Apollo, as well as the name of a local Akraiphian hero and can be traced back to prehistory<sup>14</sup>. The cult gave rise to numerous personal names in Πτωι- all over Boeotia from the second quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. onwards with a concentration in its Northern part including Akraiphia<sup>15</sup>. Yet, Ptoiketas is not otherwise attested in the epigraphical record, which makes it a welcome addition in the field of onomastics. The inscribed name implies further the self-confidence of the individual in this time-period and should be studied in the context of a general boom in engraved objects reaching the Boeotian sanctuary and grave from the early Archaic period on<sup>16</sup>.

*Kalos* inscriptions, usually seen as homoerotic praise of elite youths, have been debated mainly on the basis of the Attic record of dipinti which repeat a few select names of boys<sup>17</sup>. Outside Attica they usually occur as graffiti which state various names. Their acclamatory function must have been similar to the Attic one while the pots on which they appear may have been love-gifts, as already assumed for the Ptoiketas kantharos. A cup by the Pithos Painter from nearby Phokian Elateia depicting a symposiast and mentioning a *kalos*-boy in a humoristic pederastic acclamation composed in a pentameter and engraved on its underside highlights the homoerotic hue of *kalos* vases<sup>18</sup>. The cup dates to 510–500 B.C., but the graffito falls in the first quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. on the basis of its letter forms, which recalls the discrepancy attested also on our kantharos. In publishing it Rousset noted that, although its literary and visual imagery is consonant with the Archaic aristocratic ethos, namely banquet, pederasty and poetry, one should not conclude further that on a pragmatic level literacy was widespread at the time in the area, nor that feasts in which such vessels figured were exclusively aristocratic<sup>19</sup>. The case may rather be of ideals communicated visually to the mourning community on the occasion of the funeral, an interpretation that could be argued also for our deceased. In the *mise en scène* of the grave T. 166 the dead man's knife (no. 18) in his right hand (*figs.* 2. 5) casts him as a man able to bear arms, perhaps specifically as a cavalryman, or as a sacrificer<sup>20</sup>,

<sup>11</sup> Kilinski 1990, 52 f., esp. 52 n. 82 (bibliography); Wachter 2001, 7 f. 18. 23. 279–281; Andreiomenou 2015, pl. 231, 1; Andreiomenou 2019, 5 no. 1 fig. 1 and 7 f. no. 6 fig. 6. In Attica *kalos* graffiti date from ca. 550–400 B.C.: Lang 1976, 11.

<sup>12</sup> In Attica *kalos* dipinti appear ca. 550 B.C. (Group E). For the Polytimidas exaleiptron see Schöne-Denkinger 2012, 146 f.

<sup>13</sup> BAPD 207426. 207427. 207428. Regarding Hippon see Mannack 2014, 117. 122 who argues that the person thus praised would have been alien in a Boeotian's grave, thus the dipinto merely enhanced the vessel's cultural status. Yet, the name's associations with horsemanship would be much at home in the region and may have somehow reflected on the Boeotian dead too.

<sup>14</sup> It appears as ›Ptoia‹ (po-to-a2-de) in a Linear B tablet, suggesting a Mycenaean (Theban) cult place in the area of the later Ptoion sanctuary: Ganter 2013, 91.

<sup>15</sup> Jeffery 1990, 85; Kilinski – Maffre 1999, 35–37 (name as dipinto on a black-figure kantharos depicting a monoposias); Fraser – Matthews 2000, 365 f. s. v. Πτωι...

<sup>16</sup> Wachter 2001, 9–25; Polignac 2005, *passim*. For other inscribed names on Akraiphian pots see Andreiomenou 2019, 63 table 1.A. For other kinds of inscriptions on Boeotian black-figure see Kilinski 1990, 52 f. Cf. further Vassilopoulou – Matthaïou 2013.

<sup>17</sup> They date ca. 550 to 450 B.C. and rarely later. In the Classical era they occur also in the feminine, praising female beauty. See recently Mannack 2014; Mannack 2016; Hedreen 2016; Müller 2016, 111–127.

<sup>18</sup> Rousset 2012, from a grave. For another Boeotian *kalos* metrical graffito on a kantharos see Gaunt 2014, 105 f.

<sup>19</sup> Rousset 2012, 34 f.

<sup>20</sup> The knife was a weapon and utensil in daily life and cult. Its continuous use in the course of the centu-



Fig. 5 Knife (scale: 1 : 2)

while his kantharoi as a symposiast of elevated status as well as a partaker of Boeotian ethnic identity<sup>21</sup>. The man's inscribed kantharos celebrated him as *kalos*, handsome, once partaker of an education that comprised initiatory pederasty and athletics as characteristic aspects among others<sup>22</sup>. The heroized colouring of the man's qualities via the kantharos and weapon surrounding his corpse functioned as his praise at death and was complemented by the tomb's figured vessels as we shall see next.

## WHAT IMAGERY FOR A DECEASED BOEOTIAN MALE?

The figured pottery of grave T. 166 comprises the two modest black-figure skyphoi 13 and 14 which depict athletes and a woman. Although scholars usually look down on hackworks of this kind, their stylized scenes functioned as pictograms<sup>23</sup> that were able to render well-known artistic motifs succinctly. Furthermore, these conventional depictions were not meaningless but iconic, as they visualized aspects of citizen identity and facets of the value system of early 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Boeotia. Crystallized into emblems, cursory scenes with token rather than narrative character reveal the depth of their meaning when analyzed in their iconographic, archaeological and cultural context. Below I argue that the grave's figured vases were thematically associated with one another and reflected aspects of the dead man's social persona.

ries makes it iconic and symbolic, i.e. a prop of male identity. According to van Wees 1998 bearing iron (*siderophorein*) was part of the hero's apparel; the funerary display of weapons highlights manly prowess and family strength while picturing the dead as capable of using force in general. Daggers and knives may feature as attributes of the deceased and as iconic shorthands of the whole armour, which is not placed in the tomb but may have been displayed at the funeral before being handed over to the relatives. Yet, given the importance of horsemanship in Boeotia, one should further consider Xenophon's view of the knife as the most suitable offensive weapon for cavalymen (X. Eq. 12, 11) which may also explain

why not all male burials are equipped with it. Knives in Akraiphian tombs: Andreiomenou 2001, 486 n. 44 figs. 13, 14; Andreiomenou 2019, 5 n. 6; in the Kalapodi sanctuary: Schmitt 2007, 509–517, esp. pl. 106 no. 491. For the characterization of reclining heroes as *thysia* slaughterers (*mageiroi*) rather than feasters see Giuliani 2013, 150.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. St. Petersburg 4305 (BAPD) 207605 depicting a kantharos superseded by the dipinto BOIOTIOS as shield-device.

<sup>22</sup> For an inscribed kantharos that may have served as a prize at an athletic contest see Andreiomenou 2019, 42 f. no. 118 fig. 98.

<sup>23</sup> Lissarrague 1997.

## A. Athletics: βαρέα ἄθλα

The skyphos 13 depicting in silhouette a wrestling and a boxing match on either side associates Ptoiketias *kalos* with athletics (*fig. 6 a. b. c. d*)<sup>24</sup>. Its sturdy shape, brownish fabric, thin, misfired and irregularly applied glaze, the thick, uneven dotted circle at the underside, and the glaze stains on its resting surface, all suggest that it was locally made<sup>25</sup>. The shape and the system of glaze bands framing the figure zone vaguely recalls the CHC Group<sup>26</sup>, while the rendering in silhouette has parallels in skyphoi by the Haimon Group and other painters of the early 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.<sup>27</sup> However, the source of inspiration of Boeotian silhouette should not be sought solely in contemporary Attic vase-painting, for it has a diachronic presence in Boeotia starting in the mid 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C., with the so-called Geometricizing vases<sup>28</sup>. Further, this vessel's horizontal handle palmettes are unusual and point to a link with Ure's Class of skyphoi A1, which date to the latter part of the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. and are known in Boeotia through imports and copies<sup>29</sup>. The eclectic combination of earlier and contemporary elements is typical in regional fabrics and may suggest traditional tastes. The adherence to customary aesthetics may also lie behind the choice of subject-matter, as combat sports appear among a few other select themes already in the Boeotian vase-repertoire of the Geometric period, where they are often featured with a prize-tripod<sup>30</sup>. Their thematization in early art is reflective of the fact that wrestling and boxing were old athletic events, celebrated in the epics and charged with heroic connotations. Despite their brutal character, they were highly esteemed for the skill and lengthy training required<sup>31</sup>. Winners were praised in epinician odes by Pindar, who exalted their manly excellence and fame in the frame of one's family and polis<sup>32</sup>. Herodotos (5, 60) described a tripod with an epigram naming the victorious boxer Skaïos, who offered his award to the Theban sanctuary of Apollo Ismenios. Such a costly dedication and revered symbol of wealth, political power and heroic status<sup>33</sup> commemorated publicly the athletic victory as well as the prestige ensuing from it. The testimonia mention also Boeotian Olympic victors (boys and men) in combat sports throughout antiquity<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> The boxers' thong is clearly seen only on one's fist; yet, the thickness of their raised palms, especially when compared with the wrestlers' on the reverse, implies that these were also gloved. A thong only on one hand occurs on a Boeotian krater of ca. 690 B.C. (Ruckert 1976, pl. 17 no. Kr2) and earlier, in the famous Thera fresco with boy boxers. The theme was long-lived, the latest being on a Hadra hydria (ca. 240 B.C.), see Wünsche 2004, 161 fig. 18.4.

<sup>25</sup> For a silhouette skyphos with wrestlers between on-lookers see Andreiomenou 2015, 320 pl. 217 no. 15, from an Akraiphian grave (see also n. 70 below).

<sup>26</sup> ABV 617–626; Beazley, Para., 306–308. See also n. 48 below. Other ›narrow band‹ silhouette skyphoi, derivatives from or imitative of the CHC Group, also exist: Moore – Pease-Philippides 1986, 293 no. 1610 pl. 106.

<sup>27</sup> Cf., e.g., M. Pipili, CVA Athens (4) pl. 63; CVA Louvre (27) pl. 23 (Athena Painter).

<sup>28</sup> Kilinski 1990, 60 n. 58 (bibliography). This archaizing fabric is influenced by earlier Geometric and contemporary Corinthian vase-painting.

<sup>29</sup> For another hybrid with horizontal palmettes see Andreiomenou 2015, 239 no. 13 pl. 134 no. 26.13; cf.

also Ure 1927, pl. 17, 102.86 A–B. For A1 skyphoi in Boeotia see Kilinski 1990, 59; V. Sabetai, CVA Thebes (1) pls. 40–42. For boxers and wrestlers see M. Pipili, CVA Athens (4) pl. 22, 3–4; CVA Laon (1) pl. 24, 3–4 (BAPD 350850, late, with minimal incision).

<sup>30</sup> CVA Louvre (17) pl. 2; Ruckert 1976, pl. 2, 2–4 no. Oi8; pl. 17, no. Kr 2. For the theme in other fabrics (8<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> cent. B.C.) see Sakowski 1997, 243–249.

<sup>31</sup> Wrestling and boxing are mentioned in Hom. Il. 23, 681–739, who refers to tripods and women as prizes (702–704). Boxing appears also in 16<sup>th</sup> cent. B.C. Aegean art. For wrestling and pugilism see Poliakov 1987, 23–53, 68–88; Wünsche 2004, 148–157, 158–171; Kyle 2007, 124–126. For the semantics of boxing in Etruria cf. Steiner – Neils 2018, 25–44.

<sup>32</sup> Scanlon 2002, 17. Pindar praised the boxer Diagoras in O. 7 and the young Hagesidamos in O. 10 and 11. For the sociology of pugilism and the sport's aristocratic underpinnings in the Pindaric odes see Nicholson 2014. For the victor's status in Pindar see Kurke 2010.

<sup>33</sup> See Papalexandrou 2008, esp. 259.

<sup>34</sup> Moretti 1957, 102 no. 302; 122 no. 427; 124 no. 444; 132 no. 504; 141 no. 584.





Fig. 6 a–d Akraiphia, grave T. 166, Skyphos 42228

Combat sports, especially boxing, are documented in the record of Attic imports<sup>35</sup> and of Archaic Boeotian vase-painting<sup>36</sup>. Characteristic is their depiction in vignettes on the legs of an exaleiptron by the Boeotian Dancers Group with multi-figured scenes of celebratory character<sup>37</sup>. An important mid 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Boeotian example adhering to Geometric models and thus attesting to continuation in theme and style is a kantharos depicting the boxers with one leg on a tripod. This piece, in silhouette like our skyphos from half a century later, belongs to the aforementioned archaizing Boeotian Group of miniatures called »Geometricizing«<sup>38</sup>. The popularity of combat sports scenes continues in the late Archaic period in the oeuvre of the Camel Painter, a craftsman influenced by Lydos and probably immigrant in Boeotia, who favoured particularly boxers on skyphoi<sup>39</sup>. In short, this iconography is tenacious and has already had a long life in the Boeotian fabric at the time of its appearance on our skyphos ca. 500–490/480 B.C.<sup>40</sup> The preferred moment is the initial phase of the athletes' engagement, a common type in late black-figure which pictures it as the contest of equals. The athletes are beardless, and thus young, which may inscribe their match in the context of education, *paideia*, where athletics, competition and pederasty contributed to socializing the youth, as is documented also in the case of Archaic Boeotia<sup>41</sup>. The literary sources mention the story of the ideal athlete-ephebe Iolaos, companion and lover of Heracles, whose cult comprised a festival and athletic contests and who was venerated near the stadium in Thebes. In the same vein is also the legend of Diocles and Philolaos, whereby the homosexual couple comprises a lawgiver and his eromenos who is cast as an athlete-ephebe<sup>42</sup>. Homoerotic relationships continued to foster male bonds in the Boeotian military as late as the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C., as in the Sacred Battalion, the Theban elite corps which was formed of homosexual couples<sup>43</sup>.

Understanding combat sports in the context of initiatory education comprising athletics and pederasty may be further highlighted by a cup by Douris contemporary to our scenes and bearing *kalos* dipinti above a boxing scene on the exterior and around a youthful boxer at the intaglio<sup>44</sup>. The dead man's skyphos was not complemented by any such – enlightening – dipinti integrated in its images. Yet, a combined look at the skyphos's athletic scenes and the kantharos with the graffito Ptoiketas *kalos* may have produced similar meanings and may have contributed in exalting aspects of the deceased's qualities and social identity against the backdrop of the grave. This complementarity is further enriched when the grave's second figured skyphos is adduced in the discussion.

## B. The female as prize in an *agon*

The skyphos 14 features a seated woman framed by sphinxes at either side (*fig. 7 a. b. c*). It may be connected to the CHC Group and to the Group of Thebes R.102, the latter thought Attic by Beazley but Boeotian by Kilinski and originally comprising 10 skyphoi<sup>45</sup>. Nine have

<sup>35</sup> See, e.g., BAPD 31340 (amphora); 300633 (cup); 14365 (CHC skyphos); 330272 (cup); 332236 (miniature Panathenaic amphora).

<sup>36</sup> Kilinski 1990, 15, 1; 17, 1; 18, 1; 19, 4.

<sup>37</sup> BAPD 300333; Kilinski 1990, 15, no. 1 pl. 7, 1–2; Sabetai 2014, 24 f. Second quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> cent. B.C.

<sup>38</sup> Ure 1929, pl. 13 no. 18; cf. further pl. 11, no. 8 (top).

<sup>39</sup> BAPD 300863. 300864; cf. BAPD 300866; Kilinski 1990, 22–24.

<sup>40</sup> Micrographic scenes like ours, but with onlookers and prize-vases, occur also in the work of Attic late Archaic band-cup painters, which may have been another source of inspiration. For a silhouette Kassel cup of the 530s B.C. cf. CVA Kassel (1) pl. 29, 4; 30, 4 (BAPD 1206).

<sup>41</sup> Scanlon 2002, 93–95.

<sup>42</sup> They were Corinthians who lived and died in Thebes: Scanlon 2002, 93–95. 328.

<sup>43</sup> Ma 2008, 83; Schachter 2007, 125 f. In Athens homoerotic ideals fade after the fall of the tyrants, but such bonds continue to be seen as pivotal in the defence of the homeland: Zografou 2010, 333.

<sup>44</sup> CVA London (9) pls. 24. 25 (BAPD 205073).

<sup>45</sup> ABV 623–626, esp. 624 f.; Ure 1927, 63–66 (Type E); Kilinski 1990, 30 f. Distinct features: poor glaze and draughtsmanship; direct application of white on the clay surface (as here for female's arms).



Fig. 7 a–c Akraiphia,  
grave T. 166, Skyphos  
42230

a Boeotian provenance, Rhitsona, but more examples have appeared since then, some from Akraiphia<sup>46</sup>. The Group's skyphoi are connected with Ure's Class of Skyphoi C<sup>47</sup> regarding shape, and with the CHC Group in style of drawing. CHC skyphoi were especially popular in late Archaic Boeotia, where they were imported and copied<sup>48</sup>. Some sloppy Boeotian variants may fall late in the series reaching down to the first decade of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. and were consumed locally, notably at a time when Attic red-figure masterpieces invade the Etruscan graves as well as some major Greek sanctuaries. The repertory of the Group of Thebes R.102 is comprised of a single or a few generic figures, mostly youths and sphinxes, and occasionally women<sup>49</sup>. In some instances, only the lateral sphinxes appear as sole decoration and a kind of workshop trademark<sup>50</sup>. This kind of frugal decoration is executed sloppily, yet it does not fail to focus the viewer on the essential, which, in our case, is the iconic image of the seated female. Its occurrence in the man's grave may have functioned as a visual reference to the womenfolk of his household and particularly as a token image of his bride or wife and a memorialization of their marital relationship against the backdrop of the cemetery<sup>51</sup>. The interpretation of the generic female figure as signifying womenfolk gains depth when the skyphos bearing it is seen in tandem with its pair in the tomb, namely the one depicting combat sports. Their combined reading may suggest that what underpins the visual rhetoric in this grave's *mise en scène* is the concept of the woman as prize in an agonistic context.

The particular semantic association between the participant in combat sports and the woman is highlighted on a contemporary CHC skyphos from Rhitsona, perhaps a Boeotian copy, which depicts a filleted and thus victorious boxer on its obverse and a striding woman on its reverse (*fig. 8 a. b*)<sup>52</sup>. Her posture identifies her as a reluctant, fleeing bride in a figural type that was used commonly in amorous pursuit scenes whence it was further excerpted. The bridal female was not chosen at random as the victorious boxer's thematic pair on the Rhitsona skyphos: in fact, she was meant as his trophy at a contest. The concept of a woman as prize is known from the epic poems, where females are mentioned among metal vessels and animals offered to winners<sup>53</sup>. It finds early artistic expression on an architectural model from the sanctuary of Poseidon Heliconius in Achaia (720–700 B.C.) which depicts chariots, men at a prize-tripod and an »elite maiden« being surrendered to a man<sup>54</sup>. The unified narrative of victory at chariot races, tripod dedication and capture of a maiden is so important to the dedicant's *oikos* that the decorative area chosen for this scene is the architectural model's culminating point, namely its roof. The cultural ideal and widely diffused folktale motif which combines wedding and *agon* underpins further several myths of marriage by contest

<sup>46</sup> Andreiomenou 1990, 133 pl.93 (Grave 25); Andreiomenou 1994, 203 and 207 fig.71 a. b (Grave KOL / 100); Andreiomenou 1995, 141–145, esp. 143 f.; pl. 21, 4 (Grave ΔΔ / 34); cf. Andreiomenou 2001, 480 fig. 18; 483 (Grave Mara / 20). For other similar examples see CVA Nantes pl. 17, 1; CVA Jena (1) pl. 64, 1–2.

<sup>47</sup> M. Pipili, CVA Athens (4) 52. These derive from the Attic Heron Class.

<sup>48</sup> Kilinski 1990, 59. M. Pipili in: CVA Athens (4) 52–63 dates them in 510–490 B.C. See also n. 26 above.

<sup>49</sup> BAPD 306360. 306362. 306368 depict a youth seated on a stool between sphinxes in a compositional type identical to our scene. For a woman see Andreiomenou 1990, 133 pl.93 (Grave 25). Cf. also an earlier skyphos of better quality in drawing and ornament in Andreiomenou 1995, 144 n. 215 pl. 21, 4 which depicts a running woman. This repertory is featured also on late CHC skyphoi.

<sup>50</sup> See, e.g., Thebes R. 102. 100 (BAPD) 306366.

<sup>51</sup> For the woman as emblem of the *kalos kagathos* see Vilatte 1986. The seated posture imparts elevated status; the female may be understood as an iconographic shorthand for the matronly bride. The male-female relationship may have also been conveyed on a skyphos by this Group depicting a male and a female head on either side: see Kilinski 1990, 30 cat. no. 1.

<sup>52</sup> V. Sabetai, CVA Thebes (1) 60 pl. 53, 4–6, where the woman is described as stepping dancingly. When seen in association with the boxer on the obverse her posture may be interpreted as echoing the maiden's erotically charged and quasi choreographed flight.

<sup>53</sup> Kefalidou 2007, 205. 213.

<sup>54</sup> Gadolou 2015, 271–274. I thank A. Gadolou for drawing my attention to this find that tells the same story as our grave's imagery, albeit in a different context and date.

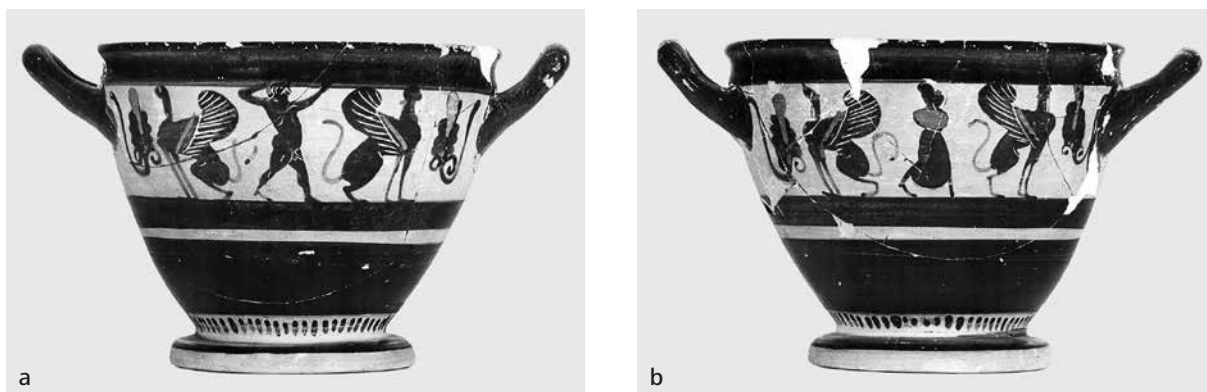


Fig. 8 a. b Rhitsona, Skyphos R.31.175

with the bride as prize, such as Peleus' wrestling with Thetis and Atalanta, the archery contest for Iole and Penelope, the chariot race for Hippodameia, the struggle between Herakles and Acheloos for Deianeira and that of Apollo versus Idas for Marpessa, among others<sup>55</sup>. That this ideal reflected but also shaped real life habits is suggested by Herodotos' story of Megakles' marriage to the daughter of the Sicyonian tyrant Kleisthenes after a lengthy *agon* at all levels<sup>56</sup>. In literary imagery, Euripides portrays Herakles and Thanatos wrestling over the loyal consort Alcestis<sup>57</sup>, while the marriage theme underpins the victor's praise in one of Pindar's odes which celebrate Telesicrates as a winner entitled to a fine wife<sup>58</sup>.

The long-lived association between *agon* and the woman as award continues to underpin Attic and Boeotian red-figure of the Classical period but it has not always been recognized as such. Images of the third quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. picture boxing or wrestling as a contest for love in the presence of the bride herself. This may be the theme of a small group of Attic vessels of the 440s B.C., such as a skyphos in Bochum by the Penelope Painter (440–430 B.C.) with boxers on the obverse and a female judge before a prize-tripod beneath which stands a girl on the reverse<sup>59</sup>. A *kalos* dipinto has been tentatively reconstructed above the boxers and a *kale* above the woman<sup>60</sup>. Kunisch rightly interpreted the imagery as a prize in the unfolding boxing contest on the basis of Homer's epics. Modestly wrapped in her mantle, the prize-maiden is placed under the tripod as if being part of it in order to suggest that she also was a prestigious award. The girl and the tripod are offered to a double, internal and external viewership, for they can be seen by the contesting boxers in the image but also by the beholder of the vessel<sup>61</sup>. The identity of the female umpire standing next to the girl is enigmatic, but a pyxis and a fragment of a nuptial lebes by the Washing Painter (430–420 B.C.) with two wrestling Erotes suggests that this figure must be Aphrodite herself<sup>62</sup>. In the latter vase she watches the entangled Erotes holding the judge's wand, while in the former she

<sup>55</sup> Kakridis 1971, 33–39; Hansen 2002, 56–62 (›Bride won in a Tournament‹); Scanlon 2002, 28 f.; Neils 2013, 120–123.

<sup>56</sup> Hdt. 6, 126–131.

<sup>57</sup> E. Alc. 1025–1036. Love as agonistic activity is further attested in other 5<sup>th</sup> cent. B.C. poetry on a metaphorical level: Scanlon 2002, 260 f.

<sup>58</sup> P. 9.97–100 (474 B.C.); Scanlon 2002, 222–226.

<sup>59</sup> BAPD 9031676; N. Kunisch, CVA Bochum (2) text to pl. 26, 4–5. For a different interpretation see Tiverios 2011, 349–353, arguing that the female was meant as a statue supporting the tripod. Yet, her statuery look may just be a way to highlight the girl's solemn appearance as a prize. For an example of a figure ap-

pearing as a living statue see Lissarrague 1999, 369 f. fig. 9. The Penelope Painter's choice of theme makes his skyphos an appropriate wedding gift; its mending holes suggest use-life before reaching the grave, a habit also attested in Boeotia.

<sup>60</sup> Although the former is uncertain, a *kalos*-tag is not incompatible with the boxers, as suggested by the already mentioned cup by Douris (BAPD 205073; see above, n. 44).

<sup>61</sup> Epics and tragedy insist on the bride's visibility during the contest: Kakridis 1971, 33–39.

<sup>62</sup> Pyxis Würzburg H 4455 (BAPD 215006); fragment Munich 8926 (BAPD 214887); see Sabetai 1993, 102–117; Gambogi 1998, pl. 53, 3; Scanlon 2002, 260–262.

observes the contest seated with a sceptre. Aphrodite, wearing chiton and himation as on the Bochum skyphos, appears often to the bride with Eroses in nuptial scenes by the Washing Painter<sup>63</sup>. On the painter's pyxis the Eroses wrestle under her auspices for the sake of their object of desire, the bride herself, who is binding her hair on her nuptial couch in the presence of a third Eros and a loutrophoros-bearer. The idea that erotic love wins the trophy bride is pervasive in red-figure nuptial imagery. It may be seen as the continuation on a metaphorical level of the Archaic concept of competing for an elite maiden who will become the bride of the winner's aristocratic *oikos*. Boeotia followed such trends in Attic imagery of the Classical period. The Painter of the Dancing Pan (ca. 420 B.C.) painted an amusing variant whereby two Eroses undertake a proxy contest via cocks who are shown fighting at the louterion, the iconographic space of female embellishment and bridal preparation. The victorious cock will win his erotic mates, the hens, while the Eros owning and supervising him will win the seated bride and possibly also the female companions populating the rest of the vessel's decorative area, which functions as a conceptual women's room<sup>64</sup>. The Boeotian painter's parallelism between the Eroses and the cocks as fighters for love encapsulates visually the interconnected themes of the agonistic and the nuptial in a humorous way.

To return to the dialogue of images in the Akraiphian tomb, the marital meaning conveyed by the combined vase-iconography of boxers / wrestlers and a trophy wife highlights the importance of marriage as the foundation of one's *oikos*. Such nuptial ideals are not at odds with the *kalos* acclamation on the kantharos which may have recalled the dead man's initiatory pederasty, as already said, but also, more generally, that he was cherished, once handsome and entitled to a good wife<sup>65</sup>.

In sum, the juxtaposed images of combat sports and a woman in an early 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Boeotian tomb hint at an intricate nexus of interconnected meanings and values. Despite the scholar's difficulty to recover them effortlessly, they must have been readily apparent in antiquity, embedded, as they were, in the common canvas of shared knowledge. At the funeral such images would have reflected the values permeating Ptoiketas' life when still a master of his Akraiphian *oikos* and would have prompted familiar recollections among the mourning audience.

## THE FIGURED POTTERY IN THE FRAMEWORK OF ITS POTTERY-GROUP: FABRICS, NUMBERS, SHAPES, COMPOSITION OF THE ASSEMBLAGE

Let us now look at the occupant of tomb T. 166 through a wider lens zooming out from the figured skyphoi with complementary iconography to the rest of his grave furnishings and their placement around his corpse. These fall into two categories, i.e. ceramics and metal. Missing are two classes of objects occurring in other Boeotian graves, namely figurines, usually accompanying children and women as well as jewellery, such as hair-spirals, usually associated with young individuals<sup>66</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> Her comely allure resonates with her matronly iconography in the Parthenon frieze: Mark 1984, 295–302; Sabetai 1993, 91–101; Sabetai 2019, 41–44.

<sup>64</sup> Sabetai 2012a, 125 f.

<sup>65</sup> Ferri 1962. Yet, examples of the heterosexual *kalos* are a little later than our grave: see, e.g., Romiopoulou 1987 (janiform male / female head-vase bearing the graffiti *kalos, kale* in a presumed humorous context);

also BAPD 275017 (alabastron from nearby Ela-teia).

<sup>66</sup> Thus, the osteological analysis which identified the occupant of grave T. 166 as an adult man (see Appendix below) is in accordance with his furnishings both in what is present and what is absent. No nails suggesting a coffin, or funerary wreaths were deposited either.



Fig. 9 a. b Akraiphia, grave  
T. 66, Droop Cup inv. 42231

As to the arrangement of the grave-goods, the bulk of the ceramics were placed in two areas in the interior, namely one cluster around the head, the other along the right side of the corpse's lower part (*fig. 1 b. 2*). Seven vases packed in three layers flanked the skull: at the bottom was an exaleiptron, above which lay the Droop cup (*fig. 9*) and a glazed skyphos, and on top a skyphos and three kantharoi, two touching the cheek-bones. Along the body and at the dead man's right side were eight vases, namely four kantharoi, among them the inscribed one lying by his knee, two exaleiptra, a kotyle and a mug. Also on the right and on top of his femur bone was his iron knife, put in his palm or attached to a belt. The figured skyphoi were the only vases that were found together beside his left femur.

The number of offerings seems scanty in comparison with some wealthy, late Archaic Akraiphian graves, but is not frugal when seen against the rather poorly furnished burials of the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. However, as development and variation in the number of furnishings in Boeotian tombs has not been quantified yet, any such remarks remain preliminary. It may be generally said that the wealth of objects varies according to time period, social status, sex and age of the deceased.

We are on safer ground with observations regarding our tomb's repertory of shapes which comprises 14 drinking vases (seven kantharoi, five skyphoi, one Droop cup and one

mug) and three ointment vases (*exaleiptra*). Although in the Archaic period unguent vessels, especially Corinthian *aryballoi*, predominate, the turn of the century sees a gradual shift towards drinking equipment, particularly *skyphoi*. Ointment vessels still appear, but now in the form of Corinthian *exaleiptra* and locally produced glazed *plemochoai*. In this tomb feasting is suggested by the *skyphoi*, *kantharoi* and cup, while mixing bowls do not occur, as is the norm in Boeotian necropoleis. The absence of complete wine sets may be seen in the context of local funerary customs, where personal drinking equipment is preponderant but the more communal *krater* must have stayed home with the living. As regards figured vessels, these are a minority in funerary assemblages and usually occur in select burials.

Looking at this grave assemblage as a whole complements the picture from other viewpoints too. Regarding workshops, we note an assortment of Atticizing black-figure and Boeotian glazed drinking pots with Corinthian ointment containers. Although Attic imports of figured pottery continue through the course of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. in Boeotia, a preference for local ware is attested in the tomb. Both its figured vases adhere to Attic prototypes, but the *skyphos* depicting athletics, in particular, further amalgamates elements from earlier regional artistic sources in an effort to look respectful of tradition. This tendency in art seems suggestive of cultural continuity in social attitudes and customs which is evident also in the plethora of glazed *kantharoi*.

A final word should be said about the assortment of the grave's furnishings, by comparison to the general patterns of burial deposition in Boeotia. The fact that *skyphoi* connected to the CHC Group are recurrent in contemporary tombs at Akraiphia<sup>67</sup> and Rhitsona<sup>68</sup>, as well as the fact that the funerary shape-repertoire consists of ointment and drinking vases indicate similar patterns in various Boeotian necropoleis around 500 B.C. Comparison of figured vessels from several contemporaneous tomb groups suggests that there may also exist patterns in the assortment of images. As an example of scenes associating the agonistic with the female realm we may cite, e.g., an Akraiphian grave which comprised a *skyphos* depicting a tripod and others picturing seated women<sup>69</sup>. In other grave groups the agonistic and female / erotic themes may underpin scenes that do not immediately reveal their interconnectedness to the modern eye<sup>70</sup>. The relative uniformity of contemporary assemblages as attested in combinations of shape-types and imagery does not seem fortuitous nor imposed solely by what was readily available in the Boeotian markets and homes, as often assumed. This type of explanation tends to leave the agency of the buyer and the burying group unaccounted for. On the contrary, the selection of specific shapes and imagery at various Boeotian sites (Rhitsona, Akraiphia) seems suggestive of conscious choices which must be understood as reflecting common ground and cultural habits. This realization could further contribute to the study of Boeotia as a network of poleis also on the evidence of mortuary evidence<sup>71</sup>.

<sup>67</sup> See, e.g., Andreiomenou 1990, 133 pl. 93 (Grave 25): male burial comprising a knife and 19 vases, among them eleven black-glazed (nine *kantharoi*, a mug and a *skyphos*), one Corinthian and seven black-figured, of which five are by the Group of Thebes R.102 (single figures). See also Andreiomenou 2015, 318–326 pls. 216–222: grave with 65 vases, among them a silhouette *skyphos* with wrestlers and Droop cups (see n. 25, above).

<sup>68</sup> In graves 5. 18. 26. 31. 80. 82. 102. 112. 130; see Ure 1927, pls. 18–21 *passim*.

<sup>69</sup> Andreiomenou 2015, 236–243 pls. 132, 26.1 and 134, 26.16–26.17 (grave no. 26). The *skyphoi* depicting the seated female may be attributed as close to the CHC Group.

<sup>70</sup> Andreiomenou 2015, 318–326 pls. 217–222, esp. 217 f. (grave no. 90): wrestlers, cocks and hens, monopsiast on the ground with seated woman, riders, chariot, Dionysiac thiasos, animals (see also n. 25, above).

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Mackil 2013 on common polity.



## CONCLUSION

Funerals are highly staged activities encoding cultural values and embedded concepts, re-affirming or negating aspects of personal and collective identities at the time of the formal deposition of the corpse<sup>72</sup>. In this paper an effort was made to sketch the profile at death of an adult male who was buried in Boeotia ca. 500–490 B.C. To do so we jointly assessed the various elements contributing to the characterization of his social persona against the backdrop of the cemetery. The figured but also the inscribed and the undecorated pots, as well as the knife, all have a story to tell by their painted scenes, inscriptions, shape-types, use-life, function and placement around the corpse. The combined reading of the evidence reveals how the man was memorialized, which may reflect also how he lived, or, more correctly, how he aspired to live. At the time of his burial Ptoiketas, memorialized by name as *kalos*, was staged as capable of bearing a weapon. The images surrounding him, informed by traditional aesthetics in style and theme, complement one another and function as visual praise of citizen role models ca. 500 B.C.: excelling in athletics and specifically in the venerated combat sports, being entitled to a trophy wife, initiating an *oikos* via marriage<sup>73</sup>. The place of honour held by the many kantharoi adds an ethnic and heroic dimension to the funeral; these ritual vases can be seen as attributes construing and reflecting his last self-image<sup>74</sup>. Note that clay vases were an important medium in expressing ideological issues via image and shape and communicating them to the citizen community. The cumulative identities of being a former partaker of *paideia* in conjunction with athletics, a man bearing arms and a husband, can be seen as pebbles in the same mosaic of values in early 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Boeotia. Issues of this kind are best researched when one analyzes the totality of the grave furnishings and their relationship to the dead person.

## APPENDIX

### 1. The Finds of Grave T. 166

Vases<sup>75</sup> (figs. 2. 3).

Around the skull:

- 1 Inv. 42243. Black-glazed kantharos. Maximum height 15.5 cm. Dm<sub>Rim</sub> 14 cm.
- 2 Inv. 42233. Black-glazed kantharos, misfired red<sup>76</sup>. H 13 cm. H at rim 9 cm. Dm<sub>Rim</sub> 11.5–12.5 cm. Dm 18.5 cm. Dm<sub>Base</sub> 6 cm.
- 3 Inv. 49014. Corinthian ray kotyle<sup>77</sup>. H 12 cm. Dm<sub>Rim</sub> 15 cm. Dm 22.5 cm. Dm<sub>Base</sub> 8.4 cm.
- 4 Inv. 42234. Black-glazed kantharos<sup>78</sup>. H 17 cm. Dm<sub>Rim</sub> 13.3 cm. Dm 20 cm. Dm<sub>Base</sub> 7 cm.

<sup>72</sup> »An inhumation presents the body as a unit or a totality in the grave«: Oestigaard 2013, 500; Sofaer – Stig Sørensen 2013, esp. 527 f.

<sup>73</sup> Pindar in P. 11, 55–58 represents the victor Thrasydaeus of Thebes as a restrained citizen and family man: Nicholson 2016, 61. Boeotian images of men and women as »prosopographies«: Sabetai 2012a, 131.

<sup>74</sup> For similar methodology regarding other cultural contexts see Langner 2012; Herring 2014.

<sup>75</sup> Numbers 1 to 17 (followed by the Museum invento-

ry number) refer to vases in the excavation drawing (fig. 3) and reflect the sequence of their unearthing; the overlapping pieces 3, 15 and 16 do not feature in the drawing.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Ure 1927, pl. 10 no. 80.223 (grave 80, 500–490 B.C.: V. Sabetai, CVA Thebes (1) 100).

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Stillwell – Benson 1984, 190 f., pl. 44 no. 1006. Latter part of 6<sup>th</sup>–early 5<sup>th</sup> cent. B.C.

<sup>78</sup> Similar shape: Ure 1913, pl. 4 no. 12.66 and 26.140 (graves 12 and 26, 510–480 B.C.: V. Sabetai, CVA Thebes (1) 98 f.). Cf. CVA Reading (1) pl. 33, 4.

Below these, still around the skull at the NW side of the pit:

15 Inv. 42231. Droop cup<sup>79</sup>. H 8 cm. Dm<sub>Rim</sub> 19 cm. Dm 25.5 cm. Dm<sub>Base</sub> 7.8 cm (*fig. 9*).

16 Inv. 42237. Black-glazed skyphos. H 9 cm. Dm<sub>Rim</sub> 12.5 cm. Dm 20 cm. Dm<sub>Base</sub> 7 cm.

At the lowest level:

17 Inv. 42240. Corinthian exaleiptron. H 5 cm. Dm<sub>Rim</sub> 8 cm. Dm 17.2 cm. Dm<sub>Base</sub> 10.1 cm.  
Concentric lines.

Alongside the body, right side:

5 Inv. 42238. Black-glazed kantharos. H 19 cm. Dm<sub>Rim</sub> 15.2 cm. Dm 22 cm. Dm<sub>Base</sub> 7.9 cm.

6 Inv. 42235. Black-glazed kantharos<sup>80</sup>. H 18.1 cm. Dm<sub>Rim</sub> 14.5 cm. Dm 22 cm. Dm<sub>Base</sub> 7.6 cm.

7 Inv. 42229. Corinthian skyphos<sup>81</sup>. H 9 cm. Dm<sub>Rim</sub> 11.4 cm. Dm 17.5 cm. Dm<sub>Base</sub> 7.2 cm.

8 Inv. 42232. Black-glazed mug, misfired red<sup>82</sup>. H 8.8 cm. Dm<sub>Rim</sub> 9.9–10.5 cm. Dm 11.8 cm.  
Dm<sub>Base</sub> 6 cm.

9 Inv. 42239. Corinthian exaleiptron. Lanceolate leaves<sup>83</sup>. H 5 cm. Dm<sub>Rim</sub> 7.5 cm. Dm 16.8 cm. Dm<sub>Base</sub> 11 cm.

10 Inv. 42242. Black-glazed kantharos, ὙΠΟΙΚΕΤΑΣ ΚΑΛΟΣ<sup>84</sup>. H 16.5 cm. Dm<sub>Rim</sub> 12.4 cm. Dm 18 cm. Dm<sub>Base</sub> 6.3 cm. It lay broken with its inscribed side facing down (*fig. 4 a. b. c*).

11 Inv. 42241. Corinthian exaleiptron. Lanceolate leaves. H 6 cm. Dm<sub>Rim</sub> 8.2 cm. Dm 17 cm.  
Dm<sub>Base</sub> 9.5 cm.

12 Inv. 42236. Black-glazed kantharos. Missing one handle and part of its upper body.  
Streaked glaze<sup>85</sup>. H 19 cm. Dm<sub>Rim</sub> 14.9 cm. Dm<sub>Base</sub> 7.5 cm.

Alongside the body, left side:

13 Inv. 42228. Black-figure skyphos. A. Wrestling. B. Boxing. H 10.3 cm. Dm<sub>Rim</sub> 15.5 cm.  
Dm 21.6 cm. Dm<sub>Base</sub> 10 cm. It lay with the wrestling scene upwards, facing the viewer (*fig. 6 a. b. c. d*).

14 Inv. 42230. Black-figure skyphos. A–B, seated woman flanked by a sphinx at either side. H 11 cm. Dm<sub>Rim</sub> 16 cm. Dm 22.4 cm. Dm<sub>Base</sub> 9.3 cm (*fig. 7 a. b. c*).

*Other (fig. 4c)*

18 Inv. 52633. Metal: a knife with one cutting side. Length: 0.28 m; Width 0.04 m. Complete, once with wood handle. It lay diagonally on the right femur (*fig. 5*).

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Pipili 2009.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Ure 1927, pl. 11 no. 80.118 (grave 80, 500–490 B.C.: V. Sabetai, CVA Thebes (1) 100).

<sup>81</sup> Cf. CVA Reading (1) text to pl. 2. 12 f. (A. D. Ure). Date: latter part of 6<sup>th</sup>–early 5<sup>th</sup> cent. B.C.

<sup>82</sup> Mug in Akraiphian graves: Sabetai 2012b, 308. 311. Cf. Andreiomenou 1973/1974, pl. 280 c and Andreiomenou 1988, 9–11. Date: last quarter of 6<sup>th</sup>–beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> cent. B.C.

<sup>83</sup> Date: latter part of 6<sup>th</sup>–early 5<sup>th</sup> cent. B.C.; 138 specimens were found in 18 graves at Rhitsona: A. D. Ure, CVA Reading (1) text to pl. 6, 6.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Ure 1913, pl. 2 no. 31.243 (grave 31, 515–480 B.C.: V. Sabetai, CVA Thebes (1) 99); Ure 1927, pl. 11 no. R.80.108 (for the date of grave 80 see above, n. 76).

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Ure 1913, pl. 3 no. 31.262 (for the date of grave 31 see above n. 84).

Sources of illustrations: *Fig. 1 a. b;* 2: excavation photographs and drawing: O. Peperaki. – *Fig. 3. 4 a–c; 6 a–d; 7 a–c; 9:* A. Santrouzos. Copyright Ephorate of Boeotia. – *Fig. 5:* V. Sabetai. Copyright Ephorate of Boeotia. – *Fig. 8 a. b; 10:* Copyright Ephorate of Boeotia.



Fig. 10 Akraiphia, Skeleton of grave T. 166

## 2. Sex and age assessment for T. 166 (Efthymia Nikita)

Based on the preliminary osteological study of the skeleton retrieved from tomb T. 166, the sex of the individual was assessed as male using cranial morphological characters (*fig. 10*).

In specific, the skeleton had a pronounced mental eminence and occipital protuberance as well as gonial eversion. It must be stressed that no pelvic sex markers were preserved; however, the combination of the above cranial features and the absence of any indicators of sexual dimorphism suggestive of a female sex, render rather safe the identification of the sex of this skeleton as male. Regarding age, the only skeletal marker available for study was the degree of dental wear on the maxillary molars. The fact that the third molar had completed its eruption suggests an adult individual, while the rather extensive dental wear identified on this tooth appears to support a middle-aged individual (35–50 years old). Note that the reason the third molar was primarily examined is that this is the last tooth to

erupt (usually at the age of 18 years although marked variation may be seen among individuals). Therefore, although the first and secondarily the second molar exhibited even more pronounced dental wear due to their eruption at the age of 6 and 12 years, respectively, the extensive dental wear on the third molar indicates that it had erupted several years before the death of the individual. However, it must be stressed that numerous factors, including dietary patterns, oral hygiene and others, affect the rate of dental wear; therefore the above age assessment is tentative. For this reason, histological analyses need to be performed in the future in order to complement the macroscopic study of the remains and provide a more accurate age estimation.

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