

# A BLACK-FIGURED KYLIX FROM THE ATHENIAN AGORA

(PLATES 31 AND 32)

IN THE spring of 1950 an ancient well was discovered in the area behind the Stoa of Attalos, just east of the sixth shop from the south.<sup>1</sup> It was excavated to the bottom which was reached at a depth of 7.70 meters below the present surface of bedrock. The well was beautifully cut, round and true, in the soft green clayey bedrock, and on two sides, the northwest and southwest, there was a series of fifteen footholds designed to help the workman who was digging the well in going down and coming up.

No trace was found of the house that this well was designed to serve nor was the contemporary ground level preserved at any point near by. A pillaged foundation trench of classical Greek times passed over the mouth of the well except for the very northernmost segment, the broad deep footing trench for the back wall of the Stoa of Attalos passed about two meters to the west of the well, and a drain of the Roman period barely a meter to the east. The few remaining "islands" where bedrock stood to a higher level preserved no trace of ancient deposit.

The fill in the upper meter or so of the well was loose bedrock without sherds. The next two meters produced scattered fragments of pottery of the first half of the sixth century B.C., one box full in all, among which we may note two black-figured fragments with animal friezes, rudely drawn, a fragmentary lid of a powder-box pyxis belonging to the Swan Group,<sup>2</sup> a fragment of a small late Corinthian skyphos with a zone of elongated animals, and several fragmentary unfigured kylixes, one of "komast" shape<sup>3</sup> and two shaped like "Ionian" kylixes and having their off-set lips decorated inside with bands of thinned glaze.<sup>4</sup>

The next four and a half meters contained no sherds whatsoever, and the fill consisted sometimes of loose bedrock, occasionally of black mud. At the very bottom lay the kylix which is the subject of this article, broken into well over a hundred fragments; there were no sherds other than those belonging to this vase.

No water gathered in the well, and this combined with the fact that no whole

<sup>1</sup> *Hesperia*, XX, 1951, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Beazley, *Hesperia*, XIII, 1944, p. 55. It is like the lid published in *C.V.A. Petit Palais*, Collection Dutuit, pl. 16, 11-12, except that it has swans on the side only and not on the top which is plain.

<sup>3</sup> As Richter and Milne, *Shapes and Names*, fig. 152.

<sup>4</sup> Somewhat as Sieveking and Hackl, *Die Königliche Vasensammlung zu München*, no. 521, pl. 18. Cf. also Kunze, *Ath. Mitt.*, LIX, 1934, pp. 89-90, Beilage VI, 13.

*Hesperia*, XX, 2

or nearly whole water jars were found at the bottom, indicates that the well was a failure and was never used. It was probably re-filled at once with the earth that had been dug out of it, which would account for the lack of sherds; near the top some other earth containing a scattering of contemporary sherds was thrown in. The kylix from the bottom of the well must have been broken at the time the well was abandoned and its fragments thrown in with the first shovelfuls of re-fill.

The kylix<sup>5</sup> (Plates 31 and 32) has been mended from 129 fragments. It is complete in all essentials, and the few missing pieces of rim, bowl and foot have been restored in plaster. It is a kylix of the type conventionally called "Siana" from two examples in the British Museum which were discovered at Siana in the island of Rhodes. This type of kylix had a brief vogue during the first half of the sixth century B.C.; in shape it stands midway between the so-called komast cups and the later little-master cups.<sup>6</sup>

The principal decoration is on the interior of the cup (Plate 31) where we have a large medallion, bordered by a rich lotus and palmette frieze, in which a warrior is depicted running to the left. He is bearded and wears a pointed cap with flaps hanging down over the cheeks; the cap was once red and its lower edge bordered with a row of white dots between incised lines. He carries two spears in his right hand, and his legs are protected with greaves which were once red and bordered with a row of white dots between incised lines. His body is entirely hidden by a large round shield which forms the central feature of the whole design. The shield was white with a red border, and the device, a large satyr's head, must once, when the colors were still fresh, have stood out even more sharply than it does now. This head is rendered by incision; the face, neck, beard and alternate strands of the hair are red, as are the two hornlike shocks of hair which spring from the forehead;<sup>7</sup> there is an incised rosette on each shoulder.

The outside of the cup (Plate 32) is decorated in the same way on either side; on the lip myrtle, in the handle zone a grazing horse between palmettes which are not quite upright. Red is used for the horse's mane and for a stroke on the hind quarter; also for the hearts, alternate petals and three or four cross strokes at the top of the stem of the palmettes.

Our kylix is not one of the earliest Sianas; in fact, the treatment of the exterior with a single figure on either side and palmettes at the handles already foreshadows

<sup>5</sup> Inv. No. P 20716. Height 0.130 m. Diameter 0.272 m. Diameter of interior medallion, with border 0.170 m.; without border 0.088 m.

<sup>6</sup> On kylixes of this type see Beazley and Payne, *J.H.S.*, XLIX, 1929, p. 260; Beazley, *J.H.S.*, LI, 1931, p. 275; and *Metropolitan Museum Studies*, V, 1934, p. 93; and F. Villard, *Revue des Études Anciennes*, XLVIII, 1946, pp. 157-162.

<sup>7</sup> Compare the tufts of hair above the forehead of the satyr on the shield of Achilles on the Vatican Amphora by Exekias: C. Albizzati, *Vasi Antichi Dipinti del Vaticano*, pl. 40, Furtwängler-Reichhold, *Griechische Vasenmalerei*, III, pl. 131.

the little-master cups.<sup>8</sup> We might then suggest the years between 570 and 560 B.C. as the date when it was made, and with this the style of drawing would be in accord. Stylistically it cannot be assigned to either of the two large groups of Siana cups, the Heidelberg group which stands close to the early work of the Amasis painter<sup>9</sup> or the group by the C painter.<sup>10</sup> Nor have I found any close stylistic parallels for it among the unassigned Sianas or other vases of the period, close enough that is to warrant attribution to the same hand. Nevertheless, the vigorous style and the crisp, sure drawing especially on the interior, show us that we have to do with an artist of no mean ability, and this kylix is a welcome addition to the Agora Museum.

EUGENE VANDERPOOL

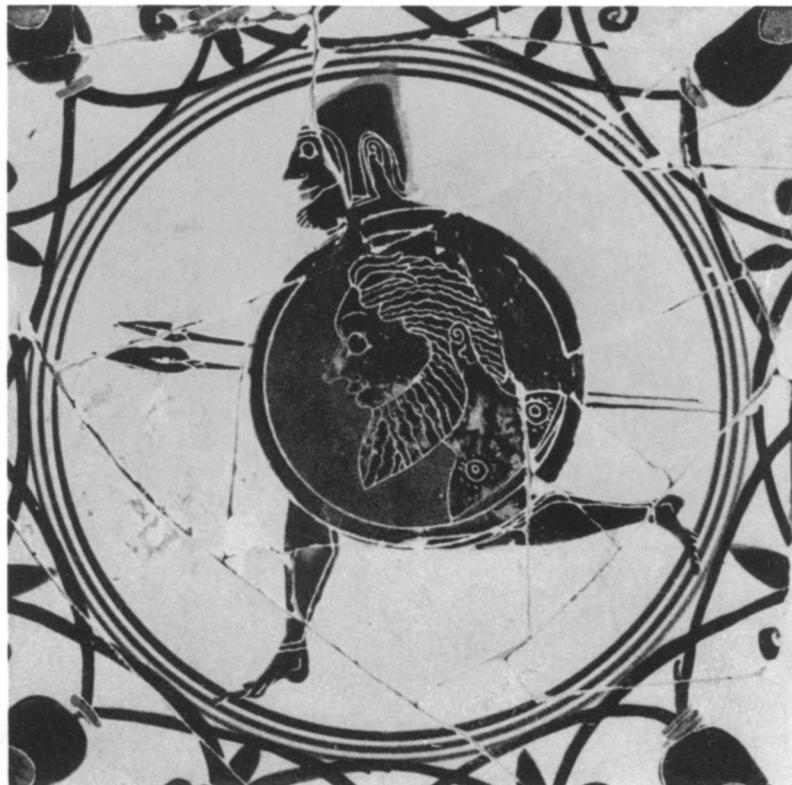
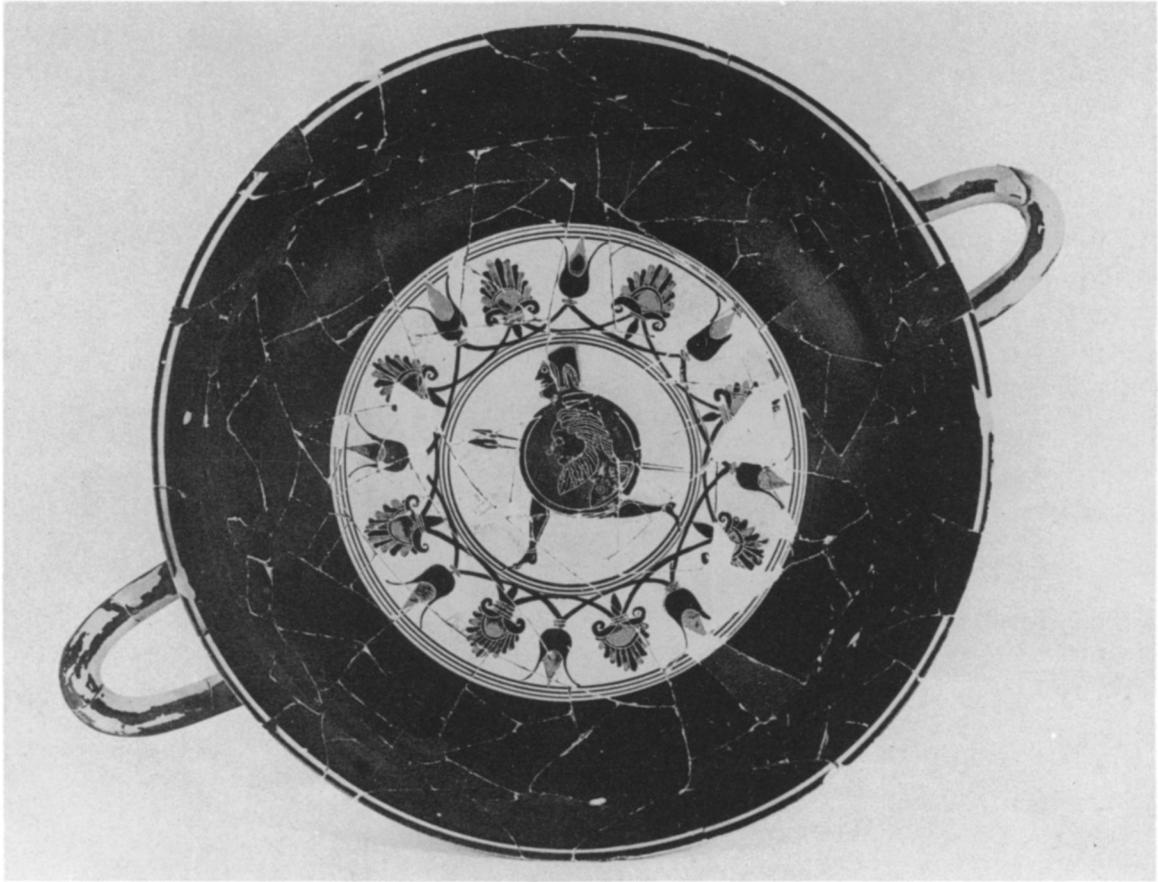
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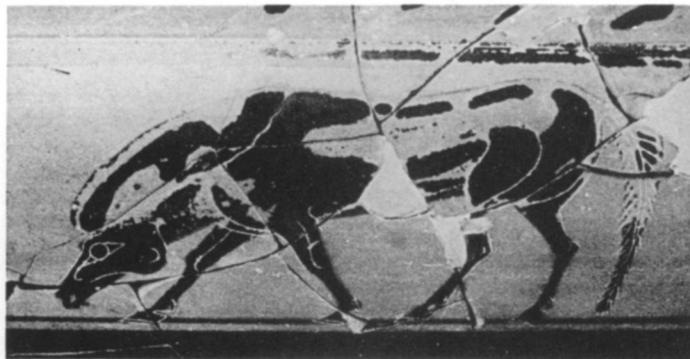
<sup>8</sup> Cf. F. Villard, *loc. cit.*, pp. 159-160.

<sup>9</sup> Beazley, *J.H.S.*, LI, 1931, pp. 275-282; *Met. Mus. Studies*, V, 1934, p. 98, note 20.

<sup>10</sup> Beazley, *Met. Mus. Studies*, V, 1934, pp. 93-115; cf. Martin Robertson, *J.H.S.*, LV, 1935, pp. 224 and 227.



Black-figured Kylix: Interior (Detail at actual size)



Black-figured Kylix: Exterior (Detail at actual size)