

# A PAIR OF GRAFFITI

(PLATE 15)

A red-figured hydria of about 470-460 B.C., by the Syracuse Painter (*Auction Sale xvi, Monnaies et Médailles S. A. Basle*, pl. 33, 129: *ARV*<sup>2</sup>, p. 520, no. 35), now in a private collection at Riehen in Switzerland, bears, on the underside of the foot, a graffito of which a transcription is published by Dr. Herbert Cahn in the catalogue just mentioned (p. 36), and a near-facsimile by Professor D. A. Amyx in *Hesperia*, XXVII, 1958, pl. 52, g. Plate 15, a, gives a more precise copy from a tracing which I made, with Dr. Cahn's kind permission, while the vase was still in the market. Professor Amyx discusses the graffito in *Hesperia*, XXVII, 1958, pp. 292-293 and interprets it as "one drachma four obols, lekythides one hundred and eleven," reserving his opinion about the initial letter, which is a mu.

Now a red-figured pelike decorated by the same painter—his name-piece in fact—, found at Gela and now in the Museum of Syracuse (21834: A, *Mon. Ant.*, XVII, 1906, p. 370, pl. 16; A. *CVA*, Syracuse, pl. 3, 4: *ARV*<sup>1</sup>, p. 352, no. 16; *ARV*<sup>2</sup>, p. 520, no. 32), bears a similar graffito, a transcription of which but not a facsimile was published by Orsi in *Mon. Ant.*, XVII, 1906, p. 370 and repeated by Arias in *CVA*, Syracuse, p. 4. Halbherr, consulted by Orsi, interpreted it as meaning "10001 drachmai 4 obols, lekythides 20"; Hackl (*Münchener archäologische Studien*, p. 105) rejected this interpretation and substituted "1 drachme 4 obols, lekythides 20," detaching the initial mu as an abbreviation of which the significance escapes us. In *Hesperia*, XXVII, 1958, pl. 52, f and p. 292, Professor Amyx repeated Orsi's transcription (omitting, however, the iota of the word lekythides); and was puzzled by the discrepancy between the Syracuse graffito and that on the new hydria: on the first, apparently, twenty lekythides for ten obols; on the second, a hundred and eleven lekythides for the same sum.

Looking up my old notes on the pelike in Syracuse, I found that I had recorded a letter not given by Orsi in his transcription: H, before the final pair of deltas. Orsi was usually so careful in such matters that I hesitated to challenge his reading, and felt that I must write to Professor Bernabò Brea asking him for a rubbing. Plate 15, b, is from a neat facsimile made, with his kind permission, by Dr. Maria Teresa Currò, to whom I am much indebted. It shows, first, that my own reading was correct, and, secondly, that the graffito is by the same hand as that on the new hydria.

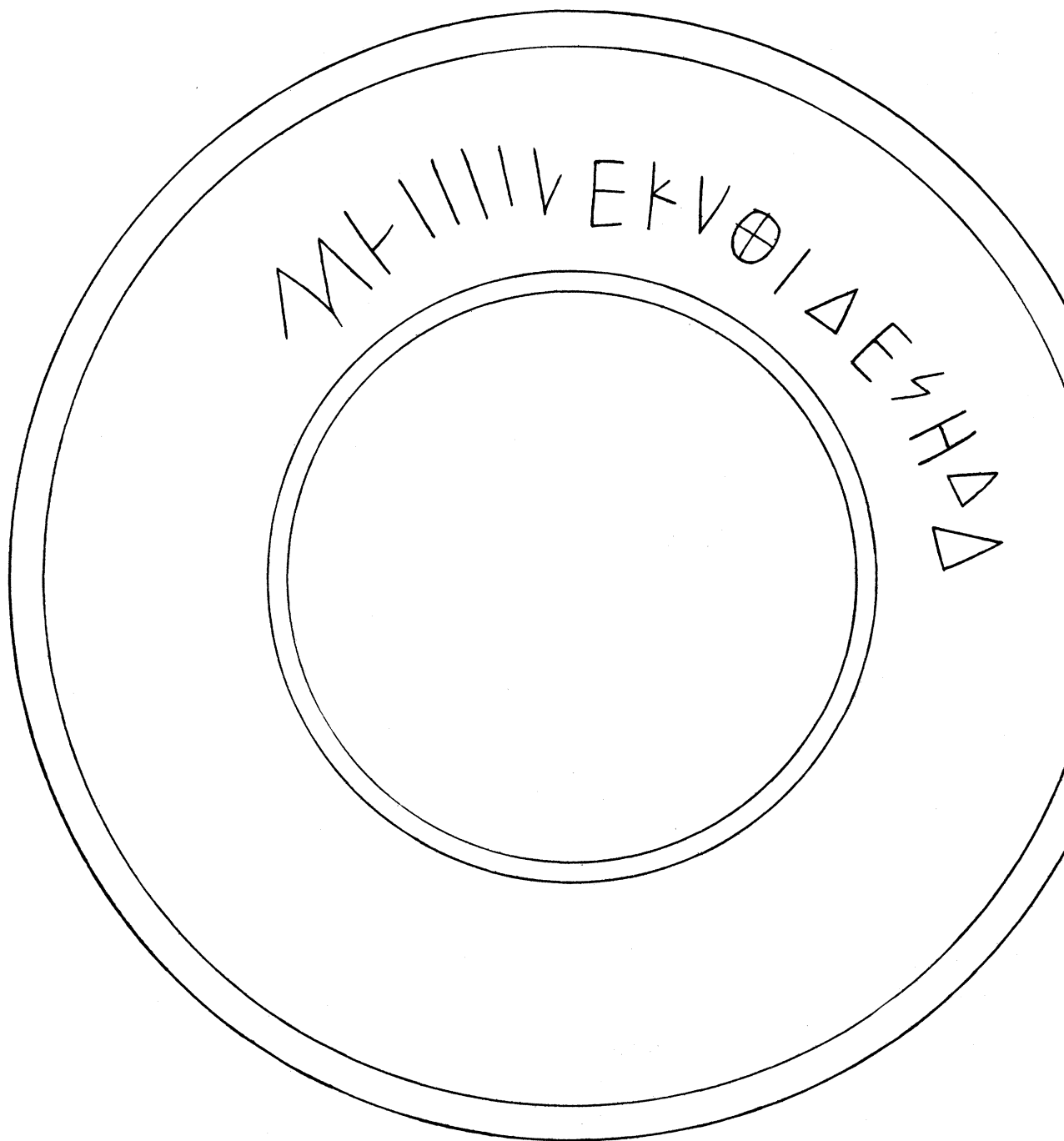
We have therefore, on the new hydria, "ten obols, a hundred and eleven lekythides," and, on the Syracuse vase, "ten obols, a hundred and twenty lekythides"; so that the discrepancy which troubled Professor Amyx has almost disappeared.

The question what is meant by the initial mu remains unanswered.

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a. Graffito on foot of Red-figured Hydria in Riehen, Private Collection



b. Graffito on foot of Red-figured Pelike from Gela in Syracuse Museum