

NOTES FROM THE TINS 2 RESEARCH IN THE STOA OF ATTALOS

This series of research notes was conceived as a way to bring to light various details of the archaeological record at the Athenian Agora Excavations that might otherwise be lost within broader publications.¹ As noted in the first installment, the title “Notes from the Tins” refers to the feta cheese and oil tins used by the excavations for the storage of uninventoried pottery and other finds from specific deposits or stratified levels. Study of finds in these tins led to the discovery of the details presented in these notes. Some of the pieces discussed had already been inventoried and so do not, *sensu stricto*, come from the tins. The tins, however, serve equally as a metaphor for the study of items long ago inventoried, whose importance to archaeology might rise and fall with changing scholarly interests, and whose interpretation might change with further considerations of contexts or more recent discoveries.

This is not to say that the tins do not figure strongly in the notes presented here. My study of amphoras as paint pots combines material found in the tins with jottings in the excavation notebooks and one previously inventoried example. No less important is the absence of similar fragments from hundreds of other tins, reminding us that negative evidence from the tins is sometimes useful as well. Kathleen Lynch’s study of early black-glazed mastoi clarifies the importance of rare, inventoried, but largely overlooked Attic examples within the context of known black-figure examples and representations of the form by Attic vase painters. She also examines the contexts within the Agora (including the contents of the tins) in which the black-glaze examples were found.

John Papadopoulos’s commentary on crudely reworked clay disks is based on the hundreds of such disks found in the excavations, the many examples kept in the tins, and the few he has selected for inventory. These disks have piqued the curiosity of scholars over the years, but they have never received as broad a consideration as they do here. Finally, Susan Rotroff’s study of the context pottery tins brought to light a rare signature on a moldmade bowl. Presumably this signature was overlooked and relegated to the tins instead of the glamour of inventoried status when the deposit was originally excavated.

M. L. L.

1. The authors would like to thank John McK. Camp II, Director of the Agora Excavations, for his support of this project. We are also grateful to the anonymous *Hesperia* reviewers and to the members of the Publications Committee of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens for their helpful suggestions.

AMPHORAS AS PAINT POTS?

MARK L. LAWALL

WITH A CONTRIBUTION BY AUDREY JAWANDO

The secondary use in antiquity of transport amphoras as small coffins or layers for drainage is well attested.² Other contexts of reuse are rarely attested with certainty in archaeological finds. Three examples of imported amphoras reused as paint pots appeared in excavations of two deposits at the Agora related to the Persian sack of Athens in 480 B.C. These paint pots are not unique among the Agora finds, but the identification of the jars, preliminary study of the pigment, and consideration of the archaeological contexts of the jars provide new evidence for the study of Athenian history, commerce, and topography.

1 P 1334 Toe and lower part of amphora Fig. 1:A

G 6:3 (Rectangular Rock-Cut Shaft, upper fill at 10.9 m)

P.H. 19.6 cm; Diam. (toe) 6.3 cm

Traces of white slip on exterior with wide horizontal brown band around top of preserved fragment. Red-brown deposit on interior with some thicker areas of preserved pigment; pigment spills over ancient breaks.

Dusky pale reddish and gray-brown fabric. Wide scatter of gray glassy inclusions, dark gray/blackish stony bits, and yellowish lime chunks.

Fabric color: 5YR 6/6 and grayer. Pigment color: 10R 5/8.

Comments: Brief mention of this piece as “an unpublished amphora fragment” is found in Vanderpool 1946, p. 266, n. 6. This amphora type is attributed to the area of Klazomenai; see Doğer 1986; Lawall 1995, pp. 48–53; Dupont 1998, pp. 151–156. Deposit G 6:3 is a deep rectangular pit on the Kolonos Agoraios; see Shear 1993, pp. 445–449; Vanderpool 1938 and 1946. The upper fill of the shaft is reported to have included miltos (notebook for section A, p. 1002; Vanderpool 1946, p. 266). The upper fill also included a lekythos, broken and reused as a much smaller paint pot (Vanderpool 1946, p. 266, no. 146).

Date: late 6th century B.C.

2 AS-P 1049 Series of joining lower body fragments

R 12:1, tin ΣA 150

Smooth orange buff exterior; resinated interior with red pigment thickly preserved over the resin. Fabric with some mica; grainy break, moderate scatter of gray glassy and bright white opaque bits, all fairly small.

Fabric color: 5YR 5/8. Pigment color: 10R 4/8.

Comments: R 12:1 is a well deposit at the southeast corner of the Agora excavations, just east of the Stoa of Attalos (Shear 1993, pp. 469–471). A nearby deposit of the same period is Q 12:3, the Stoa Gutter Well (Roberts 1986). The attribution and date of these fragments

2. For use in drainage constructions, see Mattioli 1998. For the use of amphoras as coffins or urns, see *Kerameikos* IX, passim. On the reuse of amphoras, see, in general, Grace 1979, text with fig. 10, and for the rarity of reexportation, see van Doorninck 1989, esp. pp. 247, 256. I am grateful to Audrey Jawando for carrying out the analysis of the pigment and providing the report presented here. I also thank Julie Unruh for her generous assistance and advice in preparing this note.

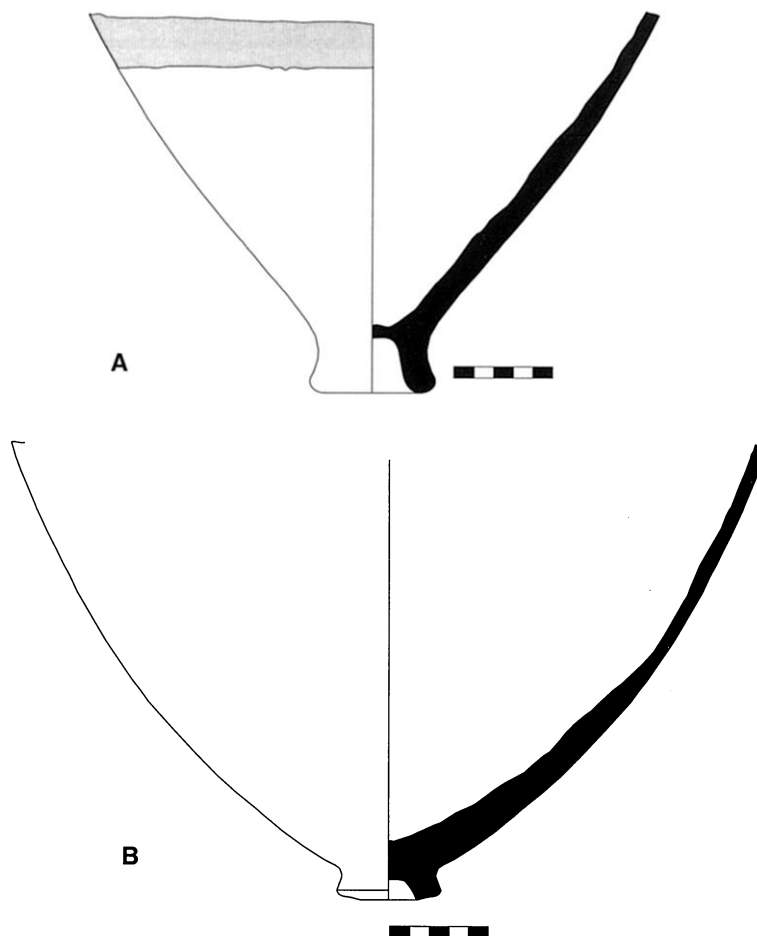


Figure 1. A) Klazomenian amphora (P 1334); B) North Aegean amphora (tin ΣA 148). Drawing M. L. Lawall

cannot be determined on the basis of the remains; neither the fabric nor the form is diagnostic.

Date: context date, before 480 B.C.

3 Toe and lower part of amphora

Fig. 1:B

R 12:1, tin ΣA 148

P.H. 22.5 cm; Diam. (toe) 5.3 cm

Resinated with reddish brown discoloration and a few thicker deposits of red pigment. Smooth, hard, micaceous orange-brown surface, fine-grained break; moderate sized, poorly sorted mix of dark gray opaque, very small white, and a few larger red-brown inclusions.

Fabric color: 5YR 5/8. Pigment color: 10R to 2.5YR 4/6.

Comments: The amphora is from the North Aegean; see Lawall 1997, especially pp. 116–117; Lawall 1995, pp. 116–175.

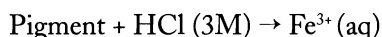
Date: context date, before 480 B.C.

The amphoras described above were not initially intended as jars of red paint. Fragments 2 and 3 preserve resinous lining, which is most often associated with sealing the interiors of amphoras for shipments of wine.³ The red pigment covers these linings, so it must have been added after the

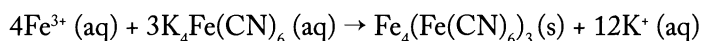
3. Koehler 1986, pp. 50–52.

jars were emptied of wine. Furthermore, the red pigment on 1 covers the ancient break around the upper edge of the fragment. Only the bottom part of the amphora was used for the paint pot.

Audrey Jawando studied the pigments found on the amphora fragments and supplied the following report: “The test for an iron base in the red pigment was based on the fact that an iron (III)-containing compound combined with hydrochloric acid produces iron ions (Fe^{3+}).



“Iron ions combined with potassium ferrocyanide ($\text{K}_4\text{Fe}(\text{CN})_6$) creates solid ferric ferrocyanide ($\text{Fe}_4(\text{Fe}(\text{CN})_6)_3$), or Prussian blue.



“If a blue precipitate forms when an unknown compound is acidified and combined with potassium ferrocyanide, then the test for iron is positive.⁴ The reaction of the pigment with HCl and $\text{K}_4\text{Fe}(\text{CN})_6$ was tested against two control samples: yellow ocher, which is known to contain Fe^{3+} ; and white lead pigment, which contains no Fe^{3+} . Both the yellow ocher sample and the red pigment turned blue-green, while the color of the white lead pigment did not change. This indicates that the red pigment contains iron.”

The ancient term for red, iron-based pigment, $\mu\lambda\tau\omicron\varsigma$,⁵ can refer to pigments from a wide range of sources, including perhaps Attica,⁶ most commonly Kea and Lemnos, and also Cappadocia, Carthage, and Egypt. Indeed, iron oxides suitable for red pigment are quite common.⁷ Relatively recent efforts to characterize miltos from different sources preclude assuming a particular source for the red pigment found in these amphoras from the Agora.⁸

Nevertheless, the examples of miltos found in Athens raise important historical questions. If the miltos could be connected to Kea, then these amphoras would document Athenian use of Kean resources well before a Kean inscription attests to the resumption of Athenian control of that island’s miltos exports sometime before 350 B.C.⁹ A Cappadocian provenance for the miltos in these amphoras would provide early and rare archaeological evidence of imports from the Black Sea; according to Strabo, this miltos was exported through Sinope.¹⁰ Evidence for late-6th-century Athenian imports from either Egypt or Carthage is also quite rare.¹¹

The three paint pots from pre-Persian contexts in the Agora excavations also reflect changing activities in the area. No such residues appear among roughly 150 other Agora deposits closed between ca. 525 and 86 B.C. Therefore, sometime before 480 B.C., different activities seem to have taken place in the Agora, with the result that miltos pots were no longer left behind. John Papadopoulos has suggested that the development of the Agora area as a civic center may have begun as late as ca. 490, with a concurrent decline in the use of the area as a potter’s quarter.¹² Although decoration of pottery is only one of many uses for miltos,¹³ the apparent disappearance of miltos pots after 480 may be related to the decline in the use of the area for craft production. A full survey of the

4. Odegaard, Carroll, and Zimmt 2000, pp. 62–63.

5. For an overview, with discussion of ancient references, see *RE* XVa, 1932, cols. 1851–1854, s.v. Minium (W. Kroll).

6. Caley (1945, p. 155) notes the presence of ochers in Attica, but without further references.

7. Photos-Jones et al. 1997, pp. 359–360.

8. Photos-Jones et al. 1997, *passim*.

9. *IG* II² 1128; Tod 1948, no. 162, pp. 181–185; and Böckh 1886, pp. 312–317.

10. On Sinope’s role in Cappadocian exports, see Strab. 12.2.10. For securely identifiable Black Sea amphoras in 4th-century contexts in the Agora, see Grace 1985, p. 21, n. 52.

11. Habermann 1986; Lawall 2001.

12. Papadopoulos 1996, p. 112.

13. For uses of miltos, see Photos-Jones et al. 1997, pp. 359, 369. For use of miltos in Athenian pottery production, see Richter 1923, pp. 53–59, 96–98; Vanderpool 1946, p. 266; Noble 1988, pp. 125–127; and Schreiber 1999, pp. 48–52.

Agora excavation notebooks for references to miltos has not been undertaken; nevertheless, scattered finds from the late 5th century B.C. appear to involve either very small vessels or the use of miltos with other materials (such as tiles).¹⁴ The reuse of amphoras as paint pots may have been an element of late-6th-century pottery production in the area of the Agora, while later traces of miltos may be associated with different activities.

Most directly, these remains of paint pots illustrate the reuse of emptied imported amphoras. The fragments also highlight problems encountered in studying poorly preserved imported goods. Future provenance studies of miltos residues might clarify which, if any, of the sources noted above is the correct one. The fact that these samples come from fully documented archaeological contexts will then allow any evidence for provenance to be considered in an appropriate social and historical setting.

ADDENDUM

While this note was being revised for publication, Julie Unruh, a conservator at the Agora Excavations, informed me that a Corinthian B amphora bottom with toe, found in 2000 in well J 2:14, contains a large mass of red and yellow pigment. Analyses of this very well preserved fragment are expected to shed further light on the reuse of amphoras as paint pots around the Agora.

THREE MASTOI FROM THE ATHENIAN AGORA

KATHLEEN M. LYNCH

Mastoi, as their name implies, are cups shaped like a female breast.¹⁵ The shape is relatively rare¹⁶ and is decorated in either black-figure or black-glaze with black-figure subsidiary decoration. Although no mastoi in figural black-figure are known from the excavations of the Athenian Agora, three largely black-glazed Attic examples have come to light (Figs. 2–4), two of which have not been previously published.¹⁷ The three examples from the Agora are representative of developments in the form of the mastos. The purpose of this note is to introduce these vessels and place them in a chronological and typological context.

The form of the mastos is conical or slightly bulging, and ends with an articulated nipple.¹⁸ The Attic examples may originally have had either

14. Apart from G 6:3 and R 12:1, two other deposits included remains of miltos. An unused section of the foundation trench for the New Bouleuterion, filled late in the 5th century, included a small bowl with traces of miltos (section B notebook, pp. 1882–1883), and a tile fragment with miltos remains was found in the late-5th-century deposit F 6:2 (section KK

notebook, p. 769). Caley (1945, p. 153) lists three fragments of a black-glaze skyphos (P 3448) with miltos residue found in mid-5th-century fill in section K, near the Rectangular Peribolos and the Southwest Fountain House.

15. On the name of the shape, including ancient references, see Richter and Milne 1935, p. 30; Kanowski 1983, pp. 105–106; *RE* XIVb, 1930,

col. 2175, s.v. Mastos (H. Nachod).

There is also a mastoid cup that has a flat bottom.

16. There are approximately twenty true mastoi listed in the Beazley Archive Database.

17. All three are mentioned in Mertens 1979, p. 23, n. 16.

18. See Schreiber 1999, pp. 194–195 on potting technique.

two horizontal cup handles or one horizontal and one vertical strap handle.¹⁹ The strap handle allowed the drinker to hold the cup. The horizontal handle presumably allowed the cup to be hung on a wall so that the view was “anatomically correct.”

The form is thought to originate at Corinth, for there are Corinthian mastoi dating to the first half of the 6th century B.C.²⁰ Although there are no surviving Attic mastoi from this date, mastoi appear in scenes of symposia on cups by the Attic KX Painter dated to ca. 580–570 B.C.²¹ Attic mastoi with black-figure decoration appear after 550 and continue in black-figure until ca. 500 B.C.²²

The shape of the Attic mastos shows some variation, and parallels between the black-glaze examples and the black-figure forms provide some indication of chronology.²³ Examples earlier in the series have delicate thin walls, straighter sides, and smaller nipples, resulting in an overall conical appearance. The fine potting and delicacy of subsidiary decoration of 1 (Fig. 2) are comparable to features of an unattributed black-figure mastos in the British Museum, dated to ca. 525 B.C. on the basis of its figural style.²⁴ Later versions have thicker walls, a more bulging, hemispherical profile, and larger, acorn-shaped nipples.²⁵ Mastos 2 (Fig. 3) is a transitional form with heavier walls, but a conical nipple. Mastos 3 (Fig. 4) is a fragment of a late mastos with thicker walls and less careful application of ornament. Its profile is similar to that of Munich 2003, which is dated 510–500 B.C.

19. Beazley 1928, p. 4, n. 2, on handles. In the Corinthian examples the handles are horizontal skyphos handles.

20. Payne [1931] 1971, p. 312, n. 2, nos. 999, 1000, catalogued as Middle Corinthian (600–575 B.C.) but possibly later; Amyx (1988, p. 503) suggests a Late Corinthian I date (570–550 B.C.). Bothmer (1975, p. 123) states incorrectly that the earliest-known mastos is a black-glazed example with black-figure subsidiary decoration at Corinth. Nancy Bookidis and Ann Brownlee (pers. comm., Oct. 2000) concur that no early black-glazed mastoi exist in the collection in Corinth.

21. Greifenhagen 1977, p. 135. Three mastoi appear hanging behind symposiasts on a cup by the KX Painter, Samos 1280 (575–570 B.C.), *ABV* 26, no. 27; *Samos XXII*, no. 200, pls. 37–38 (= Paspapyridi-Karusu 1937, pl. 57.1). Also on a skyphos by the KX Painter in Athens, NM 640 (585–580 B.C.), a figure

carries what looks like a footed mastos; see *CVA* Athens 4 [Greece 4], pl. 3.2 and commentary, pp. 15–16 (= Paspapyridi-Karusu 1937, pl. 58.1). Both of these cups have previously been attributed to Sophilos.

22. Greifenhagen (1977, pp. 135–137) lists twelve Attic black-figure examples in rough chronological order; Mertens (1979, p. 23, n. 16) adds several others. The latest black-figured mastos is probably the white-ground Munich 2003, dated by Mertens (1977, p. 87, pl. 12.3) to 510–500 B.C. on the basis of its black-figure style. Flat-bottomed mastoid cups continue the form to ca. 475 B.C. The Sotades workshop revives the form in the mid-5th century B.C. (British Museum D9, D10).

23. Greifenhagen 1977, pp. 134–135; Mertens 1979, p. 23. It is likely that the same potters made mastoi for decoration in black-figure and black-glaze. Unfortunately, most of the mastoi are published without profile

drawings, making studies of the potters difficult. For other published black-glaze mastoi, see Dohan 1934, p. 530 (Philadelphia, University Museum, MS 4869); *CVA* Adria 2 [Italy 65], pl. 28 [2941]:9, pl. 29 [2942]:1 (Adria, IG 2291, inv. Bocchi A32); *CVA* Adria 2 [Italy 65], pl. 29 [2942]:2 (Adria, inv. Civico A256). Two fragments preserving only nipples with surrounding decorative bands may or may not be figural: Samos K 6891 (*Samos XXII*, no. 181, pl. 35); and Heidelberg S23, *CVA* Heidelberg 4 [Germany 31], pl. 165 [1504]:4.

24. British Museum B377, Greifenhagen 1977, pl. 38.1–2.

25. The three black-figure mastoi by Psiax have hollow nipples with beads within to create a rattling effect when lifted; see Mertens 1979, p. 23. Mertens does not give a firm date for these, but links them with Psiax's association with Nikosthenes (ca. 525–500 B.C.).

The contexts of the three mastoi from the Agora agree with this proposed typological development. Mastos 1 is from the use fill of a well deposit, G 15:2, closed around 525 B.C.²⁶ Mastos 2 comes from deposit Q 12:3, known as the Stoa Gutter Well, closed in association with the Persian destruction of Athens in 480.²⁷ Material from this deposit ranges from 525 to 480 B.C.; thus, 2 could comfortably date after 1. Mastos 3 comes from a deposit, R 12:3, closed ca. 500.²⁸ Each of these deposits contained examples of domestic pottery, and it is likely that the mastoi represented an exotic element of a private sympotic set.

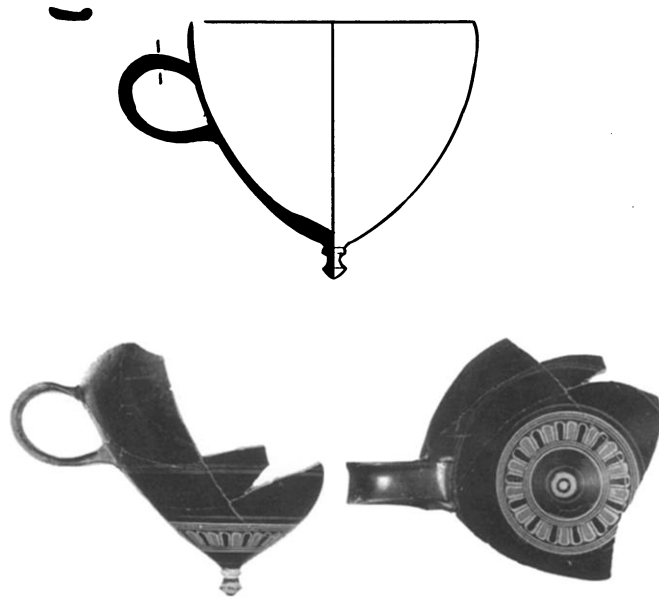


Figure 2. Mastos 1 (P 1217). Scale 2:5.
Courtesy Agora Excavations, drawing K. M. Lynch.

1 P 1217 Mastos

Fig. 2

G 15:2

H. 8.4 cm; est. Diam. 5.2 cm

Complete profile preserved. Missing much of wall, one vertical strap handle preserved. Very thin walled and light, with lustrous black glaze. Slightly convex profile; biconical nipple separated from body by a raised fillet. Concave strap handle attached below rim to mid-body.

Nipple reserved with three lines of black glaze: below tip, at carination, and below fillet. On lower wall, a reserved band with a frieze of alternating black and red tongues. Above and below the tongues, three very fine, equally spaced lines. Tongues separated by thin relief lines. Tiny added red dots at tips of scalloped upper edge of tongue frieze. Added red lines: single line in the black-glazed band above the nipple; single below reserved band; double above the reserved band; double at base of strap handle; single at the top attachment of strap handle (fugitive). Added red on sides of handle. Interior black glaze.

Date: period of use, 550–525 B.C.

26. Unpublished. See Shear 1933, p. 465; *Agora XII*, p. 391; *Agora XXI*, p. 98.

27. Roberts 1986, p. 30. On Persian destruction deposits, see Shear 1993.

28. Thompson 1956, p. 61.



Figure 3. Mastos 2 (P 24556).
Scale 2:5. Courtesy Agora Excavations,
drawing K. M. Lynch.

2 P 24556 Mastos

Fig. 3

Q 12:3 (Stoa Gutter Well)

P.H. 5.0 cm; P. Diam. 7.25 cm

Missing handles and much of upper wall. Dull and streaky black glaze. Bulging conical profile; flat, conical nipple. Heavy wall, especially at nipple. Nipple with black-glazed top, reserved below. Bottom of wall reserved with bands of decoration: frieze of irregular black-glazed tongues separated by vertical relief lines between two dilute horizontal lines; row of dicing dots between two thin, dilute lines; darker dilute line; wide streaky black-glazed band; uneven dilute line. No trace of added red lines. Interior black glaze.

Date: before 480 B.C.

Published: Roberts 1986, p. 30, no. 63, fig. 20 (profile).

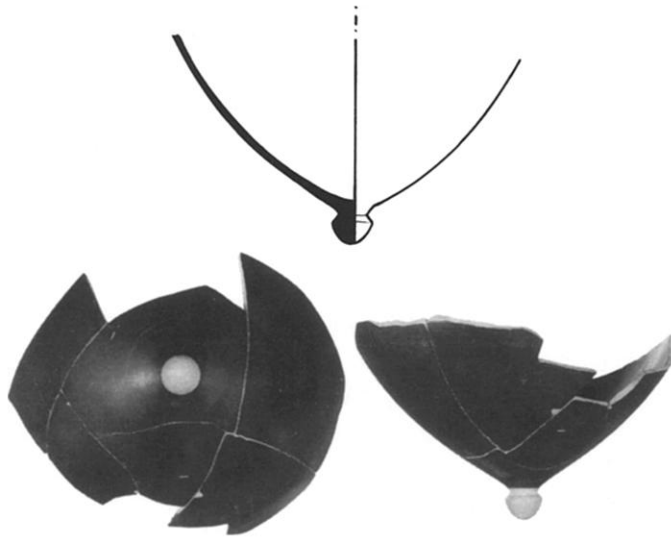


Figure 4. Mastos 3 (P 25277).
Scale 2:5. Courtesy Agora Excavations,
drawing K. M. Lynch.

3 P 25277 Mastos

Fig. 4

R 12:3

P.H. 6.5 cm; P. Diam. 10.8 cm

Missing handles and much of upper wall. Good black glaze. Trace of reserved handle panel indicates at least one horizontal cup handle. Bulging conical profile; acorn-shaped nipple. Nipple and very bottom of wall reserved. No trace of added red lines. Interior black glaze.

Date: last quarter of the 6th century B.C.

Well in Stoa Shop II; see discussion in Thompson 1956, p. 61, pl. 19:c-g.

Παίζω ἢ χέζω?
 A CONTEXTUAL APPROACH TO *PESSOI*
 (GAMING PIECES, COUNTERS, OR
 CONVENIENT WIPES?)

JOHN K. PAPADOPOULOS

Much has been written about small disks or roundels of clay fashioned from sherds of pottery by chipping and smoothing around the edges.²⁹ They are common occurrences in various types of deposits in the area of the Classical Agora, and especially common in many of the Late Geometric and Early Archaic wells. Among numerous such contexts, I illustrate here only a selected number of disks from well I 13:4 (Fig. 5), a well deep below the Middle Stoa excavated in 1996 that was abandoned ca. 700 B.C.³⁰ In discussing the possible function of the disks, Eva Brann writes:

What they were used for, whether for counters, pucks, covers or plugs, is uncertain. Those with holes . . . may have had a string to serve as the handle of a lid. Remains of plugs have actually been found in Mycenaean stirrup jars . . . but the 7th century has no common round-mouthed, narrow-necked shape. Some, most likely, were game-counters. Several games requiring sherd disks were played in the streets and public places of Athens (cf. Pauly-Wissowa, *R.E.*, “Spiele”) and the Agora even possesses a die of the period (Agora MC 84).³¹

Among these various functions, that of gaming pieces (*peSSI*) has been singled out by philologists, most recently by Leslie Kurke, who has written much on Greek board games and how to play—or not play—them.³² The examples most commonly illustrated from the area of the Classical Agora are those from the so-called Protoattic “votive deposit” published by Dorothy Burr.³³ Not all of these, however, were “ornamented bits of old pottery,” as Kurke maintains.³⁴ In addition to terracotta disks—including one of Corinthian fabric and several cut from coarse undecorated pottery—the deposit yielded a number of related stone disks, some marked with crosses.³⁵ It is exactly small stones such as these and smoothed circular disks of clay that were used for various board games, including that in the celebrated scene of Ajax and Achilles on the Vatican amphora (Fig. 6).

The purpose of this note is to return to a multifunctional interpretation for the disks, to suggest a possible further interpretation not noted in previous scholarship, to emphasize the evidence of context—which is often overlooked—and to draw attention to the fact that a *πεσσο* in Greek does not refer only to an oval-shaped stone for playing board games.³⁶

The great variety in the size of the disks and the type of vessel from which they were fashioned highlights the fact that not all served the same function. Of the examples assembled in Figure 5, the smallest have a diameter of 0.030 m and a thickness of 0.006 m, whereas the largest measure 0.098–0.105 m in diameter, with a thickness of 0.017–0.022 m. Many are cut from earlier decorated pots ranging in date from Protogeometric through Late Geometric. Others are fragments from various coarseware

29. See, among others, Burr 1933, pp. 546, 603–604; Young 1939, pp. 86, 191–192, figs. 57, 142, nos. XVII 23 and C 163–173; Brann 1961, p. 342, under no. F 62; Lalonde 1968, p. 131.

30. Camp 1999, pp. 260–262.

31. Brann 1961, p. 342, no. F 62; with further reference to *Corinth* XII, pp. 217–222.

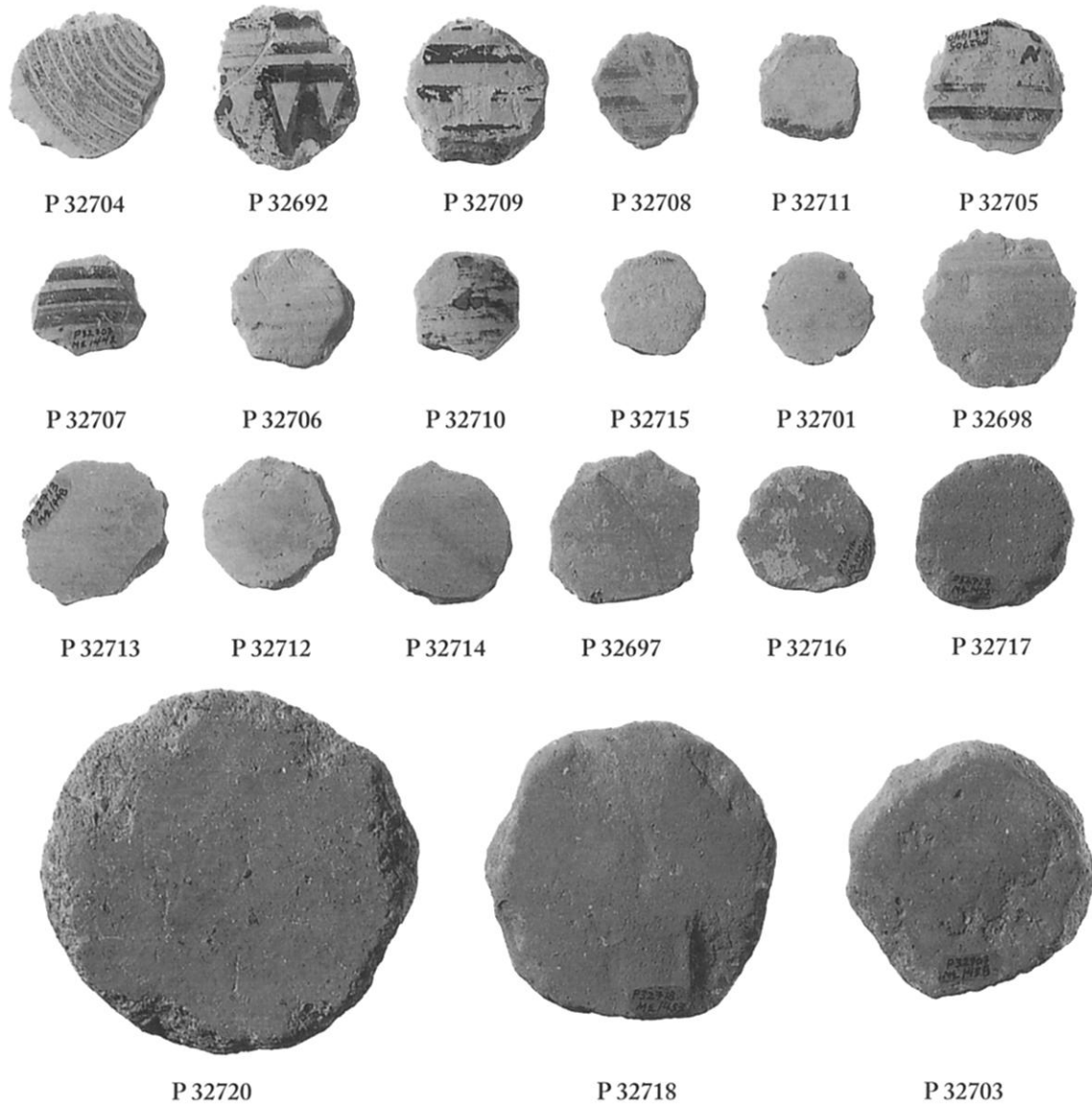
32. Kurke 1999a; 1999b, esp. pp. 254–274. The fullest overview of board games (*Iusoria tabula*) remains that in *RE* XIII.2, 1927, cols. 1900–2029 (H. Lamer).

33. Burr 1933; Kurke 1999b, p. 274, fig. 9.

34. Kurke 1999b, p. 273.

35. Burr 1933, p. 603, fig. 71, nos. 275–276.

36. LSJ s.v. *πεσσο*.



vessels, including massive pithoi. Although many of the disks illustrated in Figure 5 may have been used as gaming pieces, others, such as the three examples shown on the bottom row, are far less likely to have served such a function.

In any discussion of the uses for such disks, the evidence of context is paramount. A few of the disks, such as those first published by Burr, clearly derive from a context with cultic overtones. In discussing the twelve clay disks from the 5th-century triangular hieron, Gerald Lalonde noted that although their provenience may tempt some scholars to identify them as “cult objects, their appearance suggests nothing so much as simple jar-stoppers.”³⁷ Occasionally, disks, specifically identified as *pessoi* by their excavators, are found in tombs, such as the group of Archaic disks recovered from tomb 11 at Eretria.³⁸ Such contexts, however, are the exceptions, not the rule.

Figure 5. Clay disks fashioned from Protogeometric and Geometric potsherds from well I 13:4.
Courtesy Agora Excavations

37. Lalonde 1968, p. 131.

38. Eretria Museum, inv. 16588–16595. The majority are fashioned from coarseware or cooking vessels; only one is actually from a decorated pot.

Figure 6. Detail, Athenian black-figure belly amphora by Exekias, ca. 540–530 B.C. Vatican Museum, inv. 344. Courtesy Hirmer Verlag GmbH



In Athens, the vast majority of disks were found in abandoned wells, filled with either domestic refuse or the debris from potters' workshops.³⁹ The fill of the average well consists of the period-of-use fill at the bottom—often comprising plain or banded pots inadvertently dropped by their owners in the process of extracting water—below a dumped fill. Apart from the sometimes copious quantities of potters' debris found in some of the wells, the dumped fill, which usually contained the most interesting pottery and other small finds, was normally deposited all at the same time when the well was abandoned in order to prevent people from falling in.⁴⁰ Brann wrote that the dumped fill “was very probably carted from near-by rubbish heaps or swept together from local debris. It contains, therefore, the *disiecta membra* of the furnishings of the neighborhood pantries, kitchens, courtyards, burial plots, and sanctuaries, but from the latter two there are only the most fragmentary remains.”⁴¹ Some wells contained only a handful of clay disks, while others produced numerous examples—occasionally twenty or more disks—among a fill that yielded, on average, anywhere between a few hundred sherds to several thousand. The quantity and varying sizes of clay disks in such contexts not only underscore a multifunctional purpose, but also suggest that they were used as common, everyday items, as was stated by Brann.

A further function is plausibly suggested both by the evidence of context as well as by the meaning of *pessos*. The word *πεσσός* in Greek has a variety of meanings. In addition to referring to a stone for playing board games, it can also mean a “medicated plug of wool or lint to be introduced into the vagina, anus, etc., *pessary*.”⁴² It is from *pessos* that the English word *pessary* derives, and it is this meaning, in both Greek and English, that complicates the issue. In the same way that we cannot be sure whether the gaming pieces on Exekias's amphora were of stone or clay, we cannot be sure of the material that is used by the man on the cup interior, now in Boston (Fig. 7). In attributing the cup fragment to the Ambrosios Painter, John Beazley laconically described the scene as “man ἀποψώμενος”

39. See *Agora VIII*, pp. 107–108; Papadopoulos 1996; Papadopoulos, forthcoming.

40. *Agora VIII*, p. 108.

41. *Agora VIII*, p. 108.

42. LSJ s.v. *πεσσός*.



Figure 7. Athenian red-figure kylix tondo fragment, with edges trimmed, by the Ambrosios Painter, ca. 510–500 B.C. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Res. 08.31 b (from Orvieto). Courtesy Museum

(ἀποψάω meaning “wipe off,” “wipe oneself”).⁴³ It is ironic that the edges of the fragment itself are trimmed to define a disk resembling a *peplos*. A bearded man wearing a cloak loosely over his shoulders squats, leaning against a staff. According to Emily Vermeule, following Edward Perry Warren, he is using one of the proverbial three stones, *τρεις εισιν ικανοι πρωκτον απομαξαι λιθοι*.⁴⁴ Vermeule goes on to cite Paul Hartwig’s suggestion that this representation illustrates the passage in Aristophanes’ *Peace* in which Trygaeus, taking a corselet from the arms dealer, notes:

ἐναποπατεῖν γάρ ἐστ’ ἐπιτήδειος πάνυ—
Look, this will make a handy crapper—

concluding:

ὦδί, παραθέντι τρεῖς λίθους. οὐ δεξιῶς;
this way, if I prop it up with three stones. Neat, eh?⁴⁵

In *Acharnians*, Aristophanes clearly states that a stone was one means—evidently the most common—for wiping oneself:

. . . ὁ δὲ λίθον λαβεῖν
βουλόμενος ἐν σκότῳ λάβοι
τῇ χειρὶ πέλεθον ἀρτίως κεχρισμένον·
ἐπάξειεν δ’ ἔχων
τὸν μάρμαρον, κάπειθ’ ἀμαρ-
τῶν βάλοι Κρατῖνον.

43. *ARV*² 174, no. 22. For the iconography of defecation in Athenian vase painting, see, most recently, Cohen and Shapiro 2002, pp. 88–89, pl. 22:d–e, with references.

44. Vermeule 1969, p. 14, no. 14, pl. 11.2.

45. Ar. *Pax* 1228, 1230, J. Henderson, trans., Cambridge, Mass., 1998.

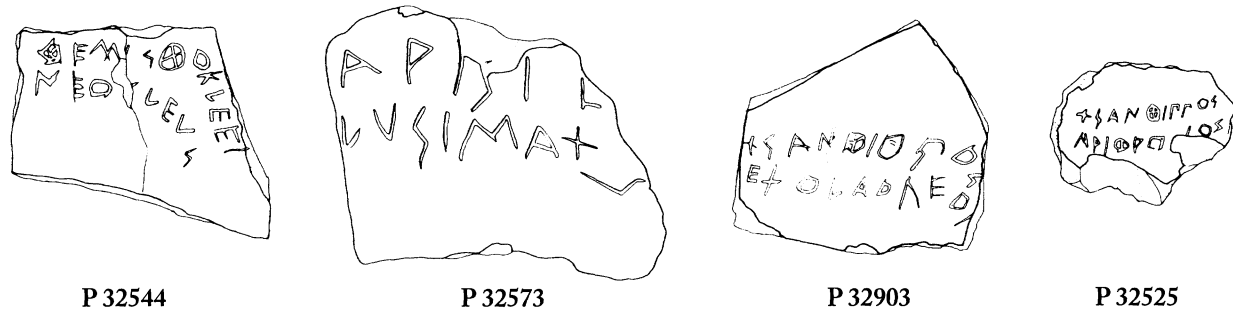


Figure 8. Selected ostraka from the area of the Classical Agora. Left to right: Themistokles, Aristeides, Xanthippos, Xanthippos. Scale 1:2. Courtesy Agora Excavations, drawing A. Hooton.

... and when he wants to grab a stone
I hope in the darkness
he grabs in his hand a fresh-shat turd,
and holding that glittering missile
let him charge at his foe, then miss him
and hit Kratinos!⁴⁶

The same was true in 19th-century England, if the statement attributed to Alfred Lord Tennyson is correct: “I wipes me ass [arse] on a piece of grass or sometimes on a stone.”⁴⁷

Such a meaning is usually limited to stones. But in the same way that Kurke suggests that clay disks were used as gaming pieces, I wonder whether they also served for wiping oneself? Their context—common neighborhood rubbish or debris from potters’ establishments dumped into abandoned wells—in Late Geometric and Archaic Athens is certainly suggestive. Many of the clay disks were found in wells that also contained stone disks or conveniently shaped pebbles. And it is useful to remember that public latrines, with running water, were a luxury not known in Athens until Roman Imperial times.⁴⁸ In what context other than common household debris would we expect to find discarded wipes in the Late Geometric or Archaic period?

If some of the numerous clay disks recovered from early Athenian wells were used in the manner illustrated in Figure 7, then their context—if not their quantity—is remarkably similar to another class of Athenian sherds: ostraka (Fig. 8). At about the same time when the Agora excavators uncovered the well with the *pesoi* (Fig. 5), they also came across a “collection of about 144 ostraka found scattered throughout a layer of fill in the area behind a Classical commercial building.”⁴⁹ Although it is clear that many ostraka are simply too large and cumbersome to have served as convenient wipes, others seem ideally shaped. Again, it is their context that is suggestive, particularly that of the numerous examples thus far recovered from the Agora and Kerameikos excavations. Indeed, it is clear that many of the latter, especially those from the Kerameikos, were dumped a long way from their intended place of use in any ostracism.⁵⁰ Epigraphers and philologists have been reluctant to consider the context and, more particularly, the afterlife of ostraka. And it is to them that I pose the following question: is it possible that some Athenians used some of the ostraka, appropriately inscribed with the name of a worthy political figure—and *pesoi*—in a manner not unlike that illustrated in Figure 7?

46. *Ar. Ach.* 1168–1173, J. Henderson, trans., Cambridge, Mass., 1998.

47. Quoted by Vermeule 1969, p. 14. The rhyme works as well in English and American pronunciations using arse or ass. For a perceptive treatment of the fate of human waste, see Laporte 2000.

48. *Agora XIV*, p. 197.

49. Camp 1999, p. 268. For the contexts of other ostraka, see *Agora XXV*.

50. Although the *ekklesia* regularly met at the Pnyx, the one occasion when the Demos converged on the Agora was when an ostracism took place; see *Agora XIV*, pp. 50–51.

A MOLDMADE BOWL OF Ἀργεῖος

SUSAN I. ROTROFF

Examination of the context pottery from the building fill of the Middle Stoa brought to light a rare instance of an Attic moldmade bowl with a signature.⁵¹

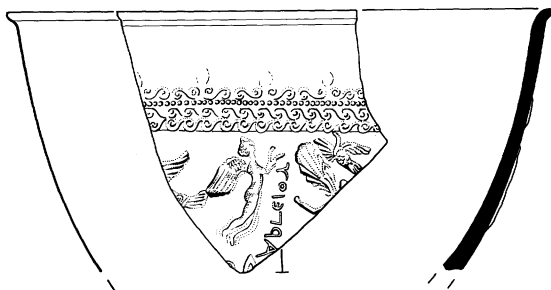


Figure 9. Moldmade bowl of Ἀργεῖος (P 31702). Scale 1:2. Courtesy Agora Excavations, drawing A. Hooton.

P 31702 Moldmade bowl

Fig. 9

H–K 12–14 (Middle Stoa Building Fill)

P.H. 6.6 cm; est. Diam. 14.5 cm

Single fragment preserving part of wall from tip of calyx to rim.

Calyx: diamond-shaped tip of fern preserved, with tips of two petals of rosette to left. Wall (left to right): large bird flying left (tail and right wing preserved); Eros flying right, his arms upraised in front of him; signature APΓEIOY, retrograde and vertical, reading from bottom to top; frontal Nike (right wing, right lower arm, top of head, trace of top of left wing [not shown in drawing] preserved), small bird flying left above her. Rim: simplified guilloche, beading, double spirals crowned by leaves. Scraped groove with milto below slightly outturned rim. Metallic black gloss, partly missing outside; fine reddish yellow fabric (5YR 6/6) with tiny sparkling inclusions.

The date of the fragment can be established with some assurance. Moldmade bowls were first made in Athens in the second half of the 3rd century, probably beginning in 224.⁵² A lower terminus of ca. 175 for this new fragment is indicated by both stratigraphic and stylistic criteria. Its context, the building fill of the Middle Stoa, contained about 1,500 stamped amphora handles. With five exceptions that may be dismissed as Late Hellenistic intrusions, the latest date to 183 or 182 b.c., or perhaps fifteen years later,⁵³ providing a date in the first quarter of the 2nd century or earlier for the fragment in question. The motifs on the fragment point to the same conclusion, for they are amply paralleled on bowls of the Workshop of Bion, which was active between ca. 224 and 175 b.c.⁵⁴ Good examples of the relevant motifs, at precisely the same size, can be found on the following published Athenian bowls:

Calyx P 7001, P 20190: *Agora XXII*, pp. 62, 64, nos. 154, 168, pls. 28, 31, 78, 95 (both signed Βίωvos)

51. Including this new piece, only seventeen signed bowls are known from the Agora, six of which date before the middle of the 2nd century. For signatures on bowls from the Agora, see *Agora XXII*, pp. 40–41.

52. For a detailed explanation of this surprisingly precise date, see *Agora XXII*, pp. 6–13.

53. Virginia Grace dates the latest Rhodian and Knidian amphoras to 183 or 182 (Grace 1985). On the basis of his reappraisal of the Rhodian chronology, Gerald Finkielsztein puts the closing date of the fill at ca. 169/167 (Finkielsztein 2001, p. 177).

54. For the Workshop of Bion, see *Agora XXII*, pp. 26–27.

Frontal Nike	P 401: <i>Agora XXII</i> , p. 62, no. 152, pls. 28, 78
Small bird flying left	P 401, P 7001: <i>Agora XXII</i> , p. 62, nos. 152, 154, pls. 28, 78 (the latter signed Βίωνος)
Rim pattern	P 18654, P 18646: <i>Agora XXII</i> , p. 59, nos. 125, 130, pls. 24, 25

The flying Eros on the new fragment is not paralleled within the Workshop of Bion, but precisely the same figure, at a smaller scale, appears on bowls of Class 1.⁵⁵ Contexts suggest that bowls of Class 1 are later than those of the Workshop of Bion, dating in the second quarter of the 2nd century. They share several motifs with the earlier workshop, but in all cases at a smaller size, showing that Class 1 is derivative from the Workshop of Bion.⁵⁶ The discovery of the Eros motif at larger size in the oeuvre of the Workshop of Bion provides another example of the relationship.

More importantly, however, the new bowl is signed. The maker inscribed his name lightly in the mold, so that it appears in very low and delicate relief on the bowl, barely visible except in raking light. This explains how the fragment escaped inventory at the time of discovery. As is normal on moldmade bowls, the name is given in the genitive: Ἀργείου. The hand appears to be different from the one that signed two bowls of this workshop with the name Bion,⁵⁷ demonstrating that at least two craftsmen worked there, probably at about the same time.

Several individuals named Ἀργεῖος are known from Hellenistic Athens.⁵⁸ The name could also, however, be an ethnic, and in this connection it is worth noting that there is an Argive workshop that produced bowls with marked similarities to those produced by the Attic Workshop of Bion. Gérard Siebert has described the output of an Argive shop that signs its work with a complex monogram (henceforth, the Argive Monogram Workshop).⁵⁹ By his estimation, it is the earliest of the Argive workshops, commencing production around 220, and therefore about contemporary with the Workshop of Bion.⁶⁰ It employs some motifs that are so closely similar to those used by the Athenian shop that they can only be explained by mechanical copying or shared stamping devices. The bird

55. P 589, P 9849, P 25444: Thompson 1934, pp. 378–379, D 34, fig. 65; *Agora XXII*, p. 61, no. 143, pl. 26 (at far left and right in the photograph), and no. 145, pl. 27 (just right of center in the photograph). The Eros on bowls of Class 1 measures 2.5 cm from toe to head, as opposed to 2.8 cm on the fragment under consideration here.

56. For Class 1, see *Agora XXII*, p. 30. The other matching motifs of different sizes that support the relationship are the gorgoneion medallion (cf. P 11426, P 401 [*Agora XXII*,

pp. 59, 62, nos. 124, 152, pls. 24, 28, 78] from the Workshop of Bion with P 13684 [p. 61, no. 144, pl. 27] of Class 1); Athena Parthenos medallion (cf. P 18662 [*Agora XXII*, p. 56, no. 104, pls. 18, 98] of the Workshop of Bion with P 12068 [p. 68, no. 208, pl. 41] of Class 1); frontal Nike (cf. P 401 [*Agora XXII*, p. 62, no. 152, pls. 28, 78] and the fragment published here, both of the Workshop of Bion, with P 9849 [p. 61, no. 143, pl. 26] of Class 1); Eros on a panther (cf. P 16208 [*Agora XXII*, p. 63, no. 163, pl. 30] of the Workshop of

Bion with P 23606 [p. 63, no. 157, pls. 29, 79] of Class 1); Eros on a goat (cf. P 8101 [*Agora XXII*, p. 64, no. 169, pl. 31] of the Workshop of Bion with P 12062, P 23606 [pp. 62–63, nos. 156, 157, pls. 29, 78] of Class 1).

57. P 7001, P 20190: *Agora XXII*, pp. 62, 64, nos. 154, 168, pls. 28, 31, 78.

58. Osborne and Byrne 1994, s.v. Ἀργεῖος.

59. Siebert 1978, pp. 50–63. The monogram cannot be read with certainty, but it cannot represent either of the names in question here (Argeios, Bion).

60. Siebert 1978, p. 170.

flying left that occurs on the fragment published here and on many other bowls from the same shop is very close to a bird found on bowls of the Argive Monogram Workshop (but not on other Argive bowls).⁶¹ The rampant goats common within the Workshop of Bion are also closely similar to those on Argive bowls.⁶² Charles Edwards, who examined and measured Attic and Argive fragments with the bird motif, reported that the Argive motif was smaller than, and thus derivative from, the Attic one.⁶³ There are also compositional similarities between the Argive and the Attic bowls: unlike other Argive workshops, but similarly to the Workshop of Bion, bowls of the Argive Monogram Workshop display a single row of figures above a leafy calyx and, also like bowls of Bion's workshop, the points of the guilloche of the rim pattern are almost always oriented to the right.

It is clear, then, that there was a close relationship of some sort between the Argive Monogram Workshop and the Attic Workshop of Bion. The reduced size of the bird motif in the Argive repertoire shows that the Argive shop borrowed motifs from the Attic one. The Ἀργεῖος signature, however, invites further speculation. What lies behind the name is difficult to say—an Argive metic, perhaps, or a family with ties in the Peloponnesian city. Such a person, having established his business with some success in Athens, may then have used familial connections in Argos to set up another there. Whoever owned the Workshop of Bion, he was remarkably entrepreneurial. A workshop on the island of Lesbos also manufactured bowls closely similar to those of the Attic shop, of which it is likely to have been a branch.⁶⁴ This degree of enterprise, unusual for the middle years of the Hellenistic period, anticipates by over a century and a half the international manufacturing networks that were to be established by Roman potters in the early years of the Roman empire.⁶⁵

61. Siebert 1978, pp. 53, 354–356, 359, nos. M 45, M 50, M 55, M 87, pls. 27, 28, 30.

62. Cf. P 18666 (*Agora* XXII, p. 56, no. 105, pls. 18, 75, Athens, Workshop of Bion) and Siebert 1978, pp. 57, 357, nos. M 67, M 68, pl. 29 (Argos, Monogram Workshop).

63. Edwards 1986, p. 397, fig. 1.

64. Massa 1992, *passim*, with comments on pp. 243–244; Rotroff 1994, pp. 578–579.

65. For example, the establishment of subsidiary workshops at Pisa, Lyon, and Ephesos by manufacturers of Arretine pottery (Zabehlicky-Scheffenecker 1995).

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