

# An Inscribed Terracotta Ball in Boston

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A MINIATURE TERRACOTTA BALL, about  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inches in diameter, and richly decorated with figures and inscriptions, was acquired by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in 1963 and has been published by Dr Herbert Hoffmann in the *Museum Bulletin*.<sup>1</sup> One of the inscriptions, however, was not read at the time; its interpretation makes it necessary to discuss the ball once more, even at the cost of some repetition (see PLATES 1 and 2, figures 1–6).

Our object is a hollow and somewhat flattened sphere. When shaken, it produces a clear rattle, as if a pebble had been baked inside. Placed on a level surface, it easily rolls to an upside-down position, *i.e.* it is top-heavy. The ball was probably made in two pieces, one consisting of the bottom cap and the middle part, and the other, of the top cap (this is speculation, for I could not find any joints between the middle parts and either of the caps, although they project slightly). The lower part was then hollowed out, while the top cap remained solid. The lack of balance did not matter, for a hole which passes through the ball vertically proves that it was suspended from a string. The top hole is more worn than the bottom hole; the former has applied red inside (such as is used for the top and bottom caps), while the latter has black dirt around it. Thus a string was passed through and knotted at the bottom, and the toy could be swung to make the rattle sound. The object is clearly a child's rattle.

At the same time, the profile suggests strongly that the rattle imitates a playing ball. The two projecting caps enclose a broad and bulging strip that runs horizontally. Although I know of no certain parallels for this method of constructing a ball, it seems obvious that it would have consisted of three strips of leather, one rectangular and two circular, which were sown together and stuffed with wool or a

<sup>1</sup> "A Clay Ball of Myrrhine," *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* 61 (1963) no. 323, 20–22, figs. 1–3. I want to thank Drs Cornelius C. Vermeule and Herbert Hoffmann for their assistance and for sending me photographs taken by the Museum of Fine Arts.

similar material.<sup>2</sup> Thus the ball is what the Romans called a *harpastum* or small stuffed ball. To be sure, shape is the only evidence for this identification, for the decoration of the ball is derived from vase painting.

The two caps are decorated with applied red, which was put on in two layers. Centered around the suspension holes at top and bottom are incised palmettes, rather poorly drawn, but done with a fine instrument—no doubt the same that was used for the graffito inscriptions surrounding the palmettes (see PLATE 2, figures 5–6).<sup>3</sup> The central zone has a figured frieze in black-glaze silhouette technique and framed above and below by a black line (PLATE 1, figures 1–4).<sup>4</sup> The glaze is uneven and has flaked off in some places; in particular, the hollow in one of the discuses seems to be due to a blister (PLATE 1, figure 2). On the whole, the decoration is poorly done, and the ball is ambitious rather than beautiful. The scenes have been described by Hoffmann. In the center, a bearded man with legs crossed, himation over his shoulder, and leaning on a stick, presents a flower to a boy wearing a himation and accompanied by his dog. Behind the man a fawn is also interested in the flower (PLATE 1, figures 1 and 3). To the left of this scene, two athletes are practicing the discus throw (PLATE 1,

<sup>2</sup> A ball pictured on a RF squat lekythos in Altenburg (late fifth century and perhaps Attic) may show similar stitching, but this is quite uncertain; see *CVA Altenburg*, fasc. 2, pl. 73,2. For a full bibliography on rattles, see D. M. Robinson, *Excavations at Olynthus X* (Baltimore 1941) 494–500 under no. 2561. Our ball may be a miniature version, but it may also be in scale; for such small balls, see e.g. [Hippocrates], *Περὶ ἄρθρων* 3, where a small hard ball οἶαι πολλὰ ἐκ τῶν πολλῶν σκντέων ῥάπτονται is put in the armpit to assist in setting a dislocated shoulder.

<sup>3</sup> Palmettes with circular outlines and inscribed in a tendril are frequent on late sixth-century red-figure; see P. Jacobsthal, *Ornamente griechischer Vasen* (Berlin 1927) pls. 73a and 75a. The tendrils may curl inward: *ibid.* pl. 44a (Oltos). A *Gegenpalmette* is often found, but the short three-leaved design above the tendrils of our palmettes is rather a *Zwickelpalmette*, for which see *ibid.* p.162. These are usually larger in our period than they are on the ball: Jacobsthal's examples of short *Zwickelpalmetten* are classical (pls. 55a and 103c). However, our palmettes are unusual in being used around a central point and a large *Zwickelpalmette* would have been inappropriate. I am not familiar with other examples of incised Attic palmettes, which must be very hard to draw. Painted palmettes similar to ours are common on the bottoms of Paidikos alabastra, ARV<sup>2</sup> 98–101; but they do not have the *Zwickelpalmette*.

<sup>4</sup> For some early examples in this technique, see e.g. J. D. Beazley, *Attic Red-figure Vase Painters*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford 1963) 235; E. Haspels, *Attic Black-figured Lekythoi I* (Paris 1936) 102 (Pasiades alabastra); J. D. Beazley and F. Magi, *La raccolta B. Guglielmi nel Museo Gregoriano Etrusco* (Città del Vaticano 1939) 49 no. 53 and pl. 18 (Lekythos, third quarter of sixth century); E. Pfuhl, *Malerei und Zeichnung I* (Munich 1923) 238. For silhouette technique on fifth-century BF lekythoi, see Haspels, *op.cit.* index, s.v. SILHOUETTE.

figure 2).<sup>5</sup> The athlete on the left is beginning the movement of the throw by switching the discus from the left (or carrying) hand to the right (or throwing) hand. The athlete on the right is swinging the discus back with his right hand; he is about to crouch in the famous Myronian position. The right-hand scene shows two youths practicing with javelins; that on the left is preparing to throw his spear to the right (he looks left, at the thong, as was customary in distance throwing; see PLATE 1, figure 3), while his companion is winding the throwing thong around his javelin (PLATE 1, figure 4). Between the two are a stool with clothes and two javelins stuck in the ground.<sup>6</sup> The style of these figures is hard to assess, but the stiffness of the folds of the two himatia and the sharp articulation of the legs suggest that ours is an early example of silhouette technique: Hoffmann dates the ball *ca.* 500 B.C. The letter forms of the painted inscription and the earlier graffiti would seem to agree with this date (see below).

There are four inscriptions on the ball. First, in the field of the figured scene, is the dipinto: *Μυρρίνες εἰμί*, and below: *ναίχι*. This shows that the ball was a bespoke piece—probably a gift. Secondly, on the bottom cap is the incised inscription: *Μυρρίνες εἰμί*, done with the same fine point used for the palmette, and hence presumably done by the vase painter in the shop (PLATE 2, figure 5). Thirdly, on the top cap, and in the same position as the last, is the graffito: *ἡο παῖς καλός*, done by the same hand as the graffito on the bottom cap (PLATE 2, figure 6). This last inscription starts with very wide spacing between the letters H, O and Π, but the spacing becomes narrower so that the text completes the circle;<sup>7</sup> at the end is a triple interpoint to indicate the beginning of the text. On the top cap is also a second graffito, by a different hand, and no doubt put on later, to which we shall return.

Barring perhaps this last inscription, the decoration just described was on the ball when it was given to Myrrhine. The object is not

<sup>5</sup> The figure on the left is a youth; that on the right is drawn as bearded by Miss Chapman in the *Bulletin* (*supra* n.1) fig. 1, but the photograph leaves the detail uncertain. Hoffmann (*ibid.* 21) speaks of a youth. This seems to be right.

<sup>6</sup> Youth and admirer; see *infra* n.13. For the position of the athletes, see E. N. Gardiner, *Athletics of the Ancient World* (Oxford 1930) 154–68 (discus) and 169–76 (javelin); Hoffmann, *Bulletin* (*supra* n.1) 21 and nn.

<sup>7</sup> For such irregularities, cf. TAPA 79 (1948) 184. The two graffiti on the caps (inscriptions 2 and 3) and the dipinto (1) show some similarities of letter forms, especially *mu* and the two forms of *rho* in 1 and 2 (see also n.16).

unique. Somewhat similar is a hollow terracotta ball with a slight rattle, of the same size as ours, which was found in a Hellenistic tomb on Samothrace, a tomb of two adolescents rather than of small children. This ball imitates an inflated ball (or *follis*) sewn together from twelve patches in the form of pentagons, and it clearly shows the place for letting in the air. As Professor Helen Bacon has pointed out to me, this ball resembles the description of the globe in Plato's *Phaedo*, where the globe is compared to a ball.<sup>8</sup> The find is interesting also in showing that our ball need not have belonged to a small child, but that such objects were sometimes kept to a later age. Unfortunately, it is impossible to identify Myrrhine, since the name is common in Athens; it occurs e.g. in the Peisistratid family.<sup>9</sup> Little earlier than our ball is a *phormiskos*, or funerary ritual clay object, from the Athenian Cerameicus, which shows a certain Myrrhine stretched out

<sup>8</sup> I owe knowledge of the ball from Samothrace to Miss Bacon; cf. Plato, *Phaedo* 110 B 6-7: ὡς περ αἱ δωδεκάσκυτοι σφαῖραι. The Samothrace ball is published by Mrs. E. B. Dusenbury, *Archaeology* 12 (1959) 168-69 and fig. 8. It disproves the theory of S. Mender, *Das Ballspiel im Leben der Völker* (Münster 1956) 78 n.12, that inflated balls are not found before the middle of the first century B.C. Mrs. Dusenbury has given me much additional information; she says that contrary to the description in *Archaeology* the ball is hollow, not solid, and has a bit of a rattle which is not certainly intentional. She has called my attention to a parallel from Thasos, *BCH* 78 (1954) 242f, fig. 27 (miniature ball with rattle and pierced, from a Hellenistic tomb). Most of the spherical objects found in tombs and sanctuaries are, however, not playing balls, but have ritual significance (whereas our balls are clearly simple toys). Cf. e.g. the small balls from the Cerameicus, *Kerameikos: Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen* V.1 (Berlin 1954) 23 and 68, pls. 15 and 157; B. Neutsch, "Tonball mit Totenkultszenen aus der italischen Nekropole von Sala Consiliana," *Apollo, Bolletino dei Musei Provinciali del Salernitano* no. 1 (July/December 1961) 53-66 and figs. 1-7, cf. R. Naumann and B. Neutsch, *Palinuro II (RM Ergänzungsheft 4 [1960] pls. 55,3-5 and 68,3 (bibliography in text); MonAnt 46 (1963) 287-88, figs. 59-61 ("cypress cones" from temple of Cybele on the Palatine); M. P. Nilsson, "Das Ei im Totenkult der Alten," ARW II (1908) 530-46; R. Lullies, *Antike Kleinkunst in Königsberg* (n.d.) nos. 84, 85 (I owe the last two references to Professor E. Vanderpool). The list of these objects could easily be increased from the holdings of many museums.*

Interesting are Egyptian balls which imitate playing balls made of parallel strips: see R. D. Barnett in *The Aegean and the Near East: Studies presented to Hetty Goldman* (Locust Valley [N.Y.] 1956) 237 and pl. 22,4.

<sup>9</sup> Wife of Hippias, Kirchner, *PA* 10,485; possibly a daughter of Peisistratus, schol. Demosth. 23.71 (cf. *RE* 16.1 [1933] 1146 s.v. MYRRHINE). *IG* I<sup>2</sup> 1009, late sixth century funerary inscription, lost (cf. W. Peek, *Griechische Vers-Inschriften* I [Berlin 1955] no. 65), as restored by Miss L. H. Jeffery in *BSA* 57 (1962) 142 no. 54 and in *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece* (Oxford 1961) 269 n.3; the objections of W. M. Calder III, *AJA* 69 (1965) 263 n.10, seem to me not valid. A. E. Raubitschek, *Dedications from the Athenian Acropolis* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1949) no. 201, as restored, but W. Peek, *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der . . . Universität Halle-Wittenberg* 3 (1954) 385, has suggested reading a man's name. I have not been



Figure 1



Figure 2



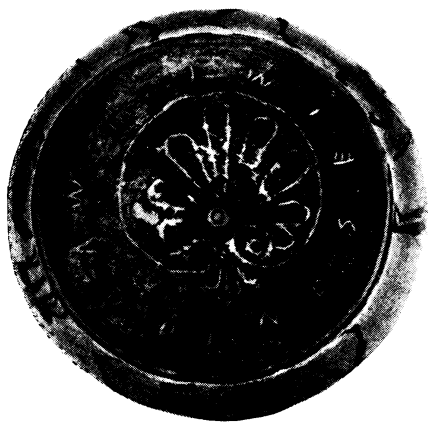
Figure 3



Figure 4

ATTIC TERRACOTTA BALL IN THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON, NO. 63.119  
(scale 1:1)

PLATE 2 IMMERWAHR



*Figure 5. Bottom*



*Figure 6. Top*

ATTIC TERRACOTTA BALL IN BOSTON, NO. 63.119



*Figure 7*

RED-FIGURED ASKOS IN BOSTON, NO. 13.169

on the bier in a prothesis scene.<sup>10</sup> This vase was also made to order and it shows a girl of good family, but she cannot be identified with our Myrrhine.

A toy ball was an appropriate gift for a girl. The early evidence shows balls used in a variety of games, some of which were played by girls. It is true that we have no evidence from Athens for girls' team games comparable to the boys' game shown on the famous base from the Themistoclean wall and on another recently found near the Dipylon. In Sparta, however, such games are mentioned in the literary sources. In Athens, the ἀρρηφόροι (who were between seven and fourteen years of age and who belonged to the first families of the city) had a ball court (σφαιρίστρα) on the Acropolis: their games had no doubt religious significance. We know of three ball games played by girls. First, the ἐφεδρισμός, or piggy back, in which a girl had to carry a companion blindfolded to a spot sometimes marked by the throw of a ball; secondly, a game in which a ball was thrown across a wicket; and finally, a game played alone and at home, in which a number of balls or skeins of wool were juggled in the air, and a question was asked, such as "How long will I live?" This last was specifically a girls' game, whereas the first two were also played by boys. In addition, the simple bouncing of the ball, called ἀπόρραξις, is frequently depicted on South Italian vases of the fourth century B.C.<sup>11</sup> Here the girl is often accompanied by a young man or by Eros.

able to find the courtesan of the time of Themistocles mentioned by Hoffmann in *Bulletin* (*supra* n.1) 21. For later occurrences of the name, both for respectable ladies and courtesans, see Kirchner, *PA s.v.*; *Ar. Lys.* 70, etc. and *SEG* 12.80 (14.25; 16.31) = *ArchEph* 1948/49, 146–53 (first priestess of Athena Nike); S. Karouzou, *AM* 76 (1961) 92ff; Beazley, *AJA* 54 (1950) 319, no. 19; Pape, *Eigennamen*, s.v. MYRRHINE. For the meaning of the name see J. Papademetriou, *ArchEph* 1948/49, 148–9. See also F. Bechtel, *Griechische Frauennamen* (Göttingen 1902) 103.

<sup>10</sup> See *JdI* 61–62 (1946–47) 65 no. 44 and pl. 13; cf. *AA* 1935, 298 fig. 24; J. D. Beazley, *Attic Black-figure Vase Painters* (Oxford 1956) 678 under ΜΥΡΤΗ?

<sup>11</sup> Ball games: (1) Themistoclean base; see recently E. Wagner, "Kritische Bemerkungen zum Harpastum Spiel," *Gymnasium* 70 (1963) 356–66. Base from Dipylon: F. Willemsen, *AM* 78 (1963) 132–6, pl. 66. (2) Girls' team games in Sparta: Athen. 1.14E (Hippasus). (3) ἀρρηφόροι: *RE s.v. sphairisterion*; L. Deubner, *Attische Feste* (Berlin 1932) 15 n.3 (he assumes [p.12] that in Panathenaic years there were as many as four ἀρρηφόροι: this would make group games possible). See also Harpocraton and *EM s.v. ἀρρηφορεῖν* (Deubner 11 n.6 and 12 n.6). (4) ἐφεδρισμός: L. Deubner, "Spiele und Spielzeuge der Griechen," *Antike* 6 (1930) 176, fig. 27 and pl. 20; P. Zazoff, "Ephedrismos, ein altgriechisches Spiel," *Antike und Abendland* 11 (1962) 35–42; differently, P. Mingazzini, *RendPontAcc* 32 (1959/60) 81–92. (5) Ball thrown across wicket: E. Pottier, *Syria* 7 (1926) 207 and 8 (1927) 174; Beazley, *BSA* 29 (1927–28) 209 no. 16; L. Deubner, *Antike* 6 (1930) 166 fig. 12 and 167 fig. 13; S. Karouzou,

This brings us to the erotic significance of the ball. Familiar from Hellenistic poetry, the erotic connotations of balls and ball games are implicit already in the famous scene in the *Odyssey*, where Nausicaa's ball goes astray to wake up Odysseus, and they are explicit in a poem by Anacreon, in which the aged poet watches two girls playing ball.<sup>12</sup> In this connection, the frieze on our ball with its athletic and erotic scenes is entirely appropriate: it depicts the most important events in the life of young men. The erotic scene of boy and lover should be connected with the athletic scenes, which take place in the palaestra: for as we know from Plato it was there that erotic encounters customarily took place. Pictures on vases confirm Plato's descriptions: on a red-figured cup of the early fifth century in Boston (10.193) a number of couples appear, with lovers or friends bringing various gifts to the boys, while on the wall are hung up oil flasks and sponges, the paraphernalia of the gymnasium.<sup>13</sup> Hence the three scenes on our ball are really continuous, and the erotic encounter is the centerpiece of a picture of life in the palaestra. As Hoffmann has

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*ArchEph* 1953–54, 103 fig. 5 and 104 nn.1–5 (lekanis lid Athens 17,534 with women playing the game). (6) Juggling: explained by S. Karouzou, *JHS* 65 (1945) 42 and pl. 6 a and b; F. Brommer, *CVA Schloss Fasanerie* I p.27 and pl. 41,4. (7) ἀπόρραξις: Daremberg-Saglio IV.1 s.v. *pila* 1, p.477 fig. 5666; *CVA Altenburg* 3, 24–25, pl. 104, 1–3; A. D. Trendall, *Vasi antichi dipinti del Vaticano* fasc. 1 (1953) pl. 27a and e. On a Locrian pinax, *AJA* 63 (1959) 246 n. 71 and pl. 59, a girl seems to dedicate her ball in a sanctuary.

For ball games in general, see Daremberg-Saglio IV.1 pp. 475–8 s.v. *pila* 1; *RE* 2 (1896) 2832–4 s.v. BALLSPIEL with addendum suppl. I.240; E. N. Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals* (London 1910) 185 and 485; L. Gründel, "Griechische Ballspiele," *AA* 40 (1925) 80–95; E. N. Gardiner, *op. cit.* (*supra* n.6) 230–8; A. E. Klein, *Child Life in Greek Art* (New York 1932) 18–20, 40; Deubner, *Attische Feste* 240–1; L. B. Mitchell, "Ancient Ball Games," *CJ* 34 (1938–39) 103; G. van Hoorn, *Choes and Anthesteria* (Leiden 1951) 44–5; S. Mendner, *op. cit.* (*supra* n.8); S. Dow, *HSCP* 67 (1963) 91–2. For girls' games, see C. A. Forbes, *Greek Physical Education* (New York 1929) 30 n.5, *RE* 2 s.v. BALLSPIEL, 2832, and Daremberg-Saglio, s.v. *pila* 1. G. van Hoorn, *De vita atque cultu puerorum* (Amsterdam 1909) 61–4.

<sup>12</sup> *Od.* 6.115–17; Anacr. fr. 13 Page. An Attic RF hydria (2 fragments: Tübingen E 112, *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 1147 no. 61) shows Aphrodite among girls playing ball. Naples 2872, a South Italian RF bell krater by the Amykos Painter (A. D. Trendall, *Frühitaliotische Vasen* [Leipzig 1938] 34 no. 118; cf. H. Heydemann, *Vasensammlung* 418), shows a woman leaning against a stele and Eros playing *aporrhaxis*, cf. F. Hauser, *RM* 25 (1910) 285. On the stele is an inscription read by Kretschmer: *ἵψς ἄν μοι τὸν σφῆραν* (P. Kretschmer, *Die griechischen Vasenschriften ihrer Sprache nach untersucht* [Gütersloh 1894] 215). Cf. S. Mendner (*supra* n.8) 128 and pl. 17a—but his discussion follows Babelon and is to be rejected.

<sup>13</sup> *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 1567 and 1698; P. Hartwig, *Die griechischen Meisterschalen* (Stuttgart 1893) pl. 26; L. D. Caskey and J. D. Beazley, *Attic Vase Paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts III* (Boston 1963) pl. 71 no. 136. Cf. S. Karouzou, "Scènes de Palestre," *BCH* 86 (1962) 430ff; see generally, Hartwig, *op. cit.* index, s.v. LIEBESSZENEN.



observed, the scenes could be looked at while twirling the ball: thus the figured decoration, conventional as it is, was meant to appeal to the owner. It is possible that a boy gave the ball to a girl, but it is perhaps safer to say that the painter considered scenes from the life of boys appropriate to a gift for a girl.

These last speculations, tenuous as they are, may help in understanding the fourth inscription, which is difficult to interpret (see PLATE 2, figure 6). As we have seen, the graffito *ho παῖς καλός* was apparently written by the vase painter and may be connected with the figured scene, from which it was displaced, as it were, by lack of space; it certainly belongs to the same context of ideas as the figured decoration. The fourth inscription, in a coarser and much less skilled hand, was written on the outside of *ho παῖς καλός*, and it starts in the same place, with the H below the H of the first inscription.<sup>14</sup> The text then runs around the edge of the cap and completes the circle with the letters EN, after which a triple punctuation mark indicates the beginning of the text, as it did in the third inscription. But the fourth inscription does not end here: an additional *alpha* and *iota* were written between the two sets of punctuation. The *alpha's* top was left open to avoid cutting into the upper punctuation mark: this is important in showing that the third inscription was of interest to the writer of the fourth. The *iota* is clear on the original; like several other strokes in this inscription, the line did not go through the red paint. A second *alpha* was written between the H and O of the third inscription. It is followed by four short vertical scratches, which I take for unsuccessful attempts to write another *iota*. Hence we have *alpha* and *iota* written twice, and the entire inscription reads:

: *hos εἰκεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἐρίων εἶναι{αι}*<sup>15</sup>

The letter forms differ from those of the other three inscriptions: note especially *nu* with short first hasta, *epsilon* with horizontal strokes, and *kappa*. The lettering is probably somewhat later, although it is

<sup>14</sup> Cf. e.g. a funerary inscription on a marble disk, British Museum 935: IG I<sup>2</sup> 975, P. Jacobsthal, "Diskoi," *93rd Winckelmannsprogramm der Arch. Gesellschaft zu Berlin* (Berlin 1933) 26 fig. 19, and L. H. Jeffery, *BSA* 57 (1962) 147 no. 64.

<sup>15</sup> Many other readings have been suggested. *ἀποτον* seems to me inappropriate. "Made of wool" was one of many suggestions made by Professor Edwin Brown. "From the wool" may mean that the object is a loom weight; but apparently it is not. Professor Ross Holloway thought that "from the mounds" might be a reference to the pictures on funeral stelae (referring to the boy with the dog).

dangerous, in the period before 480 B.C., to equate differences in letter forms (especially in painted and scratched inscriptions) with chronological differences, since there is some overlapping of writing styles. The loose disjointed writing (with strokes not always meeting) is characteristic of certain vase inscriptions and graffiti.<sup>16</sup> It goes without saying that I see no reason to doubt the genuineness of this inscription; in this I am supported by the Museum authorities, who consider the deposits in the letter strokes ancient.

The inscription seems to be an additional comment to the other, made by another person. We can read *hos* as *ὅς*-relative, *ὤς*-exclamatory or *ὤς*-conjunctive. Clear is *ἔοικεν*, which means 'looks like' rather than 'seems'—the word for 'seems' in *kalos*-inscriptions is *δοκεῖ*.<sup>17</sup> Thus the inscription appears to have reference to the pictures on the ball. Clear is also, I think, the infinitive *εἶναι*; hence we do not here have the simple *ὤς ἔοικεν*, 'as it seems', but rather 'who seems to be', or 'as he (it) seems to be', or 'How he (it) seems to be!'<sup>18</sup> The main crux of the inscription is the word EPION. This is not likely to be from *ἔριον* 'wool': 'How it looks as if it (the ball??) were made of wool!' would hardly be construed with *ἀπό* and the definite article. But *ἡρίον* 'mound, tomb' is a well-known word. It occurs first in the *Iliad* for the tumulus over the tomb of Patroclus and is not infrequent in later poetry, especially in funerary epigrams. At the same time, *ἡρίον* was an old Attic word for the family plots of Athenian citizens. In the *Ἀθηναίων Πολιτεία*, Aristotle mentions the following among the formulae for questioning candidates for the archonship: *ἡρία εἰ ἔστιν καὶ ποῦ ταῦτα*. The same meaning appears in several places in the Attic orators, but the Aristotelian passage shows that the word was traditional and thus old.<sup>19</sup> The word occurs further on two Attic

<sup>16</sup> *Epsilon* with horizontal bars is found at the end of the sixth century: see Jeffery, *LSAG* (*supra* n.9) 66 and 75. The disjointed style is common on vases of Beazley's "Coarser Wing," *ARV<sup>2</sup>* chs. 10–12.

The two forms of *rho* are characteristic of about 500 B.C.: see A. E. Raubitschek, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.9) nos. 79, 184, 232, 367, and the Telesarchus discus (*infra* n.20).

<sup>17</sup> For *δοκεῖ*, see e.g. *ARV<sup>2</sup>* 1561, Alkaios no. 1; 1584. D. M. Robinson and E. J. Fluck, *A Study of the Greek Love-Names* (Baltimore 1937) ch. 4 nos. 7, 12, 32, 73, etc. Dr Werner Fuchs refers me to C. Karouzos, *Aristodikos* (Stuttgart 1961) 91 n.79, where epic *εἰκώς* is mentioned as being related to works of art.

<sup>18</sup> *ὤς*-exclamatory was suggested to me by Professor Walton Morris.

<sup>19</sup> Arist. *Ath.Pol.* 55.3. For the poetic use of *ἡρίον*, see *Il.* 23.126; Callim. fr.43 line 4, and fr.262 with Pfeiffer's note: Nicander fr.108 Gow-Scholfield. Funerary epigrams: *IG XII 2*, 489; *XII 1*, 168(?); *XII 3*, 10; Kaibel, *Epigrammata*, nos. 214, 411, 465, 550, 574, 626, 704; Peek,

stone discuses, which have been published, together with two others, by P. Jacobsthal.<sup>20</sup> Each of the four has an inscription: ἐκ τῶν ἄ[θλ]ον (Metropolitan Museum); Ὁέθεν ἀθλ[α] (lost); Τελεσάρχου ἐκ τῶ ἐρί[ο] (Metropolitan Museum); ἐχ (sic) τῶν ἐρίων εἰ<μ>ί (lost). The Telesarchus inscription was first explained by Beazley<sup>21</sup> in the sense that the

*Griechische Vers-Inschriften I* (supra n.9) nos. 1248, 1355 (= *Anth.Pal.* 7.502), 1803 (= *Anth.Pal.* 7.537); *Anth.Pal.* 7.180, 209, 440, 8.138; *Corinth VIII* 1, no. 130. Later prose: *Plut. Them.* 9.4; *Tib.Gr.* 9.5; *Paus.* 6.20.17; *Lucian, Charon* 22; *Deor.Conc.* 15 (mock decree). Similar is *Lycurg. Leoc.* 109 as corrected by Wurm.

Epigraphic use outside Attica: *SIG<sup>3</sup>* 11: Delphic funerary stele, second half of sixth century B.C.; on the front: οἴμοι, ὀρχέδαμε ἡ Πυθία Σελωνόντιος; on the back, in large letters vertical and up: ἐρίων; despite Dittenberger's comment that ἡρίων here means 'cippus sepulcralis' rather than 'tumulus', it may well refer to the funerary plot. See further Peek, *op.cit.* I.1670; Jeffery, *LSAG* (supra n.9) 277 no. 33 (cf. 269 and 271) and *BSA* 57 (1962) 142; W. M. Calder III, *AJA* 69 (1965) 263–4 (but Miss Guarducci does not discuss this inscription in *Annuario* 37–38 [1959/60] 255 n.5, as stated in Calder's n.13); J. Bousquet, *BCH* 88 (1964) 380–2 fig. 1 (front only). *IG IV* 1593 is an undated boundary marker from Aegina, with ἡρία in large letters.

Additional evidence for the Attic term: *Dem.* 57.67 and *Din.* 2.17 Blass<sup>2</sup> (as corrected with certainty by Valesius) both depend on the formula given in *Ath.Pol.* 55.3. It should be noted that the orators, when they use their own terminology, call these family tombs *μνήματα*, which shows that in the fourth century ἡρίων was a technical term not in common usage: see e.g. *Dem.* 57.40 (καὶ ὦν τὰ μνήματα ταῦτά) and *Isae.* 6.64 and 9.36. Further, *Harp s.vv.* ἡρία and (perhaps) ὄξυθυμία; *Suidas s.vv.* ἡρίων and ἡρία; similar entries occur in other lexicographers. Interesting is the entry in *EM s.v.* ἡρία (sic): αἱ πύλαι, Ἀθηναῖοι κτλ, which some take as a reference to a special city gate northeast of the Dipylon, the Gate of the Mounds (cf. I. N. Travlos, *Πολεοδομικὴ Ἐξέλιξις τῶν Ἀθηνῶν* [Athens 1960] 52; Jeffery, *BSA* 57 [1962] 132), but it may be no more than a comedians' joke for the Sacred Gate (Ἱερὰ Πύλη). Some glosses in Hesychius give the impression of being derived from comedy: see *s.vv.* ἡριεργής, ἡριεύς.

<sup>20</sup> Jacobsthal, *op.cit.* (supra n.14) 17ff; *SEG X* 396–98. The authenticity of the discuses was doubted by J. Jüthner, *JÖAI* 29 (1935) 32ff (esp. 41–3). The Telesarchus discus is published also in Gardiner, *op.cit.* (supra n.6) 156 fig. 113; Kirchner, *Imagines<sup>2</sup>* pl. 7 no. 15; cf. Jeffery, *BSA* 57 (1962) 147. The lost discus with ἡρίων is no. 59a in Jeffery (p.145). The inscription on the other New York discus, ἐκ τῶν ἄ[θλ]ον, is tentatively restored by her (p.147) as ἐκ τῶν εἰ[ρ]ῶν, and this is very attractive, for ἀθλον seems never to be construed with ἐκ; similarly Jüthner, *op.cit.* 42. The second New York discus is figured in Gardiner, *op.cit.* 156 fig. 112.

The fact that the inscription on the first New York discus is picked rather than cut should not make it suspect. Picking is common on very early inscriptions, both on rock (e.g. the Theraean inscriptions) and on stone (see e.g. W. A. McDonald, *Hesperia* 25 (1956) 69–72, Dreros), but it occurs later too (e.g. *SEG X* 452a = Jeffery, *LSAG* (supra n.9) 78 no. 31 = *BSA* 57 (1962) 139 no. 48 (ca. 540 B.C.); *BSA ibid.* 146 no. 63 (the circular letters). This technique is common on bronze, and our discus may imitate the style appropriate to a bronze discus. See also F. Willemssen, *AM* 78 (1963) 142 and n.131.

<sup>21</sup> Sotheby Sale Catalogue for May 1929, no. 90. Miss Jeffery, *BSA* 57 (1962) 147, has objected to this interpretation and has suggested that three of the four inscribed discuses are funerary (since, among other reasons, ἡρίων is not elsewhere attested in the meaning

discus was a prize from funeral games, public or private (so Jacobsthal p.22). Jacobsthal also lists as parallels many bronze vases given as prizes in local contests.<sup>22</sup> It seems to me that the material, too, of which the discuses were made suggests that they were prizes; for real discuses must have been made of bronze. The stone discuses are dated by Jacobsthal to about 500 B.C.; they are thus contemporary with our ball.

We may assume, then, that athletic contests, no doubt of a private nature, took place in Attica around the turn of the century at family tombs, where ancestors were worshipped as heroes. If this is true, the three inscriptions that exhibit the word *ἡρίον* may be thought to support one another, and our inscription may be translated: "The boy is handsome, who seems to be from the mounds," *i.e.* the funeral games. He looks like a noble young athlete. *ἀπό* in the sense 'to belong to', or 'to be associated with', is idiomatic Greek.<sup>23</sup> An intriguing red-figured askos of the early fifth century in Boston (13.169; PLATE 2, figure 7) may perhaps illustrate the kind of funeral games we have postulated. The subject was long ago described by Beazley as follows: "a bearded hero with spear and shield rising out of a large mound: attached to the mound, and leaning against it, a diskos, a pair of halteres, two fillets, and three akontia: the origin of athletic contests."<sup>24</sup> Despite the contemporary look of some of the objects, the

'funeral game'). She compares the discus IG I<sup>2</sup> 975 (*supra* n.14), which is certainly funerary, and the discus of the doctor Aeneas, IG I<sup>2</sup> 1019, which is probably funerary. Her explanation seems unlikely, since two of Jacobsthal's discuses are anonymous and since the statement 'from the tombs' would make sense only after the object had been removed from the tomb. Our ball tends to confirm Beazley's explanation.

<sup>22</sup> See also E. Diehl, *Die Hydria* (Mainz 1964) B 77, 78, 82, 107, (115), 120, 133, 135; Jeffery, *LSAG* (*supra* n.9) 91ff, 95, 176, 238; A. Brückner, *BPW* 35 (1915) 1080-2; P. Wolters, *ibid.* 1422-4; L. Malten, "Leichenspiel und Totenkult," *RM* 38-39 (1923-24) 300-40; Gardiner, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.6) 38 fig. 10; K. A. Neugebauer, *RM* 38-39 (1923-24) 405-6; *JHS* 13 (1892-93) 129; D. M. Robinson, *AJA* 46 (1942) 180 and n.29; *Hesperia* 25 (1956) 64 and n.67; J. D. Beazley, *Greek Vases in Poland* (Oxford 1928) 20 n.3. For local Attic festivals in honor of the dead and heroes, see Deubner, *Attische Feste* (*supra* n.11) 224-31.

<sup>23</sup> See *LSJ s.v. ἀπό* III 1; Arist. *Ath.Pol.* 45.1: *ὁ ἀπὸ τοῦ τυπάνου*; Callim. *Iamb.* 1.27 *ἀπὸ θύματος Δελφοί*, *pace* C. M. Dawson, *YCS* 11 (New Haven 1950) 13, n. on v.27. *ὁ ἀφ' ἱερᾶς sc. γραμμῆς* is a phrase used in the game of *pestoi*.

<sup>24</sup> J. D. Beazley, *Attic Red-figured Vases in American Museums* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1918) 55. Cf. E. T. Vermeule, "The Vengeance of Achilles: the Dragging of Hektor at Troy," *Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Bulletin* 63 (1965) no. 331, 45-46, fig. 15. Beazley formerly attributed the vase to the Tyszkiewicz Painter (last ARV<sup>1</sup> 188 no. 59), but it is not included in ARV<sup>2</sup>. It seems less likely to me that the athletic equipment is meant to recall the hero's

picture is probably mythological: it might represent Patroclus and the games of the *Iliad*. But it might also refer to an ἡρίων in Attica, and the hero could be an ancestor.

A different explanation for the inscription on our ball has been suggested to me by Dr Werner Fuchs. This is to read ἔργων instead of ἡρίων, a correction that he thinks is suggested by the fact that the *iota* of EPION slants (see PLATE 2, figure 6). We would then read *ho paîs kalós, hōs εἰκεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων εἶναι*, “the boy is handsome, as he seems to be from his deeds,” namely the ἔργα depicted in the scenes. The suggestion is tempting, but the infinitive εἶναι seems awkward, and we would have to assume that the writer of the graffito considered the youths in the picture identical—a kind of repeating narrative, such as we find on cups for the deeds of Theseus but which is unfamiliar to me in this period for athletic scenes.<sup>25</sup> These objections are not compelling, but I lean toward the reading ἡρίων.

With either reading, we have here a personal comment added to the conventional ὁ παῖς καλός; such comments are frequent in the last decade of the sixth century and in the early fifth. The custom is especially characteristic of the “Pioneers.” In this connection it is interesting to note that Beazley has attempted to resolve the famous puzzle ΕΝΕΜΕΚΝΕΡΙΝΕ on a cup by Douris in the Louvre (G 115) by connecting it with the nearby Ἐρμογένης καλός and reading *hermogénes kalós, ἦν ἐμὲ ἐγκρίνη<ι>*, “Hermogenes is fair—if he count me in, admit me among his friends.”<sup>26</sup> On our ball too we must assume that the comment refers to a παῖς καλός; but since he is not named, we must refer it to the scenes. It is less likely that the remark refers to a friend of Myrrhine (such as the young man who may have

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own past athletic prowess, as it often does on Attic funerary lekythoi. A mound with similar athletic equipment occurs on an Etruscan amphora in Six’ technique, of the early fifth century, which imitates an Attic subject that was no doubt mythological; see J. D. Beazley, *Etruscan Vase Painting* (Oxford 1947) 195 no. 2 (Munich 3170, J. 895). Another parallel: *Select Exhibition of Sir John and Lady Beazley’s Gifts to the Ashmolean Museum, 1912–1966* (London 1967) no. 293.

<sup>25</sup> I am not familiar with athletic scenes in which the same name is repeated. ἔργα in the plural would here refer to athletic deeds but might also include the erotic event: see *LSJ s.v. ἔργον* I 2 and 3c; cf. *Hdt.* 5.72.4 with *Paus.* 6.8.6.

<sup>26</sup> J. D. Beazley, “Some Inscriptions on Vases: VIII,” *AJA* 64 (1960) 219 no. I. Cf. also the athletic scene on a RF psykter by Oltos in the Metropolitan Museum (10.210.18), *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 54 no. 7, with the comment *χαλούμενος εἶσι*; and another psykter by Oltos, in the Schimmel Collection in New York (*ARV*<sup>2</sup> 1622 no. 7 bis: New York Market, and A. Greifenhagen, *Pantheon* 23 [1965] 1–7) with the repeated inscription ἐπὶ δελφίνος.

given her the ball), for ἔοικεν should refer to a picture. With the reading ἡρίων, we may pick any one of the figures as the παῖς καλός (I would prefer the boy who is being given the flower), or we may assume that the same youth is shown in various actions; with the reading ἔργων, we are forced to adopt the second alternative. The comment may have been done in the workshop (it is in the nature of painter's comments in this period), but it is more likely that it was added later by the user or by a friend. The notion that Athenian women were illiterate has never appealed to me.<sup>27</sup>

Unique texts are difficult to interpret. We can say for certain only that around 500 B.C. a rattle in the shape of a playing ball was especially prepared for Myrrhine and was probably presented to her as a gift. Its decorations with scenes from the life of boys were appropriate to the object and its intended use; this meaning was reinforced by inscriptions. An added comment (whose maker we cannot identify) further reinforced the praise of a boy—probably one of the youths depicted on the ball itself.<sup>28</sup>

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July, 1967

<sup>27</sup> "Book Rolls on Attic Vases," *Classical, Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies in Honor of Berthold Louis Ullman I* (Rome 1964) 27–8.

<sup>28</sup> Dr Werner Fuchs (by letter) compares our figured scene in style to a small white-ground BF lekythos by the Kephisophon Painter, Toronto 963.59 (ARV<sup>2</sup> 1699, Philadelphia Market). It seems certain, in fact, that the painter of our ball should be sought in the circle of this painter; see C. H. E. Haspels, *Attic BF Lekythoi* (Paris 1936) 117–9.