

An Archaic Inscribed Vase Fragment from Haliartus, Boeotia

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THE VASE FRAGMENT published here, now in Athens, comes from Haliartus and bears a graffito in a Boeotian script (PLATE 1).¹ The fragment appears to be part of a kantharos handle (PLATE 2). At one end of the fragment, enough is preserved of the juncture between the handle and the rim of the kantharos to determine the angle at which the handle sprang from the vase: the handle rose nearly vertically from the rim before curving in a loop and continuing downward; the crest of the loop is preserved in the fragment. The outer surface of the handle fragment is glazed in a careless manner and reserved underneath. This feature sets it apart from most black glaze kantharoi, which are rarely, if ever, decorated in this manner. It does, however, tend to associate the fragment with those kantharoi decorated in the black figure technique, which occasionally have handles with reserved undersides. The glaze is black with a low quality luster and is streaky. The color of the clay is between 7.5YR 7/4 (pink) and 7.5YR 6/4 (light brown).² These features indicate a Boeotian origin for the fragment and the kantharos to which it belonged.³ The glazed surface of the fragment is flat, lacking the slightly concave form of handles on most Boeotian kantharoi. This aspect of the vase, however, is perhaps a local variation.⁴ The curve and proportions of the

¹ This fragment is in the collection of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, ASP 146, and is published by permission of the Director of the School. Maximum preserved length is 5.0 cm. The authors wish to express their gratitude to Eugene Vanderpool, Jr., for the photographs and Helen Besi for the drawing; to E. L. Bennett and C. F. Edson for consultation on the inscription; and to the editors and readers of *GRBS* for their help in preparing this for publication. A special debt is owed to H. R. Immerwahr for his examination of and comments upon the sherd itself.

² The color designations refer to those arranged in the *Munsell Soil Color Charts* (Baltimore 1973).

³ K. Kilinski II, "The Boeotian Dancers Group," *AJA* 82 (1978) 189 n.24, and "The Istanbul Painter," *AntK* 21 (1978) 15 and n.19.

⁴ Since a large majority of known Boeotian kantharoi are from southeastern Boeotia (Thebes-Kabirion, Rhitsona, and Tanagra), variant types could be localized elsewhere in the district. Little is known about the Boeotian pottery from Haliartus. See A. M. Woodward, "Archaeology in Greece, 1925–26," *JHS* 46 (1926) 235; R. P. Austin, "Excavations at Haliartos, 1931," *BSA* 32 (1931–32) 192.

handle and its angle in relation to the vase rim are similar to those of handles on Boeotian kantharoi from the middle through the second half of the sixth century B.C.⁵ This date is in agreement with that indicated by the inscription.

The inscription appears on the convex side of the handle fragment. It is typically Boeotian in that it has no punctuation. The characteristic Boeotian letter form in the script is the crooked *alpha*, but also common are the tailed *kappa*, pointed *rho*, and crooked *pi* (first letter of the second line, inverted and written retrograde). None of the letters is necessarily later than the sixth century B.C., and the crooked *pi* and pointed *rho* are particularly characteristic of the archaic period in Boeotia.⁶ The inscription is in many respects both straightforward and difficult; the text suggested here is intended more as a beginning than an end.

FEKTA F AKPATIA [
ΠΙΘ ΜΕ

Except for the seventh letter, the letters in the first line are clear. Generally speaking, when letters are dim or in doubt, the difficulty is in discerning which strokes are caused by flaking and which by the inscriber. That is the case here and even more in respect to the *omicron* (?) and surrounding letters in the next line. In regard to the dubious letter in the first line, *alpha* seems the most likely letter from the deliberate strokes. There might be none at all, but the spacing seems to argue for it. The surrounding letters seem to call for a vowel, and the two downward strokes seem clearly to rule out *epsilon*, *upsilon*, or *iota*. The line probably refers to a measurement of the capacity of the kantharos. Its placement on a handle of the vase is in accord with the graffito *ἡμίτριτ[ο]* on the handle of a contemporary oinochoe from Eretria once considered to be Boeotian.⁷ A similar phrasing appears in a sixth-century inscription of Miletus, which reads *ἔκτη οἴνω*,⁸ and *Ἐέκτα* could merely be the Boeotian form of *ἔκτη*.⁹ If the word is singular, the term to

⁵ P. N. Ure, *Black Glaze Pottery from Rhitsona in Boeotia* (London 1913) pls. 1–8, and *Sixth and Fifth Century Pottery from Rhitsona* (London 1927) pls. 10–11. For a useful list of Rhitsona grave groups, from which these vases came, and their approximate dates, see B. A. Sparkes, "The Taste of a Boeotian Pig," *JHS* 87 (1967) 128–30.

⁶ L. H. Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece* (Oxford 1961) 89–90.

⁷ A. Rehm, *CVA Bonn* 1 p.47, points out some Boeotian affinities, and Jeffery (*supra* n.6) 85 and 95, no. 22, is inclined to agree. J. Boardman, "Pottery from Eretria," *BSA* 47 (1952) 44, considers the vase a local Eretrian product.

⁸ E. Schwyzler, *Dialectorum Graecorum exempla epigraphica potiora* (Leipzig 1923) no. 725.

⁹ The number itself, *Ἐέξ*, is found in Doric, cf. A. Thumb and E. Kieckers, *Handbuch*



INSCRIBED HANDLE FRAGMENT FROM HALIARTUS

Athens, American School of Classical Studies, ASP 146

Photograph by Eugene Vanderpool, Jr.



INSCRIPTION ON HALIARTUS FRAGMENT

Drawing by Helen Besi



PROFILE OF HANDLE FRAGMENT
Photograph by Eugene Vanderpool, Jr.



BOEOTIAN BLACK FIGURE KANTHAROS
Sidney, University of Sidney, Nicholson Museum, no. 46.37
Photograph courtesy of the Museum, published by
permission of the Curator

be understood is *μοῖρα*; if plural, then *μέρη*.¹⁰ The analogy of the Milesian inscription and our assessment, based on the style and other Boeotian kantharoi of the period, that the capacity of the jar could hardly be more than about three cups, make it tempting to interpret the first word as a feminine singular. In addition, Hesychius defines a related word (*s.v.* *ἑκταῖον*) as *αἱ δύο κοτύλαι*, which does not seem far off.¹¹ If this course is followed, however, the grammatical difficulties are substantial. For the last six letters then would most reasonably be construed as a proper name such as Kratiadas. While names ending in *-ιάδης* occur as early as Homer,¹² Kratiadas is found only once elsewhere and not of a Boeotian.¹³ The sixth and seventh letters (*Fa*) probably would need to be interpreted as an early form of the feminine nominative article, a possessive adjective, or a variant form of *ἑκταία*, *ἑκτάFa*. While the second is conceivable as a form (though it would lack a referent), the best that can be said for the first and third is that they are unprecedented.¹⁴ *KPATIA* might also be construed a genitive.¹⁵ In these cases the inscription would simply designate a sixth belonging to a particular individual. Names on such inscriptions are hardly rare, but the rarity of this one and the grammatical difficulties seem to make it unlikely. Let us then take the first word as a neuter plural.

Examples of a similar use of the neuter are found in the Hippocratic corpus. It occurs with *μέρος: ἕκτον μέρος χοίνικος* (*Mul.*

*der griechischen Dialekte*² I (Heidelberg 1932) 97, 100, 279; compare *Ἐκτα μερίς* at *Tab.Heracl.* 2.106 (Schwyzer no. 63).

¹⁰ J. Wackernagel, *Vorlesungen über Syntax* II (Basel 1924) 135.

¹¹ This is the reading of Dindorf; Latte gives *αἱ δέκα κοτύλαι*, but comments of both readings “neutrum intellegitur.” A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*² (London 1927) 33 n.6, gives two cotylae (of wine) as “about a pint.”

¹² E. Schwyzer, *Griechische Grammatik* I.2 (Munich 1939) 509–10.

¹³ It is borne, ironically, by an Argive who fell at Tanagra in the fifth century (*SEG* X 407.126; Meiggs/Lewis 35). Later inscriptions from Boeotia (*SEG* II 207, XIX 352) may argue that the Boeotian form was Krattidas; the cognate form Krateas also occurs (*IG* VII 2438).

¹⁴ Cf. E. Vilborg, *A Tentative Grammar of Mycenaean Greek* (Göteborg 1960) 98f; it has been suggested that *Fo* equals *ó* in an Arcado-Cypriote inscription: A. Thumb and A. Scherer, *Handbuch der griechischen Dialekte*² II (Heidelberg 1959) 160 no. 274.9. Otherwise there is no support for this form of the article, especially as *tau* is often found in the nominative plural in Boeotian. The absence of an article (masculine genitive singular in this case) before the name is not unusual. If Corinna is indicative of the dialect, we have a possessive adjective in *πῆδα Φόν* (fr.10 Page); Beermann, however, conjectured *πῆδ' ἐΦόν* (MS. *πηδεγον*): cf. R. Kühner and F. Blass, *Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache* I.1 (Hanover/Leipzig 1890) 79. Finally, if the first word is singular and there is no seventh letter, that would leave the intractable *ἑκταία*.

¹⁵ One analogy is *Ἀλεύα ἄρχοντος* (*IG* VII 3167; Thumb/Scherer 27 no. 236.9).

1.75 [8.164 Littré]); ἕκτον μέρος τοῦ μελικρήτου (*Int.* 28 [7.242 L.]). The neuter without μέρος even refers to liquids, water and wine among them: πρῶτον ὕδατος τὸ ἕκτον μίσγων καὶ μέλανος οἴνου καὶ αὐστηροῦ σμικρόν (*Epid.* VII 3 [5.372 L.]); ἕκτον αὐτῶ διδόναι πίνειν (*Morb.* 2.38 [7.54 L.]). There is also the language of Plutarch in describing conditions in Solon's time: ἐγεώργουν ἐκείνοις ἕκτα τῶν γινομένων τελοῦντες (*Sol.* 13.4). Since the measure already cited in Hesychius is based on the same stem and there is no noticeable difference between the usage of that adjective and this one, the ἕκταῖον does lend some grammatical support. It is tempting to speculate that the two words are the same measure, thereby providing an estimate of the volume of the kantharos to which the Haliartus fragment was attached or the size of the measure under consideration. While the passages cited above need not necessarily mean that ἕκτον was anything more than a fraction, there are difficulties in taking it just as that. To begin with, it would not be easy to divide a liquid into six parts without glass tumblers to make matching the levels feasible. Then there would be the natural variation in ceramic ware, especially pronounced in vessels of small size and not used for trade. In addition, it seems very bad medical practice to mix or prepare a liquid for a patient and not to specify the amount of the liquid. Accepting a 'sixth' as a standard measurement of some kind seems more reasonable, especially as the vase from Eretria cited above seems to express the same relationship in a different term.

The sixth letter of the inscription then becomes a number, and, if this interpretation is correct, an early example of the practice of using a letter as a number.¹⁶ A letter used as a numeral generally follows the word to which it refers, and such is the case here.¹⁷ Furthermore, this numeral is the older form of *digamma* and not the later tailless form.¹⁸ While this usage and other similarities noted above may connect it with Miletus, it does not appear to argue conclusively for or against Larfeld's hypothesis on the origin of the alphabetic system of numerals.¹⁹ 'Six sixths' may sound

¹⁶ M. N. Tod, "The Alphabetic Numeral System in Attica," *BSA* 45 (1950) 135, remarks "It is noteworthy that the early form of the letter *F* does not appear as a numeral in Attica and very rarely elsewhere. . . ."

¹⁷ Tod (*supra* n.16) 126–39.

¹⁸ A. N. Jannaris, "The *Digamma*, *Koppa*, and *Sampi* as Numerals in Greek," *CQ* 1 (1907) 39.

¹⁹ W. Larfeld, *Griechische Epigraphik*³ (Munich 1914) 293–97; cf. Jeffery (*supra* n.6) 327.

suspicious, but, if correct, is a further argument that what is recorded here is a standard measure. If the term merely meant a fraction, there would seem little point to saying that the jar contains a whole of something. Rather, it seems to argue that the ‘sixth’ was a common way of designating and reckoning this kind of commodity, so that no conversion to the next larger measure was contemplated.

The last word in the first line then becomes ἀκρατία[and refers to something unmixed, most probably wine. The analogy of the Milesian inscription already cited clearly points to a genitive of the quantity being measured, as do the passages in the Hippocratic corpus. Unfortunately, the letters are too clear to permit any corrupted reading of ἄκρατος, a fairly common word. One possibility is to restore a *sigma* and interpret the word as the Boeotian dialect version of ἀκρασία.²⁰ Aside from a very late abstract use of this noun,²¹ the best examples come from the Hippocratic corpus. There is first the Ionic version of the noun: χυμῶν . . . ἀκρησίας (VM 18 [1.616 L.]); W. H. S. Jones (LCL) translates the phrase ‘unmixed humours’. There is a similar usage with a cognate abstract noun: μέγα μὴν διαφέρει καὶ οἴνου καὶ μέλιτος ἀκρητότης ἐς ἴσχον (Acut. 56 [2.346 L.]). The statement is elaborated and made somewhat more concrete by the use of οἴνου ἀκρήτου in the following sentence. The use of the noun for ‘unmixed wine’ may have been a fashion that did not endure: ἀκρασία is not frequent, and, according to all our reference works, ἀκρητότης does not occur again. Another possibility, suggested by a reader, is that the genitive ἀκρατία[ο] should be restored from a masculine noun *ἀκρατίας derived from ἄκρατος even as ἀνθοσμίας from *ἄνθοσμος; and this is a formation that is quite appropriate for wine-names and similar products.²² The meaning in either case is the same; the jar contains (or contained) six ‘sixths’ of unmixed wine. If, however, the doubtful *alpha* should be mere flaking, the text would indicate ownership, six ‘sixths’ belonging to Kratia[*das*].

The letters of the second line are somewhat less clear than the first, although their meaning seems less open to dispute. The line is inverted, retrograde, and composed of either four or five letters.

²⁰ C. D. Buck, *The Greek Dialects* (Chicago 1955) 57–58 no. 61.3; F. Bechtel, *Die griechischen Dialekte I* (Berlin 1921) 247–48; Thumb/Scherer 31 no. 236.15.

²¹ Dam. *Princ.* 115, in the sixth century A.D.

²² P. Chantraine, *La formation des noms en Grec ancien* (Paris 1933) 94f; Frei-Lüthy, *Der Einfluss der griechischen Personennamen auf die Wortbildung* (Heidelberg 1978) 65. The genitive in -ao in Boeotian is quite common; see Thumb/Scherer 34–35 no. 237.1.

The first letter is clearly *pi*, the last *epsilon*. The second letter is undoubtedly *iota*, and the second-to-last, while faint, seems definitely *mu* rather than a more archaic *sigma*.²³ (It was inscribed in an unglazed area of the fragment.) It is especially difficult in the area before this letter to determine whether the strokes are due to flaking or an inscriber. Professor Immerwahr's suggestion that it is "probably a somewhat miswritten *omicron* (a straight line and a quarter circle)" seems the best observation. Thus the resulting text is *πίο με* "drink me," an imperative from an aorist *ἐπιόμην, a form given by Kretschmer.²⁴ If there is no letter there, the resulting form would be *πί*, which would be the fulfillment of other hypotheses.²⁵ The meaning is the same, and the presence of *με* on inscribed objects (mostly kantharoi) of archaic Boeotia to refer to the item being inscribed or its contents is not unusual.²⁶

The shape and letter forms of the graffito indicate a date in the second half of the sixth century B.C. for the Haliartus fragment. The inscription appears to contain a measurement and an early example of a letter used as a number. We hope that these remarks will be a suitable beginning for the discussion of this fragment and a helpful addition to the limited evidence on archaic Boeotia.

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²³ Cf. Jeffery (*supra* n.6) 89.

²⁴ P. Kretschmer, *Die griechische Vaseninschriften, ihrer Sprache nach Untersucht* (Güterloh 1894) 195ff. His example, however, is incorrect; it is [π]πίο, "buy" (H. R. Immerwahr, "Some Inscriptions on Attic Pottery," *The James Sprunt Studies in History and Political Science* 46 [1964] 19 no.3).

²⁵ See Kretschmer (*supra* n.24). M. Leumann, *Kleine Schriften* (Zurich 1959) 260 n.1, thinks this is the form behind the frequent *πίει* on Attic vases. It is conceivable that such a form could be analogous to the *πῶ(θι)* found in Aeolic and based on a different grade of the vowel. Cf. *Etym.Magn.* 698.52f; *SGDI* II 1376–77; J. D. Beazley, "Two Inscriptions on Attic Vases," *CR* 57 (1943) 102–03; Schwyzer (*supra* n.12) 798ff.

²⁶ *IG* VII 2245, 3467, 3468; compare 1685, *Γοργίδαο εἶμ*.