

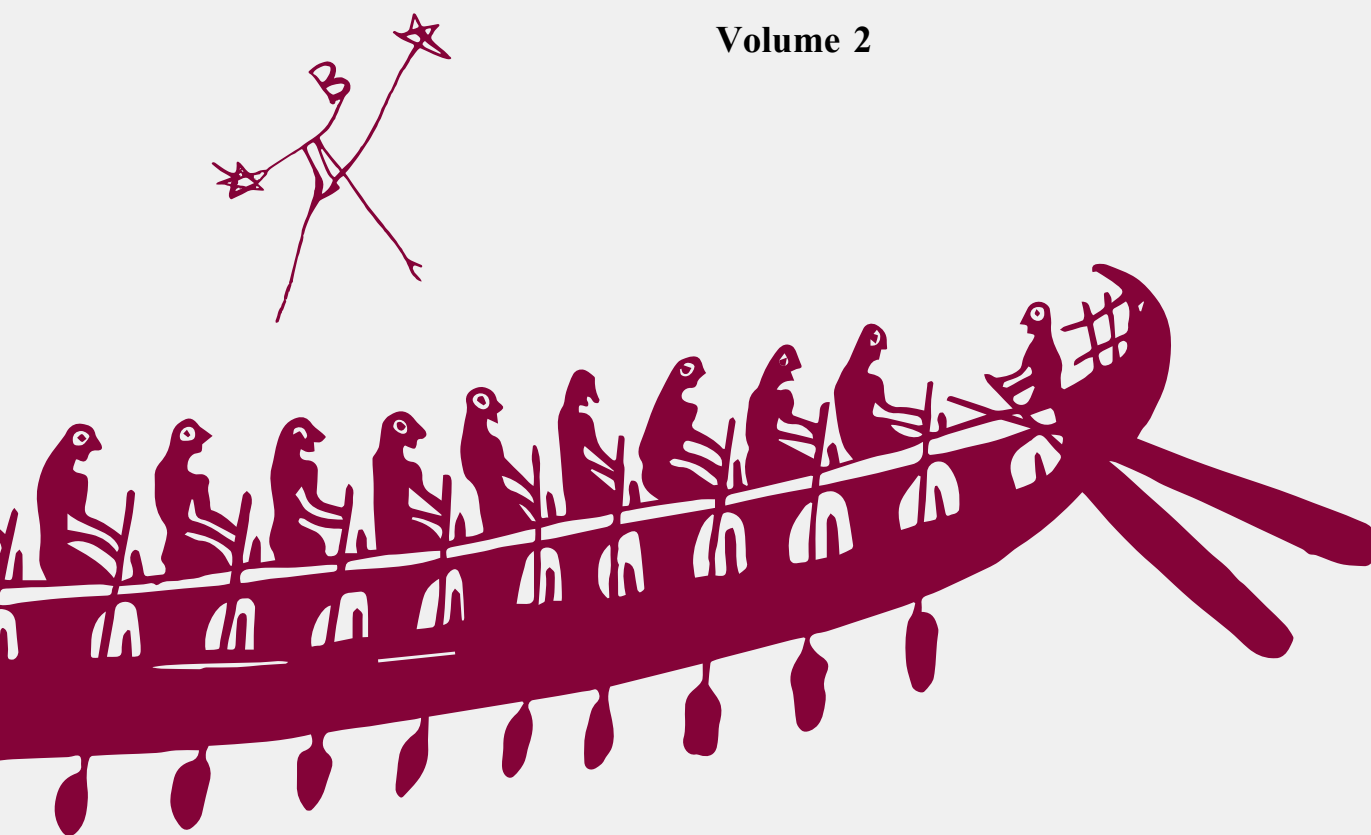
EUBOICA II

Pithekoussai and Euboea between East and West

**Proceedings of the Conference
Lacco Ameno (Ischia, Naples), 14-17 May 2018**

Teresa E. Cinquantaquattro, Matteo D'Acunto and Federica Iannone

Volume 2



Napoli 2021

UNIVERSITÀ DI NAPOLI L'ORIENTALE
DIPARTIMENTO DI ASIA AFRICA E MEDITERRANEO



AION

ANNALI DI ARCHEOLOGIA
E STORIA ANTICA

Nuova Serie | 28



2021 | Napoli

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DI ARCHEOLOGIA
E STORIA ANTICA

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Volume 2



UniorPress
Napoli 2021

ISSN 1127-7130

Abbreviazione della rivista: *AIONArchStAnt*

Quarta di copertina: Pithekoussai (Ischia), T. 500, sigillo del Lyre Player Group
(rielaborazione grafica UniorPress)

Sovracopertina: nave dipinta sul cratere corinzio del LG nel Royal Ontario Museum di Toronto,
inv. C.199 (disegno S. Verdan); e costellazione incisa su un cratere del LG di fabbrica pitecusana,
trovato nell'area di S. Restituta a Pithekoussai, Ischia
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I contributi sono sottoposti a *double blind peer review* da parte di due esperti,
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I contributi di questo volume sono stati sottoposti a *peer review* da parte di:

Ida Baldassarre, Laura Ficuciello, Fausto Longo, Eliana Mugione,
Giacomo Pardini, Carmine Pellegrino, Alfonso Santoriello, Michele Scafuro

ABBREVIATIONS

Above sea-level: above s.l.; Anno Domini: AD; and so forth: etc.; Before Christ: BC; bibliography: bibl.; catalogue: cat.; centimeter/s: cm; century/ies: cent.; chap./chaps.: chapter/chapters; circa/ approximately: ca.; column/s: col./cols.; compare: cf.; *et alii*/and other people: *et al.*; diameter: diam.; dimensions: dim.; Doctor: Dr; especially: esp.; exterior: ext.; fascicule: fasc.; figure/s: fig./figs.; following/s: f./ff.; fragment/s: fr./frs.; for example: e.g.; gram/s: gm; height: h.; in other words: i.e.; interior: int.; inventory: inv.; kilometer/s: km; length: ln.; line/s: l./ll.; maximum: max.; meter/s: m; millimeter/s: mm; mini- mum: min.; namely: viz.; new series/nuova serie etc.: n.s.; number/s: no./nos.; original edition: orig. ed.; plate/s: pl./pls.; preserved: pres.; Professor: Prof.; reprint: repr.; series/serie: s.; sub voce: s.v.; supplement: suppl.; thick: th.; tomb/s: T./TT.; English/Italian translation: Eng./It. tr.; volume/s: vol./vols.; weight: wt.; which means: scil.; width: wd.

Abbreviations of periodicals and works of reference are those recommended for use in the *American Journal of Archaeology* with supplements in the *Année Philologique*.

CONTENTS

TERESA E. CINQUANTAQUATTRO, MATTEO D'ACUNTO, <i>Preface to Volume II</i>	p.	ix
--	----	----

Colonial Memories and Models

MAURIZIO GIANGIULIO, <i>Euboean Colonial Memories. Mediterranean Mobility, Literary Traditions and Social Memory</i>	»	19
LUCA CERCHIAI, <i>Interpretative Models of Euboean Colonization and Impacts on the Indigenous World</i>	»	29

Pithekoussai

TERESA E. CINQUANTAQUATTRO, <i>Pithekoussai, Necropolis of San Montano (Excavations 1965-1967). Stratigraphy, Funerary Representation and Intercultural Dynamics</i>	»	49
MELANIA GIGANTE, ALESSANDRA SPERDUTI, IVANA FIORE, FRANCESCA ALHAIQUE, LUCA BONDIOLI, <i>Euboean, Eastern and Indigenous People: A Bioarchaeological Investigation of Ancient Pithekoussai (8th-7th Century BC, Ischia Island, Campania)</i>	»	87
VALENTINO NIZZO, <i>Ritual Landscapes and Ritual Codes in the Pithekoussai Cemetery</i>	»	107
COSTANZA GIALANELLA, PIER GIOVANNI GUZZO, <i>The Manufacturing District in Mazzola and its Metal Production</i>	»	125
LUCIA A. SCATOZZA HÖRICH, <i>Pithecusan Gold: Anatolian Connections</i>	»	147
GLORIA OLCESE (with a contribution by GILBERTO ARTIOLI), <i>Natural Resources and Raw Materials at Ischia in Antiquity: Some Data and Preliminary Reports from an Ongoing, Interdisciplinary Project</i>	»	161
NADIN BURKHARDT, STEPHAN FAUST, <i>First Results of the Excavations at Pithekoussai from 2016-2018 (Villa Arbusto, Lacco Ameno, Ischia)</i>	»	183
MARIASSUNTA CUOZZO, <i>Pithekoussai. Pottery from the Mazzola Area</i>	»	201
FRANCESCA MERMATI, <i>Parerga and Paralipomena to the Study of Pithecusan-Cumaeen Ceramic Production in the Light of New Research. Twenty Years after Euboica</i>	»	221
TERESA E. CINQUANTAQUATTRO, BRUNO D'AGOSTINO, <i>The Context of "Nestor's Cup": New Considerations in the Light of Recent Anthropological Studies</i>	»	267
MAREK WĘCOWSKI, <i>The "Cup of Nestor" in Context. The Rise of the Greek Aristocratic Culture</i>	»	275

Cumae and Parthenope

- ALFONSO MELE, *Kyme, Apollo and the Sybil* » 281
- MATTEO D'ACUNTO, MARIANGELA BARBATO, MARTINA D'ONOFRIO, MARCO GIGLIO, CHIARA IMPROTA, CRISTIANA MERLUZZO, FRANCESCO NITTI, FRANCESCA SOMMA, *Cumae in Opicia in the Light of the Recent Archaeological Excavations by the University of Napoli L'Orientale: from the Pre-Hellenic (LBA-EIA) to the earliest phase of the apoikia (LG I)* » 305
- ALBIO CESARE CASSIO, *Earlier and Earlier: The Rise of the Greek Alphabet and a Greek Letter on an Euboean Skyphos Found in Pre-Hellenic Cumae, ca. 760-750 BC* » 451
- MASSIMO BOTTO, *Phoenician Trade in the Lower Tyrrhenian Sea between the 9th and 8th Centuries BC: the Case of Cumae* » 461
- GIOVANNA GRECO, *Structures and Materials of Archaic Cumae: Research of the Federico II University in the Area of the Forum* » 501
- DANIELA GIAMPAOLA, *New Discoveries from Parthenope (Naples)* » 523

Magna Graecia and Sicily

- JAN KINDBERG JACOBSEN, GLORIA MITTICA, *Oinotrian-Euboean Pottery from Timpone della Motta – Francavilla Marittima (CS)* » 563
- MARIA COSTANZA LENTINI, *Naxos between the Eighth and Seventh Centuries BC Revisited* » 575
- GIOVANNA MARIA BACCI, *Zancle: Latest Findings on the Urban Settlement and Sanctuaries* » 589

Conclusions

- CATHERINE MORGAN, *Conclusions. From Euboica to Euboica II: Changes in Knowledge and Scholarly Approaches* » 605
- Abstracts* » 617

THE “CUP OF NESTOR” IN CONTEXT. THE RISE OF THE GREEK ARISTOCRATIC CULTURE*

Marek Węcowski

*I am Nestor's cup, good to drink from.
Whoever drinks from it, straightaway that man
will be seized by the desire belonging to fairly-crowned Aphrodite.*

When first presented to the scholarly world by Giorgio Buchner¹, the Pithecusan “Cup of Nestor” from the necropolis of San Montano was bewildering to the point of disbelief. Rhys Carpenter tried to date its staggering inscription to a later period and thus dissociate the vessel itself from its handsome text². Although this idea was patently wrong, I would argue that later scholarship unjustifiably stopped being puzzled by this object (and this text), iconic though they are in our scholarly debates. I suggest we ought to try to alienate ourselves, so to say, from this object once again to fully grasp its originality and its true importance.

Let me briefly summarize just one aspect of the discussion revolving around the “Cup of Nestor” and its possible historical implications. And let me emphasise right at the outset that I am not going to delve into the hotly debated issue of its conceivable significance for the history of Greek epic poetry, a debate at least partly focussed on identifying, or not, Nestor from this inscription with the epic character, Homeric or otherwise. Instead, I will concentrate on the interpretive line defined by the pathbreaking studies by Oswyn Murray³. We owe to this scholar not only an overall interpretation of the “Cup of

Nestor” and its inscription in the context of early Greek elite conviviality, or symposion, but also the conclusion that by virtue of combining the pleasures of Aphrodite, that of wine drinking, and the poetic form and conceivable original function of the text itself, this epigram is our first tangible testimony to the Greek notion of *euphrosyne*, or good cheer or joyousness as an ideal to strive for in life. This ideal was particularly appropriate to the social group that may be dubbed, in traditional sociological terms, a “leisure class”. Its main resort was the symposion, i.e. a nocturnal wine party attended by male aristocrats, a drinking occasion strictly separated from feasting that involved more solid food, and a party full of musical and poetic entertainments. In a series of studies dating from even before he tackled the “Cup of Nestor”, Murray asked a fundamental historical question of how to relate, in historical terms, this new elite focused, inter alia, on convivial pleasures with earlier types of social and political elites in the Early Iron Age Aegean⁴.

Nowadays, despite the growing stock of both archaeological evidence for socio-political developments in EIA Aegean and, as we shall see shortly, of freshly excavated objects (and texts) analogous to the “Cup of Nestor”, we venture to ask this crucial question afresh much too rarely. And this point needs to be stressed time and again. If we take, as I think we still should, the “Cup of Nestor” and its expanding kin as powerful symbols of social prestige, they look puzzling indeed as viewed

* I seize this occasion to thank the Organizers of this unforgettable conference for their hospitality in Ischia. This paper would not have been written without the generous support of the research project of Poland's National Science Center (NCN grant no. 2016/21/B/HS3/03096) and without the discussions with my collaborators in this project: Xenia Charalambidou, Katarzyna Kostecka, Cameron Pearson, and Roman Żuchowicz.

¹ BUCHNER – RUSSO 1955.

² CARPENTER 1963.

³ In particular MURRAY 1994.

⁴ From MURRAY 1983 to MURRAY 2009. All these studies now conveniently collected in MURRAY 2018.

against the backdrop of earlier social and cultural developments in the Aegean. Before returning to this issue to conclude my paper, let me now turn for a moment to the aforementioned growing family of similarly inscribed vessels.

What I mean by analogous vases is a group of almost fifty first-person utterances inscribed into wine-drinking paraphernalia, ranging from shortest ownership statements (“I am the vase of X”) to rather long poetic compositions such as the inscription of the “Cup of Nestor” itself⁵. As a group, they represent a substantial part of 8th- and 7th-century inscribed vessels catalogued thus far. What is striking about this collection is the fact that they most probably belonged to domestic contexts, where emphasising one’s ownership would have been superfluous. Moreover, just like the “Cup of Nestor”, some of these items seem to be self-consciously “overvalued” in that their inconspicuous material form sharply contrasts with the proud, even if jocular, utterances they bear. In one case, a rather modest LG monochrome cup from the sanctuary of Apollo Daphnephoros in Eretria has a pre-firing dipinto in bold letters parading the ownership of the vase⁶. Its future owner must have been proud enough of his prospective possession to pre-order this dipinto in a potter’s shop beforehand. All in all, this must have been a case of some added functional value involved here.

Now, I would not hesitate to link this phenomenon with a well-known rule of “doing things to the right” (*epidexia* or *endexia*) during Archaic and Classical symposia (already attested to in Homer), where various pastimes of the diners circulated in the dining-hall to give equal access to them to all the participants of the social gathering, but also to regulate and even stimulate their competition as all the entertainments involved were organised in a series of contests⁷. Bringing one’s cup inscribed with an ownership formula to a party would secure its possession when it circulated around (sometimes threatening curses against thieves were duly added) but would also add to the jocular atmosphere of the meeting since their inscriptions

would sometimes interact with the expectations of their drinkers in a paradoxical way, as the inscription of the “Cup of Nestor” famously does by invoking the pleasurable powers of Aphrodite where one would in principle expect a threatening curse (i.e., «whoever steals it will get blind»). Importantly, such early inscribed vessels were excavated in Pithecoussai, Kyme, Eretria, and recently, in a most spectacular manner, in Methone Pierias⁸, and possibly in Lefkandi, Al Mina, and Kommos.

Beginning in the second half of the 8th century BC, the sympotic function of such inscriptions – shorter or longer, humorous or serious as they may be – would most certainly require at least some acquaintance with an alphabetic script or perhaps even a rather solid level of functional literacy to make them truly effective. And even if not, the alphabetic script would at least serve some symbolic purpose for the social group enjoying this type of entertainment.

In the category of early inscribed vessels, the “Cup of Nestor” still has just a few direct matches bearing longer poetic, or partly poetic, compositions to compare with, including the now famous “Hakesandros Cup” from Methone⁹. Meanwhile, one less spectacular object deserves our special attention here. It is yet another “bird kotyle”, this time from Eretria and badly damaged (ca. 720-710 BC) so that the inscription can only tentatively be restored¹⁰. What is left, however, is meaningful enough: «I belong to Thymokartès [or to Euthymos – M.W.]. The one who will [drink from this cup,] instantly she will be well...». This time the potential “victim” of the “curse” will be a woman, which is striking indeed. But the most important thing is that it perfectly matches the Pithecusan “Cup of Nestor” as regards the form of the inscription. Once again, the first line of an uncertain metrical status was most probably followed by two hexameters. And it not only yields a similar set of ideas but does it in the very same syntactic structure. There is no escape; we must conclude that two contemporaneous drinking vessels of the same type, one found in the Euboean motherland and the other excavated overseas on Ischia, actually pre-

⁵ In general, see BARTONĚK – BUCHNER 1995 (cf. BARTONĚK 1998), and recently WĘCOWSKI 2017.

⁶ Cf. KENZELMANN PFYFFER – THEURILLAT – VERDAN 2005, no. 1.

⁷ Cf. WĘCOWSKI 2014, *passim*.

⁸ *Methone Pierias I*.

⁹ *Methone Pierias I*, no. 2.

¹⁰ BARTONĚK – BUCHNER 1995, B1 (*LSAG*² 434 [B], pl. 73,4).

sent variations on the same poetic form and possibly on the same set of convivial ideas. If so, spanning the Euboean Mediterranean in the second half of the 8th century BC, when taken together they testify to the rise of a fairly homogeneous custom of culture-oriented drinking that involved circulating wine-cups and poetic performances by the diners, but also some level of their functional literacy.

As to the emergence of highly idiosyncratic wine-drinking habits of utmost social importance in the Aegean, I suggested a possible historical time-frame in my book of the rise of the Greek aristocratic banquet¹¹. Based on a series of distinctive developments in the material culture, they seem to have been well underway by the MG II period. Socially meaningful ways of pleasurable drinking are suggested, *inter alia*, by the appearance of the class of multi-storeyed “trick vases” of multiplied capacity to provide for more alcohol and more fun when their drinkers will be tricked, or pretend to be tricked, into consuming more than they anticipated¹², but also by the growing importance of the kantharos with high strap handles. The latter was obviously very convenient to be passed around from one diner to another, but not so much for drinking itself and this could have been the point because they may have been supposed to test the dexterity and elegance of their drinkers as many later shapes of Greek sympotic pottery did. In less practical terms, I would stress the importance of yet another new phenomenon, namely of the symbolically laden knobs of Attic, and then Euboean, large wine containers and pyxides. In the MG II period, the traditional repertory of handles crowning such vessels was expanded to include not only horse figurines and granary models – and thus alluding to the ideal “social persona” of their owners as possessors of horses and of large storage of grain – but also miniature wine-drinking paraphernalia such as skyphoi, oionochai or hydriai. It was by no means a minor change since, in purely symbolic terms, wine drinking and wine ceremonial in general seem hereby to join in the set of prestigious activities meant for establishing, consolidating, and displaying one’s social status and prestige.

All in all, I think it justified to say that with all these developments at hand, we may postulate the existence, or maybe even the rise of the prestigious, i.e. socially meaningful elite wine party at least foreshadowing, if not identical with, the symposium as defined based on our sources beginning with the testimony of the “Cup of Nestor”. Therefore, at this juncture, returning to our initial historical question, it is worthwhile to briefly consider the historical implications of this development. To put it briefly, redirecting means of social prestige in a commensal context from what earlier must have been based on more or less conspicuous consumption of meat to more or less subtle and ceremonial wine drinking is a major change. It can be analysed by having recourse to the famous anthropological theory of “commensal politics” as formulated by Michael Dietler and Brian Hayden¹³. In a nutshell, to use their famous definitions, the “empowering feasting” is all about the «manipulation of commensal hospitality» ultimately to be translated «into an ability to influence group decisions or actions»¹⁴, whereas the “patron-role feasting” «involves the formalized use of commensal hospitality to symbolically reiterate and legitimize institutionalized relations of asymmetrical social power»¹⁵. The lavish offering of animal meat to one’s guests (or social peers to compete with) would be a main economic tool in both cases. In contrast to them, Dietler’s “diacritical feasting” «involves the use of differentiated cuisine and styles of consumption as a diacritical symbolic device [...]», and in which «the emphasis shifts from an asymmetrical commensal bond between unequal partners to a statement of exclusive and unequal commensal circles [...]». Therein, «[d]iacritical stylistic distinctions [...] may be orchestrated by the use of elaborate food-service vessels and implements or architectonically distinguished settings to serve to “frame” elite consumption as a distinctive practice even when food is not distinctive. Or they may be based upon differences in the complexity of the pattern of preparation and consumption of food and specialized knowledge and taste (i.e. the “cultural capital”

¹¹ WĘCOWSKI 2014.

¹² Cf. SIMANTONI-BOURNIA 2011.

¹³ DIETLER – HAYDEN 2001.

¹⁴ DIETLER – HAYDEN 2001, 75-76.

¹⁵ DIETLER – HAYDEN 2001, 82.

[...] that proper consumption entails»¹⁶. No doubt, as M. Dietler observed himself, there is hardly a more emblematic case of “diacritical feasting” than the Greek symposion. And most probably earlier models of “commensal politics” in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age Aegean may generally be identified with “patron-role feasting” or with “empowering feasting” in one way or another.

In my study of the origins of the symposion, I have argued that the “diacritical” aspect of the symposion prominently featured the competencies of the diners themselves¹⁷. Diverse cultural performances or dexterity games, all organised in a series of contests, were at the core of this new social practice. And they had direct socio-political implications at that. I tried to show that such cultural skills and abilities were indeed a prerequisite for one to be included in elite drinking circles and, as such, the symposion served as a forum for the natural selection of Greek aristocracy, sealing the ascendancy of an ambitious and successful individual (and his offspring) if one was admitted by the traditional local elites to their symposia. It is also important to bear in mind that all this involved an important economic factor. Separating wine drinking from eating at symposia resulted, among other things, in lowering the economic threshold for those aspiring to establish their elite status in feasting, since they no longer needed to have access to large herds of cattle to feast in a conspicuous manner while distributing large quantities of meat to their potential supporters or their social peers. Thus, the mechanisms of social advancement were facilitated in the symposion, which focused on wine drinking and was largely based on the “cultural capital” showcased and practiced by the diners. I, for one, would not hesitate to differentiate the new elite excelling in the new “diacritical” lifestyle from older ones and would eagerly call this new one aristocracy proper.

To return to the times of the “Cup of Nestor”, or the period slightly predating it, yet another “diacritical” element of prestigious lifestyle detectable in the MG period in the Aegean seems to be combined with pleasurable wine drinking as well, namely the erotic, or better, aphrodisiac discourse. Before we

find it explicitly stated in the epigram of the “Cup of Nestor” and most probably (implied by the feminine form in the epigram) on the “bird kotyle” from Eretria¹⁸, an erotic scene involving an adult male and an adolescent (or perhaps a woman) and jokingly mirroring consecutive scenes of copulating horses, features on the famous MG I/II “krater of black horses” (ca. 760 BC) from a sumptuous pyre in Eretria recently published by Athanasia Psalti¹⁹. Once again, a distinctive lifestyle, instead of publicising one’s social and especially economic might, comes to the fore in a convivial context, once again reflected in the funerary display.

What the “Cup of Nestor” adds to this cultural complex roughly a generation later is, obviously, poetry and the alphabet. Whereas the former aspect, suggestive of poetic performances of the Pithecan diners, seems rather straightforward and has been wonderfully studied ever since Peter A. Hansen’s seminal study of the issue²⁰, we need to dwell for a moment on the latter. In the current state of our evidence, we cannot help using the “Cup of Nestor” and its kin in our hypotheses regarding the origins and the moment of adoption of the alphabetic script by the Greeks. However, I would argue that what may be called the wave of early convivial inscriptions of the Late Geometric period has no direct relevance to the problem of the invention of the Greek alphabet²¹. Rather, it only bespeaks of a new cultural fashion which let the alphabetic script invade the convivial pastimes of the Euboean elites.

Meanwhile, as such, this phenomenon seems to round off earlier intricate developments by adding one more cultural competence to the repertoire of the social skills required to join in the sophisticated entertainment of their local elites. Of course, I do not suggest that each individual partaking in the ceremonial drinking parties of this period must have been literate – any more than that each and every one of them must have been able to improvise decent convivial poetry. What I mean is that

¹⁶ DIETLER – HAYDEN 2001, 85–86.

¹⁷ WĘCOWSKI 2014.

¹⁸ Both testimonies may ultimately suggest the existence of sympotic hetaerae at an early date. Cf. WĘCOWSKI 2017, 319 with note 28.

¹⁹ Cf. PSALTİ 2011.

²⁰ HANSEN 1976.

²¹ For a detailed argument to this effect, see WĘCOWSKI 2017.

both the alphabetic and poetic competencies of a given diner would importantly add to the social graces of this individual in his immediate social circle, thus adding to his social status and prestige. In that, Euboean drinking parties of this period fully deserve to be called “culture-oriented banquets” and I would be tempted to interpret them, already at so early a date, as hubs of the natural selection of early Greek local aristocracies.

To conclude, let me observe that the sheer number and, in particular, the wide geographical distribution of the inscribed convivial vases that provided the starting point for this paper may suggest a supra-local social function of such vessels and of the lifestyle they seem to convey. We witness this phenomenon from Pithecoussai and Kyme in the West to Eretria in the Euboean motherland and further north to the Euboean outpost in Methone. But by the end of the 8th century BC, this cultural complex clearly reached as far as the eastern shores of the Aegean, as an analogous cup from Rhodes, inscribed by its owner, a certain Korax, shows well²². And this process of swift geographical expansion of the custom of inscribing convivial pottery with this type of inscriptions is fully understandable from the perspective I advocate here.

Namely, distinctive elite wine drinking must have been a socially powerful mediating force. It not only served the integration of local aristocracies

in many corners of the Mediterranean, but even more so, it provided a convenient and duly respected tool of mediation and integration for travelling and interacting Greeks across the Mediterranean. Economic transactions, marriages, political alliances, and all other occasions uniting individuals by bonds of ritual friendship, *philia* or *xenia*, must have been sealed at symposia, where a certain level of cultural homogeneity was required to fully realise the potential of this “culture-oriented banquet”. Indeed, one of the inscribed LG vessels in Methone alludes, if I am not mistaken, to the *xenia* ritual²³. As a result, countless interconnected networks were born and consolidated, covering the “small Greek world”, as Irad Malkin calls it²⁴, in its entirety. And one of its main unifying mechanisms, or mobile hubs of this overarching network, were aristocratic symposia, or better, the cultural skills and competencies on which this social practice was based. In this manner, the Pithecusan “Cup of Nestor” and its Eretrian counterpart I mentioned above become our first witnesses to the rise of the Greek aristocratic culture in a broader sense of the term, a culture that indeed can be described as a main integrative force of early Greek civilisation – both in its social and geographical dimension, thus matching and counterbalancing the fundamental (geographic and political) fragmentation of the Hellenic world.

²² *LSAG*² 347, pl. 67,1.

²³ WĘCOWSKI 2017, 319-321 with pl. 1 (p. 328).

²⁴ MALKIN 2011.

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BC research on pottery production has always been of major importance. In the case of Pithekoussai and Kyme, the artisans could count on an already established state of affairs, which allowed them to immediately start up successful workshops, and achieve a steadily developing production. In the earliest phase, the original cultural background is still much in evidence: it shows a strong Euboean influence but is already enriched by other inputs – Boeotian, Attic, Corinthian and from the Cycladic islands. Over time, contact and coexistence with different groups native to the land and/or newly arrived there lead to an eclectic production that becomes easily recognisable. Archaeometric analyses (NA) carried out on materials dating from the mid-first quarter of the 8th century BC until the middle of the 7th century – distributed between Pithekoussai, Kyme and the necropolises of the Valle del Sarno – now clarifies the origin of some of the most ancient pottery imports in the Phlegraean area, and so reveals and defines the complexity of the Pithe-cusan-Cumaeen pottery production and the manner of its consumption and diffusion.

TERESA E. CINQUANTAQUATTRO, BRUNO D'AGOSTINO, *The Context of "Nestor's Cup": New Considerations in the Light of Recent Anthropological Studies*

The so-called "tomb of Nestor's Cup" (T. 168) is one of the most representative contexts of the extraordinary intermediary role played by Pithekoussai between the Greek motherland and the Western world thanks to its eponymous vase which is the oldest direct source of the Homeric epic. The study and re-examination of the skeletal specimen by a team of anthropologists led by L. Bondioli and M. Gigante have provided new data indicating that the tomb assemblage did not in fact belong to one single burial and this calls into question its interpretation until now. The article re-examines the dynamics of the formation of the archaeological records, focusing on the "layer of burnt fragments" identified below the tumuli and interpreted as the result of a ritual action to which it is highly probable that a large part of the vases present in "context 168" can be attributed.

MAREK WĘCOWSKI, *The "Cup of Nestor" in Context. The Rise of the Greek Aristocratic Culture*

The goal of this paper is to show that the Pithe-cusan "Cup of Nestor", as well as similar LG vessels adorned with convivial inscriptions and spanning the Mediterranean from Rhodes to Ischia, become our first witnesses to the rise of the Greek aristocratic culture. One of its main unifying mechanisms, or mobile hubs of this overarching network, were aristocratic symposia, or better, the cultural skills and competencies on which this social practice was based, featuring the alphabetic competences of their participants. This culture of the LG Greek "travelling elites" can be described as a main integrative force of early Greek civilisation – both in its social and its geographical dimension, thus matching and counterbalancing the fundamental (geographic and political) fragmentation of the Hellenic world.

Cumae and Parthenope

ALFONSO MELE, *Kyme, Apollo and the Sybil*

Starting from recent archaeological investigations, which have led to a reassessment of the attribution of the upper temple of the acropolis, this article discusses the cult of Apollo Archegetes at Cumae, and his role in the foundation of the colony. The tradition of the cult of Aeolian Apollo in the Chalcidian colonies is examined, and the characteristics of the god worshipped with the epiclesis of *Smintheus* in different parts of the Greek world are discussed. As the latest research shows, the god is also present in Cumae with this connotation; the presence of the Sibyl is linked to his domain, which also includes the mantic sphere. This paper traces the various traditions on the Sibyls in Greece, in the Aegean area and in the West, focusing on the Cumaeen Sibyl, documented in the literary tradition since the Archaic age. The discovery on the acropolis temple of two bronze figurines, the first of which represents a lyre player identified with the Sibyl, and the second with a warrior, gives us the opportunity to reconsider the tradition of Apollo and his connections with the other cults of the early Cumaeen pantheon.

Finito di stampare nel mese di marzo 2024
presso l'Industria Grafica Letizia, Capaccio (SA)
per conto di UniorPress

AION

Nuova Serie | 28



The intent of the *Euboica II* conference, *Pithekoussai e l'Eubea tra Oriente e Occidente*, held in Lacco Ameno (Ischia, Naples) from 14 to 17 May 2018, was to discuss the themes of colonization, how colonial realities became rooted in different areas of the Mediterranean, the specific traits of Euboean colonization, and forms of contact and relationship between the Greek element and local communities. These Proceedings are divided in two volumes, arranged geographically. They feature a dialogue between historians and archaeologists, with an emphasis on the new important contributions made over the last twenty years by field archaeology in Euboea and in colonial and Mediterranean contexts.

