

Illustrating Burial Practice from the Cemetery at Lagonisi, Attica: Burials and Grave Goods of the 5th Century B.C.

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Foreword

As the title may suggest, the purpose of our essay is to illustrate burial practice and funerary rituals of the 5th century B.C. as attested by the evidence from the cemetery at Lagonisi, Attica. In order to deal with our subject, we have chosen to examine a number of burials¹. This is the first attempt to publish a considerable amount of data from the site since the beginning of the short term salvage excavations and therefore, our study has been based on a merely casual material selection. Counting on personal experience and fieldwork at the site, we consider the cases that we have included in our study to be representative of the burial practice during the 5th century B.C. at the Lagonisi cemetery. As one may notice, the majority of the selected tombs fall into the early part of the 5th century B.C. This is not fortuitous but is meant to reflect the excavation data so far, which indicate the intensive cemetery use during the same period.

Each case shall be treated separately and differently. Wherever our material allows us to draw conclusions on the identity or personality of the person buried in a grave, we try to make some conjectures, while in other cases we simply do not make such an attempt. Finally, as we aim to provide mainly visual evidence, we tend to treat in fuller-detail the presentation of pottery, which is the main artefact category from the site. Thus, we generally insist on issues like pottery production, function, decoration and iconography. In doing this we hope, apart from dating each context, that we can throw more light in the perception of death during the 5th century B.C.

¹ The burial customs and the grave typology of the cemetery are discussed in the paper by D. Papathanasiou and A. Tsaravopoulos. We take the opportunity to thank both of them for assisting us in our study.

Graves 50-A7 and 50-B

The grave complex lies in the south part of an estate where mainly burials of primary cremations were located (pl. 1/1). It is situated on the southwest corner of the estate and it consists of Grave 50-A7 and Grave 50-B.

Grave 50-A7 was constructed as a rectangular, shallow pit measuring 1.30 × 0.95 m. Its outline was apparently bordered by a stone arrangement of which only the east part has been uncovered (pl. 1/2). In the tomb, 21 pottery vessels were found circumscribing the dead person's body. Most surprisingly, it was at the southeast corner, in the space between the vessels that a thin layer of ashes and burnt bone fragments of the deceased were found. At the same spot a pair of bronze nails was recovered along with an ivory plaque in worn condition.

The pottery finds were all *lekythoi*, small unguent bottles, a typically funerary pottery shape in Attic graveyards of the 5th century B.C. The examples from Grave 50-A7 originate from a variety of Attic workshops producing vessels in the characteristic black-figured style of the late 6th to the early 5th century B.C. The majority of the black-figured *lekythoi* in our case can be ascribed to the so-called Cock Group², of which the most prominent feature is a figure of a cockerel on the vessel's shoulder along with ivy leaves (pl. 1/3). The painters working for that workshop seem to have shown a considerable preference for battle-related scenes, in our case

² This workshop uses for its *lekythoi* a somewhat squat, compressed shape with a wide shoulder and a solid, continuous profile, originating from the so-called Shoulder Group *lekythoi* of the last quarter of the 6th century BC; see Haspels 1936, 68; Boardman 1974, 115, fig. 238; Knigge 1976, 34 ff; Moore, Philippides 1986, 46, pl. 78.

especially for the subject of warriors departing for the battlefield, either on dry ground (pl. 1/4) or on the deck of a warship (pl. 1/5), and for that of fighting hoplite-soldiers (pl. 1/6). Apart from these, other products from the same workshop comprise an eye-*lekythos*³ (pl. 1/7) and others depicting Bacchic subjects (pl. 1/8).

The rest of the *lekythoi* are associated with the workshop of the Class of Athens 581⁴ and depict current Bacchic scenes. Among them one may distinguish an example depicting Dionysos between a pair of eyes (eye-*lekythos*) (pl. 2/9) and another one depicting the same god, seated between two other also seated figures. One example stands alone, namely a *lekythos* with a black shoulder-palmette, characteristic of the late 6th century B.C. Phanylis Group⁵, depicting a seated Dionysus.

The presence of a concentration of ashes and small burnt bones to the SE of the grave suggests a secondary cremation burial in Grave 50-A7, as the incineration did not take place *in situ* but outside of the grave. Moreover, we have strong reasons to believe that the funerary ashes were not just scattered in the pit but received special care. As to this, there are two indications. Firstly, the pair of bronze nails mentioned above point to a wooden structure, which would have acted as a repository for the incinerated remains. This can either be a funerary *κλίνη* or bed or a small container. We can exclude the first suggestion, that of the presence of a funerary bed, as this is not the case of an inhumation. The

second one, namely the use of a small wooden box for the deposition of the ashes, seems to be more fitting if we take into account our second indication, that is the ivory plaque. This must have been purely ornamental, serving as a revetment on the wooden box⁶.

The earliest *lekythoi* from Grave 50-A7 are those ascribed earlier to the Cock Group, dating to the late 6th century B.C., while the latest are a number of examples attributed to late production of the Class of Athens 581. According to this, the burial must have taken place some time during the early decades of the 5th century B.C.

To the SW of Grave 50-A7 a pottery group comprising four *lekythoi*, one *kylix* and a stemmed dish⁷ were located (pl. 1/1). The four *lekythoi* belong in stylistic terms to both Cock Group and the Class of Athens 581. The *kylix* bears the shape of the eye-cups of the last quarter of the 6th century B.C. while its decoration places it together with the common cups of the Leafless Group⁸, dating to the late 6th – early 5th centuries B.C. (pl. 2/10). Below both handles appear small dolphins, a distinguishing feature of the group (pl. 2/11). It bears on both sides the depiction of Hercules fighting with the Nemea Lion. Finally as to the stemmed dish, it can be ascribed to the category of convex and large examples that date to the first two decades of the 5th century B.C.⁹ (pl. 2/12).

This pottery group lay somewhat deeper than the rest of the pottery found in the grave. As this pottery group was found transecting another grave, namely Grave 50B, it was a problem for us to determine the provenance of these vessels and we could not incorporate them unmistakably in either grave inventory. Grave 50B was situated about 0.50 m deeper than the former grave and transacted its SW part, the pottery group lying between the two pits. It contained thirteen *lekythoi* along with a 0.20 m thick layer of burnt

³ Cf. Moore, Philippides 1986, pl. 85, nos. 1079 - 1087 (Kalinderu Group).

⁴ For this somewhat multi-collective group of mainly low quality, mass-produced *lekythoi* and drinking cups, the production period of which falls into the early decades of the 5th century BC, see Haspels 1936, 93 - 4, 224 -25; Moore, Philippides 1986, 46 - 7, 95; Beazley 1956, 487 ff. Burn, Glynn 1982, 59 - 60. For questions of dating and a discussion of chronology, cf. Cheliotis 1970 - 1971, 130 - 154. To the same assemblage belongs a Class of Athens 581 ornamental *lekythos* with a shape close to the shoulder *lekythoi* and double palmette decoration, associated with the Beldam workshop. See Kunze-Götte 1999, pl. 19: 73. 1 (HTR) 61.

⁵ See Boardman 1974, 115, fig. 237; Moore, Philippides 1986, 45.

⁶ Unfortunately, we were unable to locate and examine this find.

⁷ This is of the "convex and large" category; see Sparkes, Talcott 1970, nos. 960, 964, 968. pl. 35, fig. 9.

⁸ Moore, Philippides 1986, pl. 113, nos. 1761 - 1771, esp. 1762; Boardman 1974, 150-151, figs. 290 - 291

⁹ See note 7.

soil thus indicating a primary cremation burial¹⁰. Some of the *lekythoi* were burnt along the deceased on the pyre, while others, not burnt, seem to have been simply thrown into the pit after the cremation ceremony (pl. 2/13 – 14). After having compared the pottery from both graves with the pottery group, we were unable to associate it with either Grave 50A or 50B, as in chronological terms all pottery was identical¹¹. As a result, it was impossible to establish a firm chronological sequence for the construction of the graves resting solely on the pottery finds. The key in solving this matter lay in the presence of burnt soil, which was found much under the pottery group and at the same level as the burnt layer of Grave 50B. Consequently, the pottery group was apparently part of Grave 50A, which was constructed a little later than Grave 50B.

Grave 5-Z 32

A similar case of burial rite has been recorded for Grave 5-Z 32 and concerns the deposition of the cremated remains of the deceased in a clay *larnax*.

The grave is NE-SW orientated and was found among other early Classical burials. Quite a large number of grave complexes of the early 5th century B.C. had already been located in close distance, such as a tomb enclosure, several dispersed *larnax* burials and a mound-like structure housing cinerary urns.

The *larnax* is of a stretched and narrow form, measuring 1.45 × 0.39 m and being about 0.19 m deep. Its outer and inner corners are curvilinear and in all respects the *larnax* can be identified with the *λουτήρ* (*louter*), or bathtub, used both in contemporary households for casual hygienic needs and in funerary contexts for the deposition of the dead. Furthermore, the *larnax*

was placed in a pit of almost rectangular shape, which was cut into the natural bedrock and was equipped with rounded ends as well, so that the *larnax* could fit properly.

Along with the container a clay cover plate/lid was placed on top in order to seal the complex. This was rounded at its NE end, whereas its S end was intentionally broken and shaped as a rectangular in order to fit in the grave. Considering dimensions and shape of both *louter* and adhering cover/lid, it seems unlikely that they were designed as one. Most probably, two proper *louteres* were used, the one broken on purpose at its S end acting as a tomb plate. As a matter of fact, such a combination was apparently quite common in early 5th century B.C. Attic cemeteries and it is usually held to be an attribute of children's burials¹². We shall come, however, to this later on.

From the interior of the container a number of artifacts were recovered, all of them ceramics: eight *lekythoi*, one small *kylix*, one drinking cup and a *κόθων/εξάλειπτρον* (*kothon/exaleiptron*), a somewhat problematic vessel type of obscure function.

The *lekythoi* are of about 12 cm average height, and their main form elements comprise the discus-shaped foot, cylindrical, spindle-like body and bud-shaped rim. All of them are made of a fine, reddish to orange Attic clay and bear black-figured pictorial and floral decoration. As to the painted subjects, the depicted scenes draw from a variety of mythological repertoires, such as goddess Athena fighting a Giant, Theseus struggling with the Marathon Bull¹³, episodes related to Dionysus and a charioteer mounted on a quadriga.

¹⁰ Grave and funerary rite typology: Kurtz, Boardman 1971, 96 - 99, esp. 98

¹¹ As in Grave 50-A7, in Grave 50-B we have examples of *lekythoi* of both the Class of Athens 581 and the Cooch Group. There is also a palmette *lekythos*, which we would ascribe to the late Phanylis Group of ornamental *lekythoi*. See Kunze-Götte 1999, pl. 35.7 239 (35 HTR 23 II) 1.

¹² Generally, Kurtz, Boardman 1971, 97 ff.: "...one being inverted over another to enclose the small body (rarely used for an adult)."; cf. ibid. fig. 17. For similar children burials in Kerameikos, see Kübler 1976, 179ff.

¹³ Theseus and Herakles should be seen as interchangeable figures in the iconography of Late Attic Black-Figure Vase Painting. In our case we suggest that the depiction of Theseus on a *lekythos* from an Attic rural cemetery, situated near the scenery of this mythological episode, namely Marathon, would be more fitting. See e.g. Carpenter 1991, 162, fig. 242; parallels: CVA Paris (Musée Rodin), 145, pl. 17, 6 = Beazley 1956, 547; Moore, Philipides 1986, 229, no. 1022 (P 24487), pl.

The *kylix* is almost 5 cm high its floral decoration consists of a banded pattern of degenerated palmettes and lotus buds across the body of the vessel¹⁴. The drinking cup, or *σκύφος* (*skyphos*), is of a mixed form, which combines Attic elements, such as the horizontal horse-shoe-like handles, with traits of a more traditional Corinthian type, characterized by the disc-shaped foot¹⁵. This is decorated with three black-figured sphinxes, mythological hybrid creatures with an apotropaic, evil-averting function and funerary associations, two of which were heraldically placed.

Now we come to illustrate the most controversial of all the grave goods that we have reviewed so far. The *kothon* or *exaleiptron* is of a compressed globular shape. Its main features are the characteristic inward bend of the rim and the massive, horizontal cordon-like handle. On the rim, its outer periphery and the bottom it bears linear decoration in concentric circles and a band decorated with a very worn battlement motive, rendered in a reddish-brown slip¹⁶. As far as the use of this type of vessel is concerned, many theories have been proposed, based partly on accounts of antique literary sources¹⁷ and on self-styled observation¹⁸. Could this have been a sort of lamp, an incense burner or just a drinking cup?

The grave finds offer us solid chronological grounds in order to date the burial. Firstly, the main bulk of *lekythoi* belong to the so-called

Class of Athens 581, Group ii, known from a multitude of Attic burial and urban sites¹⁹. Moreover, our *kylix* is very similar to a pair of well-stratified sherds of floral band cups, found at Old Smyrna²⁰ that can be placed in the same chronological frame. Furthermore, the form of our *skyphos* reproduces the shape of contemporary black-glazed drinking cups of the late 6th to early 5th centuries B.C., found at the Athenian Agora²¹. Finally, the Corinthian *κώθων/εξάλειπτρον* falls into a category that on the basis of its decoration and hemispherical profile usually dates from Late Corinthian II, about 530 B.C. in absolute terms, until in some cases, as in Attic grave-contexts, well into the 1st quarter of the 5th centuries B.C.

This brings us to a number of further considerations regarding the symbolic potential of the grave inventory. To put things straight, any attempt to determine the buried person's sex is deemed in our case highly problematic. Most importantly, there is a sheer lack of skeletal material, as Grave 5 was used to contain only the deceased's incinerated remains, just after the cremation had taken place somewhere outside the grave itself and after the bones had perished, leaving only the ashes to be collected and placed in the *larnax*.

Furthermore, if one turns to the grave artifacts for help, these can only offer extremely limited information; let alone the iconography of the black-figured *lekythoi*, which tends in general to reflect current thematic preferences in accordance with the prevalent afterlife ideology of the era and the funerary destination of these vessels. Such is the case with the sphinxes. These would guard the enigma of death and even the deceased himself, either depicted on a vessel, as in our case, or sculptured on a grave pillar in the most extravagant and luxurious graves of Attica of the 6th century B.C. On the other hand, the Bacchic subjects, regardless of their afterlife

83; Knigge 1976, 93, no. 27 (HW 107), pl. 20/ 8, 3; 174, no. E 19 (C 33), pl. 87/ 4.

¹⁴ Blegen et al. 1946, Grave 262, no. 10, pl. 36. Grave 272, nos. 4 - 5, pl. 38; Boardman 1958 - 1959, 167, pl. 36/68 - 69; Maffre 1971, 658 - 660, nos. 15 - 6, figs. 18 - 9.

¹⁵ Type A of the Sparkes, Talcott classification, see Sparkes, Talcott 1970, 84, nos. 305, 334 - 335, 359, fig. 4, pl. 14/ 1 - 2; Knigge 1976, 133, no. 194 (SW 96), pl. 57/ 5, 1; 174, no. E19 (C 33) pl. 87: 1 - 3

¹⁶ Morphologically speaking, our example belongs to Type A III according to the Burrows and Ure classification, whereas on the basis of its decoration it corresponds to the so-called Corinthian White Style. See Burrows, Ure 1911, 72 ff., esp. 73, 79; Payne 1931, 298, 335 f.; Hopper 1949, 162 - 257, esp. 232; Amyx 1988, 473 - 474.

¹⁷ See note 23.

¹⁸ For example Pernice 1899, 60 ff.; Scheibler 1968, 397. Sparkes 1975, 128.

¹⁹ For the extensive export of products of this group see inter alios Campus 1981, Tuna-Nörling 1995, 84, 87, esp. 148, pl. 9/ 31.

²⁰ See note 14.

²¹ See note 15.

associations, do in fact seem to be more in agreement with the rural, wine-producing region of Mesogaia, in which the cemetery is situated.

Coming now to the problem of age determination, we suggest this matter can be partly clarified by the presence of the *kothon* vessel. Such vessels from the south-hill cemetery at Kerameikos and other Attic cemeteries were exclusively associated with children's burials²². At this point, we are willing to stress once more that, although many suggestions have been made, primary function of this vessel is a matter to be answered and one wonders quite rightly how a vessel of possibly military use²³ would be compatible with the burial of a child. Resting on the evidence just referred to, we would like to turn your attention to an observation made earlier in the paper, namely that the use of a pair of different *louteres* in Attic cemeteries of the 5th century B.C. has been regarded to indicate the burial of a child. Consequently, we believe that we are at least in part justified to assume that Grave 5 contained the remains of a child or juvenile.

Grave 35-Z 27

As in the case of Grave 5, which we previously considered to have hosted the burial of a child, Grave 35, one of the most well furnished graves that have come up so far at the cemetery of Lagonisi, from the same estate as the former, involves the use of a clay *louter* containing the cremation burial. This measures 1.17 to 0.25 m, while its depth is about 0.30 m. It was found NW-SE orientated and it was placed in a shallow shaft (pl. 3/15). Some pieces of the lid were found and it seems that this was probably another clay *louter*. At close distance a thin layer of burnt soil was located, whereas at a nearby spot, SE of the *larnax*, sherds of a domestic jug, used probably for the liquid offerings, were uncovered.

The *louter* contained along with the cremation ashes quite a remarkable number of grave artifacts: three cup-*skyphoi*, two ornamental

and seven pictorial black-figured *lekythoi*, two terracotta figurines and a fish-plate (pl. 3/16). All pottery finds are distinctively Attic in origin. Two of the cup-*skyphoi*²⁴ bears the common floral-band decoration with palmettes that we have already encountered in Grave 5 (pl. 3/ 17), while the third, a wide panel of ivy leaves on both sides (pl. 3/18). As to the two ornamental *lekythoi*, these are likely to stem from the Haimon Painter-workshop on the basis of the rendering of the palmettes and their shape (pl. 3/19). The pictorial black-figured *lekythoi* include a wide thematic repertory. Unexpectedly, subjects related to the semi-god Herakles are rather frequent. On the vases are depicted the introduction of Herakles on Olympus with god Hermes leading the procession²⁵ (pl. 3/20), the marriage of Herakles with Hebe with Apollo²⁶ playing the *kithara* (pl. 3/21) and the struggle of the hero against the Nemea Lion or the taming of the Cretan Bull²⁷ (pl. 4/22). We also have an example on which a rather peculiar Bacchic scene is depicted with two maenads worshipping a large phallus (pl. 4/23) and two examples with depiction of a chariot race (pl. 4/24). It is notable that both these scenes are rendered on a white ground and it is striking that chariot scenes depicted on contemporary *lekythoi* from the whole site of the cemetery are rendered in the same way.

On morphological and stylistic grounds, our *lekythoi* should be attributed to a workshop associated with the Haimon Painter²⁸. Firstly, its body is much more cylindrical than the one used by the potters of Class of Athens 581 and they stand on a foot slightly raised on a plastically

²⁴ For shapes and typology see Sparkes, Talcott 1970, Part I, 276; Part II, pl. 25, fig. 578; see note 14.

²⁵ Carpenter 1991, 134, fig. 232; Schefold 1992, 33ff., figs. 38 - 40.

²⁶ Carpenter 1991, 134, fig. 233.

²⁷ Hercules and the lion of Nemea: Schefold 1992, 95 -100, figs. 110 - 12; Hercules and the Cretan Bull: Carpenter 1991, 120; Schefold 1992, 109 - 111, fig. 129.

²⁸ Haspels 1936, 133, 137, 171, fig. 1, 186, 189; Beazley 1956, 538 - 539, 706 - 707 (Haimon Painter); 539 - 83, 705 - 8, 716 (Haimon Group); Beazley 1971, 269 - 91, 357, 285 (formal imitations); Burn, Glynn 1982, 64 (Haimon Painter); 64 - 5 (manner of Haimon Painter).

²² Knigge 1976, 58, 90f., no. 20 (HW 198) pl. 19/ 1, 18. See note 12.

²³ Athenaeus 11.483d-e. For more antique writers on the matter and further discussion see Liapis 1995 - 1996, 297 - 301.

torus which is characteristic of the Haimonian workshop. Secondly, the figures in the scenes seem to stand on a thinly drawn black line that implies the ground, another Haimonian feature.

The two terracotta figurines are mould-made and represent seated satyrs with their penis in state of erection²⁹ (pl. 4/25 - 26). Along with the *lekythos* depicting the phallus' cult, these are the only grave-goods with clear Bacchic associations. As to the fishplate, it bears floral decoration on the rim, while a deer or stag is depicted at its centre (pl. 4/27). It dates to the early 5th century BC³⁰

According to the grave contents, Grave 35 should date around 480 B.C. The Haimonian *lekythoi* and the cup-*skyphoi* with floral decoration should date after 490 BC, while the figurines may be slightly later.

The burial rite applied here bears identical traits to the one we have already illustrated in the case of Grave 5. Here as there, the cremated remains were deposited in a clay *larnax* with a great concentration of artefacts occupying its interior. Moreover, as stated before, a proper *louter* was used to host the burnt remains. In this case, however, we are less inclined to consider this grave as having housed the burial of a child. Besides the dead person's ashes, several solid bone fragments of the skull and legs, which survived the incineration, were recovered from the interior. Considering durability and good structure of adult bones, this leads us to believe that it was the remains of an adult that were placed in Grave 35, in contrast to Grave 5 where absolutely no bone material was recovered.

To conclude the case study, a last remark of iconographic nature is appropriate. For the person deposited in Grave 35, namely, vessels of a Herculean repertory were chosen, whereas for the one buried in Grave 5 Bacchic scenes in general, thus demonstrating a different point of view as to afterlife aspirations and hopes. If this perhaps

reflects the difference of age between the persons buried in Grave 35 and Grave 5 respectively, it is a matter that for the time being remains open.

Grave 115-B

The case of inhumation we now come to present, Grave 115-B, is one of the numerous examples that have so far been excavated at the Lagonisi cemetery. The buried person was placed in a rectangular rock-cut shaft measuring 2.05 × 0.87m. The skeleton, of around 1.55 m height, was found lying in a supine-stretched position, with its arms along the torso and its hands resting seemingly on the pelvis. The skull, of which only a part of the parietal and temporal bones along with a part of the mandible are preserved, shows a considerable inclination towards its right side. At the time of discovery the condition of bone preservation was very poor, many bones being fractured or in a state of advanced wear and as a result, the full *in situ* excavation of the skeleton was deemed impossible. At this point we would like to clearly state that we personally were unable to locate the skeleton after its *en bloc* recovery and refer to an anthropologist for a diagnostic study of the material.

Along with the skeleton four small *lekythoi* were found. These were deposited in pairs, two of them at the skeleton's inner left-hand side, while the other two were placed at its outer right-hand side. One may rightly observe that the mouths of the *lekythoi* of the former pair are directed towards the head, whereas those of the latter towards the feet of the buried person, thus simulating a clockwise rotation around the upper body.

In sum, there are one black-ground *lekythos*, one *lekythos* with pictorial decoration and two ornamental black-figured *lekythoi*. The pair of ornamental *lekythoi* is decorated with a palmette band on the body and lotus buds on the shoulder (pl. 4/28). Their shape and decoration is typical of the ornamental *lekythoi* of the Class of Athens 581³¹. The *lekythos* bearing a solid black

²⁹ Knigge 1976, 130, no. 181 (HW 213), pl. 35/ 5, 10; Higgins 1954, nos. 159 - 165 (Rhodes); Schmaltz 1974, no. 12, pl. 12.

³⁰ Our example seems to fit well into the "phase du marli court" (Type A IV); see Callipolitis-Feytmans 1976, vol. 1, 129 - 142; vol. 2, pl. 67/ 8.

³¹ Knigge 1976, 105, no. 68, pl. 38/ 3, 1-6 (SW 93) (Class of Athens 581ii, Form III/3); cf. *ibidem*, pl. 27/ 4, 96 (SW 117).

ground glaze on its body and lotus buds on the shoulder as well has a somewhat different shape, inasmuch as its body is more cylindrical and the foot considerably raised on a slight plastic black-glazed torus³² (pl. 4/29). These should be seen as features associated with the Haimon-workshop. As for the last *lekythos*, this clearly belongs to the Cock Group³³ both in terms of shape as well as decoration (pl. 4/30). The main subject of the pictorial decoration consists in this case of four figures two of them bordering a pair of a possibly female one and a hoplite. The scene reminds us in general of the warrior departing scenes, which were commonplace in the iconography of Attic vase painting³⁴.

Consequently, the grave inventory includes pottery that dates from the late 6th century B.C., such as the Cock Group example, until late into the first quarter of the 5th century B.C., such as the black-ground *lekythos*. As a result we are inclined to estimate that the inhumation took place after the first quarter of the 5th century B.C.

Grave 4Π

As opposed to the grave above, but related to the funerary rite associated with it, the following example we now turn to review, namely Grave 4Π, is a case of inhumation in a clay *larnax*. This is situated in an adjacent estate, which was extensively used as a burial ground during the late 6th to the late 5th centuries B.C., around 100 m to the SW of the one in which Grave 5 is situated.

The *larnax* was found placed in a rectangular rock-cut shaft, in this case however the *larnax* was correspondingly of a proper rectangular shape. Its dimensions are about 1.38 to 0.48 m, its depth around 0.15 m. In general, our example may be called a clay sarcophagus as opposed to the *louter* reviewed earlier. The sarcophagus had its own clay cover plate, of rather bad firing quality, which was found broken

in big fragments as a result of heavy pressure exercised by the grave fill. At the SE outer corner of it we located a somewhat wide opening, around 0.25 m deep, which was cut into the soft rock and ran for 1.13 m on the edge of the shaft. In the opening a massive layer of burnt material was spread and we managed to collect a number of much worn sherds of a wine jug. It seems, in consequence, that this was a construction, where the family and relatives rendered offerings to the dead both during and after the funeral and where they could partake of the funerary meals held in honour of the deceased³⁵.

After having removed the grave fill that had penetrated and broken the lid we recovered three artifacts, placed midway to the N side of the sarcophagus (pl. 5/31). These consisted of a pair of small squat-bodied *lekythoi* and a bronze *strigilis*, densely placed to each other. The *lekythoi* have the same shape and form. One bears a red-figured duck or bird on solid black ground, whereas the other is entirely black-glazed³⁶. Both of them should date to the turn of the 5th century B.C. As to the *strigilis* (an implement used by athletes to scrape off oil and mud from their body), this is about 15 cm long and it is decorated with incised linear patterns on the handle's front (pl. 5/32-33).

We were unable to recover any bone material or any funerary ashes from the interior of the sarcophagus that would explain the rite used to dispose of the dead. Nevertheless, we believe that we are right in assuming that here we have to deal with a case of inhumation. Such a supposition rests on two factors. For one thing, the fractured lid of the sarcophagus, allowed at some point of time for a great bulk of the infill of the grave to intrude in the sarcophagus and displace or even crush the skeletal remains. This, coupled with the fact that the dead person was deposited in a soil of high acidity, in which bones would easily and rapidly perish, accounts for the total loss of such important evidence.

³² Sparkes, Talcott 1970, Part 2, 153, pl. 38, nos. 1115, 1118 - 1119.

³³ See note 2.

³⁴ Bérard *et al.* 1989, 39 - 52, esp. 45 - 48 with figs. 43 - 45

³⁵ For the 'offering places' ("Opferplätze") see Kurtz, Boardman 1971, 75, 100.

³⁶ Sparkes, Talcott 1970, Part 1, 315; Part 2, nos. 1125 - 1128 ("patterned") and 1137 - 1138 ("small and late"). Cf. Kübler 1976, 87-88.

Furthermore, the absence of ashes or burnt material in the *larnax* indicates that this grave did not contain the remains of a cremation.

As a consequence and in absence of any direct evidence as to the buried person's age and sex, the grave items themselves can offer the only solid information. From what we may infer from it, the combination of the two squat *lekythoi*, used to contain oil and ointments at athletic activities, with the *strigilis*, a proper auxiliary item for athletes, indicates that the inhumed person was perhaps a male, most probably at the age of adolescence or early manhood.

We would like to conclude this case by noting, however, that in most cases the grave inventory may and can be used only as an indirect allusion to the identity of the deceased. In sociological terms, burial rites and grave artifacts need not at all times reflect the *post mortem* ambitions and anticipations of the person dead and buried but perhaps mainly those of the contemporaries conducting the burial³⁷. Therefore, according to the social and historical framework in which a burial takes place, one is able to observe a variable degree of idealization of the deceased. This means that the person buried in Grave 4Π was not necessarily a remarkable athlete or even not an athlete at all. The funerary practice implies most efficiently the efforts and hopes of his relatives, who managed to bury him so that in posterity he could be considered as an athlete, in lasting memory and regardless of the rest of his activities during his lifetime.

Grave 8Π

In the case of Grave 8Π another funerary rite was applied. This grave is situated at the estate where also the *larnax*-grave containing the athlete's utensils was placed. Its pit was of rectangular shape with dimensions 1.17 to 0.70 m., while its depth ran up to 1.85 m. This was arranged in an alignment along with three other rectangular pits, some of which might have

housed either cinerary urns or simply the scattered ashes of the dead. Among these pits the one of Grave 8Π held the most prominent position, being situated on the highest point of the natural ground. To the N of this pit arrangement an apsidal stone structure was uncovered. It was built of small rocks and rubble so as to enclose an area, in which the soil was massively burnt and ashes were found in large quantity. As a result, it is probable that enclosed area was used as a crematory.

To return to our case, it is consequently very probable that the person whose ashes were placed in Grave 8Π was incinerated there. His ashes were deposited in a bronze cauldron, or *λέβης* (*lebes*), which acted as a cinerary urn. The urn was found covered by an amphora, packed between large rocks, its foot placed atop (pl. 5/34). Close to the cauldron, a storage jar was found. The bronze cauldron contained, besides the ashes, burnt fragments of bones and a *lekythos*. During artefact conservation at the museum laboratory a small piece of textile was located in the cauldron's interior. It is very likely that this belonged to a larger cloth used to wrap up the cremated remains.

The cauldron is about 26 cm high and 38 cm in diameter. It was equipped with two handles and a pair of thin slender rods, which were placed midways between the handles and acted as safety locks for the lid (pl. 5/35).

The *lekythos* found inside the cauldron is about 16 cm high and it is the only element to date the grave (pl. 5/36). It is purely ornamental, its basic decorative motive being the ivy tendrils between a net pattern and a meander on white ground³⁸. According to shape that originates from the Beldam workshop and decoration, our example should date to the 3rd quarter of the 5th centuries B.C. In consequence, Grave 8Π falls into the same chronological frame.

³⁷ See Parker-Pearson 1982, 99 - 103; Hodder 1996, 109; Bernbeck 1997, 264.

³⁸ Kunze-Götte et al. 1999, pl. 55, no. 282 (S 12) 1/2 - 8; pl. 58, no. 289 (526), 4; pl. 59, no. 322 (H 141) 1/1.

Conclusion

In the paper we attempted to illustrate through a number of case studies the mortuary evidence from the cemetery at Lagonisi, Attica. We believe that the data demonstrate the variety of burial practices and attitudes towards death and afterlife among the generations that used the locality as a cemetery during the 5th century B.C. Furthermore, based on the present standards of the excavation data, we believe that the reviewed case studies reflect sufficiently the burial customs of the 5th century B.C. not only at the cemetery of Lagonisi but at other rural burial grounds of Attica as well. It is to be expected that further systematic publication of the finds from Lagonisi will add new and interesting insights regarding settlement and society in the rural periphery of Athens.

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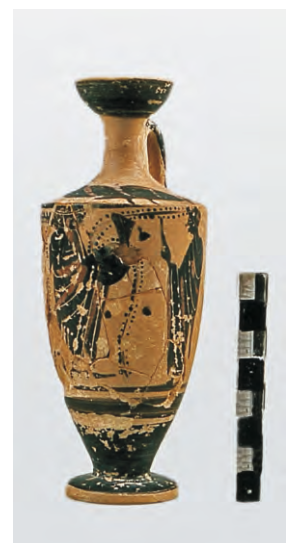
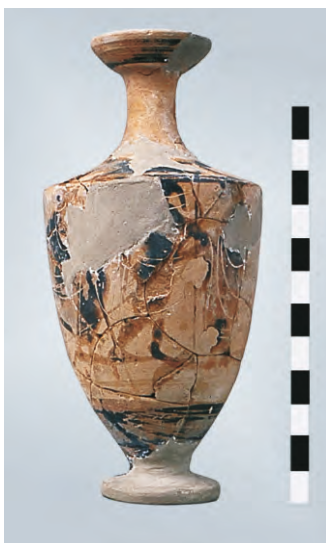
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Pl. 1. 1-2 Graves 50-A7 and 50-B; 3 - 8 *lekythoi* of Cock Group..



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Pl. 2. Pottery finds: 9 *lekythos*; 10 - 11 *kylix*; 12 stemmed dish; 13 - 14 *lekytoi*.



15



16



Pl. 3. 15 Grave 5-Z32 in a clay *larnax*; 17 - 21 pottery finds: 17 *kylix*, 18 *skyphos*, 19 - 21 *lekythoi*; 16 Grave 35-Z27



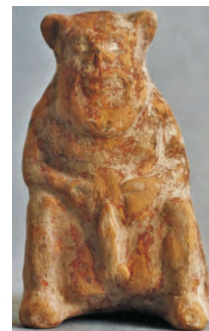
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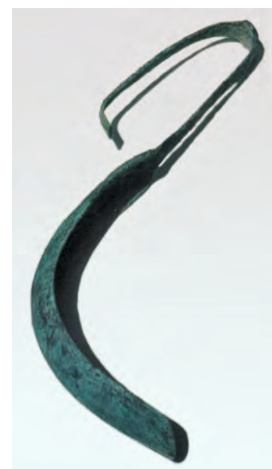
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Pl. 4. Pottery finds: 22 - 24, 28 - 30 *lekythoi*; 25 - 26 terracotta figurines; 27 fish-plate.



31



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35



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34



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Pl. 5. 31 Grave 4 II; 32 - 33 strigilis; 34 grave 8 II; 35 bronze cauldron (lebes); 36 *lekythos* of Beldam workshop.

