

ΕΘΝΙΚΟ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΠΟΔΙΣΤΡΙΑΚΟ ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ
ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΚΗ ΣΧΟΛΗ - ΤΜΗΜΑ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ
ΤΟΜΕΑΣ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΤΕΧΝΗΣ

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ ΜΕΤΑΔΙΔΑΚΤΟΡΙΚΗΣ ΕΡΕΥΝΑΣ:

«Από τη ζωή στο θάνατο»:

ματιές στην εικονογραφία του κόσμου των γυναικών κατά τους πρώιμους ιστορικούς χρόνους με αφορμή μια γαμική πρόχου από το Μαραθώνα.

Μεταδιδακτορική ερευνήτρια: Βασιλική Βλάχου, διδάκτωρ Πανεπιστημίου
Αθηνών

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Αθηνών

ΑΠΟΣΠΑΣΜΑ (ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΕΙ ΕΚΤΕΝΗΣ ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ ΤΗΣ ΕΡΕΥΝΑΣ ΣΤΑ ΑΓΓΛΙΚΑ)

Κεντρικό άξονα της παρούσας μεταδιδακτορικής μελέτης αποτελεί ένα μοναδικό αγγείο της Ύστερης Γεωμετρικής (ΥΓ) περιόδου, το οποίο είχε τοποθετηθεί μαζί την ταφή νεαρής γυναίκας εντός του τάφου 15, της νεκρόπολης κατά μήκος της λεωφόρου Μαραθώνος στο Μαραθώνα Αττικής. Πρόκειται για ενταφιασμό νεαρής γυναίκας εντός λακκοειδούς τάφου, που συνοδευόταν από μια υπερμεγέθη πρόχου που φτάνει τα 80 εκ. σε ύψος, δύο ακόμα σκύφους με ρηχό σώμα και ψηλό διάτρητο πόδι και δύο ασημένια δακτυλίδια. Η κεραμική χρονολογεί με ακρίβεια την ταφή στο τελευταίο τέταρτο του 8^{ου} αιώνα π.Χ. ή την ΥΓ ΙΙβ περίοδο¹.

Με αφορμή το αγγείο από το Μαραθώνα γίνεται μια σύγκριση με τις υπερμεγέθεις πρόχους που έχουν μέχρι στιγμής ανασκαφεί και αναδεικνύεται η ιδιότυπη χρήση του παραπάνω αγγείου που περιορίζεται σε ταφές ενταφιασμού στην Αθήνα και την Αττική κατά την Ύστερη Γεωμετρική περίοδο. Παρόλο που στις περισσότερες περιπτώσεις το φύλλο ή η ηλικία του/της νεκρού/ής δεν σημειώνεται, το αγγείο από το Μαραθώνα συνόδευε ταφή νεαρής γυναίκας σύμφωνα με την ανθρωπολογική μελέτη, όπως αντίστοιχα σημειώνεται και για ορισμένες άλλες περιπτώσεις από τους ανασκαφείς, χωρίς όμως περαιτέρω ανθρωπολογική μελέτη. Το σχήμα του αγγείου με τον ψηλό λαιμό, την κατακόρυφη λαβή που στολίζεται από

¹ Η χρονολόγηση των διαδοχικών περιόδων ακολουθεί το καθιερωμένο πλέον σύστημα από τον Coldstream (1968).

ένθετα φίδια και το μεγάλο του μέγεθος φαίνεται να ταιριάζουν στον τύπο της *λουτροφόρου*, ενός ιδότυπου Αττικού αγγείου που περιείχε το νερό για το τελετουργικό λουτρό, στο γάμο αλλά και στο θάνατο.

Σε αντίθεση με την ταφική χρήση του αγγείου, η πλούσια εικονογράφηση της πρόχου μοιάζει να εστιάζει στην ιερή ένωση αρσενικού και θηλυκού μέσα από την ιεροτελεστία του γάμου. Το αγγείο κοσμεύεται με μια συνεχή ζώνη ακριβώς εξωτερικά και χαμηλότερα του χείλους, όπου εικονίζεται μικτός χορός, από σαράντα νεαρά αγόρια και κορίτσια που εναλλάσσονται κρατώντας χαμηλά τα χέρια τους και κλαδιά. Ο πρώτος του χορού, που εικονίζεται ακριβώς δίπλα από την κατακόρυφη λαβή του αγγείου, κρατά με τα δύο του χέρια ένα αντικείμενο που μοιάζει περισσότερο με κάποιο κλειστό αγγείο (αμφορέα ή πρόχου;). Η απεικόνιση αυτή είναι μοναδική στην τέχνη των Γεωμετρικών χρόνων, άντρες και γυναίκες μουσικοί συνοδεύουν συνήθως τους χορούς των νέων και μπορεί να συγκριθεί με την πρωιμότερη παράσταση λουτροφορίας, σε αποσπασματική Πρωτοαττική λουτροφόρο-υδρία από το ιερό των Νυμφών στη νότια πλαγιά της Ακρόπολης των Αθηνών². Αν δεχτούμε την παραπάνω ταύτιση, η παράσταση χορού σε συνδυασμό με τη λουτροφορία υπογραμμίζουν τη συμβολική σημασία των γαμικών τελετουργιών για την ερμηνεία τόσο της εικονογράφησης αλλά και χρήσης του αγγείου από το Μαραθώνα.

Ένας δεύτερος χορός από σαράντα τρεις νεαρές κοπέλες εικονίζεται σε συνεχή ζώνη στο κάτω μέρος του σώματος του αγγείου. Όλες οι μορφές κρατούν χαμηλά τα χέρια τους μαζί με κλαδιά, ενώ δύο μόνον μορφές που τοποθετούνται εκατέρωθεν του σχηματοποιημένου θέματος του ιερού Δέντρου της Ζωής κρατούν τα χέρια τους ψηλά. Η κίνησή τους αυτή εντείνει την κυκλική κίνηση του χορού, ο οποίος εμφανίζεται σαν να κυκλώνει το Δέντρο της Ζωής.

Παρόλο που η γαμική πρόχους από το Μαραθώνα δεν βρίσκει ακριβή παράλληλα στην τέχνη της Αττικής κατά τη Γεωμετρική ή Αρχαϊκή περίοδο, οι σκηνές που επιλέγονται μπορούν να χωριστούν σε δύο διακριτές κατηγορίες: σε ήδη γνωστά εικονογραφικά πρότυπα, όπως οι πολυπρόσωποι μικτοί χοροί και οι χοροί νεαρών γυναικών, το ιερό Δέντρο της Ζωής, κένταυροι και ιππείς, αλλά και πρωτότυπα εικονογραφικά θέματα όπως το φτερωτό άλογο, η αιχμαλωσία ενός

² Μουσείο Ακροπόλεως, 1957-Aa-189. Για το αγγείο και τη σκηνή λουτροφορίας, βλ. Oakley and Sinos 1993, 5, 15; Sabetai 1993, 136; Winkler 1999, 20–1, no. 17, pl. 1; *ThesCRA* VI, Contexts and circumstances of cultic and ritual activities, Marriage in the Greek World, 90, εικ. 35.3, A.C. Smith. Σκηνές λουτροφορίας, όπου το αγγείο με το νερό για το λουτρό προστίθεται στα χέρια νεαρών κοριτσιών γίνονται αγαπητό εικονογραφικό θέμα στα Κλασικά χρόνια.

άγριου ζώου και η συμβολική ένωση αρσενικού και θυληκού στο πλαίσιο του ιερού γάμου.

Κεντρικό θέμα μεταξύ των έξι εικονιστικών μετοπών που εμφανίζονται στο άνω μέρος του σώματος του αγγείου αποτελεί η παράσταση νεαρού άνδρα και γυναίκας που κρατούν χαμηλά τα χέρια τους, τα οποία κυκλώνονται από ένα μεγάλο στεφάνι και από τα οποία φύεται ένα σχηματικό κλαδί στον τύπο του ιερού Δέντρου της Ζωής. Τα εικονογραφικά στοιχεία με την απόδοση των δύο μορφών και του Δέντρου της Ζωής δημιουργεί άμεσες αναφορές στην παράσταση των χορών, μέσα από μια πρωτότυπη και μοναδική εικονογραφική απόδοση. Η παράσταση αποδίδει με τρόπο εύγλωττο τον συμβολισμό του ιερού γάμου, της ένωσης αρσενικού και θυληκού. Τα υπόλοιπα εικονογραφικά θέματα που εμφανίζονται εντός των μετοπών ενισχύουν το συμβολισμό του ιερού γάμου, της ανανέωσης της φύσης και της ζωής.

Η απεικόνιση του φτερωτού αλόγου αποτελεί ακόμα μια πρωτοτυπία του ευφάνταστου Μαραθώνιου κεραμέα-ζωγράφου. Σε μια εποχή όπου οι μύθοι φαίνεται πως άρχιζαν να γνωρίζουν μεγαλύτερη διάδοση και να συνδέονται μέσα από μια συμβολική έκφραση με εκφάνσεις της καθημερινής ζωής, ο μύθος του φτερωτού αλογού, ήδη γνωστός στο έργο του Ησιόδου, και η σύνδεσή του με τη γονιμοποιό δύναμη της φύσης αποκτά κεντρική σημασία στην ερμηνεία του εικονογραφικού κύκλου του αγγείου από το Μαραθώνα. Επιπλέον, η σκηνή του κυνηγιού νέων σε μια σύνθεση που δεν βρίσκει παράλληλα στην τέχνη των Γεωμετρικών χρόνων ή και αργότερα

Η πλούσια εικονογραφία της πρόχου από το Μαραθώνα αποτέλεσε το έναυσμα της μελέτης περισσότερων αγγείων και αντικειμένων της ίδιας περιόδου, τα οποία προέρχονται από την Αττική και διακοσμούνται με μια περισσότερο συντομευμένη εκδοχή του εικονογραφικού κύκλου που βρίσκουμε στο αγγείο του Μαραθώνα. Πρόχοι, υδρίες και αμφορείς εικονογραφούνται με παραστάσεις που φαίνεται να σχετίζονται με τελετουργίες και γιορτές των Αθηναίων, αλλά και των κατοίκων της Αττικής, όπως αυτές που συνδέονται με το γάμο. Η εύρεση των αγγείων αυτών, αλλά και αντικειμένων όπως σφραγίδες που κοσμούνται με παρόμοιες εικονογραφικές σκηνές, σε τάφους δείχνει την ανάδυση μιας νέας συμβολικής έκφρασης στο πλαίσιο της δημόσιας και θρησκευτικής ζωής.

Ειδικότερα, ο συμβολισμός που αποκτά η ανάθεση μιας γιγαντιαίας πρόχου με τις ταφές νεαρών κοριτσιών στην Αθήνα και την Αττική αναζητάται στη θρησκευτική και τελετουργική έκφραση του τέλους του 8^{ου} αιώνα π.Χ. στην Αθήνα και την Αττική.

Αν και οι περισσότερες ταφές που συνοδεύονται από μια γιγαντιαία πρόχου περιείχαν και άλλα υψηλής αξία αντικείμενα ως κτερίσματα, υπάρχουν και ταφές που περιείχαν μόνον ένα ή δύο μικρά αγγεία πόσεως³. Επιπλέον, οι ταφές από το νεκροταφείο στην περιοχή των κλασικών Μελιτίδων πυλών, συνοδεύονταν από περιοχές με πρωτογενείς καύσεις, προφανώς τα κατάλοιπα έμπυρων τελετουργιών κατά τη διάρκεια ή μετά την ολοκλήρωση της ταφής⁴. Ορισμένες εκ των γιγαντιαίων πρόχων είχαν διάτρητες οπές στους πυθμένες τους, στοιχείο που ενισχύει τη χρήση τους κατά τη διάρκεια των νεκρικών τελετών και την εναπόθεσή τους στη συνέχεια εντός του τάφου. Τα αγγεία αυτά, με το ευρύ κυκλικό στόμιο και τον υψηλό λαιμό φαίνεται ότι χρησίμευαν για τη μεταφορά νερού για το νυφικό ή νεκρικό λουτρό και συνδέονταν αντίστοιχα με το γάμο και την ταφή.

Το αγγείο από το Μαραθώνα αποτελεί το σημαντικότερο αγγείο σε αυτή την κατηγορία λόγω της πλούσιας εικονογράφισής του. Παρά την εύρεσή του εντός του τάφου 15 της νεκρόπολης των Γεωμετρικών χρόνων στο Μαραθώνα, το αγγείο έχει έναν συμβολισμό που μπορεί να γίνει κατανοητός μόνο μέσα στο γενικότερο θρησκευτικό και κοινωνικό πλαίσιο του γάμου και της μετάβασης από την εφηβική ηλικία στο νόμιμο έγγαμο βίο. Κατά συνέπεια, προτείνεται ότι το αγγείο είχε κατασκευαστεί αρχικά για την τελετή του γάμου, ενώ για λόγους που δεν είναι εμφανείς ή αναγνώσιμοι αρχαιολογικά κατέληξε να συνοδεύει την ιδιοκτητήριά του στον τάφο. Αγγεία και άλλα αντικείμενα με έντονο συμβολικό φορτίο λόγω της χρήσης τους, του τρόπου απόκτησής τους ή ακόμα και της παλαιότητάς τους φαίνεται ότι αποτελούσαν ιδιαίτερα δώρα προς τους νεκρούς, τα οποία αποτελούν συχνά άμεσες αναφορές στη ζωή, την ιδιότητα ή την κοινωνική ταυτότητα του/της νεκρού/νεκρής. Ειδικότερα σε μια κοινωνία όπως αυτή του τέλους του 8^{ου} αιώνα π.Χ., η διευρημένη οικογένεια αποτελεί τον κυρίαρχο κοινωνικό σχηματισμό και την οποία βαραίνει η ιδιοκτησία της γης μέσω της κληρονομικότητας και της κοινωνικής θέσης των μελών της. Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο, οι τιμές που αποδίδονται σε νεαρές γυναίκες και άνδρες αντίστοιχα που δεν πρόλαβαν να εκπληρώσουν το μέρος αυτό της αναπαραγωγής και διεύρυνσης της οικογένειας και του οίκου, υποστηρίζεται εδώ ότι είναι αρχαιολογικά ορατές μέσω ιδιαίτερων αντικειμένων όπως αποτελούν οι

³ Κεραμεικός τάφος 51: Kübler 1954, 245-47, πίν. 113, 140 και πίν. 120. 1316, πίν. 121. 1317-1318. Borell 1978, πίν. 13 αρ.10.

⁴ Αθήνα, Επισύχθονος και Νηλέως, τάφοι 6 και 14: Tzahou-Alexandri 1967, 80, πίν. 80δ και 81δ.

γιγαντιαίες πρόχοι στο ταφικό ρεπερτόριο των νεκροπόλεων Αθηνών και των πλούσιων περιοχών της Αττικής.

Γίνεται σαφές ότι στο δεύτερο μισό του 8^{ου} αιώνα π.Χ. σκηνές που συνδέονται με τη ζωή και το θάνατο των γυναικών δίνουν σημαντική έμφαση στη σημασία του οίκου, της συγκρότησης και διατήρησής του. Μια αναγκαιότητα που φαίνεται να συνδέεται τόσο με τα πλούσια γένη γαιοκτημόνων στην Αττική την περίοδο αυτή αλλά και μιας ευρύτερης κοινωνικής ομάδας, η οποία μοιάζει να διεκδικεί μέσω του πλουτισμού και της ιδιοκτησίας προνόμια στην έως τότε 'κλειστή' κοινωνία της Αθήνας και της Αττικής των Πρώιμων Ιστορικών Χρόνων.

Μέρος της παρούσας μελέτης έχει εμφανιστεί ως:

Vlachou, V. 2016. "Image and Story in Late Geometric Attica: Interpreting a Giant Pitcher from Marathon". In: T.H. Carpenter, E. Langridge-Noti and M.D. Stansbury-O'Donnell (eds), *The Consumers' Choice: Uses of Greek Figure-Decorated Pottery. Selected Papers on Ancient Art and Architecture 2*. Boston, MA: Archaeological Institute of America, 126-151.

Vlachou, V. 2016. "Nuptial Vases in Female Tombs? Aspects of Funerary Behavior during the Late Geometric Period in Attica". In: M. Mina, S. Triantafyllou and Y. Papadatos (eds), *An Archaeology of Prehistoric Bodies and Embodied Identities in the Eastern Mediterranean*, Oxford και Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 96-103.

**NATIONAL AND KAPODISTRIAN UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS
SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY – FACULTY OF HISTORY AND
ARCHAEOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY OF ART**

SUMMARY OF THE POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH:

**'From Life to Death': insights in the world of females during the Early
Iron Age as presented on the iconography of a nuptial pitcher from Marathon.**

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Academic Supervisor: Prof. Em. Nota Kourou

KEYWORDS:

Athens, Attica, burials, Marathon, Marathonos Avenue, Geometric pottery, pitcher, females, maidens, iconography, sacred marriage, male-female union, centaur, horse, winged horse, hunt, dance, female chorus, tree of life.

Introduction

Attic decorated fine wares are distinguished by their high quality of potting and their singular style defined in terms of shapes and decorative style. The introduction of figured scenes on the monumental funerary vessels marked a new association between 8th-century BC Athenians and the pottery they owned and used. Imagery illustrated the consecutive stages of the funerals and lamentation, supplemented with land and sea battles, processions of chariots, armed warriors, gratifying in this way the preferences of contemporary aristocrats in a socially exclusive manner⁵.

The introduction of figured decorated pottery to Athens at about the beginnings of the 8th century B.C.E. marks a fascinating instance of the complex connections between people and the pottery they owned and used. Geometric figured vessels have been largely investigated for the cultural significance they were accorded and the degree of social exclusivity they manifested.⁶ By the third quarter of the eighth century BC pictorial representations displayed a wide range of themes that have been discussed in terms of mythic and epic narratives, and equally for the

⁵ Coldstream 1991; D'Agostino 2008.

⁶ Ahlberg 1971; Boardman 1988; Coldstream 1991; Coulié 2013, 61–104; Vlachou 2015.

encoded social values they expressed.⁷ Images of athletic and musical contests, hunts, processions and dances presumably at public festivals became popular in Attic iconography, as in most regional styles, coinciding with an apparent escalation in the popular taste for smaller, finely decorated pots.

Insights in the world of females in the 8th century BC iconography are namely limited to two main categories: those relating to lament and the mourning of the dead and those placing them in what seems as a context of celebrations or festivals while performing dances. Variations however do exist providing the necessary background to approach the life and death of females: in *prothesis* and more rarely in *ekphora* scenes they appear lying on the funerary *kline* and receiving the honours of the family and of the larger kin groups. On a krater now in New York a seated female is presented as if attached from the mast and thus interpreted as a captive.⁸

The iconography of the male-female pair is a fresh introduction to the Late Geometric repertory, presented on gold bands, stone seals, and namely ceramic vessels in Attica, Corinthia, the Cyclades (Naxos), Ithaka, Crete and further afield in Cyprus and Etruria.⁹ The forceful claim of the maiden manifested with the gesture of *χείρ ἐπί καρπῶ*, prevails in the visual rendering of the theme, even with a certain degree of variability as to the composition (abduction from the dance, by centaur or ship) and the spatial setting (at the shore, at the dance floor). A constant reference to the iconography of dance is made explicit by the addition of wreaths, branches and even the belted skirts that the maidens occasionally wear. As an illustration of the stories of pairs in myth and contemporary poetry, the figures have been variously identified as Theseus and Ariadne, Jason and Medea, Menelaos/Paris and Helen, Hektor and Andromache, Odysseus and Circe. Be they emblematic prototypes of mythic action and epic narrative, or artistic renditions of the transformations of social life, this new interest in representing the male-female pair has been discussed recently by S. Langdon and convincingly associated with significant changes that occurred at the social and ideological level during the second half of the 8th century B.C.E.¹⁰

⁷ Carter 1972; Boardman 1983; Ahlberg-Cornell 1992; Stansbury-O'Donnell 1995; Snodgrass 1998; Langdon 2008; Giuliani 2013; Mikrakis 2015.

⁸ Moore 2000, 18.

⁹ Langdon 1998; Langdon 2008, 276–91. Naxos: Simantoni-Bournia 1998, fig. 1. Ithaka: Morgan 2006, 225–6. Crete: Lebessi 2009. Cyprus: Vlachou 2012, 352. Etruria: Stuart Leach 1987, 77, cat. no. 198, 124–6, 192–3, figs. 52–5; Langdon 1993, 170–173 no. 63 and col. pl. 8.

¹⁰ Langdon 1998; Langdon 2006; Langdon 2008, 197–233. For a similar approach, Morgan 2006, 224–225; Morgan 2010, 78–81.

An exceptional opportunity for exploring these social dynamics and symbolic meanings inherent in early pictorial representations is provided by a recent find from Marathon (Attica), a giant pitcher with extraordinary and unique figured decoration (**fig. 1-3**). The Marathon pitcher is a spectacular find that despite its placement in funeral context alludes to nuptial celebrations both by its shape and its dense iconography as it suggested in this study. Recent scholarship placed a renewed importance on the role of objects in social and religious life considered as channels to read a specific story of an individual's life, of an important moment or a situation. Furthermore, gender archaeology has offered a wide range of approaches and tentative interpretations of the funerary record and fuelled discussions and responses related to the cultural and social construction of the deceased¹¹. Following the interest of gender issues, and inspired by the post-structuralist approaches on the communicative values of material culture, the exploration of issues of polysemy, biographical and cultural meaning of artifacts underlined the active role of context and material culture in discussing social structures¹². Within this theoretical context the giant pitcher from Marathon provides an exceptional case for exploring the social dynamics and meaning of figured decorated pottery of the late 8th century BC.

*The Oversized Pitcher from Burial 15 of the Marathonos Avenue Burial Ground:
the context.*

A large burial ground was excavated at Marathon by the 2nd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical antiquities (now Ephorate of Antiquities of Eastern Attica), in the area in front of the former American naval communications base, on Marathonos Avenue. The area forms part of the modern Municipality of Nea Makri. A total of 27 graves of the Geometric, Archaic and Classical periods were discovered during rescue excavations in three periods, in 1985 under the supervision of Klairi Eustratiou, ten years later by prof. Alexandros Mazarakis-Ainian and more recently in 2004 by Mary Oikonomakou.¹³ The excavated area seems to correspond to only small part of a larger burial ground. A number of Geometric fragments have been reported in the fill layers of Brexiza, where the Sanctuary of Roman Deities was founded in the Roman

¹¹ Gibbs 1987; Hodder 1989; Sørensen 1991; 2007; Díaz-Andreu, M. 2005; Arnold 2007. For the Athenian female burials of the Geometric period, cf. Whitley 1991; 1996; Langdon 2005; De Polignac 2007.

¹² Langdon 2001; Vlachou 2016a and forthcoming b.

¹³ Eustratiou 1985; Oikonomakou 2004, 388; Mazarakis Ainian 2011; Vlachou 2011.

period. At least 13 burials can be dated mainly to the latter half of the 8th and the early 7th century, cist and shaft inhumation burials, secondary cremation depositions and child *enchytrismo*.

Monumental in size amphorae, one decorated with a large *prothesis* scene seem to have accompanied the earliest burials of the excavated part of the burial ground.¹⁴ The amphorae are dated to the MG II (ca. 800-760 BC) and LG Ib/IIA (ca. 750-735 BC) period respectively and belong both to the belly handled type of amphorae. This means that the large amphorae should have once marked the burials of women, if accept the consistency in the use of the belly-handled amphorae with female burials in Athens and Attica,¹⁵ the earliest within the burial ground along Marathonos avenue. The same ostentatious practice of using a monumental in size, figured decorated vessel in order to mark the place of the burial of an important individual is equally attested in the burial ground on the north entrance to the plain at Oinoe, located some 700 m to the SE of the Medieval tower of Oinoe.¹⁶

The pitcher (**K 2209**) was found, broken, inside grave 15 in 1995 during the rescue excavations along Marathonos avenue, at the southern entrance of the Marathonian plain (**fig. 4**). The giant vessel was placed at the left of the inhumation of a young female, who was identified by osteological analysis. Two skyphoi with low pedestals and two silver finger rings were found by her left arm. From the pottery, the burial may be dated to ca. 720–710 BC.

The vessel (**fig. 1-3**) was reconstructed from several fragments and although small parts on the neck and the body are missing, the shape has been fully restored. It reaches 78cm in height, the diameter on the lip is 29cm and the maximum diameter on the belly is 34cm. It has a fairly ovoid body that stands on a low ring base and a high neck, slightly concave in profile that gradually widens to the mouth. The height of the neck almost equals to that of the body giving thus the impression of a compact body under a tall and heavy neck. The high handle exceeds the mouth of the vessel for 4cm and is joined to its side by two struts of which only one survives. A plastic snake is added on the back of the high handle that reveals its funerary destination. Although no chemical clay analysis has yet been delivered, the fabric examined macroscopically is close to the range of fabrics in pale pinkish hues that include mica and stone

¹⁴ Vlachou 2011; forthcoming c.

¹⁵ Kourou 2001.

¹⁶ Arapogianni 1985.

inclusions similar to that from the country districts of Attica, while the secure provenance of the vessel from Marathon offers a strong indication that we shall be dealing with a provincial workshop. A suggestion for a local workshop in the Marathon area has already been made upon the monumental clay markers from the burial grounds of Marathonos Avenue and Oinoe.

The Oversized Pitcher from Burial 15 of the Marathonos Avenue Burial Ground: the iconography.

No *comparandum* fully matches either the richness of the figured scenes organized in two continuous friezes on the lip and the lower body and six consecutive panels (**fig. 5**), placed on the upper body, or their iconography. Among the pictorial themes illustrated on the pitcher, some of which are new entries in LG iconography, the male-female pair seems to hold a central place. Contrary to the prevailing abduction scenes, the moment of the union between the male and female seems intentionally emphasized on the pitcher, providing an early iconographic treatment of the theme of Sacred Marriage (*hieros gamos*).

The two figures are placed in one of the six square panels face each other (**fig. 5-6**): in one hand they hold branches, while from their other joined hands sprouts a large branch resembling the Tree of Life motif. This apparent emblematic representation of male-female union is emphasized further by the addition of a wreath that encircles the joined hands of the figures, as if binding them together. The presence of both the wreath and the Tree motif underscores the moment of the union between male and female: an image that serves as an early visual contextualization of the symbolism in the ritual of the *hieros gamos* (*Theogamia*).¹⁷ The emphasis is on the maturation of youths and maidens, on fertility and the eternal circle of life. A slightly later (around 700 BC) Argive seal from Megara (**fig. 7**)¹⁸ offers an iconographical counterpart for the Marathonian pair: it anticipates the symbolic representation of the heterosexual pair in the 7th century BC context of *hieros gamos* on votives and pottery namely from Crete, the Samian and Argive *Heraion* and the sanctuary of Artemis *Orthia*.¹⁹

¹⁷ Cremer 1982; Avagiannou 1991; *LIMC* VII Suppl. Hieros Gamos; *ThesCRA* VI (*supra* n. 10), 86.

¹⁸ Athens, NM 11750, cf. Boardman 1963, 130, G14, pl. XVI (around 700 BC).

¹⁹ Marangou 1969, 17, no. 3, fig. 7; Cremer 1982, 284–6; Hall 2002; Langdon 2008, 190–5; Lapinski 2008; Lebessi 2009.

The second Tree of Life motif is shown in the square panel just below the root of the handle (**fig. 5**). The theme of rampant goats flanking a central Tree motif has an equally long tradition in the Near East, being introduced into the Attic LG Ia repertoire probably under Cypro-Phoenician influence.²⁰ It is clear that the scene functions as a counterpart to the symmetrically arranged male-female pair, by drawing analogies to land fertility and the regeneration of life. In this context, the iconography of the male-female pair on the Marathon pitcher diverges from the LG IIB treatment of the theme. Still, an emphasis on the erotic implications of the male-female pair is equally absent. A comparable treatment of the theme within the theoretical framework of the Sacred Marriage beyond the Aegean is found in a highly stylized scene on a small Cypriot krater.²¹ Each figure is shown holding a wreath and a trap pattern, a reference to dance and hunt respectively, while high trees frame the scene on both sides of the krater. On a later ovoid pithos from Knossos, both figures are placed on bases, possibly with the intent of the painter being to emphasize the divine character of the figures.²²

The pitcher's imagery strongly evokes a public gathering, certainly a festive occasion, judging by the two large dances, in which no less than 83 male and female participants are involved. One processional dance is displayed in the broad zone immediately below the exterior of the vase's lip (**fig. 1-3**): it comprises 40 male and female figures, holding hands and branches. The composition of the dance with its alternating male and female celebrants is among the earliest of this type in Attic iconography,²³ anticipating similar representations of mixed dances in the somewhat later works by the Analatos Painter, although with far fewer people depicted there.²⁴

²⁰ Kepinski 1982; Smith 1958, 137, pl. 99A; Catling 1964, 196–6, pl. 29c–e. For the Tree motif in Greek art, cf. Kourou 2001b. For the Tree motif in the LG iconography of Attica, Euboea and related regions, cf. Coldstream 1994; Kourou 1998.

²¹ Nicosia, Cyprus Museum inv. B 1988. Karageorghis 1973; Karageorghis and Des Gagniers 1974, I, 80–82 and II, 493, XXVI; Boardman 1976, 153–154, pl. 23.3–5; Vlachou 2012, 353–353, 358 no. 9, fig. 11.

²² Payne 1927–28, 286–288; Coldstream 2001, 31 and fig. 1.4c. For the use of a wheeled base for the depiction of a nature goddess on a PGB Knossian pithos, cf. Coldstream 1984.

²³ Dances are integrated in the repertory of the Burly Workshop (LG Ib/LG IIA), identified by Davison (1961, 83–6) and refined by Rombos (1988, 352–7, 497–502, cat. nos. 298–309, with bibliography). The oinochoe now in Tübingen 2657 (Rombos 1988, 497, cat. no. 298, pl. 71a) is among the earliest depicting two groups of youths and maidens flanking a central musician. See also, Buboltz 2002, 63–5. For similar arrangement of the male and female participants, cf. amphora in Copenhagen (LG IIB), Johansen 1945, 16, figs. 5–6. For the *loutrophoros*-hydria by the Analatos Painter in Athens, NM 313 (ca. 700 BC), cf. Denoyelle 1996, pls. 14.2–3 and 15.2–3; Coulié 2013, 195–7, fig. 189.

²⁴ Hydria: Ruhr-Universität Bochum (inv. S 1067), cf. Kunisch 1996, 25–9. *Loutrophoros* amphora: Paris Musée du Louvre CA 295, cf. Denoyelle 1996, pls. 15.1 and 16.1–2; Coulié 2013, 201, fig. 194.

Large mixed choruses are commonly associated with the wedding ritual in literary sources;²⁵ a similar allusion may be equally intended on the Marathon pitcher if we consider the object held by the male leader of the dance (**fig. 8**). This object does not resemble any known depiction of a musical instrument, but seems more akin to a closed vessel.

People bearing vessels are extremely rare in Late Geometric and Early Archaic iconography. A single example may be seen on a contemporary amphora from the Athenian Agora:²⁶ on the neck panel three males carry gifts for the deceased represented in the *prothesis* scene on the other side of the neck. The last figure holds what looks like a closed vessel, presumably a water container for the ritual bathing of the deceased (**fig. 52**). In Proto-attic iconography, people with vessels are occasionally present in wedding processions, bringing water for the bridal bath.²⁷ The *loutrophoria* (*λουτροφορία*) becomes popular only in the course of the fifth century BC.²⁸ Although the theme is not attested in Late Geometric iconography, certain hydriae and amphorae decorated with choruses of youths and maidens or processions of mourners have been seen as the forerunners of archaic *loutrophoroi*, as to their use and function in the funerary context.²⁹

The theme seems to comport with a conspicuous use of the giant pitcher, possibly as an early *loutrophoros*, a water container for the ritual bathing in both marriage and funerals. By its large size, at 78 cm in height, the high quality of potting and complexity of decoration, this unique vase should be considered as a special commission of individuals of apparently high social status, presumably members of the local elite, for a specific event: possibly a marriage? In this sense, the placement

Fragmentary hydria from the Athenian Agora: Brann 1962, pl. 22.384. For an early Euboean specimen from Pithekoussai interpreted as the 'Crane Dance', cf. Coldstream 1968a.

²⁵ *Il.* 18.491–497, 590–605; Hes. *Shield* 272–279; *Pl. Laws* 771e–772. For a discussion, cf. Swift 2006.

²⁶ From the remains of pyre XII: Young 1939, 55–7, figs. 37–8; Davison 1961, fig. 36; Ahlberg 1971a, 28, no. 39, fig. 39; Rombos 1988, 444–5, cat. no. 167.

²⁷ The earliest pictorial representation of the *loutrophoria* is considered to be that on the fragmentary Protoattic *loutrophoros*-hydria dedicated at the Sanctuary of the Nymph on the south slope of the Athenian Acropolis (Akropolis Mus. 1957-Aa-189). Cf. Oakley and Sinos 1993, 5, 15; Sabetai 1993, 136; Winkler 1999, 20–1, no. 17, pl. 1; *ThesCRA* VI, Contexts and circumstances of cultic and ritual activities, Marriage in the Greek World, 83–94, A.C. Smith. (esp. 90, pl. 35.3).

²⁸ For the clay *loutrophoros*, the container of water for ritual bathing, both during wedding and funerary rituals, and equally the youth carrying the vessel that contained the bathwater cf. Mösch 1988; Sabetai 1993, 129–74; Oakley and Sinos 1993, 6–7, 15–16, 32; Bergemann 1996, 166–74; Mösch-Klinge 1999; *ThesCRA* VI (*supra* n. 10), 88, 90–91.

²⁹ For the origins of the clay *loutrophoros* already in the LG period, cf. Walter-Karydi 1963, 90–2; Boardman 1988, 175–8; Sabetai 1993, 132–6; Vlachou 2016a and forthcoming a.

of a nuptial vessel inside the tomb registers a new tendency in the use of figured pottery in the funerary record by the late 8th century BC.

Forty three dancing maidens are linked in a circular dance on the lower body of the pitcher (**fig. 1-3**). Although female dancers constitute a frequent pictorial theme in Late Geometric iconography, regularly shown on the newly adopted hydriae,³⁰ on the Marathon pitcher the addition of the stylized Tree motif, the center around which the action takes place is a fresh introduction (**fig. 9**). This circular performance of the maidens around the Tree is further accentuated by two of the female figures flanking it with their hands held upright. Stylized trees reminiscent of the Phoenician-flower type of the Tree of Life motif are occasionally held by sphinxes or even flanked by lions and centaurs in Attic iconography of the late 8th century BC,³¹ while goats flanking the Tree motif is equally shown on one of the six square panels decorating the Marathon pitcher. Circular dances in front of trees constitute a frequent pictorial theme in Cypriote art, shown both on the Cypro-Archaic pottery and metal bowls.³² A sacred *alsos*, serving as the setting for the dancers has been convincingly argued for those cases. In an Aegean context, the addition of the Tree motif emphasizes the outdoor setting for the dance, presumably performed in an open ritual space. In the figured repertory of LG IIb Attica, stylized tree motifs are occasionally shown with pairs of female dancers holding hands and branches, although in separate square panels and not combined in a single image.³³ On the Marathon pitcher the Tree motif bears an important symbolic role, as is further manifested by its repetition elsewhere

³⁰ Tölle 1964; Bronson 1964; Rombos 1988, 330–51; Langdon 2008, 143–82; Haug 2012, 119–63. Add a recent find from Kifissia (tomb 126), Skilardi 2011, 700 fig. 15 and 701 fig 20.

³¹ For the Phoenician flower-Tree, cf. Shefton 1989; Rehm 1997, 130–1, S9, fig. 16; Aruz *et al.* 2014, fig. 3.38. For a similar Tree motif in LG Attic iconography, cf. Brann 1962, pl. 44; amphora (early work by the Analatos Painter): Shapiro *et al.* 1995, 50–52 no. 10; for lions and fantastic creatures flanking a Tree of Life, cf. Sheedy 1992, 20; *CVA* Paris Musée du Louvre 16 (France 25), pls. 42–43. For single trees in narrow panels, cf. *CVA* Tübingen 2 (Germany 44), 33–34, pls. 21.3–5, 22; Randal Mack 1974, pl. 5A.

³² Borell 1978, 44–7, 67–70; Kourou 1985, 415–17; Sheedy 1992, 15–20; Calame 2001.

³³ Attica: Pedestalled high-rimmed skyphos, Institut für Klassische Archäologie, Eberard-Karls-Universität Tübingen, 1086, cf. *CVA* Tübingen 2 (Germany 44), 33–34, pls. 21.3–5, 22; Tölle 1964, pls. 20–1; Langdon 2008, 155, fig. 3.15. Flat bottomed pyxis, cf. Randal Mack 1974, pl. 5A. A volute tree, resembling the Phoenician flower-tree type, is equally well represented. Both have been assigned to the Workshop of Athens 894, with which the painter of the Marathon pitcher shares a common style, cf. Vlachou 2016a. Boeotia: Boeotian bronze fibula, now in Paris, showing two females with long dresses holding a branch; a wreath is placed below their joined hands, cf. Perrot and Chipiez 1898, 253, fig. 125 and 255, figs. 130–1; Hampe 1936, 25, fig. 6. Argos: Seal from the Argive Heraion with female dancers holding hands and branches placed in the free space, Athens NM 14066. Waldstein *et al.* 1905, pl. 138.21; Langdon 2008, 157, fig. 3.15. Ithaka (Aetos): two long-robed figures identified by Morgan (2006, 255–6) as male aristocrats.

on the vessel so that it serves as a sort of 'iconographical key' for unlocking the entire imagery.

Among the remaining four figure panels presented around the body of the pitcher, a winged horse, a horse-rider and a centaur (**fig. 5**) bestow a specific equine emphasis to the vase, providing thus an aristocratic context for the marriage theme. The peaceful centaur with branches in both hands becomes a quite popular theme in LG IIb Attic iconography: he is seen in later mythological narratives and receives an important role in abduction scenes and the iconography of marriage.³⁴ The peaceful horse-rider,³⁵ shown to the left of the pair, also holds branches in his upraised arms. Both figures make a strong iconographical reference to the chorus members depicted in a similar posture, carrying branches. In this sense, the figure in each framing panel accentuates the festive character of the composition.

On the other hand, the winged horse is a new iconographical theme that will be further developed in the Attic, Cycladic and mainly the Corinthian repertoire in association with the myth of Pegasus. The depiction on the Marathon pitcher is the earliest to my knowledge among the Attic examples and the only one with the horse depicted in full flight.³⁶ Winged goats enter the Attic repertoire around the same time,³⁷ yet the semantic value of the appearance of the winged horse, at least for the Marathon pitcher, seems to go beyond the mere preference for such creatures in the late eighth century BC.

This mythical creature is usually identified as Pegasus, offspring of the mythic union of Poseidon with the Gorgon Medusa according to Hesiod's *Theogony* (278–286). The basic story-lines of the myth of Pegasus could have been known from existing narratives, as is implied by the appearance of the theme in the Attic repertory at the very end of the eighth and the early seventh centuries BC.³⁸ The attempt of the

³⁴ For LG iconography, cf. Rombos 1998, 232–4. For the association with abduction and marriage, cf. Langdon 2006, 211, 214–5; Langdon 2008, 95–110.

³⁵ Rombos 1998, 161–84. The posture of the figure with both arms upraised and his long legs almost reaching the ground differs from that of LG horse riders, and may be intended as riding a mule or ass. The posture of the rider could equally denote a side-saddle riding, although no indication of a saddle exists. For side-saddle riders, cf. Voyatzis 1992; Morgan 2006.

³⁶ For the theme of the winged horse in the early seventh century BC, cf. Attica: Langlotz 1932, pl. 7.79 (the Vulture Painter); Petrocheilos 1996, 50–1, pl. 6.2–3; Charalambidou 2011, 849, fig. 6. Eretria: Huber 2003, pl. 76. Perachora: Payne and Dunbabin 1962, 53, no. 390, pl. 20. Delos: Poulsen and Dugas 1911, 383, fig. 47.

³⁷ Tankard: *CVA*, Paris, Musée du Louvre 17 (France 25), pl. 39.3–4 (CA 1780). Skyphos from Anavyssos: (Athens, NM 14441): Borell 1978, 10 no. 30, pl. 21; Rombos 1988, 461 no. 203 and pl. 46a.

³⁸ More recently, see Ziskowski 2014.

painter to show the creature in full flight, even if quite clumsily executed, seems to follow the Hesiodic narrative. As the divine offspring of a union between a god and a mortal maiden, the winged horse serves the core meaning of the pitcher's imagery in providing a counterpoint to the legitimate union as celebrated on the event of a marriage. Furthermore, the unique character of the hunt and the particularities of the scene presenting the exact moment of the capture of the feline with but a rope, could have equally referred to a particular story. Still, the hunt of a ferocious animal and its capture exemplifies the boldness and bravery of the hunters in taming the wild nature of the animal, and points to the maturation of the noble youths. In this sense, both images may be related to the male-female pair and the theoretical framework of *hieros gamos* in celebrating basic aspects of the circle of life of the individuals, the *oikos* and the community in general. The reference to *hieros Gamos (Theogamia)* functions as a paradigm in Hesiod's *Theogony* (590–612), endorsing the social aspects of human marriage, and thus forming a legitimizing model for the institution.

At this end, it is possible to distinguish the images presented on the pitcher into two broad categories: those common enough to assist the viewer in identifying the meaning, namely the female and mixed dances, the centaurs and the horse-riders, and also newly introduced themes, for which further information and possibly the knowledge of a certain story would be necessary for them to be understood.³⁹ In this category falls the depiction of the winged horse that in the absence of any proper framework from its understanding it could easily seem quite funny and even inappropriate for the figured decoration of such a vessel. Nonetheless, the framing of the winged horse in the narrow square panel and its general treatment would seem as a visual innovation of this imaginative painter rather than a standardized figured theme. Likewise, the image of the capture of a ferocious animal that completes the iconography of the pitcher remains unique among the contemporary and later treatments of the scene.

The composition of the hunting scene, with three youths shown at the moment of capture of a ferocious feline (apparently using what seems like a rope or noose), is highly experimental with neither antecedents nor descendants in Attica or elsewhere (**fig. 10**). The large feline occupies most of the space, looking directly out at the

³⁹ Giuliani (2013, 51) defines as a narrative image the one that presupposes the knowledge of a particular story or context of action in order to be understood. However, the iconography of the Marathon pitcher cannot be claimed as narrative as, to the exception of the dancers, the figures do not interact to build a united story.

viewer, while the three males are shown in the background, each holding in both hands the presumed rope, judging by the odd-looking knot at the feline's neck. The frontal portrayal of the head of the animal seems closer to certain Corinthian examples.⁴⁰ The large size of the animal in comparison to the human figures and the posture of its body with one paw raised as if ready to attack is perhaps intended to highlight the masterful skills of the hunters and their domination over the wild and uncivilized. The image thus forms a proper accessory to the male-female pair, in that it celebrates balance and stability over the ferocious and uncivilized nature of the animal.

An Iconography of Nuptials in the Late Geometric Attica?

A new emphasis is placed by the Late Geometric period on the iconography of the male-female pair within the concept of marriage. Variability in the visual rendering of the theme may reflect the intentional portray of different moments -forceful claim and abduction, the concept of stable and shared life that the ritual of Sacred Marriage symbolized, or even marriage as an agreement between two families.⁴¹ Although the treatment of the Sacred Marriage is rare in the Attic repertoire, a sealstone from Megara offers the closest iconographical parallel. Interestingly enough, the rear side of the seal shows a side-saddle rider, again close to the image on the pitcher from Marathon. The choice of both images is rare; their combination on the same object must have been intentional, maybe a visual short-hand reference to a longer story? The seal from Megara (**fig. 7**) is not the only case where a common visual language may be claimed with the Marathon vase. On another pitcher, today in the National Museum at Athens, female ring dancers shown in a wide zone around the lip are combined with four square panels around the body (**fig. 11-12**). These panels depict single horses twice, a centaur carrying branches and a single female with branches and a wreath.

It becomes evident from the above discussion that the use of certain repeated iconographical elements were use in order to create a visual communication-channel

⁴⁰ Among the earliest is an aryballos from the Argive Heraion, Payne 1933, pl. 9.2. For few Attic LG II specimens, cf. Borell 1978, 61, pl. 9 and 9, no. 73.

⁴¹ A unique scene on a clay stand now in Munich (Staatliche Antikensammlungen inv. 8936): Fittschen 1969, 196, no. 936; Ahlberg-Cornell 1992, 61–2, figs. 91–3; Murray 1993, 214; Snodgrass 1998, 79, figs. 27–9; Langdon 2006, 213–21; Langdon 2008, 234–44. Note also the addition of a male hunter with his prey in the scene.

between specific objects and their users and viewers. It is thus possible to trace in the selective use and combination of certain images an encoded symbolism of social behavior that progressively took shape by the late eighth century BC.

The use of oversized pitchers and social complexity in Late Geometric Attica

The development of a specific 'iconographic language' in the late 8th century BC is consistent with the use of specific vessel types in Athens and Attica, mainly amphorae and hydriae. Those vessels have been seen as the forerunners of the clay *loutrophoros*.⁴² Among the vases that were made and decorated for the wedding ritual, the clay *loutrophoros* held a prominent place serving as the carrier of the water for the nuptial bath.⁴³ The nuptial iconography that is commonly applied on the surface of those vessels and their dedication to shrines and sanctuaries associated with marriage, are indicative of its symbolism.⁴⁴ However, the clay *loutrophoros* seems to have served both the wedding and funerary rituals.⁴⁵ The use of the vase in funerary context as offering or grave marker has been related to those that died prematurely, deprived of their nuptial rites. Most of those LG vases were found in cemeteries; however, the iconography of their surface do not always refers to funerals, as it would be most appropriate, but commonly to festive occasions.⁴⁶

The shape of the giant pitcher that has not gained much attention in the scholarly research may contribute to the discussion of the origin of the clay *loutrophoros*. The pitcher from Marathon does not constitute an isolated example. Although the shape becomes a quite popular *kterisma* for burials of both males and females in Athens and Attica during the Late Geometric period,⁴⁷ only few pitchers, no more than 25 in number stand out, as they grow significantly, reaching almost a meter high. Those vessels were selectively placed with burials in Athens and Attica, and although the sex of the deceased cannot be determined with certainty for most of the cases, it is possible to argue for a specific gender-based Attic funerary behaviour towards young females. The original use of those vases as water containers (*πρόχοος/πρόχους*), the monumental and elongated body with a high neck and the not

⁴² Walter-Karydi 1963, 90-92; Boardman 1988, 175-178; Sabetai 1993, 132-136; Hildebrandt 2011.

⁴³ Mösch 1988; 1999; Sabetai 1993, 129-174; Oakley and Sinos 1993, 6-7, 15-16, 32.

⁴⁴ Papadopoulou-Kanellopoulou 1997, 18-22, 218-219; Kyrkou 2011, 201-202.

⁴⁵ Walter-Karydi 1963; Sabetai 2009; Bergemann 1996, 166-174; Smith 2005, 3-9.

⁴⁶ Tölle 1964, 11-31; Rombos 1988, 344-351; Langdon 2008, 166-174; Haug 2012, 151-178, 472-474, 479-480.

⁴⁷ Kahane 1940, 479, 482; Cook 1947, 151-154; Coldstream 1968, 64-74.

infrequently explicit iconography, implies a function similar to that of the Archaic and Classical *loutrophoros*.

Three giant pitchers are known from the so-called Dipylon cemetery, one of the richest cemeteries that started receiving burials around the middle of the 8th century BC, situated beside the modern Piraeus Street, under the modern Eleutherias square and named after the gate of the archaic wall of Athens, some 300m to the north-east.⁴⁸ Among the graves of the cemetery, representations of women's wealth and status are manifested in the large belly-handled amphorae that once stood over some of the graves, while in the following years large pitchers were placed inside three of the graves, presumably also belonging to female burials.

The earliest surviving example (Athens, NM 812, cat. no. 1, **fig. 43**) was placed along with a giant oinochoe (Athens, NM 811, **fig. 44**) in the Dipylon grave 14. Both vases have been assigned to the Dipylon Master. According to Brückner and Pernice who published the Dipylon graves, the body of the deceased, probably that of a woman, had been placed close to the long wall of the shaft in order to make place for the two huge vases that accompanied the internment, an oinochoe and a pitcher, 79 and 85 cm in height respectively.⁴⁹ Dipylon grave 7 is described as a female inhumation on the basis of the skeletal remains.⁵⁰ The few grave goods were gathered by the feet of the deceased near the south wall of the shaft. The pitcher (Athens NM 782, cat. no. 2, **fig. 45**) was found standing with the elaborate lid fallen on the floor of the tomb, along with one skyphos with high lip⁵¹ and a smaller skyphos decorated with a ritual scene on the interior surface,⁵² a small round aryballos, a cup and three spiral ornaments with a rosette at one end, already lost by the time of the publication.

Inside Dipylon grave 13 the offerings were placed along the left side of the deceased and around the head.⁵³ The pitcher (Athens NM 771, cat. no. 3, **fig.46**) along with the amphora (Athens, NM 770)⁵⁴ were the largest vessels in the grave, reaching a height of 58,5 and 63 cm each, accompanied by three quite large skyphoi with high lip similar to the skyphos from grave 7 of the same cemetery and two smaller ones

⁴⁸ Hirschfeld 1872, 131-181; Brückner-Pernice 1893; Skilardi 1968, 35-52; Matthaïou 1983; Kavvadias and Laggia 2009, 74-75; Coulie 2010, 22-23; for the name Leokoriou Gate, *cf.* Arrington 2010, 500.

⁴⁹ Brückner-Pernice 1893, 131-132.

⁵⁰ Brückner-Pernice 1893, 111-115.

⁵¹ Athens, NM 783; Wide 1899, 214 fig 97 middle.

⁵² Athens NM 784; Brückner-Pernice 1893, 113 fig. 10; Borell 1978, 8 no. 24, pl. 20; Langdon 2008, 170-171; Haug 2012, 139, fig. 104.

⁵³ Brückner-Pernice 1893, 127-31; Haug 2012, 483.

⁵⁴ Wide 1899, 190-191 fig. 48.

(Athens NM 772-775). Inside the same grave few more bone objects and 2 faience lion figurines (Athens NM 780-781) were found, along with an unparalleled set of ivory statuettes modelled after Syrian prototypes.⁵⁵

Yet, the Dipylon burials are not isolated examples in 8th century Athens and oversized pitchers accompanied one burial from the Kerameikos burial ground,⁵⁶ two burials for the small burial plot on the north slopes of the Hill of the Nymphs in the area of the later Melitides Gates,⁵⁷ and a much disturbed burial to the south slopes of the Acropolis.⁵⁸ Some more pitchers have been found with burials elsewhere in Attica, at Anavyssos,⁵⁹ Spata⁶⁰ and Marathon, areas with strong Athenian affinities. Some more giant pitchers of excellent preservation that are today in Museums and collections follow the monumental size established by the Dipylon Painter.

The use of the pitcher, the *prochous* for pouring water, appears already in the Homeric epics.⁶¹ Although pitchers serve for washing before important events or feasts, the indispensable function of water in funerary rituals may provide a reason for the consistent presence of such vessels in LG burials. However, we may argue that this specific class of pottery, the large sized pitchers were inextricably associated with an Attic gender-based funerary behavior, and presumably embodying the individual social standing of the deceased. It is probable that those vessels were used during the funerary rituals and in fact some of them have their bottom pierced. This process of deforming the object in such a way as to remove any possibility of usefulness of it, is

⁵⁵ Athens NM 776-779, Schweitzer 1971, pls 147-148; Brückner and Penice 1893, 128; Giant pitcher, Athens National Museum (NM 771): Wide 1899, 206-7, fig. 74; Davison 1961, fig. 144a-b; Coldstream 1968, 66 n. 2. From the same burial are the amphora (Athens National Museum, NM 770): Wide 1899, 190-91, fig. 48; three oversized skyphoi with high lip similar to the skyphos from grave 7 and two more smaller ones (Athens National Museum, NM 772-775); a collection of small bone and faience objects and figurines (Athens National Museum, NM 780-781, 2604) among which an unparalleled set of ivory statuettes modeled after Syrian prototypes (Athens National Museum, NM 776-779): Schweitzer 1971, pls. 147-148; Carter 1985, 1-7, 40; Zosi 2012.

For an interpretation of the 'Isis' grave at Eleusis as belonging to a priestess of Demeter upon the small faience figurine of the Egyptian goddess placed inside the grave, cf. *Ephemeris* 1898, pl. 6, 1. One more Egyptianizing faience figurine was found in Kavalotti St. Gr. B, cf. *Deltion* 20, (1965) B pl. 46. For a commentary of the finds, cf. Landgon 2005, 16-17.

⁵⁶ Kerameikos cemetery, grave 51 (inv. no. 1314): Kübler 1954, 245-47, pl. 113, 140 and pl. 120 inv. 1316, pl. 121 inv. 1317-1318; Borell 1978, pl. 13 no.10.

⁵⁷ Erysichthonos and Nileos str., graves VI and XIV: Tzahou-Alexandri 1967, 80, pls. 80d and 81d.

⁵⁸ South Slopes of the Acropolis (FM26), Pit burial IX: Charitonides 1973, 14, pls. 7a-c.

⁵⁹ Anavyssos: Kastriotis and Philadelfeus 1911, 122 figs. 20 and 21; Coldstream 1968, 73, n. 1, pl. 13c. The excavators describe the two large pitchers as one-handed pithoid vessels and note that they were used as either for child inhumations (*enchytrismoi*) or as cinerary urns. This is the only case where such a use is observed for the giant pitchers that unfortunately cannot be verified as no more information survive for the excavation of the cemetery.

⁶⁰ Spata, graves 1, 3 and 4: Philadelfeus, 1920-21, 131-138.

⁶¹ *Od.* 1.136, 7.172, 15.135, 17.91; *Il.* 24.301.

known as much in funerary and ritual contexts resulting in a defunctionalisation of the practical aspect and the value of the object.⁶²

Conclusion

It becomes evident that lavish items, that would have served the funerary practices before deposited inside the grave, were inextricably related to the individuals that accompanied. This significantly patterned behavior has gone largely unmarked, possibly because of the absence of clear signs of aristocratic exclusivity in their selection and use. Yet the use of the giant pitchers may be understood and approached in view of the gender, and the specificities of the lives and/or death of those individuals. If we consider the individual aspects of the lives and the social role of those females, how they were experienced and expressed at death, we can only begin to rediscover the importance that those objects had in social life.

Still, we may imagine these young females, the daughters of Athenian families participating in the religious life of Athens and Attica, serving the religious festivals of the late 8th century BC and being commemorated at death in a similar manner. Interpreting ritual activity from pots is certainly risky, however giant pitchers of the second half of the 8th century BC are again no ordinary pots.

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⁶² Kübler 1954, 33-34; Boardman 1988, 176-77; Luce 2003, 60-61; Luce 2011, 57.

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Fig. 1-3. Giant pitcher, Marathon Museum (K 2209). Marathonos Avenue, t. 15. Photo by the author.



Fig. 4. Giant pitcher (K 2209), from t. 15 on Marathonos Avenue during excavation. Photo by A. Mazarakis Ainian.



Fig. 5. Giant pitcher, line drawing of the six figurative panels (by the author).



Fig. 6. Giant pitcher, detail of the male-female pair.
Photo by the author.



Fig. 7. Stone Seal from Megara, ca. 700 B.C.E.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum 11750.
A: Male-female pair. B: Rider (photo: author. ©
Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Education and
Religious Affairs / Archaeological Receipts Fund).



Fig. 8. Giant pitcher, Marathon Museum (K 2209),
detail of the mixed chorus.





Fig. 9. Giant pitcher, Marathon Museum (K 2209), detail of the female chorus.



Fig. 10. Giant pitcher, Marathon Museum (K 2209), detail of the 'capture' scene.

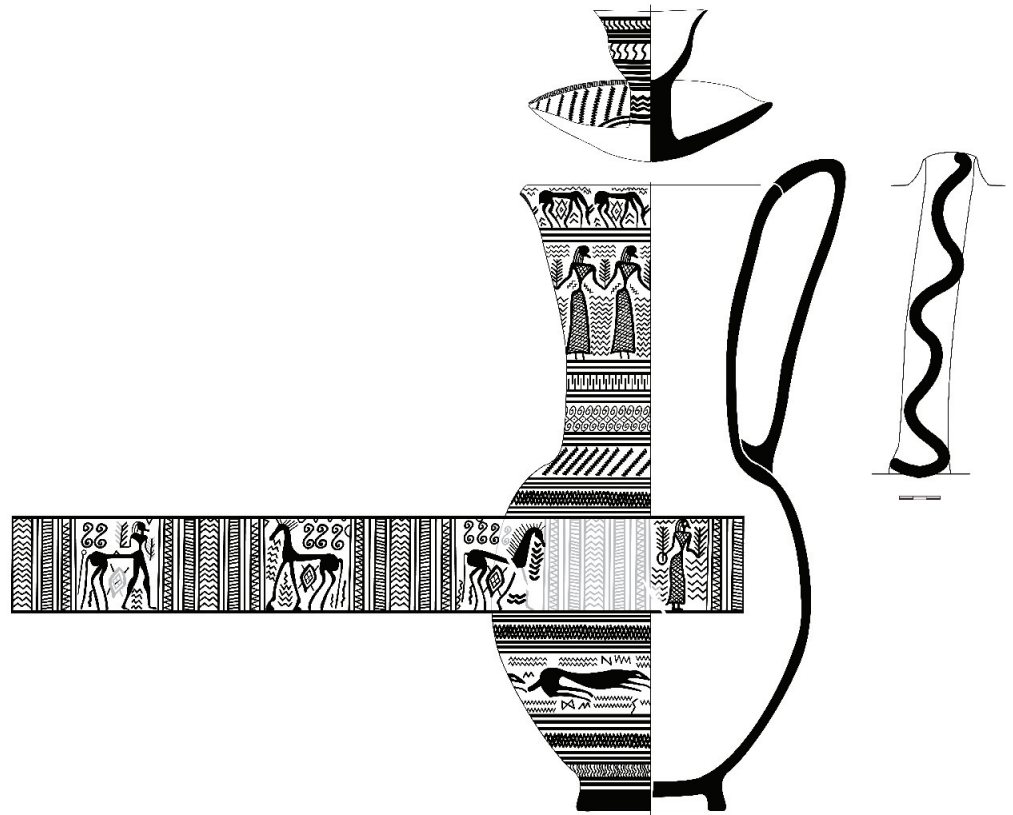


Fig. 11-12. Figured decorated pitcher, Athens, NAM 29838 formerly in the I. D. Passas collection. Photo by the author, reproduced with permission of the National Archaeological Museum, Athens.