

## NOTES

### Sickles and Strigils

At least fifty small iron sickles were found in the pit on Rheneia<sup>1</sup> to which the Athenians removed the contents of the Delos graves during the purification of 425 B.C. Various scholars<sup>2</sup> have attempted to associate these with Thucydides' (i 8.1) report of the identification of Carian graves by the armour found in them on the occasion of the purification, and Herodotus' remark (vii 93) that Carian soldiers carried daggers and sickles (*drepana*). Similar sickles were also found in fifth-century graves on Rheneia, so the practice was clearly not a particularly ancient one in Herodotus' and Thucydides' day, but it was equally not a normal practice in any other part of Greece. The pit yielded the usual assemblage of Classical grave furniture with one notable exception — strigils — and it is worth considering whether, on Delos and Rheneia, these simpler small iron blades, like sickles, were employed as strigils.<sup>3</sup> The usual Classical strigil<sup>4</sup> is an elaborate affair of bronze with a curved hollow blade and shaped handle. It was used to scrape oil and dirt from an athlete's skin, a regular piece of palaestra equipment, and regarded as a peculiarly personal possession, like a man's favourite pipe or razor. On several Archaic and a few Classical gravestones the dead is characterised as an athlete with strigil and oil bottle, and strigils are very common offerings in Classical graves all over Greece. We would expect them on Delos: we have the 'sickles' instead. Clearly, for the purpose of removing oil from the body they would have served just as well. They are small for agricultural use (blades 10 to 17 cm. long) and with only one hole for fastening they could hardly be considered very sturdy implements.

We may look for other evidence for this possible use. In Hellenistic and later Sparta there are dedications from the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia, made by youths for success in contests whose character is not wholly clear, but which may have been partly athletic. The prizes they dedicated were *drepana*, sickles, which were set into the stone *stelai*.<sup>5</sup> The word *drepanon* is used in the dedications, but the goddess has to acquire an agricultural fertility function

<sup>1</sup> K. Rhomaios, *ADelt* xii (1929) 212 ff.

<sup>2</sup> The discussions are usefully reviewed by C. R. Long in *AJA* lxii (1958) 298, 304 f., and see R. M. Cook, *BSA* l (1955) 269.

<sup>3</sup> One of them was found wrapped in cloth: Rhomaios, 213.

<sup>4</sup> Best discussed by S. Dorigny in *Daremberg-Saglio*, s.v. On sickles see W. Schiering in W. Richter, *Die Landwirtschaft im homerischen Zeitalter* (1968) 155 ff.

<sup>5</sup> R. M. Dawkins (ed.), *Artemis Orthia* (1929) 285 ff. (A. M. Woodward), 406 (H. J. Rose).

if they are explained as farming implements. Strigils as prizes and dedications are more readily explicable, and the outline of the blades, with a fairly straight sweep at right angles to the handle, is very close indeed to that of the ordinary strigil. Plutarch (*Inst. Lac.* 239A) records that Spartans employed reeds as strigils, which argues some individuality of practice, but they used metal strigils too. Sosibios (in Athenaeus xv 674a, b) says that Spartan youths from the country wreathed themselves with reeds or a strigil, which in this instance may not have been totally dissimilar objects, but we shall return to the use of a 'strigil' as wreath.

The earliest group of sickles whose real function might also be questioned are the fifty or more found at Perachora in eighth–seventh century deposits.<sup>6</sup> They have no fastening holes at all and so could hardly have been very stoutly secured to their handles. Dunbabin recognised this and entertained Laum's suggestion for the Delos sickles that they were a form of iron currency.

A secondary meaning for the word *stlengis*, strigil, is wreath or tiara, although just how strigil-like the crown might be is not clear. The shape of the Classical strigil has little obviously in common with a tiara, although in a fifth-century grave at Argos a real strigil was found laid across the forehead of the corpse.<sup>7</sup> A handleless sickle blade makes a more plausible model for a tiara, and the use might imply that simpler curved blades could be so designated. The Spartans' curved reed strigils could easily be adjusted to wreaths.

Literary references to the use of strigils are no earlier than the second half of the fifth century. Representations on vases are no earlier than the second half of the sixth century and there are no surviving specimens of the Classical type in any earlier context. It is in the second half of the sixth century that the status and equipment of an athlete seem first to have acquired some importance in Greek society and art, but are we to believe that the practice of scraping down is no older? The little oil bottles which form part of the equipment first appear in numbers with the Early Protocorinthian *aryballoi* of the later eighth century B.C. The oil may well have been used and scraped off in the usual manner some time before the sophisticated Classical strigils were invented. Here we might look to the Perachora sickles for implements which could have been used earlier.

This whole cleansing procedure and use of oil with strigil seems peculiarly Greek and without parallel in the East or Egypt. The use and production of

<sup>6</sup> In H. Payne, *Perachora* i (1940) 189.

<sup>7</sup> S. Karouzou, *ADelt* xv (1933–35) 40–43, and discussion.

olive oil were also features of Greek life not shared to the same degree by other early cultures and of course they long antedate the first Protocorinthian *aryballoi*. Small flasks, presumably for the domestic or toilet use of oil, were being made throughout the earlier Iron Age of Greece, and their predecessors were the Bronze Age stirrup jars, the smallest of which closely match later Greek *lekythoi* and *aryballoi* in capacity and have similar orifices for shaking out the heavy liquid, not pouring it. We cannot, of course, say that the oil was scraped from the body, although the function of some Bronze Age 'razors' and 'toilet knives' might be called into question here. However, any such attempt to project back the Classical practice into the Bronze Age or even the earlier Iron Age is not supported by the Homeric poems in which a different toilet use of oil is described — anointing the body after a water bath and before dressing, with no suggestion that the oil was removed, but rather that a gleaming, oiled skin was admired.

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### 'Epoiesen' on Greek Vases

A relatively very small but by absolute reckoning considerable number of painted Greek pots have signatures on them. These signatures are almost always painted and indicate either the maker (*ἐποίησεν*) or the painter (*ἔγραψεν*). The relevant statistics are these. Most of the signatures are on Attic products of the century from 570 to 470. Makers' signatures are about twice as common as painters'. Sometimes both kinds of signature occur on the same pot, but (so far as I know) only three times are the maker and the painter the same man.<sup>1</sup> In two instances the signature gives the names of two makers.<sup>2</sup>

The meaning of *ἔγραψεν* is certainly 'painted', but in Greek as in English usage 'made' (*ἐποίησεν*) can refer to an owner of a workshop or a manual worker. Most students who have published their opinion take the 'making' of a pot to refer to manual work and, since double signatures show painting distinguished from 'making', they interpret *ἐποίησεν* as shaped. Their reasons seem to be two. First, the shaping of much Attic pottery of the later sixth and earlier fifth centuries is so excellent that they expect the shapers to have been quite as deserving of recognition as the painters. Secondly, the examination of shapes<sup>3</sup> suggests strongly that some pots signed by the same 'maker' were shaped by the same shaper, and so far no exceptions have been observed (or, if observed,

have not been made public). The first reason is subjective and not supported by other evidence; but the second has some force, though the sample of signed pots so far examined is small. Even so, the arguments against the interpretation of 'maker' as shaper are more direct. First, it is hard to imagine how two shapers could have collaborated on one Band cup. Secondly, since the signatures are regularly painted and apparently by the same hand as any other inscriptions on the pot (which sometimes are a considered part of the painted decoration), it is a fair conclusion that the signatures were done by the painter:<sup>4</sup> but if both painters and 'makers' were operating in another man's workshop, it is strange that painters' signatures are much rarer than those of 'makers'. Thirdly, there is the case of Euphronios. This name is recorded in the signatures of a painter who was active in Athens at the end of the sixth century, in 'maker's' signatures of the earlier fifth century and in the inscription of a marble dedication probably of or just before the 470's, found on the Acropolis of Athens and designating the donor as a potter:<sup>5</sup> since Euphronios is not a common name, it is generally and reasonably accepted that painter, 'maker' and dedicator were the same man and that Euphronios changed from painting to 'making'. Yet if 'making' means shaping, it is surprising that a painter of remarkable quality should have chosen to become a not very remarkable shaper,<sup>6</sup> unless the shape of a vase was valued much more highly than its painted decoration; and then, one may wonder, since evidently he knew how to shape, why he ever took up painting in the first place. On the other hand, to prosper enough to be able to make expensive dedications as Euphronios did, implies the ownership of a sizable workshop.<sup>7</sup> Fourthly, as Mr B. F. Cook pointed out to me, the number of surviving signatures of Nikosthenes as 'maker' seems excessive, if the signed pots (decorated by several painters) are his own handiwork.<sup>8</sup> Fifthly, there is I think a semantic objection to interpreting *ἐποίησεν* as 'shaped' in those signatures. For shaping the word that comes first to mind is *πλάττω*. As for *ποιῶ*, one would expect from the general use of that verb that to the buying public, who read the signatures, the 'making' of a painted

<sup>4</sup> Similarly the much less frequent incision of signatures was done after painting.

<sup>5</sup> *IG* i<sup>2</sup> 516. A. E. Raubitschek, *Dedications from the Athenian Akropolis* 255–8, no. 225.

<sup>6</sup> Beazley ingeniously suggested failing eyesight (*Potter and Painter* 34); but if he is right, it did not destroy Euphronios's commercial success.

<sup>7</sup> References in Beazley, *op. cit.* 21–5.

<sup>8</sup> Nearly 120 are listed in *ABV* and *ARV*<sup>2</sup>. If Nikosthenes shaped all these pieces and also the unsigned cups attributed to the same shaper as one or other of the signed cups, then it would seem that he filled the needs of several painters: yet, so J. V. Noble tells me, on average the shaping of a pot needs about as much time as the painting.

<sup>1</sup> Exekias twice (*ABV*, nos. 1 and 13); Duris once (*ARV*<sup>2</sup>, no. 256).

<sup>2</sup> *ABV* 163–4 (Glaukytes and Archicles) and 230 (Anacles and Nikosthenes): both are Band cups.

<sup>3</sup> H. Bloesch, *Formen attischer Schalen*.