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NONSENSE INSCRIPTIONS AND LITERACY

In memory of Vernon Ingram

Attic vases revel in inscriptions, to the extent that they furnish important evidence for the Attic dialect as demonstrated in the classic work by Kretschmer and the recent grammar by Threatte among other publications.¹ But how literate were the writers of these inscriptions? Here, in addition to the numerous errors found on the vases, the nonsense inscriptions appear to be a promising group for assessing the state of literacy among Athenian vase painters. To the modern mind it seems obvious that a person would not write meaningless letters if he knew how to write sense properly. Unfortunately, the matter is not so simple, for as I had already pointed out in *Attic Script*, nonsense inscriptions are not necessarily a sign of illiteracy.² These inscriptions are very numerous. I have made some calculations of the percentage of nonsense inscriptions as registered in my *Corpus of Attic Vase Inscriptions* (henceforth CAVI)³ which show that about a third are without meaning. An interesting additional

Abbreviations: BF = black-figure, BG = black glaze, LM = Little Master, RF = red-figure, WG = white-ground. Bibliographical abbreviations are listed at the end of the article.

In addition to the usual epigraphical symbols the caret ^ is used to indicate a gap between letters, which is often caused by an intervening object in the design, but can also simply be a small blank space between letters. Pointed brackets <> mark omitted letters, round brackets () mark letters that are badly written or miswritten. (.) indicates an indistinct letter.

¹ P. Kretschmer, *Die griechischen Vaseninschriften ihrer Sprache nach untersucht* (1894) 73–210. L. Threatte, *The Grammar of Attic Inscriptions I, Phonology* (1980); II, *Morphology* (1996).

² See H. R. Immerwahr, *Attic Script. A Survey* (1990) (henceforth Immerwahr, *Script*) 44. For the origin of the Attic nonsense inscriptions see *ibidem*. They become frequent rather suddenly in the second quarter of the sixth century, e.g. on Siana cups and the earlier Tyrrhenian vases.

³ The corpus has been included in the data base of the Beazley Archive at the Ashmolean (without, however, the CAVI numbers) and should appear in the next version of the inscriptions disk of the Packard Humanities Institute. Hard copies exist at the American School of Classical Studies, the Beazley Archive, the Getty Museum and a few other places. All information on vase inscriptions is taken from this collection.

result is that the proportion is higher for black-figure than for red-figure, i.e. in the earlier period it was considered more proper to write letters regardless of their meaning than it was later.⁴ I believe some of the impetus for writing meaningless letters was later taken up by the ubiquitous *kalos* and *ho/he pais kalos/kale*. The statistics suggest that the mere act of writing had greater prestige than would be expected in a fully literate society.

In Immerwahr, Script 44–45 I defined the Attic nonsense inscriptions as being different from the ordinary run of meaningless vase inscriptions. This needs perhaps some clarification. There is no doubt that in origin they go back to a situation when it was difficult to write properly. The frequency with which these inscriptions appear from the time of the François Vase on make them a distinctly Attic phenomenon. They appear sometimes on vases of high quality and hence should not be confused with illiterate inscriptions, which are easily recognized as clumsy attempts at reproducing particular sense inscriptions. A typical example is a BF lekythos in Villa Giulia (42,884, CAVI 7164), where Hermes is labeled $\eta\epsilon^{\wedge}\gamma\mu(\sigma)^{\wedge}(\lambda)$, Dionysus, $\text{I}\alpha\chi(\sigma)\epsilon^{\wedge}$, and only Heracles is labeled more or less correctly.⁵

Nonsense inscriptions, by contrast, came to be an illusionistic technique. They emulate writing in two ways: (1) as an optical illusion, by which letters are strung along without regard to pronunciation, a purely visual technique. They may make up longer strings than can be found in words. In many cases, the letters are merely suggestive (so-called imitation letters), being simplified into strings of hooks that resemble upsilons, or rows of dots;⁶ (2) as an acoustic illusion, pretending that the sequence of letters could be pronounced. These are often called mock inscriptions, and it is indeed unclear whether such inscriptions are put on deliberately by literate painters or are a sign of a lack of understanding.

It is in connection with both categories that I called attention in Immerwahr, Script to examples of vases that exhibit both sense and

⁴ Of 526 inscribed vases in the British Museum as listed in CAVI 350 (67%) have sense inscriptions and 115 (22%) have only nonsense inscriptions; 20 (4%) have both sense and nonsense inscriptions and 41 (8%) have other types of inscriptions. Hence the proportion of sense to nonsense is 115 to 350 or 33%. In black-figure, however, the proportion is much higher (63 to 112, or 56%) and in red-figure much lower (49 to 214, or 23%). However, vases in museums are to a certain extent selected and a count of all existing vases would probably add a good many vases of poor quality with imitation inscriptions or dots.

⁵ For a list of examples see Appendix 1.

⁶ I have given a more detailed classification in Acta of the Fifth International Congress of Greek and Latin Epigraphy, Cambridge 1967 (1971) 54.

nonsense inscriptions, which showed clearly that nonsense could be written by literate vase painters. Rudolf Wachter has objected to this deduction, for he thought that the combination of sense and nonsense was rare.⁷ However, it is not infrequent: I count altogether 142 instances in CAVI (see Appendix 2). To these should be added the numerous cases where painters well versed in sense inscriptions produce vases with only nonsense inscriptions. This means that the use of nonsense is not necessarily a sign of impaired literacy.

Fair examples of nonsense inscriptions used by literate painters are combinations of name labels with nonsense, especially if they appear in the same scene. The foremost instance of this practice is the BF aryballos by Nearchos in the Metropolitan Museum, which I discussed in Immerwahr, Script 27. In CAVI I list 40 certain or probable examples of this combination.⁸ A somewhat distinct group joins nonsense inscriptions with highly formulaic inscriptions such as signatures, *kalos*-names, drinking inscriptions on Little Master cups, etc. These raise somewhat different problems and will be discussed below. Finally, nonsense inscriptions are frequently found in combination with simple *kalos* or *ho pais kalos* (see Appendix 2, 1–2), or, more rarely, with $\chi\alpha\lambda\iota\kappa\epsilon$.⁹ Another category that may be mentioned in this connection are nonsense inscriptions that try to imitate name labels, of which I have 11 examples.¹⁰ This is of course much less certain as a sign of literacy, since a painter may be aware of the significance of name labels or other sense inscriptions, but writes nonsense from carelessness, or because he did not command sufficient expertise in the alphabet. The decision can be made by testing whether on other vases the painter showed his literacy by writing sense.¹¹ The moti-

⁷ See Immerwahr, Script 44–45. R. Wachter, *Der Informationsgehalt von Schreibfehlern in griechischen und lateinischen Inschriften*, *Würzburger Jahrbücher* 18 (1992) 19 n. 4. Wachter also points to the fact that on some vases cited by me the sense inscriptions are badly misspelled, and he raises the question of different hands.

⁸ Appendix 2, section 3: 151a. 151d (A). 2210 (B). 2262. 2280. 2306. 2801. 3458. 3816 = 3817. 3921. 4256. 4278? 4288. 4422? 4431. 4539. 4884. 4976(A). 4986 (Body, A). 5121. 5251? 5258. 5259. 5260 (B). 5285? 5287 (Body). 5309 (A). 5495. 5642. 5882. 5883. 6096? 6269. 6271? 6416 (Shoulder). 6419. 7189? 7569. 7711. 7944.

⁹ Appendix 2, section 3: 1192, 4224, 5245.

¹⁰ Appendix 2, section 3: 151d (B). 4229. 4278? 4290 (2 per person). 4664. 4986. 6269. 6271. 6273 (lion and siren). 7944. 7989. A different kind of imitation (by an illiterate) is Appendix 1, 7823.

¹¹ E.g., 4229 is by the Kyllenios Painter; cf. his 2211, which spells a good many names correctly. 4290 is by the Antimenes Painter whose vases exhibit a wide range from

vations for combining sense and nonsense inscriptions can only be guessed at. The desire to complete a visual picture is probably the best explanation whenever sense and nonsense are mixed in the same scene.¹² In other cases, a nonsense word replaces a naming label in the presence of other labels; the reason was perhaps that a name was not readily available or known. The lack of names immediately available probably explains the many instances where mythological scenes are properly named, while others, especially departures of warriors and athletic scenes, are left anonymous.¹³ In addition, one can discern certain preferred locations for nonsense inscriptions, such as neck pictures on amphorae and shoulder pictures on hydriai, while the more important main pictures are properly labeled.¹⁴ The same is true of inscriptions on objects (whether objects that in RF present a tempting clear surface, or objects, such as stelae, that could have something written on them); they are frequently graced with rather sloppily written letters, e.g. imitation of *καλός*.¹⁵ Sloppiness or haste is probably also the explanation when nonsense inscriptions appear only on side B of a vase while side A is properly labeled.¹⁶ None of these features suggest a serious lack of writing ability.

Another type of evidence to show that literate painters wrote nonsense inscriptions is the fact that many painters, most of whose vases bear sense inscriptions, also sometimes have vases with non-

nonsense to well-written inscriptions, while other vases show errors. Both painters have some difficulty with the alphabet but can hardly be called illiterate.

¹² See, e.g., the fountain hydria 4288 or the mythological side (A) of the RF amphora by the Dikaios Painter, 4539.

¹³ E.g., 2211 (B, anonymous fight); 4986, a neck amphora of the Leagros Group, has anonymous scenes on the neck (a chariot scene and a departure respectively) with only nonsense, and an inscribed mythological scene on A with a mixture of sense and nonsense.

¹⁴ 2819, Tyrrhenian neck amphora; animals on the neck, mythical scene in the main zone. Similarly 6273 (hydria). On cups there is often a difference between the Interior and Exterior (A and B) in that the former alone has the nonsense: see 3623. 4066. 7640.

¹⁵ Miswritten *kalos* or nonsense letters replacing the word are extremely common on wineskins and amphoras depicted in the scenes. 1436 seems to have nonsense on an altar base, 4224 has it on stelai, and 3628 on a shield.

¹⁶ The difference in writing between one side and the other (A and B), especially on Little Master cups but also on other shapes needs further investigation. Inscriptions on B are sometimes less carefully done and nonsense inscriptions are more frequent on that side. See e.g. on Little Master cups: 2227, Berlin 1763 (lip cup with potter's signature). 4313, London B 414 (a mangled drinking inscription on a lip cup). 5547, New York 06.1021.155 (a lip cup with the signature garbled on B). 7271, Rome, Marchese Giorgio Guglielmi, ABV 175/15 (a lip cup with the signature garbled on B).

sense inscriptions only. One example, already cited, is the Antimenes Painter.¹⁷ Another is Euthymides, who in addition to vases that mix sense and nonsense (see below) also has two vases which have only nonsense inscriptions, namely, 6610a, Louvre C 11,072, A: κτε. γτε. συιπυ, and 7026, Vatican G 71, χχει. εχυν. κτοτλε. τι. [-²](λ)υτ. κχυο. Both are in the typical Euthymidean style. This is a common practice in which painters of different abilities participate. Epiktetos, for example, writes almost entirely signatures, *kalos*-names and more rarely *kalos*, i.e. highly repetitive inscriptions, but has also vases with only nonsense inscriptions. On 1238, Athens, N.M. Acr. ii, 68, he has ενοες (for εποες?), and 4448, London E 35, a RF cup, has [--]εαοντολοευ on the Interior and on A, [κα]λός.¹⁸ Finally another painter who can write both sense and nonsense is the Brygos Painter, especially in his later period, as pointed out in Immerwahr, Script 89.

These vases show clearly that writing nonsense was respectable because writing letters had prestige in itself. An interesting document to attest to that fact is 5244, a BF band cup in Munich (2216) with, on each side, two horsemen facing each other between youths. On A, a bird flies between the horsemen, no doubt an omen; on B it is replaced by a short nonsense inscription: F(κ)F(.).

However, there are indications that nonsense inscriptions could also be a fall-back technique for those who had difficulty writing properly, even if some may not have been completely illiterate. Obvious examples are instances where the sense inscriptions are badly miswritten or where only one of several persons is labeled accurately, while the rest of the inscriptions are nonsense. I illustrate the second category first:¹⁹ CAVI 151a: A: in a rather conventional scene of two warriors accompanied by youths, the central figure is called Aeneas,

¹⁷ See note 11. Examples: sense only: 5189 and 5190 (Munich 1691 and 1694). Sense with major error: 1981 (Basel, Antikenmuseum BS 435): A(ρ)ερεμ for Artemis. Sense with nonsense: 4290 (Appendix 2, sec. 3). Nonsense only: 2929 (Brussels, Musées Royaux R 291).

¹⁸ Further: 5012, Malibu 86.AE.279, ἐλοι^εοσε(σ), probably nonsense, *pace* P. Anderson, TAPA 135.2 (2005) 267–77. 5484, Naples, Racc. Porn. 1, similar to 5913. 5913, Oxford 520, A: ιε^οιε^οιε. τσ, retr. οιεν, retr. B: --]ι(ε)...ιε. εο(ι)ε. The similarity of the nonsense on these three vases seems to me to eliminate the possibility that we are dealing with carelessness. Epiktetos has hardly any name labels; but see CAVI 3 (Aberdeen 744), *tessara* in a scene of Ajax and Achilles playing dice, and perhaps the name of Menelaos on 5319 (Munich 2619(?), ARV² 74/40). The frequent repetition of anonymous *epoiesen* as well as the transposition of *phs* > *sph* also point to a somewhat restricted literacy.

¹⁹ All items are listed in Appendix 2. – 2306 and 4422 are uncertain.

while the remaining inscriptions are meaningless. B: a similar scene, but all inscriptions are meaningless. 2626: two mythological scenes, the first with nonsense not imitating labels, the second giving *kalos* and *Nereus*; it is likely that different hands are involved on the two sides, with the hand of B more knowledgeable, in which case the supposition that A's hand is illiterate is strengthened.²⁰ 4256: by Exekias. On A, Achilles and Penthesilea are not inscribed. On B, Memnon is flanked by two Ethiopians; one is named Amasis, the other has a nonsense label perhaps recalling the letters of *epoiesen*; Memnon himself is not named. This indicates perhaps some difficulty on the part of the painter.²¹ 7569: this is the notorious inscription by the Sappho Painter in which, according to Haspels, the name Peleus appears in the middle of a string of nonsense letters. 7711: in a Ransom of Hector, the figures of Hermes and Priam are picked out, the first with a nonsense label ending in the name of Hermes, the other with a pure nonsense label. On side B, a departure scene, the charioteer and an old man are picked out with nonsense inscriptions too short to simulate labels. One may speculate why on these vases the naming is so capricious, but in several the suspicion arises that the painter was not familiar with some of these names and may not have known the spelling.²²

²⁰ There are unquestioned cases where more than one hand is involved in the writing, but not in the design. In Immerwahr, Script 75 and 171 I mentioned [5152], Munich 1416 (Leagros Group). Certain potters' signatures are thought to be added by the potter; see B. Cohen, *The Literate Potter: A Tradition of Incised Signatures on Attic Vases*, *Met. Museum Journal* 26 (1991), *passim*, who has convinced me that the majority of the incised Hieron signatures were written by the potter (as against my former statement in Immerwahr, Script 90, that most of his signatures were written by the painter). R. Guy (apud Cohen n. 99) believes, probably rightly, in view of the larger letters and a different rho, that on 5600, New York 12.231.2, a RF cup by Onesimos, the potter's signature of Euphronios was painted in by Euphronios himself. In these cases the decisive factor is the difference in alphabet or ductus; absent these criteria the assumption of different hands remains speculative. The distinction between nonsense and sense in itself does not suffice to postulate different hands. In Appendix 2 I noted some speculations of possible multiple hands; see 2626 (above), 5534, 5597, and 7989.

²¹ See L. Rebillard, *Exékias apprend à écrire: diffusion de l'écriture chez les artisans du Céramique au VIe s. av. J.-C.*, in C. Baurain et al., edd., *Phoinikeia Grammata* (1991) 549–564. R. constructs a learning curve largely on the assumption that the Little-Master cups with the potter's signature of Exekias (ABV 146–47, 2–5) were signed by Exekias himself, which seems to me doubtful. R. does not mention the Memnon vase cited above.

²² For further examples, see Appendix 2, 2280, 3226, 3458, 6269.

On other vases the sense inscriptions are so badly miswritten that it is clear that there was a lack of writing competence.²³ 3816 = 3817, a BF column crater of the Leagros Group, has the names of Heracles and Andromache plus a nonsense inscription and a garbled name perhaps intended for Hipposthenes, a name which recurs on the next vase. 4229, a Tyrrhenian neck amphora by the Kyllenios Painter attempts to write the names of athletes, partly with nonsense inscriptions and partly with miswritten proper names; one name, Hipposthenes, is written intelligibly. 4986, a BF neck amphora of the Leagros group, has one name label (that of Anchises) miswritten among several well written names, as well as nonsense. 5236, a lip cup, has a well written name on A, and an improbable name on B. 5287, the Munich hydria by Hysis, has a misspelled *kalos*-name and the misspelling Hyphopyle plus a nonsense word.²⁴ In the instances where we find a single misspelled name among properly written name labels, it is of course possible that the reason is not lack of writing competence, but a copyist's mistake of an illegible model. In other cases illiteracy is more likely.

An interesting group of vases that mix sense with nonsense carry a single sense inscription that is highly formulaic and repetitive, such as a potter's signature, a *kalos*-name, or the drinking inscription χαῖτε καὶ πίετε εὖ, or the like, while the other inscriptions are all nonsense. I tabulate these as follows:

Potter's signatures:

- 2649, RF kantharos with litter of letters in the scenes and the signature of Nikosthenes on the foot.
- 4664, RF cup by the Nikosthenes Painter; the signature of Pamphaios is on the Interior, whereas the Exterior has only nonsense.
- 5085, another cup by the Nikosthenes Painter, with the signature of Pamphaios on the foot profile.
- 5742, on a sixth-century amphora the signature of Andokides is in the scene on A.
- 7600 and 7601, two BF Droop cups have the signature of Antidoros on the underside of the foot.
- 7604, BF band cup painted by Sakonides, has nonsense in the field and the potter's (Kaulos') and painter's signatures under the handles.

²³ See Wachter's remark cited in note 7.

²⁴ Other possible examples are: 5521 (one name miswritten, ἡἔρα(κ)λῆς, one correct, Κάροπος), 6096 (ἡἔρατος), 6271 (ἡἔρις).

8104, a RF cup of the late sixth century has the signature of Pamphaios on the foot profile.

Kalos-names:

2244, a BF band cup, has the praise of Hippokritos under one handle.

2835, a BF hydria in the manner of the Lysippides Painter, has *Automenes kalos* in the scene and perhaps the *ho paĩs kalός* formula as well.

3716, RF cup by the Antiphon Painter, has the kalos name Lysis on A, but nonsense on the Interior and B.

4290, BF hydria by the Antimenes Painter; one woman at a fountain is named Σίμῃ καλέ; the rest have only nonsense ascribed.

4421, RF cup in the manner of the Epeleios Painter: *Hippon kalos* plus a miswritten *ho pais kalos*, plus nonsense.

Chaire kai piei, etc.:

4056, a BF lip cup, with nonsense on the Interior and the drinking formula on A. Are the inscriptions by the same hand?

4066, a BF lip cup, with nonsense on the Interior and the drinking formula on the Exterior (A and B).

5061, a fragmentary BF cup, has probably only nonsense on the Interior (unless one inscription is a miswritten name) and the drinking inscription on B, with some unclear letters.

6282, a BF amphora by the Affecter, has nonsense inscriptions on A, and the drinking formula χαίρει καὶ πίνει ἐμέ on B, where ἐμέ is surely inappropriate on an amphora. Other vases by the Affecter listed in CAVI have only nonsense or dots.

7640, a BF lip cup, has rows of dots in the interior frieze and the drinking formula on A and B.

Several explanations of this phenomenon may be suggested. The potter's signatures that are not in a scene but under handles or on cup feet may be thought to have been written not by the painter who wrote the meaningless inscriptions but by another person, presumably the potter himself. However, the majority of these inscriptions were probably also written by the painters as I showed for the signatures of Nikosthenes and Pamphaios on cup feet.²⁵ Hence they may have been given to the painter to be copied, which is most likely the case with

²⁵ The Signatures of Pamphaios, AJA 88 (1984) 341–52. For signatures written by potters see above, note 20.

the signatures that appear in the scenes. The assumption of instruction is the only one feasible for *kalos*-names or drinking inscriptions, which do not usually appear in separate locations. It seems likely to me that at least some of the *kalos*-names were requested by patrons who would have provided a text to be copied.²⁶ A standard text would also be available for the drinking inscriptions.²⁷ On the whole these inscriptions do not furnish evidence for literacy, for they could well be copied by painters who knew the alphabet but not much more.

I take a similarly negative view of the 53 examples listed in Appendix 2, sections 1–2, of mixed sense and nonsense inscriptions in which the sense inscription is either *καλός* or *ho παῖς καλός*. These words are so ubiquitous that a painter could easily acquire the ability to write them without being able to write much else. Thus these inscriptions do not prove literacy to any great extent. The examples, as might be expected, begin only in the late sixth century and run to the middle of the fifth, i.e. the period when *kalos* was most prominent on vases.

Finally, a major group of inscriptions suspect of indicating impaired literacy are the so-called mock inscriptions already mentioned as nonsense inscriptions that pretend to bear a resemblance to sense. The basic question is: are they deliberate ‘take-offs’ of sense inscriptions (as many scholars and I myself have thought), or are they evidence for incompetence? E.g., do they show that the painter, having learned the letters of, say, *ἐποίῃσεν*, did not know exactly how to use them and thus produced a meaningless mixture of them?

Some of the most conspicuous instances have been listed in Immerwahr, *Script*, such as the inscription *[υ]μεν(υ)(μ)εναιευ(μ)αιε* on CAVI 205, a BF loutrophoros from the Acropolis (Para. 45) which uses the letters of the wedding song *hymenaie*²⁸; or *νετεναρενε(τ)ενετο* on 2497, a RF neck amphora by Smikros in Berlin, which derives from *νήτη*, the highest note on the musical scale²⁹. The series of lengthy nonsense inscriptions using the letters of *ἐποίῃσεν* has also been mentioned in Immerwahr, *Script*³⁰, but the list can be enlarged.³¹

²⁶ T. B. L. Webster, *Potter and Patron in Classical Athens* (1972), *passim*.

²⁷ E.g., the Tleson workshop seems to have preferred the version *χαίρε και παιε ευ*, as against the version with *τένδε*. See my paper cited in note 36.

²⁸ Immerwahr, *Script* 31, no. 120.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 69, no. 404.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 44 note 30 and index.

³¹ 741, Athens, N.M. 1104 (perhaps reference to *οἶνος* rather than *ἐποίῃσεν*). 2200, Berkeley 8/358.

2540, Bologna. Immerwahr, *Script* 54, 284.

These inscriptions, mainly from Little Master workshops, should be compared with others on which the signature is garbled, chiefly by being conflated with elements of *kalos*-inscriptions and drinking inscriptions – the main elements of the vocabulary of Little Master cups:

- 2430: Berlin 4041.1. Frs. of RF cup. Skythes.
A: (fr. a): Ἐπίλυ[κος ---]. [--- ἐποίῃ(?)]σεν. B: (fr. b): [--- ἔγρα]φσεν. Probably a mixture of the *kalos*-name Epilykos and a signature; cf. 6387 and 7094, below.
- 6056: Palermo, Museo Nazionale V 655. RF cup. Thalia Painter. Cachrylion potter.
Χα[χυνλ]ιδὸν καλ[ό]ς.
- 6387: Paris, Louvre G 10. RF cup. Skythes.
Ἐπίλυκο[ς] ἔγρα[φ]σεν καλός.
I read καλός rather than καλῶς; it is surely a confusion between a *kalos*-inscription for Epilykos and a signature of Skythes.
- 7094: Rome, Villa Giulia + Toronto 923.13.11. ARV² 83/8. RF cup. Skythes.
[---]ς καλὸς ἔγ[ρα]φ[ε]σεν.
Beazley (ARV², p. 82) compares 6387, Louvre G 10 (above). If this is also conflation of the *kalos*-inscription favored by Skythes and his signature, the inscription might be restored with either [Ἐπίλυκο]ς or [Σκύθε]ς. Because of the parallel, reading καλός is more probable than reading καλῶς here also.

It seems clear that the garbled signatures are a sign of insufficient understanding of the basic inscriptions current among the Little Mas-

3319, Corinth T 1477, P 718.

3983, Heidelberg S 35.

5211, Munich 2127 (Tleson signature garbled on B).

5212, Munich 2128.

5236, Munich 2172 (together with a misspelled *kalos*-name).

5647, New York 27.122.27.

6085, Paris, Cab. Méd. 207 (εποιται, with other nonsense).

6570, Paris, Louvre C 10,256.

6974, Rome, Vatican 323.

7606, Tarentum, Museo Nazionale I.G. 20,784.

8095, Würzburg 418. A: εμε^συ^ποιεκελυ^εμν^εσε. B: ευκλευσ:ευποιεσκυνε. This contains letters from other words as well. Langlotz, Griechische Vasen in Würzburg (1932) 78 has a rather fanciful reading after Ulrichs; cf. also Kretschmer, Vaseninschriften 93 who is more doubtful. I think it is illiterate.

ters. Presumably the writer had mechanically copied them without proper comprehension. These inscriptions are thus good evidence of copying. The longer nonsense inscriptions cited earlier, which use the letters of certain words and multiply them into nonsense should also be considered evidence of incomplete literacy rather than as playful jokes to amuse the customers. The term ‘mock inscriptions’, used by me and others in the past, is thus rather inappropriate and should be abandoned.

Since nonsense inscriptions can be shown in use both by literate painters and by others not fully literate the question is how to assign a particular painter to one or the other category. The answer is that there is no overall criterion that could give certain results. The only method is to consider a number of features to gain a kind of “portrait” of each painter or group of painters. Such features should include the type of vases, whether large or small (since small vases are more apt to have hastily written nonsense inscriptions); the type of subjects found in the oeuvre, whether mythical, realistic, or “anonymous”; the proportion of vases with sense inscriptions to those with nonsense; the frequency and nature of errors in the sense inscriptions; and finally the type and especially the lettering of the nonsense inscriptions themselves. In this paper I will only discuss a number of test cases. A statistical survey of literacy in the Ceramicus is, I am afraid, out of reach, because the lack of literacy will frequently remain only a suspicion.

In Immerwahr, Script 39–44 I discussed the Tyrrhenian workshop in some detail, albeit without the benefit of the recent publications of J. Kluiver that illustrate many inscribed vases.³² Important is the division into an earlier and a later group, with the earlier painters putting nonsense inscriptions mostly on the less important side of a vase, while labeling the mythological scenes on A³³, whereas the later group uses only nonsense inscriptions, even in mythological scenes.³⁴ There are a good many errors in the sense inscriptions of the earlier group. Another interesting feature is the lettering of the nonsense inscriptions, already noted by Thiersch (see Immerwahr, Script 39), which uses an incomplete alphabet. While the painters of the earlier group are certainly fairly literate, I think it is likely that

³² BABESCH 67 (1992) and following years, especially 70 (1995) and 71 (1996).

³³ E.g., 2211 in Appendix 2, the name piece of the Kyllenios Painter.

³⁴ Immerwahr, Script 43, no. 202, Louvre E 864, is not by the Castellani Painter but by the Prometheus Painter who belongs to the earlier group.

there was social deterioration in the second group, who were not literate, although they knew the alphabet.³⁵

A restricted alphabet is also a feature of the well-known nonsense inscriptions used by members of the Leagros Group, which I discussed in a paper on writing habits of Attic vase painters.³⁶ “Leagran nonsense” is not the only type of nonsense current in this group, for it is used mainly by certain painters of large amphoras and hydrias, with the Acheloos Painter the most prominent representative. The inscriptions are mostly short and thus not imitations of words and the alphabet is restricted. Notable is especially the rarity of alpha. Sense inscriptions are fairly rare in this group; for example I know of only one vase with sense inscriptions by the Acheloos Painter, 5700, New York 49.11.1 (which has only *ho pais kalos* and *kalos*), and even the *kalos*-inscription of Leagros, after which the group is named, is not nearly as frequent as it is in red-figure. This suggests to me that these painters had some difficulty in writing and preferred to copy each other’s nonsense inscriptions.

A third group that may exhibit some difficulty in writing are the RF vases (mostly cups) assembled by Beazley in the different groupings of The Coarser Wing (ARV² 122–158). They belonged to a number of workshops of which by far the most important are those of Nikosthenes and Pamphaios whose signatures are frequent. On the whole the cups are of course closely tied to the symposium at which they functioned. The scenes are mainly of symposiasts, athletes or satyrs, almost all left anonymous. Mythological scenes are quite rare and name labels even rarer. Inscriptions fall into two groups: anonymous praise of youths (*ho pais kalos* or *kalos*); nonsense inscriptions usually written in haste, and in contrast rather well written potters’ signatures and sometimes *kalos*-names. The Epeleios Painter is at the high end of this class. His most common inscriptions are *kalos* and *ho pais kalos*, while nonsense inscriptions are less frequent.³⁷ I list only one vase signed with the name of Pamphaios (5087, Melbourne, Uni-

³⁵ T. H. Carpenter, OJA 3 (1984) 43–56 argues that the Tyrrhenian workshop was not Attic, but the writing does not support this; in particular digammas are not uncommon in Attic nonsense inscriptions (Immerwahr, Script 140–41).

³⁶ Observations on Writing Practices in the Athenian Ceramicus, to be published in a festschrift.

³⁷ And usually on vases attributed to the manner only: 3566, Florence 3965 (Ext.); 3691, Florence A B 4+; 3805a, Germany, Private (Hornbostel, Aus der Glanzzeit Athens 88/40, Ext.); 5324, Munich 2623; 5687, New York 41.162.133. Sometimes it is not clear whether we have merely miswritten *kalos* inscriptions or nonsense: e.g. 5314, Munich 2611.

versity MUV 32, manner), but there are some remarkable examples of *kalos*-names, notably *Epeleios kalos* but also a number of other youths. 2972, a cup in Bryn Mawr College (P 96) depicts conversations of youths (including one man) and has several *kalos*-names, Theodoros, Epeleios (three times) and Isarchos, as well as *ho pais kalos* several times, i.e., some youths are left anonymous. The painter may be suggesting that the *kaloi* are being talked about, or that they are actually present at the conversations, in which case Epeleios would be represented in different situations. My guess is that this cup was ordered by a particular group of people who cherished these youths. At any rate, the close connection with aristocratic youths places the Epeleios Painter on a higher social level than most of the other painters in this group, as does also the frequency of anonymous praises rather than nonsense inscriptions. A similar group of *kaloi* occurs on side B of 5321, Munich 2619a, with some of the same names, Epeleios, Isarchos, Theodoros, and Dorotheos. This vase has many mythological name labels on A and some spoken words on the Interior and is thus good evidence for literacy.

These features are notoriously absent from the vases of the Nikosthenes Painter and especially of those attributed to his “Wider Circle”. Here too the subjects are mainly scenes suitable for an audience of symposiasts, and mythological scenes are uncommon.³⁸ Particularly striking is the absence of popular *kalos*-names.³⁹ Were these vases less sought out by the aristocracy? The percentage of nonsense inscriptions is higher than for the Epeleios Painter.⁴⁰ The

³⁸ I count only 19 vases with mythological scenes, 6 of which are single figures of divinities and 13 are true mythical scenes. Only one has a few name labels: 7635, Tarquinia RC 2066, Int.: satyr and maenad (*ho pais kalos*). A: Heracles and Kyknos, with some name labels. B: athletes, with *ho pais kalos*. On the foot profile is the signature of Pamphaios. In 2136, Basel Market (M.M.) (Auktion 70, 56/184, pl. 28), it is unclear whether the name *[Paid]ikos* refers to a satyr in the scene.

³⁹ But see Chairias, 650, Athens, Agora P 25,960, compared by Moore to the Coarser Wing Group but not really a part of it, and perhaps 4076, Kassel, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen T 504, Group of Adria B 300 (καλὸς Χα[–]), but that may be Charops which is found on 3235, Copenhagen, NM 127, by the Charops Painter in this group, and on two other cups; see ARV² 1572.

⁴⁰ *Ho pais kalos*, or *kalos*: I count 4 for the Nikosthenes Painter himself plus 7 in his circle. Nonsense or miswritten: 5 for self and 9 for his circle. Some vases have a combination of nonsense with the praise of anonymous *kaloi* (6800, Philadelphia, Uni. Museum 3499, and perhaps 7177, Rome, Villa Giulia 50,385). The figures for the Epeleian vases are: *ho pais kalos*, etc.: 17 for the painter, 35 for the manner or related vases. Nonsense only: none for the painter, 2–3 for the manner. There are however some vases that mix nonsense with *kalos*: 3612, Florence 91,455 (self); 3566, 3805a and 5314, cited above in note 37 (manner).

writing of individual letters is sloppy and idiosyncratic, contrasting with the relative clarity of the potters' signatures. As stated earlier, these signatures, even when found outside the figured scenes, were written by the painters and not, as a rule, by the potters.⁴¹ Their neatness is thus the result of special effort, probably by copying a model. But in general the group of painters associated with the Nikosthenes Painter relied much less on writing for connection with the symposium than those associated with Epeleios.

One odd feature of this group is the practice of strewing letters all over the field, the so-called "litter of letters", which (while it is found among many painters) is particularly striking in the Wider Circle of the Nikosthenes Painter.⁴² In Immerwahr, Script I illustrated part of one side of 2649, Boston 95.61, a RF kantharos with scenes of love making.⁴³ The inscriptions are: A: .εο. γρεοσ. νοσε. σε. νοεσεο. ν[.]ο. εσο. εσο (retr. and upside down). B: νοσε(ε). σεο. οσ(ε)οεο. σεοπιεο. νααρε(λ)ο(π). νοσεε[.]εεσε. (α)σεοπεο. This is a rather primitive way of using letters, for there is no attempt at grouping; instead, letters are simply used to fill a certain space, as shown by the repetition of the same few letters. That this may sometimes be an indication of lack of writing ability is suggested by vases like 4426, London E 11, a RF cup signed on the foot with the name of Pamphaios and compared by Beazley to the roughest cups of the Nikosthenes Painter.⁴⁴ The inscriptions on the Interior are: νοσσ υεσεε ε(σ)εσ νοσε[¹⁻²] plus a "word", χ(α)σν, followed by single letters: ο ν ⁹⁴⁵ and η ο ε φ. Elsewhere ον(φ)σε. The Exterior is similar. Letter forms are extremely variable.

By contrast, the clearest example of deliberate use by a literate painter is Euthymides. Characteristic is 4976, Malibu 84.AE.63, a RF neck amphora, with a single figure of an athlete on each side. Vertical inscriptions frame each figure: on A, the name of Phayllos is on the left (succeeded by two nonsense letters), a nonsense word, on the right. On B we have two nonsense words in similar positions. Earlier we noted two vases of his with only nonsense inscriptions. In addition, Euthymides sometimes places one or two nonsense inscriptions in scenes with sense inscriptions. Characteristic are several vases that have a single (and seemingly quite superfluous) nonsense word

⁴¹ Above, p. 143 and n. 25.

⁴² See ARV² 130, bottom.

⁴³ Immerwahr, Script 138, no. 943, fig. 109.

⁴⁴ ARV² 129/22 and 130, bottom.

⁴⁵ The letter marked 9 looks like a schwa, but is no doubt a miswritten omicron.

in scenes that are otherwise well labeled and sometimes signed (see Appendix 2 for a full listing of these items):

5121, name labels, χαῖρε and χασα (Neils: Χαρά).

5260, εἶδονθεμεν among sense inscriptions (Furtwängler: εἶδον·
θέ(δ)μεν).

5258, among signature and name labels: ελεοπι, retr. (Neumann:
ἐγέου, not retr.).

5259, among signature and name labels: χυχοσπι. (Neumann: χ(ά)λ-
χασπι(ς)).

6419, name labels, χαῖρε, and χαρχ(ν) on A; χαιρετι and end of a
name(?) on B.

Except for Furtwängler's reading of εἶδονθεμεν which may contain a reflection of the word 'to see', the other attempts at reading sense are improbable as they posit unlikely names (Neils) or much misspelling and awkward letter forms (Neumann) by an artist who elsewhere writes unusual inscriptions without much trouble, such as ἡδὲ οὐδέποτε Εὐφρόνιος on 5258 or ἔγχει ἡδ(ὺν) οἶνον on 8001, a neck amphora, Warsaw, National Museum 142,332. However, the main reason for rejecting these interpretations is that such insertions are part of a tradition that can be documented already in Oltos and Phintias and is found in other vases connected with Euthymides such as the Pezzino Group and even in the early Kleophrades Painter.⁴⁶ These single instances should be connected with the multiple nonsense words found on the neck amphora in Malibu, 4976, mentioned earlier.

Finally, there are painters who clearly prefer nonsense inscriptions to sense. In part, this may be a function of the production of large quantities of small vases like lekythoi, but it can also originate with a lack of writing competence. Typical seem to me some painters around the turn of the sixth to the fifth century, such as the Sappho

⁴⁶ Oltos frequently mixes sense and nonsense; for examples, see Appendix 2, 3623, 4431, 4923, and 5309. Phintias' ναῖζον on 5285, said by Furtwängler to be the equivalent of καλός (ναῖ ζῶν), is written near a bearded man and thus probably a nonsense word. The Kleophrades Painter's early vases have short nonsense inscriptions in the Euthymidean tradition, e.g. 3217, Compiègne, Musée Vivienel 1068; 3913, Harvard 1960.236; 8122, Würzburg 507; and others. As Beazley has said, the Kleophrades Painter was not "a ready writer", (AK 1 (1958) 6–8); his most common inscriptions are καλός and καλός εἰ. For the Euthymidean tradition see also my paper, *The Lettering of Euphronios*, *Euphronios und seine Zeit* (1992) 52–53.

Painter, the Diosphos Painter, the Athena Painter and his RF “twin”, the Bowdoin Painter. The Sappho Painter is the most interesting, having a number of different types of inscriptions and decorating a number of shapes.

In addition to an important group of funerary vases, there are only a few vases with sense inscriptions. One is 5666, New York 41.162.29, a BF/WG lekythos depicting Helios rising between Nyx and Eos departing, and Heracles sacrificing at an altar. The inscriptions are: Νύκς⁴⁷, retr. ἥλιος. ἥδς. ἡῤα(κ)λῆς, the kappa miswritten. 8002, Warsaw 142,333, a hydria in Six’ technique, shows Sappho playing the lyre, Gr.: Φσαφ(φ)ῶ. In both vases the spellings as well as the letter forms are peculiar.⁴⁸ Two vases with *kalos*-names are also probably by the Sappho Painter or near him.⁴⁹

The funerary vases painted by the Sappho Painter include a number of plaques, two loutrophoroi and a bail amphora. It is clear from the Exekias plaques which have proper names of participants, as well as from the so-called areio set (Athens, N.M. 2410, 2412, 2413), that funerary plaques were often ordered for specific funerals, with the names sometimes furnished to the painter.⁵⁰ From the Sappho Painter we have only one plaque with such names: 4945, Malibu 80.AE.101, fragments showing two pairs of mourners and a column capital. To the right of the left pair is the inscription κῆδεστῆς, in-law. On the right, referring probably to a youth in the right pair: Ἀντιλέων. To the right of the bearded man in this pair: Τα[–] (perhaps Τα[υρέας] or τᾶ[λς], bride, referring to a lost figure). Note the mixture of proper name and anonymous specification of relationship. Perhaps not all names were given to the painter. The famous plaque 6698, Louvre MNB 905, has a long array of these relationships (ἀδελφός, πατήρ, ἀδελφῆ, τέθῃ, etc.), all of which had specific functions in the funeral, accompanied by expressions of grief (οἴμοι, etc.). There are also several nonsense words (λοσυτοσ and λοσυτ, etc.), which appear to be supernumerary. Whether the Louvre plaque was ordered or

⁴⁷ J.-L. Perpillou, REG 105 (1992) 559–60 has shown that tenuis for aspirate had a certain vogue in vase inscriptions; cf. also (for κσ = χσ) Kretschmer, Vasenschriften 179 and Threutte, Grammar I, 20; II, 677 (this vase).

⁴⁸ In the first, alpha is a high kicker (alpha 9 in the chart, pp. xxii–xxiii in Immerwahr, Script), heta resembles Roman h (S 5), sigma has a number of shapes. In the second note the different shapes of phi (S 16, like the cross-bun theta, and S 18 with the vertical protruding and not carried to the bottom).

⁴⁹ 2960, once Brussels, van Branteghem, Haspels, ABFL 228/50 bis, Τελένικος καλός. 4872, Lyons 75, Κορό(ν)ῃ καλῆ, φιλό.

⁵⁰ See in general J. Boardman, BSA 50 (1955) 51–66. H. Mommsen, Exekias I: Die Grabtafeln (Kerameus 11, 1997).

produced independently by the workshop (to be used at any funeral, representing, as it does, an ideal family), must remain uncertain, but it is clear that there was a strict vocabulary for such plaques which could easily be copied by a painter.

Other shapes are less standardised. One loutrophoros (708, Athens, N.M. 450) has a funerary epigram written on a tumulus, which was once read by Conze *ἄνδρὸς ἀποφθιμένοιο ῥάκος κακὸν ἐνθάδε κεῖμαι*, but is now illegible. It is generally considered a bespoke piece, i.e. ordered, although no proper name is preserved. Another loutrophoros, however (4740a, London inv. 1928.7-16.1), has only nonsense inscriptions. Most remarkable is the bail amphora at Bowdoin College (2854, Bowdoin 1984.23), which depicts the nocturnal ceremony of placing the body in a coffin. The inscriptions are all nonsense: around the head of the deceased, in letters larger than the other inscriptions, *λαβμελιτυτα*. Elsewhere: e.g., *οσλτισυτ. οιεγοιολτ. ολτιστιοσ* (around the head of a woman). The frequency of omicron suggests cries of lament, but the placement of several inscriptions by a head suggests proper names. These are the two features of funerary texts known to the painter who however had no specific instructions for the scene.

Other vases show confusion by mixing sense and nonsense in peculiar ways. An example is 4884 (Appendix 2): On A, the name of Dionysus is amplified by three nonsense letters (*Διό(ν)υσοσ* <IN>) and a nonsense word is added near his lyre (*χιοιο*). Elsewhere there appear to be scattered letters (*κι(.)* and *ο*)⁵¹. On B, *τιονο*, a nonsense word similar to one found on A, takes the place of a fallen archer's name; the remaining characters are properly named except that the name of Iolaus is given to a female, i.e. Eurytus' daughter Iole.

Most numerous are the vases that have only nonsense inscriptions⁵², among them lekythoi, a shape which often has nonsense inscriptions, but also larger vases. There are two types of inscriptions, short (4–5 letters) and long. Characteristic is 4381, London B 639, a BF lekythos with Hermes weighing the souls of two heroes; one inscription is short: *(ε)ιτι*, the other long: *πυοινοιντυ*, perhaps retr.; neither imitates labels. Elsewhere both types are used as space fillers and also in the position of name labels, regardless of whether the length of the inscription is suitable. The latter is a practice much used by the Diosphos Painter, to an extent that makes one wonder

⁵¹ Leroux: *κίτο* ("pour κίττου?").

⁵² See Haspels, ABFL 96 for a discussion of the Sappho Painter's use of nonsense inscriptions.

whether (despite some sense inscriptions⁵³) he was able to write sense without instruction. The Sappho Painter is more literate but he too uses nonsense inscriptions to a degree that suggests he was more comfortable with them. The style of lettering likewise suggests this. The Sappho Painter writes a thick and coarse hand, easily recognized, which sometimes verges on imitation letters, especially in the long inscriptions where imitation letters are interlarded with better shaped letters. Unlike the Diosphos Painter he uses many letters, straight-sided and round (tau plus o is not uncommon), whereas the Diosphos Painter prefers straight-sided letters (including iota).⁵⁴ The use of nonsense is even more prevalent in the Athena and Bowdoin Painters so that these painters present a descending sequence of competence.⁵⁵

It is clear that we are dealing here with inscriptions that are a regular part of the vocabulary of ornamentation of Attic vases and not with simple primitivism or lack of competence. In general terms, the use of writing on vases serves to establish a connection between

⁵³ E.g., 6375, Louvre F 385, and 6671, Louvre CA 1961), both with mythological scenes. Two vases (679, Athens, N.M.?, ARV² 300, and 1912, Athens Market, ABFL 233/16) have well-written *kalos*-names. 2870, Brauron, Museum, AK Beihft 1, 11/20, pl. 5,4, has the formula *ho pais kalos*. 6088, Paris, Cab. Méd. 219, a small neck amphora, has typical nonsense on A and the mysterious inscription Διος φός (or φός?) by Dionysus on B, as well as the name of Hera. The inscriptions on A and B are probably by different hands, i.e., the Diosphos Painter had some help.

⁵⁴ E.g., 6655, Louvre CA 598, has a typical duplication of iotas: υυυ and υυυ(.)(.).

⁵⁵ Sense inscriptions by the Athena Painter are either doubtful readings or uncertain attributions. 2085, Basel, Private, a BF/WG oinochoe (Para. 262) has imitation inscriptions, one of which is read by Cahn Ἐός. 5492, Naples Stg. 142, another BF/WG oinochoe, with Ἀχιλλεῦς and [h]έκτορ, is probably not by the Athena Painter himself. M. Bieber's suggestion that some nonsense inscriptions on 3001, Buffalo, Albright Art Gallery G 479, imitate the words ἱερὸν and ἱεροποιός is very speculative (see AJA 48 (1944) 124 and note 11). 5882, Oxford 251, a BF lekythos, has the *kalos*-name Κύνιππος, and is attributed by Haspels to the manner of the Athena Painter. The Bowdoin Painter has only one possible sense inscription, followed by a nonsense word: 5883 (App. 2), a WG lekythos with Νί[χε] ἰσοί, according to Fairbanks. But there are several vases with *kalos*. The vast majority have only nonsense. Heydemann's h(έ)ός on 819, Athens, N.M. 1791 and Πασιθέα on 3788, Geneva, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire inv. 18,043, are probably misreadings. There is a certain similarity between the nonsense inscriptions by the Athena and Bowdoin Painters, note e.g. σταοσε in 3100, once Castle Ashby, CVA, GB 15, no. 27, pl. 23,5–7 (Athena Painter) and σταοσσ in 4, Abingdon, Robertson, ARV² 685/185 (Bowdoin Painter); they confirm the close relation, perhaps identity, of the two painters.

the pictorial world and the world of the logos, i.e., of conversation such as took place at the symposium, but which always accompanies visual experience.⁵⁶ Inscriptions show that the pictures in question, or the actions depicted in them, are worthy of being talked about. Thus inscriptions increase the importance of the scenes to which they are attached and nonsense inscriptions profit from the importance accorded to the written word.

As we have seen, nonsense inscriptions specialize in two aspects of writing: the visual image and the sound. They usually eschew meaning, although there are instances of indirect reference, e.g. by using letters from well-known words. Both features of nonsense writing are used by literate painters and they say nothing about their competence. The proximity with which vase painters worked near one another established communication that led to mutual interdependence, which in turn led to the establishment of fashions, of which the use of nonsense inscriptions is one. The most important example of such a “fad” are the nonsense inscriptions of the Euthymidean circle.⁵⁷

On the other hand, many painters make such copious use of nonsense inscriptions that it is legitimate to suspect that they simply chose the easier route of writing, one which required only knowledge of individual letters. Others even confined themselves to signs that merely resembled letters. I have not studied this aspect in detail, but when vases show nothing but dots instead of letters, the presumption may be that the “writer” was functionally illiterate. Most painters, however, show that they knew the alphabet (perhaps not always perfectly). Among them are groups that could only write letters but not words, as the later group of Tyrrhenian painters demonstrates, while others were able to follow direction when a request was made, e.g. for a potter’s signature or a *kalos*-name, but were more comfortable with nonsense inscriptions as a substitute for name labels. The

⁵⁶ This is what I meant when I spoke of the inscriptions on the François Vase establishing a narrative; see Immerwahr, Script 24. This function of inscriptions is clear in the metrical inscriptions on the Chest of Cypselus (Pausanias 5.18,7), the Theron Metopes (where a written name (XEΛΙΑΔON) refers to the fate that befell the women of Tereus, who were turned into birds (LSAG 226/2, pl. 44); a conversation on the occasion of looking at pictures (in this case temple sculptures) is given in a famous passage in the *Ion* of Euripides (Eur., *Ion* 190ff.). Traces of this conception can also be found on vases: note, e.g., the Dourian cup depicting conversations at a symposium (4691, London 95.10-27.2, *Hesperia* 60 (1991) 367–82) and the reproduction of an actual conversation about handsome boys (5293, Munich 2447, ABV 425). Among such conversations would be talk about pictures.

⁵⁷ On such fashions see the paper cited in note 36.

examples discussed above give a picture of the levels of competence. The painters of the Leagros Group certainly could write *kalos*-names such as Leagros, as well as some name labels, but much of the time they copied from each other a certain type of nonsense used on large vases. Some cup painters such as the Epeleios Painter, had a close connection with the symposium that led them to write *kalos*-names (perhaps by request or good business sense), while others, such as the circle of the Nikosthenes Painter, produced a more generally useful ware and confined themselves to the simpler nonsense inscriptions or the equally easy *ho pais kalos*. One suspects that they could do no better. Finally the lekythos painters I have grouped together (the Sappho Painter, the Diosphos Painter, the Athena Painter and the RF Bowdoin Painter) all prefer nonsense to sense, although their competence varied. The Sappho Painter certainly could write, although not very well, to judge by his letter forms – note his funeral vases –, while I suspect that the other three really wrote nonsense because they had to. The few vases with sense inscriptions may well have been copied.

This picture is what one might expect in a social group that consisted of citizens, metics and other foreigners and which did not have the advantage of formal schooling enjoyed by the aristocracy. They mostly learned writing from each other and were proud to adorn their products with inscriptions, whether meaningful or not.

Appendix 1: Illiterate Inscriptions

2230: Once Berlin 1766. BF lip cup. Unattributed. ABV 188/2.

A: A(.)^(.)εξ : π(.)ισν. B: A^χι^εξ : π(.)ισν. B: A^χι^εξ : π(.)ισν. 7207, Rome, Villa Giulia 50,679, by the same hand, has similar attempts at the same signature. In CAVI 2230 I wondered whether this was not deliberate “mocking”, but it now seems to me more likely to be uncomprehending copying of a faulty original.

2794: Boston 24.453. RF cup. Unattributed. Pamphaios potter. ARV² 129/28.

Πα(ν)(φ)αῖος εποι..[.]ν or perhaps: Πα(ν)(φ)ῖος ἐποίησ[ε]ν. “A helpless little work: ... by a beginner?” (Beazley, ARV² 131). Odd letter forms; see CAVI. Copying is clearly involved.

3328: Cracow, Czartoryski Museum 1079. BF band skyphos. Unattributed. 3/4 6. CVA, Poland 2, pl. 5,4.

A: χαιετφεχαι. χαίποισεν. B: χαι. No more preserved. Two failed attempts at the drinking inscription; and confusion with LM signatures.

- 6849: Princeton 31.5. RF alabastron. Group of Paidikos Alabastra (γ). ARV² 100/17.
On the top of the mouth, in a complete circle, in BG: παιγογλοι. This may be an illiterate attempt to write ho παῖς καλός. Around a woman's head: ιο(α)ῖλο.
- 7823: Unlocated. Fr. of BF neck amphora. Red-Line Painter.⁵⁸ Ca. 510 (Cahn). 100 Werke Antiker Kleinkunst: Katalog 1 (December 1989; H.A.C., Kunst der Antike) 12/22.
A: Heracles and the Lion; Athena; Iolaus. B: Return of Helen (Cahn). A: above Heracles and the lion: εαροσχις. The inscription imitates the name ἡρακλῆς (Cahn, rightly).

Appendix 2: Sense and Nonsense Combined

1. With *kalos* or *kale* alone:

- 148: Amsterdam 8210. RF cup. Sabouroff Painter. Ca. 460.
725: Athens, N.M. 595. BF lekythos. Sappho Painter. Early fifth.
1977: Basel, Antikenmuseum BS 415. RF column krater. Unattributed. Ca. 480 (CVA).
2199: Berkeley 8/4. + Fragmentary RF cup. Unattributed (Coarser Wing i: Wider Circle of Nikosthenes Painter). 4/4 6.
2631: Boston 95.30. RF cup. Telephos Painter (follower of Makron). 470–60.
2709: Boston 01.8033. RF cup. Telephos Painter. 470–60.
2718: Boston 01.8075. RF cup. Dokimasia Painter. 480–70.
2766: Boston 10.572. RF cup. Boot Painter. 470–60.
2942: Brussels, Musées Royaux R 337. RF cup. Painter of the Paris Gigantomachy. 1/4 5.
3405: Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Museum 1881.44.22. BF oinochoe. Unattributed. Ca. 520 (CVA). With καλέ, referring to a shield.
3486: Ferrara, Museo Nazionale di Spina 19,108. RF cup. Connected with Adria Painter. Early fifth. Individual letters on book rolls.
3598: Florence 75,804. RF cup. Curtius Painter (Penthesilean). Ca. 450 (Magi). Probable only.
3699: Florence PD 54. Fragmentary RF cup. Telephos Painter. 470–60.
3741: Frankfurt, Liebieghaus St.V.9. RF cup. Telephos Painter. 470–60. καλός πι; i.e., καλός with two nonsense letters added.⁵⁹
3957: Heidelberg 97. RF cup. Unattributed. Late sixth or early fifth. Nonsense letters on a shield.
4202: Leyden PC 75. RF cup. Painter of Louvre G 265 (Brygan). 480–70.
4282: London B 323. BF hydria. Painter A (Leagros Group). 510–500.
4379: London B 633. WG lekythos. Unattributed. 2/4 5?

⁵⁸ Connected with the Leagros Group (Cahn).

⁵⁹ The habit of adding two nonsense letters is discussed in my paper cited in note 36.

καλ(η) | (α)υ(λ), my reading. Beazley reads Μυλ and suggests ‘Muia’. So also Walters. Μίχα, Heydemann, Μικλ = Μίκα, Wernicke. I think there is no name.

- 4428: London E 13. RF cup. Unattributed. Cachrylion potter (attributed). 4/4 6. May rather be miswritten.
- 4448: London E 35. RF cup. Epiktetos. 4/4 6.
- 4477: London E 71. RF cup. Brygos Painter. Ca. 490.
- 4485: London E 85. RF cup. Sabouroff Painter. Brygos potter (att. Bloesch). 2/4 5.
καλῆ πχ, i.e., καλῆ with two nonsense letters added. Also imitation inscriptions.
- 4718: London 1906.12-15.5. RF lekythos. Bowdoin Painter. 1/4 5. The nonsense inscription is on a laver.
- 4928: Malibu 76.AE.131. + Fragmentary RF cup. Briseis Painter (True). 1/4 5. καλός on two wineskins. Also nonsense according to True, GVGettyMus 1 (1983) 76–79.
- 5012a: Malibu 86.AE.283. RF cup. Unattributed. Ca. 500. Mostly kalos’. Nonsense is only probable.
- 5286: Munich 2422. RF hydria. Phintias. 510–500.
- 5355: Munich 7821. RF lekythos. Karlsruhe Painter. Ca. 460.
καλός χσ. Again two nonsense letters added to καλός.
- 5597: New York 12.229.13. Fragmentary RF oinochoe. Harrow Painter. Ca. 480. Two inscriptions, the first only nonsense and sloppy, the second καλός + nonsense, much neater. Two hands?
- 5624: New York 21.88.150. RF cup. Brygos Painter. 1/4 5. The kalos is on a krater.
- 5751: New York, Gallatin. ARV² 529/10. RF Nolan amphora. Alkimachos Painter. Ca. 470. The nonsense inscription is on a pillar.
- 6443: Louvre G 94 *ter*. RF cup. Recalls Epiktetos (Beazley).⁶⁰ Ca. 510.
- 6537: Louvre G 381. RF lekythos. Brygos Painter. 1/4 5. Late (Beazley). (Not Eos, but nonsense: see CAVI entry.)
- 6911: Rhodes 12,296. RF cup. Telephos Painter. 2/4 5. καλός πσ. Two nonsense letters added.
- 7361: St. Petersburg 658. RF cup. Telephos Painter. 480–70.
- 7765: Tübingen E 27. Fragmentary RF cup. Foundry Painter. 1/4 5.
- 7786: Tübingen E 140. Fr. of RF alabastron. Unattributed (Beazley cf. a WG lekythos by the Beldam Painter). 1/2 5.
καλός | six illegible letters. Imitates a *kalos*-name.
- 7802: Tübingen 7358. RF lekythos. Karlsruhe Painter. 460–50.
καλός (.)(.). The two nonsense letters added to *kalos* are indistinct.

2. With *ho pais kalos*, *ho pais*, vel sim.:

- 1984: Basel, Antikenmuseum BS 438. RF cup. Bonn Painter. 1/4 5. With litter of letters reminiscent of the Nikosthenic circle; A and B: mixture

⁶⁰ Outside near Epiktetos, inside not, but both by same hand.

- of nonsense inscriptions with attempts to write *ho pais kalos*. The Interior has *ho pais kalos* and *kale* (twice) clearly.
- 2030: Basel, Antikenmuseum Lu 36. RF cup. Bonn Painter. Ca. 500.
- 2133: Basel Market (Münzen und Medaillen). *Auktion* 56, pl. 39/93. RF cup. Euergides Painter (Cahn). Ca. 520–10. Uncertain.
- 2276: Berlin 2030. BF alabastron. Unattributed? Date?
- 2318: Berlin 2270. RF cup. Thorvaldsen Group. 1/4 5.
- 3566: Florence 3965.+ RF cup. Manner of Epeleios Painter. 4/4 6.
- 3612: Florence 91,455. Fragmentary RF cup. Epeleios Painter. 4/4 6.
- 3805a: Germany, Private. RF cup. Manner of Epeleios Painter (Hornbostel). W. Hornbostel, ed., *Aus der Glanzzeit Athens* 88/40. Ca. 510–500.
- 3930: Havana, Museum 163. RF cup. Penthesilea Painter. 460–50.
- 4408: London D 29. WG lekythos. Carlsruhe Painter. 2/4 5. *ho pais kalos* is doubtful.
- 5652: New York 28.167. WG bobbin. Penthesilea Painter. 460–50. The nonsense is on a diadem.
- 6800: Philadelphia University Museum 3499. Fragmentary RF cup. Wider Circle of Nikosthenes Painter. 4/4 6.
- 7177: Villa Giulia 50,385. RF cup. Wider Circle of Nikosthenes Painter. Pamphaios potter (Bloesch). 4/4 6. Not certain that the inscription on the Interior is nonsense. Elsewhere *ho pais kalos* repeated.
- 7365: St. Petersburg 679. RF rhyton (hound's head; two-handled). Brygos Painter. Ca. 480. Uncertain; perhaps miswritten.
- 7809: Turin 4117 = inv. 3032. RF cup. Unattributed (see ARV² 1628). 4/4 6. Nonsense is on a wineskin. Otherwise *ho pais kalos* repeated.

3. With name labels, signatures, *kalos*-names, and other significant inscriptions:

- 151a: Amsterdam, Allard Pierson Museum B 11.999 (loan). + BF Siana cup. Ainipylos Painter (Brijder). 560–55.
A: Aeneas and warrior between horsemen. B: duel between horsemen.
A: Αἰνέας; nonsense (5–6 letters); another nonsense inscription. B: nonsense (8 letters).
- 151d: Amsterdam, Allard Pierson Museum RALS 801a-b (loan). Ca. 550. Fragmentary BF band cup. Circle of Amasis Painter (Heesen).
A: Heracles and the Lion; Iolaos; Athena; between onlookers. B: warrior with two horses, between onlookers.
A: nonsense: υσλογ(α)σ (or λσλοσ(δ)σ?). [I]όλεός, retr. ηἔρακ{ε}λῆς, retr. (in larger letters). Faint nonsense inscription of 10 very small letters. Ἀθῆναία (somewhat larger than the nonsense inscription, but smaller than Heracles'). Another nonsense inscription. There are perhaps further traces at the right edge. B: each of six onlookers is given a nonsense inscription as does the warrior in this scene. B: nonsense related to the figures.

- 1192: Athens, N.M. Acr. i, 2569. Frs. of BF plaque. Unattributed (compatible with the Sappho Painter (Boardman)). Early fifth. Chariot before a stoa; Athena with the reins; Heracles. Nonsense with χαῖρε, e.g. λολοσ^λοσ. χαῖρε has a letter added: (γ). Boardman, BSA 50 (1955) 62/under 28 relates to Sappho Painter.
- 1241: Athens, N.M. Acr. ii, 75. Frs. of RF cup. Unattributed (some resemblance to Epiktetos, Beazley). 4/4 6. ARV² 80/1.
Int.: owl between olive branch and tendril. A: Ajax and Achilles playing dice? B: warriors setting out (the central warrior's shield device: satyr mask with kylix).
B: in thick red paint: [--- ἀν]έθ[ἐκ]εν. On the kylix: νκχ(.)οι, retr. Above the kylix, on the shield, : εχστ(.)η, retr. Dedicated by the maker (if correctly restored)?
- 1436: Athens, Acr. ii, 806. RF column krater, fragmentary. Myson potter and painter. 1/4 5. ARV² 240/42.
A: Athena and male at altar. B: Athena seated, and youth. On the neck, horizontal two-liner: Μύσδων ἔγραψεν ἀποίῃσεν.
A: on the base of the altar, nonsense partly covered by lines: (.)ο(.)γ(.)ο(.). I am not certain that these are letters.
- 2210: Berlin 1698. BF amphora. Group E. Ca. 540. ABV 136/54.
A: Ajax and Cassandra. B: Theseus and the Minotaur.
A: Ἀντίλοχος, for Ἀντίλοχος. Πολυχσένε. Αἶ[ας]. Κατ(τ)άνδρα. Ἀθῆναία, retr. γλαύχς. Σκαμανδρόφιλος. Στεσίας κα[λός]. B: πε(π)χσπχρε, retr. (.)ο(.)σχσ. Θεσεύ[ς]. (π)σπυεο(.)ο. πευπ(.), retr. [Α]ριάγ(ν)ῆ, retr. ν.(?) (ρ), retr. ε vac. μ(.)ο(.).
- 2211: Berlin 1704. BF neck amphora. Kyllenios Painter (Tyrrhenian) (Bothmer). 550–40. ABV 96/14.
A: Birth of Athena. B: fight (three pairs of warriors).
A: Διώνυσος. ἡέφ(ι)αιστο(ς). ηερμῆς εἰμι Κρλελνιος. h(ε)λείθνα. Ἀ(θ)ῆναία. ΔΒευς. [Δε]μέτῆρ. [Εὐρ]υμέδ[ων]? Ἀ(ν)φ[ιτρίτ]ῆ. B: ροοτσ. .ονός. π(.).
- 2227: Berlin 1763. BF lip cup. Near the Taleides Painter. Tlempolemos potter. 540–30. ABV 178/1.
Handle zone: A: Τλῆνπόλεμος : μέποίῃσεν. B: Τλενπολεμε : κνυ-
νυον.
- 2244: Berlin 1799. BF band cup. Unattributed. Ca. 550. ABV 164.
Int.: frontal chariot. In the exergue: hound pursuing hare. A: Gigan-
tomachy? B: similar.
Int.: above the scene: remains of a senseless inscription. In the exergue: senseless letters. A: ευοπιν. οιοττ. νλτσχιτυπι. And others. B: similar inscriptions.
Under the extant handle: [h]ιπ(π)όκριτος | κάλ(λ)ιστο[ς].
- 2262: Berlin 1904. BF hydria. Simos Group (Leagros Group). 510–500. ABV 364/54.

- Shoulder: race of two chariots. Body: Dionysus mounting a chariot, with Semele.
Shoulder: νεσις. σλδιου.
Body: ινθ(.)υ. Διόνυσος. Σεμ(έ)λῃ.
- 2280: Berlin 2098. Fr. of BF kyathos. Unattributed? Date? Furtwängler, Beschreibung 2098. Two seated women spinning.
Around them scattered letters; also: λλο. ιειατ. Between them: Μίκαα.
- 2306: Berlin 2244. Fragmentary lekythos in Six' technique. Circle of Diosphos and Sappho Painters (Haspels). Early fifth. Haspels, ABFL 107 n. 3. Reclining maenad playing flute, between two satyrs. Much restored. Above her: [Βρ]ίακ[χος]. To her right: nonsense: ·ΣΗΝ. Briakchos is also a maenad name; the name does not refer to one of the satyrs.
- 2626: Boston 95.23. RF calyx krater. Fröhner Painter. 470–60. ARV² 510/3.
A: Zeus pursuing Thetis. B: a Nereid fleeing to Nereus.
A: λο(.)λ, apparently complete. λ(ο)(σ)[--]. λονα(.) ναc. B: καλός, retr. Νῆρεύς, retr. A and B are probably by different hands.
- 2649: Boston 95.61. RF kantharos. Unattributed (Beazley: cf. Epeleian and Nikosthenes Painter). Nikosthenes potter. 520–10. ARV² 132. Immerwahr, Script 138, no. 943, Fig. 109 (part of A).
A: love making. B: the like.
Litter of letters between the figures. A: .εο. γρεοσ. νοσε. σε. νοεσεο. ν[.]ο. εσο. εσο (retr. and upside down). B: νοσε(ε). σεο. οσ(ε)οεο. σεοπειο. ναρε(λ)ο(π). νοεσε[.]εεσε. (α)σεοπεο. On the reserved foot profile: Νικοσθένες ἐποίε[σ]εν.
- 2801: Boston 59.176. RF calyx krater. Altamura Painter. 470–60. ARV² 590/11.
Pliupersis: A: Ajax and Cassandra; death of Priam; fight of two. B: Aeneas and Anchises. A: Αἶας, retr. λονιολ. B: Αἰνέα(ς). σοτν. αολδλ.⁶¹
- 2819: Boston 67.1006. BF hydria. Tyrrhenian Group (Archippe Group). 3/4 6. Para. 43.
Top zone: sphinxes between lions between cocks.
Main zone: Iolaus in chariot; Heracles beside it; at left, Hermes and Demeter; at right, Artemis and Aphrodite.
Top zone: nonsense: οτευσπ, retr. σπεχ(.), retr., the last letter smeared?
Main zone: ηερεμς, retr. Δεμέτῃ(ρ), retr. ηερακλῃς, retr. Ἰό(λ)εδς, retr. Ἄρτεμις, retr. [Ἀ]φροδίτῃ, retr.
- 2835: Boulogne, Musée Communal 417. BF hydria. Manner of Lysippides Painter. 530–20. ABV 260/32.
Body: Athena mounting a chariot with Heracles. Αὐτομένῃς καλός. [--]τειε. ειελειεσ. ειεελσλ. Two more inscriptions. Beazley also read:

⁶¹ The reading is not quite certain. My note from a published photo says αολδλ; in Immerwahr, Script 102 n. 18 I give αολαλ.

- παι καλός. For the same kind of nonsense inscriptions see 4288 (below) and 2929, Brussels, Musées Royaux R 291.
- 3226: Copenhagen, NM 87. BF lekythos. Sappho Painter (Haspels). Ca. 500. CVA, Denmark 3, pl. 111,1.
Ajax pursuing Cassandra; altar; statue of Athena; warrior. Αἶας.
Nonsense: ασ. σ. δ *vac.1* χι. ασ|αν.
- 3458: Essen, Museum Folkwang A 176. BF amphora. Leagros Group. 4/4 6. Para. 166/108 *bis*.
A: Ajax and Achilles playing a game at an altar; behind the altar, Athena. B: Artemis(?) mounting a chariot; behind, Apollo citharoedus.
A: on the WG center block of the altar, in BG: Ἀθηναίᾱς. Nonsense.
Imitation letters: to left of Athena: 9 letters. To right, 9 letters.
- 3623: Florence 1 B 36.+ Frs. of RF cup. Oltos. 4/4 6. CVA, Italy 8, pl. 1, B 36, etc.
Int.: nude man running. A: Heracles and Nessos; at right, Deianeira.
B: satyr, maenad, donkey.
Int.: nonsense: at left: κρετην[---]. At right: [---]οσεν. A: [---]χ[---].
[hē]ρακ[λῆς]. Δαϊάνειρα.
- 3628: Florence 3 B 15. Fr. of RF cup. Myson. 1/4 5. ARV² 242/83.
Int.: satyr raping a maenad. A: warriors; on one shield: donkey.
Int.: Λέαγο[ος ---]. A: on the shield: ηἴην, perhaps not complete at end.
- 3716: Florence PD 362. RF cup. Antiphon Painter. 1/4 5. ARV² 341/80.
Int.: youth leaning on his stick; sponge, aryballos, strigil.
Ext.: fragmentary: A: two hoplitodromoi arming on either side of a trainer. B: similar.
Int.: to left of upper body: κογγισ(?). A: Λ[ύ]σις κ[αλός] (so ARV²).
B: υγ (nonsense).
- 3816 = 3817: Gioia del Colle, Museo Archeologico Nazionale MG 29. Fragmentary BF column krater. Leagros Group (Ciancio). CVA, Italy 68, pls. 21,1–2 and 22,1–4.
A: Heracles and the Amazons. B: Amazon in a chariot; Athena.
A: οασ^οασ(.). ηιπ(π)οσοιΛς.⁶² ηἔρακλῆς. [Αν]δρομά(χ)⟨ε⟩, retr.
- 3921: Harvard 1972.40. RF kalpis. Unattributed Pioneer (recalls Euthymides and earliest Kleophrades Painter, Beazley, Para. 324/13 *bis*).
Πρίαμος. χεχι, retr. χετοι, retr. χινι. τετλ, retr. χετει. Nonsense inscriptions of Euthymidean type, for which see Immerwahr, Script 71 n. 35.
- 4056: Karlsruhe, Badisches Landesmuseum 59.61. BF lip cup. Unattributed. 3/4 6. Photos in Beazley Archive. 150 Jahre Antikensammlungen in Karlsruhe 171, pls. 105–106 (*non vidi*).
Int.: Artemis between two rampant lions. Lip: A: two naked runners.

⁶² “Mock” inscription: half sense: ηιπ(π)οσ(θ)⟨εν⟩ι(α)ς(?).

- Int.: by the lions: πυμ(.)πυ^(δ)πσ^σ(α)(.)ν. που^(.) (ο). Handle zone:
A: χαῖρε κα[ι] (πί)ει σύ. No photo of B.
- 4066: Karlsruhe 69.61. BF lip cup. Epitimos Painter (Thimme, Robertson)
= Lydos (Tiverios). CVA, Germany 60, pl. 22,1–7 and p. 51 (facs. of
inscriptions).
Int.: nonsense: πυρον. οπσ^φα(ν)(σ). γος.
Ext.: handle zone: [χ]αῖρε κα[ι] (πί)ει σύ. B: χαῖρε κ[α]ι̣ περί[δ] με].
- 4224: London. RF kantharos. Unattributed? 2/2 5. JHS 41 (1921) 133/5.
A: youth before a stele. B: similar, but youth holds a thyrsus.
A: on the stele: πλ[.]νο(ν) (χ)αῖρε. B: on the stele: ατια. [Nonsense
with χαῖρε.]
- 4229: London B 48. BF neck amphora (Tyrrhenian). Kyllenios Painter.
560–50. ABV 100/70.
A: athletes and trainers. B: fight of seven warriors.
A: inscriptions near the figures: Σιχεος. ηιπ(π)οστένεις (young wrestler).
Ουερπος. Ολυποκουχυ.. Ουπεσοε, retr. (.)[---]ριω(.) [sic].
B: also near the figures: Ποεο[.]. Πιφεσο[.]. (.)υισοεσ. Ου(.)ο(γ)πο[.].
Π[.]ποεσο(γ). One more. Unclear which “names” are miswritten and
which are nonsense. One name (Hipposthenes) is written correctly; for
the tau, see note 47. (γ): the shape is that of an Ionic gamma, hence
presumably not a gamma but misunderstood; perhaps partial pi’s?
- 4256: London B 209. BF neck amphora. Exekias. Ca. 540. ABV 144/8.
A: Achilles and Penthesilea. B: Memnon between two Ethiopian
attendants.
B: to left of Memnon’s head: αοιθον. To right of his head: Ἀμασις.
- 4278: London B 309. BF hydria. Leagros Group (Simos Group). 510–500.
ABV 364/56.
Shoulder: Heracles and the Cretan bull. Body: Man mounting a
chariot.
Shoulder: some dots to right of Iolaus and behind Hermes.
Body: Σῖμος. Κλείτα, complete. Τελοηυς = Τέλ(λ)ῶ ηυς(?). Or
part nonsense? To right of horses’ bellies: Κ.ονου. The last word is
probably miscopied by the painter; see my article cited in note 36.
- 4288: London B 333. BF hydria. Unattributed. 530–20. Immerwahr, Script
57, no. 301, Fig. 92.
Shoulder: duel. Body: Women at the Fountain.
Body: καλέ. Μνέσιλ(λ)α. ελελειελν.⁶³ Ῥόδον. ελετειεν. AMAT, com-
plete. ελετελειεν. ΕΠΙΣ. Ἀνθύλ(λ)ε καλέ.
A replica, by a different hand, of 8072, Würzburg 304 (see ABV, 678,
top) which has similar inscriptions but without the nonsense. Similar
nonsense inscriptions occur on 2835, Boulogne 417 (listed above) and
2929, Brussels R 291 (nonsense only).
- 4290: London B 336. BF hydria. Antimenes Painter. Ca. 520. ABV 266/3.

⁶³ See Beazley in JHS 47 (1927) 83, n. 50, and ABV 677/MNESILLA 3.

Shoulder: warriors leaving home, one in a chariot. Body: Seven women at a fountain.

Body: ten nonsense inscriptions, two for each woman, one near the head, the other by the legs: αρχνομ. πογνοννον. – πσι(π)ο. νυχεονο. – (.)εοσεο. πο(σ)νο(.)(.).ν. – σπονσν. εγ(.).ποσγ. – By the head of the fifth woman: (Σ)(ι)μῆ καλῆ. χαργκεχσ. – No inscriptions between the sixth and seventh women.

- 4313: London B 414. Plain lip cup. Unattributed. 3/4 6. CVA, Great Britain 2, pl. 12,5 (A).

Lip: plain.

Handle zone: A: χαῖρε κα[ι π]ρίῳ ἐμέ. B: χαιρετενεπποστ.

- 4338: London B 507. BF oinochoe. Unattributed. Keyside Class. Early fifth. ABV 426/9.

Forge: one male working on each side of it. On the left side of the forge: ho : Mῦς | καλὸς : δοκεῖ, | ναί.

To the right of the forge, three nonsense inscriptions: above the man's head: five letters, beginning λο... Starting to left of the man's mouth: ηεννα(.).ει, retr. Behind his back: an inscription ending in ...v.

- 4421: London E 7. RF cup. Manner of Epeleios Painter. 4/4 6. ARV² 149/16.

Int.: warrior. A: two warriors fighting, between a warrior leading a horse on each side. B: two groups of fighting warriors.

A: around the shield device of the fallen warrior: ἡππὼν καλός :. In the field: ho π(α)ῖς και. B: nonsense.

- 4422: London E 8. RF cup. Oltos. 4/4 6. ARV² 63/88.

Int.: boy running, with lyre and meat. A: Heracles and Cycnus. B: Dionysus and a giant. Facing each handle, warrior with horse, probably belonging to A (Beazley).

Int.: imitation inscriptions. A: above Heracles: ἡῆρ(α)⟨κλ⟩ῆς(?).⁶⁴ Imitation inscriptions. B: under the left handle: imitation inscriptions.

- 4431: London E 16. RF cup. Oltos. 520–10. ARV² 61/75.

Int.: boy lifting a hydria. A: departure of Ajax, with chariot. B: Dionysus with maenads and satyrs.

Int.: Μέμνων καλός. A: [1-2](.)ρ(α)λος. Αἶας. χ(α)τσο, the σο perhaps separate. ΑΤΟΛ(Ε). Μέμ[μ]νων and καλός. ανκ, complete? B: ΕΛΑ is clear once; other inscriptions are similar, all short.

- 4539: London E 255. RF amphora. Dikaios Painter. 510–500. ARV² 31/2.

A: The Struggle for the Tripod. B: warrior leaving home.

A: Ἀθῆναία. παλοσ. δεχιοι. Ἀπ[όλ]λῶν. Ἀρτεμς. B: nonsense only: κισι. γεχγογκ. χλε[.]σι, retr., except for the first sigma. χεχγιοχεχογε. χλειοπχιο.

⁶⁴ Smith in the BM catalogue prints ΗΕΡΛΕΣ with three-stroke sigma and reads ἡῆρ⟨ακ⟩λῆς, but that gives an Ionic lambda; I prefer alpha lacking the crosstroke. I wonder if this is not also nonsense, or at best a “mock” inscription.

- 4664: London E 815. RF cup. Nikosthenes Painter. Pamphaios potter. Early fifth. ARV² 125/15.
 Int.: naked woman using olisboi. A: Hermes playing the lyre, with cattle (4 heads). B: three maenads and three satyrs.
 Int.: Παν(φ)αῖος, and ἐποίεσεν. A: nonsense (one inscription for each cow): νοσ[.]h. ν(θ)ιος. επο[.]σε. ν[³⁻⁴]πον. B: not inscribed.
- 4884: Madrid 10,916. BF amphora. Sappho Painter or close. Late sixth. ABV 508.
 A: Heracles at banquet, with Dionysus. B: Heracles and the sons of Eurytus.
 A: Διό(ν)υσος (IN. χιοιο.⁶⁵ κι(.) and ο. B: τι^ονο, retr. Εὔρυτος, retr. Ἰφι^τος. Ἀντ(ι)φῶλο(ς), retr. Ἰολ^έα^ (ς), retr. (for Ἰόλῃ?).
- 4923: Malibu. Fragmentary RF cup. Oltos. 4/4 6. *Vidi*.
 Int.: part of an armed(?) figure. A: not noted. B: one running to left, followed by two mounted archers.
 Int.: nonsense: h[.](ν)ιχπ[.]πχι^ . One iota elsewhere. A: ηε[ρμῆς]. ηἔρ[ακλῆς]. Below: a retr. kappa. B: much nonsense: e.g.: πκπυπθσ. εἰσπ. ἡσπκ. Four more inscriptions.
- 4976: Malibu 84.AE.63. RF neck amphora. Euthymides. 4/4 6. Immerwahr, Script 65, no. 375.
 A: discus thrower. B: athlete with javelin.
 The inscriptions vertically down on either side of the figure. A: on the left: Φάυλ(λ)ος [²(?)] *vac.1* ιο (or λο?), probably complete at end. On the right: κοτελο, the last two letters very faint, but probably complete at end. B: along lower left: εχοπει. Along lower right: χοιοι. Both complete.
- 4986: Malibu 86.AE.82. BF neck amphora. Leagros Group (Bothmer). 520–10. CVA, USA 23, pls. 41, and 44,3–4.
 Neck: A: chariot. B: Departure of Warrior: old man, warrior, dog, woman.
 Body: A: Aeneas rescuing Anchises, with Ascanius(?) and Aphrodite. B: Dionysus between satyr flautist and satyr.
 Neck: A: μεχτεετς. λεβιτ[.]δεσ. χττο(.)ν. B: μυχταεν. 7–8 letters not legible in CVA's photo. Body: A: πετελευχ. Ἀ(φ)ροδίτῃ καλῆ. Ανχισι (Anchises). Αἰνέα(ς) : καλός.
 The neck has only nonsense inscriptions, except that λεβιτ[.]δεσ recalls a personal ending. The body has sense inscriptions with one nonsense inscription and one miswritten name.
- 5061: Manisa, Museum inv. no. 2137. Frs. of BF cup (with merrythought handles). Unattributed. 3/4 6. N. H. Ramage, AJA 87 (1983) 453–60, pls. 63–65.
 Int.: legs of a running male. A: hoplite combat. B: Calydonian Boar Hunt. Under each handle: draped man.

⁶⁵ Interpreted by Leroux as Χίοιο, sc. οἶνου, which is unlikely as a similar nonsense word appears on B.

- Int.: *two[--]* (nonsense or garbled name?). *ι(α)πεοσειν(.)* (unclear reading).⁶⁶ A: not inscribed. B: *χαῖρε καὶ π[ίει ---?]. [---](.)ς.* (Ramage restores: *[h]ύς*).
- 5085: Melbourne 1730.4. RF cup. Nikosthenes Painter. Pamphaios potter. 4/4 6. ARV² 125/20.
Int.: satyr. A: Heracles and Alcyoneus. B: Dionysus with two maenads and two bulls.
In the scenes: nonsense inscriptions. On the reserved foot profile: *Παν(φ)αῖος ἐποίησεν.*
- 5121: Morgantina inv. 58.2382. Fragmentary RF volute krater. Euthymides. 4/4 6. ARV² 28/10.
Neck: A: Heracles and the Amazons: 11 figures. B: symposium.
A: *Ἀνδρο^μάχῃ. ἡῤακ^λ)ῃς.* To H.'s right, Amazon and apparently some letters. *Σοσία(ς). χασα*⁶⁷. B: *χα[ί]ρε. χαῖρ^ε (Σ)οσία[ς. [--]ιος.*
- 5236: Munich 2172. BF lip cup. Unattributed. 3/4 6. ABV 668.
Int.: siren; below, plant motif. Lip: A–B: sirens replacing handle palmettes.
Int.: *εποηπει, retr. ει[.](σ)ε(.)ιγ, retr.* Handle zone: A: *ἡπ(π)οτέλε(ς) καλοσεν.* B: *ἡπ(π)οκίμενος εαιοι.*
- 5251: Munich 2243. BF band cup. Unattributed. Glaukytes potter. The famous multfigured band cup with the Calydonian Boar Hunt and Theseus and the Minotaur would need a lengthy discussion. It has numerous sense inscriptions but also a number of short inscriptions which have been variously interpreted as sense but some of which I consider nonsense or at any rate meaningless. See Rebillard's fundamental article in BCH 116 (1992) 501–40.
- 5245: Munich 2220. BF band cup. Unattributed (recalls Amasis and Taleides Painters, Fellmann). 3/4 6. CVA, Germany 57, pls. 30,6 and 31,1–4.
A: two boxers; between them, a prize amphora; on each side a “judge”. B: similar.
A: *χεο(.)ο(.). χονιχ(.)(.), retr.(?). χαῖρε* (above the amphora). *χο(ν)ιχ(ν)(.). χνχο(ν)ιχ.* B: four similar inscriptions. Above the amphora: *χι[---]*. The nonsense inscriptions all start with chi. [Nonsense with *χαῖρε.*]
- 5258: Munich 2307. RF amphora. Euthymides. 510–500. ARV² 26/1.
A: Hector arming. B: komos of three bearded men.
A: *ἔ(γ)ραφσεν | Πρίαμος : Εὐθυμίδης | ὁ Πολ(λ)ιδ. ἡέκτορ. ἡεκάβε, retr.*

⁶⁶ Ramage thinks the two inscriptions are parts of a garbled *epoiesen* signature, but the second word is not very close.

⁶⁷ My reading. Neils, AJA 99 (1995) 434, reads *Χαρά*, but this is hardly a suitable name for an Amazon.

- B: ἡδὲ οὐδέποτε Εὐφρόνιος. Κόμαρχος. Εὐ{ε}δέμος. Τέλες, retr. ελεοπι, retr.⁶⁸
- 5259: Munich 2308. RF amphora. Euthymides. 510–500. ARV² 26/2.
A: arming similar to 5258, Munich 2307, A, but not mythological. B: two young athletes and a bearded trainer.
A: Μαε[-⁴]-γ[.] vac. χυχοσπι.⁶⁹ Θδρουκίδων. h[o Πολ(λ)ι]δ | Εὐθυμίδες{εξ}. Εὐθύβο[λος]. Ὀρσιμένες, retr. Εὐθυμί(δ)ες | ho Πολ(λ)ιδ. Both lines are retr.
- 5260: Munich 2309. RF amphora. Euthymides. 510–500. ARV² 27/4.
A–B: Theseus abducting Helen (or Korone).
A: ηερες (cf. perhaps the later *kalos* and *kale* name Ἡραῶς, ARV² 1614 and 1707?). Περίθους. ηελένῃ. Θεσε(ύ)ς, retr. (Κ)(ο)ρδνῃ. B: χαίρε {τ} Θεσεύς. Ἀντιόπεια. ειδονθεμεν (εἶδον· θέ(δ)μεν, Furtwängler, but probably nonsense).
- 5285: Munich 2421. RF hydria. Phintias. 510–500. ARV² 23/7.
Shoulder: symposium of two hetaerae playing kottabos. Body: music lesson.
Shoulder: καλοῖ. (σ)οῖ τῆν(δ)ί, Εὐθυμί(δ)ει. I.e.: σοὶ τηνδί, Εὐθυμίδῃ καλῶ, sc. λατάσσω. Body: ναιζον.(ναί, ζῶν, Furtwängler, = καλός; but it is written near a bearded man! Probably nonsense). [Δ]εμέτριο(ς). Εὐθυμίδες, i.e., Εὐθυμίδες. Τλεμπό(λ)εμος. Σμίκυθος.
- 5287: Munich 2423. RF hydria. Hypsis. 510–500. ARV² 30/1.
Shoulder: two boys on horseback, and chariot, with charioteer mounting. Body: three Amazons getting ready.
Shoulder: Σίμος. Πεδιος(?)⁷⁰ κ(α)λός. (χ)αῖρε. Body: (᾽Α)νδ(ρ)ομάχῃ. χευχε. Ἀντιό(π)εα. ηυφο(π)υλε. ηύφοις ἔγραψεν.
- 5309: Munich 2606. RF cup. Oltos. 520–10. ARV² 64/102.
Int.: naked woman cleaning her sandals. A: Dionysus seated, with a donkey, and satyr riding a donkey. B: two youths on horseback and a man (riding lesson?).
Int.: Μέμ[νῶν] [καλ]ός. A: Διόνυσος. Behind the satyr five indecipherable characters. B: καικασ σεμονι.
- 5495: Naples Stg. 172. BF cup. Kallis Painter. 3/4 6. ABV 203/1.
A: heads of Dionysus and Semele. Vines and satyrs. B: heads of a maenad, Dionysus and two other maenads.
A: by one satyr: νι.(ν)οιο, and γειογ(ν) (doubtful reading). Διόνυσος. Σεμέλῃ retr. Above her head: σνσο(ν)(ν)υ, probably retr. By another satyr: (.)ε(.)γιο(.) (doubtful). B: above Dionysus: χπιογνιτκπ. Διόνυσος, retr. Above the first maenad on D.'s right: Κάλ(λ)ις. The other maenad: Σίμῃ. The left maenad is not inscribed.
- 5521: New York 74.51.1331. BF hydria. Unattributed. 570–560. Immerwahr, Script 44, 214, Fig. 27.

⁶⁸ ελεοπι is read by G. Neumann, AA 1977, 38ff.: ἐγέου, not retr.

⁶⁹ Neumann reads χυχοσπι: χ(ά)λχασπι(ς). MA... is unexplained.

⁷⁰ My suggestion. Others: νεδιος, ηεριας, ηερ(μ)ίας. See CAVI.

Shoulder: two lions facing. Body: Heracles and the Lion; two birds.
Shoulder: λεολεσ. λσ, retr. χοιχολσ, retr. χασχιεασ, complete. Κά-
πος, retr. χιλεσλχιχ, retr. νεσλ, retr. λχσα(.)ει(?). Body: νει(.)χσχι.
hēρα(κ)λῆς, retr. λεογh?εον, complete. (.)νιλι.: λειλι, complete. *Karpōs*
is perhaps a *kalos*-name with *kalos* omitted, but it would be very early.
The name occurs, e.g., in IG II² 11,824 and later; see LGPN II. Some
of the nonsense inscriptions use the letters of the word for lion.

- 5534: New York 06.1021.47. BF olpe. Unattributed. 4/4 6. ABV 667.

Apollo and 3 Muses.

οι(σ)τοηε. (σ)ιοετσ. νεστλοευ. Εὐφύλῃτος. καλῆ.

One wonders whether the two sense inscriptions are by the same hand
as the nonsense or are copied. I take καλῆ to refer to the Muse at right;
I do not take it as a vocative to go with the name.

- 5547: New York 06.1021.155. Plain lip cup. Xenokles Painter?⁷¹ Xenokles
potter. 550–30. Immerwahr, Script 53, no. 275, Fig. 52 (B).

Handle zone: A: Χσε[νοκλῆ]ς : ἐποίῃ(σ)(ε)(ν). B: Χεσνοιε(σ)ενο, or
Χεσνοιε(ς) ενο.

- 5642: New York 26.49. BF aryballos. Nearchos. 560–50. ABV 83/4.

Handle plate, front: three satyrs masturbating. Left side: Perseus. Right
side: Hermes. Rim: battle of pygmies and cranes.

Handle plate, front: behind upper body of left satyr: χαίρει. In front:
Δόφιος. I. e., Δόφιος | χαίρει. Above the head of the middle satyr:
Τερπέκῃλος. In front of the right satyr: Φσδῶς. Behind the upper
body: ἡσσι. To right of his legs: λει, and (separated by the tail): βρε.
Under the plate, Gr.: Νέαρχος | ἐποίησέν με. On the left side of the
handle plate: Περσε|εύς, retr. At right: ηευ|σει. On the right side of
the handle plate: τει. Between Hermes' legs: ἡδί. On his right: ἡρμῆς.
On the rim, scattered: ριο, retr. θ[--]. ανασ, retr. κρο. καλ, retr. χοσ.
αρυς. ρορυ. θεν. ακι. ρε. θοι, retr. βανσ, retr. πυ. οαι.

- 5742: New York, Bastis. BF amphora. Unattributed. Andokides potter. 3/4
6. ABV 253.

A: chariot with charioteer. B: similar; preceded by a man with wreath
and branch (perhaps a victorious chariot).

A: ἡοινοϝ. By charioteer's face: Ἀνδοκίδῃς. Below horses: ἐποίησ(ε)ν.
At right: πισοισινσ.

- 5806: Orvieto 1045. RF neck amphora. Syriskos Painter. 1/4 5. ARV²
261/21.

A: boy before a man. B: similar (reversed; the man is offering a
flower).

A: to boy's right: [κ]αλὸς εἶ. To left of man's open mouth: καλὸς εἶ,
retr. B: to right of man's face: κ[α]λὸς εἶ. To boy's left "mock" inscrip-
tion, imitating the others: κγσγ(ο)ι (so photo.; CVA reads καλὸς εἶ
twice on B). The men are praising the boys and the painter is too.

⁷¹ Beazley in ABV 185 notes that the signatures on the undecorated Xenokles cups
are "in the same style" [as the four cups attributed to one hand, ABV 184/1–4].

- 5808: Orvieto 1049. RF cup. Oltos. 520–10. ARV² 64/103.
 Int.: warrior. A: Dionysus with four satyrs and two maenads. B: Dionysus on a donkey with three satyrs and three maenads.
 Int.: around the scene: Μέμ[ν]ον κα[λό]ς. A: καλός three times among numerous nonsense inscriptions. CVA, text, gives: ελοολο(ς). μεανε. αο γνο. εγο αλ(ς). γκξρς (the xi probably a zeta with a blot. Koppa may be omicron). B: above leftmost maenad: καλό(ς). Nonsense inscriptions. Between a fluting satyr and Dionysus: καλό(ς).
- 5882: Oxford 251. BF lekythos. Manner of Athena Painter (Haspels). 1/4 5. ABFL 161 and 262/1.
 Shoulder: between eyes: hunter; doe hit by two spears; stag rushing off.
 Shoulder: (.)νον καλὸς Κύνιππος.
 Haspels 161: “Apart from these words, our painter strews a number of small blots in the field, which give the illusion of an inscription from a distance, but which do not even pretend to be mock letters.”
- 5883: Oxford 265. WG lekythos. Bowdoin Painter. 2/4 5. Fairbanks, Ath. Lekythoi (1907), Gp A, Class 2/3. (ARV² 686/187).
 Nike, flying, with caduceus; fawn. Νί[χῆ] ἴσοι (so Fairbanks).
- 6096: Cab. Méd. 251. BF stamnos. Unattributed. Ca. 530. CVA, France 10, pl. 77,3–4, 78,1–3.
 A: Dionysus with satyr and two maenads. B: The Struggle for the Tripod, with Leto (or Artemis?); deer.
 B: nonsense? mock inscriptions? Between Heracles and Apollo: ἡεαριος. To right of Heracles’ face: αφχγνα(.).τ, retr. (uncertain). To left of Leto’s face: Λετῶς(χ), retr. (but CVA gives alpha as the first letter).
- 6269: Louvre E 855. BF neck amphora (Tyrrhenian). O.L.L. Group. 550–30. ABV 99/53.
 A: Heracles and the Amazons. B: warriors.
 A: above an Amazon: γογοιουγι (uncertain). To Heracles’ right: ηἔρακλῆς. By the second Amazon: γογιφικι, retr. Near one Greek: ν(.).οοισιν.
- 6271: Louvre E 857. BF neck amphora (Tyrrhenian). O.L.L. Group. Mid sixth. ABV 97/26.
 A: the Gorgons, fleeing; at right, Hermes. B: warriors between horsemen.
 A: ηεου(ῆ)ς, retr. (the epsilon miswritten as a slightly curved iota: ηεουμς). Three nonsense inscriptions: (ν)υο(λ)ιωι. νοιοζυι. νοζυιογιο.
- 6273: Paris, Louvre E 869. BF hydria. Archippe Group (Tyrrhenian Group iv). 2/4 6. ABV 106/iv 2.
 Shoulder: lions between sirens. Body: Achilles receiving his armor from Thetis.

Shoulder: σιλετον. λεονο, retr. λε(ο)(σ), retr. σοιγο, retr. ζλει, retr. Σιρην (ε)ῖμι. Body: Ὀλυτ(τ)εύς, retr. Ἀχιλ(λ)εύς. Θέτις, retr. Ποντί(α).

6282: Louvre F 24. + BF amphora. Affecter. 3/4 6. ABV 347/88.

A: warriors setting out: nude warrior; woman; departing warrior; man; bird; hare. B: warrior setting out: similar to A, but the left warrior is replaced by a draped man.

A: Three nonsense inscriptions, with some imitation letters.

B: χαῖρε καὶ πίνει ἐμέ.

For the unusual position of the drinking inscription see Immerwahr, Script 48, n. 43, and 186.

6291: Louvre F 53. BF amphora. Group E. Exekias potter. Ca. 540. ABV 136/49.

A: Heracles and Geryon. B: warrior in chariot leaving home. Lid: sirens and stags.

A: Ἐχσῆκίας ἐποίησε. ἡῆρακλῆς. Εὐρυτίδων, retr. Γερυνόνῃ or Γερυνόνῃς. Στεσίαις καλός, retr. B: Ἀνχιπ(π)ος. Καλ(λ)ιφώρας. Σῆμος, retr. Πυθ(ρ)οκόμῃ. Καλ(λ)ιφόμε.

On the lid: to left and right of one siren: two groups of nonsense letters. Is the lid by the same painter?

6293: Louvre F 66. BF Siana cup. Unattributed. 2/4 6. Cf. Beazley, JHS 52, 178, n. 21.

Int.: man running. Ext.: no figured decoration (inscriptions on the lip).

Int.: αἰβξιαρο(.)(), retr. [--]υκβ(ατ). A third inscription. A: καλόν εἰμι τὸ ποτέριον καλ(όν). B: nonsense: given in CVA, France 12, pl. 77,8,12, as repetition of καυ not less than three times. I read from a photo: [--?]κατοενστοποθρεον.

6407: Louvre G 31. + Frs. of RF pelike. Euthymides. 510–500. ARV² 27/9.

A: two acontists. B: jumper and discus thrower.

On one fr.: [Λέαγ(?)]ρος, retr. “The other inscriptions seem meaningless” (ARV²).

6416: Louvre G 41. RF hydria. Unattributed Pioneer. 510–500. ARV² 33/8.

Shoulder: chariot, and warriors getting ready. Body: Dionysus with Ariadne; Poseidon with Amphitrite; Hermes.

Shoulder: Χάρῃς, retr. Σόστρατο[ς] and below: χαῖρε. οασ. χαιρέτῳ and Εὐ(θ)υμίδῃς. Body: ἡερμῆς, χα[ῖρε]. Διονυ. Διό(ν)υσος. Ποσειδ[όν]. CVA gives an extra χαῖρε on the shoulder beneath the horses’ bellies.

6419: Louvre G 44. RF amphora. Euthymides. 510–500. ARV² 27/3.

A: young warrior mounting a chariot. B: woman, youth and man.

A: Δα[μ]ᾶς. χαῖ[ρε] and Σῶσις. χαρχ(ν). B: χαιρετι. --]ας, retr.

- 6564: Louvre Cp 52. Frs. of BF lip cup. Unattributed. 3/4 6. CVA, France 14, pl. 88,7.
 Lip: A: two panthers or lions facing; between, an uncertain object. B: panther and panther or lion; between them, an uncertain object of odd shape.
 Handle zone: A: χαῖρε καὶ προ[ίω ---(?)]. B: χαῖρε καὶ ΣΟΕΙΚΑ. Perhaps not nonsense but miswritten. Cf. R. Wachter, *Kadmos* 42 (2003) 169/129.
- 6963: Vatican. RF amphora. Kleophrades Painter. Late sixth. Very early. ARV² 182/3.
 A: Heracles and Athena, with Iolaus. B: komos: two youths and a man.
 A: near the mouth of Athena: χαῖρε. B: from the mouth of a lyre player: νοῦπο.
- 7023: Vatican G 59. BF lip cup. Unattributed. 550 or a bit earlier (Beazley). ABV 172.
 Lip: A, B, each: Heracles and the Lion.
 Handle zone: A: χαῖρε καὶ πίνει τῷ(ν)δί. B: {χαι}χαῖρε καὶ πίνει (π)ε.⁷²
- 7189: Villa Giulia 50,450. BF neck amphora. Leagros Group. 510–500. ABV 371/140.
 A: Heracles in battle, between Athena and Hermes. B: athletes with flautist.
 A: (A)θῆνάα, retr. ἡῆρακλῆς. Nonsense(?): (κ).. ιος. (probably one inscription). Νικο[.?] (complete?). ἡ[εο]μῆς.
- 7271: Rome, Marchese Giorgio Guglielmi. BF lip cup. Taleides Painter. Taleides potter. 550–30. ABV 175/15.
 Lip: A, B, each: lion.
 Handle zone: A: Ταλείδεξ (ἐ)ποιῆσεν. B: Τ(εγγιοδανειδδνϜ.
 Irregular letter forms; the second letter on B after its rendition in ABV.
- 7569: Syracuse 26,822. Lekythos in Six' technique. Sappho Painter. ABFL 96 and 228/48.
 Peleus and Atalanta; dinos.
 "... in the middle of a long row without sense, he suddenly breaks into the name Πῆλεύς", Haspels.
- 7600: Tarentum I.G. 4434. BF Droop cup. Unattributed. Antidoros potter. 550–30. ABV 160/2.
 A–B: chariot race: on each side, three chariots with charioteers. Under one handle: a standing figure; under the other, a seated figure.
 A–B: nonsense: A: (ν)σλνιν. νυν:. ν(.)νσ. ν(π)νληνν(.)[--(?)]. Under the foot, around the central hole: Ἀντίδορος ἐπόε.

⁷² M. Scheller, *MusHelv* 38 (1981) 222 n. 2, describes a pi pinched in. But Beazley reads ρε and notes that the inscription is inserted into a split χαι - ρε, a joke by the painter. However, Scheller may be right, whence we have a false start and some nonsense letters.

- 7601: Tarentum I.G. 4435. BF Droop cup. Unattributed.⁷³ Antidoros potter. 550–30. ABV 159/1.
 A: boar hunt. B: battle of pygmies and cranes.
 B: α(.) (δ) (π) (.) (.) . Under the foot, around the central hole: Ἀντίδορος ἔπ'όε.
- 7604: Tarentum I.G. 6221. BF band cup. Sakonides. Kaulos potter. 550–30. ABV 171/ii.
 A: male with woman and youth; king seated, with Nike, woman and youth; horseman with woman and youth. B: similar.
 A: nonsense, e.g.: μαισεσ. εχσει. ετχ[.]χι(ν)ι, retr. χει(θ)το, retr. σιχο. επιχσι. ετχοσχο, retr. χσοσχο. Under one handle: Καῦλος | ἐποίησεν. Under the other: Σακονίδης | ἔγραψεν.
- 7640: Tarquinia RC 4194. BF lip cup. Unattributed. 3/4 6. CVA, Italy 26, pl. 21,5–6.
 Int.: Heracles and Triton; five fish; around the tondo, a zone with 17 dancing Nereids, in a complete circle. Ext.: lip: A, B, each: chariot between two columns; at the handles, sphinxes.
 Int.: under the armpit of each Nereid, a row of closely placed tiny dots (17 rows in all). A, B, each: handle zone: χαῖρε καὶ πίνει εὔ.
- 7711: Toledo 72.54. BF amphora. Rycroft Painter (Bothmer). 520–10. CVA, USA 17, pls. 4–5.
 A: Ransom of Hector: Hermes; attendant carrying a tripod and a stack of phialae; Priam; Achilles; woman [Briseis?] with hydria.
 B: Departure of Warrior in chariot.
 A: near Hermes: (κ)(ε)(.)[h]ερεμ[ε]ς. Near Priam: (δ)ο(γ)(.)αδ(.).
 B: by the charioteer: σουσ. By an old man: τλοσ.
- 7944: Vienna 3613. BF hydria. Archippe Group (related to Tyrrhenian Group). ABV 106/1. 550–530.
 Shoulder: two warriors fighting; on each side, a sphinx and a woman.
 Body: departure of a chariot; on each side, a man and a woman.
 Shoulder: τελοπυσφος. χιλκες, retr. λεοτις. (κ)ο(χ)λει, retr. σου-επτολος. Body: Ἀνφίλοχος. Ἀρχίπ(π)ε. ρι(.)ι(.)(.). Διομέδης, retr. Κ(ά)λ(λ)ιπ(π)ος or more probably Κλ(έ)ιπ(π)ος (Beazley, AJA 58, 187). Εὐμελία, retr. The nonsense on the shoulder imitates names.
- 7988: Warsaw, National Museum? (Ex Goluchow). BG oinochoe (olpe). Unattributed. Kriton Group. 4/4 6. ABV 446/2.
 Undecorated.
 Body, in a cartellino: (Κ)ρίτων ἐποίησεν : λεπουσ. There are four olpai with a cartellino, 3 of them inscribed with potters' signatures, the fourth blank: see ABV.
- 7989: Warsaw, National Museum? (Ex Goluchow). BF amphora. Diosphos Painter. 1/4 5. CVA, Poland 1, pl. 12,3.

⁷³ Beazley: "I cannot be sure that the pictures are by the same hand on both cups [this and 7600]." [The use of nonsense inscriptions is certainly different.]

A: Chiron receives the child Achilles from Peleus; dog. B: Maia and Hermes; ram.

A: Χῆρῶν. Πῆλ(ε)ύ(ς). B: behind Maia: 7–8 nonsense letters. To left of Hermes' face: λχλ(ο)χ. Are the inscriptions on A and B by the same hand?

8104: Würzburg 471. RF cup. Unattributed.⁷⁴ Pamphaios potter. 4/4 6. ARV² 129/20.

Int.: satyr with an amphora. A: six dancing satyrs (four with wineskins). B: six dancing satyrs (the second has a pointed amphora, the third a wineskin).

Int.: around the figure, : (α)σ(ο)ογοχι(.)υ(δ) (uncertain reading).

A: on rightmost wineskin, in BG: οσ. B: nonsense inscriptions. On the reserved upper edge of the foot, in BG: [Παν]φ[αῖ]ος ἐποίησεν.

Bibliographical Abbreviations

ABV: J. D. Beazley, *Attic Black-figure Vase-painters* (1956)

ARV²: J. D. Beazley, *Attic Red-figure Vase-painters* (1963)

CVA: *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum*

Furtwängler, Beschreibung: A. Furtwängler, *Beschreibung der Vasensammlung im Antiquarium* (1885)

Haspels, ABFL: C. H. E. Haspels, *Attic Black-figured Lekythoi* (1936)

LSAG: L. H. Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece*. Revised edition (1990)

Para.: J. D. Beazley, *Paralipomena: Additions to Attic Black-figure Vase-painters and to Attic Red-figure Vase-painters*² (1971).

Abstract

The large number of unmeaning inscriptions that are found on Attic vases have received relatively little attention. The present article draws on the author's collection of Attic vase inscriptions where these inscriptions have been included for the first time. The aim is to find out what they can tell us about literacy among vase painters. It can be shown that writing nonsense inscriptions is an ornamental practice not infrequently adopted by literate vase painters, but that it also enabled those with poor knowledge of the alphabet to adorn their products with inscriptions. The level of literacy in the Ceramicus was decidedly mixed.

⁷⁴ A slight connection with the Nikosthenes Painter.