This year, the traditional autumn sale held by Cahn Auktionen AG will take place on 19 November, immediately preceding BAAF Basel. The preview and the auction itself will be held in our gallery at Malzgasse 23 in Basle.

As last year, you may participate in the auction, from the comfort of your home or office, by bidding online.

Once again, important private collections, mostly from Switzerland and Germany, but also from other European countries and from the USA, could be acquired. Correspondingly, over 200 artworks from all major Mediterranean cultures, spanning a time range from the Predynastic Period to Late Antiquity, will be offered for sale.

A FRAGMENT OF A MUMMY MASK. H. 23 cm. Cartonnage, polychromy. Egypt, New Kingdom, 18th Dynasty, Amenophis III, 1390-1353 B.C.
Starting bid CHF 36,000
The fate of the unhoused ashes from the Etruscan urn (CQ 2/2014) clearly stirred the hearts of our readers, and we would like to thank those who expressed their opinions on the matter, both in letters and in conversations. We are especially indebted to Prof. Dr. Rudolf Wachter of the Universities of Basel and Lausanne. As a classical philologist who specialises in epigraphy, he immediately noticed that my attempt to read the Etruscan inscription on the urn could not possibly have had a positive effect on the peace of the dead. “I can understand that the ashes balk at being buried before the name of the deceased has been properly deciphered!”, he wrote to us by return post, and offered to look into the matter. His research revealed that the ashes were those of a woman called Thesia Lavttnita Artnnis, and that both the urn and the inscription had been published in the 1980’s.

The case of Thesia shows us, especially in the age of computerisation, when all information is seemingly available at a click of the mouse, how priceless both human memory and the friendly willingness to share knowledge are.

The Etruscan Urn Revisited

By Yvonne Yiu

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The case of Thesia shows us, especially in the age of computerisation, when all information is seemingly available at a click of the mouse, how priceless both human memory and the friendly willingness to share knowledge are.
A Passion for Perfection – Partnership with La Serlas

By Yvonne Yiu

Intent on his work, the goldsmith imparts the finishing touches to the piece of jewellery before him. Many hours and countless worksteps were necessary from design to completion, but now the object scintillates on the workbench with breathtaking beauty.

Was this today or two thousand years ago? Over the centuries, the goldsmith’s tools have been refined and the stylistic language has undergone constant transformation, but the passion for artistic perfection has remained unchanged.

Gregor Barth, manager of the jewellery boutique La Serlas located on Bahnhofstrasse, close to Paradeplatz in Zurich, and the classical archaeologist Jean-David Cahn recognised this similarity between modern Haute Joaillerie and the art of antiquity, and decided to form an innovative co-operation, which will make it possible to admire artworks from both ancient cultures and from contemporary jewellery masters under one roof.

After modifications necessary for insurance reasons, the gallery on Via Maistra 11 in St. Moritz will reopen in December 2014 under the aegis of La Serlas. Jean-David Cahn will maintain a presence there with two showcases and a display window, and a joint private view will take place in the first week of January 2015. The St. Moritz branch of La Serlas will be open throughout the year.

At the main shop of La Serlas on Bahnhofstrasse, Zurich, Jean-David Cahn will exhibit both sculptures as well as smaller works of ancient art. Our gallery in Basle will host a showcase by La Serlas, presenting the making of a ring from inception to completion. A first joint event with La Serlas, Zurich, is scheduled to take place this autumn.

Should you be interested in a piece of ancient art on display in La Serlas, Zurich or St. Moritz, you will be expertly advised either by Jean-David Cahn or by employees of La Serlas.

We greatly look forward to our partnership with La Serlas!

A Mutual Enrichment

Timeless and unique collector’s pieces from precious materials – this description is fitting both for valuable antiquities and for exquisite jewellery. La Serlas and Jean-David Cahn AG share a passion for such unique objects. This lays the foundation for our co-operation.

We greatly look forward to the mutual inspiration engendered by this partnership. And we are especially delighted for our clients. We will now be able to serve our customers not only in Zurich but also in St. Moritz and Basle. At these three locations, we will show them the fascinating relationship between ancient and modern artworks. We eagerly anticipate the reactions.

Gregor Barth, Manager La Serlas
The Debate

Unpublished Excavations: The Viewpoint of a Field Archaeologist

By Andreas Furtwängler

In his contribution to the question of why much information about excavations and finds has never been published, Sir John Boardman very convincingly presented the main reasons leading to this state of affairs (CQ 2/2014). He concludes his argument with the observation that informative facts can be gleaned from finds that are not particularly impressive and that this material is “sometimes not worthy of display but of extreme historical and archaeological importance”.

Here, the question arises as to what the opinion is of a field archaeologist who is active today. I am such an archaeologist, and so, let us suppose that I can provide convincing reasons to carry out an excavation, and that the authorities support my cause. Now, my finances are only sufficient to fund the campaign itself. And if I cannot present any spectacular finds or prestigious objects, which can be published in advance, and I have “only” findings that make new historical inferences possible, my project is often not destined for a bright future. For, in consequence, the staff and funding allotted to my project remain very limited.

My experience has shown that it is very rarely possible to present in detail material that is not spectacular, but nonetheless of importance. Even if the larger historical context is set forth, it is nowadays a much more protracted endeavour to produce a detailed “catalogue raisonné”; the comparisons have become more numerous, as has the secondary literature. Thus, individual groups of material can only sporadically be given to students for their theses, allowing at least a part of the finds to be saved from oblivion.

To this day, honourable institutions such as the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, which have existed since the 19th century, run classical excavations that are endowed with considerable funds; I think, for instance, of Olympia, Delos, Pergamon, Didyma etc. Often, however, the reasons for keeping these renowned sites are political rather than scholarly. A lack of suitable scholars, the problem of short-term contracts, which make it impossible for employees to have a decent livelihood, but also the incidence of staff-members who leave the team, often prevent the adequate presentation of finds and findings that have been hoarded for years. Restoration work has become increasingly prioritised. Can one improve this situation, or does one have to accept it as symptomatic of our times?

These are, to my mind, developments, the import of which it is hard to assess. The “Bildungsbürger” of the late 19th and 20th centuries, who belonged to the intellectual and economic upper bourgeoisie, and whose relationship to classical antiquity was still un-
broken, has given way to the interested world citizen of our globalized society. The subject “Classical Antiquity” – to mention just one example – has to economise, for instance, at our universities (at least in Germany) and to look for liaisons with other disciplines of archaeology in order to survive. For many years now, professorships have not been as generously endowed as they generally were in the 1960’s. The academic junior staff has, at German universities, been largely eliminated, administrative jobs are subject to cuts, and secretaries who took care of bureaucratic tasks for the department head will soon become entirely a thing of the past. Burdened with administration, the professor or scientific director – if he is active as a field archaeologist – has less and less time to concern himself with adequate publication. Due to the demands of teaching and on-site research, he is left with only a very restricted time budget to present the finds in detail and to ensure their adequate scholarly analysis.

Does this sound defeatist? Things are not quite as bleak as my short sketch would make it appear. Thanks to social media, the younger generation can contact field archaeologists quickly, form networks with international scholars, ask questions regarding finds, receive background information, access otherwise hard-to-get literature with the click of a mouse, and comb through databases. Jealousy and vanity are replaced by interest and idealism: this is my hope! In any case, no one can take from us the intimate relationship to archaeology and also to ancient art.

On visiting a colleague in Jerusalem, I, by coincidence, discovered this impressive fragment of a monumental bronze oil lamp, which had formed part of the Baidun Family Collection since 1976. After receiving the export license from the Israel Antiquities Authorities, the object was shipped to Basle. In its charming, unrestored condition, the fragment displays a crusty, earthy patina. It belonged to lamp with multiple spouts, and is decorated with the mask of a comedian, whose open mouth serves as air vent. The dimensions of the entire lamp were monumental. The spout itself is 21 cm long, and the diameter of the whole object can be reconstructed as measuring 1 m!

The actor gapes at us with furrowed brow, wrinkled nose and erect hair. A rectangular fitting with square cross-section was cast separately and is placed over a peg behind the mask and fastened by a horizontal iron pin. Above it, the flat snout of a dolphin can be seen. One of the chains with which the lamp was suspended from the ceiling would have been fastened to its tail.

Such ceiling lamps with multiple snouts are only rarely preserved. This spout alone weighs 1460 g! The whole lamp would have weighed over 20 kg.

It was frequently used, as testified by the traces of burning and heat at the tip of the snout. One would like to calculate the quantity of oil used by such a lamp. The lamp was cast in the same manner as were large bronzes, i.e. with the typical rectangular plaques, that were inserted after casting had taken place, in order to correct casting errors. A lamp of these dimensions would have graced and illuminated a very stately villa, a temple or a bath. It gives us an idea of the now lost extravagance and luxury of the furnishings found in 1st and 2nd century A.D. Palestine.
A RED-Figure LEKYTHOS, ATTRIBUTED TO THE BOW-DOIN PAINTER. H. 26.5 cm. Clay. A youth stands to right, in long flowing robe, playing the double flute. He wears the phorbeia, a leather strap tied across the cheeks of aulos players for additional support because of the powerful blowing required to sound the two pipes, one held in each hand. Groundline of continuous maeander to right; chain of five palmettes in silhouette on the reserved shoulder; black tongues at base of neck. Complete, reassembled. Formerly from the estate (1995-1997) of Coll. B. G., Munich. Attic, ca. 480-470 B.C. CHF 18,000

A HAND MIRROR WITH HANDLE. D. 9.6 cm. Bronze. Slightly curved disc with upright rim, to which an arched handle is attached by two lengths of bronze wire twisted to form a loop and hanger shape. The interior is decorated with a series of concentric rings. Mirrors of this type were composed of two discs that were hinged together and could be shut to protect the reflective surface on the inside. Partially corroded. A fragment of the rim reattached. Formerly H.A. Cahn, Basle. Roman, 1st cent. B.C.-1st cent. A.D. CHF 1,600

A JAR. H. 6.9 cm. Bronze. The squat vessel tapers to the circular base. Short, constricted neck and funnel-shaped mouth. Fine grooves at the shoulder and the base. Organic deposits in the interior of the vessel, possibly crystallized resin. Slightly dented, minor lacunae, a crack at the rim. Formerly art market, Germany, 2000. Greek, 5th cent. B.C. CHF 2,800

A WHITE-GROUND LEKYTHOS. H. 30.5 cm. Clay. On the front of this slender cylindrical vessel slight traces remain of the tall shaft of a stele. On the right is the figure of the deceased, a young woman, auburn-haired and fully wrapped in a red cloak, save for her right arm, which she extends out to the left, as though reaching for one of the fillets or holding something aloft. On the stele’s left, another female stands in three-quarter view to right. Dressed in a long sleeveless chiton, she gestures with a raised right hand, palm inwards, and extends her left towards the tomb, in mourning for the loss of her kinswoman. Above the scene, a border of rightward stopt maeanders punctuated by saltire squares; on the shoulder, probably once a floral complex of interlocking palmettes. Figure-work in matt outlines. Added red much faded. Traces of a reddish miltos wash on reserved top of mouth, edge and underside of disc-foot. Complete; breaks through lower neck and at base of handle restored. Small loss to top of deceased’s head repainted. Glaze in places misfired brownish orange. Formerly Lochard Collection, The Netherlands, acquired prior to 1943; and thence by descent to the Van der Noordaa Collection, The Netherlands. Publ.: L. Byvanck-Quarles van Ufford et al. (eds.), Klassieke kunst uit particulier bezit: Nederlandse verzamelingen 1575-1975, Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden, 15 May-13 July 1975 (exhib. cat.). Attic, ca. 430-420 B.C. CHF 24,000

A LUNULA PENDANT. W. 3 cm. Sheet gold. Crescent-shaped sheet-gold plaque with an upright palmette and delicate tendrils in filigree gold wire. The rim of the crescent is enlivened by gold wire and the tips are adorned by a rosette with a gold bead. A broad, centrally affixed loop for suspension. One bead missing. Formerly priv. coll., Austria, acquired in the 1980’s on the art market, Vienna. Greek, 4th cent. B.C. CHF 2,200

A RING WITH CAMEO. D. max. 1.5 cm. Gold, agate. Horizontal oval hoop made of sheet gold with grooves and floral decoration, into which a cameo with a female bust to left, probably a helmeted goddess (Minerva?) is set. Hoop partially filled in. Formerly Coll. Saeed Motamed (1925-2013). Roman, 2nd-4th cent. A.D. CHF 1,200

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TWO FIBULAE AND A NECKLACE. L. 30 cm. Silver. Two fibulae with similar decoration. Pin holder in the shape of an upright palmette with a rivet to which the pin was attached. The catch consists of a plaque adorned by two hemispherical elements and a central loop. The bow of the fibula is composed of four, respectively five, fluted beads alternating with disc-shaped elements. Fibulae of this type were found mainly in northern Greece and the Balkans. L. max. 4.9 cm. Furthermore, a four-strand necklace with a ring at each end. Probably part of a larger ensemble. Both pins and one catch lost. One loop broken. Formerly H.A. Cahn, Basle. Northern Greek, 5th-4th cent. B.C. CHF 2,800

A Votive Eye. L. 5.3 cm. Clay. The eye is embedded in a horizontal oval representing a section of the face. It is framed by broad lids which are joined together on one side and open on the other, probably thereby indicating the lacrimal caruncle. The votive therefore appears to be that of a left eye, as is further suggested by the bulge above it, that would, in this case, represent the brow. Iris and pupil are represented in relief. Similar objects from the votive deposits of Ponte di Nona near Rome and Campetti, Porta di Caere in Veji are assigned dates ranging from the late 3rd cent. to the 1st half of the 1st cent. B.C. Mould-made. Traces of red paint. Surface slightly worn. Formerly private coll. of an academic, England, acquired between 1950 and 1975. Old label with findspot: “Rome, Columbarium near Tomb of Scipio”. Roman, 3rd-1st cent. B.C. CHF 850

A Dagger. L. 39.2 cm. Bronze. The triangular blade is set off from the handle by a profile. The lower section of the grip is decorated by horizontal bands and the upper section was originally inlaid. The crescent-shaped top of the handle is enlivened by grooves. Traces of use. Formerly Coll. Hofmann, Berlin, before 1939. Late Bronze Age, probably Western Asia, 13th-11th cent. B.C. CHF 2,200


A Spiral-Headed Pin. L. 20.3 cm. Bronze. Solid, round bronze wire, terminating in a spiral twisted to the left with twelve layers. Dress or hair pin. Surface partially corroded, otherwise intact. Fine green patina. Formerly Munich art market, 2000. Early Iron Age, Hallstatt Period, 8th-6th cent. B.C. CHF 1,300


A Enamelled “Chatelaine” Brooch. L. 9 cm. W. max. 4 cm. Bronze, enamel. The brooch is comprised of a D-shaped cast-bronze plate with a central raised boss, two small lateral lugs and a third, larger, positioned centrally above, the whole decorated with red and yellow enamel cellwork. Below the lower edge, a transverse rod has been secured, from which are suspended, and separated by three spacers of blue glass seed-beads, four cosmetic instruments - a pair of tweezers, a grooved ear-scoop, a spoon, and a scraper or nail-cleaner. A vertical hinged pin and catch-plate are soldered to the flat, unworked reverse. Such enamelled chatelaine brooches, with toilet sets affixed, were a common female accoutrement, notably in Roman Britain. Bowl of spoon lost, and some evidence of recent repair about pierced adjuncts securing transverse bar. Condition generally excellent. Formerly priv. coll., County Durham, Great Britain. Roman, 2nd cent. A.D. CHF 2,800


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AN APOTROPAIC STATUETTE OF PRIAPUS. H. 37.2 cm. Marble. The god of fertility and aversion of evil has a compact upper body rendered in the shape of a phallus resting on his left leg, the right is bent at the knee and placed forward. The shoulders taper to form the glans of the penis which originally supported a schematically rendered head. A loin-cloth with a pointed front, half of it covered by a tripartite breadth of cloth decorated with vertical circles as worn by gladiators, covers his private parts which used to be typical for gladiators. A semicircular width of cloth partially covers thighs and parts of the buttocks. On the left, Priapos carries a dagger stuck in his wide belt. Back partially worked in the round; at the height of the shoulders and the buttocks, a round hole for attachment. Right thigh preserved to the knee, the left to the upper end of the knee. Worn. A triangular recess at the front of the loincloth probably held a metal ornament, perhaps a symbolic representation of the pubic delta. In this garb, the statuette probably served as a guardian of a boundary, boundary stone, or as guardian of a piece of land or as a companion warding off evil. Formerly Sotheby’s London, 17-18 July 1985, no. 464. Thereafter European private collection. Gallo-Roman, 1st-2nd cent. A.D. CHF 46,000

A RARE LAMP-FILLER IN THE SHAPE OF A SILEN. H. 9.7 cm. Clay, black glaze. The naked, bearded, big-bellied Silenus squats on the ground clutching a wine-skin. Its opening serves as spout. A broad circular handle at the back. Slightly worn. Formerly London art market. Western Greek, 3rd cent. B.C. CHF 5,800

A BLACK-GLAZED KANTHAROS. H. 17.3 cm. Clay, black glaze. High foot, slightly flaring body and high strap handles. Wall set off from the foot by a sharp ridge. Base reserved. Reassembled from fragments. Minor restorations. Formerly priv. coll., Switzerland. Greek, Boreotia, 5th cent. B.C. CHF 3,200

A BLACK-Figure MASTOID CUP, Attributed to the Haimonian Group. H. 8.4 cm. Clay. This small drinking cup is of standard mastoid shape, with everted offset lip, and a round-shouldered body that tapers sharply to a small round base whose flat underside is unglazed. In the broad reserved zone between the high-swung handles, on either side, a cloathed maenad dances amidst a spreading vine and is framed by a pair of eyes. Under each handle, a stemmed ivy leaf. Unbroken. Upper righthand section of one side corroded and pitted. Added white details in good part well preserved. The simplified, silhouette style of the figure-work, with minimal incision, is fully characteristic of products of the prolific Haimonian workshop. Formerly Paris art market. Attic, ca. 500-480 B.C. CHF 5,600
Recipe from Antiquity

“Waiter, Another Dream-forgetter Beer Please!”

Beer Brewing in the Time of the Pharaohs

Von Yvonne Yiu

Those who wished to quench their thirst in ancient Egypt would, in general, not delight their palate with a glass of wine, since, except in the Delta, “vines they have not in their land” (Herodotus, Histories, II, 77.4). Rather, their favoured beverage was beer, which was produced in a great variety of styles. Rainer Hanning’s dictionary “Die Sprache der Pharaoen” lists, amongst many others, hieroglyphs for excellent beer, thick beer, laxative beer, extra-sacrifice beer and dream-forgetter beer. The quality of the beer greatly pleased Diodorus of Sicily who travelled in Egypt in 60­57 B.C. In his Bibliothéke historiké he notes: “The Egyptians also make a drink out of barley which they call zythos, the bouquet of which is not much inferior to that of wine.” (II, 34, 10).

In pharaonic Egypt, beer, together with bread (see CQ 1/2014), formed the basis of every meal. Accordingly, the hieroglyphs for bread (Gardiner list X1 or X2) and beer (Gardiner list W22) are components of the words “food” (wnmt) and “meal” (SAbw). The statue of the inspector of scribes, Sekhemka, dating from the 5th Dynasty (ca. 2400–2300 B.C.), sold by Christie’s on 10 July 2014 for over 15 million pounds sterling, holds a scroll on his lap with a list of offerings designed to render his afterlife as agreeable as possible. Naturally, a breakfast of bread and beer could not be lacking on it.

Both bread and beer were important means of payment and barter, and, consequently, mathematical papyri such as the Rhind Mathematical Papyrus (ca. 1550 B.C.) or the Moscow Mathematical Papyrus (ca. 1850 B.C.) devote much attention to bread and beer problems. Amongst these, pefsu problems, which are concerned with the number of loaves of bread or jugs of beer made from a certain amount of grain, are particularly numerous. The pefsu value was calculated by dividing the number of loaves or jugs by the number of heqat (ca. 4.8 litres) of grain used. Thus, the higher the pefsu value is, the lower is the grain content of the bread or beer. The average pefsu of bread is 20, and beer was produced in strengths of 2, 4, and 6 pefsu. By means of the pefsu value, the correct amounts to be exchanged in a barter transaction could be calculated:

“Example of exchanging bread for beer. If it is said to you: “100 loaves of bread of [pefsu] 10 are to be exchanged for a quantity of beer of [pefsu] 2, [reason as follows to find the quantity of beer].” Reckon the amount of wedjet-flour in 100 loaves of [pefsu] 10; it is 10 [heqat]. Multiply 10 by 2; it makes 20. Say then that this [i.e. 20 des] is [the amount of beer it takes for] the exchange.” (Papyrus Rhind, Problem 78)

The close relationship between bread and beer is also reflected in the artistic record. Bakery and brewery scenes are depicted next to each other on reliefs such as those in the mastaba of Ti in Sakkara (ca. 2400 B.C.), or in wooden models like the one found in the sepulchre of Mekeiret in Thebes (ca. 1981–1975 B.C.). Moreover, the production processes themselves appear to be closely related. In the brewery scene from the mastaba of Ti, for instance, inscriptions describe some of steps in the brewing process as “kneading the uncooked bread”, “moulding the loaves” and “pouring the dough”. Due to such inscriptions, as well as sources like the Hymn to Ninkasi (ca. 1900 B.C.), which describes the production of beer in Mesopotamia, and the brewing instructions written by Zosimos of Panopolis (ca. 350­420 A.D.), the general consensus has, for almost a century, been that the ancient Egyptians brewed their beer by fermenting partially baked loaves of bread.

So far, modern attempts to brew beer from bread have failed to produce a palatable beverage. Reporting on the experiments conducted by Gil Stein of the University of Chicago and Nate Gibbon of the Great Lakes Brewery in Cleveland, Ohio, last year, the Swiss newspaper “Tagesanzeiger” pronounced the crushing verdict that “beer from Mesopotamia tastes disgusting”. As any attempt undertaken by myself to ferment Egyptian beer breads was not likely to be better fated, I was greatly relieved to read about the
research carried out by Delwen Samuel of King’s College London.

In contrast to previous research, which was based on the study of images and texts, Samuel used scanning electron microscopy to examine biological residues from the brewing process found in Deir el-Medina and el-Amarna. Changes in the structure of the starch samples revealed that bread was not used in the brewing process. Rather, a portion of the grain was malted and ground to produce enzymes that would break down starch into sugars. A further portion of ground grain, that may also have been malted, was well heated in water to make the starch susceptible to attack by enzymes. Both quantities were mixed and sieved to extract a sweet liquid. Yeast and possibly also lactobacilli were added in order to change the sugars into alcohol. (J. Am. Soc. Brew. Chem. 54(1):3–12, 1996 and I. Spencer Hornsey, A History of Beer and Brewing, 2003, p. 68)

My attempt to brew ancient Egyptian beer according to the method suggested by Samuel, is, to some extent, informed by modern brewing methods, as no precise information on the quantities and temperatures used in pharaonic Egypt are available. In order to have a comparison, I also brewed a Swiss lager beer.

One kilogram of malt, with a volume of ca. 2 l or 0.4 hekat produced 10 not completely filled 0.5 l bottles of beer, which is the equivalent of 10 des jugs, the usual measure for beer in pharaonic Egypt. The pefsu value of my “Egyptian” home brew is thus 10/0.4=25, which is considerably higher than the standard value of 2–6 pefsu found in ancient Egypt.

At the tasting session, the “ancient Egyptian” beer with honey was much praised. The beverage was a cloudy light yellow, highly effervescent, and had a pronounced sour taste with a whiff of yeast in its bouquet. It reminded Jean-David Cahn of certain cider styles and he found it very refreshing. The variant without honey was much sourer and less bubbly, and failed to convince the tasters. The Swiss lager was a pleasingly light beer which, in contrast to the “ancient Egyptian” beers, formed a nice head. Nonetheless, our daring and experimental archaeologists found it a bit too conventional.

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A Cup Attributed to the Triptolemos Painter

By John Robert Guy

Within a tondo encircled by a border of cross-squares, of characteristically Dourian form, and leftward units of maeander, an elegantly garbed female stands to left with a warrior’s arms: helmet, spear, and a shield proudly emblazoned with a rampant lion. At lower left, a stool with patterned cushion; in the upper field, remains of the inscription “ho pais kalos”. Across the exterior unfold crowded scenes of warriors, five per side, in violent combat. The cut and thrust of battle is here powerfully conveyed, with overlapping figures tightly massed and expertly composed. Copious blood flows from the fallen wounded who, on the threshold of death, roll their eyes upward. Details of dress and armour are minutely observed, from elegantly layered and embroidered chitoniskoi to a leather cuirass’s ornamental panther-mask. Occupying the handle-zones are carefully wrought palmette complexes of standard Dourian type. Reassembled from fragments; gaps filled, with retouching restricted to the cup’s interior. The foot is a modern restoration.

This cup assuredly ranks amongst the finest of the Triptolemos Painter’s mature works, ca. 480 B.C., produced in the workshop of the potter Python. In style, ornament, and composition, it owes a conspicuous debt to the artist’s fellow and rival, Douris, from whom he absorbed much, all the while forming and evolving a stylistic vocabulary distinctly his own. The Triptolemos Painter, long-lived and productive, is one of the most versatile artists in red-figure of the late archaic period. His career, from very early to very late, ca. 500 to sometime after 470 B.C., may be charted with a remarkable degree of accuracy. As principally a painter of cups, he collaborated with the potters Euphronios, Hieron, Python and Brygos. He ventured, however, onto a wide range of vase shapes, decorating a ram’s head rhyton signed by Charinos as potter, and a unique white-ground alabastron, signed on the topside of the mouth by the otherwise unknown potter Heromitimos. In his later years, he may be seen to share labour on a pelike, and on at least three column-kraters, with the Flying-angel Painter, an uncommon practice for the time. He ends his days in the Brygan workshop, alongside cup-painters of the next generation, early classical followers such as the Villa Giulia and Lyandros Painters, the Sabouroff and Stieglitz Painters, the Telephos and Boot Painters, all of whom continue and breathe new life into the vibrant Brygan production of white-ground cups.

Provenance: Formerly Collection Michael Waltz, Munich, acquired in the 1970’s.


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