

# A BOEOTIAN DIE IN CONTEXT: GAMING PIECES, JEWELLERY, SEALS, SPINDLE WHORLS AND BIRD BOWLS IN A FEMALE BURIAL OF STATUS

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*To Ares and Orestes, passionate players*

**Abstract.** The present paper presents a die in its archaeological context, which is a rich grave in the region of Boeotia. It attempts to understand with what other items this gaming piece coexisted and why, as well as who was the person who played with it during lifetime. The Boeotian die is a solid cube made of clay that presents a peculiarity in its numbering system, for the face normally bearing six dots features twenty-five instead. The date of the die in the Archaic period and the sex of the deceased can be established from its associated grave-group which comprises 48 Boeotian (mostly bird bowls) and Late Corinthian vases, minor objects, such as spindle whorls, and gaming pieces from raw natural materials (such as pebbles, shells, a terracotta animal in secondary use, etc), as well as jewellery such as rings, bracelets,

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necklaces, brooches, pins, spiraled tubes, seals and rosettes attached on a -now lost- head cover. The age of the dead is estimated as young from osteological analysis, which situates our die and its gaming assemblage in the cultural context of the “*mors immatura*” in Archaic Greece. Dice among other gaming pieces are known from antiquity, yet undisturbed (and sexed) contexts of the Archaic period are rare. In the 6th century BC dice occur in sanctuaries; none is known from Boeotia, hence the significance of publishing one here in its assorted grave-group.

Boeotian die, grave group, woman

**Περίληψη.** Στο παρόν άρθρο παρουσιάζεται ένα ζάρι από πλούσιο Βοιωτικό ταφικό σύνολο με τα συνευρήματά του. Η συζήτηση εστιάζει στην ταύτιση των μικροαντικειμένων του τάφου ως σχετιζόμενα με παιχνίδι και στην κατανόηση της κοινωνικής ταυτότητας του νεκρού που συνοδεύεται από τέτοια σύνεργα. Το ζάρι είναι συμπαγής πήλινος κύβος με ιδιαιτερότητες στο σύστημα αρίθμησής του, εφόσον αντί έξι στιγμών στη μια πλευρά του φέρει 25. Η χρονολόγησή του στην ώριμη αρχαϊκή εποχή, καθώς και το φύλο του νεκρού (θήλυ) προσδιορίζονται από τα συνευρήματα της ταφής, τα οποία είναι 48 βοιωτικά (κυρίως «κύπελλα με πουλιά») και υστερο-κορινθιακά αγγεία, μικροαντικείμενα (αγνύθες, πετρούλες, κοχύλια, ειδώλιο σε δεύτερη χρήση, κ.α.) καθώς και κοσμήματα (δαχτυλίδια, βραχιόλια, περιδέραια, σφραγιδόλιθοι, περόνες, σπειροειδείς σωληνίσκοι και επίρραπτοι ρόδακες κεφαλοδέσμου). Η οστεολογική ανάλυση ταυτοποίησε τη νεκρή ως νεαρής ηλικίας, στοιχείο που βοηθά την ένταξη του συνόλου μας στην ιδιαίτερη πολιτισμική κατηγορία του «άωρου νεκρού», με χαρακτηριστικά κτερίσματα της αρχαϊκής εποχής. Ζάρια από ανασκαφές είναι γενικώς γνωστά, αλλά κλειστά σύνολα της αρχαϊκής εποχής στην Ελλάδα είναι ελάχιστα. Τα ζάρια απαντούν κυρίως σε ιερά κατά τον 6<sup>ο</sup> αι. π.Χ. αλλά κανένα δεν είναι ως τώρα γνωστό από τη Βοιωτία, κάτι που καθιστά τη δημοσίευση του εδώ παρουσιαζόμενου ταφικού συνόλου πολύ σημαντική.

Βοιωτικό ζάρι, ταφικό σύνολο, γυναίκα

**Riassunto.** L'articolo si propone l'analisi contestuale di un dado proveniente da un ricco contesto funerario della Beozia. Obiettivo dello studio è indagare la relazione del manufatto con i materiali associati, nonché l'identità della persona sepolta con tale oggetto. Il dado beota è un cubo solido di argilla che presenta una particolarità nel suo sistema di numerazione, poiché la faccia che normalmente reca sei punti ne espone, invece, venticinque. La datazione del manufatto al periodo arcaico ed il sesso del defunto possono essere stabiliti grazie al corredo

associato che comprende 48 vasi locali (principalmente coppe con decorazione ad uccelli) e di produzione tardo-corinzia, piccoli oggetti come fuseruole e altri strumenti di gioco ottenuti da materie prime naturali (ciottoli, conchiglie, un animale di terracotta di reimpiego, ecc.), nonché gioielli come anelli, braccialetti, collane, gemme, fibule, ornamenti tubulari a spirale, sigilli e rosette fissate in origine ad un copricapo non più conservato. L'analisi osteologica attesta la giovane età del defunto, che permette di associare il dado e gli altri strumenti lusori al fenomeno culturale della *mors immatura* nella Grecia arcaica. I dadi, come altri strumenti di gioco, sono noti dall'antichità, ma i contesti indisturbati del periodo arcaico (e di cui si possa determinare il sesso di appartenenza) sono rari. Nel VI sec. a.C. i dadi sono presenti nei santuari; nessun esemplare era sinora noto dalla Beozia; da qui l'importanza di pubblicarne uno in questa sede in relazione al suo contesto funerario di rinvenimento.

Dado, Beozia, corredo funerario, donna

### Introduction

This paper presents a peculiar die in its archaeological context, which is a rich grave in the region of Akraiphia in Boeotia and discusses further the identity of the person who supposedly played with it in lifetime.<sup>1</sup> The date of the die in the Archaic period is established from its associated grave-group which comprises at least 48 vases, items of metal, glass and faience jewellery, as well as minor objects, such as a selection of spindle whorls.<sup>2</sup> Although many dice and gaming pieces are known from antiquity, undisturbed contexts of the Archaic period are rare, hence the significance of this discovery and its publication in context.

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<sup>1</sup> They are thought to have been invented in India, from where they were distributed to Mesopotamian cultures. Their varying contexts and forms do not always allow for their secure association with specific games: DE VOOGT *et alii* 2015.

<sup>2</sup> A full publication of the vases and minor objects is impending.



**Figure 1:** Grave T.171, die.  
Photo V. Sabetai. Copyright EFA  
Boeotia.



**Figure 2:** Grave T.171, roll-out  
drawing of die. Photo V. Sabetai.  
Copyright EFA Boeotia.



**Figure 3:** Die Inv. B 352. Photo Akademisches Kunstmuseum Bonn-  
Jutta Schubert.

### 1. An unusual die

The die (no. G1) is a solid cube (ca 3.5 x 3.5 cm; 78.60 gr) made of brown clay (Figs 1-2; 10). Its edges and corners are worn and rounded due to the object's use-life and possibly also to the conditions in the pit grave. Its dots are shallow depressions smeared with a white substance that was overpainted with black, as seen on the central dot of the face bearing 5. The die presents a peculiar numbering system because one face features 25 dots instead of the expected 6 dots; of these some originally close to the side of the cube are abraded. Two shallow circles on the second row from left and at the upper and lower end of the column featuring 5 dots are random depressions.<sup>3</sup>

The values with respect to one another on the cube's six faces are placed as follows: 3 and 4, 2 and 5, 1 and 25 are featured at opposite sides. If there were 6 instead of 25 dots opposite 1, the way of placing the values on this die would have conformed to the "Sevens" configuration, which follows the rule that "opposite sides of a die add up to 7".<sup>4</sup> This combination is the commonest in antiquity, especially from the post-Archaic era onwards, and the one adopted also today. Regarding dot patterns, those forming the numbers 1, 4 and 5 are arranged in the standard way. The dots for 2 are placed in a straight line, while those for 3 form a triangle, arrangements known in antiquity but occurring less frequently. Number 25 is arranged with 5 lines of 5 dots each, which are not regularly spaced among themselves. The only parallel I know of a die with 25 dots instead of 6 is an ivory one in the Kunstmuseum Bonn, of unknown provenance and date (Fig. 3).<sup>5</sup> The arrangement of values on it differs from our die, as at opposite faces are placed 3 and 1, as also 4 and 2. Value 5 features opposite 25.

Such dice are exceptional. Those with repeating numbers at the exclusion of others have been called "false dice", which, however, is not our case since the Boeotian die conforms to the dominant "Sevens" form, except

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<sup>3</sup> Possibly a mistake or trial by the die striker, or even damage due to the die's mediocre state of preservation.

<sup>4</sup> On die configuration and dot pattern, see DE VOOGT *et alii* 2015, 152-154; see further DE VOOGT – EERKENS 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Akademisches Kunstmuseum - Antikensammlung der Universität Bonn, Inv. B 352. Brought to my attention by U. Schädler. It measures 1.4 x 1.4 cm and bears spots of 2 mm in diameter with a central dot. The spots on the side of 25 are 1.5 mm in diameter.

for the side bearing 25 dots.<sup>6</sup> In her study of Hellenistic gaming sets, Despina Ignatiadou notes that dice configuring more than 6 dots occur usually as singletons rather than as part of a gaming set. She offers the hypothesis that they are more appropriate for games of chance rather than board games which require very set rules and canonical dice.<sup>7</sup> At least three untypical dice are known from Greece: one is from Archaic Sindos with only 8 x 7 or 7 x 6 dots on the golden sheet coating its wooden core; two are from Classical Corinth with 9 dots instead of 6 and with uncanonical configuration.<sup>8</sup> Yet, these idiosyncratic examples can hardly be compared to the Boeotian die, which diverges from the norm only in its featuring 25 instead of 6 dots, but is otherwise canonical. Thus, our singleton should not be considered *a priori* alien to a gaming set.

## 2. The Boeotian die in its archaeological context: An assemblage with pebbles, shells and a broken figurine<sup>9</sup>

The die was found in a fossa pit which is the typical type of grave in Archaic Boeotian cemeteries (Figs 4-6).<sup>10</sup> On its cover slabs 26 Boeotian bird bowls were placed in a reversed position. This deposition pattern is known also in other instances, and tombs of this kind are often richly furnished with a multitude of objects in various materials.<sup>11</sup> The custom of overturning vases at the closing of a funeral may be interpreted as a deliberate cancellation of their use in order to mark emphatically a person's demise.

<sup>6</sup> For "false dice", see DE VOOGT *et alii* 2015, 152. It follows that our die's manufacturer knew the norms governing die configuration through cultural transmission but modified the "Sevens" configuration only once, when he stroke 25 dots.

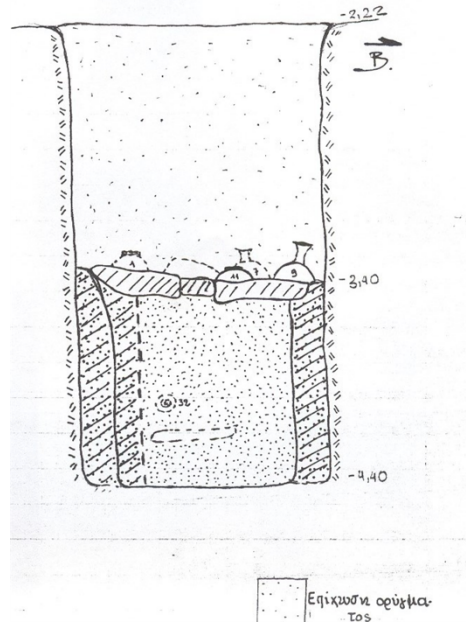
<sup>7</sup> IGNATIADOU 2013, 224. See also IGNATIADOU 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Sindos: DESPOINI 2016, 85-86 (tomb of adolescent boy). Corinth: DAVIDSON 1952, 221, nos. 1737 and 1738, pl. 100. See further ALEVIZOU 2020.

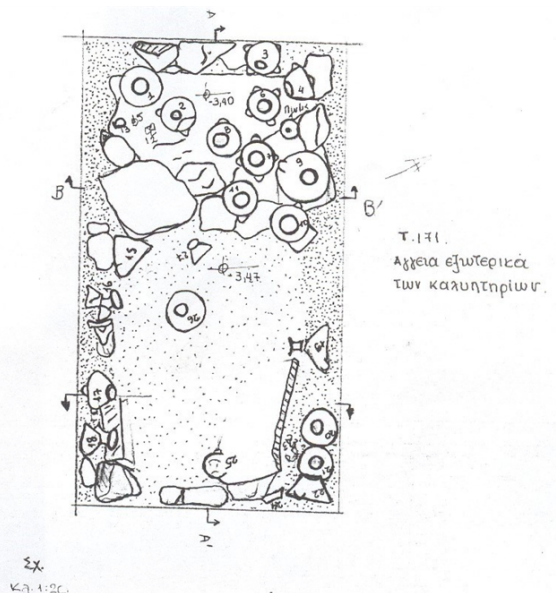
<sup>9</sup> For a catalogue of finds see Appendix 3.

<sup>10</sup> Dimensions: 2 / 2.5 x 0.80 / 1.20 m. Height: 1.20 m (fossa) and 1 m (pit). Orientation: E-W, head at the East. The dead lay in a pit opened at the bottom of the shaft; the pit was covered with four roughly hewn slabs preserved in situ only at its western part. After placing reversed vases on the slabs covering the pit, the shaft was filled with earth up to the ground surface. The underlying pit must have remained unfilled, as suggested by the slabs that collapsed in it (eastern part) due to the weight of the shaft's fill.

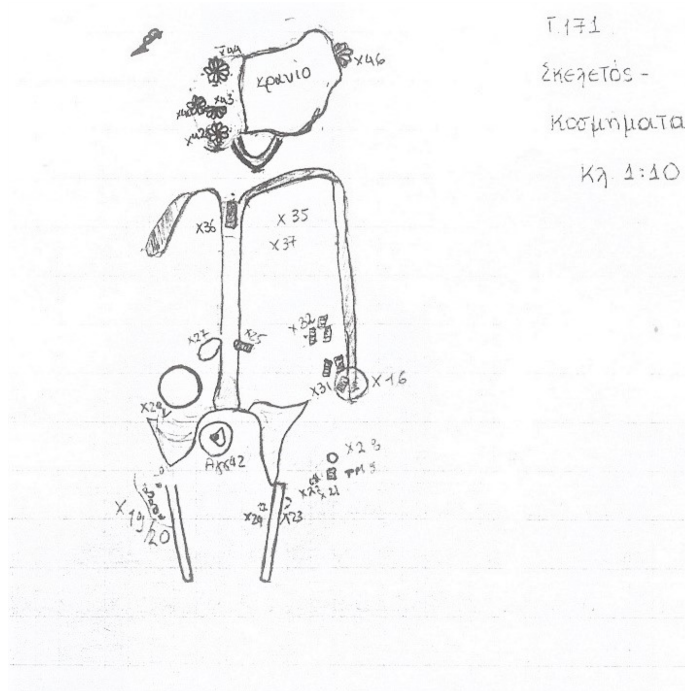
<sup>11</sup> Note that such tombs are infrequent. ANDREIOMENOU 2015, esp. 61 notes that only 28 in a total of 663 Akraiphian tombs of all periods (Geometric to Hellenistic) comprised bird bowls. This rather small number may suggest distinctions in the treatment of the dead according to their age-class or status.



**Figure 4:** Grave T.171, section. Drawing O. Peperaki.



**Figure 5:** Grave T.171, cover slabs with reversed bird bowls. Σχ 1:20 Drawing O. Peperaki.



**Figure 6:** Grave T.171, skeleton inside the pit. Drawing O. Peperaki.



**Figure 7:** Grave T.171. Sides A-B of Boeotian miniature krater, cat. no. 34. Photo V. Sabetai. Copyright EFA Boeotia.



The die in question was found inside the pit and at the area of the dead's feet, where ten other vases were densely packed together, as well as a small bronze knife. The vases were the Boeotian miniature pedestalled krater no. 34 which is decorated with confronted birds in silhouette (Fig. 7a, b), the Corinthian pyxides nos. 31, 33, 35, 37 and alabastron no. 39, the Boeotian stamnoid no. 32, the kotyliske no. 36 and the black-glazed skyphos no. 38 (Fig. 8). This drinking vase was found filled with small objects to be discussed right below (Fig. 9a-b). A pyxis lid (no. 48) lying smashed on top of it may have covered it, but this is uncertain as it is of smaller diameter. The skyphos was found upright a few centimetres underneath the die and contained 11 shells (No. G4), four semi-spherical pebbles of light and dark colour (no. G5), a cylindrical one with "veins" (no. G6), and a miniature figurine of a caprine (no. G7). The animal was probably once yoked to a cart, as suggested by the strip of clay on its back and belly which is broken at its inner side, where it would have joined a second quadruped. One of the shells from within the skyphos has an almost rectangular shape (due to natural causes) except for the side of the shell's apex (*umbo*). The two pairs of light and dark pebbles (Fig. 10, middle and bottom) may have been originally matched with another that bears an engraved circle (no. G3) (Fig. 10, top left) but which was found outside the skyphos.

The upright drinking vase containing selected pebbles and shells may suggest that at least some of them served as gaming pieces, a view corroborated by the die found at the immediate vicinity above the pot. Stone gaming counters are mentioned in the literary sources;<sup>12</sup> they are also attested in Etruscan necropoleis of the Archaic and Classical period and occur further in sets of the Hellenistic period together with dice in Macedonia.<sup>13</sup> The engraved pebble no. G3 is rare, attesting to usage and modification of ready-made material taken from nature. Has it been engraved in order to serve as a special piece of a board game? Was its engraved circle meant to imitate the iris of an eye in order to create an "intelligent" counter that could "see" its way through on the gaming board?<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Alk. Frg. 82.

<sup>13</sup> For pebbles in Macedonian sets, see IGNATIADOU 2013, 212 (18 items); 215 (15 items); 216 (6 items); 218 (1 item); 219 (13 items); 227. See also IGNATIADOU 2019. For Etruscan sets, see *ibid.* 227-228; LAMBROTHANASSI – TOULOUMTZIDOU 2016, 85-86.

<sup>14</sup> For eyes on objects in antiquity, see STEINHART 1995.



**Figure 8:** Boeotian vases of grave T.171. Photo V. Sabetai.  
Copyright EFA Boeotia.



**Figure 9:** Grave T.171. The skyphos cat. no. 38 and its contents of shells, pebbles, terracotta animal. Photo V. Sabetai. Copyright EFA Boeotia.



**Figure 10:** Grave T.171. Die and engraved pebble from outside skyphos; 4 pebbles from inside it. Photo V. Sabetai. Copyright EFA Boeotia.

Or was it meant to recall an inlaid element, as in some glass objects? The shells are also interesting, for they could be used as toys and gaming pieces according to the testimonia and to archaeological evidence from graves.<sup>15</sup> The heavier shells, in particular, can easily serve as counters because they are sturdy like pebbles, while having an elegant and “exotic” appearance. It is uncertain whether the partly broken miniature animal figurine also served as counter; it should be noted that it became unable to stand upright on its

<sup>15</sup> For shells in Athenian (child) burials, see STROSZECK 2012; for Macedonian graves where they are found as part of gaming sets, see IGNATIADOU 2013, 212 (17 items); 215 (2 worked items); 219 (11 items). For the symbolism of shells in the South Italian funerary record, see CARÈ 2018.

own after it broke from its terracotta group.<sup>16</sup> We may then suggest that die, pebbles, shells, and perhaps also a clay animal in secondary use served as playthings because they were unearthed together. Although only part of the assemblage was found within the grave's skyphos while the rest was scattered around it, it is more than possible that all the objects were originally placed together in the pot and were later disturbed due to taphonomic conditions. The lakeside cemetery of Akraiphia suffered regular inundations. Intrusive water, in addition to the weight of the shaft's fill, could cause damage or displacement of cover slabs and objects in the burial pit.

Regarding the skyphos no. 38 that was used as storage container for the gaming pieces, it is notable that a similar vessel containing shells, some of which were processed, is further known from Magna Graecia. Although such shells could be variously explained, it cannot be excluded that they were toys or counters.<sup>17</sup> Two vase paintings by the Plousios Painter depicting a pair of men engaged in a board game show a large skyphos or skyphoid krater below the gaming table.<sup>18</sup> On the basis of the above-mentioned evidence we may wonder whether the utilitarian vessel shown in the images could have served as storage receptacle for the men's gaming set.

Although cubic dice and gaming tables are known from Archaic Attica since the mid-7th and with a peak in the 6th century BC,<sup>19</sup> actual gaming

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<sup>16</sup> For miniature animals as counters in the Prehistoric era, see L. Phialon and V. Pliatsika in this volume.

<sup>17</sup> BÉRARD 2017, 245-248 (child grave, Megara Hyblaia; Archaic). For shells found in drinking vessels, see further CARÈ 2018, 148-149.

<sup>18</sup> See the late-Archaic pelike New York, MMA 68.27 and another (probably now in Jerusalem), Borowski collection (BAPD 7599 and 11685 respectively). The corpus of the Plousios Painter (so named by Bothmer; his attribution also of a third vase [Vatican City, Museo Gregoriano Etrusco Vaticano 413; BAPD 31764] was not unanimously accepted) comprises two vases depicting the same scene of a game. The current interpretation as workmen playing in the marketplace seems questionable to me. The men are citizens as suggested by their staffs, while the presence of musical instruments signals festivity and komos as noted by Cerchiai 2008, 98. In vase-imagery the utilitarian vessel under the table is associated with the activity taking place on it and serves in collecting material falling from it. In scenes of shoe-making it collects discarded pieces of leather (Oxford, Ashmolean Museum 563; BAPD 302990), while in those of sacrifice the victim's blood (for the sphageion see, e.g., GEBAUER 2002, 304-305, no. Z 8, fig. 170; 307-309, no. Z 10, fig. 172; 314-315, no. Z 20, fig. 184; 321, no. Z 28, fig. 190; 322, no. Zv 31, fig. 192).

<sup>19</sup> For early Attic dice from graves, see IGNATIADOU 2013, 224 and D. Paleothodoros in this volume.

sets with counters and dice are not known from the Greek mainland before the mid-4th century BC, the first recorded examples being those unearthed in graves at Pieria in Macedonia.<sup>20</sup> Yet, in the Archaic era gaming assemblages may have been offered to the dead more frequently than it has been possible to detect archaeologically. In particular, pebble-counters originally placed in containers made of perishable materials, rather than pots, can pass unnoticed as they look like any random stone in a tomb's fill.<sup>21</sup>

Regarding affiliation of the Boeotian die with examples from other areas, it may be compared to large, solid clay dice from the sanctuary of Hera at Samos and from the Corycian cave at Phocis.<sup>22</sup> Comparison with the earliest Attic dice shows that ours is equally large but cruder than those beautiful pieces that bear skilful decoration in black-figure.<sup>23</sup> Artfully decorated dice would not have been inappropriate in games of skill such as board games, but their rarity suggests that they may have served also as votives. Although their early use in Attica is well documented, the lack of precise findspots does not shed any light on their function. The Archaic die from Boeotia attests to early use also in this region, where no other examples are currently known, while its archaeological context allows some thoughts about dice in gaming and votive practices.

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<sup>20</sup> LAMBROTHANASSI – TOULOUNTZIDOU 2016, 84 with earlier bibliography.

<sup>21</sup> For gaming pieces from later times from the Kabirion, see BRAUN – HAEVERNICK 1981, 114, pl. 34: 32-37.

<sup>22</sup> The Samian die (Vathy Museum, inv. T 2585; dimensions: 4,9 x 3,8 x 4,5 cm) was found in clean-up dumps at the area of the altars preceding the one erected by Rhoikos. The die's number arrangement does not conform to the "Sevens" configuration (1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5 and 6 features at opposite sides). According to W.-D. Niemeier, the die is made locally, and its associated pottery provides a date to ca. 590-570 BC for it. For Phocian dice, see JACQUEMIN 1984, 170-171, nos. 16-17. For dice from the stoa of the temple at Skala, Kephallenia, see VIKATOU – PAPAFLORATOU 2015, 18.

<sup>23</sup> See the die Athens, N.M. 19366 (KARUSU 1973, 56; mid-7th century BC; SCHÄDLER 1999, 39 and fig. p. 41) which depicts a male head on one face, a horse protome on another and decorative designs on the rest. Although identified with Palamedes, the head may in fact be the abbreviated figure of an aristocratic male whose horse appears on another face. If this die was functional and not produced for a strictly votive use, the shot with the head up may have been the winning one. Another decorated die features black-figure birds (first third of the 6th century BC; Vlastos collection, from Sounion). For Archaic Attic dice, see further D. Paleothodoros in this volume.

### 3. Which game could have been played with an uncanonical die?

The total of five pebbles in the grave recalls the game of *pentalitha* or Five Stones described by Pollux as the favourite game of girls, *parthenoi*.<sup>24</sup> Five astragals, nuts or pebbles were thrown up into the air and then attempted to be caught while falling on the back of the hand. However, the occurrence of the die cannot exclude the possibility that our pebbles and shells may have served as gaming counters related to one another and to the cube.<sup>25</sup> The best-known ancient game played with counters and one or two dice is *pente grammai*, which was popular from the late 7th to the 3rd century BC and was regarded as of noble character.<sup>26</sup> Two players move five counters each across a board of wood, stone, or other material, with five parallel lines engraved or drawn on it; a central line is called sacred and the winner is the one who manages to place his pieces on this line first. No board was found in the Boeotian tomb, but the large size of the die and its worn edges may suggest that it could have been thrown directly onto the ground, where a board with lines could have been temporarily sketched.<sup>27</sup>

Enlarged versions of *pente grammai* existed too, where the gaming board could sport 11 lines instead of five. In such cases the number of counters corresponded to the number of lines, each player having as many counters as lines on the board.<sup>28</sup> Is it possible that a version of *pente grammai* could be also played with a die bearing 25 dots instead of just six? Could it be that the number 25, integral multiple of five, with its dots arranged in five lines, was associated with this particular game? One logically supposes that the privileged or lucky throw would be the one featuring the 25 dots. The example in Bonn shows that our die is not an absolute *unicum*. Since it is thought that singletons were used in divinatory practices, the existence of two similar, though not identical examples, strengthens the possibility that

<sup>24</sup> Poll., *Onom.*, 9.126-127 = COSTANZA 2019, 316-317.

<sup>25</sup> Note that no astragals were found in our grave group which would have perhaps suggested accumulation of random playthings. Deposition patterns of knucklebones at the necropolis of Akraiphia are uncharted. It seems that they occur less frequently in the Archaic than in later periods.

<sup>26</sup> SCHÄDLER 2009b; IGNATIADOU 2013, 221-223; WIDURA 2015, 111-115; KIDD 2017.

<sup>27</sup> An irregular stone (30 x 50 cm) resembling a broken cover slab was found close to the gaming set as seen on the excavation drawings and photographs. It is rather impossible that it could have been a gaming board; no lines were discerned on it during the dig.

<sup>28</sup> SCHÄDLER 2009b, 181.

they were used in a game rather than in divination, although dice, could, of course, have several different functions.

The game of *pente grammai* is best known through a series of terracotta gaming tables and the description by Pollux. It was regarded as a game requiring strategic skill and chance and able to combine entertainment with education. A series of vase-paintings most of which depict Homeric heroes playing an unspecified board game at an interval of the Trojan war, attest to the association of such imagery with figures of status.<sup>29</sup> At least one vase bearing a board game scene was imported to Halai, a town at the border of Lokris with Boeotia (Fig. 11a-c).<sup>30</sup>



**Figure 11:** Black figure lekythos Thebes Museum 46381. Copyright EFA Boeotia.

<sup>29</sup> WOODFORD 1982; CERCHIAI 2008; SCHÄDLER 2009a; DASEN 2015; CASTOLDI 2015; WIDURA 2015, 112-115. Some scenes in the series show citizens.

<sup>30</sup> Thebes Museum 46381, by the Emporion Painter: see GOLDMAN–JONES 1942, pl. 2, iii, 4; *ABV* 586, 12 (*BAPD* 331212). It is of interest that the heroes are flanked at either side by an archer. More unpublished examples exist from Boeotia and Lokris, see SELEKOU 2014, 446, no. K 3512.

#### 4. Gaming pieces for her grave: A young woman of status and the “*mors immatura*” in Archaic Boeotia

Who is buried with counters and dice in antiquity and why? Although evidence from sexed graves is limited, some observations can be offered. Burials comprising gaming sets in Hellenistic Macedonia are commonly associated with men and boys.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, the attribution of the invention of playing with dice and counters to the hero Palamedes<sup>32</sup> and the association of board games to the elite, as attested also from the iconography of Ajax and Achilles at play, has led to the conclusion that such games carried connotations of prominent social status and aristocratic ideals. With this in mind, let us look at the occupant of our grave and ask who could have been buried with a gaming assemblage in Archaic Boeotia, a confederacy with aristocratic regimes that lasted until the 4th century BC.

The grave's skeleton was poorly preserved. Osteological analysis by Efthymia Nikita showed that the bones belonged to a young adult of undetermined sex.<sup>33</sup> Yet, several highly gender specific objects help ascertain the sex of the dead.<sup>34</sup> On or around the skeleton were found many bronze, faience and glass jewellery items (Figs 12-14). The eight bronze rosettes (no. J6) lying around the skull must have been attached on a veil once covering the head. On the chest were also a pinhead (no. J7b), at least six smashed fibulae (no. J5) and blue faience disc-beads from a necklace (no. J8a). Several bronze spiral tubes were around the head, on the chest and on the fingerbones (no. J4). One bracelet (nos. J1a, b) was in each arm, while four rings (no. J3), many glass beads from a second necklace (no. J8b), two disc-shaped faience seals (nos. J9a, b) depicting an ibex or gazelle (Fig. 15)<sup>35</sup> and two small spindle whorls for spinning very fine yarn (nos. SW3; SW4) were on the left-hand (Fig. 16). In the fingers of the right hand were three rings, among which a silver one (no. J2). A second pair of larger and heavier spindle whorls (nos. SW1, SW2) were deposited close to the gaming assemblage at the area around the feet. Thus, the jewellery and the ornate head cover, as well as the spindle whorls suggest that the dead was a young woman.

<sup>31</sup> LAMBROTHANASSI – TOULOUMTZIDOU 2016, esp. 87. For board games and aristocratic military prowess in Hellenistic Thrace, see further NANKOV 2013.

<sup>32</sup> See WOODFORD – KRAUSKOPF 1994; VESPA 2021.

<sup>33</sup> See Appendix 2.

<sup>34</sup> For a catalogue of objects, see Appendix 3.

<sup>35</sup> The seals, rare items in Akraiphia, must have been attached to rings.





**Figure 12:** Hand and head jewellery of the dead of T.171.  
Photo V. Sabetai. Copyright EFA Boeotia.



**Figure 13:** Beads and pinheads of the dead of T.171. Photo V. Sabetai. Copyright EFA Boeotia.



**Figure 14:** Bronze jewellery (spirals) worn by the dead of T.171. Photo V. Sabetai. Copyright EFA Boeotia.



**Figure 15:** Faience seals of the dead of T.171. Photo V. Sabetai. Copyright EFA Boeotia.



**Figure 16:** Spindle whorls of the dead of T.171. Photo V. Sabetai. Copyright EFA Boeotia.

She was buried fully adorned and veiled as a bride, and with insignia highlighting a gender ideal, that of the industrious female, as indicated by her spinning equipment. The existence of spindle whorls for fine yard suggests that the dead woman was not only able to produce but also to wear luxurious garments. As is well-known, poets and painters since Homer repeatedly praised in word and image the spinning woman as skilful and seductive. Her faience seals functioned as symbols of status as well as amulets that granted her protection from the evils believed to haunt individuals transitioning liminal states, such as bridehood and pregnancy.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> For faience seals and their association with females of status in early Attica, see LANGDON 2005, 9-10. For the specific association of amulets and pregnancy, see PLUT., *De Is. et Os.*, 65.

We conclude, then, that in a female burial of status a gaming assemblage had apparently also a place and a role to play.<sup>37</sup>

Let us note further that dice were associated with women in many interesting ways also in non-funerary contexts. Telling evidence comes from sanctuaries of goddesses where worshippers dedicated their cubes, as e.g., the Corycian cave at Phocis sacred to the Nymphs (and Pan) and the Attic sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron, which was closely associated with female maturation and childbirth.<sup>38</sup> Yet, the most impressive evidence of dice dedicated to goddesses comes from the Spartan sanctuary of Artemis Orthia. The metal votive dice found there date to the late 7th century BC, have a spindle-like form and bear inscriptions mentioning that they are gifts not only to Artemis, but also to Eileithyia, protector of labour and childbirth.<sup>39</sup> The rare find of two seals as part of our Boeotian woman's funerary ornamentation may further point to her demise at a critical moment of female life, i.e. during bridehood or pregnancy.

### 5. Date

The date of our die depends on the Boeotian and Late Corinthian ceramics (Figs 17-18) and the jewellery.<sup>40</sup> The Boeotian bird bowls found inverted on the tomb's slabs (nos. 1-11; 14-23; 25-27; 29-30) belong to a well-known local class of vases called cups, though they rather resemble pedestalled bowls (Fig. 17).<sup>41</sup> Artisans of the bird-bowls Class painted also oinochoai, kantharoi, skyphoi, and figurines. The bird bowls show outline-drawn flying birds painted so as to appear inverted when the vessel stands on its foot, but most feature plain floral and linear designs.

<sup>37</sup> In the Greek mainland gaming sets are associated with men. In Etruria, a mirror of the 3rd century BC depicts a couple playing a board game, with the woman cast as a half-naked, eroticized bride: SCHÄDLER 2009b, 179, fig. 4. In the western Greek necropolis of Lokroi Epizefyrioi, astragals are interpreted as reference to an elite status in both female and male deceased (CARÈ 2017, 188, n. 85).

<sup>38</sup> Delphi, Corycian cave: JACQUEMIN 1984, 170-171. Brauron: DAUX 1960, 669, fig. 12.

<sup>39</sup> KILIAN 1978, 221-222 notes that these inscribed dice served as offerings, not oracular objects in this sanctuary. Although men also visited sanctuaries of goddesses, women must have figured prominently in such cult places.

<sup>40</sup> The forthcoming publication of the pottery will help define more narrowly our grave-group's date.

<sup>41</sup> For the term "bird bowls", see BOARDMAN 1998, 109. SIMON 1972, 213 thinks these were *lekanai* or *louteria* for use in wedding rituals.



**Figure 17:** Grave T.171. Boeotian bird bowls. Photo V. Sabetai. Copyright EFA Boeotia.

Their fragile polychromy creates a decorative effect but further suggests that they may have been non-functional. Such vases are known from the necropoleis at Rhitsona and Akraiphia where a local workshop has been hypothesized.<sup>42</sup> Tombs containing patterned and figured bird bowls are a minority in the cemeteries. Further, such bowls featuring birds are usually

<sup>42</sup> URE 1927, 12-19 (200 bird bowls from a few Rhitsona graves); ANDREIOMENOU 2015, 65-122 (from Akraiphia). For the rarity of graves with bird bowls, see n. 11 above.

outnumbered by the patterned examples within their grave group.<sup>43</sup> The tombs furnished with bird bowls were fossa pits for adults of unknown sex and age or child enchytrisms. Despite various efforts to form a typology, bird bowls are not easy to classify and their date has been the object of debate.<sup>44</sup> Based on excavated material Percy N. Ure dated the Rhitsona series from the second quarter of the 6th century BC down to the end of the century (580/560 to 500/480 BC). A date in the second third of the 6th century BC, possibly around the mid-6th century BC for our tomb-group is supported by all its contents. Notable is the miniature pedestalled krater no. 34 that features silhouetted birds (swans) (Fig. 7a-b). It resembles a nuptial lebes and its style of drawing recalls Ure's Geometricizing Group, a Boeotian class of small silhouette vases that spans the second and third quarter of the 6th century BC.<sup>45</sup>



**Figure 18:** Corinthian vases of T.171. Photo V. Sabetai. Copyright EFA Boeotia.

<sup>43</sup> In our grave there were seven bird bowls depicting birds among 19 bowls of the same class with patterned decoration.

<sup>44</sup> For bibliography, see KATHARIOU 2009, text to pl. 42; ANDREIOMENOU 2015.

<sup>45</sup> URE 1929; this Class does not comprise pedestalled krateriskoi such as ours. For a similar, perhaps earlier example, see KÄSTNER-VON BRÜCK 1980, 203, fig. 11; 208. For a similar shape cf. CVA Berlin 4, pl. 187, 5-6. The decorative motif recalls a more skillful one on a miniature skyphos from Akraiphia: ANDREIOMENOU 2015, 292, pl. 189, 67.9.

### Conclusion

The evidence from the Boeotian tomb T.171 (middle decades of the 6th century BC) suggests that the owner of our unusual die was a young woman also possessing a gaming assemblage which her family thought significant to bury her with. As gaming pieces were used objects from nature (pebbles and shells) and maybe also an artifact in secondary use (miniature terracotta animal). That objects of such divergent nature could be recycled to serve as counters is indicative of the easiness in mounting gaming assemblages in Archaic Greece, and Boeotia in particular. It further shows the fondness of 6th century BC Boeotians for the exotic-looking shells of their lake homeland. Such usage is in sharp contrast to the homogeneous appearance of gaming sets in later eras, when coloured glass counters and bone dice featuring standard values are the norm. The storage of the gaming pieces in a drinking vase highlights further the multiple uses to which vessels could be put, serving also as toy containers.

A forceful imagery was created at the funeral of the dead woman who occupied the grave T.171: jewellery ornamented her veiled body, spindle whorls for fine yard referred visually to a cherished female role and amuletic seals highlighted her status while soothing the anxieties surrounding maturation and the risks of pregnancy. All these objects helped construe a bodily image – and self-identity – that was imbued with symbolisms and wished-for ideals associated with female gender and status. The only iconographic motifs featured on the few objects that bore figural decoration were birds and caprines.<sup>46</sup> The evidence from a funerary “mise en scène” that highlights gender ideals complements the anthropological data that point to a prematurely deceased young woman. She was treated with burial vocabulary signalling the elite *aoros* in Archaic Boeotia, part of which was a gaming assemblage that marked her and by extension her family’s elevated status.

In describing his vision of a happy afterlife several decades later, the Boeotian poet Pindar is quoted as having written that, “some enjoy horses and wrestling, others board games, and yet others the music of the lyre”.<sup>47</sup> This source should not lead to the conclusion that board games had a

<sup>46</sup> For the birds see miniature krater no. 34, Late Corinthian kotyle no. 12 and pyxis no. 33, as well as the bird bowls. The caprines were featured on the seals nos. J9a, b (Fig. 14) and on the small terracotta animal G7 (Fig. 9).

<sup>47</sup> [Plut.], *Mor., Cons. ad Apoll.*, 120C.

funerary significance as has been often argued.<sup>48</sup> On the contrary, gaming assemblages could occasionally escort the dead in order to characterize him/her as noble, intelligent and blissful while further highlighting the fragility of the human condition which all too often resembles the throw of a die.

### **Appendix 1. Flying upside down on the bird bowls: A Boeotian enigma**

An odd feature of bird bowls, as well as occasionally of this Class's skyphoi and kantharoi, is that the flying birds appear inverted when the vessel stands upright. In order to see the birds properly one has to invert the vessel, which recalls the funerary ritual of placing them upside-down on the tomb's cover slabs (Figs. 4-5 and 19). The reason for the odd rendering of the birds on the bowls has been variously explained, but without consideration of their placement in the grave. Some scholars regarded upside-down birds as a regional peculiarity of early Boeotian vase-painting, while others attributed it to technical reasons during manufacture, namely painting the bowl inverted for easier handling.<sup>49</sup> Although it is easier to decorate stemmed bowls by holding them inverted, this is not the case with kantharoi and skyphoi, which occasionally also display upside-down birds, even though they must have been held upright at the moment of decoration.<sup>50</sup> The answer to the riddle may be that the bird bowls (and occasionally also kantharoi and skyphoi in this class) were meant to be seen inverted, as offerings. Other shapes, such as, e.g., the oinochoai depict the birds in the expected way because they were meant to be deposited upright.<sup>51</sup> Thus, it seems that bird bowls were of non-functional character, as suggested further by their technical features (lack of slip and glaze; friable fabric; polychromy) as well as by a votive dipinto inscription on one example.<sup>52</sup> In fact, most come from necropoleis, while the few examples from sanctuaries bear patterned decoration (Ptoion, cave of Leibethrian

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<sup>48</sup> WHITTAKER 2004.

<sup>49</sup> CVA Kiel 1 (1988) text to pl. 1, 1-2 (B. Freyer-Schauenburg) with earlier bibliography.

<sup>50</sup> Skyphoi with birds drawn upside down: ANDREIOMENOU 2015, pl. 97, 19.1; pl. 109, 20.1; pl. 116, 23.1; pl. 195, 7; pl. 199, 4; pl. 206, 37-38. Kantharos and skyphos with bird drawn upright: pl. 72, 15.21; pl. 210, 3.

<sup>51</sup> See e.g. ANDREIOMENOU 2015, pl. 87, 18.1; pl. 227.

<sup>52</sup> MAFFRE 1975, 415-425, fig. 2.



Nymphs).<sup>53</sup> The example of our grave further suggests that bird-bowls were placed inverted on the cover slabs as part of a conspicuous funerary ritual at the closing of the pit.



**Figure 19:** Bird bowl from T.171 in inverted position. Photo V. Sabetai. Copyright EFA Boeotia.

Birds depicted right-side-up appear occasionally also on generic enthroned figurines that were made in the bird-bowls workshops. These figurines, wearing polos and necklaces with pending pomegranates were originally interpreted as goddesses, but may stand for mortal enthroned brides.<sup>54</sup> Flying birds are also depicted on terracotta poloi by the same workshops, a significant fact, as the polos is characteristic headgear of bridal

<sup>53</sup> ZAMPITI 2012, 182-185, esp. n. 834; see also 245 for a terracotta polos associated with the workshops that produced bird bowls.

<sup>54</sup> For examples, see HAMDORF 2014, 60, no. C 94 (575-550 BC); SIMON 1972, 211, fig. 7. For seated figurines as mortals, see HUYSECOM-HAXHI – MULLER 2015.

figures in Boeotian art. One such example depicting a file of polos-wearing women has been rightly connected to the nymphs and marriage in a far-sighted article by Erika Simon.<sup>55</sup> Acting as visual indexes, the birds fly towards either side of the central woman, who is thus best understood as the bride among her peers, one of whom offers her a pomegranate. Simon further argued that the birds are cravens, which were considered models of happy conjugality in antiquity.

In view of the above, one wonders whether the bird bowls were produced in order to feature inverted especially on the graves of prematurely deceased females. Most bird bowls bear patterned decoration, but the few vases with birds recall the ritual bridal *poloi* and the maternal figurines decorated with similar motifs. One needs more examples to substantiate this hypothesis, but it seems no coincidence that in the case of grave T.171 bird bowls accompany a female dead provided also with jewellery and spindle whorls, insignia of the respectful citizen bride and matron. The die and assorted gaming material placed at her feet adds one more fascinating facet to the burial vocabulary of the *mors immatura* in early Greece.<sup>56</sup>

### Appendix 2. Osteological analysis by Efthymia Nikita

The grave's skeleton was in a poor state of preservation. The skull preserved part of the mandibular corpus, small segments of the parietals and the right mastoid process; the spine preserved parts of 2 cervical, 9 thoracic and 5 lumbar neural arches; the shoulder girdle consisted of small scapular and clavicular segments; the long bones of the upper and lower limbs preserved small diaphyseal segments, while the pelvic girdle consisted of small ischial and iliac segments. Most mandibular teeth were present but only the roots were preserved inside the alveoli while the crowns had broken off.

The poor preservation of the skeleton rendered the assessment of sex inconclusive. The pelvis, which is the most accurate anatomical area for skeletal sex assessment, was too partially preserved and lacked all sexually dimorphic anatomical structures. Similarly, the long bones were too

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<sup>55</sup> SIMON 1972 (the proposed connections with the Daidala festival may be less obvious).

<sup>56</sup> Several examples in ANDREIOMENOU 2015 document the combination of bird bowls, jewellery and items used by females in the necropolis of Akraiphia.

fragmented to allow metric sex estimation, while the only cranial anatomical structure useful in sex assessment was the mastoid process, which is not a particularly reliable sex marker.

The state of the skeleton rendered age estimation also rather problematic. None of the traditional ageing methods (e.g. methods based on the morphology of the pubic symphysis, iliac auricular surface, sternal rib end, cranial suture closure) could be used. Thus, age was tentatively assessed as ‘young adult’ (approximately 18-35 years) based on the lack of ante-mortem tooth loss among mandibular teeth.

### Appendix 3. Catalogue of Finds

#### A. Catalogue of Vases

On the cover slabs: 30 vases (nos. **1-30**),<sup>57</sup> of which 26 are Boeotian bird bowls; three or four Late Corinthian vases (kotyle no. **12**, aryballoi nos. **13** and possibly **28**, pyxis no. **24**) (Figs 7-8, 17-19).<sup>58</sup> Of the bird bowls 21 are stemmed and five stemless; 19 bear patterned decoration and seven, all stemmed, birds.<sup>59</sup> The tallest bird bowls are ca. 19-20 cm high and bear birds. Most vases are mended from fragments; some are partly preserved.

1. Inv. 52612. Bird bowl (bird-tail handle). H. 9 cm<sup>60</sup>.
2. Inv. 52602. Stemmed bird bowl. H. 13.5 cm.
3. Inv. 52606. Stemmed bird bowl. H. pres. 8.5 cm.
4. Inv. 52595. Stemmed bird bowl. H. 12.5 cm.
5. Inv. 52610. Stemmed bird bowl. H. pres. 14 cm.
6. Inv. 52583. Stemmed bird bowl. H. 12.5 cm.
7. Inv. 52585. Stemmed bird bowl; birds. H. 16.6 cm.
8. Inv. 52608 +52598. Stemmed bird bowl. H. pres. 13.2 cm.
9. Inv. 52582. Stemmed bird bowl; birds. H. 19 cm.
10. Inv. 52607. Stemmed bird bowl; birds. Broken. Diam. 31 cm.
11. Inv. 52577. Bird bowl (bird-tail handle). H. 8 cm.
12. Inv. 52596. Corinthian black-figure kotyle; birds and sirens. H. 6.5 cm. Diam. base 5.4 cm.

<sup>57</sup> The detailed study of the grave's pottery will appear in a forthcoming publication.

<sup>58</sup> Due to the collapse of some slabs into the pit it is not entirely certain that the second aryballos was an exterior offering.

<sup>59</sup> The motifs are palmettes, cross-hatched triangles alternating with upright spirals, herring-bone triangles etc.

<sup>60</sup> For the design cf. URE 1927, pl. IV, 126.1 – 126.2, (540-30 BC); ANDREIOMENOU 2015, pl. 63, 15.1 (ca. 550 BC).

- 13.** Inv. 52584. Corinthian aryballos; quatrefoil. H. 5 cm.  
**14.** Inv. 52578. Bird bowl (bird-tail handle). H. 7.5 cm.  
**15.** Inv. 52605. Stemmed bird bowl; birds. Broken.  
**16.** Inv. 52588. Stemmed bird bowl. H. pres. 8.5 cm.  
**17.** Inv. 52574. Stemmed bird bowl. H. 13 cm.  
**18.** Inv. 52591. Stemmed bird bowl. H. 18.3 cm.  
**19.** Inv. 52594. Stemmed bird bowl. H. 14.5 cm.  
**20.** Inv. 52576. Stemmed bird bowl. H. 12.9 cm.  
**21.** Inv. 52575. Stemmed bird bowl. H. 12.7 cm.  
**22.** Inv. 52573. Bird bowl. H. 8 cm.  
**23.** Inv. 52592. Stemmed bird bowl; birds. H. 19 cm.  
**24.** Inv. 52613. Tripod Corinthian pyxis; bands. H. 6.8 cm; Diam. 11.3 cm.  
**25.** Inv. 52603. Stemmed bird bowl.<sup>61</sup> H. 14.3 cm.  
**26.** Inv. 52614. Stemmed bird bowl; birds. H. pres. 17 cm.  
**27.** Inv. 52611. Stemmed bird bowl. H. pres. 12.5 cm.  
**28.** Inv. 52600. Corinthian aryballos; bands. Broken.  
**29.** Inv. 52579. Bird bowl. H. 7.8 cm.  
**30.** Inv. 52785. Stemmed bird bowl; birds. Broken.
- Inside the pit: 18 vases (nos. **31-48**; Figs 7-8; 18). Of these, five are Boeotian (black-figure miniature krater no. **34**, stamnoid vase No. **32**, patterned kotyliske no. **36**, and two glazed pots, i.e. skyphos no. **38**, containing gaming assemblage and mug no. **40**) and 13 are Late Corinthian (pyxides nos. **33**, **35**, **37**, pyxis lids nos. **43-48**, aryballoi nos. **41**, **42**, one lying at the pelvis, stamnoid pyxis no. **31** and alabastron no. **39**).
- 31.** Inv. 52587. Corinthian stamnoid pyxis. H. 6 cm.  
**32.** Inv. 52590. Boeotian stamnoid vase. H. 9 cm.  
**33.** Inv. 52581. Corinthian black-figure pyxis with lid; 3 swans. H. (with lid) 6.5 cm. (It was found reversed; underneath it were three shells (inv. 52784 a-γ).  
**34.** Inv. 52601. Boeotian black-figure miniature pedestalled krater; confronted swans. H. 8.5 cm; Diam. mouth 3.5 cm; Diam. base 4.3 cm.<sup>62</sup>  
**35.** Inv. 52580. Corinthian pyxis with lid. H. 6.5 cm.  
**36.** Inv. 52609. Boeotian kotyliske. H. 3.5 cm.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. ANDREIOMENOU 2015, pl. 64, 15.3 (ca. 550 BC).

<sup>62</sup> See discussion in text.

- 37.** Inv. 52604. Corinthian pyxidiske. H. 3.7 cm.
- 38.** Inv. 52593. Boeotian black-glazed skyphos. H. 9 cm. Diam. rim 13 cm. Diam. base 7.4 cm. It contained the pebbles, shells and terracotta animal nos. **G4-G7** (Fig. 9).
- 39.** Inv. 52586. Corinthian alabastron. H. 11 cm.
- 40.** Inv. 52589. Black-glazed mug. H. 7 cm.
- 41.** Inv. 52597. Corinthian aryballos; quatrefoil. H. 5 cm.
- 42.** Inv. 52599. Corinthian aryballos; quatrefoil. H. 6 cm.
- 43.** Inv. 52615. Corinthian pyxis lid. H. 3 cm. Diam. 11.
- 44.** Inv. 52616. Corinthian pyxis lid. H. 2.3 cm. Diam. 6.8.
- 45.** Inv. 52617. Corinthian pyxis lid. H. 2.5 cm. Diam. 4.8.
- 46.** Inv. 52618. Corinthian pyxis lid. H. 2 cm. Diam. 6.1.
- 47.** Inv. 52619. Corinthian pyxis lid. H. 2 cm. Max. Diam. 6.
- 48.** Inv. 52620. Corinthian pyxis lid found close to skyphos no. **38**. H. 3 cm. Diam. 10.7 cm.

#### *B. Catalogue of Objects*

These comprise objects nos. **G1-G7**, i.e. die, pebbles, shells and terracotta animal that were found in, or around, the skyphos no. **38** and may be interpreted as gaming pieces (Figs. 9-10); jewellery items nos. **J1-J9** (Figs. 12-15); spindle whorls nos. **SW1-SW4** (Fig. 16); metal objects (nos. **M1-M2**). All objects were found in the pit, except if noted otherwise.

**Gaming assemblage:** nos. **G1-G3** were found outside, while nos. **G4-G7** (Fig. 9) inside the skyphos no. **38**.

**G1.** Inv. 52784. Die. Solid cube made of clay. Dimensions: 3.5 x 3.5 x 3.5 cm. Weight: 78.60 gr. Values: 3 and 4, 2 and 5, 1 and 25 are featured at opposite sides.

**G2.** Inv. 52784 a-δ. Four shells. 52784a: *Venus verrucosa*; 52784 β-δ: *bolinus brandaris* and two of the species *hexaplex trunculus*.

**G3.** Inv. 52785. Engraved pebble; at its centre an engraved oval circle. Diam. 3.5 cm. (Fig. 10, top left).

**G4.** Inv. 52786-52788 and 52790-52791: five water-worn bivalve shells of the species *spondylus gaederopus*. Inv. 52786 is a *spondylus* lower valve. It is heavy and its texture resembles marble (fossilized?). Inv. 52787 and 52788 preserve the upper and lower valve respectively. Inv. 52790 and 52791 are smaller pieces of the same species.

Inv. 52792: six natural shells. Inv. 52792a is a *pinna nobilis*; inv. 52792β is a *cerastoderma glaucum*; inv. 52792γ is an *arca noae*; 52792δ are a *cerithium vulgatum* and two *columbellae rusticae*. (Fig. 9, two top rows). The identification of the shells is due to David S. Reese.

**G5.** Inv. 52793. Four pebbles, two light and two dark-coloured. (Fig. 9, two bottom rows).

**G6.** Inv. 52789. A broken cylindrical stone with “veins”. (Fig. 9, third row, left).

**G7.** Inv. 52794. Miniature terracotta figurine of a caprine adjunct to another object, possibly yoked on a carriage as one of a pair.<sup>63</sup> Its outer side is glazed. (Fig. 9, third row, right).

**Jewellery** (in bronze, silver, iron, faience and glass). It consisted of spirals, rings, bracelets, necklaces, beads, brooches, pins, seals and rosettes (Figs. 12-15).

**J1a, b.** Inv. 52795-52796. Two bracelets around left and right arm respectively. Bronze, with overlapping ends.<sup>64</sup> Diam.: 7.3 cm. (Fig. 12).

**J2.** Inv. 52797-52798. Three rings in fingers of right hand. Two were bronze spirals and one a silver ring. Diam. 2.1 cm (Fig. 12).

**J3.** Inv. 52799a, b -52801. Four rings in fingers of left hand: two spiral tubes, a thick ring, (diam 2.5 cm, Fig. 12) and an iron ring.

**J4.** Inv. 52802-52803. At least 17 pieces or fragments of spiral tubes.<sup>65</sup> Two of them have a spiral at either end (e.g. inv. 52802, Fig. 14 middle, which was found in the area around the feet of dead). Most items were found on the thoracic area and around the skull; a few were scattered all over.

**J5.** Inv. 52804. Six arched fibulae, mostly smashed: two were in the middle of the grave, the rest on or near the spine and chest.<sup>66</sup>

**J6.** Inv. 52805. Eight hammered rosettes once composed of 11-12 petals; rendered in relief with double outlines and rounded ends; in the centre is a

<sup>63</sup> For a yoked quadruped, see HIGGINS 1954, 266, no. 976, pl. 137 (Corinthian, ca. 350 BC).

<sup>64</sup> Cf. ANDREIOMENOU 1997, 84. All items marked with an X on the drawing of our grave are pieces of jewellery.

<sup>65</sup> For spirals in general, see HIGGINS 1961, 50-52; 54; 57; 61; 72; 87; 91-93; 102. LAFFINEUR 1978, 144-145. For comparanda to ours, cf. ANDREIOMENOU 1997, 83, fig. 30 (second quarter 6th century BC).

<sup>66</sup> Cf. ANDREIOMENOU 1997, 85-89, figs. 50-54. ANDREIOMENOU 2015, pl. 107, 19.37-46 (550 BC).

disc with dots (Fig. 12).<sup>67</sup> All were found around the skull and would have been attached on a head veil. Diam. 5.3 cm.

**J7.** Inv. 52806-52807. Two pinheads in the shape of a pomegranate; pierced with two drilled holes opposite each other.<sup>68</sup> No. **J7a** was found on the cover slabs at the western part of the grave; no. **J7b** laid on the left part of the chest. Diam. 0.9 cm. (Fig. 13 top).

**J8.** Inv. 52808-52809. Two necklaces. No. **J8a** was made of several blue, disc-shaped faience beads. No. **J8b**, with 23 yellow amphiconical glass beads (found at neck, chest and all over; Fig. 13).<sup>69</sup>

**J9a, b.** Inv. 52810-52811. Two faience seals from similar but different moulds; found on the left hand and once part of two rings. Shape: discoid, with back side slightly convex, and pierced lengthwise. A cast technique was used for the design. Only one preserves its greenish glazed surface. In intaglio an ibex or gazelle walking to the right; above its back is the solar disc and in front of it the hieroglyphic *nb*. Animals with long, thin body, tail curving upwards, long straight horns. Both are products of the Naucratis factory. Diam.: 1 cm. Width: 0.4 cm. (Fig. 15).<sup>70</sup>

**Spindle whorls**<sup>71</sup> (Fig. 16)

**SW1.** Inv. 52812. Lead, conical, found at the feet of the dead. H. 1.6 cm; diam. 3 cm.

**SW2.** Inv. 52813. Steatite stone, found at the feet of the dead. Diam. 2.7 cm.

<sup>67</sup> Earlier (600-560 BC) rosettes of this type have their leaves bordered with a circle, while later these leaves are cut off, as here. Cf. ANDREIOMENOU 1997, 84, fig. 43. ANDREIOMENOU 2015, pl. 86, 17.31; pl. 107, 19.34-36 (550 BC). RAUBITSCHKE 1998, 75, no. 293, pl. 44 (Archaic).

<sup>68</sup> Pinheads are infrequent and occur in Akraiphian tombs of the second third of the 6th century BC. Cf. ANDREIOMENOU 1997, 84, fig. 41; ANDREIOMENOU 2015, pl. 62, 14.14 (ca. 550 BC).

<sup>69</sup> For former cf. ANDREIOMENOU 2015, pl. 108, 19.53-55 (550 BC).

<sup>70</sup> Disc-shaped seals by the Naucratis factory (first half of 6th century BC) with designs of animals occur in sanctuaries of female divinities and had an amuletic function. For the repertory of animals on seals found in Perachora see, e.g., DUNBABIN *et alii* 1962, 474; for a horned quadruped, ibex or gazelle (both caprines) see 501, nos. D485-D499 and 504, fig. 36. For the Naucratis factory see GORTON 1996, 91-131, esp. 97 (type XXVIII, ibex). For the few graves that contained seals see BRANN 1960, 406 (8th century BC). One more tomb from Akraiphia is known to have contained a seal in the form of a scarab (T.254, enchytrism, excavated in 1996, unpublished).

<sup>71</sup> Cf. ANDREIOMENOU 2015, pl. 62, 14.17 (second quarter 6th century BC).

**SW3.** Inv. 52814. Steatite stone, button-like, for fine yarn; found on the left palm. Diam. 2 cm.

**SW4.** Inv. 52815. Steatite stone, conical, for fine yarn; found on the left palm. Diam. 2 cm.

**Metal objects**

**M1.** Inv. 52817. Iron object resembling pliers.

**M2.** Inv. 52818. Bronze knife (small). Length: 13.2 cm; width: 0.5 cm.

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