

ATTIC BLACK-FIGURE POTTERY AT TOMIS: THE HAIMON PAINTER'S CUP-SKYPHOI

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Abstract: Various fragmentary cup-skyphoi, both known and relatively unknown, from Tomis led me to consider questions relating to the identification and distribution of some Attic black-figure vases – probably, the earliest on the Tomis scene – and I shall briefly explore here a tentative redating of the first Greek presence on the site. The stylistic features of the selected sherds are treated here in relation to the Attic workshop of the Haimon Painter. They are strikingly different from contemporary products, and their creator is, in my view, to be one of the first Attic black-figure painters present in Tomis.

Rezumat: Câteva fragmente de la cupe-skyphoi diferite, găsite la Tomis, în parte cunoscute din publicații, dar cele mai multe încă inedite, fac obiectul acestui articol. Acestea pun probleme referitoare la identificarea și distribuirea unor vase atice cu figuri negre – probabil, primele de pe piața tomitană. Pornind de la noile date, voi relua pe scurt aici posibilitatea de redatere a prezenței grecești pe acest sit. Caracteristicile stilistice ale vaselor selectate sunt studiate în relație cu atelierul atic atribuit pictorului Haimon și echipei sale. Acestea sunt izbitor de asemănătoare între ele și diferite de cele ale unor produse contemporane, iar producătorul lor este, în opinia mea, unul dintre primii pictori de vase atice cu figuri negre identificați la Tomis.

The black-figure vessels attributed to Haimon painter are among the most frequent works of Attic origin in the period between the end of the sixth and early fifth century BC (ca. 500-450 BC). The real name of the artist is unknown, but individual characteristics of the vases suggest the existence of a unique personality, for which, in the absence of signatures, scholars have invented “Haimon” as conventional name.

Identification and chronology

C.H. Emilie Haspels¹ originally named the painter after Haimon, Creon's son and Antigone's fiancé, who was the last victim killed by the Theban Sphinx — a scene shown on one of his lekythoi.² She was also the first to assemble the work of the painter on the basis of his distinctive style. Helping Haspels' work and accepting her denomination, Sir John Beazley used more specifically the terms “Manner of the Haimon Painter”, and the “Haimon Group”, employing both formulae interchangeably.³ John Boardman followed both, also calling him the Haimon Painter, but drawing attention to the painters' associates rather than a specific master of the workshop.⁴

It has long been known thanks to Haspels' study,⁵ that the Haimon Painter's style was shared by a group of painters working on later Attic black-figured pottery that was contemporary with the beginning of the red-figured style. Haspels moreover assembled the works of this painter on a stylistic basis and remarked upon the careless products of his workshop, saying that the painter's style was hard to define, since it stands at the crossroads between a number of different trends, and that it was far from possible always to distinguish between different hands such as those of the Diosphos, Marathon or Emporion Painters on the one hand, and

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¹ On the identification of Haimon Painter, see Haspels in *ABL*, pp. 130-141, 241-246, with additions from Mannack 2006; *ABV*, pp. 539-571; *Paralip.*, pp. 269-287; *Agora* 23, pp. 95-96.

² Sophocles, *Antigone*, 526-581. Many Thebans perished by the beast, including Haimon, the son of King Creon of Thebes. Following the loss of his son, the king proclaimed that whoever should rid the land of the Sphinx would be presented with the throne. The hero Oedipus took up the challenge, and deliberately went to Mount Phicium to encounter the Sphinx. The Sphinx posed the famous riddle, and Oedipus simply answered “Man”. The subject-matter of the Sphinx and her victim is repeated four times in the painter's repertory.

³ J.D. Beazley adopted Haspels' attributions and her denomination of the Haimon Painter, see *ABV*, pp. 538-539; von Bothmer 1985, p. 15, discuss Beazley' difficulties to identify the painters of the late black figure vases.

⁴ *ABFV*, pp. 62, 148-151, 178, 191, 194.

⁵ Haspels in *ABL* lists about 104 secure, and 10 uncertain, works attributed to Haimon, cf. *ABL*, pp. 241-47, 249; Beazley adds 30 new and 17 uncertain attributions, cf. *ABV*, pp. 538-71, 705-8, 716; *Paralip.*, pp. 269, 271-87.