

Pyrwias Leading the Dance

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Abstract A study of a Corinthian *aryballos* on which is painted a line of hexameter verse that complements its images of an *aulos* player and a boy leading a small company of dancers.

Keywords Pyrwias. Inscribed Greek verse. Corinthian vases. Dancers. Text and image.

In 1954 an utterly charming,¹ largely undamaged, ceramic vessel was discovered by American excavators in Corinth, in a tile fill just below the temple of Apollo [figs 1-2].²

Its shape is of the type nowadays uniformly described as an *aryballos*, although the vessel itself, as we shall see, seems to call itself an *olpe*.³ *Aryballos* finds (I shall continue to use this name) are quite common in Corinth and elsewhere, and this particular subtype may have originated there (it is in fact called “Corinthian” by art histo-

An *amuse-voûç* for Willy. Thanks are due to William Furley, Regina Höschele, Antonis Kotsonas, Joel Lidov, David Petrain, Andrej Petrovic, and Alan Shapiro for help of various sorts.

1 “Delizioso”, Guarducci 1959-60, 281.

2 On the excavation, see Roebuck 1955, especially 151-2.

3 “Aryballos” seems to be pre-Greek (Beekees 2010, s.v. “ἀρύβαλλος”), and is glossed as *lekythos* (Hsch. s.v. “ἀρβυλίδα· λήκυθον. Λάκωνες”) and as *kotyle* (Hsch. s.v. “ἀρυβάσσαλον· κοτύλη ἢ φλάσκων” [= late Latin *flascō*]); also Hsch. s.v. “ἀρύβαλλοι· μαρσύππια”, ‘pouch’, since in origin it was a small leathern draw-string purse, as in Stesichorus fr. 165 Finglass. See further Gulletta 1992, 272-7. This is not the only vase to refer to its own shape/name; cf. Lazzarini 1973-74.





Figure 1 Corinth C-1954-1 = CEG 452 = Amyx/Wachter COR 17 = Guarducci 1967, 1: 175-6 = Lorber 39 = SEG XIV, 303. Roebuck 1955, *Hesperia* 24(2). American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Corinth Excavations. <https://www.corinth-museum.gr/en/collection-item/aryballos-with-a-unique-dance-scene/>

Figure 2 A flattened reconstruction of the Pyrwias aryballos. Roebuck 1955, *Hesperia* 24(2). Artist: Piet de Jong. American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Corinth Excavations. <http://corinth.ascsa.net/id/corinth/image/color%20183?q=references%3A%22Corinth%3AObject%3AC%201954%201%22&t=&v=icons&sort=rating%20desc%2C%20sort%20asc&s=4>

rians; cf. Richter, Milne 1935, 16), although it was also widely exported and found elsewhere in the Greek world.⁴ *Aryballoi* range in height from ca. 4 to ca. 18 cm; ours is 4.4 cm high. It has been dated to the middle Corinthian period, although its decade has not been agreed upon by the experts.⁵ Our *aryballos* attracted immediate attention not only because of its lively dance scene, but also because of its ad-hoc inscriptions, seemingly (but not without some dispute) both a personal name and a complete hexameter line describing both the painted scene and the vase as a whole. A review of the function of the vase⁶ and the nature of the words and scene depicted will lead to a few new observations (and one wild guess).⁷

Inscription

(1) ΠΟΛΥΤΕΡΠΟΣ

(2) ΠΥΡΡΗΙΑΣ ΠΡΟΧΟΡΕΥΟΜΕΝΟΣ· ΑΥΤΟ ΔΕ ΦΟΙ ΟΛΠΑ.⁸

Apparatus criticus

(1) Πολύτερπος (nomen proprium) Guarducci (1959-60) 282 plerique πολυτερπός (adj.) Roebucks fort. πολυτερπως

(2) ΑΥΤΟ: αὐτῶ (= Attice αὐτοῦ) plerique αὐτῶ<ι> (= αὐτῶ) Roebucks αὐτῶ (adv.) Boegehold ΔΕ ΦΟΙ: δ' ἔφο Boegehold ΟΛΠΑ: <μ>ολπά Boegehold Raubitschek (1973)

⁴ What moderns call the Corinthian *aryballos* Theocritus may have called the Doric *olpe*; see below. Athenaeus' description of *aryballos* fits the modern usage: ΑΡΥΒΑΛΛΟΣ· ποτήριον κάτωθεν εὐρύτερον, ἄνω δὲ συνηγμένον, ὡς τὰ συσπαστὰ βαλάντια, ἃ καὶ αὐτὰ διὰ τὴν ὁμοίωσιν ἀρυβάλλους τινὲς καλοῦσιν. Ἀριστοφάνης Ἰππεῦσι (1094)· “κατασπένδειν κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἀρυβάλλω ἀμβροσίαν” (783e). See also Moeris s.v. “ἀρυβάλλον· ἔστι δὲ ποτηρίου εἶδος στενόστομον”.

⁵ It has been dated 590-580 or a little later, according to the Roebucks (1955, 580-75), *omnibus assentientibus*. For the periodisation of Corinthian vases, see Benson 1953.

⁶ Beyond the usual function of *aryballoi* of this size, designed to contain enough olive oil for one trip to the gymnasium. A leather thong was passed between handle and body to allow the vessel to hang from the athlete's wrist. A ceramic plug (almost always lost) would have kept the oil from spilling. Both the thong and the oil being poured are to be seen in a gymnasium scene on Berlin no. F 2180 = Beazley archive no. 2000063. <https://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/XDB/ASP/browse.asp?tableName=qryData&newwindow=&BrowseSession=1&companyPage=Contacts&newwindowsearchclosefrombro> use=. On this vase, see Aulenti et al. 1990, 53-9.

⁷ This is not the place to discuss the broad issue of vase inscriptions; cf. e.g. Snodgrass 2000, 22-34; Wachter 2016; Yatromanolakis 2016. A data base of all vase inscriptions may be found at <https://www.avi.unibas.ch/DB/searchform.html>.

⁸ Underlined letters are written retrograde.

Text

- (1) Πολύτερπος
(2) Πυρφίας προχορευόμενος· αὐτοῦ δέ φοι ὄλπα.

1 Commentary

(1) Πολύτερπος: This word, separated by the body of the aulete from the other words and dancers, has been reasonably taken by almost all to be his proper name,⁹ whether Polyterpos adopted it himself as an appropriate *redender Name*¹⁰ or, as Boegehold (1965, 259) suggests, because it would be unsurprising at a time when sons often followed a father's trade if a boy born to a musician were given an appropriate name at birth.¹¹ In any case, Euterpe was the Muse most closely associated with the aulos; cf. e.g. schol. in Eur. *Rhes.* 346 (= Herod. Att. fr. 159 Wehrle) Εὐτέρπη, ἣ τὴν κατ' αὐλοῦ εὔρεν εὐέπειαν, Philostr. *v.Ap.* 5.21 εἰ δὴ ταῦτα πάντα παρέχεις, θαρρῶν αὐλεῖ, ὦ Κάνε, μετὰ σοῦ γὰρ ἡ Εὐτέρπη ἔσται, Simon. 947 *PMG* = F 254 Poltera ἐπεὶ περ ἤρξατο | τερπνοτάτων μελέων ὁ καλλιβόας πολύχορδος | αὐλός.

Less likely is the adverb πολυτέρπως, or rather πολυτερπῶς, since the only adjective built on this stem in literary texts is πολυτερπής, which, however, is not found until Anon. *Anth. Pal.* 9.504.6 ὕμνους ἀθανάτων Ἐρατῶ πολυτερπέας εὔρε, an epigram that seems to be post-Philip, i.e. post 100 BCE;¹² *Orac. Sib.* 8.489 ὁδομαῖς ἀνθῶν πολυτερπέσιν; and *Orphic Hymn* F 243.9 Bernabé (cited by Porphyry) Ἔρωσ πολυτερπής, all three in hexameters. As Wachter (2001, 45) ably documents, since there are parallels for the same stem to appear in two declensions, there can be no objection to a Polyterpos and Polyterpes.¹³ Auletes accompany jumpers on other vases as well.¹⁴ The question remains as to why the painter/commissioner named Pol-

⁹ The Roebucks saw it as a simple adjective, followed by Gallavotti 1976, who takes its reference to be not the scene in whole or part, but the vase itself, adducing comparanda, e.g. Φιλτῶς ἡμι τὰς καλὰς ἀ κύλις ἀ ποικίλα (*IG* 12.1.719).

¹⁰ The best comparandum is Stesichorus, né Teisias (Suda s.v. "Στησιγόρος"), but note also Plato, né Aristocles (Sext. Emp. *Math.* 1.258), and Theophrastus, né Tyrtamus (Strabo 13.2.4); cf. Thompson 2007 and Corsten 2019.

¹¹ See Guarducci 1959-60, 282-3, who offers some examples.

¹² That is, it does not occur in runs of epigrams clearly belonging to either Meleager or Philip's two early anthologies.

¹³ David Petrain (personal communication) wondered whether ΠΟΛΥΤΕΡΠΟΣ could represent the genitive Πολυτερπους - i.e. (the image) of Polyterpes - but, although there are parallels for this use of a genitive label elsewhere, I can find none on a Corinthian vase.

¹⁴ Basel Antikenmuseum, Kappel 425 = Boutron-Oliver, *Douris* 51 (and plate 36); and Boston MFA 1973.88, on which see below. See also Bundrick 2005, 74-80.

yperpos on a vase celebrating Pyrwias' victory. Perhaps his local fame as aulete lent luster to any *agon* he accompanied.

(2) Corinthian vase inscriptions (for which see Lorber 1979; Arena 1967) tend to be simple; if not mere names, then the shortest of dedicatory formulas: X^{nom} ἀνέθηκε Y^{dat}. Although Corinthian *aryballoi* are more likely to show writing than those of any city other than Athens,¹⁵ the only one of comparable length is IG 14.865 = Lorber 9 (675-650) Ταταίης ἐμὶ λέγουθος. ἡὸς δ' ἄν με κλέφσει θυφλὸς ἔσται.¹⁶

Metrics The string of letters remaining was almost certainly intended as a hexameter, although this has been either contested or, if accepted as an epic line, damned as a poor example (“subliterary”). “Poor” is too harsh, however; our composer may not have been Homer, but nothing in this line cannot be found in epic. (i) The Line shape is SDDSD, a relatively rare one in Homer, where it occurs only 5.23% of the time. (ii) A word as long as προχορευόμενος is conducive to a hephthememiral caesura, as here. (iii) A continuant (μ, ν, λ, ρ, σ, ϕ) in hexameters may be prolonged (‘doubled’ or, more properly, ‘geminated’), usually in the princeps,¹⁷ in order to lengthen metrically the preceding syllable;¹⁸ here the final sigma of προχορευόμενος.¹⁹ (iv) Usually the continuant begins a word; here, however, it ends one, as at *Il.* 1.85 θεοπρόπιον ὄ τι οἴσθα; *Thgn.* 2 ἀρχόμενος οὐδ', 1232 ὤλετο μὲν Ἰλίου ἀκρόπολις. (v) The iota of Πυρφίας is naturally short, but proper names containing the pattern — υ — are often modified to fit

¹⁵ See Osborne, Pappas 2007, 141.

¹⁶ For the formulaic syntax of which, see Cingano 2018, 31-6. The inscription falls just short of being iambic: “I can’t scan it, and I doubt if Tataie believed herself to be writing verse”, Beazley 1927-28, 187 fn. 4.

¹⁷ Exceptions are *Il.* 5.158 = 21.368 = 22.91 πολλὰ λισσομεν-, *Il.* 24.755 πολλὰ ῥυστάζεσκεν, *Od.* 13.438 = 17.198 = 18.109 πυκνὰ ῥωγαλέην. If we were to allow this at *Parm.* 8.36 οὐδὲν γὰρ <ἦ τι οἴσθα> ἔστιν ἦ ἔσται, the commonly accepted insertion would not be necessary. It should not have been proposed in any case, since ἦ (<*ἦFé) experiences corruption only six times in Homer; cf. van Leeuwen 1918, 86-7, so that <ἦ> would merely be a conjecture that replaces one statistical oddity for another that is already in the manuscripts.

¹⁸ This is easy enough in itself, but is often helped by historical reasons (e.g. initial υ- <*σν-) that allowed the practice to be extended more generally. Even so, there are limits; cf. Monro 1882, 275-8. This doubling between words is occasionally noted in the papyri (e.g. ἐνὶ μμεγάρους), but is printed as such in modern editions only when internal (e.g. ἔλλαβε = ἔλαβε). The modern notation of a macron above the doubled consonant, as employed by Snell in his Teubner Pindar, has its uses. It is, however, a common error to think that the preceding vowel has been lengthened; cf. e.g. Hartel 1873, 7 “die Längung kurzer vocalisch auslautender Silben vor den Liquididen λ μ ν ρ”. One should, for example, rather follow the indications of the papyri to think (and say) ἐνὶ μμεγάρους and μέγα ἄφφιάχοντες, where one supplies a missing digamma and then doubles it!

¹⁹ It is probably just a coincidence that the geminate sigma, by being the first not to be written retrograde, partakes of two words at once; i.e. the syllabic breaks are -εῦ ο με νος σαυ του δε.

a hexameter.²⁰ Compare in particular the Corinthian inscriptions IG IV 358 = CEG 132 (7th c.) || Δφένιᾶ τόδε [σαῦμα], IG 9.1.867 = CEG 143 (Corcyra, a Corinthian colony) || ηυίου Τλασίᾱφῶ Μενεκράτεος, IG 4.211 = CEG 356 (5th c., init.) || Σίμιδον μ' ἀνέθ<ε>κε, Simon. 32a.1 FGE = Ep. 60 Sider || Ἰφίων τόδ' ἔγραψε Κορίνθιος. For additional inscriptional examples, see Allen 1885-86, 75, as well as *Il.* 1.258, 2.419, *Od.* 14.159, Hes. *Theog.* 454, and Pind. *Pyth.* 1.71 and *Nem.* 9.28. In sum, for all its statistical oddities, the line is unmistakably an acceptable hexameter, and should not be damned with the label irregular, as the Roebucks and Guarducci do.²¹ As a one-off very likely composed by someone other than a professional bard, it, like its illustration, has its own charm. It is, moreover, the only verse on a Corinthian vase, although Lorber 105-106 lists some individual names that appear in their epic rather than Corinthian form.

Πυρρίας προχορευόμενος: Rather than being a nominal sentence with an understood ἐστί (“Pyrrhias is leading the dance”), which is rare where the predicate is a participle,²² these two words should be read simply as a syntax-free label, “Pyrrhias leading the dance”, which serves as a title, such as for an object in a museum or the title of a written work (*viz* this very chapter); or, more pertinently, on Greek objects, e.g. an *aryballos* with Ἀσωποδώρου ἡλήγυθος (Athens 15375; ARV² 447.274, 1653).²³ On our *aryballos*, however, it has been incorporated into the meter; so, implicitly, Raubitschek (1968, 22), “Pyrrhias vortanzend”.²⁴ Compare the near contemporary IG I³ 1261 = CEG 24 (Attica, ca. 540) σῆμα Φρασικλείας· κόρη κεκλήσομαι αἰί, where a nominal sentence with an understood first-person εἰμί would be quite rare.²⁵ Exceptions that prove the rule are Pl. *Lach.* 180a ἐπαινῶ τε

²⁰ Cf. Wachter 2001, § 222.

²¹ Annibaldis, Vox 1977 would like to impose a verse scheme that incorporates πολυτερπῶς: “prosodic stesicoreo” (— — — — —) + 2 anapests + reizianum, but this seems to credit our poet with more skill than he would be likely to have.

²² For the construction (noun +) εἰμί (vel sim.) + (non-perfect) participle, cf. Soph. *Ai.* 588 μὴ ἐμὲ προδοῦς γένῃ, Thuc. 1.38, Pl. *Leg.* 895d, D. 19.36, K-G 1.39-40.

²³ Cf. too Protagoras’ οἱ Καταβάλλοντες, Aristophanes’ Ἐκκλησιάζουσαι and Θεσμοφοριάζουσαι.

²⁴ Boegehold 1965, 260, citing Whatmough, rev. of Hofmann, *Lateinische Syntax und Stilistik*, 59 (1964, 111-12), labels these words a nominative absolute (assent. Annibaldis, Vox 1977, 187), but the following δέ speaks against this.

²⁵ Svenbro’s translation (1998, 23) is nonsense: “Moi, sēma de Phrasikleia, m’appellerai toujours fille” (in Lloyd’s translation, “I, Phrasikleia’s sēma, shall always be called girl”, 17). Schefold’s is worse: “Sieh Phrasikleias Mai! Fur immer heisst sie nun Kore” (1973, 138). Understanding the first two words as a label is facilitated by their being set off by themselves on one line:

ΣΕΜΑ ΦΡΑΣΙΚΛΕΙΑΣ	σῆμα Φρασικλείας.
ΚΟΡΕ ΚΕΚΛΕΣΟΜΑΙ	κόρη κεκλήσομαι

ὑμῶν τὴν διάνοιαν καὶ κοινωνεῖν ἔτοιμος [sc. εἶμι], οἶμαι δέ..., where the ellipsis is mitigated by its being surrounded by first-person verbs; *CEG* 315 (Attic, ca. 470) ἐγὼ Χάρις Ἀντιφάνους παῖς; and (iii) Simon. 83.1 *FGE* = *Ep.* 50 Sider θηρῶν μὲν κάρτιστος ἐγώ. In both our vase and the Phrasikleia stone, a metrical label continues with a clause that refers to the subject in a different case, nominative to genitive with Pyrwias, genitive to nominative with Phrasikleia. Occasionally a label of this sort incorporates the author rather than the subject; note in particular Anon. 173 *FGE* (= Ath. 11.19) γραμμαὶ Παρρασίοιο, τέχνα Μυός. ἐμμι δὲ ἔργον | Ἰλίου αἰπεινᾶς, ἂν ἔλον Αἰακίδαι, “Drawing by Parrhasius, execution by Mys. I am a work (showing)...”.²⁶ Perhaps the neatest parallel is *SEG* 41.385 (7th c.) Πύρρο δ' ἄπ<α>.²⁷

Πυρφίας: A local Doric form of the more familiar Πυρρίας/-ίης, appearing elsewhere in this form on another Corinthian *aryballos* (600-575), a symposium scene on which is painted (at least) [Π]υρρίας. It is tempting to imagine that this is an ancestor of our Pyrwias; cf. also *IG* 4.496 (Mycenae, 6th c.) ἐπ' Ἀντία καὶ Πυρφία, “in the priesthoods/ magistracies of Antias and Pyrwias”.

προχορευόμενος: Choruses very often had leaders; cf. Pind. *Parth.* fr. 94c ὁ Μοισαγέτας με καλεῖ χορευῶσαι | [Α]πόλλων (where Apollo is not present and “me” stands for each chorister); *Hom. Hymn Artem.* 13.18 ἔξάρχουσα χορούς; Callim. *Del.* 313 χοροῦ δ' ἠγήσατο Θησεύς.²⁸ In these and doubtless often elsewhere, the leader was visually distinct and would or could perform steps that distinguished him or her from the others, although perhaps not regularly so much as between a modern prima ballerina and the corps du ballet. Here Pyrwias seems younger (and shorter) than the six choristers in his train and is clearly performing his own steps; see further below.²⁹ The

ΑΙΕΙ, ΑΝΤΙ ΓΑΜΟ	αἰεὶ, ἀντὶ γάμου
ΠΑΡΑ ΘΕΟΝ ΤΟΥΤΟ	παρὰ θεῶν τοῦτο
ΛΑΧΟΣ' ΟΝΟΜΑ.	λαχοῦσ' ὄνομα.

Contrast *CEG* 72 (Attica, ca. 500-480) σῆμα τόδ' εἶμι Κρίτο Τελέφο Ἀφι[δναί]ο.

²⁶ Date unsure; see Page, *ad loc.* Cf. also the prose titles of Elean inscriptions: φράτρα τοῖρ Φαλείοις; e.g. *InO* 9 (ca. 500-450) φράτρα τοῖρ Φαλείοις καὶ τοῖς Ἑρραίοις, “Treaty between the Eleans and the Heraeans”; cf. Nachmansohn 1941, 5.

²⁷ See Burzachechi 1973-74, 75.

²⁸ And note Aelius Aristides *Plato* 45.10 Jebb κορυφαῖος χοροῦ, ναυτῶν κυβερνήτης, στρατιωτῶν στρατηγός, δήμου ρήτωρ ἠγεῖται.

²⁹ That the six are in fact dancing seems clear to all – “a dancing chorus” in the first sentence of the Roebucks’ *editio princeps* –, but Snodgrass 2006, 402, who says that Pyrwias’ “companions stand in a taut, attentive pose which strongly suggests that they are waiting for their turn to come”. But if this were the case, why paint them in the first place? Their bent legs suggest rather that they are dancing far less vigorously than Pyrwias, or perhaps (so, e.g. Guarducci) just beginning to join in; cf. the similar group

verb that describes his leading, however, is quite rare, appearing elsewhere before the third-century CE only once: Eur. *Phoen.* 790b κῶμον ἀναυλότατον προχορεύεις.³⁰ The force of the middle is probably like that of the *Agamemnon*'s watchman saying αὐτός τ' ἔγωγε φροῖμιον χορεύσομαι (31); i.e. he will dance for himself (a point emphasised by αὐτός). Similarly, Pyrwias, with his eye on the prize, is leading the chorus more for his own purpose than for the chorus as a whole; i.e. an indirect reflexive middle.³¹

αὐτοῦ δέ φοι: The last word is not found elsewhere on a Corinthian inscription, but does appear twice on a contemporary bronze tablet found in the nearby (ca. 50 km) Argive Heraion, *IG* 4.506. (Corruption of φοι is unexceptional; cf. *Il.* 1.118 ἐν δέ οἱ ἦτορ). With sufficient parallels on Corinthian vessels for O representing the long vowel later written as the spurious diphthong OY, there is no reason to follow the Roebucks' reading the vase as αὐτῶ<ι>; cf. Lorber (1979, 36), who cites Μαλέρο and ἠερακλέος, as well as inscriptions such as Φορίνθο.³² This syntagma is a striking juxtaposition of genitive and dative, each referring to the same person, which elsewhere is found more spread out: *Il.* 14.25-26 λάκε δέ σφι περὶ χροῖ χαλκὸς ἀπειρήσ | νυσομένων ξίφεσιν τε καὶ ἔγχεσιν, 16.531 οἱ ὦκ' ἤκουσε μέγας θεὸς εὐξαμένοιο, *Od.* 16.155-157, 14.527 οἱ βίπτου περικήδετο νόσφιν ἐόντος, *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 37 τόφρα οἱ ἐλπίς ἔθελγε μέγαν νόον ἀχθυμένης περ, with Richardson's note; Theoc. 2.83-84 ὥς μοι πυρὶ θυμὸς ἰάφθη | δειλαίας. See Wackernagel (1924, 77), who also discusses the dative alone to denote possession.

Taking φοι as a dative, however, is a distinctly minority opinion, for most follow Latte (1956), who, adducing Schwyzer, Debrunner 1950, 189-90, argued that it is rather a genitive (= οὔ, here intensified by αὐτό), but the supposed parallels for this are far better taken as straightforward datives; e.g. ἡμῖν + (ethical) dative at Pind.

of dancers arranged 2 × 3 on Basel Antikenmuseum BS 415: <http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/XDB/ASP/recordDetails.asp?id=1451C241-DD83-4763-AFB6-786C657896FA&noResults=&recordCount=&databaseID=&search=>. It should also be clear from this that the boy depicted is Pyrwias, upon which obvious inference Smith (2016, 148) oddly casts doubt, along with some other notions not followed by others, such as the leap representing not the dance itself but Pyrwias' leap for joy on hearing that he has won; or that the verse that can only exist on the vase is somehow being produced by the aulete.

30 Where the schol. *ad loc.* would nullify the force of the prefix: προχορεύεις: ἡ προπλεονάζει.

31 Only Schneidewin of *Agamemnon* commentators has noticed this: "Auf seine Hand (medium) will er vor der offiziellen χορῶν κατάστασηις vor lauter Lust tanzen". Cf. Allan 2003, 112, "The subject is affected in that s/he derives benefit from the action performed"; Wachter 2001, 46.

32 It is not to be printed as αὐτο<ῦ>, as some do (e.g. Threatte 1965), which suggests that a letter is missing. Either keep it as αὐτό or rewrite as though Attic: αὐτοῦ.

Ol. 2.14 and *Eur. Ba.* 336 are in fact examples of partitive appositives (as noted by Dodds ad *Eur. loc.*); and although at *Hdt.* 1.82.8 τῶν οἱ συλλοχιτέων διθαρμένων, 3.15.3 ἀπέλαβε τήν οἱ ὁ πατήρ εἶχε ἀρχήν, and 3.153.1 τῶν οἱ σιτφόρων ἡμιόνων μία ἔτεκε, οἱ clearly has a distinct possessive sense, it would not have been understood by a late fifth-century audience as anything other than a dative. Chantraine's (1953, 71-2) explanation is better: "datifs comportant une valeur 'possessive' [...] Cette syntaxe a entraîné des tours où le génitif est *apparemment* [emphasis added] en apposition au datif".

ὄλπα: This term (*olpe*) is used nowadays to describe "a slender oenochoe with a sagging belly", even though "the distinction is not borne out in the ancient writings" (Folsom 1967, 164), although one can imagine such a shape being dipped in a *krater* for the purpose of pouring wine for symposiasts, as is consistent with *Ion fr.* 10 *TrGF* ἐκ ζαθέων πιθακνῶν ἀφύσαντες ὄλπαις | οἶνον ὑπερφίαλον κελαρύζετε. On the other hand, clearly something other than an oenochoe is mentioned by *Achaeus fr.* 19 *TrGF* λιθάργυρος {δ'} | ὄλπη παρηωρεῖτο χρίματος πλέα. Even more suggestive of the athlete's oil container is *Theoc.* 2.156, where *Simaetha's* boyfriend visited her house so frequently that he used to leave his *olpe* there, the equivalent of the modern toothbrush: καὶ παρ' ἐμὴν ἐτίθει τὰν Δωρίδα πολλακίς ὄλπαν, where "Doric *olpe*" might well refer to the "Corinthian *aryballos*".³³ The upshot is that, although this is the only vase to do so, there is no reason to doubt that our vase is identifying itself as an *olpe*.

2 Interpretation

The vase is most reasonably taken to celebrate *Pyrwias'* victory in the dance portrayed, commissioned either by his parents or by the authorities who oversaw the competition; that is, as either an unofficial or official prize. The obvious parallel is the inscription of the *Dipylon* vase (ca. 740 BCE), which was also a prize vessel with an ad-hoc hexameter referring to the dancer, albeit without an accompanying illustration: ἥος νῦν ὄρχεσθῶν πάντων ἀταλότατα παίζει (vel -εἶ), | τὸ τόδε.³⁴ An *aryballos* is normally designed for use, but the *Roebucks* may be right to see it as a dedication, as they detect no signs of wear

³³ The *lekythos* too could have this function; cf. Sider 1992, especially 363 fn. 9, where I quote Evelyn Harrison 1989: "one man's *aryballos* is another's *lekythion* or *olpe*"; Krause 1854 ap. Wegener 1946, 1: "Was die *Lekythos* bei den Athenern, das war die *ὄλπη*, ὄλπα, ὄλπις bei den Dorern, ein Ölfaschchen, welches die *Erheben* bei sich trugen, wenn sie die gymnastischen Übungsplätze besuchten"; Beazley 1927-28, 187.

³⁴ See Powell 1988, 66-7, who makes a good case for this vase also celebrating "an athletic contest in the form of an acrobatic dance".

(it might, though, have been treated gently) other than that which it suffered from burial (which might have obscured such signs). Its find-spot below Apollo's temple also favors its having been a dedication (so, e.g. Bookidis, Stroud 2004, 413), although this does not absolutely preclude its having been used as well. I myself like the idea of Pyrwias carrying and proudly showing it off to his friends.

As for the dance portrayed, one can go only so far on the way to certainty when presented with only a static view.³⁵ Nonetheless it seems relatively safe to say that the dance portrayed qualifies as an instance of the ἀναπάλη, which is described by Ath. 14.631b ἔοικεν δὲ ἡ γυμνοπαιδικῇ³⁶ τῇ καλουμένῃ ἀναπάλη παρὰ τοῖς παλαιοῖς. γυμνοὶ γὰρ ὀρχοῦνται οἱ παῖδες πάντες, ἐρρυθμοὺς φορὰς τινὰς ἀποτελοῦντες καὶ σχήματά τινα τῶν χειρῶν κατὰ τὸ ἀνάπαλον, ὥστ' ἐμφαίνειν θεωρήματά τινα τῆς παλαιστρας καὶ τοῦ παγκρατίου, κινουῦντες ἐρρυθμῶς τοὺς πόδας (the gymnopedic dance resembles the one the ancients used to call *anapale*, in which all the boys dance naked, accomplishing some kind of rhythmic movement with gestures of the hands like those seen in wrestling, so that with rhythmic movements of their legs they put on a show akin to what is seen in wrestling and the pankration).³⁷ Another name that has been put forth may be nothing more than a synonym for essentially the same dance, namely the βίβασις, defined by Poll. *Onom.* 4.102 as follows: καὶ βίβασις δέ τι ἦν εἶδος Λακωνικῆς ὀρχήσεως, ἣς καὶ τὰ ἄλλα προυτίθετο οὐ τοῖς παισὶ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῖς κόραις· ἔδει δ' ἄλλεσθαι καὶ ψαύειν τοῖς ποσὶ πρὸς τὰς πυγὰς, καὶ ἠριθμεῖτο τὰ πηδήματα (the *bibasis* was a kind of Laconic dance, for which prizes were offered, not only for boys but for girls as well. It called for leaping [cf. ἀναπάλη] and touching one's buttocks with the feet; the leaps were counted).³⁸ Note the Spartan Lampito's excited exclamation at Ar. *Lys.* 81-82 μάλα γ', οἶῶ, ναὶ τὼ σιῶ· | γυμνάδδομαί γα καὶ ποτὶ πυγὰν ἄλλομαι. Annibaldis and Vox (1977, 183-4, however, may be going too far to see a reference to this sort of dance in *Hom. Hymn Ap.* 514-516, where we read of Ἀπόλλων ... κιθαρίζων καλὰ καὶ ὕψι βιβάς: the image of

³⁵ For the difficulties of inferring movement from a static painting, see, e.g. Smith 2016, 146.

³⁶ Cf. Ath. 14.630c τῆς λυρικῆς ποιήσεως τρεῖς· πυρρίχη γυμνοπαιδικὴ ὑπορχηματικὴ. Neoptolemus' leap in the air at Eur. *Andr.* 1139 τὸ Τροϊκὸν πηδημα πηδήσας ποδοῖν, may be a feature of pyrrhic dancing; see Borthwick 1967; Simon 1978. And on jumps in athletics, see Jüthner 1968, 2, ch. B "Sprung", 159-225.

³⁷ For archaic examples of what he calls "akrobatische Einzeltänze", see Wegner 1968, 65-8.

³⁸ Pollux continues with ὅθεν καὶ ἐπὶ μιᾶς ἦν ἐπίγραμμα· "χίλια †ποκα† βίβαντι, πλεῖστα δὴ τῶν πηποκα", "jumping a thousand times, the most ever". Cf. Gal. *San. Tu.* 6.145 K τὰ τοιαῦτα γυμνάσια σφοδρά, σκάψαι καὶ δισκεῦσαι [καὶ κινήσαι] καὶ πηδήσαι συνεχῶς ἄνευ τοῦ διαναπαύεσθαι.



Figure 3 Boston MFA 01.8020. Onesimos, ca. 500-490 BCE. A boy practicing leaps with the aid of a friend.
<https://collections.mfa.org/objects/153699/drinking-cup-kylix-depicting-pentathletes?ctx=352d0e8c-e4d6-42d5-a59b-74bc547e5a2a&idx=0>

anybody, let alone Apollo, leaping high while playing the kithara is an unseemly one.

That our scene would qualify for an *anapale* (whatever else an ancient might have called it) is shown by its closest parallel on a vase in Boston showing a scene of youths practicing various gymnastic activities [fig. 3].

An even closer parallel to our vase, also in Boston, shows two boys doing a leaping dance to the tune of an *aulos* (an image closely repeated on the other side) [fig. 4].³⁹

Pyrwias, however, does not act alone. The $\pi\rho\omicron$ - and the image suggest that his movements are somehow synchronised with the different ones of the chorus.

At this point, I would like to make an admittedly tentative suggestion, based on the acrobat scene in figure 3, where a trainer is holding up his staff. Since this would not be necessary to guide the boy once in the air, it may be intended to indicate the height he is to attain. And since, furthermore, many Greek dances regularly called

³⁹ On the Boston vase, cf. Robertson 1977.

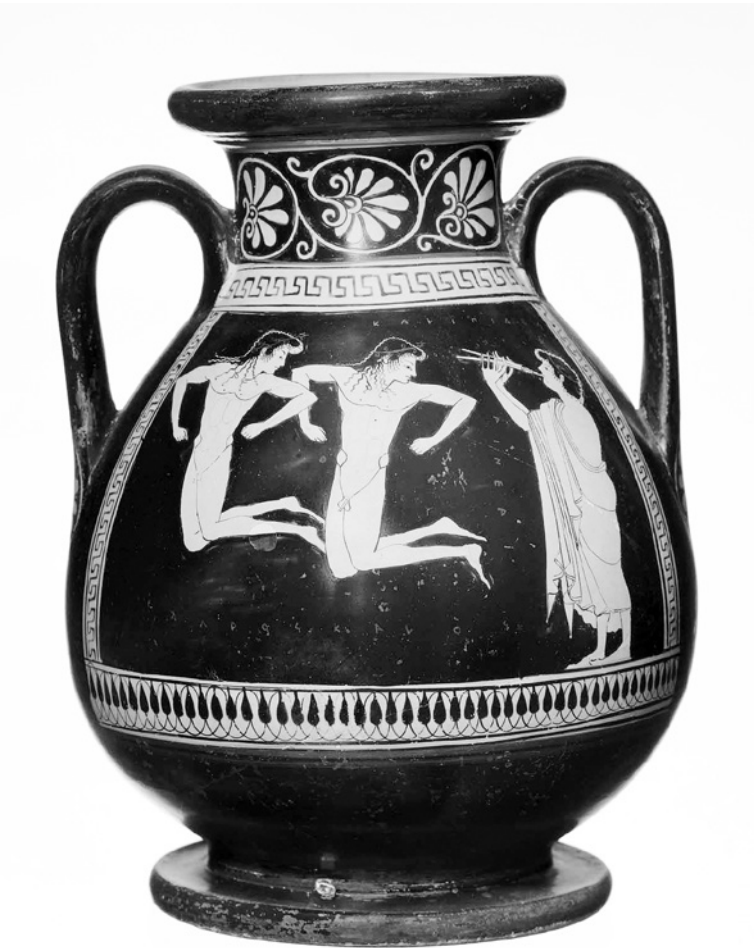


Figure 4 Boston MFA 1973.88, ca. 520-515 BCE. Circle of Euthymides. Boys dancing and jumping to the *aulos*. <https://collections.mfa.org/objects/153847/twohandled-storage-jar-pelike-depicting-young-athletes-ju?ctx=ecf9af27-ba61-4840-a8f6-86671c3dc344&idx=14>

for the wearing or carrying of various objects,⁴⁰ I find it tempting to imagine that there was a rope held up for Pyrwias to dance/leap over, a rope that is here indicated by the sinuous line of hexameter. That is, he is comparable to the two acrobats and dancers described at *Il.* 18.602-606:

ἄλλοτε δ' αὖ θρέξασκον ἐπὶ στίχας ἀλλήλοισι.
πολλὸς δ' ἰμερόεντα χορὸν περιστάθ' ὄμιλος
τερπόμενοι· δοιῶ δὲ κυβιστητῆρε κατ' αὐτούς
μολπῆς ἐξάρχοντες ἐδίνεον κατὰ μέσσοις. 605

If the idea of the hexameter as jump-rope is too much to swallow, we can at least subscribe to Smith's elegant observation:

The inscription frames all of the figures in the scene and follows the pattern of their composition and movement. Indeed, rather than physically marking off the dancers one from another, or simply isolating the winner, the letters and words draw attention to the action and enhance the circumstances. (2016, 148)⁴¹

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⁴⁰ For example, *Hom. Hymn Artem.* 13.16-18 ἔνθα κατακρεμάσασα παλίντονα τόξα καὶ ἰοῦς | ἠγείται χαρίεντα περὶ χροῖ κόσμον ἔχουσα, | ἐξάρχουσα χορούς; Lawler 1964, 107-9.

⁴¹ It was only after this chapter was with the editors that I came across Deborah Steiner's description of the relationship between Pyrwias and the letters, far more elegant than Smith's and mine 2018, 183-6.

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