

## RED-FIGURE KYLIX ATTRIBUTED TO MAKRON

Greek, Attic, ca. 490-480 B.C.

Terracotta

D: 21 cm (without handles) (8.27 in)

Reference: 28883



This vessel, outstanding for its technical and artistic qualities, was decorated in the so-called red-figure technique (the background of the scenes is covered with black paint, while the figures remain in the orange-red color of the clay, as a sort of negative of the older black-figure technique).

Kylikes are among the most important and commonly used forms in the repertoire of Greek and especially Attic potters. They were the wine-drinking cups par excellence at the symposia, the ancient Greek banquets; strictly reserved for men, the symposium was a social institution when eating and drinking for pleasure was accompanied by music, dancing or recitals, with the joyful presence of young women (heteres) and young men.

Our example belongs to the type C, which differs from the other largely widespread type at that time (type B) by its high and concave edge. The bowl of the vessel is supported by a disc-shaped foot and a cylindrical stem. The regular, low body terminates in a flared edge and a simply rounded lip. The two U-shaped handles are placed at the edge that marks the lower rim: they divide into two halves the surface available for painted decoration.

The lower part of the vessel, the rim and a large inner portion are painted in black. The figural scenes unfold on the friezes between the handles and in the tondo inside the cup. The subject, clearly connected to the purpose of the vessel, shows five symposiasts quietly reclining on their klinés (banquet couch), discussing and gesticulating: one of the guests is represented in the tondo (maybe the organizer of the symposium), while the other four occupy the two external sides (forming two couples).

Iconographically, they all look similar: adult males with a short hair and a pointed beard, a red crown encircling their foreheads. Their long himations (coat), with undulating folds, cover their left shoulder and their legs. They straighten their chest, leaning their left arm on two large striped cushions; the right arm is extended forward. In the left hand, two figures hold a skyphos, two others a rhyton (drinking horn), the last one holds a kylix, the archetypal drinking cup for symposiasts. Their legs are stretched or nonchalantly bent forward. One of the figures (the only man who turns his head backwards) is talking or reciting verses (his mouth is open), while the others are silent and appear to listen to him.

This vessel is a beautiful example of contemporary Attic production for its remarkable artistic and technical quality. Known for several decades, it was attributed by M. Padgett to Makron, one of the most famous and prolific painters in the early Classical Greek period. This hypothesis is reinforced by comparing our kylix with a fragmentary cup of the same type housed in Oxford, on which Makron also represented a symposium with four similar men reclining on a couch, including small details (for instance, the striped cushions, the drinking vessels, the meander, etc.).

Makron, who seems to have worked almost exclusively for the potter Hiero, was a specialist in drinking vessels, especially cups and sometimes skyphoi, which he decorated mostly with scenes of daily life generally associated with the Dionysian world, or with the sphere of the symposium or sports. The mythological scenes are rare.

### CONDITION

Complete and in very good condition, but reassembled from various fragments; some gap-fills and restorations.

## PROVENANCE

Ex- Galerie Segredakis, Paris, 1960s; Ex- French private collection; Christie's, London, 24 October 2013, lot 41.

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## EXHIBITED

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

On Makron and his work, see:

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