

Notes on an inscribed *kyathos* from Cerveteri

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1. Over a decade ago, Maria Antonietta Rizzo and Mauro Cristofani published an Etruscan inscription incised on the conical base of a *kyathos* from a tomb (no. 1) excavated in the locality of San Paolo (Cerveteri).¹ The *kyathos* was recovered broken into fragments, but conservators were successful in restoring the cup to something close to its original state. The inscription, which was incised in a spiral around the conical foot of the cup, survived in good shape, except for two places. Two letters are missing at the beginning, and a few letters are missing about two-thirds of the way through the inscription. Cristofani reconstructed the text of the inscription as follows:

(1) **[mi]ni venel paiθina[s mu]lunice**

Given that this inscription is a dedication, an exceedingly common epigraphic type in archaic Etruscan,² the forms restored by Cristofani are in no way controversial. He observes that the verb form **[mu]lunice** is missing a vowel in the antepenultimate syllable and that it should be emended to **[mu]lunice**. He also points out that the family name **paiθina[s]** may be compared to **paiθunas**, which is found at Volsinii (ET Vs 3.4), and to **paiθnas**, which is attested at Volcii (ET Vc 2.41).³ It turns out, however, that a much more compelling *comparandum* exists. The family name **paiθinaie** was incised on a fragment of the conical base of a *kyathos* recently recovered at Poggio Civitate (ETP 353).⁴ Formally, **paiθinaie** is a derivative in *-ie* built from the patronymic base, *paiθena-*, the ancestor of the forms attested at Volcii and Volsinii and, according to Cristofani, of the form on the San Paolo *kyathos*.

2. The similarities between these two inscriptions and the bucchero ceramic on which they were incised may run deeper than an etymological relationship connecting the family names. The *kyathos* from Poggio Civitate was not a locally produced product the bucchero fragments of this cup are unlike other bucchero products produced at the site.⁵ The *kyathos* is, therefore, an import and one that may well have been made in a workshop at Caere. Consider the similarities (1)

The Poggio Civitate *kyathos* and the San Paolo *kyathos* were incised with dedicatory inscriptions in sinistroverse direction spiraling around the conical bases of the cups. (2) Both inscriptions have Object - Subject - Verb word order, which is relatively rare in this type of text.⁶ (3) In both inscriptions the letter *gamma* has the form of a shepherd's staff, Γ , and the letter *theta* is a small circle without any internal punctuation, Θ .⁷ This combination of letters is a rarity on Etruscan inscriptions from this early period.⁸

3. These facts conspire to suggest that the family name on the *kyathos* recovered at San Paolo be completed as **paiθina[ie]** or **paiθina[ies]** rather than **paiθina[s]** and that the inscription be restored as in (2). The family name on the San Paolo inscription would then find a perfect match with the family name on the *kyathos* recovered at Poggio Civitate.⁹

(2) **[mi]ni venel paiθina[ie(s)] mulluv<a>nice** (ETP 196)

4. If the family name on the San Paolo *kyathos* is restored as **pai]ina[ie(s)]**, it is possible to connect the two inscribed *kyathoi* and speculate along the lines offered by Colonna in his note on the Poggio Civitate *kyathos*.¹⁰ First of all, members of the same immediate family, perhaps brothers, perhaps father and son, had these two cups inscribed. Second, a member of the **paiθina[ie(s)]** family from Caere was in contact with the residents of the Orientalizing complex at Poggio Civitate and had a finely decorated and inscribed *kyathos* sent there as a gift. We might imagine an exchange of gifts to cement political or economic ties, which is an intriguing idea given the geographical distance between the two communities. There is also another, more intriguing, possibility that deserves to be mentioned. The *kyathos* from Poggio Civitate was recovered from the remains of the so-called OC3Tripartite Building. We might imagine, if the Tripartite Building at Poggio Civitate had a religious function,¹¹ that this cup was offered as a votive dedication to the deity or deities worshipped there.

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FOOTNOTES

1. Rizzo & Cristofani 1993. The inscription was also published in Sgubini Moretti 2001:166–167.
2. For this variety of ‘iscrizione parlante’, see Agostiniani 1981.
3. Etruscan inscriptions are cited from Rix et al. 1991 = (ET) and from Wallace, Shamgochian, and Patterson 2004–2006 = (ETP).
4. Wallace (in press). Colonna 2005:331 reads this section of the inscription in a different manner: **paiθina çe**[. His reading cannot be correct, however. There is no doubt that the letter that he takes to be a ç is in fact an i.
5. Neilsen and Tuck 2001:44, 50–55.
6. See Schulze-Thulin 1992:180.
7. For discussion of the distribution of these letters on inscriptions from the Orientalizing period see Bagnasco Gianni 1993.
8. The only other inscription with this combination of letterforms is ET Cr 0.1, which was incised on a kyathos recovered from the *Tomba Calabresi* at Cerveteri.
9. The two inscribed *kyathoi* were discussed by Colonna 2005:332, but he took the family names to be **paiθina-**, which is impossible for the inscription on the Poggio Civitate *kyathos*. The cups and inscriptions can be connected only if the family name on the San Paolo *kyathos* is restored as **paiθina[ie(s)]**. Colonna also notes that ETP 4 from Vetulonia, of which only a small fragment remains ([---]e p[---]), could well belong to this same group.
10. Colonna 2005:332.
11. Tuck 2000:111.

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