Sonya Nevin, "Entry on: Ostrakon [Όστρακον (Óstrakon)] by Thetis Authentics Ltd. ", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/767. Entry version as of October 30, 2026.

Thetis Authentics Ltd.

# Ostrakon [Όστρακον (Óstrakon)]

*Greece (2010)*

TAGS: Aristides Athens Cimon / Kimon Graeco-Persian Wars Greek Art Greek History Miltiades Ostracism Pericles Themistocles






*We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.*

| General information | |
|---|---|
| *Title of the work* | Ostrakon [Όστρακον (Óstrakon)] |
| *Studio/Production Company* | Thetis Authentics Ltd. |
| *Country of the First Edition* | Greece |
| *Country/countries of popularity* | Greece and English-speaking countries |
| *Original Language* | Greek, English |
| *First Edition Date* | 2010 |
| *First Edition Details* | *Ostrakon* [όστρακον]. Thetis Authentics Ltd., 2010. |
| *Official Website* | thetis.gr (accessed: October 30, 2018) |
| *Genre* | Puzzles and games |
| *Target Audience* | Crossover (5+; Instructions state: Keep away from children under 3–4 years old) |
| *Author of the Entry* | Sonya Nevin, University of Roehampton, sonya.nevin@roehampton.ac.uk |
| *Peer-reviewer of the Entry* | Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk<br>Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com |



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## Creators



**Thetis Authentics Ltd. (Company)**

Thetis Authentics was founded by Dr Eleni Aloupi-Siotis in 1999, replacing the 1994-founded Thetis Hellas archaeological consulting company based in Athens, Greece. Thetis Authentics uses non-invasive techniques to date artefacts and art, mostly for museums and private collections. The company expanded to include the creation of ceramic replicas of ancient artefacts. Dr Aloupi-Siotis holds a PhD in Analytical Chemistry based on research on archaeological ceramics at the Institute of Materials Science (NCSR Demokritos, Athens/University of Ioannina). She taught Archaeometry at the University of Thessaly before going on to work as a forensic expert at the Greek Ministry of Justice's Court of Appeals, and, then, to found Thetis Hellas.

Sources:

Official website (accessed: October 30, 2018);

Eleni Aloupi's profile at independent.academia.edu (accessed: October 30, 2018).

Prepared by Sonya Nevin, University of Roehampton, sonya.nevin@roehampton.ac.uk



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## Additional information

Summary

The Thetis Authentics Ostrakon game challenges people to "excavate" a slab of plaster to discover reproductions of pottery fragments (ostracons or "ostraca"). One of the fragments will be an imitation of an ostracon used in a political ostracism – an occasion when adult male Athenians of the classical period would scratch (or get someone else to scratch) onto a sherd of pottery the name of an individual whom they wished to see exiled from the city for a certain limited time. The person whose name appeared most frequently in the vote would be banished accordingly. This was regarded as an effective way to reduce political deadlock and to reduce risk of tyranny. The set also includes a wooden chisel for excavating with, a toothbrush for removing the remnants of plaster, and a protective mask to cover mouth and nose.

The set comes with a bilingual information sheet. The sheet invites the reader to learn about ostracism by reading the contents and examining the finds. The sheet explains the basics of the process involved in an ostracism. There are images of all the ostraca in the series, featuring Aristides, Themistocles, Kimon, and Pericles. The careers of each of these individuals are described in circa. 50 words. The information sheet contains safety guidance for the excavating process. Readers are urged to look up terms such as "black and red figured decoration techniques", "black glazed pottery", "glazed ceramics", and "glass" on the internet to earn more.

Analysis

For analysis of the overall series, please see the *Pinax. Gods and Heroes. Athena* [πίναξ. θεοί και Ηρωες. Αθηνά] in this database.

This edition from the puzzle series benefits from the enclosure in plaster. The physical effort involved in digging the pottery out adds a further hands-on experience of discovery to the process. There is the enjoyable element of anticipation and uncertainty; like a real archaeologist, the young excavator does not know exactly what they are going to unearth.

The information sheet provides fairly limited guidance about ancient pottery or culture. One positive is that the images within the sheet reproduce all the ostraca from the series, so the "excavators" are able



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to compare the one that they have unearthed with other examples. The personalities chosen for the Ostrakon series are famous figures from the classical era and amongst those most commonly named on ostraca: Aristides, Themistocles, Kimon, and Pericles. Each named individual is given a basic biography. There is, however, no guidance on reading the ostraca. Excavators will be able to match the sherd that they have dug up to its image in the information sheet, and thus to connect it to the correct biography, but there is no guidance on how to read the Greek alphabet, and there is no explanation of the patronymics that appear as part of each name. Only Kimon's father (Miltiades) is mentioned by name at all, and this is included more in relation to Kimon's social position as the son of the victor of the Battle of Marathon than as an explanation of the "ΜΙΛΤΙΑΔΟ" on the ostracon. The piece in the box sampled by the author of the entry featured Aristides the Just (along with three further decorated sherds from a different pot). The information sheet includes a lively ostracism-related story about Aristides drawn from Plutarch (Plut. *Arist*. 7), but it does not draw attention to the fact that the voter who wrote this particular sherd spelt Aristides' name wrong, nor explain the patronymic. The absence of any guidance on this front indicates that the product originated in Greece, where the alphabet and use of patronymics would not require explanation, and that the manufacturers neglected to consider what might be useful in an international market. Nonetheless, these well-made replicas offer a fun haptic experience of 'artefacts' that have the potential to be engaging, educational, and inspirational.

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|---|---|
| Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts | Aristides Athens Cimon / Kimon Graeco-Persian Wars Greek Art Greek History Miltiades Ostracism Pericles Themistocles |
| Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture | Historical figures History Justice Names Play* Rejection Society Values |



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