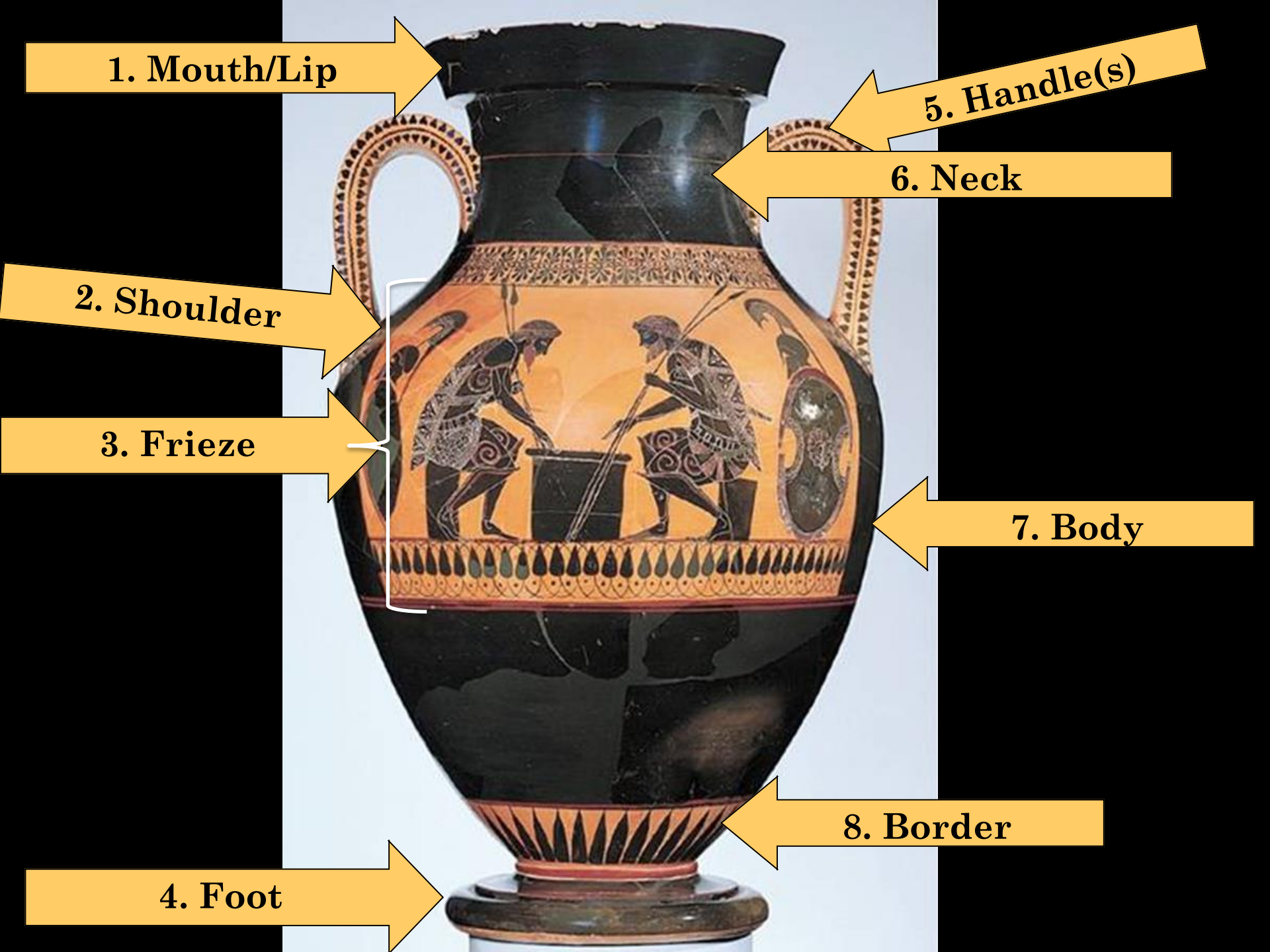


# Ancient Greek Pottery



1. Mouth/Lip

5. Handle(s)

6. Neck

2. Shoulder

3. Frieze

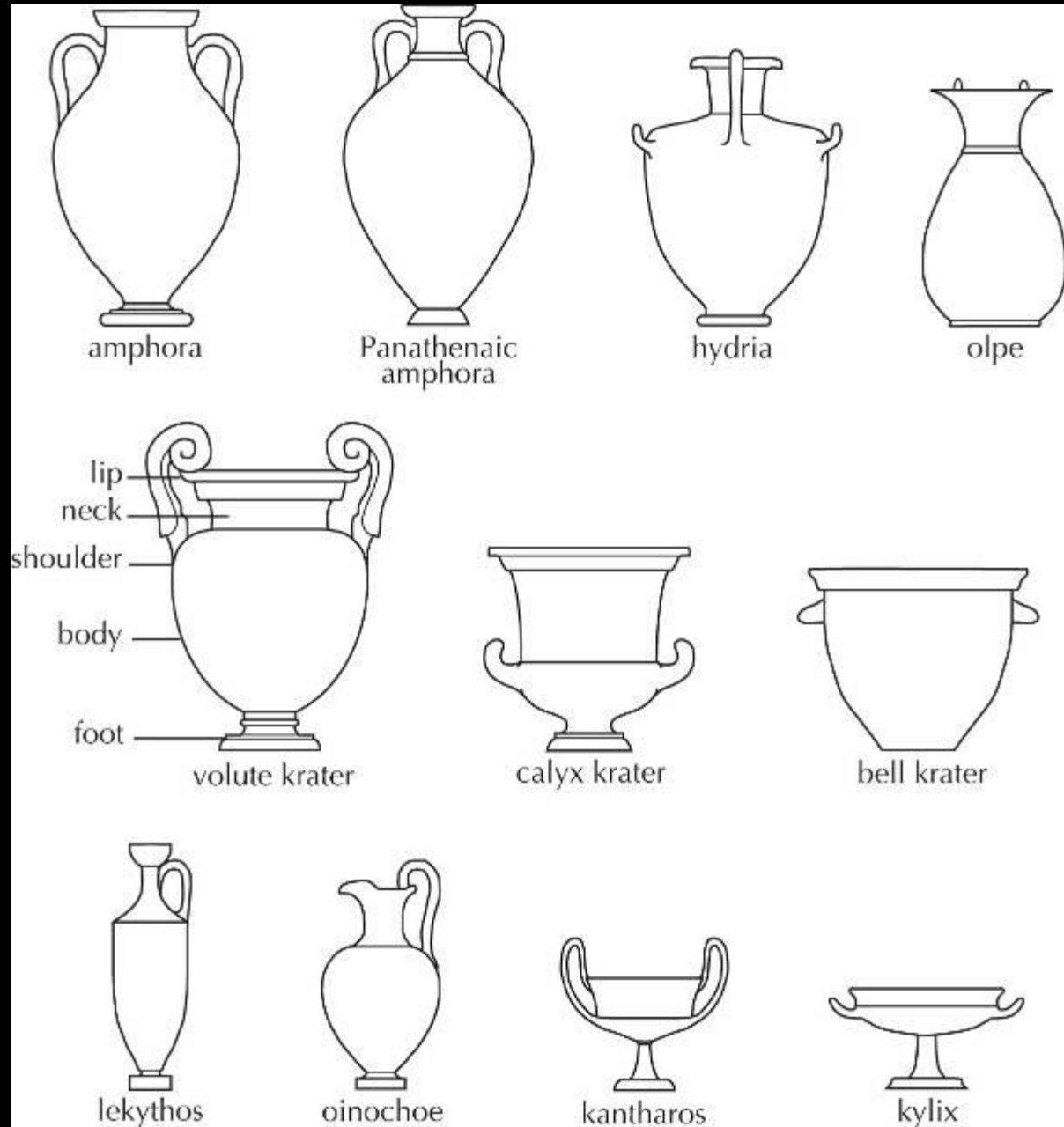
7. Body

4. Foot

8. Border

# VASE SHAPES

- Pots were **shaped** according to their **function**.

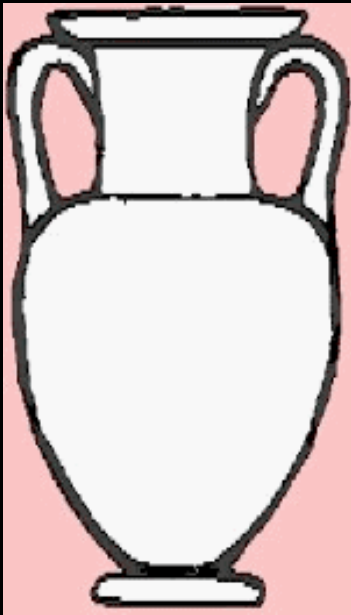


# Most common uses

- Storage
- Mixing and cooling wine
- Drawing water
- Drinking or pouring (wine or water)
- Cosmetics
- Athletics
- Rituals (weddings, funerals)

# Storage: Amphora

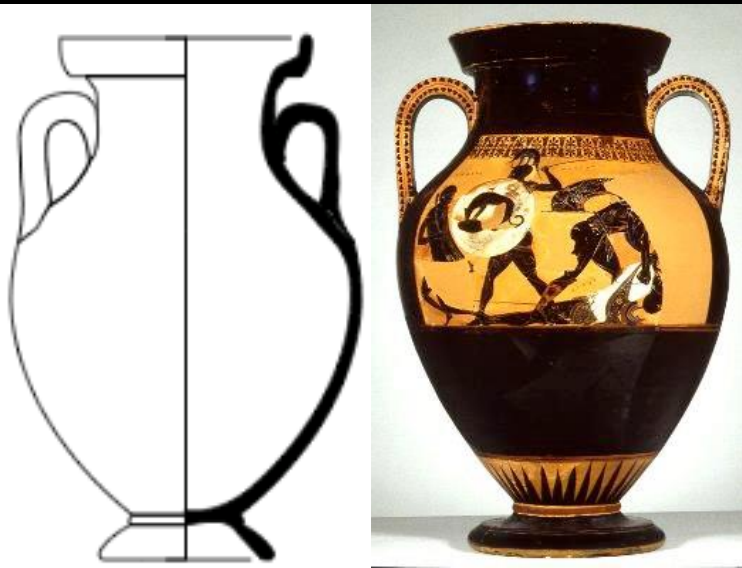
- Oval body with a vertical handle on either side. It was used for **storage of wine** or sometimes **oil**. The name "Amphora" is from the word "amphi" means on both sides and "phero" means to bring.



# Storage: Amphora

## Belly Amphora

- Oval body with a continuous profile from the lip to the foot and two handles.



## Neck Amphora

- Oval body, an offset neck with a thick mouth, two vertical handles and a heavy stand.



# Storage: Lekythos

- A lekythos (plural lekythoi) is a type of Greek pottery used **for storing oil**, especially olive oil. It has a **narrow body** and **one handle** attached to the neck of the vessel.
- The lekythos was used for anointing dead bodies and many lekythoi are **found in tombs**. The images on lekythoi were often depictions of **daily activities or rituals**, they may also depict funerary rites, a scene of loss, or a sense of departure as a form of funerary art.





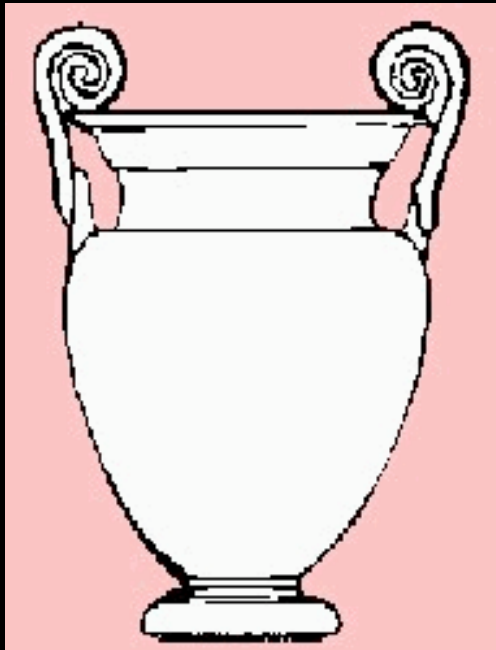
# Mixing: Krater

- A **krater** (meaning: **mixing bowl**) was a large bowl with two handles, used for **mixing water and wine**.



# Mixing: **Volute** Krater

- Round body, a offset neck, a heavy stand and two handles which is in the form of a **spiral** with flanged sides rising from loops on the shoulder to **above the rim**.



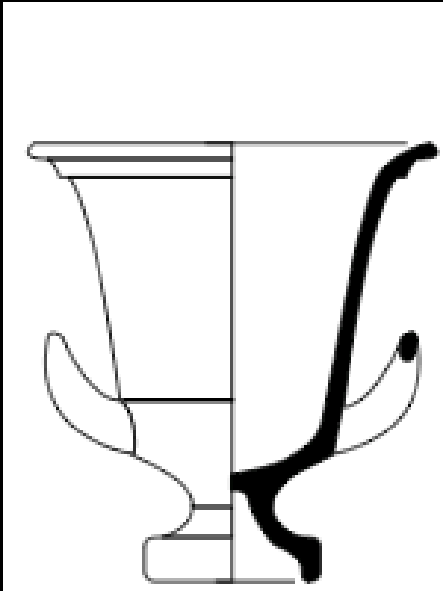
# Mixing: Column Krater

- Round body, a offset neck with a **thick lip** and a heavy stand. Each **column-shaped handle** ends with a horizontal member joined to the rim. (Resembles amphora with different handles and wider mouth.)



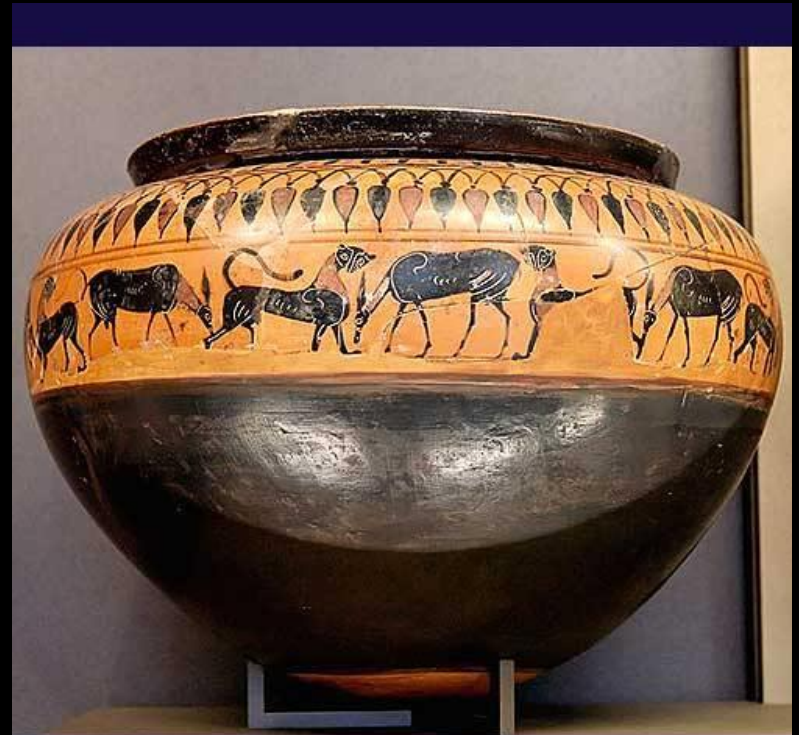
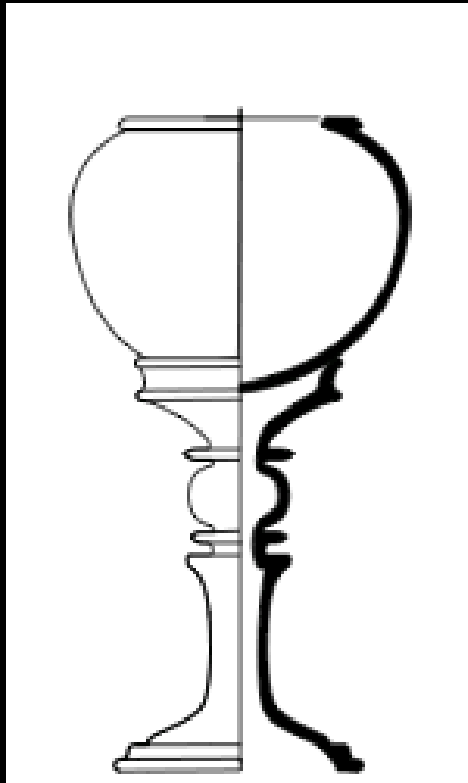
# Mixing: Kalyx (Calyx) Krater

- Deep body with the lower convex, the upper slightly concave. A heavy stand and **handles** which are set at the top of the lower part, **curve upward**.



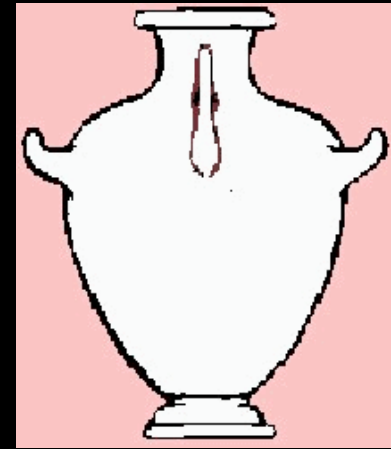
# Mixing: Dinos

- The **dinos** (plural *dinoi*) is a **mixing bowl**. It is meant to sit on a stand. It has **no handles** and **no feet**.



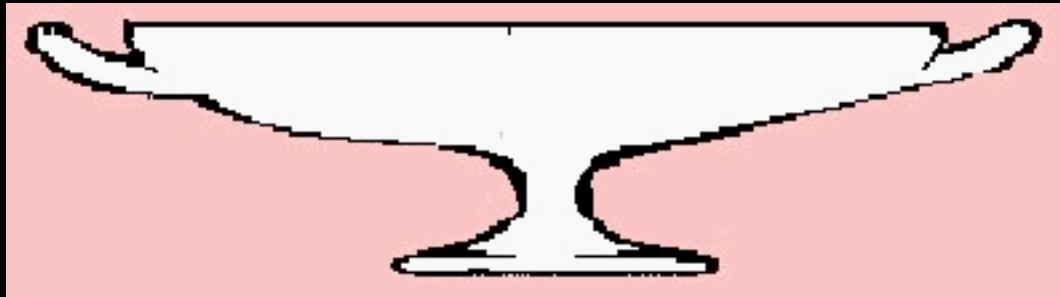
# Water Jug: Hydria

- The **hydria** was used for **carrying and storing water**. The name *hydria* comes from the Greek word *hudor*, which means "water." *Hydriai* often stood about a foot and a half high. Many ancient pictures show women going to water sources and gathering water. This type of vase has three handles two for lifting/carrying and one for pouring. It has a **narrow neck** to avoid spilling.

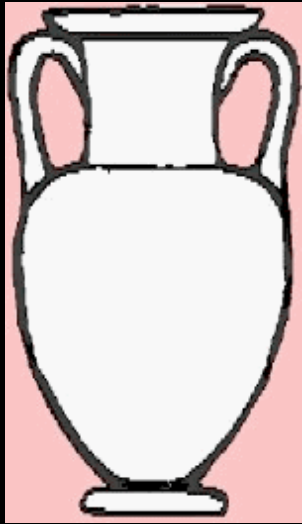


# Drinking: Kylix

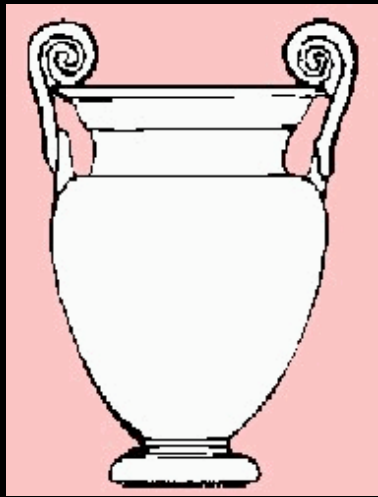
- "Kylix" is a **drinking cup** with a horizontal handle on either side and used for wine. Its name seems to be applied to the cup in any shape.



You need to be able to recognize:



storage:  
amphora  
(2 types)



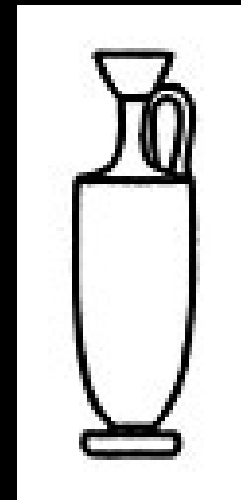
mixing:  
krater  
(3 types)



water:  
hydria



drinking:  
kylix



oil:  
lekythos



# VASE VOCABULARY

# Greek Pottery Vocabulary

- **Slip** – liquid form of **clay**, used as paint
- **Frieze** – **band of artwork**, usually in center of vase
- **Ground-line** – represents the ground in a frieze

# Greek Pottery Vocabulary

## Composition:

- **Unity:** Do all the parts of the composition feel as if they belong together, or does something feel stuck on, awkwardly out of place?
- **Balance:** Having a symmetrical arrangement adds a sense of calm, whereas an asymmetrical arrangement creates a sense of unease, imbalance.
- **Movement:** There many ways to give a sense of movement, such as the arrangement of objects, the position of figures, the flow of a river.
- **Rhythm:** In much the same way music does, a piece of art can have a rhythm or underlying beat that leads and paces the eye as you look at it. Look for the large underlying shapes (squares, triangles, etc.) and repeated color.

# Greek Pottery Vocabulary

## Composition (cont'd):

- **Focus:** The viewer's eye ultimately wants to rest of the "most important" thing or focal point in the painting, otherwise the eye feels lost, wandering around in space.
- **Contrast:** Strong differences between light and dark, or minimal
- **Pattern:** An underlying structure, the basic lines and shapes in the composition.
- **Proportion:** How things fit together, big and small, nearby and distant.

Unity?

Focus?

Balance?

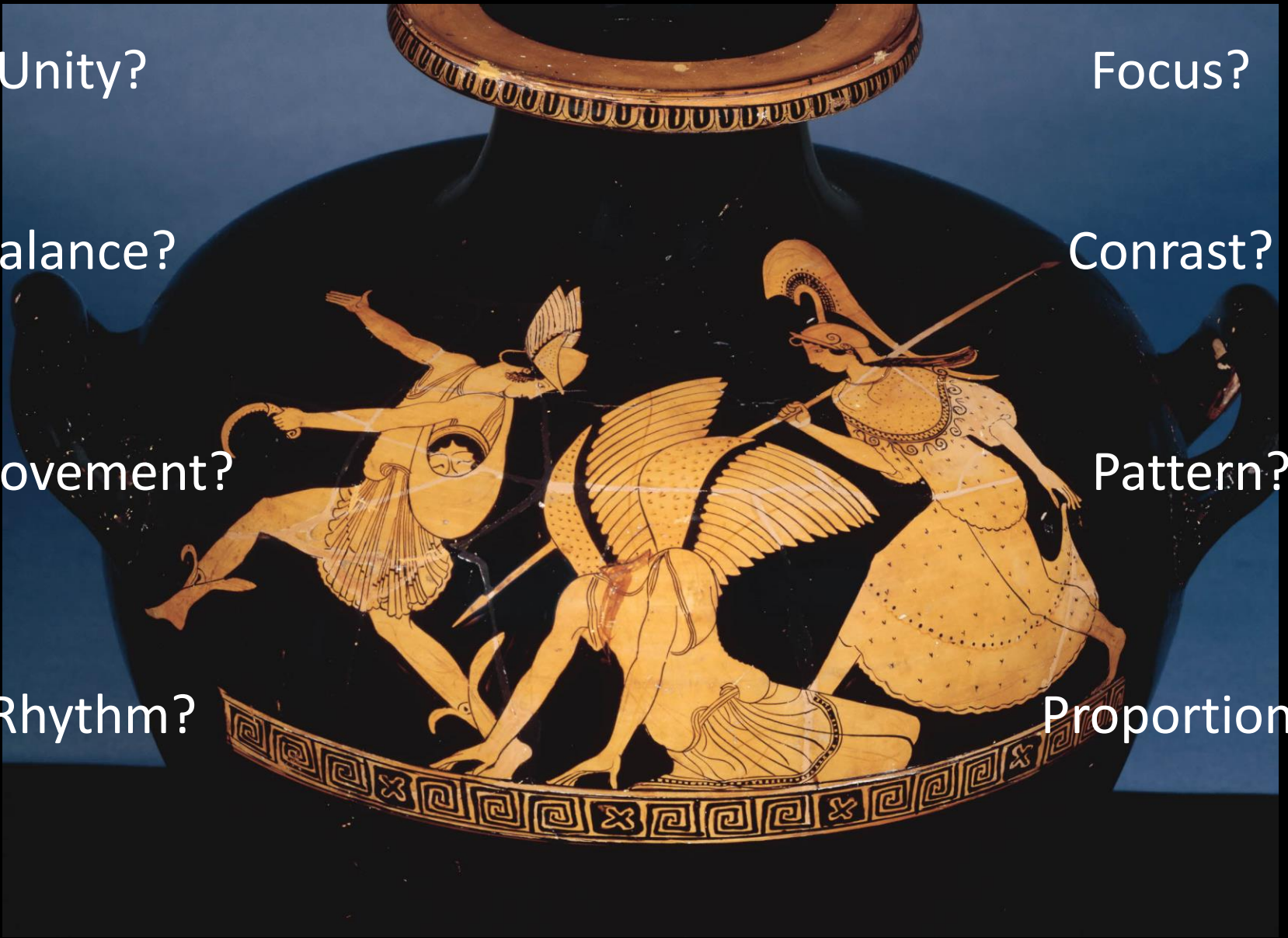
Contrast?

Movement?

Pattern?

Rhythm?

Proportion?



# Greek Pottery Vocabulary

- **Foreshortening** – used to suggest recession of forms in depth; uses **perspective** to make an object **appear natural** to the person looking at it; the form of an object appears shortened in relation to the angle from which it is seen



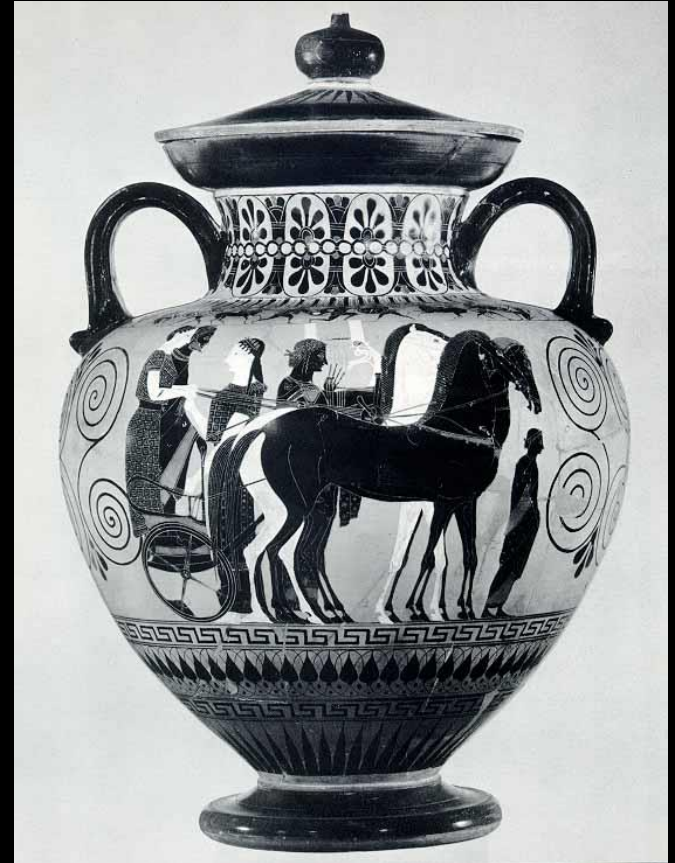


# **HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**



# Greek Pottery

- Storage containers, cookware and dishes were as necessary for the Ancient Greeks as they are for us.
- Without much glass and with metal expensive, clay was a very handy material.



# Greek Pottery

- What survives is often **not high art**. Really valuable containers tended to be made of bronze, silver or gold. However, little of this survives because the metal was reused. Pottery fragments, having no real value, survive.

# Greek Pottery

- Despite it being a lesser form than metal-craft, some excellent creations exist.
- Greek pottery and painting evolved into a significant art form.



# Periods and Styles

- Pottery is one of the oldest surviving art forms from Ancient Greece.
- Works and fragments survive from the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC.
- Greek pottery was traded throughout the Mediterranean world and beyond.



# Periods and Styles

## Minoan & Mycenaean



- Minoan & Mycenaean pottery is the **oldest** that we know of.
- It was exuberantly decorated.
- It tends to have as a trait “horror vacui” or fear of leaving open space.

# Periods and Styles

## Geometric

- The next style to pervade exhibits a different sensibility.
- From the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium the geometric style dominates.
- Regular **geometric patterns and shapes**, not animal forms, are pervasive.



# Periods and Styles

## Orientalizing

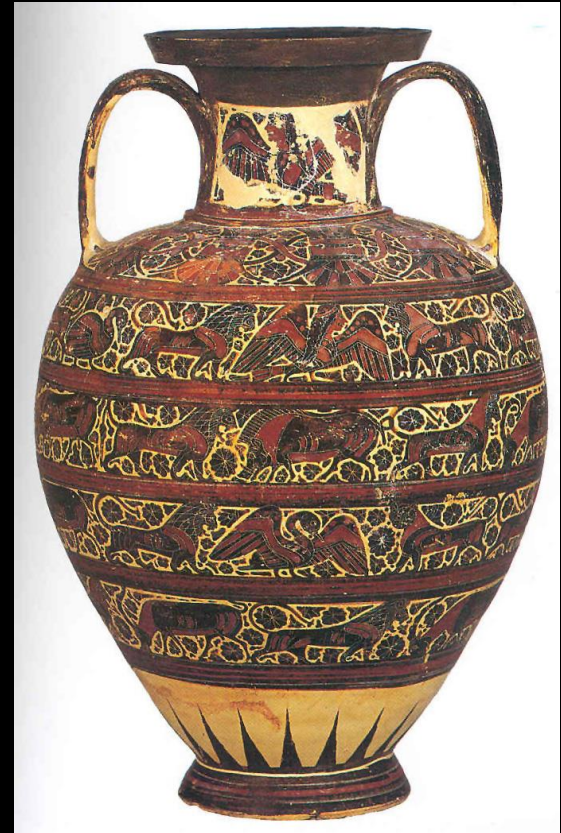


- Contact with **Asia** brought new innovation in design.
- The next stage is therefore known as the orientalizing period.
- **Plants and animals** reappear in the bands of design.

# Periods and Styles

## Orientalizing

- During the orientalizing period (roughly 725-650 BC) the **black figure** technique is employed in Corinth.
- In the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, this spreads to Athens.





# Periods and Styles

## Archaic

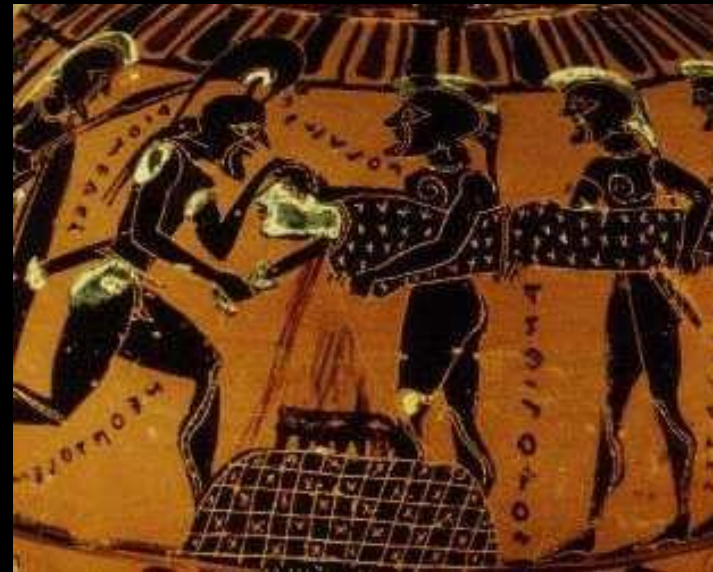


- The Archaic style existed from around 700 to 480 BC.
- **Mythology and life** became important subjects.
- Some artists signed their work.

# Periods and Styles

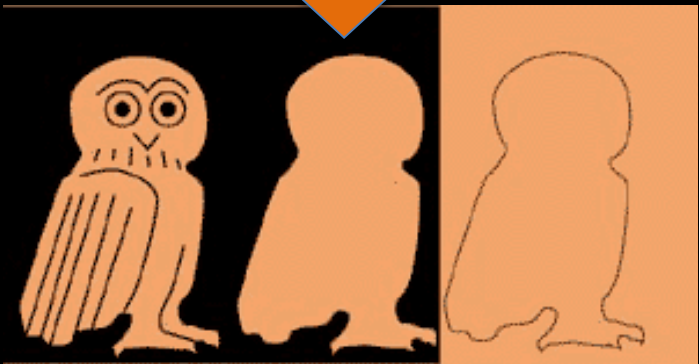
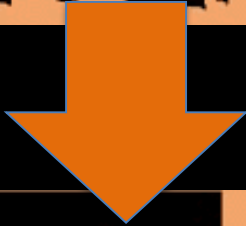
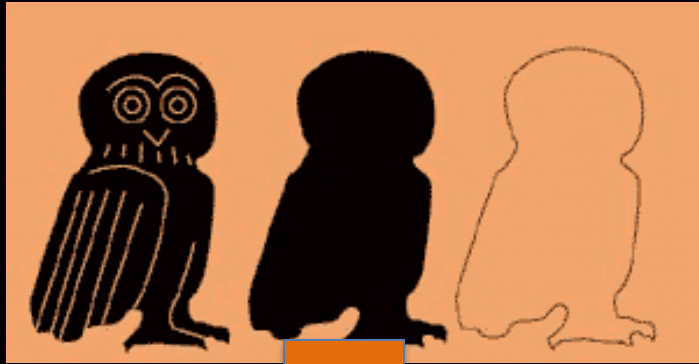
## Black-Figure

- The Black-figure style really did not dominate until the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.
- Artists **Painted** black images silhouetted against the natural red clay background.
- **Details** were inserted by **etching** the black figures.
- White or purple paint could then be added.



# Periods and Styles

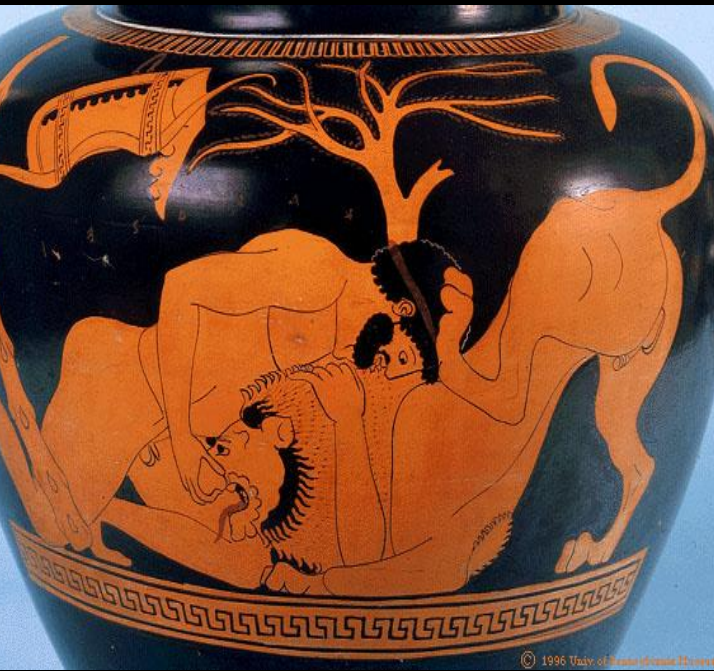
## Red-Figure



- The red-figure style appeared between 530-525 BC.
- It was achieved by simply reversing the manner of black figure painting.
- The red figures are reserved and the **background** is painted.
- This is more difficult but it allowed the design to be **seen better** at a distance and it leaves the contour of the pot more visible.

# Periods and Styles

## Red-Figure (continued)



- **Fewer** figures, on a **larger** scale than black figure allow for **less clutter**.
- Use of **a brush** allowed for greater flexibility than incision.
- Lines more flowing and vary in intensity.
- Figures have a more **rounded** quality.
- Greater sense of mass and three dimensionality.

# **PAINTING STYLES**

# Periods and Styles

## Black Figure – **Miniature Style**



- Several **friezes** with small figures
- Inspired by Corinthian, Orientalizing period

# Periods and Styles

## Black Figure – Grand Style

- One **large** narrative scene instead of several friezes with small figures
- Varied **poses**
- Depth
- Added color
- Attention to **drapery**
- Created by potters in Athens

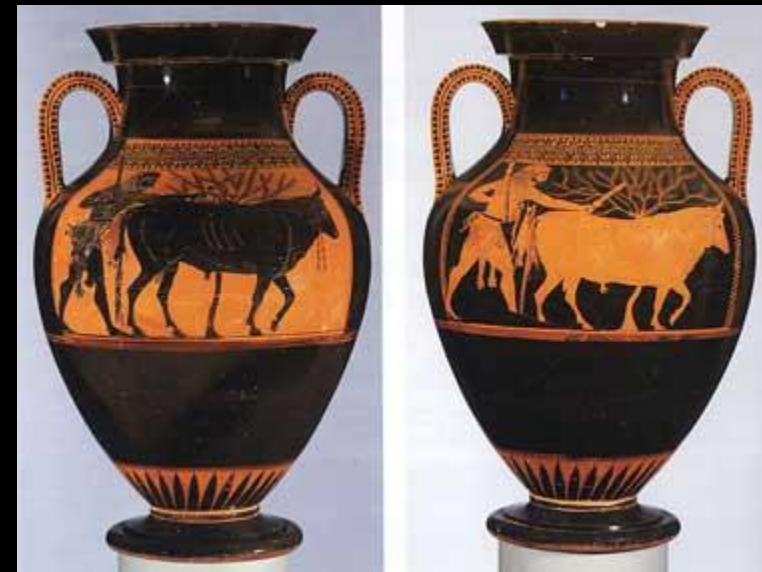


# Periods and Styles

## Bi-lingual

- Included the older **black-figure** style of decoration on one side of the pot and the newer **red-figure** style on the other side.
- Often, both sides would show the **same scene**, just each one done in a different style.
- Transitional period when black-figure was being gradually replaced in dominance by red-figure
- Almost entirely restricted to **Belly Amphora**
- Almost exclusively from Athens

*Why? It may have come about as a reflection of potters' uncertainty as to whether or not the public would be willing to accept this new style of decoration – after all, if the public didn't buy it, they'd have to come up with some new decorative style to market. They need not have worried, however – red-figure decoration soon took off, and pieces of bilingual pottery became rarer and rarer. In fact, the period in which they were produced was quite short, which may be why so few examples have survived into the present day.*

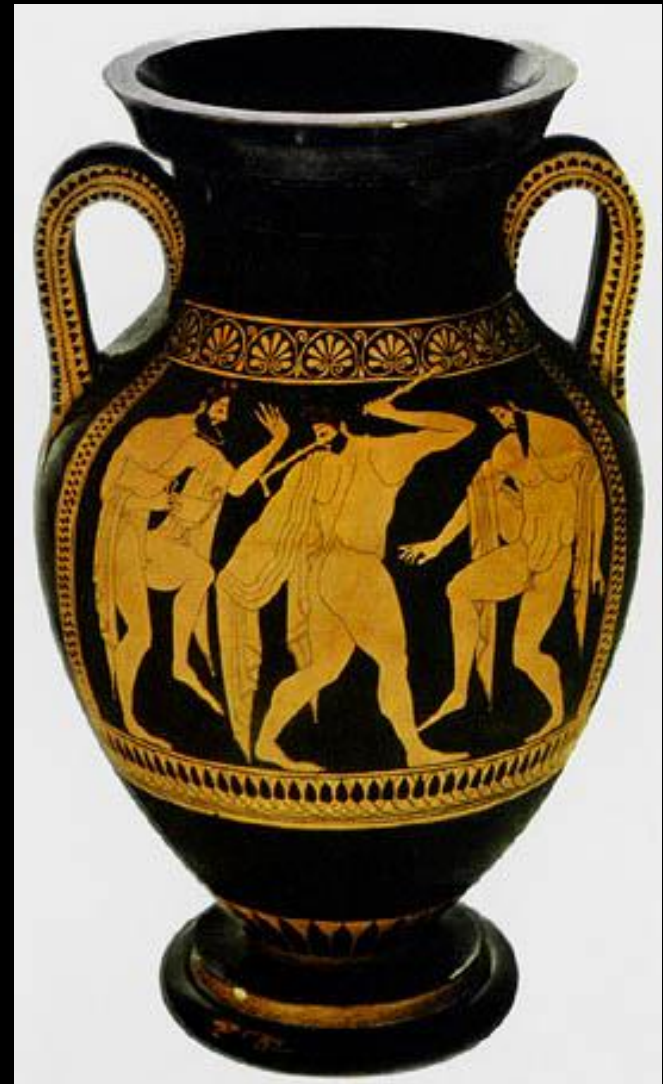




# Periods and Styles

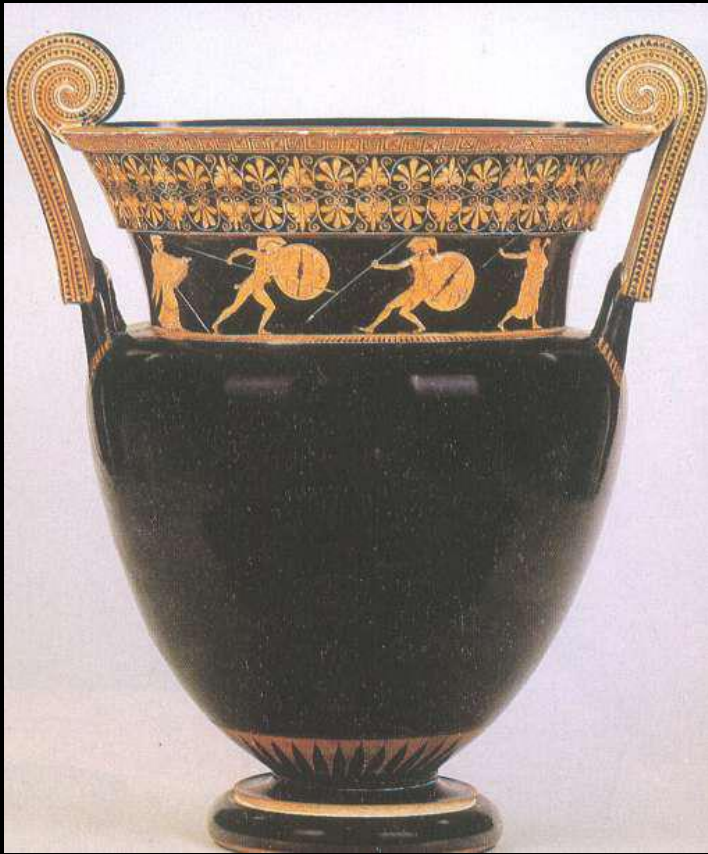
## Red Figure – Pioneers

- Interested in depiction of **human form** and **human movement**
- Wanted to show the body in **motion**
- Twisting, torsion, foreshortening, overlapping
- Used brushes of varying width to enable lines with different thicknesses
- Smooth, flowing lines and lighter and darker lines for different **muscle groups and folds in drapery**
- Competitive Group of painters:  
On this vase Euthymides wrote:  
*“os oudepote Euphronios”*  
= ‘As never Euphronios (could do)’



# Periods and Styles

## Red Figure – Early Classical



- Mastery of perspective foreshortening, allowing a much more **naturalistic depiction** of figures and actions
- Drastic reduction of figures per vessel, of anatomic details, and of ornamental decorations.
- Figures are often somewhat stockier and less dynamic than their predecessors. As a result, the depictions gained seriousness, even *pathos* (*emotion*).
- Folds of garments were depicted less linear.
- The paintings ceased to focus on the moment of a particular event, but rather, with **dramatic tension**, showed the situation immediately before the action.

# Periods and Styles

## Red Figure – Mannerists

- Continued to paint in Archaic red-figure rather than explore new development of Classical period
- **Emphasis and Exaggeration** of individual features
- Theatrical
- Drapery, decoration, poses and gestures deliberately exaggerated and designed to make figure look more **elegant**



# ESSAY QUESTION TOPICS

# What was gained or loss in the movement from black to red?

## Gains

- Easier to **paint** figures on pot than **incise** them
- Brushes allow for freer style
- Greater sense of **three dimension**
- Emotions more easily depicted
- Red-figure closer to flesh tones
- Quicker to produce, therefore **cheaper** and more cost-effective
- Depiction of **muscle and drapery**

## Losses

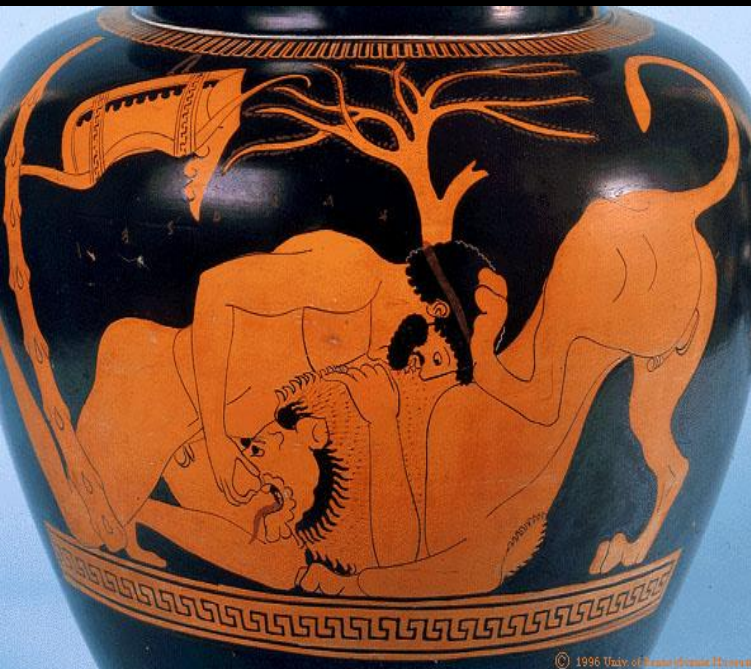
- Dramatic effects** could be produced with darker figures highlighted against simple pale background
- Master could achieve **minute detail** in black-figure



- Freer style
- Natural movement
- Muscles and drapery
  - Facial expression
- But...the minute detail is lost

# What are some difficulties in portraying the myth on a vase?

- Problem: Story should be **recognizable**, easily understood, characters recognizable
- Solutions: **inscriptions**, **iconography**, particular scenes **unique** to myth



# What are some difficulties from the vase shapes when painting on vases?

- Problems:

- Placement of frieze
- Curved surface
- Handles; some incorporated, some did not; they could be painted in background color and left blank, or be incorporated into overall decoration

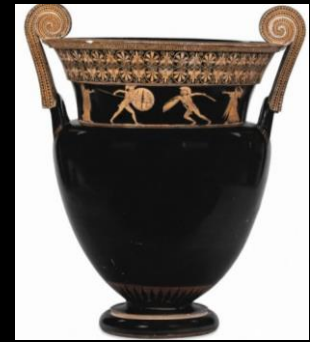
- Solutions:

- Geometric patterns
- Repetitive shapes of animals or monsters
- Multiple friezes



# Solutions on some specific shapes

- **Kraters:** sides flared outwards from base to tip; large surface to decorate which got bigger at the top; needed to select appropriate story; Berlin painter left most of pot shiny black and highlighted figured friezes on neck of krater



- **Amphora:** use of decorative borders or spirals to separate a figured panel from rest of pot; ground-line and frame for scene

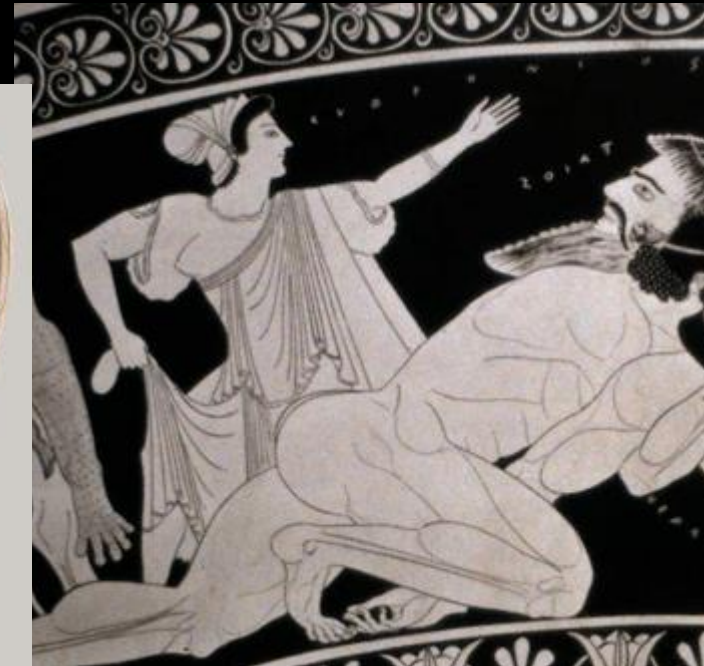


- **Hydria:** two different, unconnected narratives separated by band of geometric pattern to account for shape of pot



# How were women depicted different from men?

- **Types of scenes** in which goddesses and women are shown; relationship of women to men in such scenes
- **Clothed**
  - Clothes were more elaborate and shown with more detail with added color, patterns and decoration
- **White skin** (Black-figure)



# How were women depicted different from men?

- Different types of scenes – domestic scenes, weddings, weaving
- **Color** on drapery to show status
- Female figure underneath drapery
- Elaborate **hairstyles** and added detail such as **jewelry**



# How was drapery depicted (improved)?

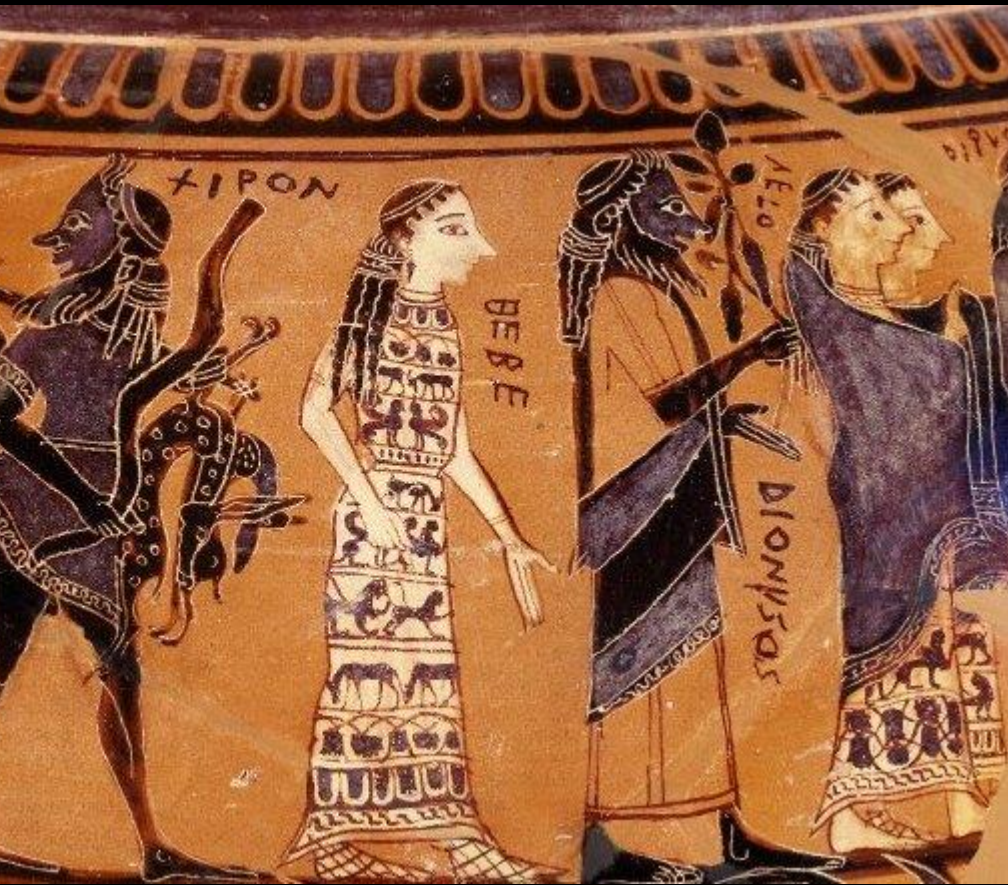
## Black Figure:

- **Stiff**, almost foldless
- Incised and/or painted in purple-red to show pattern and folds

## Red Figure:

- Zig-zag lines at the ends of garments
- Diluted slip and fine brushes to paint **lines of folds**
- Responded to movement of body and hung in **natural folds**
- Overlapping loops
- Drew lines close together for fine fabrics
- Lines further apart for heavier materials
- 'Wet-look' drapery to depict the **body underneath** the garment and movement

# Depiction of drapery



# What do I need to know?

- Recognize shape and function of vase
- Technique and Style
- 10 vases (*plus 13 you must be familiar with*)
  - Artist
  - Subject
  - Describe composition



# Credits

- Disclaimer: I am but a poor public school teacher who threw together this PowerPoint from various sources over the years without keeping track of my sources. I do not get paid for this PowerPoint, nor do I charge for my website. I do not take credit for the fabulous pictures or the research that this PowerPoint is comprised of.