When in the eighteenth century ancient terracotta vases were first found and collected in Italy, they were almost universally acclaimed as Etruscan. This term was applied even to vases that had been unearthed in Southern Italy. Goethe speaks in the journal of his voyage to Italy of the assiduity with which Etruscan vases were collected and of the high prices they fetched. But these vases were for the most part Greek, imported into Etruria in antiquity or made in Southern Italy by Greek colonists and their descendants. One doubts whether Goethe ever saw a real Etruscan vase, and when Prosper Merimee (in 1830) describes the name piece of his novelette Le Vase étrusque ("c'était une pièce rare et inédite. On y voyait peint, avec trois couleurs, le combat d'un Lapithe contre un Centaure") one almost certainly recognizes an Attic black-figured vase and not an Etruscan vase painting.

Later in the last century the Greek origin of the vases found in Etruria was generally accepted, and the word Etruscan began to disappear from the title pages of catalogues and from museum labels. The remaining true Etruscan vases, long eclipsed by the Attic, have been assembled and placed in their historic context by Sir John Beazley in his recent Etruscan Vase-Painting.

During the course of last year the Museum acquired two Etruscan red-figured vases of singular charm and interest. They are shown in the newly rearranged Etruscan gallery, the Second Room. They were purchased from different sources but are roughly contemporary and are exhibited in the same vitrine. They are published here for the first time.

The first is a small red-figured skyphos, with disparate handles, of the type called glaux (i.e. "owl," since its Attic models are decorated with an owl on either side). It was once in the collection of Professor Richard Norton and belongs to a small group of glauks which are presumed to be the work of one potter. A vase of this shape has been found at Alexandria, and the group may thus be dated in the last third of the fourth century. Through a fortunate coincidence the Museum has had a glaux of the same type as the Norton skyphos since 1907: in the illustration on page 146 the two vases are shown side by side. Though the other glaux is a trifle bigger there is such an astonishing general agreement in the profile of the vase and even in its decorative scheme and the very decoration itself, that the two can not only be assigned to...
Two Etruscan red-figured glaukes, or drinking cups. Last quarter of the 4th century B.C. Rogers Fund, 1951, 1907
Etruscan red-figured kantharos. On each side are two griffins attacking a deer. About 300 B.C. Rogers Fund, 1951
the same potter but almost certainly also to the same painter.

This painter was a miniaturist, or rather an ornamentalist. With the use of a firm relief line for all contours, shading in diluted glaze for inner markings, and white high lights, his floral ornaments emerge from the black background with a sharpness and the illusion of a third dimension that can be compared to an architectural sculptured frieze. The ornaments, rich garlands of fantastic flowers, predominate but do not entirely exclude figure painting. On the newly acquired glaux, space has been left for a pretty dove handsomely adorned with a white necklace; on the other glaux one discovers amidst the floral decoration a female head, with a looped white headband and imposing white earrings. The bottoms, not illustrated here, are decorated with concentric black circles.

The Museum's second acquisition is a red-figured kantharos, like the glaux or skyphos also a drinking cup. Its handles are knotted, a shape common in late Etruscan. Usually, however, the vase is entirely black; the Museum's kantharos is the only one known in which the walls of the vase are decorated with scenes painted in the red-figure technique. Both sides, illustrated on page 147, while varying in details give the same scene: two griffins are felling a deer in a wooded landscape. The headband on page 145 gives a roll-out drawing of one side. Though heraldic in general composition, these animals do not constitute a mere ornamental band: they are locked in grim combat, and the artist has put all the ferocity of the attack into the stance and expressions of the monsters.

The home of the griffins was believed to be in the mythical Northeast; they were guardians of the gold and in constant strife with the one-eyed Arimasps. Throughout archaic Greek art and through most of the fifth century these mythological beasts, part lion and part eagle, are a comparatively tame species of monster. In the later fifth century not only their character but also their physical appearance seems to change for the worse. Their necks lengthen and are surmounted by the spiky, serrated mane of marine monsters. On the Etruscan kantharos all four griffins have also distinctive goatees. The Etruscans must have been fond of these monsters. While I know of no griffins exactly like ours on other Etruscan vases, they occur in similar attacks on weaker animals on the peripheries of engraved mirrors, on the ornamental bands of engraved bronze cistae, on stone sarcophagi, and on wall paintings. The painting illustrated above is from the Tomba François at Vulci and is at present in the Villa Albani at Rome. Here a griffin has paired off with a jackal or hyena in its attack on a deer, which is spotted like the
ones on the kantharos—perhaps a fallow deer. The relief illustrated below is from one of the ends of an Etruscan alabaster sarcophagus found at Vulci, now in Boston. Here two griffins have brought down a horse. The composition also is somewhat different.

The Tomba François has been dated in the early third century B.C. The Boston sarcophagus is commonly placed at the turn of the fourth to the third century. The shape of the kantharos, to judge by the black examples, begins in the fourth century and continues well into the third. Perhaps it can therefore safely be put not far from 300 B.C.

The accession number of the Norton glaux is 51.11.1. Its height is 3½ inches. The accession number of the other glaux is 07.286.33. Its height is 3½ inches. On the group of glaukes see John D. Beazley, Etruscan Vase-Painting (1947), p. 116. The accession number of the kantharos is 51.11.10. Its height is 6¾ inches. The wall-painting of the Tomba François is reproduced from Raffaele Garucci, Tavole fotografiche delle Pitture Vulcenti (1866), pl. v, 4.

Dr. George H. Chase of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts generously supplied the print of the Etruscan sarcophagus 86.145 and gave permission to have it reproduced here.

Etruscan sarcophagus from Vulci with relief of two griffins attacking a horse. About 300 B.C. In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston