GREEK VASES FROM
THE HEARST COLLECTION

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Of all the manifestations of the Greek creative genius painted pottery has survived best. Through the vases the history of Greek art can be traced in unbroken continuity. Their chronology is well charted, their centers of production are recognized, and many potters and painters are known to us from signatures. The style of painting, especially from the sixth to the fourth century, is so individual as to permit attributions to hundreds of artists. Most of them are not known by signature and have in modern times been given names of convenience, taken from potters’ signatures, from collections or cities in which characteristic works are preserved, or from a subject depicted.

Almost all Greek wall and easel painting has been destroyed, and painted vases cannot quite compensate for this loss. Yet it is wrong to think of Greek vase painting as a minor art, or to see in its very quantity a sign of mass production, with all that term implies in our age of machines. There are, of course, differences in quality among the works of the artists, but the best of them can hardly have been inferior in talent to their colleagues who practiced painting on a larger scale, on a different surface, and in another medium. There is no need to relegate a vase painting to a secondary class merely because it is on a vase with curving surfaces and small in scale, not on a flat and large panel that can be framed and hung.

The proud owners of painted vases in antiquity must have been aware of this, as is proved by the many broken vases that show signs of old mending with staples and rivets. This was not customary merely because the owner was in need of containers and cups. It was the painted scene on the Attic vase which gave it intrinsic value that could not be replaced. And setting aside for the moment artistic merit and qualitative comparisons, what would be our idea of Greek life and how it looked to those who lived it, in what manner would we set the stage for their gods and heroes, if it were not for vase painting with its abundance of narrative illustration?

Late last year the Museum purchased sixty-five Greek vases from the Hearst Corporation, now exhibited in three rooms south of the Balcony. These vases range from the early sixth century to the last third of the fourth century and illustrate Greek figure painting from the archaic through the late classic style. A choice from the entire collection of Mr. Hearst, they have been selected with an eye to the particular needs of the Museum. They round out our collection by filling gaps, and they add masterpieces that raise its level. Sixty of them are Attic, a high proportion, but not surprising when we remember that it was under Attic leadership that Greek pottery reached its artistic heights.
The vases are shown chronologically. The first room contains the black-figured style down to the last quarter of the sixth century. Except for two amphorae (p. 168) the vases in this room are Attic. The earliest among them (p. 168) belong to the second quarter of the sixth century, when ornaments, monsters, animals, and human figures were still equally stressed. This is followed by the fully developed narrative style, with amphorae by painters of Group E (as the precursors of Exekias are called) and the Princeton Painter (pp. 169 f.), the Amasis Painter and the Affecter (p. 171), a cup signed by Tleson, the son of Nearchos (p. 173), and amphorae in the manner of the Lysippides Painter (p. 174).

At about 530 B.C. a significant change took place: the vase-painters began to reserve the figures in the reddish color of the fired clay, filling in the background with black glaze, instead of painting the figures black, incising details and adding white and dark red. For a time the two techniques, “red-figure” and “black-figure,” were concurrent. Vases in both techniques from the same period are shown in the second room. Black-figure is here represented with works by the Acheleos Painter and the Leagros Group (pp. 173 f.), their contemporaries, and the Eucharides Painter, as well as two later works, small neck-amphorae by the Diosphos Painter (p. 172). Attic red-figure emerges with a number of very fine late archaic vases. The most celebrated among them, in fact the best-known vase in the entire collection, is an amphora by the Berlin Painter (cover and p. 176). It shows a singer accompanying himself on the kithara, his whole body, the cords of his instrument, and the sash attached to it seeming to vibrate in unison. Equally memorable is the picture of Triptolemos on a hydria by the Troilos Painter (p. 175). The advances made in the drawing of anatomy can be gauged in a battle scene by Myson (p. 175). Convivial scenes are shown in the pictures of a flute girl peering into her wine jar and a reclining banqueter on another cup, which may be an early work by the Kleophrades Painter. The wine god himself appears on two vases by the Pig Painter. A neck-amphora by the same painter shows a trainer and an athlete equipped for the race in armor (p. 177). Another neck-amphora has as its subject a soldier taking leave of his old father (p. 177), and the Syriskos Painter is represented with a stamnos on which men and women and youths are arranged in quiet groupings.

In the last room Attic red-figure is continued with vases of the early classic style, in which the archaic spirit still lingers, followed by the classic style proper, and concluded with a few vases from the end of the fifth and the beginning of the fourth century. Here the subject matter will perhaps be the main interest for the visitor. The adventures of Theseus are shown in several episodes: his fight with the Minotaur, his combat with an Amazon (p. 178), and his triumph over the Marathonian bull (p. 178). Peleus and Thetis appear on a large stamnos (p. 177), Philoktetes is shown on a lekythos (p. 179), and the story of Ajax and Cassandra is rendered on a neck-amphora (p. 178). The quiet departure scene of a warrior (p. 175) may be taken from daily life, and a sacrifice of a bull (p. 179) may refer to the festival of Hephaistos. Of the gods themselves we see Eros riding a deer, Poseidon and Amymone, and Dionysos, once in pursuit of Ariadne and again in a nocturnal revel (p. 178). One vase stands apart, for it is still in the black-figured technique: an amphora of the fourth century awarded as a prize at the Panathenaic festival. It was once filled with oil collected, as we learn from the inscription, under the archonship of Polyzelos (367/6 B.C.). Lastly there are three vases that are not Attic but were made in southern Italy: a hydria with a particularly full illustration of rites at a tomb, a bucket in the developed Apulian style showing the return of Apollo to Delphi, with a remarkable sketch of a young face on the normally plain underside (p. 179), and, in the tradition of the monumental Apulian style, a large volute-krater found near Taranto in 1786 (p. 180), dating from about 330 B.C.

William Randolph Hearst began to collect vases in the spring of 1901, and he kept up his interest for half a century. In the early years this interest in Greek vases was shared by his mother, Mrs. Phoebe Apperson Hearst, who gave her archaeological collections to the University of California. Most of Mr. Hearst’s pur-
chases were made in the twenty years between the two wars, and they filled his home on Riverside Drive in New York. In 1935 the collection was moved to the castle on La Cuesta Encantada, overlooking San Simeon, on the California coast halfway between Los Angeles and San Francisco. At San Simeon the vases were placed on top of bookcases lining the walls of the library, each one secured with wires against the hazards of earthquakes. As the collection continued to grow, the overflow was put in a vault in the castle or left in packing boxes in a warehouse by the sea.

Until the recent Museum purchase the vases at San Simeon numbered over four hundred pieces and formed the biggest private collection of ancient pottery assembled in this century. For its peers in scope and quality one has to go back to the nineteenth century and compare the Hearst collection with those that bear the names of Thomas Hope, Samuel Rogers, or Count Pourtalès-Gorgier. Yet the achievements of Hearst as a collector are the more remarkable as one recalls how his vases were acquired. They were bought at auction in New York and London and on the continent or through the noted antiquarians Joseph Brummer, Jacob Hirsch, and Spink & Sons. The two factors that had given earlier collectors their critical advantage, namely low prices and free export from Greece and Italy, no longer existed. The growth of the Hearst collection paralleled to some extent that of the Metropolitan Museum's, except that Mr. Hearst's more direct methods of placing bids and concluding purchases normally made him sure of obtaining the objects of his choice.

His collection was historic, in that his vases had passed through other great collections before they reached San Simeon, and most of them still bear the labels of several historic connoisseurs. To the relatively modern collectors known to us by name we should add the ancient owners whose names have not been recorded. For Greek vases have always been collectors' items from the moment they left the potter's kiln. Almost all the vases shown in this exhibition were found in Italy, where they had been exported in antiquity. So preponderant in fact is Italy among the known provenances of Greek vases, that early excavators took them to be of local Italian, or Etruscan, manufacture. This contention was first attacked by Winckelmann, who pointed to the Greek character of the inscriptions on vases, and it was gradually abandoned. In popular tradition, however, Etruria has loomed large as the country of origin, as exemplified by Merimeé's *Vase étrusque* and in the names of Wedgwood imitations.

But if the Etruscans can no longer be credited with the vases now known to be Greek they will remain forever associated with them, as the first among the non-Greeks to appreciate the beauty of the Greek vases, to treasure them, and to preserve them. No other event has been so important for the connoisseurship of Greek vase painting as the discovery in 1828 of the vast necropolis at Vulci, which in the first years' excavations alone yielded over three thousand painted vases. These finds were shared by Lucien Bonaparte, Napoleon's youngest brother (the Prince de Canino), with Dorow, Candelori, Campanari, Fossati, and Feoli. Within a few years the vases had found new homes in the great museums of London, Paris, Munich, Berlin, and the Vatican.

Museums in this country can never hope to rival these, let alone the museums of Italy, Greece, and Russia which house the results of excavations conducted by the government. There must be close to one hundred thousand vases in the museums of Europe. Yet skillful and persistent acquisitions have made certain American museums rich enough in Greek vases to give a fair representation of this important aspect of Greek art.

A collection is never complete, and its growth hardly ever follows a regular pattern. The Hearst purchase adds an important chapter to the development of our collection. Even when in due time the Hearst vases are shown in their proper context, with our other vases, they will remain conspicuous in their glory. The drift of antiquities into museums has made the achievements of a great private collector accessible to the public, and the harvest of his years will now be enjoyed by many rather than by few.

*Most of the Hearst vases have been attributed to their painters by Sir John Beazley and Professors H. R. W. Smith, D. A. Amyx, and A. D. Trendall.*
ABOVE: Amphora with a banquet scene, by the Orvieto Painter, Chalcidian, 540 B.C. Neck-amphora with lions felling a bull. BELOW: Attic neck-amphora with combat and animals, by the Goltyr Painter.
ABOVE: Amphora with battle scene, by the Princeton Painter, about 540 B.C. Neck-amphora, Menelaos and Helen. BELOW: Amphora with Herakles and the lion and Herakles and Geryon, attributed to Group E
**ABOVE:** Amphora with a warrior and an athlete carrying a prize tripod. Attributed to Group E, about 540 B.C.

**BELOW:** Panathenaic prize amphora, with a chariot race and Athena. About 530 B.C.
ABOVE: Amphora with scenes of a warrior departing. Attributed to the Amasis Painter, about 550 B.C.

BELOW: Neck-amphora, on each side a horseman setting out. Attributed to the Affecter, about 540 B.C.
ABOVE: Two kalpides, with a chariot setting out and warriors fighting. About 510 B.C. CENTER: Athletes, detail from a stamnos; women and a man at a fountain, detail from a neck-amphora. About 515 B.C. BELOW: Detail from a lip cup, with a hen and the potter’s signature of Tleson the son of Nearchos. About 540 B.C.
ABOVE: Left, hydria by the Troilos Painter, about 480 B.C. Triptolemos, with the ears of grain in his hands, is aloft in the winged chariot. Right; hydria by the Deepdene Painter, about 470 B.C. A seated woman holds up a mirror in her left hand and is about to arrange her hair with her right hand. In front of her stands a servant with a wool basket. BELOW: Left, column-krater by Myson, about 490 B.C. It shows a fight between two warriors over the body of a fallen comrade; on the reverse are three revelers. Right, pelike by the Altamura Painter, about 460 B.C. A woman is pouring a libation for a departing warrior. The subject is repeated on the reverse.
Details from the amphora by the Berlin Painter illustrated on the cover: a young citharoedus, singing to his own accompaniment, and a judge or coach
ABOVE: Neck-amphora with scene of a trainer and a youth practicing for the race in armor. By the Pig Painter, about 490 B.C. Stamnos with the story of Peleus and Thetis. By the Altamura Painter, about 470 B.C. Here the hero is wrestling with Thetis. BELOW: The other side of the stamnos above, showing Thetis’s sisters running off to tell their father, Nereus. On the right is a neck-amphora with twisted handles. It shows an old man and a warrior. Formerly attributed to the Harrow Painter, now to the Matsch Painter, about 480 B.C.
ABOVE: Stamnos with Dionysos and satyrs, Group of Polygnotos. Nolan amphora with a Greek fighting an Amazon, by the Dwarf Painter. BELOW: Nolan amphora with the story of Ajax and Cassandra, by the Ethiop Painter. Calyx-krater with Theseus and the Marathonian bull, Manner of Polygnotos. All 440-430 B.C.
ABOVE: A bull being led to sacrifice, detail of a bell-krater by the Kekrops Painter. A torch race on the reverse links this to a festival of Hephaistos. About 410 B.C. The lekythos on the right, in the manner of the Eretria Painter, shows the wounded Philoktetes abandoned on the Island of Lemnos. About 430 B.C. BELLOW: A situla in the manner of the Lycurgus Painter, with the underside of its base, on which is a young face in glaze outlines. The scene shows Apollo, returning to Delphi in a chariot drawn by griffins, greeted by satyrs and maenads. On the reverse, Dionysos, satyr, and maenad. Apulian, about 350 B.C.
Volute-krater with Athena, Apollo, Artemis, and Herakles and, below, Greeks in combat with Amazons. On the neck, Nike in a chariot; on each handle, a young Pan. Apulian, about 330 B.C.