



A kylix painted by a well-known Athenian artist named Exekias

An aryballos and alabastron were delicate flasks for perfumed oils and ointments.

ATHENIAN POTTERY

Some of the most detailed and sophisticated vase painting was produced in Athens between 550-300BC. Artists decorated pots with scenes from daily life, as well as from Greek mythology.

The earliest Athenian pottery, from about 550BC, is known as black-figure ware, because black figures were shown on a red background. From about 530BC, they also made red-figure ware: red figures on a black background. A few pots were painted on white backgrounds too.



INTERNET LINK

For links to websites where you can see lots of Greek pots, try a quiz and watch a video of how they were made, go to www.usborne-quicklinks.com

MAKING BLACK- AND RED-FIGURE WARE

Athenian potters used a clay that turned red when fired. The areas of the pot that were to be black were filled in with a black paint made from clay, ash and water. Red-figure pots were painted black, with the figures left bare, or cut into the surface, so that they showed through in red after the clay was fired. Touches of white and dark red paint were used for fine details.

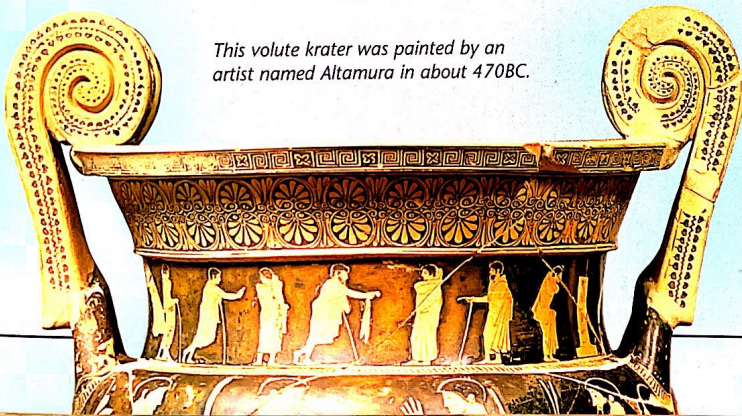
During the firing process, the openings to the kiln were shut. This cut off the oxygen supply, turning the pot black. The temperature was left to drop and the air vents were reopened - the painted areas stayed black, and the rest turned red.

This is a loutrophoros, a large vase with a long neck, used for carrying water for a bride's ceremonial bath.

This flat round box, known as a pyxis, was used for storing medicines.

This is an amphora, a two-handed jar used to store wine, oil and other liquids.

This volute krater was painted by an artist named Altamura in about 470BC.



A hydria was a jar for carrying water from fountains. Two handles were used to lift it, while a third, on the neck, was used for pouring.