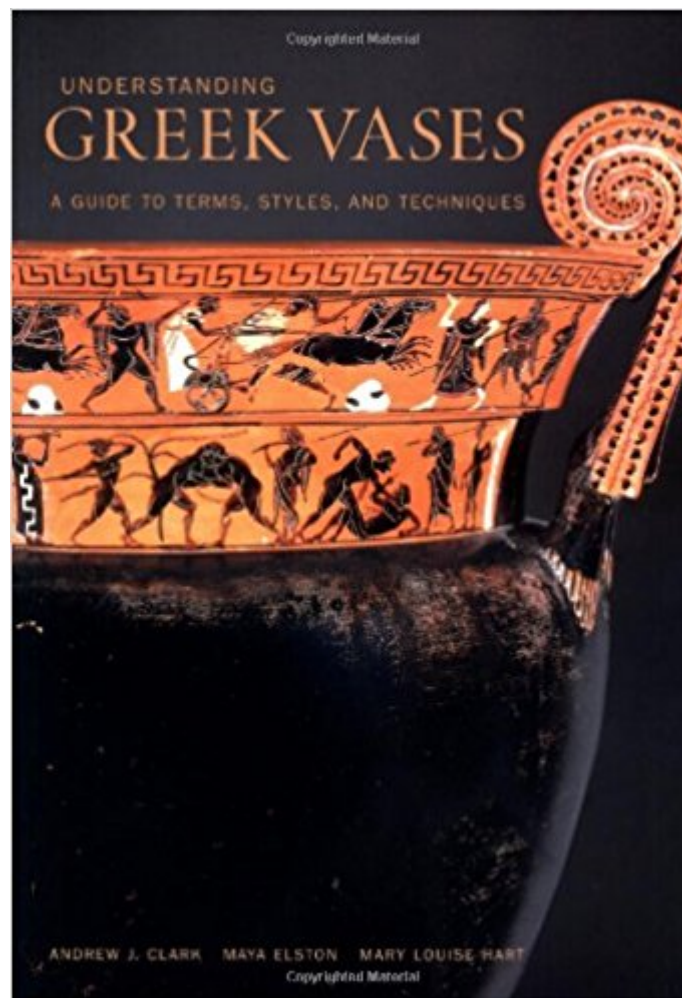




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# Understanding Greek Vases: A Guide To Terms, Styles, And Techniques (Looking At Series)



## Synopsis

What is a pyxis? Who was the Amasis Painter? How did Greek vases get their distinctive black and orange colors? This richly illustrated book--the latest in the popular Looking At series--offers definitions and descriptions of these and many other Greek vase shapes, painters, and techniques encountered in museum exhibitions and publications on ancient Greek ceramics. Included is an essay on how to look at Greek vases and another on the conservation of ancient ceramics. These essays provide succinct explanations of the terms most frequently encountered by museum-goers. The concise definitions are divided into two sections, one on potters and painters and another on vase shapes and technical terms relating to the construction and decoration of the vases. Featuring numerous color illustrations of Greek vases, many from the Getty Museum's collection, *Understanding Greek Vases* is an indispensable guide for anyone wishing to obtain a greater understanding and enjoyment of Greek ceramics.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This latest addition to the "Looking At" series published by the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles is well organized and more comprehensive than the previous volumes in the series (others include European sculpture, illuminated manuscripts, etc.). Intended for general readers and museum visitors, it is more than just a dictionary of Greek vases. Greek ceramics scholar Clark includes a first chapter, "Looking at Ceramics," which gives background by explaining why and how Greek vases are studied. Because most of the Greek vases that remain today are broken and dirty, Maya Elston, associate curator of antiquities conservation at the Getty Museum, has also included a

chapter on antique vase care and conservation. The glossaries that follow cover potters, painters, vase shapes, and such technical terms as alabastron, amphora, hyrdia, kythos, and oon. Beautiful and plentiful reproductions add richly to the scholarly text. What sets this book apart from other similar titles (e.g., any of the John Boardman texts) is the nonspecialist perspective and the addition of the conservation chapter. The book is concise yet packed with general information.

Recommended for public and academic libraries. Jennifer Moldwin Gustafson, Detroit Inst. of Arts  
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Andrew J. Clark is an independent scholar specializing in the study of Greek ceramics. Maya Elston is associate curator of antiquities conservation in the Getty Museum. Mary Louise Hart is assistant curator in the Museum's Department of Antiquities.

Understanding Greek Vases, published by the Getty Museum, is a compact reference guide that provides the essential background (painters, styles, terminology) needed to study and appreciate ancient Greek vases. The major part of the book consists of short (half-page), encyclopedia-style, entries for Athenian potters, vase-painters, ceramic styles, and other essential terminology.

Coverage, although limited to Athenian pottery, is broad and expert, ranging from "bilingual vases" to "Six's technique." Entries are generously illustrated, mostly in color, by important examples (including many "name vases") from museum collections in the U.S. and abroad. What really sets this book apart is that the individual entries are so extensively cross-referenced, that they look and feel more like a hypertext-linked web site than a conventional book. For example, if you look up the entry for the "Brygos Painter," you'll get cross-references in the text to three other Cup-painters, to Cup-painting itself, to the Pioneers, to Workshops, to Attribution, to Kylix, and to seven illustrations. This is an amazingly effective reference, one that I will use often at home, and take with me whenever I go to look at Greek vases in a museum. Tip: don't plan to read it cover-to-cover like an ordinary book. Begin with some topic that interests you, and follow the cross-references as you would with a Web page.

Greek vases are the best signifiers of ancient culture which we still have intact. Each one of them tells a beautiful and interesting story. Fascinating!

Book in great condition and an excellent resource as well.

You too will learn how to read a Greek vase

This book seems aimed at someone just beginning their study of Greek figured vases. That said it is well written and the glossary is helpful.

Although Understanding Greek Vases has been a help, I had expected more from it. Nevertheless, I am glad to have the book in my collection.

The book begins with a quick general overview on Greek ceramics - its history, techniques, trajectory in themes, artists, mythological characters, Greek culture/society that finds itself within the art, etc - that provides the reader with a pretty good base for the number of pages it takes up. There is then a short section on the 'conservation and care of ancient Greek ceramic objects' that explains some more technical things. After that comes the large section on Greek potters and vase painters, listed in alphabetical order and accompanied by colorful and informative images of the relevant vases. The artist's period, name, style and whatnot are explained in detail. Definitions for unfamiliar terms used in this section can be found in the next part of the book, which explains vase shapes and technical terms in normal English (also with nice images). Thus through the cross-referencing, most of the book's content can be understood without much trouble. At the end is a chart of vase shapes, which is useful because you can compare them without having to flip a single page. This book is excellent for purposes of quick reference. I would say that most people would not read it like they would a novel, but if you have any interest in Greek vase paintings, this is an excellent book to have.

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