

Greek art part i

Teaching the Greek Art module in the OCR Classical Civilisation A Level prescription.

- Introduction
- Vase painting

Created by Dr Nicky Devlin for Kings' College London Summer School on Teaching Classical Civilisation, July 2019.

OCR Specification:

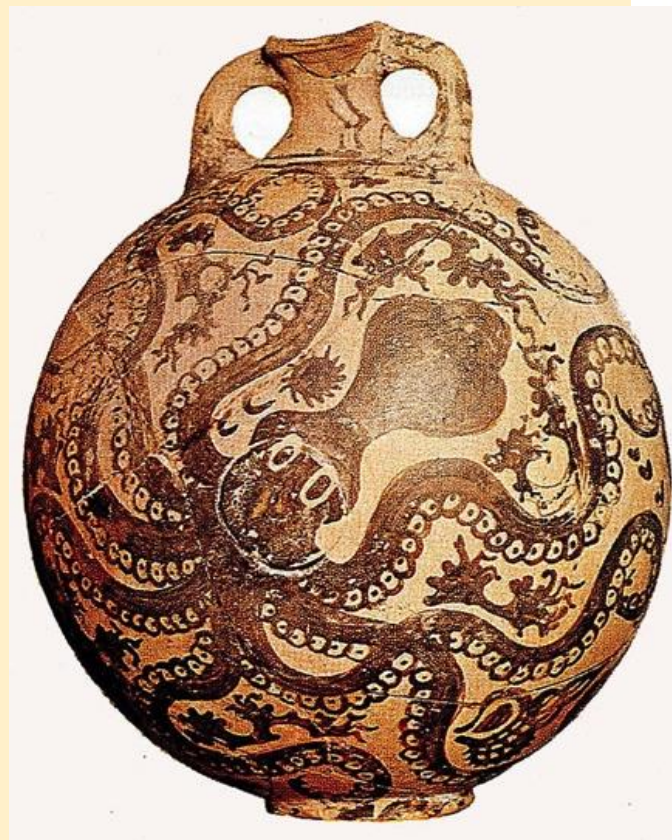
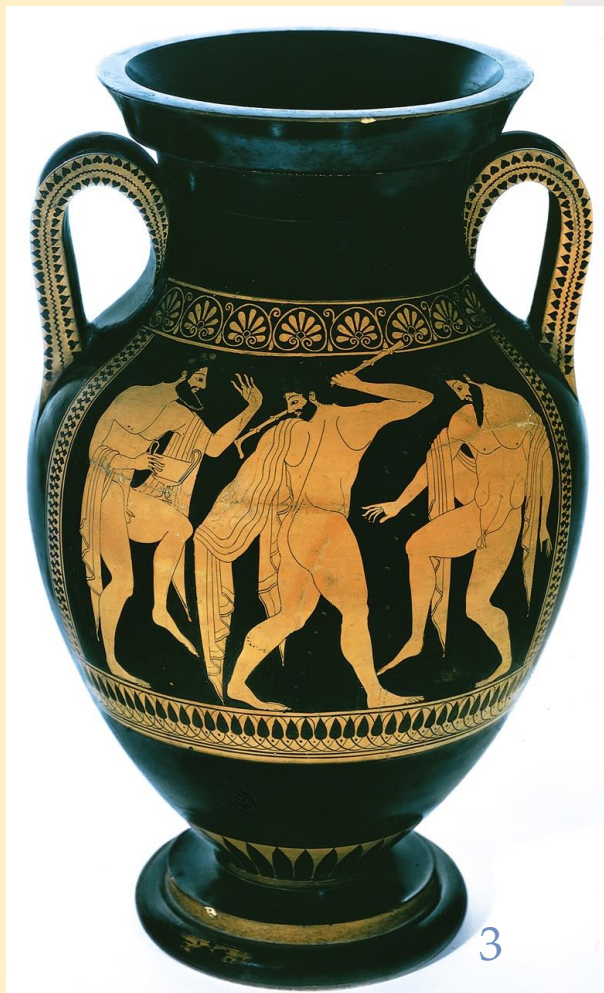
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introduction

- What are students' other interests?
- History – English – Politics
- Art
- Outside interests?
- Getting them to look
 - - describe
 - - evaluate

OCR Specification:

<https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/315133-specification-accredited-a-level-classical-civilisation-h408.pdf>



- Shapes and uses – storage, mixing, carrying, pouring, cosmetic, sporting
- Materials – effects of different types: clay, added colours; advantages/limitations
- Techniques – black-figure, added colour, incision; red-figure, different brush sizes, dilution of slip
- Subject matter – Achilles, Athena, Dionysus, Trojan War



amphora



neck amphora



Panathenaic
amphora



hydria



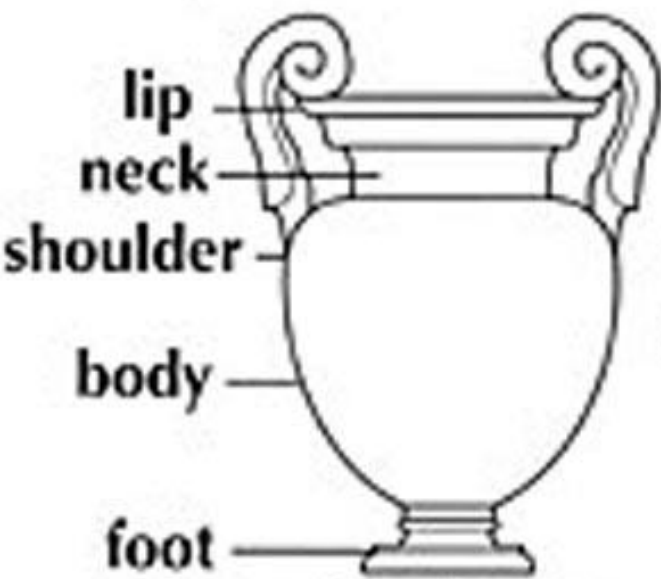
hydria (calpis)



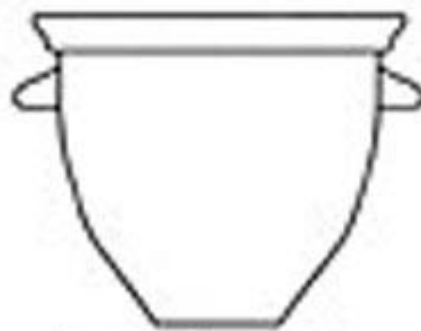
oinochoe



olpe



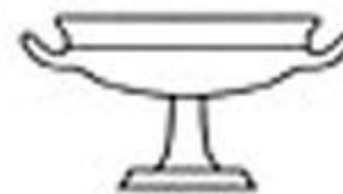
volute krater



bell krater



calyx krater



kylix



kantharos



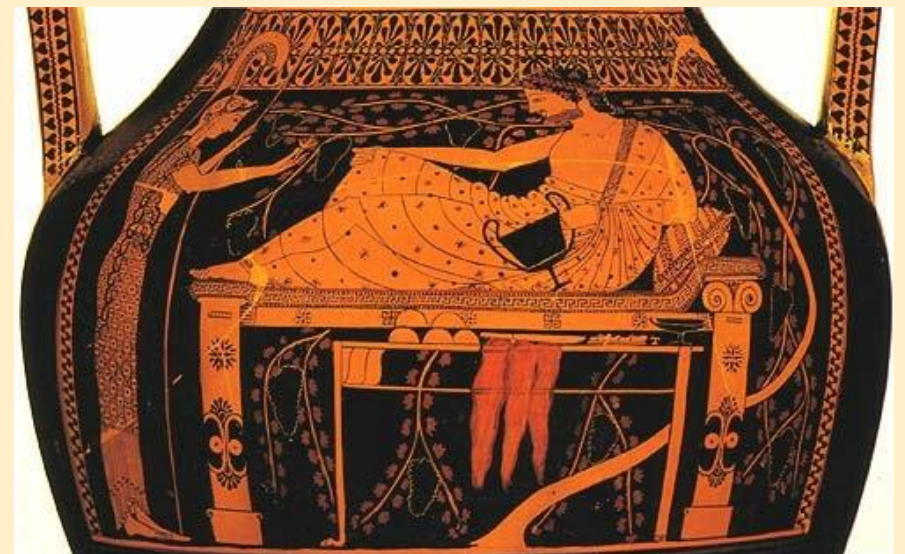
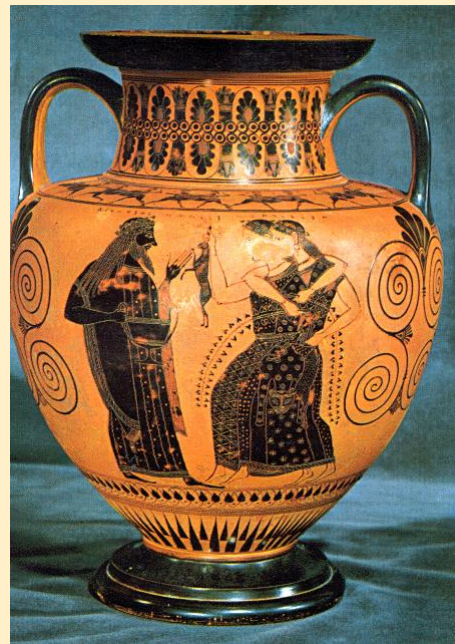
lekythos

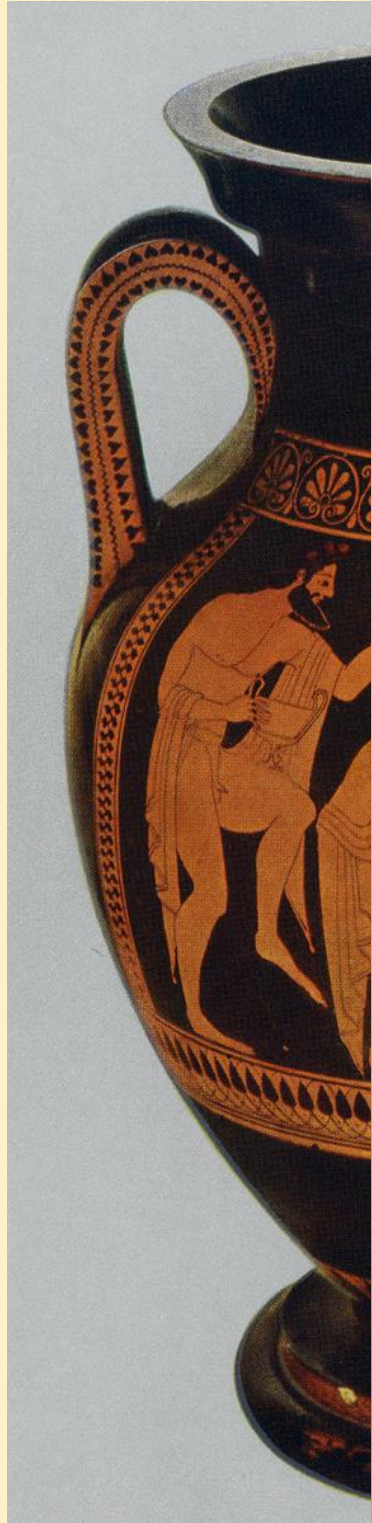


pyxis

Greek vases

a summary (i)





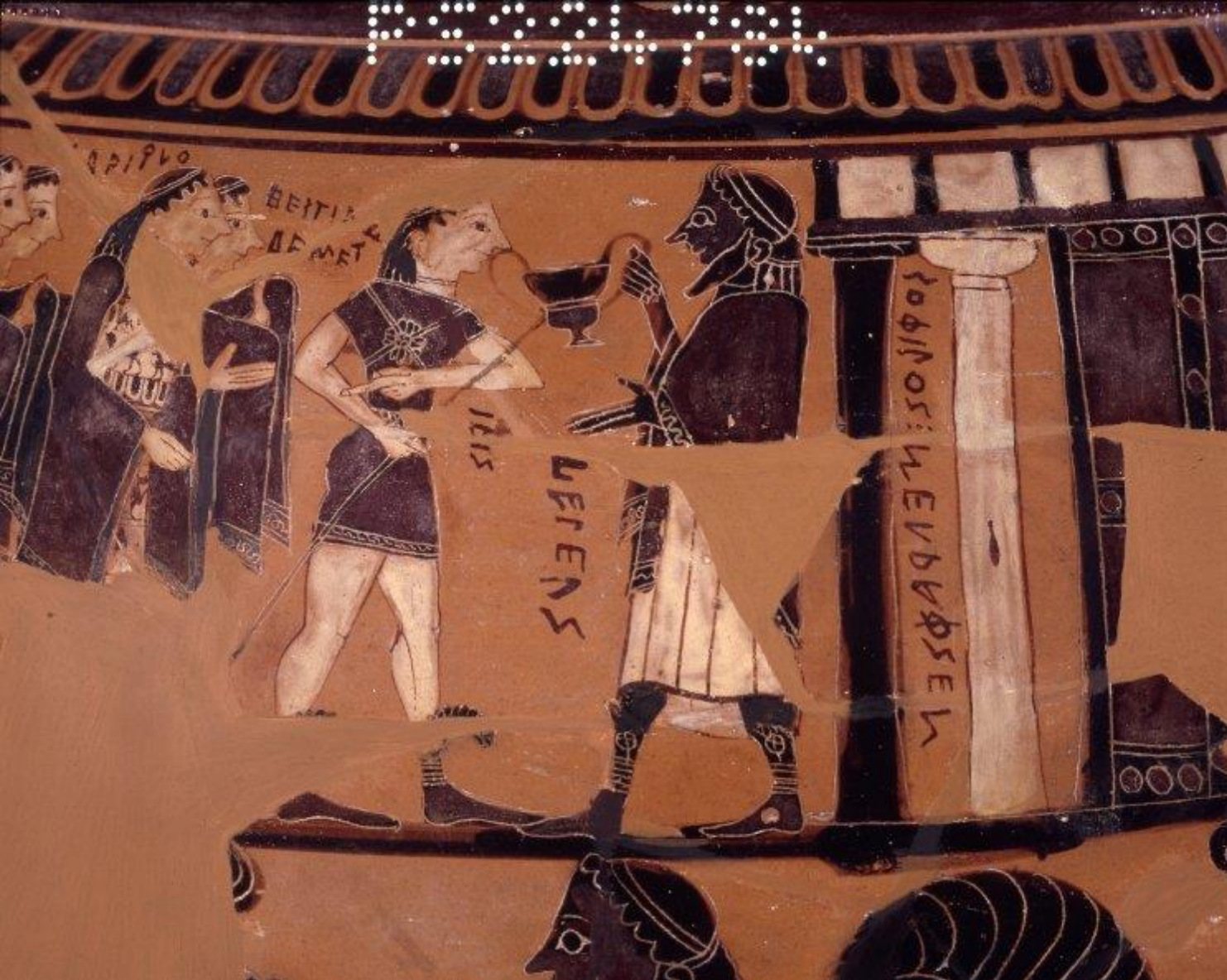
examples

- Sophilos' dinos
- handle of Francois vase
- amasis painter dionysos and maenads
- Exekias Achilles and Ajax playing dice
- Kleophrades painter sack of troy
- euthymides three men carousing

Sophilos

- 'Wedding of Peleus and Thetis'
- Earliest Attic vase by a known painter
- 580-70BC
- *Dinos*
- 71cm high
- four friezes showing wild and mythical beasts
- 'wedding' frieze on shoulder shows procession of gods etc. to house of Peleus
- Same principles of repetition and reflection
- Same black figure technique and incised detail
- Sophilos' mythical frieze has many more figures than the Gorgon frieze
- He adds white paint, especially for women's skin, and touches of red.





SOPHILOS M' EGRAPHSSEN

'Sophilos painted me'

Figures in the procession – their names are beside them starting at Peleus' house

- Iris the messenger goddess leads
- In red cloaks – Hestia, Demeter, Chariklo and Leto
- Dionysos with vine
- Hebe
- Cheiron the Centaur plus bow and kill from hunting
- Themis
- three nymphs



In the next group come gods and goddesses in chariots:

- Zeus and Hera – her gesture, holding veil over face, indicates bride or married woman
- Three unknown goddesses, walking
- Poseidon and Amphitrite (sea goddess)
- Three Graces walk alongside
- Aphrodite and Ares
- five Muses walking
- Hermes (hat and winged boots) and Apollo (cithara)
- Three more Muses, walking
- Athena and Artemis with her bow
- Three 'Morai' (the Fates)

Note how overlapping figures, like the horses here, are used in black figure to give some sense of depth.



Hera holds her veil up beside her face.

Do the animal figures in the lower frieze distract from the wedding scene? Explain your answer. Could a different view be justified?

- Okeanos behind chariots – bull-horned and fish-bodied
- His wife Tethys and Eileithyia goddess of childbirth, walking
- Hephaistos riding a mule.
- Peleus' house –to be read on this side as the home of the gods from which they all set out?



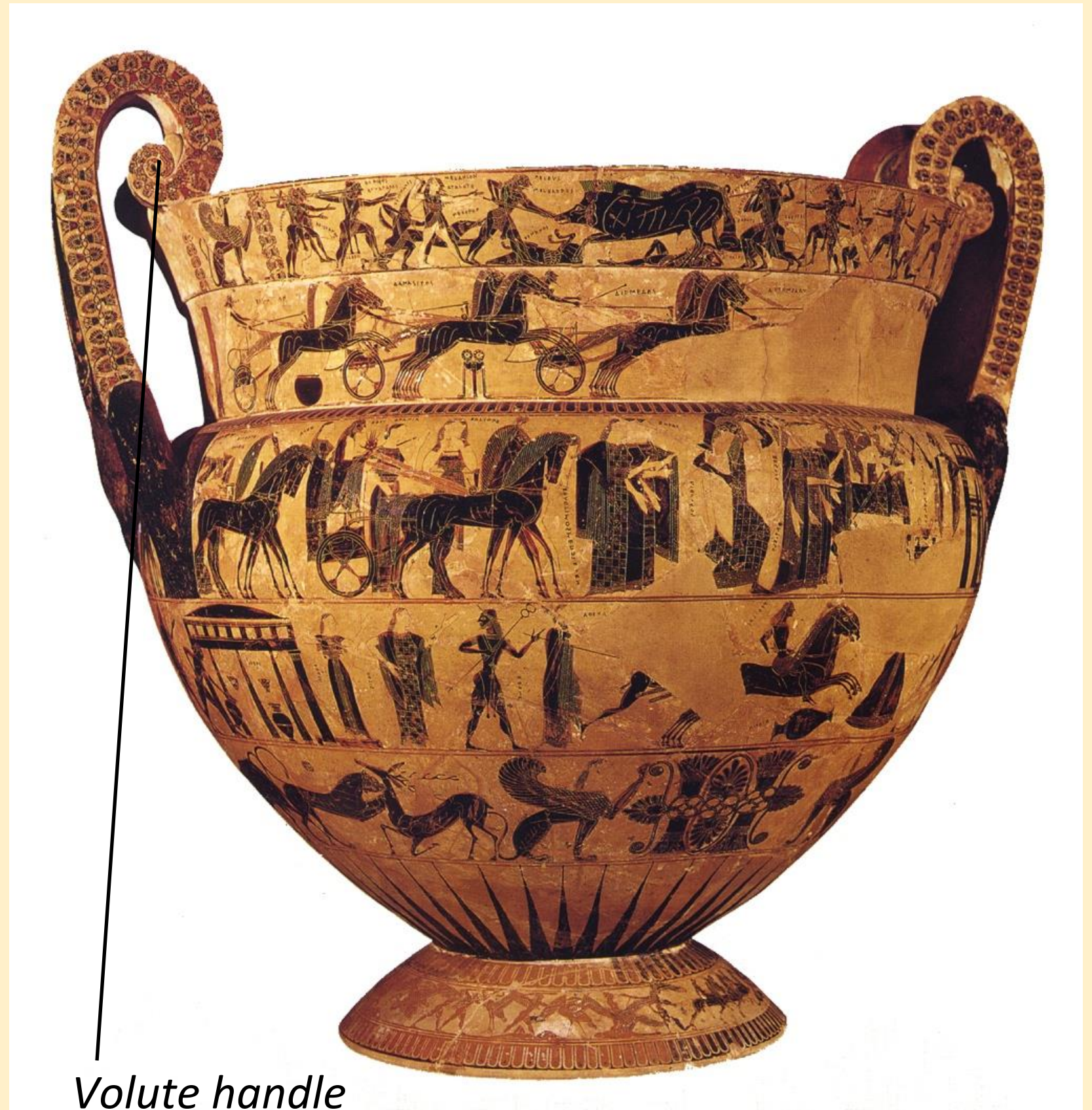
Note how the frieze continues uninterrupted round the whole circumference of the vase, and the figures create a sense of movement and variety which invites us to follow the procession with our eyes.

Visit the Sophilos *dinos*, which has a case all to itself, at the British Museum in London.
More information and pictures at the British Museum website [here](#).

The 'François Vase'

Kleitias (painter) and
Ergotimos (potter)

- 570-550BC
- **Volute krater** for mixing wine and water
- 66cm high, 57cm diameter at rim
- 5 figured friezes on main vase, ray pattern at base, further figured frieze on foot
- almost entirely figurative - 270 figures in all and 121 inscriptions, including names of potter and painter

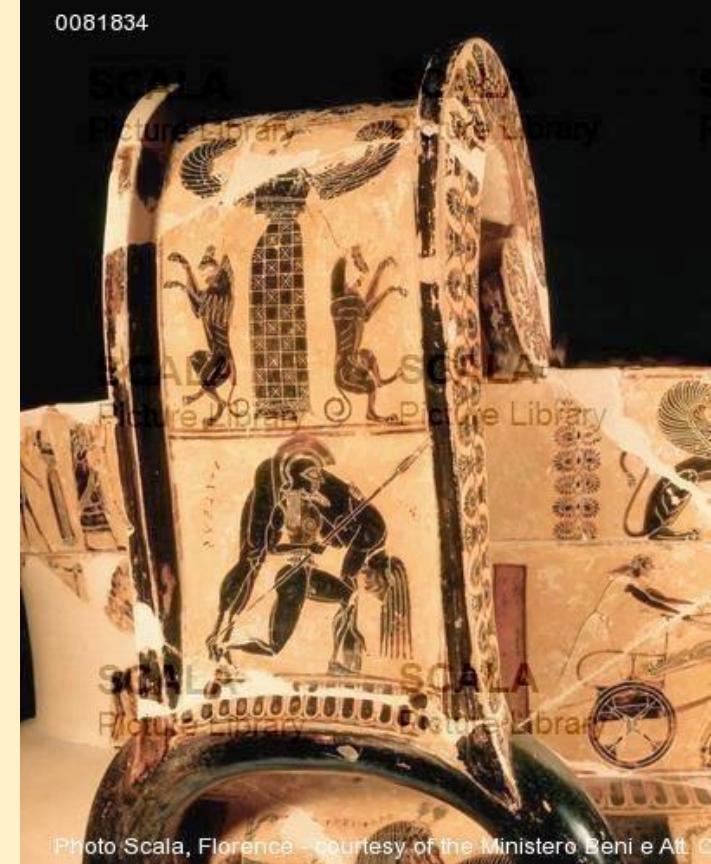


Volute handle

Handle decoration

Ajax bearing the dead Achilles from the battlefield. Small panel on flat outer surface of handle.

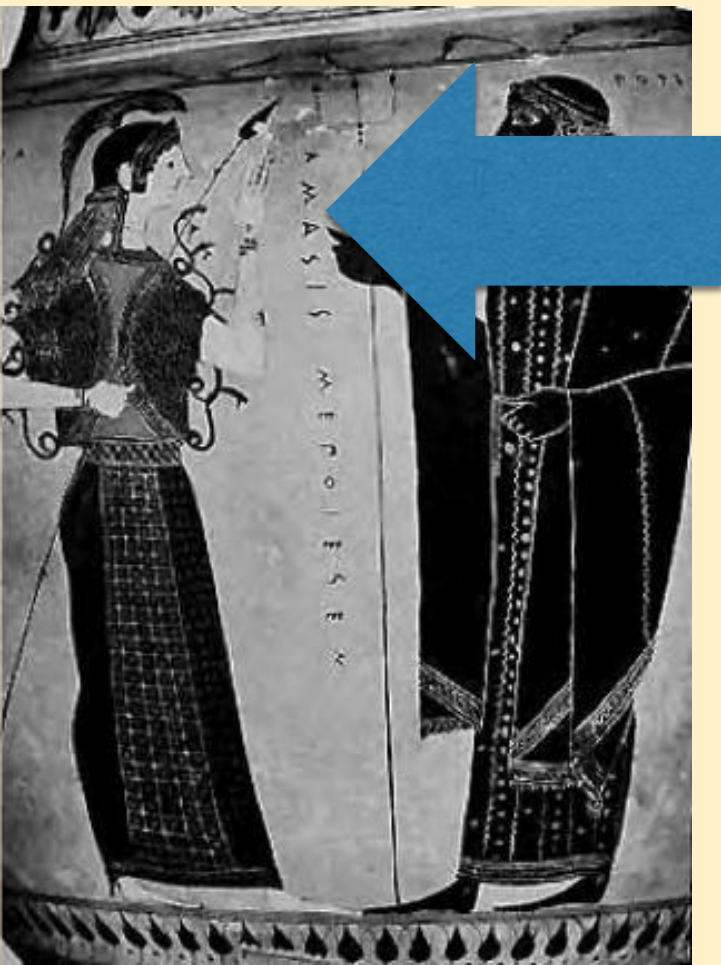
What does the painter suggest here about the relationship between the two heroes? How does he emphasise the contrast between life and death?



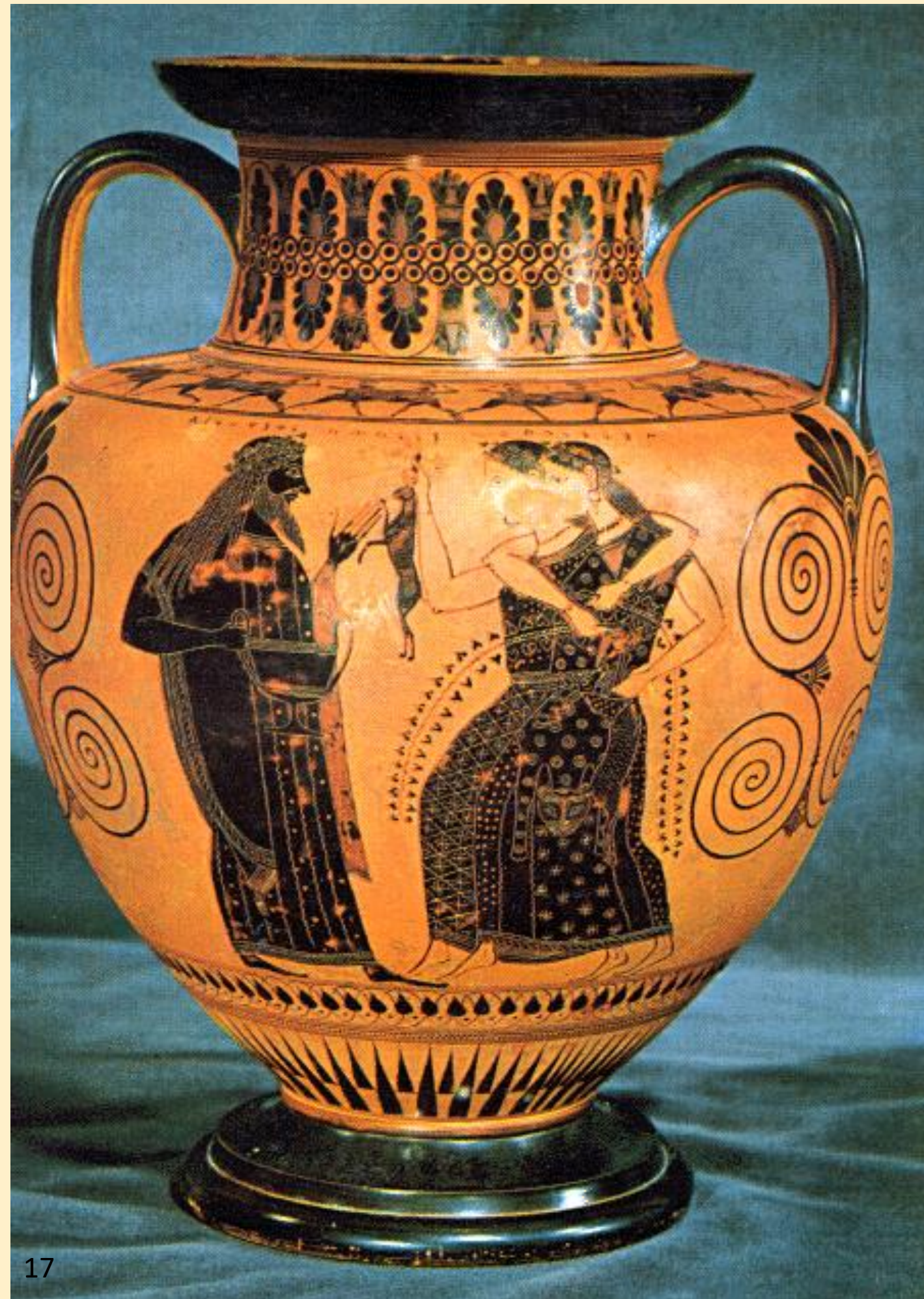


Amasis Painter

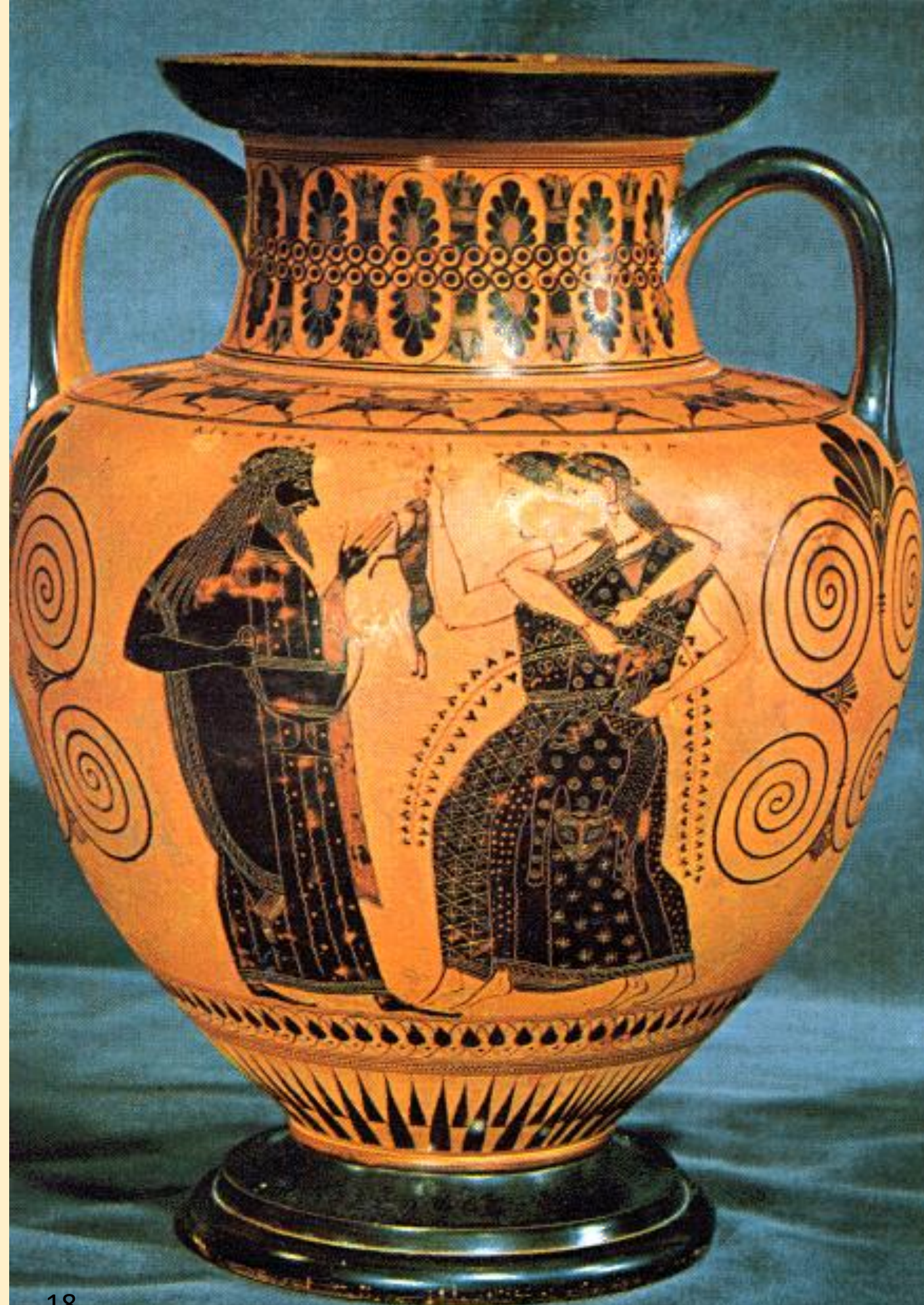
- 'Dionysus and Two Maenads'
- 540-535BC
- **Neck amphora** for storage
- 33cm
- Single painted panel has replaced banded decoration
- Signed by the potter Amasis – an Egyptian? AMASIS M'EPOIESEN – Amasis made me.



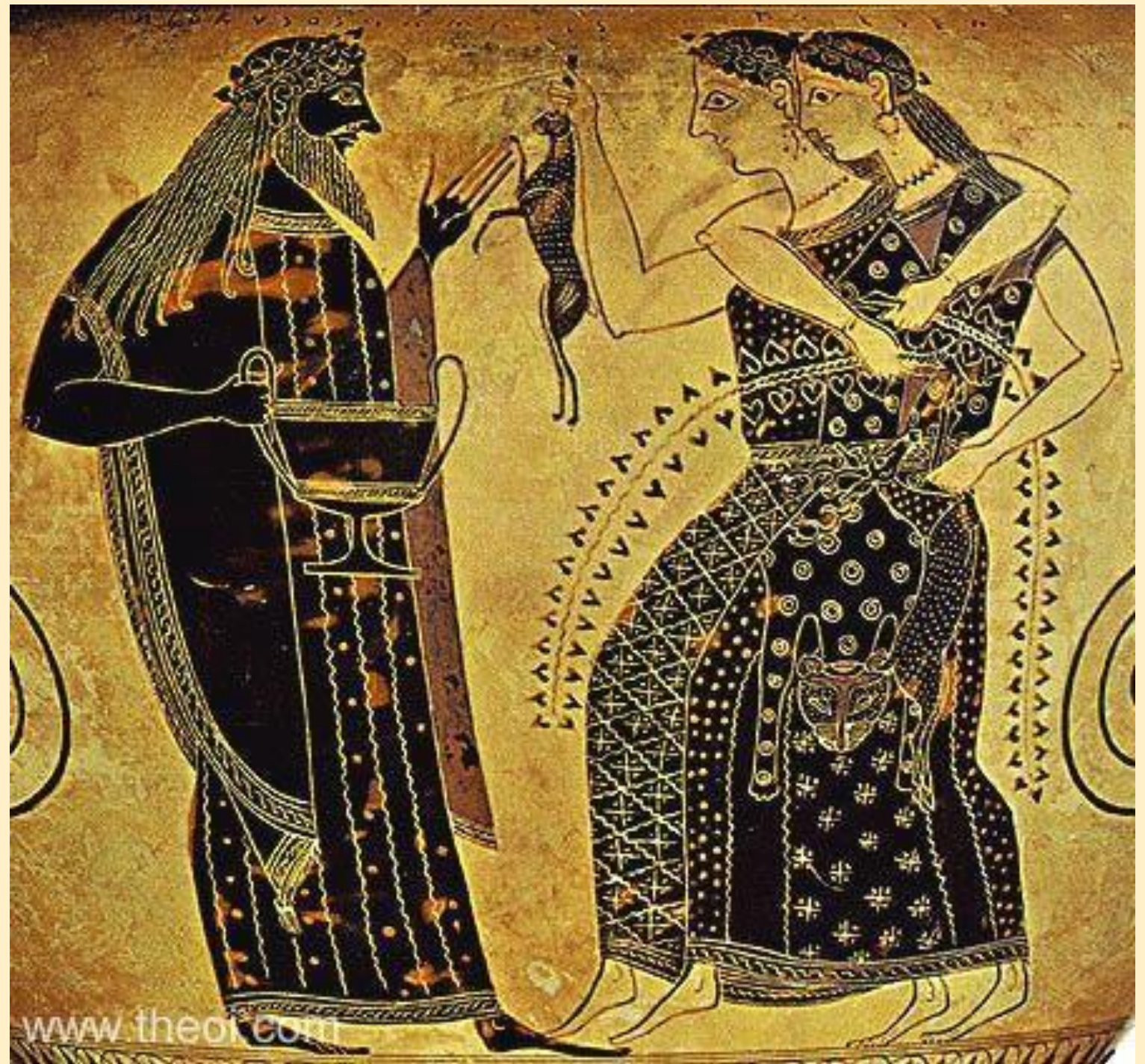
*Reverse –
Athena and
Poseidon*



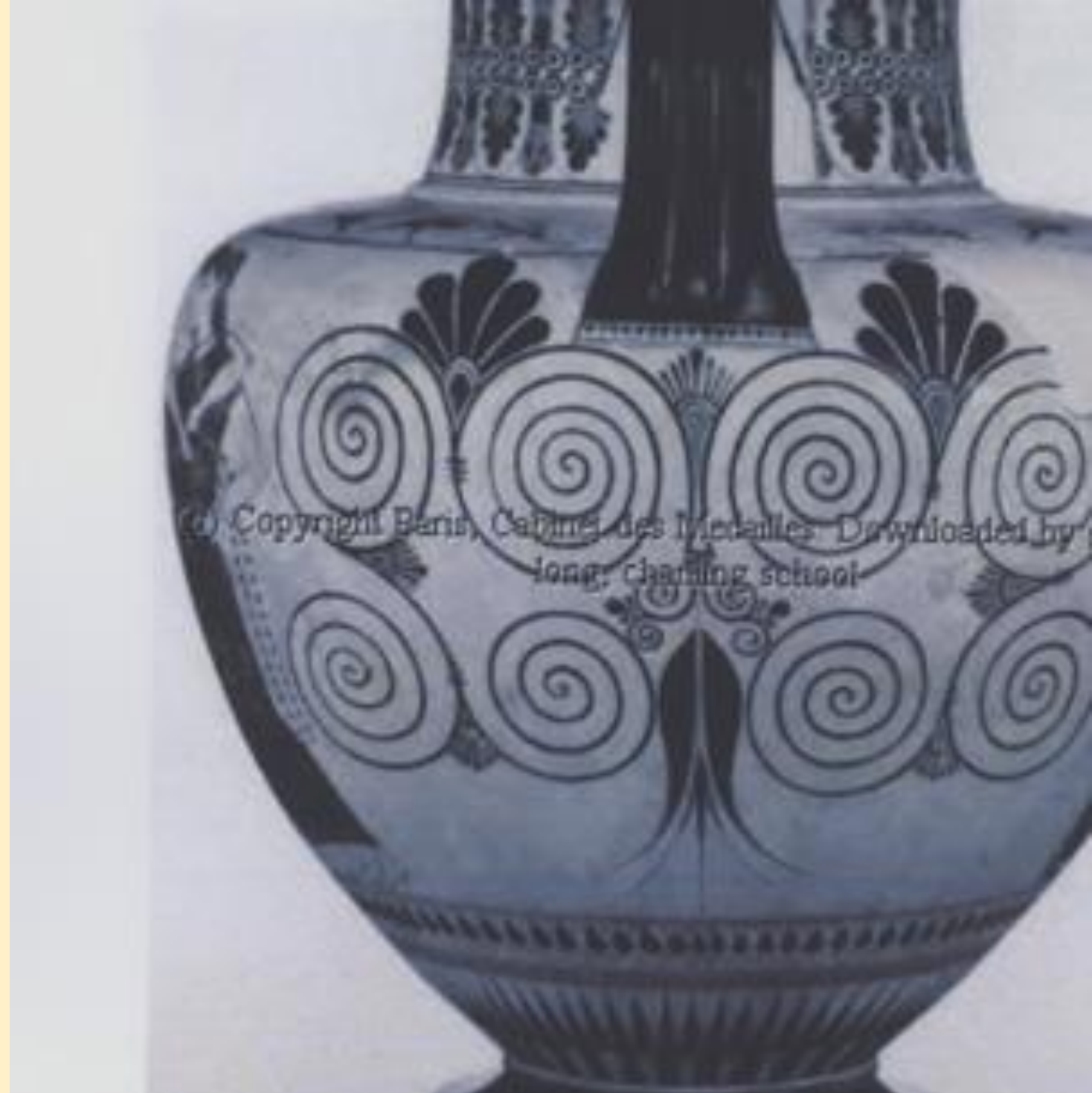
- Decoration based on symmetry and repetition
- Dionysos (black figure) and Maenads (in painted outline) loosely mirror each other
- centre of composition marked by hare
- Maenads x 2 in matching profile. Faces and arms delineated by brush lines
- Interplay of bent arms creates interesting patterns
- raised feet and bent legs suggest lively movement
- Varied patterns on dresses, panther skin, fawn
- Dionysos' contrasting stillness emphasised by strong repeated verticals of his garment



- On Dionysos, vertical folds minutely wavy to suggest cloth
- Fine incision in locks of Dionysus' hair and features
- finely drawn **kantharos** (wine cup)
- one Maenad holds out a hare, other has fawn, wears leopard skin
- Vine tendrils fill space around Maenads
- Feeling of affectionate closeness with each other and with god
- Sense of power over nature
- Instead of firm borders to picture, bounded each side by spiral patterns



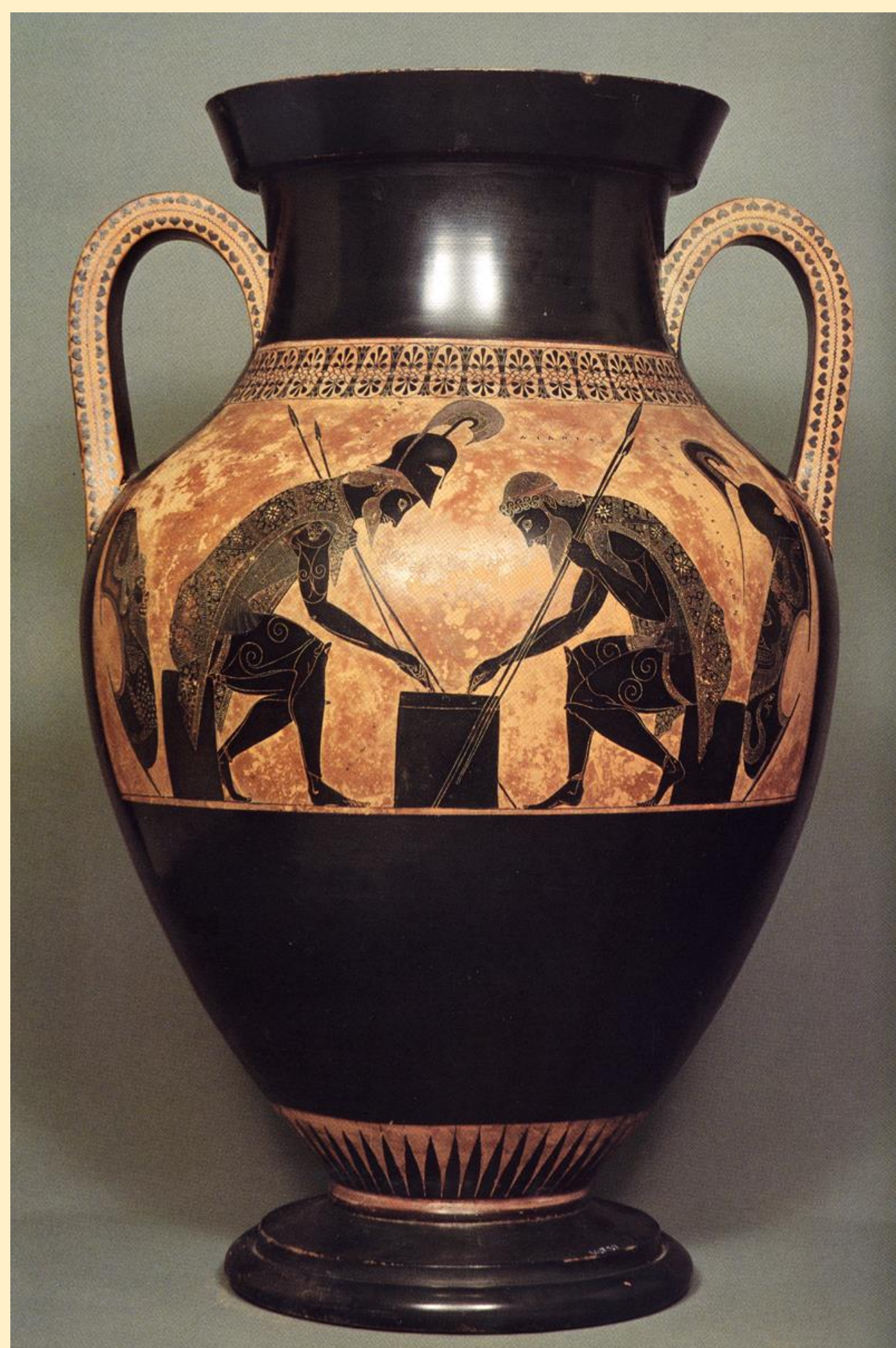
- Lotus flower and tendril decoration under handles
- naturalistic frame to images on flanks of vase
- meticulously painted
- band of lotus buds and pattern of rays emphasise narrowing of pot towards base.
- Figurative frieze on shoulder
- Double lotus and palmette pattern on neck



How has the painter incorporated the shape of the vase in his design?

Exekias

- 'Achilles and Ajax playing dice'
- Unique example of virtuoso black figure
- 540-530BC
- **Belly amphora**
- 61cm high
- Single painted panel replaces banded style
- Broad areas of black above and below painted figures focuses attention on central panel
- Two figures in mirroring poses either side of a gaming table
- many elements help to focus viewers' attention on board
- curved backs and shields enclose scene
- handles continue lines of shields and of spears

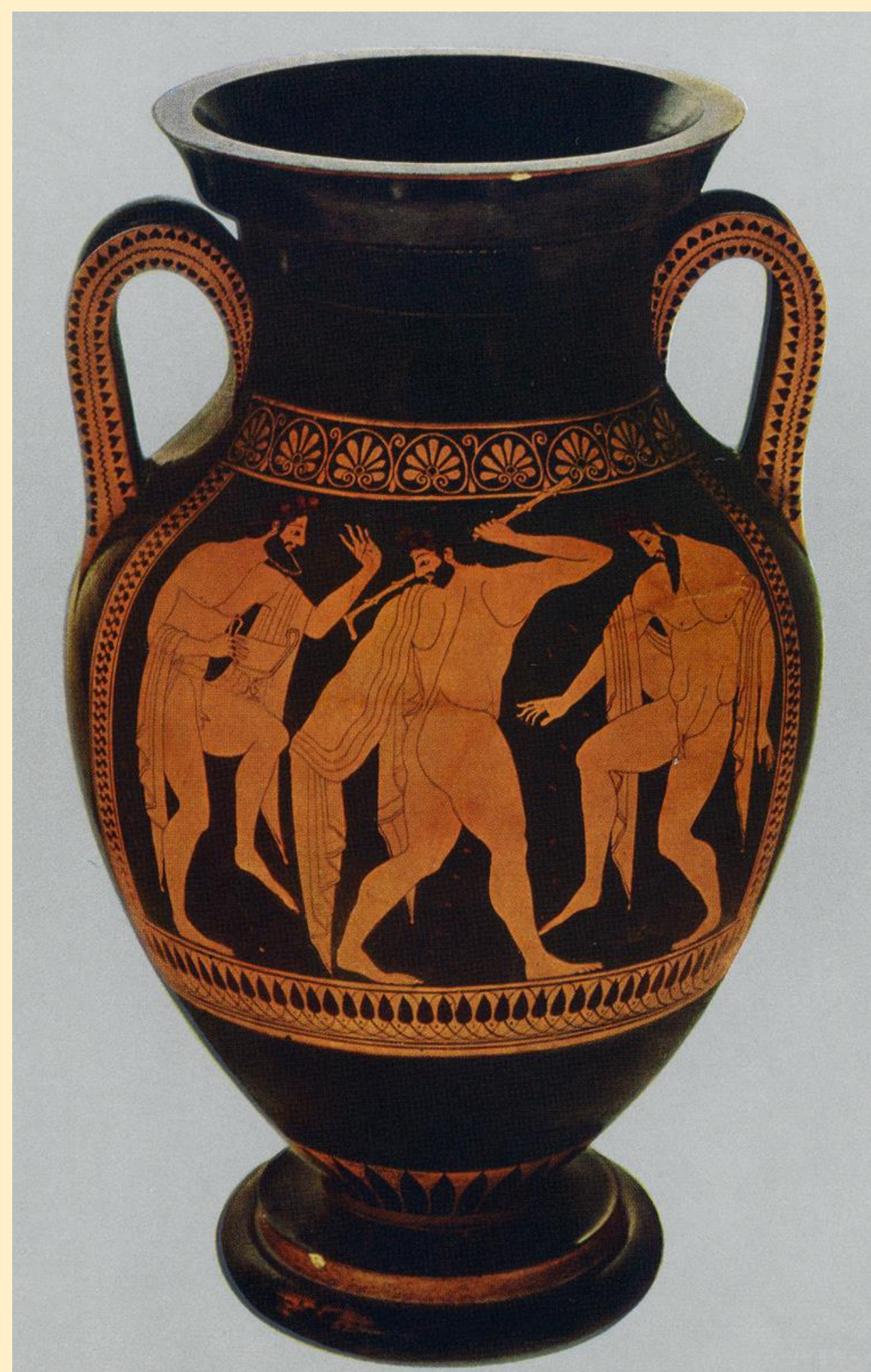




For another view of this vase and more information,
look [here \(Clash of the Dicers\)](#)

Euthymides - Three Men Carousing

ca 510
belly amphora



Kleophrades Painter

The sack of Troy.

500-490BC

Side 1: Priam

Side 2: Cassandra





Side 1



Side 2:

Compare and contrast

