





Black-figured Chalcidian Amphora, Archaic Period, Greece, 6th century B.C., h. 19 $\frac{3}{4}$  ins., Felton Bequest.

## TWO GREEK VASES

The National Gallery has recently acquired through the Felton Bequest two magnificent Greek vases; one is an excellent specimen of the black-figure style, which was current throughout the sixth century B.C., the other of red-figure, which came in about 530 B.C. and continued until the end of the fourth century.

The black-figure amphora is an unusually fine example of the fabric generally called Chalcidian, after Chalcis in Euboea, because the inscriptions on vases of this ware are written in the alphabet in use there. However, the localisation of the fabric is still a matter of dispute; nearly all the known vases have come, like ours, from Etruria or South Italy, and until further excavations at Chalcis can settle the question, there is much to be said in favour of the theory that the ware was manufactured in Etruria by Chalcidian settlers, who continued to use their own alphabet for the inscriptions upon them. The fabric is restricted to black-figure and lasted for a period of about forty years from ca. 560 to 520 B.C.

The Melbourne vase (inv. 1643/4) stands  $19\frac{3}{4}$  inches in height without the lid, 24 inches with it. It is made from a warm orange-red clay of particularly fine quality, with lustrous black glaze, and a good deal of added purple-red for the drapery, armour and other details, though comparatively little added white is used. The amphora has been skilfully recomposed from fragments; with the exception of a large piece on the obverse representing the hindquarters of the horses only a few small bits are missing and these have been carefully restored. An unusual feature is the preservation, in almost perfect condition, of the lid, the presence of which greatly enhances the appearance of the vase. Also noteworthy are the small round holes at the base of the handle-joins; possibly they served for suspension purposes.

The scenes on both sides of the vase provide vivid illustrations of the combats between Greeks and Trojans described in such detail by Homer in the *Iliad*. Nearly all the figures can be identified by the inscriptions beside them and include a number of well-known epic heroes. On the obverse is the four-horse chariot of Achilles, with the charioteer Automedon holding the reins; Achilles himself has stepped down on to the ground and is lunging with his spear at Eurymachos, whose body lies prostrate beneath the horses. To the right the Greek warrior Asteropaios, carrying a large round shield with a white tripod blazon, is striking down at the Trojan Periphatas, who has been forced to his knees and vainly tries to shield himself from the attack.

On the reverse are three more combat groups in the same manner. To left are two Trojans and a Greek; the latter, Diomedes, has struck down Charops, to whose rescue Hippolochos has come and is attacking his adversary. In the centre Glaucus fights Menestheus; the artist by showing Glaucus in full face and by giving him such a dominant position has perhaps wished to emphasise his prowess upon an occasion when, according to Homer (*Iliad*, xii, 329 ff.), Menestheus shuddered at the mere sight of him. The third group represents Odysseus with his foot upon the prostrate body of a warrior to whom he is about to give the coup de grace with his spear; only the first two letters ME of his victim's name survive, so we cannot be certain of his identity — Melanippos would be a possibility. The armour worn by the heroes, especially the helmets, shields, swords and greaves, is of considerable interest and well illustrates the descriptions given by Homer.

The vase may be attributed without doubt to the Inscriptions Master, the greatest of all Chalcidian vase-painters, and has many points of detail in common with his other works, notably in the use of inscriptions and the rendering of armour and of the human figure, especially in full face. The powerful style of this painter is seen to great advantage in the panel-like pictures on our vase; the obverse design is a real masterpiece, with great feeling for harmonious composition and the effective use of the different colours. There is an excellent sense of movement, the scenes are vivid and convincing, and not a little of the character of the heroes emerges from their representation. The period of the painter's main activity lies in the third quarter of the sixth century B.C., contemporary with and not un-influenced by Exekias, the great master of Attic black-figure, and our vase, which shows



Black-figured Chalcidian Amphora, detail, Glaukos, (full face) and Odysseus with a Prostrate Foe, Felton Bequest.

the artist at the height of his power, should be dated not far from 540 B.C. In shape, style and quality it has a strong claim to be ranked amongst the finest, if not actually as the finest, of the Chalcidian vases which have come down to us.

The red-figure *kylix* or cup (inv. 1644/4 comes from one of the great Athenian pottery workshops — that of the Penthesilea Painter — at the height of the Early Classical Period (ca. 460 B.C.). It is unusually well preserved for so large a vase (height 5½"; overall diameter 17", internal 13½"), and has only slight restorations along the fractures and where the stem has been re-attached to the bowl. The clay is deep orange-red, the glaze a dull black with greenish patches, and added red is used for the inscriptions and for the fillets round the heads of the figures, though this has now largely disappeared.

The scenes upon the vase are all concerned with music. In the tondo is a representation of a boy seated upon a stool playing the *aulos* or double-reeded flute while a young friend listens with apparent attention. Above runs the inscription *ho pais kalos*, the boy is handsome; a similar formula is also repeated twice on each of the scenes on the outside, and its use, without mention of any specific name, is characteristic of the painters of this school.

The exterior designs represent music lessons and each contains six figures. The one side shows to left a bearded man, wearing a cloak draped in a manner characteristic of the painter so as to leave part of the right side of the body exposed; note the small weights attached to the corners to help keep the garment in position. He is watching a boy with

a lyre in his right hand, who holds out his left to a bearded man who seems from his gestures not to have been very satisfied with the pupil's performance. To right is Victory holding in her hands a purple fillet with which she is about to crown the boy who stands before her; he turns his head, with an accompanying salute from his right hand, towards the bearded man who stands beside him. One is tempted to interpret the scene as pointing the contrast between the successful pupil and the failure. In the field above is a selection of objects appropriate to the school-room — a writing-tablet with stylus attached, an instrument case, a T-square for drawing, and a purse.

The scene on the other side is similar. Once again we have a row of objects in the field, this time with the addition of a strigil (scraper), a lyre, and a pair of purple-laced sandals, one shown in frontal view, the other in profile. To left stands a bearded man, then come two boys, one stretching out his hand towards the other, who holds a lyre with an attached plectrum in his right hand, and turns his head to look back at a bearded man with a stick. To right a lesson is in progress — the teacher, a bearded man with a receding hair-line, sits on a stool playing the flute, while his pupil stands before him in rapt attention.

The vase has been attributed by Sir John Beazley to the Splanchnopt Painter, an artist who derives his name from a fragmentary cup in Heidelberg showing a boy roasting *splanchna* (entrails) over a fire. He is a pupil of the Penthesilea Painter, the chief artist of a large group of painters in a workshop which specialised in the production of cups, often of large dimensions; their style illustrates the new artistic trends of the second quarter of the 5th century B.C. — the desire for monumentality, the development of naturalism, and an ampler treatment of the human form, which finds parallels in contemporary sculpture, as, for example, the Olympia pediments. Characteristic of the style of the Splanchnopt Painter are the small set mouths with slightly protruding underlip, the prominent rounded chins and the frizzy hair. Note also the more realistic treatment of the drapery, with simple folds represented by a few relief lines in contrast to the elaborate stylised schemes of the preceding period, and often with rounded zig-zags at the edge of the garment.

The Melbourne kylix is an admirably representative example of the work of the Splanchnopt Painter at its best and may be dated to ca. 460-450 B.C.

A. D. Trendall.

Red-figured Kylix, Classical Period, 5th century, h. 5½ ins., internal diam. 13½ ins., Felton Bequest.





Mahasthamaprapta, dark limestone, Northern Ch'i Dynasty, China, 6th century, h. 60 $\frac{3}{8}$  ins., Felton Bequest.

During 1956, through the Felton Bequest, the Chinese collection of the National Gallery of Victoria has been enriched by several important possessions. These include two companion Bodhisattvas carved in a dark limestone, once in the collection of Charles Vignier of Paris. Described by Siren in 1925, and attributed then to the Sui dynasty (581-618), he has since encountered them again and described them enthusiastically (1955), placing them correctly in the Northern Ch'i dynasty (550-577).

Bodhisattvas are those heroic beings in the Buddhist pantheon, who although enlightened have eschewed Buddhahood to remain on earth to assist in the salvation of all living beings. One in our pair is the beloved Kuan Yin (Avalokitisvera), for the diadem carries a figure of the Amida Buddha from whom the Bodhisattva is an emanation. In one raised hand is a branch or flower stem, and in the other a leaf or a palette. A scarf, chains of jewels and a necklace bedeck the body, which is partially covered by the dhoti which falls in long folds to a spiralling hem. The companion figure is almost certainly Ta Shih-chih (Mahasthamaprapta), and holds a lotus bud and a vase. Each is 61 inches in height, and would have stood beside a central Buddha figure.

These figures which are unusually intact are almost certainly from the cave temples of Nan Hsiang-t'ang in northern Honan, from which much of China's finest sculpture has come to the western world. From their resemblance to the fine Bodhisattvas and priest in the University Museum, Philadelphia, they are likely to be from the same workshop or centre. But they are less sophisticated, still retain a trace of the 'archaic smile', and may be a few years earlier, or the work of a less advanced sculptor.

Both figures mark a transitional stage in the evolution of Buddhist figures evident in the second half of the 6th century. In style they lie between the Wei dynasty figures of Yun Kang and Lung Men of the late 5th and early 6th centuries. These replaced the early sculpture of Yun Kang represented by the naturalistic great Buddha of cave XX (Mizuno) by flat stylised figures deriving from earlier Chinese sculpture. The Indo-Graeco-Roman figures of Gandhara as modified at Khotan in their passage over the great western desert, have been acted upon by the Chinese mode of apprehension. They have been rendered in flattish relief, symmetrically with lovely curving lines. The head with its smiling face has become longer with a long neck and sloping shoulders. The garment falls in almost parallel symmetrical folds to diverge to a lovely hem of swordlike points and scalloped edges. In our figures traces of this earlier hem fold remain. But the figures have come forward from the background, and, although still stiff, are on the way to the naturalism so brilliantly expressed a few years later in the T'ang dynasty (618-906).

The acquisition of the well-known Chun lotus bowl from the Schoenlicht collection brings to us an object described by Visser as "a famous piece of outstanding beauty". Originally from the collection of Dr. Otto Burchard of Berlin, it was

exhibited at the Berlin exhibition of 1929; the International Exhibition of Chinese Art, London, 1935; the Asiatic Art exhibition at Amsterdam, 1936; the exhibition of "Arts de la Chine Ancienne", Paris, 1937; and the Los Angeles exhibition, 1952. Furthermore, it has been frequently illustrated.

It is in the form of a lotus flower, emblem of Buddhism, which in utmost purity arises from muddy waters. Its shape is conical with nine petal flutings, supported on a small conical foot. Both within and without are four purple splashes on a lavender-blue glaze which has turned a pale brown over the ribs and rim-edge.

Its shape is almost unique for this ware. A comparable bowl, although with an ogee edge is the famous "great bowl of the Three Bats" in the David Foundation. This, however, is nearly twice the width of our bowl whose diameter is  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Chun ware is one of the most interesting types of the Sung dynasty (960-1279), although not regarded by the Chinese as classical. It was manufactured about the region of Chun-chou in Honan and was produced at several kilns. It is likely that it was made even before the Sung period, for the characteristic glaze is at times found on shapes which are usually considered as T'ang. The earlier part of the 10th century is commonly regarded as its time of origin, but it may have been made earlier.

No doubt Imperial ware, as this bowl is likely to be, was made at special kilns. But in 1127, the Emperor of all China suffered a notable defeat. He himself, although cultured, an artist and a scholar, was politically inept, and knew little of the arts of war. The Chin Tartars, already within the great wall, advanced upon the northern capital and captured the Emperor Hui-tsung himself. The court retreated to the south, and the lovely city of Hang-chou became the new capital. The Imperial kilns moved with the court, and although the manufacture of Chun ware was continued even to Ming times it no longer was an Imperial ware. Indeed, the ware of the south was unlike the northern ware, and can usually be easily distinguished from it. Copies of Chun ware have been made in the south, chiefly about Canton, some being of great beauty. It is likely that our lotus bowl was made in the north some time prior to the removal of the court in 1127.

Chun glaze is felspathic, and runs viscously in the heat of the furnace. It is therefore thick. Sometimes it is crackled. In the main it preserves a bluish colour, often lavender. There may, however, be much grey in it, and the blue itself may vary in shade. Probably the lovely, classical Imperial Ju ware as identified by Sir Percival David is derived from it. There is also a green variety. Chun ware may be plain, but there may be remarkable splashes of purple or crimson as in our bowl. The blue colour is derived from a small percentage of iron incorporated in the glaze; but the purple colour from copper probably painted on the body. The most dramatic of such effects are to be observed on the Imperial bulb bowls and flower pots, such as the fine example in the Gallery which came from the Eumorfopoulos collection. These, however, are not always to the European taste. There are other good examples of Chun ware in the collection, including an interesting specimen from a kiln site showing an intact pot within its saggars.

Leonard Cox.



Lotus Bowl, Chun Ware, Sung Dynasty, (960-1279), China.  
diam.  $4\frac{1}{2}$  ins., Felton Bequest.

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Figure of a Bodhisattva, Kuan Yin, Northern Ch'i Dynasty, 581-618, China . . . . .	Felton Bequest
Figure of a Bodhisattva, Mahasthamaprapta, Northern Ch'i Dynasty, 581-618, China . . . . .	Felton Bequest
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### THEATRETTE:

**ART FILMS: on the third Tuesday of each month.**  
**DOCUMENTARY FILMS: on Tuesdays, excepting each third Tuesday.**  
**MUSICAL RECORDINGS: on the second and fourth Thursday.**  
**All these activities are held at 1.15 p.m.**

The cover design in this issue is a Red-figured Kylix, Classical Period, 5th Century, h. 5½ ins., internal diam. 13½ ins., Felton Bequest.