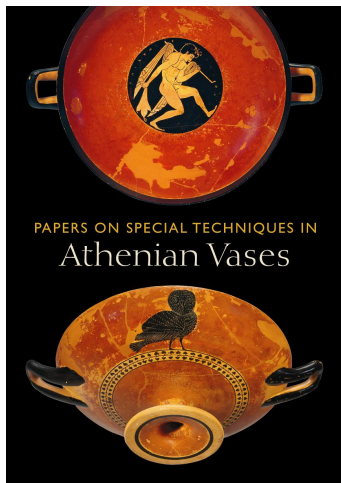


Papers on Special Techniques in Athenian Vases / Edited by Kenneth Lapatin.—Los Angeles, CA: The J. Paul Getty Museum, dist. by Oxford University Press, August 2008.—264 p.: ill.—ISBN 978-0-892-36901-0: \$75.00.



With the reopening of the newly renovated Getty Villa, the Museum planned a series of exhibitions focusing on the cultures of the ancient Mediterranean. The first exhibition, *The Colors of Clay: Special Techniques in Athenian Vases*, put a spotlight on the works of Athenian potters and painters from the mid-sixth to mid-fourth century B.C.E. In particular, it focused on less common decorative techniques, such as bilingual decoration, outline drawing, coral red gloss, white ground, and Six's technique, as well as vessels with added or extruded-clay reliefs, gilding, and plastic additions. An international symposium attended by twenty-three leading experts—scholars, scientists, and conservators—was held in conjunction with the exhibition. The papers from the symposium are collected in this volume.

The nineteen essays vary in the new contributions they make to this field of study, but most provide innovative or intriguing observations. One such example is Annie Verbanck-Piérard's association of special techniques as a way to offer an unusual gift to Athena Ergane (Athena as worker). The re-creation of an ancient Greek kiln and its results as documented Lisa C. Kahn and John C. Wissinger will, no doubt, prove useful for conservators and others studying pottery creation techniques. A disagreement between participants on whether or not vases were double-fired in the creation of the coral red gloss, is an instructive reminder that so-called "facts" are not indisputable.

This collection of papers is not for the novice. Vase shapes, motifs, themes, and image descriptions, as well as many ancient Greek terms, are often not defined or explained. The volume does not include a glossary or outline chart of vessel shapes. With few illustrations of the objects being discussed (those images are in the actual exhibition catalog), the reader may have difficulty following and understanding the text.

This book is most appropriate for libraries serving specialists in ancient Greek antiquities or conservation staff tending ancient collections. The corresponding exhibition catalog is also a necessity, and because it is more accessible to a larger audience, it would be the appropriate choice for a more general library collection..

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