

Basic Detail Report



Column Krater (Mixing Bowl)

Date

ca. 525-510 BCE

Primary Maker

Rycroft Painter and Shop

Medium

pottery and paint

Description

The four divinities assembled on one side of this krater appear in different arrangements on numerous Attic vases of the 6th and 5th centuries BCE. Memorably rendered by the Rycroft Painter, the youthful, virile Apollo ascends his

chariot, observed by his divine sister, Artemis, who holds her bow as goddess of the hunt, and by their mother, Leto. Leto grasps a spindle and a distaff, symbols of spinning and weaving, the central activities of the proper matron and mother in the home, used here to indicate that she is the mother of the divine twins. Hermes, the patron of travelers, identified by his winged hat, steadies the team of horses and awaits Apollo's departure so that he may guide his way. The rendering of both the anatomy and spirit of the horses is more convincing than that of the figures. Horses were a luxury in the 6th century BCE and were prized by the Greeks far above all else in nature but man. Apollo, the chariot, and particularly the horse team virtually crowd out the three deities. The subject on the opposite side of the bowl is Dionysos, the god of wine, surrounded by followers of his cult. Surprisingly, Dionysos is not as well drawn and painted as the excited satyr beside him. The grapevines undulate as if motivated by music, the same music to which the maenads, female worshippers of Dionysos, dance in a restrained and measured manner. The satyr, to the left of Apollo in the central pairing, possesses by his placement a greater significance in the composition than the god. Dionysos and the maenads hold wine cups; Dionysos also commands a huge kantharos (bottle). General inebriation is supposed. Most probably this scene was selected due to the function of the vessel. A krater, or bowl, was used to mix wine and water for use at social gatherings. The purple coloration on the beard and hair of the god of wine is a humorous addition. As ivy is sacred to Dionysos, the ivy leaf borders of both narratives refer to him.

Dimensions

Overall: 14 x 14 5/8 x 12 3/8 in. (35.6 x 37.1 x 31.4 cm)