

**CATALOGUE OF THE
CASTELLANI COLLECTION OF
ANTIQUITIES IN THE UNIVERSITY
GALLERIES, OXFORD**

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Catalogue of the Castellani collection of antiquities in the University Galleries, Oxford by W. S. W. Vaux

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W. S. W. VAUX

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INTRODUCTION.

THE Collection of Antiquities, of which I now submit a Catalogue *sufficient for identification*¹, consists of the following principal groups:—

- I. Eighty-eight *Vases*, or parts of *Vases*, of Græco-Italian workmanship.
- II. Eighteen *Objects in Terra Cotta*, chiefly female figures.
- III. Twenty-five miscellaneous *Objects in Bronze*, including a helmet, strigil, spear-heads, portions of candelabra, &c.
- IV. Three spear or pike-heads, *in Iron*.

Of these, the *Vases* form the largest and the most important class; I shall therefore give a short outline of the leading classes into which it is usual to divide such works of art. Omitting therefore many smaller subdivisions requisite in great collections, such as that of the British Museum, the following may be taken as comprising the most important groups:—

¹ It must be remembered that the following papers are only a Catalogue of the Castellani Collection as it at present exists. The writer hopes that the time may come when similar objects elsewhere in Oxford may be placed with it. Hence it is that the vases, &c., in this collection are not placed, as they might have been, in a chronological order: this can only be effectually done when all the collections in Oxford (and they are many) are arranged under the heads to which they respectively belong.

1. *Vases of the Archaic Period*, sometimes termed Phœnician, the latest being probably as early, if not earlier, than B.C. 500, while the most ancient are believed to ascend to B.C. 700.

2. *Later Archaic and Transitional*, between B.C. 550 and B.C. 440.

3. *Vases of the Finest Style*, from B.C. 440 to B.C. 336.

4. *Vases of the Macedonian Period*, to the decline or extinction of the art, from B.C. 336 to, probably, about B.C. 100. After this time scarcely any vases were made.

As each of these classes finds its representative in the Castellani Collection, it is worth while to state here, though briefly, its leading characteristic.

I. *Vases of the most Archaic Period*. These vases are generally painted in brown or maroon on an ash-coloured ground, crimsons and whites being added by coloured clays, technically called *engobes*. The designs on them are usually rude geometrical forms, lozenges, waves and checquers, often arranged in concentric bands, like wicker-work. Animal forms are rare, and when given the eyes and other features are rendered by lines rudely incised in the clay while moist. Later in this style, lions and other animals occur, represented on a field *semé* with flowers. Occasionally there is an alternate arrangement of vertical lines and pictures in compartments, bearing some analogy and resemblance to the Metopes and Triglyphs of a Doric temple. Vases of this class have been met with at Athens, in the Greek Islands, and at Vulci and Nola in Italy.

II. *Later Archaic and Transitional*. In these, the clay body is of a clear fine red, with figures painted on it with a black enamel glaze, believed to be in part composed of volcanic ashes; crimson and purple is used to relieve the figures, the uncovered portions of the women being generally painted white: outlines of form and details of dress and armour are delicately incised. A black varnish covers all the unorna-

mented parts of the vase, as the mouth and the handles, and is more lustrous and durable than that found on vases of the more ancient style. The field is still *semé* with flowers, and friezes and animals occur; but the representation of the human figure in action is the principal subject of the design. In the earlier specimens this action is restrained and ungainly, and the faces wear the rigid conventional smile of the marbles from *Ægina*, now at Munich; the eye, though in profile, is drawn as if seen in front, and the beard is often peaked. Greater skill is shewn in the delineation of the animal than of the human figure. Vases of this class abound in the Etruscan sepulchres (whence the name they long bore), and especially at Vulci.

III. *Vases of the Finest Style.* In these vases the colours of the previous period are reversed, the figures being left of the natural colour of the clay (in some cases slightly enhanced by artificial means), while the background is covered by a black lustrous varnish. The details of the costumes and the inner markings of the anatomy are represented by black lines, strong or faint as occasion requires; whites and purples rarely occur, and the incisions of the earlier date are disused. As the drawing had to be executed on the clay while wet and before it was baked, great freedom of hand was needed to produce a correct design. Simplicity is the leading characteristic of the compositions of this time; the eye is drawn in better perspective, and the figures are kept as much as possible in one plane. The faces are generally, as in the earlier styles, in profile. The grand ideal of the School of Pheidias may be recognized in the general artistic treatment; thus the neck is round and column-like, the shoulders broad, and the muscles well developed: the female forms are rendered in a character as masculine as possible, such approximation of the feminine to the male type being one of the characteristics of the best period

of Greek art. A great many vases of this kind have been procured from Vulci and other Etruscan sites, but the material of those from Nola is, generally, the finest, owing to the brilliancy and almost uniform preservation of the glaze, the elegance of the forms adopted, and the refined beauty noticeable in the choice and treatment of the designs. Though Italy, as is natural, has proved our largest storehouse, fine vases of this class have been also procured from Athens, Sicily, and Rhodes.

IV. *Vases from the Macedonian Period to the decline or extinction of the art.* The chief characteristics of this style are, the magnitude of the vases produced in the Apulian manufactories, the abundant use of white, yellow, and purple *engobes*, a greater variety in the forms of the vases themselves, a richer and often excessive ornamentation, with less purity of composition and less care in the drawing. Gold is occasionally used in the accessories, and wreaths and other details (even figures) are sometimes rendered in relief. The face, which on the earlier styles is always in profile, is here frequently given in front view, and an attempt is made to impart some expression to the features. The compositions are more crowded, and the subjects selected are more suitable for mural pictures than for the decoration of the convex or concave surfaces of vases. The designs most frequently relate to Dionysiac subjects, to Aphrodité and Erôs, or to sepulchral rites. The larger specimens seem hardly to have been intended for domestic use, but rather for the decoration of the houses of the rich. It is generally supposed that the Ceramographic art died out in Greece soon after the sack of Corinth by Mummius, and that it did not survive much longer in Italy. At the close of this period the drawing became coarse and inaccurate, the forms of the vases clumsy, while the glaze, originally defective, loses nearly all its brilliancy. There is indeed a continuous decline in every quality, both of mechanical and artistic excellence.

Among the eighteen objects in Terra Cotta, the small female figures may be considered as fairly representing this class of ancient art. As a rule, Greek Terra-cottas are small figures in the round, varying in height from four to twelve inches. A few of them denote various mythical personages, and may be recognized by their respective characteristics, but to the large majority no name can be assigned, while some are probably studies taken from the life, possibly in preparation for future works in marble. They would seem to have been, generally, cast in moulds and afterwards retouched by the hand; some, however, exhibit signs of modelling. They have been all painted in *tempera*, and a few of them preserve their original colours. Many again of these Terra-cottas have been unquestionably intended as votive offerings, and have therefore been found in great abundance in excavations within the precincts of Temples: they have also been repeatedly met with in the tombs of Magna Græcia. Figures of this kind must not be regarded as elaborate works of art, though often modelled with much freedom. In their attitudes, and in the composition of their draperies, they often exhibit much felicity and boldness of invention; indeed some of them may fairly be considered to be studies or recollections of the works of great sculptors.

In the following Catalogue the Roman numerals refer to the outline-forms in the Plates of the two volumes of the Catalogue of the Vases published by the Trustees of the British Museum. There are however, as might have been anticipated, some modifications of form not exactly corresponding with any one in these plates. Cf. (*conferre*) means that the vase

is like, but not identical, with any shape in the British Museum Catalogue. The smaller or Arabic numerals mean a reference to the numbers in the British Museum Catalogue. Thus Cf. B.M. 359 means 'compare this vase with No. 359 in the published Catalogue of the British Museum.' This comparison is intended to point, generally, to minute differences between the Oxford and the Museum specimen, which cannot readily be described in words.

The Greek technical names of the Vases, as Krater, Amphora, Hydria, &c., have been only added where there seems to be no doubt of their correctness, as it must be remembered that scholars, and especially those who have paid the most attention to ancient Ceramic works, are by no means agreed on a certain or comprehensive nomenclature for such works of Art. Indeed it is only in the larger specimens, where the etymological origin of the name corresponds with the form of the vase or with the use to which it was put, that we can feel fairly sure we assign to it the name the Greeks themselves would have employed.

W. S. W. VAUX.

Oxford, 1876.