Hands On Learning
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GREEK POTTERY AH 55



When archaeologists find Greek pottery today they can often get some idea of the trade routes used by ancient peoples. Greek colonies (cities of Greek people in different countries) grew up all around the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. At *Emporia* in Spain, *Massilia* in France (Marseilles), *Tripolis* (Tripoli) in Libya and *Olbia* (Odessa) in Ukraine and in the many Greek cities of Sicily and *Magna Graecia* (southern Italy) the Greeks traded with the native populations for locally produced materials. *Emporia* means 'market', *Olbia* means 'prosperity' and *Massilia* was ruled by rich merchants, showing how successful these trading posts were. This map shows the Mediterranean and Black Sea as we know it today. You can see Greece in the centre with Spain and France on the left, Libya at the bottom and Ukraine on the right.

Greek pottery can be roughly divided into two groups by looking at the patterns of the black figure and the red figure. The black figure pottery has black silhouetted figures on a red natural background and originated in Corinth during the early seventh century BC. The red figure pottery has figures outlined in black with the background painted black, leaving red figures. It was invented in Athens around 530 BC. Details were made with a fine brush and battles or tales of mythology were the usual subjects of the design.

This box contains two types of lekythos, which is an ancient Greek vessel used as a container, usually olive oil. Oil had many uses in the ancient world such as anointing the body, fuel for lamps and in the preparation of food.

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Squat lekythos

This vessel has a shorter, fuller body when compared to the other traditional lekythos in this box. It has an attractive black glaze and is painted using the red figure technique. The design shows a palmette with eleven leaves and tendrils (shoots) rising from either side. It dates from 400 to 375 BC.



Lekythos

This lekythos has a more usual shape. It is a slim, graceful vessel with a single handle at the top. It is painted using the black figure technique and has the beautifully painted leaves of a lotus flower arching over a palmette. It is thought to have been manufactured in Athens between 500 and 475 BC.

