



Olpe (pitcher)

Date

570-550 B.C.E.

Primary Maker

The Rosoni Painter

Medium

Terracotta with slip

Description

As the ancient Greeks began to traverse the Mediterranean more extensively in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE, they came into contact with people of other cultures and exchanged goods, techniques, and ideas. One such group was a tribe of indigenous Italians called the Etruscans, based in an area north and west of Rome until they were fully conquered and assimilated into the Roman Republic in the third century BCE. This olpe, used for holding and pouring wine, was created by an Etruscan artisan who adopted Corinthian form and iconography. Corinth—a city-state in ancient Greece—had increased its power and cultural production in the seventh century BCE and founded settlements in present-day Corfu (a large island off the west coast of mainland Greece), Egypt, and Albania. Such ceramics became known as Etrusco-Corinthian ware and were produced from approximately 630 to 540 BCE, mostly in the Etruscan cities of Vulci, Caere, and Tarquinia. This vase is typical of the ware in its shape, arrangement of the decoration in three registers, and palette of purplish brown, reddish brown, and cream. The style of decoration

was also borrowed from Corinth and was itself influenced by the Greeks' increased contact with the Near East. Known in the modern period as "Orientalizing," the decoration typically featured geese, boars, panthers, and other exotic animals, some of which are seen here, along with rosettes. (This vessel appears to depict four panthers, three swans (or geese), and one stag.) As the style evolved under the Etruscans, it became less precise and more abstracted, as is particularly visible in the rosettes on this example. (SOURCE: Alcauskas, INNOVATIVE APPROACHES, HONORED TRADITIONS, 2017)

Dimensions

Overall: 11 7/8 × 6 5/8 × 5 1/2 in. (30.2 × 16.8 × 14 cm)