



Of Red and Black Greek vases of the Luynes' collection

At the Bibliothèque nationale de France, the Museum of Coins, medals and antiques presents all the Greek vases of the Luynes' collection. The hundred ceramics unearthed in the 19th century during Italian archaeological excavations will allow visitors to discover the most beautiful pieces from 6th and 5th century BC. pottery Athenian workshops.

These vases decorated with red and black figures illustrate the excellence of a craft disclosing the life and spirit of the ancient Greece. These outstanding and richly ornamented works are proposed to contemporary visitors as the dismantled pieces of a puzzle made in Greek pottery kilns 2500 years ago. The Duke of Luynes collected them to make the famous archaeological and numismatic collection that he donated to the Bibliothèque nationale de France in 1862. This is one of the most prestigious bequests ever made to a French institution.

The Duke of Luynes and his collection

Honoré d'Albert, Duke of Luynes (1802-1867), is one of the most famous figures in the field of 19th century art and archaeology. This rich and learned aristocrat was also a patron with a passion for antiquity. Both in Paris, Italy and Greece, he made up a unique collection of coins and antiques. At the end of his life, he donated these pieces to the 'Cabinet des Médailles' so that they can be seen by other people and examined by scholars. The Duke gathered these hundred ceramic vases between 1820 and 1850. At that time, the most beautiful pieces discovered during excavations in Etruria and southern Italy were eagerly sought by famous collectors and European museums. These vases reflect the taste of the man who selected them. They all offer both an aesthetic and thematic interest.

The Greek vases

This collection allows to discover how the Athenian craftsmen created one of the most sophisticated pottery works. The contrast between the red colour of the clay proper to the Athenian region and the beautiful black glaze is almost enough to compose the scenery. Intended to the Greek or Etruscan elite who collected them in Italy, these vases were particularly used in everyday life for drinking parties and ablutions. Some of them were also selected to pay tribute to the gods and the dead. The meticulous and complex iconography portraying men and gods is characteristic of Greek antiquity. The most beautiful vases so became true masterpieces.

Images of the ancient Greece

The vases of the Luynes' collection and their rich iconography offer an exceptional directory to tackle the ancient Greece. Mythical figures are widely illustrated : Olympian gods, heroes (Hercules, Theseus, Ulysse...); the Dionysiac universe is particularly present on vases illustrating wine consumption and used during drinking parties. Iconography also discloses certain aspects of the Athenian everyday life : athletics, war, seduction... Each vase is an opportunity to shed light on a facet of life and beliefs in ancient times.

Exhibition

Of Red and Black

Greek vases of the Luynes' collection

October 28, 2013 | January 4, 2015

BnF | Richelieu

Museum of Coins, medals and antiques

5, rue Vivienne, Paris II^e

Monday to friday 1p.m. > 4.45 p.m.

Saturday 11p.m. > 4.45 p.m. , Sunday 12 a.m. >6 p.m.

Closed on holidays

Free entrance

Curator

Cécile Colonna, conservator, in the Department of Coins, medals and antiques, BnF

Publication

De Rouge et de Noir.

Les vases grecs de la collection de Luynes

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Pictures :

1 - Amphore à figures noires, *Assemblée des dieux*, attribuée au groupe de Trois lignes, Athènes, 530-520 av. J.-C., BnF, département des Monnaies, médailles et antiques/CNRS- Maison Archéologie & Ethnologie René Ginouvès

2 - Coupe à figures rouges, *Dionysos musicien et satyres*, attribué au peintre de Brygos, Athènes, vers 480 av. J.-C., BnF, département des Monnaies, médailles et antiques

3 - Hydrie à figures noires, *Guerriers*, attribué au groupe de Léagros, Athènes, 550-500 av. J.-C., BnF, département des Monnaies, médailles et antiques

