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978-1-108-08190-0 - History of Ancient Pottery - Volume 1: Egyptian, Assyrian, and Greek

Samuel Birch

Frontmatter

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The discovery of material remains from the recent or the ancient past has always been a source of fascination, but the development of archaeology as an academic discipline which interpreted such finds is relatively recent. It was the work of Winckelmann at Pompeii in the 1760s which first revealed the potential of systematic excavation to scholars and the wider public. Pioneering figures of the nineteenth century such as Schliemann, Layard and Petrie transformed archaeology from a search for ancient artifacts, by means as crude as using gunpowder to break into a tomb, to a science which drew from a wide range of disciplines - ancient languages and literature, geology, chemistry, social history - to increase our understanding of human life and society in the remote past.

History of Ancient Pottery

The Egyptologist Samuel Birch (1813–85) began to study Chinese at school, and obtained his first post at the British Museum cataloguing Chinese coins. He maintained his interest in Chinese civilisation throughout his life, but also collaborated with C.T. Newton on a catalogue of Greek and Etruscan vases, and with Sir Henry Rawlinson on cuneiform inscriptions, while also specialising in the examination and cataloguing of the Museum's growing collection of Egyptian papyri and other artefacts. Birch describes this two-volume, highly illustrated work on ancient pottery, published in 1858, as filling a perceived need: 'A work has long been required which should embody the general history of the fictile art of the ancients.' Volume 1 covers the composition and techniques of the pottery of ancient Egypt and Assyria, with notes on Jewish Phoenician wares, and begins an examination of the techniques and art of the Greek ceramicists.

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ARCESILAUS, KING OF CYRENE, WEIGHING SILPHIUM.
(FROM A CUP, VULCI.)

[Vol. I., p. 269.—*Frontispiece.*

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HISTORY
OF
ANCIENT POTTERY.

BY SAMUEL BIRCH, F.S.A.



IN TWO VOLS.—VOL. I.

EGYPTIAN, ASSYRIAN, AND GREEK.

ILLUSTRATED WITH COLOURED PLATES AND NUMEROUS ENGRAVINGS.

LONDON:
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PREFACE.



THE present work was commenced many years ago as one of a series on the subject of the history of the Pottery of all nations. It comprises the principal features in the history of the art, from the most ancient period till the decadence of the Roman Empire. In the Oriental division it embraces the pottery of Egypt and Assyria—the two great centres of primæval civilisation. In classical antiquity it treats on the pottery of Greece and Rome ; it ends by a concise account of that of the Celtic and Teutonic nations. A work has been long required which should embody the general history of the fictile art of the ancients, combine the information scattered through many memoirs and treatises, and give one continuous account of the rise and progress of this branch of archæology. The technical portion of the subject has been already elaborately treated by M. Brongniart, and others, and the relation of this art to literature has been the repeated object of the investigations of the learned for the last two centuries.

b

The great advance recently made in the science of archæology, by the more accurate record of discoveries, the great excavations made upon ancient sites, the new light thrown upon the subject by deeper and more minute examination of ancient authors and inscriptions, added to the immense quantity of fictile remains now existing in the Museums of Europe, and the collections of individuals, has given to this branch of the study of antiquity a more important place than it formerly occupied. To render the work available to those who wish to pursue the investigation further, the author has added references to all statements of the principal facts, and appendices and lists of the most important inscriptions on vases and other terra-cotta objects. He cannot close his labours without thanking many friends, and acknowledging the assistance and information he has received from several—amongst whom he must name, Miss Cornwallis, Mr. Layard, Mr. Newton, Mr. Norris, Mr. Dyer, Mr. A. W. Franks, Mr. N. E. Hamilton, and Mr. Vaux. To the late Mr. Bandinel he was also more particularly indebted, as it was at his suggestion and advice that he undertook so grave a task. He can only deplore that he was not spared to aid him by his counsel, and see the completion of one portion of his great project.

LONDON, *Oct.* 19, 1857.

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The numbers of the Cuts are those of the List of Illustrations.

- Page ix., line 8, for "Erichthonius," read "Erichthonius."
 ,, xi., line 10, for "Thotmes," read "Thothmes."
 ,, 18, note 1, for "Leeman," read "Leemans,"
 ,, 21, note 1, prefix "1."
 ,, 23, line 12, and page 35, line 21, for "Thotmes," read "Thothmes."
 ,, 56, note 3, prefix "3." And page 59, note 2, prefix "2."
 ,, 61, line 15, for "Mangnesia," read "Magnesia."
 ,, 64, for "Jeremiah," read "Ezekiel."
 ,, 136, No. 86, for "Exihiting," read "Exhibiting."
 ,, 167, line 2, for "Eretheum," read "Erechtheum,"
 ,, 212, line 17, for "varies," read "vary."
 ,, 282, line 1, for "style," read "style.¹"
 ,, 283, line 2, for "crimson," read "crimson.¹"
 ,, 308, line 8, for "Erichthonius," read "Erichthonius."
 ,, 316, note 2, line 10, for "Archæolgische," read "Archäologische."
 ,, 356, last line, for "Eretheus," read "Erechtheus."
 ,, 357, line 16, for "Erichthonius," read "Erichthonius."
 ,, 358, line 7, for "Erichthonius," read "Erichthonius."
 ,, 360, line 2, for "Eretheum," read "Erechtheum."
 ,, ,, line 3, for "Erichthonius," read "Erichthonius."
 ,, ,, line 4, for "CALLIRHOE," read "CALLIRRHÖE."
 ,, 371, note 5, line 7, before "F," add "V."
 ,, 373, line 5, for "Mononachia," read "Monomachia."
 ,, 376, line 11, for "Oileus," read "Oileus."
 ,, 383, line 2, for "Erichthonius," read "Erichthonius."
 ,, 391, line 12, for "Syren," read "Siren."