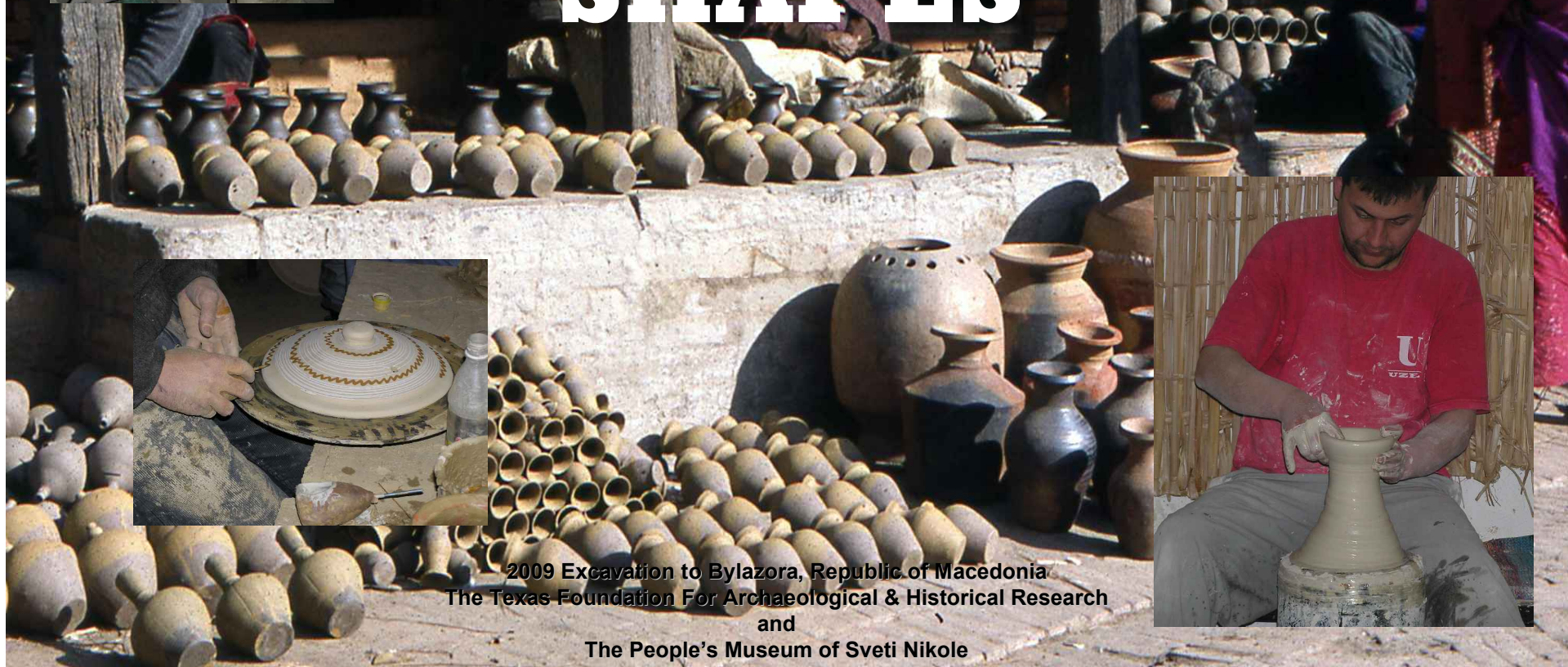


THE TEXAS FOUNDATION
FOR
ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL RESEARCH

POTTERY SHAPES



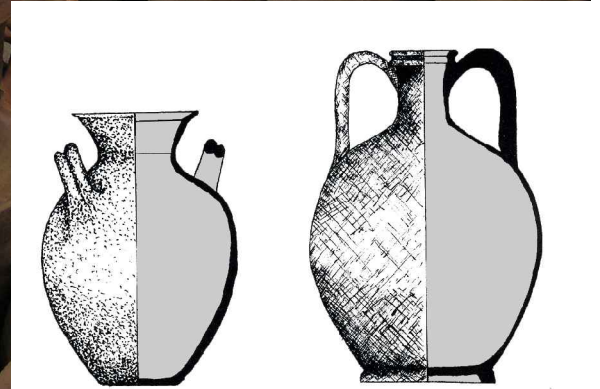
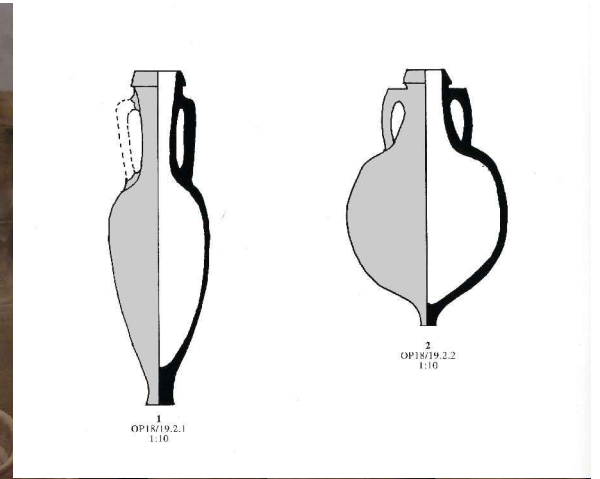
2009 Excavation to Bylazora, Republic of Macedonia
The Texas Foundation For Archaeological & Historical Research
and
The People's Museum of Sveti Nikole

This presentation is designed to introduce the first-time archaeology student to some of the basic pottery shapes encountered on a number of TFAHR's excavations. Unfortunately, there is no universally accepted vocabulary even for classical pottery shapes, the terminology often varying significantly from site to site and archaeologist to archaeologist. Neither can we rely on ancient Greek or Latin terms, which were often used just as loosely by classical authors. The following TFAHR "lexicon-in-progress" should help as an introduction to basic ceramics terminology.

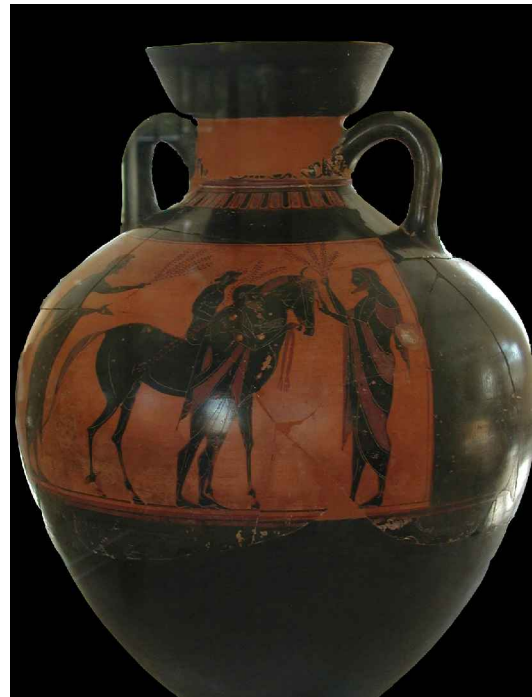
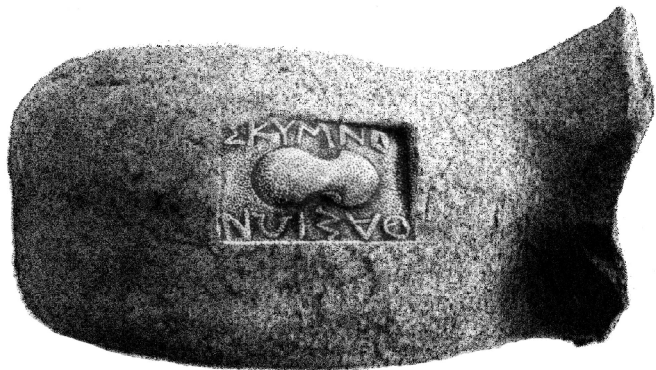


AMPHORA (ΑΜΦΟΡΑ)

An amphora is a two handled storage jar with an ovoid body. Often the base ends in a point, originally to facilitate stacking and storage in shipping (wine, oil, etc.). A flat based amphora is often called a “table amphora.”



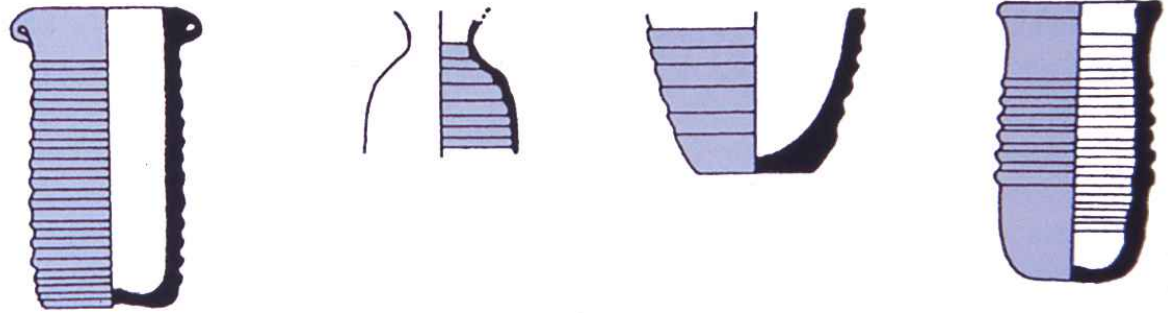
Often the handles of amphoras are stamped with information regarding the vintner, manufacturer, or the point of origin of the contents within the amphora.



Amphoras were used for many other purposes besides the transport and storage of liquids, such as cinerary urns (above) and prizes (left).

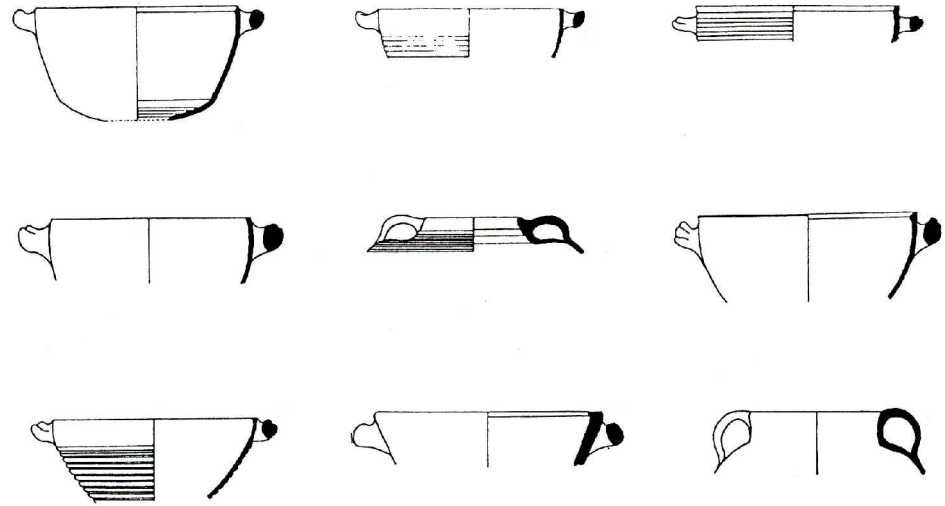
BEAKERS

Beakers are tall cylindrical drinking or measuring vessels. They usually do not have a foot but rather a flat or rounded bottom. Some beakers have vestigial handles that serve no practical function. Beakers are rarely decorated or painted.



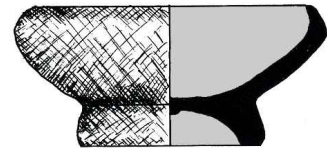
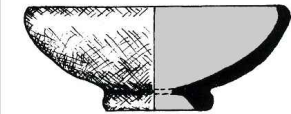
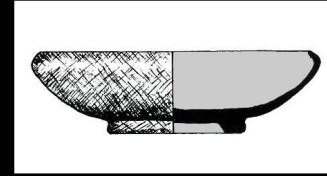
COOKING POTS / COARSE WARE

Cooking pots are generally large, rough, undecorated vessels commonly referred to as “coarse ware.” The pots were usually placed right in the fire or into the coals. Many had lids that fit over the large, open mouth. Cooking pots come in a great variety of shapes and handle arrangements.



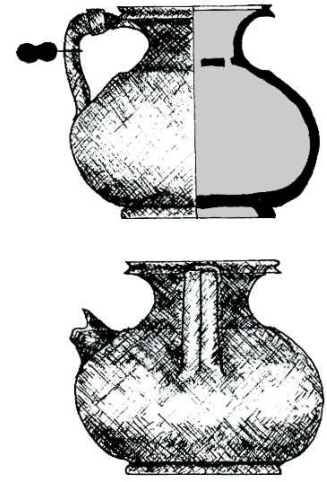
ECHINUS (ΕΧΙΝΟΣ)

The word echinus (which originally meant nothing more than “jug” in Greek) is now commonly used to refer to a bowl with its rim curved to the inside. There is usually a foot and the echinus can be glazed or unglazed.



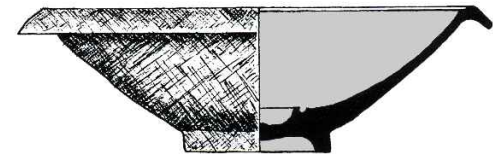
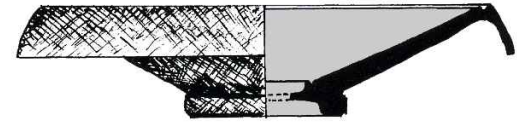
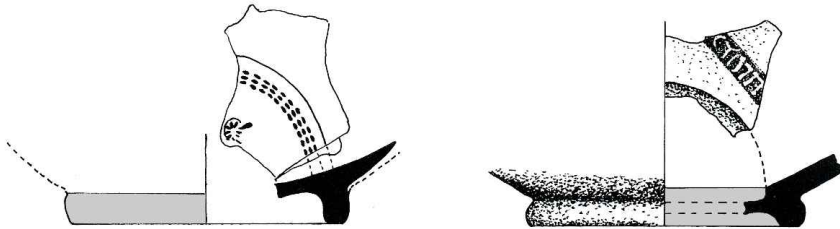
GUTUS

The gutus is a small globular vessel with a spout. It is used to pour olive oil into an oil lamp. Often there is a strainer built into the gutus to help strain out the impurities in the olive oil.



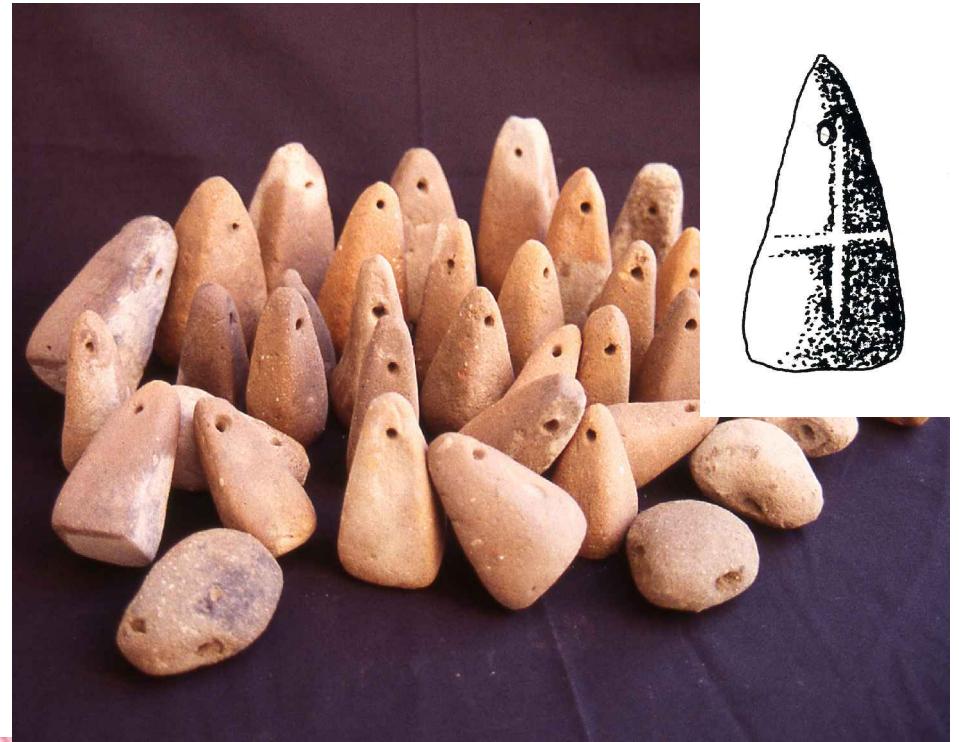
ICHTHYIA / FISH PLATE (ΙΧΘΥΙΑ)

An ichthyia is used to serve fish. It commonly has a small well in the center to hold sauce. Fish plates can be glazed or unglazed and often have roulette decoration or incisions around the well.



LOOM WEIGHT

A loom weight is a pierced weight through which the woof (vertical) threads of a textile are run while the textile is on the loom. The weight keeps the textile taut while the warp (horizontal) threads are run through it. Loom weights come in many different sizes and shapes. They are often decorated with incised marks or stamps.



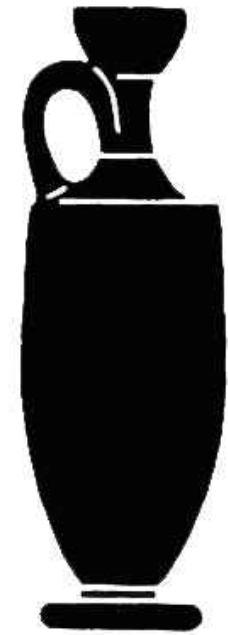
KANTHAROS (ΚΑΝΘΑΡΟΣ)

The kantharos is a wine-drinking vessel of a very antiquated form. It can be glazed or unglazed. Most are two-handled, wide-mouthed, and footed and flat based. Many have painted decoration on the upper part of the vessel or molded decoration on the lower part.



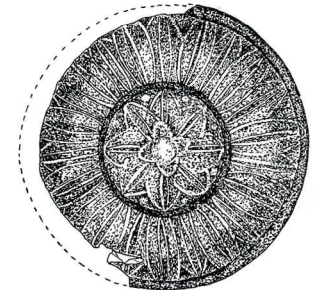
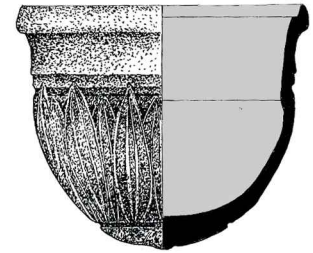
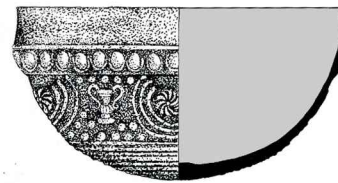
LEKYTHOS (ΛΗΚΥΘΟΣ)

The lekythos is a small vessel for unguents, balms, or perfumed oils. It is usually flat-footed and can be made without a handle or with one vertical handle.



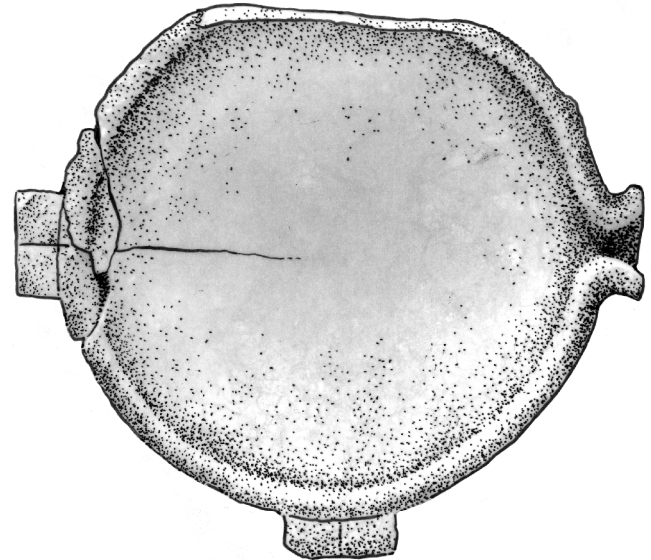
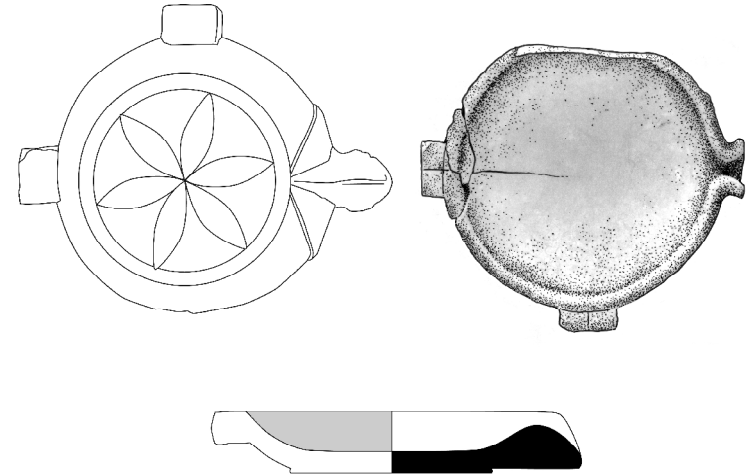
MOLD-MADE POTTERY

Instead of being thrown on the potter's wheel, mold-made pottery is pressed into a fired terracotta mold. It is decorated on the exterior and usually lacks a foot. It is often loosely referred to as "Megarian Ware," after Megara, one of the ancient centers of its manufacture.



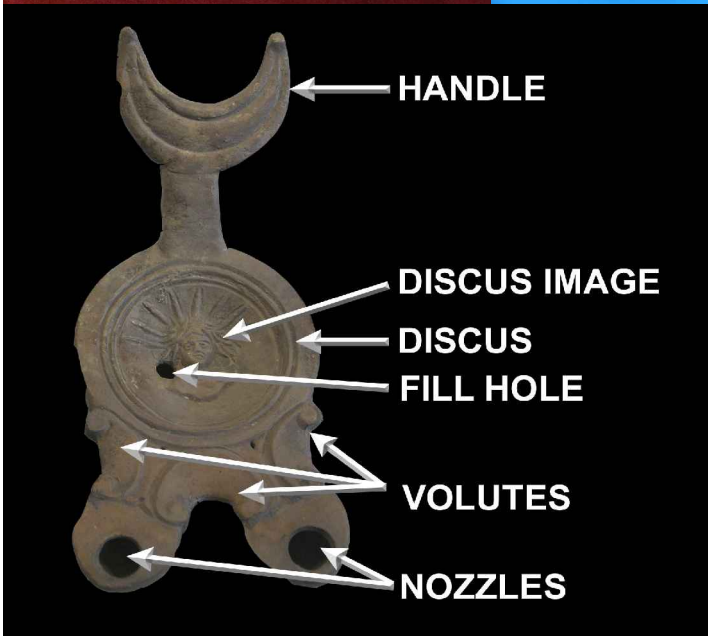
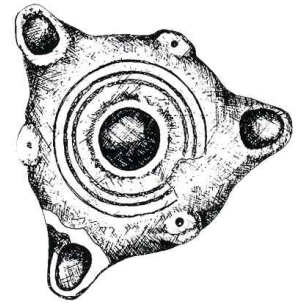
MORTARIUM / GRINDER

The mortarium or grinder is used for pressing or grinding juice from a plant or perhaps some very light pounding of grains or herbs. The mortarium found at Bylazora in 2008 was carved from stone. Like most mortaria it had two handles (one missing) and a built-in spout.



OIL LAMP (ΛΥΧΝΟΣ)

The oil lamp was the chief means of illumination in antiquity (See: TFAHR Historic Images – Ancient Oil Lamps). Its shape varied greatly across place and time. Many were made in halves in molds, joined, and then fired. Olive oil was the chief fuel.



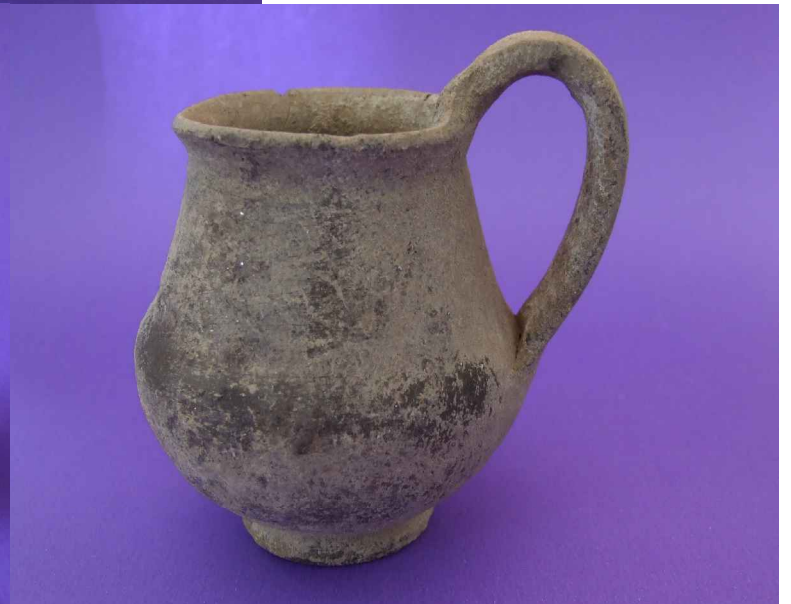
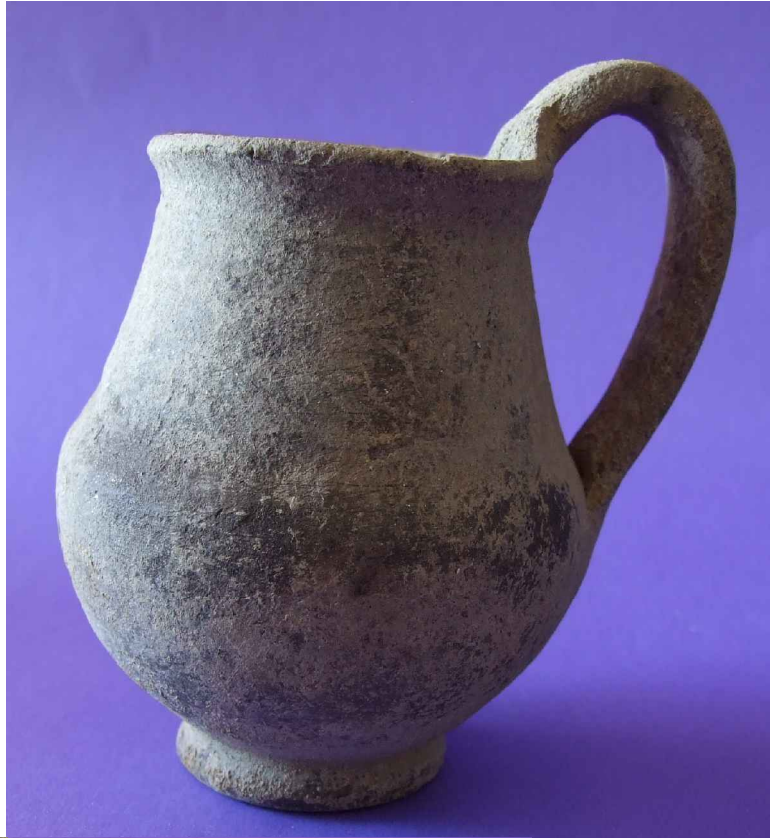
OINOCHOE (OINOXOH)

The oinochoe is, as its name implies, a (wine-) pouring vessel. Its most distinctive feature is its trefoil or pinched spout, as compared to the flat spout of the olpe.



OLPE (ΟΛΠΗ)

An olpe is a small pitcher usually with just one handle and a flat spout, as compared to the trefoil spout of the oinochoe.



PITHOS (ΠΙΘΟΣ)

A pithos is a very large storage jar for grain or liquids. It is set partially into the ground, and once set in position usually not moved again. If a pithos was damaged, it was common to mend the pithos with lead clamps. A stone or terracotta disk covers the top of the pithos.



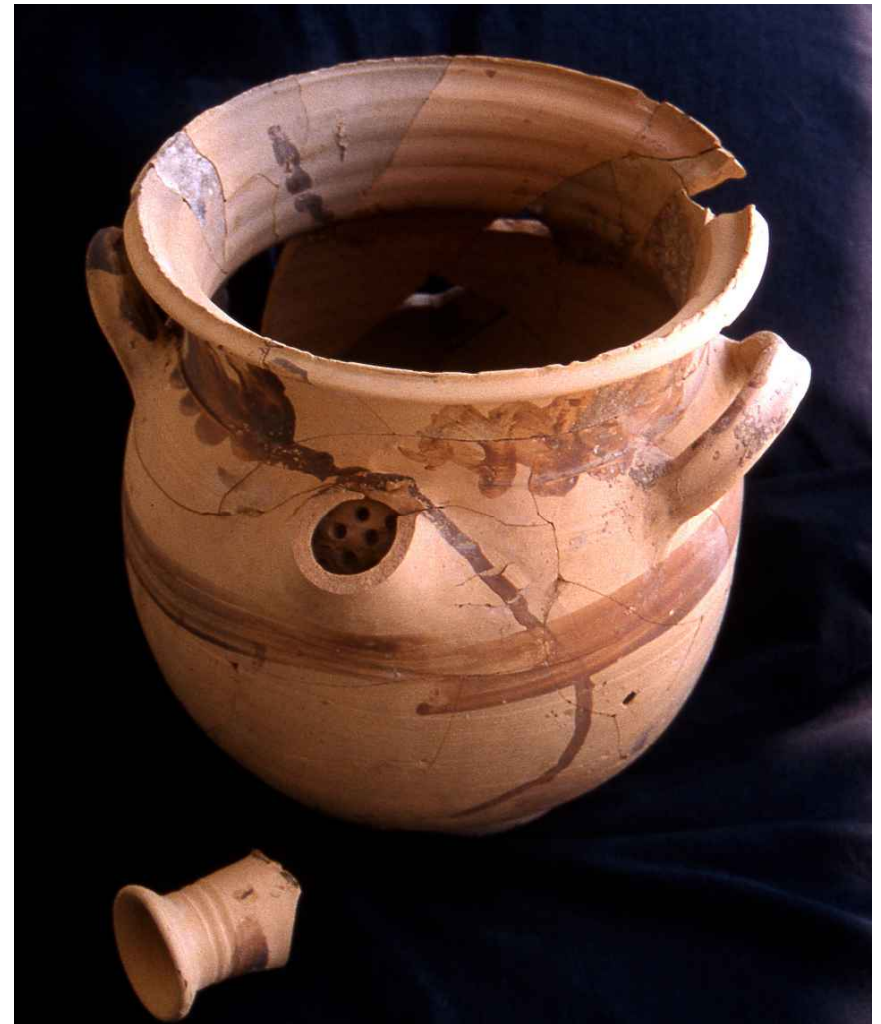
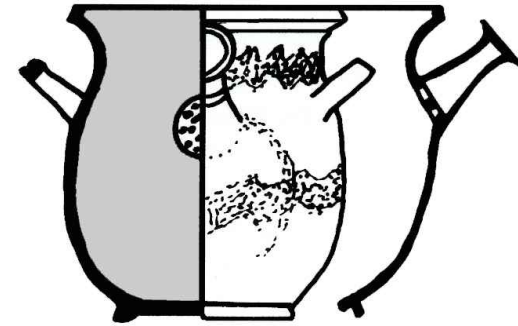
SKYPHOS (ΣΚΥΦΟΣ)

A skyphos is a deep drinking vessel with two horizontal handles; it may or may not have a foot. The term refers to many different shapes and skyphoi are often depicted in symposium scenes.



STRAINER

There are many vessels that have a strainer built into the spout. The exact function of this vessel (discovered at Ulanci, Republic of Macedonia) is uncertain. One idea is that it was used to ferment some beverage, like mead or beer. The strainer would filter out the impurities and solids in the liquid. Another theory is that it simply was used to strain the larger impurities out of some vegetable or fruit juice. The holes of the strainer are rather large.



UNGUENTARIUM

An unguentarium is a small, cylindrical vessel used to hold oil or oil-based perfume. Unguentaria are usually just a couple of centimeters tall and without handles. They have a bulge either in the middle or at the bottom of the vessel; some are flat bottomed and some are footed.

