

Choes: Information Sheet

In this activity, we are thinking about the following object(s): Chous 198

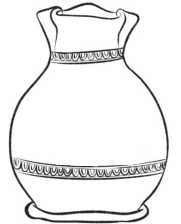


A chous is a special type of jug from ancient Greece. The plural of chous – so when we talk about more than one chous – is **choes**.

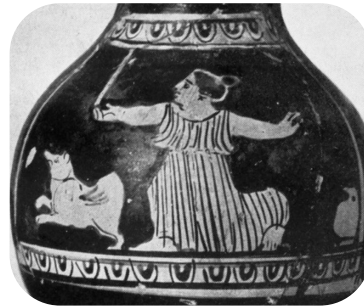
Choes were jugs used for pouring wine.

Small choes from ancient Greece were usually decorated with scenes showing children: almost 700 choes that show children playing, sitting, standing and crawling have been found in Greece. The scenes on them – which are called the 'iconography' – show children playing with toys, with animals, and with each other.

The boy on the chous in the Shefton Collection, 198, is an older boy and he sits in the middle of the scene, holding a little jug in his hand. Younger boys and girls were also shown on choes; you can see some other examples of choes made at around the same time as the Shefton chous here:



Boys playing together: they have rollers, choes and one holds a bunch of grapes. Both boys wear protective amulets on a string across their chests, and headbands around their heads.



A girl playing a game with a stick balanced on her fingers. A dog runs in front of her, and a chous stands on the ground behind her.



A boy plays with a lyre, a musical instrument. A dog runs in front of him: the dog has a chous tied on its back. A bird follows the boy.

Choes were given as presents to children when they were around 3 years old in ancient Greece. Children used them at a special festival called the Anthesteria, which was a celebration of new wine and flowers. When they went to the festival, which was probably celebrated in their house or in someone in their family's house, children were allowed to take their first drink of wine from their chous jug.

- To learn more about chous jugs and how children used them in ancient Greece, you can read the 'Chous Comic Strip' (activity 7), and read more about the Shefton chous with its 'Object Fact Sheet'. You can also feel how big the Shefton chous is by holding the chous 3D-print, it is exactly the same size as the real object that is kept in the Great North Museum: Hancock. Now, try designing your own chous – you can colour in Mikion's chous from the Comic Strip for inspiration (activity 9).