

## **Greek Kylix Project**

**(Estimated time: Two Class Sessions)**

### **Materials:**

1. Prepared (wedged) clay (both slabs and precut circles for the base)
2. Mold for stemless kylix (see note)
3. Brushes/sponges and water
4. Glazes—orange and black only
5. Implements for trimming the clay slab and scoring the handles
6. Access to kiln for firing

### *Note on Molds:*

The kylix was an elegant, stemmed drinking cup used widely in ancient Greece. The stemless version reproduced here resembles a shallow bowl with handles. “We used wooden bowls purchased through a restaurant supply store for this project,” says sixth grade educator Caroline Hardeman. “They are approximately ten inches in diameter and are pre-sprayed with nonstick cooking spray to prevent any clay from adhering to the bowl.”

### **Instructions:**

#### *Session I—Forming the Kylix*

Roll wedged clay into 14" x 14" slabs approximately 1" in thickness, taking care to remove any air bubbles. Precut 3" circles from extra slabs of clay to form the bases.

Gently lay each slab over a prepared bowl/mold and press the clay around the bowl to create the shape. The excess clay should be carefully trimmed away and the edges smoothed with a slightly damp sponge.

Put some extra clay in a small amount of water and mix together until it reaches a thick, soup-like consistency. Called “slip,” this mixture will be used as a glue to attach handles and bases to the unfired vessels.

Roll palm-sized amounts of clay into balls and flatten them slightly on a table. Pressing down with the fingers of both hands, roll the flattened balls back and forth until they begin to resemble long, thin, snakes. Continue rolling until each snake-like “coil” is the width of a small finger. Cut the coils into 6" lengths, form each piece into the desired handle shape and allow to dry. Attach handles to the sides of each kylix using a scoring implement and slip. Do the same with the base.

Allow to dry for at least 48 hours. Remove all the vessels from their molds and check for cracks before replacing them for further drying. Drying times vary, but there is no rush. “Due mainly to scheduling, we may wait two weeks between forming the bowls and glazing them,” says Caroline. Once they are thoroughly dry, they are loaded into a kiln and fired before any glaze is applied.

#### *Session II—Glazing*

Sponge the entire kylix with a thin coat of water. Using brushes of varying sizes, apply black and orange glaze. After the base coat has dried, take a small brush and outline the chosen design on the interior of each kylix. “Students were allowed to choose either red or black figure pottery as their model and had pre-sketched their designs on paper plates,” says Caroline. After glaze is applied, the vessels are loaded back into the kiln for a second firing.