

## **What is a Copy?**

Zack Orefice, '09

As the ceramic vessels in the University of Richmond's *Ancient World Gallery* are replicas, the question should be addressed of how to define a copy. Listed below are some different definitions of "museum copies":

### *Exact Copy:*

1. The copy is made from the same materials as the original.
2. It is made using the same techniques as the original.
3. It has the exact shape and size of the original.
4. It has identical decoration to the original.

### *Simple Copy:*

1. In a comparison between the original and copy the likeness between the works is clear (i.e. – they have similar size, shape, and decoration).
2. The copy is not necessarily made of the same materials as the original or with the same technique.

### *Adaptation:*

1. The shape is used in accurate combination with the motifs.
2. The coloring of the decoration is true to the original.
3. There is an attempt to recall the characteristics of the original.

Vassilis Politakis is the potter who created the replicas which are currently on display in the *Ancient World Gallery*. Most of his "museum copies" are made as either a simple copy or an adaptation. These approaches allow artists the opportunity to create new art in the ancient style rather than just copying an original. For example, the replica Marine Style rhyton (Figure 1) located in the *Ancient World Galley* appears to be an exact copy of the original (Figure 2) as defined above. However, a closer examination of both works reveals subtle differences. While the composition, color, and design are almost identical, the replica only measures 12 inches high, 1 inch shorter than the original Minoan vessel. The replica also has wider shoulders and a differently shaped foot than that of the original. Because of these subtle changes, the replica should be considered a simple copy and not an exact one.



**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**

For more information on Vassilis Politakis and his “museum copies,” visit his website at:  
<http://www.spiritofgreece.gr/copies.html>