Inscriptions are numerous in Attic vase-painting, and attention is currently growing on this very specific aspect of painting. Graphein means both write and draw. This paper will discuss the double dimension of inscriptions, as linguistic elements bringing informations, and graphic elements introducing orientations in the picture. It will focus on two practices, and their implications: in early black-figure, the way objects are named; in red-figure the way objects are bearing ‘kalos’ inscriptions. In both cases the verbal dimension of the inscriptions seems essential to properly perceive the aesthetic value of the picture.