

COLNAGHI

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Spouted Bowl with Lug

Greek, Early Minoan II
ca. 2900-2300 B.C.

Chlorite schist
3.4 x 11.1 x 9.1 cm; 1 ¼ x 4 ¼ x 3 ½ in.

Provenance:

Art Market (Switzerland) by 1961;
Collection of Michael and Judy Steinhardt, 1993-2019.

Exhibited:

“Ancient Art of the Cyclades” Katonah Museum of Art, October 1 – December 31, 2006.

Published:

Münzen und Medaillen, *Kunstwerke der Antike Auktion XXII*, (Basel 13 May, 1961)
no. 7, pl. 2;

Galerie Heidi Vollmoeller, *Marmorkunst der Kykladen im 3. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*
(Zurich 1989) no. 38 (illus.);

Nefer 8 (Zurich, Galerie Nefer Ancient Art Catalogue 1990), p. 8, no. 3;

J. Rosasco and M. Ward, *Art of Prehistoric Greece* (New York, Michael Ward
Gallery Exhibition Catalogue 1990), p. 16-17 no. 21. (not illustrated)

P. Getz-Gentle, *Ancient Art of the Cyclades* (Katonah Museum of Art, Exh. Cat.
2006) p. 58 cat. no. 82.

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The present vessel originates from the island of Crete in the middle of the third millennium B.C. It has steep straight-sided walls that taper on both the inside and outside to a narrow circular base. The mouth of the vessel is also circular, with the exception of the elegant, flared spout. Opposite the spout is an oblong lug set slightly below the rim. This lug gives greater control over the vessel by a user: placing the thumb on top of the lug while holding the base with the other fingers or palm allows for the bowl to be tipped and emptied through the spout without holding the sides of the vessel. The presence of such lugs is generally believed to indicate a ritual function for bowls such as these, as their shape is ideal for emptying liquid libations.

The vessel's interior is well smoothed and polished; some scratch-like tool marks are visible on the interior, while deeper and wider marks made by a knife or curved chisel are visible as a sort of faceting around the bowl and in the channel of the spout. On the exterior, the circular base of the vessel is divided into quarters, filled with parallel grooves alternating in directions. From this circle emanate three rays, each filled with long parallel grooves that divide the sides of the bowl into three parts. Between the rays, the remaining triangular areas are filled with parallel grooves that differ in orientation from those of the rays. These grooves are aligned with the short grooves on the rim. Finally, a design of parallel grooves, arranged in syncopated fashion, decorates the underside of the spout.

The level of workmanship of this bowl is superior throughout. The pattern of evenly spaced oblique parallel grooves wrapped around the exterior, underside, and top of the vessel indicate a carefully planned design and convey an eminently appealing approach to fabrication. Stone vessels such as this began to be made in Crete around roughly 2900-2300 B.C. (during the period referred to as Early Minoan II). This period corresponds approximately to the time when the Early Spedos variety of figurative sculptures, the world-famous Cycladic idols, began to be made in the Cyclades and on rare occasion imported to Crete. Among the earliest stone vessels in Crete are the ones

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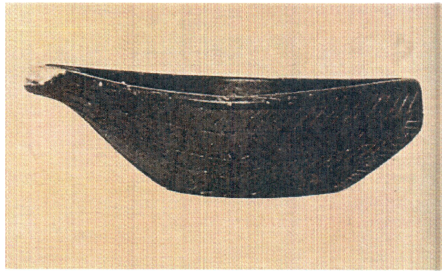
made of chlorite schist and steatite with overall, primarily rectilinear, incised decoration. Due to the contact with the peoples from the Cycladic islands during this period, one might argue that stone vessel making on Crete began in emulation of the by then centuries-old Cycladic tradition.

References:

P. Warren, *Minoan Stone Vases* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1969) 93-6, pl. 531-4.

This volume is the standard comprehensive study of Minoan vessels in various stones.

Comparanda:



Heraklion, Heraklion Archaeological Museum, HM2424.



Heraklion, Heraklion Archaeological Museum, HM56.