

COLNAGHI

Greek
Mycenaean, ca. 14th century B.C.

Kylix

Terracotta

h. 12.4 cm
4 7/8 in.

Provenance

Stricker Collection, Vienna, 1960s;
Herbert A. Cahn, (1915-2002), Basel;
Cahn Auctionen, Sale 1, 22 September 2006, lot 286.



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This stemmed cup was created during a time of Mycenaean cultural expansion. Its transitional form is a continuation of earlier mainland ceramic styles but also foreshadows later shapes of Greek pottery. While several contemporary examples feature much taller stems, this particularly elegant vessel's low stem gives it a more solid foundation and is more reminiscent of later Greek kylixes than the others.

Popular shapes in their own time, such stemmed cups were commonly ornamented with vegetal, floral, and marine motifs. These decorative programs owe their inspiration to the preceding Minoan culture, but the Mycenaeans masterfully innovated and improved upon their predecessors' work. A particularly fascinating aspect of Mycenaean painted pottery is the increasing interest in abstraction, as seen on this vase, as well as the intentional eliding between different sorts of representation: there are several particularly fascinating vases where octopuses morph into flowers at the ends of their tentacles, and flowers bloom with nautili and cuttlefish tentacles. This vase, as an example of pure abstraction, is evidence of the Mycenaeans' visual innovations, as well as an example of their ordered style, where the motif is exactly repeated and symmetrically duplicated along a central sight line.

Comparanda:



New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 06.1021.1

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