

PHD STUDENT, ART HISTORY, GREECE

With the 1969 publication of Peter Warren's book, "Minoan Stone Vases", scholars gained access to the sole catalogue of Bronze Age stone vessels produced on the island of Crete. The catalogue lists the various types of stone vessels, where they were found, the material they were made of and their general dimensions. Unfortunately, further research concerning stone vessels has been limited, despite the fact that subsequent excavations have produced a wealth of new artifacts. It is particularly this new material which provides the necessary basis for a reevaluation of Warren's thirty-year-old study.

My goal, therefore, is not to merely produce an updated version of Warren's catalogue, but to use it as a foundation to my study of the stone vessels from Pseira. The focus will be on the interrelations between sites on Crete and in the Aegean that were not only providing the raw materials, but also producing and exchanging the vessels. Due to the undecipherable nature of the textual evidence for this period, analyses of objects such as these stone vessels are especially important. Such a study would help to gain a better understanding of a technologically advanced culture that is recognized not only by its impressive ceramic and architectural history, but its ability to produce unique interpretations of art.

My three seasons of work in Greece for various archaeological projects, focusing on the Minoan civilization, have fortified my appreciation for the necessity of preserving history and making it readily accessible. I have excavated at Knossos, north of the Little Palace, at Azoria, above Kavousi in eastern Crete, and the cave site of Hagios Charalambos on the Lasithi Plateau. I have also produced drawings for the sites of Chrysokamino, Hagios Charalambos, and Trypetos. Moreover, aside from various onsite excavation experiences, I have used several types of remote sensing equipment such as an Electronic Distance Measurer (EDM) and a geo-radar. These experiences will allow me to approach this new topic with a rigorous methodology to a sizeable body of uninterpreted artifacts which will provide scholarship with remarkable opportunities.

My project, which is already underway, concerns the manufacture, development and trade of stone vessels during the Minoan period, ca. 2600-1400 B.C. The project focuses mainly with stone vessels from the island of Pseira, located in the Aegean off the north coast of Crete, and their relationship to other Minoan sites (i.e. Knossos, Gournia and Mochlos). I am pursuing several goals during the implementation of this project, the end result being a doctoral dissertation that will closely examine the archaeological record and the role these vessels played in a culture which produced unrivaled works of art. First, all of the material from Pseira will be carefully studied, measured, drawn and photographed. After the Pseira material is documented, it will be compiled in order to produce an updated catalogue of stone vessels. This catalogue will serve as a comparanda to address the complex interactions between Pseira and other contemporary sites. Second, samples of raw material will be collected to help determine accessibility and to rank preference of the material used. Third, petrographic analysis will be conducted to test the validity of all hypotheses concerning the manufacture and subsequent use of these vessels. Finally, attempts will be made to employ local raw materials and historically appropriate tools in the recreation of a stone vessel(s). Such an activity will provide information regarding the time and effort it took ancient humans to manufacture such elite goods.

Since the vast majority of the materials I will study are housed in local archaeological museums, a significant portion of my research must be conducted in Greece (mainly in Athens and Crete). It is crucial that I have access to the artifacts to help determine issues such as the extent of trade between sites, the shared use of similar raw materials, and the development or preference of certain vessel shapes at specific sites. My doctoral advisor, Dr. _____, holds the rights to the Pseira stone vases, and he has given me the permission to study them. Additional information will be gathered at the libraries of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens and the Institute of Aegean Prehistory Study Center for East Crete.

With the completion of this project, and the simultaneous writing of my dissertation, stone vessels will once again be brought to the fore of archaeological study. It is my hope that this project will produce a clearer picture of the range of material used, the extent of trade among sites, and the value placed on the vessels by site.

By February _____, I will have completed my comprehensive examinations. Dissertation proposals are accepted only after the successful completion of the comprehensive exams for the Department of Art History at Temple University.

The amount of time required to complete this project is one academic year, beginning in September and ending in June. The autumn months are reserved for the close examination, photographing and drawing of the material within the various museum collections. Winter and Spring are dedicated to researching the various sites, compiling the database, and procuring the raw materials and tools necessary for the recreation of a stone vessel.