

### Ancient Art from Cyprus, Greece, and Italy

The island of Cyprus was a thriving trading post through much of ancient history due to its location in the Mediterranean Sea. Absorbing Mycenaean, Minoan, Egyptian, Assyrian, Phoenician, and eventually Etruscan, Roman, and Persian influences, the art of Cyprus reflects a variety of aesthetic styles as well as a distinctly Cypriot flavor. The tremendous influence of the art from mainland Greece is evident in the Cypriot objects, which closely parallel the artistic trends and periods of their Greek counterparts. Examples of Attic and Corinthian art reveal the Cypriot debt to these Greek centers.

The core of the Ringling Museum's collection of classical antiquities centers on John Ringling's sensational 1928 acquisition of a large number of objects from the Cesnola collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. This purchase was the first sale of ancient art to make front-page news and bolstered Ringling's plans to create a world class art museum in Sarasota. During the 1860s and 1870s, "General" Luigi Palma di Cesnola, the American Consul to Cyprus, amassed a large collection of Cypriot art. A flamboyant self-promoter, Cesnola became the first director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1879, and his collection of antiquities was showcased when the institution first opened its doors on Fifth Avenue.



**Cyprus**

Early Cypriot period (2500-1900 B.C.)

*Jar*, c. 2500 B.C.

Ceramic (Red Polished Ware)

Museum Acquisition, 1974, SN 74.2



**Varrese Painter**, attributed to  
Greek, active in Apulia, Italy

*Column Krater*, mid-4th century B.C.

Red-figure ceramic

Gift of Mrs. Charles J. Espenshade, 1964,  
SN 1693



**Cyprus**  
Cypro-Archaic period (750-480 B.C.)

*Bearded Male Wearing a Helmet,*  
c. 600-540 B.C.  
Limestone

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936,  
SN 28.1755



**Cyprus**  
Hellenistic period (310-30 B.C.)

*Male Figure,* c. 325-50 B.C.  
Limestone

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936,  
SN 28.1928



**Cyprus**

Cypro-Archaic period (750-480 B.C.)

*Standing Male Figure*, c. 540 to 450 B.C.  
Limestone

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936, SN  
28.1819





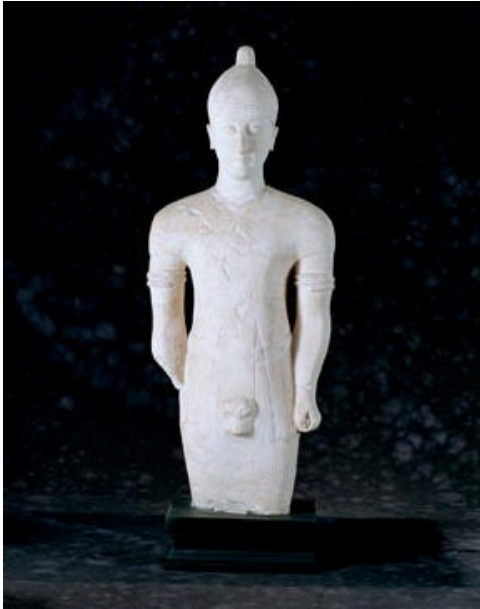
**Cyprus**

Cypro-Archaic period (750-480  
B.C.)

*Male Figure with a Dove*, c. 540-  
450 B.C.

Limestone

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936,  
SN 28.1921



**Cyprus**

Cypro-Archaic period (750-480 B.C.)

*Male Figure with Leopard Skin*, c. 600-540 B.C.

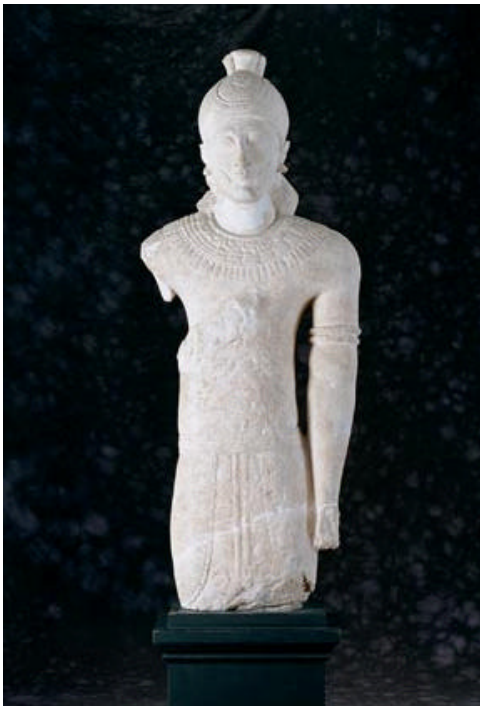
Limestone

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936, SN 28.1914

This figure was excavated from one of the two temples in the ancient walled city of Golgoi. The carefully incised, almond-shaped eyes are typical of Archaic art, which predates the canonical forms of Classical, Periclean Greek statuary. Also characteristic of this period is the thin, upturned mouth, a feature known as the archaic smile. This figure's frontal pose and clenched fists – typical Egyptian motifs –

illustrate the influence of Egyptian sculpture in the Mediterranean. Yet the asymmetry of the lower body is a Greek innovation and suggests the possibility of movement. The left leg is slightly in front of the right in a pose that foreshadows the classical *contrapposto*.

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**Cyprus**

Cypro-Archaic period (750-480 B.C.)

*Male Figure with Egyptian Headdress*, c. 560-520 B.C.

Limestone

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936, SN 28.1913



## Cypriot Heads

Sculptors of these fascinating heads have captured ideal types by means of differing approaches that evolved through time. True portraiture, with its interest in conveying character as well as distinct facial structure, did not emerge until the later Hellenistic and Roman periods (roughly 200 BC to 300 AD). The works dating from the Archaic period, however, employed specific blueprints for figural representation; the incised eyes and half-smiles are universal, even if the statues to which these heads belonged were intended to represent particular individuals. And yet through these few heads presented here and in the scholarship to date, it is quite clear how fresh and innovative were the artists in spite of the limitations of the statuary formulae used primarily in funerary works. These heads were not carved as heads alone. Instead they were part of full bodied statues and the heads were most commonly the first to break off from the sculpture. That the heads were kept throughout the ages is quite interesting as they became objects in and of themselves worth keeping.

*Male Head with Headdress Band*  
Cypro-Archaic, c. 560-520 B.C.  
Limestone  
SN 28.1748

*Male Head with Hair Bound in a Filet*  
Cypro-Archaic, c. 540-450 B.C.  
Sandstone  
SN 28.1746

*Male Head with Wreath*  
Hellenistic, c. 325-50 B.C.  
Limestone  
SN 28.1609

*Male Head with Wreath and Side Beard*  
Hellenistic, c. 325-50 B.C.  
Limestone  
SN 28.1773

*Male Head with Wreath*  
Hellenistic, c. 325-50 B.C.  
Limestone  
SN 28.1772

*Male Head with Three-Tiered Crown*  
Cypro-Archaic, c. 540-450 B.C.  
Limestone  
SN 28.1616



## Bronze Age Cyprus (c. 2500-1050 B.C.)

The Bronze Age in the Mediterranean was the age of Homeric epics and prosperous city-states. The earliest vessels from this period have simple rounded forms. Often decorated with incised patterns on shiny, buffed red or black surfaces, they are known collectively as Red and Black Polished ware. The next millennium saw the emergence of pottery adorned with dark, geometric forms painted on light ground. Potters covered vessels with a thick white liquid clay (slip), which was then painted with these rectilinear patterns in a form known as White Slip ware. By the end of the Bronze Age, vases were commonly formed on the wheel rather than by hand, and artists primarily used black and red paint to decorate vessels in a style known as Bichrome ware. The of painting details in dark pigment continued with White Painted ware, while two examples of a rarer monochrome ware, Black Slip, are also included here.

1. ***Sword***

Middle Cypriot, 1900-1650 B.C.  
Bronze, SN 28.2240

2. ***Composite Juglet (Bilbil)***

Late Cypriot, 1350-1200 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.101

3. ***Squat Amphora***

Cypro-Geometric, 1050-750 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.701

4. ***Mixing Bowl (Krater)***

Late Cypriot, 1350-1200 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.132

5. ***Small Jug***

Early Cypriot, 2500-1900 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.23

6. ***Small Jug***

Early Cypriot, 2500-1900 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.42



7. **Jug**  
Late Cypriot, 1350-1200 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.344
8. **Bowl**  
Early Cypriot, 2500-1900 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.6
9. **Jug**  
Cypro-Geometric, 1050-750 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.715
10. **Jug**  
Cypro-Geometric, 1050-750 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.726
11. **Small Jug with Applied Rosettes**  
Cypro-Geometric, 1050-750 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.233
12. **Blade**  
Middle Cypriot, 1900-1650 B.C.  
Bronze, SN 28.2278
13. **Sword**  
Middle Cypriot, 1900-1650 B.C.  
Bronze, SN 28.2251
14. **Ring-shaped Bottle**  
Cypro-Geometric, 1050-750 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.470
15. **Small Jug**  
Late Cypriot, 1350-1200 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.120
16. **Bowl**  
Middle Cypriot, 1900-1650 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.49



## Geometric and Archaic Art in Cyprus

(c. 1050-480 B.C.)

By virtue of its geographic proximity to Phoenicia, Greece, Egypt, and other civilizations, Cyprus embraced both diverse populations and artistic vocabularies. Foreign traditions merged with native pottery styles in the Geometric period (c. 1050-750 B.C.) and continued to thrive in the Archaic period (c. 750-480 B.C.). Craftsmen favored the geometric motifs, such as intersecting bands of concentric circles, that also adorned Greek pottery. By the Cypro-Classical period (c. 480-310 B.C.), the artists of Cyprus were most heavily influenced by the art of mainland Greece, but Cypriot idiosyncrasies, such as the pitchers with figural spouts, maintained their place alongside foreign vocabularies. The human figure made more regular appearances in art than in previous ages, and sculpture became popular on large and miniscule scales. The figurines visible in this case may have been votive offerings representing goddesses or burial objects meant to portray specific individuals.

1. ***Bracelet***

Cypro-Archaic, 560-480 B.C.  
Silver, SN 28.2192

3. ***Female Figurine***

Cyprus, Hellenistic, 325-50 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.2062

2. ***Earrings***

Cypro-Classical, 450-400 B.C.  
Gold leaf over lead, SN 28.2306a-b

4. ***Figurine of a Pipe Player***

Cyprus, Hellenistic, 325-50 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.2073

5. **Jug**  
Cypro-Archaic, 750-600 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.448
6. **Jug**  
Cypro-Archaic, 750-600 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.305
7. **Jug**  
Cypro-Geometric, 1050-750 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.336
8. **Basket-shaped Bowl**  
Cypro-Archaic, 600-475 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.607
9. **Female Figurine**  
Cyprus, Hellenistic, 325-50 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.2120
10. **Female Figurine**  
Cyprus, Hellenistic, 325-50 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.2119
11. **Jug**  
Cypro-Archaic, 750-600 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.227
12. **Bowl**  
Cypro-Geometric, 1050-750 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.567
13. **Jug**  
Cypro-Archaic, 750-600 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.510
14. **Juglet**  
Cypro-Archaic, 750-600 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.516
15. **Flask**  
Cypro-Archaic, 750-600 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.585
16. **Jug**  
Cypro-Archaic, 750-600 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.574



## Animal Forms and Decorations in Cypriot Ceramics

A small but bustling trading post in the Mediterranean, the island of Cyprus absorbed the artistic traditions of the wide variety of cultures that traded there. The resulting eclectic aesthetic vocabulary at times incorporated anthropomorphic shapes that displayed a sense of playfulness. The Cypro-Classical red ware jugs (c. 480-310 B.C.) were clearly crafted with a sense of humor, as the spouts were formed in the shape of female figures pouring libations from jugs that also repeat this motif. The open sea and sky provided endless inspiration for craftsmen, who frequently molded small, asymmetrical jugs known as *askoi* into aquatic or birdlike shapes. The emphasis on animal forms indicates the Cypriot affinity for playful, asymmetrical objects as well as the importance of animals and livestock to the culture. The small size of the *askoi* suggests that they were used to hold precious substances such as perfumed oils.

1. ***Composite Juglet (Bilbil)***  
Late Cypriot, 1475-1200 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.143
2. ***Jug Decorated with a Duck***  
Cypro-Archaic, 750-600 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.367
3. ***Jug with Serpentine Handle***  
Cypro-Geometric, 950-850 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.430
4. ***Horse with Saddle***  
Late Cypriot, 1475-1200 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.2068
5. ***Jug with Spout of a Woman Holding a Jug***  
Cypro-Classical, 450-400 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.501
6. ***Jug with Bull's Head Spout***  
Cypro-Classical, 450-400 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.623



**7. *Jug with Spout of a Woman Holding a Jug***

Cypro-Classical, 450-400 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.625

**8. *Jug Decorated with Ducks***

Middle Cypriot, 1900-1650 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.70

**9. *Duck-shaped Askos***

Cypro-Geometric, 950-850 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.381

**10. *Animal-shaped Askos***

Middle Cypriot, 1725-1650 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.50

**11. *Ram's Head Askos***

Middle Cypriot, 1725-1650 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.94

**12. *Sheep-shaped Askos***

Middle Cypriot, 1725-1650 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.64



## **Contact with the Mainland in Hellenistic and Roman Times**

(c. 400 B.C.-150 A.D.)

While pottery was produced in local workshops throughout the Hellenistic world (310-30 B.C.), the close interconnection among these diverse regions led to an overall uniform style of ceramics. This uniformity became even more pronounced as the Romans began to mass-produce pottery in “factories” in Italy, France, and Africa. At a time when figural vase painting had virtually disappeared in Athens, the red-figure tradition continued to thrive in the Greek colonies of south Italy. South Italian red-figure pottery tends to be much more ornate and florid than Athenian ceramics. Metalwork too continued to thrive alongside pottery, and those who had enjoyed prosperity in life were often buried with such exquisite items as the bronze mirror displayed here. Though age and dirt have discolored the metal, it was originally as shiny and bright as a copper penny with its incised decoration easily visible.

**1. *Bowl with Molded Animal Figures***

France, Gallo-Roman, 50-100 A.D.

Ceramic, SN 28.927

***Bowl***

France, Gallo-Roman, 50-150 A.D.

Ceramic, SN 28.941

**2. *Handle in the Shape of a Lion's Head***

Cyprus, Roman, 50-150 A.D.

Bronze, SN 28.2302

**3. *Covered Dish (Lekanis)***

South Italy, Classical, c. 350 B.C.

Ceramic, SN 28.839a-b

4. *Cup*

Cypro-Classical, 350-300 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.808

*Beaker*

France, Gallo-Roman, 50-100 A.D.  
Ceramic, SN28.986

*Jar (Alabastron)*

Greece, Hellenistic, 150-50 B.C.  
Glass, SN 28.1562

5. *Clothed Male Figurine*

Cyprus, Roman, 50-150 A.D.  
Ceramic, SN 28.2264

*Nude Male Figurine*

Cyprus, Roman, 50-150 A.D.  
Ceramic, SN 28.2265

6. *Mirror Depicting Dancers*

Etruscan, c. 300 B.C.  
Bronze, SN 28.2164

7. *Water Jar (Hydria)*

Egyptian, Hellenistic,  
250-200 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.892

8. *Wine Pitcher (Oinochoe)*

South Italy  
Classical, 350-340 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.856

9. *Perfume Flask (Unguentarium)*

France, Gallo-Roman, 50 B.C.-50  
A.D.  
Ceramic, SN 28.963



## Archaic Pottery from Athens and Corinth

(c. 750-480 B.C.)

Strategically located between mainland Greece and the Peloponnesian peninsula, the city of Corinth became a major trading center in the 7th century B.C. Black-figure technique, with figures represented in silhouette and details rendered with an incised line, was first developed by Corinthian potters. A favorite decorative scheme was a procession of animals, both real and imaginary – lions, geese, bulls, griffins, and sphinxes are common. Many of the best Corinthian vessels were made as small containers for perfumed olive oil, a valuable export commodity for the prosperous city-state. The black-figure technique of decoration was perfected in Athens during the 6th century B.C. Many vases were produced as utensils for drinking parties called *symposia*. Not surprisingly, much of the subject matter revolved around Dionysos, the god of wine, and his retinue made up of satyrs, impish horsemen, and maenads, his uninhibited and spirited female followers.

1. *Drinking Cup (Kylix) Showing a Satyr with Ivy Vine (interior); Stylized Eyes with Maednad and Satyrs (exterior)*

Athens, Archaic, c. 520 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.830

2. *Wine Pitcher (Oinochoe) Decorated with a Frieze of Animals and Mythological Beasts*

Corinth, Archaic, 625-600 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.831



3. ***Wine Pitcher (Oinochoe) with a Procession of Satyrs***  
Athens, Archaic, c. 500 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 46.1
4. ***Oil Jar (Aryballos) with Floral Ornament***  
Corinth, Archaic, 600-575 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.796
5. ***Ring-shaped Oil Flask (Aryballos) with Armed Horsemen***  
Corinth, Archaic, c. 600 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.799
6. ***Cup (Kotyle) with Decorated Frieze with Rooster, Bull, Lion, Griffin, and Goose***  
Corinth, Archaic, 625-600 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.764
7. ***Cosmetic Box (Pyxis) Showing a Banquet***  
Athens, Archaic, c. 500 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN28.841
8. ***Amphora Fragment***  
Athens, Geometric, c. 760 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.789
9. ***Perfume Bottle (Alabastron) with Roosters***  
Corinth, Archaic, c. 625 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.794
10. ***Oil Jar (Aryballos) with a Boar***  
Corinth, Archaic, c. 600 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.793



## Archaic and Classical Pottery from Athens

(c. 750-400 B.C.)

Around 530 B.C., Athenian potters invented a new decorative scheme in which the background was colored black while the figures remained the color of fired clay. This enabled the craftsman to paint details freely within the red silhouette of the figure and to portray human forms and postures accurately. Ceramic artists continued to depict subjects related to wine and the *symposium*, especially on drinking vessels such as the *kylix*. However, after the Persian Wars (480-490 B.C.) more sober themes emerged, such as Nike, goddess of victory, making sacrifices for peace. As Athenian potters experimented with the red-figure technique, another innovation emerged - the covering of the background with a white slip. Both the white background and the added colors proved to be extremely delicate and were too fragile to withstand daily use. The white ground technique was eventually limited almost exclusively to funerary use and to *lekythoi*, vessels for perfumed oil used in burial rituals.

### 1. *Perfumed Oil Jar (Lekythos)*

*Showing a Man at an Altar*

Athens, Classical, c. 440 B.C.

Ceramic, SN 28.854

### 2. *Oil Lamp Filler*

Athens, Classical, 425-400 B.C.

Ceramic, SN 28.812

### 3. *Amphora with a Winged Nike with Torches and a Standing Youth* (reverse)

Athens, Late Classical, c. 350 B.C.

Ceramic, SN 46.2

4. ***Drinking Cup (Kylix) Showing a Reclining Youth on a Couch with a Wine Cup***

Athens, Late Archaic, 500-475 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 46.3

5. ***Drinking Cup (Kylix) Showing a Musician (interior) and a Frieze of Bacchic Figures (exterior)***

Athens, Classical, c. 470 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.827

6. ***Drinking Cup (Skyphos)***

Athens, Classical, 450-425 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.834

7. ***Perfumed Oil Jar (Lekythos) with a Frieze of Warriors***

Athens, Archaic, c. 500 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.852

8. ***Perfumed Oil Jar (Lekythos) with a Winged Nike Holding Vessels for Pouring Wine***

Athens, Classical, c. 470 B.C.  
Ceramic, SN 28.855