



The Cretan Collection in the University of Pennsylvania Museum III

Metal Objects from Gournia

by Philip P. Betancourt, Susan C. Ferrence and Alessandra Giumlia-Mair

DESCRIPTION:

The University of Pennsylvania owns the largest collection of Minoan artifacts outside of Europe. The objects were acquired legally from the nation of Crete after it became independent from the Ottoman Empire and before its request was accepted to become a part of Greece, whose laws forbade such gifts to institutions that had sponsored archaeological expeditions. This third volume about the Cretan Collection in the Penn Museum presents the Minoan metal artifacts. They provide primary evidence for the early history of metallurgy in southeastern Europe during the second millennium B.C. This is a rich and varied assemblage of objects, with a large number of different classes. It is especially rich in items from the preliminary stages of metalwork (including oxhide ingot fragments, cut preliminary strips, and small cast strips used as early stages in the manufacture of artifacts). The study using modern techniques of examination-including scientific analyses-both documents the museum's holdings and provides new information on Minoan metalworking. Two important metallurgical techniques are documented: eutectic bonding of silver-capped rivets on daggers and "casting on" repairs to an existing object, which has not been noted previously in Minoan metalwork. The assemblage is remarkable for the light its objects shed on the history of technology.

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