



A MINOAN JAR FRAGMENT FROM SIDON

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ALEXANDER
MACGILLIVRAY

1 Sidon jar fragment S/73954. (Photo J. A. MacGillivray).

2 Sidon jar fragment S/73954. (Drawing M. Xanthopoulou).

The Minoan cup from Phase 2 at Sidon's British Museum excavations at the 'College site' ¹, is now joined by a new Minoan pot sherd found on the floor outside the entrance to the Middle Bronze Age temple where a breakage ceremony took place.



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The sherd (S/73954) (fig. 1) is in the highly refined buff coloured Neogene clay fabric typical of central Crete, eg. Knossos, Archanes and Phaistos ². It is well-fired with no visible inclusions, but with characteristic lime spalling. The exterior is coated with an iron-rich slip that fires to the dark-brown to black coloured ground typical of Cretan Kamares Ware. There is a faint trace of an added white pointed diagonal line and white paint fleck beside the rounded break that signifies where the base of a handle had been attached. The shape of the break indicates that the handle was of the vertical loop type and that the painted line approached one of the two attachment stubs. The interior surface is plain.

The sherd's dimensions and profile (fig. 2) together with the rounded break where one stub of a loop-handle had been attached indicate that it comes from the shoulder of a rounded bridge-spouted jar of either type 4 or 6 at Knossos ³. The white painted decoration, albeit fugitive, recalls the tip of a pointed line, perhaps from a spiky foliate band like those found on rounded bridge-spouted jars from Knossos ⁴. The Knossian jars are from the West Polychrome Deposits, which contain a mix of MM IIB and MM IIIA pottery, so the Sidon sherd may belong to a similar jar of similar date, although it could well be from a MM IIA example, as the form is quite popular from MM IIA to MM IIIA. The former date would place this jar in the same chronological horizon as the two MM IIB-III A bridge-spouted jars from Byblos ⁵, and further illustrate the connection between Knossos and the Levant at the end of Crete's Old Palace Period ⁶. The latter date would make it contemporary with the Minoan Sidon cup.

NOTES

1 C. Doumet-Serhal, 2003 & J. A. MacGillivray, 2003.

2 P. M. Day & D. Wilson, 1998.

3 J. A. MacGillivray, 1998, p. 79-80, fig. 2.16; 2007, 128, fig. 4.18, 139-40, fig. 4. 27.

4 J. A. MacGillivray, 1998, 141, Pls. 15, 75-6, Cat n^{os} 379-82.

5 M. Dunand 1939, p. 191, Pl. 177 n^o 2986; C. F.-A. Schaeffer, 1948, 66, fig. 74.2-4; D. C. Baramki, 1973; R. B. Koehl, 2008.

6 J. A. MacGillivray, 1998, p. 106; 2009.