

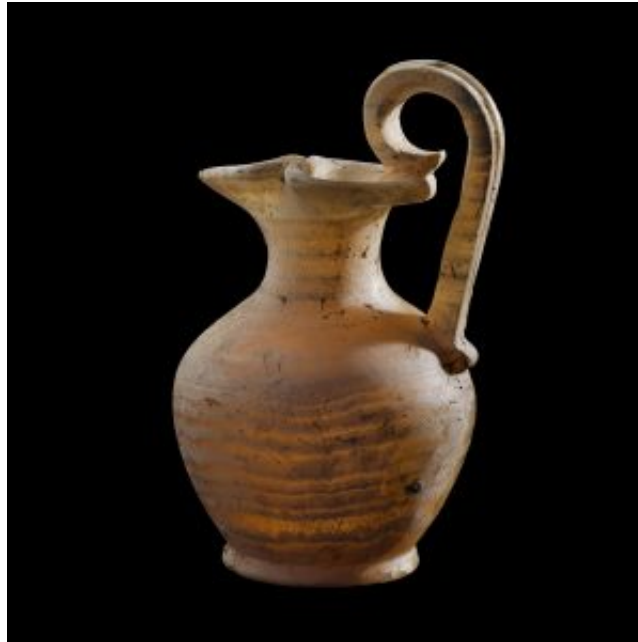
OINOCHOE

Greek, 4th century B.C.

Alabaster

Height: 17 cm (6.7 in)

Reference: 21326



Stone vessels were common in Greek art since the Bronze Age. With the time the fashion for large, heavy, and different color stone vessels was ceased, however smaller types of the vases of semi-translucent alabaster survived and continued to be used. Especially popular were containers for perfumed oils, among them an alabastron whose name preserves the name of the material itself.

The oinochoe is a kind of a wine jar that has a trefoil mouth and a full, rounded body that tapers down to its base. A high handle extends gracefully from the shoulder of the vessel and above the trefoil lip. The Greeks had the tradition to keep wine in large quantities in the amphoras and the kraters during their meals and to distribute it among the drinking cups and bowls with the help of the smaller jars.

Oinochoe made of clay or precious metals is a well-known type among the wine containers. Alabaster oinochoe, most probably, was not used for wine serving as the wine, especially the red one, would leave stains and be absorbed by the porous stone surface. This helps to suggest that such vessels were used for the ritual libations.

Alabaster has natural veins of different shades in its structure; they are almost horizontal in this carving corresponding with the bottom of the vessel. This testifies the high technical skill of the stone-maker and his ability to preview the artistic effect.

CONDITION

Complete

PROVENANCE

Ex-European private collection