

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS ON THE PLANNING OF
MINOAN STONE RELIEF VESSELS: THE ZAKROS RHY-
TON: *Paul Rehak*, Loyola University, Chicago, and
John G. Younger, Duke University

Minoan vessels with relief scenes have usually been studied for the light they shed on Minoan Neopalatial architecture and religion (e.g., J. Shaw, *AJA* 82 [1978] 429–48). Basic studies of the technique used to produce these vases have

only touched on the actual planning and execution of the relief scenes.

An examination of the Zakros Sanctuary rhyton reveals new aspects of the planning of such relief scenes. The top and bottom reveal incised setting lines used to lay out the composition in broad outline; the tips of rosette leaves at the bottom mark where vertical lines converge. The entire scene is arranged around a single vertical axis (as on the Harvester Vase), and three successive stages in the carving are visible.

Changes in the final execution are apparent in details: the rectangular altar, for example, was originally planned to be narrower but then was extended farther to the right; one agrimi atop the shrine was recarved on different lines than its preliminary sketch. Since the left and back sides of the vessel are executed more summarily than the front and right, the carver is likely to have worked from the front around to the right. These alterations and sketched initial outline probably indicate that the peak sanctuary shown is a generic rendering, based on considerations of symmetry and grid patterns, rather than the depiction of a specific shrine. Other architectural representations on stone vases may be *topoi* as well.

These technical observations about the importance of preliminary sketches and positioning lines extend to other stone vases, sealstones, and frescoes, and help document the considerable overlap among artistic media, and perhaps even areas of craft specialization, in Neopalatial Crete. Individual craftsmen may have worked with equal facility in a variety of media while sharing both a common iconographic vocabulary and sculptural techniques.