

	Object:	The Grimani Jug
	Museum:	Szépművészeti Múzeum Dózsa György út 41. 1146 Budapest
	Collection:	Antik Gyűjtemény
	Inventory number:	ANT_56.11.A

Description

One of the most valuable pieces in the Collection of Classical Antiquities had been acquired by a prestigious Venetian family, the Grimanis, between the 16th and 18th centuries, presumably from Greece. What had been one of the oldest and largest collections in Venice was sold off by the impoverished descendants of the family in the late 1820s. Gábor Fejérváry, who amassed the most significant private collection of ancient art in the 19th century in Hungary, and his nephew, Ferenc Pulszky, later director of the National Museum, purchased the jug in Milan in 1833. It was only acquired by the National Museum after Pulszky's death, and thence by the Museum of Fine Arts. Greek bronzeworkers also produced water vessels (hydria) and wine jugs (oinochoe) for banquets. Whereas in the 6th century B.C., the bodies of the vessels were frequently cast, later they were hammered from sheet metal. The latter technique enabled craftsmen to produce individual pieces, although they generally used conventional decorative motifs. In all probability, the Grimani jug, this masterpiece of bronze craft, was produced in one of the major metalworking centres of the age, Corinth, at the height of classical Greek culture, circa 450 B.C. The harmony of the masterfully shaped body and its decoration sets the piece apart from similar vessels of the period. The simple but finely wrought jug is decorated with motifs on the cast base and handle subsequently attached to the body hammered out of sheet bronze. The tongue-pattern sequence around the base, the series of pearl-like ribs following the curve of the handle and the palmette at their ends are mere accessories to the two mythical hybrid creatures, the real adornments of the vessel. The one with pointed ears and beard, sitting on the edge of the spout, has the more prominent position. Silenos, from the retinue of Dionysos, the god of wine, greedily awaits the opportunity to dip the drinking horns held in his hands into the contents of the jug. At the base of the handle, behind the figure evoking fun and wild revelry, sits a siren with outstretched wings. Ancient Greeks thought that these beings with the body of a bird and the head of a woman awaited those entering the gate of the Underworld, to alleviate the bitterness of death. Even Odysseus had to have himself tied to the mast of his ship upon hearing their "clear-toned song", enticing but fatal. As the Greeks believed that they would also attend banquets in the afterlife, their tombs often contained vessels they might need for these occasions. The Grimani Jug, which has survived intact for thousands of years, was probably buried deep in a grave shortly after

its production, in order to accompany its owner into the realm of Hades. Following
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Basic data

Material/Technique:	bronze / hammered, cast
Measurements:	31.2 cm

Events

Created	When	450 BC
	Who	
	Where	

Keywords

- Container