



PRESS STATEMENT

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Toledo Museum of Art Agrees to Return Ancient Water Vessel to Italy

Toledo, Ohio— The Toledo Museum of Art announced today that it has signed an agreement with the United States government to return an Etruscan Kalpis (water vessel) to the Italian Ministry of Culture. Research conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in cooperation with the Italian government led ICE to conclude the Kalpis was inappropriately exported from the country. The Museum had the option of returning the Kalpis to its country of origin or pursuing legal action.

“Based on the insurance value of the Kalpis, the Museum made a strategic decision not to pursue a legal case,” said Brian Kennedy, director. “As was true with the Meissen Sweetmeat Stand that was returned to Germany last year, it is part of our collections policy to deaccession and return any object for which we cannot provide clear title.”

The Museum purchased the Kalpis in 1982 from a Swiss art gallery with a letter of authenticity from its previous owner, a private collector. No Italian export license was provided in the documentation.

The Kalpis is highly prized because of its unique iconography and fine detail. As the story goes, Dionysos, the Greek god of wine and drama, was captured by pirates in his sleep. Upon awakening, he turned himself into a lion. His terrified captors dove overboard to avoid the beast, but were saved from drowning as the compassionate god turning them into dolphins. It is this scene of half men/half dolphins diving overboard that is portrayed on the vessel, which is the only Etruscan example of this particular myth.

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The mission of the Toledo Museum of Art is based upon the belief in the power of art to ignite the imagination, stimulate thought, and provide enjoyment. Through our collection and programs, we strive to integrate art into the lives of people.

The Toledo Museum of Art is a nonprofit arts institution funded through individual donations, foundation grants, corporate sponsorships, and investments. The Ohio Arts Council helps fund programs at the Toledo Museum of Art through a sustainable grant program that encourages economic growth, educational excellence, and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans.

Admission to the Museum is free. The Museum is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 10 A.M.–4 P.M.; Friday, 10 A.M.–10 P.M.; Saturday, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.; Sunday, Noon–6 P.M.; closed Mondays and major holidays. Friday evening hours are made possible by Fifth Third Bank.

The Museum is located at 2445 Monroe Street at Scottwood Avenue, just west of the downtown business district and one block off I-75 with exit designations posted. For general information, visitors can call 419-255-8000 or 800-644-6862, or visit www.toledomuseum.org.