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Apulian Gnathia Amphora



An ancient Apulian Greek black glazed Gnathia amphora with a theater mask on one side hanging from a garland, perhaps a hetaira, framed by pendant sprigs; the other side with a wreath centered by a circular medallion; the biconical ribbed body outlined in red with added white dots around the perimeter.

Apulia, Magna Graecia.
Ca. 350 - 300 BC.
Height: 4 1/4 in. (10.6 cm).

Gnathia ware is so named as it was first found at the Apulian site of Egnathia. The black glaze ware is often decorated with applied red, white, or yellow painted floral motifs. Production probably was centered around Taras, with workshops in Egnathia, Canosa and Sicily. The output and quality of the Greek colonial potters working in Southern Italy increased greatly following the Peloponnesian War when Attic exports fell off sharply. South Italian Colonial Greek craftsmanship of the 4th century BC was an amalgamation of the Ionian (Athenian, Attic) conventions, and Doric (western colonial Greek) styles, with a noticeable native Italian aesthetic. The five predominant regional schools of South Italian pottery were: Apulian, Sicilian, Lucanian, Paestan, and Campanian.

Published: A. J. Paul, Exhibition Catalogue, A View into Antiquity: Pottery from the Collection of William Suddaby and David Meier, Tampa, 2001, no. 47.

Exhibited: Tampa Museum of Art, A View into Antiquity: Pottery from the Collection of William Suddaby and David Meier, 14 October 2001-13 January 2002.

Formerly in the collection of William Suddaby, Key West, Florida; subsequently in the collection of Jerome Eisenberg, New York; Christie's, New York, December 9, 2005, lot 272.

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