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Corinthian Cockleshell Aryballos

An ancient Corinthian Greek aryballos in the form of a cockle shell realistically modeled with ridges and stripes in black slip. The shell imitates the form of the edible cockle cardium edule.



Corinth.
Ca. 525 - 475 BC.
Height: 2 3/4 in. (6 cm).

The idea for creating a shell-shaped terracotta vessel may derive from containers made from real shells. Archaeologists have found shells outfitted with hinges and clasps in order to serve as containers for small items.

cf.: Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, inv. no. ?.1898-35, from Panticapaeum necropolis, Crimea.

Formerly in a New York private collection; previously in a German private collection.

inventory number: 7880

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