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Sicilian Gnathia Lidded Pyxis

An ancient Sicilian Gnathia lidded pyxis with a knob handled lid decorated with ivy and grape vines on the body and lid.



Sicily.
Ca. 350 - 300 BC.
Height: 6 in. (15.2 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.The pyxis was a lidded cylindrical vessel mostly used by women to hold cosmetics, trinkets or jewelry. Surviving pyxides from the Classical Period are mostly ceramic, but sometimes they are made of wood, metal, or ivory. The name derived from Corinthian boxes made of wood from the boxwood tree (puxos).

Formerly in the collection of Jerome Eisenberg, New York.

inventory number: 9104

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