

Finch & C^o



ANCIENT ROMAN BRONZE AND IRON SITULA

AN UNUSUAL ANCIENT ROMAN BRONZE AND IRON SITULA

THE HANDLE ATTACHMENTS IN THE FORM OF TWO RELIEF MASKS OF SILENUS. THE HANDLE, RIM AND FEET OF BRONZE,
THE IRON BODY CORRODED

1ST - 2ND CENTURY AD

SIZE: 18CM HIGH (MAX), 11CM DIA – 7 INS HIGH (MAX), 4¼ INS DIA

LITERATURE

A SITULA IS A BUCKET OR VESSEL WITH A MOVABLE SEMICIRCULAR HANDLE. BENEATH THE RINGS TO WHICH THE HANDLE IS HOOKED ARE TWO RELIEF MASKS OF SILENUS PORTRAYED WITH HIS LONG BEARD AND WITH VINES AND GRAPES IN HIS HAIR.

THIS SITULA WAS PROBABLY USED FOR MIXING WATER WITH WINE WHICH WOULD THEN BE LADLED INTO A CUP OR GOBLET. WINE WAS THE EVERYDAY DRINK OF ALL CLASSES IN GREECE AND ROME AND WAS THE KEY COMPONENT OF ONE OF THE CENTRAL SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS OF THE ELITE; THE DINNER AND DRINKING PARTY. ON SUCH OCCASIONS LARGE QUANTITIES OF WINE WAS DRUNK, BUT IT WAS INVARIABLY HEAVILY DILUTED WITH WATER. IT WAS CONSIDERED THE MARK OF UNCIVILISED PEOPLES, UNTOUCHED BY CLASSICAL CULTURE THAT THEY DRANK WINE NEAT WITH SUPPOSED DISASTROUS EFFECTS ON THEIR MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH.