Finch & Co



ANCIENT ROMAN BRONZE HYDRIA HANDLE

A FINE ANCIENT ROMAN BRONZE HYDRIA HANDLE DECORATED WITH TWO MEDUSA MASK HEADS
1ST CENTURY BC/AD
SIZE: 11CM HIGH, 13CM WIDE, 7CM DEEP – 4¼ INS HIGH, 5 INS WIDE, 2¾ INS DEEP

LITERATURE

HYDRIA WERE LARGE THREE HANDLED URNS USED PRIMARILY FOR CARRYING WATER, WHICH HAD TWO SIDE HANDLES FOR LIFTING AND ANOTHER VERTICAL ONE FOR POURING. THE HANDLES WERE CAST SEPARATELY FROM THE BODY AND ATTACHED BY MEANS OF RIVETS AND SOLDER. THESE LARGE AND COSTLY BRONZE VESSELS WERE PROBABLY ONLY USED ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS OR FOR RELIGIOUS RITES, ALTHOUGH THEY DID ALSO FUNCTION AS CONTAINERS FOR DRAWING LOTS, ATHLETIC PRIZES AND AS CINERARY URNS. MEDUSA, THE SNAKE HAIRED FEMALE MONSTER WHOSE GLANCE TURNED ALL WHO LOOKED UPON HER TO STONE AND WHO WAS SLAIN BY PERSEUS, WAS THOUGHT BY EXTENSION TO PROTECT THE OBJECT HER HEAD ADORNED AND WAS THEREFORE A MOTIF OFTEN USED FOR THE HANDLES OF CEREMONIAL VESSELS.