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KANTHAROS AH61

This cup is known as a Kantharos, a type of Greek drinking cup that has a deep bowl and upright handles. It probably would have been used for wine. Wine was a popular drink in the ancient world but unlike today it was mixed with water and served in pottery cups, not glasses.

Although we do not know where this kantharos was found, it is thought to have been made in an area known as Etruria, in western central Italy. The people who lived here came to be known as Etruscans. Etruria was rich in minerals such as copper and iron and the Etruscan people traded these resources with people from other lands in and around the Mediterranean Sea. As a result of this trade ideas and artistic styles spread from one civilisation to another. The style of this drinking cup was probably inspired by metal work coming into Etruria from Eastern countries such as Phoenicia (the area in and around



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Greece.

This type of pottery is known as Bucchero. Like this example, Bucchero is usually black and glossy with a smooth surface. This type of pottery was made using very fine clay. It would have been made on a potter's wheel, possibly polished with something to make it shinier and then put into a very hot oven, a kiln, to slowly bake. By controlling the gases inside the kiln, the potter was able to make the clay turn black.

Bucchero was mainly produced between the seventh and fifth century BC. Later examples of this pottery tend to be duller, more greyish in colour and have thicker walls. This kantharos with its thin walls and delicate ribbon-like handles is of a finer quality; therefore it is thought to date from the earlier period of Bucchero production (BC 625-575). Similar examples have been found placed inside Etruscan tombs at Tarquinia and Cerveteri in Italy, perhaps for the dead to use in the next life.

