

## RED-FIGURE BELL KRATER

Greek, Attic, ca. 350-325 B.C.

Terracotta, white pigment

H: 41.0 cm (16.1 in)

Reference: 21336



The bell-krater has an egg-and-dart pattern on the rim, a stylized leaf wreath below it, palmettes and egg-and-dart pattern at the handles, and a Greek key ornament on the lower part of the body to serve as the ground line for the human figures.

On side A, six figures are represented, among them Dionysus, nude, with long locks over his shoulders, a leaning thyrsos on the side and a folded cloak overlapping his left thigh. The god is offering a drinking cup, a kantharos, to a young woman seated in front of him, most probably, his consort Ariadne. Her upper torso is bare, and a himation with multiple soft folds covers her hips and legs. She is wearing bracelets; her hair is arranged with a cap, the sakkos. Behind her, a young, tall and athletically muscular Pan (identified by his tail and horns) moving in the opposite direction but turning his head toward the center and raising his arm in a greeting gesture. Behind Dionysus, two figures advancing in a procession are depicted: a bearded Silenus playing the auloi (the double flute) and a maenad clad in a long sleeveless chiton, also with her head covered by a sakkos; both her arms are lifted as if she plays the krotala (not depicted as the added paint is lost). All participants wear wreaths, except for Ariadne who holds one in her hand (probably, just received from the god). Above Dionysus and Ariadne is a flying winged Eros offering a dish with cakes and a wine jar, an oinochoe with three-foiled mouth, to celebrate the initiation of Ariadne to the Dionysian circle.

The white is abundantly employed to depict the skin of the woman and young Eros and a few selected details. The dilute black, a beautiful hue of almost golden-brown, is used to mark the details in the areas covered in white – the painter's drawing is especially delicate in

depicting the fingers of Ariadne's left hand, the women's eyes, and it is precise enough to shape the two figures in an ecstatic dance, a miniature scene on the kantharos.

On side B, three standing figures in ample cloaks and two pillars are represented in a rather broad manner.

### CONDITION

Reassembled from fragments with some retouching along the seams; a few scratches inside; some flaking of black glaze in places.

### PROVENANCE

Ex- William James (d. 1912) collection, West Dean Estate, England;

thence by descent to the Edward James (1907-1984) foundation, West Dean Estate, England;

The Edward James Foundation of the West Dean College of Arts and Craft.