



## Black-on-red ware amphora (storage jar)

### Date

c. 750-600 BCE

### Primary Maker

Unknown artist, Greek (Ancient)

### Medium

Terracotta with slip

### Description

Isaac Hollister Hall, Class of 1859, tutored at Hamilton College for four years following his graduation and before attending law school at Columbia University. Although he practiced law in New York City for a decade, he maintained a fascination with Near Eastern antiquity. From 1875 to 1877, he taught at the Syrian Protestant College (now American University of Beirut), where he produced significant scholarship on Syriac manuscripts and Cypriot inscriptions. It was during this period that Hall formed the

collection of sixty-six ancient objects later given to Hamilton, which includes numerous glass vessels, ceramics, and oil lamps. Integral to Hall's acquisition of these objects was his relationship with Luigi Palma di Cesnola, an Italian immigrant of noble birth who served as a Union general during the American Civil War. It is unclear how Hall met Cesnola, the US consul to Cyprus from 1865 to 1877, who, in addition to his political post, was also an archaeologist and conducted excavations in the area around Larnaca during his consulship. It is likely that Cesnola reached out to Hall to assist in identifying specific objects and translating Cypriot inscriptions. Letters now in the Hamilton College Archives show that, by 1876, the two men were in epistolary communication; in that year, Hall accompanied Cesnola on a visit to a number of sites in northern Cyprus. The collection includes objects that span the island's diverse history. Because of its strategic position in the Mediterranean along important shipping routes, Cyprus was influenced and occupied throughout antiquity by numerous cultures, including the Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Egyptians, Romans, and Byzantines... In 1872, Cesnola sold to the incipient Metropolitan Museum of Art a large collection of Cypriot antiquities excavated between 1866 and 1872 and ultimately became very involved in running the museum, serving as its first director, from 1879 until 1904. Hall continued to assist Cesnola in translating Cypriot inscriptions, especially after his own appointment as curator of the Metropolitan's Department of Sculpture and Casts in 1885, where he remained until his death in 1896. "I know you will do the work 'con amore,'" Cesnola wrote to him in 1883, "having been connected already with the Cypriote antiquities." (SOURCE: Alcauskas, INNOVATIVE APPROACHES, HONORED TRADITIONS, 2017) Following the Mycenaean settlement on Cyprus, the island came under Assyrian rule. The conquest occurred during the island's Cypro-Achaic period, which is characterized by flourishing cultural activity, monumental architecture, and city-kingdoms which were under Assyrian dominion. In the collection of antiquities recently gifted to Hamilton, there is a small amphora, or storage vessel, dating from this period of Assyrian rule. The amphora was made of clay on a potter's wheel and is covered by a red slip. It is decorated with black bands across the base of the neck and the body and with black targets composed of concentric circles along the neck and shoulder. The amphora was likely produced sometime between 750 and 600 B.C. Because of its small height of nine centimeters, it probably had a cosmetic use and held perfume or scented oil. This geometric pattern of bands and targets is very common in this period and appears on many different vessels of varying shapes and sizes (SOURCE: Ianna Recco '16, "Unpacking the Past: Highlights from the Collection: Cypriot Black-on-Red Ware Amphora," Wellinformed blog (Spring 2016), <https://www.hamilton.edu/wellin/wellinformed/unpacking-the-past-highlights-from-the-collection>).

### Dimensions

Overall: 3 9/16 in. x 4 1/4 in. x 3 in. (9.1 x 10.8 x 7.6 cm) Diameter (mouth): 3 1/8 in. (7.9 cm) Diameter (base): 1 3/8 in. (3.5 cm) Handle (each): 1 7/8 x 3/8 x 5/16 in. (4.7 x 1 x 0.8 cm)