

DOROTA GORZELANY

Arethusa Cups in the Collection of the Princes Czartoryski Museum in Cracow – the Coin as a Decorative Element in Pottery

The collection of the Princes Czartoryski Foundation, deposited with the National Museum in Cracow, contains two ancient *kylikes* known as Arethusa cups (the name refers to the naiad venerated at the spring on the island of Ortygia). The inside surfaces of the vessels are decorated with a relief imprint depicting the reverse of the popular decadrachm of Syracuse dating from the late 5th – early 4th century BC. However, Sicily is not the place of origin of these *kylikes*. They are, in fact, products of Campanian workshops of the late 4th – early 3rd century BC, with Cales and Teanum Sidicinum indicated as the manufacturing centres for this type of pottery. It was there, in the mixed Greco-Italic milieu, that the production of the pottery inspired by metal vessels developed. It represents an example of the transformation of the traditional classical forms. The Arethusa cups combine the technique of making the black metallic surface of a thin vessel and the skill of performing decorative relief motifs. The central element of the ornamentation is the fine image of the nymph, sometimes coated with a thin silvery layer in order to enhance the originality of the application.