



Vase

Not on display

Title/Description: Vase

Object Type: Vase

Materials: Diorite

Measurements: h. 83 x w. 85 x d. 50 mm

Accession Number: 1024

Historic Period: Predynastic (c. 3000 BC)

Production Place: Africa, Egypt

Credit Line: Purchased with support of the Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Art Trust, 1990

Vases cut in a variety of stones, both hard and soft, are among the commonest of Egyptian artefacts, particularly in the Predynastic period and the first six historical dynasties, when they were favoured as luxury items in royal and private tombs. It is probable that most would have contained foodstuffs, drink or precious ointments for use in the next world. However, if they were placed in the tombs empty they are still likely to have symbolised their intended contents, which could be called into being by magical means. When not provided with separate lids, these vessels were sealed with a piece of strong linen or other material, and securely tied.

They are often furnished with two lugs (as here), pierced horizontally from each end, by which they may have been suspended. Comparable examples are illustrated by Khouli (1978: pls. 55-7); for a technical discussion of lapidary work, see Aston (1994).

Entry taken from Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection 3 volume catalogue, edited by Steven Hooper (Yale University Press, 1997).

Provenance

Purchased by the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia from K. J. Hewett in 1990 on the advice of Robert Sainsbury out of funds provided by the Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Art Trust.
