



Large vase

On display

Title/Description: Large vase

Object Type: Vase

Materials: Porphyry

Measurements: w. 289 mm

Accession Number: 1044

Historic Period: Nagada II-Dynasty I (c. 3600-3000 BC)

Production Place: Africa, Egypt

Credit Line: Purchased with support of the Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Art Trust, 1991

Vases cut in a variety of stones, both soft and hard, 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.

A variety of types are shown here, notable among them the massive compressed spherical example (no. 224). Four of them are furnished with two lugs, pierced horizontally from each end, by which they may have been suspended. No. 225 has greenish (copper?) deposits adjacent to both lugs. Comparable examples are illustrated by Khouli (1978: pls. 55-7); for a technical discussion of lapidary work, see Aston (1994).

Cyril Aldred & Geoffrey T. Martin, 1997

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 in 1991 on the advice of Robert Sainsbury out of funds provided by the Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Art Trust.

