

Finch & C^o



ANCIENT EGYPTIAN BANDED ALABASTER OIL VESSELS

TWO ANCIENT EGYPTIAN BANDED ALABASTER OIL VESSELS WITH TWIN LUGS

THIRD INTERMEDIATE PERIOD CIRCA 1069-747 BC

SIZE: 14CM HIGH – 5½ INS HIGH (EACH)

LITERATURE

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ALABASTER IS A TYPE OF WHITE TRANSLUCENT STONE USED IN STATUARY, ARCHITECTURE, ALTARS AND VESSELS. IT IS A FORM OF LIMESTONE MORE ACCURATELY DESCRIBED AS TRAVERTINE. IT OCCURS PRINCIPALLY IN THE AREA OF MIDDLE EGYPT, THE MAIN PHARAONIC SOURCE BEING HATNUB ABOUT TEN MILES SOUTHEAST OF THE NEW KINGDOM CITY AT EL-AMARINA.

THESE VESSELS CONTAINED OILS AND OTHER UNGUENTS THAT HAD BEEN PERFUMED WITH VARIOUS AROMATIC HERBS AND SPICES, FOR USE ON THE LIVING BODY OR AS SACRED OILS TO ANOINT THE MUMMY IN THE TOMB AT VARIOUS STAGES OF THE RITUAL 'OPENING OF THE MOUTH' CEREMONY. FROM THE EARLY DYNASTIC PERIOD ONWARDS ALABASTER WAS INCREASINGLY USED FOR THE PRODUCTION OF COSMETIC AND FUNERARY VESSELS AND THE SKILLED CRAFTSMEN CHOSE AND SHAPED THE STONE TO MAXIMISE THE DECORATIVE EFFECT OF THE NATURAL COLOUR AND BANDING.