

# *Quenching the thirst across eras*



When you walk through the Egyptian streets you will find these pottery jars set up on the street corners in metal or wooden stands and racks located under trees on the pavement to take advantage of the shade and assist in keeping the water in the clay jars cold. You might ask yourself: what is the function of these jars? Why are they here? And who is responsible for them?

All of these questions are important: water jar stands not only provide water for the thirsty to drink, but are part of history and culture.

# visual timeline

New Kingdom

[c. 1292-1072 BC]



In Pharaonic Egypt the house plan always provided for a special place, usually paved with a stone slab, along the side of the vestibule or main hall, where large water-jugs would be set on wooden stands or ring stands.

Late Roman  
and Coptic periods

[c. 30BC - 641 AD]



The water-jar stands are sometimes permanent structures made of red bricks bonded with waterproof mortar, with an elaborate drainage system.

The water-jar stands in these periods are decorated with lions' heads, undulating vines with rigid grapes and leaves issuing from baskets and letters A and Q as a symbolic idea of Jesus Christ. Other stands have instead of the lion's head a round human face and protruding tongue.

Islamic period

[c. 641-1517 AD]



In this period the water-jar stands are made of marble. We can differentiate them from late Coptic examples on the basis of decoration: the Islamic artist used plant motifs, especially branches overlapping and interlocking (arabesque), as well as Arabic inscriptions bearing religious verses and foundation texts.

They served as containers of water for ablution beside the main function of providing drinking water for people and animals.

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**Revisions**

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