

Basic Detail Report



Shabti

Date

1142-1132 BC

Primary Maker

James Burton

Medium

Calcite

Description

Fragment of a shabti. Top half of an alabaster shabti with

its face roughly carved. It is crudely painted with folded arms, and there are remains of green wax and black paint. It was found in the tomb of Ramesses V, and brought to England by the British Egyptologist James Burton. Similar fragments of Shabti in this tomb bear the name of Ramesses VI indicating that this shabti may also have belonged to him. A shabti was a kind of servant figure that was buried with the deceased and found in elite burials from the New Kingdom. In the afterlife the deceased was expected to help maintain the 'reed fields' where they would be living in the afterlife. If the deceased was called on to do manual labour the shabtis would take his place. To this end they were often depicted holding tools in their hands. Shabtis were commonly made of stone, wood, plaster, and faience. The number of shabtis included in a burial changed over the course of Egyptian history; in the 18th dynasty, only one shabti was common, but by the Third Intermediate Period they could have one for every day of the year! Some were inscribed only with the name and title of their master while others contained an inscription known as the 'shabti spell' or chapter 6 of the Book of Coming Forth by Day, better known as the Book of the Dead. This spell would make them answer when their master was called on to work. The word shabti means 'answerer'.

Dimensions

Object/Work: 96 x 41 x 35 mm