



Shabti of Thent-Hor, Singer of Amun

Date

c. 1070-656 B.C.E.

Medium

Red clay with black pigment

Description

In the Egyptian afterlife, everyone was expected to work in the Field of Reeds (or A'aru) for Osiris, the god of death. Shabtis first began appearing in tombs of the Middle Kingdom (ca. 2040 – 1782 B.C.E.), likely evolving from the wooden models of servants and workers that were included in Old and Middle Kingdom burials. At first, they were only mummiiform and most were placed in their own coffins. Most remained uninscribed, but some included the name of their owners or fractions of the shabti spell from Chapter 6 of the Book of the Dead. By the New Kingdom, shabtis had come to personify the deceased and perform labor on their behalf in the A'aru. They were made of predominantly clay and faience, and painted with agricultural implements such as sickles, hoes, baskets, and brick molds for working in the A'aru. Most tombs contain at least a few shabtis. Over time, it became more common to include 365 worker shabtis (one for each day of the year) and 36 overseers (one for every 10 worker shabtis) in wealthier tombs, totaling 401. This Third Intermediate Period shabti (ca. 1070 – 656 B.C.E.) was excavated from Tomb 32 of Cemetery D in Abydos sometime between 1899 – 1902, and donated to the College by William C. Winslow in 1902. It has been attributed to Thent-Hor, Singer of Amun, and belongs to a larger set that likely numbered around 401; the Wellin possesses over a dozen of Thent-Hor's shabtis. Unfortunately, little is known about Thent-Hor, but she must have been a figure of relative importance in Abydos given her title, role, and the number of shabtis that have been found in connection to her. (Written by Kayley Boddy '22)

Catalogue card from 1960s: "5 clay ushabtis. Egyptian, XXI-XXVth Dyns. Gift of: W.C. Winslow '62. Buff clay, reddish wash; black on wig and columnar inscription. Backs rounded with depression at base of wig; fronts modelled with crossed hands."

Dimensions

Overall: 3 3/4 × 1 1/4 × 13/16 in. (9.6 × 3.2 × 2.1 cm)