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Egyptian Blue Faience Shabti: Hori

An ancient Egyptian large blue faience shabti of Hori, the High Priest of Ptah. The bearded mummiform figure wears a necklace, a wig with a side lock of hair, his crossed hands hold hoes. A vertical Hieroglyphic inscription is painted on the front reading, "The illuminated one, the Osiris, Sem Priest, Director of Craftsmen, Hori, True of Voice."



New Kingdom, Ramesside Period,
19th Dynasty, ca. 1279 - 1193 BC.
Height: 5 1/2 in. (14 cm).

Shabtis were first introduced in the Middle Kingdom as substitutes for the the mummy in case it was destroyed. During the Second Intermediate Period inscribed wooden figures called shawabtis (after the Egyptian word for wood, shawab) began to be placed in tombs. During the New Kingdom, shabtis assumed a new role as servant figures for the deceased. They were now depicted with agricultural equipment. By the Third Intermediate Period, the number of shabtis placed in the tomb was set at 401 (365 workers and 36 overseers). During the Late Period the tomb figures became known as ushabtis ('answerers'), these figures represented servants who would magically answer when called upon to perform agricultural duties for the Pharaoh (in the form of Osiris) in the afterlife. Their main function was to ensure the individual's comfort and freedom from daily labor in the next life.

cf.: for this shabti type of Hori: J. F. Aubert, Statuettes Egyptiennes, (Paris, 1974), p. 91.

Thermoluminescence test performed by QED laboratory in France and XRF analysis by Emory University in Georgia.

Formerly in the collection of Dr. Leopoldo Benguerel y Godo, Barcelona, acquired in London in the 1960's.

inventory number: 5892

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