

Object 1786.004:

Object 1786.004 has yet to be identified, however academics have recognised this box as either a Canopic chest or a Shabti box.

Figure 1: photograph showing on of the sides of object 1786.004, after Lockwood 2018



H. 39.6 cm
W. 23.5 cm
L. 28 cm

Considering the box has not yet been identified, dating this object has proven difficult. Suggestions have been made placing this box between the Third intermediate period and the Ptolemaic period, due to the design and layout of the box.

Figure 2: Photograph showing the lid of object 1786.004, after Lockwood 2018



On the other hand this box could be earlier than the Third intermediate period. The second intermediate period saw the 'evolution of canopic chests' (Taylor, 2001: 68) and during this period canopic jars were rare. During the third intermediate period the mummification processes adapted and the internal organs were wrapped in linen individually and then placed back inside the body. For this reason canopic chests and 'jars were still provided' (Taylor, 2001: 66) keeping up the idea, but more so following tradition.

A Canopic chest is a box which was used to store the Canopic jars which contained the mummified organs of the deceased. During the Ptolemaic period 'shrine shaped boxes were decorated as Canopic chest's however they contained potshards acting as a dummy' (Grajetki, 2003: 125) while the organs were placed back within the body. A Shabti box is a chest which houses funerary figurines that developed in the middle kingdom. Their purpose was to 'spare their owner from menial labour in the afterlife' (Petrie & Schneider, 1995: 266). The increasing number of Shabti's meant the manufacture of boxes to store them in.

Figure 3 and 4: Photographs showing two sides of the object 1786.004, after Lockwood 2018



Bibliography:

- Grajetki, W. 2003. *Burial customs in ancient Egypt: Life in death for rich and poor*. London: Duckworth
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- Petrie, W; Schneider, H. 1995. Shabti. In: Nicholson, P; Shaw, I. *British Museum dictionary of Ancient Egypt*: trustees of the British museum
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