

**Headrest**

Egypt

Middle Kingdom 2040 - 1782 B.C.

Alabaster

H: 22.2cm

Composed of four separate pieces, the rectangular base with a slightly stepped circular boss supporting the fluted columnar shaft tapering towards the top, surmounted by a curving pillow supported by a slightly concave abacus, inventory number E.8987.1.4 inked in red on the pillow, abacus and the base Englebach, its excavator, states: 'Fig. 10 is a fine alabaster headrest of the Xth-XIth dynasty, the head-piece and base being separate from the stem. It was found half way up a shaft in cemetery E; nothing else was found with it.' Headrests of this type in general are discussed by Grajetzki who acknowledges that such objects had several functions, from the prosaic of providing a place for the resting of the deceased's head to connections with the 'Opening of the Mouth' ceremony of the Book of the Dead, the objectives of which were to animate both the statues of the deceased and the deceased him/herself.

**Literature:**

R. Engelbach and Battiscombe Gunn, British School of Archaeology in Egypt and Egyptian Research Account, Twentieth Year, 1914: Harageh, London, 1923, no. 9., fig. 10, p.36, and pl. VIII, 10.

W. Grajetzki, Harageh, an Egyptian Burial Ground for the Rich about 1800 BC, London, 2004, p.14.

R.S. Bianchi, ‘The Treasure of Harageh’, JARCE, 49, 2013, p.22, no.1 (inventory number 14001).

Antiquities, Bonhams, 2nd October 2014, London, Lot 162.

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