

## 3040

### *Shawabti of the Man Maya*

**Edna Russmann:** In this case, we are looking at three *shawabtis*, all made during the New Kingdom. *Shawabti* is an ancient Egyptian word that was applied to small figures like these, usually shown shrouded, as if they were mummies. They were placed in a person's tomb as likenesses of the deceased, and their purpose was to perform any heavy labor that might be required of him or her in the afterworld. Although *shawabtis* had a special function, they were, of course, statues, and the fine ones like these do reflect the style and the models of their own time.

The largest of the *shawabtis* was made for a man named Maya. He lived in the reign of King Amunhotep III, about 1375 B.C. Maya was an artist who made objects for the burial of the king. Wood would have been expensive, because wood is imported. It's been very finely carved, and it has the extra touch of inlaid eyes made of colored glass. For a man like Maya to have had this magnificent *shawabti*, I think there are two probable explanations. One, he procured the material somehow from the royal stash of wood and made it himself; or, two, if he was not himself a *shawabti* maker, one of his fellow artists made it for him.