

DATABASES FOR SHABTIS OF THE THIRD INTERMEDIATE PERIOD
(c. 1069-656 BC)

Amen-niwt-nakht

Imn-niw.t-nḥt



Third Intermediate Period, 21st Dynasty
From the Priests of Amen Cache, Cache II, Bab el-Gasus, Deir el-Bahari, Western Thebes



Amen-niwt-nakht

Pottery, white wash, details added in black

Third Intermediate Period, 21st Dynasty

From Western Thebes, Deir el-Bahari, Cache II, the Priests of Amen Cache

a-j H. (max) 6.7 cm. W. 2.5 cm. D. 1.6 cm.

ex Émile Brugsch Collection

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Exhibited: ‘*Shabtis*,’ Cybele Gallery, Paris, 2003

‘*Shabtis: Suspended Truth in Context*,’ The Manchester Museum, 2017

k H. 6.4 cm. W. 2.3 cm. D. 1.6 cm.

ex Charles Ede Ltd. (London)

Exhibited: ‘*Shabtis: Suspended Truth in Context*,’ The Manchester Museum, 2017



A group of eleven mummiform worker *shabtis* for the same owner. Each wears a plain tripartite wig that is painted black. The rear lappet is quite short and ends at the base of the neck. The top of the head on each figure is quite flat. The body of the *shabtis* are painted white. The arms are crossed right over left on the chest and they appear to be left unpainted. The hands hold a pair of small hoes that are painted black. Nos. a, e, i and k have rectangular-shaped baskets with square-hatched detail added in black on the back with carrying straps in the upper corners

extending below the rear lappet of the wig. Nos. b, c, d, f, g, h and j have trapezoidal-shaped baskets with square-hatched detail and carrying straps that hang over the shoulders at the sides of the rear lappet of the wig. The face and ears, which protrude in front of the lappets of the wig, have been left the underlying brown colour of the pottery. Eyes with eyebrows are added in black. A single vertical column of a painted hieroglyphic inscription on the front of each *shabti* is added in black. The owner is named Amen-niwt-nakht¹ (The City of



Amen [Luxor] is victorious) with the title of God's Father of Amen. The word Amen appears to have a dual role as part of the title and part of the name of the owner, thus being used haplographically.

Shabtis for this owner are from the Second Cache, also known as the Bab el-Gasus or the Priests of Amen Cache, at Deir el-Bahari, Western Thebes.²

Other *shabtis* from the series for Amen-niwt-nakht give different titles. Some have the title Chief of the Engravers (*hry B.y bsn.t* – for examples, see London UC 40441; Paris MdL E 14732 A) or Chief of the Engravers in the temple of Amen (*hry B.y bsn.t n pr 'Imn* – for examples, see Cairo CG 47956–47960) and others have the title Chief of Secrets in the Domain of Amen (*hry sšb n pr 'Imn* – for examples, see Cairo CG 47951–47955; Paris MdL E 14732 B) although such examples are seemingly rather rare. Two 'overseer' *shabtis* that are to be found in Cairo have the title Great of Ten (*ʿ3 mdw*), thus confirming their role that was to be overseeing 10 worker *shabtis* – see the following database.

It seems that no *shabtis* for Amen-niwt-nakht were sent out in the various Lots that were distributed around the world, by the Egyptian Government in 1893. Presumably they were all kept by the museum in Boulaq. A number of *shabtis* were to be found in the collections of George Daressy (some of which are now in the Louvre in Paris (see following database) and Émile Brugsch (10 of which are in the present collection and with a further 12 being offered for sale at auction, and with two more being ex Harer Collection – see the following database) while

others were seemingly sold by the museum, hence their appearance on the art market.

As noted in the following database, there are two types of *shabtis* for Amen-niwt-nakht. The first are like the examples to be found in the present collection and the second is a series that have the face and hands painted red and with red framing lines at the sides of the inscription. Some of the 'overseer' *shabtis* in the second group give an abbreviated version of the name as just Niwt-nakht, presumably because of lack of space on the apron for the word Amen. The *shabtis* for Amen-niwt-nakht are the smallest to be found in the Priests of Amen Cache, the small size adding to their charm. When they were newly made and freshly painted they must have been a quite spectacular set of *shabtis*.

The coffins of Amen-niwt-nakht are to be found in the Cairo Museum (JE 29649).³ These coffins comprise an inner coffin – CG 6174 (case) & 6173 (lid) and a mummy board – CG 6196 (see Fig. 1). The inscriptions on the coffins give the full name of Amen-niwt-nakht and more titles including *wab*-priest of Amen-Re, King of the Gods, Engraver of the House of Amen-Re, King of the Gods, *wab*-priest of the House of Anubis, and Chamberlain of Amen, Mut and Khonsu.

Funerary papyri for Amen-niwt-nakht are also to be found in Cairo (a magical papyrus SRVII.10224 and a Book of the Dead papyrus JE 95848 = CG 58025, SRIV.946).⁴ Other items of his funerary equipment include an Osiris-cloth, mummy braces with pendelogs, a blue faience scarab, and an embalmer's plaque made of red wax although the present location of all of these is unknown.⁵



Fig. 1. The upper part of the inner coffin lid (CG 6173) and mummy board (CG 6196) of Amen–niwt–nakht in the Cairo Museum. (Photo: courtesy of VB).

Regarding the mummy braces, it was quite common for mummies of the 21st and 22nd Dynasties to have a pair of straps of leather placed around the neck and crossing over on the chest used to secure the wrappings. They had tabs in the form of a *menkhet* or *menat* counterpoise that were inscribed with short inscriptions. In the case of Amen–niwt–nakht both counterpoise tabs were inscribed with the name of the High Priest of Amen, Pinudjem (II), King’s son of Psusennes (I).⁶

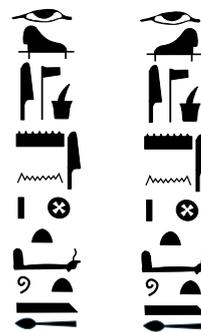
A large *shabti* box 66 cm in length comprising of three compartments is to be found in Ismailia (IMM 2560 – formerly Cairo SR 6845 = JE 29278).⁷ The box gives Amen–niwt–nakht the titles of the Great favourite in the Knowledge of Amen, *wab*–priest entering Amen of Karnak, Master of walking in his place, Chief of Secrets, Chamberlain of Amen, Mut and Khonsu, God’s Father, Chamberlain of the Lord of the Two Lands in his palace, Chamberlain of the Lord of the Two Lands, and Chief of the Engravers in the Domain of Amen–Re, King of the Gods.

The name of Amen–niwt–nakht’s wife is noted on the *shabti* box as Shabty⁸ – the only occurrence of her name to be found on the funerary equipment for Amen–niwt–nakht.

The Priests of Amen Cache contained a set of coffins for a certain Shabty who bore the titles of Lady of the House and Chantress of Amen–Re, King of the Gods⁹ but a mummy board for another lady of the same name was also found.¹⁰ Another person buried in the Cache, User–hat–mes, also had a wife named Shabty who was a Chantress of Amen. Furthermore, neither of the coffins and mummy board of these ladies called Shabty give affiliation to either Amen–niwt–nakht or User–hat–mes. However, the set of coffins were found in close proximity to the coffin of Amen–niwt–nakht, so it seems highly likely that the owner of these coffins was his wife.¹¹

It is suggested that the title of Chamberlain (*imy-hn.t*) as found on the *shabti* box is the only occurrence known in the Third Intermediate Period at Thebes and relates to the importance and high status of Amen–niwt–nakht although it could be an honorary title. The title pf *wab*–priest entering Amen of Karnak would have allowed Amen–niwt–nakht access to the holy of holies in the temple. He would have had the responsible task of caring for and carrying sacred statues in processions.¹²

Inscriptions



a–h, j, k

i

Wsir it-ntr (n) Imn [Imn]-niw.t-nht m3'-hrw

The Osiris, the God’s Father (of) Amen, [Amen]–niwt–nakht, justified.

Typology and database of parallel *shabtis* for Amen–niwt–nakht

Shabti types and subtypes from a study of parallel examples to be found in museum collections, private collections and those offered for sale at auctions and by dealers (images are not to scale).

WORKER I – mummiform; pottery (sun dried clay?) with a white wash on the body except the face; details are added in black; plain tripartite wig is painted in black; the rear lappet is short; the top of the head is somewhat flat; the face is quite round in shape and is the colour of the underlying red/brown pottery; eyes are large and boldly outlined and have with pupils in black and eyebrows; ears protrude in the front of the lappets of the wig and are unpainted; arms are crossed right over left on the chest; clenched hands, which are not painted but the underlying red/brown colour, carry a pair of small hoes that are painted black; a small square-hatched basket or a wide gently curving basket is carried in the centre of back and has carrying straps that emerge from below the rear lappet of the wig and extend to the upper corners of the basket or fall down the sides of the rear lappet; the feet are gently pointed in profile; the back is flat; a neatly written hieroglyphic inscription is added in black giving the name and varying titles of Amen–niwt–nakht without framing lines; two examples (Cairo CG 47969 & 47970) have the inscription preceded by the Illuminated one. c. 6.0–6.7 cm in height.

Aix–les–Bains (MAIB 0.53.5 & 0.56.3).¹³

Cairo (CG 47951–47970).¹⁴ ①–⑥

Cambridge (GC LR.23, LR.24 & LR.25 – bequeathed in 1918–1919 by Gwendolen Crewdson, an administrator of Girton College, who purchased the *shabtis* at the Cairo Museum in 1905 for 20 piastres each).¹⁵ ⑦–⑨

Chicago (FM 31177).¹⁶ ⑩

Cortona (MAC 142).¹⁷ ⑪

Dôle (MBA 235 – 2 examples).¹² ⑬

London (UC 40041).¹⁹ ⑭

Paris (MdLE 14732A–C – ex Daressy Collection, E 22057).²⁰ ⑮–⑰

Roanne (MJD 245 & 246).²¹

Uppsala (G inventory number not known).²² ⑱

German private collection.²⁰

Memphis Collection (NH–90; NH–246 – ex Drexel Institute, Philadelphia; ex Royal Athena Gallery – sold to Dr. W. Benson Harer in 2005; NH–385 – ex Dr. Horacio Fabrega Collection, Pittsburgh; NH–441 & NH–442 – the

last two are ex Dr. W. Benson Harer Collection, Los Angeles, California, USA; ex Émile Brugsch Collection; exhibited at the Drexel Museum, Philadelphia, 1895–1914; with the Drexel Institute Collection, Minneapolis Museum of Art, 1915–1958 [nos. 16.390 and 16.391]; at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1986–1991; in the University of Arizona Museum of Art, October 1993 to December 1993; in the Robert and Frances Fullerton Museum of Art, California State University, San Bernardino, 2005–2023; sold Artemis Gallery 2023, lot 1B).²³ ⑲–⑳

Beaussant Lefèvre 2015, part of lot 61.

Bonhams 2003, part of lot 450 – ex MacGregor Collection (sold Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge 1922, part of lot 1334).

De Ricqlès 1996, lot 559 – 12 *shabtis*, ex Émile Brugsch Collection.

Christie's 1996, part of lot 138.

Helios Gallery (2022 – now in a Spanish private collection).²⁶





7



27



8



3



9



24



10



11



12



13



14



15



16



17



18



19



20



21



22



23



24



6390



25



6391



26

WORKER 2 – mummiform; pottery (sun dried clay?) with a white wash on the body; details are added in red and black; tripartite wig is painted black with a white *seshed* headband; the top of the head is somewhat flat; the face is quite round in shape, simply modelled and painted red; eyes are crudely defined and have no obvious eyebrows; ears protrude in the front of the lappets of the wig and are painted red; arms are crossed right over left on the chest; the clenched hands are painted red and hold pair of hoes that are mostly boldly painted in red; a basket is carried on the back and is outlined in red; the feet are gently pointed in profile; flat-backed; a very faint inscription is crudely added in black on the front of the figures mostly giving an abbreviated version of the name as Niwt-nakht usually with bold red framing lines that are open at the top; one example that is to be found in Cairo () has the inscription the Illuminated one, the Osiris, Amen-niwt-nakht without a title, thus writing the name in full and with a black horizontal line closing the inscription frame that has red side lines.
 c. 5.0–6.5 cm in height.

Cairo (CG 47971–47975).²⁴ ①–④

Cambridge (HAM 1919.609, 1919.610, 1919.612 & 1919.613).²⁵ ⑤–⑧

Cortona (MAC 143).²⁶ ⑨

Paris (MdL E 14732E – ex Daressy Collection).²⁷ ⑩

Vienna (KHM ÄS 6683).²⁸ ⑪



OVERSEER 1 – dress of daily life with a short knee-length projecting apron that is added to worker *shabtis* as a modification; pottery (sun dried clay?) with a white wash on the body except the face; details are added in black; plain tripartite wig is painted in black; the rear lappet is short; the top of the head is somewhat flat; the face is quite round in shape and is the colour of the underlying red pottery; eyes are quite large and boldly outlined and have with pupils added in black and also the eyebrows; the ears protrude in the front of the lappets of the wig and are unpainted; the arms are crossed right over left above on the chest suggesting the *shabtis* are modified workers with the apron being added; a whip that is painted in black is carried in the clenched right hand; the feet are gently pointed in profile; the back is flat; a hieroglyphic inscription is added in black on the front of the apron with an abbreviated version of the name as Niwt-nakht without framing lines; two examples have the title Great of Ten (ꜥ3 *mdw*).
c. 6.2 cm in height.

Cairo (CG 47976–47980).²⁹ ①–⑤



OVERSEER 2 – dress of daily life with a short knee-length projecting apron that is added to worker *shabtis* as a modification; pottery (sun dried clay?) with a white wash; black and red painted details; fully painted tripartite wig is painted in black; the rear lappet is short; the top of the head is somewhat flat; the face is quite round in shape and is painted red; eyes are large and boldly outlined and have with pupils in black and eyebrows; faintly defined ears protrude in the front of the lappets of the wig; arms are crossed right over left above on the chest suggesting the *shabtis* are modified workers with the apron being added; a whip, which is boldly painted in red, is carried in the clenched right hand; the legs are boldly highlighted in red; the feet are gently pointed in profile; the back is flat; a hieroglyphic inscription is faintly and crudely added in black of the apron with an abbreviated version of the name as Niwt-nakht with thick framing lines that are painted in red and open at the top.
c. 6.2–6.6 cm in height.

Cairo (CG 47981–47983).³⁰ ①
Cambridge (GC LR.20, LR.21 & LR.22 – purchased from the
Cairo Museum for 20 piastres each).³¹ ②–④
Paris (MdL E 14732D – ex Georges Daressy Collection).³² ⑤

Memphis Collection (NH-246 – ex Drexel Institute,
Philadelphia; ex Royal Athena Gallery – sold to Dr. W.
Benson Harer in 2005).³³ ⑥
De Ricqlès 1997, lot 698 – ex Émile Brugsch Collection.





Photo credits:

WORKER 1: Cairo = courtesy of VB, 2025; Cambridge = © 2025 The Mistress and Fellows of Girton College, Cambridge; Chicago = © Field Museum, Chicago; Cortona = courtesy of NH; Dôle = © Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dôle; London = Courtesy of The Petrie Museum of Egyptian and Sudanese Archaeology, UCL; Paris = © 2011 & 2020 Musée du Louvre / Antiquités égyptiennes; Uppsala = courtesy of NH; Memphis Collection = courtesy of NH; Helios = courtesy of Helios Gallery. **WORKER 2:** Cairo = courtesy of VB, 2025; Cambridge = © President and Fellows of Harvard College; Cortona = courtesy of NH; Paris = © 2011 & 2020 Musée du Louvre / Antiquités égyptiennes; Vienna = © Kunsthistorisches Museum. **OVERSEER 1:** Cairo = courtesy of VB, 2025. **OVERSEER 2:** Cairo = courtesy of VB, 2025; Cambridge = © 2025 The Mistress and Fellows of Girton College, Cambridge; Paris = © 2011 & 2020 Musée du Louvre / Antiquités égyptiennes; Memphis – courtesy of NH.

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See also the website La cachette de Bab el-Gasous: <http://beg.huma-num.fr/> and the website of *shabti* scholar Dik van Bommel: <https://www.ushabtis.com/>

Abbreviations

ASAE	Annales du Service des antiquités de l'Égypte (Cairo).
BIFAO	Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale (Cairo).
CG	Catalogue général du musée du Caire.
FM	Field Museum (Chicago).
G	Gustavianum (Uppsala, Sweden).
GC	Girton College, Lawrence Room, University of Cambridge.
HAM	Harvard Art Museums (Cambridge, USA).
JE	Journal d'entrée du musée du Caire.
KHM	Kunsthistorisches Museum (Vienna).
MAC	Museo dell'Accademia di Cortona (Cortona).
MAIB	Musée d'archéologie, Aix-les-Bains.
MBA	Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dôle.
MdL	Musée du Louvre (Paris).
MJD	Musée Joseph Déchelette (Roanne).
OMRO	Oudheidkundige Mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden (Leiden).
RA	Revue Archéologique (Paris).
RecTrav	Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et l'archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes (Paris).
UC	University College, London (Petrie Museum of Egyptian and Sudanese Archaeology).

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