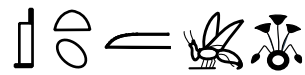


# DATABASES FOR SHABTIS OF THE THIRD INTERMEDIATE PERIOD (c. 1069-656 BC)

## Iset-em-Khebit I

*3s.t-m-3h-bi.t*



Third Intermediate Period, 21st Dynasty

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



# Iset-em-Khebit I

Faience, bright blue glaze, details added in black

Third Intermediate Period, 21st Dynasty

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

H. 12.2 cm. W. 4.1 cm. D. 2.8 cm.

ex Horace A. Owen (1910–1993) Collection (West Hampstead, London)

Published: Janes, G., *Shabtis – A Private View. Ancient Egyptian funerary statuettes in European private collections* (Paris, 2002), pp. 61–62 [no. 30]

Exhibited: 'Shabtis,' Cybele Gallery, Paris, 2003

'Shabtis: Suspended Truth in Context,' The Manchester Museum, 2017



A mummiform *shabti* wearing a plain tripartite wig that is painted black. The lower edges of the front lappets are left unpainted. The arms are crossed left over right above the waist, and the clenched hands hold a pair of hoes that are crudely added in black. A *wesekh*-collar is painted in three somewhat blurred rows on the chest. A large rectangular-shaped basket with carrying straps and square-hatched detail is painted on the back of the figure. At the sides of the basket the backs of the upper arms are well defined in the modelling although they are quite thin. The small face is somewhat crudely modelled and has the eyes and eyebrows added in black. The ears are crudely defined and they protrude in front of the side lappets of the wig.

The feet curl gently forwards and the back of the *shabti* is gently shaped. A vertical column of a painted hieroglyphic inscription within framing lines is added on the front of the *shabti* and also extending under the feet. The owner is named as Iset-em-Khebit<sup>1</sup> (Isis is in Khemmis) with the title of Lady of the House.

*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.<sup>2</sup>

It has been generally considered that this owner had four types of *shabtis* in two series, but after careful consideration, it has been decided to attribute them as belonging to two owners of the same name, Iset-em-Khebit. The main reason for this is





Fig. 1.

The opening vignette of the papyrus for Iset-em-Khebit I (Cairo, S.R.IV.555 = JE 95657).

(Photo: VB 2023).

the differences in iconography of the two series. The colour of the glaze is very different in the second series, being a much lighter blue in colour, and in terms of the size, they are considerably smaller. This group is therefore attributed to Iset-em-Khebit II (for an example, see Fig. 2 – database forthcoming) whereas the *shabtis* in the present database are for Iset-em-Khebit I. Within both series there are worker and ‘overseer’ *shabtis*. None of the examples for Iset-em-Khebit II give a title in the inscription whereas the larger ones give the titles of Lady of the House or Chantress of Amen, with both sometimes being written.

There were five owners with the name Iset-em-Khebit buried in the Second Cache, not all with coffins, indeed some are only known from papyri. The removal and recording of the objects from the Cache as supervised by Grébaut and Daressy was done in haste and records were incomplete and often incorrect, so it is difficult to be certain about the attributions. It seems that Iset-em-Khebit I had a set of coffins that are to be found in Cairo (JE 29671 = CG 6006, CG 6142–6143, CG 6123–6125).<sup>3</sup> These were usurped from a lady called Iwes-en-Mut who has the titles of Lady of the House and Chantress of Amen-Re, King of the Gods. A funerary papyrus for Iset-em-Khebit is also to be found in Cairo (S.R.IV.555 = JE 95657 – see Fig. 1).<sup>4</sup> As to be found on some parallel *shabtis*, the coffins have the additional title of Chantress of Amen-Re, King of the Gods.

Other objects belonging to Iset-em-Khebit I, which are noted by Daressy, include an Osiris cloth, a lead embalmer’s plaque, a lead hawk pectoral, a basalt scarab, a necklace comprising two *djed*-pillars, and single heart and Thoth amulets.<sup>5</sup>

A *shabti* box is also recorded although it is not clear to which Iset-em-Khebit it belongs.<sup>6</sup> Another example is also attributed to an Iset-em-Khebit.<sup>7</sup> By no means certain, these are presumably in the Cairo Museum but the inventory numbers or further details are not known.

### Inscription



*Wsir nb.t-pr 3s.t-m-3h-bi.t m3<sup>c</sup>-hrw*

The Osiris, the Lady of the House, Iset-em-Khebit, justified.



Fig. 2. An example of a *shabti* for Iset-em-Khebit II (London, BM EA 71265).

(Photo: courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum).

## Typology and database of parallel *shabtis* for Iset-em-Khebit I

*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; mid to bright blue glazed faience; details are added in black; wear a fully painted tripartite wig; the lower end of the front lappets mostly terminate in a narrow unpainted horizontal band; the face is quite round in shape and generally quite simply modelled; the eyes are large and boldly outlined and with eyebrows; the ears protrude in the front of the lappets of the wig, some being almost indiscernible; boldly modelled arms are crossed left over right above the waist; clenched hands hold a pair of hoes; some wear a *wesekh*-collar comprising three strands across the chest; a rectangular, square or diamond-hatched basket of varying sizes is carried in centre of the back and has carrying straps that extend at the sides of the rear lappet of the wig; a vertical column of a hieroglyphic inscription is painted on the front of the *shabtis*, sometimes extending under the feet and often including outlined hieroglyphs and within framing lines open at the top; some have an additional title of Chantress of Amen – Cairo has two such examples (see below).  
c. 11.3–13.0 cm in height.

Aberdeen (ABDUA 20123 & 20124).<sup>8</sup> ① ②

Alexandria (AB 1080).<sup>3</sup>

Amiens (MP 88.3.99).<sup>9</sup> ④

Basel (MKB 608).<sup>10</sup>

Berlin (ÄM 11898).<sup>11</sup> ⑤

Budapest (SM 51.1796).<sup>12</sup> ⑥

Cairo (CG 47001–47010 & 47021 – wigs are assumed to be fully painted).<sup>13</sup> ⑦

Copenhagen (NMD 3984).<sup>14</sup>

Cortona (MAC 81).<sup>15</sup>

Florence (ME 8586 & 8587).<sup>16</sup> ⑧ ⑨

Hamburg (MK&G 1919.165).<sup>17</sup>

Leiden (RMO F 93/10.17).<sup>18</sup> ⑩

Lisbon (SGL 2507–26B).<sup>19</sup> ⑪

London (BM EA 24816 & 35372).<sup>20</sup> ⑫ ⑬

Montserrat (MOB 610.102).<sup>21</sup> ⑭

Moscow (PM I.1a 1131 & 6884).<sup>22</sup> ⑮ ⑯

Paris (MdL E 22096).<sup>23</sup> ⑰

Roanne (MJD 294).<sup>24</sup>

St. Gallen (KM C.730.4).<sup>25</sup>

Stockholm (MMS NME 905).<sup>26</sup> ⑱

Swansea (EC 2296 – ex Martin Sinclair Franklin Hood Collection).<sup>27</sup> ⑲

Uppsala (G 55).<sup>28</sup> ⑳

Vienna (KHM ÄS 8414).<sup>29</sup> ㉑

Washington (NMNH A154932 – two examples).<sup>30</sup> ㉒ ㉓

Former R. de Rustafael Collection.<sup>31</sup>

Kemehu Collection.<sup>32</sup> ㉔

Memphis Collection (NH–218).<sup>33</sup> ㉕

Spanish private collection. ㉖

Artcurial 2023, lot 57. ㉗

Bonhams 2008, lot 21

Bonhams 2017, lot 13 – ex Hugh Evans Collection – same *shabti* as Bonhams 2008. ㉘

Bonhams 2024, part of lot 70 – ex Bodo Bleß (1940–2022) Collection (Berlin). ㉙

Christie's 2009, lot 5.

Christie's 2018, lot 14.

De Maigret 2012, lot 81 – ex Charles Bouché Collection. ㉚







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**WORKER 2** – mummiform; bright blue glazed faience; details are added in black; wear a striated tripartite wig with a *seshed* headband that lacks a tie; the lower end of the front lappets terminate in a narrow unpainted horizontal band; the face is quite round in shape and comparatively well modelled; the eyes are large and boldly outlined and with eyebrows; the ears protrude in the front of the lappets of the wig; boldly modelled arms are crossed left over right above the waist; clenched hands hold a pair of hoes; a *wesekh*–collar is worn across the chest comprising of three strands; a rectangular–shaped square–hatched basket is painted in centre of the back with carrying straps that extend at the sides of the rear lappet of the wig; a vertical column of a painted hieroglyphic inscription, several outlined only, is painted on the front of the *shabtis* with framing lines open at the top.  
c. 12.3–12.4 cm in height.

London (BM EA 24815).<sup>34</sup> ①

Roanne (MJD 276 – with additional title of Chantress of Amen).<sup>35</sup>

Christie's 2009, lot 7. ②



①

②

**OVERSEER 1** – dress of daily life with a knee-length triangular projecting apron; bright blue glazed faience; black painted details; wear a fully painted tripartite wig with fairly short rounded front lappets and a short rear lappet; the face is quite well modelled with the mouth being faintly suggested and eyes that are in shallow relief; the eyes are highlighted with paint and have eyebrows; a chin strap (and a stubby beard?) is also added on some; faintly suggested ears protrude in the front of the lappets of the wig (assumed); a *wesekh*-collar comprising three strands is worn across the chest (some); the left arm hangs by the side; the right arm, which has a rather short forearm, is folded across the waist and the clenched hand holds a whip that is crudely painted in front of the right shoulder; the feet curl forwards; a vertical column of a painted hieroglyphic inscription is added on the apron and extends down the lower legs, ankles and feet, and also under the feet (some), within thin framing lines that are closed at the top.  
c. 12.0 cm in height.

Cairo (CG 47011–47015).<sup>36</sup> ①

Location unknown. ②



①

②

**OVERSEER 2** – dress of daily life with a knee-length triangular projecting apron that has been applied to a worker *shabti* as a modification; mid to bright blue glazed faience; black painted details; wear a fully painted tripartite wig with fairly short lappets that were perhaps reduced by paring as can be seen with the left arm and hand of which only the elbow really remains obvious (one example has longer lappets); the face is fairly well modelled with a faintly shaped mouth and eyes in relief; eyes highlighted with paint and with eyebrows; faintly suggested ears protrude in the front of the lappets of the wig; there are two right arms – one hangs by the side although it is rather poorly defined and the other is folded across the chest and the clenched hand holds a whip that is either modelled or painted in front and behind the left shoulder; the left elbow is shown in the modelling (see above comment); the feet curl forwards a vertical column of inscription is painted on the apron and extends over the lower legs, ankles and feet and presumed to extend under the feet, within thin framing lines that are sometimes closed at the top.  
c. 12.3–12.7 cm in height.

Leiden (RMO F 93/10.18).<sup>37</sup> ①

Lisbon (SGL 2507–26A).<sup>38</sup> ②

Aubert collection.<sup>39</sup> ③

Former Michel Philippe Collection<sup>40</sup> – acquired from Christie's  
1980c, lot 196 – sold Bergé 2010, lot 88. ④





### Photo credits:

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See 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

|       |                                                                  |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AB    | Alexandria Bibliotheca.                                          |
| ABDUA | University of Aberdeen, Human Culture Collection.                |
| ÄM    | Ägyptisches Museum (Berlin).                                     |
| ASAE  | Annales du Service des antiquités de l’Égypte (Cairo).           |
| BIFAO | Bulletin de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale (Cairo). |
| BM    | The British Museum (London).                                     |
| BSEG  | Bulletin de la Société d’égyptologie (Geneva).                   |
| CdE   | Chronique d’Égypte (Brussels).                                   |
| CG    | Catalogue général du musée du Caire.                             |
| EC    | Egypt Centre, University of Swansea (Wales).                     |
| G     | Gustavianum (Uppsala, Sweden).                                   |
| KHM   | Kunsthistorisches Museum (Vienna).                               |
| KM    | Kulturmuseum (St. Gallen, Switzerland).                          |
| MAC   | Museo dell’Accademia di Cortona (Cortona).                       |
| MdL   | Musée du Louvre (Paris)                                          |
| ME    | Museo Egizio (Florence).                                         |
| MJD   | Musée Joseph Déchelette (Roanne).                                |
| MK&G  | Museum für Kunst & Gewerbe (Hamburg).                            |
| MKB   | Museum de Kulturen (Basel).                                      |
| MMS   | Medelhavsmuseet (Stockholm).                                     |
| MOB   | Museo del Oriente Biblico (Montserrat).                          |
| MP    | Musée de Picardie (France).                                      |
| NMD   | National Museum of Denmark (Copenhagen).                         |
| NMNH  | Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History (Washington).     |
| PM    | The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts (Moscow).                  |
| RMO   | Rijksmuseum van Oudheden (Leiden).                               |
| SGL   | Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa (Lisbon)                        |
| SM    | Szépművészeti Múzeum (Budapest).                                 |

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