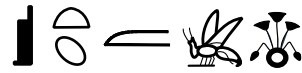


DATABASES FOR SHABTIS OF THE THIRD INTERMEDIATE PERIOD (c. 1069-656 BC)

Iset-em-Khebit II

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 II

Faience, pale 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. 9.5 cm. W. 3.6 cm. D. 2.5 cm.

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



A mummiform *shabti* wearing a plain tripartite wig that is painted black. The rear lappet is short and ends at the base of the neck. The arms are crossed right over left above the waist and the clenched hands hold a pair of hoes that are boldly painted in black. A very large and crudely painted square-shaped basket with square-hatched detail and carrying straps is carried on the back. The details of the face are gently suggested in the modelling, the eyes being boldly outlined in black. The ears are somewhat crudely defined and they protrude in front of the side lappets of the wig. The feet curl gently forwards while the back of the *shabti* is flat. The front of the *shabti* has a vertical column of now rather faded painted hieroglyphic inscription within framing lines closed at the top that names the owner as Iset-em-Khebit (Isis is in Khemmis).¹ The writing of the inscription is interesting in that the bee, with its wispy detail, appears to be done using a fine tipped brush as opposed to a thicker brush that was used for the other hieroglyphs.

Shabtis for this owner are from the Second Cache, also known as the Bab el-Gasus and the Priests of Amen Cache at Deir el-Bahari, Western Thebes. This particular Iset-em-Khebit has until now, like Iset-em-Khebit I (see separate database), been linked in literature to Daressy List A 126, but it has been recently suggested that this particular Iset-en-Khebit is listed by Georges Daressy as List A 100.² The potential reasons for this are noted below.

There are two types of *shabtis* for this particular lady named Iset-em-Khebit – small ones like the present example and ‘overseers’ that wear a projecting apron that was most likely applied as a modification to worker *shabtis*. This is really confirmed

by the fact that none of the currently known ‘overseers’ have the usual positioning of the arms for such figures with one folded across the waist and the other hanging pendant by the side of the body. ‘Overseer’ *shabtis* for this owner are very rare. None of the *shabtis* of either type give a title and for this reason it is really impossible to securely link the owner with a particular set of coffins because there were several sets of coffins for different owners named Iset-em-Khebit found in the Second Cache. One such owner is Iset-em-Khebit I (Daressy List A 126).³ She can be fairly securely linked to a coffin set because of the related titles (see a separate database).

One potential outer coffin for the Iset-em-Khebit II is to be found in Cairo (JE 29717 = CG 6005 & 6010) that was usurped from a certain Pa-shed-Khonsu. This attribution with Iset-em-Khebit II is first suggested by Niwiński.⁴ Another inner coffin and mummy board, also to be found in Cairo (JE 29740 = CG 6006, 6007 & 6008), was usurped from Nefert-Amen. As noted earlier, none of the *shabtis* for Iset-em-Khebit II give a title, but these two coffins have titles of Chantress of Amen-Re, King of the Gods, and Singer of Mut, suggesting that they perhaps belong together.

It is particularly interesting to note another individual found in the Second Cache, this being a man named Pay-ef-adjar (Daressy List A 99).⁵ His coffin set, also now to be found in Cairo ((JE 29616 = CG 6137–6138, 6156–6157 & 6136),⁶ were found next to those for Iset-em-Khebit, the owner of JE 29717 as noted above.⁷ Van Bommel suggests that these two owners were related in some way, potentially husband and wife.⁸ Being aware of this, perhaps the priests who reburied

them placed their coffins side by side in the Cache. This idea of family grouping is certainly known with other owners who were buried in the Cache. To further enhance this theory the *shabtis* for Iset-em-Khebit II and Pay-ef-adjar are virtually identical in their iconography even when comparing the ‘overseer’ examples that have an apron applied to the front of worker *shabtis* (see Fig. 1). Except for the inscriptions, the only obvious difference is in the rendering of the wig – those for Iset-em-Khebit being fully painted while those for Pay-ef-adjar have striations that are added in black paint. Both sets of *shabtis* were clearly made in the same workshop, perhaps even using the same moulds for the worker figures.



Fig. 1. *Shabtis* for Pay-ef-adjar (Amiens MP 88.3.125; The Memphis Collection) and Iset-em-Khebit II (Cortona MAC 116; Stockholm MMS NME 903) .

There are *shabtis* for other owners that have very similar iconography to those for Iset-em-Khebit II and Pay-ef-adjar. These are for Di-Khonsu-iry (Daressy List A 49),⁹ Ta-shedet-Mut,¹⁰ Montu-wenemi¹¹ and Amen-em-o-pe (see Fig. 2).¹² With their dumpy and squat proportions, they must have been all made in the same workshop.



Fig. 2. *Shabtis* for Di-Khonsu-iry (Kemehu Collection), Ta-shedet-Mut (Manchester MM 11348), Montu-wenemi (Frankfort L 1686) and Amen-em-o-pe (Memphis Collection).

No other objects belonging to Iset-em-Khebit II have been positively identified.

Inscription



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

The Osiris, Iset-em-Khebit.

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

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).

WORKERS – mummiform; light to dark blue glazed faience; details are added in black; small and squat; fully painted tripartite wig with a short rear lappet; above the forehead on most examples is an unpainted band that perhaps suggests a headband; the face is quite large, either oval or round in shape and usually simply modelled; the eyes are faintly modelled and often outlined in black; eyebrows are not shown; large ears, sometimes very well modelled, protrude in the front of the lappets of the wig; the arms are crossed right over left above the waist; clenched hands hold a pair of hoes, usually boldly painted albeit crudely; a crudely painted square-hatched basket is carried in the centre of back that is either square or rectangular in shape and with carrying straps in the top corners; the front has a crudely painted hieroglyphic inscription with some outlined hieroglyphs with framing lines that are closed at the top. c. 9.2–10.2 cm in height.

Basel (MKB 587).¹³
 Berlin (ÄM 11907/01 & 11907/02).¹⁴ ① ②
 Bristol (BMs Ha5884).¹⁵ ③
 Cairo (CG 47021–47030).¹⁶
 Clermont-Ferrand (MB 3163 & 3169).¹⁷ ④ ⑤
 Copenhagen (NMD 3957 & 3958).¹⁸ ⑥ ⑦
 Cortona (MAC 116).¹⁹ ⑧
 Florence (ME 6158 D.).²⁰ ⑨
 Leiden (RMO F 93/10.15 & F 93/10.16).²¹ ⑩ ⑪
 Lisbon (MNA E 102, E 401, E 402 & E 460; SGL 2507–4A & 2507–4B).²² ⑫ ⑬
 Liverpool (WM 1961.202.140).²³ ⑭
 London (BM EA 24814, 71265;²⁴ ⑮ ⑯ UC 39907).²⁵ ⑰

Moscow (PM 7419).²⁶ ⑱
 Paris (MdL E 22095).²⁷ ⑲
 Roanne (MJD 255).²⁸
 Uppsala (VM 50).²⁹ ⑳
 Washington (SI A461104–0).³⁰ ㉑
 Former R. de Rustafael Collection.³¹
 Kemehu Collection.²⁶
 Memphis Collection (NH–206).³² ㉒
 German private collection.²⁸
 Bonhams 2003, part of lot 57 – ex M. Ayres (dealer, London 1970–1988).²⁹
 Bonhams 2024, part of lot 71 – Bodo Bleß (1940–2022) Collection (Berlin).³⁰



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OVERSEERS – dress of daily life; light blue glazed faience; black painted details; wears a fully painted tripartite wig; the rear lappet is short; above the forehead on some examples is an unpainted band that perhaps suggests a headband; the face is crudely modelled with the eyes being outlined in black; the ears protrude in the front of the lappets of the wig; wears a triangular-shaped projecting apron – sometimes very small and barely discernable; the arms are crossed right over left above the waist; the clenched right hand holds a whip that is boldly painted and falls behind the left shoulder and across the back; one example in Cairo (CG 47018) carries a hoe instead of a whip according to Newberry (see below); a square-hatched basket is very crudely painted on the back; all are modified worker *shabtis*; the front has a crudely painted vertical column of hieroglyphic inscription with framing lines that are closed at the top. c. 9.6–10.0 cm in height.

Cairo (CG 47016–47020).³³

Stockholm (MMS NME 903).³⁴ ①

Memphis Collection (NH-116).³⁵ ②



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GJ with the exceptions of **WORKER** : Berlin = © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung; Andreas Paasch; Copenhagen = Rogério Sousa & Anne Haslund Hansen; Cortona = courtesy of NH; Florence = courtesy of Dr. Anna Consonni; German private collection = courtesy of VB; Leiden = courtesy of the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden; Lisbon = © L. M. de Araújo; London = courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum and courtesy of the Petrie Museum of Egyptian and Sudanese Archaeology, UCL; Moscow = © The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts; Paris = © 2014 Musée du Louvre / Département des Antiquités égyptiennes; Uppsala = courtesy of NH; Washington = © Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History; Memphis Collection = courtesy of NH; Bonhams = © Bonhams, London. **OVERSEER**: Stockholm = © Medelhavsmuseet; Memphis Collection = 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

ÄM	Ägyptisches Museum (Berlin).
ASAE	Annales du Service des antiquités de l'Égypte (Cairo).
BM	The British Museum (London).
BMs	Bristol Museums (Bristol, UK).
CG	Catalogue général du musée du Caire.
MAC	Museo dell'Accademia di Cortona.
MB	Musée Bargoin (Clermont–Ferrand).
MdL	Musée du Louvre (Paris).
ME	Museo Egizio (Florence).
MJD	Musée Joseph Déchelette (Roanne).
MKB	Museum de Kulturen (Basel).
MMS	Medelhavsmuseet (Stockholm).
MNA	Museu Nacional de Arqueologia (Lisbon).
NMD	National Museum of Denmark (Copenhagen).
PM	The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts (Moscow).
RMO	Rijksmuseum van Oudheden (Leiden).
SI	Smithsonian Institution (Washington).
VM	Victoria Museum, Gustavianum (Uppsala).
WM	World Museum (Liverpool, UK).

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