

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

Pa-her-mer

P3-hr-mr



Third Intermediate Period, early 21st Dynasty
From Abydos, North Cemeteries, Cemetery D, tomb 14B



Pa-her-mer

Faience, pale blue–green glaze, details added in black

Third Intermediate Period, early 21st Dynasty

From Abydos, North Cemeteries, Cemetery D, tomb 14B

H. 12.2 cm. W. 3.8 cm. D. 2.4 cm.

ex Major James Findlay (1915-1990) Collection, Aberdeen, acquired in the 1950s-1960s, and thence by descent

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An ‘overseer’ *shabti* wearing a knee-length apron – the dress of everyday life. The figure wears a tripartite wig with striations being added in black. Breasts are very faintly modelled below the front lappets of the wig. The left arm is folded across the chest and the clenched hand holds a whip that ends in a curl in front of the left shoulder. The right arm hangs down by the side of the body and the clenched hand holds a short whip that hangs down by the side of the apron. The whip has a handle that is indicated at the back of the hand as well as the front. Both of the whips are added in black paint. The face is somewhat simply modelled and has large eyes and eyebrows added in black. The ears are large and protrude in front of the lappets of the wig. The front of the apron has a vertical column of a painted hieroglyphic inscription that names the owner as Pa-her-mer who has the title of Chief of the Treasury.

A brick-built mastaba tomb at Abydos, North Cemeteries, Cemetery D, tomb 14, which was excavated by Mace during the 1899–1900 season, was very large and really consisted of three

separate tombs that were closely connected (see Fig. 1). The earliest construction (pit E) dates from the 18th Dynasty. It was reused in the 20th Dynasty when another mastaba was built ‘skew to the original direction and partly cutting away the old mastaba walls.’ A second mastaba was built in the 19th Dynasty (A, B & C), comprising an outer enclosure wall with three small offering chambers being built on to it, and pit chamber B (see the insert in Fig. 1). It is from the underground chambers from pit B that *shabtis* for Pa-her-mer are recorded as being found.¹ It also contained a number of *shabtis* for other owners, namely Hora, Pau-her and Ankh-es-en-Mut.² Pa-her-mer’s name was initially read by Mace as Pa-ab-mer with the heart hieroglyph (♥ *ib*) being read as an alternative to the face hieroglyph (♦ *hr*), which seems preferable with a seemingly obvious neck in the drawing of the face.

Although Mace says the *shabtis* for Pa-her-mer date from the New Kingdom, 19th Dynasty³ there is evidence to perhaps suggest that they are later than this. ‘Overseer’ *shabtis* that are to be found in museum collections in Batley, Middlesbrough and

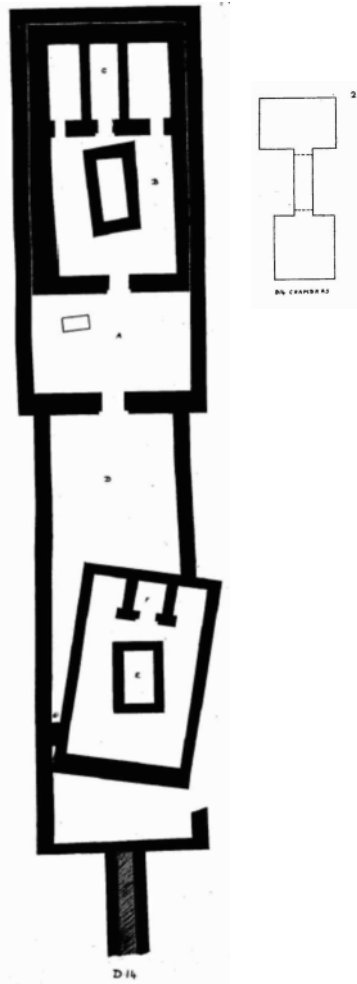


Fig. 1. Plan of tomb D 14 and the subterranean chambers of 14B. (Randall-MacIver, D. & Mace, A. C., *El Amrah and Abydos 1899–1901* (London, 1902) pl. XXV 1 & 2).

the Kemehu Collection (see the following database) have the usual attributes associated with such figures – the projecting triangular apron and the carrying of whips – so a date of the early 21st Dynasty, Third Intermediate Period is perhaps to be preferred. Furthermore, the sun-disc in the inscription (*shd*) has dotted rays, which also suggest a later date.⁴

Somewhat unusual for an ‘overseer’ *shabti* is the wearing of a tripartite wig as opposed to the customary bipartite wig. ‘Overseers’ wearing a tripartite wig are usually modified worker *shabtis* with the apron and pendant arm being added, but there only faint suggestions of such modifications on the example described in the Kemehu Collection. A parallel ‘overseer’ *shabti* that is to be found in Batley (see the following database) appears to be made from a different mould because the pendant right arm has a short-sleeved tunic shown in the modelling but the left arm does not. The left elbow is very pronounced on the example in Batley, whereas the example in the Kemehu Collection is less so and is more like the elbow found on the worker *shabtis*.

The *shabtis* would have been a very attractive group when initially made because they would all have had a blue glaze that is only seen on a handful of the surviving examples (see the following database). ‘Overseer’ *shabtis* for Pa-her-mer are rare with only three examples known.

Also found in tomb 14B were somewhat fragmentary magic bricks that are made of unbaked mud with the exception of one being in the form of a *djed*-pillar that is made of blue glazed faience. All are inscribed with the name Pa-her-mer.⁵

Magic bricks were placed in burial chambers of the elite and also the royalty from the New Kingdom through to the 21st

Dynasty. They consisted of four elements, each being inscribed with spells from Chapter 151 of the *Book of the Dead*. This was a spell to ward off evil forces in the tomb from the cardinal points – north, east, south and west. The north was protected by a mummiform figure, the south was protected by a flaming torch, the east was protected by an Anubis jackal, and the west by a *djed*-pillar that was to be made of faience and coated in electrum.⁶ They would have been placed in niches in the burial chamber of a tomb and the niches were to be sealed. One of the best preserved sets of magic bricks is to be found in London (BM EA 41544–41547 – see Fig. 3).⁷

The magic bricks and *djed*-pillar from Pa-her-mer’s tomb are now to be found in the Oriental Institute Museum, University of Chicago – magic bricks – E6780, E6785, E6786 and *djed*-pillar – E6792 (see Fig. 2).⁸

E6780 is a very small brick fragment that is 6.7 cm in height and inscribed in hieratic. E6785 is 9.8 cm in length and is the base for a striding figure of which only the feet remain. The base is inscribed on the back and right side in hieratic. According to Scalf, the striding figure is very unusual because such figures are usually in the form of a mummiform figure – unless a jackal-headed figure could be considered as stipulated as protector of the east(?). E6786 is 10.8 cm. in length and is hollowed out to take an amulet, that is now missing. Initially described as being a statue base by Mace, the sides are inscribed in hieratic with a spell from Chapter 151 of the *Book of the Dead*. The *djed*-pillar, E6792, is 16.3 cm in height and is inscribed with Pa-her-mer’s name and titles of God’s Father of Amen and Overseer of the Treasury and a spell from Chapter 151 of the *Book of the Dead* that gives the instruction to ‘watch’ – hence the pair of eyes at the top of the amulet.⁹

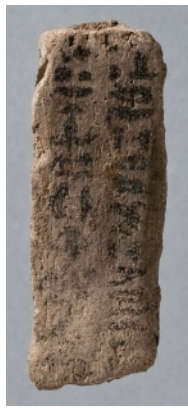
A pair of crescent-shaped model boats made of unbaked clay were also found in Pa-her-mer’s tomb. These are also now to be found in the Oriental Institute Museum, University of Chicago – E 6787 & 6788.¹⁰ The boats are over 20 cm in length.

Inscription



*shd Wsir im.y-r pr-hd P3-hr-mr
m3^c-hrw*

The Osiris, the Overseer of the Treasury, Pa-her-mer, justified.



E6780



E6785



E6786



E6792

Fig. 2. The magical bricks and *djed*-pillar of Pa-her-mer in the Oriental Institute Museum, University of Chicago. (Photos: courtesy of the Oriental Institute Museum, University of Chicago).

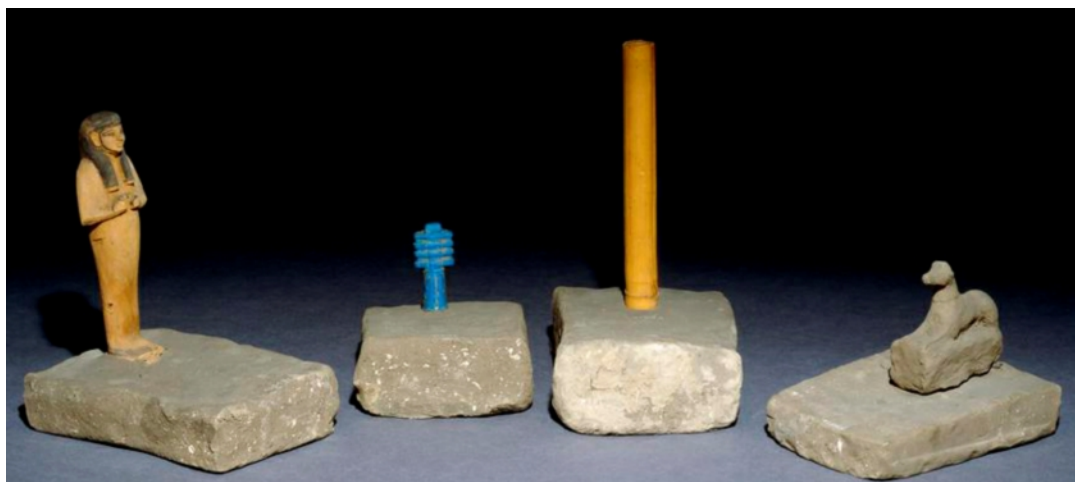


Fig. 3. A set of magical bricks for the Chantress of Amen, Henut-mehyt, New Kingdom, 19th Dynasty (BM EA 41544-41547). (Photo: courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum).

Typology and database of parallel *shabtis* for Pa-her-mer

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 green to blue (original colour) glazed faience; details are added in black; tripartite wig with striations added in black; the rear lappet is usually longer than the front lappets; a pair of breasts are faintly modelled below the front lappets of the wig; the arms are crossed right over left on the chest and the hands hold a pair of hoes that are added in black; a basket with carrying straps is carried on the back and varies from being square, trapezoidal or rectangular in shape with horizontal line or square-hatched detail; some baskets have loops at the upper corners; the faces are mostly well modelled with eyes and eyebrows being added in black; large well modelled ears protrude in front of the lappets of the wig; a vertical column of a painted hieroglyphic inscription is added on the front with framing lines closed at the top that names the owner as Pa-her-mer with the title of Overseer of the Treasury.

c. 11.5–13.2 cm in height.

- Atlanta (MCCM 2005.071.001 – ex Bonhams 2005 (see below) & 2018.010.601).¹¹ ①
 Aylesbury (AYBCM 1914.72.1).¹² ②
 Bolton (BOLMG 1900.54.133 & A.82.1967).¹³ ③ ④
 Boston (MFA 00.695 – as from Abydos, Cemetery G).¹⁴ ⑤
 Chicago (OIM E 6885 & 6905 – recorded as coming from Abydos, tomb 14B).¹⁵
 Chiddingstone Castle (EDECC 01.0302).¹⁶ ⑥
 Clinton (REWMA 699).¹⁷ ⑦
 Derby (DMAG 1931–309/1).¹⁸ ⑧
 Dundee (McM 1950–165–42).¹⁹ ⑨
 Greenock (MMAG 1987.315).²⁰ ⑩
 London (BM EA 32718 & 68670¹¹ ⑪ ⑫;²¹ UC 55305 & 55306 – fragments only).²² ⑬ ⑭
 Liverpool (WM 24.9.00.110, 56.5.27, 56.21.587 & 1967.195.14).²³ ⑮–⑰
 Manchester (MAG 1918.69 – from the Thomas Horsfall Collection, acquired from Petrie¹⁹;²⁴ MM – 3628a & b and one other without a number).²⁵ ⑱–⑳
- Oxford (ASH E.3622²³ & QL293).²⁶
 Pittsburgh (CNMH 1662.2).²⁷ ㉔
 Southport (AT 179).²⁸ ㉕
 St. Helens (SAHMG 1900.010.0026).²⁹ ㉖
 Warrington (WAGMG 1900.373).³⁰ ㉗
 Memphis Collection – ex East Coast Fine Arts LLC 2017, lot 246.³¹ ㉘
 Artcurial 2019, lot 136 – ex Charles Bouvier Collection. ㉙
 Artemis 2017, lot 10. ㉚
 Bonhams 1996, lot 475.
 Bonhams 2005, part of lot 12 – now in Atlanta (MCCM 2005.071.001). ㉛
 Bonhams 2014, lot 295 – to BB Antiken Gallery. ㉜
 Bonhams 2024, lot 73 – ex Bodo Bleß (1940–2022) Collection (Berlin). ㉝
 Christie's 2011, lot 133. ㉞
 Durrants 2010, lot 42.
 Puhze Gallery 1999 [no. 237].





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OVERSEERS – dress of daily life with a near ankle-length triangular projecting apron; one parallel example wears a short-sleeved tunic; light green to blue (original colour) glazed faience; details are added in black; tripartite wig with striations added in black; breasts are faintly modelled below the lappets of the wig; the left arm is held across the waist and the clenched hand holds a whip; the right arm hangs by the side of the body and the clenched hand holds a whip with a short handle the end of which is indicated at the back of the hand; the faces are fairly well modelled with eyes and eyebrows being added in black; large ears protrude in front of the lappets of the wig, the right ear being the more obvious; a vertical column of a painted hieroglyphic inscription is added on the front of the apron without framing lines that names the owner as Pa-her-mer with the title of Overseer of the Treasury.

c. 11.8–12.2 cm in height.

Batley (KLMUS 966.51).³² ①

Middlesbrough (MIDDM 1904.1704).³³

Kemehu Collection. ②



Photo credits:

GJ with the exceptions of **WORKERS**: Atlanta = courtesy of the Michael C. Carlos Emory Museum; Aylesbury = courtesy of Buckingham County Museum; Bolton = Anthony Donohue; Boston = © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Clinton = © Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art, Hamilton College; London = courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum and courtesy of The Petrie Museum of Egyptian and Sudanese Archaeology, UCL; Manchester = © Manchester Art Gallery; Pittsburgh = © Carnegie Museum of Art; Memphis Collection = courtesy of NH; Artcurial = © Artcurial, Paris; Artemis = © Artemis Gallery; Bonhams = © Bonhams, London; Christie's = © Christie's, London.

1. Randall-MacIver, D. & Mace, A. C., *El Amrah and Abydos 1899–1901* (London, 1902), pp. 77, 83, 98, pls. XXV [no. 1], XXXIX, LI & LVIII [no. 47 – although for some reason attributed to tomb 15] – translated as Pa–ab–mer. PM V, p. 68. See also Aston D. A., *Burial Assemblages of Dynasty 21–25; Chronology – Typology – Developments* (Vienna, 2009), p. 148 [TG 596 with TG 597 being noted for the *shabtis* and other objects attributed to Pa–her–mer (as Pamer)].
2. Randall-MacIver, D. & Mace, A. C., *El Amrah and Abydos 1899–1901* (London, 1902), p. 98.
3. *ibid.*, p. 77.
4. Schneider mentions the dotted rays being found on *shabtis* dating from the Late Period, 28th–30th Dynasties and the Ptolemaic Period, so this palaeography on the *shabtis* for Pa–her–mer is much earlier. See Schneider, H. D., *Shabtis – An Introduction to the History of Ancient Egyptian Funerary Statuettes with A Catalogue of the Collection of Shabtis in the National Museum of Antiquities at Leiden* 3 vols. (Leiden, 1977), vol. 1 p. 119.
5. Randall-MacIver, D. & Mace, A. C., *El Amrah and Abydos 1899–1901* (London, 1902), pp. 91, 98, pls. XLI & LI.
6. Roth, A. M., & Roehrig, C. H., *Magical Bricks and the Bricks of Birth*, JEA 88 (London, 2002), pp. 121–122; Régen, I., *When the Book of the Dead does not match archaeology: The case of the protective magical bricks (BD 151)*, BMAES 15 (London, 2010), p. 269; Barbash, Y., 'The Ritual Context of the Book of the Dead,' OIMP 39, p. 79 (Chicago, 2017).
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8. Communication with Susan Allison. See the website of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago: <https://isac.uchicago.edu/>
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10. Randall-MacIver, D. & Mace, A. C., *El Amrah and Abydos 1899–1901* (London, 1902), pp. 91, 98, pl. LI. See the website of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago: <https://isac.uchicago.edu/>
11. See the website of the Michael C. Carlos Emory Museum: <https://carlos.emory.edu/>
12. See the Accessing Virtual Egypt website: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums-static/ave/search/individual/index.php?museumname=Buckinghamshire>
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14. See the website of the Museum of Fine Arts: <https://www.mfa.org/>
15. Communication with Susan Allison. See the website of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago: <https://isac.uchicago.edu/>
16. Communication with Maria Essain.
17. See the website of the Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art, Hamilton College: <https://www.hamilton.edu/wellin>
18. Communication with Rachel Atherton.
19. Communication with Averil Anderson.
20. Communication with Chris Wilson.
21. See the website of the British Museum: <https://www.britishmuseum.org/>
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29. Communication with Hannah Longworth.
30. Janes, G., *The Shabti Collections 2: Warrington Museum & Art Gallery* (Lymm, 2011), pp. 48–49 [no. 24].
31. De Haan, N., *The “Memphis” collection of Egyptian antiquities – A catalogue of a Dutch private collection*. Vol. 3 *Shabtis from the Third Intermediate Period* (printed for private circulation, 2025), pp. 123–124
32. Communication with Katina Bill and Joseph Murray.
33. Communication with Katina Bill.

Abbreviations

ASH	Ashmolean Museum (Oxford).
AT	The Atkinson (Southport).
AYBCM	Aylesbury Buckinghamshire County Museum.
BM	The British Museum, London.
BMAES	British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan (London).
BOLMG	Bolton Museum & Art Gallery (Bolton).
CNHM	Carnegie Museum of Art (Pittsburgh).
DMAG	Derby Museum and Art Gallery.
EDECC	Chiddingstone Castle, Edenbridge.
JEA	Journal of Egyptian Archaeology (London).
KLMUS	Kirklees Museums and Galleries.
MAG	Manchester Art Gallery.
MCCM	Michael C. Carlos Emery Museum (Atlanta).
McM	The McManus, Dundee Art Gallery & Museum (Dundee).
MFA	Museum of Fine Arts (Boston).
MIDDM	Middlesbrough, Dorman Museum.
MM	The Manchester Museum (England).
MMAG	McLean Museum & Art Gallery (Greenock, Scotland).
OIM	Oriental Institute Museum, University of Chicago.
OIMP	Oriental Institute Museum Publications.
REWMA	Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art, Hamilton College.
SAHMG	St Helens Museum of Glass (World of Glass).
UC	University College, London (Petrie Museum of Egyptian and Sudanese Archaeology).
WAGMG	Warrington Museum & Art Gallery.
WM	World Museum (Liverpool).

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