

## EGYPTIAN FAIENCE USHABTI WITH THE NAME OF NEFERIBRESANEITH

Egyptian, middle of the 6th century B.C.)

Faience

H : 18.6 cm

Reference: 22912



reference 22912

Together with the statuettes of Horkhebi (see (56)), ushabtis of Neferibresaneith are among the most beautiful faience works of the period known as the Saite Renaissance. Everything is perfectly carved: the modeling of the body softly wrapped in the shroud, the details of the hair, the anatomy of the face, the attribute-tools, and especially the long inscription, which is composed of clear, evenly engraved signs. Following the usual typology of these figurines, the man is standing upright, his body entirely wrapped in a pall; only the hands protrude from the shroud at chest level and hold a hoe, a pick, and the string of a seed sack suspended from the left shoulder and hanging in the back. The square face, which conveys a serene, barely smiling expression, is framed by a tripartite wig, while a false beard adorns the chin. The inscription occupies nine horizontal lines placed on the legs of the figurine, on both sides of the supporting pillar. It indicates the name of the deceased and of his mother (Shepenhoubastet), but it does not give his complete titles. This figure, named Neferibresaneith, was a well-known notable under the Saite dynasty. The text is completed by the long version of Chapter 6b of the Book of the Dead, which forces an ushabti to carry out many tasks for the deceased in the afterlife.

Other ancient sources reveal that in the reign of Pharaoh Amasis, Neferibresaneith was the Wab priest to the king, royal chancellor of Lower Egypt, and administrator of the palace. His tomb was found at Saqqara (a shaft grave located near the pyramids of the Old Kingdom) in 1929: the ushabtis of Neferibresaneith, which had been deposited on the lid of the anthropoid sarcophagus, were subsequently sold by the Egyptian Antiquities Service and are currently housed in many public and private collections worldwide. This ushabti represents the same figure as statuettes (59) et (60). From the small but numerous stylistic and textual differences (the rendering of the face and the modeling of the chest and body are not exactly the same, the engraved text is not always identical, and some hieroglyphic signs show differences

between one example and another), these ushabtis can be divided into four groups, each descending from a different matrix. After the statuette was removed from the mold, the finishing touches were done by hand. This demonstrates that the pieces were mass-produced, probably by several craftsmen, or that they were executed in different workshops. The three examples presented here seem to have been made from three different molds.

### PROVENANCE

Ex-R. Liechti (1934-2010) collection, Geneva, Switzerland; collected between the 1950's and the 1990's.

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