

## WOOD USHABTI FOR IMEN-NEB-NEHEH

Egyptian, New Kingdom, late 18th -19th Dynasty, ca. 1300 B.C.

Wood

H: 24.8 cm (9.7 in)

Reference: 25478



Carved from a single piece of hard, compact dark wood, this work is outstanding for its remarkable artistic qualities, both in the slender, elegant proportions and in the plasticity (well-molded, sinuous shapes).

Iconographically, this example is similar to many contemporary ushabtis, except for the particular position of the arms and hands that are not crossed on the chest, but placed lower than usually, with the hands barely clasped. The slender mummiform body is entirely wrapped in a shroud; although hidden by the fabric, the outline of the arms is clearly marked. The hands protrude from a vertical slit in the fabric and are indicated in relief; in his hands, the figure holds a hoe (left hand) and a small seed sack.

The broad, rounded face has the almost "smiling" expression typical of sculptures at that time; it is framed by a tripartite hairstyle, furrowed by deep horizontal incisions, which descends like a mat at the back and on the chest forming two large, smooth and simple braids. A beautiful necklace composed of several rows of small beads, supported by two falcon heads visible on the shoulders, encircles his neck.

The hieroglyphic text was engraved in ten lines, but is unfortunately damaged in the lower part. As is often the case, it contains an excerpt from chapter 6 of the Book of the Dead and indicates the name of the deceased, Imen-Neb-Neheh. According to the text, he was the master of the stables of the god Amon, which certainly included tens of thousands of animals; as indicated by contemporary written sources (see, for instance, the papyrus of Harris I), this livestock included both

domesticated and wild animals.

The funerary statuettes that are generally referred to as ushabtis, were most often made of blue faience; stone (steatite, "alabaster"/calcite, limestone, sandstone, occasionally quartzite, etc.), metal (bronze or other noble metals, usually available to the wealthiest classes) and wood examples are rarer: these images accompanied the deceased in the tomb and served as substitutes to accomplish the chores of daily life linked to agriculture, transportation, and construction.

### CONDITION

Aside from the feet, now lost, the statuette is complete and in excellent condition. Some lines of the inscription are faded. The surface of the face is partially worn (nose).

### PROVENANCE

Ex- Pierre and Claude V\'erit\'e private collection, acquired between 1930 and 1960 in Paris.

### PUBLISHED

Phoenix Ancient Art 2016-33, no. 9

### EXHIBITED

PAD, London, October 2016;

TEFAF, New York, Spring 2017

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