

Article

The "Lost" Calcite Alabaster Vessels of Princess *Nbw-m-th* in Turin (Cat. 3254 and 3255)

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In 2008, the epigraphical evidence for the mid-18th Dynasty king's daughter *Nbw-m-th* was published and discussed by Dina Faltings and Beatrix Gessler-Löhr. The list of objects belonging to the princess also includes four alabaster vessels held in the Museo Egizio Turin, two of which could be identified by the two scholars based on the data available back then, while two others could not be retrieved and were thus thought to be "lost". The two "lost" pieces were recently re-identified as Turin Cat. 3254 and Cat. 3255. They are published here together with their two already known siblings Cat. 3247 and Cat. 3248.

ملخص

في عام 2008 نُشرت الكتابة التذكارية لابنة ملك الأسرة الثامنة عشرة نبومتخ وقامتاً بمناقشتها كل من دينا فالتينغز وبياتريكس جيسلر-لور. تتضمن مجموعة أشياء خاصة بالأميرة بالإضافة إلى أربعة أواني من رخام الألباستر محفوظة حالياً في المتحف المصري في تورينو، اثنتين منهما استطاعتا تحديدهما العالمتين بناءً على البيانات المتاحة في ذلك الوقت في حين لم تستطعا التعرف على الآيتين الأخرتين وبالتالي تقرر اعتبارهما "مفقودتين". أُعطيت مؤخراً لتلك الآيتين "المفقودتين" أرقام الأرشيف Cat. 3247 و Cat. 3248. نُشرت هنا مع مثيلتهما المعروفتين بالأرقام Cat. 3254 و Cat. 3255.

1. The Dossier of Princess *Nbw-m-th*

In 2008, Dina Faltings and Beatrix Gessler-Löhr published an article about the king's daughter *Nbw-m-th* in the *Festschrift* for Bettina Schmitz, discussing the princess' epigraphical evidence and her date, which had been undetermined until that point.¹ The known prosopographical dossier of the princess – who might have been a daughter of either Thutmose IV or Amenhotep III – comprised ten calcite alabaster² vessels of three types and one cosmetic implement, kept in several European museum collections. In addition, there were two further vessels in Turin, which could not be tracked down and were thus called "lost" by the aforementioned scholars. Since that article of 2008, the full set of *Nbw-m-th*'s inscribed alabaster vessels has – to the knowledge of the present author – never been addressed again. The two rediscovered

"lost" pieces in Turin are presented here, along with fresh data on their already known Turin siblings.

Table 1 lists all the objects of *Nbw-m-th*, with the four Turin pieces highlighted.³ All the alabaster vessels bear the same inscription: *z3.t-nswt Nbw-m-th*, "king's daughter Nebu-em-tekh".⁴ Vessel **I.12** shows a different position of the inscription. The cosmetic implement (**II**) has the inscription running along the centre of its flat underside and the name is spelled in a unique fashion as *Nbw-th*. The stela (**III**) provides another piece of evidence for the king's daughter, her connections to Memphis and her most likely date.

2. The "Lost" Turin Vessels

In listing the collections with objects of *Nbw-m-th*, Faltings and Gessler-Löhr state that "[f]ür zwei weitere Gefäße in Turin (**I.11** und **I.12**) verliert sich die Spur".¹⁵

ID	Collection	Type	Acquisition	Figure
I.1	Leiden, RMO H 329 (AAL 86)	kohl-pot with lid	bought in January 1829 with Anastasi collection	Fig. 1a
I.2	Leiden, RMO H 330 (AAL 87) ⁵	kohl-pot	bought in January 1829 with Anastasi collection	Fig. 1b
I.3	Leiden, RMO H 332 (AAL 88) ⁶	kohl-pot	bought in January 1829 with Anastasi collection	Fig. 1c
I.4	Leiden, RMO H 240 (AAL 20) ⁷	ointment-jar	bought in January 1829 with Anastasi collection	Fig. 1d
I.5	Paris, Louvre N 507 ⁸	ointment-jar	bought before 1873 ⁹	Fig. 2a
I.6	Munich, SMÄK ÄS 243	ointment-jar	bought in 1832 from Dodwell collection	Fig. 2b
I.7	Munich, SMÄK ÄS 247	ointment-jar	bought in 1832 from Dodwell collection (an earlier drawing dates to 1825) ¹⁰	Fig. 2c
I.8	Turin, Museo Egizio, Inv. 8475 (Orcurti N. 8.)	ointment-jar	acquired before 1855	Fig. 2d
I.9	Turin, Museo Egizio, Inv. 8474 (Orcurti N. 6.)	ointment-jar	acquired before 1855	Fig. 3a
I.10	London, BM EA 4536 ¹¹	ointment-jar	bought in 1845 from Harry Osborn Cureton	Fig. 3b
I.11	Turin, Museo Egizio, no inv.-no. (Orcurti N. 5.?)	ointment-jar with lid	acquired before 1855	–
I.12	Turin, Museo Egizio, no inv.-no. (Orcurti N. 7.?)	ointment-jar with lid	acquired before 1855	–
II	Paris, Louvre N 813 (LP 233) ¹²	Quartzite cosmetic implement	donation of Léon Jean Joseph Dubois before 1846 ¹³	Fig. 3c
III	London, BM EA 1369 ¹⁴	limestone stela of the <i>jm.j-r'-rwy.t M^chw</i>	purchased in 1902 from Mohamed Mohassib through Rev. Chauncey Murch	Fig. 3d

Table 1: The objects of, or mentioning, the king's daughter *Nbw-m-th* as listed and numbered by Faltings and Gessler-Löhr. The Turin pieces are highlighted in **bold**.

Thus, they could not match those two vessels with any Turin inventory numbers (see [Table 1](#)). They, however, could tentatively recognize them among the alabaster vessels appearing in the *Catalogo illustrato dei monumenti egizii del Regio Museo di Torino, Sale al Quarto Piano* by Pier Camillo Orcurti from 1855.¹⁶ In this work, Orcurti lists and describes four inscribed vessels of *Nbw-m-th* in the Turin collection as follows:¹⁷

N. 5. Alabastro. Vaso di forma panciuta con coperchio. Ha una iscrizione geroglifica che dice: « Regio figlio Nubemtech-het ». (“Drop-shaped vase with lid. It has a hieroglyphic inscription that reads: ‘royal son Nubemtech-het’”).

N. 6. Alabastro. Vaso largo in cima e ristretto in fondo. Ha una piccola bocca ricoperta da un coperchio: l'iscrizione verticale che ha sul dinanzi è la medesima del vaso n. 5. (“Vase that

is wide at the top and narrow at the bottom. It has a small mouth that is covered with a lid: the vertical inscription on the front is the same as that on vase no. 5”).

N. 7. Alabastro. Ampolla con coperchio, con piede e largo collo. Ha pure l'iscrizione del vaso no. 5. (“Vial with lid, with a foot and a wide neck. It has the same inscription as vase no. 5”).

N. 8. Alabastro. Vaso panciuto senza manico. Ha l'iscrizione del vaso no. 5: è alquanto rotto nel collo. (“Drop-shaped vase without a handle. It has the same inscription as vase no. 5: it is somewhat broken at the neck”).¹⁸

Based on these short descriptions, the connection proposed by Faltings and Gessler-Löhr between the Orcurti-numbers and the objects (see [Table 1](#)) can



Fig. 1: a: Leiden RMO H 329 (photo: RMO Leiden, CCO).
b: Leiden RMO H 330 (photo: RMO Leiden, CCO).
c: Leiden RMO H 332 (photo: RMO Leiden, CCO).
d: Leiden RMO H 240 (photo: RMO Leiden, CCO).





Fig. 2: a: Louvre N 507 (photo: © 2000 Musée du Louvre / Georges Poncet).
b: Munich SMÄK ÄS 243 (photo: © Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst München / Marianne Franke).
c: Munich SMÄK ÄS 247 (photo: © Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst München / Marianne Franke).
d: Turin RGCE 8475 (after Faltings and Gessler-Löhr, in Spiekermann (ed.), *FS Schmitz*, 2008, pl. VII, fig. 8).



Fig. 3: a: Turin RGCE 8474 (after Faltings and Gessler-Löhr, in Spiekermann (ed.), *FS Schmitz*, 2008, pl. VII, fig. 8).
b: British Museum EA 4536 (photo: © The Trustees of the British Museum).
c: Louvre N 813 (photo: © 2000 Musée du Louvre / Georges Poncet).
d: British Museum EA 1369 (photo: © The Trustees of the British Museum).

be confirmed for the first two vessels: **I.8** = N.8 and **I.9** = N.6. This confirmation also further validates the surmised link between **I.11** = N.5 and **I.12** = N.7. Regarding the first two vessels in Turin (**I.8** and **I.9**),

their “proper” Catalogo (Cat.) numbers¹⁹ can now also be verified in Fabretti et al., *Regio Museo I*, 1882, p. 442, based on the descriptions and inscription: **I.9** = Cat. 3247 (Fig. 4) and **I.8** = Cat. 3248 (Fig. 5).²⁰

3247. Vaso di alabastro orientale, alto m. 0,095. Questo vaso (tav. I, n. 75), che rassomiglia nella forma ai cosidetti canopici, porta incisa la leggenda:  (?) 
la regia figlia Nub-em-teḫ. — Piano superiore, galleria, tavolino XV, n. 92.

3248. Vaso di alabastro orientale panciuto e rotto nel collo (tav. I, n. 73), alto m. 0,442, contenente nell'interno alcune sostanze organiche carbonizzate, ed avente incisa nell'esterno la leggenda del vaso precedente. — Piano superiore, galleria, tavolino XVII, n. 93.

3254. **Vaso** di alabastro orientale, alto m. 0,075 (tav. I, n. 63), recante in una linea verticale di geroglifici incisi la leggenda del numero 3499. — Piano superiore, galleria, tavolino XVII, n. 99.

3255. Vaso di alabastro orientale, alto m. 0,08, largo m. 0,13 (tav. I, n. 180), con due anse appena indicate e con coperchio formato da un disco del diametro di m. 0,075. Sul vaso è incisa in una linea orizzontale di geroglifici la stessa leggenda del numero precedente. — Piano superiore, galleria, tavolino XVII, n. 400.



Fig. 8: Petrie MSS 3.1.190, showing vessels **I.9** (= Cat. 3247) and **I.8** (= Cat. 3248) (© Griffith Institute, Oxford: <https://archive.griffith.ox.ac.uk/index.php/petrie-3-1-190>).



Fig. 9: Petrie MSS 3.1.195, showing vessels **I.11** (= Cat. 3255) and **I.12** (= Cat. 3254) in the front row among other calcite alabaster vessels (upper row Cat. 3277; Cat. 3252; Cat. 3275; lower row left Cat. 3261; right Cat. 3259) (© Griffith Institute, Oxford: <https://archive.griffith.ox.ac.uk/index.php/petrie-3-1-195>).

Fabretti	Faltings & Gessler-Löhr	Orcurti	'Location'-No.	RCGE
Cat. 3247	I.9	N.6	92	8474
Cat. 3248	I.8	N.8	93	8475
Cat. 3254	I.12	N.7	99	8481
Cat. 3255	I.11	N.5	100	8482

Table 2 : Catalogue and inventory number concordance of the four calcite alabaster vessels of the king's daughter *Nbw-m-th* in Turin. RCGE stands for "Registro Catalogo Generale Entrata" (Register of the General Entry Catalogue), a further inventory number Italian authorities used for state property, including archaeological heritage objects.



Fig. 10: The four calcite alabaster vessels of the king's daughter *Nbw-m-th* in the Museo Egizio Turin (photo by Nicola Dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni/Museo Egizio).

3. *Nbw-m-th*'s Calcite Alabaster Vessels in Turin

Inventory Number: Cat. 3247 (Figs. 10, 11, 12, 13)

Material: Calcite alabaster, Egyptian blue

Dimensions: height 9.4 cm, max. diam.: 8.85 cm; diam. at base: 5.5 cm; outer diam. of rim: 4.4 cm; inner diam. of mouth 3.2 cm; depth: 7.6 cm; weight: 815.4 g

Acquisition: before 1855 (possibly from Drovetti collection)

Provenance: unknown, probably Saqqara (see below)

Date: mid-18th Dynasty, Thutmose IV – Amenhotep III

Description: Calcite alabaster vessel with a short and flattened rim, rounded shoulder, narrowing body and flat base, and an inscription column engraved on the body. The text reads *z3.t-nswt Nbw-m-th*. It is

framed by two incised lines, the left one of which is continuous while the other one appears to have been made in several parts. The main elements of the inscription are also incised, other smaller elements appear pecked. Tiny remains of Egyptian blue are present in the rightmost gold grain element of the *nbw*-sign (see Fig. 13). The vessel's stout contour is reminiscent of that of miniature canopic jars and small *nemset*-vessels.²⁵ The edge at the vessel's base is angled for the most part. The outer surface is smooth and matt. Some minor "impurities" can be made out in the diagonally banded calcite alabaster (see Fig. 12). The inner cavity widens towards the bottom and shows drilling traces almost down to the bottom. After a slight lip shortly above the inner base, which has a roughly triangular form, the drill-

ling traces stop. No remains of contents are present. The main inventory number “Cat. 3247” appears in red on a sticker on the base (see Fig. 11g) and in black ink within a black rectangle on the back side (see Fig. 11d).

References: Orcurti, *Catalogo illustrato*, 1855, p. 178, N.6; Fabretti et al., *Regio Museo I*, 1882, p. 442, pl. I, no. 75, Cat. 3247; Maspero, *RecTrav* 4 (1883),

p. 151; Gauthier, *RecTrav* 40 (1923), p. 202, no. 32; Chassinat, *REA* 1 (1925), p. 132; Roccati, in Morigi Govi et al. (eds.), *L'Egitto fuori dell'Egitto*, 1991, p. 362; Bierbrier, *Hieroglyphic Texts* 12, 1993, p. 26; Faltings and Gessler-Löhr, in Spiekermann (ed.), *FS Schmitz*, 2008, p. 68, pl. VII, fig. 9, I.9.

Parallels: I.10.



Fig. 11: Main views of Turin Cat. 3247 (photos by Nicola Dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni/Museo Egizio).



Fig. 12: Two views of Turin Cat. 3247 with light shining through (photos by Nicola Dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni/Museo Egizio).

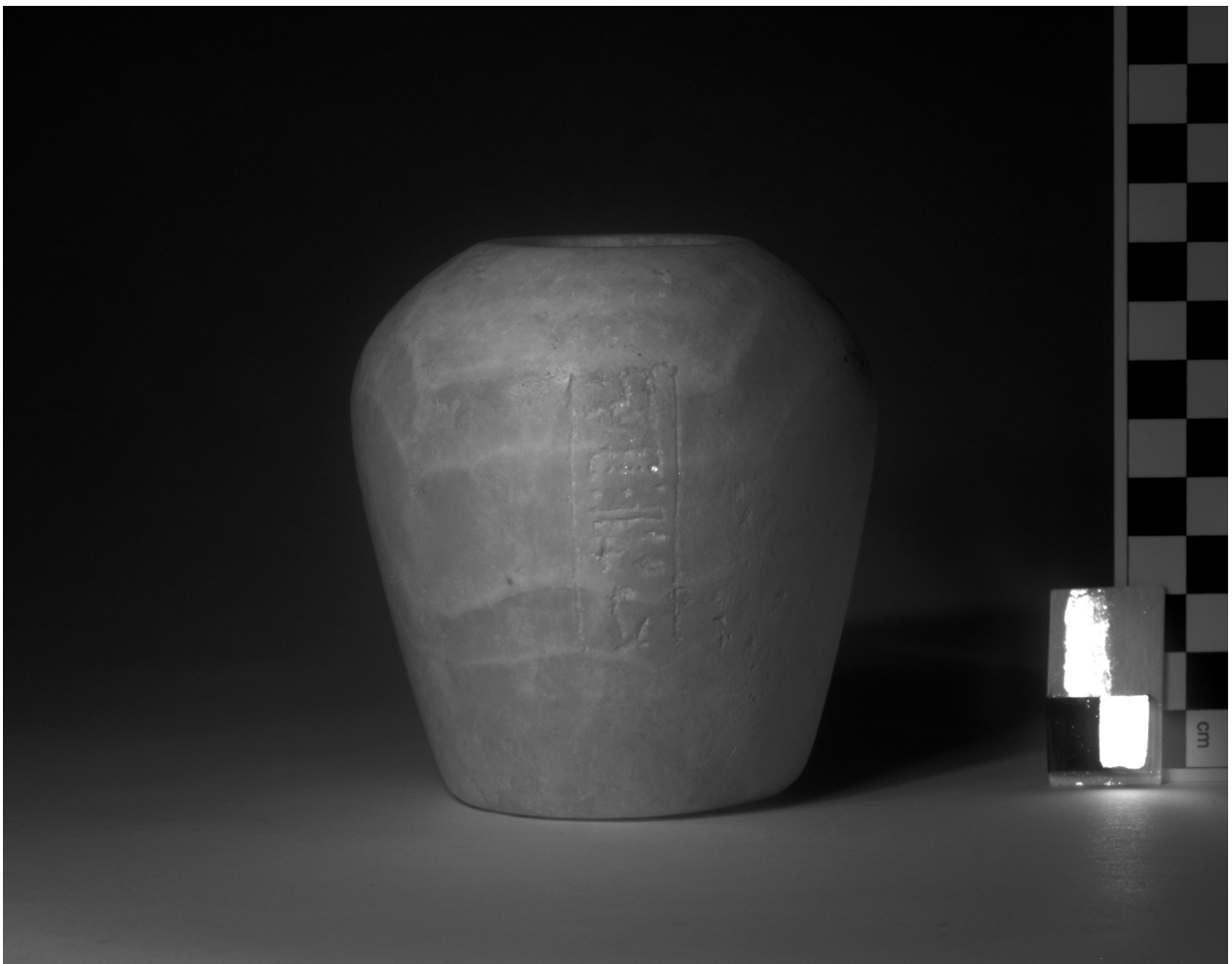


Fig. 13: View of the inscription of Cat. 3247 under visible induced luminescence (VIL) (photo by Nicola Dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni/Museo Egizio).

Inventory Number: Cat. 3248 (Figs. 10, 14, 15, 16)

Material: Calcite alabaster, Egyptian blue

Dimensions: height: 11 cm; max. diam.: 9.9; outer diam. of mouth 4.5 cm; inner diam. of mouth 3.65 cm; inner diam. of neck 3.15 cm; max. inner depth measured from upper rim: 9.8 cm; weight: 845 g

Acquisition: before 1855 (possibly from Drovetti collection)

Provenance: unknown, probably Saqqara (see below)

Date: mid-18th Dynasty, Thutmose IV – Amenhotep III

Description: Calcite alabaster vessel with a flat (reworked?) rim, short cylindrical neck, bag-shaped (or pyriform) body and a flattened base. An inscription column reading *z.t-nswt Nbwt-m-tj* is engraved on the body; it is framed by two lines. The framing lines and hieroglyphs mainly appear to be pecked. Larger remains of Egyptian blue can be found in some of the hieroglyphs, particularly the *z.t*-, *nbwt*- (including the gold grains) and *tj*-signs (see Fig. 16). The transition from the base to the body is smooth. The body widens to its maximum at the lower end of the inscription and narrows again towards the neck. Minor impurities are present in the generally horizontally banded calcite alabaster (see Fig. 15). The outer surface is smooth and matt. The cylindrical neck is marked by an incised groove at its lower base. Four neck fragments are glued back together. Some smaller neck pieces are missing at the breaks between the fragments; one larger piece is missing at the back. The outer and inner sides of the neck are smooth. A small lip is present at the outer edge of the flat rim. Based on both the appearance of the rim and the usual ty-

pology of ointment jars with disk rims (see I.4–7), it can be surmised that the disk was broken in antiquity and was hence removed and the rim reworked. There are no definite traces of such repair or reworking; the fragmentary state and unusual shape of the rim, however, suggest that such an operation was carried out. Some greyish sandy remains can be found inside the jar; these also adhere to the inner walls, which thus appear less regular and show less apparent drilling traces. A plain white rectangular sticker on the base, left of the centre, bears “C 3248” written in red. Opposite it, quite close to the edge, the location number “93” is written in pencil (see Fig. 14g).

References: Orcurti, *Catalogo illustrato*, 1855, p. 179, N.8; Fabretti et al., *Regio Museo I*, 1882, p. 442, Cat. 3248; Roccati, in Morigi Govi et al. (eds.), *L'Egitto fuori dell'Egitto*, 1991, p. 362; Bierbrier, *Hieroglyphic Texts* 12, 1993, p. 26; Faltings and Gessler-Löhr, in Spiekermann (ed.), *FS Schmitz*, 2008, p. 67, pl. VII, fig. 8, I.8.

Parallels: I.4–7; I.8 seems to miss its original rim. The closest parallel for such a vessel with a removed/missing rim is from Aniba: S.10, 47.²⁶ In addition, Aniba no. S.49 can be mentioned: the neck of the vessel is missing and the break appears to have been smoothed.²⁷ Furthermore, the bag-shaped vessel SAC5 211 from Tomb 26, feature 2, a mid- to late 18th Dynasty burial context (thus also corroborating the dating of *Nbwt-m-tj*'s vessels) on Sai Island is among the closest parallels, as it has an eroded rim which was originally likely shaped in a form such as that of I.4–7.²⁸



Fig. 14: Main views of Turin Cat. 3248 (photos by Nicola Dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni/Museo Egizio).



Fig. 15: Two views of Turin Cat. 3248 with light shining through (photos by Nicola Dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni/Museo Egizio).



Fig. 16: View of the inscription of Cat. 3248 under visible induced luminescence (VIL) (photo by Nicola Dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni/Museo Egizio).

Inventory Number: Cat. 3254 (Figs. 10, 17, 18, 19)

Material: Calcite alabaster, Egyptian blue

Dimensions: height: 8 cm; max. diam. of rim: 7.5; max. diam. of body: 6.8 cm; max. diam. of base ring: 5.3 cm; thickness of rim 0.6 cm; diam. of mouth 2.05 cm; max. inner depth measured from upper rim: 5.95 cm; weight: 506.3 g

Acquisition: before 1855 (possibly from Drovetti collection)

Provenance: unknown, probably Saqqara (see below)

Date: mid-18th Dynasty, Thutmose IV – Amenhotep III

Description: Calcite alabaster vessel with a flat brim, short neck, rounded shoulder, truncated conical body and flattened base. An inscription column reading *z3.t-nswt NbW-m-th* is engraved on the body. The framing lines and other major elements of the text are engraved as continuous lines or spaces, making this inscription the “best” one of the four in the Turin set. Remains of the original colour fill appear as dark material, particularly in the upper part of the inscription. The VIL-photo confirms the presence of Egyptian blue (see Fig. 19). The base is not fully flat. Starting at the indentation above the base,

the body flares towards the shoulders, which then tilt towards the narrow neck. A rough zone extends across the whole back surface, which is otherwise generally smooth and shiny. The base of the neck is slightly undulating. The brim gets thinner towards its rounded outer edge. Some light red-brown patina is present on the upper rim surface. The circumference of the piece is not perfectly circular. The upper part of the central hole is cylindrical and shows regular drilling lines. It appears less regular and wider in the lower half. Fine powdery grey remains (galena?) are present inside. The base bears an old sticker with the location number “99”, under which “Cat. 3254” was written twice (an earlier, now fuzzy writing was renewed at some time with a finer pencil). Below, there is a square paper sticker with cut edges bearing the number “4412” (see Fig. 17g). Orcurti (see above) mentions a lid which is no longer associated with this vessel and has not been identified so far.

References: Orcurti, *Catalogo illustrato*, 1855, p. 179, N.7; Fabretti et al., *Regio Museo I*, 1882, p. 443, pl. I, no. 63, Cat. 3254; Faltings and Gessler-Löhr, in Spiekermann (ed.), *FS Schmitz*, 2008, p. 69, I.12.

Parallels: I.1–3.²⁹



Fig. 17: Main views of Turin Cat. 3254 (photos by Nicola Dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni/Museo Egizio).



Fig. 18: Two views of Turin Cat. 3254 with light shining through (photos by Nicola Dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni/Museo Egizio).



Fig. 19: View of the inscription of Cat. 3254 under visible induced luminescence (VIL) (photo by Nicola Dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni/Museo Egizio).

Inventory Number: Cat. 3255 (Figs. 10, 20, 21, 22)

Material: Calcite alabaster, Egyptian blue

Dimensions: height: 7.2; width from lug to lug: 13.2 cm; width without lugs: 11.7 cm; diam. of base: 3.9 cm; outer diam. of rim: 8.6 cm; inner diam. of rim: 6.6 cm; diam. of mouth: 6 cm; max. inner depth measured from upper rim: 5.5 cm; diam. of lid: 6.9 cm; thickness of lid: 0.72 cm; weight with lid: 1041.5 g; weight of lid: 53.8 g

Acquisition: before 1855 (possibly from Drovetti collection)

Provenance: unknown, probably Saqqara (see below)

Date: mid-18th Dynasty, Thutmose IV – Amenhotep III

Description: Calcite alabaster vessel with a short, flattened rim which is covered with a disc-shaped lid, round sloping shoulders, two summarily indicated and unpierced lugs, a globular (oblate spheroidal) squat body and a rounded base. The text *z3.t-nswt Nbwt-m-th* is inscribed horizontally on the body in between two framing lines which are not fully continuous and appear to have been pecked with a small pointy tool. The hieroglyphic signs also appear pecked. A tiny trace of Egyptian blue can be found in front of the lower framing line (see Fig. 22). The transition from the small, level base to the body is smooth. The lower parts of the stone are more crystalline and characterised by open pores (see Fig. 21). The body widens towards the shoulders. Two lugs protrude on opposite sides at the level of the maximum diameter. They are rectangular with rounded

sides, and unpierced. The body then tapers towards the short and small inclined neck with a round outer contour with a flat upper surface. Most of the edge to the inner rim is angled. Traces of drilling can be discerned in the interior. No original contents remain. One third of the outer rim of the circular lid is partly broken. The short and rough circular base is off centre. The lip has a thin and sharp edge. A white plain sticker with the number “C 3255” written in red can be found a bit off-centre on the base (see Fig. 20i).

References: Orcurti, *Catalogo illustrato*, 1855, p. 178, N.5; Fabretti et al., *Regio Museo I*, 1882, p. 443, Cat. 3255; Faltings and Gessler-Löhr, in Spiekermann (ed.), *FS Schmitz*, 2008, p. 69, I.11.

Parallels: A general parallel for the shape can be found in RMO-Leiden AAL 51a, a coeval jar, slightly smaller and with a more pronounced angular rim, belonging to the high-priest of Ptah *Pth-ms* from the reign of king Amenhotep III.³⁰ The loose parallel MMA 20.2.28, somewhat different in size and shape, was considered to be Predynastic by Herbert E. Winlock, while it may indeed be of Dynasty 18 manufacture according to Christine Lilyquist.³¹ The MMA collection website gives a 2nd–3rd Dynasty date³² and speaks of a reuse under king Thutmose III.³³ A further general parallel for Cat. 3255 in terms of its overall contour is Turin Cat. 3256 (Fig. 23, left), a vessel which – although uninscribed – might also be part of the burial equipment of *Nbwt-m-th* (see below).



Fig. 20: Main views of Turin Cat. 3255 (photo by Nicola Dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni/Museo Egizio).



Fig. 21: Two views of Turin Cat. 3255 with light shining through (photos by Nicola Dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni/Museo Egizio).



Fig. 22: View of the inscription of Cat. 3255 under visible induced luminescence (VIL) (photo by Nicola Dell'Aquila and Federico Taverni/Museo Egizio).

4. Additional Comments on Provenance

Next to the long-debated dating issue which could be solved by Faltings and Gessler-Löhr and is also supported by typological and archaeologically provenanced parallels,³⁴ the question of the archaeological provenance of the calcite alabaster vessels and the cosmetic implement remains. Faltings and Gessler-Löhr could show that the stela of *M^chw (III)* most probably originates from his tomb at Saqqara, which implies that the stela owner and all the other people represented on it – including the king's daughter *Nbw-m-th* – had a certain connection to Memphis and the local palace.³⁵ In terms of the origin of the high-class funerary goods of *Nbw-m-th*, the earliest drawing of one of the objects from 1825 (**I.7**) provides a *terminus ante quem* for their appearance on the art market; all the other pieces have later appearance dates, such as 1827 (**I.5**), 1829 (**I.1–4**), 1832 (**I.6–7** and **II**) and 1845 (**I.10**). These dates provide additional evidence to the fact that the Saqqara necropolis was extensively plundered in the 1820s, which led to the surfacing of objects on the art market in subsequent years. The Leiden pieces (**I.1–4**) belong to the Anastasi collection, whose small finds most likely come from Saqqara.³⁶ For the Turin vessels, the date of acquisition and thus presence in the Regio Museo in Piemonte's capital is “before 1855”, the publication year of Orcurti's catalogue. Yet they do not necessarily belong to the Drovetti collection, which is, however, very likely.³⁷ The 1822 *Catalogo Sommario dei monumenti*

antichi egiziani componenti la collezione di cose Egizie del Cavaliere Drovetti contains a list of 90 “Vasi ed oggetti in Alabastro”.³⁸ Among them, the most likely candidates for an identification with the vessels of *Nbw-m-th* are enumerated in the following table (**Table 3**), excluding all non-fitting pieces, obvious “canopic jars” and other vessels described as having multi-lined inscriptions. To this compilation of objects, which were part of the Drovetti collection as early as 1820, were then also added the calcite alabaster artefacts of the general *Dhw.tj* coming from his tomb in Saqqara, which are now in Turin.³⁹

The link between the calcite alabaster vessels of *Dhw.tj* and *Nbw-m-th* is of significance insofar as they were sold together as part of the Drovetti collection. This suggests in turn that the vessels of *Nbw-m-th* are also likely to come from Saqqara. The objects of *Dhw.tj* now kept in Turin, Paris and Leiden were probably brought to light in Saqqara sometime between 1820–22 by Giuseppe Nizzoli,⁴⁰ while the burial of *Dhw.tj* and his “Gold of Honour” are said to have been discovered in 1824 (or earlier)⁴¹ during work on behalf of Drovetti himself.⁴² Although the Drovetti collection has a certain focus on Thebes,⁴³ the vessels of *Nbw-m-th* are also mentioned by others as possibly coming from the Memphite region.⁴⁴ Faltings and Gessler-Löhr furthermore state that the tomb of *Nbw-m-th* at Saqqara would constitute an exceptional case, since 18th Dynasty king's daughters were – as the available evidence

Drovetti nos.	Description
23–25	Vases avec hiéroglyphes
35	Idem id. (= sans anse) avec petit couvercle, et hiéroglyphes sur le devant; 10 c.
36	Idem id.; 12 c.
37	Idem avec hiéroglyphes; 8 c.
38	Idem; 11 c.
39	Idem; 4 c.
40	Idem; 5 c.
45	Vase petit sans couvercle, avec quelques hiéroglyphes sur le devant.
59	Vase avec son couvercle et hiéroglyphes sur le devant.
61	Idem id. (= plus petit vase avec son couvercle) avec hiéroglyphes.
66	Vase avec hiéroglyphes sur le devant.

Table 3 : Calcite alabaster vessels in the Drovetti list from 1820 (published in 1822) among which the vessels of *Nbw-m-th* might be named.



Fig. 23: From left to right: Cat. 3256 (3.8 × 10.2 cm; rim diam. 3.1 cm); Cat. 3250 (9.42 × 9.7 cm; outer neck diam. 4.5 cm); Cat. 3249 (12.1 × 7 cm [max. outer diam. at lower open base]; outer neck diam. 3.8; Cat. 3251 (8.4 × 7.6 cm; neck diam. 5.1 cm; outer rim diam. 6.72 cm and lower base diam. 4.35 cm).



Fig. 24: From left to right: Cat. 3252 (7.35 × 8.3 cm [outer rim diam.]; body diam. 6.8 cm; base diam. 6.55 cm); Cat. 3253 (6.9 × 8.5 cm [outer rim diam.]; body diam. 6.8 cm; base diam. 6.5 cm).

suggests – generally buried at Thebes in several wadis in the western mountains.⁴⁵ However, until now, no evidence for *Nbw-m-th* has come to light at Thebes. At Saqqara, on the other hand, at least one tomb of a royal woman, the daughter of either the prince (and later king) Merenptah or of prince Khaemwaset, called *ḥs.t-nfr.t*, from the mid-19th Dynasty is known.⁴⁶ The issue of the provenance of the alabaster vessels of *Nbw-m-th* must thus remain open for now, but the available circumstantial evidence suggests that they indeed come from Saqqara, where the tomb of the mid-18th Dynasty princess should most likely be sought.

5. Final Remarks

The currently known set of cosmetic jars certainly belonging to the funerary equipment of the princess *Nbw-m-th* comprises 12 calcite alabaster vessels of four different types:⁴⁷ four kohl-pots (**I.1–3** and **I.12**), four bag-shaped ointment-jars (**I.4–8**; **I.8** missing its original rim), two *nemset*-vessels (**I.9–10**) and one squat jar with two handles and a lid (**I.11**). All were used as containers for makeup, unguents, or oils.⁴⁸ The vessels in Turin are Cat. 3247, Cat. 3248, Cat. 3254 and Cat. 3255. In fact, it might be even possible that there are more vessels of *Nbw-m-th* in the Museo Egizio;⁴⁹ the lack of epigraphical data or earlier archaeological documentation or archival records, however, makes it currently impossible to identify any of these in the inventory-number range between Cat. 3248 and Cat. 3254 (and possibly also among numbers after Cat. 3255) as certainly belonging to *Nbw-m-th* (Figs. 23, 24).⁵⁰

Besides addressing questions about the *chaîne opératoire* of stone vessel manufacture, which are outside the scope of the present article,⁵¹ future research on the vessels of *Nbw-m-th* might seek to identify the powder remains in Cat. 3248 and Cat. 3254, study the different styles of the inscriptions, determine what kind of tools (copper alloy and/or stone) were used in their fabrication, and find out what these vases can teach us about New Kingdom stone working technology and workshop organisation in more general terms.⁵² Finally, the re-discovery of the burial place of *Nbw-m-th* at Memphis would not only shed further light on the local attachments of this member of the 18th Dynasty royal family, but also allow scholars to address further chronological and functional questions regarding the princess' calcite alabaster vessel set.

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Notes

¹ Faltings and Gessler-Löhr, in Spiekermann (ed.), *FS Schmitz*, 2008, pp. 63–89; see also Bierbrier, *Hieroglyphic Texts* 12, 1993, p. 26, on the monuments of *Nbw-m-th* with references to their earlier mentions or publications (such as Chassinat, *REA* 1 [1925], p. 132, who dates the princess, based on **I.9**, **I.5** and **II** [see [Table 1](#)], to the second half of the Old Kingdom or the Middle Kingdom). Vessels **I.1** and **I.4** are discussed by Valentina Gasperini in Giovetti and Picchi (eds.), *Egypt – Millenary Splendour*, 2016, pp. 353 and 547, cat.-nos VI.48a–b (and are dated there to the reigns of Amenhotep II – Thutmose IV). Vessel **I.5** is mentioned in Champollion, *Notice descriptive*, 2013, p. 214, no. L. 55 (and is dated there to beginning of the 18th Dynasty). Finally, see also Anne Herzberg-Beiersdorf,

Prosopographia Memphitica, https://anneherz.github.io/ProM/detail/singleview_objects.html?ids=230 (last access 31 January 2023) on stelae BM EA 1369 with a brief list of the previously known constituents of *Nbw-m-th*'s prosopographical dossier.

² The stone variety the vessels are made from is called “calcite alabaster” throughout this paper following the suggestions by Klemm and Klemm, *GM* 122 (1991), pp. 57–70.

³ All data from Faltings and Gessler-Löhr, in Spiekermann (ed.), *FS Schmitz*, 2008, pp. 64–70. The links to the respective museum collection online databases in the following footnotes provide further information on the objects, particularly in terms of older publications or mentions.

⁴ For a discussion of the name, see Faltings and Gessler-

- Löhr, in Spiekermann (ed.), *FS Schmitz*, 2008, pp. 74.
- ⁵ <https://hdl.handle.net/21.12126/2848> (last access 2 August 2022).
- ⁶ <https://hdl.handle.net/21.12126/2845> (last access 2 August 2022).
- ⁷ <https://hdl.handle.net/21.12126/2780> (last access 2 August 2022).
- ⁸ <https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010008145> (last access 2 August 2022).
- ⁹ Actually, the Louvre online collection data informs that the year of arrival at the Louvre is 1827, while the piece was entered into the inventory on 16 February 1857.
- ¹⁰ Faltings and Gessler-Löhr, in Spiekermann (ed.), *FS Schmitz*, 2008, p. 67, fn. 35.
- ¹¹ https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA4536 (last access 2 August 2022).
- ¹² <https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010027607> (last access 2 August 2022).
- ¹³ The data under <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010027607> informs that this piece was inventoried in 1832.
- ¹⁴ https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA1369 (last access 2 August 2022). For this stela and its prosopographical data, see also Anne Herzberg-Beiersdorf, *Prosopographia Memphitica*, https://anneherz.github.io/ProM/detail/singleview_objects.html?ids=230 (last access 31 February 2023).
- ¹⁵ Faltings and Gessler-Löhr, in Spiekermann (ed.), *FS Schmitz*, 2008, p. 63, fn. 4.
- ¹⁶ Orcurti, *Catalogo illustrato* II, 1855.
- ¹⁷ Orcurti, *Catalogo illustrato* II, 1855, pp. 178–179.
- ¹⁸ As already remarked by Faltings and Gessler-Löhr, in Spiekermann (ed.), *FS Schmitz*, 2008, p. 69, fn. 51, Orcurti seemingly overlooked the feminine ending in the title and misunderstood the sign Gardiner W 23 (vessel classifier) as F 34 (heart-sign), thus reading a male title and name.
- ¹⁹ See the guidelines of the *Rivista del Museo Egizio* <https://rivista.museoegizio.it/pubblica-con-noi/> for the different inventory number systems in use at the Museo Egizio, Turin.
- ²⁰ In fact, these catalogue numbers are also cited by Faltings and Gessler-Löhr, in Spiekermann (ed.), *FS Schmitz*, 2008, pp. 67–68, fns. 38 and 43, in their references to Fabretti et al., *Regio Museo* I, 1882.
- ²¹ This number specifying the position and location of the objects in the original showcases is also found at the end of each entry in Fabretti et al., *Regio Museo* I, 1882 (see Table 1-16). Today, those stickers are not present anymore. In the case of **I.8** (= Cat. 3248), the location number is written in pencil on the base, while **I.12** (= Cat. 3254) now has the sticker on the base.
- ²² For these archive materials, see <https://archive.griffith.ox.ac.uk/index.php/petrie-3-2> (last access 5 October 2022).
- ²³ See <https://archive.griffith.ox.ac.uk/index.php/petrie-3-1-190> and <https://archive.griffith.ox.ac.uk/index.php/petrie-3-1-195> (last access 5 October 2022).
- ²⁴ Faltings and Gessler-Löhr, in Spiekermann (ed.), *FS Schmitz*, 2008, pl. VII, figs. 8–9.
- ²⁵ Cf. the more elaborate calcite alabaster (ritual model) *nemset*-vessel of the high priest of Ptah *Pth-ms* Leiden RMO-AAL 50 (<https://hdl.handle.net/21.12126/356>; last access 2 August 2022) as a loose parallel dating to the time of Amenhotep III.
- ²⁶ Steindorff, *Aniba* II, 1937, p. 144 and pl. 95.9 (already referred to by Faltings and Gessler-Löhr, in Spiekermann [ed.], *FS Schmitz*, 2008, p. 67, fn. 40). This vessel is kept at the Egyptian Museum – Georg Steindorff – of Leipzig University under the inventory number UL Egypt 6060 (https://sammlungen-editor.uni-leipzig.de/receive/ULEgypt_lido_00006332; last access 8 February 2023).
- ²⁷ Steindorff, *Aniba* II, 1937, p. 145 and pl. 95.23. This vessel is kept at the Egyptian Museum – Georg Steindorff – of Leipzig University under the inventory number UL Egypt 6067 (https://sammlungen-editor.uni-leipzig.de/receive/ULEgypt_lido_00006339; last access 8 February 2023). Possibly the vessel Cleveland Museum of Art 1914.620, resembling an ostrich egg with a smoothed elevated mouth, can also be cited as parallel (Kozloff, *BCMA* 73.8 [1986], p. 335, figs. 26–27; <https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1914.620>). Given the comparable dimensions and shape, the neck of this vessel could have been removed and the remaining part smoothed to create the rounded external rim.
- ²⁸ Budka, *Tomb* 26, 2021, pp. 107–109, fig. 5.30.
- ²⁹ Cf. also the additional parallels mentioned in Faltings and Gessler-Löhr, in Spiekermann (ed.), *FS Schmitz*, 2008, pp. 63–79.
- ³⁰ Staring in Giovetti and Picchi (eds.), *Egypt – Millenary Splendour*, pp. 267, 529–30, cat.-no. V.29; <https://hdl.handle.net/21.12126/18813> (last access 2 August 2022).
- ³¹ Lilyquist, *Three Foreign Wives*, 2003, pp. 245–46; 256–57, figs. 199–200, Cat. 168 (14.2 cm in height, 22 cm in diam.; the body is thicker and transition to base more “swollen”). See also Lilyquist, *Stone Vessels*, 1995, pp. 10–12; Aston, *Stone Vessels*, 1994, p. 131 with form 108. See also the “type 3–III spheroidal jar with horizontal handles” made of hard stones in Reisner, *Mycerinus*, 1931, p. 185, fig. 55, no. 21, next to the 2nd Dynasty porphyry pieces in El-Khouli, *Egyptian Stone Vessels*, Vol. III, 1974, pl. 84, nos. 2259, 2260 and 2261.
- ³² Cf., as a chronological and typological parallel, the “coarse alabaster” vessel from Beit Khallaf mastaba K2: Garstang, *Mahasna*, pl. XX.
- ³³ <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/545769> (last access 10 November 2021). The practice of reuse is evidenced by several other stone vessels, see, e.g., Lilyquist, *Stone Vessels*, 1995, pp. 10–12; Jansen-Winkeln, *ZÄS* 143 (2016), pp. 194–203 (including further references to similar cases).
- ³⁴ The dating of vessels **I.1** and **I.4** in Giovetti and Picchi (eds.), *Egypt – Millenary Splendour*, 2016, pp. 353 and 547, cat.-nos VI.48a–b to the reigns of Amenhotep II – Thutmose IV as well as the dating of vessel **I.5** in Champollion, *Notice descriptive*, 2013, p. 214, no. L. 55, to the beginning of the 18th Dynasty thus need to be revised.
- ³⁵ Faltings and Gessler-Löhr, in Spiekermann (ed.),

- FS Schmitz, 2008, pp. 77–78. For the most recent overview of the prosopography of Memphis in the New Kingdom, see Herzberg-Beiersdorf, *Prosopographia Memphitica*, 2023 and the corresponding online database <https://www.prosopographia-memphitica.com>.
- ³⁶ Cf. Lilyquist, *MMJ* 23 (1988), pp. 5–68. See also Staring, in Verschoor et al. (eds.), *Imaging and Imagining*, 2017, pp. 95–113, for the mid-19th century exploration of Saqqara.
- ³⁷ Particular thanks are due to my colleague Tommaso Montonati for further information about the Drovetti collection and objects from other smaller collections (Donati, Sossio, Busca, Bussi, Zucchi, etc.) in the Museo Egizio which are also included in Fabretti et al., *Regio Museo I–II*, 1882–1888.
- ³⁸ Anonymous, in *Documenti inediti*, 1880, pp. 272–74; on this document, see also Donatelli, in *Alle origini dell'Egittologia*, 2019, pp. 79–118.
- ³⁹ On *Dḥw.tj* and his monuments, see, e.g., Lilyquist, *MMJ* 23 (1988), pp. 5–68; Reeves, *JEA* 79 (1993), pp. 259–61; Hirsch, in Gundlach und Klug (eds.), *Der ägyptische Hof*, 2006, pp. 123–26; 183–84. The model scribal palette of *Dḥw.tj* Turin Cat. 6227 can be identified in the Drovetti list with no. 85 without an asterisk. The alabaster vessels of *Dḥw.tj* Turin Cat. 3225, 3226, 3227 and 3228 (possibly also Cat. 3234 numero doppio) might be amongst the Drovetti list numbers *74–*80 (*79 = Cat. 3227 and *80 = Cat. 3226). The presence of the asterisk with these numbers indicates that they were added post-September 1820 to the object list. For a discussion of objects from Saqqara as part of the Drovetti collection, see also Poole, in *RiME* 3 (2019) pp. 13–14.
- ⁴⁰ Lilyquist, *MMJ* 23 (1988), pp. 5–68.
- ⁴¹ Lilyquist, *MMJ* 23 (1988), p. 65 mentions that the Turin *Dḥw.tj* objects might even have left Egypt before 1818.
- ⁴² Reeves, *JEA* 79 (1993), pp. 259–61.
- ⁴³ Roccati, in *Alle origini dell'Egittologia*, 2019, passim.
- ⁴⁴ Roccati, in *Alle origini dell'Egittologia*, 2019, p. 23.
- ⁴⁵ See Bouvier, in Kessler et al. (eds.), *Texte – Theben – Tonfragmente*, 2009, pp. 59–69; Litherland, *Shaft Tombs of Wadi Bairiya*, 2018; Bickel, in Bickel (ed.), *Räuber – Priester – Königskinder*, 2021, pp. 28–38. Lilyquist, *Three Foreign Wives*, 2003, and Litherland, *Western Wadis*, 2014, offer further data.
- ⁴⁶ Kawai, in Bárta et al., *Abusir and Saqqara 2010/2*, 2011, pp. 497–510.
- ⁴⁷ Since Turin Cat. 3255 was not known to Faltings and Gessler-Löhr, in Spiekermann (ed.), *FS Schmitz*, 2008, pp. 70–73, they only subdivide the calcite alabaster vessels into three typological groups.
- ⁴⁸ Future residue analyses might elucidate their function and contents more precisely.
- ⁴⁹ If the information provided by Roccati, in Morigi Govi et al. (eds.), *L'Egitto fuori dell'Egitto*, 1991, p. 362 and Roccati, in *Alle origini dell'Egittologia*, 2019, p. 23, is correct (Roccati twice references “cat. 3247 ss.”), other calcite alabaster vessels following Cat. 3247 and 3248 might also belong to the “corredo funerario” (burial assemblage) of the king's daughter *Nbw-m.tḥ*. See also

the following footnote.

- ⁵⁰ Since Cat. 3254 and Cat. 3255 belong to *Nbw-m.tḥ*'s funerary equipment for sure, some of the numbers in between Cat. 3248 and Cat. 3254 (and possibly a few numbers above Cat. 3255) might be grave goods of the princess as well.

- ⁵¹ See Stocks, *Antiquity* 67 (256) (1993), pp. 596–603; Stocks, *Experiments*, 2003, pp. 139–68.

- ⁵² Cf. Stocks, *Experiments*, 2003, pp. 25–30; 63–66; 74–95.

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