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NOTES ON THE TERMINOLOGY FOR FUNERARY FIGURINES

von

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Attested from the Eleventh Dynasty through the Ptolemaic Period, funerary figurines are perhaps the most common of all ancient Egyptian antiquities. Various known as *shabtis*, *shawabtis*, and *ushebtis*, from the inscribed text of chapter 6 of the Book of the Dead, these figurines are also rather arbitrarily and inaccurately described. These words are not interchangeable. The terminology followed a fairly orderly chronological development; hence, the word used should reflect the spelling found in the text of chapter 6 on the particular example. Stated very generally, *shabti* occurs in the Thirteenth Dynasty and is the word of choice in the New Kingdom. *Shawabti* first appears in the Seventeenth Dynasty but becomes popular only in the Nineteenth at Deir el-Medina. *Ushebti* is first attested in the Twenty-first Dynasty and is found consistently throughout the Third Intermediate, Late, and Ptolemaic Periods¹.

To elaborate, a small, uninscribed wax prototype and model coffin found at Saqqara and now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, may date to the Herakleopolitan Period², although it was found in surface rubbish, not in a stratified context. A Herakleopolitan date

is certainly possible because very similar anepigraphic wax figurines and coffins were found in the burials of the royal family at the Eleventh Dynasty temple of Nebhepetre^C Montuhotpe at Deir el-Bahri³. Although these wax prototypes and other figurines in wood and stone from the Thirteenth Dynasty⁴ lack chapter 6, their identity as funerary figurines is unquestionable. Throughout the long history of these objects, many examples have no more than a very abbreviated version of the spell, consisting of the epithet *shꜥ*, "the illuminator/the illuminated", and the title and name of the deceased⁵.

What is uncertain is the date of the first appearance of the ancient Egyptian word for "funerary figurine" on the objects themselves. Furthermore, the etymologies of the several words have not been established. No well-dated figurines inscribed with chapter 6 appear before the Thirteenth Dynasty. The outer coffin of Gua from Bersheh (B2L) and now in the British Museum (30839), however, bears the plural *shabtiu* in spell 472 of the Coffin Texts⁶. The epigraphy of the invocation offering formula and the layout of the exterior texts of both inner and outer coffins suggest a Twelfth Dynasty date⁷. The same spelling is found on a Thirteenth Dynasty "pseudo-naos" from Gebelein⁸. By one interpretation, the plural spelling is correct and derives from *š(3)bd* "sticks". The later, singular writing *shabti* is derived therefrom. By another hypothesis, both singular and plural writings may point to a nisbe formation from *š3bt*, "food", and denote "procurers of food"⁹. The accuracy of neither guess has been verified.

Chapter 6 of the Book of the Dead with the spellings *shaubti* (*š3wbtj*) and *shabti* (*š3btj*) appear on the figurines of Waḥneferhotpe and Bener from Lisht, both probably of Thirteenth Dynasty date, and now in Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 14.3.70 and 44.4.5 respectively¹⁰. Other early figurines with the spelling *shaubti* or *shabti* are also very likely of the same date¹¹. Both spellings continue into the Eighteenth Dynasty, on the figurines, for example, of *Nḥj*, Nehi, vice-roy of Nubia, temp. Thutmose III¹²; and *Qn-Jmn*, Qen-Amun, temp. Amenhotpe II¹³. Amenhotpe II's own figurines have *shabti*¹⁴, but two others, belonging to the woman *Dḥwtj* and found in his tomb have *shawabti*¹⁵.

The spellings *shawabti* (*š3w3btj*) and *shubti* (*šwbtj*) are first attested at Thebes on the crude, stick-like figurines of the Seventeenth Dynasty and continue into the early Eighteenth at Abydos¹⁶. *shawabti* becomes popular only in the early Nineteenth, at the workmen's village of Deir el-Medina on the west bank of Thebes¹⁷. Derivations from the

words š3w3b, "persea tree", and, again, š(3)bd, "stick", have been posited¹⁸. Throughout the New Kingdom, the spelling *shabti* is, however, by far the most common. At the same time, *shebti* (šbtj), perhaps with a different etymology, occurs not infrequently¹⁹.

The spelling *ushebti* (wšbtj) is first found on a figurine of the high priest Pinudjem II, son of the high priest Menkheperre^C and grandson of Pinudjem I, third ruler of the Twenty-first Dynasty²⁰. The spelling *ushebti* is typical for the Third Intermediate, Late, and Ptolemaic Periods. The etymology may be the verb *wšb*, "to answer"²¹.

¹ See further, Aubert, in: CdE 54, No. 107, 1979, 62; Schneider, *Shabtis*, I, 48-9.

² Hayes, *Scepter*, I, 326.

³ Ibid., 326-7, fig. 215.

⁴ Ibid., 328, fig. 216.

⁵ This short text is important also for the translation of *shd* at the beginning of chapter 6. Although the translation "instruction" has been suggested (references in Schneider, *Shabtis*, I, 132, n. 6) and would make very good sense as a rubric or introductory statement at the beginning of the spell ("Instruction of the Osiris NN: he/she says, '...')", it does not fit easily with the short text. Hence, another translation must be sought. An active or passive participle, "the illuminator/the illuminated", used as an epithet, is preferable (ibid.).

⁶ Ibid., I, 46-9; III, fig. 3. IA₁1, IA₂1-2.

⁷ W. V. Davies, Deputy Keeper, Department of Egyptian Antiquities, British Museum, provided a set of photographs of Gua's coffins.

⁸ Vernus, in: RdE 26, 1974, 100-14.

⁹ For both, Schneider, *Shabtis*, I, 136.

¹⁰ Hayes, *Scepter*, I, 193, 349-50, fig. 229; J.-F. and L. Aubert, *Statuettes Égyptiennes*, Paris 1974, 19-21; Schneider, *Shabtis*, I, 92; III, 1, figs. 3, IIIA 1 and 6.

¹¹ Schneider, *Shabtis*, I, 82-3; III, fig. 3, IC1 (Senwosret - wrongly said to be in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York); I, 87; III, fig. 3, IIC 1 (Ameny).

¹² Reisner, in: JEA 6, 1920, 30-1; Petrie, *Six Temples at Thebes*, 1896, London 1897, 4, 21, and pl. 2.

¹³ Helck, *Verwaltung*, 471-81; Newberry, *Funerary Statuettes*, 1-2 and pl. 14 (Cairo CG 46530-1); Cooney, in: *Journal of Glass Studies* 2, 1960, 12, figs. 1-2; Schneider, *Shabtis*, I, 107, no. 1; III, fig. 5, Vb, no. 1.

¹⁴ Daressy, *Fouilles de la Vallée des Rois*, 85-91, 93-7, 99, 101-103, and pl. 25 (Cairo CG 24183-24216, 24230-9, 24242, 24251, 24257, 24264).

¹⁵ Ibid., 99-100 and pl. 25 (Cairo CG 24252-3).

¹⁶ For Thebes, see Spiegelberg and Newberry, *Report on Some Excavations in the Theban Necropolis during the Winter of 1898-1899*, London 1908, 4, 26-34, and pls. 18-22; Carnarvon and Carter, *Five Years' Exploration at Thebes, 1907-1911*, London 1912, 3, 13, 19-21, and pls. 11-12; L. Speleers, *Les Figurines Funéraires Égyptiennes*, Brussels 1923, pls. 12-13; Newberry, *Funerary Statuettes*, 265-8 and pls. 1-9 (CG 47906, 47908, 47910, 47914a-b, 47920, 47923b, 479278). Petrie, *Shabtis*, London 1935, 5, 24-6, pl. 1, fig. 3; V. Beyer, *Antiquités égyptiennes Strasbourg: Exposition à l'Ancien Douane: 12 Juillet-15 Octobre 1973*, Strasbourg 1973, fig. 47, nos. 245-6; Ägyptische und Vorderasiatische Alterthümer aus den königlichen Museen zu Berlin, Berlin 1895, pl. 40, top row, left; Schneider, *Shabtis*, I, 84, no. 3 (CG 47908), 86 (CG 47910), 89, no. 3 (CG 47906); III, 6 (Leiden 2.1.1.1) and figs. 3 (IIA 2-3, IIB 1-2, IID 2-3), 7-9. For Abydos, see A. Mariette, *Catalogue Général des Monuments d'Abydos*, Paris 1880, plate facing

p. 48, no. 6; Garstang, *El-Arabeh*, London 1901, 35, 45, pls. 14-15, no. 251; Newberry, *Funerary Statuettes*, 21-4, 265-6, 270-3, and pls. 1-11 (CG 46566, 46569, 47906, 47908, 47910, 47914a&b, 47920, 47923b, 47927); Schneider, *Shabtis*, II, 29-30 and pls. 82-3; III, pl. 8 (Leiden 2.2.1.1 and 2.2.1.3), and fig. 3, IIA 2 (Leiden 2.2.1.1). Other figurines which have the spelling "shawabti" and which are simpler and less gaudy than the many florid polychrome figurines characteristic of the Twentieth Dynasty are probably of Eighteenth or Nineteenth Dynasty date; these belonged to *Jmn-nḥt(.w)*, Amunnakhte; see Cooney, in: *JNES* 12, 1953, 7 and pl. 17; *Hwjḥ*, Khui, Norbert Schimmel Collection; see Settgast, ed., *Von Troja bis Amarna: The Norbert Schimmel Collection*, New York, Mainz am Rhein 1978, no. 246; and *Mwtjrrj*, Mutiri, Hermitage Museum, Leningrad, 18515; see Piotrovsky, *Egyptian Antiquities in the Hermitage Museum*, Leningrad, Leningrad 1974, figs. 53-4; see also James, *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Inscriptions in the Brooklyn Museum*, 1, no. 184, pls. 8, 48 (Brooklyn 60.99); and Komorzynski, 5000 Jahre Aegyptischer Kunst, Vienna 1961, 74, no. 91 and unnumbered plate. Some of these, particularly the shawabti of *Hwjḥ*, probably come from Deir el-Medina. See the Deir el-Medina shawabtis enumerated in the text note.

- 17 For the popularity of the term shawabti at Deir el-Medina see Bogoslovsky, in: *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii* 1972 (3): esp. 73-4, n. 36. The following is a mere sampling, by no means a complete list, of Deir el-Medina shawabtis of the Nineteenth Dynasty:

- I. *Snnḏm*, Sennedjem, and family: Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, *ibid.* 71-6, esp. 73-4 and pls. 2-5; Newberry, *Funerary Statuettes*, 221-2, 224-36, and pls. 17, 24-5 (CG 47731-2, 47734, 47740-71, 48411-12, 48520, some of these have only the *shḏ Wsjr* NN text); Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge 1887.9, see Budge, *Catalogue of the Egyptian Collection in the Fitzwilliam Museum*, Cambridge, Cambridge 1893, 69, no. 17; MMA 86.1.22: see Hayes, *Scepter*, II, 425-6 and fig. 272; *Kunsthistorisches Museum*, Vienna, 6614; see Elfriede Reiser-Haslauer, "Uschebti für Sn-ndm (Sen-nūdem)", in: Eggebrecht, ed., *Corpus Antiquitatum Aegyptiacarum. Geschichte, Ziele, Richtlinien und Arbeitsbeispiele für das Erfassen ägyptischer Altertümer in Form eines Lose-Blatt-Kataloges*, HÄB 12, Hildesheim 1981, 148-9; Louvre E.27417, see *Antiquités égyptiennes et grecques. Ancienne Collection de Monsieur G. M. Hôtel Drouot, Salle No. 8, 16 Novembre 1973*, no. 40; and *Ägyptisches Museum*, Berlin 10193; see Kaiser, ed., *Ägyptisches Museum Berlin*, Berlin 1967, 89, no. 903 and unnumbered plate. Many other figurines once belonging to the Sennedjem family are unpublished: M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco, 1925.132 (Sennedjem); Egyptian Museum, Turin, 2588 (*Ijnfrrtj*, Iineferti); see A. Fabretti, F. Rossi, and R.V. Lanzone, *Regio Museo di Torino. Catalogo generale dei Musei di Antichità e degli oggetti d'arte raccolti nelle Gallerie e Biblioteche del Regno*, I, Turin 1882, 366; MMA 86.1.17 (*Hḥbḥnt*, Khabekhenet), 86.1.18 (Iineferti), 86.1.19 (Khabekhenet and Iineferti), 86.1.29 (*Nfrmrpt*, Neferrenpet), 62.80 (Khabekhenet). For the genealogy and date of the Sennedjem family, see Toda, in: *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 10, 1887, 91-148; *idem*, in: *ASAE* 20, 1920, 145-58; Daressy, in: *ASAE* 20, 1920, 159-60; and Bogoslovsky, in: *VDI* 1972 (3), 81-4, 104.
- II. *Dḥwtjḥrmkt.f*, Djehutihermeketef: Musée Archéologique de Zagreb; see J. Monnet-Saleh, *Les Antiquités Égyptiennes de Zagreb. Catalogue raisonné des antiquités égyptiennes conservées au Musée Archéologique de Zagreb en Yougoslavie*, Paris and the Hague, 1970, 132, no. 601; and possibly Louvre 1121, BM 28, 266, see P. Boylan, Thoth, *The Hermes of Egypt*, London 1922, 178. For the man, his dates, and his monuments, see Černý, *Community*, 110-11, 249; the Černý archives in the Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, ms. 25.6; and Janssen, *Commodity Prices*, 44-5, 211.
- III. *Qnhrrḥpš.f*, Qenherkhepeshef: British Museum 33940, unpublished. For the man, his date, and his monuments, see Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum. Third Series*. Chester Beatty Gift, London 1935, 24, n. 3; Černý,

Community, 220, 329-37; Edwards, in: JEA 54, 1968, 155-60; Romer, *Ancient Lives: Daily Life in Egypt of the Pharaohs*, New York 1984, 232; and Janssen, *Commodity Prices*, 600 (s. v.).

- IV. *Twjj*, Tui: Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, 22.193; Steindorff, *Catalogue of the Egyptian Sculpture in the Walters Art Gallery*, Baltimore 1946, 160, pl. 107, no. 719.
- V. *Q3h(3)*, Qah(a) (title: *3 n jst/hrj n jst*): Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, 22.186-8, 22.192; *ibid.*, 160 and pl. 107, nos. 720-3. Probably the owner of tomb 360 at Deir el-Medina, see PM I.1², 424-5; Černý, *Community*, 125, 135, 286-7, 296-7; and Romer, *Ancient Lives*, 232.
- VI. *Q3h(3)*, Qah(a) (title *šm 3 m st M3t*): Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 72.749-51, unpublished. Perhaps the son of the workman Pashedu and the woman specified in VII, who lived in the early part of the Nineteenth Dynasty and were the owners of both tombs 3 and 326 at Deir el-Medina. Qaha is depicted in tomb 3; see PM I.1², 9-11; A.-P. Zivie, *La tombe de Pached à Deir el-Medineh*, No. 3. MIFAO 99, Cairo 1979, 114, 119, 121.
- VII. *Nāmt-bhdt*, Nedjemetbehedet: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 72.755, unpublished. Perhaps the mother of the preceding person.
- VIII. *Pn-mr-n-b*, Penmerenab: Louvre N. 2704, unpublished; for the man, his date, and his monuments, see Bogoslovsky, in: VDI 1972 (3), 64-71.
- IX. *P3-šdw*, Pashedu: Louvre N. 2707/3-2708/3, unpublished.
- X. *3-mkt*, A'ameket, Louvre N. 2708/2, unpublished.
- XI. *Mrsgr*, Merseger: Staatliche Sammlung Ägyptischer Kunst, Munich ÄS 272; see Wildung, *Staatliche Sammlung Ägyptischer Kunst*, München, Munich 1976, 157.
- XII. *Wnw*, Wennu: T. G. Allen, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead. Documents in the Oriental Institute Museum at the University of Chicago*, Chicago 1960, 64, pl. 122, no. 17065.
- XIII. *Mrjtt-R*, Meritre^c: Ashmolean Museum, Queen's College Loan 56, unpublished.
- XIV. *Wnnfr*, Wennefer: Ashmolean Museum, Queen's College Loan 235, unpublished.
- XV. *Nwjj-nb*, Nuineb: Staatliche Sammlung Ägyptischer Kunst, Munich, 756, unpublished; Egyptian Museum, Turin, 2676(1-2), see Fabretti et al., *Catalogo generale Torino I*, 377.
- XVI. *Jjtw3tj*, Iitwati: Egyptian Museum, Turin, 2585-6; *ibid.*, 366.
- XVII. *Jmnwhb*, Amenemheb: Egyptian Museum, Turin, 2524-6; *ibid.*, 359.
- XVIII. *Nbrm3t*, Nebemma'at: Egyptian Museum, Turin, 2662-4; *ibid.*, 375-6.
- XIX. *T3jj-sn*, Taysen: Egyptian Museum, Turin, 2669-70, *ibid.*, 376.
- XX. *Mhjj*, Mehi: Egyptian Museum, Turin, 2636, *ibid.*, 372.
- XXI. *Djdj*, Diði: Egyptian Museum, Turin, 2777, *ibid.*, 389. For a shawabti of a person with the same name found in Setau's tomb at Deir el-Medina, see Bruyère, *Deir el-Medineh*, FIFAO 14, 1937, 98, fig. 42.
- XXII. *Jmn-ms(w)*, Amenmose, Civica Raccolta Egizia Castello Sforzesco, Milan, nos. 797-798; see G. Lise, *Musei e Gallerie di Milano. Museo Archeologico. Raccolta Egizie*, Milan 1978, 53. A Nineteenth Dynasty date is rightly mentioned, thereby correcting the Late Period date posited in an earlier publication (*idem*, *Civica Raccolta Egizia Castello Sforzesco*, Milan 1974, 42-3).
- XXIII. *P3jj*, Pay, private collection; see Málek, in: RdE 31, 1979, 153-6. See also the shawabti mentioned at the end of the preceding note.

¹⁸ Schneider, *Shabtis*, I, 138.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 139.

²⁰ Aubert, *Statuettes Egyptiennes*, 143 and pl. 29, fig. 64; for the genealogy, see Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt*, 473, table 7 and 517. See Schneider, *Shabtis*, I, 135 for another possible occurrence in the New Kingdom, which may be a miswriting for *šwbtj*.

²¹ Schneider, *Shabtis*, I, 138.