

ON SOME SHABTIS OF MUTNODJMET, WIFE OF PSUSENNES I

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A correspondent (1) in the United States has recently favoured me with some details of six bronze shabtis (2), acquired in the art market in 1980. Each is about 5.5 cm in height. When purchased they were somewhat corroded, and did not appear to be inscribed. In 1981 three were chemically cleaned, with the result that a legible inscription was brought to light on two of the specimens, showing that they were made for *The Osiris, the King's Wife Mutnodjmet* (3). The third shabti was so badly corroded that it fell to pieces on cleaning. The other three have not undergone conservation at the moment of writing, and no details are available. There is every reason to believe, however, that these will prove to be part of the shabti complement of Queen Mutnodjmet. Of the group three are illustrated on Plate 1, nos. 1-3. No. 1 shows the front and back of one of the cleaned specimens with a legible text; no. 2 has also been cleaned, and an inscription is discernible; no. 3 has not been chemically cleaned.

My correspondent also mentioned two other bronze shabtis of Queen Mutnodjmet seen in the art market in America in 1981. One was identical to the six noted above, the other being a *reis* shabti. In the same year the present writer learned (4) that the latter specimen had been acquired for the Egyptian collection of the Musée d'Art et

1) Professor Bob Brier, to whom I tender thanks for his kindness in allowing me to publish these notes, for some of the details outlined above, and for providing slides of three of the shabtis from which some of the photographs illustrated in the present paper have been made.

2) Bronze shabtis are mostly confined to the Third Intermediate Period and with few exceptions are royal, see P.A. Clayton, *JEA* 58 (1972), 167-175.

3) On Mutnodjmet see K.A. Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt*, Warminster, 1973, Index, 511.

4) From Professor Robert Hari.

d'Histoire, Geneva (5). The catalogue details are as follows:
Inventory no. 23477, acquired 1981. Plate 2 (6). Ht. 6.9 cm.
Max. width (across elbows) 1.9 cm. Max. depth 1.3 cm. Pedestal
(feet) 0.85 x 1.0 cm. Provenance: unknown. Text: *The Osiris,
the King's Wife* (7) *Mutnodjmet, true of voice with Osiris*.
The inscription is engraved.

The *reis* figure wears the tripartite wig without uraeus, and a short beard. The arms are crossed over the breast, and both hands grasp whips (8) to symbolize authority over the other shabtis in the 'set'. There is a small tenon, an integral part of the figurine, under the feet. The workmanship of the shabti is somewhat summary.

Since these notes were drafted more bronze shabtis of Mutnodjmet have appeared on the art market. Dr. J.-F. Aubert signals six specimens, probably similar in character to those described above. M. Aubert writes (9): '... l'antiquaire américain... vient en effet de nous présenter six petits chaouabtis de bronze, qui lui avaient été vendus en 1980, paraît-il, comme étant de Psousennès; mais

(5) I am much indebted to M. Jean-Luc Chappaz for his permission to publish the shabti, and for furnishing all relevant details. The shabti will appear in his forthcoming *Catalogue des figurines funéraires du Musée d'Art et d'Histoire*. I have not personally had the opportunity of examining any of the objects described in this paper.

(6) The photographic illustrations of the Geneva shabti are the work of M. Yves Siza. The facsimile of the text is my own, based on photographs and on copies made by Mlle M. Stierlin and M. Chappaz.

(7) On a bracelet from the tomb of Psusennes I Mutnodjmet is called 'King's first Great Wife of His Majesty', see P. Montet, *ASAE* 46 (1947), 313. This variant of 'King's Great Wife' would suggest that 'the original title ... was no longer sufficient to designate the most important queen. Further qualification was necessary' (B. Mertz, *Certain titles of the Egyptian queens and their bearing on the hereditary right to the throne*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, Chicago, 1952, 115).

(8) For parallels cf. J.-F. and L. Aubert, *Statuettes égyptiennes*, Paris, 1974, pl. 33, no. 71; P.A. Clayton, *op. cit.*, pl. 34, 5-6 (Psusennes I). For details of known shabtis of Psusennes I see H.D. Schneider, *Shabtis*, pt. 2, Leiden, 1977, 151-152.

(9) J.-F. Aubert, *CdE* 56 (1981), 30.

ils sont un peu plus petits, et deux d'entre eux, un chef et un serviteur, furent décapés d'une gangue épaisse mêlée de cristallisation bleue. Grande fut la surprise au Musée de Brooklyn, puis à Paris, lorsqu'apparut, sous cette gangue, une colonne d'inscription au nom de "l'Osiris, épouse royale Moutnedjemet", la soeur et grande épouse de Psousennès I'.

The tally is still not complete. No less than nine bronze shabtis of the queen (not *reis* shabtis) are, or were until recently, in the German art market (10).

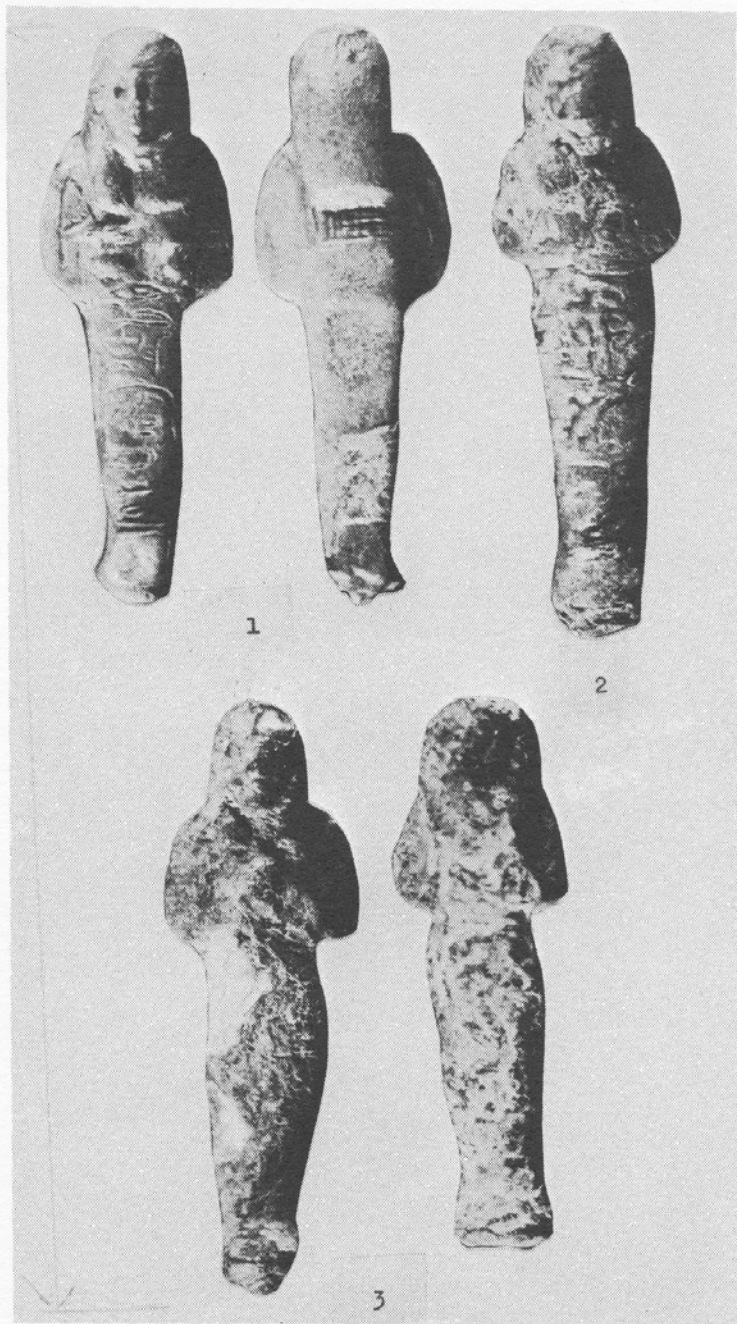
The closest parallels to the figurines of Mutnodjmet are the contemporary specimens of her husband, Psusennes I (11). As far as I am aware no other shabtis of the queen are known, though it is possible of course that some are in private collections, in the art market, or remain unrecognized in a corroded state. It is curious that all the specimens noted above have come to light in a relatively short space of time. Their appearance suggests the possibility that the tomb of the queen has been discovered (12), or that a deposit of funerary figurines from a destroyed tomb has been located. They appear to be the only bronze shabtis made for a

- (10) According to information received from M. Jean-Luc Chappaz, who describes the shabtis from photographs: 'L'état de conservation et la taille de ces statuettes sont très variables. Toutes ont les bras croisés et tiennent une houe dans chaque main. Quelques-unes paraissent avoir une petite barbe de dignitaire, mais ce détail reste très difficile à interpréter d'après les photographies. Perruque à deux longues mèches antérieures qui descendent sur les clavicules'. The texts on these read: *Wsir hmt nsw Mwt-ndmt* (4 examples); *Wsir hmt nsw ...* (1 example); *Mwt-ndmt* (1 example); ... *Mwt-[nd]mt* (1 example); *Wsir hmt [nsw Mwt]nd mt* (1 example); ... *Mwt ...* (1 example). The objects were apparently on offer in a group of 16 bronze shabtis, including at least four of private persons, two of which are *reises*. According to the dealer the specimens in the group vary in height from 5.0 to 7.0 cm.
- (11) The bronze shabtis of this king were first mentioned by P. Montet, *La nécropole royale de Tanis*, vol. 2, Paris, 1951, 94, with pl. 63. Measurements are not provided. On the Tanite shabtis generally see H.D. Schneider, *op. cit.*, 151-154.
- (12) Cf. J.-F. Aubert, *CdE* 56 (1981), 30.

female. No evidence is available regarding their provenance, which is presumably the royal necropolis at Tanis (13).

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(13) A Delta provenance is suggested too by the state and colour of the bronze, though these can hardly be absolutely conclusive.



American private collection

Scale approx. 1:1



Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva 23477

Scale 1:1

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