

The shabtis of the Chantress of Mehyt
Khayt



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1. Introduction

1.1 *Introduction to this study*

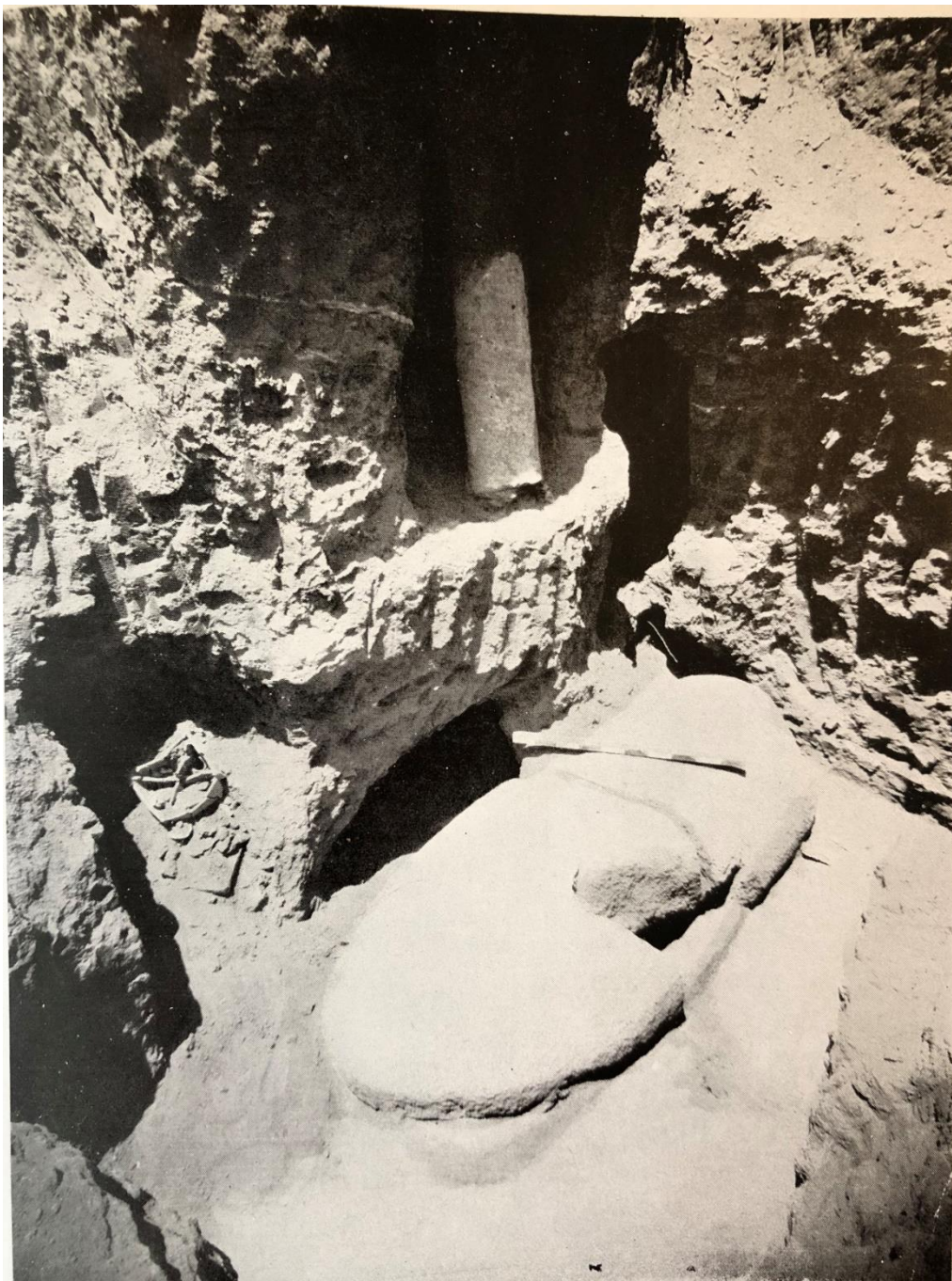
This study provides an overview of the shabtis for Khayt. In addition to the published examples I added the shabtis I have come across in the world. I will start off with a short introduction of the ancient owner Khayt and describe her shabtis in general. In the following chapters you will find the museum parallels (chapter 2) and the privately owned parallels (chapter 3).

1.2 *Who was Khayt?*

Khayt was the wife of Hori I, who was the Viceroy of the southern land of Kush (Nubia) under the pharaohs Ramesses III and IV. He married the chantress of Mehyt, Khayt. The majority of the ladies who held the title chantress were dedicated to Amun, depending on the location of the owner, Thebes for Amun. Mehyt was the lion goddess of This and Sebennytos. In the 20th Dynasty the numbers of ladies that were Chantresses were very low with only a few that held this title after Ramses III. In the inscriptions for Hori I and Hori II found in Aswan and Nubia they are constantly shown with Bubastis being mentioned, indicating the family's origins.

The son of Khayt and Hori I, called Hori II, held the same important governorship under pharao Setnakhte.

Hori I's family tomb was located at the valley of the nobles in Tell Basta and was officially excavated in 1944, although being plundered in antiquity. Khayt's tomb was found next to the room to that of Hori I. Another son, called Ubekhsenu, also "first charioteer of his Majesty" was most likely buried in one of the two other rooms in the tomb, as his names often appears next to that of his father.



Tomb of Khayt in situ

1.3 Description of the shabtis

The shabtis are mummiform, the faience has a rare white glaze and the details are in purple/brown, wearing a tripartite wig, earrings, nostrils indicated, adorned with a broad usekh collar and wrist bracelets, holding agricultural implements in each hand, a large seed sack on the back and a column of hieroglyphic inscriptions on front: "Words spoken by the Osiris, the Chantress of Mehyt, Khayt, true of voice". On some the Chantress titles is abbreviated. Very rare is that the inscription is continued underneath the feet.



Backside showing differences in size, NH collection. Note the firing cracks on the back of the right example.



Rare inscription underneath the feet, in an enclosed panel

It is unclear how many shabtis were originally buried in Tell Basta for Khayt as the tomb had been plundered in antiquity. The shabtis for Khayt were found in a shabti box with four compartments. The faience shabtis vary in size around 11,5 cm, which is slightly larger than Hori I. A considerable amount of the shabtis currently on the market are broken, which is not a surprise when looking at the smashed shabti box found.



Shabtibox found in the tomb of Khayt

2. Museum pieces

On the following pages an overview is provided of the museum pieces which are currently part of their respective collections.

The following information is provided for each piece:

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Location: | The city in which the museum is located is mentioned as well as the name of the museum. |
| Published: | If the museum piece is published in a book or on the internet the name of the publication, author and the relevant page number is mentioned. |
| Inventory nb | The inventory number is mentioned if known. |
| Provenance: | For as far as available the provenance of the piece is described, detailing the previous owners prior to the entering into the collection of the museum. |
| Height: | The specific height of the shabti is described in centimetres. |
| Comments: | Provides the comments of the author to the specific pieces, for example relating to the condition or quality of the object compared to the other parallels. |



1-6

1-6: Cairo museum

- Published: The first 4 are published by Labib Habachi in *Tell Basta*. These four examples are on display. There are some more on display, of which at least two are for Khayt (5 and 6). Based on the size, the two others are slightly smaller and are more likely for Hori I.
- Inventory nb In the display cases 7937-7940, 7941 and 7933
- Provenance: Tomb of Hori I, excavated in Tell Basta
- Height: Unknown
- Comments: Some have considerable damage. On some the text continues underneath the feet.

3. Private collections pieces and unknown current location

On the following pages an overview is provided of the examples which are currently in private collections around the world.

The following information is provided for each piece:

- Owner: The name of the current collector/collection. In case this is known the identity of the collector is often protected by using initials only.
- Published: If the private collection piece is published in a book or on the internet the name of the publication, author and the relevant page number is mentioned.
- Provenance: For as far as available the provenance of the piece is described, detailing the previous owners prior to the entering into the collection of the collector.
- Height: The specific height of the shabti is described in centimetres.
- Comments: Provides the comments of the author to the specific pieces, for example relating to the condition or quality of the object compared to the other parallels.



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1 Aubert collection

Published: Aubert, Statuettes Egyptiennes Chaouabtis Ouchebtis (Paris, 1974); fig 42 p. 292 pl. 20

Provenance: Art market in the Netherlands prior to 1974 (probably Moger)

Height: Between 11.2 cm

Comments: Very good example

2 Amasis collection

Published: Online at www.shabticollections.com SC/62

Provenance: Ex UK collection 2005, later sold by Mark Goodstein as a old Woodmere, NY collection before 1980, ex USA collection Virginia, JL, ex NH collection, currently in the Amasis collection

Height: 11.4 cm

Comments: Some small chips. Hairline crack on the back. Well executed version.

3-4 Bouvier collection

Published: No. Exhibited Basel museum in 1999.

Provenance: Acquired by Maurice Bouvier prior to his move from Egypt to Switzerland in 1959

Height: 11.4 (3) and 11.2 (4) cm

Comments: Number 3 is rather poor. Number 4 is missing the feet, which have been restored.

5 Bouche collection

Published: No. Auction catalogue Thierry de Maigret, 24 October 2012, lot 52, page 42-43.

Provenance: Unknown

Height: 12.5 cm (object partly sunken in the stand, size maybe incorrect)

Comments: Good example.

6. GJ collection

Published: No.

Provenance: Unknown

Height: Unknown

Comments: Very clean example

7-8 NH collection

Published: No.

Provenance: 7: Sold at auction in Kriegeldorf, Stuttgart, Germany in 1962 to collector ES (North Germany), sold onwards by Anubis Ancient Art at the BAAF 2015 to current owner.

8: Ex Peter Newell, from his father's estate, former dealer South-Africa in the 1950's, sold by Duke auction house, 14 February 2019, lot 67.

Height: 11.4 (7) and 11.5 (8) cm

Comments: 7: No breaks. Some wear to the faience and some chips to on the back. 8: Break underneath the arm section professionally restored, some chips to the wig also restored.

9 Coll S.

Published: Van Nijl tot Schelde / Du Nil a l'escaut, no. 199, page 170-171

Provenance: Unknown

Height: 11.3 cm

Comments: Heavily chipped on wig and hands example.

10-11 Ex Moger

Published: No

Provenance: Unknown, sold by Moger in the Netherlands

Height: Unknown

Comments: 10: break across neck section and possibly in the middle. 11: Appears intact. Some chips to wig and text seems to be partly faded.

12-13 Ex Ede

Published: 12: Charles Ede, Small sculpture from ancient Egypt, volume XV, number 43. 13: Charles Ede, Small sculpture from Ancient Egypt, Volume unknown, January 2003, number 41.

Provenance: 12: Unknown. 13: Ex Mustaki collection

Height: 12: 11.1 CM; 13: 11.4 CM

Comments: 12: Chips to wig. Not too elegantly painted. Otherwise good condition. 13: Small chip from wig made good.

14 UK Collection

Published: No

Provenance: Unknown, was in a UK collection of Mrs. CB.

Height: Unknown

Comments: Heavily damaged with break in the middle, chips to head and nose section.

15-16 ex Christies

Published: Christies auction catalogue, 11 June 2003.

Provenance: Christies in one lot, 11 June 2003, lot 16, ex collection of Maurice Nahman and Alexandra Manserro-Nahman

Height: 15: 11.4 CM, 16 a bit smaller

Comments: 15 appears to have two larger chips and 16 appears to be intact.

Index

Below is the complete overview of all the currently known location of the shabtis of Hori.

Between brackets is the inventory number.

Museum pieces

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Cairo, Cairo Museum | 6 |
|---------------------|---|

| | |
|---------------|----------|
| Museum totals | <u>6</u> |
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Private collections

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Coll. Aubert | 1 |
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| Coll. Amasis | 1 |
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|---------------|---|
| Coll. Bouvier | 2 |
|---------------|---|

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Coll. Bouche | 1 |
|--------------|---|

| | |
|----------|---|
| Coll. GJ | 1 |
|----------|---|

| | |
|----------|---|
| Coll. NH | 2 |
|----------|---|

| | |
|---------|---|
| Coll. S | 1 |
|---------|---|

| | |
|----------|---|
| Ex Moger | 2 |
|----------|---|

| | |
|--------|---|
| Ex Ede | 2 |
|--------|---|

| | |
|---------------|---|
| UK collection | 1 |
|---------------|---|

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Ex Christies | 2 |
|--------------|---|

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Private collection totals | <u>16</u> |
|---------------------------|-----------|

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Overall total (museums and private collections) | <u>22</u> |
|---|-----------|

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