

The workers shabtis of
Tayu-heret

By Niek de Haan and Patrice Renaut

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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction to this study

This study provides an overview of the worker shabtis for *Tayu-heret*. In addition to the published examples, we added the shabtis we have come across in the world, with the help of Glenn Janes work and the Sehedj database. We will start with an introduction of the owner *Tayu-heret* and describe her workers 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 *Tayu-heret*?

Tayu-heret is considered to have been a wife and maybe a sister of the High Priest of Amen *Masaharta*. Her titles include “Chief of the Harem of Amen-Re” and “King of the Gods” (1). They were both buried in DB320 also known as the Royal Cache at Deir el-Bahari. Her mummy was found in coffins usurped from a “Chantress of Amen” named *Hatet*. They had been modified for *Tayu-heret*'s usage in a very expedient fashion by merely writing her name over that of the previous owner (2).



Detail of outer coffin (CG 61032) of *Tayu-heret* © CESRAS

Names changed (in red fields) from that of the original owner (*Hatet*) to *Tayu-heret*.

Notice that her name is written with two different spellings (see section 1.3)

1.3 Description of the workers

The study presented here is based on the documentary background available on the Web as well as on documents from the authors' library. It is obvious that the list of the studied statuettes is far from being exhaustive and will have to be updated. To our knowledge, the most comprehensive sources available now are:

The Schedj data base: Répertoire bibliographique des figurines funéraires (shabtis / oushebtis) (3).

G. Janes's book "Shabtis, a private view" which describes an example of an overseer for *Tayu-heret* and gives an extensive list of known parallels in museums, private collections and the art market at the date of its publication (1).

All the workers are made of faience with refulgent mid or bright blue glaze "Deir el Bahari blue" with black painted details. Their size is comprised between 9.8 cm and 11.3 cm. Their general shape when viewed from the front is approximately the same for all parallels we know. They are mummiform, their arms are crossed right over left on the chest and the well molded hands hold a pair of hoes except for three known parallels where hoes are missing. This last feature is very uncommon for workers shabtis of the TIP.

They wear a tripartite wig with horizontal striation (A) across the front of the wig. However, a few workers wear a tripartite wig with perpendicular (B) striation across the front of it. This last characteristic is reminiscent of the small slender workers of *Pi-nudjem I* (4) and of the *Tayu-heret* overseers (5). Two kinds of ornament are present on some specimens: bracelets (C) and/or a *wesekh* collar (D) painted with a few strands.



A



B

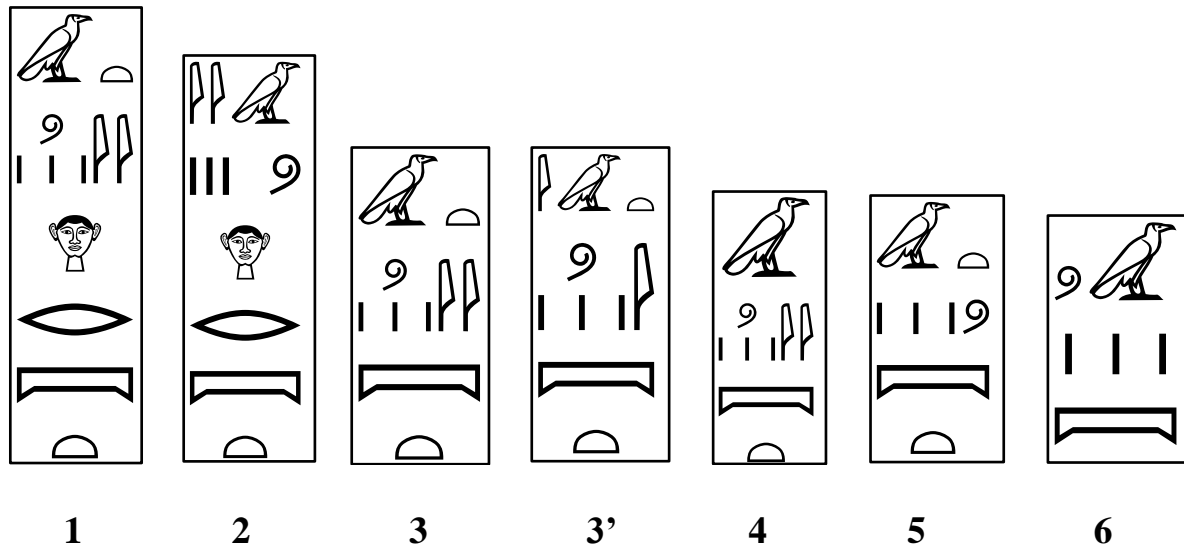


C




D

The inscription painted in black mentions the name of the owner but not any associated title. Her name *Tayu-heret* is written with at least more or less elliptic 6 various spellings (**V1 to V6**):



Moreover, we could distinguish among the artefacts shown here, 4 sets of parallels which present some specific features indicating that at least 4 different painters were involved in the production of these shabtis.

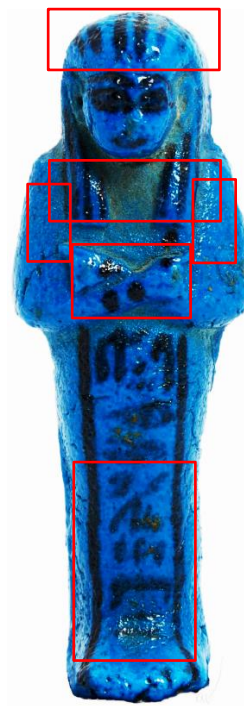
A first set of shabtis was identified and further labelled as **set A**. It is characterized by the following features: a face with well-defined eyebrows and nice eyes. The mouth is molded but not painted, and the wig is horizontally striated. An *wesekh* collar is painted for all the parallels except one. The inscription is spelling **V3** and the glyph  *ws* is drawn in a special manner when compared to other parallels. 11 shabtis belong to this set A.

The shabti of the unknown collection S is taken as an example to show these different characteristics.



Unknown collection S

A second set of shabtis, **set B** is well represented by shabti of the KMT collection.





KMT collection

Its characteristics are the following: The absence of hoes, the absence of the *wesekh* collar, a vertically striated wig, the presence of bracelets painted exactly the same way, the spelling of the name is **V6**. We found 4 shabtis corresponding to this set.



A third set was identified (**set C**). It is best represented by shabti from the HC collection.



HC collection

It is characterized by the following features: the wig is represented with spaced lines and the face is expressive with well depicted eyebrows, eyes and mouth. The inscription looks neglected. First the glyph  has a strange shape, and then the name is written in an elliptical way. The  *ws* is painted in a strange way too. We found 3 shabtis corresponding to this set (may be a fourth one).

A fourth set of shabtis, **set D** is well represented by shabti of Hildesheim museum n° 317.

It is characterized by the following features: the collar is represented with one horizontal band and two verticals lines, the hoes are boldly painted without cord and the bracelet is rather thick. The inscription shows the following characteristics. First the  *t* is absent, then the glyph  has a strange shape, and

then the name is written with the glyphs  and  for *hr*, all glyphs are clearly painted by the same hand.

We found 3 shabtis corresponding to this set D.



Hildesheim n° 317

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 and country in which the museum is located and name of the museum are mentioned.

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 are mentioned.

Inventory number: 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 centimeters.

Comments: Provide the comments of the authors to the specific pieces, for example, the presence of a vertically striated wig or horizontally one, a *wesekh* collar, bracelets. Other details such as hoes or the quality and the variant of the inscription are mentioned too. Finally, we indicate to which set the shabti belongs to. However some shabtis do not correspond to any of the sets.

Boston, USA, Museum of Fine Arts



Published: collections.mfa.org

Inventory number: 66.1030

Provenance: Royal Cache, Luigi Vassalli (1812-1887), Horace L. Mayer (1966)

Height: 10.0 cm

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, two strands collar, well defined hoes, nice inscription (V5).

Cairo, Egypt, Cairo Museum

General comments: they are at least 14 workers of *Tayu-heret* in the Cairo Museum. We present pictures of 9 of them.



© Edward Loring

Published: <https://www.ushabtis.com/royal-cache-db320/>

Inventory number: unknown

Provenance: Royal Cache, G. Maspero

Height: unknown

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, 2 strands collar, well defined hoes, very nice inscription (V3).

Cairo, Egypt, Cairo Museum



© CESRAS DSC_6659

Published: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/horemachet/15666098661/>

Inventory number: unknown

Provenance: Royal Cache, G. Maspero

Height: unknown

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, 3 vertical strands collar, bracelets, two different hoes, very nice inscription (V1).

Cairo, Egypt, Cairo Museum



© CESRAS DSC_6659

Published: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/horemachet/15666098661/>

Inventory number: unknown

Provenance: Royal Cache, G. Maspero

Height: unknown

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, collar, bracelets, two different boldly painted hoes, faded inscription (V2), set D.

Cairo, Egypt, Cairo Museum



© CESRAS DSC_6659

Published: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/horemachet/15666098661/>

Inventory number: unknown

Provenance: Royal Cache, G. Maspero

Height: unknown

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, two different hoes, nice inscription (V3).

Cairo, Egypt, Cairo Museum



© CESRAS DSC_6659

Published: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/horemachet/15666098661/>

Inventory number: unknown

Provenance: Royal Cache, G. Maspero

Height: unknown

Comments: Vertically striated wig, bracelets, no hoes, nice inscription (V6), set B.

Cairo, Egypt, Cairo Museum



© CESRAS DSC_6657

Published: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/horemachet/15668769015/>

Inventory number: unknown

Provenance: Royal Cache, G. Maspero

Height: unknown

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, two strands collar, well defined toes, nice inscription (V3), set A.

Cairo, Egypt, Cairo Museum



© CESRAS DSC_6656

Published: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/horemachet/15482532098/> and <https://www.ushabtis.com/royal-cache-db320/>

Inventory number: unknown

Provenance: Royal Cache, G. Maspero

Height: unknown

Comments: Vertically striated wig, well defined hooves, very nice inscription (V6).

Cairo, Egypt, Cairo Museum



© CESRAS DSC_6656

Published: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/horemachet/15482532098/>

Inventory number: unknown

Provenance: Royal Cache, G. Maspero

Height: unknown

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, three strands collar, well defined hoes, nice inscription (V3).

Cairo, Egypt, Cairo Museum



© CESRAS DSC_6656

Published: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/horemachet/15482532098>

Inventory number: unknown

Provenance: Royal Cache, G. Maspero

Height: unknown

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, well defined hoe, nice inscription (V3).

Hildesheim, Germany, Roemer-Pelizaeus Museum





Published: Th. KOHL, *Diener für die Ewigkeit* (HÄB 54), Hildesheim 2018, 189-196 n° 50.

Inventory number: 305

Provenance: Purchase of W. Pelizaeus in Egypt, part of the donation 1907

Height: 10.2 cm

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, three strands collar, dissymmetric hoes, nice inscription (V3), set A.

Hildesheim, Germany, Roemer-Pelizaeus Museum



Published: Th. KOHL, *Diener für die Ewigkeit* (HÄB 54), Hildesheim 2018, 189-196 n° 51.

Inventory number: 306

Provenance: Purchase of W. Pelizaeus in Egypt, part of the donation 1907

Height: 10.4 cm

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, well defined hoes, nice inscription (V4).

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Hildesheim, Germany, Roemer-Pelizaeus Museum



Published: Th. KOHL, *Diener für die Ewigkeit* (HÄB 54), Hildesheim 2018, 189-196 n° 52.

Inventory number: 317

Provenance: Purchase of W. Pelizaeus in Egypt, part of the donation 1907

Height: 10.2 cm

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, collar, boldly painted hoes without cord, bracelets, set D.

Hildesheim, Germany, Roemer-Pelizaeus Museum



Published: Th. KOHL, *Diener für die Ewigkeit* (HÄB 54), Hildesheim 2018, 189-196 n° 53.

Inventory number: 5481

Provenance: collected in Egypt around 1900, acquired from private estate in 1983

Height: 10.6 cm

Comments: Vertically striated wig, no collar, no hoe, bracelets, no bag, (V6), set B.

Krakow, Poland, Czartoryski Museum



Published: Schlögl, Hermann A.; *Corpus der Ägyptischen Totenfiguren der Öffentlichen Sammlungen Krakaus*. Kraków, 2000 number 20, page 60

Inventory number: XI-935

Provenance:

Height: 10.2 cm

Comments: Horizontally (?) striated wig, faded painted details.

London, England, British Museum



Published: unknown

Inventory number: C 223, n° 1

Provenance: Sir W. M. Flinders Petrie

Height: 10.5 cm

Comments: Vertically striated wig, bracelets, no hoes, nice inscription (V6), set B.

London, England, British Museum





Published: unknown
Inventory number: 35370
Provenance: R J Moss & Co
Height: 10.16 cm
Comments: poorly decorated, faded inscription.

London, England, British Museum





Published: unknown

Inventory number: 35371

Provenance: R J Moss & Co

Height: 10.25 cm

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, poorly decorated, faded inscription.

London, England, Petrie Museum



Published: W. M. F. Petrie. *Shabtis*. No 261 p.14, pls. 11,15,18,36

Inventory number: UC39866

Provenance: Sir W. M. Flinders Petrie

Height: 11.3 cm

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, three strands collar, dissymmetric hoes, rather nice inscription (V3).

Mainz, Germany, Landesmuseum Mainz



Published: unknown

Inventory number: unknown

Provenance: unknown

Height: unknown

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, collar, bracelets, boldly painted hoes without cord, set D.

New York, USA, Brooklyn Museum



Published: <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/9450>

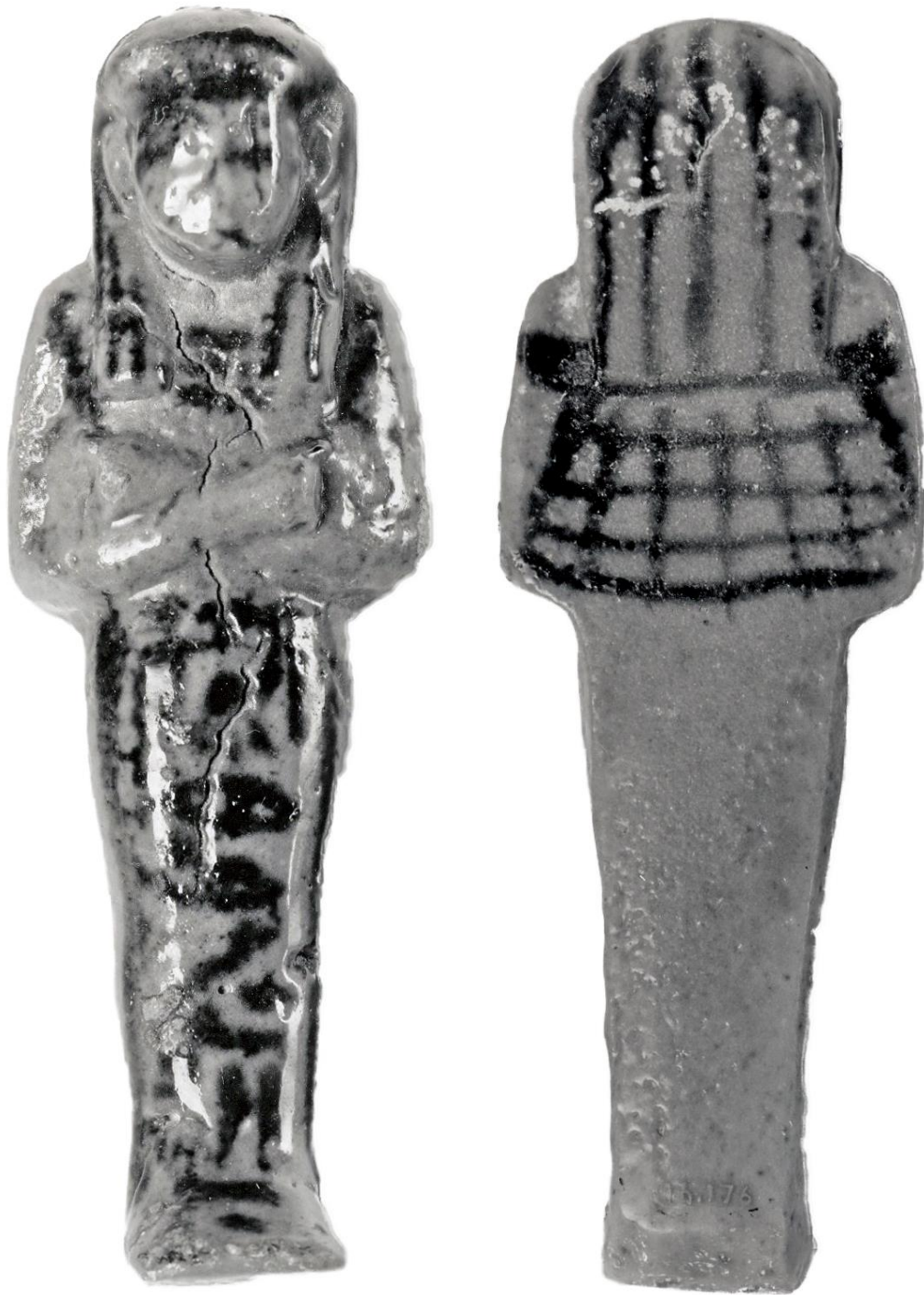
Inventory number: 16.175

Provenance: Charles Edwin Wilbour

Height: 10.7 cm

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, two hoes, crude workmanship, inscription (V3).

New York, USA, Brooklyn Museum



Published: <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/9451>

Inventory number: 16.176

Provenance: Charles Edwin Wilbour

Height: 9.8 cm

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, three strands collar, rather nice inscription (V3).

Oxford, England, Ashmolean Museum



Published: unknown

Inventory number: unknown

Provenance: unknown

Height: unknown

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, well defined hoes, rather nice inscription (V3).

Paris, France, Louvre



Published:

<https://collections.louvre.fr/recherche?advanced=1&inventoryNumber%5B0%5D=E%207677&inventoryNumber%5B2%5D=E7677>

Inventory number: E 7677

Provenance: E. D. P. Allemant (1883)

Height: 10.7 cm

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, two strands collar, well defined hoes and bag, nice inscription (V5).

Paris, France, Louvre



Published: Tanis. L'or des pharaons.1987, p.122.

Inventory number: E 20325

Provenance: Unknown

Height: 11.0 cm

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, two strands collar, well defined hoes, rather nice inscription.

Prague, Czech Republik, Narodni Muzeum



Published: Unknown

Inventory number: Unknown

Provenance: Unknown

Height: Unknown

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, two strands collar, well defined hoes, rather nice inscription (V3).

Vienna, Austria, Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien





Published: www.khm.at/de/object/5030b49b7d/

Inventory number: INV 6060

Provenance: 1885 Geschenk

Height: 10.8 cm

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, three strands collar, well defined hoes and bag, very nice inscription (V3), set A.

3. Private collections pieces

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: Generally unknown, when known then indicated with the collection name known to the authors.

Published: If the private collection piece is published in a book, an auction catalogue 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 centimeters.

Comments: Provide the comments of the authors to the specific pieces, for example: the presence of a vertically striated wig or a horizontally striated one, if there is a collar, bracelets and the way the hoes and the inscription are painted. See above.

Collection HC



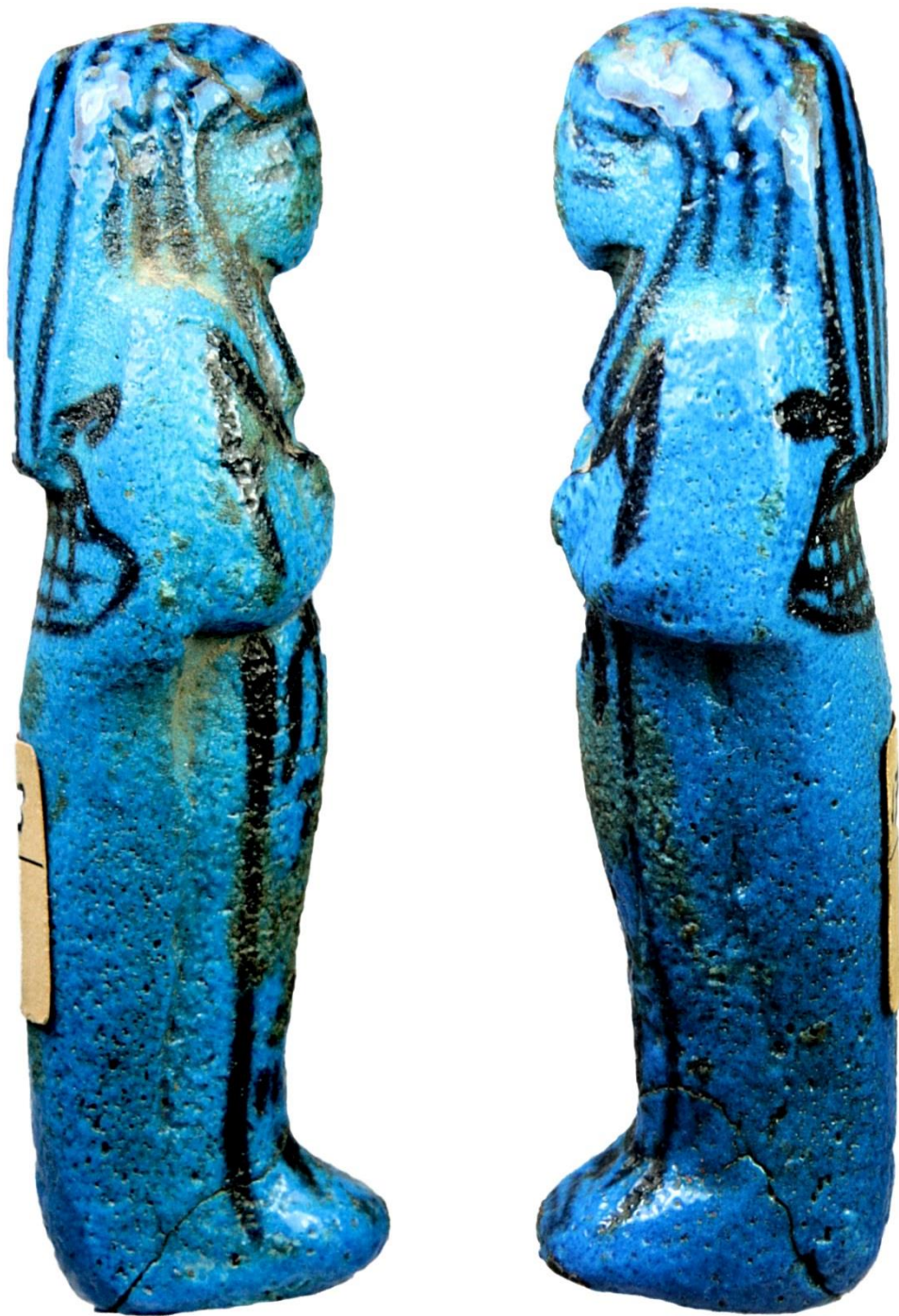
Published: Christies auction catalogue, 11/12/2003, lot 57

Provenance: Old French collection G. de B., sold by Anubis Ancient Art

Height: 10.5 cm

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, well defined hoes, set C.





Published: Helios gallery website (<https://heliosgallery.com/antiquities>)

Height: 11.3 cm

Provenance: Ulf Filipson-Löwe (1921-1989), then Igor Jülich, (13934-2013)

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, well defined hooves, three strands collar, fine inscription (V3), unusually molded body (thicker than other parallels)





Published: A Dutch collection of Egyptian antiquities, Shabti Collection Publications, Voorhout, 2016, private print, number 52, page 117-118

Height: 10.8 cm

Provenance: ex American private collection, 1940's, sold by Medusa Ancient Art in April 2011

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, three strands collar, well defined hoes, nice inscription (V3), set A.

Former Collection Stefan Decker



Published: Decker, Stefan; *Uschebti - ägyptische Dienerfiguren einer deutschen Privatsammlung*. Kempen, 2005, page 66-67

Height: 10,3 cm

Provenance: Ex Stefan Decker, ex Aton Gallery, ex NH collection to current owner

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, three strands collar, nice inscription (V3). The shabti was exhibited at the Roman-Germanic Museum, Cologne, 25 June to 30 September 2007, “Kosmos der Zeichen” and published also in the exhibition catalogue.

Collection KMT





Published: Mercier & Cie auction catalogue, Lille, 09/05/2021, lot 206

Height: 10.5 cm

Provenance: Unknown

Comments: Vertically striated wig, no hoes, no bag, bracelets, rather faded inscription (V6), set B.

Collection AB





Published: Bonhams auction catalogue, 15/10/2008 lot 18. DVC auction catalogue, Antwerp, 2/12/2017, lot 20

Provenance: Unknown

Height: 10.8 cm

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, two strands collar, well defined breasts, nice inscription (V3), set A.

Collection AB





Published: Pescheteau-Badin auction, catalogue, lot 213.

Provenance: Unknown

Height: 10.8 cm

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, two strands collar, well defined breasts, nice inscription (V3), set A.

Collection J, United Kingdom



Published: Helios gallery website (<https://heliosgallery.com/antiquities>)

Height: unknown

Provenance: unknown

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, dissymmetric headdress, nice inscription (V3').

Unknown Collection A



Published: Du Nil à l'Escaut, Bruxelles, 1991, p. 187, n° 221

Provenance: Unknown

Height: 10.5 cm

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, four strands collar, well defined hoes, rather nice inscription (V3), set A.

Unknown Collection B



Published: Bergé auction catalogue, 29/11/2014, lot 74

Provenance: Old French collection G. de B.

Height: 10.6 cm

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, well defined hoes, nice inscription (V3).

Unknown Collection C



Published: Bonham's auction catalogue, London, 01/05/2013, lot 87

Provenance: Dutch private collection

Height: 10.5 cm

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, faded dissymmetric hoes.

Unknown Collection D



Published: unknown

Height: unknown

Provenance: ex Wallis collection

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, three strands collar, nice inscription (V3), set A.

Unknown Collection E



Published: Christies auction catalogue, 09/12/2005, lot 90

Provenance: Gift of Michael and Linda Kenston 1981

Height: 10.5 cm

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, three strands collar, poorly defined hoes, rather nice inscription (V3).

Unknown Collection F



Published: Christies auction catalogue, 26/04/2012, lot 119

Provenance: Ex Collection of the Italian-Russian Egyptologist Prince Boris de Rachewiltz (1926-1997).

Height: 10.2 cm

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, two hoes without cord, very nice inscription (V3), set A.

Unknown Collection G



Published: Drouot auction catalogue, 29/06/1992, lot B, wrongly attributed to *Pi-nedjem I*

Height: 10.8 cm

Provenance: Ex collection Mme A

Comments: Poorly striated wig, all painted details poorly defined, hoes and bracelet present.

Unknown Collection H



Published: Drouot auction catalogue, 29/06/1992, lot D,

Height: 10.7 cm

Provenance: Ex collection Mme A

Comments: Poorly striated wig, two hoes, bracelets, faded inscription.

Unknown Collection I



Published: Drouot auction catalogue, 29/06/1992, lot J, wrongly attributed to *Masaharta*

Height: 10.2 cm

Provenance: Ex collection Mme A

Comments: Vertically faded striated wig, two faded hoes, poorly defined inscription.

Unknown Collection J



Published: Drouot-Montaigne auction catalogue, 12/11/2001, lot 226

Height: 10.7 cm

Provenance: private collection Paris

Comments: Vertically (?) faded striated wig, two faded hoes, poorly defined inscription.

Unknown Collection K



Published: Millon auction catalogue, 15/06/2007, lot 8

Height: 10.5 cm

Provenance: Unknown

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, well defined hoes, set C.

Unknown Collection L



Published: Monte Carlo auction catalogue, 13/10/2018, lot 138 (Wrongly mentioned as *Pi-nedjem I* in the title of the lot)

Height: 10.5 cm

Provenance: Unknown

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, well defined hoes, three strands collar, rather fine inscription.

Unknown Collection M



Published: Pescheteau Badin auction catalogue, 09/03/2019, lot 138, (wrongly mentioned as *Tcha-nefer* in the title of the lot)

Height: 10.0 cm

Provenance: Unknown

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, well defined hoes, two strands collar, fine inscription (V3).

Unknown Collection N



Published: Tessier Sarrou auction catalogue, 03/04/2019, lot 113

Height: 10.8 cm

Provenance: Ex Collection Robert Sonin New York (ca 1970)

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, well defined hoes, two strands collar, rather fine inscription.

Unknown Collection O



Published: Picture found on Pinterest without reference

Height: Unknown

Provenance: Unknown

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, well defined hoes, four strands collar, poorly defined inscription, set C. Based on the picture the shabti does not appear to be genuine or at least heavily restored.

Unknown Collection P



Published: unknown

Height: unknown

Provenance: unknown

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, two strands collar, well defined hoes, nice inscription (V5).

Unknown Collection Q



Published: unknown

Height: unknown

Provenance: unknown

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, well defined toes, poorly defined inscription, set C.

Unknown Collection R



Published: unknown

Height: unknown

Provenance: unknown

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, two strands collar, well defined hoes, nice inscription (V3), set A.

Unknown Collection S



Published: unknown

Height: unknown

Provenance: Former US collection

Comments: Horizontally striated wig, three strands collar, dissymmetric hoes, nice inscription (V3), set A.

4. Discussion

The present paper shows images of 54 workers for the owner *Tayu-heret* coming from the royal cache of Deir el-Bahari.

27 shabtis are located in museums, 27 in private collections.

It is more likely that a few hundreds were present and a lot of them have still to be identified from private collections and museums all around the world.

The quality of the statuettes is uneven.

Spellings of the name on the workers are various: we have identified at least 6 variants but they are probably more, especially if we take into account the way the “justified” formula is painted.

We have identified 4 sets of artefacts decorated by 4 different painters.

The following frames summarize these 4 sets:



Set A*



BM



C5



Hld



KMT

Set B*



HC



K



O



Q

Set C*



C3



Hld



Manz

Set D*

Further work is required to identify more painters.

A more accurate study should be necessary in order to determine if different molds were used (this seems to be the case). It is unclear at this moment whether each set corresponds to a given mold and maybe to a corresponding painter who worked on them?

* The labelling of the shabtis shown in the frames is in the same order as in the main catalogue. First the museum parallels (BM for British museum, C for Cairo museum, HLD for Hildesheim museum, Manz for Mainz museum, Vn for Vienna museum) then the known collections and then the unknown collections pieces.

5. Index

Below is the complete overview of all the currently known locations of the workers shabtis of *Tayu-heret*.

Museum pieces

Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 1
Cairo, Cairo Museum 14
Cracow 1
Hildesheim 4
London, British Museum 3
London, Petrie Museum 1
Mainz, Landesmuseum Mainz 1
New York, Brooklyn Museum 2
Oxford 1
Paris, Louvre 2
Prague, 1
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum 1

Museum totals 32

Private collections

HC 1
NH 2
KMT 1
SD 1
AB 2
J 1
Unknown Collections A –S 19

Private collection totals 27

Overall total (museums and private collections) 59

6. Bibliography

1. G. Janes. Shabtis, a private view, p. 101-102 n° 52
2. D. van Bommel, <https://www.ushabtis.com>
3. <https://www.segweb.ch/index-shabtis>
4. G. Janes. The Amasis collection, p.47-61 n° 14
5. N. de Haan, The overseers shabtis of *Tayu-heret*,
<http://www.shabticollections.com/>

7. Acknowledgments

We are grateful to Glenn Janes for his huge work performed on shabtis. His books are precious sources of references for any further studies on shabti owners.

We want to thank Dik van Bommel too for his excellent website which affords a lot of valuable information and images dealing with shabtis, in particular for the royal cache I and Bab el-Gasus cache II.