

Clay funerary figurines from tombs MMA 1151 and MMA 1152 in Sheikh Abd el-Gurna



Abstract: A significant number of clay ushebti comes from two Middle Kingdom tombs MMA 1151 and 1152 investigated by a Polish team in Western Thebes. The funerary figurines belong to a later phase of tomb reuse in the first millennium BC. Nine types were distinguished: six of baked clay and three of unbaked clay. The types and their distribution in the Theban necropolis are discussed in this paper, including the implications of these findings for the debate on the existence of workshops manufacturing funerary goods in Thebes.

Keywords: Thebes, Theban necropolis, clay figurines, ushebti, shabti, Sheikh Abd el-Gurna/Qurna, Third Intermediate Period, Late Period

Funerary statuettes, known as shabtis, ushebti or shawabtis (Schneider 1977/I: 2, 112, 119), were found in large numbers in two Middle Kingdom tombs located on a small nameless hill southwest of Sheikh Abd el-Gurna in Western Thebes [Fig. 1]. The tombs were reused several times during the 1st millennium BC (Kaczanowicz 2018). The investigation by a PCMA project, directed by the late Tomasz Górecki, revealed remains of multiple burials and tomb equipment, scattered in the ruins of a Coptic hermitage established later in the tombs. Once the Coptic Project, working from 2003, had concluded fieldwork by 2015, the Pharaonic structures became the main focus of research (Górecki 2004; 2005; 2007; 2010; 2011; 2013; 2014; Górecki and Szpakowska 2008).

Most of the figurines are small, uninscribed clay ushebti coming from the later phases of reuse of the Middle Kingdom tombs. Dating of these specimens is difficult for two reasons: firstly, the context of the finds was disturbed by the activity of Coptic monks living

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Fig. 1. Location of tombs MMA 1151 and MMA 1152 on the hill near Sheikh Abd el-Gurna investigated by the Polish team, view from the east; top, plan of the two tombs (PCMA UW Sheikh Abd el-Gurna Project/drawing M. Czapińska; photo M. Kaczanowicz)

on the hill, as well as by undocumented excavations conducted in the first half of the 20th century, and secondly, clay ushebtis figurines without texts generate little scholarly interest and it seems that only recently more attention was paid to this kind of artifacts, e.g., publications of Erhart Graefe (2003: 184–192), Gábor Schreiber (2008: 57–60) and, most recently, Agnieszka Makowska (2015). As a rule, however, clay ushebtis are treated as a homogenous group without differentiating between various types of material, details of the figurines, etc.

These inconspicuous, mass-produced objects, despite their seemingly unattrac-

tive appearance, offer a glimpse into the processes of production and distribution of funerary goods in the necropolis. The fact that they were moulded enables archaeologists to recognize specimens originating from one mould. Such single-mould specimens found in different parts of the necropolis may help, in turn, not only to date the figurines found in insecure contexts, but also to understand how goods of this kind were supplied to the necropolis, who the makers of ushebtis were, etc. It is hoped that this short paper, in addition to the above-mentioned publications, will draw attention to this somewhat overlooked category of finds.

CLAY FIGURINES FROM THE TOMBS

Nine distinctive types of clay figurines were recorded beside funerary statuettes of stone and faience. Most of the finds were made in the surroundings of the tombs or the unfinished courtyards (for the plan of the tombs and their location on the hill, see *Fig.1*), clearly far from their original location. Several figurines or fragments thereof came from the sieving of a dump in front of the entrance to tomb MMA 1151. The most likely interpretation of the latter context is that it represents an archaeological dump from Herbert Winlock's excavations in the 1920s. Figurines were also discovered in "Coptic" contexts, such as the "tower" in front of tomb MMA 1152. All the figurines listed below, unless indicated otherwise, came from outside the tombs.

Most of the objects are fragmentary figurines (in several instances recombination of broken parts yielded com-

plete figurines). Traces of paint were preserved, albeit very poorly (especially on unbaked figurines), which is why it was impossible to establish how many ushebtis were painted originally.

In presenting the figurines, the following aspects were taken into consideration: size (measured in the highest/widest point), number of discovered specimens (both complete figurines and their fragments), reconstructed minimal number of figurines (tallying diagnostic parts of figurines such as upper bodies and legs), location within the tomb, type of clay (according to the Vienna system, see Nordström and Bourriau 1993: 168–182), traces of paint, dress (mummiform or everyday), treatment of the back (flat or modelled), presence of a beard, and types of the following items, based on a typology proposed by Hans D. Schneider: wig (W), hand arrangement

(H), and implements (I) (Schneider 1977/I: 165–171).¹ The most important criterion of attribution, however, is

their provenance: all the statuettes belonging to the same type seem to have been made in a single mould.²

CLASSIFICATION



Fig. 2. Classification of ushebti figurines: top, baked clay ushebti types B1 to B6; bottom, unbaked mud ushebti types U1 to U3 (PCMA UW Sheikh Abd el-Gurna Project/photos M. Kaczanowicz)

- 1 The remaining criteria of Schneider’s typology (bags and baskets, text position) were not taken into consideration as they are not present on the said figurines.
- 2 It may seem surprising that the figurines differ in size, sometimes considerably, within the same type. There are two reasons for this: different types of clay and temper resulted in different degrees of shrinking during the firing process and, even more importantly, excess clay from pressing the raw material into a mould in most cases was removed without sufficient care, giving in effect figurines of different size despite their being made in the same mould.

Baked clay figurine	Type B1	[Fig. 2:B1]
Size: 5.5–7 x 1.5 x 1 cm Clay: Nile B2 Paint: Traces of blue paint	Dress: Everyday life (overseer of workers) Back: Flat Beard: No Wig: W4/W17 Hands: H33 Implements: I14	Number: Seven complete, 27 fragments Reconstructed number: At least 21 figurines Location: Three fragments found inside the shaft of tomb MMA 1152

Additional remarks and dating

Figurines of overseers, same in style as Type B2 (facial features, size, paint), likely forming a set. Whip in left hand. Details roughly modelled (eyes, lips). No headband.

A comparable figurine from the Kraków Czartoryski collection (XI-916), without a given provenance, is dated to the Twenty-first–Twenty-second Dynasties (Schlögl 2000: 73). The Twenty-first Dynasty date should be excluded as no other artifacts from this period were discovered in the tomb.

William M.F. Petrie was of the opinion that the overseer ushebti went out of fashion at the end of the Twenty-second Dynasty (Petrie 1935: 11), but examples of overseer statuettes have now been attributed to the late Twenty-fifth Dynasty (Aston 2009: 356 and note 2934). Therefore, this group can be dated to the Twenty-second Dynasty and later, although a comparison with Type B2 figurines could narrow down this dating (see below).

Baked clay figurine	Type B2	[Fig. 2:B2]
Size: 5.5–7 x 1.5 x 0.5 cm Clay: Nile B2 Paint: Traces of blue paint	Dress: Mummiform Back: Flat Beard: No Wig: W4/W17 Hands: H19 Implements: I5	Number: 21 complete, 341 fragments Reconstructed number: At least 222 figurines Location: Nine fragments from the upper chambers of tomb MMA 1151; • 27 fragments from the bottom of the shaft of tomb MMA 1152; • five fragments from a niche inside the shaft of tomb MMA 1152; • a fragment from test trench D

Additional remarks and dating

The presence of two hoes and the mummiform shape indicate that these figurines represented a group of workers. They undoubtedly formed a set with figurines of Type B1. Analogous unprovenanced figurines are currently in the Kraków Czartoryski collection (XI-921, XI-1682) and the Archaeological Museum (305, 599), dated all except one from the Archaeological Museum (599) to the Twenty-second Dynasty (Schlögl 2000: 78, 84, 213); the sole exception is from the Twenty-second–Twenty-fifth Dynasties (Schlögl 2000: 244). A similar figurine, currently in Basel, is dated to the Twenty-first–Twenty-fifth Dynasty (Schlögl and Brodbeck 1990: 234). Czech excavations in Deir el-Medina brought to light a number of comparable statuettes, dated generally to the “Third Intermediate Period” (Onderka 2014: 180; sadly no date of discovery or exact location is given). TT 99, the tomb of Senneferi in Sheikh Abd el-Gurna yielded a number of ushebti of a type very similar to Type 2, apparently from a single mould.³ The timespan of the reuse of the New Kingdom tomb TT 99 covers most of the Third Intermediate Period, including the Twenty-second Dynasty,

3 Figurines from TT 99 are illustrated online: <http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/tt99/finds/shabti1.html> [accessed: 29.11.2017].

although this is hardly definite proof of such a date. Identical statuettes were discovered recently in TT 184 in el-Khokha, which also yielded fragments of cartonnages tentatively indicating a Twenty-second Dynasty date, but also remains of later burials (tubular beads from bead nets, see below, note 7).

Also, German excavations of the Ramesside tomb K93.12 in Dra Abu el Naga revealed a number of figurines resembling the ushebti discussed in the paper; these were dated tentatively to the Twenty-first–Twenty-second Dynasties on the basis of ceramic finds (U. Rummel, personal communication). The most important parallel on all counts comes from an intact burial in the courtyard of TT-171 - where identical figurines were found together with the mummy of Perenbast, chantress of Amun (Petrie 1909: 15 and Pl. LIII); they have been dated in reference to the other grave goods to the late 10th or early 9th century BC (Aston 2009: 160).⁴

Since the pottery finds from both tombs fit well into a Libyan-period date (Rzeuska and Orzechowska 2005), both Type B1 and Type B2 can be dated provisionally to the Twenty-second Dynasty, although a later date cannot be excluded.

Baked clay figurine	Type B3	[Fig. 2:B3]
Size: 5 x 0.8 x 0.3 cm Clay: Nile B2, • marl A2, • marl A4 Paint: None	Dress: Mummiform Back: Flat Beard: Yes Wig: W35a Hands: H30 Implements: I5	Number: One complete, 45 fragments Reconstructed number: At least 32 figurines Location: Fragment from the entrance corridor in tomb MMA 1152

Additional remarks and dating

Figurines of Type B3 are much smaller than those of the first two types. The producer's fingerprints, left likely when pressing the clay into the mould (Makowska 2015: 144) or perhaps when removing excess clay after modelling, are very well visible on their backs. A beard is present, although the details of the face are roughly modelled (or not at all).

The presence of a beard is a criterion used by David Aston to date the Third Intermediate Period ushebti: the earliest example of a funerary bearded figurine noted by Aston, belonging to Istemkheb B from Tomb Group 575 (Aston 2009: 363), is dated to 700–680 BC.⁵ Thus bearded figurines can be assumed cautiously to be later than the types presented above. The collected ceramic assemblage collected as well as the coffin and Ptah-Sokar-Osiris fragments, point to the late Twenty-fifth or early Twenty-sixth Dynasty (Rzeuska and Orzechowska 2005; Szpakowska 2007). However, remains of a presumed Hellenistic-period burial were discovered inside tomb MMA 1152 (Górecki 2011: 233) and ushebti from the Ptolemaic period, although rare, were discovered during the Hungarian investigation inside TT 32 (faience statuettes: Schreiber 2011: 123); clay figurines were also identified, for example, during Austrian excavations in the Asasif area (Budka 2010: 273). A Ptolemaic date thus cannot be completely excluded, even though it seems highly unlikely, taking into account the very few remains of such a late burial that could be an indication of fairly modest tomb equipment having been offered to the dead.

- 4 For some reason Aston described the figurines of Perenbast as being made of mud (his type K) contrary to what Petrie wrote. However, photographs published by the Manchester Museum leave no doubt as to the baked-clay form of the figurines, which are painted blue: <http://harbour.man.ac.uk/mmcustom/Display.php?irn=101186&QueryPage=/mmcustom/narratives/index.php> [accessed: 14.12.2017].
- 5 Figurines of Aston's type G: smooth, uncontoured, tapering bodies, no arms, a plain wig and a beard, make their first appearance around 700 BC (Aston 2011: 25).

Baked clay figurine	Type B4	[Fig. 2:B4]
Size: 5 x 1 x 0.4 cm Clay: Nile B2, • marl A4 Paint: Traces of blue and yellow ⁶ paint	Dress: Mummiform Back: Flat Beard: No Wig: W4/W17 Hands: H8 Implements: I5	Number: Seven complete, 266 fragments Reconstructed number: At least 144 figurines Location: One complete figurine and four fragments from inside the shaft of tomb MMA 1152

Additional remarks and dating

Many of the Type B4 figurines have excess clay, which failed to be removed by the producer, on both sides of the body. Unprovenanced figurines of similar type are currently in museums in Warsaw (MN 141783; Pomorska 1959: 135), Kraków (MAK 595, 1273, 1279, 1283, 1284, 1286, 1287, 2228; Schlögl 2000: 240–245), Poznań (MNP A 244, 246; Schlögl 2006: 35) and Cleveland (CMA 32; Berman and Boháč 1999: 449). Their dating varies from the Twenty-first to the Twenty-third Dynasties (Warsaw ushebti), Twenty-second to Twenty-fifth Dynasties (Kraków and Poznań figurines), and no date at all (Cleveland figurine). A Late Period date has been proposed for the figurines from the excavation in the temple of Amenhotep II near the Ramesseum (Sesana 2007: 47–48, Fig. 47); similarly the ushebti stored in the Museo Gregoriano Egizio (19427–19549, 19551–19580, 19582; Grenier 1996: Pl. I). Several specimens were also found in TT 99 (see above). Some of the abovementioned figurines are made of unbaked clay, but apart from this, there are no visible differences between them.

The date cannot be narrowed because of the broad chronological span of analogous objects from other excavations and museums. Therefore, the proposed date covers a period from the beginning of the Twenty-second Dynasty through the beginning of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, and the Ptolemaic period.

Baked clay figurine	Type B5	[Fig. 2:B5]
Size: 3.5 x 0.6 x 0.1 cm Clay: Nile B2, • marl A4 Paint: Traces of blue paint	Dress: Mummiform Back: Flat Beard: No Wig: W4/W17 Hands: H18 Implements: I5	Number: One complete, 22 fragments Reconstructed number: At least 12 figurines Location: No data

Additional remarks and dating

Figurines of Type B5 are much smaller than those of the previous types. The only parallels are the figurines from TT 99 (see above). For lack of evidence, this group, like Type B4, needs to be dated to the period between the beginning of the Twenty-second Dynasty and the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, or to the Ptolemaic period, although the latter seems least likely.

6 According to Aston (2009: 361), the yellow color on ushebti is due to discoloration of an originally clear varnish.

Baked clay figurine	Type B6	[Fig. 2:B6]
Size: 5 x 1.5 x 0.6 cm Clay: Nile B2 Paint: No	Dress: Mummiform Back: Flat Beard: Yes Wig: W35a Hands: H10 Implements: None modelled	Number: Two complete, 10 fragments Reconstructed number: At least 11 figurines Location: One complete statuette found inside the shaft of tomb MMA 1152

Additional remarks and dating

Very roughly modelled figurines, details not visible. The possible parallels for Type B6 statuettes are currently in Kraków (MAK 1282, 1268, 1287, 1685), dated to the Twenty-second–Twenty-fifth dynasty (Schlögl 2000: 241–245) and Cleveland (CMA 32), no date provided (Berman 1999: 449). Very similar ushebtis—likely from a single mould—come from TT 99 (see above). The presence of a beard suggests either a late Twenty-fifth/early Twenty-sixth Dynasty date or, less likely, the Ptolemaic period.

Unbaked clay figurine	Type U1	[Fig. 2:U1]
Size: 5 x 0.8 x 0.3 cm Clay: Nile B2, • marl A2, • marl A4 Paint: No	Dress: Mummiform Back: Flat Beard: Yes Wig: W35a Hands: H30 Implements: I5	Number: 40 fragments (no complete figurines) Reconstructed number: At least 40 figurines Location: Two fragments from the entrance corridor of tomb MMA 1152

Additional remarks and dating

Being identical with Type B3 figurines of baked clay, this type is presumed to come from the same mould. The same dating in the late Twenty-fifth/early Twenty-sixth Dynasty, or, less likely, the Ptolemaic period, is thus proposed for these fragments. Figurines of similar size and stylistic features, but without beards, come from the “Saite” tombs (Lipińska 1977: 10–11) situated behind the temple of Tuthmosis III in Deir el-Bahari (excavated in the 1980s by Jadwiga Lipińska for the PCMA), and from TT 184 in el-Khokha (see above). It seems very likely that these particular ushebtis, the figurines from TT 184 and those from the Deir el-Bahari tombs all originated from the same workshop, which is yet another argument for discarding the Ptolemaic date and assigning the figurines to the Twenty-fifth–Twenty-sixth Dynasties.

Unbaked clay figurine	Type U2	[Fig. 2:U2]
Size: 5.5 x 1.2 x 1 cm Clay: Nile B2, • marl A4 Paint: Traces of blue and green paint	Dress: Mummiform Back: Flat Beard: No Wig: W4/W17 Hands: H8 Implements: I5	Number: Two complete, 13 fragments Reconstructed number: 15 figurines Location: No data

Additional remarks and dating

This figurines resemble the Type B4 baked-clay figurines, hence the same date: Twenty-second–Twenty-sixth Dynasties, or the Ptolemaic period.

Unbaked clay figurine	Type U3	[Fig. 2:U3]
Size: 5.5 x 1.2 x 1 cm Clay: Nile B2 Paint: None	Dress: Mummiform(?) Back: Flat Beard: ? Wig: W0 Hands: Not modelled Implements: None modelled	Number: 19 fragments (no complete figurines) Reconstructed number: 19 figurines Location: No data

Additional remarks and dating

The figurines are modelled very clumsily; no details are visible and the images resemble lumps of clay rather than ushebti. No evident parallel can be proposed. A tubular faience bead of the kind usually forming a bead net was noted fused into the clay of one of the pieces attributed to this group [Fig. 3]. Since bead nets first appeared in tomb equipment in the second half of the 8th century BC,⁷ their presence in the tombs in question (hundreds of beads have been found) narrows down the dating of this type of ushebti to the Twenty-fifth–Twenty-sixth dynasty or the Ptolemaic period.



Fig. 3. Tubular, faience bead inside a type U3 mud ushebti (PCMA Sheikh Abd el-Gurna Project/photo M. Kaczanowicz)

UNCLASSIFIED FRAGMENTS

Of the 256 fragments of figurines of baked clay not assigned to any group, two fragments were found in a niche in the shaft of tomb MMA 1152, 19 fragments at the bottom of the shaft, and three fragments in the entrance corridor of the tomb. More figurines are likely to be found in the fill of the shaft of tomb MMA 1151,

once its excavation is completed. As for the unbaked figurine fragments, 138 non-diagnostic pieces were found for the most part outside the tombs. The sole exception are two fragments from the entrance corridor of tomb MMA 1152 and one piece found at the bottom of the burial shaft.

THEBAN WORKSHOPS PRODUCING FUNERARY GOODS

The number of clay ushebti discovered during the excavations on the hill is much larger than the number of any other kind of figurines placed in the tomb. It is consistent with the funerary beliefs of the 1st millennium BC when it was customary to order a set of 401 funerary statuettes for each deceased (Černý 1942; Edwards

1971; Poole 1998; Schneider 1977/I: 320). The number of different types of clay figurines found within a single tomb/site, as well as criteria used by authors to distinguish particular types varies: nine types were discovered during the Polish investigations in Sheikh Abd el-Gurna, two groups (of clay, with several types

7 Aston (2009: 292–293) recently demonstrated that examples of bead nets dated to earlier times could have been girdles instead.

and subtypes) in the burial ground of the Temple of Hatshepsut in Deir el-Bahari (Makowska 2015: 144–156), and 32 different types in TT 184 (Fábián 2007: 32). It would seem natural to assume that one gang of ushebtis (figurines from a single mould) was intended for one deceased. However, at Hawara, a collection of 399 statuettes, containing 17 different types, was discovered in a single burial (Petrie 1890: 19). Therefore, it cannot be deduced from the presence of nine different types of ushebtis that there were nine different burials. Moreover, during the Late Period, large inscribed faience figures could have coexisted with small, uninscribed statuettes (perhaps clay ones as well) within the same tomb, thus reflecting the hierarchy of overseers and workers (Schneider 1977/I: 322); it is not known when the blending of new and old traditions began. Distribution of similar figurines (supposedly coming from the same workshop) in Sheikh Abd el-Gurna, el-Khokha and Deir el-Bahari also prompts the question about the number of ushebti makers, and location and organization of their workshops.

Little information is available on workshops of this kind. According to Makowska (2015: 138, note 3), there were no workshops specialized in the production of ushebtis as a particular category, the specialization being rather by material. The known workshops were attached to temples and to royal palaces (*Hwt-nbw*) and no private ones have ever been noted. Schneider (1977/I: 240) did not think that a title such as “ushebti

maker” existed. In a bill of sale of ushebtis figurines (BM EA 10800) from the Twenty-first to Twenty-second Dynasties, the producer of the statuettes is referred to as “the chief modeller of amulets of the temple of Amun” (Edwards 1971: 122), confirming Makowska’s view. The inscription on a recently published shabti box (Cairo TR 15.12.25.18/SR 7723), dated to the same period, seemingly hints at its owner’s title: “Osiris shabti-maker of the Amun domain”, which, provided the reading is correct, would indicate that the title of “ushebti maker” did exist (Miniaci 2014).⁸ In both cases, production of funerary figurines seems to have been connected with the institution of the temple; this, however, does not necessarily mean that the workshops could not have been “private” ones (Warburton 2007).

A faience bead, observed inside one of the type U₃ ushebtis, must have fallen into the clay mixture before it was left to dry in the sun. It would consequently indicate that the workshop which produced this particular statuette must have also been manufacturing faience objects, or, at least, that a faience workshop and the one producing ushebtis were situated close together. The resumption is that some workshops could have specialized in more than one material.

The precise identity of the figurine makers, just like the identity of the coffin makers of this time (Elias 1993: 852–859) is an open issue. One could cautiously suggest that perhaps Medinet Habu—a refuge for a former population of workmen from Deir el-Medina—

8 According to Gianluca Miniaci (2014: 256–257), the title *Wsjr ms hm (ntr?) n pr Imn* would be a *hapax legomenon*.

is where such ateliers should be sought. After all, there is evidence for rewrapping of the royal mummies at the end of the New Kingdom there (Teeter 2010: 7), thus connecting Medinet Habu with the activities of embalmers and, possibly, makers of funerary equipment (some Twenty-first Dynasty grave goods were discovered in the Royal Cache, along with 'restored' objects, belonging to the original burial assemblages, such as the wooden shabti figurine of Ramesses II modified into an Osiris figure, Aston 1991: 95–99). Pottery kilns, which theoretically could be used for ushebti production, have been discovered (Hölscher 1954: 16). However, fragments of funerary figurines found at the site (Teeter 2010: 98–100) cannot serve as proof of the existence of such workshops, as Medinet Habu was eventually turned into a necropolis. Nevertheless, such workshops did not have to be situated within the necropolis and could have been located on the other bank of the Nile as well.

The presence of the same types of figurines manufactured in a different manner (made of baked and unbaked clay) is interesting and requires further comment. It has been proposed that female and male burials within the Ramesseum necropolis differed in that men were equipped with faience ushebti and women with mud ones (Quibell 1898: 9–10; Aston 1987: 643–644; 2009: 240). This statement has been questioned recently (Li 2010: 71), therefore the material can no longer be used to determine the sex of the deceased. The fact that different types of clay were used to produce figurines of the same type may be explained simply enough: whenever the makers ran out of

a particular type of clay, they would use what was available. Why some figurines were baked and others were not is not clear. Perhaps raw mud figurines were cheaper than the baked ones.

Finally, the coexistence of two different categories of funerary figurines: mass produced ushebti and large, well worked statuettes, during the 1st millennium BC, calls for further consideration. The first category, examples of which are the ushebti from tombs MMA 1151 and 1152, includes the mass-made figurines of materials such as clay or faience, which were commissioned by the family of the person for whom they were intended. In case of the figurines known from papyrus BM EA 10800, the person who commissioned the ushebti was the son of the deceased (Edwards 1971). Manufacturing such figurines was not a drawn-out process—they did not have to possess any facial characteristics of the deceased—and it took place, most likely, within 70 days from death and burial. Sets of figurines may have simply been available for purchase at the workshop at all times. Figurines of this kind are apparently *hmnw* or servants, not the actual images of the deceased, especially in view of the fact that they were divided into the categories of workers and overseers, which—when animated in the Netherworld—would require the *ka* of the deceased to be divided in two, if both a worker and overseer were to perform their work at the same time. Stone shabtis came back into fashion during the Twenty-fifth Dynasty (Schneider 1977/I: 225–226, 234–235). These “archaizing” figures, made by hand and therefore highly individualized, had more in common with contemporary

statuary than with the discussed clay figurines. It has been suggested that all the Theban stone shabtis of the Kushite era were manufactured in a single workshop (Gundlach 2013/I: 309). Production of such a huge number of stone figurines must have been time-consuming and it seems likely that it was commissioned by the tomb owner himself. It would seem more appropriate to look for the inspiration of this renewal in Middle Kingdom times, when funerary figurines indeed played the role of a 'double' of the deceased. These different functions of the ushebti during the Kushite period find their reflection in the texts of the spell, especially variant VIIA, where the terms shabti and ushebti were used

together, and the figurines can be addressed both in singular and plural form (Schneider 1977/I: 118–119). This confusion is perhaps the result of the above-mentioned mixing of two concepts. In light of numerous discussions on the change of the religious role of the funerary figurines in the 1st millennium BC, it is perhaps also worth considering whether these two categories of objects—mass-made ushebti and stone shabtis—represent the same funerary belief or whether the different form and workmanship of the statuettes reflect two rivalling funerary traditions that were finally blended into one custom during the Late Period.

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