Three Saite-period shabtis of Wedjat-Hor, son of Ashsedjemese, with some idiosyncratic features

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Text abstract: This report describes for the first time the surviving (upper) portions of three 26th-Dynasty shabtis made for Wedjat-Hor, son of Ashsedjemese. Shabtis A and C are clearly from the same mould and inscribed by the same scribe; shabti B is the product of a different mould and scribe. Some orthographic idiosyncrasies are shared, whereas others are specific to each scribe. Ashsedjemese ("He who calls, she will hear") is an uncommon female name of the Late Period known from a 27th-Dynasty demotic marriage contract. On shabtis A and C, her title "Mistress of the House" comes perilously close to being downgraded to "Mistress of the Shelter/Yard," while shabti B inflicts an even greater indignity by miswriting her name as Sedjemash, "Servant." An unusual insertion after the mother's name, found on all three shabtis, is discussed. The shabti spell is substantially abridged and omits the central bloc of the canonical (i.e., Schneider VIIA) clause sequence. To compensate for the lack of a Summons clause, a novel change is made to the grammar of the Duty clause. Wedjat-Hor's name features three times in the short inscription, more often than is usual even in the full-length shabti spell.

Graphic abstract:
1. Introduction

This report describes the surviving (upper) portions of three finely detailed 26th-Dynasty shabtis made for a man named Wedjat-Hor. The first two specimens (shabtis A & B) are now in an Australian private collection; the third (shabti C) is also in private hands, but its current location is unknown. Previously, shabti A was in a German collection, having been acquired in Egypt during the 1940s.1,2 Shabtis B and C were recently sold by an antiquities dealer in Dubai.3

2. Descriptions and analysis

2.1 Descriptions and photographs

The surviving (i.e., upper) portion of shabti A (Fig. 1) has maximum dimensions of 6.9 cm (height), 3.0 cm (width at elbows) and 2.2 cm (depth, from front of beard to back of shoulders). The shabti is of green faience with numerous surface losses which expose an off-white fabric. The lower front of the beard has lost its surface finish. The main surface scrape (on top left of face, from forehead into wig) was probably caused by a digging tool during excavation. There is no dorsal bag, although there appears to be a suspension rope leading from the right hand to the left shoulder.

The interior areas of the incised hieroglyphs are smooth and light green, like the unincised surface. Due to breakage of the figurine, only the first three registers of frontal text have survived intact, along with the upper part of the fourth. The top of the back pillar of this shabti carried an old label bearing the number 2108 in black ink (Fig. 1d). During the course of this investigation, it was removed by the current owner to reveal the top hieroglyphs of the back pillar. The extant frontal and back-pillar text of shabti A is captured photographically in Fig. 2a-h and Fig. 2i, respectively.

The surviving (i.e., upper) portion of shabti B (Fig. 3) has maximum dimensions of 8.8 cm (height), 3.1 cm (width at elbows) and 2.2 cm (depth, from front of beard to back of shoulders). This figurine has lost most of its glaze, leaving a porous pale yellowish-brown surface. There is slight abrasion to the tip of the nose and also to the beard, which ends in a spiral coil. In this case, five bands of frontal text have survived intact, along with the upper part of the sixth. Apart from the loss of the feet, the main damage is a long shallow scrape down the left hand side of the back pillar, probably caused by a digging tool during excavation. As with shabti A, the exposed fabric is off-white. A suspension rope from the right hand leads to a dorsal bag slung over the left shoulder.

The interior areas of some of the frontal hieroglyphs are glazed with a light green colour, like those on shabti A. The extant frontal and back pillar text of shabti B is captured in Fig. 4a-f and Fig. 4g, respectively.

The surviving (i.e., upper) portion of shabti C (Fig. 5a-d) was advertised by the dealer as measuring 8.5 x 3.3 cm. Its surface is a variable brown/orange/green colour, with the most reddish patches on the front of the statuette and the greenest tones on
Fig. 1. Shabti A. Views of the surviving fragment of shabti A. (a) Full frontal, (b) left side, (c) right front angle, (d) rear.
Fig. 2. Detailed views of inscription on shabti A. Frontal text reads right-to-left, so (a-h) follow anti-clockwise rotation of figurine. (i) Inscription concludes on back pillar.
Fig. 3. Shabti B. Views of the surviving fragment of shabti B. (a) Full frontal, (b) left side, (c) right front angle, (d) rear.
Fig. 4. Detailed views of inscription on shabti B. Frontal text reads right-to-left, so (a-f) follow anti-clockwise rotation of figurine. (g) Inscription concludes on back pillar.
Fig. 5. Shabti C. Views of the surviving fragment of shabti C. (a) Full frontal, (b) left front/side angle, (c) right front/side angle, (d) rear. Images by kind permission of Hussam Zurqieh (Zurqieh Co. Ancient Art, Dubai), who retains all rights.
Fig. 6. Detailed views of inscription on shabti C. Frontal text reads right-to-left, so (a-e) follow anti-clockwise rotation of figurine. (f) Inscription concludes on back pillar. Images by kind permission of Hussam Zurqieh (Zurqieh Co. Ancient Art, Dubai), who retains all rights.
the back. The beard ends in a bulbous forward projection. A suspension rope from
the right hand leads to a dorsal bag slung over the left shoulder. For this shabti, I
have had to rely entirely on photographs.6

The interior areas of most of the incised hieroglyphs seem to have been coloured
grey-black, or – alternatively – the underlying fabric has a darker colour than the
unincised surface. The extant frontal and back pillar text of shabti C is captured in
enlargements from the images in Fig. 5, which are aligned and presented as Fig. 6a-e
and Fig. 6f, respectively.

2.2 Comparison and analysis

Despite their different surface coloration, shabtis A and C are clearly from the
same mould. Apart from one possible exception in each category, the shared
inscriptions that survive are identical in composition (i.e., in glyph choice and
positioning) and in the placement of line-breaks.7 The underlying Schneider
typology appears to be 5.3.1 Tc:Cl.XIA2 W39 H30 I6 B26 Tp3c,8 9 although
(probably through oversight) shabti A lacks a dorsal bag and is therefore B0. In
contrast, shabti B is from a different mould. It has a smaller and narrower face, which
– unlike the other two figurines – is framed by incised “sideburns” or “chin-straps”
that join the wig to the beard. This shabti’s hands are much closer together, and its
forearm contours are clearly visible in addition to the rounded elbow-bulges present
on all three statuettes. In contrast to shabtis A and C, where the handle of each hoe is
a single straight rod,10 the handle on each of shabti B’s hoes consists of two half-
length rods joined via a short overlap hidden by the figurine’s hand.11 The implement
set is still classed as I6 because it consists of two hoes and a cord, but the hoe handle
design is closer to that in class I2/3. Overall, the Schneider typology for shabti B
appears to be 5.3.1 Tc:Cl.XIA2 W39 H26 I6 B26 Tp3c. For both shabtis with bags,
i.e., shabtis B and C, the mesh pattern consists of regularly impressed rows of small
triangles, and thus is neither B26a (net-like) nor B26b (brickwork-like).

As is often the case for Saite-period shabtis, all three wear a large striated lappet
wig, which pushes the exposed ears forward, and a plaited ritual beard. The facial
features are striking: a long face, wide mouth with thick lips, and a broad nose.
Portraiture in the Saite renaissance of the 26th Dynasty preserved the Kushite
influence of the preceding Dynasty.12,13 Kushite features include a round face, short
broad nose, nasolabial furrows and thick lips,14,15 so it is likely that this 25th Dynasty
convention underpins the somewhat negroid features of Wedjat-Hor’s shabtis. The
Nubian aspect is more pronounced on the broader faces of shabtis A and C.

Each of the shabtis wields two hoes, which for the 26th Dynasty is very unusual,
although not completely without precedent. Two hoes comprised the normal set of
implements from the mid-18th Dynasty to the end of the 25th Dynasty, but thereafter
the standard equipment consisted of a hoe and a pick.16 Despite the Schneider
classification of I6, there is little difference between each of the two hoes held by
each figurine, and neither of the blades in each pair is pointed. Shabti A wields two
narrow-bladed hoes; shabtis B and C seem to have hoe-blades that are intermediate
between the narrow and broad forms. As mentioned above, a Saite shabti bearing two
hoes is not unheard of. For example, a shabti made for a certain Horiraa early in the 26th Dynasty holds a pair of hoes similar to those held by Wedjat-Hor’s shabtis, as does another shabti from the middle of the 26th Dynasty made for a man named Waw(a)wer.

The horizontal registers of the inscription consist of small hieroglyphs that have been very precisely incised; the text would have been added to the figurines with a sharp pointed tool after moulding but before firing. In addition to the manufacture of shabti B in a different mould, its frontal hieroglyphs are significantly larger – glyph heights are ca. 5 mm and ca. 7 mm high for shabtis A and B, respectively. The frontal text on shabti B is housed in wider registers than those on shabti A (and probably C, too). Beyond these indications, various orthographic features (Sect. 3-6) also point to a shared scribe for shabtis A and C and a different one for shabti B. This would be consistent with Niek de Haan’s findings for other Late Period shabtis of the 26-27th Dynasties. Specifically, a study of 50 shabtis made for Psamtik, son of Mery-Neith, revealed that the shabtis from each mould had been inscribed by a different individual, with a single scribe working on the output of a single mould. A later study of a smaller sample of shabtis made for Wahib-Ra-mery-Ptah, son of Iretiru, pointed toward the same conclusion.

The arrangement of text into horizontal bands from the waist downward is normal for tapering 26th-Dynasty figurines such as these. With the exception of shabtis from Saqqara, the alternative T-shaped format did not become common until the 27th Dynasty, after which it persisted until the Ptolemaic era.

The presence of a back pillar is typical of Late Period shabtis. The hieroglyphs on the back pillar of shabtis A and C are significantly larger than those on their frontal rows, but the same is not true of shabti B, where both sets of glyphs are approximately the same size. In Saite-period shabtis, the rear pillar often bears a vertical inscription that implores the local town-god to stand behind the deceased. The back pillar is discussed further in Sect. 5.

The remaining sections of the paper will focus upon the inscription on the shabtis.

3. Identity of the owner

Wedjat-Hor is not given any titles, nor does he bear the usual epithet for the deceased, *mscr-hrw* (“true of voice” or “justified”). The first part of Wedjat-Hor’s name is specified solely by the Eye of Horus symbol, *D10, wd3.t*. This contrasts with many other Late Period shabtis for similarly named individuals, such as the 26th-Dynasty shabtis of two men named Wedja-Hor (“Horus is whole/injured”), where *wd3* is spelled out using *G43-U28*, or the 30th Dynasty shabti of another Wedja-Hor, where it is specified by *V25-G1*. The Horus component of Wedjat-Hor’s name is specified by the falcon glyph *G5, Hr.w*. The same is true for one of the 26th Dynasty shabti owners, but the second part of the other man’s name is given by the human face symbol *D2, hr*. The 30th Dynasty shabti uses the falcon-on-a-standard glyph *G7, Hr.w*. 
Wedjat-Hor’s mother was ‘ỉ-sdm-sa (Fig. 7a), Ashsedjemes. This name is not listed in Hermann Ranke’s Personennamen, nor in Michelle Thirion’s supplements to that work. Ranke’s translation of ‘ỉ-sdm-f (PN I 71, 9) (Fig. 7b), the male equivalent of Ashsedjemes, is *wer ruft, wird gehört: “One who calls will be heard,” which suggests that Ranke has parsed the name as ‘ỉ, the perfective participle “he who called/calls,” plus an active prospective sdm-f whose subject is the name-bearer: “he will hear.” Using Ranke’s paradigm, the literal translation of Ashsedjemes would be “He who calls, she will hear.” Another possibility might be to view ‘ỉ as an imperative, in which case the name would read “Call! She will hear.” Ashsedjemes is an uncommon female name of the Late Period known from a demotic legal papyrus of the early 27th Dynasty that was found in the Sacred Animal Necropolis at Saqqara. The consent of this particular Ashsedjemes, who was the daughter of Ankh-Psamtik and Tetihor and the wife of Petiese, is noted in the marriage contract of her daughter Shemty, which is dated to year 11 of Darius I. The name ‘ỉ-sdm-s does not appear in the Demotisches Namenbuch in its own right, but this compendium lists the probable variants ‘ỉ-stm and ‘ỉ-stm.

On shabtis A and C, Ashsedjemes is twice described as nb(.t) pr.w (“Mistress of the House”) with a variant of house glyph O1 that looks uncannily like the reed shelter glyph O4, a simple “Greek key” motif with a phonetic value of *h. However, Ashsedjemes is spared the corresponding demotion to “Mistress of the Shelter” or “Mistress of the Yard” by one small detail: careful inspection reveals that the rectilinear meander is actually the mirror-image of glyph O4. The final up-tick at the centre of the observed glyph may be the result of an upward displacement (and then fusion) of the vertical logographic stroke that is sometimes written below O1 when the latter is used as an ideogram. Inspection of other shabtis has not yet revealed additional instances of this distinctive variant of glyph O1.

Shabti B uses the canonical house glyph O1 on the single occasion where it provides Wedjat-Hor’s mother with a title, thus according her an uncompromised nb(.t) pr.w. However, this shabti reserves its own – and indeed greater – indignity for the woman by miswriting her name (‘ỉ-sdm-s) as sdm-ỉ (Fig. 7c), “Servant,” i.e., “the one who hears the call.” It does so on both of the occasions where her name is cited (lines 1 and 3). One must presume that the similarity of an uncommon personal name (Ashsedjemes) to a well-known noun (sedjemash) built from the same two root words has confused the scribe of shabti B and resulted in the substitution. As the first word is a participle, Faulkner’s dictionary records sdm-ỉ for a male servant and sdm-t-ỉ for a female one, so perhaps a further insult – this time to the mother’s gender – lurks within the appellation sdm-ỉ. On the other hand, it is worth noting that Ranke lists sdm-ỉ.w as a female name of the New Kingdom (PN I 323, 20), albeit with only one attestation. Its listing as a woman’s name does not sit well with the presence of the (plural) male determinative A1 and the fact that it is thought to be an epithet of Amun.

An interpolation in the text of all three shabtis, which will be discussed in Sect. 6.1, seems to provide yet another attempt at formulating or paraphrasing the name of Wedjat-Hor’s mother.
Fig. 7. Hieroglyphic forms of relevant names (and potential names) followed by their transliterations. (a) Ashsedjemes, as recorded on Wedjat-Hor’s shabtis A and C; female name, Late Period. (b) Ashsedjemef (PN I 71, 9); female name, New Kingdom. (c, d) Sedjemash; noun, “[male] servant.” (e) Sedjemetash; noun, “[female] servant.” (f) Sedjemashu (PN I 323, 20); female name, Middle Kingdom. (g) Ash (PN I 71, 8); female name, Middle Kingdom. (h) Ash (PN I 71, 8); female name, Late Period. (i) Ash (PN I 71, 8); female name, Middle Kingdom to Late Period. (j) Insertion after Wedjat-Hor’s mother’s name on shabtis A-C (Sect. 6.1). (k) Djisimeri (PN I 397, 21); female name, Middle Kingdom. (l) Padji-ashsedjem (PN I 122, 21); male name, Late to Ptolemaic Period. (m) Padji-ashsedjemef; male name, Late Period. (n) Tadji-ashshedjemef; female name, Late Period. (o, p) Mes (PN I 164, 18); especially male but also female name, New Kingdom.
4. Inscription

The full inscription was written in six horizontal registers on the front of each shabti and was concluded in a single vertical column written on the back pillar (BP). The text represents an abridged form of the shabti spell from Chapter 6 of the Book of the Dead, whose omissions will be identified and discussed in Sect. 7. The hieroglyphic consensus from the three shabtis is shown in Fig. 8. The main differences in the text on the shabtis relates to the name and titling of Wedjat-Hor’s mother (Sect. 3). Transliteration of the consensus text from shabtis A and C yields the following:

(1) shΔ wsr wtst-ḥr.w ms(i.n) nb(.t) h/pr.w ṣ-ṣdm-
(2) =s di s Δ26 dd-f Z3 i wsbd-
(3) ty pn wsr wtst-ḥr.w ms(i.n) nb(.t) h/pr.w ṣ-ṣdm-
(4) =s (i)r iri-f k3.w(t) nb(.wt)
(5) iri.ti im m ḫr.t-nṯt ḫnn.i.t
(6) ṣ(y) n(.y) imn.tt ḫ
(BP) isb.tt m’k w(i) ḫt ḫr.w

Translating at face value, as far as this is possible, gives:

(1) The illuminated one, the Osiris, Wedjat-Hor, born of the Mistress of the Yard/House, Ash-sedjem-
(2) es [+ di s Δ26], he says [+ Z3]: O this shab-
(3) ti, the Osiris Wedjat-Hor, born of the Mistress of the Yard/House, Ash-
-sedjem-
(4) es, if he would do all the works
(5) which are to be done there in the necropolis ferrying
(6) sand of the West to
(BP) the East; Here I am, Wedjat-Hor.

The filiation term ms in lines 1 and 3 is taken to be the perfective relative form ms(i.n), the phrase literally meaning “Wedjat-Hor to whom [...] Ashsedjemes gave birth.” With shabti B, the main difference is that Wedjat-Hor’s mother is (in both of these lines) called ṣdm-ṣ, “Servant” (Sect. 3), and the second nb(.t) h/pr.w (line 3) is omitted. These and other small changes affect the position of some of the line breaks (lines 1-2 and 3-4).

The interpolation of di s Δ26 after the mother’s name in line 2, which is common to all three shabtis, will be discussed in Sect. 6.1.

On all three figurines, the plural determinative for the shabtis being addressed (Z3, line 2) is severely misplaced, being positioned much too early. In the Late Period, the standard shabti inscription uses plural forms of address which reflect the multiplication of shabtis into a gang. With the loss of the plural determinative through mispositioning, the inscription on all three figurines (lines 2-3) reads i wsbd.ty pn (O this shabti…) rather than i wsbd.tyw ipn (O these shabtis…).
Fig. 8. Inscriptions on Wedjat-Hor’s shabtis. This figure presents in full the texts that were originally inscribed on Wedjat-Hor’s shabtis. Upper text (black) follows shabti A, where available (lines 1-3 & part BP), otherwise shabti C. In lines 1-3, the following differences are noted for shabti C: a, determinative seemingly absent from shabti C; b, the line-break may occur here (i.e., one glyph earlier) in shabti C. Lower text (grey) follows shabti B, aligned wherever possible with the corresponding A/C text; c, if these markings are meant as hieroglyphs, their significance is unknown.
On shabtis A and B, the determinative of the vocative “O” (line 2) is A26 instead of the usual A2, but this substitution is reasonably common on Late Period shabtis. On shabti C, it looks from the photographs as if no determinative is present.

As mentioned in Sect. 3, on shabtis A and C (but not B) Ashsedjemes is described in lines 1 and 3 as nb(.t) pr.w using a mirror-image of glyph O4 (h) where glyph O1 (pr.w) would be expected. In the transliteration above, this ambiguity has been communicated by using the phrase nb(.t) h/pr.w.

The grammar of line 4 will be discussed in Sect. 6.2. In the two instances where the horned viper (I9, phonetic f) is depicted on each shabti (lines 2 & 4), the space above it is filled by a long horizontal line which has no other function. Instances of this on other shabtis have not been noticed. Another long horizontal filler line is used after the final r of line 6.

In line 5, iri.ii im (present on both of the shabtis that preserve line 5, i.e. shabtis B and C) is correct for the feminine passive prospective participle, appropriate for possible or expected actions that have yet to occur (“will be done” or “are to be done”). It is rare to see both the .t and the i specified explicitly, as here; usually one or neither is present. Technically, the participle should also be plural to agree with the number of kA.wt, but the plural suffix is often dropped from passive participles.

On line 5 in shabti C, the necropolis symbol R10 (hr.t-ntr) – which is supposed to be a combination of R8 (ntr), T28 (hr) and N29 (sandy hill determinative) – is in fact formed from R8 (ntr) plus N25, the hill-country symbol that serves as the determinative of smy.t (desert/necropolis). The end of the N25 glyph intersects the midpoint of the flagpole R8 at a 45º angle. The result has similarities with R10D and R10G, in which an ostrich-feather projecting from the baseline presents a 45º angle to the flagpole, and with R10C and R53, where a horizontal N25 is fused to the base of the flagpole. Symbols like R10D and R10G do indeed represent “necropolis” on some Late Period shabtis. The line of text in which the necropolis symbol appears falls below the break-point of shabti A. On shabti B, the foregoing description holds true but an additional rectangular element forms a plinth from the mid-point of the flagpole to its base. No doubt the rectangle approximates glyph T28, the hr of hr.t-ntr; its combination with R8 mimics R50. In sum, the two available examples of the necropolis symbol on Wedjat-Hor’s shabtis are composites that include glyph N25. In Sect. 5, we will meet another instance of creative superimposition involving N25.

Adjacent to the necropolis symbol on line 5, the rowing-arms glyph D33 also has an unusual appearance. It is quite different in shape to the canonical symbol, and the version on shabti B is quite distinct from that on shabti C. (The register in which it appears falls below the break-point of shabti A). The final t of hni.t (denoting the infinitive) is explicit, which is unusual, although it is present on a 26th Dynasty shabti made for a certain Psamtik and on a Late Period shabti for Smen-Ptah-Psamtik.

In line 6, the n(,y) has largely or wholly been lost from the three shabtis as it falls at or below the break-points of all the figurines. Accordingly, this zone is shaded with diagonal hatching in Fig. 8. In shabti B, the lower part of line 6 is somewhat distorted, with the result that some expected symbols (such as the N25 of inn.t) are not visible.
5. Back pillar

On Wedjat-Hor’s shabtis, the back-pillar contains the end of the shabti spell rather than a Saitic “town-god formula” or the owner’s title or parentage. For its first symbol, the rear inscription on shabtis A and C seems to use a central superimposition of glyph N25 (hill-country) on M1 (tree) to create a surrogate for sign R15 (spear decorated as a standard) in the word for “the East.” From this and the composite necropolis symbol of Sect. 4, one must wonder if the scribes did not have a pre-made punch tool for N25, and thus perhaps for other common glyphs as well.

The first symbol on shabtis B’s back pillar looks less like a clumsy composite and is a good match for glyph R15A. Although in this case there is no problem, symbol R15 and its relatives seem occasionally to have been misunderstood by those inscribing shabtis, perhaps because of their complexity and relatively rarity. For example, in one instance R15 seems to have been miswritten as an ankh symbol.

On shabti C, the spell is truncated at the end, omitting the terminal “...you shall say” in favour of repeating the name of the deceased. In this form, the inscription ends somewhat abruptly with the self-identification “Here I am, Wedjat-Hor,” which we must assume to be spoken by the shabti. On shabti B, the speaking/eating determinative A2 is present and thus provides ideogrammatic compensation for the omitted phrase. The relevant portion of the back pillar lies below the break-point of shabti A, but this shabti presumably followed the pattern of shabti C.

6. Insertions in the inscription

After each of the two mentions of Wedjat-Hor’s mother, there are unexpected insertions in the text; these interpolations are common to all three shabtis.

6.1 First interpolation

After the first mention of Ashsedjemes on shabtis A and C, and the first mention of Sedjemash on shabti B (Sect. 3), we find an insertion of di s [di=s or di s(y)] followed by glyph A26, the determinative for “call”(Fig. 7j). The position and appearance of the insertion is reminiscent of the standard epithet for a deceased woman, ms⃣(.t)-hrw, “true of voice,” but this can hardly be its origin. Glyph A26 serves as a logographic abbreviation for ⃣ in sdm-⃣, “one who hears the call” (Fig. 7c), and has this function in the name misassigned to the mother on shabti B (Sect. 3). If glyph A26 can represent ⃣ as a verb as well as a noun, then one could read the phrase as di=s ⃣(=i), “she causes that I may call.”

Other interpretations are possible. Perhaps di-s(y)-⃣, “a call gives (i.e., summons) her,” is another way of rendering the mother’s name (Sect. 3); identical glyphs for di-s(y) are used in the female name di-s(y)-mri (PN I 397, 21) (Fig. 7k). The symbols for di-s(y) can also be read ms, which in conjunction with the logogram A26 would give “Mes-Ash,” each half of which would constitute a plausible abbreviation of (or nickname for) Ashsedjemes. Ash (⃣, Fig. 7g-i) is in fact recorded as a female name in its own right, with attestations for the Middle Kingdom and Late Period (PN I 71, 8), while Mes (ms) – with alternate orthography and the meaning of “child” (PN I
Another set of names built around ‘š-šdm may be relevant here, especially as some of these names – whose use extends from the Late Period to Roman times – may have been more common than Ashsedjemes or its male equivalent, Ashsedjemef. This set includes Ps-šls-šdm (Padji-ashsedjem; PN I 122, 21), Ps-šls-šdm=f, and Ts-šls-šdm=f (Fig. 7.1-n). Herman de Meulenaere takes the available permutations to encompass “He/she who calls him/her whom he/she has heard,” and believes that the versatility in gender allowed reference to any deity who was deemed to have answered the prayers of any supplicant. Since the gender of the initial demonstrative (Ps/Ts) correlates with the sex of the name-bearer, de Meulenaere’s formula may best be taken to mean “This male/female supplicant, who calls upon the god/goddess [and] whom the deity has heard.” The morphology of the final verb in the examples above (šdm-f) is not compatible with the perfective relative form šdm.n=f (“... whom he has heard”) but is compatible with šdm.(w)-f, namely the aorist relative form (“... whom he [regularly] hears” or “... whom he [regularly] has heard”) and, for that matter, with the prospective relative form (“... whom he will hear”). Whatever the intended tense of the šdm form, the di component of these names is given by arm-holding-bread glyph D37, the same as that used in the interpolated di s on Wedjat-Hor’s shabtis. The familiarity of -di-š- from such names could have encouraged the inclusion of the insertion.

6.2 Second interpolation

After the second mention of “Wedjat-Hor, born of Ashsedjemes” the text (line 4) departs from the standard shabti spell “If the Osiris N is detailed for any work / all the works...” insofar as “for the works” (r k3.wt) has been expanded to read r iri=f k3.w(t) (shabtis A and C) or ir iri-f k3.w(t) (shabti B). There is often some variability at this position in the text, which can be expanded to r iri.t k3.(w)t, “to do work(s);” the construct consists of the preposition r + infinitive iri.t, denoting purpose (lit. “for the purpose of doing work”). In actual shabti inscriptions, this formula is approximated by different writings (r iri k3.t, r iri k3.wt, iri r.y k3.wt, ir i ri.t k3.t, r iri.t k3.t, etc.) which account for the variability at this position. The inscription on Wedjat-Hor’s shabtis lacks the introductory clause “If the Osiris N is detailed...” (in Schneider’s terminology, the Summons) and is unique in its compensatory expansion of r k3.wt nb.(wt) to (i)yr iri-f k3.w(t) nb.(wt). The verb is now in the subjunctive or future [iri=f or irir.(y)=f for either, the subjunctive being more likely here], which allows the overall sense to be preserved. In place of the standard “If the Osiris N is detailed to do all the works which are to be done there in the necropolis...,” we have “The Osiris N, if he would do all the works which are to be done there in the necropolis...”
clause (D) to half-way through the Task clause (T). The Schneider clause sequence for Wedjat-Hor’s shabtis reads

\[ P - \text{Inv.} - P(1^{st} \text{ part}) - D - T(2^{nd} \text{ part}) - C(1^{st} \text{ part}) - N \]

(where the clause codes are \(P = \) Preliminaries; \(\text{Inv.} = \) Invocation; \(D = \) Duty; \(T = \) Task; \(C = \) Call, \(N = \) Name).\(^{87}\) The standard clause sequence for Late Period shabtis, classed as Schneider version VIIA (Summons II shabti), reads

\[ P - \text{Inv.} - S\text{l} - D - O - a.a.m. - C - S\text{i} - n\text{w} - T - ts-phr - C\text{II} \]

(where \(S\text{l} = \) Summons I master; \(O = \) Obstacle; \(a.a.m. = \) “as a man;” \(C/I = \) Call 1/2, \(S\text{i} = \) summons II shabti, \(n\text{w} = \) “at any time…”; \(ts-phr = \) “and vice versa;”).\(^{88}\) Thus, Wedjat-Hor’s text has no formal Summons and lacks the entire central set of clauses, i.e., \textit{inter alia} it is missing the segment \(O - a.a.m. - C - S\text{i} - n\text{w} - T(1^{st} \text{ part}).\)

In the typology outlined by Harry Stewart, the sequence of clauses on Wedjat-Hor’s shabtis conforms most closely to type B, an abbreviated text which mainly contains lines 1, 2, 3, 9 and 11 from the best-known version of the spell.\(^{89}\) This form reads: “O this shabti / If the Osiris \(N\) is detailed for any work that is to be done yonder in the netherworld / To cultivate the fields, to irrigate the riverbanks, to ferry sand of the East to the West / Here I am, you shall say.” It was current from the Middle Kingdom to the end of the New Kingdom, but was not as popular as more complete versions of the spell.\(^{90}\)

A search for other Late Period shabti inscriptions with a structure resembling Wedjat-Hor’s produced one match. Specifically, an abbreviated spell with the same central omission is found in one shabti in Schneider’s catalogue: item 5.3.1.124.\(^{91}\) An interlinear presentation of its inscription and that of the consensus from Wedjat-Hor’s shabtis A and C is shown in Fig. 9. Shabti 5.3.1.124, which is one of a series of five shabtis for Padji-Neith (Pa-dy-Neit)\(^{92}\) in the Leiden collection, dates to the reign of Amasis in the 26\(^{th}\) Dynasty. Although they differ in their facial features, Padji-Neith’s shabtis may well be contemporary with those of Wedjat-Hor. The insertion \(\text{d}i\) \(\text{s}\) (Sect. 6.1) is not present, but there is an anomaly at the \(r\ k\z t\) locus which appears to read \(r\ n\ k\z t\), and which is amended by Schneider to \(r\ iri\ k\z t\); we have already seen that Wedjat-Hor’s shabtis, too, are unorthodox at this position (Sect. 6.2). The front text ends with \(…iri\ im\ m\ hr\ t-n\text{t}\ w\) and resumes on the back pillar with \(r\ h\text{n}\i\ t\ ʃ'y\ n(y)\) \(imn\tt\)… which – apart from its retention of the \(r\) – matches exactly the splice junction in the frontal text of Wedjat-Hor’s shabtis (shown here as the boundary between yellow and grey highlighting):

\[…iri\,ti\,im\,m\,hr\,t-n\text{t}\,h\text{n}\i\,t\,ʃ'y\,(y)\,n(y)\,imn\tt\] \(^{93}\)

For shabti 5.3.1.124, the discontinuity in the text is less jarring because the major omission coincides precisely with the switch from the end of the frontal inscription to the start of the column on the back pillar. In contrast, the discontinuity on Wedjat-Hor’s shabtis occurs unexpectedly within one of the frontal registers.
Fig. 9. Comparison of Wedjat-Hor’s inscription (shabtis A/C) with that of Padji-Neith (Leiden 5.3.1.124). Apart from personal specifics such as names, titles and epithets, all of the shabti spell text originally inscribed on Wedjat-Hor’s shabtis A/C (*upper text, black*) and on Padji-Neith’s shabti 5.3.1.124 (*lower text, grey*) is included in this figure.\(^9^4\)
Both Wedjat-Hor and Padji-Neith’s shabtis talk of ferrying “sand of the West to the East,” in contrast to the best-known version of the shabti spell, which specifies the reverse. The West-to-East direction is in fact common in shabtis of the Late Period. As indicated above by the Schneider VIIA clause sequence, the phrase is often followed by “and vice versa” to encompass both directions, although this addendum is not present on any of the four shabtis being discussed.

The end of Wedjat-Hor’s inscription is truncated, lacking the final “you shall say” (Sect. 5). The end of the inscription on shabti 5.3.1.124 is even more premature, since it lacks the entire sentence “‘Here I am,’ you shall say.” In contrast to that for Wedjat-Hor, the inscription for Padji-Neith does not conclude with an additional instance of the owner’s name.

8. Conclusion

This report describes for the first time the surviving (upper) portions of three 26th-Dynasty shabtis of Wedjat-Hor, son of Ashsedjemes. The owner is given no title.

Shabtis A and C are clearly from the same mould and are inscribed by the same scribe; shabti B has been made using a different mould and has been inscribed by a different hand. Some orthographic idiosyncrasies, such as the misplacement of the plural determinative for “shabtis” in line 2 and the full writing of ir.ti im in line 5, are common to all three figurines and presumably reflect practices endemic to the workshop as a whole. Other idiosyncrasies are unique to each scribe, such as the use of the mirror-image of glyph O4 to represent glyph O1 on shabtis A and C.

Ashsedjemes (“He who calls, she will hear”) is an uncommon female name of the Late Period known from a 27th-Dynasty demotic marriage contract. On shabtis A and C, her title “Mistress of the House” comes perilously close to being downgraded to “Mistress of the Shelter” or “Mistress of the Yard.” While avoiding this near-insult, shabti B visits an even greater indignity upon the mother by miswriting her name as Sedjemash, “[Male] Servant.” An unusual insertion after the woman’s name, found on all three shabtis, may reflect the fact that her full name posed some difficulty to the scribes or that it was not the only way in which she was addressed. The interpolated text seems to recapitulate elements in the name Ashsedjemes and in closely related names such as Padji-ashsedjemes. It may provide two abbreviations (“Mes” and “Ash”) – or perhaps a composite nickname (“Mes-Ash”) – by which Wedjat-Hor’s mother was commonly known.

The shabti spell on all three shabtis is substantially abridged. Reminiscent of an abbreviated spell that was employed during the Middle and New Kingdoms, it omits the central bloc of the canonical Late Period clause sequence (i.e., Schneider VIIA). One shabti in the Rijksmuseum collection catalogued by Schneider (Leiden 5.3.1.124) has an almost identical omission, but – in contrast to Wedjat-Hor’s circumstance – the deletion is less jarring there because it coincides with the discontinuity between the front and back inscriptions. To compensate for the lack of a Summons clause in Wedjat-Hor’s inscription, a novel change is made to the grammar of the Duty clause: the phrase r k3.wt or r iri.t k3.wt has been adjusted to read (i)r iri=f k3.wt. In this way, the standard “If the Osiris N is detailed to do all the works...” is modified to “The
Osiris N, if he would do all the works...” Despite the overall similarity of its inscription to that of Wedjat-Hor, this innovation is not found on Leiden 5.3.1.124.

Wedjat-Hor’s name is featured three times in the relatively short inscription, one time more than is usual in even the full-length Schneider VIIA spell. Perhaps this repetition was facilitated by the fact that only two glyphs are required to write his name. Overall, his identity fares substantially better than that of his mother, whose name and reputation suffer various indignities – in the ways described above – at the hands of the scribes.

Acknowledgements

I thank the owner of shabtis A and B for giving me permission to examine, photograph and publish them. I am grateful to Hussam Zurqieh (Zurqieh Co. Ancient Art, Dubai) for granting me permission to reproduce his images of shabti C. I am grateful to Bettina Graham for expert help with the translation of German phrases.

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Unless otherwise indicated, URLs were accessed on 20 Aug, 2016.

1 Helios Gallery Antiquities, Sales Invoice 15/597. Helios Gallery is based in Lower Kingsdown, Wiltshire, U.K. and is online at http://www.heliosgallery.com/noframes/aboutus.php. It is a member of the UK Antiquities Dealers Association (ADA; www.theada.co.uk), which in turn is a corporate member of the UK Museums Association (www.museumsassociation.org).

2 The provenance of this shabti – the only one for which information about prior ownership was available – suggests that Wedjat-Hor’s tomb was discovered in the 1940s. The export under licence of non-unique Egyptian antiquities (i.e., artefacts for which multiple similar objects were known and for which the State was already deemed to possess sufficient examples) remained legal until 1983.

3 Zurqieh Co. Ancient Art LLC is based in Dubai, AUE, and is online at https://www.vcoins.com/en/stores/zurqieh-171/ancient-coins/Default.aspx#!/AboutUs and http://stores.ebay.com/zurqiehdubai/. It is a member of the Association of International Antiquities Dealers. For Shabti B, the dealer’s identifiers were TAT6 and item no. 291810188476; for item C, TAT7.


7 On shabti C, a determinative may have been omitted in line 2, and there may be a one-glyph offset between the inscriptions at the line 3/4 boundary. See ahead to Fig. 8, annotations a & b.


10 Like the hoe handle in Janes, Shabtis, p.244 (schematic no. 10).

11 The knob adjacent to the overlap is in fact part of the shabti’s hand rather than the hoe handle; it is actually the shabti’s thumb.


Stewart, *Egyptian Shabtis*, p.34 & 38.

Janes, *Shabtis*, p.192-194 (no. 98), assigned to the reigns of Necho II and Psamtik II.

Janes, *Shabtis*, p.156-157 (no. 82) and its parallel at Shabti Collections, SC/126 (http://www.shabticollections.com/Content/Late%20Period/SC126wawawer/SC126.html). Janes describes the implements as a pick and a hoe, but the photographs indicate two hoes.


Shabtis from Saqqara made in the first part of the 26th Dynasty typically have a T-shaped inscription or vertical column of hieroglyphs that presents an abbreviated version of the shabti spell, while those from the end of the Dynasty mostly display complete versions of the shabti spell written in horizontal lines on their fronts [van Oostenrijk, “Iconographic changes on Late Period Shabti Groups from Saqqara”].


Schneider, *Shabtis*, vol. 1, p.292-293.


This seems to be the sense of the Egyptian, perhaps referring to Horus’s recovery after the fight with Seth. Ranke (PN I 88, 26) gives “Horus ist hell,” which literally means “Horus is unbroken” but would more naturally be read as the cultic declaration “Horus is salvation.”


Schneider 5.3.1.82; for inscription, see Schneider, *Shabtis*, vol. 2, Pl. 118.

Janes, *Shabtis*, p.162 (no. 84).

Schneider 5.3.1.82; Schneider, *Shabtis*, vol. 2, Pl. 118.


Or perhaps the imperfective participle *ś.(w)*, “he who calls.” The form would be *ś.t* (perfective and imperfective) if a female caller was intended [Ockinga, *Concise Grammar*, p.63-64; James P. Allen (2010) *Middle Egyptian – An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs*, 2nd edn., Cambridge Univ. Press, Cambridge, p.328]. One could perhaps circumvent this gender limitation by taking *ś* as an imperative and translating the complete name as “Call! He will hear.”

Normally, a nominal participle serving as the object of a sentence would be expected to follow the verb and subject, hence *sḏm-f* *ś*. At face value, the observed word order in *ś-sḏm-f* resembles the relative form *ś sḏm.(w)=f*, “the caller, whom he hears,” or – taking *ś* as a noun – “the call, which he hears.” This is clearly not how Ranke has interpreted the name.

Ockinga, *Concise Grammar*, p.35. Taking *ś* as an imperative circumvents the gender limitation and anomalous word order inherent in viewing it as participle (see previous two notes).

41 Martin, “A Twenty-Seventh Dynasty ‘Marriage Contract’ from Saqqara.”
44 Faulkner, Concise Dictionary, p.156.
47 Faulkner, Concise Dictionary, p.259.
49 Faulkner, Concise Dictionary, p.259.
51 Faulkner, Concise Dictionary, p.259.
52 Faulkner, Concise Dictionary, p.259.
54 Hieroglyphs adapted from panel m, but with the ending (re)constructed from that of the demotic Ts-dj3-sdm in P. Hou 6, line 1. Vleeming, The Gooseherds of Hou, p.246.
56 Stewart, Egyptian Shabtis, p.49.
57 The final glyph on the back pillar (BP), which completes Wedjat-Hor’s name, lies below the break point of both shabtis A and C; its presence has been inferred from shabti B.
58 E.g., Janes, Shabtis, p.149-150 (no. 78); p.158-161 (no. 83a,b); p.169-170 (no. 88); p.204-205 (no. 103) & p.210-214 (no. 106a,b).
59 Ockinga, Concise Grammar, p.64; Allen, Middle Egyptian, p.328. A few shabti inscriptions show iri.t(i) with a plural determinative at this point, e.g. Schneider, Shabtis, vol. 3, Fig. 5, version VIIA, nos. 3 and 4.
60 Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar, p.502.
62 E.g., Janes, Shabtis, p.156-157 (no. 82); p.158-159 (no. 83a) & p.182-188 (no. 95a,b,c).
64 Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar, p.453.
65 Janes, Shabtis, p.173-175 (no. 90).
66 Schneider, Shabtis, vol. 2, p.195, entry 5.3.1.204 & Pl. 122, 5.3.1.204.
72 Janes, Shabtis, p.173.
73 The visual similarities are that ms*(t)-hrw is commonly written using two low broad glyphs, AaII over P8 [Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar, p.541], which may be followed by determinative A2 [Faulkner, Concise Dictionary, p.101]; the feminine t is often omitted [e.g., Janes, Shabtis, p.149-150 (no. 78)]. While one could envisage the use of A26 (related to calling) as a substitute for A2 (related to speaking), it is difficult to believe that any scribe in a shabti workshop would fail to recognise ms*(t)-hrw. If this is in fact the origin of the insertion, then every glyph must have undergone substitution early, at least before the text for inscription was distributed to the two scribes whose output we are examining here.
74 Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar, p.445 (A26). This is a participle form of sdm.
By extrapolation from Ranke PN I 397, 19-20. The alternative, dls $f$ (“She gives a call”), is more difficult to rationalise.

For glyph D37 as m, see Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, p.454 & Ockinga, *Concise Grammar*, p.96.


Curiously, de Meulenaere parses the sDm=f as the “passive participle sDm(y)” with 3.m.s. subject $f$, but this matches only the prospective passive particle [Ockinga, *Concise Grammar*, p.63-64] and thus denotes a possible or expected action (future), rather than one already achieved (as specified by his translation, “...whom he/she has heard”).

For names commencing with Tr-, indicating a female antecedent, these aorist and prospective relative forms ought to modulate to sdm.tf and sdm.t(i)=$f$, respectively [Ockinga, *Concise Grammar*, p.68 (§109); Allen, *Middle Egyptian*, p.354 (§24.2, 2)].

The form of the first verb (dl) is problematic; it does not match any of the expected options, namely the active imperfective participle (dd(.w)) or the active perfective participle (rdl), nor does the stem gain a suffix .t in names commencing with Tr-. Cf. Ockinga, *Concise Grammar*, p.63-65.

For r iri kA.t and r iri kA.w(t) see, e.g., Janes, *Shabtis*, p.150, 159, 161, 170, 174, 193, 200, 212, 214; for other forms, see e.g. Janes, *Shabtis*, p.153, 155, 157, 184, 186, 188, 196; also online at [http://www.shabtis.com/Spell.php](http://www.shabtis.com/Spell.php).

Schneider, *Shabtis*, vol. 1, p.121 (“Summons I master,” Slm; see ahead to Sect. 7).


Schneider, *Shabtis*, vol. 1, p.120.

Stewart, *Egyptian Shabtis*, p.49.

Stewart, *Egyptian Shabtis*, p.49. The standard text for the Late Period is Stewart’s type E, which is a complete or near-complete rendering of the spell.

Schneider, *Shabtis*, vol. 2, p.176 & Pl. 120, 5.3.1.124.

Schneider, *Shabtis*, vol. 2, p.175.

Wadjet-Hor’s shabtis have lost the initial preposition r, which – together with the infinitive bn.t – would indicate “for the purpose of ferrying” or “in order to ferry;” we are left simply with “ferrying” or “to ferry.”

Glyphs in the latter [from Schneider, *Shabtis*, vol. 2, Pl. 120, 5.3.1.124] have, in places, been grouped differently to the arrangement in Schneider’s transcript in order to maximise the alignment with Wedjat-Hor’s inscription. Their sequence, of course, remains unchanged.


Schneider, *Shabtis*, vol. 1, p.122-123.