

# Ancient Egyptian funerary statuettes in Croatian collections

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## ANCIENT EGYPTIAN FUNERARY STATUETTES IN CROATIAN COLLECTIONS

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*Approximately 5,000 Egyptian artefacts are housed in the more than twenty museums and known private collections in Croatia: ca 4,042 in museums and ca 400-1,000 in private collections. 375 shabtis are housed in nine museums and all known private collections in Croatia. Most of them (346) date to the Pharaonic periods of Ancient Egypt, but also 26 shabtis and 3 pseudo-shabtis were unearthed during excavations in the territory of the former Roman provinces of Dalmatia and Pannonia (today in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina). These shabtis were usually associated with the diffusion of the Egyptian cults during the Graeco-Roman eras (ca 4<sup>th</sup> century BC to 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD).*

### INTRODUCTION: EGYPTIAN ARTEFACTS IN CROATIA

Approximately 5,000 Egyptian artefacts are housed in Croatian museums and private collections. They can be dated from the fourth millennium BC to the Arab conquest of Egypt in AD 642. Most of these objects can be found in museums (ca 4,042) but some (ca 1,000) are housed in private collections (Tomorad 2005). The Egyptian artefacts have found their way to Croatia mainly in two ways:

*The largest collection of shabtis is held in the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb (312). They were collected over an extended period, from 1865 to the present, from various sources, but most are of unknown provenance. They were crafted between the Middle Kingdom (inv. no. E-310) and the third century AD. Analysis showed that all shabtis are genuine and that almost all known types and forms of shabtis can be found in Croatian collections.*

*Keywords:*

*Egyptian collections, Croatia, shabtis, funerary statuettes, history, typology, Archaeological Museum in Zagreb.*

1) material acquired from abroad through intermediaries or donations (mostly in the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century) (ca 4,600 artefacts), 2) material associated with Egyptian cults found in the territory of Croatia (c. 400 artefacts). It has been acquired through archaeological excavations, and brought to Croatia mainly during Antiquity. The exact provenance for most of these artefacts is not known. They were sold to private collectors by various second hand antique dealers or intermediaries predominantly during the nine-

teenth century. Today museum inventory logs can only tell us how these objects came to the museums, the name of the donor and in some cases the exact provenance of the artefact (mostly when they were excavated by amateur diggers). For most artefacts in Croatian museums, we may only speculate as to their exact find sites (Tomorad 2005: 2).

## SHABTIS – ANCIENT EGYPTIAN FUNERARY STATUETTES

The shabti (eg. wšbty) is a figure found in Egyptian tombs from the Middle Kingdom onward, very often in large numbers in wooden boxes, sarcophagi and coffins, or laid on the floor. The shabti assumes the form of a mummified person bearing various agricultural implements (Schnieder 1977). During the New Kingdom, shabtis were placed in tombs in high numbers. A perfectly equipped tomb might hold 401 shabtis: 365 workers (one for each day of the year), and 36 overseers (one for every ten workers) (Tomorad 2000: 5). There are three different variations of the Egyptian words for shabti. The first is shabti with unknown etymology, the second is shawabti, and by the time of the Late Period the common term was ushabti. All of these terms have their root in the Egyptian word wšb – meaning answerer (Schneider 1977; Shaw & Nicholson 1995: 266-267; Stewart 1995: 13). The shabti was intended to serve as a magical replacement should the deceased be called upon to perform tasks in the underworld (Budge 1893: 171, 211-215; Schneider 1977; Shaw & Nicholson 1995: 266-267; Stewart 1995: 9). The Egyptians believed that when they died they had to perform manual labour for Osiris, the king of the dead, the same as they did during their lives for the pharaoh, the king of the living. Common Egyptians had to do various jobs (e.g. build and clean irrigation systems, carry out agricultural tasks in the fields, etc.) for the pharaoh during floods. Members of high society always had someone else to do their work. But in the underworld every Egyptian had to work. Therefore, the main role of the shabti was to stand in for the deceased and perform labour in the land of the dead. The most common shabti tasks were filling canals with water, ploughing the fields and carrying the sand (Budge 1893:172). Shabtis bore a variety of inscriptions. Usually they bore name of the owner, offering incantations, dedications and spells. The most common shabti spell with agricultural references came from the Coffin Texts (De Buck 1935, Spell 472) which later became the sixth chapter of the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* (Budge 1895). Shabtis from the New Kingdom on-

ward mainly bear incantations from the Book of the Dead, either in whole or in part: “*Illumine the Osiris Ani, whose word is truth. Hail, Shabti figure! If the Osiris Ani be decreed to do any of the work which is to be done in Khert-Neter, let everything which standeth in the way be removed from him – whether it be to plough the fields, or to fill the channels with water, or to carry sand from (the East to the West). The Shabti figure replieth: I will do it, verily I am here (when) thou callest.*” (Budge 1895: 629) The incantation sHD Wsjr Hm-nTr from the New Kingdom were commonly written on them (Tomorad 2006b: 283). Shabtis appeared for the first time during the late Old Kingdom or early First Intermediate Period. According to G. Mariette, the first form of shabtis and its inscriptions appeared during the Sixth Dynasty (Mariette 1869: 48). During that time wooden models of servants – e.g. agricultural labourers, bakers, brewers, butchers – were placed in tombs (Stewart 1995: 8). Their purpose was to answer in the name of *ba* when the gods called the deceased to their court. During the Middle Kingdom, the *ka* was shown as the mummy. In the time of the New Kingdom, the *ka* was united with shabti which bore the name of the deceased (Budge 1893; Schneider 1977; Shaw & Nicholson 1995: 266-267). Shabtis were made of various materials, including alabaster, wood, clay, metal and coloured (green, blue, brown or red) faience (Budge 1893: 212; Petrie 1909: 113; Tomorad 2004: 93). During the Thirteenth Dynasty, shabtis were made of calcareous stone, granite or wood. The figure’s hands crossed the breast, but without any agricultural implements, with the name and titles of the deceased inscribed. Glazed faience shabtis appeared at the beginning of the New Kingdom, and they were used until the end of Saite period. The iconography of shabtis changed during the Eighteenth Dynasty, when they began to carry various agricultural implements (e.g. hoes, mattocks and baskets) (Budge 1893: 212; Tomorad 2004: 93). At the time of the Nineteenth Dynasty, the attire of shabtis changed, and since then shabtis usually featured the garments which the deceased wore during their lifetimes (Budge 1893: 212; Tomorad 2004: 93). During the reign of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, the shabti stood on a square pedestal and had a rectangular upright plinth on the back. They were usually made in moulds and painted in light blue and green pigments or they were glazed. As of the end of the Saite period, they were made with less care and had brief inscriptions. By the end of Ptolemaic period, shabtis became small and usually had no inscriptions (Tomorad 2004: 93).

## SHABTIS IN EGYPTIAN MUSEUMS AND PRIVATE COLLECTIONS IN CROATIA

A total of 375 shabtis are housed in known museum and private collections in Croatia. During the excavations in the territory of the former Roman provinces of Dalmatia and Pannonia, 26 shabtis and 3 pseudo-shabtis were unearthed (Tomorad 2006b: 277-278, 285-301). There are 312 shabtis in the Egyptian Collection of the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb. Most of them (291) came from Egypt, and only eight were unearthed in Croatia. In the Egyptian Collection Inventory Log of the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, they are called the funeral statuettes of Osiris. Nine shabtis unearthed in Dalmatia (in central Dalmatia, Solin and the islands) are housed in the Archaeological Museum in Split (inv. no.: G 1623-1626, B 212-216). Four shabtis from Egypt are housed in the Archaeology Museum of Istria in Pula (inv. no.: P 7580, P 30331-30333).

In the Archaeological Museum in Dubrovnik, there are 25 shabtis originally from Egypt (inv. no. 473, 504, 506-508, 550, 552-564, 566-567, 595, 3805-3807). A few shabtis are housed in other museums: one from Egypt in the Mimara Museum in Zagreb (inv. no. ATM 232), one in the Museum of Slavonia in Osijek (inv. no. 5243 found in Osijek), four from Egypt in the Benko Horvat Collection in the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb (inv. no.: 360-362), two from Čitluk (Bosnia-Herzegovina) in the Franciscan monastery in Sinj and four in the Monastery of St. Euphemia in Kampo on the island of Rab. A minimum of seven shabtis are housed in private collections: one shabti is held by A. Domančić on the island of Hvar, six are held by Tereza Marović (formerly of the private Carrara-Bratanić Collection) and one shabti unearthed during the archaeological excavations in Kazale near Filipani in Istria in 1996/1997 is now in the private possession of Mr. Lik in Filipani.

Collection	Origin	Period	Inv. no.	Qty
Archaeological Museum, Zagreb	Various	Middle Kingdom-Roman era	For more information see Table 2	312
Mimara Museum, Zagreb	Unknown	late Middle Kingdom	ATM 232	1
Archaeological Museum, Dubrovnik	Unknown	not analysed	473, 504, 506, 507, 508, 550, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 566, 567, 595, 3805, 3806, 3807	25
Archaeological Museum of Istria, Pula	Unknown	Graeco-Roman era	P7580, P30331-30333	4
Archaeological Museum, Split	Central Dalmatia	Graeco-Roman era	G1623, G1624, G1626, B212-216	8
Archaeological Museum, Split	Hvar	Graeco-Roman era	G1625	1
Museum of Slavonia, Osijek	Mursa (Osijek)	Graeco-Roman era	5243	1
Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb	Alexandria	Graeco-Roman era	360	3
St. Euphemia Monastery, Kampo – Rab	Unknown	Not analysed	without inventory numbers	4
Franciscan monastery, Sinj	Čitluk	Graeco-Roman era	without inventory numbers	2
A. Domančić, Hvar	Middle Dalmatia	Graeco-Roman era	without inventory numbers	7
Tereza Marović, Split	Middle Dalmatia	Graeco-Roman era	without inventory numbers	6
Lik, Filipani	Kazale, Istria	Not analysed	without inventory number	1
Total				375

Table 1: Shabtis in museums and private collections in Croatia

## THE LARGEST COLLECTION OF SHABTIS FROM THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM IN ZAGREB, CROATIA

The largest collection of shabtis (312 artefacts) is housed in the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb. Most came from the private collection of the Habsburg imperial Lt. General Baron Franz von Koller (Bohemia, 27 November 1767 – Naples, 22 July 1826) (Tomorad 2003: 19), which was purchased for the National Museum in Zagreb in 1868. It is a matter of record that he purchased the collection during his military service in Naples (1815, 1821-1826) from a Roman antique dealer

named Lancius, who in turn procured them from a Greek dealer named Papiandropolis. It was first housed in the von Koller manor in Obrzistov, and later in Prague. There is no record of the original provenance and sites at which the shabtis were discovered (Tomorad 2003: 19; Tomorad 2011: 110). Other shabtis came from various private collections and they were donated or purchased for National Museum or, later, the Archaeological Museum from 1862 onward (Tomorad 2005; Tomorad 2011: 110). Two of them are not recorded in the Inventory Log of the Egyptology Section. They are only mentioned in the Main Inventory Log of the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb (inv. nos. 348, 358).

Donor/Purchase	Profession/ Location	Year	Origin	Inv. No.	Qty.
Mijat Sabljar	curator/Zagreb	1865?	Egypt	E448	1
Franjo Jordan	merchant/Cairo	1866	Egypt	E386, E453, E495, E511	4
Franz von Koller	baron/Habsburg Monarchy	1868	Egypt	E256-271, E273-312, E-317-365, E-367-381, E-383-385, E-387- 431, E433-441, E-443-447, E-449-452, E-454-463, E-465- 472, E-474-490, E-492-494, E-496-510, E-512-560, E-566	285
Ferdo (Ferdinand) Pleše	priest/Fužane	1871	Suez, Egypt	E333	1
Lanza collection	Split	1874	Salona, Croatia	E442, E561-E565	6
Milan Tompa	unknown	1886	Egypt	E366	1
Fran Gundrum- Oriovčanin	physician/Križevci	1898	Egypt	E491	1
M. Valjato	unknown/ Kraljevica	1900	Egypt	E473	1
Gustav Koritić	civil servant/ unknown	1905	Egypt,	E328	1
Finkh	pharmacist/Zagreb	?	Egypt	E272	1
Ivan Bojničić	physician/unknown	?	Egypt	E432	1
The Gymnasium	Senj	?	Egypt	E464	1
Petar Karlić	physician /Zadar	1912	Nin, Croatia	E675, E676	2
Vesna Magdić	unknown/Zagreb	1954	Ostrožac, Bosnia	MIB AMZ 348	1
Kamila Radovan	unknown/Zagreb	1957	unknown	MIB AMZ 358	1
Pavletić	unknown	2000	Egypt	E773, E774, E779, E781	4
Total					312

Table 2: Shabtis in the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb

The first catalogue for the Egyptian Collection of the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb was compiled by Heinrich Brugsch in 1869. He examined the collection and took notes which were later used by Šime Ljubić, the curator and director of the National Museum. Ljubić wrote the first notation on the National Museum's Egyptian Collection in *Viestnik narodnoga zemaljskoga muzeja u Zagrebu*, Vol. I (Ljubić 1871), where he mentioned them as "funeral statuettes of Osiris". In 1889, Ljubić published the first catalogue of the Egyptian Collection (Ljubić 1889), where he again described them as "Statuettes of Osiris with or without inscriptions" (Ljubić 1889: 8-10). At that time, they were placed in closet no. 4 in the Egypt Room (Ljubić 1889: 10). During the 1960s, Janine Monnet Saleh published her doctoral thesis *Les antiquités égyptiennes de Zagreb. Catalogue raisonné des antiquités égyptiennes conservées au Musée Archéologique de Zagreb en Yougoslavie* (Monnet Saleh, 1970). Among other artefacts, she examined the shabtis and catalogued them. Sadly, her work contains numerous errors: many artefacts were not well examined and analysed (incorrect dimensions, materials, dating, etc.) or were incorrectly interpreted. She divided the shabtis into five fundamental types: "Type A – Depicted as living people in clothing with a triangular shape descending over the knees, with medium long sleeves, and wigs composed of three parts; Type B – The most common type. The figurines are mummy shaped. Three-part wigs, with the third part extending onto the back; Type C – The locks of hair on the wig are depicted with vertical lines. Otherwise they are identical to type B. Type D – The shabtis have no tools in their hands. Type E – In the shape of a mummy with a pedestal and a dorsal column on the back. They have false beards, tools in their hands, and a rope thrown over their shoulders." (Monnet Saleh 1970: 127). Her typology was later used by Igor Uranić in his catalogue (Uranić 2007: 135). In 1979, Mihael Gorenc published the first guide to the Egyptian Collection entitled *Egipat* (Gorenc 1979). Shabtis were only mentioned in a few sentences with general information about their use in Ancient Egypt (Gorenc 1979: 32). The next work which mentioned shabtis was published in 1996. It was entitled *Muzeopis ... 1846-1996*, dedicated to the celebration of the one-hundred fiftieth anniversary of National Museum in Zagreb. In it, Uranić wrote a brief introduction to the collection and noted that shabtis are the most numerous artefacts housed in the museum (Uranić 1996: 90). In the short catalogue section of *Muzeopis*, he analysed the shabti of Mer-Rut-Ahmose (inv. no. 431) as a good example of shabti figures (Uranić 1996, p. 94). In 2005, Uranić

published a second guide to the Egyptian Collection, *Egipatska zbirka – Vodič*, in which he only mentioned shabtis in a brief evaluation of Egyptian funerary articles (Uranić 2005: 29) using the example of the *Uah-ib-re-em-akhet* shabti (inv. no. 438) (Uranić 2005: 31). Shabtis that were not purchased from von Koller were first mentioned in the Tomorad article "Šauabtiji u Dalmaciji i Panoniji" (Tomorad 2000: 2, 13) and later in the paper "Shabtis from Roman Provinces Dalmatia and Pannonia" (Tomorad 2004: 90). In both work, only general information was given (donor or purchaser and the year of purchase, inventory numbers, dimensions) and they were dated to the Graeco-Roman period. Later they were fully analysed and interpreted in the article "Shabtis from Roman Provinces Dalmatia and Pannonia and their Role in Egyptian Cults during Roman Empire". (Tomorad 2006b: 296-301, Pl. 82-3, 84-86) In his interpretation, systematization and dating, Tomorad used Schneider's typology (Schneider 1977), which is different than the one used in previous works by Monnet Saleh and Uranić. Finally, the shabtis were catalogued by Uranić in the new museum catalogue *Aegyptiaca Zagrabensis* (Uranić 2007: 135-188), which also included several new acquisitions not mentioned in previous publications. It contains: the catalogue number, a general description of each shabti (although in all cases), the type assumed from the Monnet Saleh catalogue, material, height, inventory number and dating (which in most cases includes only long periods e.g. New Kingdom or Late Period, etc.). In 2009, Mladen Tomorad re-catalogued the entire shabti collection in the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb using Schneider's typology. He compiled the catalogue as a part of his dissertation entitled "Shabtis from Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Croatia" submitted to the University of Manchester for a Degree in Egyptology at the Faculty of Life Sciences. In this dissertation, he analyzed the entire collection of shabtis in the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb. During this examination, all shabtis were dated again and for the first time systematically described according to the Schnieder typology (Schnieder 1977). In 2011 typological study of shabtis from Archaeological Museum in Zagreb was published in article entitled "Shabtis from the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb (Croatia): a typological study". (Tomorad 2011).

Period	Dynasty	Number of shabtis
Middle Kingdom		1
New Kingdom		65
Third Intermediate period	21 <sup>st</sup> Dynasty	1
	21 <sup>st</sup> -23 <sup>rd</sup> Dynasty	2
	25 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	1
	26 <sup>th</sup> Saite Dynasty	28
	other dynasties	48
Late period		
Graeco-Roman period		166
Total		312

Table 3: Dating of shabtis from Archaeological Museum in Zagreb.

## CONCLUSION

375 shabtis are housed in the known museums and private collections in Croatia. Most of them came from the Pharaonic periods of Ancient Egypt (346). However, 26 shabtis and 3 pseudo-shabtis were also unearthed during excavations in the territory of the former Roman provinces of Dalmatia and Pannonia. These shabtis were usually connected with the diffusion of Egyptian cults during the Graeco-Roman era (ca 4<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD). The largest collection of shabtis is held in Zagreb, where the Archaeological Museum is the owner of 312 shabtis which were collected over an extensive period, from 1865 to the present, from various sources (Tab. 2). Most are of unknown provenance. This fact made my analysis and dating difficult and uncertain, even though a thorough examination showed that the artefacts are genuine. They were made between the Middle Kingdom (inv. no. 310) and the third century AD (Tab. 3). The analysis of shabtis also showed that almost all known types and forms of shabtis can be found in the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb. Most of them do not have any specific artistic value. They are just among the thousands of similar shabtis that can be seen in various similar museums, but at the same time there are several pieces (e.g. E-277, E-286, E-289, E3-307, E-309, E-549) that any museum would gladly have in its collection. Most of the shabtis do not have any hieroglyphics on them and they were made mainly during the Late period or the Ptolemaic dynasty. In some cases, the names or full shabti incantations can be read, which make it possible to determine who the original owner of these shabtis was or even in which graves they were placed as a component of common funerary articles.

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