A shabti-box of Djehutyhotep (Turin Cat. 2443)

Paolo Marini

The collection of the Museo Egizio in Turin includes a shabti-box inscribed for an official named Djehutyhotep, listed as no. 2443 in the catalogue Regio Museo di Torino. Antichità egizie. This paper focuses on an interesting and never before studied shabti-box (Cat. 2443) currently kept at the Museo Egizio, Turin. By consulting archival documents, the author has ascertained that the container comes from the collection sold by Bernardino Drovetti to King Carlo Felice in 1824. The box is inscribed for the imy-rA pr and sšm(w)-hb n Jmn Djehutyhotep. It has a pr-nw-chapel shape and is decorated with some very common funerary scenes. Its unusual combination of iconography from the Ramesside period and morphological characteristics from the Eighteenth Dynasty makes it a unicum, eluding habitual typological classifications. However, stylistic analysis and comparisons with other shabti-boxes indicate that the owner must have flourished during the reign of Ramesses II.

One of the oldest documents referring to Drovetti's objects is a list sent by Carlo Vidua to Count Prospero Balbo during the negotiations for the purchase of the collection. The document consists of a catalogue divided into nine categories: within each category, each entry describes only features that were of interest to antiquarians. However, it is often impossible to identify them. Descriptions *310, *311 and *312 are an exception, as they correspond to some pr-nw-chapel-shaped shabti-boxes. The three entries are described as follows:

*310 Une caissette à trois divisions, avec figures et
The specific mention of the tripartite subdivision, the excellent preservation and the fraicheur of box *310 speak strongly for an identification with the shabti-box of Nefermesi (Turin Cat. 2445; Fig. 1), as does the fact that the latter’s height and width – 30 and 17 cm, respectively – are very close to those given for this item in the list. This is a wooden shabti-box, (Type Marini IIIa – Type IV Aston), plastered and painted. It has a bottom with protruding edges and with four jambs, with a vaulted lid between each pair. The long sides are decorated with a scene showing the deceased offering to the gods: Osiris and Isis on the front, and Horus and Nephthys on the back. The short sides portray the four sons of Horus.

The description of box *311 in Vidua’s list suggests that it should be similar to the previous one, but bipartite. The only box in the Museo Egizio of Turin corresponding to this description is the shabti-box of Nia (Cat. 2444). Like the box of Nefermesi, it carries scenes of the deceased worshiping gods and the four sons of Horus (Fig. 2). The only obstacle against this identification are its – h. 30.5 cm, base 25 × 22 cm – which do not match those given by Vidua.

The entry for box *312 gives only a very short description, specifying the object’s morphology – “à une seule division” – and that it has a polychrome decoration. Among the boxes conserved in Turin, two may correspond to this description: the shabti-box of Nebhepet (Cat. 2435) and that of Djehutyhotep (Cat. 2443). The box of Nebhepet, even though belonging to the type with one pr-nw chapel, has a very different decoration than the previous two. Its front side is decorated with the false-door motif (Fig. 3), while the other sides show a texture imitating woodgrain. Furthermore, the tops of the two short sides – forming jambs rising above the box – are graced with the head of a sparrowhawk. Box Turin Cat. 2443, on the contrary, is very similar to the above-mentioned and illustrated coffer of Nia (Cat. 2444), especially in the representation of relatives worshipping their dead ancestors and the decorative polychrome strips, with geometric motifs reproducing a false-door on the bottom and, on the top, floral motifs of blue lotus petals. It therefore seems more likely that this is the box described under number *312 in Vidua’s list. The iconography described above makes the links among the three objects seem stronger: we note that, in the list entries, the items are distinguished primarily on the basis of morphology, with little mention of decoration.
raised in a gesture of devotion. The cup is filled by a stream of water coming from a hes vase, held by a female figure whose body rises from the branches of a tree in front of the male figure. A second stream of water, coming from the same hes vase, fills a second cup placed under the chair. From this cup a human-headed bird drinks. The scene represents the dead person and his ba drinking the purifying water poured by the sycamore tree goddess (Fig. 4).

On the right side (Fig. 5), the owner of the box is represented as a mummy on a pedestal, facing left towards an offering table beyond which is a bouquet. He is wrapped in white bandages and wears a wesekh collar. He wears a goatee and a “double wig” surrounded by a yellow band. An ointment cone rests on the wig.

The back is less well preserved, but the decoration is still clearly visible. The scene is dominated by the standing figure of the owner, dressed as he would have been when alive: elegant sandals on his feet, an elaborate garment with wide sleeves, gathered at the waist, and a double wig. He wears a wesekh collar and bracelets, and holds a flabellum in his left hand. A second male figure is aspersing him with purifying water issuing from a hes vase. This figure has a shaved head and wears a short white pleated robe and a leopard skin on the shoulders, the typical attire of the sem priest. Even though no caption specifies the identity of this second individual, it might be one of the sons of Djehutyhotep, since this kind of scene typically depicts the worship of dead ancestors (Fig. 6).

The left side shows a scene divided in two by a central column of hieroglyphs, featuring two mumiform figures, facing one another. They wear a large wesekh collar, a tripartite wig and false beard with well-visible black lines connecting it to the ears. In front of each figure is a bouquet extending from the feet to the knees. Hieroglyphic captions at the top of the scene identify the figures as Amset and Hapi, respectively on the right and left (Fig. 7).

The four scenes are clearly inspired by wall paintings in Theban tombs of the New Kingdom. The scenes are graced by polychrome borders with geometrical and floral motifs; the one below reproduces a stylized false-door motif, the one above a row of blue lotus petals.
Fig. 4: Shabti-box of Djehutyhotep (Turin Cat. 2443), front. H. 31.5 cm. Photo by Nicola Dell’Aquila/Museo Egizio.

Fig. 5: Shabti-box of Djehutyhotep, right side. Photo by Nicola Dell’Aquila/Museo Egizio.

Fig. 6: Shabti-box of Djehutyhotep, back. Photo by Nicola Dell’Aquila/Museo Egizio.

Fig. 7: Shabti-box of Djehutyhotep, left side. Photo by Nicola Dell’Aquila/Museo Egizio.
Inscriptions

The walls of shabti-box Cat. 2443 are inscribed with columns and rows of very well-preserved hieroglyphs, written confidently and steadily in black ink. When the text is not limited to a mere caption, but also mentions names and titles of the figures represented in the scenes, it eulogizes the dead or evokes some typical funerary rituals of the Theban area.

Front:

\[\text{Wsr jmy-r pr } \text{Dhwty-htp}\]
The Osiris, the steward Djehutyhotep

Left side:

\[\text{nh } hz-k \text{ rw}\ h^s w-k } \text{sbn-k } \text{sm-w Hr Wsr } \text{sm(w)-hb n Jmn jmy-r pr Dhwty-htp ms^r-hrw}\]
May your ba live, may your limbs be strong. May you join the followers of Horus. The Osiris, the leader of the festival of Amun, the steward Djehutyhotep, justified.

\[\text{Jmstj} \quad \text{Hpj}\]
Amseti   Hapi

Back:

\[\text{Wsr jmy-r pr Dhwty-htp ms^r-hrw}\]
The Osiris, the steward Djehutyhotep

Right side:

\[\text{sms=k Skr } hdw r } hh-k } mzz-k Jnpw nb t3-hd^21 } sbl-f tw m hw r sdbw Wsr jmy-r pr Dhwty-htp ms^r-hrw\]
May you follow Sokar, onions being round your neck, may you see Anubis, lord of the Land of Dawning, while he leads you as a heron to Abydos. The Osiris, the steward Djehutyhotep.

Lid:

\[\text{Wsr sm(w) } hb n Jmn Dhwty-htp ms^r-hrw}\]
The Osiris, leader of the festival of Amun, Djehutyhotep, justified

Among these many inscriptions the most interesting is the one on the right side. It refers to the god Sokar, to the ritual use of onion and to the journey of the dead to Abydos. These three elements are related to a funerary rite attested during the New Kingdom. The rite was carried out in the night between the 25th and the 26th of Khoiak, on the west bank at Thebes. It was related to the nTrjt festival, more specifically to the invigoration of the mummy of the god Sokar-Osiris and to the procession on board a boat to the Temples of Millions of Years and to the necropolis. During that night, privately, the ka-priests and/or the kinsmen of the Theban dead carried out rites of libation or purification in the chapels of the tombs. They wore necklaces made of braided onions and offered them to Sokar and to the dead. The previous two nights of the 23rd and 24th of Khoiak were devoted to the embalming of the statue of Sokar-Osiris, the rite of the opening of the mouth, and the protection of the mummy, which, being one with Osiris, sailed on the nSmnt-boat to Abydos, where the deceased became ms^r-hrw.

Onion was much used in Egypt, where it was grown since ancient times. It is mentioned in the Pyramid Texts, where it is designated by the word hdw. It was used in various contexts, for example in medicine-magic, especially against the bites of snakes and scorpions. Its antiseptic properties were much appreciated. During the process of mumification, it was placed on the chest and the upper belly, and in the facial cavities (mouth and eyes).

Dating

The morphological features of the shabti-box of Djehutyhotep place it among the shabti-boxes of Type Marini I (Aston Type II), dated to between the middle and the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty. Nevertheless, the scenes decorating it – representing the dead
man in the presence of his ancestors, the sycamore tree goddess and his ba – and the elaborate borders with lotus flower petals and the false-door motif are closer in style and subject matter to the boxes of the “Marini I Ib and IIIa” types (Aston Type II and IV, respectively), featuring double and triple pr-nw chapels and dated between the mid-Nineteenth and the Twentieth Dynasties. Even though the morphology of shabti-boxes is typically crucial in determining their typology and dating, in this case it has less diagnostic value. Indeed, reuse of canonical artistic forms from the Eighteenth Dynasty is commonly attested during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties. The choice of specific subjects such as the sycamore tree goddess and the ba, on the contrary, constitutes a more certain terminus post quem: the two subjects are, indeed, widely attested in the wall paintings of Theban tombs and on shabti-boxes. The representation of the sycamore tree goddess is clearly inspired by Chapter 59 of the Book of the Dead; although the scene is attested on the walls of some tombs of the Eighteenth Dynasty, it becomes popular only in the Ramesside age, when it also enters the iconography of shabti-boxes. The representation of the ba is also first attested on the walls of Theban tombs of the Eighteenth Dynasty, but is more widespread in the Ramesside age. In particular, the theme of the ba drinking the water poured by the sycamore tree goddess is seen only from the Nineteenth Dynasty onward, both in wall paintings and on coffers. Moreover, another element suggesting a date no earlier than the Nineteenth Dynasty for the box is the two polychrome strips, with false-door motifs below and lotus-flower petals above. This feature can be seen on several double pr-nw chapel-shaped shabti-boxes, possibly dating to the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties.

The shabti-box of the royal scribe, chief steward of the Southern City and leader of the feast of Amun-Re Djehutyhotep

Djehutyhotep, the owner of shabti-box Turin Cat.

Fig. 8: Shabti of Djehutyhotep II (Trieste 5390). H. 28,5 cm. Photo by Enrico Halupca/Civico Museo di Storia e Arte in Trieste.
2443, bears the titles of jmy-r pr (steward) and ss-m(w)-hb n Jmn-R’ (leader of the feast of Amun-Re). Both the name and the titles suggest that he is the same Djehutyhotep who owned a shabti in the Civico Museo di Storia e Arte in Trieste (Inv. no. 5390, Fig. 8), inscribed with the following titles:

- ss nswt = royal scribe;
- jmy-r pr wr n njw.t-rs.t = chief steward of the Southern City;
- ss-m(w)-hb n Jmn-R’ = leader of the feast of Amun-Re.

Claudia Dolzani dates this statuette to the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty on stylistic and typological grounds. Franco Crevatin reminds us that Wolfgang Helck – in Zur Verwaltung des Mittleren und Neuen Reichs –, also attributes the blade of a bronze knife (Fig. 9) kept in the Metropolitan Museum of New York (n. inv. 48.105.3) and the head of a granite statue (Fig. 10) in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek (Copenhagen ÆIN 1019) to the owner of shabti Trieste 5390. Both the knife and the head are attributable to a famous Djehutyhotep who lived during the reign of Hatshepsut. The bronze blade was found by the archeological mission of the Metropolitan Museum near the funerary temple of Hatshepsut in Deir el-Bahari. Close to the junction between the blade and the now lost handle – probably originally of wood – is the inscription: jmy-r pr n nfr-nfr ëhwty-htp = steward of the good god, Djehutyhotep. Hayes attributes it to the same Djehutyhotep as the owner of the Copenhagen statue. The head of the granite statue belongs to a type with a back-pillar, smooth wig, and short beard. It has pierced earlobes and shaded eyebrows and it bears the titles jmy-r pr ss_-m wb n Jmn ëhwty-htp (chief steward, leader of the feast of the god Amun, Djehutyhotep). Otto Kofoed-Petersen dated it between the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties. Furthermore, pierced earlobes appear on depictions of men in the last decade of the reign of Amenhotep III and then became very popular during the Amarna period and later. Shaded eyebrows also became common towards the end of the reign of Horemheb. Finally, the mouth is of a shape found on statues of the Ramesside period. All these data thus do not support Helck’s attribution, but rather point to a date between the end of the Eighteenth and the early Nineteenth Dynasty. Moreover, the British Museum has a small vaulted wooden lid with a semicircular section, a more or less square base, a knob on the front lunette and a column of hieroglyphs on the top (Fig. 11) reading ss nswt jmy-r pr wr n njw.t-rs.t ss-m(w)-hb n Jmn-R’ ëhwty-htp (royal scribe, chief steward of the Southern City [=Thebes], leader of the feast of Amun-Re, Djehutyhotep [BM EA 30801]). The shape, the dimen-

Fig. 9: Knife of Djehutyhotep I (The Met 48.105.3). L. 14 cm. Photo public domain, CC0 1.0.

Fig. 10: Head of a statue of Djehutyhotep (Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, ÆIN. 1019). H. 25 cm. Photo by Ole Haupt.
sions (9.3 × 8.6 cm) and the knob on the lunette sug-
gest that it is a lid for a single pr-nw chapel-shaped
shabti-box, datable to the Eighteenth Dynasty.53 The
closest parallel is indeed the lid of a shabti-box of an
Amenemhat (New York, Brooklyn Museum 50130a-
b) dated to the reign of Thutmose IV.54

The homonymy and the sameness of the title on all
the above objects suggest that they might all belong
to the same owner. However, their stylistic dating
does not support this hypothesis. Indeed, knife blade
New York 48.105.3 and shabti-box lid London BM EA
30801, as we have seen, date from the Eighteenth Dy-
nasty. Statue head Copenhagen ÆIN 1019, instead,
can be dated between the end of the Eighteenth and
the early Nineteenth Dynasty, and shabti-box Turin
Cat. 2443 cannot be earlier than the Nineteenth Dy-
nasty. A later date can also be suggested for shab-
ti Trieste 5390, which shows elements such as the
painted layered wig and other stylistic details that
are typical of the Ramesside age and earlier.

In the light of the above, then, the objects must in
fact belong to at least two homonymous individuals:
one who lived in the age of Hatshepsut (Djehutyho-
tep I) and another who lived in the late Eighteenth to
early Nineteenth Dynasty (Djehutyhotep II). Further
support for this hypothesis can be found in a stylistic
comparison between three of the five objects, name-
ly, shabti-box lid London BM EA 30801, shabti-box
Turin Cat. 2443 (Fig. 12) and shabti Trieste 5390.

Three objects from the same funerary assemblage
should surely resemble one another. Instead, the lid
in the British Museum piece is very different in style
from the shabti-box in Turin and the shabti in Tri-
este, most notably because it is unpainted, whereas
both of the latter objects carry a fine pictorial deco-
rati on.

Shabti-box Turin Cat. 2443, as the decoration sug-
gests, was thus probably made during the reign of
Ramesses II for an eminent official who lived and
was buried in the Theban area. The object is a very
interesting and rare example of its kind: it has the
usual decoration of shabti-boxes of Type Marini IIIa
(Aston Type IV) but the morphology of shabti-boxes
of Type Marini I (Aston Type II). Indeed, it does not
seem to fit into any existing typological slot.

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**Fig. 11:** Shabti-box lid of Djehutyhotep (BM EA 30801).
H. 3.56 cm, l. 9.03 cm, w. 8.06 cm. Photo by Paolo Marini.

**Fig. 12:** Shabti-box lid of Djehutyhotep (Turin Cat. 2443).
H. 4 cm, l. 9 cm, w. 8.4 cm. Photo by Nicola Dell’Aquila/
Museo Egizio.
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<td>Seventh cent. BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box</td>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>Provv. 721</td>
<td>Usirhor</td>
<td>VIIib</td>
<td>Seventh cent. BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box</td>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>Cat. 2451</td>
<td>Pentjenef</td>
<td>VIIib</td>
<td>Seventh cent. BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Wood</td>
<td>Provv. 5651</td>
<td></td>
<td>VIIib</td>
<td>Seventh cent. BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box</td>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>Cat. 2438</td>
<td>Nayefjaurudj</td>
<td>VIIib</td>
<td>Seventh cent. BC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Endnotes

1 Fabretti et al., *Regio Museo di Torino*, p. 346.
2 Moiso, *La storia del Museo Egizio*, p. 44.
3 Especially in the area of the temples and the necropolis of Thebes. See Moiso, *Museo Egizio*, p. 40.
4 The shabti-box has never been deeply studied, even though it has often been listed or briefly described. See: Marini, *I contenitori di ushabti*, pp. 53, 64, 292, table 3, figs. 19–20; Marini, EVO 35 (2012), pp. 89–90; Donatelli, in Donadoni Roveri, (ed), *Civilta degli Egizi. Le credenze religiose*, pp. 204, 206; Fabretti et al., *Regio Museo di Torino*, p. 346; Orcurti, *Catalogo illustrato*, p. 106.
5 [Vidua], in *Documenti inediti*, p. XII.
6 [Vidua], in *Documenti inediti*, pp. 206–92.
7 [Vidua], in *Documenti inediti*, pp. 235–48.
8 Shabti-boxes in the shape of a Pre-dynastic *pr-nw* chapel – very simple buildings made of light material, such as mud bricks or perhaps trellis, consisting of a chamber covered by a barrel-shaped vault or by a dome of reeds and rushes (Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt*, II, p. 448) – were produced in Egypt beginning in the mid-Eighteenth Dynasty, continuing until the Twenty-First Dynasty. Marini, EVO 35 (2012), p. 86.
10 In this article, I use my own typology, which diverges from that of Aston (1994). For a parallel, see Marini, EVO 35 (2012), p. 124; for the general features of type “Marini Ila”, see Marini, EVO 35 (2012), pp. 96–98.
11 Marini, EVO 35 (2012), p. 96, fig. 11.
14 Regarding this topic see: Trapani, in Collombat et al., *Aere perennius. Mélanges Verus*, pp. 811–24; Marini, in Dorn and S. Polis (eds.), *Outside the Box*.
15 At the base.
16 Regarding paintings in Theban tombs, see Manniche, *Lost Ramessid and Post-Ramesside Private Tombs; Manniche, Lost Tombs; Manniche, The Tombs of Nobles at Luxor; Mekhitarian, Egyptian Painting*.
17 Some small lacunae make the reading somewhat uncertain.
19 Wb IV, 440.
20 See Wb IV, 485.
22 The “Land of Dawning” is the region of Gebelein. See LÄ I, p. 331. Much more famous is *Jnpw nb nz-dfr = Anubis, lord of the sacred earth (necropolis). Nevertheless, the cult of “Anubis, lord of the Earth that lights up (where it dawns)” is attested together with that of the goddess Hathor at Gebelein. See Habachi, *MDAIK* 14 (1956), pp. 52–62; AEO, II, p. 20; Kees, *ZÄS* 71 (1935), p. 150.
23 Concerning the *nrtj* feast, see Posener-Kriéger, *Les archives du temple funéraire de Néferirkarê-Kakâi*.
25 Graindorge, in *Encyclopédie religieuse*, p. 325.
26 Graindorge, in *Encyclopédie religieuse*, pp. 317.
28 Lucas and Harris, *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Industries*, p. 316.
32 See the tomb of Neferhotep – TT 49 – (PM, I.1, p. 93); the tomb of Neferhotep – TT 50 – (PM, I.1, p. 96); the tomb of Nakht – TT 52 – (PM, I.1, p. 100); the tomb of Sobekhotep – TT 63 – (PM, I.1, p. 125); the tomb of Kenamun – TT 93 – (PM, I.1, p. 191).
33 Some tombs of the Ramesside age in which the sycamore tree goddess is represented are: TT 1, TT 2, TT 3, TT 5, TT 6, TT 7, TT 9, TT 16, TT 19, TT 23, TT 33, TT 41, TT 51, TT 54, TT 58, TT 106, TT 133, TT 135, TT 137, TT 138, TT 158, TT 178, TT 211, TT 218. See PM, I.1, passim.
34 See shabti-boxes of Ashakhet (Macclesfield 1873.77), of Henutmetheyt (London BM EA 41521), Leiden L.IX.1, London BM EA 8526, of Tjaenuhuy (Bologna KS 1969).
36 See the tombs of Amenemosis (TT 19, Seti I), Userhat (TT 51, Seti I), Faser (TT 106, Ramesses II), Panches (TT 16, Ramesses II), Neferhotep (TT 133, Ramesses III), Thotnefer (TT 158, Ramesses III), Amennakht (TT 218, Nineteenth/Twentieth Dynasty), Nebenmaat (TT 219, Nineteenth/Twentieth Dynasty), Saymiotef (TT 273, Nineteenth/Twentieth Dynasty), Amenemhab (TT 278, Nineteenth/Twentieth Dynasty), Pahemnetjer (TT 284, Nineteenth/Twentieth Dynasty), Iny (TT 285, Nineteenth/Twentieth Dynasty), Nay (TT 286, Nineteenth/Twentieth Dynasty), Pashedu (TT 292, Nineteenth Dynasty), Hatsi (TT 324, Nineteenth/Twentieth Dynasty), Amenenuia (TT 356, Nineteenth Dynasty), Meriyptah (TT 387, Ramesses II).
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