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AN UNCOMMON UŠEBTJ-FIGURINE  
FROM A FINNISH  
COLLECTION

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as *Ketel* instead of *Halšepes*). Despite this, I think, they preserved their traditional function.

It has been noted, that the *ušebtj*-figurines also resemble a coffin (LAPIS & MATTHEW, 1969, p. 86). This fact is indicated by the funerary formulae, which occur on the coffins as well, and also by the introduction of the invocations to Aten. It seems evident, that besides the function of representing the body to the deceased, either as a substitute or as a stand-in worker, an *ušebtj*-figurine represented also the coffin which enclosed the body.

Thus, the occurrence of figurines in «costume des vivants» can also be explained by the change of the style of the coffins, which took place in the 19th dynasty (cf. i.a. the coffins LOUVRE D 2 and 3), when the deceased, on the lids of the coffins appeared dressed.

Later, in the 21st dynasty, the figurines in «costume des vivants» seem to have lost their function as substitutes for the body and the coffin and became «*reises*» to supervise the crowd of ordinary mummyform «worker» -*ušebtjs*, placed in the graves together with them. This new function is indicated by the fact, that instead of hands crossed over the chest or held alongside the hips, the left hand is now often shown risen, holding a flagellum.

### The Helsinki-figurine

The *ušebtj*-figurine to be described in the present article, belongs to the category of those in «costume des vivants». As it shows some uncommon characteristics, the editorial board of the *Finnish Egyptological Society* recommended to publish it as soon as possible.

The figurine belongs to the private collection of Mr. *Magnus Schwanck* (Helsinki) and was purchased by him at the «flea market» in Paris in the year 1953 (SALMI, 1963, p. 36). Unfortunately he did not obtain any information about the original provenance of the piece.

It was documented by the Finnish Egyptological Society and preliminarily published (HOLTHOER, 1970, p. 16).

The figurine is made of blackened serpentine and represents a good standard of craftsmanship. Its height is 195 millimetres and its preservation, apart from small damages to the nose and the right sleeve, is good (fig. 1).

It represents a beardless man, who wears a *long wig*. He is dressed in a long robe with a protruding apron and is coated with a mantle with outstanding sleeves. Round the neck is an *wsḥ* necklace. The hands are crossed over the chest, — right hand over the left. They are holding the symbols of stability (right) and protection (left). The legs are together.

The figurine is mounted upon a low, square pedestal. The back of the

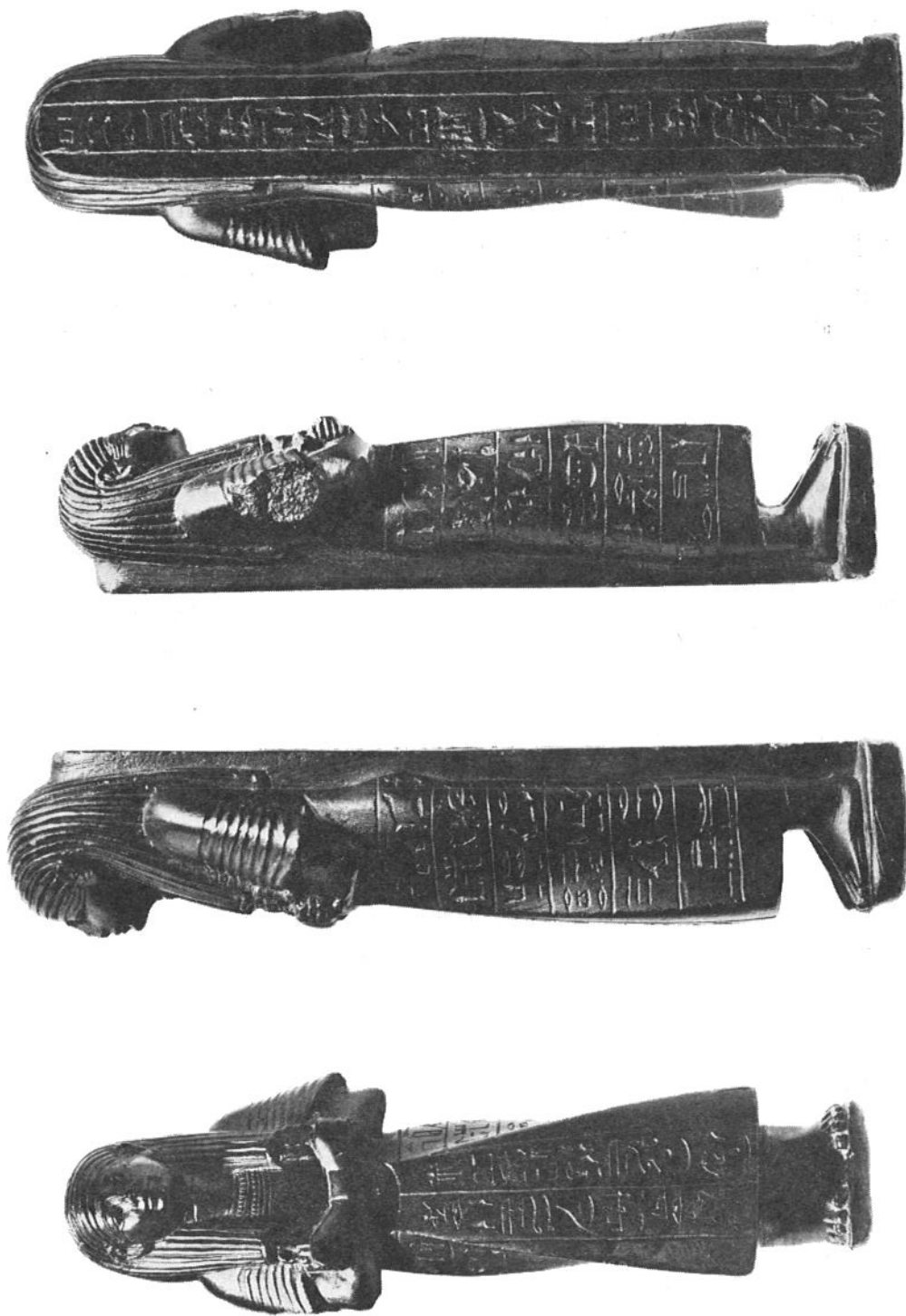


Fig. 1. The ušebtj-figurine of the Schwanck-collection in Helsinki, Finland.

figurine is dominated by a cintred back-pillar, extending from the pedestal to the backhead.

On the shoulders there are two small, carved rings — perhaps misinterpreted falcons' heads of the *wsh* necklace.

The text (fig. 2) of the 6th chapter of the Book of the Dead starts on the right side (A) of the robe and consists of 6 lines, each of them continuing on the left side (B) of the robe. The last part of the text is written on the two lines on the front of the apron (C).

Despite the good craftsmanship the figurine seems to have been prefabricated with the space for the name and the titles originally left blank (as in the case illustrated by BRUNTON & ENGELBACH, 1927, P. XXVIII: 21). The portions of the text incerted later, are in the translation marked by a cursivation.

*Translation:*

(A and B: 1) »May the 'Osiris' be illuminated, (namely) *the overseer of the workshops of the Temple* (2) *Nfr-hr* <sup>(sic)</sup>, *justified*. He says: 0, *ušebtjs* (3) these. If one estimates to reckon you (masc. sing.) to do (4) any work, which is usually done in the necropolis by a man according to his duties, (5) (to) strenghten the field, to fill with water (6) the shores, to ferry the sand of (C: 1) the east to the west, — if reckoned at any time — 'I am the one (C: 2) who does (it), here (I am)' — you(?) shall say (in the?) necropolis, (namely) *Osiris Hr-nfr, justified*.»

The back-pillar (D) is occupied by a wish, which is a version of the expression frequently found on the statues (i.a. LAPIS & MATTHIEW, 1969, fig. 49) and *ušebtjs* (LOUISIANA, 1962, p. 67, fig. 54) of the 19th dynasty, but its position on the back-pillar is somewhat strange.

*Translation:*

(D) »Every (occasion) of being content <sup>(sic)</sup> in the presence of Osiris, Anubis, lord of R-seta and all the gods of the necropolis to the »ka« of 'Osiris', *the overseer of the workshops of the Temple, Hr-nfr, justified*.»

## Commentaries

The texts:

- A: 3. *iptw*. If regarded as a demonstrative plural pronoun with a proclitic vowel, it indicates that the noun is regarded as feminine (GARDINER, 1950, § 110).
- B: 3. *r ip tw*, »to reckon you«. If correctly translated, this passage indicates, that the same noun is regarded as masculine.

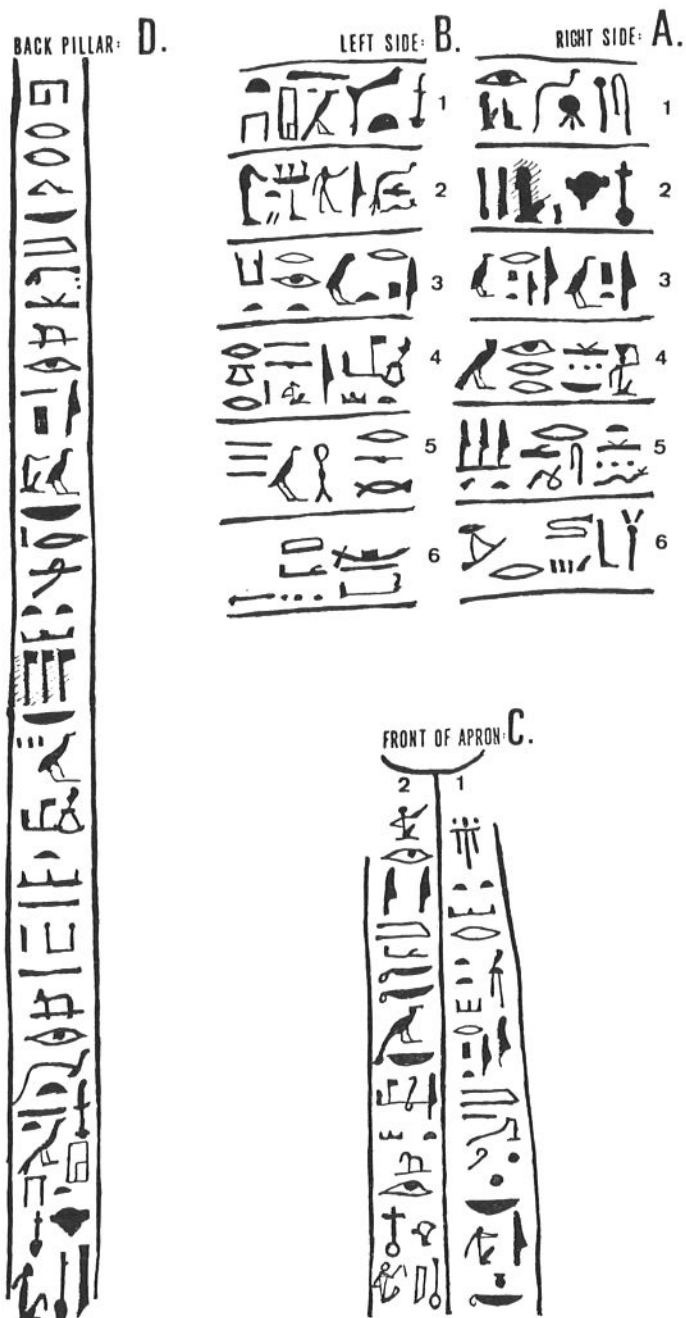


Fig. 2. The text on the ušebtj-figurine from the Schwanck-collection in Helsinki.

- A: 5. (*r*) *srwd*, »to strenghten«. Evidently the spelling with one *r* is advocated by the presence of this same letter in the both words.
- D. *hrr(t)*, »to be content«. The occurrence of this verb instead of the usual *prr(t)*, »to come forth« can depend on two factors. It can be explained by the unusual position of the text on the back-pillar or simply by an ortographical mistake due to the resemblance between the signs for *h* and *pr*.

The name:

The name, *Hernefer*, is rare (RANKE, 1935, 252: 10). One would expect it as *Neferher* (as spelled in A: 2) or written with the sign of a falcon instead of a face. The stone coffin of the 19th dynasty belonging to a man with the same name, mentioned by Ranke (*Ibid.*), was despite efforts not traced by me in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

On the other hand, a name spelled in a similar manner occurs on the second register of the limestone stela of *Twn'* (CAIRO Nr. 34023), probably from the time of Thutmosis IV, who is also represented on this stela. This monument is, if correctly dated, however, of a too early date in order to suit an identification of the man represented on it with the owner of the Helsinki- ušebtj (cf. below).

The dress:

Figurines with a »costume des vivants«, combined with a long wig do not occur in the 18th dynasty and are extremely rare during the 19th dynasty. I have so far been able to find only two such pieces, belonging to a certain »majordomus *Nđm*«, in the Egyptian Museum (Nrs. 47230 and 47231).

As for the position of the hands and the presence of a text similar to D, these figurines make out the best parallels to the Helsinki- piece, but they are made of fired clay and have traces of blue paint and their size, being 485 millimetres, exceeds that of our piece.

During the following dynasties, i.e. the 20th, 21st and the 22nd, figurines with such a combination of the dress become more common. They are, however, of bad craftsmanship and made of blueglazed fayence or copper(?).

Such pieces are i.a. found in the Egyptian Museum (Nrs. 46917, 46847, 47976, 48169, 48460, 48462, 48466 *et al.*), Kestner-museum (WOLDERING, 1958, fig. 59), Hildesheim Pelizäus Museum (SPELEERS, 1923, Pl. 26: 5), Louvre (figurine of *Nsj Hnsw*) and the Fitzwillian Museum (CLAYTON, 1972, Pl. XXXIV: 5—6 and pp. 167—175).

Moreover, the figurines of the 21st and the 22nd dynasties are often represented with their left hand upright, holding a flagellum and thus do not suit the style of our figurine.

### The dating:

Thus, despite their scarceness, the best stylistical parallels are found in the 19th dynasty, to which our piece most probably should be dated.

However, although there are no parallels of stone, the fact, that the similar combination of the dress with a long wig becomes more common in the 21st dynasty, indicates a slightly later dating of our piece — to the end of the 19th dynasty or even to the 20th dynasty.

If we accept such a dating, it may render a clue also to the unknown provenance of the Helsinki-figurine. Černý (JEA 26., London 1941) has stated, that the term »Temple» as spelled in the title of Hernefer, could be an abbreviated name for the temple of *Medinet Habu*. Consequently Hernefer might have been in his lifetime »the overseer of the workshops (or craftsmen) of the Medinet Habu temple» and finally buried somewhere in the Theban mountains.

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