

Middle Kingdom Studies 12

**The World of Middle Kingdom
Egypt (2000-1550 BC)**

*Contributions on Archaeology, Art,
Religion, and Written Sources*

vol. III



Gianluca Miniaci, Wolfram Grajetzki (eds)

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The World of Middle Kingdom III:
Contributions on Archaeology, Art,
Religion, and Written Sources

Gianluca Miniaci, Wolfram Grajetzki
(eds)

Middle Kingdom Studies 12

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Abbreviations

- Ä&L/ÄuL/ÄgLev = *Ägypten und Levante: Zeitschrift für ägyptische Archäologie und deren Nachbargebiete* (Vienna)
- ÄA = *Ägyptologische Abhandlungen* (Wiesbaden)
- ÄAT = *Ägypten und Altes Testament* (Wiesbaden)
- Abgadiyat = *Abgadiyat: Scientific Refereed Journal by the Bibliotheca Alexandrina Calligraphy Center* (Alexandria)
- Achet = *Achet Schriften zur Ägyptologie* (Berlin)
- ACER = *Australian Centre for Egyptology. Reports* (Sydney)
- AegMonast = *Aegyptiaca Monasteriensia* (Aachen)
- AfO = *Archiv für Orientforschung* (Berlin/Graz/Vienna)
- AHL = *Archaeology & History in Lebanon* (London)
- AION = *Annali dell'Istituto Orientale di Napoli* (Napoli)
- ÄMP = *Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung in Berlin*
- Ann CdF = *Annuaire du Collège de France* (Paris)
- Ann. Rev. Anthropol = *Annual Review of Anthropology* (Palo Alto)
- AnOr = *Analecta Orientalia: Commentationes scientificae de Rebus Orientis Antiqui* (Rome)
- AntOr = *Antiguo Oriente* (Seminario de Historia Antigua II, Universidad de Alcalá)
- AOS = *American Oriental Series* (New Haven)
- ASAE = *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte* (Cairo)
- ASE = *Archaeological Survey of Egypt* (London)
- ASEM (EES) = *Archaeological Survey of Egypt. Memoirs* (London)
- ASOR = *American Schools of Oriental Research* (Alexandria, VA)
- AV = *Archäologische Veröffentlichungen, Deutschen Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Kairo* (Berlin / Mainz am Rhein)
- AVDAIK = *Archäologische Veröffentlichungen, Deutschen Archäologisches Institut. Abteilung Kairo* (Berlin/ Mainz am Rhein)
- BABELAO = *Bulletin de l'Académie Belge pour l'Etude des Langues Anciennes et Orientales* (Louvain)
- BACE = *Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* (North Ryde)
- BAe = *Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca* (Brussels)
- BAR = *British Archaeological Reports* (Oxford)
- BAR IS = *British Archaeological Reports International Series* (Oxford)
- BASOR = *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* (Alexandria, VA)
- BCE = *Bulletin de la céramique égyptienne* (IFAO, Cairo)
- BdE = *Bibliothèque d'Étude* (IFAO, Cairo)
- BEC = *British Egyptology Congress* (EES, London)
- BEM = *Bulletin of the Egyptian Museum* (Cairo)
- BES = *Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar* (New York)
- BH = *Beni Hassan, Egypt*
- BIFAO = *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* (Cairo)
- BiOr = *Bibliotheca Orientalis* (Leiden)
- BM = *British Museum, London*
- BMPES = *British Museum Publications on Egypt and Sudan* (London)
- BMSAES = *British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan* (London)
- BMRAH = *Bulletin des Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire* (Brussels)
- BODO = *BIBEL und ORIENT Museum (Fribourg) online database*
- BOLMG = *Bolton Museum and Art Gallery, Bolton, UK*
- BOREAS = *Uppsala Studies in Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern* (Uppsala)
- BOS NS = *Bonnener Orientalische Studien. Neue Serie* (Stuttgart/Bonn/Wiesbaden)
- BSAE/ERA = *British School of Archeology in Egypt/ Egyptian Research Account* (London)
- BSAE = *British School of Archaeology in Egypt* (London)
- BSEG = *Bulletin de la Société d'Égyptologie Genève* (Geneva)
- BZÄ = *Beiträge zur Ägyptologie* (Vienna)
- CAENL = *Contributions to the Archaeology of Egypt, Nubia and the Levant* (Vienna)
- CASAE = *Cahiers supplémentaires des ASAE* (Cairo)
- CCEM = *Contributions to the Chronology of the Eastern Mediterranean* (Vienna)
- CdE = *Chronique d'Égypte. Bulletin périodique de la Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, Bruxelles* (Brussels)
- CG/CGC = *Catalogue General du Musée du Caire* (Cairo)
- CHANE = *Culture and History of the Ancient Near East* (Leiden)
- CNMAL = *Catalogue of the National Museum of Antiquities at Leiden* (Leiden)
- CRAIBL = *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres* (Paris)
- CRIPeL = *Cahier de Recherches de l'Institut de Papyrologie et d'Égyptologie de Lille* (Paris/Lille)
- CSIC = *Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas* (Spanish National Research Council)
- CT = *Coffin Texts*
- DAIK = *Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo*
- DE = *Discussions in Egyptology* (Oxford)
- DFIFAO = *Documents de fouilles de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire* (Cairo)
- DGÖAW = *Denkschriften der Gesamtkademie, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Vienna)
- EA = *Egyptian Archaeology* (London)
- EEF = *Egypt Exploration Fund* (London)
- EES = *Egypt Exploration Society* (London)

- EES EM = Egypt Exploration Society Excavation Memoirs (London)
- EES OP = Egypt Exploration Society, Occasional Publications (London)
- EgUit = Egyptologische Uitgaven (Leiden)
- EJARS = *Egyptian Journal of Archaeological and Restoration Studies* (Sohag)
- ENiM = *Cahiers Égypte Nilotique et méditerranéenne* (Montpellier)
- EU = Egyptologische Uitgaven (Leiden)
- EVO = *Egitto e Vicino Oriente* (Pisa)
- FIFAO = Fouilles de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale (IFAO) du Caire. Rapports préliminaires (Cairo)
- FIP = First Intermediate Period (2160–2055 BC).
- GHPE = Golden House Publications Egyptology (London)
- GM = *Göttinger Miszellen* (Göttingen)
- GOF = Göttinger Orientforschungen I V. Reihe, Ägypten (Wiesbaden)
- GSL = Gardiner's Sign List (in A.H. GARDINER: *Egyptian Grammar. Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs*, 3rd ed., Oxford 1957)
- HÄB = Hildesheimer Ägyptologische Beiträge (Hildesheim)
- HES = Harvard Egyptological Studies (Leiden/Boston)
- IAA = Israel Antiquities Authority
- IBAES = Internet-Beitraege zur Aegyptologie und Sudanarchaeologie (Berlin/London)
- IEJ = *Israel Exploration Journal* (Jerusalem)
- IFAO = Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale (Cairo)
- IJCP = *International Journal of Cultural Property* (Cambridge)
- IJHS = *International Journal of Heritage Studies* (Taylor & Francis online)
- IRSR = *International Regional Science Review* (Los Angeles/London/New Delhi/Singapore/Washington DC/Melbourne)
- JAEA = *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Architecture* (online)
- JA EI = *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* (Tucson)
- JAR = *Journal of Anthropological Research* (Chicago)
- JARCE = *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* (Boston/Princeton/New York/Cairo)
- JEA = *Journal of Egyptian Archeology* (London)
- JEH/JEgH = *Journal of Egyptian History* (Leiden)
- JESHO = *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* (Leiden)
- JNES = *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (Chicago)
- JSA = *Journal of Social Archaeology* (United Kingdom)
- JSem = *Journal for Semitics* (South Africa, SASSEM)
- JSSEA = *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* (Toronto)
- KASKAL = *Kaskal. Journal History, Environment, and Cultures of the Ancient Near East* (Venezia)
- KAW = Kulturgeschichte der Antiken Welt (Mainz am Rhein)
- Kush = *Kush: Journal of the Sudan Antiquities Service/ Journal of the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM)* (Khartoum)
- LÄ = W. HELCK, E. OTTO, W. WESTENDORF (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, 7 vols, 1972–75 (Wiesbaden)
- LAAA = *Liverpool Annals of Archaeology & Anthropology* (Liverpool)
- LingAeg StudMon = *Linguae Aegyptia. Studia Monographica* (Göttingen)
- MÄS = Münchner Ägyptologische Studien (Berlin/Munich/Mainz am Rhein)
- MÄSB = *Mitteilungen aus der Ägyptischen Sammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin* (Berlin)
- MDAIK = *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* (Mainz/Cairo/Berlin/Wiesbaden)
- MEEF = EEF Excavation Memoirs (London)
- MET = Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York
- MFA = Museum of Fine Arts in Boston
- MIFAO = Mémoires publiés par les membres de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Cairo (Paris/Cairo)
- MK = Middle Kingdom (2055–1650 BC).
- MKS = Middle Kingdom Studies (London/Pisa)
- MMA = Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York
- MMJ = *Metropolitan Museum Journal* (New York)
- MRAH = Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels
- MRE = Monographies Reine Élisabeth (Brussels/Turnhout)
- MVEOL = Mededelingen en Verhandelingen Ex Oriente Lux (Leiden)
- NCM = Nottingham City Museums and Galleries
- NEA = *Near Eastern Archaeology* (Alexandria, VA)
- OBO = Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis (Freiburg/Göttingen)
- OBO SA = Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis. Series Archaeologica (Freiburg/Göttingen)
- OIP = Oriental Institute Publications (Chicago)
- OIMP = Oriental Institute Museum Publications (Chicago)
- OLA = Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta (Leuven)
- OM = Orient & Méditerranée (Paris)
- PdÄ = Probleme der Ägyptologie (Leiden/Boston/Köln)
- PEF = Palestine Exploration Fund (London)
- PEFQS = Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement (London)
- PIHANS = PIHANS, Egyptologische Uitgaven, Achaemenid History (Leuven)
- PM = B. PORTER, R. MOSS, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings*, 7 vols., 1927–1951 (1960–), (Oxford)
- PMAG = Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Perth, UK
- PMMA = Publications of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Egyptian Expedition) (New York)

- PPYE = Publications of the Pennsylvania-Yale Expedition to Egypt (New Haven)
- PT = Pyramid Texts
- QDAP = *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine* (Jerusalem)
- PN = H. RANKE, *Die altägyptischen Personennamen*, 2 vols. (Glückstadt, 1935, 1952)
- RACE = *Reports of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* (Sydney)
- RdE = *Revue d'Égyptologie* (Paris)
- REAC = *Ricerche di Egittologia e di Antichità Copte* (Bologna)
- RecTrav/RT = *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes* (Paris)
- Rime = *Rivista del Museo Egizio* (Turin)
- Rives = *Rives méditerranéennes* (Marseille)
- RMO = Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden
- ROM = Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Canada
- ROSAPAT = Rome «La Sapienza» Studies on the Archaeology of Palestine & Transjordan (Rome)
- SACOS = School of Archaeology, Classic and Oriental Studies
- SAGA = Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altägyptens (Heidelberg)
- SAHL = Studies in the Archaeology and History of the Levant (Winona Lake)
- SAK = *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* (Hamburg)
- SAK Bh = Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur. Beihefte (Hamburg)
- SANER = Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records (Berlin)
- SAOC = Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilisation (Chicago)
- SASAE = Supplément aux Annales du Service des antiquités de l'Égypte (Cairo)
- SDAIK = Sonderschrift des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo (Wiesbaden)
- Shedet = *Shedet. Annual Peer-reviewed Journal of the Faculty of Archaeology – Fayoum University* (Fayoum)
- SIP = Second Intermediate Period (1650–1550 BC)
- SMC = Studies in Manuscript Cultures (Berlin)
- TdE = *Trabajos de Egiptología. Papers on Ancient Egypt* (Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife)
- TLA = Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae (Berlin)
- TPPI = J.J. CLÈRE, J. VANDIER, *Textes de la Première Période Intermédiaire et de la XI^{ème} Dynastie*, (Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca 10, Brussels 1948)
- TT = Theban Tomb
- UC = Petrie Museum, University College London, Inventory Number
- UCL = University College London
- UGAÄ = Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Altertumskunde Ägyptens (Hildesheim/Leipzig/Berlin)
- UMM = University Museum Monograph (Philadelphia)
- Urk. = K. SETHE, W. HELCK, H. SCHÄFER, H. GRAPOW, O. FIRCHOW (eds), *Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums*, 8 vols., 1903–57 (Leipzig/Berlin)
- UZK = Untersuchungen der Zweigstelle Kairo des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts, herausgegeben in Verbindung mit der Ägyptischen Kommission der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Vienna)
- VDI = *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii* (Revue d'Histoire ancienne), (Moscow/Leningrad)
- WA = Writings from the Ancient World. Society of Biblical Literature (Atlanta)
- Wb = A. ERMAN, W. GRAPOW, *Wörterbuch der ägyptische Sprache*, 7 vols, 1926–61 (Berlin)
- WZKM = *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* (Vienna)
- ZÄS = *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* (Berlin/Leipzig)
- ZDPV = *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* (Wiesbaden)

Some Remarks on Neha's Spell for gaining Power over his Servant Statuettes

Arkadiy E. Demidchik

Abstract

A few comments to the inscription in cols. 12-25 on the west wall of the burial chamber of Neha at el-Qatta, previously discussed by Schneider (1977) and Allen (2013). This spell was believed to provide Neha, after his burial, with magical power over representations (most probably statuettes) of his dependents designed to serve him in the Beyond. However, since an indispensable condition for the effectiveness of the spell was considered to be the faultlessness of the acquisition of the representations, this was asserted in passages resembling an ideal autobiography. The expression $mr(y)t(=f) ds=f$ 'his own $mr(y)t$ workers' in col. 22 is a colloquial equivalent of the designation $mr(y)t(=f) n(y)t dt=f$, which is written on the pedestal of a sculptural group of three (originally four) servant statuettes from the Dahshur tomb of Shepi (CG 512). This parallel may be of some significance, as in the selection and arrangement of the PT and CT spells Neha's tomb is comparable to that of Siese, which is also at Dahshur.

Published in 1906 and tentatively dated then to the late Eleventh or Twelfth Dynasty, the tomb of the $h3ty$ - c Neha at el-Qatta is mainly noted for several 'Pyramid Texts' and 'Coffin Texts' spells on the walls of its burial chamber.¹ However, three unparalleled spells on the west wall, between PT 304 and PT 579, are also quite significant for the understanding of funeral practices and beliefs of Middle Kingdom Egypt. This paper is just a collection of comments to one of them – the short inscription in columns W 12-25, first translated by Schneider in 1977²

and discussed as 'a neglected funerary text' by Allen in 2013.³ The text is still available only in normalized hieroglyphs of the original publication.

An 'Ideal Autobiography' within the Spell

The very placement of this text in the burial chamber, its context consisting of PT and CT spells, its 'title' $dd mdw$ (l. 12)⁴ – all of these signal that the inscription under consideration is a funerary spell. Even though most of it (cols. 12-19, 21-23) is composed in the manner of ideal (auto)biographies.⁵

The logicity of including the 'ideal autobiography' into this spell becomes apparent once we acknowledge that its purpose was to guarantee the power of the de-

¹ CHASSINAT, GAUTHIER, PIERON, *Fouilles de Qattah*, 33-70, pls 4-8. On the architecture of Neha's tomb and the other texts therein now see RUSSO, *RdE* 55, 113-23; MORALES, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts*, 158-65; LANGE, in MINIACI, GRAJETZKI (eds), *The World of Middle Kingdom Egypt*, vol. II, 200-1; ABD EL-SATTAR, *Egyptian Journal of Archaeological and Restoration Studies* 10/1, 29-42. I have not consulted RUSSO ABD EL SAMI, in BICKEL, LOPRIENO (eds), *Basel Egyptology prize*, 361-9.

² SCHNEIDER, *Shabtis*, vol. I, 38-42; see also JANSSEN, *De traditionelle Egyptische Autobiographie*, vol. I, 176; POLOTSKY,

JEA 16, 198, n. 24.

³ ALLEN, *JEA* 99, 300-7. Now see also DEMIDCHIK, *Вестник ИТУ* 19/10, 50-8.

⁴ On the meaning of $dd mdw$ see BERLEV, *BiOr* 55, 774-5.

⁵ Cf. JANSSEN, *De traditionelle Egyptische Autobiographie*, vol. I, 176; RUSSO, *RdE* 55, 113.

ceased Neha over his servant figurines who were meant to work for him in the Beyond. When reading the text literally, Neha seems to be relating about acquiring people bound to serve ‘his house’ and ‘his place’: he *db3* ‘repayed’ (col. 13),⁶ *iri* ‘acquired’ (cols. 13-16, 21-23),⁷ *ini* ‘bought’⁸ (col. 23) his workers. Berlev, however, convincingly showed that similar statements could be made when acquiring not people as such, but only their representations,⁹ and the Old Kingdom custom of placing servant figurines in the *serdab* is known to have persisted into the first part of the Middle Kingdom; the only difference was that now they were mostly placed in the burial chamber.¹⁰ *Shabti* figurines became a continuation of this custom.¹¹ In col. 16 of Neha’s inscription, the acquisition of *twtw* ‘statues’ or ‘statuettes’ is stated directly; and even though the latter were not found in his tomb, the northern wall of the burial chamber has a niche where they could be placed.¹²

However, an indispensable condition to guarantee the right of the tomb owner to use the labour of the servant representations was the propriety of acquisition. With the exception when they were gifted to the tomb owner by the very people depicted, he had to pay for making them from his own means. In the Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period, ‘payment texts’ in private tombs proclaimed that the craftsmen and artisans who had built and decorated them were generously rewarded,¹³ and later, the *shabti* owners had to pay the craftsmen in full as well.¹⁴ Similarly, Neha’s spell also contains proclamations that his servant figurines have been purchased in advance and in accordance with all the legal and moral norms.

⁶ HANNIG, *Ägyptisches Wörterbuch*, vol. II, 2831-32.

⁷ SCHNEIDER, *Shabtis*, vol. I, 39, 40, n. e; HANNIG, *Ägyptisches Wörterbuch*, vol. II, 367 [3295].

⁸ BERLEV, *Общественные отношения*, 39-40; HANNIG, *Ägyptisches Wörterbuch*, vol. II, 301 [2715].

⁹ BERLEV, *Общественные отношения*, 17-34; BOLSHAKOV, *Man and His Double*, 139-42.

¹⁰ There was no fundamental difference between acquisition of mural or relief representations of servants, as described by Berlev, and acquisition of servant statuettes, cf. BOLSHAKOV, *Man and His Double*, 214-60; ESCHENBRENNER-DIEMER, in MINIACI, BETRÒ, QUIRKE (eds), *Company of images*, 45-8. Like the mural or relief representations, such statuettes were sometimes inscribed with ‘titles’ and names of the depicted, see SCHNEIDER, *Shabtis*, vol. I, 21, 23.

¹¹ SCHNEIDER, *Shabtis*, vol. I, 19-31.

¹² CHASSINAT, GAUTHIER, PIERON, *Fouilles de Qattah*, 17, fig. 8, pl. 7.

¹³ See BERLEV, *Общественные отношения*, 19; PEREPPEL'KIN, *Хозяйство*, 114-9; STRUDWICK, *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, 251-60.

¹⁴ SCHNEIDER, *Shabtis*, vol. I, 240-2, 323-5, 329-30.

The ‘Relocation Formula’

The spell begins with the tercet:

in nh3 m niwt=f
h3n nh3 m sp3t=f
pr=f grg(w) st=f mnt(i)

‘Neha has come from his town,
 Neha has descended from his nome,
 his house (in the necropolis) being established and his
 place (in the West) being firm’

The last line regarding the ‘house’ and ‘place’ sounds like a loose allusion to the adage known to us from the ‘Teaching of Hordedef’: ‘equip your house in the necropolis, make excellent your place in the West’.¹⁵ It occurs unchanged again in col. 17.

The first two lines of the tercet are the ‘relocation formula’¹⁶ typical for the beginning of ‘ideal’ autobiographies,¹⁷ the meaning of which, despite its outward simplicity, remains a matter of debate.¹⁸ No doubt, it is about a burial. But why is it so important to claim that the deceased has arrived to his tomb specifically from ‘his town’ and ‘his nome?’

A new explanation of the emergence and structure of the ideal autobiography was suggested in the PhD dissertation of Shehab el-Din ‘Autobiography in Ancient Egypt in the epoch of the Fourth to Eighth Dynasties’, supervised by Berlev. According to these scholars, ‘already the oldest ideal autobiography, the one of *wr-hww*, was structured in a way that connected the burial with following the laws while still living’.¹⁹ This and other examples²⁰ confirm an undisputable dependency between the burial and a life according to the law and the norms. The natural conclusion is that those who did not live the right way do not have the right to be buried. In other words, already under the Fifth Dynasty, ideal autobiographies

¹⁵ Cf. BRUNNER in HORNUNG, KEEL (eds), *Studien zu alt-ägyptischen Lebenslehren*, 113-7, 121-2. The ‘autobiographical’ parallels suggested in POLOTSKY, *JEA* 16, 198, n. 24 tell only about establishing a ‘house (*pr*)’, but not of a ‘place (*st*)’.

¹⁶ It is called so in SHEHAB EL-DIN, *Автобиография в древнем Египте*, 76-8; see below.

¹⁷ JANSSEN, *De traditionelle egyptische autobiographie*, vol. I, 38-9, vol. II, 58-60; SCHNEIDER, *Shabtis*, vol. I, 39-40, n. b; STAUDER-PORCHET, in STAUDER-PORCHET, FROOD, STAUDER (eds), *Ancient Egyptian Biographies*, 90-2

¹⁸ See the survey in KLOTH, *Die (auto-)biographischen Inschriften*, 54-60. ALLEN, in BARTA (ed.), *The Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, 9-18; ALLEN, *JEA* 99, 301-2, n. a.

¹⁹ SHEHAB EL-DIN, *Автобиография в древнем Египте*, 76.

²⁰ E.g. LICHTHEIM, *Maat in Egyptian Autobiographies*, 9-12, nos. 1-6.

imply the existence of practice much later described by Diodorus of Sicily, I, 92: *'When the body is ready to be buried the family announces the day of interment to the judges and to the relatives and friends of the deceased, and, the law gives permission to anyone who wishes to arraign the dead person. Now if anyone presents himself and makes a charge, and shows that the dead man had led an evil life, ... the body is denied the customary burial... When no accuser appears, ... the relatives put their mourning aside and laud the deceased. And of his ancestry, indeed, they say nothing, ... since they hold that all Egyptians are equally well born, but after recounting his training and education from childhood, they describe his righteousness and justice after he attained to manhood, also his self-control and his other virtues, ... and the multitude shouts its assent and extorts the glory of the deceased, as of one who is about to spend eternity in Hades among the righteous'*.²¹

In Berlev and Shehab el-Din's opinion, the (auto)biographies starting with the 'relocation formula' and this Diodorus's narration *'obviously talk about the same thing: the right to a tomb as a means to achieving an eternal life and the status of blessed dead. What is described by Diodorus as relatives' speeches is in fact the biography of the deceased, that in the tomb is put into the mouth of his representation and turns into his autobiography. Thus, the purpose of this genre was not only to attract attention of the passers-by and to make them say the tomb owner's name out loud, but also to substantiate the owner's right to the burial and the tomb'*.²²

While not insisting that 'the trial' described by Diodorus fully conforms to the reality of the time of the Fifth-Eighth Dynasties, Berlev and Shehab el-Din nevertheless believed such views to be the reason for the formation of the autobiography as a genre, and pointed at *'almost literal conformity of the structure of (auto) biography, especially the ideal one, to what Diodorus described as relatives' speeches prior to burying the deceased'*.²³ Recently, Oréal has corroborated Diodorus I, 92 by several New Kingdom tomb scenes,²⁴ and, according to Willems, the practice of the judgment of the dead being ritually enacted as part of the burial rites is alluded to in the Coffin Texts spell 40.²⁵

If Berlev and Shehab el-Din's theory is correct, it becomes clear why it was so important to emphasize that the deceased arrived to his tomb from 'his town' and

'his nome'. The 'relocation formula' states that the 'acquittal' was pronounced by people well familiar with the deceased, his neighbours who had known him his entire life. Indeed, were he to be buried in a foreign location – being judged by people who did not know him – their acquittal would not be entirely reliable. By stating that he 'has come from his town', and 'has descended from his nome' the tomb or stela's owner was assuring passers-by that he had been acquitted by the people who knew practically everything about him, and therefore his righteousness is beyond reproach.

In Egyptian phraseology, the collocation *niwt + sp3t* means a man's 'entire world, absolutely everything. The world consists of towns and the spaces between them; consequently, "towns" and "nomes" comprise one's full and entire world'.²⁶ Of course, in the 'relocation formula', the addition of the personal suffix pronouns =f/ =i to these nouns narrows the meaning of the collocation to *'the tiniest living space of one person'*.²⁷ However, even with this, the sentences in question meant that the entire 'world' of those who knew the deceased, everyone from his 'living space' acknowledged his righteousness and his right to a decent burial.

Thus, Neha's spell first tercet states that he was given the post-mortem approval by his 'world' already after he had set up 'his house (in the necropolis)' and 'his place (in the West)' – that is his tomb. Therefore, the material preparations to the burial were done without violating the norms, and Neha's right to the tomb and to its contents is undisputed. The impeccability of Neha's life and his right to his tomb is once again clarified right after the abridged 'relocation formula' *i(y).n hh3 3* in cols. 17-19:

'Neha has come here,
his house (in the necropolis) being established and his
place (in the West) being firm.
When Neha was on earth among the living,
Neha did not hinder²⁸ a lad,²⁹
and he did not revile an old man.
Neha did not do what the god hates,
Neha did not acquire at the measuring more than what
has been allotted (to him),³⁰

²¹ SHEHAB EL-DIN, *Автобиография в древнем Египте*, 77-8.

²² SHEHAB EL-DIN, *Автобиография в древнем Египте*, 79.

²³ SHEHAB EL-DIN, *Автобиография в древнем Египте*, 79.

²⁴ ORÉAL, in COLLOMBERT *et al.* (eds), *Aere perennius*, 493-512.

²⁵ WILLEMS, *Les textes des sarcophages*, 197; WILLEMS, *Historical and archaeological aspects*, 187-8; cf. ASSMANN, *Altägyptische Totenliturgien*, vol. I, 164.

²⁶ BERLEV, *Трудовое население*, 238. On the *sp3t* designating the agricultural land between settlements, see *ibid.* 234-42.

²⁷ BERLEV, *Трудовое население*, 238.




²⁸ SCHNEIDER, *Shabtis*, vol. I, 40, n. o.

²⁹ Cf. '[I buried (?)] its (i.e. the town) old men (*i3ww*), I circumcised its *ndsw*...' (PETRIE, *Dendereh*, pl. 8; FISCHER, *Dendera*, 149-50). On the meaning of the much discussed noun *nds* see: BERLEV, *Общественные отношения*, 73-125; FRANKE, *GM* 167, 65-78; QUIRKE, *Orientalia* 79, 404-5; GRAJETZKI, *The People of the Cobra Province*, 25, n. 92, 179-80.

³⁰ SCHNEIDER, *Shabtis*, vol. I, 30, 41, n. r. Cf. The Book of the Dead, Chapter 125: *'I have not added to nor have I subtracted*

Neha did entirely³¹ what is true in his mind,
Neha loved what is good and great with god'

Neha's *k3wtw* and *ḥ3t*

The word  in col. 13 and  in cols. 15, 16, 20, 21, 23, 24 was understood by Schneider as *k3wtw* 'menial labourers',³² whereas Allen reads it as noun *k3wt* 'works', which also occurs in cols. 19 and 21, being spelt as .³³ Although the inscription deliberately excludes the characters depicting humans (Neha believed that human representations can 'come alive'!), it is easy to see that Schneider is right.

The spelling of *k3wt* 'works' in cols. 19 and 21 has the papyrus scroll determinative, which is absent in the word under discussion in cols. 13, 15, 16, 20, 21, 23, 24.³⁴ The noun *k3wtw* 'menial laborers' in Neha's inscription is each time accompanied by the suffix pronoun =*f*, both times absent in *k3wt* 'works'. In col. 24 *k3wtw=f* is modified by the masculine participle *iabw*, which would be strange if it was the feminine noun 'works'.

The term *k3wtw*, with the original meaning 'menial labourers', and later also 'porters', was discussed by Spiegelberg, Gardiner, Haring,³⁵ and Bogoslovsky in Russian. The latter proved that in the workmen's community of Deir el-Medina this job 'belonged to those of the people of *smdt*, and was not considered a "profession". These young men who were already put to work and mastered a profession, but not yet assigned to the craftsmen, were obviously in the position close to the people of *smdt*. Therefore, they could be charged with the work that did not demand professional skills'.³⁶

This conclusion is also important for the proper understanding of *ḥ3t=f* in col. 15, which was read by Schneider as 'his personnel', 'assembled attendants',³⁷ and by Allen as 'his mass (of possessions)'.³⁸ Schneider's reading is corroborated by both the similar mean-

ing of *ḥ3t* in Coffin Texts spell 143 (II, 176f, k)³⁹ and by the fact that in the distich under consideration *ḥ3t* is in parallel with the *k3wtw* 'menial labourers':

iw irn nh3 ḥ3t=f
iw irn nh3 k3wtw=f m rwd ḥḥw=f

'Neha has acquired his *ḥ3t=f*,
Neha has acquired his menial labourers when his body
was still strong'




Since here the denotations of the *ḥ3t* and *k3wtw* are likely to be the same, the translation of *ḥ3t* as 'personnel', 'assembled attendants' appears to be appropriate.

Moreover, based on the analysis of the inscriptions on a statue of the military officer Senbebu (*imy-r3 mšḥ sn-bbw*) from the sanctuary of Heqaib on Elefantine,⁴⁰ Berlev and Shehab el-Din conjectured that in a number of texts *ḥ3t* was used as a 'specific term of the ancient Egyptian social organization. It denotes people who have not been assigned to work yet but are eligible for employment. Usually these are young people who have not received their first assignment yet'.⁴¹ This meaning of *ḥ3t* is quite close to that of *k3wtw* discovered by Bogoslovsky (see above), and the 'parallel' use of these terms in the distich under consideration corroborates Berlev and Shehab el-Din's suggestion.

Neha's *mr(y)t* Workers

(21) ... 
(22) 

Allen's reading: *sk ḥrp.n nh3 nst=f/ir.n.f k3wt mm mrwt ds.f*, 'When Neha managed his seat, / he made his works among the dependents himself'. However, such an understanding of the second clause seems odd to me: why, although being among his *mr(y)t* workers, would Neha do the work himself?⁴²

As shown above, in this inscription  stands not for *k3wt=f* 'his works', but for *k3wtw=f* 'his menial labourers'. And the following word can hardly be the preposition *mm* 'among', since in Neha's spell it is invariably written with the  sign (; cols. 14-17, 23-24), which lacks here. Probably column 21 should have ended with the preposition *m*. But since the scribe's

from the offering measure. I have not subtracted from the aroua measure. I have not encroached upon fields. I have not added to the weight of the balance. I have not tampered with the plummet of the scales' (the translation by RITNER, in SIMPSON (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, 270).

³¹ SCHNEIDER, *Shabtis*, vol. I, 30, 41, n. s.

³² SCHNEIDER, *Shabtis*, vol. I, 38-9.

³³ ALLEN, *JEA* 99.

³⁴ On the spelling *k3wtw* 'menial labourers' without the scroll determinative in the Middle Kingdom see Wb. V, 102.4-10; HANNIG, *Ägyptisches Wörterbuch* II, 2561.

³⁵ GARDINER, *Onomastica*, vol. I, 59*-60*; HARING, *Divine Households*, 238-9.

³⁶ BOGOSLOVSKY, *Древнеегипетские мастера*, 228-9.

³⁷ SCHNEIDER, *Shabtis*, vol. I, 39, 40, n. i.

³⁸ ALLEN, *JEA* 99, 302.

³⁹ SCHNEIDER, *Shabtis*, vol. I, 40, n. i, 44.

⁴⁰ HABACHI, *The Sanctuary of Heqaib*, 75-6, no. 49, pl. 126.

⁴¹ SHEHAB EL-DIN, *Автобиография в древнем Египте*, 215, 283-6.

⁴² Such a 'justification' for one's 'release from labour obligations in the next life' (ALLEN, *JEA* 99, 307) would have been quite unique in extensive Egyptian mortuary literature.

attention was already consumed by the transition to the next column, he mistakenly repeated the preposition *m* there, which is even more understandable because the first word in col 22 was also supposed to start with *m* – *mr(y)t*. More plausible is, therefore, the translation by Schneider: ‘he (*i.e.* Neha) acquired his menial labourers from his own personnel’.⁴³ The preposition can also be ‘*m* of equivalence or predication’ – ‘as’: ‘*he acquired his menial labourers as his own mr(y)t workers, which Neha had acquired on earth, when his body was still strong*’.

Schneider is also right that *mr(y)t(=f) ds=f* means ‘his own personnel’,⁴⁴ literally ‘his own *mr(y)t* workers’,⁴⁵ which is the only known occurrence of the social term *mr(y)t* with the modifier *ds* meaning ‘(one’s) own’. It is clear, however, that *ds* in the meaning of ‘own’ is just a Middle Egyptian colloquial equivalent of the Old Kingdom term of ownership (*ny dt*).⁴⁶ The designation *mr(y)t(=f) n(y)t dt=f* ‘his own *mr(y)t* workers’ is attested in the Middle Kingdom twice,⁴⁷ both times in the captions to representations:

- in the Bersheh tomb of the nomarch Neheri, the latter is shown seeing ‘[the cultivation of fields] by his own *mr(y)t* workers (*in mr(y)t=f n(y)t dt=f*)’,⁴⁸
- on the pedestal of a wooden sculptural group of three (originally four) walking servant statuettes from the Dahshur tomb of the ruler of domain (*hk3 hwt*) Shepi, it is written: [...] *špi mr(y)t n(y)t dt=f* ‘[...] Shepi, his own *mr(y)t* workers’ (CG 512, see Fig. 1; see also CG 511).⁴⁹

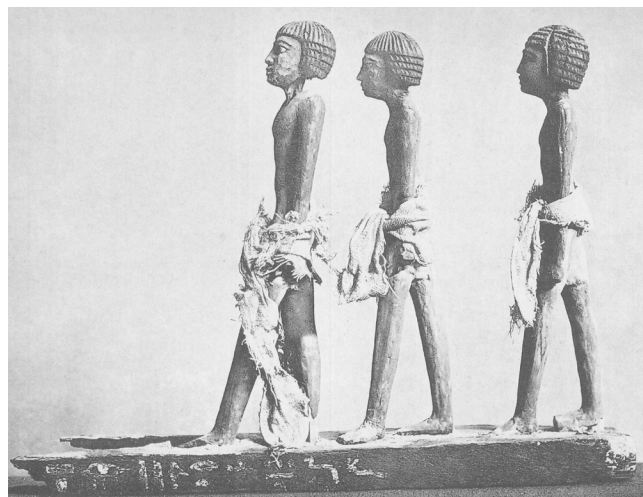


Fig. 1 – The wooden sculptural group of three (originally four) walking servant statuettes from the Dahshur tomb of the ruler of domain Shepi (CG 512; BORSCHARDT, *Statuen und Statuetten*, vol. II, 77, 88)

The parallel with the statuettes of Shepi’s ‘own *mr(y)t* workers’ from Dahshur is of special interest, since in the selection and arrangement of its PT and CT spells the tomb of Neha is comparable to that of Siese, also at Dahshur, and to the tombs of Senwosretankh and Imhotep at Lisht.⁵⁰ While equipping his ‘house in the West,’ Neha, the provincial official, likely copied some religious-magical texts from the areas of Lisht and Dahshur, which at the time were a kind of metropolitan suburbs. Therefore, the representations of Neha’s ‘own *mr(y)t* workers’ could be made in about the same manner as the ones of Shepi.

On the Date of the Composition

In its architecture, in the selection and arrangement of the PT and CT spells, Neha’s ‘house in the West’ is comparable to a few tombs from the reigns of Senusret I and Amenemhat II,⁵¹ that is also *terminus ante quem* for the spell under consideration. The noun *nds* ‘lad’, in col. 17, does not occur in Middle Kingdom writing after the Senusret I.⁵² The avoidance of the human figures, the archaic form $\text{𓆎} \text{𓆏} \text{𓆐}$ in col. 18,⁵³ as well as the ‘Old

⁴³ SCHNEIDER, *Shabtis*, vol. I, 39. On such dittographie, cf. BROSE, *Grammatik der dokumentarischen Texte*, 44, nos. 154-7.

⁴⁴ SCHNEIDER, *Shabtis*, vol. I, 41, n. z.

⁴⁵ On the reading and meaning of the social term *mr(y)t* see BERLEV, *Трудовое население*, 96-146, and now DI TEODORO, *Labour organization*, 39-40; GRAJETZKI, *The People of the Cobra Province*, 205-6.

⁴⁶ BERLEV, in POWELL (ed.), *Labor in the Ancient Near East*, 156, n. 71. On (*ny dt*) meaning ‘(one’s) own’ see: PERPEL’KIN, *Privateigentum*; BERLEV, *Трудовое население*, 172-262; BOLSHAKOV, *GM* 141, 39-42. On *ds* in the meaning ‘(one’s) own’ used as equivalent of (*ny dt*) see BERLEV, *Трудовое население*, 173-75; DEMIDCHIK, *VDI*, 125-37.

⁴⁷ On the designation *mr(y)t n(y)t pr n(y) dt* (CG 1571; FIRTH, GUNN, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries*, vol. I, 208-9; BORCHARDT, *Denkmäler des Alten Reiches*, vol. II, 43, pl. 71) see BERLEV, *Трудовое население*, 121-3, 196, no. 42a.

⁴⁸ GRIFFITH, NEWBERRY, *El Bersheh*, vol. II, pl. XI.3-4; BERLEV, *Трудовое население*, 119-20, 189.

⁴⁹ DE MORGAN, *Fouilles à Dahchour en 1894-1895*, 18-21, pl. 3; BORCHARDT, *Statuen und Statuetten*, vol. II, 76-7, pls 87-8; BERLEV, *Трудовое население*, 103-4, 189.

⁵⁰ RUSSO, *RdE* 55. 113, n. 4, 5; ALLEN, *JEA* 99, 300; MORALES, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts*, 158-65; on *mr(y)t* workers serving their master in the Beyond now see ROSELL, *Trabajos de Egiptología* 9, 176-82.

⁵¹ ALLEN, *JEA* 99, 300; see above, n. 1.

⁵² BERLEV, *Общественные отношения*, 73-125; FRANKE, *GM* 167, 65-78; see, however, ILIN-TOMICH, in MINIACI, GRAJETZKI (eds), *The World of Middle Kingdom Egypt (2000-1550 BC)*, vol. I, 155, 5A.

⁵³ See ALLEN, *JEA* 99, 303, n. j.

Egyptian' independent pronoun *twt* in lines 20 and 21 signal a relatively early dating of the spell, and – to the best of my knowledge – *ds* in the meaning 'one's own' is only attested in relation to one's servants or workers in two Denderite autobiographies from the First Intermediate Period.⁵⁴

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⁵⁴ Cairo Museum JE 46048; ABDALLA, *JEA* 79, pl. XXIV.1; FRANKE, *SAK* 34, 167-72, pl. 4; MUSACCHIO, *AntOr* 4, 77-9, fig. 2. On the inscription of the steward *bbi* see DARESSY, *ASAE* 15, 207; FISCHER, *GM* 210, 28-33; BERLEV, *Трудовое население*, 160-1, 173; FRANKE, *JEA* 93, 162.

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