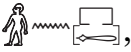







Some Titles Associated with Dwarfs and Midgets

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The inscription on the granite statue of a dwarf, published by Zahi Hawass in *MDAIK* 47 (1991), 157ff., is so roughly carved that its interpretation is, at one point, somewhat obscure. After the first words, which are correctly interpreted as *shmh ib n nb.f r nb* “one who entertains his lord every day,” Hawass reads: *nmîw nswt Pr-n(i)-nh(w) n* (+ determinative) *n pr* 3 “the king’s dwarf *Pr-n(i)-nh(w)* of the Great Palace.” “King’s dwarf of the Great Palace” is hardly possible, however, since the presumed determinative of the word read as *nmîw* follows the name, and the name would interrupt the title.¹ This ideogram actually belongs to the title , which corresponds to , as it appears in the offering niche of the dwarf’s chapel, and on two offering stands in front of the niche.² The extra *n* is surely just a slip; there is only one *n* at this point and it belongs to the name, although it has had to be placed in the continuation of the inscription, on the opposite front edge of the seat.

The reading of the remaining group must also be reconsidered. *Nmîw* is taken to be an early writing of *nmw*, a word for “dwarf” that is attested from the Middle Kingdom as ,³ and later as .⁴ But  occurs rarely as an Old Kingdom writing of terminal *îw*, even as a plural ending;⁵ and since a plural is not involved in this case, it evidently begins the word. Thus the indistinct sign can hardly be anything but  in *îwhw*. This term is applied to a midget in the mastaba of *Ty*,⁶ and it reappears in a title of the dwarf *Snb: imy-r îwhw*, where it again lacks a

1. Nor would a determinative be expected after the name, since the statue itself performs that function. Cf. *MMJ* 8(1973), 7.

2. Seen during a visit to the Giza necropolis in 1991; cf. the description given by Hawass, *loc. cit.*, p. 158.

3. Newberry, *Beni Hasan II*, pls. 16, 32.

4. For the later writings see *Wb.* II Belegstellen for 267 (4).

5. Faulkner, *Plural and Dual in Old Egyptian*, p. 31: *nmîw*-ships.

6. Epron–Wild, *Tombeau de Ti*, pls. 16, 18; Jones, *Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles... of the Old Kingdom*, no. 29.

determinative⁷ The same title is given to a man named *Q3r* at Saqqara, and here again *iwhw* lacks a determinative.⁸ Whether or not *Q3r* likewise was a dwarf is completely unknown, for his inscription is one of several attached to a row of offering bearers of identical stature, and it is apparently a later addition.⁹

Although the location of the doubtful sign may not appear to favor this alternative, its level is between that of the other two signs, so that each of the three signs is consecutively lower. This may be seen from Fig. 1, which shows the title in question. The title *iwhw nswt* does not, of course, provide the reading of the title which concludes the inscription, and which may be *dng n pr-c3*.¹⁰

Further support for the proposed solution is to be found among the rock inscriptions of Wadi Hammamat, where an overseer of the army named *nhw* left his name and titles. Among them is one that has been read as *shd iwhw(.w)* “inspector of dwarfs,”¹¹ this being followed by a sign in the form of a cross, which is taken to represent a short-limbed person. But no determinative is to be expected after *iwhw*, and the alleged determinative seems to be followed by \triangle . I think this must be a semi-hieratic form of 𓏏 , and that the title again refers to *iwhw-nswt* (Fig. 2).¹²

While *iwhw* has been taken to be a term for dwarf or midget, that assumption has been questioned by Junker, who draws attention to Borchartt’s description of an unpublished scene in the tomb chapel of *Tp-m-nh* at Abusir. Here, in a scene depicting men towing a statue on a

7. Junker, *Gîza V*, fig. 6. Jones, *Index*, no. 268.

8. Capart, *Rue de tombeaux*, pl. 99,

9. In such cases names and titles were applied mechanically, simply to ensure the survival of minor officials in the tomb chapel of one of much greater rank and wealth. *MMJ* 9 (1974), 7, n. 14; there are many examples in the mastaba of *Snb*, Junker, *Gîza V*, figs. 7 (bottom), 8, 14a, 18 (bottom); 20 (bottom); 21.

10. Jones, *Index*, no. 1810, is to be corrected, as also no. 1811.

11. Goyon, *Nouvelles Inscriptions*, no. 23; Jones, *Index*, no. 3337 (incompletely quoted).

12. The form of 𓏏 , which recurs in the same inscription, is much more unusual; the closest parallel I know of is the adjacent Dyn. III example, from Gardiner-Peet-Černý, *Inscriptions of Sinai*, pl. 1.





Fig. 1






Fig. 2


sledge, a man at the very end of the group is labelled *iwḥw Ipt*.¹³ Since the man would probably have been described as a dwarf if he had been one, Junker presumes that he was of normal stature; even so, the label itself may again be a secondary addition, for it is unexpected in this context.¹⁴ Supposing that it is pertinent, however, *iwḥw* would not betoken dwarfs or midgets, and Junker therefore concludes that it may represent a function in which dwarfs, as well as others, were engaged. It is difficult to imagine what this function might be,¹⁵ and the occurrence of the title *shḏ iwḥw(.w)-nswt* in the Hammamat inscription adds further perplexity, nor is it clear whether this is related to *ḥnw*'s participation

13. Junker, *Gîza V*, p. 11, citing Borchardt, *Grabdenkmal des Königs Ne-user-re*, p. 122. Borchardt's description of this, the better preserved of two similar groups of figures, begins with the words: "bei der zweiten Gruppe..." which has been misread by Claude Sourdive as "bei der Zwergengruppe..." in *La Main*, p. 95.

14. The only official that is certainly known to appear in such scenes is a nameless *hrp izwt* "director of crews," Jones, *Index*, no. 2559; see Marianne Eaton-Krauss, *Representations of Statuary*, pls. 11, 12, 14, 15, 16. The director is shown and described as "pouring water" to lubricate the passage of the sledge, but this would hardly warrant the interpretation of *iwḥw* as "moistener" (*Wb.* I, 57 [1–8]) in such a context. Where other titles (with names) replace that of the director (Eaton-Krauss' pls. 19–22), they are probably secondary additions; that is verifiable in the case of her pl. 19 (nos. 110, 111); see *Mereruka*, pl. 29.

in expeditions, or whether it, like the title that precedes it, refers to a function at the Memphite capital.¹⁶ If *iwhw* does not refer to a function, his title might possibly concern pygmies who assisted expeditions to their homeland as scouts.¹⁷

The term *iwhw* also appears in a few personal names of the Old Kingdom, including not only ,¹⁸ but also ¹⁹ and .²⁰ They would more plausibly refer to the physical aspect of a person rather than to a function, although this evidence is hardly conclusive.

In any case *iwhw* can hardly be a generic term for dwarfs and midgets, since that role seems to have been filled by *dng*.²¹ *Dng* has previously been thought to refer specifically to pygmies because it is clearly applied to them in the inscription of *Hr-hw.f*, at Assuan, where it is written ,²² but Véronique Dasen rightly points out that the determinative of the word represents an achondroplastic dwarf,²³ and that the inclusion of an ear in the writing may refer to the tendency of such dwarfs to be prone to deafness as a result of otitis media in childhood.²⁴

15. Some have presumed this to be the keeping of domestic animals such as apes and dogs, but such a title would more likely be *mnw/zxw*, as in the case of a “keeper of baboons,” (Jones, *Index*, no. 1594), or else *iry*, as in *iry gfw* “keeper of monkeys” (*ibid.*, no. 1243).

16. As inspector of *wcb*-priests of the pyramid cult of Re-djedef; Jones, *Index*, no. 3377.

17. The habitat of pygmies was formerly far more extensive than it is today; see Véronique Dasen, *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt and Greece*, p. 27; Colin M. Turnbull, *The Forest People*, pp. 14, 18–19.

18. Ranke, *PNI*, 18 (15), for which see El-Khouli and Kanawati, *Quseir El-Amarna*, pl. 44. Ranke’s reference is also mentioned by Jones, *Index*, no. 29.

19. *PNI*, 18 (14), for which see Blackman, *Meir IV*, pl. 3; V, pls. 21, 26.

20. Ranke, *loc. cit.*, to be corrected: *Mereruka*, pl. 82.

21. With Pyr. variants *D3g/d3ng*: *Wb.* V, 470 (5–7); Jones, *Index*, no. 3737.

22. Notably Dawson, *JEA* 24 (1938), 185, referring to *Urk.* I, 129–31.

23. *Op. cit.*, p. 28.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 29. Otitis media, as a complaint of achondroplastic dwarfs in early childhood, is remarked by Charles I. Scott, Jr., *Genetics: Pediadric Annals* Nov. 1973, 25; for deafness see *idem* in *Dwarfism* (Irvine, Cal., 1994), ed. Richard Crandall, p. 133.

