Two Wooden Anthropoid Coffins from Abusir el-Malaq
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1. Introduction
On Tuesday 24 April 2012, the chief inspector of Beni Suef governorate Amal Farag and the inspector Shimaa Galal rescued two anthropoid coffins (for a male and a female) in Abu Shelb – south west of Abusir el-Malaq at the same moment robbers were preparing to transfer them outside the tomb. Fortunately, thieves left the coffins and ran away once they heard the inspector’s car approaches and stops nearby the tomb. This tomb is situated atop an archaeological Tell three meters high. The male coffin was covered with blankets by thieves. At the moment of rescuing the coffins, the inspectors could not determine whether this tomb was the original location or the thieves transferred them to this tomb as a collection point before taking them away. Moreover, they are not sure – even though this tomb was the original location – in which part of the tomb these coffins were located as they were discovered in the center of the open court at the tomb entrance. This raises an issue in terms of their archaeological context.

The tomb is accessible through a vertical shaft in its eastern side, almost 1.5m deep, and ends with a staircase that leads to an open corridor (2m×1.10m). At the end of this corridor, the tomb entrance measures almost 1.30m×0.70m. It terminates into a main east-west rectangular chamber surrounded by six niches to house mummies (loculi), two at the northern, southern, and western sides. Two niches are at the top of the northern wall and one at the top of the western wall (Average 0.80m long×0.20m wide×0.30m deep).

The two anthropoid coffins under investigation of unknown male and female have been separated from their archaeological context by tomb robbers and coincidently rescued. The two coffins were restored and once preserved in Beni Suef Museum under the numbers 2612 and 2613 for male and female coffins respectively. Until recently in 2017, they were moved to the Grand Egyptian Museum under the numbers 65490 and 65489 respectively.

The texts are inscribed in vertical columns and occupy the central part of the two coffins. They are inscribed on yellow grounds and flanked with simple motives. Either coffins lost parts of their hieroglyphic texts but still in a reasonable state of preservation with vivid colors. The Coffins shroud mummies; the male one is wholly preserved while the female one is heavily decayed.

2. The Male Anthropoid Coffin (fig.1)

2.1 Basic information
- Grand Museum Catalogue Registry Number: 65490.
- Material: Sycamore covered with a layer of stucco.
- Length: 183cm.
- Maximum width: 55cm.
- Thickness: 43cm.
- Feet width: 34cm.
- Feet height: 36cm.
- Head height: 46cm.
2.2 General Description

The coffin is typical of yellow type which appeared for the first time during 19th Dynasty and continued until the reign of Oserkon I of the 22nd Dynasty. It is decorated with polychrome on yellow-varnished background. Colored scenes and texts covered the three sides of the coffin. The coffin seems to be a mummiﬁed body that is completely wrapped, and arms are hidden inside. The face is painted dark brown with white wide eyes and black pupils. Eye brows and eye lids are extended by cosmetic lines. Cheeks are full, and the mouth is quite small, and lips reﬂect a slight smile. The nose seems bigger than the other facial parts. The Ears are exposed, and a curved false beard is attached to his lower chin. A tripartite hair wig covers the head and rests on the shoulders. It is ornamented by strips colored in blue, red, green, and yellow. It is fastened by means of a cylindrical head band that hides part of the forehead and decorated with geometrical designs. Notably, all texts are written with black ink in cursive hieroglyphs.

The lid is divided into two parts; scenes decorate the upper one while texts - sorted in three vertical bands ﬂanked by standing images of protector gods - occupy the lower one till the leg toes. The appearance of protector gods on coffins’ sides started during the reign of Taharqa of the 25th Dynasty; therefore, the statue most probably belongs to the 26th Dynasty or later. The coffin sides are ornamented by forms of worshipping apes. The coffin trough is free of scenes and texts while the coffin back is fully occupied by the scene of Iment, wearing the hieroglyphic sign of the west.
2.3 Joining the earth

The lid's chest is occupied with a broad collar wsx ended by Horus head which is surrounded by dark red solar disk. According to chapter 158 of the Book of the Dead, titled: 'Spell for the broad collar of gold put at the throat of the blessed one', this collar material was gold. It was placed on the neck and throat of the deceased who is identified with Osiris in his day of 'joining the earth'. The collar encompasses nine rows; the ninth one is erased except a zigzag line linking the endings of the hair wig. The first and fifth rows symbolize Isis tears of mourning, while the third and sixth rows are decorated with the tit amulet of Isis. The tit amulet is put on the deceased throat in his burial day as attested in spell 156 of Book of the Dead. The knots color is red which represents blood and reflects the name of this chapter "A knot-amulet of red jasper". This means that the protection of "the Great One i.e. Osiris" is achieved through the blood power of Isis. Once the amulet is put on the deceased, he entertained the magical power of Isis that protects his limbs.

2.4 The protection of Nut

Below the wsx collar, goddess Nut sits on a nwb sign and spreads its wings which are topped by two face-to-face recumbent jackals with flywhisks over their backs (figure 2). The goddess wears a head band – tied from the back – and is surmounted by the dark red solar disk. Her head turns right towards a blue feather of mAat on the right wing while the left one is erased. It is noted that the body of goddess Nut is painted with dark red color – color of blood and violence as it is the same color of the sun god Re and goddess Sekhmet when she performs a protective role in this context. While Nut's head band and part of her two wings colored in green, the feathers are colored in black. The three colors as well as the black color of mAat feather and the two Jackals signify the netherworld. The role of Nut here is Osirian rather than solar and its echo textually occurred in the Pyramid Texts. This theme is repeated throughout the Egyptian History as Nut says: "I spread myself out over my son, in your name of Mysterious one".

Griffiths also asserted that Nut involves the deceased who became a star, and, in later pictography, stars are shown on the lid near her body. Although the texts explained her representation as a protector goddess who outstretches her wings upon the coffin as became clear in the 18th Dynasty, she has not been demonstrated on coffins before the 20th Dynasty. She is not only protecting the deceased but also assigns her son Thoth to protect him as echoed in Chapter 1 of the Book of the Dead titled: 'Spell for descending to the (Council of Osiris) on the day of burial, of entering after going forth'. In this spell Thoth – as a child of Nut – talks about his role in protecting Osiris from his enemies 'I am one of these gods [member of the Council], the children of Nut who slay the enemies of Osiris and keep the rebels away from him'.

Fig. 2. The Motif of Nut

Beside her head and directly above the right wing, two short vertical hieroglyphic columns exist.

\[\text{Htp di nsw (Htp di) Wsir}\]

A boon which the king gives, a boon which Osiris gives.

The first column mentions the hieroglyphic statement Htp di nsw, the introductory part of the famous offering formula. The upper part of the second column is hardly visible; however, we can recognize the "throne" sign above "an eye" which reads Wsir below it. The notice of this column most probably reads: Htp di nsw (Htp di) Wsir.

2.5 Journey to the heaven
Two horizontal registers of scenes occupy the area under goddess Nut; the scenes of the lower one should be interpreted before those of the upper one and read from left to right contrary to the upper one's which are read from right to left. The Scenes represent the journey of the deceased starting from the funeral through ascending to the other world to the judgement. The first register shows the funeral procession; a boat carries a naos driven by Webwawet jackals. Then, the scene of entering the west horizon where the western mountain and the solar disk are painted black. The black color symbolizes death as it is the color of the night. Osiris was called 'the Black One' to express his role in the netherworld and resurrection.

An offering table is eventually set before Ta-tennen the god of 'risen earth or exalted earth' and accompanied by a text that reads: "the body is for earth and the soul is for heaven".

The second register encompasses the scene of opening the two gates of the horizon by Anubis that were mentioned in both Pyramid Texts and Book of the Dead. The follows the scene of entering the horizon and the sky of the other world colored in red. Finally, the judgement scene shows the deceased being judged before Osiris by means of a scale. The representation of Nut spreading its wings on coffins below which the Judgement scene occurs for the first time in the reign of Taharqa 25th Dynasty.

2.6 Lid Texts
Below the two registers, three are there vertical lines of texts flanked by four sons of Horus, each of which holds two feathers of Maat and accompanied with the text ḫnTr (worshipping god four times). The first line of the vertical text painted on the front side of the coffin represents an offering formula to Sokar-Osiris, the great god, and asking for a beautiful burial in the cemetery. The second line displays an offering formula to Osiris Khenty Imentiwy lord of the west and the lord of Abydos. Unfortunately, the third line is destroyed.

On the leg toes, two face-to-face recumbent "Anubis" are demonstrated. This feature started in the reign of Taharqa of the 25th Dynasty. They protect the deceased Osiris as appeared in the texts of the 21st Dynasty coffins.
A boon which the king gives, a boon which Sokar-Osiris gives, great god (who is in Abydos) of sacred, beautiful burial, given offering of pure and cold water with bread.

A boon which the king gives to Osiris, the foremost of westerners, great god, lord of Abydos, herdsman ...... divine ...... alabaster and her clothing upon which he gives.

...... of preferable burial in the sarcophagus, dignitary, beloved of both (Isis and Nephthys).
Two Wooden Anthropoid Coffins from Abusir el-Malaq

(a) The ib sign looks clear and the lower part of Ab sign looks clear and can be compared to the same sign in the second vertical line of Htp di nsw formula. This lost part can be reconstructed as Hry ib AbDw.

(b) It is obvious that the writer either uses uniliteral signs to compose words or writes signs as logograms.

(c) The two signs m and the beheaded goat are very clear, and the sentence can be reconstructed as m-Xnw Xrt nTr (in the necropolis).

(d) The writer repeated the forearm with hand holding bread. It can be suggested that the first sign can be read as di while the second one could be read as Hnq (offering). This is suitable with the rest of the sentence n wab n (KbH) nm nzp.

(e) The upper part of the sign, which represents a water-pot with water pouring from it, is clear. It is worthy noting that the writer used the sign n as a logogram in the word mw, the genitival article, and the determinative of the word qbH.

(f) According to the Wörterbuch, the conjunction article nm first appeared in the Greco-Roman period. This supports the dating of this sarcophagus from the 26th Dynasty onwards.

(g) In the word nzp, it's clear that the last sign of this vertical line is written mistakenly instead of the sign p. The word nzp is appropriate in accordance with the rest of the sentence mw wab n (KbH). The pure and cold water, and the bread are the most preferable offerings.

(h) The writing of AbDw is unfamiliar. The writer replaced the sign Dw with the sign d.

(i) The writing of mniw is unfamiliar. The writer wrote it with the sign, representing a standing man instead of the sign which represents a man with a stick and a bundle or a mat on shoulder.

(j) The writer repeated the sign Htp as he used to repeat signs throughout the whole text. The determinative of Htpw consists of the forearm and the hand instead of the forearm and the hand holding bread.

(k) Di.f is followed by the sign representing the forearm and the hand which is totally out of context.

(l) According to the context, the sign is read as mni although it should be written using the sign as a logogram.

(m) mnxt was ended by n which is a mistake from the writer. He was confused as he should end the word using the papyrus roll instead.

(n) The uniliteral signs Sn and (ty) should be read Sn(ty) which means "both" in reference to Isis and Nephthys. The writer also repeated the sign mry at the end of the text probably to signify Isis and Nephthys too.

(o) On the two sides of the coffin, a group of cheering and praising baboons precedes vertical black snake. The rear side of the coffin is occupied by Imen, goddess of the west. She is surmounted by a falcon, wearing a head band and a tight dress decorated with a net that covers the upper part of the body. Above the head of Imen, there is an unclear line of hieroglyphs painted in green.

3. The Female Anthropoid Coffin (fig.5)
3.1 Basic information
- Grand Museum Catalogue Registry Number: 65489.
- Material: Sycamore covered with layer a of stucco.
- Length: 182cm.
- Maximum width: 55cm.
- Thickness: 40cm.
- Feet width: 41cm.
- Feet height: 36cm.
- Head height: 42cm.
3.2 General Description

The coffin is decorated only on the front side with both colored scenes and texts; however, traces of color can still be noticed on the back and sides. The coffin seems to be a mummified body that is completely wrapped, and arms are hidden inside. The face is painted dark brown with white wide eyes and black pupils. Eye brows and eye lids are extended by short cosmetic lines comparing to the male ones. Cheeks are full, and lips reflect a slight smile. Nose is delicate, and ears are exposed. A heavy black tripartite hair wig covers the head and rests on shoulders and parts from the collar. It is fastened by means of a cylindrical head band that hides part of the forehead. A collar of seven rows occupies the coffin's chest. Geometrical squares of blue, orange and red colors adorn the first two rows. The other five rows symbolize Isis tears and are painted blue, orange, red, and green. The kneeling figure Nut outstretches her wings colored in light blue with clear details of feathers. The blue color symbolizes the cosmic aspects of nature including the sky which goddess Nut represents. She is painted brown and wears an ornamented long green dress and a black hair wig. She is flanked by two recumbent Anubis.
3.3 Lid Texts
A vertical text is painted on the front side of the coffin between two sons of Horus\textsuperscript{39}. Qebehsenuef as a marching man wearing a light blue kilt with red and white color, and Hapy as a mummified baboon-headed man painted in blue with a red head and a black head cover.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.3\textwidth]{lid_text.jpg}
\end{center}

Recitation by Eye of Horus, praised by Isis, her helpers of lower sky, and Horus Menyt.

(a) The raging Eye of Horus was an important protective element to the deceased Osiris. In the pyramid texts spell 510\textsuperscript{43} explains that the Eye of Horus, in the form of the 'Ikhet the Great uraeus, emerges out from the red head-band.\textsuperscript{44} It is the terrifying and flame-throwing sS\textsuperscript{d}-star that is 'stronger than men and mightier than gods'. It rains fire down on the deceased kings' enemies who was identified with Osiris. In spell 519, the Eye of Horus is used to bandage the finger of the deceased Osiris.\textsuperscript{45}

(b) mnfy (mwnf) means helpers\textsuperscript{46}.

(c) mnn\textsuperscript{47} was written mistakenly instead of mnit, one of Horus titles. This title relates to the stellar Horus who was abstracted as a tough fighter in the Pyramid Texts when identified with the 'morning star'. He as the deceased king is implored to ascend to the heaven and join Re and bears the title\textsuperscript{48} 1r xnty-mnit.f.\textsuperscript{49}

4. Conclusions
This article publishes two coffins of unknown male and female. They are dated back to the 25th Dynasty onwards as evident from many features that appeared for the first time from the reign of Taharqa of the 25th Dynasty onwards including: the appearance of protector gods on coffins' sides, the representation of Nut spreading its wings on coffins below which the Judgement scene, and the representation of the recumbent Anubis on coffins. Also, this is clear from using some hieroglyphic signs such as the conjunction article nm which is dated back to the 26th Dynasty onwards.

The artist who decorated the male coffin was creative as he succeeded in summarizing the deceased's journey to the heaven in two thin small horizontal registers under the representation of Nut, starting from the funeral through ascending to the otherworld, opening the two gates of the horizon, entering the horizon, to the judgement.

As echoed with the Pyramid Texts, the role of Nut here is Osirian rather than solar as she spreads her wings to protect her son i.e. Osiris and his coffin. Therefore, the deceased would become a star near her body. She also assigns her son Thoth to protect the deceased as echoed with Chapter 1 of the Book of the Dead.

Amulets play an essential role in protecting the deceased. As evident from chapter 158 of the Book of the Dead, the broad collar \textit{wsx Hr} was put on the neck and throat of the deceased who is identified with Osiris in his day of 'joining the earth'. Also, the red-colored \textit{tit} amulet of Isis was put on the deceased throat in his burial day as attested in spell 156 of Book of the Dead to protect "the Great One i.e. Osiris". This is only achieved by the magical blood power of Isis.

As mentioned in the Pyramid text, the role of the four sons/souls of Horus was to help the deceased to ascend the sky. And according to Wilkinson, they were also the sons of Osiris who were members of the 'seven blessed whose role was to protect Osiris coffin.'

The Eye of Horus played an important protective role to the deceased Osiris as attested in the Pyramid Texts spell 510. The Eye of Horus spits on the enemies of the deceased who is identified with Osiris. 1r-mnit or 1r xnty-mnit.f is one of Horus titles that implies his stellar powers as the 'morning star'. He is a tough fighter as mentioned in the Pyramid Texts. He helps the deceased to ascend to the heaven and join Re.

Philologically, it has been noted that the writer either uses uniliteral signs to compose words or writes signs as logograms such as \textit{krst}, the sign \textit{n} in \textit{mwy}, the sign \textit{in} in the word \textit{mni}. It has further been concluded that the texts include mistakes including: I) Mixing up original signs and similar ones, such as \textit{Dw} which was replaced by \textit{d} and the \textit{Htp} by the standing man in the word \textit{mniw}. Also, the determinative of \textit{Htpw} and writing \textit{mnn} instead of \textit{mnit}. II) Using inappropriate signs, such as the sign representing the forearm and the hand in \textit{dj.f}. III) Repeated signs, as the writer used to repeat signs throughout the text with no logic reason, such as \textit{Htp}.
References
- Munro, I., Totenbuch-Spruch 151 des wieder Lesbaren (PLouvre n. 3047), in; Behlmer, H., Fs. Westendorf, Gottingen, 1994, 143-155.
- Satzinger, H., Beobachtung zur Opferformel: Theorie und Praxis, LingAeg, 5, 1977, 177-188.
Two Wooden Anthropoid Coffins from Abusir el-Malaq

امل فرج – أسامة إبراهيم

Taboat Khanbian from Abu Sir melq

This page contains text in Arabic and English. The text is about two anthropoid coffins from Abusir el-Malaq. The passage discusses the discovery and significance of these coffins, mentioning their importance in the study of ancient Egyptian burials. The text also touches on the archaeological context and the preservation of these artifacts. The page ends with additional notes on the coffins and their significance in the history of Egyptology and ancient Egyptian burial practices.

3 Niwiński, "Coffins, Sarcophagi and Cartonnages", 286.
5 Ancient Egyptians believed that the skin and the limbs of god are of gold, the color of the sun. Therefore, they made golden masks for mummies and adorn the throats with the broad collar to entertain the immortality of the sun which is reflected by the yellow color – Schenkel, W. Die Farben in Ägyptischer Kunst und Sprache. Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde, 88, 2007, 131-147; Baines, J. Color Terminology and Color Classification: Ancient Egyptian. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007, 240-262.
6 Allen, T. G., The Book of the Dead or Going Forth by Day, SAOC, 37, Chicago, 1974, 156.
8 Allen, The Book of the Dead or Going Forth by Day, 155.
10 Red color symbolizes two opposite meanings; the victorious Seth – whose eyes and hair are in red – over Apep, and the evil Seth who murdered his brother Osiris. So, it symbolizes power and victory that endows "life" from one side and anger, war, violence, and evil that cause "death" - Schenkel. Die Farben in Ägyptischer Kunst und Sprache, 131-147; Baines. Color Terminology and Color Classification, 240-262.
11 They first appeared in the reign of Taharqa. Niwiński, A., Coffins, Sarcophagi and Cartonnages, 286.
12 Schenkel. Die Farben in Ägyptischer Kunst und Sprache, 131-147.
17 Hayes, W. C., Royal Sarcophagi of the XVIII Dynasty, Princeton Monographs in Art and Archaeology: Quarto Series XIX, Princeton, 1935, 184 (1A-I).
18 Niwiński, "Coffins, Sarcophagi and Cartonnages", 284.
19 Allen, The Book of the Dead or Going Forth by Day, 5.
20 For the meaning of Htp dj nsbw formula, see. Satzinger and Franke who have considered that (z) dj (w) is a perfect relative form with the god Osiris as a subject. Satzinger, H., Beobachtung zur Opferformel: Theorie und Praxis, LingAeg, 5, 1977, 177-188; Franke, D., The Middle Kingdom Offering Formulas: A Challenge, in: JEA, 89, 2003, 46.
21 The name of Wepwawet mean "opener of the ways" and he was worshipped at Asyut - Wilkinson, R.H., The complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt, Thames and Hudson, 2003, 86. Wepwawet and Anubis were identified with Horus as brothers to protect their father Osiris. Beside Wepwawet, other names were given to the Jackal deities who drive the deceased boat including: sAbw, Ixmw, and sqw. For detailed explanation of the names and roles of Jackal deities see: Shelaih, R.M.A., The God Anubis and the Jackal Deities in the Graeco-Roman Period in Egypt, unpublished M.Sc. thesis, Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management, Suez Canal University, Imaali–Egypt, 2009.
22 Schenkel. Die Farben in Ägyptischer Kunst und Sprache, 131-147.
24 Ta-tennen was entitled the 'father of gods' and was linked to creation mythologies and represented the whole underworld in the 'Book of the Gates'. Redford, D.B., The Ancient Gods Speak: A Guide to Egyptian Religion, Oxford University Press, 2002, 241,249,324.
Two Wooden Anthropoid Coffins from Abusir el-Malaq

26 This first appeared in in the Twenty-fifth Dynasty. Niwiński, Coffins, Sarcophagi and Cartonnages, 286.
27 Niwiński, Coffins, Sarcophagi and Cartonnages, 286.
28 The earliest indication to the four sons – also souls – of Horus appeared in the Pyramid Texts. They are called the 'friends of the king' and their role was to help the dead king to ascend the sky – Pyr. 1278-79. They are also entitled 'the sons of Osiris' and members of the 'seven blessed once' whose role was to protect Osiris coffin - Wilkinson, The complete Gods and Goddesses, 88.
29 Niwiński, "Coffins, Sarcophagi and Cartonnages", 286.
31 Gardiner SL. D37, p.454.
32 Gardiner SL. W15, p.529.
33 Wb. II, 263,6.
34 Wb. II, 319,8.
35 Gardiner SL. A33, p.445.
36 Wb. IV, 497, 8.
37 Schenkel. Die Farben in Ägyptischer Kunst und Sprache, 131-147.
38 In some instances, Osiris was depicted in green to symbolize his fertility and resurrection roles and he was titled "the Great Green" – Pyr. 628c, in: Sethe, K. Die altaegyptischen pyramiden texte nach den papierabdrucken und photographien des Berliner Museums. Hinrich'sche Buchhandlung, Leibzig, 1908, 339.
39 The four sons of Horus were associated with the Canopic jars to preserve the mummified internal organs of the deceased. Imesty was represented as a human-headed mummy and was assigned to protect the liver. He is oriented towards the south and guarded by Isis. Dwamutef was represented as a jackal-headed mummy and was assigned to protect the stomach. He is oriented towards the east and guarded by Neith. Hapy was represented as a baboon-headed mummy and was assigned to protect the lungs. He is oriented towards the north and guarded by Nephthys. Qebehsenuef was represented as a falcon-headed mummy and was assigned to protect the intestines. He is oriented towards the west and guarded by Serket - Wilkinson, The complete Gods and Goddesses, 88.
40 Wb.II, 79.
41 Wb.II, 55, 7-9.
42 Wb.II, 76, 11-12.
43 Pyr. 1147.
44 See the symbolism of the red color explained before.
45 Pyr. 1202-1203.
46 Wb.II, 79; Wb.II, 55, 7-9.
47 Wb.II, 76, 11-12.
48 Wb.II, 60.