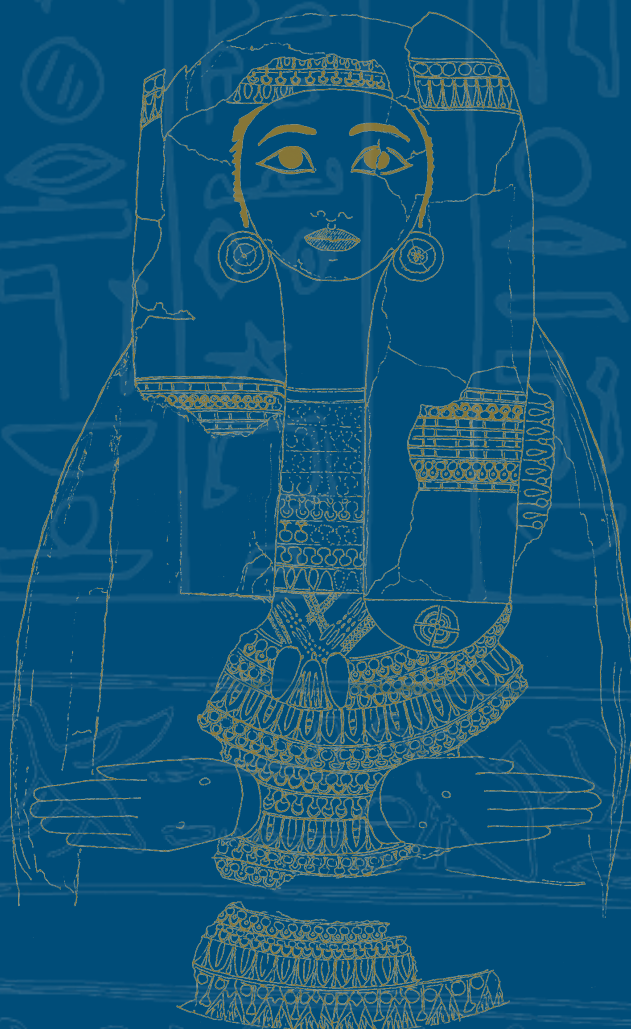


GLEAMING COFFINS

ICONOGRAPHY AND SYMBOLISM
IN THEBAN COFFIN DECORATION
(21ST DYNASTY)

VOL. I: THE SHELTERING SKY



ROGÉRIO SOUSA

IMPRESA DA UNIVERSIDADE DE COIMBRA
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THE GATE OF THE
PRIESTS
BAB EL-GASUS PROJECT

For Carlos

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Death is always on the way, but the fact that you don't know when it will arrive seems to take away from the finiteness of life. It's that terrible precision that we hate so much. But because we don't know, we get to think of life as an inexhaustible well.

The Sheltering Sky

Paul Bowles



Inner coffin (A.136)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	11
Terminological remarks	15
CHAPTER ONE - EVOLUTION OF THE ANTHROPOID COFFINS	
The origins	19
<i>Rishi</i> type	21
‘White’ type	26
‘Black’ type	28
‘Festive dress’ type	32
Proto-‘yellow’ type	37
‘Yellow’ type	43
CHAPTER TWO - HEAD OF MYSTERY: THE HEADBOARD	
Face	47
Wig	49
Headdress	51
General interpretation	54
CHAPTER THREE - JUSTIFIED GOD: THE UPPER SECTION	
Hands	61
Forearms	63
Arms	65
Breasts	66
Chest	67
Short collar	71
Large collar	72
General interpretation	76

CHAPTER FOUR - HEAVENLY MOTHER: THE CENTRAL PANEL

Basic scheme	99
Classical scheme	107
Complex scheme	110
General interpretation	115

CHAPTER FIVE - GATES OF THE BEYOND: THE LOWER SECTION

Lateral partitions: Basic scheme	133
Lateral partitions: Classical scheme	134
Lateral partitions: Complex scheme	137
Central partition: Classical scheme	138
Central partition: Complex scheme	141
General interpretation	143

CHAPTER SIX - RESURRECTION AND MOURNING: THE FOOTBOARD

Basic scheme	157
Classical scheme	158
Complex scheme	160
Reverse side	160
General interpretation	161

CHAPTER SEVEN - EVOLUTION AND DIVERSITY IN THE 'YELLOW' TYPE

Typology of the lid	171
'Yellow' type stages	174
Variability and genealogical lines	176
Irregular compositions	179
Deconstructing the 'yellow' type	183
Regional versions	184

CHAPTER EIGHT - SYMBOLISM AND MEANING

Coffin decoration as semiotic wrapping	197
Proto-'yellow' coffins: The lid as the heavenly ceiling	200
Basic scheme: The lid as a sacred gate	201

Classical scheme: The lid as the plan of a royal tomb	202
Complex scheme: The lid as the Duat	203
BIBLIOGRAPHY	209
LIST OF FIGURES	227
LIST OF PLATES	231
LIST OF SOURCES	233
INDEX OF SOURCES	257
PLATES	267
TYPOLOGICAL TABLE	277

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INTRODUCTION

This study is focused on the decoration of the so-called ‘yellow’ coffins crafted in Thebes from the final part of the 20th Dynasty to the beginning of the 22nd Dynasty (1295-945 BC). This is a critical period in the Egyptian History, witnessing to a situation of political unrest and severe economic scarcity affecting Egypt, the Near East, and the Mediterranean¹. And yet, there is no evidence for a decline in the production of these outstanding funerary artefacts. On the contrary, the corpus of ‘yellow’ coffins outnumbers the previous types of Egyptian anthropoid containers and stands out among the most complex and sophisticated objects ever crafted in the Ancient World.

Despite its singularity, the ‘yellow’ corpus is deeply rooted in the tradition of coffin decoration, which on itself is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon with its own history and evolution.

Originally, coffins and sarcophagi remained undecorated, as well as the burial chambers themselves. The phenomenon only took shape from the late 5th Dynasty onwards, with the growth of Osirian beliefs. From then on, royal funerary chambers started to be decorated with the Pyramid Texts, providing a safe journey into the hereafter and private coffins too received texts and images aiming at securing an eternal supply of food, a successful mummification and a thorough cartography of the underworld².

The decoration of coffins is thus deeply rooted in the Osirification of the funerary practices. We will examine this process in Chapter 1, presenting an overview of the evolution of anthropoid coffins from its origins dating back to the early Middle Kingdom to the late Ramesside Period. During this time, several types of anthropoid containers emerged, each one with its own specificities in terms of formal layout. However, behind their differences, anthropoid coffins evolved in a continuum line forming what can be called a ‘genealogical evolution’. This means that each new form is grounded in previous developments, not only in formal terms but also regarding religious and symbolic meaning.

The defining layout of a particular type of coffin literally imprints a specific repertoire of texts and images on the object, adding further layers of meaning to the basic practical purpose of the body container strengthening and enriching its magical scope. In

¹ Cooney 2014. Broekman 2017.

² Grajetzki 2016, 30-37.

addition, we should not lose of sight that motifs integrated into coffin decoration were also relevant for the performance of funerary and mourning rituals³.

For reasons still difficult to perceive, the design of anthropoid coffins resulted from the complex interaction between ritual needs, funerary beliefs, and socioeconomic factors. ‘Yellow’ coffins resumed all these aspects in ways sometimes difficult to grasp. It has long been pointed out the correlation between the complexity of the ‘yellow’ type with the inexistence of decorated tombs during the 21st Dynasty, as well as the disappearance of rectangular coffins from the archaeological record. ‘Yellow’ coffins thus seem to have absorbed the iconographic repertoire and ritual purposes associated with rectangular coffins and tomb decoration⁴. As a result of this fusion, ‘yellow’ coffins depict both the magical household and its divine dweller⁵, integrating representations of magical space and sacred topography. René van Walsem labeled this phenomenon as the ‘architectonisation’ of anthropoid coffins⁶, which consists in the adoption of architectural components or scenes originating in temple or tomb architecture in the repertoire of coffin decoration in order to create a sacred space⁷. The design of the ‘yellow’ type conveys a symbolic topography⁸, where a cosmic map was imprinted⁹. Each pictorial area defines a particular setting in this topography, one which is provided with its own principles of composition¹⁰. Another aspect involved in the ‘yellow’ type is the dynamic character of the scheme of decoration, which is open to endless variations. Variability shaped coffin decoration, creating a ‘genealogical’ line from the simpler objects to the utterly complex ones. This aspect was dealt with by Andrzej Niwiński and our approach is built upon the evolution of ‘yellow’ coffins proposed by this author.

The ‘architectonisation’ and the ‘genealogical evolution’ of coffin decoration are the fundamental concepts that shaped our approach and even the terminology that we used.

We present in Chapter I our topography of ‘yellow’ coffins. As much as we

³ For example, the features of the face – eyes, mouth, and nose – should not be taken just as the divine ‘portrait’ of the deceased they also would have played an important role in the Opening of the Mouth ceremonial, aiming at the symbolic reanimation of the mummy. In Taylor 2016a, 53.

⁴ Taylor 1989, 32. Bettum 2017, 73.

⁵ Bettum 2017, 73. See also Taylor 2016a, 55.

⁶ On the concept of architectonisation of coffins see Van Walsem 1997, 361.

⁷ Van Walsem 2014a, 2.

⁸ Sousa 2017b.

⁹ Liptay 2017, 261.

¹⁰ Sousa 2017a.

acknowledge the need for a standardized approach in terms of terminology¹¹, we strongly believe that each type of coffins presents its own specificities in this respect. Our terminology of the ‘yellow’ coffin’s components is consistent with our conceptual framework. The designations that we adopted define objective areas easy to isolate and to compare and we intentionally avoided the use of terms based in the analogy of body parts which are rather difficult to use objectively in the ‘yellow’ type¹². Terminological options do have important consequences in terms of methodology. By defining a pictorial setting we enhance the holistic perception of its composition, which is often neglected. For example, the ‘central panel’ is seldom acknowledged as a composition of its own and it is frequently reduced to a random and often meaningless assemblage of registers, which we believe introduces a biased view, preventing a deeper inquiry on its significance and meaning. A similar situation is observed in the design of the lower section, often seen as not more than a random succession of registers. By clearly isolating these pictorial areas we are able to study not only the rules guiding their layout as we are better equipped to perceive their symbolic role in the overall program of the coffin.

Perhaps more importantly, our terminology provides a sound base to carry out comparative studies. In this way, we are able to isolate each pictorial unit and to define its own scheme of decoration, i.e., the guidelines ruling its layout. This approach eventually reveals the key-features that, in each section, rule the evolution towards complexity. By doing so, this method also provides important formal criteria for dating coffins in relative terms.

This comparative approach is complemented with an assessment of the impact of each section in the overall organization of coffin decoration. Variations in the weight of each section provide important clues regarding its symbolism in the overall economy of this process.

Given the complexity involved in the decoration of these objects, this study will be published in several volumes, with the first one dealing with the decoration of the lid, and the others dedicated to the exterior and interior decoration of the case. The patterns used in the decoration of the borders and edges will be dealt with separately, as well as

¹¹ The Vatican Coffin Project is carrying out a useful work in establishing a common protocol for coffin description. However, this work has to acknowledge the formal differences between the different models of anthropoid coffins and different designations should be used when working with different models.

¹² The use of expressions such as ‘abdomen’ or ‘legs’ create ongoing difficulties as these areas do not depict body parts.

the corpus of texts inscribed in these objects. Broader considerations on style and workshop practices will be carried out integrating data from these different pictorial and textual contexts.

Based on our topography/terminology of the lid we carried out a comparative approach on each pictorial area involving a relatively large sample of coffins quoted in the ‘List of Sources’ in the end of this volume¹³. The formal analysis of this corpus revealed typologies, defined the iconographic repertoire and the principles of composition of each section of the lid allowing us to assess its meaning. Despite the large number of coffins inventoried, we cannot be exhaustive in the description of all the different arrangements adopted in coffin decoration. In each chapter, we will focus on one particular section of the lid presenting the general principles ruling its layout. The iconographic repertoire of each section of the coffin’s topography is therefore examined separately, aiming at the definition of its symbolic scope and/or ritual purpose in the overall arrangement of coffin decoration. Given the extreme levels of variability reached by the ‘yellow’ type, the complete listing of the iconographic arrangements involved in each section is virtually impossible to carry out. Equally impossible is the task of listing all the objects that share a particular feature. For each relevant feature, we offer a small selection of examples quoted in the footnotes. In the future, only a database will make possible the complete listing of the objects according to their key-features.

The adoption of a sound terminology is also important to distinguish the funerary objects themselves which, in many cases, are indifferently grouped under the same labels. In fact, even in specialized Egyptological literature, different funerary objects tend to be described using the same designations. For example, under the designation of ‘mummy-boards’, a variety of objects is referred to, such as the openwork cartonnage cages, funerary planks featuring the deceased as a living and the mummy-covers used during the 21st Dynasty. We avoided this practice and adopted the following terminology to deal with the variety of objects under discussion:

- Mummy-board: openwork cartonnage cage normally used with a funerary mask;
- Funerary plank: board featuring the deceased as a living;
- Mummy-cover: board designed after the layout of the ‘yellow’ type, displaying headboard, upper section, central panel and lower section.

¹³ We did not include in this corpus the so-called ‘stola’ coffins, which form a consistent funerary corpus on its own. For this corpus of coffins see Van Walsem 1997.

In short, this study seeks to investigate Theban coffin decoration from an art historical perspective. The decorative elements will be dealt with according to the compositions they form in the different pictorial areas of the coffin. The study involves the analysis of the iconography of each section, but our major goal consists in finding the principles of composition ruling the layout of each pictorial tableau. We believe that this approach is important not only to reveal how the scheme of decoration evolved during this period as to understand the symbolic and ritual meaning behind each pictorial tableau. Although this approach can be useful to understand different ‘layers’ of use, we will not examine here aspects like coffin reuse, or workshop practices, which fall outside the scope of the present work.

Terminological remarks

Despite the astonishing levels of sophistication achieved by ‘yellow’ coffins, their primary purpose remained serving as body containers. We should thus start by defining the Egyptian terminology concerning funerary body containers and understand how specific the role of anthropoid coffins was perceived in relation to the other types of funerary containers.

Egyptian funerary archaeology is rich in body containers and sometimes modern vocabulary does not acknowledge the particularities of these artefacts. The modern term ‘sarcophagus’ refers to a monumental object carved in stone¹⁴. The Egyptian vocabulary referring to this type of object includes the expressions *neb ankh*, the ‘lord of life’¹⁵, and *djebat*. As a large stone object, the sarcophagus was positioned within the tomb since its very construction¹⁶ and it would normally hold coffins within. Rectangular sarcophagi display an architectonic layout, adopting motifs and patterns suggesting its identification with a building or an enclosure wall¹⁷, thus serving as a house for the deceased, a role it shared with the tomb itself¹⁸.

Coffins, on the other hand, are almost universally carved in wood or light materials, such as clay. Given the complexity of Egyptian funerary rituals, coffins played a bold role, being used for a variety of purposes. In the first place, coffins were portable

¹⁴ This term is borrowed from Classical archaeology and alludes to the drying properties of limestone, literally meaning ‘flesh eater’.

¹⁵ Ikram, Dodson 1998, 193.

¹⁶ Ikram, Dodson 1998, 193.

¹⁷ See Van Walsem 2014, 12. The anthropoid shape is sometimes adopted to carve sarcophagi, first by private individuals (reign of Amenhotep III) and later on, in royal contexts too (Ramesside Period). It is unknown whether anthropoid stone sarcophagi may also have been called *djebat*.

¹⁸ Bettum 2017, 72.

objects allowing the corpse to be moved during the funerary processions. Secondly, coffins performed an important role in the ceremonials themselves mediating the ritual interaction between the mourners and the deceased. The variety of these roles originated different types of coffins.

During the Middle Kingdom, the most common coffin was rectangular in shape. This type of coffin was called *qersu* (the word *qerset* is used generically for ‘burial’)¹⁹. In the same period appeared the anthropoid coffin, called *wt*, making use of a mummy determinative and the pustule sign (Aa 2), suggesting an intimate contact of this body container with the flesh. This would be the container nearest the fully-adorned corpse and in such a close contact with it that one could hardly make a distinction between them. The word *wt*, sometimes followed by the determinative of wood (M 3) would mean something like ‘wooden embalmed body’²⁰. In other words, this funerary container would be seen as an eternal body, thus an extension of the mummy itself and not quite as an independent object. This coffin depicted the deceased as a *sah*, a mummiform deity of the underworld²¹, featuring the horizontal and transverse bandages that hold the wrappings together²².

From the 18th Dynasty onwards, the mummy-board (*suhet*) was included in the funerary equipment of the dead. This object was put inside the anthropoid coffin in close contact with the mummy. The word’s original meaning is ‘egg’²³ suggesting the association of the body container with the primordial ‘egg’, where the deceased is cocooned in the womb of the mother goddess Nut in order to reborn again as the sun god²⁴.

These body containers were combined in a variety of ways. During the Middle Kingdom, burials frequently used double sets of rectangular coffins, but the anthropoid coffin remained a rare object. Because it was seen as an extension of the mummy itself, it always occurs in association with rectangular coffins²⁵. As a rule, the anthropoid

¹⁹ Ikram, Dodson 1998, 193.

²⁰ In fact, depending on the determinative, the word *wt* is associated with various meanings such as ‘embalming’ or ‘bandages’ or ‘coffin’. In Cooney 2007, 18.

²¹ The anthropoid coffin thus became the visible indication that the person had been transformed into a divine being. The salts, oils, and resins that were used, in addition to their preservative qualities, were held to magically purify and regenerate the dead, and to make them like gods. See Taylor 1989, 24.

²² In most of the times, iconography establishes a complete identification between the mummy and the anthropoid coffin and normally it is impossible to differentiate the depictions of coffins from the depictions of mummies on tomb walls and papyri. In Ramesside tomb paintings, the coffin is shown with width and height as the living humans in the scene, suggesting that the coffin is purposely likened to the mummy itself in two-dimensional funerary art. Cooney 2007, 20.

²³ Cooney 2007, 23.

²⁴ Delvaux, Therasse 2015, 9.

²⁵ Burial of Sebnesi, in Mace, Winlock 1916, Fig. 1.

coffin is always laid on its left side, facing the eye-panel depicted on the sides of the rectangular case and the sunrise.

Royal burials probably involved nested sets of rectangular coffins and an anthropoid coffin, positioned within a large stone sarcophagus²⁶. Anthropoid coffins were shaped after the *sah*-archetype but a similar influence is also detected in the decoration of other objects, such as the funerary masks, the *shabti* figurines or even the canopic vases²⁷, all of them conveying the idea of sacredness associated with mummification²⁸. In Thebes, during the Second Intermediate Period, only one coffin was used, normally of anthropoid shape. In the early 18th Dynasty, for the first time it is attested the exclusive use of anthropoid coffins in nested assemblages²⁹. Royal burials of the 18th Dynasty involved up to three anthropoid containers, one sarcophagus and a variety of funerary canopies³⁰, shaped as *per-wer* or *per-nw* shrines. Private burials of the Theban elite tried to emulate this practice. The exquisite burials of Yuya and Tjuiu (KV 46), dating from the reign of Amenhotep III (1390-1352 BC), revealed funerary sets involving four wooden containers³¹. The outermost was shaped like a *per-nw* and the remaining three containers were anthropoid in shape³². Ideally, the innermost coffin was entirely gilded, while the other anthropoid containers were partially covered with gilded foil³³. The burial equipment of the ‘black’ type also included an openwork mummy-board featuring bands of texts³⁴.

The same nesting principle is used in miniature versions of these coffins. Examples are found in the Tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62), where miniature ‘black’ coffins were used

²⁶ Any royal burial dating from the Middle Kingdom survived to our days. It is quite possible that anthropoid coffins first occurred in this context. See Roehrig 1988, 131.

²⁷ Hayes 1953, fig. 210. Miniature versions of this object were used in the canopic jars (*khebw en wt*, literally ‘the jars of the *wt*’) that is, the jars belonging to the mummified body (Cooney 2007, 18).

²⁸ “Material preserved from tombs of the Middle Kingdom makes it perfectly clear that the individual organs were regarded and treated as small ‘mummies’. They were anointed with preservative resins, wrapped in linen bandages, and either provided with miniature mummy masks or enclosed in jars of cartonnage, wood, or stone, with covers in the form of a portrait heads of the deceased – obvious counterparts of the anthropoid coffins in which bodies were placed. In spite of its cubical shape, the canopic, or visceral, chest in which the bandaged organs or the jars containing them were stored, was nothing more than a smaller replica of the rectangular outer coffin, with which it was always made to conform in type, construction, and decoration”, in Hayes 1953, 320-321

²⁹ The burial of Merytamun involves two *rishi* coffins (Cairo Egyptian Museum), the outer one of gigantic proportions.

³⁰ Such is the case of Tutankhamun (KV 62). See Reeves 1990, 100-109.

³¹ Jouguet 1930, Pl. I-XII.

³² Taylor 1989, 34.

³³ The burials of Yuya and Tjuiu (KV 46) revealed that for high-ranking individuals sets of up to four coffins were available. The outermost was shaped like a shrine and mounted on wooden sledge runners, like the catafalques which were used to transport the mummy to the tomb. Taylor 1989, 34.

³⁴ Mummy of Tjuiu and mummy of Yuya (KV 46). See mummy-board of Yuya, from KV 46 (Cairo Egyptian Museum) in Reeves, Wilkinson 1996, 177.

to bury the unborn children of the king. Most interestingly, these miniature coffin sets are also used to keep locks of hair³⁵. In all these objects, gold foil is used as the innermost layer in contact with the divine flesh.

As we approach the 21st Dynasty the nested burial assemblages used in the Theban necropolis tend to be composed of anthropoid containers alone³⁶. In these nested burial assemblages, the outer anthropoid coffin was described by two different word compounds, *wt aa*, literally meaning the ‘large anthropoid coffin’ and *men ankh*, meaning ‘enduring of life’, thus similar to the expression *neb ankh*, ‘lord of life’. The inner anthropoid coffin was described by the expression *wt sheri*, translated as ‘small anthropoid coffin’³⁷.

‘Yellow’ coffins are thus seen as a particular type of *wt* coffins, providing a nested set of wooden bodies that wrapped the mummy with symbolic and magical layers forming with it an inseparable unit, while at the same time integrated into their layout the symbolic scheme of a *qerset* rectangular coffin and the decorative repertoire of a tomb. This concentration of symbolic layers in one single type of object largely explains the levels of complexity achieved in the ‘yellow’ type. In the next chapter, we will examine how this process evolved.

³⁵ A set of miniature coffins contained a lock of hair of Queen Tiye. See Reeves 1990, 168.

³⁶ The burial assemblage of Merymes involved three nested ‘black’ type sarcophagi (British Museum, EA 1001). The anthropoid sarcophagi of Ramses I (Cairo Egyptian Museum), carved when he was still vizier under Horemheb, were modelled after the ‘festive dress’ type and featured the deceased wearing the official garments of his rank, showing that nested assemblages were now formed using exclusively anthropoid coffins. Further evidence of this practice is found in contemporary shabtis. Modeled after the ‘festive dress’ type these shabtis were enclosed within an anthropoid miniature coffin designed after the proto-‘yellow’ type. See model coffin and shabti of Amenmose (British Museum, EA 53892) in Friedman 1998, 152.

³⁷ Kathlyn Cooney states that coffins were referred to with these adjectives only to avoid confusion when a set of nesting *wt* coffins was purchased. When only one coffin was commissioned, the object was just called *wt* simply because there was no need for specification (Cooney 2007, 21). Ramesside tomb paintings depicting funerary rituals sometimes illustrate two coffins of equal size standing next to one another before the tomb (Cooney 2007, 20). The Tomb of Amenemimet (TT 277) shows two male coffins of identical size and type, probably indicating that a set of inner and outer coffins was meant, even though the artist provided no size perspective (D’Abbadie 1954, Pl. XII).

CHAPTER I – EVOLUTION OF THE ANTHROPOID COFFINS

The origins

The remote origins of the anthropoid coffins can be already detected as early as the 6th Dynasty (2345-2181 BC) and consisted in the depiction of human eyes on the exterior of the rectangular coffins³⁸. However, the first known predecessor of the anthropoid coffins is only to be found in the burial of Queen Ashayet, wife of Mentuhotep II (2055-2004 BC), consisting in a cartonnage ‘mask’ that had been expanded to form a full-length case enclosing the whole body³⁹.

During the 12th Dynasty, wooden anthropoid coffins are for the first time attested in the archaeological record. They were made from a single trunk of sycamore-tree, cut in two halves and hollowed out⁴⁰. The interior of the coffin is covered with black pitch⁴¹.

Black pitch⁴², or even gold leaf⁴³, is seldom found on the exterior, but most of the coffins are covered with a layer of stucco and linen and simply painted white⁴⁴. Occasionally a brightly colored reticulated pattern imitating the bead girdle that wrapped the mummy is depicted⁴⁵. The decoration of the coffin reproduces the magical equipment of the mummy, such as the funerary mask, collars and binding bands.

A great deal of attention is given to the headboard, which is a strict replica of the funerary mask. The face is often gilded, or painted black⁴⁶, dark green or yellow. The eyes are inlaid⁴⁷ or painted⁴⁸. A square kingly beard is the rule for men⁴⁹. They also

³⁸ The intimate connection between the anthropoid container and the eye-panel was kept during the Middle Kingdom, as the anthropoid coffin was laid within the case upon its left side so that, in this position, the eyes could look out through the eye-panel on the side of the rectangular coffin. Van Walsem 2014, 13. See Coffin of Nebhotep (British Museum, 46629), in Taylor 1989, 15. A direct connection between the Giza mummies completely covered with gypsum separated from the flesh by only a few layers of linen, and the anthropoid coffins cannot be demonstrated (Van Walsem 1997, 27-28).

³⁹ Hayes 1953, 310-311. Taylor 1989, 25. See also Bickerstaffe 2009, 26 and Van Walsem 1997, 27-28.

⁴⁰ Some coffins combine two methods: The back was made from a single plank of hardwood, hollowed out inside, while the lid was built up of smaller pieces of wood. See Mace, Winlock 1916, 40.

⁴¹ Winlock 1916, 41.

⁴² Coffin of Nephthys (Metropolitan Museum of Art). Coffin of Hapyankhtify (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁴³ Winlock 1916, 41. See also Hayes 1953, 310.

⁴⁴ Coffin of Senebtisi. See also Taylor 1989, 24. Coffin of Userhat (Fitzwilliam Museum).

⁴⁵ Coffins of Nakhtankh and Khnumnakht (Tomb of the Two Brothers).

⁴⁶ Coffin of Userhat (Fitzwilliam Museum).

⁴⁷ Coffin of Hapyankhtify (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁴⁸ Coffin of Userhat (Fitzwilliam Museum).

⁴⁹ Coffin of Hapyankhtify (Metropolitan Museum of Art). Coffin of Khnumhotep (National Museums of Scotland). See also coffin of Userhat and the coffins of Nakhtankh and Khnumnakht (Tomb of the Two Brothers).

wear a *nemes*-headdress (or a *khat*-headdress), or a divine tripartite wig⁵⁰. Striated wigs are occasionally detected⁵¹.

The funerary mask, or *tep en seshta*, ‘head of mystery’, served as a substitute for the deceased’s own head and face, hidden under the wrappings⁵², but its magical role was much wider in scope. Chapter 151 of the Book of the Dead (‘Spell for the head of mystery’) describes its powers:

Your right eye is the night barque, your left eye is the day barque, your eyebrows are the Ennead. The crown of your head is Anubis, the back of your head is Horus. Your fingers are Thoth, your lock of hair is Ptah-Sokar. You (the mask) are in front of (the deceased), he sees by means of you. (You) lead him to the goodly ways, you repel Seth’s band for him and cast his enemies under his feet for him in front of the Ennead in the great House of the Noble in Heliopolis. You take the goodly way to the presence of Horus, the lord of the nobles⁵³.

The text makes clear that the mask enabled the deceased to see and that it drove away his enemies but also emphasizes that through mummification the deceased had become wholly divine, a transformation expressed through the equation of all parts of the head with deities⁵⁴.

Also related to the imagery of the funerary mask, is the depiction of the *usekh*-collar, displaying concentric bands with alternating colors and drop-beaded motifs in the outer band. Two types of terminals are detected in these early coffins: undecorated terminals with rounded borders⁵⁵ or falcon-headed terminals⁵⁶. Both types are attested in the funerary collars found in contemporary mummies⁵⁷. Great care is given to the depiction of these collars, sometimes integrating real beads inlaid⁵⁸. Other adornments or jewels can be depicted such as the barrel-shaped *seweret* bead worn on the throat. The meaning

⁵⁰ The tripartite wig is originally a divine attribute. It was not usurped by private individuals before the 6th Dynasty. The first private statues exhibiting this type of wig date from the Middle Kingdom and from then on tripartite wigs are the rule both for male and female coffins. See Van Walsem 1997, 109.

⁵¹ Coffin of Hapyankhtify (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁵² Hayes 1953: 310.

⁵³ In Taylor 2010, 26.

⁵⁴ Taylor 1989, 25.

⁵⁵ Coffin of Userhat (Fitzwilliam Museum).

⁵⁶ Hayes 1953, fig. 203.

⁵⁷ Hayes 1953, fig. 198; Hayes 1953, fig. 199. See the collar of Neferuptah, dating from the reign of Amenemhat III in Hornung, Bryan 2002, 104.

⁵⁸ Hayes 1953, 311.

of the floral collar⁵⁹ is connected with the protection conferred by certain deities, such as Horus, Nekhbet or Wadjet⁶⁰.

Plain transverse bands, spaced at regular intervals, represent the outer binding which held the mummy wrappings in place⁶¹. A longitudinal band runs down the centre of the lid, normally inscribed with an offering formula referring to the protection conferred by Nut, the sky goddess. This text is borrowed from the Pyramid Texts, where the goddess is beseeched to spread herself over the deceased in a gesture of protection:

Oh, my mother Nut, spread yourself over me, so that I may be placed among the Imperishable Stars and may never die.⁶²

This inscription thus establishes a magical identification between the anthropoid coffin and the heavenly realm of Nut, where the deceased his begotten as Osiris in order to be reborn as the sun god.

***Rishi* type**

Anthropoid coffins were used sporadically during the Middle Kingdom, but achieved a dominant status from the 17th Dynasty (C.1580-1550 BC) onwards, especially in Thebes⁶³. Feathered (*rishi*) coffins appear in the archaeological record during the Second Intermediate Period associated with the Theban ruling elite. Unlike the previous form of anthropoid coffins, they are always used as a single piece without association with an outer rectangular coffin⁶⁴. Following this practice, the dead were no longer laid on their left sides but placed on their backs⁶⁵.

The coffin itself is roughly hewn out of sycamore logs. Only the feet, and sometimes the face, are dowelled separately to the lid⁶⁶. The workmanship of these objects is mediocre typically featuring crude, angular and wedge-shaped faces⁶⁷. The use of a royal *nemes*-

⁵⁹ Hayes 1953, 310-311.

⁶⁰ The magic role of these collars is suggested in the friezes of objects depicted on rectangular coffins dating from the same period. In these friezes, a wide range of objects is depicted such as mirrors, broad collars with counterpoises, bracelets, anklets, necklaces, kilts, linen cloth, scepters, staves, maces, bead aprons with tails, crooks, bows and many others (Hayes 1953, 314). The association of these deities to the collars is detected by the names given to some of these collars. See Winlock 1916, 65.

⁶¹ Taylor 1989, 24. See also Taylor 2010, 98.

⁶² Taylor 1989, 11.

⁶³ Ikram, Dodson 1998, 193.

⁶⁴ Miniaci 2011.

⁶⁵ Grajetzki 2016, 46.

⁶⁶ Van Walsem 1997, 28.

⁶⁷ Hayes 1953, 29 -30.

cloth is the rule⁶⁸, usually decorated with feathered motifs. Occasionally hathoric⁶⁹ or tripartite wigs⁷⁰ can be detected too.

On the chest, a new important feature was added: the motif of the winged deity (the vulture), outstretching its wings towards both sides of the lid⁷¹. This motif is sometimes combined with the depiction of a cobra. The *usekh*-collar is now decorated with falcon-headed terminals⁷².

The longitudinal band is inscribed with the offering formula⁷³, normally addressed to Osiris⁷⁴ or, more rarely, to Ptah⁷⁵. The name of the deceased is rarely included in this text⁷⁶. The longitudinal band is flanked by two long wings⁷⁷.

The footboard is normally flattened, featuring concentric bands suggesting the shape of a mound⁷⁸. On the other hand, on the crown of the head, a bird is sometimes found, suggesting the rising of the deceased from the primordial mound, flying as a *ba*-bird⁷⁹. Sometimes the footboard is decorated with the jackal form of Anubis⁸⁰. Occasionally, the reverse side of the footboard bears the mourning goddesses, Isis and Nephthys⁸¹.

The case is decorated as an independent box⁸². Its monochromatic decoration contrasts with the lavishly decorated lid⁸³. On occasions, ritual scenes depicting the funerary procession and the Opening of the Mouth ceremony are painted on the exterior walls of the case, thus forming the first known occurrences of these motifs in the decoration of anthropoid coffins⁸⁴.

⁶⁸ Anonymous *rishi* coffin 1 (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁶⁹ Anonymous *rishi* coffin 5 (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁷⁰ Coffin of Taiuy (British Museum).

⁷¹ Anonymous *rishi* coffin 1 (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

⁷² Hayes 1953, fig. 13. Anonymous *rishi* coffin 2 (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁷³ Sometimes this band is left uninscribed: Anonymous *rishi* coffin 1 (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁷⁴ Anonymous *rishi* coffin 2 (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁷⁵ Hayes 1953, 32.

⁷⁶ Hayes 1953, 32.

⁷⁷ Ikram, Dodson 1998, 193.

⁷⁸ Anonymous *rishi* coffin 3 (Metropolitan Museum of Art), anonymous *rishi* coffin 4 (Metropolitan Museum of Art), anonymous *rishi* coffin 5 (Metropolitan Museum of Art), anonymous *rishi* coffin 8 (British Museum), anonymous *rishi* coffin 9 (Museum of Fine Arts in Boston), anonymous *rishi* coffin 10 (National Museums of Scotland), anonymous *rishi* coffin 11 (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich), coffin of Sekhemre Heruhermaat Antef (Louvre Museum), coffin of Kamose (Cairo Egyptian Museum).

⁷⁹ Anonymous *rishi* coffin 1 (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁸⁰ Anonymous *rishi* coffin 7 (British Museum).

⁸¹ Anonymous *rishi* coffin 9 (Museum of Fine Arts in Boston). See also anonymous *rishi* coffin 7 (British Museum).

⁸² Coffin of Taiuy (British Museum).

⁸³ Coffin of Reri (Metropolitan Museum of Art). Anonymous *rishi* coffin 7 (British Museum). See Hayes 1953, 29 -30.

⁸⁴ Anonymous *rishi* coffin 6 (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

The religious meaning of these coffins is enormous as they depict the deceased as a human-headed *ba*-bird, while the anthropoid coffins from the Middle Kingdom represented the deceased as *sah*, i.e., a chthonian deity. This apparently new vision of the afterlife was probably borrowed from the royal coffins crafted during the 12th Dynasty⁸⁵.

Another interpretation commonly accepted recognizes the feathered motifs depicted in these coffins as the wings of the vulture mother goddess embracing the deceased with her wings. This interpretation, however, overlooks the fact that anthropoid coffins provide an empowered *alter ego* for the deceased, usually as an Osirian god. *Rishi* coffins are not different in this respect, depicting the deceased as a *ba*-bird, a motif that would be more expected in royal burials, where the Pharaoh figured as a solarized god. Surely the idea of the protective embrace of the mother goddess also integrates the imaginary of these coffins but this concept is better expressed in the vulture depicted on the chest of the deceased.

The depiction of the deceased as a *ba*-bird in the Theban coffins from the Second Intermediate Period shows that royal solar beliefs were integrated into the traditional vision of the Osirian hereafter. Comparison with contemporary funerary masks shows the same concerns. Here the head is rendered on a much smaller scale than the mask itself, originating oddly unbalanced objects⁸⁶. However, the examination of these objects clearly shows that a human-headed raptor is depicted instead of the head of the deceased, revealing that he is here depicted as a *ba*. These objects thus stand as the first documented attempts to depict this important anthropological concept and because of that, we are still far from the conventions that will be established from the 18th Dynasty onwards⁸⁷. However, it is clear the divine nature of these depictions⁸⁸.

⁸⁵ In Roehrig 1988, 131.

⁸⁶ Cairo Egyptian Museum (JE 45629). See Ikram, Dodson 1998, 169. See also the *Rishi* mummy mask (World Museum in Liverpool, M 11020)

⁸⁷ The divine wig, which will be an important attribute of the *ba*-bird from the 18th Dynasty onwards is still absent from these depictions.

⁸⁸ The object kept in the Cairo Egyptian Museum (JE 45629) is gilded showing a divine beard. See Ikram, Dodson 1998, 169. See also the *Rishi* mummy mask (World Museum in Liverpool, M 11020) where the *ba*-bird is fully depicted as a raptor with the human face added. This composition results from the aspective character of iconographic representations where different manifestations of the same being are juxtaposed in the same image. In this regard see the well-known statue of Khafre in the Cairo Egyptian Museum (JE 10062), with the pharaoh depicted both in human shape and in avian form, as an embodiment of Horus. These objects are also interesting in the way they show the close association between the anthropoid coffin and the funerary mask. If previously, the anthropoid coffin could be seen as an extension of the funerary mask, here we can see the funerary mask as a 'reduction' of the anthropoid coffin.

Royal rishi coffins

In the royal tombs of Dra Abu el-Naga, dating from the 17th Dynasty, splendid gilded coffins were uncovered⁸⁹. In these objects, the feathered pattern is incised on the wood and entirely covered with gold leaf. The treatment of the faces presents much better quality in royal artefacts⁹⁰, frequently presenting inlaid eyes⁹¹, an *iaret*-cobra over the front⁹² and divine beards. It is likely that these objects had been crafted after the royal models from the Middle Kingdom, which have not survived to our days⁹³.

The quality of craftsmanship of these objects is increasingly better as we approach the 18th Dynasty. The coffin of Ah-hotep, in particular, is an accomplished masterpiece of this type, already announcing some of the developments that will follow, such as the subtle rendering of anatomic details. The kneecaps and legs are carved, and the nipples are suggested by the decoration of the hathoric wig. The vulture headdress is for the first time attested in these royal coffins⁹⁴, as in the coffin of Sat-Djehuti⁹⁵.

The military exploits of Ahmose and his successor transformed the once modest lineage of Theban rulers into the sovereigns of a world power⁹⁶ and this is obviously reflected in the royal funerary practices. The gilded foil is first selectively applied over certain details⁹⁷ but its use was extended and eventually covered the object entirely.

From the New Kingdom onwards, the *rishi* type became an exclusive royal prerogative and in this context alone it is used down to the Third Intermediate Period. During the 18th Dynasty, a new feathered pattern is introduced in royal coffins. Instead of the large wings outstretched along the lid, the body is now entirely sheathed in plumage, back and front, rather as if the deceased were dressed in an enveloping garment of feathers⁹⁸. Two different sections are now fully visible, each one decorated with a distinct

⁸⁹ Coffin of Nubkheperre Antef (British Museum), coffin of Sekhemre-Wepmaat Antef (Louvre Museum), coffin of Ah-hotep (Cairo Egyptian Museum).

⁹⁰ Coffin of Kamose (Egyptian Museum in Cairo), coffin of Sekhemre-Heruhirmaat Antef VII (Louvre Museum).

⁹¹ Coffin of Sekhemre-Wepmaat Antef (Louvre Museum), coffin of Ah-hotep (Egyptian Museum in Cairo), coffin of Taa II (Egyptian Museum in Cairo), coffin of Nubkheperre Antef (British Museum).

⁹² Coffin of Ah-hotep (Egyptian Museum in Cairo), coffin of Taa II (Egyptian Museum in Cairo), coffin of Sekhemre-Wepmaat Antef (Louvre Museum), coffin of Sekhemre-Heruhirmaat Antef VII.

⁹³ From the New Kingdom onwards, the *rishi* type becomes restricted to the royal use which seems to suggest the royal origin of this type of coffin. In Roehrig 1988, 131.

⁹⁴ Miniaci 2011, 30, 136-138.

⁹⁵ Coffin of Sat-Djehuti (fragment) - Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich. In the coffin of Puhorsenbu (Metropolitan Museum of Art) a vulture is depicted over the front of the deceased, but probably not willing to depict the royal headdress.

⁹⁶ Taylor 2016a, 49.

⁹⁷ Anonymous *rishi* coffin 10 (National Museums of Scotland).

⁹⁸ Taylor 1989, 28.

feathered pattern⁹⁹: the shoulders and the torso are covered with overlapping rows of small scale-like feathers, while long feathers cover the legs – the two zones representing the upper and lower sections of a falcon’s plumage¹⁰⁰. On occasions, the lower section is decorated with winged goddesses (Isis and Nephthys) flanking the central longitudinal band¹⁰¹.

Headdresses include the usual *nemes*-cloth for kings or Hathoric wigs for royal women¹⁰². However, elaborate tripartite wigs decorated with feathered motifs are also attested for queens¹⁰³, as well as the vulture headdress¹⁰⁴.

Another important innovation introduced in royal *rishi* coffins is the depiction of the hands and crossed forearms¹⁰⁵. This innovation is seen for the first time in the gigantic coffins of Ahmose-Nefertari and Merytamun¹⁰⁶. The depiction of the fists is visibly related to the use of regalia, the scepters *heka* and *nekhakha* for the kings¹⁰⁷ and flowers¹⁰⁸ or *ankh*-signs¹⁰⁹ for the queens¹¹⁰. The adoption of this pose by royal coffins thus defines the kingly status of its owner rather than his Osirian identity, as it is often understood.

The cross-arms pose seems to have been borrowed from royal colossi, such as those that stood before the cliffs of Deir-el-Bahari, in the funerary temples of Hatshepsut and Mentuhotep II, as it is accurately pointed out by Dylan Bickerstaffe:

although the cross-arms pose seems to have nothing to do with Osiris, the name ‘Osiride’ has been applied to the type of colossal royal statue with arms crossed in this manner, either dressed in a kilt with an elaborate crown as though alive, or apparently swathed and ‘mummification’ as though dead. This pose is related to the authority of the king. The colossal Osiride statues of the

⁹⁹ Outer coffin of Merytamun (Cairo Egyptian Museum).

¹⁰⁰ Taylor 1989, 28.

¹⁰¹ Inner sarcophagus of Tutankhamun (Cairo Egyptian Museum).

¹⁰² Inner coffin of Merytamun (Cairo Egyptian Museum).

¹⁰³ Coffin of Ahmose-Nefertari (Cairo Egyptian Museum), outer coffin of Merytamun (Cairo Egyptian Museum).

¹⁰⁴ Inner coffin of Merytamun (Cairo Egyptian Museum).

¹⁰⁵ Sometimes the upper section alone works as the lid of the entire coffin, thus presenting a full independence from the rest of the coffin (outer coffin of Ahmose-Nefertari). Because the form of the coffin imitated a wrapped mummy, no arms were depicted on the first anthropoid coffins. This trend continued into the Second Intermediate Period and royal coffins of the 17th Dynasty from Thebes continued to be ‘arm-less’. Bickerstaffe 2009, 27.

¹⁰⁶ Taylor 1989, 30.

¹⁰⁷ Tutankhamun’s burial assemblage (Cairo Egyptian Museum). Coffin of Psusennes I (Cairo Egyptian Museum).

¹⁰⁸ Outer coffin of Merytamun (Cairo Egyptian Museum).

¹⁰⁹ Outer coffin of Ahmose-Nefertari (Cairo Egyptian Museum).

¹¹⁰ Exceptionally this feature is attested without an explicit political reading. Anonymous *rishi* coffin 12 (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

New Kingdom appear to predate the assumption of the cross-arms pose by Osiris, and it is really only the mummiform Osiride statues that bear a superficial resemblance to the god.¹¹¹

During the reign of Akhenaten, ceremonial wigs featuring braiding motifs carved in the round were introduced¹¹² resulting from a new vision of the afterlife where the deceased did not resurrect as Osiris but continued to live in an earthly like dimension¹¹³ where he is ritually engaged in the cult of the sun.

‘White’ type

In the beginning of the 18th Dynasty (1550-1295 BC), a new model of anthropoid coffin emerges in the Theban necropolis, the so-called ‘white’ type, which was specifically designed to be used by commoners.

It is not uncommon to find reused *rishi* coffins in this category¹¹⁴ but workshop practices evolved in order to make a better use of the wood. Instead of using entire tree logs, these coffins are now constructed with wooden planks assembled together with increasingly sophisticated methods¹¹⁵.

The decoration of the ‘white’ coffins returns to the scheme of decoration used during the Middle Kingdom, depicting the deceased as a *sah*¹¹⁶. The tripartite wig becomes the typical headdress¹¹⁷, being used as a divine attribute¹¹⁸. It features striate decoration (alternating yellow and black stripes)¹¹⁹ or uniformly blue hair¹²⁰. The lappets of the wig are decorated with yellow terminals¹²¹.

The face is shaped with slender proportions, painted yellow to suggest gold¹²² or covered with gilded foil¹²³. Inlaid eyes are rarely found¹²⁴. The ears are always depicted

¹¹¹ Bickerstaffe 2009, 19.

¹¹² Anonymous royal coffin from KV 55 (Cairo Egyptian Museum).

¹¹³ Taylor 2016a, 55.

¹¹⁴ Coffin of Ahmose, son of Nakht (Metropolitan Museum of Art), coffin of Nubnen (National Museum in Warsaw). These objects are easily detected by the technique of construction – they are hewn out of logs - and the angular faces. Moreover, the coffin of Nubnen displays the hathoric wig, which is a typical feature in *rishi* coffins.

¹¹⁵ Taylor 2016b, 181.

¹¹⁶ Taylor 2016a, 50.

¹¹⁷ Van Walsem 1997, 109.

¹¹⁸ Van Walsem 1997, 109.

¹¹⁹ Coffin of Madja (Louvre Museum), Coffin of Ah-hotep Tanedjemet (Metropolitan Museum of Art),

¹²⁰ Coffin of Ahmose, son of Nakht (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

¹²¹ Coffin of Ramose (Metropolitan Museum of Art), Coffin of Hatnefer (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

¹²² Hayes 1953, 72.

¹²³ Coffin of Ramose (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

¹²⁴ Coffin of Wadjshemsisu (Princeton Art Museum).

regardless of the gender of the coffin's owner. A curled beard – an exceptional attribute in previous coffins – is for the first time included in male coffins¹²⁵. The floral collar with falcon-headed terminals is the most prominent feature depicted on the lid. The depiction of the sacred vulture on the chest is rare¹²⁶, as well as fists¹²⁷. The longitudinal band – inscribed with the offering formula – is now associated with the transversal bands which, for the first time, became fully inscribed with short texts referring to the protection granted by the Sons of Horus and other deities¹²⁸. These inscriptions run down the sides of the case, as the columns of texts inscribed on rectangular coffins¹²⁹. Similarly, the *wedjat*-eye¹³⁰ is introduced on the sides, following the layout observed in rectangular coffins¹³¹.

Perhaps even more important is the introduction of scenes on the sides of the case, featuring earthly events, such as the funerary procession¹³² or mourning rituals¹³³. The lid, on the other hand, is decorated with vignettes featuring deities, such as Anubis¹³⁴ or mourning goddesses¹³⁵. This scheme suggests that the lid was now connected with the heavenly divine realm, while the case became associated with the earthly profane sphere¹³⁶. Perhaps under the growing influence of the rectangular coffins, the choice of subjects became eventually restricted to deities, thus paving the way for creating the scheme typically used in the 'black' type¹³⁷.

¹²⁵ Coffin of Ahmose, son of Nakht (Metropolitan Museum of Art). Coffin of Wadjshemsisu (Princeton Art Museum).

¹²⁶ The vultures typically found on the chest of the *rishi* coffins are kept even if the object was updated according to the scheme of decoration of the 'white' type. Coffin of Ahmose, son of Nakht (Metropolitan Museum of Art) and coffin of Nubnen (National Museum in Warsaw).

¹²⁷ The coffin of Puia (Museo Egizio in Turin) is a remarkable exception, also showing the forearms. This is to our knowledge the earliest occurrence of this motif in private coffins.

¹²⁸ Anonymous 'white' coffin (Metropolitan Museum of Art), coffin of Ramose (Metropolitan Museum of Art). See Hayes 1935, Pl. XVIII-XX.

¹²⁹ Taylor 2016c, 215.

¹³⁰ Coffin of Ahmose, son of Nakht (Metropolitan Museum of Art), Coffin of Madja (Louvre Museum).

¹³¹ It was now usual that one eye was painted on each long side (rather than two on the left side as it was the usual practice in the Middle Kingdom rectangular coffins), a response to the position of the dead on their backs introduced with the *rishi* coffins (Grajetzki 2016, 46).

¹³² Coffin of Madja (Louvre Museum).

¹³³ Coffin of Ahmose, son of Nakht (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

¹³⁴ Coffin of Madja (Louvre Museum).

¹³⁵ Coffin of Nubnen (National Museum in Warsaw).

¹³⁶ These scenes are transversally aligned with the sides of the case. Coffin of Ahmose, son of Nakht (Metropolitan Museum of Art). Coffin of Madja (Louvre Museum).

¹³⁷ This scheme is also detected on contemporary terracotta coffins. See Delvaux, Therasse 2015, 53-57.

This is exactly what we observe in the coffin of Ah-hotep Tanedjemet. The sides are decorated with the four Sons of Horus¹³⁸. On the lid, the winged goddess Nut is depicted standing with upraised hands (Plate 1)¹³⁹, emulating the decoration of the ceilings from the Theban funerary chambers, as it can be seen in the Tomb of Djehuty (TT 11) in Dra Abu el-Naga. This motif establishes a magical equation between the ceiling of the burial chamber and the lid, both seen as the embodiment of the heavenly goddess¹⁴⁰. In this way, the symbolic reading of the lid as the ‘sky’ or the ‘ceiling’ of the anthropoid coffin became clearer than ever before. This exceptional object already shows that by integrating the scheme of decoration of the rectangular coffins, anthropoid coffins started to include motifs deriving from the repertoire of tomb decoration.

‘Black’ type

The first attested ‘black’ coffins date from the reign of Hatshepsut-Thutmose III (1473-1458 BC). From then on the color of the background changed from white to black¹⁴¹, with the hieroglyphic bands and iconographic motifs covered with gold foil or painted in yellow (imitating gold). The ‘black’ corpus includes objects with exquisite levels of craftsmanship¹⁴², often featuring kneecaps, shinbones and the contour of the legs and buttocks¹⁴³. Beards are rare¹⁴⁴ as well as other gender-markers¹⁴⁵: the use of clenched fists, an innovation first detected on royal *rishi* coffins, is progressively introduced in the repertoire of the ‘black’ type¹⁴⁶. They are depicted crossed over the chest protruding through the floral-collar, regardless of the sex of the deceased. Sometimes they hold *djed* or *tyet*-amulets¹⁴⁷.

¹³⁸ They are depicted in fully human shape in the Coffin of Coffin of Ah-hotep Tanedjemet (Metropolitan Museum of Art) and in the Coffin of Puia (Museo Egizio in Turin), but they can also figure in mummiform guise (anonymous coffin, Rosicrucian Museum).

¹³⁹ Coffin of Ah-hotep Tanedjemet (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

¹⁴⁰ Coffin of Henutdjebu (Washington University Gallery of Art). Inner sarcophagus of Merymes (British Museum).

¹⁴¹ Exceptionally, instead of resin, silver-leaf was used as the contrasting element. Middle coffin of Yuya (KV 46).

¹⁴² Taylor 1989, 34.

¹⁴³ Van Walsem 2014a, 16. See burial assemblages of Yuya and Tjuiu (Cairo Egyptian Museum), coffin set of Kha (Egyptian Museum in Turin), inner coffin of Maherpra (Cairo Egyptian Museum, CG 4219).

¹⁴⁴ Fragment from the coffin of Amenhotep (Myers Museum), gilded inner coffin of Maherpra (Cairo Egyptian Museum). On anthropoid sarcophagi, this attribute is more often found: outer and inner sarcophagi of Merymes (British Museum), reused anthropoid sarcophagi of Psusennes I (Cairo Egyptian Museum), sarcophagus (Elephantine Museum).

¹⁴⁵ Van Walsem 1997, 29.

¹⁴⁶ Outer and middle coffins of Yuya (Cairo Egyptian Museum), outer coffin of Tjuiu (Cairo Egyptian Museum), burial assemblage of Maherpra (Cairo Egyptian Museum), inner coffin of Kha (Museo Egizio in Turin).

¹⁴⁷ Van Walsem 1997, 29. Taylor 1997, 30.

Other coffins, however, show no difference with the ‘white’ type in terms of the structural work and seem to have been carved exactly in the same way¹⁴⁸.

The headboard displays striated wigs with the lappets decorated with yellow terminals. The striated pattern continues onto the case¹⁴⁹. The floral collar is decorated with terminals featuring a lotus flower or a falcon’s head¹⁵⁰. The use of a central marker on the chest is for the first time witnessed, usually consisting of a heart amulet¹⁵¹ or a naophoric pectoral featuring the solar scarab¹⁵².

On the abdomen, it is clear the difference between earlier objects, which bear the depiction of a vulture¹⁵³, and later ones featuring the winged goddess Nut¹⁵⁴. This figure provides an illustration of the longitudinal band of text, where the goddess is addressed to place the deceased among the Imperishable Stars. Both the winged deity and the longitudinal inscription allude to the protective role of the lid as the embodiment of the heavenly-goddess¹⁵⁵. It is noteworthy that this winged figure combines the human depiction of Nut with the avian manifestation of the goddess formerly featured as a vulture in *rishi* coffins¹⁵⁶. Two other goddesses are included in the decoration of the lid: the underside of the footboard receives the image of Isis, and the crown of the

¹⁴⁸ Coffin of Kent (Museo Egizio in Florence), coffin of Nebtau (Museo Egizio in Florence). Coffins like these may have been crafted following the ‘white’ type and later on (re) painted after the ‘black’ type. A similar phenomenon is detected in the ‘white’ type, with many objects showing a structural work typical of the *rishi* coffins.

¹⁴⁹ Van Walsem 1997, 29. This rule is observed even on sarcophagi. See sarcophagus of Psusennes I (Cairo Egyptian Museum).

¹⁵⁰ These motifs are borrowed from the decoration of the actual *usekh*-collars that were used in the wrappings of the mummies. See collar with falcon-headed terminals, (Michael Carlos Museum, 2001.15.1), collar with lotus-shaped terminals (Michael Carlos Museum, 2001.9.1). See Lacovara, Trope 2001, 62.

¹⁵¹ The heart amulet seems to have played an important role as it figures on a significant number of coffins dating from the reigns of Amenhotep II and Thutmose IV: coffin of Amenhotep (Myers Museum), inner coffin of Maherpra (Cairo Egyptian Museum), sarcophagus (Elephantine Museum).

¹⁵² Inner coffin of Tjuu (Cairo Egyptian Museum).

¹⁵³ Coffin of Kent (Museo Egizio in Florence), coffin of Amenemope (Roemer and Pelizaeus Museum), coffin of Mahu (Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts), anonymous ‘black’ coffin 1 (Museum of Fine Arts in Boston), anonymous ‘black’ coffin 2 (British Museum), coffin of Nubensekhet (Musée d’Archéologie Méditerranéenne de Marseille)

¹⁵⁴ Coffin of Henutdjebu (Washington University Gallery of Art), coffin of Tentamentet (British Museum), burial assemblages of Yuya and Tjuu (Cairo Egyptian Museum).

¹⁵⁵ Coffin of Henutdjebu (Washington University Gallery of Art), inner sarcophagus of Merymes (British Museum).

¹⁵⁶ Van Walsem 1997, 29. At first, Nut is depicted in standing position with upraised hands and a vulture flying above her. Eventually, these motifs were fused into one single image featuring the mother goddess squatted with outstretched wings. In our corpus, this motif is first attested on the anthropoid coffin of Tjuu (KV 46).

headboard is decorated with Nephthys. Both are depicted rejoicing with their arms upraised¹⁵⁷.

A pair of *wedjat*-eyes figures now on the left shoulder of the lid¹⁵⁸. This motif migrated from the sides of the case and stays as a faint reminder of the eye-panel that used to decorate the left side of rectangular coffins¹⁵⁹.

Four transverse bands of inscription spring from either side of the longitudinal band, running down the sides¹⁶⁰. The texts and images depicted on the sides refer to the positions of gods escorting the deceased:

- The four corners of the coffin are watched over by the Sons of Horus: Imsety and Hapy paired on either side of the shoulders, Duamutef and Qebehsenuf flanking the legs;
- The middle of the sides is associated with the primeval cosmic divinities, Shu and Tefnut, and their offspring, Geb and again Nut¹⁶¹;
- The footboard depicts one or two *djed*-pillars¹⁶², or even a composition involving *tjet*-signs and *djed*-pillars¹⁶³.

This scheme is drawn from the vignette of Chapter 151 of the Book of the Dead, showing these divinities grouped around the mummy to protect the deceased from Seth and assure his resurrection¹⁶⁴. The scheme of decoration of the ‘black’ type thus served to establish a magically protective environment around the mummy¹⁶⁵, recreating the symbolic features of this vignette to emphasize the identification between Osiris and the dead¹⁶⁶.

This decorative scheme is completed by two figures of the god Thoth located on each side alluding to Chapter 161 of the Book of the Dead, which refers to the triumph of the

¹⁵⁷ Occasionally, the lid receives further decoration such as the figure of Anubis in jackal form, the *wedjat*-eye or the mourning goddesses. See anonymous ‘black’ coffin (British Museum).

¹⁵⁸ Coffin of Tentamentet (British Museum), coffin of Henuudjebu (Washington University Gallery), coffin of Mahu (Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts).

¹⁵⁹ Van Walsem 1997, 29.

¹⁶⁰ This grid pattern of text bands was borrowed from the decoration of rectangular coffins but the older concept which had linked the coffin with ideas of the house or tomb was no longer so influential (Taylor 2016a, 51).

¹⁶¹ Hayes 1959, 70-71.

¹⁶² Coffin of Mahu (Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts).

¹⁶³ Coffin of Henuudjebu (Washington University Gallery of Art).

¹⁶⁴ Taylor 2016a, 52.

¹⁶⁵ Taylor 2010, 98.

¹⁶⁶ Taylor 1989, 9-10.

sun god Re over his enemy Apophis and to the opening of the sky by Thoth enabling the sun god to ascend to the heavens¹⁶⁷.

From the symbolic point of view, ‘black’ coffins fully accomplished the fusion between the anthropoid coffin depicting the deceased as a *sah* and the rectangular coffin, a process already in motion in the ‘white’ type. The importance of this fusion in the creation of the ‘black’ type is detected in the iconographic repertoire of the Book of the Dead. Contemporary vignettes of Chapter 17 (Plate 2) show a rather strange association between a black *per-nw* coffer and a yellow human face heading the composition¹⁶⁸, suggesting the depiction of the ‘black’ coffin exactly as it was conceived from the symbolical standpoint: a magical container embodying both the deified deceased and his protective environment.

Regarding the color scheme adopted in these coffins, it probably derives exactly from the association with rectangular coffins as these objects had long been decorated with black resin and gilded foil¹⁶⁹. As John Taylor points out, in the symbolic language of color, black represents the fertile silt from which vegetation sprang, naturally with a strong association with Osiris who was precisely described as ‘the black one’¹⁷⁰. The ‘black’ type thus emerges as further stressing the osirification of the anthropoid coffin and therefore its sacredness.

However, archaeological evidence suggests that the application of the black resin only took place in the tomb¹⁷¹, perhaps with ritual significance. In these circumstances, the dark color of the background would only be visible during the funerary rites themselves. We should note that this procedure would only be possible when gilded foil was used¹⁷², otherwise all the painted decoration would disappear under the dark pitch¹⁷³. From this hypothesis results that the black color would be ideally achieved only after the performance of the appropriate rituals. This dynamic view of the ‘black’ type helps us to understand the continuum observed between coffins partially gilded

¹⁶⁷ Taylor 2016a, 53.

¹⁶⁸ Dublin Papyrus (Trinity College Library, Inv N 161). The vignette sometimes occurs in the interior decoration of the coffin. See Zivie 1979, Pl. 29.

¹⁶⁹ Coffin set of Nebseni. See Mace, Winlock 1916, Pl. XVII.

¹⁷⁰ Taylor 2016a, 51.

¹⁷¹ The middle coffin of Maherpra was left without the resin because, due to some manufacturing error, the coffin turned out to be smaller than the inner case. See Ikram, Dodson 1998, 211.

¹⁷² The varnish was added after the gilded foil had been applied since in some places it overruns the edges of the gilded features. In Taylor 2016b, 182.

¹⁷³ Clearly, this procedure was not used in the coffins of Kent and Nebtau (Museo Egizio in Florence), or in the coffin of Tentamentet (British Museum). On gilded coffins, such as those of Henuudjebu (Washington University Gallery) or on the coffin of Mahu (Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts) this could have happened, as the gilded decoration would be easily cleaned up.

(thus almost completely covered by dark pitch) and coffins entirely gilded. One could say that ‘gilded coffins’ would be a proper expression to describe these objects included in the ‘black’ type, as all of them are, or pretend to be, gilded in different degree and extension. The application of gleaming black pitch might be related to an important funerary ritual often illustrated in contemporary Theban tombs, depicting the lustration of the deceased¹⁷⁴. This lustration ceremonial had important solar significance and was performed after royal archetypes (Plate 7). Surely the subject deserves a deeper inquiry but the royal background of this ritual might help to understand the boldness it achieved in coffin decoration.

Royal archetypes are indeed implicit in nested assemblages, where the use of gold foil is increasingly more extensive as we approach the mummy, suggesting several stages of a transformation towards complete illumination, i.e., identification with the sunlight. The innermost object, completely gilded, suggested the full identification of the deceased with the sun god begotten by Nut¹⁷⁵ and symbolized solar immortality¹⁷⁶.

The ‘black’ type is attested not only at Thebes but also in the Memphite necropolis¹⁷⁷ and at Nubian sites, becoming something like a ‘national’ style¹⁷⁸. The success of the ‘black’ type is detected even in the decoration of anthropoid sarcophagi. The first attested occurrence is found in the Theban tomb of Merymes (TT 383), the powerful governor of Kush during the reign of Amenhotep III. His nested funerary assemblage included three outstanding anthropoid sarcophagi, designed after the ‘black’ type¹⁷⁹. Sarcophagi designed with this layout have also been found in Sakara and were still being used as late as the 19th Dynasty¹⁸⁰.

‘Festive dress’ type

During the late 18th Dynasty, an important innovation is documented in coffin decoration. The anthropoid sarcophagus of Ramses I (1295-1294 BC), carved when he was still a vizier under the King Horemheb makes use of an odd combination of

¹⁷⁴ See, for example, the scenes depicted in the Tomb of Sennefer (TT 96), the Tomb of Ramose (TT 55) and the Tomb of Userhat (TT 51), showing the importance of this subject during a long span of time. See Sousa 2011, Pl. 74-76.

¹⁷⁵ Taylor 2010, 98.

¹⁷⁶ Van Walsem 1997, 110. Sometimes the face is also covered with black resin, but that circumstance is highly exceptional, such as in Coffin E found in KV 63. See Sousa 2014b, 202.

¹⁷⁷ Coffin of Tauret (Imhotep Museum).

¹⁷⁸ Taylor 2016b, 181.

¹⁷⁹ Funerary shrines of Yuya and Tjuiu (KV 46).

¹⁸⁰ Sarcophagus of Pahemnetjer (British Museum), sarcophagus of Hori (Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrus Sammlung in Berlin).

features¹⁸¹. The deceased wears the tripartite wig, typical of his status as a *sah*, a divine being but, instead of the mummy-like appearance, the lid fully depicts Ramses as a living, wearing his ceremonial costume as vizier, with his arms displayed along the body and the feet crudely carved in the round¹⁸². Oddly enough, the layout of the sides is fully designed after the ‘black’ type, featuring the usual figures of the four Sons of Horus and Thoth alternating with bands of text¹⁸³.

A similar scheme is detected in wooden coffins dating from the early 19th Dynasty (1295-1186 BC). The lid is decorated with a life-size image of the deceased wearing the so-called ‘every-day dress’. Actually, these garments are ceremonial and have connotations with the divine festivals of Amun. Men wear a white linen kilt and a long tunic; they have a short beard and the hands are laid on the thighs¹⁸⁴ or crossed on the chest¹⁸⁵. Women wear an elaborately pleated dress; one hand is held by the side and the other flexed across the breast¹⁸⁶. Both sexes wear heavy wigs. Those of women have straight masses of hair brought forward over both shoulders, held together with horizontal binding bands¹⁸⁷. They wear earrings, and her nipples are suggested with the depiction of rosacea. The type of wig worn by men consisted of two lateral flaps of hair swept backwards to the shoulders¹⁸⁸. In both cases, the texture of the hair is carved in relief, with the individual tresses carefully rendered. Ears are no longer included in the deceased’s ‘portrait’ as they remain hidden under the heavy masses of hair¹⁸⁹.

¹⁸¹ Inner sarcophagus of Ramses I (Cairo Egyptian Museum).

¹⁸² The four Sons of Horus displayed on the intervening panels of the lid were probably added on a later moment, as this layout is witnessed in the proto-‘yellow’ type alone.

¹⁸³ This sarcophagus was later buried in Medinet Habu but was found without a mummy. However, it is clear that a secondary decoration was added on the lid, consisting in the addition of the four Sons of Horus, a pattern otherwise common on proto-‘yellow’ coffins.

¹⁸⁴ Funerary plank of Khay (Musées royaux d’Art et d’Histoire in Brussels), anonymous ‘festive dress’ funerary plank 2 (Nationalmuseet in Copenhagen), anonymous ‘festive dress’ funerary plank 3 (Brooklyn Museum of Art), anonymous ‘festive dress’ funerary plank 4 (Museo Egizio in Florence).

¹⁸⁵ Coffin of Amenemhat (Metropolitan Museum of Art), funerary plank of Piay (Cairo Egyptian Museum).

¹⁸⁶ Coffin of Aset (Cairo Egyptian Museum), funerary plank of Iyneferty (Metropolitan Museum of Art), funerary plank of Tamakhet (Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrus Sammlung in Berlin), coffin of Weretwahset (Brooklyn Museum), coffin of Henutwati (Louvre Museum), anonymous ‘festive dress’ funerary plank 1 (Michael Carlos Museum in Atlanta).

¹⁸⁷ Coffin of Isis (TT 1), funerary plank of Iyneferty (TT 1), funerary plank of Tamakhet (TT 1), coffin of Weretwahset (Brooklyn Museum), coffin of Henutwati (Louvre Museum).

¹⁸⁸ Taylor 1989, 35. Coffin set of Sennedjem (TT 1), inner coffin of Khonsu (TT 1).

¹⁸⁹ The anonymous ‘festive dress’ funerary plank 1 (Michael Carlos Museum in Atlanta) presents a noticeable exception, displaying ears.

This life-sized depiction of the deceased is found either as an independent funerary plank¹⁹⁰ or as the lid of the coffin¹⁹¹. These objects depict the deceased as a justified god, thus exactly in the same way that he/she is figured in tomb decoration, being able to go forth by day or moving freely in the netherworld¹⁹². The origins of this type of coffins are obscure but it is possible that the ‘festive dress’ type may have been created during the Amarna Period (1352-1336 BC). In fact, we know that royal *rishi* coffins dating from this period introduced for the first time the representation of ceremonial wigs depicted in naturalistic fashion as they were worn by the living in divine festivals¹⁹³. Evidence of this practice can be found in the *rishi* coffin found in KV 55, reused by a member of the royal family. In the same tomb, canopic vases were found with their lids displaying the same layout, which is consistent with the usual practice of shaping these objects after the same model used in the coffin¹⁹⁴. Although so far unattested in archaeological records, it is possible that a similar design was used in private contexts. Tomb decoration in Amarna clearly depicts the deceased wearing festive wig and garments, lying on a funerary bear, with the arms lying alongside the body (Plate 4). What we generally interpret as the depiction of the corpse itself may, in fact, represent the current type of coffin, the ‘festive dress’ type. This new type of coffin would thus have been entirely shaped after the living image of the deceased, which is consistent with the Amarnian concepts regarding the afterlife, expected to be continued with the earthly life in eternal interaction with the life-giving powers of the sun god¹⁹⁵.

This would have been the short-lived apex of the maximal anthropomorphisation of the coffin¹⁹⁶. After the Amarna Period, the traditional Osirian archetype was back in favour. A few examples are known of ‘black’ coffins dating from the late 18th Dynasty¹⁹⁷ but the most important examples are the sarcophagi of an unknown man reused for

¹⁹⁰ Funerary plank of Khay (Musées royaux d’Art et d’Histoire in Brussels), funerary plank of Sennedjem (TT 1).

¹⁹¹ Coffin of Weretwahset (Brooklyn Museum), coffin of Aset (Cairo Egyptian Museum).

¹⁹² It can be argued that these representations of the deceased as a living are representations of the *akh*. See Taylor 2016a, 57. However, when these depictions occur in tomb decoration the deceased is simply referred to as a *mae kheru*, a justified god.

¹⁹³ Anonymous royal coffin from KV 55 (Cairo Egyptian Museum).

¹⁹⁴ Canopic jar (Egyptian Museum in Cairo, JE 39637). See Saleh, Sourouzian 1987, 171.

¹⁹⁵ This paradoxical fashion for representing the dead as living people also influenced the design of shabtis (Taylor 1989, 39). See also Taylor 2016a, 55.

¹⁹⁶ Van Walsem 1997, 359.

¹⁹⁷ Coffins from the embalming cache KV 63. See Sousa 2014b.

Psusennes I and another one preserved in the Museum of Elephantine, both dating from the reign of Tutankhamun or Horemheb.

Despite this attempt to return to the traditional model, the Amarnian revolutionary model did not fall into complete oblivion. On the contrary, attempts to integrate the ‘festive dress’ type into the Osirian scheme of decoration proved to play a decisive role in the subsequent evolution of coffin decoration.

These attempts consisted in the juxtaposition of both models in one single coffin, resulting in hybrid objects with the lid following the layout of the ‘festive dress’ type and the sides designed after the ‘black’ type¹⁹⁸. This fact alone had lasting consequences as from then on, the lid and the case became formally independent and decorated as two separate pieces. For the first time, the unity between the lid and the case was broken. Another lasting legacy of these coffins consisted in the adoption of gender distinction. From then on, anthropoid coffins would always define its owner as a male or female deity, a practice that would persist until Greco-Roman times.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature introduced by the ‘festive dress’ type is the polychrome decoration covered by shiny yellowish varnish. Thereafter the black background only seldom is seen¹⁹⁹. The gilded decoration is first suggested by yellow paint, but soon a new technique would be used instead, consisting of varnish to stabilize the pigments and give the yellowish glow. This varnish consists of pistacia resin, a substance also used as incense in temple ritual, which conferred the gleaming yellow color, a godlike radiance, to the deceased²⁰⁰. The examination of the coffins displaying yellow background shows that its original color was white²⁰¹. The varnish would turn them yellowish which from the magical standpoint would literally ‘make divine’ the gilded flesh of the deceased²⁰². However, besides the yellowish tone, varnish also had the advantage of adding gleaming light, without hiding the pictorial work, as black pitch did. This is a very important aspect as, in order to be used during the funerary rites, black pitch required the use of gilded foil, otherwise would cover the decoration underneath. Coffins that did not use gilded foil had to be ‘ready’ when leaving the workshop and that prevented the reenactment of the ritual of giving

¹⁹⁸ Coffin of Aset (Cairo Egyptian Museum), sarcophagus of Ramses (Cairo Egyptian Museum), sarcophagus of Nia (Louvre Museum).

¹⁹⁹ Coffin set of Ipy (Museo Egizio in Florence).

²⁰⁰ Taylor 2016a, 57.

²⁰¹ Loring 2012. This process is clear in objects where varnish was selectively applied on particular motifs and not extensively all over the object. See mummy-cover of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus) and mummy-cover of Hori (Kestner Museum).

²⁰² Incense’s designation in Egyptian is *senetjer*, ‘that which makes divine’. In Taylor 2016a, 57.

gleaming light to the coffin, which was probably a very important step of the funerary ritual.

The varnish was thus used as a substitute for black pitch as it was compatible with a relatively cheap work of decoration and, more importantly, it could be added during the rituals themselves. In the ‘yellow’ corpus the evidence of the selective use of varnish abounds, especially in inner objects such as the mummy-covers, where sometimes only the inscriptions and the deities are covered with varnish²⁰³.

The ‘festive dress’ coffins provide the first attempts to use varnish to finish off the decoration. The sides are completely varnished but the lids are selectively coated: only the skin, wig, collar and other adornments are covered with varnish²⁰⁴.

We certainly could not witness the outstanding development in coffin decoration from the Ramesside Period (1295-1069 BC) onwards without this technical (or perhaps better said, ‘alchemical’) innovation. The use of varnish allowed the development of the pictorial work and it is deeply embedded in the magical search for solarization of the funerary equipment. The result is the coffin literally showing the deceased as a deity irradiating sunlight.

These innovations are consistent with a new color scheme introduced in the so-called ‘monochromatic tombs’ of Deir el-Medina (Plate 9), all of them dating from the early 19th Dynasty:

- Tomb of Khabekhnet (TT 2)²⁰⁵;
- Tomb of Penbuy (TT 10)²⁰⁶;
- Tomb of Khawy (TT 214)²⁰⁷;
- Tomb of Paneb (TT 211)²⁰⁸;
- Tomb of Neferabu (TT 5)²⁰⁹;
- Tomb of Nebenmaat (TT 219)²¹⁰;
- Tomb of Nakhtamun (TT 335).

²⁰³ Mummy-cover of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus).

²⁰⁴ This is probably the reason behind the reddish color shown in the coloration of the skin in this corpus of coffins.

²⁰⁵ Bruyère 1952.

²⁰⁶ Bruyère 1952.

²⁰⁷ Bruyère 1952.

²⁰⁸ Bruyère 1952.

²⁰⁹ Vandier 1935.

²¹⁰ Maystre 1936.

In these tombs, the burial chambers are decorated with scenes outlined in black against a white background and summarily painted in yellow. It is unclear the meaning underlying to this scheme of tomb decoration but it was meaningful enough to be included in the decoration of the Tomb of Nefertari (QV 66), where it is used in the decoration of small shrines. The gleaming effect that results from the selective use of yellow reminds the use of varnish on coffins and it is quite possible that both coffin and tomb decoration evolved under the same magical concerns. Contemporary shabtis, mummiform²¹¹ or carved after the ‘festive dress’ type²¹², show further evidence that might be helpful to understand this iconographic trend, as they often bear the inscription *shedj Osiris N.* (‘To make shine the Osiris N.’) sometimes using the sun disk as determinative (N 8 in Gardiner’s list) pointing out to the solarization of the Osirian afterlife and depicting the deceased as a solarized god.

Illumination and radiance were thus sought as the ultimate expression of a glorious afterlife and the gleaming coating provided to the funerary equipment expressed this pursuit of light. One of the funerary figurines of Sennedjem provides an interesting testimony of these beliefs, depicting the deceased wearing a ceremonial dress, entirely covered in varnish²¹³. An inscription runs vertically down Sennedjem’s kilt. The text reads: ‘Everything which goes forth upon the offering table of Amun in Ipet-Sut, for the Ka of Sennedjem, justified, happy in peace’²¹⁴.

The formula fully expresses the ideal afterlife inherent in the ‘festive dress’ type, which was seen as an eternal engagement of the deceased in the sacred festivals performed in the Temple of Karnak, with all the pleasant outcomes resulting from this blissful experience.

Proto-‘yellow’ type

In the transition to the Ramesside Period, no major changes are to be recorded on the sides of the boxes²¹⁵, but the lid returns again to the mummiform shape, creating what can be called the ‘proto-yellow’ type. The lid is now arranged in five distinct sections (the headboard, the upper section, the central panel, the lower section and the

²¹¹ Shabti of Khabekhnet, from TT 1. See Hornung, Bryan 2002, 143.

²¹² Shabti of Sunur. See Taylor, 2001, 123.

²¹³ Cairo Egyptian Museum (JE 27221). In Hornung, Bryan 2002, 144.

²¹⁴ Hornung, Bryan 2002, 144.

²¹⁵ The layout basically keeps reproducing the same scheme observed on the ‘black’ type but the floorboard is now flattened.

footboard). This innovative arrangement allowed these sections to evolve independently and from then on they are decorated with a repertoire of their own:

- **Headboard** – Most of the female Ramesside coffins keep displaying the fashionable wigs used by the living. The festive wig²¹⁶ is still seen in male coffins, but the tripartite wig²¹⁷ becomes progressively more prevalent. In both cases, the skin is colored red, in association with sunlight.
- **Upper section** – The torso is delimited by the contour of the forearms. Men have clenched fists, sometimes holding religious emblems²¹⁸, while women are always depicted with open hands. The depiction of breasts, introduced with the ‘festive dress’ type is kept. These will remain important gender-markers in the ‘yellow’ type. On the chest, naophoric pectorals are often shown²¹⁹;
- **Central panel** – Typically, only the winged goddess figures in the tableau (Fig. 21), but the latest examples already include the naophoric pectoral (Fig. 22);
- **Lower section** – The lower section displays two longitudinal partitions. These panels flank the central hieroglyphic band. They can remain undecorated or provided with vignettes. These scenes are arranged longitudinally but the gods are always depicted centripetally, thus facing inwards²²⁰.
- **Footboard** – A tripartite panel is formed showing the mourning goddesses displayed in reversed direction.

Despite this formal arrangement, the layout of the lid in the proto-‘yellow’ corpus is highly unstable, as craftsmen were keenly engaged in pursuing the integration of the ‘festive dress’ type into the traditional Osirian scheme. The design of these coffins is highly experimental, often originating unique objects. The analysis of this corpus reveals, step by step, the creation of new features which, later on, will be incorporated in the ‘yellow’ type.

This process of integration was clearly focused on two conflicting objects, the funerary plank depicting the deceased as a living²²¹ and the openwork mummy-boards that were

²¹⁶ Inner coffin of Ipuy (Museo Egizio in Florence), coffin of Sennedjem (TT 1), inner coffin of Khonsu (TT 1).

²¹⁷ Outer coffin of Khonsu (TT 1).

²¹⁸ Coffin of Sennedjem (TT 1). coffin of Paherypedet (DB 320).

²¹⁹ These pectorals are depicted in an increasingly lower position, eventually ending up associated with the central panel.

²²⁰ Coffin of Katabet (British Museum), coffin set of Henutmehyt (British Museum),

²²¹ Funerary cover of Khay (Musées royaux d’Art et d’Histoire in Brussels), funerary plank of Sennedjem (TT 1).

used together with the ‘black’ coffins²²². The proto-‘yellow’ type united these two competing objects, creating two separate pieces. The funerary mask absorbed the layout of the ‘festive dress’ plank²²³, featuring the ceremonial wig, the forearms of the deceased and festive garments²²⁴, while the openwork mummy-board included the winged goddess and the network of inscriptions with funerary gods depicted in the intervening panels²²⁵.

The synthesis achieved in these objects had a powerful impact on the layout of the lid. The Ramesside coffin set of Ipuu²²⁶, now in Museo Egizio in Florence, reveals an interesting combination of features. The background is black and the face and fists of the two lids are gilded. However, the face of the inner lid is oddly painted over in red, clearly showing that this was a ‘black’ coffin set reused and recycled according to the new Ramesside layout. The lower section of the inner lid displays a central longitudinal band of text and two others arranged along the edges. This arrangement is designed after the usual layout of the contemporary mummy-boards. The outer lid builds upon this scheme introducing vignettes with the four Sons of Horus in the intervening panels between the inscriptions. Unlike the ‘black’ type, these scenes are arranged longitudinally, which again results from the layout of the mummy-boards²²⁷. Surprisingly enough, the synthesis obtained with the creation of two complementary objects to cover the mummy was followed by further elaboration. The scenes carved in openwork in the intervening panels started to include the deceased clad in festive garments, exactly as he/she is depicted on the life-sized funerary planks. These scenes have a bold significance as they document, for the very first time, the integration of the deceased in the iconographic program of the coffin.

²²² These objects displayed a network of inscribed bands that used to adorn royal mummies. See mummy-trappings of Tutankhamun (Cairo Egyptian Museum, 60673) in Reeves 1990, 112 (Plate 4). See also Ikram, Dodson 1998, 171.

²²³ Clearly, this type of funerary mask was designed as a shorter version of the ‘festive dress’ cover. Mummy-board of Henutmehyt (British Museum). Mummy-board of Ram (Hermitage Museum).

²²⁴ As they are carved in openwork, the background of the iconographic tableaux is the linen straps of the mummy itself. Mummy-board of Tamutneferet (Louvre Museum). Mummy-board of Henutmehyt (British Museum).

²²⁵ During the 18th Dynasty these scenes only included the four Sons of Horus. See Mummy-board of Tjuiu, from KV 46 (Cairo Egyptian Museum, CG 5101 I) in Ikram, Dodson 1998, 171. Later on, during the Ramesside Period, these deities will become a standard feature of mummy-boards: Mummy-board of Takayt (Die Städtische Galerie Liebieghaus). Mummy-board of Henutmehyt (British Museum). Fragments of the mummy-board of Pendenit (British Museum).

²²⁶ Museo Egizio in Florence.

²²⁷ However, the use of black resin became increasingly applied on the interior walls, as we can witness in the coffin set of Tamutneferet, following the usual practice in the gilded coffins dating from the 18th Dynasty.

The coffin set of Tamutneferet is a good example of this early use of ritual scenes in the decoration of the burial assemblage²²⁸. The mummy-board decorated in openwork shows scenes featuring the deceased before the gods of the underworld, while both lids of Tamutneferet's coffins only show bands of inscriptions. Despite its misleading simplicity, this exquisite coffin set clearly shows that scenes depicting the deceased were first rendered in the secrecy of the mummy-board, the innermost object of the coffin set.

New experimental solutions gradually expanded the use of these motifs to the other objects of the burial assemblage. The undisturbed tomb of Sennedjem (TT 1), royal artisan during the reign of Seti I, contained the burial assemblages of his family spanning from several generations, providing the most important funerary corpus to understand this phenomenon²²⁹.

In the coffin set of Sennedjem, some of the features typically observed in 'black' coffins, such as the effigy of Nephthys depicted at the crown of the head, are still detected. As to the case, no major changes are to be recorded on the sides, which basically keep reproducing the same scheme observed in the gilded versions of the 'black' type.

The burial assemblage of Sennedjem includes a life-sized funerary plank featuring the deceased in festive dress, exactly in the same way he is depicted in the wall paintings of his tomb, i.e., as a justified god. Sennedjem thus figures in his burial assemblage as a justified god, ready to carry out all the ritual actions illustrated in the wall paintings of his burial chamber. This magical link between Sennedjem's funerary equipment and the decoration of his burial chamber may have triggered a phenomenon that would change completely the subsequent evolution of coffin decoration. This phenomenon consisted in the 'download' of iconographic repertoire from tomb decoration to the burial equipment. In fact, from then on, the scenes featuring the deceased formerly used in tomb decoration alone would be included in the repertoire of coffin decoration. The coffin of Sennedjem offers some of the first attested occurrences of this kind: two scenes painted on the footboard, depicting the deceased before the tree-goddess. This might be seen as a minor step but in fact, represents a

²²⁸ Coffin set of Tamutneferet (Louvre Museum).

²²⁹ Sennedjem was the son of Khabekhnet and Tahenu, whose tomb (TT 2) was next to his. He was married to Ineferty and they had at least ten children, most of them were buried in Sennedjem's tomb. Sennedjem was 'servant in the place of truth', referring to work in the royal tombs and the Valley of the Kings. See Hornung, Bryan 2002, 144.

breakthrough as it shows that a link was firmly established between the decoration of the coffin and the vast pictorial resources used on tomb walls.

The other burial sets found in the Tomb of Sennedjem show how quickly the diffusion of these scenes in coffin decoration took place. In the coffin set of Sennedjem's wife, Iyeferty, vignettes featuring the deceased cover not only the footboard but the entire lower section, making use of a wide variety of scenes notoriously akin with the repertoire of scenes featured in the funerary chamber of her own tomb²³⁰.

Both burial assemblages of Iyeferty and Sennedjem include funerary planks carved with life-sized images of the deceased wearing festive garments. However, the coffin set of Khonsu, their son, no longer includes this type of object. Both the outer coffin²³¹ and the inner coffin²³² display an extensive repertoire of vignettes arranged in two longitudinal partitions. A similar layout is also detected in the funerary canopy of Khonsu²³³. The lid of this object emulates the vaulted ceiling of his own funerary chamber (TT 1). The logical conclusion is that anthropoid coffins, funerary canopy and burial chamber all share a similar layout revolving around the celebration of the hereafter as an eternal interaction with the gods.

These burial assemblages make clear that, in less than one generation, the layout of the lid was completely transformed. The sharp contrast between the parsimonious coffin set of Sennedjem and those of his wife and son fully shows that the concepts introduced with the 'festive dress' type opened coffin decoration to the exploration of the iconographic resources previously used in tomb decoration only. This was the key to the tremendous success achieved by the emerging model of coffins which were entirely decorated with miniature scenes featuring the deceased in (ritual) interaction with the gods of the netherworld. These scenes clearly empowered the deceased and enhanced his/her godlike status.

Including the deceased in the repertoire of coffin decoration had a deep impact in terms of the symbolism associated with coffins. The repertoire of the 'black' type recreated

²³⁰ The scenes show Iyeferty and her sons Khonsu and Ramose engaged in cult scenes. Iyeferty is also depicted as a mummy lying on a bier having its mouth ceremonially 'opened' by Anubis and as a human-headed *ba*-bird drinking from a stream of water poured out by the tree-goddess. See Hayes 1953, 416.

²³¹ Anubis, Isis and Nephthys, Khonsu worshipping Osiris, and, on the footboard, a tree goddess pouring out water for the *ba*-birds of Khonsu and his wife, Tamaket. See Hayes 1953, 417.

²³² Eight panels feature the deceased and his wife kneeling in adoration below the seated figures of Osiris, Anubis, Isis and Nephthys. On the footboard, the solar disk is seen supported by the arms of the sky goddess Nut and by the sun god Khepri. See Hayes 1953, 417.

²³³ Egyptian Museum in Cairo (JE 27302/CG 47745). See Hornung, Bryan 2002, 151-153. See also coffin of Paherypedet (DB 320).

the assembly of gods escorting Osiris in his burial chamber and in this context the deceased is completely identified with Osiris lying on his bear, thus playing a passive role. The inclusion of the deceased in the repertoire of the proto-‘yellow’ type shows a new vision of the afterlife as an eternal interaction with the gods. The coffin is now seen as an extension of the tomb unfolding before the deceased the netherworld itself, which of course supposes his/her active interaction with its divine dwellers. The elaborate pictorial program set up in the proto-‘yellow’ type thus evolved as a narrative extension of the ‘festive garment’ type, profusely illustrating the rituals that would be performed by the deceased in the hereafter. While doing so, coffin decoration absorbed the repertoire of tomb decoration. In other words, it was the anthropomorphisation of the coffin that would give rise to the process of its architectonisation, which would be the defining feature of the ‘yellow’ coffins.

The inspiration for this phenomenon may have been provided by royal sarcophagi. The famous alabaster anthropoid sarcophagus of Seti I is entirely decorated with scenes taken from the Book of the Amduat, which were previously used in the decoration of the royal funerary chambers. This is one of the earliest occurrences of the explicit use of the repertoire of royal tombs in the decoration of anthropoid sarcophagi. As the lid of this important sarcophagus is missing, we are not able to know how the missing object looked like. The rounded format of the case suggests that it was shaped after the *rishi* type, with the contour of the *nemes*-headdress clearly visible. And yet, with its extensive depiction of the landscapes of the Duat featuring the nightly journey of the sun, this sarcophagus may well have been the prototype for the new type of decoration witnessed in the tomb of his servant, Sennedjem (TT 1). In this respect, it is interesting to look at the second sarcophagus of Seti’s grandson, Merenptah. As Seti’s sarcophagus, this was also decorated with extracts from the Amduat and the Book of the Gates²³⁴ but the lid shows an elaborate version of the proto-‘yellow’ type observed in private coffins, suggesting that the prototype for these objects may have derived from the royal circles²³⁵.

²³⁴ Reeves, Wilkinson 1996, 149. See the full nested assemblage of sarcophagi in Ikram, Dodson 1998, 262.9. The third sarcophagus of Merenptah, found in Tanis, also revealed conspicuous features resulting from the ‘contamination’ of royal tomb decoration, such as the frontal effigy of the goddess Nut featured on the interior side of the lid.

²³⁵ A similar scheme is found in the sarcophagus prepared for Tauheret and usurped by Amenherkhepeshef found in KV 13. See Reeves, Wilkinson 1996, 154.

‘Yellow’ type

The previous examination revealed that Ramesside developments on coffin decoration revolved around the integration of the ‘festive dress’ type in the traditional Osirian scheme. This integration was first attempted by simply juxtaposing both models in the two halves of the coffin, with the lid carved after the ‘festive dress’ type and the box designed with the traditional Osirian layout. Further developments were achieved by designing a new type of mask featuring the ‘festive dress’ type and combining them with openwork mummy-boards. These innovative achievements progressed further on with the deceased himself ending up included in the decoration of the mummy-boards, which eventually shaped the layout of the lid.

By the end of the 20th Dynasty (1186-1069 BC), two new decisive inputs were eventually added resulting in the creation of the ‘yellow’ type. These consisted in the depiction of the deceased on the sides of the case and in the creation of the mummy-cover.

The latter aspect is of crucial importance and resulted from the fusion of the mummy-board with the funerary mask in one single object²³⁶. The mummy-cover thus associated two radically distinct magical purposes. The defensive role of the funerary mask was addressed outwards, projecting the image of the deceased as a living god, while the mummy-board was addressed inwards, to the mummy itself, where the Osirian regeneration took place under the protection of the four Sons of Horus and Nut.

The merging of the two objects resulted in the elaboration of a new layout. Once established, the layout of the mummy-cover shaped the design of the lid. In a way, the ‘yellow’ type as a whole resulted from the synthesis achieved in this new artefact and not the other way around, as it is usually admitted. It is not by chance that, once created, the mummy-cover became the defining object of the ‘yellow’ type. Not surprisingly, when a new model of coffins emerged, in the beginning of the 22nd Dynasty (945-715 BC), the mummy-cover disappeared from the archaeological record too.

The ‘yellow’ type displays a very stable set of key-features, creating ‘autonomous’ pictorial areas, each one having an unprecedented degree of iconographic autonomy. Moreover, these features are combined in a global layout, forming a carefully planned ‘topography’:

²³⁶ The first known examples of this type of object presents a strongly innovative layout, with the background painted white or red. Fragment of a mummy-cover (Musées royaux d’Art et d’Histoire in Brussels). See also Ikram, Dodson 1998, 173 (fig. 205).

- **Headboard** – On the lid, this area includes the head and the wig, while on the case, it is composed of a tripartite panel;
- **Upper section** – On the lid this section is delimited by the contour of the forearms or the floral collar. On the case this section is decorated as a whole scene, where the deceased is depicted as a *ba*-bird or in human shape witnessing to important mysteries of the underworld²³⁷;
- **Central panel** – This tableau only figure on the lid and it is specific from the ‘yellow’ type. The panel has at least two registers and illustrates the rebirth of the sun god under the protection of his heavenly mother as well as his mysterious union with Osiris that takes place in the Duat²³⁸;
- **Lower section** – On the lid, the lower section displays two or three longitudinal partitions. In the ‘yellow’ type the gods are always centrifugally oriented, unlike the deceased who faces inwards²³⁹. On the case, the lower section is normally decorated with a succession of smaller vignettes showing the deceased before a variety of shrines;
- **Footboard** – On the lid, the vignettes are depicted in reversed direction and they are consistently associated with mourning rituals. On the case, this area is seldom decorated.

It is noteworthy the formal independence of the lid and the case as the transversal bands of inscriptions on the lid do not continue on the case²⁴⁰. This rupture is even highlighted by the introduction of friezes adorning the upper edge of the side walls, a novelty of the ‘yellow’ type.

Another important aspect regarding the ‘yellow’ type is the interior decoration. The edges of the case are normally painted yellow as if creating a boundary of light between the interior and the outside world. Unlike most coffins dating from previous periods, which were undecorated or simply covered with black pitch, ‘yellow’ coffins have lavishly colored interiors with the figures painted against the reddish background. The

²³⁷ This scene can be displayed on a single vignette or composed by two vignettes.

²³⁸ During the 21st Dynasty, the decoration of the central panel became increasingly complex. In the most elaborate objects, it achieved a high degree of complexity with a variable number of registers. Its dimensions are highly variable and, in the most extreme examples, it may cover the entire surface of the lid below the upper section.

²³⁹ Note that this scheme is first introduced on mummy-boards.

²⁴⁰ Taylor, 1989: p. 39

interior of the case also reveals an architectonic layout suggesting the interior decoration of a shrine:

- **Headboard** – Features a winged deity, normally the *ba*-bird, protecting the head of the mummy. It is the ‘ceiling’ of the ‘shrine’;
- **Sides** – The decoration involves several registers suggesting the side-walls of a shrine;
- **Floorboard** – Large iconographic composition arranged in several registers including three registers, the largest of which is the central one consisting in a goddess, a mummiform god or a *djed*-pillar. This section is decorated as the rear wall of a shrine. This composition is sometimes doubled with a scene painted or outlined on the underside of the mummy-cover/lid²⁴¹.
- **Footboard** – normally undecorated, it is seen as the ground of the shrine. Seldom it features cryptographic compositions;

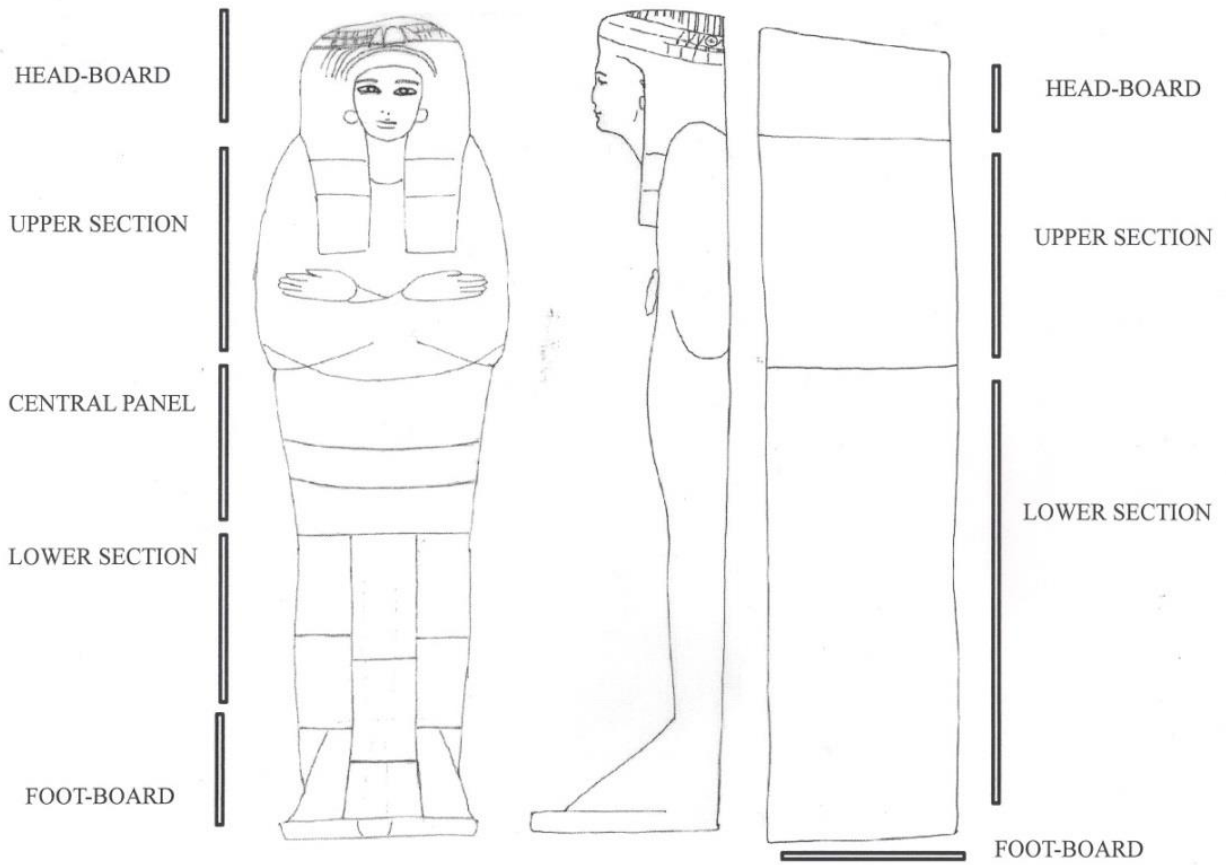
Each of these sections was provided with its own repertoire of symbols, transforming the coffin itself into a topographic object, divided into different symbolic zones²⁴². The ‘yellow’ type is thus consistent with the view of the coffin as a ‘building’²⁴³, i.e., a heterogeneous and multidimensional object in which decoration serves the purpose of creating several ‘places’ within the object. In this way, ‘yellow’ coffins display a symbolic ‘topography’ composed of spatial units or ‘sections’, each one displaying a well-established set of key-features and governed by its own principles of composition²⁴⁴.

²⁴¹ These motifs, however, are not part of the iconographic repertoire of the mummy-cover/lid integrating the scheme of decoration supposed to protect the interior of the case.

²⁴² This process known as the architectonisation of coffin decoration is rooted in the deep change of patterns that affected the Theban necropolis. From the Ramesside Period onwards the increasing scarcity of material resources led to a deep decline of tomb commission. See Cooney 2011, 3-44. This scheme of decoration of the ‘yellow’ thus reflects a wider process that transformed coffins into a miniature ‘replica’ of the tomb. This trend would find its ultimate development in the *stola*-corpus. See Van Walsem 1997, 359.

²⁴³ See Van Walsem 1997, 358-359.

²⁴⁴ It is important to stress that the identification of these areas is the result of the preliminary observation of formal and decorative patterns. Each section corresponds to an objective area, formally individualized from the others and clearly displaying a distinctive pattern of decoration which is consistently found in other objects.



Topography of a 'yellow' coffin

CHAPTER II – HEAD OF MYSTERY: THE HEADBOARD

The headboard provides a heavily idealized ‘portrait’ of the deceased depicted as a god, normally wearing a divine tripartite wig adorned with a headband. Most of the gender-markers are concentrated in this area, such as ears/earrings, beard, terminals/binding bands of the lappets.

FACE

Style and dating

High-quality coffins display well-proportioned faces, with the lips carved in a naturalistic manner and the eyes smoothly treated²⁴⁵. More often the faces present, in different degrees, some crudeness of proportions²⁴⁶, a style which becomes increasingly dominant towards the end of the dynasty.

Formal features

The faces are painted yellow²⁴⁷, but occasional use of gold can be detected both in the burials from DB 320 and from the Tomb of the Priests of Amun (Bab el-Gasus). The use of gilded foil on the face is consistent with its use on the hands too, thus clearly suggesting that gold is used to depict the deceased as an illuminated god, irradiating sunlight from his own body. With few exceptions²⁴⁸, most of the gilded coffins have been plundered in Antiquity. As a result of that, their faces, hands or breasts have been ripped out²⁴⁹. Occasionally, the skin is red, a feature that seems to be reminiscent from of color scheme used in the ‘festive dress’ type²⁵⁰.

The eyes are carved but the use of inlaid-stone eyes is exceptional²⁵¹. The cosmetic lines are painted black, as well as the eyebrows. The iris is black, painted against the white²⁵²

²⁴⁵ A.33 (inner coffin), A.52 (outer and inner coffin), A.131 (outer coffin), A.149 (outer coffin), coffin set of Tabakmut (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

²⁴⁶ A.10 (outer coffin), A.105 (outer coffin).

²⁴⁷ Few exceptions are known such as A.149 (outer coffin). Coffin set of Khonsu (TT 1).

²⁴⁸ Outer coffin of Masaharta (DB 320), outer coffin of Maatkare (DB 320), mummy-cover of Pinedjem II (DB 320) and coffin set of Hori (A.143, inner coffin). Coffin set of Tamutneferet (Louvre Museum).

²⁴⁹ Coffin of Nedjemet (DB 320), inner coffin Masaharta (DB 320), inner coffin and mummy-cover Maatkare (DB 320), inner coffin and mummy-cover Nesikhonsu (DB 320). A.142 (outer coffin, inner coffin and mummy-cover), A.147 (outer coffin and mummy-cover), A.151.

²⁵⁰ Mummy-cover of Hori (Kestner Museum), mummy-cover of Panebmontu (Louvre Museum).

²⁵¹ Coffin of Nedjemet (DB 320), inner coffin of Tabakmut (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

²⁵² A.114 (outer coffin, inner coffin and mummy-cover), A.115 (inner coffin).

or yellow background. It is interesting to point out that sometimes the eyes are painted without observing the previous sculptural work, a feature often found in later objects²⁵³. The anatomical details are outlined in red. This is particularly frequent in the following details:

- The eyelid is suggested with a thin red line traced between the eye and the eyebrow²⁵⁴;
- The nostrils are outlined in red, especially when the sculptural work is not deep enough²⁵⁵;
- The ears are depicted but only in male coffins (Fig. 6; Fig. 10). Regardless of the quality of the sculptural work, the details of the ears are always outlined red²⁵⁶.
- The throat is normally decorated with a double horizontal line depicting creases (Fig. 6; Fig. 8; Fig. 13)²⁵⁷. This feature might have been used as a sign of aging²⁵⁸.
- The naturalistic rendering of the lips is exceptional²⁵⁹ and in most of the objects, the lips are crudely carved (Fig. 12; Fig. 13; Fig. 15)²⁶⁰. The lips are normally outlined in red²⁶¹. Shadowy effects are created with small circles painted in the corners of the mouth (Fig. 8)²⁶². Very exceptionally, the lips are decorated with a striped pattern in red to suggest the use of cosmetics (Cover figure)²⁶³.

Female coffins, wear polychrome domed earrings (Figs. 9; Fig. 13; Fig. 14). Yellow or gilded, they are often decorated with rosettes (*Chrysanthemum* or *Chamomilla*) similar to those depicted on the breasts and on the floral collar, normally displaying seven or

²⁵³ A.4 (coffin), A.27 (mummy-cover).

²⁵⁴ A.27 (mummy-cover), A.91 (inner coffin), A.149 (inner coffin).

²⁵⁵ Outer coffin of Henut-tai (Metropolitan Museum of Art), coffin of Anresenmes (Metropolitan Museum of Art), A.19 (mummy-cover). Compare with coffin of Hori (Museo Egizio in Turin).

²⁵⁶ A.29 (mummy-cover), A.68 (coffin, mummy-cover).

²⁵⁷ Coffin of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum), coffin set of Henut-tai (Metropolitan Museum of Art). A.68 (coffin, mummy-cover), A.87 (mummy-cover), A.93 (coffin).

²⁵⁸ Van Walsem 2014b, 288-289. This feature was introduced during the reign of Amenhotep III.

²⁵⁹ Inner coffin of Tabakmut (Metropolitan Museum of Art). A.87 (mummy-cover), A.123 (inner coffin), A.149 (outer coffin).

²⁶⁰ A.27 (coffin, mummy-cover), A.97 (inner coffin, mummy-cover). Mummy-cover (Michael Carlos Museum).

²⁶¹ A.27 (mummy-cover), A.47 (coffin). Outer coffin of Henut-tai (Metropolitan Museum of Art), outer coffin of Butehamun (Museo Egizio in Turin).

²⁶² A.22 (coffin), A.136 (inner coffin).

²⁶³ A.136 (inner coffin).

eight petals. They are crafted separately and attached to the headboard but occasionally they are painted directly on the flattened surface of the wig (Fig. 8)²⁶⁴.

Black straps painted along the face of a man depict a short beard²⁶⁵, normally used together with the long curled divine beard (Fig. 10)²⁶⁶. These are carved separately and attached to the chin. Occasionally, they are carefully decorated with incisions suggesting braiding motifs²⁶⁷ but in most of the times this effect is achieved by simply outlining these marks in yellow²⁶⁸. Short squared beards are used occasionally²⁶⁹, especially on mummy-covers²⁷⁰. Royal beards – long and squared – are very exceptional²⁷¹.

WIG

Style and dating

During the late 20th Dynasty, wigs still display the naturalistic outlook typical of the ‘festive dress’ type, with a great care given to the braiding motifs, carved in relief²⁷². By the early 21st Dynasty the use of braiding motifs is kept in the decoration of divine tripartite wigs²⁷³, but stylized versions became more common, displaying different patterns of decoration.

Formal features

The wig is heavily decorated with gender-markers²⁷⁴. On male coffins (Fig. 10, Plate 28), the lappets display terminals (yellow or gold)²⁷⁵, while floral bindings adorn the lappets of female coffins (Fig. 9)²⁷⁶. In exceptional occurrences, both features might

²⁶⁴ Gasse 1996, pl. XXIII. This is often an evidence of a reused coffin, as in A.22, a male coffin recycled for a female burial.

²⁶⁵ A.23 (outer coffin), A.55 (outer coffin, inner coffin and mummy-cover), A.108 (inner coffin).

²⁶⁶ A.55 (coffin set), A.56, A.131 (outer coffin).

²⁶⁷ Inner coffin of Butehamun (Museo Egizio in Turin).

²⁶⁸ A.93 (coffin), A.114 (inner coffin). Coffin (Los Angeles County Museum of Art).

²⁶⁹ Coffin of Hori (Museo Egizio in Turin).

²⁷⁰ Mummy-cover of Pinedjem II (DB 320). Mummy-cover of Khonsuhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden). Mummy-cover Nesipaherentahat (Kunsthistorisches Museum). See also Goff 1979, 92.

²⁷¹ A.99 (outer coffin).

²⁷² Mummy-cover of Khaemopet (Collection Harris), coffin set of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum) mummy-cover of Panebmontu (Louvre Museum).

²⁷³ Outer coffin of Butehamun (Museo Egizio in Turin), mummy-cover of Hori (Kestner Museum), coffin of Hori (Museo Nacional in Rio de Janeiro), coffin of Amenemhat (Museo Archeologico Nacional in Madrid).

²⁷⁴ Goff 1979, 92.

²⁷⁵ A.68 (coffin and mummy-cover). Coffin set (Los Angeles County Museum of Art), coffin of Yutefamun (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

²⁷⁶ See coffin set of Maatkare (DB 320). A.52.

be used together, normally by women of high-rank²⁷⁷. The floral bindings are decorated with the same patterns used in the decoration of the collars and headband. These bindings may display a single horizontal band (more common in earlier coffins – Fig. 7) or several bands (more usual in later coffins – Fig. 9). Very exceptionally the bindings are decorated with elaborate vignettes²⁷⁸ or liminal elements²⁷⁹. Several types of wigs can be detected (Fig. 2):

- **Braided wigs.** Braiding motifs carved in relief can still be found in the ‘yellow’ corpus, normally associated with objects dating from the late 20th Dynasty (Fig. 2, n° 1). The occurrence of braided wigs during the 21st Dynasty is very exceptional and it is consistently associated with high elite burials²⁸⁰.
- **Plain blue wigs.** This type is observed both in male and female coffins from the beginning of the 21st Dynasty onwards (Fig. 2, n° 3). Plain blue lappets (without bindings or terminals) are uncommon²⁸¹. Female coffins may have further decoration, such as large tresses flanking the face²⁸² or flowers²⁸³.
- **Striped wigs.** Alternating black and yellow stripes are typically found in male coffins (Fig. 2, n° 2). This pattern derives from earlier models dating back from the 18th Dynasty (‘black’ coffins). Yellow terminals and the so-called ‘crown of justification’ are consistently associated with this type of wig²⁸⁴ but it is also usual to find objects without any headdress (Fig. 10)²⁸⁵.
- **Checkered wigs.** This decoration consists of vertical stripes of alternating yellow and black squares (Fig. 2, n° 4)²⁸⁶. Typically found in female coffins dating from the second half of the 21st Dynasty, checkered headdresses seem to have evolved as a stylization of golden hair rings encircling individual tresses²⁸⁷.

²⁷⁷ Inner coffin and mummy-cover of Asetemkhebit (DB 320).

²⁷⁸ A.74 (outer coffin).

²⁷⁹ Such as vultures, *shetjyt*-shrines or scarabs. See A.74 (inner coffin).

²⁸⁰ Coffin of Nedjemet (DB 320), coffin set of Maatkare (DB 320), coffin set of Tauheret (DB 320). Coffin of Hori (Museu Nacional in Rio de Janeiro), coffin of Panebmontu (Louvre Museum), coffin of Amenemhat (Museo Arqueologico Nacional Madrid).

²⁸¹ A.52 (outer coffin), A.54 (outer and inner coffin, mummy-cover), A.132 (mummy-cover).

²⁸² These motifs are reminiscent of the braided wigs. A.4 (coffin), A.19 (mummy-cover), A.119 (outer and inner coffin). Outer coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

²⁸³ A.74 (outer and inner coffin).

²⁸⁴ Outer coffin of Pinedjem II (DB 320), outer coffin of Masaharta (DB 320). A.95 (coffin), A.114. Mummy-cover Nesipaherentahat (Kunsthistorisches Museum), outer coffin of Butehamun (Museo Egizio in Turin), mummy-cover of Nesipanebu (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden), outer coffin of Pasebakhaienipet (Brooklyn Museum).

²⁸⁵ A.33 (inner coffin).

²⁸⁶ See Manley, Dodson 2010, 41.

²⁸⁷ An example of this type of hair rings is found among the tresor of the Asiatic princesses married to Thutmose III. On the tresor of the three princesses see Hayes 1959, 132-134.

When depicted in the naturalistic style, the rings are suggested with small yellow dots (Fig. 12)²⁸⁸. Typically these wigs only wear a headband²⁸⁹ and floral bindings are rarely used.

HEADDRESS

Style and dating

Blue wigs are normally adorned with a headband, together with a cluster of inverted lotus flowers and buds lying down on the forehead. Striped wigs, typically used on male coffins, adopt a different pattern, using either the headband (Fig. 8)²⁹⁰ or the bunch of lotus flowers (Fig. 10)²⁹¹. Of a much later dating is the vulture's headdress exclusively depicted in female coffins (Fig. 5). This attribute is first attested in the royal *rishi* coffins dating from the 17th Dynasty or the early 18th Dynasty²⁹². During the 21st Dynasty, this motif is adopted in the coffins of Maatkare (DB 320) and it is sporadically detected in high-ranked female burials from the late 21st Dynasty²⁹³. Only in the stola corpus this motif became a usual attribute of women²⁹⁴.

Formal features

Lotus flowers and buds

A bunch of lotus flowers and buds is positioned on the crown of the head, lying down on the forehead. It may have the following composition:

- Single lotus flower flanked by buds (Fig. 1, n° 1)²⁹⁵;
- Three lotus flowers (Fig. 1, n° 2)²⁹⁶;
- Three lotus flowers intertwined with buds (Fig. 1, n° 4)²⁹⁷ or other motifs (Fig. 1, n° 3)²⁹⁸.

²⁸⁸ A.27 (mummy-cover), A.74 (inner coffin and mummy-cover).

²⁸⁹ A.10 (inner coffin, mummy-cover), A.53 (outer coffin), A.91 (outer coffin), A.102 (outer coffin).

²⁹⁰ Outer coffin of Masaharta (DB 320), outer coffin of Pinedjem II (DB 320). A.93 (coffin), A.115 (inner coffin). Coffin set of Khonsumose (Museo Egizio in Turin), coffin set of Paser (Louvre Museum), outer coffin of Butehamun (Museo Egizio in Turin), outer coffin of Pasebakhaienip (Brooklyn Museum).

²⁹¹ A.28 (outer coffin), A.55 (mummy-cover), A.99 (outer coffin), A.131 (outer coffin), A.149 (outer coffin).

²⁹² Inner coffin of Merytamun (Cairo Egyptian Museum).

²⁹³ A.32 (inner coffin), A.132. Anonymous coffin.

²⁹⁴ Anonymous coffin (Carnegie Museum of Natural History), coffin of Nesikhonsu (Vleeshuis Museum).

²⁹⁵ Coffin set of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum), outer coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art),

²⁹⁶ A.74 (inner coffin).

²⁹⁷ A.74 (outer coffin), A.110 (coffin), A.119 (inner coffin), A.149 (outer coffin). Coffin of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin).

²⁹⁸ A.10 (inner coffin), A.26 (inner coffin).

The bunch of flowers may be arranged following different procedures:

- The stalks of the plants are not bonded (Fig. 1, n° 1; Fig. 13)²⁹⁹;
- The stalks of the plants are grouped and wrapped together (Fig. 1, n° 2-3; Fig. 6)³⁰⁰;
- The stalks of the plants are attached to a transversal band at the crown of the head (Fig. 1, n° 4; Fig. 9; Fig. 10)³⁰¹.

Headband

Apparently, the headband, or fillet, finds its origin in female statuary of the New Kingdom, and its function is most likely that of the ‘crown of justification’³⁰². During the 21st Dynasty, these filets evolve from a single band (Fig. 8)³⁰³, sometimes entirely gilded³⁰⁴, to a double (Fig. 6)³⁰⁵ or even triple band (Figs. 7; Fig. 9; Fig. 13; Fig. 14)³⁰⁶. A variety of patterns can be detected³⁰⁷:

- **‘Crown of justification’** – Typically, this motif consists in the alternated depiction of red and blue rectangles (Fig. 8)³⁰⁸. Sometimes each rectangle is decorated with a yellow circle (Fig. 4, n° 9)³⁰⁹ or a rosette (Fig. 4, n° 10)³¹⁰. This headdress is consistently associated with male coffins, normally wearing striped wigs. However, this geometrical headband soon became used indifferently by male and female owners (Fig. 7), together with additional bands (with floral³¹¹

²⁹⁹ Coffin of Nedjemet (DB 320). A.74 (outer coffin), A.119 (inner coffin). Outer coffin of Henut-tai (Metropolitan Museum of Art), coffin of Anresenmes (Metropolitan Museum of Art), coffin of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum). coffin of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin).

³⁰⁰ A.10 (outer and inner coffins), A.26 (inner coffin).

³⁰¹ This is typically a male motif: A.23, A.28, A.99 (outer coffin), A.131, A.149. Exceptionally, it can also be found in female coffins (A.110).

³⁰² Van Walsem 1997: 110. The famous polychrome bust of Nefertiti at Berlin makes use of one of these decorated bands.

³⁰³ A.68 (mummy-cover). Coffin set of Henut-tai (Metropolitan Museum of Art), inner coffin of Khonsu (TT 1), inner coffin of Butehamun (Museo Egizio in Turin).

³⁰⁴ Mummy-cover of Pinedjem II (DB 320).

³⁰⁵ Coffin and mummy-cover of Hori (Museo Egizio in Turin).

³⁰⁶ A.114 (inner coffin, mummy-cover). Outer coffin of Tabakmut (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

³⁰⁷ A.10, A.26, A.52, A.74.

³⁰⁸ Outer coffin of Masaharta (DB 320). Outer coffin of Butehamun (Museo Egizio in Turin), outer coffin of Pasebakhaienipet (Brooklyn Museum).

³⁰⁹ A.93 (coffin). Coffin set (Los Angeles County Museum of Art), coffin set of Khonsuhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden), mummy-cover Nesyamun (Kunsthistorisches Museum).

³¹⁰ A.16 (inner coffin), A.29 (mummy-cover), A.68 (inner coffin), A.95 (inner coffin, mummy-cover).

³¹¹ Inner coffin of Tabakmut (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

or geometrical decoration³¹²) and the inverted lotus on the forehead is often included in the composition (especially on female coffins³¹³).

- **Geometrical patterns** – Geometrical patterns featuring circles (Fig. 4, n° 2), triangles (Fig. 4, n° 5)³¹⁴, or block-friezes are common. The combination of these motifs is frequent (Fig. 4, n° 15)³¹⁵. Checkered patterns can be attested, but they are rare (Fig. 4, n° 4).
- **Persea tree buds** (*Mimusops Schimperi*) – This is one of the oldest attested patterns in the ‘yellow’ type. It is composed of buds provided with rounded terminals (Fig. 4 - n° 11, 12, 13)³¹⁶. It can be used on a single horizontal band or together with secondary bands decorated with petals, geometrical motifs or with mandrake fruits³¹⁷.
- **Lotus petals** – This motif (Fig. 4 - n° 8) is normally used with other bands displaying geometrical (checkered pattern) or floral decoration³¹⁸.
- **Mandrake fruits or flowers** – It is composed of little ‘pearls’ protruding from semi-circular motifs (Fig. 4 – n° 14, 16). This is a rare pattern on headbands³¹⁹.

Regardless of the type of wig, the crown of the head is normally painted in dark blue. When seen from above, the crown of the head forms a semi-circle suggesting the shape of the rising sun (Fig. 3). The only exception to this rule is seen in the striped type of wig, where this area is decorated with transversal stripes³²⁰.

Vulture-headdress

As a divine attribute of Mut, this headdress is first detected in elite burials, such as the coffins of Maatkare found in the Royal Cache (DB 320). In this respect, it is worthy to note the only known occurrence of the royal *uraeus* in the ‘yellow’ corpus known to

³¹² A.114 (inner coffin and mummy-cover), A.115 (inner coffin). Outer coffin of Paser (Louvre Museum).

³¹³ A.18 (inner coffin), A.77 (outer coffin), A.111 (mummy-cover).

³¹⁴ A.119 (inner coffin).

³¹⁵ Coffin of Anresenmes (Metropolitan Museum of Art), coffin of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin), inner coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

³¹⁶ Coffin of Nedjemet (DB 320). Coffin of Tamaket (TT 1). Coffin of Panebmontu (Louvre Museum).

³¹⁷ A.19 (mummy-cover), A.119 (inner coffin). Coffin set (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich), coffin set of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

³¹⁸ A.10 (outer coffin), A.123 (inner coffin). Mummy-cover of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden).

³¹⁹ A.12 (mummy-cover), A.38 (outer coffin), A.74 (inner coffin), A.136 (inner coffin).

³²⁰ As a rule, striped wigs keep this pattern on the crown of the head, even though sometimes the head of the crown is painted in dark blue. See A.26 (inner coffin).

us³²¹. The vulture headdress was rarely used during the 21st Dynasty³²² (Fig. 5) but it eventually became a typical attribute of female burials in the stola-coffins³²³. It is normally associated with a headband and a cluster of lotus flowers³²⁴.

GENERAL INTERPRETATION

The headboard depicted in anthropoid coffins derives from the shape of the funerary mask, which on itself aims at the manifestation of the deceased as a resurrected god, alluding to Chapter 151 of the Book of the Dead. However, in the ‘yellow’ type, this resurrected god is no longer strictly seen as a chthonian deity, as it was the rule before the Amarna Period. Other features of the headboard, such as beard, ears, earrings, and headdresses are used as gender-markers. In the ‘yellow’ corpus, striped wigs are consistently associated with male coffins, while checkered wigs are specifically used by women. The blue wig is indifferently used by men and women.

The important role played by gender differentiation is rooted in the ‘festive dress’ type and relates to a new vision of the hereafter as an eternal interaction with the gods. As this interaction is shaped at the image of the temple’s ritual, the deceased is admitted in the hereafter according to his/her rank in the temple’s service, hence the careful distinction of the owner with gender-markers defining the membership of the deceased in the corresponding priestly group. The deceased is thus depicted both as a justified god and a performer of rituals.

The attention given to the anatomical details is also a legacy of the ‘festive dress’ type. In the ‘yellow’ corpus, the lines of the eye-lid, the creases on the throat, the nostrils, ears, and lips are minutiously outlined thus resulting in a naturalistic and less idealized ‘portrait’ of the individual, as if the body itself was meant to be depicted in the coffin.

On the crown of the head, a lotus bunch is depicted laying down the forehead. Ramesside tomb decoration provides a wide sample of scenes featuring a bunch of lotus on the headboard of standing coffins, suggesting that it was closely associated with the Opening of the Mouth ritual³²⁵, possibly alluding to the rebirth of the deceased. The

³²¹ Outer coffin of Maatkare (DB 320). The *uraeus* is missing but given the shape of the headband, it is likely that a vulture’s head flanked by *uraei* was part of the composition.

³²² A.32 (inner coffin), A.132 (outer coffin).

³²³ Anonymous coffin (Carnegie Museum of Natural History), coffin of Nesikhonsu (Vleeshuis Museum). See Taylor 2017, 546.

³²⁴ Coffin of Nesikhonsu (Vleeshuis Museum).

³²⁵ Tomb of Userhat (TT 51).

pictorial repertoire of the 'yellow' corpus abounds in depictions of the deceased wearing lotus buds on his/her head, a feature that shows his/her divine status.

Perhaps with a similar meaning, the headband, or 'crown of justification', is an important attribute of the yellow coffins. The 'crown of justification', also called 'fillet', was symbolically given to the deceased during the Opening of the Mouth ritual. This use seems to derive from the Osiris mysteries at Abydos performed during the Wag-festival in the territory of U-Peker and also from the Festival of Sokaris. The fillet therefore directly refers to the whole range of Osiris rites at Abydos, assuring the revivification of the deceased³²⁶. Moreover, this feature alludes to Chapters 19-20 of the Book of the Dead which are concerned with the ritual associated with the 'crown of justification', symbolizing the triumph of the deceased in the judgment of the dead.

All these features suggest that the headboard not only depicted the deceased as a justified god, as it performed an important role during the funerary rituals, especially those concerned with the Opening of the Mouth ceremony. During these ceremonies, the lid would stand in upright position in order to celebrate the triumph of the deceased over Seth.

³²⁶ Van Walsem 1997: 110.

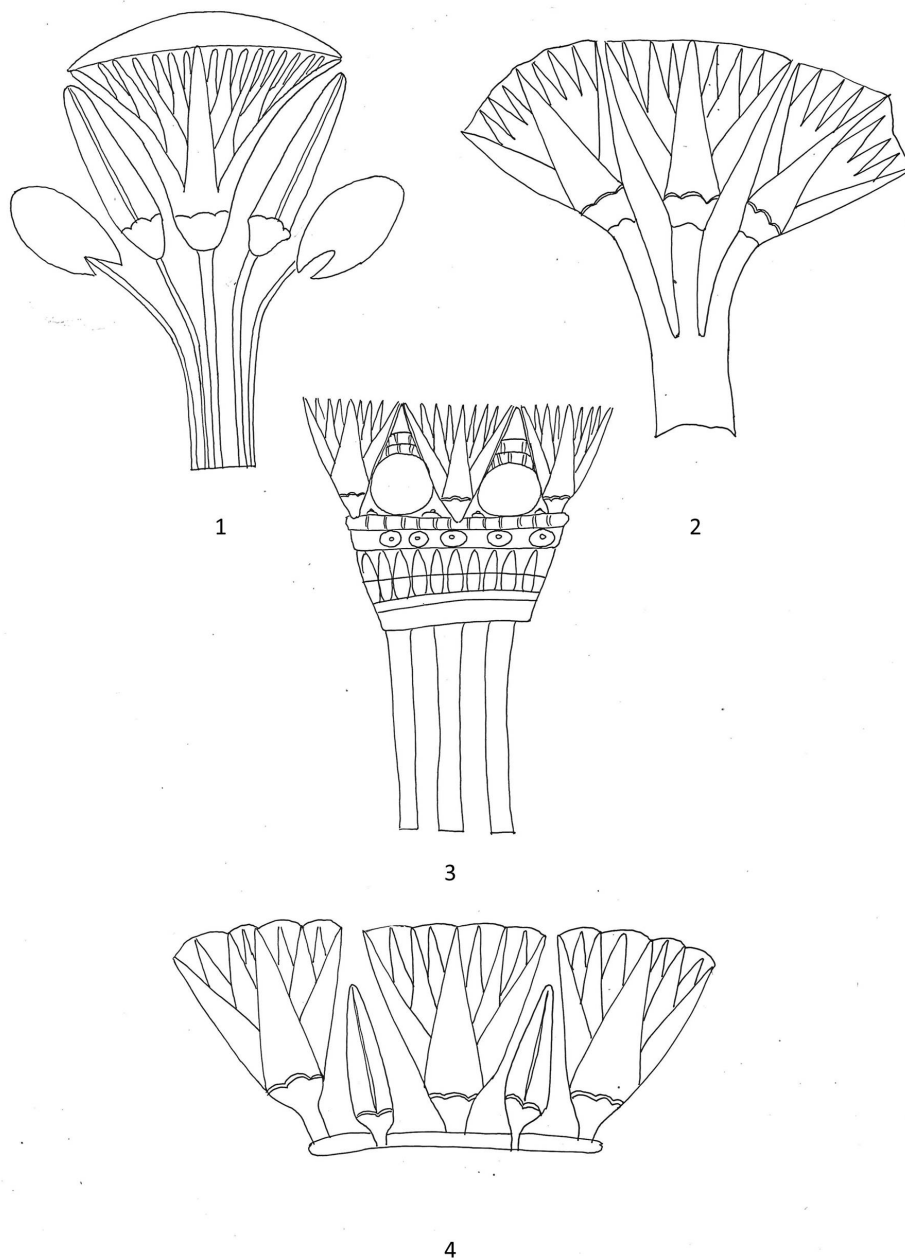


Fig. 1 – Types of lotus bunches depicted on the crown of the head.



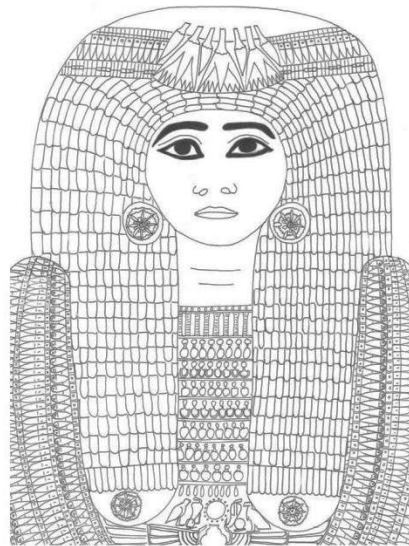
1



2



3



4

Fig. 2 – Types of wigs: braided (1), striped (2), blue (3) and checkered (4).

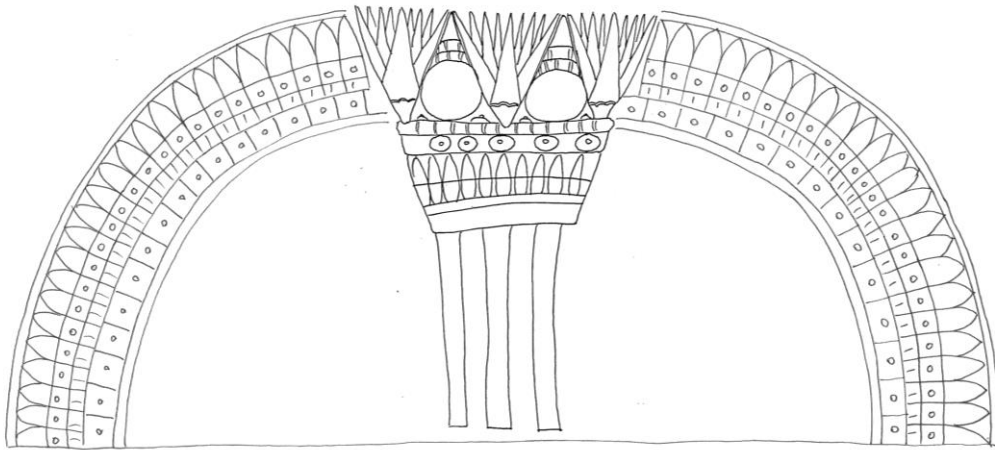


Fig. 3 – Floral headband (seen from the crown of the head).

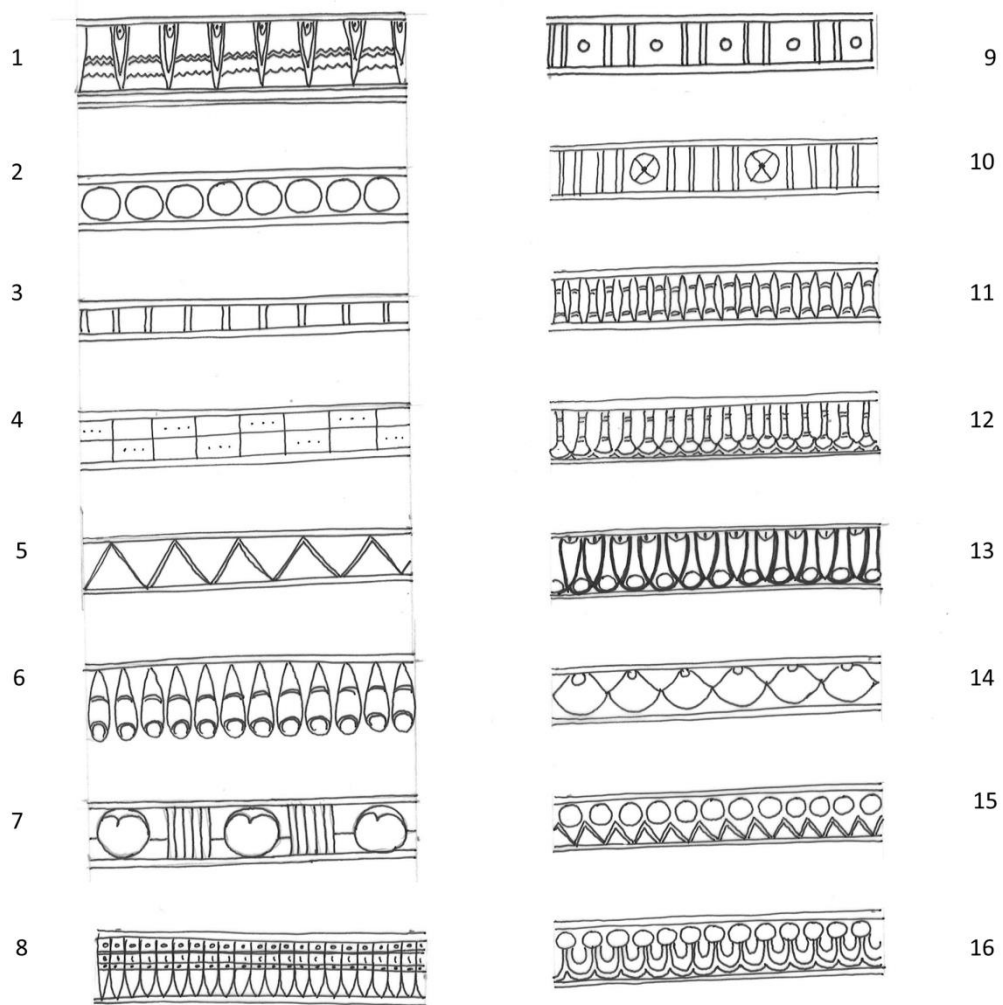


Fig. 4 – Patterns with floral and geometric motifs detected in the ‘crown of justification’ and in the floral collars.

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| (1) Buds on reeds | (7) Mandrake fruits | (13) Persea tree buds |
| (2) Geometrical patterns | (8) Lotus petals | (14) Mandrake fruits |
| (3) Crown of justification | (9) Crown of justification | (15) Geometrical patterns |
| (4) Checkered pattern | (10) Crown of justification | (16) Mandrake flowers |
| (5) Geometrical patterns | (11) Persea tree buds | |
| (6) Persea tree buds | (12) Persea tree buds | |



Fig. 5 – The vulture headdress. Outer coffin of Maatkare (A.132)

CHAPTER III – JUSTIFIED GOD: THE UPPER SECTION

The upper section features the torso of the deceased, displaying gender-markers such as breasts (female), fists (male), or hands (female). This section includes the floral collar spanning out from the chest, normally adorned with pectorals allusive to rebirth and resurrection.

HANDS

Style and dating

During the first half of the 21st Dynasty, the position of the hands is slightly raised, adopting a V-shape position³²⁷. This configuration results from the position of the forearms. In later objects, the hands protrude through the floral collar and they are arranged transversally³²⁸.

Formal features

The hands are normally painted yellow³²⁹ or covered with gold foil. Gilded hands had been systematically plundered, normally together with the face³³⁰. However, hands are often missing even in ordinary coffins, which was possibly caused either by the technique used to attach the hands to the lid or by a careless handling of these objects in Antiquity³³¹.

In the ‘yellow’ corpus, clenched fists are a distinctively male attribute, while the open hands are exclusively used on female coffins³³². Even when the objects are hastily recycled for reuse, the hands are usually changed according to the sex of the new

³²⁷ Inner coffin and mummy-cover of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art), coffin (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich), coffin of Anresenmes (Metropolitan Museum of Art), mummy-cover of Tabakmut (Metropolitan Museum of Art). A.18 (coffin), A.15 (inner coffin), A.19 (mummy-cover).

³²⁸ A.5 (coffin), A.12 (mummy-cover), A.23 (outer coffin), A.29 (mummy-cover), A.149 (outer coffin).

³²⁹ Only exceptionally this rule is broken, such as in A.149 (outer coffin).

³³⁰ Inner coffin and mummy-cover of Maatkare (DB 320), A.133 (inner coffin), A.142 (coffin set), A.147 (mummy-cover), A.151 (coffin set), inner coffin and mummy-cover of Masaharta (DB 320), coffin set of Tauheret (DB 320), coffin of Henut-taui (Museum of Fine Arts in Boston).

³³¹ The hands are carved separately and attached to the lid, a technique kept in use until the beginning of the 22nd Dynasty. In the previous models, the hands were carved in relief which gives much more stability to this feature. See A.18 (mummy-cover), A.43 (outer coffin). Mummy-cover of Henutaneb (Musée des Beaux-Arts in Grenoble), anonymous coffin (Museo Egizio in Turin).

³³² Objects with the combined use of the fist and stretched hand are extremely rare and the only known occurrence belongs to the proto-‘yellow’ corpus. See Inner coffin of Takayt (Die Städtische Galerie Liebieghaus).

owner³³³. Only exceptionally this rule is mindfully broken, as in the coffins of Maatkare³³⁴, the daughter of the High Priest Pinedjem I, herself holding the title of God's Wife of Amun. In her coffins, this powerful lady figures with fists as a bold statement of social status and perhaps in her role of Adoratrice of the God³³⁵.

Attributes associated with clenched fists are consistently associated with high elite burials. The *djed*-pillar is often found in male coffins, normally combined with the *tyet*-signs (left hand)³³⁶. In other coffins, the deceased grasps wooden replicas of a rolled-up document called *imyet-per*, or 'title to property'³³⁷. These occurrences seem to have had social meaning and are consistently associated with exceptional levels of craftsmanship³³⁸. The deceased may also grasp other attributes, such as a feather³³⁹ or the *ankh*-sign³⁴⁰. These symbols are normally carved in wood.

Even more exceptional is the depiction of iconographic motifs on the fists themselves³⁴¹, suggesting a tattooed motif.

Female burials tend to display a careful rendering of the fingers³⁴². Especially in earlier coffins, the fingers are outlined in red, including the anatomical rendering of lines and nails³⁴³, which at times are painted in a different color³⁴⁴. Rings are a typical feature of female coffins. Normally, all fingers display rings (sometimes two or even three rings on each finger). The thumbs are normally left without decoration (Fig. 7; Fig. 11; Fig.

³³³ The coffin set from A.22, originally crafted for a man, was summarily recycled to be reused by a woman. The fists were removed both on the lid and on the mummy-cover. In the later open hands were added. The inner coffin and mummy-cover of Padiamun (A.84) offer a remarkable example of a male coffin set equipped with open hands, which were introduced when the coffin set was recycled for a female burial.

³³⁴ Outer coffin of Maatkare (DB 320).

³³⁵ For further information on Maatkare see Dodson 2012, 54-55.

³³⁶ Mummy-cover of Panebmontu (Louvre Museum), mummy-cover of Hori (Kestner Museum), mummy-cover of Khaemopet (Collection Harris), inner coffin of Butehamun (Museo Egizio in Turin), outer and inner coffin of Pinedjem II (DB 320). It is also possible to find just one of these signs: A.115 (inner coffin), A.114 (inner coffin).

³³⁷ Hayes 1953, 417-419. See also Van Walsem 1997, 120-121.

³³⁸ Coffin set of Maatkare (DB 320). A.147 (coffin).

³³⁹ Mummy-cover of Butehamun (Museo Egizio in Turin).

³⁴⁰ A.33 (coffin).

³⁴¹ Fragment from a coffin (Fitzwilliam Museum). On ritual tattoos see Austin, Gobeil 2017.

³⁴² Inner coffin and mummy-cover of Henut-tai (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

³⁴³ Mummy-cover of Henut-tai (Metropolitan Museum of Art), A.19 (mummy-cover).

³⁴⁴ Coffin of Anresenmes (Metropolitan Museum of Art), A.19 (mummy-cover).

12)³⁴⁵ but any combination is possible, from the multiple use of rings in every finger³⁴⁶ to the complete absence of them (Fig. 9; Fig. 14)³⁴⁷.

FOREARMS

Dating and style

The full rendering of the forearms remains a distinctive feature of coffins dating from the late Ramesside Period to the mid-21st Dynasty. These coffins bear a naturalistic style of decoration. From the mid-21st Dynasty onwards, the floral collar increased in size and the depiction of the forearms was reduced³⁴⁸ and eventually disappeared³⁴⁹.

Formal features

The right forearm is always positioned above the left one, either on male or female coffins³⁵⁰. Typically the decoration of the forearms includes a bracelet (next to the hands) and a large lotus flower (over the elbow). The decoration of the remaining space presents several motifs:

- **Plain yellow skin.** Occasionally, the forearms are simply decorated with yellow paint, suggesting the skin of the deceased gleaming with ‘gilded’ light³⁵¹.
- **Feathered patterns.** The feathered pattern is a subtle reminiscence of the *rishi*-coffins (Fig. 8). This motif alludes to the avian manifestation of the deceased as a *ba*-bird and it has associations with his divine power of going forth by day³⁵².

³⁴⁵ Inner coffin and mummy-cover of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art), coffin (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich), coffin of Anresenmes (Metropolitan Museum of Art), A.136 (mummy-cover), A.19 (coffin).

³⁴⁶ A.10 (mummy-cover), A.32 (inner coffin), A.53 (outer coffin).

³⁴⁷ Mummy-cover of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin), coffin of Tanatnektahat (Michael Carlos Museum), A.18 (coffin), A.110 (coffin), A.111 (mummy-cover), A.136 (outer coffin).

³⁴⁸ Inner coffin of Pinedjem II (DB 320). Mummy-cover of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden), mummy-cover of Tabakmut (Metropolitan Museum of Art). A.29 (mummy-cover), A.53 (outer coffin), A.54 (mummy-cover), A.109 (outer coffin), A.110 (coffin) A.136 (outer coffin), A.142 (outer coffin), A.149 (outer coffin).

³⁴⁹ Anonymous coffin (British Museum), coffin set of Khonsuhotep (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek), outer coffin of Tabakmut (Metropolitan Museum of Art). A.4 (coffin), A.5 (coffin), A.12 (mummy-cover), A.54 (inner coffin), A.74 (outer coffin), A.133 (mummy-cover).

³⁵⁰ Coffin set of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art), mummy-cover of Khaemopet (Collection Harris), coffin set of Sutimes (Louvre Museum), coffin of Panebmontu (Louvre Museum), mummy-cover of Panebmontu (Louvre Museum), coffin set of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum), outer coffin of Masaharta (DB 320), A.68 (mummy-cover).

³⁵¹ Outer coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art), mummy-cover of Herytubekhet (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich).

³⁵² Coffin of Khonsumose (Museo Egizio in Turin), mummy-cover (Los Angeles County Museum of Art), mummy-cover of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin). A.19 (mummy-cover), A.88 (inner coffin). A.22 (coffin), mummy-cover of Khaemopet (Collection Harris), inner coffin and mummy-cover of Tauheret (DB 320).

- **Bracelets.** The following types of bracelets are allusive to actual funerary objects that were commonly used in mummification:
 - **Geometrical patterns.** Bracelets provided with geometrical decoration are frequent (Fig. 6; Fig. 7; Fig. 8; Fig. 11)³⁵³.
 - **Bracelets with multiple *wedjat*-eyes.** These bracelets are formed by small *wedjat*-eyes hanging from a thread³⁵⁴.
 - **Hieroglyphic arrangements with the *wedjat*-eye.** In larger bracelets, the *wedjat*-eye is used together with other hieroglyphs (*neb* and *nefer*-signs)³⁵⁵.
 - **(Winged) sacred scarab**³⁵⁶. Some bracelets feature the sacred scarab rising from the lotus flower³⁵⁷, from the *neb*-basket (Fig. 8)³⁵⁸ or sailing on the solar boat³⁵⁹. The scarab can be flanked by other motifs³⁶⁰, such as the *wedjat*-eyes³⁶¹, or mummiform deities³⁶². A variation of this motif is achieved by using the solar disk³⁶³, sometimes sailing in the solar bark³⁶⁴.
 - **Avian manifestation of Sokar.** The sacred falcon is normally depicted with the *wedjat*-eye and/or the winged cobras (Fig. 8)³⁶⁵.

³⁵³ Coffin of Tanatnektahat (Michael Carlos Museum), mummy-cover of Henutaneb (Musée des Beaux-Arts de Grenoble), A.136 (mummy-cover). These motifs can be found in actual funerary bracelets. See, for example, bracelets of Ah-hotep (Egyptian Museum in Cairo) in Saleh, Sourouzian 1987, N° 125. See also bracelet of Tutankhamun (Egyptian Museum in Cairo), in Stierlin 1993, 62.

³⁵⁴ Coffin of Anresenmes (Metropolitan Museum of Art), mummy-cover of Tentamun (Musée d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne de Marseille).

³⁵⁵ A.68 (mummy-cover). These are fairly realistic depictions of funerary bracelets: Bracelet of Sheshonk I found in Tanis (Egyptian Museum in Cairo), in Stierlin 1993, 192. Bracelet of Tutankhamun (Egyptian Museum in Cairo), in Stierlin 1993, 63.

³⁵⁶ Mummy-cover of Nesipanebu (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden), mummy-cover of Butehamun (Museo Egizio in Turin), inner coffin of Nesikhonsu (DB 320), outer coffin of Pasebakhaienipet (Brooklyn Museum).

³⁵⁷ A.16 (inner coffin).

³⁵⁸ A.22 (coffin).

³⁵⁹ Mummy-cover of Panebmontu (Louvre Museum), coffin (Los Angeles County Museum of Art).

³⁶⁰ Actual bracelets have been found showing the winged scarab flanked by cobras. See bracelet of Psusennes I in Robins 1997, 196. See also Stierlin 1993, 163-169.

³⁶¹ Mummy-cover of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art), outer coffin of Maatkare (DB 320), Coffin set of Yutefamun (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

³⁶² A.22 (coffin). In this coffin, Shay ('Destiny') and Osiris are depicted.

³⁶³ A.16 (coffin). Actual bracelets have been found showing a solar child. See bracelets of Nimrod in Robins 1997, 200.

³⁶⁴ Inner coffin of Pasebakhaienipet (Brooklyn Museum)

³⁶⁵ Mummy-cover of Nani (Metropolitan Museum of Art), inner coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art), coffin of Hori (Museu Nacional in Rio de Janeiro), coffin of Nani (Metropolitan Museum of Art), outer coffin of Pasebakhaienipet (Brooklyn Museum), mummy-cover of Nespawershefyt (Fitzwilliam Museum). A.19 (coffin), A.111 (mummy-cover), A.113 (mummy-cover), A.119 (inner coffin), A.22 (coffin).

Other bracelets are longer and depict sacred scenes or groups of deities:

- **Mummiform gods.** Groups of squatted mummiform deities often including the four Sons of Horus, Anubis, Thoth³⁶⁶ or any of the deities from the Heliopolitan Ennead (Fig. 6; Fig. 7)³⁶⁷. The identity of this divine assembly is not always possible to attest³⁶⁸.
- **Osirian scenes.** These scenes may range from the simple depiction of a squatted mummiform god³⁶⁹ flanked by winged deities (sometimes a *ba*-bird³⁷⁰) to more elaborate vignettes depicting the recumbent Osiris³⁷¹ lying on the embalming bed³⁷², or to the enthroned Osiris receiving offerings³⁷³. The depiction of the Ta-wer totem is also attested in this area³⁷⁴.

ARMS

Style and dating

When the floral collar is short enough, a small triangular area formed by the elbows and the arms is revealed³⁷⁵. This area eventually disappeared with the increasing size achieved by the floral collar from the mid-21st Dynasty onwards.

Formal features

Several motifs are consistently associated with this area:

- Linen straps suggesting mummy wrappings or, more likely, ceremonial linen garments, used as a reminder of the ‘festive dress’ type (Fig. 9)³⁷⁶.
- Feathered patterns, used as a reminiscence of the *rishi*-coffins (Fig. 8)³⁷⁷.

³⁶⁶ Mummy-cover of Hori (Kestner Museum).

³⁶⁷ Mummy-cover of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum), coffin of Panebmontu (Louvre Museum).

³⁶⁸ Inner coffin and mummy-cover of Masaharta (DB 320). Coffin of Herytubekhet (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich), coffin of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum), outer coffin of Butehamun (Museo Egizio in Turin), mummy-cover of Nesikhonsu (DB 320).

³⁶⁹ Coffin set of Paser (Louvre Museum), A.115 (inner coffin).

³⁷⁰ Mummy-cover Nesipaherentahat (Kunsthistorisches Museum).

³⁷¹ Coffin of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin).

³⁷² Coffin of Amenemhat (Museo Arqueológico Nacional de Madrid). A.18 (coffin), A.95 (coffin), A.114 (mummy-cover).

³⁷³ Outer coffin of Pasebakhaienipet (Brooklyn Museum).

³⁷⁴ Outer coffin of Pinedjem II (DB 320), coffin set of Khonsuhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden).

³⁷⁵ Outer coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art), mummy-cover of Panebmontu (Louvre Museum), mummy-cover of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum).

³⁷⁶ A.19 (mummy-cover), A.110 (coffin). Mummy-cover of Herytubekhet (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich).

- Beaded patterns, alluding to a funerary cover³⁷⁸.
- Iconographic compositions. These are normally depicted against a strapped background or on a plain yellow background. The following subjects are more frequently found:
 - o Hieroglyphic compositions involving *wedjat*-eyes, *nefer*-signs, and *neb*-baskets or other symbols, such as the totem of the West³⁷⁹.
 - o Adoring *ba*-bird³⁸⁰ (before a standing Osiris³⁸¹). Variations of this vignette include the depiction of the *benu*-bird³⁸² or the avian form of Ptah-Sokar (Fig. 6)³⁸³ instead of the *ba*-bird. The Ta-wer totem can be depicted instead of Osiris.
 - o Mummiform gods (standing³⁸⁴ or squatted³⁸⁵) – (Fig. 7; Fig. 11);
 - o Cobra (Fig. 14) or a feather (Fig. 13). These motifs are more frequent in later objects where this section became increasingly smaller.

BREASTS

Style and dating

Breasts remained one of the most important gender-markers in the ‘yellow’ corpus. The nipples are always rendered as rosettes. Sometimes breasts are directly painted on the flattened board (Fig. 11)³⁸⁶ but they are usually molded. Occasionally they are covered with gold foil³⁸⁷.

³⁷⁷ Mummy-cover of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin), mummy-cover of Maatkare (DB 320), coffin of Pahereniset (Museo Egizio in Turin), A.22 (coffin), A.68 (coffin and mummy-cover), mummy-cover of Nespawershefyt (Fitzwilliam Museum). However, coffins from the late 21st Dynasty may also include this motif looking for an archaizing layout. Mummy-cover of Pinedjem II (DB 320), mummy-cover of Nesikhonsu (DB 320).

³⁷⁸ Mummy-cover of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

³⁷⁹ Coffin of Herytubekhet (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich).

³⁸⁰ Coffin of Anresenmes (Metropolitan Museum of Art), inner coffin of Tauheret (DB 320).

³⁸¹ Mummy-cover of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art), mummy-cover of Nani (Metropolitan Museum of Art), coffin of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum), coffin of Panebmontu (Louvre Museum), coffin of Amenemhat (Museo Arqueologico Nacional de Madrid).

³⁸² A.114 (mummy-cover).

³⁸³ Mummy-cover of Hori (Kestner Museum), coffin set of Khonsuhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden), outer coffin of Pasebakhaenipet (Brooklyn Museum).

³⁸⁴ Mummy-cover of Nesipanebu (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden), mummy-cover of Butehamun (Museo Egizio in Turin).

³⁸⁵ Mummy-cover of Nesipaherentahat (Kunsthistorisches Museum), coffin set of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus). A.136 (outer coffin, mummy-cover).

³⁸⁶ A.136 (mummy-cover).

³⁸⁷ Coffin of Nedjemet (DB 320), coffin set of Asetemkhebit (DB 320).

Formal features

Rosettes (*Chrysanthemum* flowers) can be rendered in a naturalistic style, displaying eight (Fig. 17, n° 2; Fig. 19, n° 2)³⁸⁸ or twelve³⁸⁹ petals painted alternately black or red. Rosettes may also be depicted with a geometrical design resembling irregular circles divided into eight sections (Fig. 13)³⁹⁰, with an outer section painted in black, and a red area around the central disk (black). Both versions had been borrowed from the motifs used in jewellery³⁹¹.

Occasionally, rosettes are used as the nuclear block of a symmetrical composition, involving cobras and *wedjat*-eyes (Fig. 19, n° 3)³⁹². These compositions suggest motifs tattooed on the breasts.

Even more exceptional is the depiction of a lotus flower on each breast³⁹³.

CHEST

Style and dating

During the first half of the 21st Dynasty, the chest became literally the heart of the upper section, and it was normally decorated with a central marker consisting in a pectoral allusive to the solar rebirth (winged scarab) or to the Osirian regeneration (heart amulet). From the mid-21st Dynasty onwards, the heart amulet plays a bolder role³⁹⁴, sometimes in association with the winged scarab³⁹⁵ or the solar disk³⁹⁶. By the late 21st Dynasty, mummy braces are introduced in this area.

³⁸⁸ A.111 (mummy-cover).

³⁸⁹ Coffin set of Nani (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

³⁹⁰ A.136 (lid and mummy-cover), anonymous coffin (British Museum), anonymous mummy-cover (Vatican Museums, 25020).

³⁹¹ See the tresor of the Asiatic wives of Thutmose III. Hayes 1059, 133. The second type of rosettes is found in the gold circlet with gazelle heads.

³⁹² A.10 (coffin set). Depictions like these may, in fact, allude to tattooed motifs.

³⁹³ Inner coffin of Gautseshen (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden, F 93/10.1)

³⁹⁴ A.74 (inner coffin), A.151 (outer coffin)

³⁹⁵ A.114 (mummy-cover), A.87 (mummy-cover)

³⁹⁶ A.52, A.148 (outer coffin). Mummy-cover of Ikhy (Vatican Museums)

Formal features

(Winged) scarabs

The winged scarab is normally depicted directly on a yellow background as if the pectoral was lying on the bare skin of the deceased. The core of these compositions is formed by the scarab holding up the solar disk with the forelegs, with a *shen*-ring between the hind legs. This block can be endlessly repeated along the longitudinal axis of the lid, but on the chest it forms the largest composition with the following variations:

- **Scarabs with outstretched wings.** The scarab (sometimes ram-headed)³⁹⁷ outstretches its wings along the chest of the deceased (Fig. 7). Hieroglyphic signs³⁹⁸ (*wedjat*-eyes, *nefer*-sign, *heb*-owl³⁹⁹) or cobras⁴⁰⁰ flank the solar disk (Fig. 17, n° 1). In some occurrences, the area below the scarab is also decorated (*neb*-chest⁴⁰¹, *nub*-sign⁴⁰², *tjet*-sign⁴⁰³, lamp⁴⁰⁴). It is not uncommon to find the depiction of a necklace holding the pectoral in place (Fig. 8)⁴⁰⁵. Sometimes the winged scarab integrates a wider and more complex composition flanked by winged cobras⁴⁰⁶, jackals or heron-headed mummiform gods (Fig. 17, n° 2)⁴⁰⁷. The *shen*-ring held by the hind legs of the insect might be replaced by the *akhet*-sign (Fig. 17, n° 2)⁴⁰⁸.
- **Scarabs.** The scarab sometimes is ram-headed (Fig. 17, n° 3)⁴⁰⁹. Usually, these depictions are quite simple (Fig. 11), but in some occurrences, they might be used as a nuclear block of a wider composition:
 - Scarab flanked by winged cobras and *wedjat*-eyes⁴¹⁰;
 - Scarab flanked by *ba*-birds (Fig. 12)⁴¹¹;

³⁹⁷ A.22 (coffin). Mummy-cover of Nespawershefyt (Fitzwilliam Museum).

³⁹⁸ Coffin of Pahereniset (Museo Egizio in Turin), mummy-cover (Los Angeles County Museum of Art), coffin set of Masaharta (DB 320).

³⁹⁹ Coffin set of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum), coffin (Los Angeles County Museum of Art).

⁴⁰⁰ Coffin of Hori (Museu Nacional in Rio de Janeiro).

⁴⁰¹ Mummy-cover (Los Angeles County Museum of Art).

⁴⁰² Mummy-cover (Michael Carlos Museum).

⁴⁰³ A.68 (mummy-cover).

⁴⁰⁴ Mummy-cover of Nesikhonsu (DB 320).

⁴⁰⁵ A.68 (mummy-cover), A.16 (inner coffin). Mummy-cover (Los Angeles County Museum of Art), mummy-cover of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin), coffin set of Khonsuhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden), mummy-cover of Khonsumose (Museo Egizio in Turin).

⁴⁰⁶ A.22 (coffin), A.109 (inner coffin).

⁴⁰⁷ A.119 (inner coffin).

⁴⁰⁸ A.119 (inner coffin).

⁴⁰⁹ Mummy-cover of Maatkare (DB 320), coffin of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden).

⁴¹⁰ Coffin of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden), mummy-cover of Maatkare (DB 320).

- Scarab (sometimes positioned on a *djed*-pillar) flanked by mummiform gods⁴¹².

The depiction of winged deities other than scarabs is extremely rare. Yet, the chest can be decorated with a vulture⁴¹³, a winged cobra⁴¹⁴, or a winged solar disk⁴¹⁵. A squatted winged goddess may also figure in this area⁴¹⁶.

Heart amulets

During the mid-21st Dynasty, heart amulets became associated with the winged scarab (Fig. 18, n° 2) and later on they became the principal central marker. On the chest, the heart amulet is depicted directly against the floral collar⁴¹⁷ or against yellow background suggesting the skin of the deceased⁴¹⁸. The heart amulet is normally painted blue or black and it is sometimes inscribed with the name of Osiris⁴¹⁹ (Osiris *neb neheh*) as it would be expected in actual amulets (Fig. 15). It is interesting to note that several types of heart amulets are depicted, including the vase heart amulet⁴²⁰, the solar-headed heart⁴²¹, and the seed heart amulet⁴²².

Occasionally the amulet is flanked by lotus flowers⁴²³ but a plethora of other funerary symbols can be found:

- **Heart amulet hanging from the vulture goddess.** Only one depiction is known (Fig. 19, n° 1) but it finds parallels with royal jewellery⁴²⁴, alluding to the idea of rebirth⁴²⁵.
- **Solar-headed heart amulet flanked by cobras.** This composition has important significance as it is first attested in royal contexts, depicting the

⁴¹¹ A.10 (mummy-cover), A.27 (mummy-cover).

⁴¹² Anonymous coffin (British Museum), A.5 (coffin).

⁴¹³ Inner coffin Maatkare (DB 320).

⁴¹⁴ A.74 (outer coffin).

⁴¹⁵ A.74 (mummy-cover).

⁴¹⁶ A.48 (coffin).

⁴¹⁷ A.2 (mummy-cover), A.4 (coffin), A.102 (mummy-cover), A.108 (coffin set), A.147 (coffin set).

⁴¹⁸ A.87 (mummy-cover), A.136 (inner coffin).

⁴¹⁹ A.4 (coffin), A.74 (inner coffin), A.114 (mummy-cover).

⁴²⁰ A.87 (mummy-cover), A.114 (inner coffin and mummy-cover), mummy-cover of Pinedjem II (DB 320).

⁴²¹ A.2 (mummy-cover), A.43 (inner coffin), A.148 (coffin set). Coffin set of Ikhy (Vatican Museums).

⁴²² A.74 (inner coffin), A.136 (inner coffin).

⁴²³ A.52 (inner coffin), A.136 (inner coffin).

⁴²⁴ A pectoral with a similar vulture was found in the mummy of Tutankhamun. See Stierlin 1993, 66-67. This pectoral was actually found on the chest of the king. See Reeves 1990, 112.

⁴²⁵ Mummy-cover of Tentamun (Musée d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne de Marseille).

‘illumination’ of the Pharaoh’s heart⁴²⁶. Despite these royal connotations, when used in coffin decoration⁴²⁷, the composition alludes to the Solar-Osirian union that took place in the underworld (Fig. 14).

- **Heart amulet flanked by the Benu-bird.** In these compositions the heart amulet figures at the epicenter of an elaborate scene involving winged cobras, *wedjat*-eyes, scarabs, *benu*-birds and squatted mummiform gods (Fig. 18, n° 3)⁴²⁸. Occasionally, the amulet is associated with the *akhet*-sign navigating on the solar boat⁴²⁹. Simpler variations of this scene may occur⁴³⁰ but its significance ultimately alludes to the sunrise and solar rebirth, a subject which also deserves the attention of contemporary funerary papyri specifically concerned with the association of the heart amulet with the weighing of the heart and solar rebirth (Plate 3)⁴³¹. It is interesting to point out that a number of heart amulets from this period indeed bear depictions of a Benu-bird, clearly showing that the depictions formerly described are associated with the magical scope of the amulet⁴³².
- **(Winged) scarab rising from the heart amulet.** These are rare and elaborate compositions that seem to have played an important symbolism (Fig. 18, n° 1)⁴³³. The winged scarab alludes to the Solar-Osirian union and to the mysteries related to solar rebirth⁴³⁴. An important group of amulets dating from the late 21st Dynasty bear representations of a scarab, sometimes with versions of Chapter 30 of the Book of the Dead, referring to the weighing of the heart⁴³⁵.

⁴²⁶ Sousa 2007.

⁴²⁷ A.148 (coffin set), coffin set of Ikhy (Vatican Museums).

⁴²⁸ A.114 (inner coffin).

⁴²⁹ A.115 (inner coffin).

⁴³⁰ Mummy-cover of Pinedjem II (DB 320).

⁴³¹ A particular set of funerary papyri explores the role of the heart in the regeneration and rebirth of the deceased. See Sousa 2008.

⁴³² See JE 5280/CG 5235; JE 5738/CG 5231 in Reisner 1907, 4.

⁴³³ A.87 (mummy-cover), A.114 (mummy-cover), A.151 (outer coffin).

⁴³⁴ The scarab might be even crowned with the Osirian *atef*-crown. A.87 (mummy-cover).

⁴³⁵ The following amulets were found in the Tomb of the Priests of Amun: CG 12127, CG 12128 in Reisner 1907, 121-122.

Mummy braces

Mummy braces, or *stolae*, as they are also called, were introduced in coffin decoration during late 21st Dynasty (Fig. 14; Fig. 15). Depictions of the braces allude to the actual objects that were used in the wrappings of contemporary mummies⁴³⁶. These objects were usually made of leather straps dyed red, terminating in tabs of undyed leather, which was also used for bordering the straps⁴³⁷. In the ‘yellow’ corpus, the mummy braces are depicted over the floral-collar, sometimes together with the heart amulet⁴³⁸ or with solar symbols⁴³⁹.

Other adornments

Objects dating from the late 21st Dynasty make use of rare central markers on the chest. Between these symbols, we may find the lotus flower (Fig. 19, n° 3)⁴⁴⁰, the lily-flower (Fig. 5)⁴⁴¹, or even a bull’s head adorned with a solar disk⁴⁴². Counterpoises are occasionally attested, as well⁴⁴³.

SHORT COLLAR

Style and dating

The area between the lappets of the wig is normally decorated with a short collar composed of small horizontal bands attached to a long string, forming a U-shaped necklace⁴⁴⁴.

Formal features

The bands of the short collar display different patterns:

- **Monochromatic bands:** red, yellow and black horizontal bands are displayed alternatively (Fig. 7)⁴⁴⁵;

⁴³⁶ Van Walsem 1997, 117.

⁴³⁷ Van Walsem 1997, 117.

⁴³⁸ A.4 (coffin), A.52 (inner coffin), A.55 (mummy-cover).

⁴³⁹ Coffin set of Khonsuhotep (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek), A.133 (mummy-cover).

⁴⁴⁰ A.10 (outer coffin).

⁴⁴¹ A.132 (outer coffin), A.133 (mummy-cover).

⁴⁴² A.133 (outer coffin of Heretenureb).

⁴⁴³ A.91 (outer coffin).

⁴⁴⁴ Previously, the area comprised between the lappets was decorated with the bands of the larger *usekh*-collar. Short collars with this format are archaeologically attested, sometimes entirely weaved with organic materials. Some of these funerary garlands are made of persea leaves and leader. They are depicted on temple walls too, where they are used as divine offerings.

- **Geometrical or floral bands:** motifs depicting the Persea tree buds (*Mimusops Schimperi*) are prevalent (Fig. 4, n° 11, n° 12). Geometrical patterns (triangles⁴⁴⁶, sometimes used together with circles⁴⁴⁷ - Fig. 4, n° 2, n° 5, n° 15), mandrake fruits and flowers (Fig. 4, n° 14, n° 16)⁴⁴⁸, or a combination of several patterns is also possible to find (Fig. 8)⁴⁴⁹;
- **Feathered bands:** it is an exceptional motif attested especially in later coffins⁴⁵⁰;
- **Vignettes:** also very exceptional is the depiction of small vignettes in this context. Only one example is known, featuring the sacred scarab (Fig. 12)⁴⁵¹.

Short collars may include an exterior band decorated with olive tree leaves (almond-shaped petals)⁴⁵². Occasionally they are depicted as extensions of the large collar, displaying a similar design, including an exterior band of lotus flowers and buds (Fig. 9)⁴⁵³.

Sometimes, the short collar is not depicted at all, leaving the chest undecorated (Fig. 14) highlighting the symbols displayed on the chest: the mummy braces and the heart amulet⁴⁵⁴. In other cases, the large collar may be extended towards this area⁴⁵⁵.

LARGE COLLAR

Style and dating

At first, the floral collar only covered the shoulders and the chest (Figs 6-7). During the mid-21st Dynasty, the collar became large enough to hide most of the forearms,

⁴⁴⁵ coffin set of Maatkare (DB 320), coffin set of Pinedjem II (DB 320), inner coffin of Tauheret (DB 320). A.19 (mummy-cover). Mummy-cover of Herytubekhet (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich), mummy-cover of Khaemopet (Collection Harris).

⁴⁴⁶ A.87 (mummy-cover), A.115 (inner coffin), A.113 (mummy-cover), A.119 (inner coffin).

⁴⁴⁷ A.68 (inner coffin). A.105 (outer coffin). A.114 (mummy-cover).

⁴⁴⁸ A.47 (inner coffin), A.74 (inner coffin), A.110 (mummy-cover), A.123 (inner coffin), A.136 (inner coffin), mummy-cover of Mutemperamun (Museo Egizio in Turin).

⁴⁴⁹ A.18 (coffin), A.136 (mummy-cover). Mummy-cover of Nesipanebu (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden), coffin set (Los Angeles County Museum of Art), Mummy-cover of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden).

⁴⁵⁰ A.131 (outer coffin), A.132 (outer coffin), A.147 (inner coffin, mummy-cover).

⁴⁵¹ A.27 (mummy-cover).

⁴⁵² Inner coffin Masaharta (DB 320), inner coffin of Pinedjem II (DB 320). Inner coffin of Butehamun (Museo Egizio in Turin), coffin of Panebmontu (Louvre Museum), coffin of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum), coffin of Herytubekhet (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich).

⁴⁵³ A.16 (outer coffin), A.18 (inner coffin), A.110 (inner coffin). Coffin set of Tabakmut (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁴⁵⁴ A.52 (outer coffin).

⁴⁵⁵ Inner coffin and mummy-cover of Asetemkhebit (DB 320). A.10 (inner coffin), A.26 (outer coffin, inner coffin), A.123 (outer coffin), A.136 (outer coffin), A.149 (inner coffin).

sometimes extending itself to the abdomen. While the collars got increasingly larger, new patterns were progressively introduced in their decoration. Latter coffins not only make use of a wider sample of patterns, as they combine them in a variety of different ways.

Formal features

Ramesside proto-‘yellow’ coffins display terminals decorated either with a hawk’s head or with a lotus flower⁴⁵⁶. In the ‘yellow’ type these two motifs were eventually merged within the same vignette⁴⁵⁷. Occasionally, other elements can be added to these motifs, such as mummiform gods and offerings⁴⁵⁸. In later coffins, however, the depiction of terminals fell into disuse⁴⁵⁹.

A relatively large sample of floral patterns is used in the decoration of the collars. Given the stylized nature of these motifs, their exact identity remains a difficult task. The comparison with actual floral collars is decisive in this task⁴⁶⁰. Based on these objects we present here some attempts for the identification of the floral motifs knowing that it remains hypothetical and provisional.

- **Lotus flowers and buds** – this motif is typically used in the decoration of the exterior band of the collar⁴⁶¹. Many variations are possible normally combining the lotus flowers (*Nymphaea Coerulea*, blue lotus) with other motifs, such as lotus buds (Fig. 20, n° 6)⁴⁶², poppies (*Papaver rhoeas*)⁴⁶³ or cornflowers

⁴⁵⁶ Coffin set of Sennedjem (TT 1), outer coffin of Khonsu (TT 1), coffin of Tamaket (TT 1).

⁴⁵⁷ Mummy-cover of Pinedjem II (DB 320), A.114 (mummy-cover), A.136 (mummy-cover). Coffin set (Los Angeles County Museum of Art), mummy-cover of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin), mummy-cover of Herytubekhet (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich), mummy-cover of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art), coffin of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum), mummy-cover Nesipaherentahat (Kunsthistorisches Museum).

⁴⁵⁸ A.136 (outer coffin).

⁴⁵⁹ A.2 (mummy-cover), A.10 (outer coffin, inner coffin), A.26 (outer coffin), A.47 (coffin), A.52 (inner coffin), A.55 (mummy-cover), A.74 (coffin set), A.91 (outer coffin), A.102 (outer coffin), A.110 (coffin, mummy-cover), A.142 (outer coffin), A.149 (inner coffin). Coffin of Hori (Museo Egizio in Turin), coffin set of Khonsuhotep (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek).

⁴⁶⁰ A rich collection of floral collars was found in KV 63, an embalmer’s cache, clearly in association with the embalming process. See Sousa 2014b, 197-203. See also the collar from pit 54, where blue faience beads are sewn on to papyrus backing (Reeves 1990, 39).

⁴⁶¹ Note that, exceptionally, the outer band can be decorated with other patterns, such as lotus petals (A.105, outer coffin; A.54, mummy-cover), persea tree fruits (A.123, inner coffin), sticks (mummy-cover - Los Angeles County Museum of Art) or ‘reeds’ (inner coffin of Asetemkhebit – DB 320).

⁴⁶² A.74 (inner coffin).

⁴⁶³ Mummy-cover of Pinedjem II (DB 320), inner coffin of Tauheret (DB 320). A.29 (mummy-cover), A.68 (coffin), A.142 (outer coffin). Coffin set of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum), coffin set of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art), coffin (Los Angeles County Museum of Art), mummy-cover of Khaemopet (Collection Harris), mummy-cover of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin), outer coffin of Pasebakhaienipet (Brooklyn Museum).

(*centaurea depressa* – Fig. 20, n° 1-2)⁴⁶⁴. Yellow circular motifs depicting acacia flowers (*Acacia nilotica*) are also frequently found in this context (Fig. 20, n° 4, 5, 6)⁴⁶⁵. Composite patterns are formed by mixing two secondary motifs: in these cases, the lotus flowers are intertwined with rosettes (*Chrysanthemum* or *Chamomilla* – Fig. 20, n° 5)⁴⁶⁶ or with persea tree flowers (*Mimusops Schimperi* – Fig. 20, n° 3)⁴⁶⁷. The association of the lotus flowers with the ‘reeds’ motif (Fig. 4, n° 1)⁴⁶⁸ is exceptional;

- **Lotus petals** – Bands decorated with multicolored (white, blue and green) lotus petals are frequently used (Fig. 4, n° 8; Fig. 9; Fig. 10; Fig. 13; Fig. 14)⁴⁶⁹.
- **Olive leaves** – Pearl-shaped and monochromatic, these motifs are smaller and positioned next to the headboard (Fig. 7; Fig. 9);
- **Mandrake fruits** – Mandrake fruits (*Mandragora officinarum*) figure on collars as early as the Ramesside Period⁴⁷⁰ (Fig. 4, n° 7). During the 21st Dynasty, the size of these motifs decreases considerably resembling a circle with a small red dot (Fig. 4, n° 14)⁴⁷¹ – See Fig. 6; Fig. 7; Fig. 9;
- **Mandrake flowers (?)** – Dark petals⁴⁷² are often combined with motifs resembling mandrake fruits forming a pearl-beaded motif (Fig. 4, n° 16)⁴⁷³;
- **Persea tree buds** – This is the most common pattern. It is composed of little buds topped with small rounded protuberances (*Mimusops Schimperi*)⁴⁷⁴. The

⁴⁶⁴ See Jacquat, Rogger 2013, 87.

⁴⁶⁵ These motifs are large circles painted in yellow or orange. A.2 (mummy-cover), A.32 (inner coffin), A.54 (inner coffin), A.102 (outer coffin), A.110 (mummy-cover), A.142 (mummy-cover).

⁴⁶⁶ Van Walsem 1997, 116. These motifs are better depicted in the proto-‘yellow’ corpus. See coffin of Tamaket (TT 1), inner coffin of Khonsu (TT 1). In the ‘yellow’ corpus see A.74 (outer and inner coffin).

⁴⁶⁷ A.33 (coffin), A.53 (outer coffin).

⁴⁶⁸ Attested in a single object: anonymous coffin (British Museum).

⁴⁶⁹ Anonymous coffin (British Museum). A.52 (inner coffin), A.110 (coffin), A.149 (outer coffin).

⁴⁷⁰ Coffin set of Sennedjem (TT 1), coffin of Tamaket (TT 1).

⁴⁷¹ A.12 (mummy-cover), A.27 (mummy-cover), A.47 (coffin), A.136 (inner coffin). Coffin set of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum), outer coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art), mummy-cover of Khaemopet (Collection Harris), mummy-cover of Herytubekhet (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich), coffin set (Los Angeles County Museum of Art), mummy-cover of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden), mummy-cover of Mutemperamun (Museo Egizio in Turin).

⁴⁷² A.12 (mummy-cover), A.27 (mummy-cover), A.47 (coffin), A.136 (inner coffin). Coffin set (Los Angeles County Museum of Art), mummy-cover of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden), mummy-cover of Mutemperamun (Museo Egizio in Turin).

⁴⁷³ Coffin set of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum).

⁴⁷⁴ Van Walsem 1997, 116. Inner coffin of Tauheret (DB 320), inner coffin of Asetemkhebit (DB 320). A2 (mummy-cover), A.52 (inner coffin), A.74 (inner coffin), A.123 (inner coffin), A.142 (outer coffin and mummy-cover), A.149 (outer coffin). Mummy-cover of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum), mummy-cover of Khaemopet (Collection Harris), mummy-cover of Herytubekhet (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich).

buds are multicolored presenting three transversal sections (Fig. 4, n° 11, 12)⁴⁷⁵. These motifs are often intertwined with leaves, probably from olive trees (Fig. 4, n° 13). In earlier coffins, this pattern is combined with others, forming a variety of sequences (Fig. 6; Fig. 7; Fig. 8). In later coffins, this pattern is often repeated forming imposing and monotonous arrangements (Fig. 10; Fig. 13; Fig. 14);

- **Buds on reeds** – It is composed of vertical buds positioned at a regular distance from each other. Between the buds, it is visible the background of the floral collar, the reeds where the floral motifs were attached to (Fig. 4, n° 1). This pattern became common from the mid-21st Dynasty onwards (Fig. 9)⁴⁷⁶.
- **Checkerboard pattern** – this motif is composed of small squares painted with alternating colors (green, black, red or white – Fig. 4, n° 4)⁴⁷⁷. These patterns suggest the funerary covers made out of organic materials, such as papyrus or reeds. The dots in the rectangles denote the holes of the fastening strings, while the vertical and horizontal lines indicate the edges and ribs of the individual stem, and strings crossing them⁴⁷⁸. It is a pattern typically found during the second half of the 21st Dynasty (Fig. 9; Fig. 10; Fig. 14; Fig. 15);
- **Geometrical motifs** – It is frequent to detect bands decorated with triangles (Fig. 4, n° 5)⁴⁷⁹ or circles (Fig. 4, n° 2)⁴⁸⁰. Sometimes both motifs are combined (Fig. 4, n° 15)⁴⁸¹. These motifs possibly allude to seeds or beads (Fig. 8)⁴⁸².

The number of bands involved in these collars is highly variable: from 4 (in the earliest coffins) up to 16 (in the latest coffins). Any combination of patterns is possible to find:

⁴⁷⁵ Mummy-cover of Pinedjem II (DB 320). A.27 (mummy-cover), A.68 (coffin), A.136 (outer coffin). Coffin of Amenemhat (Museo Arqueologico Nacional de Madrid), coffin set (Los Angeles County Museum of Art), inner coffin of Khonsu (TT 1), coffin set of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art), mummy-cover of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin), outer coffin of Pasebakhaienipet (Brooklyn Museum), mummy-cover of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden).

⁴⁷⁶ Inner coffin of Asetemkhebit (DB 320). A.33 (coffin), A.102 (outer coffin), A.110 (coffin set), A.142 (outer coffin). Anonymous coffin (British Museum).

⁴⁷⁷ A.2 (mummy-cover), A.52 (inner coffin), A.123 (inner coffin), A.110 (coffin), A.132 (outer coffin), A.149 (outer coffin).

⁴⁷⁸ Van Walsem 1997, 116. A.123 (inner coffin),

⁴⁷⁹ Mummy-cover of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art), mummy-cover of Pinedjem II (DB 320), outer coffin of Pasebakhaienipet (Brooklyn Museum).

⁴⁸⁰ A.123 (inner coffin).

⁴⁸¹ Mummy-cover of Tauheret (DB 320). A.20 (mummy-cover), A.68 (coffin), A.136 (outer coffin). Coffin set (Los Angeles County Museum of Art), inner coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art), mummy-cover of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin), coffin set of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden), coffin of Amenemhat (Museo Arqueologico Nacional de Madrid).

⁴⁸² Floral collars actually included faience beads, sometimes with different collars (Floral collar from the embalming cache of Tutankhamun, KV 54).

from only two patterns repeatedly reproduced along the collar⁴⁸³ to alternating sequences of five or six patterns.

Mummy-covers dating from the late Ramesside Period and early 21st Dynasty normally show a large red strap bounding the large floral collar⁴⁸⁴. Probably not accidentally, in the embalming cache of Tutankhamun (KV 54), floral collars were found actually showing a red cloth binding the edges⁴⁸⁵.

GENERAL INTERPRETATION

Traditionally, the decoration of the anthropoid coffins was consistently limited to the visible ornaments of the mummy: mask, collar, bead girdle⁴⁸⁶. The depiction of the hands and forearms represents a break with this scheme, as these attributes were actually not visible on mummies and they were used in coffin decoration to compose a 'statue' of the deceased, i.e., a monumental 'portrait' defining his/her divine status.

The position of the hands in particular shifts the status of the deceased from an inert mummified god into a god empowered with royal status. The clenched hand (D 49) was associated with concepts related to the exhibition of power such as 'grasp' or 'seize' but also to the gesture of praise and rejoicing in the so-called *henu*-gesture⁴⁸⁷. In this context, it seems plausible that both meanings were associated with fists, which in the 'yellow' type remained a strict male prerogative. The symbols grasped by the deceased relate to the Osirian imaginary and defined him as a justified god. The feather, in particular, is allusive to Maat and refers to the weighing of the heart.

The open hands are depicted in female coffins, perhaps with Hathoric meaning, resembling the ivory clappers used in the rituals of this goddess⁴⁸⁸. Another important female gender-marker is the depiction of breasts. The nipples are always rendered as rosettes. This motif was used in Ramesside sculpture with erotic significance⁴⁸⁹ but it had long been used with funerary meaning, as gilded bronze rosettes were found sewn on a dark linen cloth unfolded over the funerary shrines of Tutankhamun suggesting the

⁴⁸³ A.27 (mummy-cover), A.136 (outer coffin). Outer coffin of Tabakmut (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁴⁸⁴ Mummy-cover of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus), mummy-cover of Hori (Kestner Museum), mummy-cover of Herytubekhet (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich).

⁴⁸⁵ Metropolitan Museum of Art (09.184.216, 09.184.214–216, 09.184.214, 09.184.215).

⁴⁸⁶ Hayes 1953, 310-311.

⁴⁸⁷ Wilkinson 1992, 55.

⁴⁸⁸ Taylor 2017, 544.

⁴⁸⁹ Torso of Merytamun (Cairo Egyptian Museum, JE 31413). See Saleh, Sourouzian 1987, N° 208

starry sky⁴⁹⁰. With the same meaning, rosettes are painted over the funeral leather canopy of Asetemkhebit found in DB 320⁴⁹¹. In this context, rosettes have Hathoric meaning related to regeneration and rebirth and might have been used in coffin decoration to display the divine status of women suggesting their identification with the goddess of the necropolis that presided over regeneration, sexuality and rebirth, just in the same way that the depiction of the divine beards suggested the identification between men and Osiris.

Gender-markers play an important role in the ‘yellow’ corpus as they alluded to the social status of men and women in the priesthood of Amun. The perception of status involved in these symbols explains some of the abnormal uses of these gender-markers. In the burial assemblage of Maatkare, open hands are only found on the mummy-cover, while her coffins display fists. Moreover, she is also not depicted with breasts. The omission of these important female gender-markers in her coffins is a powerful statement of her status. Other female coffins are known to have omitted the depiction of breasts⁴⁹². In most of these situations, the absence of breasts might have resulted from the reuse of male coffins. However, it is possible that the decision regarding the exclusion of this motif when the coffin set was recycled may have been intentional⁴⁹³. As to the depiction of forearms, it is clearly rooted in the ‘festive dress’ type but it is reinterpreted after the royal archetypes, depicting the deceased as an active and empowered god, able to perform rituals and to move freely in the netherworld. Some of the bracelets depict motifs borrowed from the decoration of actual funerary objects while others allude to the Solar-Osirian mysteries and to the deification of the deceased. Feathers and linen straps are often found on the arms as subtle allusions to the *rishi* and ‘festive dress’ type.

On the chest, a pectoral alludes to the heart, to the judgement of the dead and to his/her subsequent rebirth. Until the mid-21st Dynasty, the most common pectoral used in this area was a (winged) scarab probably alluding to the heart scarab, which was supposed to grant a positive outcome in the weighing of the heart and the awakening of the heart, identifying the awoken deceased with the rising sun, as the scarab represents Khepri, referring to the rebirth of the sun god⁴⁹⁴. These pectorals were probably used as markers

⁴⁹⁰ Reeves 1990, 101.

⁴⁹¹ Goff 1979, fig. 55-57

⁴⁹² A.18 (coffin), A.19 (coffin, mummy-cover), A.52 (inner coffin), A.54 (coffin set).

⁴⁹³ A.136 (outer coffin).

⁴⁹⁴ Van Walsem 1997, 149. Goff 1979, 209-220.

for the recitation of chapters 26-30 of the Book of the Dead⁴⁹⁵. In fact, the vignettes of these texts are clear about the use of these pectorals in the rituals related to the Opening of the Mouth.

The use of the heart amulet in this context is slightly later being attested in objects dating from the mid-21st Dynasty onwards. These objects have to be related to the scenes of the weighing of the heart painted on the sides, where the deceased receives this amulet as the result of a positive outcome obtained in the weighing of the heart. In these vignettes the deceased raises his/her arms grasping feathers in a gesture of joy⁴⁹⁶ making very clear that, when used in this context, the heart amulet is seen as a reward given by the court of Osiris designating the deceased as a justified one⁴⁹⁷.

The decorative scheme of the upper section thus included a powerful set of symbols that emulated amulets supposed to play an important role in the funerary rituals. Given this association, it is likely that when those rituals were performed, the lid would be raised in upright position, as we see in Theban tomb paintings dating from the Ramesside Period.

The focal point of the upper section is the chest and in many objects it is shown unwrapped, allowing to seeing the bare skin of the deceased⁴⁹⁸. The yellow background of the scenes depicted in this area is meant to suggest the skin of the deceased, literally gleaming with the divine light irradiating from his/her body. The same meaning must have had the yellow background on the forearms, but this area was normally decorated with bracelets before disappearing under the large floral collars.

The chest thus irradiated gleaming light and through this effect, the frontiers between the corpse and the coffin were blurred with the body of the deceased gradually emerging behind the layers of figurative elements depicted on the coffin. The amulets and pectorals adorning the chest, supposed to be included in the decoration of the mummy,

⁴⁹⁵ Sousa 2011.

⁴⁹⁶ This gesture is often depicted in mythological papyri dating from the 21st Dynasty. Mythological Papyrus of Khonsumes (Kunsthistorisches Museum). See Piankoff Rambova 1955, pl. 147. Papyrus of Nesipakachuti (E 17401, Louvre Museum) in Piankoff Rambova 1955, pl. 104 and Papyrus Nesitanebetui (SR 40017, Cairo Egyptian Museum). The same gesture is also depicted on the 21st Dynasty coffins, where this theme is very common. A.16 (inner coffin), A.93 (coffin), A.114 (inner coffin), A.115 (inner coffin).

⁴⁹⁷ In the vignettes of the weighing of the heart, the presentation of the deceased to the god Osiris is the natural consequence of a positive outcome of that procedure. Usually, the amulet is given to the deceased before the scene of the adoration of Osiris. Although couples can be depicted, men are always those who wear that amulet. This is the case of the tomb of Rai and his wife, Nebetaui, (TT 255) where the amulet seems to be connected with the weighing of the heart.

⁴⁹⁸ A.27 (mummy-cover), A.136 (inner coffin and mummy-cover). Upper section of the coffin of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus).

are thus displayed as if worn by a living. Given this context, we should understand the exact nature of the iconographic arrangements displayed around these pectorals, which are mainly composed of *wedjat*-eyes, *nefer*, and *neb*-signs⁴⁹⁹. Compositions involving (winged) *iaret*-cobras are also common⁵⁰⁰. *Wedjat*-eyes and *iaret*-cobras can also be found on the breasts themselves⁵⁰¹. At first sight, this prolific depiction of iconographic compositions would seem to result from a particular mindset described in the Egyptological literature as *horror vacui*⁵⁰², which would be responsible for filling in the available space with randomly chosen signs. However, we believe this type of compositions is far more specific, alluding to ritual tattoos. In fact, this same repertoire of symbols has been recently found in a tattooed mummy from Deir el-Medina⁵⁰³. The studies carried out by Anne Austin and Cédric Gobeil on the torso and arms of one single woman revealed 30 small tattoos, some of them difficult to perceive. The most prevalent motifs are the *iaret*-cobras and the *wedjat*-eyes, sometimes combined with *nefer*-signs forming exactly the same hieroglyphic compositions detected in coffin decoration (Fig. 7; Fig. 8; Fig. 12; Fig. 17, n° 2, n° 3). Whether this practice was reserved for special individuals or widespread is unknown. Tattoos are difficult to perceive on a mummified body without proper imaging tools and it is possible that this type of evidence has remained undetected so far. The authors of this study suggest that tattoos played an important role in the life of this particular woman, both enhancing her ability to perform magical rituals and her social status within the community itself⁵⁰⁴. The same meaning would be expected to be associated with the small compositions of symbols ‘tattooed’ on the chest, forearms, hands, and breasts of the deceased depicted in the ‘yellow’ coffins, empowering them with magical strength and knowledge. In this way, the ‘yellow’ coffin show the gleaming (tattooed) torso of the deceased adorned with pectorals, amulets, bracelets, mummy braces and floral collars as if the linen wrappings had been completely removed.

As to the floral collars – both the large and the short collars – they reproduce the shape and composition of the actual objects used during the New Kingdom. Due to their

⁴⁹⁹ Outer coffin of Masaharta (DB 320). Mummy-cover of Khaemopet (Collection Harris), outer coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art), coffin of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum).

⁵⁰⁰ Coffin of Amenemhat (Museo Arqueológico Nacional de Madrid), coffin of Hori (Museu Nacional in Rio de Janeiro), mummy-cover of Khonsumose (Museo Egizio in Turin),

⁵⁰¹ Coffin set of Tabaekkhonsu (Kunsthistorisches Museum)

⁵⁰² Niwiński 1988, 99.

⁵⁰³ Austin, Gobeil 2017.

⁵⁰⁴ Austin, Gobeil 2017.

magical powers, they were used in the funerary rites themselves⁵⁰⁵, playing a very important role during mummification. The boldness of this role is detected in the creation of embalming caches, particularly in the Valley of the Kings, where these objects were kept, together with other waste materials used during royal mummification.

In the embalming cache of Tutankhamun (KV 54), floral collars were found remarkably well preserved. The examination of these objects revealed how they were crafted: alternating rows of flower petals and buds, leaves, berries, and blue faience beads were sewn to a papyrus backing⁵⁰⁶. Olive leaves, cornflowers, and poppies are some of the species used in the Tutankhamun collars.

A large collection of floral collars was uncovered in another important embalming cache (KV 63), also dating from the late 18th Dynasty⁵⁰⁷. Some of these collars used gold leaves intertwined with petals. A wide range of species had been used, including persea tree flowers.

It is also important to note that floral motifs and patterns had a widespread use in material funerary culture and can be seen in the decoration of virtually any funerary object or building⁵⁰⁸. In fact, the patterns used in the decoration of the floral collars depicted in the coffins are similar to those depicted in the friezes used in tomb decoration of the Theban necropolis. In the Tomb of Amenemheb (TT 278) the scenes painted on the walls are bounded by block friezes and monochromatic bands⁵⁰⁹. Floral bands adorn the upper edges featuring lotus petals⁵¹⁰, rosettes, bunches of grapes and persea tree flowers. Similar uses of floral friezes can be seen in the decoration of tomb ceilings⁵¹¹. All in all, these floral motifs allude to the protection provided by the heavenly mother goddess and they were used in coffin decoration with the same meaning, assimilating the lid with the ceiling of the burial chamber. Moreover, also in temple context, it is possible to detect the same alternate sequences of different floral patterns (rosacea, alternating lotus flowers, and buds, petals) in painted ceilings⁵¹², alluding to the same Hathoric imaginary. The association between the funerary manifestation of Hathor and these plants is clearly suggested in the vignettes of the

⁵⁰⁵ Sousa 2014b, 197.

⁵⁰⁶ Metropolitan Museum of Art (09.184.216, 09.184.214–216, 09.184.214, 09.184.215).

⁵⁰⁷ Sousa 2014b, 202.

⁵⁰⁸ Dodson, Ikram 2008, 126.

⁵⁰⁹ Tomb of Amen-heb (D'Abbadie 1954, Pl. XXVI). Tomb of Hay (Valbelle 1975, 7).

⁵¹⁰ Tomb of Userhat (TT 51).

⁵¹¹ Tomb of Nefer-hotep (Wild 1979, Pl. 2).

⁵¹² Hölscher 1951, Pl. 24.

Book of the Dead featuring the shrine of the divine cow on the Theban hill surrounded by a forest of papyrus, lotus, and lily-flowers (Plates 5-6).

In generic terms the flowers involved in the floral collars are life-giving emblems alluding to the rebirth provided by the heavenly mother, the lotus especially being a symbol of resurrection⁵¹³. However, some of the fruits and flowers used in these collars might have played a specific role, surely related to their healing properties. Some of these plants, such as the blue lotus or the mandrake are known to be hallucinogenic and it is possible that they were used during mummification with particular ‘healing’ purposes⁵¹⁴.

The growing importance of these collars in the decoration of the coffin is detected in the increasingly larger size achieved by these objects. The role associated with these garlands is close to that of the floral headbands. The same names were used indifferently to both categories of objects (*mah* and *wahu*)⁵¹⁵ and they were both associated with the ritual of the ‘crown of justification’ alluded to in Chapter 19 of the Book of the Dead. In later coffins, the size of the collars greatly extended the upper section which became the longest area of the lid.

The introduction of mummy braces, or stola, during the late 21st Dynasty, is consistent with this trend. The earliest example of mummy braces actually found on a mummy dates from the reign of Ramses XI but they were often used on the mummies from the Tomb of the Priests of Amun (Bab el-Gasus) providing an excellent dating criterion for mummies when the ruler is named⁵¹⁶. These red mummy braces probably derive from ritual scarves used in association with the Osirian cult in Abydos⁵¹⁷. Ritual scarves are attested during the Old Kingdom, when they were used as a symbol of rejoicing and protection⁵¹⁸. However, from the iconographic standpoint, this motif is always used in association with mummiform deities, such as Amun, Min, Ptah or Osiris⁵¹⁹. The origin of these objects seems to be related to temple’s cult where they were used on divine images⁵²⁰. A peculiar representation in this respect is the Hathor cow advancing from

⁵¹³ Van Walsem 1997, 116.

⁵¹⁴ Jacquat, Rogger 2013, 84-88.

⁵¹⁵ Jacquat, Rogger 2013, 85.

⁵¹⁶ Van Walsem 1997, 117.

⁵¹⁷ Kaper 2017, 308.

⁵¹⁸ Brovarski 2017, 269-273.

⁵¹⁹ Van Walsem 1997, 119. This motif dates back to the beginning of the 12th Dynasty.

⁵²⁰ Prada 2017, 379.

the necropolis cliffs with a crossed or ‘parallel’ (not crossed) red *stola*, instead of the usual *menat* around its neck⁵²¹.

Another interpretation of the *stola* “may be deduced from the shape it rather often takes, approximating to the *sa*-sign, meaning ‘guard’ or ‘protect’, which seems to be a mat used by herdsman around their necks, obliquely crossing the chest. It may be significant that in two-dimensional scenes the figures of kings and deities are often accompanied by the inscription *sa ha ef*, ‘protection behind him’, which corresponds exactly to the manner in which the *sa* is carried by herdsman.

Regardless of its origin, the stylized object was finally transposed, now as leather straps, onto real human mummies (enhancing their divinity), and represented also on the lids of coffins⁵²². In other words, when depicted in the coffin, the *stola* conferred to the deceased a bolder divine status bolder⁵²³, an aspect that combined with the increasingly larger floral collar alluded again to the manifestation of the deceased as a chthonian god, a phenomenon that would eventually lead to the adoption of other models of coffins during the 22nd Dynasty.

⁵²¹ This likely finds its precursor in the frequent representations in Ramesside tombs of the Anubis jackal with a crossing or a parallel *stola* around its neck. In Van Walsem 1997, 117.

⁵²² Van Walsem 1997, 119.

⁵²³ Van Walsem 1997, 349.



Fig. 6 – Headboard and upper section. Coffin of Hori (Kestner Museum)

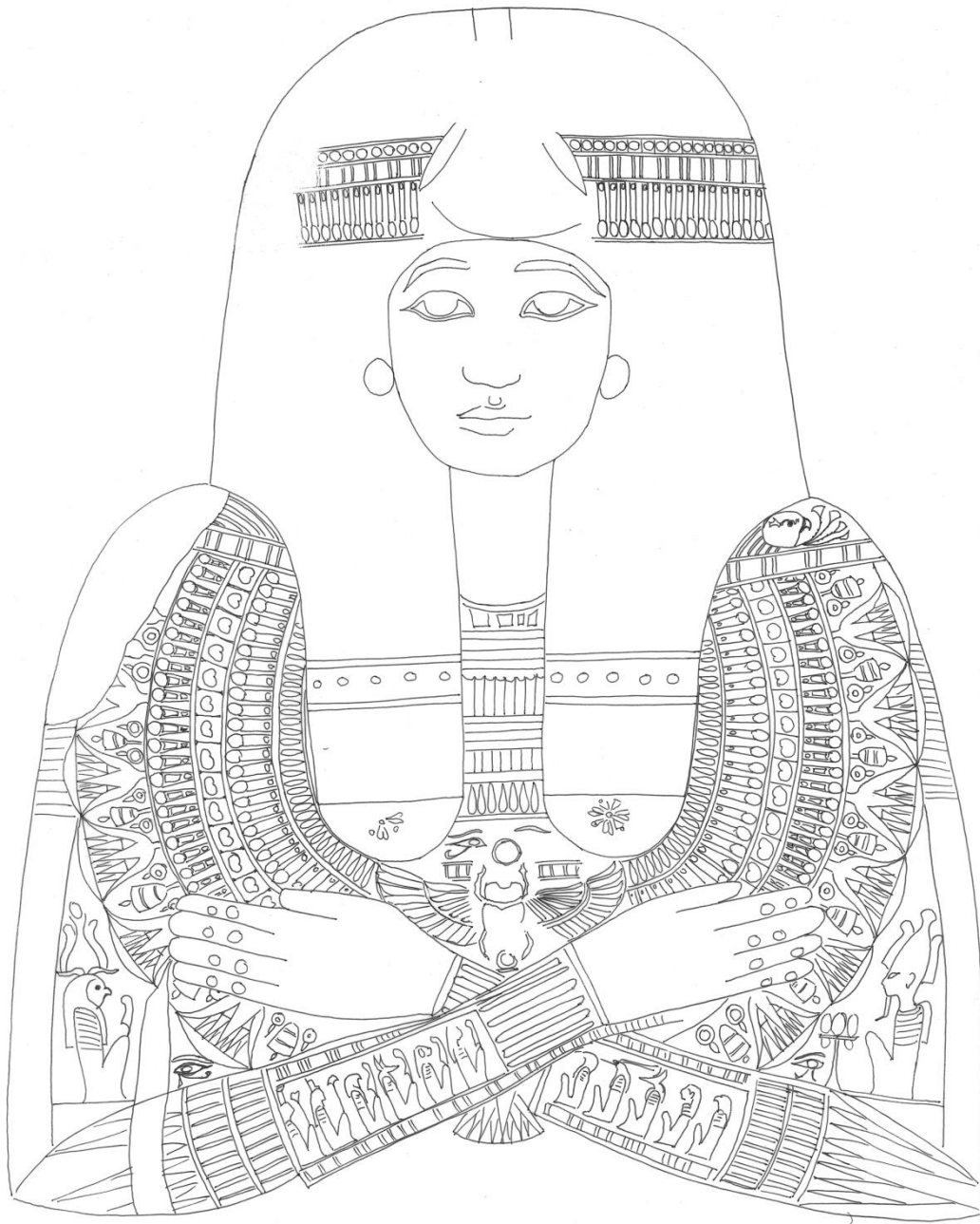


Fig. 7 – Headboard and upper section. Coffin of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus)



Fig. 8 – Headboard and upper section. Coffin (A.22)

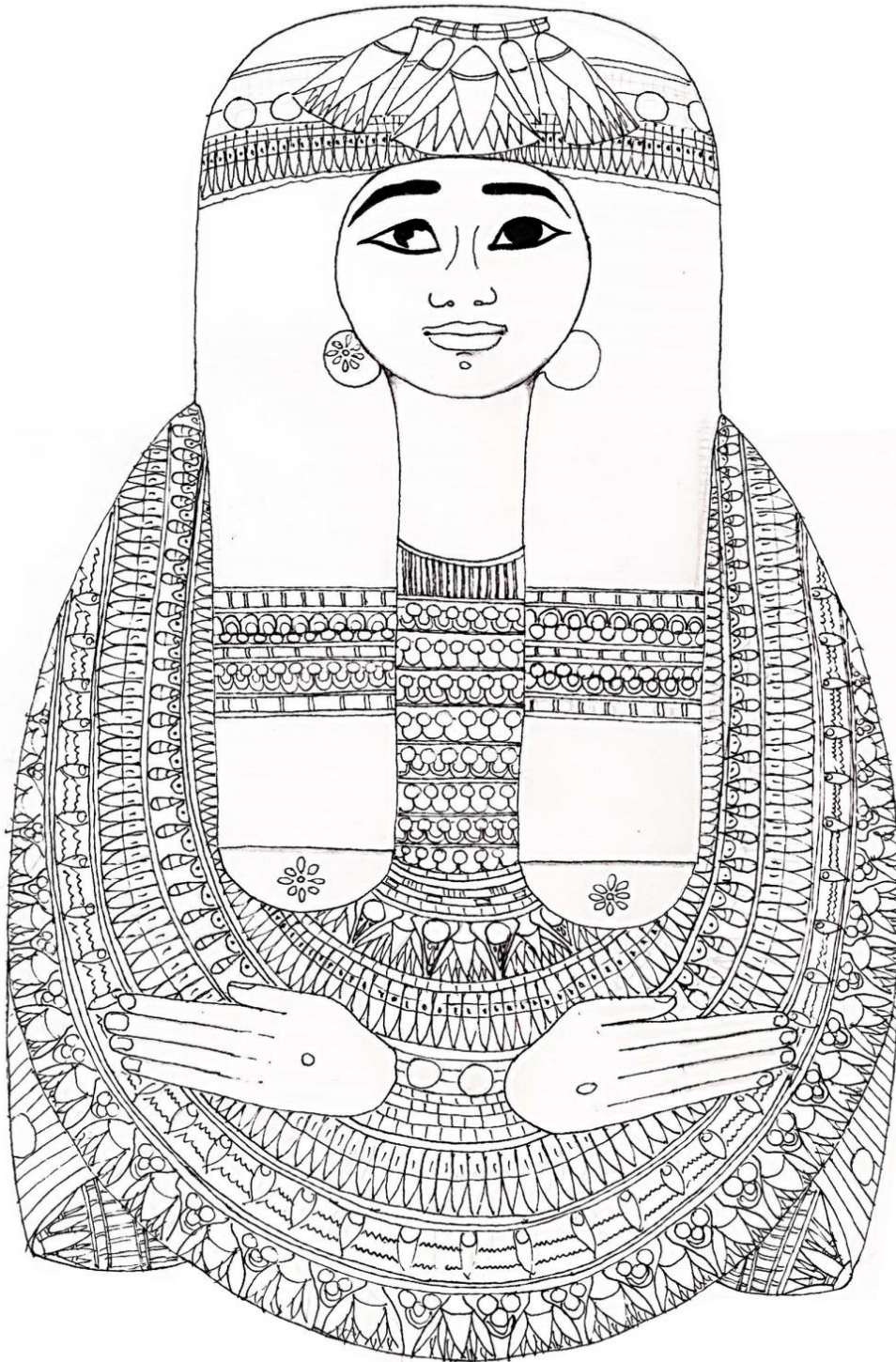


Fig. 9 – Headboard and upper section. Coffin (A.110)

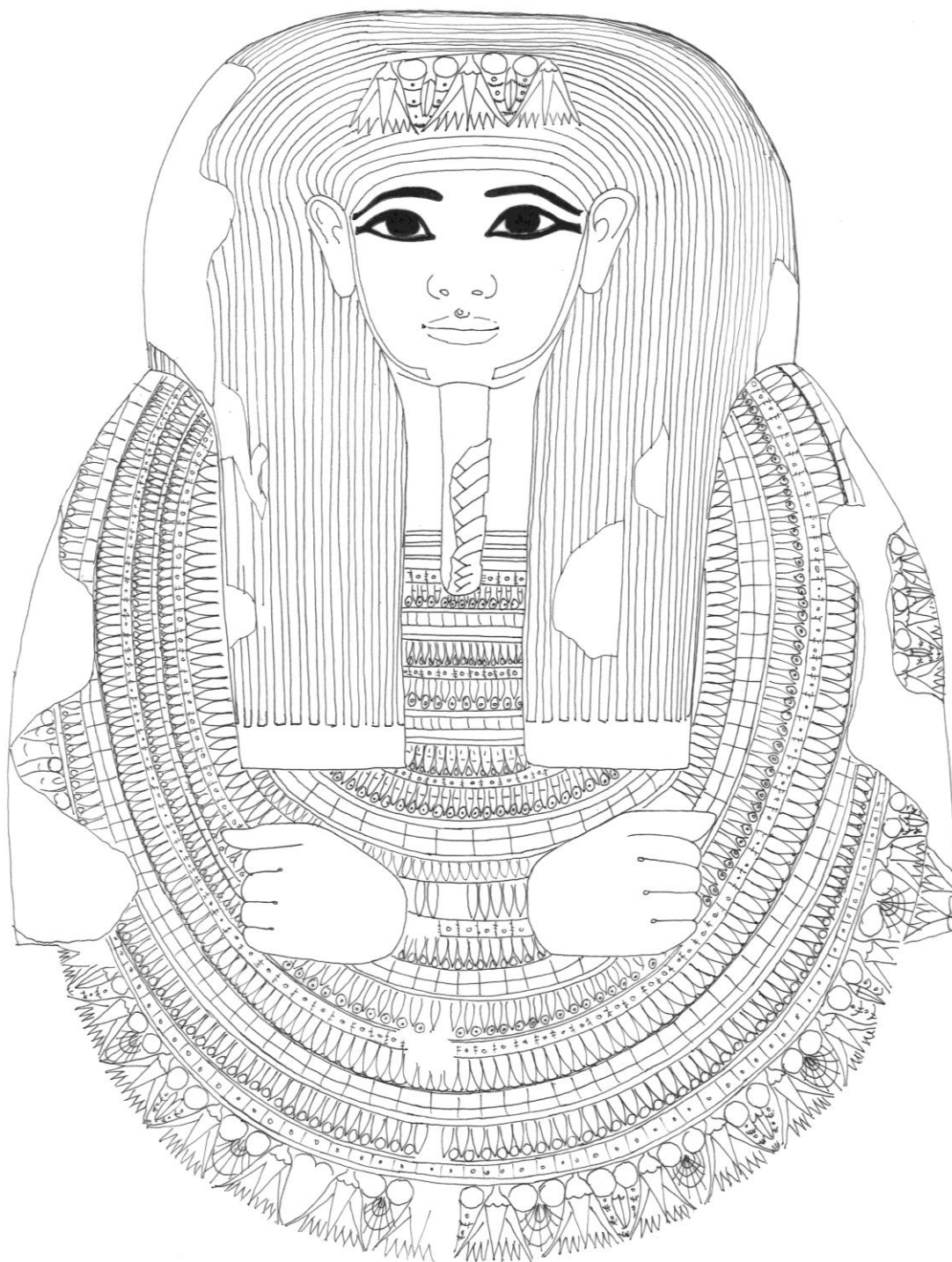


Fig. 10 – Headboard and upper section. Coffin (A.56)



Fig. 11 – Headboard and upper section. Mummy-cover (A.136)

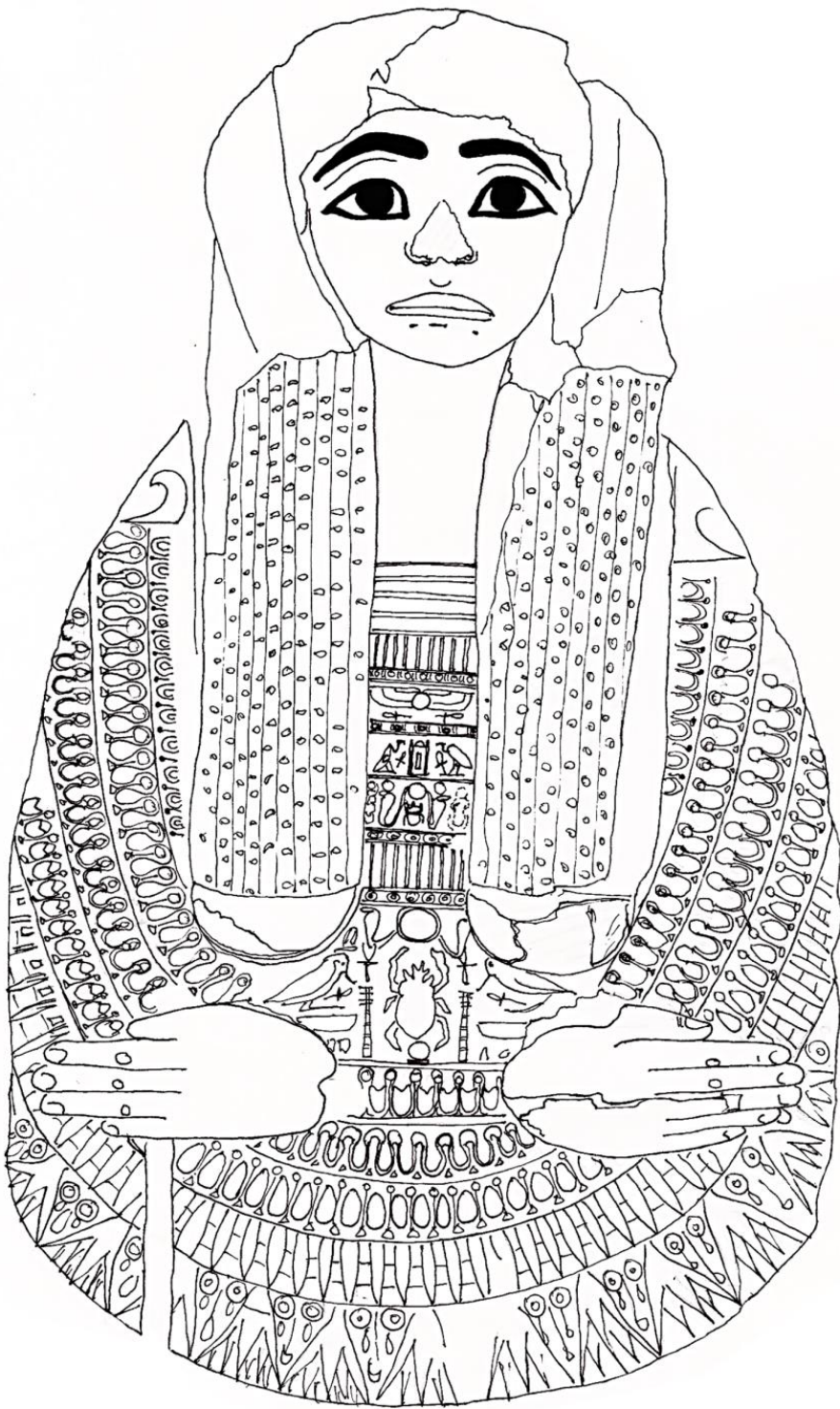


Fig. 12 – Headboard and upper section. Mummy-cover (A.27)

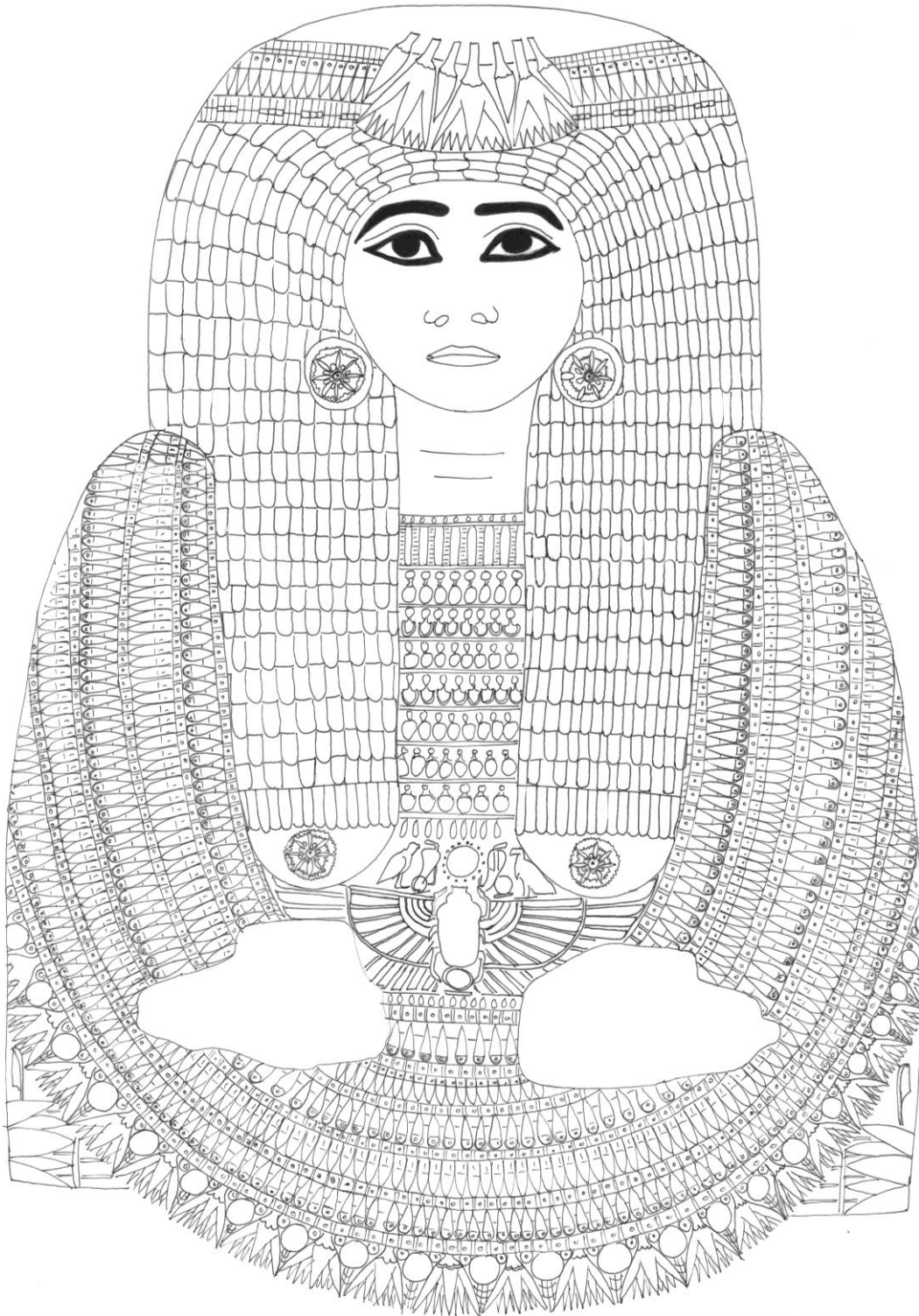


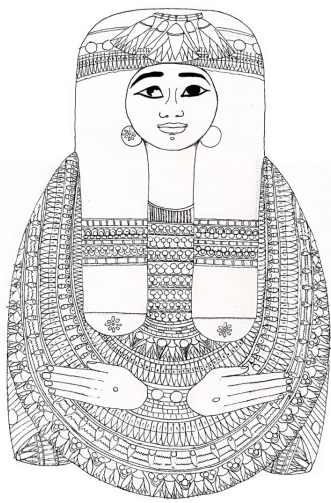
Fig. 13 – Headboard and upper section. Inner coffin (A.15)



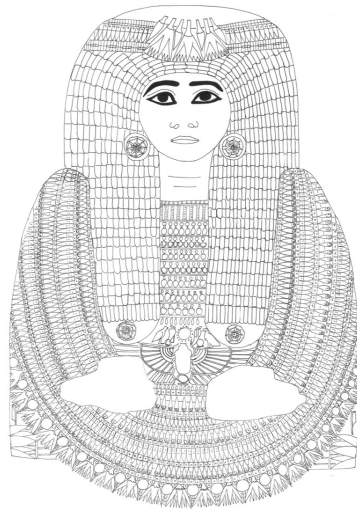
Fig. 14 – Headboard and upper section. Outer coffin (A.52)



Fig. 15 – Headboard and upper section. Coffin (A.4)



1



2



3

Fig. 16 – Types of central markers

- (1) Without central marker
- (2) Scarab or heart amulet
- (3) Mummy braces

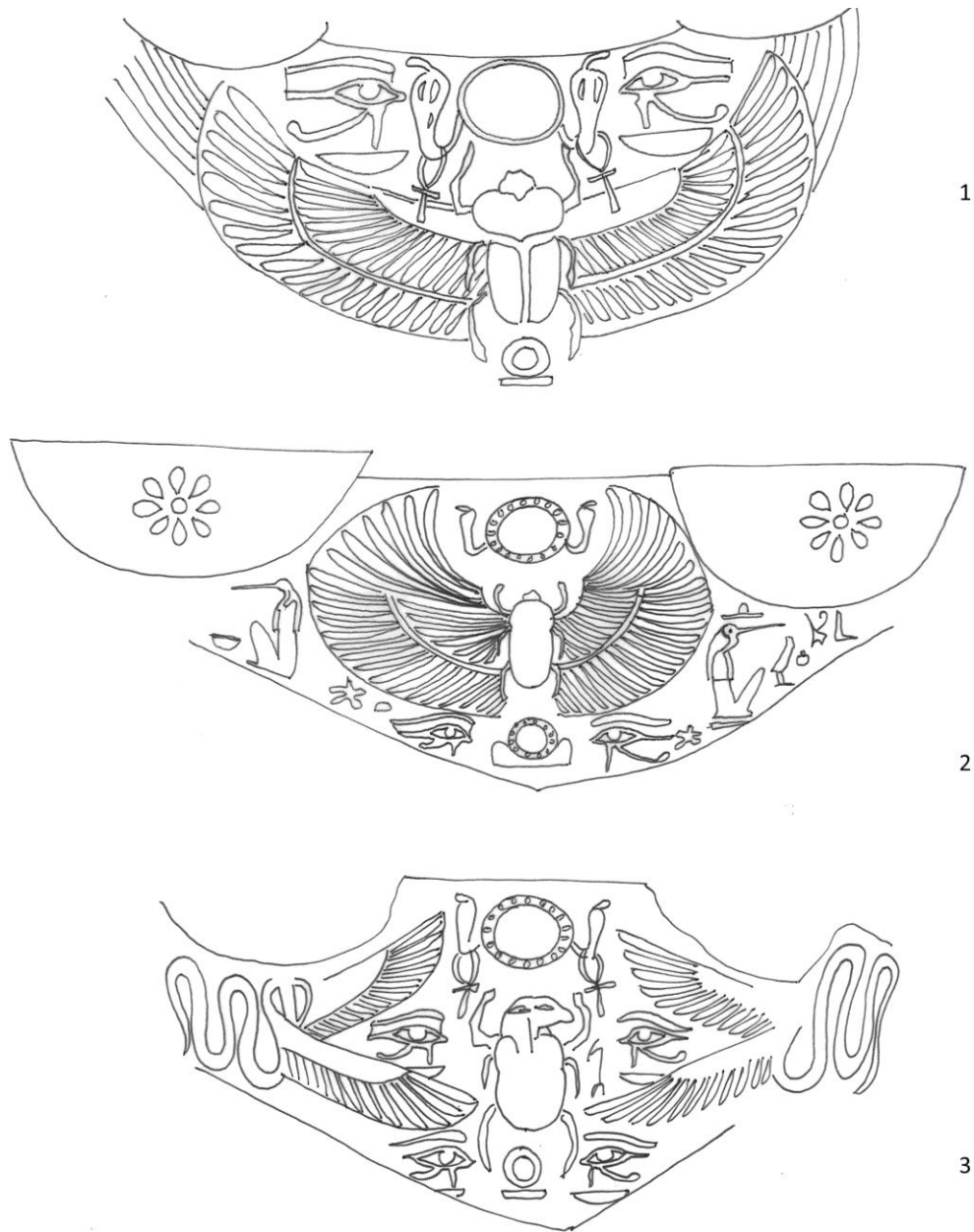
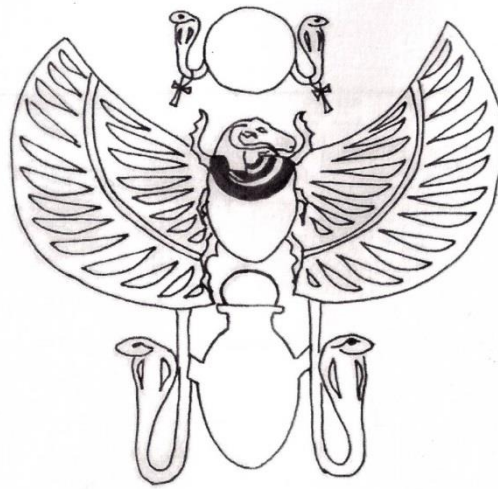


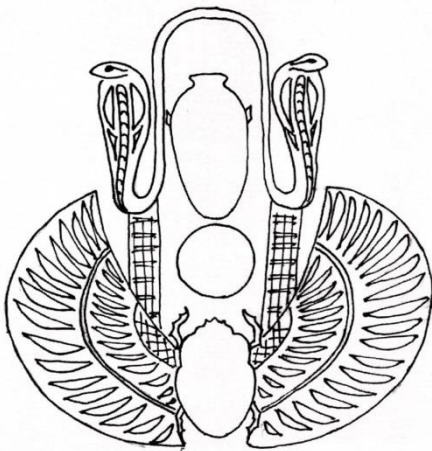
Fig. 17 – Central marker: (Winged) scarabs.

- (1) Mummy-cover of Nesyamun (Leeds Museum)
- (2) Inner coffin (A.119)

- (3) Mummy-cover of Maatkare (DB 320)



1



2



3

Fig. 18 – Central marker: Winged scarabs and heart amulets

- (1) Mummy-cover (A.114)
- (2) Coffin of Khonsumose (Museo Egizio in Turin)
- (3) Mummy-cover (A.87)

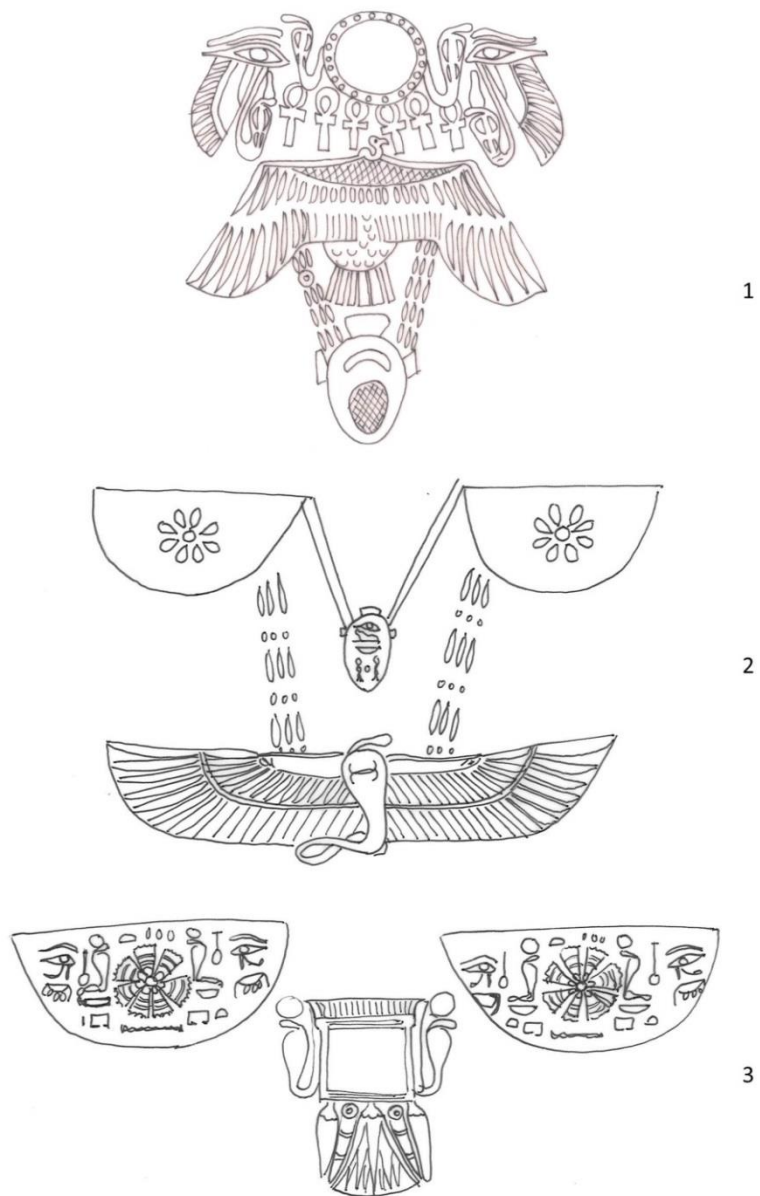


Fig. 19 – Central marker: Heart amulets and other motifs

- (1) Mummy-cover of Tentamun (Musée d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne de Marseille)
- (2) Inner coffin (A.74)
- (3) Outer coffin (A.10)

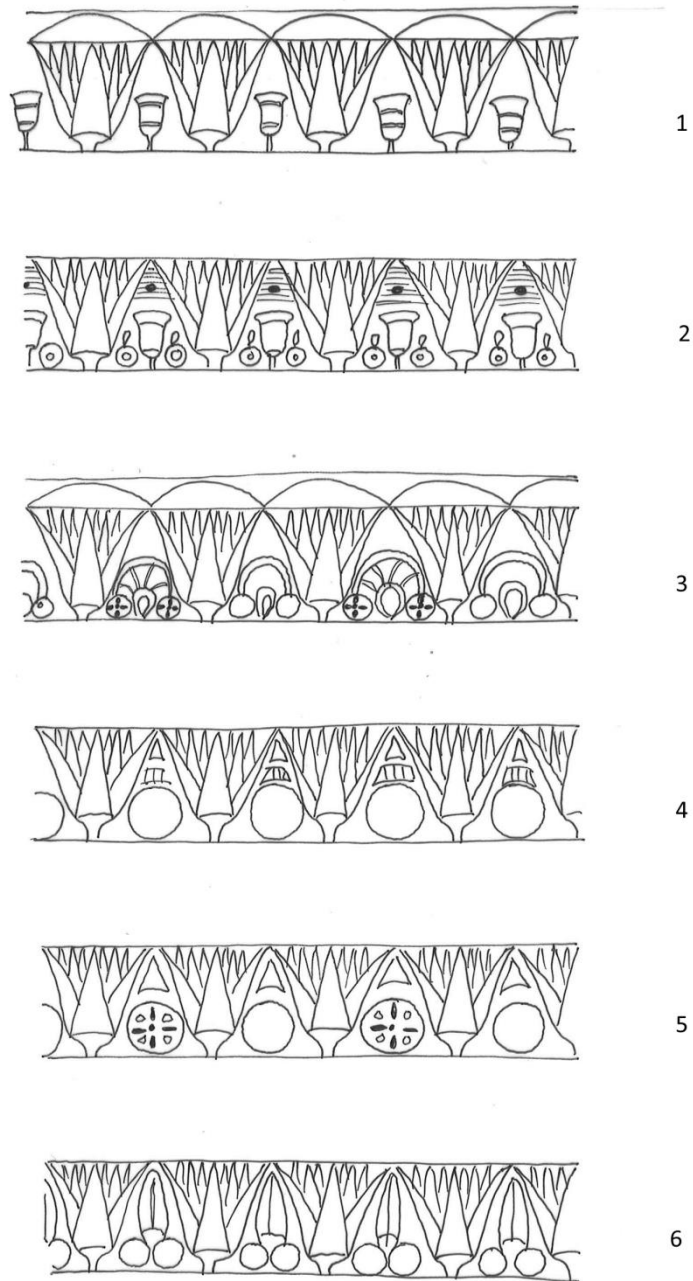


Fig. 20 – Patterns with lotus flowers.

- (1) Lotus flowers intertwined with cornflowers
- (2) Lotus flowers intertwined with cornflowers and acacia flowers
- (3) Lotus flowers intertwined with persea tree flowers, acacia flowers and rosettes
- (4) Lotus flowers intertwined with acacia flowers
- (5) Lotus flowers intertwined with rosettes and acacia flowers
- (6) Lotus flowers intertwined with lotus buds and acacia flowers

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CHAPTER IV – HEAVENLY MOTHER: THE CENTRAL PANEL

From the formal standpoint, the central panel is the most elaborated composition of the ‘yellow’ type, playing a decisive role in the layout and in the symbolism of the coffin as a whole. In the proto-‘yellow’ type, the panel was composed by a simple image of the winged goddess Nut (Fig. 21) to which a solar pectoral was added (Fig. 22)⁵²⁴. The central panel thus results from associating the heavenly mother goddess with her own son, the new-born sun god.

BASIC SCHEME

Style and dating

The simplest compositions display two registers, forming what we call the ‘basic scheme’ (Figs. 23-26). This layout is typical of the late Ramesside Period and the first half of the 21st Dynasty. These compositions display lower density of decoration and show the naturalistic softness of the Ramesside style. When depicted, the deceased wears white festive garments (Fig. 25; Fig. 28).

The basic scheme is also used during the late 21st Dynasty when workshops sought for an archaizing style⁵²⁵. However, the style of these later objects is highly schematic and the density of the composition is much heavier, displaying a high number of liminal elements⁵²⁶. When is depicted, the deceased wears dark and tight clothes.

Formal features

Typically, the basic scheme displays two registers. The first register consists in a symmetrical composition flanking a nuclear block, usually a pectoral, an amulet or a (winged) scarab. The symmetrical composition involves centripetal and/or centrifugal blocks, each one of them using a repertoire of its own. The second register displays the winged goddess with U-shaped wings. Secondary compositions can be found above and below the wings of the goddess. This simple layout is sketched in the following scheme:

⁵²⁴ Originally this pectoral was depicted in the upper section but in the proto-‘yellow’ type it was integrated into the central panel, perhaps with the purpose of associating the solar significance of this object with the winged goddess. This transition can be followed in the proto-‘yellow’ corpus, comparing the coffin of Katabet (British Museum), with the coffins of Tamutneferet (Louvre Museum) and the coffins of Henutmehyt (British Museum).

⁵²⁵ During the second half of the 21st Dynasty, compositions typically found in earlier models are selectively reintroduced, originating an archaizing trend of coffin decoration. For this reason, coffins of a later date may display a central panel with only two registers, which would be expected in earlier coffins. Outer coffin of Ikhy (Vatican Museums).

⁵²⁶ A.91 (outer coffin).

centripetal block + centrifugal block + **nuclear block** + centrifugal block + centripetal block

_____ (dividing line) _____

winged deity

Despite the sophistication of the composition, the components of each block can be easily isolated and the symbols used in each one of them can be inventoried.

Symmetrical register: The nuclear block

The nuclear block truly rules the composition of the central panel as a whole, originating different variations. The following motifs can be detected in this context:

- **Naos-shaped pectoral.** The depiction of the pectoral normally includes suspender-like bands hanging from the floral collar (Fig. 23; Fig. 24). Typically these pectorals are decorated with a scarab holding up a sun-disk with a *shen*-ring between its hind legs⁵²⁷. The solar god is sometimes escorted by groups of mummiform deities (Fig. 24)⁵²⁸. Other variations include the solar scarab flanked by avian gods (Fig. 23)⁵²⁹, winged goddesses⁵³⁰ or *wedjat*-eyes⁵³¹. Some of these motifs can actually be found in royal pectorals⁵³². The solar significance of the pectoral is normally highlighted by depicting the *akhet*-sign (Fig. 23)⁵³³, or the solar disk⁵³⁴ on top of it. The magical significance of these pectorals is apparently rooted in the imaginary of the Sed Festival aiming at providing eternal rebirth⁵³⁵.

⁵²⁷ The *akhet*-sign can figure alone: outer coffin of Henut-tai (Metropolitan Museum of Art), outer coffin of Masaharta (DB 320). This sign can also be displayed within wider compositions which may include the *wedjat*-eyes: mummy-cover of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum), outer coffin of Butehamun (Museo Egizio in Turin).

⁵²⁸ Outer coffin of Maatkare (DB 320), outer coffin of Masaharta (DB 320). A.81 (coffin). Mummy-cover of Khaemopet (Collection Harris). The first depictions of the solar barque on the pectoral may be detected already in the Ramesside Period. Coffin set of Henutmehyt (British Museum).

⁵²⁹ Outer coffin of Paser (Louvre Museum).

⁵³⁰ Mummy-cover of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum).

⁵³¹ Coffin of Padiamun (Cairo Egyptian Museum).

⁵³² Pectoral of Sheshonk II. See Montet 1951, pl. XXVI; Stierlin 1993, 169. Pectoral from the reign of Tutankhamun, see Reeves 1990, 151. This motif is also common in the decoration of the shrines of the sacred barque of Amun. See also de pectoral of Psusennes I in Hornung, Bryan 2002, 130.

⁵³³ Outer coffin of Masaharta (DB 320), Outer coffin of Henut-tai (Metropolitan Museum of Art). Coffin of Herytubekhet (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich), outer coffin of Butehamun (Museo Egizio in Turin).

⁵³⁴ The solar disk is encircled by cobras. Outer coffin of Maatkare (DB 320). Coffin A.81.

⁵³⁵ Van Walsem 1997, 121.

- **Solar barque.** When the solar disk is depicted, the enthroned god Amun-Re is depicted within⁵³⁶, or the solar child⁵³⁷. The divine crew includes the god Shai and Maat⁵³⁸, or Thoth⁵³⁹. The barque navigates on the *pet*-sign, sometimes flanked by the totems of the East and the West⁵⁴⁰. Another variation consists in the depiction of the winged (ram-headed⁵⁴¹) scarab navigating on the solar barque (Fig. 25). Royal funerary jewellery did include pectorals of this kind and it is possible that these motifs were inspired by such objects⁵⁴².

- **Pectoral with a (winged) scarab.** The pectoral is supported on suspender-like bands (Fig. 26; Fig. 27)⁵⁴³. Floral elements (lotus flowers and buds) adorn the lower fringe of the pectoral⁵⁴⁴. These motifs reproduce the features of funerary pectorals actually used in the royal mummies⁵⁴⁵.

- **Sacred scarab.** The simplest version of the previous motifs consists in the plain depiction of the sun god as a scarab holding up the solar disk with forelegs (Fig. 28)⁵⁴⁶.

Regardless of the particular type of pectoral depicted in the nuclear block, the (winged) scarab is normally associated with secondary motifs:

- The sacred scarab rises from the *nwb*-sign⁵⁴⁷, the *heb*-bowl, the *djed*-pillar⁵⁴⁸, the lotus flower⁵⁴⁹, or the even the heart⁵⁵⁰. In some depictions, the scarab is raised up by a goddess (Maat or Nut)⁵⁵¹.

⁵³⁶ Outer coffin of Pasebakhaienipet (Brooklyn Museum), coffin of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum)

⁵³⁷ Mummy-cover of Maatkare (DB 320).

⁵³⁸ Outer coffin of Pasebakhaienipet (Brooklyn Museum).

⁵³⁹ Mummy-cover of Maatkare (DB 320). Coffin of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum).

⁵⁴⁰ A.49 (mummy-cover). Coffin of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum).

⁵⁴¹ A.68 (inner coffin), A.151 (outer coffin).

⁵⁴² Pectoral from Tutankhamun's tomb, in Stierlin 1993, 69. Pectoral from the mummy of Sheshonk II, in Stierlin 1993, 195. See also Hornung, Bryan 2002, 131.

⁵⁴³ A.68 (mummy-cover). Coffin (Los Angeles County Museum of Art), inner coffin of Henut-tau (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁵⁴⁴ A.68 (mummy-cover). Inner coffin of Henut-tau (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁵⁴⁵ Pectoral of Sheshonk II: See Stierlin 1993, 188. Pectoral of Psusennes I: See Montet 1951, pl.CXV.

⁵⁴⁶ Mummy-cover of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden). A.86 (mummy-cover), A.111 (mummy-cover), A.121 (inner coffin).

See Van Walsem 1997, 149. Goff 1979, 209-220.

⁵⁴⁷ Inner coffin, mummy-cover of Tauhert (DB 320).

- The sacred scarab is normally flanked by hieroglyphic signs (*ankh*, *was*, and *djed*) hanging from the *iaret*-cobras that encircle the solar disk. Exceptionally other motifs may be included in the nuclear block, such as squatted gods⁵⁵², or the *ba*-bird offering before his own mummy⁵⁵³.

Symmetrical register: Lateral compositions

The nuclear block is flanked by symmetrical compositions, involving centrifugal and/or centripetal blocks.

Centrifugal blocks. Mummiform gods (squatted⁵⁵⁴ or seated on a throne) such as **Osiris** (Fig. 26)⁵⁵⁵ or the avian god **Ptah-Sokar** (Fig. 24)⁵⁵⁶ are the most common motifs depicted in this sector. Exceptionally, these gods may figure as royal ancestors, such as Horemheb⁵⁵⁷. Normally the enthroned god is escorted by standing (winged) goddesses (sometimes identified as Isis and Nephthys) or by a winged *djed*-pillar (Fig. 27)⁵⁵⁸. In the most elaborate compositions, the centrifugal block (enthroned god and protective female deities) is entirely depicted inside a heavily decorated shrine.⁵⁵⁹

Centripetal blocks: (Winged) goddesses⁵⁶⁰ protect the *ba*-bird (Fig. 26)⁵⁶¹ or the Sons of Horus⁵⁶². These goddesses are normally identified as Isis and Nephthys⁵⁶³. On occasions, these goddesses wear the monogram of Neith⁵⁶⁴ even if the adjacent label-inscriptions identified them as Isis or Nephthys. These compositions can be abbreviated

⁵⁴⁸ A.19 (mummy-cover). Mummy-cover of Henutaneb (Musée des Beaux-Arts de Grenoble), coffin set of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin), coffin of Hor (Museu Nacional in Rio de Janeiro), coffin (Los Angeles County Museum).

⁵⁴⁹ Mummy-cover of Khonsuhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden).

⁵⁵⁰ Outer coffin of Pinedjem II (DB 320).

⁵⁵¹ A.28 (outer coffin), A.111 (mummy-cover), A.151 (outer and inner coffin). Mummy-cover of Nespawershefyt (Fitzwilliam Museum)

⁵⁵² Maat and Horus:A.19 (coffin).

⁵⁵³ Coffin (Los Angeles County Museum of Art).

⁵⁵⁴ A.136 (inner coffin).

⁵⁵⁵ Inner coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁵⁵⁶ Mummy-cover of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum). Coffin of Herytubekhet (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich). Coffin of Panebmontu (Louvre Museum).

⁵⁵⁷ Mummy-cover of Khonsuhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden).

⁵⁵⁸ A.60 (inner coffin).

⁵⁵⁹ Coffin of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin).

⁵⁶⁰ Inner coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁵⁶¹ Outer coffin of Maatkare (DB 320), inner coffin of Masaharta (DB 320). A.114 (outer coffin). Mummy-cover of Tanethereret (Louvre Museum), coffin of Paser (Louvre Museum), inner coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁵⁶² Outer coffin of Pinedjem II (DB 320). Mummy-cover of Nany (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁵⁶³ Mummy-cover of Panebmontu (Louvre Museum). Mummy-cover of Khonsuhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden).

⁵⁶⁴ A.111 (mummy-cover).

by simply using winged cobra goddesses⁵⁶⁵ identified as manifestations of Neith (Fig. 27). These goddesses “represent protection as well as provision with the breath of life”⁵⁶⁶. It is noteworthy that symmetrical depictions of winged deities are common in royal sarcophagi dating from the reign of Tutankhamun onwards⁵⁶⁷, precisely to restore the vital powers of the royal mummy – the embodiment of Osiris. The goddesses reproduce this decorative scheme in the central panel.

An alternate scheme consists in **offering scenes**, clearly inspired on temple decoration (Fig. 24). In these blocks, the god Thoth performs rituals (offering the *wedjat*-eye)⁵⁶⁸, sometimes followed (or substituted) by the deceased⁵⁶⁹.

When the available space is limited – especially in mummy-covers – the centripetal block is frequently juxtaposed to the nuclear block, forming a composition typically found in the decoration of shrines⁵⁷⁰.

Dividing line

In the basic scheme, a dividing line bounds the two main registers⁵⁷¹. This line presents subtle variations according to the motifs depicted in the first register:

- If the nuclear block of the first register is a pectoral, this line is traced on the lower edge of the pectoral (Fig. 24)⁵⁷²;
- In most of the compositions, the registers are bounded by a long *pet*-sign⁵⁷³, sometimes decorated with stars⁵⁷⁴. This is especially true when the nuclear block is a solar barque (Fig. 25). Aquatic connotations of the sky are

⁵⁶⁵ A.68 (mummy-cover). Mummy-cover (Los Angeles County Museum of Art).

⁵⁶⁶ Van Walsem 1997, 146

⁵⁶⁷ The earliest occurrence of this motif is attested in the sarcophagus of Akhenaten, where Nefertiti figures at the four corners of the object. The winged goddesses are introduced in this decorative context in the rectangular stone sarcophagus of Tutankhamun and this scheme will be kept by his immediate successors, Ay and Horemheb. See Ikram, Dodson 1998, 260.

⁵⁶⁸ Coffin of Panebmontu (Louvre Museum).

⁵⁶⁹ Inner coffin of Masaharta (DB 320). Mummy-cover of Tentamun (Musée d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne in Marseille). These scenes are rooted in the motif of the *wedjat*-eye flanking the nuclear block of the first register detected in the proto-‘yellow’ corpus. See coffin set of Henutmehyt (British Museum), mummy-cover of Khaemopet (Collection Harris).

⁵⁷⁰ This composition displays two winged goddesses flanking a solar scarab. This scheme is detected in the decoration of the divine barque of Amun-Re. The winged goddesses are also abundantly attested on the decoration of divine or funerary shrines. Funerary shrines from Tutankhamun’s tomb: Piankoff 1952, Pl. III, X, XII, XV, XVII.

⁵⁷¹ In this context, this feature became very common and only exceptionally is omitted A.114 (outer coffin).

⁵⁷² Outer coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art), mummy-cover of Herytubekhet (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich).

⁵⁷³ A.49 (mummy-cover). Outer coffin of Pasebakhaienipet (Brooklyn Museum).

⁵⁷⁴ A.68 (coffin). Coffin of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin).

emphasized with the depiction of a fish pulling out from the water⁵⁷⁵ which also alludes to the ord *besy*, meaning ‘introduction’ or ‘emersion’, with connotations related to the heavenly ascent⁵⁷⁶;

- Sometimes, when enthroned gods are depicted in the centrifugal blocks, the dividing line can be absent and long mats are positioned underneath the thrones (Fig. 28). In that case, the dividing line is interrupted at the centre of the composition⁵⁷⁷.

Winged goddess

In most of the compositions, Nut figures as the central deity, but occasionally, the winged goddess wears the monogram of Neith (Fig. 27)⁵⁷⁸. Normally, the goddess is squatted, facing left⁵⁷⁹ and wearing a divine dress knotted with a long belt. The goddess wears a headband⁵⁸⁰, a modium⁵⁸¹, or a royal crown adorned with cobras⁵⁸², sometimes together with a sun disk⁵⁸³. The goddess grasps feathers⁵⁸⁴, *ankh* or *djed* signs⁵⁸⁵. Typically, large U-shaped wings irradiate from her open arms.

Less often, the winged deity is fully depicted in avian form, either as a falcon⁵⁸⁶ or as a vulture⁵⁸⁷.

Winged goddess: The upper composition

The U-shaped wings of the goddess⁵⁸⁸ bound short inscriptions referring to her name and titles⁵⁸⁹ (frequently combined with the depiction of *wedjat*-eyes) – See Fig. 26⁵⁹⁰.

The goddess is referred to as:

⁵⁷⁵ Outer coffin of Pasebakhaienipet (Brooklyn Museum).

⁵⁷⁶ See Kruchten 1989, 163-167. See also Sousa 2009, 32.

⁵⁷⁷ Mummy-cover of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden).

⁵⁷⁸ Inner coffin of Butehamun (Museo Egizio in Turin). A.19 (coffin), A.38 (inner coffin), A.121 (inner coffin).

⁵⁷⁹ The inner coffin of Khonsu (TT 1) is a remarkable exception to this rule, where the goddess is facing right.

⁵⁸⁰ Coffin set of Tamutneferet (Musée du Louvre).

⁵⁸¹ Outer coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁵⁸² A.68 (coffin).

⁵⁸³ A.68 (coffin).

⁵⁸⁴ Outer coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art). Outer coffin of Masaharta (DB 320), A.46 (outer coffin). Outer coffin of Paser (Louvre Museum).

⁵⁸⁵ A.68 (mummy-cover).

⁵⁸⁶ Mummy-cover of Maatkare (DB 320). A.114 (outer coffin).

⁵⁸⁷ Outer coffin of Maatkare (DB 320).

⁵⁸⁸ Mummy-cover of Khaemopet (Collection Harris).

⁵⁸⁹ Outer coffin of Masaharta (Cairo Egyptian Museum). Coffin set of Tamutneferet (Musée du Louvre). Coffin set of Herytubekhet (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich), inner coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

- Lady of the sky, lady of the gods⁵⁹¹;
- Nut, the great one on the horizon⁵⁹²;
- Nut, the great one that gives birth to Re, the lady of the Amentet⁵⁹³;
- Nut, the great one that gives birth to the gods, may she give offerings⁵⁹⁴;
- Nut, the great one, mother of gods, daughter of Re, who is in the House of Life (Per-Ankh), lady of the House of Beauty (Per-Nefer), may she give all things⁵⁹⁵.

Short spells of Nut are sometimes included:

- Words spoken by Nut, the great one. Words spoken by Isis, the mother of gods⁵⁹⁶;
- Words spoken by Nut, the great one who gives birth to the gods, who conceived Re, lady of the Amentet, may she give all the good, and pure things⁵⁹⁷;

Winged goddess: The lower composition

In earlier objects, the area below the wings of the goddess is left undecorated (Fig. 23)⁵⁹⁸. Gradually, this area was used to display centrifugal compositions involving *wedjat*-eyes⁵⁹⁹, the god Anubis (Fig. 25; Fig. 26)⁶⁰⁰, Osiris⁶⁰¹, (winged⁶⁰²) cobras⁶⁰³ or the *ba*-bird (Fig. 24).

The transition towards the classical scheme

Some attempts to introduce innovative arrangements in the central panel were focused on the first register. Those consisted in reproducing the nuclear block of the first register – the (winged) scarab – in the area above the symmetrical register, originating two separate registers⁶⁰⁴.

⁵⁹⁰ A.49 (mummy-cover). Coffin of Panebmontu (Louvre Museum). Inner coffin of Henut-tai (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁵⁹¹ Outer coffin of Khonsu (TT 1), coffin of Tamaket (TT 1).

⁵⁹² Inner coffin of Khonsu (TT 1).

⁵⁹³ Mummy-cover of Khaemopet (Collection Harris).

⁵⁹⁴ Outer coffin of Masaharta (Cairo Egyptian Museum).

⁵⁹⁵ A.68 (coffin).

⁵⁹⁶ Coffin set of Takayt (Die Städtische Galerie Liebieghaus).

⁵⁹⁷ Coffin of Panebmontu (Louvre Museum).

⁵⁹⁸ A.49 (mummy-cover). Mummy-cover of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum).

⁵⁹⁹ Coffin set of Tamutneferet (Musée du Louvre).

⁶⁰⁰ Inner coffin of Henut-tai (Metropolitan Museum of Art). Mummy-cover of Tanethereret (Louvre Museum); Coffin of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin).

⁶⁰¹ Coffin of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus).

⁶⁰² Inner coffin of Masaharta (Cairo Egyptian Museum). A.68 (coffin). Anonymous coffin from Bab el-Gasus (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden).

⁶⁰³ Mummy-cover of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin). Mummy-cover of Khonsuhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden).

⁶⁰⁴ A.53 (outer coffin). A.95 (mummy-cover). Coffin of Tanatnektahat (Michael Carlos Museum), inner coffin of Nani (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

Another trend proved to be more successful in redefining the layout of the central panel. This was focused on the winged goddess. The motifs depicted below her wings grew in size and in number⁶⁰⁵ and eventually formed an autonomous register (Fig. 27; Fig. 28)⁶⁰⁶. A few coffins found in the Tomb of the Priests of Amun show how this process progressed:

- In the inner coffin from A.60 (Fig. 27), the third register shows a rather interesting composition: two frogs flank the lotus flower, spitting water to the avian manifestation of the deceased;
- In the coffin from A.18, four squatted mummiform gods flank a falcon god resting on the sign of the West, while the deceased adores two other mummiform deities (Fig. 28);
- In the inner coffin from A.96, the nuclear block is formed by the god Shu who rises from the ground holding up the basket where the winged goddess is squatted. This central figure is flanked by the *ba*-bird adoring Anubis.

These compositions clearly show that, at this stage, the third register was not standardized. The arrangement of this register is so innovative that it sharply contrasts with the remaining composition. However, a growing dependence between the first and the third register is progressively observed. In the mummy-cover of Nesipanebu⁶⁰⁷, most of the motifs included in the third register are alien to the usual repertoire (recumbent Osiris and the *ba*-bird in the nuclear block) but centripetal winged goddesses introduce the vertical symmetry with the first register.

The mummy-cover from A.29 shows another stage of this process with the third register displaying minor differences, most of them focused on the nuclear block (Fig. 29). The scheme of the third register was eventually defined when the same standardized structure of the first register was adopted, originating what we call the ‘classical scheme’ of the central panel⁶⁰⁸.

⁶⁰⁵ Anonymous coffin (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden, F 93/10.4)

⁶⁰⁶ A.18 (coffin), A.60 (inner coffin), A.96 (inner coffin).

⁶⁰⁷ Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden.

⁶⁰⁸ A.142 (mummy-cover). Coffin of Khonsumose (Museo Egizio in Turin), coffin of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden), coffin of Hori (Museo Egizio in Turin).

CLASSICAL SCHEME

Style and dating

By the mid-21st Dynasty, the layout of the central panel evolved considerably in complexity. Not only was a new register added, as the decoration itself underwent a surplus of secondary motifs making the overall composition much heavier and dense. The style evolved accordingly becoming schematic and rigid (Fig. 30). Moreover, greater attention is given to volume and certain key-features (scarabs, solar disks or enthroned gods) are moulded in plaster, creating a three-dimensional relief-like effect, which is particularly clear along the central axis of the lid.

Formal features

The classical register shows a very stable scheme displaying three registers. The first and the third register share the same symmetrical structure, while the second register features the winged goddess.

Symmetrical registers

Typically, the symmetrical registers are composed of a (ram-headed) scarab⁶⁰⁹ flanked by centrifugal and centripetal blocks. After this sequence, additional blocks are juxtaposed. These blocks normally depict squatted mummiform gods⁶¹⁰, sacred animals (such as the jackal god⁶¹¹), or a variety of cult scenes (Fig. 30; Fig. 32)⁶¹². The Ta-wer totem⁶¹³ is frequently found on the edge of the composition⁶¹⁴. Normally, a complete symmetry between the first and the third register was sought (Fig. 30)⁶¹⁵, but subtle differences between them were maintained by using different methods:

⁶⁰⁹ Inner coffin of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden).

⁶¹⁰ A.10 (inner coffin), A.110 (coffin), A.136 (outer coffin).

⁶¹¹ A.131 (outer coffin).

⁶¹² A.110 (coffin).

⁶¹³ A.108 (inner coffin), A.136 (outer coffin).

⁶¹⁴ This feature was previously depicted on the arms but it was gradually transferred to this section as the floral collar started to cover this area.

⁶¹⁵ A.12 (mummy-cover), A.23 (outer coffin), A.33 (inner coffin), A.40 (outer coffin), A.44 (outer coffin), A.108 (inner coffin, mummy-cover), A.110 (coffin), A.131 (coffin set), A.136 (outer coffin), A.149 (outer and inner coffin). Coffin set of Hori (Museo Egizio in Turin), coffin of Khonsumose (Museo Egizio in Turin), coffin of Pashedkhonsu (Michael Carlos Museum), mummy-cover of Mutemperamun (Museo Egizio in Turin), coffin of Bakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin).

- changing the sequence of the centrifugal/centripetal blocks⁶¹⁶;
- changing a particular motif⁶¹⁷;
- removing certain motifs⁶¹⁸ or entire blocks⁶¹⁹.

Winged goddess

The most notorious change in this register consists in the arrangement of the wings of the main goddess, which are now fully stretched transversally in order to accommodate the increasing number of symbols displayed on her arms (Fig. 30).

The liminal elements

The classical scheme reveals a conspicuous interest in the depiction of small signs consisting in:

- **Vultures.** Although this is the heraldic bird of Nekhbet, the goddess of Upper Egypt, in this context it seems to allude to Mut, the mother goddess in Thebes;
- **Cobras.** They are normally associated with the goddess Wadjet heraldic of Lower Egypt but in this context, they rather stand as a manifestation of Neith regarded as the goddess embodying the coffin itself. These ophidian representations of Neith sometimes spring from line registers⁶²⁰, thus highlighting their association with the coffin, from where they emerge protectively;
- **Scarabs.** As solar symbols, they allude not only to the nightly journey of the sun but also to regeneration, rebirth, and rejuvenation as manifestations of Khepri ('He who came forth' or 'He who came into being')⁶²¹;
- **Shetjyt-shrines.** During the New Kingdom, these shrines are associated with the gods of the netherworld, such as the god Sokaris, alluding to the

⁶¹⁶ The order of the centrifugal and centripetal blocks is changed. See inner coffin and mummy-cover of Nesikhonsu (DB 320), where the winged goddesses are depicted in the centrifugal block.

⁶¹⁷ See outer coffin of Nesikhonsu (DB 320), where the nuclear block of the third register is depicted without wings. See also A.110 (mummy-cover): here the Osirian god was interestingly changed by the Ta-wer totem.

⁶¹⁸ See A.26 (inner coffin). Here the Osirian gods are squatted (instead of enthroned), the goddesses are shown in her ophidian manifestations, the *ba*-birds and the imiwt-totems have been removed.

⁶¹⁹ In the coffin of Khonsumose (Museo Egizio in Turin), the third register does not have centrifugal blocks and in the nuclear block the solar boat was removed. This process is used often as the available space in the lower areas is normally reduced. See also A.142 (mummy-cover).

⁶²⁰ See outer case of A.136. See also coffin set of Butehamun (Museo Egizio in Turin).

⁶²¹ Wilkinson 1992, 113.

protective role of the coffin as a magical container that embodies the Duat. This type of shrine is also frequently used to hold *shabti*-statuettes⁶²²;

- **Hieroglyphs.** A variety of small hieroglyphs are loosely written among the available space, normally alluding to the Duat, such as stars (*duat*), *netjer*, *nefer*, *wedjat*-eyes, *heb*-bowls. Sometimes they allude to divine names, such as Nut, Isis or Neith.

These elements are unspecifically used in coffin decoration and they are normally labeled as ‘space-fillers’ based on the assumption that their role is to fill in the empty space as a result of the phenomenon known as *horror vacui*. However, the iconographic examination of coffin decoration reveals that this particular repertoire of symbols is first detected in the interior decoration of the case, in close symbolic association with the sacredness associated with the mother goddess depicted on the floorboard (Plate 8). These symbols were thus strongly connected with the sacredness of the interior of the coffin, which was obviously seen as the Duat itself.

These symbols were then brought to the exterior, being first depicted along the wings of Nut, forming centripetal compositions flanking her head (Fig. 29; Fig. 30; Fig.31). In this way, they added sacredness to the object and established a ‘fluid’ magical protection linking the interior of the coffin with the exterior walls. In our perspective, the increasing importance of these elements is precisely due to their ability to extend the magical protection provided by the mother goddess to the exterior areas of the coffin, creating a magic ‘fluid’ that wrapped the coffin as a whole. These symbols should thus be seen as an extension of the protective role of the heavenly mother goddess depicted in the interior of the case. In order to acknowledge the boldness of this magical role, we adopted the designation ‘liminal elements’ to label these symbols.

Interestingly enough, these liminal elements soon spread out towards the outer limits of the central panel and were included between the main registers of the tableau⁶²³. The symbolic role played by these symbols was so important that they kept growing in

⁶²² Shabti-box of Khabekhenet (Louvre Museum, E 27149) in Étienne 2009, n° 215.

⁶²³ The importance of these elements is clear on the upper edges of the central panel, which became wider when the depiction of the forearms fell out of use. This fact alone created new pictorial areas in this section that were decorated with liminal elements. See A.18 (coffin), A.83 (outer coffin). These areas were also decorated with additional blocks allusive to cult scenes. See A.110 (coffin). Coffin of Pashedkhonsu (Michael Carlos Museum).

number and in size (Fig. 32)⁶²⁴. The friezes of liminal elements involved more motifs, such as falcon gods, long twisted cobras, and mummiform gods together with their respective shrines⁶²⁵. The depictions of gods became larger and, in some cases, they figure fully enthroned⁶²⁶, forming entire cult scenes on their own (Fig. 36)⁶²⁷.

The increasing importance of the liminal elements eventually led to the progressive miniaturization of the central panel⁶²⁸. Miniaturist panels still display three registers but present wider interstitial areas: the three main registers are thus ‘absorbed’ and involved by extensive liminal compositions (Fig. 30; Fig. 32). In the best objects, the composition evolved to form a minacious tableau, presenting a strong sense of geometry and unity despite the multiplicity of blocks included in the liminal areas⁶²⁹.

COMPLEX SCHEME

Style and dating

During the second half of the 21st Dynasty, the central panel attained a significant degree of complexity. The style is schematic and the density of depiction is increasingly heavier.

Formal features

At least three different types of layout can be detected at this stage, normally displaying more than three registers.

Panels headed by a solar scarab

Normally, these compositions are considerably extended, some of them fully covering the lower section down the footboard (Fig. 34)⁶³⁰. The classical tripartite scheme of the central panel is observed but new registers are added⁶³¹. In these circumstances, several processes are detected:

⁶²⁴ Coffin of Hori (Museo Egizio in Turin). Coffin of Khonsumose (Museo Egizio in Turin). A.10 (coffin set), A.83 (outer coffin), A.99 (outer coffin).

⁶²⁵ A.110 (coffin).

⁶²⁶ A.18 (coffin), A.33 (coffin). A.40 (outer coffin), A.142 (inner coffin)

⁶²⁷ A.32 (coffin).

⁶²⁸ A.26 (outer coffin), A.149 (outer coffin). Outer and inner coffin of Tabakmut (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁶²⁹ Outer coffin of Tabakmut (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁶³⁰ A. 29 (inner coffin), A.41, A.143 (wooden case). Sometimes, the central panel is extended but the lower section is preserved. See mummy-cover of Asetemkhebit (DB 320), where the central panel displays six registers.

⁶³¹ A.124 (outer coffin).

- The three first registers keep the usual layout of the classical scheme. The lower registers present the same alternate sequence between the symmetrical registers and the winged deity (Fig. 34)⁶³². The main goddess is frequently replaced by a raptor⁶³³ or a winged sun disk⁶³⁴. The symmetrical registers are increasingly simplified as we approach the footboard. An interesting procedure is to obliterate the centrifugal block and the winged goddesses from the centripetal block, keeping only the *ba*-bird and the *wedjat*-eye (from the centripetal block)⁶³⁵;
- After the three first registers, the succession of registers is not predictable. Sometimes only symmetrical registers are displayed⁶³⁶. Other objects display a sequence formed by winged deities, symmetrical registers, and friezes out of any predictable order⁶³⁷. The use of friezes composed of *djed* and *tjet*-signs is normally included in these compositions, as well as the abundant use of liminal elements, sometimes including very unusual motifs such as serpent-headed recumbent gods⁶³⁸.

This layout results from the mindful obliteration of the expected longitudinal arrangements of the lower section. Sometimes, a block-frieze bounds the two areas as if acknowledging the formal division between them⁶³⁹. Even more interesting is the decision of extending the central panel down the footboard only along the central partition of the lower section⁶⁴⁰. In this situation, the vignettes of the lateral partitions are simply juxtaposed to the other ones and this process is not always immediately clear to the observer. The complementary method is also used: the registers of the central panel extend themselves to the footboard down the lateral partitions, leaving the central partition of the lower section with the usual decoration⁶⁴¹.

⁶³² A.20 (inner coffin, mummy-cover), A.41 (mummy-cover).

⁶³³ A.66 (inner coffin). Coffin set of Tamutmuef (Museo Egizio in Turin).

⁶³⁴ A.136 (mummy-cover). Inner coffin and mummy-cover of Gautseshen (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden, F 93/10.1)

⁶³⁵ See A.20 (inner coffin and mummy-cover), compare the 5th and the 7th registers.

⁶³⁶ A.124 (outer coffin), anonymous mummy-cover (Inv. E.5907, Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire).

⁶³⁷ A.6 (mummy-cover), A.143 (wooden case). Coffin of Amuniesankh (Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts).

⁶³⁸ Coffin of Amuniesankh (Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts).

⁶³⁹ Anonymous mummy-cover (Inv. E.5907, Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire).

⁶⁴⁰ Inner coffin of Gautseshen (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden, F 93/10.1).

⁶⁴¹ A.47 (inner coffin). This is clear from the 5th register down to the 10th register.

Panels headed by the winged sun disk

From the formal standpoint, the most important feature of these compositions consists in the addition of a winged solar disk heading the panel (Fig. 33). The number of registers in these compositions is highly variable.

Normally the winged sun disk is juxtaposed to a composition of the classical type⁶⁴², but the basic type can be seen too⁶⁴³. A typical sequence would be formed with the following structure⁶⁴⁴:

- 1st register: Winged solar disk;
- 2nd register: Symmetrical register;
- 3rd register: Winged goddess (or a raptor);
- 4th register: Symmetrical register;
- 5th register: Avian deity.

Panels headed by a vulture

These panels are headed by a large depiction of a vulture with its wings outstretched towards both sides of the lid (Fig. 35)⁶⁴⁵. The number of registers of these compositions is highly variable. In the smaller ones, the panel is featured after the layout of the classical scheme, bounded by a vulture in the upper and in the lower register⁶⁴⁶. The longest compositions are extended down the footboard⁶⁴⁷. Even in these objects, the classical tripartite scheme of the central panel is usually observed. However, after the fourth register, the composition of each register gets rather loose, with the design of the panel heavily shaped by the transversal compositions with little if any formal relationship between them. This impression is highlighted by the use of transversal border markers bounding the registers, such as starry *pet*-signs, hieroglyphic friezes (*djed* and *tjet*-signs, scarabs, cobras, royal cartouches) or block-friezes. The structure of the symmetrical registers is selectively kept, with some registers observing the general

⁶⁴² A.32 (inner coffin), A.52 (inner coffin), A.54 (inner coffin), A.55 (outer coffin), A.91 (inner coffin), Anonymous mummy-cover (Museo Egizio in Turin, CGT 10118), anonymous coffin (Museo Egizio in Turin). Anonymous coffin (Carnegie Museum of Natural History), coffin of Khonsuhotep (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek).

⁶⁴³ A.27 (mummy-cover), A.43 (outer coffin).

⁶⁴⁴ A.54 (inner coffin), A. 147 (inner coffin). Anonymous coffin (British Museum), coffin of Khonsuhotep (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek).

⁶⁴⁵ A.40 (inner coffin), A.54 (outer coffin), A.74 (coffin set), A.85 (CG 6043), A.143 (outer coffin).

⁶⁴⁶ A.74 (inner coffin).

⁶⁴⁷ A.40 (inner coffin), A.85 (CG 6043), A.143 (outer coffin).

rules. However, others show a sharp distinction regarding the nuclear block, which displays rather unusual motifs, such as the recumbent Osiris⁶⁴⁸, the god Heh⁶⁴⁹, or liminal elements, such as frogs or bees⁶⁵⁰. The centripetal and centrifugal blocks may even be composed by using loose liminal elements. In this arrangement, the ‘architectonic’ layout typically featured in the classical scheme is completely faded away.

This is exactly the situation that can be observed on the lid of an anonymous inner coffin from the Tomb of the Priests of Amun, displaying eight registers (Fig. 35)⁶⁵¹. The composition is headed by a serpent-headed vulture with its wings fully outstretched towards both sides of the composition. Oddly enough, the depiction of the vulture is shown from above, as if the panel was literally positioned under its wings.

Panels with liminal elements as nuclear blocks

A distinct type of panels is formed by using liminal elements as nuclear blocks of the symmetrical registers (Fig. 38). Compositions of this type do not have a predictable structure. They may be fully extended down the footboard⁶⁵², or display just three registers⁶⁵³. Regardless of the number of registers, the sequence and structure of these compositions may preserve most of the features of the classical scheme (Fig. 37)⁶⁵⁴. The difference of these panels is found in the composition of the nuclear blocks where we can find a variety of unusual symbols, such as a triple set of solar scarabs (Fig. 37)⁶⁵⁵, or heart amulets (Fig. 36).

The coffin set of Dirpu (A.123) gives us some of the most accomplished compositions of this type. In the outer coffin, the composition is headed by a pectoral decorated with a *ba*-bird flanked by hearts-*ib*, followed in the second register by a winged solar disk (which should be depicted in the first register) and by a winged goddess in the third register. The remaining decoration makes use of loose additional blocks and liminal elements. Different types of liminal elements can be seen in the nuclear block: *tjet*-signs,

⁶⁴⁸ A.74 (outer coffin), A.85 (coffin CG 6043).

⁶⁴⁹ A.143 (outer coffin).

⁶⁵⁰ A.40 (inner coffin).

⁶⁵¹ A.40 (inner coffin).

⁶⁵² A.55 (inner coffin).

⁶⁵³ A.52 (outer coffin).

⁶⁵⁴ A.32 (outer coffin).

⁶⁵⁵ A.52 (outer and inner coffin), A.55 (mummy-cover).

cartouches, Osirian gods, the god Heh⁶⁵⁶, the *ba*-bird, the jackal form of Anubis, the heart-*ib*⁶⁵⁷ are some of the possibilities.

The inner coffin of Dirpu displays a highly irregular composition, using liminal elements (squatted gods and goddesses) as nuclear blocks of the third and fifth register. At first glance, the composition seems to observe the rules guiding this panel, namely the succession of symmetrical registers and winged deities, but only the composition of the second register follows this scheme. The others are formed by the orderly juxtaposition of liminal elements. The mummy-cover of the same burial set shows a similar process, with an even weaker observance of the traditional layout of the panel.

The prevalence of the liminal elements in these panels is detected not only in their number and size but also in the sophisticated and subtle role they play in the composition as a whole.

In the panel depicted in the outer coffin from A.32 (Fig. 36), enthroned gods are depicted as liminal elements, as well as a large number of gods and goddesses, literally transforming the lid into a sacred mural.

In the outer coffin from A.52 (Fig. 37), the goddess Neith is used as the only liminal element, being repeatedly depicted engaged in several ritual actions, transforming the usual structure of the composition into a dynamic composition where this goddess literally traverses all the areas of the lid animating it with her all-encompassing divine presence⁶⁵⁸.

*
* *

In all these three types of layout, most of the decoration is colored black, including feathered motifs and liminal elements, giving to the object a much darker atmosphere than previously. The weight of the liminal elements is such that the background is even difficult to perceive. This is not only the result of the prolific depiction of secondary motifs but also by their increasing dimensions. In the repertoire of these symbols, it is

⁶⁵⁶ A.55 (inner coffin).

⁶⁵⁷ A.32 (outer coffin).

⁶⁵⁸ A remarkable example of this use is found in the outer coffin of A.52. The goddess Neith is repeatedly depicted in ritual scenes forming secondary compositions that work as liminal elements.

now possible to find new motifs such as bees⁶⁵⁹, scarabs, cartouches⁶⁶⁰, sun disks⁶⁶¹, stylized geometrical motifs⁶⁶², mummiform *ba*-birds⁶⁶³, squatted mummiform gods⁶⁶⁴ and even fully enthroned gods⁶⁶⁵. The full inventory of these symbols is virtually impossible to carry out. The role played by these symbols became so important that eroded quite severely the traditional structure of the symmetrical registers. Instead of the expected sequences, we may find endless representations of gods used as liminal elements⁶⁶⁶. The increasing bolder role played by divine depictions as liminal elements originated outstanding achievements in terms of composition (Figs. 36-37).

GENERAL INTERPRETATION

In terms of the pictorial work, the central panel reveals a growth in complexity only possible due to the definition of a precise set of rules and key-features that rule this composition. The genealogical approach clearly shows that the central motif of this tableau is the winged deity and fully illustrates the text associated with it:

Oh, my mother Nut, spread yourself over me, so that I may be placed among the Imperishable Stars and may never die.⁶⁶⁷

The image of the goddess is thus the personification of heaven and of the coffin itself⁶⁶⁸, alluding to her ability to provide rebirth for the deceased. The subsequent development of the tableau is rooted in this idea and underwent several stages:

The first stage of this development consisted in the association of winged goddess with the *wedjat*-eyes. The origin of this motif can be traced back in the eye panel traditionally depicted on the left side of the rectangular troughs⁶⁶⁹. However, as early as

⁶⁵⁹ Inner coffin and mummy-cover of Gautseshen (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden, F 93/10.1).

⁶⁶⁰ A.6 (mummy-cover). Inner coffin and mummy-cover of Gautseshen (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden, F 93/10.1).

⁶⁶¹ Inner coffin and mummy-cover of Gautseshen (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden, F 93/10.1).

⁶⁶² A.20 (inner coffin and mummy-cover). Inner coffin and mummy-cover of Gautseshen (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden, F 93/10.1).

⁶⁶³ Mummy-cover of Tamutmuef (Museo Egizio in Turin).

⁶⁶⁴ Outer coffin of Asetemkhebit (DB 320).

⁶⁶⁵ A. 32 (outer coffin).

⁶⁶⁶ Inner coffin of Asetemkhebit (DB 320).

⁶⁶⁷ This text itself was borrowed from the Pyramid Texts, in which the goddess is regarded as the king's mother through the deceased's identification with Osiris (son of Nut). Taylor 1989, 11.

⁶⁶⁸ In texts of the Old Kingdom, the word for the chest of a sarcophagus is *mwt* (mother) – a clear allusion to this concept. Taylor 1989, 11.

⁶⁶⁹ Anthropoid sarcophagi dating from the late 18th Dynasty display the eye panel on the left side of the case. See, for example, the inner sarcophagus reused by Psusennes I, in Montet 1951, Pl. XCVI

the ‘black’ type, the *wedjat*-eyes were already depicted on the left shoulder of the lid⁶⁷⁰. This motif then ‘migrated’ to the central panel. This phenomenon is extremely significant for the subsequent development of the layout of the central panel. One has to keep in mind that the eye panel is usually associated with the false-door motif, thus being closely related to the symbolism of passage between the world of the living and the realm of the dead. As a result of the migration of the *wedjat*-eyes from the case to the central panel of the lid, the symbolism of passage was introduced on the later. The central panel thus became a threshold between the world of the living and the Duat⁶⁷¹.

The second stage of the development of the central panel was achieved by integrating the *naos*-shaped pectoral. With this motif, the central panel summoned the role of the *naos* of a temple assuring contact with the Duat, where the regeneration of the sun god took place⁶⁷². The pectoral thus strengthened the architectonisation⁶⁷³ of the central panel by adopting a layout borrowed from architectural settings. In fact, most of the motifs included in the symmetrical registers are borrowed from temple or tomb decoration. With this input, the central panel was fully identified with the magical territory of the Duat, seen as a sacred realm where the regeneration of the sun god takes place. The alternate depiction of the mother winged goddess and her son, the sacred scarab, suggest an ascending movement towards the light. Note that, in some coffins, the rising sun heads the entire composition, either depicted within the *akhet*-sign (basic scheme), thus alluding directly to the sunrise, or as an imposing winged sun disk (complex scheme), suggesting the identification of the central panel with the horizon from which the sun springs each morning⁶⁷⁴.

The third stage of the development of the central panel consisted in creating symmetrical registers with Osirian significance, alluding to the Solar-Osirian union that

⁶⁷⁰ Coffin of Henujudjebu (Washington University Gallery of Art).

⁶⁷¹ Curiously enough – just as it happened with the *wedjat*-eyes – the architectonisation of the lid progressed hand in hand with the inclusion of symbols used in mummification or in funerary rites (amulets and pectorals). In fact, such pectorals depict actual funerary objects whose existence is archaeologically attested. An important collection of funerary pectorals involving sacred scarabs was uncovered in the wrappings of the mummy of Tutankhamun and in the royal tombs of Tanis. Apparently, these objects were not found in the wrappings of the mummies of Bab el-Gasus, which may suggest that the pectorals depicted on yellow coffins may have had a substitutive role, thus aiming to provide the magical protection of an object that was probably no longer included in the funerary equipment of the mummy. Daressy 1907, 3-38.

⁶⁷² In fact, most of the pectorals depicted on ‘yellow’ coffins include scenes allusive to solar rejuvenation and rebirth. See Van Walsem 1997, 121.

⁶⁷³ On the concept of architectonisation of coffins see Van Walsem 1997, 361.

⁶⁷⁴ The association of the *ba*-bird with the central panel is also not accidental since it probably corresponds to the area of the mummy where the union of the *ba*-bird with its own corpse was supposed to occur. In fact, in the scenes depicted on the central panel, the *ba*-bird witnesses the mysteries of the Duat: the regeneration of the sun god and his union with Osiris.

took place in the secrecy of the Duat. This significance was further enhanced with the multiplication of registers and the creation of the classical scheme.

The fourth stage consisted in the creation of the liminal elements. These important symbols first appeared on the lid in close association with the winged goddess, from where they spread out. These elements are so important that they shaped the layout of the central panel from the mid-21st Dynasty onwards, eventually becoming its most important feature. At first, they included a relatively limited repertoire of symbols, such as *shetjyt*-shrines, sacred vultures, and cobras, endlessly repeated along the composition. The origin of these symbols is to be found in the interior decoration of the case, where they are closely associated with the mother goddess. By the end of the dynasty, these elements included a vast repertoire, such as hieroglyphic signs, a variety of sacred animals, mummiform gods and even gods and goddesses as important as Neith. The liminal elements thus magically connect the central panel with the interior of the coffin itself, providing not only a 'passage', as the previous layout did, but indeed a visualisation of the secretive realm of the Duat. In its final stages, the central panel fully alluded to the sacred and magical atmosphere that surrounded the deceased when he/she was fully embraced by the mother goddess in her heavenly realm.

From the symbolic standpoint, the central panel thus alludes to the magical realm of the Duat and to its mysteries and it stands out as one of the defining compositions of the 'yellow' type, one that fully recreates the iconographic elements expected to be found in the burial chamber.



Fig. 21 – Central panel. Inner coffin of Khonsu (Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Fig. 22 – Central panel. Outer coffin of Henutmehyt (British Museum)

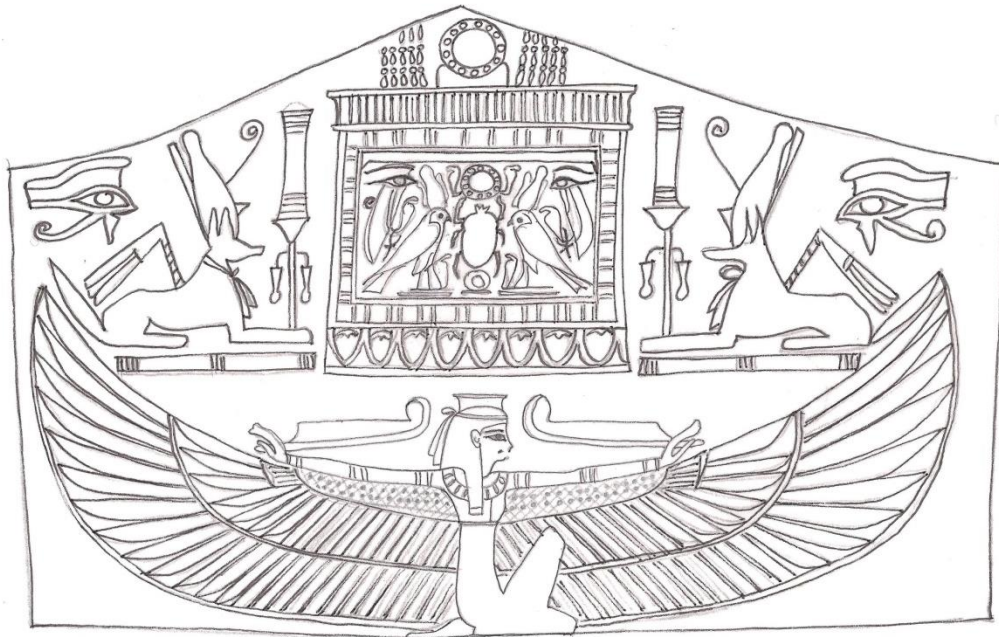


Fig. 23 - Central panel. Outer coffin of Henut-tau (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

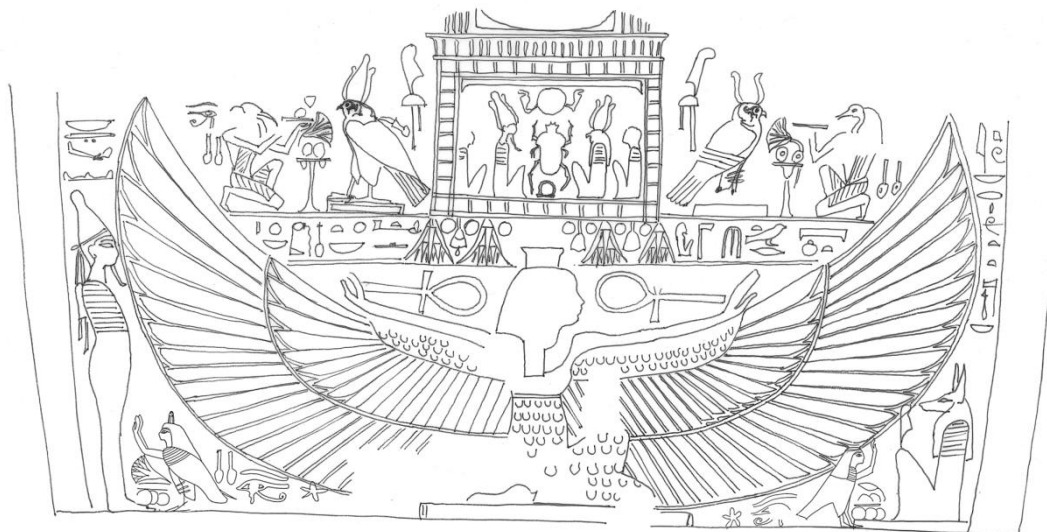


Fig. 24 - Central panel. Coffin of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus)

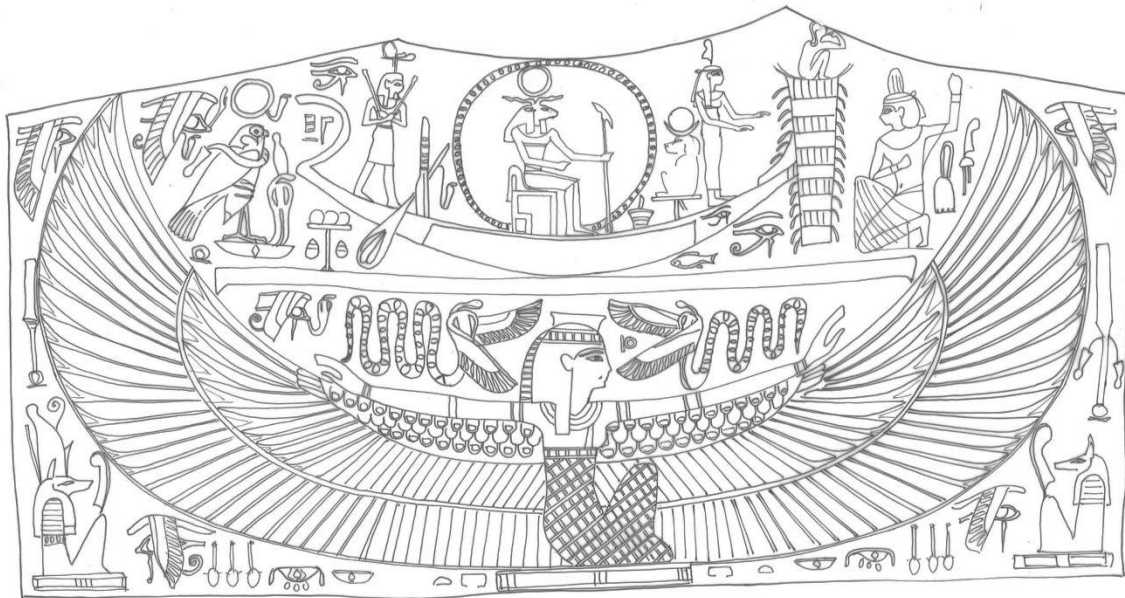


Fig. 25 - Central panel. Outer coffin of Pasebakhaienipet (Brooklyn Museum)

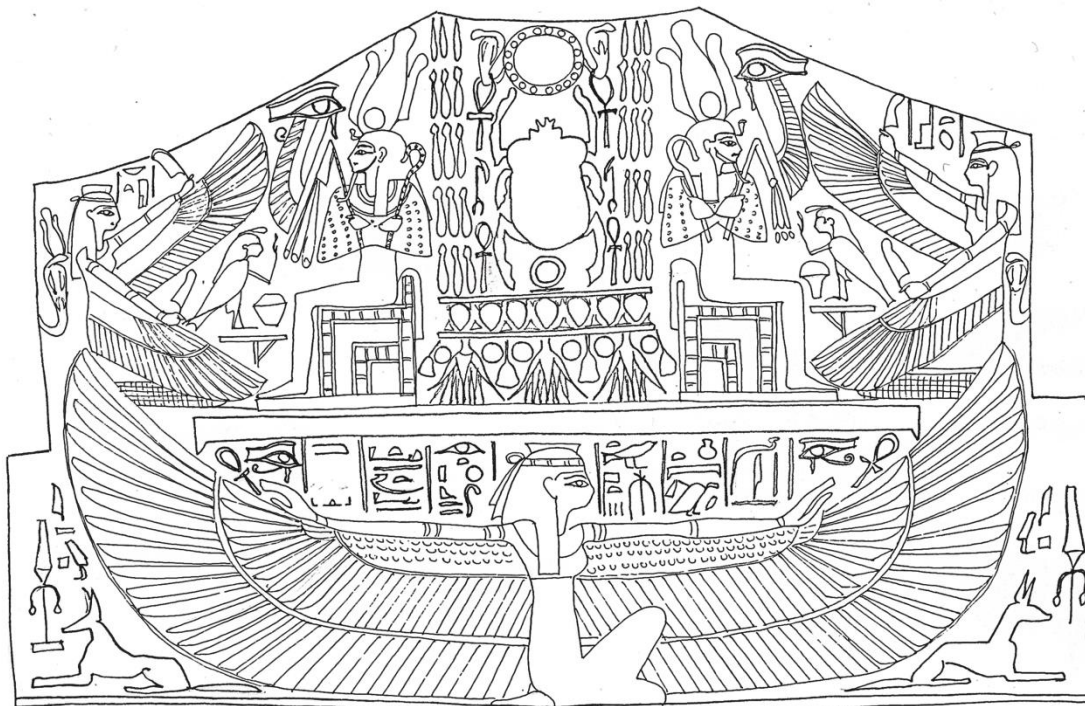


Fig. 26 - Central panel. Inner Coffin of Henut-tai (Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Fig. 27 – Central panel. Inner coffin (A.60)



Fig. 28 – Central panel. Coffin (A.18)



Fig. 29 – Central panel. Mummy-cover (A.29)

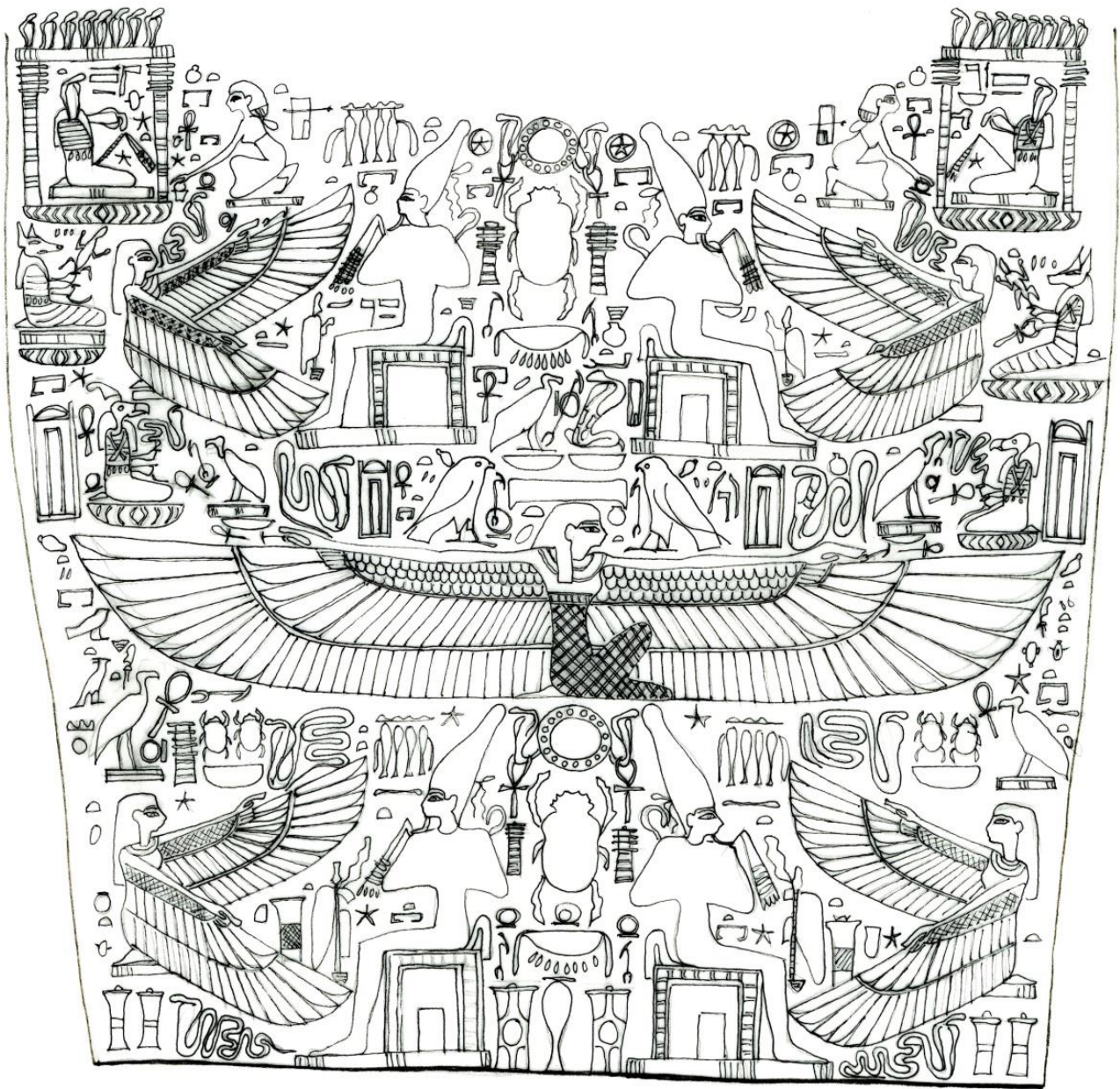


Fig. 30 – Central panel. Coffin (A.110)

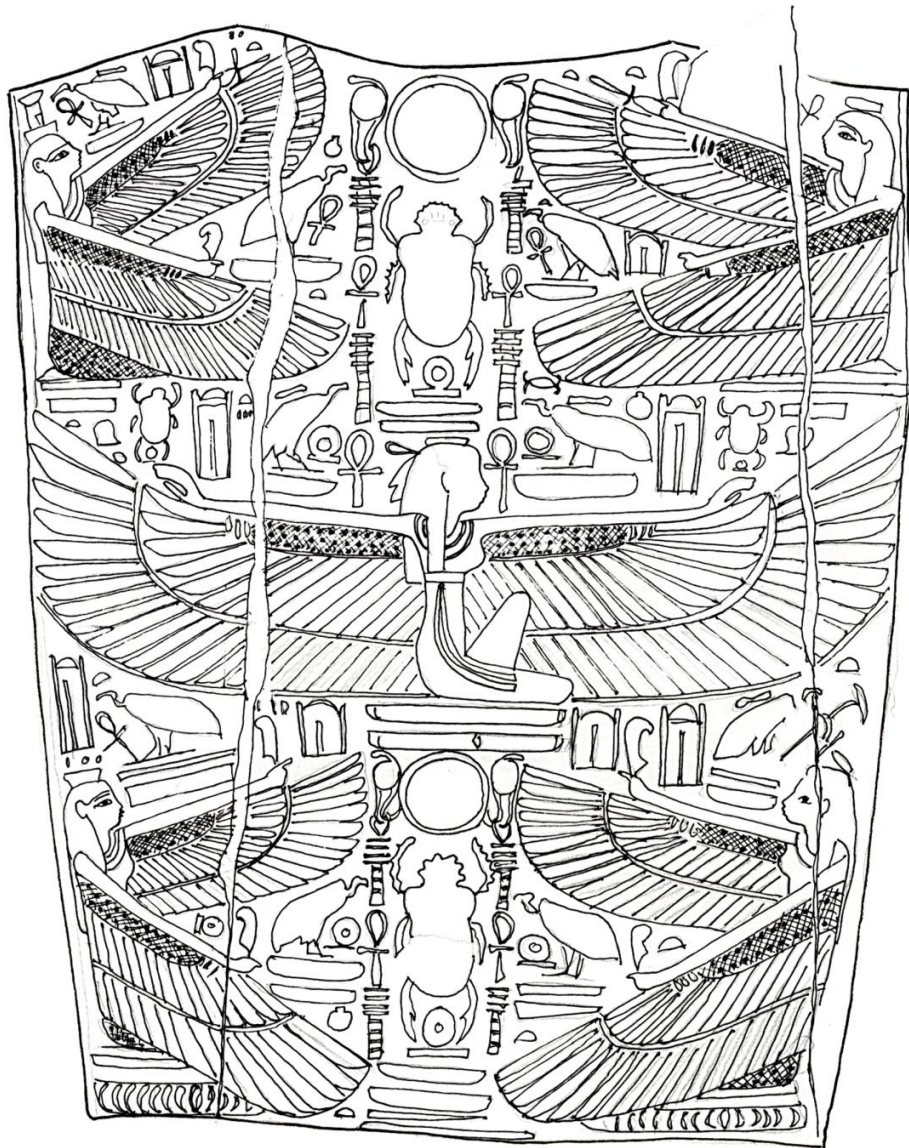


Fig. 31– Central panel. Mummy-cover (A.136)

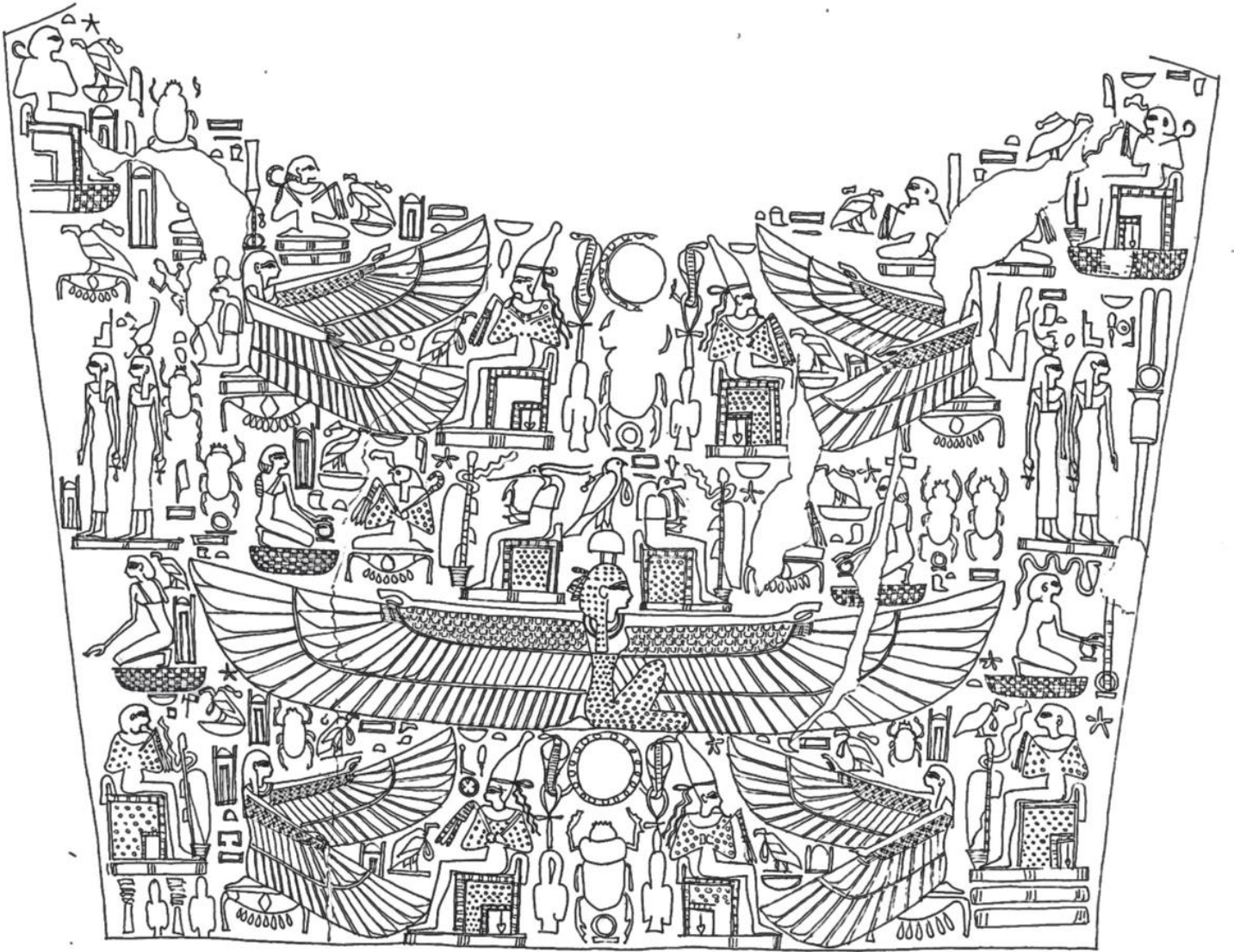


Fig. 32 – Central panel. Outer coffin (A.40)



Fig. 33 – Central panel. Outer coffin (A.15)

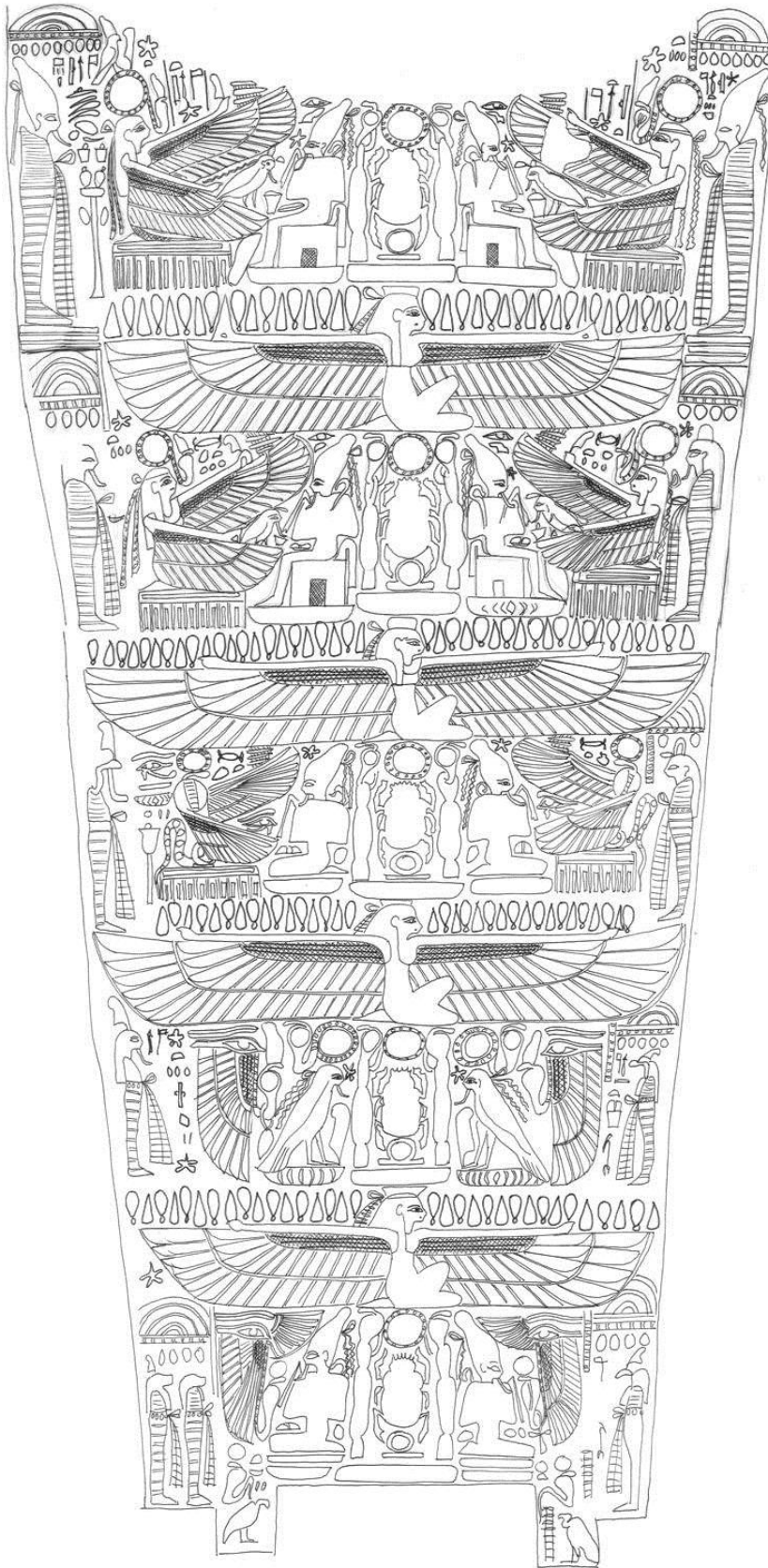


Fig. 34 – Central panel. Inner coffin (A.15)

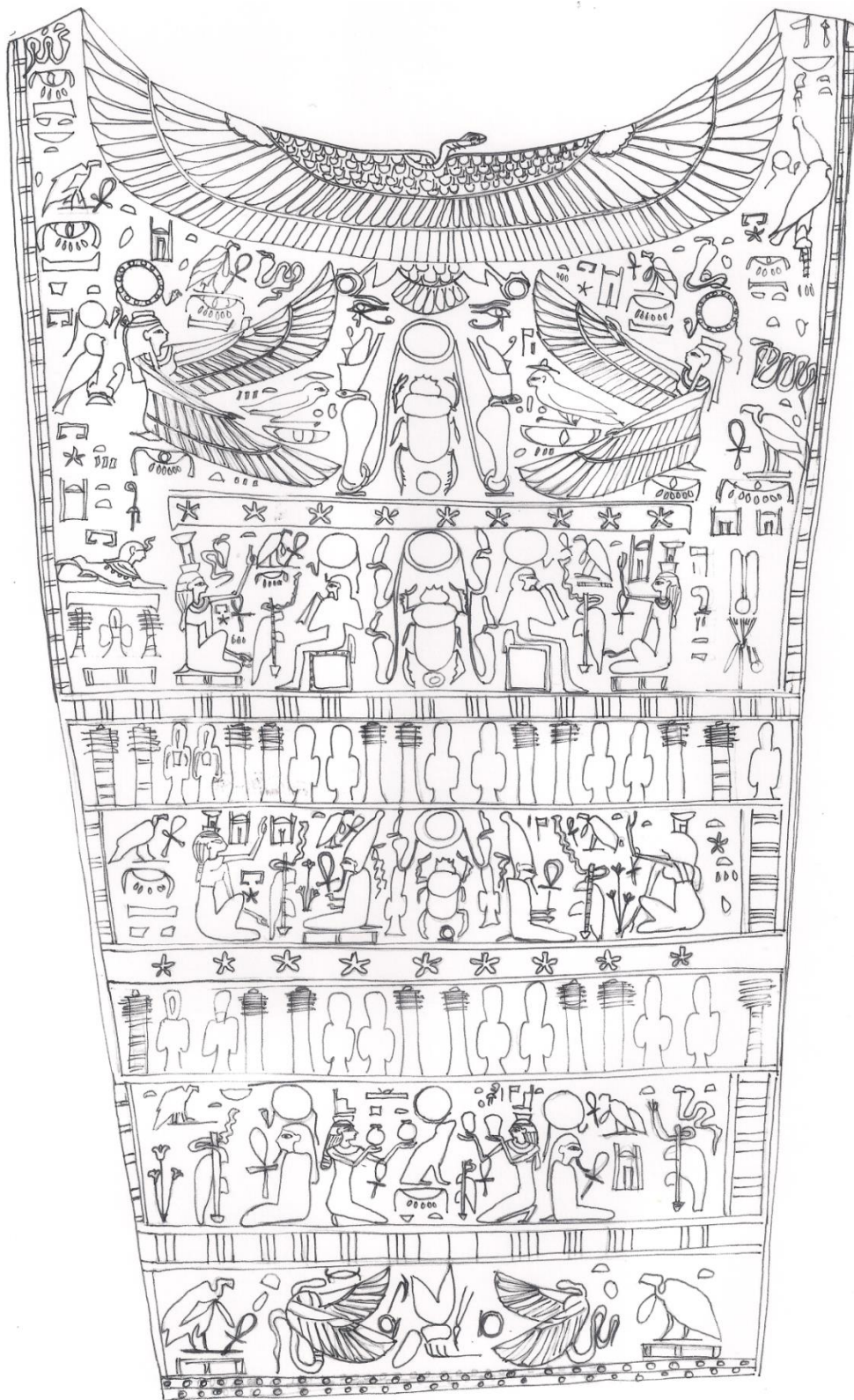


Fig. 35 – Central panel. Inner coffin (A.40)

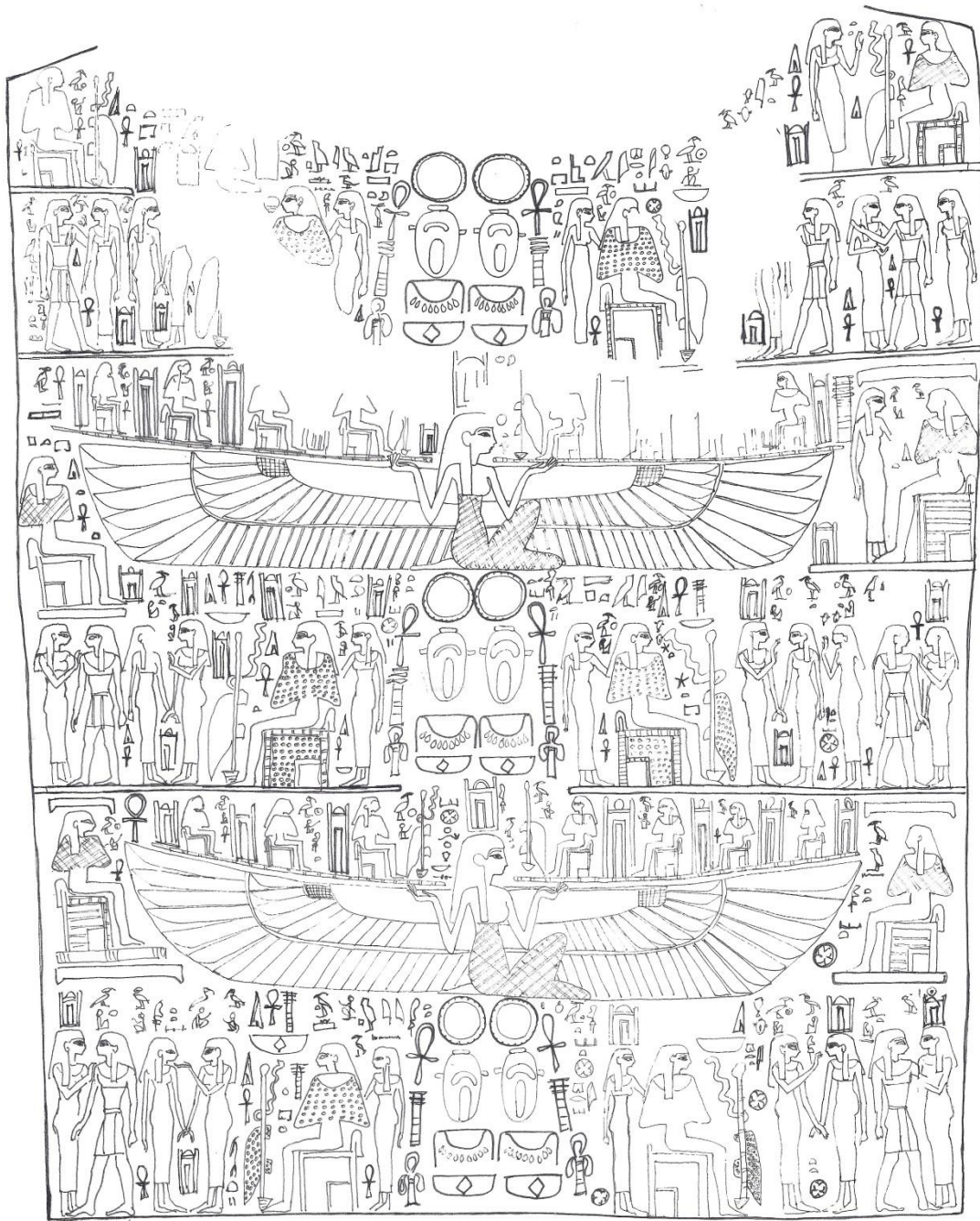


Fig.36 – Central panel. Outer coffin (A.32)

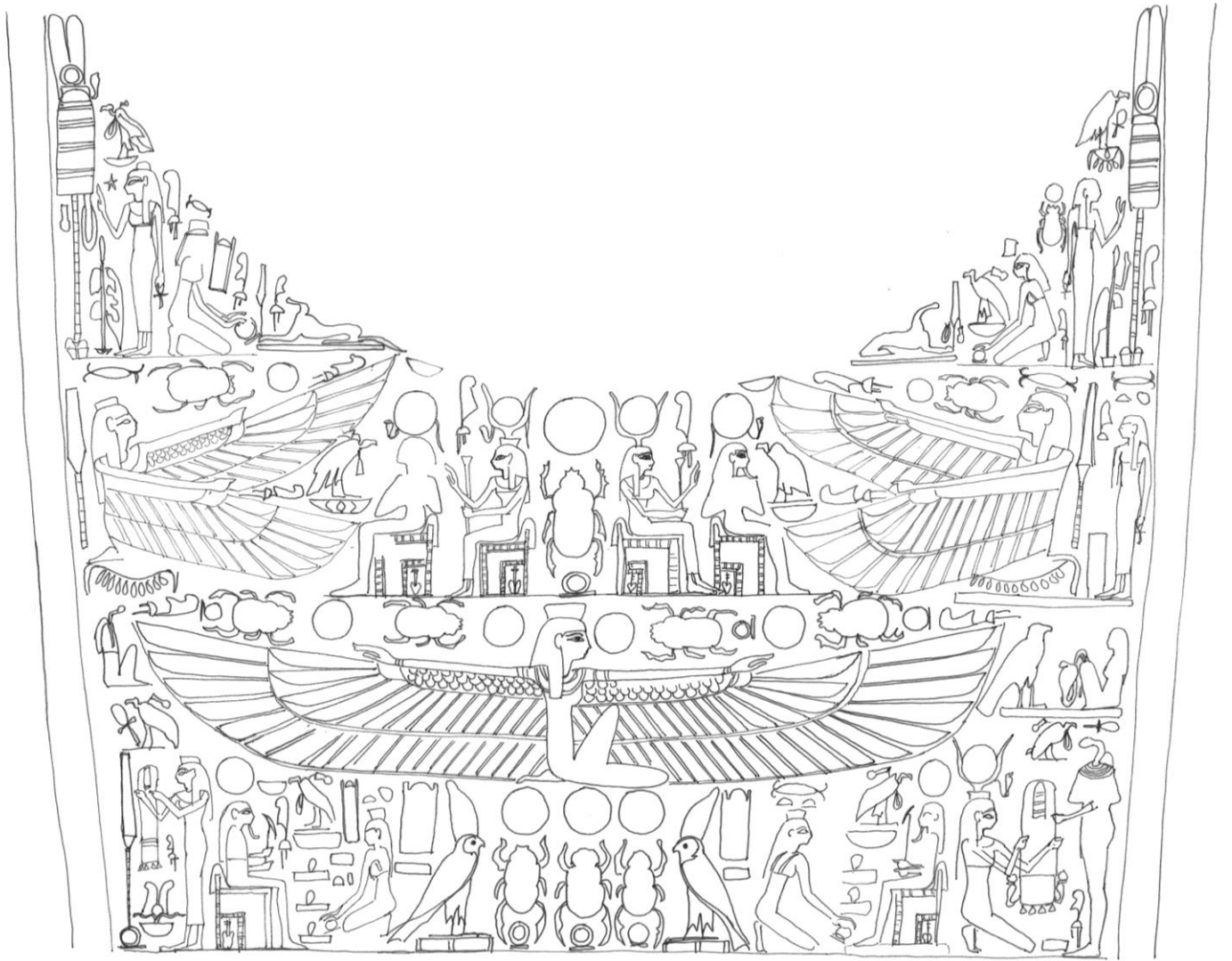


Fig. 37 – Central panel. Outer coffin (A.52)

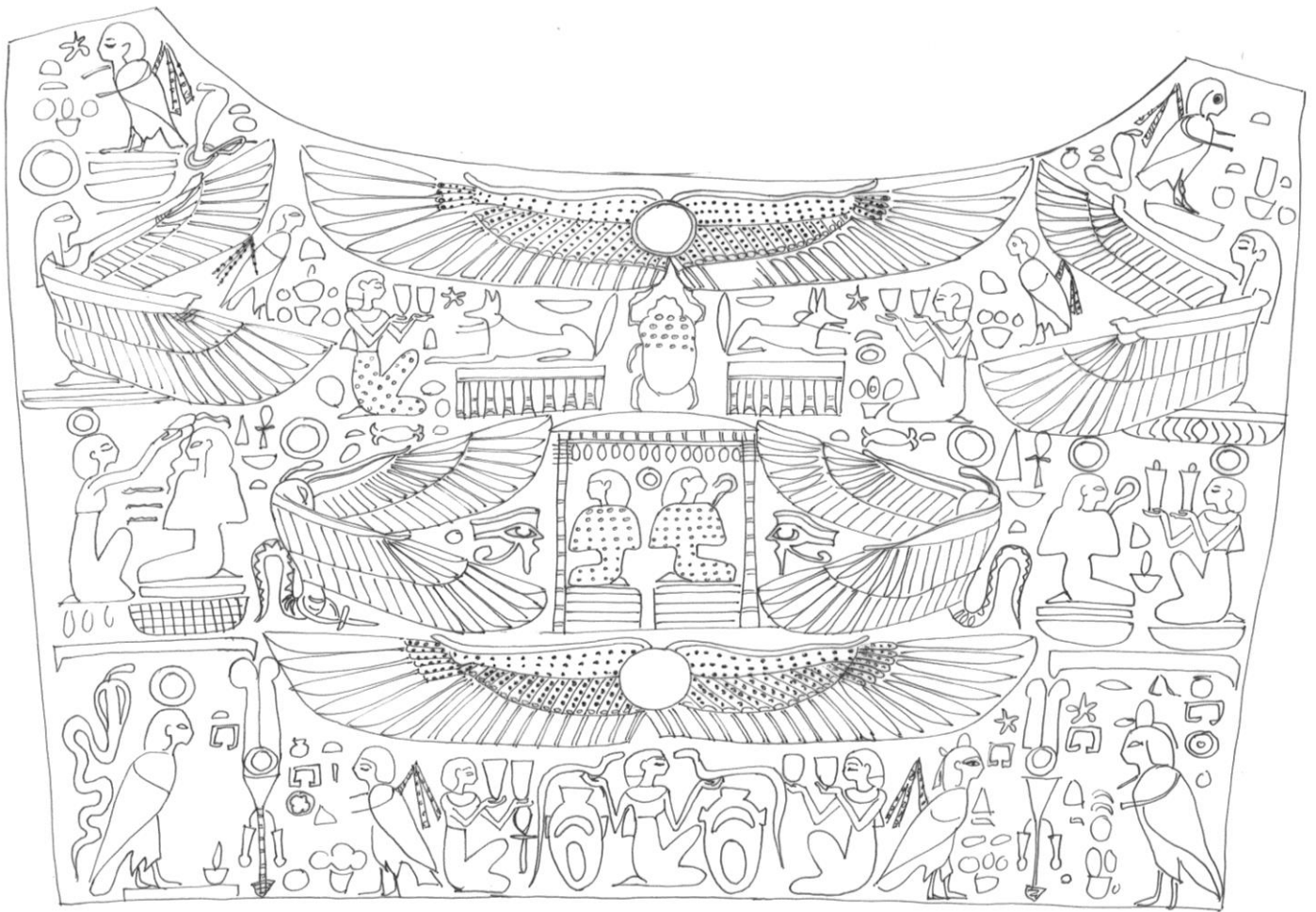


Fig. 38 – Central panel. Inner coffin (A.123)

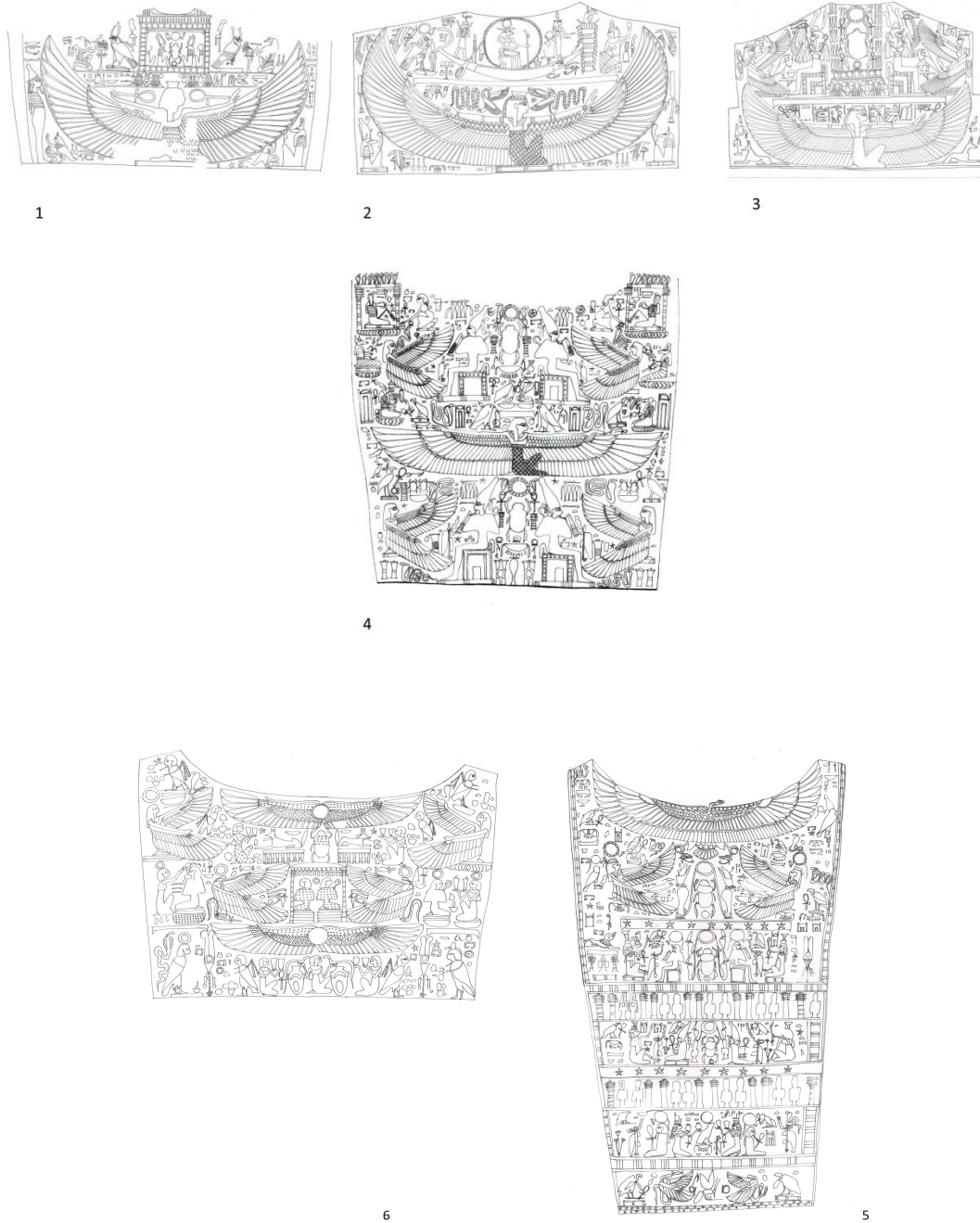


Fig. 39 – Types of nuclear blocks

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| (1) Naophoric pectoral | (4) Sacred scarab |
| (2) Solar barque | (5) Lustral elements |
| (3) Pectoral with a scarab | (6) Lustral elements |

CHAPTER V – GATES OF THE BEYOND: THE LOWER SECTION

Traditionally, the lower section was simply decorated with a longitudinal band of inscriptions running down the center of the lid. During the Ramesside Period, this band was flanked by longitudinal partitions decorated with vignettes. By the mid-21st Dynasty, a new layout of the lower section was designed. Instead of the longitudinal band of inscriptions, a central partition is displayed⁶⁷⁵, except in mummy-covers, where the lack of available space contributed to keeping the bipartite layout⁶⁷⁶. As a rule, the lateral partitions are decorated with chthonian mummiform deities, while the central partition features solar motifs alluding to the nightly journey of the sun. The composition of these areas changed considerably during the 21st Dynasty.

LATERAL PARTITIONS: BASIC SCHEME

Dating and style

In the basic scheme, the lateral partitions display a simple sequence normally including Osiris and the Sons of Horus (Fig. 40). This scheme is found in coffins dating from the end of the Ramesside Period to the first half of the 21st Dynasty⁶⁷⁷. It is consistently associated with other early features, such as the naturalistic style and the bipartite layout of the lower section.

Formal features

This sequence normally includes three registers:

- The first register displays a standing or enthroned Osiris. It is not uncommon to find the solar god Ptah-Sokar or Re-Horakhty in one of the lateral partitions, playing a complementary role with Osiris⁶⁷⁸. In this register it is frequent to find the deceased featured in a festive garment, in adoration or performing offerings⁶⁷⁹;

⁶⁷⁵ A.18 (coffin), A.95 (inner coffin). Inner coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁶⁷⁶ Mummy-covers decorated with the central partition are not common. See: A.9, A.10, A.18, A.54, A.102, A.133. Tauheret (DB 320), Nesikhonsu (BD 320), Asetemkhebit (DB 320). Padiamun (Luxor Mummification Museum), coffin of Gautseshen (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁶⁷⁷ Outer coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁶⁷⁸ Coffin of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus), coffin set of Herytubekhet (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich), mummy-cover of Hori (Kestner Museum).

⁶⁷⁹ Given the shape of the lid, the upper vignette is broader than the lower ones, allowing the depiction of more elements. See the outer coffin of Pasebakhaienipet (Brooklyn Museum).

- The second register is decorated with the four Sons of Horus (two gods on each partition);
- In the third register, a secondary deity is included. The jackal form of Anubis is common⁶⁸⁰, as well as the Hathoric cow⁶⁸¹. Also common is the depiction of the god Thoth performing a ritual or opening the sky (Fig. 40)⁶⁸².

Variations of this sequence are often formed with the addition of registers featuring the god Benu⁶⁸³, the enthroned god Thoth⁶⁸⁴, the Ta-wer totem⁶⁸⁵, or the god Heka⁶⁸⁶. Mythological motifs can be included in these sequences, such as the triad over a serpent⁶⁸⁷, or even guardian deities⁶⁸⁸.

LATERAL PARTITIONS: CLASSICAL SCHEME

Dating and style

The classical scheme is typically formed with at least three registers featuring Osiris, the avian form of Ptah-Sokar and mummiform gods (Fig. 41). This is by far the richest sequence of the ‘yellow’ corpus and it is often challenged in a variety of ways, resulting in vivid and beautifully designed compositions. This scheme is associated with coffins dating from the first half of the 21st Dynasty. It seems to have been formed as a variation of the basic sequence⁶⁸⁹, being normally associated with naturalistic style⁶⁹⁰ and excellent levels of craftsmanship. The transitional character of these sequences is

⁶⁸⁰ Outer coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁶⁸¹ A.115 (inner coffin).

⁶⁸² Mummy-cover of Herytubekhet (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich). Mummy-cover of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus). In these scenes, Thoth faces inwards, which is an exception to the rule observed in these coffins, where the main deities always face outwards.

⁶⁸³ Coffin of Panebmontu (Louvre Museum).

⁶⁸⁴ See mummy-cover of Hori (Kestner Museum). A.115 (inner coffin).

⁶⁸⁵ Outer coffin of Pinedjem II (DB 320). A.54 (inner coffin), A.113 (outer coffins), A.114 (inner coffin, mummy-cover). Mummy-cover of Nesipanebu (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden), coffin of Panebmontu (Louvre Museum), outer coffin of Pasebakhaienipet (Brooklyn Museum).

⁶⁸⁶ A.114 (mummy-cover).

⁶⁸⁷ A.109 (outer coffin).

⁶⁸⁸ A.114 (mummy-cover).

⁶⁸⁹ While in the former sequence, both Osiris and Ptah-Sokar figured on the first register, in this scheme the enthroned Osiris is featured in the first register, and Ptah-Sokar is displayed on the second register. It is thus likely that this sequence may have derived from the basic scheme. Outer coffin of Pinedjem II (DB 320).

⁶⁹⁰ Outer coffin of Pasebakhaienipet (Brooklyn Museum).

detected in their association either with the bipartite design⁶⁹¹ of the lower section or with a tripartite layout⁶⁹².

Formal features

Typically, this sequence includes three registers, one of them displaying the avian form of Ptah-Sokar (Fig. 41)⁶⁹³:

- The first register displays the enthroned Osiris;
- The second register shows the avian-form of Ptah-Sokar⁶⁹⁴;
- In the third register, one the following subjects might occur:
 - o Mummiform gods (Osiris⁶⁹⁵, Sons of Horus⁶⁹⁶, funerary triade standing on a serpent⁶⁹⁷, unnamed mummiform gods⁶⁹⁸);
 - o Guardian deities⁶⁹⁹;
 - o *Wedjat-eye*⁷⁰⁰.

Additional registers are often introduced below the three main registers, displaying squatted gods⁷⁰¹ or enthroned gods⁷⁰². Other subjects such as the jackal⁷⁰³, the cow-goddess⁷⁰⁴, or the recumbent figure of Osiris⁷⁰⁵ can also be found in this context.

Two important variations of this sequence are formed by adding an additional register.

Variation with the sacred ram

The sequence includes a sacred ram, according to the following scheme (Fig. 44):

- The first register displays an enthroned god. Usually, Osiris is featured on both sides⁷⁰⁶;

⁶⁹¹ A.114 (inner coffin).

⁶⁹² A.88 (coffin). This scheme can also be found in later coffins displaying an archaizing layout. See outer coffin of Pinedjem II (DB 320).

⁶⁹³ Outer coffin of Pinedjem II (DB 320). A.19 (coffin), A.114 (inner coffin). Outer coffin of Pasebakhaienipet (Brooklyn Museum).

⁶⁹⁴ Exceptionally, this god can also figure in mummiform guise. See A.95 (mummy-cover).

⁶⁹⁵ A.54 (outer coffin).

⁶⁹⁶ Outer coffin of Masaharta (DB 320). A.119 (inner coffin). Coffin of Anresenmes (Metropolitan Museum of Art), mummy-cover of Khonsuhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden).

⁶⁹⁷ A.88 (coffin), A.111 (mummy-cover). Mummy-cover of Nespawershefyt (Fitzwilliam Museum).

⁶⁹⁸ A.2 (mummy-cover).

⁶⁹⁹ Mummy-cover of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin).

⁷⁰⁰ A.20 (coffin).

⁷⁰¹ A.111 (mummy-cover).

⁷⁰² Mummy-cover of Pinedjem II (DB 320).

⁷⁰³ A.88 (coffin).

⁷⁰⁴ A.119 (inner coffin). Coffin of Anresenmes (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁷⁰⁵ A.151 (outer coffin).

- The second register shows the avian-form of Ptah-Sokar;
- The third register is decorated with the sacred ram⁷⁰⁷. The sacred ram is normally depicted on a shrine⁷⁰⁸ (var.: *nwb*-sign⁷⁰⁹ or a divine standard⁷¹⁰). Variations to this scheme may include the depiction of the sacred ram in one partition and the avian form of Ptah-Sokar in the opposite one (Fig. 41)⁷¹¹;
- Additional vignettes may display a wide repertoire of motifs, such as the Sons of Horus, the Ta-wer totem⁷¹², the Anubis jackal⁷¹³, standing mummiform gods⁷¹⁴, squatted gods⁷¹⁵, enthroned deities (such as Hathor⁷¹⁶, Osiris⁷¹⁷, Thoth⁷¹⁸ or Benu⁷¹⁹). The recumbent Osiris⁷²⁰ or the funerary triade standing over a coiled cobra can also be detected as variations⁷²¹.

Variation with the ba-bird

Another important variation of the classical scheme consists in the depiction of the *ba*-bird, typically following the scheme described below⁷²²:

- The first register shows the enthroned Osiris;
- In the second register is displayed the avian-form of Ptah-Sokar;
- The third register features the *ba*-bird;
- Additional registers may include:
 - *Wedjat*-eye;

⁷⁰⁶ However, Osiris can be shown in one partition and Sokar on the other. See outer coffin of Masaharta (DB 320). Mummy-cover of Khonsumose (Museo Egizio in Turin), coffin of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum).

⁷⁰⁷ A.105 (outer coffin). Coffin of Khonsumose (Museo Egizio in Turin), mummy-cover of Khonsumose (Museo Egizio in Turin).

⁷⁰⁸ A.77 (outer coffin).

⁷⁰⁹ A.12 (mummy-cover).

⁷¹⁰ Coffin and mummy-cover of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden).

⁷¹¹ Outer coffin of Masaharta (DB 320). A.12 (mummy-cover). Coffin of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum), coffin of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden), coffin of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus).

⁷¹² Coffin of Amenemhat (Museo Arqueológico Nacional de Madrid).

⁷¹³ Inner coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁷¹⁴ Inner coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁷¹⁵ A.16 (inner coffin), A.113 (mummy-cover). Coffin of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin), coffin set of Khonsuhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden), coffin of Yutefamun (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁷¹⁶ Coffin of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum).

⁷¹⁷ Inner coffin of Nesikhonsu (DB 320). A.95 (coffin).

⁷¹⁸ Coffin of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus).

⁷¹⁹ Coffin of Tanatnektahat (Michael Carlos Museum).

⁷²⁰ Coffin of an anonymous woman (Vatican Museums), outer coffin of Sutimes (Louvre Museum).

⁷²¹ Coffin of Henut-taui (Museum of Fine Arts in Boston).

⁷²² Inner coffin and mummy-cover of Tauheret (DB 320). A.38 (inner coffin), A.60 (mummy-cover), A.88 (mummy-cover), A.147 (mummy-cover). Coffin set (Los Angeles County Museum of Art).

- Mummiform god.

This sequence seems to be slightly later. The depiction of the *ba*-bird in this context is probably rooted in the depiction of the sacred ram (also meaning ‘*ba*’). An interesting aspect of this motif is the depiction of the *ba*-bird in the centrifugal block, as opposed to the depictions of the deceased which always figures in the centripetal block. The *ba*-bird thus fully enjoys a divine status bolder than the deceased himself⁷²³. Iconography reinforces the divine status of the *ba*-bird featuring this motif resting on a false-door⁷²⁴ or on a divine standard⁷²⁵. The divine bird is adored by the deceased himself⁷²⁶.

This scheme is sometimes complemented with an additional register depicting mummiform gods⁷²⁷ or *wedjat*-eyes⁷²⁸. Occasionally, more complex vignettes may occur, such as the depiction of three mummiform gods over a coiled cobra⁷²⁹.

LATERAL PARTITIONS: COMPLEX SCHEME

Dating and style

In the complex scheme, all the registers depict deities of the underworld, most of them in mummiform guise (Fig. 42). These sequences are typically found in coffins dating from the second half of the 21st Dynasty. The style is highly schematic and the layout of the vignettes is standardized⁷³⁰. Sequences of this type are consistently found with other late features, such as the tripartite arrangement of the lower section.

Formal features

Mummiform gods⁷³¹ can be depicted enthroned, standing, squatted or in a recumbent position (Fig. 42)⁷³².

The number of registers is highly variable but three registers form the more usual sequence⁷³³, normally displaying the following composition (Figs. 45-46):

⁷²³It is worthy to note that occurrences of the *ba*-bird are frequent on the sequences previously discussed, where they figure in the centripetal blocks, the usual setting for the manifestations of the deceased – either as a living one, a mummy or a *ba*-bird. Outer coffin of Tauheret (DB 320).

⁷²⁴A.38 (inner coffin). Coffin set (Los Angeles County Museum of Art).

⁷²⁵Mummy-cover (Michael Carlos Museum).

⁷²⁶A.38 (inner coffin).

⁷²⁷A.147 (mummy-cover). Mummy-cover (Los Angeles County Museum of Art).

⁷²⁸A.29 (mummy-cover), A.60 (mummy-cover). Mummy-cover (Michael Carlos Museum).

⁷²⁹A.88 (mummy-cover).

⁷³⁰A.2 (mummy-cover), A.54 (outer coffin).

⁷³¹Exceptionally, these gods might be depicted as living deities: Outer coffin and mummy-cover of Maatkare (DB 320). A.33 (outer coffin). Outer coffin of Butehamun (Museo Egizio in Turin).

⁷³²A.142 (outer coffin).

- The first register displays the deceased before the enthroned Osiris;
- The second register shows a mummiform god (enthroned, squatted or standing);
- In the third register, one of the Sons of Horus is depicted.

Variation with ritual scenes

In later coffins, the area of the lower section is normally reduced. And yet, the number of registers is kept (normally three registers are detected). The Osirian gods are still the main focus of the vignettes but elaborate cult scenes are now added showing the deceased escorted by a group of deities (Fig. 48)⁷³⁴.

The composition of each register is slightly similar, showing a cult scene performed by the deceased and other gods before the Osirian shrine (Fig. 48-49).

It is interesting to point out that decorative friezes featuring *djed* and *tjet*-signs are now used to bind the vignettes instead of the traditional hieroglyphic bands (Fig. 47-48)⁷³⁵.

The importance of the cult scenes is such that at times they are duplicated in the same register (Fig. 47)⁷³⁶. In these scenes, the divine agents of the cult are clearly the main subject and sometimes the deceased is entirely overlooked (Fig. 47).

Variation with liminal elements

By the end of the 21st Dynasty, very irregular sequences can be observed. Besides mummiform deities, other motifs are added forming sequences out of any predictable pattern⁷³⁷. One has the impression that these motifs are used as liminal elements, thus depicted in a very loose way (Fig. 50).

CENTRAL PARTITION: CLASSICAL SCHEME

Dating and style

This sequence is formed with intertwined scenes featuring the solar scarab and sacred totems (Ta-wer and *sekhem*) – See Fig. 43. This pattern is consistently associated with lateral partitions featuring the classical sequence (Fig. 44)⁷³⁸. In objects from a later

⁷³³ Up to five registers might be found, but this situation remains exceptional. See inner coffin of Asetemkhebit (DB 320). A.26 (mummy-cover), A.84 (inner coffin).

⁷³⁴ A.52 (outer coffin), A.60 (outer coffin).

⁷³⁵ A.52 (outer coffin).

⁷³⁶ A.52 (outer coffin), A.123 (outer and inner coffin).

⁷³⁷ A.123 (inner coffin): Three *ba*-birds (1st register), squatted gods (2nd register), standing gods (3rd register), Anubis jackal (4th register).

⁷³⁸ Outer coffin of Tauheret (DB 320). A.16 (coffin), A.68 (inner coffin), A.105 (outer coffin). Coffin of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden), inner coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum

dating, this diversity is shortened⁷³⁹ and only one of the totems is included: the Ta-wer totem⁷⁴⁰ or the *sekhem*-scepter⁷⁴¹.

Formal features

This type of sequence displays intertwined scenes depicting solar motifs and sacred objects (Ta-wer, *djed*-pillar or *sekhem*). Less often, all the vignettes depict winged scarabs (Fig. 45)⁷⁴².

The solar vignettes are headed by cornices and bounded by block-friezes (Fig. 43). The solar scarab normally holds up the solar disk with the forelegs and the *shen*-ring with the hind legs. The following compositions are prevalent:

- **Winged scarab on a solar barque**⁷⁴³. Sometimes, the scene displays elaborate details, such as the solar child squatted on the prow of the barque, or fishes emerging from the bottom line as if pulling out from the water (Fig. 43)⁷⁴⁴;
- **Winged scarab hanging from a necklace**, flanked by:
 - Squatted mummiform gods;
 - *Wedjat*-eyes⁷⁴⁵.
- **Winged scarab** flanked by cobras facing outwards⁷⁴⁶;
- **Scarab** flanked by⁷⁴⁷:
 - Mummiform (standing⁷⁴⁸, enthroned⁷⁴⁹ or squatted⁷⁵⁰) gods⁷⁵¹;
 - *Ba*-birds⁷⁵²;

of Art), coffin of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin), coffin of Amenemhat (Museo Arqueologico Nacional Madrid), coffin of Nani (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁷³⁹ As usually, exceptions can always be found: inner coffin of Nesikhonsu (DB 320), A.148 (outer coffin).

⁷⁴⁰ Outer coffin of Pinedjem II (DB 320). A.54 (inner coffin), A.102 (mummy-cover), A.133 (inner coffin), A.148 (outer coffin), outer coffin of Ikhy (Vatican Museums).

⁷⁴¹ A.4 (coffin), A.12 (mummy-cover), A.74 (outer coffin and inner coffin). Outer coffin of Tabakmut.

⁷⁴² A.136 (outer coffin).

⁷⁴³ inner coffin of Nesikhonsu (DB 320). Inner coffin of Henut-tai (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁷⁴⁴ Coffin of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden).

⁷⁴⁵ Outer coffin of Tauheret (DB 320). Coffin of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin), coffin of a man (Los Angeles County Museum of Art), coffin of Tanatnektahat (Michael Carlos Museum)

⁷⁴⁶ Coffin of Pahereniset (Museo Egizio in Turin).

⁷⁴⁷ One of the few exceptions to this rule is found on the outer coffin of A.28.

⁷⁴⁸ A.77 (outer coffin).

⁷⁴⁹ Coffin of Amenemhat (Museo Arqueologico Nacional de Madrid), outer coffin of Tabakmut (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁷⁵⁰ A.18 (coffin), A.15 (outer coffin), A.132 (outer coffin), A.151 (outer coffin). Inner coffin of Henut-tai (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁷⁵¹ Usually, the scarab is flanked by two deities, but sometimes four gods are attested.

- Avian form of the god Ptah-Sokar⁷⁵³;
 - Solar cobras facing outwards⁷⁵⁴;
 - Ta-wer totems⁷⁵⁵.
- **Solar disk** rising from the lotus flower (sometimes with a ram's head depicted within).

It is interesting to point out that vignettes displaying sacred objects are not bounded by a formal framework (Fig. 43). They include the following motifs:

- **Ta-wer totem.** It is normally flanked by:
 - Mourning goddesses (Nephthys and Isis)⁷⁵⁶;
 - (Winged) cobras⁷⁵⁷;
 - Avian deities (Ptah-Sokar⁷⁵⁸, *ba*-birds⁷⁵⁹);
 - Mummiform gods⁷⁶⁰;
 - Liminal elements (vultures, *shetjyt*-shrines, cobras, etc.)⁷⁶¹.
- **Sekhem-scepter**⁷⁶² with the Anubis jackal and a pile of offerings⁷⁶³. As the previous motif, it can be flanked by:
 - Mourning goddesses, Isis and Nephthys⁷⁶⁴;
 - *Wedjat*-eyes and (winged) cobras⁷⁶⁵;
 - Avian deities (*ba*-birds⁷⁶⁶, Ptah-Sokar⁷⁶⁷, vultures⁷⁶⁸);

⁷⁵² Coffin of Amenemhat (Museo Arqueologico Nacional de Madrid), coffin of Nani (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁷⁵³ Outer coffin of Tauheret (DB 320).

⁷⁵⁴ A.95 (mummy-cover).

⁷⁵⁵ A.142 (outer coffin).

⁷⁵⁶ Coffin of A.2. Coffin of Tanatnektahat (Michael Carlos Museum), inner coffin of Henut-tai (Metropolitan Museum of Art), coffin of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin), inner coffin of Nesikhonsu (DB 320), outer coffin of Pinedjem II (DB 320).

⁷⁵⁷ A.54 (inner coffin), A.68 (inner coffin). Coffin of Amenemhat (Museo Arqueologico Nacional Madrid), inner coffin of Nesikhonsu (DB 320), outer coffin of Ikhy (Vatican Museums).

⁷⁵⁸ Outer coffin of Tauheret (DB 320).

⁷⁵⁹ Inner coffin of Tauheret (DB 320), coffin of Nani (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁷⁶⁰ Anonymous coffin (Carnegie Museum of Natural History).

⁷⁶¹ A.15 (outer coffin), A.133 (mummy-cover), A.147 (inner coffin), A.148 (mummy-cover).

⁷⁶² The *sekhem*-scepter, meaning 'the powerful', is a shaft in the form of a papyrus flower and stem, used as a symbol of authority. The ritual context involved in the scenes could allude to the *aba*-scepter, a similarly depicted object which was held by the officiant who presented the offerings. However, the paramount role of this symbol makes clear that its significance falls well beyond its ritual role, alluding to rebirth. Gilbert, Holt, Hudson 1977, n° 52.

⁷⁶³ Coffin of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden).

⁷⁶⁴ A.12 (coffin), A.142 (inner coffin). Inner coffin of Nesikhonsu (DB 320), coffin of Nani (Metropolitan Museum of Art), coffin of Pahereniset (Museo Egizio in Turin).

⁷⁶⁵ A.105 (outer coffin). Inner coffin of Henut-tai (Metropolitan Museum of Art), coffin of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin), coffin of Amenemhat (Museo Arqueologico Nacional Madrid).

⁷⁶⁶ Coffin set of Tauheret (DB 320).

- Mummiform gods⁷⁶⁹.
- *Djed-pillar* (with solar headdress). It can be flanked by:
 - *Wedjat*-eyes and (winged) cobras (Fig. 44)⁷⁷⁰.

CENTRAL PARTITION: COMPLEX SCHEME

Dating and style

In these sequences, all the vignettes display solar motifs. This arrangement is typically found from the mid-21st Dynasty onwards and it is associated with lateral partitions featuring the complex sequence (Fig. 45-46). These coffins are designed after the schematic style, showing a highly standardized decoration.

Formal features

The vignettes of the central partition feature the sacred scarab (var.: solar child⁷⁷¹) as the nuclear block of a centripetal composition. The solar motif rises from a lotus flower⁷⁷², *nub*-sign⁷⁷³ or a *neb*-basket⁷⁷⁴.

Centripetal blocks flank the central solar motif, normally using liminal elements such as *shetjyt*-shrines⁷⁷⁵, vultures⁷⁷⁶, cobras⁷⁷⁷ and mummiform gods (enthroned⁷⁷⁸, squatted⁷⁷⁹ or standing⁷⁸⁰) or goddesses (Fig. 48)⁷⁸¹.

Squatted gods or sacred animals are frequently depicted resting on a variety of *heb*-bowls, *neb*-baskets, *nwb*-signs, *shetjyt*-shrines and others (Fig. 46).

⁷⁶⁷ A.68 (inner coffin).

⁷⁶⁸ A.74 (inner coffin), A.133 (mummy-cover), A.147 (inner coffin), A.148 (outer coffin and mummy-cover).

⁷⁶⁹ A.4 (coffin), A.74 (outer coffin). Outer coffin of Tabakmut (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁷⁷⁰ A.60 (inner coffin).

⁷⁷¹ A.132 (outer coffin).

⁷⁷² A.132 (outer coffin).

⁷⁷³ A.142 (outer coffin).

⁷⁷⁴ Inner coffin of Tabakmut (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁷⁷⁵ A.26 (inner coffin).

⁷⁷⁶ A.10 (mummy-cover), A.27 (coffin), A.110 (coffin).

⁷⁷⁷ A.10 (mummy-cover), A.26 (inner coffin), A.131 (outer and inner coffin), A.149 (inner coffin), A.151 (outer coffin).

⁷⁷⁸ A.18 (coffin), A.33 (coffin), A.142 (outer coffin). Inner coffin of Tabakmut (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁷⁷⁹ A.18 (coffin), A.60 (outer coffin), A.142 (outer coffin), A.151 (outer coffin). Inner coffin of Tabakmut (Metropolitan Museum of Art), anonymous coffin (British Museum).

⁷⁸⁰ Coffin of Hori (Museo Egizio in Turin).

⁷⁸¹ A.132 (outer coffin).

Variation with liminal elements as nuclear blocks

In the late 21st Dynasty, liminal elements can be used as nuclear blocks of these compositions. The most usual motifs involved in these compositions are:

- *Tyet*-sign, flanked by:
 - Scarabs (Fig. 47)⁷⁸², West-signs⁷⁸³, *Djed*-pillars⁷⁸⁴, mummiform gods⁷⁸⁵ or cobras⁷⁸⁶.
- *Djed*-pillar flanked by:
 - Mummiform gods⁷⁸⁷ or *tyet*-signs⁷⁸⁸.
- Heart-*ib* flanked by:
 - Enthroned mummiform gods (Fig. 49)⁷⁸⁹, bees⁷⁹⁰ or *tyet*-signs (Fig. 50)⁷⁹¹.
- Royal cartouche flanked by cobras⁷⁹²;
- *Ankh*-sign flanked by bees⁷⁹³;
- *Ba*-bird flanked by:
 - *Shetjyt*-shrines⁷⁹⁴;
 - Sacred cobras⁷⁹⁵.
- Squatted mummiform god flanked by liminal elements⁷⁹⁶;
- Avian form of the god Ptah-Sokar⁷⁹⁷.

The variety of liminal elements increases and secondary motifs may include motifs such as falcons or bees⁷⁹⁸, *ba*-birds⁷⁹⁹, winged *wedjat*-eyes or hieroglyphic signs (*tyet*-sign⁸⁰⁰, *djed*⁸⁰¹, *shemsw*, *ankh*).

⁷⁸² A.26 (inner coffin), A.52 (outer coffin). Anonymous coffin (British Museum).

⁷⁸³ A.2 (mummy-cover).

⁷⁸⁴ Anonymous coffin (Náprstkovo Museum).

⁷⁸⁵ A.56 (outer coffin), A.131 (inner and outer coffin), A.149 (outer coffin);

⁷⁸⁶ A.26 (inner coffin).

⁷⁸⁷ Coffin of Khonsuhotep (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek).

⁷⁸⁸ Anonymous coffin (Náprstkovo Museum).

⁷⁸⁹ A.32 (outer coffin).

⁷⁹⁰ A.123 (outer coffin).

⁷⁹¹ A.123 (inner coffin).

⁷⁹² A.54 (outer coffin).

⁷⁹³ A.123 (inner coffin).

⁷⁹⁴ A.123 (outer coffin).

⁷⁹⁵ A.123 (outer coffin).

⁷⁹⁶ Coffin of Pashedkhonsu (Michael Carlos Museum).

⁷⁹⁷ Mummy-cover Gautseshen (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁷⁹⁸ A.18 (coffin).

⁷⁹⁹ A.5 (coffin), A.10 (inner coffin). Coffin of Khonsumose (Museo Egizio in Turin),.

⁸⁰⁰ A.10 (mummy-cover), A.123 (inner coffin), A.149 (inner coffin).

⁸⁰¹ A.110 (coffin).

These vignettes can be found together with other motifs featuring a more conservative structure⁸⁰², or arranged exclusively with other vignettes featuring hieroglyphic compositions⁸⁰³.

GENERAL INTERPRETATION

In the ‘yellow’ type, the longitudinal band, traditionally associated with the protection given by the heavenly mother, becomes the axis of a ‘diptych’ formed by two longitudinal partitions illustrated with motifs borrowed from Chapter 151 of the Book of the Dead: Osiris, the four Sons of Horus and Thoth.

The main subjects depicted on this diptych are chthonian gods such as Osiris, Ptah-Sokar and solar gods, such as Benu and Re-Horakhty. Variations of this sequence include sacred images borrowed from the cultic context of the Theban necropolis, such as the avian form of Ptah-Sokar on occasions depicted together with the sacred ram of Amun (seen as the *ba* of the supreme god) along with other underworld deities. Each one of these deities is depicted inside a shrine of his own. The overall layout of this diptych irresistibly suggests the decoration of a sacred door, which given the context should be seen as a heavenly gate. This significance is highlighted with the depiction of the god Thoth, often shown opening the gates of heaven.

In the mid-21st Dynasty, a new partition was introduced within the decorative scheme of the lower section, transforming this area into a ‘triptych’. At first, solar motifs were intertwined with sacred objects with Solar-Osirian significance (Ta-wer totem, *sekhem*). It is interesting to note that the dynamic succession between the upper and the lower registers. In the lateral partitions, the reading progresses from the upper registers to the lower registers, suggesting the ritual progression of the deceased that performs rituals before a community of gods, each one of them depicted in his own shrine. On the other hand, the central partition suggests a solar ‘ascent’ from the lower registers to the upper levels, which progresses upwards to the central panel.

This reading was highlighted with the neat division of the solar and Osirian subjects that occurs in the complex scheme. In these objects, the central partition became exclusively associated with solar symbols, while the Osirian motifs dominated the lateral partitions. In this layout, the central partition became the solar axis of an otherwise heavily Osirian

⁸⁰² A.26 (inner coffin), A.54 (outer coffin). Anonymous coffin (British Museum).

⁸⁰³ A.32 (outer coffin), A.123 (outer coffin). Anonymous coffin (Náprstkovo Museum).

composition. The solar character of the central partition is rooted in the original significance of the longitudinal band of inscriptions. In other words, the central partition gave an iconographic rendering to the solar significance of the longitudinal band of text. The profusion of architectonic details involved in the depiction of each shrine is such that the global layout of the lower section results heavily affected by its architectonic decoration. On the lateral partitions, these shrines are depicted in side view, while on the central partition they are depicted frontally, frequently showing a cornice and a (winged) solar disk, as observed on sacred gates.

The heavy architectonic layout of the lower section is enhanced by the triptych itself, often suggesting the frontal and side views of multiple shrines. This arrangement echoes the decoration of the underground galleries of the Ramesside royal tombs, where the main passage is often flanked by columns depicting the Pharaoh before the deities of the underworld, while the ceiling shows solar compositions describing the nightly journey of the Sun god through the sacred gates of the netherworld. This reading of the lower section suggests a clear association with the royal compositions of the Amduat.

With its different variations, the classical and complex layout of the lower section thus illustrates the nightly journey of the Sun god through the Netherworld aiming at the union with Osiris (this union is featured on the central panel). In each vignette of the central partition, the Sun god is depicted crossing one gate of the netherworld, flanked and protected by the gods of the underworld or by liminal elements providing the protection of the heavenly mother goddess (vultures, cobras, falcons, bees).

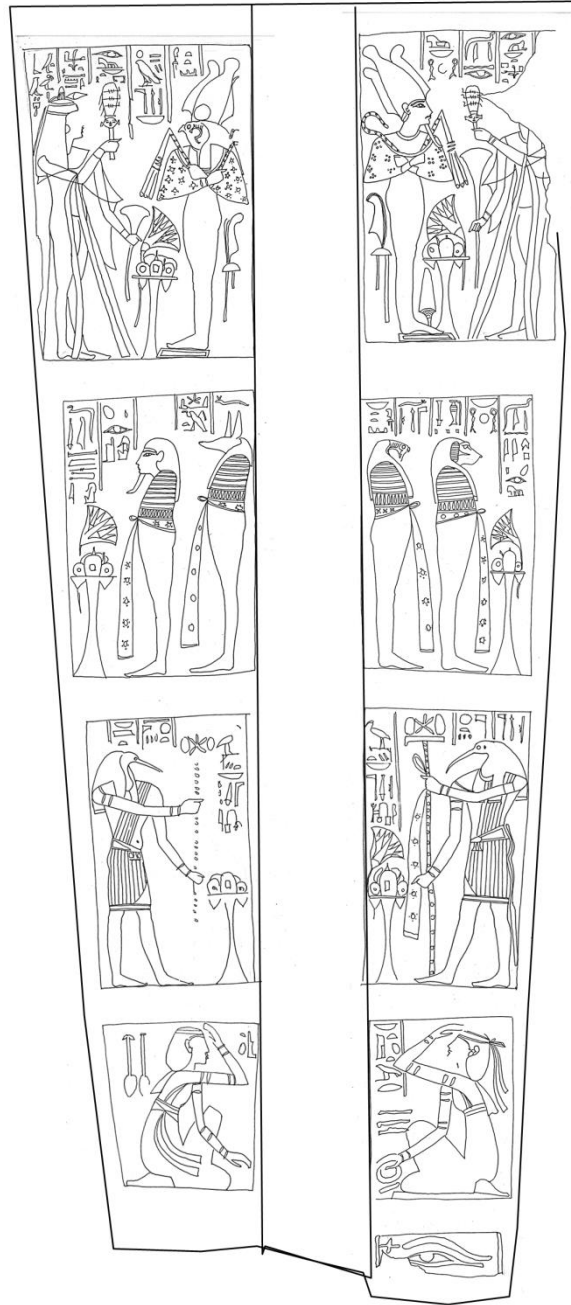


Fig. 40 – Lower section. Mummy-cover of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus)

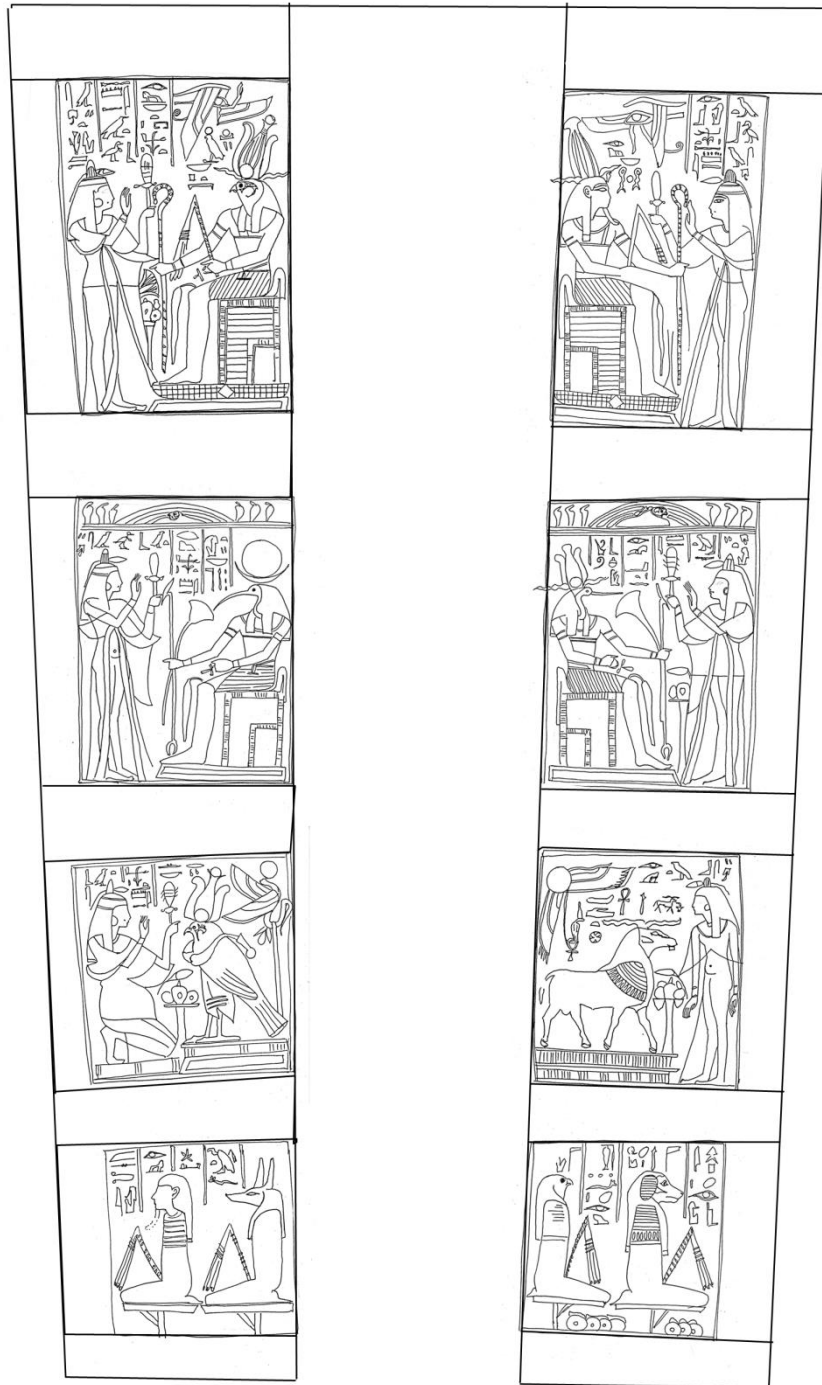


Fig. 41 – Lower section. Coffin of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus)

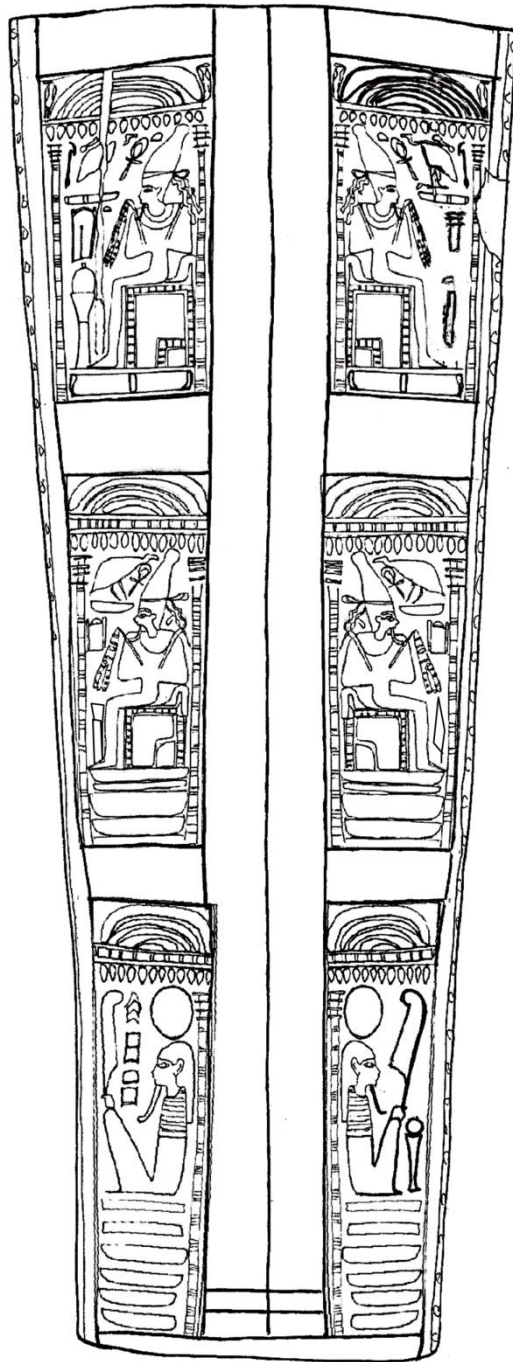


Fig. 42 – Lower section. Mummy-cover (A.110)

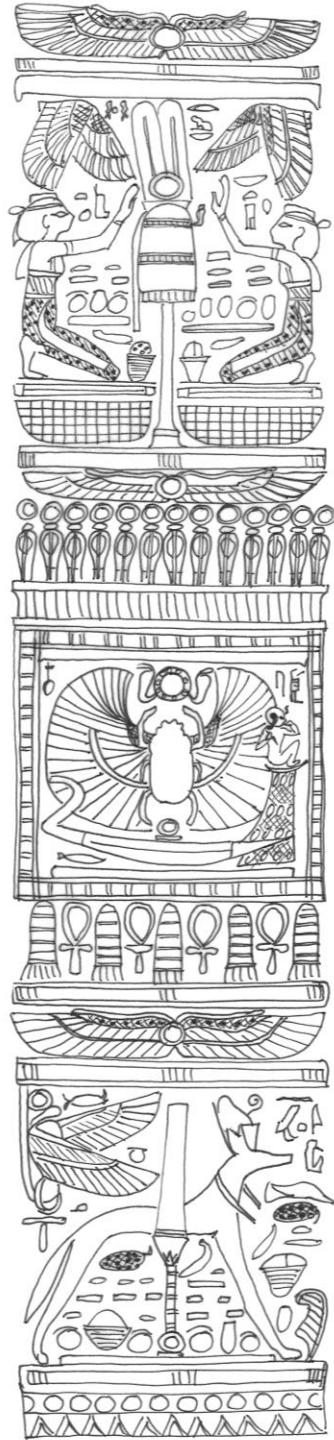


Fig. 43 – Lower section. Coffin of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden)

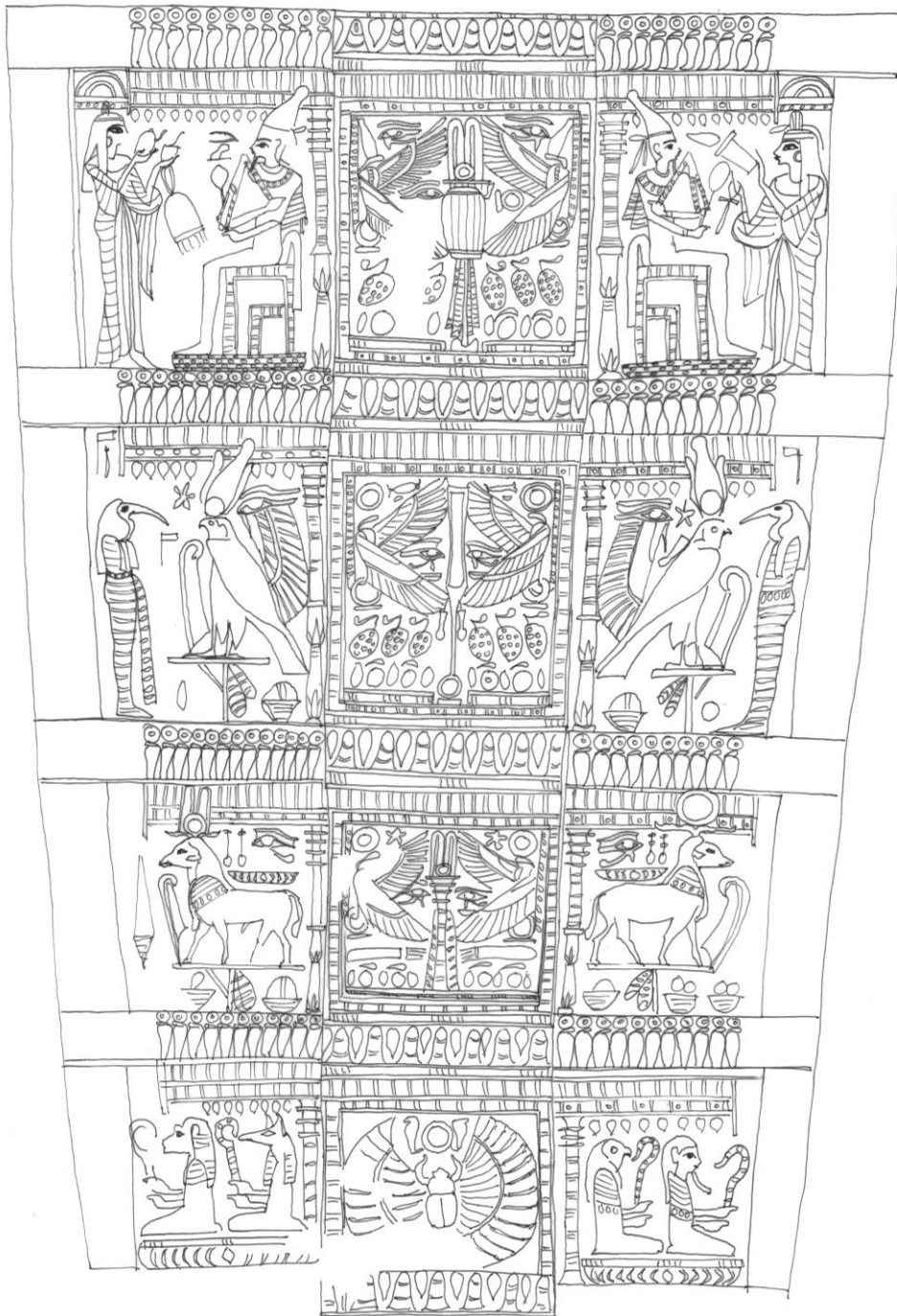


Fig. 44 – Lower section. Inner coffin (A.60)

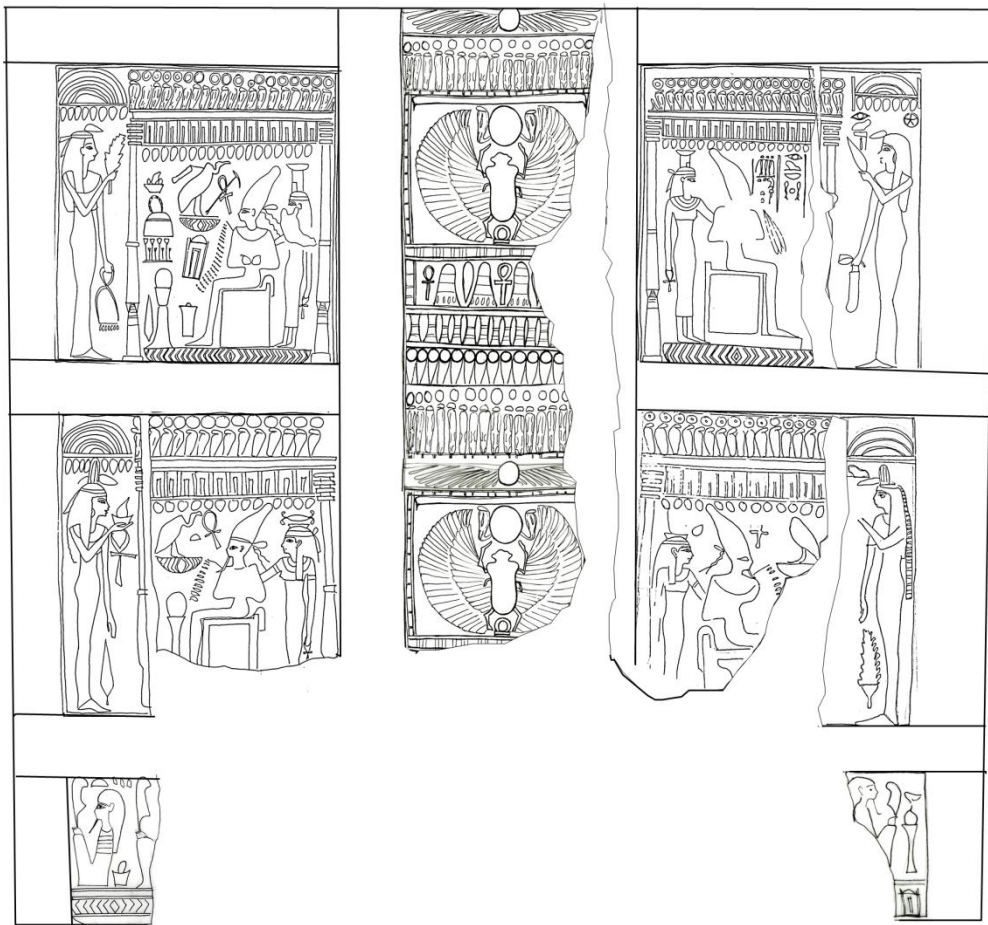


Fig. 45 – Lower section. Outer coffin (A.136)

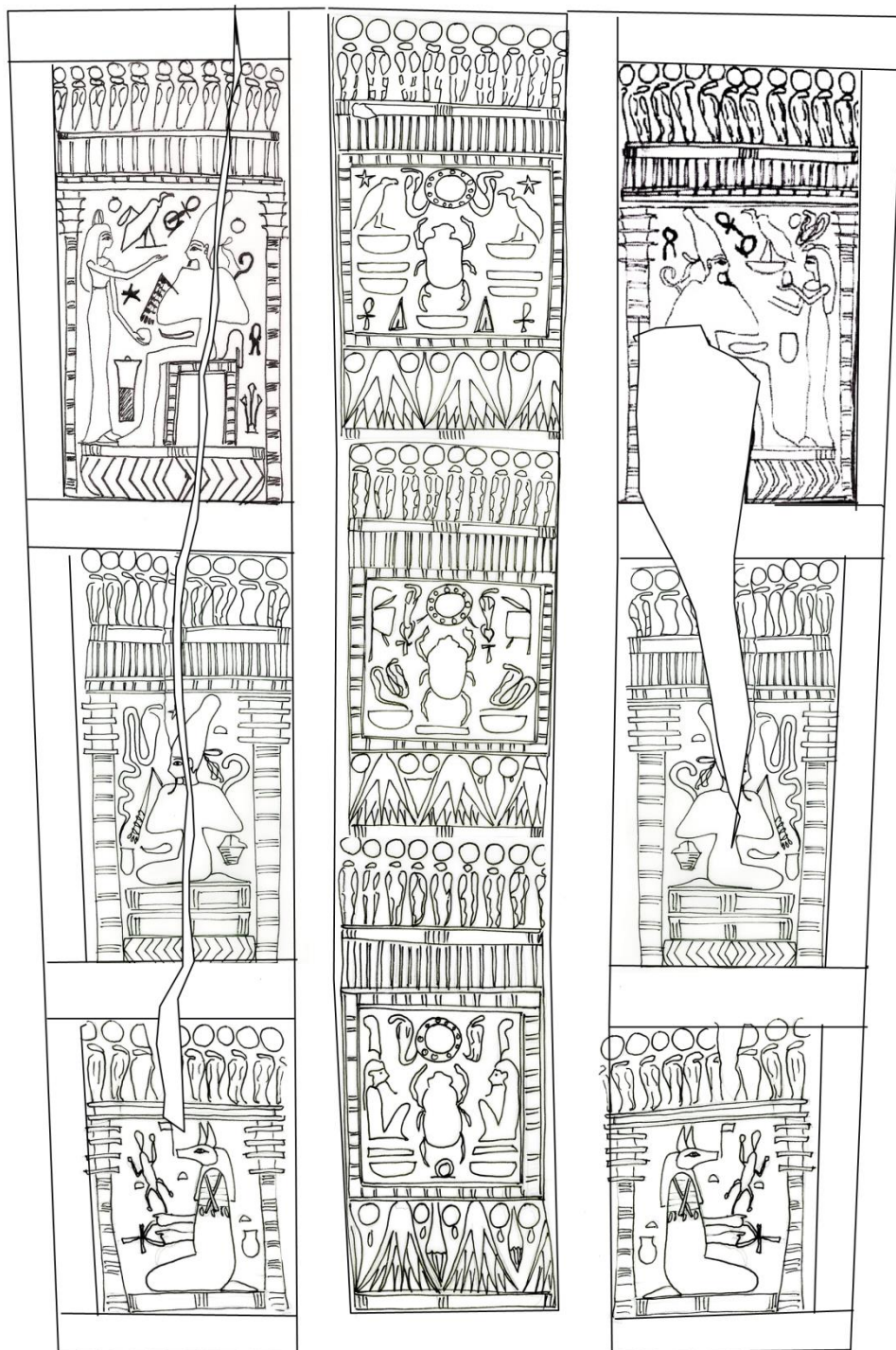


Fig. 46 – Lower section. Coffin (A.110)

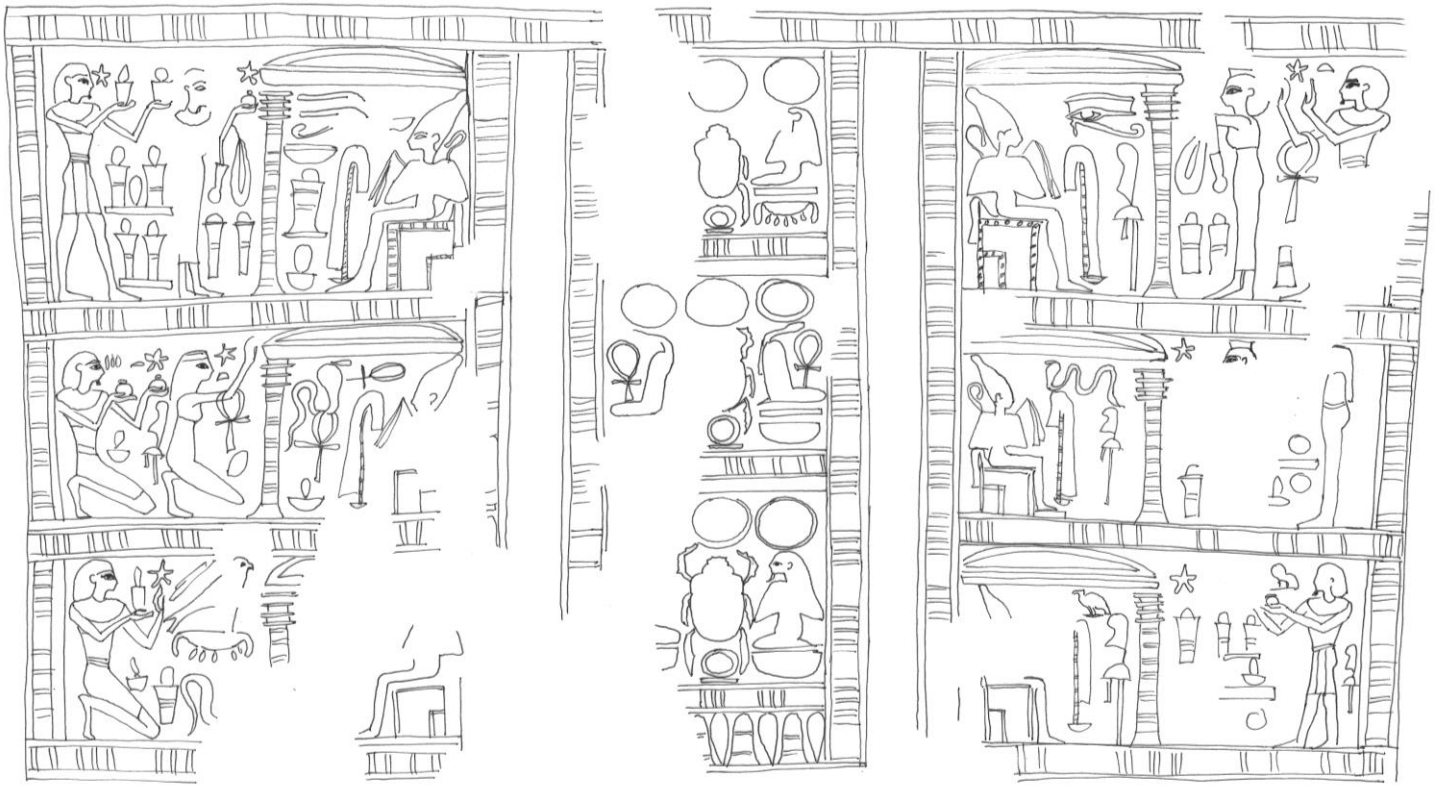


Fig. 48 – Lower section. Outer coffin (A.60)

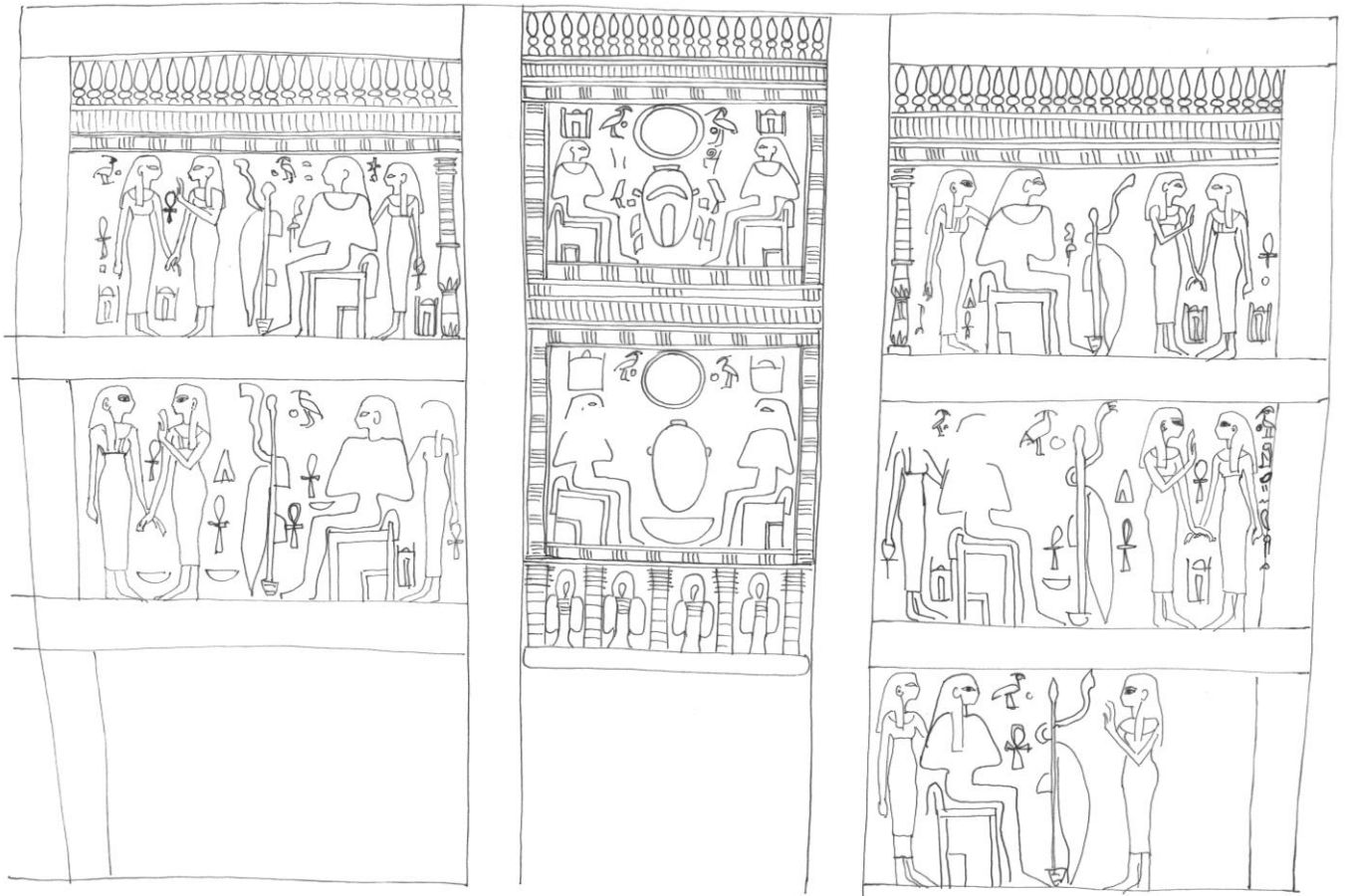


Fig. 48 – Lower section. Outer coffin (A.32)

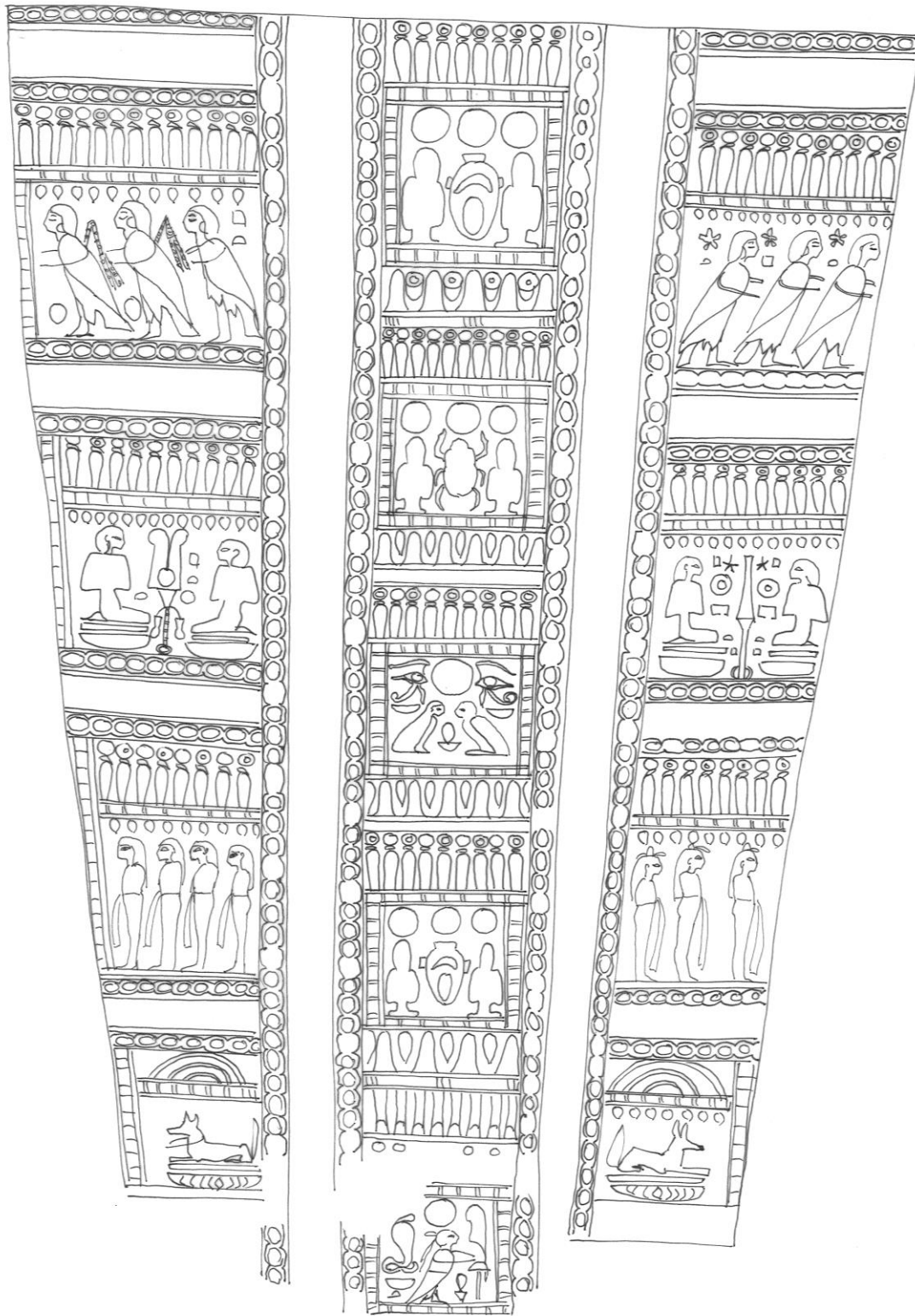


Fig. 49 – Lower section. Inner coffin (A.123)

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CHAPTER VI – RESURRECTION AND MOURNING: THE FOOTBOARD

The most common arrangement of the footboard consists in a tripartite layout with the lateral partitions displayed in reverse direction, while the central partition is normally used for inscriptions. On earlier coffins, this central band is inscribed with texts running down the center of the lid⁸⁰⁴, while on later objects the inscriptions are restricted to the footboard itself⁸⁰⁵.

BASIC SCHEME

Dating and style

The depiction of the mourning goddesses is a typical motif in coffins dating from the first half of the 21st Dynasty (basic scheme) or with an archaizing outlook⁸⁰⁶. In most of the times, the style is naturalistic (Fig. 51).

Formal features

These vignettes depict the mourning goddesses facing inwards⁸⁰⁷. Nephthys tends to be depicted on the left partition, while Isis figures on the opposite side (Fig. 51-52). The mourning goddesses are squatted (sometimes over *nwb*-signs⁸⁰⁸), with one hand raised and with the other one lying down. A wide range of symbols is included in the scene. The simplest versions include a short inscription-label referring to the identity of each

⁸⁰⁴ Inner coffin of Pinedjem II (DB 320), outer and inner coffin of Masaharta (DB 320), A.93 (coffin), coffin set of Paser (Louvre Museum), inner coffin of Maatkare (DB 320).

⁸⁰⁵ A.26 (outer coffin), A.18 (coffin), A.28 (outer coffin), A.52 (outer coffin), A.54 (outer coffin), A.77 (outer coffin). Coffin of Hori (Museu Nacional in Rio de Janeiro), inner coffin of Nesikhonsu (DB 320), coffin of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden), coffin of Tanatnektahat (Michael Carlos Museum), outer coffin of Pinedjem II (DB 320).

⁸⁰⁶ Coffin set of Takayt (Die Städtische Galerie Liebieghaus), mummy-board of Tamutneferet (Louvre Museum), coffin set of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art), mummy-cover of Hori (Kestner Museum), coffin set of Herytubekhet (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich), coffin of Anresenmes (Metropolitan Museum of Art), inner coffin of Butehamun (Museo Egizio in Turin), coffin of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum), coffin of Panebmontu (Louvre Museum), outer coffin of Butehamun (Museo Egizio in Turin), outer and inner coffin of Tauheret (DB 320), coffin (Los Angeles County Museum of Art), mummy-cover of Maatkare (DB 320,).

⁸⁰⁷ Coffin set of Takayt (Die Städtische Galerie Liebieghaus), outer coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art), mummy-cover of Hori (Kestner Museum), coffin of Herytubekhet (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich). Sometimes the mourning goddesses face the central partition: A.95 (mummy-cover), A.110 (coffin). Exceptionally, the mourning goddesses face outwards: A.87 (mummy-cover), A.123 (inner coffin).

⁸⁰⁸ Coffin of Anresenmes (Metropolitan Museum of Art), inner coffin of Butehamun (Museo Egizio in Turin), coffin of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum).

goddess⁸⁰⁹. The determinative of ‘water’⁸¹⁰ is usual, together with the (winged) *wedjat*-eye (or the hieroglyphs *nefer-wedjat-neb*), an offering-vase (or an offering-stand) and the *ba*-bird of the deceased⁸¹¹. The West-sign⁸¹² and the Anubis-jackal⁸¹³ may also figure in the repertoire of motifs included in the scene.

Mummy-covers present interesting variations of these vignettes. Despite the formal absence of the footboard, it is not uncommon to find a similar scheme of decoration on the lower register. However, in the mummy-covers these vignettes are not presented in the reversed direction⁸¹⁴. Despite that, the goddesses are depicted in the same way: facing inwards, displaying the mourning gesture and surrounded with the same basic iconography (water, *wedjat*, and offerings). This scene is often considerably shortened and reduced to the simple depiction of *wedjat*-eyes⁸¹⁵, *tyet*-signs⁸¹⁶ or even cobras⁸¹⁷.

The depiction of the goddesses derives directly from the repertoire of Chapter 151 of the Book of the Dead.

CLASSICAL SCHEME

Dating and style

These vignettes are more likely to occur in objects dating from the mid-21st Dynasty (Fig. 54)⁸¹⁸ or in archaizing objects⁸¹⁹. The style is naturalistic.

⁸⁰⁹ Outer coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art), coffin set of Takayt (Die Städtische Galerie Liebieghaus).

⁸¹⁰ Mummy-cover of Hori (Kestner Museum), coffin of Herytubekhet (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich).

⁸¹¹ A.110 (coffin). Coffin of Khonsumose (Museo Egizio in Turin), coffin of Nesyamun (Leeds City Museum).

⁸¹² Outer coffin of Butehamun (Museo Egizio in Turin).

⁸¹³ Outer coffin of Tauheret (DB 320), A.114 (inner coffin), coffin of Panebmontu (Louvre Museum).

⁸¹⁴ Mummy-cover of Maatkare (DB 320), mummy-cover of Masaharta (DB 320). A.12 (mummy-cover), A.55 (mummy-cover), A.95 (mummy-cover), A.113 (mummy -cover). Mummy-cover of Herytubekhet (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich), mummy-cover of Khonsumose (Museo Egizio in Turin), mummy-cover of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden).

⁸¹⁵ A.29 (mummy-cover), A.147 (mummy-cover). Mummy-cover of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin), mummy-cover (Michael Carlos Museum).

⁸¹⁶ A.53 (mummy-cover).

⁸¹⁷ A.10 (mummy-cover). Mummy-cover of Tabakmut (Metropolitan Museum of Art), anonymous mummy-cover from Bab el-Gasus (Vatican Museums, 25022).

⁸¹⁸ Inner coffin of Maatkare (DB 320), outer and inner coffin of Masaharta (DB 320). A.93 (coffin). Coffin set of Paser (Louvre Museum), coffin of Tanatnektahat (Michael Carlos Museum), coffin of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden), coffin of Hori (Museu Nacional in Rio de Janeiro), coffin of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin).

⁸¹⁹ Outer coffin and mummy-cover of Pinedjem II (DB 320). A.28 (outer coffin), A.77 (outer coffin).

Formal features

These vignettes depict the mourning goddesses squatted before a standing (or squatted⁸²⁰) effigy of Osiris. The mummiform god stands on a pedestal⁸²¹, a *neb*-basket⁸²² or a *heb*-bowl⁸²³, wearing the *atef*-crown⁸²⁴ (or just a wig⁸²⁵), long belt and scepters. At his feet figure an *imiwt*-totem⁸²⁶ and many of the symbols previously referred to: offerings⁸²⁷, the *wedjat*-eye⁸²⁸ and the ‘water’ determinative⁸²⁹. Occasionally, the mummiform god is falcon-headed⁸³⁰.

Variation with the Ta-wer totem

A variation of the former scheme consists in the depiction of the Ta-wer totem instead of Osiris (Fig. 53). These vignettes seem to have been used during the same span of time, occurring in objects dating from the early to the mid-21st Dynasty. The style of decoration changes from naturalistic in older objects to schematic in later objects.

These vignettes depict the mourning goddesses before the Ta-wer totem⁸³¹, including basically the same repertoire formerly described. However, in this variation, the goddesses are squatted before the sacred totem, which stands on a podium (sometimes decorated with the typical recessed panel)⁸³² or over the sign of the horizon, *djw*. A long belt is attached to the totem⁸³³. Other symbols are expected to be found around the totem, such as the *imiwt*-totem, piled offerings, the *wedjat*-eye and the ‘water’ determinative.

⁸²⁰ Outer coffin of Tabakmut (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁸²¹ Inner coffin of Maatkare (DB 320), outer coffin of Masaharta (DB 320). A.54 (outer coffin).

⁸²² A.93 (coffin).

⁸²³ outer and inner coffin of Pinedjem II (DB 320). Coffin of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin).

⁸²⁴ Inner coffin of Maatkare (DB320), outer and inner coffin of Masaharta (DB 320). A.54 (outer coffin), A.77 (outer coffin), A.93 (coffin). Coffin of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden).

⁸²⁵ A.18 (coffin), A.52 (inner coffin), A.102 (outer coffin), A.136 (outer coffin). Coffin set of Paser (Louvre Museum), mummy-cover of Nesipanebu (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden).

⁸²⁶ A.77 (outer coffin). Mummy-cover of Nesipanebu (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden), inner coffin of Nesikhonsu (DB 320), coffin of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden).

⁸²⁷ A.102 (outer coffin).

⁸²⁸ A.93 (coffin).

⁸²⁹ Outer coffin of Masaharta (DB 320). A.18 (coffin), A.77 (outer coffin), A.93 (coffin). Coffin of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin).

⁸³⁰ Coffin of Tabakenkhonsu (Museo Egizio in Turin).

⁸³¹ Coffin set of Yutefamun (Metropolitan Museum of Art), outer coffin of Pasebakhaienipet (Brooklyn Museum), coffin of Amenemhat (Museo Arqueologico Nacional de Madrid).

⁸³² A.108 (coffin).

⁸³³ A.38 (coffin). Outer coffin of Pasebakhaienipet (Brooklyn Museum), coffin of Amenemhat (Museo Arqueologico Nacional de Madrid), inner coffin of Nani (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

COMPLEX SCHEME

Dating and style

By the late 21st Dynasty, this scene shows a bolder role of the god Osiris, which is normally depicted without the mourning goddesses⁸³⁴. The style is sketchy and highly schematic and the vignettes are smaller.

Formal features

In these vignettes, Osiris is depicted enthroned⁸³⁵ or standing, always facing outwards (Fig. 55). The mourning goddesses are included but their importance decreases and they eventually disappear.

The size of the vignette tends to decrease to half the length of the footboard (Fig. 57)⁸³⁶ and sometimes the number of registers involved in the decoration of the footboard grows considerably (Fig. 56).

However, the vignettes can be considerably more complex and sometimes an entire cult scene is depicted, featuring a priest performing rites before Osiris⁸³⁷. The vignettes regularly include offerings, the *ba*-bird⁸³⁸ and the *wedjat*-eye⁸³⁹.

REVERSE SIDE

Normally the reverse side of the footboard remained undecorated. However, some coffins present a briefly sketched panel.

Rejoicing goddess

Coffins dating to the first half of the Dynasty tend to include the sketchy depiction of Isis. The goddess Isis is depicted squatted on the *nwb*-sign, raising her arms in joy, sometimes with *ankh*-signs pending from her arms. West-signs flank the composition (Fig. 58)⁸⁴⁰.

⁸³⁴ A.10 (inner coffin), A.26 (inner coffin), A.91 (outer coffin), A.123 (outer coffin), A.131 (outer and inner coffin). Inner coffin of Tabakmut (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁸³⁵ Inner coffin of Asetemkhebit (DB 320). A.33 (coffin), A.131 (outer and inner coffin), A.149 (outer coffin).

⁸³⁶ Inner coffin of Asetemkhebit (DB 320). A.91 (outer coffin), A.131 (outer and inner coffin), A.149 (outer coffin).

⁸³⁷ A.149 (outer coffin). Inner coffin of Tabakmut (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁸³⁸ A.26 (inner coffin).

⁸³⁹ A.10 (inner coffin).

⁸⁴⁰ Coffin of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus).

Tyet-sign

Coffins dating to the first half of the dynasty sometimes include the depiction of a large *Tyet-sign*, normally very crudely sketched. A large *Tyet-sign* is the nuclear block of a symmetrical composition. West-signs flank the composition, sometimes with human arms raised in adoration (Fig. 59)⁸⁴¹.

GENERAL INTERPRETATION

The ‘festive dress’ type introduced the feet in coffin decoration. This trend was short-lived but had important consequences. From then on the footboard became for the first time an autonomous section of the lid. The autonomy of this section is outlined with the reversed direction of its decoration.

The footboard is designed as a triptych, with the central partition inscribed with several columns of text⁸⁴² and the lateral partitions showing the mourning goddesses. More complete versions of this vignette display the mourning goddesses before the Ta-wer totem or even before the standing mummy of Osiris himself. On later objects, the mourning goddesses are no longer depicted and only Osiris is included, either standing or enthroned, always facing outwards. The layout of these vignettes is consistently associated with the Osirian sequences depicted on the lateral partitions of the lower section. This later development is telling of the osirification of coffin decoration that took place during the second half of the 21st Dynasty⁸⁴³.

This decoration of the footboard suggests a strong association with the imaginary of the Osirian mourning rituals and resurrection. The reversed direction of this tripartite panel suggests that the motifs here depicted – Isis and Nephthys - were supposed to be raised when the coffin was lying in horizontal position. The footboard thus provides the deceased with the vision of his divine mourners. It is thus likely that this particular section was associated with the rituals related to Chapter 151 of the Book of the Dead.

On the other hand, the rejoicing Isis featured on the reverse side alludes to the resurrection of Osiris and probably played an important role in rituals involving the elevation of the lid. When standing in upright position, the lid would convey the image of Osiris in triumph.

⁸⁴¹ Coffin of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus).

⁸⁴² Only one object was found presenting the scene facing the central partition (lid of A.110).

⁸⁴³ Inner coffin of Asetemkhebit (DB 320). A.10 (inner coffin), A.26 (inner coffin), A.32 (inner coffin), A.91 (outer coffin), A.131 (outer and inner coffin), A.149 (outer coffin). Inner coffin of Tabakmut (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

Another subtle reading is detected in the shape of the footboard suggesting the sign of the horizon (*djw*), thus associating the coffin as a whole with the territory of the Duat where the regeneration of the sun and the resurrection of Osiris took place. A similar cosmic reading can be associated with the layout of the headboard as the floral headdress resembles the rising sun when seen from the crown of the head (Fig. 3). From the footboard to the headboard thus is suggested the entire journey of the sun in the netherworld from where the sun disk raised each morning, as the deceased did in his avian form in order to go forth to the daylight.

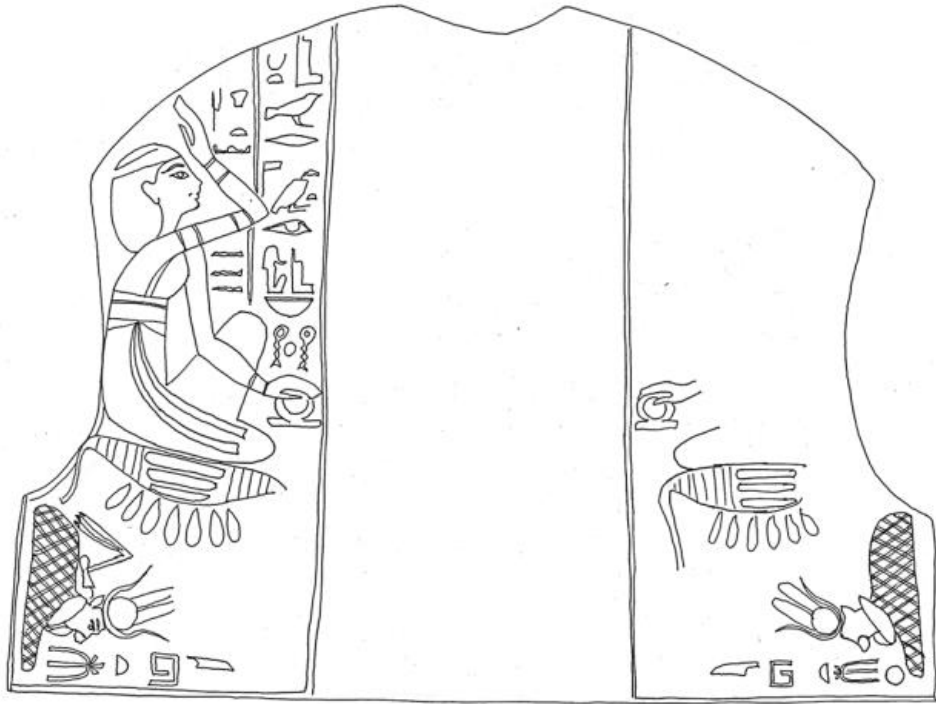


Fig.51 – Footboard. Coffin of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus)

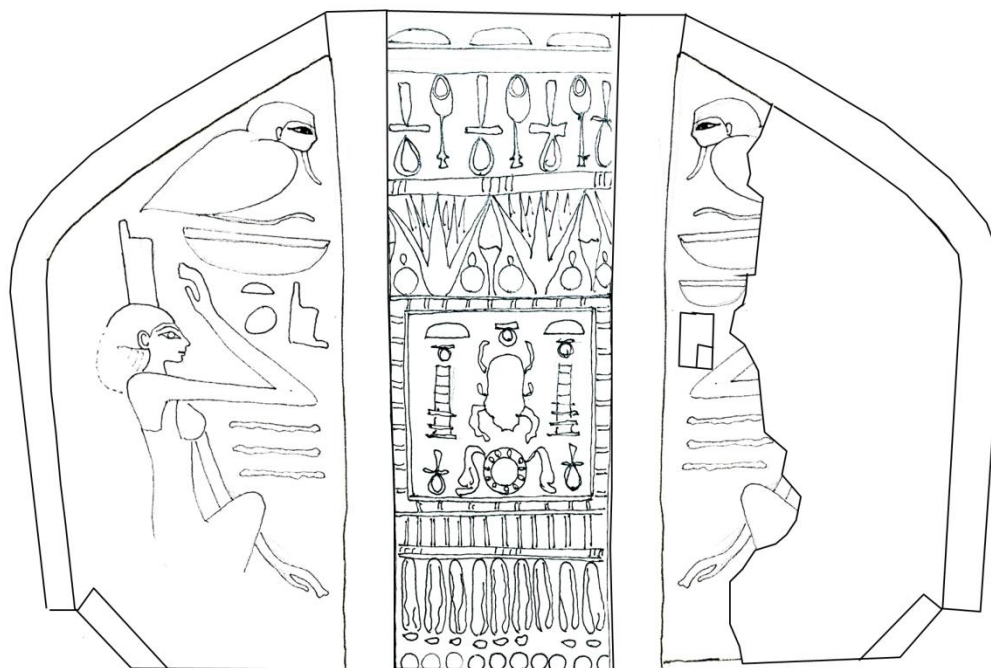
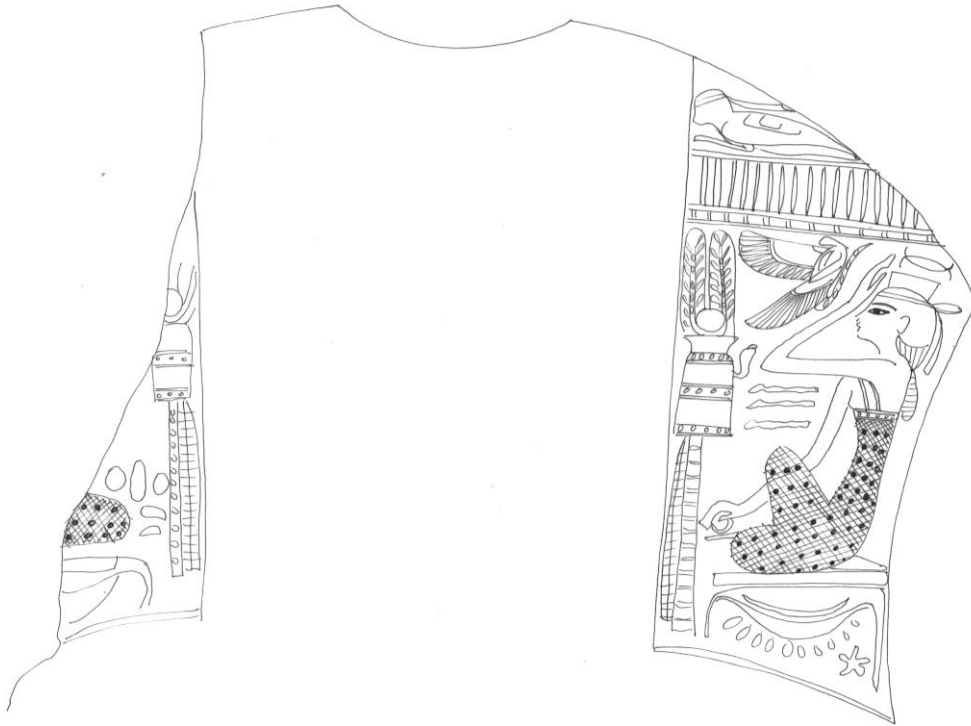


Fig. 52 – Footboard. Coffin (A.110)



Footboard.

Fig. 53 – Inner coffin (A.12) –above

Fig. 54 – Coffin (A.93) – below

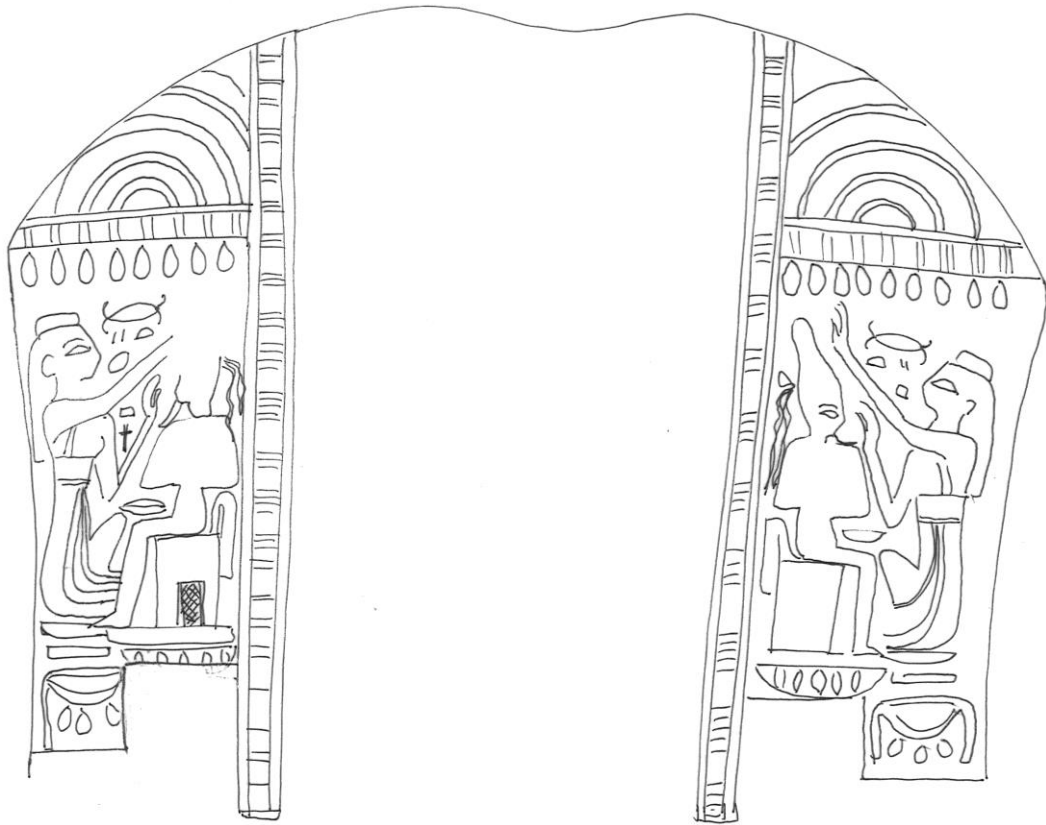
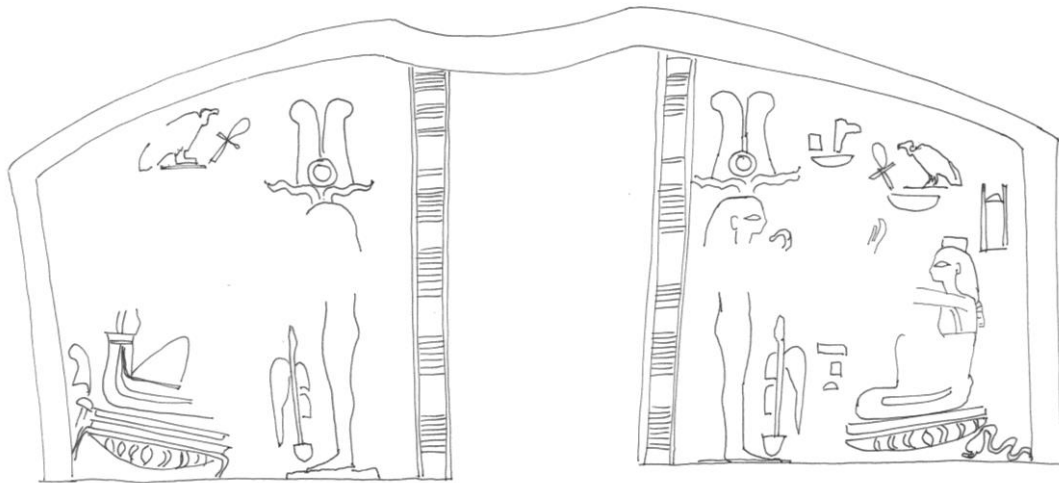
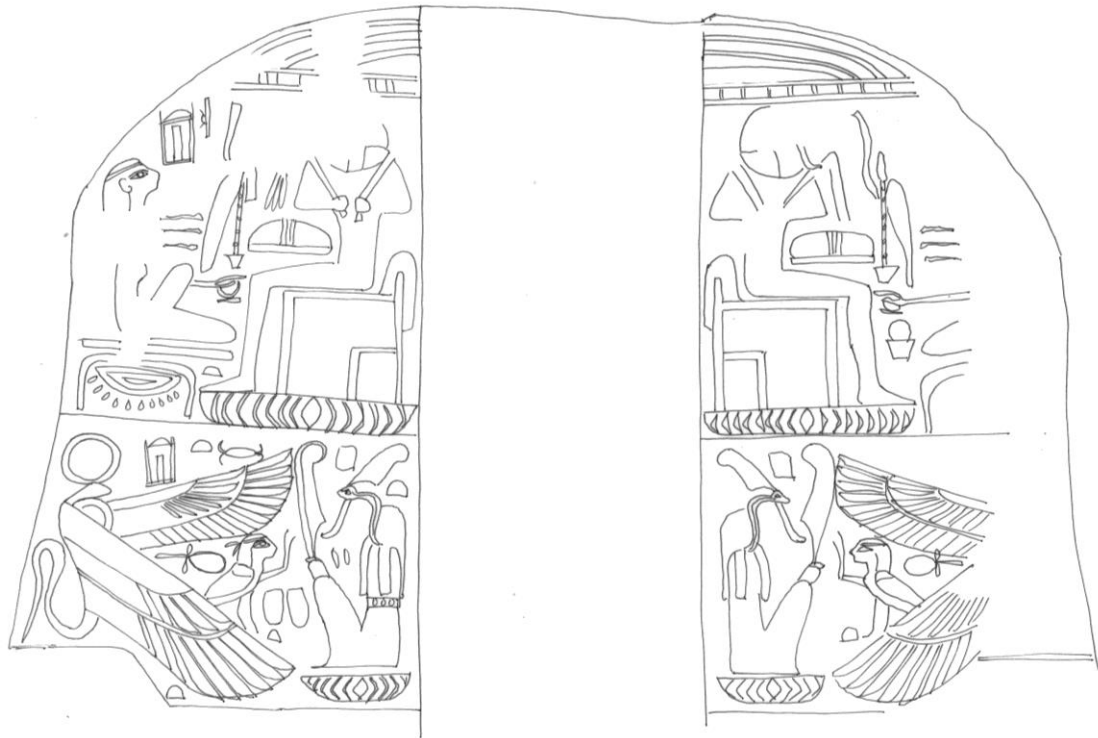


Fig. 55 – Footboard. Inner coffin (A.15)



Footboard

Fig. 56 – Outer coffin of Ikhy (Vatican Museums) – above

Fig. 57 – Outer coffin (A.52) – below

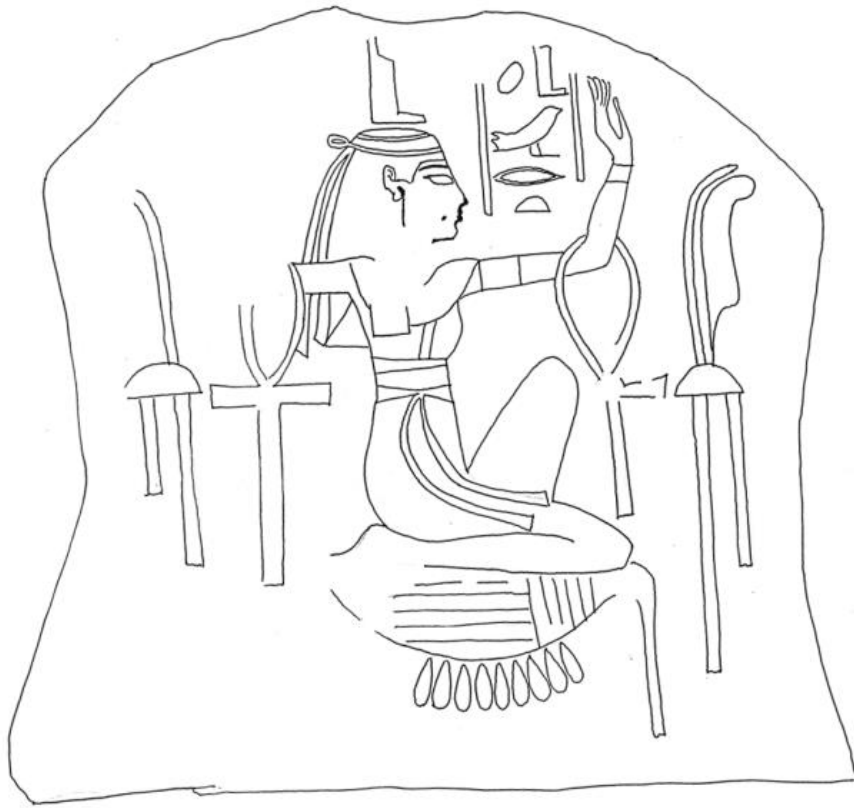


Fig. 58 – Footboard. Coffin of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus)

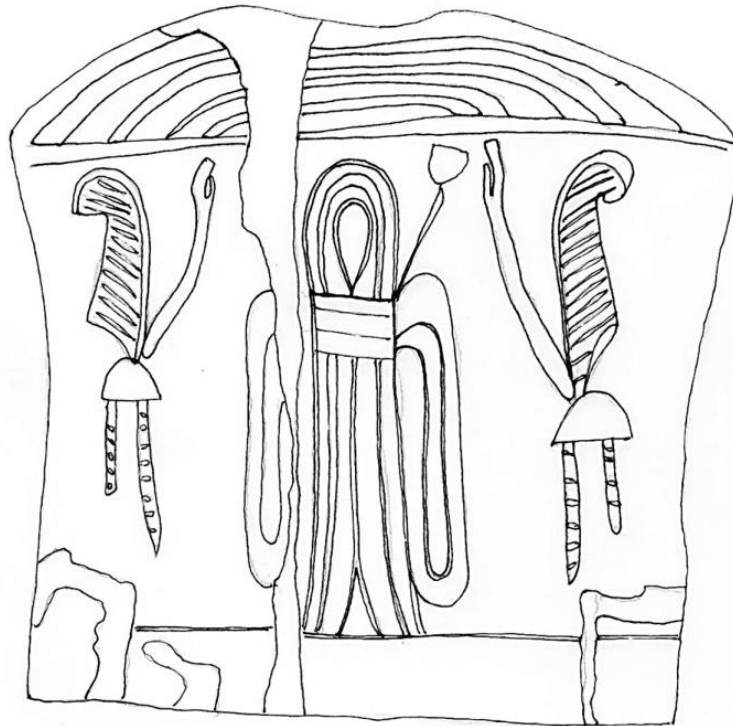


Fig. 59 – Footboard. Outer coffin (A.136)

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CHAPTER VII – EVOLUTION AND DIVERSITY IN THE ‘YELLOW’ TYPE

TYPOLOGY OF THE LID

From the earlier stages of the ‘yellow’ type to its latest developments, a long line of evolution towards complexity is clearly detected. This problem was first addressed by Andrzej Niwiński who proposed a typology describing the different stages detected on the layout of the lid. This author proposed five main types established according to the design of the object as a whole. We share with this author the evolutionary view of coffin decoration in the way that each type suggests a different stage in the evolution towards complexity. However, we disagree with this author’s underlying assumption of the lid as resulting from a holistic composition work. In our examination of the documental corpus, we did not find evidence of such practice. On the contrary, it is clear that each section was designed on its own, quite independently from the other sections. Evidence from reuse also suggests that when recycling an object, ancient craftsmen often updated it selectively, reworking some of the sections and leaving others untouched⁸⁴⁴.

In Niwiński’s typology, we also have to deal with the problem of definition of the ‘yellow’ type. In our model, Niwiński’s Type I cannot be considered as part of the ‘yellow’ corpus⁸⁴⁵, as well as some of the objects included in Type IV⁸⁴⁶, which we see as part of the proto-‘yellow’ corpus.

Moreover, Niwiński’s type IV raises a number of other problems in terms of formal definition. The author groups in this category a variety of objects displaying exceptional features⁸⁴⁷. Some of these objects are grouped in this category merely because they have a white background. However, as we have seen, this is not a fundamental difference regarding the remaining corpus of ‘yellow’ coffins as the yellowish tone is caused by varnish and not by a different pictorial treatment. In our perspective, these coffins cannot be grouped in a distinct category considering this aspect alone. Other objects are included in Type IV because they display exceptional anatomic details such as feet or arms lying along the body. As Kathlyn Cooney has been pointing out, these objects

⁸⁴⁴ See Cooney 2017a, 109.

⁸⁴⁵ See Niwiński 1988, 68.

⁸⁴⁶ Such as the Ramesside masks and mummy-boards. See Niwiński 1988, 70.

⁸⁴⁷ Niwiński 1988, 69.

show evidence of reuse and resulted from the recycling of Ramesside objects rather than from the deliberate choice of creating a distinct type of object.

Despite these differences, our results are consistent with Niwiński's observations on Type II and Type III. The features that we group under the designation of 'basic scheme' should, of course, be compared with Niwiński's Type II (displaying the depiction of the forearms), while the objects following the 'classical scheme' can be included in Niwiński's type III. Our 'complex scheme' includes objects that in Niwiński's typology can be found within types III, IV and V. The later inclusion of mummy braces in the upper section (which Niwiński regards as Type V) to our point of view does not introduce any fundamental change in the overall arrangement of the upper section, and we simply consider it as a variation of the upper section typically found in the complex scheme.

With our framework based on a topographic view of the lids, we propose the following typology for the different sections (see Typological Table):

Headboard. Regarding the decoration of the wig we may identify the following types⁸⁴⁸:

- Braided wig;
- Blue wig;
- Striped wig;
- Chequered wig.

Upper section. As it has been long pointed out by Andrzej Niwiński, the depiction of the forearms (or their omission) is decisive in the 'yellow' type. The omission of forearms has to be related to the increasing size achieved by the floral collar.

Thus three main types can be identified concerning the forearms:

- Basic scheme – Forearms fully visible;
- Classical scheme – Forearms partially visible;
- Complex scheme – Forearms fully covered by the floral collar.

⁸⁴⁸ With the exception of the checkered wigs, which are only found in the complex scheme, the other types of wigs are found in any stage of development.

Sub-categories can be established according to the central markers:

1. Central markers not depicted;
2. (Winged) scarab and/or heart amulet;
3. Mummy braces;

Central panel. The number of registers are important to establish different categories:

- Basic scheme – Two registers;
- Classical scheme – Three registers;
- Complex scheme – More than three registers⁸⁴⁹, or composition headed by a winged sun-disk or a vulture.

Sub-categories can be established according to the nuclear blocks of the symmetrical registers (with an especial emphasis on the first register):

1. Naophoric pectoral;
2. Solar barque;
3. Scarab hanging from a funerary collar;
4. Scarab;
5. Liminal elements⁸⁵⁰.

Lower section

The lateral partitions display the following categories:

- Basic scheme (lateral partitions form a diptych):
Osirian god + Sons of Horus + secondary deity
- Classical scheme (lateral partitions integrate a triptych):
Osirian god + Avian form of Ptah-Sokar + Sons of Horus
 - Var: Osirian god + Avian form of Ptah-Sokar + Sacred Ram + Sons of Horus
 - Var: Osirian god + Avian form of Ptah-Sokar + *ba*-bird + Sons of Horus

⁸⁴⁹The number of registers can be smaller when the composition is headed by a sun-disk.

⁸⁵⁰Solar triplets, heart amulets, and other hieroglyphic signs.

- Complex scheme (lateral partitions integrating a triptych):
Osirian god+ mummiform god + mummiform god
 - Var: Cult scene before Osirian god + Cult scene before Osirian god

The central partition presents the following categories:

- Classical scheme:
Ta-wer totem+ solar scarab+ sekhem sceptre
- Complex scheme:
solar scarab + solar scarab + solar scarab
 - Var: liminal element + solar scarab

Note: The lower section can be completely absent when the central panel extends itself towards the footboard.

Footboard. The subjects depicted on the lateral partitions define the typology of the footboard:

- Basic scheme – mourning goddesses
- Classical scheme – mourning goddesses before Osiris
var: mourning goddesses before the Ta-wer totem;
- Complex scheme – Osirian gods.

‘YELLOW’ TYPE STAGES

As we have stated, our approach prevents us from establishing typologies for the layout of the lid as a whole. As the different sections of the lid were prepared independently from each other, the way in which they were combined in each object greatly varied. In other words, each object resulted unique from the simple combination of the different sections.

In each section, we may distinguish three main moments, or ‘stages’, in the evolution of coffin decoration:

Basic scheme. This stage is detected from the late Ramesside Period to the first half of the 21st Dynasty. The basic scheme preserves a naturalistic, one could say, Ramesside style, with large figures clad in white folded garments. The composition is light with the space between the figures left empty or inscribed with short label-inscriptions.

Classical scheme. Is typically found in coffins dating from the mid-21st Dynasty. In the classical scheme, we observe the evolution towards the schematic style. The main figures became smaller and increasingly standardized. Gradually, the depiction of the deceased also changes: instead of the white garments, he/she wears dark and tight clothes. The composition is heavy with the space between the main figures filled in with liminal elements.

Complex scheme. Is detected in coffins dating from the second half of the 21st Dynasty. The role performed by the liminal elements is further increased in the complex scheme and their size almost equals the main figures. In the latest forms of the ‘yellow’ type, the liminal elements eventually became the ruling elements of the compositions.

Both styles, the naturalistic and the schematic, display rich or poor levels of craftsmanship. In the ‘yellow’ corpus, the number of coffins crafted according to the classical and the complex scheme is much higher than those displaying the basic scheme and probably this is the reason why, apparently, later coffins seem to have poorer levels of craftsmanship. In reality, both styles originated outstanding works of art.

Given the formal autonomy of each section, it is usual to find in the same object different levels of complexity. In the lid of Tabasety (Fig. 60), clearly dating from the first half of the 21st Dynasty, the upper section and the central panel display the basic scheme, but the lateral partitions of the lower section already show features of the classical scheme, which would be the rule during the mid-21st Dynasty. The lid of Djedmutiuesankh (Fig. 61), dating from the second half of the 21st Dynasty, shows a slightly similar situation, with the upper section and central panel displaying the classical scheme and the lower section designed after the complex scheme.

Later on, the levels of complexity of the different sections became more consistent. The inner lid from A.15 (Fig. 62) clearly shows one of these situations, with the central panel fully extended down the footboard. The outer lid from A.52 (Fig. 63)

apparently shows a more conservative layout. From the formal point of view, the composition of the lid observes the canonical principles of composition of each section: the central panel displays three registers, the lower section is designed as a triptych and the footboard shows the typical depictions of the mourning goddesses. However, all these conservative elements are challenged by the innovative use of the liminal elements, which pervade the arrangement of the central panel, the lateral partitions of the lower section and the footboard. In all of them, the goddess Neith is repeatedly featured, uniting all the areas of the lid with her divine presence. This is perhaps one of the finest achievements of the latest trend of coffin decoration which gave a paramount importance to the liminal elements, transforming the rigid topographic layout of the 'yellow' type into a 'fluid' system of relations.

During the second half of the 21st Dynasty, compositions typically found in earlier models are selectively reintroduced, originating a so-called 'archaizing' trend of coffin decoration. It is true that at times this concept reveals to be problematic. Archaization is closely associated with reuse and recycling but it is a different phenomenon. While the recycling of an object shows how the decorative program was reinterpreted on a later dating, archaization deals with the processes involved in the craftsmanship of an object in order to 'look older'. This phenomenon is first detected among the coffins of the highest elite, as in the burial set belonging to Pinedjem II, thus presenting a clear contrast with the contemporary layout of coffin decoration, which evolved towards outstanding levels of complexity. This archaizing revival was first used by Theban highest elite to display social status, but it was quickly adopted by a larger number of individuals.

VARIABILITY AND GENEALOGICAL LINES

The extraordinary development in coffin decoration that took place during the 21st Dynasty required a high level of organization and expertise in order to avoid disorder. The conscious and methodical exploration of the possibilities offered by the scheme of decoration in each section was required in order to keep entropy on minimal levels⁸⁵¹. In this process, the definition of a well-defined set of key-features ruling each section played a paramount role to control workshop practices.

⁸⁵¹ Van Walsem (forthcoming). See also Van Walsem 1998, 317-342.

The transition between the different layouts was not achieved randomly and it is clear that it involved an ‘experimental’ work. When facing a new coffin or when recycling an older one for reuse, a given workshop would observe the set of norms defining the scheme of decoration. However, at the same time, Theban craftsmen were compelled to create objects that challenged the established conventions in order to be easily perceived as ‘new’ or ‘different’.

The iconographic variability detected in the ‘yellow’ type is not just the result of a random combination of features, but of a constant search for innovation, always grounded on previous developments. Evolution towards increasing levels of complexity thus required the conscious and methodical exploration of the possibilities offered by the formal structure of the pictorial scheme. In this process, each innovation was built upon previous achievements, creating a ‘genealogical’ line of evolution. This genealogical approach is in many ways similar to the evolutionary framework used in natural sciences to describe the diversity of life. As in the evolution of the species, diversity in coffin decoration can be described with genealogical sequences adopting a branching pattern of evolution from the simplest to the most complex forms. The iconographic diversity detected at later stages of coffin development thus evolved from a common model. Innovations played a crucial role in this process. Some of the innovative solutions became permanent features of the ‘yellow’ type’s design, and remained in use during the subsequent process of evolution, while others seem to have been more ephemeral.

By seriating the pictorial sections from their simplest versions to the most complex ones, it became clear that regardless of the technical quality of the coffins⁸⁵², sophisticated strategies to generate variability in a systematic way have been used. It is clear that Theban workshops used a variety of processes to make easier the difficult task of creating innovative solutions out of the established principles of composition. We will now examine some of these procedures.

Variability by disruption

One of the most effective ways to create an innovative result consisted in challenging the existing set of rules. This rich process is based on qualitative changes introduced into the scheme of decoration.

⁸⁵² See Cooney 2014, 45-66.

Some of these changes originated a whole new line of evolution. This is detected in the introduction of the third register of the central panel, a feature that was introduced by the mid-21st Dynasty. The examination of the documental sources clearly shows that the third register was produced when the frieze depicted below the wings of the mother goddess increased in size. These compositions eventually gained complete autonomy forming an independent register.

As a rule, the introduction of qualitative changes is limited to a particular aspect of the composition indicating a systematic search for new designs that challenge the normative set of rules. The disruptive changes introduced in this way are normally integrated into the normative scheme of decoration.

Variability by accumulation

In addition to the qualitative changes described above, craftsmen could increase variability by simply adding new elements into the scheme of decoration without changing its basic organization. This is particularly clear in the evolution detected in the central panel. The symmetrical registers observe a very stable scheme comprising a nuclear block flanked by centrifugal and centripetal blocks. At first, the structure of each block included a limited sample of key-features but, with time, they became eventually outnumbered by the constant addition of new and oftentimes interchangeable secondary motifs. At first, the centrifugal block was composed of one single deity, the enthroned Osiris. However, other deities began to be depicted escorting and protecting the Osirian god, such as Isis or Nephthys, the Ta-wer totem or Djed-pillar. Eventually, this group became enclosed within a shrine of its own.

This procedure achieved its apex when all the available possibilities for a given block were included in the same composition. The aforementioned elements integrating the centrifugal blocks (goddesses, Djed-pillar, Ta-wer totem) were at times included in the same composition⁸⁵³. In other objects, the centrifugal block was even replicated twice⁸⁵⁴.

Quantitative changes performed a bold role in the growth of complexity. This occurred not only by adding new elements into the structure of the existing blocks but also by forming additional blocks on the edges of the tableaux. The use of these additional blocks, together with the increasing use of liminal elements, eventually transformed the

⁸⁵³ A. 141 (inner coffin).

⁸⁵⁴ A.132 (outer coffin).

layout of the central panel into what might be called ‘miniaturist compositions’. These panels show the importance that this additive process of composition played on the layout of coffin decoration.

Variability by omission

Variability could also be achieved by omitting expected aspects of the scheme of decoration. One of the simplest and most effective ways to achieve an innovative output simply consisted in omitting one of the expected key-features included in the normative scheme of decoration. Again, this strategy is better understood in the composition of the symmetrical registers of the central panel. With a typical sequence composed of a nuclear block flanked by centrifugal and centripetal blocks, painters often omitted the centrifugal block to achieve an unexpected result.

Symbolic equivalence

In face of the stable patterns provided by the scheme of decoration, a simple strategy used to achieve innovative arrangements consisted in using equivalent motifs to those commonly depicted. For example, in the centrifugal blocks, the Ta-wer totem could be used as a substitute for the depiction of Osiris (Fig. 64)⁸⁵⁵.

IRREGULAR COMPOSITIONS

A radical way to achieve innovative arrangements was open by selectively breaking the most important conventions. The general layout of one particular section could thus be significantly transformed by challenging its dominant conventions. These highly irregular compositions first occurred in coffins of exceptional quality, suggesting that they did not result from a careless manufacture but from a deliberate search of uniqueness. Generally speaking, the outcomes achieved by this process are short-lived and did not have a lasting impact on the genealogical lines of evolution. This explains why it is virtually impossible to characterize all types of irregularities that may occur. Nevertheless, reference will be made to some examples illustrating the use of this process in each section.

⁸⁵⁵ See A.110 (mummy-cover). Note that this totem is ‘enthroned’, just as the god Osiris is depicted in the first register.

Upper section

Irregular patterns are rare in the upper section, where the decoration is normally dominated by the floral collar. One single object is known to us where the floral collar is absent. In the coffin set of Tjenetipet (A.119), the outer lid and the mummy-cover display an extremely rare composition entirely decorated with a zigzag pattern, suggesting water.

Another exceptional feature is the depiction of mummy braces under the floral collar. When depicted in this way, only the extremities of the braces are depicted⁸⁵⁶. This motif precedes the depiction of the mummy braces over the floral collar, only attested from the end of the 21st Dynasty onwards.

Central panel

Not surprisingly it is on the central panel where we find the most important evidence of disruptive innovation, exactly because this was the section of the coffin more heavily codified with rules.

An extreme example of how the entire structure of the central panel could be challenged is detected in the mummy-cover of Hori (Fig. 65)⁸⁵⁷. Here the expected scheme involving the winged goddess and the solar scarab has fused into one single register featuring a large winged scarab. As a result, the secondary compositions displayed below the winged deity grew quite considerably, forming an autonomous register with a *djed*-pillar at the center of a symmetrical register. Despite the singularity of its layout, this is a good example of a short-lived innovation, suggesting that it did not resist to an assessment of its potential interest in terms of evolution. This composition also illustrates an early attempt to blur the frontiers between the central panel and the upper section, as the wings of the scarab overlap the forearms of the deceased. This process will be seen later on, and outstanding compositions were created by forming a continuous tableau from the headboard to the lower section. In these objects, the central panel irrupts through the central axis of the upper section, creating a single composition that mingles features typical of both sections. On the mummy-cover of Padiamun (A.87, Fig. 66), the area above the traditional tripartite scheme of the central panel breaks through the upper section with a large nuclear block combining the heart amulet and the winged scarab.

⁸⁵⁶ A.114 (outer coffin). See mummy-cover from Bab el-Gasus (Vatican Museums, 25022).

⁸⁵⁷ Mummy-cover of Hori (Kestner Museum).

Another way, perhaps more subtle, of challenging the frontiers between the upper and the lower section, consisted in using the heart amulet – a central-marker typically associated with the upper section – as the nuclear block in the compositions of the central panel. A masterpiece of this kind of composition is observed on the inner coffin of Djedmaeiuesankh (A.109), where an interesting and innovative fusion of several irregular elements previously mentioned can be found (Fig. 67). Here, the central winged goddess is depicted in standing position with her wings displaying the old-fashioned U-shaped arrangement. Additional blocks are composed of rather unusual elements, such as sacred rams being adored by *ba*-birds or lioness-headed goddesses spitting fire. This scenario is completed in the first register with a no less unusual nuclear block: the heart amulet flanked by Ta-wer totems and winged goddesses.

This sophisticated use of archaizing motifs with highly innovative arrangements created outstanding compositions displaying a strong and vivid sense of uniqueness. The creation of these elaborated compositions suggests that the targeted audience of these workshops praised iconographic subtleties and it is clear that these novelties greatly increased the economic and social value of the coffins. Another way of exploring this process consisted in blurring the frontier between the central panel and the lower section. We have already made reference to a few objects where the central panel is selectively extended downwards only along the central partition of the lower section⁸⁵⁸. The complementary method is also used: the registers of the central panel extend themselves to the footboard down the lateral partitions of the lower section, leaving the central partition of the lower section intact⁸⁵⁹.

Lower section

In a limited number of mummy-covers, the lower section is simply painted ‘white’⁸⁶⁰ or with a beaded pattern (Fig. 68). Although this layout might seem familiar, reminding the earliest stages of coffin decoration, it is clearly abnormal in the context of the ‘yellow’ corpus and represents a deep break with its most basic conventions. This

⁸⁵⁸ Inner coffin of Gautseshen (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden, F 93/10.1)

⁸⁵⁹ A.47 (inner coffin). This is clear from the 5th register down to the 10th register.

⁸⁶⁰ A.19 (mummy-cover), A.97 (coffin set). Mummy-cover of Khaemopet (Collection Harris), mummy-cover of Panebmontu (Louvre Museum).

layout suggests a ‘transparency’ effect, giving full visibility to the mummy wrappings⁸⁶¹, covered by the sacred beaded net of Hathor (Plates 5-6).

Footboard

The scheme of decoration remained very stable on the footboard and irregular compositions are rare. Yet, when they occur, instead of the reversed direction typically found in this area, the vignettes are aligned with the remaining decoration of the lid⁸⁶². In more extreme situations, the vignettes are even displayed transversally, and the main motifs (mourning goddesses or Osiris) can be absent⁸⁶³.

Another and far more interesting source of variation was found in depicting a single tableau of solar significance. In these compositions, the style is naturalistic, normally associated with coffins dating from the mid-21st Dynasty⁸⁶⁴. In these objects, the footboard is decorated as a single tableau displaying a large winged deity depicted either in reversed direction⁸⁶⁵ or aligned with the remaining decoration of the lid⁸⁶⁶.

The motifs depicted in this context allude to rebirth and resurrection:

1. Falcon deity: this motif probably alludes to Isis in her avian form, suggesting the sexual union of Osiris and Isis⁸⁶⁷;
2. *Ba*-bird⁸⁶⁸ joining the reborn sun god in his ascent to the sky (Fig. 69);
3. Winged *djed*-pillar⁸⁶⁹ holding the sky and the barque of the morning sun (Fig. 70).

These subjects allude to the solar cycle, suggesting an association between the footboard and the horizon, an association already detected in proto-‘yellow’ coffins⁸⁷⁰. These scenes are related to the solar navigation, thus implying the identification of the footboard as a threshold between the Duat and the world of the living. Consistent with this imaginary, the footboard adopted the shape of the *djw*-sign, the horizon, presenting two small elevations with a depression between them.

⁸⁶¹ A.20 (mummy-cover), A.27 (mummy-cover), A.68 (mummy-cover), A.86 (mummy-cover), mummy-cover of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art),

⁸⁶² A.32 (inner coffin), A.142 (inner coffin), A.102 (outer coffin).

⁸⁶³ Coffin of Khonsuhotep (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek).

⁸⁶⁴ Outer coffin of Maatkare (DB 320). A.16 (inner coffin), A.95 (coffin), A.111 (mummy-cover). Few exceptions are detected: A.114 (mummy-cover).

⁸⁶⁵ Outer coffin of Maatkare (DB 320).

⁸⁶⁶ A.16 (inner coffin), A.95 (coffin), A.111 (mummy-cover).

⁸⁶⁷ Outer coffin of Maatkare (DB 320).

⁸⁶⁸ A.16 (inner coffin), A.111 (mummy-cover).

⁸⁶⁹ A.95 (coffin).

⁸⁷⁰ Inner coffin of Khonsu (TT 1).

* * *

In conclusion, it is clear that irregular compositions were formed aiming at highlighting the value of the object. In this context, the central panel must have been particularly meaningful, as innovative solutions are clearly focused on this composition. This also suggests the paramount role played by this particular section in terms of the global perception of the significance and value of an object by the targeted Theban audience. It is thus likely to admit that when assessing the value of a particular coffin, the layout of the central panel was under a particular demanding scrutiny.

It also seems plausible to conclude that other sections playing a bolder role as ritual markers may have been kept less affected by these operations, such as the footboard, the headboard and the upper section.

DECONSTRUCTING THE ‘YELLOW’ TYPE

Typically, workshops increased variability by adding complexity. However, some objects of poor craftsmanship use the inverse process to assure an innovative result. The anonymous mummy-cover from the Vatican is clearly a later work⁸⁷¹: it displays a large floral collar hiding the forearms and the lower section is decorated with vignettes depicting mummiform deities from the underworld. The style is crude and schematic. However, the central panel displays an intriguing composition featuring a large pectoral (typical of the basic scheme) and mummy braces. Ta-wer totems flank the nuclear block and the depiction of the large winged goddess is conspicuously omitted.

A similar process is observed in another anonymous mummy-cover from the Vatican⁸⁷². On the upper section, the large floral collar covers the forearms and the lower section is heavily decorated with block-friezes. The central panel is headed by a winged solar disk. The first register keeps the usual nuclear block (scarab flanked by cobras) but excludes the typical symmetrical sequences, simply featuring liminal elements. In the second register, the typical large winged goddess is also omitted and a frieze of alternating *djed* and *tjet*-signs (normally included on the third register) is displayed instead.

⁸⁷¹ Vatican, 25020.

⁸⁷² Gasse 1996, Pl. XXXI (fig. 15)

In the anonymous coffin kept at Náprstkovo Museum the full omission of the central panel took place⁸⁷³.

Examples like these clearly show that also poor workshops addressed the issue of producing innovative results. Unable to obtain innovative solutions by adding new inputs – which would be a far more difficult task - these workshops assured those results by omitting, in different degrees, the expected key-features provided by the normative scheme of decoration.

However, as poor as they are, these objects provide important evidence of a new phenomenon consisting in using the scheme of decoration of the ‘yellow’ type in order to deconstruct its rules. This process is clearer in the coffin of Padikhonsu⁸⁷⁴. Here the floral collar displays the typical concentric layout detected in the complex scheme. The area below the collar displays an archaizing layout reminding the ‘white’ type, with the network of longitudinal and transversal bands depicted against a white background. The central panel seems to have been omitted but in reality, it was fused with the lower section, as the three winged deities that would be expected to form the central panel are depicted along the lid. This design is just one step behind the typical layout of the cartonnage cases from the 22nd Dynasty⁸⁷⁵, showing how the creation of the new model was achieved.

REGIONAL VERSIONS

A small family of coffins of unknown provenance⁸⁷⁶ presents an odd combination of features that has been able to feed a vivid debate on its dating⁸⁷⁷. Although displaying several levels of quality in terms of craftsmanship, they share the same scheme of decoration:

1. The lappets of the wig are decorated with terminals regardless of the sex of the deceased.

⁸⁷³ The upper section is decorated with the large floral collar and the lower section reveals the tripartite organization, with the central partition displaying vignettes of alternating *djed* and *tjet*-signs and the lateral partitions featuring the usual sequences of Osirian deities.

⁸⁷⁴ Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon.

⁸⁷⁵ See Taylor 1989, 49.

⁸⁷⁶ Coffin of Anet (Vatican Museums, XIII.2.1), coffin of Khenemensanapehsu (Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung), coffin of Sesekhneferu (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek AEIN 62), coffin of Meretenankh (Kunsthistorisches Museum). Andrzej Niwiński includes in this group other objects, see Niwiński 2017, 335.

⁸⁷⁷ Some authors suggesting the 20th Dynasty and other the early 21st Dynasty. See Niwiński 2017, 335.

2. The upper section displays the forearms. The terminals of the floral collar are included.
3. The central panel features a bold division between the winged goddess and the symmetrical register. The nuclear block of the first register displays one single motif, such as the scarab, the heart amulet, or the Ta-wer totem.
4. The lower section displays two partitions bounded by a single longitudinal inscription.

The style is naturalistic and the spacious vignettes are bounded by block friezes. Given the differences in style, it is possible that these objects may have been crafted in a different necropolis, possibly in Akhmim, as suggested by Éva Liptat⁸⁷⁸, where the Theban model was adopted for local use. Although it is clear that craftsmen were visibly working with a model based on the basic scheme, the style and arrangement clearly result from a local elaboration, which prevents us from dating these objects based in the genealogical line elaborated with the Theban artefacts. Nevertheless, it is tempting to admit a later dating, as Annie Gasse suggests⁸⁷⁹. In any case, these objects show that at certain centres, the ‘yellow’ type was adopted in local workshops undergoing an evolution of its own.

⁸⁷⁸ Liptay 2011b. See also Niwiński 2017, 335-340.

⁸⁷⁹ Gasse 1996, 148-157.

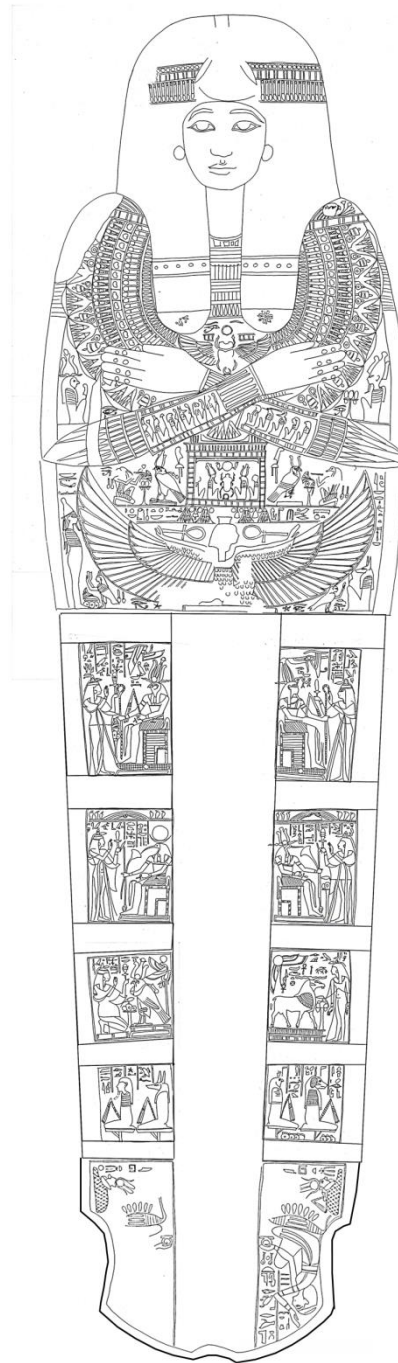


Fig. 60 – Lid of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus)

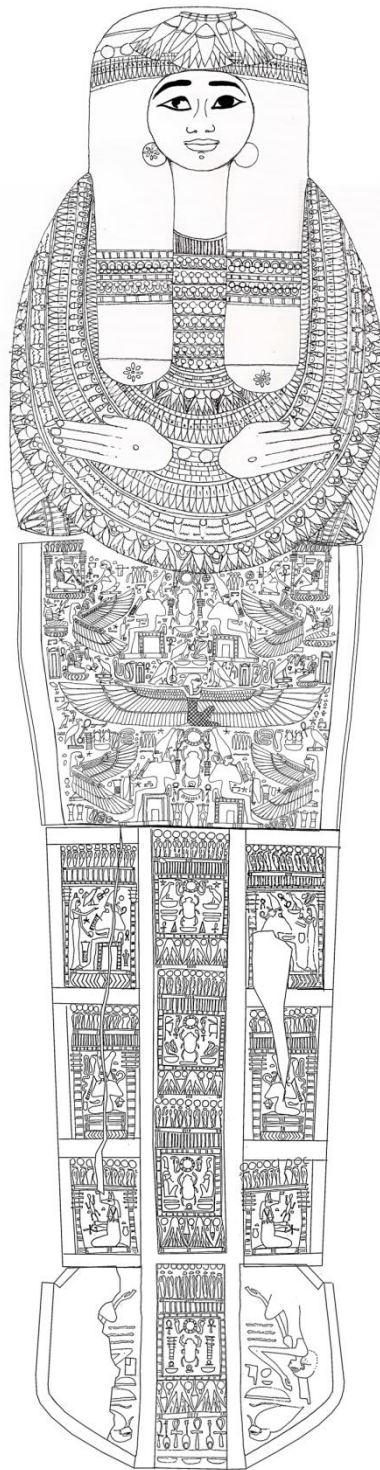


Fig. 61 – Lid (A.110)

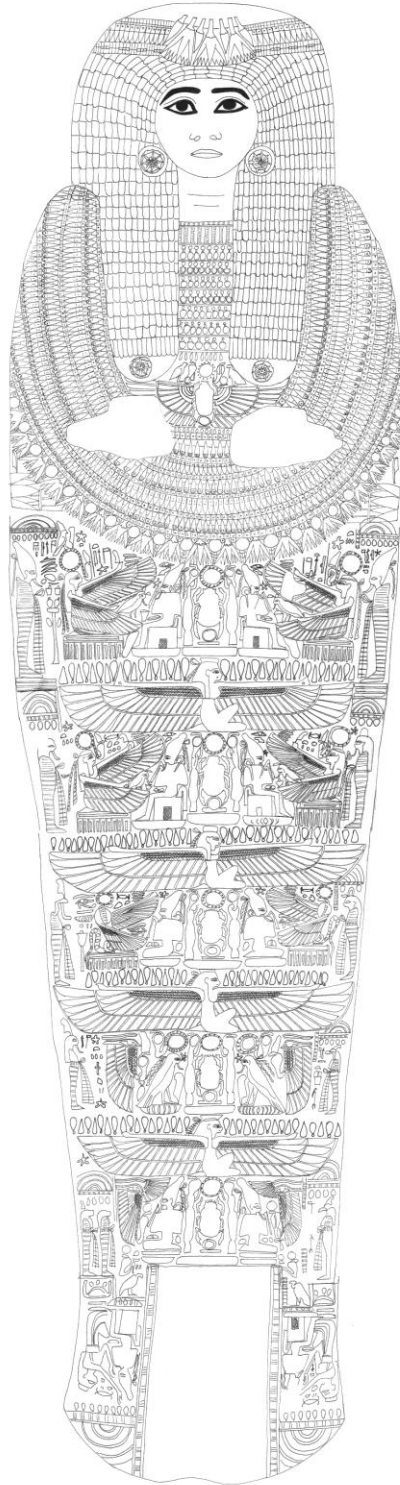


Fig. 62 – Lid (A.15)

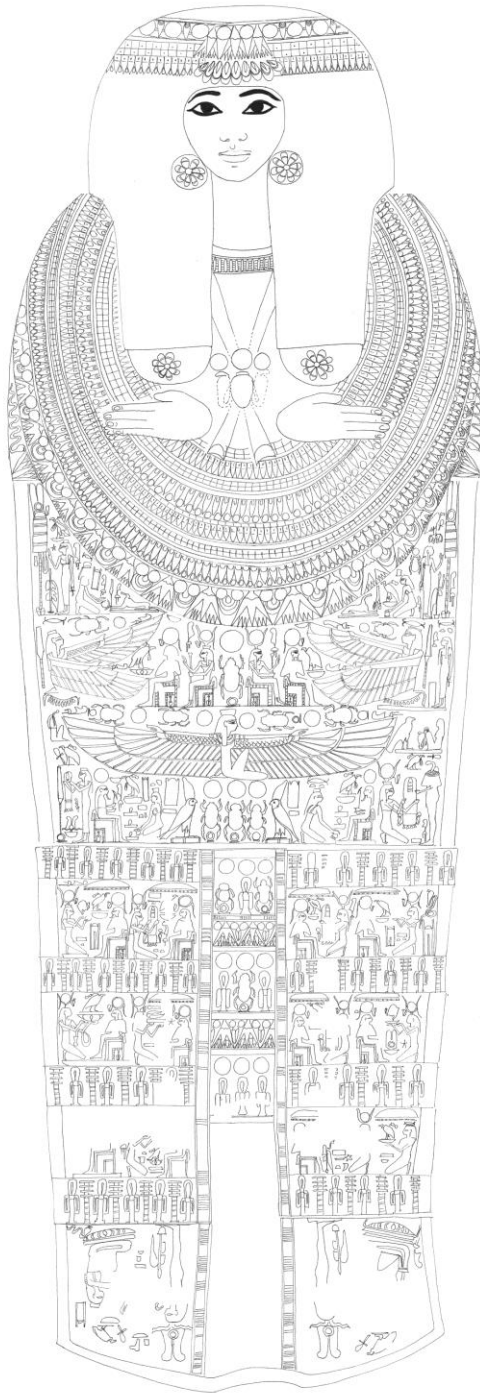


Fig. 63 – Lid (A.52)

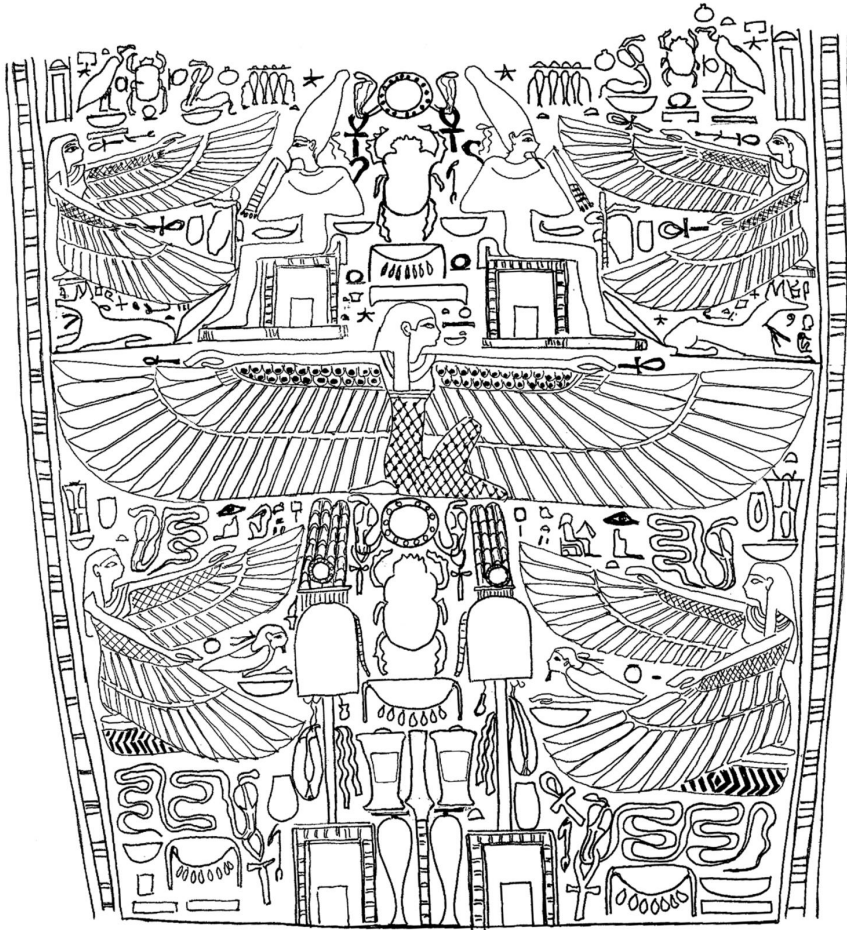


Fig. 64 – Central panel. Mummy-cover (A.110)



Fig. 65 – Mummy-cover of Hori (Kestner Museum)

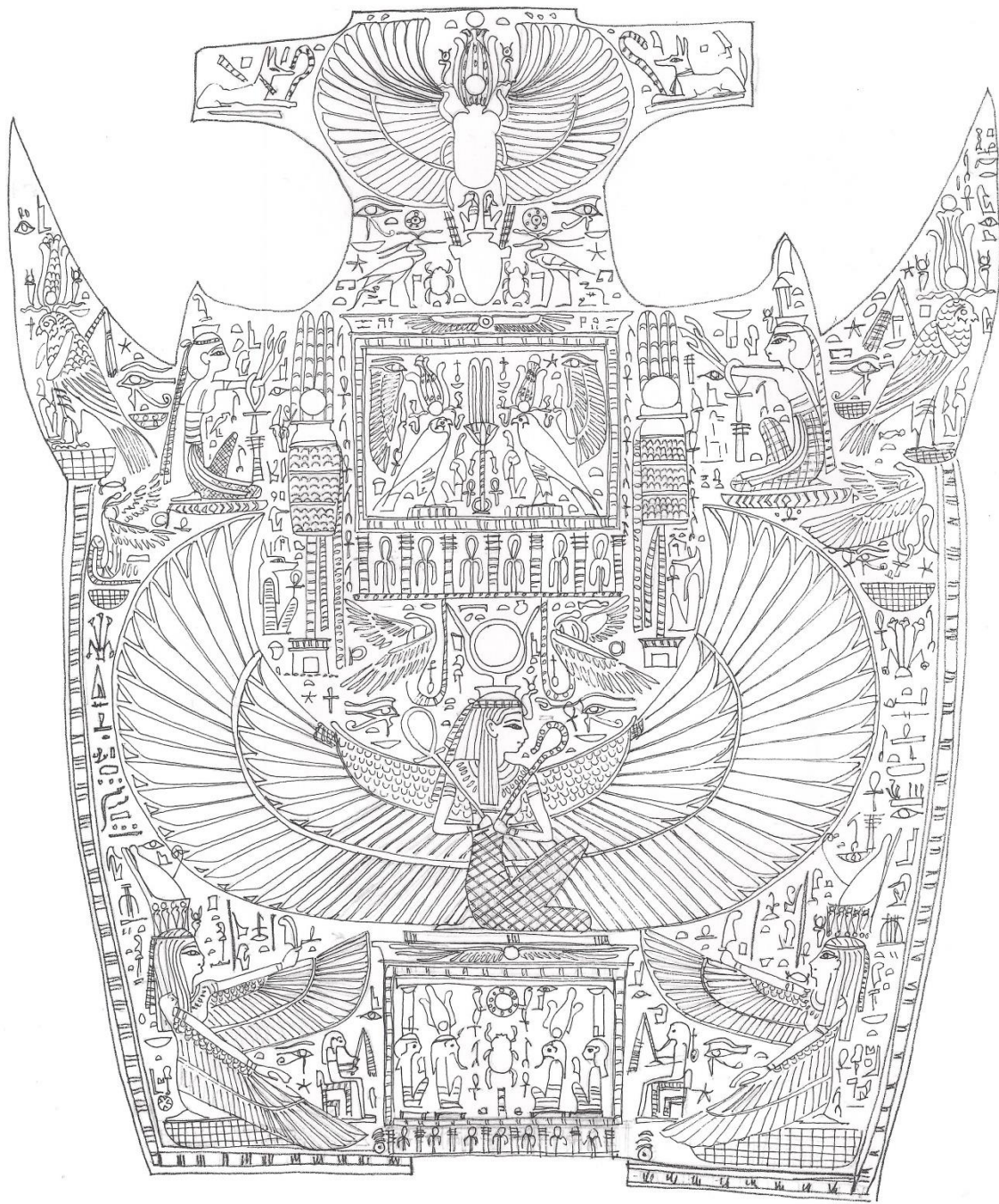


Fig. 66 – Central panel. Mummy-cover (A.87)

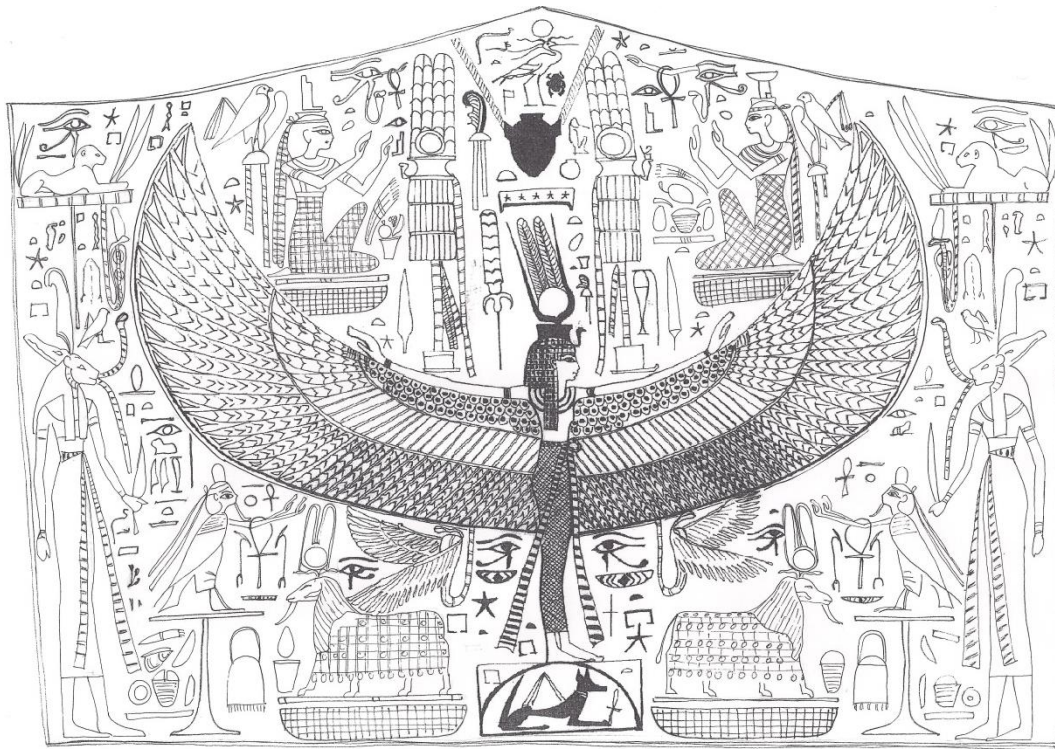


Fig. 67 – Central panel. Coffin (A.109)

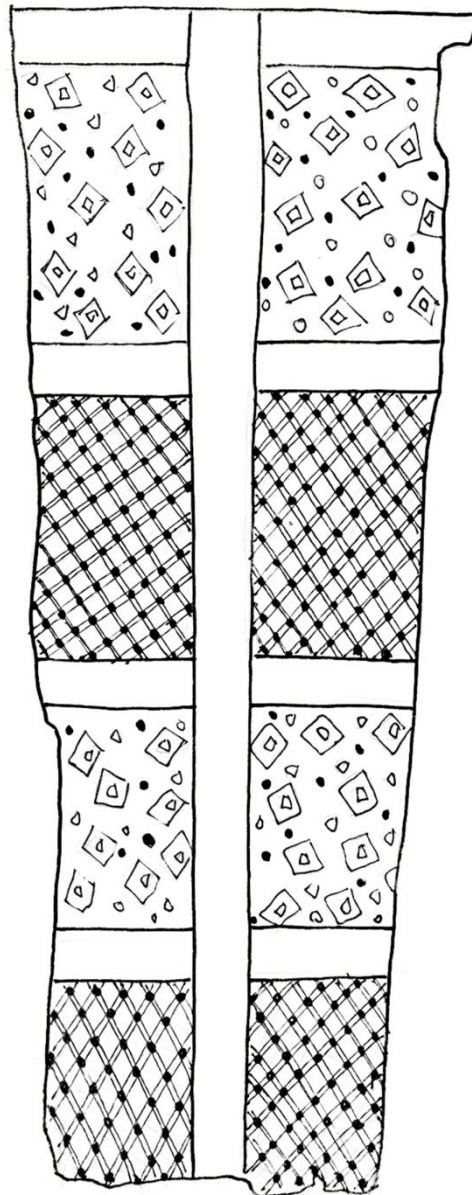


Fig.68 – Lower section. Mummy-cover (A.27)

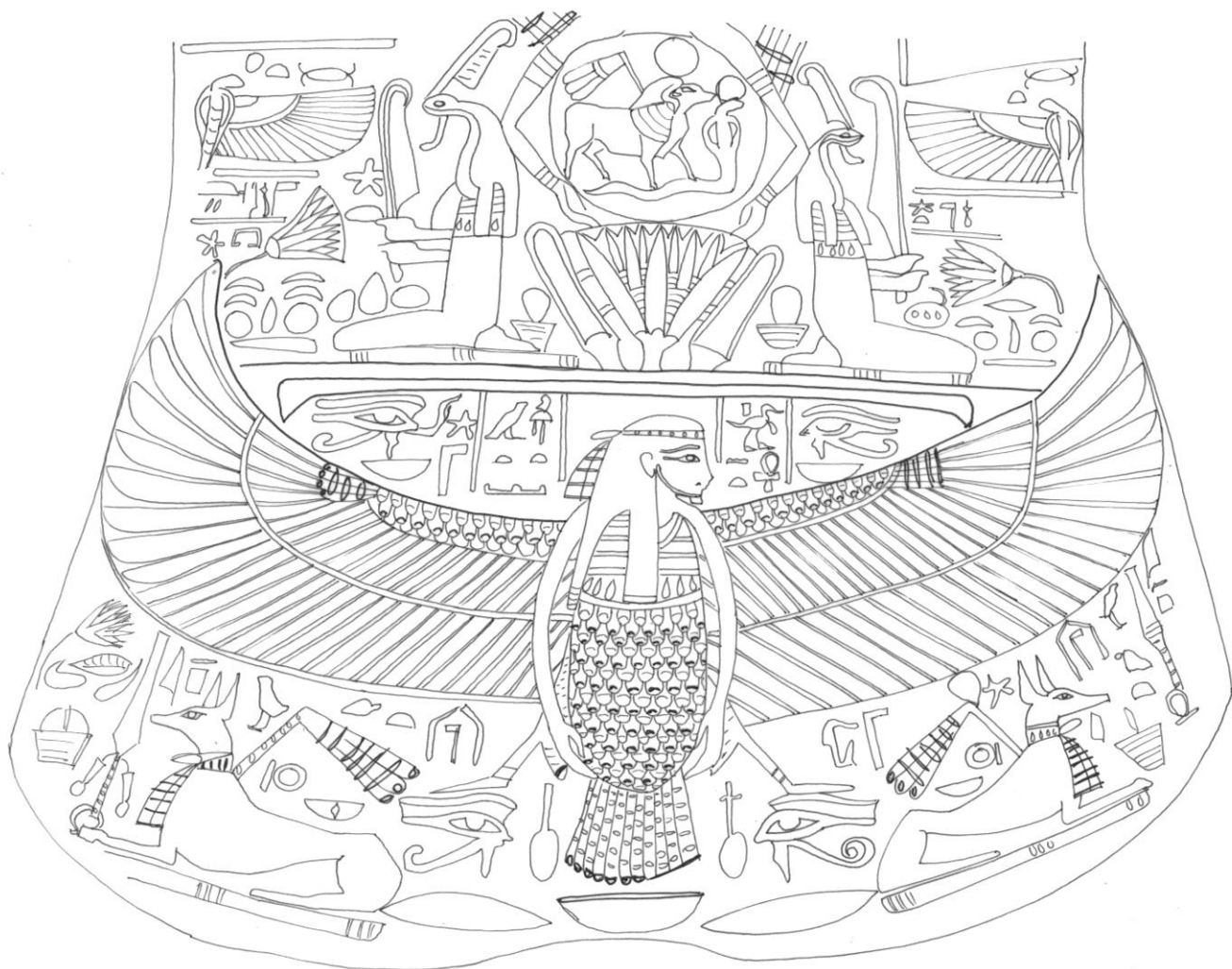


Fig. 69 – Footboard. Inner coffin (A.16)

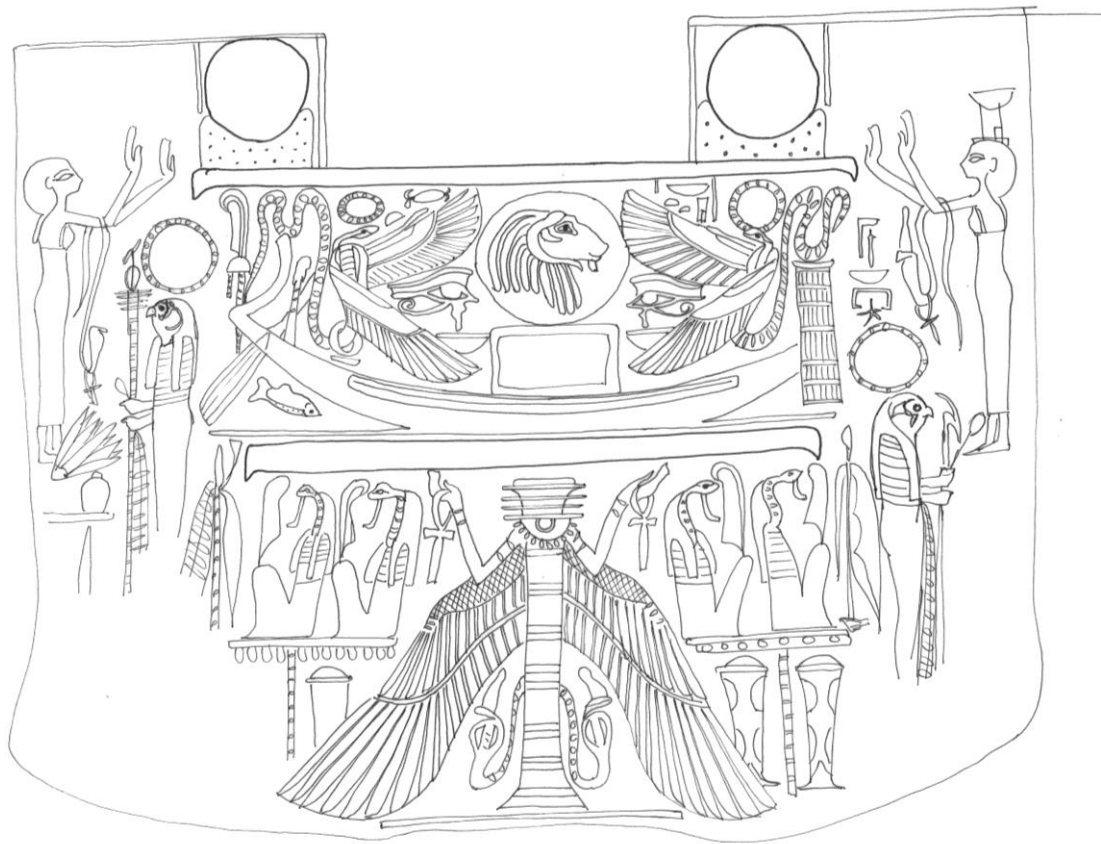


Fig. 70 – Footboard. Coffin (A.95)

CHAPTER VIII – SYMBOLISM AND MEANING

COFFIN DECORATION AS SEMIOTIC WRAPPING

The layout of the lid fully shows that Theban coffin decorators engaged in an unprecedented quest for complexity. This process was achieved by using a variety of processes. Borrowing images and symbols used in the magical protection of the mummy was one of these processes. Amulets, pectorals, collars and necklaces, headbands, rings and bracelets played an important role as gender/social markers.

On the other hand, ritual scenes played for the first time a decisive role in the decoration of the lid, namely on the lower section and footboard. The effective combination in one single object of such heterogeneous corpora of images borrowed from the repertoire of ritual tattoos, mummification and temple decoration is by itself an outstanding achievement. Coffins thus became unrivaled media conveying images with relevant meaning both in terms of religious significance and social status.

The layout of the lid displays several layers of representations revolving around the body itself. The anatomical features (face, hands, etc.) are painted yellow to suggest the gleaming skin of an awakened god and this light irradiates all over the coffin. On this bodily background, the iconographic tableaux are depicted. The representations evolve gradually from the skin itself. Some of them are featured on the chest, hands or forearms and allude to ritual tattoos. From this level, another layer of symbols associated with mummification is added such as pectorals, amulets, floral collars, and necklaces. Most of these representations are focused on the central panel, upper section, and headboard. Ritual scenes add a new layer on the lower section, featuring the deceased in ritual interaction with the gods of the underworld. Yet another sphere is added with ritual markers displayed on the footboard alluding to funerary rituals performed publicly. All these symbolic layers create magical spheres irradiating from the body of the deceased, leading it towards the transformations granted by the funerary rituals until his/her full manifestation as a justified god.

This ‘transparency’ effect, as Éva Liptay puts it⁸⁸⁰, is already detected in the openwork boards and played a strong influence in shaping the scheme of decoration of the ‘yellow’ type. The outer and inner lids thus reflect the layout of the mummy-cover, which stands as the nuclear object of the nested assemblage. This ‘transparency’ effect progresses to the interior of the mummy itself. It is to be reminded the practice

⁸⁸⁰ Liptay 2017, 269.

introduced in the 21st Dynasty of packing the organs inside the body cavity and not in the canopic vases. Because of that, statuettes of the four Sons of Horus were introduced within the mummy. Cosmic integration – one of the magic roles performed by the canopic chest – was thus achieved within the mummy itself. The mummy stands now at the core of the burial assemblage and resumes it in a way never achieved before⁸⁸¹. The objects of the nested assemblage thus make visible the deities hidden inside the mummy.

The role performed by the corpse is also detected in the way it shapes coffin decoration. As opposed to the previous models of anthropoid coffins, who were shaped at the image of the mummy, the ‘yellow’ type ventures to depict the transfigured body of the deceased, with its arms freed from the wrappings, its head gleaming with light and the tattooed chest adorned with pectorals and amulets. Although the anthropomorphic features are focused on the upper section and the headboard, the yellow background extends the ‘skin’ of the deceased towards the complete assemblage, as if all the motifs were engraved on the ‘living’ body of the deceased⁸⁸².

Coffin decoration thus wrapped the mummy within semiotic layers of signs⁸⁸³. In this process, the corpse figures at the core of this magical assemblage and coffin decoration projects the resurrected corpse to the outer layers. This ‘transparency’ blurred the definition of the coffins themselves to give full visibility to the body. This is better understood in the pictorial tradition of tomb decoration and funerary papyri. It has long been recognized that during the 18th Dynasty the depiction of the anthropoid coffin stands for the representation of the mummy, with the later hidden inside the body container. The layout of the coffin depicted in these scenes replicates the model in use during this period, the ‘black’ type. Decorators even include typical

⁸⁸¹ The magical equipment of these mummies included a funerary papyrus (between the legs) and other amulets such as the *wedjat*-eye (over the embalming incision), a falcon with outstretched wings and the heart scarab and, on the outermost layers, a pair of linen mummy braces. See Smith 1906, 155-160.

⁸⁸² It is worthy to note that in the royal burials at Tanis, which keep using the rectangular sarcophagi in the nesting process, do not present mummy-covers. See Montet, 1951, 112 (fig. 45). The nesting practice used in the Theban context – using exclusively anthropoid coffins - was clearly rooted in the royal imaginary but the exclusion of rectangular coffins fully attests the high level of architectonisation achieved by these objects. More than transitional objects looking outwards and assuring the link between the mummy, the burial chamber and the beyond, the coffin set is now conceived as a self-sufficient magical enclosure.

⁸⁸³ Regardless of the original provenance of the images – ritual tattooing, jewellery, temple decoration or funerary artefacts – a vast array of symbols began to be used in coffin decoration providing the coffin with several layers of meaning that revolved around the body. They not only transformed the body from within, as they brought it back to life, restoring the identity of the deceased and introducing him/her to the gods of the underworld. This ‘inter-iconicity’ transformed anthropoid coffins into extraordinary complex semiotic objects.

features of these objects, such as the gilded bands⁸⁸⁴, or the Sons of Horus⁸⁸⁵. Nested assemblages are suggested by the depiction side by side of anthropoid coffins⁸⁸⁶. Later on, in the Ramesside Period, nested assemblages are suggested by the depiction of two coffins partially⁸⁸⁷ or almost completely⁸⁸⁸ juxtaposed. However, during this period, the depiction of the coffin no longer follows the design of the actual objects in use. In fact, the ‘yellow’ type, as we know it, is not depicted in tomb decoration or in the funerary papyri. Instead, a mummy wrapped in white bandages and adorned with a mask and a floral collar is depicted. This scheme can be seen in the Tomb of Sennedjem (TT 1), thus without any correspondence with the layout of the coffins found in the tomb. Exactly the same pattern is detected in the model coffins found in the same tomb to hold shabtis, which suggests that this new model was not seen as ‘yellow’ at all. What we perceive as ‘yellow’ was likely seen by ancient Egyptians as ‘brightness’. A similar color scheme was adopted by Ramesside tombs, displaying the scenes outlined in red or black against a white background and the figures selectively covered with yellow paint. This scheme was meaningful enough to be adopted even in royal circles like in the Tomb of Nefertari and it clearly shows how the idea of ‘shining’ and ‘irradiating light’ transformed coffin and tomb decoration alike.

This same concern is again seen in the craftsmanship of shabtis. It is interesting to point out that during the Ramesside Period, these objects were inscribed with the formula ‘Illuminating the Osiris N.’⁸⁸⁹. Certainly not accidentally, during the 21st Dynasty shabtis began to be modeled in glazed ‘faïence’. This change clearly shows that more than the complicated formal features of coffin decoration, shabtis reproduced the quintessential quality of ‘yellow’ coffins, which was their gleaming light. This change is surely embedded in the meaning of the ‘yellow’ type. Previously, the anthropoid coffin was depicted as the protective interface of the mummy, providing a portable medium for the performance of rituals, but with the ‘yellow’ type the mummy became fully visible, while the coffin turned selectively ‘transparent’, allowing the ‘gilded flesh’ of the deceased to gleam through the layers of objects and symbols depicted on the lid. The defining feature of the ‘yellow’ type is the gleaming

⁸⁸⁴ Opening of the Mouth scene. Tomb of Nebamun and Ipuky (TT 181). In Mekhitarian 1997.

⁸⁸⁵ Papyrus of Amenhotep (Civico Museo di Storia ed Arte di Trieste, Inv. no. 12089).

⁸⁸⁶ Tomb of Amenmose. See Foucart 1935, Pl. IX.

⁸⁸⁷ Tomb of Userhat (TT 51).

⁸⁸⁸ Tomb of Neferabu (TT 5). See Vandier 1935.

⁸⁸⁹ Shabtis of Burero, in Hayes 1985, 428.

light that irradiates from the body of the deceased. This immaterial light wraps the body unfolding colors, images and texts, around the deceased and giving full visibility to the netherworld and its sacred topography. More than just recreating a tomb, this gleaming light connected the body of the deceased with the timeless topography of the Duat in a way never achieved before.

With the mummy at the core of the decorative program, the meaning of the lid underwent subtle changes, exploring different interpretations of the role of the deceased in the timeless realm of the netherworld.

PROTO-‘YELLOW’ COFFINS: THE LID AS THE HEAVENLY CEILING

During the Ramesside Period, it is clear that the coffin decoration is intimately related to the decoration of the funerary chambers. Both processes evolved in the same direction. The funerary chambers of the Theban tombs, which in theory should be left undecorated, adopted the extensive iconographic repertoire of the Book of the Dead and the same happened with coffin decoration. The motifs that were used to decorate the walls and ceilings of the funerary chamber are in fact, the same that were painted on the Ramesside coffins⁸⁹⁰. This common inspiration is visible in coffin decoration, through the transverse arrangement of the vignettes depicted in the lower section of the lid.

During this period, the layout of the lid of the anthropoid coffin mirrored the decoration of burial chamber, both shaped to resemble a heavenly gate. This common layout is explained in the light of the symbolism of the Ramesside coffin as a symbolic recreation of the Osirian chamber. The symbolism of coffin and tomb became so intimately intertwined, allowing the intense flux of iconography between tomb and coffin. This process kept a magical continuum between the ceiling of the Ramesside funerary chamber, the lid of the anthropoid coffin, the mummy-board and eventually the mummy itself.

In this way, during a short period, coffins’ lids and tomb ceilings were designed exactly under the same inspiration, providing several transitions, one could almost say ‘layers’, between the innermost sphere – the wrappings of the mummy itself - and the netherworld. In this context, the anthropoid coffin was seen as a transitional object linking the mummy to the cosmic sphere.

⁸⁹⁰ Bruyère 1952, pl. XIV, pl. XXVII

BASIC SCHEME: THE LID AS A SACRED GATE

From the 20th Dynasty onwards a stable connection between the coffin and a tomb was lost and, for the first time, funerary assemblages involved exclusively anthropoid coffins. These circumstances favoured a deeper level of architectonisation, giving rise to the basic scheme of the ‘yellow’ type.

The lateral partitions of the lower section are now decorated with shrines holding funerary deities (Osiris, Ptah-Sokar, four Sons of Horus and others) and the deceased is shown actively involved in rituals. The resulting design seems to have been shaped after the layout of the doors of a shrine⁸⁹¹. This sacred gate is headed (in the central panel) by the central panel as if painted on a lintel. This composition alludes to the divine mother and to her solar child and refers to the solar rebirth, which took place in the ‘mystery’ (literally the ‘corpse’) of the Duat⁸⁹². This passage opens not only to the interior of the coffin, seen as the territory of the Duat, but to the interior of the corpse itself, where the mystery of the regeneration of the sun takes place. The upper section depicts the deceased as a justified god (Fig. 60). The scenes that decorate the forearms and the chest of the deceased allude to the sunrise, the rebirth of the sun god, and to the resurrection of Osiris, mysteries that were witnessed and experienced by the deceased himself, one could truly say, ‘in his own flesh’. The composition of the lid thus results from the juxtaposition of the sacred gate against the body of the deceased, which is not a process entirely new in the Egyptian Art, reminding the layout of the Ramesside block-statues, where a shrine is juxtaposed against the legs of the individual. This composition makes clear the personal relation, one could almost say ‘physical’ or even ‘intimate’, between the owner of the statue and the divine shrine where his personal god took residence. A similar design was adopted in private naophoric⁸⁹³ and stelephorous⁸⁹⁴ statues, the first ones were commissioned to be set up in temples, while the later ones were crafted for the tomb. Despite these differences, both were associated with divine adoration

⁸⁹¹ Naville 1896, Pl. XXVI.

⁸⁹² These depictions refer to very important amulets that were actually used as part of the mummification process. Funerary pectorals and amulets are common in Ramesside burials and their depiction in the decoration of the yellow coffins suggests the close correspondence between the funerary equipment of the mummy and coffin decoration. The decoration of the lid and the arrangement of the mummy thus seem to keep a close association and interdependence.

⁸⁹³ Connor 2016, 54.

⁸⁹⁴ Robins 1997, 145.

and personal engagement of the owner in the divine cult. The lids of anthropoid coffins thus seem to have been designed after the layout of private statues, with a sacred gate imprinted in the deceased's body, suggesting the personal connection of the deceased with the deities ruling the underworld.

Moreover, these 'naophoric' lids brought with them an interesting view of the burial ground itself as it would be now conceived as a collective (sacred) precinct where the burial sets were placed to join the sun god during his nightly journey, in the same way that private statues were positioned in the temple to witness the daily course of the sun. All in all, the basic scheme of the lid features the deceased at the threshold of the underworld, from where he/she emerges as an empowered justified god and as an active performer of divine rituals.

CLASSICAL SCHEME: THE LID AS THE PLAN OF A ROYAL TOMB

In its classical tripartite version, the lower section presented an elaborated symbolism regarding the gates of the netherworld and the nightly journey of the Sun god. Each register of the central partition depicts one shrine in frontal view, while the lateral partitions allude to the cult scenes that were supposed to be depicted on its side walls. Altogether these elements suggest a symbolic reading of the lid, from below to above, with the central partition of the lower section suggesting the passing of the sun through the sacred gates of the Duat⁸⁹⁵.

The shrines depicted in the lateral partitions depict the gods flanking/protecting this passage. Such reading would be necessarily rooted in the myths of the nightly journey of the Sun in the Netherworld and in the decoration of the royal tombs of the Valley of the Kings. The central partition – with its architectonic friezes depicted in full frontal view – would suggest the succession of sacred gates leading to the royal burial chamber⁸⁹⁶, where the union of Re and Osiris took place.

As to the central panel, most of the motifs resemble the decoration of a funerary shrine or a sarcophagus. The winged goddesses depicted in the symmetrical registers are some of these motifs. During the Amarna Period and the late 18th Dynasty, royal sarcophagi

⁸⁹⁵ The god Osiris guards the underworld and embodies regeneration. The rejuvenation of the Sun was conceived in terms of a Solar-Osirian unity, which is a primarily topic in the royal books of the netherworld. The embrace of Re and Osiris causes the transfiguration of the deceased. See Weiss 2017, 222-230.

⁸⁹⁶ A similar concept is detected in the succession of the sacred gates in the temple. See Étienne 2009, 289.

displayed goddesses unfolding their wings on each corner. Symmetrical winged goddesses are also displayed on the sacred canopies that enshrined royal sarcophagi⁸⁹⁷. The central panel thus recreates the burial chamber where the *ba* of Re united with the corpse of Osiris, thus momentarily restoring the divine unity of the supreme god⁸⁹⁸.

The classical scheme of the lid thus maps the underworld, which is featured as a royal tomb (Plate 9). In this scheme, the deceased now emerges as undergoing the transformation into an Osirian and lethargic god.

COMPLEX SCHEME: THE LID AS THE DUAT

During the second half of the 21st Dynasty, further developments took place in the general layout of the lid, with an increasingly higher degree of complexity. The central panel displays three or more registers heavily decorated with liminal elements. The lower section can be either absent, thus entirely replaced by the central panel (Fig. 62) or, if it occurs, it is now much reduced (Fig. 48; Fig. 49). Given these differences, several types of layout may occur, each one with a slightly different meaning.

The lid as an Osirian shrine

During the late 21st Dynasty, a heavy uniformization took place. The lateral partitions depict Osirian gods alone, while the central partition features the solar scarab (Fig. 46). At the same time, an increasing weight is given to the Osirian significance of the footboard (Fig. 54; Fig. 56). It is interesting to note in these coffins the use of plaster to mold certain key-features of the compositions, especially along the longitudinal axis of the lid (such as solar disks, scarabs, or the bodies of the Osirian gods), suggesting the decoration of a cultic space⁸⁹⁹ and the increasing identification of the coffin with a sacred building where the deceased stood as deity of the underworld.

The lid as a sacred ceiling

The ‘liminalization’ of the coffin attests its full sacralization and turned more fluid the rigid topography of the ‘yellow’ type, originating objects where the fusion of the

⁸⁹⁷ Piankoff 1952, Pl. XII, XVII, LXXII. Centripetal compositions involving winged deities (usually Isis and Nephthys) are also frequently used in the decoration of the lateral walls of divine shrines. Such depictions can be found in the decoration of the barque shrine of Amun carried out in procession in Theban festivals.

⁸⁹⁸ Taylor 2016a, 49.

⁸⁹⁹ Liptay 2017, 263.

different areas is essayed. Objects with the central panel extending down the footboard belong to this type (Fig. 34; Fig. 62). In these objects the succession of winged deities with outstretched wings is designed after the ceilings of the funerary shrines, temples and tombs, where a succession of vultures or winged sun disks can be seen flying along the longitudinal axis of the temple, which again suggests the identification of the lid with the imaginary of the Sun's journey through the netherworld. These objects bear a close resemblance to the monolithic *naoi*, carved to creating an artificial cave⁹⁰⁰. The walls of these Ramesside monuments are decorated with ritual scenes while the ceilings show winged deities. The rear wall contains the figures of gods cut in high relief.

The coffins from this category were designed after these sacred *hypogea*, with the lid suggesting the ceiling of the chamber, the sides replicating the decoration of the walls and the deceased figuring as the divine dweller of this *naos*. Although less dependent on these architectonic references, another group of extended compositions recalls the protection conferred by the heavenly mother goddess, depicted as a vulture (Fig. 35). These compositions are headed by a vulture and the role of liminal elements is greatly increased with the layout as a whole showing less structured spacial references. Such panels literally display the 'nest' of the heavenly goddess, the sacred atmosphere that surrounds the deceased under the wings of the mother goddess. The 'liminalization' of the lid eventually led to the deconstruction of the scheme of decoration of the 'yellow' type and to the emergence of the layout that would be in favour in Thebes during the 22nd Dynasty.

In common to these variations is the increasing size of the large floral collar. This growth of the weight given to the floral collar was surely motivated by the importance given to the magical protection of the mummy. Such protection literally embraced the deceased alluding to the regeneration provided by Hathor, the mother goddess who presided over the Theban necropolis⁹⁰¹.

⁹⁰⁰ Naoi of Ramses II (Cairo Egyptian Museum, JE 37475, JE 37476). See Saleh, Sourouzian 1987, 204-205.

⁹⁰¹ We know that floral collars played an important role during the mummification process. In burials dating from the 21st Dynasty, it is not rare to find garlands decorating the exterior wrappings of the mummies. The royal embalming cache (KV 63) uncovered an extensive collection of funerary garlands and floral collars most certainly used during the royal mummification process. Sousa 2013, 67.

Similarly, the depiction of the mummy braces introduced in the late 21st Dynasty alludes to the lethargic state in which resurrection takes place⁹⁰².

Together with the introduction of the mummy braces, the increasing importance of the depiction of the floral collar contributes to the acclamation of the divine status of the deceased as an Osirian god and not so much as a priest actively engaged in the cult, as it was the case during the early 21st Dynasty. As a result of this trend, the deceased became increasingly concealed underneath the heavy decoration provided by the floral collar and was now fully enveloped under the myriads of liminal elements surrounding him with their magical protection. Both the floral motifs and the liminal elements conveyed to the coffin the sacredness of the Duat and wrapped the deceased with the divine attributes of Hathor, as if he/she had entered into her divine realm to be regenerated under her protection, exactly in the way this process is depicted in funerary papyri and votive cloths (Plates 5-6).

The complex scheme features the full Osirification of the coffin, and involved three other aspects that deeply shaped the later stages of the 'yellow' coffins:

- Increasing role of the liminal elements;
- Unprecedented levels of standardization;
- Impersonal use of coffins, detected by the increasing use of anonymous coffins.

*

* *

The repertoire detected in the upper section of the 'yellow' coffins thus shows a subtle evolution from the depiction of the deceased as an awoken god, empowered with magic knowledge and gleaming with the light of the rising sun, to a lethargic Osirian deity of the underworld, literally embraced by the 'Mistress of the West' and regenerated with her life-giving flowers, plants and magical symbols.

This represents a slow but effective shift in the symbolic significance of the 'yellow' coffin evolving from a greater weight given to the identification of the deceased with the re-born sun god to an increasingly stronger identification with Osiris. Although the deceased identifies himself with both Osiris and Re⁹⁰³, the weight given to each of these manifestations changed along the course of the 21st Dynasty, which is perhaps the boldest reason behind the changes on the layout of the lid.

⁹⁰² Smith 1906, 155-160. See also Van Walsem 1997, 117.

⁹⁰³ Weiss 2017, 222-230.

The different pictorial areas found on the lid clearly play distinct symbolic and perhaps ritual purposes. The longitudinal arrangement of the lower section revolves around Solar-Osirian imagery and offers to the deceased a ritual set to his/her active engagement in divine cults. As we approach the end of the 21st Dynasty this area decreases and the role of the gods as performers of cults is often bolder than that of the deceased himself (Fig. 47). On the other hand, the symmetrical registers of the central panel celebrate the regeneration provided by the heavenly mother goddesses. As a rule, the deceased figures here in his/her avian manifestation merely as a witness of the Solar-Osirian union. And yet the central panel became increasingly larger as the end of this period is approached. The examination of the decoration reveals that the most important changes that affected coffin decoration during this period irradiated from this area. The size, complexity, and weight given to the central panel in the global economy of the decoration of the lid clearly show that the efforts concerned with innovation were focused on this section. The perception of uniqueness associated with this composition thus seems to have played an important role in the global assessment of the value of the coffin as a whole and perhaps because of that, great efforts were made to generate innovative compositions in this setting.

To a much lesser degree, the upper section also reflects these changes, displaying slightly different messages on the status of the deceased. In the beginning of this period, the deceased is depicted as an empowered reborn god, equated with the rising sun, often depicted as a central marker on his/her chest, while by the end of the dynasty he/she figures as a lethargic deity, with emphasis put on the Osirian identity highlighted by the heart amulet and even by mummy braces.

The headboard and the footboard remained privileged areas for the performance of mourning rituals or the Opening of the Mouth ceremony. These practical concerns probably prevented that bolder changes occurred.

Each section played a different role, shaped by ritual needs and symbolic speculation. The ritual needs associated with the objects of a nested assemblage were certainly different. Clearly outer coffins stand as the most important object in terms of social value and they seem to have played a bolder role in public ceremonies. The layout of these lids exhibits very contrasting colors⁹⁰⁴ and in most of them, the style is sketchy and rough⁹⁰⁵, despite the overall good quality of the craftsmanship.

⁹⁰⁴ A.56 (outer coffin), A.60 (outer coffin).

⁹⁰⁵ A.15 (outer coffin), A.33 (outer coffin).

Interestingly enough, when seen at some distance, the visual impact of the objects is excellent, suggesting that they were designed exactly to be seen at some distance. The outer lids were thus likely to be upraised on a courtyard before a relatively large assembly of attendants.

It is likely that the inner lid was used in a more private context, perhaps during rituals involving the inner social circle of the deceased⁹⁰⁶. The lid of the 'yellow' coffin not only concealed the body within the funerary container, as performed many other roles, such as providing a protective magical sphere, either this was conceived as a sacred gate, an Osirian crypt, or the heavenly realm of the mother goddess. 'Yellow' coffins thus served a significantly wider range of purposes than ever before, eventually becoming not only the largest corpus of body containers produced in Egypt to that date but also the most elaborate and complex artefacts crafted in the ancient world.

⁹⁰⁶ In most of the burials, the inner lids would be the only available object to be used in public ceremonies.

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LIST OF FIGURES

The drawings are from the author.

Fig. 1 – Types of lotus bunches depicted on the crown of the head.

Fig. 2 – Types of wigs: braided (1), striped (2), blue (3) and checkered (4).

Fig. 3 – Floral headband (seen from the crown of the head).

Fig. 4 – Patterns with floral and geometric motifs detected in the ‘crown of justification’ and in the floral collars.

Fig. 5 – The vulture headdress. Outer coffin of Maatkare (A.132)

Fig. 6 – Headboard and upper section. Coffin of Hori (Kestner Museum)

Fig. 7 – Headboard and upper section. Coffin of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus)

Fig. 8 – Headboard and upper section. Coffin (A.22)

Fig. 9 – Headboard and upper section. Coffin (A.110)

Fig. 10 – Headboard and upper section. Coffin (A.56)

Fig. 11 – Headboard and upper section. Mummy-cover (A.136)

Fig. 12 – Headboard and upper section. Mummy-cover (A.27)

Fig. 13 – Headboard and upper section. Inner coffin (A.15)

Fig. 14 – Headboard and upper section. Outer coffin (A.52)

Fig. 15 – Headboard and upper section. Coffin (A.4)

Fig. 16 – Types of central markers

Fig. 17 – Central marker: (Winged) scarabs.

Fig. 18 – Central marker: Winged scarabs and heart amulets

Fig. 19 – Central marker: Heart amulets and other motifs

Fig. 20 – Patterns with lotus flowers.

Fig. 21 – Central panel. Inner coffin of Khonsu (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Fig. 22 – Central panel. Outer coffin of Henutmehyt (British Museum)

Fig. 23 - Central panel. Outer coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Fig. 24 - Central panel. Coffin of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus)

Fig. 25 - Central panel. Outer coffin of Pasebakhaienipet (Brooklyn Museum)

Fig. 26 - Central panel. Inner Coffin of Henut-taui (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Fig. 27 – Central panel. Inner coffin (A.60)
Fig. 28 – Central panel. Coffin (A.18)
Fig. 29 – Central panel. Mummy-cover (A.29)
Fig. 30 – Central panel. Coffin (A.110)
Fig. 31 – Central panel. Mummy-cover (A.136)
Fig. 32 – Central panel. Outer coffin (A.40)
Fig. 33 – Central panel. Outer coffin (A.15)
Fig. 34 – Central panel. Inner coffin (A.15)
Fig. 35 – Central panel. Inner coffin (A.40)
Fig. 36 – Central panel. Outer coffin (A.32)
Fig. 37 – Central panel. Outer coffin (A.52)
Fig. 38 – Central panel. Inner coffin (A.123)
Fig. 39 – Types of nuclear blocks.
Fig. 40 – Lower section. Mummy-cover of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus)
Fig. 41 – Lower section. Coffin of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus)
Fig. 42 – Lower section. Mummy-cover (A.110)
Fig. 43 – Lower section. Coffin of Amenhotep (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden)
Fig. 44 – Lower section. Inner coffin (A.60)
Fig. 45 – Lower section. Outer coffin (A.136)
Fig. 46 – Lower section. Coffin (A.110)
Fig. 47 – Lower section. Outer coffin (A.52)
Fig. 48 – Lower section. Outer coffin (A.60)
Fig. 48 – Lower section. Outer coffin (A.32)
Fig. 49 – Lower section. Inner coffin (A.123)
Fig. 51 – Footboard. Coffin of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus)
Fig. 52 – Footboard. Coffin (A.110)
Fig. 53 – Footboard. Inner coffin (A.12)
Fig. 54 – Footboard. Coffin (A.93)
Fig. 55 – Footboard. Inner coffin (A.15)
Fig. 56 – Footboard. Outer coffin of Ikhy (Vatican Museums)
Fig. 57 – Footboard. Outer coffin (A.52)

Fig. 58 – Footboard. Coffin of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus)

Fig. 59 – Footboard. Outer coffin (A.136)

Fig. 60 – Lid of Tabasety (Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology in Aarhus)

Fig. 61 – Lid (A.110)

Fig. 62 – Lid (A.15)

Fig. 63 – Lid (A.52)

Fig. 64 – Central panel. Mummy-cover (A.110)

Fig. 65 – Mummy-cover of Hori (Kestner Museum)

Fig. 66 – Central panel. Mummy-cover (A.87)

Fig. 67 – Central panel. Coffin (A.109)

Fig. 68 – Lower section. Mummy-cover (A.27)

Fig. 69 – Footboard. Inner coffin (A.16)

Fig. 70 – Footboard. Coffin (A.95)

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LIST OF PLATES

Plate 1 – Goddess Nut. Lid of the coffin of Ah-hotep Tanedjemet (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 12.181.303).

Plate 2 – Vignette of Chapter 17 of the Book of the Dead (Trinity College Library, Inv N 161) – detail.

Plate 3 – Funerary papyrus of Amenemwya (Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrus Sammlung in Berlin, P 3127).

Plate 4 – Mourning scene from the Amarnian Period (location unknown)

Plate 5 – Funerary papyrus of Userhatmose, from Bab el-Gasus (Cairo Egyptian Museum, 4885).

Plate 6 – Votive cloth (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

Plate 7 – Lustration scene. Tomb of Sennefer (TT 96)

Plate 8 – Interior decoration of the coffin A.27.

Plate 9 – From left to right: Lid of Djedmutiuesankh (A.110), ostrakon with the plan of a royal tomb (Cairo Egyptian Museum, 4371).

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LIST OF SOURCES

ANTHROPOID COFFINS FROM THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

Coffin of Hapyankhtify, 12th Dynasty, from Mir – Metropolitan Museum of Art (12.183.11c.1–2)

- Hayes 1953, 312 (fig. 203).

Coffin of Khnumhotep, 12th Dynasty – National Museums of Scotland (A.1907.713.5)

- Manley, Dodson 2010, 17

Coffin of Khnumnakht, 12th Dynasty, from Deir Rifeh (Tomb of the Two Brothers) – Manchester Museum (4740)

- David 2002, pl. 19
- David 2007
- Ikram, Dodson 1998, 202

Coffin of Nakhtankh, 12th Dynasty, from Deir Rifeh (Tomb of the Two Brothers) – Manchester Museum (4739)

- David 2002, pl. 19
- David 2007

Coffin of Nephthys, 12th Dynasty, from Mir – Metropolitan Museum of Art (70 11/16)

- Hayes 1953, 312.

Coffin of Userhat, 12th Dynasty, from Beni Hasan – Fitzwilliam Museum (E.88.1903)

- Ikram, Dodson 1998, 202
- Taylor 2010, 223
- Vassilika 1995, 36-37

Coffin of Senebtisi, 12th Dynasty, from Lisht – Destroyed

- Hayes 1953, fig. 197
- Mace, Winlock, 1916

RISHI COFFINS

17th Dynasty

Coffin of Ah-hotep, from Dra Abu el-Naga – Cairo Egyptian Museum (CG 28501)

- Corteggiani 1986, 83-84
- Hornung, Bryan 2002, 108-109
- Ikram, Dodson 1998, fig. XXVI

Coffin of Kamose, from Dra Abu el-Naga – Cairo Egyptian Museum (CG 4944)

- Daressy 1908, 61-63
- Miniaci 2010, fig. 5

Coffin of Nubkheperra Antef, from Dra Abu el-Naga - British Museum (EA6652)

- Ikram, Dodson 1998, 205
- Taylor 1989, 26

Coffin of Puhorsenbu, from Asasif (Burial B 44) – Metropolitan Museum of Art (30.3.7a-b)

- Museum records

Coffin of Reri, from Asasif (Tomb CC 46/3) - Metropolitan Museum of Art (12.181.299a-b)

- Hayes 1953, fig. 13
- Taylor 1989, 26

Coffin of Sat-Djehuti (fragment) - Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich (ÄS 7163)

Coffin of Sekhemre Heruhermaat Antef VII – Louvre Museum (E 3020)

- Ikram, Dodson 1998, 205

Coffin of Sekhemre-Wepmaat Antef – Louvre Museum (E 3091)

- Museum records

Coffin of Taa II, from DB 320 – Cairo Egyptian Museum (CG 61001)

- Daressy 1909
- Ikram, Dodson 1998, 206

Coffin of Taiuy - British Museum (EA54350)

- Museum records

Anonymous *rishi* coffin 1, from Asasif (Tomb CC 41) – Metropolitan Museum of Art (30.3.4a-b)

- Museum records

Anonymous *rishi* coffin 2, from Asasif (Tomb B 43) – Metropolitan Museum of Art (30.3.6a-b)

- Museum records

Anonymous *rishi* coffin 3, from Asasif (Burial 46.1) - Metropolitan Museum of Art (12.181.301a-b)

- Museum records

Anonymous *rishi* coffin 4, from Asasif (Tomb B 28) - Metropolitan Museum of Art (30.3.5a-b)

- Museum records

Anonymous *rishi* coffin 5, from Asasif – Metropolitan Museum of Art (12.181.300a-b)

- Museum records

Anonymous *rishi* coffin 6, from Asasif (Tomb CC 62) – Metropolitan Museum of Art (14.10.1a-b)

- Hayes 1953, fig. 14.

Anonymous *rishi* coffin 7 – British Museum (EA52951)

- Davies, Schofield 1995, 148
- Robins 1997, 116
- Taylor, Strudwick 2005, 50-1

Anonymous *rishi* coffin 8 – British Museum (EA52950)

- Taylor 2010, 224

Anonymous *rishi* coffin 9 – Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (1987.490a-b)

- Museum records

Anonymous *rishi* coffin 10, from Gurnah - National Museums of Scotland (A.1909.527)

- Manley, Dodson 2010, 23-26.

Anonymous *rishi* coffin 11, from Dra Abu el-Naga - Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich (ÄS 6084)

- Museum records

18th Dynasty

Anonymous *rishi* coffin 12, from southern Asasif (Tomb MMA 1013) – Metropolitan Museum of Art (23.3.461)

- Miniaci 2011
- Hayes 1959, 221

Anonymous royal coffin, from KV 55 – Cairo Egyptian Museum (JE 39627)

- Clayton 2006, 127

Burial assemblage of Tutankhamun, from KV 62 – Cairo Egyptian Museum (JE 60671)

- Ikram, Dodson 1998, 213-215
- Reeves, Wilkinson 1996, 127

Coffin of Ahmose-Nefertari, from DB 320 – Cairo Egyptian Museum (CG 61003)

- Ikram, Dodson 1998, 207

Coffin set of Merytamun, from TT 358 – Cairo Egyptian Museum (JE 53140)

- Ikram, Dodson 1998, 208
- Saleh, Sourouzian 1987, fig. 127
- Winlock 1932, fig. 5

‘WHITE’ COFFINS

Coffin of Ah-hotep Tanedjemet, from Asasif (Tomb CC 37) – Metropolitan Museum of Art (12.181.303)

- Hayes 1935, fig. 22
- Hayes 1953, fig. 38

Coffin of Ahmose, son of Nakht, from Asasif (Tomb 37) – Metropolitan Museum of Art (14.10.2)

- Hayes 1953, fig. 37
- Ikram, Dodson 1998, 209
- Robins 1997, 146

Coffin of Hatnefer, from Sheikh Abd el-Gurnah (Tomb of Senenmut, TT 71) – Metropolitan Museum of Art (36.3.184)

Coffin of Madja, from Deir el-Medina – Louvre Museum (E 14543)

- Andreu 2002, 299.

Coffin of Nubnen from Deir el-Medina – National Museum in Warsaw (138979)

Coffin of Puia - Museo Egizio in Turin (Provvisorio 718)

- Greco, Poole 2015, 99

Coffin of Ramose, from Sheikh Abd el-Gurnah (Tomb of Senenmut, TT 71) – Metropolitan Museum of Art (36.3.172)

- Ikram, Dodson 1998, 210

Coffin of Wadjshemsisu (fragment) - Princeton Art Museum (1998-37)

Anonymous ‘white’ coffin – Metropolitan Museum of Art (15955)

- Hayes 1935, fig. 23

'BLACK' COFFINS

Coffin of Amenemope – Roemer and Pelizaeus Museum in Hildesheim (Inv. no. 6330)

- Eggebrecht 1993, 52

Coffin of Amenhotep (fragment), from Dra Abu el-Naga (TT A7) – Myers Museum in Baltimore (ECM 1876)

- Spurr, Reeves, Quirke 1999, 24

Coffin of Henutudjebu, from Thebes (Tomb of Hatiay) – Washington University Gallery of Art (2292)

- Hornung, Bryan 2002, 67
- Kozloff et alii 1993, 270-275

Coffin of Kent – Museo Egizio in Florence (Inv. no. 6526)

- Guidotti 2001, n° 1-A
- Guidotti 2015, n° 66
- Ikram, Dodson 1998, 202
- Taylor 2010, 223

Middle coffin of Kha, from TT 8, Deir el-Medina – Museo Egizio in Turin (S.8316/1)

- Greco, Poole 2015, 141

Inner coffin of Kha, from TT 8, Deir el-Medina – Museo Egizio in Turin (S.8429)

- Greco, Poole 2015, 141

Middle coffin of Maherpra, from KV 36 - Cairo Egyptian Museum (CG 24003-4)

- Ikram, Dodson 1998, 211

Inner coffin of Maherpra, from KV 36 – Cairo Egyptian Museum (JE 31378; CG 4219)

Gilded inner coffin of Maherpra, from KV 36 – Cairo Egyptian Museum (CG 24003-24004)

- Ikram, Dodson 1998, 211

Coffin of Mahu, from Thebes – Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow (I.1.a 5249)

- Hodjash 2002, n° 38

Coffin of Nebtauai – Museo Egizio in Florence (Inv. no. 6525)

Coffin of Nubenusekhet – Musée d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne de Marseille

- Maspero 1914, 12-17

Outer Coffin of Tauret, from Sakara (Tomb of Aper-el) – Imhotep Museum in Sakara

- Zivie 2007

Coffin of Tentamentet, from Thebes – British Museum (EA 54521)

- Taylor 2010, 225

Outer coffin of Tjuiu, from KV 46 – Cairo Egyptian Museum (CG 51006)

- Ikram, Dodson 1998, 211
- Jouguet 1930, Pl. IX-X.

Inner coffin of Tjuiu, from KV 46 – Cairo Egyptian Museum (CG 51007)

- Ikram, Dodson 1998, 211
- Jouguet 1930, Pl. IX-X.

Outer coffin of Yuya, from KV 46 – Cairo Egyptian Museum (CG 51002) (CG 51003-4)

- Ikram, Dodson 1998, 212
- Jouguet 1930, Pl. II.

Middle coffin of Yuya, from KV 46 – Cairo Egyptian Museum (CG 51003)

- Ikram, Dodson 1998, 212
- Jouguet 1930, Pl. III-IV.

Inner coffin of Yuya, from KV 46 – Cairo Egyptian Museum (CG 51004)

- Ikram, Dodson 1998, 212
- Jouguet 1930, Pl. III-VI.

Anonymous 'black' coffin 1 – Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (1988.1)

- D'Auria, Lacovara, Roehrig 1988, 133.

Anonymous 'black' coffin 2 – British Museum (29580)

- Robins 1997, 147
- Taylor 1989, 33

Sarcophagi

Sarcophagus of Hori, 19th Dynasty – Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrus Sammlung in Berlin (57)

Sarcophagus – Elephantine Museum in Aswan (2686)

Inner sarcophagus of Merymes – British Museum (EA 1001)

- Ikram, Dodson 1998, 213
- Kozloff et alii 1993, 279

Sarcophagus of Pahemnetjer, from Sakara - British Museum (EA18)

Sarcophagus of an unknown man reused for Psusennes I, from Tanis NRT III – Cairo Egyptian Museum (JE 85911)

- Ikram, Dodson 1998, 226
- Montet 1951, Pl. XCIV-XCVII

‘FESTIVE DRESS’ TYPE

Coffin of Amenemhat – Metropolitan Museum of Art (19.3.207a-b)

Coffin of Henutwati – Louvre Museum (E 18848)

- Cooney 2007, fig. 125

Funerary plank of Khay – Musées royaux d’Art et d’Histoire in Brussels (E.6878)

- Cooney 2007, fig. 71-73
- Delvaux, Therasse 2015, 72-73.
- Taylor 1989, 37.

Funerary plank of Piay – Cairo Egyptian Museum (JE 2156)

- Cooney 2007, fig. 75

Coffin of Weretwahset (reinscribed for Bensusipet), from Deir el-Medina – Brooklyn Museum (37.47Ea-b)

- Bleiberg 2008, figs. 124-125.

Anonymous ‘festive dress’ funerary plank 1 – Michael Carlos Museum in Atlanta (L2003.14.38)

- Cooney 2007, fig. 206
- Cooney 2017b, 284

Anonymous ‘festive dress’ funerary plank 2 – Nationalmuseet in Copenhagen (Aaa 67)

- Cooney 2007, fig. 205
- Cooney 2017b, 284

Anonymous ‘festive dress’ funerary plank 3 – Brooklyn Museum of Art (37.1520 E)

- Cooney 2007, fig. 198
- Cooney 2017b, 284

Anonymous ‘festive dress’ funerary plank 4 – Museo Egizio in Florence (5424)

- Cooney 2017b, 284

Coffins from TT 1

Coffin of Aset – Cairo Egyptian Museum (JE 27309)

- Saleh, Sourouzian 1987, fig. 218

Funerary plank of Iyeferty – Metropolitan Museum of Art (86.1.5)

- Cooney 2007, fig. 141

Funerary plank of Sennedjem – Cairo Egyptian Museum (JE 27308)

- Cooney 2007, figs. 101-105

Funerary plank of Tamakhet – Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrus Sammlung in Berlin (Inv. no. 10832)

- Cooney 2007, fig. 5

Sarcophagi

Sarcophagus of Nia, from Saqqara - Louvre Museum D.2 (N.338)

- Ikram, Dodson 1998, 225

Inner sarcophagus of Ramses (later King Ramses I), from Medinet Habu – Cairo Egyptian Museum (JE 72203)

- Ikram, Dodson 1998, 216
- Saleh, Sourouzian 1987, fig. 200

PROTO-‘YELLOW’ COFFINS

Coffin set of Henutmehyt – British Museum (EA 48001)

- Ikram, Dodson 1998, 216
- Robins 1997, 187
- Taylor 2010, 277

Coffin set of Ipyu - Museo Egizio in Florence (Inv.n.2175.A-B)

Coffin of Katabet – British Museum (EA 6665)

- Cooney 2007, fig. 21
- Ikram, Dodson 1998, fig. XXX

Coffin of Paherypedet, from DB 320 - Cairo Egyptian Museum (CG 61022)

- Cooney 2007, fig. 81
- Daressy 1909, Pl. XXIV

Coffin of Sat-Djehuti (fragment) - Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst München (ÄS 7163)

Coffin set of Takayt – Die Städtische Galerie Liebieghaus in Frankfurt (1651 a-f)

- Bayer-Niemeier et alli 1993, 302-320
- Cooney 2007, fig. 25

Coffin set of Tamutneferet – Louvre Museum (N 2631, N2571, N 2623, N 2620)

- Cooney 2007, fig. 42

Mummy-boards

Mummy-board of Henutmehyt – British Museum (EA 48001)

- Cooney 2007, fig. 2
- Taylor 1999
- Taylor 2001, 227

Mummy-board of Pendenit (fragments) – British Museum (EA 35888-35893)

- Cooney 2007, fig. 63-64

Mummy-board of Ram – Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg (N. Inv. 787)

- Cooney 2007, fig. 124
- Piotrovsky 1974, 104

Mummy-board of Takayt – Städtische Galerie Liebieghaus in Frankfurt (1651 a-f)

- Cooney 2007, fig. 34

Mummy-board of Tamutneferet – Louvre Museum (N 2631, N2571, N 2623, N 2620)

- Cooney 2007, fig. 50

Coffins from TT 1

Coffin of Inyeferty – Metropolitan Museum of Art (86.1.5 a-b)

- Cooney 2007, fig. 143
- Niwiński 1988, 159

Coffin set of Khonsu – Metropolitan Museum of Art (Outer coffin 86.1.1 a-b; inner coffin 86.1.2 a-b)

- Cooney 2007, fig. 132
- Niwiński 1988, 159

Coffin of Tamakhet – Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung (Inv. no. 10832)

- Cooney 2007, fig. 54

Coffin of Sennedjem – Cairo Egyptian Museum (JE 27308)

- Cooney 2007, fig. 96

Sarcophagi

Alabaster sarcophagus of Seti I (KV 17) – Sir John's Soane's Museum

- Budge 1908

Second sarcophagus of Merenptah (KV 8)

Third Sarcophagus of Merenptah (KV 8) – Cairo Egyptian Museum

- Montet 1951, Pls. LXXV-LXXX

‘YELLOW’ COFFINS

Coffins from DB 320

Coffin set of Asetemkhebit - Cairo Egyptian Museum (CG 61031)

- Daressy 1909, Pl. L
- Hornung, Bryan 2002, 133-134

Coffin set of Maatkare - Cairo Egyptian Museum (CG 61028)

- Daressy 1909, Pl. XXXIX

Coffin set of Masaharta - Cairo Egyptian Museum (CG 61027, JE 26195)

- Daressy 1909, Pl. XXXVI
- Niwiński 1988, Pl. III

Coffin of Nedjemet - Cairo Egyptian Museum (CG 61024)

- Daressy 1909, Pl. XXVI

Coffin set of Nesikhonsu - Cairo Egyptian Museum (CG 61030)

- Daressy 1909, Pl. XLV

Coffin set of Pinedjem II - Cairo Egyptian Museum (CG 61029)

- Daressy 1909: PL. XLII

Coffin set of Tauheret - Cairo Egyptian Museum (CG 61032)

- Daressy 1909, Pl. LIV.

Coffins from Bab el-Gasus

A.2 – Musées royaux d’Art et d’Histoire in Brussels

Coffin set of Tauseretempnesu

Coffin and mummy-cover (E.5883, E.5909)

- Delvaux, Therasse 2016, 86-91

A.4 – Geographical Society of Lisbon

Anonymous coffin (SGL-AC-514)

- Sousa 2017a

A.5 – Museum Appenzell

Anonymous coffin

JE 29726

- Hornung 1984
- Küffer 2011
- Küffer 2017

A.6 - Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden

Coffin set of Nesitanebetaui

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (F 93/10.2)

- Mann, Greco, Weiss, 2017, 42-44 (Figs. 15-17)

A.10 - Kunsthistorisches Museum (Vienna)

Coffin set of Tabaekkhonsu

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (ÄS 6266/6265/6264)
JE 29721

- Egner, Haslauer 1994, Pl. 18

A.12 – National Museum (Copenhagen)

Coffin set of Nesipanebimakh

Coffin, mummy-cover (Inv. no. 3909)

JE 29697

- Niwiński 1988, 135

A.15 – Museo Egizio in Florence

Anonymous coffin set

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (Inv. no. 8524)

JE 29694

- Sousa, ed. (forthcoming)

A.16 - Cairo Egyptian Museum

Coffin set of Ankhefenmut

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6109/6110/6098/6099/6100)

JE 29692

- Niwiński 1988, 127 (Pl. V)

A.18 - Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire in Brussels

Anonymous coffin set

Coffin and mummy-cover (Inv. E. 5884, E.5906)

- Delvaux, Therasse 2016, 92-97

A.19 - National Museum (Copenhagen)

Coffin set of Taiuheret

Coffin, mummy-cover (Inv. no. 3912)

JE 29723

- Niwiński 1988, 136

A.20 - Museo Egizio in Florence

Anonymous coffin set

Coffin, mummy-cover (Inv. no. 8525)

- Sousa, ed. (forthcoming)

A.22 - Museo Egizio in Florence

Coffin set of Khonsumes

Coffin, mummy-cover (8527 e 8528)

JE 29676/29731

- Sousa, ed. (forthcoming)

A.23 - Cairo Egyptian Museum

Coffin set of Nesipakaef

Outer coffin, inner coffin (CG 6111/6112/6096/6097)

JE 29624

- Niwiński 1995, 135-141
- Niwiński 1988, 120

- A.26 - Kunsthistorisches Museum (Vienna)
 Coffin set of Nesiniutitai
 Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (ÄS 6263/6262/6261)
 JE 29631
- Egner, Haslauer 1994, Pl. 23
- A.27 - Geographical Society of Lisbon
 Anonymous coffin set
 Coffin, mummy-cover (SGL-AC-515, SGL-AC-516)
- Sousa 2017a
- A.28 - Cairo Egyptian Museum
 Coffin set of Padiamun, usurped by Nesipenhertahat
 Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (6154/6155/6119/6120/6144)
 JE 29643
- Niwiński 1988, 121
- A.29 – British Museum (London)
 Anonymous coffin set
 Coffin, mummy-cover (24789, 24790)
 JE 29719
- Niwiński 1988, 152
- A.32 - British Museum (London)
 Coffin set of Taahuti
 Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (24793, 24794, 24795)
 JE 29720
- Niwiński 1988, 153
- A.33 - National Museum (Copenhagen)
 Coffin set of Ankhefenkhonsu
 Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (3910)
 JE 29630/29729
- Niwiński 1988, 135
- A.38 - Cairo Egyptian Museum
 Coffin set of Ankhsemut
 Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (6158/6159/6147/6148/6149)
 JE 29675
- Niwiński 1988, 126
- A.40 - British Museum (London)
 Coffin set of Bakenmut
 Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (24792/24798/24799)
 JE 29650
- Niwiński 1988, 153
- A.41 - National Museum (Copenhagen)
 Anonymous coffin set
 Coffin, mummy-cover (3911)
- Niwiński 1988, 135

A.43 - Cairo Egyptian Museum

Coffin set of Nesipakashuti

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6018/6061/6062/6087)

JE 29641

- Niwiński 1988, 121
- Niwiński 1995, 122-125

A.44 - British Museum (London)

Coffin set of Tjenetehenef

Outer coffin, inner coffin (24791, 24791a, 24796)

JE 29657

- Niwiński 1988, 152

A.46 - Cairo Egyptian Museum

Coffin set of Senu

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6150/6151/6134/6132/6135)

JE 29651

- Niwiński 1988, 122 (Pl. VII)

A.47 – Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden

Coffin set of Tenetpenheruenefer

Coffin, mummy-cover (F 93/10.3a-b)

- Mann, Greco, Weiss 2017, 44-45 (Figs. 18-19)
- Boeser 1916, Pl. IV

A.49 - Cairo Egyptian Museum

Coffin set of Diukhonsuiry

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6266/6267/6263/6265/6264)

JE 29733

- Niwiński 1988, 131

A.52 - Musée d'Art et d'Histoire (Genève) and Kunsthistorisches Museum (Vienna)

Coffin set of Butherkhonsu

Outer coffin (Kunsthistorisches Museum, ÄS 6271)

Coffin and Mummy-cover (Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Inv. no. 007363, 012454)

JE 29646

- Egner, Haslauer 2009, Pl. 9.
- Egner, Haslauer 2009, Pl. 257-274
- Haag, Hölzl 2015
- Küffer 2017
- Küffer 2011

A.53 - National Museum of Natural History (Washington)

Coffin set of Tantdjehuti

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (154953, 154954, 365000)

JE 29648

A.54 - Musée d'Ethnographie (Neuchâtel)

Anonymous coffin set

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover

JE 29645

- Küffer 2011
- Küffer 2017

A.55 - Cairo Egyptian Museum

Coffin set of Pinedjem

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6105/6106/6103/6104/6063)

JE 29637

- Niwiński 1988, 121
- Niwiński 1995, 54-69

A.56 - Museo Egizio in Florence

Outer coffin of a man (8526)

JE 29644

- Sousa, ed. (forthcoming)

A.60 - Museo Egizio in Florence

Anonymous coffin set

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover

JE 29701

- Sousa, ed. (forthcoming)

A.66 - Cairo Egyptian Museum

Coffin set of Isety

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6198/6199/6164/6165/6161)

JE 29654

- Niwiński 1988, 122 (Pl. XII)

A.68 – Kunsthistorisches Museum (Vienna), Albany Institute of History & Art and British Museum (London)

Coffin and mummy-cover of Ankhefenmut (AS 6267a)

- Egner, Haslauer 1994, Pl. 8.

A.74 - Historisches Museum (Bern)

Anonymous coffin

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (Inv. no. AE10)

JE 29647

- Hornung 1978.
- Küffer 2007.
- Küffer 2011
- Küffer 2017
- Küffer, Renfer 1997, 103 - 12.

A.77 - Cairo Egyptian Museum

Coffin set of Nesinebtau

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6055/6056/6058/6059/6060)

JE 29685

- Niwiński 1988, 127
- Niwiński 1995, 46-53

A.81 - Cairo Egyptian Museum

Coffin set of Ameniutenakht

Coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6174/6173/6196)

JE 29649

- Niwiński 1988, 122 (Pl. LXIV)

- A.83 - Cairo Egyptian Museum
Coffin set of Djedkhonsuesankh
Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6069/6068/6067/6066/6065)
JE 29658
- Niwiński 1988, 123
 - Niwiński 1995, 6-83
- A.84 – Mummification Museum (Luxor)
Coffin set of Padiamun, usurped by a woman
Coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6024/6025/6026)
JE 29683
- Chassinat 1909, 74-75
 - Niwiński 1988, 127
- A.85 - Cairo Egyptian Museum
Anonymous coffin set
Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6043/6044/6041/6042/6045)
JE 29680
- Niwiński 1988, 126
 - Niwiński 1995, 6-22
- A.86 - Cairo Egyptian Museum
Coffin set of Shebti
Coffin, mummy-cover (6028/6029/6027)
JE 29711
- Chassinat 1909, 70-74
 - Niwiński 1988, 129
- A.87 - Cairo Egyptian Museum
Coffin set of Padiamun
Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6080/6081/6082/6079/6078)
JE 29668
- Niwiński 1988, 125
- A.88 - Cairo Egyptian Museum
Coffin set of Nesitanebetaui
Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6246/6245/6247/6248/6237)
JE 29716
- Niwiński 1988, 129
- A.91 – Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung (Berlin)
Coffin set of Taditumut
Outer coffin, inner coffin and mummy-cover (CG 11981/11982/11983);
JE 29707
- Niwiński 1988, 110
- A.93 - Cairo Egyptian Museum
Coffin set of Padiamun usurped by Amenempermut
Coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6152/6153/6160)
JE 29706
- Niwiński 1988, 128

A.95 - Cairo Egyptian Museum

Coffin set of Pameshem

Coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6012/6011/6009)

JE 29718

- Niwiński 1988, 130
- Chassinat 1909, 23-26

A.96 – Museum of the Odessa University and Museum of Antiquities at the Kazan University

Coffin set of Nesitawadjatakh

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (Inv. 52976, N. 11605)

JE 29712

A.97 - Cairo Egyptian Museum

Coffin set of Horpeshi

Coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6072/6070/6071)

JE 29715

- Niwiński 1988, 129
- Niwiński 1995, 90-94

A.99 - Cairo Egyptian Museum

Coffin set of Padiamun

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6138/6137/6156/6157/6136)

JE 29616

- Niwiński 1988, 119

A.102 - Cairo Egyptian Museum

Coffin set of Haes

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6115/6116/6077/6076/6075)

JE 29665

- Niwiński 1988, 124 (Pl. VIII)
- Niwiński 1995, 99-110

A.105 - Cairo Egyptian Museum

Coffin set of Userhat

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6211/6212/6185/6186/6187)

JE 29661

- Niwiński 1988, 123 (Pl. XI)

A.108 - Cairo Egyptian Museum

Coffin set of Ankhfenkhonsu

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6208/6209/6210/6193/6194)

JE 29663

- Niwiński 1988, 124 (Pl. IX-A)

A.109 - Cairo Egyptian Museum

Coffin set of Tjnetimentether, usurped by Djedmaatuesankh

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6213/6214/6182/6183/6184)

JE 29660

- Niwiński 1988, 123

A.110 – Geographical Society of Lisbon

Coffin set of Djedmutiesankh

Coffin, mummy-cover (SGL-AC-517/SGL-AC-518)

JE 29679

- Sousa 2017a

- A.111 - Cairo Egyptian Museum
Coffin set of Mashasekebt
Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6232/6231/6230/6229/6238)
JE 29667
- Niwiński 1988, 124-125 (Pl. VI)
- A.113 - Cairo Egyptian Museum
Coffin set of Nesiamenemope
Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6215/6216/6217/6180/6181)
JE 29659
- Niwiński 1988, 123
- A.114 - Cairo Egyptian Museum
Coffin set of Padiamun
Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6241/6242/6234/6233/6235)
JE 29666
- Abbas 2014
 - Hornung, Bryan 2007, 158-161
 - Niwiński 1988, 124 (Pl. XI)
- A.115 - Cairo Egyptian Museum/National Museum of Alexandria
Coffin set of Paharu
Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6140/6139/6122/6121/6141)
JE 29670
- Niwiński 1988, 125
- A.119 - Cairo Egyptian Museum
Coffin set of Tjenetipet
Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6189/6188/6191/6190/6192)
JE 29662
- Niwiński 1988, 123
- A.121 – Medelhavsmuseet (Stockholm) and Victoriamuseet (Uppsala)
Coffin set of Khonsumes
Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (NME 890, NME 891, NME 894)
JE 29709
- Bettum 2014, 185
 - Dodson 2015, 13-15
 - Dodson 2017, 145-147
- A.123 - Cairo Egyptian Museum
Coffin set of Direpu
Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6117/6118/6083/6084/6085)
JE 29669
- Niwiński 1988, 125
 - Niwiński 1995, 111-121
- A.124 - Cairo Egyptian Museum
Anonymous outer coffin (CG 6001/6062)
JE 29696
- Chassinat 1909, 1-3, 47-49 (Pl. III)
 - Niwiński 1988, 127

A.131 - Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire in Brussels

Anonymous coffin set

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (Inv. E.5879, E.5885, E.5908)

JE 29615

- Delvaux, Therasse 2016, 102-107

A.132 - Cairo Egyptian Museum

Coffin set of Maatkare

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6286/6287/6288/6289/6283)

JE 29612

- Niwiński 1988, 118

A.133 - Cairo Egyptian Museum

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6275/6277/6276/6273/6274)

JE 29738

- Niwiński 1988, 131

A.136 – Geographical Society in Lisbon

Coffin set of Henut-taui

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (SGL-AC-519/SGL-AC-520/SGL-AC-521)

JE 29614

- Sousa 2017a

A.142 - Kunsthistorisches Museum (Vienna)

Coffin set of Nesipernub

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (ÄS 6270/6269/6268)

JE 29636

- Egner, Haslauer 2009, Pl. 1-9

A.143 - Cairo Egyptian Museum

Coffin set of Hori

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-case (no number)

JE 29619

- Sousa 2017c, 24

A.147 - Cairo Egyptian Museum

Coffin set of Menkheperre

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6269/6272/6268/6271/6270)

JE 29628/29735

- Niwiński 1988, 120

A.148 - Cairo Egyptian Museum

Coffin set of Nesyamun

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6290/6291/6292/6293/6294)

JE 29611

- Niwiński 1988, 118

A.149 – Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung (Berlin)

Anonymous coffin set

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (11978-11979-11980)

JE 29739

- Niwiński 1988, 109

A.151 - Cairo Egyptian Museum

Coffin set of Tjanefer

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover (CG 6285/6284/6262/6261/6260)

JE 29736

- Niwiński 1988, 131

Unknown A-numbers

Coffin set of Ikhy - Vatican Museums

Outer coffin and mummy-cover (25035.3.1-25035.3.2)

- Gasse 1996, Pl. XIII
- Prestipino 2017, Fig. 4, 12c

Anonymous mummy-cover (Vatican Museums, 25022)

- Gasse 1996, Pl. XXXII
- Prestipino 2017, Fig. 12b

Coffin set of Gautseshen (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden, F 93/10.1a-c)

Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover

- Boeser 1916, Pl. VIII
- Mann, Greco, Weiss 2017, 40-42 (Fig. 12-14)

Anonymous coffin - Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden (F 93/10.4)

- Boeser, 1916: Pl. I.
- Mann, Greco, Weiss 2017, 45 (Fig. 20)

Anonymous mummy-cover - Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire in Brussels (Inv. E.5907)

- Delvaux, Therasse 2016, 111

MUSEUMS' COLLECTIONS

Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology (Aarhus)

Coffin and mummy-cover of Tabasety

- Niwiński 1988, 104
- Sousa, Nørskov (forthcoming)

Vleeshuis Museum (Antwerp)

Coffin of Nesikhonsu (AV 88.1)

- Gubel 1995, p. 89.

Michael Carlos Museum (Atlanta)

Mummy-cover (1999.1.12)

- Lacovara, Trope 2001, 51

Coffin of Tanatnektahat (1999.I.17 A-D) – Plate 29

- Lacovara, Trope 2001, 49-50.

Coffin of Pashedkhonsu (1999.1.15, A-B)

- Lacovara, Trope 2001, 51

Museum of Fine Arts (Boston)

Coffin set of Henut-taui (115b) – Plate 30

- D'Auria, Lacovara, Roehrig 1988, 162-163.

Egyptian Museum in Cairo

Coffin of Padiamun (JE 26220 / CG 61011)

- Cooney 2007, fig. 175

Fitzwilliam Museum (Cambridge)

Coffin set of Nespawershefyt (88.1903)

- Niwiński 1988, 133
- Strudwick 2017, 522
- Strudwick, Dawson 2016, 183

Fragment from a coffin (E.GA.2861.1943)

- Strudwick, Dawson 2016, 193.

Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek (Copenhagen)

Coffin of Khonsuhotep (AEIN 1069)

- Jorgensen 2001, 92-152.
- Koefoed-Pettersen 1951, Pls. XXV-XLIX
- Niwiński 1988, 136

Musée des Beaux-Arts (Grenoble)

Mummy-cover of Henutaneb (Inv. 2000)

- Kueny, Yoyotte 1979, 87-88
- Niwiński 1988, 141

Kestner Museum (Hannover)

Mummy-cover of Hori (Inv. no. 1977.1)

- Niwiński 1988, 142

Leeds City Museum (Leeds)

Coffin set of Nesyamun (D. 426-426a.1960)

- Niwiński 1988, 145

Rijksmuseum van Oudheden (Leiden)

Coffin set of Khonsuhotep (Inv. no. AMM 26-a, b)

- Boeser 1916, Pl. I-X.
- Niwiński 1988, 146

Coffin set of Amenhotep (Inv. no. AMM 2-a, b)

- Boeser 1917, Pl. I-X.
- Ikram, Dodson 1998, 231
- Niwiński 1988, 145
- Schneider 1998, n° 201

Mummy-cover of Nesipanebu (Inv. no. AH 1)

- Niwiński 1988, 145

Musée des Beaux-Arts (Lyon)

Coffin of Padikhonsu (Inv. H 2320-H 2321)

- Jamen 2016
- Jamen 2017, 227

British Museum (London)

Anonymous coffin (EA 24907b) – Plate 31

- Niwiński 1988, 153

- Russmann, Strudwick, James 2006, n° 82.

Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Los Angeles)

Coffin set (M.47.3a-c) – Plate 28

Museo Arqueologico Nacional (Madrid)

Coffin set of Amenemhat (Inv. no. 15216-15218)

- Niwiński 1988, 155
- Perez-Die 1991, 97

Musée d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne (Marseille)

Mummy-cover of Tentamun (Inv. no. 253/1)

- Maspero 1914, p. 10-12
- Meeks, Meeks 1990, 24
- Nelson 1978, 80-81
- Niwiński 1988, 156

Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts (Moscow)

Coffin of Amuniuesankh (I.1.a 6800)

- Hodjash 2002, n° 42

Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst (Munich)

Coffin set of Herytubekhet (ÄS-12a-c)

- Niwiński 1988, 157

Brooklyn Museum (New York)

Outer and inner coffin of Pasebakhaienipet (08.480.1a-b)

- Bleiberg 2008, Figs. 94-96
- Niwiński 1988, 158

Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York)

Coffin set of Henut-tai (25.3.182–.184)

- O'Neill 1987, 74-76.
- Niwiński 1988, 161
- Winlock 1916, fig. 85

Coffin set of Nani (30.3.23a, b; 30.3.24a, b; 30.3.25)

- Niwiński 1988, 161

Coffin set of Tabakmut (25.3.10a, b)

- Niwiński 1988, 160

Coffin set of Yutefamun (26.3.1a, b)

- Niwiński 1988, 161

Coffin set of Gautseshen (26.3.6-8)

- Niwiński 1988, 161

Louvre Museum (Paris)

Cooffin set of Panebmontu

Coffin and mummy-cover (Inv. E 13029, 13046)

- Seipel 1989, n° 472-473

Coffin set of Sutimes

Outer coffin, inner coffin and mummy-cover (N 2610)

- Andreu, Rutschowsky, Ziegler 1997, 167

Coffin set of Paser

Outer coffin, inner coffin and mummy-cover (N 2570, N 2581)

- Museum database

Coffin set of Tanethereret

Outer coffin, inner coffin and mummy-cover (E 13034, E 13027)

- Museum database

Carnegie Museum of Natural History (Pittsburgh)

Anonymous coffin

- Patch 1990, n° 60.

Náprstkovo Museum (Prague)

Anonymous coffin (P 629)

- Verner 1982, 1-23.

Museu Nacional (Rio de Janeiro)

Coffin of Hori (Inv. no. 525)

- Kitchen 1990, 109-110.

Museo Egizio in Turin

Coffin of Bakenkhonsu (CGT 10111.a-b)

- Niwiński 2004, Tav. XX

Outer coffin of Butehamun (10101a-b)

- Niwiński 2004, Tav. I (I.1,2)

Inner coffin of Butehamun (10102.a-b)

- Niwiński 2004, Tav. IV

Mummy-cover of Butehamun (CGT 10103)

- Niwiński 2004, Tav. VII

Coffin of Hori (CGT 10112)

- Niwiński 2004, Tav. XXII.1

Mummy-cover of Hori (CGT 10113)

- Niwiński 2004, Tav. XXII.2

Coffin of Khonsumose (CGT 10106.a-b)

- Niwiński 2004, Tav. XI

Mummy-cover of Khonsumose (CGT 10107)

- Niwiński 2004, Tav. XIII

Mummy-cover of Mutemperamun (CGT 10109)

- Niwiński 2004, Tav. XVI

Coffin of Pahereniset (10108.a-b)

- Niwiński 2004, Tav. XIV

Coffin of Tabakenkhonsu (CGT 10104.a-b)

- Niwiński 2004, Tav. VIII

Mummy-cover of Tabakenkhonsu (CGT 10105)

- Niwiński 2004, Tav. X

Coffin of Tamutmuef (CGT 10119.a-b)

- Niwiński 2004, Tav. XXXIII.2.

Mummy-cover of Tamutmuef (CGT 10120)

- Niwiński 2004, Tav. XXXVI

Anonymous coffin (CGT 10117.a-b)

- Niwiński 2004, Tav. XXX

Anonymous mummy-cover (CGT 10118)

- Niwiński 2004, Tav. XXXIII.1.

Vatican Museums (Vatican)

Anonymous mummy-cover (25020)

- Gasse 1996, Pl. XXXI, (fig. 16)

Kunsthistorisches Museum (Vienna)

Mummy-cover Nesipaherentahat (ÄS 231)

- Egner, Haslauer 2009, Pl. 25-37

Collection Harris

Mummy-cover of Khaemopet

- Cooney 2007, fig. 213

REGIONAL 'YELLOW' TYPE**Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung (Berlin)**

Coffin of Khenemenseanapehsu (8505-8506)

- Cooney 2007, fig. 160-169

Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek (Copenhagen)

Coffin of Sesehneferu (AEIN 1062)

- Jorgensen 2001, 56-91.

Vatican Museums

Coffin of Anet (XIII.2.1)

- Gasse 1996, Pl. XXXV
- Niwiński 2017
- Van Walsem 2000

Kunsthistorisches Museum (Vienna)

Coffin of Meretenankh (ÄS 6066)

- Egner, Haslauer 2009, Pl. 116-143.

Musée des Beaux-Arts (Grenoble)

Coffin of Hatshepsut (Inv. 3572)

- Kueny, Yoyotte 1979, 83-86
- Niwiński 1988, 142

INDEX OF SOURCES

ANTHROPOID COFFINS FROM THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

Coffin of Hapyankhtify (Metropolitan Museum of Art) – 19, 20, 233

Coffin of Khnumhotep (National Museums of Scotland) – 19, 233

Coffin of Khnumnakht (Manchester Museum) – 19, 233

Coffin of Nakhtankht (Manchester Museum) – 19, 233

Coffin of Nephthys (Metropolitan Museum of Art) – 19, 233

Coffin of Userhat (Fitzwilliam Museum) – 19, 20, 233

Coffin of Senebtisi – 19, 233

RISHI COFFINS

17th Dynasty

Coffin of Ah-hotep (Cairo Egyptian Museum) – 24, 26, 234

Coffin of Kamose (Cairo Egyptian Museum) – 22, 24, 234

Coffin of Nubkheperra Antef (British Museum) – 24, 234

Coffin of Puhorsenbu (Metropolitan Museum of Art) – 24, 234

Coffin of Reri (Metropolitan Museum of Art) – 22, 234

Coffin of Sat-Djehuti (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich) – 24, 234

Coffin of Sekhemre Heruhermaat Antef VII (Louvre Museum) – 22, 24, 234

Coffin of Sekhemre-Wepmaat Antef (Louvre Museum) – 24, 234

Coffin of Taa II (Cairo Egyptian Museum) – 24, 234

Coffin of Taiuy (British Museum) – 24, 234

Anonymous *rishi* coffin 1 (Metropolitan Museum of Art) – 22, 234

Anonymous *rishi* coffin 2 (Metropolitan Museum of Art) – 22, 234

Anonymous *rishi* coffin 3 (Metropolitan Museum of Art) – 22, 234

Anonymous *rishi* coffin 4 (Metropolitan Museum of Art) – 22, 234

Anonymous *rishi* coffin 5 (Metropolitan Museum of Art) – 22, 235

Anonymous *rishi* coffin 6 (Metropolitan Museum of Art) – 22, 235

Anonymous *rishi* coffin 7 (British Museum) – 22, 235

Anonymous *rishi* coffin 8 (British Museum) – 22, 235

Anonymous *rishi* coffin 9 (Museum of Fine Arts in Boston) – 22, 235

Anonymous *rishi* coffin 10 (National Museums of Scotland) – 22, 24, 235

Anonymous *rishi* coffin 11 (Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in Munich) – 22, 235

18th Dynasty

Anonymous *rishi* coffin 12 (Metropolitan Museum of Art) – 25, 235

Anonymous royal coffin from KV 55 (Cairo Egyptian Museum) – 26, 34, 235

Burial assemblage of Tutankhamun (Cairo Egyptian Museum) – 17, 25, 235

Coffin of Ahmose-Nefertari (Cairo Egyptian Museum) – 25, 235

Coffin set of Merytamun (Cairo Egyptian Museum) – 17, 25, 51, 235

‘WHITE’ COFFINS

Coffin of Ah-hotep Tanedjemet (Metropolitan Museum of Art) – 26, 28, 230, 236

Coffin of Ahmose, son of Nakht (Metropolitan Museum of Art) – 26, 27, 236

Coffin of Hatnefer (Metropolitan Museum of Art) – 26, 236

Coffin of Madja (Louvre Museum) – 26, 27, 236

Coffin of Nubnen (National Museum in Warsaw) – 26, 27, 236

Coffin of Puia (Museo Egizio in Turin) – 27, 28, 236

Coffin of Ramose (Metropolitan Museum of Art) – 26, 27, 236

Coffin of Wadjshemsisu (Princeton Art Museum) – 26, 27, 236

Anonymous ‘white’ coffin – Metropolitan Museum of Art – 27, 236

‘BLACK’ COFFINS

Coffin of Amenemope (Roemer and Pelizaeus Museum in Hildesheim) – 29, 237

Coffin of Amenhotep (Myers Museum in Baltimore) – 28, 29, 237

Coffin of Henutudjebu (Washington University Gallery of Art) – 28, 29, 30, 31, 116, 237

Coffin of Kent (Museo Egizio in Florence) – 29, 237

Coffin set of Kha (Museo Egizio in Turin) – 28, 237

Coffin set of Maherpra (Cairo Egyptian Museum) – 28, 29, 31, 237

Coffin of Mahu (Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow) – 29, 30, 31, 237

Coffin of Nebtauai (Museo Egizio in Florence) – 29, 237

Coffin of Nubenusekhet (Musée d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne de Marseille) – 29, 237

Outer coffin of Tauret (Imhotep Museum in Sakara) – 32, 237

Coffin of Tentamentet (British Museum) – 29, 30, 31, 237

Coffin set of Tjuui (Cairo Egyptian Museum) – 17, 28, 29, 237

Coffin set of Yuya (Cairo Egyptian Museum) – 17, 28, 29, 238

Anonymous ‘black’ coffin 1 (Museum of Fine Arts in Boston) – 29, 238

Anonymous ‘black’ coffin 2 (British Museum) – 29, 238

Sarcophagi

Sarcophagus of Hori (Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrus Sammlung in Berlin) – 32, 238

Sarcophagus (Elephantine Museum in Aswan) – 28, 29, 238

Inner sarcophagus of Merymes (British Museum) – 18, 28, 29, 32, 238

Sarcophagus of Pahemnetjer (British Museum) – 32, 238

Sarcophagus of an unknown man reused for Psusennes I (Cairo Egyptian Museum) – 28, 29, 35, 115, 238

‘FESTIVE DRESS’ TYPE

Coffin of Amenemhat (Metropolitan Museum of Art) – 33, 239

Coffin of Henutwati (Louvre Museum) – 33, 239

Funerary plank of Khay (Musées royaux d’Art et d’Histoire in Brussels) – 33, 34, 38, 239

Funerary plank of Piay (Cairo Egyptian Museum) – 33, 239

Coffin of Weretwahset reinscribed for Bensusipet (Brooklyn Museum) – 33, 34, 239

Anonymous ‘festive dress’ funerary plank 1 (Michael Carlos Museum in Atlanta) – 33, 239

Anonymous ‘festive dress’ funerary plank 2 (Nationalmuseet in Copenhagen) – 33, 239

Anonymous ‘festive dress’ funerary plank 3 (Brooklyn Museum of Art) – 33, 239

Anonymous ‘festive dress’ funerary plank 4 (Museo Egizio in Florence) – 33, 239

Coffins from TT 1

Coffin of Aset (Cairo Egyptian Museum) – 33, 34, 35, 239

Funerary plank of Iyeferty (Metropolitan Museum of Art) – 33, 41, 239

Funerary plank of Sennedjem (Cairo Egyptian Museum) – 33, 34, 38, 40, 230, 239

Funerary plank of Tamakhet (Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrus Sammlung in Berlin) – 33, 239

Sarcophagi

Sarcophagus of Nia (Louvre Museum) – 35, 240

Inner sarcophagus of Ramses, later King Ramses I (Cairo Egyptian Museum) – 33, 240

PROTO-‘YELLOW’ COFFINS

Coffin set of Henutmehyt (British Museum) – 38, 99, 100, 103, 118, 227, 241

Coffin set of Ipyu (Museo Egizio in Florence) – 35, 38, 39, 241

Coffin of Katabet (British Museum) – 38, 99, 241

Coffin of Paherypedet (Cairo Egyptian Museum) – 38, 41, 241

Coffin set of Takayt (Die Städtische Galerie Liebieghaus in Frankfurt) – 61, 105, 157, 158, 241

Coffin set of Tamutneferet (Louvre Museum) – 39, 40, 47, 99, 104, 105, 241

Mummy-boards

Mummy-board of Henutmehyt (British Museum) – 39, 241

Mummy-board of Pendenit (British Museum) – 39, 241

Mummy-board of Ram (Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg) – 39, 241

Mummy-board of Takayt (Städtische Galerie Liebieghaus in Frankfurt) – 39, 241

Mummy-board of Tamutneferet (Louvre Museum) – 39, 157, 241

Coffins from TT 1

Coffin of Ineferty (Metropolitan Museum of Art) – 41, 241

Coffin set of Khonsu (Metropolitan Museum of Art) – 33, 38, 41, 47, 52, 73, 74, 75, 104, 105, 118, 182, 227, 242

Coffin of Tamaket (Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung) – 53, 73, 74, 105, 242

Coffin of Sennedjem (Cairo Egyptian Museum) – 33, 38, 40, 41, 73, 74, 230, 242

Sarcophagi

Alabaster sarcophagus of Seti I (Sir John's Soane's Museum) – 42, 242

Second sarcophagus of Merenptah (KV 8) – 42, 242

Third Sarcophagus of Merenptah (Cairo Egyptian Museum) – 42, 242

'YELLOW' COFFINS

Coffins from DB 320

Coffin set of Asetemkhebit – 50, 66, 72, 73, 74, 75, 77, 110, 115, 133, 138, 160, 161, 243

Coffin set of Maatkare – 47, 49, 50, 51, 53, 54, 60, 61, 62, 64, 66, 68, 69, 72, 77, 94, 100, 101, 102, 104, 137, 157, 158, 182, 243

Coffin set of Masaharta – 47, 50, 51, 52, 61, 63, 65, 68, 72, 79, 100, 102, 103, 104, 105, 135, 136, 157, 158, 159, 243

Coffin of Nedjemet – 47, 50, 52, 53, 66, 243

Coffin set of Nesikhonsu – 47, 64, 65, 66, 68, 108, 133, 136, 139, 140, 157, 159, 243

Coffin set of Pinedjem II – 47, 49, 50, 51, 52, 62, 63, 65, 66, 69, 70, 72, 73, 75, 102, 134, 135, 139, 140, 157, 158, 159, 176, 243
Coffin set of Tauheret – 50, 61, 63, 66, 72, 73, 74, 75, 133, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 157, 158, 243

Coffins from Bab el-Gasus

A.2 – Coffin set of Tauseretempnesu (Coffin and mummy-cover) – 69, 73, 74, 75, 135, 137, 142, 243

A.4 – Anonymous coffin – 48, 50, 63, 69, 71, 139, 141, 243

A.5 – Anonymous coffin – 61, 63, 69, 142, 243

A.6 - Coffin set of Nesitanebetaui (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 111, 115, 243

A.10 - Coffin set of Tabaekkhonsu (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 47, 51, 52, 53, 63, 67, 69, 71, 72, 73, 107, 110, 141, 142, 158, 160, 161, 243

A.12 – Coffin set of Nesipanebimakh (Coffin, mummy-cover) – 53, 61, 63, 74, 107, 136, 139, 140, 158, 244

A.15 – Anonymous coffin set (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 61, 139, 140, 175, 206, 244

A.16 - Coffin set of Ankhefenmut (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 52, 64, 68, 72, 78, 136, 138, 182, 244

A.18 - Anonymous coffin (Coffin and mummy-cover) – 53, 61, 63, 65, 72, 77, 106, 109, 110, 133, 139, 141, 142, 157, 159, 244

A.19 - Coffin set of Taiuheret (Coffin, mummy-cover) – 48, 50, 53, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 72, 77, 102, 104, 135, 181, 244

A.20 - Anonymous coffin set (Coffin, mummy-cover) – 75, 111, 115, 135, 182, 244

- A.22 - Coffin set of Khonsumes (Coffin, mummy-cover) – 48, 63, 64, 66, 68, 244
- A.23 - Coffin set of Nesipakaef (Outer coffin, inner coffin) – 49, 61, 107, 244
- A.26 - Coffin set of Nesiniutitai (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 52, 53, 72, 108, 110, 138, 141, 142, 143, 157, 160, 161, 245
- A.27 - Anonymous coffin set (Coffin, mummy-cover) – 48, 51, 69, 72, 74, 75, 76, 78, 112, 141, 182, 245
- A.28 - Coffin set of Padiamun (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 51, 102, 157, 158, 245
- A.29 - Anonymous coffin set (Coffin, mummy-cover) – 48, 52, 61, 63, 73, 106, 137, 158, 245
- A.32 - Coffin set of Taahuti (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 51, 54, 63, 74, 110, 112, 113, 114, 129, 142, 143, 154, 161, 182, 228, 245
- A.33 - Coffin set of Ankhefenkhonsu (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 47, 50, 62, 74, 75, 107, 110, 137, 141, 160, 206, 245
- A.38 - Coffin set of Ankhsenmut (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 53, 104, 136, 137, 159, 245
- A.40 - Coffin set of Bakenmut (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 107, 110, 112, 113, 245
- A.41 - Anonymous coffin set (Coffin, mummy-cover) – 111, 245
- A.43 - Coffin set of Nesipakashuti (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 61, 69, 112, 246
- A.44 - Coffin set of Tjenetehenef (Outer coffin, inner coffin) – 107, 246
- A.46 - Coffin set of Senu (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 104, 246
- A.47 - Coffin set of Tenetpenheruenefer (Coffin, mummy-cover) – 48, 72, 73, 74, 111, 181, 246
- A.49 - Coffin set of Diukhonsuiry (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 101, 103, 105, 246
- A.52 - Coffin set of Butherkhonsu (Outer coffin, inner coffin and mummy-cover) – 47, 49, 50, 52, 67, 69, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 77, 91, 112, 113, 114, 130, 138, 142, 152, 157, 159, 167, 175, 189, 227, 228, 229, 246
- A.53 - Coffin set of Tantdjehuti (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 51, 63, 74, 106, 158, 246
- A.54 - Anonymous coffin set (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 50, 63, 74, 77, 112, 134, 135, 137, 139, 140, 142, 143, 157, 159, 246
- A.55 - Coffin set of Pinedjem (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 49, 51, 71, 73, 112, 113, 114, 158, 247
- A.56 - Anonymous outer coffin – 142, 206, 247
- A.60 - Anonymous coffin set (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 102, 106, 136, 137, 138, 141, 206, 247
- A.66 - Coffin set of Isety (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 111, 247
- A.68 - Coffin set of Ankhefenmut (Coffin and mummy-cover) – 48, 49, 52, 63, 64, 66, 68, 72, 73, 75, 101, 103, 104, 105, 138, 140, 141, 182, 247
- A.74 - Anonymous coffin set (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 50, 51, 52, 53, 63, 67, 69, 72, 73, 74, 96, 112, 113, 139, 141, 247
- A.77 - Coffin set of Nesinebtaui (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 53, 136, 139, 157, 158, 159, 247
- A.81 - Coffin set of Ameniutenakht (Coffin, mummy-cover) – 100, 247

- A.83 - Coffin set of Djedkhonsuesankh (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 109, 110, 248
- A.84 – Coffin set of Padiamun, usurped by a woman (Coffin, mummy-cover) – 138, 248
- A.85 - Anonymous coffin set (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 112, 113, 248
- A.86 - Coffin set of Shebti (Coffin, mummy-cover) – 101, 182, 248
- A.87 - Coffin set of Padiamun (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 48, 67, 69, 70, 72, 157, 248
- A.88 - Coffin set of Nesitanebetaui (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 63, 135, 136, 137, 248
- A.91 – Coffin set of Taditumut (Outer coffin, inner coffin and mummy-cover) – 48, 51, 71, 73, 99, 112, 160, 161, 248
- A.93 - Coffin set of Padiamun usurped by Amenempermut (Coffin, mummy-cover) – 48, 49, 51, 52, 78, 157, 158, 159, 248
- A.95 - Coffin set of Pameshem (Coffin, mummy-cover) – 50, 52, 65, 106, 133, 135, 136, 140, 157, 158, 182, 196, 229, 249
- A.96 – Coffin set of Nesitawadjatak (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) - 106, 249
- A.97 - Coffin set of Horpeshi (Coffin, mummy-cover) – 48, 181, 249
- A.99 - Coffin set of Padiamun (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 49, 51, 52, 110, 249
- A.102 - Coffin set of Haes (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 51, 69, 73, 74, 75, 133, 139, 159, 182, 249
- A.105 - Coffin set of Userhat (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 47, 72, 136, 138, 140, 249
- A.108 - Coffin set of Ankhefenkhonsu (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 49, 69, 107, 159, 249
- A.109 - Coffin set of Tjenetimentether, usurped by Djedmaatiuesankh (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 63, 68, 134, 249
- A.110 – Coffin set of Djedmutiuesankh (Coffin, mummy-cover) – 51, 63, 65, 72, 73, 74, 75, 107, 108, 109, 110, 141, 142, 157, 158, 179, 249
- A.111 - Coffin set of Mashasekebt (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 53, 63, 64, 67, 101, 102, 135, 182, 250
- A.113 - Coffin set of Nesiamenemope (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 64, 72, 134, 136, 158, 250
- A.114 - Coffin set of Padiamun (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 47, 49, 50, 52, 53, 62, 65, 66, 67, 69, 70, 72, 73, 78, 95, 102, 103, 104, 134, 135, 158, 180, 182, 250
- A.115 - Coffin set of Paharu (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 47, 51, 53, 62, 65, 70, 72, 78, 134, 250
- A.119 - Coffin set of Tjenetipet (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 50, 51, 52, 53, 64, 68, 72, 135, 250
- A.121 – Coffin set of Khonsumes (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 101, 104, 250
- A.123 - Coffin set of Direpu (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 48, 53, 72, 73, 74, 75, 113, 131, 138, 142, 143, 155, 157, 160, 228, 250
- A.124 - Anonymous outer coffin – 110, 111, 250
- A.131 - Anonymous coffin set (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 47, 49, 51, 52, 72, 107, 141, 142, 160, 161, 251
- A.132 - Coffin set of Maatkare (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 50,

51, 54, 60, 71, 72, 75, 139, 141, 178, 227, 251

A.133 - Coffin set (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 61, 63, 71, 139, 140, 141, 251

A.136 – Coffin set of Henut-taui (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 48, 53, 63, 64, 66, 67, 69, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 102, 107, 111, 139, 159, 251

A.142 - Coffin set of Nesipernub (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 47, 61, 63, 73, 74, 75, 107, 108, 110, 137, 140, 141, 182, 251

A.143 - Coffin set of Hori (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-case) – 47, 110, 111, 112, 113, 251

A.147 - Coffin set of Menkheperu (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 47, 61, 62, 69, 72, 136, 137, 140, 141, 158, 251

A.148 - Coffin set of Nesyamun (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 67, 69, 70, 139, 140, 141, 251

A.149 – Anonymous coffin set (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 47, 48, 51, 52, 61, 63, 72, 73, 74, 75, 108, 110, 141, 142, 160, 161, 251

A.151 - Coffin set of Tjanefery (Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 47, 61, 67, 70, 101, 102, 135, 139, 141, 252

Unknown A-numbers

Coffin set of Ikhy - Vatican Museums (Outer coffin and mummy-cover) – 67, 69, 70, 99, 139, 140, 167, 228, 252

Anonymous mummy-cover (Vatican Museums, 25022) – 158, 180, 252

Coffin set of Gautseshen (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden, F 93/10.1a-c, Outer coffin, inner coffin, mummy-cover) – 67, 111, 115, 181, 252

Anonymous coffin - Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden (F 93/10.4) – 106, 252

Anonymous coffin mummy-cover - Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire in Brussels (Inv. E.5907) – 111, 252

MUSEUMS' COLLECTIONS

Museum of Ancient Art and Archaeology (Aarhus)

Coffin and mummy-cover of Tabasety – 84, 119, 145, 146, 163, 168, 175, 186, 227, 228, 229, 230, 252

Vleeshuis Museum (Antwerp)

Coffin of Nesikhonsu – 51, 54, 252

Michael Carlos Museum (Atlanta)

Mummy-cover – 48, 68, 137, 158, 252

Coffin of Tanatnektahat – 63, 64, 106, 136, 139, 140, 157, 158, 252

Coffin of Pashedkhonsu – 108, 109, 142, 252

Museum of Fine Arts (Boston)

Coffin set of Henut-taui – 61, 136, 253

Egyptian Museum in Cairo

Coffin of Padiamun – 100, 253

Fitzwilliam Museum (Cambridge)

Coffin set of Nespawershefyt – 64, 66, 68, 102, 135, 253

Fragment from a coffin – 62, 253

Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek (Copenhagen)

Coffin of Khonsuhotep – 63, 71, 73, 112, 142, 182, 253

Musée des Beaux-Arts (Grenoble)

Mummy-cover of Henutaneb – 61, 64, 102, 253

Kestner Museum (Hannover)

Mummy-cover of Hori – 35, 47, 49, 62, 65, 66, 76, 83, 133, 134, 157, 158, 180, 191, 227, 229, 253

Leeds City Museum (Leeds)

Coffin set of Nesyamun – 48, 49, 51, 52, 63, 65, 66, 68, 72, 73, 74, 79, 94, 100, 101, 102, 105, 136, 157, 158, 253

Rijksmuseum van Oudheden (Leiden)

Coffin set of Khonsuhotep – 49, 52, 65, 66, 68, 102, 105, 135, 136, 253

Coffin set of Amenhotep - 53, 63, 68, 72, 74, 75, 101, 104, 107, 136, 138, 139, 140, 148, 157, 158, 159, 228, 253

Mummy-cover of Nesipanebu – 50, 64, 66, 72, 106, 134, 159, 253

Musée des Beaux-Arts (Lyon)

Coffin of Padikhonsu – 184, 253

British Museum (London)

Anonymous coffin – 63, 67, 69, 74, 75, 112, 141, 142, 143, 231, 253

Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Los Angeles)

Coffin set – 49, 52, 63, 64, 68, 72, 73, 74, 75, 101, 102, 103, 136, 137, 157, 254

Museo Arqueológico Nacional (Madrid)

Coffin set of Amenemhat – 49, 50, 65, 66, 75, 79, 136, 139, 140, 159, 254

Musée d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne (Marseille)

Mummy-cover of Tentamun – 64, 69, 96, 103, 254

Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts (Moscow)

Coffin of Amuniuesankh – 111, 254

Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst (Munich)

Coffin set of Herytubekhet – 63, 65, 66, 72, 73, 74, 76, 100, 102, 103, 104, 133, 134, 157, 158, 254

Brooklyn Museum (New York)

Outer coffin of Pasebakhaienipet – 50, 52, 64, 65, 66, 73, 75, 101, 103, 104, 120, 133, 134, 135, 159, 227, 254

Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York)

Coffin set of Henut-tai – 48, 50, 51, 52, 53, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 73, 74, 75, 79, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 119, 120, 133, 134, 136, 138, 139, 140, 157, 158, 182, 227, 231, 254

Coffin set of Nani – 64, 66, 67, 106, 139, 140, 159, 254

Coffin set of Tabakmut – 47, 48, 52, 61, 63, 72, 76, 110, 136, 139, 141, 158, 159, 160, 161, 254

Coffin set of Yutefamun – 49, 64, 136, 159, 254

Coffin set of Gautseshen – 133, 142, 254

Louvre Museum (Paris)

Coffin set of Panebmontu - Coffin and mummy-cover – 47, 49, 50, 53, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 72, 102, 103, 105, 134, 157, 158, 181, 254

Coffin set of Sutimes - Outer coffin, inner coffin and mummy-cover – 63, 136, 254

Coffin set of Paser - Outer coffin, inner coffin and mummy-cover – 51, 53, 65, 100, 102, 104, 157, 158, 159, 254

Coffin set of Tanethereret - Outer coffin, inner coffin and mummy-cover – 102, 105, 254

Carnegie Museum of Natural History (Pittsburgh)

Anonymous coffin – 51, 54, 112, 140, 255

Náprstkovo Museum (Prague)

Anonymous coffin – 142, 143, 184, 255

Museu Nacional (Rio de Janeiro)

Coffin of Hori – 49, 50, 64, 68, 79, 102, 157, 158, 255

Museo Egizio in Turin

Coffin of Bakenkhonsu – 107, 255

Coffin set of Butehamun - Outer coffin, inner coffin and mummy-cover – 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 62, 64, 65, 66, 72, 100, 104, 108, 137, 157, 158, 255

Coffin set of Hori - Coffin and mummy-cover – 48, 49, 52, 73, 106, 107, 110, 141, 255

Coffin set of Khonsumose - Coffin and mummy-cover – 51, 63, 68, 79, 95, 106, 107, 108, 110, 136, 142, 158, 255

Mummy-cover of Mutemperamun – 72, 74, 107, 255

Coffin of Pahereniset – 66, 68, 139, 140, 255

Coffin set of Tabakenkhonsu - Coffin and mummy-cover – 51, 52, 53, 63, 65, 66, 68, 73, 75, 102, 103, 105, 135, 136, 139, 140, 158, 159, 255

Coffin set of Tamutmuef - Coffin and mummy-cover – 111, 115, 255

Anonymous coffin – 61, 112, 255

Anonymous mummy-cover – 112, 255

Vatican Museums (Vatican)

Anonymous mummy-cover (25020) – 67, 183, 255

Kunsthistorisches Museum (Vienna)

Mummy-cover Nesipaherentahat – 49, 50, 52, 65, 66, 73, 256

Collection Harris

Mummy-cover of Khaemopet – 49, 62, 63, 71, 73, 74, 79, 100, 103, 104, 105, 181, 256

**REGIONAL ‘YELLOW’ TYPE
Ägyptisches Museum und
Papyrussammlung (Berlin)**

Coffin of Khenemensanapehsu – 184, 256

Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek (Copenhagen)

Coffin of Sesekhneferu – 184, 256

Vatican Museums

Coffin of Anet – 184, 256

Kunsthistorisches Museum (Vienna)

Coffin of Meretenankh – 184, 256

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PLATES



Plate 1



Plate 2

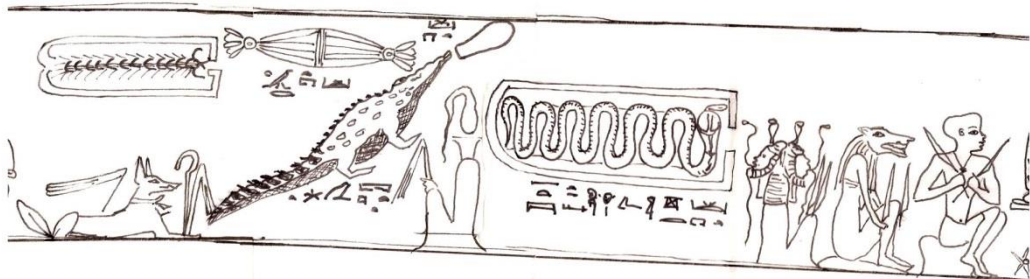
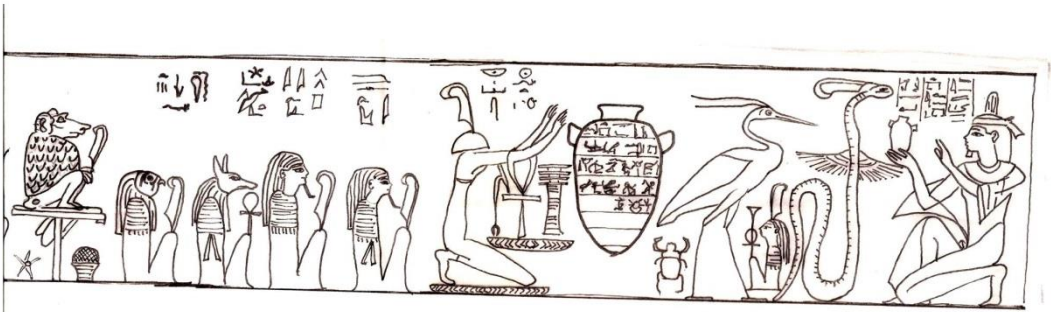


Plate 3



Plate 4



Plate 5

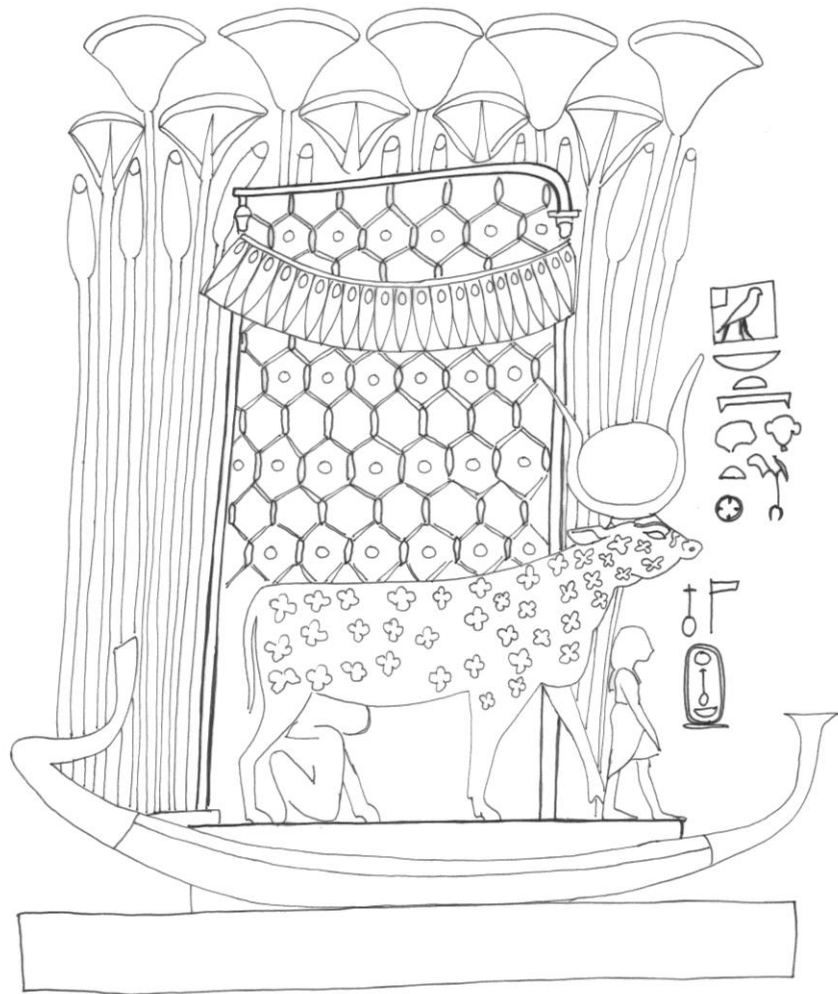


Plate 6

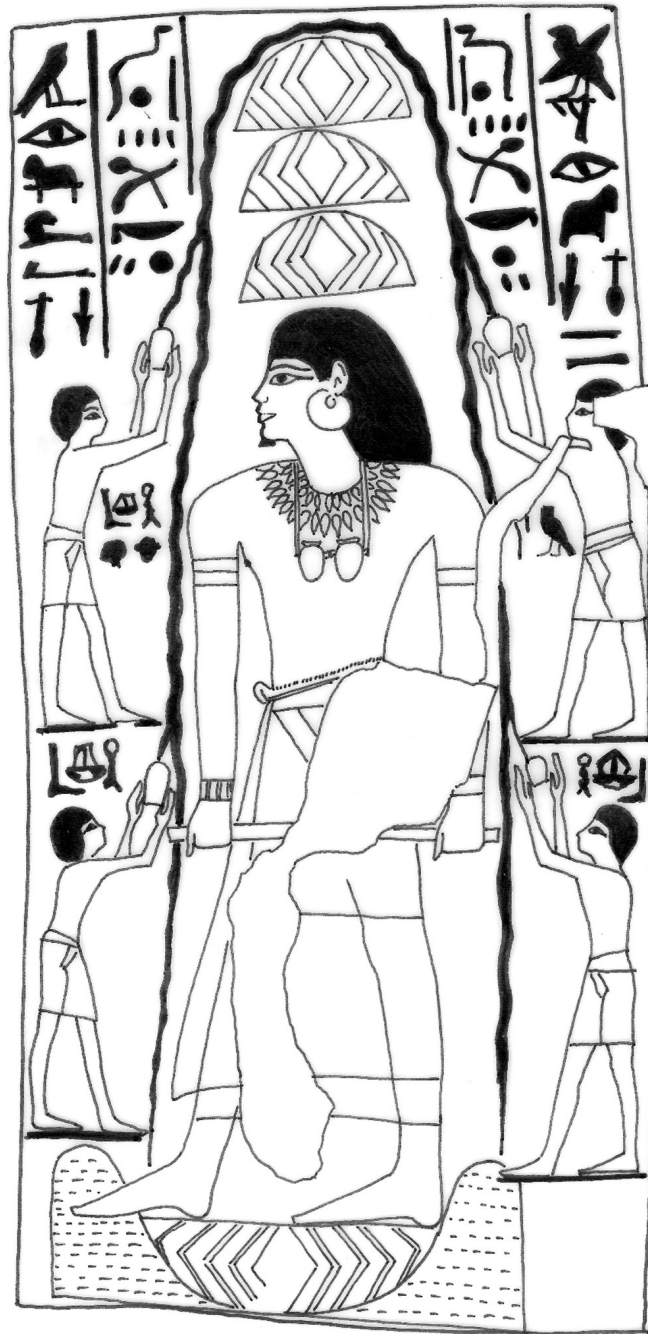


Plate 7

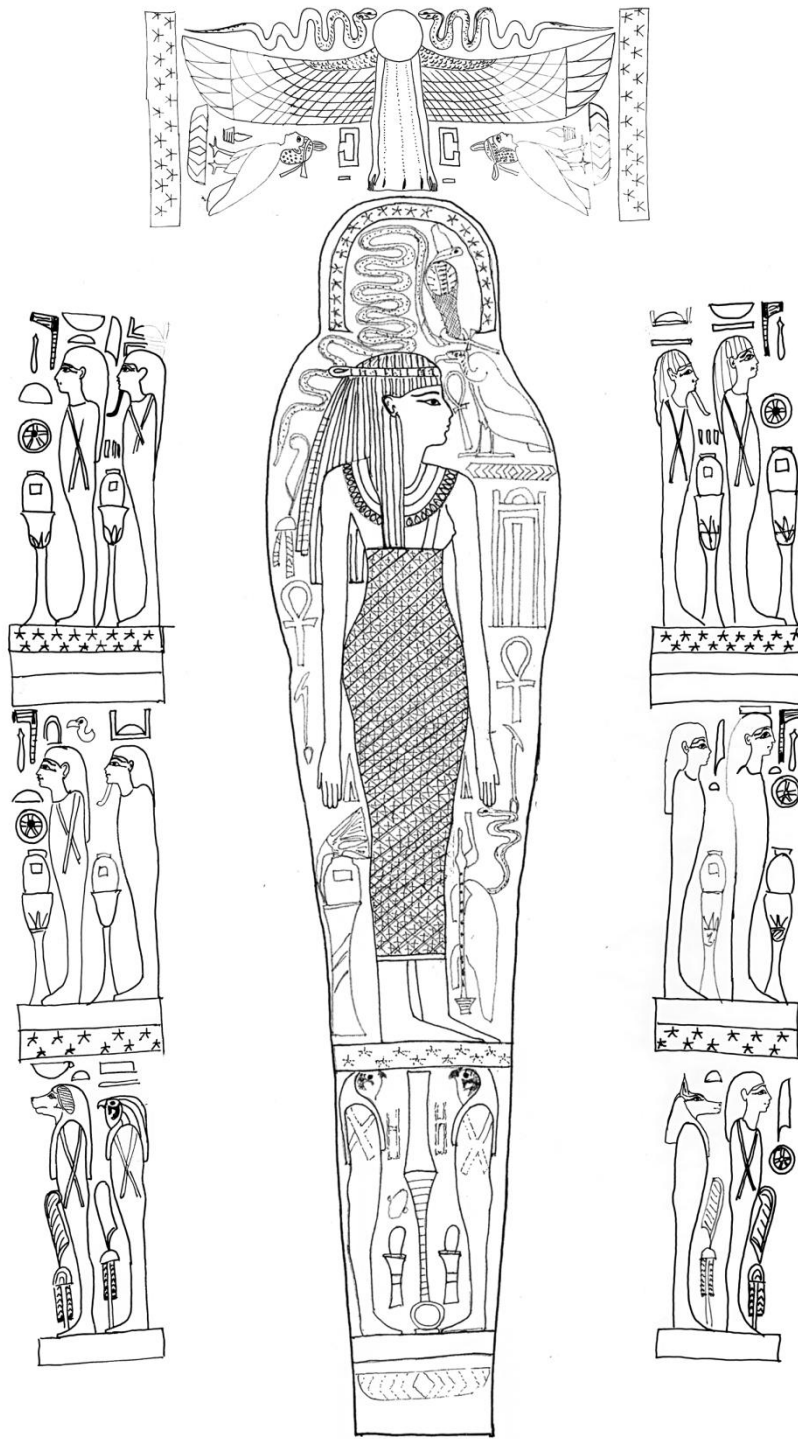


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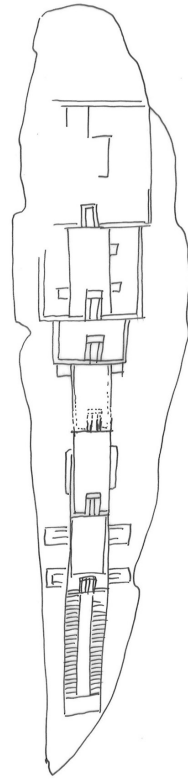
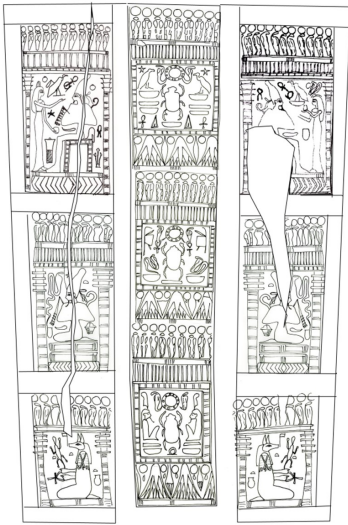
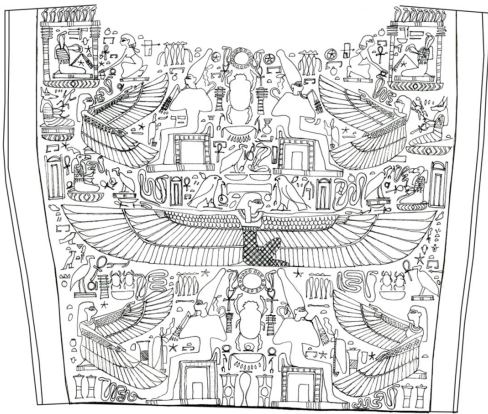
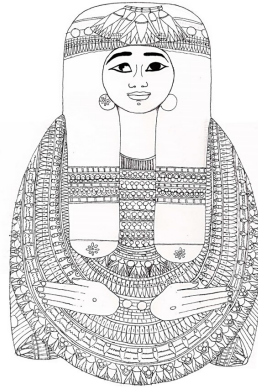


Plate 9

TYPOLICAL TABLE



1



2



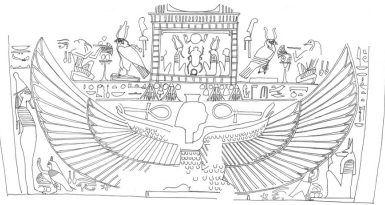
3

Typology of the upper section

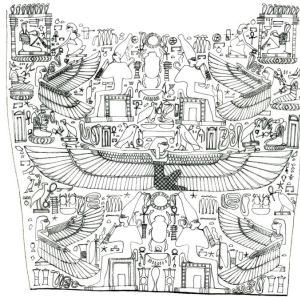
(1) Basic scheme.

(2) Classical scheme.

(3) Complex scheme.



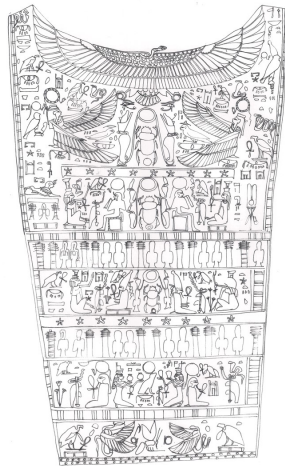
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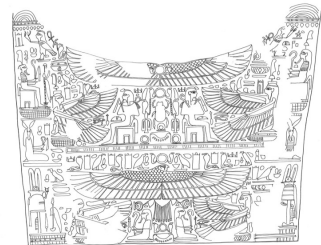
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3



4



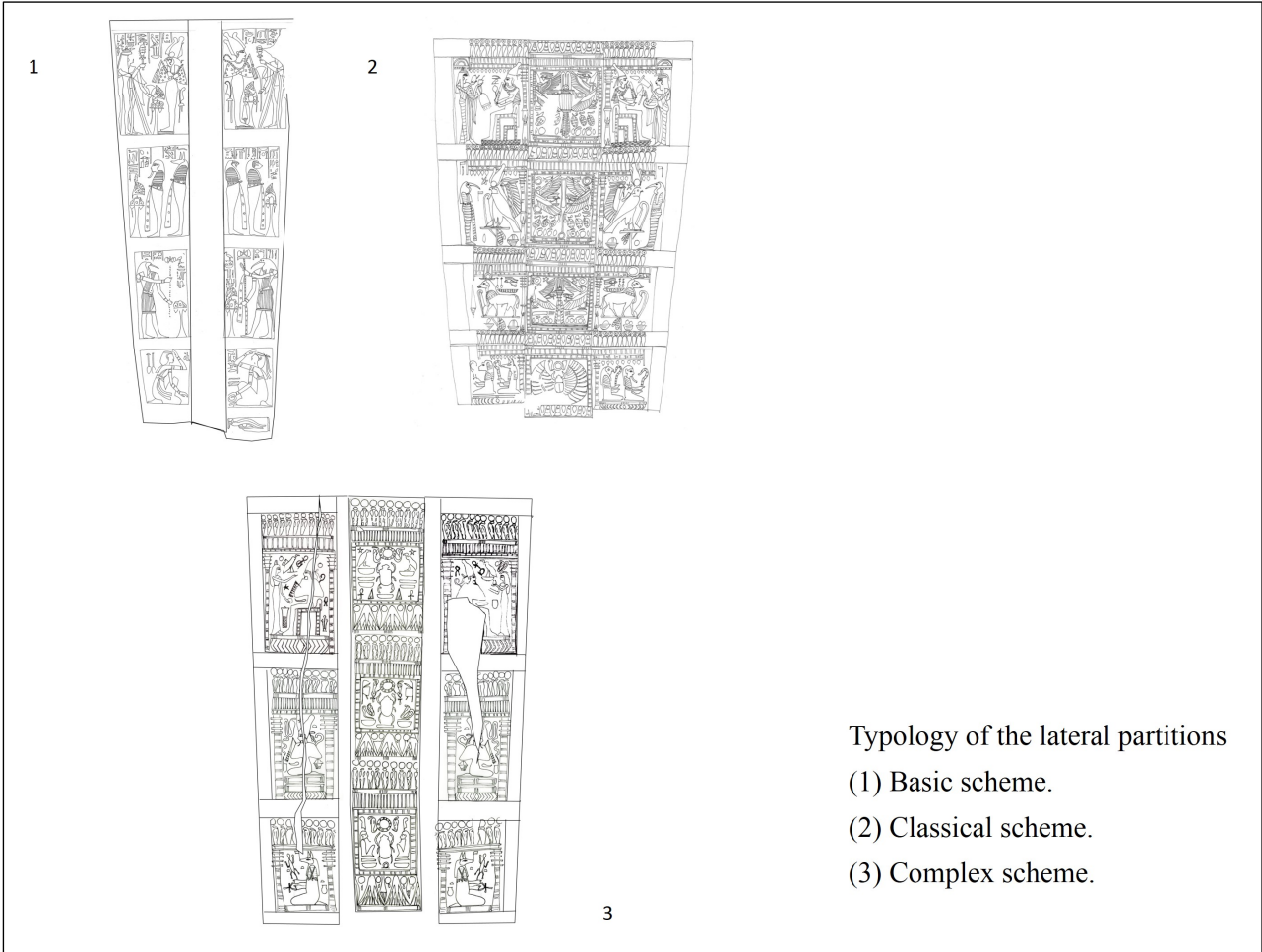
5

Typology of the central panel

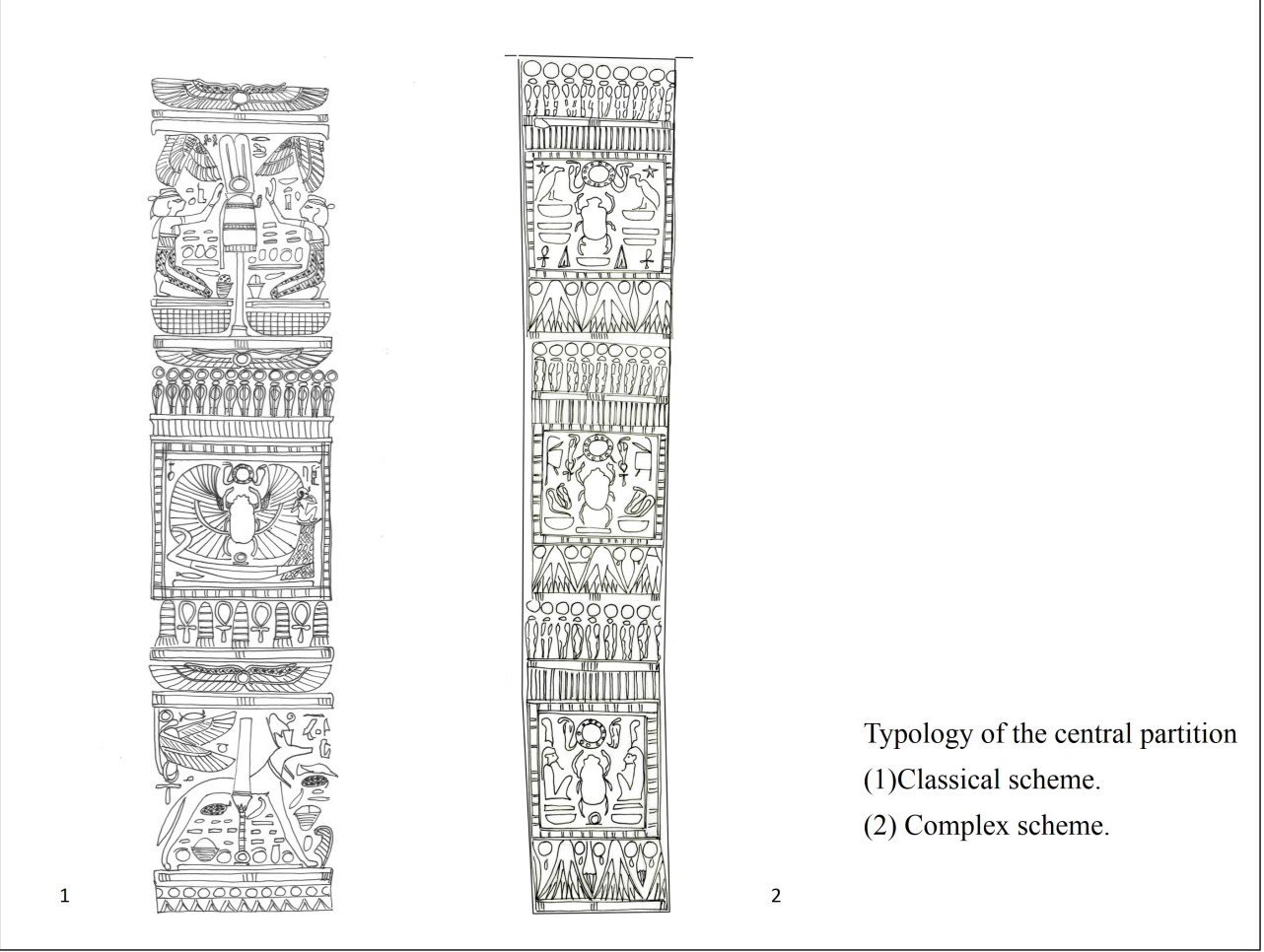
(1) Basic scheme.

(2) Classical scheme.

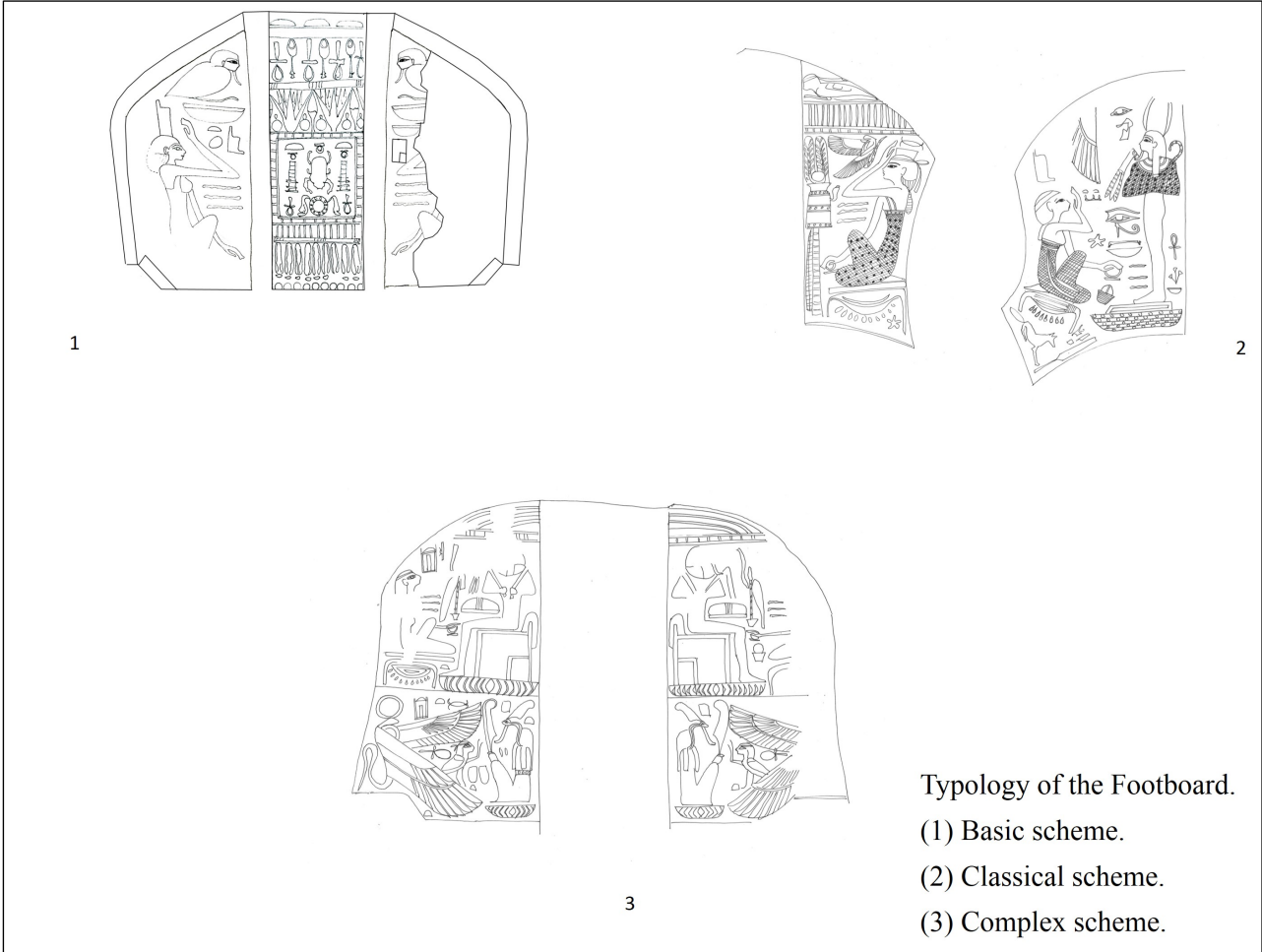
(3, 4, 5) Complex scheme.



Typology of the lateral partitions
 (1) Basic scheme.
 (2) Classical scheme.
 (3) Complex scheme.



Typology of the central partition
 (1) Classical scheme.
 (2) Complex scheme.



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