

PROCEEDINGS
F I R S T
VATICAN
COFFIN
CONFERENCE
19-22 JUNE 2013

VOLUME 1



VATICAN COFFIN PROJECT

Reparto Antichità Egizie e del Vicino Oriente

Laboratorio di Diagnostica per la Conservazione ed il Restauro

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Coffin lid of Djedmut and details, inv. MV25008

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PROCEEDINGS
FIRST
VATICAN
COFFIN
CONFERENCE
19-22 JUNE 2013
VOLUME 1

edited by **ALESSIA AMENTA** and **HÉLÈNE GUICHARD**



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Cartonnage fragments from the 22nd Dynasty originating from Theban Tomb 65 and its surroundings

Fruzsina Bartos

The use of the necropolis on the hillside of Sheikh Abd el-Gurna is consistently confirmed for almost the whole of the Third Intermediate Period. Though the South-West side of the hill seems the most intensively utilized area, contemporary burials can be found all over the necropolis, well until the Ptolemaic Period. Although located on the Eastern hillside, TT 65 fits quite well into this continuum. The analysis of the excavated coffin and cartonnage finds verifies the consecutive reuse of the tomb not only during the whole period in question, but probably after it as well. According to these finds three main burial phases can be isolated: one from the 21st Dynasty, another from the 22nd Dynasty, and probably a third from the Ptolemaic Period. Although all three phases show the multiple reuse of the site, which seems to have been a popular burial place among the people of this period, in this paper I will concentrate on the cartonnage finds dated to the 22nd Dynasty.

TT 65 shows the distinctive architectural features of an 18th Dynasty elite tomb with its extensive forecourt just in front of the façade cut out of the rock, and the six-columned transverse hall, the axial corridor and the ‘sloping passage’ carved inside the rock. The tomb was created for a man called Nebamun, who held, among others, the offices of ‘Overseer of the Granary’ and ‘Scribe of the Royal Accounts in the Presence’ during the reign of Hatshepsut, though only the first hall of the tomb had been completed at this time. For reasons unknown, construction was stopped, and Nebamun was presumably buried somewhere else. Later a Theban Amun Priest, a certain Imiseba occupied the tomb in the 20th Dynasty during the reign of Ramesses IX. He continued the construction of the tomb, but without finishing the ‘sloping passage’.¹ In subsequent years there were several secondary burials in shafts cut in the transverse hall of the tomb, which date back to the Third Intermediate Period and the Late Period. A possible history of these burials can be drawn up based on the *corpus* of cartonnage and coffin fragments, which were found in TT 65 and analyzed between 2007 and 2013. By closely considering the iconographical and typological status of these objects we will be able to determine the estimated timespan during which the tomb was used in the periods mentioned above. As a complete presentation of these finds is impossible, I only mention here some examples to demonstrate the variety of the *corpus*.

A large number of so-called ‘yellow coffin’ fragments have been found in the tomb, mainly in the ‘sloping passage’. These fragments, which are typically dated to 21st Dynasty burials, only form a small part of the already catalogued *corpus*. It can be verified that more than one 21st Dynasty burial is to be taken into consideration, as none of the analysed pieces fit together either physically or stylistically. The attached hands, which have not yet been catalogued, also confirm this statement. On the basis of approximately a dozen differently shaped hands, we can assume at least one male and three female burials in the tomb. Unfortunately, because of the relatively small size of the fragments as well as the similar design of each coffin of this type, it is hard even to tell which piece of the coffin ensemble they might have belonged to, however, according to the quality of their decoration, it can be assumed that the pieces come from at least four different coffins dating to the second half of the 21st Dynasty.

Remains of inscriptions can be found on some fragments that are parts of offering formulae and genealogical texts, the usual textual decoration type of the period. On one of the fragments an illegible *epitheton* with *n sh ntr nb Imntt* ‘of the Embalming Hall, Lord of the West’ – that probably referred

1 Bács 2011.



Fig. 1. Fragments of 21st Dynasty 'yellow coffins' (photo by Author).

in an *jm3hy-hr* formula (Fig. 1 on the left). However, the name of the god is missing. According to contemporary examples it may have been a solar god, as in these types of texts they appeared most frequently.

Burial activities might be attested from the 25th and 26th Dynasties according to some small cartonnage finds. One tiny piece can convincingly be dated to this period based on the differently coloured background of the text columns. The 25th Dynasty origin of the other finds is very likely as well, according to comparison with the coffins of the Montu priests from Deir el-Bahari, the inner parts of which show similar features in shaping and writing technique.²

The greatest number of coffin and cartonnage fragments from TT 65 date back to the 22nd Dynasty, and most of these have been already documented and analysed. According to the currently accessible data, one black outer coffin, an almost plain intermediate coffin and at least half a dozen cartonnages can be identified with certainty. However, the several separate fragments, which do not match any other parts might increase this number, and we also have to take into account that they may have got into the tomb and been broken off when the early excavator, P. E. Newberry, used it as a store in the early 1900s.³ Because the decoration of separate coffins in one ensemble differs greatly from another, and because this decoration follows a certain pattern from this time on, we can at least determine which coffin of the ensemble the fragments belong to and which part of the coffin itself they come from.

The fragments from the outer coffin have a rough surface without varnish and their decoration is yellow line drawing on black background, the usual colour code of the outer coffins at this time (Fig. 2). Although their decorative motifs in most of the cases are only the drawn wig, the collar and an offering formula in a vertical line, our fragments show an infrequently used type on which figures of deities appear beside the text column. Unfortunately, most of the fragments are quite small and the signs or the decoration can hardly be identified. Among the fragments there are some small pieces from a middle coffin on which the collar and the wig were polychrome on plain background (Fig. 2). Since

to Osiris or Anubis - and perhaps *3s.t mw.t [ntr]* 'Isis, Mother of the God' can be discerned (Fig. 1 on the right). The fragment presumably comes from the lower middle part of the coffin lid and in this case we can suggest that this piece belonged to a middle coffin of the ensemble, because offering formulae on middle coffins usually did not mention solar gods as they did on outer coffins, but Osiris or another netherworld god is named instead, showing a closer connection with the deceased. Only one name can be identified on the 21st Dynasty fragments: Padimut

² Gauthier 1913, I, 111-138, Pls. IX-X.

³ Carter 1903, 49.



Fig. 2. Fragments of 22nd Dynasty outer and middle coffins (photo by Author).



Fig. 3. Fragments of a 22nd Dynasty cartonnage with 'two falcons' motif (photo by Author).

only one outer and one middle coffin could be identified from this *corpus*, their belonging together seems certain. Now the main goal is to identify which cartonnage formed the third item of the ensemble. Although there are many candidates, and no name has survived among the coffin fragments, we have nothing convincing to base our suggestions on.

Two of the possible candidates show similar decoration patterns but are from different periods. The central motifs of the pattern are the upper ram-headed and the lower falcon-headed bird on the chest below the collar, symbolizing on the one hand the sun god rising from the underworld and on the other hand the unification of the sun god and Osiris which results the rebirth, the most important stage of the god's travelling in the netherworld.⁴ One of the two examples represents an earlier phase in the development of cartonnage decoration, dating from the late 9th to the end of the 8th century BC. It can be seen that the blue-red-blue decoration band contains only three vertical lines, not so wide as in later times, and the wings of the two goddesses, Isis and Nephthys, still cross each other behind the Abydos-fetish. As for this second example (Fig. 3), according to iconographic criteria, such as the different colouration of the inner 6 or 8 feathers of the wings of the birds, the horizontal stripes on the body of the falcon-headed bird, and the wider decoration stripes, this piece should be dated somewhat later, perhaps to the late 8th century BC.

As for the fragments that do not form larger units, there are some characteristics from which we can draw some conclusions concerning their origin in the 22nd Dynasty. Only two names can be identi-

4 Taylor 2003, 106.



Fig. 4. Cartonnage fragments with the name Basa (photo by Author).

fied in the corpus so far. One is Basa, a certain *nb W3st* on two different fragments (Fig. 4), where the following can be read [...] [*Mnt*] *nb W3st B3-s3 m3c-hrw s3* [...] '[...] of Montu, Lord of Thebes, Basa justified, son [of ...]', but whether the name refers to one or two persons is not clear, it is still under study. The other name is Ankhtaesherit, of whom we only know that she was a mistress of the house (*nb.t pr*) (Fig. 5 on the right). Unfortunately the chevron band decoration does not give us any further information either, because it cannot be decided whether it was bi- or tripartite, so it cannot be used as a dating criterion in this case. There is an other piece, however, that has a tripartite chevron band decoration flanking a *hṭp-dj-nsw.t* formula on the right side of an Abydos-fetish, thus it cannot be dated before the mid 9th century BC, when this pattern appeared.⁵ At the same time the decoration bands on another example show a definitely earlier variant of this pattern (Fig. 5 on the left). With their changing green-red-blue colours, they probably point to the first half of the 22nd Dynasty. The relatively large curve of the wing also confirms this dating. The text fragment probably names Sokar, [...] *nṯr 3 nb p.t s3b šw.t nb šty.t* [...] 'the Great God, Lord of the Sky, the Colourful Feathered, Lord of the Shetayet-shrine (of Memphis)'.

There are several fragments from the facial part of cartonnages as well. At least one male and one female owner can be recognized without difficulty. Although a seated Maat goddess can be seen on the neck of one of them, this motive in itself is not sufficient criterion to date the object.

In the last four seasons, the excavation of the hill-side in front of TT 65 and TT 66 has produced some interesting and – we can say – unique cartonnage fragments. Only five examples of this type of cartonnage are known to me, namely the cartonnages of Tjendinebu's in the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin (Inv. 1881.2228), Padimut in the Harvard Semitic Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts (Inv. 1901.9.1), Panehsy in the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden (Inv. AMM 17-e), Ankh-Hor in the Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery, Norwich (Inv. 196.928), and Nakhtefmut in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (Inv. E.64.1896).⁶ Their particularity is in their shaping, the main units of the decoration are

Fig. 5. Early 22nd Dynasty cartonnage fragment naming probably Sokar (on the left) and a later 22nd Dynasty cartonnage fragment with the name Ankhtaesherit (on the right) (photo by Author).

⁵ Elias 1993, 406, no. 12.

⁶ I would like to thank Professor John Taylor for calling my attention to the cartonnage of Nakhtefmut in Cambridge and that of Ankhhor in Norwich, as well as for his kind help and the useful conversation on this topic. I have to mention here some other fragments with a similarly plastically raised decoration which were found in TT -400- by another Hungarian Mission spearheaded by Gábor Schreiber in 2013. As the fragments are still under study, further information about them is expected later.



Fig. 6. 22nd Dynasty cartonnage fragment with painted and moulded decoration before and after cleaning (photo by Author).

plastically raised. It can be observed in the case of our fragments on the stola, the leg and wing of the bird, and the Son of Horus (Fig. 7 above on the left), the wings and one hand of the goddesses, and the leg of the bird (Fig. 6). Besides, the whole surface is beautifully painted. Unfortunately, most of the pieces were almost entirely covered with some kind of a white, very solid, gypsum like material, which had attached itself strongly to the cartonnage surface. Clearing the individual pieces was really difficult and was not completely successful. The patterning of this white material indicates an accidental presence rather than an intentional one, though probably from a time when the cartonnage case was still intact.

The fragments came from every part of the cartonnage. We have the head part with the scarab on top of the head, but unfortunately without the face. Although, there is no plastic decoration and no direct connection between the head and the other fragments, I am quite convinced that they belong to the same cartonnage case. The white material mentioned above covered only fragments of this type and none of the others, even if they came from the same excavation unit, from next to each other. Besides, the coloration and the painting are quite identical on the head and on the other pieces as well. From the frontal part we can identify the stola and a Son of Horus, namely Qebehseneuf, on the right side of the wing and the leg of the ram-headed bird, the head of the falcon-headed bird and the sun disc on its head, the wing and the leg of the falcon-headed bird and the crossed wings of Isis and Nephthys under it, and parts of the Abydos-fetish and the beginning of the



Fig. 7. 22nd Dynasty cartonnage fragments with painted and moulded decoration (photo by Author).



Fig. 8. Drawings of a 22nd Dynasty cartonnage fragment showing the painted decoration (on the left) and the outlines of the plastically emphasized details (on the right) (drawing by Author).

ḥtp-dj-nsw.t formula (Fig. 7 above on the right).

A large fragment came from the back and from the side of the cartonnage case showing a large *djed*-pillar at the back, the end of the wing of the falcon-headed bird, and the name of Isis on the head of the goddess. Coincidentally, the same part from the opposite side has been found as well, however, only the uppermost line of the disc, containing the name of Nephthys, can be recognized. It is worth mentioning that on the larger fragment the holes and strings can still be seen where the cartonnage case was once closed. On one of the fragments from the foot part, the end and the beginning of two names can be read, [...] *p3-ḥrd m3-ḥrw s3 ʿnh.f-[mw.t?]* '[...] pakheredu justified, son of Ankhef[mut?]' (Fig. 7 below). Unfortunately we have no further information about the owner or the names themselves that otherwise seem quite common for the period.

On the one hand, this rare decorative feature gives a real value to the cartonnage, on the other hand, it caused difficulties during documentation. As the decoration is quite rich and colourful, and the painted and modelled parts crossed each other at several points, I had to make decisions and compromises during the process of drawing the pieces. As a result, I chose to make two drawings of each fragment, one showing the painted decoration, while the other the outlines of the plastically emphasized details (Fig. 8). This method seemed to be the best solution for retaining as many details as possible and, at the same time, preventing the loss of any information of importance during the process of documentation.

As can be seen from this small collection of examples, the *corpus* of coffin and cartonnage fragments that has been found during the excavation of TT 65 and its surrounding area is really varied. Though we do not have any authentic information about the secondary burials placed in the seven chambers and the two shafts inside and outside the tomb, the coffin and cartonnage fragments together with other grave goods, for example the typical 22nd Dynasty shabtis, leads one to draw the inevitable conclusion that the tomb, as with several others in its vicinity, had probably been used for more than one burial during the Third Intermediate Period.

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