

THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN COFFIN
IN THE SLOVAK NATIONAL MUSEUM:
THE DISTRIBUTION OF REGISTERS AND
INSCRIPTIONS ON THE EXTERIOR SURFACE*
(Plates 1 – 8)

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The exterior surface of the coffin was originally decorated with polychrome painted scenes and inscriptions. While the back side of the mummiform part of the coffin consisted explicitly of the inscriptions, its frontal side contained a rich combination of paintings divided into registers and sections filled with inscriptions written in vertical and horizontal bands. The exterior surface of the lid of the coffin is very badly damaged. Some physical parts of the surface on the coffin are completely missing. This is why the damaged parts were restored in modern times. This paper deals with the basic layout and distribution of the registers filled with scenes and texts on the preserved exterior surface of the front and back sides of the coffin. The investigation is based on an analysis of the preserved parts of the original decoration identified on the exterior surface of the coffin. A more detailed description and analysis of the particular registers filled with the paintings and inscriptions as well as the reconstruction of the original decorative programme of the coffin will be discussed and presented in following papers.

Key words: coffin, exterior surface, design, registers, axial symmetry

First of all, it is useful to make some general notes concerning the basic data and terms.¹ The coffin consists of two parts: the lid and the trough. The length of the coffin is 183.5 cm. The widest part of the coffin (across the shoulders) measures 54 cm, and the narrowest part (across the ankles) measures 31 cm.

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¹ For an introduction to the study of the coffin, see MAGDOLEN, D. The Ancient Egyptian Coffin in the Slovak National Museum: a preliminary research report. In *Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1, 2013, pp. 131 – 135.

The terms *left* and *right* refer to the real sides of the coffin itself and/or its parts; in other words, neither term is used from the perspective of the viewer. The decoration on the surface was divided into sections consisting of various scenes accompanied by inscriptions and other texts written in vertical columns and horizontal bands. The particular sections of the decoration were separated from each other and flanked by borders in the form of vertical and horizontal bands consisting of small rectangular blocks of alternating colours and short lines.

The coffin is made of the wood.² It was covered with linen, plastered and painted with a polychrome decoration. The physical shape of the coffin represents the mummified human body with a rectangular pedestal beneath the feet and a supporting pillar at the back. The exterior surface contains a lot of damage in the form of cracks and abraded areas.³ Some parts of the original exterior surface are completely missing. The lid from below the head to the feet represents the most damaged exterior part of the coffin. The whole coffin, including its exterior and interior, underwent major restoration works in the 1970s. The restored areas on the exterior surface of the lid are clearly distinguishable from the original material and they mostly have a white and grey colouration.⁴

In Plates 1 and 7 we can see that the original surface of the frontal part of the lid consists of several separate fragments varying in sizes and in the quality of the preserved decoration. At the same time, the exterior surface of the lid below the head reflects the greatest diversity of the coffin decoration. It consisted of numerous registers filled with various scenes and hieroglyphic inscriptions.

1.0. The exterior surface of the lid

1.1. The head (Plates 1, 3, 5 – 6)

The uppermost part of the mummiform lid (viewed in its erected position) has the shape of a human head. We can see the frontal part of the huge tripartite wig around the face with two lappets terminating above the breast (the lateral sides of the wig bear the signs of the 1970s restoration). The hair of the wig is fixed in the form of thin strands. The surface of the lowermost parts of both lappets is

² BŘEZINOVÁ, D., HURDA, B. Xylotomic Examination of Timber from Ancient Egyptian Coffins. In *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*, Bd. 103, 1976, pp. 139 – 142.

³ The extent of the damage can be seen in Plates 1 – 7.

⁴ In connection with this, and according to our observations, it is important to note that the fragments of the original painted decoration within the registers themselves on the frontal side of the lid were not restored. Therefore, the modern additions have no influence on the identification of particular scenes or inscriptions or on the study of their distribution on the surface.

decorated with a yellow horizontal band. The vertex of the head is decorated by a wide headband with floral motifs and a rounded border band. It seems that the inner surface limited by the rounded border band was divided by blue lines into several columns providing the place for the text. However, because of damage to this area no fragments of the inscriptions have been preserved. These columns were probably divided by another border band in the central part as indicated by small traces of green, yellow and ochre arranged one after the other and preserved in the frontal part of the vertex. The central and lower parts of the vertex and the edges of the lid contain evident signs of modern-day treatment from the restoration works in the 1970s.

The face has full cheeks and contains a very well-preserved depiction of the eyes, which are coloured black and white, in contrast with the ochre and brownish colour of the rest of the face. Grooves for the eyebrows on both sides can be clearly seen. The face has a long nose and relatively short but full lips. The chin is decorated with a so-called false beard curled at its very bottom. The false beard is supported by a pillar joined to the rest of the body.⁵

The exterior surface of the lid below the head consists of several fragments. These fragments vary in size and shape as well as in the quality of the preserved decoration. They will be described one by one from the top to the bottom of the mummiform lid.

1.2. The body

1.2.1. Fragment 1 (Plate 7)

This fragment represents the largest piece of the original exterior surface preserved on the lid between the head and the pedestal of the coffin. The numerous traces of polychrome decoration and repeating patterns reveal that the uppermost part of this fragment contains a depiction of a broad collar with a partly preserved terminal mostly on the right side. Various pieces of the depiction of this collar can be found on both sides of the lid as well as in the frontal part. The lower part of the collar reaches the lowermost edge of both wig lappets terminating above the breast. The broad collar can be tentatively marked as **Register A** of the design layout on the surface of the lid.

The remnants of a decoration depicting a human figure can be identified immediately below the broad collar. It seems that the preserved figure is kneeling on something which resembles the *nbw* sign. Several radiating lines clearly visible on the left side of the lid belonged to the figure mentioned above and depicted in the vertical axis of the lid below the false beard. These radiating

⁵ The false beard was found broken off at the beginning of the 1970s. During the restoration work it was stuck on to the chin. Mojmir Benža, personal communication.

lines very probably represent the particular feathers of the wing belonging to the left arm of the mentioned human figure. Less distinctive, but still identifiable, are such feathers (or more precisely their fragments) on the right side of the lid. These features indicate that the depiction of the winged human figure may represent a deity.⁶ Imprints of the vertical lines preserved on the right side below the right arm of the figure together with the fragment of a hieroglyphic sign below the radiating feathers of the wing on the left side indicate that the surface below the wings of the deity was divided into several columns filled with hieroglyphic inscriptions. The section comprising the depiction of the figure of a kneeling winged deity and the columns with remnants of the hieroglyphic signs are identified and marked as **Register B**.

A long band running horizontally can clearly be seen below the figure of a deity with wings and columns for the text. This band consists of long lines and rectangular regular blocks of approximately the same size. The colouration of these blocks is as follows: ochre, green and yellow. These blocks are separated by shorter sections of white-black-white and/or white-blue-white vertical lines. The whole band is a standard border band separating particular registers and/or inscriptions, and it was used in the design layout to form specific sections or compartments on the surface of the coffin. Immediately below this border band there is another horizontal band. However, this one is monochromatic. The colouration of this band is yellow. Fragments of particular hieroglyphic signs painted in black and visible in this yellow band reveal that there was a long horizontal inscription, which has been marked as **Horizontal Inscription 1**. Again, immediately below this inscription another border band consisting of the same composition of colours as described above can clearly be seen.

In the central part of Fragment 1 several polychrome pieces of human figures can be recognized with traces of a blue bold horizontal line appearing above the figures. Some of them are depicted standing, while it seems that parts of the others are shown seated. On both sides of the lid, the upper part of the *w3ꜥ* scepter is also clearly preserved in very close vicinity to the seated figures. It seems that more figures or their parts are preserved in the scene on the right side of Fragment 1. However, the pieces of the scene with similar characteristics

⁶ The other details preserved in the depiction enable us to identify the figure as a female deity. The known analogies of preserved coffins provided the material for the identification of this female deity with the goddess Nut. See for example, TAYLOR, J.H. Patterns of colouring on ancient Egyptian coffins from the New Kingdom to the Twenty-sixth Dynasty: an overview, Pls. 54/3, 55/1. In DAVIES, W.V. (Ed.) *Colour and Painting in Ancient Egypt*. The British Museum Press, London 2001; GAUTHIER, M.H. Cercueils anthropoïdes des prêtres de Montou. Catalogue Général Antiquités Égyptiennes du Musée du Caire, Nos. 41042 – 41072. Tome 1, Pl. XVI; D'AURIA, S., LACOVARA, P., ROEHRING, C.H. Mummies & Magic. The Funerary Arts of Ancient Egypt, p. 171, Pl. 123.

preserved on the left side indicate that the mentioned depictions on both sides could represent a kind of mirror image of the same or a very similar motif painted in these sections of Fragment 1. Both scenes probably continued further to the lateral edges of the lid. As the right and left edges of the original surface are missing, it is not possible to determine precisely the length of both scenes, but according to analogies we can suppose that the depictions reached the edges of the lid.⁷

Several vertical lines painted in blue or preserved in the form of imprints can be observed between both scenes mentioned above. Judging from the yellow fragments preserved between some vertical lines as well as from the parts of some hieroglyphic signs painted in black ink on a yellow background, one can reasonably conclude that both scenes with figures were separated by a panel (tentatively marked as **Central Panel 1**) filled with hieroglyphic inscriptions written in several columns. The panel with columns was located in the central part of the lid in the vertical axis. The uppermost part of the columns certainly had to begin under the lower border band of Horizontal Inscription 1, while their lowermost parts were defined by the bottom of the registers with figures. The vertical narrow border band was located between the outermost columns of texts in Central Panel 1 and the scenes with the seated figure depicted close to the central part on each side of the lid. Traces of imprints and faded colours attest the presence of such a vertical border band on both sides. Both scenes with figures appearing on the right and left sides of the lid can be marked as **Register C** and **Register D**.

Another long horizontal border band can be identified immediately below the scenes with figures and Central Panel 1 featuring vertical short columns of inscriptions in the vertical axis. This was followed by the long **Horizontal Inscription 2** with another horizontal border band situated immediately underneath. These horizontal bands are clearly preserved on the right side. Because of the damage to the surface they can only be observed up to the vertical axis of the lid. However, we can suppose that they also continued on the left side because this can be stated on the basis of existing analogies.⁸

In the vertical axis below Horizontal Inscription 2 a part of another scene is clearly visible. The scene is incomplete and its left part is missing. Its upper part is formed by a blue bold horizontal line. The left and lower edges of this scene are defined by shorter vertical and longer horizontal border bands respectively.

⁷ Cf. BIETAK, M. Theben-West (Luqsor). Vorberichtung über die ersten vier Grabungskampagnen (1969 – 1971), Taf. XX (left), Taf XXI/a.

⁸ See for example TAYLOR, J.H. Egyptian Coffins. Shire Egyptology 11. Aylesbury 1989, p. 57 (ill. 45) and p. 58 (ill. 46); BIETAK, M. Theben-West (Luqsor). Vorberichtung über die ersten vier Grabungskampagnen (1969 – 1971), Taf. XX (left).

This incomplete rectangular section forms **Register E** of the design layout of the lid.

The surface of the lid below the lower border band of Register E is decorated with another panel marked as **Central Panel 2** consisting of long vertical lines running down and forming columns originally filled with hieroglyphic inscriptions.⁹ The presence of these columns and inscriptions in this place can be attested by the remnants of the vertical lines and hieroglyphic signs written on a yellow background. These long columns of inscriptions continued down to the feet. However, at the level of the knees their course is interrupted because of the missing remainder of the original exterior surface. The first column from the right side is bordered by a vertical border band running down. Based on the principle of axial symmetry applied in the design layout, one can expect that another vertical border band was originally on the left side as well.¹⁰

On the right side of Register E, immediately next to the vertical border band, the imprints of several vertical lines are preserved. These lines are not too long and their lowermost parts approach the horizontal cracking on the surface of the lid. The number of the imprints indicates that there were probably at least four columns with the hieroglyphic text.

Visible remnants of different colours and various shapes including curved lines painted one above the other have been preserved further to the right edge of the lid and reveal that this area contained a vertical scene with vertical border bands on both sides. This scene can be identified as **Register F**. It is probable that the columns for the text described above can relate to the scene belonging to this register.

Further to the right of Register F and its right vertical border band, yellow fragments together with pieces of hieroglyphic signs painted in black reveal that immediately next to this register the place for one column with an inscription was preserved.

The very edge of Fragment 1 on the right side of the lid contains polychrome fragments very similar in shape to those in Register F, including curved lines. It seems that another vertical scene similar to that described above very probably

⁹ Cf. ASTON, D.A. Burial Assemblages of Dynasty 21 – 25. Chronology – Typology – Developments, p. 287; BRUYÈR, B. Une nouvelle famille de prêtres de Montou trouvée par Baraize à Deir el Bahri. In *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte*, 1956, Tome LIV, Pl. V.

¹⁰ Cf. TAYLOR, J.H. Patterns of colouring on ancient Egyptian coffins from the New Kingdom to the Twenty-sixth Dynasty: an overview, Pl. 54/3; TAYLOR, J.H. Theban coffins from the Twenty-second to the Twenty-sixth Dynasty: dating and synthesis of development, Pl. 63. In STRUDWICK, N., TAYLOR, J.H. *The Theban Necropolis. Past, Present and Future*. The British Museum Press, London 2003; TAYLOR, J.H. Egyptian Coffins. *Shire Egyptology* 11, p. 57 (ill. 45).

was depicted on this part of the lid. This scene can be identified as **Register G**. Perhaps one column of the text in the original depiction related to Register G.

Unfortunately, due to the damage and the missing original exterior surface, it is not possible to determine the content of the decoration of the very edge on the right side of the lid.

At the level of Registers F and G, the lower part of vertical lines defining the place for columns with hieroglyphic inscriptions on the left side of the vertical axis of the lid can be identified. Based on analogies we can reasonably expect that Registers F and G accompanied by columns of inscriptions painted on the right side reflected the principle of axial symmetry used in the decorative programme of the coffin. In this context one can suppose that the layout of registers combined with the inscriptions on the left side of the lid was the same as that on the right side. The preserved remnants of the hieroglyphic signs within the lower parts of the columns may represent a section comparable with that marked as Register F on the opposite side of the vertical axis. They can be ascribed to the hypothetical register marked as **Register H**. Again, based on the analogies, this register could have followed another one (**Register I**) respecting the principle of axial symmetry in the design and distribution of particular registers on the surface.¹¹

The clear remnants of the green and yellow colour interrupted by short vertical black and white lines indicate that the horizontal border band on the left side was immediately below the columns with texts and framed Register H from the bottom. Below this horizontal border band, another yellow piece of paint of a larger size can be seen. This time, however, this colour was used to form the background for a horizontal band filled with a hieroglyphic inscription. At least two remnants of hieroglyphic signs are preserved in this place. However, this horizontal inscription did not continue across the vertical axis of the lid further to the right side. A small fragment of the short vertical blue line on the right side of this horizontal inscription probably represents its right edge. It was probably part of a long vertical line belonging to the vertical border band separating the registers, with inscriptions present on the left side of the lid from the outermost left column and a hieroglyphic inscription belonging to Central Panel 2 appearing in the frontal part of the lid along the vertical axis.

On the basis of the principle of axial symmetry, we can suppose that such a shorter horizontal text as that identified and described above was also on the right side. Approximately at the same level on the right side, only two partly preserved horizontal lines with a piece of ochre paint lying between them can be observed. These fragments probably come from the horizontal border band above the horizontal band of inscription which was originally below it. This,

¹¹ BIETAK, M. Theben-West (Luqsor). Vorberichtung über die ersten vier Grabungskampagnen (1969 – 1971), Taf. XX (left).

however, has not been preserved. Other ochre remnants nearby the right edge of Fragment 1 might belong to another horizontal border band which might have been below the horizontal inscription.¹²

The surface of the lowermost part of Fragment 1 on the left side of the lid is very damaged and only faded contours of some vertical lines can be seen. Further to the right side, the situation is a little bit better. Imprints of vertical lines and their fragments are visible near Central Panel 2 in some places and define the place for columns of inscriptions written on a yellow background. Probably four columns were on this part of the lid. Further to the right edge of Fragment 1, remnants of the vertical border band can be observed.

The vertical border band was followed by a vertical scene similar to those mentioned above and identified as Registers F and G. This scene can be marked as **Register J**. It was followed by another vertical border band on the right side, the upper part of which has been preserved. In the immediate vicinity, at least one column of inscription followed; this is indicated by the presence of a larger yellow piece of paint in its uppermost part.

The decoration of Fragment 1 in its lowermost section is completely missing on the right and left sides. We can suppose columns of inscriptions and some register or registers on the left side of the lid existed as well. Perhaps a fragment of an imprint indicates the place of the existence of such a register compared with that on the right side (Register J) that could be tentatively marked as **Register K**. The presence of Register K on the left side of the lid could be indicated by the shape of the imprint itself in the form of a curvature comparable in shape to those present in Registers F, G and J.

1.2.2. Fragment 2 (Plate 7)

The whole surface of this fragment has a decoration which is a part of the broad collar, including the lower remainder of the collar termination.

1.2.3. Fragment 3 (Plate 7)

The upper part of the decoration on this fragment belongs to the lowermost part of the broad collar. Below three parallel sloping lines, there is part of a horizontal inscription bearing several hieroglyphic signs painted in black ink. Below this inscription, another three sloping lines continue towards the lower edge of this fragment. Its lowermost part contains the remnants of columns with inscriptions divided by vertical lines, the upper parts of which are still preserved together with some hieroglyphic signs.

¹² Cf. BIETAK, M. Theben-West (Luqsor). Vorberichtung über die ersten vier Grabungskampagnen (1969 – 1971), Taf. XX (left).

1.2.4. Fragment 4 (Plate 7)

This fragment of a roughly rectangular shape in the lower part of the mummiform lid below the knees is practically without any traces of the original decoration. Its surface is covered by material, the consistence of which is probably a result of treatment undertaken during the restoration works in the 1970s. It is isolated from other fragments on the original surface of the lid by modern gypsum and it was painted grey during the restoration.

1.2.5. Fragment 5 (Plate 7)

The position of this fragment is on the right side of the vertical axis of the lid. Like the previously mentioned Fragment 4, it is isolated from the other fragments and has some decoration preserved on the original surface. The state of preservation of the original decoration on the surface of this fragment, despite its evident damage, is much better compared to the previously mentioned one. This relatively small fragment is very important because the information preserved on its surface can tell us a lot about the continuation of the decoration and its distribution on the surface in the lower part of the lid.

The upper part of this fragment contains the remnants of vertical columns with inscriptions. Some hieroglyphic signs and parts of others are still preserved. Looking from the right side of the fragment, we can count the lower parts of four columns. The vertical lines which follow these four columns closer to the vertical axis of the lid contain imprints of various degrees of colouration recognizable between them. The thin vertical band with polychrome blocks within it indicates that this could be the known border band dividing particular scenes and inscriptions. This band runs almost to the bottom of this fragment. It terminates approximately at one quarter of its height measured from the bottom of this fragment. To the left edge of this fragment, traces of yellow, a blue vertical line and some short black spots can be clearly seen. The combination of these components reveals that they could form a column bearing a hieroglyphic inscription. It seems that this column terminates at the same level as the vertical border band described above.

A part of another border band is present immediately below the lower parts of the four columns preserved on the right side of this fragment. This time its details are preserved more clearly, and one can see that it runs horizontally. It seems that the horizontal border band does not reach the left edge of this fragment; it terminates in front of a green block belonging to the vertical border band described above. Below the horizontal border band there is part of the horizontal band filled with a hieroglyphic inscription and another horizontal border band.

A complete rectangular vignette is present approximately in the central part of this fragment. It is bordered from all four sides by short border bands, two of

which are mentioned above (the upper one and one on the left side). This vignette can be marked as **Register L**.

The right part of this fragment at the level of the vignette contains a vertical yellow band with traces of black spots. It seems that this was a short column with hieroglyphic text written inside.

Nearer to the bottom of this fragment, there is another border band running horizontally across the whole width of the fragment from one edge to the other. This border band belongs to the lower border band of the vignette described above. The place below this long horizontal border band occupies the band reserved for the horizontal hieroglyphic inscription. Some signs of this inscription are still preserved inside on the right side of the fragment. The traces of the yellow background of this inscription can be also observed on the left side of the fragment, which means that the text continued below the vertical border band and the column of the inscription preserved on the far left side of this fragment. This inscription running across the whole width of this fragment can be marked as **Horizontal Inscription 3**. There is another border band below this hieroglyphic text running from one edge of the fragment to the other.

At the very bottom of this fragment we can see very short blue lines with pieces of yellow paint and black spots between the lines. It is highly likely that they are the remnants of short columns of hieroglyphic inscriptions continuing down to the feet of the mummiform lid.

1.2.6. Fragment 6 (Plate 7)

This is the lowermost fragment of the surface on the mummiform lid bearing the original decoration. The polychrome paintings are well preserved despite some damage which includes long cracks running horizontally.


The decoration itself combines the depiction of the human body and the hieroglyphic inscriptions arranged in short columns. The human body in this depiction represents an ancient Egyptian goddess who is shown with outstretched winged arms seated above the *nbw* sign.¹³ Above the outstretched arms of the goddess in the upper part of this fragment we can see the lowermost parts of the columns with hieroglyphic signs and their parts. These columns with signs are undoubtedly the same as those situated in the lowermost part of Fragment 5. Other columns and hieroglyphic inscriptions can be seen in the lower part of this fragment below the wings on both sides of the *nbw* sign. The decoration on this fragment at its lowermost part is terminated by a long border band. The whole composition on this fragment can be tentatively marked as **Register M**.

¹³ The composition of this depiction is similar to that identified and described in Fragment 1.

1.3. The pedestal


1.3.1. The frontal side (Plates 1, 7 – 8)

The surface of this side of the rectangular and mostly brownish pedestal is badly damaged. Horizontal and vertical cracks can be observed in its lower part. Only a few traces of the original polychrome decoration can be identified. All four edges of the rectangular surface bear the remnants of the various colours arranged one behind the other on each side. Their sequence indicates that they belong to the original border band. Above the lower horizontal border band we can see blue, yellow and white remnants of various shapes. The decoration is much better preserved on the lateral sides of the pedestal and helps us to decode the scene on its frontal side. The fragments of the decoration on the frontal side are the pieces of the hieroglyphic signs *nb*, *w3s* and *ʿnh* depicted in the

calligraphic composition  attested in known analogies.¹⁴ The dimensions of the remnants of the *nb* signs reveal that this grouping was repeated four times on the frontal side of the pedestal.

1.3.2. The right side (Plate 6)

On this side of the pedestal, a rectangular piece of the surface is missing. This part was restored in the 1970s. Despite damage to it, the preserved depiction

shows the repeated sequence of the hieroglyphic signs  shown three times. This composition is on a blue background and is framed by border bands on three sides (the rear side touching with the trough of the coffin is deliberately without a border band because the scene continued on the trough).

1.3.3. The left side (Plate 5)

This side of the pedestal displays almost the same characteristics as those described above in section 1.3.2. In fact, the difference consists in the better quality of the original depiction and the colouration of the restored part.

1.3.4. The bottom side (Plate 4)

The surface of this side of the pedestal includes the imprints of straight horizontal and vertical lines and/or wider bands preserved in the vicinity of the edges of the surface. Despite some damage, the central scene consisting of the picture of a bull carrying the mummy on its back is clearly preserved.

¹⁴ GAUTHIER, M.H. Cercueils anthropoïdes des prêtres de Montou, Pls. VIII, XIII, XV, XXI; TAYLOR, J.H. Patterns of colouring on ancient Egyptian coffins from the New Kingdom to the Twenty-sixth Dynasty: an overview, Pl. 54/3.

2.0. The exterior surface of the trough

2.1. The head (Plates 2 – 3, 5 – 6)

The surface of the head of the trough contains several cracks and signs of modern-day restorations on both lateral sides and the upper edge of the vertex. The decoration consists of the continuation of the tripartite wig on the back side of the coffin. The wig consists of the strands of hair in the form of vertical thin bands running from the top to the shoulders and the back. The decoration of the vertex of the head includes the continuation of the wide headband and a rounded border band. Within the surface formed by the rounded border band we can see a scene consisting of a solar disc and two *uraei*. The upper edge of the vertex of the head in the central area was partly restored.

2.2. The body

2.2.1. The back pillar (Plate 2)

This is elaborated on the central dorsal side of the coffin in the form of a vertical flat surface in raised relief. Its width is almost that of the wig. The pillar runs from the lowermost part of the wig to the feet or the pedestal. Despite a significant amount of damage, including the cracks on the surface, the decoration of the pillar is well preserved. Its lateral sides are formed by a vertical border band. The place between them is filled with long hieroglyphic inscriptions written in five columns. Every odd column has a yellow background and every even one has a white one.

2.2.2. The lateral sides of the body (Plates 5 – 6)

Both sides of the trough are damaged and contain traces of modern-day restoration on the surface. The sides were decorated with hieroglyphic inscriptions and a decorative band consisting of numerous polychrome columns formed by five short lines.

The inscriptions are written in horizontal bands formed by blue lines.¹⁵ The colour of the bands is alternately yellow and white. There are 36 bands on the left side of the trough and the right side contains 37 horizontal bands filled with inscriptions.

The bands with text touch the edge of the pillar in the central part of the trough, while on the outer side they are bordered by a long decorative band. This is not preserved completely and in some places it shows the traces of the modern-day restoration. The left side of the trough reveals that this band starts under the

¹⁵ Some of them were added on both sides of the trough during the restoration in the 1970s.

lowermost line bearing an inscription, in other words, from the upper part of the pedestal. The beginning of this band is not preserved on the right side of the trough. It continued to the head and probably terminated in the vicinity of the wig. On the basis of its fragments, we can say that the decorative band consisted of a repeating sequence of columns. Each of them consisted of five short lines. Each column and each line were separated. The colour of the columns was blue, ochre and green. The colours of the columns were arranged in the sequence of blue/ochre, blue/green.


2.3. The pedestal

2.3.1. The back side (Plate 2)

The surface damage and a long deep crack running from one side to the other can be seen very clearly. The decoration consists of geometrical motifs showing a combination of lines and/or bands of various colours.


2.3.2. The right side (Plate 6)

This side reveals a lot of restoration in its upper part. An evident crack runs across the whole surface. The decoration is formed by a standard border band preserved on the lower and rear sides only. In the middle there is the motif of

the group of hieroglyphic signs  on a blue background.

2.3.3. The left side (Plate 5)

This side of the pedestal is damaged as well. The surface is more faded as that on the right side and the crack is bigger. Despite this damage, the content of the decoration is recognizable. The border band is preserved on the upper, rear and

lower sides. The presence of the signs  can be confirmed as well.

2.3.4. The bottom side (Plate 4)

The surface on this side of the pedestal is too damaged to show any traces of original decoration. The whole surface is divided into three wide white horizontal bands in the upper and lower part and a dark one in the middle.

Conclusions

The detailed investigation of the exterior surface of the coffin clearly shows that the frontal side of the lid contained the greatest diversity in the decorative programme. The exterior surface of the lid was originally divided into several

compartments consisting of a combination of registers filled with painted scenes and hieroglyphic inscriptions written in horizontal bands and vertical columns. When compared with existing analogies, our study of the preserved parts of the decoration allows us to present the identification and distribution of the paintings and inscriptions on the preserved exterior surface of the lid, which can be seen in Plate 8. The result of this investigation represents a starting point for the more detailed analysis of the particular registers, which are filled with painted scenes and accompanying inscriptions. Therefore, further research will focus on the identification of details preserved in the individual scenes and the reconstruction of their content. The analysis of the original decorative programme on the exterior surface of the lid can help us to iconographically determine the age of the coffin within a scale of relative chronology.

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PLATES



Plate 1: The frontal side of the coffin.



Plate 2: The dorsal side of the coffin.



Plate 3: The top side of the coffin.



Plate 4: The bottom side of the coffin.



Plate 5: The left side of the coffin.



Plate 6: The right side of the coffin.

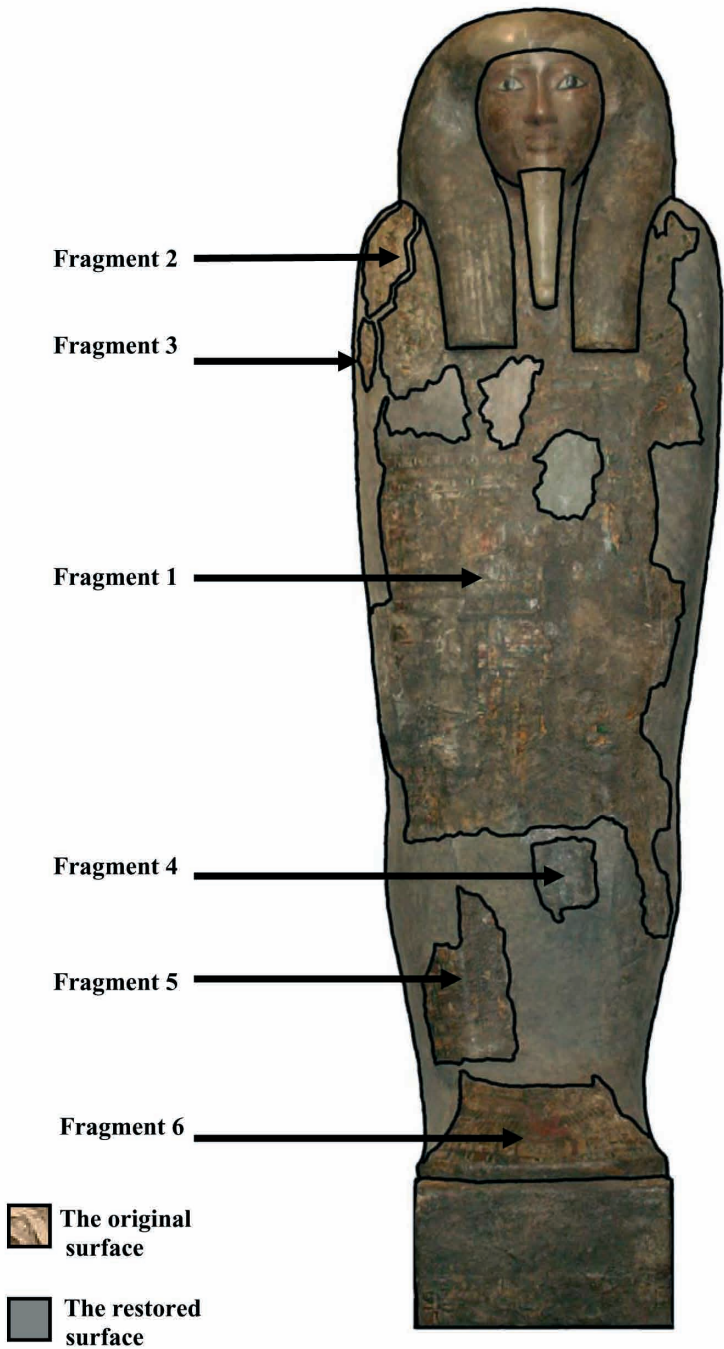


Plate 7: The outline of the fragments on the frontal side of the coffin lid.

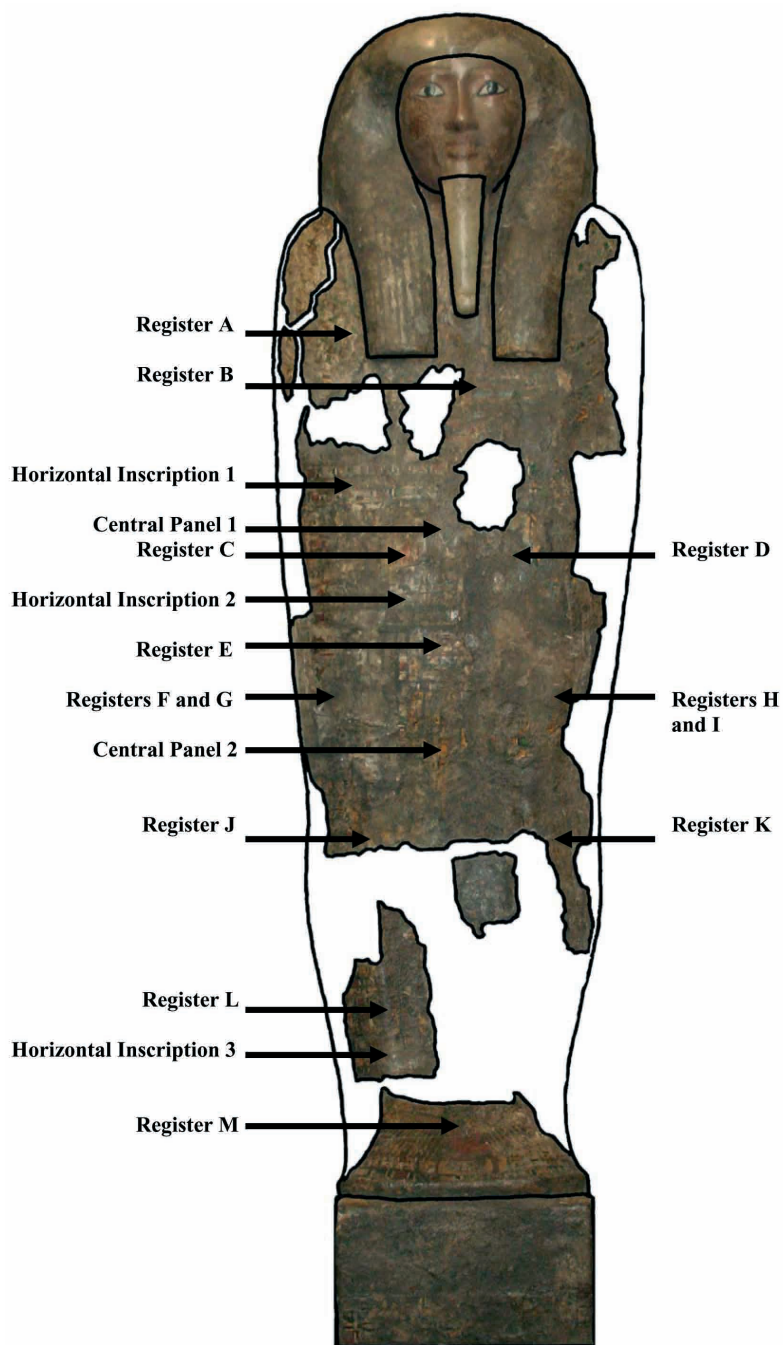


Plate 8: The distribution of registers and inscriptions on Fragments 1 – 6.

