

FOUR ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ARTEFACTS FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION IN SLOVAKIA* (Plates 1–8)

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In this paper we want to report on the appearance of new ancient Egyptian artefacts in a private collection in Slovakia. This collection consists of four pieces of original ancient Egyptian artefacts. They were examined in the Slovak Academy of Sciences. The Egyptological investigation was carried out at the Institute of Oriental Studies in Bratislava and the material analysis of the objects at the Institute of Archaeology in Nitra. The paper publishes the results of our research. They comprise various aspects of our investigation including the botanical examination of the wood and the textile composition of the cartonnages. Furthermore, the description and identification of artefacts, their decoration, iconography, transliteration and translation of the hieroglyphic inscription, and the dating of the artefacts are estimated as well.

Key words: ancient Egyptian artefacts, private collection, funerary equipment, coffin, cartonnage mummy-case, textile, hieroglyphic inscription

The ancient Egyptian artefacts investigated in this paper are said to come from the ownership of an unknown woman, who offered them to František Javorský, an archaeologist of the Slovak Academy of Sciences from Spišská Nová Ves, in the 1980s. No details are known about the acquisition of the artefacts by that woman or their earlier history. According to Eva Javorská, the

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wife of the now deceased František Javorský, the family of the unknown woman had owned the artefacts for a long time and perhaps she had tried to improve her financial situation. Today, the collection is in the private ownership of Marián Soják, the co-author of this paper.

The artefacts (herein marked as Fragments 1–4) are tied to cardboard by thin ties (Plate 1) and covered by a gilded wooden frame. The collection consists of one piece of wood with polychrome decoration (Fragment 1, Plate 2), two pieces of cartonnage with polychrome decoration (Fragments 2 and 3, Plates 3 and 4) and one piece of textile (Fragment 4, Plate 5). A small etiquette with an inscription written in French is placed in the lower part of the cardboard. The text on the etiquette reads “Antiquites des Tombeaux des Rois (Louxor)”. This text helps us to identify the locality of the origin of these artefacts.

First of all, a material description will be presented. This is followed by an Egyptological analysis focused on Fragments 1–3. Conclusions are included in the third part of this paper.

I.

Fragment 1 (size: 252x100 mm)

A botanical examination of this wooden piece (Plate 2) based on the microscopic anatomical study shows that this fragment was made of cedar wood.¹ In general, there are three main species of the genus *Cedrus*: the Atlantic Cedar – *Cedrus atlantica* (Endl.) Manetti ex Carr., the cedar of Lebanon – *Cedrus libani* A. Rich. and the deodar – *Cedrus deodara* (Roxb. ex D. Don) G. Don.² Lebanon cedar is native to Lebanon and the Taurus Mountain chain in the Mediterranean region of Turkey.³ Botanically it is very hard to distinguish the wood of the Atlas and Lebanon cedars, but it has been accepted that any cedar wood found in Egypt comes from *Cedrus libani*. Its origins reach back to Predynastic Egypt and thus it was imported there very early.⁴ Therefore we can conclude that, the wood from the painted Fragment 1 in the above mentioned private collection comes from the same genus of cedar (Fig. 1).

¹ The archaeobotanical analysis of the wooden fragment was made by using a high-power stereoscopic microscope Zeiss-Discovery V12 in combination with AxioVision 5.2 software. The outputs were compared to reference photographs of the corresponding material, i.e. the wood anatomy of Lebanon cedar (cf. YAMAN, B. Anatomy of Lebanon Cedar (*Cedrus Libani* A. Rich.) Wood with Indented Growth Rings, Fig. 1).

² GALE, R., GASSON, P., et al. *Wood*, p. 349.

³ YAMAN, B. Anatomy of Lebanon Cedar (*Cedrus Libani* A. Rich.) Wood with Indented Growth Rings, p. 19.

⁴ GALE, R., GASSON, P., et al. *Wood*, p. 349.

Figure 1.

Lebanon cedar wood (*Cedrus libani* A. Rich.) in radial section, magnification x150 (photo: J. Mihályiová).



Fragment 2 (size: 96x84 mm, thickness 3–6 mm)

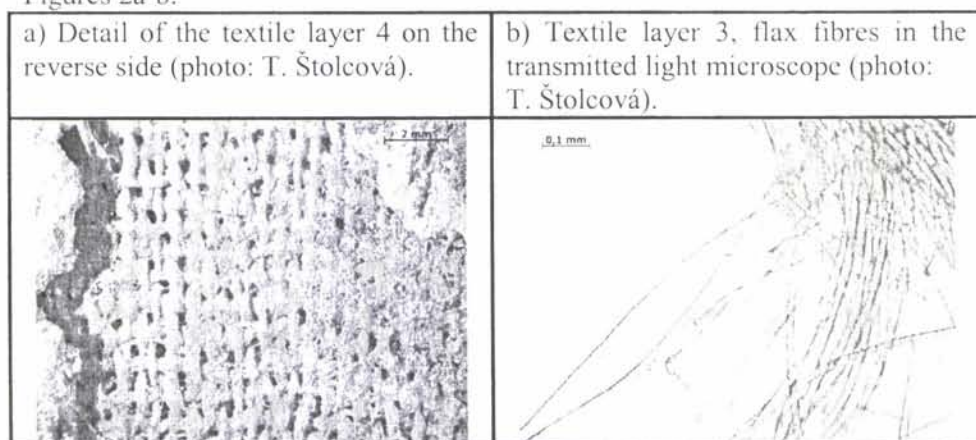
This is a fragment of cartonnage with polychrome paint on a gypsum plaster layer (Plate 3). The plaster layer is situated on the obverse and reverse of the cartonnage and covers four thin layers of textiles inside it (Table 1).⁵ These textile layers are visible through the cracks in the cartonnage and at the edges. Therefore, it was possible to examine and document them quite well. Textile layer 1 is directly attached to the obverse layer of the gypsum plaster layer. It is hardly visible, but the type of the material and textile structure is similar to layer 2 below it. Textile layer 2 consists of a fine s-spun linen tabby. Textile layer 3 has the same parameters as layer 2, but it was also possible to identify the thread count⁶ (15/18). Layer 4 (Figure 2a) is very similar to the previous ones,

⁵ The microscopic analysis was undertaken by SteREO Discovery V12, ZEISS.

⁶ The thread count in the weave represents the number of threads for one square cm. It is described by the oblique line “/”, where the number on the left signifies warp threads and on the right the weft threads. However, as in the case of textiles from Luxor, it is not always possible to identify warp and weft threads in the weave and therefore we discuss threads from system 1 and system 2 (system 1/system 2). The same form of documentation is applied to the angle of twist, thickness of the threads and spin direction – e.g. 34°/37°, 0.3/0.4 mm and s/s. In the basket weave, where threads are doubled, each thread is signified separately: e.g. ss/ss.

with a very dense thread count of 20/13. All four textile layers are made of flax fibre (*Linum* sp.), (Figure 2b).

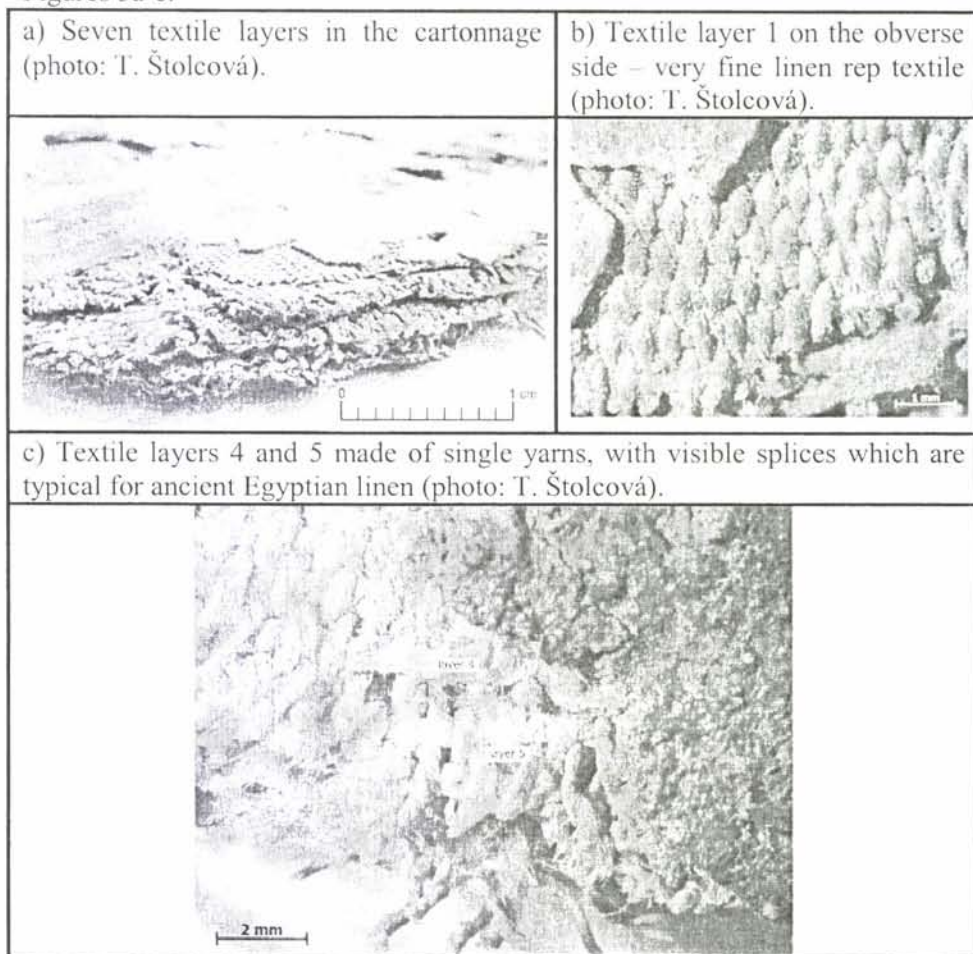
Figures 2a-b.



Fragment 3 (size: 140x131 mm, thickness 4–7 mm)

This is a likewise constructed fragment of cartonnage with polychrome paint and gypsum plaster layers (Plate 4) as Fragment 2. Altogether there are 7 layers of textiles of various qualities (Figure 3a). Textile layer 1 is directly attached to the obverse layer of the gypsum plaster layer. It is a very fine rep textile, where threads of one system cover almost completely threads of the other system (Figure 3b). Therefore, the fabric has a ribbed structure which is created by 14 threads per cm in one direction and 36 threads per cm in the other. Textile layer 2 consists of fine tabby. Layers 3 and 6 have the same features as relatively dense basket weaves. Layers 4 and 5 also originally belong to one piece of tabby woven fabric and are relatively coarse and thick (Figure 3c). The last textile layer 7 is completely covered with a mixture of gypsum and varnish, which requires further investigation. Therefore it was not possible to identify any other characteristic of this layer. All of the layers were identified as linen and have s-spun threads.

Figures 3a-c.



Fragment 4 (size: 165x95 mm)

Fragment 4 is a single piece of torn-off textile (Plate 5). Having no starting border, no edge, painting or decoration could be observed. The textile woven-in basket weave is similar to layers 3 and 6 from Fragment 3 (Figure 4). The threads are s-spun in both warp and weft directions and the thread count is 9/7. The fabric is very well preserved. No traces of bitumen indicating mummy wrappings were identified on this fragment. Unfortunately, due to missing

information on the whole collection, it is not possible to say more about the function of this piece.

Figure 4.

Magnified photo of the basket weave (photo: T. Štolcová).



Textiles played a very important role in the everyday life of ancient Egyptians. Thanks to the favourable desert conditions in Egypt, valuable information about textile production has been gained not only from the tomb paintings,⁷ but mostly through the organic cloth, which has been preserved here very well in large quantities. The production of twisted thread is known here from at least the 5th millennium BC.⁸ The majority of these textiles are linen. Since flax (*Linum bienne* Mill. and *Linum usitatissimum*) is not a native plant in Egypt, it was imported there from the Levant.⁹ In comparison with contemporary cultures in Europe, the ancient Egyptians used a very different technique to make thread. After retting and scutching, the fine strands were hand-spliced together with overlapping of the ends by a few centimetres and roughly spun with a loose twist. This special splicing technique appears in produced textiles as though it was plied.¹⁰ The same feature can be observed in

⁷ E.g. the most famous comes from the Eleventh and Twelfth Dynasty tombs in Beni Hasan. See NEWBERRY, P. E. *Beni Hasan*, vol. 2, Pls. IV, XIII.

⁸ BARBER, E. J. W. *Prehistoric Textiles*, p. 44.

⁹ VOGELSANG-EASTWOOD, G. *Textiles*, pp. 269–270.

¹⁰ BARBER, E. J. W. *Prehistoric Textiles*, pp. 46–47; VOGELSANG-EASTWOOD, G. *Textiles*, pp. 271–272.

textile layer 4 in Fragment 2 and layers 4 and 5 from Fragment 3 (Figure 3c). Not knowing the process of ancient Egyptian spinning, one could easily confuse the single threads with plied ones. After splicing and loose twisting of the threads, these were wound in balls or coils. The balls were placed into special bowls with internal loops, through which the threads were pulled out during spinning. The bowls were filled with a little bit of water to provide better conditions for working with linen threads.¹¹ The spliced and loosely twisted threads were then spun with a spindle by adding a strengthening twist. This was done by three different techniques: grasped spindle spinning, support spindle spinning and drop-spindle spinning.¹²

Table 1. Basic features of individual textile layers from Fragments 2–4.

| FRAGMENT 2 | | FRAGMENT 3 | | FRAGMENT 4 |
|------------|---|------------|---|---|
| layer | textile structure | layer | textile structure | textile structure |
| 1 | tabby (?), <i>Linum</i> sp. (?) | 1 | tabby - fine rep, single threads, s/s, 41°/33°, 0.3/0.3 mm, 14/36, <i>Linum</i> sp. | basket weave, single threads, ss/ss, 32°/27°, 0.56/0.56 mm, 9/7, <i>Linum</i> sp. |
| 2 | tabby, single threads, s/? 0.38/0.33 mm, <i>Linum</i> sp. | 2 | tabby, single threads, s/s, 28°/? 0.37/0.42 mm, <i>Linum</i> sp. | |
| 3 | tabby, single threads, s/s, 0.3/0.4 mm, 15/18, <i>Linum</i> sp. | 3 | basket weave, single threads, ss/ss, 0.45/0.42 mm, 8/10, <i>Linum</i> sp. | |
| 4 | tabby, single threads, s/s, 0.32/0.33 mm, 20/13, <i>Linum</i> sp. | 4 | tabby, single threads, s/s, 32°/33°, 0.66/0.68 mm, <i>Linum</i> sp. | |
| | | 5 | tabby, single threads, s/s, 31°/33°, 0.60/0.65 mm, <i>Linum</i> sp. | |
| | | 6 | basket weave, single threads, ss/ss, 28°/31°, 0.54/0.54 mm, <i>Linum</i> sp. | |
| | | 7 | tabby (?), <i>Linum</i> sp. (?) | |

¹¹ BARBER, E. J. W. *Prehistoric Textiles*, p. 71.

¹² VOGELSANG-EASTWOOD, G. *Textiles*, p. 272.

The first evidence of weaving in ancient Egypt is depicted on a Neolithic dish dated to the 4th millennium BC.¹³ The ground loom consists of a simple construction where a horizontal warp is stretched between two beams on the ground. It was used in an area from Egypt to Iran during the Neolithic and Bronze Ages.¹⁴ Another type of loom used here was the vertical two-beam loom known from the New Kingdom onwards.¹⁵ The types of weaves represented in the private collection from Luxor are in general the most basic weaves produced in ancient Egypt (Table 1). Tabby is the most common structure. Rep weave is derived from a simple tabby. In Egypt, a so-called weft-faced tabby weave was more common, where the weft threads cover the warp threads almost completely. The basket weave, which occurred in Fragments 3 and 4 is also a tabby weave with doubled threads in both systems.¹⁶ In general, it can be concluded that all the textiles found in the above mentioned collection were meant for funerary purposes.

II.

Fragment 1 (Plate 2)

The shape of the decorated surface of Fragment 1 is not flat, but it is slightly convex. The decoration consists of eleven bands with floral and geometrical patterns (α , β , γ) arranged alternately (α , β) and separated from each other by ten white lines (see Figure 5). The colours of the decoration are green, white and ochre and traces of blue are presented as well. In my opinion, Fragment 1 represents a part of the lid of a wooden antropomorphic coffin. The decoration of this fragment would depict a part of the broad *wsh*-collar usually painted on the outer surface of the lid of the coffins and/or sarcophagi. If so, the wooden material and the decoration in the form of the broad collar would indicate that such a coffin might have been originally prepared for a high-ranking person. The convexity of the decorated surface and the curvature of the white lines separating the bands in the lower part of the fragment would indicate that the fragment may come from the lateral side of the coffin rather than from the centre.

During my research I have found out that in the Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna there is a complete coffin of a certain lady named Tashakheper, the

¹³ BARBER, E. J. W. *Prehistoric Textiles*, p. 83, Fig. 3.3.

¹⁴ BARBER, E. J. W. *Prehistoric Textiles*, p. 84; VOGELSANG-EASTWOOD, G. *Textiles*, pp. 275–276.

¹⁵ BARBER, E. J. W. *Prehistoric Textiles*, pp. 113–115.

¹⁶ VOGELSANG-EASTWOOD, G. *Textiles*, p. 274.

decoration of which includes a broad collar (Plates 6 and 7).¹⁷ It is very interesting to note that in comparing the decoration of Fragment 1 (Plate 8a) with that on the lid of the coffin from Bologna (Plate 8b) one can clearly see that the components in the decoration are exactly the same. There is only a very small difference in the colours used in the decoration of both objects. This difference can be identified in the small rosettes. The central part of the rosette depicted on Fragment 1 is painted in white, while the colour used in the central part of the rosette depicted on the collar in Bologna is ochre.

There is another interesting coincidence between Fragment 1 and the decoration of the broad collar on the coffin in Bologna. In the lowermost part of Fragment 1 we can see an incomplete and damaged band (γ) composing of small beads on the ochre background. Exactly the same decoration we can observe in the case of the collar on the coffin in Bologna. The band with small beads is situated immediately above the goddess Nut with her arms and wings outspread (see Plate 7). This fact enables us to conclude that it is highly likely that Fragment 1 comes from the lowermost part of the broad collar depicted on the original coffin.

Figure 5. Patterns of the decoration.



¹⁷ I would like to express my thanks to Dr. Daniela Picchi for her kind help with literature and pictures. I am grateful also to the Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna for permission to publish the pictures of the sarcophagus of Tashakheper used in this paper.

The interpretation of Fragment 1 is based first of all on the analysis of its shape and its decoration. The existence of the comparable material found in the Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna consequently confirms the results of the iconographic analysis and the conclusion that Fragment 1 represents part of a coffin with a decoration which shows the lowermost part of the broad *wsh*-collar.

Fragment 2 (Plate 3)

This object represents the fragment of a polychrome cartonnage mummy-case. The surface of the fragment contains a decoration including white, black, yellow, red, green and blue colours. The decoration of the fragment in the left and upper parts consists of geometrical patterns in the form of coloured squares arranged in vertical and horizontal bands. The bands determine the corner of a scene with a white background, from which only a part is preserved. This fragmentary preserved scene contains two pictures. The first picture depicted on the left side represents the Red Crown, the royal symbol of Lower Egypt. Only the upper part of the crown is preserved. The crown is oriented to the right. On the right side of the scene the head of a falcon is depicted facing to the left. The falcon head wears a fat cone on its head with short lines symbolizing a spreading aroma from the cone.¹⁸ The upper part of the cone is painted in ochre and the lower one in white.¹⁹

Fragment 3 (Plate 4)

This object represents the most decorated fragment of the polychrome cartonnage mummy-case in this collection. The decoration does not consist only of coloured pictures, but also of a part of the hieroglyphic inscription, which is preserved on the surface of this fragment. Yellow, black, green, ochre, white colours can be identified.

In the central part of the fragment, we can see a scene (A) surrounded by vertical and horizontal polychrome bands consisting of geometrical patterns. The dominant figure in scene A is the picture of the recumbent jackal facing to the right with the ceremonial tie painted in ochre depicted around his neck. Over the back of the jackal is depicted an object that can be identified as a flagellum²⁰ or flail.²¹ Another object is depicted in front of the jackal. This time

¹⁸ The same motif in the decoration of the coffin can be found in TAYLOR, J. H. *Patterns of colouring on ancient Egyptian coffins* Pl. 53/1; PAYRAUDEAU, F. *Harsîsis*, Pl. XV.

¹⁹ Cf. SHEDID, A. G. *Sennedjem*, pp. 23, 42, 59, 68, 69, 72, 73, 78, 79, 88, 89, 104, 105, 106.

²⁰ GARDINER, A. H. *Egyptian Grammar*, p. 510.

²¹ ALLEN, J. *Middle Egyptian*, p. 442.



it is the *shm*-scepter. In this scene, a short hieroglyphic inscription is written in the column between two vertical lines painted in front of the head of the jackal.



This inscription transcribed and transliterated as *|||wp* represents the name of the god. The text is written from right to left. The name enables us to identify the picture of the animal in scene A. This picture represents the god known as Wepwawet²² depicted in zoomorphic form. Behind the flail and above the rear part of the animal traces of another two hieroglyphic signs can be observed. The signs are not very clear or legible. In my opinion, they relate to

the picture of the god. I have transcribed and transliterated both signs as *nb 3bdw*²³ and translated the phrase as "Lord of Abydos".²⁴ The major cult centre of Wepwawet was Asyut, but this god was venerated also in Abydos in connection with Osiris²⁵ and Anubis.²⁶ Without the text or attributions the god Wepwawet appears often indistinguishable from the god Anubis, another deity very closely associated with Abydos.²⁷

In the lowermost part of Fragment 3 under the horizontal band and scene A the upper part of the incomplete picture of another scene (B) appears. It

consists of a pair of two emblems  and  depicted twice one after the other

²² WILKINSON, R. H. *Gods of Ancient Egypt*, pp. 191–192. For the same iconography see the picture of Wepwawet painted on the wooden stela published in STRUDWICK, H. (ed.), *Ancient Egypt*, p. 219.


²³ It is clear that in this case the text is to be read from left to right. The sign *nb* is written in the higher position in the text. For such a form of writing see for example JANSEN-WINKELN, K. *Inschriften der Spätzeit*. Teil 3, p. 344/153.

²⁴ References to the phrase *nb 3bdw* related to Wepwawet can be found in HELCK, W. *Historisch-biographische Texte*, pp. 8, 48; BUDGE, E. A. W. *Hieroglyphic Texts*, Part II, Pl. 34; BUDGE, E. A. W. *Hieroglyphic Texts*, Part IV, Pls. 25, 37, 43; BUDGE, E. A. W. *Hieroglyphic Texts*, Part VI, Pl. 27; CLÈRE, J. J. Un Hymne, Taf. V/1; STEFANOVIĆ, D. Dedusobek, Taf. XI; HODJASH, S., BERLEV, O. *Egyptian Reliefs and Stelae*, pp. 80/Nr. 36, 84/Nr. 36.


²⁵ WILKINSON, R. H. *Gods of Ancient Egypt*, p. 192.


²⁶ BONNET, H. *Reallexikon*, pp. 843–844.



²⁷ Cf. BIERBRIER, M. L. *Hieroglyphic Texts*, Part 11, Pls. 88–89; MUNRO, P. *Die spätägyptischen Totenstelen*, Tafelband, Taf. 11/Abb. 41, 42, Taf. 15/Abb. 52, 53, Taf. 17/Abb. 61, Taf. 18/Abb. 62, 63, 62, 65, Taf. 19/Abb. 66, 67, 68, 69, Taf. 20/Abb. 70, 71, 72, 73, Taf. 21/Abb. 74, 75, 76, 77, Taf. 30/Abb. 110, Taf. 31, Abb. 112, Taf. 32, Abb. 115, Taf. 33/Abb. 120, Taf. 37/Abb. 136, Taf. 38/Abb. 139, 141, Taf. 42/Abb. 150, Taf. 43/Abb. 152, 155, 156, Taf. 46/Abb. 160, Taf. 52/Abb. 177, Taf. 53/Abb. 178, 179, 180, Taf. 54/Abb. 182, Taf. 55/Abb. 185.


in the form . They represent magical symbols, namely the *dd*-pillar and the *tit*-knot.²⁸ The former is painted in white on a blue background, while the colour of the latter is yellow and the background is blue. These emblems are associated with the god Osiris and the goddess Isis respectively.²⁹


On the very right side of Fragment 3, a hieroglyphic inscription written in a column is preserved (Figure 6). This inscription is badly damaged and incomplete. Its beginning in the uppermost part and its end in the lowermost part are missing. The hieroglyphic signs are painted in black ink on a brownish background. The cracks on the plaster surface and the empty spaces occur in the inscription. The partly preserved signs in the upper and lower parts of the inscription do not enable their reconstruction and the meaning of particular words.


Traces of at least four signs are incompletely preserved in the uppermost part of the inscription. The first of them looks like  (O1) followed by a vertical

stroke  (Z1) meaning "house". However, I doubt that the second sign is Z1, because the lowermost part of this sign in the inscription is curled to the left. The third sign is also not clear, but it is horizontal in its shape and it resembles

 *nb* (or  *ir*?). Another sign below consists of a vertical line with a short line running to the right. I think that this sign is also incompletely

preserved. It looks like the sign , but its vertical part is too short compared

with for example the sign  from the same group of vertical signs (the latter is clearly written in this inscription thereafter). In my opinion, in this part of the

inscription one would expect words, such as  *nbt pr* "Mistress of the house"³⁰ or *wsir nbt pr* or *wsir nb(t) pr*.³¹ The legible text transcribed in figure 6 I have transliterated as follows:

... *ihyt*^(a) *n(t)*^(b) *imn-r*^(c) *šz*^(d) *hpr*^(e) *ššn*^(f)

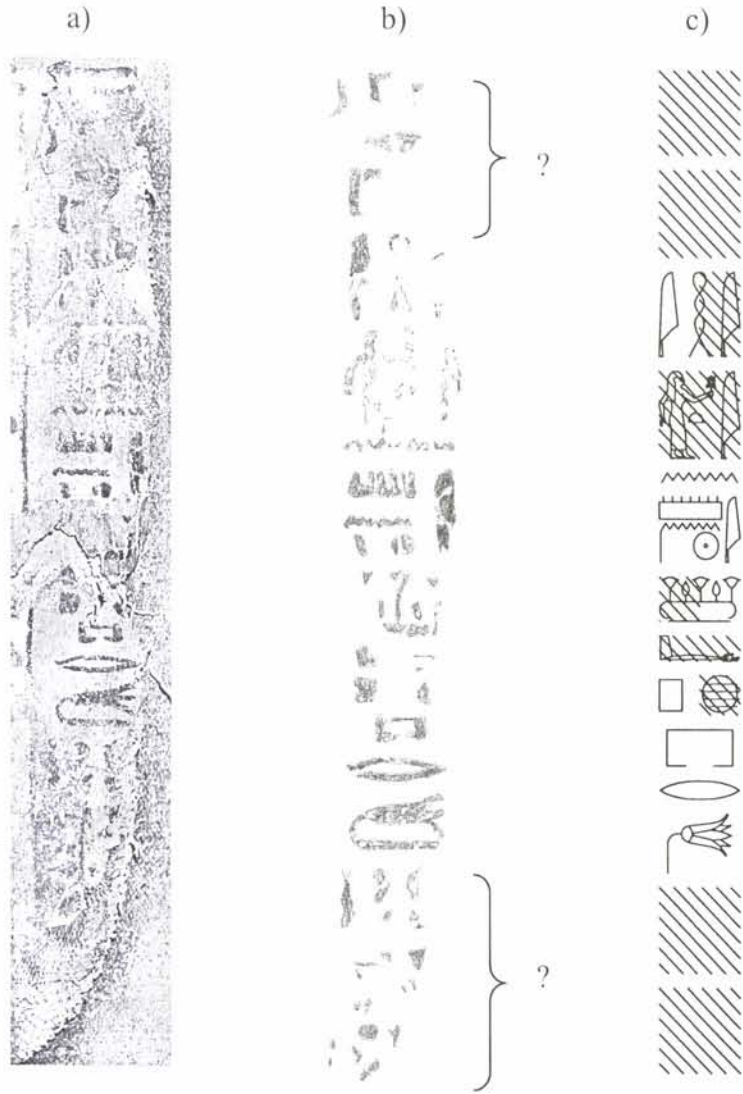
²⁸ The same symbols in the decoration of the coffin can be found in NIWINSKI, A. *21st Dynasty Coffins*, Pl. XXIV/A.

²⁹ WILKINSON, R. H. *Symbol & Magic*, p. 72.

³⁰ FEUCHT, E., *Family*, pp. 502–503.


³¹ PAYRAUDEAU, F. *Harsîsis*, p. 199 and 202 fig. 1, Pls. XIV–XVI.


Figure 6. Original (a), facsimile (b) and transcription (c) of the hieroglyphic inscription.



Notes

a/ Only the lowermost short vertical part and a tiny short line in the middle of the first sign *i* of this word are preserved. The rest is missing. Other signs in

this word together with the determinative  are damaged by cracks on the surface, but it is possible to reconstruct the whole word. It is a noun and its meaning is “musician” or “the sistrum-player”.³² The variant used in this

inscription represents the full version of this word with the feminine ending  *t* written before the determinative.³³ The feminine ending and the translation of this word mean that it is a title related to a woman (see below). The other variants of the same word do not have to include the feminine ending.³⁴

b/ This sign is used for the indirect genitive “of” related to the preceding

feminine noun *ihyt*, but the sign  is omitted here.³⁵

c/ The name of the ancient Egyptian god “Amun-Ra” is quite clearly preserved.


d/ The two signs belonging to the word *ššr* are incomplete and their parts are

missing. The second sign I have reconstructed as  *r*.

e) The word *hpr* is written here in a very unusual and rare form. The first two

signs of this word are written by the uniliteral  *h* and  *p*. One half of the first

sign  is missing. Both signs are followed by the biliteral sign  *pr*

complemented by  *r*. Such a way of writing the word *hpr* is very rare.³⁶

³² ERMAN, A., GRAPOW, H. *Wörterbuch*, Band 1, p. 121; HANNIG, R. *Handwörterbuch*, p. 96; FAULKNER, R. O. *Dictionary*, p. 101; See also LYNN ONSTINE S. *Chantress*, p. 20.


³³ For the parallels in the texts see JANSEN-WINKELN, K. *Biographische und religiöse Inschriften*, Teil 2, pp. 346/b, 347e, 360/b, 361/c, 370/a, 371/c, 373/c, 378/a, 381/a, 382/b, 384/d, 401/c, 406/a, 408/a, 409/b, 411/b, 412/a, 417/c, 419/c, 424/f, 425/a, 427/b-c, 430/a, 434/c; JANSEN-WINKELN, K. *Inschriften der Spätzeit*, Teil 2, pp. 64/44c, d, 144/79b, 146/80b, 241/47, 245/51e, 253/60, 254/65, 303/18, 308/23n, 323/7l, 325/10; JANSEN-WINKELN, K. *Inschriften der Spätzeit*, Teil 3, pp. 352/12, 426/152.

³⁴ See for example JANSEN-WINKELN, K. *Biographische und religiöse Inschriften*, Teil 2, pp. 357/b, 436/b; JANSEN-WINKELN, K. *Inschriften der Spätzeit*, Teil 2, pp. 272/12d, 302/16, 307/23k, 437/91, 462/123, 464/126; JANSEN-WINKELN, K. *Inschriften der Spätzeit*, Teil 3, pp. 394/96, 413/140, 416/143, 418/145, 421/148, 426/152, 431/158, 438/165, 541/352.

³⁵ Cf. ROEDER, G. *Aegyptische Inschriften*, Band 2, p. 617.

³⁶ See CAMINOS, R. A. *Osorkon*, p. 113; GARDINER, A. H. *Egyptian Grammar*, p. 492; JANSEN-WINKELN, K. *Spätmittelägyptische Grammatik*, p. 12.

f) The sign  would represent the ideogram *sšn* and the word for “lotus”.

Traces of other hieroglyphic signs are visible following , but their reconstruction and meaning are not certain.

Commentary

The hieroglyphic inscription on Fragment 1 is damaged and incompletely preserved. The signs in the beginning and the end of the text are not clear or legible. The most problematic part in the interpretation of the legible text remains the group of signs following the name of Amun-Ra. These signs represent three different words *sšc*, *hpr* and *sšn*. Transliteration of the text enables, in my opinion, two possible versions of its translation and interpretation.


1) “..... the musician of Amun-Ra who was the first to come-into-existence, Seshen”.

In this version, the words *sšc* and *hpr* would be related to the god Amun-Ra as the creator god³⁷ and the word *sšn* would represent the female name,³⁸ the holder of this title.

2) “..... the musician of Amun-Ra, Shakheperseshen”.

This interpretation of the text shows that all three words following the name of Amun-Ra would represent the female name, the holder of the title. In fact, I did not find such a name in the written records. There were, however, very similar names, such as *sšc-hpry*³⁹, *t3-sšc-n-hpr*⁴⁰, *t3-sšc-hpr*⁴¹. All these references come

³⁷ For *sšc hpr* see ERMANN, A., GRAPOW, H. *Wörterbuch*, Band 4, p. 406; Discussion on the epithet of Amun-Ra including *sšc hpr* can be found in GUNN, B. *Amonrasonthēr*, pp. 83–105; Cf. ASSMANN, J. *Egyptian Solar Religion*, p. 138 and 150; ASSMANN, J. *Hymnen und Gebete*, pp. 207, 320, 322, 331, 446; See also MORENZ, S. *Ägypten*, pp. 13–82.


³⁸ For the occurrence of the sign  in the various Egyptian names consisting of the single word see RANKE, H. *Personennamen*, Band 1, p. 297 (29, 30, 31) and 298 (1, 2, 3); See also BRUNNER-TRAUT, E. *Lotos*, 1095.


³⁹ RANKE, H. *Personennamen*, Band 1, p. 324 (21).




⁴⁰ RANKE, H. *Personennamen*, Band 1, p. 367 (20); JANSEN-WINKELN, K. *Inschriften der Spätzeit*. Teil 2, p. 327/12; JANSEN-WINKELN, K. *Inschriften der Spätzeit*. Teil 3, p. 494/258.




⁴¹ There were several different persons with this name. One of them was the daughter of Osorkon II, the pharaoh of the 22nd dynasty. See NAVILLE, E. *The Festival Hall*, Pl. IV/1; DODSON, A., HILTON D. *Royal Families*, p. 217 and 223; JANSEN-WINKELN, K. *Inschriften der Spätzeit*. Teil 2, p. 113/13; JANSEN-WINKELN, K. *Inschriften der Spätzeit*. Teil 3, pp. 530–531/327.


from the first millennium B.C. In our context it is interesting to note that the decoration preserved on Fragment 1 is identical with that found on the sarcophagus in Bologna belonging to Tashakheper (see above).⁴² It must be said, however, that because of the lack of detailed information the relationship between Fragment 1 and Fragment 3 is not known. Do these fragments come from the funerary equipment found in the tomb belonging to one person? Or were both fragments found in two different tombs, or do they belong to two different funerary equipments found in the same tomb? Unfortunately, we do not know the answers. In his publication, Jansen-Winkel⁴³ mentions part of an inscription with an incomplete name ending with the word *hpr* written by the



sign  (L 1). He reconstructs the name as [*ḥ-ṣṣ^c-n*]-*hpr*. This trilateral sign is


immediately followed by  in the position of the phonetic complement and

another sign  (M 75).⁴⁴ The latter is very similar to  (M 85) or  (M 2) and it was used after the 18th dynasty in the inscriptions where the male or female name is followed by the phrase *m³^c-hrw* “be justified”⁴⁵ (literally, “true of voice”) and related to the deceased person. Because of the graphical

similarity between  and  or  one could speculate that the sign

 in the inscription on Fragment 1 could have been, in fact, a mistake of the

ancient Egyptian scribe who wrote it instead of  or . In that case, the female name in this inscription would have the form *ṣṣ^c-hpr* Shakheper (perhaps

without *ḥ* omitted at the beginning), and the sign  would be used to mean “justified”.

III.

The material, iconographic and textual examinations show that Fragments 1–4 are original ancient Egyptian artefacts. They represent fragmentary pieces of

⁴² KMINEK-SZEDLO, G. *Catalogo di Antichità Egizie*, pp. 226–227; BRESCIANI, E. *La collezione egizia*, 64; ACQUARO, E., PERNIGOTTI, S. Una familia, pp. 17–25; GOVI, Ch. (ed.), *Museo Civico Archeologico*, pp. 202–203.

⁴³ JANSEN-WINKELN, K. *Inschriften der Spätzeit*. Teil 2, p. 230/24.

⁴⁴ HANNIG, R. *Handwörterbuch*, p. 1148.

⁴⁵ ERMAN, A., GRAPOW, H. *Wörterbuch*, Band 2, p. 17; FAULKNER, R. O. *Dictionary*, p. 101; LESKO, L. *Dictionary*, Volume 1, p. 206.

funerary equipment or equipments originally deposited in a tomb. According to the text on the etiquette they come from Luxor, where large cemeteries including the Valley of the Kings and the Valley of the Queens on the west bank of the Nile with the tombs of ancient Egyptian kings and the members of royal families are situated. However, because of the lack of more detailed information related to their modern discovery, the precise original location of Fragments 1–4 within the Luxor area cannot be determined. Moreover, it is not possible to say exactly whether all pieces belong to the funerary equipment prepared for one person or whether they represent fragments collected together by their discoverer, but which were scattered in a tomb in which more burials were originally placed.

Fragment 1 represents, in my opinion, a piece of the lid of a wooden anthropomorphic coffin. The botanical examination shows that the wood is cedar. If so, it would indicate that such a coffin made of this wood was originally prepared for a person belonging to a higher social level, because cedar wood belonged to luxury goods imported to Egypt. The polychrome patterns preserved on Fragment 1 depict the part of the *was*-collar usually painted as the standard decoration on the lids of coffins in ancient Egypt.

Fragments 2–3 are pieces of cartonnages mummy-cases⁴⁶ or coverings⁴⁷ made of several layers of textiles covered by a thin layer of plaster on both sides and a polychrome decoration on one side only. The decoration consists of partly preserved scenes with geometrical patterns, religious symbols and a hieroglyphic inscription on Fragment 3. The incomplete and damaged text of the inscription enables more than one interpretation of its legible part. However, it is clear that this part contains the title of a female person “the musician of Amun-Ra”, whose reading of the name depends on the interpretation of the text behind the name of the god. The writing of the word *hpr* in this part of the inscription is unique and rare. The analogical evidence can be attested to the Third Intermediate Period of ancient Egyptian history (ca. 1076–723 BC).⁴⁸ In addition, the female names similar to those presented in both variants of interpretation of the text on Fragment 3 occur in ancient Egyptian records of the same period.

⁴⁶ LAPP G., NIWINSKI A. Coffins, Sarcophagi, and Cartonnages, pp. 279–287.

⁴⁷ ROBINS G. *Art*, p. 250, Fig. 302.

⁴⁸ HORNUNG, E., KRAUSS, R., WARBURTON D. A. (eds.) *Chronology*, p. 493.

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Plate 1. The private collection in the wooden frame.



Plate 2. Fragment 1 from the private collection.



0 5 cm

Plate 3. Fragment 2 from the private collection.

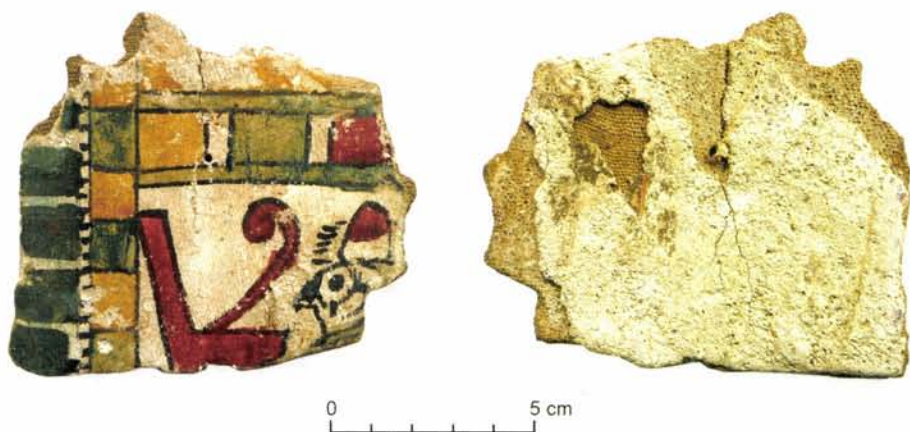


Plate 4. Fragment 3 from the private collection.



Plate 5. Fragment 4 from the private collection.

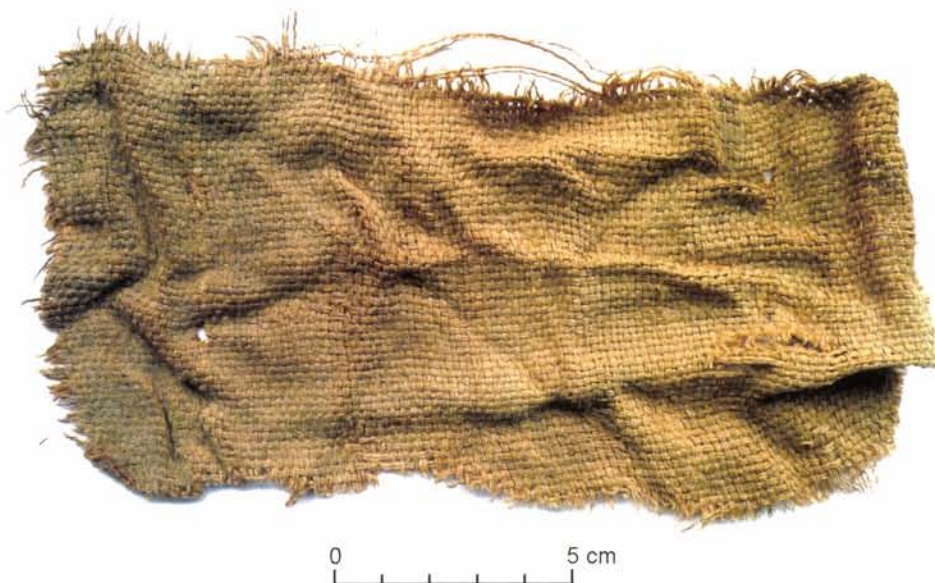
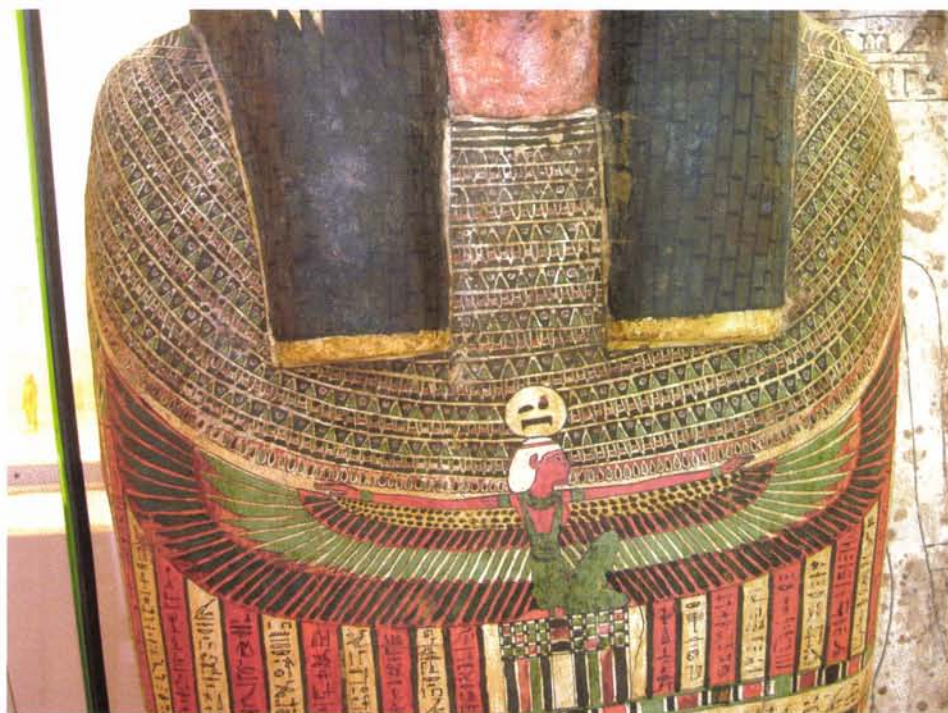


Plate 6. The coffin of Tashakheper in Bologna.



Plate 7. The broad collar and the goddess Nut on the coffin of Tashakheper in Bologna.



Plates 8a-b. Fragment 1 (a) and detail of the broad collar on the coffin
of Tashakheper (b).

a)



b)

