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**The ancient Egyptian perception of *nb ʿnh*:**  
the images of coffins on the items from the Pushkin State  
Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

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1. *nb ʿnh* – describes the function of a sarcophagus/coffin as a containers of the buried bodies that revives the dead to life. Used from the Old Kingdom, even personified as a deity (Hannig 2003, AWb I, 613). In the Middle Kingdom the term became widespread (Hannig 2006, AWb II, Teil 1, 1240-1241), especially in the “Coffin Texts” (CT 54, 60, 75, 160, 312, 340, 441, 534, 647, 50)

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I.1a.1622 (ИГ 4488 a-b)  
of a mummy  
in a box-form coffin Ushabti of *Dhwj-ms* in  
a form with a vaulted lid  
New Kingdom 1<sup>st</sup> half of 18 Dyn.

2. The interior space of the coffin is described as a goddess Nut, mother of gods, giving rebirth of the sun, creating a cyclic revival of the universe.

3. *krsw* – physical sheath surrounding the deceased. The word can be used to name a coffin or the whole burial, and equipment of the tombs. It has an archaic form of the sanctuary of Lower Egypt - *pr nw*. The Egyptian word *krsw* depicts an old-styled type of coffin, but allows also an anthropoid determinative. The word *krsw* is often written with a sign *ks* (T19) – as well as bone harpoons, bone (Pr. 5,1; West 10,10; BD 100,14), and it also used in the definitions as “painful, difficult, dangerous”. Through this sign is written and “sculptor, carver of reliefs” (*ksytj*). The morphographeme (base) *kr* is also a part in the words «cave» (*krrt*), «storm» (*kri*), «bag» (*krft*), «container» (*krhit*) and the door lock (*k3rt*). So, on the one hand, its semantics is linked with the «bone» and some «danger» and on the other hand – with the meaning of “concealing something” .



I.1a.5364  
The model of a boat  
with a coffin  
Middle Kingdom  
The coffin has a box form  
with a vaulted lid typical for  
the Old Kingdom

I.1a.1948 (ИГ 3550)  
Ushabti-box of priest  
Unnefer  
Ist millennium BC  
This item depicts a box-form  
coffin not typical for the  
Ist millennium BC



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Egyptian coffin is an essential part of the burial equipment throughout Egyptian history. The image of *nb ʿnh* can be found on different types of items: sculpture models, ushabti-boxes, tomb reliefs, shrouds of mummy, etc.

The collection of the PSMFA contains some objects with depictions of coffins from different epochs that illustrate the perception of the central item of the tomb equipment and one of the main themes of Egyptian religious art.

It is particularly interesting to discover this phenomenon in the Middle Kingdom, when the coffin and models are placed in close proximity to each other in the burial chamber and made of the same material - wood. However, the shape of the coffin on the models followed the traditional form of the sign, perhaps because the model - is a form made for the space of offerings and is another way to demonstrate the same things that are shown in the drawings or carvings in *frise d'objets*.

I.1a.5249  
Coffin of Mahu  
New Kingdom, 18 Dyn.,  
c. 1550 – 1290 BC.



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I.1a.1662 (ИГ 3853)  
Ushabti of *Sn-ndm*  
*sdm-ʿs m st m3ʿt*  
in a form of a mummy in a model of an  
anthropoid coffin . New Kingdom,  
19 Dyn. (Seti I-Ramses II)



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I.1a. 1025  
From the Museum-Institute  
Of Classic Orient, 1924  
Lid of an ushabti box  
with a hawk-Akhom  
I millennium BC  
The lid has an ornament on its sides  
typical for the Old Kingdom coffins  
The hawk is dressed in a mummy net  
that was placed over the outer  
wrappings of mummies  
from the 25 Dyn to the  
Ptolemaic Period (Taylor 2001, 206)

I.1a.1918 (ИГ 3547)  
Ushabti box of *Hnsw*  
New Kingdom, 19 Dyn. (Ramses II)  
The box has a form of dual sanctuary  
The coffin depicted has a mummy form  
of *twt* sign  
New Kingdom



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The form of coffin images and models can vary from the style of form and décor of full-size coffins used in particular epoch and place. We can see simultaneous applying of anthropoid full-sized coffins and the box-forms in models and hieroglyphic descriptions.

The Middle Kingdom “chests” are used in tombs of nobles together with “old-fashioned” *krsw* forms of models of the tomb equipment.

From the time of the New Kingdom and TIP - on the display there are examples of anthropoid coffins, but models still can represent forms of the Old Kingdom.

But there is an exception - the anthropoid coffin for ushabti of *Sn-ndm* from Deir el-Medina typical for the 19<sup>th</sup> Dyn. The hieroglyph *krsw* can have a determinative in the form of anthropoid coffin, but more often is used the classic form of determinative, thus in the manufacture of models can follow the hieroglyphic form, i.e. the model inherently linked with hieroglyphic form.

But *krsw* - is not only a sarcophagus or coffin, it is the designation of the entire equipment of the tomb or a shrine (*naos* over coffin); in tomb models it can play a role of 3D image of the hieroglyphic sign Thus the model of a *twt* figure of deceased depicted as a sign is placed in a model of *krsw* sign.

But do not rule out the possibility of natural and simultaneous relationship of coffin forms and its images. This kind of correlation forms the majority of such cases. But some examples described above make it possible to reflect on how Egyptians constructed an image *nb ʿnh* on the funeral equipment.

I.1a. 5638 (ИГ 4117)  
Burial procession from unknown  
tomb.  
From Saqqara  
New Kingdom  
Late 18 Dyn.

I.1a. 5637 (ИГ 4124)  
Burial procession from the tomb of *Twjj*.  
Transportation of coffin,  
the “opening of the mouth” ritual  
From Saqqara  
New Kingdom  
Early 19 Dyn.



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