



Fig. 5
Mummy-shaped lid of the innermost sarcophagus of Merymose (Amenophis III; London, British Museum, EA 1001)

Fig. 6
Sarcophagus of Ini-ia (Tutankhamun; Paris, Louvre, D2 = N338) – the deceased appearing in the dress of daily life

Fig. 7
Right side of the outer sarcophagus of Pa-Rameses (Haremhab; Cairo, Egyptian Museum, JE 30707 + 46764). The lid shows the deceased in the dress of a vizier

Fig. 8
Left side of the inner sarcophagus of Pa-Rameses (Cairo, Egyptian Museum, JE 72203)

Sarcophagi showing the deceased in the dress of daily life – not unlike the rectangular ones – are very rare (see the Fig. 4 below). They first appeared during the reign of Tutankhamun and were mostly produced in the post-Amarna era. Just two examples date to the reign of Rameses II.

The Decoration

The decoration program mainly consists of well-known funerary symbols, gods and goddesses of which many were already mentioned in inscriptions on Old and Middle Kingdom coffins:

- The sky goddess Nut as standing or kneeling woman with wings or as vulture, stretched over the chest of the lid;
- The two sisters of Osiris, Isis and Nephthys, as well as Neith and Serqet in some cases, situated at the head and foot end of lids and cases or the instep of the foot end of the lid;
- Anubis as jackal or jackal-headed deity, at the head end or in the middle of the long sides of the cases or occasionally on the lower part of the lid;
- The four sons of Horus – on the long sides of the cases and/or the lower part of the lid – were displayed with human heads until the reign of Amenophis III. From this time onwards they usually wore the animal heads assigned to them (except Amseti), with some confusion during the post-Amarna period;
- Thoth, always as ibis-headed deity with the sky-sceptre at the head and/or foot end of the long sides of the cases.

Common symbols are:

- The udjat eye – as pair or as single entity – is mostly displayed at the head end of the long sides above a shrine or pedestal. But it can also occupy different positions on the lid (right and left side of the sky goddess or on the instep);
- The djed pillar, used as amulet in the right hand of the deceased or on the foot end of the lid and/or cases
- The knot of Isis, used as amulet in the left hand of the deceased or on the foot end of the lid and/or cases;

Decoration on the inside of stone coffins is not well documented, although there are

examples for the incised figure of the sky goddess Nut on sarcophagi lids and cases (e.g. Senenmut, Senqed, Nebwenenef).

The Texts

The textual repertoire was largely composed of chapters 151 and 161 of the Book of the Dead, as well as the Nut-spell from the Pyramid text Pyr. 638, the *jmshy-hr* and *qd-mdw-jn*-formulae known from Middle Kingdom coffins and some portions of texts deriving from mitre inscriptions, also from Middle Kingdom coffins, which probably served as source material for the speeches of the god Anubis, among others.

Apart from Anubis, other gods and goddesses assumed the role of 'speaker' for the deceased or were mentioned frequently in the inscriptions on private sarcophagi of the New Kingdom. These include the four sons of Horus, Geb and Nut, Isis and Nephthys, Thoth as well as Horus and the god 𓅓 . Variations and exceptions did occur, but are often limited to details. However, some remarkable changes were made in rare cases, e.g. the sarcophagus of the great overseer of cattle Djehutymose from Tuna el-Gebel (Cairo, Egyptian Museum, JE 48079) was inscribed not only with BD 151 and 161, but also with excerpts from different spells from the Pyramid texts (e.g. PT 366 and 593), which are actually not attested on other stone coffins of that time.

The Owners

The study of the owners is to this point only a preliminary one. Further research is required in the future, but some general statements about their family connections, their rank and social standing can be given here.

The Women

Private sarcophagi of women are rare during the New Kingdom. Only nine examples were owned by females. Most of them were married to high officials who possessed a sarcophagus of their own; so the husbands were probably providing one for their wives as well. This is particularly evident when women shared a burial place with their husbands, e.g. *Hl* (wife of *P3-Rc-hrp*, buried together in one tomb in Sedment), *3s.t* (wife of *Dhwtj-ms*, buried in TT 32) or *Mr.t-sgr* (wife of *B3k-n-Hnsw*, buried in TT 35).

Besides the usual title of *nb.t-pr*, the women held mostly priestly titles or titles connected with temple service:

- *hm.t-ntr*
- *hm.t-ntr tpj n dhwtj*
- *w^cb.t*
- *wr.t hnr.t n GN*
- *šm^cy.t n GN*
- *shmy.t n GN*

The Men

Most of the male owners possessed one single stone coffin, but eleven were placed in a stone coffin ensemble. In one case there were up to three sarcophagi placed inside one another (ensemble of the viceroy of Kush Merimose).

Many of the sarcophagi owners were high ranking officials. According to their titles they can be divided into four groups:

- Scribes (*sš-nswt* was the most frequently used title on private sarcophagi)
- Military
- State administration
- Temple administration

Among them were for example four viceroys of Kush, four viziers, five majors of different cities, eight overseers of the treasury, seven great overseers of state-owned domains and six of temple domains, four great overseers of cattle and nine high priests of different gods and goddesses.

But despite these numerous members of the highest ranking old Egyptian elite, who owned a sarcophagus, even more officials of equal social rank and status did not make the effort to procure a stone coffin: Among the 30 high priests of Amun only two were in possession of a sarcophagus. Approximately the same number of viceroys of Kush are known to us, but only four of them owned a stone coffin. The same can be said for the large number of viziers of the New Kingdom. Almost 50 of them were appointed, but likewise only four are represented in the corpus of private sarcophagi.

This raises the question as to the reason for this discrepancy? – Was it because of the expenses for the procurement of a sarcophagus? Or is the archaeological data widely incomplete? Have the majority of high-class officials not been able to obtain a sarcophagus for some reasons or was there no demand to get one? And if so, what did they use instead?

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