

"Unpublished Late Period Coffin from Giza , stored in the Museum of Civilization Magazine"

Dr. Salwa Kamel

Cairo University / Faculty of Archeology

Introduction

During the Late Period, from about the 26th Dynasty and later, wooden coffins have similar shapes. The flat lower part of the coffin serves merely as a support, not a container for the mummy, because it was now covered by a much more convex lid. Figural representations became less numerous, replaced either partially or completely by long texts. These were excerpts from the "Saite version" of the Book of the Dead, which were written on the lid in vertical columns. Some of the lids after the Saite period also have carved decorations.

Wood was an expensive material in Egypt, a dry, desert land. Although some trees such as palm and almond grew along the banks of the River Nile, these both had slim trunks and produced soft wood, which made them unsuitable for making coffins. Hard wood had to be imported from countries such as the Lebanon and transported to Egypt by sea and then along the river. To make the coffin, the wood was cut into planks, using metal tools, which were first made of copper, then bronze and later iron. Sandstone, rather than metal planes, was used to smooth rough edges and flatten surfaces.

As technology advanced, so did the skills of the carpenters and joiners, who developed sophisticated methods of holding the coffin together using dowels, dovetailing and mortise and tendons. Glue was used to make the coffins more secure. This was produced by boiling and then reducing animal products such as skin, bone and cartilage. Many coffins had a coating of lime plaster to provide a smooth painting surface. Clay and gypsum plasters were used on tomb walls. Paint was made from ground minerals mixed with gum, egg-white or gelatin, and a final protective coating of varnish or beeswax was sometimes applied over the completed decorations.



Fig. 1 Gilded Mummy



Fig.2 Mummy Mask



Fig. 3 A broad collar (wesekh)



Fig. 4 Anthropoid Coffin



Fig. 5 Sandals



Fig. 6 Strip of writing

Description

The Coffin dimensions according to magazine register:-

Length: 199cm. Max. Width: 58cm.

The actual dimensions are taken by the publisher:

Length: 201cm. Max. Width: 68cm. Height: 68.5cm.

This wood sycamore Coffin of a woman, excavated from Giza excavation by Mohamed Sakr, stored in Museum of Civilization Magazine under registry number 485, it belongs to the Late Period 26th dynasty. This Coffin excavated at El Mansoreia, the name of the Coffin owner is unknown. The Coffin painted by different colors including red, white, black and blue, winged scarab on the chest, below there are two opposite sides of the falcons is surmounted by the sun disc. And drawing on the thigh of the goddess Isis and parked her head above the disk of the sun, in both her hands Maat. And on both sides, there are four sons of Horus, and the God Anubis mummified the God Osiris. Inside the coffin gilded mummy on the face, neck, waistcoat, at the centre on the front of the lid is a column of gold hieroglyphs.

Anthropoid is formed from the Greek word for human being, *anthrōpos* and the ending -oid, meaning "resembling." Anthropoid can describe fictional animals that look like humans, like the three bears in the Goldilocks story, standing upright and wearing their Sunday best. The word also can describe objects that have been decorated to have human features, such as an anthropoid mask with a painted-on face (there's a good insult for your great-aunt who wears too much make-up).

Conclusion

All Egyptians after the New Kingdom desired a coffin representing them as Osiris. Although the coffin stands for the box that Seth used to trap Osiris, in the tomb the coffin protects the person who will become Osiris. In the anthropoid coffins, the carved forearms were crossed at the breast. On those belonging to men, the hands clenched sculpted amulets, while those of women are open and lie flat on their breasts.