



## The Unpublished Middle Kingdom Wooden Coffin of the Chief of Police *Nb(.i) it(.i)*

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### ABSTRACT

This research delves into the analysis of a rectangular wooden coffin housed within the storeroom of Abu-Elgood Museum, Luxor, identified by inventory number 3686. Currently unpublished, this object's provenance, date, and ownership remain undocumented. The coffin, attributed to Nebit, the Chief of Police during the Middle Kingdom, serves as an exemplary representation of this period. Adorned with hieroglyphic inscriptions featuring the *h<sub>tp</sub> di nsw.t* and *im<sub>3</sub>hy* formulae, the coffin's typological features, writing style, and decorative elements suggest its association with the end of the Twelfth Dynasty and the beginning of the Thirteenth Dynasty. This paper endeavors to translate and interpret the inscriptions and decorations adorning the coffin, presenting a comprehensive transliteration, translation, and analysis of the textual content.

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### INTRODUCTION:

The rectangular wooden coffin under investigation was part of a collection of antiquities donated by Zaki Mohareb to the Ministry of Antiquities subsequent to the enactment of Law No. 117 of 1983. Initially housed in the old storeroom of Abu Elgood Museum at Luxor in 2002, it was subsequently transferred to the museum's second storeroom in 2010, where it received the inventory number 3686. No records detailing the circumstances of its discovery exist. Unfortunately, this coffin was found amidst a collection of personal items and was not unearthed during formal excavations or archaeological surveys. Consequently, the absence of a well-defined archaeological context presents significant challenges in understanding its origin and historical background.

It belongs to Nebit, who was the Chief of Police at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. This coffin is like the coffins that date to the Old Kingdom and Middle Kingdom. They were simple rectangular coffins with a flat lid (Green 2001, 279). The name *Nb(.i) it(.i)* was written on the coffin in three positions with the same hieroglyphic signs.

This coffin holds great significance as it is a valuable addition to the coffins of the Middle Kingdom, specifically for important high-ranking individuals. We have gained valuable insights into the Chief of Police, Nebit through studying it.

### **DESCRIPTION:**

The dimensions of the rectangular coffin in question are as follows: length (L) measures 188 cm, width (W) measures 43 cm, and height (H) measures 50 cm. In comparison, typical outer coffins from the early 12th Dynasty have been recorded with measurements of L: 190 cm, W: 44 cm, and H: 54 cm (Bourriau 1988, 88-89). Consequently, the coffin attributed to Nebit is slightly smaller than the average coffin of that period.

This rectangular coffin was made from cedar wood. The outer surface of the coffin is covered with a layer of white stucco, providing a foundation for the yellow-colored surface and paints. It is decorated with black vignettes on a yellow background. The decoration has deteriorated in some areas, with limited damage. The wood is visible in different parts, yet none of the panels show traces of interior decoration or inscriptions; the wood was left untreated.

The inscriptions on the coffin were executed using hieroglyphic signs in black ink against a yellow background with red borders. The lid features a central horizontal section with an inscription bearing the *ḥtp di nsw.t* formula.

Furthermore, the lower sections of both the east and west sides display four vertical columns of hieroglyphic signs containing the *im3hy* formula. In contrast, the upper sections of the east and west sides showcase a single horizontal line of hieroglyphs, which also feature the *ḥtp di nsw.t* formula.

The headboard and the footboard contain one horizontal line of hieroglyphic text on the upper part and two vertical columns of hieroglyphic text on the lower part. Both of them contain the *im3hy* formula.

### **Decoration and Inscriptions on the Lid:**

The lid exhibits decorations in multi-colored vignettes against a yellow background; however, some portions of the painting have deteriorated over time. The decoration consists of four bands featuring alternating colors of red, white, yellow, and black. These bands subdivide the lid's decorative and epigraphic elements into three horizontal yellow stripes. The middle stripe holds particular significance, containing a single horizontal line of hieroglyphic text oriented from right to left, flanked by thin red borders and positioned between two white lines. The text is remarkably well-preserved, although some signs are missing between the *ḥtp di nsw.t* formula and towards the end of the line. The ability to restore lost text makes every text readable. The text starts with the *ḥtp di nsw.t* formula (Gardiner 1915, 79-93), (Barta 1968, 263-295), (Lapp, Sarg. Särge des AR und MR 1984, 430-434), (Satzinger 1977, 177-188), (Franke 2003, 39-57), (Lapp, Eine Spezielle Opferformel des Mittleren Reiches 1987, 181-183) which can be read as:

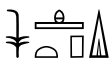



*ḥtp di nsw.t (n) inpw [tpi dw.f] p3 ḥnty (sh)-ntr di.f d3.f pt sm3 t3 hr ntr nfr nb pt ḥry-ib tm3 m3<sup>c</sup>t n(i).t im3ḥy imy-r šnt Nb(.i) it(.i).*

An offering which the king has given to Anubis, the one upon his hill, who is in front of the divine tent *sh-ntr*, he caused him to cross the sky and join with the earth before the Good God, the Lord of the Sky in the middle of the land of justice for the revered Chief of Police Nebit.

### Comment

The offering formula, *ḥtp di nsw.t*, was changed continuously throughout the Middle Kingdom, so it was possible to distinguish between these forms (Bennett 1941, 77). The

*ḥtp di nsw.t* which was written with this form  was attested during the 12th Dynasty to 13th Dynasty. It was then changed to  at the beginning of the 14th Dynasty (Smither 1939, 34).

The title *ḥnty sh-ntr* is translated to mean (who presides over the divine booth) (Fischer, Egyptian Titles of the Middle kingdom, a Supplement to Wm. Ward's Index, Second Edition 1997, 21). The relation between Anubis and *sh-ntr* (the tent of purification) initially appears in the Old Kingdom Pyramid Texts and *ḥtp di nsw.t* formula in the context of his sacerdotal role as a purifier of the departed (Sethe 1910, 2012, b-c). This tent was also associated with Anubis, who served as the deceased's embalmer. This job was not documented prior to the Middle Kingdom (de Buck 1961, 112- spell 908), (Sattar, The Anthropoid Wooden Coffin Of sn(=i)-iw in Cairo Museum ( CG. 61010.1-2) 2018, 27).



Fig. 1: Lid of the wooden coffin of the Chief of Police *nb(.i) it(.i)* (taken by M. Samah)

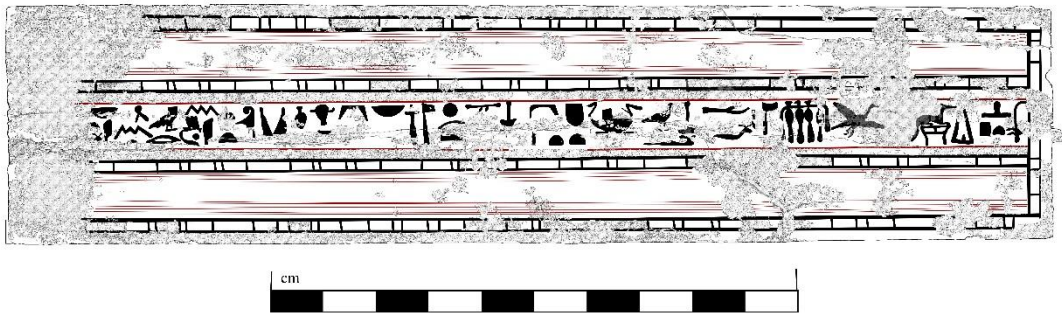


Fig. 2: Facsimile of wooden coffin Lid of the Chief of Police *nb(.i) it(.i)* (taken by A. Gamal)


### Decoration and inscriptions on the eastern side

The eastern side of the coffin displays multi-colored vignettes against a yellow background, and the upper part of this same eastern side bears a single horizontal line of hieroglyphic text, drawn in black ink and oriented from right to left. This inscription begins with the Offering Formula to the deceased and includes the *hꜥp di nsw.t* for Osiris. On the lower part of the panel, a pair of wedjat-eyes and a false door are depicted, painted over a square filled with a light-brown color. Positioned on the coffin's eastern side, a pair of eyes symbolize the deceased's ability to observe offerings, look upon the sun, and participate in the sun god's daily journey (Green 2001, 279). The false door (Boraik 2016, 1-9), on the other hand, grants the deceased the ability to move freely and to leave the coffin chamber at will and re-enter at any time (Green 2001, 279).

In addition to these features, there is an offering stand depicted with four vessels and various offerings. Furthermore, four vertical columns of hieroglyphic texts, drawn in black ink and oriented from right to left, containing the *imꜣhy* formula (Janssen 1996, 30-33), (Helck 1956, 63-75), (Allen, Some Aspects of The Non-Royal Afterlife in The Old Kingdom 2004, 16), (Chauvet 2004, 143-147), and a list of offerings, and other decorative elements.

The text is readable except for a few signs, though even the missing portion of the text can be recreated.

### Text 1

  
*hꜥp di nsw.t (n) wsir nb mꜣꜥt nꜥr ʕꜣ nb ʕbdw di.f prt-hrw t hꜥkt hꜣ m kꜣw hꜣ m ʕbdw šs mnht  
 ht nbt nfr kb n imꜣhy imy-r šnt Nb(.i) it(.i).*

An offering which the king gives to Osiris, the Lord of Justice, the Great God, Lord of Abydos. May he gives an invocation offering of bread, beer, one thousand oxen, one thousand fowls, alabaster, clothing and everything that is good and cold for the revered Chief of Police Nebit.

## Comment

The offering formula *h̄tp di nsw.t (n) wsir* is depicted with Osiris alone as the boon's giver in this offering formula, which includes bread, beer, oxen, fowls, alabaster, clothes and everything that is good and cold. The offering formula follows the name of the god Osiris and was attested to the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (Barta 1968, 56, 57, 74), it continued until the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, during the reign of Amenhotep I and occasionally in the reign of Hatshepsut, Osiris precedes the *h̄tp di nsw.t*, formula, bearing the same titles (Sattar, The Anthropoid Wooden Coffin Of sn(=i)-iw in Cairo Museum ( CG. 61010.1-2) 2018, 21). In this formula Osiris holds the titles, *nb m3ʿt ntr ʿ3 nb 3bdw* (the lord of justice, the great god, lord of Abydos); these are the same titles he enjoyed during the Old and Middle Kingdoms (Leitz, Lexikon der Ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen, Vol II 2002, 528).

The mention of *p̄rt-hrw* in the Offering Formula is to be taken as a reference to the ritual which is marked by recitations following (Lapp, Die Opferformel des Alten Reiches. Unter Berücksichtigung einiger Späterer Formeln 1986, 91-94), the presentation of food during the offering ritual, and serving two purposes. On one hand, it is to be carried out during the burial, while on the other hand, it serves as a future reference during festivals celebrated for the dead individual and re-enacting certain aspects of the funerary ritual (Bickel 2017, 152) In addition to the concept of protection, which is provided by the coffin itself and the preservation of the body. The apotropaic gods, named in vertical lines on the coffin, provide assurance against evil forces (Green 2001, 279).

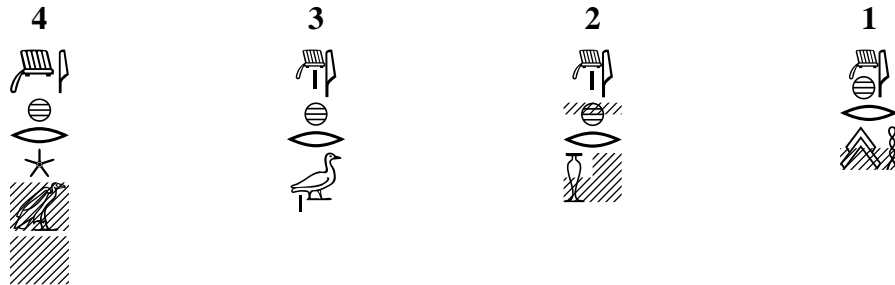
The name and title of the coffin owner has been placed in a narrow space at the end of the spell.

## text 2

The word *im3hy hr* is orthography is translated as (revered before), which invokes the names of the four sons of Horus, the funerary deities named Imsety, Hapy, Duamutef and Kebehsenuf who are attested from the Old Kingdom to Greco-Roman times. They appear fourteen times in the pyramid text, the earliest extensive set of Egyptian religious texts in Spells 2078 and 2079 (Dodson 2001, 561). From the Middle Kingdom onward, however, they are ubiquitous within the tomb, invoked upon almost all coffins and canopic containers, in the earlier pyramid texts they were among the deities before whom the deceased was stated to possess "reverence" (*im3hy*); such texts are commonly found on coffins lateral text bands, with actual depictions added during the Eighteenth Dynasty (Dodson 2001, 562). They are mythical guardians of embalming and burial and whose functions are first stated in the Pyramid Texts (Mercer 1952, 643- 1333-1334). They preside over both the protection the deceased and bringing him back to life (Mercer 1952, 619- 1338- 1823- 1824). In Spell 1333, they "spread protection of life over your father the Osiris king, since he was restored by the gods" (Dodson 2001, 562). The four sons of Horus had various other relationships. Geographically, Imsty was linked to the south, Hapy with the north, Duamutef to the east and Kebehsenuf to the west. Additionally, Hapy and Duamutef were linked to the Delta city of Buto; Imstey and Kebehsenuf with the Upper Egyptian city of Hierakonpolis (Dodson 2001, 562). Consequently, "*Nb(.i)*

*it(.i)* " is revered before the guardians and sanitizers who get him ready to ascend and join the realm of Osiris.

The texts consist of four vertical columns of hieroglyphic signs oriented from the right to left, which are drawn with black ink and consist of the *im3hy* formula invoking four gods from right to left: Hapy, Qebehsenuf, Geb and Duamutef.



1- *im3hy hr h3by*

Revered one before Hapy.

2- *im3hy hr [ kbh-snw .f]*

Revered one before Qebehsenuf.

3- *im3hy hr Gb*

Revered one before Geb

4- *im3hy hr dw3 mwt .f*

Revered one before Duamutef.

## Comment

The *im3hy* formula revered the dead before the guardian gods (Hapy, Qebehsenuf, Geb and Duamutef). According to chapter 151 of the Book of the Dead, Hapy defends the dead, joins his head to his neck, and beats his enemies in his defense. (Allen, *The Book of The Dead or Going Forth by Day* 1974, 147-150) (Lüscher 1998), Qebehsenuf was responsible for cooling and refreshing the face of the dead according to the coffin texts (du Buck 1951, 114 e-h), and Duamutef guards the dead, keeping evil spirits at a distance, according to the inscriptions of coffin No. CG 1047 in the Egyptian Museum.

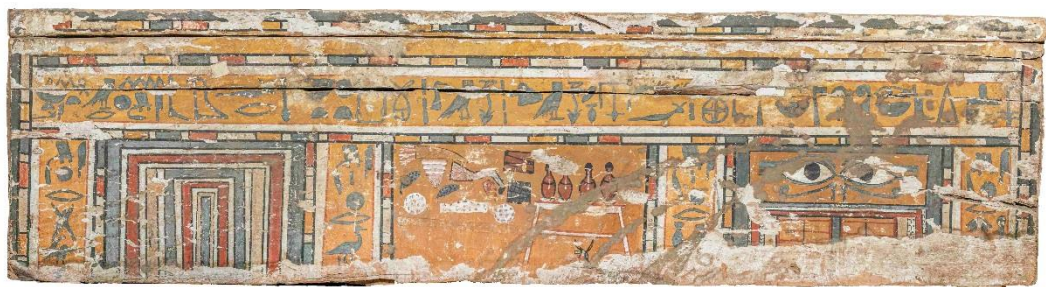


Fig. 3: Eastern side of the wooden coffin of the Chief of Police *nb(.i) it(.i)* (taken by M. Samah)

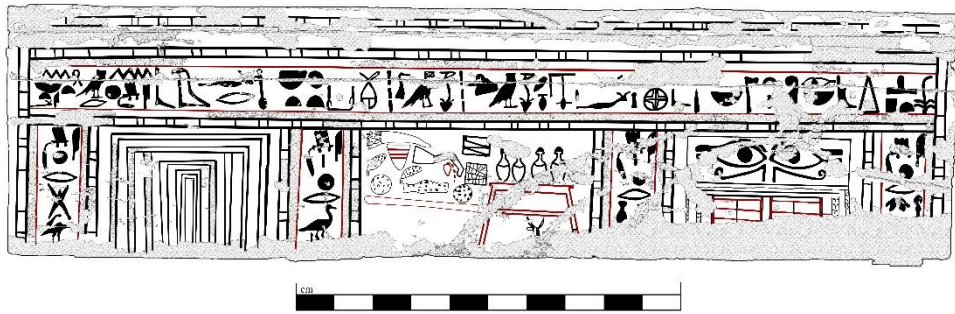


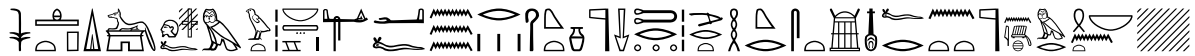
Fig. 4: Facsimile of the eastern side of the wooden coffin of the Chief of Police *nb(.i) it(.i)* (by A. Gamal)

### Decoration and inscriptions on the western side

The western side presents a single horizontal line of text on the upper portion with hieroglyphic signs, drawn in black ink, inscribed and oriented from the left to the right. It starts with the *hṭp di nsw.t* formula for Anubis followed by a plea in which the dead individual wishes for a beautiful burial (Green 2001, 281). The lower part of the panel consists some of the decorations, and there are four vertical columns of hieroglyphic signs drawn in black and oriented from left to right. These make up the *im3hy* formula.

All the texts are readable.

#### Text 1



*hṭp di nsw.t (n) Inpw tpy (ḏw) .f imy-wt nb t3 ḏsr di .f mw r 3 ḥnkt snṯr mrḥt krs.t nfr.t n(i).t nṯr n im3hy imy-r šnt Nb(.i) it(.i).*


An offering which the king has given to Anubis, the one upon his hill, he who is in the embalming place, the lord of sacred land, he gives water, one-third of beer, incense, oil and a beautiful burial of the god for the revered Chief of Police, Nebit.

#### Comment:

The offering formula *hṭp di nsw.t* is on the western side of the coffin for the god Anubis because he is the protector of the necropolis (Leitz, Lexikon der Ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen, Vol I 2002, 390), Hence the dead desired to obtain Anubis's protection in the tomb. As in this formula, Anubis held the titles (*tpy (ḏw) .f, imy-wt, nb t3 ḏsr*) (the one upon his hill, he who is the embalming place (ERMAN, Wörterbuch Der Aegyptischen Sprache I 1926, 73), (the Lord of the Sacred Land), these titles follow the god Anubis because they are linked with the dead's burial in the necropolis.




The title (*imy-wt*) is the most well-known epithet of Anubis, which appeared for the first time in the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, in the chapel of " *ḥ<sup>c</sup>(i) .f-ḥw(i) .f-w(i)* " (Simpson 1978, fig 25), Then it became the primary epithet of Anubis, *wt* is most probably to be interpreted as the name of a place of embalming (Bolshakov 1993, 23) (Logan 1990, 61-69).



The offering formula *hṭp di nsw.t (n) Inpw* depicts Anubis alone as the boon's giver in this offering formula, which includes water, beer, incense, oil and a beautiful burial for the revered Nebit.


A beautiful burial  is the desire of every deceased ancient Egyptian. The trilateral stem *krs* and its noun *krs.t* refer to the meaning of "bury" and "burial" (Ibrahim Abd El-Sattar 2021, 50).

The name and title of the coffin owner, "*imy-r šnt Nb(.i) it(.i)*," have been placed in a narrow space at the end of the spell.

The scribe has made some errors with the signs due to poor craftsmanship. An example of this is the name *hnkt* which is incorrectly written in regard to the orientation of the sign

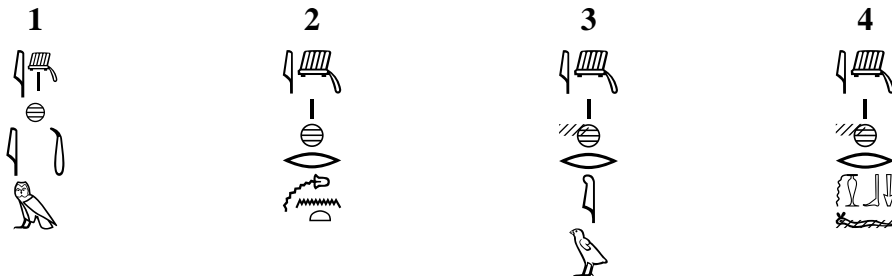
*k*  which is written instead of the sign (N29) . The name *mrht* is incorrectly written due to the orientation of the sign *mr*  being written instead of the sign (U7)

. The name *krs.t* is also incorrectly written due to the orientation of the sign *k* 

which is written instead of the sign (N29) .

## Text 2

The texts consist of four vertical columns of hieroglyphic signs drawn with black ink and oriented from the right to the left. These are the *imšhy* formula invoking the four gods from left to right: Imseti, Tfnut, Shu, Qebehsenuf.



1- *imšhy hr imsti*

Revered one before Imseti.

2- *imšhy hr tfnt*

Revered one before Tfnut.

3- *imšhy hr šw*

Revered one before Shu



4- *imšhy hr kbḥ-snw .f*

Revered one before Qebehsenuf.



**Comment**

The *im3hy* formula revered the dead before the guardian gods (Imseti, Tfnut, Shu, Qebhsenuf). According to chapter 151 of the Book of the Dead, Imseti protected the dead, guards his home and makes him eternal (Allen, *The Book of The Dead or Going Forth by Day* 1974, 147-150) (Lüscher 1998), he also kills snakes that attempt to bite the dead according to the sarcophagus of *h<sup>c</sup>* (Darressy 1917, 8).

The name of the god Shu in the third vertical line is incorrectly written regarding the orientation of the name *šw*  which is written instead of the sign (H6) .

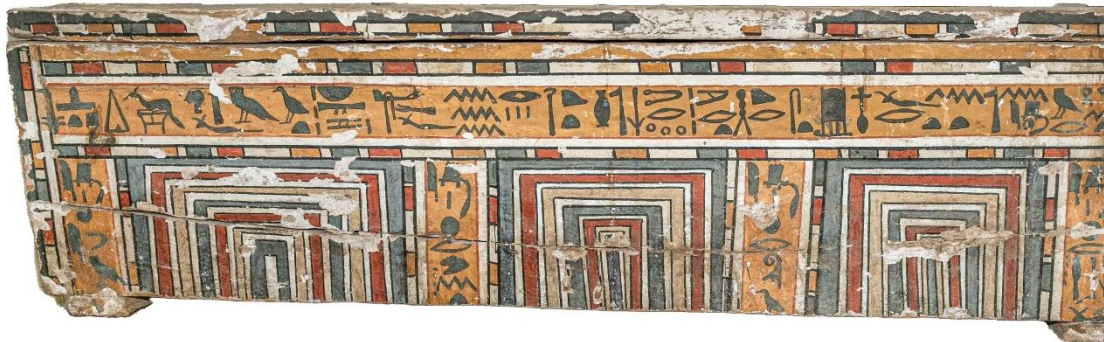


Fig. 5: The western side of the wooden coffin of the Chief of Police *nb(.i) it(.i)* (taken by M. Samah)

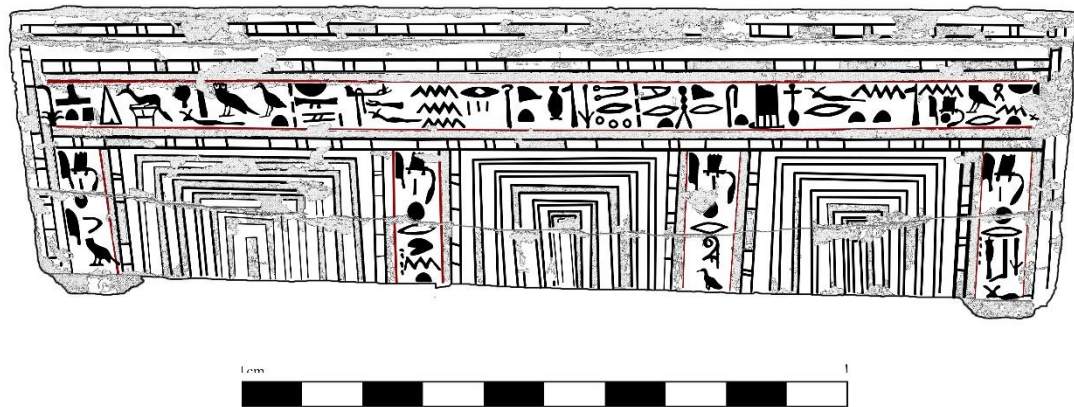


Fig. 6: Facsimile of the western side of the wooden coffin of the Chief of Police *nb(.i) it(.i)* (by A. Gamal)

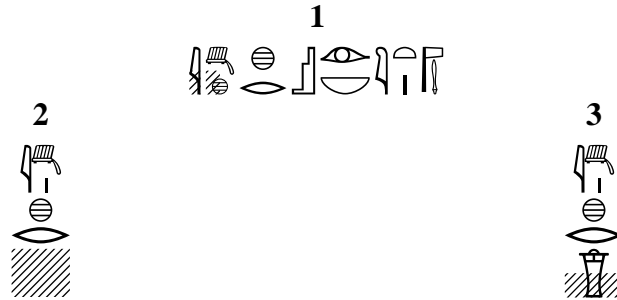
**Decoration and inscriptions on the Headboard section:**

The headboard is adorned with multi-colored vignettes against a yellow background. It consists of one horizontal line and two vertical columns of hieroglyphic text. This inscription begins with the *im3hy* formula. The upper part of the headboard features a horizontal line of hieroglyphic text invoking the god Osiris, with the hieroglyphic signs rendered in black in and oriented from left to right. The inscription calls upon Osiris for protection. The lower part of the panel consists of two vertical columns of hieroglyphic

signs which are drawn in black ink and oriented from left to right. One of the vertical inscriptions invokes the goddess Bastet, while the other is incomplete or missing.

The primary concept conveyed by the headboard's decoration is that of protection, serving to safeguard both the coffin itself and the preserved body. The apotropaic gods, whose names are inscribed in the vertical lines on the coffin, offer assurance against malevolent forces (Green 2001, 279).

The text is well preserved, and in good condition except for a few signs at the beginning of the horizontal line and the name of the god in the vertical line.



1- *im3hy hr wsir nb m3ct ntr ʿ3*

Revered one before Osiris, the lord of justice, the great god

2- *im3hy hr .....*

Revered one before.....

3- *im3hy hr B3stt*

Revered one before Bastet (Jones 2000, 23).

The title of *ntr ʿ3* in the horizontal line is incorrectly written regarding the orientation of the name *ntr* ʿ is written instead of the sign (R8) 𓂏 .

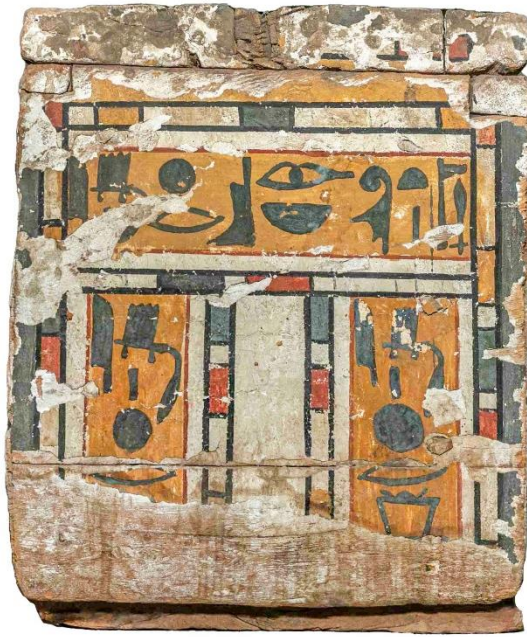


Fig. 7: Headboard of the wooden coffin of the Chief of Police *nb(.i) it(.i)* (taken by M. Samah)

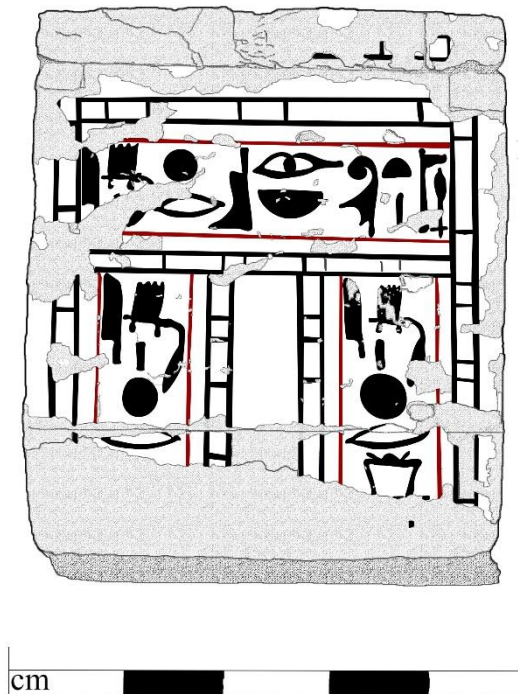


Fig. 8: Facsimile of the headboard of the wooden coffin of the Chief of Police *nb(.i) it(.i)* (by A. Gamal)

### Decoration and inscriptions on the Footboard section:

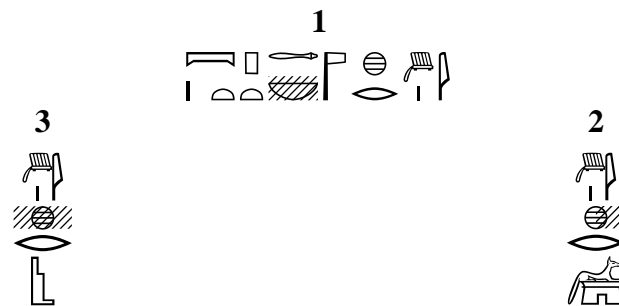
The footboard follows the same decorative style of the coffins and shows deterioration of some of the signs. The horizontal line and the two vertical columns feature the *im3hy*

formula texts. These hieroglyphic signs are meticulously oriented from right to left and drawn with precise black ink strokes.

The upper portion of the footboard showcases a single horizontal line of hieroglyphic text, continuing the *im3hy* formula and revering the divine entity. The signs here are meticulously aligned, starting from the right and proceeding to the left.

In contrast, the lower section of the panel comprises two vertical columns of hieroglyphic signs, also aligned from right to left, and drawn with artistic black ink strokes. One of these vertical inscriptions reveres the god Anubis, while the other mentions the esteemed Osiris.

Additionally, the footboard includes depictions of apotropaic gods, carefully named in vertical lines on the coffin. These deities provide a powerful shield against malevolent forces, offering assurance and protection for the departed's journey to the afterlife.



1- *im3hy hr ntr 3 nb pt*

Revered one before the great god, the lord of the sky.

2- *im3hy hr Inpw*

Revered one before Anubis.

3- *im3hy hr Wsir*

Revered one before Osiris.

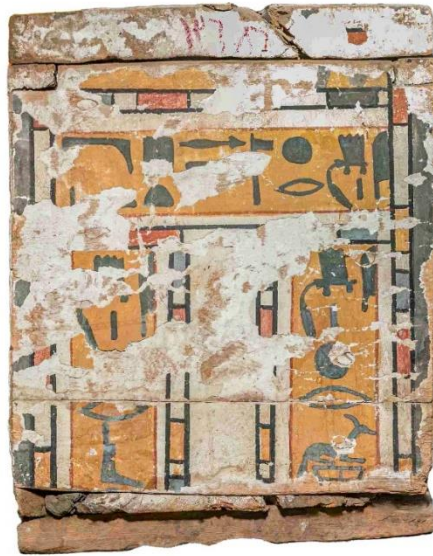


Fig. 9: The footboard of the wooden coffin of the Chief of Police *nb(.i) it(.i)* (taken by M. Samah)

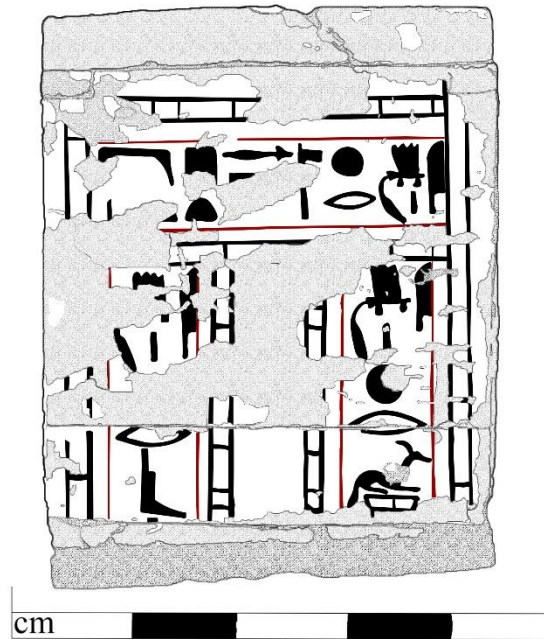


Fig. 10: A Facsimile of the footboard of the wooden coffin of the Chief of Police *nb(.i) it(.i)* (by A. Gamal)

## THE NAME AND THE TITLES OF THE COFFIN'S OWNER

### Nebit:

The name and title of the coffin's owner (No. 3686) are mentioned in three distinct positions with the same hieroglyphic signs on the coffin: at the end of the horizontal line of hieroglyphic text on the lid, at the end of the horizontal line of hieroglyphic text on the eastern side, and once again at the end of the horizontal line of hieroglyphic text on the western side. The name "*Nb(.i) it(.i)*" holds the meaningful translation of "my lord is

my father," and it appears in the texts on the coffin. This name has been attested in Ranke (RANKE 1935, 183), and documented during the Middle Kingdom.

The individual bearing the name "Nb(.i) it(.i)" also holds the title "*imy-r šnt*," which denotes "the chief of police."

The name "Nebit" was quite common during the Middle Kingdom and the Second Intermediate Periods, with a total of 58 mentions found during the study. Interestingly, when studying the titles associated with each mention of the name, it was observed that "Nebit" appeared three times with the title "*imy-r šnt*." Out of these instances, two were found in the Tel Edfou necropolis, while one was located in Akhmim.

However, it's worth noting that the mention of the name in Akhmim was excluded from the study's analysis due to the presence of other titles that were not present on the coffin currently under examination.

The family names of the coffin's owner, *Nb(.i) it(.i)*, are documented as follows: his wife's name is *Tbi*, his son's name is *Tsi*, his daughter's name is *ddt-nbw*, and his mother's name is *Intiti.s* (Alliot 1933, 28-29), (PERSONS AND NAMES OF THE MIDDLE KINGDOM 2022).

A question arises regarding the title "*imy-r šnt*," whether it was written without "*hry ḥb*" (the lector priest), similar to how the title was written on the statue and offering table found in Edfou. The possibility of omitting "*hry ḥb*" arises due to space constraints, where the name and title are written at the end of the line. Alternatively, it could also be considered whether "*imy-r šnt*" served as the owner's official hierarchy. In comparison to other title-holding officials, it was customary for this title to be mentioned without the addition of "*hry ḥb*" (Ward 1982, 50).

### **The title of *imy-r šnt***

The title (*imy-r šnt*) is translated to mean an officer with judicial authority (ERMAN, Wörterbuch Der Aegyptischen Sprache, Vol IV 1971, 498), (Fischer, Egyptian Titles of the Middle kingdom, a Supplement to Wm. Ward's Index, Second Edition 1997, 8-34-49) or the Chief of Police (Ward 1982, 50) or Overseer of Disputes (Jones 2000, 256), (Ward 1982, 50), (Hannig 1995, 64). The title *imy-r šnt* is a type of policeman and during the First Intermediate Period, he worked in the towns and villages where he enforced the laws (Andreu, La Stèle Louvre C.249: Un Complément À La Reconstitution D'Une Chapelle Abydénienne 1980, 143). One stele with Coptic names from the 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty identifies one individual who combined several military and police functions, restoring order in five cities of Upper Egypt for the benefit of the Theban government (Fischer, Inscriptions From The Coptic Nome, Dynasties VI-XI 1964, 106-111). It is likely that at this time the police were provided by the army, and during the Middle Kingdom the *jmy-r šnt* is a judicial police commissioner. We find him during the arrest and trial of thieves, the hearing of the culprits, the direction of investigations and the instruction of process (Andreu, Plizei 1906, 1069). This title was often used during the Middle Kingdom. The title of *imy-r šnt* was found to be mentioned 85 times (PERSONS AND NAMES OF THE

MIDDLE KINGDOM 2022) in the study. However, when looking at the names that are given with this title, it became clear that individuals with the name of Nebit were only given the title *imy-r šnt* three times. The first two of these were in the Tel Edfu necropolis (PORTER (B.) 1962, 201), on a statue (Musée du Louvre logo 2008) and an offering table (Musée du Louvre logo 2008). The third was in Akhmim (PERSONS AND NAMES OF THE MIDDLE KINGDOM 2022), in relation to tomb equipment. The name that appeared in Akhmim has other titles that were not present on the coffin associated with this analysis.

### **PROVENANCE OF THE COFFIN NUMBER 3686**

The records kept in the archives of the Abu Elgood Storeroom Museum at Luxor do not provide any specific details about the provenance of coffin number 3686. This is because the coffin was part of a collection of antiquities donated by Zaki Mohareb to the Ministry of Antiquities, and its exact origin within the museum's holdings was not explicitly documented.

However, there is a plausible suggestion that the coffin's provenance can be traced back to the Tel Edfu necropolis. This hypothesis is based on the compelling observation that the name and title of the coffin's owner align with those found on a statue and an offering table that were unearthed in the Tel Edfu necropolis in 1933 (Alliot 1933, 28-29). Given this correlation, it is reasonable to assume that the coffin likely originated from the Tel Edfu necropolis.

It is probable that the coffin was once part of the Tel Edfu necropolis, but at some point, it found its way out of the necropolis and was eventually acquired by Zaki Mohareb through a purchase or another means. As a result, it became part of the collection that Mr. Mohareb generously donated to the Ministry of Antiquities, where it now resides within the museum's holdings.






















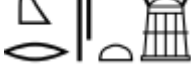













### **THE DATE OF THE COFFIN NUMBER 3686**

To determine the date when coffin number 3686 was crafted, several key characteristics need to be considered. These include the overall outline of the ornamentation, the absence of decoration inside, the texts, and paleographical details. These characteristics are similar to the coffins of the Middle Kingdom for example the coffin No. S1Bir at the Birmingham Museum & art Gallery (Bommas 2017, 149-180). Moreover, there is a significant discovery of a statue and an offering table in the Edfu necropolis that bear the same name and title as that of the coffin.














Based on these factors, it is deduced that coffin number 3686 likely dates back to the end of the Twelfth Dynasty and the beginning of the Thirteenth Dynasty during the Middle Kingdom period. The similarities in style, inscriptions, and spell collection between the coffin and the other artifacts found in the Edfu necropolis provide valuable evidence for this dating.

**ORTHOGRAPHIC COMMENT:**

The Scribe has confused the use of some signs. He inaccurately used some signs instead of others, ignored some determinative and reversed the direction of other signs.

No.	sign	word	Comment
1		 <i>di.f</i>	The scribe used the sign D36  instead of D37  in the verb <i>di</i> which mean give.
2		 <i>hnty sh-ntr</i>	The scribe ignored the determinative <i>sh</i> (O21) 
3		 <i>pt</i>	The scribe wrote the word <i>pt</i> "sky" with uniliteral signs, biliteral sign, phonetic complement and stroke.
4		 <i>kb</i>	The scribe ignored the determinative (W15)  in the noun <i>kb</i>   which mean cold.
5		 <i>tpy (dw) .f</i>	The scribe ignored the determinative <i>dw</i> (N26)  .
6		 <i>wt</i>	The scribe used an oblique line to represent the strokes (Z3)  in the title ( <i>imy-wt</i> ).
7		 <i>Krs.t</i>	The scribe reverse direction of the sign (N29)  and used the sign (Q34)  instead (Q6)  in the noun beautiful burial ( <i>krs.t nfrt</i> )
8		 <i>dsr</i>	The scribe used the sign (D37)  with reverse direction instead (D45)  in the title lord of sacred land ( <i>nb t3 dsr</i> )
9		 <i>imsti</i>	The scribe wrote the sign (U33) <i>ti</i>  with a simple form
10		 <i>Tfnt</i>	The scribe used the sign (D26)  in the noun of the goddess Tfnut ( <i>Tfnt</i> ) (ERMAN, Wörterbuch Der Aegyptischen Sprache, Vol IV 1971, 299)

























11		 <i>mr</i>	The scribe reverse direction of the sign (U7) <i>mr</i>  and ignored the determinative (D1) 
12		 <i>ntr</i>	The scribe reverse direction of the sign (R8) <i>ntr</i> 
13		 	The scribe reverse direction of the sign (N29) 
14		 	The scribe reverse direction of the sign (H6)  in the name of the god Shu

**PALEOGRAPHIC COMMENT:**











The coffin of *nb(.i) it(.i)* has been decorated with vertical columns and horizontal lines of text, some of them oriented from right to left and others oriented from left to right. The iconography of this coffin is classical, but the inscriptions appear to have interesting graphic peculiarities. The scribe wrote some hieroglyphs in cursive.

The following table shows the different forms of the signs:

N	G	Signs
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

8		
9		
10		
11		

Different forms of the signs on the coffin of *(Nb(.i) it(.i)*)

- 1-  Sandy hill-slope: the sign inscribed irregularly, with an oblique form which indicates poorer craftsmanship.
- 2-  Loop of cord with the ends downward: the sign is inscribed with a thick line, and different forms, it is like the hieroglyphic sign.
- 3-  Human mouth: the upper and lower lines are thick oblique lines, and generally rounded.
- 4-  Seat: seat is like the hieroglyphic sign, it is inscribed irregularly with a thick line which indicates poorer craftsmanship (G. Möller 1965, 86, no. 883).
- 5-  Ripple of water: the ripple is reduced to three waves with an oblique form.
- 6-  Backbone with spinal cord issuing from it: the sign consists of a small square with three short strokes, and a thick rounded line (G. Möller 1965, 16, no.172).
- 7-  Star: the sign appeared as oblique intersecting lines and strokes on the upper crossed section (G. Möller 1965, 80, no 814).
- 8-  Cloth wound on a pole, the emblem of divinity: the sign is inscribed with a horizontal thick line on its top vertical oblique stroke.
- 9-  Feather: the feather is like the hieroglyphic sign, it inscribed with a thick line.
- 10-  water-pot with water pouring from it: the jug is inscribed with a thick tall line, the water is pouring from the top of the jug, and the water appears as separate dots (G. Möller 1965, 48, no. 500).



11- Liquid issuing from lips: the lips are similar to the hieroglyphic sign but with thick lines, the issuing liquid is pouring from the lips as a separated dot.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the wooden rectangular coffin No. 3686, which likely belongs to the Chief of Police, *Nb(.i) it(.i)*, offers valuable insights into the artistic and cultural landscape of the Middle Kingdom. Dated to the end of the Twelfth Dynasty and early Thirteenth Dynasty, its connection to similarly named artifacts found in the Edfu necropolis reinforces its provenance. The coffin stands out for its simple form, devoid of painted figures and texts, and features bands of contrasting colors. Within the coffin's inscriptions, philologically significant texts include the *htp di nsw.t* formula for Osiris and Anubis, as well as the *im3hy* formula venerating a group of gods. This coffin provides a fascinating glimpse into the artistry and religious beliefs of the Middle Kingdom.



Fig. 11: The outer of case of coffin No. 3658 of the Chief of Police *nb(.i) it(.i)* (by M. Samah)



Fig. 12: The outer and interior of case of coffin No. 3689 of the Chief of Police *nb(.i) it(.i)* (by M. Samah)



Fig. 13: The lid of coffin No.3686 of the Chief of Police *nb(.i) it(.i)* (by M. Samah)

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## تابوت خشبي غير منشور من عصر الدولة الوسطى لرئيس الشرطة نب إيت

### الملخص

يتعمق هذا البحث في تحليل تابوت خشبي مستطيل الشكل، محفوظ داخل المخزن المتحفي بأبي الجود بالأقصر تحت رقم (٣٦٨٦)، لم يتم نشره بعد، ولا يزال مصدر هذا التابوت وتاريخه وملكيته غير مسجلين بسجلات المخزن المتحفي.

هذا التابوت المنسوب إلى شخص يدعي نب إيت، قائد الشرطة في عصر الدولة الوسطى، يعد بمثابة تمثيل نموذجي لهذه الفترة. التابوت مزخرف بنصوص هيروغليفية تمثل صيغة القربان والتبرئة، توجي السمات الفنية للتابوت وأسلوب الكتابة والعناصر الزخرفية بارتباطه بنهاية الأسرة الثانية عشرة وبداية الأسرة الثالثة عشرة. تهدف هذه الورقة البحثية إلى ترجمة وتفسير النقوش والزخارف التي تزين التابوت، وتقديم ترجمة شاملة وتحليل للنصوص.

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### بيانات المقال

تاريخ المقال

تم الاستلام في ٢٨ فبراير ٢٠٢٣

تم استلام النسخة المنقحة في ٥ أكتوبر ٢٠٢٣

تم قبول البحث في ٢٨ أكتوبر ٢٠٢٣

متاح على الإنترنت في ٢٢ يناير ٢٠٢٤

### الكلمات الدالة

هيروغليفية،

الدولة الوسطى،

نب إيت،

تابوت مستطيل،

رئيس الشرطة.