

ELŻBIETA DĄBROWSKA - SMEKTAŁA

Coffin of *Tay-akhuth*, Chantress of Amūn-Re

Wooden coffin Inv. No. 141 988 belonging to the collection of the Department of Ancient Art in the National Museum in Warsaw¹ was made for *nbt pr šm' (y) t n 'Imn R' T3y — 3hwt* ~ Lady of the House, Chantress of Amūn-Re, *Tay-akhuth*.

The name and the title of the deceased are written on the right exterior side of the bottom at the scene showing the woman presenting the offerings.

Dimensions of the coffin are following: length 171 cms., width at the arms 30 cms. and at the feet 25 cms., height of the lid 10 cms. and of the bottom 25 cms.

Provenance of the relic belonging to *Tay-akhuth* who at life was probably attached as a musician-priestess to clergy of Amūn-Re at Thebes is unknown. Inscription written in Russian on the bottom of the headside (Pl. I) reads as follows: *V Impieratorskij Warszawskij Univiersitiet, No. 6 Sarkofag*. It indicates that the coffin belonged to the Warsaw University in the years 1869—1915 when by virtue of the Charinian ukase from the 20th June 1869 *Szkola Główna* was changed into *Impieratorskij Warszawskij Univiersitiet*².

During the Second World War the coffin was destroyed, especially the lid (Pl. II and III). The conservation works after the war-time were undertaken (Pl. IV) but some parts of the decoration had been completely lost.

The coffin is decorated with inscriptions, simple religious scenes and amuletic symbols. The ground colour of the relic is yellow. The contours of all representations covering the surface are painted in red, black, bright and dark green. Some of the individual elements being first modelled in low relief on *gesso* and then painted in dark green, e.g. Khepri and the sun-disk which he holds, the wig of the goddess Nut and the upper parts of *3bdw* — and *šm* signs. Decorations confined only to the outside and the interior floor of the coffin.


¹ Deposit of the University of Warsaw No. 3304 : 38 from the 1th May 1938.



² First note about the coffin was written by A. H e n z e l, *Zbiory Polskie w Muzeum Narodowym w Warszawie*, "Sztuka i Praca", z. 25—28 (1929). On the page 20th the author writes: "coffin of the woman from the Nineteenth and Twentieth dynasties" and on the page 23 continues: "the uncommon freshness of the colours must be underlined and the variety and invention in covering the surface with figures of the gods and symbols."

Description of the lid.

The part of the head on the lid is in a very bad state of preservation. The face made in wood and painted in yellow is surrounded by the green wig which is confined only to the lid and not carried over the sides of the bottom. The plain green lappets of the wig are decorated with the bands of small squares and sloping grate painted in yellow and red. Round the brow are seen the remains of geometrical and floral ornamentation. The chest is covered with the *wsh* collar painted in repeated floral motives. Below the lappets the painted forearms are crossed with hands carved out of wood and affixed to the front of the lid with wooden pegs (Pl. II). The left hand is missing, only the right one is preserved (Pl. IV). The forearms are decorated with painted bracelets in the shape of *udjat* eye placed over the sign of gold and the *nfr* sign (Pl. IV). On the fourth finger are painted three oval rings, the middle one is painted in bright and the exterior ones in dark green. The stoles which hang from shoulders between the lappets are crossed on the hands. The scheme of the decorations on the lid is shown on Pl. IX.

Above the hands is painted the first pectoral figure (A) — the god Khepri represented as a winged scarab-beetle holding in it's fore-legs the sun-disk with cobras, and in it's hind ones the *šnw* sign painted in bright green with red dot in the middle.

Below the hands is represented the second pectoral figure (B) — almost completely lost; preserved wings and the *šnw* and *nb* signs only allow us to suggest that it was the same as the previous one. On each side of the pectoral figure are represented: Anubis as a recumbant jackal turned toward the fetish of Abydos which is fastened on the *dw* sign crowned with disk and two plumes with hanging counterpoises and Ptah-Seker-Osiris as a hawk wearing the *stf* crown with sun disk in the middle. In front of the god on the right side is painted the feather of truth and on the left one — the sign of life. The figures of the gods and fetishes are separated from each other by the inscription , on the right side is painted the *udjat* eye and on the left side the *šnw* sign. Cobras with the sign of life close the scene.

Beneath, the third pectoral figure (C) represents the sign of heaven held up by the kneeling figure of the goddess Nut. She is wearing a dress made of the red net girdled with a scarf, which does not cover her outstretched arms to which are attached wings painted in green. Signs of her name  partly covered with *wsh* collar are painted on her breast. She wears a green wig and *mdh* fillet. In each hand the goddess holds signs of life. Inscriptions on the both sides of her arms which read as follows: *Says Nut the Great, who has born all the gods, Eye of Re, Chieftain of the lands* — are quite the same but that on the left side is not so well preserved as on the right one (Pl. II). Above the goddess's hands are painted winged cobras and below two figures of Anubis appearing as a jackal with the inscription .


Across the middle of the lid are running down two repeating scenes in rectangular frames (D-E-D-E-D). The first one (D) represents Khepri as a winged scarab-beetle holding the sun-disk in it's fore-legs and the *šnw* sign in it's hind legs. The next (E) — represents the *shn* sign fitted on the *šnw* sign. The three sealed oil jars are painted in dark and the middle one in light-green, the covers of the jars are painted in red.

of Re, Lady of the House of Life, to Imsety, Hapy, Duamutef, Qebehsenuf Anubis 'Imy-wt who is in front of the great divine booth, ruler of the necropolis, that they may give the bread, breath and water in the necropolis in the course of every day. (Pl. VII).

b. The boon which the king gives to Osiris, Lord of Eternity, the First of the necropolis in Abydos, the great god, the First of the House of Million, the ruler of Eternity, to Isis the great mother of the god, Eye of Re, Lady of the House of Life, to Nephthys the divine sister, the Eye of Re, Lady of the House of Life, to Imsety, Hapy, Duamutef, Qebehsenuf, Anubis 'Imy-wt, that they may give the bread, beer, oxen, fowl, wine, incense, clothing and unguent. (Pl. VII).

Underneath the bands with offering formula there are fifteen columns of hieroglyphic inscriptions on each side of the bottom with seven scenes from which the six are quite the same, except the third one which is different on each side.



First Scene (Pls. V and VI).

In the shrine the god Ptah-Seker-Osiris is represented as a hawk wearing the 'tf crown with sun-disk standing on the standard with symbol of truth at the front. Below are represented the offering basket of food, loaf of bread and oil jar with  inscription. Behind the god is painted the winged *udjat* eye with cobra wearing the white crown. On the right side of the bottom, the figure of the god is partly destroyed, only *udjat* eye with cobra wearing the white crown and the sign of life are well preserved.

a. Words spoken by Ptah-Seker-Osiris, Lord of Štyt, he gives the offerings of vegetables and food... (Pl. VII).

b. I am Ptah-Seker-Osiris... (Pl. VII).

Second Scene (Pls. V and VI).

Ibis-headed figure of Thot wrapped in black bandages which ends are falling down stands in the shrine. The mummified god is wearing the *wsh* collar. On the left side there is inscription which reads as follows: *Thot, Lord of the gods, the scribe of the Truth*. On the left side in front of the god is painted  sign⁴ and a tall water pot and on the right side are seen winged *udjat* eye with cobra, basket of loaves and  sign.

a. Words spoken by Thot, Lord of the great gods, scribe of the truth who is before the great gods. Long live Re, died the tortoise! Prosperous is that who is [in the coffin].

b. Words spoken by Thot, Lord of the great gods, the scribe of the truth who is before the great gods. Long live Re, died the tortoise! (Pl. VII).

That formula appeared on the coffins from Eighteen and Nineteenth dynasties⁵ and is a part of 161th chapter of the Book of the Dead⁶.

⁴ Very often Four Sons of Horus represented on other relics are holding these objects, see G. Darussy, *Cercueils des cachettes royales*, Nos. 61024, 61027, 61028, 61030, Le Caire 1909. That kind of pendant in the shape of the 'pr sign is depicted on the relief from the Sixth dynasty showing the production of the various things made from gold, see ANEP, p. 40, 133. So, some authors are wrong describing that object as a bunch of the ritual onions.

⁵ H. Bonnet, *Reallexikon*, p. 681.

⁶ H. Kess, *Götterglaube*, p. 69 and S. Södebergh, *Eine rammessidische Darstellung vom Töten der Schildkröte*, MDIK, Bd. 14, pp. 175—180.

Third Scene (Pl. VI).

Morning solar bark carries the sun-disk with the god Khepri in the middle. The bark is floating on the sign of heaven below which is the looped huge serpent Apophis. The prow is covered with the solar mat⁷ on which is perched a little bird⁸. The bark has two oars with the handles in the shape of the human heads with hanging cobras and the sign of life. Above the stern is painted a winged cobra with the sign of life⁹.

b. *Words spoken by Osiris, Lord of Eternity, the First of the necropolis in Abydos he gives the fresh offerings...* (Pl. VII).

Third Scene (Pl. V).

The scene represents the resurrection of Osiris. In front of the mummyfied god reclining on the high lion-couch runs the inscription which reads: *Osiris, Lord of the necropolis, Lord of West, Lord of the sky*. The god is laying on the mattress. The body of the god is painted in green, he wears the *wsh* collar and crown with double feathers and little sun-disk at the base. The god is smelling the lotus flower laying under sunshade of ostrich feathers fastened on the sun-disk. Below the lion-couch are two red vessels with green covers and the water pot painted in dark green. Lettuces painted in light green are among them and in the right corner stands the Canopic chest¹⁰.

a. *Words spoken by Osiris, Lord of Eternity, the First in the necropolis in Abydos, he gives the offerings of food in the necropolis as all the gods.* (Pl. VII).

Fourth Scene (Pls. V and VI).

That offering scene shows *Tay-akhuth* standing in the shrine. Her hands in the offering attitude are holding the tray with offerings difficult to identify. In front of her there is standing an altar in the shape of *h3wt* sign with two loaves of bread, bundle of onions and two lotos flowers above and two lettuce below. The deceased is wearing the wide, transparent, pleatted garment and the festal cone with the lotos bud on her head. Under the bust line she is girdled by scarf. Her neck is decorated with the *wsh* collar, ears with earrings and wrists with bracelets.

a. *Words spoken by Osiris, Lady of the House, chantress of Amün-Re, king of the gods Tay-akhuth, so named by all the gods of the necropolis.*

b. *Words spoken by Osiris, Lord of Eternity, the First in the necropolis, he gives the fresh offerings...* (Pl. VIII).

Fifth Scene (Pls. V and VI).



In the shrine between the coils of serpent Apophis are standing three mummyfied

⁷ See E. Thomas, *Terrestrial Marsh and solar mat*, JEA, 45 (1959).

⁸ W. Budge, *Pap. Greenfield*, Pl. 111, p. 77 interpretes the bird as a swallow and symbol of the goddess Scorpion, a daughter of the god Re.

⁹ Scene resembles the vignette of the 17th chapter of the Book of the Dead, see W. Budge, *Ani*, Pl. 16.

¹⁰ For the same scene E. Chassinat, *La seconde trouvaille de Deir el-Bahari*, Le Caire 1909, t. I, fasc. I, p. 8, fig. 11; Piankoff-Rambova, *Myth. Pap.*, Nos. 10, 11, 18 and Tomb of Ramesses VI (Texts) Figs. 183 and 185.

figures of deities. The first has a jackal head and is described as , the next has a ram head with horizontally spread horns and the last one has a lion head and inscription . The middle figure has a plain bandages, the exterior ones have their bodies wrapped in black bandages which ends are falling loose. The gods' necks are decorated with *wsh* collars¹¹.

a—b. *Words spoken by Osiris, Lord of Eternity, the First in the necropolis in Abydos.*

a—b. *Words spoken by Horus, son of Isis, the great god, protector of his father Osiris.*

a—b. *Words spoken by Isis the great mother of the god, Eye of Re, Lady of the House of Life. (Pl. VIII).*

Sixth Scene (Pls. V and VI).

In the shrine is represented the sacred symbol of the god Nefertum with counterpoises. On each side are winged *udjat* eyes with cobras in the white crowns and the signs of life. Symbol of Nefertum is placed on the *šnw* sign with the offerings consisting of bread and bunch of grapes on the both sides.

a. *Words spoken by Anubis 'Imy-wt, who is in front of the [temple of the god], the great Lord of the West, he gives the offerings and water in Abydos.*

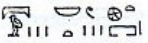
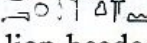



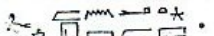
b. *Words spoken by Anubis 'Imy-wt, who is in the front of the temple of the god, the great Lord of West, he gives the offerings... (Pl. VIII).*



Seventh Scene (Pls. V and VI).

On the last scene, the entrance into Underworld is depicted by the Western Mountain with the cow of Hathor — the goddess of the necropolis — wearing a *Menat* necklace, emerging to meet the deceased *Tay-akhuth*. The goddess's body is painted with stars. Between her horns she wears the sun-disk with two plumes. The mountain is indicated by the red lines with red dots between them. Building representing the tomb with a pyramid-shaped roof is situated nearby the mountain. The mummified figure of the deceased is decorated with *wsh* collar, she is wearing a wig with festal cone and lotos bud at the forehead as well as earrings. Black bandages with loose ends wrap her body. In front of the woman stands an altar piled with bread and bunch of onions. The goddess Nekhbet in the form of a winged cobra is painted above the offerings. At the foot of the mountain is painted the symbol of Lower Egypt. A winged cobra on the sign of gold is represented above the necropolis.

a = b. *Words spoken by Hathor, Lady of the necropolis, the Eye of Re, Chieftain of all the countries, she gives the bread and breath. (Pl. VIII).*

a = b. *I am Nephthys, sister of the god, Eye of Re, Lady of the House of Life, she gives the fresh offerings. (Pl. VIII).*

¹¹ For the same representations see Piankoff-Rambova, *Myth. Pap. paps.* Nos 10 and 22 with accompanying inscription ; Darussy, op. cit., coffin No. 61030 with ; and on the coffin 61029 the ram headed figure is described as , lion headed as  and jackal headed as , and on the coffin 61032 is seen the inscription .

H e n z e l was wrong when he wrote that the coffin belongs to the period of Nineteenth and Twentieth dynasties because the writing of the word  with  determinative occurs from the Twenty-second dynasty¹² and the similarity in design of the coffin from Deir el-Medina¹³ indicates that the coffin belongs to the period not earlier than that of the Twenty-second dynasty.

¹² *Wb.* II, 432, 11.

¹³ See D a r e s s y, *op. cit.*, Coffins Nos. 61029, 61030, 61032, 61034.

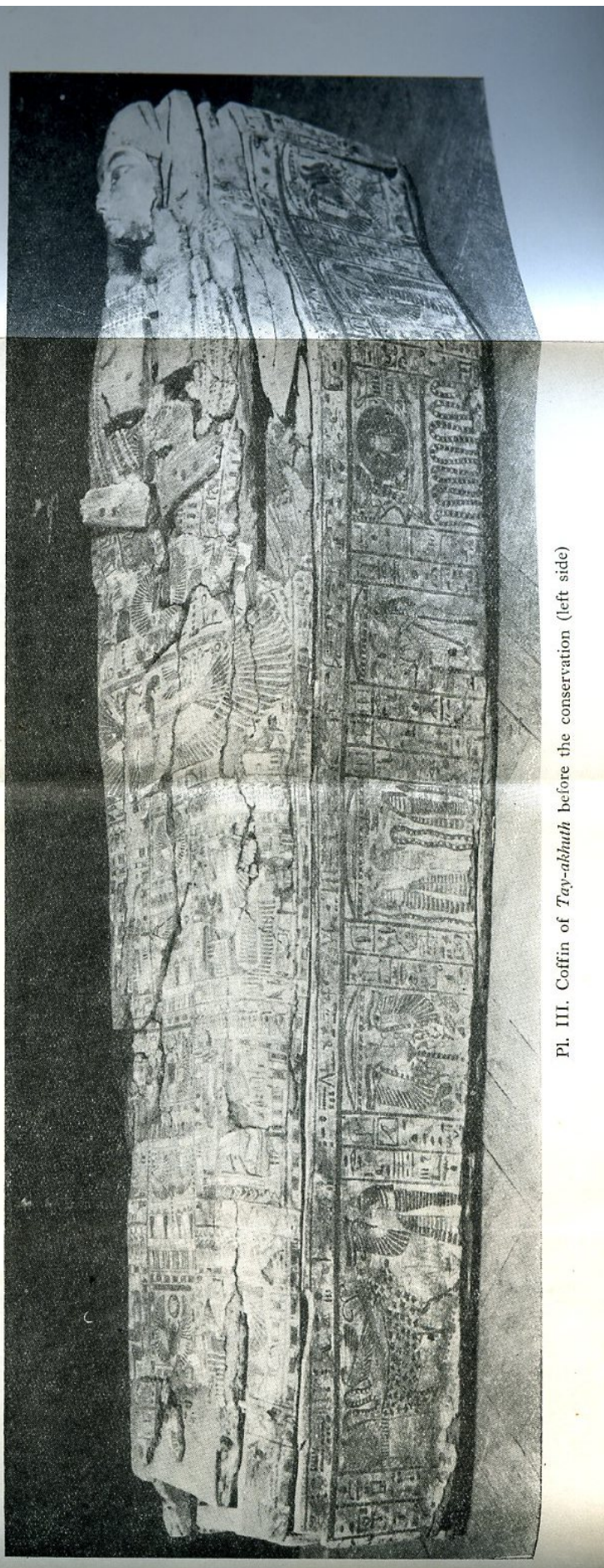


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Pl. I. Headside of the coffin

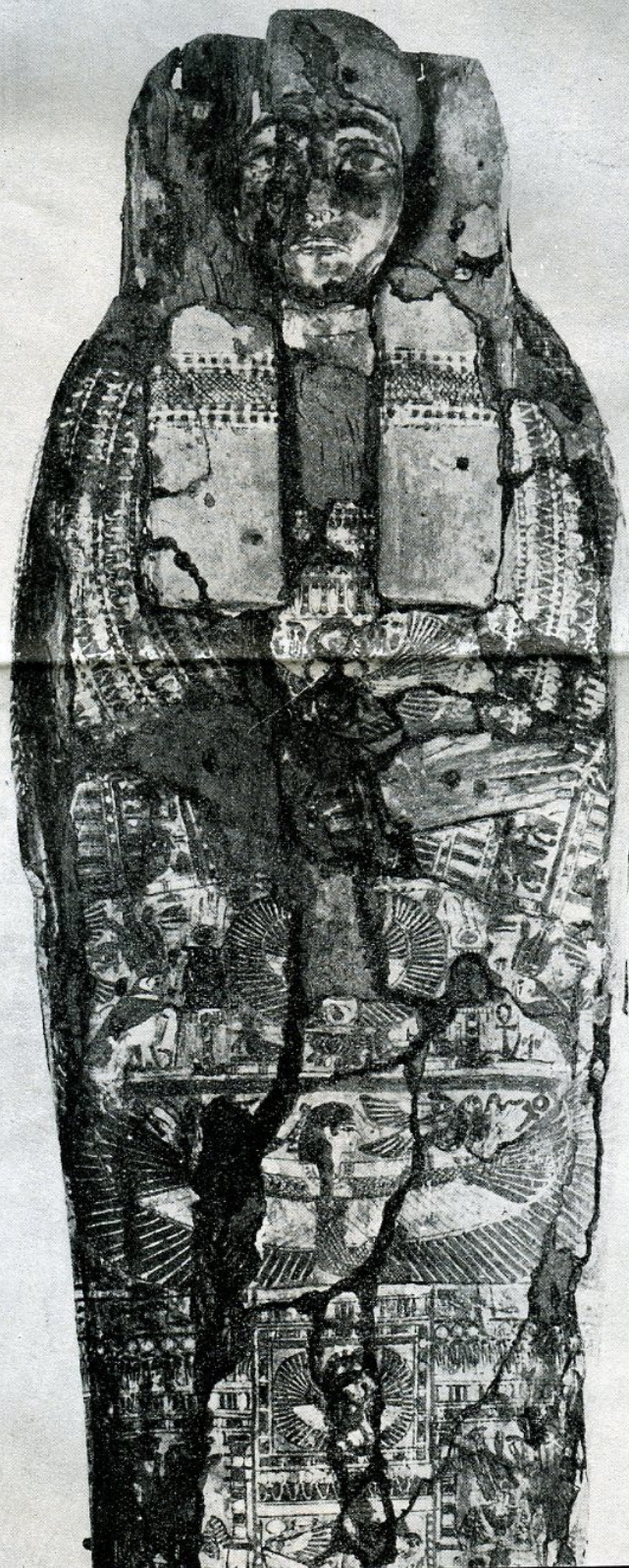


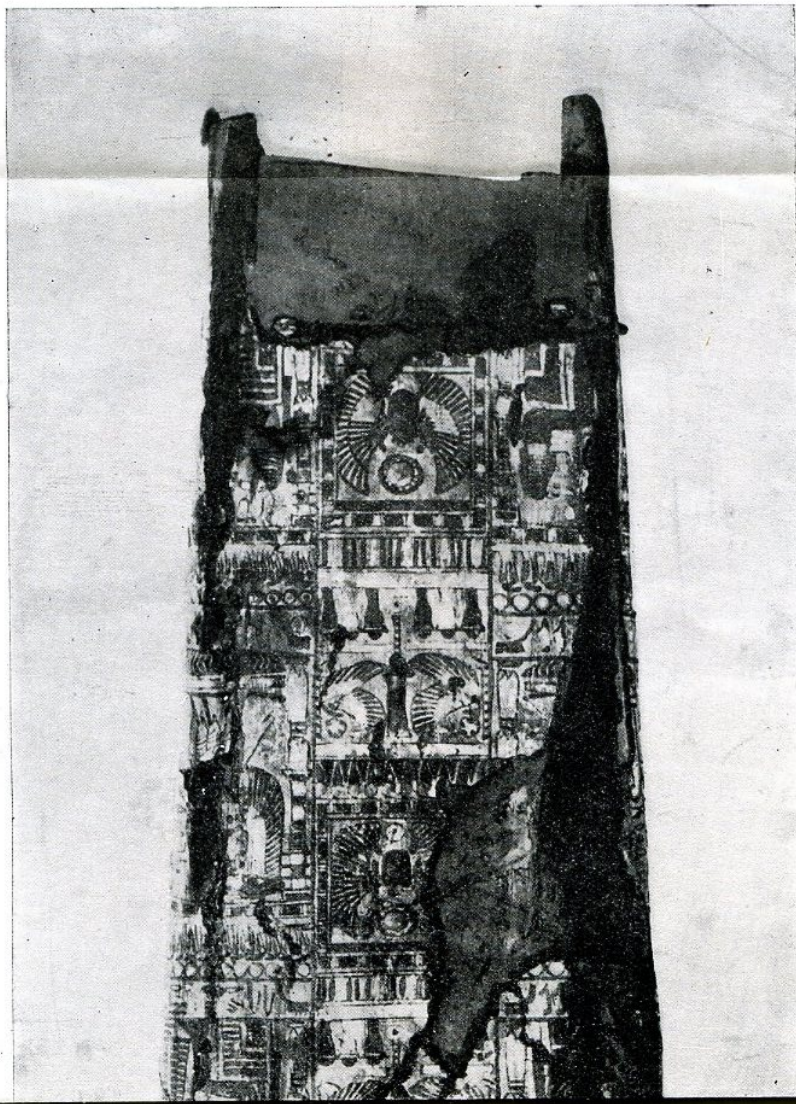
Pl. II. Coffin of *Tay-akhuth* before the conservation (right side)

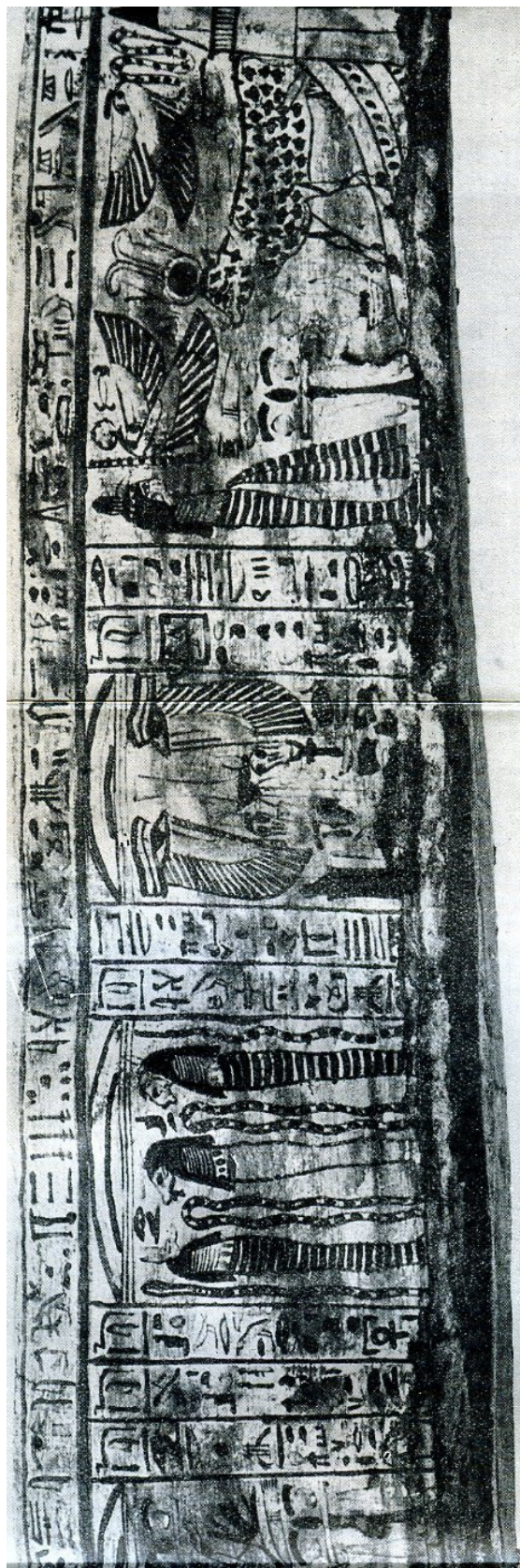


Pl. III. Coffin of *Tay-akhuth* before the conservation (left side)

Pl. IV. Front of the lid, after conservation work.



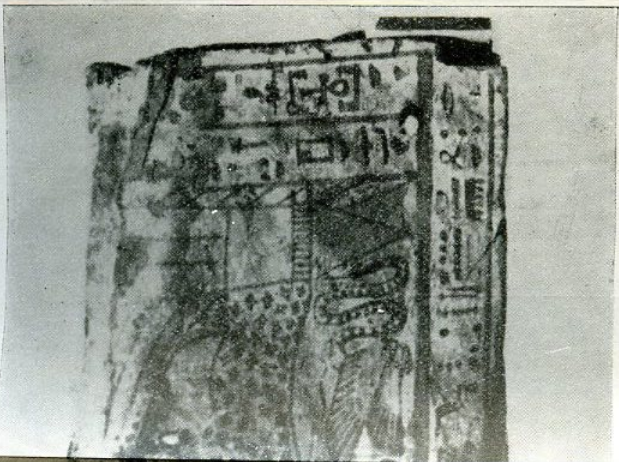




Pl. V. Right side of the bottom



Pl. VI. Left side of the bottom

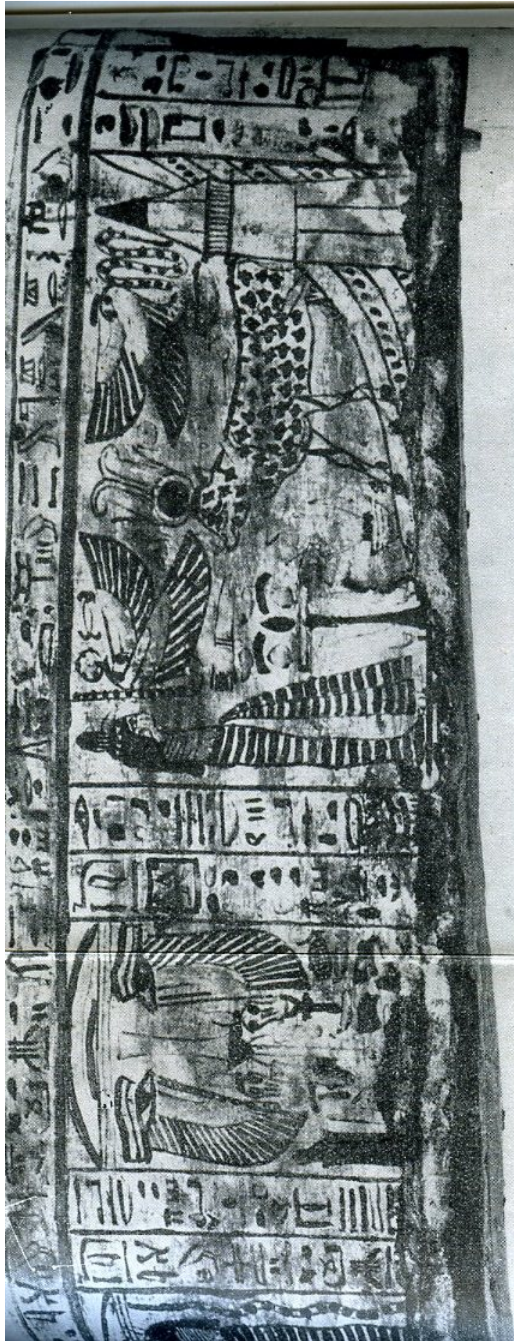


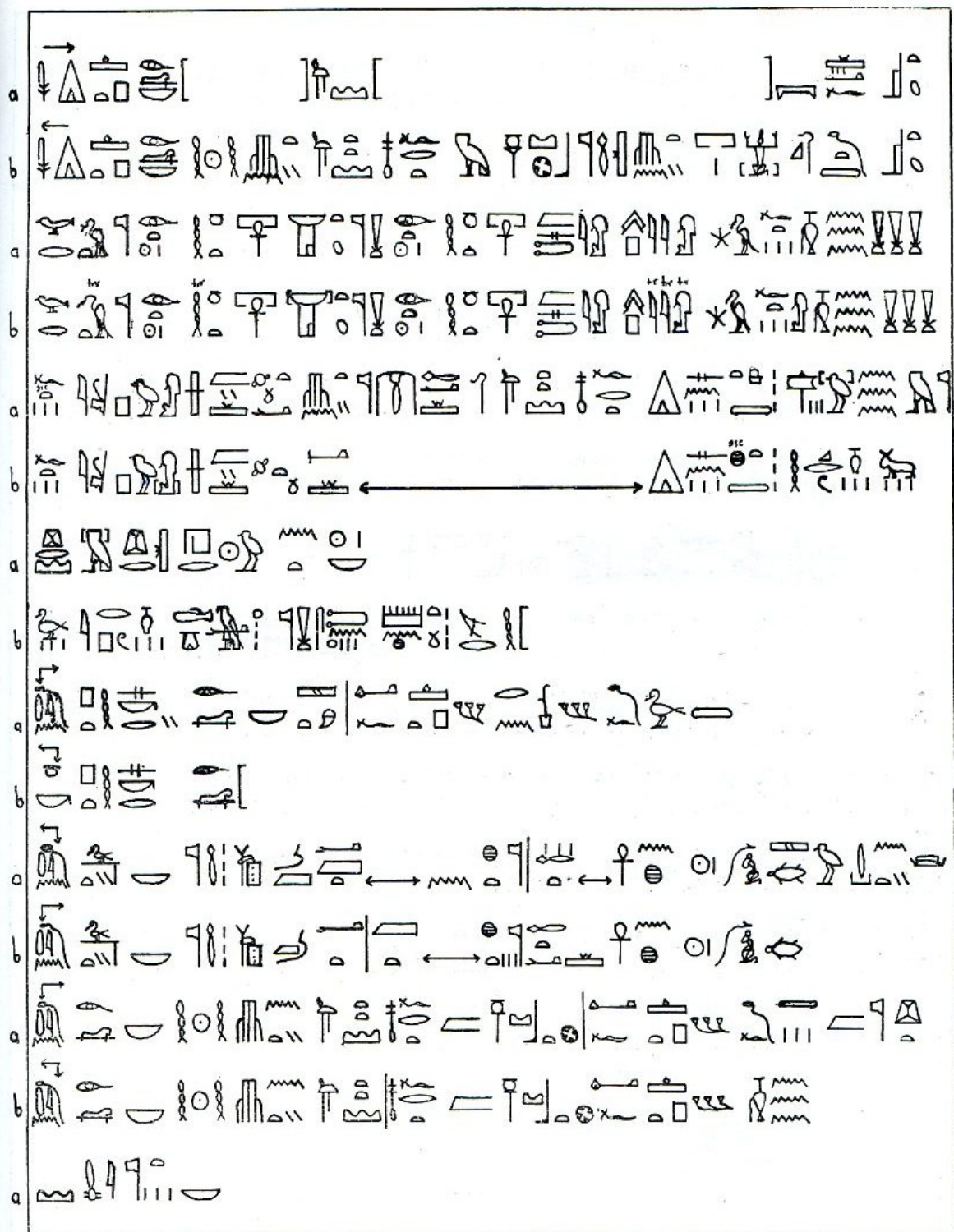
Pl. VI. Left side



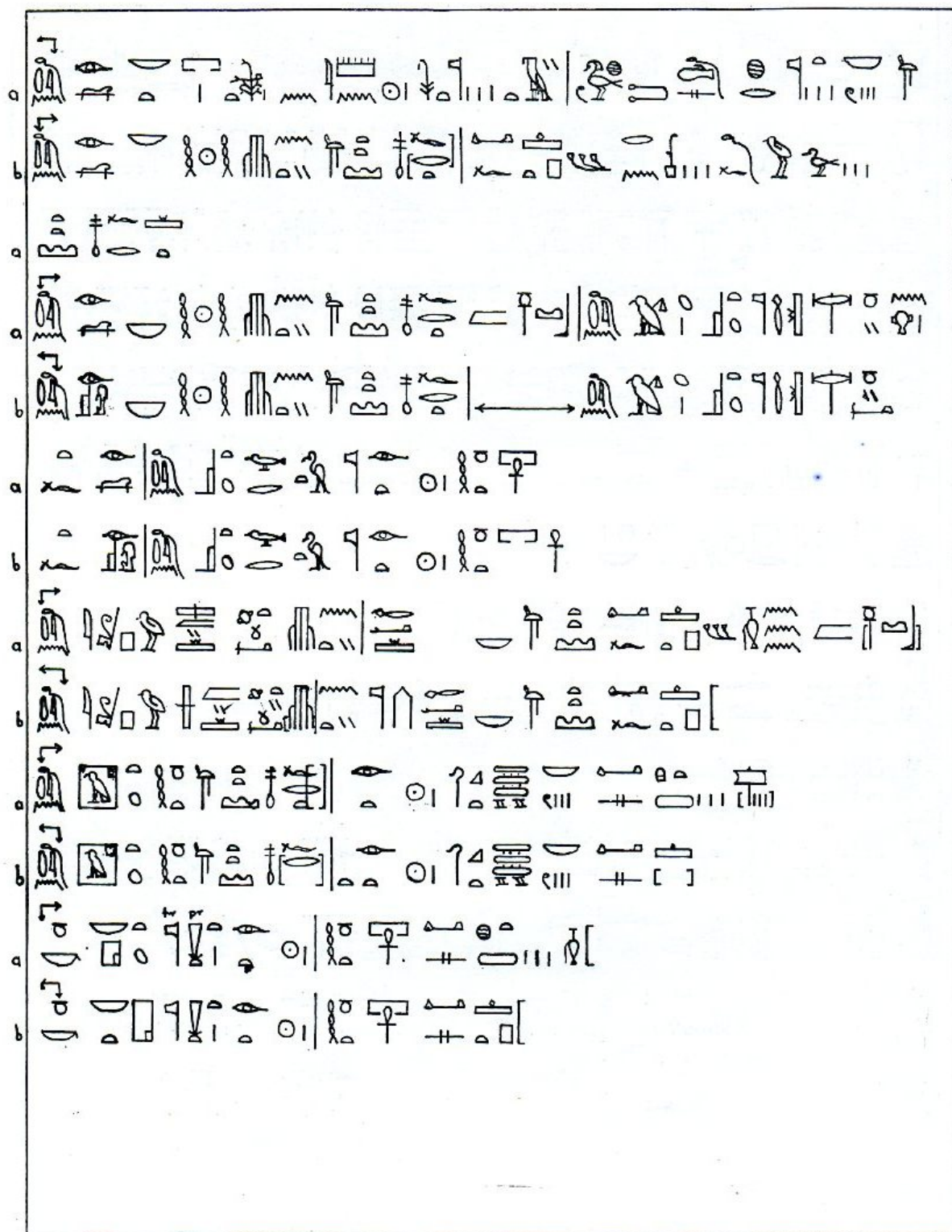
Pl. V. Right side



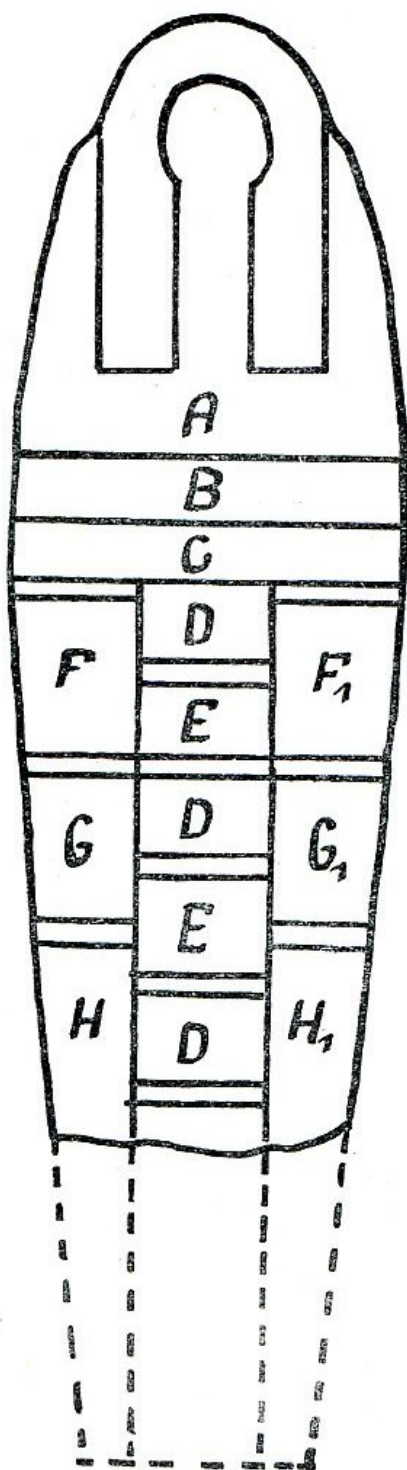




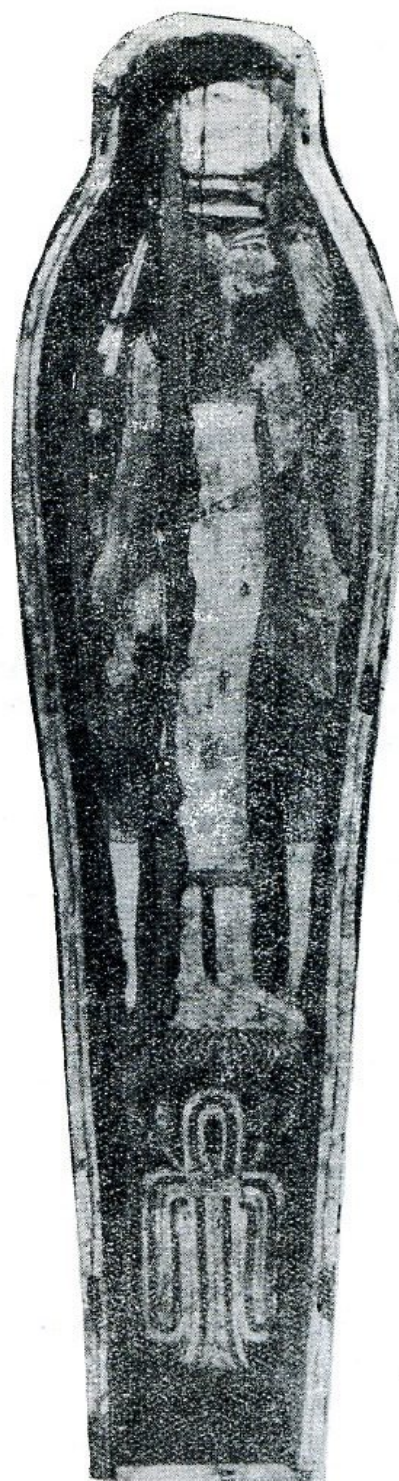
Pl. VII. Inscriptions on the bottom



Pl. VIII. Inscriptions on the bottom



Pl. IX. Scheme of the representations on the lid



Pl. X. Decoration on the floor of the bottom

