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Elzbieta Dabrowska Smektala

Coffins found in the Area of the Temple of Tuthmosis III at Deir el-Bahari [with 13 photo-plates].

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COFFINS FOUND IN THE AREA OF THE TEMPLE OF TUTHMOSIS III AT DEIR EL-BAHARI

BY

ELŻBIETA DĄBROWSKA-SMEKTALA

During the third season 1963-1964, the Polish Mission from the Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology in Cairo assisted Dr. L. Dąbrowski in his task of restoring the temple of Hatshepsut on behalf of the Egyptian Antiquities Service ⁽¹⁾.

Simultaneously, the clearing of the temple of Tuthmosis III was continued westward.

Among the other finds ⁽²⁾ made this season, were four intact wooden coffins and the wooden bottom of another one ⁽³⁾.

The coffins belonging to the Overseer of the Priests *'Ir-ty-rw-ḏw* (Inv. No. F. 4032) and to the women *Ns-Hnsw* (Inv. No. F. 5592) and *Wdḏ-rn-s* (Inv. No. F. 5593) — family members of priests of the god Mont — can be dated to the Late Period, as can also the coffin-bottom (Inv. No. F. 4033). The small wooden undecorated coffin (Inv. No. F. 4043) belonging to an unknown girl is probably from the Roman Period.

Three of these coffins (Inv. Nos. F. 4032, F. 5592, F. 5593), probably made in the same carpenter's shop, represent the same style of the simple decoration. The ground colour is white, and in the middle of the lid a single vertical band bearing a hieroglyphic inscription in black ink with the name and titles of the deceased runs

⁽¹⁾ For information concerning the work, see L. DĄBROWSKI : « Preliminary Report on the Restoration Work at Deir el-Bahari during the season 1963-1964 », *ASAE*, in print.

⁽²⁾ See E. DĄBROWSKA-SMEKTALA : « List of

the Objects Found at Deir el-Bahari in the Area of the temple of Tuthmosis III during the Season 1963-1964 », *ASAE*, in print.

⁽³⁾ The coffins are stored in the newly-build magazine with the other finds.

down from the neck to foot. Between the lappets of the wig, which confined to the lid only, a fragment of the neck is visible.

Around the neck is painted a very simple *wsh* collar.

The remainder of the lid is occupied by the figures of the Four Sons of Horus : Amset, human-headed ; Duamutef, jackal-headed ; Hapy, baboon-headed ; and Qebhsenuf, falcon-headed ; all shown as standing mummies wearing green *wsh* collars and blue wigs. These deities are depicted two on each side—one above the other—facing towards the inscription.

The coffins are all rather crudely made, the interiors are not painted and in some cases, the inscriptions were not left unfinished.

On December 8th 1963, among the débris covering the temple the bottom of a wooden coffin was found and a headless mummy nearby (Pl. XXXII, A).

The rather crude coffin-bottom (Inv. No. F. 4033) is only decorated on the exterior. The standing figure of the goddess Nut with her face in profile is outlined in black against the white background (Pl. XXXII, B). The features are faintly marked. She wears a white wig with red *mdh* fillet and is crowned with the yellow disk. The goddess' body is painted yellow, her breasts are naked and white dress girdled with red ribbon. The hands are barely sketched and the fingers are not even traced.

For the construction and dimensions of the bottom see fig. 1.

As to the headless mummy found in the vicinity (Pl. XXXII, C), after removing the wrappings, the body of the middle-aged man appeared with hands concealing the pudenda (Pl. XXXIII, A-F). It should be noted that the inner most cerecloths were still damp, probably imbibed with resinous substances⁽¹⁾.

On December 30th 1963 among the débris mounted above the area of the temple, a small wooden coffin made of plain wood (Inv. No. F. 4034) was found (Pl. XXXIV, A).

For the construction and dimensions of the coffin see fig. 2.

When opened, the coffin proved to contain the mummy of a girl about seven years old (Pl. XXXIV, B-C) wearing round her neck a thin palm-cord with two tiny amulets — one made of blue faience representing the god Bes (Inv. No. F. 1516) and another one made of bronze representing a naked woman (Inv. No. F. 1515).

⁽¹⁾ An anthropological study of the mummies is to be published by prof. T. Dzierżykraj-Rogalski.

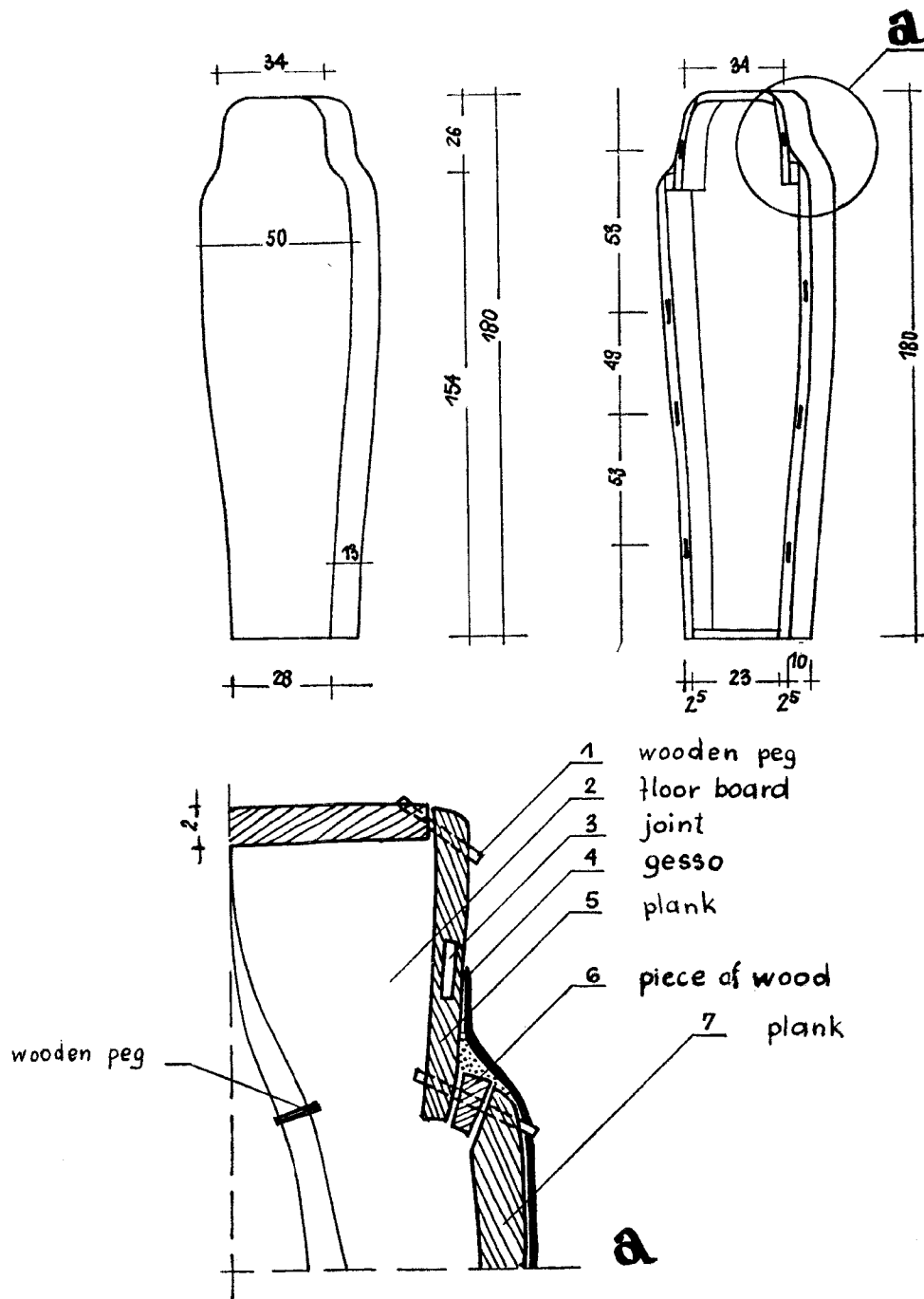


Fig. 1. — Bottom of the coffin (F. 4033).

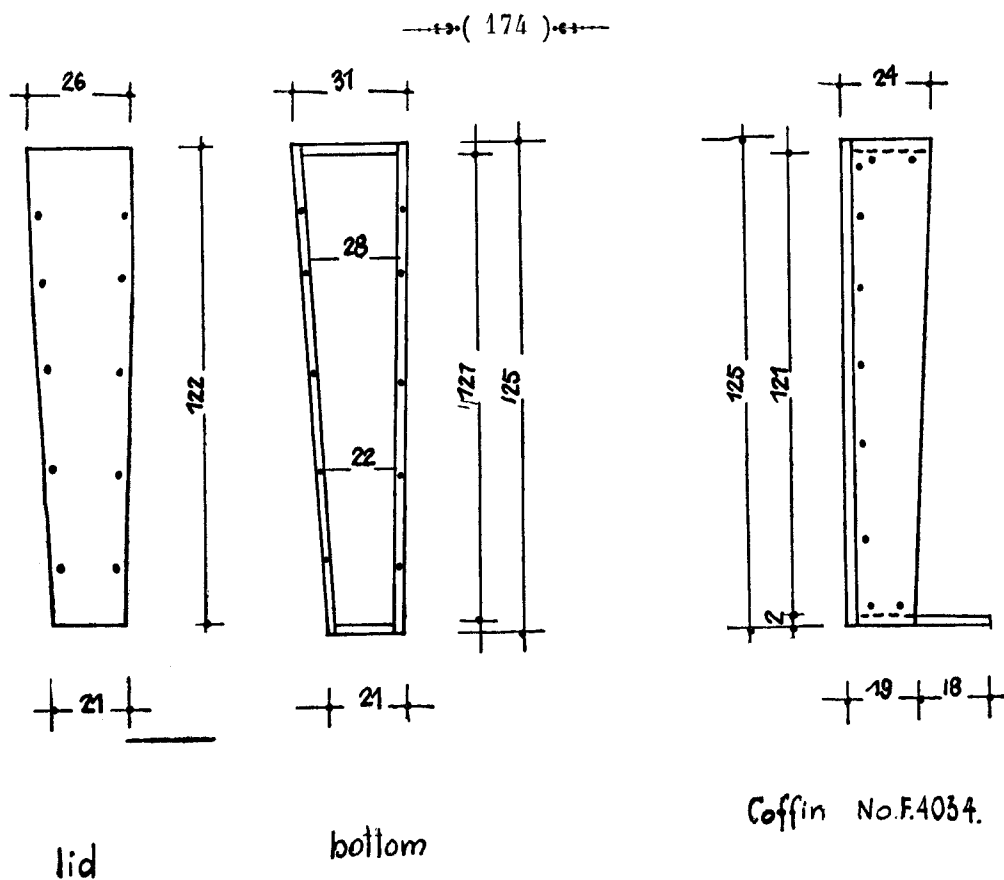


Fig. 2.

Coffin of 'Ir.ty-rw-t'w.

The coffin was found intact and very well preserved on the 23rd of December 1963 among the débris above the pavement of the temple (Pl. XXXV, A-B).

For the construction and dimensions, see fig. 3.

The deceased, 'Ir.ty-rw-t'w, bore the following titles : Overseer of the Priests of Min-Lord of Panopolis ; Overseer of the Priests of Horus-Lord of Aphroditopolis ; Overseer of the Priests of Wepwawet-Lord of Asyût. He was the son of *Dd-hy*, Priests of the god Mont-Lord of Thebes ⁽¹⁾.

⁽¹⁾ The wooden bottom of the interior coffin belonging to the priest probably the same, was published by H. Gauthier, see *Cercueils anthropoïdes des prêtres de Montou* (No. 41070), p. 502, pl. XXIX.

son
of and

The face of on the lid is painted red, with black and white eyes and the beard is a black line traced round the face. The yellow wig is decorated with vertical stripes done in blue and red (Pl. XXXVI, B). On the backside of the head on the coffin, the sun is depicted rising over a yellow mountain (Pl. XXXVI, A). The arms and

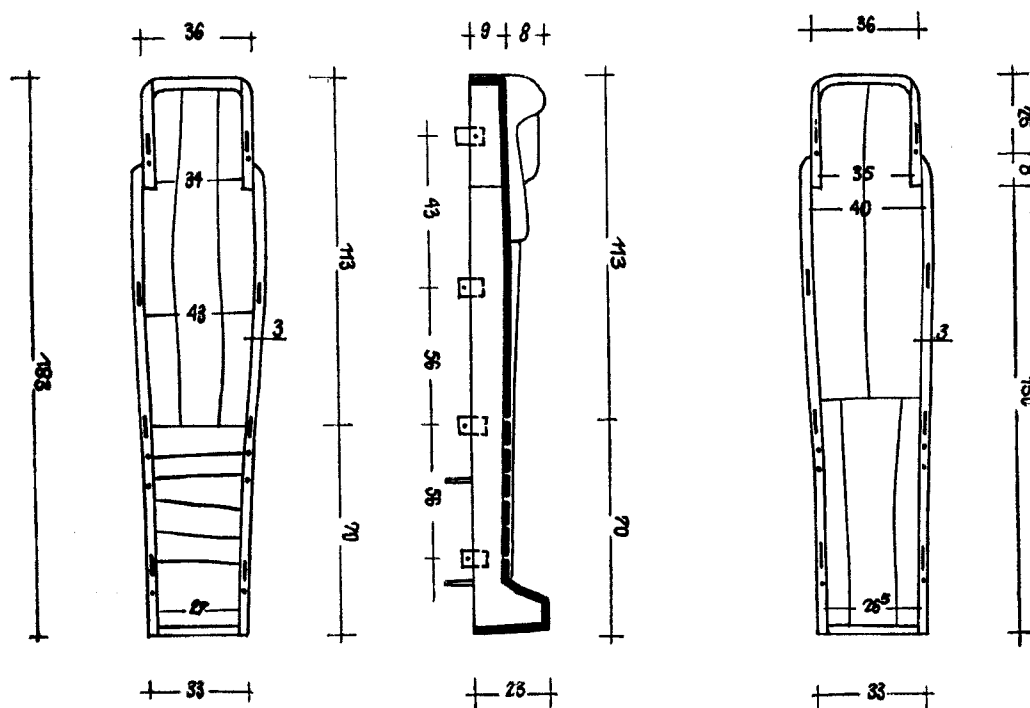


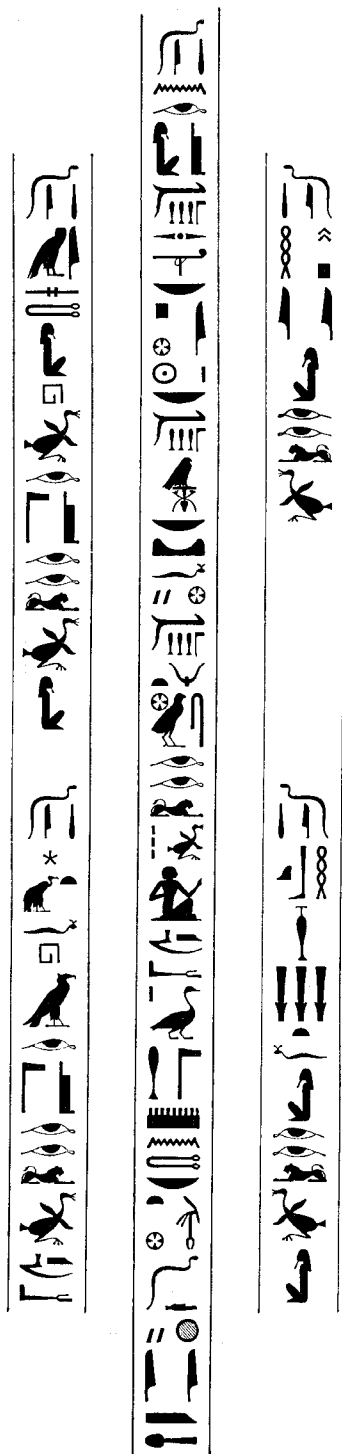
Fig. 3. — Coffin of *Irty-rw-t₃w* (No. F. 4032).

the breast are covered by the *wsh* collar which consists of the different kinds of small vertical beads—green ones on a yellow, and blue on a white background ⁽¹⁾.

The hieroglyphic inscription is painted on a yellow background with red contour lines along both sides (Pl. XXXVI, C) and reads :

« Words spoken by Osiris, Overseer of the Priests of the god Min-Lord of Panopolis, Overseer of the Priests of Horus-Lord of Aphroditopolis, Overseer of the Priests of

⁽¹⁾ I am indebted to Mr. G. Gerster for his excellent photos.



—+—(176)+—

Wepwawet-Lord of Asyût, 'Ir.ty-rw-t'w⁽¹⁾ justified, son of the Priests of Mont-Lord of Thebes, Dd-hy⁽²⁾ justified».

The Four Sons of Horus represented as yellow mummies standing on blue *m't* signs, bear the following inscriptions⁽³⁾ : Red-faced Amset : « Words spoken by Amset, O ! Osiris 'Ir.ty-rw-t'w. Black-faced Duamutef : « Words spoken by Duamutef, O ! Osiris 'Ir.ty-rw-t'w».

Red-faced Hapy : « Words spoken by Hapy, 'Ir.ty-rw-t'w».

Yellow-faced Qebehsenuf : « Words spoken by Qebehsenuf 'Ir.ty-rw-t'w».

Coffin of Ns-Hnsw.

This coffin was found intact among the débris on March 31st 1964 with an upper left side of the lid destroyed (Pl. XXXVII, A-B).

For the construction and dimensions of the coffin see fig. 4.

The face on the lid is painted in pink. The yellow wig is decorated with blue and red vertical stripes, and the ear is visible against the wig. The *wsh* collar is painted red and blue, as on the coffin of 'Ir.ty-rw-t'w.

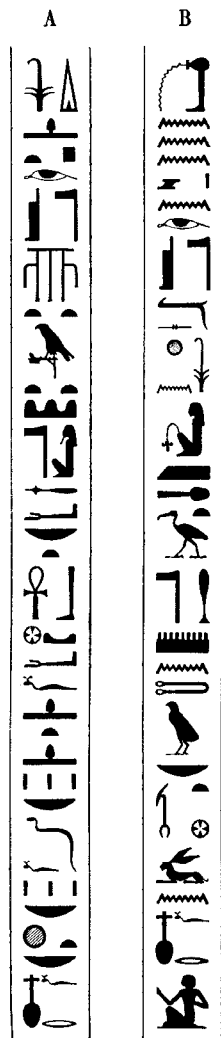
The Four Sons of Horus also represented in the same way as on the coffin of 'Ir.ty-rw-t'w.

⁽¹⁾ See RANKE, *Personennamen*, Bd. 1, S. 42, 17.

⁽²⁾ See *op. cit.*, Bd. 1, S. 412.

⁽³⁾ Some signs are written in hieratic.

The main inscription (Pl. XXXVII, A) consisting of a prayer to Osiris for funerary offerings, written on the yellow background reads as follows :



between two red lines reads as follows : « Words spoken by Osiris, Mistress of the House *Wdʒ-rn-s* ⁽³⁾ justified, daughter

« The boon which the king gives (to) Osiris, First of the Western, the Great God, Lady (sic) of Abydos, that he may give the offerings of good and all things good and pure to Osiris *Ns-Hnsw* ⁽¹⁾, justified, daughter of the priest of the god Mont-Lord of Thebes *Wnn-nfr* » ⁽²⁾.

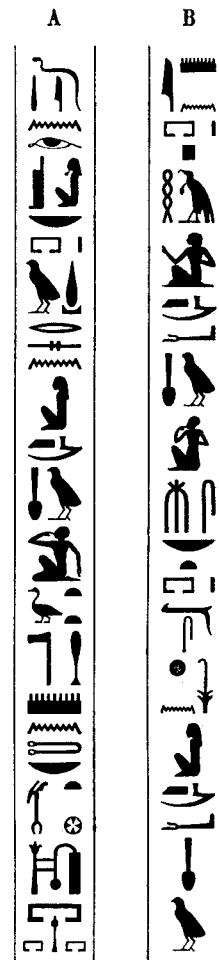
Coffin of the Mistress of the House Wdʒ-rn-s.

Coffin of *Wdʒ-rn-s* who was a daughter of *Phtyw*-Priest of the god Mont, Scribe of the House of Amūn, and *Ns-Hnsw* Mistress of the House to which probably belongs the coffin mentioned above was found on April 1st 1964 (Pl. XXXVIII, B-C).

The face on the lid is painted pink, and the wig blue, covered with red and yellow painted decoration imitating the feathered wings of a bird. The *wsh* collar is green and red. The ears are shown against the wig, and the button-shaped earrings are marked in black ink.

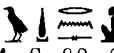
The Four Sons of Horus are depicted as standing mummies. Amset is red-faced ; Duamutef green-faced ; Hapy red-faced ; and Qebhsenuf white-faced.

Along the middle of the lid, a hieroglyphic inscription running down



⁽¹⁾ RANKE, *Personennamen*, Bd. 1, S. 178, 20.

⁽²⁾ Probably the same to whom belongs the coffin published by H. GAUTHIER, *Cercueils* II, 255, No. 41055.

⁽³⁾ Name of the deceased is written  instead of  see RANKE, *Personennamen* Bd. 1, S. 88, 23.

of the Priest of the god Mont-Lord of Thebes. Scribe of the White House of Amūm, *Phtyw*, justified and born of the Mistress of the House *Ns-hnsw*, justified».

For the construction and dimensions see fig. 5 and 6.

Opening of the coffin.

The coffins were opened inside the storehouse on 28th March-8th April 1964, in the presence of the following commission : Mr. Jacob Farah — Inspector of Luxor (replacing the Chief Inspector of Upper Egypt), Mr. M. Fathy Abdel Rahim — Director of Restoration Works in Upper Egypt, Mr. Ramadan Mustapha Saad — Inspector of Kurna, Mr. Hafiz Shusha — Chemist from the Museum in Cairo, Mr. Aly Bahgat — Conservator from Cairo Museum, professor of Anthropology T. Dzierzykray-Rogalski (Poland), Dr. L. Dąbrowski and E. Dąbrowska-Smektała — representing the Polish Mission. Photographs during the work were taken by Mustapha A. Maksut from Cairo Museum.

In the coffin of the overseer of priests *'Ir-ty-rw-t'w* after the outer bandages and linen wrappings were removed (Pl. XLI, Pl. XLII and Pl. XLIII), instead of a mummy nothing was found but linen bags filled with sawdust, chaff and chopped straw, cloths impregnated with resinous matter, and parcels of natron and other materials tied up in bits of cloth (Pl. XLIV, A-D). These bags had been so placed as to form the shape of the body, and the wrappings were bound in the same way as they would have been on a genuine mummy.

The coffins of *Ns-Hnsw* (Pl. XXXVIII, A) and *Wd'-rn-s*⁽¹⁾ (Pl. XXXVIII, B and Pl. XXXIX, A-C) contained only linen bags filled with the materials mentioned above. The bags were placed directly inside the coffin, without wrappings.

All the materials found inside the bags were used by the embalmers as they worked on the bodies they prepared for burial.

This rather unusual kind of burial is however not exceptional in the area of Deir el-Bahari. For example the similar cases are mentioned by Winlock⁽²⁾ and Naville⁽³⁾ where he described the coffin from XXIIInd dynasty belonging to *Na-menhet-Imn* priest of Mont. He writes « after the opening there were found hundreds of bags

⁽¹⁾ Some parts of the coffin being broken. It was necessary to open it by removing the floor-board from the bottom, other-wise the coffin would have been destroyed.

⁽²⁾ See Season 1918-1919, *MMA. Bull. Egypt. Exped. 1916-1927*, p. 12.

⁽³⁾ See *Temple of Deir el-Bahari*, Part 2, p. 6.

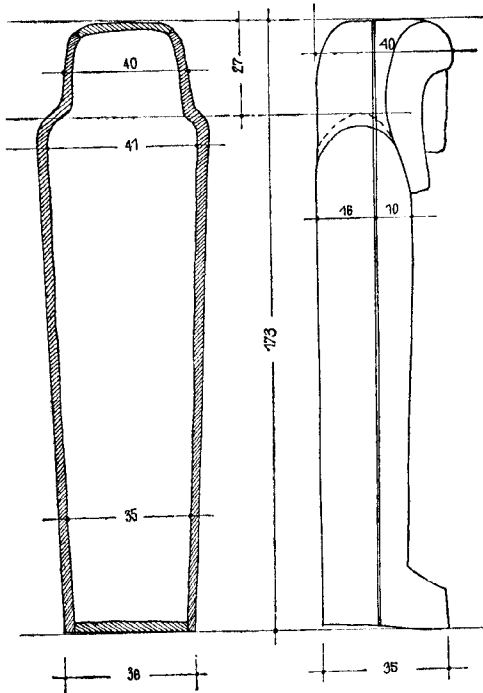


Fig. 4. — Coffin of *Ns-Hnsw* (No. F. 5592).

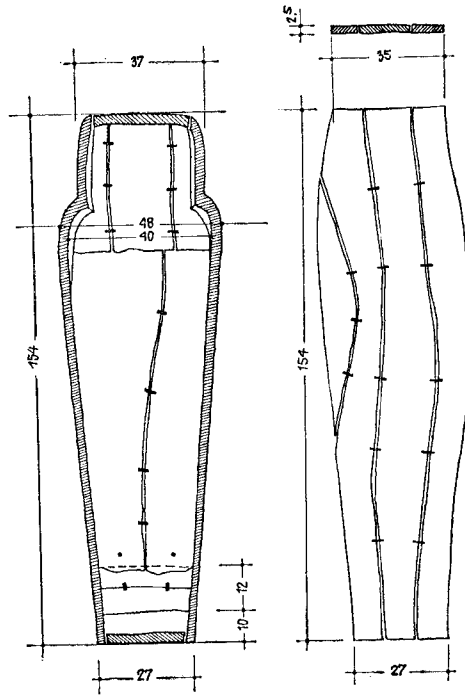


Fig. 5. — Coffin of *Wd'-rn-s* (No. F. 5593).

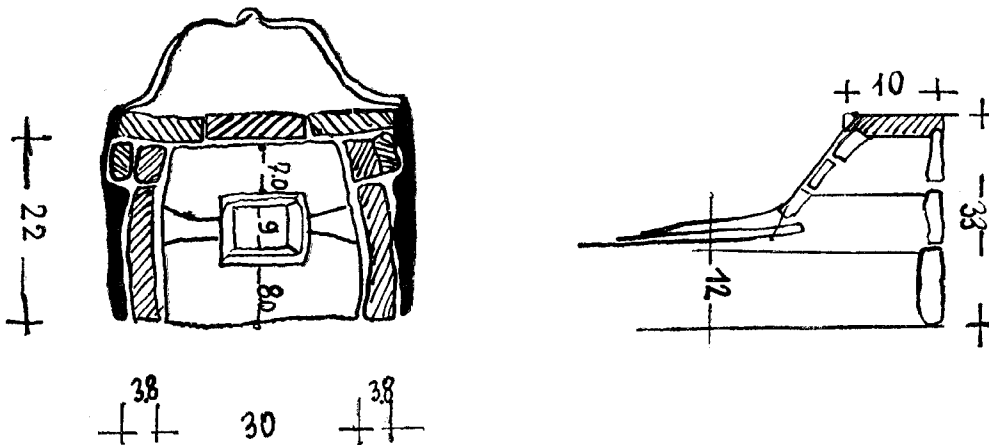


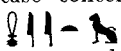
Fig. 6. — Coffin of *Wd'-rn-s* (No. F. 5593).

full of nitre». Winlock did not explain it, but Naville presumed that the coffin was not paid for or the purchasers have changed their minds and left it and the embalmers used it for storing their chemicals. The latest discovery brings some new elements which threw light on this sort of burial. All three coffins were found intact, closed as originally, with the joints and cracks in the wood and the space between the lid and the bottom filled up with whitewash. Among the débris, were found some fragments of the hieratic papyrus belonging to the priest 'Ir.ty-rw-t;w⁽¹⁾. This find as well as the bottom published by Gauthier proved that the priest 'Ir.ty-rw-t;w had the normal burial equipment and the original coffin had to be robbed.

It is very well known fact, that the robbing of the tombs happened during the whole history of Egypt, but the first well known looting by organized gangs took place in the times of Ramesses IX. In that time were robbed not only the royal tombs but that of the noblemen and commoners and every tomb had been violated. The robbers were recruited from the people who worked in the Western Thebes. During the times of Dynasty XXIst the viziers and high priest of Amūn were obliged to protect the mummies and to remove them from their coffins and to lay them wrapped again in the bandages in plain wooden coffin which were then reburied.

As all facts show in the case of our three coffins mentioned above the situation was almost the same. It is possible to explain the case in the following way :

The broken coffins with the profaned bodies were probably found by the priests or may be by the special commission working at the protecting of the mummies. So they were taken to the temple or to the embalmer's shop where they were prepared to the reburial. The new plain wooden coffins in the anthropoid shape were covered with the simple decorations and inscriptions with the names and titles of the deceased and the names of their parents. All these evidences were taken probably from the remains of the saved objects e.g. broken original coffins, fragments of the papyri and so on. So the essential aim for the ancient Egyptian preserving his name was fulfilled and he was given the life. But new life and survival was connected with mummification. The identification of our mummies was probably impossible for they may be completely broken or lost so the people occupied at the protecting of the

⁽¹⁾ The same case concerned the wooden coffin of woman  found at Deir el-Bahari some years ago by Mr. Ramadan

Mustapha Saad, inspector of Antiquities Department.

corpses put inside the coffin the linen bags with the materials of the embalmer's shop used when they worked at the mummies-henna, sawdust natron and so on. These materials were ritually consecrated and the priests recited the religious formulae appropriate to the various stages in the embalmment rituals and then put in the place of the original mummies. Then the coffins were closed and reburied in the débris covering, ruined in that time the temple of Tuthmosis III.

In that way the main works of the commission reburied the robbed mummies were realised, the names of the deceased were preserved for eternity in the inscriptions written on the coffins and the substitutional bodies in the form of the linen bags did not allow the soul to search eternally in vain for a body which no longer existed.

The fact that the bags of 'Ir.ty-rw-ḫw were wrapped in the bandages and in the case of the women were put directly inside the coffins can be explained by his higher social position.

But till now there is no evidences who make the reburial and what authorities were responsible for that work.

Now we stand at the problem of dating the first burial and time when happened the reburial.

As to the date of the first burial we have only the bottom of the coffin published by H. Gauthier (belonging probably to the same priest) from the pre-Saite period ⁽¹⁾.

To the same priest belongs fragment of the hieratic papyrus ⁽²⁾ found in the area of Tuthmosis III (see below). The manuscript had to be written for the deceased 'Ir.ty-rw-ḫw when he had the first burial. The name of the deceased appeared in XXVIth dynasty ⁽³⁾ but it is not a certain clue. Some forms of the hieratic signs on the papyrus are showing the similarity rather to the signs of the IInd and Ist century B.C.

Resemblance of our fragment of the papyrus to the 'Iw.f-nḥ manuscript allow us to date the first burial to the period of XXVIth dynasty or later, but now it is difficult to write something more in that question.

Cairo, December 1966.

⁽¹⁾ See GAUTHIER, *Cercueils*, CGC, p. 502.

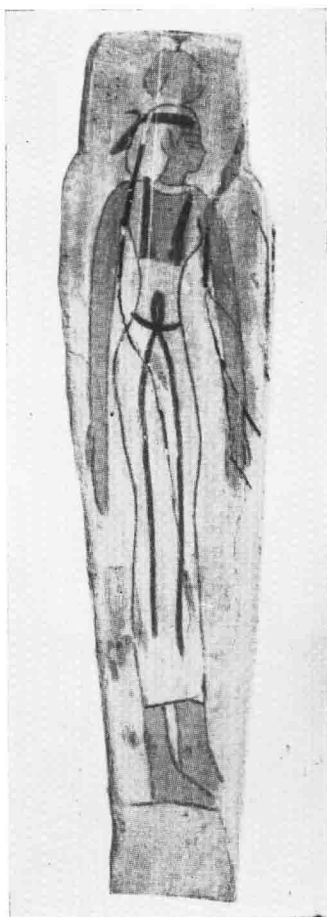
⁽²⁾ Fragment of the Hieratic Papyrus of 'Ir.ty-rw-ḫw.

⁽³⁾ M. MALININE, *Choix de textes juridiques en hiératique «anormal» et en démotique*. I^{re} partie. Paris 1953, the author published some papyri

from the time of Amasis I from Thebes where is mentioned 'Ir.tw-rḫj son of Dd-ḫj and 'Irt.w-rw. His title was whj-mw n Tj-int (E. 7836, E. 7843, E. 7839 all from Louvre).



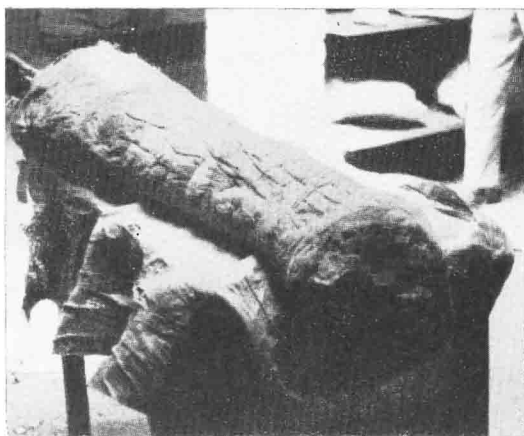
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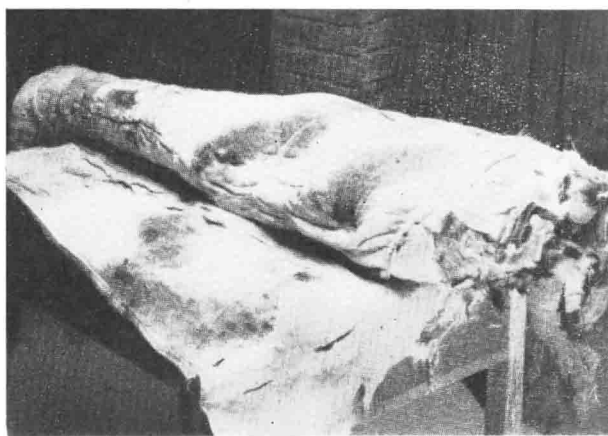
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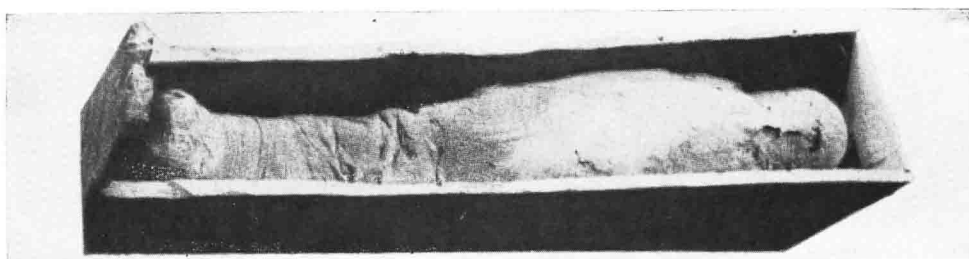
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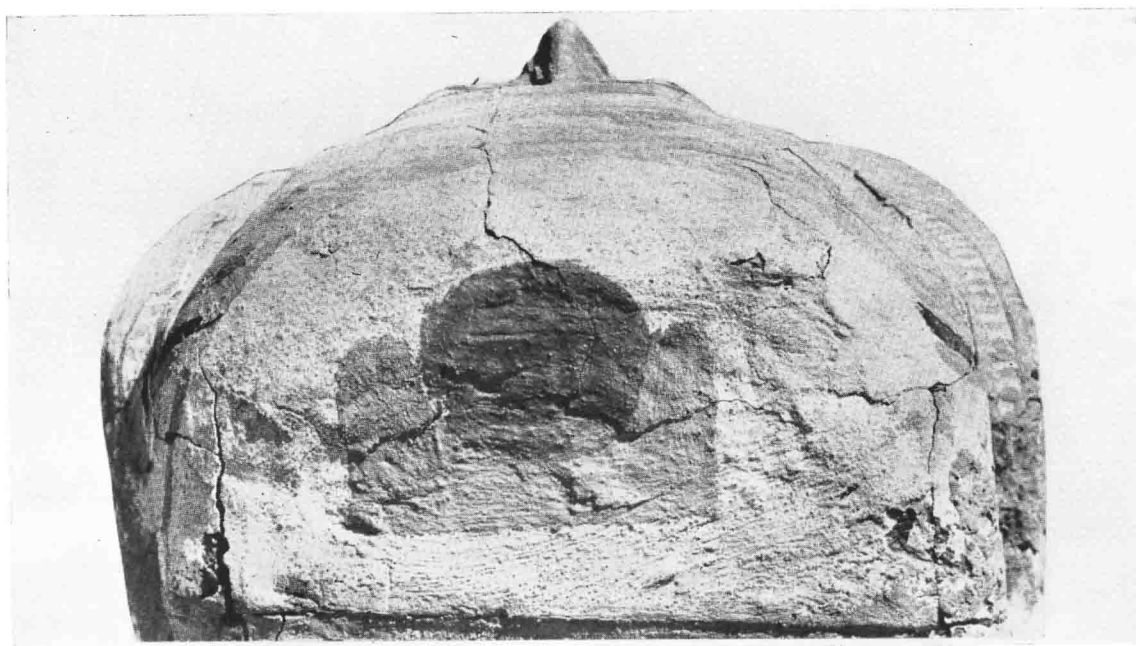
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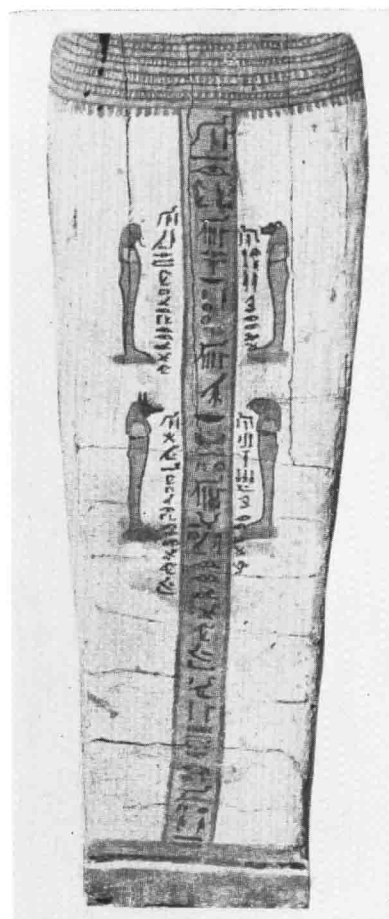
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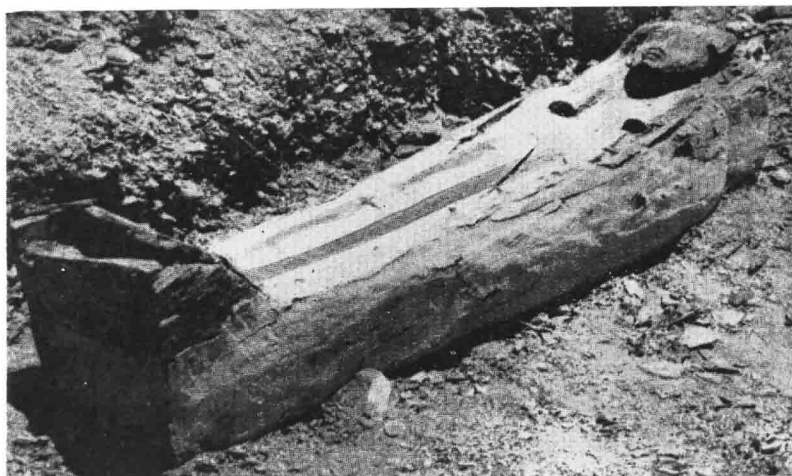
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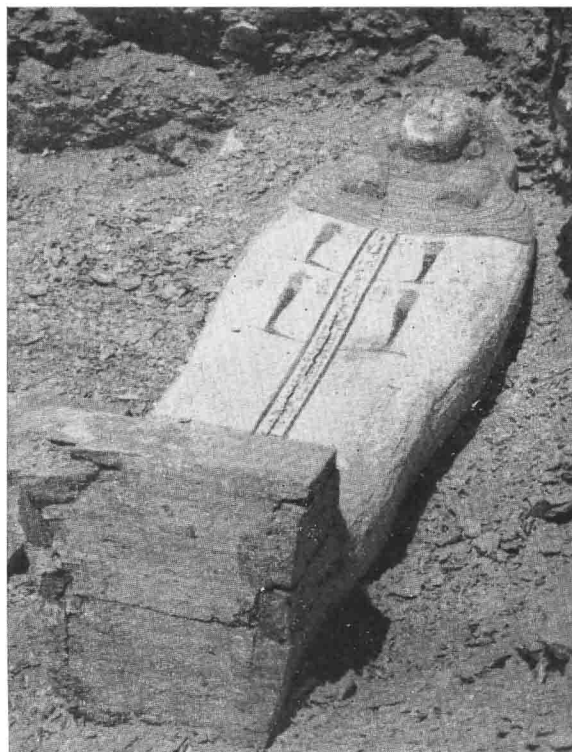
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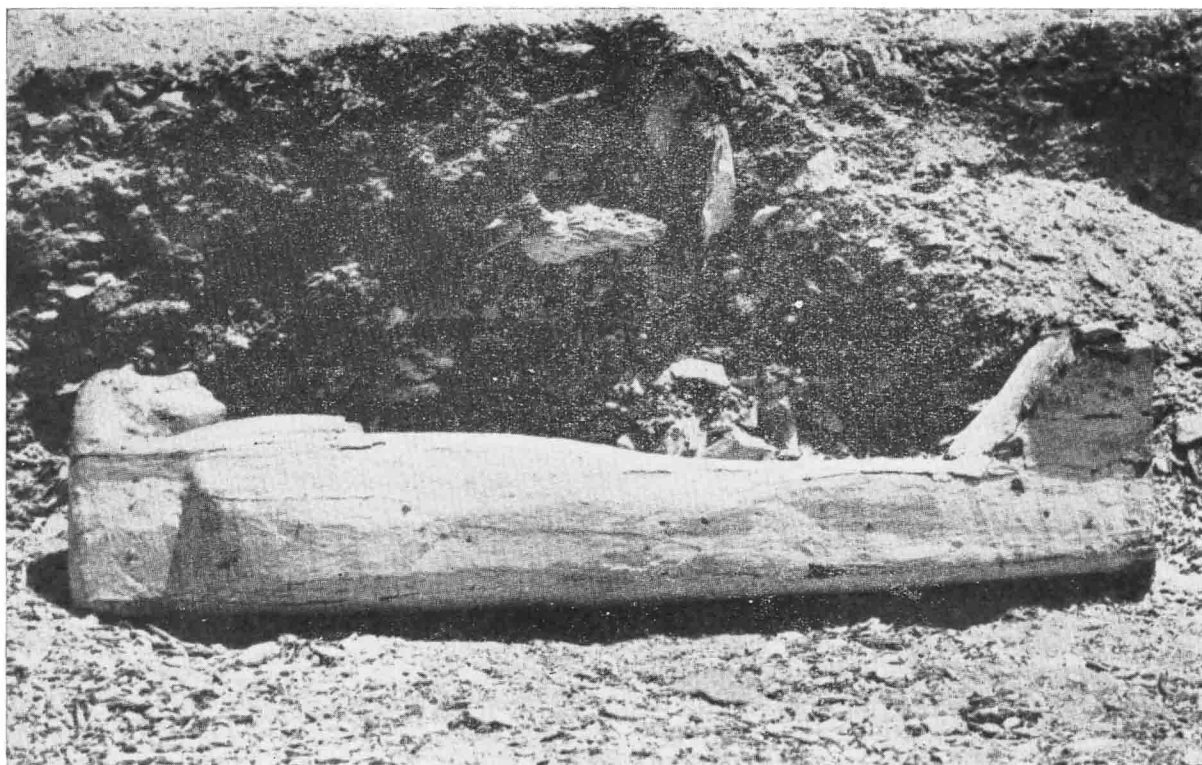
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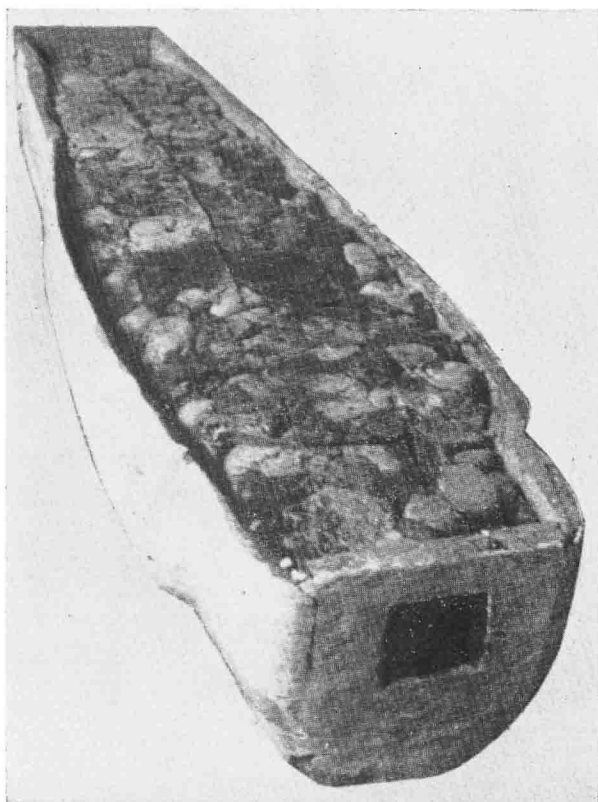
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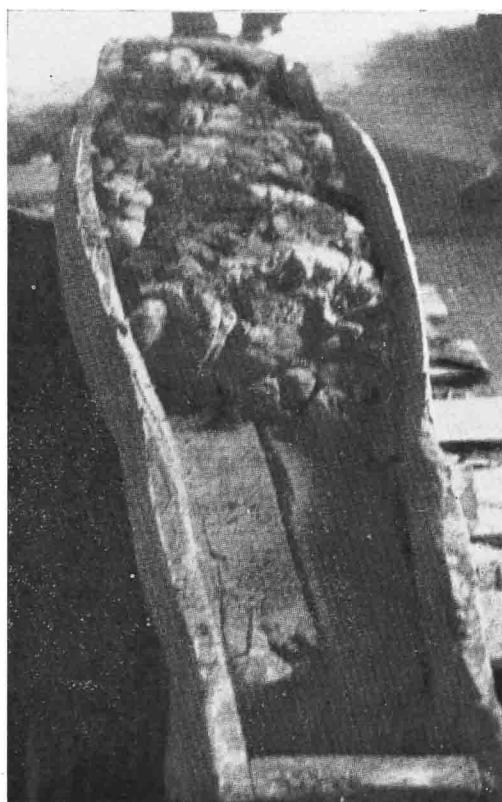
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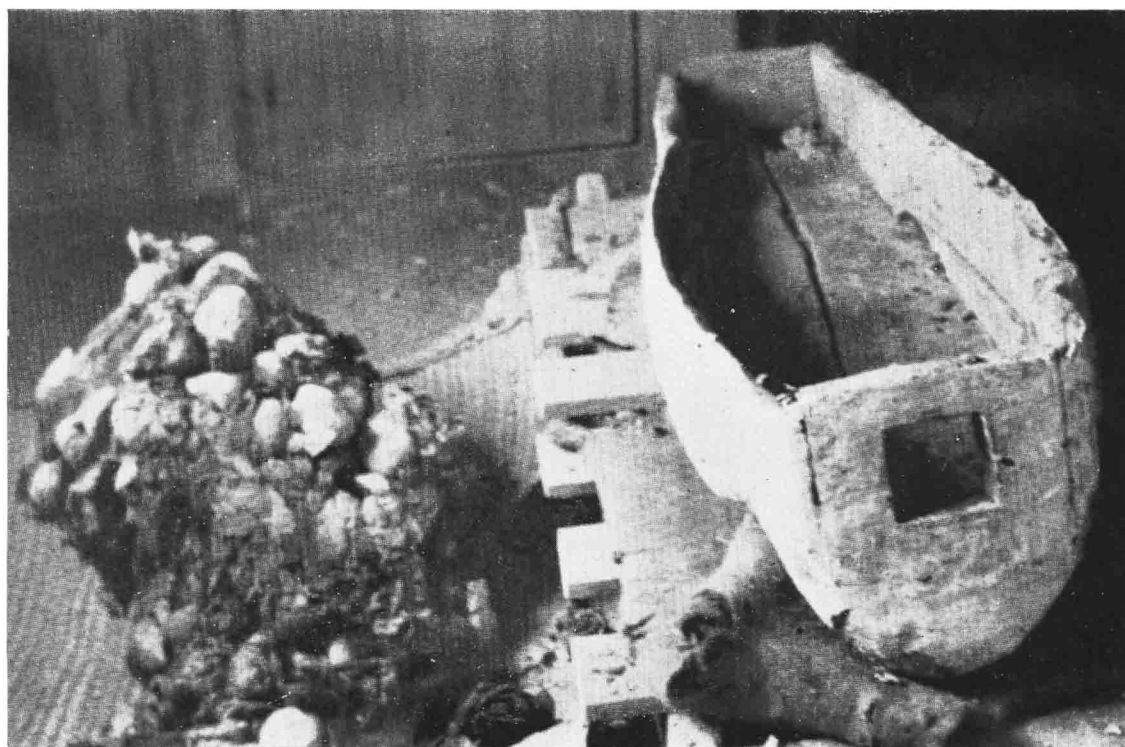
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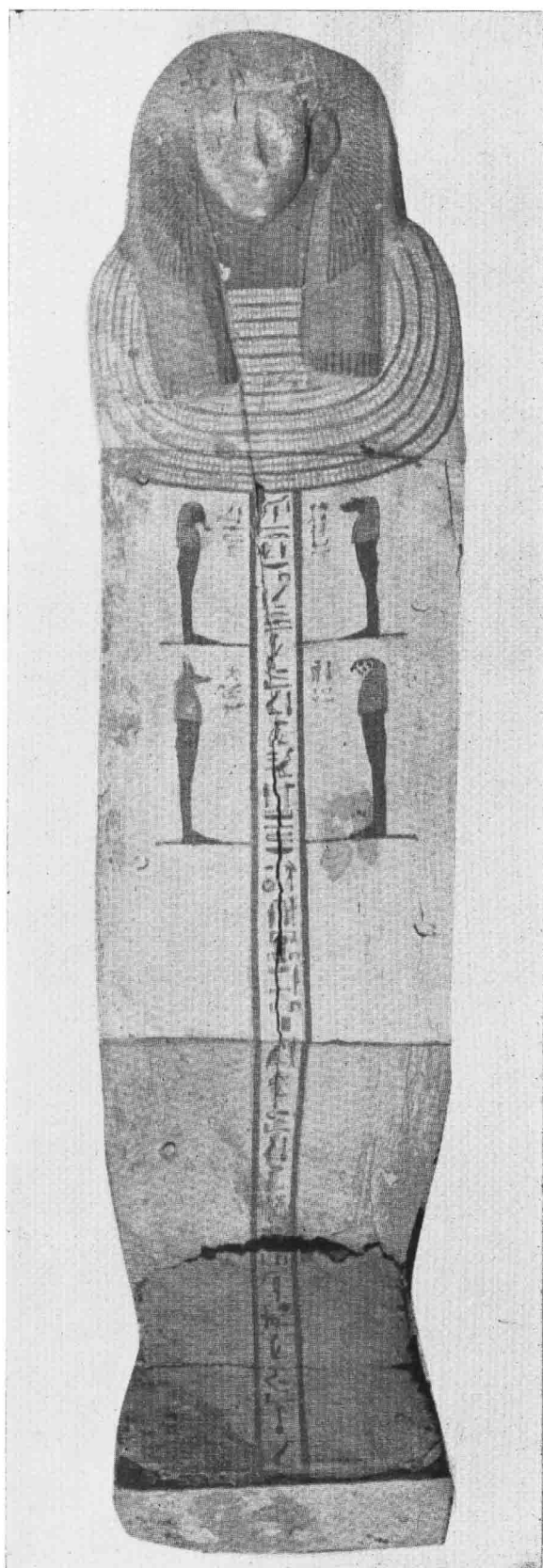
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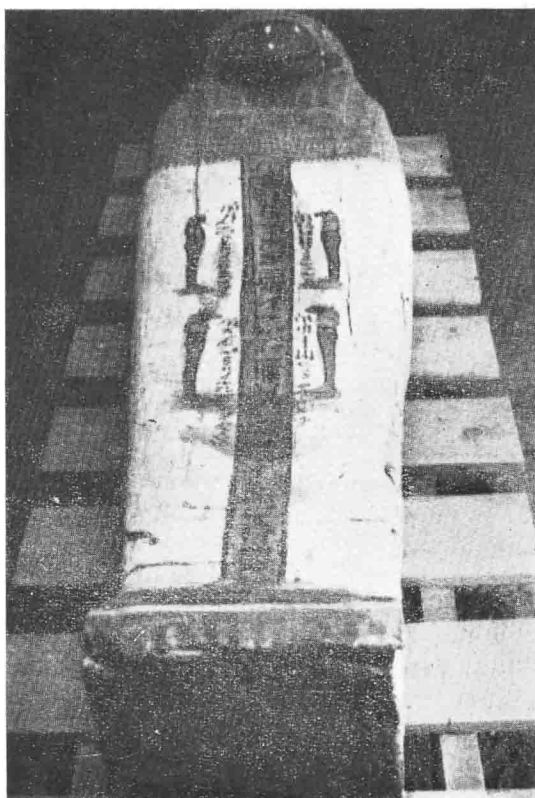


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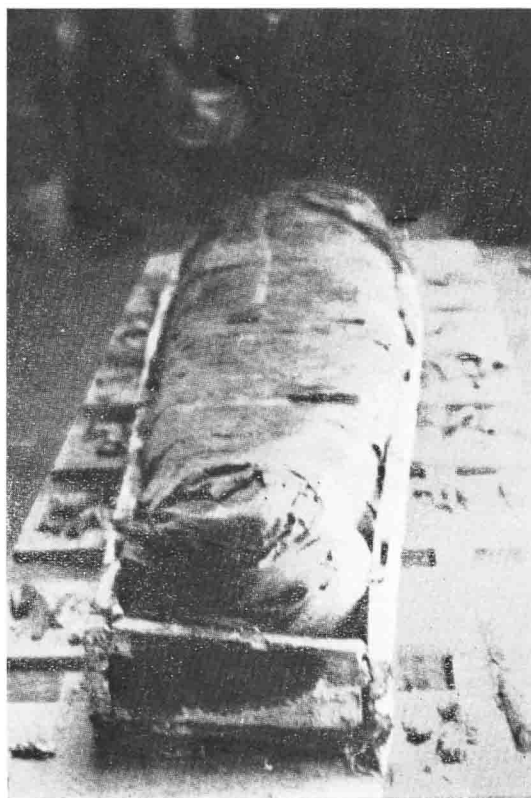


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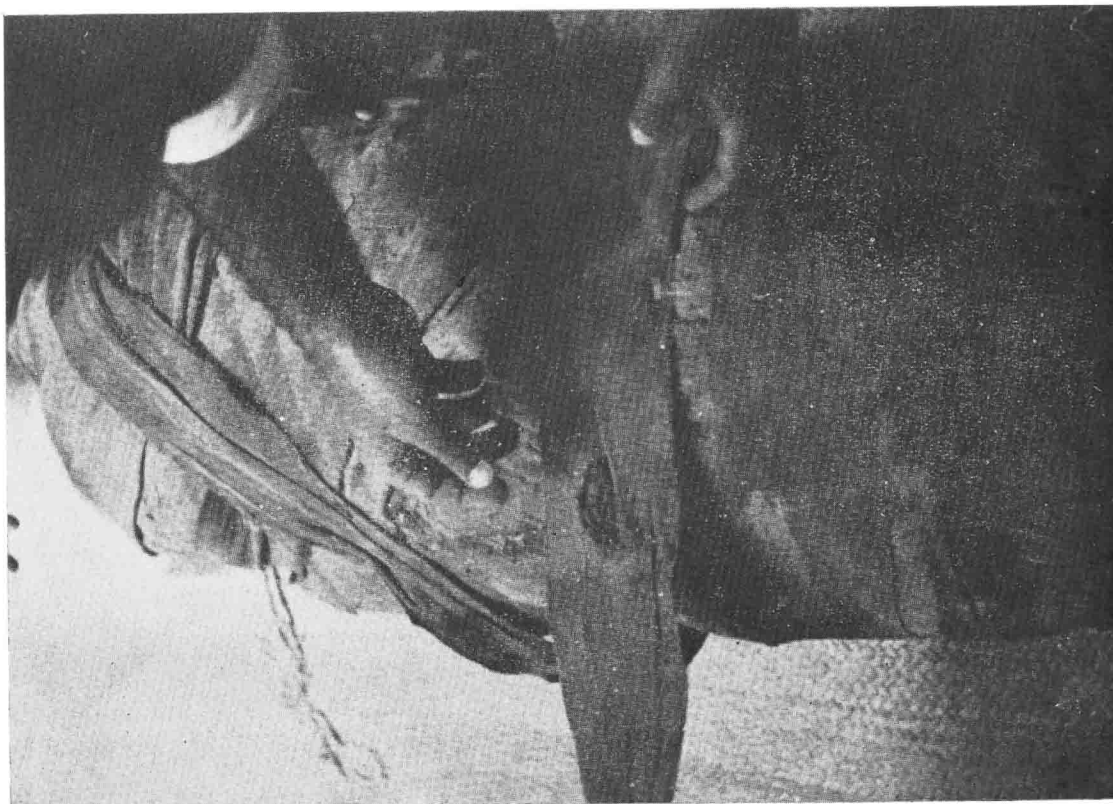
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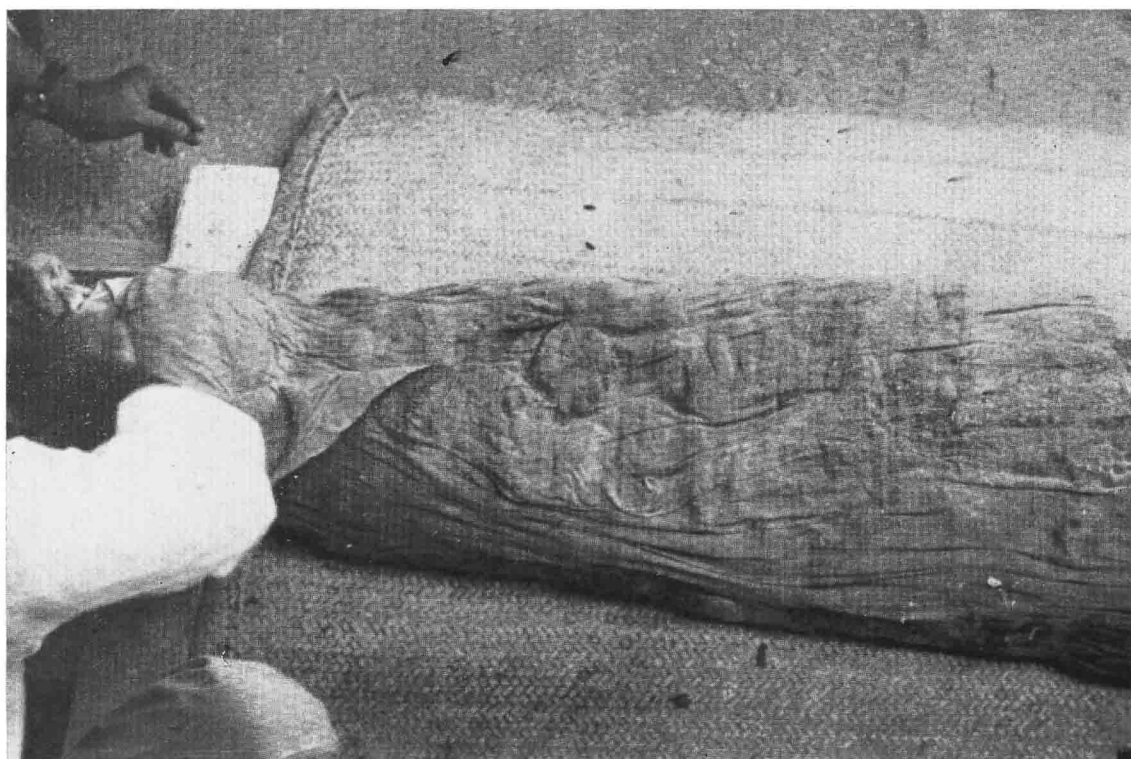
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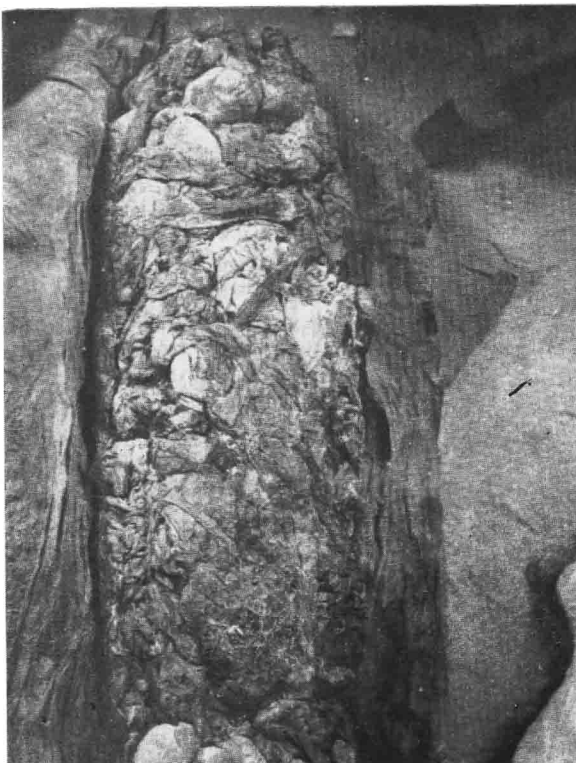
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