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The granite sarcophagus of Tjay

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The sarcophagus of Tjay, a royal scribe of correspondence of the Lord of the Two Lands, was discovered in 1905 by R. Mond in the burial chamber of TT 23. Since then this object did not attract scholarly attention. Due to the fact that the corpus of private sarcophagi of the New Kingdom is still to be compiled, it seems important to provide some details on this object.

The sarcophagus of Tjay is mummiform, its lid represents the deceased as a mummy with exposed face and hands. The sarcophagus is hewn out of pink granite. Its length is app. 267 cm, which corresponds to the 'large' size of the New Kingdom anthropomorphic sarcophagi. It is possible that it was made by two groups of stoneworkers — gangs of the right and the left hands. Defects of stone and faults of workers were fixed with clay. The shape of the coffin is irregular: outlines and dimensions of the chest and lid do not match.

Outer surface of the sarcophagus is decorated with painted reliefs. The main subjects of these reliefs are guarding the deceased, who is identified with Osiris, by the goddesses Isis and Nephthys, and vignettes and the text of the 'Spell 161' of the 'Book of the Dead'. The closest parallels to the sarcophagus of Tjay are granite sarcophagi of Amenhotep Huy from Mit-Rahina, Amenemope and Djhutimes from Thebes (TT 41 and TT 32).

A relatively small number of inscriptions and mentioning of the owner's name only twice are among peculiarities of Tjay's sarcophagus. This can be a sign of speedy production or adaptation of a sarcophagus that was made for sale.

Keywords: mummiform sarcophagus, anthropoid coffin, tomb of Tjay, TT 23, Theban necropolis, funerary art of the Ramesside period, stoneworking, burial customs, 'Book of the Dead'.

In 2006 the Centre for Egyptological Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (CES RAS) started a project on study and conservation of the Theban tomb 23¹. The tomb was built for Tjay, a royal scribe of correspondence of the Lord of the Two Lands at the time of Merenptah. Most likely Tjay was rather close to the king, who honoured his scribe

¹ For progress reports see Ivanov 2012; 2018. Results of specialized studies were published in Васильев, Иванов 2008; Кигтова 2019; Lämmel 2015; Орфин-

ская 2016; 2019a, 2019b; Орфинская, Толмачева 2016; Tolmacheva 2018, etc.

with good mundane things² and gave him a chance to have a spacious tomb in the Theban necropolis. This tomb is larger than most tombs of Tjay's contemporaries³, its walls were decorated with elaborate reliefs, which — with a minor exception — were completed by the time of the owner's burial.

Like many high-ranking officials, Tjay commissioned an outer sarcophagus made of granite. It was discovered in 1905 inside the coffin pit of the burial chamber of the tomb. R. Mond, an excavator of the tomb, mentions that the sarcophagus was empty⁴; it is likely that the lid was already broken by robbers. R. Mond ordered to lift the sarcophagus to the tomb proper. For this his workmen had to refill all shafts in the sloping passage; moreover, as far as the sarcophagus was moved upwards the space behind it was also refilled in order to prevent the heavy object from sliding down. Obviously, this operation was not an easy task and resulted in further destruction of the sarcophagus. Its multiple fragments of various size were discovered while cleaning the sloping passage in 2008–2013.

Some attempts to fix the sarcophagus were made in 1980-s, when complex conservation of the whole tomb was conducted by the Egyptian Antiquities Organization. Several pieces of medium size were joined with epoxide. The chest was put on a concrete platform and filled with limestone rubble and turab, then large fragments of the lid were put atop the fill.

Unlike reliefs and texts of TT 23⁵, the sarcophagus attracted almost no scholarly attention: its inscriptions were copied by N. de Garris Daives⁶ but remained unpublished. As a corpus of private stone sarcophagi of the New Kingdom is still to be compiled⁷, it seems important to provide some details on the sarcophagus of Tjay.

The sarcophagus of Tjay consists of a chest and a lid that represents the owner as a mummy with exposed face and hands (fig. 1–4). The chest is ovoid in planum, it is rounded in the head part and flat at the feet. The maximal length of the chest is 267 cm, its maximal width is 112 cm, and its overall height is 131 cm (the chest — 100–86 cm, the lid — 30–45 cm). The size of the sarcophagus fits the format of lager (outer?) containers, which were c. 5 cubits and 1 palm long⁸.

The shapes of both the chest and lid are not even. More or less regular at the head end, at the feet part the chest is inclined towards the feet and to the right. The lid does not match the chest precisely⁹; it has slightly different outline and is 8–15 cm larger than the chest.

The chest and lid were carved out of two single pieces of pink granite. The stone consists of coarse grains and a large amount of biotite mica. This structure was quite suitable to carve lapidary forms, but not small details as the stone crumbled away. Therefore the craftsmen experienced problems already while shaping the workpiece: walls of the sarcophagus have numerous long horizontal cracks. Some of them could be a result of transportation and moving the sarcophagus into and inside the tomb, but a few large cracks certainly appeared

² Kitchen 1991.

³ Iskander 2002: 372.

⁴ Collins 1976: 34.

⁵ PM I.1: 38–41; Haikal 1985; KRI IV: 107–119, etc.

⁶ Davies MSS: 11.40.74.

⁷ A provisional catalogue of the New Kingdom sarcophagi was made by M. Raven (Raven et al. 2005:

57–66), for current situation in this field see Böhme 2013: 45–46.

⁸ Raven et al. 2005: 59. Another typical size of anthropoid sarcophagi was c. 225 cm that is c. 4 cubits and 2 palms, see Hamada 1935: 122; James 1991: 269; Schreiber 2008: 20; El-Din 2010: 131, etc.

⁹ It is a general feature, see, for example, Raven et al. 2005: 59, etc.

before decoration as they are filled with clay and painted over. Numerous fragments of granite baked with the same kind of clay (fig. 5) are the evidence of other defects that were fixed with clay.

The sarcophagus was intended to be locked with four pegs that were inserted into corresponding slots in the chest and lid. The slots were made using a core drill with a diameter of c. 2 cm. Three or four drilled holes made in a row formed an elongated slot 6–7 cm long and c. 6–7 cm deep. Traces of drilling with remains of copper are well visible inside the slots (fig. 6)¹⁰. The edge of the left side of the chest has traces of two unfinished slots (for one a single hole was made, not for the full depth; the second slot was only marked with four trial shallow holes).

This might indicate the work of two (left and right hand) gangs of stone workers, who at a certain moment decided that four locking slots would be enough. Another possible evidence of involving two working teams is mismatching of heights of the chest walls, which is most obvious at the feet part. The difference between heights of the feet wall and adjoining right wall is c. 5 cm; this fault was fixed with clay. This piece was formed by hands and still has a craftsman's finger and palm prints but no scratches or traces of pressure by the sarcophagus lid. It is likely that this adjusting was still not enough, and as a result two parts of the sarcophagus were not fitted tightly.

The finished surface of the sarcophagus was evened but not polished. Carved figures of a large size have sharp outlines and just a few inner details; small elements like hieroglyphs are of irregular shape. The craftsmen who carved the reliefs made their best to ignore irregularity of the chest shape and draw straight lines over uneven surfaces.

The coffin was painted, the pigment was applied directly on rough stone surface. The palette of artists was limited to four colours: yellow, light and dark blue, and black for contouring details (fig. 3–4).

The mask of the coffin was treated with special care: the rough surface of stone was smoothed with plaster of reddish colour, eyes were outlined in black. The face was presumably gilded as remains of a gold leaf are still visible on the cheeks; the gold was applied over the painted surface. Unfortunately, the face was badly damaged.

The lid of the sarcophagus shows the owner in a tripartite wig and with beard on his chin (fig. 1, 7). The beard itself has not preserved, but its shape can be reconstructed from its imprint on the neck and chest. Tjay's arms are crossed on his chest, and he holds the *tt*- and *dd*-signs in his hands. The chest of the deceased is decorated with a broad *wseh*-collar with falcon-headed terminals on shoulders, and a rectangular pectoral; a subject of the pectoral is not clear. Tjay's wig is adorned with a band of beads; there are bracelets on his wrists. On the belly, below the collar, an image of a winged goddess is carved; below her wings (in the lower corners of the composition) symmetrical representations of *wdj*-eyes are placed. There is a representation of a *dd*-sign to the left of the goddess; it is carved on convexity of an elbow and has rather irregular shape — this may be the reason why a sculptor did not make a matching symbol to the right of the winged deity.

Below the goddess the composition is divided with a vertical and two horizontal bands with columns of inscriptions.

¹⁰ The use of copper core drills is considered to be typical for Ramesside stoneworking (e. g. Stocks 2003: 177, note 11).

The inscription I on the central vertical band:



Dd-mdw jn Wsir sš nsw T3 m3^c-hrw D[d.f]... [m] pt

Recitation by Osiris royal scribe To true of voice. [He says:]... [in] the sky.

Inscriptions on horizontal bands are as follows:

II, upper left:



Dd-mdw jn jm3hy hr Hpy

Recitation by the one honoured by Hapy.

III, upper right:



Dd-mdw jn jm3hy hr...

Recitation by the one honoured by...

IV, lower left:



Dd-mdw jn jm3hy hr Jn[pw]

Recitation by the one honoured by An[ubis].

V, lower right:



Dd-mdw jn jm3hy [hr]...

Recitation by the one honoured [by]...

The bands confine two registers. The upper one is occupied by the Sons of Horus — Amset and Duamutef on the left, and Hapy and Qebekhsenuf on the right. The deities are represented standing with arms stretched down. They are wearing tripartite wigs, divine corsets, short kilts, *wseh*-collars, bracelets and armlets.

Names of the gods are written in columns in front of them:

VI:



Msty Dw3-mw.t=f

Amset, Duamutef.

VII:



Hpy Kbh-[sn.w=f]

Hapy and Qebekhsenuf.

The lower register contains symmetrical images of two goddesses with raised arms, sitting on *nbw*-signs with *tt*-symbols behind them.

There are also two horizontal bands carved along the side edges of the sarcophagus lid. Texts on them are rather damaged:

VIII, at the left side:



Dd-mdw jn Gb R^c ntr-nfr... [jnk] s3=k mry... ms.n 3s.t

Recitation by Geb, Re (?) the good god... [I am] your beloved (?) son... born by Isis.

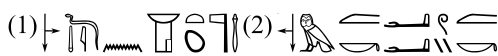
IX, at the right side:



...ms... s3 mr[y]... ms=f n 3s.t

...[I am] (your) beloved (?) son... born by Isis.

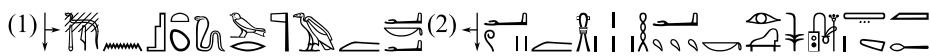
Soles have images of the goddess Nephthys with raised arms, sitting on the sign *hb*. She has an *nh*-sign hanging on her left forearm (fig. 10). By the sides of the goddess there are two columns with inscriptions (X):



(1) Dd-mdw jn Nb.t-hw.t ntr(.t) 3(.t) (2) mk 3.wy m=k

Recitation by Nephthys, the great goddess. (She says:) Behold, (my) arms are with (i. e. protecting) you!

The head part of the sarcophagus chest has an image of the goddess Isis sitting on the *nbw*-sign. Her arms are raised, the goddess holds an *nh*-symbol in each hand, while another *nh* is hanging on her left forearm (fig. 3, 10). This scene is bordered with two vertical bands of inscriptions (XI):



(1) Dd-mdw jn 3s.t wr[.t] mw.t-ntr mk (2) 3.wy m s3 h3=k Wsir s3 nsw T3 m33-hrw

Recitation by Isis the Great, mother of god. (She says:) Behold, (my) arms are protecting your flesh, o Osiris, the royal scribe To, true of voice!

The representation of the goddesses at the head and feet of the sarcophagus refers to the idea of two sister goddesses who protect the deceased identified with Osiris¹¹. At the same time placement of Isis at the head end and Nephthys at the feet is opposite to the common layout, where Nephthys protects the head, and Isis — the feet of the deceased. Another distinctive feature is representation of Nephthys on the *hb*-sign instead of usual *nbw*.

The foot end of the sarcophagus chest is decorated with a symmetrical composition consisting of the *dd*-pillar in the center and two *tt*-symbols by its sides.

¹¹ This design first appeared on sarcophagi dated to the reign of Amenophis III (Niwinsky 1984: 438; Raven et al. 2005: 61).

The sides of the chest are occupied with a representation of deities performing the vigil (*Stundenwachen* ritual) for the deceased¹² (figs. 2, 8–9). Each god is put inside a separate frame with the sign of the sky on the top; these frames are divided with columns of inscriptions. The scenes contain five figures each: the first figures (at the head part) are directed to the fellow gods, towards the feet end; while the rest of the deities face the first figure. The scenes start and end with images of the god Thoth holding a standard with the sky-sign. Thus, this god, who is opening the sky for the deceased, is represented four times. These four images refer to the ‘Spell 161’ of the ‘Book of the Dead’, the text of which is carved on both sides of the chest. They may also represent four cardinal points and serve ‘to block the exit of one of the four winds’¹³.

Besides Thoth, the scene on the right side of the sarcophagus contains images of Amset, Duamutef and Qebekhsenuf. On the left side the Sons of Horus are represented by Hapy and Duamutef, while the third image shows the god Dunanuy. All deities are depicted wearing tripartite wigs, divine corsets, short kilts, broad collars, bracelets and armlets. The costume of Thoth is different: instead of a corset he is wearing a shoulder strap of a lector-priest. Carved figures are painted dark and light blue, the details are outlined in black.

The texts on the sides of the chest are as follows:

XII, right side, head end:

(1) (2)

(1) *Dd-mdw jn jm3hy hr Msty ntr 3* (2) *nh R mwt stw wd3 nty m db3.t*

Recitation by the one honoured by Amset, the great god. (2) (He says:) Re lives and the turtle dies. The one who is in sarcophagus stays safe.

XIII, right side, continuation:

↓(1) (2) (3) (3)

(1) *Dd-mdw jn jm3hy hr Dw3-mw.t=f* (2) *(h)r Kbḥ-sn.w=f ntr 3 (nb) r-st3w* (3) *(h)r Dhwtj nb st ntr 3 hrj-tp dw3t*

(1) *Recitation by the one honoured by Duamutef, (2) (by) Qebekhsenuf, the great god, (the lord of) the necropolis, (3) (by) Thoth, the lord of the place, the great god, master of Duat.*

XIV, left side, head end:

(1) (2)

(1) *Dd-mdw jn jm3hy hr Hpy* (2) *nh R mwt stw wd3 nty m (db3.t)*

(1) *Recitation by the one honoured by Hapy. (2) (He says:) Re lives and the turtle dies. The one who is in the (sarcophagus) stays safe.*

¹² Assmann 1985; 1990; Riggs 2010: 2–3.

¹³ Allen 1974: 156–157, note 262; Schreiber 2008: 20; Böhme 2019: 116–124. Cf. Raven et al. 2005: 61; Schneider et al. 2012: 109–110, etc.



Fig. 1 (left). Lid of the sarcophagus
(in process of conservation)

Fig. 2 (right upper). Chest of the sarcophagus, right side

Fig. 3 (right lower). Head end of the sarcophagus



Fig. 4 (left upper). Fragment of a composition of the left side of the chest

Fig. 5 (left lower). Slot on the chest with remains of copper oxide in the places of core drilling

Fig. 6 (right). A piece of clay with grains of granite baked in (find No. 08-09/0190/004)

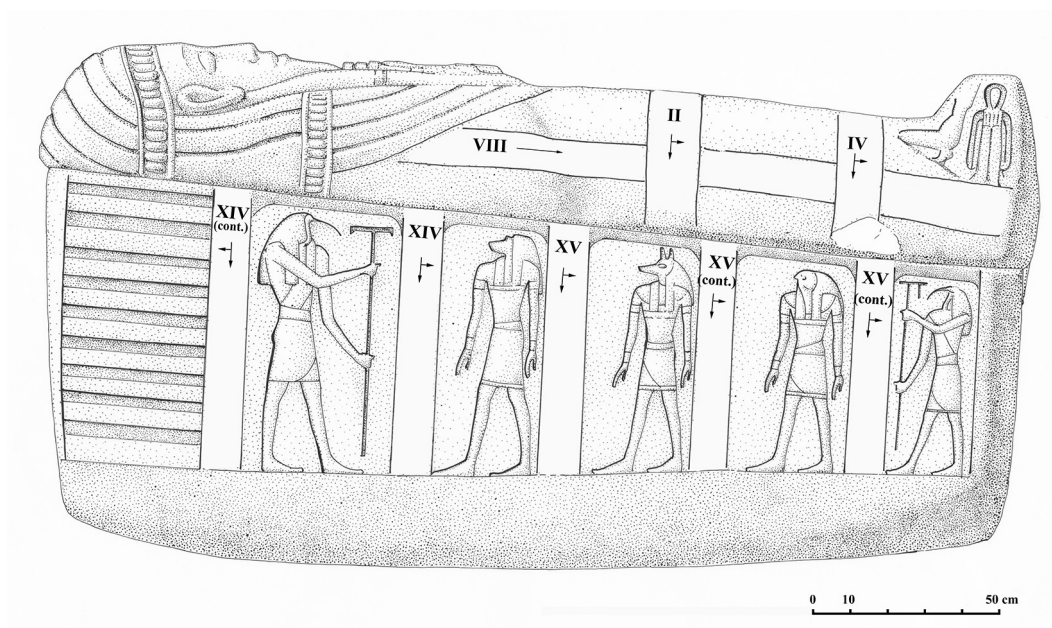


Fig. 9. Chart of the left side of the chest showing location of inscriptions (drawn by O. V. Vinglotc)

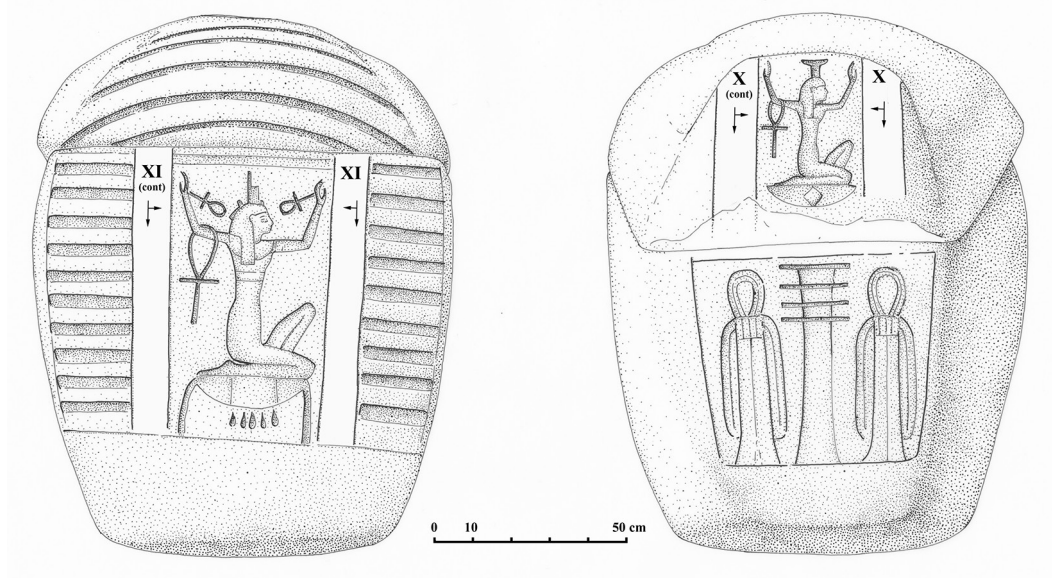


Fig. 10. Chart of the head and feet ends of the chest showing location of inscriptions (drawn by O. V. Vinglotc)

(1) (2) (3)

(1) *Recitation by the one honoured by Anubis, who is in front of the divine booth, (2) (by) Duamutef, the great god, the lord of Duat, (3) (by) Dunnanwy¹⁴, the great god, the lord of the necropolis.*

The irregular shape of the chest, mismatching dimensions of the chest and the lid along with the certain negligence in carving details also fit a general trend of decline of craftsmanship of private sarcophagi during the Rameside period¹⁹.

It is noteworthy that on the whole sarcophagus the name of the owner is mentioned only twice: once on the lid (central band, text I) and once on the chest (head end, text XI). This does not fit a general tradition to name the owner almost in every long recitation. If it was a wooden coffin, one could state that it had been made for sale and then adapted for the buyer²². This could also be a case for stone sarcophagi, though this statement is hard to argue due to the insufficiency of published evidence.

²² Cooney 2007: 173–175.

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Гранитный саркофаг Чаи

С. В. Иванов

Статья посвящена изучению саркофага «писца царских депеш» Чаи (XIX династия, время правления Меренптаха), найденного в фиванской гробнице № 23. Несмотря на то что этот саркофаг был обнаружен в 1905 г. английским исследователем Р. Мондом, он до сих пор не привлекал внимание исследователей. Учитывая, что большинство частных каменных саркофагов эпохи Нового царства остается неизученным, публикация данного памятника представляется весьма актуальной.

Саркофаг Чаи антропоморфный, его крышка выполнена в форме лежащей мумии с открытыми лицом и кистями рук. Он высечен из розового гранита; его длина составляет ок. 267 см, что соответствует длине «больших» антропоморфных саркофагов эпохи Нового царства. Некоторые технологические особенности указывают на то, что над его изготовлением работали две группы мастеров — бригады правой и левой руки. Дефекты камня и ошибки камнетесов были скрыты при помощи глиняной массы. Высота стенок его нижней части (ящика) разная. Кроме того, ящик и крышка не соответствуют друг другу ни по размеру, ни по форме.

Внешняя поверхность саркофага украшена рельефными изображениями, которые покрыты полихромными росписями. Декоративная программа включает сюжеты, связанные с охраной тела умершего, который отождествляется с богом Осирисом, богинями Исидой и Нефтидой, а также иллюстрации и текст 161-й главы «Книги мертвых».

К ближайшим аналогиям находки можно отнести гранитные саркофаги Аменхотепа Хуи из Мит-Рахины, Аменемопе и Джхутимеса из Фив. Одной из особенностей нашего памятника является сравнительно небольшое количество высеченных на нем текстов, причем имя его владельца упомянуто лишь два раза. Это может указывать либо на спешку при изготовлении саркофага, либо на то, что его делали на продажу и адаптировали надписи под конкретного покупателя.

Ключевые слова: антропоморфный саркофаг, гробница Чаи, фиванский некрополь, искусство рамессидского времени, обработка камня, погребальный обряд, «Книга мертвых».

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