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The Funerary Ensemble of Nairis in the Hermitage Museum

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Summary: Publication of a funerary ensemble brought back from Egypt in 1827 by Anastasios Averoff and now kept in the Hermitage museum, Saint Petersburg. It comprises an outer coffin and a cartonnage pertaining to a woman named Nairis, who lived in the Theban area at the end of the Libyan Period. She may be identified with the mother of a maid, known through her coffin and her funerary stele, both items dated to the 25th Dynasty.

Keywords: Libyan Period – 22nd Dynasty – Thebes – coffin TIP – cartonnage – Saint Petersburg – Hermitage Museum DB-772 – DB-8718

Among the Egyptian pieces kept in the Hermitage Museum since the 19th Century is a little known funerary ensemble belonging to a woman named Nairis. It is composed of an outer coffin (inv. number ДБ-772), a one-piece cartonnage (inv. number ДБ-8718) and some cloths, bones and bandages, being the rest of the mummy (inv. numbers ДБ-8500, ДБ-8516, ДБ-8523 – ДБ-8547)¹.

¹ A few references were made to this ensemble in the literature. The outer coffin was mentioned by Lieblein, 1873, 38, n° 63, pl. VIII, n° 25, “Ta-ires”. His lecture of the name was reproduced by Ranke, PN, II, 323, 27. Golénischeff gave a more detailed description of the outer coffin in his catalogue of the Hermitage collection: Golénischeff, 1891, 102, n° 772. The author specified that the mummy and the cartonnage were by those days kept in the Ethnographical Museum of the Academy of Sciences. Turaev gave a long description of the cartonnage case, without mentioning the coffin, in the Journal of the Oriental Department of the (Imperial) Russian Archaeological Society: Turaev, 1899, 117–118, n° 2. Schmidt published, among many others, a picture of the cartonnage: Schmidt, 1919, 190, fig. 1062 (in the label, he noted that the cartonnage was in Cairo; it is in fact a confusion with the one illustrated on fig. 1059, and the labels of fig. 1059 and 1062 must be switched). The whole ensemble was mentioned in the guide of the Oriental rooms of the Hermitage museum in its edition of 1939: Dyakonov e.a., 1939, 28.

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The ensemble entered the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1827, with two other funerary ensembles, as a gift of Anastasios Averoff² (1810–1858), a merchant of Greek origin (Metsovo) aged only 17 at the time. He was installed in Saint Petersburg and traded dates, golden thread and cotton, before establishing in Cairo, where his brother Georgios Averoff joined him in 1837. In a letter accompanying the gift, Anastasios Averoff gives some details concerning his life, the privileges he acquired in consideration of his devotion to the Russian tsar, and the Egyptian ensembles he intended to give to the Egyptian Museum:

«Distingué par feu S. M. l'Empereur Alexandre de glorieuse mémoire³, par des privilèges, pour avoir institué les premières relations commerciales avec l'Égypte, et décoré d'une médaille d'or pour avoir délivré cinq Russes de l'esclavage et même de les avoir amenés à St. Pétersbourg à mes propres frais, j'ai longtemps cherché une nouvelle occasion pour montrer mon zèle et mon dévouement envers la Russie et Son Auguste Monarque. Persuadé que quelques antiquités égyptiennes tant recherchées dans ce tems (*sic*) seroient (*sic*) agréables, j'ai apporté de l'Égypte trois momies, très-bien conservées, dont une se distingue par un triple sarcophage orné d'une foule de peintures hiéroglyphiques, et comme l'Académie Impériale des Sciences a fondé un musée égyptien, j'ai cru convenable d'offrir ces remarquables antiquités à l'Académie et je prie Votre Excellence d'accepter cette offrande, et d'être l'interprète de mon zèle et de mon dévouement envers S. M. l'Empereur.»⁴

The first funerary ensemble given together with Nairis' ensemble is the triple coffin of Padiaset son of Hor and Shepenwen, of Theban origin. The second one is probably the coffin of Tjanefer, son of Herefnu and Tasheritenaset, which also comes from Upper Egypt. All of them were given with their mummy⁵.

² Schnitzler, 1828, 232; Wl. Golénischeff, op. cit., n° 772.

³ I.e. Alexander I, who died in 1825 and was succeeded by his brother Nicholas I.

⁴ Letter of Averoff kept in the archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Saint Petersburg, Department of the Chancellery, Presidency and Vice-presidency, under the reference: Архив Российской Академии Наук. Фонд Канцелярия Президента и Вице-президента Академии Наук. Переписка с учреждениями и лицами о приношении в дар Академии Наук купцом Аверовым трех мумий. Фонд 5, № описи 1 (1827), Ед. хр. 228.

⁵ See Golénischeff, op. cit., v, 102–105 and 110–111. Concerning the ensemble belonging to Padiaset, see more recently Jansen-Winkel,

When it entered the Russian collections, the funerary ensemble of Nairis was part of the Egyptian museum of the Academy of Sciences. Then, the outer coffin entered the Hermitage in 1881, whereas the cartonnage and the mummy remains, having been kept in the Ethnographical Museum of the Academy of Sciences, reached the museum only in 1919.

1 The outer coffin⁶

The anthropoid wooden⁷ outer coffin of Nairis (fig. 5–7) is 190 cm high and consists of a case and a lid. Each of them is made of several boards, most of which have cracks and distortions⁸. As it is generally the case, the face was cut off as a separate element and fastened by two pins on the right and left sides on the main wooden surface.

Whereas the outer part of the case was left undecorated⁹, some parts of the outside of the lid were painted. It shows the deceased wearing a tripartite wig covered with the feminine vulture headdress and a floral headband. The ends of the two frontal lappets of the wig are decorated with four horizontal stripes. Below, the upper part of the chest wears an *ousekh*-necklace made of floral ornaments and beads. From the chest to the feet, the body was left undecorated, except the axial column, inscribed with an offering formula (*text 1a–b*). This kind of decoration is attested on most of the outer coffins in the Theban area¹⁰.

The inner part of the lid was left undecorated. In the inner part of the case, a goddess Nut, standing on a horizontal line, is frontally depicted; her arms are stretching

up to the internal walls¹¹. Her name is written above her head (*text 2*) and her hands hold an *ankh*-sign.

2 The cartonnage

The cartonnage (fig. 8–11) is 175 cm high and occupies the whole space inside the coffin, so that we may be sure there was not enough space for an intermediary coffin. The cartonnage case, originally in one part, was sawed (perhaps to remove the mummy) and is now divided into three parts: the upper one, which forms a kind of “lid”, and two long boards joined together along the spine, which form the “case”¹². At the very bottom the soles were covered with a separate footboard. Lacing closed the back, and holes for the string are still clearly visible; the foot-plaque was also laced to the cartonnage.

The decoration of the cartonnage is organised on the model 2C, as described by Taylor¹³, and shows as well standard scenes as variants. It was painted on a white background, using mostly black, dark blue, red, beige and green; a brilliant varnish, which turned yellow, highlights some areas and most of the figures.

2014, 693, n° 68. The coffin of Tjanefer was recently published by Nikolaev, 2015, 1–30.

⁶ However we call this piece “outer coffin”, we cannot assure that it was not intended to be placed in an external coffin (which would have been lost), because the design of the coffin is known both for outer and intermediary coffins of funerary sets; see Taylor, 2003, 107.

⁷ Scientific analysis led by M. Kolosova in March 2015 indicated that the case was made of sycamore (*Ficus Sycomorus L.*).

⁸ For this reason, several small parts have been lost (for example, one of the boards with the inscription, which formed the rise of the foot), and a layer of painted plaster in the joints is badly damaged (it is almost completely lost on the shoulders and on the neck).

⁹ We can just note some traces of parallel stripes (painted?) on the lower part of the case. Compare these stripes to the ones on the inner side of the coffin Sydney, Nicholson Museum R28, Taylor, 2006, pl. 46. These stripes were perhaps a preparation for areas intended to be inscribed, the project having not been eventually run.

¹⁰ Taylor, 2003, 108, “Design 1”; Aston, 2009, 277. Compare e.g. to the outer coffin of Setjaimengau, Amiens, musée de Picardie M.P. 94.3.3.1, Perdu – Rickal, 1994, 34–35.

¹¹ Taylor, op. cit., 109, design 2B.

¹² Compare this treatment with the one received by the cartonnage Grenoble MG 1998 when its mummy was removed in 1858 or by the cartonnage belonging to the former collection Dugas in Lyon. Concerning the first piece, see Kueny – Yoyotte, 1979, 97–98, n° 119 and Froppier, 2014, 306–307, fig. 12–14. Concerning the second one, see Moret, 1894, 14–15 and pl. I–II.

¹³ Taylor, op. cit., 106–107.



Fig. 1: Top of the head of Nairis' cartonnage (© State Hermitage Museum).



Fig. 2: The central scene on the second register (© State Hermitage Museum).

The front

The cartonnage is human shaped and shows the mummified deceased wearing a tripartite wig decorated with the feminine vulture headdress and a floral headband. At the very top of the head, a scarab pushing a small sun-disc is depicted in the middle of a double circle (beige and red) delimited by the headband (fig. 1). A small necklace is depicted between the lappets of the wig. A larger *ousekh*-necklace spreads on the upper part of the chest, overpassing a coloured band. On each side, it lets a triangular space, which hosts an image of a jar containing *mrht*-oil (Sign-list W2)¹⁴. Below, the decoration along the body is organised into five registers delimited by coloured bands. The decoration on the feet is organised perpendicularly.

The first register

Between two coloured bands, a winged solar disk with two *uraeus* is depicted in the middle of the first register¹⁵. On each side, a pair of protective deities is kneeling, wearing two *m3't*-feathers on their heads and holding a knife. The first one is lion-headed, and the second is crocodile-headed. There is no text accompanying these representations.

¹⁴ An example of this motive at the same place occurs on cartonnage Berlin ÄM 7325 (Schmidt, 1919, 188, fig. 1040). When decorated, this place is more frequently occupied by the hieroglyphic signs of East and West, as on the cartonnages Cambridge Fitzwilliam Museum E.64.1896, Leiden RMO AMM17b or Hamburg, Museum für Völkerkunde C 3834, respectively illustrated by *ibid.*, 165, fig. 908, 173, fig. 957, and 190, fig. 1056. The jar containing *mrht*-oil can be depicted together with a jackal lying down between the *ousekh*-necklace and the winged deity on the chest, such as on a cartonnage in Cairo illustrated by *ibid.*, 191, fig. 1067.

¹⁵ Most of the cartonnages belonging to model 2 as defined by Taylor show a sunrise scene incorporating two falcons, the upper one being ram-headed. Here, only one winged deity, depicted as a solar disk, is shown. This variant is attested on other cartonnages such as Edinburgh National Museum of Scotland A.1911.399.1 B (Dodson – Manley, 2010, 69–70) and may be found on cartonnages belonging to other decoration models, such as Baltimore Walters Art Museum 79.1 (Schulz – Seidel, 2009, 102–105, n° 41), London BM EA 22939 (Taylor – Antoine, 2014, 77), London BM EA 6682 (*ibid.*, 99), London BM EA 6686 (Taylor, 2001, pl. 52, n° 2), Leiden RmO M 36 (*id.*, 2003, pl. 46), Copenhagen NCG ÆIN 298 (Jørgensen, 2001, 185), Leiden RmO AMM 2C (Greco [ed.], 2013, 140–141, n° 95), Paris Louvre N 2621 (Étienne [dir.], 2009, 146–147, n° 113), Philadelphia Penn Museum E14344 (Silverman [ed.], 1997, 266–267, n° 89), Minneapolis Institute of Arts 16.417, Boston MFA 72.4835a, Detroit Institute of Arts 90.1S11800.2, Lisbon MAN E 135 (Araújo [ed.], 1993, 306–308, n° 217). One of the winged solar disks on this late example is also part of an Abydenian fetish.

The second register

The second register shows a tripartite decoration. A scene figured in an arched frame¹⁶ occupies the central part (fig. 2). The deceased, holding her hands before her face, is worshipping Osiris. She is dressed with the common female dress known during the Third Intermediate Period; a tripartite wig covers her head. On the forehead, a headband holds a blooming lotus flower¹⁷. Osiris is shown mummified, sited on a cubic throne, and wearing an *at-ef*-crown; he holds a *was*-sceptre. An offering table laden with breads is depicted between Osiris and the deceased. Four short columns in the upper part of the scene were designed for a text, but were never inscribed.

The four sons of Horus are depicted in the two side-compartments of this register. On the right side of the body are Imset and Hâpi (*text 3a–b*); Qebehsenuf and Duamutef are depicted on its left side (*text 3c–d*). They are shown animal-headed, mummified, and holding a large feather.

However such a scene has no known exact parallel on cartonnages and coffins dating from the Third Intermediate Period. One could suggest it is an illustration of the end of chapter 125 of the Book of the Dead, the deceased being successful in the judgement and coming before Osiris to worship him. On the papyri, this scene frequently takes place in a chapel, in the presence of the four sons of Horus, and sometimes Isis and Nephtys¹⁸. Here, the sons of Horus are not shown in the building indicated by the arched frame, but relegated in the side-compartments of the register. Indeed, the theme of the judgement of the

¹⁶ This architectural frame is comparable to those on the cartonnage Baltimore Walters Art Museum 79.1 (Schulz – Seidel, *op. cit.*, 102–105, n° 41), London BM EA 6686 (Taylor, 2001, pl. 52, n° 2), London BM EA 30720 (*id.*, 2003, pl. 49), Leiden RmO M 36 (*ibid.*, pl. 46), Brooklyn Museum 37.50E.

¹⁷ The stem is not depicted: the flower seems to spring out from the headband, and not to be put on the top of the head as usual. The absence of the stem is quite rare, but see e.g. London BM EA 8450, Bierbrier, 1987, 15 and pl. 16–17. Usually, the lotus flower, depicted either blooming or as a bud, is accompanied by an unguent cone, and only few examples show the lotus flower alone; see e.g. the cartonnages Athens NAM 3412 (Tzachou [ed.], 1995, 178–179, n° LXIV) and London BM EA 6660 (Strudwick, 2006, 252–253, depiction of Imset).

¹⁸ Compare e.g. to the papyrus of Hunefer (London BM EA 9901, sheet 3) where the four sons of Horus, Isis and Nephtys are depicted (Budge, 1899, pl. 4–5), to the papyrus of Ani (London BM EA 10470, sheets 29–30) where the four sons of Horus and Isis are depicted (The Book of the Dead: Facsimile of the Papyrus of Ani in the British Museum, London, 1894, pl. 29–30; Faulkner et al., 1994, pl. 30) or to the much later papyrus of Tarepit (P. MacGregor, sheet 4) for a representation without the sons of Horus (Mosher, 2001, pl. 14).

dead is frequently depicted on the chest¹⁹, either by the weighing of the heart²⁰ or by the visit of the deceased, sometimes led by another deity, to Osiris²¹.

The third register

The third register is also divided into three parts. The central part is decorated with an image of the mummified falcon-god Sokar (*text 4*)²² shown in an architectural frame summoned by the hieroglyphic sign of the sky (Sign-list N1) and a *khekeru* line²³. The two side-compartments are occupied by a depiction of a solar falcon spreading its wings; between the wings, a small image of a ram (*ovis longipes paleoegyptiacus*) with solar attributes is shown walking on a standard. A *was*-sceptre is behind; it is combined with an *ankh*-sign on the left side of the body. Two columns were prepared for a text, which was never painted.

¹⁹ Taylor, 2003, 105.

²⁰ See, e.g. the cartonnages Brooklyn Museum 34.1223 (Fazzini, 1988, pl. XLVI, 1), Cambridge Fitzwilliam Museum E.8.1896 (Taylor, 2009, 415, pl. XIV), Harvard Semitic Museum 901.9.1 (Hollis, 1987, 165–179), Detroit Institute of Arts 90.1S11800.2.

²¹ See, e.g. the cartonnages Chicago Art Institute 1910.238 (Teeter, 1994, 23, n° 7), Paris Louvre N 2621 (Étienne [dir.], 2009, 146–147, n° 113), Toronto Royal Ontario Museum 910.10 (Hill – Schorsch [eds.], 2007, 69, fig. 38), Paris Louvre N 2619 exhibited in the Empéri Castle in Salon-de-Provence (Champollion, 2013, 246, P.2), London BM EA 22939 (Taylor – Antoine, 2014, 77), Athens NAM 3424 (Tzachou [ed.], 1995, 168–169, n° LIX), Cambridge Fitzwilliam Museum E.8.1896 (Taylor, 2009, 415, pl. XIV), London BM EA 6682 (Taylor – Antoine, 2014, 99), Philadelphia Penn Museum E14344 (Silverman [ed.], 1997, 266–267, n° 89), Saint Louis Art Museum 109:1989 (Goldstein, 1990, 14–15), Detroit Institute of Arts 90.1S11800.2.

²² Such a scene depicting Sokar as a mummified falcon or within the *henu*-bark (see e.g. the cartonnages Baltimore Walters Art Museum 79.1, Schulz – Seidel, 2009, 102–105, n° 41; Brooklyn Museum 34.1223, Fazzini, 1988, pl. XLVI, 1, and 37.50E, or Minneapolis Institute of Art 16.417) in a building between two protective deities is known through a lot of parallels, many of them including small variants; among them, we can cite the protective deities depicted as two vultures (e.g. Baltimore Walters Art Museum 79.1), or as two *uraeus*-goddesses wearing the crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt (e.g. London BM EA 30720 (Taylor, 2003, pl. 49), or as Isis and Nephtys depicted as women (e.g. Trieste, Museo Civico di Storia ed Arte E.1, Crevatin – Vidulli Torlo, 2013, 101).

²³ This architectural motive is not very common on cartonnages, but it can be seen for Osiris' bed on the cartonnages Brooklyn Museum 37.50E and Minneapolis Institute of Art 16.417. It is also depicted on coffins, such as London BM EA 25256 (Taylor, op. cit., pl. 65) or Liverpool 1953.72 (*ibid.*, pl. 54)

The fourth and fifth registers

From this point on, the decoration of the cartonnage is divided into two parts by an axial column. This column hosts a two-registers-high image of the osirian Abydenian fetish, whose handle is inscribed (*text 5a, col. 1*).

The decoration of the fourth register is organised in a tripartite scheme, like on the two upper registers. The falcon-headed Horus and the ibis-headed Thoth are depicted on both sides of the fetish²⁴, in a scene of erecting the fetish²⁵ (*text 5b*). Each of the side-compartments takes the shape of a vaulted naos; it hosts a ram-headed (*ovis longipes paleoegyptiacus*) mummified deity holding a feather.

The fifth register is occupied, on each side of the handle of the Abydenian fetish, by a solar falcon spreading its wings²⁶. Between the wings, a *wedjat*-eye is painted.

The feet

On the feet, the decoration is also symmetrical on both sides of a two-columns text, which is the end of the text written on the handle of the Abydenian fetish (*text 5a, col. 2–3*); nevertheless, it is organised perpendicularly to the rest of the body. On each side of the axial columns, a jackal lying on a naos-shaped pedestal adorned with a feather and a *sekhem*-sceptre is depicted, accompanied by its legend naming him as Wepwawet (*text 6*).

The back

The sides of the wig and the headband were painted the same way as on the front of the cartonnage. The back of

²⁴ Concerning the depiction of Horus and Thoth to symbolise the cardinal points, see Gardiner, 1950, 3–12.

²⁵ For the interpretation of the gesture, compare with the similar scene with a *djed*-pillar labeled *s^hc dd* on the back of the cartonnage Brooklyn Museum 35.1265 (Fazzini et al., 1989, n° 67). For parallel scenes, see e.g. the cartonnages Bolton Museum n° unknown (Dodson, 2011, 162–163, n° 166), Trieste Museo Civico di Storia ed Arte E.1 (Crevatin – Vidulli Torlo, op. cit., 101), New York MMA 86.1.54a (Brecht, 2008, 42–43, n° S9, without picture), Brussels MRAH E.5890 (Francot e.a., 1999, pl. A). Such a scene can naturally be found on wooden coffins during the 25th Dynasty, as on the inner coffin London BM EA 27735.

²⁶ The figure on the right of the body is much more elaborate than the one on the left: the solar disc is ornamented with an *uraeus*, two columns were prepared to receive an inscription, and a *was*-sceptre was added.

the cartonnage was left undecorated, simply painted white. There is no trace of a projected decoration²⁷.

The footboard

The wooden footboard fastened to close the cartonnage below the feet is badly preserved. It was stuccoed and painted white. Most of the painting has fallen off on both sides. It seems that it was never decorated with the usual scene showing the Apis bull running to the necropolis.

As we saw earlier, some columns were prepared on the second, third and fifth registers of the front to receive inscriptions, but they were never written. If we bear in mind that the back was left white and the footboard simply painted white, we could suggest that the craftsmen did not finish the cartonnage decoration before the burial.

3 Inscriptions

The texts written on Nairis' coffin and cartonnage were painted hastily and with no great care, so that, in another context, some signs could be confused with other signs²⁸.

Texts on the coffin

Text 1a. Inscription on the lid, from the chest to the ankles



ḥtp dī nsw n Wsīr ḥnty Ḳmntt ntr ʿ3 nb ʿbdw dī.f ḥtpw dḃw sntr n [Wsīr] nbt-pr (N)ʿ-īrī.s mʿt ḥrw

²⁷ The same lack of decoration occurs on the cartonnage London BM EA 6686, which was left unfinished: the name of its owner was never written at the end of the axial columns (which remains blank) and several labels prepared to receive a text were never inscribed. For a face view of the piece, see Taylor, 2001, pl. 52, n° 2. The cartonnage Trieste Museo Civico di Storia ed Arte E.1 was also left with the back simply painted white, whereas the front seems to be finished (Crevatin – Vidulli Torlo, op. cit., 106). The same occurs on the cartonnage belonging to the former collection Dugas in Lyon (Moret, 1894, 15 and pl. II), and to the cartonnage Chicago Oriental Institute E 10797.

²⁸ This is the case for example on the outer coffin for the '3-sign (Sign-list O29) which takes the shape of a *ḥrw* sign (Sign-list P8) in the expression *ntr ʿ3* (text 1a) or on the cartonnage for the *mdw*-sign (Sign-list S43) in Thoth' epithet (*nb mdwt-ntr* which takes the shape of a *ḥrw*-sign (text 5b).

A boon which the king gives to Osiris foremost of the West, the great god, lord of Abydos, so that he gives offerings, provisions and incense for the Osiris lady of the house (N)airis, true of voice.

Text 1b. Inscription on the lid, on the feet area²⁹



[...]

Text 2. Inscription on the inner part of the case



Nwt

Nut.

Texts on the cartonnage

Text 3. Inscriptions of the second register

a. Human-headed deity	b. Baboon-headed deity	c. Falcon-headed deity	d. Jackal-headed deity
<i>Imst</i>	<i>Hpʿ</i>	<i>(ḥr) Dwʿ-mwt.f</i> <i>Ḳms imʿh(t)</i>	<i>Qbh-sn(w).f</i>
Imset	Hâpi	The <i>imakhet</i> (beside) Duamutef	Qebehsenuf

Text 4. Inscriptions of the third register



Skr

Sokar.

Text 5. Texts of the fourth and fifth registers

Text 5a. Axial column:



ḥtp dī nswt n Wsīr ḥnty Ḳmntt ntr ʿ3 nb ʿbdw dī.f⁽²⁾ ḥtpw dḃw n Wsīr⁽³⁾ nbt-pr Nʿ-īrī.s mʿt ḥrw

²⁹ This inscription is written opposite to the previous one, as it was to be read by the deceased herself.

⁽¹⁾ A boon which the king gives to Osiris foremost of the West, the great god, lord of Abydos, so that he gives ⁽²⁾ offerings and provisions for the Osiris ⁽³⁾ lady of the house Nairis, true of voice.

Text 5b. Texts related to Thoth and Horus:

𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏
dd mdw (in Dhwtj) nb Hmnw nb m³ct (nb) mdwt-ntr
 Utterance (of Thoth) lord of Hermopolis, lord of *maât*,
 (lord) of the divine words.

𓄏𓄏
dd mdw (in Hr)
 Utterance (of Horus).

Text 6. Legends of the deities, on both sides

𓄏
Wp-(w³wt)
 Wep(wawet).

4 Provenance and dating of the funerary ensemble

According to its decoration, which has some close parallels, Nairis' funerary ensemble was in all likelihood made in a Theban workshop. Some details of its decoration permit to date its fabrication to the second half of the Libyan Period or the very beginning of the 25th Dynasty.

The type of decoration used for the cartonnage corresponds to Taylor's type 2C; most of the examples belonging to this type are dated from the second half of the Libyan Period³⁰. Apart from the type, some iconographic details found on the cartonnage appear on pieces dated from the second half of the Libyan Period and the 25th Dynasty: the winged solar disk instead of the ram-headed falcon found at the beginning of the 22nd Dynasty; the unguent cones put on the heads of Imset and Hâpi on the second register (fig. 3) belong to a type in use during the 25th Dynasty³¹, even if they are not as detailed as on other de-

³⁰ Taylor, 2003, 106–107. Concerning this type of cartonnages, see also Aston, 2009, 283–284.

³¹ Concerning the different types of unguent cones used on the Third Intermediate Period funerary steles, see Taylor, op. cit., 101 and Loth, 2009, 219–230. The type used on the Hermitage cartonnage is close to Taylor's n° 3.

pications³²; the tripartite decoration of the second and third registers³³; the *qrs*w-shaped naos on the fourth register³⁴. Moreover, the offering table laden with Old Kingdom style breads depicted on the second register can be ascribed to the archaizing tendency, which spread out from the end of the Libyan Period until the beginning of the 26th Dynasty³⁵.



Fig. 3: Details of the heads of Hâpi and Imset on the second register of the cartonnage (© State Hermitage Museum).

Some details of Nairis' depiction on the second register (fig. 2) are typical of the Libyan Period: the lotus flower she wears on her forehead, which becomes obsolete during the second half of the 22nd Dynasty³⁶, and the details of her face, which do not show the specific Kushite features pointed out by Taylor³⁷.

All these peculiarities allow us to date the coffin between the 8th and the first half of the 7th Century BC, and the last ones point more precisely to the second half of the Libyan Period.

³² Usually, this type of cone is made of a broad white base and a red top and flanked on both sides by a green "cushion", in all likelihood made of vegetables. Here, the whole lower part was painted green, so that the unguent cones are two-coloured, green and red.

³³ Taylor, op. cit., 105–106.

³⁴ The *qrs*w-coffin itself becomes popular by near the middle of the 8th Century, see *ibid.*, 111–112. Contemporaneously, its shape is largely used for naos.

³⁵ Compare this scene to other depictions of archaizing style offering tables on funerary steles, e.g. the Theban examples London BM EA 65354 (Perdu [ed.], 2012, 129, n° 51) and BM EA 8449 (Bierbrier, 1987, pl. 14–15, n° 2), Cairo A 9448 (Munro, 1973, pl. 1, n° 4), Cairo A 9422 (*ibid.*, pl. 2, n° 5) or the Heliopolite example Cleveland Museum of Art 1920.1977 (Berman – Boháč, 1999, 416–417, n° 312).

³⁶ On this point, see Taylor, op. cit., 101. The blooming lotus flower on the forehead of a deceased seems to be lastly bear together with the unguent cone of type 2 which ends in the early 7th Century BC, see e.g. the steles London BM EA 27332 (Bierbrier, op. cit., 15–16 and pl. 18–19) and BM EA 8450 (*ibid.*, 15 and pl. 16–17).

³⁷ Taylor, op. cit., 99.

5 Toward the identification of Nairis' family?

The feminine name Nairis (*N3-ir̄i.s*), written  on the coffin and  on the cartonnage, is very uncommon. It could be an abbreviation of the names Nairesnefer (*N3-ir̄.s-nfr̄*)³⁸ and its two versions including divine names, Nairesbastetnefer (*N3-ir̄.s-b3stt-nfr̄*)³⁹ and Nairesasetnefer (*N3-ir̄.s-3st-nfr̄*)⁴⁰, all three known during the 26th Dynasty⁴¹. Apart from a woman who lived in the mid-26th Dynasty⁴², the name Nairis was worn by the mother of a mistress of the house named Hotepamun (*Htp-Imn*), known from her coffin⁴³ and her funerary stele⁴⁴. Combining the data given by these two items, we know that Hotepamun was the daughter of a priest of Montu and divine father – beloved of the god priest named Mipu, son of Hahat, and of a mistress of the house named Nairis (written ) (fig. 4). Both of these items clearly belong to the production of the 25th Dynasty⁴⁵.

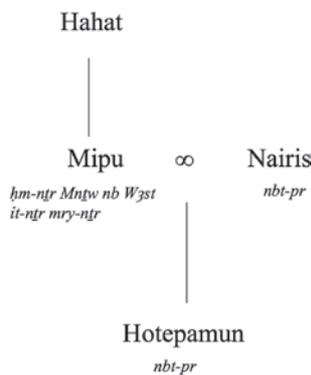


Fig. 4: Genealogy of Hotepamun, considering the data given by her coffin (Heidelberg 1015) and funerary stele (London BM EA 8453).

38 Ranke, PN, I, 169, 14 ; II, 293, 15, and 364.

39 Ranke, PN, I, 169, 13.

40 Coffin London UC 14230; see Graefe – Wassef, 1979, 109, n. n.

41 See De Meulenaere, 2012, 45, n. 23, and Graefe – Wassef, loc. cit.

42 She is the wife of the third prophet of Amun Padiamunnebnestauy. She is named on the statue of her son Hor xvii from the Cachette of Karnak (Cairo JE 37205) and on a divine statuette belonging to another of her children named Rahotep (London, private collection). These two pieces were published by De Meulenaere, op. cit., 40–59 (concerning the first statue, see also Jansen-Winkel, 2014, 294–295, n° 85).

43 Heidelberg, University collection 1015, see Feucht, 1986, 121–123, n° 277; Jansen-Winkel, 2009, 527–528, n° 323. The coffin is 137 cm high, and this may indicate that it was made for a little girl rather than for an adult.

44 London BM EA 8453: Munro, 1973, 189 and pl. 3, fig. 9; Bierbrier, op. cit., 17 and pl. 22–23, n° 2; Jansen-Winkel, 2009, 527, n° 322.

45 Note that Hotepamun's depiction on the stele London BM EA 8453 was chosen by Taylor to represent the typical feminine depiction of the 25th Dynasty, see Taylor, 2003, 100, fig. 1, n° 10, and 101, fig. 2, n° 3.

As the name Nairis is very rare during the Third Intermediate Period, the owner of the funerary ensemble kept in the Hermitage Museum could be the same as the mother of Hotepamun, whose coffin is dated to the 25th Dynasty. Although this hypothesis cannot be proven, there is no obstacle, neither in the kinship nor in the titles, and could be asserted if we consider the date of Nairis' ensemble to the later Libyan Period and the date of Hotepamun material to the 25th Dynasty.

In conclusion, the funerary ensemble of Nairis is a typical set, comprising an outer coffin and a cartonnage, made in the Theban area during the later Libyan Period. The cartonnage shows some interesting and somewhat unusual iconographic details, although it seems to have been left unfinished. Although no family relationship is related on Nairis' coffin and cartonnage, she could be mentioned as the mother of a maid called Hotepamun, on her funerary material dated to the 25th Dynasty.

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Fig. 5: Outer coffin of Nairis, front view of the lid (© State Hermitage Museum).



Fig. 7: Outer coffin of Nairis, view from the back (© State Hermitage Museum).



Fig. 6: Outer coffin of Nairis, view of the inner case (© State Hermitage Museum).



Fig. 8: Cartonnage of Nairis, front view (© State Hermitage Museum).



Fig. 9: Cartonnage of Nairis, right side (© State Hermitage Museum).



Fig. 11: Cartonnage of Nairis, view from the back (© State Hermitage Museum).



Fig.10: Cartonnage of Nairis, left side (© State Hermitage Museum).