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Liber Amicorum René van Walsem. Edited by Vincent Verschoor, Arnold Jan Stuart & Cocky Demarée.

Egyptologische Uitgaven, vol. 30;

ISBN: 978-90-6258-230-3.

www.nino-leiden.nl/publication/imaging-and-imagining-the-memphite-necropolis

www.peeters-leuven.be/boekoverz.asp?nr=10604

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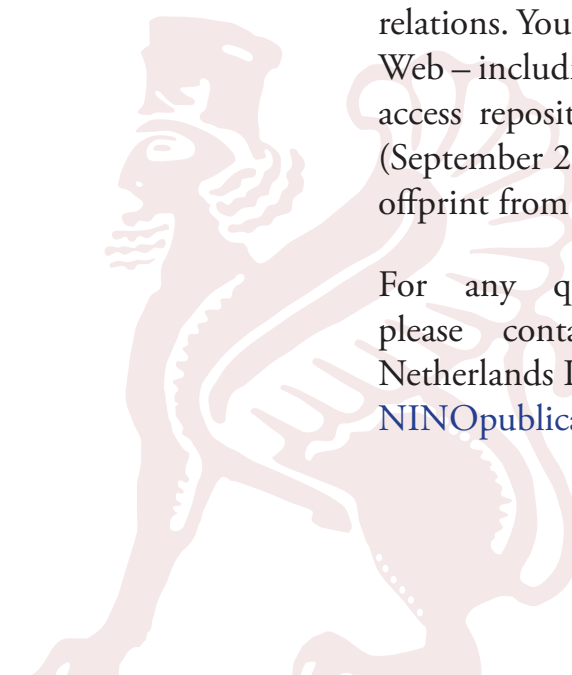
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IMAGING AND IMAGINING THE MEMPHITE NECROPOLIS

LIBER AMICORUM RENÉ VAN WALSEM

edited by

Vincent Verschoor, Arnold Jan Stuart & Cocky Demarée



NEDERLANDS INSTITUUT VOOR HET NABIJE OOSTEN
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PEETERS
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2017

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THE OUTER COFFIN OF NEFERSEMDENET (Sq9Sq)

Harco O. Willems

After decades of intensive research on Middle Kingdom coffins, I find it hard to imagine there ever was a time when the topic of ancient Egyptian burial containers was alien to me. Yet this is the case, and I even faintly remember that initially, I found the subject rather uninteresting. That this has changed is undoubtedly partly due to René van Walsem, who, somewhere in the late 1970s, taught a course on Egyptian coffins and sarcophagi, which I attended. The place of the action was a small, dark room beside the garden of the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden. In that remote, pre-PowerPoint age, with an institute that at the time did not even have a slide collection, our teacher every week carried piles of books to the lecture hall. In the course of the class, all these books would finally be displayed vertically, and folded open, on the table in front of him – from which, inevitably, some would fall down at some point. René’s knowledge about coffins was immense, and was undoubtedly founded in a deep love for the subject. One day, I vividly recall him saying that Egyptian coffins constituted a very ‘lively’ topic of research. The remark sounded bizarre at the time, but I have since come to realise that it holds more than a kernel of truth. Later in my career, I in fact became a coffin person myself. In the context of this *liber amicorum* it is moreover appropriate to recall that René’s interest and support have been vital for me when I was developing the methodology of *Chests of Life*. Considering all of this, nothing could from my perspective be a more fitting tribute than an article on a coffin.

(RE)DISCOVERY

In 1906-1907, James Edward Quibell carried out excavations in Saqqāra, and discovered the intact tomb of Karenen and the lady Nefersendenet.¹ Although apparently no thieves had disturbed the burial chamber, white ants unfortunately had, and had caused severe damage to the wooden objects. The plates provided by Quibell show that the burial chamber was in great disarray, because many of the wooden funerary models had tumbled down when the coffins, on which they once stood, collapsed.² Quibell was clearly most impressed by the beautiful and rich collection of funerary models from the tomb, and their description takes up most of the space in his description.³ The coffins, however, are described in a much more cursory fashion, even though Pierre Lacau added an extensive overview of the Coffin Texts and Pyramid Texts inscribed on them in an annex.⁴

¹ J.E. Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara (1906-1907)* (Le Caire, 1908), p. 7-61. In the earlier literature, Nefersendenet is often referred to as Nefersendet, but evidence given in Gardiner’s sign list (sub N13), as well as the coffins here discussed, leave no room for doubt that the name ends with –net. The rendering Nefermedjednyt has also been suggested, but no clear supportive evidence was cited (Do. Arnold, ‘The Architecture of Meketre’s Slaughterhouse and Other Early Twelfth Dynasty Wooden Models’, in P. Jánosi (ed.), *Structure and Significance: Thoughts on Ancient Egyptian Architecture* (ÖAW Denkschriften XXXIII; Wien, 2005), p. 36).

² Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara (1906-1907)*, p. 7-8 and pl. XII-XIII.

³ *Ibid.* p. 8-15.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 21-61.

From Quibell's account it is clear that the burial chamber contained the badly damaged remains of four coffins. He did not provide a clear plan of the room, but only the two photographs already referred to, and a rather unclear description. These indications make clear that the burial chamber had an entrance in the north wall, that the coffins of Karenen stood more or less in the middle and those of Nefersendenet further west, suggesting that the woman was buried first and the man after her.⁵

The coffins of Karenen entered the Cairo Museum under the numbers JE 39054a (inner coffin) and JE 39054b (outer coffin).⁶ In de Buck's edition of the Coffin Texts, these coffins bear the sigla Sq5C and Sq6C respectively. The description of the burial of Nefersendenet included coffin Cairo JE 39014 (de Buck's number Sq3C). However, in the description of the 'coffin and body' of Nefersendenet, no coffin is actually described,⁷ although a 'coffin', in the singular, is mentioned in passing, suggesting there was only one. However, on page 12, Quibell remarks: 'The outer coffins were massive, their lids being 0.24 cent. thick,⁸ but the state of preservation was very bad. Parts of the lines of blue inscription on the outside could be copied, but the interiors were hopeless. The inner coffins, however, being made of better wood, had suffered very little from the white ants. They, like the outer ones, were covered on the inside with texts and these have been examined by M. Pierre Lacau.' This passage shows that Karenen and Nefersendenet both possessed two coffins, and that the inner coffins were in a better state than the outer ones.

This suggests that the only coffin of Nefersendenet to which Quibell pays any specific attention must be the inner coffin Sq3C. No further record hitherto existed in the literature for the outer coffin. In this article I will present what is probably the only surviving record of this coffin.

In November 1984 I visited the Centre Golénischeff, then still housed in an impressive building in the Avenue d'Iéna in Paris. It was my aim to trace the dossiers of Pierre Lacau, so as to find documentation missing from the archive containing the de Buck photographs in Leiden. Since Lacau had been deeply involved in the study of the Coffin Texts, and was even one of the founding fathers of the Coffin Texts project, I went to several places where he had worked. An attempt to find Lacau's papers in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo was unsuccessful; nothing survived in the records there, according to the director, Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ, perhaps because, prior to the construction of the 6 October Bridge in the 1970s, an archive building belonging to the Museum was demolished before the museum staff had been able to bring the documents stored inside into safety. I then moved to the Centre Golénischeff, where Jean Yoyotte came up with a box filled with coffin photos which had once belonged to Pierre Lacau and which Yoyotte, in a very friendly gesture, passed in permanent loan to de Buck archive at the Netherlands Institute for the Near East (NINO) in Leiden.

This file box turned out to be less informative than I had hoped, as almost all of the photographs it contained were prints of the same negatives already available in the de Buck archive, or had been published. However, it included one photograph that was new, and I reproduce it here (Fig. 1).⁹ The coffin panel depicted here has not been known to scholars except myself, and therefore the only references to it are few in number. In 1988, I included the coffin it depicts under the number Sq9Sq in the coffin list

⁵ A (perforce rather impressionistic) plan is offered by J.-L. Podvin, 'Position du mobilier funéraire dans les tombes égyptiennes privés du Moyen Empire', *MDAIK* 56 (2000), p. 322-23.

⁶ Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara (1906-1907)*, p. 12-14. A recent study of these coffins is J. Dahms, *Die Särge des Karenen: Untersuchungen zu Pyramidentexten und Sargtexten* (PhD Heidelberg, 2013).

⁷ Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara (1906-1907)*, p. 14-15.

⁸ Of course Quibell must here mean to say: '0.24 m. thick'.

⁹ I express my gratitude to Olaf Kaper for giving me permission to have this photo reproduced here.



Fig. 1. Outer coffin of Nefersendet (Sq3C), FR-side, inside (photo in De Buck archive).

I published in *Chests of Life*.¹⁰ The element 'Sq' at the end of this coffin siglum indicates that the object is currently in Saqqāra. However, this is in fact no more than an assumption, as I know of no factual information regarding its present whereabouts. It is quite conceivable that it was left behind in the tomb at Saqqāra, as it was clearly only partly preserved, and in a poor state. Nevertheless, it cannot be ruled out entirely that it may surface one day in a museum collection.

The coffin was also briefly referred to by Jan Dahms,¹¹ and by myself in an updated list of Middle Kingdom coffins.¹² As far as I am aware, no other references to this document exist. This article has the aim of making accessible this long-lost coffin to the Egyptological world.

DESCRIPTION

The photograph only covers the inside of the FR-side of the coffin. However, our analysis will show that Quibell's publication also includes an image of the outside of the same coffin panel. Based on this, the present article will be able to present a complete typological determination of this coffin.

Measurements

The photograph does not provide information on the height, length, and thickness of the coffin panel. Moreover, since it was taken at a slight angle, even the height : length ratio cannot be determined with full accuracy. Since the top and bottom of the outside are not visible in the photograph, the total length : height ratio of the side cannot be determined. It is, however, possible to measure the height and length of the decorated inner surface. On the photo, the length is 24.7 cm and the height 12.35 cm. Accordingly the coffin must have had an unusually squat appearance, the height being equal to half its length (1 : 2).

This information can be compared with the length of Sq3C. De Buck's photo archive in Leiden contains a record of this coffin accompanied by a scale rod. On this basis its interior length can be calculated to amount to approx. 1.85 m its height to approx. 0.49 m. Clearly this coffin can only have been an inner coffin: for Sq9Sq to have fitted inside it, it would, given its length : height ratio, have to have been a very small coffin, with a height of probably less than 20 cm and a length of c. 40 cm. Therefore, even though our information on measurements is very incomplete, our data confirm that Sq9Sq must be the outer coffin.

If we assume that the coffin sides of Sq3C had a thickness of about 0.15 m, its total exterior length would have been in the order of magnitude of at least 2.10 m. Allowing for some manoeuvring space inside Sq9Sq, the inner length of this coffin cannot have been less than about 2.30 m. Because the length : height ratio is 2 : 1, its inner height must have been at least about 1.15 m.

¹⁰ H. Willems, *Chests of Life: A Study of the Typology and Conceptual Development of Middle Kingdom Standard Class Coffins* (MVEOL 25; Leiden, 1988), p. 31.

¹¹ Dahms, *Die Särge des Karenen*, p. 13, n. 26.

¹² H. Willems, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture: Religious Ideas and Ritual Practice in Middle Kingdom Elite Cemeteries* (CHANE 73; Leiden, Boston, 2014), p. 302-3.

Technical Description

Unlike Sq3C, which was made of well-sawn planks (probably conifer wood), Sq9Sq was made of irregular planks of poor quality.¹³ In Sq3C, the decoration seems to have been applied directly on the wood. In Sq9Sq this was clearly impossible, and instead, sheets of veneer were applied to the wood on which the decoration was applied.¹⁴ Not all of the pieces of veneer were still attached to the wood when Lacau's photograph was taken, but in the areas where it is missing, the pegholes for attaching the sheets of veneer can still be recognised.

Decoration

1. *General layout of the side.* The FR panel of Sq9Sq is decorated in accordance with layout pattern FR9 (see Fig. 2). This decoration pattern is extremely rare. It is only known from Sq3C and Sq9Sq, and from Sq6C, one of the coffins of Karenen that was found in the same burial chamber.¹⁵ This is a strong indication that Sq3C and Sq9Sq derive from the same workshop.

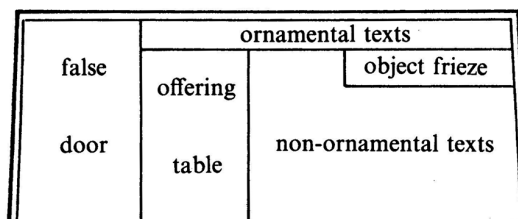


Fig. 2. Layout pattern FR9 according to Willems, *Chests of Life*, p. 185.

2. *Leopard skin ornament and band of coloured rectangles.* Usually, the inner walls of Middle Kingdom coffins are framed with bands of coloured rectangles along the vertical ends and along the top. Facing outward from the vertical block bands, many coffins additionally feature a chain-like ornamentation which, as René van Walsem has pointed out, probably goes back to the dotted motif found on the skin of a leopard, along the spine of the animal, and ending in a stroke pattern as found on its tail.¹⁶ In some early Middle Kingdom coffins the latter motif is reduced to a pattern of clumsily drawn black hemicircles at the top and oblique strokes at the bottom. In Sq9Sq and Sq3C,¹⁷ as well as in the coffins of Karenen, we find the exceptional variant 153.¹⁸ This is a second indication that the coffins from the burial chamber of Karenen may all derive from the same workshop.

¹³ This is in agreement with Quibell's remark, cited on p. 2, that the inner coffins were made of better wood. See Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara (1906-1907)*, p. 12.

¹⁴ This very exceptional technique has hardly been commented upon in the literature. The examples I know are B8B, BH1C, presumably BH6C (outside), G1T, M23C, M25C, M26C, M27C, and M12War. Whenever the date can be determined based on typology or archaeological context, all of these fragments date to the early Middle Kingdom. However, the recently discovered coffin veneer of coffin R1Br must be attributed to a fairly advanced date in the Twelfth Dynasty. For the key to the sigla, see Willems, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture*, p. 230-315.

¹⁵ Willems, *Chests of Life*, p. 185.

¹⁶ Unpublished lecture by R. van Walsem, quoted in Willems, *Chests of Life*, p. 191, n. 58. See also R. van Walsem, *The Coffin of Djedmonthuiufankh in the National Museum of Antiquities at Leiden, I: Technical and Iconographic/Iconological Aspects* (EU 10; Leiden, 1997), p. 95, n. 132.

¹⁷ See Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara (1906-1907)*, pl. XX.

¹⁸ In Willems, *Chests of Life*, p. 192-93, fig. 22, attestations of this version of the ornament are referred to in *ibid.*, n. 63.

3. *False door.* The false door in coffin Sq9Sq shows marked similarities to the one in Sq3C¹⁹. In both cases, the element is surrounded by a white area (i.e. it does not join directly to the ornamental frame). The top parts of the false doors in both coffins are near identical. Below, Sq3C has a horizontal field with ornamentation, whereas in Sq9Sq the area seems to be monochrome. Below this, both coffins have a rectangular field with a chequerboard motif. This tops the false door area proper, which is similar in both coffins. Although the two false doors are not identical, several parts are sufficiently comparable to assume the two were made in the same workshop.
4. *Offering table.* To the right of the false door, Sq9Sq has an offering table panel. In Sq3C this is topped by the label *dbh.t-htp r^c nb*. This is absent in Sq9Sq. Also, Sq3C seems to have a somewhat wider selection of objects. Some elements are, however, closely comparable. Here I mention the shape of the offering table, the ewer and washing basin below it, and the shape of the basket with figs. Other elements are different, or not clearly recognisable in the photograph.
5. *The ornamental hieroglyphic text.* The register with this text does not fill the entire top of the side below the ornamental frame, but only the area to the right of the false door (see Fig. 2). This arrangement is shared by Sq3C and Sq9Sq. The texts in the two coffins run as follows:

Sq9Sq:



Sq3C:



Although there are slight differences between the two versions, the arrangement of the signs, their form, and coloration (as far as this can be judged from the grey tones in the publication of Sq3C and the photograph in Fig. 1) leave no room for doubt that both texts were applied in the same workshop. The reader can easily verify this by comparing the hieroglyphs of Sq3C as rendered in Fig. 3 with those in Fig. 1.



Fig. 3. Ornamental hieroglyphic text on FR inside of Sq3C
(after Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara (1906-1907)*, pl. XX-XXII).

6. *Object frieze.* In coffin Sq9Sq, the object frieze occupies a very short register near the foot end of the coffin, and just below the register of ornamental hieroglyphs (see Fig. 1). This arrangement is very exceptional, but it is paralleled in the other coffins with layout pattern FR9 (Sq3C and Sq6C), both from the same burial chamber. In Sq9Sq the objects are arranged from left to right in three groups. The former two are arranged on low tables, or perhaps rather stands, as some longitudinal objects are depicted as though they are stuck in holes in the top of the stands. A third group is depicted after the second and last table. The content of the frieze is as follows:

¹⁹ Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara (1906-1907)*, pl. XX.

Group 1: Lefthand subgroup: a sling (𓂏) over a second, curved object, probably another sling. Righthand subgroup: nine *mdw* sticks.

Group 2: Lefthand subgroup, above the table: a *wꜣs* sceptre, horizontally positioned (𓂏); below it a forked stick (𓂏); below it a thin, horizontal object, perhaps ending on the right in a hand (an arm-like censer?), if it is not another forked stick. Below this four bows (𓂏); Righthand subgroup, above the table: three sceptre-like objects. On the left, something resembling a 𓂏-sceptre, but with a more rounded top; in the middle probably a *hꜣd* mace (𓂏), to the right a *mnw* mace (𓂏). Below the table: two daggers (*bꜣgsw* and *mtꜣpn.t*).

Group 3: a herdsman's staff (𓂏) and another, unclear kind of staff. The two staves are depicted over a sling (𓂏).

Part of the frieze is obliterated by a crack that runs through its entire length. Almost all of these objects have analogues in the object frieze in Sq3C, although there the objects appear in a slightly different order. And all derive from the ritual of offering royal insignia to the deceased.²⁰

7. *List of offerings.* The area between the offering table scene and the object frieze is taken up by fifteen columns of cursive hieroglyphs, rendering a list of offerings (see Fig. 4). In the photograph, many signs are so vague as to be almost illegible. However, the sequence of the items in the list and the way their names are spelled are so similar to what is found in Sq3C that it was in most cases nevertheless possible to determine the reading. The table in Fig. 5 compares the sequence of objects in Sq9Sq (left-hand columns) with those in Sq3C (right-hand columns). This clearly shows that the two coffins share almost the same selection of items, and do so in the same order. Occasionally, however, Sq3C has elements absent from Sq9Sq; the reverse situation is also encountered, although less frequently. Several of the mentions in version Sq3C that are absent in Sq9Sq are stage directions; therefore the differences are fairly restricted as regards the material content of the offering list. It is also remarkable that the quantifications of the items in the two lists are usually identical.²¹ This strongly suggests that the *Vorlage* on the basis of which the two coffins were inscribed, must have been closely similar or the same, thus strengthening the impression that the two coffins derive from the same workshop.

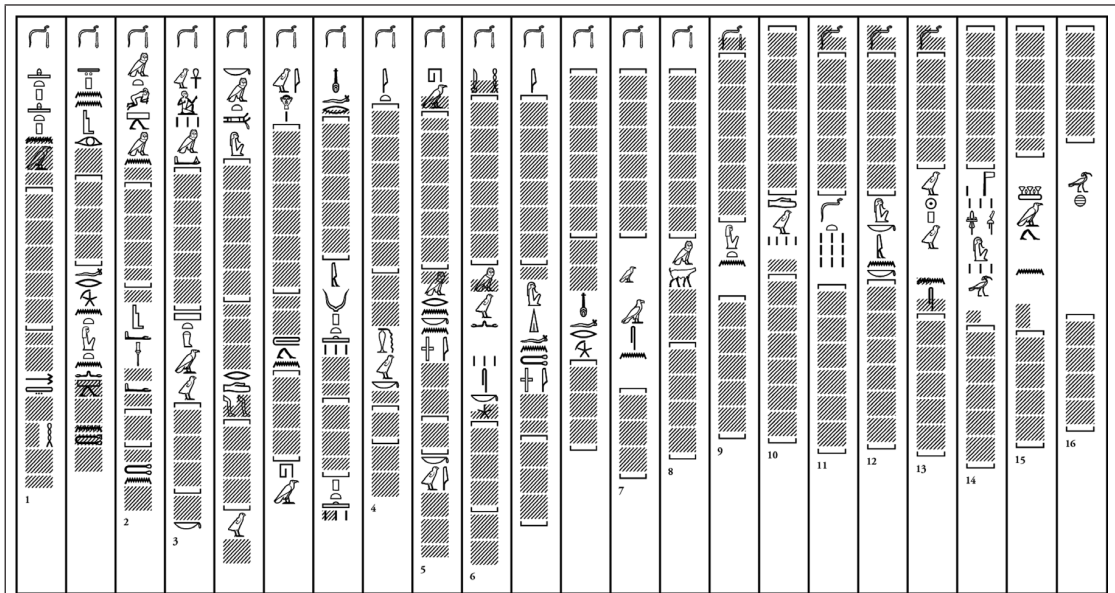
²⁰ For this ritual, see Willems, *Chests of Life*, p. 200-9; for the occurrence of this ritual in the Saqqāra coffins here discussed, see *ibid.* p. 221 (C).

²¹ In the fields in table 4, these are the numbers written behind the name of the item. If no number is indicated, this means that none is written on the coffin. If the area where the number was written is now damaged, this is indicated by '///'.

			-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	</														

Sq9Sq	Sq3C	Sq9Sq	Sq3C	Sq9Sq	Sq3C
1 <i>s3t mw</i>	1 <i>s3t mw</i>	31 <i>t^c n</i>	38 <i>^c n f3i.t 1</i>	63 <i>np3.t 2</i>	73 <i>np3.t 2</i>
2 <i>sntr [1]</i>	2 <i>sn3r 1</i>	<i>f<3i>.t 1</i>		64 <i>msy.t 2</i>	74 <i>msy.t 2</i>
3 <i>qbh t3 [2]</i>	3 <i>qbh t3 2</i>		39 <i>dwiw 1</i>	65 <i>dsr.t 2</i>	75 <i>dsr.t 2</i>
	4 <i>wn hn 1</i>	32 [<i>sb.w</i>]	40 <i>sb.w 1</i>	45 <i>hd 4</i>	56 <i>hd 4</i>
	5 <i>shp.t mrh.t 1</i>	(?) 1		46 <i>hps 1</i>	57 <i>hps 1</i>
4 <i>sty hb 1</i>	6 <i>sty hb</i>	33 <i>di sb.w ///</i>	41 <i>di sb.w 1</i>	66 <i>dsr.t</i>	76 <i>dsr.t w3s.t.t 2</i>
5 <i>hknw 1</i>	7 <i>hknw</i>	34 <i>sw[.t] 1</i>	42 <i>sw.t 1</i>	<i>w3s.t.t ///</i>	
6 <i>sft 1</i>	8 <i>sft</i>	35 <i>/// 2</i>	43 <i>mw 2</i>	67 <i>hnk.t 2</i>	77 <i>hnk.t 2</i>
7 <i>nhnm 1</i>	9 <i>nhnm</i>	36 <i>/// 2</i>	44 <i>bd 2</i>	68 <i>/// ///</i>	78 <i>hnk.t hnms 2</i>
8 <i>tw3w.t 1</i>	10 <i>tw3w.t</i>	37 <i>/// 2</i>		69 <i>shp[.t] ///</i>	79 <i>shp.t 2</i>
9-10 <i>h3.t.t</i>	11-12 <i>h3.t.t n.t</i>	38 <i>/// 1</i>		70 <i>ph3 ///</i>	80 <i>ph3 2</i>
<i>n.t s3 1</i>	<i>s3 1</i>	39 <i>/// 1</i>		71 <i>dwiw (2)</i>	81 <i>dwiw 2</i>
11-12 <i>h3.t.t</i>	13-14 <i>h3.t.t n.t</i>	40 <i>ht (?) 2</i>	45 <i>ht 2</i>	72 <i>d3[b.w] ///</i>	82 <i>d3b.w 2</i>
<i>n.t</i>	<i>Thnw 1</i>	41 [<i>n</i>] <i>hr 2</i>	46 <i>nhr 2</i>	73 <i>irp ///</i>	83 <i>irp 2</i>
<i>Thnw 1</i>		42 <i>dp3 4</i>	47 <i>dp3 4</i>	74 <i>/// ///</i>	84 <i>irp mh.w 2</i>
13-15 <i>rf</i>	15-17 <i>rf w3d</i>	43 <i>psn 4</i>	48 <i>psn 4</i>	75 <i>/// ///</i>	85 <i>bs 2</i>
<i>w3d</i>	<i>msdm.t 2</i>	44 <i>šns 4</i>	49 <i>šns 4</i>	76 <i>/// 1</i>	86 <i>irp 1</i>
<i>msdm.t</i>			50 <i>mt3 4</i>	77-89 <i>/// ///</i>	87 <i>im.t 2</i>
2			51 <i>hbnn.t 4</i>	90 <i>/// 2</i>	88 <i>nh3 2</i>
16 <i>wnh 2</i>	18 <i>wnh 2</i>		52 <i>kmh 4</i>		89 <i>snw 2</i>
17 <i>sntr 1</i>	19 <i>sntr 1</i>		53 <i>id.t 4</i>		90 <i>hbnn.t 2</i>
18 <i>qbh t3 2</i>	20 <i>qbh t3 2</i>		54 <i>p3.t 4</i>		91 <i>hnf.w 2</i>
19 [<i>h3.t</i>] <i>///</i>	21 <i>h3.t 1</i>		55 <i>t.wy 4</i>		92 <i>i3d 2</i>
	22 <i>di pri.t-hrw</i>	28 <i>nms[.t] ///</i>	33 <i>nms.t 1</i>		93 <i>s3.t hd 2</i>
20 <i>///</i>	1	45 <i>hd 4</i>	56 <i>hd 4</i>		94 <i>s3.t w3d 2</i>
21 <i>///</i>	23 <i>mi hr 1</i>	46 <i>hps 1</i>	57 <i>hps 1</i>		95 <i>s.t ig.t 2</i>
22 <i>///</i>	24 <i>t nsw.t 2</i>	47 <i>iw^c 1</i>	58 <i>iw^c 1</i>		96 <i>s.t s3.t 2</i>
23 <i>///</i>	25 <i>htp nsw.t 2</i>	48 <i>shn 1</i>	59 <i>shn 1</i>		97 <i>b3b3.t 2</i>
24 <i>///</i>	26 <i>t im.y wsh.t</i>	49 <i>sw.t 1</i>	60 <i>sw.t 1</i>		98 <i>nbs 2</i>
	2	50 <i>sph.t 1</i>	61 <i>sph.t 1</i>	91 <i>t nbs 1</i>	99 <i>t nbs 2</i>
	27 <i>dd mdw ? 1</i>	51 <i>mis.t 1</i>	62 <i>mis.t 1</i>	92 <i>w^ch 2</i>	100 <i>w^ch 2</i>
	28 <i>pr-?? 1</i>	52 <i>33r.t 1</i>		93 ? (<i>fi nb?</i>)	101 <i>ht bnr 2</i>
25 [<i>i^c-r</i>]	29 <i>i^c-r nsw.t 1</i>	53 <i>n<n>šm 1</i>	63 <i>n<n>šm 1</i>	1	
<i>nsw.t ///</i>		54 <i>h^c 1</i>	64 <i>h^c 1</i>	94 <i>/// ///</i>	
26 <i>ttw ///</i>	30 <i>ttw 1</i>	55 <i>iwf n h3.t</i>	65 <i>n h3.t 1</i>	95 <i>rnp.t 1</i>	102 <i>rnp.t</i>
27 <i>t [hnr] ///</i>	31 <i>t hnr 1</i>	1		96 <i>/// ///</i>	
	32 <i>ht 2</i>	56 <i>r 1</i>	66 <i>r 1</i>	97 <i>hkn.w 1</i>	103 <i>hknw</i>
28 <i>nms[.t] ///</i>	33 <i>nms.t 1</i>	57 <i>trp 1</i>	67 <i>trp 1</i>	98 <i>wnm.w 1</i>	104 <i>wnm.w</i>
29 <i>ds[...] ///</i>	34 <i>dsr.t 1</i>	58 <i>s.t 1</i>	68 <i>s.t 1</i>	99 <i>phr.w 1</i>	105 <i>phr.w</i>
30 <i>/// ///</i>	35 <i>nms.t 1</i>	59 <i>sr 1</i>	69 <i>sr 1</i>	100 <i>wnm.w</i>	106 <i>wnm.w</i>
	36 <i>n.yt hnk.t</i>	60 <i>mn.t 1</i>	70 <i>mn.t 1</i>	1	
	<i>hnms.t 1</i>	61 <i>t sif ///</i>	71 <i>t sif 2</i>	101 <i>di.w 1</i>	
	37 <i>šns 1</i>	62 <i>s^c.t 2</i>	72 <i>s^c.t 2</i>	102 <i>hps 3</i>	

Fig. 5. Comparative table listing the items in the offering lists in coffins Sq9Sq and Sq3C.



¹ The ʒ has been reconstructed based on CT VII, 59g [857]; actually, only the oblique line of the back is visible. Above sign →, some indistinct traces. Below the ʒ-sign, a bird-sign occurs.

² Below the break in the middle of the column, and above sign 𓂀, traces of a horizontal sign, which must represent 𓂀. Further traces at the column end.

³ Above 𓂀, some illegible traces. The 𓂀 is not quite clear, and it would constitute a dittography with the one at the top of the next column.

⁴ Above *bbh.wsk*, many illegible traces, below it, the illegible trace of one sign. Several traces at end of column, also illegible.

⁵ Below 𓂀, some illegible traces. At end of column, below *kiw*, illegible signs.

⁶ I do not trust the transcription of the two first signs. The remainder is problematic as well; the transcription is mostly based on the assumption the passage is a version of PT § 139a. However, the sign after 𓂀 is hard to account for. It has here been left as an empty space. It looks somewhat like a *k*. What has here been rendered as a *k* rather looks like *n*, and the star sign is really not clear.

⁷ Although many parts of the text look clear enough, it is hard to find adequate transcriptions for most of them that make sense. This explains the white areas in the column transcription. At the top, the lower part of the sign: a line tilting down to the right. Below it a rectangular sign, likewise tilted downward to the right (compare note 15). Below it, two signs, of which the leftmost one seems to be an alif; the one on the right is a z-like shape.

⁸ The traces below the *lm*-sign do not fit the expected *nw*-sign or the house-determinative.

⁹ Probably the determinative of the name of the coffin owner followed by the demonstrative pronoun *tm*. The traces below may read 𓂀; but the first sign might be another round sign, and the bird is not entirely clear.

¹⁰ Below the four strokes there are remains of a tall sign like 𓂀.

¹¹ Below *[ps]d.t*, vague traces of a sign.

¹² The sign here transcribed as the 'sitting god' 𓂀 could also be the 'sitting woman' 𓂀.

¹³ Below the second quail, the empty space in the transcription on the original contains a tall sign of which the left half borders on, or disappears in, a hole in the surface. The two signs below this (*n* and *s*) are likewise partly damaged and therefore not completely certain.

¹⁴ Below the ʒ-bird there is space for another sign, but no clear traces remain.

¹⁵ The spaces left empty in the transcription contain traces in the original, but I am unable to propose a reading for these. Note that the second sign from above is the same tilted rectangle as is found in column 13 (see note 7). For the word here transcribed as 𓂀, which is not included in the *Wb.*, one might compare A.H. Gardiner and K. Sethe, *Ancient Egyptian Letters to the Dead Mainly from the Old and Middle Kingdoms* (London, 1928), letter II.2 + comments. The text cited there reads 𓂀. In our document, there is space below the ʒ-sign as well, and some traces suggest this sign may actually have been written here.

¹⁶ Numerous sign traces remain, but they either offer different possibilities for reading, or are insufficiently distinct to justify a transcription.

Fig. 6. Hieroglyphic transcription of the Coffin Texts and Pyramid Texts spells on *FR* of *Sq9Sq*.

8. *Spells.* The rectangular space below the object frieze is taken up by twenty-two columns of Coffin Texts and Pyramid Texts spells (see Fig. 6). Whereas the signs of the list of offerings are written in cursive hieroglyphs, the Coffin Texts are written in hieratic. Also, whereas the text in the offering list faces to the left, the Coffin Texts ‘look’ to the right, something that is probably due to the fact that hieratic handwriting is less easy to reverse than hieroglyphic writing. The same phenomenon can be observed on Sq3C, with one exception. In this coffin, the columns of Coffin Texts are topped by the expression *dd mdw*, which, different from the rest of the columns, faces to the left.

Unfortunately, the columns of Coffin Texts are less easily recognizable in the photograph than the offering list was. I have been able to transcribe and identify only part of the texts. However, the scant remains do allow us to reconstruct part of the text programme.

Columns 1-2 preserve text passages that must derive from CT VII, 59g-60b [857]: the beginning of column 1 corresponds to the beginning of CT VII, 59g, the end of this column to CT VII, 59h and the beginning of column 2 to CT VII, 60a-b. The available space is insufficient to accommodate all signs given in the parallel versions, but I have been unable to reconstruct the text.

This is followed by a lacuna, the end of which presents the second half of the name of the coffin owner followed by the demonstrative pronoun *tn*. This is followed by *n šm.nz[is] mwt<.ti> šm.nz [t̄ is ḥ.ti]*. This is the beginning of PT utterance 213: PT § 134a.²² Since this passage always begins with the name of the deceased preceded by the vocative particle *h3*, the same reading must be reconstructed in the damaged part of column 2. The end of column 3 and the beginning of column 4 correspond to PT § 134b. The rest of column 4 is taken up by PT § 134c. Column 5 begins with *sk m 'Itmw*. This must derive from one of the passages *tpsk m 'Itmw ḥ.wy=sk m 'Itmw rmn.wy=sk m 'Itmw ḥ.t=sk m 'Itmw* in PT § 135a. Further down in the column, the word *rd.wy* must belong to *rd.wy=sk m 'Itmw*, which is part of PT § 135b. Column 6 begins with *iw hr*. This must be part of PT § 135b, which in some Middle Kingdom versions includes the reading *iw hr=sk m 'Itmw*. Further down in the column, *phr.n* belongs to PT § 135c.

The end of column 6 and the beginning of column 5, reading *h3 Nfr-[smd-n.t]*, present the address to the deceased of PT § 136a, which opens the new PT spell 214. The rest of this column and the beginning of column 8 render PT § 136b.

Large parts of column 8 are destroyed or beyond recognition in the photograph, but the remaining traces show that the scribe left out all or most of PT § 137a-138b. The word *kbH.w*, followed, at the beginning of column 9 by *h3[y]*, shows that the text is here taken up with PT § 138b-c. The remainder of column 9 fits § 138c-139a. The signs in column 10 are of the utmost difficulty, and their rendering has been inspired rather by the expectation that the sequel of PT § 139a should occur here than by the hieratic. In column 11, however, we are on firm ground again, as the remaining traces here clearly correspond to a part of PT § 139c.

The central part of column 12 contains the name of the coffin owner, and this was undoubtedly part of the vocative [*h3*] *Nfr-smd-n.t* opening PT utterance 215 (PT § 140a).

The rather clear traces in column 13 are hard to make sense of, and most have not been tran-

²² For the versions of this text on Middle Kingdom coffins, see J.P. Allen, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts VIII: Middle Kingdom Copies of Pyramid Texts* (OIC Publications 132; Chicago, 2006), p. 46-7.

scribed in Fig. 6. Also, I am unable to relate this part of the text to PT utterance 215, but *m-hmw* in column 14 would suit the text of PT § 140c. The only clear traces in column 15 must have read *[Nfr-smd-n.t] tn*, and might suit PT § 141a, where many versions of PT spell 215 feature the name of the deceased. But since the traces after this do not seem to fit this spell, this is quite uncertain. From here on, I have been unable to identify the texts.

The only legible part of column 16 can probably be restored into *fd.w* ‘four’, the traces in column 17 undoubtedly read *[ps]d.t* ‘enned’, and I would propose to read what remains of column 18 as *[it]zk ii nzk* (or *ii.nzk*). In column 19 there may be a reference to *[hr]w pw* ‘this day’. Column 20 refers to *ntr.w imn.ty.w isb.ty.w 3h.w* ‘easterly and westerly gods and akh-spirits...’. I am unable to make any sense of the last two columns.

Only about half of the CT programme on this coffin wall could accordingly be identified: CT spell 857, PT utterance 213, PT utterance 214, and perhaps the beginning of PT utterance 215. CT spell 857 occurs in a closely similar location of coffin Sq3C.

Possibly, this spell was very consciously placed in this position: it is an offering spell concerning the presentation of the *3ms*-sceptre. This offering is part of the ritual of offering royal insignia to the deceased, and all items in the object frieze immediately above derive from the same ritual.²³ In Old Kingdom royal pyramids, this ritual is depicted on the north wall of the burial chamber. PT utterances 213 and 214 also derive from this chamber, although not from the same wall. With regard to the location, there is, therefore, a connection between the offering ritual under discussion and these texts. Moreover, these texts refer to the *3b3* sceptre (PT § 134b) and the *n3b.t* sceptre (§134c), which also appear in the ritual of presenting royal insignia to the deceased.²⁴ This suggests that there is a conceptual connection between the object frieze and the Coffin Texts and Pyramid Texts written immediately below.

THE OUTSIDE OF THE FR PANEL OF COFFIN Sq9Sq

There is also information concerning the outside of the coffin panel we have been discussing, as it turns out to have been depicted in Quibell’s excavation report.²⁵ Like the other coffins from the same burial chamber, it contains an offering formula addressed to Osiris, asking for an invocation offering. It is certain that Quibell’s report does not depict any of these panels, because of a difference in layout. All coffins from this tomb had an outer decoration of Type I. This means that the coffin sides were undecorated except for the *udjat* eyes on FR, and a single line of ornamental hieroglyphs just below the top of the coffin sides. The plate published by Quibell shows a collapsed coffin, with the funerary models tumbled over, partly to the inside of the coffin and partly resting against its outside. Due to the debris in the burial chamber, only part of the coffin panel is visible. Its lower half, the head end, and part of the area near the foot end are invisible, but the central part is clearly recognizable. A very unusual feature is that the single line of hieroglyphs is here rendered, not directly below the rim of the coffin, but probably just above the middle of the side. Because this arrangement is not found in Sq3C, Sq5C and Sq6C, the plate can only show the FR side of Sq9Sq.

²³ See Willems, *Chests of Life*, p. 203-207; 220-228.

²⁴ See *ibid.*, *loc. cit.*; G. Jéquier, *Les pyramides des reines Neit et Apout* (Le Caire, 1933), pl. XII.

²⁵ Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara (1906-1907)*, pl. XIII.

The panel contained the following text, which, again, follows the one on the corresponding side of Sq3C closely both in formulation, in orthography, and in style:²⁶

Sq9Sq:



Sq3C:



TYPOLGY AND DATE

Although the main purpose of this article is to make available for study a hitherto undocumented coffin, a brief overview of the indications as to the date of the burial chamber in which Sq9Sq was found is in order, as there is some disagreement on this in the relevant literature.

The outer decoration of Sq3Sq contains only one register of ornamental hieroglyphs, and even though it is positioned exceptionally low on the wall, this coffin, like all others found in this burial chamber, can be said to represent type I.²⁷ On the inside, the coffin panel includes an object frieze. Since this is a FR-side, and since coffins with an object frieze on FR almost always also have one on H, F and B, this is likely also to have been the case with Sq9Sq, as was in fact the case with the closely similar outer coffin of the same owner (Sq3C) and the inner coffin Sq5C of Karenen, found in the same burial chamber. In the typology of Middle Kingdom standard class coffins, an inner decoration with object friezes on all four sides represents interior type 2. The outer/inner typology of these sources is accordingly I/2, and this combination is only attested in these three coffins.²⁸

Interior type 2 is otherwise characteristic of coffin production in the later Twelfth Dynasty, the earliest securely dated example being the sarcophagus of the vizier Mentuhotep from al-Lisht (L4Li), datable to the later reign of Senwosret I,²⁹ but type 1 outer decoration is overwhelmingly characteristic of the period up till the reign of Senwosret I.³⁰ Clearly, in the Saqqāra group discussed in this article, we are facing a pattern that is not in keeping with the overall development in Egypt. However, because of some close affinities with an exceptional pattern in evidence in a few well-dated Theban funerary monuments, I have suggested long ago that coffins Sq3C and Sq6C (belonging to Nefersemdenet and Karenen) are likely to date to the early Middle Kingdom, and presumably the late Eleventh Dynasty.³¹ In the same study, I also situated these two among a larger group of coffins, which, like them, all derive from the Teti Pyramid Cemetery. Some of these explicitly state that their owner was attached to the pyramid cult of king Merikare. Although no such mentions occur on the coffins of Karenen and Nefersemdenet, the end of the reign of this king should for this reason be considered a *terminus ante quem non* for the group.

²⁶ Here, square brackets do not indicate damage to the text, but invisibility in the published photograph.

²⁷ Willems, *Chests of Life*, p. 122-27.

²⁸ It is also found in coffins A1C, T3C, and originally probably G1T, but these early Middle Kingdom coffins are so idiosyncratic in their design that they should not be compared with the present material. See Willems, *Chests of Life*, p. 190. These coffins were extensively discussed in H. Willems, *The Coffin of Heqata (Cairo JdE 36418): A Case Study of Egyptian Funerary Culture of the Early Middle Kingdom* (Leuven, 1996).

²⁹ For this coffin siglum and the pertinent bibliography, see Willems, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture*, p. 260-61.

³⁰ Willems, *Chests of Life*, p. 127.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 106, and particularly n. 216a.

In 1990, S.J. Seidlmayer also discussed the Teti Pyramid Cemetery group as a unit, because of its homogeneous material culture.³² He noted the marked similarities of pottery material found associated with this group with pottery from his phases al-Ḥarāja II, the later material from phases Sidmant al-Jabal IIA and B, and material from al-Ghurāb phase II, noting that forms characteristic for al-Ghurāb III would be entirely absent. Moreover, the pottery in this Saqqāra group would be entirely different from that encountered in the tombs of Ihy and Hetep, also from Saqqāra. Although Seidlmayer does not quote any evidence to support his conviction, he apparently dates these latter tombs to the very beginning of the reign of Amenemhat I, arguing that that the Teti Pyramid Cemetery group cannot possibly postdate the beginning of the Twelfth Dynasty, since the tombs of Ihy and Hetep cover some of them.³³ This conclusion comes as a surprise, since although Seidlmayer's chronological table on page 395 attributes phase al-Ḥarāja II to the early Eleventh dynasty and even earlier and al-Ghurāb phase II to the pre-unification Eleventh Dynasty, he situates phases Sidmant al-Jabal IIA and B between Mentuhotep II and Senwosret I. Clearly, the implied chronological range of about two centuries for one archaeological assemblage is hard to accept. Moreover, Seidlmayer has failed to notice that many of the Saqqāra burials are demonstrably of a date late in the reign of Merikare or later, which would bring them very close to the unification of Egypt by Mentuhotep at the very earliest. Furthermore, while it is true that the tombs of Ihy and Hetep cover the tomb of a priest serving the cult of Merikare, Do. Arnold has argued that the pottery found in this particular burial represents types distinctly earlier than those found in the tomb of Karenen and Nefersendenet.³⁴

Here, another point merits consideration. Many authors have assumed that, *because* Merikare is so often mentioned in the Teti Pyramid Cemetery group, this whole group should be assigned to the First Intermediate Period.³⁵ However, I have shown elsewhere that the pyramid cult of this king demonstrably continued at least into the late Eleventh Dynasty, so that this dating criterion does not hold.³⁶ Meanwhile, the pottery of this group, which formed the key to Seidlmayer's dating proposal, has been

³² S.J. Seidlmayer, *Gräberfelder aus dem Übergang vom Alten zum Mittleren Reich: Studien zur Archäologie der Ersten Zwischenzeit* (SAGA 1; Heidelberg, 1990), p. 383-85.

³³ Although this cannot have been known to Seidlmayer at the time he wrote his study, D.P. Silverman and R. Freed now also date the tombs of Ihy and Hetep to the reign of Amenemhat I (R. Freed, 'Observations on the Dating and Decoration of the Tombs of Ihy and Hetep at Saqqara', in M. Bárta, J. Krejčí (eds.), *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2000* (Praha, 2000), p. 207-14; D.P. Silverman, 'Middle Kingdom Tombs in the Teti Pyramid Cemetery', in M. Bárta, J. Krejčí (eds.), *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2000* (Praha, 2000), p. 259-82; D.P. Silverman, 'Non-Royal Burials in the Teti Pyramid Cemetery and the Early Twelfth Dynasty', in D.P. Silverman, W.K. Simpson, J. Wegner (eds.), *Archaism and Innovation: Studies in the Culture of Middle Kingdom Egypt* (New Haven and Philadelphia, 2009), p. 47-101). Only the first of the three articles just cited offers an argumentation for the attribution of the tombs to the reign of Amenemhat I. All of these criteria rest on an assessment of the style of the decoration of the tombs, and I am afraid that this does not really convince me. The relief style to me seems much higher than the wafer-thin raised relief normally attributed to this king's reign, and the somewhat austere rendering of the relief would in my opinion not be unlike what is encountered under Amenemhat II.

³⁴ Do. Arnold, in P. Jánosi (ed.), *Structure and Significance*, p. 36.

³⁵ E.g. K.A. Daoud, *Corpus of Inscriptions of the Herakleopolitan Period from the Memphite Necropolis. Translation, Commentary, and Analyses* (BAR International Series 1459: Oxford, 2005), p. 159-60, see specifically n. 1632; Chr. Knoblauch, 'The Memphite Area in the Late First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom,' in: L. Evans (ed.), *Ancient Memphis. 'Enduring is the Perfection.'* *Proceedings of the International Conference Held at Macquarie University, Sydney on August 14-15, 2008* (OLA 214: Leuven, Paris, Walpole, 2012), p. 271; E. Brovarski, False doors and History: The First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom, in: D. Silverman, W.K. Simpson, J. Wegner (eds.), *Archaism and Innovation: Studies in the Culture of Middle Kingdom Egypt* (New Haven, Philadelphia, 2009), p. 365-78.

³⁶ Willems, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture*, p. 168-72.

re-evaluated by Do. Arnold, who instead attributes it to the reign of Amenemhat I.³⁷ Her study moreover brings a new type of argument into the debate: the close similarity of the funerary models found in tombs like those of Karenen and Nefersemdenet with models from the tombs of Meketre in Thebes and Gemenemhat in Saqqāra. In a recent publication on the coffins of Karenen, J. Dahms has analysed the tomb context and arrived at the conclusion that this burial in all likelihood must be dated to the late Eleventh and early Twelfth Dynasty (Amenemhat I).³⁸ His most important dating argument is based on a still unpublished analysis of the pottery by E. Kruck, which suggests the material most likely dates between the reigns of Mentuhotep II and Senwosret I.³⁹

Current opinion on the date of the Karenen-Nefersemdenet tomb accordingly seems to agree on an early Middle Kingdom date for the assemblage, in agreement with my own earlier dating. In addressing Seidlmayer's somewhat earlier dating proposal, it should be kept in mind that the three sites with which he makes a comparison show rather significant differences in date range, according to his chronology. The date range of the pottery from Sidmant phases IIA-B fit the proposed chronology admirably, but the al-Ḥarāja and al-Ghurāb material is earlier, and in part significantly earlier. This suggests that the three ceramic groups may not have been adequately placed, or that there may be significant chronological differences from one site to another, or that some assemblages may have contained ceramic containers that were already old at the time of their deposition.

On the other hand, the conclusion that the Karenen-Nefersemdenet tomb dates to the reign of Amenemhat I or even later is ultimately dependent to a large extent on Do. Arnold's reattribution of the temple in western Thebes formerly attributed to Mentuhotep III to Amenemhat I.⁴⁰ This redating cannot be considered certain, however.⁴¹ Although a date as late as this remains possible, I do not think the late Eleventh Dynasty can be ruled out.

³⁷ Do. Arnold, in P. Jánosi (ed.), *Structure and Significance*, p. 36-43; accepted by B. Russo, *The Territory w and Related Titles During the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period* (GHP 13; London, 2010), p. 7-8.

³⁸ Dahms, *Die Särge des Karenen*, p. 25-8.

³⁹ Unpublished dissertation, cited Dahms, *Die Särge des Karenen*, p. 14-6.

⁴⁰ Do. Arnold, 'Amenemhat I and the Early Twelfth Dynasty at Thebes', *MMJ* 26 (1991), p. 5-48.

⁴¹ W. Grajetzki, *Die höchsten Beamten der ägyptischen Zentralverwaltung zur Zeit des Mittleren Reiches: Prosopographie, Titel und Titelseiten* (Achet A2; Berlin, 2003), p. 241-43; Willems, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture*, p. 168-72.