

THE COFFIN OF NESMIN: CONSTRUCTION AND WOOD IDENTIFICATION

Branislav Anđelković

Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade

María Victoria Asensi Amorós

French Archaeological Mission of Thebes-West (MAFTO), Paris

Abstract: *The coffin is anthropoid, mummiform with a foot pedestal and dates from the early Ptolemaic period. The owner was Nesmin, the son of Wennefer and Chay-Hathor-Imw, and the grandson of Djedhor. It seems very likely that the coffin comes from Akhmim. The lid, as well as the trough, were each shaped from a single trunk to which a few smaller pieces of timber were glued and pegged. All four analysed samples (coffin lid, coffin trough, tenon and peg) were of Tamarix wood. Some observations are made related to the construction and decoration techniques. The description and use of Tamarix wood in ancient Egypt is discussed.*

Key words: *Nesmin, Akhmim, Belgrade mummy, Ptolemaic period, coffin construction, Tamarix aphylla, wood anatomy.*

A coffin containing a human mummy was purchased in Luxor in 1888 by Pavle Ridički and presented the same year to the National Museum in Belgrade. The exhibit became known as the Belgrade mummy (Anđelković 1997; *idem* 2003). The hieroglyphic text on the coffin names the owner as *sm3* priest Nesmin, the son of Wennefer and Chay-Hathor-Imw, and the grandson of Djedhor (Anđelković and Teeter, in press). The coffin has no sure provenance beyond its purchase in Luxor. However, the family of Nesmin is known to have been from Akhmim, so it seems very likely that the coffin also comes from that site (Anđelković and Teeter, in press).

The coffin is in anthropoid form, or more precisely, it represents the mummy standing upon a pedestal. The early Ptolemaic style of the coffin agrees well with the dating of the text that was used to decorate the coffin lid. The dimensions are: L. 182.5 cm, max. W. 52 cm, max. Dp. *ca.* 42 cm at the pedestal, (when the coffin is closed).

The lid (fig.1) is hollowed out from a single large trunk to which about nine smaller pieces of timber were pegged. Apart from the face and the wig lappets, plus subtle modelling of the contours of the feet and knees, no details were sculpted. The eyebrows and eyes were prepared to receive inlay which is now only partly present in the form of dark-blue glass paste fragments. There is a rectangular mortise hole *ca.* 2.6 cm deep in the chin, for a false beard to be

attached (the beard itself is missing). A small dressing made of linen, papyrus and resin/glue *ca.* 1.3 cm deep, lined the interior of the hole (pl. I/1). Originally this would have covered the tenon-like top of the false beard so that it fitted firmly into the hole. Almost two thirds of the face (the right side) were made from a single piece of wood (pl. I/2) (max L. 25.5 cm, max W. 12.6 cm, max Dp. 4.8 cm) fixed into place with glue and two pegs, one of which is broken. The roughly dressed wood was first pegged-together and then modelled into a face. Below the face and further to the right is another pegged on piece L. *ca.* 40 cm, max W. 9 cm. The join was covered with plaster. On the left and right side of the lid two longish pieces were glued and pegged in place with three pegs (peg D. *ca.* 1 cm) each. The right L. 77 cm, max W. 10.5 cm, max Dp. 4.2 cm, three

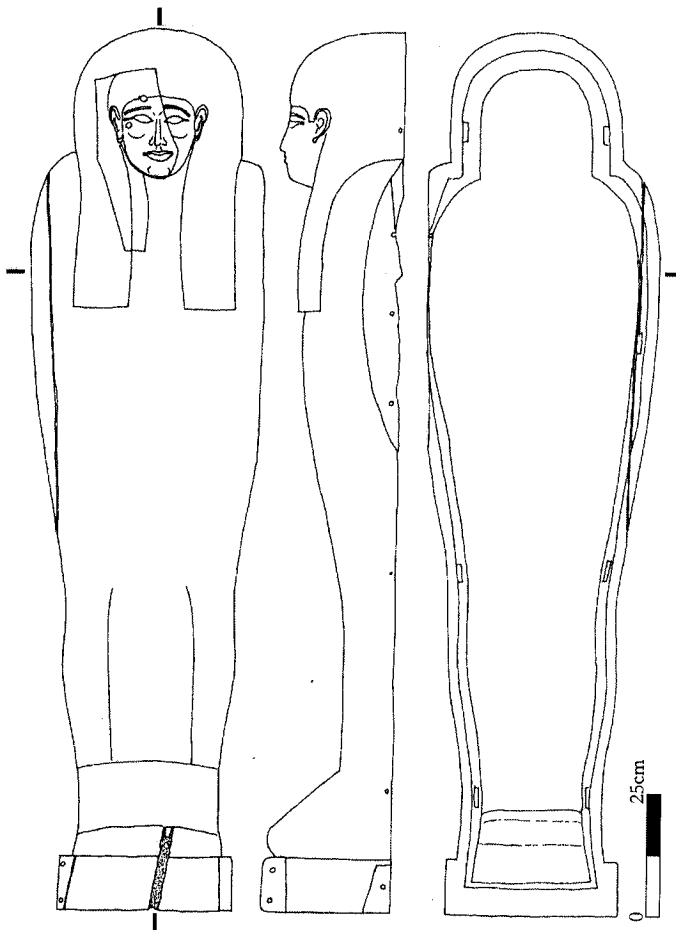


Fig. 1. The coffin lid.

pegs (pl. II/1); the left L. ca. 56 cm is now missing, three holes, the bottom one with a broken peg. Close to the left lateral piece, in the shoulder area was another piece L. ca. 30 cm. The additional three pieces were pegged to the pedestal: first, left back, in the shape of a wedge, max. L. 10.4 cm, max W. 6.2 cm max Dp. 6.8 cm, one peg visible; second, left front (is now missing) was approximately rectangular, similar size to previous, two holes (D. ca. 1 cm), both have broken pegs; third, right front, shape of a wedge, max. L. 10.9 cm, max W. 3.1 cm, max Dp. 4.5 cm, two pegs, small projection in the corner.

There are numerous scratch-like lines (most of them roughly horizontal) ca. 1.5–3 cm long on the outer surface of the wood (pl. II/2). Their function was probably to help a single layer of a very loose gauze-like fabric (pl. III/1) to be glued to the bare surface of the wood (*cf.* Ikram and Dodson 1998: 243), as well as to help plastering. Over the surface (with and without a coating of threads) a layer of plaster was then applied. The finish consisted of polychrome (blue, green, yellow, red, black, white) decoration and gilding. The gilded face is surrounded by the blue wig, the lappets of which fall to the mid breast. A six-rowed floral collar with sun disk-crowned falcon terminals is slung around the lower torso. The polychrome decoration includes a six-rowed floral collar with sun disk-crowned falcon terminals on the chest, plus some ten rows of the same style between the lappets of the wig, but rather intended to represent a sort of necklace. Below it, in the central axis of the coffin, kneels a sun disc crowned Nut with extended arms and wings (a lot of painted surface is lost, so it is not possible to say if she originally clasped feathers, *cf.* Fleming *et al.* 1980: 9). A double column of text runs below her. Aside the name, title and parentage of the dead person, the rest of the text is known as Book of the Dead 191 “Spell for bringing the soul to the body”, but it has also been classified as belonging to the Books of Glorifications of Osiris (Anđelković and Tee-ter, in press). A single line of text, a recitation of Anubis for the protection of Nesmin, is centred on the foot section of the coffin, between two figures of Anubis reclining on top of a pylon-shaped shrine, holding a flail. This text is positioned in the opposite orientation, so its end is centred on the end of the two lines of the upper text. There was a line of horizontal painted hieroglyphic text (on a white background) framed with a double lined border on the pedestal, but it is so poorly preserved that it is now illegible. The rest of the coffin was painted black. The text and decoration (with the exception of six rows of painted floral collar and text on the pedestal) were incised into the surface of the plaster, which was then gilded. The wooden structure of the coffin is in good condition, but its painted surface, a lot of which has fallen off, would need a great deal of conservation.

The interior of the lid is neither decorated nor coloured. Chisel marks are visible mostly at the head (pl. III/2) and shoulders as well as the feet zone, whereas the rest of the interior surface is smoothed to various degrees. The lid edge has two surface levels. The outer level is some 0.8 cm higher than the inner one. Four pairs of rectangular mortise holes (ca. L. 4 cm, W. 1 cm, Dp.

4.4 cm) were cut into the edge of the box to allow the lid to be secured. The holes of each pair were horizontally centred. The second mortise hole (counting from the bottom to the top) on the left, and first and fourth (pl. IV/1) on the right have broken tenons (first tenon on the right W. 3.85 cm, Dp. 0.9 cm, reconstructed L. ca. 8 cm, pl. V/1 left). The tenons were rectangular, with two holes. The first, second and fourth mortise hole on the left and all four on the right have lateral safety pegs present (first peg on the right L. 3.5 cm, D. 0.52–0.78 cm, pl. V/2 left; second peg on the right L. 2.8 cm, D. 0.56–0.75 cm, pl. V/2 right). Some of the lateral safety pegs are shorter than needed so it seems that only some of them really fulfilled their function. The lateral safety

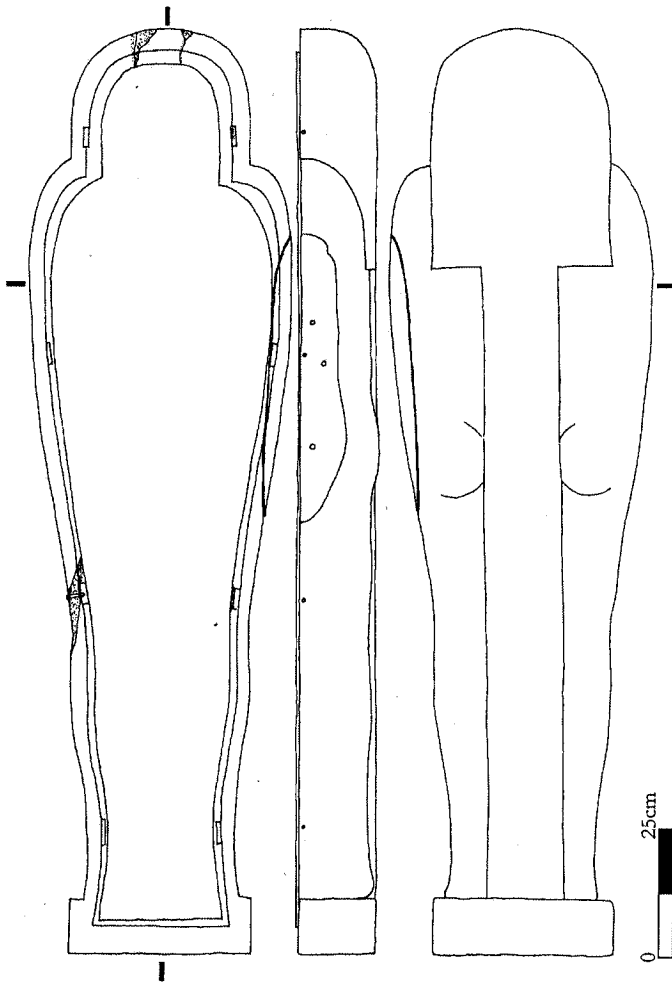


Fig. 2. The trough.

pegs were intended to go through three holes: the external coffin hole, the hole in the tenon and the internal coffin hole (pl. IV/2). Even though all eight external holes are present, the only proper internal hole was drilled near the fourth mortise on the right. The wood of the lid is in relatively good condition, with the exception of a crack on the feet (and several recent nails).

The trough (fig. 2) was shaped from a single piece of wood to which only one additional piece of timber was glued and pegged (with three pegs). This additional longish piece is on the right side L. 57 cm, max W. 3.7 cm, max Dp. 9 cm. On the reverse of the coffin-trough a representation of a back pillar rises from the pedestal, terminating at the bottom of the edge of the wig. There is also subtle modelling of the contour of the buttocks and legs. The wood surface was treated in the same manner as the lid (scratch-like lines; an irregular sparse film of threads; plaster) Aside from the blue wig, the rest of the trough was painted black. It seems that, similar to the lid, there was continuation of the horizontal painted hieroglyphic text on the pedestal, but it is now lost.

The interior of the trough is neither decorated nor coloured. The chisel marks are visible mostly in the shoulder area. The interior surface of the trough is not as well polished as that of the lid. Uneven plaster traces at the bottom and the sides. The difference in colour at both sides suggests that the coffin-trough interior had to be additionally carved out in the thigh area. A small fragment of linen (1.1 x 0.6 cm) was stuck to the plaster at the right side of the head area. The trough edge also has two surface levels, like the lid, but this time the outer level is some 0.8 cm lower than the inner one, so the lid and the trough can be joined together (fig. 3). There are four pairs of rectangular mortise holes cut into the edge of the trough that correspond to the four pairs of holes cut into the ledge of the lid. The third mortise hole on the right contains a broken tenon (pl. V/1 right). The first and fourth hole on

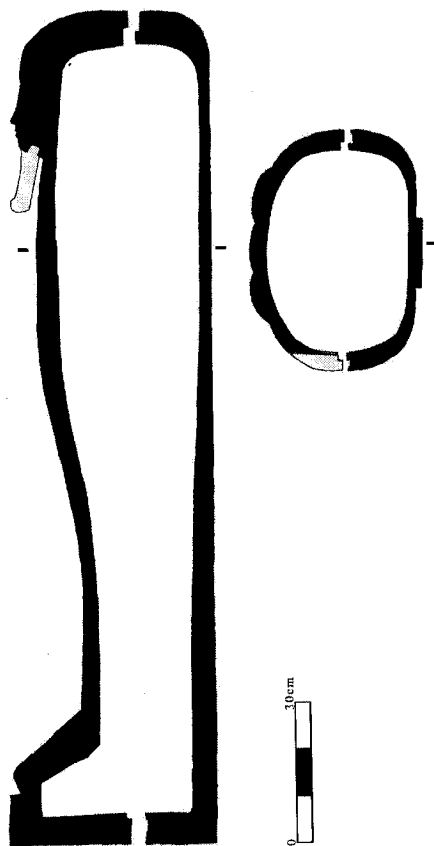


Fig. 3. Coffin cross section.

the right and second on the left were partially filled. The fill consisted of mud, plaster, straw, papyrus fragments, linen fragments and ootheca (for the oothecae see: Anđelković, Anđus and Stanković 1997). The first and fourth mortise hole on the left are almost completely filled with mud and plaster. All eight (four on left and four on right) lateral safety pegs are present. Some of them seem to be shorter than needed. In contrast to the lid, all eight internal holes for lateral safety pegs are drilled. The coffin-trough is slightly damaged on the right edge, near the second mortise hole. An irregular piece of wood at the top of the head is separated (but it cannot be pulled off) by three cracks from the rest of trough.

Materials and Methods

Four samples (coffin lid, coffin trough, tenon and peg) from the coffin of Nesmin were analysed.¹ The four samples are reddish in colour. The wood anatomy analysis was made at the Wood Research Institute, Kyoto University, Japan. Standard microtechnique procedure was followed to prepare the sections for microscopic observation and anatomical quantification (permanent microscope slides). After cutting the samples in the transverse, tangential and radial sections by hand, the wood anatomy was examined microscopically. About 20 measurements were made for each anatomical element.

Results

Analysis shows that all four samples were of *Tamarix* wood and, apparently, belong to the same species. About 35 different species of *Tamarix* living in the Sahara and the adjacent regions are difficult to separate, not only in the morphological aspect but also in the wood anatomy (Neumann *et al.* 2001; Fahn, Werker and Baas 1986; Fahn 1958). In Egypt there are several native species of tamarisk. According to Baum (1978) nine species of *Tamarix* are to be found in Egypt,² whereas Tackholm (1974: 366–367) notes only five and Boulos (2000: 127) only six species; for the later two authors some of the species named by Baum were synonyms. From the anatomical point of view

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² Namely: *Tamarix arabica* Bge., *T. arborea* (Sieb. ex Ehrenb.) Bge., *T. mannifera* (Ehrenb.) Bge., *T. nilotica* (Ehrenb.) Bge., *T. aphylla* (L.) Karst., *T. tetragyna* Ehrenb., *T. amplexicaulis* Ehrenb., *T. macrocarpa* (Ehrenb.) Bge. and *T. passerinoides* Del. ex Desv.

(Neumann *et al.* 2001) we can establish no more than two different types: a *Tamarix aphylla* type (including *T. aphylla*, *T. getula* and *T. passerinoides* species) with rays exceeding sometimes 20 cells wide, and a *Tamarix tetragyna* type with more narrow rays. The four analysed samples from the coffin of Nesmin seem to correspond better with *Tamarix aphylla* type.

Description of Wood Anatomy

Growth ring boundaries are difficult to distinguish. Diffuse porous (pl. VI/1).³ Vessels large, solitary or diagonally placed in multiples of 2 or 3 and in small clusters (pl. VI/2). Vessels perforations simple; intervessel pitting alternate; pits are small with slit-like openings. Vessel-ray pits with distinct borders.

Fibres medium thick-walled. Various shapes: sometimes spindle shaped, sometimes with irregular walls. Pits are almost entirely limited to the radial walls, simple to minute bordered.

Axial parenchyma paratracheal, vasicentric and confluent, fusiform.

Rays. 3 to 4 in one millimetre. The majority of rays are 8–20 cells wide, height reaches 1.5 mm (pl. VII/1). Heterocellular with procumbent, square and upright cells (pl. VII/2).

Vessels and parenchyma elements storied. Few solitary prismatic crystals present in square and upright cells.

Description and Ecology of Tamarix sp.

Tamarix aphylla (L.) Karsten (Syn.: *Thuya aphylla* L.; *Tamarix articulata* Vahl., *T. orientalis* Forssk.)

Family: Tamaricaceae

Vernacular name: Tamarisk (English); Tamaris (French); Atl, Athl, Farn (Arabic),

The *Tamarix* are trees or tall shrubs with very small scale-like leaves, however *Tamarix aphylla* has no obvious scales. It is a spreading tree up to 15 m in height with pendulous, jointed branches. Immature trees have light grey trunks and stems. Mature trees have a thick, rough, dark grey to black bark, and grey-brown stems, and can be up to 1 m in diameter. The minute, dull green leaves superficially resemble pine tree 'needles'. Its small flowers are pinkish-white without stalks, growing on 30–40 mm long spikes from the ends of the previous year's branches. The fruit is bell shaped with a hairy tuft,

³ Sample photographs were taken by microscope Olympus CH2 equipped with Reichert photomicrography system (along with Reichert exposure control unit) at the Department of Botany, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Belgrade.

and contains numerous small cylindrical seeds. The trees have strong woody roots which penetrate and spread deeply throughout the soil.

The origin of the genus is still difficult to determinate. *Tamarix aphylla* has a very wide range of distribution in North Africa and in Western Asia, it is found all over the Saharo Irano-Sindian area; the distribution suggests tropical and probably Sudanian origin (Waisel 1960). Even if the genus is predominantly Irano-Turanian it has penetrated into the Saharo-Arabian region and even to extra-tropical and tropical areas of Central and South Africa. It is poorly represented in the Mediterranean and Euro-Siberian regions (Zohary 1973: 385). The easy vegetative propagation suggest that the tree was probably introduced in ancient times into North Africa, Middle East and South Africa.

Tamarix aphylla is originally a plant of deep and moist wadis in hot deserts, living in salty places, riversides or wadis where water flows from time to time after rain. In Egypt they can be found in all the country from the Valley to the oases and also in the coastal regions.⁴ The trees grow very fast and can attain relatively great age. The plant prefers light (sandy), medium (loamy) and heavy (clay) soils, requires well-drained soil and can grow in heavy clay and nutritionally poor soils. Tamarisk prefers acid, neutral and basic (alkaline) soils but can grow in very alkaline and saline soils. They can tolerate maritime exposure. As they require much moisture they rapidly impoverish the underground water resources of their surroundings; with its huge root system which may reach a depth of 30 m, the lateral roots can reach about 50 m. Initially, the primary root grows steadily downward with little branching until it reaches the water table. Once the water table is reached, secondary root branching becomes profuse. Adventitious roots easily develop from submerged or buried tamarisk stems. The tamarisk forms a phytogenic hillock of organic material.

Present Uses

Tamarix aphylla produces a sweet manna-like substance (a result of insect activity) that forms on the twigs and is used to adulterate cane sugar. It can also be eaten with porridge etc. or mixed with water to make a refreshing drink. Galls produced on the twigs and flowers contain up to 55% tannin. The galls are astringent. The bark is astringent and bitter. It seems that Sinai Bedouins used the bark mixed with kohl for eye infections (Bailey and Danin 1981). Very tolerant of maritime exposure and wind, it makes a good shelter hedge in gardens. In Egypt the wood is used for carpentry and fuel.

⁴ For general distribution in Egypt see: Baum (1978), Zahran and Willis (1992). Red Sea mountains distribution: Kassas (1957). Wadis distribution: Montasir (1938), Kassas and Girgis (1970), Kassas and Imam (1954). Nile Valley distribution: Zahran (1966), Bornkamm and Kehl (1985), El Hadidi (1978). Coastal distribution: Kassas and Girgis (1968).

Iconography and Epigraphy

For Keimer (1924: 155), Charpentier (1981: 114) and Germer (1985: 202) *isr* is the hieroglyphic name of *Tamarix aphylla* or *Tamarix nilotica* (Ehrenberg.) Bge., however Baum (1988: 202) thinks that *isr* is the name of the genus *Tamarix* in general.

Isr is cited in the texts from the Old Kingdom in the Pyramid Texts and later on in the Coffin Texts in relation to the desert ecosystem where the dead person lives. It is cited in the food context and especially with the notion of regeneration, due to the phytogenic hillocks that the tree can form. The Geographical Edfu list notes for the Ptolemaic time the presence of one sacred tamarisk at Saka, 17th Nome of Upper Egypt (Baum 1988: 204).

Archaeological Occurrences

Tamarisk wood has always been used in Egypt in all periods (de Vartavan and Asensi Amorós 1997: 245–254; cf. Lucas and Harris 1989: 440–441). However, few identifications reach the species level. We can note the following examples in *Tamarix* wood:

- Predynastic: wooden post (Van Zeist and De Roller 1993: 13), bowls and worked sticks (Brunton and Caton-Thompson 1928: 38; Kroll 1989: 135).
- Old Kingdom: coffin (Davies 1995: 146–156), cylinder seals (Liphschitz, Bonani and Brink 1997: 38).
- 1st Intermediate Period: Bow fragment (Hearst Museum, 6–2778) (Western and McLeod 1995: 80).
- Middle Kingdom: coffins (Davies 1995: 146–147), statues bases (Delange 1987: 116, 156, 158), worked sticks (Schoske, Kreibl and Germer 1992: 191), implements (hoe and sickle) (*idem*: 98), walking stick and throw stick (Lucas and Harris 1989: 441), stamp seal with a small loop (Liphschitz 1998: 259), some models (Winlock 1955: 99–100).
- 2nd Intermediate Period: dowels of a coffin of *Ficus sycomorus* (sycamore fig) (Davies 1995: 147).
- New Kingdom: musical instrument (Ziegler 1979: 118), Ramses II coffin part (Normand 1985: 327), shabtis (Schoske, Kreibl and Germer 1992: 109; Asensi Amorós *et al.*, in press), pegs of three masks in sycamore fig (Liphschitz 1998: 258).
- 3rd Intermediate Period: coffins (*ibid.*).
- Late period: coffins (Březinová and Hurda 1976: 141; Verner 1977: 144), statues of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris, Isis, Osiris (for Osiris head see Liphschitz 1998: 259; Asensi Amorós, in press), Head-rest (Waly 1999: 269), bows and arrows (Western and McLeod 1995: 81, 86), Hawk akhem (Asensi Amorós *et al.*, in press).

- Graeco-roman period: cats coffin and coffins (Asensi Amorós 2003; Liphshitz 1998: 258), small statues (Ptah-Sokar-Osiris) (Asensi Amorós 2003; Liphshitz 1998: 259), mummy labels (Asensi Amorós 2003: 186, Amiens, MP 94.3.141; Ribstein 1925), seals (Nachtergaele 2000: 156), also we can note some canopic boxes in combination with cedar wood (AM 284) and sycamore fig wood (Marseille, AM 282 & 283) (Asensi Amorós 2003: 185), Osiris statues (Asensi Amorós 2003: 185 AM 611, AM 615; Liphshitz 1998: 259), and the leg of a piece furniture (MP 3060.512) (Asensi Amorós 2003: 186).
- Coptic period tamarisk served to make coffins, stele, architectural elements, some furniture, toilet furniture (boxes, kohl instruments), seals, toys and music instruments (Rutchowscaya 1986: 27–161).

The above list is not exhaustive but it can give us an idea of the ancient uses of tamarisk wood. We can note the use of this wood in statues, boxes, weapons, stele, architecture, etc. Of course, coffins figure in quite an important amount and we can review them as follows:

- Neolithic: 1 coffin (Brunton 1937: 33).
- Old Kingdom: 1 coffin⁵.
- Middle Kingdom: 3 coffins⁶ and the dowels of sycamore fig coffin⁷ in the British Museum. 1 Coffin pegs (6th Dynasty – 1st Intermediate period, Ashmolean Museum 1911. 477) (Gale *et al.* 2000: 345).
- 2nd Intermediate Period: 17th Dynasty: dowels of a coffin of sycamore fig (Davies 1995: 147).
- New Kingdom: Coffin fragment: Ramses II (coffin made on *Cedrus libani*, 20 *Fraxinus ornus* L. pegs and one piece of *Tamarix aphylla* (L.) Karst) (Normand 1985: 327).
- 3rd Intermediate Period: nails of a sycamore fig coffin (BLMJ 3592) (Liphshitz 1998: 258).
- Late period: 2 coffins in *Tamarix aphylla* (Naprstek Museum Prague P 625 and Natural History Institute, Slovak National Museum, Bratislava, A 3263) (Březinová and Hurda 1976: 141; Verner 1977: 144); 1 coffin (Lucas and Harris 1989: 441).
- Graeco-roman: coffin planks (AM 262 in combination with *Cedrus* and *Fagus* planks) coffin dowels (Marseille AM 258) and cats coffin (Marseille AM 737) (Asensi Amorós 2003: 186), nail of a *Pinus halepensis* coffin (BLMJ 3728) (Liphshitz 1998: 259).
- Coptic: coffin fragment probably from Antinoe (Rutchowscaya 1986: 100).

⁵ 6th Dynasty, Assiut, Hogarth Tomb 56, British Museum EA 46629 (Davies 1995: 146 n° 1).

⁶ British Museum EA 46631, EA 47594, EA 47594, (Davies 1995: 146–147).

⁷ Assiut, British Museum EA 46646, (Davies 1995: 147).

CONCLUSION

To date, only the wood anatomy of about a hundred coffins preserved in museums has been scientifically analysed (Asensi Amorós 2000). Tamarisk wood was used to make about ten coffins (eleven with the coffin of Nesmin), part of two others and the pegs of six more coffins (usually in combination with sycamore fig). Even if this amount is not insignificant, the fact is that most of the coffins identified in Egypt were made from sycamore fig and from imported cedar wood. The physical and mechanical properties of tamarisk wood make it a very useful timber. Along with the good quality and sufficient largeness, the symbolic aspects and associations of either sycamore fig or tamarisk (or their combination) might be of some importance in the choice of coffin woods. The coffin of Nesmin was composed of about 52 separate wooden items (2 large trunks, 10 smaller pieces and about 40 various pegs and tenons) plus eyebrows and eyes glass paste inlay. The gentle, "soft" expression of the Nesmin's face is not only a good example of skillful craftsmanship, but of high artistic achievement as well.

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БРАНИСЛАВ АНЂЕЛКОВИЋ И МАРИЈА ВИКТОРИЈА АСЕНСИ АМОРОС

КОВЧЕГ НЕСМИН:
КОНСТРУКЦИЈА И ИДЕНТИФИКАЦИЈА ДРВЕТА

Резиме

Ковчег из целине познате као Београдска мумија је антропоидан, мумиформан са подножним постољем, и може се датовати у рани Птолемејски период. Власник је идентификован као *sm3* свештеник по имену Несмин (Онај-који-припада-[богу]-Мину), син Унефера и Чаи-Хатор-Иму, унук Цед-Хора. Ковчег највероватније потиче са некрополе у Акхмиму. Поклопац (сл. 1) и дно (сл. 2) ковчега обликовани су из по једног великог комада дрвета сваки, а помоћу лепка и типлова причвршћено је и неколико додатних мањих делова (девет на поклопцу и један на дну). Сва четири анализована узорка (поклопац, дно, правоугаона спојна плочица и клинасти типл) припадају тамариковом дрвету (тамарика) *Tamarix aphylla*, (т. VI/1-2, VII/1-2), честом у Египту. На подбратку постоји правоугаона рупа за уметање тзв. лажне браде, чији је горњи део (браде) био подглављен платном, папирусом и смолом/лепком (т. I/1). Око две трећине десне стране лица моделовано је из посебног комада дрвета, причвршћеног помоћу два дуга ваљкаста типла и лепка (т. I/2). На левој и десној бочној страни поклопца је по један подужни ивични део, причвршћен кратким ваљкастим типловима (т. II/1). На површини поклопца извршено је огрубљивање подлоге малим урезима (т. III/1) ради бољег лепљења ретког, гази сличног, платна (т. III/1) и „хватања” гипсане штукатуре, који су потом били нанети на овако припремљену дрвену подлогу. Ковчег је полихромно осликан (плава, зелена, жута, црвена, црна, бела), а неки делови су имали и позлату. У очним дупљама присутни су остаци стаклене пасте. Осим плаво обојене перике, позлаћеног лица, полихромних представа (овратник са терминалима у виду

соколове главе, Нут и Анупис) и натписа, остатак ковчега је црне боје. Унутрашњост поклопаца, са приметним траговима длета (т. III/2), није осликана, као ни унутрашњост дна. Поклопац и дно били су међусобно причвршћени помоћу осам правоугаоних, двојно перфорисаних, спојних плочица (т. V/1), свака углављена и фиксирана за поклопац и дно са по два бочна сигурносна тишла (т. V/2, IV/1-2). И поклопац и дно имају степенасто обрађену насупротну ивицу (сл. 3), како би се уклопили једно са другим. Ковчег је био састављен од укупно око 52 засебна уклопна дрвена дела (2 велика и 10 мањих комада, те око 40 различитих типова и спојних плочица), као и уметнутих обрва и очију од стаклене пасте. Физичка и механичка својства тамариксовог дрвета чине га погодним за обраду, а вероватно је постојао и одређен симболички аспект. Дрво ковчега је, за разлику од полихромне штукатуре, добро очувано. Суптилан израз и благи осмех Несминовог лица указују подједнако на одличну занатску вештину и високо уметничко постигнуће мајстора.

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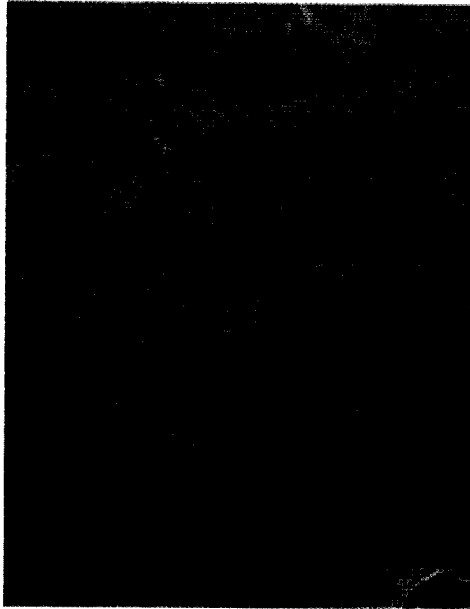
1. A mortise-hole on the chin, for a false beard to be attached.



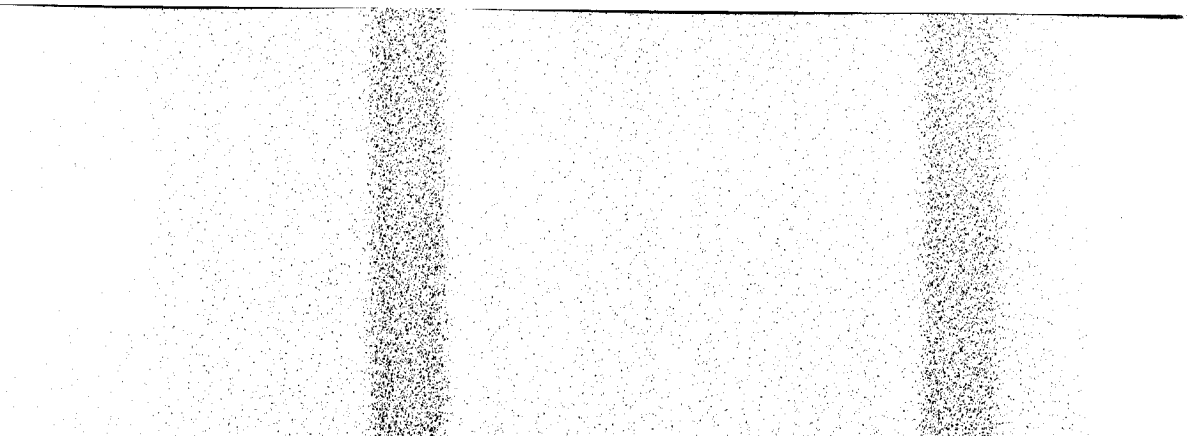
2. Pegged part of the face: front and back.

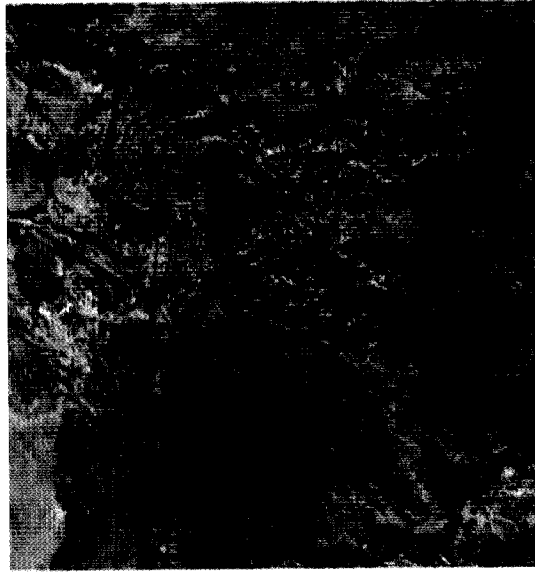


1. Peg joint.

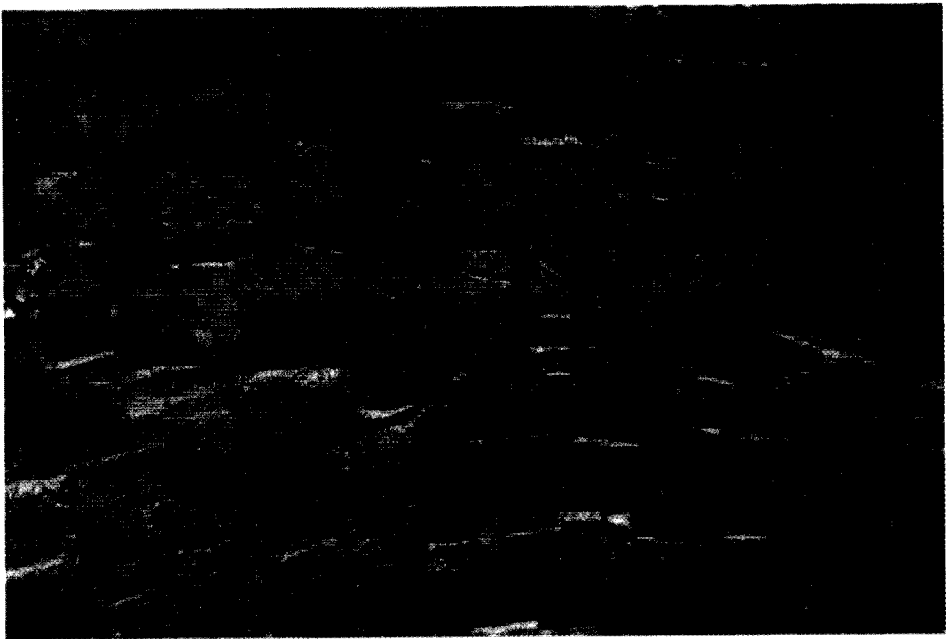


2. The lines on the outer surface of the lid.

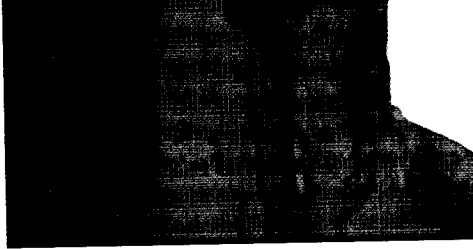




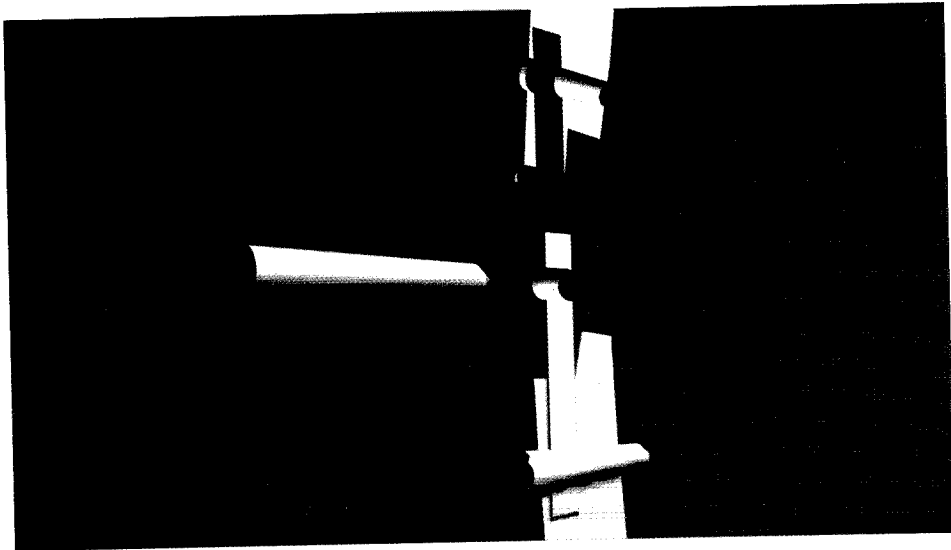
1. A layer of a very loose gauze-like fabric glued to the bare surface of the wood, over which a layer of plaster was applied.



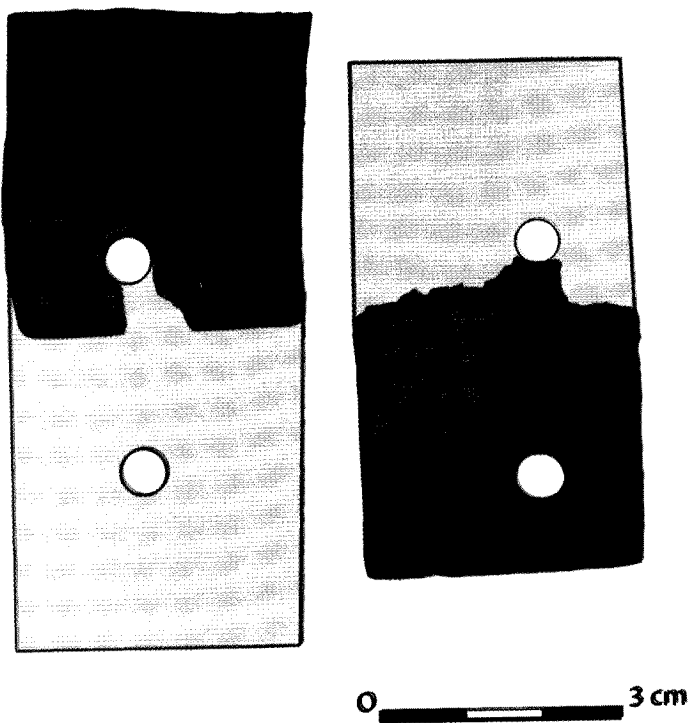
2. The chisel marks.



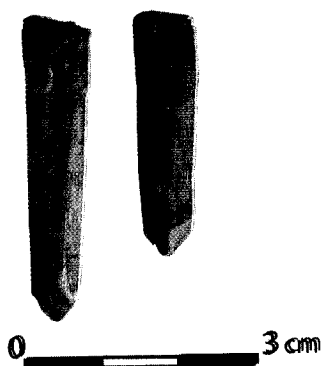
1. A mortise hole with broken tenon and lateral safety peg.



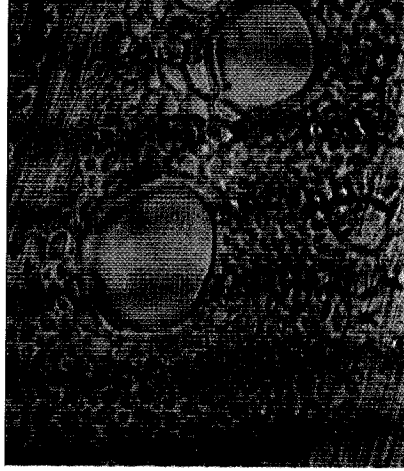
2. The schematic view how coffin lid and trough were joined by tenon and safety pegs.



1. The broken tenons.



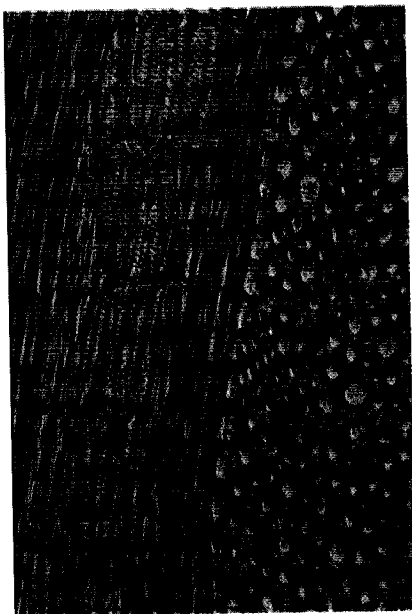
2. Lateral safety pegs.



2. Transverse section. Vessels large, solitary or diagonally placed in multiples of two and in small clusters (from the trough, magnification rate 40 x 6.3).



1. Tangential section. Heterocellular rays with procumbent, square and upright cells. Axial parenchyma paratracheal, vasicentric and confluent, fusiform, storied (from the lid, magnification rate 10 x 6.3).



2. Tangential section. Detail of the Heterocellular rays (from the lid, magnification rate 40 x 6.3).