

CORPUS OF EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES IN SERBIA: ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS

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Abstract: *The modest corpus of Egyptian antiquities in Serbia encompasses artefacts from various museums, mostly in Belgrade but also in Vršac, Sombor, and Užice. The wide chronological span of the objects ranges from the Old Kingdom to the Roman Period. Several items are to be added to the corpus: three coffin faces, one shabti, one scarab, and one scaraboid. A few observations will be made related to the material, technique, style, dating and authenticity of the named objects. Some corrections to the readings of a few of the previously published shabti inscriptions from the City Museum of Vršac are to be suggested. A brief comparison of the factors that might affect the quantity of Egyptian antiquities in Serbia and Croatia was made.*

Key words: *Egyptian antiquities, Serbia, coffin faces, shabti, scarab, scaraboid, hieroglyphic inscriptions.*

Although the main part of the ancient Egyptian items present now in the museums of Serbia was purchased in Egypt and donated to the respective museums during the second half of the 19th century, the first effort to perceive it as one corpus, define its composition and quantity, and establish its internal structure was only made about one century later (Anđelković 1991; *idem* 2002a). Infrequent previous works either referred solely to the collection of a particular museum (such as modest, incomplete and unpublished manuscript by Mahler 1902), treated in detail only single items (Glumac 1963), or selected types of objects from some museums (Tutundžić 1970; *idem* 1989). Both sporadic (Vasiljević 1991; Ristić-Šolajić 1994; Panić-Štorh 1997) and systematic (Anđelković 1993; *idem* 1994a; *idem* 1994b; *idem* 1995; *idem* 1997; *idem* 2002a; *idem* 2002b; *idem* 2002c; *idem* 2003; Anđelković, Andus and Stanković 1997; Čuljković *et al.* 2000; Anđelković and Panić-Štorh 2002; Stefanović and Anđelković 2002; Anđelković, Pavlović and Savović 2002; *idem* 2004; Anđelković and Sagrillo 2003; Anđelković and Asensi Amorós 2005; Anđelković and Teeter 2005) research related to Egyptian antiquities in Serbia significantly increased after the 1990s.

Egyptian artefacts entered the present-day territory of Serbia in four different periods (*cf.* Anđelković 1991). The first, corresponding to prehistory, is

represented by a single glazed composition scarab found in 1978 *in situ* during the excavation of the Iron Age (*ca.* 550 B.C.) grave mound at Trnjaci-Pilatovići in Southwestern Serbia (Anđelković 2002a: 47, 49). The item is kept in the National Museum in Užice (reg. no. 202/78).

The second period corresponds to the era of Roman domination. Although a number of artefacts, mostly bronze statuettes, are related to Egyptian or syncretist deities (Isis, Isis-Fortune, Anubis, Harpocrates, Hermes-Thoth, etc.) those objects are primarily of Roman not Egyptian origin. Noteworthy, during the construction of Roman emperor Galerius' palace at Felix Romaniana (Gamzigrad in Eastern Serbia) Gebel Dokhan porphyry, Aswan red granite and probably Egyptian grey granodiorite were used (*cf.* Јовић 1990: 142–143).

The third period – Middle Ages – has so far yielded only objects such as Coptic pottery, textiles and bone boxes (mostly souvenirs related to the Christian cult), brought by Serbian pilgrims and monks.

The fourth period is a kind of long-lived (up to the present) by-product of Napoleon's 1798 Egyptian campaign, followed by publication of *Description de l'Égypte* in 1809–1813 and J.-F. Champolion's *Lettre à M. Dacier relative à l'alphabet des hiéroglyphes phonétiques* in 1822, which aroused worldwide interest in ancient Egyptian antiquities. Practically all of the items listed below belong to this phase.

In 1888 Pavle Ridički donated a human Egyptian mummy to the National Museum in Belgrade (reg. no. 13/VI). This Early Ptolemaic mummy, previously known as the Belgrade mummy, and recently identified as *sm3* priest Nesmin from Akhmim (Anđelković and Teeter 2005) is the most significant Egyptian item in Serbia. Nesmin is presently located at the Archaeological Collection of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade. Apart from the mummy, the National Museum in Belgrade has 14 more Egyptian items: the coffin of Nefer-renepet (reg. no. 12/VI),¹ a bronze statuette of Isis nursing the infant Horus (reg. no. 4/VI), a bronze infant Horus statuette (reg. no. 4/VI), 3 shabtis (reg. no. 7–9/VI), 2 amulets (reg. no. 10–11/VI), 3 scarabs (reg. no. 1–3/VI),² and now 3 coffin faces (presented here).

Paja Jovanović donated five Egyptian statuettes to the City Museum of Vršac in October 1894. He was followed by Wilhelm Wetttl, who donated sixty-five Egyptian antiquities in 1896, and Max Adler who donated a fragmentary bronze statuette-pendant, a fragmentary bronze ring, half of an alabaster

¹ This coffin, previously wrongly attributed to Anpeti, was once part of the Amherst collection (*cf.* N. N. 1921: 35, entry 351, pl. 10/351). It was purchased at auction in London by Ernest Brummer in June 1921 and donated to the National Museum in Belgrade.

² The named statuettes, shabtis, amulets and scarabs have been in the Archaeological Collection of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, since October 1990, whereas the mummy within its coffin and empty coffin of Nefer-renepet entered the Collection in October 1992.

vessel, three fragments of a stone slab inscribed with hieroglyphs, two fragments of “porcelain” statuettes, and ten fragments of “plaster” statuettes in 1899. Some five pieces seem to have been inherited from Leonhard Böhm, the late mayor of Bela Crkva. The collection of Egyptian antiquities in the City Museum of Vršac consists now of 97 pieces (reg. no. Aeg. 1–92, 93n–97n): 44 amulets, 18 shabtis, 17 scarabs and scaraboids, 8 jewellery items, 5 statuettes, 3 vessels, 1 canopic jar stopper, and 1 fragmentary inscription. This is the most numerous collection in Serbia.

The donor of Egyptian antiquities to the City Museum of Sombor was Fernbach János in 1899. The collection consists of 22 pieces: 1 shabti (reg. no. 4100), 17 amulets (reg. no. 4097/2, 4098, 4102, 4103, 4104/1–2, 4105–4112, 4114/1–3), 2 jewellery items (reg. no. 4097/1, 4113) and 2 vessels (?) (reg. no. 4099, 4101).

The rest of the corpus of Egyptian antiquities in Serbia is of more recent date. The Museum of Yugoslav History in Belgrade (former Memorial Centre “J. B. Tito”) keeps four pieces presented to the Yugoslav president by Egyptian officials (Cvijović 1986: 171; *idem* 1991: 25–27; *idem* 2003: 21, 35, 37): a bronze Osiris statue from Beni Suef (reg. no. 82A),³ an alabaster cylindrical jar (reg. no. 79A),⁴ a high-shouldered jar (reg. no. 80A),⁵ and a pointed jar (reg. no. 81A)⁶ – all three alabaster vessels are from the Djoser’s Step Pyramid at Saqqara. Finally, the Jewish Historical Museum in Belgrade keeps a shabti (reg. no. 365) of doubtful authenticity, presented to the museum in 1976 by the art and antiquities dealer and collector H. Lederer.

The corpus of Egyptian antiquities in Serbia consists of 144 items.⁷ The fact that there are about 4030 Egyptian antiquities in Croatia (M. Tomorad, personal communication, October 31, 2006; *cf.* Tomorad 2003: 201), make us think of historical, political, economic, geographic, cultural and human factors

³ Presented to J. B. Tito by Egyptian president A. el Sadat sometime between 1971 and 1974.

⁴ Presented to J. B. Tito on the occasion of his 80th birthday by A. el Sadat, in May 23rd, 1972. Egyptian Antiquities Department reg. no. 5890 written below the rim.

⁵ Egyptian Antiquities Department reg. no. 5516 written on the shoulder.

⁶ This piece originates from the excavations of the Egyptian Antiquities Department in May 5th, 1935 (reg. no. 5618 written on the shoulder). Presented by G. A. Naser in January 5th, 1956.

⁷ Note that the Belgrade mummy – along with the coffin, 15 amulets (gold, lapis lazuli, faience), 1 string of faience beads, 5 pieces of painted cartonnage and a thick papyrus roll, probably Book of the Dead, near the left upper arm, between the body and the outer bandages – is counted as 1 item. Let us mention that in the City Museum of Vršac there are 9 Ptolemaic bronze coins (Ujes and Bakić 1996), whereas the Museum of Applied Arts in Belgrade has 23 Coptic textiles (Stojanović 1980); and the Home Museum in Knjaževac has 1 Coptic clay lamp (Anđelković 1991: 72). Since neither coins, that rather belong to the domain of numismatics, nor Coptic 4th–11th century objects are ancient Egyptian *sensu stricto* category of antiquities, we have not included them here. However, even if we include them in the corpus of Egyptian antiquities in Serbia (Ptolemaic coins and Coptic textiles are included among Croatian 4030 items), it would make no more than 177 items.

that might have affected the interest in (and quantity of) Egyptian antiquities in each country respectively.

For instance, although the territory of present-day Croatia, with her numerous islands, was, via Adriatic ports, better connected with the Eastern Mediterranean, including the Roman province of Egypt, one can only guess why the Roman emperor, “Augustus” Diocletian in the very beginning of the 4th century A.D. brought about 11 (whole or fragmented) huge stone sphinxes from Luxor to his palace in Split (*cf.* Tomorad 2003: 55), whereas his co-emperor “Caesar” (soon to be “Augustus” himself) Galerius brought only stone from Egyptian quarries for architectural elements in his palace in Gamzigrad.

Across the Balkan Peninsula, which is part of the land bridge between Europe and Asia, runs the border line between two somewhat different cultural spheres of influence, along with accompanying world views, aesthetic tendencies, artistic interests, value systems – East and West, Byzantium and Rome, the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy.

It is hardly a coincidence that all of the 19th century donors of Egyptian antiquities in present-day Serbia were born and/or lived north of Danube and Sava rivers in the territory that was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, ruled by the Habsburgs until 1918 (now Vojvodina, northern province of Serbia). The nobleman P. Ridički (born 1805 in Mokrin, Vojvodina) spent most of his life between Vienna, Banat and Italy. The painter P. Jovanović (born 1859 in Vršac, Vojvodina) spent most of his life in his atelier in Vienna. Printing-house owner and publisher W. Wetzl, along with Vršac citizen M. Adler, mayor L. Böhm and landowner J. Fernbach, judging by their surnames, probably were of Danube Swabian ancestry – who settled mostly in 17th–18th century, especially under Maria Theresa, on Crown lands, *i.e.* the Military Frontier against the Ottomans. While Croatia was rather in the Western cultural sphere of influence, the area south of Danube and Sava rivers, *i.e.* most of present-day Serbia, was ruled by the Ottoman Empire and accordingly was affected by different cultural and historical conditions.

Additions

In July 2003, the National Museum in Belgrade received a donation that, apart from a recent small wooden African mask, included three items related to the ancient Egyptian civilization.⁸ The objects, wrongly referred to as

⁸ The donor wished to remain anonymous. Acknowledgment that the gift was received was confirmed by receipt no 432/6 of July 17, 2003, National museum, Belgrade. A year later, in July 2004, the donated items were transferred to the Museum of African Art in Belgrade (document no. 514/2 of July 5, 2004). Thanks are due to N. Knežević-Šijan, Director of the Museum of African Art, who informed us of these new acquisitions. B. Anđelković is grateful to the Ministry of Science and Environmental Protection, Republic of Serbia, for supporting the project no. 147041.

“masks”, turned out to be three face carvings originally crafted as parts of anthropoid, mummiform coffin lids. Closer provenance or acquisition records are unknown.

Coffin face no. 1 (pl. I),⁹ wood (undetermined), in one-piece. Roughly triangular shape face with a wig, height 28.8 cm, maximum width 24.5 cm, maximum depth *ca.* 10 cm (nose tip to rear). The wood core is overlaid with a thinly applied layer of gesso. The pupil of right eye is made as a shallow depression. Eyelids are emphasized giving the impression that the eyes are looking downwards (similar to coffin face no. 3). A gap, *ca.* 1.4 cm long (located on the upper part of forehead, slightly right from the centre) runs from the front to the back of the face. The face is painted terracotta-red, whereas eyes (including pupils, the right one previously deepened) are contoured black against painted white eyeballs. The eyebrows and the wig (*i.e.* the part that represents the centre section of the wig) are painted black. The paint is chipped in places, most evidently on the forehead and the cheeks. Short cosmetic lines continue from the eye corners outwards (similar to coffin face no. 3). On the flat rear, along with a few cracks (one quite deep) in the wood, there are four sockets (*ca.* 0.8 cm diameter) positioned in a trapezoidal pattern for the pegs that once fastened the face to the rest of the coffin lid. Two pegs covered by a layer of gesso and paint are to be traced (due to their round contour) on the right cheek and wig, whereas the position of the two pegs on the left side of the face is not visible. That all four sockets have broken pegs inside is visible on the rear. Sporadic traces of wormholes. The small hole in the centre of the rear is from a recent exhibit mount. The technical and artistic quality of the workmanship is poor. The item is probably to be dated to the Roman period.¹⁰

Coffin face no. 2 (pl. II), wood (undetermined), in one-piece except for an inserted part in the shape of an inverted droplet (height 8.5 cm) above the left eye. A broad horizontal wig above an oval face, height 25.5 cm, maximum width 25.5 cm, maximum depth *ca.* 8 cm (nose tip to rear). The nose, lips and the wide face in general, give an impression of roundness. The lower lip is sculpturally emphasized. The cheeks are slightly projecting. The lower side of the chin is plain. The reverse is slightly concave. The wood was carved, then

⁹ Numeration is according to the National museum document 514/2, see footnote 1.

¹⁰ We are grateful to H. Satzinger who, after a joint visit to the depot of Museum of African Art in Belgrade (February 18, 2005) kindly helped with the dating and also drew our attention to some coffin faces from Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (inv. no. A 1996, A 1997, A 2046, A 2048) (*cf.* Reise-Haslauer and Satzinger 1979: 112). Such items are quite frequently represented in museum collections. The faces become separated from the coffins accidentally when the dowel joint fails, or the faces are deliberately removed because they are more desirable and portable than the coffin itself. Among the many examples in collection of the Oriental Institute Museum in Chicago are OIM 961 and 1316 (from the Ramesseum, Dynasties 21-22), and OIM 6728 (from Abydos, Dynasties 21-25).

unevenly stuccoed and painted. The eyebrows and eyes were hollowed (*ca.* 0.6–1 cm) to receive inlay, which is now only present in the form of gesso filling. Two different kinds of plaster are to be seen: the eyes are deeply filled with white plaster, as is the line where the face and wig meet, whereas the surface layer is plaster of a pink colour. The face is painted red, whereas the centre section of the wig is black. The paint has largely flaked off the face, and partially from the wig. Nostrils seem to be very shallowly hollowed out. On the lower cheeks and lateral areas of the wig four pegs are visible. A crack in the wood goes vertically over the right side of the face. On the rear, there are four sockets (*ca.* 0.9 cm diameter) positioned in trapezoidal pattern, with broken pegs inside. The pegs are more of a square to oval cross-section whereas sockets are more rounded. Left of centre on the rear of the wig area there is a hole in the wood that corresponds to the back end of the inserted piece. Sporadic traces of wormholes. The small hole between the two upper sockets is from a recent exhibit mount. Higher technical and artistic quality. The item is probably to be dated to the 26th Dynasty.

Coffin face no. 3 (pl. III), wood (undetermined). Slightly wider horizontal headdress above an oval face, height 25.3 cm, maximum width 18.5 cm, maximum depth *ca.* 9 cm (eyebrows to rear). The wood was gessoed. The larger and deeper surfaces are filled with a mud mixed with wood sawdust, upon which is a layer of white stucco¹¹ and pigment. The face is painted pinkish-red, whereas the eyebrows, outline of eyes, and the circular pupils are drawn in black paint. The headdress is detailed with parallel horizontal black lines. The nose, originally attached by two pegs (*ca.* 0.7 cm), is now missing. In profile the face is more square than nos. 1 and 2. The upper lip and eyelids are emphasized and the forehead is high. There is a crack in the wood on the upper right side of the face. The face consists of two vertical pieces pegged together by six pegs, arranged in three pairs (two recent hooks hold face pieces together now). The left (bigger) piece has 7.5–7.7 cm deep peg holes that do not reach the surface of the face. The upper and lower pair of peg holes on the right piece are visible from the front, whereas the middle pair cannot be seen. What resembles a peg in its socket on the right end of the headdress is actually a knot in a wood. On the rear there are six sockets, three on the right side, two on the left and one in the centre near the lower end (*ca.* 0.6 cm diameter). The peg in the centre comes out below the chin, so at first glance it can be misidentified as a tenon to attach a false beard. In fact, all pegs come out at an angle on the upper or lower sides of the face, not straight at the front as in no. 1 and 2. The second socket from below, right, was erroneously drilled too close to the surface of the

¹¹ Named two layers are clearly visible at the joint of face and headdress on the inner side of the right piece.

face, so it had to be filled with stucco (still present in the first third of a hole). About 1 cm above it a new socket was drilled. There are broken pegs inside all but the erroneously drilled socket. Circular hole from a knot in the wood is present on the right lower third of the rear. Sporadic traces of wormholes. The piece is of modest technical and artistic quality. The item is probably to be dated to the Late Ptolemaic period.

The Belgrade City Museum, aside from the previously published bone handle of doubtful authenticity with carved decoration – referred to as “Akhenaton’s relief” (Glumac 1963; Anđelković 1991: 69, 74, n. 39; Vasiljević 1991) – has some additional Egyptian items: a shabti, a scarab and a scaraboid.¹² The shabti (registration number 2651),¹³ is fired clay, grey in colour, height 12.6 cm, maximum width 4.23 cm (at the elbows), maximum depth 3.25 cm (at the base). Its arms are crossed, and it holds a sort of “tool” – an unlikely mixture between a hoe and a flail – in each hand (for a similar “tool” see Stefanović and Anđelković 2002: 226, 230). Traces of an illegible cartouche are on the middle of the chest, and an illegible hieroglyphic text is arranged in two horizontal rows at the foot. The other two items are a bone scarab (registration number 2955) and a scaraboid (registration number 2954).¹⁴ The authenticity of the shabti, scarab and scaraboid, judging by the manner of manufacture (including pseudo-hieroglyphic text) and the way the objects were obtained, seems to be questionable.

Corrections

The field of Egyptology always welcomes the publication of collections, especially those that might be of more difficult access, or those which are virtually unknown outside their own region. The catalogue of Egyptian antiquities from the City Museum of Vršac by Anđelković and Panić-Štorh (2002)¹⁵ is no exception. It presents a variety of small finds that often characterize smaller regional collections. However, the following corrections to the readings of a few of the Egyptian inscriptions can be suggested.

¹² Thanks are due to S. Krunić from the Belgrade City Museum who informed us of these additional items.

¹³ The Belgrade City Museum, Archaeological Department, Division for the Antique, inventory book no. 2, December 13, 1965, no. 1616; shabti was purchased from certain N. Romano from Belgrade.

¹⁴ Both pieces purchased from certain D. Tesla.

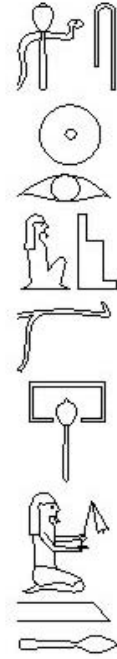
¹⁵ Who of the co-authors has written on which object can be seen in: Anđelković and Panić-Štorh (2002: 11, n. 6, 13, n. 10).

1. Shabti, reg. no. Aeg. 2 (Anđelković and Panić-Štorh 2002: 29–31, cat. no. 9, fig. 15).

Transliteration: *šḥd Wsir imy-r pr ḥd Iry m3^c ḥrw*

Translation: The illuminated Osiris, the overseer of the treasury, Iry, true of voice.

Commentary: The title is clearly *imy-r pr ḥd* “overseer of the treasury,” rather than “lord of the house.” The personal name is probably Iry which is common in the New Kingdom. For this name, see Ranke (1935: 41, no. 23). For Iry written without any phonetic compliments (*ibid.*: 41, no. 27). Another possibility is that the name is Iryt (*ibid.*: 42, no. 3), without the conventional epithet “true of voice.” The alternate readings of the name are due to the indistinctness of the two small lines under the kneeling man which could be either the *t* and a book roll for Irty, or the writing *m3^c ḥrw* “true of voice,” that usually follows a name on shabtis. The erroneous reading *P3-ḥry* is derived from the text for Gardiner sign list A 52 (1957: 447) where the kneeling man with flail is shown as a determinative for the name *P3-ḥry*. Moreover, instead of “female figurine” (Anđelković and Panić-Štorh 2002: 30) this shabti should rather be designated as a figurine of a male.



2. Shabti, reg. no. Aeg. 5 (Anđelković and Panić-Štorh 2002: 32–33, cat. no. 11, fig. 17).

Transliteration: *Wsir s3b Ḥr ms n Iwn (?) m3^c ḥrw*

Translation: The Osiris Ḥor, born of Iwn (?) true of voice.

Commentary: The author’s suggested reading is a good attempt to read the awkward text, but the resulting “Osiris, dignitary, Heru-mes is in the tomb,” is quite extraordinary and unexpected for a shabti text. It is not clear if “Hesru-mes is in the tomb” is being taken as a personal name or a name followed by an epithet. Further difficulties with the translation are that “in” the tomb would be *m* rather than *n* and the *iw* is left unexplained. The reading might be taken as a more conventional filiation: “The Osiris, the dignitary Ḥor, born of [personal name] true of voice.” The name, which could possibly be Iwn (Ranke 1935: 17, no. 13), presents problems, for it is attested for the Middle Kingdom whereas the shabti is of the Late Period.

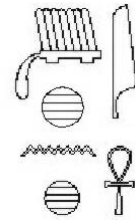


3. Shabti fragment, reg. no. Aeg. 8 (Anđelković and Panić-Štorh 2002: 34–35, cat. no. 16, figs. 22/a, 23/a).

Transliteration: *im3h ḥnh...*

Translation: The revered one, Ankh...

Commentary: In the publication, *im3h* (revered) has been misread as *shd* (illuminated). The personal name begins with Ankh.



4. Shabti fragment, reg. no. Aeg. 11 (Anđelković and Panić-Štorh 2002: 36–37, cat. no. 21, figs. 22/f, 23/f).

Transliteration: *Imn-ir-di.s ms[t n]...*

Translation: Amunirdis born [of]...

Commentary: The writing is fairly clear as the female name Amunirdis. The name was common in the 25–26th Dynasties, so Late Period is probably a more appropriate date than the broader “Late Period to Ptolemaic Period (?)” (Anđelković and Panić-Štorh 2002: 37).



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БРАНИСЛАВ АНЂЕЛКОВИЋ и ЕМИЛИ ТИТЕР

КОРПУС ЕГИПАТСКИХ ЕКСПОНАТА У СРБИЈИ:
ДОДАЦИ И КОРЕКЦИЈЕ

Резиме

Корпус староегипатских експоната у Србији броји око 144 инвентарске јединице (рачунајући Београдску мумију са пратећим елементима под једним инвентарским бројем). Предмети припадају неколицини музеја у Београду, потом Вршцу, Сомбору и Ужицу. Њима је обухваћен широки хронолошки распон од Старог царства до римског периода. Нове предмете придодате корпусу чине три моделована лица од дрвета, поклоњена 2003. Народном музеју у Београду (т. I-III). У питању су елементи вишеделних, антропидних, мумиформних ковчега, који су првобитно били причвршћени типловима за ковчег, а после су отпали или били скинути, који се могу датовати од 26. династије до римског периода. Следе једна ушабти фигурина, један скарабеј и један скарабоид из Музеја града Београда, набављени откупом током 1960-их, чија је аутентичност мало вероватна. Дата је корекција натписа на ушабти фигуринама инв. бр. *Aeg.* 2, 5, 8, 11 из Градског музеја у Вршцу.

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Coffin face no. 1, height 28.8 cm (photo by P. Dakić).



Coffin face no. 2, height 25.5 cm (photo by P. Dakić)



Coffin face no. 3, height 25.3 cm (photo by P. Dakić)