

Ramadan B. Hussein. 2024. *The Texts on the Coffin of Ppy-im3 from Naga ed-Der, Translation and Annotation*, edited by Susanne Beck (“Studien zu altägyptischen Totentexten 23”). Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. v-viii, 1-145 pages, Plate i-xxxiv. Hardcover, ISBN 978-3-447-12146-0. EUR 78.

The publication to be discussed here is based on the Master thesis of the author, submitted 2004 to Brown University in Providence. The work presents the Pyramid and Coffin Texts on the ancient Egyptian coffin of Ppy-im3 from Naga ed-Der. The content of the posthumously published book is as follows:

In Chapter 1, general information is provided. The excavations in Naga ed-Der were executed from 1901-1905, 1910-1912, and 1923-1924, respectively (1). The stelae from Naga ed-Der can be viewed as invaluable chronological markers for the First Intermediate Period (1). The decorations and funerary prayers of the stelae show striking similarities with the coffins from Naga ed-Der, regarding iconography and palaeography (2). The coffin of the treasurer and mayor Ppy-im3, now housed in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, was found in tomb N 4003 at Naga ed-Der in the mid 1920s. The exterior sides of the acacia wood made coffin are inscribed at the top with two horizontal hieroglyphic bands (2). In the field below, three vertical hieroglyphic columns appear (2). The margins of the coffin bear two lines of cursive hieroglyphs (3). The coffin of Ppy-im3 can be dated by iconographical and palaeographical means to the Heracleopolitan Period (4).

In Chapter 2, the front side of the coffin is tackled. The piece consists of five different panels. The head-end is decorated with several offerings (9). The second panel exhibits ten vertical columns of hieroglyphs, stemming from PT 32, PT 25, PT 36, PT 34 (9). The third panel is inscribed by a long offering list, written in three registers of compartments (9). The fourth panel is covered by twelve vertical columns of hieroglyphs, while the fifth panel presents three registers of various kinds of jars (9). The word *bb* (15) unknown to the author is perhaps be related to the root *bb.t* (Jansen-Winkel 2021: 131), whose determinative “Three Globules” indicate a granular substance. The version of PT 36 on the coffin differs from the Old Kingdom and Middle Kingdom parallels (16). The coffin offers the only known Pyramid Texts spells from Naga ed-Der so far (19). The only parallel for the inclusion of *r* behind *mw s3t* “poured water” in the offering list of Ppy-im3 can be found in the list of *Š-nḥ-Ptḥ* at Giza (23). The offering list belongs to Type A of the longer version in Barta’s classification (34). The entries in the list point at distinct discrepancies with the Middle Kingdom Type A (34). The fourth panel of the front side has a *bw.t*-spell, which reflects the local tradition of this genre (35). The derivation of the word *gnš* “hair” from *nši* “to comb” (38) has to be rejected, since the initial *g* lacks a profound explanation. The existence of the verb *nši* “to comb” is, by the way, anything but certain. For this reason, apparently, the

authors of the dictionary put a question mark behind the meaning. Moreover, the word *nši* “comb,” which could be thought of here, has proven to be a ghost word (Janssen 1964: 178-179) and should therefore be discarded. The proposed connection between *ḥ3p* “to throw/to cast” and *ḥ3p* “to bounce (of the gazelle)” (38) is inadmissible on semantic grounds. The secondary form *gnš* for *gnḥ* “wing” is highlighted (38), which is common in other cases (Klotz 2012: 167).

In Chapter 3, the back side of the coffin is treated. The back side is filled with several objects from the “frises d’objects” and three different Coffin Texts spells (41). The decoration of the third panel of the back side consists of thirteen columns of hieroglyphs (43). The *bw.t*-spell in the second panel of the back side features palaeographic and orthographic peculiarities typical for late 9th Dynasty inscriptions from Dendera (55). The translation “Stand up, O the power of *Gb* because your faces are *3ḥw*” (57) for *ḥꜣ šḥm Gb ḥr ḥr(.w)=ṯn 3ḥ.w* has to be corrected into “Stand up, *Gb* has power over your faces, *3ḥ.w*.”

In Chapter 4, the inscriptions of the margins are dealt with. The coffin possesses several spells written in cursive hieroglyphs on the margins of its four sides. The translation “who gives the fear of himself into the gods” (60) for *dd nr=f n nṯrw* should be modified to “who gives the fear of himself to the gods”. The transcription *ḥꜣ (r) nṯr(.w) ḥr ḏb3.t=f* and translation “(more glorious) appearing (than) the (other) god(s) on his pedestal” (64) has to be corrected into *ḥꜣ nṯr ḥr ḏb3.t=f* “the god appears on his pedestal.” The translation “you should not restrain my soul” (64) for *n ḥnr=ṯn b3=i pn* must be corrected into “you should not restrain this soul of mine”. The translation “My soul will be the chief among those who count the years” (64) for *iw b3=i r ḥ3.t mm ip(.w) rnp.wt* should be changed into “My soul is on the top of them, who count the years.”

In Chapter 5 conclusions are drawn. The Coffin Texts of Ppy-im3’s coffin vary strongly from the parallels and inaugurate a new tradition of this genre (75). Two of Ppy-im3’s spells are completely absent in the previous material (75).

The Book ends with a bibliography (75-80), a glossary (81-97), indices (99-108) and plates (i-xxxiv).

To sum up: The book can be rated quite well for a master’s thesis. The secondary literature is sufficiently taken into account. The philological side of the work, on the other hand, performs weaker. The translation suffers from some technical mistakes. Part of the blame must be placed on the editor, who apparently did not want or could not take corrective action.

References

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