

A STUDY OF A RARE GRAECO-EGYPTIAN COFFIN AT HILDESHEIM

Masoud, A.

Archaeology dept., Faculty of Arts, Ain Shams Univ., Cairo, Egypt

E-mail address: abdoumasoud@yahoo.com

Article info.

Article history:

Received: 12-1-2020

Accepted: 20-11-2020

Doi: [10.21608/ejars.2020.131820](https://doi.org/10.21608/ejars.2020.131820)

Keywords:

Graeco-Egyptian coffin

Mummy portrait

Female figure

Djed-pillar

Osiris

Dionysus

EJARS - Vol. 10 (2) - Dec. 2020: 177-187

Abstract:

Hildesheim museum keeps a Graeco-Egyptian coffin which is considered one of the most excellent funerary pieces (Roemer-und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim: 1048). The guides of the museum represented a very short description for this coffin; so this paper focuses on this interesting coffin explaining its decorations, in particular the unique iconographical theme which is depicted on the lid. It shows a representation for a girl in Greek fashion with an Egyptian anthropomorphic djed-pillar. I also study and analyse the uniqueness of this image as unusual funerary iconography from Roman Egypt beside other important themes, paying attention to the iconographical themes, identification, workshop and dating for better understanding of the biculturalism of funerary thoughts in Roman Egypt.

1. Introduction

It is a rectangular wooden coffin with a flat lid, sized to hold a little burial [1-4]. The lid and outer walls are decorated with a variety of Graeco-Egyptian scenes painted on a thin layer of stucco. The coffin is made of wood (sycamore and acacia). It is of unknown provenance. The museum has acquired the coffin in 1910 through Egyptian art trade. It measures Height: 48 cm. length: 108.5 cm. width: 43.5 cm. This coffin is found with rare features in terms of decorations. The painted religious and items are remarkable as well since they show the Egyptian program, with Greco-Roman features.

2. Methodological Study

2.1. The outer surface of the lid

The decorative scheme of the outer surface of the lid shows the deceased, which is in a good condition. It represents a little female figure emerging from a *djed*-pillar, figs. (1-

a, b), depicted in the Graeco-Roman portrait style called "mummy portrait" or "Fayoum portrait". The female figure is depicted with a full frontal face and torso on a cream-colored background, occupying the upper half of the outer lidsurface. The female figure wears a simple dark red tunic with long sleeves, without any indications to folds or ornaments. It is shaped in a Roman-style. Both earlobes are adorned with simple earrings in the shape of rings. The left hand is hiding behind the back and the right hand holds a base of a transparent *cup of wine* with black outlines. The face of the female figure is carried out with a pinkish-red color with eyes of white and black. The portrait shows a young girl with a fleshy and elongated face. The facial features are generally characterized by the gently arched rounded outlines, with round cheeks, round-pointed chin, and a relatively big nose. The mouth is small and closed. The eyes are large and topped with arched

eyebrows. The ears are small. The hair style can be traced back to the Egyptian wig-style, parted in the middle and has three locks falling freely down the back and in front of each shoulder, while revealing both ears. A vertical *djed*-pillar occupies the lower part of the lid, is depicted in Egyptian traditional design with a little exception. It has three not four horizontal bars as usual surmounting its top. The *djed*-pillar is flanked by a pair of protective cowned cobras, back to back and looking at outside. The right-side cobra is crowned with the white crown and the other one with the red crown. The latter's body is divided into ten parts and the right-side one into only eight parts. All of the divisions are colored in red and black. The upper parts of their bodies are decorated with several wavy lines. The white *djed*-pillar is bordered with two black outlines, representing the tails of the two cobras.

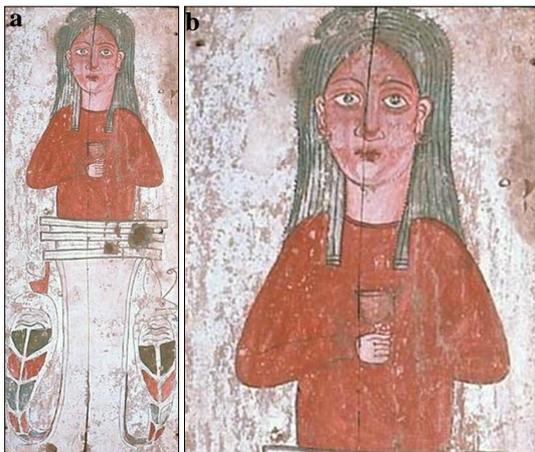


Figure (1) Showing **a.** the decorative scheme of the lid is the deceased emerging from a *djed*-pillar, **b.** details of the previous figure

2.2. The four sides of the coffin

The four sides of the coffin are decorated with several pure traditional Egyptian motifs. The two long sides are decorated with an image of a mummy lying down on her funeral lion-shaped bed. In the middle, the images of Isis, Nephthys and sons of Horus are depicted at the foot and the head of the bier surrounding the mummy, figs. (2-a, b). As the scene of the first long side, fig. (2-a), a mummified girl

in red shroud in the middle lying on a lion-headed bed flanked by squatting Isis and Nephthys facing each other, mourning the deceased. To the left side Isis or Nephthys is shown. Behind her squat ape-headed Hapy and a falcon-headed Qebhsenuef are shown, and then the mummified girl, Isis or Nephthys followed by a dog-headed Duamutef and a human-headed Imseti. The heads of the sons of Horus are topped each with a red sun-disk and all are dressed in red drapery. There are two rectangles frames in front of the faces of Isis and Nephthys, to receive hieroglyphs, but they are blank. On the second long side, the same previous scene is repeated with a little difference concerning the arrangement of the sons of Horus: Hapy and Duamutef are depicted to the left, Qebhsenuef and Imseti are shown to the right. Here the sons of Horus heads are also topped with red sun-disc except for Qebhsenuef who wears *atef*-crown. On one of the two narrow sides of the coffin, fig. (2-c), at the head of the mummy, the deceased is depicted lying on the lion-headed couch, and on the opposite narrow side, at the foot, is a depiction of a spread-winged vulture in black outline, fig. (2-d). All the scenes came without the usual accompanying label-texts.

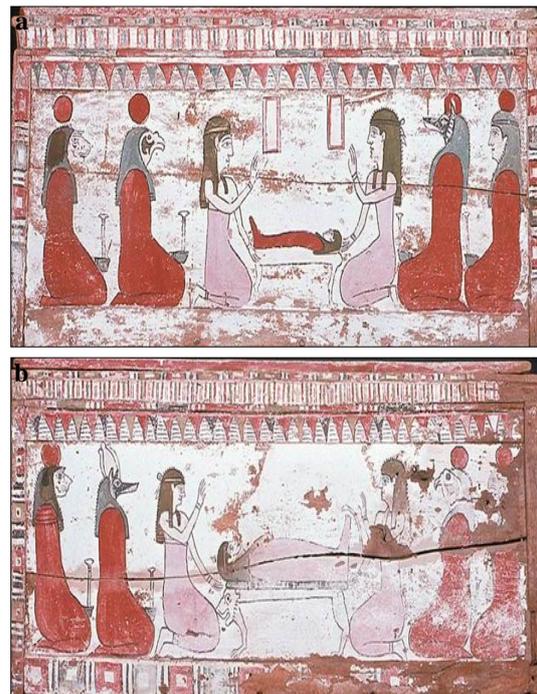




Figure (2) Showing **a.** one of the two long sides is decorated with the deceased on the funeral lion-shaped bed, and images of Isis, Nephthys and sons of Horus, **b.** the other side with the same previous theme, **c.** one of the narrow sides of the coffin represented the deceased lying on the lion-headed couch, **d.** the other narrow side has a depiction of a spread-winged vulture.

3. Results

The obtained results showed the following points:

- *) Most of the decorations of the coffin are traditional Egyptian.
- *) The outer lid surface contains a unique scheme combining Egyptian and Graeco-Roman elements depicting a scene of a hellenized female figure with the *Cup of wine* atop the *djed*-pillar.
- *) The point of interest here is that the artisan choose, for the first time, to depict a deceased as a hellenized female emerging from the *djed*-pillar, the most important Osirian symbol, In addition to Hellenic subject (represented in the female figure with the *cup of wine*).

4. Discussion

4.1. Absence of the texts

The iconographical themes on this coffin are based only upon images and symbols

without texts. However this is not a surprise since the general priority during the Roman period (in particular in Alexandria as we see in the catacombs of Kom el-Shoqafa) was to have an iconographical program based completely upon Graeco-Egyptian motifs and symbols beside the pseudo-hieroglyphics especially in the main burial chamber [5]. This may be attributed to the ability of images and symbols to imply the meaning, nullifying the need for inscriptions. That happened when the visual effect of these images and on viewers is more rapid and potent than words. The texts sometimes give great space to the artisan' imagination to express some ideas in visual aspect, especially when the text can be represented in various methods, and the visual aspect in funerary context, was more powerful than scripts. Perhaps the artisan here aimed to attract the attention of observers to the female figure portrait, because the image is recalled more easily than Egyptian traditional aspects and scripts, so the artisan may wish to commemorate the deceased by using the fashion of mummy-portrait as one of the perfect forms of deceased commemoration during the Graeco-Roman period [6], or perhaps he simply does not know the Egyptian scripts about the aspect but he knows the conception.

4.2. The red color

Another notice is that, the red color is used heavily with the mummified forms of the deceased, the Hellenized female figure, and also with sons of Horus; probably for highlighting visual and Egyptian religious significance. The Egyptian tradition of covering the deceased body with red drapery goes back to the pre-dynastic period in Nubia [7,8], and it was also used during the dynastic period through the Roman Era, with various funerary and religious items. The trough interior of the anthropoid wooden coffin of a young lady named "Ankhesenmut", mistress of the house and chantress of Amun, dated to late the 21st dynasty, is colored red [9,10]. The body of the human figure accompanying the *djed*-

pillar on the coffin's base of a woman called "Dismutenibtes" from the 25th dynasty is colored red [11]. Women's drapery of some mummy-portraits is attested with red color in varied degrees [7]. The Egyptian museum in Cairo has a collection of shrouds entitled by Corcoran as "red-shrouded mummies" (CG. 33217-33221), show male and female mummies with red shrouds or remnants of red pigment, indicating that the mummies were completely covered with red color [7,12]. An interesting mummy shroud of a man found in Deir el-Banaat, Fayoum, represents a good example of red-shrouded mummies (museum of Kom Oshim, Karanis, Fayoum, Reg. no. 432) [7]. The red color was associated with the new birth of the sun-god Re who has strong combination with Osiris, implies a wish for the deceased to be identified also with the sun-god [13, 14]. Red and yellow colors symbolize the sun color in the times of sunset and sunrise, which refers to the rebirth and triumph of the sun every morning [8,15]. There are words associated with this concept, to be spoken by the deceased in the pyramids texts: "I am the redness which came forth from Isis, I am the blood which issued from Nephthys... I am representation of Re and I do not die.." [16]. May be for this reason some shown *djed*-pillars topped with the sun-disk of god Re [17,18]. Most of Horus sons' heads are crowned with the red sun-disk within the decoration of the two long sides of this coffin. In addition, Osiris was associated often with red drapery [8]. Recently an Egyptian archaeological mission uncovered a rock-tomb of a person called "Tutu" and his wife "Tasheret-Isis" at El-Deyabat in Akhmim, Sohag. The decorations program of the tomb follows the Egyptian traditions. Osiris is depicted frequently seated on the throne with his usual attributes and dressed in red drapery completely [19]. Examples of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris's statues, god of resurrection, were painted in red color [8,20].

4.3. The *djed*-pillar

Although in post-pharaonic times, and by the Roman era, the Hellenic elements came in, and the various Egyptian motifs become

increasingly debased. The *djed*-pillar is a traditional Egyptian religious motif which is derived from the Osirian myth and closely is associated with funerary conceptualization. It was one of the most, if not the most important Osirian symbol and is played an important role in this cult. In fact, Osiris representing a central ideological god in the Egyptian beliefs of the afterlife, he had a double role as a ruler of the underworld and deity of resurrection. The revival of Osiris was celebrated in two rituals having the same meaning: the awakening of the life-giving limb, the phallus, and the rising of the god; then Osiris was revived and got up as the pier for all eternity. For that, the *djed*-pillar was a symbol of duration and eternal stability. The basic idea is the resurgence of nature in the tree and shrubs [21-23]. In addition, the *djed*-pillar is associated with Osiris rebirth [24,25], and refers to Osiris as a god of fertility [26]. Also, it was an important symbol signifying the eternal components of the universe [22,23]. The *djed*-pillar and its presence in scheme iconography is explained by its role as a main symbol of Osiris. Its significance denotes an important episode in the myth of Osiris who was killed and dismembered by his evil brother Seth. Isis with the aid of her sister Nephthys gathered the dismembered body of their brother Osiris [13, 26,27], and Anubis helped in the god's resurrection by the mummification. Since this, by analogy, it is the destiny which was wished by the deceased. He is identified in the afterlife with Osiris, and he obtains certain felicities, including defeating death and be resurrected as Osiris, to enable him to enjoy eternal life after death [28]. The depicting of the female deceased three times in the shape of a mummy on her coffin ensures the previous idea. As mentioned above, the *djed*-pillar played an essential role within the Osirian myth as a very important Osirian symbol. It was considered as an embodiment of the god himself, or his backbone [1,11,18, 21,25,29]. In this context, the *djed*-pillar

recalls the ritual of the raising of the *djed*, one of the most important primary rituals for the transformation of the deceased [30]. This raising of *djed*-pillar refers to Osiris's resurrection [31], and it means that the deceased became Osiris [18]. In the funerary cult, it is likely that the erection of the *djed* was accomplished by raising the coffin, as the backbone of Osiris, which indicates at the same time the erection of the abutment [21]. Hence the *djed*-pillar was a common item. It is one of the standard well known elements of the decorations on the Egyptian anthropoid wooden coffins from the end of new kingdom onwards, in particular during the 21st-22nd dynasties [11,24]. It was continued until the Roman period on various funerary equipments [11]. In funerary texts from Roman Egypt it was mentioned that the *djed*-pillar must be intact [25]. The *djed*-pillar was a useful amulet in protecting the backbone of the deceased according to the book of the dead [32], thus allowing the deceased to be-resurrected [24] and live [31] as Osiris. The types of the anthropomorphic *djed*-pillars decorations vary depending on the motifs accompanying the *djed*-pillar [11], but a romanized female figure with the anthropomorphic *djed*-pillar was never known before. There is a type which depicts a semi-anthropomorphic *djed*-pillar provided with crossed arms on the chest, and *atef*-crown, but without a human head, with or without eyes. The Medelhavsmuseet collection has a good example of this type (*NME 892-ex. Cairo JE 29703*). It is known as aforementioned anthropoid wooden coffin of a young lady named Ankhesenmut, mistress of the house and chantress of Amun, dated to late 21st dynsty. The interior of the trough is colored red and the *djed*-pillar stands on a *nub*-symbol [9,10]. The same type is depicted on a Roman female mummy-mask found in the site of Meir [12]. The central scene of the back side shows a semi-anthropomorphic *djed*-pillar without a human head, *atef*-crown, with both of Isis and Nephthys on the sides looking at and adoring him. The north wall

of the anteroom of the house-tomb 21 at Tuna el-Gebel, dated to the first century A.D., is decorated with two semi-identical forms of the anthropomorphic *djed*-pillar. The first form, on the west side of the lower register, shows a *djed*-pillar with two eyes between its uppermost bars and topped with the sun-disk, flanked by two cobras representing Isis and Nephthys [18]. The second form is on the east side and is very similar to the previous one; the only difference is that the *djed*-pillar is flanked by two *tyets* symbols topped with crowns of Isis and Nephthys, fig. (3) [14,18]. The previous theme of the flanked *djed*-pillar by two *tyets* symbols is attested also on the back of a female mask which was found in Meir, which could be dated to the second half of the 1st century A.D. (Egyptian museum, Cairo, CG. 33133) [14]. The last and rare type is anthropomorphic form. The closest analogue to our scheme, in some features is the *djed*-pillar topped with human head in Osirian form depicted on the inner anthropoid wooden coffin of a woman called "Dismutenibtes" dated to 25th dynasty (the museum of Cultural History in Oslo, C47708) [11]. The underside of the base is decorated with a huge anthropomorphic *djed*-pillartopped with human figure consisting of a torso *en face*, a head in profile, with a pair of hands on the chest and holding the crook and flail, symbols of Osiris. The human figure wears an *atef*-crown and a divine beard. The lower part of the pillar is flanked by two cobras. The left shoulder of the human figure is accompanied by an inscription indicating him as "Osiris, Lord of Busiris". Another example is the inner floor of the coffin of *Penju*, priest of the god Min, from Akhmim? Which dates to 22nd-23rd dynasties. It is decorated fully with an anthropomorphic *djed*-pillar with human head in profile (Hildesheim museum 1902 b) [17,33]. A red mummy-shroud in the Egyptian museum belongs to this type from the Roman period. Its surface is decorated with seven registers, the middle one contains a scene showing two males worshipping a *djed*-pillar topped with an

anthropomorphic figure representing the bust of mummified Osiris holding his main attributes, the crook and flail and the *djed*-pillar's base surrounded by two erected cobras without crowns [7,12].

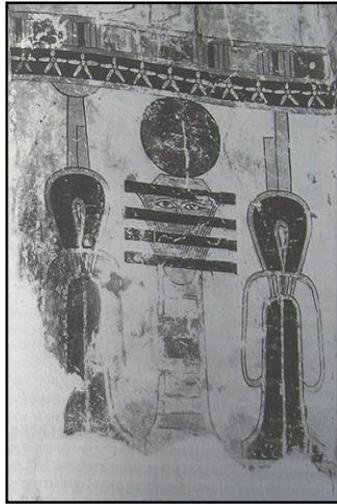


Figure (3-a) Showing the *djed*-pillar flanked with two *tyets* symbols topped with crowns of Isis and Nephthys, the house-tomb 21 at Tuna El-Gebel (after Riggs, 2006)

4.4. The Graeco-Roman elements

Graeco-Roman elements occur within our scheme through the iconography of the female portrait. The portraits were essential for the Greek and Roman conceptions of the afterlife during the Roman period. It is clear that the pictorial treatment of the female figure follows the Hellenic tradition, and that the artisan adopted the painted "mummy portrait" treatment to execute it on a flat panel as the case with mummies faces [34]. The "portrait" as a term refers to the image which reveals some of an individual's personality traits specific to him/her, as well as his/her physical appearance [6]. The mummy portrait qualities in our figure are distinguished by dark-eyes and rosy-cheeked face. The *cup of wine* is a well-known Dionysiac equipment, beside other attributes and symbols as the thyrsus sceptre. The *cup of wine* is attested with several funerary artifacts in the hand of the male and female dead from Roman Egypt, and that has a significance: the deceased belongs to the Dionysiac cycle [14]. Wine was strongly associated with Dionysus, and it was a very important element and funerary offering to maintain endless

happiness and pleasure for the Dionysiac followers in the underworld [35]. Dionysus was associated with the concept of resurrection and immortal life. An Orphic golden tablet mentioned the rebirth of the dead and the role of Dionysus as a god of liberation and rebirth to the deceased as well the wine is a source of eternal happiness [36]. Various figurative representations from Roman Egypt confirm the previous meaning. A lid of marble sarcophagus from Abu Qir, at eastern Alexandria, takes the form of an aged-deceased reclining on his left side and holding in his left hand a *kantharos* [37]. The presence of the *Kan-tharos* here indicates that the patron of the sarcophagus belongs to the Dionysiac cycle [38]. A girl's shroud of unknown provenance is kept at the British museum (EA 68509), and is dated to the period 151-200 A.D. It depicts the owner dressed in a pink-color tunic with black *clavi*. The right hand grasps a *cup of wine* and the left one holds a wreath of flowers [14].

4.5. Identification

Probably the female deceased of Hildesheim coffin was identified in this form with Dionysus as well as Osiris. This concept is relevant to the followers of Dionysus in classical artifacts. A lid of a sarcophagus from Etruria region, which is dated to the third century B.C., shows in very high relief a female deceased as Dionysus. She is attired as Dionysiac, with the right hand holding *Kan-tharos* and the left one holding the *thyrsus*, the most famous attributes of Dionysus [36]. According to the Dionysiac myth, he was an androgynous god. He has a union of male and female nature [39]. As we have seen, the representations of a man emerging from a *djed*-pillar are well known, but there is no a similar example for a woman emerging from a *djed*-pillar is attested. This makes the interpretation of the iconography is difficult, but I think that, its significance could represent an episode which was derived from Graeco-Egyptian funerary beliefs during the Graeco-Roman period. And the question is now, why was the *djed*-pillar topped unusually with a female figure? It is likely that the artisan broke away from the previous rule

to indicate that, the represented girl is identified with Osiris and Dionysus both to gain resurrection and eternal rebirth. The main purpose of the motif was to grant the deceased the divine privileges which is appropriate to Osirian-Dionysiac cycle members. A very interesting funerary stele from Therenutis (Kom Abu Billu), dates to the Hadrianic period (The Egyptian Museum of Cairo, J E. 45062, Marble, H. 91 cm), fig. (4), depicts a scheme which belongs to the same context of the Osirian-Dionysiac cycle [40-42]. The grave stele owner is a young man in his twenty-sixth years old called Isidoros. The relief represents him deified as both Osiris and Dionysus, naked in heroized appearance, and standing in front, the left leg bent and the weight depending on the right leg. His right hand extends offering a libation to an animal, probably a lion [42], or rather a panther, but for me, it is a panther, the sacred animal of Dionysus. The left hand is holding a thyrsus staff, the main attribute of Dionysus, which proves that the dead was conceived as Dionysus. The head topped with Atef-Hmhm crown, which implies also his otherworldly existence as Osiris. The two gods are synchronized in the dead's person. Not only the male, but also the female deceased was referred to as "the Osiris N" [14]. In addition, from the beginning of the 5th Century B.C., the texts mentioned the prefix of the name of the female dead with the composition "the Osiris-Hathor" beside the single title "the Hathor" [14]. Three statues of dead *sistrum*-players women were offered in the temple of the god Amun-Re at Karnak, date to the 4th Century B.C, carried the expression "the Osiris - Hathor", or "the Hathor" (Egyptian Museum, Cairo, JE. 37026-7, 38017) [43]. A lid of limestone sarcophagus from the site of Tuna el-Gebel, dates to the 4th Century B.C, was also made for an "Osiris - Hathor". Copies of Breathing books from late Ptolemaic period, mentioned the epithet "Osiris-Hathor" [14]. Herodotus who visited Egypt before Alexander the Great, made a syncretism between the Egyptian and Greek deities on the basis of similarities between the rituals and functions. Osiris,

the most famous god of the underworld in the ancient Egyptian religion, was strongly syncretized and identified with Dionysus as a chthonic god. Herodotus also mentioned that the Egyptians celebrated the Dionysiac festivals, and the celebration of the Egyptians included almost all the features of the Greek celebration of Dionysus. He also considered that the worship of Dionysus came from Egypt [44]. Later Diodorus also identified Dionysus with Osiris [45]. In addition, the association between Osiris and Dionysus was very close and depended on other common factors; such as both deities were considered cosmic gods and both are deities of both fertility and vegetation [45]. Both of them are also wine gods [46]. The most common factor between Osiris and Dionysus is that they were killed and dismemberment. Osiris was killed by his brother Seth. Dionysus was also killed by the Titans [35], and then by the help of other gods, the bodies of both gods were reconstructed and at the end were resurrected [46]. The most important common denominator between myths of the two deities was also the process of laceration of the body that was done for both [36]. Plutarch identified Osiris with Dionysus, and said clearly that Dionysus is no other than Osiris, and the rituals of the dismemberment are very similar. In addition, both gods were resurrected and re-born [47]. As a result, Dionysus was associated strongly with the underworld gods in the Greek beliefs [35].

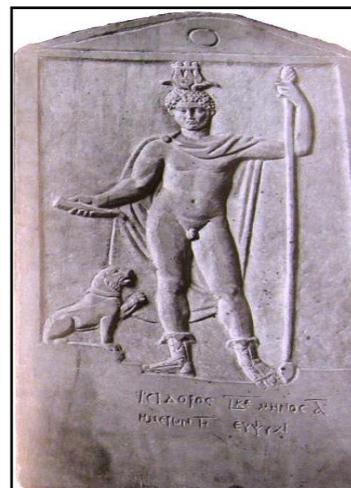


Figure (4) Showing a funerary stele from Kom Abu Billu of Isidoros (after Grimm, 1975).

4.6. Workshop

Sure the Fayoum region is the chief home of most of the mummy-portraits, but a coffin's lid decorated with a pannel of portrait was never found there. Moreover the pannel-portraits of middle Egypt represent a mixture of Egyptian and Greek features more than these came from Fayoum region [12]. Furthermore, the decorations of Hildesheim museum's coffin, especially the female portrait and the *djed*-pillar, show that they were executed by the hands of a skillful artisan. With these perfect mixed-style one expects that the coffin is the product of a proficient workshop with professional craftsmen like the workshops of middle Egypt, especially at Tuna el-Gebel or Meir. This suggestion is supported by a notice that the treatment of the decorations of the coffin of Hildesheim museum agree with some artifacts from the necropoles of Middle Egypt. Both showing similar treatments and features. Their scheme are not pure Hellenic. The chitons were carried out also without indications of the folds. The hair style is not of Greek or Roman fashion, but Egyptian [12]. The red color is also very similar to what we found with female masks from Meir Necropolis. Most of the Roman funerary artifacts, in particular the two wall-paintings of *djed*-pillar in the house 21 at Tuna el-Gebel, and the female masks decorated with the motif of *djed*-pillar, topped and flanked by various items were found at Meir (Egyptian museum, Cairo, CG. 33133) [14]. All belong to the region of Middle Egypt. It seems that the workshops of the art of the middle Egypt adopted similar items from the same pattern book and reflect the same current fashion amongst inhabitants of that region.

4.7. Dating

By a careful investigation of the motifs, in particular the anthropomorphic *djed*-pillar topped with a female figure, the scheme in question presumably could be dated to the first century A.D. This date depends on a criteria of several points. In the following we will try to enumerate these points esp-

pecially those related to the anthropomorphic *djed*-pillar and the iconographical features. On one hand, the *djed*-pillar was a central element evolving from a typical scheme current during the first millenium in funerary Egyptian artifacts and continues during the Roman period. With a careful observance, we can find a major difference between the *djed*-pillar of the dynastic periods and the *djed*-pillar of the Roman period, that is the number of the horizontal bars which surmount the vertical *djed*-pillar were four with ones of the dynastic periods but were often three with ones of the Roman period. The practice of *djed*-pillar decoration on the exterior surfaces of the inner wooden coffins and cartonnage was common during the 25th - 26th dynasties. The first attempt of this practice was through the rear body field of cases which are dated from 22nd to 25th dynasty [11], as we see with the wooden coffin of "Dismutenibtes" from 25th dynasty, with the anthropomorphic *djed*-pillar on the exterior surface of its base, a basic motif during the 25th dynasty [11]. On the other hand, the decoration of the female figure is typical of the Roman period. The portrait treatment including the hair style and the freshness and quality of the decoration date the object to the first century A.D. Edgar dated the female mummy-masks from Meir with the hairstyle of parted hair in the middle and falling freely down to each side or on shoulders to the first century A.D. They may be dated to the Claudian period [12]. This date is supported by the close relationship between the depiction of the *djed*-pillar on the coffin's lid and the other comparative examples of the artifact especially the decorated mummy-masks from Meir and the two wall-paintings in the house-tomb 21 at Tuna el-Gebel with the *djed*-pillar, all dated to the second half of the first century A.D.

5. Conclusion

*It is important to emphasise, however, that there is no perfect parallel to Hildesheim museum's coffin with a *djed*-pillar topped with female*

figure among the contemporary funerary artifacts from Roman Egypt. The rare occurrence of the motif in the Roman period proves that, the scheme was not well known during the previous periods, especially the Ptolemaic period. It seems that, the mode of decoration of a painted portrait on the coffin's lid happened as an imitation of covering the outer shroud of the mummy with a painted portrait directly. The scheme is meant to help the deceased in the afterlife according to both the Egyptian and Greek beliefs. The complementarity of the funerary iconography of the girl with the cup and djed-pillar together are essential for the resurrection and rebirth according to Graeco-Roman Egyptian beliefs. The scheme reflects the desire of the deceased and/or the artisan to adopt both traditions. The selection of this scheme shows a mixed cultural heritage. The Graeco-Roman and Egyptian traditions could each play a role to transfer the deceased into the afterlife during the Roman Era. Through identification within two great underworld-gods the deceased can gain transfiguration into a divine status and takes the form and place of Osiris and Dionysus, the gods of life and death. The special red garment which the female deceased wears was rare among Egyptians during the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, and was not a usual mummification garment to be used for enveloping the mummified body during the dynastic period. Nevertheless it seems that its function is to play a significant role a first step into the divine society and was worn by the deceased after having transformed into a divine spirit, in particular, the Osiride status. By looking at the items of this scheme, we can suggest that, the object belongs to a Middle Egypt workshop, particularly at Tuna el-Gebel or Meir, as this workshop was famous for modifications, new funerary fashions and additions, probably produced during the first century A.D.

References

- [1] Amann, A-M. (1983). Zuranthropomorphisierten vorstellung des djedpfeilers als form des Osiris, in: von Wolfgang, R. & von Soden, W. (eds.), *Festschrift für H. Brunner, Die Welt des Orients*, Vol. XIV, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Goettingen, pp. 46-62.
- [2] Kayser, H. (1973). *Die Ägyptischen altertümer im Roemer-Pelizaeus-museum in Hildesheim*, Roemer Pelizaeus Museum, Hildesheim.
- [3] Parlasca, K. (1966). *Mumienporträts und verwandte Denkmäler*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden
- [4] Roeder, G. (1921). *Die Denkmäler des Pelizaeus-Museums zu Hildesheim*, Karl Curtius Verlag, Berlin
- [5] Empreur, J-Y. (1995). *A short guide to the catacombs of Kom el Shoqafa, Alexandria*, Sarapis, Alexandria
- [6] Riggs, Ch. (2002). Facing the dead: Recent research on the funerary art of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, *American J. of Archaeology* Vol. 106 (1), pp. 85-101.
- [7] Corcoran, L. (1995). *Portrait mummies from Roman Egypt (I-IV centuries A.D.) with a catalog of portrait mummies in Egyptian museums*, The Oriental Institute, Chicago.
- [8] Taylor, J. (2001). Patterns of coloring on ancient Egyptian coffins from the new kingdom to the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty: An overview, in: Winifred, V. (ed.), *Color and Painting in Ancient Egypt*, British Museum, London, pp. 164-181.
- [9] Bettum, A. (2014). Lot 14 from Bab el-Gasus (Sweden and Norway): The modern history of the collection and a reconstruction of the ensembles, in: Sousa R. (ed.), *Body, Cosmos and Eternity: New Research Trends in the Iconography and Symbolism of Ancient Egyptian Coffins*, Archaeopress Egyptology), Archaeopress Archaeology, UK ed., pp. 167-186.
- [10] Dodson, A. (2015). *Ancient Egyptian coffins: The Medelhavsmuseet collection*, Stockholm, National Museums of World Culture, Stockholm
- [11] Bettum, A. (2010). Dismutenibtes and Aaiu. Two 25th dynasty coffins in Oslo, *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur*, Vol. 39, pp. 51-65.
- [12] Edgar, M. (1905). *Graeco-Egyptian coffins, masks and portraits*, Catalogue Général du Musée du Caire, Vol. 26, Le Caire.
- [13] Corcoran, L. (1997). Mysticism and the Mummy portraits, in: Bierbrier, M. (ed.), *Portraits and Masks: Burial Customs in Roman Egypt*, British Museum, London, pp. 45-53.

- [14] Riggs, Ch. (2006). *The beautiful burial in Roman Egypt: Art, identity, and funerary religion*, Oxford Univ. Press, Oxford.
- [15] Kees, H. (1943). Farbensymbolik in ägyptischen religiösen texten: Aus den nachrichten der akademie der wissenschaften in Göttingen , *Philosophisch-Pistorische Klasse*, Vol. 11, pp. 413-479.
- [16] Faulkner, R. (1969). *The ancient Egyptian pyramid texts*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- [17] Miatello, L. (2016). Texts and iconography of Padiamun's coffin in the Liverpool museum, *Birmingham Egyptology Journal*, Vol. 4, pp. 10-61.
- [18] Venit, M. (2016). *Visualizing the afterlife in the tombs of Graeco-Roman Egypt*, Cambridge Univ. Press, Cambridge.
- [19] SCA. (2019). *Newsletter*, Issue 35, Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities, Cairo.
- [20] Raven, M. (1978/79). Papyrus-sheaths and Ptah-Sokar-Osiris statues, *OMRO*, Vol. 59/60, 251-296.
- [21] Merkelbach, R. (1995). *Isis regina-Zeus Sarapis: Die griechisch-ägyptische religion nach den quellen dargestellt*, Vieweg+Teubner Verlag, Leibzig.
- [22] Iossif, P. & Lorber, Ch. (2012). The Rays of the Ptolemies, *Revue Numismatique*, Vol. 168, pp. 197-224.
- [23] O'Connor, D. (2011). *Abydos, Egypt's first pharaohs & the cult of Osiris, (New Aspects of Antiquity)*, Thames & Hudson, London.
- [24] Altermüller, H. (1975). s.v. Djed-Pfeiler, in: Helck, W. & Otto, E. (eds.), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, Band I, Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, Col. 1100-1105.
- [25] Kurth, D. (2010). *Materialien zum Totenglauben im römerzeitlichen Ägypten*, Hützel Backe Vlg., Germany
- [26] Bommas, M. (2012). Isis, Osiris, and Serapis, in: Christina Riggs, (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*, Oxford Univ. Press, Oxford, pp. 419-435.
- [27] Abdelwahed, Y. (2012). *Egyptian cultural identity in the architecture of Roman Egypt (30 BC-AD 325)*, PhD, Classics and Ancient History dept., Faculty of Arts and Humanities Durham Univ., UK.
- [28] Borg, B. (1997). The dead as a guest at table? Continuity and change in the Egyptian cult of the dead, in: Bierbrier, M. (ed.), *Portraits and Masks: Burial customs in Roman Egypt*, British Museum, London, pp. 26-32.
- [29] Kákosy, L. (1987). The hippocampos in Egyptian sepulchral art, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica*, Vol. 18, pp. 5-12.
- [30] Liptay, É. (2009). The wooden inner coffin of Takhenemet in the Czartoryski museum, Kraków, *Studies in Ancient Art and Civilization*, Vol. 13, pp. 83-117.
- [31] Bakry, H. (1955). *The main elements of the Osiris legend with refrence to Plutarch and certait folk-tales*, Durhan Univ. Press, UK.
- [32] Allen Th. (1974). *The book of the dead or going forth by day: Ideas of ancient Egyptians concerning the hereafter as expressed in their own terms*, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 37, The University of Chicago Press, USA
- [33] Eggebrecht, A. (1996). *Pelizaeus museum, Hildesheim: The Egyptian collection* Verlag Philipp von Zabern, Mainz.
- [34] Walker, S. (1997). Mummy portraits in their Roman context, in: Bierbrier, M. (ed.), *Portraits and Masks: Burial customs in Roman Egypt*, British Museum, London, pp. 1-6.
- [35] Seaford, R. (2006). *Dionysos*, Routledge, London.
- [36] Bernabé, A. & San Cristóbal, A. (2008). *Instructions for the netherworld, the orphic gold tablets: Religions in the Graeco-Roman World*, Vol. 162, Brill, Leiden.

- [37] Botti, G. (1900). *Catalogue des monuments exposés au muse Gréco-Romain d'Alexandrie*, Imprimerie Générale A. Mourès & C., Alexandrie.
- [38] Graindor, P. (1934). *Bustes et statues-portraits d'Égypte Romaine*, Imprimerie P. Barbey, Le Caire.
- [39] Otto, W. (1965). *Dionysus: Myth and cult*, Indiana Univ. Press, USA.
- [40] Grimm, G. (1975). *Kunst der Ptolemäer- und Römerzeit im ägyptischen museum, Kairo*, Verlag Phillip von Zabern in Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Mainz
- [41] Kákosy, L. (1983). Die kronen im spät-ägyptischen totenglauben, *Aegyptiaca Treverensia*, Vol. 2, pp. 57-60.
- [42] McCleary, R. (1985). *Funerary stelae with the Orans-motif: (workshop traditions of Terenuthis during the Roman occupation of Egypt)*, PhD, Art History dept., University of Toronto.
- [43] Albersmeier, S. (2002). *Untersuchungen zu den frauenstatuen des ptolemäischen Ägypten*, Verlag Philipp Von Zabern, Mainz.
- [44] Herodotus, (1960). *Histories*, Vol. II, Loeb Classical Library. London.
- [45] Diodorus of Sicily. (1935). *Library of history IV Book*, Harvard Univ. Press London.
- [46] von Lieven, A. (2016). Translating gods, interpreting gods on the mechanisms behind the interpretation Graeca of Egyptian Gods, in: Rutherford, I. (ed.), *Greco-Egyptian Interactions: Literature, Translation, and Culture, 500 BC-AD 300*, Oxford Univ. Press, Oxford, pp. 61-82.
- [47] Plutarch. T. (1936). *Moralia, Isis and Osiris. The eat Delphi. The oracles at Delphi no longer given in verse. The obsolescence of oracles*, Vol. V, Harvard Univ. Press USA.