

# Unpublished Four Canopic Jars from Al-Ashmunein Magazine

## أربعة أوانٍ كانوبية غير منشورة بالمخزن المتحفى في الأشمونين

Abdel-Rahman Ali Abdel-Rahman\*

### ملخص:

يتناول هذا البحث نشر أربعة أوانٍ كانوبية من العصر المتأخر موجودة بالمخزن المتحفى في الأشمونين بمركز ملوي بمحافظة المنيا. ويبدأ البحث بوصف عام للأواني الكانوبية الأربعة ثم يتناول كل إناء على حدة مع ترجمة للنص الموجود على الجزء الأمامى من الإناء وهو عبارة عن سطرين هيروغليفيين رأسيين على كل إناء، كذلك شكّلت رأس كل إناء على هيئة أحد أبناء حورس الأربعة: 'إمستي'، و'حابي'، و'قبح سنو إف'، و'دوا موت إف'. كما قام الباحث بعمل فاكسميلي لكل نص موجود على أحد الأواني، مع وجود صور فوتوغرافية لكل إناء، واللافت للنظر أنه في كل نص لا بد من قراءة السطر الثاني قبل السطر الأول؛ حتى يستقيم النص.

والأواني الكانوبية الأربعة من الألبستر وتحمل اسم *Nwb-ii.ti* لكن لا يحمل أي من النصوص إشارة إلى وظيفته أو أسرته، ثم تطرق البحث إلى تأريخ الأواني وفقاً لطبيعة ومميزات النص الموجود عليها، وهو عبارة عن صيغة انتشرت منذ الدولة الحديثة والعصر المتأخر.

The four Canopic jars published here were found by the police in year 1981, with some robbers in Maghagha, El-Minia Governorate. Then they were moved to Al-Ashmunein Magazine, and kept under the Inventory number 3204 and 516\1-4 in the Magazine's register book. The original location in where these jars were found is still unknown.

Each one of those jars bears two vertical lines of inscribed hieroglyphic enclosed in a frame, with the traditional formula usually written on the Canopic jars since the Saite Period. This formula invokes the protection of the four protection goddesses Isis, Nephthys, Selqet and Neit.<sup>1</sup>

### The direction of the inscription

The text on the body of each one of the four Canopic jars consists of two vertical lines of hieroglyphic text. It is noticeable that the second line is written before the first one, as that was known from the other traditional formula. To obtain the correct meaning, we must read the second line before the first one until the formula is completed. The occasion the Canopic jars of the Saite Period onwards. It is the first time, as to my knowledge, the text comes disarranged.

On the other four Canopic jars, the date of the late Libyan period came from Gurnah district at Thebes. We find five vertical lines on each jar arranged from right to left although the direction of the text runs from left to right.<sup>2</sup>

### 1. The first Canopic jar with a human headed lid

Inv. Nr: 516\1

Material: Alabaster

Height: 34 cm.

#### Description

Yellowish alabaster Canopic jar with a human head as a symbol of *Kbh-snw.f* without beard



(Fig. 1) The first Canopic jar with a human headed lid.

bears two vertical lines of inscribed hieroglyphic, enclosed in a rectangular frame. The jar is polished outside, the cover is in a good state of preservation with painted eyes and mouth carefully cut in the stone.

1)



2)



2) *dd n Srkt n k3.k skd s3 hr r<sup>c</sup>-nb hr mkt n Kbh-snw.f nty [im.i]*

1) *s3 Wsir Nwb-ii.ti m3<sup>c</sup> hrw s3 kbh-snw.f Wsir Nwb-ii.ti m3<sup>c</sup> hrw pw kbh-snw.f*

2) *Selqet spoke<sup>(a)</sup> for your ka, the protection<sup>(b)</sup> of every day is the protection of Kbh-snw.f who [is in me].<sup>(c)</sup>*

1) *the protection of Osiris Nwb-ii.ti the justified is the protection of Kbh-snw.f, Osiris Nwb-ii.ti the justified is Kbh-snw<sup>(d)</sup>.f<sup>(e)</sup>*

**Comment**

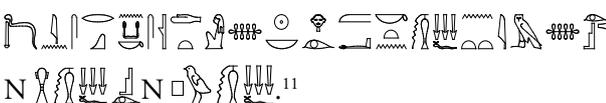
a. Most of the Canopic jars formula from Twenty-Sixth Dynasty begins with <sup>3</sup> however the formula begins with either *s<sub>dm</sub>.f* or *s<sub>dm</sub>.n.f* form.<sup>4</sup>

b. The verb *skd* is just written with the two signs  , it is an incorrect writing of  <sup>5</sup> and its variations.<sup>6</sup> The verb is a causative form of verb *kd* ‘to fashion, to build’, so *skd* means ‘cause to fashion’.<sup>7</sup>

c. Adding  [im=i] ‘who is in me’.<sup>8</sup>

d. The name of *Kbh-snw.f* is written error as  instead of .<sup>9</sup>

e. It appears that the formula of the goddess Selqet has some errors. This appears when we compare between it and other formulas, finding on the other jars date to the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty onward!<sup>10</sup>



*dd mdw in Srkt n k3.k skd.i s3 r<sup>c</sup>-nb hr ir mkt n Kbh-snw.f nty im.i s3 Wsir N s3 Kbh-snw.f Wsir N pw Kbh-snw.f*

*Recitation by Selqet for your ka, I get the protection daily to make the protection of Kbh-snw.f who is in me, the protection of Osiris N is the protection of Kbh-snw.f, Osiris N is Kbh-snw.f.*

K. Sethe studied the whole formulas on the Canopic jars from the Old Kingdom to Late Period, he classified them in types, the last type (XIX) is from the Saite Period.<sup>12</sup>

**2. The second Canopic jar with a hawk headed lid**

Inv. Nr: 516\2

Material: Alabaster

Height: 34 cm.

**Description**

Yellowish alabaster jar with a hawk head bears two vertical lines of inscribed hieroglyphic, enclosed in a rectangular frame. The jar is polished outside; the cover is in a good state of preservation with painted eyes and mouth carefully cut in the stone. The text in both lines is damaged in some parts.

1)



2)



2) *dd (n) 3st sm3(.i) d3it stp-s3 hr Imsty nty im(.i) s3 Wsir Nwb-*

1) *[ii.ti ] m3<sup>c</sup> hrw s3 Imsty Wsir Nwb-ii.ti m3<sup>c</sup> hrw pw Imsty*

2) *The speech (of) Isis: (i) destroy<sup>(a)</sup> the foe<sup>(b)</sup> and protect Imsty who is in (me)<sup>(c)</sup>, the protection of Osiris Nwb-*

- 1) [ii.ti]<sup>(d)</sup> the justified is the protection of Imsty,  
Osiris Nwb-ii.ti the justified is Imsty.



(Fig. 2) The second Canopic jar with a hawk headed lid.

**Comment**

- a. The verb sm3 'to slay, to destroy'<sup>13</sup> is written here without the sign and without a determinative.

It is usual in this kind of text to find the verb in metatheses such as <sup>14</sup> where the letter 3 introduced on the letter m.<sup>15</sup> The determinative of the verb varies between , and .<sup>16</sup>

- b. The word d3it 'foe, enemy, opponent'<sup>17</sup> ends with the determinative <sup>18</sup> or <sup>19</sup> or with both determinatives.<sup>20</sup> So, the scribe here was confused between the determinative and .<sup>21</sup>
- c. Addition of the suffix pronoun, first person, singular.
- d. The first line starts with a damage part; there is enough space to put the last part of the deceased name .

**3. The third Canopic jar with a jackal headed lid**

Inv. Nr: 5163  
Material: Alabaster  
Height: 34 cm.

**Description**

Yellowish alabaster Canopic jar with a jackal head as a symbol of *Dw3-mwt.f* bears two vertical lines of inscribed hieroglyphic, enclosed in a rectangular frame. The jar is polished outside; the cover, not polished, is in a good state of preservation with painted eyes carefully cut in the stone.

- 1)
- 2)



*Recitation by Neit, i spend the morning, the evening and the day making protection of Dw3-mwt.f who is in me, the protection of Osiris N is the protection of Dw3-mwt.f, Osiris N is Dw3-mwt.f.*

- c. addition of the suffix pronoun, first person, singular.

#### 4. The fourth Canopic jar with an ape headed lid

Inv. Nr: 516V4

Material: Alabaster

Height: 34 cm.

##### Description

Yellowish alabaster jar with an ape head as a symbol of *Hpy* bears two vertical lines of inscribed hieroglyphic, enclosed in a rectangular frame run from right to left. The jar is polished outside. The cover is in a good state of preservation with painted eyes and mouth carefully cut in the stone.

1)



2)



2) *dd n Nbt-hwt (h3)p.(i) sst3 hr ir bs3 n Hpy nty im.(i) s3 Wsir*

1) *Nwb-ii.ti m3c-hrw s3 Hpy Wsir Nwb-ii.ti m3c-hrw pw Hpy*

2) *The speech of Nephthys: (i) conceal<sup>(a)</sup> the secret<sup>(b)</sup> and make protection<sup>(c)</sup> of Hpy who is in (me)<sup>(d)</sup>, the protection of Osiris.*

1) *Nwb-ii.ti the justified is the protection of Hpy, Osiris Nwb-ii.ti the justified is Hpy.*



(Fig. 4)

**Comment**

- a. It is clear that the scribe wrote only the sign  of the verb  ;<sup>30</sup> he forgot the sign ,<sup>31</sup> which comes so much in the parallel texts.<sup>32</sup>
- b.   *sšt3* 'secret'. It is clear here that the sign  came later after the group  but it came in parallel texts of Canopic jars in its normal place such as <sup>33</sup> and <sup>34</sup>.
- c. The verb  'to protect'<sup>35</sup> is written with an incorrect determinative. It is probably that the scribe intended the sign  which usually comes as an end for the verb such as <sup>36</sup> but the great potential that the scribe confused between the determinative of the verb *h3p* , which is found in the oldest formula of Nephthys,<sup>37</sup> and the determinative of verb *bs3*. The same occurs in other verbs such as verb *sdw3* which usually ends with the determinative  or . It appears taking the determinative <sup>38</sup>. The verb appeared with different determinatives such as , ,  and .<sup>39</sup>
- d. Addition of the suffix pronoun, first person, singular.

**Owner of the jars**

The owner of these Canopic jars is *Nwb-ii.ti* 'the gold came'. It is attested as a proper name in the texts of the Middle Kingdom,<sup>40</sup> or even earlier in the First Intermediate Period,<sup>41</sup> and became common in the Late Period. The owner's name is written, as it came before, one time with the sign <sup>42</sup> instead of the sign  mistakenly, but the right full name is <sup>43</sup>  and <sup>44</sup>. A female form from the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty bears the same name.<sup>45</sup>

The inscriptions of the four Canopic jars mentioned the owner's name, but did not mention the name of his father or his mother. On the other hand,

no title or profession of the deceased is mentioned.

**Dating of Canopic jars**

The date of those Canopic jars is unknown; the registration of Al-Ashmunien Magazine dates them to the Saite Period, but depending on the characteristics of the lids and hieroglyphic inscriptions, it is more appropriate to place them in the Era between the Saite Period and the Thirtieth Dynasty. The traditional formula which occupied the Saite period onward and the appearance verb <sup>46</sup> did not permit to put these Canopic jars before this period. So, I am inclined to suggest dating them to the first occupation in Persian Period because the errors in the texts were spread in the first Persian occupation in Egypt, especially in the texts of the sarcophagi.<sup>47</sup>

However, the formula of the four Canopic jars (CG. 43754378-), which resembles the current jars in the opposite direction of the lines dated to the Libyan Period, is not a complete formula, so we cannot include them in the same Period.

In addition, Dolzani<sup>48</sup> divided the formulas of the Canopic jars into seven forms. He dated the last one, which looks like ours to the Saite Period onwards, according K. Sethe who divided the formula of the Canopic jars into nineteen types, the last one also dated to the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty.<sup>49</sup>

**The characteristics of the inscriptions**

Apparently, there is a tendency to that the words lack the determinatives, and the signs themselves inscribed on the jars are very thin and not deep. They resemble the graffiti on the rocks, especially in some signs such as *kbh*- sign and *s3*- sign. There is no proportion in the size among the different signs; some of them are small and the others are big; more words are written errors or decreased letters. On the texts of the four Canopic jars, the suffix pronoun first person singular is omitted, whether following verbs or

following propositions.

For example, the name of Osiris is written eight times, four of them  and four , in the eight times the name is written without the divine determinative . It seems that the name was a written likeness on the Canopic jars of the Saite Period.<sup>50</sup>

## Notes

- \* Assistant Professor, Faculty of Archaeology, Cairo University.
- 1 G . Reisner, 'The Dated Canopic Jars of the Gizah Museum', *ZÄS* 37 (1899), 70-71; G. Reisner, *Canopics, CG*, 4039, 4100, 4101, 4102, 4107, 4108, 4109 .... Etc; C. Dolzani, *Vasi Canopi*, n. 19001- 19153; *Catalogo del Museo Egizio di Torino* IV (Milano, 1982), n. 19028, 19029, 19030, 19031, 19032, 19033, 19034, 19035, 19036. E. Brovarski, *Canopic Jars, MFA I* (1978), 1, 4, 7, 68, 119, 122.
  - 2 Reisner, *Canopics, CG*, 4375, 4376, 4377, 4378.
  - 3 K. Sethe, *Zur Geschichte der Einbalsamierung bei den Ägyptern und einiger damit verbundener Bräuche* (Berlin, 1934), 12.
  - 4 Sethe, *Zur Geschichte der Einbalsamierung bei den Ägyptern und einiger damit verbundener Bräuche*, 13\*(1).
  - 5 Reisner, *Canopics, CG*. 4101, 4109, 4117, 4121, 4124, 1440, 4144, 4148, 4158, 4160, 4174, 4269; Dolzani, *Vasi Canopi*, n. 19001- 19153; *Catalogo del Museo Egizio di Torino* IV, n. 19035.
  - 6 Sethe, *Zur Geschichte der Einbalsamierung bei den Ägyptern und einiger damit verbundener Bräuche*, 13\*-14\*.
  - 7 Brovarski, *Canopic Jars, MFA I*, 160.
  - 8 Reisner, *Canopics, CG*, 4101, 4109, 4117, 4121, 4124, 4129, 4174, 4269, 4280.
  - 9 See: Reisner, *Canopics, CG*, 4140, 4148, 4152. 4156, 4160, 4174.
  - 10 Sethe, *Zur Geschichte der Einbalsamierung bei den Ägyptern und einiger damit verbundener Bräuche*, 229-230.
  - 11 Reisner, *Canopics, CG*, 4121 for more examples see: Reisner, *Canopics, CG*, 4148, 4156, 4160, 4174, 4269; Brovarski, *Canopic Jars, MFA I*, 125, 160; Reisner, *ZÄS* 37, 71.
  - 12 Sethe, *Zur Geschichte der Einbalsamierung bei den Ägyptern und einiger damit verbundener Bräuche*, 229-230.
  - 13 *Wb.* IV, 122, 7-123, 11; L. Lesko, *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian II* (Berkeley, 1982), 39.
  - 14 Dolzani, *Vasi Canopi*, n. 19032; J. Malek, 'Imset (I) and Hepy (H) Canopic-Jars of Neferseshem-psammethek', *JEA* 64 (1978), 139.
  - 15 Reisner, *Canopics, CG*, 4102, 4106, 4114, 4140; Rarely we find the verb in its regular form. see: Reisner, *Canopics, CG*, 4166.
  - 16 Sethe, *Zur Geschichte der Einbalsamierung bei den Ägyptern und einiger damit verbundener Bräuche*, 13\*(2).
  - 17 *Wb.* V, 517, 10- 518, 1; Lesko, *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian II*, 261.
  - 18 Reisner, *Canopics, CG*, 4106, 4122, 4277.
  - 19 Reisner, *Canopics, CG*, 4102, Sethe, *Zur Geschichte der Einbalsamierung bei den Ägyptern und einiger damit verbundener Bräuche*, 13\*(4).
  - 20 Reisner, *Canopics, CG*, 4266.
  - 21 Malek, *JEA* 64, 139.
  - 22 *Wb.* IV, 368, 1; Lesko, *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian II*, 98.
  - 23 Dolzani, *Vasi Canopi*, n. 19030.
  - 24 Dolzani, *Vasi Canopi*, n. 19034; Reisner, *Canopics, CG*. 4100, 4108.
  - 25 Brovarski, *Canopic Jars, MFA I*, 33.
  - 26 Reisner, *Canopics, CG*, 4100, 4512; Sethe, *Zur Geschichte der Einbalsamierung bei den Ägyptern und einiger damit verbundener Bräuche*, 14\*(16).
  - 27 *Wb.* IV, 144, 1.
  - 28 Reisner, *Canopics, CG*, 4116, 4143, 4159, 4279.
  - 29 Brovarski, *Canopic Jars, MFA I*, 154; Reisner, *Canopics, CG*, 4101, 4104, 4108, 4116, 4120, 4151, 4159, 4268, 4279, 4286; Reisner, *ZÄS* 37, 71; Sethe, *Zur Geschichte der Einbalsamierung bei den Ägyptern und einiger damit verbundener Bräuche*, 230, 12\*(c).
  - 30 *Wb.* III, 30, 6-31, 3; R. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford, 1969), 163.
  - 31 Malek, *JEA* 64, 139.
  - 32 Brovarski, *Canopic Jars, MFA I*, 134; Reisner, *Canopics, CG*. 4103, 4107.
  - 33 Reisner, *Canopics, CG*, 4146.
  - 34 Reisner, *Canopics, CG*, 4282.
  - 35 *Wb.* I, 475, 8-10; Faulkner, *A concise Dictionary of*

- Middle Egyptian*, 84; Lesko, *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian I*, 139; Wilson, *A Ptolemaic Lexicon* (Leuven, 1997), 332.
- 36 Reisner, *Canopics*, *CG*, 4103, 4115; Malek, *JEA* 64, 139.
- 37 Reisner, *ZÄS* 37, 66.
- 38 Reisner, *Canopics*, *CG*, 4151.
- 39 Sethe, *Zur Geschichte der Einbalsamierung bei den Ägyptern und einiger damit verbundener Bräuche*, 14\*(13).
- 40 H. Ranke, *Die Ägyptischen personennamen I* (Glückstadt, 1935), 190 (7).
- 41 PM VIII3, 199 (803-030-304).
- 42 Canopic Jar number 516\2.
- 43 Canopic Jar number 516\3.
- 44 Canopic Jar number 516\4.
- 45 M. Daressy, 'Inscriptions hiéroglyphiques du Musée d'Alexandrie', *ASAE* 5 (1904), 117; C.R. Williams, 'The Egyptian Collection in the Museum of Art at Cleveland, Ohio', *JEA* 5 (1918), 40.
- 46 *Wb.* IV, 144, 1.
- 47 A.A. Abdel-Rahman, 'A Wooden Sarcophagus from Saqqara in the Egyptian Museum', *SCA* 5 (2008), 133.
- 48 Dolzani, *Vasi Canopi*, 10-11.
- 49 Sethe, *Zur Geschichte der Einbalsamierung bei den Ägyptern und einiger damit verbundener Bräuche*, 229-230.
- 50 Dolzani, *Vasi Canopi*, n. 19028-19036; Brovarski, *Canopic Jars*, *MFA* I, 68, 122; Reisner, *Canopics*, *CG*, 4107. 4108, 4109, 4123, 4124, 4182 etc.