

GOLD OF PRAISE

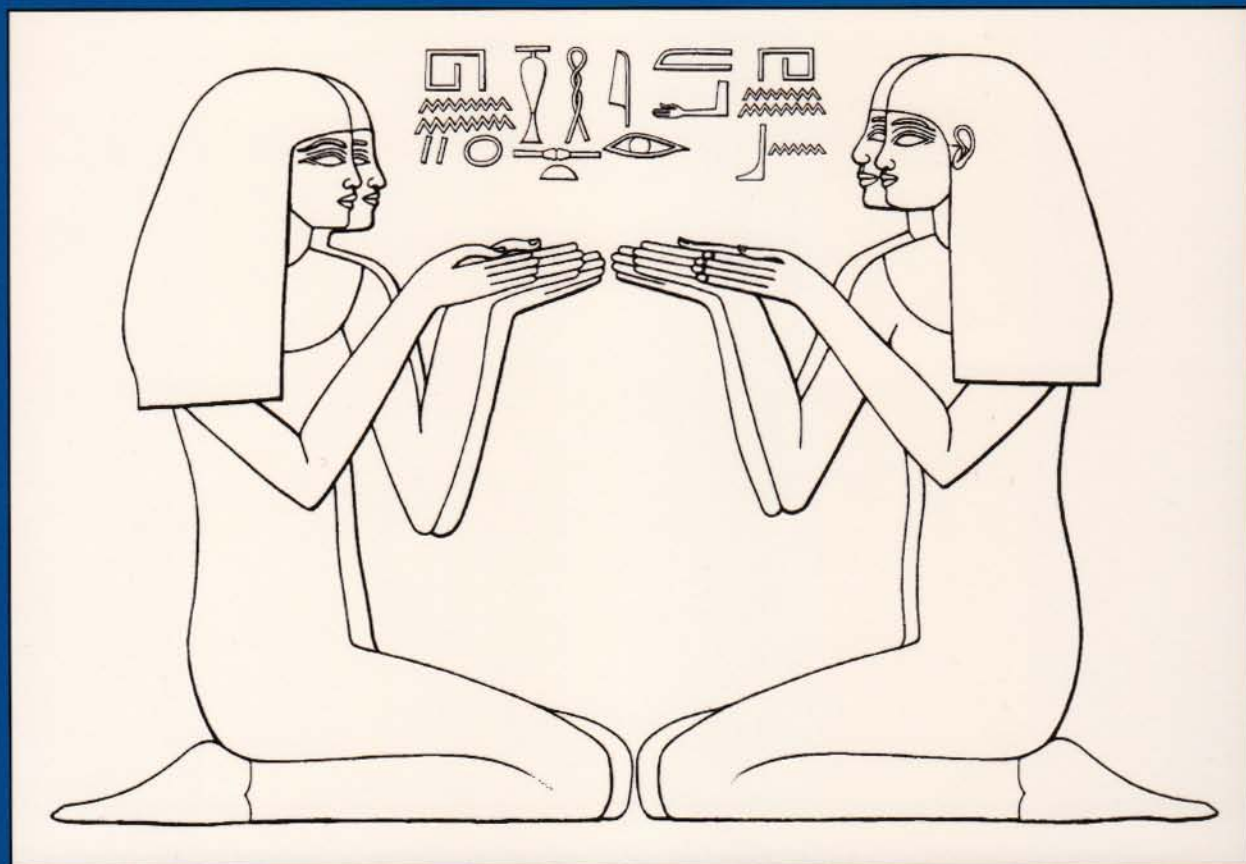
STUDIES ON ANCIENT EGYPT IN HONOR OF
EDWARD F. WENTE

edited by

EMILY TEETER

and

JOHN A. LARSON



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INVENTORY OFFERING LISTS AND THE NOMENCLATURE FOR BOXES AND CHESTS IN THE OLD KINGDOM

EDWARD BROVARSKI

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

For me, and I think for others who were privileged to study there in the 1960s and 1970s, the Oriental Institute was a special place whose abundant resources included teachers of the caliber of Klaus Baer, George Hughes, John A. Wilson, and, of course, Edward F. Wente. Since my earliest days in Egyptology, Professor Wente has been a source of inspiration. To me he is the quintessence of a scientific scholar and thinker — systematic and exact, impartial and unbiased. It was my privilege to take a number of courses in Late Period Egyptian hieroglyphic and hieratic with Professor Wente, an acknowledged master in those fields. As a teacher, he possesses an extraordinary ability to put a student at ease, to make him or her want to perform at their best, and to make the student feel that his or her suggestions or observations actually possess merit.*

One course in particular I remember with fondness, a seminar on architectural terms that Professor Wente agreed to teach. The class was small; in actual fact, it consisted of just the professor and the present writer. While not on architectural terms, the present article is likewise devoted to lexicography, and I hope it meets with his approbation.

The first part of this article appeared in the festschrift volume of an old friend and collaborator of Professor Wente.¹ Both parts utilize furniture lists that comprise one component of the inventory offering lists of Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom date as a source for the investigation of nomenclature for furniture in that period.²

*I express my thanks and appreciation to the following individuals: Dr. Rita E. Freed, Curator of Ancient Egyptian, Nubian, and Near Eastern Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, permitted the reproduction of the photographs in fig. 4.10 taken during the Harvard University-Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition (all photographs from the expedition are hereafter referred to as Exp. Ph.). Dr. Anna Maria Donadoni Roveri, Soprintendente delle Antichità Egizie at the Museo Egizio, most kindly provided the photographs of the Turin objects reproduced as figs. 4.6, 4.9, and 4.15 in the present article, as well as information concerning them. Dr. James P. Allen and Professor Janet H. Johnson both shared their knowledge with me in a number of particulars, and the latter very agreeably looked up a number of words on my behalf in the files of the Chicago Demotic Dictionary Project. Thanks are also due Jordi Ensign for the drawing of the *h3-ht-* and *qsr-*determinatives from the furniture list of Ny-hetep-khnum (15) reproduced in table 4.1. I am also indebted to my wife, Del Nord, and an old colleague and friend, Elizabeth Sherman, for editing and improving the manuscript. Finally, Dr. Peter Der Manuelian spent long hours scanning the numerous figures that accompany this article, formatting fig. 4.11 in particular, and compiling table 4.1.

1. Brovarski 1996. A third part, "CG 20506 and the Ancient Egyptian Word for 'Bed Canopy,'" is scheduled to appear in the volume for Abdel Aziz Sadek (part three) (Brovarski, forthcoming).

2. Several individuals provided access to unpublished lists, and their contributions are acknowledged below. The sources for both parts of the article are the same; see Brovarski 1996, pp. 127–29. The furniture lists are as follows: (1) Satba, niche stone, Helwan tomb no. 1241 H 9, end of the Second Dynasty (Saad 1947, p. 41, no. 20, pl. 24); (2) Ny-djefanesut, niche stone, in Hannover, No. 1935, 200, 46, first half of the Third Dynasty (Kestner Museum 1958, cat. no. 12); (3) Kha-bau-sokar, stone-lined niche from Saqqara, in Cairo, CG 1385, time of Djoser (Murray 1905, pl. 1); (4) Hathor-nefer-hetep, wife of Kha-bau-sokar, stone-lined niche from Saqqara, in Cairo, CG 1386–1388, time of Djoser (Murray 1905, pl. 2); (5) Sisi, niche stone, Helwan tomb no. D. H 6, late Third Dynasty (Saad 1947, pp. 46–48, no. 23, pl. 27); (6) Nedji, wooden panel of offering niche from Saqqara, early Fourth Dynasty (Badawi 1940, pp. 495–501, pl. 46); (7) Irensen, panel of offering niche or of false door from Saqqara, in Cairo, CG 1393, early Fourth Dynasty (Borchardt 1937, p. 52, pl. 13); (8) Metjen, panel of false door of stone-lined cruciform chapel from Saqqara, Berlin 1105 G, time of Khufu (Lepsius 1842–45, pl. 3; Königlichen Museen zu Berlin 1913, p. 81); (9) Rahotep, false door panel from Medum, in London, BM 1242, time of Khufu (Petrie 1892, pl. 13; James 1961, pl. 1 [2]); (10) Rahotep, left side of false door recess from Medum, in London, BM 1277, time of Khufu (Petrie 1892, pl. 13; James 1961, pl. 3 [3]); (11) Seshatsekhentiu, slab stela, Giza tomb G 2120, in

It probably serves to reiterate that the investigation in this article of terms for furniture and their applications in periods later than the Old Kingdom is limited in scope and mainly included for purposes of comparison. See table 4.1, at the end of this article, for the determinatives of words for boxes and chests that occur in furniture lists referred to in the ensuing discussion.

Terms for furniture occur in furniture lists, sporadically in Old Kingdom tomb reliefs, in *frises d'objets* on sides of burial chambers or coffins from the Sixth to Eighth Dynasties, and in different kinds of documents, including the Pyramid Texts and the Abusir Papyri. In this article the terms for furniture are discussed first if they occur in furniture lists, second if in a tomb relief, third if in a burial chamber, and fourth if in papyri.

TERMS FOR FURNITURE TYPES DISCUSSED³

Furniture in Furniture Lists

| | | |
|-----|---------------------------|--|
| aa. | <i>fdt</i> | Small- or medium-sized rectangular box |
| bb. | <i>(m)htm(t)</i> | Storage box or hamper |
| cc. | <i>hn(w)</i> | Box or chest |
| dd. | <i>h³-ht</i> | Plain wooden box |
| ee. | <i>hr(t)-^c</i> | Document case |
| ff. | <i>tnn</i> | Round-topped box |
| gg. | <i>tzt</i> | Chest-on-legs(?) |
| hh. | <i>dbn</i> | Round-topped box or coffret |
| ii. | <i>dsr(w)</i> | Coffret, ornamental casket |

Furniture in Tomb Reliefs

| | | |
|-----|-------------|---------------|
| jj. | <i>itnt</i> | Type of chest |
| kk. | <i>stpt</i> | Type of chest |

Furniture in Burial Chambers

| | | |
|-----|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| ll. | <i>pr-w^cb</i> | Shrine-shaped box(?) |
| mm. | <i>sry</i> | Shrine-shaped chest(?) |
| nn. | <i>dh³</i> | Chest with vaulted lid(?) |

Furniture in Abusir Papyri

| | | |
|-----|--------------------------|----------------------|
| oo. | <i>db³w</i> | Type of box or chest |
| pp. | <i>š^ct(?)</i> | Type of box or chest |

Boston, MFA 06.1894, time of Khufu (Leprohon 1985, pp. 59–62); (12) Anonymous, slab stela, Giza, Junker Mastaba II n = G 4260, time of Khufu (Junker 1929, pp. 181–91, fig. 36, pl. 29a); (13) Anonymous, slab stela, Giza, Junker Mastaba VII nn = G 4770, time of Shepseskaf (Junker 1929, pp. 229–31, fig. 53, pl. 37b); (14) Izi, fragment of wall relief from Saqqara, in Copenhagen, AEIN 672, end Fourth Dynasty (Mogensen 1930, p. 90, pl. 93); (15) Ny-hetep-Khnum, right aperture of false door, Giza, Western Field, end Fourth Dynasty (Abu-Bakr 1953, fig. 10); (16) Merib, false door panel, Giza tomb G 2100-I-annexe, Berlin 1107 G, time of Shepseskaf-Userkaf (Lepsius 1842–45, pl. 19 = Königlichen Museen zu Berlin 1913, p. 99); (17) Setju, slab stela, intrusive in Giza tomb G 2353 B, in Boston, MFA 13.4341, end Fourth Dynasty or early Fifth Dynasty (Simpson 1980, p. 35, pl. 61a, fig. 47; Leprohon 1985, pp. 93–96); (18) Painted inventory list from “Covington’s Tomb,” Giza, South Field(?), end Fourth Dynasty or early Fifth Dynasty (Brovarski 1996, fig. 1); (19) Senenu, left aperture of false door, Giza, West Field, Abu Bakr excavation for University of Alexandria (1953), end Fourth Dynasty or early Fifth Dynasty (unpublished; see PM 3/1, p.

48); (20) Senenu, right aperture of false door, end Fourth Dynasty or early Fifth Dynasty (unpublished; see PM 3/1, p. 48); (21) Seshemnefer I, inventory list on east wall of chapel, Giza tomb G 4940, Userkaf-Neferirkare (Lepsius 1842–45, pl. 28); (22) Kapunesut Kai, inventory list on south wall of chapel, Giza, West Field, early to middle Fifth Dynasty (unpublished; discovered by Dr. Zahi Hawass in 1992; Dr. Hawass graciously permitted me to utilize the items herein); and (23) Kayemankh, Giza, West Field, G 4561; painted “Gerätekammer” on walls of burial chamber, Sixth Dynasty (Junker 1940, pp. 70–71, pl. 9). Henry G. Fischer very kindly called the lists of Senenu to my attention and placed his 1959 hand copies at my disposal.

3. In the ensuing discussion single, lowercase letters in parentheses are cross-references to items of furniture discussed in the first part of this article (Brovarski 1996): (a) *st* “bed”; (b) *wrs* “headrest”; (c) *wtz(t)* “carrying chair”; (d) *m^c* “foot-bath”; (e) *h³wt* “circular table”; (f) *hnd(w)* “bentwood chair, stool”; (g) *st-(n)-ht* “bed of wood”; (h) *st hms* “seat”; (i) *s³h* “table”; (j) *gs(³w)t* “two-legged bed or backrest”; (k) *ndrwt* “bedframe”; and (l) *hwdt* “palanquin.” Double lowercase letters refer to the boxes and chests discussed herein.

FURNITURE IN FURNITURE LISTS

aa. *ʿfdt* “rectangular box”: Murray 1905, p. 35; “tablette”: Weill 1908, p. 253; “coffre”: Montet 1925, p. 309; “Kasten”: *Wb.* 1.183:15–17

In her furniture list (4), Hathor-nefer-hetep’s *ʿfdt* is said to be made of *s3d*-wood. The word is determined by a rectangle bordered by double lines, which possibly represent the timber framework of the box or alternately a veneer or trim of a different kind of wood. The same sign serves as the determinative of *h3-ht* (dd) in the list of Kapunesut Kai (22). Since certain of the determinatives in Hathor-nefer-hetep’s list are drawn in elevation and others in plan,⁴ it is not clear whether the determinative presents a top or a side view.

In the tomb of Ti, a carpenter is shown drilling a hole in the center of the lid of a small, plain, flat-lidded rectangular box supported on a pair of battens, presumably for the addition of a button handle (fig. 4.1a).⁵ The legend above reads *hit ʿfdt in fnh* “drilling an *ʿfdt* by the carpenter” (Montet 1925, p. 304). Further along in the same register two carpenters are seen sanding a *h[nw]*-chest that differs from the *ʿfdt* only in that it is nearly three times as long (fig. 4.3a).

On the basis of the Ti scene, Montet (1925, p. 309) concludes that small boxes during the Old Kingdom were designated *ʿfdt* and large boxes *hn(w)*. In the Abusir Papyri, both *ʿfdt*-boxes and *hn(w)*-boxes or chests contain incense or objects used in the daily cult, whereas only the latter were used for the storage of more bulky vases, papyrus, food, and especially cloth. Posener-Kriéger (1976, p. 185) thinks the discrepancy in usage confirms Montet’s observation concerning the relative sizes of the two kinds of containers, at the same time noting that *hn(w)*-boxes may also be small in size. The definitive passage seems to be one in which three *ʿfdt*-boxes filled with incense are placed inside a *hn(w)*-box (Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival 1968, pl. 52A, 3c; Posener-Kriéger 1976, p. 374). In most cases the determinative of the *ʿfdt*-boxes in the Abusir Papyri is the same sign that serves to determine *hn(w)*-boxes or chests in these documents: a rectangular box supported on battens with or without a small handle in the center of the lid (Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival 1968, pls. 14A, 1; 49C, D; 52A, 3c). However, in one place (*ibid.*, pl. 6A, d), *ʿfdt* is determined by a hieratic sign that seems to represent a box with taller legs. It is not entirely certain what value should be attached to the latter sign since no other determinative or depiction of an *ʿfdt*-box appears to share this feature.

Apart from the papyri, it is worthwhile calling attention to the *ʿfdt hry ʿntyw hry mrht* “box containing myrrh and unguent,” which was among the gifts presented to Sabni I of Aswan by the king upon his return from Wawat with the body of his deceased father Mekhu (*Urk.* 1, p. 139.12–13). Presumably, the unguent was contained in cosmetic jars (see Lepsius 1842–45, pl. 22b; Reisner-Smith 1955, p. 42, fig. 38, pl. 34a–c; Simpson 1978, fig.

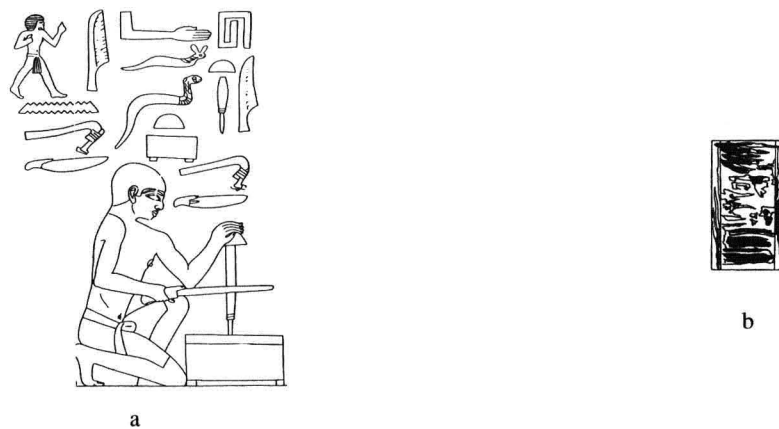


Figure 4.1. *ʿfdt*-boxes, after (a) Wild 1966, pl. 174, and (b) Jéquier 1922, fig. 47 = Maspero 1885, pl. 2

4. The determinatives of *hnw*, *tnn*, *dbn*, and *dsrw* are all clearly drawn in profile, and *hrt*-ʿ probably in plan. As with *ʿfdt*, it is not certain which aspect of *ʿtzt* is shown.
5. Killen (1994, p. 11) suggests that a small mushroom-shaped handle would have been inserted into the hole. All of the actual boxes of Old Kingdom date illustrated or referred to in the present article have a button handle in the middle of the

lid. Killen (1994, p. 20, fig. 44D) mistakes the papyrifiform handle of an adjacent mirror for a mushroom-shaped handle at the front of a shrine-shaped box depicted in a burial chamber of the end of the Sixth Dynasty or later from South Saqqara (Jéquier 1929, fig. 50) and interprets this as the first occurrence of such a handle on a box. The “curtain box” of Queen Hetepheres I has been restored with a mushroom-

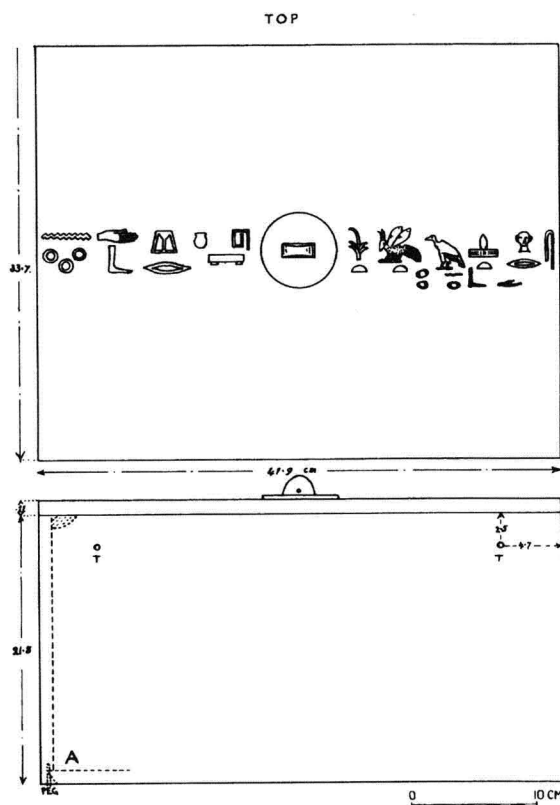


Figure 4.2. Bracelet Box of Queen Hetepheres I, after Reisner-Smith 1955, pp. 43–44, fig. 44

30, pl. 18). Once again it is likely that the box was a smallish one. The determinative in Sabni's inscription is a low, rectangular box with four battens or legs and a handle in the center of the lid. The box was made of *ssdm*-wood.⁶

The evidence so far presented seems to suggest that *fdt* in the Old Kingdom was a term for a small, rectangular wooden box, wider than tall, and equipped with battens. In contrast to the examples cited above, the main dimension of the rectangular *fdt*-box depicted on one side of a stone-built burial chamber of late Old Kingdom date is vertical (fig. 4.1b). Though evidently made of imported ebony wood, this box is otherwise completely plain and lacks battens.

By the Middle Kingdom, *fdt* is often spelled *fdt* (CT 1, p. 160a; CT 3, p. 76 l; CT 4, p. 54d; CT 6, pp. 408–09). From a series of Coffin Text spells it seems likely that *fdt* / *fdt* designated the small rectangular chest seen on the forward deck of contemporaneous wooden model solar ships (Borghouts 1973/74, pp. 358–64). In Coffin Text Spell 695 an *fdt hrt* contains a document, perhaps the credentials the deceased had to present to the great god in the next world (Wilson 1954, p. 254). The hieratic determinative of *fdt* in all these instances is again a small, wide rectangular box with two pairs of battens or legs and a button handle in the center of the lid.

fdt is the usual writing of the term in the ostraca of Ramesside date from Deir el-Medina (Janssen 1975, p. 197). In regard to the ostraca, Janssen (1975, p. 197) notes that thirty-one silver *fdt* in P. Harris I, 13b, line 11, weigh only ca. 215 gr, so that they must have been very small. He also makes the observation that (the material of ?) the stone *fdt* of P. Westcar 9, line 4, again points to smaller dimensions. The prices of the *fdt*-boxes appear to confirm these suggestions as to size since they never exceed three *deben* (Janssen 1975, p. 197). In one ostracum an *fdt* is said to contain papyri, which, as in the case of the *fdt hrt* already referred to, probably points to a small- or medium-size container (Janssen 1975, p. 197).

The term survives into Ptolemaic and Roman period Demotic as *ftt* (Erichsen 1954, p. 60).

shaped handle in the center of the lid, even though the original was almost completely decayed (Reisner and Smith 1955, p. 26, figs. 28–29, pls. 7, 11–13).

6. For this variety of wood, see, for example, Môtet 1925, p. 307; Gardiner 1973, p. 483 (M29); Edel 1955, §60.

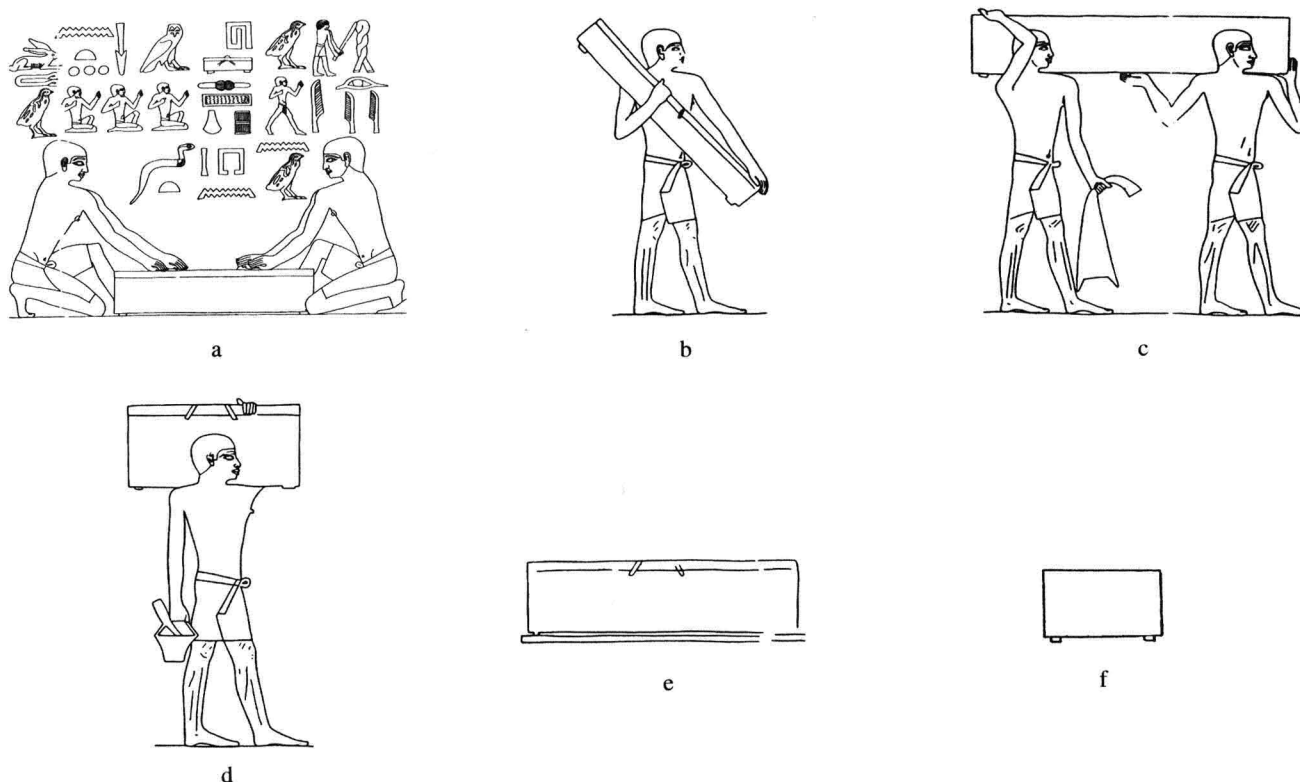


Figure 4.3. Plain *hn(w)*-boxes with Battens, after (a) Wild 1966, pl. 174; (b) Zeigler 1993, p. 119; (c) Zeigler 1993, p. 118; (d) Zeigler 1993, p. 168; (e) Zeigler 1993, p. 119; and (f) Jéquier 1921a, fig. 649 = Chassinat-Palanque 1911, pl. 20 (1)

bb. *mḥtm(t)* “Truhe”: Junker 1940, p. 71; “closed” or “sealed receptacle”: Gardiner 1955, p. 13

As Gardiner (1955, p. 13) observes, the word from its etymology clearly signifies a “closed” or “sealed receptacle.” *Mḥtm* is an example of a noun (*nomina instrumenti*) formed by a prefixed *m* from the trilateral verb *ḥtm*.⁷ In the list in the burial chamber of Kayemankh (23), the determinative is the hieratic version of a rectangular box with a pair of battens and a small handle. In the furniture list of Seshemnefer [I] (21), on the other hand, the word is determined by a simple rectangle without detail. If any trust is to be placed in the relative size of the determinatives in the latter list, a *mḥtm* was larger than a *ḥṣ-ḥt*-box (dd). Seshemnefer’s *mḥtm* was made of ordinary wood (*ḥt*).



A variant *ḥtm*, without the prefixed *m*, but presumably possessing the same meaning, occurs in the Abusir Papyri.⁸ In one place a *ḥtm* is mentioned together with a basin (*š*) and instruments utilized for the twice daily *qbḥw*-libation for the deceased king (Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival 1968, pl. 6A, f; Posener-Kriéger 1976, pp. 19–20, 185). In another fragment, what must have been a fairly good-sized *ḥtm* apparently contained two jars and their contents, two baskets and a smaller *ḥtm* of incense (*sntr*), as well as thirty loaves of bread (Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival 1968, pl. 51, 2a; Posener-Kriéger 1976, p. 370). In two related accounts, two *ḥtm* are confided to the laundrymen of Neferirkare’s temple (Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival 1968, pl. 52A, 3a, c; Posener-Kriéger 1976, p. 372). In one of these, a large and a small *ḥtm* are brought from the king’s sun temple and turned over to a laundryman (Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival 1968, pl. 52A, 3a; Posener-Kriéger 1976, pp. 372–73). The determinative of *ḥtm* in all these occurrences is once again the hieratic version of the rectangular box supported on a pair of battens and with or without a small handle. What was probably yet another example of a *ḥtm*-box (a determinative is lacking), contained eight alabaster cylinder jars (of unguent?). It was of ebony (*Urk.* 1, p. 137.1).

7. Such formations are discussed by Grapow 1914; Jéquier 1921b, pp. 145–54; Gardiner 1973, p. 218, n. 1; Edel 1964, §§253–55.

8. Compare, for example, the words *ḥnt* and *mḥnt* (*Wb.* 1.206; 2.47:10–11); *ndt* and *mḥndt* (*Wb.* 2.48:1–8); and *ḥ’t* and *mḥ’t* (*Wb.* 1.221; 2.49:8–14).



Figure 4.4. (a) *Hn(w)*-box, after Simpson 1978, fig. 30, and (b) Chest-on-legs, after Davies 1902a, pl. 14; compare Killen 1994, p. 13

In the Thirteenth Dynasty Ramesseum Dramatic Papyrus (Gardiner 1955, pl. 2 [35]), the determinative of *mḥtmt*  bears a close resemblance to a type of wickerwork box or hamper that is very commonly represented in Old Kingdom wall reliefs .⁹ As a hieroglyphic sign the hamper also serves as a determinative of Old Kingdom funerary feasts, in particular *Dḥwt*, *Wꜥg*, and *Sꜥd*.¹⁰ In the latter capacity, it appears to have functioned as a container for provisions (Jéquier 1910, pp. 89–94). It is possible that the determinative in the Ramesseum Dramatic Papyrus holds a clue to the sort of receptacle that was intended by that designation in the Old Kingdom. The only obstacle to the identification seems to be posed by the form of the determinatives in the furniture lists of Seshemnefer I and Kayemankh and, whereas the latter sign might be understood as a generic determinative as a result of the relatively late date of the list, it is not possible to discount entirely the form of the sign in Seshemnefer’s list, which is that of a plain rectangular box.

From P. Westcar 12, line 5, it emerges that another *ḥtm(t)* was a container large enough to contain a grain sack.¹¹ It may have been of rather rough construction, since it was used for the storage of commodities (cf. Janssen 1975, p. 208). The *ḥtm(t)* in question was closed with leather straps (*istnw m dḥrw*). Indeed, the passage suggests that the word refers to a type of container without a specific locking mechanism that had of necessity to be tied with straps or ropes. It is unclear if this definition should be applied to other (*m*)*ḥtm(t)*.

Everything considered, it seems that (*m*)*ḥmt* was a term used for both good-sized wooden storage boxes of plain, utilitarian construction and for wicker work hampers, likewise utilized for storage.

cc. *hn(w)* “box”: Griffith 1892, p. 38; “box”: Murray 1905, p. 35; “coffre”: Weill 1908, p. 253; “coffret”: Jéquier 1921a, pp. 131, 247; “Kasten”: *Wb.* 2.491:9–15

The gold-covered bracelet box of Queen Hetepheres I is inscribed on the lid (fig. 4.2): *hnw hr dbn* “box containing bracelets” (Reisner-Smith 1955, pp. 43–44, fig. 44, pls. 36a–b, 37–38). The box measures 41.9 cm long by 33.7 cm wide, and the height with the lid is 21.8 cm. It is covered inside and out with horizontally ribbed sheets of gold, bordered with a mat pattern (except for the bottom where there is only one plain sheet of gold). In the center of the lid is a small ivory button handle with a pierced semicircular projection for lifting it. In the inscription on the lid *hnw* is determined by a low rectangular box with a pair of battens, even though the box itself seemingly lacks battens.

The determinatives of *hn(w)* in the early lists show four forms:

- i. Completely plain rectangular box (2[?], 5, 7, and 13)
- ii. Rectangular box with button handle (10)
- iii. Rectangular box with pair of battens, as on Queen Hetepheres’ bracelet box (12)
- iv. Rectangular box with small handle on lid and pair of battens (4 and 11)¹²

9. For example, Lepsius 1842–45, pl. 25; Mariette 1889, p. 93; Bissing 1905a, pl. 4 [11b]; Junker 1934, fig. 27; Hassan 1932, pl. 6B, CG 1558, 1566, 1696; Dunham and Simpson 1974, fig. 3a–b. A box of this shape is carried on the shoulder of a barber and was presumably used to store the tools of his trade; see Lepsius 1842–45, pl. 89c; for *ḥꜥkw*, see *Wb.* 3.365:3–4; Montet 1931, pp. 178–89. The example reproduced here is from Jéquier 1910, fig. 21 (= CG 169b).

10. Jéquier 1910, pp. 91–92. Jéquier (1910, p. 90) notes that the sign also appears as a determinative of the word *ḥnkt* “offering, donation” in PT 150, 502.

11. Erman 1890. The word is determined by the house-sign, but is so translated by *Wb.* 3.352:5. For the disappearance of the final *t*, see Posener-Kriéger 1976, p. 20, n. 51; Edel 1955, §113.

12. The semicircular element in the center of the lid presumably represents the button handle preserved on actual boxes; see, for example, those illustrated in figs. 4.2 and 4.10. Compare the treatment of the pattern on the foot of the vase reproduced in Schäfer 1974, fig. 43e. The semicircular element in the center of the lid of the cavetto-corniced box in fig. 4.7d probably also represents a button handle. Alternatively, it might represent the type of button handle on Queen Hetepheres’ box with the projecting vertical element.

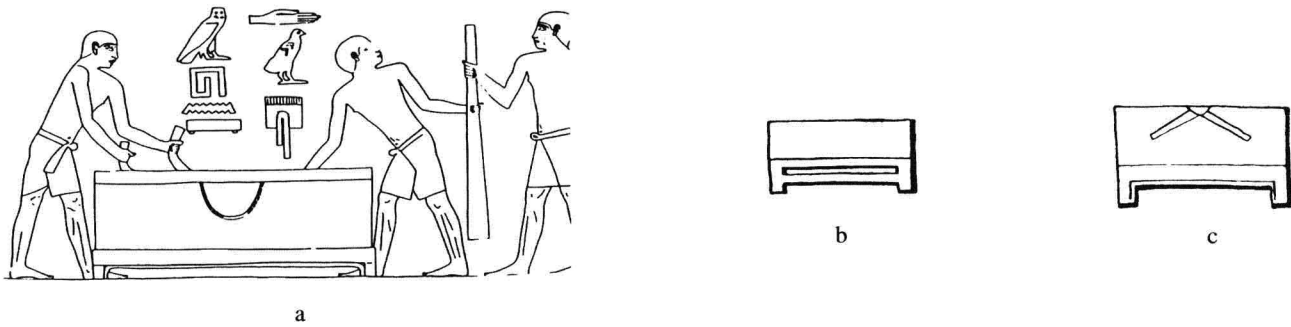


Figure 4.5. Flat-lidded *hn(w)*-boxes and Chests-on-frames, after (a) Zeigler 1993; (b) Bissing 1905a, pl. 5; and (c) Bissing 1905a, pl. 5

In the list of Hathor-nefer-hetep (4), form iv appears after *hnw* only, while the other boxes and chests have distinctive determinatives of their own. In the other early lists, although form i also functions as the determinatives of *hꜣ-ḥt* (hh) and *ḏsr(w)* (ii) boxes, forms ii–iv appear nearly exclusively as determinatives of *hn(w)*.¹³ Hence, the surviving evidence, slim as it may be, may indicate that forms ii–iv originally appertained to *hn(w)*, only later becoming the generic determinative for all kinds of boxes and chests. By the end of the Fifth Dynasty, for example, in the Abusir Papyri, besides determining *hn(w)*,¹⁴ the hieratic equivalent of form iii and form iv accompanies *ḏdt* (aa), *(m)ḥtm* (bb), *šꜥt* (pp), and *ḏbꜣw* (oo) boxes. Similarly in the Pyramid Texts, in addition to *hn(w)*, form iv determines the epithet *tztī* (see under gg, below) and a term for coffin, *[ḏr]wt*.¹⁵ Whereas forms iii and iv seem perfectly suitable for *ḏdt*-boxes (aa), which appear by and large to have been smaller versions of *hn(w)*-boxes, due to the limited nature of the evidence, it is not clear to what extent they functioned as generic, as opposed to specific, determinatives for *(m)ḥtm* (bb), *šꜥt* (pp), *tzt* (gg), *ḏbꜣw* (oo), and *[ḏr]wt*. At any rate, in the discussions of boxes and chests in the present article, a more specific determinative is given greater weight than what appear to be more general signs.

Old Kingdom wall reliefs and paintings often depict *hn(w)*-boxes and chests on a larger scale than in the furniture lists and in greater detail. They show that the term *hn(w)* continued to denote rectangular boxes or chests of simple design and varying dimensions which were usually supported on battens (fig. 4.3a–e).¹⁶

In the tomb of Khufukhaf I, on the other hand, the word *hnw* designates a medium-size box (human figures provide the scale) of a different construction, that is, one with short legs that are evidently prolongations of the stiles or sideposts (fig. 4.4a).¹⁷ The joints of the legs of this box are reinforced with bentwood braces, and in the center of the lid is a cord loop tie through which a short stick is passed. Similarly, a large chest labeled *hn(w)* in the Sixth Dynasty tomb of Ibi at Deir el-Gebrawi has relatively tall legs that also function as the stiles of the construction (fig. 4.4b).¹⁸

A *hn(w)*-box depicted in the Louvre mastaba of Akhetotep shows yet another form — a goodly sized clothing chest with a flat lid — which sits on a separately manufactured stand made to look like a low table (fig. 4.5a).¹⁹ An actual chest-on-frame²⁰ of this type was found by Schiaparelli in the “Tomb of the Unknown Owners” at Gebelein (fig. 4.6).²¹ The rectangular Gebelein chest (30.0 × 55.5 × 31.0 cm) also rests on a table-like framework with short legs, the joints at the front and back being reinforced with bentwood braces, while flush stretchers connect the side legs (Turin suppl. 13968: see Egyptian Museum of Turin 1987, pp. 199–200, 258;

13. The hieratic version of form iv also appears after *mḥtm* in the latest of the furniture lists in the burial chamber of Kayemankh (23).

14. See Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival 1968, pls. 7A, h; 21, o; 22A, j; 22D; 25, e; 26f; 27C; 27D; 28G; 34, 1, c; 52A, 3c; 59C; 73E; 92A, a 2.

15. Sethe 1960a, Pyr. 184b; 491a; Sethe 1960b, Pyr. 2009a. On *ḏrwt*, see *Wb.* 5.601:3; Faulkner 1962, p. 324.

16. Captions at rear of file of porters on the left embrasure of entrance to the offering room of Akhetotep and at head of file on the south wall appear to identify boxes and chests alike as *hn(w)*, even though term is written with ideogram of small, rectangular, flat-lidded box supported on two battens; see Zeigler 1993, pp. 118, 169; and fig. 4.3b–d herein. The

former caption also seems to apply to a *dbn*-chest (fig. 4.14b). As Killen (1994, p. 11) notes, the box illustrated in fig. 4.3a is similar in its proportions to the curtain box of Queen Hetepheres I, for which see n. 5 above.

17. Simpson 1978, fig. 30 (*hnw ḥr snṯr*).

18. Compare Killen 1994, p. 13.

19. Zeigler 1993, p. 116 (*ḏw sšr m hn(w)*). The chest appears to have a top border of a different color, similar to the borders of the chest in Turin shown in fig. 4.6.

20. For the term chest-on-frame for an item of furniture set on a stand, see, for example, Fairbanks and Bates 1981, p. 52.

21. Turin suppl. 13968: see Egyptian Museum of Turin 1987, p. 137, wherein Schiaparelli dates the tomb to the second half of the Fifth Dynasty.



Figure 4.6. Chest-on-frame from Gebelein, Turin Suppl. 13968. Egyptian Museum of Turin 1987, p. 137

Donadoni Roveri et al. 1994, fig. 33). The top of the lid has a flat button handle in the center and two battens inside to hold the lid in place. The bottoms and borders of the chest are of a darker wood than the rest. When found, the chest contained various linen textiles and three lists of textiles in black ink were inscribed on the inside of the lid (Donadoni Roveri et al. 1994, p. 208). The table-like stand, reinforced by bentwood supports or simple stretchers, appears regularly in representations of *hn(w)*-boxes or chests hereafter (figs. 4.5a–c, 4.7b–f, 4.9, 4.11a–b, d).

From the end of the Fourth Dynasty and in the early Fifth Dynasty, the tops of many flat-lidded *hn(w)*-boxes and chests in relief show a cavetto cornice (only rarely ribbed) and torus molding (fig. 4.7a–f).²² The cornice projects beyond the sides of the box. Although such boxes are generally set on low legs or on a table-like support, cavetto-corniced boxes without legs are sometimes represented (fig. 4.8a–c). Like the simple *hn(w)*-chests already examined, cavetto-corniced boxes or chests-on-frames occur in a variety of shapes and sizes (figs. 4.7a–f, 4.11a–b, d). Smaller boxes are sometimes more elaborate in design with superimposed pairs of bentwood stretchers (fig. 4.7e–f). Killen (1994, p. 19) points to an example in the mastaba of Khentika whose feet appear to have been shod with protective metal shoes (James 1953, pl. 34).

At least two types of cavetto-corniced chests are represented by actual examples. A small, square wooden box-on-frame (28.2 × 17.5 cm) in Turin comes once again from the “Tomb of the Unknown Owners” at Gebelein (fig. 4.9) (Turin suppl. 13985: see Donadoni Roveri et al. 1994, p. 137). Two pairs of legs are strengthened by curved braces, the others by straight rails or stretchers (not visible in the photograph).²³ The body and lid are painted white and the base red. The lid, recessed into the top of the box, is not visible when the

22. The earliest examples in relief are probably Dunham and Simpson 1974, fig. 5, pl. 5b; and Borchardt 1913, pls. 59–61 (= fig. 4.8b); see LÄ 4 “Möbel,” col. 182; Killen 1994, p. 17. Only fig. 4.7d is expressly labeled (*hnw hr(y) sntr*), but

compare fig. 4.7c with Firth and Gunn 1926, 1, p. 97; 2, pl. 6D (*hn(w) n sstꜣ*).

23. One of the stretchers is missing, the other looks to be damaged by white ants.

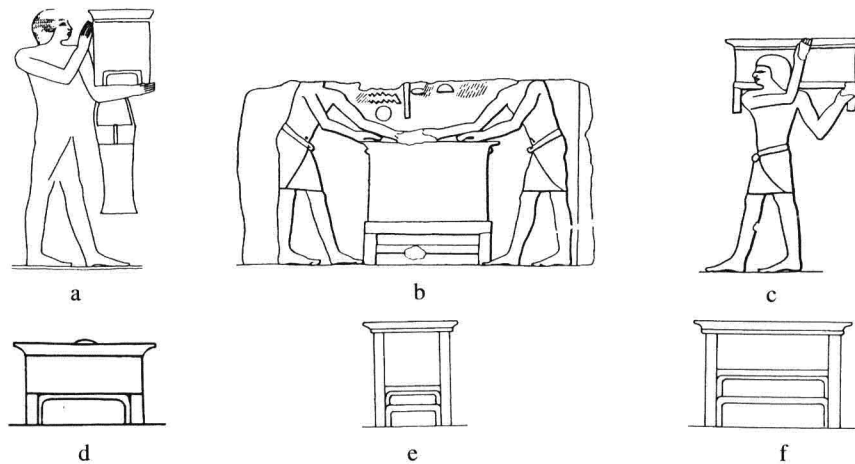


Figure 4.7. Cavetto-corniced *hn(w)*-boxes and chests, after (a) Badawy 1978, fig. 34; (b) Macramallah 1935, pl. 10 C; (c) Macramallah 1935, pl. 10 B; (d) Simpson 1976, fig. 24; (e) Baker 1966, fig. 55 = Sakkarah Expedition 1938a, pls. 94–95; and (f) Baker 1966, fig. 55

chest is viewed straight on. In the center of the lid is a flat button handle. Two essentially identical boxes from Nag^c-ed-Deir tombs N 94²⁴ and N 4183²⁵ date to the end of the Sixth Dynasty or later.

A rectangular chest on a taller frame also derives from tomb N 4183 (fig. 4.10).²⁶ Like the two square boxes from Nag^c-ed-Deir, it lacks the torus molding at the base of the cornice that appears in most Old Kingdom representations (see figs. 4.7a–f, 4.8a–c, 4.11a, b[?], d) and on the square box in Turin.²⁷ Stretchers hold the legs on the ends of the box in place, but the bentwood braces under the side legs appear to be more decorative than functional.

Sixth Dynasty cavetto-corniced chests sometimes have other than flat lids. A number of Mereruka's *hn(w)*-chests possess gable lids (fig. 4.11a),²⁸ while a chest in the tomb of his near contemporary, Ankhmahor Zezi, has a vaulted lid (fig. 4.11b). These large chests were fitted with retractable carrying-poles, as were plain, oblong chests (fig. 4.11c, e),²⁹ and flat-lidded cavetto-corniced *hn(w)*-chests (fig. 4.11d), the wood or metal(?) fittings of which are sometimes shown in considerable detail (fig. 4.11e).³⁰

In the Abusir Papyri, the component members of one large *hn(w)*-chest are inventoried (Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival 1968, pl. 25e). They consisted of the body of the chest (*ds.f*), its lid (*ʿ*), its fastening (*dbʿ*), and four carrying poles (? *hzʿw*; see Posener-Kriéger 1976, pp. 191–94).

During the Old Kingdom, *hn(w)*-boxes or chests were utilized for the storage of a wide variety of commodities. Cloth was regularly kept in large *hn(w)*-chests.³¹ Large- or medium-sized *hn(w)*-boxes or chests also

24. Reisner, *Naga-ed-Dêr Notebook* 1, p. 4; Exp. Ph. A 4478, 4481; C 4338–41, 8793–94. The contents consisted of a broken alabaster offering table and several small stone vessels suitable for unguents, including an alabaster jar (the cloth sealing tied around its mouth largely intact) similar to the two published in Jéquier 1929, fig. 95, left. Inside the coffin from this tomb were found twelve pleated dresses, on which see Riefstahl and Chapman 1970, pp. 244–58.

25. Reisner, *Naga-ed-Dêr Notebook* 3, pp. 92–93, 95; Exp. Ph. A 707; C 638. According to the Tomb Card for N 4183, reassembled by Caroline Nestmann Peck from the photographic record of the Harvard-Boston Expedition and now on deposit in the Museum of Fine Arts, the contents of the tomb, including this box, are now in the Phoebe Hearst Museum in Berkeley, California, LMA 6-2157/2164 and 2166(?). The present whereabouts of the box from N 94 (n. 27) and of the chest from N 4183 (n. 29) are unknown to the writer.

26. Exp. Ph. C 636, 8059–60. Among other objects, the chest contained a mirror, a cosmetic spoon, a small alabaster jar (like that described by Donadoni Roveri et al. 1994, p. 134, with cloth likewise intact), and four other stone vessels.

27. Note that the molding is also absent in the large cavetto-corniced chest from the late Sixth Dynasty tomb of Ibi at Deir el-Gebrâwi illustrated in fig. 4.17b.

28. For example, Sakkarah Expedition 1938a, pls. 70, 72, 74–76, 79, 98–99 (*hn[w] nw mnht*). The determinative in the label above the last example is a cavetto-corniced chest with flat lid. For what appear to be medium- and small-sized gable lid boxes, see James 1953, pl. 38.

29. Compare Borchardt 1913, pls. 59–60.

30. Compare Bissing 1911, pl. 36. See also the portable, gable-lidded chest from the tomb of Tutankhamun in Metropolitan Museum of Art 1976, cat. no. 7. For a discussion of the fittings in Old Kingdom portable chests, see Posener-Kriéger 1976, pp. 193–94.

31. For example, Firth and Gunn 1926, pl. 6; Borchardt 1913, pl. 59; Sakkarah Expedition 1938a, pls. 74–76, 98–99; Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival 1968, pl. 52A, 3c; Posener-Kriéger 1976, p. 373; Zeigler 1993, p. 116 (= fig. 4.5a).

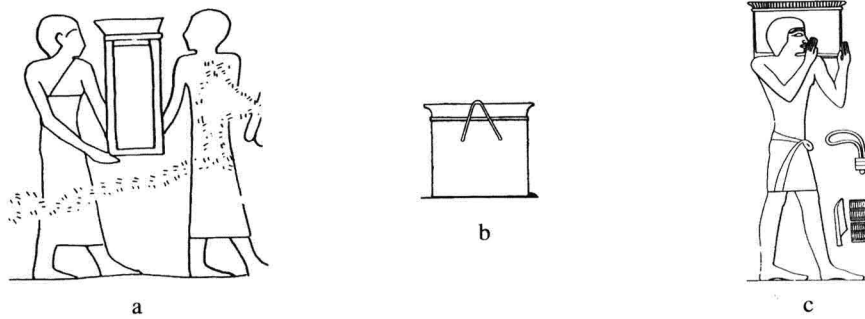


Figure 4.8. Cavetto-corniced Boxes without Legs, after (a) Dunham and Simpson 1974, fig. 8; (b) Borchardt 1913, pl. 60; and (c) Épron 1939, pl. 16

served for the storage of incense,³² myrrh,³³ natron,³⁴ eyepaint,³⁵ perfumes and unguents,³⁶ *phrt*-medicaments,³⁷ sweets,³⁸ jewelry,³⁹ and, in at least one case, a scepter (Davies 1902a, pl. 14). Both the small square box and the rectangular chest from Nag^c-ed-Deir tomb N 4183 appear to have functioned as toilette boxes. In the pyramid temple of Neferirkare, a large *hn(w)*-chest held four smaller *hn(w)*-boxes that contained implements for the Opening of the Mouth ceremony (Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival 1968, pls. 20; 21, o; 22A, j, k; 22D; Posener-Kriéger 1976, p. 176). *Hn(w)*-chests also served for the safekeeping of documents (Sethe 1960a, Pyr. 491a; Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival 1968, pl. 73E, 92A, a 2; Posener-Kriéger 1976, pp. 176, 479), a usage well attested later on (*Wb.* 3.491:12).

On occasion, *hn(w)*-chests also appear to have served as measures of capacity. A medium-sized chest-on-frame in the tomb of Kagemni is thus labeled *hn(w) n hꜣt* “chest of measuring,” and a much larger cavetto-corniced chest in the tomb of Mereruka (fig. 4.11d) is captioned *hn(w) n n* (sic) *hꜣt*.⁴⁰

The Gebelein and Nag^c-ed-Deir chests-on-frames and the Gebelein box-on-frame, in addition to a flat button handle on the lid, have pairs of holes on opposite sides of the box for cords — a method of fastening known from Old Kingdom reliefs. On the clothing chest from the Louvre mastaba (fig. 4.5a), one of two loops of cord, which would probably have fitted around the button handle in the center of the lid and then been sealed with a lump of wet clay, hangs loose.⁴¹ In a number of instances, what must be the sealing is shown (e.g., figs. 4.5c, 4.11e), although more commonly only the cord loop (fig. 4.8b) or its ends (fig. 4.3b, d–e) appear. The process of sealing the chests was shown in some detail in the pyramid temple of Sahure, but the scene is largely destroyed (Borchardt 1913, pl. 59). In the case of the determinative in one of Senenu’s lists (19), two pairs of cord loops appear exceptionally to have been used to seal the box or chest, which is shown in plan.

The use of the term *hn(w)* for sarcophagi and coffins⁴² suggests that *hn(w)*-chests could be very large indeed. Merenre sent Weni the Elder to fetch a sarcophagus — a *hn(w) n nḥ* ‘chest of life’ — of black granite from the Ibhēt granite quarry in Nubia (together with its lid) for his pyramid at Saqqara.⁴³ A short time later, the expedition leader Sabni I returned from Nubia with the body of his dead father enclosed in a wooden coffin (*hn[w]*) (*Urk.* 1, p. 137.1). Finally, two hieratic linen lists on the inside of the south end of a white-stuccoed

32. For example, Borchardt 1913, pl. 59; Sakkarah Expedition 1938b, pl. 118. The incense was probably in the form of bricks (*dbwt*); see Simpson 1978, fig. 30.

33. For example, Vandier 1964, pl. 13.

34. For example, Bissing 1905a, pl. 5 (= fig. 4.5c). Compare Posener-Kriéger 1976, pp. 196, 207; Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival 1968, pl. 22A j.

35. For example, Sakkarah Expedition 1938b, pl. 118.

36. For example, Macramallah 1935, pl. 10; Vandier 1964, pl. 13, fig. 160.

37. Martin 1979, pl. 29 (60). For *phrt*, see *Wb.* 1.549:10–11.

38. For example, Sakkarah Expedition 1938b, pl. 112 (*ht bnrt*). Compare Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival 1968, pl. 92A, a 2.

39. For example, Reisner-Smith 1955, pp. 43–44, fig. 44, pls. 36–38; Borchardt 1913, pl. 59; Kaplony 1976, no. 2, fig. on p. 22.

40. Bissing 1905a, pl. 5 (cf. fig. 4.5b, above); Sakkarah Expedition 1938b, pl. 112. The superfluous *n* in the latter caption presumably represents an instance of dittography. For *hꜣt* “measure (with a wooden bucket, etc.),” see *Wb.* 3.223:4–14; Montet 1925, pp. 229, 231, 321.

41. Compare James 1961, pl. 29 [2]. Killen (1994, p. 11) incorrectly, I believe, refers to these as “carrying ropes.” However, elsewhere Killen (1994, p. 14) seems to realize that these “cord handles” could be pulled across the lid and tied in the center to hold it firmly in position.

42. See *Wb.* 2.491:16–17.

43. *Urk.* 1, p. 106.14–17. Merenre’s sarcophagus is discussed by Donadoni Roveri 1969, p. 108 (A 14), and more recently by Wissa 1994.

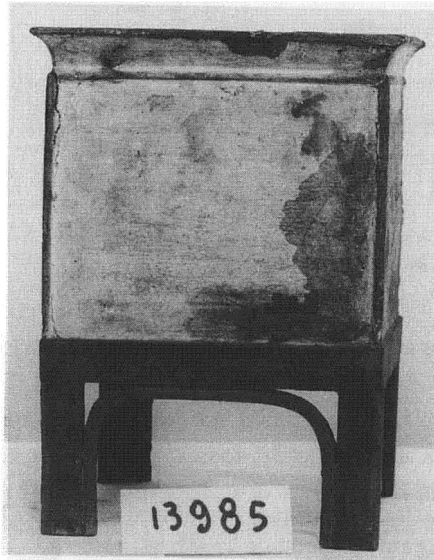


Figure 4.9. Cavetto-corniced Box-on-frame, Turin Suppl. 13985. Courtesy of the Egyptian Museum, Turin

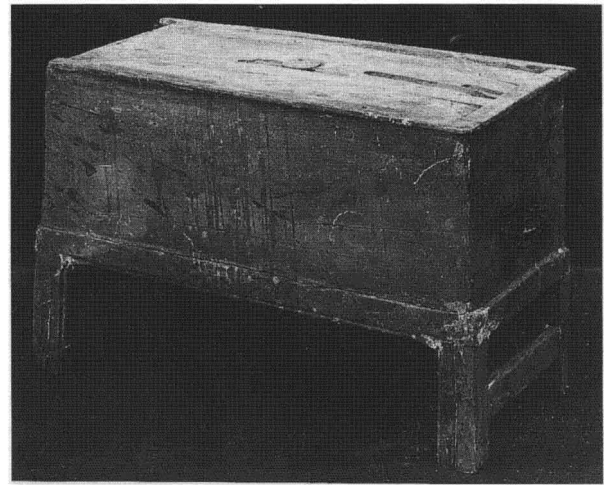


Figure 4.10. Rectangular Chest-on-frame from Nag'-ed-Deir Tomb N 4183. Harvard University-Boston Museum of Fine Arts Egyptian Expedition n.s. photograph C636. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

wooden coffin of Old Kingdom date discovered by the Harvard-Boston Expedition in Nag'-ed-Deir tomb N 4183 are entitled zš mhw n hn(w) n 'nh "record of the contents(?) of the chest of life."⁴⁴

Wooden coffins of Old to Middle Kingdom date regularly rest on two, three, or four battens,⁴⁵ and the coffin from tomb N 4183 also has four battens on its underside. The presence of battens at the bottom of coffins, which are essentially just very large plain *hn(w)*-chests, suggests that the small, square supports seen on the bottom of smaller, plain *hn(w)*-boxes or chests, like those in fig. 4.3a–f, are indeed battens rather than small legs.

At the end of the Sixth Dynasty, *hn(w)* is applied to several different kinds of boxes or chests in two separate burial chambers at South Saqqara (fig. 4.12a–d).⁴⁶ It is possible that by this time *hn(w)* had become associated with so many outwardly different types of boxes and chests that it had become the generic word for boxes or chests of every kind. The determinatives and in the captions above the boxes in fig. 4.12a, d clearly express only the general sense of the word and do not reflect the form of the specific type of box that they label. Indeed, in Middle Egyptian hieroglyphic, the latter sign serves regularly as the generic determinative for boxes (Gardiner 1973, p. 500, Q5), while the former sign also functions in that capacity, if only sporadically.⁴⁷

Even if, by the end of the Old Kingdom, *hn(w)* had become the generic term for virtually any kind of box or chest, there is no question that it continued to be used to designate simple rectangular boxes and chests supported on battens. A *hn(w) n ḥsmn* "box of natron" is mentioned in funerary formulas in tombs and coffins of the end of the First Intermediate Period or early Middle Kingdom at Bersheh in Middle Egypt,⁴⁸ as in Spell 61 of the Coffin Texts which declares: "There is brought for you a box of natron by the *w*'*b*-priest on his monthly duty" (CT 1, p. 259). The *hn(w) n ḥsmn* depicted beneath the offering table on the interior of a Tenth/Eleventh Dynasty coffin from Asyut is a small, flat-lidded rectangular box with two battens (fig. 4.3f).⁴⁹ A box of essentially identical form was found resting on the lower legs of a mummy in tomb N 4003 at Nag'-ed-Deir dated to the

44. Reisner, *Naga-ed-Dêr Notebook* 3, pp. 92–93, 95; Exp. Ph. C 8562–64. The determinative of *hn* is a simple rectangle without battens or handle. The coffin measured 128 × 54 × 51 inches and the body was wrapped in plain and "rucked" cloth, the former with a fringe.

45. For example, Junker 1944, pl. 12a; 8, fig. 40; Lacau 1904, pls. 1–7, 10, 12–13. One coffin from Akhmim exceptionally had six battens arranged in pairs (Lacau 1904, pl. 5 top).

46. In a burial chamber from the end of the Sixth Dynasty, a representation of a long coffer with a gabled lid set on a bed-like stand having the head of a lion at the two extremities, instead of one end like the example in fig. 4.12c, is termed

ḥsw-ddt(?) (Daressy 1916, p. 202 [8]). Killen (1994, p. 20) points to a large flat-lidded cavetto-corniced box (in fact, a coffin or bier) equipped with carrying poles and bovine feet in the chapel of Tjefu at Saqqara (Hassan 1975, p. 108, fig. 56, pl. 84).

47. For example, Newberry 1893a, pl. 35.

48. For example, Griffith and Newberry 1894, p. 44, CG 28082, 28091, 28094.

49. Chassinat and Palanque 1911, p. 106, pls. 19–20. As is not infrequently the case, the line of the lid is omitted. The texts on the coffin include a *r3 n hn(w) n ḥsmn* "spell of a box of natron" (Chassinat and Palanque 1911, p. 107).

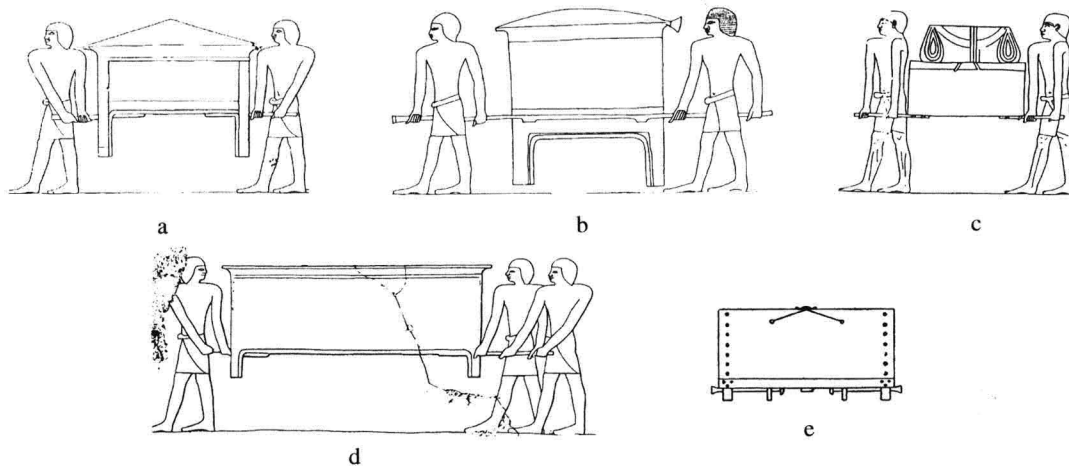


Figure 4.11. Large *hn(w)*-chests Equipped with Carrying Poles, after (a) Sakkara Expedition 1938a, pl. 79; (b) Badawy 1978, fig. 42; (c) Zeigler 1993, p. 118; (d) Sakkarah Expedition 1938b, pl. 112; and (e) Firth and Gunn 1926, p. 146, fig. 85

Ninth Dynasty. It is identified as <*hn(w)*> *pn n ḥsmn w^cb* “this box of pure natron” in the inscription on one of its sides.⁵⁰

The same sort of simple box or chest (sometimes with knobs) appears in the Middle Kingdom title *zš n hn(w)* “scribe of the (document) chest.”⁵¹ From the Twelfth Dynasty on, however, the term is not infrequently also applied to a cavetto-corniced chest-on-legs with a shrine-shaped top.⁵² In a scene of ceremonial purification in the tomb of Djehutyhotep at Bersheh (Newberry 1893b, p. 16, pl. 10), one shrine-shaped *hn(w)*-box contains natron and another clean clothes. The term *hn(w)* (*n*) *ḥ* is also applied to wooden coffins in the Middle Kingdom (Lacau 1904, p. 82, CG 28031; Willems 1988, p. 46, n. 5).

During the New Kingdom *hn(w)* designates a variety of receptacles, including rectangular chests-on-frames and shrine-shaped boxes with and without legs.⁵³

By analogy with *bnwt* > *bri*, Černý (1945, p. 39) thinks Late Period Egyptian *hr* might be the same as *hn(w)*. Although this may be so, the radical *n* continues to appear in Graeco-Roman period hieroglyphic texts and in both Demotic *hn* and Coptic ϩHNE .⁵⁴

dd. *ḥz-ḥt* “Dossier”: Weill 1908, p. 253; “back(?) of wood”: Murray 1905, p. 34; “Kasten aus Holz”: *Wb.* 3.12:18

After *dsrw* (ii), *ḥz-ḥt* is the most common box or chest in the furniture lists. Except for one questionable occurrence in a broken context in the Abusir archive (Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival 1968, pl. 71C; Posener-Kriéger 1976, p. 161), this term is apparently unknown outside of the furniture lists. We are therefore confined to the determinatives of the word in attempting to define the nature of the object in question. The sign that determines *ḥz-ḥt* in the early lists of Kha-bau-sokar (3) and Hathor-nefer-hetep (4) is evidently a square box, albeit damaged in the former. The band around the margins of the box and across its center may represent a framework of timber with a central bar⁵⁵ or a veneer or inlays in a different colored wood. The material from

50. Brovarski 1989, pp. 665–67 with fig. 65. The box is now in the Phoebe Hearst Museum in Berkeley, California, where it bears the accession number LMA 6-2068; see Exp. Ph. C 639. Although the word *hn(w)* is written with the ideogram of a small, rectangular, flat-lidded box on two battens alone, given the parallels, there seems little question that it is to be so read. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Frank Norick, Principal Museum Anthropologist at the Hearst Museum, for permission to study and publish the inscribed material of First Intermediate Period date from Nag^c-ed-Deir in Berkeley.

51. See, for example, Newberry 1893b, pls. 15, 18, 20, 27.

52. Newberry 1893b, pl. 10; *Urk.* 4, pp. 388.1, 427.6–7, 1015.17. In the Eighteenth Dynasty this type of box was not uncommonly utilized for the storage of scribal equipment; see, for example, Silverman 1982, cat. no. 389.

53. For example, *Urk.* 4, pp. 206.11–13, 388.1, 427.6–7, 1015.17, etc. For an actual frame-on-chest, essentially identical in construction to the chest illustrated in fig. 4.6, see Reeves 1990, p. 191, no. 585.

54. Reymond 1977, p. 70 (Pap. Vienna 6343, col. 3, line 1; reading is confirmed by Prof. Janet H. Johnson); Spiegelberg 1921, p. 376; Vycichl 1983, p. 304.

55. See, for example, Killen 1994, p. 35, pl. 24.

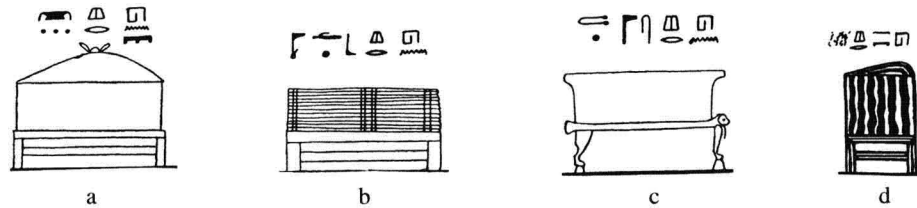


Figure 4.12. *Hn(w)*-chests and Boxes from End of Sixth Dynasty, after (a) Jéquier 1929, pl. 16; (b) Jéquier 1929, pl. 16; (c) Jéquier 1929, pl. 16; and (d) Jéquier 1929, p. 124, fig. 140

which the box is made is stated in both cases to be *s3d*-wood. In the other lists, *h3-ht* is determined by a squarish or rectangular box. In the furniture list of Kapunesut Kai (22), the determinative is a rectangle outlined by double lines, essentially the same sign that defines *fdt* (aa) in Hathor-nefer-hetep's list (4), and which may once again represent a timber framework or a veneer or inlays in a different wood. The *h3-ht*-box of Ny-hetep-Khnum (15) has an overall pattern of black and yellow streaks, the colors that generally denote ebony. Except for the box in the list of Seshemnefer I (21), there is no indication of a lid.

Thus, in contrast to *hn(w)* (cc), *h3-ht* seemingly denotes a square or rectangular box without battens or legs of any sort. On occasion, it could be made of exotic woods or trimmed with wood of a contrasting color. If not for the appearance of a lid in the latest occurrence of the word in the tomb of Seshemnefer, it would be possible to suppose that the term *h3-ht* characterized the type of box with a flat lid that could be slid in and out between grooves, and which would appear to be quite featureless when viewed head on.⁵⁶

That *ht* is an integral part of the word seems to follow from the fact that it never stands in apposition to *h3*, which is in clear contrast to *st-(n)-ht* (g), where *ht* is usually written in apposition, to indicate the material of which the object is made.⁵⁷ The scribe who laid out the list of Seshemnefer I may have experienced some confusion in this regard since he relegated the *ht*-branch to the compartment above, as if he understood it to represent the material from which the box was made, while the word is still spelled $\text{𓏏} \text{𓏏}$. A peculiar orthography $\text{𓏏} \text{𓏏}$ in Kapunesut's list is perhaps to be explained by the stone carver's confusing an original simplified hieratic version of $\text{𓏏} \text{𓏏}$ with a hieratic $\text{𓏏} \text{𓏏}$.⁵⁸

ee. *hr(t)-c* "Scribe's Writing Tablet": Murray 1905, p. 35; "writing-case": Griffith 1892, p. 38; "ovaler Holzbehälter, hauptsächlich zum Aufbewahren von Akten bestimmt": Junker 1940, p. 71 (8); "portemanuscrits," "valise à manuscrits": Montet 1925, pp. 146, 420; "nécessaire de scribe": Jéquier 1921a, pp. 264–65; "Behälter für Schreibzeug und Akten": *Wb.* 3.394:1 (aus Holz 2); "sacs ovales, paquets": Vandier 1964, p. 195; "Urkundenbehälter": Weber 1969, p. 57

The term *hr(t)-c* is composed of the *nisbe*-adjective *hr(y)(t)* used nominally and the noun *c* "piece of writing," "document"; and it literally means "that-which-bears-the-document," in other words, a "document case."⁵⁹ The word is written *hrt-c* in some furniture lists (4, 19, 21) and *hr-c* in others (5, 10).

Document cases depicted in Old Kingdom scenes of daily life provide considerably more detail than the small determinatives given in the furniture lists. On the other hand, the depictions are not labeled with their names. Still, they are so distinctive that there is little question they are identical with the *hr(t)-c* of the furniture lists. In most cases, the depictions are oval in form and fastened with cords (fig. 4.13a), but similarly bound rectangular examples do occur (fig. 4.13b). Document cases are, as shown in more detailed representations, usually supported on battens.

Vandier (1964, p. 195) evidently believed that these cases, which he refers to as "sacs ovales" and "paquets," were made from a pliable material (presumably cloth or leather) and were regularly seen as if set on edge.

Jéquier (1921a, pp. 264–65) remarks quite aptly that the specific form is difficult to ascertain because only one of its surfaces is regularly depicted. He also feels that it is the upper surface of the document case which is

56. See *LÄ* 4 "Möbel," cols. 182–83.

57. In the list of Kha-bau-sokar *ht* stands in an indirect genitival relation to *st*; only in the list of Hathor-nefer-hetep does *ht* follow on *st*.

58. Compare, for example, Goedicke 1988, p. 20a (M 3: Abusir 25, e; 31B.1; 65, 43) with Goedicke 1988, p. 26a–b (N 35).

59. See Weber 1969, p. 57.

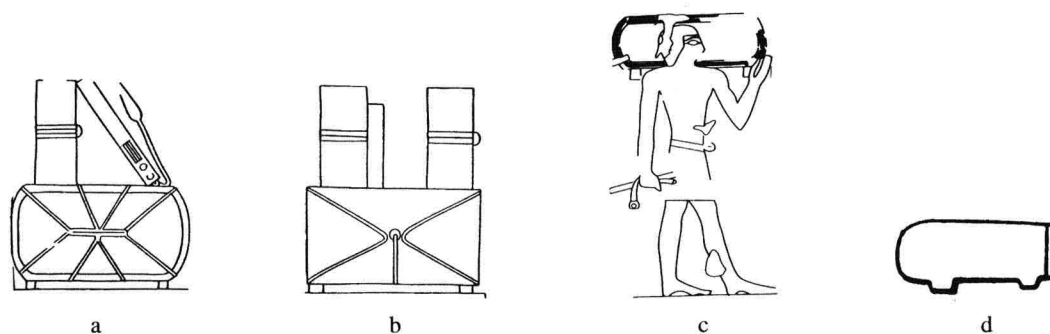


Figure 4.13. Scribal Document Cases, after (a) Wild 1953, pl. 125; (b) Wild 1953, pl. 125; (c) Moussa and Junge 1975, p. 20, pl. 3 and frontispiece; and (d) Fakhry 1961, fig. 283

regularly depicted and that to a flat base, elongated and rounded at the two extremities, were attached sides made from basketwork or very thin wood that might be bent to the desired form. By way of a cover, four flaps of cloth or leather of triangular form were fixed at the top of the sides and closed the box by joining in the middle, where they were fastened by means of a clasp or some such device.

While agreeing with Jéquier in the main, I would differ in a few particulars. First, none of the depictions of document cases known to me show any pattern that might be interpreted as basketwork. Second, the lines that Jéquier presumably thought to represent the outline of the four cloth or leather flaps are almost certainly the cords used to secure the case when not in use. The individual strands of the cords are clearly indicated in the depiction of a document case in the tomb of Nesut-nefer at Giza (Junker 1938, fig. 27, pl. 5; cf. Simpson 1978, fig. 27). The thickening at the center of the cords in this example and others clearly represents a knot,⁶⁰ the loose ends of which are evident in at least one instance (Wild 1966, pl. 168).

The depiction of three document cases, which preserve extensive traces of color, seem to indicate that certain examples at least were made of wood. The first depiction is the *hr(t)-^c* determinative in the furniture list on the left side of the false door recess of Rahotep (10). The frame of the determinative is painted black, while the rest of the case is white, except for a black circle in the upper part of the case that presumably represents a button handle. The white color may indicate that the box was manufactured from a less costly or less attractive native wood, such as sycamore or acacia, and was covered with gesso to render its appearance more pleasing.⁶¹ A second depiction of an oval document case in the tomb of Fetekta has a light brown body with a black colored border and round handle.⁶² The third case, which belonged to the chief metalworker Sekhentiu (fig. 4.13c), is painted red, while the frame is black (outlined in yellow), red being the color usually spoken of as “cedar,” and black or black streaked with yellow being utilized for “ebony” (Quibell 1913, p. 24; Williams 1932, p. 47). The battens in both cases are painted red-brown.

The Egyptians were skilled cabinet makers, and an oval-shaped box would undoubtedly have been within their capacity even at so early a date. In form and construction the document case was perhaps not very different from the cartouche-shaped box of Tutankhamun, except for the rectangular element at one end of the latter which represents the tied ends of the rope composing the name-ring (Metropolitan Museum of Art 1976, cat. no. 28). It may be no more than a coincidence that Tutankhamun’s cartouche-shaped box, like Sekhentiu’s document case, is made of a reddish brown wood (believed to be coniferous), while all the edges of the box and the cartouche on the lid are veneered with strips of ebony.⁶³

One depiction of a document case is unlike all these others. This is the determinative of *hr(t)-^c* in the title *zš hr(t)-^c nswt* on a Fourth Dynasty stela belonging to a son of Snefru (fig. 4.13d) (Fakhry 1961, fig. 283, pls. 38–39). Only one end of the case is rounded, while the other is flat and provided with what is apparently a lid or cap. This case also is set on battens.

Oval *hr(t)-^c* with bindings appear in the object frieze on a number of Middle Kingdom coffins (*wb*. 3.394:1; Jéquier 1921a, pp. 264–65, 282–83, figs. 694–95, 760–61). In one instance, the word is determined with the

60. See Junker 1938, p. 222. Unfortunately, Junker does not mention the colors of the document case, seal, or cords, even though the detail given in Junker 1938, pl. 5, appears to be from a color reconstruction.

61. See Baker 1966, p. 118.

62. Lepsius 1842–45, pl. 96.

63. See Edwards 1976, p. 139.

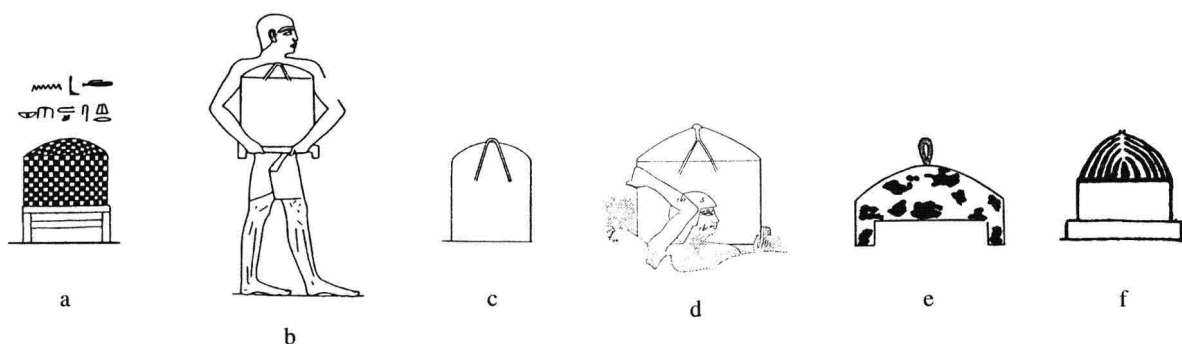



Figure 4.14. Round-topped Boxes of the Old (*a–d*) and Middle (*e–f*) Kingdoms, after (*a*) Jéquier 1929, pl. 16; (*b*) Zeigler 1993, p. 118; (*c*) Borchardt 1913, fig. 59; (*d*) Borchardt 1907, fig. 58; (*e*) Jéquier 1921a, p. 249, fig. 656 = Birch 1886, pl. 25; and (*f*) Newberry 1893a, pl. 13

sign of the cow's skin, suggesting that this particular case might have been made from leather (Jéquier 1921a, pp. 282–83, fig. 761). *Wb.* 3.394:1–2, provides no references for *hrt*-^c later in date than the New Kingdom. Ramesses III donated a number of document cases, fabricated from perseawood and painted, to the temple of Ptah at Memphis, but the determinative indicates that these cases took a different form () than the oval cases of earlier periods (Gaballa 1973, p. 113, fig. 3; Helck 1978, pp. 137–38).


Lastly, it might be mentioned that Fischer (1978, p. 54, n. 63) has assembled titles that contain the element *hr(t)*-^c.

ff. *tnn* “ein Möbel (aus Ebenholz)”: *Wb.* 5.312:16

The word is a *hapax legomenon*, occurring in Hathor-nefer-hetep's list (4) between *gs*³ and *hrt*-^c. It was therefore in all probability an article of furniture. More specifically, from its determinative it appears to have been a round-topped box, taller and narrower than the *dbn*-chest named three compartments earlier. It is completely plain, but its material is given as ebony. In the absence of actual examples of either *tnn* or *dbn*, it is impossible to know what additional features may have distinguished these round-topped boxes.

gg. *tzt* “Bundle(?) or perhaps a cushion(?)”: Murray 1905, p. 35; “tablette”: Weill 1908, p. 253; “Kasten aus Holz”: *Wb.* 5.404:14

As far as the furniture lists are concerned, *tzt* appears only in that of Hathor-nefer-hetep (4), where the determinative appears to be a rectangle (smaller than the rectangle determining the adjacent word for box, *fdt*) with narrow borders at either end, which may represent a timber framework or alternatively an inlay or trim of a darker wood. The determinative is so nondescript that Murray (1905, p. 35) was misled into thinking it might represent a bundle or cushion. Nevertheless, *tzt* is listed along with several other kinds of boxes — *fdt* (*aa*), *hn(w)* (*cc*), *hꜣ-ht* (*dd*), *dbn* (*hh*), *dsr(w)* (*ii*) — and like them was made of *sꜣd*-wood.

The term *tzt* evidently recurs in the biography of Washptah (Grdseloff 1951, pp. 127–40; Brovarski 1977, pp. 110–11). The equipment given to the elderly vizier by the king for the “booth of purification” (*ibw*) in which his body was to be ritually cleansed after his death included [*t*] *tzt*-chests. In contrast to the sign that determines *tzt* in Hathor-nefer-hetep's list, the determinatives of *tzwt* in Washptah's biography are three cavetto-corniced rectangular chests on two pair of low legs . The chests contained the *dbꜣw* [*n hmt hry-ꜣbt*] “requirements of the craft of the lector priest.”⁶⁴

In the Pyramid Texts (Sethe 1960a, Pyr. 184a–b; Faulkner 1962, p. 47), the king is identified as Osiris and addressed as “He-who-is-in-the-god's-booth, Who-is-in-the-censing(?), the *dbn*-coffer, the *tzt*-chest, and the *inqti*-sack.” The determinative of *tzt* in the pyramid of Unis is a simple rectangular box with a pair of battens

64. Elsewhere the *dbꜣw n hmt hry-ꜣbt* are similarly contained in small rectangular chests with cavetto cornices and legs; see Sakkarah Expedition 1938b, pl. 130; Simpson 1976, fig. 24.

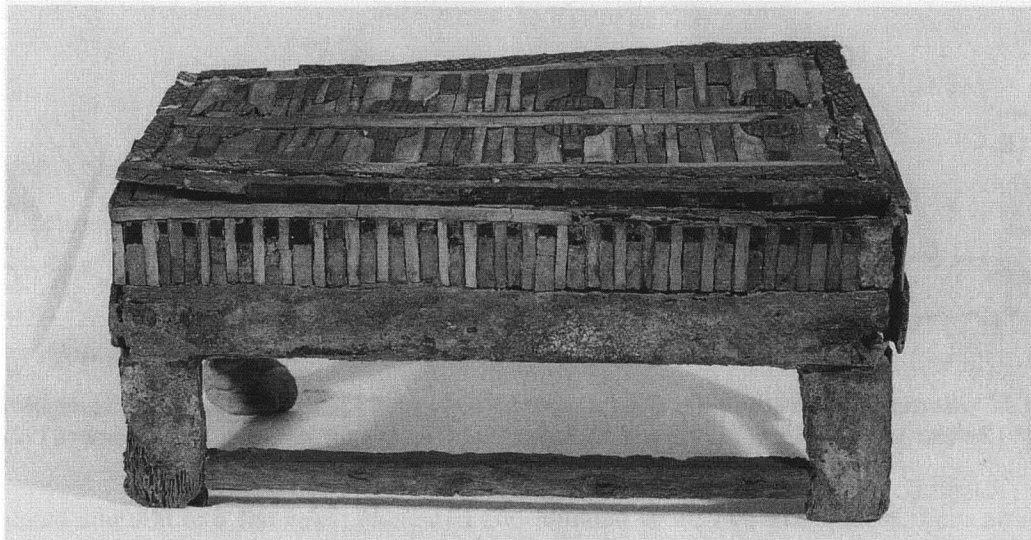


Figure 4.15. Chest-on-legs from Gebelein, Turin Suppl. 16735. Courtesy of the Egyptian Museum, Turin


and a handle, a sign which probably by this time had become the generic determinative for boxes and chests (above).⁶⁵

Wb. 5.404:14 suggests a connection with *tzi* “to raise,” “lift up” and it is possible that *tzt* represented a more specific term than *hn(w)* for a “chest raised on legs.” Whereas this suggestion would suit the determinatives of *tzwt* in the biography of Washptah, it is difficult to reconcile with the determinative in Hathor-nefer-hetep’s list.


hh. *dbn* “Circular Box”: Murray 1905, p. 35; “coffre à couvercle bombé”: Weill 1908, p. 253; “coffret bas, à petits pieds et à couvercle bombé”: Jéquier 1921a, p. 248; “(runder) Kasten aus Holz”: *Wb.* 5.437:16


Dbn appears to be derived from the verb *dbn* “to be round” (Osing 1976, p. 202). In the list of Nedji (6), the determinative of *dbn* is a plain box with a rounded or vaulted lid and a (button?) handle. The determinatives in the furniture lists of Hathor-nefer-hetep (4) and Rahotep (9) and in both lists of Senenu (19–20) exhibit a pattern of parallel vertical lines on the box itself, which may imply a slat construction. Except in one list (20), the vaulted lids are quite plain.⁶⁶ The determinative of *dbn* in the list of Irensen (7) is a plain box with a vaulted lid and (button?) handle set on short legs. Hathor-nefer-hetep’s *dbn* was constructed of *s3d*-wood.

A *dbn*-box depicted on the walls of a stone-lined burial chamber of late Sixth Dynasty date at South Saqqara (fig. 4.14a) is a container for “festival perfume” (*stj-hb*). The box or coffret is set on a low table-like stand and has an overall checkered pattern. The actual coffret may have been inlaid with alternating ebony and ivory squares or been painted to imitate checkerboard marquetry.⁶⁷

A different type of table-like stand supports a round-lidded box from an Old Kingdom mastaba (fig. 4.14b). A similar sign with a (button?) handle on the lid  determines *dbn* in a First Intermediate Period temple inventory.⁶⁸ The latter box was made of copper.

Dbn-boxes were commonly sealed in the same manner as *hnw*-boxes and chests (fig. 4.14b–c). However, a fragmentary relief from the pyramid temple of Neuserre (fig. 4.14d) seems to suggest that some sort of a fastening or clasp may also have been utilized on occasion.⁶⁹ All three of these examples are useful for providing a relative scale for the *dbn*-boxes, which appear to be of medium size.

On the other hand, an epithet of Osiris in the Pyramid Texts (Sethe 1960a, Pyr. 184; cf. *Wb.* 5.437:12), *dbni* “He-who-is-in-the-round-lidded-chest,” seems to indicate that a *dbn* could on occasion be of quite substantial size. Given the context, *dbn* here probably alludes to the most common type of Old Kingdom coffin with rounded top and end bars (*LÄ* 5 “Sarkophag A,” col. 471). The epithet is determined with .

65. In the parallel in Pepi II’s pyramid *tzi* is determined by , the generic determinative of the verb *tzi* in the Pyramid Texts (e.g., Sethe 1960a, Pyr. 574d, 622a, 626a).

66. Compare Sakkarah Expedition 1938b, pl. 122.

67. For New Kingdom boxes so inlaid, see Freed 1982, cat. no. 234.

68. Goedicke 1994, p. 71, fig. 1, pl. 9. On the date, see now Fischer 1996.

69. None of the boxes in fig. 4.14b–d are specifically identified as *dbn*-boxes. In fact, the box illustrated in fig. 4.14b is apparently subsumed under the general heading *hn*.

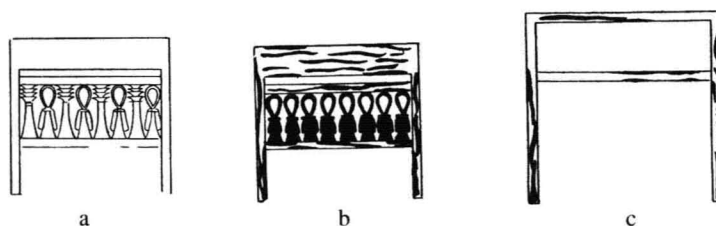


Figure 4.16. Chests- or Cabinets-on-legs from the Tomb of Hesyre, after (a) Quibell 1913, pl. 17 [25]; (b) Quibell 1913, pl. 18 [30]; and (c) Quibell 1913, pl. 18 [35]

Dbn is well attested in the Middle Kingdom, evidently with much the same meaning it had in the Old Kingdom (*Wb.* 5.437:16). *Dbn*, for example, is the term used to describe a low coffret with small feet and a rounded cover, fitted with a loop for lifting, on one side of the coffin of Amamu (fig. 4.14e). Amamu's coffret has an overall pattern of dappled cow hide. Since inlay simulating cow hide was apparently an innovation of the New Kingdom,⁷⁰ this gives rise to the possibility that the coffret was made of leather over a wooden frame. A small round-topped box on a rectangular base in the tomb of Amenemhat at Beni Hasan is captioned *dbn n 'ntyw* and thus evidently held myrrh (fig. 4.14f).⁷¹ The pattern on its lid suggests wickerwork.

In the case of only two of the *dbn* referred to above are their contents mentioned with any surety; in one instance perfume is specified and in the other myrrh. If representative, this may indicate that smaller *dbn* at least served as coffrets for the storage of precious substances such as these.

Among the offerings made to the deceased in the funerary liturgy preserved in a papyrus from a tomb of the Thirteenth Dynasty discovered beneath the Ramesseum are "thirty cases of figs" (*dbn n d3b 30*) (Gardiner 1955, p. 11, pl. 2, col. 11). The determinative of *dbn* is damaged but does not appear to be round-topped. The *Wörterbuch* has no citations for *dbn* later than the end of the Middle Kingdom, and it is possible that the term was passing out of use or in some fashion being redefined.

It is therefore uncertain whether *dbn* "round-topped or vaulted box or coffret" is to be equated with a word *dbn* that occurs three times on a New Kingdom ostrakon in Vienna as a container for toilet articles (Zonhoven 1979, fig. 1, lines 5, 8–9). In his commentary on the ostrakon, Zonhoven expresses doubt over the identification and explains *dbn* in the ostrakon as a corrupt spelling of *dbt/dbw*, a common word for "box" in the Deir el-Medina texts.⁷² He then questions whether *dbw/dbt* goes back to Middle Egyptian *dbn* (Zonhoven 1979, p. 95, n. 47). The occurrence of *dbt* in a hieratic inscription on a wooden casket with vaulted lid from the tomb of Tutankhamun may, however, provide support for the latter derivation (Černý 1965, pp. 7 [46], 25).

Dbn has been identified with Coptic τβηλ "Korb; Schutzdach" (*Wb.* 5.436:12–437:2; Spiegelberg 1921, p. 545; Meeks 1980, p. 434; Osing 1976, p. 202, n. 890), but this equation too has been called into question by Zonhoven (1979, p. 95, n. 43).

ii. *ḏsr(w)* "stool or table": Murray 1905, p. 35; "table ou siege": Weill 1908, p. 253; "Art Möbel": *Wb.* 5.617:10; "Kasten": Junker 1940, p. 71

In the furniture list in the niche of Kha-bau-sokar (3), a square chest inlaid with a *z3*-sign between two *tit*-emblems determines the word *ḏsr*. In the niche stone of the Nubian Sisi (5) the determinative of *ḏsr* is a rectangular box with what may be a pattern of palace-facade paneling on its sides. On account of the small size of the determinatives in the niche of Hathor-nefer-hetep (4) and in the false door panels of Rahotep (9–10) and Metjen (8), it is not entirely certain whether a flat-lidded, rectangular chest-on-frame or a cabinet-on-legs is represented. The material from which Kha-bau-sokar's box was fashioned is unclear, but Hathor-nefer-hetep's is said to be made of *s3ḏ*-wood.⁷³

70. See, for example, the model folding stool with an imitation leopard-skin seat in Edwards 1976, cat. no. 11, color pls. 3–4.

71. Newberry 1893a, p. 38, reads *ḏwn(?)*, but the reading is corrected by Montet 1911, p. 4.

72. Zonhoven 1979, pp. 94–95. On *dbt*, see Goedicke 1968, p. 128; Brunner 1974, p. 150; Janssen 1975, p. 203, §41.

73. The heading of *ḏsr* and *wrs* (b) is *tr*, determined by a scribal palette. Murray (1905, p. 34) suggests the meaning "colored" or "painted." Harris (1961, p. 155) notes that *tr* is a mineral substance, some form of which was used as a pigment, but that it also has the wider meaning of "red color." Possibly the two items were painted red or made from a red-

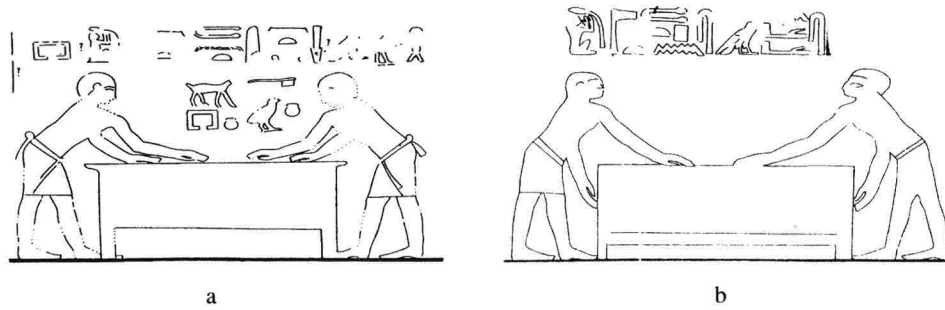


Figure 4.17. Boxes of Old Kingdom Date, after (a) Davies 1902b, pl. 14, and (b) Davies 1902b, pl. 10

An actual Old Kingdom chest-on-frame from Gebelein, now in Turin, is supported on four legs connected by cross-rails or stretchers. The flat lid simply rests on the body and is secured by means of two tongues and grooves. This well-known chest, beautifully illustrated in color by Scamuzzi, is inlaid with ivory and black and blue faience.⁷⁴ The decoration on the lid consists of two sets of four stylized lotus columns alternating with vertical strips of blue and black rectangles, while the vertical fluting on the rectangular body reproduces the form of a reed prototype. The inside of the chest was stuccoed and painted red and contained a string of glazed beads.⁷⁵ The chest measures 37.5 cm long, 23.0 cm wide, and 19.0 cm high (Donadoni Roveri et al. 1994, pp. 137, 256, fig. 182). A less well-preserved chest-on-frame from Gebelein in Turin is illustrated here (fig. 4.15).⁷⁶ It has the same form as the first and a similar design on the lid. The lid of what may have been yet another chest-on-frame was found by Quibell (1898, pl. 8) in an Old Kingdom mastaba at Elkab. The pattern on the lid was likewise composed of small flat strips of ivory and pieces of blue and black faience. Unfortunately, the wood of the box was badly decayed, and its form could not be ascertained with any certainty. The box itself measured about 30.8 cm long, 20.5 cm wide, and 12.8 cm high (Quibell 1898, pp. 4, 19). The contents consisted of a small porphyry bowl, a shell, and some green paint; on this basis Quibell thought it to be a toilette box.

Similar looking articles of furniture in the paintings of Hesyre (fig. 4.16a–c), with frames of “Isis-knots” and *djed*-columns, are probably cabinets-on-legs rather than chests-on-frames. They resemble actual examples from the tomb of Tutankhamun, dating thirteen hundred years later.⁷⁷ The Tutankhamun cabinets open from the top and are divided internally by compartments to hold jewelry and toilet articles (Baker 1966, pp. 37, 91–92). They are taller and larger than the Gebelein chests, one of them, for example, measuring 67.94 × 43.80 × 40.00 cm (Baker 1966, p. 337, fig. 107).

In contrast to the preceding, the *dsrw*-chest in the offering list preserved in the copy in Boston (18) has a vaulted lid with circular inlays(?), while the design on the sides is a simplified “palace facade” motif. It rests on short legs. The determinatives of *dsr(w)* in the furniture lists of Nedji, Seshemnefer I, and Ka-pu-nesut Kai (6, 21, and 22) also have vaulted lids. That of Nedji is quite plain, while Seshemnefer I’s has a simple frame. The sides of Ka-pu-nesut’s chest, however, bear a design of *djed*-columns(?). Unlike these, the boxes from G 4770 and those in the lists of Ny-hetep-Khnum and Kayemankh (15 and 23), while also rectangular in form, have flat lids. The box from G 4770 is plain, but Ny-hetep-Khnum’s box was seemingly made of ebony with two rows of ivory(?) inlays in the form of “Isis-knots.” Kayemankh’s box bears a pattern of three transverse lines that may just possibly represent a simplified palace facade design. Although the chests of Nedji and Seshemnefer lack

colored wood. Alternatively, *tr* may have been written in error for *trt* “willow” (*Wb.* 5.385:15–386:3).

74. Turin Suppl. 15709: Scamuzzi 1965, pl. 11; see also Donadoni Roveri et al. 1994, pp. 137–38, fig. 182. The chest was discovered in the western pit of a great mastaba in the Old Kingdom necropolis at Gebelein, in which was also found a limestone basin with a hieroglyphic text giving the name of the owner, Perim; see Donadoni Roveri 1990, p. 24.

75. Turin Suppl. 15710. This information was kindly supplied by Dr. Anna Maria Donadoni Roveri (private communication, 10 July 1995), who also notes (1994, pp. 137–38) some confusion with the chest-on-frame from the “Tomb of the Unknown Owners” (fig. 4.6), which contained linen sheets.

76. Turin Suppl. 16735. Donadoni Roveri again supplies the information that the second, less well-preserved chest came from another great mastaba beside that of Perim, but that it is not possible from the preserved records to say if it contained anything. For a color photograph of Turin Suppl. 16735, see Donadoni Roveri et al. 1994, p. 30.

77. Baker (1966, p. 37) describes the last example (fig. 4.16c), which is plainer than the others, as a table with plain straight legs and stretchers, but as Quibell (1913, p. 27 [35]) observes, the panel represented by the solid area of the chest or cabinet is not blank but yellow with graining of horizontal red lines.

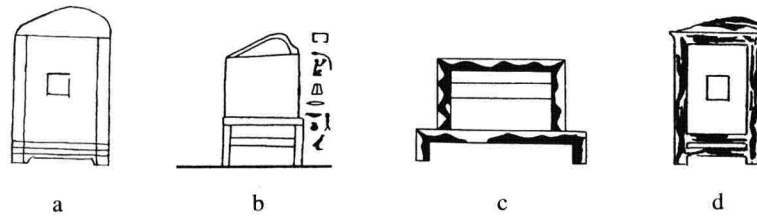


Figure 4.18. Miscellaneous Chests, after (a) Maspero 1885, pl. 2; (b) Jéquier 1929, pl. 16; (c) Newberry 1893a, pl. 13; and (d) Jéquier 1921a, fig. 653 = Maspero 1885, pl. 2

details, it is possible that these would have been added in paint, and hence these two chests might also have been made from exotic woods or ornamented with inlays. What is common to all five of these chests, and to the early chests of Kha-bau-Sokar and Sisi as well, is the lack of legs.⁷⁸

Ember gives “raise,” “support” as meanings of the verb *dsr* (Ember 1913, pp. 110–21; cf. *Wb.* 5.610, 613:14; Faulkner 1962, pp. 324–25). Such an etymology could perhaps explain the application of the term *dsr(w)* to a chest-on-frame or cabinet-on-legs. Hoffmeier (1985, pp. 30–58) believes these meanings to have been incorrectly applied to *dsr*, however. And, in point of fact, while suitable for chests supported on legs, *dsr(w)* in this sense could not be appropriately applied to the legless boxes in the furniture lists. Another meaning of *dsr* may therefore be pertinent in this context, that is, “costly” (*Wb.* 5.611:21; Faulkner 1962, p. 324). “Costly” might readily be applied to both types of chests, referring to their lavish ornamentation rather than their form. In other words, *dsr(w)* might refer to any elaborate box or chest, of whatever form, made from costly materials. Such a chest would be suitable for the storage of small objects such as jewelry, as in the case of the Turin chest-on-frame, or toilette articles, as in the case of the Elkab chest. It might thus be best to translate *dsr(w)* in English as “coffret” or “ornamental casket.”

Due to their exceptional character, the determinatives of *dsr* in the two lists of Senenu (19–20) have been excluded from the preceding discussion. The determinatives are closely similar in form, but it is not easy to know exactly what they represent. Perhaps a rectangular chest on a sort of bentwood frame is intended.

Note should also be taken of the fact that in the list of Seshemnefer I *dšrwt* is written instead of *dsr(w)*. It is possible that the scribe here confused *dsr(w)* with *dsr(w)t*, a well-attested word for a type of cult table.⁷⁹ However, the determinative in Seshemnefer’s list has a slightly curved top, and it is hence more likely that a box with a vaulted lid rather than a table was intended.

FURNITURE IN TOMB RELIEFS

jj. *itnt* “Art Kasten”: *Wb.* 1.151:11–12⁸⁰

In a tomb relief of Ibi at Deir el-Gebrawi, two pairs of carpenters sand two large chests-on-legs. The first, identified as a *hn*, is flat lidded (fig. 4.4b). The second, captioned *itnt nt w^cb(t)-[ntr](?)* has a cavetto cornice (fig. 4.17a). In form, there is little to distinguish the latter from a large, cavetto-corniced *hn(w)*-chest-on-legs, for example, that illustrated in fig. 4.11. For that matter, the only point of difference between the two chests depicted in the tomb of Ibi is the cavetto cornice on the former.

Wb. 1.151:4 connects *itnt* with Late Period Egyptian *ityn*, but Janssen (1975, pp. 374–75) doubts the association and instead identifies (*i*)*ityn* as part of a ship, perhaps a beam.

78. The determinative in the slab stela of Seshatsekhtiu is damaged. It is flat lidded and inlaid with *nfr*-signs(?), but it is unclear if a chest-on-frame, a cabinet-on-legs, or a legless chest was represented.

79. *Wb.* 5.617:11–12; Newberry 1893a, pl. 17; Jéquier 1938, pl. 85; see also Hoffmeier 1985, pp. 56–57.

80. Montet (1925, p. 306), I believe incorrectly, takes both *itnt* and *spt* (kk) to be parts of a naos, in the case of the latter,

the facade of a naos. It is clear from the remarks of Montet (1925, p. 310) that in the case of the caption containing *itnt* at least, he has mistakenly inverted the *w^cb-* and *pr*-signs and read *pr-w^cb* “naos,” for which see the next entry (ll). Rightly or wrongly, I would prefer to restore *w^cbt ntr* “embalming house of the god” in both captions. There were two distinct *w^cbts* or “workshops” in the Old Kingdom, one for the embalmers and the other for craftsmen; see Brovarski 1977, pp. 114–15.

kk. *stpt* “great chest”: Davies 1902b, p. 11, pl. 10

In the workshop scene on the north wall of the tomb of Djau at Deir el-Gebrawi, two carpenters sand a large flat-lidded chest-on-legs (fig. 4.17b). As Davies (1902b) observes, the chest looks like the *hn(w)*-chest in the tomb of Ibi (fig. 4.4b) but is designated *stpt nt w^cb(t)-ntr*.⁸¹ In fact, Davies actually restores (*m*)*stpt*, apparently seeing some connection between the flat-lidded chest and *mstpt*, which is in actuality the name of the lion-headed bier in the funeral procession on the east wall.⁸² To the right of the *stpt*-chest in the tomb of Djau is a tall naos, while on its left stands a large scepter of electrum. Davies called attention to the parallels between this scene and the one on the north wall of the earlier tomb of Ibi, already discussed under *itnt* (jj). In Ibi’s scene the flat-lidded box on legs is called *hn(w) n shm* “the box of the *sekhem*-scepter,” and a carpenter squatting on the ground nearby holds the scepter in question. Alongside the two carpenters sanding the *hn(w)*-chest in Ibi’s tomb are two others working on a cavetto-corniced chest-on-legs (fig. 4.17a). It is this box which is identified as an *itnt nt w^cb(t)-[ntr](?)*. Given the analogies between the scenes, it is not unlikely that one or the other of the artists who decorated the two tombs not only erred when he wrote out the word designating the term for one of the chests, but also applied the caption to the wrong-shaped chest (cf. also De Morgan 1903, fig. 6).

FURNITURE IN BURIAL CHAMBERS

ll. *pr-w^cb* “coffrets à couvercle bombé en talus”: Jéquier 1921a, p. 248

In two separate burial chambers at South Saqqara, *pr-w^cb* is applied to chests that in form imitate the southern Egyptian sanctuary (fig. 4.18a–b). The first chest sits on a low table-like stand, the feet of which are reinforced by bentwood braces. The other chest rests on a higher stand, the legs of which are strengthened by stretchers. The contents of the latter chest are stipulated as *hknw*-perfume or oil, presumably stored in a stone jar within.⁸³

At Beni Hasan early in the Twelfth Dynasty, the term *pr-w^cb* was assigned to a rectangular box of entirely different form (fig. 4.18c).⁸⁴ At about the same time, two shrine-shaped boxes with hunchbacked roofs on low table-like stands were denominated according to their contents: *pr-^cntyw*, *pr-msdmt* (Lacau 1906, p. 45, nos. 67, 68 [CG 28091]). Then once again, around the end of the Thirteenth Dynasty, *pr-w^cb* was applied to a shrine-shaped box (Lacau 1904, p. 114, no. 11 [CG 28038]).

It is difficult to know what to make of the divergent example from Beni Hasan (fig. 4.18d). Perhaps it is relevant to recall that in the Old Kingdom the term *pr-w^cb* was also applied to an object of different shape, namely, a cavetto-corniced, straight-sided statue naos.⁸⁵ Given the different shapes the word encompasses, it is possible that, rather than being a technical term for a specific kind of box or chest, *pr-w^cb* represents an instance of periphrasis.⁸⁶ Still, there is no denying that the term is regularly associated with shrine-shaped chests.

In the Old Kingdom and again in the Middle Kingdom, these shrine-shaped chests appear to have been utilized especially for the storage of precious substances such as perfumes or unguents, myrrh, and eyepaint.

mm. *sry* “[coffret] à couvercle bombé en talus”: Jéquier 1921a, p. 248

In a burial chamber unearthed by Maspero at South Saqqara, a tall cavetto-corniced chest-on-legs with a hunchbacked roof in imitation of the southern Egyptian shrine is labeled *sry* (fig. 4.18d). The frame of the chest consists of ebony, while the side panels are of a lighter wood inlaid(?) with a square panel at the center. The legs, which are prolongations of the sideposts, are reinforced with stretchers. Save for the cavetto-corniced top edge and the fact that it appears to be made of ebony, there is little to distinguish this chest from a neighboring chest that is labeled *pr-w^cb* (fig. 4.18a). Conceivably, this constituted sufficient reason for the ancients to designate the two chests by different names. On the other hand, if *pr-w^cb* does indeed represent an instance of pe-

81. Davies 1902b, p. 11. The house-sign does not follow *w^cb* here, as it does in the tomb of Ibi.

82. Davies 1902b, pl. 7; see Fischer 1968, p. 79 (4) and n. 337.

83. For *hknw*, see Murray 1905, p. 31; *Wb.* 3.180:5–7.


84. For *pr-w^cb n hbny*, see Newberry 1893a, pl. 13, p. 38.9.

85. See Brovarski 1977, p. 112.

86. See Montet 1925, p. 310, who makes the same assumption in regard to *itnt* (jj).

riphrasis, it is possible that *sry* is the technical term for a “shrine-shaped chest.” The term evidently appears only in the present context.

nn. *dhꜣ*

In the painted burial chamber of the vizier Ny-ankh-ba in the Unis cemetery at Saqqara, the word *dhꜣ* survives in a badly damaged caption above five rectangular chests-on-legs (Hassan 1978, p. 46, pl. 28A). Two of the chests are plain and flat-lidded, while the others are also flat lidded but have cavetto-cornices. The former are essentially identical to the *hn(w)*-chests (cc) of fig. 4.4b and the latter to the *hn(w)*-chests of fig. 4.7d. However, the word *dhꜣ* itself is determined by a square chest with a vaulted lid .

The term appears to be unattested elsewhere, although a silver ceremonial object designated *dhꜣ* appears in the Abusir Papyri, where it is determined by the sign for basket.⁸⁷ In the Eleventh or early Twelfth Dynasty, a trunk with seemingly the same profile appears under a bed inside the cabin on one of the traveling boats of the vizier Meketre (Winlock 1955, fig. 38, p. 55; Arnold 1991).

FURNITURE IN ABUSIR PAPHYRI



oo. *dbꜣw* “coffre”: Posener-Kriéger 1976, p. 177

This object, made of imported wood (*ht hꜣst*), is listed in an inventory in the Abusir Papyri (Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival 1968, pl. 21p; Posener-Kriéger 1976, pp. 134, fig. 3; 135 (20); 177, inv. B 12; 179, n. 2). As Posener observes, the determinative of the object differs from that of the adjacent *hn*-boxes only in lacking a small handle. The sign may represent a generic determinative, however, and tell us little or nothing about the actual nature of the box. Unfortunately, the contents of the box, which might have provided a clue as to its nature, are not given.

The same or a related word *dbꜣ* occurs in Old Kingdom marsh scenes as a term for a wickerwork cage for captured birds (*Wb.* 5.561:14; cf. *Wb.* 5.360:12; Montet 1925, pp. 164–65 [*tb*]). The material of the object inventoried in the Abusir Papyri, which was presumably costly imported wood, seems to preclude the possibility that the term designates so crude an object as a cage or even a crate. If *dbꜣ(t)* is indeed a word used to designate a palace or part of a palace within a niched enclosure wall (Kees 1914, pp. 15–16; Roth 1994, p. 233), it is possible that *dbꜣw* in the Abusir Papyrus is a term for a wooden box with all-around decorative paneling.

A word for box, *dbꜣt* (also written *dbꜣwt* and *dbꜣw*), specifically a large box or coffin, is known in Middle and Late Period Egyptian (*Wb.* 5.561:9–12). According to Černý (1976, p. 180) this word is perhaps the same as Coptic ΤΗΗΒΕ, rather than ΤΑΙΒΕ as Steindorff thought (Crum 1939, Add. p. xxii).

pp. *šꜣt(?)* “coffret(?)”: Posener-Kriéger 1976, p. 181 (B 18)

This term is known from the Abusir Papyri (Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival 1968, pl. 26A, B 18), where the object in question is fabricated from acacia wood (*šnd*). The reading remains uncertain, and in the original publication the group was transcribed as *mnt*. After examination of the original, however, Posener-Kriéger (1976, p. 181) felt confident that the first sign is  and the last . The sign determining the word is the hieratic equivalent of the rectangular box with a pair of battens that may or may not tell us something about the nature of the box or chest in question.

87. Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival 1968, pl. 15A. Posener-Kriéger (1976, pp. 82–83) identifies the object as a winnowing basket or sieve.

CONCLUSION

Many of the terms for types of furniture discussed herein (and in Brovarski 1996) evidently fell into disuse at the end of the Old Kingdom:

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| <i>m</i> ^c (d) | <i>st-(n)-ḥt</i> (g) | <i>st ḥms</i> (h) | <i>sḥ</i> (i) | <i>gs(ḥw)t</i> (j) | <i>nḏrwt</i> (k) | <i>ḥḥt</i> (dd) |
| <i>ttn</i> (ff) | <i>tzt</i> (gg) | <i>ḏsr(w)</i> (ii) | <i>stpt</i> (kk) | <i>sry</i> (mm) | <i>ḏḥḥ</i> (nn) | <i>ḥḥt</i> (pp) |

Others continued in use as late as the Middle Kingdom:

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| <i>ḥt</i> (a) | <i>wrs</i> (b) | <i>wtz(t)</i> (c) | <i>ḥḥt</i> (e) | <i>ḥnd(w)</i> (f) | <i>fḏt</i> (aa) |
| <i>(m)ḥtm(t)</i> (bb) | <i>hn(w)</i> (cc) | <i>hr(t)-^c</i> (ee) | <i>dbn</i> (hh) | <i>pr-w^cb</i> (ll) | <i>ḏbḥw</i> (oo) |

Others continued to be used in the New Kingdom:

| | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| <i>ḥt</i> (a) | <i>wrs</i> (b) | <i>wtz(t)</i> (c) | <i>ḥḥt</i> (e) | <i>ḥnd(w)</i> (f) |
| <i>fḏt</i> (aa) | <i>hn(w)</i> (cc) | <i>hr(t)-^c</i> (ee) | <i>dbn</i> (hh)(?) | |

A few seem to have survived into Ptolemaic hieroglyphic:

| | | |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
| <i>ḥt</i> (a) | <i>ḥḥt</i> (e) | <i>fḏt</i> (aa) |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------|

A few survived into Demotic:

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| <i>ḥḥt</i> (e) | <i>fḏt</i> (aa) | <i>hn(w)</i> (cc) |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|

And a few survived into Coptic:

| | | |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| <i>ḥḥt</i> (e) | <i>hn(w)</i> (cc) | <i>dbn</i> (hh)(?) |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|

It is not always easy to ascertain why certain of the terms for furniture disappeared, while others survived, especially since Old Kingdom traditions of furniture manufacture and design persisted with little change into the Eighteenth Dynasty.⁸⁸ In the case of *m*^c (d), *gs(ḥw)t* (j), and possibly *ḥndt* (l), it is likely that the disappearance of the term corresponded with the actual abandonment of that particular article of furniture after the Old Kingdom. In the case of *ḥt* (a) and *st-(n)-ḥt* (g), increased specialization seems to explain the replacement of one term by another within the course of the Old Kingdom.

Of course, to some extent, the picture that emerges is due to the nature of the later evidence which is heavily inscriptional rather than representational in character. Sufficient testimony does exist, however, to show that a number of terms were transformed in meaning with the passage of time. This is true of *ḥnd(w)* (f), which in the New Kingdom came to mean the steps of a throne rather than the throne itself. Similarly, whereas *ḥt* (a) continued to be used of practical beds at least into the Second Intermediate Period, the term came increasingly to be applied to funerary beds formed by the heads, bodies, legs, and tails of two lions. Although King Pi(ankh)y uses *ḥt* to refer to a practical bed, this usage may constitute an archaism since *ḥt* had apparently come to designate a funerary lion-bed by the Ramesside period at the latest. If the change in signification came about earlier, it could explain why *ḥḥt* appears to have been applied to Tutankhamun's lion-legged beds which, except for a dipping in the center, are essentially identical with *ḥt*-beds fabricated more than a thousand years before (Černý 1965, pp. 16, 28, no. 69; Baker 1966, pp. 102–04; Reeves 1990, pp. 180–82).

Fashion may be another reason why the nomenclature for furniture changed over time. Thus, the general enthusiasm for things foreign may help to explain how a foreign loanword, *krk(r)*, came to replace *ḥḥt* and the other words for beds in the period of empire and later.⁸⁹ The first mention of *krk(r)* is seemingly in the Annals of Thutmose III, who brought back to Egypt in the plunder from Lebanon and Megiddo a *ssndm bḥk m nbw m^cḥt nb ḥḥt m ḥr n krkr n hrw pf* "bed of *ssndm*-wood, wrought with gold and all costly stones in the fashion of a *krkr* of this foe."⁹⁰

The terms that remained in evidence till the end of the pharaonic period and beyond seem to be very common, to wit the terms for small and large boxes, *fḏt* (aa) and *hn(w)* (cc), and for altars of any kind, *ḥḥt* (e). It bears repeating, however, that our investigation of the nomenclature for furniture in periods after the Old Kingdom is limited in scope, and further research may prove even these observations to be overly simplistic.























































88. See Baker 1966, p. 60.

89. *Krk(k)* is evidently Demotic *glg* (Erichsen 1954, p. 591) and Coptic ⲄⲗⲠⲆ (Sahidic), ⲄⲗⲠⲗ (Bohairic) (Vycichl 1983, p. 340); see Osing 1978, p. 188. References are courtesy of

Janet H. Johnson and the Chicago Demotic Dictionary Project.

90. Compare Breasted 1962, §436; Janssen 1975, p. 185.

Table 4.1. Signs Determining Words for Furniture in Furniture Lists

| Furniture List* | Word for Furniture | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | <i>f</i> _d <i>t</i> aa | (<i>m</i>) <i>h</i> <i>t</i> <i>m</i> (<i>t</i>) bb | <i>h</i> <i>n</i> (<i>w</i>) cc | <i>h</i> ³ - <i>h</i> <i>t</i> dd | <i>h</i> <i>r</i> (<i>t</i>)- ^c ee | <i>t</i> <i>n</i> <i>n</i> ff | <i>t</i> <i>z</i> <i>t</i> gg | <i>d</i> <i>b</i> <i>n</i> hh | <i>d</i> <i>s</i> <i>r</i> (<i>w</i>) ii |
| 2. Ny-djefa-nesut | | |  | | | | |  | |
| 3. Kha-bau-sokar | | | |  | | | | |  |
| 4. Hathor-nefer-hetep |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. Sisi | | |  |  |  | | | |  |
| 6. Nedji | | | |  | | | |  |  |
| 7. Irensen | | |  | | | | |  | |
| 8. Metjen | | | |  | | | | |  |
| 9. Rahotep | | | |  | | | |  |  |
| 10. Rahotep | | |  | |  | | | | |
| 11. Seshatsekhtiu | | |  |  | | | | |  |
| 12. Anonymous (G 4260) | | |  | | | | | | |
| 13. Anonymous (G.4770) <i>Revised: G 2155 AS 7447</i> | | |  |  | | | | |  |
| 15. Ny-hetep-Khnum | | | |  | | | | |  |
| 18. "Covington's Tomb" | | | |  | | | | |  |
| 19. Senenu | | |  | |  | | |  |  |
| 20. Senenu | | | |  | | | |  |  |
| 21. Seshemnefer I | |  | |  | | | | |  |
| 22. Kapunesut Kai | | | |  | | | | |  |
| 23. Kayemankh | |  |  | | | | | |  |

*Furniture Lists 1, 14, 16, and 17 do not have signs determining these words for furniture and are omitted from this table. See footnote 2, pages 27 f., above for information on the furniture lists.

Abbreviations

- CG 1295–1808 *Denkmäler des Alten Reiches (Ausser den Statuen) im Museum von Kairo*, 2 volumes. L. Borchardt. Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire 97, 100. Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1937; Cairo: Organisme général des imprimeries gouvernementales, 1964
- CG 28001–28126 *Sarcophages antérieurs au Nouvel Empire*, 2 volumes. P. Lacau. Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire 11, 14. Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1904–1906

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