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The Lady of the Body [1]A Rare Group of Hieroglyphs from Museo Archeologico “Giovio” in Como

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Abstract

This study examines a rare hieroglyphic inscription preserved on the cartonnage of the Theban priestess *ʾst wr.t* (Isiuret), a high-ranking religious official of the Twenty-second Dynasty who bore the titles of sistrum player of Amun-Ra, chantress in the choir of Mut the Great, *Mistress of Isheru (Asheru)*, and *ḫnm.t ḫnsw-pꜣ-ḥrd* ("Nurse of Khonsu the Child"). Her richly decorated anthropoid cartonnage, dating to the Third Intermediate Period and now preserved in the Museo Archeologico "Paolo Giovio" in Como, Italy, entered the museum's collection through the bequest of Alfonso Garovaglio in 1905. The article focuses on an unusual orthographic and lexical form associated with the goddess Nephthys, namely the expression *nb.t ḥt* ("Lady of the Body"), which appears in place of the conventional *nb.t-ḥwt*. This previously unexamined epithet is analysed through philological, palaeographic, and iconographic methods. Particular attention is given to the rare use of the sign *nbj* ("to swim") as a graphic substitute for *nb* ("lord/lady"), a phenomenon previously noted by Brugsch (1864) but rarely discussed in relation to Nephthys. Although Isiuret's cartonnage has been the subject of earlier studies by Ballerini (1910), Guidotti (1990), and Guidotti and Leospo (1994), the inscription discussed here has never received a comprehensive philological analysis. This study proposes a new translation and interpretation of the text, arguing that *nb.t ḥt* should be understood not as an alternative spelling of the name *nb.t-ḥwt*, but as a deliberate epithet emphasising Nephthys's protective relationship with the body of the deceased. This interpretation not only provides a more coherent explanation of the parallel inscriptions dedicated to Isis and Nephthys on the cartonnage but also offers new evidence for understanding Nephthys's funerary role. More broadly, it lends further support to Altenmüller's (1999) hypothesis connecting the goddess with the embalming ritual, while suggesting that the designation "Lady of the Body" more accurately reflects her theological function than the traditional and much-debated interpretation "Lady of the House."

Keywords

Cartonnage; Nephthys; Isis; Third Intermediate Period; Twenty-second Dynasty; funerary religion; epithets; hieroglyphic palaeography

1. Premise

For over two centuries, the cartonnage containing the mummified remains of Isiuret (*ʾst wr.t*)—a young Theban priestess of the 22nd Dynasty who died during the 9th century BCE—has been preserved at the Museo Archeologico

1This paper is dedicated to Isabella Nobile, former scientific curator of the Museo Archeologico “Giovio” in Como.

"Paolo Giovio" in Como. Born into one of the leading priestly families of Thebes, she served as a sistrum player of Amun-Ra, participated in the choir of Mut the Great, held the title *Mistress of Isheru (Asheru)*, and fulfilled the role of nurse to the child god Khonsu.

According to documentary evidence, the cartonnage was presented in 1819 by the Khedive of Egypt, Muhammad ʿAli (1769–1849), to the distinguished Milanese officer Carlo Valerio. The gift was reportedly intended as an expression of gratitude for the assistance he had provided to Egyptian students who encountered financial difficulties while studying in Milan.

"Around the first decade of the last century, Muhammad Ali sent to Italy, together with other young Egyptians, certain brothers named Misabichi (?) to pursue their education. Instead of applying themselves to the sciences or the arts, however, they devoted themselves entirely to a carefree lifestyle and eventually became burdened with numerous debts. The Khedive therefore recalled them and, through his secretary, Castoldi of Milan (a nephew of Minister Prina), [...]" (Ballerini, 2010, p. 12. Translation of the author)

Although an antiquities protection decree was promulgated on 15 August 1835, the export of Egyptian antiquities continued under the rule of Muhammad ʿAli (1805-1848). Following the withdrawal of the French expedition, the Ottoman governor systematically employed archaeological objects as diplomatic gifts and as instruments for securing European political and cultural support. This policy, which also actively promoted diplomatic and cultural exchanges with Europe, facilitated the removal of numerous significant monuments from Egypt. Among the most notable examples was the obelisk from the Luxor Temple, which Muhammad ʿAli presented to France in 1829 (Sbriglio, 2025, p. 26).

Unfortunately, the correspondence and manuscript documentation recording the transfer of the cartonnage, formerly preserved in the Museo Archeologico in Como until 1910, are no longer extant. Nevertheless, a significant discrepancy persists; it concerns the identity of the first Italian recipient of Muhammad ‘Ali’s donation. Contemporary sources identify Baldassare Valerio, whereas both Alfonso Garovaglio, the subsequent owner of the cartonnage, and the Egyptologist Francesco Ballerini stated that the recipient was "the father of Signor Baldassare Valerio," namely Carlo Valerio.

There are compelling reasons to regard Carlo Valerio as the correct beneficiary of Isiuret’s cartonnage. This conclusion is supported not only by Garovaglio's own statement in his article published in *La Perseveranza* (1887), describing the unwrapping of the mummy, but also by the apparent origin of the confusion itself. The inconsistency appears to have arisen from an editorial error introduced by the anonymous editor of *La Perseveranza*, who entitled the article *La mummia del Signor Baldassarre Valerio di Milano* ("The Mummy of Signor Baldassare Valerio of Milan", 1887, p. 2). This mistaken attribution was subsequently repeated in later scholarly publications (Guidotti, 1990; Guidotti & Leospo, 1994) as well as in museum catalogues and institutional records (Lombardia Beni Culturali, 2016; Società, 2021).

In 1887, the mummified remains entered the personal collection of Alfonso Garovaglio (1820–1905), a prominent archaeologist (Rovi, 2011) and distinguished collector of antiquities from Como (Uboldi & Meda Riquier, 2011), not to be confused with Santo Garovaglio, a botanist, as it happened in official records (Lombardia Beni Culturali, 2016). After transferring the cartonnage to his villa at Loveno di Menaggio, Garovaglio undertook a preliminary unwrapping of the mummy and published a detailed account of the procedure in *La Perseveranza* newspaper:

"When the lid of the sarcophagus was removed, the mummy was found intact, wrapped in rich bandages of fine linen. The upper part of the wrappings was lightly stained yellow, whereas the section extending from the knees to the feet was much more deeply discolored, apparently as a result of moisture, or perhaps because the body had been lifted into an upright position before the natron had completely dried, causing the excess to run downward." (Garovaglio, 1887, p. 2. Translation of the author)

Subsequent conservation work, however, has demonstrated that this intervention was considerably more invasive than Garovaglio's own description suggests. According to Gianluigi Nicola, who directed the restoration of Isiuret's mummy and cartonnage, the object had been opened in a particularly forceful manner, contradicting Garovaglio's published account:

"In reality, the operation was far from easy. The collector must have struggled considerably and, in the process, damaged the artifact at several points. The signs of forcible opening are quite evident." (Faverio, 2009, p. 47. Translation of the author)

In his will, Garovaglio stipulated that his prehistoric, protohistoric, and Roman collections should be bequeathed to the museum, while his Etruscan and Egyptian antiquities were initially intended to pass to his daughter before their

eventual donation to the institution. In practice, however, the entire collection was transferred to the museum immediately following Garovaglio's death in 1905.

Figure 1. The anthropoid cartonnage containing the mummy of Theban priestess Isiuret, late XXII Dynasty. An AI-generated image from the original picture.

2. An increasing interest

Scholarly interest in Isiuret began in 1910, when Francesco Ballerini (1877–1910), a young assistant to Ernesto Schiaparelli at the Egyptian Museum in Turin, published the first academic study devoted to the mummy's case. This pioneering article presented a comprehensive overview of the museum's principal Egyptian object and included the first translation of its hieroglyphic inscriptions. The subsequent interruption of research, can largely be attributed to Ballerini's premature death.

Research experienced a significant revival during the 1990s, beginning with what is considered the first computed tomography (CT) examination of an Egyptian mummy conducted in Italy. During this period, the museum promoted a systematic interdisciplinary investigation of the cartonnage, recognizing the broader scholarly value of its Egyptian collection, which comprises nearly one thousand objects and had already served as the basis for several dissertations completed at the University of Pisa under the supervision of Professor Edda Bresciani.

Egyptologists Maria Cristina Guidotti and Enrichetta Leospo were subsequently commissioned by the Museo Archeologico "Giovio" and the Municipality of Como to undertake the first comprehensive scholarly study of the Egyptian collection. In 1994, their comprehensive catalogue of the Egyptian collection was published, including an extensive section devoted to Isiuret and the full scientific report on the examination of her mummified remains, prepared by an interdisciplinary team of specialists. Earlier, Guidotti had published an article (Guidotti, 1990) examining the genealogy of Isiuret as recorded in the inscriptions on the cartonnage.

Finally, between 2009 and 2010, the restoration of the cartonnage and the mummy, carried out under the direction of Gianluigi Nicola, technical director of the Aramengo Laboratory, provided important new insights into the manufacture of this exceptional anthropoid cartonnage (Faverio, 2009). The conservation project, in particular, significantly enhanced our understanding of the manufacturing processes and techniques employed in the production of Egyptian cartonnage coffins. In 2014, the Anthropological and Odontological Laboratory of the University of Milan completed a three-dimensional facial reconstruction of Isiuret, further contributing to the study and public presentation of the individual (Fisogni, 2013).

Among the most remarkable features of Isiuret's cartonnage (Guidotti, 1990; Guidotti & Leospo, 1994) is the presence of a rare group of hieroglyphs on the left side of the coffin. Despite previous scholarship, the signs beneath the representation of the goddess Nephthys have remained uninterpreted. Ballerini (1910) transcribed the inscription but did not attempt a translation, whereas Guidotti and Leospo (1994) identified the sequence as referring to Isis and Nephthys without undertaking a detailed palaeographic or philological analysis. They suggested that the inscription was closely associated with the adjacent iconography. The present study argues that a careful examination of this unusual hieroglyphic group provides important new evidence for understanding the identity and religious function of Nephthys within the Egyptian pantheon.

3. A rare group of hieroglyphs

Figure 2. The hieroglyphs on the left side of the mummy's case referring to goddess Nephthys, the sister of goddess Isis.

The inscription under consideration occupies the upper register on the left side of the cartonnage and is arranged vertically in four columns (Fig. 2). It is intended to be read from left to right and from top to bottom. The text accompanies the depiction of goddess Nephthys, whose right arm holds the *nekhekh* flail, a traditional symbol of royal authority and divine protection. The inscription is introduced by the verb *ḫwj* ("to protect"), thereby explicitly linking the text with the protective role of the goddess.

Beyond safeguarding the deceased, the outstretched wings of the goddess express reverence toward the triumphant solar deity, represented in the centre of the cartonnage as a winged solar disk surmounting a column. Between these elements, in both upper quadrants, appears the ram-headed god Khnum. The inscription is divided into four columns and can be read as follows from left to right:

1. *ḫw=s*
2. *jn nb.t ḥt*
3. *sntr.t ḥsmn wd3w.t*
4. *ntr.w*

Although the formula is generally straightforward, the group of hieroglyphs occupying the second column (signs 5–9 in the horizontal transcription below) presents significant philological difficulties and therefore merits closer examination.

I propose the following translation:

"May she be protected on behalf of the Lady of the Body. Incense and natron. The decrees of the gods."

The verbal form *ḫw=s* forms an independent verbal construction expressing either an optative or a jussive meaning, depending upon the context. Since it is not preceded by the particle *jw*, the sentence begins with a direct invocation of divine protection for the deceased. The suffix pronoun *=s* clearly refers to Isiuret.

The preposition *jn* ("by" or "on behalf of") introduces the agent responsible for this protection. At this point, however, the inscription becomes philologically problematic. Although the iconographic context clearly identifies Nephthys as the protective deity, her name is not written using its conventional orthography (*nb.t-ḥwt*) but instead appears as an unusual and previously unexplained group of signs.

The word *sntr.t*, “incense”, is written with the sign T23, which has been used from Dynasty XVIII instead of T22 (Gardiner, 1957: p.514).

The identification of Nephthys is reinforced by the symmetrical inscription on the right side of the cartonnage, where the same introductory formula, *ḫw=s*, is attributed to Isis the Great (*ʾst wr.t*), who embraces the coffin in an identical manner. This deliberate textual and iconographic symmetry strongly suggests that both divine sisters were invoked as complementary protectors of the deceased. Unlike the inscription associated with Nephthys, however, the formula referring to Isis occupies only three horizontal columns:

ḫw=s jn st wr.t mw.t ntr.t

This formula may be translated as: "May she be protected on behalf of Isis the Great, the Divine Mother."

Returning to the inscription associated with Nephthys, the preposition *jn* is followed by the sign of a swimmer enclosed within a circular basin of water, accompanied by the feminine ending (*t*) and the sign *ḥt* ("body").

At first sight, according to the sequence of the hieroglyphs, the group should be read as *nbj.t ḥt*. Such a reading, however, presents considerable semantic difficulties. The value *nbj*, meaning "swimmer" or "to swim," bears no apparent relationship to the protective role of Nephthys. More importantly, the syntax of the sentence requires the designation of the divine agent responsible for protecting Isiuret.

These difficulties disappear if *nbj* is interpreted as an alternative orthography of *nb* ("lord"), which, when followed by the feminine ending, yields *nb.t* ("lady"), an entirely appropriate designation for the goddess.

The question therefore arises whether *nbj* could function as a graphic variant of *nb*.

The answer appears to be affirmative. Brugsch (1864, p. 65) observed that this "swimming group" (*Gruppe für Schwimmen*) frequently occurs in Late Egyptian inscriptions and may be employed in writing the names of both Isis

and Nephthys. While examining hieroglyphic inscriptions, he noted that this peculiar sign group, although especially common in later periods, originated in earlier phases of Egyptian writing. Referring to the sarcophagus of Pa-nehem-as in the Ambras Collection in Vienna, Brugsch observed that the names of Isis and Nephthys were both written using this distinctive group.

"While studying hieroglyphic texts, I sometimes encountered a peculiar group that appears most frequently in inscriptions of the later epoch, yet its origin belongs to the older, good style of hieroglyphics. The most striking, yet most instructive example, is found on the previously cited sarcophagus (p. 29, vol. 1863 of this journal) of a certain Pa-nehem-ás from the Ambras collection in Vienna. In the series of deities of the Osiris circle, first identified by Lepsius, one encounters the following groups for the designation of the two goddesses Isis and Nephthys" (Brugsch, 1864, p. 65. Translation of the author)

He therefore concluded that:

"The compound initial sign in the name of Nephthys, representing a man lying on his stomach in the sign for sea and island (...), thus remained as a representative of the syllable (…) neb for further investigation." (Brugsch, 1864, p. 65. Translation of the author)

He consequently concluded that the compound initial sign in the name of Nephthys, representing a man lying prone within the sign for water, should be understood as a graphic representation of the syllable *neb*, while acknowledging that its precise origin required further investigation (Brugsch, 1864, p. 65).

The use of *nbj* as an alternative writing of *nb*, involving a semantic shift from "to swim" to "lord / lady," is in fact attested as early as the Early Dynastic Period and may represent a deliberate graphic pun employed by the artisan responsible for the inscription (Wilkinson, 1999, p. 104). Similarly, Griffith (1900, p. 156) included "to swim" among the recognised phonetic values of *nbj*, thereby lending further support to this interpretation. Brugsch's proposal was subsequently incorporated into Budge's *A Hieroglyphic Vocabulary to the Theban Recension of the Book of the Dead* (1911), where the name was cautiously transliterated as *Neb-t-kha-t* and tentatively identified as Nephthys.

Already in *The Gods of the Egyptians* (1904), however, Budge had proposed that the expression *nb.t ḫt*, written with the sign *nbj*, should be understood as an epithet of Nephthys meaning "Lady of the Body." His interpretation was further developed in the *Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary*, where the entry *nb* was expanded to *nbj* while retaining the reading *nb* (Budge, 1920, p. 357).

An alternative explanation would be to regard the entire group of hieroglyphs as an unconventional spelling of the name Nephthys itself. Such an interpretation, however, would require the equation of *ḫt* ("body") with *ḥwt* ("house"), a substitution that is unsupported by the linguistic evidence currently available for the Third Intermediate Period. Moreover, as will be argued in the following section, the association between Nephthys and the body is both conceptually and religiously significant and is reinforced by the parallel inscription referring to Isis on the opposite side of the cartonnage.

4. Nephthys: from The Lady of the House to The Lady of the Body

The preceding analysis demonstrates that the divine agent responsible for Isiuret's protection is Nephthys, here identified through the epithet *nb.t ḫt* ("Lady of the Body"). This interpretation is fully consistent with the parallel inscription on the right side of the cartonnage, whose syntactic structure closely mirrors that of the left side and explicitly refers to Isis by means of an epithet, *ʾst wr.t mw.t ntr.t* ("Isis the Great, the Divine Mother").

Accordingly, *nb.t ḫt* should not be understood as an unusual orthographic rendering of the name Nephthys produced in a Theban workshop of the Twenty-second Dynasty. Rather, it represents the deliberate use of an epithet, paralleling that employed for Isis. This observation is particularly significant because the conventional name of Nephthys, *nb.t-ḥwt* ("Lady of the House" or "Lady of the Temple"), is itself originally an epithet rather than a personal name.

Reconstructing the precise intentions of the artisan responsible for the cartonnage is, of course, impossible in the absence of direct textual evidence. Nevertheless, the orthographic variations observed elsewhere in the inscriptions on Isiuret's cartonnage suggest that the scribe or craftsman intentionally employed refined linguistic and palaeographic devices, whether as an expression of individual expertise or as a characteristic feature of the Theban artistic tradition of the period (Guidotti & Leospo, 1994). A more definitive assessment would require comparison with

additional cartonnages produced in the same workshop or within the same regional tradition. The author has examined approximately forty 22nd Dynasty cartonnages from the collections of Musei Vaticani, Museo Egizio di Torino, Musée du Louvre, National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, British Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, musée des Confluences, Brooklyn Museum.

The comparative corpus examined in this study comprises both published museum collections and individually documented cartonnage objects from major institutional holdings. These include the cartonnage of Nespanetjerenpere in the Brooklyn Museum (Brooklyn Museum, n.d.), the cartonnage mummy case in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Metropolitan Museum of Art, n.d.), the cartonnage of Nehemsoe in the National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden (National Museum of Antiquities, n.d.), and the mummy-case cartonnage of Djedameniufankh in the British Museum (British Museum, n.d.). Additional comparanda include the Egyptian anthropoid cartonnage sarcophagus documented in the Christie's catalogue (Christie's, n.d.), the three mummy cartonnages published by D'Amicone and Donadoni Roveri (1989) and accompanied by the technical observations of Nicola and Donadoni Roveri (1989), the corpus of Third Intermediate Period coffins and cartonnages preserved in Lyon (France, 2022), the cartonnage of Paysetjenfy from Dra Abu el-Naga (Llanos & Hunkeler, 2024), the Ptolemaic cartonnages from Thebes (Schreiber, 2006), the Würzburg mummy masks (Stadler, 2004), and the cartonnage associated with the priestess Ta-Usert-em-Suten-Pa (Smith, 1906). Collectively, these corpora provide a broad chronological and geographical framework for comparison, spanning the Third Intermediate Period to the Graeco-Roman Period.

No comparable epithet for Nephthys has been identified within this corpus. The closest parallel occurs on the cartonnage of Paysetjenfy from Dra Abu el-Naga (Llanos & Hunkeler, 2024), where the winged goddesses Isis and Nephthys are represented as kites, closely resembling their depiction on Isiuret's cartonnage. In contrast to the present example, however, Nephthys is accompanied by her conventional epithet (Fig. 32, p. 200).

However, the possibility remains that such an epithet exists in unpublished or less accessible material, and the author hopes that this publication will prompt other scholars to report any parallels they may have encountered. It is therefore hoped that the publication of this inscription will stimulate further discussion and perhaps lead to the identification of comparable examples in other collections.

Further support for interpreting *nb.t ḫt* as an epithet, rather than as an alternative spelling of the goddess's name, is provided by another inscription on the same cartonnage. In the vertical text on the left side, Nephthys is written using her conventional orthography (*nb.t-ḥwt*) within the standard offering formula addressed to the goddess. The coexistence of the traditional name and the expression *nb.t ḫt* strongly suggests that the latter was intentionally employed as an additional descriptive title. Consequently, the inscription appears to identify Nephthys specifically as the "Lady of the Body."

The question therefore arises: why was this particular epithet selected?

As Budde (2011, pp. 1, 3) observes, Egyptian deities commonly bore epithets that conveyed information concerning their nature, manifestations, spheres of influence, genealogical relationships, or associations with specific localities. In most instances, these epithets immediately followed the divine name. Frequently, they also functioned as captions accompanying divine representations in temple decoration, thereby identifying or characterising the depicted deity.

Isiuret's cartonnage appears to represent precisely such a case. Both Isis and Nephthys are identified through epithets—"the Divine Mother" and "the Lady of the Body," respectively—which function as textual counterparts to their iconographic representations and emphasise their complementary protective roles.

The identification of Nephthys as the "Lady of the Body" may also contribute to the long-standing debate concerning the meaning of her traditional name. The conventional interpretation of *nb.t-ḥwt* as "Lady of the House," "Lady of the Temple," or "Lady of the Enclosure" remains controversial, and scholars continue to disagree regarding the significance of the "house" or "enclosure" to which the name refers. Sethe interpreted the designation primarily within the context of marital symbolism, whereas Rusch proposed that the "house" should be understood in a broader cosmological sense. In either case, these explanations appear only indirectly related to Nephthys's principal religious function as a mourning and protective goddess, whose identity is inseparable from that of her sister Isis.

From their earliest attestations in the Pyramid Texts of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties, Isis and Nephthys are consistently represented as complementary guardians of the deceased. Isis occupies the position at the head of the body—a role that reflects the probable original meaning of the name *ʾst* ("She of the Headrest")—whereas Nephthys stands at the feet, together forming a symmetrical pair responsible for protecting and revivifying the dead.

The iconographic programme of Isiuret's cartonnage vividly illustrates this theological relationship. The facing

postures of the two goddesses, together with the mirror-like structure of their inscriptions, deliberately emphasise their complementary functions in safeguarding the deceased.

Altenmüller (1999) argued that the name of Nephthys can be fully understood only in relation to her role as a professional mourner. According to his interpretation, the "house," "temple," or "enclosure" referred to in her traditional name should be identified with the embalming place itself. Nevertheless, Altenmüller also acknowledged the limitations of this hypothesis:

"Unfortunately, this interpretation cannot be conclusively proven. The goddess is never referred to as the 'Lady of the Embalming Hall' in any known instance. Therefore, it remains unclear whether her name actually designates her as the 'Lady of the Embalming Hall.'" (Altenmüller, 1999)

Against this background, the epithet "Lady of the Body" may represent an important new element in the discussion. Although it cannot definitively resolve the problem, it establishes an explicit relationship between Nephthys and the physical body of the deceased, thereby highlighting her protective role during the funerary process. The term *ḫt*, represented by the hieroglyph of the uterus, denotes the living body rather than the corpse, which is normally expressed by *ḫꜣt*. Following embalming, the deceased's body was expected to undergo glorification and transfiguration, becoming the renewed body of an effective spirit (Riggs, 2010, p. 2). Consequently, the wrapping of the mummy was not merely a technical procedure but a fundamental ritual intended to restore and preserve the unity and integrity of the body after its disruption through death.

Within Egyptian religious thought, at least three principal semantic fields associate Nephthys with the body. First, in the Osiris myth, following Seth's murder and dismemberment of Osiris, Nephthys assists Isis in locating, recovering, and reassembling the scattered limbs of the god, thereby contributing directly to the restoration of his corporeal integrity.

Second, Nephthys assumes her traditional position at the feet of the funerary bier, embracing and protecting the deceased. Isis performs an analogous function at the head of the body, although her role acquires an additional regenerative dimension through the conception and birth of Horus following the restoration of Osiris.

Third, together Isis and Nephthys keep vigil over the body of Osiris. This divine vigil became the archetypal model for all funerary vigils in ancient Egypt, where every deceased individual was ritually identified with Osiris. Within this theological framework, Nephthys's epithet "Lady of the Body" appears entirely appropriate, expressing not only her physical proximity to the corpse but also her indispensable role in preserving, protecting, and ultimately restoring the integrity of the deceased's body as a prerequisite for rebirth in the afterlife.

5. Conclusion

This study aims to draw the attention of the international Egyptological community to a neglected but significant artifact: the cartonnage of the priestess Isiuret, late XXII Dynasty. Through a re-examination of a previously overlooked hieroglyphic inscription, it has proposed a new interpretation of the epithet *nb.t ḫt* ("Lady of the Body") as applied to the goddess Nephthys. Rather than representing an unconventional orthography of the goddess's name, the inscription appears to preserve a deliberate epithet that complements the parallel designation of Isis on the opposite side of the cartonnage and highlights the symmetrical protective roles of the two divine sisters.

Although the proposed interpretation cannot be regarded as definitive, it offers a plausible philological and iconographic explanation that contributes to the broader discussion of Nephthys's functions within Egyptian funerary theology. More generally, the study underscores the importance of re-examining well-known museum objects through interdisciplinary approaches that combine philology, iconography, archaeology, and the history of collections.

It is hoped that the publication of this analysis will encourage further investigation of Isiuret's cartonnage and facilitate comparisons with other Twenty-second Dynasty funerary assemblages. Such research may not only clarify the interpretation of the inscription discussed here but also contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the theological, artistic, and linguistic innovations that characterised Theban funerary workshops during the Third Intermediate Period.

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