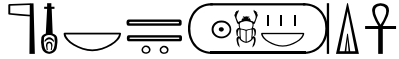


<p>Carter Number 48e</p>	GH
<p>Museum and Accession Number (if available) Cairo Museum, JE 61713</p>	GH
<p>Name of Object 'Straight stick with gilt top' (Carter: 48) 'Stab' ['staff'] (Beinlich and Saleh 1989: 21)</p>	GH
<p>Location in Tomb This stick was found as part of a larger group on "bed 47" (an ebony bedstead, see Carter: 47) in the antechamber. The group consisted of six sticks and several bows (Carter: 48; Griffith Institute). Carter writes that these objects came from "box 50", a hinged wooden box which contained various cloths, sticks arrows and a mace (Carter: 50).</p>	GH
<p>Measurements L. 99.2 cm</p>	GH
<p>Translation (1)  (1) <i>ntr nfr nb t3.wy Nb-hpr.w-Rc di ʕnh</i> (1) The Good God, Lord of the Two Lands, Nebkheperure, given life</p>	GH
<p>Textual notes</p>	
<p>Notes on the content of the texts The cartouche is that of Tutankhamun</p>	GH
<p>Object description This is a straight stick with a gilt top. It is made of a hard dark red-brown wood with knots in it (Carter: 48e).</p> <p>The pattern of decoration on the stick has been organized by Carter into separate sections, labelled alphabetically A – C. Carter has described these sections top to bottom as follows (Carter: 48e):</p> <p>A. Plain gilt with no decoration of inscription. B. The natural surface of the wood is left visible. C. There are traces of gesso which shows that there was originally a gilt ferule.</p> <p>A band of incised hieroglyphic inscription runs from just below A on one side of the stick. These hieroglyphs are filled with gesso and gilt.</p>	GH
<p>Notes on the object type The ancient Egyptian word for 'stave' is first given in the late Old Kingdom as imyt-r, which could be understood as 'that which is on the edge (of a lake or pool)' (Fischer 1979: 7). This impression of staves representing a waterside reed is confirmed by the inscription found on another stave, 227e (Carter: 227e). There are, however, many types of stave and so a variety of explanations could be suggested.</p>	

Most depictions of individuals carrying staves would indicate that they relate to the authority of their owner, although staves can also be carried by their retainers (see below). Other sticks relate to occupations and would therefore designate a career role, such as: sounding rods for sailors, fowling sticks for bird keepers and, cattle prods for pastoralists (Fischer 1979: 8). Where actual staves have been found within the burial they are most often deposited within the wooden coffin of the deceased, a position particularly standardised during the Middle Kingdom (Hassan 1976: 74). The body itself rests on its left side, with the head pointing north and facing east, staves are then placed on either side of the body, occasionally also with bows and arrows (Hassan 1976: 110) such as those found alongside the sticks in the tomb (Carter: 48). Burials are also often accompanied by a head rest and sandals. It can be suggested therefore that these elements were requirements for the ideal Middle Kingdom burial assemblage. Hassan points out that while staves should have been placed within the coffin itself, it was also possible to deposit them outside the sarcophagus/coffin and either wrap them in cloth or keep them in a wooden box (Hassan 1976: 110). Group 48 were probably originally placed in a box in the antechamber. There is no clear conclusion as to why staves were a part of the ideal burial assemblage but spell 23 of the Coffin Texts alludes to their potential purpose for use in the journey to the afterlife (see CTI: [23] 71h-72c): Take your staff, your loincloth, your sandals, [and] your arrows for the road, so that you can cut off the head and sever the neck of your foe that approaches [when] you are dead.

This text also draws together the various elements located within the coffin; the staff, linen dressings, sandals and weapons. The text also indicates that the staves had protective connotations, as well as providing physical support during the deceased's travels to the next world (Hassan 1976: 118). A similar reference can also be found in Coffin Text spell 3 (CTI: [3] 10b-f; Bommas 1999: 57-58), and also in the New Kingdom Tale of Two Brothers (Lichtheim 1976: 208).

Staves first appear in private burials during the First Intermediate Period (Hassan 1976: 119). It is also during this period that staves first appear within the equipment frieze on internal coffin decoration (Hassan 1976: 98). Willems has shown that these depictions represent the funerary rites associated with the interment of the deceased (Willems 1988: 208). The presence of staves within these images descended from similar depictions in Old Kingdom royal contexts showing the object offering ritual (Willems 1988: 203-204). The first attested private burial of the Middle Kingdom to have staves deposited within the coffin is that of *ϕnw* at Saqqara and his burial is illustrated by Hassan as an ideal Middle Kingdom coffin assemblage (Hassan 1976: 75, fig. 19). As the process of including staves within the burial assemblage reappeared during the early New Kingdom, little altered from Middle Kingdom traditions, it is unsurprising to find staves preserved from the royal burials of Amenhotep II, Amenhotep III, Ramesses II and Merenptah (Hassan 1976: 131). Tutankhamun however stands out among New Kingdom examples due to being buried with around 130 staves. According to Hassan's calculations (1976: 131), only about one tenth of these staves have inscriptions; group 227 includes five of these examples. Reeves documents that Carter believed Tutankhamun may have been 'an amateur collector of walking sticks and staves' (Reeves 1990: 178). This statement is however, difficult to confirm due to a lack of complete royal burials from the late Eighteenth Dynasty with which to compare the assemblage of Tutankhamun.

The large number of staves in the tomb of Tutankhamun allow for a misrepresentative view of sticks in royal burial assemblages of the New Kingdom. It is clear that large numbers of staves should have been expected in other royal tombs, and it is perhaps due to the removal of bodies into caches during the Twenty-first Dynasty that these are no longer preserved in their entirety. It is currently difficult to ascertain exactly why Tutankhamun is buried with such large numbers of the same types of staff (70 in the case of the *mdw*-type), although it is also true that he was buried with at least one of each known example from burial contexts. From this brief overview of staves in Ancient Egypt, and particularly those in the tomb of Tutankhamun, it is clear that the past assumption that these items were 'walking-sticks' (ILN 1925: 524-525) is unfounded and that instead these funerary goods represented the authority of their owners, and related to specific roles and rituals Tutankhamun was involved in. Further work on the inscriptions on other staves found in Tutankhamun's tomb will assist in understanding the purpose of these objects and the reasons for their prevalence in burial contexts from the Old Kingdom to the New Kingdom.

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