Local variation in the Coffin Texts:  
*A case study of sentence structure in spell 75*
Local variation in spell 75

• Coffin texts and terminology
• Local variation
• Method
• Results
• Future
Coffin text and terminology

Coffin text and terminology

Coffin text and terminology

• Text in de Buck (CT1, 378a, B2L)
Coffin text and terminology

• Text in de Buck (CT1, 378a, B2L)

• Outer coffin of $gw3$ (BM EA 38039)
Local variation

• Personal preference or local variation?
Local variation

• Personal preference or local variation?

Beni Hassan, tomb of Amenemhat, hall, north wall, register 1 (Newberry, plate 315)
Why Coffin Texts?

• Large corpus
• Multiple witnesses from the same and different locations
• Well published by de Buck
Method

• Encoding a database
Method

• Encoding a database
Method

• Encoding a database
• Create analysis files
Method

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• Encoding a database
• Create analysis files
• Spells as proteins
Method

- Encoding a database
- Create analysis files
- Spells as proteins
Method

• Encoding a database
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IQ-TREE
Efficient software for phylogenomic inference

Method

• Encoding a database
• Create analysis files
• Spells as proteins
• Visualization

Dendroscope 3
by Daniel H. Huson
with contributions from Benjamin Albrecht.
Philippe Gambotto, Leo van Iersel,
Celine Scornavacca and others.

www-ab.informatik.uni-tuebingen.de/software/dendroscope
Method

• Encoding a database
• Create analysis files
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• Visualization

Spell 75

• 24+1 witnesses
  • 8 witnesses from Deir el-Bersheh
  • 8 witnesses from Meir (+1 unpublished, courtesy of Tobias Konrad, Mainz)
  • 3 witnesses from Asyut
  • 1 witness from Beni Hassan
  • 1 witness from Gebelein
  • 1 witness from Aswan
  • 1 witness from the Theban area
  • 1 witness from Saqqara

• 191 phrases
Spell 75

Damage to the witnesses

- BH2C
- A1C
- G1T
- Sq5C
- M-Ann
- M28C
- M23C
- M6C
- M5C
- M4C
- B4C
- M20C
- M3C
- B7C
- B6C
- B1P
- B2L
- B1C
- B1Bo
- B3C
- T3C
- S14C
- S2C
- S1C

Legend:
- Blue: Number of partial lacunae
- Red: Number of lacunae
- Gray: Undamaged entries
Results
Results
Results
Results
Results
Results

Late 11th dynasty – early 12th dynasty.

Incised cursive
Results
Results

Amenemhat I – Amenemhat II
Results
Results
Results
Results

Sesostris I – Amenemhat II
Results
Results
Results

• There are many fuzzy borders
• There seem to have been 3 major variations of this spell
• There seem to have been at least two workshop traditions in Bersheh
• Meir is vague, but there is some common ground
• The coffins from Aswan and Gebelein seem to share a common origin
Future

• Analyzing more spells using the same method, and comparing the results
• Analyzing the verbal system used in the spells
• Analysis of spelling of verbal forms