

V.

ON TWO EGYPTIAN MUMMIES PRESERVED IN THE MUSEUMS OF
EDINBURGH. BY WARREN R. DAWSON, F.S.A.Scot.I. THE MUMMY OF AN INFANT IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF
ANTIQUITIES.

One of the most interesting objects of the magnificent Rhind Collection is a double mummy-case containing the mummies of two children (Reg. No. 546). This specimen was obtained

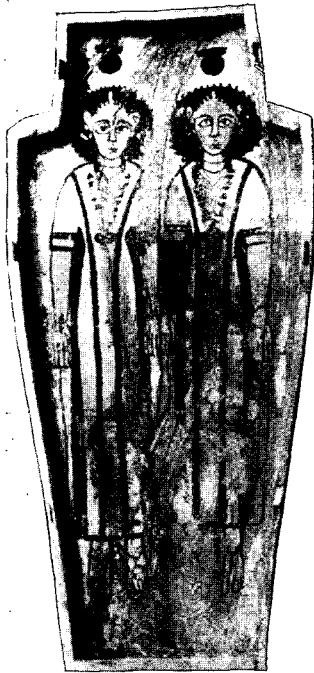


Fig. 1. Base of the Coffin showing the two Painted Figures.

at Thebes by A. H. Rhind, but apart from a brief mention of it in his book he gives no particulars.¹ So far as I am aware, this coffin is unique; I know of no other example of the kind. It has been expressly constructed for the reception of two mummies of equal size, and is therefore broader in proportion to its length than a single coffin of its size would be. It is made of sycamore wood, and displays the coarseness of construction and finish which is usual in the Roman period.² The body of the coffin is a slab composed of several pieces of coarse-grained wood fixed together by three transverse battens underneath. This is provided with shallow sides so as to form a kind of tray, to which the lid is attached by means of six tenons fitting into slots in the customary manner. The interior has been coated with a thin layer of plaster, on which are painted the figures of two children of equal size standing side by side (fig. 1). The figures are each clad in a long robe reaching to the ankles, and with sleeves to the elbows.

The long hair, ear-rings, and breast-ornaments, together with the style of the garment, suggest that these figures are intended to represent girls, but one of the mummies is that of a boy,

¹ *Thebes: Its Tombs and their Tenants*, p. 108.

² Compare Naville, *Ahnas el Medineh*, Pl. xi.

whilst the sex of the other is unknown, for it has not been unwrapped. The cover of the coffin (fig. 2) has two face-masks, and, on the upper part of the foot-end, two pairs of feet are painted. It shows in a very conventionalised form two mummies standing side by side. The head- and foot-ends are rectangular, and contrast with the gracefully rounded

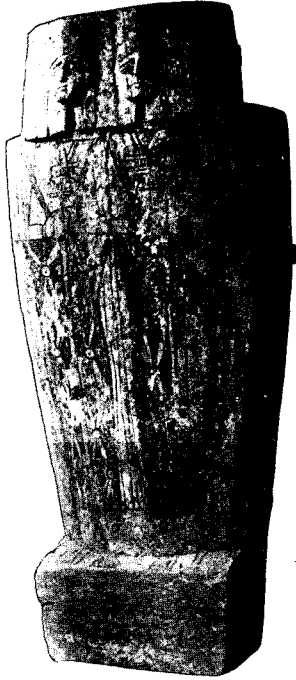


Fig. 2. Lid of the Coffin with Double Face-mask.



Fig. 3. The Twin Mummies.

contours of the coffins of earlier periods. The decoration is painted, and consists of a number of poorly executed patterns—debased survivals of the elaborate decorations of the Pharaonic period.

This case, when opened, was found to contain two mummies (fig. 3), one of which is in its original wrappings, and the other was unrolled many years ago (Reg. Nos. 520, 521). Each mummy had on its outer wrappings a bead necklace, a small rectangular metal plaque, and a blue faience figurine of the god Bes. The outer shroud is covered by a series of interlaced bandages, forming a geometrical pattern, which is the usual arrangement in mummies of this period.

In April 1927, by the kind permission of the Director, Mr J. Graham Callander, I made a thorough examination of the unwrapped mummy, and found that it revealed features of quite unusual interest. Mummies of children of all periods are usually very poorly made; the embalmers did not bestow upon them the care which they generally devoted to adults. All the specimens of child-mummies which I have hitherto examined have been very summarily and carelessly treated, although some pains had usually been taken to make a presentable exterior by paying careful attention to the adjustment of the superficial wrappings. This mummy, on the contrary, has been carefully and elaborately embalmed, and presents a marked contrast with the slovenly methods usual even in mummies of adults of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods.¹ The general method of treatment of this infantile body recalls that employed for the best-made mummies of adults by the embalmers of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty.

The body is in an extended position, but the head is bent forward so that the chin rests upon the breast. Its pose is exactly similar to that of the mummy of a child of about the same age from Torres Straits, of which I recently published a photograph and description.² The arms and hands are fully extended at the sides, so that the palms rest upon the lateral aspects of the thighs. All the nails of the fingers and toes are perfect, and the epidermis has been carefully cut round the bases of the fingers and toes so as to leave a natural "finger-stall" of skin on each of the digits in order to retain the nails when the rest of the epidermis peeled off the body during its maceration in the salt-bath, a process to which all mummies were subjected. This precaution for the safety of the nails was usually taken with well-made adult mummies, but I have never as yet found it observed in the case of a child. The viscera, both abdominal and thoracic, have been removed through a slightly oblique embalming wound, 7.5 cm. long, extending from the crest of the ilium towards the margin of the ribs. The body cavity is empty, and no attempt has been made to pack it. The inside of the body cavity has been smeared with thick, lustrous, pitch-like resin. In the centre of the thorax, lying on the spine, is a shrunken mass of tissue which is probably the heart, but the embalming wound is too small to allow of a complete exploration of the body cavity. In spite of the oft-repeated and erroneous statement that the heart was removed along with the other viscera, it is a fact that

¹ For details of the debased technique of these periods, see Elliot Smith and Dawson, *Egyptian Mummies*, pp. 123 ff.

² *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, vol. xx. p. 850 and fig. 11.

in mummies of all periods the heart was carefully left *in situ* by the embalmers.¹

The surface of the body has been carefully treated all over with a paste made of resin and fat, and is covered with minute crystals of fatty acids—the decomposition products of this paste. The paste has been applied with a brush in a heated state, and has not been indiscriminately poured over the body in molten condition, which was the slipshod method usually adopted by embalmers of late periods.² The genital organs, though characteristically infantile, are intact.

The head is covered with short reddish-brown hair, the ears are well formed and pressed close to the sides of the head, and their lobes do not appear to have been pierced. The eyelids are half open, but no packing material has been inserted between the lids and the collapsed eyeballs, as was usual in earlier times. The brain has been removed through the left nostril, which communicates with a forced passage through the ethmoid bone. No packing material has been inserted into the cranial cavity nor into the nasal fossæ.

The body is that of a male infant, whose name, as we learn from the papyrus found upon the mummy, is Petamon, and whose age I should estimate at twenty-four to thirty months. The height of the child is about 25 inches. The fact that the feet are at right angles to the legs (instead of being inclined at an angle of 45°, as is usual in adult mummies) and that the head has fallen over the chest, suggests that the mummy was kept in an upright position during the processes of its embalming.

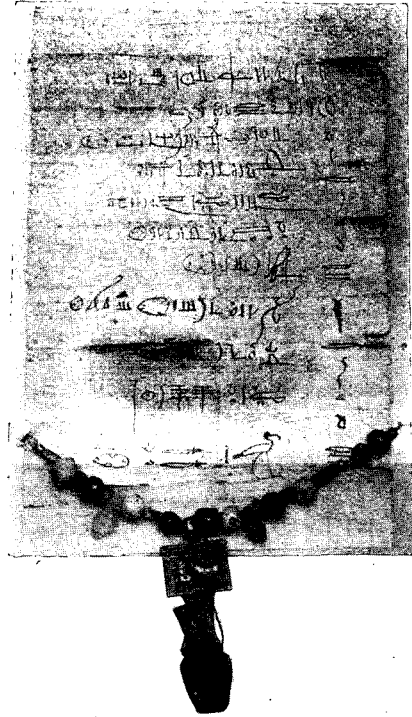


Fig. 4. The Hieratic Papyrus of Petamon. Attached to this are the necklace and amulets found on the mummy-wrappings.

¹ For the significance of the heart, see Elliot Smith, *Journal of the Manchester Oriental Soc.*, vol. i. pp. 41 ff.

² For the method of applying the resinous paste, see my article "Making a Mummy" in the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, vol. xiii., part i., pp. 40-49 and Pls. xvi-xviii.

From the careful treatment of the body it is evident that this infant and its twin were the children of wealthy parents.

The papyrus (fig. 4) which was found with this mummy contains a short funerary spell, which consists of an extract from a composition usually known by the title "May my name flourish," many copies of which, all of late date, are known. The writing is characteristic *hieratic* of the Roman period. The following is a translation of the text:—

"O the Osiris Petamon
 "born of Ta-Renénet!
 "[He says: May my name prosper]
 "As prospereth the name¹
 of Osiris Khentamenthes in Abydos,
 of Hathor, mistress of the West,
 of Geb in Bu-shemy,
 of Nut in Shenty,
 of Horus in Pe.
 "As prospereth the name
 of Uto in Pe and in Dep,
 of Isis in Heliopolis,
 of the Ram, lord of Mendes,
 of Thoth, the twice-great, lord of Hermopolis."

II. THE MUMMY OF A WOMAN IN THE ROYAL SCOTTISH MUSEUM.

In 1911 the Royal Scottish Museum acquired a female mummy which had been previously unwrapped (Reg. No. 399/1). The body was enclosed in a well-made cartonnage casing, and this in turn fits exactly into a wooden outer coffin. I made an examination of this mummy on 19th April 1927, by kind permission of Mr Edwin Ward, Keeper of the Egyptian Department.

The body is that of an adult woman of small stature (height, 4 feet 4 inches), lying in the usual extended position with the arms at the sides of the body, the right hand being placed so as to conceal the pudenda, and the left with its palmar surface against the outer side of the thigh. The nails of the hands and feet have been treated in exactly the same manner as those of the child described above, the "finger-stalls" of epidermis being plainly visible. The body has been eviscerated through a gaping elliptical wound with inverted edges 14 cm. in length. This

¹ The Egyptian text, of course, reads from right to left. This phrase is twice repeated in the vertical column on the right of the document. The places mentioned in connection with each divinity are mythological localities. The composition, although never found on papyri before the Roman period, is of very ancient origin, and is based upon a passage of the *Pyramid Texts* of the Sixth Dynasty.

wound is placed obliquely, and runs parallel to the line of the groin about midway between the iliac crest and the navel, the upper end being a little above the level of the latter. Through it the viscera have been removed, and the whole of the cavity tightly packed with a mixture of mud, sawdust, and resin. (The abdominal wall has been partly broken away, which enables the packing of the interior to be observed.) No packing material has been inserted in the thighs nor in any other part of the body. The incision was plugged with a pad of resin-soaked linen.

The head has been closely shaved, and the soft parts of the nose have been flattened by the pressure of the bandages. On the skin of the forehead is the well-marked impression of a linen bandage or fillet which once encircled it. The nostrils are dilated, and through them the brain has been extracted, the ethmoid bone being perforated on both sides, although the septum is undamaged. The lips are partly open, and expose seven of the upper teeth. The eyes are half open, and reveal a packing of linen placed over the eyeballs and under the lids. The head and limbs of the body have been varnished in modern times, but before the mummy came into possession of the Museum.

The outer coffin of this mummy was originally covered in gesso, but this has all perished and only the wooden shell remains. The cartonnage is in excellent preservation, and its colours bright and fresh. It is gaily painted with figures of funerary genii, etc., but has no inscriptions upon it. We are therefore in ignorance of the name of the lady whose mummy we have described. The style of the coffin and cartonnage corresponds to the period between the Twenty-second and Twenty-fifth Dynasties, and must therefore be placed in the Twenty-third or Twenty-fourth, *i.e.* about 745-712 B.C. The technique of the mummy also corresponds with this period. In the Twenty-first and Twenty-second Dynasties (which for brevity we will call period A) an elaborate process of packing the limbs and body was in vogue.¹ During the period represented by the Edinburgh mummy (period B) these methods fell into abeyance, and a different method of treatment came into vogue in the Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth Dynasties (period C). This mummy presents a number of features which are intermediate between periods A and C. In period A a band or fillet of dyed linen was placed around the brow, or sometimes it was imitated by a band of paint;² in period C this custom was not followed. The impression on the forehead of the mummy (to which attention has

¹ For full details of the technique of this period, see Elliot Smith, *Contribution to the Study of Mummification in Egypt*, Cairo, 1906.

² In mummies from Torres Straits, the technique of which closely resembles that of Egypt during period A, a head-band is always represented with black paint. See *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*, vol. xi. pp. 87-94 and Pls. x.-xii.

already been called), therefore, is a survival from period A. In period A, also, the orbits were packed with linen, and artificial eyes were inserted under the lids. In period C neither packing nor false eyes were used. The Edinburgh mummy is again intermediate in this respect, for it has the linen packing but no artificial eyes. Both hands were placed over the pudenda in period A, and in period C they were straightened and placed on the outer sides of the thighs. Our mummy makes a compromise between the two positions, for the right hand is placed in the pubic region and the left on the thigh. In period A the viscera were wrapped in separate linen parcels and returned to the body cavity, the free space between the parcels being filled with mud, sawdust, and resin. In period C the viscera in parcels were usually placed between the legs, and the whole of the body cavity filled with packing. In this respect period B agrees with C, but in the present instance we do not know whether the viscera were placed between the legs, as no record of the unwrapping has been kept.

The mummy has been carefully prepared, and it, and its cases, are good examples of the period to which they belong.