

Unwrapping the Mummy

Extract from "The Horniman Free Museum Seventh Annual Report 1897"

Events of the Year, 1897

"On February 24th Mr Horniman presided at a lecture, given before the Dulwich Scientific and Literary Association by Mr H W Mengedoht, on "Mummies and their History." After giving a very graphic account of the different methods of embalming, and how these varied at different periods, he proceeded to illustrate his subject, by unrolling, with the assistance of Mr Quick, the mummy which Mr Horniman had kindly lent for the occasion from the Museum collection.

The body was first removed from the case of painted sycamore, and placed on the table. The mummy measured a little over five feet in its bandages. The ancient Egyptians were short in stature. Over the whole of the bandages was a kind of shroud bound with tape-like strips, passing around and across diagonally. The bandages were numerous and of different texture, applied with great neatness and precision. The limbs were separately bandaged. On the ends of two of the bandages some hieroglyphical characters were found, bearing

reference to the date of the operation, etc, the month corresponding with our March. The bandages being removed, the body was exposed. The brain had been extracted through the nostrils, and the viscera from the abdomen by an incision in the left side, and returned into the cavity, which was filled with the dust of some bitter wood. The nails on both hands and feet were perfect, and had been stained with hennah. No scarabei or other ornaments were found upon it, and the lecturer declared it to be a Memphite mummy of the period of about 1500 BC. It was that of a woman of about sixty years of age.

On the lid of the coffin the name was given of Peta-Amen-Neb-Nest-Taiu, who was a priestess of Amen-Ra and daughter of an officer of high rank at Thebes (whose mummy is now in the British Museum).

Mr Horniman gave to each of the visitors present a small sample of the mummy cloth, as a souvenir of the occasion."