



# Biography of Coffins in The McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery and Museum



1914 Magic lantern slide of the Egyptian Room c.1914

Dundee was a prosperous Royal Burgh and a busy port from medieval times until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the nineteenth century Dundee became a centre for the jute industry. The wealthy owners of the textile factories travelled the world for business and pleasure and used some of their wealth to improve the cultural life of Dundee and its citizens.

The 'Albert Institute for Literature, Science and Art' which opened 1867 was one such enterprise. Modernised in 1984 it was renamed in honour of the late Lord Provost McManus.

The Museum will be celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017 and Egyptology has been part of its story since the very beginning. The Egyptological collection was an integral part of the original displays, Egyptomania of the Victorian period and has remained popular ever since, with displays and objects being re-interpreted by each generation.

The Egyptology collection arrived in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century by various routes: donations from individuals such as the philanthropist Sir James Key Caird, and from those working on projects in Egypt such as the Rev. Colin Campbell and subscriptions to the Egypt Exploration Fund and other organisations. Though key objects have long been part of the Museum's displays, the majority have long been in storage, and were under-researched. Some objects have now been the subject of volunteer research projects using contextual information from the early days of the Albert Institute including museum reports, magic lantern slides and correspondence as well as collaborations with universities using new technology.

## VALUABLE DONATION TO DUNDEE MUSEUM. ANTIQUITIES FROM EGYPT.

The archaeological section of Dundee Museum has just been enriched by one of the most valuable and interesting acquisitions it has ever made. This has been received from the Egypt Exploration Fund mainly owing to the influence of the local secretary of that Society, the Rev. Dr Campbell, who is an accomplished and enthusiastic Egyptologist. Several times during recent years similar donations have been obtained from this energetic Society, these including one of the most interesting objects the Museum possesses—an outer and inner mummy case which contained the body of a woman, and was found in the Necropolis of Ha-Khenensu (Heraeopolis Magna, the modern Ahnas-el-Medinet or Henassieh, in Nomes xx of the ancient Egyptian geography, the Bibli-

Dundee Courier & Argus 12<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1898 p4



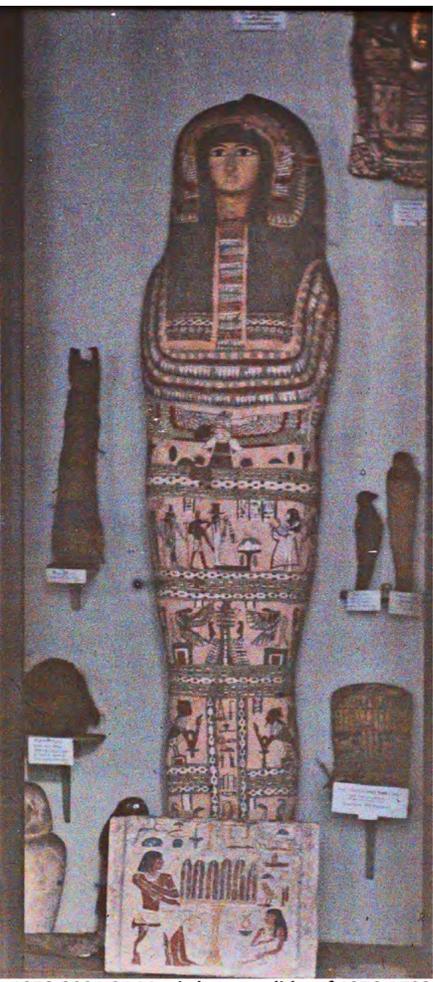
1914-2001-20 Magic lantern slide of 1914-204-1-4 c. 1914

The Egyptian section of the Museum has now attained considerable dimensions, filling five large glass cases, and for this the citizens are indebted to the Egypt Exploration Fund, and to Dr Campbell. The very considerable funds necessary for the Society to prosecute its valuable labours are entirely derived from subscriptions obtained from cultured people in Great Britain, and these are none too ample, and ought to be largely increased. Ladies ought to take a special interest in this fund, for it has from the first been largely officered by their sex. The late secretary was the distinguished writer Miss Amelia B. Edwards, and she has a fitting successor in Miss Emily Paterson. A subscription of one guinea constitutes membership, and it is hoped that the exceptional generosity shown to Dundee will induce quite a number to join the few subscribers now living in the city. Those willing to join should communicate with Dr Campbell, who is the local secretary.

Another coffin group from Sedment is in the McLean Museum in Greenock 1987-394 and 1987-395. They also subscribed to the Egypt Exploration Fund.



1987-395 Cartonnage, McLean Museum, Greenock Dundee Courier & Argus 12<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1898, p4



1914-2001-21 Magic lantern slide of 1976-1708 c.1914 from Sedment, Fayyum via EEF 1891



Coffin 1976-1170 and cartonnage 1976-1708

**Mummy 1978-2146** The mummy was taken to the Clinical Research Imaging Facility (CRIF), University of Dundee and Ninewells Hospital, Dundee. Prof. Luc Bidaut and his team performed a CT scan using a Siemens Biograph mCT-128 (120kV/279mA, reconstruction at 1mm isotropic). These data were then used to perform virtual 3D renderings of the mummy...

**Cartonnage 1976-1708** This had been in store and there was no photographic record of the object. After opening the packing we were amazed to see our beautiful cartonnage looking up at us. "Northern" in type having a separate wooden face mask and chain cross binding/animal skin motif.

**Wooden Coffin 1976-1170** This also had not been seen by any current member of staff and it was opened with excitement. A deep plain wooden coffin trough and a shallow lid, both painted red were revealed. Parts of the tri-partite lappet wig and vulture headdress with broad fillet remained, similarly the broad collar necklace below on which the hands rest.

**Mask 1975-531** The mask was separate but had shown up in the review of funerary objects and it became clear that it was a match. This was all brought together when I searched the Annual Reports of 1892 of the then Albert Institute (later The McManus) and found "The Archaeological Section...continues to increase from the EEF... a fine mummy case (outer and inner) in splendid preservation...this was found in the Necropolis of Heracleopolis...Ahnas el-Medinet".

**Re-location of E.E.F. Memoirs** These we knew were given to museums with objects in return for donations, they were found in the Dundee Library and are now available in the Collections Unit. Literally completing the picture with *Naville, E (1894) Ahnas el-Medinet, Plate VIII, E.E.F.*

The 51 EEF publications are relocated to the Collections Unit making them available for study and research.



CT scan and 3D renderings of Mummy 1978-2146; Luc Bidaut, CRIF, Dundee, 2012



... From these, Luc indicated that the mummy was female, height approx. 1.60m, chest and pelvis areas are displaced possibly due to handling, transporting her or simply to being displayed upright as was the norm in the past. Few teeth remain in place, many scattered throughout her body. Those are all worn, which, together with the wear on her spine and compression fracture on at least one lumbar vertebra, suggests she died in old age. Only one package has been replaced in the body cavity and no amulets are visible, she has typical hand position, at the pelvis, of a T.I.P. mummy.



The coffin is unusual in that it is from the Roman Period but the decoration does not display typical Roman characteristics. The decoration harks back to the styles of the Third Intermediate Period and New Kingdom rishi (feathered) coffins. Likely a copy of c.8<sup>th</sup> cent. BC original.

**Outer lid**

Has a carved face, rough hewn facial characteristics which may have been plastered,. There is some decoration on the lid (plaster and paint), but no more carving. It may be a copy of a 21<sup>st</sup> or early 22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty coffin as the hands disappear from late 22nd Dynasty examples. Several wings can be seen, along with a Htp-di-nsw and a djedd pillar. Red, black and yellow colours dominate.

The djedd pillar can be seen in a similar position on the inner coffin of Amenhotepiyin, No.A.1869.33 B, National Museum of Scotland from Thebes Late 25th Dynasty (early 7th Century BC).

**Interior of lid** is undecorated, as are the interior sides in line with 22nd-26th Dynasty conventions.

**The exterior sides of lid** are decorated with red wings highlighted in black, underneath which is a serpent which runs the length of the lid , which rears at the feet where traces of a sundisc can be seen on its head. Similarities can be drawn from the coffin of Irthorru (A1910.97), National Museum of Scotland, probably 26th or 27th Dynasty.

**Trough**

Base -The god figure is on a white background, the figure has a red solar disc on their head (rebirth). Sun god red-yellow, wig black, white mask, yellow neck, an adornment/braid from ear to top of tunic in black, a silver broad collar. The upper body and arms are red, arms by the sides, in use in early 22nd Dynasty with armllets. The right hand has five fingers and a thumb and holds an ankh is held in each hand. The yellow tunic with red trim at the hem atypically starts under arms to above the knee, seemingly non standard garment for a man or woman. Reference can be found to a similar garment in the 22nd - 25th Dynasty in Theban funerary iconography. The figure is atop black nome standard, leonine "tail" beneath the standard, is this a depiction of the tail on the kilt of pharaoh or the priests leopards skin?

Roman coffin 1976-1168, c.2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Century BC, possibly from Thebes

The head is in profile, the body is turned slightly towards the viewer, the figure has very short calves and the feet are in profile. The body is out of proportion with an elongated body, protruding stomach and navel, long thighs and short calves, however it does adhere to the stance of the human in egyptian art. Also the person has a long body with a saggy stomach and well defined belly button perhaps alluding to the status of the individual. Similarities can be made with the coffin of Nes-pa-mau, No.31212, Neues Museum, Berlin, possibly from Akhmim. **The trough base exterior** has a representation of an Osiride djedd pillar crowned with horns, sundisc and two feathers (Osiris). The two feathers of Osiris/Ma'ati are yellow with the red sundisc of Re. It also shows horn's of ram in black. The djedd pillar is in yellow, white and red, in the top section two black snakes are depicted facing outwards. There are hieroglyphs reading down the pillar. Similarities can be drawn with the inner coffin of Amenhotepiyin, No.A.1869.33 B, National Museum of Scotland from Thebes Late 25th Dynasty, early 7th Century BC. And the Late Period bi-valve coffin of Irthorru, No.A1910.97, National Museum of Scotland, probably 26th or 27th Dynasty, 6th century BC or later. The style is Theban and the Djedd pillar is in use mid to late 22nd Dynasty until 26th Dynasty.



Mummy mask 1914-204-37,(see lantern slide above)

In 2013 Jean Lambe researched the mask as part of her MA in Conservation, University of Lincoln. It was cleaned, reshaped and consolidated and stylistically researched.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Cent. AD
- Middle Egypt
- Male with tri-partite headdress, a short fringe and clean shaven
- Made by a different culture (Graeco-Roman) following Egyptian iconography (Anubis, Isis, Nephys and the deceased) with naturalistic representations of the face and hair
- Colouring may have been more vibrant when decorated, the colours having degraded with time
- An individual of some status & wealth to allow for such a burial mask

Jean also looked into the travels of Sir James Caird but could not find any firm evidence of him visiting Egypt apart from a passenger manifest of the "City of Calcutta 22d September 1903" mentioning a Mr Caird, curiously though his name is scored through. These ships went via the Suez Canal.



1914-204-1-4 cartonnage, Sir James Caird, Dundee

1914-204-41 Ptolemaic coffin lid, Qaw el-Kebir, Sir James Caird

This T.I.P. coffin group was part of the donation to the Albert Institute by Sir James Caird in 1913 when he presented "78 Egyptian Relics". Sadly most of the objects are unprovenanced but Caird is known to have "collected the specimens that form the nucleus of the Egyptian Collection." "in 1907 whilst on tour in Egypt" from the Dundee Year Book of 1912.

Dundee Courier & Argus 1889

The Larches, near Bristol, May 1st, 1889.  
Gentlemen,—I have the pleasure to inform you that a selection of antiquities for your museum will be forwarded from London in a few days. The President and Committee of the Egyptian Exploration Fund have much pleasure in offering this selection for your acceptance. I wish to add that this donation is presented in recognition of the Rev. Colin Campbell's valuable services as our local honorary secretary in Dundee.—I am, &c.,  
AMELIA B. EDWARDS.



My thanks go to Dr Aidan Dodson and Dyan Hilton who were invaluable visitors in September 2012 aiding us in our research of the coffins including style and dating and Prof. Luc Bidaut, CRIF for imaging.