

Wooden Mummiform Coffins

These two coffins, dating to the 22nd Dynasty of Egypt (945-712 b.c.e.), were discovered together in the same grave at Thebes. They originally contained the bodies of a man and a woman, both of whom held positions of responsibility in the Temple of Amun-Rec at Thebes. They may have been husband and wife. Following Egyptian custom, the face of the woman is rendered as a pale yellowish-brown, while the man's face is painted red.

36. Coffin of Satmut.

The upper coffin belonged to a woman named Satmut, a female singer in the Temple of Amun-Rec. The exterior of the coffin is decorated in the austere style found on many coffins of the latter part of the 22nd Dynasty. Besides the wig, face and broad beaded collar (wesekh), there is only a single line of inscription, the standard offering formula, which gives Satmut's name and title.

The coffin's interior contains an image of the sky-goddess Nut, who can be found inside many coffins of the 22nd Dynasty, on either the floor or the lid. Nut is painted full face on the floor of this coffin. She wears a robe of the celestial color blue and carries an ankh, the symbol of life, in each hand. Her arms, extending up the sides of the coffin, seem to embrace the body of the deceased.

1902.50.10 (Gift of Theodore M. Davis). Restored in 1985 through the generosity of Rae M. Ginsberg and William M. Ginsberg (Class of 1937).



37. Coffin of Khenankhkhonsu.

The more richly decorated coffin below held the mummy of Khenankhkhonsu, a doorkeeper in the Temple of Amun-Rec and possibly the husband of Satmut.

The lid of Khenankhkhonsu's coffin is covered with images of protective deities. Particularly prominent are the winged scarab beetles. One sits on Khenankhkhonsu's head and enfolds his face in its wings. A second winged scarab covers his chest. Scarabs were symbols of resurrection and new life. Both scarabs grasp the shen-symbol between their hind legs, a protective amulet that also conveyed the idea of eternity.

Scarabs were also connected with the sun, because, according to the Egyptians, the sun moved across the sky like a ball of dung being pushed by a dung beetle. The winged scarab on Khenankhkhonsu's chest holds the solar disk between its front legs like a ball of dung. This scarab also has the head of a hawk, another symbol of the sun. A winged scarab similar to this one can be seen on the wall above.

Offering formulas, which include Khenankhkhonsu's name, appear on the top and both sides of the coffin.

1902.50.9 (Gift of Theodore M. Davis). Restored in 2001.