

E. 1184

Mummy of Child

In 1847, the museum's first curator, Amédée de Beauffort, donated a child's mummy "wrapped in canvas and plasterboard" 22. The face is masked with a thin layer of stucco. The superciliary arches, the nose and the lips are slightly modeled. Big eyes, eyebrows and lips are painted black. The round face, the slightly shaped features, and the size of the eyes invite us to situate this document at the earliest at the end of the fifth century AD. 23. The cartonnage²⁴, visible from the level of the knees to the feet, is in the same material as the mask and is held by a set of strips of about 4 cm wide -25, arranged quite casually on full length. There are still traces of red painted decoration on the leg and the right foot. The top of the feet still bears the traces of three columns of a hieroglyphic inscription that we could not read. A protective layer of wax was applied throughout the length of the mummy and drops, coagulated are visible on the sides.

The radiographic study shows that the cranial box with supra-orbital rims has tilted in the carton mask. An important part of the facial area with the upper jaw is missing. The lower jaw is in place. Here all definite teeth are still completely enclosed in their germinative capsules. All deciduous teeth are present with the exception of two left incisors, which are missing. According to den-tition the age of the child is estimated between 4 and 5 years. We find a tooth, perhaps a canine, at the height of the groin.

The rib cage, vertebral column, pelvis and upper limbs are missing. A vague and dense spot, perhaps a part of the pelvis, is in the thorax. Several little characteristic bone fragments, perhaps the remains of a hand, are seen at the height of the left groin. There is a long bone fragment in the right groin. The lower limbs are about in their normal anatomical relationship. The left femur is broken almost in the middle and the upper part is missing. The head of the right femur is missing from the epiphysis. The articulations of both knees are slightly dislocated. The left fibula shows a post-mortem fracture in its distal third and the right inferior in its proximal third. The growth cartilages are clearly visible in the che-cities. Both feet are missing.

The current length of the mummy is not a good parameter to determine the original size of the child since several important parts of the skeleton are missing. Dr. Gray has been confronted with a similar situation with "Leiden 24". As the sharp delineation of bone fragments still present, the mediocre result of mummification must be attributed to a negligent application of the mummification technique and a lack of precision on the part of the embalmers, rather than the late start of embalming operations. If the unkempt mummification practiced on this body leads to date the document of the end of the Ptolemaic era at the earliest, the type of the cardboard mask invites to locate it at the earliest at the end of the fifth century AD. AD

Lastly, this mummy underwent a C.T.Scan at the Neder-over-Heembeek Military Hospital under the direction of Dr. P. Dufrane, who produced an impressive number of tomographies (4-4-1995) 27. This examination revealed that the mummy was lying on a board embedded in the strips, a detail that conventional radiography had failed to detect.

