

Horwennefer

IMPACT ID: IMP00065

Institution: World Museum
Liverpool

Designation: M13996A

Date of Acquisition: 1833

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Image Modality: x-ray



Figure 1. Horwennefer at Liverpool World Museum (World Museum).

Country: Egypt

Site: Abydos

Time Period: Ptolemaic

Dynasty: Unknown

Date: ~332 BC – 30 BC

Sex: Male

Age: Adult

Background:

The mummy is from the Ptolemaic period in Egypt, recovered from the site of Abydos (World Museum). The individual currently resides at the Liverpool World Museum in Liverpool, England, where it was gifted by Joseph Mayer in 1833 (World Museum). The museum refers to the mummy as Horwennefer. However, it should be noted that the mummy has also been referred to as Harwennefer and Liverpool 8 in different sources.

Horwennefer's parents are referred to as Nesanhar and Satsat, and his name derives from the gods Horus (Hor) and Osiris, sometimes referred to as wen-nefer (World Museum). He was an elite individual (Wade & Nelson, 2013), as he was a high-ranking priest in Abydos and also held the title of Royal Acquaintance (World Museum).

The mummy of Horwennefer is well-preserved, as careful attention was paid by the embalmers (World Museum). His outer wrappings are blackened from the bitumen which they were coated in, which likely served to protect the mummy from bacteria and parasites (World Museum). Additionally, the mummy was wrapped in an outer shroud adorned with the Four Sons

of Horus and goddesses Isis and Nephtys which have been painted on and gilded (World Museum). This shroud is thin and today is torn, but the adorning figures are still intact (Gray & Slow, 1968). At one point, the mummy had also possessed a gilded cartonage mask and a foot plate (although they were damaged sometime before 1870). However, since Liverpool was bombed during the war in 1941, these items have been lost (World Museum).

Pathological Features:

The mummy was identified by Gray & Slow (1968) as male based on the x-rays which they performed in 1966. They also came to an adult age estimate based on these x-rays. Wade & Nelson (2013) give a further narrowed age-at-death estimate of 21 to 31 years based on the CT scans of Horwennefer taken in 2017.

In terms of cranial features, Horwennefer's CT-scans show that the individual has been excerebrated (Wade & Nelson, 2013) and that resin has been poured into the skull (World Museum). However, there is evidence that Horwennefer's excerebration may have been incomplete, as the falx cerebri has calcified (Gray & Slow, 2013). The excerebration appears to have been performed by transnasal craniotomy (Wade & Nelson, 2013) and there is evidence of nasal tampons in Horwennefer's nasal cavities (World Museum). Additionally, it has been noted that all Horwennefer's teeth appear to be intact, there are no observable skull fractures present, and the cervical spine remains undamaged (Gray & Slow, 2013).

In terms of postcranial pathological features, Horwennefer has been eviscerated and the body cavities have been filled with resin, described as Gray & Slow (1968) as "a considerable amount". However, the method by which the individual has been eviscerated is undetermined (Wade & Nelson, 2013). There is no evidence of degenerative conditions in Harwennefer's spine, such as arthritis, nor have fractures or dislocations been observed (Gray & Slow, 2013). His pelvis, arms, and legs appear to be in the same condition as the spine, lacking any form of fracture or dislocation (Gray & Slow, 2013). However, the legs do show evidence of bilateral arrested growth lines in the distal tibia (Gray & Slow, 2013). In terms of arm positioning, Horwennefer's arms were placed crossed over the chest, with the left arm under the right. The hands were placed over the shoulder joints with the left-hand's fingers in a flexed position and those of the right in an extended one (Gray & Slow, 1968).

Resources

Gray, P. H. K., Slow, D. 1968. Egyptian Mummies in the City of Liverpool Museums. Liverpool Bulletin. 15: 1-74.

Human Remains; Mummy of Horwennefer. World Museum [Internet]. Available from: <https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/wml/collections/antiquities/ancient-egypt/item-302961.aspx>

Wade, A. D., Nelson, A. J. 2013. Evisceration and Excerebration in the Egyptian Mummification Tradition. Journal of Archaeological Science. 40: 4198-4206.