

The Braided Lady

IMPACT ID: IMP00083

Institution: Museum of World Treasures

Designation:

Date of Acquisition: 2006

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Image Modality:

Country: Egypt

Site: unknown

Time Period: New Kingdom

Dynasty: 18th

Date: 1550 BCE-1069 BCE

Sex: Female

Age: Late 20s



Figure 1. The Braided Lady at the Museum of World Treasures (Museum of World Treasures, n.d.).

Background:

The mummy is that of young adult female (Briers, 2008), dated to the 18th to 21st Dynasty of the New Kingdom or Third Intermediate Period in Egypt based on mummification trends (King, 2012). She is often referred to as the “Braided Lady” in reference to her hair style (AP, 2008). Dr. Bob Briers, an Egyptologist and Senior Research Fellow at Long Island University, has examined the mummy and suggested that there are indications that the individual was not a royal but was of high status (Briers, 2008). The markers of non-royal identity identified by Briers (2008) are the arrangement of her arms in an extended position to lay over the pelvis, the presence of organ (brain, spleen, and liver) remnants from incomplete evisceration, and the lack of uniformity in linens used for the wrappings – the wrappings expected from a royal mummy would be solely fine linens. Briers’ (2008) evidence to suggest that she was an individual of high status are her manicured hands polished with henna, her modest amount of bone mineralization, and the broadness of her face and breast tissue.

The individual was discovered in a cache of mummies in Egypt, rather than an individual tomb (King, 2012). She was brought to Canada in 1860 by Dr. James A. Douglas, and given to

the Niagara Falls Museum. Here, the mummy was unwrapped (King, 2012). She was then purchased by the John Carlos Museum at Emory University in 1999 before being sold to the Museum of World Treasures' founder in 2006 (King, 2012).

Pathological Features:

The "Braided Lady" was estimated to have died in her early to mid 20s by Briers (2008). This estimate was based on x-rays which display the presence of the mandibular molars and only partial fusion of the distal femur and proximal tibia (Briers, 2008). This is mostly in accordance with the age-at-death estimate of 28-35 years given by Wade & Nelson (2013). While alive, the individual's stature would have been approximately 4'10", and she would have lived with a curved spine (AP, 2008). In terms of mummification, Briers (2008) describes an incomplete evisceration, as described above, with the presence of some organ tissue remaining within the abdominal cavity. However, Wade & Nelson (2013) state that the individual, was neither eviscerated nor excerebrated, and the heart remains intact. During his examination, Dr. Briers took some samples for further lab testing. Samples taken included: a section of the material from the abdominal mass, an insect exoskeleton in the individual's hair, hair, and linen (Briers, 2008).

Resources

AP. 2008. Expert to Study Wichita Mummy. The Wichita Eagle [Internet].

Briers, B. 2008. Conclusions of non-invasive examination of “Braided-hair lady” mummy by Egyptologist, Dr. Bob Briers. Unpublished report.

King, S. 2012. Email correspondence between Steven King of the Museum of World Treasures and Andrew Wade of Western Ontario. Unpublished.

Museum of World Treasures. N.d. Photo of the Braided Hair Lady. Image. Available from <https://worldtreasures.org/exhibits/ancient-egypt>

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

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