

ON THE MINIATURE MASK
FROM THE TUT^CANKHAMŪN EMBALMING CACHE*

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In the spring of 1909 H.E. Winlock acquired for the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York a collection of pieces which had been discovered by Theodore M. Davis the season before in the pit now numbered KV54 in the Valley of the Kings (1). A detailed account of this material, which Winlock early recognized as embalming and other refuse pertaining to the burial of Tut^Cankhamūn, appeared in 1941 (2). The centre-piece of the catalogue was a miniature 'casque' (MMA 30.8.231) (3) of the type often found surmounting packets of embalmed viscera (4), which had arrived at the Met. with the Davis bequest in 1930. Standing some 15 cm high, modelled in cartonnage and painted (predominantly yellow and blue), it would appear to correspond tolerably well with the only contemporary description of the KV54 mask we possess: 'A head about 7 in. high,

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- (1) E. Thomas, *The Royal Necropoleis of Thebes*, Princeton, 1966, 163 f. The Andrews diary (*A Journal on the Bedawin 1889-1912*, for which cf. J.A. Wilson in *Studies in Honor of George R. Hughes*, Chicago, 1976, 274) indicates that the pit was first opened on 21 December 1907, and the contents examined on and before 17 January 1908 (cf. H.E. Winlock, *Materials Used at the Embalming of King Tūt-^Cankh-Amūn*, New York 1941, 5). The entry for 22 January evidently refers back to the earlier examination of this material, and not to the discovery of KV53 as E. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 158, would suggest.
- (2) H.E. Winlock, *Materials...* Note that the Metropolitan Museum assemblage represents only a fraction of the total contents of this pit.
- (3) H.E. Winlock, *Materials...*, 12, pl. II, B; W.C. Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt II*, New York 1959, 304, fig. 189. This is evidently the same mask as that alluded to in a letter from Winlock to Carter dated 25 June 1915 (see n. 6 below), 'tomb unknown', at that time with the rest of Davis's personal collection in Newport, R.I.
- (4) As, for example, in the burial of Tjuyu: T. M. Davis, *The Tomb of Iouiya and Touiyou*, London 1907, 24, pl. XVII; J.E. Quibell, *Tomb of Yuua and Thuiu*, Cairo 1908, 34 f., CG 51018-21, pl. XVI.

which crowned the head of a mummied bird' (sic) (5).

The correctness of this attribution is, nevertheless, open to question. In a letter to Carter dated 25 June 1915 (6), detailing the Metropolitan Museum's holdings of material from KV54 and from the Valley of the Kings in general, Winlock added the following note: 'A mask, *covered with gold leaf* (my italics), of the type found on packages of viscera within Canopic Jars, is said to have been found in the first of the (KV54) Zeirs opened and to be now in the Cairo Museum'. A mask of this description is indeed to be found on display in Cairo (7). The relevant entry in the museum register reads as follows:

J 39711. Tête ou masque en cartonnage doré qui
devait être placé sur un paquet d'intestins
embaumés dans un canope. Cartonnage doré.
H. 0.14 m. Biban el Molouk 1908, puits sans
inscriptions.

Since only one 'puits sans inscriptions' discovered during the seasons 1907/8 or 1908/9 is known to have yielded an object of this description -- this being the pit in which T.M. Davis discovered the Tut^Cankhamūn embalming refuse --, we may reasonably suppose J 39711 to be the miniature mask from KV54. Support for this conclusion is provided by a comparison with the gilded-gesso 'casque' from the smaller of the two foetuses in the tomb of Tut^Cankhamūn (KV62) (8): it and the mask J 39711 are virtually

(5) Andrews diary, entry for 22 January 1908; the 'mummied bird' is surely a garbled reference to one of the packets of embalming refuse.

(6) Unnumbered, amongst the Carter MSS, Tut^Cankhamūn, Notes, in the Griffith Institute, Oxford; first brought to my attention by John Romer.

(7) In room Pl2, E4 case M. The piece appears to be unpublished.

(8) H. Murray and M. Nuttall, *A Handlist to Howard Carter's Catalogue of Objects in Tut^Cankhamūn's Tomb*, Oxford 1963, 12, no. 317a(2); H. Carter, *The Tomb of Tut.ankh.Amen III*, London 1933, 88, pl. XXVI, A. Cf. F.F. Leek, *The Human Remains from the Tomb of Tut^Cankhamūn*, Oxford 1972, pl. XXIII, left.

identical. We can now see that it was this similarity which had prompted Carter to suggest the intended employment of the KV54 mask: it had originally been prepared for the larger of the KV62 fetuses, but, 'owing to its being too small to fit over the head' (9), had never been so employed.

Given that there was but one miniature cartonnage discovered in the KV54 cache (10), and that this is the mask J 39711, Winlock's attribution of the Metropolitan Museum example must fall. Its proper find-spot might, nevertheless, be established from Ayrton's description of one of the 'animal tombs' -- KV51 (11) --, discovered by Davis early in 1906. Besides three monkeys, a large cynocephalous baboon, an ibis, three mummified ducks and 'a tarred box coffin for some animal', Davis recovered from here 'some bundles of intestines made up in the form of little human figures; one of these had near it a mask of beautifully coloured stucco representing a human head which had probably fitted it ...', doubtless 'of the XVIIIth Dynasty' (12). That we have here a reference to the mask MMA 30.8.231 is, I would suggest, little less than certain.

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(9) H. Carter, *Tut.ankh.Amen III*, 89.

(10) Cf. H.E. Winlock, *Materials*, 12.

(11) E. Thomas, *Necropoleis*, 166 ff. Note that in her fig. 15 the numbering of KV50 and KV51 has been inadvertently transposed; cf. T.M. Davis, *The Tomb of Siptah*, London 1908, 17, and Carter map GI I.G.48.

(12) T.M. Davis, *Siptah*, 17 f.