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THE EGYPTIAN COFFINS IN THE COLLECTION OF BRISTOL'S CITY MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

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Introduction

The origins of what is now "Bristol's Museums, Galleries and Archives" lie in the foundation, in 1823, of the Bristol Institution for the Advancement of Science and Art, which shared premises with the Bristol Literary and Philosophical Society at the bottom of Park Street in that city in the south west of England¹. The main focus of the Institution was the natural sciences, but from the very beginning, it was collecting Egyptian material, albeit in small quantities: during the first ten years, only twelve out of about 1250 donations were Egyptological items, and three of those were books.

The first coffin to be donated to the collection was received in 1824, when Thomas Garrard (1789-1859), the City Chamberlain of Bristol, gave a mummy and its associated case. This proved to be an Eighteenth Dynasty piece, belonging to a certain Tay, and ultimately registered as H630 (Cat. 2, below)². Further coffins were given by the same donor in 1834 (Cat. 12-15), but few Egyptian items were acquired in the immediately following years. In 1867 the Institution merged with the Bristol Library Society, moving in 1872 to a new building at the opposite (top) end of Park Street, The new Bristol Museum and Library Association's displays concentrated on geology and natural history, the antiquities collection being relegated to the attics, with the exception of the Egyptian collection, which was displayed on the landing of the back staircase. In 1893 the Museum and Library, struggling financially, were transferred to the Bristol city government and, in 1906 a new City Art Gallery and Museum of

^{*} I am most grateful to Sue Giles, David Singleton and Amber Druce (Bristol's City Museum and Art Gallery) and Rachel Smith (Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery) for all their help in my study of the coffins that form, or once formed, part of the Bristol Egyptian collection.

¹ For more general accounts of the history of the Bristol collection, see A. Dodson and S. Giles, 'The Egyptian Collection of Bristol City Museum', in: V. Solkin (ed.), Древний Егыпет II: к 150-летию со дня рождения Владимира Семеновича Голенищева/Ancient Egypt II: On the occasion of the 150th Birthday Anniversary of Vladimir S. Golenischev (Moscow-St. Petersburg, 2006), 11-20, and Id., 'Ancient Egypt in the City and County of Bristol, England', Kmt: a modern journal of ancient Egypt 18/4 (2007-8), 20-32.

² The registration system currently used dates from 1913; cf. A. Dodson, 'The Coffins of Iyhat and Tairy: a Tale of Two Cities', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 94 (2008), 109, n. 2.



Fig. 1. Bristol's museum buildings. That on the left was built in 1870 for the move of the collections from the nearby former premises of the Bristol Institution for the Advancement of Science and Art. It was, however, abandoned following bomb damage in 1941, and now houses a restaurant. The right-hand structure was completed in 1905 as the City Art Gallery and Museum of Antiquities, and after 1941 also received the collections of the bombed City Museum (*Author's photograph*).

Antiquities was opened next door to the old Museum. During the planning stage of the new establishment it had been decided that archaeology should be linked with art, and thus a gallery of Assyrian, Egyptian, Greek and Roman antiquities was included in the new building.

Although no Egyptological expertise existed within the Museum during this period, this was available at the nearby University College Bristol in the shape of Ernest Sibree (1854-1927), who had in 1896 been appointed Lecturer in Oriental Languages (i.e. Egyptian and Akkadian)³. In 1899 he completed a manuscript volume of copies, transliterations and translations of the Museum's principal Egyptian texts, including some of the coffins.

The first recorded⁴ acquisition of coffins since 1834 occurred in 1905, when the early Twenty-First Dynasty example of Horemkeniset from Deir el-Bahari was received from the Egypt Exploration Fund (Cat. 6/7) and in 1907 a child's coffin and mummy (Cat. 18) was loaned by the Reverend C. Onslow Bourton. During 1909/10 the British

³ See A. Dodson, 'Ernest Sibree: A forgotten pioneer and his milieu', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 93 (2007), 247-53.

⁴ Cf. Cat. 11 and 19: the latter was certainly in the collection before 1899.

School of Archaeology in Egypt gave an early Twenty-Second Dynasty example from Dra Abu'l-Naga (Cat. 10)⁵ and an early Fourth Dynasty piece from Meidum (Cat. 1). From the collection of Mr C. Helyar came in 1917 the lid of the late eighth/early seventh century coffin of Pedihorpakhered (Cat. 16) and in 1922 J.F. Holloway gave a Late Period coffin (Cat. 25).

In 1935, a group of objects were transferred from the Victoria and Albert Museum, which included two complete Twenty-Fifth/Sixth Dynasty coffins and part of the lid of a third (Cat. 17, 20-21), together with and an unusual coffin-trough of the Roman Period (Cat. 26). More funerary material came in 1938 with the collection formed by the lawyer E. Sidney Hartland. Among items given by his widow were the early Twenty-Second Dynasty "yellow" coffin and mummy board of Iytaumut (Cat. 8/9).

The 1870s Museum building was gutted by fire following a bomb hit on the night of 24/25 November 1940. The rear part of Art Gallery was also hit, but luckily escaped the conflagration, although suffering badly from blast damage. Nevertheless, the Art Gallery partially reopened in February, now also housing some of the Museum's surviving material on a "temporary" basis: planning began in 1951 for a wholly new Museum and Art Gallery on a different site. This never materialised, and the collections remain in the 1905 building and an extension completed in 1930.

Storage space was at a premium, and led in 1957 to the destruction of parts of a number of larger objects. That October, Cat. 11, 12 and 14, together with the lid of Cat. 2, were "[d]estroyed ... as in very poor condition, riddled with woodworm; and had always been sub-standard specimens".

On a more positive note, in February 1966, the Museum received on long loan from the Bath Municipal Library some Egyptian antiquities formerly in the Museum of the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution⁷. This included a wooden sarcophagus and two coffins dating to the seventh/sixth centuries BC (Cat. 22-24). This marked the last of the Museum's coffin acquisitions.

Only a selection of the coffins have generally been displayed in the past, but when in May 2005 the Egyptian gallery was closed for rebuilding all underwent conservation and were subsequently placed on display in the new enlarged Egyptian room, which opened in 2007/8. The whole group are now under study, and it is planned that they

⁵ B. Porter and R.B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings*, I, 2nd edition (Oxford, 1960), 606; D.P. DAWSON, S. GILES and M.W. PONSFORD, *Horemkenesi, May He Live Forever: The Bristol Mummy Project* (Bristol, 2002), 21-2.

⁶ Note in the Museum's H-register.

⁷ The Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution (BRLSI) was founded in 1824 at Grand Parade, Bath, and was opened to members in 1825, providing a museum, library and reading room, lecture hall and botanical garden. The original building was demolished in 1932, the BRLSI moving to 16-18 Queen Square; this was requisitioned for defence purposes in 1940, and then passed into the hands of the local government in 1959, being employed in part as the City Reference Library from 1964 until 1993. The BRLSI was then re-launched: see http://www.brlsi.org/>.

should all be published in due course by the present writer as part of a *Catalogue of Ancient Egyptian Coffins and Related Material in the South West of the United Kingdom*, also to include the museums of Exeter, Plymouth, Swansea and Truro.

Catalogue

1. Uninscribed rectangular coffin, containing crouched burial (fig. 2a).

Registration number: H640.

Owner: Male adult.

Date: Early Fourth Dynasty.

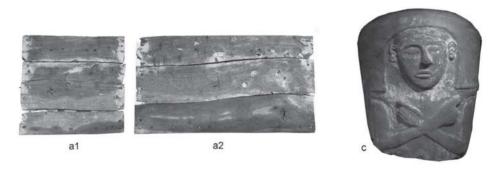
Provenance: Meidum, shaft tomb under façade of small mastaba east of

tomb 6 (Rahotep). Given by British School of Archaeology in

Egypt (BSAE) in 1910.

Bibliography: W.M.F. Petrie, E. Mackay and G.A. Wainwright, Meydum and

Memphis III (London, 1910), 3, 28-9, pl. xxiii[3]; L.V. Grinsell, Guide Catalogue to the Collections from Ancient Egypt (Bristol, 1972), 26; DAWSON, GILES and PONSFORD, Horemkenesi, 20-1.



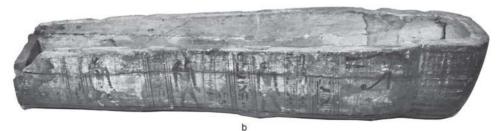


Fig. 2. a. Cat. 1 (H640); 1: head-end; 2: right-hand side; b. Cat. 2 (H630); c. Cat. 5 (H2771a). (a-b. Courtesy Bristol's Museums, Galleries Archives; c. Author).

2. "White" anthropoid coffin, formerly containing a mummy (fig. 2b, 2).

Registration number: H630.

Owner: Tay (woman).

Date: Early Eighteenth Dynasty.

Provenance: Given by Thomas Garrard 1824; allegedly from Salt Collection.

Notes: Mummy unwrapped 1824: fate unknown. Coffin lid destroyed

October 1957.

Bibliography: Dodson and Giles, Kmt: a modern journal of ancient Egypt

18/4 (2007-8), 20, 23, 29.

3-4. Fragments of ceramic "slipper" coffins

Registration number: H2769-70.

Owner: No inscriptions.

Date: Late New Kingdom/early Third Intermediate Period.

Provenance: Uncertain, but most likely East Delta, probably Saft el-Hinna or

Tell el-Yahudieh, although similar pieces were excavated at

these sites and also Ali Marah (see further below).

Notes: Museum records state that a fragmentary slipper coffin was given

by the Egypt Exploration Fund in 1904 "from Sedment" – but this site was not worked until 1920-1, and then by the British School of Archaeology in Egypt, not the EEF. A number of sites explored in 1905/6 by the BSAE yielded such pieces, and thus it is conceivable that the "1904" is a mistake for "1906", "EEF" for "BSAE" and perhaps "Sedment" for "Saft el-Hinna" (!)

Bibliography: Grinsell, Guide Catalogue, 54; cf. W.M.F. Petrie and J.G. Dun-

CAN, Hyksos and Israelite Cities (London, 1906), 42, 51.

5. Ceramic "slipper" coffin (fig. 2c). *Registration number*: H2771a-d. *Owner*: No inscriptions.

Date: No inscription

Date: As Cat. 3-4.

Provenance: See Cat. 3-4.

Bibliography: Grinsell, Guide Catalogue, 54-5, fig. 31; cf. Petrie and Dun-

CAN, Hyksos and Israelite Cities, 42, 51.

6-7. Type IIa⁸ "Yellow" anthropoid coffin and mummy board, containing mummy Ha7386 (fig. 4a).

⁸ Following the typology of A. Niwiński, 21st Dynasty Coffins from Thebes. Chronological and Typological Studies, Theben 5 (Mainz am Rhein, 1988).

Registration number: H641.

Owner: Horemkeniset.

Titles: Priest of Amun-Re, King of the Gods, Head Foreman of the

Gang in the Place of Truth.

Father: Huysheri (not on coffin: known from other sources).

Date: Early/mid Twenty-First Dynasty.

Provenance: Deir el-Bahari, Eleventh Dynasty temple shaft 7. Given by Egypt

Exploration Fund in 1909.

Note: Mummy unwrapped and autopsied in 1981.

Bibliography: PORTER and Moss, Topographical Bibliography I², 657; NIWIŃ-

SKI, 21st Dynasty Coffins, 112[45]; J.H. TAYLOR, Unwrapping a Mummy: the Life, Death and Embalming of Horemkenesi (London, 1995), 61-6; DAWSON, GILES and PONSFORD, Horemkenesi, 35-54; DODSON and GILES, Kmt: a modern journal of ancient

Egypt 18/4 (2007-8), 26, 27, 31.

8-9. Type V "Yellow" anthropoid coffin and mummy board (fig. 4b).

Registration number: H4633.

Owner: Iy(au)mut.

Titles: Lady of House, Singer of Amun-Re-nesunetjeru.

Father: Imutu.

Date: Late Twenty-First Dynasty/early Twenty-Second Dynasty.

Provenance: Given by widow of E. Sidney Hartland in 1938. Design indi-

cates that it is ultimately from Thebes.

Bibliography: NIWIŃSKI, 21st Dynasty Coffins, 112[46]; Dodson and GILES, Kmt:

a modern journal of ancient Egypt 18/4 (2007-8), 26, 28, 29.

10. Black-painted anthropoid coffin, containing male mummy (fig. 4c).

Registration number: H638.

Owner: No readable name.

Date: Early Twenty-Second Dynasty.

Provenance: Dra Abu'l-Naga, court of TT19 and 344. Given by BSAE in 1909.

Notes: Forms part of tomb-group split between Bristol and Manchester

Museum; Bristol also has shabti box H429, while Manchester has a further shabti box, plus the coffin of the Lady Pertenbast (5053).

Bibliography: W.M.F. Petrie, Qurneh (London, 1909), 15, pl. lii; Porter and

Moss, *Topographical Bibliography* I², 606; GRINSELL, *Guide Catalogue*, 57; DAWSON, GILES and PONSFORD, *Horemkenesi*, 21-2; DODSON and GILES, *Kmt: a modern journal of ancient*

Egypt 18/4 (2007-8), 26, 28.

11. Cartonnage mummy-case *Registration number*: (H634).

Owner: No readable name.

Date: Twenty-Second Dynasty.

Provenance: Unknown; date of acquisition unknown, but ultimately regis-

tered 1917.

Notes: Decoration obscured by black layer⁹, but appears to have been

of non-standard kind.

Destroyed 2 Oct. 1957, when found to have early nineteenth

century wooden backing and stuffing of wood-shavings.

Bibliography: None

12. Anthropoid outer coffin of Iyhat (fig. 3).

Registration number: (H629); Ha5594.1 (face); Ha5594.2 (fragment of floor of

trough).

Owner: Iyhat.

Title: Waab-priest of Amun.

Date: c. 725-680 BC.

Provenance: Given by Thomas Garrard 1834. Design indicates that it is ulti-

mately from Thebes.

Notes: Destroyed October 1957; face and fragment of floor of trough

apparently retained; face loaned to Plymouth City Museum and

Art Gallery 2008.

Bibliography: Dodson and Giles, Kmt: a modern journal of ancient Egypt

18/4 (2007-8), 20, 22, 29; Dodson, Journal of Egyptian Archae-

ology 94 (2008).

13. Anthropoid inner coffin of Iyhat, formerly containing mummy (fig. 3).

Registration number: Ha5588 (footboard only); remainder now Plymouth Pease Loan

C1/C2.

Title: Waab-priest of Amun. Father: Pawarma, son of Hor.

Mother: Henttawy.

Date: c. 725-680 BC.

Provenance: See Cat. 12.

⁹ Cf. British Museum EA6662 and EA20744: W.R. DAWSON and P.H.K. GRAY, *Catalogue of Egyptian Antiquities in the British Museum*, I: *Mummies and Human Remains* (London, 1968), 12-3, 19-20, pl. VI[22], X[35].

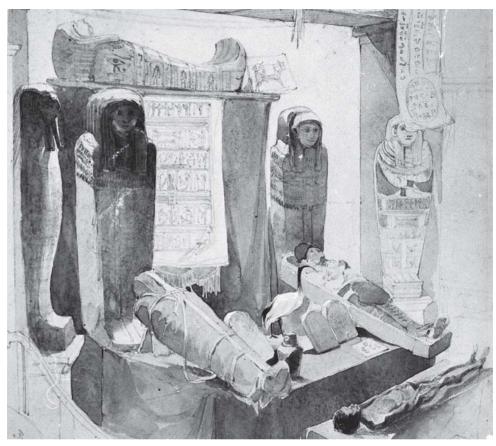


Fig. 3. Watercolour by J.S. Prout, made at the Bristol Institution between 31 March and 4 April 1834, during a series of Egyptological lectures by James Prichard (BCMAG M3984). At the rear there are, from the left: Cat. 13 (lid); Cat. 12; Cat. 2; Cat. 14; Cat. 15. The wrapped mummy derives from Cat. 12/13; the unwrapped one at the front came from Cat. 14/15. (Courtesy Bristol's Museums, Galleries Archives).

Notes: Passed into private collection of Thomas Pease (1816-1884),

perhaps c. 1870; loaned to Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery 1919; footboard remained in Museum collection, and loaned to Plymouth in 2008. Mummy unwrapped in 1842 or

1852, but now lost.

Bibliography: Dodson and Giles, Kmt: a modern journal of ancient Egypt 18/4

(2007-8), 20, 24; Dodson, Journal of Egyptian Archaeology 94

(2008).

14. Anthropoid outer coffin of Tairy (fig. 3).

Registration number: (H631). Owner:

Title: Lady of the House.

Father: Aashery. Mother: Denitnabastet. c. 725-680 BC. Date: Provenance: See Cat. 12.

Notes: Destroyed October 1957.

Bibliography: Dodson and Giles, Kmt: a modern journal of ancient Egypt 18/4

(2007-8), 22, 29; Dodson, Journal of Egyptian Archaeology 94

(2008).

15. Anthropoid inner coffin of Tairy, formerly containing mummy (fig. 3).

Registration number: none; now Plymouth Pease Loan C3.

Owner: Tairy.

Title: Lady of the House.

Father: Aashery. Denitnabastet. Mother: Date: c. 725-680 BC. Provenance: See Cat. 12.

Notes: Passed into private collection of Thomas Pease (1816-1884),

> perhaps c. 1870; loaned to Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery 1919. Mummy unwrapped in Bristol in 1834: the remains of the post-cranial skeleton may now be BCMAG Ha6371.

Dodson and Giles, Kmt: a modern journal of ancient Egypt 18/4

Bibliography:

(2007-8), 20, 24; Dodson, Journal of Egyptian Archaeology 94

(2008).

16. Anthropoid inner coffin of Pedihorpakhered (fig. 4d).

Registration number: H633.

Owner: Pedihorpakhered.

Title: Libation Priest in the temple of Amun.

Father: Panesmaat. Mother: Tamiu.

Date: c. 720-680 BC.

Given from collection of Mr C. Helyar 1917. Design indicates Provenance:

that it is ultimately from Thebes.

DODSON and GILES, Kmt: a modern journal of ancient Egypt 18/4 *Bibliography:*

(2007-8), 26, 27, 29.

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Fig. 4. a. Cat. 6 (H641); b. Cat. 8 (H4633); c. Cat. 10 (H638); d. Cat. 16 (H633); e. Cat. 17 (H4556) (*Courtesy Bristol's Museums, Galleries Archives*).

17. Anthropoid inner coffin of Payankhnedjemben (fig. 4e).

Registration number: H4556 (ex-Victoria and Albert Museum 18-1888).

Owner: Payankhnedjemben.

Father: Nesamen.

Bibliography:

Mother: Naamutsenakhtes. Date: c. 710-675 BC.

Provenance: Transferred from Victoria and Albert Museum, London, in 1935¹⁰;

originally given by Sir W.G.F. (later Lord) Phillimore (1845-1929) in 1888. Design indicates that it is ultimately from Thebes. GRINSELL, *Guide Catalogue*, 59, 67, fig. 38; DODSON and GILES,

Kmt: a modern journal of ancient Egypt 18/4 (2007-8), 26, 28, 31.

¹⁰ Offered to Director of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery in November 1934, following his visit to 'Mr. Brackett's store' in the Department of Woodwork at the V&A that summer.

18. Anthropoid coffin of a child, containing a mummy (fig. 5a).

Registration number: Ha6140.

Name: No inscription.

Date: Twenty-Fifth Dynasty.

Provenance: Loaned 1907 by Revd. C. Onslow Bourton (d. 1931), who had

inherited it from his great-uncle George Onslow Masters, who

had acquired it in Egypt.

Bibliography: DAWSON, GILES and PONSFORD, Horemkenesi, 23-4.

19. Anthropoid inner coffin of Isetwer(et) (fig. 6a).

Registration number: H632.

Owner: Isetwer(et).

Title: Lady of the House. Father: Wermenkhetamen.

Mother: Nesmut.

Date: c. 675-650 BC.



Fig. 5. a. Cat. 18 (Ha6140); b. Cat. 20 (H4557) (Courtesy Bristol's Museums, Galleries Archives).

Provenance: Unknown, other than it entered the collection before 1899, when

its texts were read by Sibree. It is possible that it may be the coffin exhibited at 10 Milsom Street, Bath, in October 1822¹¹.

Bibliography: Dodson, Journal of Egyptian Archaeology 93 (2007), 250;

Dodson and Giles, *Kmt: a modern journal of ancient Egypt* 18/4 (2007-8), 26, 30; Dodson, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 94

(2008), 114-5 n. 25.

20. Anthropoid outer coffin of unknown woman, possibly Inyamennayesnebu (Cat. 21

- Fig. 5b).

Registration number: H4557 (ex-Victoria and Albert Museum 19-1888).

Owner: Name missing; on style possibly Inyamennayesnebu (Cat. 21).

Date: Twenty-Third/Sixth Dynasty.

Provenance: See Cat. 17.

Bibliography: None.

21. Anthropoid inner coffin of Inyamennayesnebu (fig. 6b).

Registration number: H4555 (ex-Victoria and Albert Museum 17-1888).

Owner: Inyamennayesnebu. Title: Lady of the House.

Father: Horudja. Mother: Tabes.

Date: c. 675-640 BC. Provenance: See Cat. 17.

Bibliography: Grinsell, Guide Catalogue, 59; Dodson and Giles, Kmt: a

modern journal of ancient Egypt 18/4 (2007-8), 26, 30, 31.

22. Anthropoid inner coffin of Nesikhonsu, containing mummy (fig. 6c).

Registration number: H5062.

Owner: Nesikhonsu.

Title: Lady of the House. Father: Pakherkhonsu-Habi¹².

Mother: Taikesh.

Date: c. 650-600 BC.

Provenance: Loaned by Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution, Febru-

ary 1966. Prior to its acquisition by the Institution it had been

¹¹ Not to be confused with the coffins exhibited at the same time at 10 New Bond Street in the city that same month: see Cat. 22-4.

¹² Both names are given for the owner's father on different parts of the coffin.



Fig. 6. a. Cat. 19 (H632); b. Cat. 21 (H4555); c. Cat. 22 (H5062); d. Cat. 24 (H5074); e. Cat. 25 (H4308) (Courtesy Bristol's Museums, Galleries Archives).

part of an exhibition at 10 New Bond Street, which opened on 8 October 1822, stated to have been brought from Egypt by Bel-

zoni¹³. Design indicates that it is ultimately from Thebes.

Bibliography: Dodson and Giles, Kmt: a modern journal of ancient Egypt 18/4

 $(2007\text{-}8), 26, 30; \ Dodson, \textit{Journal of Egyptian Archaeology} \ 94$

(2008), 114-5 n. 25.

23. Rectangular sarcophagus of Djedkhonsiuankh.

Registration number: H5075.

Owner: Djedkhonsiuankh.

Father: Nihordebha.

¹³ Keene's Bath Journal and General Advertiser, 7 October 1822, with the same advertisement repeated in the 14 October issue; see contemporary poster reproduced in S. IKRAM and A. DODSON, *The Mummy in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1997), 71, fig. 65.



Fig. 7. Cat. 26 (H4590) (Author's photograph).

Mother: Paertja.

Date: c. 625-550 BC. Provenance: See Cat. 22.

Bibliography: DAWSON, GILES and PONSFORD, Horemkenesi, 23; DODSON and

GILES, Kmt: a modern journal of ancient Egypt 18/4 (2007-8), 30.

24. Anthropoid coffin of Djedkhonsiuankh, containing mummy (fig. 6d).

Registration number: H5074.

Owner: Djedkhonsiuankh.
Father: Nihordebha.
Mother: Paertja.

Date: c. 625-550 BC.

Provenance: See Cat. 22.

Bibliography: DAWSON, GILES and PONSFORD, Horemkenesi, 23; DODSON and

GILES, Kmt: a modern journal of ancient Egypt 18/4 (2007-8), 30.

25. Anthropoid coffin of Peditehuty (fig. 6e).

Registration number: H4308.

Owner: Peditehuty.

Title: Steward of the temple of Hathor, Lady of Ousiya.

Father: Horbebenty.

Mother: Meresmut.

Date: Late Period/early Ptolemaic Period

Provenance: Given by J.F. Holloway in 1922; on the basis of the owner's

title, probably from Meir.

Bibliography: Dodson and Giles, Kmt: a modern journal of ancient Egypt

18/4 (2007-8), 26, 28.

26. Coffin-trough in the form of a funerary bed (fig. 7).

Registration number: H4590 (Ac 8435,1935: ex-Victoria and Albert Museum 305-

1900).

Owner: No inscription.

Date: Roman Period.

Provenance: Transferred from Victoria and Albert Museum, London, in

1935. Originally collected by Major W.J. Myers (1858-1899) in the mid-1880s, the majority of whose collection was bequeathed to Eton College¹⁴. This particular piece was, however, given to the V&A by his brother, (Sir) Dudley B. Myers (1861-1944),

in 1900¹⁵.

Bibliography: None.

¹⁴ W.R. DAWSON, E.P. UPHILL and M.L. BIERBRIER, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, 3rd ed. (London, 995), 305.

 $^{^{15}}$ I am most grateful to Nicholas Reeves for information on the Myers Collection and a copy of a letter from the V&A to Eton confirming what is known of the piece's acquisition.