

# Nesmut

IMPACT ID: IMP00031

Institution: Royal Ontario Museum

Designation: Unknown

Date of Acquisition: Unknown

Contact: Unknown

Image Modality: CT

Country: Egypt

Site: Gurneh

Time Period: Third Intermediate Period

Dynasty: 22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty

Date: 945 BCE – 715 BCE

Sex: Female

Age: Juvenile



Figure 1. An unpublished photo of Nesmut's skeleton taken by Jillian Graves of Western University at the Royal Ontario Museum (Graves, 2019).

## Background:

For some time, the location of Nesmut's remains was unknown and only the coffin had been on display at the Royal Ontario Museum (Gibson, 2011a). The coffin of Nesmut belongs to a type of coffins which were only made between 920 and 900 BCE, and the inscriptions on it give the notion that the coffin had been created specifically for her by someone familiar with her (Gibson, 2011b). Nesmut's name and the titles 'Lady of the House' and 'Chantress of Amun' appear over ten times on the coffin, along with two mentions of her mother's name, Takaia or Takria (Gibson, 2011b). Also written on the coffin is the location of Waset, which is known in modern-day as Luxor, and it is possible that this is where Nesmut had lived (Gibson, 2011a). Nesmut's coffin is believed to have been one of four coffins which came from Sir Robert Mond's excavations at the site of Gurneh and given to Charles Currelly for the museum in 1906 (Gibson, 2011b). If the coffin does belong to this group, then it was fully intact when Mond discovered it, including the lid and Nesmut's mummy (Gibson, 2011b).

A retired educator and Egyptologist at the Royal Ontario Museum, Gayle Gibson, began searching for Nesmut's remains after coming across photographs belonging to the previous curator in an envelope marked '1961' (Gibson, 2011a). These photographs were taken at the University of Toronto and featured Nesmut's coffin next to a small mummy, depicting a series of events in which the small mummy was unwrapped. Gibson believed that this mummy was likely that of Nesmut, suggesting that the mummy had been brought to Canada with the coffin. However, neither the coffin nor the mummy had been recorded in any of the Royal Ontario Museum's collections and were not displayed in 1961, likely due to their poor preservation (Gibson, 2011a). Among the photographs, Gibson found notes from the Department of Anthropology at the University of Toronto, as well as their Faunal Archaeo-Ostology laboratory, leading her to the possibility of Nesmut's remains being unwrapped to be utilized for comparative anatomy – a likely possibility due to the individual's lack of known provenance and extant family connections (Gibson, 2011a). A colleague of Gibson's, Julian Siggers, Vice-President of the Royal Ontario Museum, had remembered seeing the remains while he had taught at the University of Toronto Faunal Laboratory, and he reached out to the Anthropology department. The remains were rediscovered in 2010 in a storeroom and returned to the museum (Gibson, 2011a).

#### Pathological Features:

The remains are in poor condition for a mummy, having been badly damaged by insects and unwrapped (Gibson, 2011a). Most of the body is skeletonized, except for the hands and forearms which have been preserved, including her well-cared-for fingernails (Gibson, 2011a).

Nesmut's height has been recorded as three feet nine inches, which had led to an initial age estimate of eight or nine years old (Gibson, 2011a). However, two other age estimates have been suggested for Nesmut. Based on x-rays taken in 1993, it was then estimated that her age-at-death was approximately twelve years old, and that her short stature was thought to be a result of malnutrition due to food shortages when there were issues with the rising of the Nile for agricultural irrigation (Gibson, 2011a). However, Wade and Nelson (2013) propose an age estimate of five to nine years old, closer to the initial estimation.

Note: Jillian Graves at Western University is in the process of performing a more in-depth analysis of this individual.

### References

Gibson, Gayle. 2011a. Little Girl Lost. ROM: Magazine of the Royal Ontario Museum. 43(4): 16-20.

Gibson, Gayle. 2011b. Nesmut: The Brown Coffin and the Lost Girl. Unpublished Entry in the Royal Ontario Museum Catalogue.

Graves, Jillian. 2019. Photo of Nesmut's Skeleton. Image. Unpublished.

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