XXVIII. *Description of an Egyptian Mummy, and of the Hieroglyphics upon its Case, supposed to be of the Period of the Psammetici, opened in 1843; in a Letter from HUGH W. DIAMOND, Esq., F.S.A. to JOHN YONGE AKERMAN, Esq., F.S.A.*

Read 5th June, 1845.

MY DEAR AKERMAN,

SOME time since you will remember that you were looking at the accompanying drawings, taken from the cases of a mummy which I opened in company with Mr. Birch, of the British Museum, in the autumn of 1843, and you suggested that, from the great fidelity with which they were executed, they were deserving of exhibition at some meeting of the Society of Antiquaries. I now send them to you, with some descriptions thereof, which I am enabled to furnish by the kindness of Mr. Birch.

The mummy was given to me by a friend, who purchased it a great many years ago at one of the Custom-house sales, and by long exposure to damp in a granary after it was in his possession, the upper surface of both the cases became so destroyed as not to be deciphered; a rough cut had also been made partially through the folds of the bandages over the chest by the Custom-house authorities, in order to ascertain if the package contained any contraband articles. In other respects it was in a remarkably good state of preservation; the many bandages being apparently as fresh as on the day they were first used. They were formed of *new* material torn in widths of six inches, and measuring twenty-one feet in length, with the remarkable peculiarity of a blue border at one end, (which, I believe, was also the case in Dr. Lee's mummy,) the other end terminating with a well-made fringe; evidently showing that old materials were not, as is generally asserted, used for this purpose. They were very numerous, and, together

with the inner scarf or shroud, made of a much finer texture, weighed upwards of thirty-two pounds. If any person present should feel an interest in these ancient specimens of manufacture, I send you a quantity which you may lay on the table for any one's acceptance.

So much has been said from the time of Herodotus downwards on the subject of Embalming, that it is needless for me to enter into that subject. In this mummy the whole of the viscera had been removed and deposited in five separate portions, and deposited between the legs; the whole cavity of the abdomen and chest were crammed full with a coarse powder, the raspings of some red wood, and which, no doubt, not only contributed much to the preservation of the form, but from its dry absorbing nature also was most useful in preserving the body from decay.

Notwithstanding the accuracy and minuteness of the accounts which have been given of the various processes in embalming, I believe the grand secret of preservation was siccation; and by that process alone animal matter may be preserved, without all the detail of pickling and spiceing which is usually described. I felt convinced of this long since, and I take the liberty of sending you the small hand of an infant which I treated so myself eighteen years since; it has been constantly exposed to the atmosphere since, and no doubt, if wrapped in bandages and protected from the air, would last as long as any Egyptian mummy which ever was made. You will perceive from the drawing of the Lady herself, that my views of the matter are correct; it represents a mere mass of dried flesh and bone: a portion of the integuments I moistened with water, and allowed to remain exposed to the air, and they soon became very offensive and decayed. In giving the following description of the drawings, I trust I shall be pardoned for any omission, knowing, as you do, how completely my time has been professionally occupied.

1. and 2. External sides of outer case. "The declaration of Ra (the Sun) the god, lord of the two hemispheres, over the gods, manifested in the solar abode; he gives offerings, bread, and kufi, and all other good and pure things, and all other edible (or delightful) things, for the sake of the Osirian (deceased) lady of the house of Taikush, truth-speaking^a, daughter of Pahar."

^a This expression may also be rendered "declared true;" it is equivalent to "deceased."

3. The interior bottom of the outer case, representing the "god Seker-Osiris, lord of the tombs, who gives offerings;" he is surrounded by a serpent in the outline of a naos, with the tail brought up to the mouth; emblem of eternity. At the bottom of the coffin is a solar disk in a signet; emblem of the solar orbit.

4. On the inner left side of the same case. The goddess Isis, standing on a standard: above, the Hut, the emblem of the Celestial Sun, considered as the region of Apollinopolis Magna, and "Isis, offering" between "the East," and "the West."

5. The corresponding side. The goddess Nephthys in a similar attitude, on a standard, and with corresponding titles. She was the sister of Isis and Osiris.

6. Outer back of the inner case. "The declaration of the god Ra, the Har of the two worlds, over the gods, and of Athom, lord of the two lands of Petennu, of Socharis-Osiris, resident in the centre of the tomb, and Anup resident in the divine abode (or gate), and lord of the land of Ser; of Osiris, the revealer of good, eternal ruler; who give the usual manifestation of food and drink [on their altars], innumerable quantities of flesh, and fowl, incense, and things made, and all other good and pure things, for the lady of the house Taikush, truth-speaking."

7. The corresponding side. "An appointed offering to Osiris, the breath of the West (Pethempamentes), great god, Lord of Abydos, who gives cakes and kufi, (or fragrance) and all other good and pure things, as well as all other drinkable? and delightful things, for the sake of the Lady of the house Taikush, truth-speaking, daughter of Pahar, a door-keeper (of the Temple) of Osiris, the gracious destroyer her mother, the lady of the house Shai, truth speaking, and all confronted to the great gods."

Down the back is the Nilometer, emblem of the god Tut, or "he who is established;" at the foot of which is the symbol of Life, and at each side the land of the West.

8. The bottom of the inner case. The emblem called Nilometer; from the top of it issue two arms holding the disk of the Sun, and the right symbolic eye emblem of the god Har, below the symbol Neb, "lord;" perhaps in relation with the words "East" and "West" placed at the left side, as "Har Tetu, Lord of the East and West."

9. Top of the inner case. The goddess Nupe or Netpe, standing. She

is always placed on the upper lid, and frequently invoked to extend or stretch herself over the deceased, to protect him. She is here called "Nupe, producer of the Gods." She was the Rhea of mythology, and mother of all terrestrial gods; before her is inscribed, "The Osirian (married) Lady of the house, Taikush, truth-speaking."

Mr. Birch considers this mummy to be of the period of the Psammetici.

I hope you will not consider me to have wasted your time, or that of the Society; my only excuse for so doing being an absence of more important matter, and that I might exhibit faithful representations of what is now nearly destroyed.

I am, my dear Akerman,

Yours very faithfully,

HUGH W. DIAMOND.

TO JOHN YONGE AKERMAN, Esq. F.S.A.