

Coffin of King Nubkheperra Intef



From the tomb of Nubkheperra Intef, Dra Abu el-Naga, Thebes, Egypt
17th Dynasty, around 1600 BC

The coffin of King Nubkheperra Intef is a fine example of a new type of coffin that appeared in the Second Intermediate period (about 1750-1550 BC). They are known as rishi coffins, from the Arabic word for 'feather', as the surface of the body was decorated with a pair of vulture's wings, which protected the mummy. Rishi coffins are anthropoid (human in form) and show the royal nemes head-dress, whether or not they were intended for a king.

The massive proportions and large head-dress of this example are typical. The surface of the lid is gilded, with the feather details incised. The eyes are inlaid, and a uraeus and false beard were originally attached to the head. The inside of the coffin is covered with resin, in which a beetle became trapped.

The coffin, found in 1827, is reported to have been found inside a sarcophagus carved from the surrounding rock in what might have been the original tomb of the king. Recent investigation of this area of the Theban necropolis has revealed several large tombs which might be those of the kings of the Seventeenth Dynasty (about 1650-1550 BC).

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