

Mummy Board of Henutmehyt **The British Museum**

From the tomb of Henutmehyt, Thebes, Egypt
19th Dynasty, around 1250 BC

A Theban priestess



The fine quality of Henutmehyt's funerary equipment shows that she was an individual of considerable wealth. As well as an outer and inner coffin, her mummy was covered with a mask and openwork case. This combination of mask and cover is known as a 'mummy board', and is typical of Egyptian burials of the Nineteenth Dynasty (about 1295-1186 BC). It was placed directly over the bandaged body within the inner coffin.

The mummy board of Henutmehyt is made of expensive imported cedarwood, which has been plastered and gilded. Unlike earlier examples, the mask covers the upper body and includes her crossed arms. She is shown in exactly the same way as she appears on her outer and inner coffins.

She wears a long wig with a lotus flower on the top, and her tresses are bound with gold bands. Around her neck she wears a deep and elaborate collar or garland. The openwork case has a central column and numerous horizontal bands of inscription. These recall the arrangement of the bandages of the mummy, and divide the area into scenes. The scenes show the deceased before the various gods of the Underworld.

J.H. Taylor, *Studies in Egyptian antiquities*, British Museum Occasional Paper 123 (, 1999)

J.H. Taylor, *Egyptian coffins* (Aylesbury, Shire Publications, 1989)

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