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UNCOVERING THE
MUMMY OF RAMESES II

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Uncovering the Mummy of Rameses II.,
King of Egypt, the Oppressor of the Jews
in the Time of Moses.

King
Rameses



the
Great.



THE MUMMY OF THE EGYPTIAN KING, RAMESES II., OF THE NINETEENTH DYNASTY
(ABOUT 1400 TO 1250 B.C.), STRIPPED OF ITS COVERINGS. FROM PHOTOGRAPHS.

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UNCOVERING THE MUMMY OF RAMESES II., KING OF EGYPT, AND OPPRESSOR OF THE JEWS IN THE TIME OF MOSES.

PROFESSOR MASPERO'S OFFICIAL REPORT.

BOULAK, June 3, 1886

THE year 1886, the first day of June, corresponding with the twenty-eighth day of Sha'ban, in the year 1303 of the Hegira, at nine o'clock in the morning.

By order of, and in the presence of, His Highness Mohammed Pasha Tewfik, Khedive of Egypt, and in the presence of their Excellencies Mukhtar Pasha Ghazi, High Commissioner of His Highness the Sultan; Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, High Commissioner of Her Britannic Majesty; Nubar Pasha, President of the Council of Ministers; Abdel Kader Pasha Hilmy, Minister of the Interior; Mustapha Pasha Fehmy, Minister of Finance; Abderrahman Pasha Rouchdy, Minister of Public Works and Public Instruction; De Hitroovo, Agent and Consul-General of Russia; Khairi Pasha, Director of the Maich of His Highness the Khedive; Zulfikar Pasha, Grand Master of the Ceremonies to His Highness the Khedive; Salem Pasha, Physician to His Highness the Khedive; Abdallah Bey Fauzy and Ahmed Bey Hamdy, Aides-de-Camp to His Highness the Khedive; Chouky Bey, Daninos Bey, Takla Bey, Walpole, and Abaza.

MM. Gaston Maspero, Director-General of the Excavations and Antiquities of Egypt, Emil Brugsch Bey, keeper, and Urbin Bouriant, assistant keeper, of the Museum of Boulak, proceeded, in the hall called "The Hall of Royal Mummies," to unbandage those two mummies which in the printed catalogue are numbered 5,229 and 5,233, both being among those discovered in the subterranean hiding-place at Dayr-el-Bahari.

The mummy (No. 5,233) first taken out from its glass case is that of Rameses II., Sesostris, as testified by the official entries bearing date the sixth and sixteenth years of the reign of the High Priest Her-hor Se Amen and the High Priest Pinotem I., written in black ink upon the lid of the wooden mummy-case, and the further entry of the sixteenth year of the High Priest Pinotem I., written upon the outer winding-sheet of the mummy, over the region of the breast. The presence of this last inscription having been verified by His Highness the Khedive, and by the illustrious personages there assembled, the first wrapping was removed, and there were successfully discovered a band of stuff (sic) twenty centimeters in width, rolled round the body; then a second winding-sheet, sewn up and kept in place by narrow bands placed at some distance apart; then two thicknesses of small bandages; and then a piece of fine linen, reaching from the head to the feet. A figure representing the Goddess Nut, one meter in length, is drawn upon this piece of linen, in red and white, as prescribed by the ritual. The profile of the goddess is unmistakably designed after the pure and delicate profile of Seti I., as he is known to us in the bas-relief sculptures of Thebes and Abydos. Under this amulet there was found another bandage; then a layer of pieces of linen folded in squares and spotted with the bituminous matter used by the embalmers. This last covering removed, Rameses II. appeared. The head is long, and small in proportion to the body. The top of the skull is quite bare. On the temples there are a few sparse hairs, but at the poll the hair is quite thick, forming smooth, straight locks about five centimeters in length. White at the time of death, they have been dyed a light yellow by the spices used in embalment. The forehead is low and narrow; the brow-ridge prominent; the eyebrows are thick and white; the eyes are small and close together; the nose is long, thin, hooked like the noses of the Bourbons, and slightly crushed at the tip by the pressure of the bandages. The temples are sunken; the cheekbones very prominent; the ears round, standing far out from the head, and pierced like those of a woman for the wearing of earrings. The jawbone is massive and strong; the chin very prominent; the mouth small, but thick-lipped, and full of some kind of black paste. This paste being partly cut away with the scissors, disclosed some much worn and very brittle teeth, which, moreover, are white and well preserved. The mustache and beard are thin. They seem to have been kept shaven during life, but were probably allowed to grow during the king's last illness, or they may have grown after death. The hairs are white, like those of the head and eyebrows, but are harsh and bristly, and from two to three millimeters in length. The skin is of earthy brown, spotted with black. Finally, it may be said the face of the mummy gives a fair idea of the face of the living king. The expression is unintellectual, perhaps slightly animal; but even under the somewhat grotesque disguise of mummification, there is plainly to be seen an air of sovereign majesty, of resolve, and of pride. The rest of the body is as well preserved as the head; but in consequence of the reduction of the tissues, its external aspect is less life-like. The neck is no thicker than the vertebral column. The chest is broad, the shoulders are square, the arms are crossed upon the breast, the hands are small and dyed with henna, and the wound in the left side, through which the embalmers extracted the viscera, is large and open. The legs and thighs are fleshless; the feet are long, slender, somewhat flat-soled, and dyed, like the hands, with henna. The corpse is that of an old man, but of a vigorous and robust old man. We know, indeed, that Rameses II. reigned for sixty-seven years, and that he must have been nearly one hundred years old when he died.

The unbandaging of the mummy of Rameses II. took less than one-quarter of an hour. After a short pause of a few moments, at precisely ten minutes before ten o'clock, the mummy numbered 5,229 was, in its turn, removed from its glass case. It was discovered in the great sarcophagus numbered 5,247, which also contained another mummy in a very dirty and tattered condition. As this sarcophagus bore the name of Nofretari, the wife of King Ahmes I. of the eighteenth dynasty, it had been taken for granted that No. 5,229 was the mummy of this queen. The other mummy was supposed to be that of some unknown princess who had been laid beside Nofretari by the priests employed to conceal the royal mummies in the hiding-place at Dayr-el-Bahari. Consigned to the museum stores, the mummy decayed, and gave out so foul an odor that it became necessary to get rid of it. It was accordingly opened, and proved to have been bandaged very carefully; but the body was no sooner exposed to the outer air than it fell literally into a state of putrefaction, dissolving into black matter, which gave out an insupportable smell. It was, however, ascertained to be the corpse of a woman of mature age and middle height, belonging to the white races of mankind. There were no traces of writing on the bandages, but a small strip of linen discovered in the sarcophagus No. 5,247 was decorated with a scene of adoration of King Rameses III., in the likeness of two forms of Amen. A short legend, written partly in cursive hieroglyphs and partly in hieratic, states that the piece of linen thus decorated was the gift of the head laundress of the royal household, and it was accordingly supposed that the anonymous mummy was one of the many sisters, wives, or daughters of Rameses III.

The mummy No. 5,229 was very neatly wrapped in orange-colored linen, kept in place by small strips of ordinary linen. There was no outer inscription, but upon the head was a linen band, covered with mystical figures.

M. Maspero here reminded His Highness the Khedive that Nofretari is represented upon certain monuments as of a black complexion, while upon other monuments she is seen with a yellow skin, and with the soft hair of an Egyptian woman. Hence there have arisen innumerable discussions among Egyptologists, some affirming that the queen was a negress, while others maintain that the black tint of her face and body was a fiction originating with the priests. The worship of this queen was extremely popular at Thebes, where she was deified under one of the forms of Hathor, the black goddess, the goddess of death and of the shades. The opening of the mummy No. 5,229 would, therefore, probably settle this historical question for good and all.

The orange-colored winding-sheet being removed, there appeared beneath it a white sheet, bearing an inscription in four lines, "The year XIII., the second month of Shomou, the 28th day, the First Prophet of Amen, King of the Gods, Pinotem, son of the First Prophet of Amen, Piankhi, the Scribe of the Temple Zoserou-Khonsu, and the Scribe of the Necropolis Boutchamou, proceeded to restore the defunct King Ra-user-ma Mer-Amen, and to establish him for Eternity."

The mummy, which had hitherto been taken for Nofretari, was then the mummy of Rameses III., and the anonymous mummy was without doubt that of Nofretari.

This point being verified, Rameses III. was placed erect, and photographed in his bandages. Short as was the delay, it seemed too long for the impatient spectators. The strange revelation, which had substituted one of the great conquerors of Egyptian history for the most venerated Queen of the XVIII. Dynasty, had astonished and excited them to the uttermost. The unbandaging of the mummy then recommenced, in the midst of general impatience.

All had left their places, and crowded around the operators. Three thicknesses of bandages were rapidly unwound; then came a casing of sewn canvas, covered with a thin coating of cement. This casing being cut with the scissors, more layers of linen appeared. The mummy seemed to diminish and reveal its forms under our fingers. Some of the wrappings were inscribed with legends and groups in black ink, notably the God Amen enthroned, with a line of hieroglyphics below, stating that this bandage was made and offered by a devotee of the period, or, perhaps, by a princess of the blood royal: "The Lady Songstress of Amen Ra, King of the Gods, Tait-aa-Maut, daughter of the First Prophet of Amen, Piankhi, in order that the God Amen should accord her life, health, and strength."

Two pectoral ornaments were laid in the folds of the wrappers, one of gilt wood, bearing the usual group of Isis and Nephthys adoring the sun; the other in pure gold, inscribed with the name of Rameses





III. One last wrapper of stiffened canvas, one last winding-sheet of red linen, and then a great disappointment, keenly felt by the operators; the face of the king was covered with a compact mass of bitumen, which completely hid the features. At twenty minutes past eleven, His Highness the Khedive left the Hall of Mummies.

The work was resumed in the afternoon of the same day, and on Thursday morning, the 3d of June, a fresh examination of the bandages revealed inscriptions upon two of them. The first is dated the year IX., the second the year X., of the High Priest Pinotem I. The tarry substance upon the face of the mummy being carefully attacked with the scissors, was detached little by little, and the features became visible. They are less well preserved than those of Rameses II., yet they can to a certain extent be identified with those of the portraits of the conqueror. The head and face are closely shaved, and show no trace of hair or beard. The forehead, without being very lofty or very broad, is better proportioned and more intellectual than that of Rameses II. The brow-ridge is less prominent, the cheekbones are less high, the nose is less hooked, the chin and jaw are less heavy. The eyes appear to be larger, but it is not possible to be certain of this last point, the eyelids having been removed, and the cavities of the eyeballs having been stuffed with rags. The ears are closer to the head than those of Rameses II., and they are pierced in like manner for the reception of earrings. The mouth is disproportionately wide, and the thin lips reveal a row of white and well-placed teeth. The first molar on the right side appears to have been broken, or to have been worn away earlier than the rest. In short, Rameses III. is like a smaller imitation of Rameses II. The physiognomy is more delicate, and, above all, more intelligent; but the height of the body is less, the shoulders are less wide, and the strength of the man was inferior. What he was himself in his individual person as compared with Rameses II., so was his reign as compared with the reign of Rameses II. His wars were not fought in Syria or Ethiopia, but at the mouths of the Nile and on the frontiers of Egypt. His buildings were of a poor style, and of hasty construction. His piety was as pompous as that of Rameses II., but his resources were more meagre. His vanity was, however, as boundless; and such was his supreme desire to copy in all things the example of his illustrious predecessor, that he gave to his sons the names of the sons of Rameses II., and almost in the same order of birth.

The two mummies, replaced in their glass cases, will henceforth be exhibited with their faces uncovered, like the mummies of King Pinotem and the priest Nebsouni.

Given at Boulak, June 3, 1886.

G. MASPERO.

LETTER OF BRUGSCH-BEY TO THE "ILLUSTRIRTE ZEITUNG."

ONE of the most interesting days for the history of the Museum of Boulak, and for those present at the time, was the 1st of June, 1886. Five years ago the 5th of July, I had the good fortune in Thebes to bring to the light of day the rich number of royal and other mummies, after their thousand years' rest and oblivion, and to place them, a few weeks later, in good condition, in the Museum of Boulak.

By thousands of foreigners and natives, the mummies were regarded with curiosity and wonder. Later, arose the question whether it would not be in the interest of science to open the mummies, or at least some of the most especially important of them.

The circumstance, that, a short time after its discovery, the mummy of King Thutmes III. was opened in the museum, but was found in so pitiable a condition that, no later than a few days afterwards, *Jung* formed upon it, which only with great difficulty could be again removed, restrained hitherto M. Maspero, the director-general of the museum, from undertaking a further opening of the mummies from Deir-el-Bahari.

First, at the wish of the Viceroy, who had fixed upon Tuesday, the 1st of June, for the deed, and had invited several high personages, among them Mouktar Pasha, Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, all the Ministers, as well as the Russian Consul General Hitrovo, was the opening of two mummies decided upon,— those of Rameses II., and of the Queen Nofert Ari, the wife of King Amasis, the first ruler of the Eighteenth Dynasty.

On the appointed day the opening of the two mummies above-named took place, in the forenoon, in the Museum of Boulak, in the Hall of the Kings.

The mummy of Rameses II., embalmed with great care, and wound round with alternate layers of cloths and bands, was perfectly preserved; and the head especially aroused the universal wonder of those present. The features of the great conqueror are almost perfectly recognizable, and indicate the age of a man in the eighties. The nose is strongly curved, in the style of the Bourbons; the mouth firmly shut, the teeth consequently not visible; the head, on top shaved; the hair, at the temples and behind, perfectly preserved, and of great softness and fineness. The color of the hair, in consequence of the ingredients used in the embalming, has become yellow. The arms are laid crosswise over the breast; the nails and fingers, and in like manner the feet, are stained red with henna, or some such plant.

The expression of the features is that of a man of decided, almost tyrannical character. The height of the mummy itself reaches 173 centimeters. If one takes into the account, also, the difference which arises from the shrinking together, then the result is the form of a man whose measure exceeds middle height.



The mummy opened second, found in a coffin which bore the name of the Queen Nofert Ari, was in like manner in the highest degree carefully swathed, wrapped round with linen bands of the greatest fineness; between them being layers of cloths, colored red. Upon one of the linen cloths is to be found a hieratic inscription, bearing the year 13 of the reign of King Rameses III.

On the breast, almost one with the body, and borne upon a chain of pearls of gold which encircles the neck, were found two little *uas* (breastplates): one of gilded wood, with the figures of Isis and Sphynx; the other of gold, with the image of the God Ammon, and the name and forename of Rameses III.

The fact that, instead of the mummy of the Queen Nofert Ari, that of the King Rameses was found, is easily explained, from the circumstance that the mummies were formerly opened, and, in being returned again to their coffins, were changed, as is moreover to be seen from the inscriptions, partly upon the coffins, partly upon the linen coverings themselves.

The features of King Rameses III. are less well preserved than those of his great predecessor; yet the likeness, especially in the formation of the nose, is thoroughly unmistakable. The height of the mummy reaches 168 centimeters.

The accompanying photographs were taken on the very day of the opening, and show the head of Rameses the Great from before and in profile, as well as the whole mummy.

EMIL BRUGSCH-BEV.

CAIRO, June 4, 1886.

Rameses II., son of Sethos, of the Nineteenth Dynasty (1400 to 1250 B.C.), was one of the mightiest rulers of the kingdom of the Pharaohs. Famous especially has he become through his great campaigns, which led him to the farthest boundaries of the then known world. At the head of an innumerable army, he pierced through Asia to Pontus, eastward to India: in the south, he overthrew Ethiopia. The splendor of his warlike deeds was overtopped by the glory of his buildings and monuments, which he caused to be erected on the shores of the Nile. The mighty Ramesseum (called by the Greeks "Tomb of Osymandyas"), a great structure of pylons and halls, belongs to his most famous works; among the ruins of the building is to be found the giant statue of the great king, a sitting figure, hewn out of a block of red granite, the greatest colossal statue of Egyptian plastic art. On the delta of the Nile he founded his residence, the city of Rameses, which was built, presumably, by the aid of the Jews. Famous in antiquity, further, were his great canals. Herodotus tells how he employed the great number of prisoners, whom he brought with him from his campaigns, in piercing, by means of their aid, the land in all directions with canals. Above the old Bubastis (on the delta of the Nile, northward from the present Cairo), he constructed a canal towards the east, at the creation of which the Jews, who from choice had settled there, were forced to render villanage. His warlike deeds repeatedly constitute the subject of the preserved creations of Egyptian art. Rameses died, after an active and glorious reign of sixty years; his mummy was buried in old Thebes, at that great spot consecrated to the worship of the dead, to which the Greeks gave the name *Memnonia*. The deeds of the great Pharaoh, and of his father, Sethos I., the Greeks joined together and transferred to a single person, as it answered to their imagination. The ideal, which was thus embodied in a form, they called Sesostris.

THE MUMMY OF SESOSTRIS.

With M. Maspero in the Boulak Museum, Cairo, June 1, 1886.

Among his perfumed wrappings Ram'ses lay,
Son of the sun, and conqueror without peers;
The jewel-holes were in his rounded ears,
His thick lips closed above th' embalmer's clay;
Unguent had turned his white locks amber-gray,
But on his puissant chin fresh from the shears
The thin hair gleamed which full three thousand years

Of careless sleep could never disarray.
Hands henna-stained across his ample breast
Were laid in peace; but through the narrow eyes
Flamed fires no more beneath the forward brow,
His keen hawk nose such pride, such power expressed,
Near Kadesh stream we heard the Hittite cries,
And saw by Hebrews' toil San's temple cities grow.

H. D. RAUNSLY.

Address to the Mummy in Belzoni's Exhibition.

And thou hast walk'd about (how strange a story!)
In Thebes' streets three thousand years ago,
When the Memnonium was in all its glory,
And time had not begun to overthrow
Those temples, palaces, and piles stupendous,
Of which the very ruins are tremendous?
Speak! for thou long enough hast acted dummy;
Thou hast a tongue—come—let us hear its tune;
Thou'rt standing on thy legs, above ground, mummy!
Revisiting the glimpses of the moon—
Not like thin ghosts or disembodied creatures,
But with thy bones, and flesh, and limbs, and features.
Tell us—for doubtless thou can'st recollect—
To whom should we assign the Sphinx's fame?
Was Cheops or Cephrenes architect
Of either pyramid that bears his name?
Is Pompey's Pillar really a misnomer?
Had Thebes a hundred gates, as sung by Homer?
Perhaps thou wert a Mason, and forbidden
By oath to tell the secrets of thy trade—
Then say what secret melody was hidden
In Memnon's statue, which at sunrise play'd?
Perhaps thou wert a priest—if so my struggles
Are vain, for priestcraft never owns its juggles.
Perhaps that very hand, now pinion'd flat,
Has hob-a-nobbed with Pharaoh, glass to glass;
Or dropp'd a half-penny in Homer's hat;
Or doff'd thine own to let Queen Dido pass;
Or held, by Solomon's own invitation,
A torch at the great temple's dedication.
I need not ask thee if that hand, when arm'd,
Has any Roman soldier maul'd and knuckled;
For thou wert dead, and buried, and embalmed
Ere Romulus and Remus had been suckled:
Antiquity appears to have begun
Long after thy primeval race was run.
Thou could'st develop—if that wither'd tongue
Might tell us what those sightless orbs have seen—
How the world look'd when it was fresh and young,

And the great deluge still had left it green;
Or was it then so old that history's pages
Contain'd no record of its early ages?
Still silent! incommunicative elf,
Art sworn to secrecy? then keep thy vows;
But prithee tell us something of thyself—
Reveal the secrets of thy prison house;
Since in the world of spirits thou hast slumber'd—
What hast thou seen, what strange adventures number'd?
Since first thy form was in this box extended
We have, above ground, seen some strange mutations;
The Roman empire has begun and ended—
New worlds have risen—we have lost old nations;
And countless kings have into dust been humbled,
While not a fragment of thy flesh has crumbled.
Didst thou not hear the pother o'er thy head
When the great Persian conqueror, Cambyses,
March'd armies o'er thy tomb with thundering tread—
O'erthrew Osiris, Orus, Apis, Isis;
And shook the pyramids with fear and wonder,
When the gigantic Memnon fell asunder?
If the tomb's secrets may not be confess'd
The nature of thy private life unfold:
A heart has throbb'd beneath that leathern breast,
And tears adown that dusky cheek have roll'd;
Have children climb'd those knees and kiss'd that face?
What was thy name and station, age and race?
Statue of flesh—Immortal of the dead!
Imperishable type of evanescence!
Posthumous man—who quitt'st thy narrow bed,
And standest undecay'd within our presence!
Thou wilt hear nothing till the judgment morning,
When the great trump shall thrill thee with its warning.
Why should this worthless tegument endure,
If its undying guest be lost forever?
Oh! let us keep the soul embalm'd and pure
In living virtue—that when both must sever,
Although corruption may our frame consume,
The immortal spirit in the skies may bloom!

HORACE SMITH.

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