ON THE MINIATURE MASK
FROM THE TUTANKHAMUN EMBALMING CACHE*

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In the spring of 1909 H.E. Winlock acquired for the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York a collection of pieces which had been discovered by Theodore M. Davis the season before in the pit now numbered KV54 in the Valley of the Kings (1). A detailed account of this material, which Winlock early recognized as embalming and other refuse pertaining to the burial of Tutankhamun, appeared in 1941 (2). The centre-piece of the catalogue was a miniature 'casque' (MMA 30.8.231) (3) of the type often found surmounting packets of embalmed viscera (4), which had arrived at the Met. with the Davis bequest in 1930. Standing some 15 cm high, modelled in cartonnage and painted (predominantly yellow and blue), it would appear to correspond tolerably well with the only contemporary description of the KV54 mask we possess: 'A head about 7 in. high,

(*) My thanks are due to Prof. J.R. Harris for his comments on an early draft of this note. One or two references inaccessible to me at the time of writing were kindly checked by Dr. J. Málek.


(2) H.E. Winlock, *Materials...* Note that the Metropolitan Museum assemblage represents only a fraction of the total contents of this pit.

(3) H.E. Winlock, *Materials...*, 12, pl. II, B; W.C. Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt II*, New York 1959, 304, fig. 189. This is evidently the same mask as that alluded to in a letter from Winlock to Carter dated 25 June 1915 (see n. 6 below), 'tomb unknown', at that time with the rest of Davis's personal collection in Newport, R.I.

(4) As, for example, in the burial of Tjuyu: T. M. Davis, *The Tomb of Iouya and Touiyou*, London 1907, 24, pl. XVII; J.E. Quibell, *Tomb of Yuaa and Thuiu*, Cairo 1908, 34 f., CG 51018-21, pl. XVI.
which crowned the head of a mummied bird' (sic) (5).

The correctness of this attribution is, nevertheless, open to question. In a letter to Carter dated 25 June 1915 (6), detailing the Metropolitan Museum's holdings of material from KV54 and from the Valley of the Kings in general, Winlock added the following note: 'A mask, covered with gold leaf (my italics), of the type found on packages of viscera within Canopic Jars, is said to have been found in the first of the (KV54) Zeirs opened and to be now in the Cairo Museum'. A mask of this description is indeed to be found on display in Cairo (7). The relevant entry in the museum register reads as follows:

J 39711. Tête ou masque en cartonnage doré qui devait être placé sur un paquet d'intestins embaumés dans un canope. Cartonnage doré. H. 0.14 m. Biban el Molouk 1908, puits sans inscriptions.

Since only one 'puits sans inscriptions' discovered during the seasons 1907/8 or 1908/9 is known to have yielded an object of this description -- this being the pit in which T.M. Davis discovered the Tutankhamün embalming refuse --, we may reasonably suppose J 39711 to be the miniature mask from KV54. Support for this conclusion is provided by a comparison with the gilded-gesso 'casque' from the smaller of the two feetuses in the tomb of Tutankhamün (KV62) (8): it and the mask J 39711 are virtually

(5) Andrews diary, entry for 22 January 1908; the 'mummied bird' is surely a garbled reference to one of the packets of embalming refuse.

(6) Unnumbered, amongst the Carter MSS, Tutankhamün, Notes, in the Griffith Institute, Oxford; first brought to my attention by John Romer.

(7) In room P12, E4 case M. The piece appears to be unpublished.

identical. We can now see that it was this similarity which had prompted Carter to suggest the intended employment of the KV54 mask: it had originally been prepared for the larger of the KV62 foetuses, but, 'owing to its being too small to fit over the head' (9), had never been so employed.

Given that there was but one miniature cartonnage discovered in the KV54 cache (10), and that this is the mask J 39711, Winlock's attribution of the Metropolitan Museum example must fall. Its proper find-spot might, nevertheless, be established from Ayrton's description of one of the 'animal tombs' -- KV51 (11) --, discovered by Davis early in 1906. Besides three monkeys, a large cynocephalous baboon, an ibis, three mummified ducks and 'a tarred box coffin for some animal', Davis recovered from here 'some bundles of intestines made up in the form of little human figures; one of these had near it a mask of beautifully coloured stucco representing a human head which had probably fitted it ...', doubtless 'of the XVIIIth Dynasty' (12). That we have here a reference to the mask MMA 30.8.231 is, I would suggest, little less than certain.

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(10) Cf. H.E. Winlock, Materials, 12.

(11) E. Thomas, Necropoleis, 166 ff. Note that in her fig. 15 the numbering of KV50 and KV51 has been inadvertently transposed; cf. T.M. Davis, The Tomb of Siptah, London 1908, 17, and Carter map GI I.G.48.

(12) T.M. Davis, Siptah, 17 f.