



MONASH University

The Coffin of Nytamenkhamun: A Case Study of Australia's Encounter with Ancient Egypt.

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Abstract

This thesis explores Australia's encounter with the culture of ancient Egypt through a case study of the coffin of Nyamenkhamun, a Third Intermediate Period (c.1069-525BC) Egyptian coffin currently in the collections of Museums Victoria. This thesis first utilises iconographic analysis which identifies the main elements of the iconography and surveys the inscriptions to the extent necessary to appreciate the significance of the coffin of Nyamenkhamun. This thesis then employs an Object Biography approach to this artefact and explores the role of the coffin in various collections and curatorial narratives over the last century. The history of Nyamenkhamun's coffin with past and present owners, Sir George Newnes (1851-1910), Robert Arthur Bedford (1874-1951) and Museums Victoria is outlined, and the cultural context of these collections is investigated to examine the roles of British and Australian social values and interests on the display of the coffin. Finally, changing public interaction with the coffin is traced via discussion of its role in seven public exhibitions since it joined the Museums Victoria Collections in 1972. The study of Nyamenkhamun's coffin in this thesis provides an entry point to delve into an analysis of the enduring popularity of ancient Egypt in Australia and an investigation of the changing ways in which society has engaged with this topic over the last century.

Declaration

This thesis is an original work of my research and contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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Date: October 10, 2020

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“At the heart of the notion of biography are questions about the links between people and things: about the ways meanings and values are accumulated and transformed” (Gosden and Marshall 1999, 172).

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In September of 1972, Dr Thomas Darragh, a specialist in invertebrate palaeontology and curator of such collections at Museums Victoria, drove his Land Rover from Melbourne to the rural town of Kyancutta in South Australia (Fitzgerald 1979, 168; Darragh 2019, pers. comm.). This visit was not his first to the Kyancutta Museum; Darragh had previously visited the town while on geological expeditions in South Australia. Thus, he was well acquainted with the owners of the Kyancutta Museum, Hilda Bedford and her daughter Joan Luscombe. Earlier that year, on Wednesday, February 16, 1972 (Fitzgerald 1979, 168), Darragh had packaged and transported a collection of geological specimens purchased by Museums Victoria from the Kyancutta Museum to Melbourne (Fitzgerald 1979, 168; Cooper and Jago 2018, 439); however, this occasion was different. On the previous visit, Darragh had collaborated with two assistants, Kevin Bell and Rowen Evans, and the three men had driven a three-tonne truck to Kyancutta, loaded the specimens in the back, and returned to Museums Victoria. This time, Darragh travelled alone to transport only one artefact to Museums Victoria. This artefact was an ancient Egyptian coffin identified as once belonging to an Egyptian named Nytamenkhamun.

Darragh collected the coffin from the Kyancutta Museum 20 years after the death of Robert Arthur Bedford (Fig. 1), curator and owner of the small Kyancutta Museum. Since Bedford's death on February 14, 1951 (Port Lincoln Times, 1951), his widow Hilda and daughter Joan Luscombe owned and maintained his museum. While the two women dedicated themselves to the continuation of Bedford's museum, they lacked the expert knowledge necessary to care for the artefacts. When deterioration began to show, they started divesting the collections and contacted Australian institutions which they thought could efficiently care for the artefacts Bedford had painstakingly collected over his lifetime.

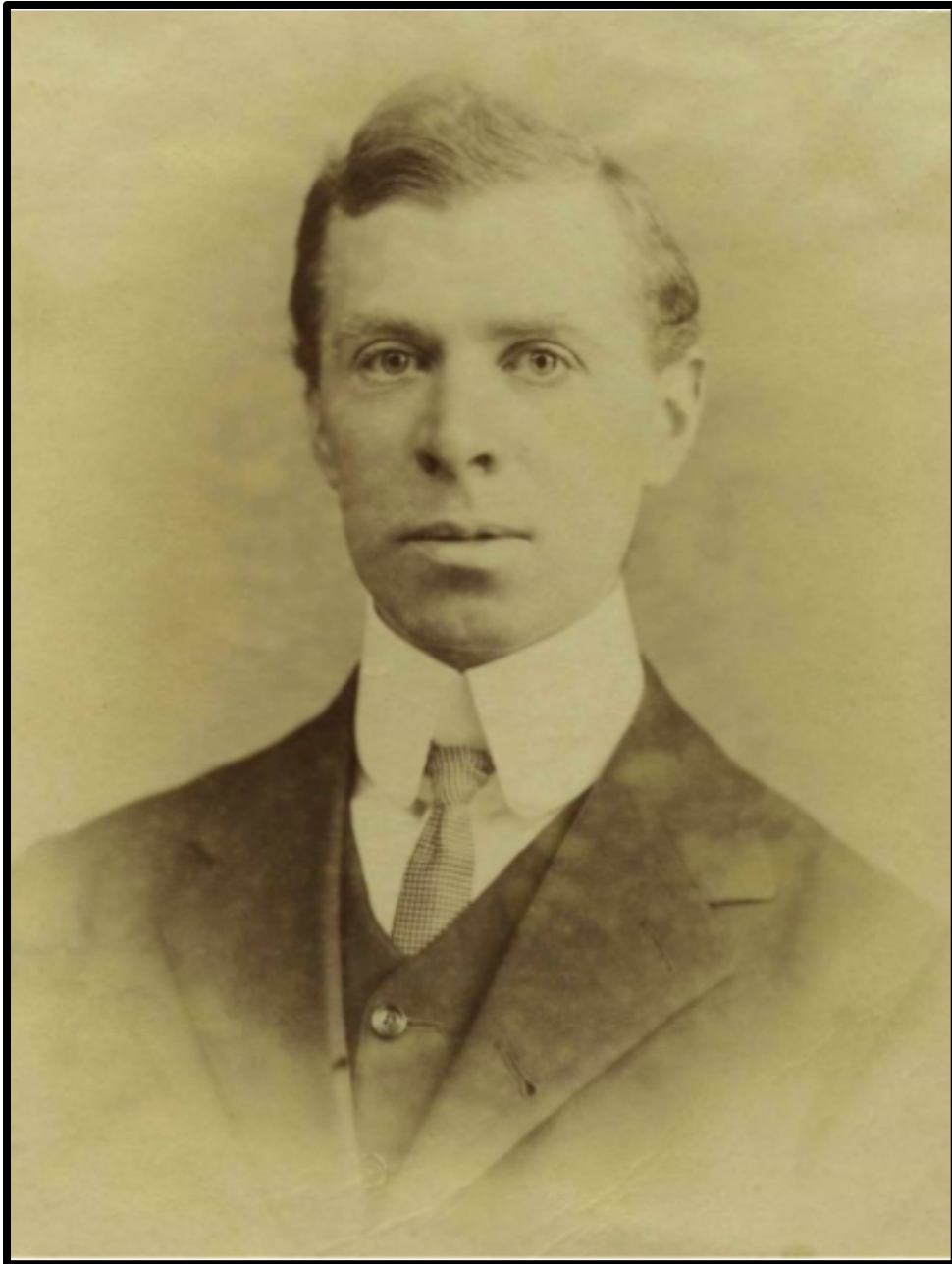


Figure 1: Robert Arthur Bedford c.1900 (Source: Cooper and Jago 2018, 419; Bedford Family Collection).

At the time of Darragh's visit, the coffin of Nytamenkhamun had spent around 50 years in Kyancutta. Bedford, a well-educated man with a fascination for museums and collecting, had purchased the coffin in England from Sir George Newnes (Fig. 2) in 1910 (Bedford 1930-1966, 9; Merrillees 1990, 51). As an avid collector of antiquities and owner of a private museum, which he began curating even before he arrived in Australia (Buddicom 1974, 64-65), Bedford was interested in the work of Charles Darwin and collected artefacts which demonstrated the theory of evolution

by natural selection (Luscombe 2018, pers. comm.). Thus, Bedford likely purchased the coffin of Nyamenkhamun for its ability to connect his museum to one of the oldest civilisations of the ancient world. This motivation was a common factor in the collection of Egyptian antiquities in the late 19th to 20th centuries and may have been a motivation in Museums Victoria's later purchase of the coffin.

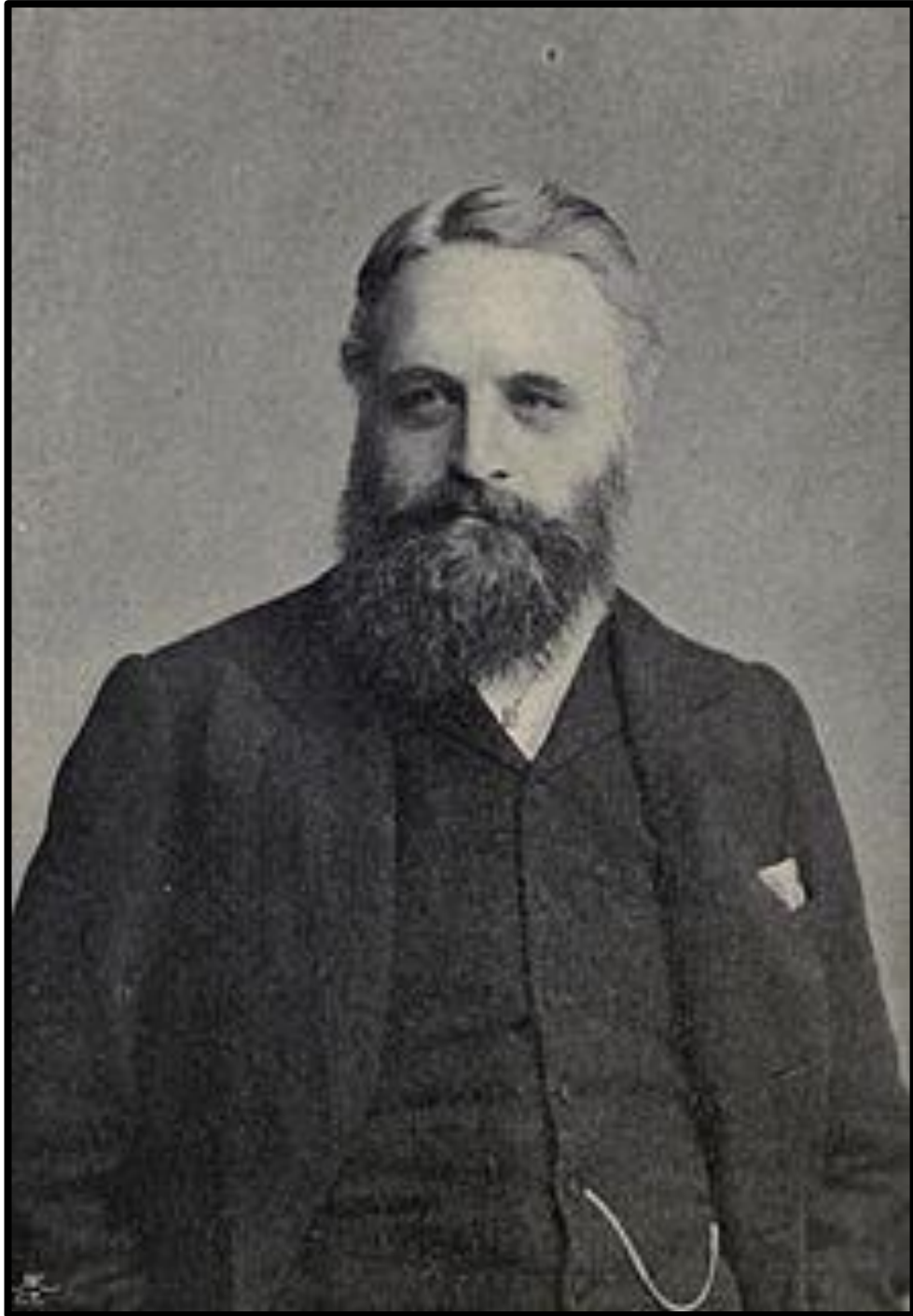


Figure 2: Sir George Newnes (Source: Friederichs 1911, n.p.).

The coffin of Nyamenkhamun (Museums Victoria: X79620; Fig. 3; Fig. 4) is not unique; for Third Intermediate Period (c.1069- 525 BCE) coffins, it can be considered standard. Nyamenkhamun's coffin is anthropoid, meaning humanoid in design. While receptacles for bodies were used from the Early Dynastic Period, anthropoid coffins like Nyamenkhamun's first made an appearance in the Middle Kingdom (c.2050- 1550 BCE) (Ikram and Dodson, 1998; Hartwig 2014, 269). In Egypt, coffins came into use in the Old Kingdom (c.2686- 2181 BCE) and gained importance in the Middle Kingdom. The primary purpose of the coffin was to protect the deceased and act as a replacement should the body be damaged (Hartwig 2014, 269). In the latter part of the New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period, the surface of the coffin was decorated with iconographic and textual material (that which was previously recorded in Books of the Dead and on tomb walls) to aid the deceased in their journey into the afterlife (Taylor 1989, 7), which was ensured by the depiction of several vignettes (small illustrations) and inscriptions on the coffin. While this was previously assured through tomb decoration, the Third Intermediate Period placed less emphasis on the importance of the tomb, and instead, the coffin became an extension of the tomb with elements of tomb decoration appearing on the sarcophagi (Taylor 1989, 8; Taylor 2000, 359), and this is visible in Nyamenkhamun's coffin (Fig. 3; Fig. 4).

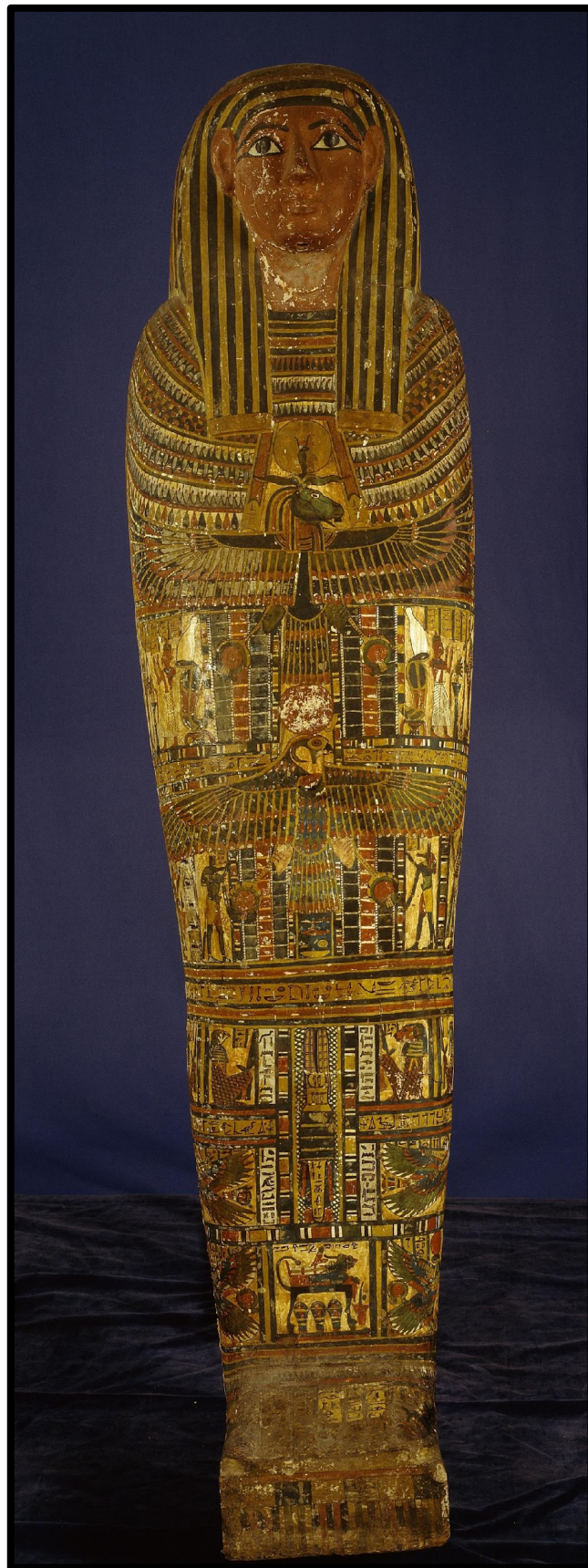


Figure 3: Front of Nytamenkhamun's coffin (Courtesy of Museums Victoria/ Photographer: Rodney Start).

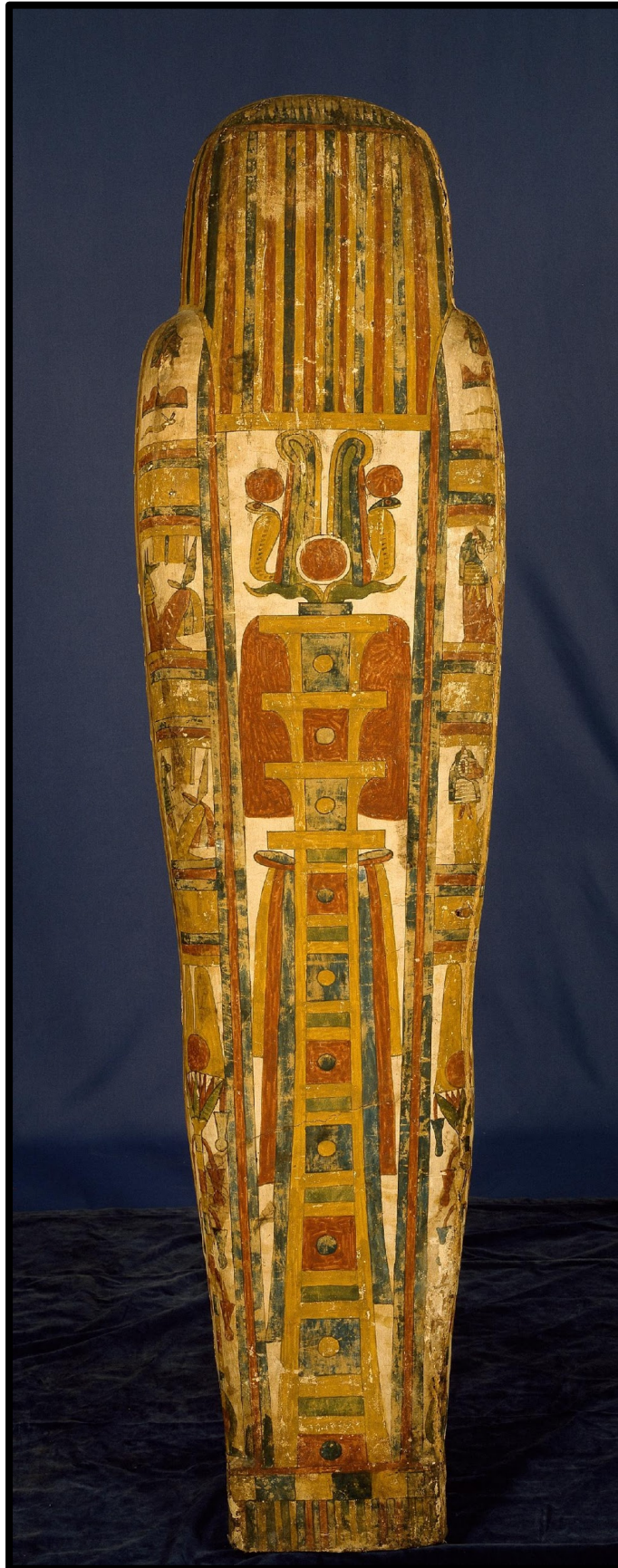


Figure 4: Base of Nyamenkhamun's coffin (Courtesy of Museums Victoria/ Photographer: Rodney Start).

The central purpose of this thesis is to explore Australia's encounter with ancient Egypt using the coffin of Nyamenkhamun as a case study. It accomplishes this by using the Object Biography methodology to present a detailed examination of the coffin and its importance in Australia. This methodology allows an analysis of the coffin and its history to yield a detailed study without any danger of damage or deterioration to the artefact. This chapter provides context for those following by addressing the main themes and methodologies utilised in this research.

There is a common misconception that ancient Egyptians were obsessed with death based on the copious amount of evidence available for their burials and mortuary traditions (Taylor 2001a, 12; Assmann 2011, 16; Quirke 2014, 202). Refuting this misconception John Taylor (2001a, 10-11) argues that it was instead a love for life which encouraged this preparation for death because, for the Egyptians, death was another stage of life but one which was eternal (Assmann 2011, 416). Therefore, their creation of elaborate tombs, coffins and burials was motivated by their firm belief in the afterlife.

Throughout the long history of ancient Egypt, coffin designs witnessed numerous stylistic changes (Taylor 1989, 7). Coffin styles were altered to reflect the political and theological beliefs of the period (Hartwig 2014, 277; Sousa 2019, xi-xiii); however, the intended purpose, to house the deceased, remained the same. Importantly, these changes in design assist in providing a reliable date for the coffin of Nyamenkhamun. In the catalogue of his Kyancutta Museum, Bedford placed a broad date of between the 22nd Dynasty (c.945- 720 BCE) to the 26th Dynasty (c.664- 535 BCE) for Nyamenkhamun's coffin. This thesis supports Colin Hope's dating of the 25th Dynasty (c.725- 664 BCE). The long history of coffins in ancient Egypt makes dating these artefacts a specialised field requiring specific knowledge (Hartwig 2014, 274, 277). Therefore, Taylor's (2003) comprehensive methodology for dating Egyptian coffins is used in this thesis to support the 25th Dynasty date of this coffin.

There are two methods identified by Taylor (2003, 96-99), which he proposes are useful to date Egyptian coffins reliably. These are independent dating evidence, based on inscriptions, and internal dating evidence which relies on iconography

(Taylor 2003, 96). Independent dating evidence examines coffin inscriptions for reference to a king, or other individuals who are reliably well-known and, therefore, can date the coffin to that period (Taylor 2003, 96). This method allows a coffin to be dated by its association to an established historical person or through connections to famous family members who are mentioned in the inscriptions or buried in the same tomb (Taylor 2003, 96). This method is considered trustworthy because it does not rely on the assessment of design features which are subject to evolution and archaism (Taylor 2003, 96).

Taylor's (2003, 97) second method, internal dating evidence, involves analysing the iconography on the coffin, for example, the depiction of the deceased in vignettes (Taylor 2003, 99-101) and the spelling of the inscriptions which can connect coffins to an individual workshop or maker (Taylor 2003, 102). Since the coffin of Nyamenkhamun has been removed from its original context and no records have been found over the course of this research that can link it to other coffins from Nyamenkhamun's family or a known king or known figure, Taylor's first method of dating cannot be used.

Combining iconographic with inscriptional analysis provides a comprehensive method and, according to René van Walsem (1997, 7), is often overlooked in favour of inscriptional dating. This thesis incorporates analysis of both the inscriptional and iconographic elements of Nyamenkhamun's coffin to provide a reliable date. Furthermore, to strengthen the accuracy of the provided date, Nyamenkhamun's coffin is compared to another coffin of the same suggested date and provenance. Comparative research makes it possible to witness regional variations, the development of styles throughout history (Taylor 2003, 95, 102) despite the possibilities of archaism and evolution and makes dating Egyptian coffins more accurate.

In the study of the Third Intermediate Period, coffins dating from the 23rd to 26th Dynasties have been examined less regularly than their 21st and 22nd Dynasty counterparts. The most researched type of coffin produced in Egypt during the Third Intermediate Period (but also appeared in the late 18th Dynasty) is the Theban so-called 'yellow' coffin. These coffins date to the 20th and 22nd Dynasties and evidence

for this type is plentiful (Sousa 2018, 11). The coffins of the 25th Dynasty have so far not received the same level of interest in scholarship. Thus, it is essential to study the coffins of this later time frame, and the study of the coffin of Nyamenkhamun contributes to filling this gap in research.

The coffin's role in the private collections of British collectors and Australian museums has provided rich episodes in its Object Biography. According to Bedford's records, he purchased the coffin of Nyamenkhamun from Sir George Newnes, but it is not clear whether this was done directly or through an external sale. It has been challenging to establish Newnes' ownership of the coffin. The only record discovered during this research linking him directly to the coffin is Bedford's Kyancutta Museum catalogue. This source records that Bedford (1930-1966, 9) purchased the coffin from "Sir George Newnes' Sale 1910". This sale is listed in Museums Victoria's records as having possibly been a Sotheby's of London auction. However, the Victoria and Albert Museum searched their records for Sotheby's of London auctions in 1910 and were unable to locate any by Sir George Newnes. They found records for a Hampton and Sons sale of Newnes' estate which occurred in 1911, but the catalogue for this sale does not include the coffin and Bedford stated that he purchased the coffin one year prior in 1910. Therefore, it is likely that Bedford purchased Nyamenkhamun's coffin in a private sale from Newnes for which there is little to no evidence.

For Bedford, there is more substantial evidence linking him to the coffin. These sources are available in newspaper articles which reference the coffin in the Kyancutta Museum, and memoirs written by Bedford's daughters, Jacintha Buddicom (1974) and Silvia Laube (1990). These sources mention the coffin and the existence of Egyptian antiquities in Bedford's collection in England and Australia. Furthermore, previous and current residents of Kyancutta have described their memories of seeing the coffin in the Kyancutta Museum. Mrs France (October 2019a, pers. comm.) visited the Kyancutta Museum as a child in 1951. She remembers the coffin and recalls that it looked like "the old Egyptian stuff you see in the movies". Another resident of Kyancutta, Mrs O'Brien, visited the museum around 1968 and was provided with a tour by Hilda Bedford (October 2019b, pers. comm.).

Having studied ancient Egypt at school, O'Brien was fascinated with the Egyptian coffin, which she remembers was in a standing position in the museum.

These reactions to the coffin by past and current residents of Kyancutta provide insight into the fascination with ancient Egypt that existed in Australia when the Kyancutta Museum was open. Nineteenth century British education taught individuals like Newnes and Bedford the importance of classical tradition for society and in having artefacts from these ancient societies on display for the edification of the public (Hope 2003, 179). Moreover, during both Newnes and Bedford's ownership of the coffin, the collection of Egyptian artefacts was exceedingly popular. Napoleon's expedition of 1798 (Osman 1999, 972) to 1801 (Strathern 2008, 33), the publication of *Description de l'Égypte* by Edme-François Jomard (1809-1822; Reid 2002, 2, 13; Strathern 2008, 424), and the decipherment of the Rosetta Stone (1822) (Osman 1999, 972; Ray 2014, 171) resulted in heightened global interest in Egypt for which repercussions were felt long after (Fritz 2016, 337). This interest was possibly seen in Kyancutta, South Australia because discussions with past and present residents revealed that many studied ancient Egypt in secondary school and often gravitated towards the coffin when visiting the Kyancutta Museum. Before these events, interest in Egypt did exist in Europe, but it was heightened after the emergence of Egyptian themed movies and books. Examples of this is the poem *Ozymandias* (1818) by Percy Bysshe Shelley (Haddad 2005, 73-74; Colla 2008, 67), the opera *Aida* (1871) by Verdi (Reid 2002, 15; Cass 2006, 35; Ziter 2006, 225; Scott 2009, 108) and the movie *Cleopatra* (1890) (Fritz 2016, 337). As seen through these dates, interest in Egypt was still thriving many years after Napoleon's campaign. Additionally, on November 26, 1922 (Carter and Mace 2019, n.p.), in the year before the coffin arrived in Australia, Tutankhamun's tomb was discovered, which resulted in a further resurgence of heightened interest in ancient Egypt.

Aspects of the display and curation of the coffin of Nyamenkhamun reveal Orientalist notions, prominent in Western society (including British and Australian) in the 19th and early 20th centuries (King 2013, 82). Orientalist attitudes result from the Western comparison of 'oriental' societies of the East, including Egypt (King 2013, 82), with those in Europe, in which the East is typically exoticised and romanticised to make the East and its inhabitants easily classifiable as the "other" (Sunar 2016,

164). The ideas are closely connected to various scientific and imperialist ambitions of the West and are therefore also active in imperial behaviours, including the removal and collection of antiquities from the 'exotic' East by British, European and American individuals or institutions (Osman 1999, 969-970). The display of Nyamenkhamun's coffin in museums and exhibitions potentially reveals the way Western powers have expressed their perceived superiority over the East (Marino 2013, 763; Said 2014, 7). They have achieved this by displaying items of ancient Egypt in ways that link this ancient civilisation to the Western world and express narratives that privilege Western social practices and developments (MacDonald 2008, 170; Marino 2013, 763). They have also presented themselves as authorities over the study of ancient Egypt and this is often reflected in Egyptian themed exhibitions (Said 1978, 7; Marino 2013, 763). Bedford participated in this through his inclusion of the coffin in his Kyancutta Museum which was organised around European concepts of the evolution of humanity (Luscombe 2018, pers. comm.) in which the coffin was included to represent ancient Egypt.

Awareness of Orientalist ideas played a part in the coffin's inclusion in more recent exhibitions, as an icon representative of ancient Egypt. Artefacts such as the coffin of Nyamenkhamun are captivating and are often presented as "exotic curiosities" (Moser 2015, 1282), which reflects Orientalist notions. Nyamenkhamun's coffin was included in the 2017-2018 Melbourne Museum exhibition *Inside Out*, an eclectic display of a vast array of items usually kept in museum storage. Nyamenkhamun's coffin was made a focal point in this exhibit and was used in marketing, with images of the coffin accompanied by slogans including "The Mummy Returns! (from our Collection store)". This slogan was specifically intended to promote the correlation between this artefact and Hollywood drama, specifically the 2001 popular adventure and horror film, *The Mummy Returns*. This film portrays a Western "exotic" interpretation of ancient Egypt which is much more of a Western "Oriental" fantasy (Tully 2011, 139) than the reality. By linking the coffin to this movie, which associated ancient Egypt with curses, mysticism, and mythology, the curators of *Inside Out* engaged with the popularity of this Orientalist interpretation of ancient Egypt for the purpose of encouraging people to visit the exhibition and view this "exotic" artefact.

Thus, Orientalism is intrinsically tied to the movement, collection and use of Nytamenkhamun's coffin¹.

In addition to the notions of Orientalism evident in the collection and display of the coffin, the artefact is also entangled with heightened social interest in ancient Egypt specifically. In the 19th century, 'Egyptomania' developed, referring to the impact of ancient Egyptian material culture on the cultural imagination of the West as evidenced by the reference to ancient Egyptian culture and society in the form of art, architecture, fashion and museum exhibitions in Western nations (National Gallery of Canada, 1994; Baber 2016, 60). Egyptomania differs from a general interest in ancient Egypt in that it references periods of extreme interest (Reid 2002, 11-12; Brier 2013; Fritze 2016, 10). It occurred specifically after Napoleon's expedition (1798-1801), which was a foundation for the Western fascination with Egyptian antiquity in the 1800s. A resurgence in interest in ancient Egypt occurred in the 1920s, in association with the highly-publicised discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb (MacDonald and Rice 2003, 126; MacDonald 2009, 93). During these periods, the level of enthusiasm surpassed a general interest in ancient Egypt and resulted in Western culture adopting elements of ancient Egyptian architecture and fashion into its popular culture (Baber 2016, 60).

In addition to prompting elements of Egyptomania in 19th century Western society, Napoleon's expedition to Egypt also prompted academic study. The study of ancient Egyptian society, Egyptology (Reid 2002, 12), was sparked by the European scholars of Napoleon's expedition, known as Savants, who carefully documented ancient Egyptian architecture and material culture (Tully 2011, 138-139; Said 2014, 11-12). This research, along with the artefacts the Savants transported to their home countries, encouraged a more comprehensive study of the ancient civilisation which has continued into the present day and recently become popular in Australia.

Interest in ancient Egypt in Australia has been primarily addressed by Robert Merrillees (1990) and Colin Hope (1984; 1988; 2003). These studies focus on how

¹ Due to the constrictions of the word limit, this topic of Orientalism and the use of Egyptian artefacts in museums could not be expanded further. However, useful sources for this topic include: Cass 2006; Hubschmann 2018; Moser 2006 and 2015; Reid 2002; Riggs 2010.

ancient Egyptian culture, including its architecture, has influenced built heritage in Australian society. Notably, both Merrillees and Hope present some of the only published references to the coffin of Nyamenkhamun.

It is important to study this coffin and its history not only for what it can teach us about the mortuary traditions of ancient Egypt during the Third Intermediate Period but also because of its role in Australian history (Moser 2015). This research outlines the impact of individuals on the movement of the coffin from its place of origin to Australia. It is likewise important to study this coffin and its history with an emphasis on its time in Australia, not only because that is where the coffin currently resides, but so that its role within the collections can be fully appreciated.

To understand how this artefact has been and is received in Australia, this thesis ventures into the area of Reception Studies (Hardwick and Stray 2008,1). In recent years, the study of the representation and reception of the past has flourished; however, the amount of scholarly work in this area concerning ancient Egypt remains limited (Moser 2015, 1263). Reception studies are concerned with the “consumption of the past” (Moser 2015, 1264), and thus the best way to approach this is through the study of past and current attitudes to collecting and viewing ancient artefacts. Reception Studies (Hardwick 2003) refers to the analysis of how an artefact, in this case, an Egyptian coffin has been received by the modern world. This is achieved through a study of the cultural influences (Hardwick 2003, 5-11) that resulted in the collection, display and reception of the artefact. Since Bedford acquired Nyamenkhamun’s coffin for his private collections and not for a major institution, the study of this coffin provides valuable insight into how an individual thought about the past and how they interacted with the coffin. After its purchase by Museums Victoria, the coffin helps to articulate various enduring narratives about ancient Egyptian society and museum curation through its role in numerous public exhibitions.

Furthermore, it is crucial to explore the motivations behind collections and the reasons why the artefacts of ancient Egypt were selected and preserved in museums and displayed as part of particular narratives (MacDonald 2008, 175; Stevenson 2015, 2). The primary motivation behind the purchase of

Nytamenkhamun's coffin for both Bedford and Museums Victoria appears to have been for educational purposes. But they also collected the coffin because it is in good condition and is valuable in displays to illustrate Egyptian culture along with the added benefit that it attracts visitors to the museum (MacDonald 2009, 87-88).

The reception of Egypt has played a large part in how the ancient civilisation is viewed today (Moser 2015, 1264). Interest in Egyptian artefacts lies not only in the artefacts themselves but also in the stories of their acquisition, discovery and transit (Riggs 2010, 1136) which this thesis endeavours to explore through the study of Nytamenkhamun's coffin. As Museums Victoria does not have an extensive collection of Egyptian artefacts, the coffin remains in storage, and thus it has not received the attention it might have in a museum with a more extensive antiquities collection; however, the Museums Victoria has taken appropriate care of the artefact and incorporated it in exhibitions over the 48 years it has owned it.

Exhibitions construct narratives which influence the mind of the visitor (Moser 2006, 2). To this day, the study of how museum exhibitions have influenced the modern understanding of ancient civilisations lacks significant research (Moser 2006, 5). Jan Assmann (2008, 109-118) contends that objects are the last remnants of a past culture. They are mute testimonies of the past and thus need to be interpreted. Assmann's research has informed the investigation into the use and collection of the coffin of Nytamenkhamun and how museums have used this artefact to construct narratives in their exhibitions. The original purpose of the coffin, to protect and contain the dead fundamentally remains the same but has transformed as it has become representative of ancient Egypt in a more general sense in exhibitions.

In addition to the traditional tools of analysis, this thesis draws on extensive interviews conducted with individuals involved with the coffin during its time in Kyancutta and Melbourne. These interviews allow this thesis to investigate the responses of those who personally interacted with the coffin and gain an understanding about how it was viewed by past and current residents of Kyancutta who viewed it in the Kyancutta Museum. Since the Kyancutta Museum is no longer existent and minimal photographic evidence exists for the displays, the information gained through discussion with residents of Kyancutta and Bedford's descendants

has provided insight into what would otherwise be a gap in knowledge. There are acknowledged issues with the approach of oral history. These issues include personal bias, memory retention and accuracy (Thomson 2010, 1). If these issues are acknowledged and understood, the value of oral history outweighs the issues because it provides personal insight into how people have viewed and interacted with the coffin of Nytamenkhamun, insight which is only accessible through interviews like those conducted for this research.

Object Biography

The concept of using a biographical approach for artefacts and objects to study their use-life was sparked by Igor Kopytoff, a cultural anthropologist (Brien 2019, 35). Kopytoff (1986, 64-67) argued that physical objects represent more than their origins; they also represent additional cultures with which they have interacted. Object Biography is popular in the field of art history to identify the history of paintings and artworks (Brien 2019, 37). Object Biography as a tool has not been embraced in archaeology to the same degree, despite its applicability to the history of artefacts (Brien 2019, 38). When addressing this issue Donna Brien (2019, 38) and Jody Joy (2009, 541) identify Janet Spector's (1993, 1-173) study of an awl excavated in North Dakota as a rare example of using Object Biography in archaeology. Writing Object Biographies of artefacts is a worthy undertaking which provides a new take on the study of artefacts and enables the relationships between humanity and objects to be explored in narrative. It is possible to provide an Object Biography for every artefact in a museum (Briggs 1988, 27) since they are no longer exclusively representative of their origins but have accumulated histories significant to the different periods and places they have travelled (Gosden and Marshall 1999, 170).

The Object Biography approach to an artefact is different from considering its use-life (Gosden and Marshall 1999, 169). Whereas the use-life seeks to understand how the artefact has evolved through direct human interaction, Object Biography seeks to explore the social interaction between the human and the artefact using a life-history approach (Gosden and Marshall 1999, 169-170). This thesis uses the Object Biography methodology to study the 'life' of Nytamenkhamun's coffin, meaning to

look beyond its original purpose and understand how it has been used in museums and received by the public (Brien 2019, 35). This enables this thesis to follow the journey of the coffin from Egypt to Australia and understand why this artefact, of Egyptian heritage, is significant in Australia today.

Object Biographies seek to comprehend how and when objects have accumulated new meanings over time and how these have impacted the object through social interaction with humans (Gosden and Marshall 1999, 170). Different phases of the 'life' of the artefact are visible on the object. For example, regarding the coffin of Nyamenkhamun, the existence of a thick layer of dirt over the coffin's foot, head and shoulders is representative of its sojourn in South Australia. The context rather than the physical change is significant in an Object Biography. These physical marks represent the life history of the artefact, and thus, while not necessarily the focal point, they are essential reminders of the artefact's history (Gosden and Marshall 1999, 174). The physical presence of dirt on Nyamenkhamun's coffin is evidence for the artefact's stay with antiquarian Robert Bedford in Kyancutta.

When stated in this thesis the word 'antiquarian' is not used as a term of contempt, as it has become, but instead, in the way Tom Griffiths (1996, 2) devised, as a term used to represent the collector of artefacts who collected for personal rather than institutional reasons. It does not attempt to glorify the collectors themselves; the main aim of researching them is to provide insight into the recent social interest in ancient Egypt. Like Griffiths (1996, 2), this research attempts to provide brief biographical details on the previous known owners of the coffin of Nyamenkhamun. As amateur collectors not tied to professional organisations, Newnes and Bedford, the collectors of the coffin of Nyamenkhamun, have been largely forgotten by the public (Griffiths 1995, 2). Their names remain recorded on files relating to the coffin at Museums Victoria, but it is vital to continue to study them, so their commitment to preserving the ancient past, whether they purchased the coffin this purpose or for pleasure or profit, does not become forgotten.

Structure/Aims

To introduce the coffin, chapter two entails an analysis of the coffin's iconography and hieroglyphic inscriptions to situate the coffin in its Third Intermediate Period context. This analysis forms an examination of this artefact and thus is an integral part of this thesis. The study is presented first, before the Object Biography, because it is essential to have a solid understanding of the artefact at the heart of this research when reading the Object Biography. Following the analysis of the iconography, a translation of the inscriptions is offered and supported by a brief commentary. This translation assists in supporting the date of the coffin because the writing of several words changed throughout Egyptian history; identifying how these words are written on Nyamenkhamun's coffin can help identify the period in which it was made. Furthermore, the hieroglyphic inscriptions provide valuable information on the coffin's owner, Nyamenkhamun, his family and profession.

Following this introduction to the coffin of Nyamenkhamun, chapter three presents an analysis of the broader historical setting of the coffin's recent collection, which includes the fascination with ancient Egypt in England and Australia. This chapter explores the main participants in the movement of the coffin, namely, Newnes, Bedford and Museums Victoria and considers why they were interested in it.

Chapter four elaborates on the historical context provided in chapter three and presents an examination of the coffin's role in Bedford's rural Kyancutta Museum. This chapter explores the coffin's time in South Australia, where it spent 49 years, and the role it played in Bedford's small museum. The coffin arrived in Kyancutta in 1923, about eight years following Bedford's arrival in Australia; however, it was not until 1929, six years later, that the Kyancutta museum was established. The influences of what was happening in society during these periods are analysed in the previous chapter which allows chapter four to identify if these events directly impacted Bedford and the citizens of Kyancutta regarding how they viewed and treated the coffin. This chapter concludes with the disbanding of the Kyancutta Museum and the purchase of the coffin by Museums Victoria.

Chapter five provides contextual information and an introduction to the exhibitions which included the coffin of Nyamenkhamun after its purchase by Museums Victoria in 1972. Directly following from this, chapter six analyses the role of Nyamenkhamun's coffin in curatorial narratives within these exhibitions. These chapters draw on interviews with the curators of these exhibitions, Associate Professors Colin Hope and Andrew Jamieson, providing valuable insight into the exhibitions and the role of the coffin in them. Both chapters five and six are concerned with analysing the use of the past in Australia, building from the fundamental question: how has the coffin of Nyamenkhamun been used from 1972 to the present and how does the use of this artefact in exhibitions help identify the role of Egyptian antiquities in Australia?

CHAPTER TWO

The Coffin of Nyamenkhamun

The first objective of this chapter is to present an analysis of the iconography and introduce the inscription on the coffin of Nyamenkhamun. This analysis enables the second objective of this chapter which is to present a date for the coffin. The coffin was dated by Bedford (1930-1966, 9) to the Third Intermediate Period, from the 22nd to the 25th Dynasties, which is accurate. This chapter supports the more specific date of the 25th Dynasty, which Hope proposed in his research for Museums Victoria. Previous research has been undertaken into Nyamenkhamun's coffin. This research is in the Kyancutta Museum catalogue and contains a description and analysis of Nyamenkhamun's coffin by Alan Rowe in 1910. A didactic panel was also made by Hope that described the iconography on the coffin. This panel was made to accompany the coffin in the untitled Museums Victoria exhibition of 1994 and was used more recently alongside the coffin in the two Ian Potter Museum of Art exhibitions. The panel has since gone missing, but the information regarding the decoration survives with Hope's description of the coffin on the Museums Victoria website. More detailed analysis exists in Hope's own records; however, the text on the panel and website is introductory and not extensive, and thus there is a need for more research on this artefact.

The Object Biography method enables insight into the movement of the coffin and the social factors which influenced this. Museums acquired many of the Egyptian antiquities they currently own during the 19th and early 20th centuries (Bettum 2010, 51; Stevenson 2015, 3). These items were procured during a time when artefacts, often excavated illicitly or haphazardly, were sold without documentation of their original context, discovery or previous ownership. Antiquities were also acquired through partage, the sharing of artefacts with museums who funded excavations. This issue of is particularly relevant for this research. The coffin of Nyamenkhamun left Egypt and arrived in England before 1910, and no official documentation for this move has been found. It is the same for its movement from England to Australia, yet this move is possible to reconstruct based on Bedford's notes and those of his


daughter Silvia Laube. It is impossible to determine precisely when the coffin left Egypt; however, by examining the coffin itself and its journey, it is possible to develop our understanding of this artefact's life in Kyancutta and eventually Museums Victoria.

General Description

The wooden coffin of Nyamenkhamun is an inner bivalve anthropoid coffin and consists of a lid and a base weighing 29.5 kilograms (Museums Victoria catalogue number: X 79620). The coffin is 40 centimetres deep, 41 centimetres wide and 181 centimetres long and made of wood, lime and plaster. It is well preserved, despite its age, with only slight damage to the decoration along with cracks and a possibly modern repair to a large fissure in the base (Fig. 5). The sides of the lid are damaged, and the paint has faded. The area with the most extensive damage is the base of the coffin's foot. In this area, the plaster has largely worn away to reveal the wood beneath. This damage to the foot is primarily due to age and how it was displayed in the Kyancutta Museum, which was in a standing position without protective covering.



Figure 5: Repair to a large fissure in the base (Courtesy of Museums Victoria).

The inscription on the coffin identifies the owner as Nytamenkhamun (*N-t3-mnh-^{imn}*)² which can translate to “efficiency belongs to Amun”. Nytamenkhamun’s name has been previously translated as Tamenkhamun (*T3-mnh-^{imn}*) in Bedford’s Kyancutta Museum catalogue and this is listed as an alternative name in Museums Victoria’s records. The difference in these two translations could be because the sign for ‘n’ is not clearly inscribed as the water ripple  glyph but as a straight line and thus may not be included in some translations. There is also one instance of the name spelt Nymenkhamun in the vertical inscriptions on the white ground of the coffin.

According to the inscriptions, Nytamenkhamun was employed in a Temple of Amun, as a “chief of a storeroom” (*n hr.y^{c.t}*). The provenance of Thebes for this coffin is supported by the Theban elements in the iconography. It is also reinforced through comparison to an additional coffin of the same period which has been reliably identified as Theban. Nytamenkhamun’s parent’s names are written in the vertical white ground inscriptions and in those located on the pedestal. His father’s name is transcribed Nesykhonsu (or alternatively Neskmons); he was also a chief of the storeroom, and his mother’s name is Tashep (or alternatively Tashesep). Nesykhonsu held a similar position in the Temple of Amun, as his profession is also recorded as a chief of a storeroom at the House of Amun, perhaps suggesting that the profession was hereditary.

Inscriptions on the coffin are painted freehand with black ink and exist only on the lid. In total, there are five horizontal bands of inscriptions of different sizes which provide the appearance of mummy wrappings and divide the iconography into different registers. The inscriptions are mainly painted on a yellow ground, but the four vertical columns identifying Nytamenkhamun’s parents and employment are painted on an unvarnished white ground to make these stand out from the other inscriptions (Taylor 2001a, 174). There are five registers on the coffin lid which contain multiple vignettes in each. Dividing each of the vignettes and inscriptions from each other are

² Alternative translations of this name are possible, including “Namenekhamun” (A/Prof Boyo Ockinga 2020, pers. comm.). Nytamenkhamun is the chosen translation used in this thesis because it is the name currently used by Museums Victoria and museum records for this artefact are listed under that title.

horizontal and vertical lines of a tile pattern, which are painted with green, red, blue and yellow paint.

Following ancient Egyptian burial traditions, the inner coffin of Nyamenkhamun was made to contain mummified remains. It may have been accompanied by an assemblage of burial goods such as amulets and other items depending on whether it derived from a cache tomb or one which had been used multiple times. Since Nyamenkhamun's coffin has subsequently lost its context and no records regarding its discovery and original place of burial have been found, the existence of additional tomb goods remains unconfirmed.

The colour scheme on the coffin of blue, red, yellow and black on a white or yellow ground is commonly seen on coffins from the Third Intermediate Period, assisting in dating it to sometime in this time frame. The face of the coffin is rounded in shape, and the eyes, pupil and eyebrows are painted with a thick black outline. The sclera of the eye is painted white. The remainder of the face including the ears, nose, cheeks and mouth are painted a red-brown colour which is representational of the deceased's male gender, and it wears a lappet-wig coloured with yellow and black stripes, once again representing the gender of the deceased as male (Robins 2001, 291-293; Sousa 2018, 50). Interestingly, the red-brown colour of the skin also reveals that the deceased was an Egyptian because the skin of foreigners was painted with either yellow or black pigment (Robins 2001, 293; Taylor 2001a, 175; Hartwig 2014, 163). The exterior surface of the coffin is varnished, and occasionally this varnish has turned a yellow colour as the artefact has aged.

The top of the wig contains a depiction of the scarab beetle, Khepri, and the face of the coffin is missing its false beard. It is unknown whether this was present during Newnes' ownership of the coffin, but it is recorded as absent by Bedford in the 1930s. A large floral and bead collar is painted on the shoulders and chest of the coffin. This collar contains rows of painted red, blue and yellow faience beads intended to emulate a floral collar (Taylor 2001b, 225). Positioned towards the bottom of the collar is the depiction of a ram-headed falcon. Below this is located a similarly depicted bird-headed falcon.

In the first register, the offering scene occurs symmetrically on the left and right of the coffin. In this scene, Nyamenkhamun is making offerings to Osiris who stands behind a lotus flower. Behind Nyamenkhamun stands a Cobra (Wadjet) (Hart 2005, 161), wearing the white crown (Hedjet) which represents Upper Egypt. Below the offering scene, two sections of the inscription are located on either side of the falcon's head. The inscription serves to break up the iconography and to provide the illusion of mummy wrappings.

In the second register, located below the falcon, the full-figure images of selected gods are depicted. These include Wepwawet, Duamutef, Anubis and Imsety, all standing upright and facing the centre of the coffin. Dividing the coffin in half is a broad horizontal line of text and below this text, in the centre of the lower coffin lid, is an Abydos Fetish. The fetish is flanked on either side with two symmetrical vignettes. The upper vignettes form register three and contain the four sons of Horus which are depicted protecting the sides of the coffin (Sousa 2018, 30). Below them, in register four, on either side of the coffin, is the depiction of a winged falcon and winged cobra also shown in a gesture of protection with their wings outstretched. Between these symmetrical registers, is a horizontal line of inscription, divided in the middle by the Abydos Fetish. In the centre of the fifth and final register, Nyamenkhamun is depicted in mummiform lying on a lion-headed bier (Taylor 1989, 61).

The pedestal contains five lines of inscription, which are written vertically and covered in a thick layer of dirt. On either side of the inscription, is a depiction of Anubis in jackal form (Bettum 2010, 57). The base of the pedestal is damaged, but the decoration remains visible. It contains a large image of the Apis bull carrying Nyamenkhamun on its back.

The coffin's base contains more simplified decoration on a larger scale. The shoulders contain three symmetrical hieroglyphs and below these is the depiction of large floral bouquets. The blue lotus in these bouquets is a symbol of resurrection because it is connected to Osiris. Dominating the imagery on the base is the depiction of a large *djed-pillar*, a symbol of the resurrected Osiris. The *djed-pillar* is often painted on the base of Egyptian coffins, where the back of the deceased would

rest, in the Third Intermediate Period. The iconography on the base is strongly connected to Osirian mythology and the combined notion of resurrection.

Analysis of Key Design Elements

Theology

The coffin has been decorated in traditional Egyptian style, and the iconography contains a combination of two theologies, namely those associated with: Osiris and Amun (Taylor 1989, 7; Taylor 2001b, 230). These two deities were chosen for specific reasons. Osiris offered resurrection to the justified dead while Amun was venerated as the creator of the universe. Amun's name means the Hidden One and he was part of the Great Ogdoad originally (Pinch 2002, 176). It is typical of the Third Intermediate Period, particularly in the 25th Dynasty, for coffin iconography to allude to more than one religious concept, which were skilfully combined (Taylor 2003, 113). The solar and Osirian theologies became the two primary doctrines from the Old Kingdom onwards.

Amun is not represented on the coffin, but elements of Amun theology is depicted in the iconography. This includes the double depiction of Behdet, once with a ram's head and body of a bird and once with the head and body of a bird, specifically a falcon. The ram was sacred to Amun (Hart 2005, 13), and thus the depiction of Behdet references the solar cult of Amun (Hart 2005, 49). However, this depiction of the ram-headed falcon is the nocturnal form of the sun god which serves to identify him with Osiris (as indicated through the texts at the ends of the bands on either side of the head). In the afterlife, the sun deity and Osiris united and are represented with a mummiform body and the head of a ram. The solar cult is further referenced in the depiction of Khepri on the top of the coffin's head. Khepri is represented by the depiction of a scarab beetle and represented the rebirth of the sun deity at sunrise (Sousa 2018, 77; Taylor 2001a, 9) and thus is connected to the solar cult. The scarab made this connection through the daily rising of the sun as it triumphed over the evil forces that dwelled in the night.

There are also Osirian elements in the iconography. This includes the depiction of the Apis Bull (Hart 2005, 29), *djed-pillar* and the Abydos Fetish (Aston 2014, 36).

The appearance of these features can help date this coffin to the 25th Dynasty (Dunand and Lichtenberg 2006, 80). The false beard, lappet-wig and depiction of a mummified Nytamenkhamun identifies the deceased with Osiris (Lacovara 2016, 384). There are two depictions of Osiris on the coffin, once in the offering scene and second on the side of the lid in the register next to a depiction of an anthropomorphic Anubis.

The combination of both Osiris and Amun on coffins perhaps references the 6th hour of the night in the *Amduat*. In this hour, before he reaches Apophis in the 7th hour, the sun deity reaches the edge of the primeval waters of Nun (Schweizer *et al.* 2010, 120). The main event of this hour is when the *Ba* of the sun deity is united with the *Ba* of Osiris. This union results in the resurrection of all deceased Egyptians who successfully pass into the next life and the restoration of light in the afterlife (Schweizer *et al.* 2010, 120). The predominance of the vibrant yellow colour on the coffin further references the figure of Osiris covered in sunlight during this hour. The yellow pigment on this coffin is identified as yellow ochre by Rosemary Goodall (2019, 3) at Museums Victoria and is the most common yellow pigment used in ancient Egypt (Scott 2016, 192). Some of the yellow colours on the coffin can be credited to the varnish which has turned yellow as it has aged. Yellow was significant in ancient Egyptian culture as it is representative of gold and the sun (Taylor 2001a, 166). Goodall's (2019) analysis of the yellow colour on the coffin helps to distinguish the pigment from the aged varnish. It also serves as a reminder that the colour on the coffin is somewhat dulled in areas by the presence of dirt. The original yellow would have been much more vibrant. Proof of this colour is a single cleaned patch on the foot which has been removed of dirt and possibly the varnish. This patch shows just how much brighter the yellow colour is than it first appears due to the layer of dirt on the pedestal (Fig. 6).



Figure 6: Detail of the foot pedestal showing the accumulation of dirt (Courtesy of Museums Victoria/ Photographer: Benjamin Healley).

Face/Head

The decoration on the coffin and the anthropoid shape are of symbolic value. The iconography on this coffin has been deliberately chosen to assist Nytamenkhamun in his journey into the afterlife (Baines and Málek 2000, 56). Providing a distinct face (Fig. 7) was considered a vital element of an anthropoid Egyptian coffin. The face was not intended to be an accurate representation of the deceased, but rather is an idealised image which depicts the deceased in the ideal youthful form (Taylor 2006, 266). In a situation where the mummy of the deceased was damaged or irreparably destroyed, the coffin could act as a replacement for the body (Taylor 1989, 11), and thus the deceased would have a working, intact and youthful body in the next life. The false beard, missing on Nytamenkhamun's coffin, was intended to connect the deceased to Osiris (Taylor 1989, 11). Overall, the importance of the anthropoid shape of the Egyptian coffin is that, along with the depiction of the wig and collar, the coffin is representative of the *sah* (the transformed body of the deceased) (Taylor 2006, 266). The shape of this coffin with lean shoulders and the small amount of space dedicated to the top of the wig where it extends up from the forehead is,

according to Taylor (2006, 267), reminiscent of its dating to between the 25th to 26th Dynasties.



Figure 7: The face of Nyamenkhamun's coffin (Courtesy of Museums Victoria/ Photographer: Michelle McFarlane).

Falcons

In this scene, two large falcons (Taylor 1989, 53) are depicted holding the Shen in their talons. This symbol signifies eternity and represents everlasting protection (Taylor 2010, 113; Fig. 8). By depicting this on the coffin, the painter has assured the rebirth of Nyamenkhamun into the afterlife. An analysis of the large ram-headed

falcon which holds this symbol is provided by Taylor (2006, 268) who contends that this feature connotes a scene from the *Book of Caverns* and became prominent on coffins from the 21st Dynasty onwards (Taylor 2006, 268). The red solar disk positioned above the head of the lower falcon is painted with a Uraeus connected to the lower part of the sun above the falcon's beak. This serves to identify the falcon as Horus of Behdet (Redford 2001, 120; Taylor 2006, 268). Horus, in the form of the falcon holding the Shen, as depicted here on the coffin, illustrates the Egyptian belief in the cyclical journey of life, death and rebirth through the setting sun and assures Nyamenkhamun's successful rebirth in the next life (Taylor 2010, 16). The wings of both the ram-headed falcon and the bird-headed falcon are outstretched in a sign of protection. In a lower register, additional falcons (Fig. 9) are also depicted in a similar gesture of protection with their wings extended and these are also identified at Behdet.



Figure 8: Falcons (Courtesy of Museums Victoria/ Photographer: Rodney Start).



Figure 9: Smaller falcon (Courtesy of Museums Victoria/ Photographer: Rodney Start).

Red and Gold *Stola* Bands

Around the solar disk and the head of the ram-headed falcon, are two red and gold bands (Fig. 10) which are likely the evolution of a design representing the red leather straps used in the mummification process (Robins 1986, 200; Sousa 2017, 71). The feature was introduced in the late 21st Dynasty and became prevalent in the 22nd Dynasty (Sousa 2017, 71). According to Taylor (2006, 266), the importance of the depiction of these *stolae* on coffins like Nyamenkhamun's is that they represented protection. They were developed from the wrapping of *stola* on mummies which ascribed divine attributes to the deceased because they were often shown in mummiform depictions of several Egyptian deities (Taylor 2006, 266).

The use of bands like these occurs on many coffins; however, the particular design of these bands identifies them as belonging to a small group of coffins with this type. The bands are smaller than the more common versions and are red with a yellow border. The concave ends of the bands disappear behind the wings, and the large collar and lappet-wig covers the tops. The design of these particular red and gold

bands is rare and connects Nytamenkhamun's coffin to a small group of Third Intermediate Period coffins with the same feature and style, which indicates that they were likely made in the same workshop (Taylor 2006, 266). These coffins include the coffin of Padiashaikhet from the Nicholson Museum in Sydney, Irbastwedjanefu from Musée de l'Opéra in Paris (Taylor 2003, 62) and the third coffin and cartonnage of Kharushery from the Metropolitan Museum (Taylor 2006, 289; Aston 2009, 233). Taylor (2006, 278) argues that the depiction of *stola*, like those on Nytamenkhamun's coffin, were popular on Theban 25th Dynasty coffins and likely characteristic of one craftsman. Thus, the inclusion of this feature suggests that these coffins were made in the same workshop.



Figure 10: Red and gold bands (Courtesy of Museums Victoria/ Photographer: Rodney Start).

Offering Scene

In the offering scene (Fig. 11), Nytamenkhamun stands in front of a Cobra and has both arms raised in a gesture of veneration to Osiris in the hope that the deity will ensure his successful journey into the next life. This Cobra, Wadjet, can be interpreted as a determinative sign for goddess and stands on the sign *nebu* 𓏏,

meaning gold. The combination of these two signs is an epithet to the goddess Hathor (Faulkner 1962, 129).



Figure 11: Offering scenes (Courtesy of Museums Victoria/ Photographer: Rodney Start).

Ancient Egyptians believed the scenes they depicted on their coffins would become real, and thus, by depicting Nytamenkhamun's successful journey into the afterlife with copious amounts of provisions, it ensured that this would occur (Taylor 2001b, 97-98). A successful afterlife was further ensured by depicting Nytamenkhamun on the coffin and repeatedly recording his name in offering formulas which requested offerings from the king or a deity (Taylor 2001b, 96). The hieroglyphs in this scene, in the two columns above Nytamenkhamun's head provide his name.

The offering scene depicted here may represent the hourly ritual in which the deceased makes offerings to Osiris for resurrection (Assmann 1990, 7). The depiction of Osiris in mummiform with green skin and the lotus blossom which stands between Osiris and Nytamenkhamun symbolises this resurrection. Also, Osiris is depicted holding the *w3s* sceptre, a symbol of power which in this funerary context ensured the safety of the deceased (Lucarelli 2006, 124). In this scene, Osiris is depicted wearing the *Atef* crown, which has been used to identify Osiris in iconography.

The unguent cone worn on Nytamenkhamun's head assisted in the purification of the dead and is often depicted on the head of the deceased in scenes in which they are

in the company of a deity (Stevens *et al.* 2019, 1528). In this case, Nyamenkhamun wears one in the presence of Osiris. It signifies that Nyamenkhamun is a 'justified deceased' (Stevens *et al.* 2009, 1528) as written in the inscriptions on the coffin. According to Egyptian afterlife beliefs, it references that he has passed the Weighing of the Heart ceremony, has been judged *m3^c- hrw* (justified) (Allen 2000, 95) and has successfully entered the afterlife. By depicting this on the coffin and recording *m3^c- hrw* in the inscriptions, the coffin is ensuring that Nyamenkhamun's journey into the afterlife is successful.

Furthermore, Nyamenkhamun is depicted wearing a kilt with a sash that goes over his shoulder. The colour of this garment has been derived from either calcite or gypsum pigment (Goodall 2019, 3) which gives the clothing a white appearance. Calcite and gypsum are among three of the most common white pigments used in Egyptian painting and were often mixed together (Scott 2016, 190). Throughout history, the colour white has long been associated with purity (Taylor 2001a, 165) and is the colour of garments worn in the depictions of those undertaking a ritual (Robins 2001, 291). In the case of this vignette, the white of Nyamenkhamun's clothing is further representative of his *m3^c- hrw* (justified) state. It represents that he has become a blessed dead, known as the *3hw*, who are depicted in linen garments of white (Taylor 2001a, 165).

Abydos Fetish

The lower half of the lid contains a large Abydos fetish (Taylor 1989, 59) wearing tall plumes (Fig. 12). Abydos was the cult centre of Osiris in Upper Egypt, and thus this symbol is associated with that deity. On both top sides of the fetish, the Four Sons of Horus are depicted carrying knives. These four deities offer protection to the deceased. Below is placed a line of inscription containing the funerary *htp dj-nsw* prayer to the earth god Geb and following that, two-winged falcons (refer to Fig. 9) and two-winged uraeus (Fig. 13) are placed symmetrically with their wings outstretched between the sign Shen in a gesture of protection.



Figure 12: Abydos Fetish (Courtesy of Museums Victoria/ Photographer: Rodney Start).



Figure 13: Winged snake (Courtesy of Museums Victoria/ Photographer: Rodney Start).

Mummy Lying on a Lion-Headed Bier

The image beneath the Abydos Fetish and between the symmetrical winged birds depicts the body of Nyamenkhamun, as a mummy, lying on a lion-headed bier (Fig.14). In his vignette, Nyamenkhamun is depicted with green skin to identify him with Osiris and guarantee his rebirth in the next life (Robins 2001, 291).

Three vessels containing sacred oils are positioned under the bier. In similar examples of the bier scene on Egyptian coffins (Küffer 2018, 419-420), these vessels may be depicted as canopic jars. This is not the case in this depiction because there are only three vessels in this instance instead of the traditional four canopic jars. Above the mummified form of Nyamenkhamun is the depiction of a bird. The bird represents the Egyptian notion of the soul, the *Ba* (Allen 2000, 79). The ancient Egyptians understood the soul to have many aspects; the *Ba*

represented the personality and was often shown as a bird with a human head (Allen 2000, 79). A brazier with incense burns at the front of the bier to purify the deceased along with the oils.



Figure 14: Mummy lying on a Lion-Headed bier scene (Courtesy of Museums Victoria/ Photographer: Rodney Start).

Pedestal

The foot of the coffin, to this day, is covered with a layer of dirt (Fig. 15). This dirt is a physical reminder of the time the coffin spent in Kyancutta. The designs on the base include a large depiction of the Apis Bull (Fig. 16) carrying the figure of the deceased on its back. The depiction of the Apis Bull was common on coffins of the Third

Intermediate Period (Bettum 2010, 57). The Apis Bull in ancient Egyptian religion was considered the double of Osiris after having its soul received into heaven and thus was known as the Osiris Apis (Wiedemann 1897, 191; Smith 2017, 393) and acted as a protector of the deceased. Therefore, this scene represents Osirian funerary theology. The pedestal has been painted with a geometric border of patterned yellow, red and blue paint and a jackal (Fig. 15) representing the god Anubis is positioned on either side of the pedestal inscriptions (Bettum 2010, 57).



Figure 15: Side of the foot depicting the damage and dirt (Courtesy of Andrew Jamieson).



Figure 16: Nyamenkhamun lying on the back of the Apis Bull (Courtesy of Museums Victoria).

Coffin Base

The base of the coffin has been made separate to the lid. It contains a large image of a *djed-pillar* (Fig. 17) (Taylor 1989, 59), a symbol of the resurrected Osiris, along with large floral bouquets to the sides. The blue lotus in these bouquets was a symbol of resurrection (Ikram 2003, 172). The *djed-pillar* is often painted upon the bases of Egyptian coffins, where the back of the deceased would rest, in the Third Intermediate Period. The *djed-pillar* represented the backbone of Osiris, and thus the positioning of this glyph was purposeful, and it was intended to support the mummy physically (Bettum 2010, 57). There are also protective deities on the right and left of the *djed-pillar* (Fig. 17) which are examples of the gate keepers who guard the gates of the afterlife which gives access to the kingdom of Osiris (Chapters 144-147 of the Book of the Dead). The imagery is less complicated and more sizeable on the base of the coffin; however, it fulfils the illustrative purpose. The decoration on this coffin is restricted to the outside.



Figure 17: Coffin base (Courtesy of Museums Victoria/ Photographer: Rodney Start).

Dating the Coffin

The designs on the coffin allow it to be dated using iconographic analysis. Since the coffin does not make mention in the inscriptions to a specific king or high priest, and it cannot be dated from any other burial items because its original burial location is unknown, we must use stylistic dating methodologies. The following paragraphs identify the elements of the coffin that allow it to be dated to a particular period in Egyptian history and place of origin. The style of the iconography on the coffin

relates to Taylor's (2003, 106, 113-116) Sunrise Design (Design One: 25th to 26th Dynasties) for wooden inner coffins. This type of coffin design includes archaizing features based on the decoration of the 22nd Dynasty cartonnage cases.

Archaism and Coffin Evolution

In the Third Intermediate Period, there was an intermixing of old traditions with new (Taylor 1989, 54). This amalgamation of styles is visible in the 25th Dynasty because it is a period when Egypt was under the control of foreign rule from Kush. Archaism was a technique used by these foreign rulers to legitimise their right for leadership in Egypt. Kushite rulers of the 25th Dynasty referred to the Old, Middle and New Kingdoms for inspiration because they were periods of strong and powerful native rule in Egypt (Taylor 1989, 54).

Consequently, in the 25th Dynasty, the style of the coffin underwent a transition, as mortuary traditions changed (Taylor 1989, 53; Taylor 2001a, 174).

Nytamenkhamun's coffin is evidence of this transition because it contains an intermixing of old and new elements (Taylor 2001a, 53). According to Taylor (2006, 277), the pillar and pedestal design along with the Abydos Fetish and ram-headed falcon are elements from 22nd Dynasty cartonnage cases while the portrayal of deities in multiple areas protecting the coffin and the depiction of the deceased on the back of the Apis Bull is reminiscent of the 25th and 26th Dynasties (Taylor 2003, 111). Furthermore, the wooden coffin, made in two halves with the pillar and pedestal design, increased in popularity, eventually becoming the standard in the 25th and 26th Dynasties (Taylor 1989, 53; Taylor 2003, 111-112; Taylor 2006, 266). That Nytamenkhamun's coffin is made in this style allows the date to be narrowed down to during or after this period (Taylor 1989, 53). The pillar and pedestal design depicted on Nytamenkhamun's coffin was inspired by statuary; for example, the Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures (Taylor 2001a, 174). This feature was included on the anthropoid coffins of the 22nd to the 25th Dynasties, which replaced the inner cartonnage style of the 22nd Dynasty (Taylor 2001a, 174). As with the earlier pillar and pedestal coffin designs, the version used in the 25th Dynasty was anthropoid and represented the deceased; however, the 25th Dynasty versions were created with a more human shape (Taylor 2001a, 174).

The coffin of Nyamenkhamun is an inner coffin which, if the owner were wealthy enough, may once have been enclosed in a larger traditionally shaped anthropoid case (Taylor 1989, 53). Anthropoid coffins are first attested in the 6th Dynasty (Sousa 2018, 19), but these were not the anthropoid designs seen in the later periods. They were no more than rectangular coffins on which eyes were drawn on the side (Sousa 2018, 19). The first proper anthropoid coffins are dated to the 12th Dynasty (Sousa 2018, 19).

Taylor (1989, 53) identifies the coffins of the 25th Dynasty as having an interesting mix of old and new traditions due to the stylistic evolution that was occurring. He emphasises that coffins of this period were decorated with the iconography of the cartonnage cases (Taylor 1989, 53). Elements of Nyamenkhamun's decoration, which incorporated some of these features, include the two large falcons over the torso, the top falcon depicted with the head of the ram and the scarab beetle on the head (Taylor 2006, 14). The 25th Dynasty funerary culture contained many transitional styles, but by the 26th Dynasty, there was a fully established funerary tradition (Taylor 1989, 56). The coffin of Nyamenkhamun contains a transitional style which dates it to before the 26th Dynasty. Due to the substantial variations in style, it is possible to date coffins by examining their designs and comparing them to coffins with consolidated dates and origins.

'Sunrise' design


The dating of this coffin to the 25th Dynasty is supported by Taylor's (2003) study on Egyptian coffins, including the so-called Sunrise design. The main features he uses to identify the 'Sunrise' design are as follows (Taylor 2003, 106):

- Two falcons, one with the head of a ram
- The sons of Horus
- A single line of inscription separating the top scenes from the lower
- An Abydos fetish
- Additional winged deities

These main features are all depicted on Nytamenkhamun's coffin. The structure of this design, Taylor argues (2003, 106) is an allusion to the daily rising of the sun. The designs towards the bottom pedestal are Osirian and relate to the mortuary cult while the top half, above the large band of inscriptions around the middle, relate closely to the cult of Amun and solar worship.

Nytamenkhamun's coffin strongly resembles Taylor's (2003, 114) Design 1 for inner coffins of the 25th to 26th Dynasties, which is an adaption of the cartonnage 'Sunrise' design. Taylor emphasises that the 25th Dynasty version of the 'Sunrise' design was often "almost indistinguishable from that on 22nd Dynasty cartonnages" (Taylor 2003, 114). Overall, the coffin of Nytamenkhamun belongs to Taylor's (2003, 113-116) Third Intermediate Period Design Class One, which dates to the 25th Dynasty and contains elements inspired from the 22nd Dynasty cartonnage cases. This design likely became obsolete by mid 7th century and is strongly associated with "Kushite figure-iconography and palaeography" which again assists in a 25th Dynasty dating for this coffin (Taylor 2003, 114).

The Spelling of 'Osiris'

Interestingly, the spelling of the name Osiris with the flagpole glyph  has been mentioned by Anthony Leahy (1979, 143), David Aston and Taylor (1990, 149) and Anders Bettum (2010, 58) and is essential in supporting the 25th Dynasty dating of this coffin. Leahy (1979) was the first to recognise this spelling as an important factor in dating coffins. The spelling of Osiris changed during Egyptian history (Collier and Manley 1998, 40-41) with the inclusion of the flagpole glyph thought to be a substitution for the divine determinative. This spelling provides a *terminus post quem* for the coffin of 720 BCE (Aston and Taylor 1990, 149; Taylor 2003, 102; Bettum 2010, 58) as it has not been found on earlier coffins or inscriptions, although the accuracy of this statement requires further research (Aston and Taylor 1990, 149). The flagpole glyph here included in the spelling of Osiris is rarely seen in the inscriptions of the 22nd to 23rd Dynasties (Leahy 1979, 143). Instead, it became increasingly common from the 25th Dynasty onwards, eventually replacing the divine determinative completely in the 26th Dynasty (Leahy 1979, 143). Inscriptions on Nytamenkhamun's coffin include a combination of Osiris spelt with the flagpole glyph

and the divine determinative which allows for a date of the 26th Dynasty to be ruled out and strongly encourages a date of the 25th Dynasty.

The Depiction of Nytamenkhamun

Taylor (2003, 101; Fig. 18) developed a comprehensive typology detailing the evolution of clothing on coffins in the Third Intermediate Period. The type depicted here on Nytamenkhamun (Fig. 19) dates to around the 22nd to 26th Dynasties. The style of dress is reminiscent of both the 22nd and 25th Dynasty examples provided by Taylor but is closer to the design of the 25th Dynasty. The closeness of this design to the 22nd Dynasty is due to archaism utilised in this later period.

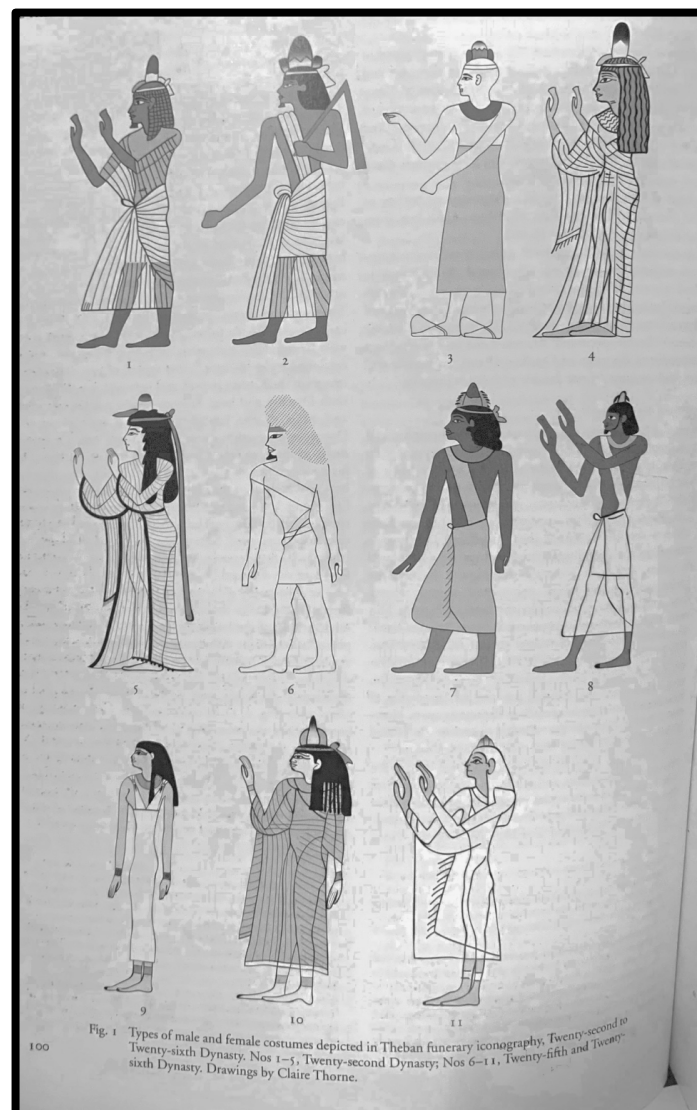


Figure 18: Taylor's costume variations (Source: Taylor 2003, 100).



Figure 19: Nyamenkhamun (Courtesy of Museums Victoria/ Photographer: Rodney Start).

Furthermore, the unguent cone worn by the deceased is of the same period as the clothing, the 25th Dynasty (Taylor 2003, 101; Fig. 19; Fig. 20). Like his typology of the clothing worn in coffin vignettes, Taylor (2003, 101) has developed dating criteria based on the unguent cones, which were first studied by Maraite in 1992. In Taylor's (2003, 101; Fig. 20) study, there are three types of cones that have some chronological overlap but can be used to help date the artefacts on which they are painted. The first dates to the reign of Amenhotep III to the late ninth century and cartonnages dating to the 22nd Dynasty display this type (Taylor 2003, 101). It is distinct in its depiction in that it contains a lotus flower protruding from the front of the tall rounded shape. Type two dates to the late ninth century to the early seventh century and occurs on coffins of the 22nd Dynasty (Taylor 2003, 101). It is the smallest of the three types and contains a large amount of plant matter around the

cone (Taylor 2003, 101). The final cone, type three, is like type two but does not contain the large amount of plant material. The cone is smooth and tall like the one worn by Nyamenkhamun, and thus type three is identified as the closest in appearance to the one worn by Nyamenkhamun on the coffin. Type three dates, at its earliest, to the 25th Dynasty and into the 26th Dynasty (Taylor 2003, 101-102). Therefore, the unguent cone provides support to the dating of the 25th Dynasty.

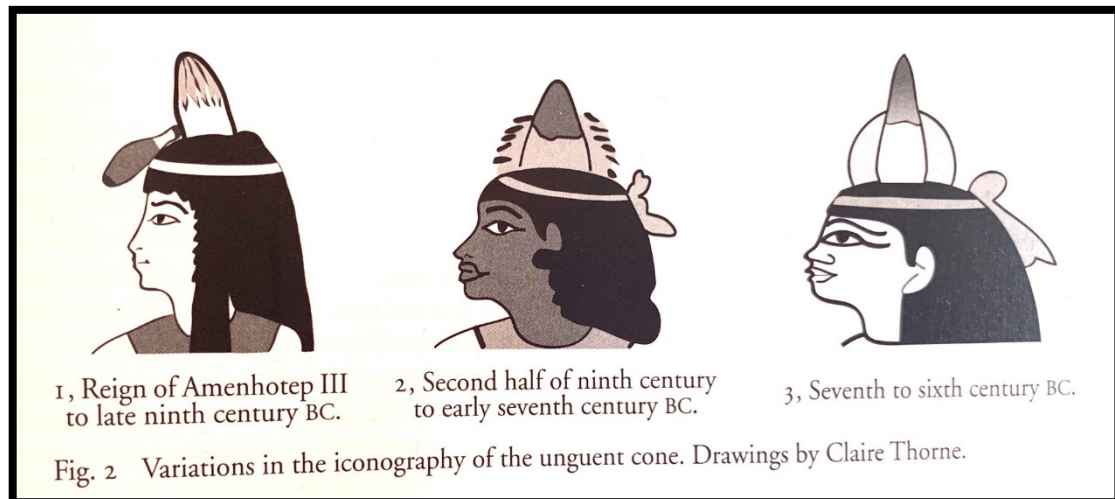


Figure 20: Taylor's Unguent Cone Variations (Source: Taylor 2003, 101).

Stylistic Choices

The inclusion of the scarab (Taylor 1989, 53; Taylor 2006, 14) on the wig can help date the coffin to the 25th Dynasty as it is an element taken from the 22nd Dynasty cartonnage case. As this period was a time of archaism, the scarab was a popular element during the 25th Dynasty (Bettum 2010, 57). Furthermore, the inclusion of ears on Nyamenkhamun's coffin assists in dating it to the 25th to 26th Dynasties, it also helps eliminate a date of the 22nd Dynasty because this feature was not included on coffins from that period (Taylor 2003, 111). The collar is also an essential element of the design, the large size of which assists in dating the coffin to a period after the 21st Dynasty when the size of the collar increased (Sousa 2017, 72-73). The form of the Shen, held in the talons of the ram-headed and falcon-headed birds was typically placed on the chest of coffins and carried by the falcon deity from approximately the seventh century (Moore 2014, 27). At the very bottom of the coffin, the scene depicting the Apis Bull carrying the deceased provides a date of during or after the 25th Dynasty, before which representations of the mummy were

omitted from these scenes (Taylor 2003, 107; Bettum 2010, 58). These stylistic choices all argue for a date of the 25th Dynasty for Nytamenkhamun's coffin.

Furthermore, the appearance of several Kushite elements on the coffin further supports a date of around the 25th Dynasty, when Egypt was under the control of Kush. These include the predominance of images over text, the very large *djed-pillar* on the base and the stylistic features of the face with broad shoulders (Taylor 2003, 99; Bettum 2010, 58). The lack of decoration on the interior (Fig. 21) of the coffin also points to a transitional style which occurred in the 25th Dynasty when the cartonnage was replaced by the wooden inner coffin (Taylor 2003, 177; Bettum 2010, 58).



Figure 21: Coffin interior (Courtesy of Museums Victoria).

Finally, as established, coffins from around the 25th Dynasty often allude to more than one religious concept, which were skilfully combined (Taylor 2003, 113). The solar and Osirian theologies became the two primary doctrines from the Old

Kingdom onwards (Taylor 1989, 8-9). These two theologies are prominent on Nytamenkhamun's coffin, thus pointing to a date of the 25th Dynasty.

The Coffin of Padiashaikhet

There is another Egyptian coffin located in Australia, dated to the 25th Dynasty, which contains similar elements in iconography to Nytamenkhamun's. This coffin is that of Padiashaikhet (Fig. 22) from the Nicolson Museum in Sydney. This coffin was provided with a comprehensive study by Taylor in 2006. In this study, Taylor (2006, 266) outlines the key iconographic features of this coffin and these contain several similarities to Nytamenkhamun's coffin, the most remarkable of these being the small red and gold stola bands. The rarity of this feature and the additional similarities in the design of the two coffins suggests that they were made in the same workshop (Taylor 2003, 102; Taylor 2006, 266). Some of the similar design elements include the shape of the face and wig, the scarab on the top of the wig, the large bead collar, ram-headed falcon and the location and depiction of the offering scene. This scene, however, is missing the depiction of the coffin owner, Padiashaikhet. Furthermore, both coffins contain a large Abydos Fetish and the depiction of several smaller deities on the sides of the coffin lid. Notably, both these coffins have spelt the name of Osiris with the flagpole glyph, as opposed to the determinative, which further supports a similar dating for these two coffins of the 25th Dynasty. This spelling of the name Osiris with the flagpole glyph is an important element in the dating of Nytamenkhamun's coffin to the 25th Dynasty. The occasions of this occurring on this coffin are highlighted in the following analysis of the key inscriptions on the coffin of Nytamenkhamun. This analysis introduces the inscriptions and studies them in regards to what they reveal about the coffin owner and the date of the coffin.

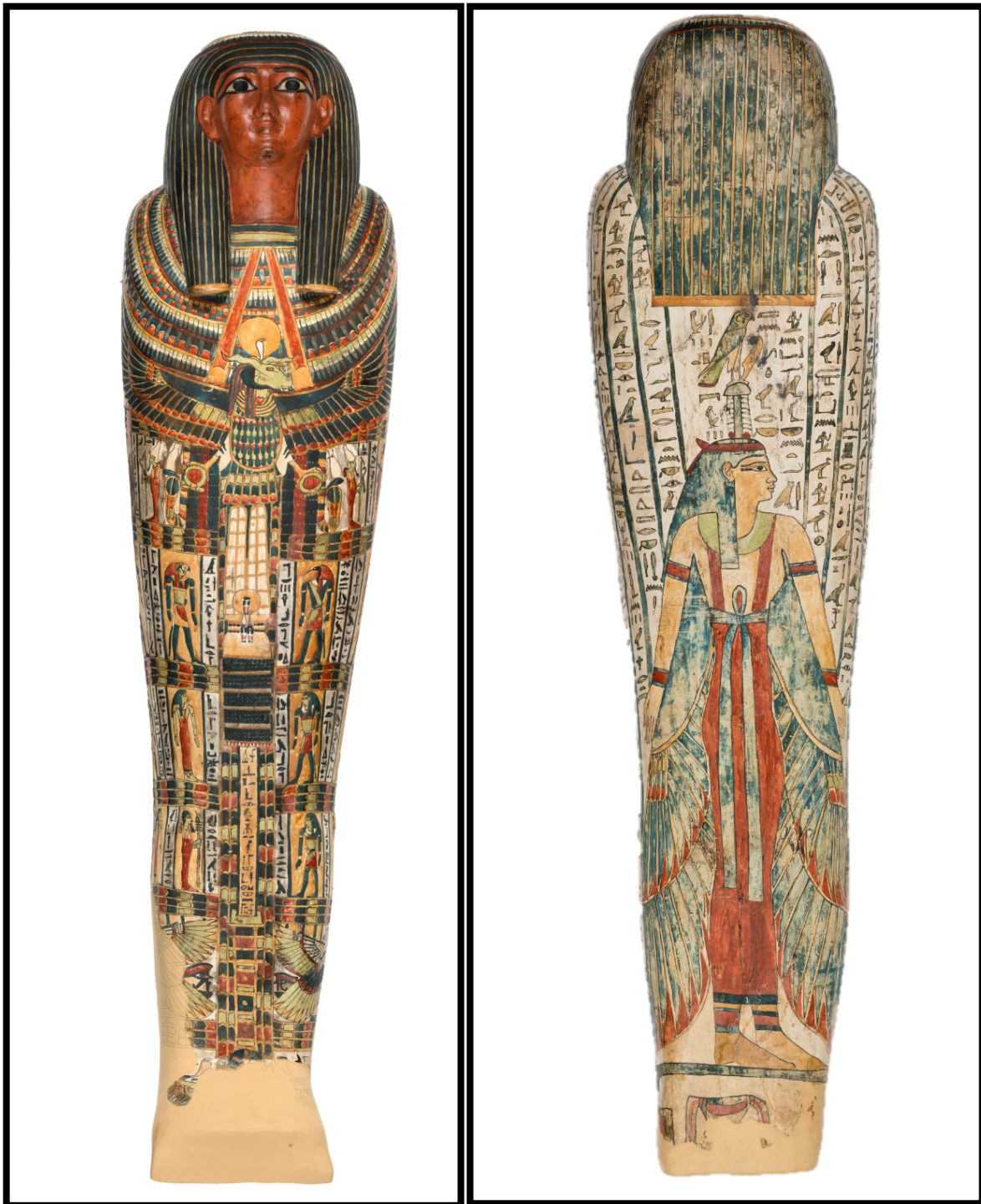


Figure 22: The Coffin of Padiashaikhet (NMR.28.1-3, Courtesy of the Nicholson Collection, Chau Chak Wing Museum, The University of Sydney).

Inscriptions

The following paragraphs introduce the main inscriptions on Nytamenkhamun's coffin. They provide a translation followed by a short commentary on the significance and location of these inscriptions. Hieroglyphs are inscribed on the coffin's exterior lid and the shoulders of the base (Fig. 23). They have been painted freehand by the artist with black ink.



Figure 23: The coffin of Nytamenkhamun with numbers indicating the sections of inscription outlined below (Courtesy of Museums Victoria/ Photographer: Rodney Start).



The inscriptions on the lid of Nytamenkhamun's coffin follow traditional funerary formulas which mainly consist of *hṯp dī-nswt* "an offering the King gives..." (Collier

and Manley 1998, 35-39) and *gd-mdw* “words spoken by...” (Collier and Manley 1998, 161; Allen 2010, 169). After these beginning statements, the inscriptions incorporate the traditional mention to deities, in this case, Osiris, Anubis, Behdet and Geb, which is then followed by a series of epithets and finally a list of offerings for Nyamenkhamun in the next life (Collier and Manley 1998, 35-39). Notably, the writing of several words like Osiris (Leahy 1979, 143) changes in different locations on the coffin lid and this is noted in the commentary. The number of each inscription below correlates to the white numbers in Figure 23. The following paragraphs provide a title, transliteration and translation of the hieroglyphs followed by a short commentary. Close images of the inscriptions are provided in Appendix A.

1. Shoulder Glyphs

tp.y {h3s.t}<dw>=f



He who is upon his mountain

The inscription is located symmetrically on the shoulders of the coffin base and is read vertically. Proportionally these hieroglyphs are significantly larger than others on the coffin, and they are the only instance of the hieroglyphs being coloured. The face *tp.y* hieroglyph wears an unguent cone, like Taylor’s (2003, 101) unguent cone variation number three, which helps reinforce the dating of this coffin to the 25th Dynasty. Furthermore, the design of this particular hieroglyph contains a jutting chin where the lips and chin are prominent and extend beyond the forehead (Taylor 2003, 99). This feature is common in 25th Dynasty Kushite iconography (Taylor 2003, 99) and further supports a dating of this Dynasty for Nyamenkhamun’s coffin. The condition of these hieroglyphs is good except for a fissure running through them on one side of the coffin (refer to Fig. 5). The inscription is a version of the epithet traditionally written *tp.y dw=f*. *It has been* written as *tp.y h3s.t* (Allen 2010, 92) on this coffin with the difference being the replacement of the single mountain glyph  with the mountain range . This inscription has been transliterated as *tp.y {h3s.t}<dw>=f* to indicate that regardless of the hieroglyph, the traditional epithet *tp.y dw=f* is what is meant.

2. Stola Inscriptions

Wsîr

Osiris


This inscription is located in both of the yellow concave ends of the two painted stola bands. The hieroglyphs translate to the name Osiris and reference the nocturnal form of the ram-headed bird when he unites with Osiris in the afterlife. Importantly, this inscription is written without the divine determinative for god . Instead, this determinative is replaced with the logogram  of the flagpole glyph (Leahy 1979, 143). This spelling is an essential element considered in the dating of this coffin.


3. Abydos Fetish

<ḥtp> dî-nsw Wsîr ḥnt.y îmn.tyw ntr^c3 nb

[An offering] the King gives to Osiris, Foremost of the Westerners, great god and lord.

The hieroglyphs in this inscription are well preserved and can be read without obstruction. They are located on the bottom half of the Abydos Fetish positioned on the lower half of the coffin lid. The location of this inscription is important because it relates it to the Osirian part of the Sunrise Design. In this design, elements related to the afterlife are positioned towards the bottom of the coffin and features relating to the solar cult are located towards the top.

This inscription follows the traditional offering formula *ḥtp dî-nsw* used to ensure the provision of offerings to Nyamenkhamun, who is the implied recipient of these, in the next life. The glyph *ḥtp*  does not explicitly appear in the inscription. It has been added in brackets because the inscription follows the traditional *ḥtp dî-nsw* formula. It is likely the *ḥtp* is represented by the Abydos Fetish itself. The inscription involves a series of phrases requesting offerings for the deceased (Allen 2014, 374-375; Faulkner and Goelet 2015, 48, 151, 156). The *dî-nsw* following *ḥtp* is read in honorary transposition and indicates that the offering is a royal gift authorised by the king (Allen 2014, 374). The spelling of

Osiris' name in this instance is written with the flagpole glyph (as is the case in section 2, above). Following this, the inscription concludes with a series of titles for Osiris including the final glyph *nb*  which translates to “lord” and is probably an abbreviation for *nb abdw* translating to Lord of Abydos.

4a. Offering Formula

{hṭp} dī-nswt gb {ī}r{y}-p'f.t} nṯr.w dī=f prt-ḥrw {t} ḥnk.t k3.w 3pd.w



[An offering] the King gives to Geb, hereditary prince of the gods, so that he may give invocation-offerings [of] (bread and beer), oxen and fowl.

It is not stated clearly in this inscription, but Nyamenkhamun is the implied recipient of these offerings given by the king through Geb. This implication can be inferred from the inscription because the traditional *hṭp dī-nswt* formula generally ends with the name of the beneficiary who is the owner of the coffin (Allen 2010, 365-367). This freehand inscription is located on the right side of the coffin lid, beside the Abydos Fetish. It is almost symmetrical to that written on the left (4b) but contains a slightly longer inscription with more specific offering requests.

4b. Offering Formula

{hṭp} dī-nswt gb {ī}r{y}-p'f.t} nṯr.w dī=f hṭp

[An offering] the King gives to Geb, hereditary prince of the gods, so that he may give many offerings.

This inscription is a shortened version of that written on the right (4a). The difference may be due to spacing reasons as horizontal inscriptions on the left of this coffin are generally shorter than those on the right. In this instance, the name *gb* (Geb)  includes the divine determinative, unlike 4a which spelt the name without the determinative . Both 4a and 4b are well preserved and can be read clearly.

5. White Vertical Inscriptions





(Top left) *gd-mdw in Wsir n hry^{c.t}* **(Top right)** *imn N-[t3]-mnḥ-imn m3^c hrw*

(Bottom right) *s3 n hry^{c.t} imn Ns-* **(Bottom Left)** *Hnsw m3^c hrw mw.t:f T3-Šp*

Words spoken by Osiris to the chief of the storeroom of Amun,

Ny[ta]menkhamun, justified, son of the chief of the storeroom of Amun,

Nesykhonsu, justified, his mother Tashep.

This significant inscription is divided into four vertical columns. They are read clockwise beginning with the top left column and are located on either side of the Abydos Fetish. The inscription is written clearly, but several signs are difficult to ascertain because the scribe has often included simplified versions of several glyphs. The sign for “son” is represented as the egg  plus vertical stroke which is common in later texts. The sign  which forms part of ‘Khonsu’ in Nesykhonsu is drawn as a black oval. Yet, this sign can be interpreted as a part of the word for Khonsu because of the surrounding hieroglyphs. Yet, contrastingly, this inscription also contains the only instance of the first ‘n’ in the coffin owner’s name written as the water ripple glyph  instead of the simplified straight line found in the other writings of the coffin owner’s name in the inscriptions. Similarly, to the previous inscriptions 2 and 3, the spelling of Osiris in this instance is written with the flagpole glyph. The name of the mother, T3-Šp, is written unusually in this inscription. The group  forming the first half of the mother’s name is unusual, but not uncommon for late texts and should be read as T3.

6. Lion-Headed Bier Inscriptions

hry^{c.t} N-t3-mnḥ-imn m3^c hrw

Chief of a storeroom (in the House of) Amun, Nytamenkhamun, justified!

This inscription is located at the bottom of the coffin lid just above the pedestal. It is directly connected to the vignette in which it is situated. This vignette contains a depiction of Nytamenkhamun as a green faced mummy lying on a lion-headed bier. The location identifies this inscription with both the contents of the vignette and with Osirian iconography. The inscription identifies Nytamenkhamun as the coffin owner and provides his profession as a chief of a storeroom in the House of

Amun. The hieroglyphs in this section are positioned directly above the depiction of Nyamenkhamun and the writing is untidy compared to other hieroglyphs on the coffin. However, the inscription can be understood with reasonable clarity using the other inscriptions to inform the interpretation of this one.

7. Middle Band Inscriptions

*ḡd-mdw ḡn Wsjr ḡnp.w tp.y ḡwꜣf nb t3{.wy} ḡsr dīꜣf ḡ.t nb.t nfr.t wꜣb.t ḡ.t nb.t nfr.t
nḡm.t bnr.t n Wsir ḡr.y^c.t ḡmn*

Words spoken by Osiris [and] Anubis, the one who is on his mountain, Lord of the Two Sacred Lands, may he give everything good and pure, everything good, sweet and pleasant to the Osiris (the deceased), chief of a storeroom (in the House of) Amun.

The middle band inscriptions serve as both a request for offerings and as an essential design element. The inscription helps separate the layout of the coffin iconography into the Osirian and Amun sections while also providing the resemblance of mummy wrappings. In this inscription, the hieroglyphs are relatively clear, and the inscription spans the entire width of the coffin lid from one side to the other. The title, “Lord of the Two Sacred Lands” is likely a scribal error in the text and should be written as “Lord of the Sacred Land”. Furthermore, the inclusion of the two adjectives “sweet and pleasant” is unusual. This inscription is a combination of two texts, the first begins with *ḡd-mdw* while the second begins with *dīꜣf* which usually occurs after the *ḡtp dīꜣnsw* formula.

In this inscription, there are two instances of Osiris being spelt differently. The first spelling contains both the divine determinative and the flagpole glyph while the second occasion uses only the logogram. This inscription further serves to identify the owner of the coffin as a chief of a storeroom in a House of Amun and requests offerings to ensure Nyamenkhamun has a good and prosperous afterlife.

8. Offering Scene

ḡd-mdw in Ws̄r ḥnty-ḡmnt m-r ḥr.y ˘.t ḡmn, N-t3-mnh-ḡmn

Words spoken by Osiris, Foremost of the Westerners, to the chief of a storeroom in the House of Amun, Nytamenkhamun.


This inscription is located twice on the upper torso of the coffin. It is placed symmetrically on either side in the space between the two large falcons and directly relates to the offering scene in which the inscription is written. In this scene, Nytamenkhamun is depicted making offerings to Osiris (spelt with the flagpole glyph). The inscriptions are written in columns which correspond to the figures in the vignette. The three columns on the left give the title and name of the owner and are written above his depiction, while the words spoken by Osiris are written above the depiction of this deity on the right and begin *ḡd-mdw*. In this instance, the hieroglyphs are somewhat messy and thus are complicated but not impossible to read. The inscription on the opposite side of the coffin lid is almost identical and the minor differences do not alter the meaning which remains the same.

9. Pedestal

(1) *ḡd-mdw in Ws̄r ḡnpw tp.y ḡwʔf ḥnt.y* **(2)** *sh ntr nb t3wy ḡsr dīʔf pr.t ḥrw t ḥnḡ.t*
k3.w 3pd.w **(3)** *n Ws̄r ḥr.y ˘.t ḡmn N-t3-***(4)***mnh-ḡmn m3˘ ḥrw s3 Ns-Hnsw* **(5)** *m3˘*
ḥrw mtʔf T3-šp.t

Words spoken by Osiris and Anubis, he who is on his mountain, Lord of the Divine Booth (embalming tent), Lord of the Two Sacred Lands, may he give an invocation offering of bread and beer and many oxen and geese for the Osiris (the deceased), the chief of a storeroom of the House of Amun, Nytamenkhamun, justified! Son of Nesykhonsu, justified, his mother Tashep.



The inscriptions in this section are not clear, particularly those located at the bottom of each column. This lack of clarity is because the hieroglyphs are obscured by a large build-up of dirt which inhibits the ability to read these hieroglyphs. Careful consideration has been taken to provide a translation based

on what is visible and on knowledge of the funerary formula *ḡḡ-mdw* (Collier and Manley 1998, 161; Allen 2010, 169) utilised in this inscription. Importantly, this inscription further identifies Nytamenkhamun as the coffin owner and his parents as Nesykhonsu and Tashep (his mother's name is spelt differently () to the other occasion in inscription 5). In this instance, Osiris is written twice, firstly with the divine determinative and secondly with the flagpole glyph.

10a. Request for offerings from Behdet 1

Bḥd.ty nṯr '3 nb pt, dīf pr.t ḥrw t ḥnk.t k3.w 3pd.w n Wsīr ḥnty-īmnt


Behdet, great god, lord of heaven, so that he may give invocation offerings of bread and beer, any oxen and fowl to Osiris, Foremost of the Westerners.



Horus the Behdetite, the great god and lord of heaven, is referenced through the hieroglyphs *Bḥd.ty*   (Gardiner 1944, 23). This inscription is a standard funerary formula requesting offerings for the justified deceased. It is located on the upper middle right side of the coffin and is written on a thick band which covers the lid of the coffin from left to right but vanishes behind the large falcon's head. The inscription on the left of the coffin, 10b, contains a similar inscription but, like 4a, involves a somewhat shorter and less detailed description. In this inscription, the spelling of Osiris' name is a rare occasion when it is written with the divine determinative and not the logogram.

10b. Request for offerings from Behdet 2

Bḥd.ty nṯr dīf nb pt dīf pr.t ḥrw t ḥnk.t k3.w 3pd.w

Behdet, great god, lord of heaven, may he give invocation offerings of bread and beer, many oxen and fowl.

This text is located on the opposite side of the coffin lid to 10a and contains a much shorter inscription. The inscription still carries the same purpose as 10a, which is to provide for Nytamenkhamun in the afterlife. The hieroglyph *prt-ḥrw* , used in both 10a and 10b, connotes invocation offerings of bread and beer (Allen 2010, 365-367).

The above introduction to the inscriptions on Nyamenkhamun's coffin identifies several key features and pieces of information beneficial to the analysis of this artefact. The spelling of Osiris (*Wsîr*) on the coffin with the Flagpole glyph  and/or the divine determinative  is a fundamental part of this analysis essential to consider in the dating of this coffin. On occasion, the use of the flagpole glyph is written either alongside (in inscription number 7) the divine determinative or alone (in inscriptions 2, 3, 5, 7, 8 and 9). There are two occasions of the divine determinative used in isolation instead of the flagpole glyph (in inscriptions 9 and 10a). The commentary of these hieroglyphs below each translation has highlighted these different occasions. As noted earlier in this chapter, the use of the flagpole glyph instead of the divine determinative occurred in the Third Intermediate Period, particularly from the 25th Dynasty (Leahy 1979, 143). It replaced the divine determinative entirely in the 26th Dynasty (Leahy 1979, 143). Therefore, since this coffin still contains the occasional appearance of the divine determinative in the coffin inscriptions, it argues for a date before the 26th Dynasty and during the 25th. Importantly, this analysis identifies the contents of the inscription, which reveals information about the coffin owner, his family and place of employment. This information is essential and provides context for the original owner of this artefact.

The analysis presented in this chapter has identified the main elements of the iconography and surveyed the inscriptions to the extent necessary to appreciate the significance of the coffin of Nyamenkhamun. It does this to provide context for the following chapters wherein the use and acquisition history of the coffin is investigated. It is important to have context when discussing the Object Biography and perhaps by analysing the coffin, it is possible to understand why Newnes, Bedford and Museums Victoria purchased it. The coffin of Nyamenkhamun is decorated in a style that is very revealing of its ancient Egyptian origin and because it is such a striking artefact which can attract attention from museum-goers, this likely led to its purchase by Bedford and especially Museums Victoria. This concept is further developed in the following chapters.

CHAPTER THREE

Historical Context

The first wave of ‘Egyptomania’

The study of Nyamenkhamun’s coffin allows this thesis to delve into an exploration of larger issues surrounding the acquisition and display of Egyptian antiquities around the world. Following the movements of the coffin itself, this chapter focuses on England and Australia, the locations where the coffin is known to have been kept following its removal from Egypt. Through an examination of the broader context of interest and trade in Egyptian material in these locations, it is possible to contextualise the coffin better in South West London and/or North Devon with Newnes, Shropshire and Kyancutta with Bedford and Melbourne with Museums Victoria.

This chapter begins by providing context for the coffin’s stay in England because, to understand the popularity of ancient Egypt in Australia, one must first look to England. This is because of Australia’s cultural affiliation with England, which is a direct relation to the popularity of Egypt in Australia. There are cultural links between these two countries as Australia was a colonial outpost of the United Kingdom, and thus aspects of English culture have influenced Australians. The recent owner of the coffin, Robert Bedford, is evidence of this link. Furthermore, England is also the first known location of the coffin after its removal from Egypt, and the background provided in this chapter regarding the broader interest in Egypt in England is aligned to the heightened popularity of Egypt in Australia.

French desire to attack British interests in the Mediterranean and India instigated the French expedition led by Napoleon (Reid 2002, 31). On July 1, 1798, Napoleon’s fleet of 400 ships sailed into the port of Alexandria. The differences between post-enlightenment modern Europe and Egyptian culture captured the imagination and interest of the Europeans. England and France felt the impact of Napoleon’s expedition, but it also reached other parts of Europe and even the United States (Jeffreys 2003, 17). Elements of everyday life such as furniture, clothing design and

architecture show signs of having been greatly influenced by Napoleon's discovery of Egyptian culture.

An unusual element of Napoleon's Egyptian expedition was the inclusion of scholars and scientists who brought Egypt to the public's attention with their writings and sketches (Reid 2002, 33). The work of the Savants was published intermittently after the expedition, and in addition to writing this text, they sold artefacts for museums and private collections which funded their work (Shaw 2004, 20-23). These Savants were originally hired to record everything they saw, to map roads in Egypt and to assist the soldiers by building mills and canals (Said 2014, 30) but they also inspired heightened interest in ancient Egypt.

In August 1799, Napoleon left Egypt in the control of General Jean-Baptiste Kleber and returned to France (Stapleton 2013, 50). French occupation in Egypt would remain for the following two years. During this time, the Savants recorded Egypt as they saw it. From 1809 to 1829 a series of publications were produced called the *Description de L'Égypte* by Edme-François Jomard. The series provides a comprehensive catalogue to ancient and modern Egypt and is often credited with having sparked the beginning of Egyptology as a field of research. The work of the Savants and the decipherment of the Rosetta Stone in 1822 sparked a wave of interest in all things Egypt in Europe. The repercussions of this wave were present throughout the lives of Newnes and Bedford in England.

Following Napoleon's campaigns, interest in ancient Egypt was continuous. An example of this continuing popularity occurred in the 1830s when Thomas Pettigrew (1834, 1-264), a surgeon from England, presented public unwrapping of mummified remains. These social events appealed to the macabre interest of the public and were fashionable to attend (Spindler *et al.* 1996, 41; Starkey and El-Kholi 2002, 131). The popularity of these events would continue and in Australia on January 20, 1893, a public unwrapping occurred at the Concert Hall of the Melbourne Exhibition Building (Dunstan and Graham 1996, 257). The mummy which was unwrapped for this occasion remains in the care of Museums Victoria (Hope 1983, 49).

This instance of public unwrapping is just one example of how Egyptian artefacts have taken on different roles over their existence. In ancient Egypt, coffins ensured the survival of human remains and guaranteed the successful journey of the individual into the afterlife. Today, Egyptian mummies are a significant source of scientific knowledge on ancient life, death and medicine. Both Egyptian mummies and coffins were never intended to be seen after being placed in the tomb; however, today Egyptian mummies and coffins are curiosities kept in museums and private collections to represent Egyptian funerary traditions and educate the public on the ancient civilisation of Egypt.

One of the most obvious areas influenced by Egyptian design is mortuary architecture (Fritze 2016, 13). The architecture of Victorian England includes many recognisable elements of Egyptian Revival (Fritze 2016, 13). The Egyptian Avenue in the West Cemetery of the London Highgate Cemetery is a perfect example of the Egyptian Revival influencing British mortuary architecture (Fritze 2016, 13). It was designed and built in the 19th century when interest in ancient Egypt was flourishing. The impressive architectural features include Egyptian-styled ornamental pillars which are flanked by a pair of giant obelisks.

In Australia, many examples of ancient Egypt likewise exist in military, religious and mortuary contexts. Obelisks are often used to commemorate sites and individuals of historical importance (Inglis 2008, 153-154). Initially, they were a symbol of the solar cult in ancient Egypt, but over the years they have come to signify mourning and military achievement. The tall shape of the obelisk has come to represent the noble actions and honourable characters of military persons (Inglis 2008, 154). Obelisks are the oldest Egyptianising monument in Australia (Hope 2003, 166-167; McFarlane 2004, 106) and are an example of how an artefact or symbol can evolve in purpose and meaning. However, whilst the meaning of the obelisk has evolved, it is likely that the early Australians building and commissioning these obelisks were unaware of its original purpose. Instead, they may have been influenced by ancient Roman use of the symbols, or even by European practices (Hope 2003, 168).

Egypt in Australia Contemporary to Bedford 1915-1951

European settlers in Australia brought with them a fascination with Ancient Egypt (McFarlane 2004, 107). This fascination promoted institutions and private collectors in Australia to collect Egyptian artefacts (McFarlane 2004, 107) like Nyamenkhamun's coffin. It was through the display of these collections that many Australians first encountered ancient Egypt. Since the coffin of Nyamenkhamun has remained in Australia since it arrived in 1923, it is an important example of the reception of Egyptology in Australia which is visible by researching the individuals who owned the coffin and how they displayed it.

In 1914, one year before Bedford reached Australia, Alan Rowe arrived in South Australia from England. Rowe spent eight years in Australia, leaving in 1922, one year before Nyamenkhamun's coffin arrived in South Australia, but during this time Rowe worked closely with the South Australian Museum and compiled a catalogue for both the South Australian Museum and the National Gallery of Victoria (Hope 1983, 45; McFarlane 2004, 109). The South Australian catalogue was never published. Rowe contributed significantly to Egyptology in Australia, donating the mummy and coffin of Tjeby, the Elder to the Victorian State Collections (Hope 1984, 5; Merrillees 1990, 38; McFarlane 2004, 109). He also provided information to Bedford regarding the coffin of Nyamenkhamun which Bedford included in his Kyancutta Museum catalogue. An exhibition titled *Tjeby: Long May He Live*, which was focused on the Tjeby artefacts Rowe donated, would be the first to include the coffin of Nyamenkhamun at Museums Victoria in 1984.

The Bedford family arrived in Australia in 1915, but it was not until 1923 that Nyamenkhamun's coffin joined them in South Australia. This arrival date is important because only shortly before, in November 1922 the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb resulted in the second wave of interest in Egypt aptly known as 'Tutmania' (Fritze 2016, 240). The coffin arrived eight years after Bedford in Australia and six years before the establishment of the Kyancutta Museum. The heightened interest in Egyptian antiquity during this period likely influenced Bedford's decision to bring the coffin to Australia in 1923. Perhaps Bedford was already planning for the Kyancutta Museum and realised with the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb that

interest in all things Egyptian would become amplified, and thus he would have wanted this artefact back in his possession. The story of George Herbert, the fifth Earl of Carnarvon and Howard Carter discovering the Tomb of Tutankhamun is well known in modern society, a fact that alone speaks to the popularity of ancient Egypt. Research has revealed that Bedford was greatly interested in ancient Egypt and held a large assemblage of Egyptian antiquities in his private collection and thus it is likely that he would have been following the discovery of the boy king and was likely influenced by this event which may have encouraged him to send for the coffin of Nyamenkhamun in 1923.

The discovery of Tutankhamun sparked the second-phase Egyptian Revival that can be seen in the fashion, art and design of the Art Deco period (Glynn 2020, 85). Motifs from ancient Egypt were interwoven into the designs on handbags, jewellery, clothing and makeup, to name a few. Even advertisements for products were influenced by this mania and often entertained Egyptian themes and designs. In Australia, the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb was announced by the media (Hope 2003, 180) and inspired many elements of Australian society, including built heritage from this time.

The Syme family Memorial at Box Hill Cemetery in Melbourne was strongly influenced by ancient Egyptian architectural style (Merrillees 1990, 610), which represents the influence of Egypt in Australian mortuary contexts. The memorial was erected 1929 (Hope 2003, 173), six years before Nyamenkhamun's coffin arrived in Australia, and reflects the idea that at the time the Kyancutta Museum was established which was also in 1928 to 1929, interest in ancient Egypt was strong.

This interest persisted into the 1930s and, in 1939-1940, the National Gallery of Victoria desired to increase their collection of Egyptian antiquities (Hope 2003, 180). This period coincides with the height of the Kyancutta Museum when Bedford was actively collecting and expanding his assemblage. The Kyancutta Museum had a substantial collection of Egyptian material, though much of this was collected before Bedford arrived in Australia and collected through exchange with global museums. Bedford (1930-1966, 9) also purchased a significant amount of Egyptian material from the Cairo Museum in 1930 and received the Mond collection in 1940. This

period, from 1930 to 1940, was a significant time for the collection of Egyptian antiquities, not just for Bedford, but for Australian Museums in general.

Egypt in Australia following Museums Victoria's purchase of the coffin in 1972.

The study of ancient Egypt entered Australian educational institutions about 40-50 years ago in the 1970-80s (McFarlane 2004, 110), which is around the same time that Museums Victoria purchased the coffin of Nytemekhamun. That a study of ancient Egypt is now possible in Australian higher education is a direct result of the migrating academics who endeavoured to bring it about. The first individual to receive a PhD in Egyptology in Australia was a graduate from Macquarie University named Naguib Kanawati (McFarlane 2004, 111) who completed his studies in 1974. Egypt was included in courses offered in at the University of Melbourne by Ron Ridley and Colin Hope and Macquarie University by Kanawati. The development of these courses all occurred while the coffin of Nytemekhamun was in the possession of Museums Victoria. At that time, there was growing interest in the study of Egyptology as it became a field of study which gave the coffin another layer of value for Museums Victoria as Egyptology became increasingly popular.

A small number of dedicated Egyptologists have driven the development of Egyptological programs in Australian higher education; the process by which Egyptology became established in Australian universities is a fascinating study. This field owes a lot to the migration of academics, particularly from England during the 1970s to 1980s whose perseverance in making the study of Egyptology accessible for Australians has resulted in the current success of the field today. If it was not for the success of Egyptology programmes in Australia, the coffin might have been kept in long term storage at Museums Victoria. Due to the popularity of ancient Egypt in education, two exhibitions at the Ian Potter Museum of Art, which included the coffin, were designed to support The University of Melbourne's ancient history classes.

This introduction to the intellectual and cultural context of the coffin's collection and display provides some insight into the historical context of the coffin in England and Australia. It explored the impact of ancient Egyptian material culture on the

imagination of the West to examine the society the coffin presided in while located in England and Australia to provide a solid context for the coffin. This context assists the following discussion of the known previous owners of Nyamenkhamun's coffin, which explores the cultural influences that surrounded the purchase and use of the coffin.

Sir George Newnes

The first known modern owner of the coffin, Sir George Newnes, lived during a period when the collection of ancient artefacts was a popular past time for the wealthy. This hobby, which concerned the collection of antiquities, likely influenced his purchase of the coffin. Newnes became interested in Egypt later in his life when illness encouraged him to travel to Egypt for the warmer weather during the British winters. During the last year of his life, Newnes began to write a biography; however, illness soon overcame him, and the biography was left a mere outline. Hulda Friederichs then took this outline and turned it into the biography of Newnes' life, which she published in 1911 (republished 2008). Friederich's text remains the standard reference work for the life of George Newnes today. Since this book, only smaller texts concerned with Newnes' journalism career have been published. Further research in this thesis helps to uncover who Newnes was and the contribution he unwittingly made to the study of Egyptology in Australia.

Newnes was born in Matlock Bath, Derbyshire, England, on March 13, 1851. His father, Thomas Mold Newnes, a congregational minister, and his mother, Sarah Urquhart, had six children, three boys and three girls (Friederichs 1911, 4). George was the youngest of these. He received an exceptional education, beginning his schooling at Silcoates, a Congregational school in the village of Wrenthorpe near Wakefield, Yorkshire, in 1857 at the age of six (Friederichs 1911, 10-27). This was about three or four years younger than the average student at Silcoates (Friederichs 1911, 11). Following this, Newnes attended Shireland School at Cape Hill near Birmingham and finished his education at the City of London School, which he only attended for the spring and summer terms of 1866 (Friederichs 1911, 27-28).

After completing his schooling, Newnes apprenticed to a haberdashery firm in London for five years (Friederichs 1911, 31; Morris 2012, 1). It seems Newnes was not overly fond of this profession as he did not pursue it further (Friederichs 1911, 31). Instead, Newnes began his career in journalism by founding his first publication *Tit-Bits* in 1881 (Friederichs 1911, 55, 60). Since he was unable to obtain financial backing, Newnes funded the journal with money he received by opening a vegetarian restaurant in Manchester earlier the same year (Friederichs 1911, 61-64). *Tit-Bits* was a huge success, selling 5000 copies in the first two hours it was on sale (Morris 2012, 1). It provided Newnes with an annual income of 30,000 pounds, enough money to finance his interests and hobbies. The publication ran from 1881 to 1984, and each periodical contained a collection of different things, “tit-bits” of information which included short stories to larger works of fiction, competitions including treasure hunts and questions to the editors (Griffen-Foley 2004, 533-535).

Newnes continued to publish additional journals and became involved in politics. He was the Liberal Member of Parliament for Newmarket from 1886 to 1895 and of Swansea from 1900 to 1910 (Friederichs 1911, 150). He started the publication *The Westminster Gazette* in 1893 which became an influential Liberal newsletter. Following the success of this newspaper, Newnes accepted a baronetcy for his political services to Liberalism along with the work he undertook in the sphere of journalism. Newnes had great success with his journalistic undertakings and today is renowned as the publisher of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s *Sherlock Holmes* series. The series was published in Newnes’ *The Strand Magazine* between July 1891 and June 1892 (Friederichs 1911, 118-124) and helped bring popularity to the magazine. First published in January 1891 the magazine, similarly to *Tit-Bits*, was a monumental success. At the age of 25 in 1881, Newnes married Priscilla Jenney Hillyard (Morris 2012, 1). Together the couple had two sons, one of whom (Frank Hillyard Newnes) survived into adulthood, and one who did not (Arthur W Newnes). The eldest son, Arthur, died aged eight years.

Later in his life, from the mid 1890s, Newnes’ health was impacted by diabetes and the misuse of alcohol (Morris 2012, 1). For the most part, Newnes used his self-made money to sponsor scientific research, provide for the less fortunate and for public building projects such as the Putney Library and the cliff railway at Lynton.

Newnes would eventually invest unwisely in oil and rubber, which lost him a fortune (Morris 2012, 1). Gradually, his estate faced crippling debt, and on George's death, Frank Newnes was forced to sell his father's estates to pay back these debts.

Newnes did not record his reasons for purchasing the coffin, and nothing has been located in which he mentions it. However, there is no apparent reason why he would not have been interested in it. Likely Newnes' schooling would have included education in the humanities, including ancient history and classics. Therefore, he would have had some basic knowledge about the culture of ancient Egypt. However, he would not have been aware of the recently identified significance of the artefact, specifically that the red bands on the chest identify it as belonging to a small group of coffins likely made in the same workshop in Thebes (Taylor 2006, 266). Instead, Newnes may have purchased the coffin simply for its aesthetic value and cultural cache as an item representative of the exotic east. Nevertheless, it seems that Newnes was interested in Egyptian culture, and had the wealth necessary to procure items like the coffin. Furthermore, Newnes took an avid interest in scientific discoveries and personally funded those he viewed beneficial for society (Friederichs 1911, 189). He lived during a period of antiquarianism in Britain when the wealthy collected artefacts from past cultures and placed them on display in their homes. Following this tradition, Newnes perhaps purchased the coffin to place on display as an example of his wealth.

There are two main locations where Newnes might have kept the coffin. The first is Wildcroft Manor, Newnes' primary residence in Putney, South West London. This manor was a grand building with elegant furniture and decoration. The second is Newnes' house in Lynton named Hollerday House where he gradually spent more and more time, eventually moving there permanently in the last few years before his death. The coffin could have been kept between both locations or in one while in Newnes' ownership. As not much is known about the contents of these estates while they were in Newnes' ownership, it is impossible to know with complete accuracy where he kept the coffin. Newnes sold the coffin in January or February 1910, only months before his death on June 9, 1910, probably through a private sale with Robert Bedford (1930-1966, 9).

Newnes and Egypt

Newnes began to show an interest in Egypt later in his life when diabetes and illness threatened his health (Friederichs 1911, 92). He travelled to Egypt for the warmer weather on the recommendation of his doctor (Friederichs 1911, 92). These trips to Egypt would have a profound effect on his life as he became enraptured with Egypt and its culture.

A pamphlet published by Newnes (1899, 20) and compiled by Hallil J. Kemeid provides information for the individual who was considering travel in Egypt. It shows that Newnes had developed a keen interest in the culture of Egypt, so much so that he wished to spread this love to other people. Importantly, the pamphlet includes a segment written by Newnes titled, "From Cairo to Cataract" (Newnes 1899, 115). The preface to the third edition of the pamphlet records that "Sir [George Newnes] is an enthusiast of Egypt as a winter resort, and says that Cairo and the Nile are unsurpassable in every way, and should be known to be valued" (Newnes 1899, 16).

Newnes' pamphlet was not concerned with discussing the culture of ancient Egypt but instead recounts a trip he made with five other British individuals (Newnes 1899, 115). Newnes explained the political situation of Egypt and described the places they stayed (Newnes 1899, 115). Firstly, Newnes (1899, 116) recorded his visit to Cairo, remarking on the Palaces of the Khedive and wrote about his interest in the streetscape of Cairo, in his musings on the dress, ethnicity and culture of the inhabitants (Newnes 1899, 116). It was common in the late 19th century for visitors to Egypt to record their experiences and make recommendations to individuals who were planning their visit to Egypt (Gregory 2002, 115).

Regarding the ancient history of Egypt, Newnes (1899, 121-122) recalled his visit to the pyramids and recounts myths about their creation. He also commented on how visitors made it a challenge to climb the Great Pyramid (Newnes 1899, 121). Along with his travel companions, Newnes (1899, 122-123) wrote that he boarded the vessel *Nitocris* and set sail for the First Cataract. Newnes (1899, 124-125) made mention of sites of historical importance which he visited, including Memphis, Saqqara, the tombs of the Sacred Bulls, the Temple of Karnak, Philae, the unfinished obelisk quarry at Aswan and the tomb of Ameni at Beni Hassan (Newnes

1899, 124-125). He describes in detail the different regions of Egypt and their historical value.

Newnes recorded that he was a frequent visitor to markets and trade locations during his trips to Egypt, and he might have purchased the coffin of Nyamenkhamun on one of these visits. Newnes (1899, 129) claimed that Luxor was his favourite location in Egypt due to its identification as ancient Thebes. Perhaps it was on one of these visits to Thebes that he purchased the coffin of Nyamenkhamun as this is the coffin's place of origin. According to the pamphlet, on this journey, Newnes and company spent six hours in Thebes exploring the tombs and temples and the Ramesseum (Newnes 1899, 132).

In the pamphlet, Newnes identifies Ramesses II as the pharaoh of the Old Testament accounts of the Exodus. He provides no reasoning or evidence to support this statement as it was a common idea in this period. He was not inventing this connection for tourism but included it to add a biblical relevance to his pamphlet that would entice the reader to consider a trip to Egypt. Newnes makes general observations to the reader as to the best places to visit, eat and sleep in Egypt and his enthusiasm and interest in Egypt is evident in the descriptions he provides about his travels.

This interest in Egypt could explain why Newnes came to own the coffin of Nyamenkhamun. In the mid to late 1800s antiquities were being sold in Egypt to tourists (Gregory 2002, 124). As a frequent visitor to Egypt in around the 1890s, Newnes had ample opportunity to purchase the coffin of Nyamenkhamun in Egypt. Likely Newnes wished to procure a souvenir of his times in Egypt or alternatively, he might have purchased the coffin outside of Egypt, maybe in England, because he recognised it as an Egyptian artefact and was interested in Egyptian culture. By the time Newnes purchased the coffin, it was already removed from its original context and had lost its grave goods and the deceased. Following its purchase, the coffin became a curiosity and a souvenir of Newnes' travels in Egypt which is distinct from its original purpose to house the deceased.

Robert Arthur Bedford

Robert Arthur Buddicom was born on November 7, 1874, at Church-Stretton in Shropshire, England. For the sake of consistency, Buddicom is referred to by his chosen surname, Bedford. He was the eldest child of William Squire Buddicom and Elizabeth Haughton Hornby (Buddicom 1974, 167-168; Brett Crowther 1979, 1; Laube 1990, 15). According to his daughter Sylvia Laube (1990, 150), Bedford was of average height with blue eyes and fair skin.

Both Bedford and his sister Lilian Holland were interested in archaeology, historical studies and natural history from a young age. Their father was a keen enthusiast of natural history which had a strong influence on his children (Winter 1974, 61).

Bedford had a classical education having studied the composition of Greek and Latin verse while at school. He was also active in museums during the early 1900s, and this gave him an appreciation for artefacts and the preservation of history - an appreciation that would later extend to his museum in Kyancutta and collection of artefacts.

Education

Bedford was a well-educated man with many interests and talents. While living in England, he won a classical scholarship to Charterhouse but turned this down in favour of Uppingham, which had a higher reputation in the sciences (Laube 1990, 17). The Medical Student Register lists Bedford as having begun his study at Oxford on October 15, 1892. He worked as a science scholar at Keble College in Oxford in 1894 and graduated with a BA in chemistry and biology on August 7, 1897 (Laube 1990, 17; Branagan 2009, 351). Following his graduation, Bedford worked as an Oxford biological scholar (1897-1898) at the marine biological station at Naples in Italy. Later, from 1906 to 1914, Bedford worked at London Hospital Medical College as both a demonstrator and lecturer (Branagan 2009, 351; Cooper and Jago 2018, 420).

The Coffin at Ticklerton Court

The Bedford family home of Ticklerton Court (Fig. 24) in Church-Stretton in Shropshire, England is listed in Burke's Peerage and Landed Gentry, 1898 (page

194). Here, Bedford created a museum in a small room next to his childhood nursery in which he kept the artefacts he had collected over many years alongside an assemblage of books (Buddicom 1974, 64-65; Laube 1990, 17). In this museum room, Bedford displayed skeletons from prehistoric Cornish burials at Trevone in the excavation of which he had assisted (Buddicom 1974, 64-65). He had a great interest in collecting and displaying artefacts.

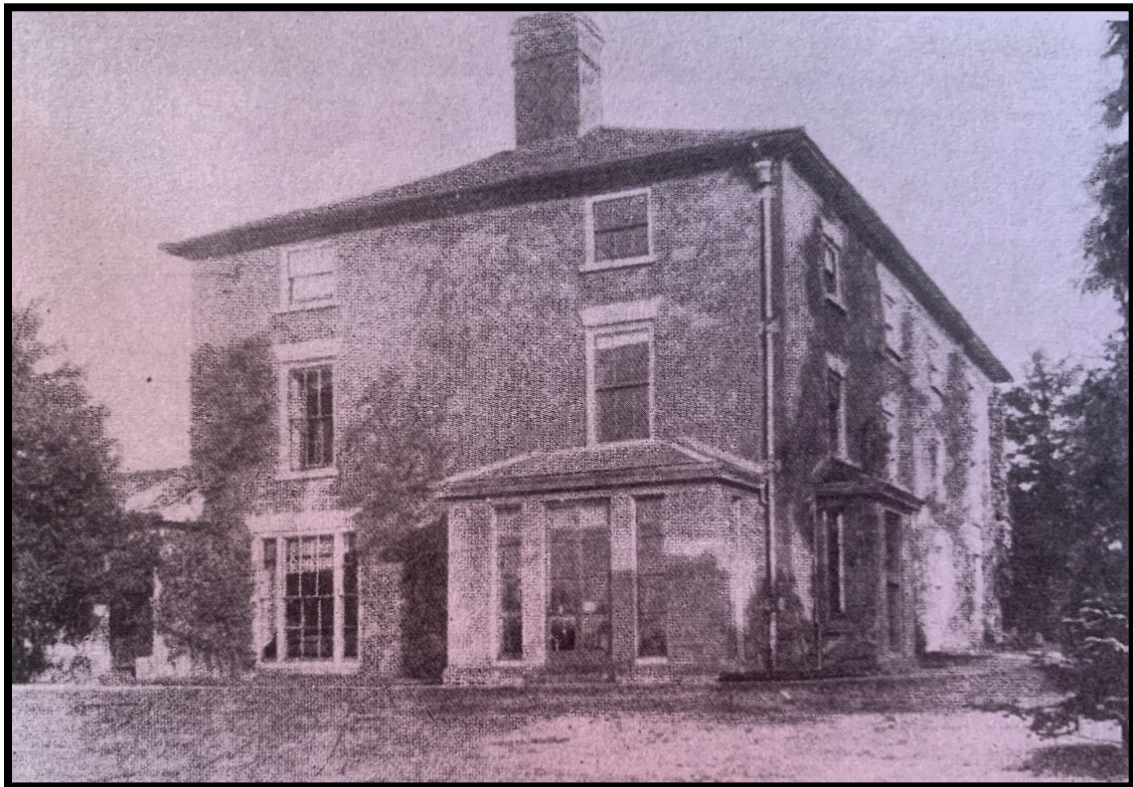


Figure 24: Ticklerton Court: the Buddicom family home as it was before renovations (Source: Jacintha Buddicom 1974, Image 16).

Interestingly, the notion of having a personal collection of antiquities can be seen in the broader intellectual history of this period and even outside England. In America, Theodore Roosevelt was similarly fascinated with natural history and created a private museum in his childhood home (Lunde 2016, 16). Roosevelt and Bedford are just two of many examples for this occurring, and thus the instance of Bedford's private collection was not a new concept. While living in England, Bedford would scour Europe and North Africa for objects to place in his collection (Laube 1990, 17). He was also a frequent visitor to second-hand shops in London and would attend sales at Sotheby's of London (Bedford 1930-1966; Winter 1974, 61).

Bedford kept his private museum collection in the care of his sister Lilian Holland in his family home at Ticklerton Court, but he himself did not reside there. In 1910, he purchased the coffin while living in London (Laube 1990, 20). Ticklerton Court was likely better suited to housing the collection, which included the coffin, than his place in London. Also, when Bedford moved to Australia, the collection of artefacts would not have been able to remain in London. It would have been necessary to take them to Australia, sell them, or entrust them to his remaining family. As Bedford had already established his museum at Ticklerton Court where his sister resided, this is likely where the coffin was kept.

Bedford's father was a widower who lived at Ticklerton Court with his daughter Lilian Holland, who kept house for him (Buddicom 1974, 60-61). Holland is noted by Jacintha Buddicom (1974, 61) as having had exceptional knowledge in natural history, history, the history of Shropshire, archaeology and botany, like her brother. In 1918 Lilian Holland married John Hayward who moved to live at Ticklerton Court with his new wife (Buddicom 1974, 64). Thus, when Bedford requested the collection, including the coffin of Nyamenkhamun, to be sent to him in South Australia around 1923, it was Lilian who sent it from the Buddicom family estate.

Bedford and Egypt

A memoir written by Bedford's eldest daughter Jacintha Buddicom (1974, 10) notes that her father kept a collection of Egyptian artefacts in a glass-fronted cupboard over the drawing-room mantelpiece at Ticklerton Court. He also took her to meet his old friends, Lord Carnarvon and Dr Wallis Budge (curator of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities at the British Museum from 1894 to 1924), during a day out in London when they visited the British Museum (Buddicom 1974, 10). She notes that as a parting gift before leaving for Australia, Bedford gave her his copy of *Egyptian Gods* (Buddicom 1974, 10). Buddicom (1974, 10) emphasises that Egyptian images were not new to her because of her father's collection and interest in this topic. Her memoir reveals that Bedford had some knowledge of Egyptian culture long before he purchased the coffin of Nyamenkhamun and thus would have had some understanding as to the value of the coffin when he purchased it. With his background in collecting and curating, Bedford may have recognised the significance

of the artefact as more than just a curiosity, but he, like Newnes, would have been unaware of the rarity of the artefact as a part of a small type group of Third intermediate period coffins with the particular stola bands.

When in Australia, Bedford compiled a catalogue documenting the items in his Kyancutta Museum. The coffin has more extensive notes than any other item in the catalogue revealing the significance it held in the museum collection. Bedford had the inscriptions on the coffin translated by Alan Rowe on February 21, 1910, and by the Department of Egyptian Antiquities at the British Museum on March 23, 1926 (Bedford 1930-1966, 11). The inclusion of the date that Rowe initially translated the inscriptions is vital in tracing the acquisition of the coffin. Since the date reveals the coffin was purchased by Bedford before February 21, 1910, Newnes must have sold the coffin before that date. In his catalogue, Bedford provides a date of 1910 for his purchase of the coffin, and this provides a two-month bracket of January 1 to February 21 in which he must have acquired it from Newnes. The maximum date of February 21 for the purchase reveals that Bedford did not purchase the coffin from a sale of Newnes' deceased estate. While are multiple references in Bedford's Kyancutta Museum Catalogue to Egyptian antiquities purchased at a Sotheby's Sale 1912, the coffin is not one of these, and it was likely a private sale by Newnes in which the coffin was purchased. It has been acknowledged that towards the end of his life, Newnes struggled with finance and perhaps sold the coffin to acquire funds.

Employment: Foreshadowing the Kyancutta Museum

Concerning employment, Bedford tried many careers but ultimately gravitated towards those dealing with curation and museum collections. From 1900-1901, Bedford worked as a curator at the Plymouth Museum and Art Gallery (Buddicom 1974, 1). While he was partial to this work, his daughter Jacintha Buddicom (1974, 1) notes that her father resented the influence of the authorities at the museum who would not allow him the freedom he wished in his job. This resentment along with his wife's desire to live close to her family, Bedford resigned after just a year in this profession and the family returned to Shropshire (Buddicom 1974, 1). In 1902 Bedford worked as Honorary Curator at Shrewsbury along with founding and editing *Life Studies: The Journal of Our Society*, also known as *Life*, a scientific and

philosophical journal in January of the same year (Cooper and Jago 2018, 420). Barry Cooper and James Jago (2018, 420) suggest that the experience Bedford gained from this publication assisted him in writing his *Memoirs of the Kyancutta Museum*.

Following this, Bedford worked as a market-gardener from approximately 1902 to 1903, purchasing land in the Bolney Estate in Shiplake-on-Thames (Buddicom 1974, 3). He partnered with family friend Frederick William Norsworthy and his first wife's brother Roy Finlay (Buddicom 1974, 3). These are just a sample of the very different professions in the sciences, museum and agricultural industries that Bedford tried while in England. His involvement in journals, experience working as a curator in the Shrewsbury and Plymouth Museums and valuable collection of both artefacts and scientific literature benefitted Bedford in Australia.

On January 17, 1900, Bedford married Laura Lucie Finlay. Together the couple had three children: Jacintha May Buddicom, Robert Prosper Gedye Buddicom and Guinever Laura Olivia Norsworthy Buddicom. Bedford and Finlay held similar interests in geology and had met at a function of the Museums Association and Geological Society of which Bedford was a fellow (Buddicom 1974, 3). This marriage would not last, and by 1908 Bedford was involved with Ethel Hilda Lewis, commonly referred to by her middle name, Hilda (Port Lincoln Times February 22, 1951, 1). Bedford and his second wife had six children: Hilda Joan Bedford, William Rudolf Bedford, Silvia Laube, Robert Bedford, Joan Luscombe and Brunhild Bedford.

This chapter has provided historical context for both known locations (England and Australia) where the coffin has been kept and considered the reception of ancient Egypt in these places and periods. In providing this context, the chapter has attempted to identify the possible motivations that led both Newnes and Bedford to purchase the coffin. While it has been established that there is clear evidence to support the ownership of the coffin by both gentlemen, there is a lack of evidence for Newnes' purchase of the coffin and sale to Bedford. Yet, for Bedford, some of his motivations for the purchase are clear: he purchased the coffin to enable his private museum to display a comprehensive assemblage of artefacts and to link it to one of

the oldest civilisations, ancient Egypt. The history of the coffin in England and a background for the two known owners has now been established. The next stage of the coffin's journey is presented in the following chapter, which provides an exploration of the use and reception of the coffin in Kyancutta, South Australia.

CHAPTER FOUR

From England to Australia

The Object Biography presented here enables an in-depth analysis of the coffin of Nyamenkhamun and its life history, after its removal from Egypt and to its integration into Museums Victoria's collections where it remains today. It is concerned with assessing how objects can become a means through which one can engage with broader issues focusing on how the actions of individuals can alter the significance of an artefact. The biography of Nyamenkhamun coffin details how this Third Intermediate Period artefact and an important item in Museums Victoria's collections arrived at its current location in Melbourne by tracing its early history in Australia. This part of the object biography engages with the broad themes of mortuary practice in ancient Egypt, the social processes of early antiquarian collection practices and the assemblage of museum collections in early Australian contexts. Exploring the display of this coffin in the two Australian museums, in Kyancutta and Melbourne, reveals the social reasons for its continued relevance in modern society.

The method of Object Biography allows this thesis to participate in contemporary attitudes to curation but with an innovative and practical approach. Object Biography is a theoretical framework used by curators to create biographies of the collections kept in museums (Simonds 2016, ii). As an object is moved, it takes on additional meanings apart from those it received from its original context (Simonds 2016, 1). The coffin, therefore, represents collection histories and the changing roles of artefacts in museums (Simonds 2016, 1). An exploration into Bedford in the previous chapter identified why he might have been interested in owning an Egyptian coffin, and this chapter explores how Bedford used the coffin to analyse what this says about the coffin and society.

Since no evidence has come to light during this research regarding Newnes' treatment of the coffin, the artefact's time in Australia forms the substantial part of this thesis and is the focus of this chapter. Furthermore, since the coffin remains in Australia today, the role of the artefact in this country is more relevant. This study

explores the journey the coffin undertook to end up in Museums Victoria and what cultural and social influences affected it.

Bedford's Journey to Australia

On February 25, 1915, Bedford and his family began the nine month journey from England to Kyancutta, South Australia spending three of these months aboard the *SS Geelong*. It was also during this year that he changed his name from Buddicom to Bedford. There are several suggestions why Bedford relocated his family and changed his name, including a business scandal while working for the Stoltz Electrophone Company (Branagan 2009, 351; Sorokin 2010, 718), gambling debts which he incurred at the card table (Cooper and Jago 2018, 422), a petition filed by the London High Court regarding Bedford's debt (Cooper and Jago 2018, 422), or Bedford's pessimism for the future of England (Laube 1990, 22). The cumulative reasons for his passage to Australia resulted in the transport of the coffin of Nytamankhamun to Australia.

The long journey to Australia was recorded by Bedford in his diary and by Hilda in her memoirs (Laube 1990, 23-29; Winter 1974, 28-29). They would not arrive in Australia until April 19, 1915, when their vessel, the *SS Geelong*, docked in Melbourne (Laube 1990, 26). After three days exploring the new land, the Bedford family continued with the *SS Geelong* to Sydney, reaching the city on April 24 (Laube 1990, 26). On the way, they travelled to Warrawee to inspect 14 acres of land in Blythswood that Bedford had received in exchange for the Buddicom family house (Quarry House) as part of his separation settlement from Laura Lucie Finlay (Laube 1990, 26). Bedford traded his land in New South Wales for land in Kyancutta (then named Polkdinny), in South Australia and the family arrived here in October 1915 (Aston 1963, 3; Laube 1990, 27). The Egyptian coffin and the additional artefacts Bedford collected over the years remained in England until approximately 1923 when they were dispatched to Kyancutta by Bedford's sister Lilian Holland (Laube 1990, 52).

Kyancutta

The name Kyancutta has disputed origins, but two leading suggestions are commonly accepted. Firstly, that Kyancutta comes from the Aboriginal term “Kutta-Kutta” which is given to a hill in the area and translates to “little night hawk”, and secondly, that the name derives from the Aboriginal word *Kankakatarri* (meaning surface water) (Winter 1974, 2; Eyrepeninsula.com). Life at Kyancutta for the early settlers was hard, the weather was hot, and they had to build up the town from the beginning. For individuals like Bedford, Kyancutta was the perfect location for them to make their mark and become involved in many different areas of society that would not have been possible in a developed town.

The Bedford family were among the first settlers of Kyancutta which became an official township on May 31, 1917 (Winter 1974, 2) just under two years after the Bedfords arrived. By the 1930s, Kyancutta was a budding township with a museum, a public hall, a Catholic Church, a school and a cottage hospital (The Register 1926, 7). Today, the town of Kyancutta barely survives. With the closure of the small airport in 1935, established by Bedford in 1929, the town fell into a steady decline, and today is a nearly a ghost town (Sydney Morning Herald Travel, 2004).

Bedford’s daughter Jacintha Buddicom (1973, 168-169) rightly described her father as a pioneer in Australia in the general sense that he assisted in the development of society in Kyancutta. Bedford was a valued citizen of Kyancutta whose efforts in the small town, especially regarding his museum, were much appreciated. An example of this appreciation is a comment left in the Kyancutta Museum’s visitor’s book during the 1950s by A. W. Jones (born in South Australia in 1912 and Director-General of the Education Department from 1970). He writes:

‘Mr Bedford’s forthrightness, modesty, culture and sense of humour no less than his remarkable collection of books and specimens kept us enthralled in our too short visit’ (Laube 1990, 124).

Bedford was interested in engaging with local schools and in helping provide an accessible collection of historical artefacts for the rural community. In his desire to help educate the town, Bedford was participating in the broader late 19th and early 20th century social trends, whereby exposure to artefacts was considered to be

edifying. During this period, there was a change in the purpose of museum collections and the value of ancient artefacts (Stevenson 2019, 9). Collectors in the 19th century supported their accumulation of Egyptian artefacts on the notion that they were not safe unless placed in a museum or a private collection in Europe (Stevenson 2019, 183). While this has ensured the preservation of artefacts, it was ultimately destructive to the archaeological record as seen in the loss of context for many of the removed artefacts like Nyamenkhamun's coffin. Nevertheless, the movement of these artefacts has also brought awareness of ancient Egyptian culture outside of Egypt.

In addition to his museum, Bedford's public library (located inside the Museum building) contained an extensive collection of rare books, many of which could be considered out of place in a wheat-farming district (Darragh 2019, pers. comm.). Among these books was a collection of Classical literature written in their original languages and medical textbooks (Darragh 2019, pers. comm.). The first public libraries and museums were established in Australia during the 1850s, before Bedford's time, but during this period there was a drive for culture and education which gave way to the creation of free public institutions.

Bedford ensured that his Museum and Library remained well maintained and had a reputation for quality (Laube 1990, 58). He wished to cultivate links to other museums and associations around the world that held similar values to himself for their mutual benefit (Laube 1990, 58). He also wished to publish documents regarding his collections and establish himself as an authority on these topics. Bedford achieved this, and today his memoirs are accessible through the University of Adelaide with the permission of the remaining family members. Bedford also organised public lectures and classes in his museum regarding the collections to educate the public and bring awareness to his museum (Laube 1990, 58; Cooper and Jago 2018, 425-426). Bedford was interested in establishing the Kyancutta Museum as a centre of education in the region, similar to the South Australian Museum, and was unhindered by a lack of funding.

The Coffin Arrives in Australia

In her text, Laube (1990, 52) includes a charming tale regarding the initial days of the coffin's stay in Kyancutta. She recalls:

'For a while, this collection was stored in the nurse's bedroom at the Cottage Hospital [in Kyancutta]. Even as a child [Laube] wondered at Nurse Chapman's composure about sharing her room with an Egyptian Mummy case.'

Laube (1990, 52) also records that her sister, Joan Luscombe, remembered:

'Old Johanneson (a superstitious Swede) nearly fainted when he found he had helped carry a mummy case. He is supposed to have said "This crate is so heavy it must have a coffin in it" [Bedford] replied "Well, it has; an Egyptian mummy case"'.

These comments attest the existence of Nytamenkhamun's coffin in Kyancutta before the creation of Bedford's museum. More interestingly, they provide insight into the relationship between the early settlers of Kyancutta and this artefact. Laube, wondering about Chapman's composure at sharing her room with the coffin, references an unease surrounding the artefact and the individual. In addition, Johanneson's reaction to the discovery that he had helped Bedford transport an Egyptian coffin further supports this unease. Social reasons for this could be the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb and the death of Lord Carnarvon soon after which led to the concept of the "mummy's curse". The unease felt by Chapman and Johanneson surrounding the coffin was perhaps brought about by this link between this artefact, death and superstition.

These two quotes also provide context for the artefact, revealing where it spent the initial years in Australia before it was moved to the Kyancutta Museum, which was in the Cottage Hospital. At this stage, Bedford treated this item as a personal possession rather than a museum item since it was not placed on display until six years later with the establishment of the Kyancutta Museum. At this point, in 1923, Bedford may not have planned for the Kyancutta Museum. He did, however, have a long-term interest in working in museums and thus the construction of the Kyancutta Museum is not unexpected. The coffin might have been brought to Australia to become a museum exhibit or to simply remain in Bedford's private collections.

Establishing the Kyancutta Museum, South Australia

The Kyancutta Museum (Fig. 25) was a central feature of the town and was located alongside the Post Office on Museum Terrace on the eastern side of the railway line in Kyancutta (Fig. 26). Bedford became Postmaster when he purchased the Post Office, then on the western side of the railway, in 1926 from Mr Aleric Dick (Winter 1974, 29). In 1928, Bedford moved the Post Office to the eastern side not long after World War I and hired two Italian builders to construct the stone museum building (Winer 1974, 61; Laube 1990, 5) which formed a small construction of 30 by 20 feet (Darragh 1971, 1). As Kyancutta was primarily a wheat farming community, there was only a small population and thus limited attractions, the museum being the foremost of the latter.



Figure 25: Kyancutta Museum (Courtesy of Ned Luscombe 2019).

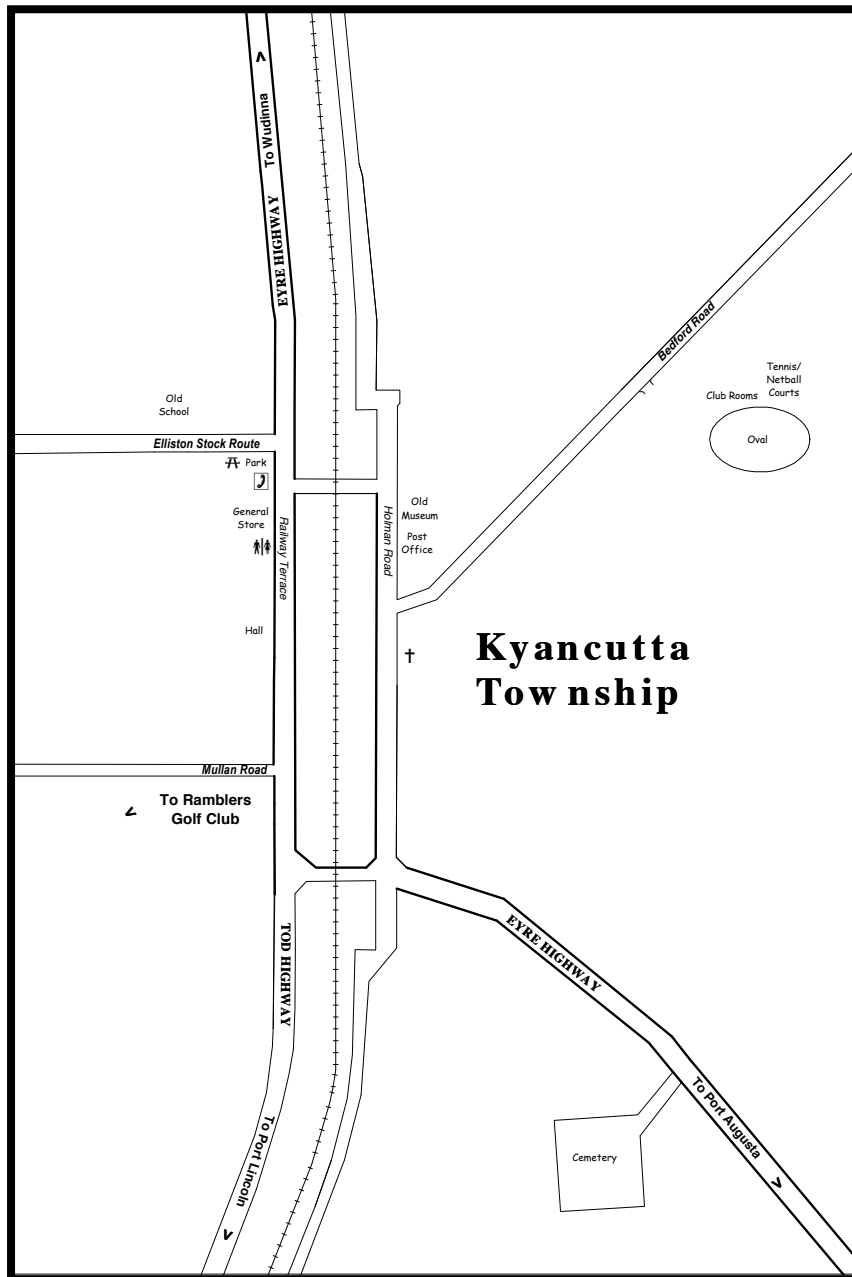


Figure 26: Kyancutta Township with the location of the Kyancutta Museum marked as “Old Museum” (Source: Wudinna.sa.gov.au).

The Kyancutta Museum

Bedford’s grandson, Ned Luscombe (2018, pers. comm.), describes the Kyancutta Museum as a sizeable one-room building (Fig. 27) with a cellar in which Bedford would study and store his artefacts. Bedford arranged the displays along the north, west and east walls in a horseshoe layout with a large display cabinet in the centre of the room (Fig. 27) (Luscombe 2018, pers. comm). This cabinet contained

geological displays, and the surrounding artefacts were arranged in order of the evolution of man (Luscombe 2018, pers. comm.). Many of the items were not presented in cases but were left open to the Australian environment, and this includes the Egyptian coffin of Nytamenkhamun.

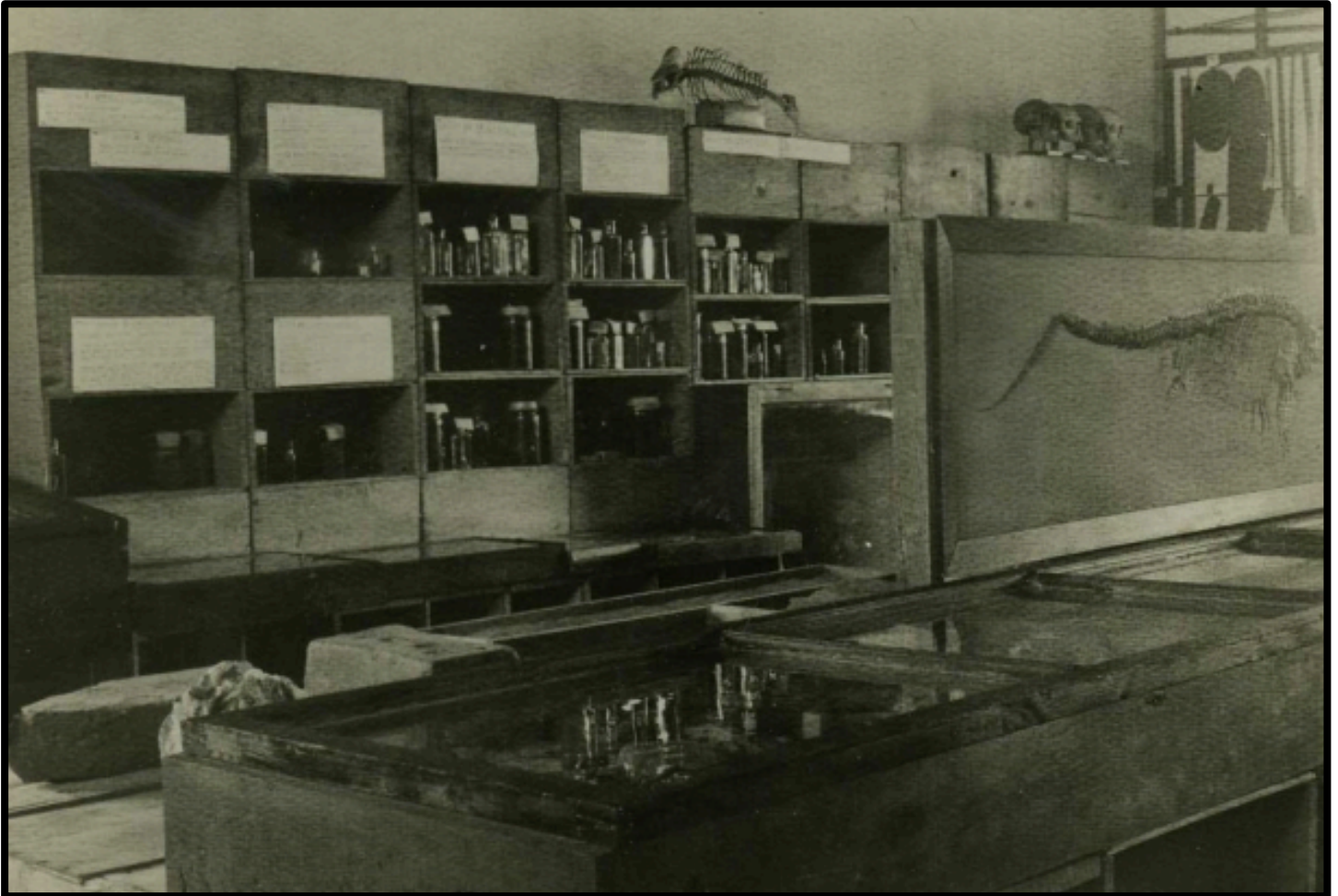


Figure 27: Interior of the Kyancutta Museum (Courtesy of Ned Luscombe 2019).

The Governor of South Australia, First Earl of Gowie, Sir Alexander Hore-Ruthven formally opened the Kyancutta Museum on June 26, 1929 (Pearson 1937, 1; Laube 1990, 52). By owning his own museum, Bedford achieved the freedom he wished to design, construct and manage the museum to his desires without the interference of others.

While the formal opening shows recognition by the government, Bedford's museum was unfunded and relied primarily on Bedford's resources. At the time the Kyancutta

Museum was established, the Depression was beginning to impact citizens in Australia (Laube 1990, 52). In the latter 1920s, Australians suffered from a collapse in the price of wheat and wool along with encountering competition from other countries producing small goods (Munday and Grigsby 1968, 122). As Kyancutta was a wheat farming community, they likely felt the impact of this. The Kyancutta Museum opened in June 1929, but it was not until November or December of that same year that people genuinely felt the impact of the collapse. However, in rural areas, there had already been a downturn in the saleability of raw materials, so Bedford in rural Kyancutta may have felt the collapse sooner than those in more built-up areas. According to written correspondence between Museums Victoria and the Kyancutta Museum, the Bedford family went without during the Depression so the museum could be established (Darragh 1971, 1). This letter shows Bedford's reluctance to allow the lack of funding and financial difficulties to impact the opening of his museum and the determination and desire he had in establishing the museum. The Kyancutta Museum was a labour of love for Bedford and something he cultivated over the entirety of his lifetime.

Eight years following the construction and formal opening of the museum, Bedford presented the constitution of the Kyancutta Museum to the District Council of L^eHunte. It was reported in the West Coast Sentinel on June 4, 1937, and in the same year, the council approved the constitution. The council agreed that the Museum was of educational value to the district and so it is reported in the West Coast Sentinel (June 4, 1937) that Councillor A.W.H. Barnes approved the constitution and Councillor D.T. Sampson seconded it.

The constitution displays some of Bedford's interests. That is the promotion of education through the museum in rural South Australia along with Bedford's efforts in publishing his research on museum items. It reveals that the priority of the museum was to provide the rural town and those who visited it with free access to collections in history, natural history and archaeology. Bedford wished to promote these areas for research regarding the history of the Eyre Peninsula and was an advocate for the use of his museum for educational purposes. Bedford and his wife Hilda often ran tours for visitors through the museum (Fig. 28). Bedford also wished to co-operate with other museums and educational bodies with similar aims and therefore, this

signifies that he wanted the Kyancutta Museum to become recognised as a valuable institution. The Kyancutta Museum constitution identifies the values and motivations, which led Bedford to create his museum.



Figure 28: Bedford in his Museum (Courtesy of Ned Luscombe 2019).

Bedford faced a significant problem when trying to complete one of the areas of his constitution. This problem was to co-operate with other museums and educational bodies in the area. The Kyancutta Museum “gained institutional membership of the Museums and Art Galleries Association of Australia and New Zealand”; however, while the museum was successful, Bedford himself was rejected from obtaining a “membership of the Royal Society of South Australia” and thus “was unable to publish in established scientific periodicals” (Cooper and Jago 2007, 12). In truth, this setback only encouraged Bedford to act on his own without assistance and so to publish his research Bedford created a journal which he named *Memoirs of the Kyancutta Museum* (Cooper and Jago 2007, 12). The self-publishing of research

was not done at this time, which led to conflictions between Bedford and authorities at the South Australian Museum.

The Kyancutta Museum and the South Australian Museum

From early days there was a rivalry between the Kyancutta Museum and the South Australian Museum, specifically between Bedford and Sir Douglas Mawson, which is well documented (Fitzgerald 1979; Laube 1990; Cooper and Jago 2018). Likely, Mawson did not know, since Bedford changed his surname on arrival in Australia, that Bedford was an Oxford graduate and therefore had knowledge and authority on geology, having been elected to the Geological Society of London. Instead, Mawson viewed Bedford as a citizen scientist and an unauthorised collector.

Furthermore, Bedford was viewed with disdain for his affinity for collecting and selling Australian geological artefacts in exchange for new items for the Kyancutta Museum (Cooper and Jago 2018, 15). Bedford did this to support his museum financially and gain new collections, but Mawson was not impressed with Bedford's excavations and trade as he wished the sites to remain exclusively for scientific research and not for profit (Cooper and Jago 2018, 15). Mawson also wished that items of Australian history and geology would remain in Australia and so he came into conflict with Bedford who was trading them overseas. Bedford's controversial actions made him an outcast with the South Australian Museum.

Egyptian antiquities were highly popular in the period Bedford opened the Kyancutta Museum and remain so today. In 1939, the South Australian Museum opened its Ancient Egypt Gallery. By having a gallery dedicated to the display of Egyptian artefacts, this emphasises the importance and prestige these items had in Australian Museums. The South Australian Museum website recalls that the Ancient Egypt Gallery was extremely popular and has changed little since its formation (samuseum.com). Importantly, the South Australian Museum also has ownership of an ancient Egyptian sarcophagus. This sarcophagus, unlike Bedford's, contains an ancient mummy. It belonged to Nenpit-Nefert, an ancient Egyptian female, and is a painted wooden coffin (samuseum.com). For an ancient Egyptian exhibit, the mummy case with or without the mummy has become a centrepiece.

An interesting fact to note is that in the late 1800s the South Australian Museum was avidly searching for artefacts from ancient civilisations (samuseum.com). The coffin and mummy of Nenpit-Nefert were purchased by Reverend William Roby Fletcher whom the museum had personally commissioned in 1890 to “inquire... as to the best means of procuring objects of archaeological interest, illustrative of ancient Egyptian or Babylonian civilisation” (samuseum.com). While he was visiting Cairo, Reverend Fletcher purchased Nenpit-Nefert. This interest in collecting artefacts from ancient civilisations was a social trend at that time, around the late 1890s to early 1900s. This trend may have influenced Bedford in his collecting and in his decision to transport his assemblage of antiquities from England to Australia. While in Australia Bedford might have felt that having Nyamenkhamun’s coffin back in his possession in Kyancutta and eventually in the Kyancutta Museum, whether this was planned or not at this time, was essential because museums like the South Australian Museum were building their own collections which included ancient Egyptian displays, but it is more likely that Bedford was influenced by the discovery of Tutankhamun’s tomb.

Expanding the Kyancutta Museum

To broaden his collection, Bedford engaged with trade amongst both Australian and international museums. He held the British Museum in particular regard, and it was with this institution that he arranged many of his exchanges. For additional artefacts, Bedford exchanged geological and skeletal material (Fig. 29) which he unearthed from local sites regardless of the contempt of the South Australian Museum. Through these exchanges, Bedford garnered an international reputation (Cooper and Jago 2018, 12). While the exhumation and trade of Aboriginal skeletal remains is now considered unethical and destructive, many individuals during Bedford’s time held a different view. Those interested in social Darwinism, like Bedford, argued that indigenous species were primitive and placed at the bottom of the social ladder with Europeans standing at the top (Griffiths 1996, 9-11; Turnbull 2017).

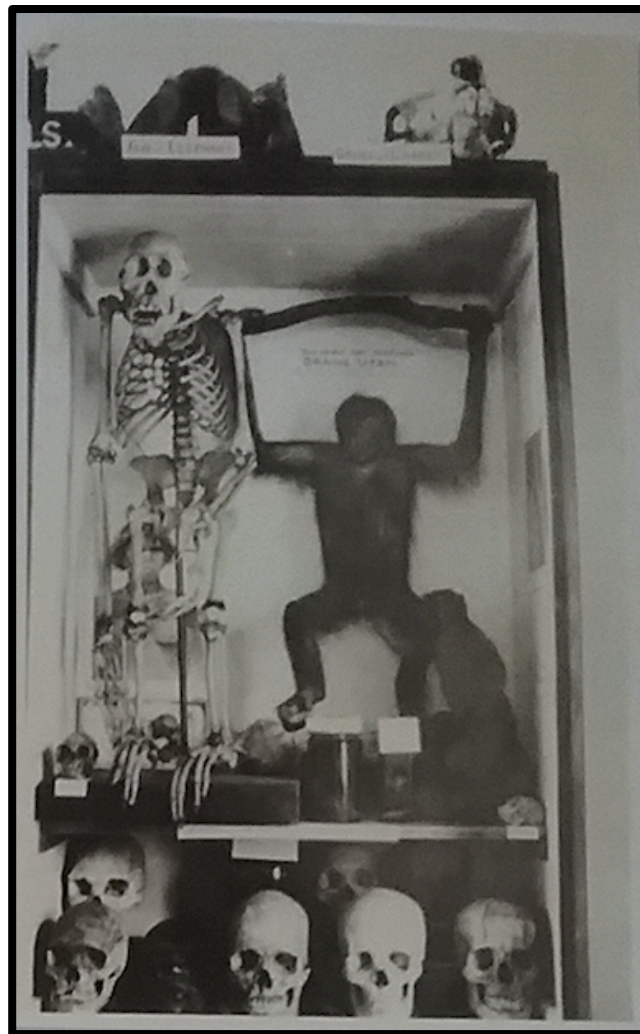


Figure 29: Skeletal and taxidermy display in the Kyancutta Museum (Courtesy of Ned Luscombe 2019).

Furthermore, Griffiths (1996, 71) includes a quote from a letter by Norman de Garis Davis published in the *Argus* 1899, regarding the arrival of Egyptian antiquities in Melbourne that year, that there was “satisfaction... in linking the region of earliest civilisations to that of the latest” and thus Bedford often used items of Indigenous Australian heritage to trade for other artefacts. His museum also displayed this link through the display of his collections which were structured to depict the evolution of humans and culture. Indigenous Australian heritage was not considered, by these early antiquarians (like Bedford), to be as important as those from other civilisations, mainly European. This reveals a little of the thinking behind Bedford’s selection of artefacts and also how he arranged his museum, on the concept of Darwin’s human evolution.

The Kyancutta Museum Collections

Bedford's personal museum notes and catalogue are the most significant source for his collections. Bedford's grandson, Ned Luscombe has granted permission to use this catalogue, and a digital copy was made available by the University of Adelaide Rare Books and Special Collections. Bedford began this catalogue in 1930 and recorded the items held by the museum including his notes on their acquisition. The catalogue was continued until 1966 by Bedford's family members. For his more significant artefacts, like the coffin, Bedford included more detailed notes which sheds light on the artefacts Bedford placed more value on in his museum.

In 1971 Dr Thomas Darragh of Museums Victoria, then called the National Museum, visited the Kyancutta Museum to assess the collections. Eventually, he purchased some geological specimens and the Egyptian coffin for the museum. Following his visit, Darragh compiled a report on the collections. The report was finalised on November 11, 1971, and provides a general outline of the Kyancutta Museum and the collections. The report was provided to the Museum to give context and background for the items purchased from the museum collections. A significant feature of this report is Darragh's description of the coffin as the most remarkable and eye-catching artefact in Bedford's museum. Museums Victoria was quick to purchase the Egyptian coffin following Darragh's recommendation, which shows the value they too placed on this artefact.

These two sources, Bedford's museum catalogue and Darragh's 1971 report attest to the variety of the collections which in turn speaks to Bedford's broad interests. The coffin was not the only item of Egyptian history in the museum and thus was provided with some context. Today, the Kyancutta Museum is mostly known for Bedford's geological collections as his publications on this material is what he was most famous for, but the variety in the collection highlights that the Kyancutta Museum broadened its sphere to compete with other contemporary collections like the South Australian Museum which had a large variety in their displays.

In his report, Darragh (1971, 4) separated Bedford's collection into two categories: 1) Natural History and 2) Ethnographical and Archaeological Material.

A significant part of Bedford's Ethnographical and Archaeological Material concerned his substantial ancient Egyptian collection. Some of these artefacts came from his private museum in England, but part of the collection (40 items) was bequeathed to the Kyancutta Museum from the Mond Collection by the executors of Sir Robert Mond's will (Bedford 1930-1966, 3-8). Mond was a British chemist interested in Egyptian archaeology. He was involved in excavations in Egypt during which he acquired a substantial collection of artefacts. The items which were left to the Kyancutta Museum were packed on October 12, 1939, and arrived at the Kyancutta Museum in March 1940. They included objects excavated from Armant, Egypt, including "scarabs, figurines, pottery and fragments of papyrus" (Darragh 1971, 4). Bedford also received a collection of seals and scarabs excavated from Armant by the Egypt Exploration Society directed by Oliver Myers that Mond personally financed in the late 1920s to 1930s. Thus, in addition to the private collections he accumulated in England, Mond's donation enlarged Bedford's Egyptian collection.

Furthermore, Bedford purchased additional Egyptian artefacts (72 items) either through exchange or payment (not specified), from the Cairo Museum. This collection consisted of numerous bronze figures, an approximated 34 pieces of pottery in good condition and blocks engraved with inscriptions (Darragh 1971, 4). Some of the other items displayed within the Kyancutta Museum included papyrus which were rolled and mounted and consist of lists of temple stores in demotic script (Bedford 1930-1966, 167; Darragh 1971, 4), a Romano-Egyptian tunic, canopic jars, amulets, weapons and some items of everyday life including tweezers, a toilet spoon and a kohl stick (Bedford 1930-1966).

Looking at Bedford's catalogue, it is easy to see how much more extensive the Egyptian collection was compared to his collections from other ancient civilisations which reveals an interest on Bedford's behalf for acquiring these pieces. However, it was not as extensive as the geological collections which were Bedford's true passion. Other items from ancient civilisations include those of Greek and Etruscan origin (Darragh 1971, 5). This collection comprised of Etruscan vases along with many Greek and Roman coins. Other civilisations represented in the museum include Europe, Africa, Canada, China and America. Most of the artefacts from these

cultures consisted of pottery, figurines and weapons (Darragh 1971, 5). The vast array of foreign archaeological material alone is highly impressive, and not what one would expect from a small, privately owned, rural museum. Instead, Bedford's Kyancutta Museum displayed a comprehensive and detailed collection.

The Natural History collection in the Kyancutta Museum consisted of several zoology specimens including corals, shells, marine creatures, insects, lizards and native Australian fauna. Darragh's (1971, 1) report identifies these specimens as having very little significance. The geology section of the collection included over 500 mineral specimens collected from local areas. These specimens were relatively common and small but attractive, with only a minimal portion being somewhat rare (Darragh 2019, pers. comm.). Bedford also displayed meteorite collections that he excavated personally from local areas (Bedford 1930-1966, 44-101). The most famous of these Bedford found at Henbury. The Henbury meteorites come from Alice Springs located in Australia's Northern Territory and are around 4,700 years old. Finally, in his Natural History collection, Bedford harboured an extensive collection of fossils, most of these covering the most common varieties (Darragh 1971, 2-3; Fig. 30). Bedford received the fossils through trade with the British Museum, the Hungarian National Museum, independent European dealers, the United States National Museum (1881-1911, now known as the Arts and Industries Building in the Smithsonian), and the American Museum of Natural History (established 1869 in New York) (Darragh 1971, 3).



Figure 30: A Fossil display from the Kyancutta Museum (Courtesy of Ned Luscombe 2019).

The Kyancutta Museum was home to a significant archaeocyathid fossil collection (R Bedford & J Bedford 1936, 1937a, 1937b, 1939; R Bedford & W Bedford 1934, 1936; Winter 1974, 161; Brett-Crowther 1979, 1). The Bedford families research on this collection remains one of the leading studies in the field today.

The first extensive publication describing the Kyancutta Museum collections were two articles published in The Port Lincoln Times newspaper in 1931. The article mentions the coffin of Nyntamenkhamun as among Bedford's "First Civilisation" collection. The article emphasises the geological focus of the museum but importantly it includes a direct reference to the coffin. Egyptian artefacts were highly popular during this period which followed a revival of interest in Egyptology after Tutankhamun's tomb was discovered. Thus, by referencing this Egyptian artefact in this article, readers might have been persuaded to visit the museum and therefore, mentioning it is clever from a publicity perspective.

The Coffin in the Kyancutta Museum

Far from its original purpose, to house the dead, the coffin of Nytamenkhamun in Australia is symbolic of ancient Egyptian culture and mortuary tradition. The coffin is an unexpected artefact to find in a small Australian outback museum, and as such, it held a significant level of prestige in the Kyancutta Museum because it attracted the attention of visitors (Aston 1963, 1-4) and became a focal piece for Bedford. When compiling his research on the coffin, Bedford sought the opinion of those with a background in ancient Egyptian studies. Those listed in the catalogue include Alan Rowe (1891-1968) and the Department of Egyptian Antiquities at the British Museum (Bedford 1930-1966, 9-14). Rowe provided the information included in the Kyancutta Museum Catalogue on February 21, 1910, a short time after Bedford purchased the coffin which was also in 1910. Rowe himself later emigrated to South Australia in 1914 for a short time and was associated with the South Australian Museum. It is unknown if Rowe ever visited Kyancutta and viewed the coffin.

An article published in *The Chronicle* (Pearson 1937, 1) on Thursday, December 2, 1937, describes the town of Kyancutta and emphasises the importance of Bedford's museum in bringing attention to the rural town and the efforts of Bedford as a pioneer. Bedford was inspired to create his museum to further education in the small rural town (Pearson 1937, 1). The article (Pearson 1937, 1) describes the museum as a large room that was accessible and free to the public and contained many glass cases displaying Bedford's collections

Twenty-six years after Pearson's (1937) article was published, Jean Aston (1963, 1-4) wrote an article in the same newspaper telling of her curiosity and surprise when, as a visitor to Kyancutta in 1963, she noticed the existence of a museum in the middle of nowhere. Aston (1963, 1) was allowed only a brief visit to the Kyancutta Museum initially since the bus she was travelling on only stopped for a short time, but she was intrigued enough that she organised a visit to return to the Museum with Hilda Bedford six months later. One of the artefacts Aston (1963, 3) makes direct mention to in her article is the coffin of Nytamenkhamun which she describes as "a colourful mummy case [which] stands in one corner". This placement of the coffin in the Museum is further supported by Ned Luscombe, Bedford's grandson, and

Thomas Darragh (2019, pers. comm.) as having been leaning against a wall. To this day, the presence of dirt upon the pedestal, shoulders, and head of the coffin serves to reinforce these statements and provide physical evidence for the coffin's display.

Egypt, with its reputation as one of the earliest civilisations, is a source of significant fascination (Griffith 1996, 71) in museums. This references early 20th century European society when Ancient Egypt had connotations of exotic, eastern grandeur (Said, 2014), Biblical history (Gange 2013, 21-25, 182-185), and sensational archaeological discoveries (Fritze 2016, 10, 237-242). Due to this, many museums, like Bedford's, began to increase the intake of Egyptological artefacts in their collections. This intake is also seen in 1938 and 1939 through the National Gallery of Victoria's Felton Bequest in Egypt made by Alan Rowe (Hope 2016) and when Alfred Kenyon became Keeper of Antiquities in the new Department of Antiquities which was established at the National Museum of Victoria (Griffith 1996, 71).

In addition, the Public Library of Victoria increased its collection of Egyptian bibliographical resources (Griffith 1996, 71). The discovery of the Tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922 sparked this intrigue into all things ancient Egypt (Fritze 2016, 237-242; Stevenson 2019, 145-181) which resulted in a 'Golden Age' for archaeology during which the discovery of Tutankhamun brought a renewed interest in the work of archaeologists around the world (Stevenson 2019, 147). Perhaps inspired by this intrigue, Kenyon created a mummy room at the National Museum of Victoria which displayed the mummy and coffin of Tjeby and in South Australia the South Australian Museum, under the efforts of Norman Tindale and Herbert Hale, reorganised its Egyptian room (Griffiths 1996, 71). Thus, it is clear that there was a significant increase in the collection and display of Egyptian antiquities in Australia in the early 1900s. This renewed interest likely influenced Bedford's collection of the coffin of Nyamenkhamun and gave the artefact a high level of prestige in the Kyancutta Museum, making it one of the most memorable attractions in the small rural museum.

Disbanding the Kyancutta Museum

Following Bedford's death on February 14, 1951, his Kyancutta Museum remained open by request only and was staffed by his wife Hilda and their eldest daughter Joan Luscombe (Laube 1990, 156). Following Darragh's initial visits to the Kyancutta Museum in the 1970s, he remained in close contact with Bedford's family, notably Joan and Newton Luscombe with whom he had become friends, and he revisited Kyancutta in the early 1980s, approximately ten years after the owners had begun dispersal of the collections. At that time, Darragh (2019, pers. comm.) recalls that the Museum was an empty room, void of the collections it once housed. The unsold material, including some geological specimens and skeletons, were either given to family members or remained in the abandoned Museum. Even while it was being disbanded, the museum never officially closed until there was nothing left to see.

Divesting of the collections began in 1961 when the owners of the Kyancutta Museum noticed that a collection of meteorites held in storage were beginning to show signs of deterioration (Laube 1990, 156). This process took many years and resulted in the collections being relocated to new locations around Australia, and on occasion, the United Kingdom. On November 24, 1971, Joan Luscombe (1971, 1) wrote to the director of Museums Victoria, John McNally offering the contents of the Kyancutta Museum for purchase. She offered prices for the meteorite collection: \$1000 (today \$10,920), the mineral collection: \$2000 (today \$21,840), and the fossil collection: \$5000 (today \$54,602). Correspondence between the Kyancutta Museum and Museums Victoria regarding these purchases are recorded in the form of letters available at Museums Victoria.

Museums Victoria agreed to purchase the fossil, meteorite and mineral collections for the price of \$7,000. Darragh (2019, pers. comm.) along with two assistants, Kevin Bell and Rowen Evans, travelled to the Kyancutta Museum in a rental truck, the largest they could drive without a truck license. They packed the geological specimens Museums Victoria had purchased and assessed the remainder of the Kyancutta Museum collection to make suggestions for further purchases. Following the visit, Darragh provided Museums Victoria with his report recommending a list of

further artefacts including the Egyptian coffin which he argued would be a significant and valuable purchase for the museum (Darragh 1971; 2019, Pers. comm.).

Later that same year, in 1971, Joan Luscombe wrote to Museums Victoria asking if they were interested in purchasing the Kyancutta Museum's Egyptian collection. In this letter, she deems this collection much too important to remain in Kyancutta. However, she was unsure of an acceptable price for the artefacts. Luscombe (1971, 1) suggests that the National Museum, as Museums Victoria was then called, could offer suggestions as to pricing based on an expert's opinion. This letter is a valuable primary source that reveals the importance of the Egyptian collection through the eyes of the owners of the Kyancutta Museum, notably Joan Luscombe. The family treasured the collection and hoped it would be valued by another institution and placed somewhere it would be appreciated and displayed.

Luscombe was willing to work with Museums Victoria and provided them with a catalogue to have the items valued. In November of 1971, Museum Victoria had the items valued, and the following year they made an offer of \$1,500 (today: \$16,380) for the Egyptian coffin alone. This purchase was requested on May 12, 1972. It was organised by John McNally, Director of Museums Victoria and authorised by Sir Robert Blackwood, a trustee of the Museum. At this stage, Museums Victoria was still considering the purchase of the other Egyptian antiquities, and after looking at images taken of the Museum's collection, they believed the Egyptian collection was more substantial than that recorded in Bedford's catalogue. The missing items not included in the catalogue consisted of several Egyptian pots and ceramics. They valued the items in the catalogue at \$1,462 and made an offer of \$1,650 to the Kyancutta Museum on June 13, 1972, for the entire collection, not including the coffin which they had already purchased, but including the items not listed in the catalogue. In 1972 Museums Victoria purchased 25 additional pieces from Bedford's Henbury meteorite collection; however, they were unsuccessful in purchasing the additional Egyptian artefacts.

On June 17, 1972, Museums Victoria was informed by Bedford's family that Joan Luscombe had been away having medical care at the time Museums Victoria had sent their offer for the remaining Egyptian collection (Kyancutta Museum 1972, 1).

During this period, an unidentified dealer from Adelaide also made an offer for the Egyptian collection at the Kyancutta Museum. This offer was more than double Museums Victoria's offer, and so the family accepted that one and the Egyptian antiquities were already sold and cleared from the premises by the time they wrote back to Museums Victoria. The unidentified dealer was unable to purchase the coffin because it already belonged to Museums Victoria (Kyancutta Museum 1972, 1).

In September 1972 Darragh (2019, pers. comm.) returned to Kyancutta, this time on his own and with only his Land Rover. On arrival at Kyancutta, the coffin was placed in the back of the vehicle. It only just fit into the Land Rover lengthwise, and the sides were padded to prevent damage on return to Melbourne (Darragh 2019, pers. comm.). Luscombe had wanted to provide the coffin with a locally made packing case, but she could not source anyone in Kyancutta with the right skill-set, and so the responsibility of packing the coffin fell on Darragh.

On September 21, 1972, the coffin arrived in Museums Victoria, then located on Russell Street, and was placed in storage where it long remained, only making appearances in seven exhibitions over the last 48 years. Following his visit to the museum, Darragh (1972) personally wrote to Bedford's family to thank them for their hospitality and inform them that the coffin had been delivered to Melbourne safely. During his correspondence with the Kyancutta Museum Darragh (2019, pers. comm.) formed a close friendship with Bedford's remaining family. As a geologist, he had spent time studying and collecting specimens in South Australia near Kyancutta before the museum was disbanded and had often visited the Luscombe family when nearby. It was for this reason that he was chosen specifically to assess, collect and transport the coffin even though he was not knowledgeable on Egyptian antiquities.

The relocation of several other artefacts from the Kyancutta Museum is also known. The Australian National University (ANU) received some of the archaeocyath specimens and the tektites for their Research School of Earth Sciences (Cooper and Jago 2018, 439). In addition, the University of Melbourne purchased some items for their Classical Studies Department and Christie's of London sold two paintings from Bedford's collection in July 1973 (Cooper and Jago 2018, 439).

It is uncertain why the South Australian museum did not purchase the coffin for their existing Ancient Egypt Gallery. W. Inglis of the South Australian Museum contacted the Kyancutta Museum on September 1, 1971, in writing, asking to inspect the collection which was for sale (Cooper and Jago 2018, 439). Yet, Inglis made no further contact with the Kyancutta Museum (Cooper and Jago 2018, 439) and perhaps the established rivalry between Robert Bedford and the South Australian Museum prevented successful negotiations. Alternatively, the South Australian museum may not have had room to display the coffin, or it may not have had the funds at that moment for such a purpose.

Conclusion

This research has identified that Bedford was an avid collector of historical items. He was interested in their conservation and display. Furthermore, he was interested in using the artefacts he collected to further education in South Australia. The coffin of Nyamenkhamun would have appealed to Bedford when he purchased it in England because of its historical value as an ancient Egyptian artefact and its ability to tie his personal collection to one of the oldest civilisations known to man. Buddicom's (1974) memoirs reveal that her father was interested in ancient Egypt and had connections with famous Egyptian scholars and institutions. Today, Bedford is not remembered for his substantial Egyptian collection but is acknowledged in academia for his efforts in the study of meteorites, especially those from Henbury Craters which he collected himself, and the fossil archaeocyatha (Cooper and Jago 2018, 440). Bedford's *Memoirs of the Kyancutta Museum* have become recognised scientific works mainly on the topic of archaeocyatha.

In the affluent levels of English society in the 1800s, there was a culture of collecting and displaying items of antiquity to portray the owner's culture and wealth. There was also a need for museums to connect items belonging to ancient societies such as Egypt, Greece and Rome. It was a way for more modern societies like England and Australia to connect to the ancient civilisations and project hegemony and superiority over these civilisations. A debate in Cultural Heritage includes whether museums should return their collections to their original country of origin. One of the positives of this removal includes the benefit of having the coffin in Australia to study.

The negatives include the removal of the artefact from the original location, which removes the context; however, even if an artefact remains in its country of origin, that does not mean that it remains in its original context. These items are either placed in storage or in a Museum, like the Cairo Museum, which is not unlike removing Nyamenkhamun's coffin and placing it in the Australian museum. For the public, the Egyptian coffin is a well-known icon of the culture, and thus it is immensely popular amongst museums. It is intriguing that the actions of one man, Bedford, can result in a case study which allows the reception of ancient Egypt to be explored in Australia.

The following chapters concerning the coffin's display in various Museums Victoria exhibitions will focus on developing the worth of the coffin in Australia, and the way Museums use the past. It will focus on how the items of Egyptian antiquity are displayed and what their purpose is in the Museum.

CHAPTER FIVE

Museums Victoria and Exhibitions

Historical Context

This chapter contextualises the display of the coffin by introducing the seven public exhibitions in which this artefact was displayed. To achieve a greater understanding of the purpose of the exhibitions and the role of the coffin in these, the two main curators involved in organising these displays, Associate Professors Colin Hope and Andrew Jamieson have been interviewed regarding the purposes of the exhibitions and the role of Nytamenkhamun's coffin. The exhibitions which involved Nytamenkhamun's coffin were run by Museums Victoria and by outside organisations including the Ian Potter Museum of Art. Examining these exhibitions, the only occasions on which the coffin has been brought out of Museums Victoria storage, provides a means to consider how the coffin is integrated into narratives about ancient Egypt and what this indicates about interest in ancient Egypt in Australian museum contexts, specifically in Melbourne. This chapter outlines the general curatorial narratives into which the coffin was integrated to provide an introduction, and the following chapter will present an analysis as to the specific role of the coffin in these exhibits.

Victorian State Collection

Today the state of Victoria is home to several significant collections of Egyptian antiquities held in institutions and private collections. An extensive collection of Egyptian artefacts was initially held under the Victorian State Collection, which include collections now held by the National Gallery of Victoria (hereafter the NGV, then known as the National Gallery), Museums Victoria (then the National Museum) and the Public Library.

Ancient Egyptian artefacts were first acquired by the Victorian State Collection in 1862 (Hope 1983, 45; Merrillees *et al.* 1990, 10). Shortly before this acquisition, the Melbourne Public Library purchased a collection of books on the topic of ancient Egypt, inspiring the subsequent acquisition of Egyptian artefacts (Merrillees *et al.* 1990, 6-10). However, in 1944 these institutions entered negotiations for separation

and in 1968 physically separated with the collection of Egyptian antiquities going to the NGV and Museums Victoria (Public Library, National Gallery and Museums Act of 1944; Rasmussen 2001, 232; Lovell Chen 2011, 36). Therefore, when Nytamenkhamun's coffin entered the collections in 1972, four years after the separation, it was not included in the combined assemblage but belonged only to Museums Victoria. The following points outline the progression of this administrative separation with a focus on Museums Victoria (Table 1) (for a comprehensive timeline of these events from 1853 to 2000 see Rasmussen 2001, 401-404).

Date	Event
1944	Negotiations for the separation of the National Museum, Public Library and National Gallery began (Public Library, National Gallery and Museums Act of 1944; Rasmussen 2001, 232; Lovell Chen 2011, 36).
1968	The NGV moved to St Kilda Road (Cox 1970, 381; Rasmussen 2001, 403). The Natural History Museum provided with the Stawell, McAllan and La Trobe Galleries on Russell Street (Rasmussen 2001, 403).
1983	National Museum merged with the Science Museum to form Museums Victoria (Rasmussen 2001, 403).
1977	Plans for renovations began at Swanston Walk to provide the Public Library with more space (Rasmussen 2001, 404).
2000	Museums Victoria moved to its current location of Carlton Gardens (Rasmussen 2001, 404).

Table 1: Outline of the Administrative Separation.

The division of the State Collection occurred to provide more room for all three institutions since their collections were rapidly outgrowing their provided spaces. Whilst this separation occurred before the purchase of Nytamenkhamun's coffin in 1972, since the first physical change happened only four years before, with the NGV moving to St Kilda Road, it likely influenced the rate of collecting and the type of artefacts Museums Victoria was seeking at that time.

During the division of the Victorian State Collection, the NGV acquired most of the antiquities collections but a small number of assorted items were distributed to the

Museum. This included Tjeby and his coffin (Merrillees 1990, 15; number: X 83758), which had been donated to the State Collection by Alan Rowe in 1923 and arrived in Melbourne in 1925 (Hope 2004, 139). Rowe acquired the coffin and mummy for his contribution to George Reisner's excavations in Egypt in 1922 (Hope 2004, 139). Today, the mummy of Tjeby is the oldest ancient Egyptian mummy in Australia, dating to the Twelfth Dynasty, circa 1956 BCE to 1870 BCE. Merrillees (1990, 15) suggests Tjeby's coffin was left for the Museum because it was = 'anthropological' rather than 'artistic', and was too damaged to be displayed. Additionally, the display of human remains is inappropriate for the NGV. Thus, Tjeby's coffin and mummified remains, along with two additional mummies whose coffins are in the gallery, became part of Museums Victoria's collection.

Egyptian Antiquities in the NGV and Museums Victoria

Within their current collections, the NGV has a significant assemblage of Egyptian antiquities, including three Egyptian coffins (Hope 1983, 46). One coffin belonged to an Egyptian male named Tjeseb, and two belonged to a female named Iret-hor-eru (Hedt 2018, 24-77). The NGV also owns a section from a coffin likely of Middle Kingdom date (Hope 2019, pers. comm), and a large piece from an additional Late Period coffin acquired in 1894 from patrons of John Garstang (Hope 1983, 46). The State Collection first acquired the coffins and mummies of Tjeseb and Iret-hor-eru in 1938. Before this, the mummies and their coffins were on display in Melbourne from 1893 in the Royal Exhibition Buildings (Hedt 2018, 80-85), only removed in 1931 because of deterioration (Hedt 2018, 83).

Museums Victoria's (2004) Egyptian antiquities collection comprises of a much smaller group of artefacts than the NGV. Amongst this collection, there are two other coffins: a large portion of a stone sarcophagus (Hope 2019, pers. comm.) and the coffin of Tjeby the Elder (catalogue number: X 83758). Museums Victoria also has an assortment of mummified remains. These include a mummified head with surviving traces of gold foil (catalogue number: X 83761) (Hope 2004, 139), and two sets of mummified remains (catalogue numbers: X 83759; X 83760) whose coffins are in the NGV, as noted above (Hope 1983, 49; Merrillees 1990, 15). There is also

a mummified hand from Thebes (catalogue number: X 83762) and a mummified Ibis (catalogue number: X 83764).

There are, therefore, several Egyptian coffins and human remains in the State Collection and the acquisition of most dates to the period when the State Library, NGV and Museums Victoria collections were still united. Thus, as the most recent arrival, Nyamenkhamun's coffin fits into an established context of collection in Victoria.

Conservation Report

In 1980, eight years after Museums Victoria purchased Nyamenkhamun's coffin, the museum compiled an unpublished conservation report on the artefact. At this stage, the coffin had yet to be placed on display and had remained in storage. The report provides the reason for this lack of use as due to the need for proper restoration before the artefact could be exhibited publicly. The report reveals that in 1980 the wood and plaster framework of the coffin was crumbling, and the surfaces were covered in dirt. It was authored by a former conservation officer who began the restoration by cleaning a section of dirt from the pedestal; however, they only cleaned a single square. No further cleaning was undertaken, and the dirt has since been identified as a reminder of the coffin's sojourn in Kyancutta and thus can be considered as having historical value. Nevertheless, the damage the dirt might be causing the coffin must also be considered. The conservation report records that preservation was required for the coffin, but Museums Victoria lacked the necessary funds and expertise of an experienced conservator. The report concluded that unless the coffin could be conserved and repaired, it could not be displayed to the public without the threat of further deterioration. This assessment perhaps explains why the coffin remained in storage for 12 years from the time it was purchased to when it first appeared on display in the 1984 *Tjeby: Long May He Live* exhibition.

Museums Victoria

Museums Victoria is the collective organisation encompassing the Melbourne Museum, the Immigration Museum and Scienceworks. The current building for the Melbourne Museum, where the coffin has been recently displayed, opened in 2000

in Carlton Gardens, next to the Royal Exhibition Building. Currently, the coffin of Nytamenkhamun is not on permanent display and is located offsite in storage. Nevertheless, it has made an appearance in several exhibitions curated and hosted by Museums Victoria and has been loaned out to other institutions for inclusion in displays elsewhere.

Museums Victoria is interested in collecting and conserving objects that are essential for historical and scientific research (Thompson 1986, 4). As an artefact from ancient Egypt, the coffin of Nytamenkhamun appeals to this interest in historical research. In total, the museum has over 17 million objects in its care. Some of these are kept in storage and others on permanent display (museums victoria.com.au/about-us/). Many of these artefacts, which are kept in storage, can only be brought to public awareness through exhibitions.

Melbourne Museum has played host to some of the most significant exhibitions concerned with ancient Egypt in Australia (Bennett, Bulbeck and Finnane 1991, 47). These exhibitions have brought awareness to the existence of items of Egyptian antiquity, including the coffin of Nytamenkhamun, in Australian public collections. These exhibitions have ensured the Nytamenkhamun is undoubtedly a better-known piece today than it was when it remained in Kyancutta. The major exhibitions that have been focused on ancient Egypt at Museums Victoria include *Tjeby: Long May He Live* in 1984, *Gold of the Pharaohs* from 1988 to 1989, and *Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs* in 2011. The coffin of Nytamenkhamun made an appearance in the first two of these exhibitions, but not in the 2011 display.

The Exhibitions and their objectives

Tjeby: Long May He Live

In 1984, Museums Victoria launched a public exhibition entitled *Tjeby: Long May He Live*. This exhibition was the first occasion the coffin of Nytamenkhamun had been placed on public display since it arrived in Melbourne 12 years prior. It was also the first major exhibition to focus on Egyptian material in Melbourne (Hope 2019, pers. comm.). Alongside Museums Victoria's collection, the exhibition also displayed Egyptian artefacts on loan from the NGV and private collections. The purpose of this

exhibition was to raise money to undertake vital restoration work needed for the mummy and coffin of Tjeby (Hope 2019, pers. comm.).

Interestingly, the coffin of Nyamenkhamun was the only coffin on display in this exhibition. Since Tjeby's coffin and mummy were both in a bad state of preservation, both could not be placed on display. Instead, the coffin of Nyamenkhamun served as a replacement while also highlighting another item of Museum Victoria's Egyptian collection. Tjeby's coffin and mummy had long been on display at the museum and was a popular attraction, but was placed in storage shortly before this exhibition due to deterioration. It was hoped that once restored, Tjeby could be placed back on display in the Museum (Hope 1984, 9). The exhibition was popular, and raised ample money to have the reconstruction completed, although it took a further ten years before this work was done (Hope 2019, pers. comm.).

Gold of the Pharaohs

Gold of the Pharaohs was a preselected exhibition on loan from the Egyptian government and included 91 artefacts from the site of Tanis, with the funeral mask of King Psusennes I as the centrepiece (Hawke 1988; Hope 1988; 2003, 161). These artefacts from Tanis were discovered between 1939 and 1946 by archaeologist Pierre Montet (see Montet 1939-1940). The blockbuster exhibition was offered to Australia in the 1980s to mark the bicentenary of Captain Arthur Phillip and the First Fleet's arrival in Sydney (Hawke 1988, 1) and the tour was arranged during Prime Minister Bob Hawke's (1988, 1) visit to Egypt in February 1987.

For ten months from 1988 to 1989, the *Gold of the Pharaohs* public exhibition toured Australia (Hope 2003, 161). It visited four cities, first opening in the Queensland Art Gallery, then travelling to the Art Gallery of Western Australia, the Art Gallery of New South Wales and lastly to Museums Victoria (Hawke 1988, 1; McCormack 2020, 61). Visitation in Australia reached 845,809 (McCormack 2020, 82), with around 360,000 people visiting the exhibition in Melbourne. The monumental success of *Gold of the Pharaohs* highlighted that there was an existing interest in the antiquities of ancient Egypt and the lure of gold in Australia (Hope 2003, 161). This popularity of Ancient

Egypt in Australia was not a new concept (Hope 2003, 161) but the success of this exhibition confirmed it and brought it to the attention of curators.

On June 19, 1988, Prime Minister Bob Hawke introduced the *Gold of the Pharaohs* exhibition to the media (Australian Prime Minister Transcripts database). Hawke's involvement is significant because it would seem uncommon for a Prime Minister to introduce a museum exhibition personally. This direct connection to Australian politics is referenced by Hawke (1988) in a transcript of his speech to the media. Hawke (1988) writes that the exhibition was sent to Australia by the Egyptian government as a show of generosity for Australia's bicentenary and was a gesture of international friendship between Egypt and the countries who were loaned the exhibition (Bowen 1989, 2). The transcript of the press release makes clear Hawke's (1988) intention to inform the media of the upcoming exhibition which would then shortly be advertised to the Australian public to celebrate the good relations between Egypt and Australia. Furthermore, the speech acted as an encouragement to inspire the public to visit the exhibition. Hawke writes:

"I am delighted that the itinerary will give many thousands of Australians the opportunity to see, enjoy and appreciate the majestic achievements of one of the greatest civilisations of the ancient world" (Australian Prime Minister Transcripts database).

In this speech, particularly this sentence, Hawke (1988) encourages visitation to this exhibition. He makes references to the glory of ancient Egypt, which harks back to European fascination with the ancient world and contains Orientalist overtones.

A catalogue was also published in 1988 to accompany the *Gold of the Pharaohs* exhibition. It includes an additional statement from Hawke, who emphasises the importance of this exhibition for education. This emphasis is interesting as it helps reinforce the role of this exhibition in the edification of the public and the perceived link between Australia and ancient Egypt in the development of western civilisation. In this catalogue, Hawke writes:

"Modern Australia is linked to the early Egyptian civilisation by the threads of history and an understanding of the civilisations of the ancient world can give valuable insights into the development of western civilisation" (Hawke in Hope 1988, 3).

Countries in the West, notably Britain and Australia, have long held an interest in connecting the development of their culture to that of Egypt (Riggs 2014, 41; Ikram 2009, n.p.). By doing this, cultures in the West are linking their history to one of the oldest civilisations in the ancient world and this exhibition, particularly Hawke's involvement, is reminiscent of this concept.

Untitled Exhibition

The third instance of the coffin's display occurred in 1994, three years after Hope (2019, pers. comm.) accepted a position as curator and research associate in Museums Victoria. In February of 1994 Hope mounted a small, untitled exhibition centred on the newly reconstructed coffin and mummy of Tjeby. This display was intended to show those who had previously visited the *Tjeby: Long May He Live* exhibition in 1984, ten years earlier, the results of their investment in the conservation (Hope 2019, pers. comm.). Significantly, the popularity of this display again alerted the museum staff to the popularity of Egyptian artefacts in Melbourne (1993-4 Museums Victoria Annual Report DOC/17/3650, p.56, 63).

This exhibition also included a collection of other Egyptian antiquities sourced from the Museum's collections and others from private collections in Melbourne (Hope 2019, pers. comm.). The untitled exhibition was available for visitation at the museum for one year and built on the success of the *Gold of the Pharaohs* travelling exhibit of 1988-89. It was designed to attract visitors to the Museum by highlighting the Egyptian antiquities in the Museums Victoria collections (Hope 2019, pers. comm.). School children frequently visited this exhibition on excursions along with the general public (Hope 2019, pers. comm.).

Million Dollar

Shortly after the untitled exhibition of 1994, Nyamenkhamun's coffin was included in a small Museums Victoria exhibition named *Million Dollar* (Hope 2019, pers. comm.). Records listing the exact dates of this exhibition have not been uncovered, but it is estimated to have occurred between 1995 to 1999, before Museums Victoria relocated to its current location. The idea behind the *Million Dollar* exhibition was to

show the public, authorities and the Australian Government that Museums Victoria had collections of value (Hope 2019, pers. comm.). The title *Million Dollar* was not approximate of the total cost for each object in the exhibit, but along with being an appealing title, it indicated the vast quantity of the collection (Hope 2019, pers. comm.). *Million Dollar* engaged artefacts from across the entire collections of Museums Victoria, those which the curators thought the public would see as valuable and exciting (Hope 2019, pers. comm.). It included everything from invertebrate fossils, indigenous bark paintings to Pacific Island collections and an Egyptian coffin (Hope 2019, pers. comm.).

Discovering Egypt

A more recent exhibition to include the coffin of Nyamenkhamun (Fig. 31) was opened by Hope on March 31, 2007, and was named *Discovering Egypt*. This display was held at the Ian Potter Museum of Art and was open to the public until August 26, 2007 (Jamieson 2007; Jamieson and Cox 2007). The Ian Potter Museum of Art is part of the University of Melbourne and is not explicitly devoted to objects from antiquity but has a gallery space used for temporary exhibitions in which archaeological artefacts and antiquities are frequently on display.



Figure 31: Nyamenkhamun's coffin in *Discovering Egypt* (Courtesy of Andrew Jamieson and the Ian Potter Museum of Art).

Associate Professor Andrew Jamieson from The University of Melbourne curated this exhibition to attract public attention, but also as a complement to the teaching program at the Centre for Classics and Archaeology at the University of Melbourne and the Schools Program at the Ian Potter Museum of Art (Jamieson 2019, pers. comm.).

Along with presenting artefacts from the vast history of ancient Egypt, *Discovering Egypt* included insight into Australia's connections to this ancient civilisation through 19th century antiquarian collectors (Jamieson 2007, 5) whose assemblages of Egyptian antiquities assisted in the discovery of Egypt in Australia. The exhibition was aptly named to reflect this context and explored the "work of pioneering archaeologists such as Sir Flinders Petrie and antiquarian collectors such as Rev.

James Dodgson” (Jamieson 2007, 5). The principal motivation behind *Discovering Egypt* was to display that which had been rediscovered: the so-called Petrie Collection at the University of Melbourne (Jamieson 2019, pers. comm.). This collection consists of 32 Egyptian artefacts which are assumed to have been acquired by the University of Melbourne from Flinders Petrie, based on some handwritten notes connected to the artefacts (Elias 2010, ii, 67). The Petrie Collection was created by Edward and Everard Miller sometime between 1910 and 1920 when the brothers were working in Egypt under the archaeologist Flinders Petrie (Elias 2010, 13). The University of Melbourne obtained this collection in early 1957 (Elias 2010, 13).

The Petrie Collection, now part of the Classics and Archaeology Department at the University of Melbourne, was missing for many years (Jamieson 2019, pers. comm.). Shortly before the exhibition, Jamieson received a call from an individual who had found the missing Egyptian antiquities. Consequently, the exhibition celebrated the re-discovery of these artefacts, along with showcasing the Egyptian antiquities held in at the University of Melbourne and additional Melbourne collections (Jamieson 2019, pers. comm.). It is curious that a collection of valuable Egyptian antiquities could go missing and this suggests that at some point in time the collection was not valued to the point that it was when it was acquired or to the degree it is currently valued. It may also reflect a lack of expertise in Egyptian antiquities in Australia from when the collection was acquired, misplaced and rediscovered.

Mummymania

Mummymania was co-curated by Jamieson and Dr Caroline Tully and ran from September 29, 2015, to April 17, 2016, at the Ian Potter Museum of Art (Jamieson and Van de Ven 2019, 215; Fig. 32).



Figure 32: Nyamenkhamun's coffin in Mummymania (Courtesy of Andrew Jamieson and the Ian Potter Museum of Art).

This exhibition was focused on Egyptian culture as illustrated through the modern fascination with mummies and demonstrated through select artefacts (Jamieson and Tully 2017, 9; Jamieson and Van de Ven 2019, 215). These related themes were intended to complement the overarching theme of the display, which concerned changing perceptions to the Egyptian mummy over time. The exhibition intertwined these different themes and forms of media to attract a wide variety of visitors to the exhibition. *Mummymania* was targeted not only to those interested in Egyptology but also to people interested in scientific studies and Hollywood drama (Jamieson 2019, pers. comm.).

The structure of the exhibition and the use of different media encouraged viewers to participate and form their own opinions regarding current debates in Egyptology. For

Australia, the matter of displaying human remains is especially contentious in Indigenous contexts (Day 2006, 159), and this exhibition investigated the ethics of displaying ancient Egyptian remains. Furthermore, the exhibition raised awareness of the problems of 19th and early 20th century private collection practices (Jamieson and Van de Ven 2019, 217). A problem related to this practice is the loss of provenance information about the acquisition of many artefacts, an issue directly related to the coffin of Nyamenkhamun.

Inside Out

The most recent inclusion of the coffin of Nyamenkhamun in an exhibition occurred from December 23, 2017, to February 11, 2018, in the *Inside Out* (Fig. 33) exhibition at the Melbourne Museum.



Figure 33: Inside Out (Source: Will Cox, Broadsheet Media).

Nytamenkhamun's coffin was one of 370 items displayed in *Inside Out*, but it was made a focal point in the exhibition. The exhibit was centred around three main themes: love, time and immortality. In an interview with Johnathan Hair (2017) from ABC News, Museums Victoria's CEO Lynley Marshall discussed the motivations behind the exhibition. She states:

"Museums are like an iceberg, there [is] only the very, very tip ever on display. Most of the public will never get to see what is stored in this museum because there is not more than one per cent of the collection on display at any one time... So, when you get to see all these objects, you have a sense of 'I wish more people could see more of this'".

Therefore, the primary motivation behind the creation of this exhibition was simple. It was intended to present to the public the artefacts owned by the museum that remain generally unseen. Curators desired to show the public the beautiful and impressive artefacts owned by Museums Victoria, like the coffin, which the public are mostly unaware even exist in Melbourne (Hair 2017).

Conclusion

Since Museums Victoria purchased the coffin of Nytamenkhamun, the artefact has been included in the seven public exhibitions identified in this chapter. The role of Nytamenkhamun's coffin in these displays is analysed in the following chapter. Furthermore, this chapter has provided an introduction into the historical setting of Museums Victoria's purchase of the coffin. It has also introduced the principal objectives of the exhibitions in which the coffin has been displayed. The following chapter will provide an in-depth analysis of the role of the coffin in these curatorial narratives to determine the purpose of the coffin in these displays.

CHAPTER SIX

The Role of the Coffin of Nyamenkhamun in Curatorial Narratives.

Exhibitions are temporary displays and are the product of meticulous planning and methodology. The methodologies used to plan exhibitions are part of museological research and professional practice (Cleary 2008, 20). Each item included in an exhibition is painstakingly selected to support an overarching theme because the choice and use of the chosen artefacts ultimately impact the success of the final display. Thus, curators carefully organise and arrange exhibitions based on a narrative and select specific artefacts to enhance the didactic value and promote visitation. The promotion of a museum's own collections in exhibitions is done by curators to present the worth of the museum to their government and local communities. It is hoped this promotion will assist in securing monetary support because the number of museums in Australia outweighs the government's ability to fund and support each of these institutions (Staiff 2003, 145). Therefore, organisations like Museums Victoria mount large blockbuster exhibitions (like *Gold of the Pharaohs*) which attract government attention to the museum. By including items of the museum's own collections in these blockbuster exhibits, curators draw attention to the museum's collections to emphasise the value of the institution (Staiff 2003, 145). Consequently, exhibitions are more than only edifying or striking displays but are also a means for curators to raise money for the institution and therefore, artefacts in these exhibits are carefully chosen to complement the desired narrative.

Furthermore, the purpose of an exhibition alters depending on the purpose of the institution. University museums and galleries develop displays which run in conjunction with their teaching program (King and Marstine 2005, 267). Therefore, the role of the artefact in the exhibition and the goal of the overarching display alters because the organisation participates in the educational system. University museums may delve into displays which are more contentious and which question and critique museum practices (King and Marstine 2005, 267, 276). These museums can display topics which may not be appropriate in public museums. Additionally, these university displays also combine disciplines (King and Marstine 2005, 268) to

encourage visitation from people with broader interests. Nytamenkhamun's coffin has been included in seven public displays which includes one blockbuster exhibition (*Gold of the Pharaohs*), one fundraising (*Tjeby: Long May He Live*), two university displays (*Discovering Egypt* and *Mummymania*) and in exhibits which promote Museums Victoria's collections (the untitled exhibition, *Million Dollar* and *Inside Out*).

This chapter examines how the coffin of Nytamenkhamun has been used and displayed in these seven public exhibitions. It investigates the role of the coffin in these displays and considers what the use of this artefact can potentially reveal about the popularity of Egyptian antiquities in the late 20th and early 21st century Australia. The study of these exhibitions allows for an exploration of curators' perceptions of Egyptology. It also provides insight into the popularity of these artefacts in Australian museums. This thesis utilises the coffin of Nytamenkhamun as a case study to help understand any changing attitudes towards ancient Egypt, which is related to the study of the reception of artefacts.

The Role of Nytamenkhamun's Coffin in Exhibitions:

As a Symbol of Death and the Afterlife in Ancient Egypt

The coffin of Nytamenkhamun has been included in seven exhibitions as a powerful symbol of death and the afterlife in ancient Egyptian society. It was selected for use in exhibitions including *Tjeby: Long May He Live* (Hope 1984) and *Gold of the Pharaohs* (Hope 1988) to provide a platform for the curators of these displays to educate visitors on ancient Egyptian afterlife beliefs and to attract visitation to the exhibitions. Nytamenkhamun's coffin contains a wealth of information regarding the Egyptian afterlife, in both the iconography and inscriptions and thus the artefact is a valuable tool in an exhibition for informing visitors on this subject. In both these two exhibitions, the coffin was displayed alongside a didactic panel which described some of the key iconography. The coffin was also included in these displays for its vibrant colour scheme and unmistakably ancient Egyptian design which attracts visitors to the display and more specifically the artefact. Therefore, this artefact has many valuable attributes which are beneficial for public exhibitions.

To Fill a Void

In addition, Nyamenkhamun's coffin was included in *Gold of the Pharaohs* and *Tjeby: Long May He Live* to fill that which was missing in both displays: an Egyptian coffin. At the time of these two exhibitions, the NGV owned their coffins, but they were not restored and thus could not be placed in the displays. Also, both these exhibitions were not connected to the NGV, which further suggests why their coffins were not included in the Museums Victoria exhibitions. At this point in time, the coffin and mummy of Tjeby still needed restoration and were severely disintegrating (Hope 2019, pers. comm.). Thus, Tjeby's coffin could not be placed on display in either exhibitions even though it was the focus of *Tjeby: Long May He Live*. As the curator, Hope (2019, pers. comm.) selected the coffin of Nyamenkhamun to partake in these two displays because it was in good condition. This condition made it possible to transport the artefact to the multiple displays of *Gold of the Pharaohs* around Australia, and that is the main reason why it was chosen rather than the other coffins in the Victorian State Collection for *Gold of the Pharaohs*.

Furthermore, *Gold of the Pharaohs* predominantly displayed items from the site of ancient Tanis, and the wooden coffins from this site have not survived, so as a wooden coffin from ancient Egypt, Nyamenkhamun's coffin (like in *Tjeby: Long May He Live*) served as a replacement for these missing items. Tanis also has gold, silver and stone coffins, but they could not travel from Egypt. Therefore, the coffin of Nyamenkhamun (which is not from Tanis) has been used in exhibitions as a 'generic' coffin from ancient Egypt. It is unlikely that the relation of this coffin's date to those from Tanis would have been a point of contention for museum-goers. The use of this artefact as a generic Egyptian coffin illustrates how it has been used in exhibitions as an icon of the Egyptian mortuary culture rather than representative of its particular dating in the Third Intermediate Period and more specifically, the 25th Dynasty.

As a Showpiece to Promote Museums Victoria's Collections

Along with providing a platform to educate visitors about the ancient Egyptian afterlife, curators have also included Nyamenkhamun's coffin in some exhibitions to demonstrate the value of Museums Victoria's collections. The coffin of

Nytamenkhamun was placed in the exhibitions *Tjeby: Long May He Live*, the untitled exhibition, *Million Dollar* and *Inside Out* as a showpiece to demonstrate the breadth and importance of Museums Victoria's assemblages.

Yet, this use of Nytamenkhamun's coffin as a showpiece was not the case for all exhibitions because *Gold of the Pharaohs* included it for an alternative purpose. *Gold of the Pharaohs* was a worldwide exhibition, but the Australian curators incorporated an array of artefacts from institutional and private Australian collections into their version of the display. These additional artefacts included Nytamenkhamun's coffin. The curators considered that the inclusion of these additional artefacts would help distinguish the Australian exhibitions from the occasions when it was displayed in other countries. The Australian tour organisers, Art Exhibition Australia (then known as the International Cultural Corporation Australia, ICCA) presented a 'wish list' to Cairo to include artefacts that were not originally in the exhibition; however, many of the requested artefacts were denied (Hope 2019, pers. comm.). Unable to largely alter the exhibition in this manner, the Australian organisers made a narrative with the artefacts already in Australia and embedded them into the current exhibition. Artefacts were sourced from the NGV, Museums Victoria and from private collections including an additional coffin borrowed from Phillip Adams in Sydney (Hope 2020, pers. comm.). This enabled the Australian exhibitions to promote some of the Egyptian artefacts held in Australia and play on the popularity of ancient Egyptian artefacts.

To Represent 'Ancient Egypt' in Eclectic Displays

The two exhibitions which were most unlike the other five that included Nytamenkhamun's coffin were *Million Dollar* and *Inside Out*. The difference is that the overarching theme of the displays did not have a direct connection to ancient Egypt. Instead, these displays were more eclectic and provided a means for Museums Victoria to display the stored collections they own, which are rarely on exhibit. Thus, the themes of these exhibitions had to be broad to accommodate the extensive range of artefacts in the displays. The use of the coffin of Nytamenkhamun in these two displays is testament to its popularity among curators at Museums Victoria. This is because the coffin was included in these displays as an iconic

representation of the Western notion of “exotic Egypt” in the desire that it will encourage visitation. Advertisements and online reviews for *Inside Out* demonstrate the vast assemblage of artefacts in this exhibition and importantly emphasise the appearance of an Egyptian coffin. An article dating to January 17, 2018, by Will Cox for Broadsheet media includes the quote “How often do you get to see an Egyptian coffin from 700 BC alongside the garish 1994 summer collection of watches from Swatch?”. Along with noting the eclectic nature of the exhibition, this quote reveals the surprise of a viewer at not only the inclusion of an Egyptian coffin in the eclectic display but also in how it was displayed in relation to the other artefacts. This further suggests that museum visitors do not often expect to see artefacts like the coffin of Nyamenkhamun displayed alongside perhaps more modern items; they expect to see Egyptian items in Egyptian themed displays.

The Purpose Behind the Exhibitions

Regardless of why Nyamenkhamun’s coffin was included in these exhibitions, they have proven that this artefact is a popular item which attracts much attention from visitors. This reveals something about the public’s interpretation of ancient Egypt during the periods of these exhibitions and the role of the coffin in these curatorial narratives as an attraction. Initial exhibitions of *Tjeby: Long May He Live* and *Gold of the Pharaohs* were focused on the overarching theme of ancient Egypt while two of the more recent exhibitions *Discovering Egypt* and *Mummymania* have been focused on educating the public about a subcategory of ancient Egyptian life, such as mummification, and the impact of 19th century antiquarianism. These later exhibitions have presented scientific and educational displays in connection to their role as part of the University of Melbourne’s teaching program, but they could also reflect a change in the public’s perception of ancient Egypt in recent years. This change in curatorial narratives from thematic to edifying could have resulted from the development and popularity of ancient Egyptian studies in higher educational institutions like the exhibitions at the Ian Potter Museum of Art which have provided opportunities for more specific exhibits. The success of both these early and more recent exhibitions emphasises that the popularity of ancient Egypt in Australia is neither an old or recent phenomenon but one which is constant in society and occasionally encounters periods of heightened interest.

The coffin of Nyamenkhamun was never intended for public display, because it is a container for mummified remains. Nevertheless, Egyptian artefacts associated with death and the afterlife (like mummies and coffins) are popular attractions in museums and this fame has ensured Nyamenkhamun's inclusion in seven curatorial narratives since 1972. The popularity of mummified remains is recognised in museums as a form of morbid curiosity as it is possible to gaze upon the remnants of individuals who were living thousands of years ago (Brier 2013, 9). This morbid attraction draws visitors to exhibitions which display Egyptian mummies (Day 2006, 160), and this notion likely influenced visitors who decided to visit *Mummymania*, which displayed some mummified remains.

In Egypt, the objection to the display of human remains is less debated than it is in Australia, and often it can be forgotten that these remains once belonged to real human beings who lived their own lives (Riggs 2014, 44, 219-224). This concept has encouraged recent debates surrounding the ethics of displaying mummified remains (Day 2014, 29-44). Mummified remains were never intended for display, and the individuals never gave their permission to be displayed to the public. The *Mummymania* exhibition delved into and participated in this debate (while displaying human remains) as it encouraged visitors to consider their stance on this issue. This is one example of how this exhibition departed from those which came before it. While previous exhibitions focused on the glory of Egypt and the lure of gold along with promoting the attractive nature of these artefacts, *Mummymania* centred around an analysis of controversial debates surrounding the Egyptian mummy. This is because this exhibition was connected to the University of Melbourne's teaching program and was not targeted to the public to as great an extent as the other exhibitions by Museums Victoria. The displays by Museums Victoria were deliberately more general in their themes to inspire visitation from the general public and to incorporate their smaller and more diverse collection of artefacts.

The Exhibitions as Testament to the Interest in Ancient Egypt in Australia.

The success of all exhibitions which included the coffin of Nyamenkhamun is a testament to the interest in ancient Egypt which existed in Australia during this period. The notion that these exhibitions could run successfully in Melbourne, with most containing only Melbourne-based artefacts, speaks to this fascination which was encouraged by the early British pioneers in Australia, Napoleon's campaigns and the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb (Merrillees 1990, 78; Hubschmann 2018, 79). Egyptian exhibitions are often focused on the theme of death and the afterlife in ancient Egypt (Hubschmann 2018, 80) because this appeals to public interest. These themes are visible in the displays that included the coffin of Nyamenkhamun. It is this concept of the Egyptian afterlife which appeals to the morbid curiosity of humanity and which entices viewers to these displays. Furthermore, much of what we know about this ancient civilisation is based on mortuary contexts. Plenty of countries have long been interested in ancient Egyptian tradition and mythology because it is so different from their own. It represents the exotic East which fascinates them. This captivation with ancient Egyptian artefacts as "exotic curiosities" (Moser 2015, 1282; Riggs 2013, 69), harks back to Edward Said's Orientalism and has ensured the popularity and success of Egyptian exhibitions and artefacts in museums. Exhibitions including *Gold of the Pharaohs*, *Tjeby: Long May He Live*, *Egyptian Antiquities*, *Million Dollar* and *Inside Out* engaged with this popularity to entice viewers to the displays.

In addition to the exhibitions which included Nyamenkhamun's coffin, antiquity displays at the NGV have long been highly popular with the public, especially school groups (Hope 2019, pers. comm). Many of the items in this collection were originally part of the combined State Collection. They have been displayed irregularly in exhibitions and at the NGV since the collection moved to the St Kilda location in 1968. The success of these additional displays of Egyptian artefacts in Melbourne, which did not include Nyamenkhamun's coffin, can further emphasise the popularity of ancient Egypt in Australia and more specifically, in Melbourne. These displays have been eclectic, and the more permanent displays of antiquities at the NGV have enjoyed long popularity even though they do not present a strong narrative. However, since they did not involve Nyamenkhamun's coffin, they will not be

investigated further except to note that they have contributed to the enduring popularity of ancient Egypt in Australia.

‘Ancient Egypt’ as a Generalised Theme in Exhibitions

Most exhibitions which displayed the coffin of Nyamenkhamun entertained a broad theme of ‘ancient Egypt’ in a general sense to allow the use of artefacts from all periods; however, *Gold of the Pharaohs* contrasted this by explicitly focusing on material from excavations at Tanis, concentrating on the royal tombs of the 21st and 22nd Dynasties. Yet, even though the exhibition appears more specific and focused on a particular period, Nyamenkhamun’s coffin was placed in the exhibition regardless of this specific theme to represent the Australian artefacts and illustrate how wooden coffins from ancient Egypt looked. In addition, the coffin was included to introduce aspects of Egyptian funerary practice to the exhibition.

Following the general theme of ‘ancient Egypt’ *Tjeby: Long May He Live* included artefacts from both Museums Victoria and the NGV (Hope 1984) that were not the same age and provenience as Tjeby (1956- 1870BC). Similarly, the untitled exhibition displayed the range of Egyptian artefacts from Museums Victoria’s collections. Artefacts from other dynasties and regions were included alongside the coffin of Nyamenkhamun in both these exhibits even though Nyamenkhamun’s coffin comes from a much later period of Egyptian history to artefacts like that of Tjeby. Both these displays sought to educate on Egyptian religion, which had a long history and therefore could include artefacts from different periods to illustrate practice over time.

Like those before it, the *Discovering Egypt* exhibition was focused on the more general theme of ‘ancient Egypt’; however, artefacts in this display were arranged chronologically to allow visitors to follow the evolution of Egyptian history over 10,000 years (Smith 2007). The items in the exhibition were related to the lives of the more modest Egyptians rather than elite, with a focus on the items of daily life (Jamieson and Cox 2007, 3). These included stone tools, vessels, ceramics, clothing, jewellery and burial items (Jamieson and Cox 2007, 3). However, some

items such as inscribed objects and the decorated coffin of Nyamenkhamun introduced aspects of elite culture to the exhibition.

Most of these exhibitions, which included Nyamenkhamun's coffin, were traditional in their display. However, instead of being a more traditional exhibition, *Inside Out* was designed to feel futuristic and eclectic and *Mummymania* engaged a variety of technologies and artefacts to appeal to a broad audience. *Inside Out* was an unusual exhibition and included a wide variety of artefacts in its display. In its inclusion of the coffin of Nyamenkhamun *Inside Out* emphasised the exoticness of this artefact and used it to represent the "other" which exhibitions like *Mummymania* and *Discovering Egypt* made a conscious effort to avoid. Nevertheless, it is not possible for any display of antiquities to altogether avoid notions of the exotic.

Furthermore, *Million Dollar* and *Inside Out* required the visitor to explore a range of different artefacts which did not necessarily relate to the others except for the fact that they belonged to Museums Victoria. Out of the 370 displayed items in the *Inside Out* exhibition, only a selective few artefacts were explicitly chosen to become feature items. These feature items were listed in the small pamphlet given to visitors. The coffin of Nyamenkhamun was one of these items because it is recognised as an attractive and eye-catching artefact. Both *Inside Out* and *Million Dollar* were similar in their wide selection of artefacts and contrast with the other displays because they were not focused on the theme of 'ancient Egypt' but on presenting the variety of Museums Victoria's collections to the public.

Interestingly, one of the geological artefacts included in *Inside Out* was a Henbury Meteorite that was also purchased from Bedford's Kyancutta Museum. It was not done deliberately, but it marks the first and only instance since the disbanding of Bedford's museum that the coffin has been displayed near another of Bedford's collection.

Curation of the Coffin

The coffin of Nyamenkhamun was deliberately included in exhibitions by the curators for specific purposes. It was used as a representation of ancient Egypt and

to assist the Egyptological exhibitions in educating on ancient Egyptian mortuary traditions and the afterlife.

For those exhibitions not organised by Museums Victoria, the curators had to go through the process of requesting the coffin for their displays. Michelle Berry, then senior object conservator at Museums Victoria and a conservator on the Dakhleh project in Egypt suggested to Jamieson (2019, pers. comm.) that he should borrow the coffin of Nyamenkhamun for the 2007 Ian Potter Museum of Art *Discovering Egypt* exhibition. As with previous exhibitions, it was in the interest of Museums Victoria to promote the coffin and to show the public that they had this artefact in their care and therefore, they were happy to lend the artefact to outside displays. In consultation with Dr Ron Vanderwell, senior curator at Museums Victoria, Jamieson also borrowed from the museum a selection of the Heywood Seton-Karr lithic artefacts, along with the Egyptian coffin, which is dated to the Palaeolithic Period from Egypt's Eastern Desert (donated to Museums Victoria, November 16, 1900), and two ripple flake flint spears.

The coffin of Nyamenkhamun had far more significance in the second exhibition at the Ian Potter Museum of Art, *Mummymania*, than it had in *Discovering Egypt* 10 years prior. Firstly, the coffin was displayed in a more prominent position in the gallery (Fig. 6.3). In *Discovering Egypt*, the coffin was placed alongside a wall while in *Mummymania*, the coffin was placed more towards the centre of the room (Fig. 6.3). Secondly, it was the largest artefact included in this exhibition. The size, detail, decoration and colour of the coffin attracted the eyes of visitors in the gallery and drew their attention. As it is a coffin, the artefact encompasses the main themes of the exhibition: life, death, resurrection and immortality. Jamieson (2019, pers. comm.) recalled that it was one of the most popular artefacts of the exhibition, where visitors spent much of their time. Guests gravitated towards the coffin, and as such, it became an unofficial centrepiece of the display (Jamieson 2019, pers. comm.). Since the curators had the precedent of the *Discovering Egypt* exhibition, it enabled them to access the coffin of Nyamenkhamun easily for the second show, *Mummymania*. Furthermore, the coffin was displayed in the same custom-made display case (Fig. 6.3) that had been made for the artefact for the *Discovering Egypt* exhibition.



Figure 34: Coffin in Mummymania (Courtesy of Andrew Jamieson and the Ian Potter Museum of Art).

Since the most recent exhibition, *Inside Out*, was organised and run by Museums Victoria who already owned the coffin, and because the purpose of the exhibition was to bring awareness to the collections kept in storage, the inclusion of the coffin of Nytamenkhamun in this display was simple. Whilst the preceding displays were focused on ancient Egypt, and thus the coffin was included to represent Egyptian mortuary traditions and was surrounded with artefacts which contributed to this theme, on this occasion the coffin was a stark contrast to the other eclectic displays. The artefact was not there for the sole purpose of assisting in the edification of the public on ancient Egyptian burial traditions, but to promote the value of Museums Victoria's collections. The different purposes of the exhibitions have a direct relation to the use and display of the coffin.

The Ian Potter Museum of Art does not have figures for the exact number of individuals who came to view the *Discovering Egypt* display, but throughout the exhibition, a total of 9,043 people visited the gallery (figure provided by the Ian Potter Museum of Art, 2019). This figure included students, members of the public, alumni and scholars. Eight years later, *Mummymania* was displayed at the Potter Museum. The enticing title of the exhibition undoubtedly encouraged visitation because, throughout its display, the exhibition received 16,841 visitors (Jamieson and Van de Ven 2019, 221). This figure does not include the combined visitation to the gallery and the exhibition during this time, unlike *Discovering Egypt's* figure. The success of this display implies a fascination with Egyptian afterlife and mummification in Australian society, which was the focus of the exhibition. *Mummymania* also included a variety of artefacts and exhibits which would interest a variety of people, not just those interested in Egypt but also those interested in science and Hollywood drama.

Mummymania was the most visited exhibition at the Ian Potter Museum of Art from 2013 to 2017 (Jamieson and Van de Ven 2019, 221). One year after *Mummymania*, an exhibition titled *The Dead Don't Bury Themselves* received 8,759 visitors. In contrast, the exhibition *Syria: Ancient History – Modern Conflict* received 16,190 visitors (Jamieson and Van de Ven 2019, 221). Whilst the latter exhibition was close, these displays both received smaller numbers compared to *Mummymania* (Jamieson and Van de Ven 2019, 221). In 2013, the Ian Potter Museum of Art exhibitions averaged 8,000 visitors per exhibition (Jamieson and Van de Ven 2019, 221) which led to them to attempt different displays to encourage visitation. This included the more interactive exhibits and use of interdisciplinary collaboration to appeal to wider audiences. *Mummymania* utilised these methods and achieved the largest visitation of these exhibitions at the Ian Potter Museum of Art.

Conclusion

The preceding exploration of these seven public exhibitions allows a study into one aspect of the 'life' of the coffin of Nyamenkhamun, that is, its life in museum collections. Through these analyses, it is possible to interpret how the public has received the coffin, and the popularity of ancient Egypt in Australia since Museums Victoria purchased the coffin. Each exhibition which included the coffin of

Nytamenkhamun was highly successful, attracting thousands of visitors, which speaks to the popularity of ancient Egypt in Melbourne but also greater Australia. The coffin is a highly attractive artefact characteristic of ancient Egypt, which makes it a valuable artefact in any exhibition as a means of enticing visitation and educating on ancient Egyptian funerary beliefs.

Both *Discovering Egypt* and *Mummymania* had high visitation rates, and in both, the coffin was one of the highlights which attracted much attention from visitors. It was also one of the largest artefacts and most vividly decorated, which makes it especially eye-catching in the displays. In both exhibitions, the coffin was included because it was local and available, but more importantly, it was sought out over other artefacts available in Melbourne because it is iconic and representational of popular notions about ancient Egypt.

The coffin of Nytamenkhamun has an interesting narrative of use and, in a sense, if one links what Bedford intended for the coffin with what Museums Victoria has done since it acquired it and is currently doing, then there is a continuation of the same ideas. Bedford used the coffin of Nytamenkhamun and the rest of his collection to the best of his ability in the small outback Kyancutta Museum to educate the public. Museums Victoria similarly uses the coffin for educational purposes and to draw attention to the many important artefacts owned by the museum.

Due to the integration of the coffin in many exhibitions over the years, the coffin of Nytamenkhamun is now a better-known piece than it was in 1972 and since it arrived in Australia in 1915. Museums Victoria has included it in exhibitions and is willing to promote it and conserve it. However, the use of the coffin within the museum in the future is unknown. Currently, it is undetermined when the coffin will be placed on display, and it will likely remain in storage until the appropriate time arises.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

This thesis provides an Object Biography for Nyamenkhamun's coffin, which explores the time it spent in England and Australia. The investigation gives valuable insight into the reception of ancient Egypt in these countries and the collection, movement and display of the coffin. At an undetermined time, the coffin was removed from Egypt and shipped to England. Since Sir George Newnes was a frequent traveller to Egypt, particularly Thebes (the provenience of this coffin) it is possible he was the one to remove this artefact; however, no documentation supporting this theory has been located throughout this research, and it remains a hypothesis. Since the only evidence for Newnes' ownership exists in the Kyancutta Museum Catalogue, the motivations which prompted Newnes to purchase Nyamenkhamun's coffin have been suggested in this thesis based on the cultural context of 19th century England.

The 19th century is well known as a period in which the wealthy collected antiquities to display in their homes and private collections with the intent of promoting their wealth. This societal trend, rooted in strong Orientalist tones, resulted in the displacement of numerous artefacts and represents the interests of those involved. This movement of artefacts from Egypt has close ties to Egyptomania and resulted in the artefacts gaining additional identities (Moser 2015, 1280). Regardless of how Newnes acquired the coffin, this practice of collecting ancient artefacts was a part of British imperial society that likely influenced his acquisition of the Egyptian coffin.

Robert Arthur Bedford purchased the coffin from Newnes in 1910, but when he left for Australia in 1915 the coffin, along with Bedford's additional private collections, remained in England. There is more substantial evidence for Bedford's collection and use of the coffin. Two of his daughters, Jacintha Buddicom and Sylvia Laube, have provided evidence for this in their memoirs which emphasise Bedford's interest in museum curating and in Egyptian artefacts. Laube's source is especially valuable as it makes mention of the coffin in South Australia before the creation of the Kyancutta

Museum. This mention by Laube establishes an arrival date for the coffin in Australia and provides insight into how the local population interacted with this coffin.

The coffin arrived in Australia in 1923, shortly after the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb on November 26, 1922, and around the time of George Herbert, 5th Earl of Carnarvon's death on April 5, 1923. By this time, Bedford had resided in Australia for eight years, and it seems too much of a coincidence for these events, the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb, death of Carnarvon and the movement of Nytamenkhamun's coffin to Australia, for there to have been no connection. Bedford was likely influenced by the new wave of 'Tutmania' which led to a resurgence in interest for ancient Egypt and had been old friends with Lord Carnarvon (Buddicom 1974, 10) which would have also inspired him to follow the discovery of the tomb. With this context and background of museum curating, Bedford likely recognised that this sudden intense interest in ancient Egypt would make the coffin of Nytamenkhamun, as an artefact distinctly representative of ancient Egyptian culture, an even more valuable artefact to have back in his possession. At this stage, there was no evidence that Bedford was planning to establish the Kyancutta Museum, and thus he did not request the coffin to display it immediately. Instead, the coffin remained stored in the nurse's bedroom at the Cottage Hospital in Kyancutta for a further five years. However, in requesting the transportation of the coffin from England to South Australia during this time which is heavily connected to Tutankhamun and Carnarvon, Bedford is participating in the social trends which heightened interest in ancient Egyptian artefacts.

Bedford applied for the position of Director of the South Australian Museum in 1928 but was rejected. This rejection prompted the creation of the Kyancutta Museum which officially opened June 26, 1929. Since Bedford was well acquainted with Egyptian artefacts and several key scholars in the field, he would have recognised the hype the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb would bring to his collection and thus the value it would receive. Bedford had a substantial collection of Egyptian antiquities including pottery, sculptures and inscriptions from a wide range of Egyptian history which he displayed in his Kyancutta Museum alongside the coffin of Nytamenkhamun.

Being the only owner of the Kyancutta Museum, Bedford had the freedom to choose and display the artefacts it contained however he pleased. Bedford's decision to arrange the display based on Darwin's evolution of animals and civilisation theory is a direct reference to the society in which he was raised. Darwin's (1859) *Origin of the Species* was published and highly popular when Bedford was 15. During the period when Bedford lived in England, it was an influential book and undoubtedly affected Bedford's design and arrangement of his personal museum in England and the Kyancutta Museum (Luscombe 2018, pers. comm.). To Bedford, the Egyptian coffin represented one of the oldest civilisations and thus held an essential role in the Kyancutta Museum.

Since being purchased by Museums Victoria (then the National Museum) in 1972 the coffin has spent copious amounts of time in storage, only coming to the attention of the public through the exhibitions it has been included within. Museums Victoria is interested in promoting this artefact but has not been able to incorporate the coffin in a permanent exhibition due to a lack of relevant displays. However, the popularity of the exhibitions in which this coffin has been included in speaks to the value of this artefact in Melbourne.

The following paragraphs will address the findings this thesis uncovered in relation to the coffin itself, as an artefact in its own right, and then in relation to what the display of the coffin can tell us about society in Australia during the 20th and 21st century.

Nytamenkhamun's coffin is a popular and striking artefact which benefits from a detailed iconographic study, as offered in chapter two. This research allows this thesis to provide evidence to support a date for the coffin of Nytamenkhamun. As explored in chapter two, the iconography on this coffin suggests a date of the Third Intermediate Period, particularly the 25th Dynasty. The shape of the coffin, with the pillar and pedestal design, suggests a late period of ancient Egyptian history sometime during or after the seventh century. In elements of the iconography, there is evidence for archaism inspired by 22nd Dynasty cartonnage cases which is depicted through the depiction of the falcons, sons of Horus and the Abydos Fetish. Analysis of the iconography of the coffin can enable a reliable dating. These features include the spelling of the name 'Osiris' in the inscriptions with the flagpole glyph and

the depiction of Nytamenkhamun in the offering scene. In these depictions of the coffin owner, the dress and unguent cone worn can be dated to the 25th Dynasty using Taylor's (2003) comprehensive typology detailing the evolution of clothing in coffin vignettes. This research has designated a provenance of Thebes and a date of the 25th Dynasty for this coffin.

This research has assisted in providing the coffin with a more secure historical context and helps highlight the importance of Object Biography as a methodology. It has established the coffin's role in the 19th and 20th century antiquarian collecting hobby, during which heightened interest in ancient Egypt resulted in the displacement of many Egyptian artefacts in private and institutional collections of that period. Furthermore, it has traced the coffin's purchase by Museums Victoria and has examined the narratives which the coffin was integrated into as part of seven public exhibitions. These narratives have notably changed, from the early 20th century experience of encountering ancient and exotic curiosities (*Tjeby: Long May He Live*, *Gold of the Pharaohs*, *Egyptian Antiquities* and *Inside Out*), to narratives which emphasise the role of Egyptian antiquities in our current society and focus on presenting didactic displays (*Discovering Egypt* and *Mummymania*). These exhibitions include fundraising ventures (*Tjeby: Long May He Live*), blockbuster exhibitions on loan from Egypt (*Gold of the Pharaohs*) and reflections on the historical phenomenon of Egyptomania (*Discovering Egypt* and *Mummymania*). Even though there was a development in the ideas noted, certain narratives used by these exhibitions have remained remarkably consistent over Museums Victoria's ownership of the coffin, including the use of the coffin as an iconic symbol representative of ancient Egyptian mortuary traditions. The coffin has also been used in displays as an opportunity to educate visitors about ancient Egyptian culture and mythology.

Thus, the coffin and public experiences with this artefact outlined in this thesis echoes the changing ways that our society engages with the ancient Egyptian world through exhibitions and museum displays. This study of Nytamenkhamun's Object Biography has highlighted the ongoing public fascination with aspects of Egyptian society. These aspects include death, gold and the exotic alongside newer interests in the role of the museum, and in the tension between the unique stories (Object

Biographies) embodied by individual artefacts and the broader, didactic requirements of public exhibitions.

In conclusion, this thesis has established that artefacts are much more than only representational of their original culture, but that they take on additional meanings as they are moved around and placed in different collections. Along with representing Third Intermediate Period Egyptian funerary traditions, the coffin of Nyamenkhamun is also emblematic of early Australian collection practices and the influence of European fascination with Egypt in England and Australia. Additionally, while the coffin of Nyamenkhamun might not be especially unique, the study of the history of the artefact has provided an entry point into larger narratives concerning why and how collections have been formed. It does this alongside an explanation of the enduring popularity of Egypt in Australia. Thus, as we consider the multiple layers of significance of the coffin outlined in this research, as an individual artefact and as part of a museum collection, it is also possible to reflect on the idea that the coffin in the Kyancutta Museum and exhibitions since 1972 has provided many Australians with their first encounter with ancient Egypt.

Bibliography

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Appendix A



Figure 35: Inscription 1: Shoulder Glyphs (Courtesy of Museums Victoria/ Photographer: Rodney Start).



Figure 36: Inscription 2: Mummy Bands (Courtesy of Museums Victoria/ Photographer: Rodney Start).



Figure 37: Inscription 3: Abydos Fetish (Courtesy of Museums Victoria/ Photographer: Rodney Start).



Figure 38: Inscription 4a: Offering Formula (Courtesy of Museums Victoria (left) and Andrew Jamieson (right)).



Figure 39: Inscription 4b: Offering Formula (Courtesy of Andrew Jamieson (left) and Museums Victoria (right)).



Figure 40: Inscription 5: inscriptions on White Ground (Courtesy of Museums Victoria/ Photographer: Rodney Start).



Figure 41: Inscription 6: Lion Headed Bier Scene (Courtesy of Museums Victoria/ Photographer: Rodney Start).



Figure 42: Inscription 7: Middle Band Inscription (Courtesy of Museums Victoria/ Photographer: Rodney Start).



Figure 43: Inscription 8: Offering Scene Inscriptions (Courtesy of Andrew Jamieson (left) and Museums Victoria (right)).



Figure 44: Inscription 9: Pedestal Glyphs (Courtesy of Museums Victoria/ Photographer: Rodney Start).

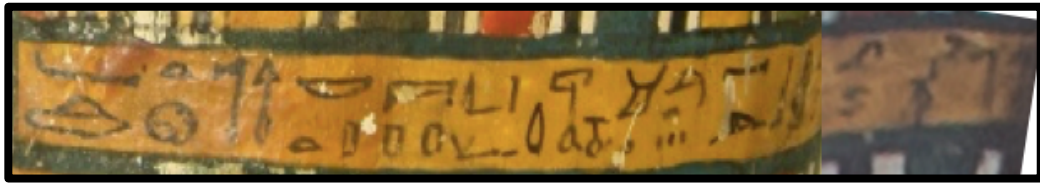


Figure 45: Inscription 10a: Request for Offerings (Courtesy of Museums Victoria (left) and Andrew Jamieson (right)).



Figure 46: Inscription 10b: Request for Offerings (Courtesy of Andrew Jamieson (left) and Museums Victoria (right)).