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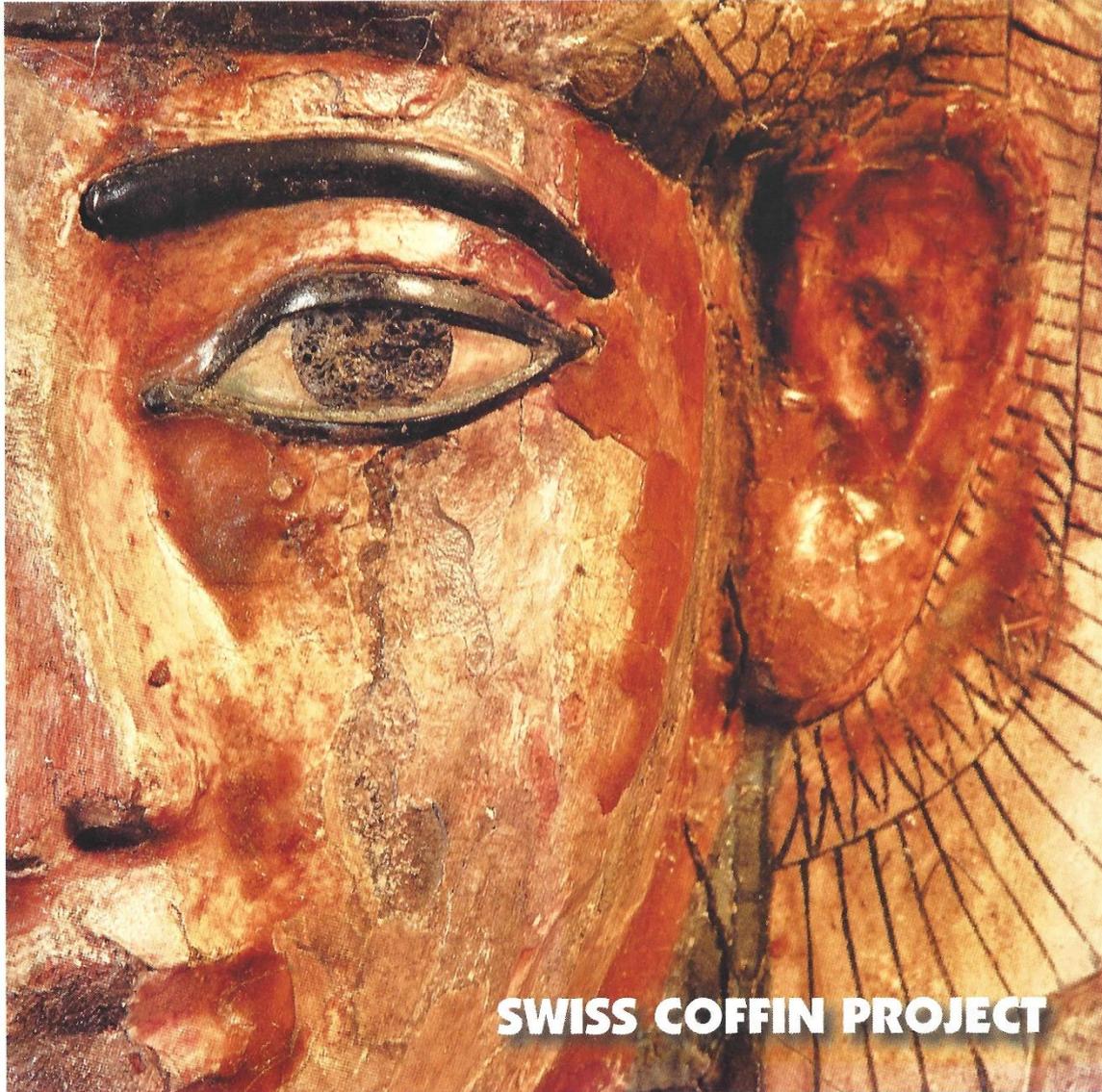
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of Ancient Egypt

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## SWISS COFFIN PROJECT



FASCINATION WITH ANCIENT EGYPT AT ORVIETO, ITALY  
RECONSIDERING SENENMUT'S TT353 AT DEIR EL BAHARI  
LEGACY OF TABUBUE, EGYPTIAN FEMME FATALE  
LIFE & DEATH IN THE PYRAMID AGE - & MORE

# Kmt

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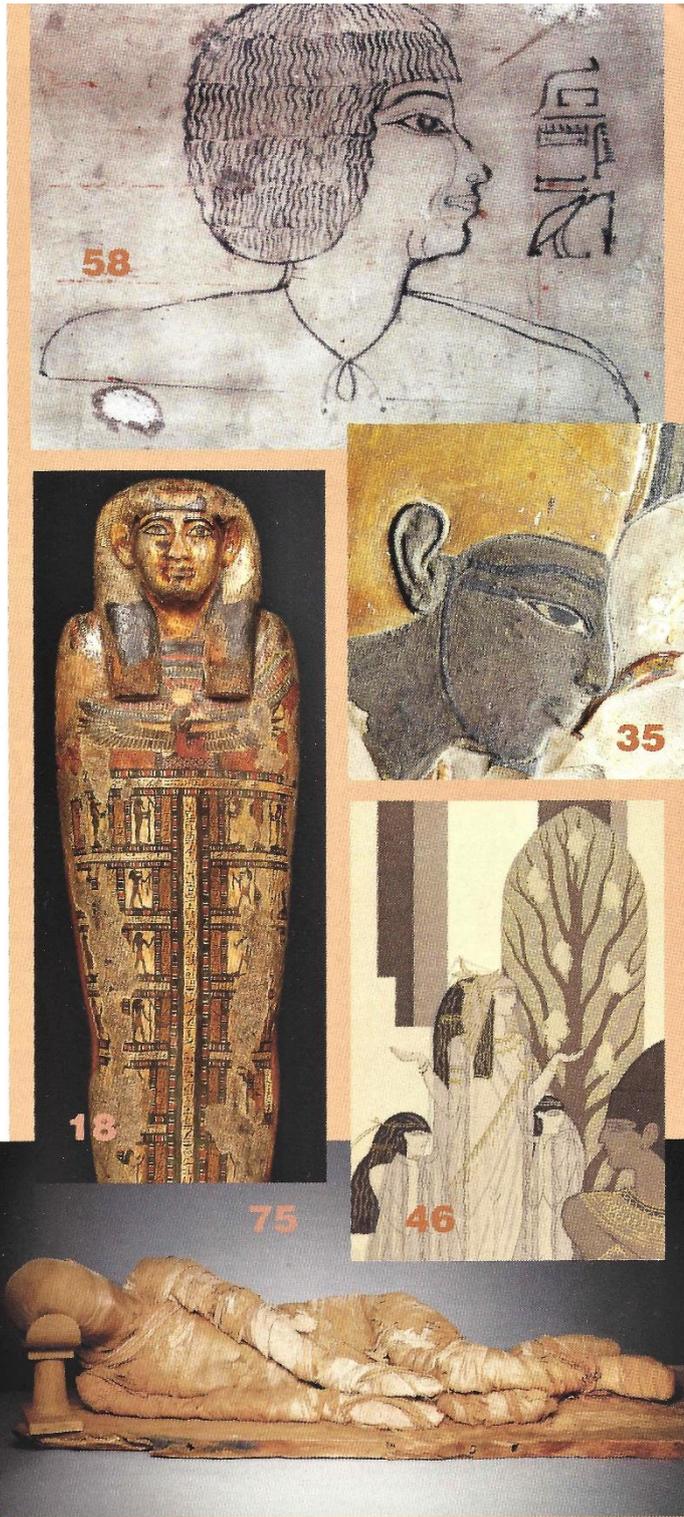
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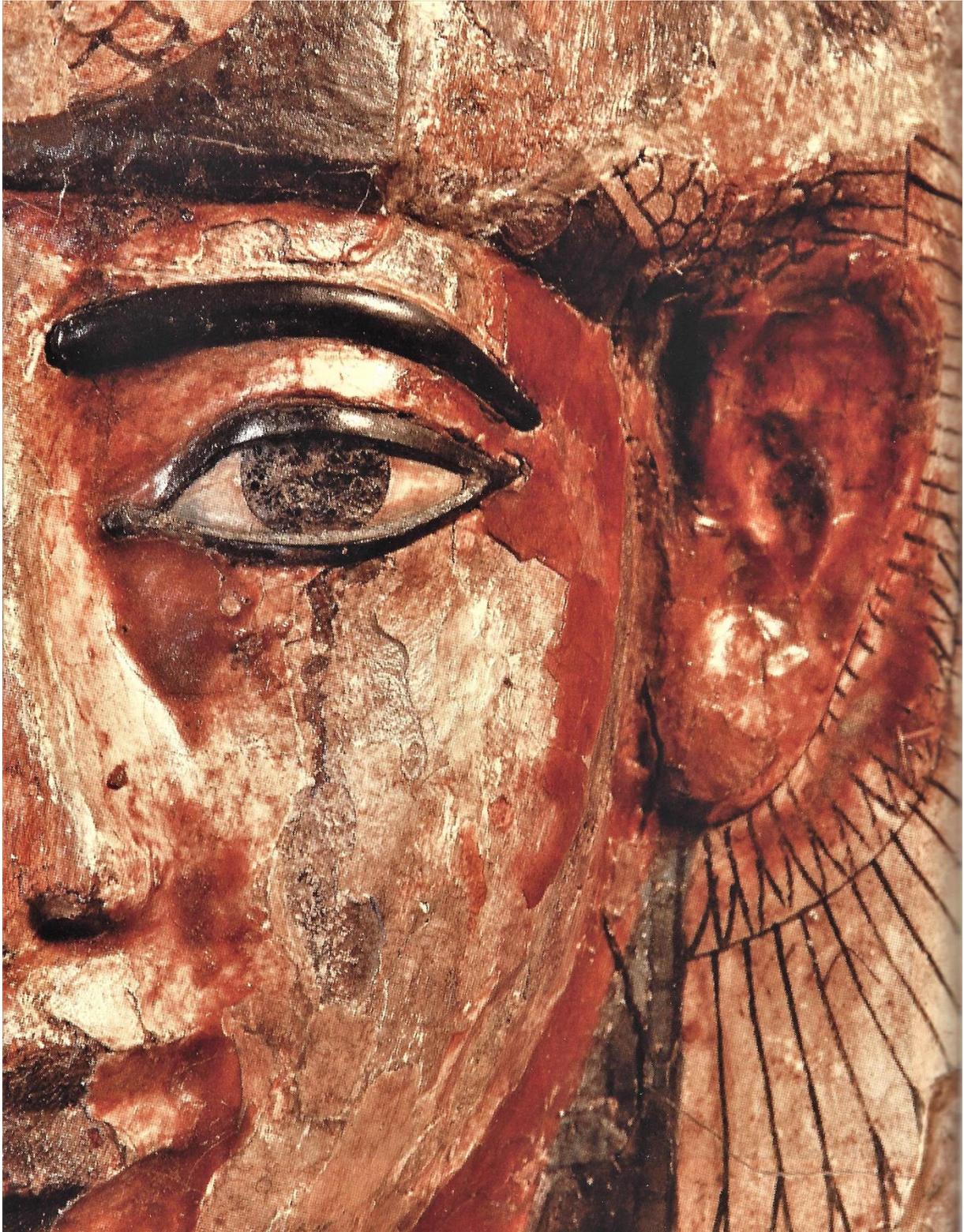
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# THE SWISS COFFIN PROJECT

## *Rediscovering Forgotten Treasures in Swiss Museums*

by Alexandra Küffer

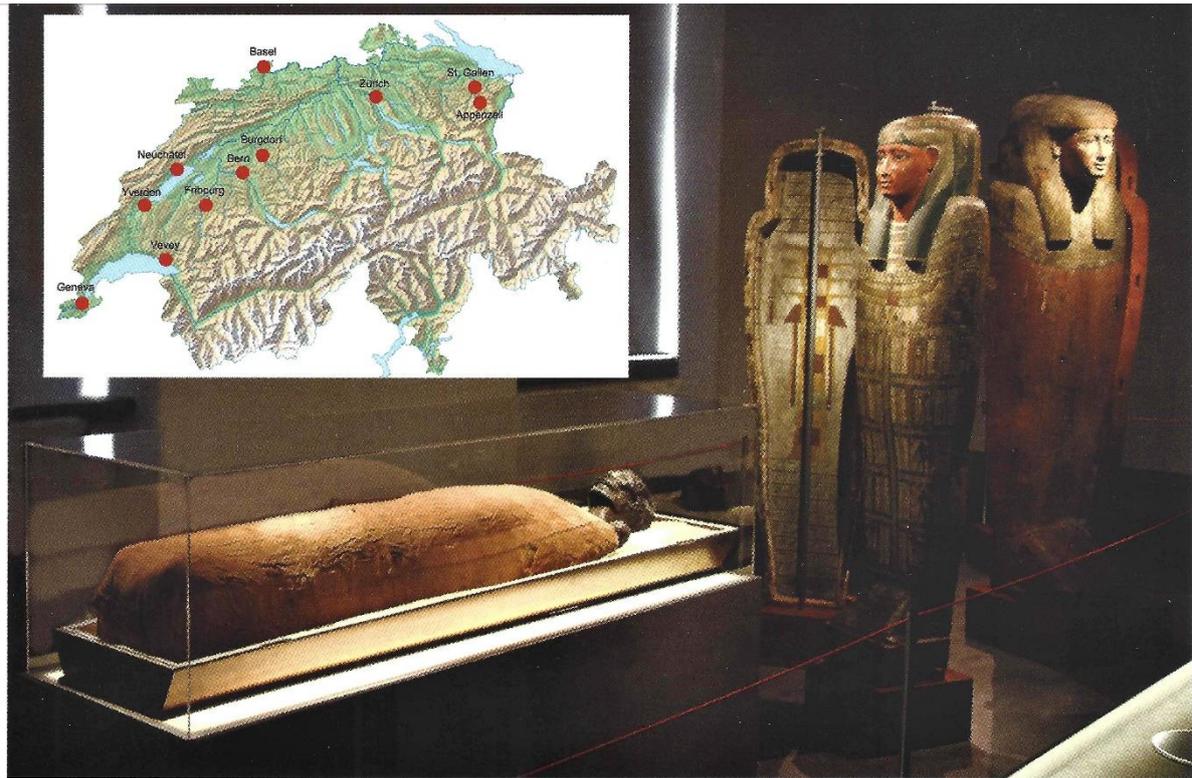


In March 6, 2011, the exhibition “Im Banne Ägyptens – Begegnungen mit der Ewigkeit” (“Spellbound by Egypt – Encounters with Eternity”) closed its doors at the Historisches und Völkerkundemuseum St. Gallen in eastern Switzerland. On display for nine months, it was one of the most successful shows ever presented by the Museum. The exhibition didn’t feature any objects on loan from abroad, focusing solely on the Egyptian collections of four Swiss museums: the Museum für Völkerkunde Burgdorf, the Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen, the Historisches und Völkerkundemuseum St. Gallen and the Musée historique Vevey. Many visitors were greatly amazed to discover pieces of such quality and beauty hitherto unknown to them coming from Swiss public institutions.

Surprisingly, it still seems to be a little bit of a secret that almost every canton of Switzerland has at least one museum owning Egyptian artifacts. Over 30,000 objects are housed in more than forty museums all over the country. Apart from the renowned institutions, like the Antikenmuseum Basel<sup>1</sup> and the Musée d’art et d’histoire in Geneva, with their comprehensive inventories, most of the Egyptian collections are rather small, ranging from a few pieces to several hundred objects. Dating back to the Nineteenth and the beginning of the Twentieth centuries, they consist mainly of the typical souvenirs that travelers brought back from a trip on the Nile,

*Detail of the face-piece of the 25th Dynasty coffin of Lady Gemtues, which is in the collection of the Musée historique Vevey, Geneva. Courtesy of the Museum.*

*Photo: pmimage*



like faience amulets, funerary figurines, bronze statuettes, and, of course, coffins and mummies.

### The Swiss Coffin Project

When my colleague, Renate Siegmann, and I, both Egyptologists, started working on the Egyptian collections of some museums in 1996, we were struck by the amount of objects and the fact that many of them had never been studied, published or even exhibited. That is why, in 2004, we initiated a small project called Schweizer Sargprojekt (Swiss Coffin Project) focusing on coffins, mummy coverings and masks, which form the highlights of the collections we were working with. In the following years, twenty-two coffins and coffin fragments — as well as seven mummy masks — from sixteen Swiss museums underwent a detailed and careful study.<sup>2</sup> The results were published in 2007, in a volume titled *Unter dem Schutz der Himmelsgöttin* (“Under the Protection of the Sky Goddess”).<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, the research work still goes on. Some pieces which weren't included in the book (mainly because of financial factors) are awaiting their publication. Several museums owning unpublished coffins have contacted us to study their artifacts. We are currently working on a website ([www.e-coffins.ch](http://www.e-coffins.ch)) which should go online in the summer of 2011 and will make the studied material easily accessible to a wider public. Besides allowing regular updates on coffin matters, it will also be possible to put the many detailed photographs that were taken of the objects online for interested specialists.

The following account is a short summary of the

*Above, The two wooden coffins of Shepeniset with her well-preserved mummy were the first Egyptian burial-equipment arriving in Switzerland in 1820. Usually on display in the Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen in eastern Switzerland, they featured as one of the highlights in the recent exhibition “Im Banne Ägyptens” at the Historisches und Völkerkundemuseum shown in St. Gallen, as well. Courtesy of the Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen & the Historisches und Völkerkundemuseum St. Gallen. Photo: Michael Elser Inset, Map of Switzerland with the cities & towns mentioned in the article. Author's graphic*

project's results so far and presents some outstanding burial-equipment and the stories behind them.

### Recreating the Biography of Coffins

Even if mummies are the most popular Egyptian artifacts, their coffins tell us about how the ancient Egyptians saw the world and what they believed in. For thousands of years, coffins were the most consistent item of funerary equipment. Their images and inscriptions created a sacred environment protecting the mummy and ensuring the well-being of the deceased person in the Afterlife.

All of the coffins included in the Swiss Coffin Project so far date from the First Millennium BC, a period of Egyptian history that is still relatively little known by the public and is therefore particularly interesting. The studied material offered a good opportunity to outline the develop-

*Opposite, The interior of the inner coffin of Shepeiset is dominated by a figure of the sky goddess Nut (left) & a djed pillar, symbol of Osiris (right). At the end of the vertical inscription in front of Nut, the name of Shepeniset & her title “mistress of the house” are mentioned. Courtesy of the Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen.*

Photo: Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen



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ment of the coffins and the changes in their decoration during that era.

The detailed analysis of the coffins and their comparison with similar pieces in foreign museums made it possible to identify their provenances, in most cases. It is always especially rewarding when objects can be restored to their original context in time and space. The majority of the examined coffins come from the large cemeteries of western Luxor and Akhmim, where important discoveries were made in the second half of the Nineteenth Century. Hundreds of coffins and mummies were taken from their ancient surroundings and the funerary equipment subsequently dispersed among various collections around the globe.

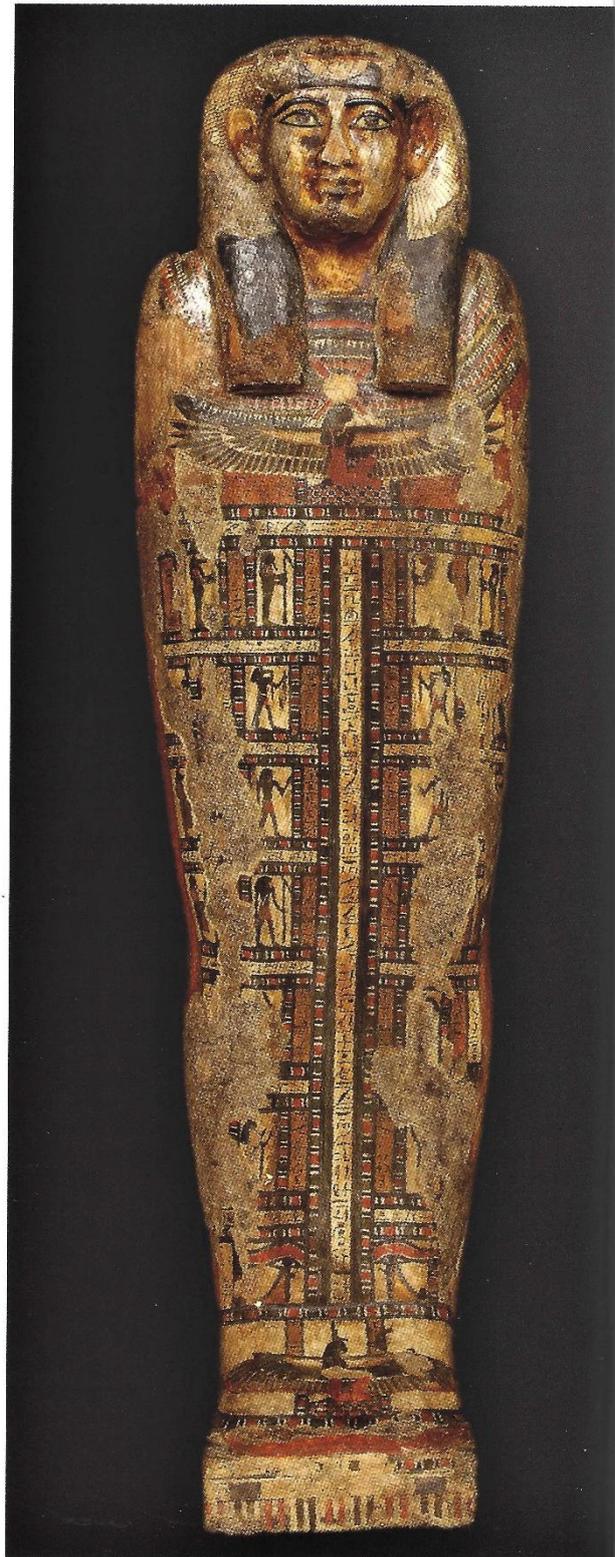
Not only the coffins themselves but also their acquisition stories turned out to be fascinating. Most pieces were gifts to their hometowns by Swiss citizens living in Egypt. Due to the cotton boom, quite a few Swiss had moved to Egypt by the mid-Nineteenth Century, settling mainly in Alexandria and Cairo. In 1866, there were, for instance, at least sixteen Swiss trading companies located in Alexandria alone. These emigrants always stayed attached to Switzerland and, whenever possible, offered generous gifts to their places of origin. With coffins and mummies so much in demand at that time, they were sure such gifts would impress the public back home.

#### **Shepeniset, the First Ancient Egyptian in Switzerland**

The arrival of the first ancient Egyptian mummy with its two coffins in Switzerland 1820 was quite a sensation.<sup>4</sup> The burial equipment of Shepeniset was offered to the founder of the canton St. Gallen, Karl Müller-Friedberg (1755-1836), by a longtime friend named Philipp Roux, who lived in Alexandria. In a letter, Roux mentions that he had been able to buy one of the most-beautiful mummies of Upper Egypt.<sup>5</sup> As was customary at that time, the coffins were opened in an official ceremony immediately after their arrival and the mummy unrolled. Each guest was allowed to take home one piece of wrapping.

Since 1820 the burial equipment and the mummy of Shepeniset have been on display in the Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen,<sup>6</sup> leaving it for the first time to be shown as main attraction in the recent exhibition "Spellbound by Egypt." The burial equipment consists of two wooden anthropoid coffins originally placed one inside the other. The massive outer coffin is simply decorated, while the inner one is elaborately painted in vivid colours. An important figure appearing on the coffins since the New Kingdom is the sky goddess, Nut. She is depicted twice on the lid of the inner coffin of Shepeniset. On the outside she is shown kneeling, her wings outstretched over the deceased in a gesture of protection; on the interior of the lid, she is represented as a standing woman with hanging arms, wearing a tight-fitting dress with a blue pattern imitating a bead garment. According to ancient Egyptian mythology, Nut was the mother of Osiris, the ruler of the Underworld. Through the identification of the deces-

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Opposite, The coffin housed today in the Musée historique Vevey on the Lake Geneva that once belonged to a lady named Gemtues, who was related to the influential clergy of the Montu priests in the late 25th Dynasty. The carefully decorated lid shows a multitude of protective deities. Courtesy of the Musée historique Vevey.

Photo: pmimage

Right, Due to its poor condition, the mummy of Gemtues was cremated in 1948 & her mortal remains are kept today in a glass vase. Courtesy of the Musée historique Vevey.

Photo: pmimage



ed with Osiris, she also became the mother of all dead, the coffin symbolizing her womb from which one would be reborn to eternal life.

Another prominent feature on the inner coffin of Shepeniset are two large *djed* pillars painted on the interior and exterior of the coffin floor. The pillar is a symbol of Osiris and is said to represent the god's backbone. Read as hieroglyphic sign, it means "enduring stability."

Together with the images of protective deities and the magically empowered inscriptions, the depictions of Nut and Osiris (*djed* pillar) created a miniature cosmos around the deceased Shepeniset, with the lid of the coffin being associated with the sky and the basin with the earth.

Names and titles formed an important part of an Egyptian's identity and were therefore — whenever possible — written on the coffin. In the case of Shepeniset, not only are her name and title, "mistress of the house," mentioned several times, but also the names and titles of her parents and her grandfather. These genealogical indications allowed the reconstruction of family ties and the location of Shepen-

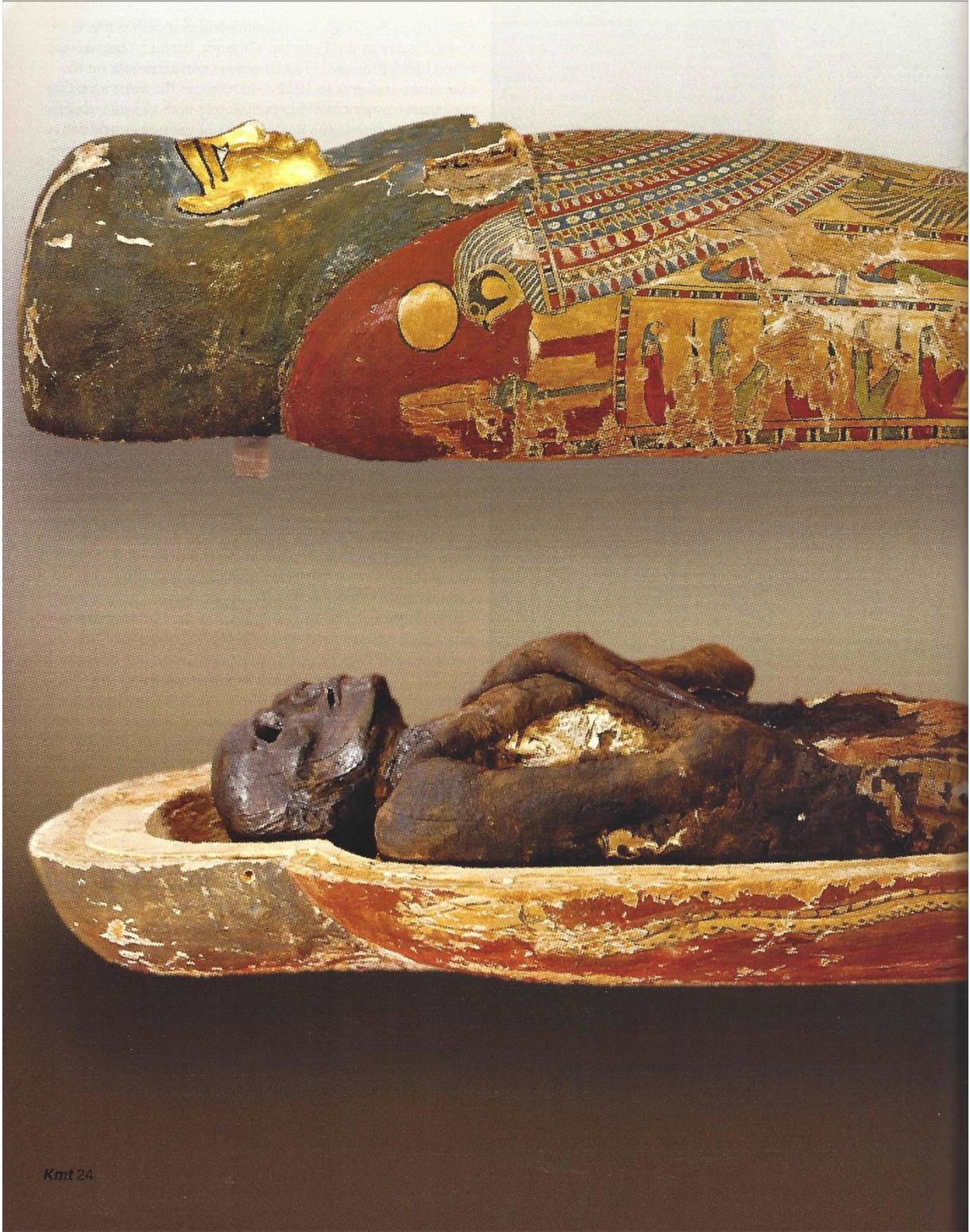
iset's father, Paestenfi. His mummy and two coffins are housed today in the Egyptian Museum, Berlin.<sup>7</sup> They were bought by a Prussian officer, Freiherr von Minutoli, on his expedition to Egypt in 1820 — notably in the same year that the burial equipment of Shepeniset was sent to Switzerland — and were among the first artifacts of the now-world-famous Berlin collection.<sup>8</sup> The exact provenances of Shepeniset's and her father's burial equipment are unknown; but their stylistic features and inscriptions point to western Luxor. Paestenfi and his ancestors bore the titles "God's Father of Amen" and "Craftsman in the Temple of Amen," connecting them to Karnak. Obviously Shepeniset belonged to a high-ranking and influential family of Egyptian priests and was one of the elite of Waset (Thebes) in the late Twenty-fifth Dynasty (700-650 BC).

### A Mummy's Destiny

Another coffin (originally with its mummy) from the late Twenty-fifth Dynasty is housed in the Musée historique de Vevey on the shores of Lake Geneva.<sup>9</sup> It was a gift from Vevey's native son Gustave Burnat in 1858. At the age of twenty-five, Burnat (1831 – 1901) moved to Alexandria and founded a flourishing cotton-trade company. In the spring of 1858, he was visited by his brother, Ernest, and their uncle, Jean Dollfus, on their "Grand Tour" of Egypt and the Near East. Dollfus kept a diary titled "Voyages d'Egypte," which gives interesting and amusing insights into the daily activities of the travel party.<sup>10</sup> Ernest Burnat and Dollfus soon left Gustave to his affairs and sailed up the Nile on a rented *dahabiya*. Although hunting was their primary interest, antiquities also aroused their curiosity. Dollfus mentions that "Arabs were selling all sorts of antiquities, especially objects found in tombs and on mummies as well as mummy parts."<sup>11</sup>

In Luxor they met a Monsieur Maunier, who was working for the French consul, Raymond Sabatier, and who invited them to an excavation in western Luxor. Fascinated by the splendid scenery of a "hundred men working in the burning hot sand at the foot of the Theban hills," Dollfus ordered a mummy and coffin to be sent to his home address.<sup>12</sup> The provenance of the coffin now in Vevey is not recorded, but it can be assumed that — inspired by the exploits of his uncle — Gustave Burnat also asked Maunier for a coffin with mummy. It was widely known, especially among early tourists, that Maunier not only worked as an excavator but also acted as an antiquities agent.

Burnat immediately sent his coffin to Switzerland, where it arrived in Vevey on October 4, 1858. Even though the mayor wrote a letter to Burnat thanking him for his precious gift, the coffin and its mummy subsequently disappeared in different storerooms (often adjacent to schools) for several decades. There they suffered severe damage from floodings and from curious pupils opening the coffin to catch a glimpse of the mummy. Finally in 1948, the town's public authority intervened and decided to have the coffin restored and — in view of the mummy's poor condition — to give it a "Christian burial." So, on (text continues p. 30)



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The intact coffin & mummy of the Ptolemaic priest Nesshu in the Musée d'Yverdon et région originally comes from Akhmim. Together with the mummy coverings & mask, the funerary papyrus & the amulets, it is the most complete burial assemblage from ancient Egypt in a Swiss museum. Courtesy of the Musée d'Yverdon et région. Photo: pmimage



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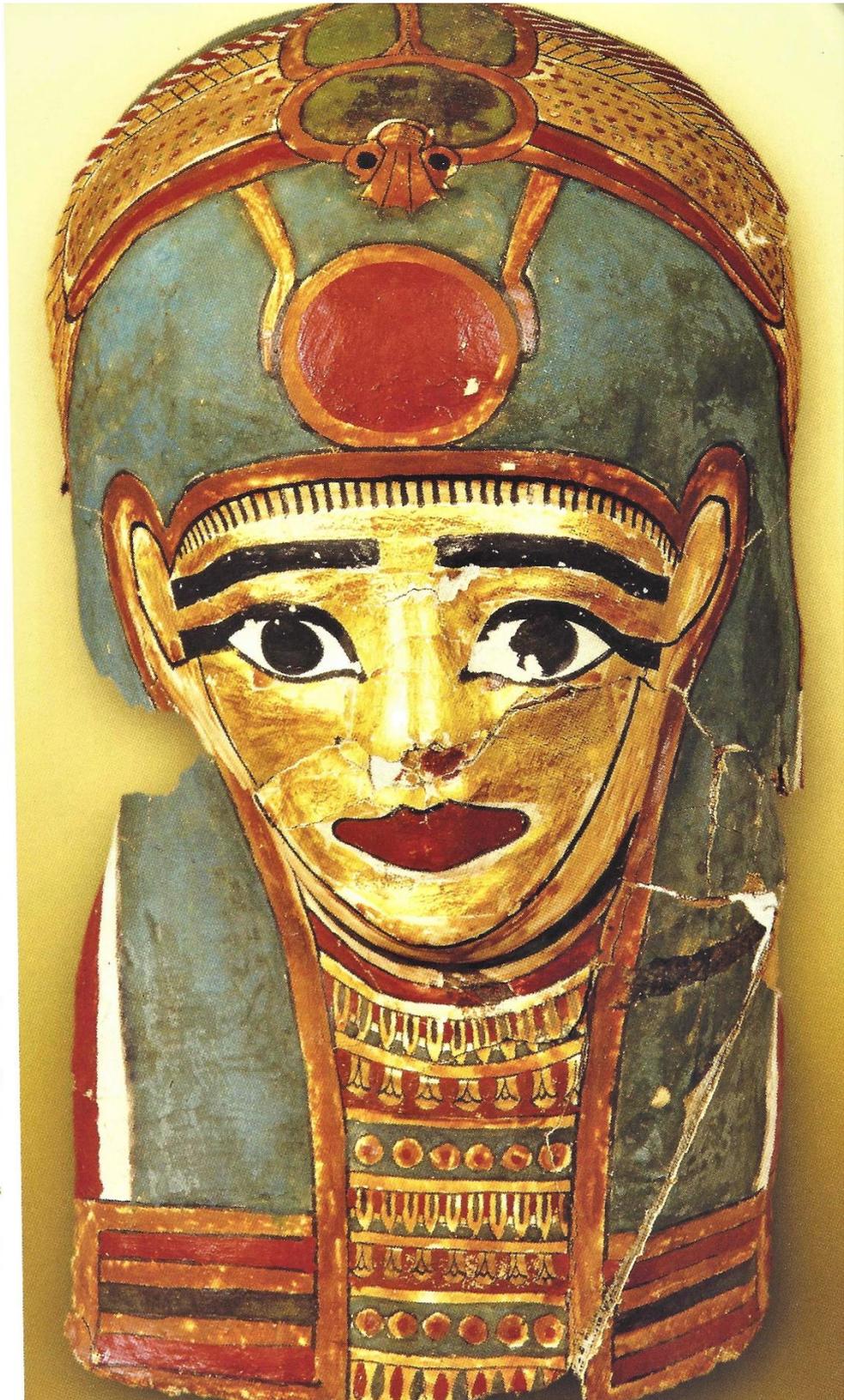
Left, opposite, The lid of Nesshu's wooden coffin is painted in brilliant colors. In its lower part, guardian deities holding knives are arranged in rows. Together with the long serpent depicted on the side of the coffin basin, they form a characteristic iconographic feature of the coffins from Akhmim. Courtesy of the Musée d'Yverdon et région. Photo: pmimage

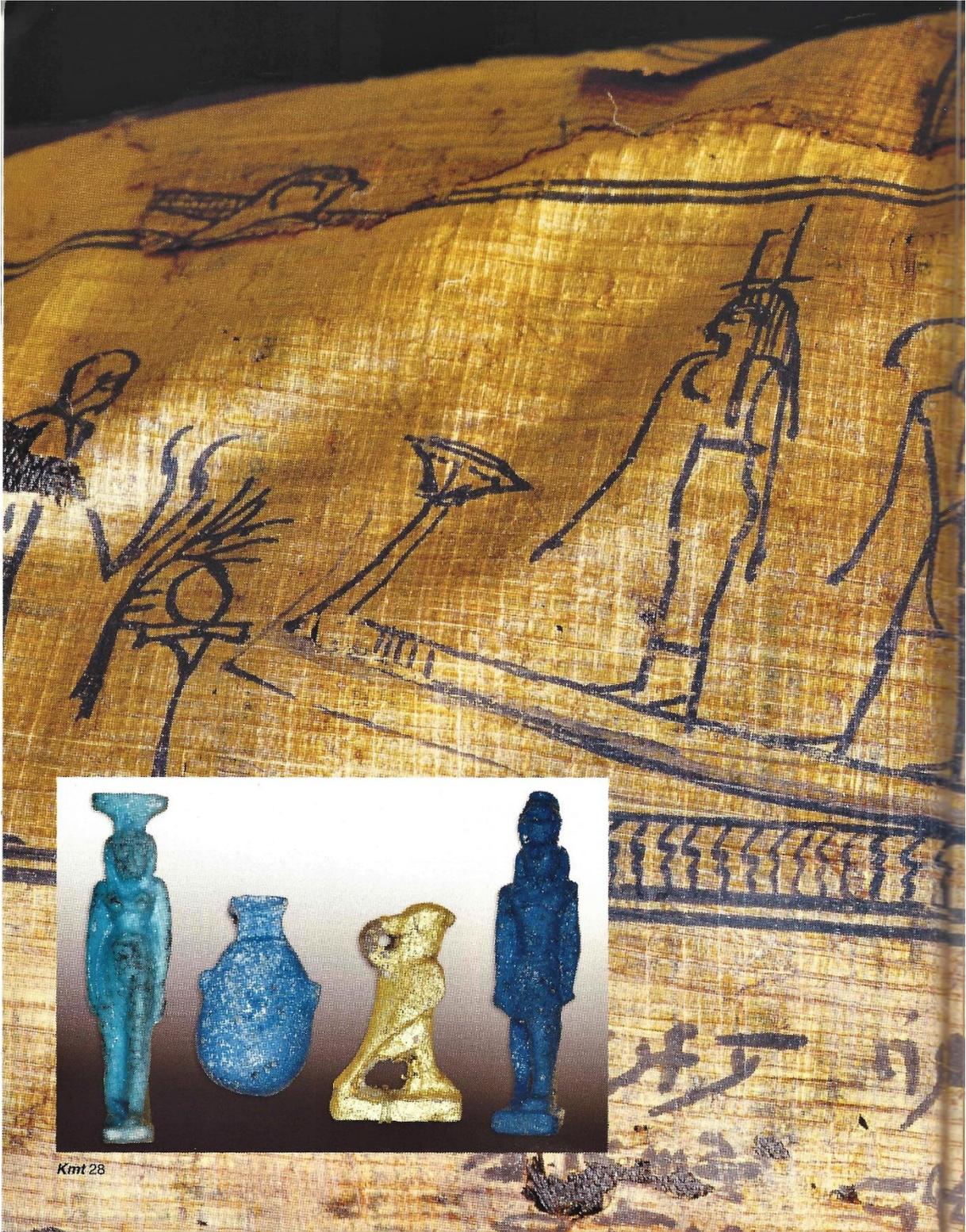
Right, opposite, Almost the entire body of Nesshu is covered with a funerary papyrus. It had been folded several times & placed within the bandages. Originally, it must have been more than 10 m. long. Courtesy of the Musée d'Yverdon et région.

Photo: pmimage

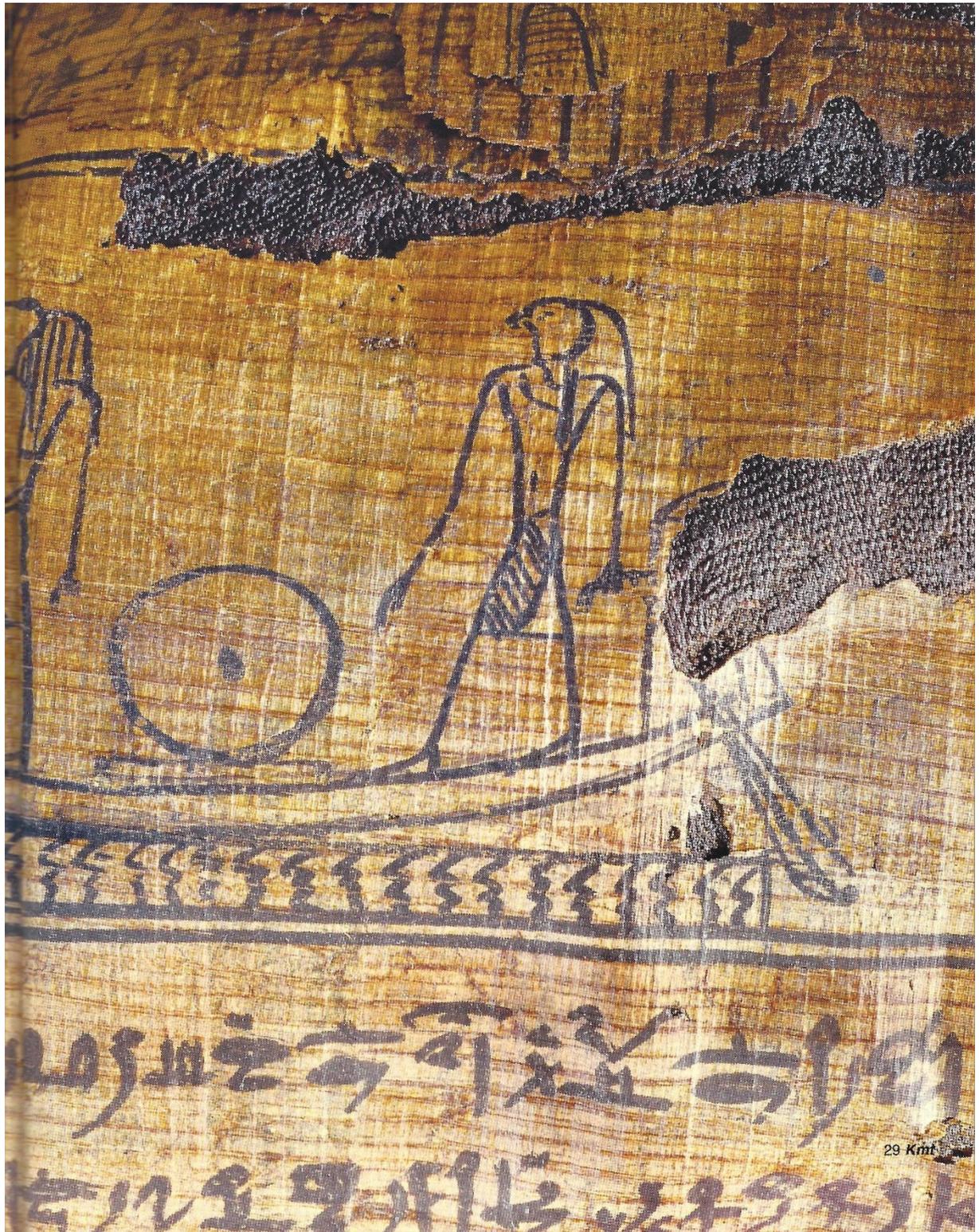
Right, The gilded face, wide-open eyes, full red lips & short bangs make the cartonnage mask of Nesshu a particularly striking item. A winged scarab holding the sun is depicted above the head symbolizing the morning sun & the eternal cycle of life. Courtesy of the Musée d'Yverdon et région. Photo: pmimage

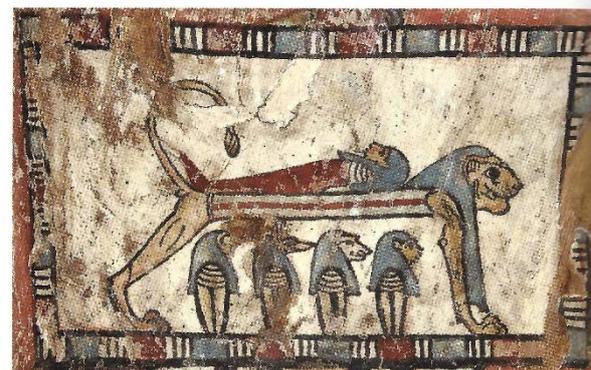
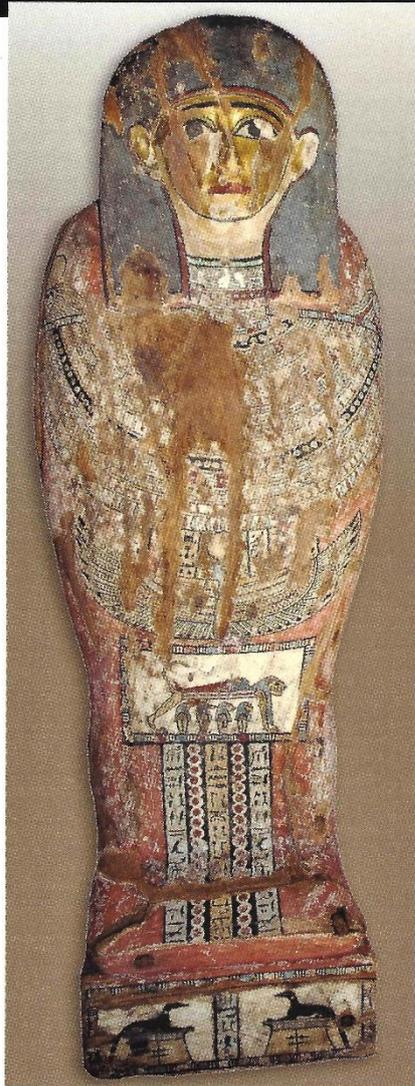
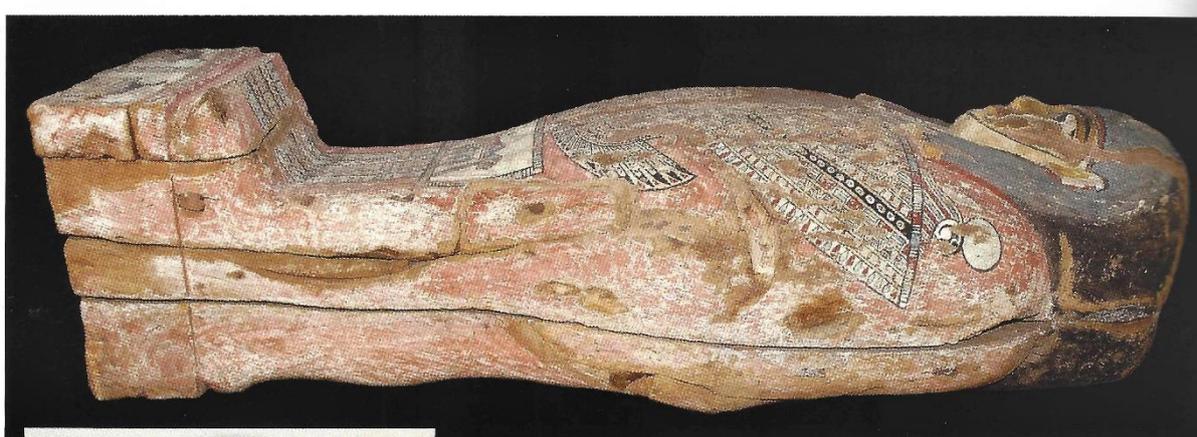
Overleaf, The funerary papyrus of Nesshu is painted with spells written in hieratic script, with vignettes from the Book of the Dead. The scene shows Nesshu standing at far left with raised arms, adoring the solar barque on its journey through the Underworld. Inset, Fourteen amulets had been placed inside the bandages of Nesshu for magical protection. Four of them were removed during an early examination. The two human-bodied deities & the heart amulet are made of blue-glazed faience; the falcon is gilded wood. All courtesy of the Musée d'Yverdon et région. Photos: pmimage





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Above, The massive wooden coffin housed in the Museum für Völkerkunde Burgdorf was bought at the Egyptian Museum Cairo in 1926 & is the largest Egyptian coffin in a Swiss museum. The mummy inside the coffin is in very poor condition (& therefore not exhibited).

Left, The lid has the typical form of the "belly" coffins, with an enlarged middle part. It is richly decorated & has a gilded face.

Right, The best-preserved scene on the lid shows the mummy lying on a lion-headed bed with four canopic jars placed below. All courtesy of the Museum für Völkerkunde Burgdorf.

Photos: pmimage

(text continues from p. 23) December 30, 1948, the mummy was cremated. Surely this procedure was well intentioned, but for the ancient Egyptians death by fire represented one of the most horrible ways of dying since destroying the body made it impossible to survive in the Afterlife.

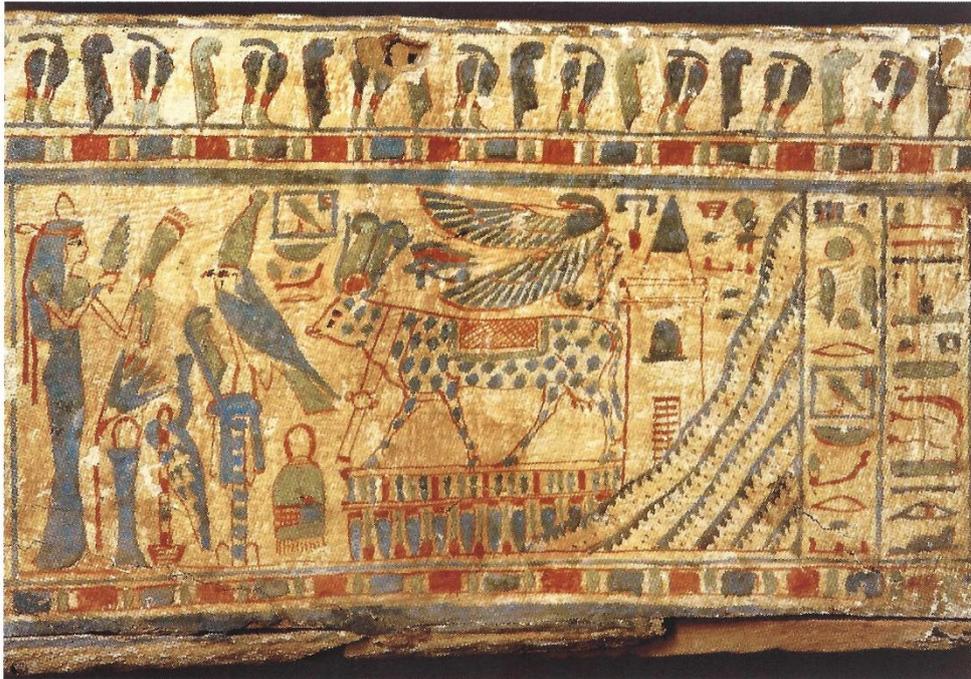
Even if, sadly, the mummy no longer exists, the inscriptions on the coffin yield some information about its owner, a lady named Gemtues. A detailed genealogy indicates that she belonged to the family of the priests of Montu and therefore to the ruling class of Waset in the late Twenty-fifth Dynasty. Several burials of the Montu clergy and their families were discovered at Deir el Bahari in 1858, the same year Gemtues and her coffin came to Vevey. Although the precise circumstances of these finds are uncertain, it can be assumed that Gemtues was buried within the enclosure of the Temple of Hatshepsut, which by that time had become a necropolis for important families of Waset.<sup>13</sup>

**A Coffin with a Certificate**

Another outstanding specimen studied in detail for the first time by the Swiss Coffin Project is the coffin of Nesshu in the museum of Yverdon, a town located in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. Together with its mummy, it was given to the town museum by Edwin Simond in 1896.<sup>14</sup> Born in Australia in 1856, Simond grew up in Alexandria. His family originally came from Yverdon, where Edwin com-

The coffins of Lady NesMut in the Musée d'ethnographie Neuchâtel were part of the four coffin sets presented to the Swiss Government by the Egyptian khedive in 1893. They are an excellent example of a stylish burial equipment in the Twenty-first Dynasty (1070-945 BC) consisting of two anthropoid wooden coffins & a mummy board (at right), which was placed directly over the deceased's body. The overcrowded surfaces are typical for the Theban coffins of this period. Courtesy of the Musée d'ethnographie Neuchâtel. Photo: pmlmage





One of the most common scenes on the sides of 21st Dynasty coffins shows the divine cow of Hathor stepping out of the Theban hills (depicted as wavy lines) & here, walking towards deceased Nesmut standing on the left wearing a long blue dress. Courtesy of the Musée d'ethnographie Neuchâtel.  
Photo: pmimage

pleted his studies. In 1879 he was back on the Nile, working for the "Land Mortgage Company of Egypt." As an agricultural engineer, he traveled all over the country and soon developed a passion for archaeology. He even took part in several excavations and is said to have left most of his finds to the Museum of Alexandria. In recognition of his merits, Khedive Taufiq awarded Edwin Simon the honorary title of Bey in 1887. As a further sign of esteem, the coffin of Nesshu was presented to Simond a few years later. He decided to donate this precious item to the Museum of Yverdon, hometown of his family. Coffin and mummy arrived there in July 1896 and were welcomed by the mayor with an official ceremony, during which the mummy was unwrapped in front of a crowd by three specially invited doctors. The arrival of an ancient Egyptian in Yverdon was a major event and made a deep impression on the local population. For weeks "this wondrous piece" was the main subject in the local newspapers. Up to this day, the coffin and mummy of Nesshu have remained very popular among the inhabitants of Yverdon.

Nesshu's burial equipage is remarkable in several ways. Consisting of the intact coffin, its mummy, the mummy mask and the cartonnage coverings — as well as a funerary papyrus and amulets for magical protection — this ensemble is the most complete such equipment from ancient Egypt in a Swiss museum. Furthermore, the site where it was found and the year of the discovery are known without any doubt. They are attested by a document, now in the Yverdon Museum's archive, written by Gaston Maspero, director-general of the Egyptian Antiquities Service and the

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Bulaq Museum. According to it the coffin and mummy were found in the necropolis of Akhmim in 1885, during excavations carried out under the direction of Maspero himself.

Name and titles of the coffin owner are mentioned several times on the lid. Nesshu worked as a *sem*-priest responsible for clothing the cult figure of Min, god of fertility. The names and titles of his parents are also known. His father, Nesmin was also a *sem*-priest. Nesshu's mother, Isetweret, is called "mistress of the house" and "musician of the god Min."

A very unusual feature of the burial equipment of Nesshu is his funerary papyrus, which was wrapped within the bandages and covered the mummy from chest to feet. Unfortunately, during the unwrapping of the mummy in 1896, a large portion of the papyrus was torn off,<sup>15</sup> so that today only the lowest layers remain in their original position on Nesshu's body. But, as can be seen on the broken edges, the papyrus originally consisted of thirteen layers covered by texts written in hieratic script, with vignettes from the *Book of the Dead*.

In addition to the funerary papyrus, fourteen small amulets had been placed within the linen bandages of Nesshu. Four of them were removed during an early examination of the body and ten still remain inside the wrappings. Among them is a finely executed scarab, a figure of the goddess Isis and a sistrum, a musical rattling instrument decorated with the head of the goddess Hathor.

#### **From the Cairo Museum to the Emmental**

The spectacular discovery of the Tomb of Tutankhamen by

Howard Carter in 1922 triggered a renewed enthusiasm for ancient Egypt all over the world. In Switzerland too, Egypt was very much *en vogue*. This huge interest caused Arnold Kordt (1880 – 1939), curator of the Museum für Völkerkunde in Burgdorf, a little town close to the Swiss capital Bern called “the gate to the Emmental,” to put together a small-but-fine Egyptian collection. Its highlight is a “belly” coffin featuring a flat bottom and a voluminous lid.<sup>16</sup> Measuring 210 cm in length and 70 cm in width, it is the biggest Egyptian coffin in a Swiss museum.

In 1926, Kordt contacted a colleague named Max Jäger living in Cairo and asked him to buy an Egyptian coffin, if possible with its mummy, and to send it to Switzerland. A few months later, a letter from Jäger arrived, in which he wrote that he had been able to buy a coffin with mummy at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo for 280 Swiss Franks and that the artifact would be sent shortly by ship from Alexandria to Marseille, and from there by train to its final destination. Jäger also mentioned that the transportation costs were higher than the amount he had paid for the coffin, since it had been almost impossible to find a captain willing to take a mummy on board his vessel.

According to the documents in the Museum’s archives, the coffin originally came from Upper Egypt. But detailed studies and the comparison with similar pieces led to the conclusion that it was found at el Gamhud in Middle Egypt. This necropolis on the west bank of the Nile opposite el Hibe was excavated by T. Smolenski and A. Kamal in 1907.<sup>17</sup> Nearly seventy massive coffins — some with gilded faces — were discovered. They provide a rare insight into burial customs of the upper social-class in a Middle Egyptian community during the Ptolemaic period. Shortly after their discovery, half of the coffins were distributed by the Egyptian Antiquities Service to the museums of Budapest, Cracow and Vienna.<sup>18</sup> The rest stayed at the Cairo Museum, where the coffin now in Burgdorf was bought in 1926. It is not known how many coffins from el Gamhud were sold off by the Museum.<sup>19</sup>

#### A Gift from Egypt to the Swiss Government

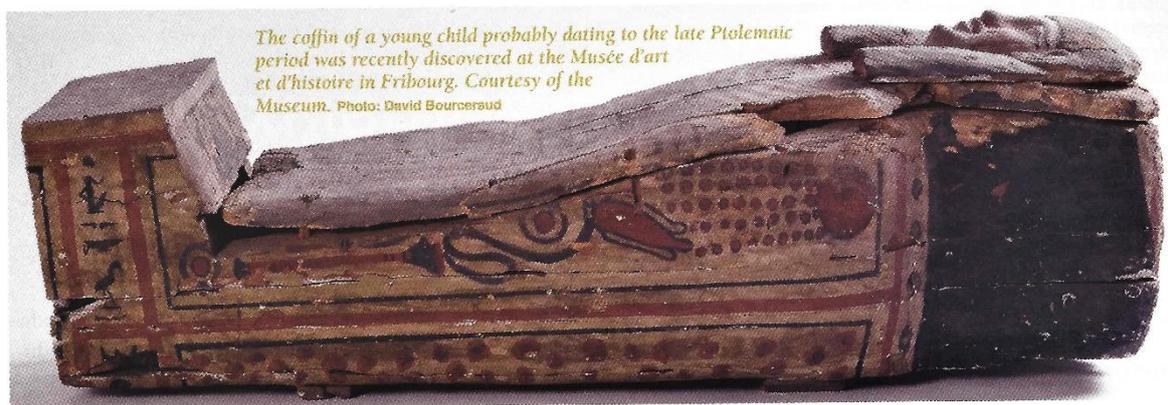
As mentioned above the majority of Egyptian coffins in Swiss museums were gifts from Swiss citizens living in

Egypt to their hometowns. But there is one notable exception. In 1893 the Egyptian khedive, Abbas Hilmy II, offered four coffin sets to the Swiss Federal Council. The coffins came from a cache-tomb in the northeastern corner of the enclosure of the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el Bahari, discovered in 1891 and subsequently called “Bab el Gusus.”<sup>20</sup> The undisturbed cache contained important burials of the high-priests of Amen and their families of the Twenty-first Dynasty (1070 – 945 BC). The amount of objects found was enormous. Among them were 153 yellow-varnished coffins (101 being double), densely painted in bright colors. The crowded conditions at the Giza Museum and the plethora of coffins led to the idea of presenting a number of them as gifts to friendly foreign countries, on the occasion of Abbas Hilmy’s coronation. It was in remembrance of the happy time spent at the Pensionnat de Lancy near Geneva, from 1885-1886, that the khedive decided to offer four coffin sets to Switzerland, as well. In a sign of appreciation, the Swiss government sent him a topographical atlas of the country, two Swiss army rifles and 1000 cartridges.

The four coffin-sets arrived in Switzerland in January 1894 and, while the event went quite unnoticed there, several foreign papers mentioned it, among them the *London Observer* with the following note: “*The Khedive has sent seven mummies to the Swiss Federal Council as a remembrance of his stay at Lancy near Geneva. There are seven members of the council so each of them will have one.*” This amusing announcement doesn’t correspond to the truth, however, since all the mummies from Bab el Gusus stayed in Cairo. According to Swiss federal tradition, the coffin sets were distributed to four museums in Appenzell, Bern, Geneva and Neuchâtel, where they all are on display today.<sup>21</sup>

#### A Recent Discovery

A few months ago, an unexpected discovery was made at the Musée d’art et d’histoire in Fribourg, a Medieval town lying on the border of the German- and French-speaking parts of Switzerland. An ancient Egyptian coffin was found in one of its storerooms.<sup>22</sup> My colleague and I had the privilege of being the first to take a close look at it, which is always a special and exciting moment. The small coffin belonged to a child who was two or three years old. It dates probably to



The coffin of a young child probably dating to the late Ptolemaic period was recently discovered at the Musée d’art et d’histoire in Fribourg. Courtesy of the Museum. Photo: David Bourceraud

the late Ptolemaic period. The colors are well preserved, especially on the coffin's sides, which both show an identical scene divided into two registers. In the lower one, sand grains are depicted symbolizing the Western Desert where the sun sets and — according to ancient Egyptian beliefs — the Underworld begins. The upper register shows a uraeus on a papyrus plant under a solar disk with rays, referring to the eternal journey of the sun god across the sky by day and through the Underworld by night. Further studies on the origin and inscriptions as well as on the acquisition of the piece are underway and will help to form a clearer picture of its biography.

Undoubtedly, the Egyptian coffins in Swiss museums represent a wonderful opportunity not only for the scientists but also for the visitors. Besides being among the most attractive of Egyptian antiquities, they allow us fascinating insights into the beliefs of one of the greatest civilizations ever known, whose culture is part of our common heritage.

#### Notes

1. "Egypt at Basel's Antikenmuseum," *Kmt* 22:1 (spring 2011), 28-42.
2. The medical examinations of the mummies belonging to the coffins were carried out by the Swiss Mummy Project, under the direction of Thomas Böni and Frank J. Rühli, and by the Zentrum Forensische Bildgebung und Virtopsy of the Institut für Rechtsmedizin of the University of Bern, directed by Michael Thali.
3. Alexandra Küffer and Renate Siegmann (with contributions by Thomas Böni and Frank J. Rühli), *Unter dem Schutz der Himmelsgöttin. Ägyptische Särge, Mumien und Masken in der Schweiz* (Zürich, 2007).
4. Ibid., 110-120; P. Müller and R. Siegmann, *Schepeneset – Die ägyptische Mumie der Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen* (St. Gallen, 1998).
5. It is typical for that time that only the mummy is mentioned, although the two coffins of Shepeniset were also part of the present given to Müller-Friedberg.
6. The coffins and mummy of Shepeniset are the only Egyptian artifacts at the Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen. The Abbey Library of St. Gall is the oldest library in Switzerland, and one of the earliest and most important monastic libraries in the world. Today it is well known for its extraordinary collection of Medieval scriptures.
7. Officially called Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.
8. The burial equipment of Paestenfi originally consisted of three coffins, but the rectangular outer coffin was destroyed during the Second World War. The two remaining coffins are on display at the Neues Museum on the Museumsinsel Berlin. R. Germer, H. Kischewitz and M. Lüning, *Berliner Mumiengeschichten* (Berlin, 2009), 39-56.
9. Besides the coffin the Egyptian collection of the Musée historique Vevey includes about seventy small objects bought by a local art-collector, David Doret (1821-1904), on a trip to Egypt in 1893. *Unter dem Schutz der Himmelsgöttin*, 132-136.
10. The unpublished diary is kept in the archives of the Dollfus family.
11. Translation from French by the author.
12. The present location of this coffin and its mummy are unknown.
13. Since different versions of these discoveries exist and the early excavators removed the burials unrecorded, it is difficult to say

with certainty where Gemtues was buried. According to information published by H. Brugsch in 1860, Maunier had made discoveries at Deir el Bahari during the season of 1857-58. This is further enhanced by the diary of Dollfus mentioning an excavation apparently led by Maunier in spring 1858. Still according to Brugsch, he had found nine tomb-shafts in the vicinity of the Hathor chapel. Possibly, the coffin of Gemtues comes from one of these. C. Sheikholeslami, "The burials of priests of Montu at Deir el-Bahari in the Theban Necropolis," N. Strudwick and J. H. Taylor, *The Theban necropolis: past, present and future* (London, 2003), 131-137.

14. The Musée d'Yverdon et région owns approximately 400 Egyptian objects. Half of them belonged to the collection of the Simond family and was given to the Museum by the descendants of Edwin Simond in 1993. "Egyptian Discoveries in Swiss Museums," *Ancient Heritage of Egypt*, Vol. 1/3 (Cairo 2008), 3-8; *Unter dem Schutz der Himmelsgöttin*, 160-166.

15. The broken-off pieces of the papyrus were reassembled by Swiss Egyptologist Gustave Jéquier in 1896 and put under thirty-four glass plates. They have not yet been published.

16. The Egyptian collection of Burgdorf contains about seventy objects. Most of them were bought between 1922 and 1936 in Cairo, Luxor and Berlin, by the curator Arnold Kordt. Besides the "belly coffin," the main pieces are a children's coffin with its mummy from Akhmim; a gilded mummy-mask from Hawara, discovered by H. Brugsch in 1895; and a stone relief dating to the Sixth Dynasty, found by J. de Morgan at Dahshur in 1894. *Unter dem Schutz der Himmelsgöttin*, 176-182.

17. Tadeusz Smolenski was the first Polish Egyptologist to lead an excavation in Egypt. Due to his poor health, he had to hand over the excavation in el Gamhud after only a few weeks to his colleague and then-curator at the Egyptian Museum Cairo, Ahmed Kamal, who published some of the seventy coffins in 1908 ("Fouilles à Gamhoud," *Annales du service des antiquités de l'Égypte* 9, 8-30). Due to a lung disease, Smolenski died in 1909, at the age of twenty-five.

18. "Antiquities from Gamhud," *Kmt* 9:1 (spring 1998), 27-30.

19. Apart from the pieces distributed to Budapest, Cracow and Vienna, and from the one in Burgdorf, three more coffins from el Gamhud are known in European museums (two in Romania and one in Germany).

20. *Unter dem Schutz der Himmelsgöttin*, 44-77; N. Reeves, "Mummies of the Priests of Amun: Bab el-Gasus," *Ancient Egypt. The Great Discoveries* (London, 2000), 81-82; A. Küffer and M. Renfer, *Das Sargensemble einer Noblen aus Theben* (Bern, 1996), 16-28; J. Lipinska, "Bab el Gusus: Cache-tomb of the Priests and Priestesses of Amen," *Kmt* 4:4 (winter 1993-94), 49-59.

21. These are the Museum Appenzell, the Historisches Museum Bern, the Musée d'art et d'histoire Geneva and the Musée d'ethnographie Neuchâtel.

22. The newly found coffin is the only Egyptian object of the Museum so far. A publication is in preparation.

**About the Author** Alexandra Küffer is an Egyptologist and co-director of the Museum für Völkerkunde Burgdorf (Switzerland). Together with Egyptologist Renate Siegmann, she initiated the Swiss Coffin Project in 2004, focusing on previously unpublished coffins, mummy coverings and masks from Swiss museums. She has been working on several exhibitions on ancient Egypt and was curator of the recent exhibition "Spellbound by Egypt" in St. Gallen (Switzerland).