



Swiss Coffin Project

New publication project on Egyptian coffin equipment in Swiss museums

Project description

The «Swiss Coffin Project» is an independent research project founded in 2004 with the aim of comprehensively documenting, studying and publishing ancient Egyptian coffin equipment in Swiss museums in order to make them accessible to a broad public as well as to specialists. In 2007, the volume «Unter dem Schutz der Himmelsgöttin» (Under the protection of the sky goddess) appeared, presenting a selection of coffins (with their corresponding mummies) and masks from sixteen Swiss museums. In the following years, several articles on the «Swiss Coffin Project» were published in Swiss and foreign scientific papers. Meanwhile, thirty museums are participating in the project, so that an expanded and updated new edition of the above-mentioned volume is planned. This will be carried out under the direction of the «Swiss Coffin Project» by a team of Egyptologists in interdisciplinary cooperation with other specialists. The publication is scheduled to appear in 2024. It will be written in German and include the following contents:

- Comprehensive description of the objects and of their cultural-historical background
- Discussion of the find context, the provenance and the acquisition history (as far as possible)
- Outline drawings of all representations
- Translations of all inscriptions and copies of the hieroglyphs with their transcription
- Detailed photographic documentation
- Outline of the collection history of the museums involved
- Special contributions on topics relevant to ancient Egyptian coffin equipment in general
- Abstracts of all articles in German, French, Italian and English as well as Arabic (if possible)

Content and publication form of the new edition

In addition to intact coffins and mummy masks, the new edition will also feature mummy coverings (bead-nets/cartonnages/shrouds) as well as fragments of coffins, masks and mummy coverings. However, papyri, mummy bandages and mummy portraits that are not related to a specific coffin equipment or mummy are not to be included.

The publication is conceived as a scientific cross-media publication combining print and online. In the print edition, the objects will be presented in a compact version available as «print on demand». Each item will be provided with a QR-code that allows access to a microsite of the website www.swiss-coffin-project.ch containing the entire and detailed documentation of the object in question.

Team

The Egyptological study of the objects is carried out by a team of Egyptologists with broad expertise in the field of funerary culture and coffin research:

- Manuela Gander, collaborator Museumsverband des Landes Brandenburg e.V., freelance collaborator Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Main research focus: Materiality and texture of objects, ancient Egyptian art and culture of the New Kingdom, Late Period and Roman mummy masks.
- Alexandra Küffer, research assistant Institut für Evolutionäre Medizin der Universität Zürich, co-founder and head «Swiss Coffin Project». Main research focus: Coffin equipment in Swiss museums, coffin iconography, provenance research, documentation of acquisition histories.
- Marc Loth, freelance collaborator Staatliche Museen zu Berlin and Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden. Main research focus: Funerary culture of Egypt in the 1st millennium BC, Egyptian reception and perception in the 19th century.
- Renate Siegmann, founding member and long-time president Ägyptologie-Forum Zürich, co-founder «Swiss Coffin Project». Main research focus: Coffin equipment in Swiss museums, provenance research.
- Katharina Stövesand, editorial assistant Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Kairo. Main research focus: Late Period coffins, visual culture of Egypt, archaeology of the Fayum and Middle Egypt, Memphite necropolis.

The outline and hieroglyphic drawings are realised by the Egyptologist and artist Daniela Rutica. Her artistic work focuses on (wall) paintings, stage sets and reconstructions based on ancient Egyptian motifs.

If the objects to be included in the publication are not photographically recorded (or if the museum doesn't employ a photographer), the photographic documentation will be produced by Maja Schwarzenbach and Peter Ekel. The two photographers have been working with the «Swiss Coffin Project» since its beginning and took the majority of the pictures for the 2007 publication «Unter dem Schutz der Himmelsgöttin». In addition to documenting Egyptian collections in Switzerland, their work focuses on desert photography as well as racing and car studio photography.

Interdisciplinary cooperation

If additional examinations (such as pigment analyses, C-14 dating or CT-scans) prove useful, they will be carried out in collaboration with the respective specialist institutions.

Funding

The «Swiss Coffin Project» is privately financed. Several benefactors have been supporting the project since 2020, thus enabling the research work for the new publication. All scientific work carried out by the above-mentioned Egyptologists, as well as the making of the outline drawings and photographic documentation, will be paid for by the «Swiss Coffin Project» within its means. However, the funding of additional examinations (such as pigment analyses, C-14 dating or CT-scans) cannot be provided.

Use of the examination and research results

The results of the studies carried out by the team of the «Swiss Coffin Project» and the documentations produced within the framework of the new edition of the publication «Unter dem Schutz der Himmelsgöttin» will be published by the «Swiss Coffin Project» with source references in the new edition (print and online) as well as in scientific papers, and will be made freely available to the respective museums with reference to source.

List of participating museums

- Appenzell, Museum Appenzell
- Basel, Antikenmuseum
- Bern, Historisches Museum
- Burgdorf, Ethnologische Sammlung Museum Schloss Burgdorf
- Champagne, Musée de Champagne (Bâtiment scolaire)
- Chur, Rätisches Museum
- Fribourg, Musée d'art et d'histoire
- Fribourg, Bibel + Orient Museum
- Genève, Musée d'art et d'histoire
- Genève, Musée Barbier-Mueller
- Lausanne, Musée cantonal d'archéologie et d'histoire
- Lausanne, Fondation Jacques-Edouard Berger (formerly Musée de design et d'arts appliqués contemporains MUDAC)
- Lenzburg, Museum Aargau
- Môtiers, Musée régional du Val-de-Travers
- Neuchâtel, Musée d'ethnographie
- Schaffhausen, Museum zu Allerheiligen
- Schleithem, Gemeindeverwaltung
- Schönenwerd, Bally Shoe-Museum
- Solothurn, Kunstmuseum
- St. Gallen, Historisches & Völkerkundemuseum
- St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek
- Vevey, Musée historique

- Winterthur, Münzkabinett & Antikensammlung
- Winterthur, Stiftung für Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte
- Yverdon-les-Bains, Musée d'Yverdon et région
- Zürich, Archäologisches Institut der Universität
- Zürich, KULTURAMA – Museum des Menschen
- Zürich, Museum Rietberg



c/o KULTURAMA
Museum des Menschen
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