

## Lives and afterlives of Ancient Egyptian coffins

### Current research work of the Swiss Coffin Project

Almost every canton of Switzerland has at least one museum owning Egyptian artefacts. There are over 30'000 objects housed in more than forty museums throughout the entire country. Although many collections include coffins, the majority of these items is largely unknown. That is why the Swiss Coffin Project was initiated in 2004 as an independent, privately funded research project with the objective of making Egyptian burial equipment in Swiss museums accessible to a wider public as well as to specialists.

In 2007, the volume «Unter dem Schutz der Himmelsgöttin» was published, presenting a selection of coffins (with their mummies) and mummy masks from sixteen Swiss public collections. The research work was continued in the following years; meanwhile, thirty museums are involved in the project, so that an expanded and updated edition of the above-mentioned volume is planned. In addition to intact coffins and mummy masks, this new edition will also feature coffin fragments as well as mummy coverings (bead-nets/cartonnages/shrouds) and portraits. The studied material dates from the Middle Kingdom to the Roman Period.

The publication, scheduled to appear in 2024, is conceived as a scientific cross-media publication combining print and online resources. While the objects will be presented in a concise version in print, each item will be provided with a QR-code that allows access to its entire documentation. A special focus will be placed on the provenances and the acquisition histories.

The talk will give a summary of the Swiss Coffin Project addressing its objectives and approach as well as the current state of research. It will also present the preliminary results of the studies on some little-known and particularly interesting pieces.

Key words: coffins, mummies, museology, documentation, Switzerland