

The Case of the Ka Nefer Nefer Mummy Mask



Excavation at Saqqara, Egypt—20 miles south of Cairo. Above: Step Pyramid of Djoser (27th c. BCE.); Right: new excavation site just east of it. 1951. Headed by **Muhammad Zakariya Ghunaym**, a native-born Egyptian archeologist, and newly appointed Chief inspector of Antiquities.



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Mohammed Zakaria Goneim

THE BURIED PYRAMID

M. Zakaria Goneim, M.A.

*Chief Inspector of Antiquities
Sagqara, Egypt*



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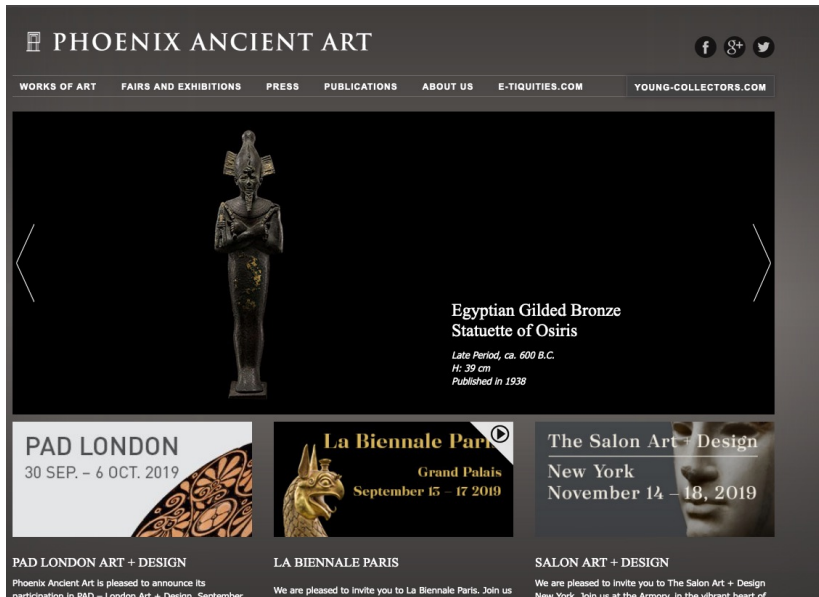
22. "Mat" burial of Libyan lady, Ka-Nefer-Nefer ("The twice beautiful Ka")
with her ornaments in position

A death mask was found covering an unummified body. The shabtis bear her full name, Ka Nefer Nefer, and the amulets are inscribed for Neferu. This hieratic scrawl on the hand on the mask itself was inscribed for her.

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Now You See It, Now You Don't: A Hieratic Scrawl on the Ka Nefer Nefer Mask
Posted on August 7, 2012 by KM Johnston

I recently found this picture from a 1952 article in the Illustrated London News. There's a two page spread on the discovery of the Tomb of Sekhemkhet by M. Zakaria Goneim, and a picture of one of my favorite funerary ensembles, that of Lady Ka Nefer Nefer!



And then it disappears from public view until 1997, when it was purchased by Phoenix Ancient Art and sold to St Louis Art Museum.



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Mummy Mask of the Lady Ka-nefer-nefer

Egyptian

New Kingdom
(1550–1070 BC)

Dynasty 19
(1295–1186 BC)

plaster, linen, resin, glass, wood, gold, and pigment

21 1/16 x 14 9/16 x 9 3/4 in. (53.5 x 37 x 24.7 cm)

Friends Fund and funds given by Mr. and Mrs. Christian B. Peper, Mrs. Drew Philpott, the Longmire Fund of the Saint Louis Community Foundation, The Arthur and Helen Baer Charitable Foundation, an anonymous donor, Gary Wolff, Mrs. Marjorie M. Getty, by exchange, Florence Heiman in memory of her husband, Theodore Heiman, Ellen D. Thompson, by exchange, Dr. and Mrs. G. R. Hansen, Sid Goldstein in memory of Donna and Earl Jacobs, Friends Fund, by exchange, and Museum Purchase

Accession Number: 19:1998

On View, Gallery 130

Place of origin: Memphis, Saqqara, Egypt

The mask had been unaccounted for since 1952. When conservationists studied the mask in preparation of SLAM's purchase they noted that Nefer's name had been removed (sloppily).

Zahi Hawass, Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, Egypt wrote SLAM's director in 2006 claiming the mask was stolen and asking for it to be returned.

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Mummy Mask of the Lady Ka-nefer-nefer



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TWO CONFLICTING VERSIONS OF ITS PROVENANCE

Egyptian government's version:

1952, mask was found, placed in Saqarra storage

1959, mask was sent to Cairo for possible exhibition in Tokyo

1962, mask was returned to Saqarra

1966, mask was sent to Egyptian Antiquities Organization Restoration Lab

1973, mask was declared missing

SLAM's version:

1952, mask was found, and given to Goneim as a gift

Late 1950s, Goneim sold it to an Antiquities dealer in Brussels

Early 60s, purchased by Kaloterna collection and then bought by "an anonymous Swiss collector"

1997, sold to Phoenix Ancient Arts

1998, sold to SLAM