

News & Comments

'Pregnant' Mummy Case Reveals Hidden Twists

Yawei Song

Worldwide researchers and scientists continue to study ancient Egyptian life. It seems like a new study about an artifact, or a mummy is discovered every now and then.

The Warsaw Museum's "Pregnant Mummy", known as the "Pregnant Mummy", has been subject to a recent study by Polish scientists.

Scientists have discovered that the mysterious mummy of an ancient Egypt woman, who may have been pregnant, probably also suffered from cancer. It is unclear whether the tumor behind the mummy's left eye was cancerous due to deformities in its skull.

An unusual mummy has been discovered in the ancient Egyptian city of Thebes (modern-day Luxor). She has been dubbed the "Mysterious Lady." It dates to the first century BCE but was found sealed in a priest's sarcophagus.

As a result of CT scans of the Mysterious Lady, researchers published a study in April 2021 claiming that she was the world's first known pregnant mummy. Around the 28th week of pregnancy, the team estimated that the woman had died.

Several years later, a Polish team reported how the fetus had been pickled inside the mummy like an egg. Some experts have suggested, however, that the fossilized fetus may actually be a warped embalming pack that replaced removals of organs during mummification, rather than a pregnant mummy.

Research from the Warsaw Mummy Project suggests that the Mysterious Lady had nasopharyngeal cancer, which affects the mouth, nasal cavity, and trachea.

There has been no peer-review or chemical testing of the new claims based on deformities in the mummy's skull.

During a recent 3D reconstruction of the Mysterious Lady's skull, a 0.27-inch (7 millimeters) hole was revealed behind the left eye socket, leading the researchers to suspect cancer.

In this unusual space, an archaeologist and anthropologist at the Warsaw Mummy Project speculates that a tumor or lesion grew there and caused the bone to separate from the rest of the socket.

The hole may also be the result of a cyst or cribra orbitalia, a condition resulting from anemia or an iron



deficiency (common among pregnant women), which changes the surface of eye sockets. Cancer, however, is most likely to cause the condition due to additional small deformities in the nasal cavity, the jaw, and the sinuses.

A skull this old wouldn't normally be able to reveal exactly what caused such deformities. Despite that, soft tissue still adheres to the bones of the Mysterious Lady due to her well-preserved state.

KEYWORDS

Ancient egypt, study, egyptologists, egyptian artifacts, warsaw museum, pregnant egyptian mummy, polish researchers, false pregnancy, egyptian embalming methods, warsaw mummy project

