



Mummy explanation

The museum houses twenty complete human mummies from ancient Egypt and around the same number of coffins. This example dates to about 750 BC and comes from ancient Thebes, what is now modern Luxor. This is the coffin of a lady. We can tell she is a lady because she has an indication of hair, coming out from under a vulture wig. And vulture wigs in ancient Egypt were a symbol of the goddess Mut and were only ever really worn by women.

The hieroglyphs on the coffin are quite true, they've been painted quite quickly, but they give the name of her, the lady buried inside. Her name was Tah-ath. The paintings on the coffin illustrate the journey to an existence in the afterlife, the ancient Egyptians believed in. So the deceased lady, is brought by the god Thoth, who has an ibis bird head, to a series of other gods who will judge this lady Tah-ath. If she's judged to have had a good life, if her heart balances on a set of scales against the feather of truth, then she will be allowed into the Kingdom of Osiris, the God of the dead. If the heart was heavier than the feather of truth then the deceased suffered the second death. And the heart was devoured by a monster called Ammit, who was part crocodile part hippo, part lion.