

MEDICAL EXAMINER'S REPORT ON THE MUMMY HARWA

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A person's sins of dieting, or other physical neglect and abuse, in addition to causing whispered comments among contemporaries due to the effects upon his appearance and disposition, may find him out again through modern medical science thousands of years after he is dead, and expose him to public scorn as the representative of a dissolute age or race.

In the case of Harwa, the 2,800-year-old Egyptian mummy in Field Museum's new fluoroscopic exhibit in Hall J, a thorough diagnosis of his condition was made by a highly qualified roentgenologist just prior to the mummy's installation at the Museum. Harwa obtained an almost 100 per cent clean bill of health.

For the examination a complete series of x-ray films of all parts of the mummy, from various angles, was made through the courtesy of the University of Chicago's medical department. In the reading of these films, it was found that Harwa's twelfth left rib is missing, opening the question as to whether it may have been removed by the embalmer, or was congenitally absent. Aside from this, no indications of any serious physical shortcomings were observed by the examiner.

Evidences of rheumatism were absent. This is unusual among adult Egyptians, as their daily life was so intimately bound up with the River Nile. Irrigation, fishing, and boating all called for frequent contact with the water, and contrary to the general impression the climate of Egypt is often disagreeably cold. There is a possible indication that Harwa may have had an abscess in one tooth. The average Egyptian had excellent teeth, dental trouble being largely confined to the upper classes with their pampered diets. The x-ray examination confirms the conclusions of archaeologists that the mummy is that of a male, and that Harwa was between 25 and 40 years of age at the time of his death.

The study by a roentgenologist, and the exhibit of Harwa at Field Museum, both using the most modern of medical aids, make a link with the beginnings of medical science. Doctors were a recognized part of the ancient civilizations of the Near East. By 2000 B.C. surgical practices were covered by law. A section of the Code of Hammurabi, King of Babylon, states: "If a physician make a deep incision upon a man [perform a major operation] with his bronze lancet and save the man's life; or if he operate on the eye socket of a man and save that man's eye, he shall receive ten shekels of silver." However, the law continues, if the operation were unsuccessful and the patient should die or lose his eye,

the physician's hand would be cut off. Rates varied with the social scale, just as some physicians today base their charge on the patient's ability to pay. The common man was charged only five shekels for a ten-shekel treatment, and the slave but two shekels.

From Egypt, at about the same period, come surgical texts dealing with examination, diagnosis, and treatment. Splints were employed for broken bones, and in severe cases the patient's body was immobilized in the correct position by casts of mud. The custom of mummification provided aids for the skill of the surgeon. The embalmers' fine linen wrappings made excellent roller bandages, and wounds were drawn together with adhesive tape. The use of stitching to close large incisions was used on the dead, and may have been employed on the living. Later, in the third century B.C., a great medical school developed in Alexandria. From this Egyptian school came two great Greek physicians: Herophilus, father of anatomy, and Erasistratos, father of physiology.

IRISH POTATOES ARE NOT IRISH

The Irish potato is not only not Irish, but is not the plant to which the name "potato" was first applied. Furthermore, although it is an American vegetable due to its South American origin, it reached North America only by a circuitous route, being carried here by Scotch-Irish immigrants in 1719, after it had been grown commonly in Ireland for about fifty years.

The word "potato" is derived from *batata*, indigenous American name for the sweet potato, a member of the morning glory family. The Irish potato is a member of the nightshade family. This latter includes other common edible plants—the tomato and eggplant—and is known also for tobacco, and for several deadly poisonous species of plants such as belladonna and bittersweet. These latter were used in the practices of sorcery and witchcraft a few centuries ago. Because of the so-called Irish potato's relationship to them, there long existed in Europe a strong prejudice and fear which acted against its use as a food. The word *batata* is still applied to sweet potatoes in the Latin-American countries.

At the present time it is generally accepted that the earliest known source of the Irish potato was Chiloe, an island off the coast of Chile. The Spaniards carried it to Europe, about 1580. Numerous relatives of our cultivated potato are cultivated also in the Andes, and many others grow wild.

The potato was perhaps the greatest gift of the New World to the Old. It has been estimated that the value of one year's potato crop of the whole world is greater than that of all the gold and silver taken to Spain from Mexico and Peru.

FOUR SUNDAY LECTURES IN MAY ON "PARADE OF THE RACES"

With the presentation in May of "The Parade of the Races," which has proved to be one of his most popular subjects, Mr. Paul G. Dallwig, the Layman Lecturer of

Field Museum, will close his current season of Sunday afternoon lectures. This subject will be presented on each of the four Sundays of the month (May 4, 11, 18, and 25).

To illustrate his talk, Mr. Dallwig will conduct his audience among the 101 bronzes of the Living Races of Mankind by Malvina Hoffman, exhibited in Chauncey Keep Memorial Hall. The lecture will outline the basic physical characteristics that differentiate the races of mankind. Into this data Mr. Dallwig will interweave human interest



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Blackfoot Indian
by Malvina Hoffman

stories which endow the various bronzes with life, and give his audiences a more intimate acquaintance with the customs of various peoples.

Lecture audiences assemble promptly at 2 P.M. Because the number that can be conducted among the exhibits under comfortable circumstances on a lecture of this type is limited, it is necessary to make reservations for all Sunday lectures well in advance. This may be done by mail or telephone (WABash 9410). Children cannot be accommodated. The lectures last until 4:30 P.M. with a half-hour intermission midway. During this interval those who desire to smoke or obtain refreshments may do so in the Cafeteria, where special tables are reserved for the group.

Mr. Dallwig will resume his Sunday afternoon lectures in November. He plans to present some entirely new subjects during the next season of seven months, reservations for which will open in October.

Museum Hours Extended for Summer Period

Summer visiting hours, 9 A.M. to 6 P.M. daily, including Sundays and holidays, will go into effect at Field Museum on May 1, and continue throughout the period up to and including September 1 (Labor Day).



1941. "Blackfoot Indian by Malvina Hoffman." *Field Museum news* 12(5), 2-2.

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