

NPTS - Museum, Bussing

# They Pamper Mummy a Lot

If the soul of Egyptian priestess Iset-Ha is looking for its mummy, it can be found in the current exhibit of the Geology Museum in Rutgers Geology Hall.

And if she happens to find it, geologists here hope her woman's vanity will be pleased with all the attention it is getting.

The mummy, dating from the Ptolemaic period, 320-30 B.C., can be seen, along with other

historical objects in the museum, on weekdays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the building on the College Avenue Campus.

And the ancient relic, actually the earthly remains of the priestess, promises to be the principal attraction of the museum's second open house in early February. Dr. Richard K. Olsson, museum director, said the museum has been redecor-

ated and physically improved since some 2,000 persons attended the first open house there early this year.

While several thousand years is a geological wink of the eye, Dr. Olsson noted the geology faculty is quite excited and pleased with the mummy, which is on loan from the New Brunswick Theological Seminary.

Dr. John W. Beardslee II,

professor of church history at the seminary, said that the mummy was presented to the seminary by the late John G. Lansing, sometime in the 1890s. Lansing, a professor of Old Testament and student of Egyptology, acquired the mummy on a trip to Egypt.

Explanatory material accompanying the mummy on its short trip from the seminary to the geology museum explained that in ancient Egypt:

"People were embalmed to save their souls for resurrection. At death the souls left them and departed for Hades where for a time they fought various enemies of the netherworld.

"There the soul had to undergo a trial; a trial before the great Osiris himself. If he approved of the soul of the indi-

vidual, it was sent back to earth to hunt for its mummy. The soul was termed the "ba" (animating soul) which had its seat in the heart or abdomen.

"It loved its body and was subject to the desire for food, drink, etc.; hence its return was not wholly satisfactory unless the body was somehow preserved. Often to facilitate easy passage to the mummy, an air duct existed between the tomb and the surface of the ground."

The inscription on the coffin in this particular case is addressed to Osiris, to the composite diety, Ptah-Sokar-Osiris, to Isis the Divine Mother, and to Anubis.

It may be translated free as: "May Osiris, the Chief of the Westerners (the dead), the great god, lord of Abydos, an Ptah-Sokar-Osiris the great god who is in the tomb, and Isis the great, the Divine Mother who is in Sethat, and Anubis Lord of Tazeser, Anubis who is in the divine hall, may they give a royal mortuary offering for the Osiris (owner of the coffin) Iset-Ha (the name of the owner of the coffin) daughter of Pet-Harpocrates and of the Lady of the House Na'set."

The rank of this particular lady is indicated by a picture of an asp, with the asp's head wearing the double crown of Egypt. The outside of the case is decorated with a gilt representation of the head of the dead priestess. But since Egyptian portraiture was highly stylized and impersonal the painted face is not necessarily her likeness.