

## Repacking TARL Mummies: February – April 2015

Student Project -Truc Nguyen: The goal of this project is to bring TARL's largest set of 'environmentally preserved' mummified remains at TARL up to best curation practice standards. Mummies are inherently fragile and extremely susceptible to physical, chemical and climatological stressors in their environment. The goal is to re-house this mummy to best practice, provide the remains the dignity of an enclosed curation environment and to use the proposed boxing technique to test this methodology of mummy curation for other mummified sets of remains in the collection. The student will be expected to thoroughly document all aspects of the project and provide regularly scheduled updates about stages of project development and completion.

"The Artifact Lab Blog: Conserving Egyptian Mummies" of the Penn Museum is a great resource for researching how other similar institutions are housing, conserving and providing researcher access to these fragile human remains. It is strongly recommended that the student familiarize themselves with the information available here to learn relevant background information pertinent to this project.

[http://www.penn.museum/sites/artifactlab/?utm\\_source=artifactlab&utm\\_medium=unknown&utm\\_campaign=redirect](http://www.penn.museum/sites/artifactlab/?utm_source=artifactlab&utm_medium=unknown&utm_campaign=redirect)

### Constructing the Container

1) outer box – create a drop-front box for housing the inner sled containing the mummy; creating a drop-front box for the inner sled means that the mummy can be slid out of the box if needed as opposed to lifted and suspended for removal and access. Every movement is a risk to the integrity of the mummy. As such every effort will be made to mitigate these risks by designing a 'multi-envelope' housing container that will provide stability, security and privacy intended to evidence our respect for the fact that these are human remains. This manner of housing will allow the student to exercise the creativity often necessary to meet the housing needs of individual objects and artifacts while providing for all the needs of an inherently vulnerable organic object: human remains.

2) inner sled – 2-4" edged stiff platform (either coroplast or non-alkaline/unbuffered board) which holds in the pellet pillows: 2-4 handles attached to sled to allow the mummy to be slid in via the sled as opposed to directly lifting the mummy itself; inner sled may slide in and out using handles attached through grommet-reinforced holes. Always choose the least risky solution to the problem of accessing the mummy.

3) sled pillows – (lining the inner sled) will be polypropylene pellet & Tyvek 'pillows' of appropriate/necessary density to support the mummy while not allowing it to make contact with the sled bottom or the inner sled walls. Dense pillows will allow the inherent pressure points created by the mummy's flexed position (underside arm/shoulder & ilium) to be supported without trying to determine specific location of pressure points and cutting stiff foam to support the mummy. The pillows will also shift with the mummy if there should ever be any 'relaxing' of the mummified connective tissues as a result of changes in RH over time. The pellets are inert polypropylene plastic (no off gassing) which are

rounded and have no sharp edges. The pillow 'cases' will be made of archival Tyvek which can be either sewn or heat-sealed.

4) the mummy –The mummified individual selected is mostly intact and evidences significant amounts of past pest damage. We have acquired the custom-sized “burly box” constructed of archival board for the outer housing. The mummy will be re-housed, pending achievement of an appropriate housing design by our student Truc Nguyen, and then moved to a climate-controlled space where there is no evidence of swings in RH% over short or long-term periods.