



CLAP HANDS

These whirling dwarfs are an Egyptian mechanical toy almost 4,000 years old, now discovered in a tomb at Lisht. Like well-trained dancers, the little figures are executing the same precise step, and their upraised hands appear to be clapping vigorously to mark time. (Photograph courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.)

ARCHAEOLOGY

Dancing-Dwarf Mechanical Toy Found in Egyptian Tomb

A CLEVER mechanical toy almost 4,000 years old, and the mystery of two borrowed coffins, have been unearthed by the Egyptian Expedition of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Excavating near the royal cemetery at Lisht, the Egyptologists dug their way into a tomb containing the mummy of a young Egyptian girl named Hepy buried in a set of borrowed coffins, says the first report of the expedition, by Ambrose Lansing.

Admitting that the mystery of Hepy has not been solved yet, Mr. Lansing congratulates the expedition on the rare objects which the tomb has yielded.

Who Was the Girl?

The tentative solution is that the owner of the ancient tomb was buried before his monumental tomb was finished. And then, still before the structure was finished, vandals plundered his body and buried the girl Hepy—who was she?—in his coffins. The owner's name was blotted off the outside of the interior coffin, and Hepy's name painted on. But the plunderers did not bother to alter the lining of the coffin the same way, and there the original owner was proclaimed.

Gold ornaments worn by the girl around her waist, neck, arm and ankle were found badly scattered. These were no funerary adornments, but her actual

jewelry worn in life, as dents in the goldwork prove.

Four dolls are among objects found embedded in sticky clay and mud in a passage leading to the tomb. But the discovery which startled the Egyptologists was to find four figures of dancing dwarfs, a mechanical toy almost 4,000 years old and very cleverly made. When wound up with threads, the ivory dwarfs whirled briskly on spools set in holes in an ivory base.

There is an Egyptian inscription from the pyramid age telling of a small boy Pharaoh overjoyed by the gift of a "dwarf of the divine dances" brought by an expedition beyond the Upper Nile. The mechanical toy seems to portray the exact type of dwarf that delighted the child Pharaoh.

Mr. Lansing links the ivory dwarfs with pygmies of Central Africa in their physical traits, and says, "It is therefore quite possible that in these figures we have the first representation of the Central African pygmies, which until recently were considered an invention of classical writers."

Emotional Egyptians

The dancing men, with knees bent, and arms upraised as if to clap hands, have expressions of violent emotion on their faces. For Egyptians in art to wear anything but straight faces is so rare

as to be astonishing, Mr. Lansing points out. A king in Egyptian art seems to have the same emotions in battle as when at ease with the ladies of his harem. The dwarfs are pronounced unique in Egyptian art for their vigor and animation.

Whether the mechanical dwarfs belonged to the girl Hepy or to the man Se'n-Worset who owned the tomb, is part of the mystery that the Egyptologists have not fathomed.

The expedition completed fourteen years of excavation at Lisht, this season, and having investigated the royal cemetery and some outlying graves, will not resume work there.

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PHOTOGRAPHY

Medical Movie of Stomach Forerunner of Film Cartoon

MEDICAL science, in studying by photograph the rhythmic movements of the human stomach, used methods of animation closely akin to the present technique of the animated cartoons almost ten years before the pioneer adventures of Felix the Cat, Jerry on the Job and Krazy Kat.

How and why medicine "scooped" the motion picture industry in the field of animation was revealed by R. F. Mitchell and Dr. L. G. Cole in their report on "Historical Notes on X-ray Cinematograph" to the Society of Motion Pictures Engineers meeting. In 1910 physicians in Detroit viewed an animated film showing the form, shape and peristaltic wave-like motion of the stomach, Dr. Cole and Mr. Mitchell reported.

Scores of X-ray photographs were made of a stomach of the human body. Cut-outs were made of the outline of the stomach. These cutouts were then reversed so that the plain white cardboard background of the cutout was photographed instead of the picture of the cutout itself. The sequence of white backgrounds was then photographed onto a continuous film and shown in October, 1910.

This procedure of photographing the white cardboard cutouts of the stomach probably was the first attempt at animation, and, therefore, this particular film becomes of interest from an historical standpoint as it has already from a legal standpoint in that it antedated, by approximately a decade, the animation of Felix the Cat by Pat Sullivan, declared the speakers.

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