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Office: 404-727-4291 | Cell: 404-822-5019 | priyanka.sinha@emory.edu

OLDEST EGYPTIAN MUMMY AND THE PYRAMID AGE THIS FALL AT THE CARLOS MUSEUM

ATLANTA, GA (June 28, 2011)—Michael C. Carlos Museum will present *Life and Death in the Pyramid Age: The Emory Old Kingdom Mummy* from September 10 through December 11, 2011. Emory's Old Kingdom mummy, acquired from excavations at Abydos in Middle Egypt by Emory Theology Professor William A. Shelton in 1920, comes from the twilight of Egypt's Pyramid Age. More than 4,000 years old, it is the oldest Egyptian mummy in the Western Hemisphere.

Examinations on the Old Kingdom mummy at Emory Hospital and in the Carlos Museum's conservation lab reveal much about the little understood origins of mummification in Egypt. No other mummy of this early date has been investigated using modern scientific procedures such as CT-scanning and radiocarbon dating. Through approximately 120 objects *Life and Death in the Pyramid Age* will explore the social and political changes that marked the end of the Pyramid Age. The exhibition will shed light on ancient Egyptian rites and rituals regarding the afterlife by chronicling the development of the burial site of Abydos and the cult of Osiris, with a link to the current excavations where the Old Kingdom mummy was found nearly a century ago. The Carlos Museum's Curator of Egyptian, Nubian, and Near Eastern Art, Peter Lacovara says, "Emory University has had a unique and important relic of Egyptian history hidden away in a crate for many decades. This mummy, dating to the period just after the Great Pyramid and Sphinx were built, is the oldest Egyptian mummy in the Western Hemisphere. After more than two years of examination and conservation, the mummy will be shown to the public for the first time restored to its original appearance."

The Sacred Site of Abydos, Egypt

Dating to around 2300 BC, the mummy comes from Abydos and was buried towards the end of Egypt's Pyramid Age during the Sixth Dynasty, when wealth and power began to slip away from the king and his court to the provincial nobility. During this time provincial governors of Abydos began building their tombs on a promontory known as the Middle Cemetery. This overlooked a processional route that led into the desert to the tombs of the kings of the First Dynasty. The area became equated with the burial of Osiris, the god of the dead and mythical first king of Egypt. Lacovara has been part of the University of Michigan archaeological expedition exploring this site.

The Old Kingdom Mummy

Emory's Old Kingdom mummy was a young man when he died, somewhere in his late twenties. He was about five feet, two inches tall, an average height during his time. He shows no signs of having done manual labor, which is in keeping with his burial at Abydos; he most likely was a member of the social elite. The cause of death remains a mystery, no soft tissue was preserved within his bandages and his skeleton shows no sign of injury or illness.

New Museum hours: From September 10, 2011 the Museum will extend its weekend hours till 5:00 p.m. The Museum will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and from noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Regular weekday business hours from Tuesday through Friday are from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

About the Michael C. Carlos Museum

The Michael C. Carlos Museum of Emory University collects, preserves, exhibits, and interprets art and artifacts from antiquity to the present in order to provide unique opportunities for education and enrichment in the community, and to promote interdisciplinary teaching and research at Emory University. The Carlos Museum is one of the Southeast's premier museums with collections of ancient art from Greece, Rome, Egypt, Near East, Nubia, the Americas, Africa, and Asia, as well as a collection of works on paper from the Renaissance to the present.

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