

# ArchaeaTechnica

Art Conservation Services



## Carlos Museum Mummy Diary

**Day 2-** Before any treatment is started, we have to examine all of the objects thoroughly to formulate a treatment plan. Fortunately, I had already had an opportunity to briefly examine the objects soon after they were acquired by the Carlos Museum in 2018, when they were in offsite storage and to prepare preliminary condition reports and proposals. That speeded up our examination process here. In addition, the mummies had been taken for xrays and CT scans in February 2020, and an extremely thorough report was made by Jonathan Elias, Director of the Akhmim Mummy Studies Consortium. It is incredibly helpful to have such imaging done prior to a treatment as it can reveal areas of damage that are less visible in an examination and give us warning about sensitive areas on the mummies.

We started with the mummy of Padibastet, as a treatment proposal had not been previously prepared for him. The outer layers of the wrappings on his upper body had been significantly disturbed at some time long ago- possibly even by tomb robbers. The outer shroud had been removed and lost- only small traces remain stuck to the black coating. The outer wrapping layers had been slit open along the sides, from his shoulders to about the hip and those layers removed over his chest and again at the feet, exposing his toes and allowing some to become lost. A hole had been dug into the center of the wrappings over his heart- probably someone was looking for amulets or a heart scarab. The linen layers are so thick that there is still considerable padding over the body, despite the losses. The linen thickness, along with additional oils and resins (see below), probably accounts for his extremely heavy weight.



*Padibastet before treatment*



*Outer layers missing revealing inner wrappings and hole*

The ancient Egyptians had coated almost all of the linen bandages on Padibastet with some type of oil/resin mixture that has embrittled them severely- they break extremely easily; the remaining black coating material on the upper surface has cracked and there are many losses.

On the mummy of Taosiris, there are many losses and areas of weakness on the outer shroud. The edge linens at the chest and on the p.l. side are so sharp that they suggest that the shroud was cut off the head and on the sides with scissors or a knife; there are fragments of the shroud stuck to the head, but the rest is missing. The black coating on the wrappings below is covered with dust from the powdered linen of the shroud.



*Taosiris before treatment*

There is damage to the black coated wrappings over the feet. The black material has flaked off in many places; several layers of linen wrappings are torn and lost over the left side.



*Damage at the feet*

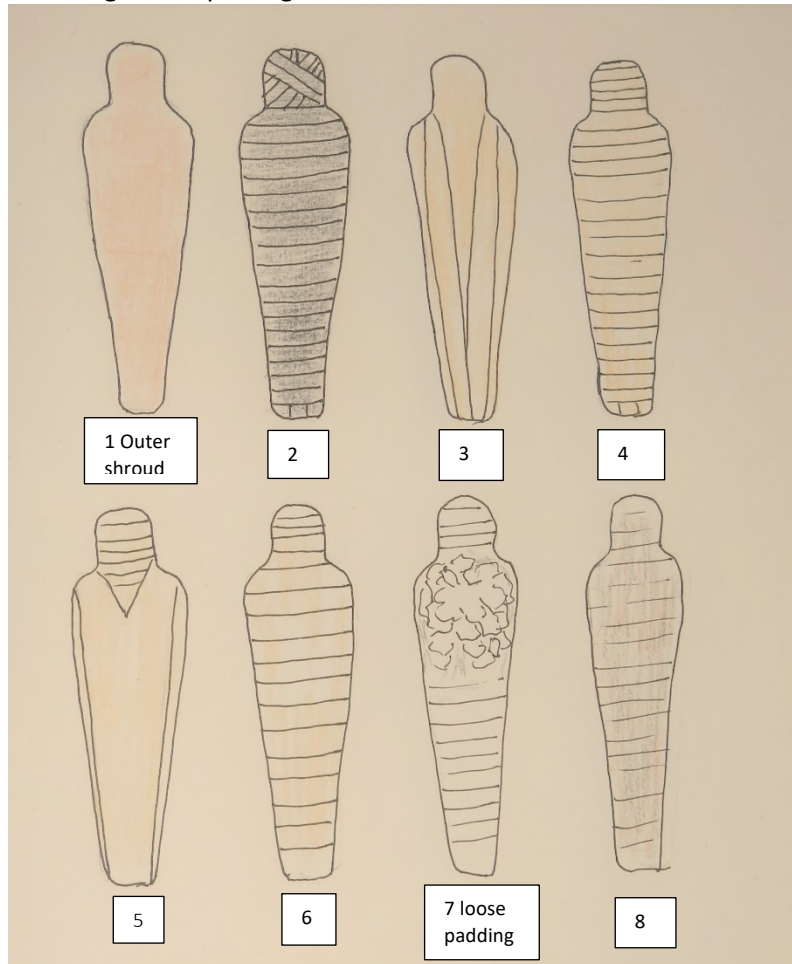
Fortunately, the linen fabric was not saturated with oils and resins like those of Padibastet, so they are still flexible and soft, after all these millenia.

I will discuss the cartonnage wrappings separately in tomorrow's diary entry.

Once the condition has been determined, I always examine the wrappings to determine the pattern and sequence of the layers. Below are the sketches of the wrapping layers of Padibastet as far as we could determine based on the remaining linens. It is easier to figure out his wrapping sequences because his



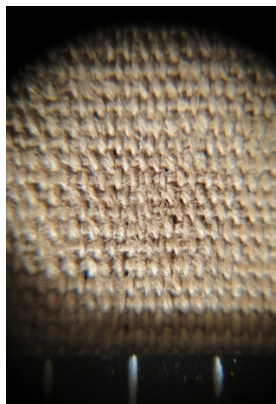
wrappings have been so disturbed. In the sketch below the outermost layer is on the left – a shroud that is nearly entirely missing now. The black-coated wrapping layer is next, then the layers that follow from left to right- like peeling an onion from the outside to the inside.



I examine the weaves types of the fabrics and do thread counts as there are many different fabrics used on any mummy. The technique of mummification changed over time and place in Egypt but there has been little documentation so I hope to contribute to a growing resource.



*Counting threads on Taosiris' shroud*



*the thread counter view*



*detail of the shroud weave pattern*

Tomorrow we will look at the cartonnage panels. Follow us on the mummy cam!