Transcript of an extract from interview with Miles Woodford 26th November 2024 relating to the X-ray images of the Egyptian Mummy

We had some amazing things to do. It began with the X-raying of Haenmetu, which was a mummy and this was actually arranged to begin with through Chris Butcher, one of the radiologists who knew someone within the conservation unit, which in those days was in The Close just behind in the big building just behind the museum, and the American student there had managed to get hold of this mummy from a private collection in Swindon, and it was part of her Masters.

Her instruction was to find out as much as she can, but don't destroy it. So X-ray was the obvious next step.

Fascinating, this mummy came in a full sarcophagus made of balsa, and it was decorated, which also told them, and eventually, us, a great deal about what's likely to be inside. There's a diagram of the sarcophagus, and it had, I think, three amphora underneath, which would have contained some of the organs, the brain of the individual. Now three meant that this was a really top quality mummification, because you can have from top quality, which would have cost you 70 yekels or whatever it was in, or five yekels for just a really quick job, you know? But that's how it is.

So we recognized that there was a really important and we thought it was going to be a whole person inside, partly because in previously, when they got the sarcophagus undone and got the mummy out of it, the feet had been damaged, and we had toe bones. So we recognized that at one end, at least, we've got a whole person. And we think it will be a whole person now, because you have got no idea otherwise, it could be anything in there could be a collection of cats all sorts, they would mummy. And then they would take it round to show how good they are, to try and sell their their processes to the to the Egyptian people anyway.

So we have this, and we, obviously, we were a very likely process to be able to handle the mummy without damaging it, just treat it as a spinal patient with an acute injury and very unstable. And you've got that. You've got exactly what you need. So on the Saturday, there was Jeremy Nettle, John Detain, who was my deputy by then, myself and at least two others came, and I think they were both from the spinal unit, because they were interested as well, plus the people from the conservation.

So we we get Haemetu up onto the X-ray table, and I said, well, what we're going to do first, we're just going to screen it. So we're going to turn the X-rays on as a constant beam, and just move it up and down and see what is actually in it. So we're all behind the screens, and we do this, and we just drive this thing up and down, and there wasn't a hair left bent, you know, dumb, wow, you've got this wonderful, wonderful mummy. And the first time ever that anybody in, say, 3000 years, has actually seen what's inside. It was just absolutely out of this world, you know?

And then we started doing the full radiography bit, head, neck, all the spine, abdomen. And we didn't do very much, except a general imaging of the lower limbs

so they just for the record. The arms were crossed, and I can't remember exactly which way round it is, but one hand will be clenched holding probably a bunch of corn or wheat stems, and the other hand would be open flat as part of his introduction to the to the next world.

But we wanted to know how old. That was one of the questions that they asked us. How old, and it's almost certainly a child, simply from the, from the size and the way we work out age of a of a juvenile is by how developed the bones are. And we looked at a few things, and Chris Butcher has got the Greulich and Pyle book of left hands and various other things to be able to try and establish what range we're talking about. And we narrowed it down to the fusion of the bones in the knuckles. So from that position, we couldn't see them very well, so we Tomogrammed it. So this is a new technique. Everybody has known about this technique for some years, but what it does is, if you have the cassette underneath and the tube on top, and you swing one and the other one opposite it, it will blur out structures above and below a fulcrum height. So only that fulcrum is going to be in focus, so we tomogrammed off that at the front of a chest and spine of this individual to see if they're infused. And it hadn't quite so that gave the age range of 13 to 14 of Haenmetu.

Haenmetu, they got that from the sarcophagus, who was the son of a high priestess.