Stacey Tunmore, 2012

[redacted]

Life Cycle of an Object Project
Object 5: Textile Book of the Dead

Description

Object W868 is a textile Book of the Dead, made from linen. It is believed to be dated to the Greco-Roman period and belonged to Djed-her, son of Ta.[1] The piece measures approximately 68.8cm in length by 9.6cm in width, although damage and tearing to the fabric has caused fraying, which makes the lengths on each side slightly different. The fabric is believed to be decorated with spells 148 and 149 from the Book of the Dead, written in hieratic in black ink and accompanied by three complete vignettes and one partial vignette. (See Figs 1-5 for photographs of W868).

Materials

• **Linen**

W868 is made from linen, and would have been spun and woven by hand. Linen is derived from the flax plant, also known as linseed. Although flax grew well in the desert climate, it was not native to Egypt. It is believed to have been imported, possibly from the Levant[2], and grown from the Predynastic Period onwards. The process of growing flax began in mid-November, following the annual Nile inundation.[3] The flax seeds were sown at this time, and sheep or goats were used to trample the seeds into the ground (see Fig. 6). Flax took approximately three months to mature, and was harvested at different times,

[1] Egypt Centre MODES catalogue entry for item #W868.
[2] Germer, R., *Flora des Pharaonischen Agypten* (Mainz: Verlag Philip von Zabern, 1985); Zohary, D., M. Hopf and E. Weiss, *Domestication of Plants in the Old World: The Origin and Spread of Domesticated Plants in South West Asia, Europe, and the Mediterranean Basin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 106.
[3] Vogelsang-Eastwood, G., 'Textiles', in *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Technology*, ed. by Nicholson, P. and Shaw, I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 270.

depending on its intended use (see Fig. 7). Young plants were delicate and used for fine linen, while older plants were stronger and produced coarser linen, so could be used for clothing.[4] The linen produced would also vary in colour, from white to golden brown, depending on the age of the flax used, and some linen was even bleached white.[5] Once matured, the flax was pulled by hand from the ground (see Fig. 8). It would be retted or soaked, then tied into bundles and left to dry in the sun.[6] Once dried, the seeds would be removed, by being pulled between the teeth of a long rippling comb (see Fig. 9). They would be used either for next year's crops, for linseed oil, or as animal feed.[7] Once the seeds had been removed the flax was ready to be spun or woven.

• **Ink**

The use of ink in Egyptian times goes back to as early as 2500 B.C.[8] The invention of papyrus led to the need for a suitable fluid for which to write upon it, and black ink was made from a mixture of lampblack (a form of carbon) and glue or gum (probably from the Acacia tree family)[9], with a preservative to prevent decomposition.[10] The carbon used for black ink would have most likely derived from soot that had been scraped from cooking vessels.[11] In preparation for use,

[4] Barber, E., *Prehistoric Textiles: The Development of Cloth in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 13.
[5] Hall, R., *Egyptian Textiles* (Aylesbury: Shire Publications Ltd, 1986), 9.
[6] Barber, 13.
[7] Vogelsang-Eastwood, 270.
[8] Pines, C., 'The Story of Ink', *The American Journal of Police Science*, 2 (1931) 290-301 (291).
[9] Danzing, R., *Pigments and inks typically used on papyrus* (2010), <http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/community/blogosphere/2010/09/22/pigments-and-inks-typically-used-on-papyrus/> [accessed 30 November 2012].
[10] Pines, 291.
[11] Lee, L. and S. Quirke, 'Painting Materials', in *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Technology*, ed. by Nicholson, P. and I. Shaw (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 108.

the mixture was rubbed on a palette with water.[12] Carbon inks were very permanent when used on absorbent surfaces, such as linen and papyrus, and would not be affected by light or chemicals.[13] The clarity of the ink on W868, as well as many other surviving artefacts inscribed with ink, is testament to the composition of the ink and its capability of surviving for thousands of years.

Production

• Spinning

Linen production was undertaken either privately, by the state, or by temples, and involved men, women and children.[14] Spinning involved twisting and drawing out the prepared flax fibres into a thread. Lengths of fibres would be rolled (on the thigh) and wound into balls/coils.[15] As the spindle turned the fibres, a twist/spin would be added- this produced a pile of thread. Z-spun threads were spun anti-clockwise, while S-spun threads were spun clockwise.[16] Hand-spinning utensils included a spinning bowl (see Fig. 10), hand-spindle (see Fig. 11) and distaff- which was used in the Greco-Roman period to hold the thread while it was being spun.[17] It was usually held in the left hand.[18] These were all made from a variety of materials, including wood, limestone, clay and stone. Spindles had a dome-shaped weight (whorl) at the top (see Fig. 12), with a groove where the thread was cut. The purpose of the whorl was to keep the spindle in motion.[19]

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[12] Pines, 293.
[13] Pines, 296.
[14] Hall, 12.
[15] Barber, 41.
[16] Vogelsang-Eastwood, 272.
[17] Hall, 12.
[18] Wild, J., 'Textile Production' in *The Oxford Handbook of Engineering and Technology in the Classical World*, ed. by Oleson, P. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 470.
[19] Barber, 43.

• **Weaving**

Each stage of the weaving process was completed by hand. Weaving involved the interlocking of multiple threads to form a textile sheet. A vertical-framed loom was used from the New Kingdom onwards, which would have likely been the method used to produce the linen for W868 (see Fig. 13). Some scholars believe the vertical loom was introduced by the Hyksos[20] or possibly from Syria or Palestine.[21] The vertical loom would have required large beams that would have been costly, so this type of weaving equipment would have most likely only featured in larger workshops, rather than private household workshops.[22] The warp was stretched between two beams and fixed in a rectangular frame, while the weaver sat at the loom base. The beams would have been fixed in position by weights or on a platform.[23] One weft thread passed over and under the warp threads, while in the next row the weft thread passed under then over, thus forming an interlocking structure.[24] (See Fig. 14 for a model of a linen production workshop).[25] Until the eighteenth dynasty, textile production was almost exclusively done by females,[26] as shown in models such as Fig. 14. With the introduction of the vertical loom, however, the role of men in textile production became more involved,[27] as shown in depictions such as Fig. 13.

The Satire of the Trades, a Middle Kingdom text, may provide an insight into the hard work required of weavers:

[20] Vogelsang-Eastwood, 278.
[21] Barber, 113.
[22] Barber, 286.
[23] Barber, 115.
[24] Vogelsang-Eastwood, 274.
[25] TT280, entry 46723: Porter and Moss, *The Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Statues, Reliefs and Paintings I: Theban Necropolis, Part 1: Private Tombs* (Oxford: Griffith Institute), 359.
[26] Barber, 285.
[27] Barber, 286.

"The mat-weaver (lives) inside the weaving-house

he is worse off than a woman,

with his knees up to his stomach,

unable to breathe in any air.

If he wastes any daytime not weaving,

he is beaten with 50 lashes.

He has to give a sum to the doorkeeper

to be allowed to go out to the light of day."[28]

Although this text cannot be taken completely at face value, and may be exaggerated, it still provides us with a general idea of the hard work involved in weaving. The fact that it is from the Middle Kingdom and applies to mat weaving rather than the weaving of linen, seems irrelevant in this case, as weaving in general required physical labour regardless of the time period or product being woven, and this text is a good example of that. Hall remarks that, despite the "crude" equipment the Ancient Egyptians had to work with, the fine materials they produced are a credit to the skill of the workers.[29]

• **Inscribing**

Reed pens were used from the Ptolemaic period onwards to inscribe items with ink (see Fig. 15). It can be difficult to identify the pigments with certainty, due to several factors, including the difficulty in obtaining a viable sample and also

[28] From Middle Kingdom text: Teaching of Khety - the 'Satire of Trades'. Transliteration after Helck 1970a, using the copy on Papyrus Sallier II as principal source: column VII, lines 2 to 4.
[29] Hall, 19.

changes in the pigments over time.[30] Backes suggests the existence of scribal 'workshops' in the Late Period where Book of the Dead papyri were inscribed,[31] a view shared by Leach and Parkinson.[32] If this was the case for papyri, then one can assume that Books of the Dead were also inscribed on linen in similar workshops, by trained scribes.

Use/Function

The object file for W868 does not provide much detailed information on its origins or use, but it does mention possible other fragments of the same piece, located in other museums around the world.[33] Further investigation of these has led to a strong belief that W868 (along with the other possible fragments) functioned as a mummy wrapping. Notes on object files from the other possible fragments have indicated they may be linked, and the abundance of similar and parallel pieces provide good evidence to support this assumption. One fragment in the Fitzwilliam Museum (E. Misc. 36)[34] and twelve fragments in the Liverpool Museum (M11465)[35] are linked to W868 by notes in their object files[36], and there

[30] Danzing.
[31] Backes, B., 'Three Funerary Papyri from Thebes: New Evidence on Scribal and Funerary Practice in the Late Period', *BMSAES* 15 (2010) 1-21. (2).
[32] Leach, B. and R. Parkinson, 'Creating Borders: New Insights into Making the Papyrus of Ani', *BMSAES* 15 (2010) 35-62 (46).
[33] The object file for W868 contains an email between the curator of The Egypt Centre, Carolyn Graves-Brown, and Irmtraut from The Totenbuch Project. The email mentions possible fragments located in The British Museum, The Fitzwilliam Museum and New York.
[34] In Budge, E.A.W., *A Catalogue Of The Egyptian Collection In The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge* (Montana: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), 116. The item is described in entry 359 as a "fragment of a linen bandage from a mummy, inscribed in hieratic with …the Book of the Dead…This fragment belongs to a mummy of a late period, and was probably inscribed about 300B.C. Length 8 ½ in by 3 ½ in."
[35] Personal correspondence with Head of Antiquities, Ashley Cooke, on October 30th 2012, has revealed a greater insight into the notes on the object file for accession number M11465. The twelve fragments were catalogued by Charles Goodwin in 1872, and were described by him as such: "(twelve linen fragments, belonging to the same mummy, but not capable of being pieced together) - contain fragments of the ritual - Late Hieratic script. Belonged to a person named Tat-Hor son of Ta." They are also recorded in Gatty, C., *Catalogue of the Mayer Collection Part 1: The Egyptian, Babylonian and Assyrian Antiquities*, 2nd and revised edn (publisher unknown, 1879), 38-39. Entry 189 states: "mummy wrappings: twelve strips of linen with portions of the Ritual of the Dead inscribed on them in late hieratic writing; on one is the name of the person from whose

are other possible fragments at The British Museum (EA10028, EA10047.10, EA 10047.11, EA10065, EA10271 and EA75047). They are all named as mummy bandages and most of them date to the Late Period. (The majority of these items do not have accompanying pictures. For pictures of EA10047.10 and EA10047.11 please see Figs 16 and 17).

Linen was used extensively for wrapping mummies[37] and the material played an important role in funerary and religious practices. Linen was left as offerings in the tomb of the deceased,[38] and it was the belief that Tayet, the goddess of weaving, provided these by her own hand.[39] Most surviving cloth from Ancient Egypt derives from mummy bandages and funerary shrouds,[40] and a large number of surviving mummies date to the Roman Period.[41] The Book of the Dead was a book of spells created to protect the deceased on their journey through the netherworld and provide them with the knowledge they needed to progress through various phases on their transition into the afterlife.[42] At least twenty nine per cent of the chapters of The Book of the Dead were used by the living and deceased alike,[43] and there are over three thousand five hundred surviving manuscripts known,[44] showing the importance of the spells to the Egyptians even

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mummy they all most probably came, Tatha, son of Ta. 11465." They were conserved in 1994, and only one is on display. The dimensions in cm (length x height) are: 36.8 x 10; 68 x 10.5; 45.5 x 9.5; 55 x 10; 74.5 x 10.7; 21 x 9.6; 19.2 x 9.8; 13.9 x 10.1; 20.2 x 10.9; 20.2 x 9.2 and 10.9 x 9.9.

[36] E. Misc. 36 has a note on the object file saying Liverpool Museum has one of the fragments, and M11465 has a note on the object file dated 17.7.92 which says there is one fragment in The Fitzwilliam Museum and five in The British Museum.

[37] Zohary, Hopf and Weiss, 106.

[38] *The British Museum Book of Ancient Egypt* eds Quirke, S. and J. Spencer (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1992), 188.

[39] Taylor, J., *Death and the Afterlife in Ancient Egypt* (London: British Museum Press, 2001), 58.

[40] Quirke and Spencer, 188.

[41] Taylor, 91.

[42] *Journey Through the Afterlife: Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, ed. by John H. Taylor (London: British Museum Press, 2010), 12.

[43] Gee, 25.

[44] Kockelmann, H., *Unterschungen zu den späten Totenbuch-Handschriften auf Mumienbinden (Studien zum Altagyptischen Totenbuch)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008).

before they reached the afterlife. W868 is believed to contain chapters 148 and 149 of The Book of the Dead, which were for providing sustenance to the deceased[45] and guiding them through the fourteen mounds of the netherworld-sacred places inhabited by supernatural creatures.[46] These 'demons' took many forms,[47] including human bodies with animal heads, and the deceased was required to recognise them to ensure safe transition.[48] Some carried knives and took reptile form,[49] like the vignettes inscribed on W868 (see Figs 1-4).

The New Kingdom development of writing religious texts upon papyrus made The Book of the Dead more accessible to all ranks of society, as papyrus was readily available and inexpensive.[50] From the New Kindgom onwards, Book of the Dead texts began to be placed on the body of the mummy, rather than just on papyrus placed in the tomb,[51] and from the fourth century B.C. around Memphis and Fayum, the Book of the Dead was inscribed on the mummy wrappings themselves.[52] The Book of the Dead was a fundamental element of elite burials in the Late Period.[53] During the Greco-Roman period, however, mummification extended to a greater proportion of the population, so it cannot be assumed that the mummy from which W868 originated belonged to a person of great wealth or status.[54]

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[45] *Journey Through the Afterlife: Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 152.
[46] *Journey Through the Afterlife: Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 138.
[47] Müller-Roth, M., 'Memphis-Thebes: Local Traditions in the Late Period ', *BMSAES*, 15 (2010) 173-187 (176).
[48] Lucarelli, R. (2010) 'The guardian-demons of the book of the dead', *British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan* 15: 85-102 (85).
[49] Lucarelli, R. (2010) 'The guardian-demons of the book of the dead', *British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan* 15: 85-102 (85).
[50] Spencer, 142.
[51] Quirke and Spencer, 98.
[52] Quirke and Spencer, 101.
[53] Backes, 11.
[54] Spencer, A.J., *Death in Ancient Egypt* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1982), 127.

Later phases of religious beliefs relied more heavily on magical protection against hostile entities, with the Greco-Roman Period protecting themselves against 'demons' of the supernatural world.[55] Linen amulets were also used to provide the deceased with protection on epagomenal days, with rituals involving spells to be said over the linen pieces, and gods to be inscribed on them in black ink.[56] These amulets were used from the Late Period onwards.[57] The preference for linen in rituals parallels the wrapping of the deceased in bandages, and shows the religious significance placed on the use of linen in funerary practices.[58] The Book of the Dead itself was also used as an amulet in mummy wrappings.[59]

A piece very similar to W868 is the Princeton Pharaonic Roll 8 (see Fig. 18), which features the same spells and the same vignettes, accompanied by hieratic script. It is believed to be dated to the Ptolemaic Period, originating from Saqqara.[60] Along with other similar and parallel pieces (see Figs 18-23), also of similar appearance, date and provenance, it would appear that a suggested pattern can be seen.

Transformation and Reuse

The damage apparent on W868 appears to be caused by either tearing or cutting of the linen. This may have been intentional, especially if the examples of other mummy bandage fragments are taken into account. With so many examples of

[55] Lucarelli, R., 'Demonology During the Late Pharaonic and Greco-Roman Periods in Egypt' *Journal of Ancient Near East* 11 (2011) 109-125 (109).
[56] Raven, M., 'Charms for Protection During the Epagomenal Days', in *Essays on Ancient Egypt in Honour of Herman te Velde*, ed. Van Dyk, J. (Groningen: Styx Publications, 1997), 276.
[57] Raven, 285.
[58] Raven, 279.
[59] Gee, J., 'The Book of the Dead as Canon', *BMSAES* 15 (2010) 23-33 (25).
[60] Images of the artefact can be viewed at: *Princeton Pharaonic Roll 8*, <http://infoshare1.princeton.edu/rbsc2/papyri/BookoftheDeadRoll8.html> [Accessed 30 November 2012].

mummy wrapping fragments, it would appear that cutting them up into numerous pieces was normal practice. There are what appear to be holes along the top and bottom of W868, with dark staining around them. Upon initial viewing of these, it may be suggested that these were made after the mummy was discovered, rather than at the time the mummy was wrapped. The dark staining could be from rust, suggesting a nail was what made the hole. In that case, the holes could be from nails which were used to affix the fragment to something. It could be suggested that the fragment was displayed prior to its arrival at The Egypt Centre, possibly by its previous owner(s).

In 'The Rendells Mummy Bandages, R. Caminos discusses nine strips from post-New Kingdom mummy bandages that are inscribed, with black ink, in hieratic writing with chapters from the Book of the Dead.[61] They appear to be from a long strip, suggesting they were all cut from the same piece.[62] Although their appearance is different to W868, the cutting up of the pieces into separate fragments is the same, suggesting this may have been usual practice with such artefacts.

Deposition

As mummies were a cocoon meant to house the soul of the deceased, once they were placed in the tomb and the tomb was sealed shut, they were meant to remain undisturbed.[63] In this respect, the intended use of W868 would have ceased once the mummy had been wrapped and placed in its tomb. Its ritual use, for protecting the spirit of the deceased and guiding them though the underworld,

[61] Caminos, R., 'The Rendells Mummy Bandages', *JEA* 68 (1982) 145.
[62] Caminos, 146.
[63] *Journey Through the Afterlife: Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, ed. byJohn H. Taylor (London: British Museum Press, 2010), 110.

with the aid of the inscribed Book of the Dead spells, would have begun at this point, but the mummy would have been expected to stay in the tomb for eternity.[64] The resin which mummies and their wrappings were coated in ensured their survival, and this may explain the staining on W868 (see Fig. 5).[65] The mummy was meant to stay intact, as the deceased needed a body to progress into the afterlife, so this was a way of ensuring the preservation of the mummy.[66] The quality of mummies deteriorated in Greco-Roman times, which may explain the fragility of w868 and the reason it sustained damage.[67] This may however, also be due to the natural wear and tear over the centuries, or may have been caused by the bandage being purposely cut into fragments. Mummy bandages were metres in length, and many were cut up by their nineteenth century discoverers and sold to European tourists- thus creating more profit.[68]

Rediscovery

The rediscovery of W868 is unknown, but it is possible that it was discovered on an excavation sponsored by one of the collectors who acquired it.

The other possible fragments and the similar and parallel pieces date approximately to the Late Period. To obtain a more specific date for W868, radiocarbon dating could be used, as linen is an organic material. Radiocarbon dating is one of the most popular and well-known methods of dating used by archaeologists.[69] It allows an organic material to be absolutely dated, and

[64] Taylor, 46.
[65] Spencer, 38.
[66] Taylor, 31.
[67] Smith,G., 'Egyptian Mummies', *JEA*, 1 (1914) 181-196 (195).
[68] *EA6644*, <http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/aes/i/inscribed_mummy_bandage_of_dje.aspx> [accessed 01 December 2012].
[69] Michaels, G. and B. Fagan, *Dating Techniques in Archaeology: Radiocarbon Dating* (1995),

quantitative data obtained, by measuring the ratio of C-14 (the unstable carbon isotope)[70] present after the 'death' of the material and the onset of C-14 decay. [71] Every organic material ingests C-14 while it is 'alive', and it becomes part of the molecular make-up.[72] It is possible to measure the number of C-14 atoms, therefore obtaining an approximate date for the material in question, as C-14 decreases by half its original amount upon 'death' after 5730 years.[73] The benefit of using radiocarbon dating is that it can be used anywhere, regardless of climate,[74] and can be used to test all organic materials. There would also, however, be some limitations to radiocarbon dating W868. There is a high risk of contamination when testing organic products,[75] and levels of C-14 present in the atmosphere have changed over time.[76] The results that are produced from radiocarbon dating are not entirely accurate, with a window of several hundreds of years.[77] A large sample size is generally needed, as methods for testing smaller samples are still in experimental stages.[78] Sample size problems are very common in the archaeological field.[79] This would mean that the W868 fragment would require a large piece, or multiple pieces, to be taken from it to be tested.

The fragile nature of the artefact may not make it suitable, as the organic matter can be removed or damaged in the process. A possible solution for

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http://web.mesacc.edu/dept/d10/asb/archaeology/dating/datingtech.html
[accessed 03 December 2012].
[70] Michaels and Fagan.
[71] *Dating in Egyptian Archaeology* (2003),
<http://www.digitalegypt.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/dating.html>
[accessed 03 December 2012].
[72] Michaels and Fagan.
[73] *Dating in Egyptian Archaeology*.
[74] Bahn, P., *Archaeology: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) 22.
[75] Bahn, 22.
[76] *Dating in Egyptian Archaeology*.
[77] *Dating in Egyptian Archaeology*.
[78] Michaels and Fagan.
[79] Christen, J. and C. Buck, 'Sample Selection in Radiocarbon Dating', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series C (Applied Statistics)*, (1998) 543-577 (555).

overcoming these issues and dating W868 may be found in the accelerator mass spectrometry method, which enables much smaller samples to be tested, thus allowing for less damage to the artefact and gaining a more accurate result.[80] Accelerator mass spectrometry is costly and can be seen as experimental,[81] but the advantages over radiocarbon dating may provide a greater insight into the date of W868.

As the practice of inscribing The Book of the Dead directly onto the mummy bandages occurred was from the fifth century B.C. onwards, W868 can be dated to this period at least. Unfortunately the provenance of over six hundred mummy bandages is unknown,[82] and many museums around the world acquired funerary articles at the beginning of the nineteenth century, with their provenance unknown in most cases.[83] With the practice most likely originating in Memphis, and with a vast necropolis at Saqqara,[84] this could also be suggested as the place where W868 was originally located. Similar and parallel pieces are also dated to this time period and are believed to be from similar locations, so this would point to the Saqqara necropolis as a possible find spot for W868.

Reinterpretation and Current Reuse

As W868 does not have any information on the object file to confirm how it came to the Egypt Centre, it can be suggested that one of three possible collectors may have purchased the fragment. M11465 (Liverpool Museum twelve fragments)

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[80] *Radiocarbon Dating for Archaeology*, <http://c14.arch.ox.ac.uk/embed.php?File=leaf_arch.html> [accessed 03 December 20120].
[81] Michaels and Fagan.
[82] Müller-Roth, 175.
[83] Raven, M., 'Book of the Dead Documents from the New Kingdom Necropolis at Saqqara' *BMSAES*, 15 (2010) 249-265 (250).
[84] Raven, M., 'Book of the Dead Documents from the New Kingdom Necropolis at Saqqara', 250.

was donated by Joseph Mayer in 1872, according to personal correspondence (3 October 2012) with Ashley Cooke, Head of Antiquities. If W868 is part of the same collection of fragments, then Joseph Mayer could have also owned other fragments at some point. Joseph Mayer was a collector of art and antiquities, and also a sponsor of publications and excavations. He was one of the earliest systematic collectors of ceramics, and opened an Egyptian Museum in Liverpool in 1852. In 1867 he presented his collection to the Liverpool Free Library and Museum, and, upon retirement, continued to collect art and antiquities. The Mayer Collection was auctioned in Liverpool in 1887.[85] M11465 has no further information regarding the donation of the fragments.

Although it does not say on the file how W868 was acquired, it could also be strongly suggested that the fragment may have, at one point in time, belonged to Henry Wellcome. Wellcome was a pharmacist in his earlier years, and founded the Wellcome Museum of Medical Science in 1923. He was an obsessive collector, not just of medical items, but everything and anything that appealed to him. He established the Wellcome Foundation in 1924, and most of his wealth was left to scientific research and education. His collection numbered approximately one million items- far exceeding The British Museum and The Louvre, and filled many warehouses in London.[86] Swansea University acquired part of the Egyptian collection from the Wellcome Trustees in 1971, on the agreement that the items be displayed for public viewing. Some items were originally displayed in a small 'museum' located in the Classics department, but eventually The Egypt Centre was opened in 1998 on the campus of Swansea

[85] All biographical information on Joseph Mayer was obtained from: Sutton, C., 'Mayer, Joseph (1803–1886)', rev. Lionel Burman, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
[86] All biographical information on Henry Wellcome obtained from: Robert Rhodes James, 'Wellcome, Sir Henry Solomon (1853–1936)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

University, after funding was provided by the European Regional Development Fund and the National Heritage Lottery Fund.[87] Because the majority of artefacts in The Egypt Centre are from the Wellcome Collection, it can be strongly suggested that W868 originated from this collection. There are also a number of pieces from the Macgregor Collection (William Macgregor's pieces are also on display at The Egypt Centre), so he may also have been a possible owner of W868. With no information on its specific origins, it is hard to determine the journey the item took before it arrived at The Egypt Centre.

The other possible fragments (namely the British Museum and Fitzwilliam Museum) identify a variety of collectors or donators that provided them, with little information on provenance, so it is not possible to determine which excavation they were discovered at, or even how the collectors themselves acquired the pieces. With no detailed information on these pieces, or the similar and parallel pieces, it is not possible to determine their exact origins.

W868 has been on display in the Egypt Centre for only a short time, since October 2012.[88] The reason for it only just being made available for public viewing is unknown, and not stated on the object file. It is currently displayed in The House of Death, in a case with other funerary items, including figurines and a soul house (see Figs 24 and 25). Its location in The House of Death is appropriate, due to the item's connection with the afterlife. It is centrally located within the case, along with a papyrus Book of the Dead. It does not have a label, but information sheets are provided next to the case, for the public to peruse if they so wish. It is kept in low lighting, and placed between two sheets of clear Perspex, to protect the artefact and avoid further damage to the material. This

[87] Egypt Centre information obtained from: Gill, D., 'From Wellcome Museum to Egypt Centre: Displaying Egyptology in Swansea', *Gottinger Miszellen,* 205 (2005) 47-54.
[88] The object file contains a press release recording the display of W868, dated 12 October 2012.

seems to be the best way to display the item, as the perspex keeps the material flat and spread out, allowing the fragment to be seen in its entirety. Its central location with the other Book of the Dead piece is also the best way for the item to be displayed. If I were to display W868, I would keep these factors, but I would maybe include more tomb items, such as shabtis and mummies, in the case as well. This would give the public a better idea of the rituals that the deceased experienced in the afterlife. I would also provide large clear labels, detailing the piece and what role it played in the deceased's journey through the afterlife.

Conclusion

W868 is an important artefact, as it played two main roles- it provided the deceased person with a cocoon to house his soul, and also provided magical protection to ensure they progressed through to the afterlife. The fundamental rituals undertaken by the Ancient Egyptians show that The Book of the Dead was embedded into lives of both the living and the dead. Although not much is known about the piece, the comparison with other pieces has provided a plausible life cycle for W868, as well as demonstrating the unfortunate but intriguing mystery surrounding many surviving artefacts for which little is known.

TOTAL WORD COUNT: 3744

List of Figures

Fig. 18: Princeton Pharaonic Roll 8; Ptolemaic Period, probably from Saqqara. The scenes shown in this section of the mummy wrapping are almost identical to those depicted on W868.

Fig. 19: Mummy wrapping inscribed in hieratic with the Book of the Dead; Ptolemaic Period (Brussels, E.6179).

Fig. 20: Inscribed mummy bandage, Book of the Dead in hieratic script; Ptolemaic Period (Brooklyn Museum, 37.2039.21E).

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Figures

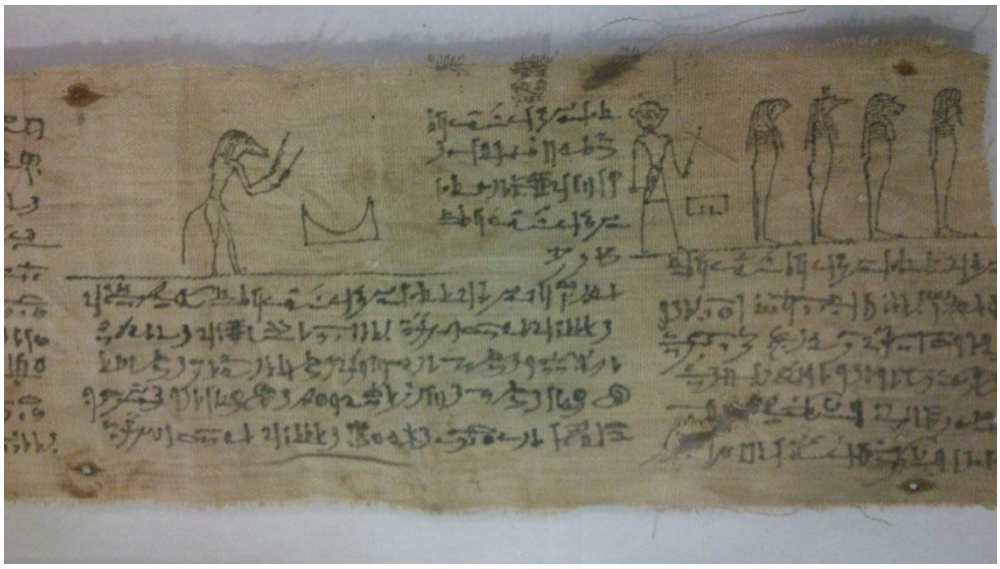

Fig. 1: Section of W868 showing hieratic script with vignettes (all photographs of W868 courtesy of Danielle Kelly).

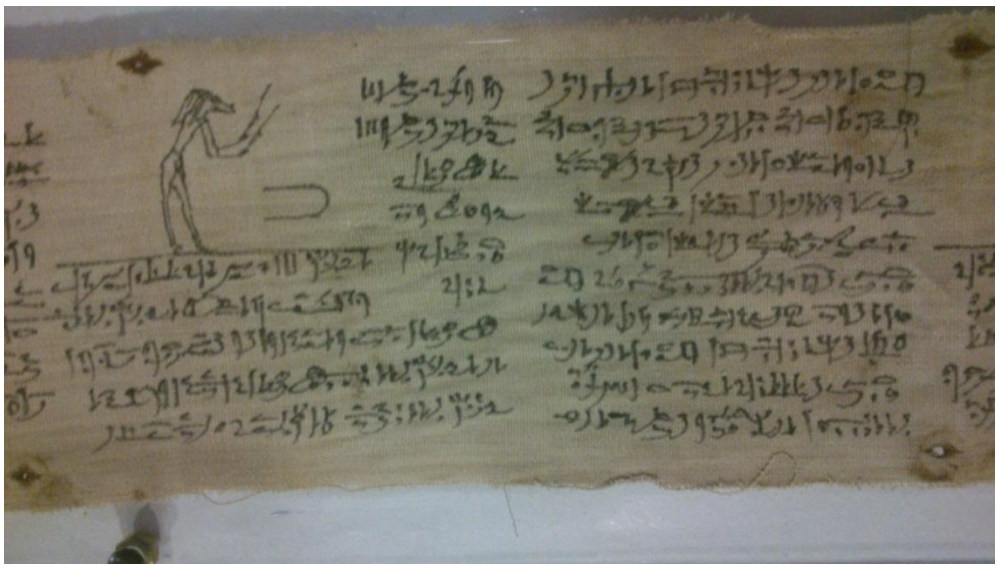

Fig. 2: Section of W868 showing hieratic script with vignette.

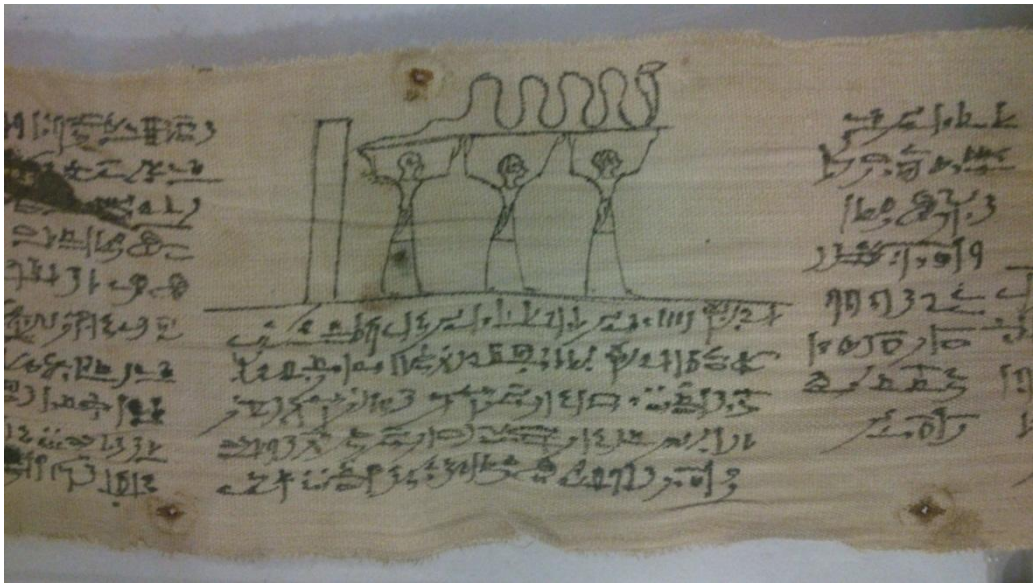

Fig. 3: Section of W868 showing hieratic script with vignette.

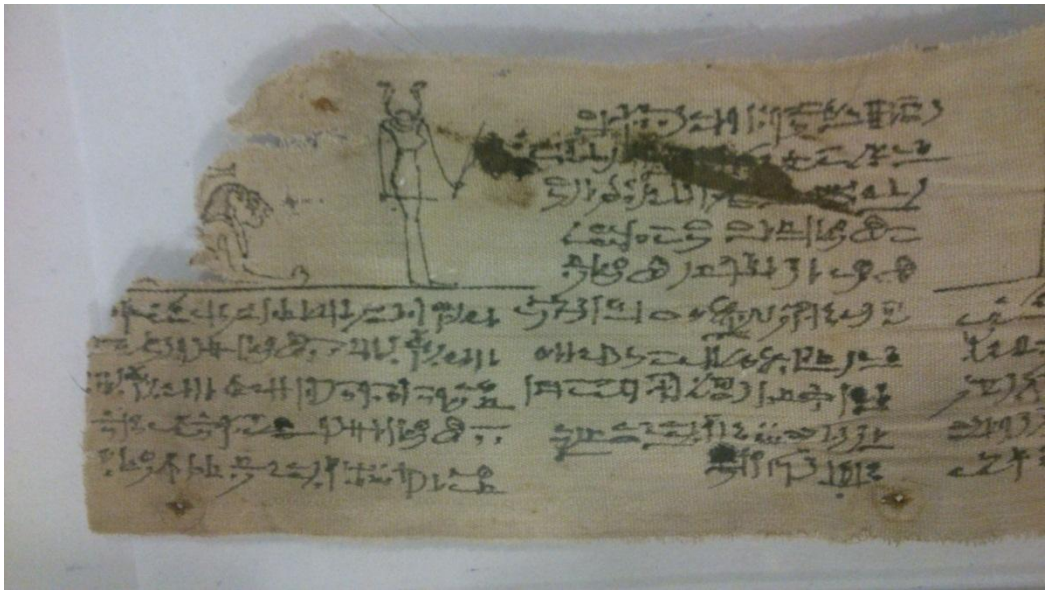

Fig. 4: Section of W868 showing hieratic script with partial vignette. This part of the fragment has damage, either from the fragile nature of the fabric worsening over time, or it may have been purposely cut.

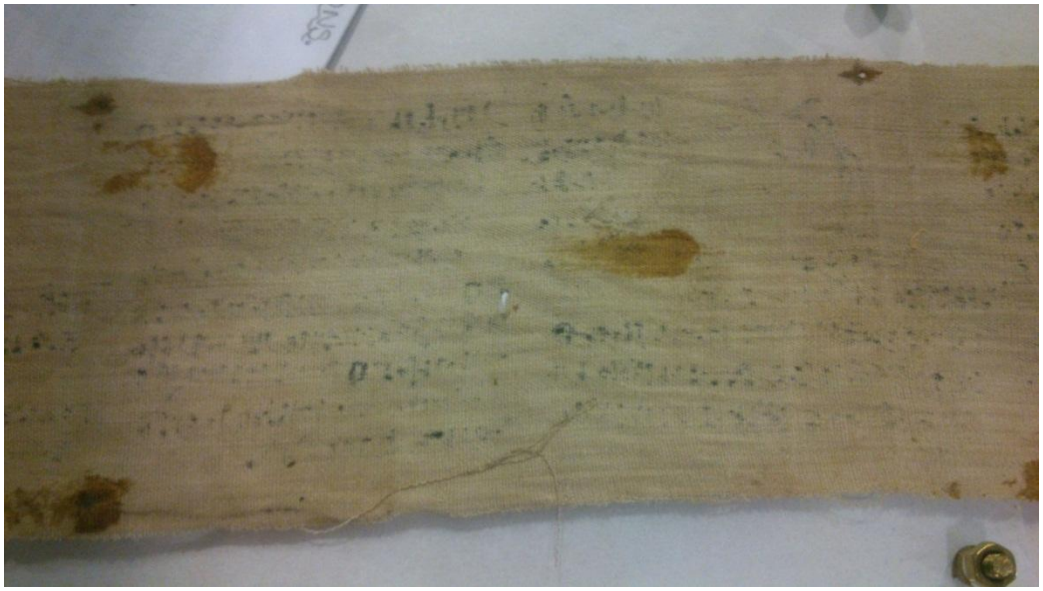

Fig. 5: Verso of W868, with staining.

Fig. 6: Tomb relief showing goats being used to trample seeds into the ground. From Middle Kingdom rock cut tomb of Urarna at Sheikh Said (tomb 25J).

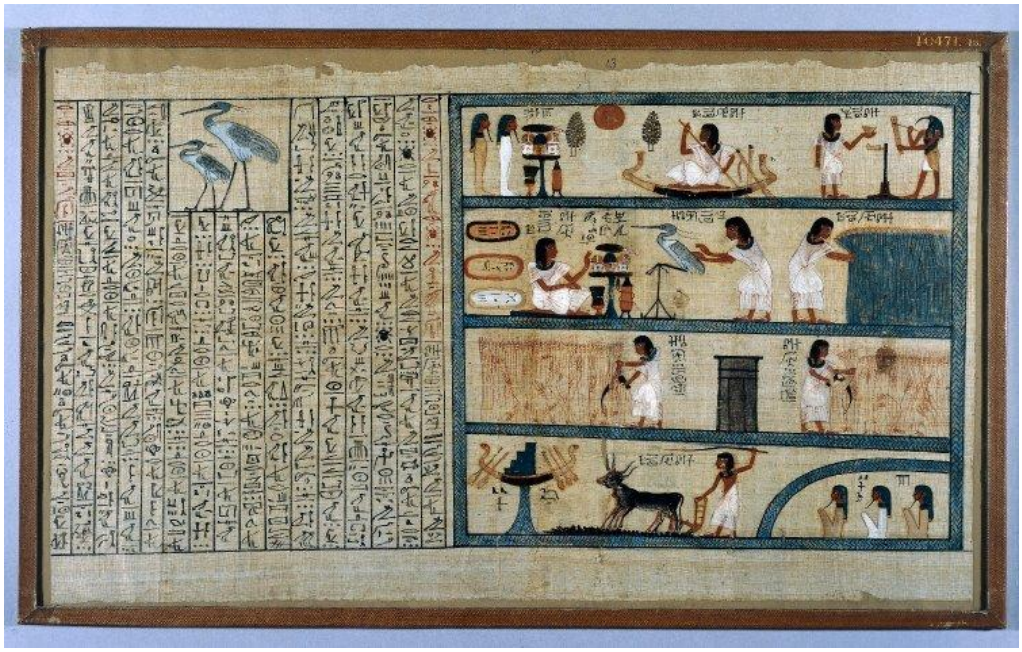

Fig. 7: Book of the Dead of Nakht, sheet 13; flax-harvesting vignette, with sixteen columns of Hieroglyphic text (EA10471,13).

Fig. 8: Photograph showing depiction in the tomb of Seneddjem of harvesting grain, sowing seeds and pulling flax; MMA object 30.4.2).

Fig. 9: Middle Kingdom weaving tool; wooden flax stripper. (Manchester Museum, 6859).

Fig. 10: Middle Kingdom limestone spinning bowl (MMA, 15.3.99).

Fig. 11: Wooden spindles (top two items) from Lahun, probably late Middle Kingdom, and Gurob, New Kingdom (Petrie Museum, UC 7306ii and 7809).

Fig. 12: New Kingdom spindle whorl (Fitzwilliam, E.31.1927).

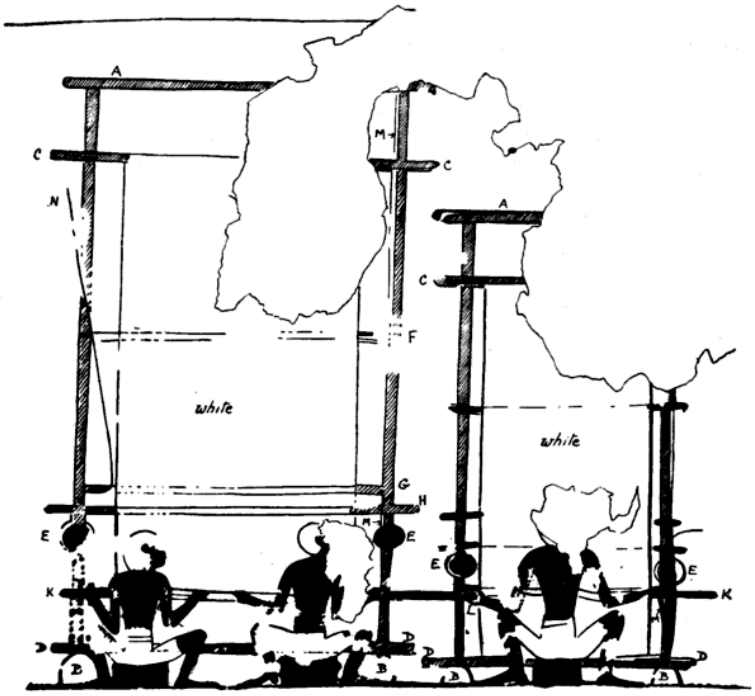

Fig. 13: Depiction of male workers operating a vertical (or ‘upright’) loom, from the Middle Kingdom tomb of Thot-nefer at Thebes (TT80). Drawing by Mr. N.G. Davies.

Fig. 14: Model of a spinning and weaving workshop, one of a wealth of models found in the Middle Kingdom tomb of Meketre. This model shows female textile workers using two operational ground looms, along with the processes of warping, roving and spinning.

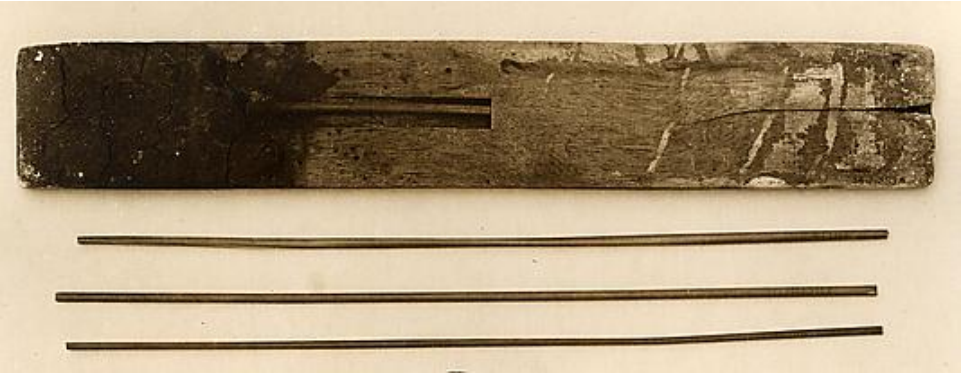

Fig. 15: Wooden scribal palette and reed brushes, from the Late Period (MMA, 14.1.393a–d).

Fig. 16: Late Period Book of the Dead mummy wrapping inscribed with hieratic and vignette (British Museum, EA10047.10).

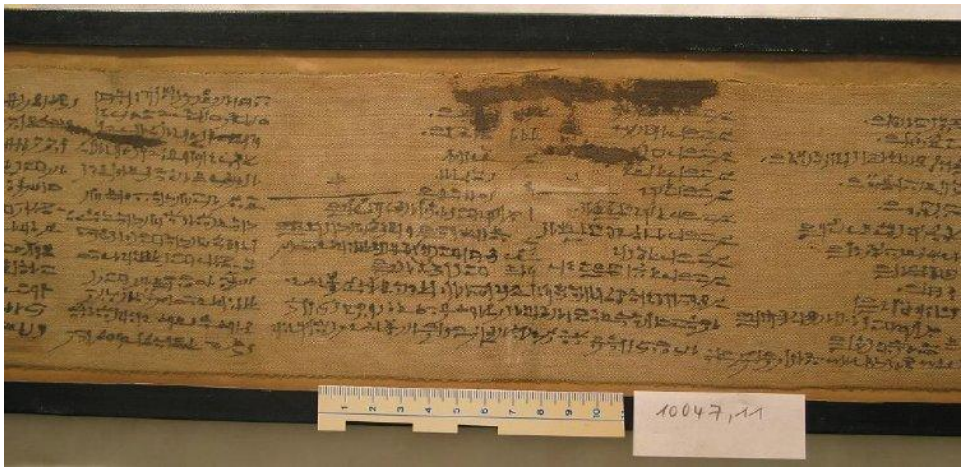

Fig. 17: Late Period Book of the Dead mummy wrapping inscribed with hieratic (British Museum, EA10047.11).

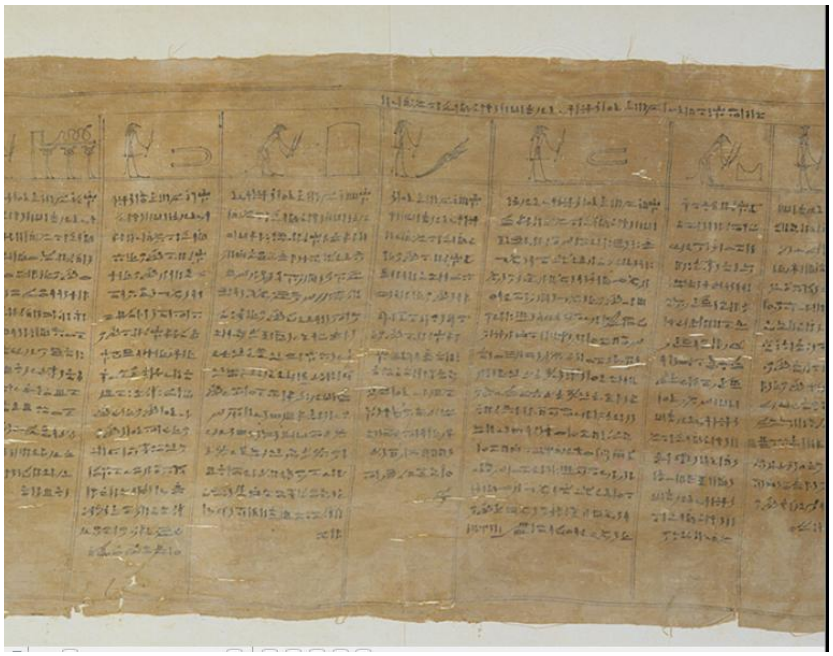

Fig. 18: Princeton Pharaonic Roll 8; Ptolemaic Period, probably from Saqqara. The scenes shown in this section of the mummy wrapping are almost identical to those depicted on W868.

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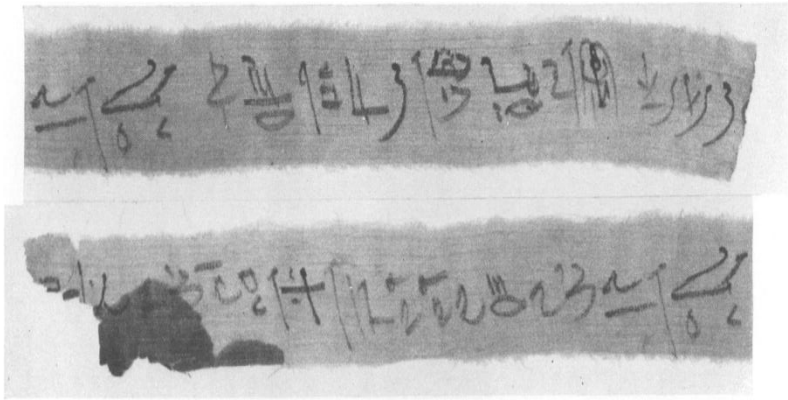

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