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## Researchers discover 2,300-year-old mummy

Objects found with the body suggest the girl belonged to a sedentary civilization, not a huntergatherer tribe.

December 17, 2004

Archeologists reported Thursday the discovery of a 2,300-year-old mummy of a female child along with some fabric, hair, feathers and plant remains in a dry, cold, high-altitude cave in the central state of Queretaro.



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Archeologists received a tip about some human remains in the cave in a mountainous area known as the Sierra Gorda. They searched the cave, located about 9,570 feet (2,900 meters) above sea level, and found the girl's mummified remains, which lacked one arm.

"This is one of the oldest mummies to have been found in Mexico," according to a press release from the Templo Mayor Museum, part of the National Archaeology and Anthropology Institute.

### DUE TO NATURAL CAUSES

The mummification was deemed to be due to natural cause the quick drying of the corpse, along with the high altitude and cool climate rather than any man-made mummification technique.

But what was equally interesting was what was found along with the body: a bit of cloth, feathers, the spines of maguey plants and patches of hair, in what may have possibly been funeral offerings. The girl is believed to have died around 320 B.C., according tests carried out on her skin and the fabric.

"At first, given the semidesert conditions of the site, it was initially thought she might have belonged to some huntergatherer group," the museum said. "But given that a cloth fragment was found, the possibility arose that sh might have been part of a settled, sedentary group." Researchers are still unsure what prehispanic group the girl belonged to; the remains were found north of the area known to have been covered by cultures such as the Olmecs or Mayas.

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