

# The Encyclopedia of Ancient History

*Edited by*

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Volume VIII  
Li–Ne

 **WILEY-BLACKWELL**

A John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., Publication

This edition first published 2013  
© 2013 Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Blackwell Publishing was acquired by John Wiley & Sons in February 2007. Blackwell's publishing program has been merged with Wiley's global Scientific, Technical, and Medical business to form Wiley-Blackwell.

*Registered Office*

John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

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*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

The encyclopedia of ancient history / edited by Roger S. Bagnall ... [et al.].

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4051-7935-5 (hardback : alk. paper)—ISBN 978-1-4443-3838-6 (electronic : online)

1. History, Ancient—Encyclopedias. I. Bagnall, Roger S.

D54.E54 2012

930.03—dc23

2011029137

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

This book is published in the following electronic formats: Wiley Online Library 9781444338386

Set in 10/12pt Minion by SPi Publisher Services Ltd, Pondicherry, India

Printed and bound in Singapore by Markono Print Media Pte Ltd

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Dodson 1998: 114–15). Excerebration through the foramen magnum and sometimes by breaking through the ethmoid bone became more standard. Resins and oils were increasingly used. Arms were generally placed at the side, over the pudenda, or on the thighs, although there are examples of arms crossed over the chest, such as the mummy of Wah, excavated by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The body was frequently placed on its side within the coffin.

#### SECOND INTERMEDIATE PERIOD (CA. 1650–1550 BCE) AND NEW KINGDOM (CA. 1550–1069 BCE)

The majority of mummies studied date from these periods. Evisceration through the side was common, with a diagonal incision, parallel to the iliac crest, rather than the vertical cut common before the reign of Thutmose III. The brain was almost always removed via the nostril-ethmoid bone route, and variations between royal and private burials become more marked. Toward the end of the New Kingdom cosmetic enhancement of mummies started, with false eyes of onion bulbs introduced into the orbits and painted brows. Arm positions were standardized: men's and women's arms lay along their sides, often with men's hands covering their genitalia. An exception to this is the superbly preserved mummy of Yuya, the father of Queen TTY. His arms were bent at the elbow and crossed under the chin. Starting with Amenophis I, kings had their arms crossed over the breast with their hands clenched to grasp the royal scepters. Some royal or noble women had one arm bent and the other straight, but there are few such examples.

#### THIRD INTERMEDIATE PERIOD (CA. 1069–664 BCE) AND LATE PERIOD (CA. 664–332 BCE)

The 21st Dynasty saw many innovations: mummified viscera were reintroduced to the body, the body was stuffed in order to look

fatter and more lifelike, stone and glass eyes were set into the orbits, and bodies were enhanced with ocher washes, yellow for women, and red for men; makeup provided details of hairlines, eyebrows, and lips. After the 21st Dynasty, the quality of mummification declined dramatically. Insufficient drying time, no or partial evisceration, and the overzealous use of resins and oils all contributed to the deterioration of the body. Viscera were returned to jars, or placed between the legs.

#### GRECO-ROMAN TO CHRISTIAN PERIODS (332 BCE–641 CE)

Mummification quality continued to decline: evisceration (either from an incision or *per anum*) was infrequent; embalmed viscera were placed by the legs; salt often replaced natron; oils and resins were overused in lieu of proper desiccation. As in the Late period, some bodies were well preserved, but these are exceptions. However, bandaging, particularly in the Late Ptolemaic and Early Roman periods, became extremely elaborate. Varicolored bandages woven in lozenges or coffers envelop the body, with painted panels or plaster masks covering the face. In the Roman period particularly, the face of the deceased was gilded, emphasizing the transformed divinity of the individual. Mummification of a crude sort was even adopted by early Christians, generally without evisceration or excerebration, but with desiccation and the liberal use of resins and oils. The practice of dressing the dead in normal clothing, as was done in the Old Kingdom, was also reintroduced in the Christian period, especially for monks and other religious people.

#### ANIMALS

ANIMAL MUMMIES were prepared in different ways, depending on the species, although they followed the basic precepts of human mummification (Lortet and Gaillard 1903–9; Ikram 1995: appendix 2; Ikram and Iskander 2002; Ikram 2005). Most animals were

eviscerated, although their viscera were not always preserved. None seem to be excerebrated. Birds were not always eviscerated, and some were not preserved in natron. Some birds show evidence of having been directly dipped into resin or bitumen before being bandaged (Ikram 2005).

SEE ALSO: Afterlife, Pharaonic Egypt; *Ka*.

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## Mummius, Lucius

LUCA GRAVERINI

Lucius Mummius is especially famous for being the destroyer of CORINTH in 146 BCE. We do not have many details of his life, or the dates of his birth and death. In spite of his plebeian origins (his father was tribune in 187 BCE), he moved successfully through the various stages of the *CURSUS HONORUM*. He was praetor in *Hispania Ulterior* in 153, and his military campaign earned him a triumph. Then he obtained the consulate in 146, together with Cn. Cornelius Lentulus: no small feat, since he was a *HOMO NOVUS* (i.e., the first of his family to reach the consulate; between 200 and 146, there were apparently only sixteen *homines novi*). In that year, the siege of CARTHAGE was still under way. SCIPIO AEMILIANUS, consul in 147, was in charge of the military operations: the final victory was considered imminent, so Scipio was not replaced by one of the new consuls. Therefore Mummius was sent to Greece, where Rome was fighting against the ACHAIA LEAGUE. Q. Caecilius Metellus, propraetor in Macedonia, had already obtained several military and diplomatic successes, but Mummius caught up with him before the final victory and sent him back to Macedonia. He defeated the Achaian army at Leukopetra on the Isthmus, and after a few days Corinth was captured, sacked, and destroyed (it is not clear whether on the initiative of Mummius, or following the orders of a senatorial commission sent from Rome). There may be several reasons for such a harsh punishment: the need to obliterate a hostile city placed in a strategically important position (cf. Cic. *Off.* 1.35); the desire to dissuade any other Mediterranean power from making war on Rome (cf. Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.87); and last, but not least, Mummius' desire to equal Scipio, who had destroyed Carthage only a few months earlier. The destruction of Corinth had enormous

resonance in the entire ancient world, and Mummius' deed was even interpreted as vengeance against the Greeks for the destruction of Troy (cf. Polystratos in *Anth. Pal.* 7.297; Verg. *Aen.* 1.284 f. with Servius *ad loc.*).

Part of the enormous booty from Corinth was used by Mummius to reward the allies and to demonstrate magnanimity to the defeated; several votive gifts by him are attested at OLYMPIA (Paus. 5.24.4 and 5.10.5). Many works of art were displayed on his triumph in Rome (Livy *Per.* 52), after which the city itself and many Italian towns were flooded with statues and pieces of Greek art. This generosity indeed helped Mummius to achieve the censorship in 142, together with Scipio Aemilianus. Some sources mention disagreements between the two censors, due to the contrast between Mummius' plebeian origins and Scipio's ancestral nobility.

Some authors, such as Favorinus (*Or.* 37.42 in the Dionian corpus), represent Mummius as a brutish ignorant, incapable of understanding artistic values. Be that as it may, the Corinthian booty represented an important moment in the formation of the distinctive eclecticism of the Romans' artistic tastes and in the development of their passion for art collecting.

SEE ALSO: Booty, Greece and Rome; Corinth.

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## Mummy portraits

VÉRONIQUE DASEN

Egyptian mummy portraits, painted on a variety of materials, but mainly hardwood (cypress, cedar, linden, fig) or canvas, offer unique surviving examples of Greco-Roman panel portraiture, highly praised by ancient writers (Plin. *HN* 35.118), and preserved thanks to the dry Egyptian climate.

Throughout the world, about one thousand mummy portraits are known, but most of them were separated from the mummy itself, and few come from archaeological contexts. Their collection started in the nineteenth century, but only slowly attracted scholarly interest. The common expression "Fayyum portraits" derives from their main place of discovery in the Fayyum region (Hawara, er-Rubayat, Tebtynis), but they were also recovered from other sites, such as Antinoopolis or Akhmim, in Middle Egypt, and as far up the Nile as Thebes and Deir el-Medina. When the archaeological context is missing, the provenience may be guessed by the shape of the wrappings, the cut of the panel (stepped, round-topped, or angled; Corcoran 1996: 44–5), and the iconographic style.

Their production ranges over more than three centuries, from ca. 30 CE into the mid-fourth century (Borg in Doxiadis 1995: 229–33; Borg 1996). More precise dating is based on the archaeological context, when it exists; the design of mummy wrappings and decoration, in conjunction with accessories worn by the portrayed person, which copied contemporary imperial fashions (hairstyle, jewelry, dress); and the painterly style. An evolution may be traced from meticulous naturalism to a more formulaic style in the later production.

Mummy portraits embody Greek painting methods. The earliest portraits are painted in encaustic, whereby pigments are mixed with beeswax, allowing easy reworking. Tempera, in which pigments are mixed with egg, was already used in Pharaonic Egypt. Both are



Figure 1 Mummy portrait of a woman. Fayyum, 1st–4th century (encaustic wax on wood). © Giraudon/The Bridgeman Art Library.

applied on prepared grounds, usually primed with gesso, a plaster mixture, sometimes showing a preliminary sketch. Several portraits combine both methods, and are enriched with gilding and stucco decoration.

Contemporary painted plaster and linen masks should be included in the category, as their features and accessories correspond, in a three-dimensional technique (raised head, vertical head and shoulders), to board and linen portraits (Aubert and Cortopassi 2004).

The social status and ethnic identity of the deceased has been a matter of debate. Men and women are equally represented, with a few infants and children. Only the upper class could afford the cost of such elaborate funerary effects. Few portraits bear names, usually in Greek, but they may not designate Greek settlers as they are also common among Hellenized Egyptians (Corcoran 1996: 66–8).

If the technique and style of the portraits are Greek, the decoration of the mummy is consistent with Egyptian burial traditions, and may point to a native Hellenized elite, though other members of the multicultural society of Roman Egypt may have adopted Egyptian practices.

The portraits are meant to record a personal identity. The deceased are individualized by distinct physiognomic features, but few exhibit bodily marks (warts, moles, scars), indicating the wish to provide an idealized image of the deceased. The degree of realism varies according to time and place. Beside portraits probably painted from life, standardized ones were produced. Third-century portraits from er-Rubayat thus show very similar features, and seem to have been ready-made; the pre-painted boards were reworked to provide the necessary likeness. When the physical evidence of the mummy is available, the results of the comparison are mixed (Filer 1997: 121–6): the deceased may correspond to the features of the portrait, or the portrait was made at much a younger age; some portraits were overpainted in order to adjust to the physical appearance at death, but few depict ageing persons. Symbolic completeness was preferred to actual likeness. In one case, the portrait of a man was inserted in the wrappings of a woman (Thompson 1982: 14–15, fig. 14).

Panel portraits were perhaps shown in the house (Gschwantler 2000: fig. 8; Doxiadis 1995: fig. 69). At death they were modified: the panel was cut to be inserted in the wrappings of mummies. Added gilding (stucco jewelry, lips, funerary wreath) relates to the new divine status of the deceased, also evidenced by the decoration of the mummy (Corcoran 1996). A few portraits with folding doors or on altars may refer to a domestic cult of the dead (Gschwantler 2000: fig. 9; Walker 2000: no. 78; Doxiadis 1995: no. 78).

The artists who made the portraits are anonymous. Mastery of encaustic technique suggests a Greek provenience for the first generation. Despite the lack of signature, attribution to distinct hands is possible.