

AL7

Week 3, Monday

The Egyptian mummification process

HPAH5007/6007

Ancient Lives in Death

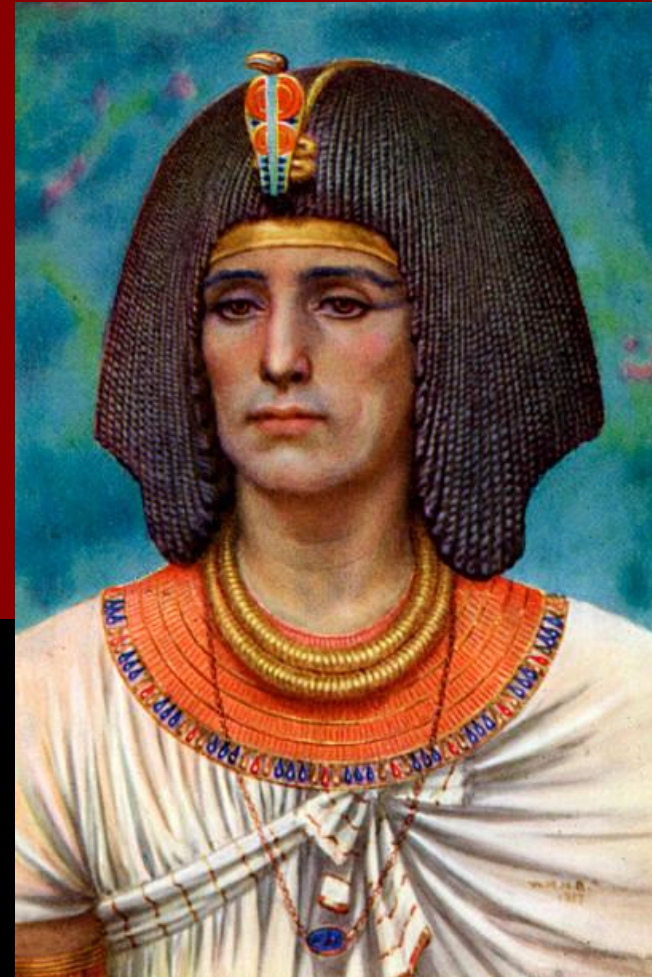
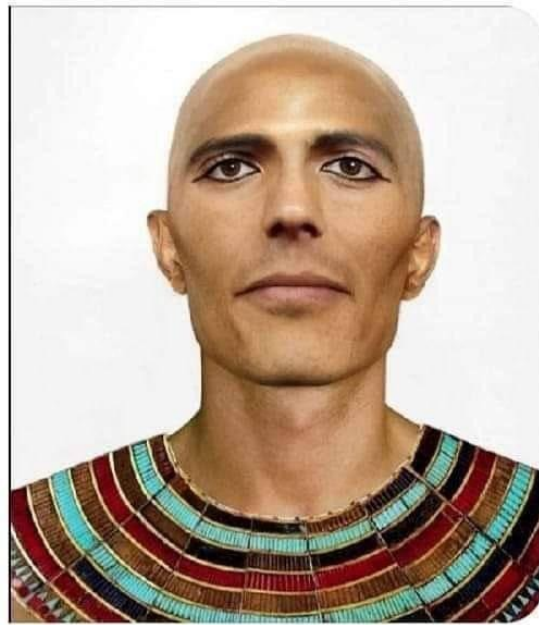
Dr Katharina Zinn

Mummies

**Seti I (Cairo Museum
CG6107; JE2)**

Abydos

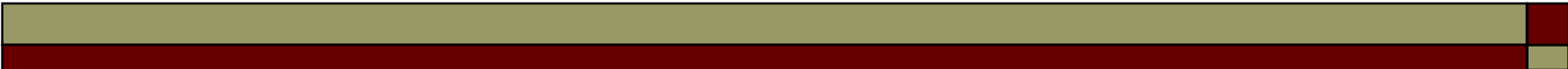




Reconstructing the
face of Seti I
WHY?

Mummy

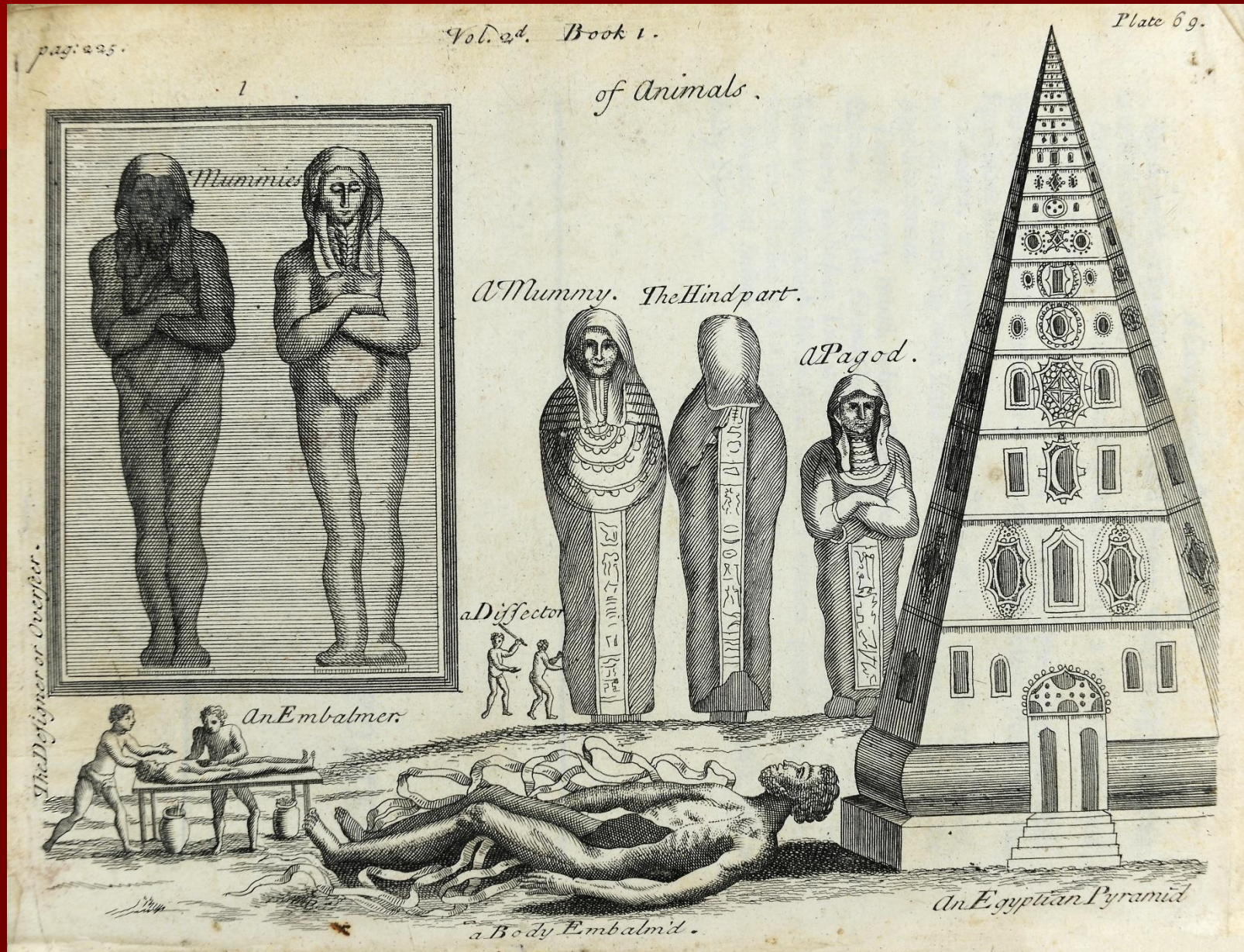
- word 'mummy': not of Egyptian origin, derived from the Arabic *mumiyah* مومياء, (= body preserved by wax or bitumen) via the medieval Latin *mumia*
- Applicable to many modern – especially European languages
 - German: Mumie
 - English: mummy
 - French: momie
 - Spanish: momia
 - Russian: мумия



Mummy Studies

- First interest: Ptolemaic Greece
- Mummies as curiosa and pseudoscientific novelties

A compleat history of druggs, written in French by Monsieur Pomet

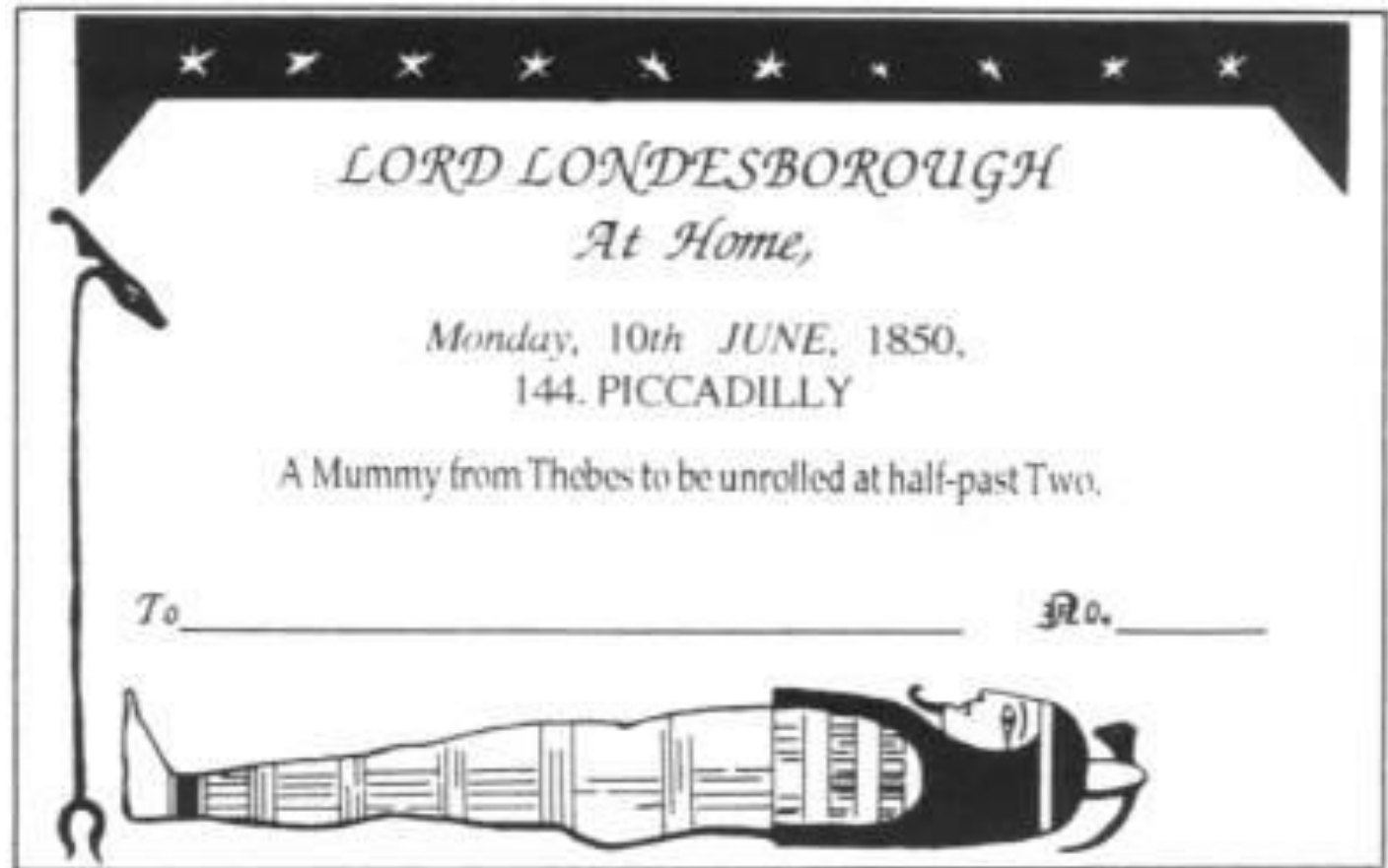


A compleat history of druggs, written in French by Monsieur Pomet : to which is added what is further observable on the same subject, from Messrs. Lemery and Tournefort, divided into three classes, vegetable, animal and mineral, with their use in physick, chymistry, pharmacy and several other arts : illustrated with above four hundred copper cutts : done into English from the originals. . London: 1712.

- Mummies as pseudoscientific novelties

Mummies in the Occident: Mummies as souvenir and curiosa

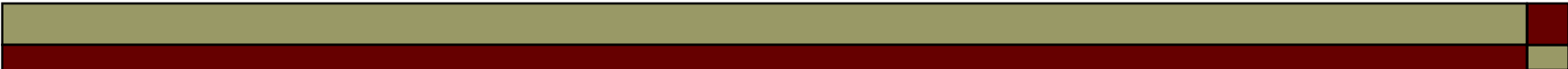
- Unwrapping of a mummy as High Society event



Mummies in the Occident: Mumiyah as (cannibal) medicine

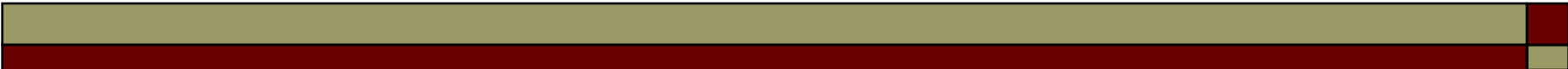
- ❑ Arabic physicians believed mummy resin as being curative and medicamental (knew medicative character of natural bitumen)
- ❑ Good conservation of body → idea: body itself has mustic and preserving powers
- ❑ Trade with mummies to Europe
- ❑ Processed into medicine





Mummy Studies

- ❑ First interest: Ptolemaic Greece
- ❑ Mummies as curiosa and pseudoscientific novelties
- ❑ structured scientific study from beginning 20th cent.:
 - 1901 medical study of Egyptian
 - 1903 first X-ray - Grafton Elliot Smith and Howard Carter – Thutmose IV
 - No CT scanning – digitally unwrap
 - 3D modelling
- ❑ 1992: First World Congress on Mummy Studies (technology and methods)



Mummy Studies

- ❑ Egyptology
- ❑ Medicine / biomedicine
- ❑ Pathology
- ❑ Archaeology / bioarchaeology
- ❑ Forensic studies
- ❑ Anthropology
- ❑ Reception and literature studies

MUMMIES IN ANCIENT EGYPT

Why a mummy in the ancient Egyptian culture?

- ❑ Preservation of the body for the afterlife
- ❑ Body as important medium which was necessary to continue to exist after death as vessel to hold the other constituent parts of the self
- ❑ Since when???
- Latest mid 4th millennium BC

Earliest evidence

Ginger - A reconstructed Egyptian grave-pit

- Predynastic Egyptian Man: Said to be from Gebelein, Egypt, Late Predynastic period (3400 BC)
- bodies placed in shallow desert graves (direct contact with sand) → natural mummificationno decay (hot dry sand absorbed water) → bacteria cannot breed and cause decay → body is preserved

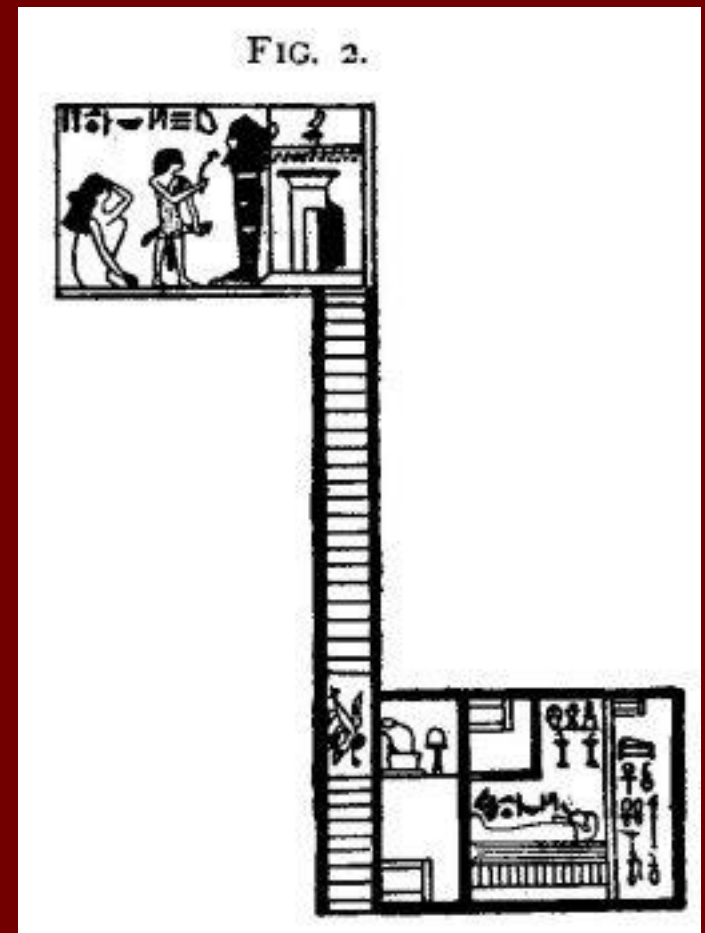


Earliest evidence

- Body of a woman
- Cemetery of Hierakonpolis
- Mid-Predynastic Period = about 3500 BC
- Artificial preservation of the body
- Was wrapped in linen and treated with resin



Ba returning to tomb (from funerary papyrus Neb-Qed)

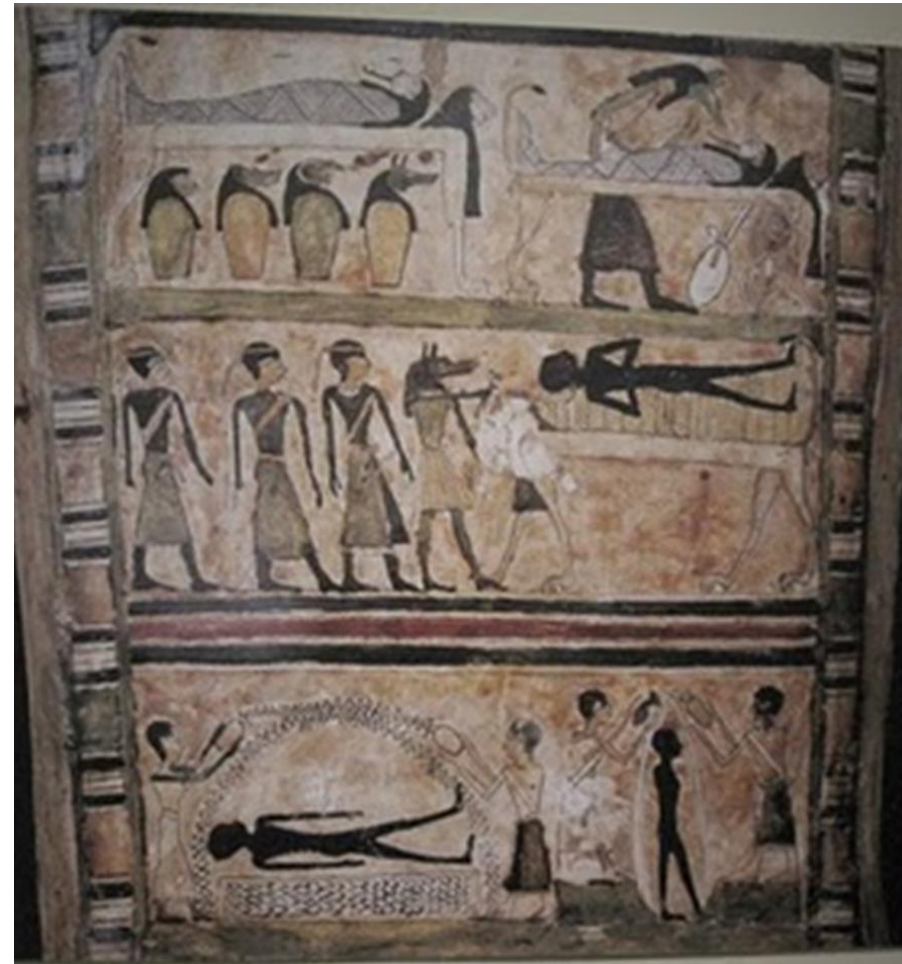


How do we know?

- ❑ mummified remains themselves
- ❑ sources relating to mummification include inscriptions and funerary illustrations, but these generally concentrate on methods of anointing and wrapping
- ❑ earliest detailed descriptions of mummification = Classical authors
 - Herodotus in the fifth century b.c. - Histories: vol.2, 86–88
 - Diodorus Siculus in the first century b.c. - Universal History: vol. 1, 7

How do we know?

- We have the mummies, can research them
- BUT: only few texts describing the procedure
- Coffin of priest Djedbastiuefankh
 - Below: washing of corpse
 - Above: body lying on lion-shaped table with natron, attended by embalmers (one = jackal-headed Anubis)
 - top: finished mummy



TT23 Tjay (Sheikh abd al-Qurna, Luxor) - scribe of royal dispatchers under Merenptah





Nesperennub: priest in the temple of Karnak
(Thebes), fan-bearer to the King
BM EA 30720, 22nd dyn. (800 BC)

Outer Coffin



Inner case



Nesperennub

CT-Scan: jewellery and amulets



- As protection and to give power in the afterlife
- large pectoral (chest ornament): winged sun-disc
- stone 'heart' in the shape of a scarab beetle
- wedjat eye on his throat

**bowl stuck to back of head
runny resin should be
caught by bowl, resin
cooled → bowl got stuck,
workers couldn't get it off,
wrapped up the body
quickly, hoping nobody
would notice**



**model of Nesperennub's
face, made from a copy
of his skull. Pegs were
put into the skull copy to
show how deep the flesh
should be. Then clay was
used to make the skin,
muscles and eyes.**



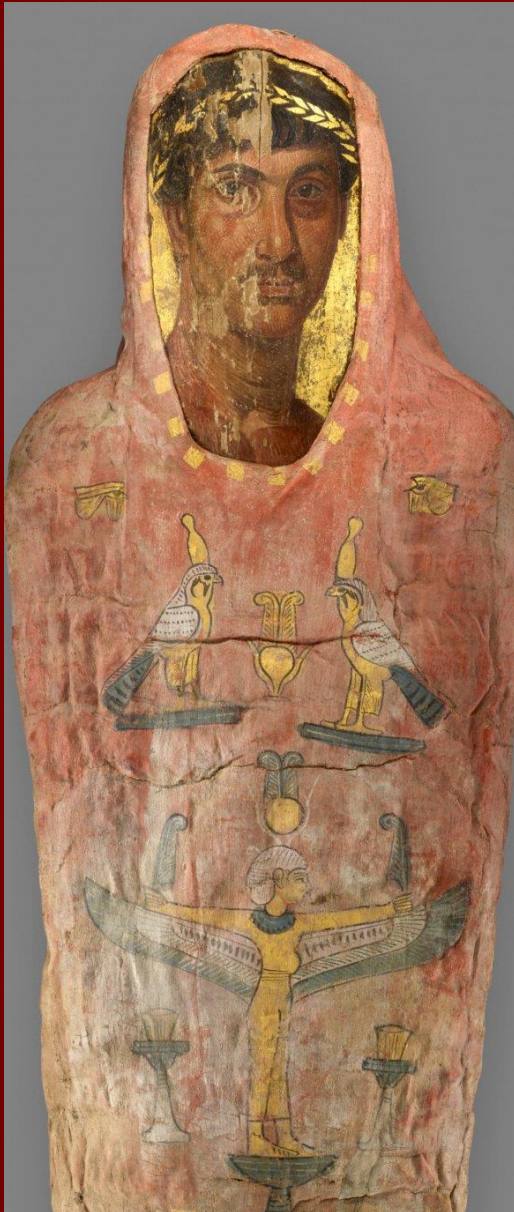
Mummification process



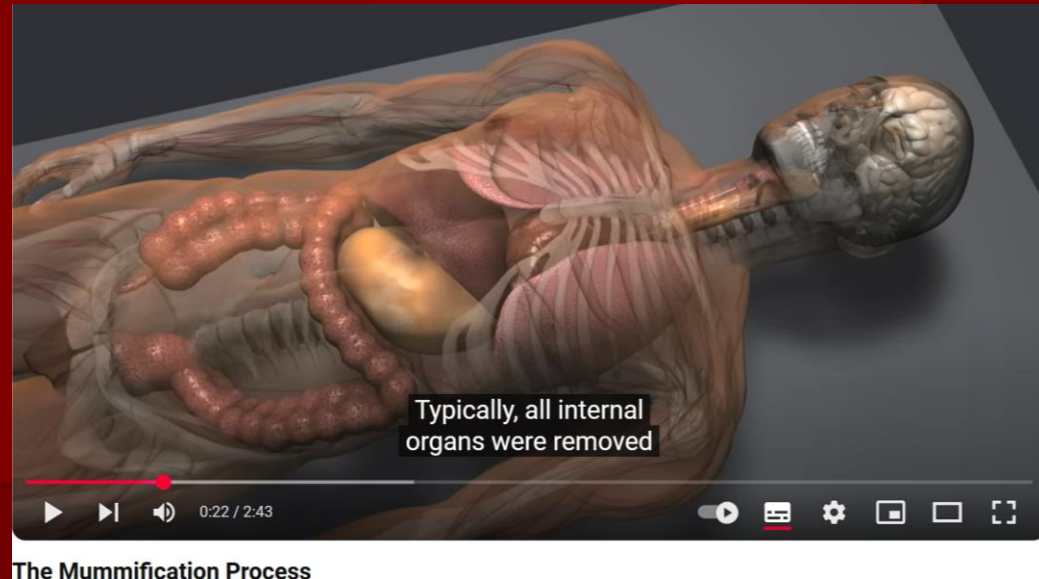
image courtesy Seth Smoot

HERITAGE-KEY.COM

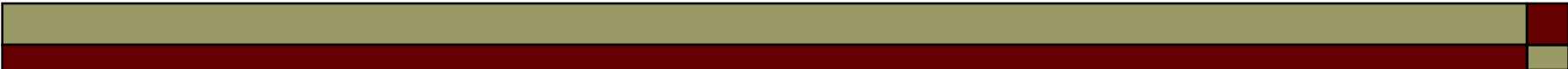
Herakleides – Getty Museum



How to make Herakleides' mummy?



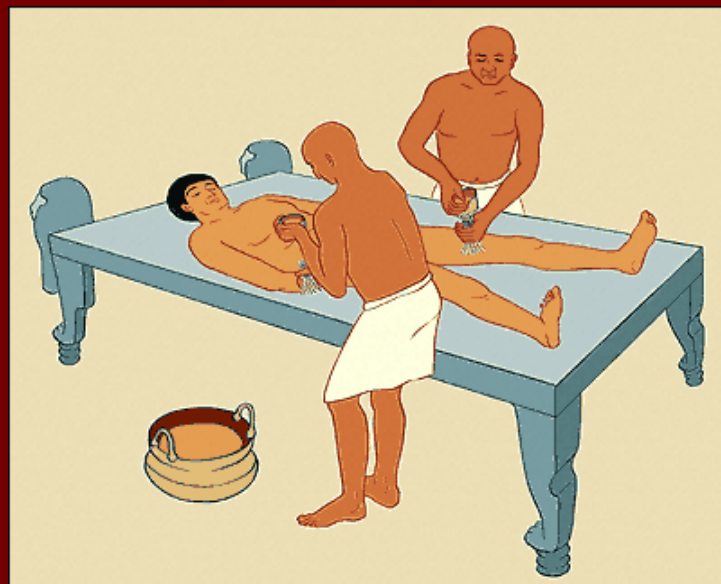
The Mummification Process



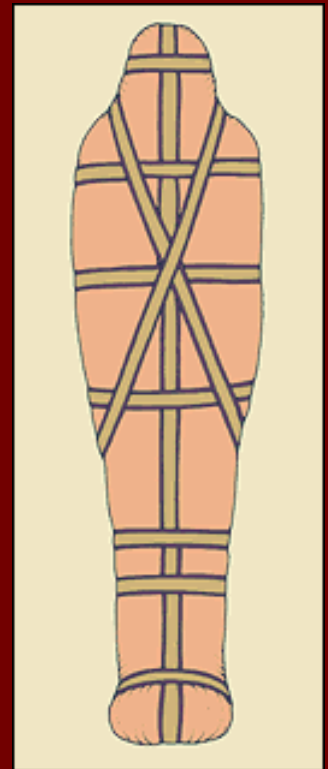
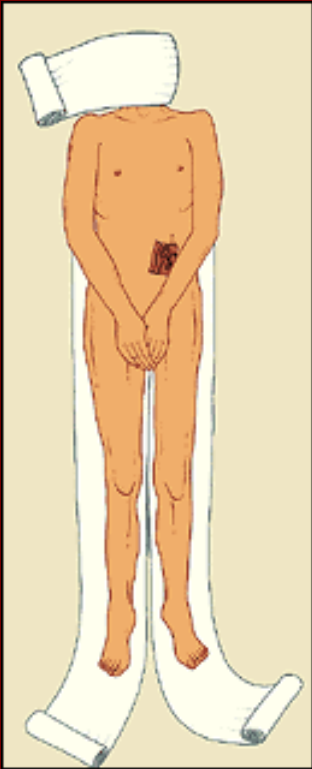
Place of mummification

- Ibw – place of purification
- Tent-like structure near the Nile, west-bank
 - Need for water

Mummification



Wrapping



Mummification as ritual: priest reads spells out loud



Ginger - A reconstructed Egyptian grave-pit

- Ethical and conservation issues with display of mummies in museums



Ethical issues



Cyfarthfa Castle Merthyr Tydfil

