

E12, Week 4 – Friday

**Funerary culture in the  
modern reception: I hate  
mummies!**

HPAH5085/6085

Exhibiting the Past: Ancient Egypt, death  
and modern representation

Dr Katharina Zinn

# Egyptomania :



# What is Egyptomania?

---

- ❑ widespread enthusiasm for all things ancient Egyptian driven by interest in ancient Egyptian culture
- ❑ heavily influenced art, architecture, literature, fashion since Rome Empire
- ❑ surges in popularity
  - Enlightenment
  - Grand tour
  - Napoleonic era: expedition to Egypt with scientific interest and decipherment of hieroglyphs)
  - discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb

# When do we see Egyptomania?

---

- Roman conquest of Egypt in 30 BC
  - Romans adopting Egyptian and Egyptianizing motifs (obelisks and sphinxes), demonstrate power over + fascination with exotic culture → incorporation of gods (Isis, Osiris, Serapis as assimilation)
- 18th and 19th centuries
  - Scientific and military expeditions (Napoleon's campaigns, Lepsius' expedition for Prussia) → extensive documentation / excavation
  - decipherment of the Rosetta Stone - race between Champollion and Thomas Young) → surge in scholarship **and** popularization of Egyptian styles (architecture, decorative arts)
- 20th century
  - discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb in 1922 generated a major global obsession, influencing everything from architecture and art deco styles to popular culture and fashion

# Egyptomania

```
graph TD; A[Egyptomania] --- B[General obsession expressed in arts, architecture, fashion, literature]; A --- C[Tutmania]; A --- D[Mummymania]; A --- E[Pyramidiomania];
```

General obsession expressed in  
arts, architecture, fashion,  
literature

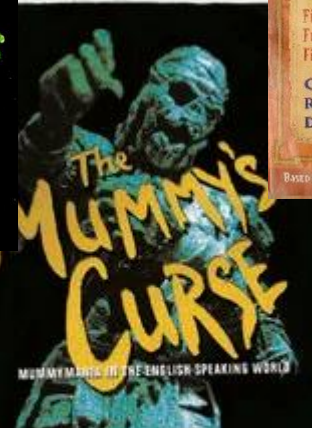
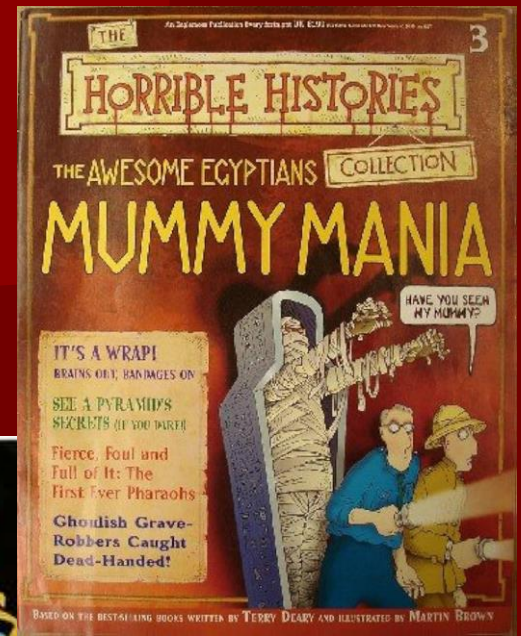
Tutmania

Mummymania

Pyramidiomania

In any case – **Cultural impact:** Egyptomania has led to the adoption of Egyptian motifs and inspired new artistic and literary works, often drawing on the romantic and fantastical elements associated with ancient Egypt

# Mummymania



# Be aware dealing with mummies can be contentious

- <https://hyperallergic.com/795453/forget-mummy-its-mummified-person-now-museums/>



HYPERALLERGIC

Membership 

News

## Forget “Mummy,” It’s “Mummified Person” Now

Some museums are opting for new language to describe the preserved individuals in their collections who were once living humans.

 Rhea Nayyar January 27, 2023





Coffin base and mummy of senior priest Iufenamun at the National Museum of Scotland (photo by Osama Shukir Muhammad Amin via Wikimedia)

### POPULAR

What Do New Yorkers Think of Anish Kapoor’s “Mini-Bean”?

US Tourist Reportedly Vandalizes Jesus Statue in Jerusalem Church

The Buddhist Monk Who Brought Mindfulness to the West

4,000-Year-Old Mummy May Be Egypt’s Oldest

Hans Hartung, No Matter What They Say

# Mummies

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

**Abydos**



# Mummy: Elderly Lady

Queen Tiye,  
Wife of  
Amenhotep  
III and  
mother of  
Akhenaton,  
grandmother  
Tutankhamun



# 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



# Research on mummies



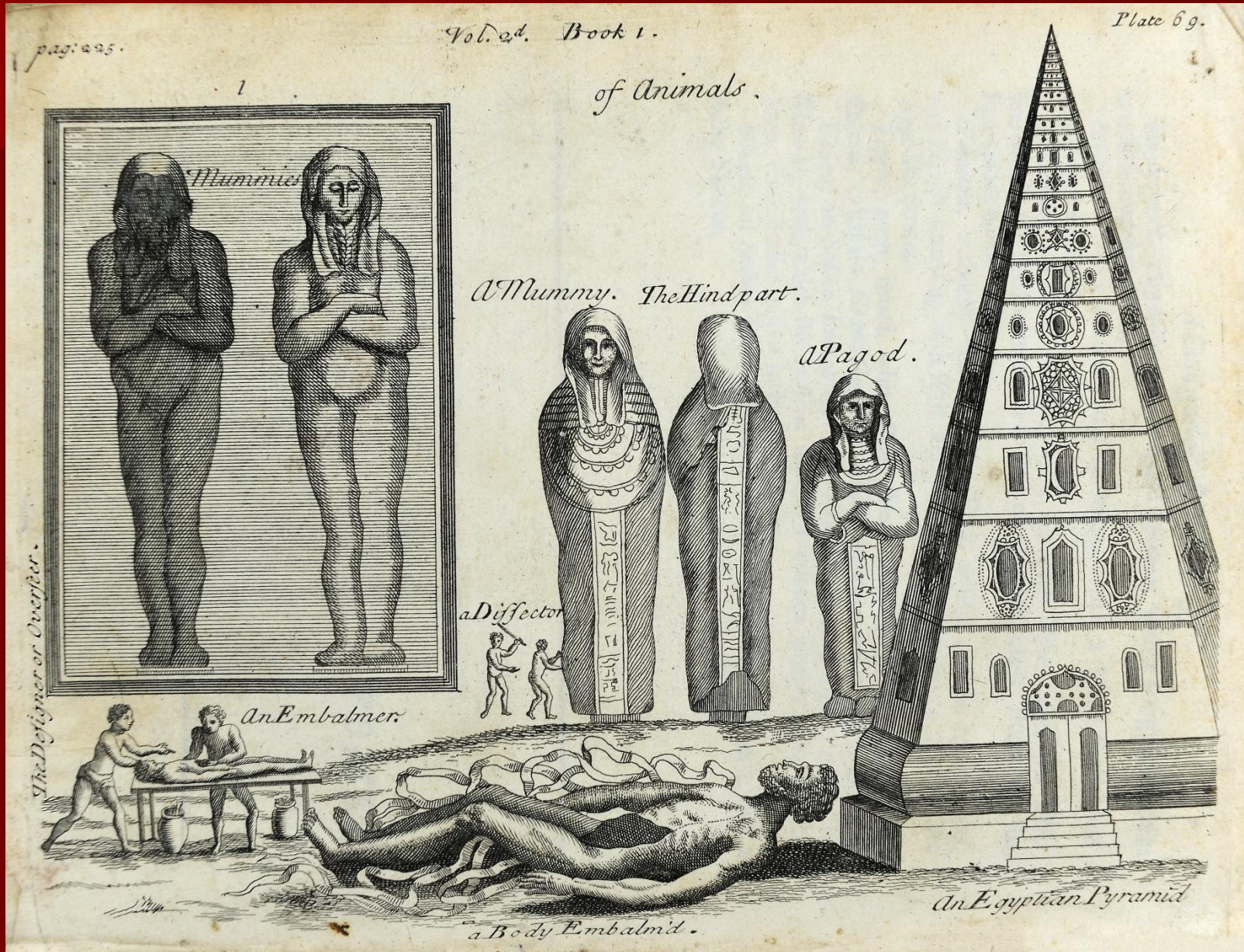


**Seriously, mummies?**

---



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



## Making fake mummies

Napoleon in Egypt Studying a Mummy, Print by E. Fiorello



Are you REALLY interested, or is  
this the ONLY extend of your  
curiosity?



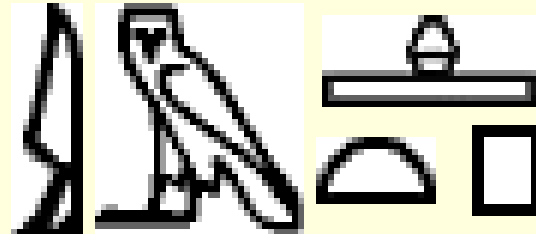
# From Fiction to Academia

## High Priest Imhotep

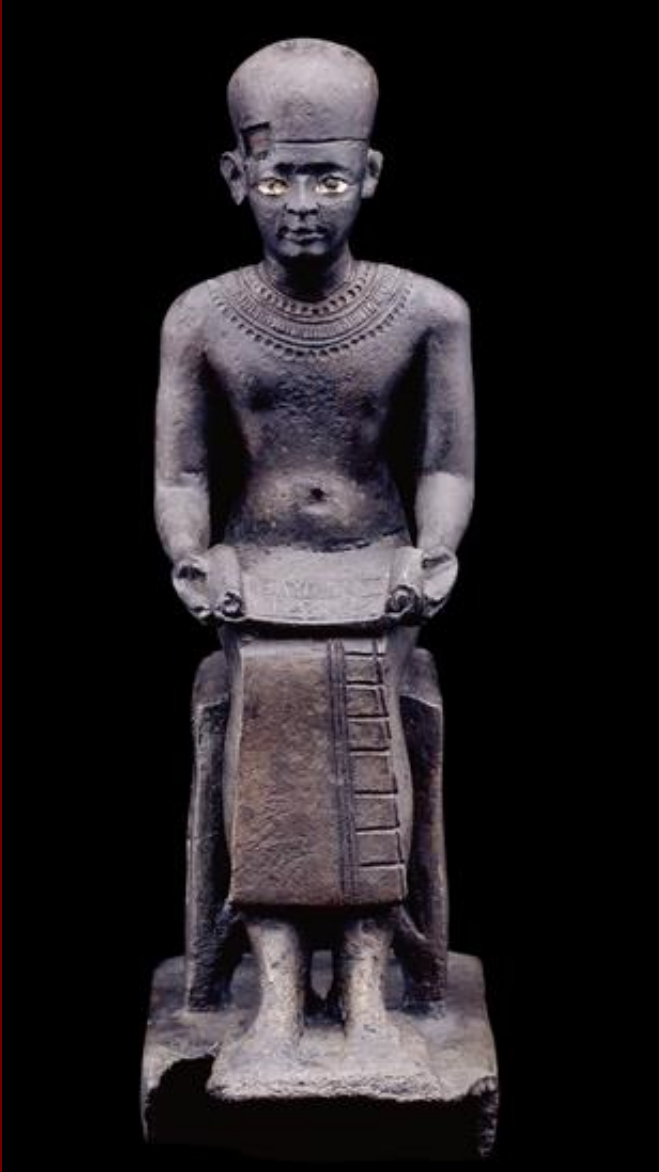


## Real historic people

- *jy-m-Htp* (Imhotep)
- Common ancient Egyptian name
- Means "he who come in peace"



# The most famous Imhotep



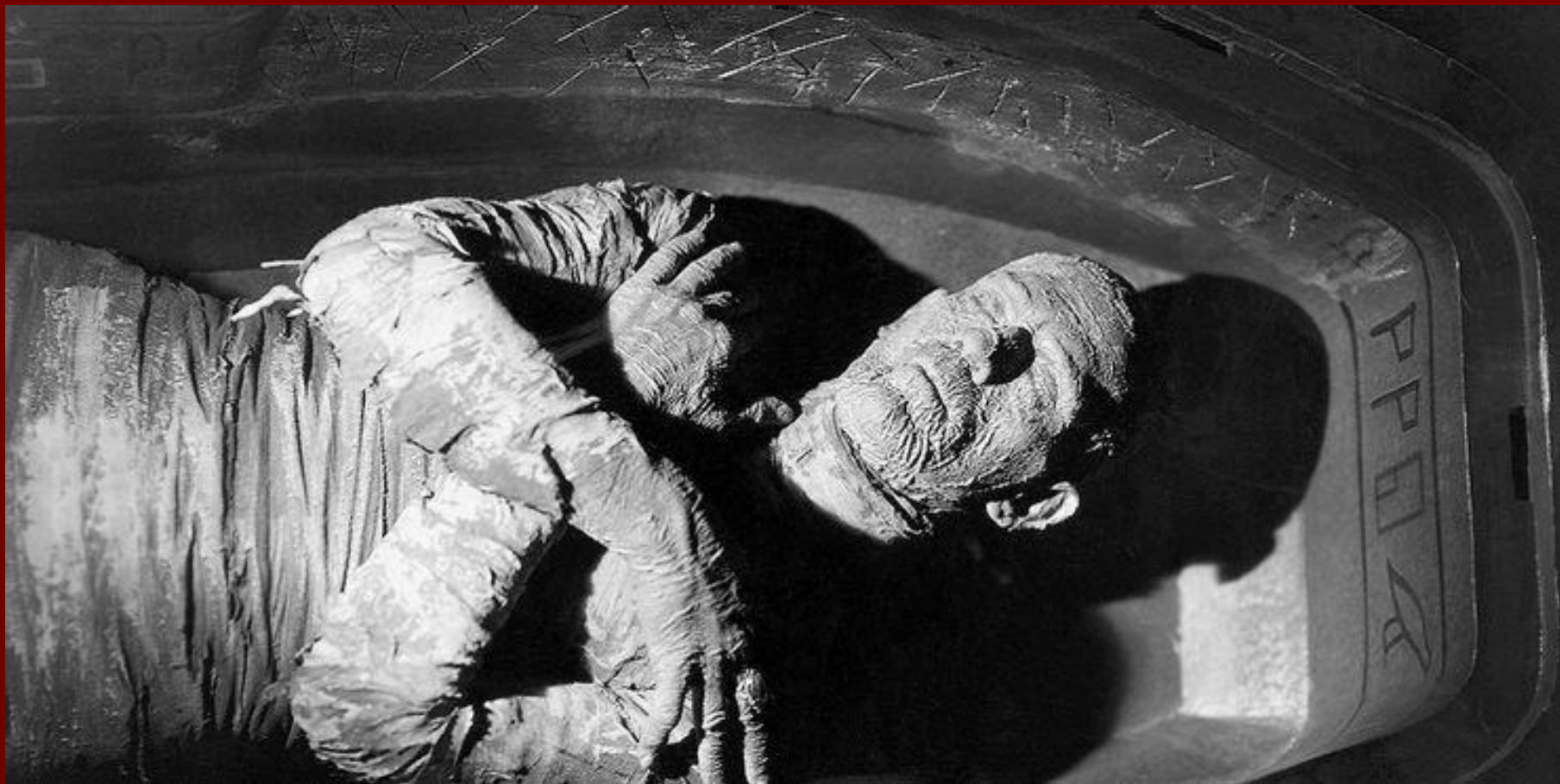
- BM EA 63800, Late Period, 6th-4th century BC
- Imhotep: vizier and architect to King Djoser in around 2700 BC, credited with building Step Pyramid at Saqqara (first monumental structure in stone)
- wrote a book of 'instructions' as one of THE wise Egyptian men

Chancellor of the king of Lower Egypt, pre-eminent after the king of Upper Egypt, hereditary prince, controller of the palace, great seer [High Priest of Heliopolis], Imhotep, builder and sculptor.



# The Mummy (1932)

## Boris Karlof



# The Mummy's Hand (1940)



# The Mummy's Tomb (1942)



# The Mummy's Curse (1944)



# The Mummy's Ghost (1944)



# Abbott & Costello Meet The Mummy (1955)



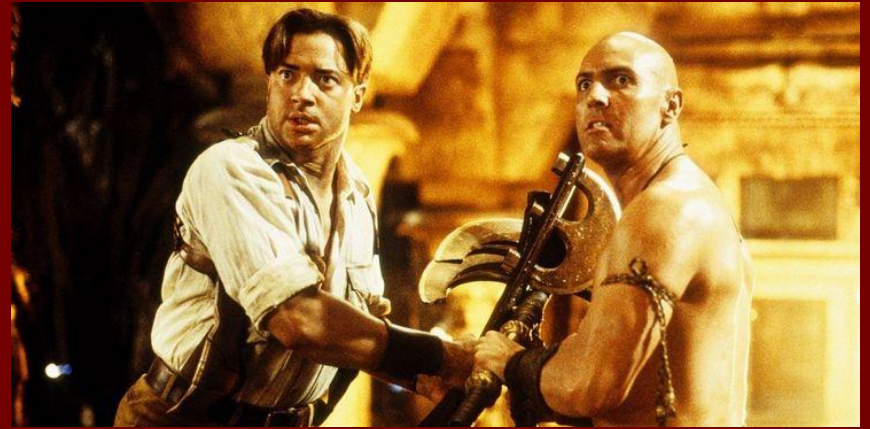
# Themes in mummy reception (literature and film)

---

( Jasmin Day. 2006. the Mummy's Curse)

- ❑ Sex and death
- ❑ Fear and loathing
- ❑ Giggles and goosebumps
- ❑ Attraction and repulsion
  
- ❑ Add: mysticism, imaginary / imagination
  
- ❑ → for publishers and productions companies:  
money, money, money

# Modern (known) mummy movies (1999, 2001, 2017, 2008)

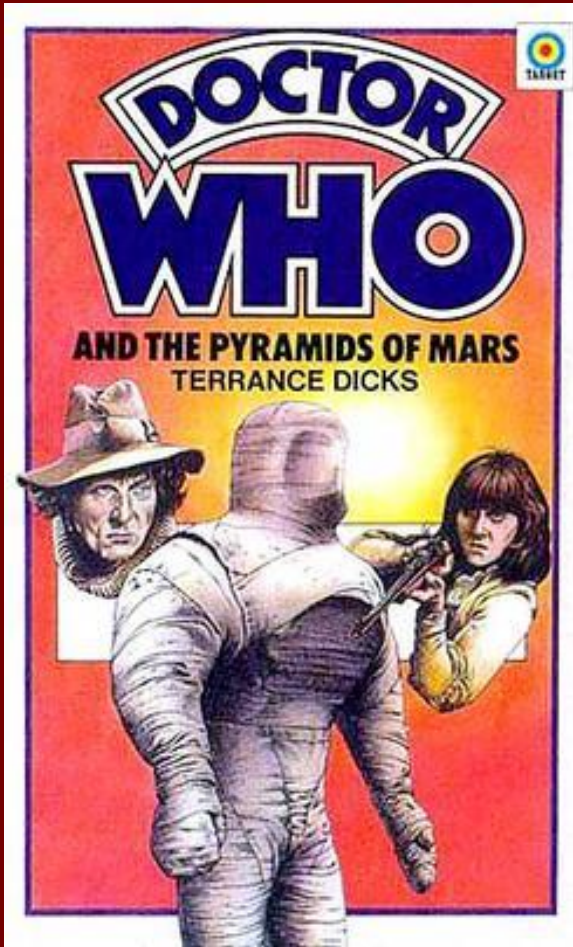


# Luc Besson's The Extraordinary Adventures of Adèle Blanc-Sec (2010)



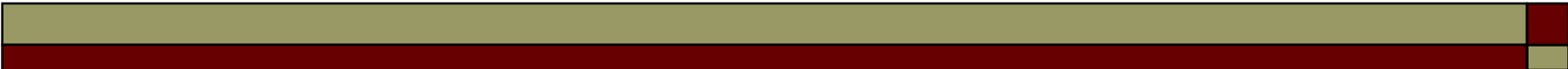
# Dr Who

## Pyramids on Mars (1975)



## The Mummy on the Orient Express (2014)





# To do!!!!

---

- Comment on Edgar Allan Poe's Some words with a mummy