



# Faces of Immortality

Egyptian Mummy Masks, Painted Portraits,  
and Canopic Jars in the  
Kelsey Museum of Archaeology

By Margaret Cool Root

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**By Margaret Cool Root**

**Kelsey Museum of Archaeology  
The University of Michigan  
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## Preface

Three years ago the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology launched a program of special exhibitions with a generous loan of Greek vases from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Our purpose was to bring to Ann Arbor objects that represent aspects of ancient art and civilization not illustrated by The University of Michigan collections. In doing so, we hoped to expand the resources available for research and teaching programs of the University and also to provide the community broader exposure to the cultural achievements of the ancient world.

As the volume and intensity of the museum's research and cataloging activity increased, however, it became ever more apparent that the holdings of the Kelsey Museum deserved a larger share of public attention. With this in mind, in 1977 we planned an exhibition of Roman portraiture combining examples in the University collections with others borrowed from major American museums. Soon afterward, the exhibits program focused more exclusively on the unique resources at hand, including not only the museum's collections but also its archaeological expeditions. To date, three exhibitions have emphasized the field operations at Seleucia in Iraq, the Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai, and Carthage in Tunisia, while three others have highlighted aspects of the collections (*Islamic Art*, *The Gods of Egypt in the Graeco-Roman Period*, and *Guardians of the Nile: Sculptures from Karanis in the Fayoum*). Through them we have endeavored to share with the University and Ann Arbor communities the results of research carried out by University of Michigan scholars and students during the past half century.

The current exhibition, *Faces of Immortality*, focuses again on Egypt of the Graeco-Roman Period, an era represented in exceptional variety and abundance by the Kelsey collections. This material will henceforth

receive due attention at the Kelsey, for in January of 1979 it was the museum's good fortune to welcome to its staff as assistant curator of collections, Margaret Cool Root, a specialist in ancient Near Eastern art. In a remarkably short time she has familiarized herself with the goals and collections of the museum and has made her presence felt in many positive ways, not least in the preparation of this exhibition, which presents and publishes for the first time the Kelsey's important mummy portraits and Canopic jars. We look forward with genuine enthusiasm to her future contributions to the research, teaching, and exhibits programs of the museum.

As every curator knows, the mounting of an exhibition depends upon the collaborative efforts of many individuals. To Ms. Root's acknowledgment of the members of the Kelsey staff I should like to add my own sincere thanks. With hard work and good cheer they have seen the museum through nine special exhibitions in the course of three years. It hardly needs to be said that without them this program could not be maintained.

Elaine K. Gazda  
*Associate Curator of Collections and  
Acting Director*

## Acknowledgments

The idea of a special exhibition of the Roman Period mummy masks in the Kelsey Museum's collections was suggested to me by Amy Rosenberg, assistant curator in conservation at the museum. Ms. Rosenberg had studied, cleaned, and repaired the plaster masks some time ago. Her careful and interesting observations on technical aspects of their manufacture and conservation sparked my own enthusiasm for embarking on the project. The eventual decision to include additional material in the exhibition necessitated a great deal of work on her part which was all performed under severe time limitations and for which I am extremely grateful.

Preparations for the exhibition and catalogue were aided in countless ways by Jill Brinnon Bace, museum registrar, Kathleen Font, museum secretary, and Pamela Reister, museum typist. In addition to the assistance of generously offered expertise and energy (without which this manuscript would never have reached the press), each has provided spontaneous warmth and support.

The Kelsey Museum's "Faces of Immortality" fix you with timeless gaze on the pages to follow through the photographic wizardry of Fred Anderegg. In the gallery itself, our Faces will achieve new life through installations executed by David Slee. As this goes to press, his work on the exhibition is just beginning. For whatever is successful about its installation credit will be due his ingenuity and artistry.

The assistance of Merrienne Timko, a graduate student in the Ph.D. Program in the History of Art at The University of Michigan, facilitated research on the Canopic texts. In this context we both gratefully acknowledge advice from Mark Ciccarello, Egyptologist for the Epigraphic Survey of the Oriental

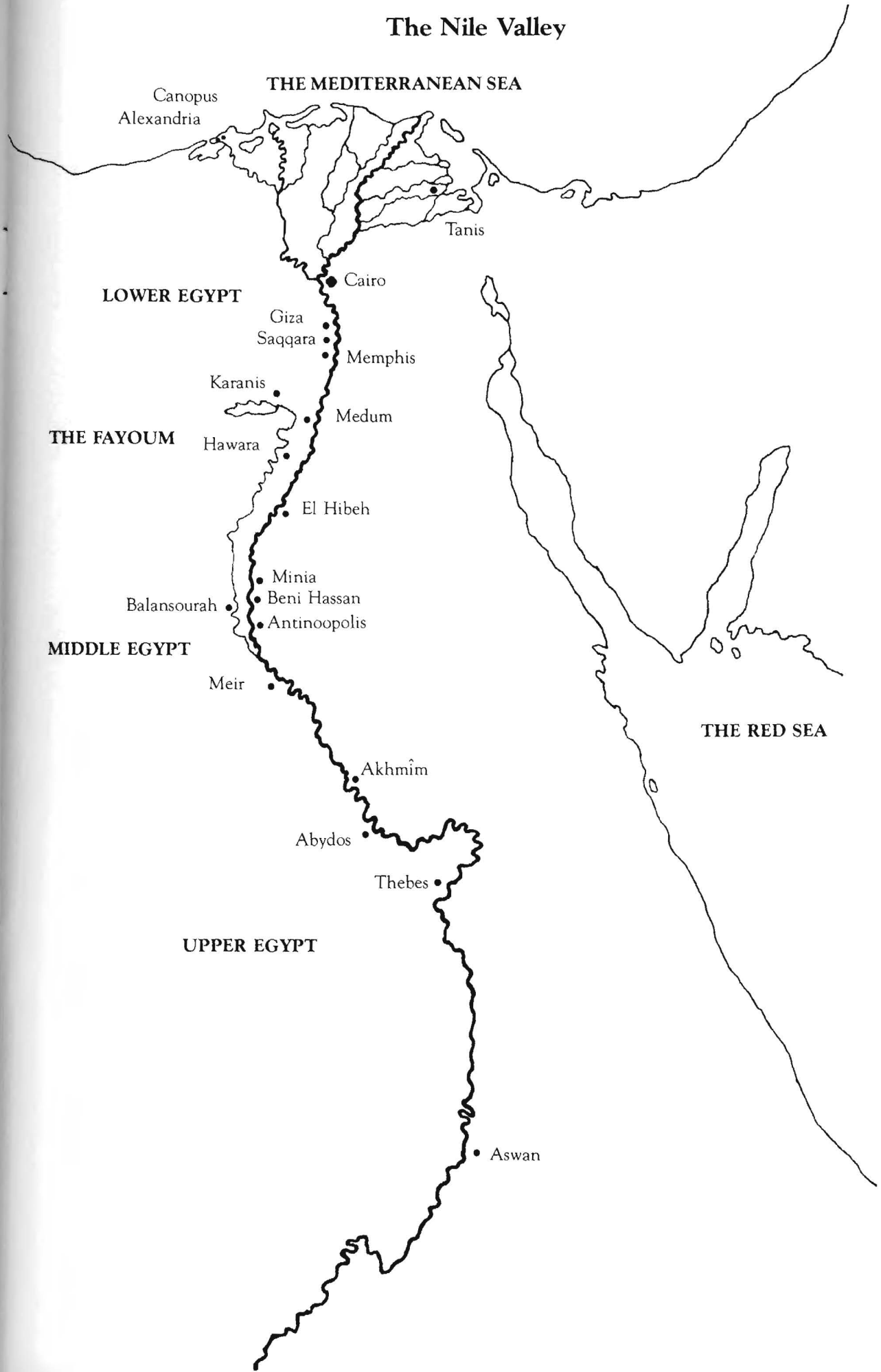
Institute, University of Chicago, and Charles R. Krahmalkov, Professor of Ancient Near Eastern Languages, The University of Michigan.

This exhibition owes a real debt to Elaine K. Gazda, associate curator of collections and acting director of the Kelsey Museum. She has ushered me through all the processes involved in my first such enterprise—while always taking care to allow decisions to be mine.

Finally, I should like to express my sense of gratitude to John Griffiths Pedley, director of the Kelsey Museum, for the tremendous personal and professional commitment he has invested in the museum. The vitality of his commitment has created an atmosphere in which exhibitions become rewarding and cooperative intellectual ventures.

Margaret Cool Root  
*Assistant Curator of Collections*

# The Nile Valley



THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Canopus  
Alexandria

Tanis

LOWER EGYPT

Cairo

Giza  
Saqqara

Memphis

Karanis

Medum

THE FAYOUM

Hawara

El Hibeh

Minia

Balansourah

Beni Hassan

Antinoopolis

MIDDLE EGYPT

Meir

Akhmîm

Abydos

Thebes

UPPER EGYPT

Aswan

THE RED SEA

## Chronological Table\*

### Early Dynastic Period

Dyn. I	3100-2890 BC
Dyn. II	2890-2686 BC

### Old Kingdom

Dyn. III	2686-2613 BC
Dyn. IV	2613-2494 BC
Dyn. V	2494-2345 BC
Dyn. VI	2345-2181 BC

### First Intermediate Period

Dyn. VII	2181-2173 BC
Dyn. VIII	2173-2160 BC
Dyn. IX-X	2160-2040 BC

### Middle Kingdom

Dyn. XI	2040-1991 BC
Dyn. XII	1991-1786 BC

### Second Intermediate Period

Dyn. XIII-XVII	1786-1558 BC
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### New Kingdom

Dyn. XVIII	
(Tuthmoside)	1558-1303 BC
Dyn. XIX	
(Ramesside)	1303-1200 BC
Dyn. XX	
(Ramesside)	1200-1085 BC

### Late Dynastic Period

Dyn. XXI	1085-945 BC
Dyn. XXII	940-717 BC
Dyn. XXIII	817-730 BC
Dyn. XXIV	730-715 BC
Dyn. XXV	760-656 BC
Dyn. XXVI	
(Saite)	664-525 BC
Dyn. XXVII	
(Persian)	525-404 BC
Dyn. XXVIII	404-398 BC
Dyn. XXIX	398-378 BC
Dyn. XXX	378-341 BC

Second Persian Domination	341-330 BC
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Ptolemaic Period	332-30 BC
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### Roman Period

30 BC-AD 337

#### Julio-Claudians

[ Augustus	27 BC-AD 14
Tiberius	AD 14- 37
Gaius	AD 37- 41
Claudius	AD 41- 54
Nero	AD 54- 68

#### Flavians

[ Vespasian	AD 69- 79
Titus	AD 79- 81
Domitian	AD 81- 96
Nerva	AD 96- 98
Trajan	AD 98- 117
Hadrian	AD 117- 138

#### Antonines

[ Antoninus	
Pius	AD 138- 161
Marcus	
Aurelius	AD 161- 180
Commodus	AD 180- 192

#### Severans

[ Septimius	
Severus	AD 193- 211
Caracalla	AD 212- 217
Elagabalus	AD 218- 222
Severus	
Alexander	AD 222- 235
Aurelian	AD 270- 275
Diocletian	AD 284- 305
Constantine the Great	AD 312- 337

\*The approximate Dynastic Period dates given here are derived from W. K. Simpson in Hallo and Simpson, *The Ancient Near East* (1971) 299-301.

# **Introduction**

**Egyptian Mummy Masks,  
Painted Portraits, and  
Canopic Jars**

## Introduction

### Scope and Purpose of the Exhibition

The Kelsey Museum of Archaeology includes in its collections a series of seventeen unpublished plaster mummy masks dating to the period of Roman rule in Egypt. This rather large and representative sample of the genre, taken together with our three complete Fayoum portraits and fragments of three more (plus three instructive forgeries) presents a coherent corpus of works for exhibition as a group and publication in a fully illustrated catalogue. As the idea for such an exhibition and catalogue has germinated, its scope has expanded. It now includes additional objects from the Kelsey collections (also previously unpublished) which serve to link the nucleus of Roman Period masks and painted portraits to the conceptual tradition of more ancient Egyptian mummy portraiture—whence the Roman corpus emerges and upon which the impact of Roman taste is clearly a superimposition.

The related Kelsey material of pre-Roman date comprises a series of Canopic jars ranging from the Middle Kingdom to the Late Period (Cat. Nos. 1-6), one face from a wooden coffin probably of the Ptolemaic Period (Cat. No. 7), three cartonnage mummy masks of the Ptolemaic Period (Cat. Nos. 8-10), and one plaster mummy mask from the Middle Kingdom (Cat. No. 11).

Special exhibitions of collections of mummy masks and painted mummy portraits from Roman Egypt almost invariably present this material as a discrete phenomenon. The objects themselves are so strong, so intrinsically and instantly appealing and interesting, that they do not cry out for supporting material to foil them—either in an exhibition or in a publication. One result of the self-sufficiency of this Roman material is that its potential for discrete treatment allows us effectively to isolate it from the Egyptian sphere in which it developed. We study it often as Roman provincial art—but seldom as an extension of and an

elaboration upon Egyptian traditions. This is particularly unfortunate because, through the socio-political vicissitudes of Egyptian history down into the Roman Period, it was not least in the area of funerary ritual that Egyptian custom remained a vital and responsive force—maintained by the Egyptians themselves and adopted (if also adapted) by Greek and then Roman settlers.<sup>1</sup> We may deplore the degeneration in embalming techniques and burial practices which took place in the Roman Period; but the fact remains that our extant Egyptian embalming texts come down to us in copies dating to this era. And Roman Period editions of the *Book of the Dead* include new elements and new combinations of spells not found earlier—suggesting that the literary tradition continued to be a living one. Our own cultural bias tends to focus our scholarly inquiries on aspects of progress and change. Aspects of continuity are equally important, of course—and especially in the context of Egyptian cultural dynamics.

In the pages which follow, no radical reassessment of the scholarship on Roman Period mummy masks and painted portraits will challenge conventional approaches to the internal issues of their dating and style. Hopefully, however, their placement within the developmental context of Pharaonic traditions may stimulate worthwhile questions both of the earlier material and also of the Roman Period material itself.

### The Mummy Mask Tradition

Immortality amongst the ancient Egyptians was by no means a casually achieved state of being. The perpetuation of life after death was not the automatic reward of the righteous. It was the result of painstaking ritual procedures and elaborate precautions. The funerary beliefs and the related burial customs of the Egyptians evolved and accrued gradually over time; and it is not always possible to elucidate their origins and changing significances through the happy coincidence of a particular extant text which clearly relates to and explains the meaning of contemporaneous archaeological remains.<sup>2</sup> Generalizations are risky indeed when discussing such a complex subject. We can only say *caveat lector* and then proceed to navigate a path

through the material available to us.

Even as far back as the Old Kingdom it would seem that, among the nascent constructs of an approach to immortality, some special significance was attached specifically to the perpetuation of a facial image of the deceased on his mummified body. The concept of the mummy mask is first documented (if only rarely and experimentally) in the Old Kingdom. It is at this early period that we find the first examples of mummified remains upon which some decorative emphasis has been imposed upon the wrapped face of the deceased. One of the best preserved and earliest known examples is the so-called Medum Mummy of Ranofer, discovered by Petrie in 1891. The body was wrapped in layers of linen bandaging—with the outermost layer saturated with resin. This last layer was then molded to the body; and facial features were, furthermore, articulated with paint. This mummy apparently dates to Dyn. IV.<sup>3</sup>

Actual sculptural masks—formed independently of the body itself, and then placed over the mummy's face—are not documented during the Old Kingdom. But on a few known mummies of Dyn. IV, and on appreciably more from Dyn. V-VI, the bandaged head was covered with a special layer of plaster, thereby imparting a suggestion of sculptural quality to it.<sup>4</sup> The so-called reserve heads made of limestone which have been found in a number of Dyn. IV court burials seem to be sculptural representations of these Old Kingdom plaster head-casings rather than being intended as representations of the deceased as they appeared in life.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the reserve heads of both males and females depict individuals whose heads are covered with the close-fitting skull cap (often found on prepared mummies); and the rendering of musculature and facial features suggests in these remarkable sculptures a tautly muted aspect. Apparently, then, the reserve heads were intended as substitutes in case of damage to the actual wrapped and plaster-encased mummy head (as documented primarily from Dyn. V-VI). Their use almost exclusively in Dyn. IV indicates the probability that plaster-encased and decorated mummy heads were already a not-uncommon feature of Egyptian court

burials—and that our lack of a significant number from that period simply reflects a paucity of data.<sup>6</sup>

The evident importance of preserving an image of the face of the deceased which was actually affixed to (made a part of?) the body finds more consistent application during the Heracleopolitan Period (Dyn. IX-X) and the Middle Kingdom. At this time, the wrapped mummy head was frequently covered by a separately formed mask with strongly articulated facial features which were first formed in cartonnage (successive layers of coarse linen sandwiched between coats of plaster) and then painted.<sup>7</sup> Generally, these masks included only the head, wig, and throat area. But an example from Beni Hassan continues down almost the full length of the body—presaging the frequent use in the New Kingdom and later of cartonnage mummy cases with head and body covered in one continuous molded unit.<sup>8</sup> In addition to the life-sized cartonnage masks of the Middle Kingdom, a small number of miniature molded plaster faces are known from the same period (see Cat. No. 11).<sup>9</sup> They were placed over the face of the wrapped mummy and must have been the central element framed by a disproportionately large wig continued either in cartonnage or plaster around the plaster face.<sup>10</sup>

The separately formed mummy mask has a long history, beginning with these Middle Kingdom examples and extending all the way through the Ptolemaic Period into the era of Roman rule in Egypt. The famous mummy mask of King Tutankhamun finds its stylistic and conceptual context in this chain, even though it is made of beaten gold rather than cartonnage or plaster.<sup>11</sup> But in spite of this functional/conceptual continuity of mummy masks and in spite of a certain very basic formal similarity shared among masks from the Middle Kingdom through the Ptolemaic Period, their stylistic, iconographical, and qualitative variety is surprisingly great.

Cartonnage masks and accompanying anthropoid mummy cases of the Ramesside Period are, for instance, often sensitive facial studies, clearly custom-made by gifted artisans.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, the three cartonnage masks in the Kelsey collections (Cat. Nos. 8-10) exhibit a cursory, abstracted treatment of modeled



facial features (such as ears) which is characteristic of cartonnage masks of the late Ptolemaic Period.

Through an examination of these pieces one can appreciate the limitations of the cartonnage medium as practiced in a mass-production situation. These masks were formed over a positive sculptural model. On the interior of each mask the negative impression of the model is clearly visible. Successive layers of soaked linen were placed over the modeled surface, adjusted over its contours, and then allowed to dry, shrinking-to-form. Ultimately an external layer of plaster (sometimes quite thick) was then applied before the mask was gilded and painted.

A studio hack might have produced our Ptolemaic masks quite easily—for the clientele here was clearly interested more in the sumptuous look of the gilded surface than in the refinements of individually tooled features, which would have had to be applied while the mask was still damp on the form. It is one of those small ironies of history that these masks—made under Greek rule in Egypt and very possibly even for Greek inhabitants of Egypt—seem as a group to be the most abstractly conventionalized and formally stereotyped in the whole run of Egyptian mummy masks.

No comprehensive study has been made of the mummy mask tradition in Dynastic or Ptolemaic Egypt. The plaster and cartonnage masks of Roman times and the wooden panel portraits of the same period are by now the subjects of well-illustrated synthetic works.<sup>13</sup> But the earlier material remains curiously remote.

Many lines of inquiry present themselves. First, in terms of style and iconography, one would like to understand, for instance, how mummy masks of a given period relate to contemporaneous stone sculpture.<sup>14</sup> It would also be interesting to study various aspects of the formal and iconographical correlations between masks and outer coffin faces, either grouped as commissions of specific individuals<sup>15</sup> or more generally by region and/or period.<sup>16</sup> And one would like to know much more about regional variations and local workshop traditions of the masks themselves at a given period.<sup>17</sup>

Second, in terms of sociological aspects of mummy mask usage and

form, one would like to know more about whether (or to what extent) status differentials had an impact on use, quality, style, and degree of ideosyncratic definition during specific periods.<sup>18</sup>

Underlying all of these issues are more basic questions. What did the mummy masks mean to the Egyptians? To what extent can we discuss these conceptual precursors of the Roman Period masks and panel paintings as "portraits"?

### **Modes of Exact Likeness: Mask, Ba, and Canopic Jars**

In his catalogue of Fayoumic paintings in the British Museum, A. F. Shore notes that,

Although in style and technique the [Fayoumic] portraits belong to the Hellenistic [i.e., Graeco-Roman] world, the use to which they were put derives its inspiration from ancient Egyptian practice and belief. The [Fayoumic] portrait was an integral part of the mummy. The survival of the individual personality was closely associated in the Egyptian mind with the face. . . . In theory these [Dynastic Period] masks were intended, like funerary statues, as individual portraits of the deceased. It is, however, seldom that one feels [i.e., *we feel*]\* even in the case of the gold mask of Tutankhamen or the gold masks from the royal cemetery of the twenty-second dynasty at Tanis, in the presence of an individual portrait. It is not until the Roman period, with the portrait panels and the contemporary painted plaster head-pieces, that one has [i.e., *we have*]\* the impression of real likenesses.

In view of the date of the first appearance of these panels and masks, it is probable that the realistic element which makes them [appear to us as]\* true portraits derives from Roman influence.<sup>19</sup>

My asterisked commentaries in brackets are meant to point up an important problem encountered in the study of Dynastic masks as precursors of Roman Period mummy masks and paintings. Emphasis is generally placed on documentation of a perceived radical shift from conventionalized representations to "true portraits." The implication is that the Romans achieved what the Egyptians tried—but failed—to achieve. It is evident that even the most splendid Pharaonic mask is a highly conventionalized work. It is, however, a mistake to view this formal quality as a failure to achieve likeness. The "trueness" of a portrait is in the mind of the beholder.<sup>20</sup> We may see the Dynastic-Ptolemaic Egyptian masks simply as formulaic and stereotyped forms, but textual evidence suggests that to the ancient Egyptian they were "true portraits"



in a very meaningful sense. They represented the individual in a certain mode of exact likeness.

The Egyptians apparently dealt with "true likeness" in a very intellectualized way—as a system of metaphorical equations. The deceased became, through mummification, a god formed in the likeness of Osiris.<sup>21</sup> And the mummy was referred to in Egyptian ritual texts as "the god." The mask of the mummy was perceived as a kind of metaphorical construct formed of the physical features of various divinities. Inscribed on the shoulders and back of Tutankhamun's mask is a ritual spell which first occurs 500 years earlier on mummy masks of the Middle Kingdom. The spell (later incorporated into the *Book of the Dead*) speaks directly to the mask, identifying various of its features with the analogous physical features of specific gods:

Hail to you, beautiful face . . . the most beautiful face among the gods! Your right eye is the bark of the night, your left is the bark of the day, your eyebrows are those of the Ennead of the gods, your forehead is that of Anubis, the nape of your neck is that of Horus, your locks of hair are those of Ptah-Soker.<sup>22</sup>

This mask spell is a significant textual clue to the metaphorical concepts behind the mummy mask as a likeness of its owner. Just as many Egyptian deities appeared in a variety of forms, the deceased individual had more than one mode of manifested existence.<sup>23</sup> None of these modes seems to have been dependent for its assertion of survival upon the veristic perpetuation of physical properties.

A crucial corroboration of this theory involves the Egyptian conceptualization of the *Ba* (often interpreted in the handbooks as being equivalent to our concept of the soul). During the Old Kingdom, the possession of a *Ba* was considered a prerogative of Pharaoh. But during the course of the First Intermediate Period and into the Middle Kingdom, a "democratization" of the concept took place. Just at the very time when mummy masks were becoming a significant feature of burial customs, the *Ba*, then, was emerging as an entity available, as it were, to the populace. The development of the mummy mask (and concomitant elaborations of mummification procedures) seems to reflect a growing concern with insur-

ing the enduring qualities of the deceased after death. Apparently the simultaneous democratization of the *Ba* is a reflection of this same concern. Both developments may be the result of anxieties arising from the political/social unrest of the times.

In his recent study of the *Ba* in Egyptian texts, Louis Zabkar rejects the conventional interpretation of the *Ba* as an exclusively spiritual element which is distinct from a separate corporeal element. Going back to the texts themselves, Zabkar sees the *Ba* as having been perceived as an alter ego of the deceased, "an embodiment of the deceased, one fully incorporating his physical as well as his psychic capabilities..."<sup>24</sup> This process is seen by Zabkar as already fully developed in the mortuary texts of the Middle Kingdom, so that the *Ba* has come to signify "a personified agent of the individual to whom it belongs and for whom it performs various functions."<sup>25</sup>

The personified *Ba* concept finds reflection, for instance, in Spell 312 of the Coffin Texts:

. . . I have made his [my *Ba*'s] form as my form, his going as my going . . .  
. . . See thine own form, form thy *Ba* and cause it to go forth . . .<sup>26</sup>

In artistic expressions, from the New Kingdom through the Roman Period, we have a series of representations of the *Ba*. It is rendered as a human-headed bird.<sup>27</sup> In art (as analogously in literature), the *Ba* and the deceased, as human-form figure, function interchangeably in terms of actions they are shown to perform. Sometimes there is a clear intention to render the *Ba*'s head with the same facial features as his human-form counterpart.<sup>28</sup> The *Ba* and the human-form mummified body of the deceased were not dichotomous to the Egyptian. Each is an exact likeness of the individual—but in an extraphysical sense rather than in any sense which is limited to the rendition of actual physical characteristics during life.

It is important to note in this context that the purpose of mummification amongst the Egyptians went far beyond preservation of the body against decay. The whole person was created anew in a conceptually as well as a physically idealized form. One procedure involved in this recreation was the treatment of the

internal organs of the deceased. Neither of our two main classical sources on Egyptian embalming practices (Herodotus and Diodorus) actually mentions what the Egyptians did with the liver, lungs, stomach, and intestines of the deceased. Diodorus does mention, however, that the kidneys and heart were left in place. We know from extant Egyptian embalmer's spells that the heart was deliberately left intact within the body in order to fulfill a specific and crucial beneficent function on behalf of the deceased.<sup>29</sup> Prayers and amulets were placed over the heart as if to seal the bargain.

Significantly, equal care was taken to remove the other organs and (beginning in the Heracleopolitan Period) to place them under the efficient symbolic guardianship of the four Sons of Horus: the liver to Amsty, lungs to Hapy, stomach to Duamutef, and intestines to Kebeh-senuef. As mummified organs they were deposited in four separate Canopic jars (each jar identified with one of these Sons of Horus).<sup>30</sup> The jars, thus identified, were in turn placed under the protection of Isis, Nephthys, Neit, and Selkis, respectively (see Cat. No. 2).<sup>31</sup>

While no extant Egyptian text explains why this was done, the Latin author Porphyry suggests that these organs were "neutralized" in a sense because they were thought of as being potentially harmful to the deceased. Claiming sound authority, he quotes an embalmer's prayer thus:

'But if, during my life, I have sinned in eating or drinking what was unlawful, the fault was not mine, but of this' (showing the chest in which was the stomach).<sup>32</sup>

In his treatise on abstinence, Porphyry had a moralistic axe to grind which suggests the desirability of a little prudence in relying on his observations. But this need not keep us from acknowledging the essential plausibility of an apotropaic rationale behind the assignment of the mummified organs to the protection of the Sons of Horus<sup>33</sup> and the simultaneous development of the Canopic jars into personifications of the deceased in the mode of these genii—as mummiform jars with lids in the shape of heads.

These personifications were manifested in various periods of history as either human-headed (often very clearly representing the genii in a human aspect which was specifically

patterned after the funerary image of the deceased) or variously-headed (to characterize the four Sons of Horus in alternative modes as a human [Amsty], a baboon [Hapy], a jackal [Duamutef], and a falcon [Kebeh-senuef]).<sup>34</sup>

A study of the formal and iconographic aspects of the human-headed Canopic jars is directly linked to a study of parallel aspects of mummy masks *per se*. The earliest known Canopic jars with human-headed lids (dating to the early Middle Kingdom) are cartonnage jars of abstractly mummiform shape whose lids are actually miniature cartonnage mummy masks of the type seen on contemporaneous mummies.<sup>35</sup> This conscious formal echoing of the mummy with its mask is a persistent feature of the Canopics—not simply a phenomenon of their initial developmental stage. The formal reminiscence suggests a conceptual correlation. Indeed, in the burial of Tutankhamun we see such a conceptual link spelled out with elaborate clarity. Here, the four human-headed Canopic lids were carved in alabaster to echo the funerary mask-likeness of the king. As if to complete the metaphor, the mummified viscera were contained within miniature gold coffins decorated to resemble the second coffin of the king. These miniature coffins were then deposited in the jar hollows and crowned by the human-headed lids.<sup>36</sup>

As with the Dynastic and Ptolemaic mummy masks, no synthetic work has been published dealing with developmental, stylistic, and iconographical aspects of the Canopic jars.<sup>37</sup>

## The Roman Impact

Following the Roman Conquest, Canopic jars continued to be made for symbolic purposes and cartonnage masks of late Ptolemaic type only gradually manifested an interest in the representation of ideosyncratic coiffure—breaking up the formalism of the massive traditional Egyptian wig.<sup>38</sup> At first, the treatment of these hints of natural hair is markedly stylized. But—apparently hand in hand with a general trend toward increasing naturalism of facial rendering—the hair bordering the face becomes increasingly natural looking as well. And, most significantly, we sometimes now see clear relationships between coiffures rendered on

these gilded cartonnage masks and the distinctive coiffures worn by the Roman imperial family and made famous through the provincial dissemination of imperial statuary.

In the Fayoum, we are able to document the development of a specific deviation from the cartonnage mask tradition. Portrait paintings on wooden panels were sometimes inserted within the typical cartonnage mask system in the place of the three dimensional face.<sup>39</sup> By contrast, in Middle and Upper Egypt, the mummy mask was given a more and more sculptural aspect. Increasingly, plaster masks produced in molds replaced the modeled cartonnage type.

The Fayoum portraits painted on wood are so called because most of the known excavated examples come from that region—an agricultural area which was systematically settled by foreign veterans first in Ptolemaic and then in Roman times. The type was not strictly limited to the Fayoum, however. A significant group was also discovered at the cemetery of Antinoopolis—important especially because the founding of that city by Hadrian in 130 A.D. suggests a rough *terminus post quem* for the production of the portraits found there.<sup>40</sup> Scattered examples have also been found elsewhere in Egypt, from Saqqara as far south as Aswan. But an accurate picture of the distribution of unexcavated examples is impossible because dealers will give "The Fayoum" as provenance simply to enhance the credibility of a painting.<sup>41</sup>

In its "classic" form, the panel portrait was placed over the mummy's face and then final bandaging of the mummy (often in elaborate rhomboidal patterns) held the portrait in place at the edges, thus obviating the necessity for surrounding cartonnage elements.<sup>42</sup> It is apparent from the cutting of many of these panels to fit the mummiform contour that they were originally painted on rectangular panels. Petrie's discovery at Hawara of a wooden picture frame with remains of a panel portrait still held within its borders demonstrated conclusively that similar paintings were made to be displayed on walls.<sup>43</sup> The generally accepted implication of this is that the panel paintings were commissioned during the lifetime of the subject and for display in the home

until the subject died. Our two fragmentary paintings from Karanis in the Fayoum (Cat. Nos. 33-34) were excavated in houses. They should perhaps technically be described as proto-mummy portraits.<sup>44</sup> Not all hanging portraits need have been destined for the grave; but on the other hand, judging by the cutdown corners and the youthfulness of the depictions found on most mummies, one would suppose that the majority were originally used as hanging panels painted well in advance of the subject's death.

Fayoum portraits are prized by students of Classical art as invaluable (if admittedly pale) reflections of an extraordinary Hellenistic tradition of panel portraiture in the encaustic technique.<sup>45</sup> Ample textual references inform us of the developments in painting which took place during the fifth and fourth centuries in the Greek world.<sup>46</sup> Already in the second half of the fifth century the Greek painter Apollodoros was experimenting with chiaroscuro effects and plays of light and shadow—such as we see employed later on the Fayoum portraits. Even the idea of painting on movable wooden panels is considered a Greek development which was disseminated around the Mediterranean area presumably in the Hellenistic Period.

It is interesting to note that Herodotus mentions the Egyptian pharaoh Amasis (sixth century BC) having sent as a dedicatory gift to Cyrene a painted portrait of himself (Herod. II. 182). Does this rather casual reference document a tradition of Late Period Egyptian portraiture on portable panels for which we have no preserved archaeological trace?<sup>47</sup> We would give a great deal to be able to see this purported portrait of Amasis and to know whether it was made by an Egyptian or by a Greek artist working at Amasis' court. Based on what we know of Egyptian wall painting and papyrus illustration, we would have to presume that any portrait made in the Egyptian tradition would have been a very linear work—with painterly qualities such as use of color modulation being a purely secondary aspect of what was, in Egypt, essentially a draftsman's medium.<sup>48</sup> The type of interest in impressionistic shading which the Greeks were experimenting with beginning in the late fifth

century was not likely to be manifested in Egypt except under strong and persistent Greek influence.<sup>49</sup>

The Fayoum portraits thus seem to be a clear instance of Graeco-Roman artistic developments being used to articulate a traditional Egyptian funerary concept.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, the Roman Period mummy masks of molded plaster seem to reflect the overpowering impact of the Classical world upon an age-old indigenous form. Both depend upon the naturalistic rendering of the human face; and both present the superficial impression that they convey ideosyncratic physical characteristics of real individuals. But only in relatively rare instances can either a Fayoum painting or a plaster mask be singled out as a unique study clearly based upon detailed observation of an individual physiognomy rather than upon recourse to a set of standard human "types."

With the masks, the simple fact that they were pressed into molds suggests that a finite corpus of types existed. A new mold would surely not have been made for each person. This is amply borne out by a perusal of Gunter Grimm's stunning collection of plates. Within the limitations of a standardized series of prefabricated molds, one could achieve a certain degree of variation even on faces made from the same mold (see Cat. Nos. 16 and 17). Probably the degree of variation was in direct relation to the amount of money one was willing to spend.<sup>51</sup>

Eyes, for instance, could be inset either in plaster (surely the cheapest way) or in various types of glass inlay (Cat. Nos. 12, 14, 18, 20, 27, 28). In some cases, it is clear that hair of plaster (either as a complete coiffure or as an added element such as a chignon) might be superimposed upon the basic molded head at the discretion of the consumer (see Cat. Nos. 17, 18, 22, 23, 26). A face might be gilded (Cat. Nos. 12, 14, 18, 20) or painted in a flesh tone.

So too with the Fayoum portraits, when we see a large collection of them side by side we begin to be struck by the underlying sameness of them.<sup>52</sup> Their stereotypical aspects do not detract from their aesthetic appeal. Many are extraordinarily beautiful. Nevertheless, their conventional nature is an important feature to recognize if we are to understand the sociological implica-

tions of the panel portraits and the plaster masks. Although articulated in a Classical artistic language rather than a traditional Egyptian one, these mummy portraits are just as formulaic (within the expanded boundaries of the Hellenistic-Roman vocabulary) as New Kingdom cartonnages. Hairstyles varied, jewelry could be added to increase the opulence of a portrait or even to supply a personal touch through the depiction of an actual ornament worn in life by the particular subject. But it seems that often the faces of the figures were drawn out at least in rough form on a mass-production basis.

It is here that the Kelsey's three modern Fayoum portraits are instructive (Cat. Nos. 35, 36, 37). They were all painted by the same hand; and they clearly represent the same basic type with only superficial variations. Similarly, many a studio artisan in antiquity must have produced whole series of almost identical "portraits".<sup>53</sup>

It is difficult to arrive at definitive dating criteria for the Roman masks and paintings which will allow us to propose precise developmental schema. The masks and the Fayoum portraits can to some extent be integrated into the chronological framework of Roman art *vis-à-vis* hairstyles, beard styles, and jewelry types. But how do we assess the degree to which these aspects are affected by the conservatism inherent in funerary art, on the one hand, and by Egyptian provincialism on the other (see Cat. No. 22)?

In the final analysis, the difficult questions of internal chronology and regional variations which plague this Roman material should not be allowed to stand in the way of our appreciation of it as a link in the long chain of Egyptian civilization. Seen against the backdrop of Egyptian tradition, the Roman masks and painted portraits present a coherent fusion of a Graeco-Roman artistic syntax with a persistent and responsive indigenous conception of the essential nature of the faces of immortality.

1. Generally acknowledged, for instance, by Brady, 1935, Castiglione, 1960, Shore, 1972, 18, and Parlasca, 1966, 91-92; but compare Thompson, 1976, 7: "... while these Graeco-Romans took over the physical concept of the funerary portrait, they had not the



least acceptance, nor indeed understanding, of its previous religious basis." The issues of (1) Greek and Roman impact on Egyptian life, institutions and cult practices, (2) Greek and then Roman reception of indigenous Egyptian culture, and (3) the effects of these first two processes upon Greek and Roman mores at home are intimately related. Recent scholarly works on specific aspects of these topics will provide vast bibliography: Gerny, 1969, Crawford, 1971, Roulet, 1972, Rubsam, 1974, Heyob, 1975, Grenier, 1977, and Hopkins, 1978.

2. Two recent studies of Egyptian funerary texts serve to document the complexities of the textual evidence, while also providing bibliography: Barguet, 1967, and Zabkar, 1968. Concerning burial customs (embalming, accoutrements of the mummy) the ancient textual sources are quite limited. Smith and Dawson, 1924, offer a good survey of Egyptian and Classical texts. Two papyri of the "Ritual of Embalming" have survived (although neither presents a complete version). See Sauneron, 1952. On a more practical level we have Egyptian documents such as an embalmer's agreement (Shore and Smith, 1960) and unsystematized information on embalming which can be culled from remarks found on stelae. Otherwise we rely heavily on Herodotus *Book II* and Diodorus *Book I* (on which see Burton, 1972).

3. Smith, 1946, 24; Smith and Dawson, 1924, 74-75 and fig. 3. More recent studies of mummification include Needler, 1950, Lucas, 1962, and Harris and Weeks, 1973.

4. Dyn. IV: Smith, 1946, 24 (mummy of Weseraf-ankh from Abusir and another mummy from Giza); Dyn. V-VI: Smith, 1946, list on 27-28.

5. Smith, 1946, 23-29.

6. Smith, 1946, 24.

7. Hayes, 1953, 309ff. For an early MK example from Saqqara see Quibell, 1908, 13-14. For MK cartonnage masks from Beni Hassan see Garstang, 1907, figs. 176, 178, 179.

8. Garstang, 1907, fig. 179. For NK cartonnage cases see Hayes, 1959, 222ff and 414-417. Botti, 1958, illustrates a large number of Late Period-Roman Period anthropoid cases.

9. Garstang, 1901, pl. XIV: eight plaster faces, "probably" MK, from Abydos.

10. As, similarly, on a completely cartonnage mask and headdress system apparently dating to the MK or only slightly later: Garstang, 1907, fig. 183.

11. Edwards, 1976, 134 and color pl. 13 (his Cat. No. 25). Other royal mummy masks are equally impressive as sculptural documents—if not so well known (e.g., the gold masks from Dyn. XXI-XXII at Tanis: Monter, 1942, pl. XI).

12. A good example is the coffin and mask series of Iy-neferty (Dyn. XIX): Hayes, 1959, 414-416 and fig. 264.

13. Parlasca, 1966, 1969, and 1977; Grimm, 1974.

14. There seems to be a general assumption that masks functioned in the same way as "funerary" or dedicatory sculpture (note Shore, 1972, 26, and Breckenridge, 1968, 46). Such an assumption needs reassessment. "Funerary sculpture" and dedicatory sculpture were themselves not functionally static phenomena.

And changing functions brought changing formal interests. Note Bothmer, 1968, xxxiii. In terms of stylistic relationships, Hayes makes important suggestive observations concerning the Memphite sculpture tradition and a MK mask from Meir: 1953, 309-312 and fig. 201.

15. E.g., variations on headgear, degree of "naturalism." Note the series belonging to Khonsu (Dyn. XIX): Hayes, 1959, 417 and fig. 265. He is bearded on his coffin face and beardless on his mask.

16. Very little analytical work has been done on anthropoid sarcophagi even as discrete elements. Buhl, 1959, attempts briefly to deal with workshops. See also Botti, 1945.

17. Again, an astute remark by Hayes, 1953, 309-312, this time on a local Theban mask workshop of the MK, deserves a follow-up.

18. With respect to the Ptolemaic cartonnage masks this might be particularly relevant. The various currents in stone sculpture of the Ptolemaic Period are so rich that one cannot help but feel that the late Ptolemaic mask type will have to be "explained" in terms of specific functional and status-related phenomena which make it a corpus unusually removed from sculpture *per se*. On Ptolemaic sculpture and interrelationships between Egyptian and Greek traditions see Bothmer, 1968, No. 93, and succeeding entries; and Adriani, 1970.

19. Shore, 1972, 25-26.

20. In the context of ancient art, Breckenridge, 1968, offers an excellent introduction to conceptual problems in definitions of "portrait" and "true likeness." Bothmer provides brilliant commentary specifically on Egyptian portraiture and the Graeco-Roman tradition (1968, 117ff). Both Breckenridge and Bothmer accept the definition of a true portrait as laid down by Schweitzer (see Bothmer, 117)—a definition which, though extremely helpful for discussing certain types of portraiture, has strict cultural and conceptual limitations. W. Steiner, 1978, presents a different perspective, which is useful here.

21. Edwards, 1976, 134.

22. Edwards, 1976, 134; Barguet, 1967, 218 (BD Chap. 151B).

23. Cf. Barguet, 1967, 19: "... il y a donc là cette indication qu'une même personne peut se présenter sous divers noms, sous diverses formes, tout en étant un seul et même être."

24. Zabkar, 1968, 130.

25. Zabkar, 1968, 98.

26. Zabkar, 1968, 98.

27. Zabkar, 1968, 76 and 143ff.

28. Zabkar, 1968, 83.

29. Barguet, 1967, BD Chap. 26-30B (esp. 29A-30B).

30. The term "Canopic" comes from the Greek name Canopus (a hero who supposedly died in the Delta town later named after him). Canopus was worshipped from the first century BC on in the form of a jar with human head. Because of this formal resemblance to the viscera jars of the Egyptians, Europeans began calling the latter Canopic jars. In fact, the confusion of the Canopic jars with Canopus was inherited from the Romans, who worshipped Osiris Canopus (as human-headed jar). Canopic jars and representations of Osiris Canopus seem to be used interchangeably on certain Egyptianizing monuments (see Roulet, 1972, 98-99 and pls. XXX-XXXIII). Apparently the Egyptians themselves had no special name for the jars

we call Canopic. Florence Ostrakon No. 2616 preserves a fragment of a literary work with a reference to the four jars. A very common word for jar is used, simply qualified by "of embalming." (Smith and Dawson, 1924, 55.)

31. Hayes, 1953, 321.

32. Smith and Dawson, 1924, 66ff.

33. Cf. Hayes, 1953, 320.

34. Brief general summaries of the formal development of the jars are found in Hayes, 1953, 118, 320-326; 1959, 72-73, 227-228, 423-425; and Brovanski, 1978, Introduction. The earliest known occurrence of the variegated type is in Dyn. XVIII (Hayes, 1959, 72-73 and fig. 39). This is an isolated occurrence. The next known use of the variegated jars does not occur until Dyn. XIX—at which time this becomes the common form.

35. Hayes, 1953, 323 and fig. 210.

36. Carter, 1972, 168-169; Edwards, 1976, pl. 12 (his Cat. No. 44).

37. Dor, 1937, has apparently never been published. In any case it would need considerable revision by now to incorporate new data.

38. Parlasca, 1966, 91-123, for discussion of the development of new types out of the Ptolemaic cartonnage tradition. Petrie's excavations at Hawara, which revealed Ptolemaic cartonnages, Roman Period cartonnages and panel portraits all in the same necropolis, remain the cornerstone for attempts to elicit a developmental schema out of the material. To a great extent the work of Edgar, 1905, has been superseded by Parlasca, 1966, and Grimm, 1974.

39. Parlasca, 1966, 115-116.

40. Its value as a *terminus* is limited because some paintings were clearly made before the founding of the city and brought to the new site by its settlers. See Parlasca, 1966, 128-129.

41. See Thompson, 1976, 7-8, on related problems.

42. E.g., British Museum 13595 (Berger, 1977, 75).

43. Petrie, 1889, 10 and pl. xii.

44. Petrie developed the theory that the mummy, with portrait already cut down and affixed to it, was kept in the atrium of the house (and subsequently battered by playing children) for an extended period of time before eventual unceremonious removal to the cemetery. Following this theory, one might postulate that our Karanis fragments did in fact come from mummies. But Petrie's idea has been aptly critiqued by Shore, 1972, 27, on the grounds that there is no textual reference to such a practice and no evidence that Egyptian houses of the Roman Period had an atrium form. Diodorus does, however, refer to mummies being deposited for a time in a special sanctuary before burial. Could not this practice account for the extensive weathering and damage noted by Petrie on some of the Hawara mummies?

45. On encaustic see Gertens and Strout, 1966, 78-81. The encaustic technique of painting with wax is mentioned by Pliny NH XXXV, 122-123 (Pollitt, 1965, 170 and 229). See Coche de la Ferté, 1952, for scientific analysis of the technique as seen on Fayoum portraits in the Louvre, and Berger, 1977, for beautiful photographs which illustrate the luster of the technique.

46. Swindler, 1929, 216-217, 223-236; Pollitt, 1965, 95-112, 154-182, and 227-229.

47. Peck and Ross, 1978, 32-33 (no. 32) publish a master drawing of Tuthmosis III executed in ink on a gessoed wooden board 36.4 cm X 53.7 cm (B.M. 5601). But no finished painted portrait panel meant for display in that medium is known from Egypt before the Roman Period.

48. Peck and Ross, 1978, 32-33.

49. On shading in pre-Ptolemaic Egyptian painting see Smith, 1946, 263-265.

50. Zaloscer's idea (1961 and 1969) that the Fayoum portraits represent not an outgrowth of ancient Egyptian traditions but, rather, the initial stage of Christian icon painting has not been accepted by Parlasca (1966, 206-207). I do not see why the two aspects must be dichotomous. We need not deny the traditional Egyptian funerary origins of the Fayoum paintings in order to explore the possibilities of their evolving functions in Late Antiquity.

51. Textual evidence informs us that these masks could be very expensive. See McCrimmon, 1945, 52 and n. 5; Smith and Dawson, 1924, 64-65.

52. Shore, 1972, 28. Parlasca's corpus (1969 and 1977) allows one to see the full range of faces—not merely the best and most unusual examples.

53. Thompson, 1972, has made a significant study of the hands at work in the studios of Antinoopolis.

# Catalogue

## A Note on Conventions

Indications of right and left on an object are derived, as is customary, from the reference point of the figure viewed—not the viewer.

For Cat. Nos. 1-6 (the Canopics)

*Jar: H.* refers to height of jar only (excluding lid) from base to lip;

*Lid: H.* refers to lid only, from base of collar to top of highest projecting member. All Canopic sets are photographed in numerical series from top to bottom and the viewer's left to right.

Unless otherwise stated, dimensions given for Cat. Nos. 7-28 (all the mummy masks) refer to *H.* (height) from chin to top of hair or wig; *W.* (width) from tip of ear to tip of ear; and *D.* (depth) from brow to back edge of mask.

Dimensions for Cat. Nos. 29-37 (painted portraits) refer to points of maximum preservation of wooden panel—not portrait face.

## 1. Four Human-Headed Canopic Lids

Kelsey Museum 88189-88192

Purchased in Egypt

Source and date of acquisition unknown

Provenance unknown

Wood: plastered and painted

88189. H. 13.0 cm, Diam. base 11.0 cm

88190. H. 13.9 cm, Diam. base 12.0 cm

88191. H. 13.0 cm, Diam. base 11.7 cm

88192. H. 13.4 cm, Diam. base 11.6 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photograph: L.79.120.19

Middle Kingdom

Many cracks in wood, especially down face of 88190; substantial remains of paint.



In dimensions, in overall form, and in most details all four stoppers are very similar. Each face is framed by a close-fitting black wig which leaves exposed a considerable portion of the temples and neck, but covers the ears. The noses are short and narrow, the lips thin. The white eyes are outlined in black, with the irises painted black. Two of the faces (88191 and 88192) are painted yellow while 88189 and 88190 are red. These last two also have moustaches and stylized black beard strips along the cheeks. Three of the four heads were intended to wear attached chin beards. On 88189 and 88191 the beards remain intact, while on the chin of 88190 the mortise alone remains.<sup>1</sup> Except for these attached beards, each of the Kelsey lids is carved out of a single block of wood.<sup>2</sup> A small rectangular depression in the base of each lid may have received a plug for holding the block in place during the carving process.

A distinctive feature of these lids is the rendition of stylized shoulders, with the wig hanging down in narrow lappets which leave revealed the arcs of these shoulders. The stylization of the shoulders as flat geometric elements may reflect the limitations imposed on the artisan by the wish to work without piecing projecting elements. But the inclusion of shoulder forms of any type is unusual on Canopic lids.



Normally, the wig forms a solid mass enveloping all but the throat area (as in Cat. Nos. 2-5). This rendition of shoulders and framing lappets on the Kelsey lids reminds us of cartonnage mummy masks which fit, in the same fashion, atop the shoulders of the mummy. Could the Kelsey lids mark an early stage in the development of the anthropocephalus type—an experimental translation into wood of the first human-headed lids which were formed as miniature cartonnage mummy masks?

The jars to which these wooden lids must originally have belonged were never acquired by the Kelsey Museum. On analogy with a complete set in the British Museum (belonging to Gud of Dyn. XII), it is possible to suggest that our wooden lids fitted on jars of alabaster.<sup>3</sup> But it is perhaps more likely that they joined with jars also of plastered and painted wood.

1. Hayes, 1953, 325, for a MK Canopic series belonging to a female, with three bearded lids and one beardless. Petrie, 1937, 27, notes a similar group in a male burial. As Petrie observed, one finds sets of human-headed Canopics either all bearded, all beardless, or three bearded and one beardless. The rationale behind these differences has not been clarified. The issue is complicated by the triple identity aspect of the Canopics: (1) as the deceased himself, (2) as Sons of Horus representing the deceased, (3) as mummified Sons of Horus in the form of Osiris.

2. Wooden jars and lids were often pieced out of many elements (e.g., Reisner, 1967, no. 4260).

3. British Museum, 1971, 147 (B.M. 30838).





## 2. Four Human-Headed Canopic Jars

Kelsey Museum 71.2.197-71.2.200

Bayview Collection

Provenance unknown

Clay: slipped, painted, and inscribed

71.2.197. Jar: H. 18.8 cm, Max. Diam. 15.3 cm, Min. Diam. 12.0 cm; Lid: H. 7.9 cm, Max. Diam. 11.6 cm

71.2.198. Jar: H. 17.3 cm, Max. Diam. 15.2 cm, Min. Diam. 11.8 cm; Lid: H. 7.8 cm, Max. Diam. 12.1 cm

71.2.199. Jar: H. 17.5 cm, Max. Diam. 15.1 cm, Min. Diam. 12.0 cm; Lid: H. 8.0 cm, Max. Diam. 11.0 cm

71.2.200. Jar: H. 18.9 cm, Max. Diam. 15.6 cm, Min. Diam. 12.6 cm; Lid: H. 7.7 cm, Max. Diam. 10.9 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photograph: L.79.121.16

Dyn. XVIII

Jars cracked and mended; mouth of face on 71.2.200 broken away; jar lip of 71.2.197 partly broken off; remains of black paint on lids (eyes, wigs) and jars (inscriptions).

These four jars and lids display a uniformity of size, shape, and facial style not always found on Canopics comprising a set. Each of the hemispherically shaped stoppers is in the form of a small beardless face framed by a voluminous black wig. The wig curves behind the ears and then sharply forward to envelop all but a narrow portion of the neck. The contours of the lid heads were determined by the technique employed in their manufacture. Both jars and lids were turned on a wheel—as is evident from the concentric rings around the interior created by the potter's fingers as the shapes were drawn up on the wheel. When inverted, the lids thus rest solidly on their flat heads. In a semi-dry state, each of these bowl-like lids was then modeled by hand and worked with tools to produce a face.<sup>1</sup> The area from tip of ear to juncture of wig and neck just under the chin was gently pushed in, rather than carved away, to define the projection of the face. On the interior this process is revealed by the protrusion inward of the displaced clay mass. The faces were then carved and modeled in the leather-hard clay, preserving intact the essential contours of the original bowl. Thus, the tip of the nose preserves the full diameter of the original hemisphere at that point; and the neck slopes out and around to maintain the geometry of the lid. A distinct black line around the perimeter indicates that the wigs were outlined in black before being painted in completely.

Painted in black directly on the clay surface of each jar is a three-columned hieroglyphic inscription which gives a formulaic text. Each text diverges from conventional form in the pairing of Sons of Horus with protective goddesses. But such deviations from the canon are not uncommon.<sup>2</sup> The most complete and legible inscription occurs on 71.2.198:

Speech—  
 Selkis, you have embraced what is in you.  
 Please protect Duamutef who is in you (and)  
 the one who is revered before Duamutef, The  
 Deputy Overseer of the Cattle of Amun,  
 Sen-Thoth.<sup>3</sup>

The deputy's personal name (meaning "Thoth is a brother") was common during Dyn. XVIII.<sup>4</sup> This fact, coupled with the shape of the jars (which could be MK or early NK) and the overwhelming predominance of wheel-made clay Canopics in Dyn. XVIII, suggests this date.<sup>5</sup> A close parallel for the style of the lid faces confirms an early NK date.<sup>6</sup>

1. Brovarski, 1978, Intro., notes that in the entire MFA collection the Dyn. XVIII Canopics are all pottery with only two exceptions. All the pottery lids and jars were, he says, "turned on a wheel and the faces modeled by hand."

2. The pairing here: Hapy = Isis (-197), Duamutef = Selkis (-198), Kebehsenuf = Neit (-199), Amsty = Nephthys (-200). The association of Duamutef with Selkis also appears on Kelsey 73.1.4 (Cat. No. 4).

3. Rendered literally, the text actually conforms to Type IXa of Sethe's classifications (Sethe, 1934, 21)—which Sethe determines to be a standard form in Dyn. XIX. Clearly, however, these jars pre-date the Ramesside Pd.—suggesting that the text classifications cannot be too rigidly followed.

4. Ranke, 1935, 310. On the "Deputy" title see Faulkner, 1953, and Schulman, 1964, 34-35.

5. By itself the jar form would not be a good diagnostic criterion. Even within one set, jar profiles often varied markedly. Note for instance the jars of the daughter of Sesostriis II (Dyn. XII): Hayes, 1953, 325 and fig. 212. Here, two of the jars have the "characteristic" square shoulders of the MK, while two have rounded forms tending toward "characteristic" NK types.

6. Hayes, 1959, fig. 189 (the miniature cartonnage mask found in a pithos in Tutankhamun's burial); fig. 135 (clay lid—similar although bearded).



### 3. Human-headed Canopic Jar

Kelsey Museum 4970

Source and date of acquisition unknown

Provenance unknown

Clay: plastered, painted, and inscribed

Jar: H. 19.9 cm, Max. Diam. 17.6 cm, Min. Diam. 10.7 cm; Lid: H. 7.9 cm, Max. Diam. 11.0 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photograph: L.79.121.17

New Kingdom

Body of jar extensively repaired; painted plaster on lid and body considerably chipped.

The sides of the jar are irregular in thickness and the base rounded and unstable. A slight rippling quality to the surface further suggests that this jar was built up by hand in the coil method. On the interior, vertical and diagonal smear marks indicate how the potter joined and smoothed the coils of clay. The lid was not turned on a wheel either. Frequent bubble holes in the exterior surface suggest that the clay was pressed into a mold. On the inside, the artisan used tools to carve out a bowl-shaped uniform hollow.



The oval yellow face is framed by a red-edged headdress which covers the ears and flares slightly to meet the crisply bevelled base of the lid. Traces of faded blue stripes survive on the yellow headdress. The eyes were outlined in black. Irises and eyebrows were also painted black. Traces of red survive on the lips, philtrum, and nostrils.

There are two inscriptions preserved. A simple vertical inscription in one column places the jar under the protection of Kebehsenuf and gives the owner's title and name: Imn-ms (Amenmose), "Overseer of the House."<sup>1</sup> The inscription (or at least its red border) appears to have been added after the jar was broken and repaired, since the red lines extend over the repaired area. We can only suggest that rather than abandon the jar which had broken while being inscribed, the artisan chose to repair the jar and repaint the portion of inscription over the restored area. Then perhaps to divert attention from the flawed surface, the artisan added yellow and red wavy lines in imitation of alabaster.

The striped blue and yellow headdress on a clay lid is a common feature of Tuthmoside Canopics, as are the imitation alabaster lines.<sup>2</sup> On variegated Canopic sets (which become popular in Dyn. XIX) the genius Kebehsenuf would be associated with a falcon-headed stopper. Thus, his association here with a human-headed lid further indicates a Dyn. XVIII date.

The second inscription was painted in black over the Dyn. XVIII alabaster decoration. The text is not intelligible; and it appears to be a modern addition.

1. Ranke, 1935, 29, cites the name Imn-ms (Amenmose) as a male name occurring frequently during Dyn. XVIII, although it also occurs during Dyn. XIX, XX, and the Late Period. One NK occurrence of the name applied to a female is also cited. The name Imn-ms also occurs on Kelsey 73.1.4 (Cat. No. 4). The title of the Imn-ms on 4970 was also quite common during the NK, and is translated by Faulkner (1962, 18) as "steward."

2. Hayes, 1953, 227-228 and fig. 135. The Tuthmoside jar belonging to Tety offers a good parallel for both of these features.

#### 4. Four Canopic Jars Grouped as a Variegated Set

Kelsey Museum 73.1.1-73.1.4

Gift of Mrs. H. Earle Russell

Formerly in collection of C. Pasha, Luxor

Provenance unknown

Alabaster: polished and inscribed (lid of

73.1.2 made of an opaque stone)

73.1.1 (falcon). Jar: H. 25.0 cm, Max. Diam.

16.0 cm, Min. Diam. 9.5 cm; Lid: H. 11.3

cm, Diam. base 10.7 cm

73.1.2 (jackal). Jar: H. 24.9 cm, Max. Diam.

17.0 cm, Min. Diam. 10.0 cm; Lid: H. 15.2

cm, Diam. base 10.5 cm

73.1.3 (baboon). Jar: H. 25.1 cm, Max.

Diam. 16.0 cm, Min. Diam. 10.2 cm; Lid: H.

12.4 cm, Diam. base 11.3 cm

73.1.4 (human). Jar: H. 29.6 cm, Max.

Diam. 20.8 cm, Min. Diam. 14.0 cm; Lid: H.

11.2 cm, Diam. base 12.6 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photograph: L. 79.121.15

Dyn. XVIII (73.1.4) and XIX (73.1.1-3)

Lower right edge of 73.1.4 lid broken; surface

of 73.1.2 lid shows considerable pitting; on

73.1.4, traces of blue paint in inscription and

black paint on eyes; label inside 73.1.4:

"3916 19 Dynasty Prof. Armitag[e]."

These four jars were acquired as a set of variegated Canopics portraying the Sons of Horus as falcon, jackal, baboon, and human. In fact, the four jars represent two sets of Canopics: one variegated series now missing only the human-headed jar, and one human-headed series of which our no. 73.1.4 is the only representative in our collections. We have chosen to discuss the four jars together because the features which differentiate them are instructive.

The human-headed jar has quite massive proportions and markedly swelling shoulders which suggest a Dyn. XVIII date.<sup>1</sup> The lid has similarly stocky proportions—with its short neck surrounded by a wig which takes off from the shoulder curve to form an uncompromising parallelogram in frontal section. By contrast, the other three jars display slender elongated proportions. Their long-necked lids curve inward to complete the slow return of the shoulder arc.

The three-columned inscription engraved on the human-headed jar follows the Canopic formula common in Dyn. XVIII. The text places the jar under the protection of Duamutef and Selkis. The name and title of the owner are Imn-ms (Amenmose), Officer for Horses.<sup>2</sup> As already noted in Cat. No. 3, the name Imn-ms is commonly used in Dyn. XVIII. On variegated Canopic series that become the norm in Dyn. XIX, Duamutef is rendered as the



jackal-headed genius; the human-headed one is associated, rather, with Amsty. Thus, the association of the human-head with Duamutef on our 73.1.4 shows that this jar was once part of a series of four human-headed jars. This fact, taken together with the other aspects discussed above, offers clear indication of a pre-Dyn. XIX date for 73.1.4, probably in the latter half of Dyn. XVIII.

The three animal-headed jars are more problematical. The inscriptions carved on them are nonsensical modern additions. Either they were added by a dealer in order to increase the market value of an uninscribed set of authentic jars, or else the jars as well as their inscriptions are modern work. (In theory one might postulate that a dealer having one obviously genuine Canopic [73.1.4] decided to manufacture three more to form a complete set.)

If the jars are genuine, they date to Dyn. XIX or later. Their profiles are characteristic of trends in Dyn. XIX.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the animal-headed lids find a parallel in Dyn. XXI-XXII.<sup>4</sup>

Rigid typologies for stylistic qualities of Canopic jars are dangerous—partly because of the inherent conservatism of the funerary crafts and partly because we still lack a publication of all excavated and firmly dated Canopics, which would form the framework of a sequence based on chronology and also workshop location.<sup>5</sup> But even with the aid of such a corpus of dated works we would certainly find stylistic variations rampant and difficult to deal with categorically. The bewildering variety of facial types of the human-headed jars is understandable. Sometimes clear attempts to incorporate ideosyncratic traits of the specific individual commissioning the jars will have influenced the style. And in cases of mass production, facial types need not have been more limited than the scope of a given artisan's exposure to art or humanity. In other words, it becomes obvious that style in the rendering of human-headed Canopic jar faces depended on the same range of conditions that affected art in general and funerary art in particular.<sup>6</sup>



Similarly, for the animal-headed types, rigid chronological categories do not work. And here, an aspect of artistic fancy is an important additional determinant of form. The baboon face of 73.1.3 would not be mistaken for any other type of creature, and yet its forms are not rendered after a close observation of nature. A remarkably naturalistic portrayal of the baboon does occur on an excavated head of Hapy from Dyn. XXV. But here, the addition of human ears reasserts artistic license even on this otherwise veristic portrayal.<sup>7</sup>

1. Seen on actual Canopics and also on tomb paintings and reliefs of the period: E.g., Sadek, 1973, fig. 1.

2. Schulman, 1964, 46-47.

3. A jar of Thenry, supervisor of works for Ramesses II in Dyn. XIX, displays extremely slender and attenuated proportions: Fazzini, 1975, 92 (cat. 79).

4. E.g., British Museum, 1971, 148 and fig. 50 (BM 59197-59200): jars belonging to Neshkons, wife of Pinudjem (the high priest of Amun at Thebes who died at close of Dyn. XXI).

5. The completion in 1967 of Reisner's catalogue of the Canopics in Cairo was a start—although lack of commentary limits its usefulness, for one does not know on what basis a date is assigned. Brovarski's catalogue (1978) of the Canopics in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, brings with it the hope that similar work will soon be done on other collections. Unfortunately, Brovarski's volume has not yet reached our library and we have had access to it only fleetingly.

6. Note, for instance, that a fine parallel for our Dyn. XVIII human-headed jar is offered by a Saite Period alabaster Canopic (Reisner, 1967, no. 4186, pl. XXVII). Proportions and profiles are almost identical; and the faces (both with smooth features and no headband articulating the break between brow and wig) are very similar as well. Here we are dealing with the same problem of Saite revivalism of antique forms as is confronted in every other aspect of art and literature during the Saite Period.

7. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 20.1063: Simpson, 1977, no. 65 (after Brovarski, 1978, then in press).



## 5. Four Variegated Canopic Jars

Kelsey Museum 71.2.193-71.2.196

Bayview Collection

Provenance unknown

Limestone: painted details

71.2.193 (human). Jar: H. 22.0 cm, Max. Diam. 15.2 cm, Min. Diam. 11.0 cm; Lid: H. 8.8 cm, Diam. base 12.7 cm

71.2.194 (baboon). Jar: H. 22.1 cm, Max. Diam. 15.3 cm, Min. Diam. 10.8 cm; Lid: H. 9.7 cm, Diam. base 12.6 cm

71.2.195 (jackal). Jar: H. 22.0 cm, Max. Diam. 15.3 cm, Min. Diam. 10.7 cm; Lid: H. 9.3 cm, Diam. base 12.2 cm

71.2.196 (falcon). Jar: H. 22.6 cm, Max. Diam. 15.0 cm, Min. Diam. 10.5 cm; Lid: H. 9.4 cm, Diam. base 12.5 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photograph: L.79.121.14

Late Period (Dyn. XXII-XXIII)

Numerous chips on jars and lids; 71.2.196 broken and repaired; traces of black paint for detailing remain on all four lids.



These jars and lids display a marked uniformity of dimensions and profile. The forms of all four lids are compact with protruding elements such as the jackal's ears and the baboon's capillary mantle projecting only minimally from the block of the head. There is a vigor in the stocky, solid proportions of this set, especially in contrast with the attenuated proportions in vogue in Dyn. XIX (Cat. No. 4).

Originally, lavish use of black paint would have enhanced the dynamic design qualities of these jars. The jars may once have borne inscriptions in paint which have worn away, just as much of the facial detailing has. Our falcon-headed lid preserves much of this original paint.<sup>1</sup> On the baboon-headed lid, a notable painted feature (now only faintly discernible) is the pair of human ears.

The Kelsey jars are hollowed out to only about one-third of their depth. This is an indication that they were made after Dyn. XXI, for it was at this time that changes in funerary practices involved replacing the embalmed viscera, each accompanied by a wax figure of the appropriate Son of Horus, into a special cavity within the mummy.



Canopic jars continued to be made and placed (empty) in the burial chamber as symbolic elements. But often little or no attempt was made to hollow out a full cavity in the symbolic jar. Sometimes jars and lids were actually carved out of a solid block of wood, stone, or plaster (see Cat. No. 6).

Close parallels for the Kelsey limestone set firmly anchor it to the Late Period, and most probably to Dyn. XXII or XXIII.<sup>2</sup>

1. Reisner, 1967, nos. 4398-4401 are good examples of variegated limestone Canopics of this period with much paint (including inscriptions) still preserved.

2. An excellent parallel is illustrated in Martin, 1945, pl. 9: series of variegated limestone Canopics dated to ninth century BC (Dyn. XXII). The variegated limestone set in Cairo (Reisner, 1967, nos. 4398-4401, pl. XLVII) is also quite similar—especially the jackal. Note, however, that on this Cairo set both the baboon and the falcon have human ears—introducing once again the issue of artistic fancy mentioned in Cat. No. 4 (or is this an “optional” iconographical element with a particular meaning?). This set is dated by Reisner to the “Libyan Period” (Dyn. XXII-XXIII). See also a depiction of a similar set of variegated Canopics on a tomb relief at Tanis firmly dated to Dyn. XXII: Monter, 1960, pls. XLVII and LI.



## 6. Sham Canopic Jar

Kelsey Museum 88193

Source and date of acquisition unknown

Provenance unknown

Plaster

H. 22.7 cm, Max. Diam. 12.0 cm, Min.

Diam. 8.8 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photograph: L. 79.122.0-2

Late Period (Dyn. XXII-XXV)

Surface coated with varnish in modern times (now badly yellowed); tool marks visible through varnish; on back of jar, written in faint brown ink: "C.[or O.?] M. Sinclair"; on front: "W.4.55."

This jar is compactly fashioned out of a solid block of plaster. A roughly



incised ring symbolically marks the division point between stopper and jar proper. Solid sham jars were made from about Dyn. XXII down into the Roman Period. Hollowed Canopics also continued to be produced during this period. In the Late Period a great variety of sculpture styles and jar profiles are used. Tendencies toward deliberate archaisms recalling MK and NK types coexisted with development of new modes and shapes.<sup>1</sup> To complicate matters still further, it becomes not uncommon for the Canopic jar form to revert to the Old Kingdom type (jar with simple inverted disk-shaped lid) but with the representation of the particular Son of Horus carved or painted on the body of the jar.<sup>2</sup> The conscious revival of antique forms which occurred during Dyn. XXV-XXVI included the revival of the MK to early NK type of set with four human-headed lids.<sup>3</sup>

Excellent parallels for our sham Canopic are dated by Reisner to Dyn. XXII-XXIII.<sup>4</sup> These parallels in Cairo are all variegated sets. On this information we may suggest that our jar is the Amsty of a similar variegated set of Dyn. XXII-XXIII. But it may also be somewhat later, perhaps belonging to a Saite Period archaizing set of four human-headed jars.

1. Reisner, 1967, no. 4646 (pl. LI), for instance, has qualities of MK to early NK in jar profile and face style; while 4288 (pl. LIII) is a distinct bulbous form seeming to presage a type which becomes familiar to us in the Graeco-Roman Period (e.g., Reisner, 1967, no. 5023; pl. LII). Both nos. 4646 and 4288 are dated Saite Period.

2. E.g., Reisner, 1967, nos. 4406-4409 (pl. LXII).

3. Noted by Brovarski, 1978, Intro.

4. Reisner, 1967, nos. 4422-4425 (pl. XLVIII).

## 7. Face From a Wooden Coffin

Kelsey Museum 71.2.201

Bayview Collection

Provenance unknown

H. 30.3 cm, W. (between temples) 17.3 cm,  
D. 9.5 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photographs: L.79.121.0 and L.79.121.1

Late Period-Ptolemaic Period

Coarse-grained wood; traces of original covering of painted plaster; face severed from coffin lid at point before juncture of ears and head; back shaved off completely flat.

Removed from its context, and with ears and wig lappets missing, this face loses balance. Its long straight-sided contours are exaggerated by elimination of what would have been a massive compensating element of wig lappets and surrounding coffin contours.<sup>1</sup> Modeling of the eye area is distinctly plastic, but one suspects that the original painted plaster surface would have significantly obscured this tensional effect of planar interaction between brows, lids, and eyes. A Late Period wood coffin face from El Hibeh has similar eye treatment.<sup>2</sup> The whites of the eyes of 71.2.201 are cut back to a lower plane than the irises. They may originally have been inlaid with opaque white glass to a level with the reserved irises.

A good general parallel for the shape and type of face and broad flat contour of the wig is found on a stone sarcophagus from Abydos dating to the end of the third to early second century BC.<sup>3</sup> Many wooden sarcophagus faces exhibit similar flat-headed aspects;<sup>4</sup> but on contemporary stone sarcophagi this is rare—heads are usually dome-shaped. It is interesting to note, however, that in treatment of heavily modeled profile (lips, nose, eyes, cheek projection) a fine parallel comes again from hard stone sculpture of the Ptolemaic Period (late third to early second century BC). Compare a sarcophagus (side view) from Qâw El-Kabîr,<sup>5</sup> and a block statue of Nes-Thoth, Craftsman of Amun.<sup>6</sup>

Based upon these general stylistic parallels, our coffin face may be dated roughly to the Late Period—Ptolemaic Period. More precision is impossible at this stage in scholarly treatment of related material. An attempt to date this piece must rest on stylistic criteria, since it is of unknown provenance and removed from its coffin (which might have been decorated with a datable inscription).

1. Faces from other wooden coffin lids, similarly isolated from structural context, include Botti, 1958, pl. XLIX, 1-9.

2. Dated Saite-Persian Period (Botti, 1958, pl. XVII).

3. Buhl, 1959, fig. 65 (F, bl) in Cairo.

4. E.g., Botti, 1958, pls. XVII, XVIII, XIX, 2, XXII, 1, etc.

5. Buhl, 1959, fig. 67 (F, b3), now in Cairo.

6. Fazzini, 1975, Cat. 108 a-b.



### 8. Bearded Cartonnage Mask

Kelsey Museum 88776

Department of Antiquities Purchase,  
Cairo, 1935

Provenance unknown

Max. H. of Mask, 42.0 cm

H. 26.3 cm, W. 20.2 cm, D. 23.9 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photograph: L.79.121.11

Late Ptolemaic Period

Face pushed in; nose dented; paint and gilding well preserved, although badly cracked on face.

The rounded face of this mask presents a compressed appearance. The ponderous dark blue frit wig is outlined continuously by a narrow band of white (now discolored) trimmed with black.<sup>1</sup> On both sides, the edging along the upper part of the wig lappets has been redrawn closer to the beard—the corrected line only clumsily joining with its lower continuation. No ornamentation relieves the visual weight of this wig, and it frames the brow tightly. This close effect is enhanced by a frit beard (outlined as the wig is) which begins immediately below the wig tabs and projects in around the face so that it touches the outward extensions of the cosmetic lines of the eyes. The beard forms a continuous strap around the chin, leaving only a 0.4 cm space around the lower lip.

Within the confines described by wig and beard, the ears are treated as stylized decorative abstractions. The internal concavities of the ears are modeled in a suggestive way, and, in fact, the form impression visible on the inside of the mask shows that the form on which the mask was modeled was much more articulate than the finished product would suggest viewed from the exterior. But the outlining of the wig around the ears is done in a way which denies the substance of the modeled natural form. Note, for instance, that the wig has been painted up over the modeled ridge of the helix of the ear, thus negating the sculptural aspect of this surface. The ears are gilded, as is the face. The face itself is dominated by large, heavily outlined eyes painted white with great black irises. Traces of red paint to represent caruncles on both the outer as well as inner canthi of the eyes perpetuate an Egyptian convention which is anatomically incorrect.<sup>2</sup> These stylized eyes are outlined in black with the cosmetic lines further articulated by a heavy frit band edged in black.

The cosmetic lines and the heavy frit eyebrows extend to meet the edge of the wig tab on either side of the face. The nostrils of the nose are articulated with red dots rimmed in black. The mouth is similarly painted. Between the lappets of the wig, a section of "usech" collar is painted on, rendered in rows of multicolored beadwork.<sup>3</sup>

Good parallels for the summary contours of face and ears, outlining of wig, and dominating aspect of the eyes may be found in numerous late Ptolemaic cartonnage masks.<sup>4</sup> The treatment of nostrils and mouth recalls the Ptolemaic and Roman Period cartonnages from Akhmim in Upper Egypt which often have gaudily painted nostrils, lips, chins, and eyes.<sup>5</sup>

1. On "frit" see Lucas, 1962, 392-395.

2. Use of this convention is not chronologically diagnostic. Note the use on Tutankhamun's mask (Edwards, 1976, 134) and on a late Ptolemaic cartonnage (Smith and Dawson, 1924, frontispiece).

3. On iconography and typology of Late Period-Ptolemaic "usech" collars see Buhl, 1959, 154-160.

4. Grimm, 1974, pl. 2. On pls. 3-5 one can see documented the tendency in the early Roman Period for increasing naturalism of ears, coiffure, face.

5. E.g., Grimm, 1974: pls. 116, 3 (London B.M. 29584); 121, 1 (Florence 6639); 121, 4 (Genf 956).



## 9. Beardless Cartonnage Mask

Kelsey Museum 88777

Department of Antiquities Purchase,  
Cairo, 1935

Provenance unknown

Max. H. of mask, 39.0 cm

H. 24.0 cm, W. 19.8 cm, D. 23.0 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photograph: L. 79.121.13

Late Ptolemaic Period

Tip of nose dented; many cracks in cartonnage; whole mask slightly warped; rear of wig much deteriorated.

The face, ears, throat, and "usech" collar of this mask are gilded in an uninterrupted expanse. The plain frit wig is edged all around in black and the gilding of face and throat is carried around the outer edge of the mask in a narrow band up to a point opposite the ear lobe on either side. Almond shaped eyes slant up at outer corners. While the dominating feature of the face, the eyes are not oversized (as are those of Cat. No. 8). They are of conventional Egyptian type, rimmed in black with a cosmetic line in blue frit which extends beyond the outer edge of the eye 0.3 cm short of the edge of the wig. Similarly, the black-edged frit eyebrows (delicately proportioned and forming an almost straight line) terminate before the line of the wig tabs.

As with 88776, the ears are of the late Ptolemaic abstract type—only very minimally articulated through modeling. Similarly, nose and mouth have received little sculptural definition. Here a dilute brown hook-like line is drawn around the outer wing of each nostril to compensate for the formlessness. The parting of the lips is defined also by a brown line. The beaded "usech" collar shown between the wig lappets is raised in relief as are the beads along the gilded rim of the mask. Similarly rendered collars are not uncommon on gilded cartonnages of the late Ptolemaic-early Roman Period.<sup>1</sup>

1. Grimm, 1974, pls. 16,3 (Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery 62.4), 16, 4 (Cairo 42951), and 17, 1 (Cairo 28440).





# 10. Beardless Cartonnage Mask

Kelsey Museum 88778

Department of Antiquities Purchase,  
Cairo, 1935

Provenance unknown

Max. H. of mask, 47.0 cm

H. 24.5 cm, W. 20.3 cm, D. 26.5 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photograph: L.79.121.10

Late Ptolemaic Period

Surface of gilded face and frit wig have separated from underlying cartonnage in large areas; right cheek repaired and consolidated.

The face of this mask gives an impression of broadness which is perhaps an optical effect created by the three gilded bands decorating the frit wig. The entirely gilded expanse of face, ears, and throat is thus carried on, echoed visually by these concentric bands. A noteworthy feature of this wig is that the narrow black edging which defines its perimeter does not continue across any expanse of gilding. The result is that the forward-most vertical section of wig lappet is not actually rendered as joined in one continuous unit with the rest of the wig. Similarly, where the second gilded band meets the gilded ear, the black edging is interrupted in a non-rational manner.

The eyes are shaped and defined rather like those of Cat. No. 9, except that here the cosmetic lines and brows extend to the edge of the wig tabs. Eyes, ears, nose, and mouth have received more sculptural definition than we see in Cat. Nos. 8 and 9. The zone between the cosmetic line and the eyebrow is somewhat modulated sculpturally (whereas on the other two cartonnage masks this area is almost completely flat).

The ears have a slight dimensionality to them; and they are a bit more detailed in interior modeling. The apertures and wings of the nostrils are sculpturally defined here, without need of further enhancement by painted detail. The mouth is similar to that of Cat. No. 9—with full, cursorily defined lips forming the soft smile characteristic of many late Ptolemaic masks.



### 11. Miniature Plaster Mask

Kelsey Museum 71.2.176

Bayview Collection

Provenance: said to have come "from a tomb opened near Assouan by Gen. Grenville, probably XII Dynasty."

H. 10.5 cm, W. 10.0 cm (edge of ear to 1. edge), D. 3.5 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photograph: L.79.120.7

Middle Kingdom

Left ear missing; top of right ear missing; top edge of wig broken off on left side; paint well preserved, but cracking; traces of linen mummy wrappings adhering to back.

As noted in the Introduction, this mask is actually a miniature face of solid plaster. The back is flat; and the remnants of mummy wrappings indicate that it rested directly atop the mummy's bandaged face.

The face is painted yellow, with details of the partially preserved right ear clearly picked out in red paint. What little is left of the wig which would have surrounded the small face (perhaps expanded by a framing cartonnage element now lost) shows a brow band of white overlaid by vertical hatching in red, followed by the wig itself in frit. Below the preserved portion of the helix of the

right ear, a fragmentary edge of white with red hatching indicates that the wig with decorated band originally continued behind the ear and down along the sides of the neck.<sup>1</sup>

The eyes are hastily painted, but effective because of their size. The face is nicely if simply modeled. A convexity at the top of each eyeball contributes to the impact of the staring visage.

Other excavated examples of this type of miniature mask seem to date to the Middle Kingdom.<sup>2</sup> And thus there seems no reason to doubt the notation of "Dyn. XII from Assouan" which appears in the Kelsey records.

We are fortunate to have an example of this rather unusual early mask type in the Kelsey collections. For the purposes of the present exhibit, it has a special significance—as it renders in all essential qualities the form of the Egyptian hieroglyph for "face." This consists (as does our mask) of a human face presented aspectively, seen from the front but with both ears pulled straight out for absolute intellectual impact (rather than visually veristic portrayal).<sup>3</sup>

The intimate conceptual and formal relationships between Egyptian art and Egyptian writing have been brilliantly discussed by Heinrich Schäfer.<sup>4</sup> Following his formulations one cannot doubt that to the Egyptians, a mask such as this one conveyed, in a literal and universally applicable sense, the fullest meanings of "a face"—in its own way every bit as "accurately" rendered as one of our naturalistic masks from the Roman Period.



1. A human-headed Canopic lid dated by Reisner to the New Kingdom gives a good impression of how our plaster face would have looked lying on the mummy with its wig intact: Reisner, 1967, no. 4599 (pl. LXVIII). This pottery lid bears a shallow face (little more than a relief) which lies almost horizontally, with ears projecting straight out at the sides.

2. Garstang, 1901, pl. XIV, and 1907, fig. 183.

3. Peck and Ross, 1978, color pl. III, for an artfully rendered Ramesside hieroglyph for "face" drawn on an ostrakon.

4. Schäfer, 1963 (1918).



## 12. Gilded Plaster Mask

Kelsey Museum 4651

F. W. Kelsey Purchase, 1925

Provenance: acquired in the Fayoum by Dr.

David L. Askren

Max. H. 14.5 cm, Max. W. 11.5 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photograph: L. 79.120.6

First Century AD

Left eye and left side of face missing; nose completely preserved except for small chip off tip; right edge (including right ear) and brow of mask missing; gilding in excellent condition; remnants of coarse fabric on interior.

The gilding on this plaster face immediately recalls the Ptolemaic cartonnage masks (Cat. Nos. 8-10). But important formal differences exist which seem to herald the infusion of a new spirit. The modeling of 4651 is forceful. While the nose is not articulately rendered around the wings of the nostrils, the nostrils themselves are actually perforated—creating a feeling of real dimension which is missing from the flat renderings of our Ptolemaic cartonnages. The mouth and philtrum are crisply defined. The soft ephemeral smile of the Ptolemaic masks has become plastic and definite. The eyes are set off sculpturally by a large socket cavity which serves simultaneously to define cheekbone and brow. The eye (as also the eyebrow) is edged in bitumen. The white of the eye is of white-painted plaster, but the iris is made of a rounded piece of black glass.<sup>1</sup> After insertion of the iris, the area was plugged with plaster at the back. A ring of black paint around the glass insert creates a subtle suggestion of naturalism in the gaze.

Good parallels for the modeled face give us an idea of how 4651 might have looked originally.<sup>2</sup> These similar plaster masks are all from Middle Egypt (Meir). We note in them strongly emerging facial contours with naturalistically rendered ears and a tendency to abandon the exaggerated stylization of eyes so common in late Ptolemaic Period masks. The elaborately embroidered Egyptian headdress still stretches across the brow and around the ears to hug the neck as it forms long lappets. Although we cannot say what type of ears our example once had, they are likely to have conformed to this new trend toward

naturalism. Traces of painted vertical stripes preserved along the right edge of our mask are vestiges of the embroidered headdress.

Grimm dates the close stylistic parallels we have cited for our mask in a series ranging from the end of the first century BC to the second quarter of the first century AD. The latest in this series (his pl. 17,1) has an Augustan coiffure emerging from beneath his Egyptian headdress. It is not possible to determine whether the Kelsey mask originally had a similar modeled coiffure which might have provided a clue to its relative position within the broad parameters suggested by these parallels.

The gilding on the Kelsey mask does not provide any indication of a more precise dating. All of our parallels from Meir are gilded. And, in fact, Grimm notes that in their original state, something on the order of



one-third of all Roman Period plaster masks were gilded (see Cat. Nos. 14, 18, 20).<sup>3</sup> Apparently, it was a simple matter of taste and pocketbook.<sup>4</sup>

The provenance of Kelsey 4651 is something of a puzzle. It was apparently acquired by Dr. Askren in the Fayoum. But according to Grimm's research, "no stucco masks as we known them from Middle Egypt" can be proven to come from the Fayoum.<sup>5</sup> Rather, the cartonnage medium persisted—developing along more naturalistic lines, but not evolving into a plaster type.<sup>6</sup> According to Grimm, the cartonnage mask in the Fayoum continues a naturalistic development which to some extent parallels developments in the molded plaster masks. But, whereas the plaster masks of Middle and Upper Egypt persist through the Roman Period, the cartonnage masks of the Fayoum become completely supplanted by painted portraits after the end of the Flavian era (certainly by the end of Hadrian's reign).<sup>7</sup>

1. Lucas, 1962, 120-154, on inlaid eyes. His information does not, however, take into account the many variations one discovers on these Roman Period masks. See also, Grimm, 1974, 18. The use of various types of eye inserts was viewed by Edgar as a diagnostic element for relative chronology (Edgar, 1905, vi-viii). This seems no longer tenable.

2. E.g., the following plaster masks published in Grimm, 1974: pls. 16, 1; 16, 4; 17, 1; 17, 2.

3. Grimm, 1974, 21.

4. Grimm, 1974, 51.

5. Grimm, 1974, 44.

6. Hence, another good parallel for Kelsey 4651 comes from the Fayoum—but it is made of gilded cartonnage: Grimm, 1974, pl. 11, 1.

7. Grimm, 1974, 44-58, on cartonnages of Lower Egypt.

### 13. Beardless Plaster Mask

Kelsey Museum 88238

Purchased in Egypt

Date and source of acquisition unknown

Provenance unknown

H. 20.0 cm, W. 17.5 cm, D. 12.6 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photograph: L.79.121.22

Neronian

Pieced together from five fragments; section of striped headdress preserved behind each ear; surface paint on face poorly preserved.

The face of this youth was painted a pink flesh tone. Black paint emphasized the eyebrows, lid creases, eyes, and parting of the lips. The plaster eyeballs are convex, with the lids and area under the eyes nicely modeled.

A good parallel for this mask is a better preserved plaster mask from Tuna el-Gebel, now in Cairo.<sup>1</sup> Facial structure, ears, nose modeling, painting of the eyes, and striped headdress are all similar. Grimm dates the Cairo mask to the Neronian Period on stylistic grounds.<sup>2</sup> Our mask exhibits a coiffure which is decidedly Neronian: with hair combed forward in a series of overlapping rows of curls, the foremost framing the brow in a neat arrangement of sickle-shaped locks.<sup>3</sup>

1. Grimm, 1974, pl. 21,4 (Cairo 33162).

2. Grimm, 1974, 72.

3. An excellent Roman sculpture parallel for the coiffure of our mask: Poulsen, 1962, no. 96 (pls. CLXX-CLXXI).



#### 14. Beardless Plaster Mask

Kelsey Museum 1874

F. W. Kelsey Purchase, 1921

Acquired by Prof. Kelsey in the Fayoum

H. 19.5 cm, W. 16.1 cm, D. 13.0 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photograph: L. 79.120.8

Late Hadrianic-Early Antonine

Facial surface pitted, outermost layer of plaster chipped off right cheek, nose, and under chin; left eyeball replaced in antiquity; traces of gilding below left eye and on right cheek.

Important observations on the manufacturing technique of the plaster masks can be made with reference to this piece.<sup>1</sup> The pitting in the surface of the face results from the bursting of bubbles which formed in the course of pouring the plaster into a mold. The chipping of the surface shows that a fine-grained plaster was initially poured into the mold to form a "skin" layer; then coarser plaster was pressed in on top of this. Over time, the bonding of the two layers has weakened. On the back of the hollow mask, finger marks are clearly visible where the maker pushed the plaster down to the mold. Close study of the interior shows that the mask was molded in two pieces. The join line runs just behind the deep crown of curly hair which frames the forehead and around behind the ears and down. From the outside, this two-piece molding is well camouflaged. But the area behind each ear is noticeably smoothed over by hand. So too, the juncture of cursorily modeled hair of the rear section with the plastic crown of curls at the front has been smoothed over but not entirely hidden.

From the back, a plug of plaster is visible behind each eyeball. This is common. Apparently, these masks must often have been mass-produced with eyeballs left hollow. Then, depending upon how much one wished to spend, eyes could be inserted either of glass, stone, or painted plaster. Here, the plug behind the right eye is of the same material as the mask itself. The plug behind the left eye is of a different, greyer material. Since the two eyeballs are also slightly different (the right being convex, with delineated pupil), it appears that the left one may have been damaged and replaced in antiquity. Both eyeballs have been only carelessly anchored with plaster from the front. Originally, painted facial surface and details would have deflected atten-

tion from these lumpy masses. In this case, the small bits of gilding under the left eye and on the right cheek indicate that the skin was gilded rather than painted a flesh tone (see Cat. No. 12).

This mask, with its inlaid eyes and gilded face, must have been an expensive one. But for all its costliness, the buyer did not receive a truly ideosyncratic likeness. A very close parallel for our mask is now in a private collection in Greece.<sup>2</sup> Face structure, nose, brow line, ears, and hair all seem remarkably similar. They could almost be made from the same mold.<sup>3</sup> On the better preserved example, we see the mantle coming around from the back of the head to frame the neck. Here on Kelsey 1874 a portion of the mantle is preserved along the left side of the head.

The parallel for our mask may be dated to the late Hadrianic or early Antonine Periods. The beardless youth wears a round pin bearing a picture of the deified Antinoos—thus providing a precise *terminus post quem*. In all probability the mask comes from Antinoopolis, which was founded by Hadrian after Antinoos' death.<sup>4</sup> For reasons noted already in Cat. No. 12, the acquisition of our piece in the Fayoum seems to shed no light on its place of manufacture and original use. The closeness of the Kelsey mask to its parallel suggests the possibility of the same workshop—perhaps at Antinoopolis.

1. Rosenberg, 1977, for additional observations on the plaster masks.

2. Grimm, 1974, pl. 43,1.

3. Dimensions of each mask would have enhanced the usefulness of Grimm's monograph by enabling such determinations at least to be postulated.

4. Grimm, 1974, 70-71.



### 15. Bearded Plaster Mask

Kelsey Museum 88236

Purchased in Egypt

Date and source of acquisition unknown

Provenance unknown

H. 20.2 cm, W. 17.7 cm, D. 12.5 cm

Bibliography: Grimm, 1974, 82 n. 201

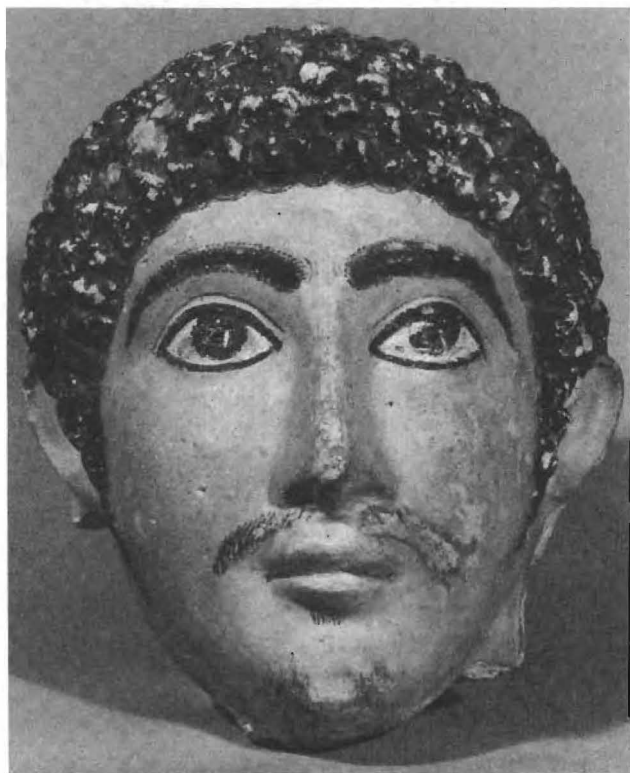
Photographs: L. 79.121.21 and L. 79.122.3-5

Hadrianic-Early Antonine

Good condition with minor chips on nose, ears, hair; paint scraped off left moustache; mask severed from headdress.

This mask displays a triangular facial structure characteristic of masks dating to the mid-second century AD.<sup>1</sup> The hair, molded in one unit with the mask, is rendered as a mass of tight curls forming a close-fitting cap. The eyes, plugged at the back, are of plaster. A pink paint covers the face and ears. Black paint covers the hair and extends down onto the brow in scallops which ease the transition from molded curls to face. The molded sideburns gradually thin out to nothing below the earlobe and are carried down slightly in sketchy painted lines. Around this area, a grey wash is used to enhance the quality of a faint youthful beard. Similarly, on the sparse painted moustache and bits of beard under the lower lip and on the chin, grey wash works effectively under whippy black strokes. A close Roman sculpture parallel for the light sketchy quality of the beard is offered by the marble bust of C. Volcacius Myronous from Ostia (dated c. 160 AD).<sup>2</sup>

Heavy black eyebrows are treated with sketchy strokes to suggest the quality of the hair. A black line marks the folds of the eyelid; and the parting of the lips is also emphasized in black. Both of these detailing features are very common on Roman masks. The chin has a small molded dimple. This dimple, as also dimples on the cheek (e.g., Cat. No. 24), is also a recurring convention of Roman Period mummy masks—apparently bearing no relation to the attributes of a specific individual.





Close parallels for this mask come from Middle Egypt and date to the middle of the second century AD.<sup>3</sup> Once again, the parallels are striking. On the basis of a photograph, one could not definitively state that our mask came from the same mold as the example in West Berlin. But it is worth pointing out that the perceptible differences between the two are all details which were often added with paint and plaster to the pre-molded mask (e.g., diadem and full beard on Berlin mask; crease lines between eyebrows on the Kelsey mask).

1. Grimm, 1974, 81.

2. Heintze, 1961, pl. 25.

3. Grimm, 1974, pl. 44,1 (West Berlin 12436), 44,2 (Genf 12489), 44,3 (Mainz D. 22144), 44,4 (Cairo 33159).



## 16. Bearded Plaster Mask

Kelsey Museum 88237

Purchased in Egypt

Date and source of acquisition unknown

Provenance unknown

H. 19.2 cm, W. 16.0 cm, D. 13.0 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photographs: L.79.120.4 and L.79.120.5

Hadrianic

Surface chipped, pitted and stained; paint almost entirely worn off on left cheek; mask preserved well below chin and along edges of painted headdress.

The poor surface preservation of this mask is most unfortunate, as close scrutiny reveals that it received fine detail work. Face, neck, and ears were originally covered with a yellow paint (now darkened). Standard details picked out in black are eyes (of plaster), eyelid creases, eyebrows, lip parting, and hair.

Extending downward from the black eyebrows, fine black lines have been drawn in a quick calligraphic manner in order to create a sense of natural hair quality. This feature is best preserved on the right brow.

The beard (a sparse youthful one) is modeled. Its plasticity is enhanced by detailing in grey wash and black. The moustache is rendered similarly. The effect (difficult to capture in a photograph) is a striking deviation from more conventional masks, where painted detail and plastic contour tend to be much more discretely functioning aspects of design, with paint being applied in a consistently draftsmanlike way.

The beard and the hairstyle of this mask (with thick locks brought forward to frame the face in loose curving strands set somewhat at random) are paralleled closely by Roman sculptures of the Hadrianic Period.<sup>1</sup> In the absence of an externally datable plaster mask parallel for Kelsey 88237, we can say only that our mask appears Hadrianic in coiffure style, thus suggesting a *terminus post quem* of the second quarter of the second century AD.

1. E.g., Poulsen, 1974, No. 68 (pls. CX-CXI).

### 17. Beardless Plaster Mask

Kelsey Museum 88240

Purchased in Egypt

Date and source of acquisition unknown

Provenance unknown

H. 17.6 cm, W. 16.0 cm, D. 11.4 cm

Bibliography: Grimm, 1974, 17

Photograph: L.79.120.25

Hadrianic

Most of surface pitted; nose chipped; small hole above left eyebrow; large section of layered mummy wrappings preserved on interior.

This face was painted a flesh tone, with lip parting, bushy eyebrows, and detailing of the plaster eyes done in the customary black. Instead of molded black hair, however, this person is depicted wearing a skull cap (rendered in grey paint) over a shaved head.<sup>1</sup>

There are two noteworthy qualities of this mask. First, it is almost identical, in every measurement and molded detail, to Cat. No. 16—except for its lack of beard and hair.<sup>2</sup> Only a couple of minute divergences of line on the ears seem to differentiate the two heads. They must have come from the same workshop. This fact provides us with the probability of a Hadrianic date for our beardless mask. The two Kelsey masks are so similar that one is tempted to suggest that they may in fact come from the same mold. The differences in the ears could easily be due to effects of wear and of the process of hand-joining the front and back portions of the masks behind the ears. The beard on Cat. No. 16 could have been formed of applied lumps of plaster. Indeed, just above the right side of the upper lip a chip in the surface plaster reveals a separation of layers between the moustache and the face surface.

The hair of Cat. No. 16 might also have been added to a pre-molded mask. In this case, the hair would have been molded separately and then joined deftly to the head. Several masks are known (male and female) which have added plastic coiffures—revealed as such only because the hair has in each case separated from the head of the mask.<sup>3</sup>

The second aspect of interest here concerns the iconography of the skull cap. There can be no doubt that our mask 88240 depicts an Egyptian priest. It is one of only three masks known to Grimm as of 1974 which definitely depict Egyptian priests. The grey paint applied

to the head proves that the mask, without hair, was in its intended finished state.<sup>4</sup>

1. Grimm, 1974, 17.

2. The photographs of the two masks cannot do justice to the similarity because of disparities in shooting angle.

3. McCrimmon, 1945, pl. 3 (9 and 11) for two such masks in Toronto; and Grimm, 1974, pl. 98, 1-2, for an excellent example in Berlin. (Grimm, 1974, 17, corrects McCrimmon's analysis of the Toronto examples.)

4. Grimm, 1974, 17. The other two are at Eton College, Windsor (Grimm, 17n.40) and in Berlin (Grimm, pl.26, 1-2). Grimm dates the Eton College mask to mid-second century. Thus it seems to be contemporary with our Cat. No. 17. See McCrimmon, 1945, 55-56, on the priest class during the Roman Period.



## 18. Beardless Plaster Mask

Kelsey Museum 88239

Purchased in Egypt

Date and source of acquisition unknown

Provenance unknown

H. 20.5 cm, W. 17.3 cm, D. 13.1 cm

Bibliography: Grimm, 1974, 17 nn. 33 & 38

Photograph: L.79.121.23

Hadrianic-Antonine (?)

Trace of gilding between lips, and in left nostril; left eye modern replacement.

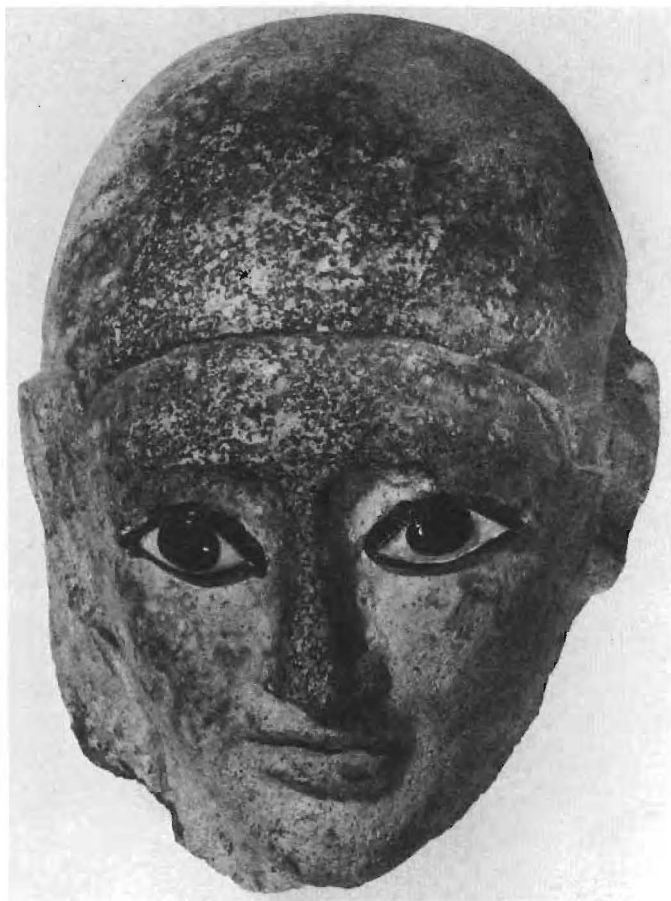
In its present state, this mask is dominated by its inlaid glass eyes. The original one (on the right) is convex, with dark blue rim and black iris. Unlike most masks, the eye sockets were not kept open for the insertion of eyes from the interior. There are no plugs behind the eyes on this mask. Instead, the eyeball was simply set into a very shallow depression in the face. Thus, the eye bulges out like a large round button. When the original gilding covered this face, the startling effect of the eyes may have been somewhat mitigated.

The mouth is quite similar to that on Cat. No. 14. Since this is a distinctive feature it is perhaps of some value as a dating criterion. On that basis, a Hadrianic-Antonine date is very tentatively proposed for this mask. In the absence of a coiffure, there is little else with which to formulate an opinion.

As Grimm notes, it is possible that our mask represents a priest wearing a skull cap rendered in low relief.<sup>1</sup> The hasty manner in which the edges of this cap were worked with a tool suggests, however, that it was intended to be hidden under a plaster "wig." The mask in Berlin which has lost part of its added coiffure reveals a smooth cap of this same type, apparently useful as a bonding agent for the coiffure.<sup>2</sup>

1. Grimm, 1974, 18.

2. Grimm, 1974, pl. 98, 1-2.



## 19. Beardless Plaster Mask of a Boy

Kelsey Museum 88241

Purchased in Egypt

Date and source of acquisition unknown

Provenance unknown

H. 16.0 cm, Max. W. 12.0 cm, D. 11.6 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photographs: L. 79.120.27 and L. 79.120.28

Julio-Claudian (?)

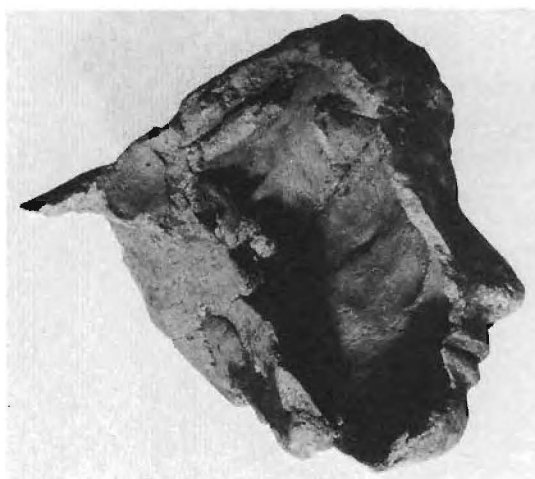
Right side of mask broken away; mended along right side of forehead; back of head has multiple cracks; nose chipped; face coated with varnish in modern times.

This is a roughly made mask of coarse plaster mixed with straw (clearly visible on the face surface). From the outside as well as the inside it is obvious that the little mask was formed of two separate molded sections. The join line runs along the back edge of the ear and up around the head. The joining was only perfunctory, so that the division between the hair of the front and back sections is readily apparent.

The ear, which lies far back from the face, is scarcely modeled. The hair which frames the face is summarily rendered, but seems to be combed forward in overlapping rows of curls somewhat like Kelsey 88238 (Cat. No. 13).

Contrasting with the overall impression of haste and carelessness, the eyes are rendered with delicacy. They are simple plastered eyes with little modeling. But the painted rims are applied with a sure hand. Eyelashes fringe the lids, and the eyebrows too are painted in quick short strokes. Similar eye treatment is found on masks dated by Grimm to the Julio-Claudian Period and the Hadrianic-Antonine Period;<sup>1</sup> the feature is not chronologically diagnostic. The summary rendering of the coiffure limits its usefulness as a dating tool.

1. Grimm, 1974, 76, 125 and pl. 64, 2 (Cairo 33193); and pl. 44, 4 (Cairo 33159).





## 20. Beardless Plaster Mask of a Boy

Kelsey Museum 88242

Purchased in Egypt

Date and source of acquisition unknown

Provenance unknown

H. 13.7 cm, W. 13.0 cm, D. 10.5 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photograph: L. 79.120.29

Trajanic

Inlaid eyes damaged, pupils missing; modern plastering on interior to hold metal hook; trace of gilding below right corner of mouth.

In contrast to the preceding mask, (also of a young boy) this one is well made and must have been costly. The eyes were inlaid with glass; and the face was apparently gilded. There is an arresting quality about this mask, stemming in part from the modeled eyebrows which appear to knit together in an expression of alertness and concern. The mouth is softly pursed—again lending a sense of immediacy to the expression. The whole head is thrust slightly off center of a sensitively modeled neck with rippling flesh folds.

The coiffure of this mask is also distinctive. Straight hair is combed forward to frame the face, with a slight parting in the strands directly above the nose. On either side of the face the hair curves downward.

This hairstyle finds precise parallels in Roman sculptures of the Emperor Trajan and his contemporaries.<sup>1</sup> The arresting tilt of the head is not a usual feature of Roman Period mummy masks. It is so reminiscent of imperial portrait types that one wonders if perhaps the mold for our mask was made with a specific imperial statue in mind.<sup>2</sup>

Several mask parallels exhibit similar forms of mouth, nose and eyes. None appears actually to be from the same mold as our mask; but the close similarities suggest the possibility of a workshop "type."<sup>3</sup>

1. Munich Glyptothek, 1979, pl. 103 (Trajan); Poulsen, 1974, No. 51, pl. LXXXIV (Trajanic head).

2. A head of Germanicus from Lower Egypt tilts at the same angle, for instance (Vermeule, 1964, fig. 13, in Toronto).

3. Grimm, 1974, pl. 20,1 (Leiden 1930/4.3), 20,3 (Louvre 6690), 24, 1 (Stockholm NME 948), 28, 3-4 (Genf 12459), 29,3 (Stockholm 11221), 29, 4 (Dealer).





## 21. Beardless Plaster Mask of a Boy

Kelsey Museum 88243

Purchased in Egypt

Date and source of acquisition unknown

Provenance unknown

H. 15.0 cm, W. 14.0 cm, D. 10.3 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photograph: L.79.121.30 and L.79.121.31

Trajanic-Hadrianic

Surface pitted; chipped on chin, mouth, nose, right eyebrow and hair over right eye.

This mask is painted a pink flesh tone, with the hair, details of the plaster eyes, and the parting of the lips executed in black.

The artisan has successfully captured childlike qualities in this little face. Note the soft roundness of the facial structure, the short, slightly upturned nose, and the parted lips. The hair, combed straight forward to form a close fitting cap, enhances the roundness of the child's face.

Using the coiffure as a criterion we may suggest a Trajanic date. A marble head from Asia Minor portrays a young boy of generally similar characteristics who also wears his hair combed forward. This piece has been dated to the Trajanic Period on the basis of coiffure and general stylistic traits—which link it to other portraits of small boys.<sup>1</sup> Grimm suggests a Hadrianic date for introduction of masks of children which feature snub noses and parted lips.<sup>2</sup> Our mask certainly documents this interest in distinctly childlike characteristics and should probably be dated to the first or second quarter of the second century AD.<sup>3</sup>

1. Inan and Rosenbaum, 1966, 203 and pl. CLVI, 1-2.

2. Grimm, 1974, 120.

3. A plaster mask in Cairo, purportedly from Balansourah, portrays a young boy with coiffure almost identical to Kelsey 88243: Edgar, 1905, pl. XXVIII, 33.201. Edgar (p. IX) describes it as "no doubt pretty early." Grimm (1974, 75) dates it Trajanic. While the hairstyle and also the dimensions of the two masks are markedly similar, the Cairo mask does not share the sensitive rendering of a child's face. A Trajanic mask in the Graf Collection comes closer (Grimm, 1974, 80 and pl. 29, 2).



## 22. Female Plaster Mask

Kelsey Museum 65.3.14

Gift of Dr. Alexander G. Ruthven

Provenance unknown

H. 15.5 cm, W. 14.2 cm, D. 11.4 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photographs: L. 79.121.32 and L. 79.121.33

Julio Claudian-Hadrianic

Surface pitted; faint traces of pale pink paint in nostrils, on ears, and on throat; black paint on right eyeball; and green paint on earrings; hook attached to interior in modern times; impressions and fragments of mummy wrappings in interior.

This mask is characterized by strong, sharp features molded in high relief. The ears are crisply defined, the eyebrows projecting emphatically above convex eyeballs which were molded with the face. The long narrow nose is balanced by a jutting dimpled chin. Absence of the original painted facial details creates a severe impression.

Hoop earrings with three beads were applied by hand to the pre-molded face. The distinctive coiffure, painted black, also appears to have been added separately (and in a clumsy manner). A row of corkscrew curls (reduced here to little more than a gridded band) frames the face at a rakish angle. This zone was clearly applied secondarily and is also separate from the rest of the hair. Behind the corkscrew curls the coiffure forms corrugated waves down both sides of the head from a deep central part. On the right side, one banana curl remains, extending down the full preserved length of the throat. Several better preserved masks have similar coiffures; and from these we see that Kelsey 65.3.14 may originally have had at least three—perhaps as many as seven or eight—banana curls gracing either side of the face.<sup>1</sup> At the back of the head a small portion of a lavender-pink mantle is visible (see Cat. No. 24).

The coiffure has its roots in fashions set at the court of Julio-Claudian Rome.<sup>2</sup> These styles must have made their way to the provinces rapidly. As Hutchinson observes, the fifty year provincial lag postulated by Petrie for Roman fashions to reach the Fayoum



(introduced, he speculated, by "elderly wives of high officials") is much too long.<sup>3</sup> The hairstyle of a Roman empress, disseminated on coins and official statues, acquired a quasi-iconographical value-by-association—just as did the coiffure of Caesar himself. The dissemination of the up-to-date imperial image to far-flung provinces was carried out with deliberate efficiency.

The difficult aspect of fixing parameters for the portrayal of Julio-Claudian hairstyles in Egypt lies in determining a *terminus ante quem*. This involves attempting to evaluate the effects of factors specific to individual consumers: class, personal taste, age (and with that, the desire to be portrayed on a funerary mask in the current Roman mode *versus* the Roman mode current in one's youth, or simply the way one actually looked in daily life). Grimm suggests that Julio-Claudian styles (with infinite minor variations) persist in the mummy masks well into the second century.<sup>4</sup>

1. E.g., Grimm, 1974, pl. 66, 1 (from Tuna el-Gebel, now in Jacksonville, Fla.); pl. 68, 3 (in Boston); pl. 67, 2 (in Vienna).

2. Furnée-van Zwet, 1956; Hutchinson, 1977.

3. Hutchinson, 1977, 57.

4. Grimm, 1974, 76-77.



### 23. Female Plaster Mask

Kelsey Museum 65.3.15

Gift of Dr. Alexander G. Ruthven

Provenance unknown

H. 17.5 cm, W. 16.8 cm, D. 11.7 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photographs: L.79.121.34 and L.79.121.35

Julio-Claudian-Hadrianic

Surface pitted; traces of flesh paint (white?) around ears; metal hook attached to interior in modern times; garland broken off at crest of head.

This mask is very similar to Cat. No. 22 in certain technical features as well as in coiffure style. Again, the facial features are crisply molded, and the convex eyeballs are of one piece with the face. The hair (here including a floral wreath) was applied secondarily and in discrete units rather than as one pre-molded element.

Corkscrew curls frame the face; and behind them rises the corrugated mass of waves (this time without a part). A white floral crown is applied to a plaster form pinched around the arc of the head.

The mask in Jacksonville is a good parallel for the face, hairstyle and floral crown of our mask.<sup>1</sup> Grimm suggests that garlands were not worn on the head after the mid-second century AD.<sup>2</sup> Like Cat. No. 22, this mask floats freely within a two-century time span.

1. Grimm, 1974, pl. 66, 1.

2. Grimm, 1974, 120.



## 24. Female Plaster Mask

Kelsey Museum 88232

Purchased in Egypt

Date and source of acquisition unknown

Provenance unknown

Max. H. 29.0 cm, H. 17.5 cm, W. 15.0 cm,

Max. D. 16.5 cm

Bibliography: Grimm, 1974, 19 n. 50

Photograph: L. 79.120.13

Flavian-Trajanic

Excellent condition; preserved down to bust; some plaster chipped off sides of mantle area and back; some restoration on left side of throat.

The surface of face, ears and throat preserves the original smooth layer of plaster. This is covered with a pink-tinted paint. The molded lips are picked out in a hasty application of pink, with the parting of the lips accented by thick black strokes. The eyes (of plaster) are detailed in black. A dimple on each cheek gives this doll-like face a certain supple quality.

The lady wears beaded hoop earrings painted gold, and two beaded necklaces (one green and gold, the other all gold). Her mantle is a striking fuschia. Her dress seems originally to have been a plum color, with a blue vertical stripe on the right side.

The black hair is coiffed in a mode current in Flavian times. A crown of dense curls frames the face (here with one corkscrew curl in front of each ear); then the rest of the hair is pulled into a high coil. A hole piercing the front section of this element may have held an ornamental attachment.<sup>1</sup>

A good parallel for the eyes of our Cat. No. 24—as well as for specific aspects of her coiffure—is found in a mask in Stockholm.<sup>2</sup> Both of these masks are placed by Grimm in the period of Flavian-Trajan.<sup>3</sup> At this time, artisans in Egypt were freely elaborating upon coiffure styles set in Rome (as indeed their clients probably were in real life).<sup>4</sup>

The hairstyle of our Cat. No. 24 is also closely paralleled on Fayoum portraits dating to the Flavian-Trajanic Period.<sup>5</sup> Such comparisons between a contemporaneous mask and panel painting suggest how distinct the two media were in terms of painting technique while being very close in terms of actual motifs (hairstyles, jewelry, costume) represented. The plaster masks could have been used as a vehicle for painterly effects such as *chiaroscuro*. But for the most

part, the painting of the masks maintained the bold linear traditions of ancient Egyptian art, apparently unaffected by exposure to the work of the panel painters.<sup>6</sup>

1. As worn, for instance, by a woman on a Flavian-Trajanic Fayoum painting in Edinburgh (Parlasca, 1966, pl. 18, 2).

2. Grimm, 1974, pl. 80, 3.

3. Grimm, 1974, 17 n. 50 and 83.

4. Grimm, 1974, 83, notes aspects of provincial retention/adaptation of Roman coiffures.

5. E.g., Grimm, 1975, pl. 93 (from Hawara); and another in Edinburgh (*supra* n. 1).

6. An exception is the impressionistic treatment of the beard on Cat. No. 16.





## 25. Female Plaster Mask

Kelsey Museum 88233

Purchased in Egypt

Date and source of acquisition unknown

Provenance unknown

H. 20.5 cm, W. 17.5 cm, D. 18.0 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photographs: L. 79.120.15 and L. 79.120.16

Flavian-Hadrianic

Surface paint badly worn; mask reassembled from many pieces; face and hair cracked and chipped.

The face of this mask was painted a reddish tone. The eyes (plaster inserts) were rimmed in black, with heavy black brows. Beaded earrings like those better preserved on our other female masks are only faintly visible here because of surface erosion. The hairstyle is similar to that of Cat. No. 24, but with multiple corkscrew curls set in tiers in front of each ear. On this basis, we can suggest a Flavian-Trajanic date.

Perhaps especially in comparison with Cat. No. 24, one is struck by the heavy masculine lines of this face. Grimm notes examples of male and female mask pairs made from the same mold—with gender-specific features (earrings, beards, hairstyles) added/modified by hand.<sup>1</sup> Our Cat. No. 25 may well be another such mask made from a "unisex" mold.

The head of this mask tilts up at about a 35° angle—as if a fully round head were shown propped up with pillows. The black mantle draped behind the ears fills in the transitional space to the base level of the mask. This slightly raised form, with the mask still rendered as a true mask (hollow and backless) marks a stage in the gradual development toward plaster "masks" which were actually heads molded fully in the round and set at a 90° angle to the mummies to which they were affixed (see Cat. No. 28).<sup>2</sup>

1. Grimm, 1974, 103.

2. Grimm, 1974, 86.



## 26. Female Plaster Mask

Kelsey Museum 88231

Purchased in Egypt

Date and source of acquisition unknown

Provenance unknown

H. (to top of bun) 21.5 cm, W. 17.5 cm, D. 10.5 cm

Bibliography: Grimm, 1974, 84n.223

Photographs: L. 79.120.10; L. 79.120.0;  
L. 79.120.11

Hadrianic

Surface very pitted and corroded; mouth, chin and hair chipped; two corkscrew curls chipped off right brow.

The face was once painted a reddish flesh tone, with black detailing to articulate eyes, brows, and parting of the lips. The eyes were molded with the mask. Earrings are of the familiar beaded hoop type.

A certain refined delicacy characterizes this mask. The roundness of the face is echoed by the harmonious contours of the coiffure. A veritable aedicula of corkscrew curls creates a lovely pointed arch over the brow. At the front of the head the hair is combed from a central part in slightly wavy strands and then is drawn up at the ears to merge with a massive coil bun which crowns the head. A crack running up behind each ear and along the front edge of the bun indicates the seam line between front and rear portions of the mask. And on the interior one can see the reinforcing plaster applied as backing to the large bun—which in essence is the rear portion of this mask.

Ours is one of a series of similar masks which are drawn after the prototype of representations of the Empress Sabina, wife of Hadrian.<sup>1</sup> A particularly close mask parallel for the coiffure and facial type of our Cat. No. 26 is a mask of the Hadrianic Period now in the Cooper Hewitt Museum.<sup>2</sup>

1. Grimm, 1974, 84n.223. Examples of the Sabina model include Grimm, 1974, pl. 82, 1-2 (Athens) and Heintze, 1961, pl. 22a (Vatican).

2. Grimm, 1974, pl. 83, 3.





## 27. Female Plaster Mask

Kelsey Museum 88235

Purchased in Egypt

Date and source of acquisition unknown

H. 17.2 cm, W. 17.0 cm, D. 17.3 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photographs: L. 79.121.19 and L. 79.121.20

Antonine

Corrosive pitting especially on cheeks, nose, ears, and mouth; two corkscrew curls broken off left of center; minor nicks on chin; on interior much modern plaster, used to anchor a metal hook, hides the original surface.

The face was painted a buff tone (now almost completely disappeared). Faint traces of black paint between lips, on eye rims, at crease of right eyelid, and on eyebrows are all that remain of the original facial detailing.

Especially around the eyes, the modeling is subtly suggestive of naturalism. This suggestion is enhanced by the eyeballs themselves, which are plaster inserts (painted with black irises) covered with sheets of transparent glass. The glass overlays have become bruised and opaque with age; but originally the effect must have been quite lifelike. Grimm determines that this technique was not employed until the Hadrianic Period—thus providing a *terminus post quem* for our mask.<sup>1</sup>

The hairstyle is also distinctive; and it serves to push this *terminus* down further, into the Antonine Period. From a central part, the hair is brought down quite severely on either side, sweeping over the tips of the ears and up at the back into a compact bun. This general arrangement characterizes a fashion set by Faustina the Elder (wife of Antoninus Pius).<sup>2</sup> As is quite common with the provincial Egyptian variations on an imperial hairstyle, however, corkscrew curls continue to frame the face of Cat. No. 27, and the coiffure in general is more schematized and linear than its sculptural and its actual-life prototypes.<sup>3</sup> The corkscrew curls of our Cat. No. 27



were clearly added to a pre-molded face (seam lines are obvious under first-hand examination). Details such as the framing curls were no doubt added at the discretion of the consumer according to the image desired—the curls perhaps connoting youth as they seem to have done for Antonia Minor back in the early days of the Empire at Rome.<sup>4</sup>

1. Grimm, 1974, 120.

2. E.g., Heintze, 1961, pl. 23 (Faustina in Ostia).

3. Other masks based on (but presenting various adaptations of) the Elder Faustina's prototypes include Grimm, 1974, pl. 86, 3 (Cairo, without no.), pl. 86, 4 (Paris 12053), pl. 87, 2 (Stockholm 946), and pl. 87, 3-4 (Genf 13742).

4. See Erhart, 1978: the individualized images of the youthful Antonia are characterized by framing curls; but on the mature portraits they are abandoned in favor of a more austere appearance.



## 28. Female Plaster Mask

Kelsey Museum 88234

Purchased in Egypt

Date and source of acquisition unknown

Provenance unknown

H. 19.0 cm, W. 17.0 cm, D. 17.5 cm

Bibliography: Grimm, 1974, 88n.265

Photograph: L.79.121.18

Late Severan (or later)

Surface corroded, especially above left eyebrow; pit in left cheek; deep nicks above nose, on bridge of nose, and on left eyebrow; surface layer of plaster chipped off tip of nose; hair broken away from head over large areas; a brown stain spots face and ears.

Originally this face was painted a pink flesh tone. The paint is still visible on ears, neck, eyelids, lips, and under the nose. Traces of black show that the lip parting was defined; and inner surfaces of the rims of the eyes as well as the eyebrows were also painted black.

This mask is interesting on several counts. First, it demonstrates the culmination of the development toward upright fully rounded heads set at right angles to the body, such as we saw in its beginning stage with Cat. No. 25. According to Grimm, this culmination does not occur until some time after 200 AD.<sup>1</sup> Thus, our mask should be no earlier than the Severan Period.

Another feature of interest is the rendering of the eyes. As with Cat. No. 27, they are painted plaster inserts covered with transparent glass. This is the only mask in our collection, however, in which we witness the complete abandonment of traditional Egyptian conventions for eye treatment. Here, the eyelids are deliberately and naturalistically modeled. They project out from and around the slightly convex eyeballs which are set very plausibly into their sockets.

Third, the coiffure of this mask deserves comment. The hair is pulled tightly down and behind the ear on either side of a central part. At the back of the head the hair is gathered in a large but very flat mass which was meant to represent a braided bun (although the perfunctory modeling makes this difficult to see). A close parallel for this coiffure formation is found on a marble head from Ephesus dated to about 250 AD, reflecting the prototypes of Herennia Etruscilla (see also Cat. No. 32).<sup>2</sup>



Finally, in this mask we have an excellent example of a pre-molded head with the entire coiffure added later. Along the line of the brow, the hair is separating from the surface of the head (clearly evident on first-hand examination of the area near the right ear). More obviously, the hair was completely broken away in large areas of the top and back of the head. Cat. No. 28 thus suggests to us a final warning on the dating of Roman Period mummy masks: the hairstyle can sometimes provide valuable information on the date after which a *particular mask* was commissioned; but it cannot necessarily provide the same information on the date when *the mold* for the mask was made (and hence for stylistic aspects of molded facial features). In all probability the manufacturers of these masks used the same face molds for many years—perhaps even generations—oblivious to the whirlwind of passing fancies in hairstyles emanating from the boudoirs of the Roman elite.

1. Grimm, 1974, 86.

2. Inan and Rosenbaum, 1966, 138 and pl. C.



### 29. Portrait of a Young Woman

Kelsey Museum 26801

Purchased in Cairo from N. Tano, 1935

Provenance unknown

Encaustic on wood

H. 39.5 cm, W. 17.0 cm, Th. 1.0 cm

Bibliography: Parlasca, 1969, 66 and pl. 34, 3\*

Photograph: L.79.121.3

Trajanic

Encaustic has separated from backing in many areas; right eye damaged; mummy wrappings adhering to back surface.



In spite of the damaged state of the encaustic, this painting provides a feeling for the tonal depth and vibrancy of color which are characteristic of the technique. Particularly noteworthy are the plays of light and shade around the eyes, the left ear, the mouth, chin, and throat. White is used deftly to highlight and bring forward certain areas. In the eye itself, a line of stark white along the lower edge of the white of the eye produces a liquid quality; and the fleck of white on the iris also suggests the liquid sheen of a natural eye. On the ear, a stark white patch on the helix creates dimensionality. The pink mouth acquires its sensuous fullness from the strokes of white applied to the lips. On the throat, the soft shadow cast by the chin is foiled by the light shades used to bring out the full curve of the neck. Such painterly effects are a common feature of high quality Fayoum portraits.

A striking element of our Cat. No. 29 is the pair of gold necklaces worn by the young woman. The gold leaf still gleams with extraordinary clarity; and the necklaces—rendered with meticulous attention to detail—must represent actual treasured possessions of the subject, added to the portrait for sentimental reasons and perhaps also to increase the individuality of the painting. Sometimes such distinctive necklaces were applied to the finished portrait in gilded stucco modeled in three dimensions.<sup>1</sup>

On the basis of hairstyle, Parlasca has dated our portrait to the period of Trajan.<sup>2</sup> Another painting of a young woman—who wears an identical coiffure—comes from Antinoopolis and is dated by Parlasca to the very end of the Trajanic Period.<sup>3</sup>

\*Berger, 1977, 209, lists six portraits as belonging to the Kelsey Museum. The numbers given do not correspond to any of the Kelsey's paintings.

1. E.g., the fine example in Detroit (Peck, 1967, 17; Berger, 1978, 175).

2. Parlasca, 1969, 66.

3. Louvre P217 (Berger, 1978, 114; Parlasca, 1969, 65).

### 30. Portrait of a Middle-Aged Man

Kelsey Museum 26803

F.W. Kelsey Purchase, Cairo, 1919

Provenance unknown

Encaustic on wood

H. 36.0 cm, W. 16.5 cm, Th. 0.3 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photograph: L.79.121.5

Flavian

Panel buckled and ruffled, split and mended in several places; ragged at bottom edge, with one broken section at top; surface very worn and washed out; tar-like substance on tunic and above head; on back of panel traces of mummy wrappings.

This painting represents a beardless man with his head turned slightly to his left, so that his left ear (rendered summarily) appears to recede into the distance. The portrait is characterized by a penetrating gaze. The eyes are distinctive in shape—being long and narrow rather than large and round, as found on so many Fayoum paintings. The hair is quite full, but with a markedly receding hairline above each eyebrow. It appears to be rendered as greying.

A good parallel for this portrait in terms of hairstyle, eyes, and general demeanor is dated by Parlasca to the Flavian Period.<sup>1</sup>

1. Parlasca, 1969, 68 and pl. 36, 1 (on loan from Goucher College to The Walters Art Gallery).







### 31. Fragmentary Portrait of a Bearded Man

Kelsey Museum 26574

Gift of Peter Ruthven

Found near Minia, Egypt, 1926-1935

Encaustic on wood

H. 33.5 cm, W. 14.0 cm, Th. 1.6 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photograph: L. 79.121.6

Severan

Encaustic cracked and separating from surface, especially on tunic area; large chip from right side of panel; left side of panel missing; traces of mummy wrappings on back.

Only a corner of the right eye and the mouth are preserved of the facial features before the break in this panel. Enough remains to reveal the hair and beard style, however. The hair is cropped very close to the head, with a distinctly receding hair-line. A narrow, close-cropped beard forms a black strap around the jaw line. A bit of moustache is preserved at the right corner of the mouth. A good parallel for these features dates to the mid-third century AD.<sup>1</sup>

1. Athens, Benaki Museum 6878 (Parlasca, 1977, 81 and pl. 110, 3; Berger, 1978, 73).

### 32. Portrait of a Middle-Aged Woman

Kelsey Museum 26802

F. W. Kelsey Purchase, Cairo, 1919

Provenance unknown

Encaustic on wood

H. 33.0 cm, W. 18.0 cm, Th. 0.3 cm

Bibliography: Parlasca, 1977, 68 and pl. 99, 3

Photograph: L. 79.121.4

Severan

Wood buckled and ruffled; many vertical splits; edge of panel at left of face is broken away; paint very worn and muted; mummy wrappings preserved on back.

In spite of its disfiguring splits, this painting is clearly a strong, sensitive portrayal of a mature woman. The eyebrows are heavy and arched above large round eyes that appear watchful and intent. The hair, greying slightly, comes softly down on either side of a central part, passing over the tops of the ears and down, before sweeping up (we can conjecture) into a flat coil bun at the back of the head.

This hairstyle is reminiscent of that on the Severan marble head from Ephesus mentioned already in connection with Cat. No. 28.<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, both Cat. No. 28 and Cat. No. 32 do have a coiffure based on the same prototypes as is the Ephesus head. But our plaster mask and our panel painting do not look much like each other. The mask presents a linear reduction of the coiffure; the painting, on the other hand, is faithful not only to its "letter" but also to its spirit.

Another Severan head offers a close parallel for the intent feeling in the face of Cat. No. 32.<sup>2</sup> Our portrait is dated by Parlasca to the beginning of the second quarter of the third century AD.<sup>3</sup>

1. Inan and Rosenbaum, 1966, pl. C.

2. Heintze, 1961, 36 (in the Lateran).

3. Parlasca, 1977, 68.



### 33. Fragmentary Portrait of a Man

Kelsey Museum 23975

U-M Excavation at Karanis, 1926

Field No. 26-B2W-D

Encaustic on wood

H. 16.5 cm, W. 13.3 cm, Th. 1.1 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photograph: L.79.121.8

Hadrianic-Antonine

Preserves only upper right corner of portrait panel including right half of hair and forehead; paint poorly preserved; no trace of mummy wrappings on back.

The Fayoum town of Karanis, so rich in papyri, glass, textiles, sculpture, and other objects of artifactual and art historical interest, has been a disappointment as a source for Fayoum paintings.<sup>1</sup> In the course of their turn-of-the-century survey of

Fayoum towns, Grenfell, Hunt, and Hogarth noted that the Karanis graves had been thoroughly ransacked. They found only "two broken bits" of panel portraits, which had been "thrown away by early plunderers."<sup>2</sup> They included no description of the two fragments in their report. Parlasca mentions them in 1966 as the only vestiges of panel painting from Karanis—noting that they had become lost.<sup>3</sup>

During the course of The University of Michigan's excavations at Karanis only one day was spent in the plundered necropolis area—with the purpose of turning up some portrait panels.<sup>4</sup> Nothing was found.

The two fragments of painted panels from Karanis which are part of the Kelsey's collections (Cat. Nos. 33 and 34) were, as noted in the Introduction, found not in graves, but in houses.<sup>5</sup> Although neither is mentioned by Peterson and Boak (1931), two fragments are indeed listed in the "Karanis Record of Objects 1926."

Enough is preserved on Cat. No. 33 to suggest that it portrayed a young man coiffed in the Hadrianic-Antonine style—with a full head of tightly curled hair framing the face.<sup>6</sup> Such a date, based on style, correlates well with the chronology proposed by the excavators for House B2W of Season 1926.<sup>7</sup> Our fragment must have hung on a wall in House B2W. The absence of any trace of mummy wrappings (or their impressions) on the backside confirms this.



1. For information on Karanis and the excavations there see most recently Gazda, *et al.*, 1978 (with bibliography).

2. Grenfell, Hunt, and Hogarth, 1900, 41-42.

3. Parlasca, 1966, 36.

4. Peterson and Boak, 1931, 4.

5. See Gazda, *et al.*, 1978, 11, for an explanation of the Karanis field numbering system.

6. Compare, for instance, Parlasca, 1977, no. 335, pl. 81, 2 (late Antonine).

7. See Gazda, *et al.*, 1978, 11 n.3: rough parameters of early second to early third centuries AD.

### 34. Fragmentary Portrait of a Woman (?)

Kelsey Museum 23976

U-M Excavation at Karanis, 1926

Field No. 26-B40-F

Encaustic on wood

H. 27.8 cm, W. 8.7 cm, Th. 1.1 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photograph: L.79.122.6-8

Late Third-Early Fourth Century AD

Preserves only a narrow vertical strip of panel including short section of bottom edge; surface badly darkened; no trace of mummy wrappings on back.

This piece is something of a puzzle. It may depict a woman with her head turned to her right so that we are seeing a profile view of her coiffure: hair swept up at the back with tendrils curling around the nape of the neck. If so, it is unlike conventional Fayoum portraits. It might, rather, be a fragment of a Hellenized goddess who would be shown wearing a classicizing coiffure.

The wispy, highlighted strands of hair seen on our fragment are paralleled in third to early fourth century paintings from Egypt.<sup>1</sup> And the portrayal of portrait subjects in reduced medallion-like formats (often including only the head down to the base of the neck) becomes a common feature during the fourth century—found, for instance, on Egyptian textiles of the period.<sup>2</sup>

The stratigraphy of Karanis suggests, further, that a date near the beginning of the fourth century AD would be appropriate for this fragment.<sup>3</sup>

1. E.g., Parlasca, 1977 (no.394, p. 66, pl. 97, 2).

2. E.g., Kybalova, 1967, 52 (Ge) and 56 (a woman).

3. Gazda, *et al.*, 1978, 11n.4.



### 35-37. Three Modern Fayoum Portraits

Kelsey Museum 1797, 1798, 1799

Presented to F. W. Kelsey by Dr. David L. Askren, 1920

Acquired by Dr. Askren "from natives in the Fayoum"

1797. H. 44.0 cm, W. 20.0 cm

1798. H. 43.5 cm, W. 21.0 cm

1799. H. 40.0 cm, W. 22.0 cm

Bibliography: unpublished

Photographs: L. 79.122.8, L. 79.122.6,

L. 79.122.7



A notation by Professor Kelsey in the Acquisitions Book shows that he suspected that these three paintings were modern when he accepted them. Certain technical features immediately suggest that they are not ancient work. The paint (apparently a matt tempera) has been applied directly to the surface of the thin panels. In antiquity, portrait panels were treated with a coat of gesso in preparation for the application of paint (either tempera or encaustic).<sup>1</sup> On these modern panels one can see the grain of the wood through the paint because the wood is young and its grain has not mellowed with age. (Some modern "Fayoum painters" use ancient wood, so that this criterion is not always useful in determining a forgery.) Our modern panels are rather long compared to the average length of an ancient Fayoum portrait panel.

In terms of style, the modern painter has not captured the depth and richness of planes which characterize the ancient paintings—even

poorly preserved ones such as our Cat. Nos. 30 and 32. But, since they were all done by the same hand, it is useful, nevertheless, to note the similarities which can reveal a shared identity of authorship—be it ancient or modern. Particularly characteristic of the painter's style here is the shape of the mouth and the eyes, the length of the neck, and the general structure of the face. A quality about the eyes and mouths of these three portraits suggests the hand of a nineteenth-century forger. It would be interesting to gather a corpus of modern Fayoum paintings in order to study the impact of various forgers' personal stylistic ideosyncracies (as well as the stylistic qualities characteristic of their eras) upon their interpretations of the ancient idiom.

1. Compare Thompson, 1976, 11.







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