

# ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

## Mummies on the Move!

Saturday, March 31, 2012

**SUMMARY:** On March 31<sup>st</sup> AIHA's two mummies will travel to Albany Medical Center to undergo x-rays and CT scans in anticipation of the exhibition *GE Presents: the Mystery of the Albany Mummies*. Experts hope that these medical imaging results will reveal details about the mummies' genders, causes of death, and their lives long ago. This new research will be included in a documentary titled "The Albany Mummies: Unraveling an Ancient Mystery". The initiative is a collaboration between the Albany Institute of History & Art, Albany Medical Center, University at Albany Foundation, and the University at Albany College of Arts & Sciences and Center for Humanities, Arts, and TechnoSciences. The documentary will also be featured in the exhibition.

**ANCIENT EGYPT GALLERY (Currently):** Three key concepts: The Nile, Daily Life, and the Afterlife, are explored through objects, text, and hands-on activities to give an overview of ancient Egypt. This gallery, located on the third floor, features the Albany Institute's mummies along with loan objects from major national museums.

**THE TRANSPORTATION:** The University at Albany student-run Five Quad Volunteer Ambulance Service will transfer the two mummies from the Albany Institute of History & Art to Albany Medical Center. The mummies will be transported by stretcher to the Five Quad Ambulance, under the supervision of Five Quad Director of Operations Max Weinstein (Class of 2013). The ambulance will be escorted by University Police to Albany Medical Center. Special permission had to be attained through the NYS Department of Transportation. Due to the delicate nature of the mummies, there will be two trips take to transport the subjects to Albany Medical Center.

**THE SCANS (March 31, 2012):** Albany Medical Center technologists Emily Johnson and Howard Mayforth and radiologists Phuong Nguyen Vinh, MD, and Michael Edward Schuster, MD will examine the mummies. The results will then be analyzed with the help of Egyptologist and medical doctor Dr. Robert Brier, a Senior Research Fellow at Long Island University known as "Mr. Mummy," and Dr. Peter Lacovara, the exhibition's guest curator and Senior Curator of Egypt, Nubia and Near East at the Carlos Museum at Emory University.

The mummies were last examined by x-rays and CT scans on November 12, 1988. This preliminary analysis helped to determine the mummies' sex, approximate ages, and various insights into the mummification process. The x-rays and CT scans show a number of bundles inside both of the mummies. Based on the last scan, it was determined that the partially unwrapped mummy is reported to have died in 966 and was probably between 55 and 65 years old at the time of his death. The wrapped mummy is a woman. Her name is not known because the top of the coffin was badly deteriorated and left in Cairo by Mr. Brown in 1909. According to Mr. Brown she also came from the cache at Deir el-Bahri. X-rays reveal that she was probably between 35-45 years old when she died. During Dynasty XXI, a change in the practice of mummification occurred. The internal organs were no longer placed in canopic jars, but were usually wrapped in linen packages. These packages were then placed in the empty body or placed between the legs. Canopic jars, however, continued to be a part of the funerary equipment, but were made smaller. Perhaps the most interesting discovery was a well-crafted fake toe, possibly made of ceramic, carefully attached to the right foot of the wrapped mummy. It is presumed that the toe was fashioned for the woman during the mummification process because of the belief that one had to be physically intact to enter the afterlife. This discovery was highlighted on The Learning Channel's program, *The Ancient ER*, in February 2003.

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**THE FILM PROJECT (Production in spring 2012, debut late 2012):** A film will be made to document the trip of the mummies from the Institute to Albany Medical Center. The film will include interviews with respected paleopathologists, Institute staff specialists, medical experts, and others involved in the project. At least two versions of the documentary will result in an 8-10 minute gallery film to be shown in conjunction with the AIHA exhibit, and a longer adaptation, approximately 15-20 minutes, suitable for different platforms, such as Web sites and DVD. The film is a partnership involving the Albany Institute of History & Art, Albany Medical Center, University of Albany Foundation, and the College of Arts & Sciences at the University at Albany, Center for Humanities, Arts, and TechnoSciences (CHATS) at the University at Albany.

**MUMMIES IN THE COMMUNITY (April & May 2012)** In preparation for this new exhibition, the Albany Institute of History & Art has partnered with libraries in the region to learn what people want to know about mummies and ancient Egypt. The presentations will feature images of objects that will be included in the exhibition. Afterwards, feedback will be gathered from the audience about what they would like to see on display as part of the exhibit. Each program attendee will be given a free admission pass to the Albany Institute that will be valid through December 2013. Please join us at one of the libraries or register via [albanyinstitute.org](http://albanyinstitute.org) for one of the sessions at the museum. Space will be limited at the Albany Institute so register soon! This program is offered to the libraries without charge supported by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and major support from General Electric.

**UPCOMING EXHIBITION (September 21-June 8, 2013):** *GE Presents: The Mystery of the Albany Mummies: The Story of Ankfenmut* will be on display in the main floor galleries. The exhibition is based around four significant objects from its ancient Egypt collections. New research has determined that the mummy cover and coffin lid of the elaborately decorated 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty coffin, which belonged to Ankfenmut, a priest in the temple of Mut, are in the collections of the British Museum, London, and the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, respectively. This exhibition will reunite the coffin with its lid and its coffin-board for the first time in more than 100 years. Dr. Peter Lacovara is the Guest Curator. The exhibition will feature 200 objects occupying 5,000 sq. ft. on the museum's main floor. In addition to objects from AIHA's collection, the exhibition will be enhanced with major loans from the British Museum, American Natural History Museum, the Semitic Museum, the Brooklyn Museum, the Kunsthistorisches Museum, the Hecksher Museum of Art, Michael C. Carlos Museum of Emory University, Morgan Library and Museum and several private collections. *GE Presents: The Mystery of the Albany Mummies* has been funded by General Electric and the Institute for Museum and Library Services.