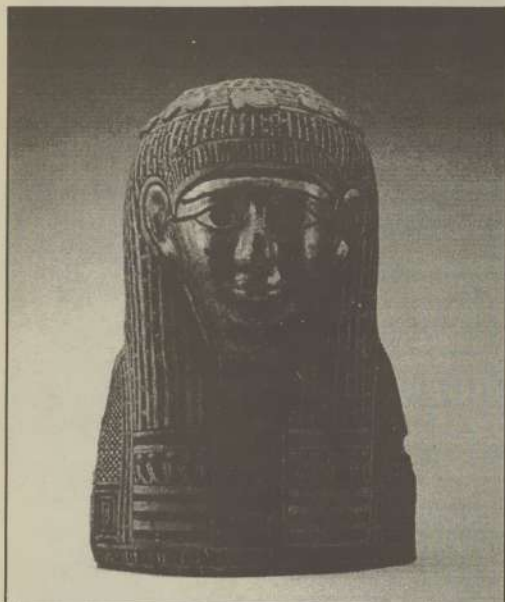


# Egyptian artifacts unearthed at Art Museum



**Mummy Mask.** Late first century B.C.E. 30 B.C.E.-395 C.E. Roman Period.

## Egyptian Fun Facts

\*X rays of the mummy of Ramses the Great revealed that his nose was packed with peppercorns to preserve its hooked shape.

\*There are about 2.3 million blocks of stone in the Great Pyramid at Giza.

\*Ancient Egyptians invented beer. There were over 17 varieties.

\*Ancient Egyptians were the first known people to fish for pleasure.

\*The earliest toilet seats were made by Ancient Egyptians in the city of Akhetaten. Wooden toilet seats were placed above large bowls of sand.



**Sarcophagus of Djedbastiuefankh.** 332 B.C.E.-C.E. 330.



**Book of the dead.** Third to first century B.C.E.

TONI MCMICHAEL  
Staff Writer

The "Splendors of Ancient Egypt" is an extraordinary exhibit.

The Portland Art Museum has focused on the family and everyday life and society. From the pre-dynasty period there are wooden sculptures that portray the agricultural background of Egyptian society.

The artifacts date from pre-dynasty to the seventh century C.E. There are two hundred pieces on loan from the Roemer-Pelizaecus Museum in Hildesheim, Germany. The Portland Art Museum was chosen to be the only host on the West Coast for this event.

Walking through this exhibit, I was astonished at how advanced, yet so ritualized, the Egyptian culture was. Egypt was able to build great pyramids and cities, which developed into powerful governments that ruled for hundreds of years. Then in a blink of an eye these cultures were shattered by Rome and Europe.

The splendors that are on exhibit include some unusual pieces such as wood carvings, stone sculptures, sarcophaguses, and a real mummy. There are statues of gods and goddesses: some are just a few inches tall while others are six to ten feet tall. The largest statue is of Hem-i-nu, a ruler from the Giza area. Hem-i-nu was responsible for having the pyramids at Giza built. The statue weighs one and a half tons and is over 4500 years old.

There is also an 18-foot-long scroll containing one copy of the "Book of the Dead." This is just one copy of hundreds that have miraculously survived through the ages. The hieroglyphics on the scroll are astonishing—it's hard to believe they were written centuries ago.

There are sarcophaguses—Egyptian coffins—that are covered with hieroglyphics. Each sarcophagus was hand painted and tells the story of the person entombed in it.

The longer you look at the hieroglyphics the more you begin to understand them. The face of the entombed is painted to resemble a perfect human. They removed any scars or blemishes in order to keep them from having these in the afterworld.

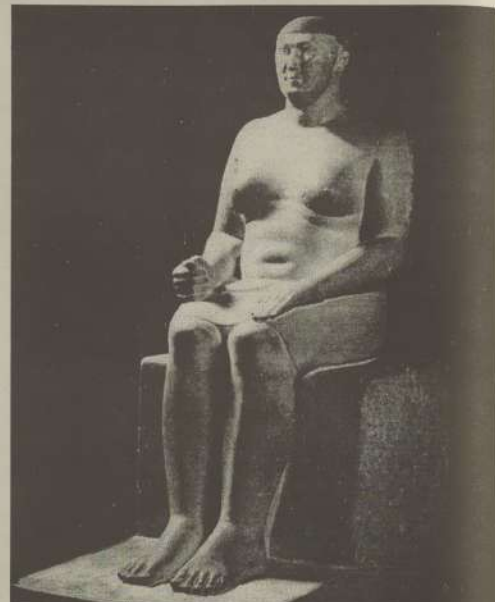
As time went on and the Egyptian culture was exposed to Rome and other European cultures, these sarcophaguses began to change. The oldest sarcophagus was painted in black with real gold trim, while the newer ones seem flat and look more like a European coffin, with a Christian background to the paintings. They contain very little hieroglyphics.

The Portland Art Museum has done a wonderful job displaying these marvelous pieces of Egypt's past. The curator is quite successful in presenting this exhibit in a very family- and student-oriented way. There are two different audio tours offered at no cost, one for adults and one for children. These tours allow you to walk through the exhibit at your own pace. You become your own tour guide.

But don't be afraid to ask questions. There are people there if you want to know more about an object and they are more than willing to tell what they have learned and studied about each piece on display.

The Splendors of Egypt will continue to amaze people until Aug. 16. After this it will become a part of Portland's past.

The Portland Art Museum is open from 9 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., seven days a week—the last entry is at 6 p.m. The cost is fairly reasonable, even for college students (\$7.50 for museum members; \$13 for non-members and adults; \$11 for seniors 55 and older and students 16 and over; and \$6 for children (2 and up). So take your student ID card and go see these ancient pieces of art for yourself, before it's too late.



**Vizier Hem-i-nu.** ca. 2530 B.C.E. 2700-2200 B.C.E. Old Kingdom.



**The Lady Senebi.** ca. 1950 B.C.E. 240-1640 B.C.E.

## For Stronger Stomachs

\*At one time ground up mummy was a popular potion believed to have magical healing powers.

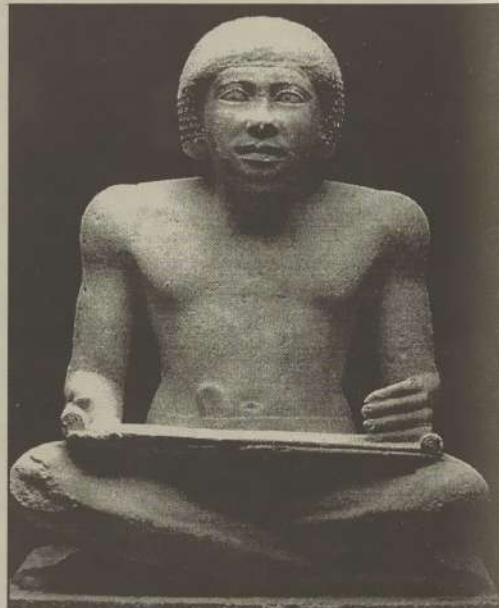
\*Egyptians embalmed soft organs but extracted and threw away the brain, believing that the heart, not the brain, was the seat of wisdom.

\*A recently unwrapped mummy was covered in a total of three miles of three inch wide line bandage.

\*The mummies of four million ibises, a sacred bird, were discovered at a single animal cemetery, each in its own individual pot. Mummies of house pets and other animals were also found.



**A set of canopic jars.** Late sixth to fourth century B.C.E.



**Heti.** Old Kingdom. 2300 B.C.E.

Photos courtesy of the Portland Art Museum