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Jewels or Dreams?

The Jewellery of the Fayum Portraits.

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JEWELS OR DREAMS?

YOU HAVE TO FACE FACTS, O QUEEN!
YOURS IS A DECADENT NATION, ONLY
FIT TO LIVE IN SEMI-SLAVERY UNDER
THE ROMANS

THE JEWELLERY OF THE
FAYUM PORTRAITS.
Abstract

The Fayum Portraits are a collection of bust-style painted images from Roman Egypt dated to the first centuries of the first millennium AD.

This thesis first considered the history and necessity of encaustic portraiture. The portraits' development, influences, methods, materials, function and discovery are of importance for the study of Roman art in general, and the death ritual of Roman Egypt in particular.

The question of reality within the image is fundamental. One method of gauging the possible reality of these portraits is by placing images of contemporary jewellery from the archaeological record beside images of the jewellery from the Fayum Portraits. Such a method allows observation of similarities or differences - in style, motif, material and technique. If a small detail, such as jewellery, is realistic, that permits the assumption that the entire image is also realistic.

Having examined the jewellery on the Fayum Portraits carefully and having compared the painted examples with contemporary archaeological pieces, I have concluded that the jewellery shown on the portraits is, to a major extent, realistic. The jewellery depicted on the portraits reflects not only Roman fashion and taste, but also locally found gems and products. This allows the hypothesis that the faces, associated with painted jewellery, are also realistic.
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Introduction

The Fayum Portraits are a magnificent and unique collection of images of the citizens of Greco-Roman Egypt, displaying the development of Roman custom and funeral practice from between the reigns of Tiberius (AD 14 - AD 37) and Septimius Severus (AD 222 - AD 235). This calibre of portraiture is not seen again until the Renaissance, a millennium after the production of the Fayum Portraits.¹

It is not possible to include here every one of the one thousand or so portraits known to exist today, or even the lesser number displayed at the “Ancient Faces” exhibition,² without the work becoming a catalogue, a list of who, what, where, why and how. This I wish to avoid. Therefore, in preference I have chosen a select few to stress the points I wish to make. The portraits chosen are ones that I consider the most suitable to portray the images of the jewellery which is the focus of my research. The choice of portrait is based on including those that most clearly display encaustic painting techniques, the stylistic changes that occur and, most importantly, the range of jewellery displayed by women in Roman Egypt.

As this research centres on jewellery, the images are almost all of women. This in no way is meant to imply that men went unadorned, as we are aware in the Fayum Portraits that some men were depicted wearing wreaths and bejewelled sword belts. Rather it is a method of containing the topic, and giving the work a coherent focus.

W.M. Flinders Petrie used the jewellery depicted on the Fayum Portraits as a dating tool. He concluded that there were three distinct earring types worn, with corresponding dates: ball-earrings (first half of the second century AD), hoop-earrings (second half of the second century AD) and bar-earrings (first half of the third century AD).³ Though it is possible that modern technology can make dating more specific, the basic stylistic dating

techniques of Flinders Petrie are still a valid and valuable guide. I am not looking to date each piece again, nor to attribute pieces to the hand of a particular artist (as with the Morellian method of Greek vase painting studies), but rather to use the jewellery as a way of measuring the realism of each depiction. In doing so, there are a series of topics and questions that I consider need addressing in relation to the depiction of these women and their jewellery, and these questions will structure this study.

It is important when looking at a selected topic within the Fayum Portraits to start with the broadest picture and gradually become more specific. It is with this structure in mind that I have organised my work.

Firstly, it is important to discover what has happened to the Fayum Portraits since interment, and how they have “travelled” to us today. Knowing how an archaeological piece was buried, where and with what accessories aids us with conservation, dating and display. An artefact discovered in a dry, airless environment should remain preserved in such an environment when exhibited. An image with a particular hairstyle, or a random coin lost in the soil, may date the piece within a matter of years. So it is with the Fayum Portraits. We must look at the Fayum Portraits’ history since burial and discover when these artefacts were found, by whom and for what purpose, and then examine how the portraits were dated and why, and where the portraits are now.

With the portrait’s subsequent history known, it is necessary to cover the basics of encaustic and tempera portraiture, and the four-colour palette (tetrachromy) available to the portrait artist in the Fayum. Do the painting style and colours used affect the realism of the portraits?

We must explore the influences of Egypt, Greece and Rome on the Fayum Portrait painting style. The Fayum’s history, and its transition from being populated by Egyptians, to settlement by Greek (Macedonian) veterans, to falling under the control of

Rome is important. It is the basis of the development of Fayum death ritual, from being totally Egyptian to a mixture of all three cultures. Information about the Fayum's history and the requirements of the rites of death is needed to help place the Fayum Portraits in their cultural and social context as part of the mummification and remembrance ritual of the time.

Once the Fayum Portraits are placed in their developmental context, we want to know if they are realistic portraits of real people, and what the portrait's purpose was. We cannot judge the reality of a face without comparing the face with an image or organic remains, yet we only have the skeletal remains, and perhaps some dry sunken skin. We never have the rounded facial features to use as a comparison, as organic matter does not often preserve well. Bartman notes three human hair wigs discovered in tombs from Les Martres-le-Veyre, but this is unusual. Barring bone tissue and lacquered skin, survival of any organic matter from a Fayum burial is rare.

We must also try to discover who the people in the portraits were. Was there a particular class most depicted, perhaps the only people permitted to be portrayed in this manner, or was this style of remembrance open to all who could afford it? This may be an impossible question to answer, as very few of the mummies were named or labelled. If the portraits were labelled at all, it was only with a name, a date and the name of a relative (usually male), and occasionally his social standing. "Aline, also called Tenos, daughter of Herodas, kindly one, fare well". Though it is possible that a person's final memorial could be used to display the giver's importance, it appears unusual — "To Kolanthos, brother of Tatriphs, clothes-repairer and head of the guild of clothes-repairers in the house of the eklogists...". The date, if noted on a label, was not that of death, but of the date that the mummification process stopped, usually seventy days after death. It was a

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6 Doxiadis. 64.
7 Doxiadis. 87.
sign that the formal embalming process had been completed within the requisite time. More labelling, with name, date and who provided the burial, would be a clearer marker of social status, but often this clue is not available to us.

It is also necessary to discover if the portraits were intended for the mummies only, or did they have a decorative purpose within the home prior to death? Considering that cremation was the preferred method of disposing of the dead in the Roman tradition why was mummification embraced, and thus funerary portraiture? Morris notes examples of large collections of cremation urns in and around Rome, and says there is evidence of "the biggest single event in ancient burial, the change in 'the roman custom' from cremation to inhumation". Tacitus (Annals 16:6) speaks of an Imperial embalming in preference to cremation from AD 65.

To answer these questions we must compare "like with like". We have only images of clothing and hairstyles, but we do have actual examples of Roman jewellery. I will use the jewellery, both real and depicted, to show if the human subjects are realistically depicted. If such small items as jewellery are realistic in the portraits, then it is probable that the people are too. The concept of using a detail to define, date and categorise an art form is not new. Morrow uses this method when re-evaluating the dating of a collection of Greek sculptures, but in her case, she uses footwear.

We do have sizable amounts of Roman jewellery, which remains in the archaeological record as a tangible relic, and offers scope for determining the realism of the depicted.

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9 A possible exception may survive in "Hermione grammatike", a female schoolteacher (See Plate 1 Image 1), but even this label is ambiguous, as scholars are still trying to decide if the term in this case really means "schoolteacher" (Doxiadis) or someone with a strong knowledge of Greek language and culture of which they were very proud (Walker).
11 Morris. 31.
12 When referring to the funeral of Poppaea in AD 65 he says, "Her body was not cremated in the Roman fashion, but was stuffed with spices and embalmed in the manner of foreign potentates". Tacitus, The Annals of Imperial Rome, trans. M. Grant (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1956). 372.
jewellery. From these examples we must discover what materials were being used in the creation of Roman jewellery. What stones, gems and metals appear most frequently in the portraits? Was the expense of these materials purely the motivation for use, or was there a greater abundance of these materials in and around Egypt?

Once the gems and metals were worked, what styles were popular and why? Who made the styles popular, and how? Was it local or imperial influence that guided the ladies in their adornment? If the influences were from outside of the local sphere, how did they travel? Was the medium art in the form of imperial or religious statues erected in local meeting places? Were ideas of style travelling by the spoken word or current literature, or by fashionable example with officials and tourists? Was it the merchants touting the latest fashions to sell their stock — "That's so last year, madam. All the fashionable ladies in the city are wearing..." and what lady would want to be thought of as unfashionable?

We must discover if these depictions show contemporary fashion or are idealised "wishes", perhaps based on imperial or divine images, for the deceased — "How I wish to be remembered, not as I am." Were the depictions of jewellery fantastic renderings of the artist's mind or realistic images of the depicted possessions? If so, was there an attempt to depict the person in wealthier attire than was worn in life? For example, more jewellery may have been displayed than was owned, or richer clothing in brighter colours whose expensive dye-pigments may have been out of most people's reach. To ask these questions is not to express condemnation; today we display ourselves in the same manner. After all, almost all brides only look like brides once and are remembered in photographs, with fancy hairstyle, loaned jewellery, professional make-up, impractical dress and all.

To answer these questions it is necessary to place the "real" beside the "depicted" and use them to compare and contrast the styles and materials, in an attempt to separate the "realistic" from the "artistic", if such a distinction existed.
This method for judging realism by comparing the jewellery from the Fayum Portraits and real archaeological finds would not be complete without investigating if this jewellery was also seen in other art forms of the time. By looking at a varied selection of art we can see if certain styles of jewellery were depicted commonly. Those styles that are often shown, in paint, marble, metal or tesserae, and are contemporary with the Fayum Portraits, could be assumed to be realistic.

I hope to answer these questions by putting into context the history and tradition of the Fayum Portraits, examining the realism and purpose of the images, and comparing and contrasting the jewellery displayed upon them.
Map 1. The Fayum area.

The Fayum area in Egypt is a tract of fertile floodland about 60 to 80 kilometres south-west of Cairo and about 15 to 20 kilometres west of the Nile.
Chapter 1
The Portraits – Discovery, Display and Dating

Interest in the Fayum Portraits began as early as 1615 with the Italian explorer Pietro della Valle, who purchased in Saqqara, and brought back to Italy, two mummies complete with their portraits. However, it was not until the late nineteenth century that there was an explosion of enthusiasm for these mummy portraits. At the start of the century excavations by the British and French discovered a few scattered examples, but nothing to excite the public. This all changed in the 1880s with the excavations of the British archaeologists W. Flinders Petrie, (a man so interested in mummification that his own head has been preserved by, and is held in, the Royal College of Surgeons in London) and D. Hogarth, in Hawara and the Fayum [Map 1] in general, and with the discerning purchase by Theodor Graf, an Austrian businessman, of many examples found in er-Rubayat. Public interest soared for perhaps 25 years, and then waned. Egyptologists thought the portraits classical, classicists thought them Egyptian, and everyone thought them an anomaly, an art form that developed in isolation. The portraits became “lost between the cracks” of scholarship. Some texts, however, were printed on them, such as Petrie’s excavation notes published in 1911, and Buberl’s publication of Graf’s collection in 1922. Buberl listed the portraits according to style – expressionism to naturalism to a “formal flat style”.

H. Drerup wrote a dissertation in 1933 where he used thirty-four examples of portraits to present his new view of the portraits’ chronology. He based his work on the view, as was the thinking of the time, that there was a loss of interest in portrait depiction in the third century AD, and resurgence in the fourth century AD. He believed that the tempera

14 Doxiadis. 123.
18 Doxiadis. 128.
19 Bierbrier. 33.
portraits, being cruder, were the earliest examples, and the encaustic, being more finely rendered, were the later examples. This went totally against the thinking of R. Graul in 1889, who thought that the two forms of portraiture could have coexisted. He believed that the development of the portrait was not linear – basic to detailed, bad to good, but that the two were used side by side, as we believe today.

Between 1933 and 1969 little work was done to expand knowledge, or to improve the display and dating methods of the Fayum Portraits. It was in 1969, however, that K. Parlasca started his now four-part corpus on the portraits (in Italian 1969, 1977, and 1980 and recently published)22. This is still considered the most complete work on the topic.

The 1980s and 1990s saw a steady flow of research and publications on the Fayum Portraits. S. Walker,23 B. Geoffroy-Schneiter24 and E. Doxiadis25 among others produced texts with large reproductions, opening up the field of the portrait to the layperson. Reconstruction allowed glimpses of the faces beneath the portraits, as in the New Scientist paper of 2001 “Image is Everything”26.

Apart from the displays of the Petrie and Graf collections in the 1880s it was not until the 1990s that another, and larger, exhibition of the portraits was held. The year 1997 saw the British Museum hold the “Ancient Faces”27 exhibition, which collected together and displayed one hundred examples held not only by the British Museum, but also on loan.

21 Walker. 34.
22 Archaeogate Egittologia on their website stated that the fourth part of K. Parlasca’s corpus had recently been published, but I am unable to find either the publication or its date.
27 In a review of the “Ancient Faces” exhibition, Perl notes that from his point of view not enough study has been done on the effect that these portraits have had on modern painters such as Matisse, Derain and Picasso. He believes that scholars have become so involved in placing these portraits historically and geographically that they have failed to notice the portraits’ modern relevance. Perl, J. "Draic Realism." Modern Painters 10 (1997) 41.
from the Louvre, the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. This was followed by exhibitions of mummy portraiture in Rome (1997), Greece (1998), France (1998), Egypt (1998), Germany (1999), and the United States of America (2000) where catalogues were produced by the local curators. Even a new section of the Musée du Louvre was opened in 1998 to display Ptolemaic and Roman Egyptian finds.

The dating of the portraits proved to be a controversial matter. They were firstly dated, in the 1880s, to the second century BC by Graf, for no better reason than that he wished to sell his collection, and the older they were the more they were worth. (One of his portraits was even sold to Freud.)

He was supported in this idea by his friend and Egyptologist Dr Georg Ebers, who believed the portraits to be of this date because of their beauty - "we may ascribe them to the time of the Ptolemies, when the full flower of Alexandrian art was but just beginning slowly to fade, rather than to the date of the decadence under Roman rule after the Christian era". He and Graf went so far as to label several of the portraits as actually being Ptolemies: Ptolemy Philadelphus and Cleopatra. This did not increase interest in anything but Graf himself, as he was labelled a fraud and his portraits modern fakes. This was not completely true. He was perhaps a little fraudulent in his selling techniques, but the pieces he sold were genuine and of a high quality.

Unfortunately, Graf's portraits did not sell well because of vastly inflated prices. The body of his two collections was broken up and sold by his heirs some twenty-five years

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28 Bailey, 25.
29 The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York based their exhibition on the one held at the British Museum in London, but included more American owned pieces.
30 Susan Walker. Personal communication.
31 Doxiadis. 132.
32 Doxiadis. 133.
33 Doxiadis. 133.
after his death. These were purchased for private collections or for major European museums, such as the Berlin and Vienna museums.

The second century BC dating was roundly refuted by H. Heydemann. He stated that the portraits were post-Hadrianic because all the men were shown with beards, and Hadrian was the first emperor to be depicted commonly with a beard. Ebers labelled this untrue, and he claimed the citizens of the Fayum would not have followed the fashions of the Imperial court. I wonder why he would make such a statement as all clothing and adornment is based on the fashions of others, mostly on those richer and socially more important. My view is also shared by Ashelford when she writes about fashion in AD 1500. She says, “Fashion was a symbol of the power of the monarchy, aristocracy and the upper classes, dictated by their lifestyle and moulded by their taste”. Walker states that “surviving examples [of portraiture] reveal an interest in copying court hairstyles, contemporary jewellery and dress”. Borg also agrees that fashions were dictated by the wealthy when she notes “The majority of the persons (sic) present themselves in the fashionable dress which is typical of the upper classes of all the Roman provinces and even of the city of Rome”.

Petrie notes in his text from 1911 that he also gave credence to dating by adornment by saying “a portrait can not be of an earlier date than when a certain style which is shown in it came into Imperial fashion. But fashion may linger longer in the Fayum after it changed in Rome”. Doxiadis suggested that Imperial style was copied almost immediately in the provinces. I agree that the fashions were copied, but as to how swiftly I do not know. Ashelford states that “there was a time lag of about five years between a fashion originating in London and its appearance, albeit in a less extreme form, in the

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35 Doxiadis. 132.
39 W. M. F. Petrie, Roman Portraits and Memphis (IV) (London: School of Archaeology in Egypt, University College and B. Quaritch, 1911). 12.
Although she is writing about fashion in the AD 1500s, her idea of the time required for ideas, such as fashion, to travel does seem plausible. In an age when people barely ventured out of the village or city of their birth and access to easy travel, such as horses, coaches, and chairs, was often limited to the wealthy, it would seem acceptable that the transfer of ideas would take some time. I believe that this would perhaps have been no different in Roman Egypt when it came to the dissemination and emulation of Rome's fashionable styles. However, that is not to say that the current fashions would not eventually arrive in the provinces, as Croom says, "Mainstream Roman costume would have been seen in the provinces on the statues and busts of the Imperial family that would be found in every major city or town." 41

In 1888, Petrie dated his discoveries to the Roman period with the majority of portraits dated within the second century AD, during the reign of Hadrian. This became the accepted view. He used the example of a papyrus found under the portrait frame on one mummy, dated to AD 127, as confirming evidence. However, he did note that this could be either the date of death, or the date of the embalming completion, which could be years apart.

The modern view is that Petrie was completely correct with most of his dating, but left out the earliest and latest examples in this all-embracing "second century AD". However, Petrie's dates linger, and are the foundation of the dating by scholars, such as Walker and Doxiadis, today. However, this "dating by appearance" (clothing, hairstyles, and beards) is not the only method of dating the portraits. Other scholars such as Parlasca prefer to date the portraits by observation of stylistic change, the development from "bad" to "good", which I believe to be too subjective.

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40 Ashelford. 51.
41 A. Croom, Roman Clothing and Fashion (Stroud: Tempus, 2000). 123.
43 Petrie. 12.
S. Walker believes, based on the hairstyles and clothing of the depicted, that the encaustic-on-wood tradition began ca. AD 30 – 40, with tempera beginning ca. AD 70. This was two generations after the start of Roman rule within Egypt. She states that the increase in depictions concurred with the increase of communication between imperial Rome and its provincial officials. Contact between the two would confirm and maintain the “privileged position” that the social élite of the Fayum (that is the descendants of the original Macedonian/Greek veterans, known as the “6474 Settlers” or “Gymnastical Élite”) wished to keep and improve. The social élite in the Fayum were those people who could trace all their direct male relatives (maternal and paternal) and/or both parents’ families directly back to the original Macedonian settlers.

The discovery and modern history of these portraits is as complicated as the ideas on dating them. Very few examples have been excavated in recent years, so we must rely on older, less precise methods of digging and recording to gain any further information on creation, painting or dating. We must also struggle with a lack of photographs of the digs in progress and the portraits in situ, which would give us broader ideas on the social context of the mummies and how they were treated. Lastly, we must contend with old-fashioned ideas of archaeology for financial gain, a form of archaeology that has left us with little supporting work for most of these portraits. In the nineteenth century the portraits were pulled from the ground, dusted off and sold, with no interest in the “who, what, where, why or how”, but some regard for “when”. Many were sold to European merchants by local Egyptians, neither of which had any regard for them beyond their market price.

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44 Walker, Ancient Faces. Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt. 36.
45 Walker, Ancient Faces. Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt. 36.
Chapter 2
The Fayum – History and Ritual

The traditions of burial in the Fayum prior to Macedonian settlement had been purely Egyptian. The tradition was to preserve the body for use in the after-life as a vessel for the *akh* or spirit. This was achieved by drying it with natron, a salt-like substance composed of sodium chloride and sodium bicarbonate.

In Egyptian tradition, it was necessary that the body be preserved with all its important component parts in one place. However, this was not necessarily within the body, as is shown by the use of canopic jars to hold the liver, lungs, stomach and intestines (the decay-causing organs) but strangely not the brain. It is thought that the Egyptians did not know the function of the brain, which is why it was not preserved with the other “important” organs. The heart was left within the body, as the Egyptians believed that the person “thought” with their heart, and that it was required for the reciting of the magical spells needed for resurrection.

The physical mummification process still intrigues us. In his article about an experimental modern mummification, Brier commented on the difficulties that he and his colleagues encountered when creating their twentieth century mummy. From brain removal to impossibly small incisions, it makes for unpleasant though interesting reading. The experiment gives us an idea of the ritual and process of mummification, a glimpse of the ancient made “flesh”.

After evisceration, the body would be wrapped in a series of linen bands in beautifully complex patterns in a laid-out stance. The necessity of the stance was to give the body a living appearance, not shown in the foetal position of earlier “sun and sand dried”.

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49 Brier. 48.
mummies. However, it was due to these natural mummies that the concept of an after-life was conceived. If the body was still so well preserved the soul must be also, residing in another life.

With the body were placed items required by the soul to continue with a fulfilled “life”: food, tools, clothes, cosmetics and even clay images of slaves. The traditions become increasingly elaborate to include statues of the dead and their family, religious texts, magical statements, highly decorated sarcophagi, jewellery and amulets woven into the linen wraps, and of course large burial monuments.

As in all things, this level of burial excess did not last and a simpler tradition evolved. Egyptian burial ritual became more symbolic and less physical at about the time the immigration of the Macedonian soldiers began, around the time of the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC. Having won the land, Alexander placed it into the care of the Ptolemies, a Macedonian family, who adopted the practice of gifting land to soldiers. The land they chose to gift was the Fayum. With the introduction of irrigation (to make use of the Nile flood and silt) the area became extremely fertile. However, the land was not actually worked by the new owners, but by the Egyptian tenant farmers. The tenant farmers were given tools, seeds and animals to work the land, but in return they had to plant to a governmental calendar, and hand over huge proportions of the harvest as rents and taxes.

Thus, with the combination of Greek ownership and the Egyptian workforce, the area became a racial mix of Greek and Egyptian. The Macedonians brought with them a Greek tradition of naturalistic art, in both painting and sculpture. Pliny states in Book 35 of his “Natural History” that art was the work of representing nature. It was the leader of

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51 Murray. 121-122.
54 Grant. 42.
all the liberal arts, and was regarded as honourable work for those freeborn. Slaves were never artists.\textsuperscript{55}

However, to be “Greek” did not necessarily mean you were Hellenic, any non-Egyptian was considered Greek. Thus, the social barriers rose placing the land-owning Greek master over the Egyptian labourer.

In 30 BC, after the Battle of Actium, Cleopatra VII, the last Macedonian ruler of Egypt, died at her own hand. Egypt became a province of Rome under the rule of Octavian/Augustus and his appointed \textit{praefectus aegypti} or personal representative.\textsuperscript{56} Egypt’s job was to produce grain, spelt and barley for Rome,\textsuperscript{57} and it was this agricultural importance that was the reason why Egypt was kept under the personal control of the emperor.\textsuperscript{58} Papyrus, which grew nowhere else but Egypt, was also strictly grown and controlled, as it was a hugely marketable product throughout the empire.\textsuperscript{59}

The Fayum, being such an agriculturally rich area, became very wealthy. This encouraged massive movement and colonisation by Roman military veterans and those wanting to make their fortune, and there were some large fortunes made. One veteran, Lucius Bellenus Gemellus, in AD 80 became so wealthy that he made himself the local benefactor, involving himself in all the festivals, providing gifts and sacrifices as impressive as cattle and coin.\textsuperscript{60}

The social scale now had four levels: Roman, Greek, Jew and then Egyptian, but it was only the Egyptians that paid taxes. The tax burden on the average Egyptian peasant became larger, not because of increased taxes, but because the Romans were much more efficient tax collectors than their Egyptian predecessors.\textsuperscript{61} However, apart from being

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{58} Freeman. 438.
\textsuperscript{59} Grant. 42.
\textsuperscript{60} Lewis. 24.
\textsuperscript{61} Lewis. 15.
\end{flushright}
taxed, the peasants in the country went about their daily routine unaware of who ruled them. With few imperial statues placed throughout Egypt, the style of public depiction of the Roman leaders and rulers were as they had been, essentially Egyptian, in clothing, setting and stance. This apparent “cross-culture” expanded to include burial ritual, and the Fayum Portraits evolved to portray, with Egyptian methods and Greek style, the Romanised élite.

However, the Greeks and Romans did not “lord it” over the Egyptians in the matter of religion. It appears that the Hellenic pantheon wove in with ease with the Egyptian one and a mixture of tradition and ritual that embraced both evolved. Thus, Egyptian gods and goddesses assumed the characteristics of their Hellenic counterparts, and vice versa. New gods were created, or elevated, to fill cultural voids. The worship of the god Serapis [Fig. 1] was an example of this: a god who appeared Greek or Roman in a Zeus/Jupiter-like visage, but had the powers of Osiris and Hades in his control over the underworld.

1. A Roman marble bust of Serapis, based on the fourth century BC cult statue by Bryaxis.

The temples that housed these new gods and goddesses were still, even under Roman rule, built in the Egyptian style.

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62 Lewis. 15.
63 Doxiadis. 41.
64 Freeman. 439.
However, regardless of the cultural sensitivity shown to Egypt and her people in regards to the gods, the rituals of Egyptian death could not be fully embraced. The custom of embalming the deceased, creating “packages” with stylised three-dimensional masks representing the departed, was not within the Macedonian-Greek or Roman tradition.

Mummification, if even attempted, was basic. Removal of the viscera was not always done, but if it was, these parts were often replaced in the body with little preserving treatment. The brain was often left in place. Broken pottery, mud or balls of linen coated in resin would be used to fill any gaps, both internal and external (nostrils, mouths and eyes). Resin, in thick layers, was used as an embalming agent to coat the skin, resulting in the surface becoming black, shiny and hard. Insects such as beetles and maggots were discovered within some bodies and wrappings, showing that by the time mummification began the bodies were already in an advanced state of decay. This idea is supported by X-rays that revealed bodies were sometimes a confusion of bones within the wrapping with parts missing. It was possible that these bodies were so decomposed that they fell apart during mummification. Herodotus notes that this decomposition could be due to the bodies, especially of women, being held by the family for three to five days before embalming, a period of time that concurs with Montserrat’s papyrus evidence from Oxyrhynchus in the Fayum. A letter speaks of a body of a woman being “still visible to relatives five days after her death.” Herodotus explains that this could be to stop necrophilia in the embalmer’s workshop. The wrapping of the mummy, in contrast to the mummification process, was of high quality. The wrapping and decoration was often complex and beautiful, displaying linen bandages placed in geometric patterns, with painted or inlaid decoration, such as the mummy portraits.

66 David and Tapp. 52.
68 David and Tapp. 53.
69 Montserrat, "Death and Funerals in the Roman Fayum." 37.
70 Herodotus, II.86-88. David and Tapp. 54.
71 David and Tapp. 54.
Though simplified mummification and linen wrapping of the deceased did become a part of the “colonised” Fayum death ritual, the masks did not. There were attempts at creating death masks [Fig. 2], but they were clumsy and lifeless, and even a step backward from the naturalistic painting traditions travelling into Egypt from Greece.

2. Portraits of two women in painted and gilded cartonnage masks. Dated to AD 40-70.

So in essence, the Fayum portraits were a mixture of tradition and style. Egyptian burial tradition decorated with Greek naturalistic painting styles on Romanised people. Subsequently, the tradition of carefully curved panels of almost wafer-thin (usually 1.6 to 2 mm in thickness) sycamore, cedar, pine or cypress with life-sized naturalistic “head and shoulder” portraits of the deceased evolved.

Doxiadis considers that the wood for the portraits had to be so thin for several reasons. Firstly, to keep the level of the top of the mummy smooth (in some cases broken noses and flattened foreheads have been the result of embalmers trying to achieve the required smooth surface between mummy and portrait). Secondly, so that the wood could be curved to fit the mummy. She notes that sycamore was especially flexible when boiled and created the gentle curve required to fit the upper portion of the mummy. Thirdly, if the wood were any thicker, it would have made the mummy very heavy. Lastly, wood was a scarce commodity in Egypt, with most wood being imported, which was expensive. This may be one of the reasons that such portraits were also rendered on linen.

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72 Geoffroy-Schneiter. 10.
73 Doxiadis. 94.
74 Bailey. 25.
The technique of depiction most favoured was encaustic, a term used to label both hot and cold wax-bound pigment painting, though the “cold wax” method was also called Punic wax. The four basic pigments or colours (tetrachromy) of white, black, red and yellow, were mixed with the wax in either form, and depending on the temperature of the wax either resin, in the case of hot wax, or egg and oil, in the case of cold wax, was added. Different methods of application were required for both mixtures, and their differences can be seen in the effect that each had, not only in the depiction, but also on the underlying wood.

Also used was a water-soluble painting style called tempera, where the four pigments were mixed with gum, glue or egg, either white or yolk. The use of this paint created a softer more sketch-like style as seen on the portrait known as “Aline” [Fig. 3] and her two children. [Fig. 6] Barring the clothing, jewellery and hair, this portrait of “Aline” could be the product of any Renaissance artist, due to the soft sketch-like depiction as seen in many Renaissance cartoons.

3. Portrait of “Aline”, showing the soft sketch-like painting style. Dated to AD 98-117.

True encaustic, or hot wax, needed to be used fast as it solidified quickly. It makes the depictions appear bold and highly textured, almost engraved, even a little in the impasto

75 Doxiadis. 97.
76 Doxiadis. 95 and Geoffroy-Schneiter. 10.
manner of oil painting, though the images are as naturalistic as any produced by the cold wax method, as is seen in the depiction of a woman of the Antonine period [Fig. 34].

Thompson suggests that this form of painting could be “heated and reworked” allowing for subtlety in the depiction, which is displayed in the “best early portraits” and the thickness of paint.\(^77\) I contest this thinking on two points. Doxiadis, who writes most authoritatively on the technicalities of encaustic and tempera painting, makes no mention of grossly thick wax, and says that from her experiments the paint was easy to use “as long as the paint was applied rapidly and accurately”.\(^78\) She does not refer to reworking, or show any evidence of it. The closest reference she makes is to under-drawing, or sketches, done prior to the application of paint.

Punic or cold wax was an easier substance to work with. With the paint being cold, there was no requirement for speed, and this enabled the artist to create a softer image with blended pigments, and to correct any mistakes. This is seen in the flat, mildly colourless, almost cosmetic quality image of a young man [Fig. 4]

4. Portrait of a young man in Punic or cold wax. This shows the slightly colourless depictions in this style. Dated to AD 90-100.

\(^78\) Doxiadis. 97.
Again, there is disagreement between Thompson and Doxiadis about the use of this medium. Thompson says it had to be used fast as it “dries quickly and permanently”\textsuperscript{79}. Doxiadis’ view is completely opposite to that, as she states “painting does not have to be carried out so rapidly” as “the emulsified wax dries very slowly”\textsuperscript{80}. Through her experiments, Doxiadis has proved her theories to be the more logical, and I believe her work to be correct.

Petrie theorised in his notes that perhaps the “hot” wax did not completely solidify due to the heat of the Egypt, and therefore was usable for a longer period, making it possible to complete a fine realistic portrait.\textsuperscript{81} However, in that case, did this not also affect the Punic or cold wax? It too must have achieved a semi-soft state due to the heat. So in theory both must have had a similar consistency and thus allowed for similar depictions. This is not the case, however, as is shown above, one image being textured and bold, the other softer, blended and more comparable to tempera depictions.

The pigments or colours used in the painting are very important to the depiction. The \textit{tetrachromy} or four-colour palette was made up of black, white, yellow and red. All of these were created from natural sources such as carbon (from soot off the bottom of cooking vessels\textsuperscript{82}), and earth and plant extracts.\textsuperscript{83} White was either gypsum (calcium sulphate) or chalk (calcium carbonate).\textsuperscript{84} Red, brown, orange and yellow ochres were made from soils containing iron-bearing materials (iron oxides or rust).\textsuperscript{85}

The four basic colours were mixed to create newer shades such as pink, grey and purple. Pink was red ochre and gypsum, grey was carbon and gypsum and purple was yellow and red ochres. This purple must not be confused with deep red (carbon and red ochre).\textsuperscript{86}

\textsuperscript{79} Thompson. 9.
\textsuperscript{80} Doxiadis. 97.
\textsuperscript{81} Doxiadis. 96.
\textsuperscript{83} Geoffroy-Schueller. 3.
\textsuperscript{84} Lee and Quirke. 113.
\textsuperscript{85} Lee and Quirke. 111, 112, 113, 115.
\textsuperscript{86} Lee and Quirke. 113.
Gold was also used to display opulence, as a colour mixed from yellow, red and white, or as real gold leaf.

However, there were also “synthetic” colours, such as reds, greens and blues, which were created from chemical reactions. In the Fayum area, saucers of white lead and red lead colours have been discovered, which are associated more with the European artistic tradition than the natural pigments of the Egyptian painting tradition. From the vast numbers of women depicted wearing emeralds we can tell that green was a popular colour, and, as with some religions today, blue was held as godly, aligning the wearer of the colour with the immortals.

Greens were a colour created from heated copper, sodium and potassium chlorides, with shades achieved by adding differing amounts of each material.

The blue used in painting was created by a similar “recipe” all over the ancient world. Pots containing it have been found in Pompeii, Knossos and the Fayum. Its popularity was vast until the ninth century AD, when the recipe disappeared and production ceased.

The basic method of blue creation was to heat quartz sand, lime, a form of alkali (perhaps natron-soda) and copper to between 850 and 1000 degrees centigrade so that it created a hard lump. Within the lump were blue glassy crystals of calcium copper silicate, the man-made version of the real Cuprorivaite. This was then crushed to a fine powder, mixed with a binding agent and used as a vivid paint. There was a naturally occurring blue

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87 Bailey. 25.
88 The Egyptian gods were sometimes depicted as having silver bones, gold skin and blue hair. S. Pain, "Something Blue...” New Scientist 165, no. 2222 (2000). 44.
89 Lee and Quirke. 112.
90 Pain. 44.
91 Pain. 44.
carbonate, *Azurite*, which came from Sinai and the Eastern Desert, but it was rare, and the above synthetic blue was more common for pigment use. 92

As will be discussed later, at one time it was thought that these rich gem colours were created from crushed gems themselves. Let me present two viable reasons why I believe they were not. One is that it would have been incredibly expensive, and the other that crushed gem would not make a smooth and usable pigment even when mixed with water or some binding agent, though it could perhaps make a glitter. These vivid gem colours were achieved by careful mixing and blending of pigments, both natural and synthetic.

Of course, it is important to know when these portraits were in fashion and who was being represented. The earliest examples of Fayum portraiture are dated by Doxiadis, Geoffroy-Schneiter and Walker to the reign of Tiberius (AD 14 - 37) and there have been only a few examples discovered from the reigns of Claudius (AD 41 - 54), and Nero (AD 54 - 68). From the time of Flavian rule (AD 69 - 96) right through to Severan rule (AD 193 - 235) there is a massive increase of portraits, with the most examples being dated to the Hadrianic (AD 117 - 138) and Antonine (AD 138 - 193) periods. 93 After the Severan period this style of remembrance decreases and only a very few examples can be dated to this time. Doxiadis and Geoffroy -Schneiter believe that the portraits evolved into a new style, Byzantine, becoming more gilded and icon-like, 94 as can be seen in the later portraits [Fig. 5].

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92 Lee and Quirke. 111.
93 I have compared the dated reproductions in each text and found them to be generally consistent.
94 Doxiadis. 99 and Geoffroy-Schneiter. 15.
5. Portrait of a young woman showing a move towards a Byzantine style depiction. Dated to the fourth century AD.

During the earliest days of the Fayum Portraits, they were restricted to the remembrance of nobility and members of the serving magistrates' family. Montserrat often refers to funeral practice involving mummification and portraiture as "elite funerals." Borg refers to such remembrance being "restricted to a very small, élite group of society" and from it "we can infer that the subjects of the portraits belonged to a well-to-do social class." Petrie notes that there were so few mummies with portraits (perhaps on one or two per cent) that it implies that portraiture was a restricted privilege of the social élite. I believe that this is true. The expense of such an elaborate funeral (with linen, flowers, food and portrait, amounting to, in some cases exceeding, six hundred drachmas) would be beyond the purse of most. The average yearly wage for a labourer would be between four hundred and six hundred drachmas. This is not to say that the deceased's family did not go into debt for a decent funeral, selling jewellery, livestock or slaves, but perhaps initial class restrictions made this unlikely. This may explain the small number of

95 Lewis. 20.
96 Montserrat. "Death and Funerals in the Roman Fayum." 33.
99 Petrie. 3.
100 Montserrat, "Death and Funerals in the Roman Fayum." 36.
early examples discovered. By the time the Roman Empire was at its strongest, class restrictions on funeral portraiture had decreased, and they became available to any family who could afford it.\textsuperscript{101} This may be seen in the larger number of portraits from AD 69 onwards, where the fashion of funerary portraiture reached its height between AD 98 and AD 193. After this date it appears to have fallen into disuse, as there are very few examples dated to after AD 200.

Chapter 3

The Mummy Portrait – Purpose and Realism

Walker states that “one of the principal functions of portraiture [is] to defy death by preserving a likeness of the deceased”.\(^{102}\) I believe this statement to be true, especially in regards to funerary portraiture. It is agreed that the Fayum Portrait images were meant for the mummy of the depicted; the purpose of the portrait was to have a physical representation of the deceased to place on the prepared body of the loved one. However, much talent and care went into the depictions, to create as lifelike a portrayal as possible, and we can assume they were an expensive remembrance, with only the wrappings costing more in the funeral preparations.\(^{103}\) This being so, why would the portraits be hidden away, or so carelessly entombed? In 1674 Pietro della Valle, while in Saqqara, dropped into a shaft and discovered “the bodies lay without order in the sand...”,\(^{104}\) and Dr Daniel Fouquet, when taken to an ancient cave in 1887, noted that “The ground was covered with corpses...”.\(^{105}\) I do not believe that the families of the mummies would dispose of their loved ones so thoughtlessly, having so carefully honoured them in portrait, and could only guess that it was the work of thieves looking for gold and precious items, who tossed the mummies aside during their looting, and caused such disarray. However, this may not be the reason, as is explained later.

Vassiliki states that “the panels are no longer considered to be life or death portraits”,\(^{106}\) and Perl says that the general consensus among scholars is that the portraits are painted posthumously, because the age of the depiction and the age of the skeleton correspond,\(^{107}\) a view that has been voiced in the popular press.\(^{108}\) Both statements I believe to be untrue. There is still speculation as to the purpose of the mummy portraits, and when, in the depicted’s life, they were painted.

\(^{102}\) Walker, *Greek and Roman Portraits*. 16.

\(^{103}\) S. Walker. Personal communication. April 2002.

\(^{104}\) Doxiadis. 125.

\(^{105}\) Doxiadis. 130.


\(^{107}\) Perl. 39.
Montserrat believes the mummy portraits were not decorative items used prior to death in the home, but purely funerary objects. He states that the body would not be wrapped until the thirty-fifth or fortieth day after death, which gave the family time to collect the supplies needed for embalming (money and linen). He also contends that this also allowed time for the family to have a portrait painted, “the theory that these paintings were produced during the lifetime of the subjects and then altered to fit in the mummy’s carapace does not convince me. I believe that the portraits were painted after death and should be seen as idealised images built around the social body rather than portraits in the sense that we understand them.” It is possible that all these portraits were painted after death and the images were all purely stylised, using popular facial conventions of the day, such as large (hence child-like) eyes and small mouths. The same basic face with a little “tuning”. However, I do not believe this. As Prag and Neave say, “A portrait includes in some form the physical likeness, not only the artist’s reaction to his sitter but also those elements of his character and lifestyle”. The range of faces, all so individual makes it difficult to believe that the artists were painting to a pre-formed plan, painting “by numbers”. In this Walker agrees. She states that while drawing the portraits herself she came to believe “that they were attempts at realistic images” by “artists trained in the classical tradition”.

According to Montserrat’s view one might question why babies and very small children, [Fig. 6] and the elderly [Fig. 7] were depicted, if the purpose of these images was to depict the subject in “the prime of life”. I speculate it was for the enjoyment of viewing by family and friends, as portraits have always been.

106 Bailey. 25.
107 Montserrat, "Death and Funerals in the Roman Fayum." 37.
109 Montserrat, "Death and Funerals in the Roman Fayum." 37.
110 Montserrat, "Death and Funerals in the Roman Fayum." 37.
Wealthier families may have had several portraits done over a lifetime, explaining the range of depicted ages. Walker asks, “was the portrait made to mark a particular achievement, or passing of a stage of life, such as formal entry into adulthood, the contract of marriage, the birth of a child, or death?” I believe that this may be true, especially in respect of life milestones. The range of ages shown in the Fayum Portraits may point to continuous portrait painting throughout life. Also, with the number of portraits of young adults, (or what we perceive as young adults, after all Plate 9 Images 33/34 of the Fayum Portraits Catalogue is only 10 years of age and yet she looks a lot older) it is possible that youthful portraits were commissioned to record a youthful event, such as a coming of age, a marriage or the birth of a child. It is also possible that some portraits could have been painted post-mortem, though later within this study I will explain why I believe post-mortem depictions to be rare.

It could be that some revelled in their mature state and wished to be remembered that way. Perhaps if the family were important enough and the children desperately desired, it could be possible that they were painted in infant form. Possibly it was as simple as the artist knowing the family and being able to paint from memory, an opinion offered by Sir Cecil Smith. He is noted in Petrie’s 1911 text as having said from the artistic impression his view “was that many of them [portraits] have been painted from memory solely for the purpose of putting on the mummy”. With this view the average itinerant artist must have been blessed with both a great talent and a prodigious memory, and as Perl states it is understandable that people “have a hard time believing that such vividly immediate images could be pulled straight out of the artist’s imagination”.

Though there are some portraits that have guide notes on colour and face shape on the back, this does not prove that the portrait was painted after death, only that the artist felt they needed reminders on aspects of the depiction.

Whatever the reason for some examples being very young or old, the majority were youthful, and looked distinctly healthy. It is possible that it was a case of the artist fulfilling his brief and flattering the “sitter”, making the fevered look glowingly rosy or tanned, the deathly pale look “peaches and cream”, and the old young and vibrant.

Perhaps the most fundamental aspect of the question of whether or not the portraits are realistic is “is the person alive or dead when depicted?” As Cotter says, “Were they painted from life? Many seem too vivaciously singular not to have been”. Riggs concedes that “Ancient artists undoubtedly did rely on the physical presence of their subjects at some stage in the creation of many portraits,” but she does not say if she believes this physical presence to be alive or dead. She believes this alive-or-dead debate to be “manufactured”. I am willing to join the debate as I believe, like David and Tapp, that in most cases the portrait was done from life.

114 Petrie. 7.
115 Perl. 39.
118 David and Tapp. 49.
The depiction of the eyes is thought to hold the truth as to whether or not the portraits were painted in life. When looking at a series of portraits you would see that most are “bright eyed”, an impression created by a white speck painted on to the iris to show light reflecting on the eye. [See Fig. 34] However some do not have that light [Figs. 8, 9 & 10] and it is the belief of Appenzeller, Stevens, Kruszynski and Walker that the presence of such a speck dictates that the portrait was painted from life and the lack of it shows a possible depiction after death.\footnote{O. Appenzeller et al., "Neurology in Ancient Faces," \textit{Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry}. 70, no. 4 (2001). 525.}


It can be assumed that the sitter was placed in a light source to illuminate the face, and thus this light would be reflected or shown in the living eye. This light was not from within the body, an internal light, but a reflection. However, we assume the artists painting these portraits knew their job well enough to depict both the living and dead as alive, and the white speck on the eyes may only be an artistic technique to display life, used by most artists, but not all. Therefore, the lack of the “spark of life” may be only an artistic choice rather than the definitive evidence that the person depicted is alive or dead. It is also interesting to note that the amount of time between death and the eyes losing their reflective quality is very short, only a matter of minutes.\footnote{Emily Whitehead, Nurse, Taranaki Base Hospital. Personal Communication. January 2002.}
If the artist was painting the dead, he had to be very talented to overcome the many problems confronted when depicting a face post-mortem. Faces lose their fullness, hair its gloss, skin its warm tint. In Egypt, time may have made post-mortem depictions impossible, with the heat ravaging the body and hastening the decomposition process. The five stages of decomposition would take hold of the body swiftly. Within minutes of the heart stopping the body would be “stained” by blood settling in the lower areas. If lying on their back, the blood would settle in the back of the arms and legs, the shoulders, buttocks and back. The flesh would sag as the body cools and within two to six hours rigor mortis would occur, lasting up to four days. Within days bacteria in the body would run rampant, and putrefaction start. The body would take on a green hue starting with the skin above the bowel, developing into purple, then black. The gas produced by the bacteria would bloat the body and cause the eyes to bulge. A week after death the top layers of the skin would slough off easily, and within three to four weeks the teeth, hair and nails would loosen, and the internal organs liquefy. Over time this would all waste away leaving only bones, and perhaps a little hair.

Thus, the five stages are complete: fresh, bloat, active decay, advanced decay, and dry or skeletal remains. This, of course, is all hastened by a hot climate and the assistance of flies, and time to paint the deceased would be short. However, drying agents were occasionally used to preserve the body. In Roman burials in North Africa there is evidence of some bodies being “packed” in gypsum, lime or chalk, and coated with resin, if indeed the body was treated at all.

As a side issue, it is interesting to note what Egyptian doctors thought were some causes of death. Papyri of medical records list some “common” diseases that were believed to lead to sudden death: chronic pulmonary coughing, infection of the feet, difficulty

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122 Spinney. 14.
123 David and Tapp. 52.
breathing (asthma?), white spot of the cornea (the "spot" of reflection?), pus and granulation of the eye.124

Burial tradition may also have posed a problem. Perhaps there were rituals that had to be adhered to, in the manner of Islamic burials where the body must be interred before sunset of the same day. We know that this was not a hindrance as the bodies were mummified in a simplified manner and such a process took time, but perhaps the mummification had to be begun within a certain period of time. There are no references to what this period of time may be, only to when the bodies were transferred from the home to the embalmers. David and Tapp note that it could be three to five days until the body was removed.125 Montserrat notes “that the shrouded corpse remained in the home for several days”.126 If the painter was going to paint post-mortem he would only have a matter of hours before the body would succumb to heat and decay. This is assuming that there was a “resident” artist in the area, who could arrive at the home swiftly. Once the embalming began, the face and shoulders would have been covered, and thus the artist would have no image to work from at all.

Without dating of the bodies, we cannot tell if the time of death concurs with the image of the deceased. Perhaps a portrait was done in the reign of Trajan, showing all the glory of the time in hairstyle, clothing and adornment, yet the death is dated well into the reign of Hadrian.

We have one noted male mummy who, via CAT scan and X-ray analysis, appears to be considerably older than his portrait.127 Is this an anomaly, or was it customary? Could this man have died suddenly and his family had no more current image? According to Appenzeller, Stevens, Kruszynski and Walker,128 it is thought the portrait was painted “before the imminent death of the subject”. There are two reasons why I am not sure I believe this. Firstly, the subject would not be in any state to be painted, perhaps racked

124 Bagnall. 186.
125 David and Tapp. 54.
126 Montserrat, "Death and Funerals in the Roman Fayum." 36.
127 Doxiadis. 46-47.
with pain or disfigured by disease. Secondly, it is not a comforting thought for the ill that their family believe them so on the verge of death, they had to get the painter in.

Egyptians believed, probably after long observation, that death swiftly followed the onset of ill health, and doctors often reported that a person died due to a "rapid illness". This belief is strong evidence favouring the idea that these portraits were painted in life, possibly long before death, and were held as decorative until required for mummification. The argument hinges on the significance of the portrait. Were they just an extension of Egyptian death ritual, or were they important and necessary for a possible after-life? As there is no reference to Roman mummies being found with canopic jars, as is seen in Egyptian burials (the mummy and "parts" all put together for reassembling in the after-life), we can assume that the Romans did not believe that an intact body was required for an after-life. It is possible that only an image of the deceased was required for admittance into the after-life and for the identification of the body and soul. This would make a portrait essential.

Investigations have been done to discover if the faces on the portraits were the faces of the people in the mummies. Work undertaken at the Unit of Art in Medicine at Manchester University in England has tried to reconstruct faces based on skulls alone, and only after reconstruction compare the reconstructed faces to the skulls' portraits. The mummies and skulls, one female and three male, were provided by the British Museum in London, the Glyptotek Museum in Copenhagen and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Using copies of the skulls, they created the faces in clay; facial muscles, fat and skin all carefully placed. The clay faces, once finished, were discovered to be not totally true to the portraits. The portraits were of European faces, with the long thin angled nose, shallow brow, high cheekbones and pointed chins usual to European features. The faces created were more African in appearance, with flatter

129 Appenzeller et al., 525.
129 Bagnall, 185.
130 Douglas, 40.
broader noses, wide brows, flatter cheekbones and square jaws. This is not completely unexpected. The range of races in the Fayum, and the want, or even necessity to intermarry, makes it obvious that most citizens of the Fayum would not look Greek or Roman.

The desire to look Greek or Roman was considered important. The Romanisation of the Fayum required the citizens to appear more European, not only for aesthetic reasons but also for financial reasons, as the Greeks and Romans received special taxable status over other citizens.

Even if this “Europeanised, beautiful and youthful in portrait, older in death” imagery may have been required and even standard, it does not answer what the portraits’ purpose may have been. David and Tapp say that the portraits “were probably painted in the owner’s lifetime, perhaps by itinerant artists, and placed in the house. When the owner dies, they (the portraits) would be trimmed to shape and incorporated in the mummy wrappings.” I share their view, as I believe we have evidence for these portraits having both a decorative purpose in the home and a funerary purpose within Fayum death ritual.

Firstly, noting from observation, the mummy portraits appear to be cut down, showing rough cutting marks in an arc around the head. As Petrie notes “After the death of the

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131 While these reconstructions are labelled as “scientific”, they represent nothing more than an artistic interpretation of the bones, and thus are likely to be inaccurate.
132 Petrie notes that the society was made up of Macedonians, Italians, Spanish, Syrian, and Indians. 14.
133 Walker, Ancient Faces. Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt. 17.
134 David and Tapp. 49.
man [or woman] his [her] portrait would be sent along with the body to the embalmer, and was then cut down to the size and form required to fit the mummy. So, the question is cut down from what? A larger rectangular image that was hung on the wall? Walker says yes, but not only rectangular but longer, a portrait to the waist. What of the fact that the wood was slightly curved? It would not be easy to hang, not being flush against the wall. Perhaps this did not pose a problem, with the portraits having an ultimately funerary purpose it was accepted that the image would not be flat. Perhaps the images were as often set on a shelf and rested against the wall as hung, the curve of the wood helping the image to remain standing. Perhaps more often linen portraits were framed, and wooden portraits left as free standing items, used in funerary processions. Without more framed portraits to compare it is difficult to judge.

I do not believe that the portrait was painted on flat wood for display, and then curved just prior to use on the mummy, as this would crack the wax image and possibly even the wood. Of course, we have little evidence that the cracks and chips we see today were not caused in antiquity. Those portraits that have been closely examined have shown splits, dust, sand, flakes of pigment and even particles of the artist’s tools in the cracks.

Secondly, there is a framed encaustic portrait still in existence [Fig. 12], and there are references to the hanging of framed portraiture in the Greek and Roman traditions.

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135 Petrie. 8.
137 Walker, "Mummy portraits in their Roman context." 4.
138 Geoffroy-Schneiter. 11 and Doxiadis. 101.
139 Pliny, NH. XXXV.4 & 88. Polybius, Histories. VI.53. Doxiadis. 84-89.
Therefore, the conclusion that the portraits were used in the home prior to death seems an easy one to make. The question would be why are there not more framed portraits. There is a two-fold answer: there may be more waiting to be discovered, and of course the portraits were used at death, taken from their frames and placed over the face of the mummy and buried with it.

There is more evidence that points to the image, and even the mummy, being kept in the home, involved in or at family events such as dinners, ceremonies and rituals. Petrie speaks in his notes from Hawara of finding mummies that had been graffitied on their feet with childish script, of portraits blistered, cracked, fly-marked, chipped and cracked, and with sections of pigment missing that had in the “wounds”, as above, debris of household neglect — dust, paint, skin, sand and fibres of clothing — the usual contents of the vacuum cleaner. I find myself agreeing with Scheidel regarding seasonal mortality and mortuary practice in Roman Egypt, with the expense of mummification it would “seem unlikely that the finished objects were earmarked for immediate burial”. The same could be said for the portraits themselves, being too costly an item to shut away. There is agreement between scholars such as Montserrat, Borg and Petrie that the mummies were not buried immediately, but not on where they were kept. As above,

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140 Petrie. 2.
141 Borg, "The Dead as a Guest at Table? Continuity and change in the Egyptian Cult of the Dead." 26.
142 Scheidel. 290.
Petrie believed that the mummies were kept in the atrium of the home\textsuperscript{143} and within the family, as shown by the damage. This view is supported by Parlasca when he writes “In my opinion, however, numerous signs point to most of the portraits on wood being used as mummy furnishings only secondarily, at least before the end of the third century AD.”\textsuperscript{144} However, Montserrat states that such damage could have been caused by transportation of the mummies, bumped about on pack animals and docks,\textsuperscript{145} and as such is no proof of the mummies being kept within the home. There are letters on papyrus that give details of such transportation of mummies. A letter from Senpamonthes to her brother, dated within the second or third century AD, states she had sent their mother’s mummy home by ship, well-labelled (label on her stomach and a tag around her neck) and with no money due on arrival.\textsuperscript{146}

However, Montserrat does acknowledge that the mummies were meant to be kept somewhere, and be available to relatives, so suggests “tomb chapels” until the mummies were moved to a burial pit when they became tatty or forgotten. As to how long a period would pass between these events, I agree with Borg when she states that the assumed time would be one or two generations,\textsuperscript{147} this being the time that the Egyptian ancestral cult/worship went back. After the mummy became “forgotten”, it would be moved outside of the home to a tomb, usually outside of the family’s care. Borg believes that once the mummy left the home, and was placed in the care of temple officials or servants, consideration of the person within ceased. This could explain mummies being crammed together, stored on their heads or faces (upside-down) or even broken to fit into small spaces,\textsuperscript{148} as was noted by Pietro della Valle and Dr Daniel Fouquet.

\textsuperscript{143} Petrie, 2.
\textsuperscript{144} Parlasca, 127.
\textsuperscript{145} Montserrat, "Death and Funerals in the Roman Fayum." 39.
\textsuperscript{146} Walker, Ancient Faces. Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt. 158.
\textsuperscript{147} Borg, "The Dead as a Guest at Table? Continuity and change in the Egyptian Cult of the Dead." 30.
\textsuperscript{148} Borg, "The Dead as a Guest at Table? Continuity and change in the Egyptian Cult of the Dead." 28.
One question as regards the “pre-life” of these mummy portraits needs addressing. If these portraits were meant only for the mummy, to be part of the funerary ritual and enclosed within the linen bindings of the mummy, why were many portraits discovered propped up against the mummy and not on them? Could they have fallen off their mummy? I think not or there would be signs of damage to both portrait and mummy, and the portrait would have fallen on to its face, and not be neatly resting against the mummy. The same argument could be used for possible looting. Fayum mummies were not buried with jewellery within the wrappings, so barring the portrait, what would the mummies be looted for?

If the portrait was painted as an item of “last respect” why was it used so carelessly? The almost discarding of the portrait displays a notion of “we forgot to give the portrait to the embalmers” or “this has been on the wall forever, get rid of it” or “I cannot part with this image of my wife/husband/mother/father” and it is only begrudgingly given up at the last possible moment to be placed with the body, perhaps when the mummy was moved to its final resting place. The lax treatment of individual portraits may suggest that their primary purpose was separate from their requirement in death ritual.

A further reason for thinking that these portraits had both a decorative and funerary purpose are that most of the portraits are of people of marriageable age, young, vigorous, beautiful and strong, seen in their prime.

However, were they really seen at their prime? Appenzeller, Stevens, Kruszynski and Walker, who hypothesised that the specks in the eyes reflected life in the subject, also believed that the portraits in some cases displayed genetic disorders and even the cause of death. They identified cases of progressive facial hemiatrophy (slow unilateral atrophy of the facial bones and tissue lasting two to ten years) in some Fayum Portraits. They also conducted an inspection for deviations of the visual axes, oval pupils, focal epilepsy, hemiplegic migraine (sudden onset of weakness on one side of the face, an arm or leg, along with migraine, lasting up to 24 hours) and autonomic nervous system dysfunction.

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149 Appenzeller et al., 528-529.
(dysfunction in the “automatic function” sections of the nervous system i.e. controlling breathing, swallowing, and the contraction of the pupil). The conclusion was that diagnosis of these disorders was possible via the portrait alone, “in the absence of a living nervous system”, and all these disorders are present in the Fayum Portraits to some extent or another. The conclusion I make as a non-medical person is that these portraits must be fantastically realistic in many cases, to display not just youth and beauty, but disease, decay and dysfunction.
Chapter 4
The Jewellery – Materials and Methods

The basis of Roman jewellery lies chiefly in the Etruscan and Hellenistic tradition. The Romans themselves never had a chance to develop their own style until the start of the Imperial period around 27 BC. Prior to this time there had been laws controlling the trade and use of gold. In the Laws of the Twelve Tables there were laws that specified the amount of gold that could be buried with the deceased (fifth century BC) and how much gold a woman could wear - less than half an ounce (third century BC). Therefore, when Rome took control of her empire, gold, which was not a naturally occurring substance within Italy, flooded in in the form of taxes and gifts. The introduction of a form of opencast and tunnel mining also vastly increased the flow of gold into Rome.

What was once a rare necessity with which the state financed wars now became a luxury item for the public. Not having their own goldsmithing tradition to work from, the Romans used ideas, styles and techniques from the Hellenistic world. The principles of Etruscan and Hellenistic gold work and jewellery were simplicity and delicacy of form. The Roman goldsmith took those ideals and turned them about, revering gold for its colour, its expense, and the fact it would not tarnish, and thus created a tradition of display and bulk. This ideal is seen clearly in Petronius’ *Satyricon*: “Soon Fortuna took bracelets from her great fat arms and showed them to an admiring Scintilla. Then she even undid her anklets and her gold hair-net which she said was pure gold”. Trimalchio states in the same text “A woman’s chains you see. This is how we poor fools get robbed. She must have six pounds on her . . . . Still I must admit I’ve got a bracelet that weighs a good ten pounds on its own”.

However, the wearing of jewellery did not meet with universal approval. Juvenal states in his *Sixth Satire* (457-460) that “a woman denies herself nothing and considers nothing

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disgraceful once she surrounds her neck with an emerald choker, and once she fastens those heavy pearls on to her suffering lobes — no more unbearable thing exists than a wealthy woman.” Ovid is just as scathing in “On Facial Treatment for Ladies” (20) in his Erotic Poems. He chastises women for making themselves unattractive to men by saying, “your fingers must sparkle with gems and two of those Eastern stones [Pearls? Emeralds?] from your chunky necklace used as an earbob will pull the lobe out of shape”.

Gold jewellery was almost never pure gold in antiquity. It was not that the mining techniques did not allow for pure gold, as coinage until third century AD was standardised at 99% pure, but because pure gold is very soft. After this time gold was debased to 90% or below, though never less than 75% which is equivalent to 18 carat gold today. Gold for jewellery was mixed with silver to get a delicate softened golden sheen, or copper to obtain a reddish tinge, both desirable. The addition of debasing elements also meant that the gold was “hardened”.

However, it was not just gold that was used in Roman jewellery. Bronze, silver, iron, lead and copper were also used as “stage” metals. Most of the metal created was either yellow, like gold, or white, like silver, because most pieces were gilded or plated, an economical use of expensive materials. The first attempts at gilding were basically to wrap gold leaf or foil around the item. This did not work successfully as the gold would soon peel off. Then two new techniques were developed that required the base metal to be pure copper. The first technique mixed the copper with zinc to create a metal that looked like gold, which could then be formed into whatever desired shape. The other technique was to gild by mercury amalgam. This method involved dissolving gold in mercury to create a paste that could be spread or dipped. Then a fine layer of gold foil could be attached and bonded on with heat that burnt away the mercury. This method

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156 A “stage” metal is a metal that was used as the base of the ornament, on to which decoration was added.
created a fine durable golden layer. Copper could also be plated with tin to give a silvery sheen.

Silver was a strange metal, in that it was considered more valuable than gold, especially in Egypt, for many years longer than in any other Mediterranean area. Once supplies were discovered in Britain, its value decreased and gold took its place as the premier metal again. This anomaly may have been due to the fact that silver was easily broken or corroded, being either very pure at 95% and thus soft, or debased silver (anything less than 50%) being mixed with copper. Ogden believes that it may not be silver’s rarity that has led to so few examples of silver jewellery surviving from antiquity, but its failing towards corrosion. However, silver was the mark of the legion. Military standards were made of silver as the Romans (in this case Pliny) believed its lustre was greater than gold, making silver easier to see over vast distances.

The Romans took the techniques and styles of the Hellenistic world and decorated themselves with opulence. In doing so, they developed three notable new styles of jewellery work: - Opus Interrasile, Niello and Polychromy.

Opus Interrasile or open chiselled fretwork on gold sheet, which became most popular in the late Roman period, developed into the ornate openwork associated with the Byzantine period. The term opus interrasile, a joining of two Latin terms, came into use during the medieval period. The correct contemporary Latin term was auro interrasile, meaning “cut-out or embossed gold”. However, as opus interrasile is the term used and accepted in current scholarship, it is the term I have used.

Niello was a form of enamelling where a mixture of black metal sulphides was melted to create a matt “filler” surface that could be levelled, and contrasted well with gold or

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157 Ogden. 34.
158 Ogden. 34.
159 Ogden. 33.
160 Ogden. 33.
161 Pliny, NH. XXXIII. 58. Isager. 64.
silver. It is believed that this style of decoration was not used until the fourth century AD, but rare items do show attempted forerunners.

*Polychromy* was originally a development of Hellenistic jewellery but it was embraced and adapted by Roman jewellers. Polychromy was the use of many varied large coloured stones and glass to create an interesting “riot” of colour. Prior to Roman use, the desire was to use the same stones or pale mixtures of stones to create a quietly elegant jewel. Once the Romans discovered polychrome decoration, they developed it to vivid effect. It was around the second century AD that Imperial coins and medallions were introduced into jewellery making. They were incorporated into earrings, necklaces, rings and brooches, to show provincial, political or imperial support [Fig. 13].

![Image of a rope chain with medallion](https://example.com/rope-chain-medallion.jpg)

13. A rope chain with detailed plaques. The lower piece is a medallion of the Emperor Domitian. Dated to AD 81-96.

When it came to gems and stones the Romans had almost as much choice as we do today. With the breadth of their empire, the selection was huge. Emeralds from Egypt and Austria, garnets from Eastern Europe, pale blue sapphires from Ceylon, dark blue

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165 Phillips. 18.
166 Anderson Black. 80.
sapphires from the Eastern sea trade, lapis lazuli from Afghanistan,\textsuperscript{167} pearls from the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean, fresh water or seed pearls from Scotland,\textsuperscript{168} brown

\textsuperscript{167} Ogden. 37.
\textsuperscript{168} Phillips. 20.
Map 3. Egypt from Luxor to Kerma, showing quarry and gemstone sites.

3. Amethyst.
8. Beryl.
23. Mircoline.
25. Smokey Quartz.

4. Amethyst.
22. Mircoline.
24. Peridot.
and cream sardonyx from India,\textsuperscript{169} red carnelian from the eastern deserts of Egypt, turquoise from Iran and Sinai,\textsuperscript{170} jet from England, amber from the Baltic,\textsuperscript{171} and diamonds from India\textsuperscript{172} could be used with topaz, aquamarine, agate, malachite, coral, rock crystal, peridot, citrine and amethyst.\textsuperscript{173} In Pliny’s \textit{Natural History} (37) he makes note of the gems available, and cites stones and gems, such as those above, as examples of “renowned gemstones”.\textsuperscript{174}

Rubies were barely known, being found beyond the empire’s borders in Burma, and garnets provided a similar look, and were easier to work. However, it is believed that garnets were rare in the jewellery of Roman Egypt, not because they were unavailable, but because they were unfashionably associated with Dionysos.\textsuperscript{175} It seems incredible that garnets were not used more in Egyptian jewellery as they were so readily available from the Eastern Desert, the Sinai peninsula and Aswan, but it is possible that Egypt’s small, flawed and crumbly garnets were not suitable for extensive use. However, Aston, Harrell and Shaw believe that Egypt’s garnets were used in Mycenaean jewellery.\textsuperscript{176}

Diamonds or \textit{adamas} in Greek, meaning invincible, were used in Roman jewellery, and are even believed to have been used in Hellenistic jewellery in the form of chips. Since they were too hard to cut, the usual structure for diamonds in Roman jewellery was in their uncut \textit{tetrahedral} shape, a shape best described as two pyramids end to end. Diamonds were mostly used in rings, [Fig. 14] as is referred to in Juvenal’s \textit{Sixth Satire} (156) “and then a legendary diamond, enhanced by Queen Berenice’s finger”.

\textsuperscript{170} Anderson Black. 46.
\textsuperscript{172} Phillips, \textit{Jewels and Jewellery}. 16.
\textsuperscript{173} Ogden. 36.
\textsuperscript{175} Ogden. 35.
However, it is possible that those clear gems taken to be diamonds were actually sapphires. Not all diamonds are clear, as not all sapphires are blue. Both come in many shades, being coloured by the minerals in the earth around them as they form. [Fig. 15] Rock crystal was found in the Western Desert between the Fayum and the Bahariya Oasis, and was used alone to mimic clear gems and as inlays over coloured cements to create the look of many gemstones.\footnote{Aston, Harrell, and Shaw. 52.}

The brown and cream sardonyx was particularly favoured for cameo, small images carved in relief, due to its parallel lines of colour. Cameo’s opposite, intaglio, where the
design is recessed into the stone, was used for seals, rings and pendants. [Fig. 16] Onyx and sardonyx were both found in Egypt, but it is not known where. The height of its use was in Ptolemaic and Roman times, and one of its uses was in nicolo cuts (cut so the top layer is bluish white). This style was known as Aegyptilla, suggesting either an Egyptian source or that Egypt was part of its trade route.¹⁷⁷

Amber was popular for necklaces, [Fig. 17] as pendants, smoothed into beads, drilled, and even, if the hand was light enough, engraved. A similar use was found for jet [Fig. 17]. The Roman influence was felt only as far as the English cutters from York would allow, as the finest jet was found and worked only in York.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ Aston, Harrell, and Shaw. 27.
Amethyst was a local product of Egypt, and was “the stone” of the Middle Kingdom and Roman Period. Its use was restricted to jewellery only (in preference to inlays on statues, boxes and funerary paraphernalia), and was very highly valued.\footnote{180}

Turquoise was also highly valued, but it is not often seen in ancient jewellery because of being worn away or disintegrating because of its soft structure. However, we do know from inscriptions on trade and design, that it was often used in Roman Egypt. Ogden believes that turquoise was never used as a pigment, but may have been used as a powdered glaze.\footnote{181}

Lapis lazuli was another highly regarded gem, but it was rarely seen outside of Roman Egypt in jewellery. There were no native Egyptian sources of lapis lazuli, and its natural location of Afghanistan made it a rarity, as it was not often exported.\footnote{182} Though lapis lazuli was used for beads and inlays, it was never used as a pigment colour.\footnote{183}

Carnelian was commonly found as water-worn pebbles occurring on the surface between the Nile Valley and the Red Sea. It came in deep red, brown and even yellow. It was among the first stones to be used in Egyptian jewellery, and is found as amulets and beads. Into Pharaonic times, it was used for inlays on jewellery (especially rings) and funerary equipment, and as amulets. Once glass was introduced into Egyptian jewellery, red carnelian was among the few stones still used, and it was even imitated.\footnote{184}

Emerald was perhaps the most popular gem used in Roman jewellery, as it was easily available within Egypt, far to the southeast of Cairo,\footnote{185} and its structure made it easy to work with. It could be cut and polished into spherical beads, but the Romans preferred to leave it in its natural state that was in \textit{hexagonal} crystals. \textbf{[Fig. 18]}

These could then be drilled and threaded on to individual wires, which would hook or loop on to the next threaded emerald to form a beaded chain. The earliest dates for emerald mining and use in Egyptian jewellery are still contested. 3500 BC is the date according to archaeologists H. P. Little and S. H. Ball, 1500 BC by German archaeologist O. Schneider. However, we must remember what is called emerald is not always emerald. Many green stones that were called emerald, were often green beryl. The confusion goes back to antiquity. The Egyptian word mofek and the Greek word smaragdus were used to describe any greenish stone, for example olivine (peridot) and green feldspar. It is Aston, Harrell and Shaw's belief that emerald was only used in Egyptian jewellery during and after the Ptolemaic period. Egypt's emeralds, though small and cloudy, were used in jewellery throughout Europe, Asia and Africa, from Hellenistic times through until the Middle Ages.

185 Sinkankas. 4.
186 Aston, Harrell, and Shaw. 25.
It is possible that emeralds were held in high regard because of their associated curative and magical powers. Anything from heart trouble to gas, fertility to labour, hope to envy was eased or gained by wearing an emerald near the skin.  

However, recent research by the French Centre for Petrography and Geochemistry has discovered that emeralds used in Roman jewellery were not just found within Egypt and Austria, but in Asia. An emerald set in a Roman earring discovered in France was found to have isotope ratios matching emeralds mined in Swat and Peshawar valleys in Pakistan, mines believed to be fabulous, and lost in the mists of time. These areas ran along rivers that were part of the trading routes between Egypt and Afghanistan.  

Not far behind emerald were pearls. These were almost totally unknown until the Mid-Hellenistic period, when there was a huge explosion of enthusiasm for them, so much so that archaeologically "more pearl jewellery of late Ptolemaic and Roman periods has been found in Egypt than in any other Roman province."  

The most common use for pearls was as drops on earrings and pendants, and as necklaces. They could, like emeralds, be drilled and threaded, and, like diamond and sapphire, they were not only one colour, occurring in shades of white, cream, grey and black. However, like almost all gems they could be copied. Polished mother-of-pearl and shell could create convincing replicas.  

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189 Sinkankas, 61, 62, 77, 78, 79, 80.
192 Ogden, 39.
The expense of pearls was a massive factor in their popularity. It is stated by Suetonius that the Roman general Vitellus paid for a complete armed campaign with the sale of one pearl. In addition, Julius Caesar created a law that forbade the wearing of pearls by any woman under a certain social level. So, not only were pearls very costly, but also an obvious symbol of wealth and, possibly, power.

It is important to note that gem cutting as we know it today did not evolve until the sixteenth century AD, and gems prior to this time were chosen either for their softness for ease of working, or their natural shape. Stones were selected to be no less beautiful for not having been cut and faceted, and to display well having only been polished. *Cabochon*, or a smooth domed polished gem, was the most popular “cut” as the gem was still bright and lustrous, although it was not heavily worked [Fig. 15].

Most gems prior to the Hellenistic period were soft, and were cut and polished with the simple use of sand or flint, and drilled with simple bow-drills with flint, metal or wood points (used in a manner not dissimilar to a Scout trying to start a fire with no matches) [Fig. 20]. By the Hellenistic period, the choice in gems had increased to include stones

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193 Landman et al. 64.
too hard to be dressed with such simple methods. Aluminium oxide or emery was more abrasive than sand, and was used when the harder gems such as sapphire and emerald became highly popular. Grinding wheels would be covered with the emery, either dusted onto the wheel or attached to the wheel with a form of adhesive, and the stone would be held against the wheel to polish and smooth it.

Two grinding stones could also be used together. They would be placed rough surface to rough surface with the top one having a slight circular motion. The stone would then be positioned in-between, rolling about to create a polished bead. It is interesting to note that different stones naturally created differently shaped beads. For example lapis lazuli, due to its natural central axis, would be ground into bicones, i.e. two cones end on end.

It was in the Hellenistic period that the diamond drill came into use. The basic design and use was the same as the bow-drill, but with added bite on the end. This type of drill could be used by hand or set onto a platform for a more controlled cut [Fig. 21]. Though technology may have progressed in the last two thousand years, the basic tools of the jeweller have not. Stones are still ground, drilled, and cut.

As today, almost all gems could be copied in glass. Glass, in bead-form, was created as far back as the third millennium BC, and is noted to have been an Egyptian favourite as early as 1500 BC.\textsuperscript{194} Glass in itself became a desirable “gem”. With its economical

\textsuperscript{194} Phillips, Jewels and Jewellery. 24.
production, realistic look and accessible value many Romans took to using glass in their jewellery [Fig. 22]. In most cases, entire necklaces or pendants were made in glass, but it was equally common to find glass and gem side-by-side. However, glass was not the only non-precious substance to be used in jewellery. Ceramic was used for beads on necklaces for common use [Fig. 17].

![A trident style earring set with glass and garnets. Dated to the third century AD.](image)

22. A trident style earring set with glass and garnets. Dated to the third century AD.

Enamel was first used in Mycenaean gold work, but it was not until the Egyptians learnt, and improved, the technique that it became highly popular. It was the Egyptian interest in glass production that led to the increase of glass and enamel use in decorative items. They had created a form of glass-like ceramic called faience, a quartz glazed non-clay ceramic that was used in a similar manner to enamelling, that is in small cell-like spaces that became highly popular in Egyptian decoration [Fig. 23]. It must be noted that faience and glass were similar in construction, a mixture of silica, alkali, lime and copper, but mixed in different amounts.

The best examples of this style were in the Pharaohs' pectoral collars. The art of cloisonné or the inlaying of stone, gem, glass or faience into gold frames was particularly valued by the Egyptians, and it can be seen in a little Roman jewellery emanating from Egypt.

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196 Ogden. 39.
198 Ogden. 39.
199 Nicholson and Peltenburg. 178.
The Romans did not embrace the true beauty of faience or enamelling, and very few Roman enamelled pieces exist today. The little that is left to us is copper-alloy with thin layers of glassy colour. The major problem with enamel was that it was a soft medium and did not survive well. It is for this reason that we find so many “blank” pieces, those with the “cells” for colour but with nothing inside.

As has been seen, Egyptian style and materials were used heavily in Roman jewellery worn in the Fayum. However, what of the Pre-Roman influence? It has been noted that the Romans relied on the vast knowledge of the Etruscan and Greek goldsmith to obtain ideas of creation and style.

Granulation was a major decorative technique in Etruscan jewellery. It was the method of designing beautiful, intricate patterns on a plain gold surface with tiny grains of gold without the presence of any solder [Fig. 24].
There were many attempts to replicate this technique but it was not until the twentieth century that the “recipe” for the “solder” was discovered. Each grain was attached with a mixture of copper carbonate, water and fish glue. The water and fish glue would hold the grain on to the surface, while the piece was being heated. Once at the correct temperature, the copper carbonate would then melt and fuse the grain to the gold with a solderless join. The water would evaporate and the fish glue would burn away, leaving a tidy and seamless piece of highly decorated jewellery. The grains were minute, less than a millimetre in diameter. Each grain was created by cutting tiny amounts of gold from a thin wire length and heating it over charcoal. Each piece would roll into a ball, as would mercury, and it was then cooled and used. By the time of the Roman occupation of Egypt, this style of decoration had decreased to a token gesture, perhaps a few grains to outline a stone or to create interest on an earring.

Another style that made its way into Roman jewellery was filigree or the use of wire to create a lace-like design. This was usually soldered into place in the required pattern, and added detail to a stone setting, an earring or pendant. The solder used was most likely to be the same metal heated and a dot placed between the two edges that were to attach. Otherwise, another metal with a lower heating point was used in the same manner. The decorative motifs in filigree were usually natural, such as leaves or flowers, in complex spiral forms.

The wire itself is interesting in its creation. It is possible to “draw” gold, which is to pull a thin strip of gold through a round hole in a solid substance to create a wire with a seam. Unfortunately, the wire created was never very strong, as it often broke along the seam. The more usual method was to twist or rub the gold into a wire by hand, as you would to a piece of string (twisting from each end in opposite directions) or lump of dough (between the palms, palm on board, or block and board but only in one direction) [Fig. 25]. This again produced a seam, but it was much more flexible, and not so liable to breaking. It was even possible to produce beaded wire with this block-on-board method.

20 Ogden. 52.
Softened gold was placed between shaped blocks and rubbed to create the "bead attached to bead" link. Once the wire was produced, it could be used to thread drilled stones, hang an earring or pendant, create decoration as granulation or filigree, or make any thickness of chain by linking hoop on hoop [Fig. 26].

25. The creation of wire, both spiral and beaded.

26. The creation of chain, from fine single chains to thick chain-link.

Another style of decoration that evolved from the Hellenistic world was "punch work". This was a method of creating decoration by use of a raised image, on metal, stone, wood or bone, onto which the gold sheet was pressed or hammered. The image would be pressed from the back of the piece of gold to the front leaving impressed decoration. This was particularly popular for bracelets and panels for necklaces and earrings. Of course, the gold would have to be quite thin, in most cases 0.1mm thick, making it vulnerable to breaking, if left as was. Most pieces would have been modest in their use of such an expensive material, and the thin sheets of gold would be used to create a hollow item, i.e. pendant on an earring or necklace, a bracelet or bangle, or a ring. Thus, a method of giving weight and hardening such jewellery was needed. It was most common to use soft pliable substances that hardened such as plaster or clay to form the filling of the piece. In the Hellenistic period, a mixture of wax or resin and marble dust was used. By the Roman

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Ogden. 46-50.
period sulphur was a popular "filler". It melted, became liquid, was pourable into confined spaces, and cooled to solid form in the desired shape. It is noted by Ogden that "Sulphur crystallises with time and ancient Roman gold now often contains sulphur of a friable, almost powdery consistency." \(^{203}\)

There was one last method in jewellery production passed down from the Hellenistic tradition to Roman jewellers. "Cast work" or jewellery created by pouring molten metal into a cast mould of stone, fired clay, metal or plaster. This method was most employed in the creation of rings, especially of the engraved seal-type for men. The method produced solid pieces, but required a large amount of expensive metal, and created unacceptable wastage, so it is understandable that this technique never became common in the production of gold jewellery. Solid cast pieces were more common in base metals such as iron.

Finally, there was the method of casting called "lost wax". This was the technique of making the desired item out of wax and leaving it to harden. Once the piece was solid, it would be encased in clay, with small holes left in the clay. The clay would then be fired, becoming a hard cast and the wax would melt and escape out of the holes. The cast was ready to have molten metal poured in. Once it had cooled, the piece would be broken out of the clay mould, and would be dressed as desired. Lost wax did leave its mark in the form of small bubbles from the wax or clay on the final piece's appearance. This was perhaps a production hiccup of any method of casting that used a soft malleable substance at the core of the creation.\(^{204}\)

\(^{203}\) Ogden. 44.
\(^{204}\) Ogden. 49-51.
Chapter 5
The Fayum Jewellery

The desire for adornment is one of the fundamental aspects of the modern human mind. Jewellery occurs in the archaeological record soon after the appearance of modern humans.

The styles of wearing jewellery have not changed since the first caveman put a feather in his hair, or a tooth on sinew around his neck. People have always decorated their heads, ears, necks, arms, wrist, fingers, waists, and ankles. Within the Roman world, certain styles became very popular, and this was reflected in the jewellery worn by the ladies of the Fayum.205 This chapter tries to show the “real” with the “depicted”, which I believe to be a novel approach. I include explanations of style and materials to show either similarities or differences.

It is important when looking at the jewellery depicted in Fayum portraits that we look at what jewellery has survived and was presumably being worn, what was popular in Rome, and what it was made of. Most depictions of the ladies of the Fayum are dated to between AD 98 and AD 193, so it is expected that the jewellery styles and materials would be similar throughout that time. This to a small extent proves to be true, though fashions occur, disappear and then reappear during this period.

To gain a broad range of portraits and dates on which to judge the progression of jewellery styles, I have used Doxiadis’ text206 and Walker’s catalogue.207 Both these authors have dated the images in their texts by comparing hairstyles, clothing and jewellery on the portraits to those of contemporary Imperial images in other art forms. There is a consistency of dating between the two texts, though Doxiadis’ text has very

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205 In the context of this study a “Roman” was like a “Greek”, a non-Egyptian, or a person of either Greek or Roman ancestry in the Fayum because of Macedonian settlement or Roman conquest.
206 Doxiadis, The Mysterious Fayum Portraits, Faces from Ancient Egypt.
207 Walker, Ancient Faces. Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt.
specific dates, whereas Walker’s text is perhaps a little more general, giving a ten to twenty year range when dating.

There is another school of thought on the dating of these portraits, a method supported by Parlasca, and it is to accept the “dominance of the perception of stylistic change over comparison with portraits in other media”\(^{207}\). This method of dating relies on the idea that styles evolve and change continuously and methodically, developing from bad to good to bad. What appears bad or crude is early, what appears good or refined is later. However, this is a subjective idea of dating, since what may seem to one mind “bad” may be “good” to another.

I believe that Doxiadis’ and Walker’s dating methods are the stronger guide and have dated my work accordingly, though I differ (perhaps twenty five to fifty years) on a few occasions\(^{208}\). This is because of the most commonly depicted hairstyle in the Fayum portraits. This style has a smooth or curled front with a centre part and a small bun of hair on the crown or nape [Fig. 27].

A style similar to this occurs between AD 150 and 175, whereas those portraits with this hairstyle are dated by Doxiadis and Walker to an earlier period between AD 110 and 125.

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\(^{208}\) It must be noted that I am working from reproductions, not having yet had the opportunity to see all of the portraits in the “flesh”.
Their thinking on these dates has little or no explanation except for stylistic connections to other portraits.

At the start of each section, I have included a graph to show years of popularity for each jewellery style. For ease I have used sub-headings within this chapter, and have shown real archaeological finds, where they exist, with depictions of similar jewellery from the Fayum Portraits. The real pieces (Catalogue 2) will be labelled alphabetically and the depictions (Catalogue 1) numerically, and each has a key to the relevant catalogue plate and image number (for example A. Pl.2-I.8 or I. Pl.1-I.2). The museum locations of the jewellery and portraits are recorded in the List of Figures. The real pieces have their general date beneath them, and the depicted pieces are displayed in chronological order to match the dating within the text. I have also adopted commonly used names for items, such as “ball earring” or “trident”, but where no name exists, I have developed my own such as “bar-drop”. The chapter will conclude with reference to clothing and the cost of adornment.

EARRINGS (Graph 1)
The taste for earrings may not have evolved until the New Kingdom in Egypt.\(^\text{209}\) Once the concept of ear piercing became popular, earrings became huge, not only in popularity, but also in size. Roman ladies took to ear piercing as another method of adornment and display. Though the “stalk and butterfly” attachment popular today was not a creation of the Roman jeweller,\(^\text{210}\) we can thank them for some beautiful, and often very simple, earring styles. The following are examples of styles of earring that were not only popular at Rome, but within the Fayum as well.

\(^{209}\) Anderson Black. 48.  
\(^{210}\) It is thought though, that a similar attachment method was used by the Etruscans as some of the earrings were very heavy, and a wire or chain would cut through the earlobe. It is also possible a rudimentary screw attachment was in use, where the earring was created to hang on the ear and not through it, in a manner similar to Victorian earrings. Phillips. 25
LOOP EARRINGS

For the first quarter of the first century AD the earring of choice was the “loop”. This form of earring was possibly the earliest “ornate” style to develop; perhaps evolving from twine threaded through the ear, hung with a drilled stone or shell. Once developed, the style was as it sounds, a simple hook or loop of metal, either bare A, or strung with beads of glass B, stone, or gem C. The beads could be grouped at the front of the loop C, creating a vertical decoration (as all of the depicted pieces are 1 to 10), or circle around so that the entire loop was decorated. There appears to be no surviving earring with a full circle of decoration. This could be because it was possibly an expensive item to make involving many beads, and this could have been seen as a waste of gems as only the ones at the front would be visible.
The wire would be bent to hold the gems in place, and create the hook for the ear. This style fell out of use around the third quarter of the first century AD. However, there was a massive resurgence of popularity in the first quarter of the second century that continued until the decline of the depictions in about AD 325.

The most common material for earrings was gold, with pearls and emeralds being the most popular decoration. Most often the emeralds and pearls would be in the form of beads like C. In some cases these beads would be “set” in gold as with 2 and 5, but most often they would be displayed as “free hanging” or unencased like 7 and 9.

The depictions and the pieces are very similar, showing that real pieces were either being worn, or, if not worn, being copied. The painted earrings show a series of styles, from plain pearl, beaded hoops like 9 and 10, where the artist has not shown any “base metal”, to mixed beads such as pearl and emerald as with 1, 3, 4, 6 and 8 and double loop earrings where there is a secondary loop behind the lobe as with 3 and 8. The reason for this extra loop is unclear, unless the second loop is the part that goes through the ear and the front or first loop is the back of the loop that holds the beads.

Though gold, pearl, and emerald appear to be the most commonly used materials, glass was also used, as can be seen from item B (the large dark cylindrical central stone with gold “collars” on each side). There appears to be no average number of gems used, such as pearls (compare C with 10), but when gems are mixed it appears that three is a usual number – a gem of one sort on either side of a gem of another sort, for example pearls on either side of an emerald (compare B with 1, 3 and 4).211

211 There are occurrences of other stones being used on other Fayum Portraits (which I have not included in the catalogue) such as red/brown stones which could be garnets or red carnelian, and amethyst.
BALL EARRINGS

Another popular style was a very simple “ball” or “orb” decoration on a simple “S” hook such as D. Though many “ball” earrings were true spherical items such as B, most were not. Many were concave and hollow, as A and D appear to be [Fig. 28]. It appears that all ball earrings were also made of two parts; a smaller ball or concave disc on to which the hook attached, welded to a larger decorated main “ball”.

It must be admitted that the hook on D looks to have one loop too many to be easily worn. Perhaps the loop closer to the ear was supposed to hang down below the earlobe. However, I think it is more realistic to assume that the entire hook passed through the ear, so that the “ball” sat flush against the lobe, as this is how they are worn in the Fayum depictions 1 to 6. The style evolved but the basic shape stayed the same. The smooth surface of this style meant many possible decorative methods could be used to give the
piece extra “dazzle”, in the way of wirework, inlay as with B, or even, rarely, a little granulation.

The “ball” style earring became popular in the second quarter of the first century AD, being depicted mostly in the fifty years between AD 25 and AD 75. From this time until about AD 175 -180 it remained popular, when it ceased to be depicted.

Gold was the most used metal for these earrings, as can be seen in not only the real pieces A to D, but also in the depictions 1 to 6. (However, it is possible 1 is actually a pearl or silver drop.) It is perhaps because of gold’s malleability that it is so often used, not just in earrings but also in all jewellery.

As with the loop earrings, the real pieces and the depictions are very similar, so it appears that again real jewellery was being painted. However, there do not appear to be any depictions of inlaid pieces as seen on item B, which is inlaid with quartz. The closest that the depictions get to this is 5, a stucco and gilt representation of a detailed, perhaps inlaid or granulated earring. All the other painted earrings appear like the examples, smooth and undecorated. However, there is one oddity, since 3 has a red or brown coloured spot on the lobe above the smaller element. This could be either a red carnelian or garnet detail, or an artistic error. The reproduction makes it difficult to tell.

Finally, as with all things hybrids appear, which I believe C to be. It is a ball earring in style, but it is inlaid. It has the standard smaller concave “top” piece, but the lower larger section is of a blue stone, perhaps a sapphire or blue glass, framed in gold.
TRIDENT EARRINGS
The "trident" style, an earring made with a central hanging point off which hangs a horizontal bar, on which there are three (or four) vertical hanging elements, emerged in the second half of the first century and remained in style for two hundred and fifty years, not appearing in the depictions after about AD 175.

The style appears quite complex, involving many elements to create a finished piece, for example A. Coloured stone and gems were used in the real pieces as seen in item B, yet the depictions show only gold, pearls and possibly gold beads as seen on 6.

The depictions show a recurring theme. A central pearl or gold bead off which hangs a gold bar that attaches three or even four (2 is not a true "trident") gold dangling elements with pearl or gold bead ends.

Yet, how did these earrings stay in place? Neither the real nor depicted pieces show how the earring stayed in the lobe. I believe that like most earrings of the time, these earrings had hooks in the back. It is possible that on B there was a hook bent around the loop at the top, but on A the attachment cannot be seen. With the depicted pieces I believe that
the pearl or gold bead above the horizontal bar covers a welded area that attached an unseen hook.

These depictions are again of real jewellery, a true and fashionable style, but appear in the Fayum Portraits to be simplistically rendered as seen on 1 to 6. This interpretation however, may not be valid. It is possible that the depictions of these “trident” earrings are correct for the Fayum, in a style that evolved from the complex, “many parted” Roman item to a more simplified version. If it is possible for styles to travel, then it must also be possible for styles to be altered for the local market. There are no pieces that I have uncovered that note provenances in Egypt to prove this, but it is possible. If Imperial hairstyles could be adapted in the provinces, and new styles evolve as stated by D’Ambra, 212 why not in jewellery?

DROP EARRINGS

The “drop” earring was in use around the same time as the “loop”. This earring had a drop of gold, gem, stone or glass, suspended from a central hanging point. Often the hanging area was highly decorated such as A. It was in fashion for the first half of the first century AD and then fell into disuse. It reappeared in the first half of the second century when it had an increase in use for fifty years or so and then disappeared.

The “shield and pendant” style, like C, was of Hellenistic origin. The construction of this style was a “shield” central piece, a gold disc or inlaid gem, with an attached “pendant”, perhaps another gem or gold drop, hanging off it on a loop or chain. The entire earring would hang from the ear via a hook or loop, as seen in other styles.

A simpler style evolved, where the decoration was only on the hanging elements, leaving the attaching loop plain, as can be seen in D and E. D shows an earring with an inlaid pale blue stone and the drop ends in a pearl. E is made up of an inlaid green stone, perhaps an emerald, a drilled pearl and ends in a pale blue stone that could be either glass or a sapphire. B is an unusual earring, having both an ornate drop and a decorated hoop, in this case a set white stone, perhaps a pearl.
Though this “drop” style of earring is real and depicted, the painted items appear a little “blobby” and simplistic, patches of shape and colour. However, two depictions are almost touchable – 1 and 2. The shading and highlighting of these depictions make them stand out from the surface, and seem three-dimensional.

As can be seen in the real pieces, many gems or stones were used. In the depictions colour is used such as in 3 and 5 where emerald is used, and 2 where garnet or red carnelian is used. It is 2 that also proves that not all drops have a curved edge. In this case, the drop is a lozenge shape with the coloured detail in the centre. However, generally there appears to be a simplicity of depiction by predominantly using pearls as the drops off thick hoops or hooks as in 2 and 4.


BAR-DROP EARRINGS
A hybrid of the “drop” earring style could be the “bar-drop” style. This earring was created with a small ball attached to the ear off which hangs a vertical drop or bar that has another ball at the end. This style had only a short life, being popular for only fifty years. It appeared in about AD 100 and disappeared in around AD 150, never to be seen again.

The representations, 1 to 4, are quite impressionistic or stylised, 1 to 3 being a little “blobby” and rough, though 2 is very firmly rendered, even outlined. The major materials of the depictions appear to be gold and pearl, which seems typical for jewellery of this time. Having not discovered a “real” piece in this style, I can only assume that either this

214 Rosenthal. 85.
style was an extension and adaptation of the "drop" style above, or that it never existed, and was an artistic device. I believe that this style evolved from the "drop" style, differing only in the fact that there are beads at the top and bottom of the earring, and little or no decoration in between.
CASTANET EARRINGS

The "crotalia" or "castanet" (crotalistria meaning a castanet dancer and crotalum meaning a rattle) was a trident or chandelier style earring with a large gem off which hung wires ending in a number of smaller gems.\(^{214}\) It was not a vastly popular style being in fashion for only the first half of the second century AD. This style was named for the tinkling sound made when the hanging elements knocked together. Earrings of this style can be seen on Septimius Severus' wife Julia Domna [Fig. 29].

Though the jewellery on this tondo portrait is highly stylised (blobs of paint on ear and neck), it is possible to see three large pearls. The two hanging elements would clink together in a pleasingly "wealthy" manner, but after a while would this cause any

damage? I expect that it would, especially with pearls that are notoriously fragile (hence their value), though I have not discovered an example of broken pearls in this style of earring, only an example where there are no pearls or gems at all, B.

The two real pieces of this style, A and B, show the construction of these “castanet” earrings very clearly. This style of earring, though it did exist, does not occur often in the Fayum Portraits, as we have only one example—1. However, when it is depicted, the materials of gold and pearl are consistent for both real and painted. In 1, there is a little gold detail beneath the pearl drops. This detail is three gold beads that end the wire on to which the pearl is threaded and hold the pearl in place.

It is fitting to end a section on pearl castanet earrings with a quote from Lucius Seneca in AD 60. “Pearls offer themselves to my view. Simply one for each ear? No! The lobes of our ladies have attained a special capacity for supporting a great number. Two pearls alongside of each other with a third suspended above now form a single earring. The crazy fools seem to think that their husbands are not sufficiently tormented unless they wear the value of an inheritance in each ear”.216 This quotation tells us two interesting things. Firstly, how castanet earrings were created, which matches the depicted image. Secondly, that pearls were very expensive, regardless of Rome’s reach over vast areas of land.

Amethyst and red carnelian do appear within the Fayum Portraits, especially towards the middle of the portrait tradition. However, they do not occur as frequently as gold, pearl and emerald, which may be because of a preference towards the depiction of pearl and emerald rather than a lack of amethyst or red carnelian in the jewellery of the day.

NECKLACES (Graph 2)

Necklaces were the most popular forms of adornment, requiring no effort to wear, unlike earrings that needed minor surgery in the form of piercing of the lobe. Neck adornment came in many forms, from a plain string of beads through to complex gold work and precious gem concoctions that delighted a wealthy lady. Beaded chains of pearl, gold beads or spherical or hexagonal emerald beads, or mixtures of them all were popular.
Necklace Style and Materials.

- Chain
- Pearl bead
- Emerald bead
- Gold bead
- Crescent
- Pendant
- Plaque
- Drop
- Spikes
- Gold rows

AD 0-25 | AD 26-50 | AD 51-75 | AD 76-100 | AD 101-125 | AD 126-150 | AD 151-175 | AD 176-200
PEARL NECKLACES

The commonest style was one introduced to Rome from Greece, a simple chain or wire strung with beads, and with a hook and loop clasp at the back.\(^{216}\) This style is most often portrayed in the Fayum Portraits dated between approximately AD 75 and AD 200, with the odd depiction dated to AD 350.

Pearls in necklaces were worn in three main styles. As a plain string or strand of pearls as with 1 and 5, or with alternating emeralds as in 2 and the real example A, or one of a collection of necklaces in a large display as in 3 and 4. On the real example, we can see the chain onto which the pearls and emeralds are threaded. If you look closely, you can see that each element has its own loops, which connect to the next element’s loops. It is not possible to tell if the loops are drilled all the way through the pearls and emeralds, or if the loops are only drilled a little way into the gem.

With the depicted pieces, we cannot see any chain or string at all. The necklaces appear to be a series of “blobs” next to each other without any connections at all.

It is perhaps because of pearl’s porous nature that not many large ancient pearls exist today, and it is difficult to find examples of strings of plain pearls, as are depicted in the

\(^{216}\) Anderson Black. 84.
Fayum Portraits like 1 to 5. This could perhaps be because pearls appear to have been used as a detail like A, rather than a basis of a complete jewelled piece.

The depictions of strings of pearls do outnumber the real examples, and I believe this is because of a desire to display wealth. Pearls, from the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf and traded in Rome, were very expensive and were perhaps not often available in outlying areas of the empire. Painted pearls served as well as real pearls as a remembrance, so I conclude that it was the wealthy “look” displayed by pearls, rather than the reality of them, that was needed in the portrait.

217 See Chapter 1: Materials and Methods for references to pearl’s expense.
EMERALD NECKLACES

With beaded necklaces in vogue, emeralds, like pearls and gold beads, were popular. The emerald-bead style became popular about AD 50 and remained until AD 200, emeralds staying in fashion for necklaces for about twenty-five years longer than pearls. This could be because emeralds were more accessible, being a product of Egypt, and less expensive than pearls.

The real pieces are not overly common, but those that do exist, such as A, B and C are similar in style to modern beaded necklaces, so much so that they would not appear out of place around the neck of a twenty-first century woman. A is a string of cylinder-like emerald beads with almond-shaped gold or gilded beads in between. It appears to have no clasp. B is again composed of cylinder-shaped emerald beads, but the sections in-between are quatrefoil gold chain links. It also has a simple and not particularly safe looking clasp, of a hook into a loop.
C is an interesting mixture of elements. It is made from drilled and linked emeralds (again cylinder-shaped), pearls and sapphire (or pale amethyst) beads. Like A, this piece appears to have no clasp. It may have been long enough to go over the head, or was designed to hang only from shoulder to shoulder in two strands, held by pins or brooches.

There are many examples in the Fayum Portraits of emerald beads, being perhaps the most popular necklace type depicted. Often the emerald beads are shown mixed with pearls as seen in C and 6, or gold beads as with A and 5, but most commonly the emeralds are set in a simple strand of cylinder-like or hexagonal beads like 8, 9, 10, 11 and 13, or rounded beads such as 1, 2, 3, 4 and 12.

Emeralds were a product of Egypt, from the southeast of Cairo, so it is not unexpected that they would figure often in the jewellery. However, as noted, not all green stones were emeralds. The all-embracing terms mafek (Egyptian) and smaragdus (Greek) were used for all stones of a green hue. 218

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218 Sinkankas. 4.
GOLD BEAD NECKLACES

As with beaded necklaces of pearls and/or spherical or hexagonal emerald beads, gold beads were also used, not only as detail between other beads, but as the base item for a string of gold beads like A. This style came into fashion at about the same time as pearl and emerald necklaces in about AD 50 and remained in use until AD 150.

The depictions, 1 to 4, show a mixture of quite realistic beads like 3 and 4 and stylised beads that look like “dashes” as with 2 and “blobs” of yellow like 1.

The archaeological record does not appear to hold many examples of gold beaded necklaces, so it is perhaps possible they were not popular, or that each bead was very delicate and crushed easily, the beads often being hollow. In addition, their value and recyclable nature may explain why they did not survive the passing of the years.

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220 See Pl.17-I.63 in the Jewellery Catalogue for an example of crushed and dented gold beads.
COLLARS

Simple styles, such as a string of emeralds or a fine chain (see next section), were not always popular. More extravagant styles developed, where not only the owner’s wealth was on display, but the jeweller’s artistry. Mixtures of elements were used to create thick collars with inlaid gems. A collar differs from a necklace in that collars are often shorter, sitting closer around the neck, and are broader in design and construction.

The real piece A is made from a thick, mesh-link chain inlaid with mother-of-pearl and emeralds, and would sit in the area on, or just above, the collarbone.

The depiction 1 is more a linking of plaques (flat inlaid pieces) or pendants. This necklace is made of large, gold square and oval shapes set with emeralds, garnet or carnelian, and a yellowish brown stone, perhaps citrine.

Though the style was possible, as seen in A, there appear to be no examples of collars, truly similar to that worn by this Fayum lady left in the archaeological record. This could be because it was not a real style but an artistic impression of wealth. The size of the emeralds (measured to be two to three centimetres if real) shows that perhaps the piece is not real, as emeralds of that size would be not only rare, but also expensive. Egyptian emerald was often small, cloudy and veined, and usable only for rough-cut or polished
beads. The richly green flawless examples were never very large, and not at all common.\textsuperscript{220}

However, it is also possible that these green stones were not emeralds, but green quartz, which was available in Egypt, usually came in large pieces and was inexpensive.\textsuperscript{221} Glass is also possible.

\textsuperscript{220} Sinkankas. 8.
\textsuperscript{221} Sinkankas. 8.
CHAIN NECKLACES

Chained necklaces came into use around AD 25 and remained in use for one hundred and fifty years. Plain, broad, gold, linked chain was popular, used alone and as a display for large pendants, plaques or drops.

The chain links are complex connections of metal elements, and the same technique could be used to create a thin, fine strand of chain through to a thick “rope” of chain. Links were folded or woven one to the next, almost “knitted” together to form the chain [Fig. 26].

As with the real pieces, A to C, the depicted pieces, 1 to 5, are all gold. As with most Roman jewellery it is possible that gold was predominantly used because of its malleability. There appear to be no silver chains in the archaeological record. This may be because chains of silver link were never made, or because silver chains were too
delicate to survive. I am doubtful of the second reason, as I do not see silver and gold chain being any different in construction or solidness. It is possible that there are few silver items in archaeological collections because it is either tarnished or not deemed valuable by modern collectors.

It would be fair to note that all of the depicted pieces, but 3, do not look real. They are rendered in a rough, outlined manner like 5, with more interest in the shading of the links as with 2, than in the links themselves. In some of the depictions the chain is so roughly rendered, or so poorly preserved, that it is difficult to tell the difference between chain-link necklaces and beaded necklaces, for example 5. I have grouped this selection of depictions together as examples of chain necklaces as they show a similarity in shape and colour.

There do not appear to be many examples of the real chain necklaces. The fine strands, like C, could easily have been knotted up, crushed or broken by the weight of a heavy pendant. The thicker ropes, like B, may have just been rare.
NECKLACE PLAQUES

The necklace was not only an item of personal display, but also a method of showing publicly a familial or political allegiance, or honours and decorations bestowed from Rome for service to the state. This could be as simple as a medallion or plaque, or as complex as a total neckpiece.

The real examples display a “medallion” of a complex spiral design using gold balls/large granulation and twisted wire for detail in A, and a medallion coin of Domitian in B.

The depicted pieces are a golden shell 1, a gold disc with an inlaid gem or glass piece of dark blue or green 2, and a gold stucco relief disc with a raised central section 3, which could be meant to hold an inlaid stone or gem, or meant to represent a coin. The framing effect on this relief stucco necklace 3 and the real coin medallion B look similar.

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223 Rosenthal. 80.
224 A plaque being a small flat brooch or badge, or an ornamental or commemorative inscribed tablet.
225 Anderson Black. 48.
Though there are very few pieces still attached to necklaces, it does appear that this style of necklace ornament was a real, and copied, style.
NECKLACE DROPS

Pendants in the form of drops were used from the second quarter of the first century AD and continued infrequently until about AD 150. They could come in many styles and contain a range of gems.

The real piece, A, is made with four pieces of garnet or red carnelian and has a pearl attached to each side with gold links. It is a delicately put together piece with inlaid stones, and welding or soldering of the attachments for the drilled pearl beads.

The depicted pieces, 1 to 3, show a mixture of styles. The first depicted piece, 1, is an amethyst or dark red carnelian inlaid in a heavy gold setting which has a shape very similar to the real example, A. This drop is worn hanging off a thick gold chain, and the drop is sitting over the top of the necklace of emerald and gold beads beneath it. Secondly, there is a gold, emerald and pearl drop decoration, 2. An emerald is encased in a gold “frame” off which hang two pearl beads on short fine gold chains. This style of ornamentation is similar to example A. The necklace on which the depicted piece 2 hangs is made from emerald and gold beads set alternately. (See depiction 5 in the Emerald
Necklace section.) Finally, there is a plain gold drop 3, similar in shape to a crescent, hanging off a thick roughly depicted gold chain. It has been placed with the necklace drops as the depiction makes it difficult to see if it is a crescent or a drop with a rough shadow.

Necklace drops are very much a part of both Roman jewellery and the Fayum depictions, and come in as many styles, shapes and sizes as there were women to wear them.
1st century AD

PENDANTS

Pendants, in this case rounded inlaid pieces like brooches, came into style at the same time as most other necklace decoration, around the second quarter of the first century AD and continued off and on until about AD 150.

The real example, A, is a gold-set, matt blue “cabochon” stone, perhaps lapis lazuli, glass or blue ceramic. It has a very simple style that is reproduced by the depicted pieces.

1 shows a thick and long link chain off which hangs an emerald inlaid in gold, again with a cabochon appearance. The middle depiction, 2, is perhaps the finest. The shadowing of the gold gives this piece a touchable feeling. However, the “flatness” of the inlaid blue/green stone (emerald or lapis lazuli?) makes it appear as though the stone has fallen out, and all we can see is rough adhesive. There is considerable damage around the neck of the portrait, so we cannot see the attaching chain. There is a very faint beaded necklace just visible, but the distance between the necklace beads and the pendant make it unlikely that the pendant is attached to it. The damage is only on the neck and shoulders, goes around the face and pendant, and the paint looks like it was scraped off.
The final depiction, 3, is of a damaged pendant, of a dark red or brown colour, perhaps red carnelian. The damage to the portrait makes seeing how the piece is attached difficult, but I expect that it hangs off the herringbone or chevron style chain.

Again, as with many styles, there are not many examples of the real pieces, but it is possible to see because of the conformity of real with depicted that this was a true style, worn by ladies in both Rome and the Fayum.
CRESCENTS

A style of pendant that became very popular was the crescent. They were introduced from Western Asia as amulets, but lost their mystical element to become purely decorative.225 [Fig. 30]

Pendants in the form of crescents were used from the second quarter of the first century AD and continued infrequently until about AD 150.

The real pieces, A and B, and all the depicted pieces, 1 to 5, are of gold, but only the first real piece, A, has an inlaid gem. The gem is dark red or brown in colouring, perhaps a garnet or red carnelian. The entire piece is a more decorative item with seven rows of

225 Phillips, Jewellery: From Antiquity to the Present. 21.
wirework outlining the gem, a band of gold vertically across the inlay, and two small disc details and gold beads on the points of the crescent. The second real piece, B, has three areas of granulation on a simple crescent shape.

The depicted pieces are all stylistically the same, an almost closed crescent in gold with a bead detail at the centre of the points. In style the depicted crescents appear to be similar in form to the first real item, B, though there appear to be no real items with the beaded detail between two sharp points.
GEOMETRIC NECKLACES

There are also depicted chain necklaces with spiked drops or rows of small gold drops. These are rare, occurring in the second quarter of the first century AD and again in the first quarter of the second century AD, and they are not as common in depiction as other styles of necklace.

It is interesting to note that necklaces, of any style, were not often depicted in the Fayum Portraits prior to AD 50. I have named these necklaces “geometric” in style as they are created from angular, flattened shapes and pendants rather than conforming to the other necklace styles, such as rounded beads.

The real piece, A, actually dated to the third century BC, is made from a strap of gold link chain with a series of rosettes and small, beech-nut shaped pendants (often mistaken for spear-head shaped pendants) hanging off it. This necklace is most like the depicted

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227 D. Williams and J. Ogden, *Greek Gold: Jewellery of the Classical World* (London: British Museum Press, 1994). 42. Spear-head pendants have fewer “lobes” and are more pointed than the example shown above.
pieces. However, their dates show that this style of necklace was not common in the Fayum, and was possibly an heirloom piece.

The other piece, B, dated to the first to the third century AD which makes it contemporary with the depictions, is made up of gold, garnets, blue and green porcelain, and pearl and green glass pendants. It differs from the other piece, A, as it is a necklace of bead pendants rather than a string of spiky spear shapes.

In one early example, 1, the Fayum lady wears a spiky gilt necklace of long thin triangular shapes off which hang small balls. (See Fayum Portraits catalogue for the full image.) She also wears a secondary necklace, a painted gilt line below the spiky necklace, which may represent a chain necklace. These necklaces, along with the wreath, the earrings (one square and one tear-shaped), the pattern on the robes and the lip covering, seem to be an “afterthought”. It appears that the portrait was painted without any adornment, and later the adornment was added on. The reason for saying this is that the portrait is finely painted, delicate and detailed. However, the gilt decoration is rough, edges of the gilt are not even with the edges of the paint. This can be seen on the shoulder of the purple mantle, and the three lines of gilt running from the neck to the breast. In addition, the mouth has been painted with full lips and shaded hollows at the corners of the mouth, below the lower lip and above the upper lip. The gilt is in two straight lines that do not follow the contours of the lips. It is probable that there were two painters involved, and at vastly different times: the first who did the original painting, which is fine and detailed, and the second who added the gilt, which is rough and hurried-looking. It is possible, as with wreaths mentioned later on in this work, that gilding was added to a pre-existing portrait after death and as a symbol of passing. Gold or gilding was believed by the Egyptians to be the gold of the gods and to bestow immortality. 228

The second depiction, 2, which is most like real piece B, is a stucco and gilt necklace comprising a medium width gold band off which hang three rows of gilt balls. There appear to be no connections between the band and the rows, or between the balls

228 Rosenthal. 77.
themselves. The balls seem to "float" in their places. This style is similar to that of 4, but 4 has no band off which the balls hang. The three rows of gold shapes, balls and oblongs, look like sweets in wrappers, small ends and a thick middle, and again appear not to be held together by any connections. Both necklaces look very delicate and light, but this may be because there are no connections. However, the manner in which they have been painted does show that the necklaces were painted as part of the original portrait, as the necklaces sit well around the throat and look carefully rendered.

Depiction 3 is very like depiction 1, with the spikes and ball decoration. However, on 3 the spikes are closer together and appear to connect to each other, rather than hanging off a chain as they do in 1. It is possible that both pieces are shown as being made from a single piece of gold foil or sheet, the shapes being cut out in one length, like a paper chain.

Depiction 5, with its two necklaces, is perhaps the most unusual. The top one is of a series of gilt rectangles side by side. The lower necklace is again rectangles, but this time smaller and set in a chevron pattern. These necklaces are similar to 1 and 3 in that they look like added "afterthoughts" to a completed portrait. As with most of the other depictions in this section, there also appears to be no chain or string holding the pieces together.

This style of necklace does not appear often in the archaeological record, especially during the time of the Fayum Portraits. The reason for this maybe that this style, with all its delicate parts, was easily broken and so they were perhaps melted down to become other pieces.
HEAD DECORATION (Graph 3)

The head is the most obvious place to decorate, the face being central to the head, and the first place a person would look when meeting another. Women have always decorated this area with make-up, earrings, and interesting hairstyles and ornaments. The reason for doing so was to bring attention to the face, and the possible wealth behind it, in the hopes of attracting a suitable marriage alliance, a lover, notice to a beautiful face, or just to make other women jealous. By the time of the full influence of Rome over Egypt, women’s hairstyles could be quite complicated, needing either masses of the woman’s own hair or large numbers of hairpieces or wigs.²²⁸

With the hairdressing being so careful and so changeable, from severe “pulled-back, centre-parted, plaied into a bun” styles to the outrageous and extravagant “mile-high curls on the crown and lattice-work plaits at the back” creations, the headdress had to match. Anything was possible – ribbon, chaplet, wreath, diadem, tiara, or crown. With so much choice as to what decoration to wear, there were also many possibilities as to what it could be made of. Flowers, fabric or metal? Plain, designed or jewelled? Glass, stone or gem? Nothing but imagination, budget and fashion could contain the possibilities.

²²⁸ Bartman. An excellent piece for constructing Roman female hairdressing practices.
The most commonly depicted head decoration was the wreath. This was most often depicted as a stylised, angular, gilt collection of diamond-shaped leaves, perhaps stylised laurel, myrtle and olive leaves. They first appeared in the second quarter of the first century AD and were used in depictions for about fifty years. They fell out of fashion until about AD 125 when they became more popular for about twenty-five years, ceasing to be depicted after AD 150.

The real piece, A, is a gold foil wreath of laurel or myrtle leaves. There is a central flower or rosette partially hidden by the leaves. The gold looks like crushed modern tin foil, and the entire piece has the appearance of a school play crown.

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Each painted wreath is created in a similar way – two branches perhaps tied at the back and meeting at the middle of the forehead. Depiction 2 has the most naturalistic leaf and berry design, while depiction 6 has a double leaf design, but with both wreaths there are no “stem” connections. This appears to be a common theme with almost all of these wreaths. Depictions 3 and 7 show this lack of connections most clearly. These two examples look “stencilled” on to the finished portraits. The leaves are sharply diamond-shaped and unnatural.

Depictions 1, 4 and 8 do show “stems” or connections between the branch and the leaves, but the leaves are not naturalistic like 2. Depiction 5 has small angular leaves off thick straight central stems. This wreath, with its more “metallic” and rigid appearance, does not have the head-hugging curve of the other examples.

As with all these examples, 1 to 8, the wreaths appear to be painted on as a later addition, perhaps post-death. This idea supports the premise that these portraits were painted prior to death; possibly well before death, for the enjoyment of friends and family. Once death occurred a wreath, or gilding in general, was added. Traditionally, wreaths were “regular accompaniments of funerals”.230

The addition of a wreath may have shown that the person had died, and was perhaps a final mark of respect or veneration. However, it could be argued that the portrait and wreath were painted as one by the same artist, but with an overnight period of drying before adding the gilding. This may give an impression of the wreath being an “afterthought” or added on. Yet, if this were the case why are there differences in style between the painting of the person and the painting of the wreath, with the portraits being so fine and the wreaths often rough. If just one artist was responsible for the whole depiction, why is there not more “flow” and similarity in style in the portrait as there is with 2 (Page 1 Image 4). The wreath is part of the hair and does not look out of place or added on. The darkening of the yellow paint appears to show that the hair and the wreath were painted together, the moist under-colour affecting the over-colour.

230 Williams and Ogden. 41.
Walker notes that some portraits were gilded after insertion into the wrappings of the completed mummy \(^{232}\), such as 3 (see Fayum Portraits Catalogue). This particular portrait is unfinished around the lower portion, showing its purely funerary use. The gilding appears to be an extension of this immediate death ritual.

The addition of gold leaf gilding would require an adhesive. The most common glue would be that made of fish. Large, non-oily fish would be boiled down and strained, then the resulting jelly left to cool and harden. This "pat" of hard fish jelly could be ground, and the powder would be mixed with warm water to create the usable glue, which would be applied with a brush. Animal skins and connective tissue (any part containing collagen) could also be used to create glue, but fish glue was the clearest and purest.\(^{233}\) Honey, beeswax, egg yolk and beaten egg white (to break the white’s natural "stringiness") could also be used.\(^{234}\)

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\(^{234}\) Newman and Serpico. 480.
HAIRPIN

The next most common head decoration was the “hairpin”. These were often gold or bone, and placed in the back of the hair where it was most thick, as with depictions 2, 3, 4 and 5. Hairpins appeared in the Fayum Portraits in the second quarter of the first century AD, losing favour in depictions after twenty-five years. There was an increase in depictions of hairpins after AD 75, and they remained popular for seventy-five years, with their most common use being in the first quarter of the second century AD. It must be noted that hairpins never “went out of style”, always being needed for hairdressing. They only went out of style in the depictions, in that they were not always painted on in the portraits.

The “hairpin” was often a long simple pin not unlike eighteenth or nineteenth century ladies’ hatpins. The pin would have a long silver, gold, bronze or bone shaft and point, not highly sharpened, and a decorated head of glass, gem, pearl, or decorated or carved metal or bone. It is possible with the complex hairstyles of the time that these pins were required to keep the style in place, much as a clip or comb would do today. Perhaps as the hairstyles became less complicated and more natural, the pins remained as a purely fashionable item.
The real piece A is made of bone, and is a wonderful, almost comic item. It ends in the head and torso of a Flavian lady. She has a huge hat-like hairstyle with either a coronet or tiara-style headdress perched on the top or a row of hairpins keeping the vast “do” together. She also has a very contented face with a shadow of a smile, a long neck, and simple draperies on an almost armless body.

None of the depicted pieces, 1 to 6, are as lovely as this lady, but there are some examples that are as ornate. The real piece B is most like the depictions, in that it is not too ornate, being composed of a rounded head on a long shaft. It is gold with a lotus-bud head and granulated detail.

Depiction 4 is the most ornate painted example, and is in the back of the hair with the jewelled pinhead standing proud of the head. It is made of gold and has inlaid gems of pearl, emerald and a deep red gem perhaps garnet or red carnelian. The depiction is quite crude, so none of the gems look connected, but rather they are blobs around a diamond-shaped gold central piece.

Depictions 1 and 6 appear to be very simple, bone hairpins with no obvious decoration. Both of these hairpins are worn across the top of the head rather than downwards through a large section of hair. These hairpins appear to be much longer than the other examples, more knitting needle length. These pins were perhaps used to keep a series of plaits in place on the top of the head, so needing a horizontally-placed, long pin, rather than on the back of the head where a vertically-placed, long pin was more useful.

Depictions 2, 3 and 5 are gold knobs, not unlike the ends of knitting needles. There is no detail on them at all, and 2 and 3 are both worn in the same manner, on the side and downwards through the hair. Depiction 5 sits on the top of the head and points down holding the large plait in place.

Hairpins were very much part of a lady’s hairdressing routine, and there are many examples of them in the archaeological record. They come in many styles and materials,
from plain pins for everyday “keep the hair off my face” hairstyles, through to ornate and expensive pins for elaborate hairstyles that displayed wealth and leisure.
HEADCHAINS

There are depictions of “headchains”, or broad bands of gold that wrapped around the back of the head and met at the front in linked chain with a pendant or medallion at the centre. These had a rare use for perhaps fifty years at the start of the second century AD.

This style of headdress is thought by Doxiadis to show a possible affiliation with the cult of Isis. However, this is unusual as the accepted attire for those initiated into the cult was a knotted and fringed shawl (which this portrait has, see Fayum Portrait Catalogue Plate 9 Images 33 & 34), a wreath of leaves or flowers with a lotus (to show purity) or an ear of wheat (to show plenty) on the top, or a diadem of stars and crescent moons. The initiated would also carry a sistrum (a musical instrument) and a situla (a suspended vase). Women joined the cult of Isis for many reasons, the main one being that she was the “guarantor of life and benefactress of those in need”. Isis was so important that Cleopatra VII (of the famous suicide) identified herself as Isis, and her son to Mark Antony was seen as a divine and royal child.

234 Doxiadis. 71.
237 Walters. 20.
239 Kee. 119.
Depiction 1 is a simple gold link chain meeting at the centre with a small inlaid gem of some dark stone that is unidentifiable.

Depiction 2 is much more ornate. It is made of a thick, gold link chain attached to a wide band of gold metal which appears to run around the back of the head. In the centre of the chain there is a gold plaque inlaid with gems. The inlay is made of pearls and garnets or red carnelian. The shape of the plaque is a series of circles inside, and on the edges of, a square. A shape similar to this is also seen on a hairpin, depiction 4, in the previous section.

The rarity of these depictions and the lack of real examples in the archaeological record could imply that this was not a true and realistic style of jewellery.
PART PINS

Also worn on the head was a clasp-like decoration, which sat in the centre parting. It was not a common piece of adornment, and it was popular for only two short periods in the middle of the first century AD and the end of the second century AD.

This style of decoration was a compromise between wearing only a simple ribbon and going all-out with a tiara or diadem. It showed that there was money for luxury items but not an ostentatious display of wealth. It is not known how it would attach to the hair. Was there a clip, a comb, or a slide? It is possible that they were attached by the hair, perhaps with a strand being pulled through a hook or loop on the underside, with that strand then being worked into the hairstyle, thus holding the clasp in place. It is interesting to note that this style of adornment had revivals in the European Royal Courts [Fig. 31].

32. Funerary portrait from Palmyra. The woman wears head ornaments such as a part pin. Dated to AD 200.

It is possible that the part pin was worn like a brooch, attached to a cloth or kekryphalos\(^{240}\) (a hairnet, headscarf or head wrap) worn over the hair. There is an example of a part pin being worn in this manner from Palmyra [Fig. 32]. The pin sits on a headdress or scarf, similar in style to a turban, with the drop pieces resting over the forehead.

The real piece A is made of gold wirework with drilled pearl details, inlaid emeralds and gold medallion plaques, and three drops, two pearls and one blue glass. In appearance, it looks more like a brooch than something worn in the hair. With all the wire detail and the twists of gold it looks as though it would catch a lot of hair in it and pull the hair out. (Perhaps this was its method of staying in the hair? Beauty is pain so we are told.) However, as is common in Mediterranean areas today, it may be possible that hair was oiled with scented olive oil which kept the hair smooth, and this combated “fly-away” hair.

The depicted piece 1 is also gold, to judge by its tannish brown colour, and is made up of two discs with spots of detail, and a rounded detailed prong. The “spots” of detail could be granulation, and they are rendered in a lighter shade of gold/brown on the discs to make them stand out. However, there does not appear to be a cloth between the hair and the pin, so even if it was possible that these part pins were worn as stated above, it was not always the case.

As with the headchains, the scarcity of both real examples and depictions show that this was not a real, or at least common, style in either Rome or the Fayum.
Another uncommon item was the “hairnet” occurring only in the third quarter of the first century AD. It was used at the back of the head and held down the hair that sat in full plaits or curls.

This style is most identified with the wall painting of a young woman in Pompeii dated to AD 40–50 [Fig. 33], but there is an example within the Fayum Portraits.

Item A is a gold mesh and garnet detailed hairnet with a Medusa medallion in the centre. It appears designed to go over the top of a bun of hair, held in place with a pin, or series of pins.

Depiction 1 is a much broader and flatter piece. It looks to be completely silver, or a silver band or circlet with pearls attached. It appears that this piece, worn toward the back
of the head, is not holding down any hair, as we cannot see any hair (a plait or bun), but this could be because it is holding the hair down very tightly against the head.

We are aware of hairnets being used within the Roman world, so depictions of them are showing us a real and used item, but the apparent lack of depictions in the Fayum Portraits shows us that hairnets were not common in the Fayum area. However, it is possible that hairnets were worn most commonly at the back of the head, and so would not appear on a portrait that concentrates on the front.
DRAPERY and BROOCHES

As with hair, the clothing fashions of the day required special fastenings. These came in the form of clothespins, or *fibulae*. The *fibulae* were used to hold fabric in place and to create soft folds around the body. In a similar manner we would use safety pins today. These could be straight decorated pins, or more complex, bent, metal items with a pin and clasp, similar to a brooch. The decoration would be inlaid to create a solid piece, and it could be jewelled with gem, glass, or ornate gold work. As in all jewellery, fashion was all-important.

However, Croom\(^{241}\) believes that the attachments at the shoulders were not metal but little “bobbles” of the robe’s fabric, sewn and twisted, to create small lumps that look like a brooch. The evidence of marble portraiture appears to show this, but there are some wall paintings that show the attachment as a different colour to the fabric, so it could perhaps be a separate item such as a brooch.

It is unfortunate that the Fayum Portraits cannot answer this question for us. The ladies depicted have either what appears to be a sewn neckline on their robes [Fig. 34] or their shoulders covered with a mantle [Fig. 35], so we cannot see such details.

\(^{241}\) Alexandra Croom. Personal communication, March 2002.
Though the fabrics of Rome could be very delicate, such as finely spun wool or luxurious silk, no cloth would stay on the body without assistance, be it a jewelled brooch or a sewn section of fabric.

A well-dressed woman would have several tunicae and stolae to select from, and many mantles, shawls, wraps and so on to clothe herself. The tunica was a knee-length or calf-length garment over which was worn the stola. This consisted of two lengths of cloth, slightly longer than the woman’s floor-to-shoulder height with the extra fabric for bunching, draping and folding in the desired fashion. These would be sewn from breast height to floor hem, and left open at the shoulder to permit the head and shoulders to pass through. It was at the shoulders that the fastenings were required, to allow the robe to hang from the shoulder and to create a draped effect with mantles or wraps. Larger pin-like items were needed to keep over garments on, but these were usually of much sturdier make.

Of course, not all women were “ladies who lunch”. Most were working women, who laboured in their homes or in the family business. A light easily-torn garment was no use to such a woman, and so most wore robes of a coarser weave, usually only lightly-dyed or even not dyed at all, as the plainer “natural” colours, such as cream, brown or black, were more suitable for the “common” people. Animal fibre (wool and silk) took dyeing well; plant fibre (linen and cotton) did not.

The dyeing of cloth was in itself a measure of wealth, as is shown by a pound of wool needing a pound of dyestuff to colour the wool successfully. The expense of the vegetable or mineral dye, due to its scarcity or difficulty of creation, meant that some colours were more desirable than others. Garments of gold or purple became equal to

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243 Croom. 25.
244 Croom. 25.
gems in both status and expense. A huge array of colours was available: amethyst, sea
green, rose, saffron, scarlet, Paphian myrtle, acorn, almond, or white, in shades of the
most subtle to colours that screamed their expense. The “colour of congealed blood” was
one such colour. It appeared black until the wearer moved, and then the fabric gleamed
rich purple. This was achieved by a dye created from crushed murex shells. Pliny
states, “It has the famous flower [sea anemone?], of purple, sought after for dyeing
robes” (Natural History).

BRACELETS AND RINGS
With such fashion, where women’s robes draped off the shoulder and there were often no
sleeves, arms were left bare. A bare arm begged for decoration in the form of an armlet,
bangle or bracelet. Such decoration was worn by everybody, and in every style, from a
simple beaded string or metal band to huge heavy gold bracelets. Development from
the simple to more extravagant styles included adding stone settings, opus interrasile and
bezels.

Snakes were popular images for armlets, bands worn around the biceps, and often curled
around the arm in one or two loops [Fig. 36].

36. Snake bracelet in gold.
Dated to the second century AD.

247 An unfortunate effect of this dye was that it smelt terrible, and the smell would “hang” on the clothes
Goddesses and mythical women are often depicted in both wall painting and statuary with armlets [Fig. 37]; for example, many images of Venus show her with an armlet.

![Image](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

37. A Fourth Style wall painting of a woman and satyr, with the woman wearing a gold armlet.

The bracelet could be used as a method of showing allegiance or remembrance, as the surface could be inlaid with a cameo or medallion of the Emperor, a god or goddess, or a noted loved-one.\(^{249}\) This style of remembrance was used again during the Victorian era, with bracelets being made of the deceased’s hair, and woven around an image of the remembered.\(^{250}\)

The form of the bracelet was varied. It could be as simple as a string of amber or ceramic beads or perhaps a circle of metal slipped on and off the wrist, what we today would call a bangle. The bracelet could be made of links or spheres with clasps at each end [Fig. 38], it could be inlaid with precious stones [Fig. 39], or even have hinges similar in creation to those used on doors.

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\(^{248}\) Anderson Black. 50.

\(^{249}\) Phillips, Jewellery: From Antiquity to the Present. 21 & 23.

\(^{250}\) Phillips, Jewellery: From Antiquity to the Present. 150.
However, it was bracelets “in miniature” that displayed social standing, imperial or provincial office, senatorial rank, marital status and wealth. These are, of course, rings. Rings were originally worn as a way to store and protect wealth, and evolved into seals to show ownership and wealth. Like bracelets, rings came in many styles. The simple band of gold or iron showed the world your rank, if you were a man, a thinner version of marital status in a woman. An engraved bezel on a ring could carry the weight of office in the form of a seal. Rings were the most popular type of jewellery, and vast collections were made. It was not uncommon to see fingers covered with rings, to the point that knuckles did not bend.

However, the main desire in wearing rings was to “show-off” your wealth. Precious stones inlaid on a band in a style we recognise as the eternity ring were favoured, displaying garnets, sapphires and emeralds. Diamond has been discovered used in ring decoration, set as an uncut stone in the solitaire style. Cabochon cut gems, set on their own, made an impressive display. Yet, it was not only gems that adorned fingers. Unusual stones with interesting colours or patterns were used. Glass and ceramic were also used in rings, either alone or side-by-side with gems. Decoration did not always have to be inlaid; it could be engraved onto the surface metal. The small surface of a ring meant that ornate gold work was possible.

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252 Much in the way as pirates and sailors wore one gold earring in the ear or woven into the hair, an easy way to carry the payment for a decent funeral.
253 Anderson Black. 50.
was not always possible. There are very few surviving examples of *filigree* and *opus intarsile* work on rings. This may not be because it was not used, but because it was quite soft and open to being broken or crushed.

The reason that rings and bracelets have not been covered within this study is that they do not appear in the Fayum Portraits.

**JEWELLERY IN TOTAL**

As seen in the graphs, at the start of each section, the occurrence of items appearing, disappearing and then reappearing may be because of pieces being family heirlooms passed down from one generation to another. Alternatively, it could be a matter of “fashion doing as fashion does” – having revivals with “retro” styles coming in and out of vogue. (Platform shoes, flares and mini-skirts are modern examples of fashions coming in and out of style.)

As was noted above, the gems most commonly used were pearls and emeralds, with occasional use of other stones. This could be because of their ease of depiction, and not because of their popularity or availability. As is noted previously, there were many gems to choose from, so I expect the limitations on depiction were based on the artist’s paint box and talent, and not necessarily the lady’s jewellery case. It was perhaps easier to paint impressionistic non-realistic jewellery than an actual item. If this were the case, there would be more examples of jewellery as crudely depicted as that on Septimius Severus’ Julia Domna, her pearl earrings and necklace being nothing more than white blobs [Fig. 30]. Though there are examples of “roughly” rendered jewellery in the Fayum Portraits, it is not always so. Some depicted jewellery looks so realistic that it feels possible to reach into the portrait and run your fingers over the gems and beads.

Possibly the artist’s brief was to paint a “class” of jewellery and not a particular “style”. He may have been required to give an impression of opulence based on the wealthy fashions of the day, conferring glamour in a stylised, impressionistic manner. To be

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254 Anderson Black. 85.
depicted in this manner would require wealth. Therefore, expensive jewellery would not be out of reach, so why paint in a stylised way, when the real item was there to be depicted. The answer could be that the item was not there to be depicted, and that the same style of jewellery was painted on many ladies because it was the artist’s “signature”. One perhaps painted emerald bead necklaces, another pearl loop earrings, and another dangling trident/castanet style earrings. With the assumption that most of the artists were male,\textsuperscript{254} it could be that they were less struck by the need to depict realistic jewellery (hence there are examples of blobby, sketchy, rough, smudged, in all “impressionistic” depictions of jewellery) than to render a complete and life-like face. It is possible that two types of artists worked together – those who thought only the face important, and those who believed a genuine depiction involved painting the face and ornament.

The fact that not only were the portraits contemporary with the real jewellery, but also the same styles were depicted on other art forms of similar dates, shows that most of the painted jewellery was realistic. Most often the jewellery was realistically rendered giving today’s viewer an opportunity to see the beauty of the Greek and Roman jewellers’ art. From my observation, those pieces of jewellery on the portraits that appear “fantastical” are usually the ones that are impressionistic in style, and this is not the norm.

It would be fair to say that the jewellery of Roman-Egypt was really Greco-Roman, with the major influences of creation being Greek. According to Pliny in his \textit{Natural History}, the start of the huge Roman interest in jewellery can be dated to Pompey’s victories in the East.\textsuperscript{255} With Egypt now open to Rome, a massive amount of new and fresh material was available to the jeweller.

\textsuperscript{254} Walker notes a papyrus, dated to the first century BC, which is a contract between four portrait artists to work within Arsinoe. All concerned appear to be male. \textit{Ancient Faces}, 157.

\textsuperscript{255} Pliny, \textit{Natural History} \textit{X, Books XXXVI - XXXVII}. 173.
The main sites for the production of jewellery within the Empire were in Rome, Alexandria and Antioch, cities near the new resources and their trade. It was where the Greek craftsmen, in their guilds, went to exploit the new enthusiasm for jewellery.256 “Their work was dispersed widely throughout Europe, taken by officials and their families to distant provinces.” 257

In conclusion, it is interesting to note what a wealthy, young woman in Roman-Egypt would be supplied with at marriage. A papyrus dated to AD 127 lists a young bride’s trousseau: Earrings – a pair = 3 minas and 14 1/2 quarters. Brooch – 1 = 8 quarters. Clothing – 2 dresses (one red, one rose) robe and mantle = 560 drachmas. The total cost was 4100 drachmas, and for interest’s sake, a mina was equal to six kilos.258 A quarter was equal to 1.70 to 1.75 grams or a quarter of the gold coin mnaieon, which was again equal to twenty silver pieces, but this was a weight and not a monetary measure.259

Also, a marriage contract from AD 260 (Oxyrhynchus Papyri 41, 2971) notes from the dowry clothing and gold jewellery, “a silvery striped Dalmatian veil worth 260 drachmae, a white, single, tasselled striped frock worth 160 drachmae, a turquoise-coloured Dalmatian veil worth 100 drachmae, another white Dalmatian veil with a purple border worth 100 drachmae.” 260 “A necklace in common gold…. Of the kind called maniaces, having a stone and weighing apart from the stone 13 quarters, a brooch with five stones set in gold, weighing apart from the stones four quarters, a pair of earrings with 10 pearls weighing apart from the pearls three quarters, a small ring weighing a half quarter…. making the total of the whole dowry one mina and four and a half quarters of common gold and for the valuation of the clothing [above] 620 drachmae.” 261

256 Rosenthal. 69.
258 Lewis. 55.
260 Croom. 28.
261 Croom. 114.
Clothing, jewellery and adornment were important parts of social display, and the value of a woman lay not only in her family connections but also in what she could bring the alliance in the form of transportable wealth. Jewellery was "viewed both as adornment and as visible evidence of wealth".\textsuperscript{262}

\textsuperscript{263} Kleiner and Matheson. 175.
Chapter 6

Jewellery in Roman Art

It is important when comparing real jewellery with that depicted in the Fayum Portraits that we look at the jewellery shown in other art forms. It is possible that a style of depicted jewellery appeared only in art, or in a specific art form, and was never actually worn. By looking at examples of art contemporary with the Fayum Portraits, we will discover if jewellery seen in one art form “translates” to another, or whether each form of art uses its own jewellery styles. Each image is in the text and a larger image is in the back of this study in a section entitled Roman Art Catalogue.

Wall paintings, frescoes and funerary portraiture provide depictions of jewellery, but many marble portrait statues often do not. It was perhaps because of a perceived need for a pious portrayal of quiet dignity and solemn virtue that Imperial ladies were often depicted in marble without any adornment. Barring some rather serious hairstyles, there was frequently no “frippery” in the way of earrings or necklaces. This could be because of two reasons. Firstly, they could have been difficult to depict in stone, especially dangling earrings. Secondly, the depicted woman often has her mantle pulled up over her head and/or around her neck, making jewellery depiction unnecessary [Fig. 40].

\[263\] Kleiner and Matheson. 175.
\[264\] D’Ambra. 101.
40. Portrait statue of a Roman woman. She is shown in the required garb of an elegant and virtuous woman. Dated to AD 150-170.

Full-length statues depicting notables, in this case Imperial women, were set up in towns and cities to display “who was in charge” and “who was popular”. The first example of an Imperial woman being so publicly depicted was Livia in the first century AD.\(^\text{266}\)

However, with the problems noted above, the provincial ladies’ ability to copy Imperial dress and adornment must have been hindered by stone draperies. D’Ambra states that “the imperial women initiated styles that were copied by women of lesser social rank, both in Rome and the provinces”, \(^\text{267}\) and that women did “copy aspects of imperial portraits.” \(^\text{268}\) Even if the statues may have won respect, they could not have been “fashion plates”, or examples for anything but a little hair, large body-covering mantles, robe hem-edgings, and sandals. It is possible that jewellery was painted on to the marble, as it is with some statuettes, but I have not found such an example in life size.

Portrait busts and busts of deities do show a little jewellery, mainly earrings, but frequently it is the hairstyle that receives the most attention. Often there is now no earring, just a hole in the lobe. [Fig. 27]. This could be because there was once an earring

\(^{266}\) D’Ambra. 101.
\(^{267}\) D’Ambra. 102.
\(^{268}\) D’Ambra. 102.
in the hole, a copy of a grand jewel made in base metal and glass. However, as portrait and deity busts were often family pieces, kept within the home, it is possible that a real gem was originally displayed [Fig. 41].

41. A bronze head of Venus wearing a gold and pearl earring in the drop style. Dated to the first century AD.

However, statues and busts do not have to be life-sized, or even marble or bronze. For example, a small hollow silver statuette of a goddess wears a silver diadem, a hugely out-of-proportion gold loop necklace and two smaller, finer gold bracelets [Fig. 42]. The necklace is like the wall painting depictions, a plain gold hoop, only in this case the hoop is far too large and heavy for the goddess beneath. It is possible that the over-sized necklace was intentional, being either a secondary votive object or a piece of jewellery that reflects the status of the goddess.
Mosaic can give us a view of jewellery, but often only as stylised, “jewellery-shaped” items. One or two differently coloured tesserae on an ear may display an earring, or a string of tesserae on a neck or wrist may be a necklace or bracelet [Figs. 43 & 44].

There are examples of very fine mosaic work such as that of a young woman from Pompeii [Fig. 45].
This mosaic, in the style of the Fayum Portraits, shows a woman with drop earrings and a gold bead necklace. The necklace is of a style similar to a necklace dated to the second century BC, but without the crescent [Fig. 30]. The earrings are similar to both the ball and drop styles noted previously. Though the jewellery is “roughly” depicted, in that it is created with geometric shapes, it is possible to make out not only what the item is, but also perhaps even the style it is meant to depict. This mosaic is as unusual and unique as the Fayum Portraits themselves. Dunbabin suggests that this mosaic, found in a floor in House VI, 15,14 in Pompeii, was created to imitate a painted portrait of a real wealthy woman, and was meant originally as a wall decoration.268

Wall painting can provide some of the clearest images of jewellery, because the artist is using a flat surface, small tools and a liquid medium, all of which is similar to the Fayum Portraits’ construction. This allows for very fine details, though frequently the jewellery is simply rendered. Often the necklaces and bracelets shown on wall paintings are plain gold bands or loops, with little detail or decoration [Figs. 46 & 47].

Fig. 46 shows Pasiphae wearing a necklace of a gold hoop with two gold loops hanging off it. It is an extraordinary necklace with no parallel in the Fayum Portraits. Fig. 47 shows three women all wearing bands in their hair, around their necks and wrists. Each band is simple and has a reddish tinge. However, each woman wears different earrings. The first woman, who leans on the pillar, wears a drop pearl in her ear. The seated woman wears bar-drop style earrings possibly ending in a pearl. The small woman (or girl) wears a drop style earring with a tear-shaped pendant.

Pearl earrings and drop style earrings are not uncommon in wall painting [Fig. 48]. Briseis wears a drop pearl in her ear, and barring a gold seal-type ring on her left ring finger, she wears no other adornment. Hera in Fig. 49 also wears a pearl in her ear, yet she has other jewellery. She wears a gold inlaid diadem under a veil, a solid looking, almost torque-like gold necklace and a gold bangle. All quite modest adornment for the Queen of the Gods.

49. Wall painting of Hera wearing the simple gold diadem, necklace and bracelet, and a pearl drop earring. Dated to AD 40-50.

Drop-style earrings appear commonly depicted in Roman wall paintings.

Although the ladies in Fig. 50 are more naturally adorned with wreaths or circlets of leaves and white blossoms (hanging like Wisteria flowers), the lady in white wears gold drop pendant style earrings similar to those in Fig. 47 or even the Fayum Portrait dated to AD 117-138. (Plate 8 Image 31 of the Fayum Portrait Catalogue). There is a possibly lozenge-shaped drop with an inlaid centre between a pearl and a hanging drop. The two figures that can be seen in full are both wearing the common gold loop necklaces and bracelets. However, the figure in white also wears an anklet and her necklace appears to have two gold drops off it, almost like the tassels at the end of a bow or knot.

50. Wall painting of women awaiting a ritual. All the women wear leafy wreaths and the front two women wear simple necklaces. Dated to AD 25-45.
Drop style earrings are also seen on Fig. 37. The woman wears a gold earring of a blossom shape, perhaps an upside-down lotus. She also wears a detailed crown-like headdress of openwork gold with upstanding finials. Around her arm and wrist are the gold loop bands, and on her left ring finger a ring with an inlaid green stone, perhaps an emerald.

However, it is her necklace and the earrings of the Satyr that are most interesting. This style of necklace, with its spiky drops, is seen on the Fayum Portraits at the start of the first century AD, and towards the middle of the second century AD. (This is displayed in the Fayum Portrait Catalogue on Plate 1 Image 2 and Plate 11 Image 43.)

The Venus in the “House of the Floating Venus” also wears this style of necklace, but hers appears to have an inlaid pendant of a dark stone [Fig. 51]. A similar style of necklace is also seen on the kneeling Artemis [Fig. 43].

The Satyr of Fig. 37 wears thick gold hoop earrings, a style that is used as commonly as drop style earrings. Examples of hoop earrings can be seen on a wall painting of a young woman holding a notebook and stylus [Fig. 33]. This young woman is very simply adorned wearing only earrings and a gold mesh hairnet over her curls. The earrings of a similar style are seen in [Fig. 52] worn by the seated woman playing a cithara. This style of earring is not seen in the Fayum Portraits, but it is possible that they are a hybrid of the loop style of earring. This wall painting, from the Villa of P. Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale near Pompeii, is unusual as it displays a Hellenistic theme of the Macedonian
Royal Family and aspects of Macedonian rule. It is one of five panels and depicts a young woman, perhaps a relative of the King or Queen, sitting on a red chair playing a cithara. The smaller figure is perhaps the seated figure’s sister. This Hellenistic theme may explain the gold headband or diadem that the seated figure wears. Significantly, this style of head decoration is not seen in the Fayum Portraits either.

Painting in general gives us the clearest view of depicted jewellery from antiquity. Two very fine examples convey the realism that can be achieved [Figs. 53 & 54]. The first, Fig. 53, is a young woman from Pompeii who sits in a pose of contemplation similar to Fig. 33, with a stylus resting on her chin or lower lip. She wears emerald and pearl drop earrings and no other jewelled adornment. In style she is very much like the Fayum Portraits with considerable detail in the hair, eyes and skin.

The second example, Fig. 54, is a woman with a jewellery box. She wears a necklace of blue cabochon cut stones set in gold and pearl or gold drop style earrings. She holds a full looking jewellery box with a string of large pearls and a possible emerald set necklace on the top.

Pfrommer states that the seated figure is Berenike II, but he does not offer any proof of this.
271 Boardman, ed. 176.
By looking at not only the Fayum Portraits but at other art, such as marble statues, mosaics and wall painting, contemporary with the portraits, we can see that jewellery shown in one art form is often depicted in another. Examples of similar "themes" in jewellery occur in all art forms throughout the time of the Fayum Portraits. Examples of Roman art in several media all show similar styles of earrings, beaded or chain necklaces, bracelets, armlets and anklets. The use of pearls and coloured gems and stones is similar on all painted art. This shows that the jewellery is being represented in accordance with a common artistic convention which appears realistic, and not surprisingly, most of these styles are found in the archaeological record.
Conclusion

The primary aim of this thesis was to test the realism of the Fayum Portraits by examining aspects of the portrait’s history, production and depiction, and by concentrating on the depiction of jewellery and its comparison with real archaeological pieces.

In conducting this work, a number of questions have been important. Firstly, there were questions to do with the creation of the portraits. Did the three cultures (Egyptian, Greek and Roman) within the Fayum have an effect on the development of the portrait? Did the painting techniques of encaustic and tempera, and the four colour palette, effect the realism of the depiction?

Secondly, there were questions about the citizens of the Fayum themselves. We wished to know if the portraits let us view real people, and if so, who were they, and why was portrait painting important to them? What purpose did the portraits serve, and when in the person’s life was a portrait painted?

Thirdly, investigation into the jewellery (style and creation) and how it was depicted within the Fayum Portraits. Was there a desire to display what was depicted in a wealthier style than was realistic, and if so, was this achieved? Did the jewellery depicted on the Fayum Portraits display a predominant use of locally available material, or were there often fantastic imports included? Most importantly, are styles of jewellery seen on the Fayum Portraits also found in the archaeological record of first to fourth century Roman jewellery, and in other art (wall painting, mosaic or sculpture) contemporary with the Fayum Portraits?

The first set of questions focused on the Fayum Portrait’s history and creation. In the beginning, Egypt had her own art. Profile faces and legs with full-frontal bodies dominated her two-dimensional art until about 323 BC. Often the art only represented the ruling class with little or no reference to the lower class unless in the act of serving their
“betters”. The painting was symbolic and stylised, often restricted to areas of worship and funerary ritual, and did not show realistic human forms.

When the Macedonian soldiers settled in Egypt after the campaigns of Alexander the Great in 323 BC, they brought with them the Greek style of painting. The style was one that attempted realism through shading and highlighting, the look of real muscle moving over bone, individual faces and human shapes, moving away from idealised godly forms towards real human bodies.

However, Macedonian/Greek control in Egypt did not last. After the Battle of Actium and the death of Cleopatra VII in 30 BC Roman rule took over. It brought with it Imperial control and Roman methods of administration, taxation, and Roman styles in fashion and art - the general Romanisation of the local élite in all areas of Egypt. The Fayum, being an agriculturally important area with the potential for great wealth, was particularly affected by Roman control and taste. Therefore, an artistic hybrid evolved. A style of art that used Egyptian methods (wood and linen painted with wax-based pigments and gold) to portray Greek naturalism (real human forms) in the fashions of Rome (clothing and adornment). These aspects of each culture were used to produce a portrait that played a role in Romanised Egyptian (or Egyptianised Roman) death ritual.

The basic tools and techniques of portrait production were Egyptian, but the styles of painting were Greek. The wax-based painting techniques of encaustic and tempera did not affect the possible realism of a naturalistic Greek depiction. Encaustic and tempera produce different styles of image, but both were equally capable of creating a realistic depiction. It was the artist who had an effect on the realism of the portrait. A competent, well-trained hand would create a realistic image [e.g. Fig. 35] whereas perhaps a less practised hand might not [e.g. Fig. 8]. Both these portraits were painted with the same tools and materials, and both are dated to between AD 160 and AD 190, and yet they are very different.
The same can be said for the four-colour palette - black, white, yellow and red. It could be believed that having only four colours to use would make a depiction colourless, dull and unrealistic. However, each basic colour of the palette had many shades, and each shade could be mixed with the others to create new colours. This would extend the possibilities of realism. Add to that the extension of the palette with the addition of new, natural and synthetic colours such as alternative greens, reds and blues, and the possibilities for realistic portrayals of skin, hair, clothing and jewellery were vast.

However, there is a problem of pigment and binders aging. As with almost all old masters oil paintings, we today are not seeing the colours as they were intended by the artist. Colours fade or darken with age, varnish or lacquer cloud or become dark and flaky. All this obscures and affects our modern view. On a Fayum Portrait a once bright red gem may have become brown, making a garnet appear to be a carnelian. This would not be what the artist or the client would have wanted.

The second set of questions asks who are “the depicted” in the Fayum Portraits? We do not have a Roman census of the citizens of the Fayum so we do not know the name and status of every person or portrait. Often the portraits are not labelled with all the details that we today would like to ease identification. However, each face is individual, each person dressed and adorned differently, so we can perhaps assume that these people were real, having once lived in and around the Fayum area. These portraits are not a matter of a standard face being inserted in a “pre-fabricated” body, like a holidaymaker’s face through the hole in a seaside resort photo board. Similarities occur when either the same artist has possibly been used [Pl.12-I.48 & Pl.13-I.50] or there is a family likeness [Pl.3-I.12 & Pl.4-I.15].

This level of individuality would not be necessary, if the portrait were only a convention of the death ritual. The portraits appear to serve an important function in the rites of the dead, and it appears that a realistic image was required. If not, why are there so many real and individual faces, and not just a collection of standard “cookie-cutter” faces?
Therefore, these portraits display the realistic faces of real people of the Fayum, but we still wonder who they are. The answer is that initially they were the local élite. They were people who could trace both parents' families or all direct male relatives (maternal and paternal) back to the original Macedonian settlers, the “6475 Colonists” or the “Gymnasial Élite”.273

To be remembered in such a way was the preserve of the élite, the wealthy landowners and the local leaders, and representatives of Rome. However, times changed, and as with all things the wealthy (but not élite) adopted many of the pretensions of the landed and leading classes. The provincial nouveaux riches used portraiture to display their newly acquired finance, perhaps thinking “our money equals their birth”. Portraiture became available to any who could afford it.

It is interesting that this style of portraiture was concentrated in the Fayum area, and that it developed from a mixture of the artistic styles of three cultures in the isolation of a small area of Roman Egypt. As much as we today find these portraits exciting to look at we still question why were they painted, what were they for?

I believe that the portraits were painted as part of the cross-cultural funerary rites that existed in the Fayum. The portraits allowed acknowledgment of both the Egyptian mummification process (an image of the deceased on the wrapped body) and the Roman need for a physical form of remembrance (a marble bust). It was perhaps a mixture of the requirements for admittance into the after-life. The Egyptians required the body to be interred with its removed, stored or preserved parts so that the body could be reassembled in the after-life. The Romans may only have needed an image of the deceased for recognition of the body and the soul in the next life.

The “domestic or funerary, painted in life or death” questions are considered by some scholars to be “non-questions”, that it does not matter when in the depicted person’s life the portrait was painted. However, I believe it does, because the “when” dictates what the

273 Lewis. 41.
portrait’s purpose was. Though I agree that the portraits were painted for an ultimately funerary purpose, namely to be interred with the deceased, I do not agree that it need have been the portraits’ only function. I believe there is evidence that the portraits were painted during the subject’s life, not only as a prospective funerary object but also as a portrait for present display, as we would show formal photographs. Frequently the person depicted is young and apparently healthy. Often they are dressed in out-of-date fashions, perhaps twenty-five years or so. The portraits show marks of having been hung, rested against a surface, or cut down from a larger image. Often there are worn areas, cracks and chips, damage too extensive to be created in the few days handling required to place the image on the mummy. Damage, hanging and cutting down could only be the result of, and be needed because of, time on display in a busy home.

Finally, are the styles of jewellery depicted in the Fayum Portraits reflected in the archaeological record? We have no inventory of a Fayum household, so we do not know what a particular woman kept in her jewellery box. We question whether the fine jewellery depicted on the Fayum Portraits was owned or was just artistic licence to create a more ornate and wealthy-looking remembrance. I do not believe that it was a matter of artistic impression or licence when it came to the styles and materials depicted on the portraits. Those who had the wealth to have a portrait painted would have had the wealth to own jewellery. However, despite the fact that we do not know if the jewellery was owned or not, we can be certain the jewellery styles were real. Many archaeologically “real” styles of first to fourth century Roman jewellery are seen recorded on the Fayum Portraits. The jewellery and gems depicted in the Fayum Portraits reflect not only pieces in the archaeological record, but materials available in and around Egypt.

There were almost no gems depicted on the Fayum Portraits that were not available within or near Egypt. The majority of stones depicted in the portraits could have originated in Egyptian mines. Emerald, amethyst, rock crystal, carnelian, garnet, jasper, turquoise, onyx and many other stones were all to be found in Egypt, and appeared on the

273 Such as the man in Chapter 3, whose CAT-scanned skeleton was found to be many years older than his portrait suggested.
Fayum Portraits. Those stones and gems not found in Egypt, such as lapis lazuli, amber, sapphire and pearl, would have been available through local trade, or within Rome. In the first century BC Egypt became part of the Roman world, an empire covering huge areas of land and controlling vast natural resources. The result was that no gem or metal was out of reach, if the price was affordable.

By putting the real jewellery side-by-side with the depicted jewellery, it can be seen that they are often the same. Themes and entire pieces seen in the archaeological record are displayed in the Fayum Portraits, showing that the jewellery is realistic and not fantastic.

It is unfortunate that we have not come across a real piece of jewellery and a portrait depicting that piece in the same interment. This would confirm that the depiction was displaying not only a realistic piece of jewellery, but also assist in countering the presently only assumed idea that the faces are realistic. With no other evidence regarding the physical features of the individuals depicted, we have only the internal evidence of the portraits' “contents” to rely on for possible realism. I believe that the jewellery’s realism in the portraits points strongly to the faces being realistic also.275 My theory is that if the small details on the portraits, such as jewellery, are realistically depicted, then it is likely that the larger details of the face are also realistic.

The medium of portrait painting (usually life-sized and close-up) made the display of painted gems easier. An image within a wall painting or a mosaic often would be smaller and the medium not so open to delicate and detailed “extras”. However, many of the jewellery styles depicted in the Fayum Portraits, and seen in the archaeological record, are also shown in other art forms such as mosaic and wall painting, but often in a lesser form.

Until we can discover and excavate new Fayum burials with detailed portraits on well-preserved mummies that are wearing the jewellery in which they are depicted, we can only assume the reality of the Fayum Portraits and their jewellery. Until Flinders Petrie,

275 However, realism is in the eye of the beholder, as is seen in the New Scientist experiment in Chapter 3.
almost none of the Fayum Portraits were sold with a pure archaeological history, or with any concern for, or investigation of, the mummy beneath. Many portraits were removed from their tombs by inexperienced hands that created no records. Therefore, as was noted previously, almost all of these portraits are now seen out of context, and have no supporting archaeological detail. Many of these portraits found their way into collections through means that would shock the modern curator, being sold for their aesthetic value and not for what they represented to classical history, art or archaeology.

However, I believe that from the investigation of the Fayum Portraits, and by placing the depicted jewellery alongside real archaeological finds, we can say that the jewellery on the portraits is realistic. From this we can assume, with a higher degree of probability, that the faces that are depicted and adorned are also realistic. Sadly, until we find new burials with all the details we desire, until facial reconstruction techniques produce less random results, and until science allows complex and complete DNA profiles that let us look at the real faces, an assumption is all we can make.
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Catalogue 1.

Fayum Portraits

2. Portrait of a young girl, encaustic on panel. AD 25-37. Hawara. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio. 71.137. 40 x 18.5 cm. (MFP68/55)

3. Portrait of a woman, encaustic on panel. AD 37-50. Provenance unknown. Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart. 130 (mpss 2/7) 34 x 20.2 cm. (MFP172/110)

5. Portraits of women, painted and gilded cartonnage. 1. AD 40-60. 2. AD 50-70. Hawara. 1. Petrie Museum, London. 2. The British Museum, London. uc28084. 55.2 x 41 cm. EA 69020. 53.5 x 30 cm. (AF67/27-28)


7. Portrait of a woman known as "Isarous", encaustic on limewood. AD 50-100. Hawara. Petrie Museum, University College, London. 19611 36.5 x 18 cm. (MFP66/52)

8. Portrait of a woman, encaustic on panel. AD 54-68. Hawara. The British Museum, London. EA 74716. 33 x 19 cm. (MFP63/48. AF40/2)
9. Portrait of a woman, encaustic on panel. AD 54-68. Hawara. The Egyptian Museum, Cairo. CG 33241. 35 x 21.5 cm. (MFP67/53)


11. Painted female, plaster and cartonnage mummy mask with garland. AD 60-70. Provenance unknown. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. 1919.19.2.6. 53 x 33 x 63 cm. (AF129/84)

12. Portrait of a little girl, daughter of "Demos", encaustic on panel. AD 69-96. Hawara. The Egyptian Museum, Cairo. CG 33240. 39 x 15.5 cm. (MFP56/39)
13. Portraits of two young girls, daughters of "Aline", tempera on linen. AD 69-117. Hawara. Aegyptisches Museum, Berlin. 11412. 21.5 x 20 cm. 11413. 29 x 34 cm. (FP8. MFP64/49-50)


15. Portrait of a woman known as "Demos", encaustic on panel. AD 75-100. Found with her daughter. Hawara. The Egyptian Museum, Cairo. CG 33237. 38 x 21 cm. (MFP57/40)

16. Portrait of a woman, encaustic on panel. AD 75-100. Hawara. The J.Paul Getty Museum, Malibu. 73.ap.91. 40 x 20 cm. (MFP59/44)
17. Portrait of a young man, encaustic. AD 90-100. Philadelphia or er-Rubayat. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. X296. 31.6 x 20.6 cm. (FP43. MFP27/22)

18. Portrait of a woman with wreath, encaustic on limewood. AD 90-120. Purchased in Cairo, provenance unknown. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. 1909 09. 181.6. 41.3 x 21.5 cm. (AF106/66. MFP162/97)

19. Portrait of a woman, encaustic on panel. AD 98-117. Hawara. The Egyptian Museum, Cairo. EA 74712. 36 x 18 cm. (MFP58/42)

20. Portrait of a woman known as "Aline", tempera on linen. AD 98-117. Hawara. Ägyptisches Museum, Berlin. 11411. 42.5 x 32 cm. (FP19. MFP65/51)
21. Second century AD frame found by Petrie in Hawara, with encaustic portrait still in place, though damaged. Location not stated. (MFP138/69)

22. Portrait of a woman known as "Isidora", encaustic on wood set in a linen shroud. AD 100-110. Ankyronpolis or el-Hibeh. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu. 81. ap. 42. 33.6 x 17.2 cm. (AF99/60 MFP165/102)

23. Portrait of a woman wearing an Egyptian hairpiece. AD 100-110. Hawara. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. 918. 20. I. (G6127). 41.7 x 22 cm. (AF55/17)

24. Portrait of elderly woman with wreath, encaustic on limewood. AD 100-125. Purchased in Cairo, provenance unknown. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. 1909 09.181.7. 36.5 x 19.7 cm. (AF108/67)
25. Portrait of woman, encaustic on limewood. AD 100-120. Hawara. The British Museum, London. EA 74707. 38.2 x 20.5 cm. (AF54/16)


28. Portraits of two soldiers, encaustic on panels. Both AD 110-130. Philadelphia or er-Rubayat. 1. Antikensammlung 2. Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin. 31161.2. 41.5 x 19 cm. 31161.6. 41 x 20 cm. (MFP22/15-16)

30. Portrait of a woman, encaustic on panel. AD 117-138. Hawara. The Manchester Museum, Manchester. 5379. 30.5 x 16 cm. (MFP74/63)

31. Portrait of a woman, encaustic on panel. AD 117-138. Antinoopolis. The Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University. 1923.60. 35.3 x 22.5 cm.

AD125-150. Hawara. The Egyptian Museum, Cairo. CG 33216. 27.7 x 12.7 cm. (MFP71/59)

34. Full mummy case of "The Golden Girl", about 10 years of age. Decorated with gilded stucco with insets of glass and stone. 107 cm.
(MFP71/60)

35. Portrait of a young woman known as "The European" encaustic on cedarwood with gilding. AD 130. Antinoopolis. Musée du Louvre, Paris. MND 2047. 41 x 24 cm.
(FP10. MFP114/86. AF89/49)

36. Portrait of a woman, encaustic on panel. AD 130-161. Antinoopolis. The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit. 25.2.
46.5 x 25.5 cm. (MFP112/84)
37. Portrait of a woman known as "Zenobia", tempera on panel. AD 138-161. Provenance unknown. Museo Archeologico, Florence. 2411. 32.5 x 20.5 cm. (MFP1, FP26)

38. Portrait of a woman, encaustic on panel. AD 138-161. Hawara. The Manchester Museum, Manchester. 789b. 30.5 x 16 cm. (MFP74/64)

39. Portrait of a woman, encaustic on panel. AD 138-161. Hawara. The Manchester Museum, Manchester. 2266. 42.5 x 21.2 cm. (MFP75/65)

40. Portrait of a woman, encaustic on panel. AD138-161. Hawara. The Egyptian Museum, Cairo. CG 33245. 42 x 23 cm (FP34, MFP75/66)

42. Portrait of a woman, encaustic on linen. AD 138-192. Provenance unknown. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio. 24.7 x 19.6 cm. (MFP167/104)

43. Portrait of a woman, encaustic on panel. AD 135-160. Memphis or Saqqara. The British Museum, London. EA 29772. 38 x 17 cm. (FP22. MFP17/8)

44. Portrait of a woman, encaustic on wood. AD 140. Philadelphia or er-Rubayat. Staaliche Museen, Berlin. 31161/9. 35 x 18 cm. (FP24. AF75/34. MFP25/20)
45. Portrait of a woman, encaustic on wood. AD 140-160. Hawara. The Manchester Museum, Manchester. 2266. 42.5 x 21.2 cm. (AF62/23)


47. Portrait of a woman, encaustic on panel with goldleaf. AD 160-190. Philadelphia or er-Rubayat. The British Museum, London. EA 65346. 44 x 20 cm. (FP28. MFP26/21)

48. Portrait of a woman, tempera on panel. AD 161-180. Provenance unknown. The Egyptian Museum, Cairo. CG 33248. 35 x 19.5 cm. (MFP106/75)
49. Portrait of a woman, encaustic on panel. AD 161-192. Hawara. Petrie Museum, University College, London. 14692. 37 x 22.5 cm. (MFP80/73)

50. Portrait of a woman, encaustic on panel. AD 180-211. Provenance unknown. Musée de Louvre, Paris. P202. 34 x 22 cm. (MFP107/76)

51. Portrait of a woman, encaustic on fir, with added gilding. AD 190-220. Hawara. The British Museum, London. EA 74717. 32.1 x 22.7 cm. (AF65/26)

52. Portrait of a woman, tempera on wood. AD 325-350. Philadelphia or er-Rubayat. Staäliche Museum, Berlin. 31161/ 49. 31 x 14.8 cm. (AF74/33)
53. Portrait of a woman, encaustic on panel. Fourth century AD. Highly decorated with stucco and gilt. Provenance unknown. The Egyptian Museum, Cairo. (FP40)
Catalogue 2.

Roman

Jewellery
54. Pectoral collar belonging to Tutankhamen. 1323 BC. Valley of the Kings. The Egyptian Museum, Cairo. (WT33)

55. Gold strap-chain necklace with rosettes and spear-head pendants, details in garnets. Hellenistic design, dated to 300 BC. Typical of necklaces popular at the time of the conquests of Alexander the Great. The British Museum, London. (J/M260)

56. An Etruscan fibula showing detail of granulation. Third century BC from the Barberini Tomb. Current location unknown. (WT167)


61. A gold hook setting for a "castanet" style earring. Once had decoration on the end of each "prong", perhaps a gem or glass bead. AD 50-79. Shown in situ in Herculaneum. The Archaeological Museum, Herculaneum. (NG557)
62. A gold rope-link chain from about the time of the Emperor Domitian. Provenance unknown. The British Museum, London. (JAT40)


64. Gold wreath dated to the first century AD. The wreath displays stylised laurel or myrtle leaves. Yale University Art Gallery, Cambridge, M.A. 1946.256. 13.5 cm. (IC197)


67. Gold, garnet and sapphire necklace with gold link chain, with butterfly pendant. Repairs have been performed. First century AD. Castellani Collection. The British Museum, London. BMCJ 2746 (AJ19)

68. Pair of gold "ball" earrings set with quartz with "S" hooks. First century AD. Oplontis, now in the Archaeological Museum, Herculaneum. (SWR86)

69. Pearl earrings known as "crotalia" due to their sound tinkling together. First century AD. Pompeii. The Archaeological Museum, Herculaneum. (SWR87)

71. Gold Ball Earrings from the first century AD. From Pozzuoli. The British Museum, London. (AF149)

72. Gold hairpin with lotus-bud head. Dated to the first century AD. Provenance unknown, now in the British Museum. 12.2 cm. (CJ pl.LXIX)

73. Gold, garnet, blue and green porcelain necklace, with pearl and green glass pendants. Dated to the first to the third centuries AD. Provenance unknown, now in the British Museum. 33 cm. (CJ pl.LVI)
74. Collection of Roman earrings, rings and ornaments dated to the first century AD. London market. (S2 293)

75. A selection of Roman gem set jewellery. Two gold pendants, one set with a citrine and the other with a peridot. Three rings. 1. with emerald, sapphire and garnet. 2. with diamond. 3. with aquamarine. Provenance unknown. The British Museum, London. (AJ 37)

76. Gold Link Chain necklace with gold crescent pendant. Late first century to the early second century AD. Provenance unknown, now in the British Museum. (AF150)

77. Selection of Roman jewels of the first and second centuries AD. Earrings and necklaces. Provenance unknown. London market. (S1 no.142)
78. Collection of first and second centuries AD rings and seals. Provenance unknown. London market. (S2 299)

79. Two necklaces, both second century AD. 1. Emerald beads with gold links. 2. Amethyst inset beads with gold links with emerald beads. Provenance unknown, now both in the British Museum. (AF155)


81. Two bracelets. The Snake bracelet is first century AD. The Twisted Gold bracelet set with semi-precious stone, perhaps turquoise, is second century AD. Alexandria, now in private collections. (JAT160)
82. Ring set with garnets, sapphires and emeralds in cabochon cuts. Second to third centuries AD. Provenance unknown. The British Museum, London. (HJ81)

83. Selection of second and third century AD earrings. Provenance unknown. The British Museum, London. (AF152)


86. Gold necklace with pearls and emeralds. Though dated to sixth century AD it shows the natural crystal shape of emerald. Provenance unknown. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. 17.190.153. (AJ36)
Catalogue 3.

Roman Art
87. Wall painting from Pompeii, now in the Museo Nazionale Archeologico, Naples. AD 20-30. (FTP167)

88. Wall painting from the tablinum of the "House of Caecilius Jucundus" in Pompeii. AD 25-45. In situ. (FTP titlepage)
89. Wall painting of Zeus and Hera from the atrium of the "House of the Tragic Poet". Pompeii. AD 40-50. *In situ.* (FTP28)

90. A wall painting of a young woman. AD 40-50. Pompeii. the Museo Nazionale Archeologico, Naples. (RAPl.XLI)
91. Wall painting from the Villa of P. Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale. 50 BC to AD 50. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. (HRA pl.3)

92. Wall painting of Achilles and Briseis from the atrium of the "House of the Tragic Poet" in Pompeii. AD 40-50. In situ. (FTP29)
93. A Fourth Style wall painting from the "House of Caecilius Jucundus" of a Woman and Satyr. Pompeii. AD 45-55. *In situ.* (FTP42)


96. Mosaic of Artemis surprised while bathing. Mid first to late third centuries AD. Petra, now in the Archaeological Museum, Suweida. (SWR198)
97. Image of a female deity from a whole mosaic from the "House of Neptune and Amphitrite". Herculaneum. First century AD. *In situ.* (SRW173)

98. Image of a woman, wearing pearl and emerald drop earrings, taken from a fresco of a married couple. First century AD. Pompeii. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples. (SRW151)

100. A bronze head of Venus with a gold and pearl earring. Dated to the first to second centuries AD. Provenance unknown. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu. 4 cm. (P-NH65)
101. Portrait bust of an unknown woman, perhaps a daughter of Faustina the Younger. AD 160-180. Carved in Rome, found in Macedonia. Ljubljana (Slovenia) National Museum. (IC43)

103. A hollow-cast silver statuette of a goddess from Lebanon or Syria. She wears a gold necklace, two gold bracelets, and a silver diadem. Dated to the late second century AD. The Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo. 1971.131. 31cm. (A204)

104. Tondo portrait of Septimius Severus and Family. AD 199. Egypt. Staatlichen Museen, Berlin. 31329. (RApl.XLV111)
105. Funerary monument from Palmyra of a woman. Limestone with traces of colour. Labelled "Alas, Umm'abi, daughter of Maggi, son of Male, son of La'ad". Dated to AD 200. Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo. 1962.18. 52x33 cm. (A122)