

مجلة كلية الآداب بقنا (دورية أكاديمية علمية محكمة)

## Ancient Egyptian Cosmetics

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## I – Introduction:

To ancient Egyptians, the beauty was an integral part of their society. Beauty was always side by side with their mortal existence and even in their afterlife. They believed that the more beautiful you are, the closer you will be to the gods. They valued makeup and ritualized them, and all the very first cosmetics were kept special in jars and packed in makeup boxes.<sup>(1)</sup>

In ancient Egypt, cosmetics were not a luxury; they were a way of life! Men and women followed the latest fashions in both hairstyles and make-up, everyone; from the poor to the pharaohs, had make-up.<sup>(2)</sup>

Cleansing rituals were very important to the Egyptians. Most people bathed daily in the river or out of a water basin at home. The wealthy had a separate room in their home to bath. Servants would pour jugs of water over their master (the equivalent of a modern day shower). The runoff water drained away through a pipe that led to the garden. Instead of washing with soap, a cleansing cream was used. This cream was made from oil, lime, and perfume. People rubbed themselves daily with perfumed oil. Perfume was made from flowers and scented wood mixed with oil or fat, and was left in a pot until the oil had absorbed the scent. The perfumed oil was used to prevent the skin from drying out in the harsh climate. At parties, servants put cones of perfumed grease on the heads of the guests. As the

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1) <http://www.eve-make-up-tips.com/makeup/makeup-beauty-tips/ancient-egyptian-makeup.aspx>

2) <http://www.thekeep.org/~kunoichi/kunoichi/themestream/womenegypt.htm.op.cit>

grease melted, it ran down their face with a pleasing cooling effect. (3)

## II-Definitions of the term "Cosmetics":

The term cosmetic is defined as:

- Any of several preparations (excluding soap) applied to the human body for beautifying, preserving, or altering the appearance or for cleansing, coloring, conditioning, or protecting the skin, hair, nails, lips, eyes, or teeth.
- Preparations externally applied to change or enhance the beauty of skin, hair, nails, lips, and eyes.
- Cosmetics are substances used to enhance or protect the appearance or odor of the human body. Cosmetics include skin-care creams, lotions, powders, perfumes, lipsticks, fingernail and toenail polishes, eye and facial makeup, permanent waves, hair colors, hair sprays and gels, deodorants. A subset of cosmetics is called "make-up," which refers primarily to colored products intended to alter the user's appearance. (4)
- A powder, lotion, lipstick, rouge, or other preparation for beautifying the face, skin, hair, nails, etc. *cosmetics*, superficial measures to make something appear better, more attractive, or more impressive: *The budget committee opted for cosmetics instead of a serious urban renewal plan* (5).

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(3) Günter D'Hoogh, *Egypt Playground of the Gods*, Paul Elliot, 2004, p, 9

(4) <http://www.answers.com/topic/cosmetic>

(5) <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/cosmetics>

### III-Personal Hygiene and Cosmetics:



<http://www.all-about-egypt.com/image-files/nofret.jpg>

*'A woman is like food without salt', Roman philosopher Platus (254-184BC) .*

Men, women and children of all ages and classes wore makeup. Mirrors of highly polished silver or copper were used to aid with the application of makeup. Eye paint was made from green malachite, and galena -- a gray lead ore. They were ground into a powder and mixed with oil to make eye color called Kohl. The Kohl was kept in jars and applied to the eyes with a small stick. The upper and lower eyelids were painted with the black cosmetic that extended in a line out to the sides of the face. It was believed the makeup had magical and even healing powers. Some even believed that wearing it would restore poor eyesight. It was also used to fight eye infections and reduce the glare of the sun. Other cosmetics used included colors for the lips, cheeks and nails. A type of clay called red ochre was ground and mixed with water, and applied

to the lips and cheeks. Henna was used to dye the fingernails yellow and orange.

Makeup was stored in special jars and the jars were stored in special makeup boxes. Women would carry their makeup boxes with them to parties and keep them under their chairs.<sup>(6)</sup>



<http://www.alexandrianbeautv.com/index.html>

The ancient Egyptians were like any other civilization; both men and women liked to make themselves look better according to their standards of beauty. The result was that both genders wore makeup when the occasion demanded it and they practiced a standard of Egyptian hygiene based on sound

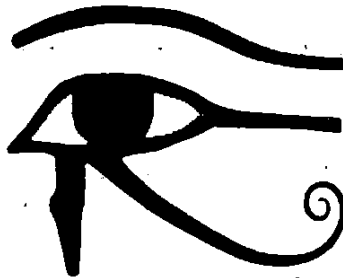
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(6) Günter D'Hoogh, Ibid, p, 9

**medicinal, therapeutic and spiritual reasons.<sup>(7)</sup>**

The health and beauty practices developed by the ancient Egyptians expose a sophisticated knowledge of the natural world; how to use nature's bounty and achieve calculated results. A rich repertoire of extraction techniques, formulas and novel ingredients remain entombed treasures awaiting their rebirth. Now that the beauty industry is leaning toward the use of natural ingredients and environmentally sensitive farming, there is renewed interest in the ancient natural sciences. Ecological responsibility, a recent trend in agriculture and business, was a staple of the ancient Egyptian approach to farming and production. An examination of an era before synthetics could provide a roadmap away from our utter dependence on artificial ingredients. We have much to learn from ancient techniques in agriculture, harvesting, extraction and waste management.<sup>(8)</sup>

#### IV-Ancient Egyptians Eye Makeup:



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[http://www.fashion-era.com/ancient costum](http://www.fashion-era.com/ancient_costum)

[egypatian eye make up cosmetics.htm](http://www.fashion-era.com/ancient_costum)

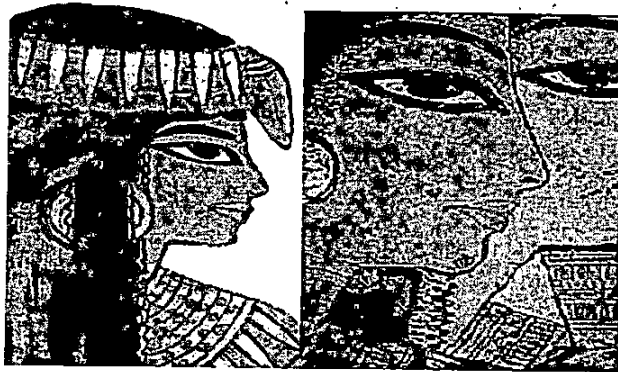
(8) Mona Shaath and Nadim Shaath, The afterlife of Natural, Ancient Egyptian Cosmetics, Alpha Research & Development, Ltd, Technical Bulletins, New York, 2007.

*The Wedjat - later called The Eye of Horus*

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eye\\_of\\_Horus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eye_of_Horus)

Gaze at the myriad portraits of ancient Egyptians and what looks back? Consistent meticulously and beautifully outlined and ornamented eyes. It is virtually impossible to find a portrait of an ancient Egyptian whose eyes are not decorated. During all periods and dynasties, eye makeup was a daily prerequisite for both men and women. That the Egyptians decorated eyes with great aesthetic care is immediately obvious. Eye cosmetics bestowed beauty and style as well as other gifts, perhaps less immediately apparent to modern eyes.<sup>(9)</sup>

The Egyptian lady had only to make up her face: At her toilet table, she had metal mirrors, pots and jars for cosmetics, tweezers, razors, and combs. Most of her time and attention was lavished on her eyes.<sup>(10)</sup>



<http://www.maat.com.au/imagbmmmbmijkggjges/femaleface.gif.2006>

<http://www.mythinglinks.org/women.jpg.2006>

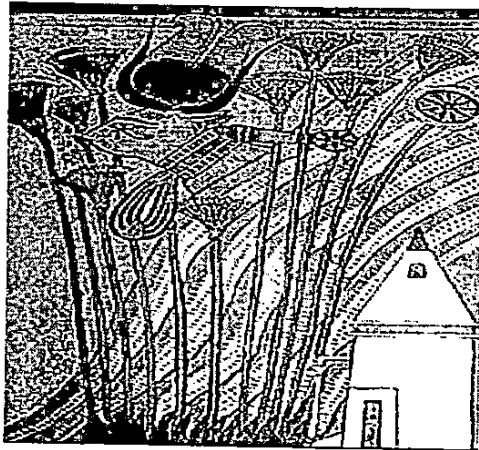
<sup>(9)</sup><http://www.touregypt.net/magazine/mag0901/mag4.htm>

<sup>(10)</sup> Barbara Mertz, *Red land black land, daily life in ancient Egypt*, New York, 1978. P, 88.

Eye makeup was probably the most characteristic of the Egyptian cosmetics. The most popular colors were green and black. The green was originally made from malachite, an oxide of copper. In the Old Kingdom it was applied liberally from the eyebrow to the base of the nose. In the Middle Kingdom, green eye paint continued to be used for the brows and the corners of the eyes, but by the New Kingdom it had been superseded by black. Black eye paint, kohl, was usually made of a sulfide of lead called galena. Its use continued to the Coptic period. By that time, soot was the basis for the black pigment. Both malachite and galena were ground on a palette with either gum and/or water to make a paste. Round-ended sticks made of wood, bronze, hematite, obsidian or glass were used to apply the eye make-up.<sup>(11)</sup>

Types of ancient Egyptians used different eye makeup:

- *Udju* was made from green malachite(copper ore) from Sinai and its mines were consider under the spiritual dominion of Hathor, goddess of beauty, joy, love, and women. She bore the epithet "Lady of Malachite."<sup>(12)</sup>



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(11)

<http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/prehistory/egvpt/dailylife/beautvaids.html>

(12) <http://www.touregypt.net/magazine/mag0901/mag4.htm>



*Hathor, mother of Horus and later wife of Ra, showing her sacred eye inherited from Wedjat - depicted in the Papyrus of Ani.*

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eye of Horus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eye_of_Horus)

Malachite has already been mentioned as being one of the forms of copper ore occurring in Egypt and as having frequently been found in Predynastic graves, at which period it was used for painting round the eyes. But ancient Egyptian records malachite was also very largely employed as an inlay or ornamentation, particularly during the period of the Empire, and it is generally associated in the text with the metals gold and silver and with precious stones, notably lapis lazuli.<sup>(13)</sup>

•Kohl – *Mesdemet*, a dark gray ore of lead, was derived from either stibnite (antimony sulphide) or, more typically, galena (lead sulphid.) Galena was found around Aswan and Red Sea Coast. It was also among the materials brought back by Pharaoh *Hatshepsut's* famed expedition to Punt and was given in tribute by Asiatic nomads.<sup>(14)</sup>

Cosmetics were an important part of the ancient Egyptian costume, and rich and poor alike used kohl to darken their eyes. The kohl used by poorer workers was made in sticks, while the wealthy kept their kohl in ornate boxes made of precious materials and often carved in beautiful shapes. Small amounts of kohl were taken from the box and mixed with animal fats to make it easier to paint on the face. In ancient Egypt kohl was used as a cosmetic to outline the eyes with a dramatic black line. While makeup was valued as a beauty aid, most cosmetics had other uses as well. The dark eyeliner gave some

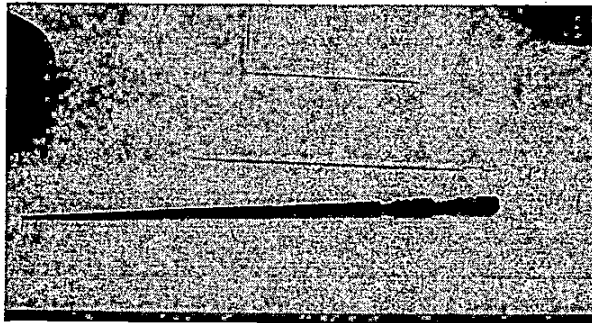
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(13) Lucas, A., *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Industries*, 4th edition revised by J.R. Harris, London, 1962, p, 83.

(14) <http://www.touregypt.net/magazine/mag0901/mag4.htmop.cit>.

protection from the bright Egyptian sun, and the galena also helped to keep insects away from the eyes.<sup>(15)</sup>

Galena is still used in Egypt under name Kohl which ancient Egyptians called "mestemt" and Greeks "στυμι" and the Arabs, Kuhl, (كحل) or a powder made from lead or copper or practically any substance possessing astringent properties. The unguent was applied by the finger, but the powder was laid on the eyelids by means of a short stick made of wood or bone or ivory or stone, with a flattened end. The Arabs call such a stick the "needle" (إبرة) *ibrah*, of the *kuhl* pot.<sup>(16)</sup>



### *Aswan Museum*

- Saffron. This was an expensive yellow-colored spice that they used as eye shadow.
- Jasper. A mineral that they ground finely to serve as medicinal eye treatments.
- Burnt Almonds. They used these along with minerals to create

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<sup>(15)</sup>[http://www.fashionencyclopedia.com/fashion\\_costume\\_culture/The-Ancient-World-Egypt/Kohl.html](http://www.fashionencyclopedia.com/fashion_costume_culture/The-Ancient-World-Egypt/Kohl.html)

<sup>(16)</sup> Wallis Budge. E.A, the Dwellers on the Nile, New York, 1977, pp, 70-71.

eye and brow color. <sup>(17)</sup> Eye pint in ancient Egypt was used as medicine in practically all medical papyri. <sup>(18)</sup>

Cosmetics and other toiletries were highly valued by the ancient Egyptians. Both men and women wore eye make-up which served to protect the eyes from the bright sun and from blowing sand and dust. <sup>(19)</sup>

In ancient Egypt kohl was used as a cosmetic to outline the eyes with a dramatic black line. While makeup was valued as a beauty aid, most cosmetics had other uses as well. The dark eyeliner gave some protection from the bright Egyptian sun, and the galena also helped to keep insects away from the eyes. Kohl had a religious purpose, too. Ancient Egyptians used large drawings of an eye to symbolize the eye of the god Horus—the Egyptian god of healing, among other things—and believed that the drawings would protect them. Many historians think that Egyptians believed that outlining their own eyes would help them carry the protection of the gods with them. <sup>(20)</sup>

### V-Ancient Egyptian Cosmetic Pots:



(17) <http://www.eye-make-up-tips.com/makeup/makeup-beauty-tips/ancient-egyptian-makeup.aspx>

(18) Hassan Kamal, Dictionary of pharaonic medicine, Cairo, 1967, pp, 122-123.

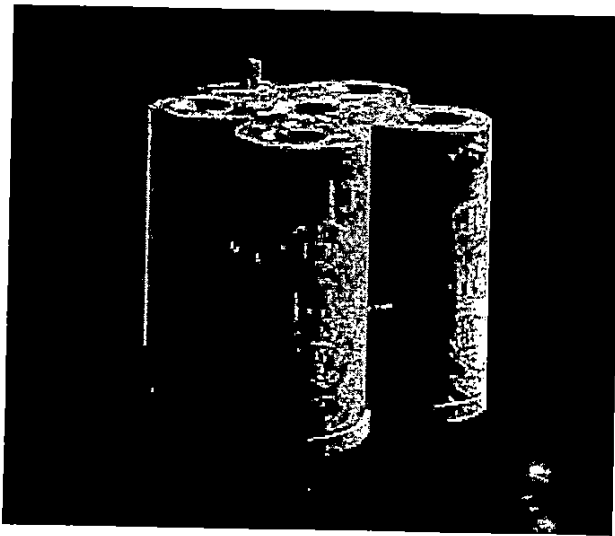
(19) <http://www.cino.org/art-and-antiques/detail/52036>

(20) [http://www.fashionencyclopedia.com/fashion costume culture/The-Ancient-World-Egypt/Kohl.html](http://www.fashionencyclopedia.com/fashion%20culture/The-Ancient-World-Egypt/Kohl.html)op.cit.

[http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/images/object\\_images/277x265/10284926.jpg](http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/images/object_images/277x265/10284926.jpg)

In ancient Egypt, the widespread use of kohl or eye makeup was reflected in the production of great numbers of small kohl pots. These jars had a multitude of shapes.<sup>(21)</sup>

Cosmetics containers have been depicted since the pre-dynastic period and are among the earliest archaeological finds. The jars were first made of granite and basalt, later of alabaster and had a pronounced lip. They were covered with a piece of leather which was tied around the neck of the jar underneath the lip. Other materials were also used, such as ivory and wood.<sup>(22)</sup>



The British Museum's collection contains wooden cosmetic pot of *Ah-mose of Peniati*, served as overseer of works to many of the kings of the early Eighteenth Dynasty, from Amenhotep I to Thutmose III. This pot for kohl, a black

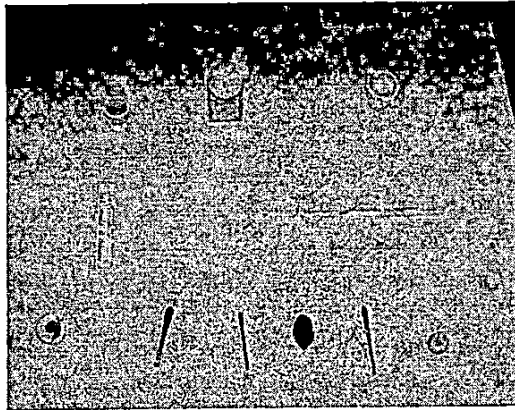
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(21) <http://www.carnegiemnh.org/exhibits/egypt/kohlpot.htm>

(22) <http://nefertiti.iwebland.com/timelines/topics/cosmetics.htm>

-Wallis Budge.E.A, op.cit, p, 71.

cosmetic for the eyes, is likely to have come from his tomb (Perhaps from Thebes, 18th dynasty, about 1500-1440 BC). The pot is divided into five compartments, four of which have associated texts on the outside. One says 'fine eye paint for every day', while the other three refer to the beginning and the end of each of the three main Egyptian seasons of four months each. This suggests that different forms of the cosmetic might have been used at different times of the year. <sup>(23)</sup>



### *Aswan Museum*

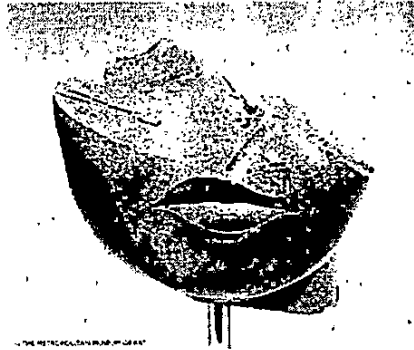
Around 1400 BC three ladies of the court of Thutmose III were buried with costly royal funerary equipment, which included cosmetics. Two of the jars contained a cleansing cream made of oil and lime. Some prescriptions for body 'scrub' are given in the medical papyri. However, no matter which remedy was employed, the Egyptians knew that nothing made the eyes

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)[http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight\\_objects/aes/w/wooden\\_cosmetic\\_pot\\_of\\_ahmose.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/aes/w/wooden_cosmetic_pot_of_ahmose.aspx)

brighter than falling in love: *'Like eye paint is my desire. When I see you, it makes my eyes sparkle'*, says a girl in a love poem. <sup>(24)</sup>

## VI-Ancient Egyptians Makeup for Lips and Face:



### *Metropolitan Museum of Art NY.*

For beautifying their faces, ancient Egyptians used the following:

- Ceruse. This was a white lead pigment they used to lighten their faces.
- Fat. They used goose or bear fat as wax base in adding pigments.
- Red ochre. They used this type of red clay for adding color to their lips and cheeks.
- Wine. The dregs from wine were used as their form of ancient lipstick. Chalk. Chalk was also used to whiten the face.
- Egyptian makeup was all about a white face, dark brows and lashes, and nice, red lips. <sup>(25)</sup>



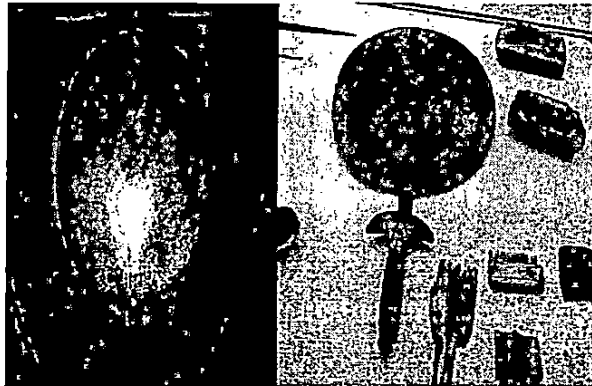
(24)<http://www.levity.com/egyptian/makeup/makeup-beauty-tips/ancient-egyptian>

(25)<http://www.eve-tips.com/makeup/makeup-beauty-tips/ancient-egyptian>

<http://i84.photobucket.com/albums/k4/BSASR/blueeyedegy.jpg>

Some Egyptians appear to have dyed their fingernails, but the nature of the red color used is unknown. It may have been henna. Red was also required to paint the lips. The lip gloss, possibly made of fat with red ochre or with one of the plants used for dyeing, was applied with a brush or spatula. Red color was used to give glow to the cheeks. Rouge consisting of red ochre and fat, possibly with a little gull resin, has survived: it was some four thousand years old. Rouge in the form of powder was marketed a few years ago as a product of ancient Egyptian origin. The recipe which inspired the manufacturers was presumably one of those used for the purpose of camouflaging a burn. <sup>(26)</sup>

### VII-The Mirrors:



*Aswan Museum*

The mirror was made of a round or oval plate of fine copper, polished on each side and was set in a handle of wood, ivory or copper. Some handles are in the form of a lotus column and others in that of a naked woman, who is probably intended to represent Hathor, the goddess of beauty. Mirrors were kept in

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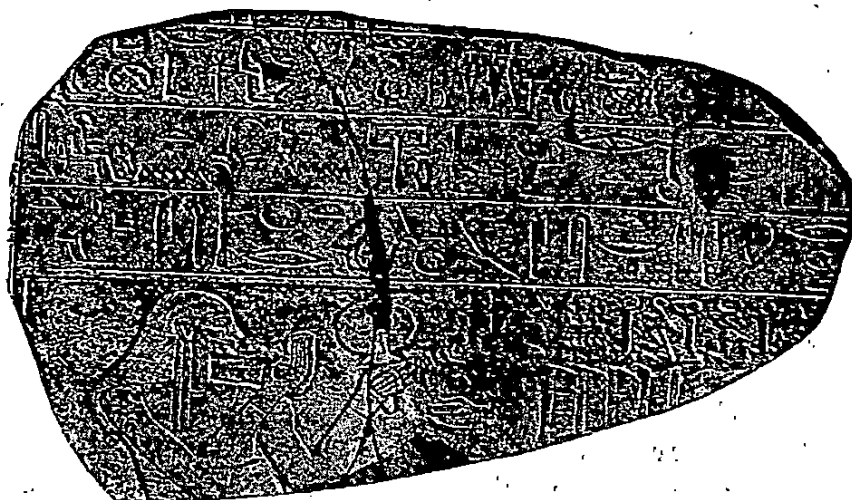
(26) <http://www.levity.com/alchemy/islam23.html>

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wooden or copper cases, but few examples of these have come down to us.<sup>(27)</sup>

Mirrors often appear in female graves. Men presumably used them too but they rarely appear in male graves. Mirrors were made of polished metal – there was no mirror glass until the Roman Period.<sup>(28)</sup>



*A lady wiping her face. Relief of unknown provenance; 11th Dynasty  
(British Museum, # 1658)*

### VIII-Ancient Egyptian Perfumes:

It was perfume, among other things, which put the king in a position to join the gods:

*O King, I have come and I bring to you the Eye of Horus which is in its container (?), and its perfume is on you, O King. Its perfume*

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(27) Wallis Budge.E.A, op.cit, Pp, 74-75.

(28)<http://www.swan.ac.uk/egypt/infosheetgen/cosmetic.htm>



*is on you, the perfume of the Eye of Horus is on you, O King, and you will have a soul by means of it... "Pyramid Texts" (29)*

Perfumes were at the centre of aesthetics and therapeutics for both men and women in Ancient Egypt. Egyptians were famous for their perfumes. Many of the perfumes were exported throughout the Mediterranean region. *Stakte, Susinum, Cyprinum, the Mendesian*. Once upon a time, those names resonated with the impact of Opium or Chanel Number Five. And for good reason: up until and during the first few centuries of the Common Era, Egypt was the prestigious center of an international perfume industry. Although perfumes were created and mass-marketed elsewhere in the ancient world, it was Egypt that was most renowned and identified with the international perfume trade. Egypt was so identified with perfume that during Julius Caesar's Roman triumphs, perfume bottles were tossed to the crowd to demonstrate his mastery over Egypt.<sup>(30)</sup>

There were various kinds of incense (some may be simply different names for the same material) such as *ihmut, sonter*, and *green incense* (possibly galbanum), mentioned in documents from the reign of Thutmose III, and *white incense* (seemingly frankincense), and *inflammable incense* which were listed as donations by Ramses III.

Flowers used for perfumes were indigenous (white lily and lotus) or of foreign origin (jasmine from India, narcissus). Most of the ingredients were of plant origin, but the use of animal fats is also known. *jb*, a salve or perfume mentioned on the Stela of *Sekerhabau* at Saqqara, was written with the sign for kid (little he-goat), *jb*, which has led to speculations that the inscription was referring to musk.<sup>(31)</sup>

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(29) [http://nefertiti.iwebland.com/trades/perfume\\_making.html](http://nefertiti.iwebland.com/trades/perfume_making.html)

(30) <http://www.touregypt.net/magazine/mag08012000.html>

(31) [http://nefertiti.iwebland.com/trades/perfume\\_making.html](http://nefertiti.iwebland.com/trades/perfume_making.html)



Perfume balls sit atop the head

<http://www.touregypt.net/magazine/mag08012000/perfume.jpg>

Egyptian perfumes consisted of oils and fat applied to the skin and hair; of these castors oil (*Strabo* XVII, 2, 5) and animal fat were used for this purpose. The fragrant substances were added to these oils fats. Modern perfumes are solutions in alcohol which necessitate knowledge of distillation – a process the fourth to third century. In festivals and banquets women as well as men used perfumes and unguents. The temple of Edfu contains a special room for perfumes with inscriptions on its wall as to prepare them.<sup>(32)</sup>

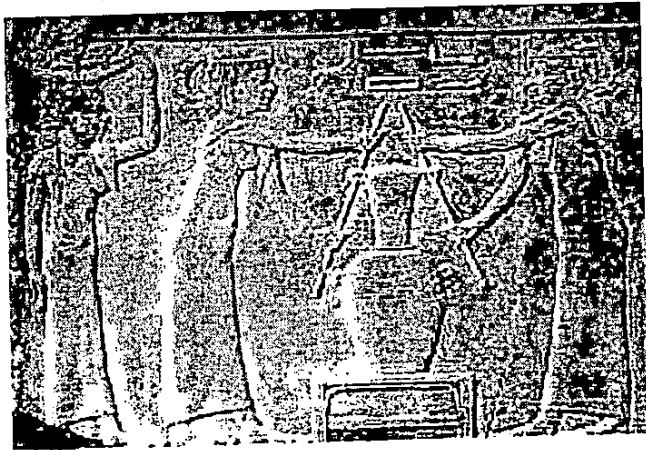
*Every day they make a triple offering of incense to the Sun, an offering of resin at sunrise, of myrrh at midday, and of the so-called cyphi at sunset.*

*(Plutarch, Isis and Osiris, § 52)*

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(32) Hassan Kamal, op.cit, p, 359.

The gods favored sweet smells just as much as did humans. Moreover, the burning of incense covered the smell which arose from the animal offerings. The temples received allocations of raw materials such as oils, myrrh, incense and blooms and prepared their final products in their own workshops: fragrant salves for medicinal purposes, oils for mummification, ointments for the unction of statues and incense to be burned as offering. The *unguent of divine mineral* for instance, a mixture of incense, bitumen and minerals was used to anoint divine statues. Mummies were anointed with perfume to bestow life upon them and render them acceptable to the gods. <sup>(33)</sup>



*Two perfumers are expressing essences; the woman on the left is carrying lily flowers*  
4th century B.C.  
[http://nefertiti.iwebland.com/trades/perfume\\_makers.htm](http://nefertiti.iwebland.com/trades/perfume_makers.htm).

Vegetable or animal oils and fats were scented and applied to the skin. A number of the jars on display here may have contained the scented oils used for this purpose. Perfumed oil was scooped out of jars using special spoons. It is often said that at parties women wore perfume cones of fat on their heads.

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(33) [http://nefertiti.iwebland.com/trades/perfume\\_makers.htm](http://nefertiti.iwebland.com/trades/perfume_makers.htm). op.cit.

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As the evening progressed the fat would melt and dribble over the hair and clothes! However, others believe that these cones shown on tomb walls are simply a hieroglyphic symbol to show that wigs were scented. Perfumes were made from myrrh, desert date, terebinth or frankincense mixed with oil. According to Roman writers, ancient Egyptian women were famed for their sweet scent.<sup>(34)</sup>

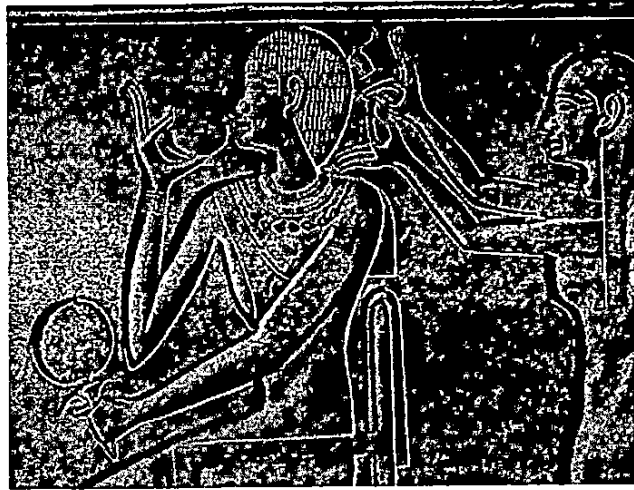


<http://users.cyberone.com.ay/myers.egypt-women.jpg>.2006.

### IX-Ancient Egyptian Hairstyles:

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(34) <http://www.swan.ac.uk/egypt/infosheetgen/cosmetic.htm>.cit.



[http://images.quickblogcast.com/62130-54495/ancient Egypt hair.jpg](http://images.quickblogcast.com/62130-54495/ancient%20egypt%20hair.jpg)

Beauty and body-care is where we find our common ground with the ancient Egyptians. Just as for us today, hair care was a major concern for the ancient Egyptians. Thousands of years ago, they demonstrated our own current cultural anxieties with baldness, thinning, receding and graying hair. Reminiscent of modern attitudes, the ancient Egyptians associated healthy, luxurious hair with youth, sexuality and sex appeal. <sup>(35)</sup>

For ancient Egyptians, appearance was an important issue. Appearance indicated a person's status, role in a society or political significance. Egyptian hairstyles and our hairstyles today have many things in common. Like modern hairstyles Egyptian hairstyles varied with age, gender and social status. <sup>(36)</sup>

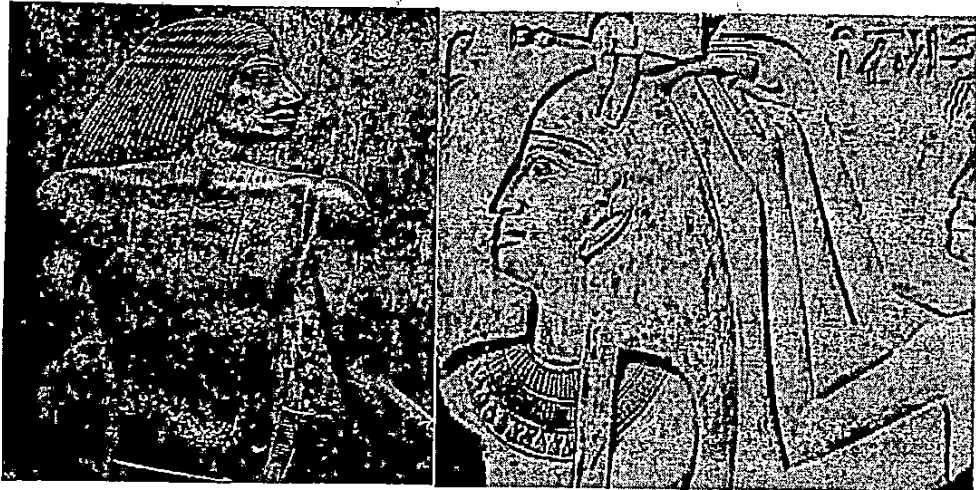
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(35) <http://www.touregypt.net/mag07012000/mag4.htm>

(36)

<http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/prehistory/egypt/dailyvlife/hairstyles.html>

Ladies usually wore their black hair long, although some female heads from the earlier dynasties display a "mannish" short haircut. A popular and becoming style was to let the long hair hang loose, thick and waving. Egyptian hairstyles varied from one time period to another. In the classical time of the old kingdom, men often wore a simple short cut like the one prevalent today. Other popular styles were the long, shoulder-length bob and the short cap of tight curls set in formal rows. In the middle kingdom style was the shawl-shape, with bangs across the forehead and the long side hair cut to a point in front. In the new kingdom a new coiffure swept the country, at least among noblemen. It was cut in two layers. The top consisted of long thin sausage curls, and the underlayer was made up of rows of shorter curls or marcelled waves hanging to the shoulders.<sup>(37)</sup>



*Egyptian Museum, CG, 1427, JE, 28504.*  
<http://www.philae.nu/akhet/hairdress.jpg>

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(37) Barbara Mertz, *op.cit*, 76.

The Egyptian hairstyles of children consisted of a shaved head except for one, long plaited lock which hung at the side. This lock of hair was referred to as the 'Lock of Youth'. This hairstyle was the traditional style worn by both boys and girls until the age of puberty. At the age of puberty the 'Lock of Youth' was cut off and the young men then adopted the same hairstyle as the men - short or shaved. The young girls then kept their hair long, which they dressed as plaits or braided pony tails, and occasionally a fringe was cut. Their hair was elaborately curled and occasionally adorned with jewelry, beads and hair bands.<sup>(38)</sup>



<http://www.king-tut.org.uk/ancient-egyptians/egyptian-hairstyles.htm>

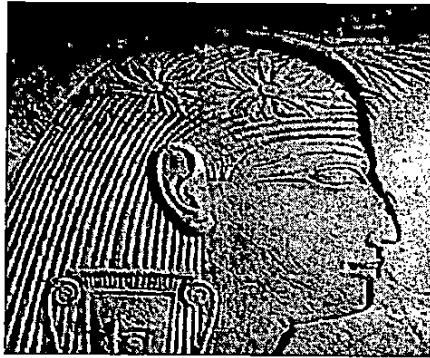
### X-Wigs:

In ancient Egypt, men and women used to shave their heads bald replacing their natural hair with wigs. Egyptian women did not walk around showing their bald heads, they always wore the wigs. Head shaving had a number of benefits. First, removing their hair made it much more comfortable in the hot Egyptian climate. Second, it was easy to maintain a high

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(38)<http://www.king-tut.org.uk/ancient-egyptians/egyptian-hairstyles.htm>

degree of cleanliness avoiding danger of lice infestation. In addition, people wore wigs when their natural hair was gone due to old age. However, even though the Egyptians shaved their heads, they did not think the bald look was preferable to having hair. Priests were required to keep their entire bodies cleanly shaved. They shaved every third day because they needed to avoid the danger of lice or any other uncleanness to conduct rituals. This is the reason why priests are illustrated bald-headed with no eyebrows or lashes.<sup>(39)</sup>



<http://floralwisdom.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/03/ancient-2.jpg>

There were periods when the hair was worn shoulder-long or even longer by both men and women. But at times, adults, men and women, had their heads shaven, priests seemingly most of the time. The reason generally given for this by historians following *Herodotus* is the prevention of head lice:

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(39)

<http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/prehistory/egvpt/dailyvlife/hairstyles.htm>,  
op.cit.



*The priests shave themselves all over their body every other day, so that no lice or any other foul thing may come to be upon them when they minister to the gods.*

*(Herodotus, Histories II)*

For body depilation mixtures of crushed bird bones, oil, sycamore juice, and gum, or like concoctions were heated and applied to the skin<sup>2</sup> after cooling the hardened layer was then presumably pulled off, removing the hair. They also used tweezers, *tj'ait-iret*, to pull out unwanted hair<sup>(40)</sup>

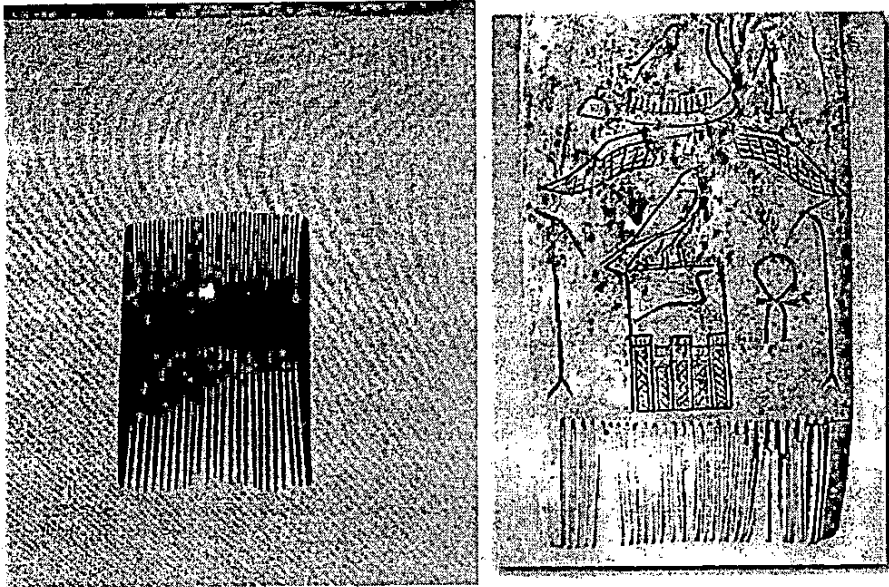
Egyptians used a material called henna (used for nails and lips, too) to dye their hair red. Scientific studies show that people used henna to conceal their gray hair from as early as 3400 BC. Like today, ancient Egyptians were also facing the same problem of hair loss, and they wanted to maintain their youthful appearance as long as possible. There were many kinds of suggested remedies targeting primarily men. In 1150 BC, Egyptian men applied fats from ibex, lions, crocodiles, serpents, geese, and hippopotami to their scalps. The fat of cats and goats was also recommended. Chopped lettuce patches were used to smear the bald spots to encourage hair growth. Ancient Egyptians also made use of something similar to modern aromatherapy. Fir oil, rosemary oil, (sweet) almond oil and castor oil were often used to stimulate hair growth. The seed of fenugreek, that plant herbalists and pharmacologists still use today, was another remedy.<sup>(41)</sup>

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(40)<http://nefertiti.iwebland.com/timelines/topics/cosmetics.htm>, op.cit.

(41)<http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/prehistory/egypt/dailylife/hairstyles.htm>  
op.cit

**XI-The combs:**



*Aswan*

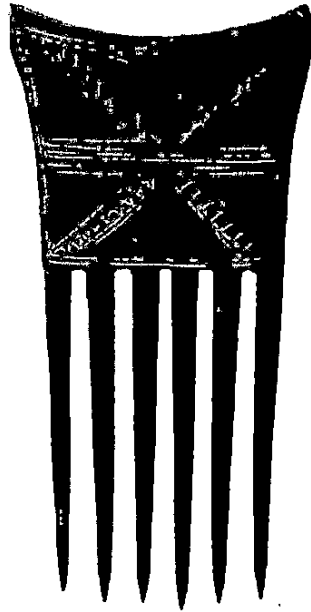
*Museum*

<http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/ivory.htm>

The combs used for the hair were also made of wood or ivory, and several examples of the small-tooth comb are known. Of the combs that were placed in the hair as ornaments, the oldest known belong to the late Neolithic period. <sup>(42)</sup>

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(42) Wallis Budge.E.A, op.cit, P, 70.



<http://www.worldwidestore.com/1466c.htm>

**XII-Tattoos in Ancient Egypt:**



[http://www.britishmuseum.org/images/ps261960\\_m.jpg](http://www.britishmuseum.org/images/ps261960_m.jpg)

In early times women and sometimes men, cut or punctured designs of various kinds on certain parts of their body, with the idea that they would protect them against the attacks of evil spirits. In later times loyal officials had the name of the reigning king tattooed on their shoulders or breasts, and royal cartouches were often cut on the shoulders and breasts of the statues of officials, perhaps with the idea of placing them under the magical protection of the king. <sup>(43)</sup>

The earliest intimations of tattoos come from clay figurines dating to roughly 4000BCE. These female figurines are decorated with dots, dashes and lozenges. This was inconclusive evidence until the discovery and examination of preserved, mummified bodies, whose body designs closely echo the patterns etched on the figurines. Among the best-preserved mummies is that of a woman from Thebes from *Dynasty XI* (2160-1994 BCE), whose tomb identifies her as *Amunet*, Priestess of Hathor. Sometimes described as a concubine of *Mentuhotep II*, tattoo patterns remain clearly visible on her flesh. No amulet designs for Amunet. Instead, she bore parallel lines on her arms and thighs and an elliptical pattern below the navel in the pelvic region. Several other female mummies from this period also clearly show similar tattoos as well as ornamental scarring across the lower abdomen. <sup>(44)</sup>

Tattooing was known and practiced. Mummies of dancers and concubines, from the Middle Kingdom, have geometric designs tattooed on their chests, shoulders and arms.

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(43) Wallis Budge.E.A, op.cit, P, 68.

(44) <http://www.touregypt.net/magazine/mag11012000/mag4.htm>.

In the New Kingdom, tattoos of the god Bes could be found on the thighs of dancers, musicians and servant girls. <sup>(45)</sup>

### XIII-Conclusion:

Speaking generally, the Egyptians lived upon the produce of their own country which except in continuous years of famine, was amply sufficient for their needs. <sup>(46)</sup>

The natural ingredients themselves are among the most accessible treasures of this ancient culture. We have collected samples and indications for items in constant use since time immemorial for the benefit of modern science and contemporary beauty. Some of these oils are common and familiar to us today. Aside from praising the fragrant quality of many of these plant materials, the pharaohs documented extensively the natural ingredients that they used in cosmetics, toiletries, aromatherapy, herbal teas and natural medicines. These items were applied, inhaled, in jested and administered using poultices. The ancient Egyptians were proficient in incorporating beauty into every aspect of life (and death). The medicines and cosmetic mixtures of the ancient Egyptians are not only scientifically sound they are also useful in contemporary formulations. Egypt, the mother of civilization. <sup>(47)</sup>

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(45)

<http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/prehistory/egypt/dailylife/hairstyles.htm>  
[op.cit](#)

(46) Wallis Budge.E.A, op.cit, P, 75.

(47) Mona Shaath and Nadim Shaath, op.cit, p, 5.



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