

Hawara Mummies



Hawara mummies created a sensation when they were discovered, and in 1997 visitors to the British Museum found the first major exhibition of the mummy portraits from the Fayum very disquieting. Some burst into tears, some had to leave, unable to bear the clear bright gaze of the living dead.

The portraits were made in the first centuries AD, at the cultural crossroads: their subjects were Roman citizens, of Greek ethnic origin – their ancestors probably Macedonian soldiers paid off in land – living in the Fayum, one of the most fertile regions of the northern Egypt.

Was ich besonders erstaunlich finde: „Realistische“ Portraits [dieser Art](#) gibt es erst wieder in der Renaissance, mehr als

ein Jahrtausend später. Man müsste untersuchen, woran das genau liegt. An der Technik nicht, weil es die Materialien für [Tafelmalerei](#) immer gab. Mir schwant da etwas – vielleicht haben [George Thomson und Alfred Sohn-Rethel](#) ja doch recht.