

Article

The Girl with the Golden Wreath: Four Perspectives on a Mummy Portrait [†]

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Abstract: A mummy portrait of a young woman with a golden wreath is part of the archaeological collection of the Allard Pierson Museum in Amsterdam. This portrait is covered by four authors, each from their separate perspective, namely provenance research, technical examination, museum presentation, and diversity education. Provenance research is significant not only for tracing the second-life biography of the panel, but also for assessing its bona fide authenticity. Non-invasive examinations can help identify possible underlayers, pigments and modern restorations. Museological aspects concern the contextualization of the portrait, not only as a funerary artefact, but also as an expression of physical appearance. Educational programs can be implemented to illustrate to museum visitors the relevance of ancient artefacts for modern society.

Keywords: panel portraiture painting; archaeology; Roman Egypt; provenance research; technical examination; museum presentation; museum education; multiculturalism

1. Introduction

Mummy portraits painted on wooden panels or linen shrouds were an invention of the Roman Imperial period in an otherwise millennia-old Egyptian funerary tradition.¹ These painted portraits were enclosed over the head within the linen wrappings of the mummified remains of some of the wealthiest inhabitants of Roman Egypt. As their first significant archeological discoveries were made in the Fayum Oasis to the southwest of Cairo, they are commonly known as Fayum mummy portraits—although they have been found elsewhere along the Nile valley too, such as at Saqqara (south of Cairo) and Deir el-Bahari (on the west bank across Luxor), Panopolis (mod. Achmim) and particularly Antinopolis (mod. Sheikh ‘Ibada).

A mummy portrait of a young woman adorned with a golden wreath (Figure 1), which is part of the archeological collection of the Allard Pierson Museum in Amsterdam (Figure 2), offers a wealth

¹ For Romano-Egyptian mummy portraits, e.g., see: Corcoran (1995); Doxiadis (1995); Borg (1996); Walker (2000); Riggs (2006); Spier et al. (2018, pp. 241–43, no. 145 [SEC]).

of information for research scholars as well as museum visitors.² The naturalistic portrait on a greenish-grey background appears to depict a girl of about fourteen years of age from an affluent family.³ With her head turned slightly to the (viewer's) left, and a twinkle in her eyes, she seems still very much alive. She wears a red tunic with black stripes, golden ear pendants, a barely visible pearl necklace, and is crowned with a wreath of gilded leaves. That golden wreath symbolizes her blissfulness due to the divine favor she enjoys in the afterlife. While average life expectancy in Roman Egypt was low (about 40 at most for men, and younger still for women, viz. 20–25), members of the elite will doubtless have reached a higher age.⁴ The youthfulness of the portrayed girl might therefore be understood as an indication of the exceptionally early age of her death.



Figure 1. The Girl with the Golden Wreath (APM inv. no. 724); painting and gold leaf on wooden panel; perhaps from Hawara (Fayum), Egypt; h. 302 mm; ca. 50–100 CE (or later); ex Reinhardt coll., Cairo, ca. 1890–ex Leyds coll., The Hague, ca. 1903–ex Scheurleer coll., The Hague, 1907–APM, Amsterdam, 1934. [Photography by Michiel Bootsman; courtesy of the Allard Pierson Museum].

² APM inv. no. 724; [Scheurleer \(1909, 64, no. 45, pl. 3, Figure 2\)](#); [Allard Pierson Museum \(1937, 19, no. 111, pl. 11\)](#); [Parlasca \(1966, 213; id. Parlasca 1969–2003, II: 43, no. 307, pl. 72, Figure 4\)](#); [Allard Pierson Museum \(1972, pl. 29\)](#); van Haarlem in [Eggebrecht \(1981, p. 74\)](#); [Scheurleer \(2009, pp. 66–67\)](#); van Oppen in [Hupperetz et al. \(2014, p. 146\)](#).

³ It should be noted, however, that age is difficult to gauge from ancient portraits, whether painted or sculptural; e.g., see: L. A. Beaumont and J. H. Oakley in [Neils and Oakley \(2003, pp. 59–84, 163–94\)](#); Huppertz in [Hembold-Doyé \(2017, pp. 33–38, the physical remains of a young girl of no more than seven years old, which was adorned with a mummy mask seemingly depicting a young woman\)](#); [Purup \(2019\)](#).

⁴ [Bagnall and Frier \(1994, pp. 75–110\)](#); cf. T. Parkin in *BMCR* 1995.03.20 (for doubts about the accuracy of male life expectancy statistics).

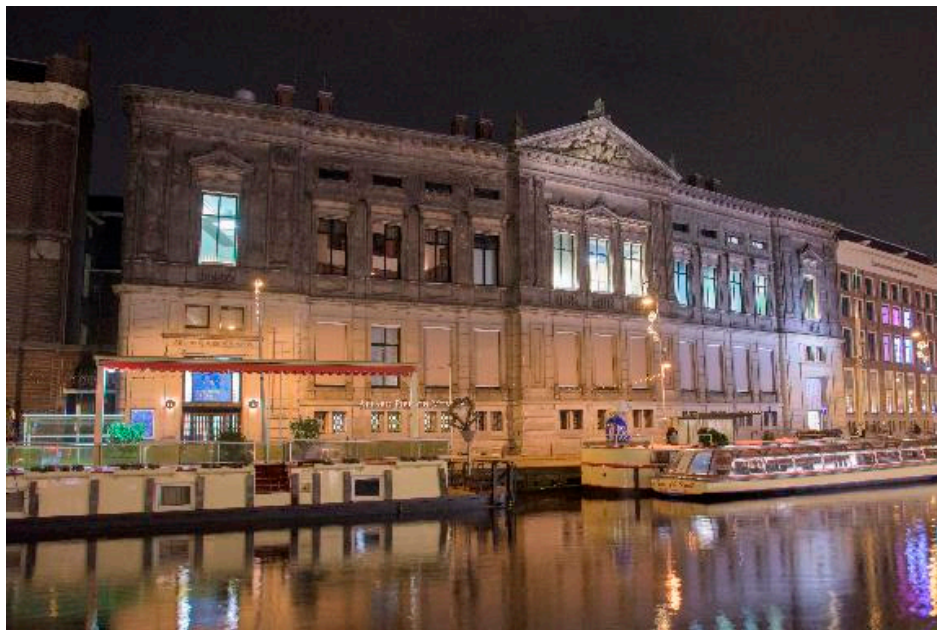


Figure 2. The Allard Pierson Museum by night, seen from across the Rokin canal in December 2015. [Image credit: CC BY-SA 4.0].

While presented jointly, the following article will cover four perspectives each by a single author: (1) provenance research by J. Barr; (2) technical examination by J. M. van Daal; (3) museum presentation by B. F. van Oppen de Ruiter; and (4) museum education by C. M ten Berge. Our presentation is thus intended as a case study aimed at illustrating what a single archaeological artefact examined from four different perspectives can teach us.

2. Provenance Research

Comprising antiquities from across the ancient Mediterranean with an emphasis on Egypt, Greece and Rome, the Allard Pierson was established as the archaeological museum of the University of Amsterdam in 1934.⁵ The museum is named for Prof. dr. Allard Pierson (1831–1896), son of the patrician businessman Jan Lodewijk Gregory Pierson (1806–1873) and the Dutch author Ida Oyens Pierson (1808–1860), daughter of the banking family Oijens. As theologian, art historian and linguist, Allard Pierson was appointed in 1877 as the first professor of archaeology at the University of Amsterdam. For educational purposes, he set about assembling a substantial collection of plaster casts of ancient works of art.

The actual archaeological collection—viz., rather than said casts—initially derived from the collections of Prof. dr. Sir Jan Six (1857–1926), the successor of Allard Pierson as professor of archaeology in Amsterdam; Prof. dr. Friedrich W. Baron von Bissing (1873–1956), the first professor of Egyptology in The Netherlands (quite possibly the largest private collection of “Aegyptiaca”); and particularly Prof. dr. Constant W. Lunsingh Scheurleer (1881–1941), a banker and collector, son of the banker and musicologist dr. Daniël François Scheurleer (1855–1927), and his wife Maria E. P. Lunsingh Tonckens (1860–1891).⁶ This historical sketch, however brief, may at least give an impression of the social circles from which the museum collection derives, namely the highly educated, literary, wealthy elite of patrician or aspiring noble families.

⁵ For the history of the APM, e.g., see: [Allard Pierson Museum](#) (1937, pp. vii–ix); [Scheurleer](#) (2009, pp. 13–14); van Beek and Hupperetz in [Hupperetz et al.](#) (2014, pp. 176–80).

⁶ For C. W. Lunsingh Scheurleer, esp. see: [van Epen](#) (2002, pp. 279–349).

The mummy portrait under question, which we will henceforth call the Girl with the Golden Wreath, derives from the collection of Constant Lunsingh Scheurleer. He befriended Von Bissing in Munich, and the idea germinated to combine their respective collections. In order to display their private collections to the general public, they opened the Museum Carnegielaan in 1924, behind the Peace Palace in The Hague, and next to the elder Scheurleer's museum of musical instruments.⁷ Due to the Great Depression, the family firm Scheurleer & Sons, where Scheurleer had acted as director since 1921, was liquidated and both the musicological and archaeological collections were sold.

Like many of the roughly thousand known mummy portraits and mummy portrait fragments, the original burial context of the Girl with the Golden Wreath is unknown.⁸ While this is not the appropriate place to address the scope in depth, these mummy portraits have historically been associated with a cluster of sites in the Fayum Oasis in Egypt, southwest of modern Cairo—including Philadelphia (mod. er-Rubayat), Arsinoe-Crocodilopolis (mod. Hawara), Karanis (mod. Kom Oshim), and Tebtynis (mod. Umm el-Baragat). Mummy portraits have, however, been excavated throughout Egypt—from Syene (mod. Aswan), far to the south, to Antiphrae (mod. Marina el-Alamein) in northeast, and in other areas in between, such as the necropoleis of Thebes and Memphis.⁹

This article is likewise not a suitable place to engage in a discussion about the consequences resulting from an artefact's disassociation from its original findspot. An important debate about the matter, within the context of exhibitions at several high-profile institutions, was opened up by Christopher Chippindale and David Gill two decades ago, and has been reignited more recently by Elizabeth Marlowe and others. (Chippindale and Gill 2000; Joyce 2012; Marlowe 2016; Lyons 2016; Charney 2019)¹⁰ The loss of a secure archaeological context certainly hinders our understanding of mummy portraits in general, specifically in terms of their origin (i.e., their place of manufacture and/or findspot) as well as their chronology.

Although the exact provenience, or findspot, of this portrait has been irrevocably lost, consideration of the portrait's known owners as well as comparative analyses of its composition and historical treatments can allow us to reconstruct a partial biography of the portrait's history. The portrait is first securely documented in 1907 when it entered the collection of Constant W. Lunsingh Scheurleer under inventory number 724. (The Allard Pierson Museum retained his numbers when he was forced to sell his collection.) As with many other mummy portraits, it had already passed through multiple hands. From Scheurleer's original records (Figure 3), the Girl with the Golden Wreath can be traced to the collection of the German scholar, art collector and dealer Dr. Carl Reinhardt (1856–1903), who likely acquired it in Cairo, where he served as a diplomat at the Imperial Prussian Consulate.¹¹

⁷ For Museum Carnegielaan, see: von Bissing et al. (1924).

⁸ Most known specimens are collected in Parlasca's monumental 4-vol. work (1969–2003).

⁹ For a map of relevant sites, e.g., see: Walker (2000, p. 8).

¹⁰ cf. Gill, "Looting Matters" available online at <https://lootingmatters.blogspot.com>.

¹¹ For Carl (also spelled Karl) Reinhardt, see: Parlasca (1966, pp. 29–30, n. 91); Goldziher and Hartmann (2000, p. 69, n. 3); there is easy ground for confusing this scholar and diplomat with his namesakes: Carl August Reinhardt (1818–1877), an author and artist, as well as Karl Reinhardt (1849–1923) and his son (1886–1958), the former a school reformer in Frankfurt, the latter the famous philologist.

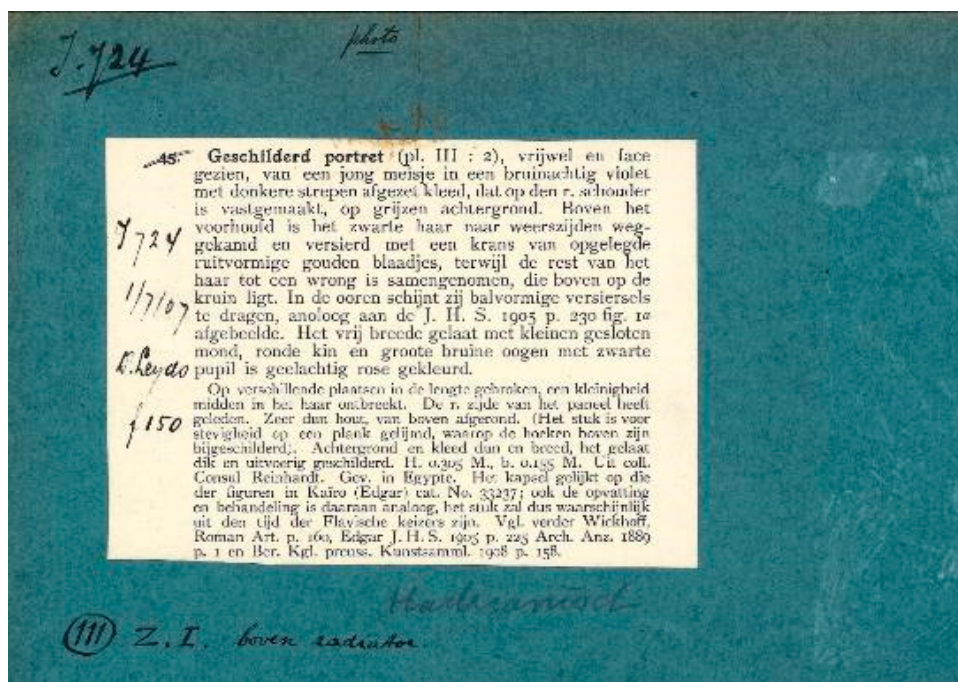


Figure 3. Scheuleer inventory card (CWLS 724), from the APM archival records, showing acquisition history and further details.¹²

In 1887, Reinhart acquired two mummy portraits, a young girl and an older woman, from Rubayat; as well as two linen mummy shrouds from unspecified provenance in 1897 (all now in Berlin).¹³ Although at this point, his precise sources for mummy portraits are not known (in terms of exact findspot and/or intermediary dealer), descriptions of the sources for his other collections of textiles, papyri, and Egyptian artworks help illuminate the art market networks extant in Egypt at this time. These sales include a set of reliefs, now in Karlsruhe, “von einem Beduinen gekauft” (Schürmann 1983, p. 5) and the famous Berlin Codex, purchased “in Kairo von einem Antikenhändler aus Achmim”, (Schmidt 1896, p. 839; Schmidt 1903, p. 2; cf. Königliche Museen zu Berlin 1899, 6; Parlasca 1983, p. 147, n. 4). north of Nag Hammadi in central Egypt, an area with which the Codex is now itself associated (King 2003, pp. 7–12; Schenkes 2012, pp. 293–304, 659–76). The Heidelberg collection of

¹² The printed text reads:

Painted portrait ([Scheurleer 1909] pl. III: 2), viewed nearly frontal, of a young girl in brownish violet garment marked with dark stripes, which is fastened on her r. shoulder, on a grey background. Over the forehead, the black is combed to either side, and is adorned with a wreath of overlaid small diamond-shaped golden leaves, while the rest of the hair is pulled back into a bun at the top of the head. She seems to wear ball-shaped ornaments in her ears, analogous to those depicted in [Edgar] J.H.S. 1905, p. 230, Figure 1a. The fairly broad face with small closed mouth, round chin and large brown eyes with black pupil is of yellowish pink color.

On various places broken lengthwise, small details missing in the hair. The r. side of the panel has suffered. Very thin wood, rounded at the top. (For support, the piece has been glued to a board of which the upper corners have been painted.) Background and dress painted thin and broad, the face thick and elaborately. H. 0.305 m, W. 0.155 m. From coll. Consul Reinhardt. Found in Egypt. The hairstyle is similar to that of the figures in Cairo (Edgar) cat. no. 33237; the conception and treatment are also analogous to that example, so this piece is probably from the time of the Flavian emperors. Comp. also [F.] Wickhoff, *Roman Art* [1900], p. 160; Edgar J.H.S. 1905, p. 225; Arch. Anz. [Archäologischer Anzeiger] 1889, p. 1; and Ber. Kgl. preuss. Kunstsamml. [Berichte aus den Königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlungen] 1908, p. 158.

¹³ Königliche Museen zu Berlin (1899, p. 352, nos. 10.271 and 272, and pp. 356–57, nos. 13.277 and 278); Parlasca (1966, pp. 29–30, n. 91; id. Parlasca 1969–2003, nos. 114, 286 and 298). While not mentioned in these references, the date of the acquisition of the two portraits and their provenience from Rubayat would seem to indicate that Reinhart purchased these specimens directly from Theodor Graf (*infra* n. 16).

papyri was purchased in 1897 from Reinhardt and was said to have come from the Fayum as well as sites in Middle and Upper Egypt (Seider 1964, p. 142; Kaplony-Heckel 2009, p. 124, n. 5; Gerber 2010, p. 114). Reinhardt also sold 173 Coptic textile fragments to Karlsruhe in 1899, although no market provenances were attached to these beyond Reinhardt's location in Cairo (Linscheid 2017, p. 9).

It is worth noting that many of the artefacts associated with Reinhardt, particularly the funereal textiles, were popular on the art market at the same time as and often exploited from the same burial areas as the mummy portraits.¹⁴ It is nevertheless clear that many of Reinhardt's purchases in Egypt were already several stages removed from the original contexts of these objects. Indeed, Reinhardt's documented purchases of the 1880s and 1890s occurred when the market for mummy portraits was primed by the arrival in Europe of the vast portrait collection of Theodor Graf (1840–1903),¹⁵ another Cairo-based collector, which he had acquired from agents “in the field” contemporaneously with Reinhardt's purchases, and the excavated portraits discovered by Flinders Petrie at Hawara in 1887. (Petrie 1889, 1911; cf. Bierbrier 2012, pp. 428–30).

When precisely the portrait of the Girl with the Golden Wreath left Egypt is unrecorded. Reinhardt himself had left Egypt to become Prussian Consul in Persia (December 1900), where two unspecified mummy portraits were exhibited in his private domicile.¹⁶ He soon after died in Munich (25 November 1903) (Bennecke 1904, p. 13; Seider 1964, p. 151). The Girl with the Golden Wreath arrived in Scheurleer's collection in The Hague by 1907. His records do indicate that the portrait had been acquired through the intermediary Willem L. Leyds (1859–1940), a Dutch private collector (Figures 3 and 4).¹⁷ The latter had been a Dutch statesman in the South African Republic (Transvaal) and its diplomatic advocate in Europe during the Second Boer War (1899–1902). Afterwards, he retired in The Hague. At the turn of the century, Leyds had acquired a large number of Egyptian antiquities from Reinhardt. In The Hague, he befriended Scheurleer and occasionally acted as his agent at auctions. Tracing the biography of the portrait's second life, from Reinhardt (ca. 1880–1900) via Leyds (ca. 1900–1907) to Scheurleer (1907–1934) thus illustrates well the social circles in which it passed, namely a distinctly educated, diplomatic and wealthy milieu.

The technical examination described below will reveal other aspects of the portrait's biography, particularly its modern restoration. Although the results do not immediately give further indications of the panel's provenance history, further research on mummy portraits in general may eventually offer additional clues. For instance, while hidden behind a modern reinforcing board, X-radiography (about which more below) reveals that the back of the panel does not appear to have been stamped, say by Graf or another intermediary art dealer. If other mummy portraits have similar modern boards, that not only reinforce the panel but also create the impression of a rectangular shape (rather than a rounded or slanted top), this might be taken as an indication of the work of an art dealer in Cairo. The modern additions were painted in the same color as the portrait's background, perhaps with pigments that might eventually be traced to a modern art dealer's workshop. The varnish, too, might have been applied in Egypt (Cairo?), still—as it serves no conservation purpose.¹⁸ (While it now darkens the tones of the panel, it may once have added a brilliant luster to the portrait.) These aspects are, for the moment, no more than tantalizing pointers. However, if researchers come to share their results in a database such as that of the Getty APPEAR project, networks might be discovered, not only

¹⁴ For Coptic textiles from the Kelekian collection, ca. 1910, see: Thomas (2010, esp. pp. 303–6).

¹⁵ For Graf, see: Buberl (1922); Parlasca (1966, pp. 23–29); A. Bernhard-Walcher in Seipel (1998, pp. 27–35); Bierbrier (2012, pp. 219–20; cf. Seider 1964, p. 148) (Reinhardt befriended Graf).

¹⁶ Rohrbach (1901, p. 147): “Dr. Reinhardt besitzt von seiner Dienstzeit in Kairo her zwei ägyptische Mumienporträts . . . , die wenige Museen in Europa zu kaufen in der Lage sein werden” (it seems unlikely that these examples refer to the portraits that are now in Berlin).

¹⁷ For W. J. Leyds, e.g., see: van Niekerk (1985) (political biography in Afrikaans).

¹⁸ In his journal (29 January–5 February 1888), Petrie (Petrie 1880–1929) observed that all mummy portraits “should be treated eventually just like any other old pictures; carefully cleaned, & then varnished with the best copal varnish” (Petrie MSS Collection, Journals 1.7, VII: p. 34); available online at <http://archive.griffith.ox.ac.uk/index.php/petrie-1-7-part-1>.

of the mummy portraits' past life, but also of their afterlife in modern collections.¹⁹ These shared results will immensely advance the study of provenance and acquisition history.


ALLARD PIERSON MUSEUM. Archaeologisch Museum der Universiteit van Amsterdam.		
Zaal: <i>XI</i>	Kast: <i>973A</i>	Inv.nr.: 724.
Grandstof: <i>Hout en was.</i>	Omschrijving voorwerp: <i>Elfenbein portret van een meisje.</i>	Gids nr.: <i>III.</i>
Datum v. aanwinst: <i>1934</i>		Cat. nr.:
Verworven van: <i>Museum Scheurleer, den Haag.</i>		Kaart nr.:
Door: <i>Aankoop</i>		H. <i>30.2 cm</i> L.
Prijs:		Br. Di.
Vroeger in: <i>Scheurleer, 1907. Coll. Leyds, den Haag. uit Hg. Consul Reinhardt f. 150.-</i>		Foto nr.: <i>43.772.7351</i> <i>47</i>
Herkomst: <i>Egypte.</i>		Cliché nr.:
		Tijd van ontstaan: <i>Claudius - Neronisch.</i>
		Plaats van ontstaan: <i>Egypte.</i>

Figure 4. Allard Pierson Museum inventory card (APM 724), from the APM archival records, showing acquisition history and further details.

As is often the case also in other museum installations and most other objects at the Allard Pierson Museum, the portrait is presented in its gallery without provenance information beyond its Egyptian origin.²⁰ Its acquisition history is partially available in earlier publications, but not through the museum's online catalogue.²¹ Visitors are, however, better oriented towards understanding the broader collecting histories in the recently opened Collectors' Cabinet (Figure 5) (de Gelder and Vennik 2016). Here, surrounded by display cases with artefacts from the collections of some of the most prominent contributors to the museum, an interactive presentation encourages viewers to trace the pathways experienced in the second lives of a select number of objects.

By considering the portrait through the lens of provenance research, it serves as an important focal point for understanding the opaque networks of collectors and dealers behind the late 19th and early 20th century art market for Egyptian antiquities both within the role of the museum's own history and more broadly across the world. It is here too that provenance and conservation research can intersect in considering the intertwining histories of authenticity and restoration of objects. The next part of our paper will explore the conservation history of the portrait in more detail.

¹⁹ For the Getty APPEAR Project, see: Roberts (2018); cf. http://www.getty.edu/museum/research/appear_project.

²⁰ Indeed, the desire to reduce the amount of object information on museum labels, in preference for descriptive texts, is a general trend aiming to address aspects of interpretation and significance.

²¹ The portrait's information in the museum's collection catalogue is available online at <http://dpc.uba.uva.nl/archeologischecollectie/record/APM00724> (in Dutch).

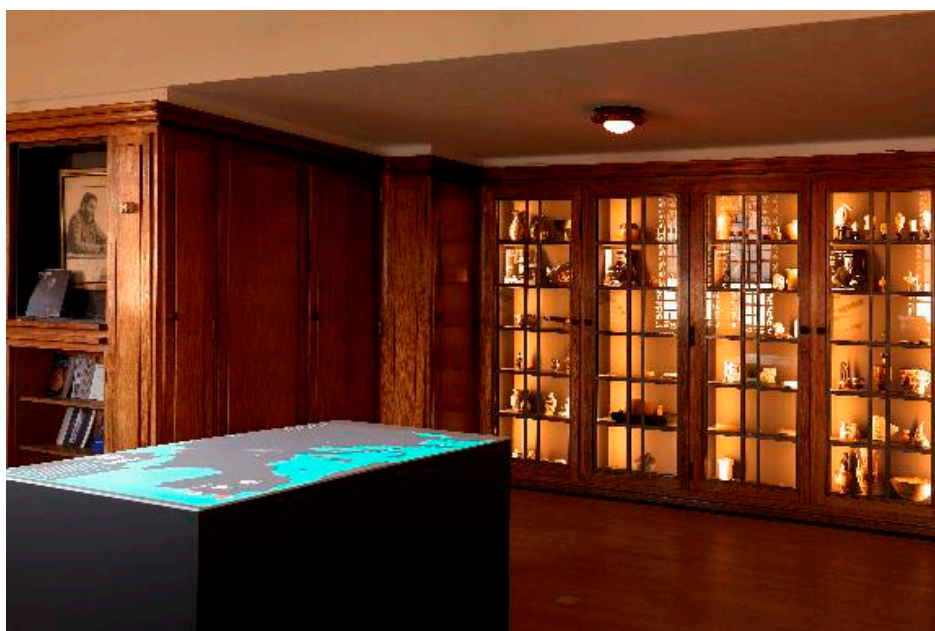


Figure 5. The Collectors' Cabinet in the Allard Pierson Museum with displays (from far left to right) of Allard Pierson, Jan Six, Flinders Petrie, Friedrich von Bissing and Constant Lunsingh Scheurleer, and an interactive map in front. [Photography by Stephan van der Linden; courtesy of the Allard Pierson Museum].

3. Technical Examination

Preliminary technical examinations of the Girl with the Golden Wreath were undertaken in June 2018 as part of a research pilot, and a second round of further analyses took place in March–April 2019 as part of the Technical Art History Master of Arts program at the University of Amsterdam.²² They were performed at the laboratories of the Rijksmuseum Atelier in Amsterdam. The goal of the examinations was to determine the materials and characterize the techniques used to create the portrait, with the expectation that it would lead to new insight about its contextualization. The portrait had not undergone any prior technical examination. Furthermore, the Allard Pierson Museum wished for no samples to be taken. These factors, combined with the available time, influenced the choice for specific and limited non-invasive analytical techniques. The examination focused on materials and painting technique. Although it was not a research priority at the time, the examination also yielded information about later conservation treatments.

The first area of interest was the wooden panel. The possibilities for visual examination were limited due to the presence of a modern wooden support completely obscuring the backside of the ancient panel. It was not possible to sample the ancient wood for species determination, but the notable thinness of the ancient panel (ca. 1.5 mm) seems to correspond with the features of *Tilia europaea* (linden/lime) wood described by Caroline Cartwright (Cartwright et al. 2011, pp. 51–53). Unlike the wood of trees native to Egypt (such as fig or palm), linden allows the production of thin panels with a high resistance against deformation and splitting, and which are easy to finish. The fact that the majority (73%) of the mummy portraits examined by Cartwright et al. are painted on linden wood seems to add to the plausibility of this assumption (Ibid. 2011, p. 56, Table 2).

The portrait is painted along the longitudinal axis of the wood grain, which is in accordance with Romano-Egyptian practice, to minimize distortions in the face due to inevitable warping and

²² The following is a partial revision of Jan M. van Daal, "Re-Viewing Amsterdam's Ancient Faces: Technical Examination of Two Fayum Portraits from the Allard Pierson Museum" (unpub. MA research paper; UvA 2018); cf. van Daal and van Oppen de Ruiter (2018).

cracking of the panel (Corcoran 1995, pp. 44–45, Figure 2; Spaabæk 2012, pp. 67–68). From the technical documentation and even with the naked eye, it is clearly visible that the ancient panel was somewhat rounded that the top. Although there are exceptions, portrait panels of this shape were typically produced in the Hawara region (in the southern area of the Fayum), which could be taken as an indication for the portrait's origin (Spaabæk 2012, pp. 67–68).

Examination of the inorganic pigments and gilding mainly consisted of X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy (XRF).²³ In total, six areas of the painting were analyzed with XRF, five of which are ancient and one being a modern addition. All the XRF measurements of the ancient layers showed a peak for calcium, which may be taken as an indicator for the presence of a calcium-based ground layer. In some areas where the ancient paint has flaked off, an off-white underlayer can indeed be observed. The only other peaks of significance were those for lead and iron, suggesting that the painter's inorganic palette mainly consisted of lead white and iron-rich earth pigments, which is in accordance with the findings in the scholarly literature (Salvant et al. 2017, p. 5, Table 1b).

Three types of imaging techniques (X-radiography, infrared reflectography and digital microscopy) were exceptionally valuable in the characterization of the painting technique of the artist who painted the Girl with the Golden Wreath (Figures 6–11).²⁴ The X-radiograph clearly shows how the painter modelled the portrait (Figure 6). Both the X-radiograph and the infrared reflectogram (Figure 7) reveal more fine details that are now obscured by a heavily discolored varnish (about which more below). The girl wears earrings and a pearl necklace; curls of her hair are loosely draped around her forehead.



Figure 6. X-radiograph of the Girl with the Golden Wreath; technical specifications: 25 kV, 2 mA, 60 s, 100 cm. [Image credit: Judith van der Brugge-Mulder; edited for brightness and contrast by Jan van Daal].

²³ XRF measurements were executed by Arie Wallert.

²⁴ X-ray acquisition provided by Judith van der Brugge-Mulder; IR reflectography by Moorea Hall-Aquitania.

Because of its translucency, the tunic is expected to be painted with a red lake pigment (Miliani et al. 2010). Although this could not be analyzed, it is likely that madder was used, since it was the most commonly used material for red lakes in antiquity (Delaney et al. 2017, p. 8).

XRF executed on one of the leaves of the wreath shows a peak for gold, confirming that gold leaf was used to create the wreath. Peaks for potential alloy metals such as silver or copper were not identified, indicating high-purity gold. The gold leaf was added on top of the paint and has an unburnished appearance, which is typical for mordant gilding (Figure 8) (Billinge et al. 1997, p. 31).



Figure 7. OSIRIS infrared reflectogram of the panel portrait taken at a wavelength of 0.9–1.7 μm . [Image credit: Moorea Hall-Aquitania; edited by Jan van Daal].



Figure 8. Micrograph of the intersection of three gilded leaves taken at 29 \times magnification from the golden wreath in the girl's hair. [Image credit: Jan van Daal].



Figure 9. Micrograph of the girl's proper left eye taken at 8× magnification showing the modelling of the paint. [Image credit: Jan van Daal].



Figure 10. Micrograph of the jawline and neck taken at 8.8× magnification showing the modelling of the paint. [Image credit: Jan van Daal].



Figure 11. Micrograph of brushstrokes in the background taken at 8.8× magnification showing the modelling to the viewer's left of the neck. [Image credit: Jan van Daal].

It was not possible to conduct binding medium analysis without taking invasive samples. X-radiography did prove to be a source of information about the artist's painting technique. Through

digital microscopy, it has been possible to image the pastose brushstrokes with which the portrait was painted, and which are even visible up-close with the naked eye (Figures 9–11). The X-radiograph of a portrait examined by Ramer shows similar handling of the paint and outlining of the figure (Ramer 1979, p. 2, Figure 1). The binding medium analysis of that painting indicated an exclusively beeswax-based paint (Ibid., p. 6.). Because it was not possible to analyze the binding medium of the Amsterdam portrait, conjecture about the paint medium is best avoided. Nevertheless, an analogy with the portrait in the Petrie Museum remains interesting, because of the correspondence between handling properties of the ancient paints and the structuring of the compositions. For the Girl with the Golden Wreath, the painter first sketched an outline, with a paint containing a heavy element (probably lead). The artist also used this paint for the modelling of the skin tones and the hair, with the face showing the highest concentration of a heavy element. The bun of the girl's hair on her proper right side was enlarged a *pentimento*, which is invisible to the naked eye. The brushstrokes in the background evince that it was painted around the figure. The image thus offers a view of the artist at work.

With the information retrieved from the technical examination—especially the X-radiography—it would theoretically be possible to sketch an artistic profile, thus offering a new framework for contextualization. The difficulty in this matter, however, is the relative lack of readily-available technical documentation on Fayum portraits. Currently, the only method that yields results is the comparative analysis of the wreath, which is possible because of Klaus Parlasca's monumental catalogue. Funerary wreaths are generally uncommon in Fayum portraits. A survey of this catalogue indicates that 85 portraits (ca. 8.4%) are depicted with a wreath and an even smaller percentage with a type that matches the girl's golden wreath (ca. 1.4%; 14 portraits, excl. APM 724) (Parlasca 1969–2003, nos. 41, 54, 103, 122, 145, 177, 221, 308–9, 311, 326, 332 and 720–21). With three portraits, the Metropolitan Museum of Art houses the largest collection of Fayum portraits with this type of wreath. Stylistically, the Girl in Amsterdam seems close to the Metropolitan's Portrait of a Young Woman in Red (Figure 12).²⁵

The type of wreath worn by the Girl can be characterized as consisting of two to three rows of more or less horizontally oriented polygonal leaves (Figure 8). The straight lines and sharp corners of the individual leaves suggest that the gilder used a stencil for the design of the wreath and possibly during the application of the gold leaf. It has not been possible to match any of the fourteen other wreaths to each other, so it seems unlikely that stencils were reused. The small number of portraits with this type of wreath and the similarity in the shape and orientation of the gold leaves does however suggest that this specific type of wreath was produced either in the same workshop or by the same (travelling?) gilder.

If the Girl with the Golden Wreath should indeed be placed within this context, its dating might have to be reconsidered. Indeed, in the first Scheurleer catalogue (1909) the portrait was dated to the Flavian period (69–96 CE) on the basis of the girl's hair-style and jewelry (Figure 3) (Cf. Edgar 1905; Doxiadis 1995, pp. 234–35; Borg 1996, pp. 71–73). By the time of the first Allard Pierson Museum catalogue (Allard Pierson Museum 1937), the portrait had been re-dated for unknown reasons to the reign of Claudius (41–54 CE) or Nero (54–68 CE) (Figure 4).²⁶ If correct, that would make the Girl with the Golden Wreath the earliest Fayum portrait in a Dutch collection, and one of the earlier examples generally. It has since been re-dated to ca. 50–75 CE, (Scheurleer 2009, p. 66) or more broadly ca. 50–100 CE. (Van Oppen in Hupperetz et al. 2014, p. 146).

²⁵ MMA 09.181.6; Parlasca (Parlasca 1969–2003, II: 43–44, no. 308); Doxiadis (1995, p. 153, pl. 97); Borg (1996, p. 192).

²⁶ *Algemeene gids* 1937, p. 19. It might also be noted that Scheurleer noted “Hadrianic” in pencil on his inventory card (Figure 19).



Figure 12. The Young Woman in Red (MMA acc. no. 09.181.6); encaustic painting and gold leaf on limewood panel; unknown findspot, Egypt; h. 381 mm, ca. 90–120 CE; purchased at art market (Maurice Nahman), Cairo, 1909. [Photography courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York].

It should, however, be noted that the fourteen other portraits with an identical type of wreath have been variously dated approximately between the late-first and late-second century (ca. 75–200 CE); the three examples in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, specifically, have each been dated to different decades between 90–170 CE.²⁷ Furthermore, the similarity of the wreath has not previously been recognized or taken into account in the dating. Most of these *comparanda* have a (possible) provenience: from Hawara (probably via Petrie), Rubayat (via Graf), El-Hiba (via Grenfell and Hunt) and Achmin (via Nahman); four have no stated or asserted findspot. Despite this appearance of a secure origin, it must be stressed that only two examples are known to derive from archaeological excavations of the early 20th century. Moreover, archaeology has thus far failed to provide any scientific grounds for dating mummy portraits along an absolute or even a relative chronology. In all cases, Parlasca has dated the portraits based according to stylistic affinity (and thus fairly subjective arguments), such as clothing, hairstyle, facial hairstyle and/or painting style. Subsequent scholars, such as Barbara Borg or Susan Walker, have similarly relied on stylistic argumentation for dating mummy portraits.

The examination additionally yielded some results about past conservation treatments. The XRF spectrum of one of the added corners showed a small peak for chromium. It is likely that a little bit of chrome green (viz., viridian, or chromium (III) oxide dihydrate) was used to match the added corner to the greyish-green ancient background. A late nineteenth-century date for this addition therefore seems plausible, based on the popularity of viridian in that period (Eastaugh et al. 2008, p. 397). This notion is further supported by the fact that the added corners were already present in the oldest photograph of the portrait in the 1909 Scheurleer catalogue. The heavily discolored varnish is clearly visible under ultraviolet light (Figure 13). It was applied—rather crudely—after the addition of

²⁷ Parlasca (Parlasca 1969–2003, no. 308) (ca. 150–190) = MMA inv. no. 09.181.6 (ca. 90–120); Parlasca (Parlasca 1969–2003, no. 309) (ca. 117–138) = MMA inv. no. 09.181.7 (ca. 120–140); Parlasca (Parlasca 1969–2003, no. 311) (ca. 150–190) = MMA inv. no. 09.181.3 (ca. 140–170). Note the differences in dating between Parlasca and the MMA.

the back support, as it covers the corners. It must have been applied shortly after the first additions, as Lunsingh Scheurleer does not mention anything about discoloration of the portrait.



Figure 13. Ultraviolet photograph of the panel portrait taken at a wavelength of 365–368 nm, *f*/10, 5 s shutter speed and ISO 200; confirming the presence of a varnish layer. [Image credit: Jan van Daal; edited for brightness and coloring].

Ultraviolet-photography furthermore shows the second set of additions (dark black): a smaller corner at the top left and a larger strip along the upper right side (Figure 13). These additions are not covered by the varnish and are perforce of a later date. That is to say, they have been added after the portrait came into the possession of Lunsingh Scheurleer. These modifications are not yet present in the photograph from 1909 nor mentioned in the records of the Allard Pierson Museum. In the absence of any documentation of conservation treatments, these results remain difficult to interpret.

The additions seem to have had the purpose of matching the portrait to the shape of its secondary support, which itself was no doubt intended in part to reinforce the fragile panel. The modern modifications are, however, not only structural. They have the additional effect of presenting the portrait as a neatly rectangular composition—and in so doing conform its appearance to a modern portrait painting. (The first Fayum portraits excavated by Petrie were even exhibited at the National Gallery, London, within rectangular frames.²⁸ In any event, these modifications tell part of the portrait's second-life biography from the time after the removal from its original context.

The research performed at the Rijksmuseum Ateliers did indeed offer new insights. The wealth of information resulting from the technical examination of the Girl with the Golden Wreath could occasion a plethora of new hypotheses. Insufficient readily-available and easily-accessible technical documentation, however, still hampers the (re-) contextualization of Romano-Egyptian mummy

²⁸ Challis (2013, p. 112; cf. Petrie 1911, p. 7); to be sure, some portraits panels were originally framed already in Antiquity, see: Petrie (1889, p. 11, pl. 12) = Parlasca (Parlasca 1969–2003, no. 807) = Walker (2000, pp. 121–22, no. 117 BM, London, reg. no. 1889,1018.1); Parlasca (Parlasca 1969–2003, no. 405) = Walker (2000, pp. 123–24, no. 119) (Getty, Malibu, obj. no. 74.AP.20).

portraits. This research hopefully serves as proof of concept to incite an increase in international collaborations between institutions holding Fayum portraits such as the Getty APPEAR project.

4. Museum Presentation

In the Allard Pierson Museum, the panel portrait of the Girl with the Golden Wreath is currently presented in the Roman gallery rather than among the Egyptian collection—which is not an uncommon practice in museum presentations. The redesigned Roman gallery displays the museum collection in a dynamic semi-permanent presentation, which has already undergone two major changes and several minor adjustments since its reopening in 2014.²⁹ The emphasis in the present collection presentation is deliberately placed on the diversity and exchange as well as the adoption and adaption of cultural traditions within the vast Roman empire (Hupperetz 2016). Selected themes highlight that cultural diversity by means of key objects chosen from three regions, namely Rome, Egypt and the Rhineland. These themes include: power, trade, food and drink, architecture, appearance, entertainment, death and religion.

The mummy portrait in question is displayed as one of the key objects illustrating the wide variety of physical appearances within the Roman Empire. The girl's portrait now shares a display case with a small marble portrait head attributed to Tiberius Gemellus (19–37/8 CE; Figure 14)³⁰ and a figurine of a Germanic mother goddess with child (ca. 2nd cent. CE; Figure 15);³¹ an actual gold-leaf wreath is placed in the case as well.³² Nearby are displays of jewelry (cf. Figure 16),³³ a large collection of sculptural portrait heads and busts showcasing different ethnicities from across the Mediterranean (Figure 17), as well as another mummy portrait from the museum's collection (Figure 18).³⁴ A recently acquired funerary bust of a young woman was purchased for the express purpose of further exhibiting the diversity of appearances within the Roman empire (Figure 19).³⁵



Figure 14. Julian-Claudian Prince Tiberius Gemellus (APM 9350); marble sculpture; Rome (?), Italy; h. 170 mm, ca. 35–40 CE (reign of Tiberius); purchased at art market (*Münzen und Medaillen* auction 51, Basel, 14–15 March 1975, lot 277); ex Langlotz coll., Würzburg—APM, Amsterdam, 1976. [Photography by Stephan van der Linden; courtesy of the Allard Pierson Museum].

²⁹ Van Beek and Hupperetz in Hupperetz et al. (2014, pp. 180–85).

³⁰ APM inv. no. 9350; van Beek and van Oppen in Hupperetz et al. (2014, p. 141).

³¹ On long-term loan from the Dutch National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden: RMO inv. no. h 1941/3.7; van Boekel (1987, pp. 469–70); Hupperetz and van Oppen in Hupperetz et al. (2014, p. 152).

³² APM inv. nos. 14.397–398.

³³ e.g., APM inv. nos. 7001–7004; Hupperetz et al. (2014, p. 145) [BFvOdR].

³⁴ APM inv. no. 14.232; Parlasca (Parlasca 1969–2003, no. 228); Moormann (1999).

³⁵ APM inv. no. 17.670; (van Beek and Jurriaans-Helle (2016)).



Figure 15. Germanic *Matrona* with Child (RMO h 1941/3.7); terracotta figurine; manufactured at Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium (Cologne), Germany, found at Valkenburg (South Holland); h. 185 mm, ca. 2nd cent. CE; RMO, Leiden, 1941. [Photograph courtesy of the Dutch National Museum of Antiquities].



Figure 16. Golden Funerary Treasure (APM 7001, 7003, 7004); golden jewelry; unknown provenance, Egypt; var. diam. (77–255 mm), ca. 3rd cent. CE; ex Bissing coll., Cairo and Munich, var. dates—ex Scheurleer coll., The Hague, ca. 1921—APM, Amsterdam, 1934. [Photography by Michiel Bootsman; courtesy of the Allard Pierson Museum].



Figure 17. The Roman portrait gallery in the Allard Pierson Museum displaying a wide variety of ethnic, cultural, stylistic and material diversity from across the Roman empire. [Photography by Antony Jonges © 2018].



Figure 18. The Young Lady in Pink (APM 14.232); painting on wooden panel; perhaps from Hawara (Fayum), Egypt; h. 356 mm, ca. 3rd cent. CE (or earlier); ex MacGregor coll., Tamworth, prior to 1922–ex Sambon coll., Paris, ca. 1922–ex Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, 1952, inv. OKAnt 2058–APM, Amsterdam, 1998. [Photography by Stephan van der Linden; courtesy of the Allard Pierson Museum].



Figure 19. Funerary Bust of a Young Woman (APM 17.670); marble sculpture; unknown provenance; h. 597 mm, ca. 69–96 CE (Flavian period); ex. private coll., Switzerland (by legate prior to 1966)—purchased at art market (Christies auction, London, 6 July 2016, lot 86)—APM, Amsterdam, 2016. [Photography by Stephan van der Linden; courtesy of the Allard Pierson Museum].

The girl's portrait offers the visitors a fascinating glimpse not only of the blending of Greek, Roman and Egyptian funerary practices and beliefs, but also the entanglements of Greek, Roman and Egyptian religious, cultural and artistic traditions.³⁶ The panel portrait was originally inserted into the wrappings of the girl's mummified remains. Mummification, to be sure, was an age-old Egyptian funerary practice dating back to the Early Dynastic Period (3rd mill. BCE).³⁷ This treatment of the deceased was believed to be necessary to preserve the body for the person's spiritual entities beyond death, so that the individual could live on in the afterworld.³⁸ The golden wreath in the girl's short hair symbolizes her good fortune and divine protection in the afterlife after passing through the judgment before Osiris.³⁹ During that Judgment, the dead's heart is weighed against the feather of Ma'at (divine justice and cosmic order). Should they fail the judgement, a monstrous being, called Ammit, would devour the dead.

Greeks and Romans had only dim conceptions of life after death, the realm of Hades or Pluto. Mystery cults—such as those of Demeter and Persephone, Orpheus, Dionysus, Cybele and Attis, as well as Isis and Osiris, and later Mithras—did offer hope for a blessed afterlife.⁴⁰ These cults became popular throughout the eastern Mediterranean during the Hellenistic period; and spread across the empire during the Roman Imperial age. Some of the wealthiest tombs show that Greeks and Macedonians could also adorn their dead with golden wreaths even before the Hellenistic period, and this practice may be related to the mystery cults. In Hellenistic and Roman Egypt, these various

³⁶ For Egyptian religion, e.g., see: Assmann (2001); Frankfurter (2000); David (2002); for Greek religion, e.g., see: Burkert (1985); Bremmer (1994); for Roman religion, e.g., see: Beard et al. (1998); Rüpke (2016); for Egyptian funerary traditions in Graeco-Roman times, also see: Riggs (2006); for ancient cultural and material entanglements, e.g., see: van Dommelen and Knapp (2010); Hodder (2012); Stockhammer (2013); cf. online at <https://materialentanglements.org>.

³⁷ For mummification, e.g., see: Ikram and Dodson (1998); Tyldesley (1999); Aufderheide (2003); Raven and Taconis (2005).

³⁸ For Egyptian afterlife beliefs, e.g., see: Hornung (1999); Assmann (2011).

³⁹ For the use and symbolism of funerary wreaths, e.g., see: Corcoran (1995, *pass.*); Riggs (2006, pp. 81–82).

⁴⁰ For ancient mystery cults, e.g., see: Burkert (1987); Bowden (2010).

funerary and religious traditions merged through the adoption and adaptation of different practices and beliefs.

The encaustic painting technique was first developed in Classical Greece.⁴¹ The decoration of mummies with a panel portrait or one painted on linen was an invention of the Roman period.⁴² (During the Hellenistic and Roman Imperial period, a more naturalistic stucco mask could be inserted into the mummy (Grimm 1974). It may be speculated that the invention was somehow related to the Roman conquest. Exactly why painted portraits were suddenly added to the mummified body of the deceased, however, remains uncertain. During her keynote address at the APPEAR conference at the Getty Villa (17–28 May 2018), Susan Walker pointed out that the linden wood on which many Fayum portraits were painted generally derives from southeastern Europe, thus including the heartland of the Macedonian veterans who settled in Egypt in the Hellenistic period.⁴³

If Walker's provocative suggestion were correct, it would indicate that the addition of panel portraits to mummies centuries later in the early Roman Imperial period could be understood as an expression of ethnic or cultural identity—a proud exclamation of the Graeco-Macedonian background of the wealthy upper-class inhabitants of the Fayum. Although the Nile Valley is geography isolated, ancient Egypt had always been inhabited by a relatively mixed population with origins in Nubia, Libya, Arabia and the Levant.⁴⁴ In the sixth century, for instance, Greek settlers founded the trading port of Naucratis in the western Nile Delta.⁴⁵ Alexandria, of course, was a cosmopolis of perhaps half a million people hailing from all across the eastern Mediterranean—including a large Jewish population.⁴⁶ The Fayum Oasis in particular was a region where foreign settlers and natives intermarried and lived together in often bilingual families and a multicultural society.⁴⁷

Fayum portraits in general illustrate this cultural and ethnic diversity very well. The Girl with the Golden Wreath wears a red tunic with black stripes. These stripes are often connected to the purple *clavi* of Roman male dress, a privilege of senatorial and equestrian status. Here, however, we should understand the strips as a local adaptation of Graeco-Roman fashion, rather than an expression of social privilege.⁴⁸ The girl's barely visible pearl necklace, likewise, is of classical Graeco-Roman style, while her curly hair is bound in Roman Imperial style. In general, the decoration of the mummified remains with a painted portrait was a most expensive practice that only the wealthiest members of the Graeco-Roman elite in Roman Egypt could afford. In other words, a more appropriate example of the social, cultural and ethnic entanglements in Roman Egypt can hardly be found.

For the opening of the redesigned Roman gallery, the Allard Pierson Museum occasioned a pilot exhibition, entitled "Keys to Rome" (September 2014 through April 2015). The aim of the new presentation, as said, is to illuminate the diversity and connectivity within the Roman Empire. This aim is a deliberate preference for an overarching narrative illustrated by means of several thematic displays, over an aesthetic, art historical and/or chronological presentation of the archaeological collection. The selection of the three stated geographic areas was guided by a combination of factors. Rome was an obvious choice to highlight the central area of the empire. Of all Roman provinces, objects in the Allard Pierson Museum collection, by far the most derive from Egypt—and that Romano-Egyptian collection is moreover of exceptional quality. The Rhineland was selected as a third geographic focus,

⁴¹ For encaustic painting, e.g., see: Doxiadis (1995, pp. 95–98); Stacey et al. (2018).

⁴² *Supra* n. 1 (for Romano-Egyptian mummy portraits).

⁴³ Walker (2018), (abstract) available online at http://www.getty.edu/museum/research/appear_project/downloads/appear_abstracts.pdf.

⁴⁴ For cultural interaction in Egypt, esp. see: von Lieven (2018); Spier et al. (2018).

⁴⁵ For Naucratis, e.g., see: Villing and Schlotzhauer (2006); Colburn in Spier et al. (2018, pp. 82–88); cf. Villing et al. (n.d.) online at https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/online_research_catalogues/ng/naucratis_greeks_in_egypt.aspx.

⁴⁶ For Alexandria, e.g., see: Rausch (1998); Goddio et al. (1998); Arcari 2017; Landvatter in (Spier et al. 2018, pp. 128–34).

⁴⁷ For the Fayum Oasis, e.g., see: Quenouille (2015); Vandonpe et al. (2015); Wilimowska (2016); Rondot et al. (2018).

⁴⁸ For *clavi* and Roman-Egyptian clothing, e.g., see: Walker (2000, p. 16); Cleland et al. (2007, p. 35); Cardon et al. (2018).

as that area offers the museum the ability to show the visitors objects from the Roman provinces nearest to Amsterdam.

It probably does not have to be stressed that the intricate entanglements just described in the preceding section are impossible to convey in a museum display in any straightforward and easily-understood fashion. During the pilot exhibition, multimedia applications and digital visualizations were set up for the purpose of providing background information particularly to key objects wherever the visitor might want to access it (Figure 20) (Hupperetz et al. 2014, pp. 183–84). Visitors could thus access tablets for further details about the key objects based on the texts written for the exhibition publication similarly entitled *Keys to Rome*. The title plays on the keycards the visitors received upon entrance with which they could personalize their museum experience. At their first login with their keycard on a tablet in an introductory room, they were able to choose their language, age level, and regional preference.



Figure 20. Opening of the *Keys to Rome* exhibition at the Allard Pierson Museum showing a visitor engaging with a multimedia application in front of the display with the key objects illustrating physical appearance. [Photograph by Monique Kooijmans © 2014].

The personalized information on the tablets also included three fictional personages, Dominicus, Lucius and Gluca, who provided each their unique point of view about the key objects. As a wealthy businessman from Rome, Dominicus represents the Roman perspective. Lucius was a potter from the Low Countries, while Gluca was a slave girl living in Karanis, Egypt, but originally from the Black Sea. In the case of the mummy portrait of the Girl with the Golden Wreath, Dominicus was for example reminded of his own daughter, who had supposedly also died early. He and his wife had been inconsolable. Lucius would comment that he had never seen a portrait painted on wood, and wondered whether the girl with her golden wreath was of the imperial family. Gluca exclaimed how beautiful she finds the girl's portrait, and hoped that Sarapis would guard her in the afterlife. After the pilot exhibition, many of the digital applications had to be removed for technical and other reasons.

Aiming to avoid a static collection presentation, in which objects remain on display for years or decades, while trying to exhibit archaeological from the Roman Imperial world accessible to the general public, the new dynamic presentation was designed to be revisited regularly. The museum is, of course, not the only cultural institution reconsidering and redesigning its collection presentation.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ From the vast literature on the matter, e.g., see: Fazzini (1995); Economou (1998); Moser et al. (2002); Merriman (2004); MacDonald and Shaw (2004); Zöllner et al. (2009); Tully (2011); van Saaze (2013); Kim (2018).

For the curators and the museum staff, the challenge lies in finding ever new selections of objects to implement this continuous renewal. Texts and labels endeavor to explain the curators' intentions for these selections, themes, and interconnections. These choices, however, are not always easily explained in few words. So, to better inform groups of visitors, the museum offers guided tours and educational programs.

5. Diversity Education

Like cosmopolitan Alexandria and the Fayum district, and just as San Diego and Los Angeles, Amsterdam has a culturally and ethnically diverse population.⁵⁰ The Netherlands in general has had a significant multicultural population (ca. 5–10%) for centuries, including a substantial Jewish segment in Amsterdam—as well as a large tourist presence throughout the year from across the globe.⁵¹ Since the Second World War, foreign-born people have emigrated to The Netherlands especially from Indonesia and Maluku, Surinam and the Antilles, Turkey and Morocco, and more recently from Southern and Eastern Europe. The open borders since the unification of Europe have greatly facilitated moving between member states. Residents with some type of foreign-born background now form the majority in the country's three largest cities, Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague. Cultural and ethnic diversity, as well as the unification process of Europe, like elsewhere in the West, have placed pressure on the notion of national self-identification of the sovereign Dutch nation state. Rightwing populist politicians play on people's fears, claim that the multicultural society has failed, and promote an anti-immigrant agenda.⁵²

The Allard Pierson Museum, comprising the archaeological and special collections of the University of Amsterdam, is located in the heart of the national capital—in a monumental building that once housed the headquarters of the Dutch National Bank (Figure 2).⁵³ For any cultural and educational institution, it is imperative to participate in public discourse when its collection affords an opportunity.⁵⁴ This can be done through tailored guided tours, lectures, round-table discussions, workshops, conferences, symposia, temporary exhibitions as well as collection presentations. To repeat, the redesigned Roman wing of the Allard Pierson Museum does indeed highlight the multicultural entanglements within the Roman Empire in order to make the public aware that culturally and ethnically diverse societies are not a recent, specifically modern Western phenomenon.⁵⁵ The Mediterranean Sea indeed facilitated the movement of people, goods and ideas throughout antiquity—whether through trade and migration, or warfare and conquest.

An archaeological museum is, in general, faced with the challenge of engaging the visiting public.⁵⁶ Ancient artefacts, especially those that are not considered aesthetically pleasing, can easily be found dull and irrelevant for the present—of interest only for knowledgeable specialists.⁵⁷ Every museum's mission is to engage, enthuse and educate the visitors about the history of its collection's objects. For this, guided tours are doubtless the most appropriate method. To be clear: *interactive* guided tours. For, in order to engage the visitors, they have to be invited to participate in the conversation,

⁵⁰ The following is a partial summary of Clara M. ten Berge, "Interculturele sensitiviteit in het basisonderwijs door middel van Oudheidkundige musea: een casestudie bij groep 7 van de Fiep Westendorpschool in Amsterdam en het Allard Pierson Museum" (unpub. BA thesis; Reinwardt Academy 2019); cf. [ten Berge and van Oppen de Ruiter \(2019\)](#).

⁵¹ For cultural diversity in The Netherlands, e.g., see: [Coleman and Garssen \(2002\)](#); [Fearon \(2003\)](#); [Sniderman and Hagendoorn \(2007\)](#).

⁵² E.g., see: [Scholten \(2013\)](#); [Mudde \(2017\)](#); [Erickson \(2018\)](#); [Dasgupta \(2018\)](#).

⁵³ *Supra* n. 5 (for the history of the APM).

⁵⁴ This article would not be the appropriate venue for a discussion about the so-called Universal or Encyclopedic Museum; for which, esp. see the contributions by [MacGregor \(2004\)](#), [Lewis \(2004\)](#), and [Abungu \(2004\)](#) in *ICOM News* 57, pp. 3–5; cf. [Curtis \(2006\)](#); [Cuno \(2008, 2011\)](#); [Burlingame \(2014\)](#).

⁵⁵ *Supra* n. 29 (for the renewal of the Roman gallery); cf. [de Gelder and Stissi \(2017\)](#) (for the "Greeks and Great Powers" gallery); ([van Oppen de Ruiter 2017](#)) (for the Hellenistic gallery, "From Alexander to Cleopatra").

⁵⁶ *Supra* n. 49; also, see: [Not et al. \(1997\)](#); [Exell \(2013\)](#); [Chatterjee and Hannan \(2016\)](#); [McManus \(2016\)](#).

⁵⁷ For related discussions on representing ethnicity and dealing with racism in classical and archaeological studies, e.g., see: [Bond \(2017, 2017\)](#); [Flaherty \(2017\)](#); [Talbot \(2018\)](#); [Pettit \(2019\)](#); [Trip \(2019\)](#).

be allowed to ask questions, and asked to share their opinions. Every object has the potential to become a conversation starter. For educational purposes, the Girl with the Golden Wreath is eminently suitable to engage the visitor in many different discussions about death and the afterlife, identity and appearance, wealth and status, painting techniques as well as cultural diversity and intermarriage, among many other elements; and thus for illustrating the relevance of ancient artefacts for modern society. (A sample questionnaire is appended to this article.)

As an example of the multicultural entanglements of Roman Egypt, the portrait of the young girl offers the museum visitor a mirror to our own multicultural society. In group conversations—whether with elementary school pupils or groups of other age categories—the painting allows us to pose questions such as: to what cultural identity did this girl’s family adhere; what is your ethnicity; how old was this girl when she died; what is an average age to die; what did people in Roman Egypt believe happened to the deceased in the afterlife; do you believe in life after death?

Offering guided tours is a profession that requires training.⁵⁸ Ideally, the guide has a strong educational background in the culture and history of the presented objects; has good people skills to make everyone in the group feel comfortable; and has the talent to moderate discussions, not only by asking the right questions but also by allowing everyone to share their thoughts. A conversation may take unintended turns yet still be valuable and enjoyable for the visitors. Obvious as it may sound, it is recommended that guides are familiar with current methods for giving tours through a museum to improve the experience for the visiting groups of every age category. Groups may consist of experienced museum visitors but may also be made up of elementary school pupils.

The Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) method can be used beneficially for looking at museum objects. This is an easily applicable and generally accessible method for observing objects developed by Philip Yenawine.⁵⁹ The essence of VTS is not to be judgmental when looking and listening, to emphasize that the visitor keeps an open mind and that there are no “wrong” answers to the guide’s questions. One element of the VTS-method is the 2 × 5 approach, in which the guide asks the group to name five elements that strike them when looking at an object, and then five more. The guide can repeat this approach with different visitors until the object is sufficiently described. If necessary, for instance to speed up the process, the guide can offer additional factual information. For this approach, it is recommended to cover accompanying texts or labels, so that the visitors can discover how much they are able to observe for themselves. This is particularly important for elementary school pupils or other groups with younger children.

Another element of the VTS-method is called “Step Inside”, in which the group is invited to imagine that they are in the position of a person represented on the object. This approach is particularly valuable when more than one person is depicted, so that different members of the group can identify with different persons on the object. The importance of VTS is that it has the potential to include the whole group in an accessible way during the tour. The method of asking questions about what everyone thinks they see, rather than lecturing, offers the group a natural opportunity to actively engage with each other in conversations about the objects in the presentation.

Closely related to VTS is the Visible Thinking (VT) method, which can be successfully used in combination with VTS.⁶⁰ The purpose of VT is rather to discover the thought process of the group. While the VT method was developed for use inside the classroom, museum educator Claire Bown has shown that elements of both the VTS-method and VT-routines are easily implemented during a museum tour. VT-routines such as “see-think-wonder”, “what makes you say that”, “think-pair-share”, “headlines” and the “explanation game” are particularly useful in a museum context. These approaches stimulate the group to think and talk about their observations, encourage them to express their opinions,

⁵⁸ For a general introduction about arts and museum education, e.g., see: (Perkins 1994; Black 2005; Hooper-Greenhill 2008; Schep and Kintz 2017; cf. Marlowe 2019).

⁵⁹ Yenawine (2013); cf. online at <https://vtshome.org>.

⁶⁰ Bown (2015); cf. online at <http://www.visiblethinkingpz.org>.

and reveal how they came to draw their conclusions. With this method, they are therefore not only able to better understand themselves and each other, but also to better understand the object that they are looking at.

In museums of antiquities and/or with an archaeological collection, it is often difficult for the general public to immediately understand what kind of object they are looking at or to recognize what exactly it depicts. Within the classic model of guided tours, it tends to become demanding to keep the group's attention for extended periods of time; even focusing on the objects rather than the guide can be problematic; engaging with the objects themselves physically is mostly prohibited for reasons of safety and conservation. VTS and VT are suitable methods to focus the attention on the objects and stimulate conversations about observations, and thus engage the group with the object and each other. The guide will have the ability to personalize the tour; the pupils will feel less pressure to perform; and they will hardly realize that they are being educated. As a consequence, the group will remember the objects better and will have actually enjoyed the museum experience.

In December 2018, a small group of six pupils between ten and eleven years old from an ethnically diverse elementary school in West Amsterdam visited the Allard Pierson Museum. The girl's mummy portrait quickly became a conservation starter.⁶¹ The discussion ranged from the artistic craftsmanship of the painting to the way in which different cultures deal with death. The cultural diversity of Amsterdam as well as the different ethnic backgrounds of the pupils moreover contributed to the content of the conversation, particularly what it means to be bicultural (having parents and grandparents of more than one background) and to live in a multicultural society (such as the Fayum or Amsterdam). The conversation was thus not only about the history or archaeological significance of the object but allowed the pupils the freedom to engage in other subjects. In their evaluation afterwards, the pupils indicated that they had enjoyed the tour through the museum and found the way of looking at the objects very pleasant. From their answers, it is clear that they preferred this visit over the standard tours in which they are required to listen passively. They also indicated that they liked it very much that there were no "wrong" answers. And they were happy to discover what they had seen together.

6. Conclusions

The mummy portrait of the Girl with the Golden Wreath, now in the Allard Pierson Museum (Amsterdam), can be traced back via the Scheurleer and Leyds collections to diplomat and scholar Carl Reinhardt. The latter likely acquired this specimen together with many other Egyptian antiquities in the 1880s and 1890s from a local antiquities dealer in Cairo. While the girl's mummy portrait may well derive from Hawara in the Fayum, its exact findspot remains unknown. Provenance research is significant not only for demonstrating a bona fide acquisition, but also for tracing objects' afterlife through networks of private and institutional collections.

A combination of visual observation and non-invasive technical examination performed on the portrait indicates that it was painted with a relatively simple palette, consisting of madder, lead-white and iron-based earth pigments mixed with a pastose paint, on a calcium-based ground applied most likely on a linden wood panel. The girl's characteristic, eponymous wreath was applied on top of the paint layer through mordant gilding.

The portrait is displayed in the Allard Pierson Museum to illustrate the wide variety of physical appearances within the Roman Empire. Like other Fayum portraits, it is a testament to an intricately entangled multicultural society. The panel painting offers the visitor a fascinating glimpse of the blending of different funerary and religious, cultural and artistic practices and traditions in Roman Egypt.

For educational purposes, the mummy portrait is eminently suitable to illustrate to museum visitors the relevance of ancient artefacts for modern society. It allows us to pose a great many questions

⁶¹ For sample questions, see the Appendix A.

about life and death and is a perfect example of the multicultural entanglements of Roman Egypt—and thus offers us a mirror to our own multicultural society. Most if not all historical societies mutually interacted with neighboring regions—adopting and adapting each other’s customs and traditions, wisdoms and beliefs. In our world today, it is of utmost importance to demonstrate that culturally and ethnically diverse societies have a long history and are not a new phenomenon.

We hope to have shown the importance of multidisciplinary investigations of objects like this mummy portrait, in which the complexities of design, display, economic contexts, collecting, and audience over thousands of years can be considered in tandem with each other. Isolating these strands of research could prevent new discoveries within one from serving as a catalyst for the others—which would be a disservice to a complicated object and its anonymous subject.

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Appendix A Sample Questionnaire

Note: questions for group discussions are best attuned to the nature of the group; rather than broadcasting information, a successful tour guide listens and encourages tour participants to pose questions of their own; proper guidance allows for a wide discussion, in which there are no “stupid” questions and no “wrong” answers—even if the guide carefully draws a distinction between fact and opinion, evidence and interpretation. The following are potential questions that might be addressed within the context of a Romano-Egyptian mummy portrait. Both for the tour guide and for the participants, the best advice is: use your imagination and let your fantasies run free.

- Can you tell us what you see here? Name five things that you see.
- What would you like to know more about?
- Do you think this is a beautiful portrait? Does it matter?
- Would you say that the proportions, the shapes and forms are realistic?
- Can you tell how it was made?
- Why do you think this portrait was painted, for what purpose?
- Will the painter have known the portrayed subject?
- When would the portrait be painted—and for whom?
- How old do you think the portrait person is? What makes you say that?
- Do you think this person was rich or poor? How can you know?
- How do we treat the dead in our society?
- Have you ever attended a funeral or visited a cemetery?
- Do you know what a mummy is?

- Can you tell us why mummies were made?
- Do you know what life expectancy is, and if so, does it change over time—can you guess what average life expectancy was at the time of this portrait?
- Can you tell where this person is from, what her or his ethnic background was?
- Do you identify yourself by your ethnicity, or by another aspect of your personality?
- Do people always have one single ethnicity, or can it be a mix, a combination?
- Do you think that cultural diversity is a modern phenomenon that did not exist in the past?
- Do you have friends or family to talk about cultural diversity and identity differences?
- Do you have any other questions or thoughts you would like to discuss?

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