

Israel to display ancient mummy with modern-day afflictions

July 26 2016, by Tia Goldenberg



Curator Galit Bennett-Dahan talks about a 2,200-year-old Egyptian mummy on display in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, Tuesday, July 26, 2016. Israel's national museum is set to display a 2,200-year-old Egyptian mummy who was burdened with some modern-day afflictions like osteoporosis and tooth decay, the museum said Tuesday. (AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)

Israel's national museum is set to display a 2,200-year-old Egyptian mummy of a man who was afflicted with some modern-day illnesses

such as osteoporosis and tooth decay, the museum said on Tuesday.

The illnesses, discovered using a CT scan, indicate that during his lifetime, the man was largely sedentary, avoided manual labor in the sun and probably ate a carbohydrate-heavy diet.

The mummy is the only such relic in Israel, named the "Protective Eye of Horus," after a pharaonic deity. It was kept for decades at a Jesuit institute in Jerusalem before it was loaned to the Israel Museum. It will be displayed in a museum setting for the first time starting Wednesday.

The research on the mummy builds on previous international studies that have shown that people in ancient Egyptian times suffered from some of the modern-day diseases.

"Osteoporosis is a disease that is characteristic of the 20th century, when people don't work so hard. We are glued to screens," said Galit Bennett, who curated the mummy exhibit. "We were very surprised that there were people who didn't do physical work and that it affected their bodies like this man here."

The museum said that thanks to Egyptian embalming processes and Jerusalem's dry climate, the mummy's bones, teeth and remnants of blood vessels were found largely intact, assisting them in their research. The mummy was also found to have had tooth cavities.



A CT (computerized tomography) scan of a 2,200-year-old Egyptian mummy on display in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, Tuesday, July 26, 2016. Israel's national museum is set to display a 2,200-year-old Egyptian mummy who was burdened with some modern-day afflictions like osteoporosis and tooth decay, the museum said Tuesday. (AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)

Researchers studied the mummy's remains earlier this year using a CT scanner, technology that allowed them to discover the diseases and determine the mummy was a man who lived to what was at the time a relatively old age of 30 and 40 years. He was originally 167 centimeters (5-foot-6) tall but that either in his lifetime or afterward, he had shrunk to 154 centimeters (5-foot-1). His apparently sedentary lifestyle, as well as inscriptions on his coffin, indicates he was a priest, the museum said.

The museum said the mummy is originally from Akhmim, some 480 kilometers (300 miles) south of present-day Cairo. It was given as a gift to the Jesuit Pontifical Biblical Institute in Jerusalem in the late 1920s by

Jesuits in Alexandria, Egypt. The mummy, nicknamed "Alex," was encased in a gold and black coffin and wrapped in strands of linen, a gold mask placed atop its concealed skull.



A 2,200-year-old Egyptian mummy on display in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, Tuesday, July 26, 2016. Israel's national museum is set to display a 2,200-year-old Egyptian mummy who was burdened with some modern-day afflictions like osteoporosis and tooth decay, the museum said Tuesday. (AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)



Israel Museum Director James S. Snyder talks about a 2,200-year-old Egyptian mummy on display in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, Tuesday, July 26, 2016. Israel's national museum is set to display a 2,200-year-old Egyptian mummy who was burdened with some modern-day afflictions like osteoporosis and tooth decay, the museum said Tuesday. (AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)



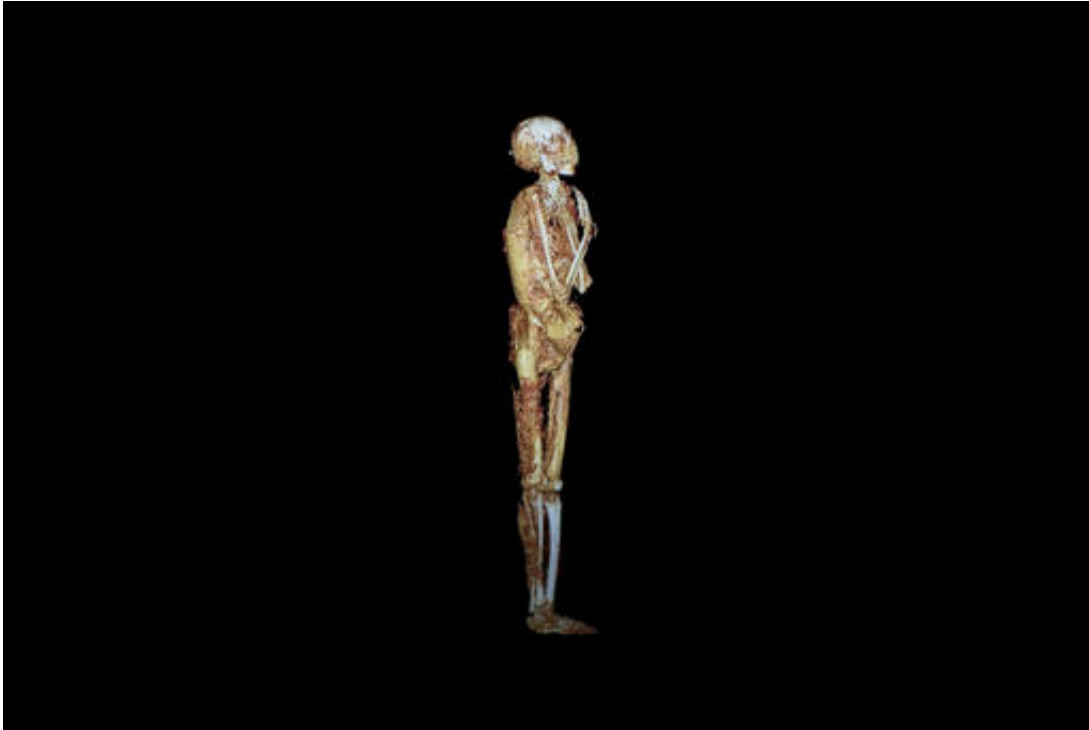
A 2,200-year-old Egyptian mummy on display in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, Tuesday, July 26, 2016. Israel's national museum is set to display a 2,200-year-old Egyptian mummy who was burdened with some modern-day afflictions like osteoporosis and tooth decay, the museum said Tuesday. (AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)



A 2,200-year-old Egyptian mummy sits in its glass case inside the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, Tuesday, July 26, 2016. Israel's national museum is set to display a 2,200-year-old Egyptian mummy who was burdened with some modern-day afflictions like osteoporosis and tooth decay, the museum said Tuesday. (AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)



A CT (computerized tomography) scan of a 2,200-year-old Egyptian mummy on display in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, Tuesday, July 26, 2016. Israel's national museum is set to display a 2,200-year-old Egyptian mummy who was burdened with some modern-day afflictions like osteoporosis and tooth decay, the museum said Tuesday. (AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)



A CT (computerized tomography) scan of a 2,200-year-old Egyptian mummy is displayed in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, Tuesday, July 26, 2016. Israel's national museum is set to display a 2,200-year-old Egyptian mummy who was burdened with some modern-day afflictions like osteoporosis and tooth decay, the museum said Tuesday. (AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)

© 2016 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Israel to display ancient mummy with modern-day afflictions (2016, July 26) retrieved 25 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2016-07-israel-ancient-mummy-modern-day-afflictions.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.