

In show of Pharaonic heritage, Egypt parades royal mummies

April 3 2021, by Samy Magdy



A convoy of vehicles transporting royal mummies is seen in Cairo, Egypt, Saturday, April 3, 2021. Egypt held a parade celebrating the transport of 22 of its prized royal mummies from Egyptian Museum to he newly opened National Museum of Egyptian Civilization. (AP Photo)

Egypt held a gala parade on Saturday celebrating the transport of 22 of

its prized royal mummies from central Cairo to their new resting place in a massive new museum further south in the capital.

The ceremony, designed to showcase the country's rich heritage, snaked along the Nile corniche from the Egyptian Museum overlooking Tahrir Square to the newly opened National Museum of Egyptian Civilization in the Fustat neighborhood, where Egypt's first Islamic capital was located.

The mummies were being transported in climate-controlled cases loaded onto trucks decorated with wings and pharaonic design for the hour-long journey from their previous home in the older Egyptian Museum. The vehicles were designed to appear like the ancient boats used to carry deceased pharaohs to their tombs.

Most of the mummies belong to the New Kingdom, which ruled Egypt between 1539 B.C. to 1075 B.C., according to the Ministry of Antiquities.

They include Ramses II, one of the most famous pharaohs, and Queen Hatshepsut, Egypt's only woman Pharaoh—who wore a false beard to overcome tradition requiring women to play only secondary roles in the royal hierarchy.

The mummies—18 pharaohs and four other royals—were originally buried around 3,000 years ago in secret tombs in the Valley of Kings and the nearby Deir el-Bahri site. Both areas are near the southern city of Luxor. The tombs were first excavated in the 19th century.



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After excavation, the mummies were taken to Cairo by boats that sailed the Nile. Some were showcased in glass cases, while others were stored. The remains of Ramses II were taken to Paris in 1976 for intensive restoration work by French scientists.

The made-for-TV parade was part of Egypt's efforts to attract foreign tourists by publicizing its ancient artifacts. The [tourism industry](#) has been reeling from political turmoil following the 2011 popular uprising that toppled longtime autocrat Hosni Mubarak, and more recently, the

coronavirus pandemic.

"This parade is a unique global event that will not be repeated," declared Tourism and Antiquities Minister Khaled el-Anany.

Security was tight in the capital, with authorities closing off major streets and intersections along the route for the slow-moving vehicles. Guards on horses and Egyptian celebrities and signers followed the motorcade.



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People watch parade of royal mummies in Cairo, Egypt, Saturday, April 3, 2021. Egypt held a parade celebrating the transport of 22 of its prized royal mummies from Egyptian Museum to he newly opened National Museum of Egyptian Civilization. (AP Photo)



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"Again, Egypt dazzles the world with an unrivalled event," said movie star Hussein Fahmy in an official promotional video.

The event started in the late afternoon and was broadcast live on the country's state-run television and other satellite stations. The Tourism and Antiquities Ministry also live-streamed it on [social media platforms](#).

The "Pharaohs' Golden Parade" circled Tahrir square, where authorities officially unveiled an obelisk and four sphinxes to decorate Cairo's most

famous square.

Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi, who will welcome the mummies at the new museum, tweeted: "This majestic scene is a new evidence of the greatness of this people, the guarding of this unique civilization that extends into the depths of history."

Once at the new [museum](#), 20 of the mummies will be displayed, while the remaining two will be stored, according to the ministry.

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