



Historically Speaking

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Ancient Egyptian Makeup

I am writing on this topic because details are important and represent a large part of the research for my books. As I am writing AMON, I want to include accurate information about the culture of the ancient Egyptians/ Nubians. Amon's father is a painter who colors the relief sculptures in the temples, tombs, and columns of Luxor. He would be including the detailed use of makeup in his representations of the figures as he works. I also want to include description of the makeup that was used in the daily lives of the characters in the book.

The application of makeup is best accomplished with a mirror, but in ancient times, mirrors were nothing like what we have today. The most basic were shallow bowls of dark colored stone such as schist or basalt, filled with clear water which could provide a reflected image, though it would have to remain horizontal and that would make its usage difficult. A polished flake of selenite crystal found among grave goods (ca. 4400- 4000 BC) along with other cosmetic equipment has been viewed as an early attempt to create a mirror.



The primary makeup used by all social classes in Egypt was kohl which was a mixture of powdered galena and water or gum to make a paste. This was used as eyeliner and brow enhancer. The wealthy had had kohl in ornately carved boxes made of precious materials. The lower class could only afford it in sticks. The wealthy also wore much more makeup than the lower classes, as we might expect, due to more leisure time to apply makeup and the wealth that allowed more to be purchased. The makeup was commonly applied using a brush made from the *Salvadora persica* tree.

Eye makeup served more than cosmetic purpose by providing protection from disease, bugs and the rays of the sun. Kohl could be combined with specific ingredients to create eye paints that were intended to treat eye infections.



NaNoWriMo Again

I participated again this year in NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month), and succeeded in writing over 53,000 words in November. I did not, however, complete a first draft as I have in past years. Instead, I have a solid start on two books.

AMON is an historical novel taking place in Egypt around 700 BCE.

...to teach (yes, that's the title) is a hybrid, part memoir and part treatise on the art and science of teaching and learning. I am sharing my journey in education and my observations about what works.

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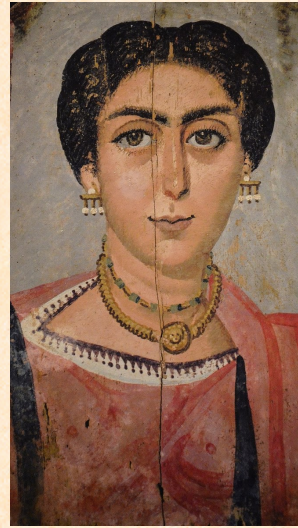
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Makeup was used for eye shadow and coloring of the cheeks and lips, more so among the upper classes. Cosmetic palettes were used to grind material for makeup.

The earliest palettes were basically rectangular in shape and date back to at least 5000 BCE. Later palettes included rounded ones decorated with depictions of events. Still later palettes took on animal shapes, especially fish which symbolically represented resurrection and new life. The palettes of royalty usually were enhanced with precious stones. Kohl was sometimes contained in baboon shaped containers, and some have been found in the shape of turtles and even hippopotami. Cosmetic spoons that usually have a long handle carved as a person or creature, end in a shallow bowl with an attached lid.

Fat and red ochre were used to make red lipstick. Eye shadow was usually green, made from malachite, or blue, made from a complex process involving copper minerals. They used henna to stain their fingertips and toes.

The use of so many pastes and other substances resulted in a vast number of containers to store them. It is from these recovered containers that we know as much as we do about the compounds used for cosmetics by the ancient Egyptians.



THE GREEKS

The Greeks also included cosmetics in their pursuit of physical beauty. They valued fair skin, bright lips and dark eyes. Greeks used vermilion for rouge, as well as the juice from berries to color their lips and cheeks. Black incense was used to darken their eyelashes, they painted their faces with white lead. False eyebrows made from oxen hair were also fashionable.

Some dyed their hair blonde with dyes containing lye. It

was so caustic that many lost their hair and had to resort to wigs.

White lead was used in eye shadow, eyeliner and face foundations. This lead to death for some. Less damaging ingredients included malachite, which was used to produce green eye shadow, and red ochre which was used for cream. Mascara made from crushed antimony was generally used to darken and define the eyes.

Various oils and other scents were used to enhance their appearance as well as to provide a pleasant scent. They also would apply lip balm made from beeswax and tinted with natural



My books are available at: ouranianpublishing.com