

## Facial Cosmetics in Ancient Egypt

By

Engy El-Kilany\* and Enas Raouf\*\*

Faculty of Tourism and Hotels

Minia University, Egypt

### **Abstract**

*Beauty was a vital concept in ancient Egypt which motivated people to seek perfection in every single detail in their life. Thus, self beautification was an essential issue where cosmetics played a key role. This study aims to focus on the concept of beauty in ancient Egypt by exploring the different procedures, materials, recipes of facial cosmetics in ancient Egypt through analyzing texts and scenes related to this topic. Findings of this study revealed that facial cosmetics in ancient Egypt formed the base of many modern cosmetic products and techniques. It has many procedures such as cleansing, paint, treatment and protection. The materials used in manufacturing these cosmetics were extracted from natural sources as mineral, plants and animals.*

Key words: Beauty, Facial cosmetics, Ancient Egypt

### **Introduction**

The term “cosmetics” is derived from the Greek word “*kosmetikos*”, which means “skilled in adorning or arranging”. It refers to the preparations used to cleans, condition, beautify, and protect the skin, lips, eyes, nails or hair. This word is derived from the Greek term “*kosmos*” which means “order” (Sherrow, 2001). Broadly speaking, the use of cosmetics is not restricted to civilized societies. Since the dawn of history until now, primitive people, (both men and women), have used to beautify and adorn themselves. However, only men were the ones who first adopted face and body painting before going to the war (Forbes, 1965).

Ancient Egypt is the earliest historical period that fully developed the use of cosmetics. A ceremonial palette dates to 3100BC was used for grinding and mixing cosmetics. It is considered to be the first archaeological finding of Egyptian cosmetics. As for cosmetic equipments, they were so important to the ancient Egyptians. They were carried forth to the afterlife as they were essential parts of their funerary equipment. Among these equipments are many toilet accessories: eyeliner applicators, mirrors, combs and hairpins. All these cosmetic objects were usually held in cosmetic boxes which were carved out of different material and sometimes inlaid with semi precious stone (Green, 2001).

---

\* Associated Professor in Tourist Guidance Department, Jenneykilany@hotmail.com

\*\* PhD Researcher in Tourist Guidance, Diss. Under the title of Scenes of Body Care in Ancient Egypt .

Since the earliest periods of Egyptian history, cosmetics have been commonly used not only for aesthetic purposes, but also for their medical, magical or religious attributes. Not only men and women were adorned with cosmetics, but their mummies, statues and the statues of their gods and goddesses were adorned also. Applying cosmetics was an important part of the daily life routine of the ancient Egyptians. It helped to shape the 'perfect' body image. As a part of a hygienic regime, it served to improve their good-looking and healthy appearance in general (Green, 2001). Cream, unguents, rouges, eye-paint and powders were commonly used. Moreover, Ancient Egyptians practiced cleansing the skin, preventing wrinkles and spots, allaying and moisturizing the skin to beautify their faces and bodies.

Everyone in ancient Egypt used cosmetics regardless of the social class. What distinguished the rich from the poor was not the use of makeup but the luxurious material and workmanship of containers and applicators. Everyone could have galena powder. While the poor used sticks to apply it, the wealthy had marvellous carved and jewelled containers of ivory or other precious materials (Ills, 2000).

This study aims to reveal the secrets of ancient Egyptian facial beauty through explaining the concept of beauty in ancient Egypt, exploring different procedures of facial cosmetics, focusing on the different recipes for face beauty and determining the materials that are used in cosmetics. This study will analyse make-up scenes and the different texts that deal with this topic to achieve its aims.

### **Concept of Beauty in Ancient Egypt**

According to the Webster's Dictionary, the modern definition of beauty is "*qualities in a person or thing that gives pleasure to the senses or pleasurably exalts the mind or spirit*" (Merriam-Webster, 2017). Nowadays, the word 'beautiful' as an adjective can be used to describe a person, an idea, an animal, an object, a place, an action, a heart, anything that provides a perceptual experience of satisfaction or pleasure.

The concept of beauty in ancient Egypt has almost the same meaning of our modern definition but with deeper view. Their concept of beauty is a cognitive view that was in the creator god's plan for the creation of the world. It means perfection, excellence, beauty and goodness. The manifestation of beauty in ancient Egypt appears in many aspects as in the myth of creation, in written and spoken words, in personal adornment, in architecture and in sculpture, even in some titles of the rulers in which terms meaning, beautiful, perfect and good (Brown, 2007).

In ancient Egyptian language, there are two adjectives that were used to describe beautiful things or people <sup>c</sup>*n* and *nfr*. The term <sup>c</sup>*n* is written with the determinative, which consists of an eye adorned with cosmetics. The other term *nfr* was very popular in ancient Egypt. It appears with many different meanings, all are positive. It was also included into many personal names, among them are the famous queens Nefertiti and Nefertari. The *nefer* hieroglyph was used to express the concepts of "goodness" and "beauty". It also could convey the meaning of good fortune, youth, happiness, and other related ideas. (Green, 2001).

### Physical Beauty in Ancient Egypt

Taking care of the body has always been a common human practice. Therefore, Beauty has always been a goal to reach, just like the one to fight diseases or overcome suffering: a goal with deep roots in civilizations and inspired by the aesthetics of different ages. Both men and women in ancient Egypt were concerned with their appearance. They watched their weight well and ate more fruits and vegetables and less meat than we do today (Greco et al, 2016)

The connection that seems to exist between youth and beauty may be an important point to understand the ancient Egyptian concept of the physical beauty. In ancient Egyptian art the ideal form of the body is a youthful and slim figure. Even for the lower classes, age and obesity are rarely depicted in women. Obviously, the attributes of youth were highly acknowledged in ancient Egypt. For example, in a coregency, the term *ntr nfr* was used to describe the more youthful ruler. Thus, the older ruler is referred to as *ntr'3*, meaning the "Great God" and the younger of the two is referred to as *nfr*. (Green, 2001)

Colour is also important for the face and body ideal form. Men are shown with reddish-brown skin. Women are frequently shown with pale cream skin, although the color used by artists varies over time. In the Old Kingdom, women were depicted with pinkish white skin. During the Middle Kingdom and early New Kingdom, their skin is often yellowish. Later in the New Kingdom, the shades returned to pink or were pale orange. Upper class women remained indoors while men were out under the sun. Hence, a pale cream-skinned woman appeared more elite (Rutherford, 2007).

### Mack-up Scenes in Ancient Egypt:

There are four scenes representing different aspects of using cosmetics in ancient Egypt:

The First one is from a Sixth Dynasty Theban Tomb of Ihy (Fig. 1). It depicts a woman sitting on a chair holding a mirror in her right hand in front of her face. Behind her is a small standing figure of a girl probably her maid. The maid possibly helps her mistress taking care of her beauty (Saleh, 1977).

The second scene is a Middle Kingdom fragmentary stela in the British Museum (Fig.2). In this scene the lady Ipwet is shown looking in a mirror and applying cosmetics to her face with a pad. This may be a face powder or red ochre to add colour to her cheeks (Stead, 1986).

The third scene is the Nineteenth Dynasty so-called erotic papyrus, now in the Egyptian Museum in Turin (Fig.3) It depicts a prostitute with a lotus flower in her wig, who is rouging her lips and surveying herself arrogantly at the same time in the metal mirror which she holds in her left hand (Erman, 1971).

The fourth scene is an ostraca (now preserved in Louvre Museum, Departement des Antiquites Egyptiennes) probably from Deir el Madina, Ramessied period. It displays a

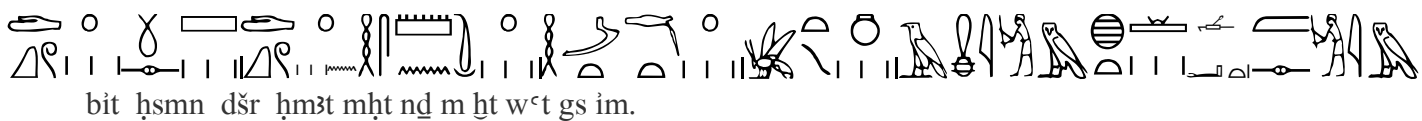
woman nursing her child while a maid servant holds up a mirror and a khol tube standing in front of her, helping her mistress in her facial cosmetics ( lessingimages.com. 2012).

**Facial Cosmetic Recipes in Ancient Egyptiant Medical Texts:**

**A- Edwin Smith Papyrus**

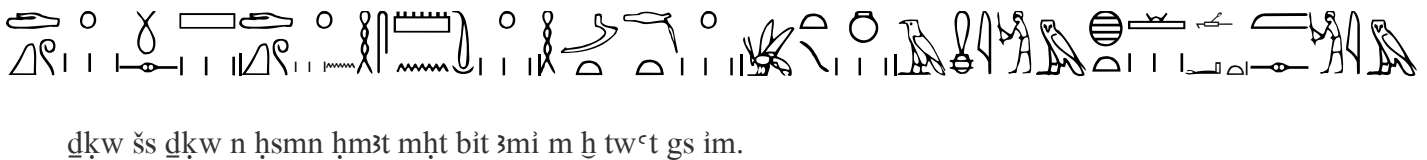
There are two prescriptions for the complexion, which are identical to the prescriptions in the Ebers and Hearst Papyri.

- 1- The prescription No. 2 on the verso (column XXI 3-6) is for renewing the skin. The description of the treatment is:



Honey, red natron and northern salt are ground into a compound and it is massaged with it (Breasted, 1999).

- 2- The prescription No. 3 on the verso (column XXI 6-8) for beautifying the face. The description of the treatment is:



Alabaster powder, powder of natron, northern salt and honey are mixed together into a compound and the face is massaged with it (Breasted, 1999).

**B- The Ebers Papyrus:**

There are prescriptions to beautify the face and to remove wrinkles as follows:

- 3-The Description of the Treatment (No. 717) is:



Aqḡ n qmꜣt Hr mw pAdw ir m xt ia.s Hr.s hrw nb xr s gs.s Hr.s im.

Powder of gum in p3dw water; now after she washed her face and she massaged her face with it (Wreszinski, 1913; Nagy, 2016).

4- The prescription (No.437) in the Ebers Papyrus is for treating the skin and the description of the treatment is:



prt dgm ʿd bꜣꜥ ir m ḥt wꜥt wrḥ im rꜥw nbt

Castor seeds, fat and moringa oil. They are mixed together and it is massaged with it every day (1991, كمال).

5- The prescription (No. 846) in the Ebers Papyrus prevents the stings of the mosquitoes and the description of the treatment is:



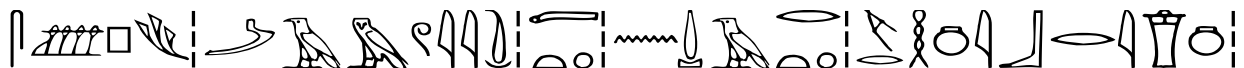
išd wꜣd gs im.

Fresh balanos oil is massaged with it (1991, كمال).

### C- Berlin Papyrus

Protecting the skin from wrinkles (Mannich, 1999).

6- The Description of The Treatment (No. 92) is:



šspt ḥmꜣw ꜣꜣwt n dꜣrt mrḥt ibr ir m ḥrt wꜥt gs s im.

Quantity of fenugreek plant, powder of Colocynth, oil and ladanum are mixed together and the patient is massaged with it (Nagy, 2016).

### Discussion and Results

**Good** General appearance in ancient Egypt was a sign of youth, beauty and health. As the face was the mirror of the general condition of the person. Ancient Egyptian gave much care to their perfect facial look.

Although there are many scenes depicting ancient Egyptians in full make-up, there are about four scenes depicting people beautifying their faces. Using of mirror was a common

feature among those scenes (a very natural human practice which lasted till our modern days). Three scenes depict ladies putting cosmetic paints to their cheek and lips. No scene depicts putting eye cosmetic has been found yet although there is a scenes depicting a maid offers kohl tube to her mistress. (Fig.4) Three scenes depicted a maid helping her mistress. The social level of the ladies is not the same as two of them seem to be nobles and one of them seems to be a prostitute.

Edwin Smith, Ebers, Hearst, Berlin Papyri are the most important ancient Egyptian medical documents that included many recipes of facial cosmetic. From these recipes we recognized the different procedures that were practiced in ancient Egypt concerning the facial cosmetics. There are three main procedures which are facial cleansing cosmetics, facial paint cosmetics and facial skin treatment and protection cosmetics.

### 1- Facial Cosmetic Cleansing:

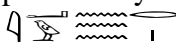
#### A- Soap:


Soap as it is known today did not exist. Instead of soap, ancient Egyptians compounded “body scrubs” of salt, natron, and honey for cleansing. Recipes for these cleansers are found in medical papyri. One such cleanse includes calcite granules. They used a type of soap made from animal and plants’ oils and perfumes to remove all of these cosmetics (Green, 2001).

#### B- Cleansing Cream:

Cleansing creams in ancient Egypt consisted of animal or vegetable oils and lime, or possibly chalk. It was used to remove the facial make-up before sleep and for the body anointing. Around 1400 BC, three ladies of the court of Tuthmosis III were buried with luxurious royal funerary equipment, which included cosmetics. Two jars contained a cleansing cream that was used to remove make-up (Eid, 2016).

#### C- Mouth Washing:

Ancient Egyptians considered mouth washing one of the main elements of cleanliness and purity. As the washing of the mouth give perfect odour and decent smell. Water and natron were used for this purpose (Sandison, 1963). Ancient Egyptians did not suffer from tooth decay because of their healthy diet and the lack of sugar. Their bread contained particles of sand from the grain and gravel from the grinding stone, which caused their teeth to become damaged. To improve the odour of their mouth breath, Egyptians chewed herbs frankincense and anise, or they gargled with milk (Abu-Bakr, 1999). They usually purified their mouths in the morning by chewing natron dissolved in water. The mouth was also purified by having a light repast or breakfast, consisting of a loaf of bread and a jar of  i<sup>c</sup>w-r, drink, which literary means ‘Mouth Washing’ (Abd El-Hakiem, 2010).

The most important material used in cleansing was natron  hsmn.<sup>1</sup> It was a divine salt, came from the Wadi Natron (Sandison, 1963). Natron was employed by the

<sup>1</sup> Wb III, p. 162 (11-14).

ancient Egyptians in washing process as a cleansing agent. When natron balls were put in a water jar, they clarified it immediately and this is probably the reason of why it occurred immediately after water in offering lists (Filer, 2001). It was used for skin renewing and mouth washing as natron is effectively absorbing moisture from the body and breaking down the fatty tissues, (أبو بكر، 1999).


## 2- Facial Cosmetic Paints:

### A- Eye Paint:



The almond painted shape of the Egyptian eyes was the most distinguished feature of the ancient Egyptian beauty. They concentrated in providing kohl to their eye lashes, eye lids and eye brows. The use of eyeliner and shadow was commonly used in Ancient Egypt. Green paint was commonly used during the Old Kingdom, but in later periods the black paint became more popular. The use of green malachite was applied from the eyebrow to the base of the nose (Johnson, 1986). The pigment commonly consisted of galena, malachite, lapis lazuli, honey and ochre in equal parts (Eid, 2016). The mineral ingredient was ground on the palette or on a flat stone. Then the ground powder was made up into a past with water or with a solution of water-soluble gum. Soot later became the most common ingredient in the ancient Egyptian product of eye paint and it is still used in the modern mascara recipes (Forbes, 1965).

The use of these cosmetics focused on ornamenting the eyes with kohl. The concept of beauty is closely related to the kohl eye paint as one of the ancient Egyptian word of beauty is *ꜥn*, with the determinative of an eye adorned with *msdmt* Kohl (Green, 2001). Kohl was not only used to beautify the eyes. It also provided some protection against eye diseases. Pulverized malachite was used as eye shadow. It might have been also used to protect eyelids from harmful sunrays (Ikram, 2011). Galena had medical functions, as it acted as a fly-repellent (Strouhal, 1997). Kohl was definitely used for its cosmetic significance: making eyes appear larger and more glowing. Furthermore, green eye paint also had a symbolic meaning, representing the eye of god Horus (Stead, 1986).

To calm eyes, a soft ground green mineral (jasper or serpentine) mixed with water was applied to eyelids. Similar preparations were emmer grains steeped in water overnight. another common recipe specify kohl mixed with fat as a remedy for inflamed eyes (Green, 2001). In medical papyri, many recipes are prescribed to be prepared with spells that were thought to be the activator of the substances used in the remedy. Ebers 385 gives the incantation for the ingredients used to cure an illness causing a “build-up of water” in the eyes: it was recited over green eye make-up pounded with fermented honey, pounded with *gꜣw* (nut), applied to the eyes (Eid, 2016).

Kohl   msdmt<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Wb, II, p.153

Two types of kohl were frequently used as eye paints: green malachite and black galena. Black galena (a dark grey ore of lead) is the natural mineral of lead sulphide. Galena is still the basic constituent of many kohl types in North Africa, Asia and the Middle-East nowadays (Walter et al, 1999). It was derived from galena ore in the Eastern Desert, near Aswan in Upper Egypt or at the Red Sea. Malachite is a green ore of copper carbonate hydroxide mineral. Malachite   w3d<sup>3</sup> was derived from Sinai. Egyptians used it as a form of eye-shadow until the Fourth Dynasty approximately. Both galena and malachite were imported as luxury commodities from Asia (Lucas, 1962). Kohl was kept in lumps in little bags of linen or leather. It was ground on a palette to a powder or a paste. It was stored in small narrow pots or tube-shaped containers from which it was extracted with a thin stick. It was applied with the moistened stick, as is done by Egyptian women today. Lumps of both malachite and galena were found in Tutankhamun's tomb (Hawas, 1995). Researchers from the *Laboratoire de recherche des musées de France* found, when analyzing the contents of 49 containers dating from 2000 and 1200 BC from the Louvre Museum, that the kohl cosmetics contained, two white constituents: laurionite and phosgenite in addition to lead-based minerals. These two products are very rare in nature. These products could have been formed by chemical alteration and ageing. These results indicate that laurionite and phosgenite must have been synthesized in Ancient Egypt. The Egyptians intentionally manufactured artificial lead-based compounds, and added them separately to the cosmetic product. This means that wet chemistry has been first practiced in Egypt since 2000 BC (Walter et al, 1999).

The powder of kohl was kept in slim containers of bone, ivory, wood or glass with different shapes, most commonly is the cylindrical one. In Old Kingdom, glazed ceramic and colourful hard stone were used. In Middle Kingdom, there was a standard shape for containers: a small squat jars with flat bottom, a wide, flat rim and a flat disc shaped lid. While containers in the New Kingdom varied in shape and material, as alabaster and blue marble became very popular. Faience and core-formed glass were used increasingly in the late Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties. Glass tube kohl in the form of palm columns was specially favoured. Kohl and other cosmetics were stored in a cut tube of hollow reeds. Cosmetic spoons pear-shaped end of a kohl stick, bone, wooden or ivory rods were used to mix and apply kohl as kohl applicators. Moreover, kohl may be applied to the eyelid with the fingertips. (Johnson, 1986).


### B- Lip and Cheeks Paints:

The lips and cheeks were coloured red with a lipstick, consisting of a reed holding a small piece of ochre at one end. Women painted their cheeks with a pad and their lips with a brush or a spatula. Ancient Egyptians were less liberal with their face powder, but pictorial evidence shows that ladies knew how to use a powder-puff (Forbes, 1965). Paints were stored on small jars or tubes made out of stone, faience, wood or reeds. They commonly have a simple cylindrical shape in addition to floral, animal and human figures. Some containers have five separate compartments each intended to preserve different pigment (David, 2015).



Red colour was used to give glow to the cheeks. There is a scene of Queen Nefertari (Fig.5) tomb in the valley of Queens depicts the queen with a clear circle on her cheeks of a darker red hue than the remaining part of her complexion (Mannich,1999). Rouge lip-gloss, consisting of red ochre and fat, possibly with a little gull resin, was applied with a brush or spatula. The most common brush, which was used in applying facial paints, was made from the *Salvadorapersica* tree (Eid, 2016).

A Middle Kingdom scene shows a lady applying powder or rouge to her cheeks with a pad (fig.2), and this is the reason why traces of red pigment and stains were found in palettes at tombs and on stones which was used for grinding it. Rouge in the form of powder was recently marketed as an Ancient Egyptian origin product (Ruiz, 2001). Material from a cosmetic jar of Middle Kingdom was found to be organic matter containing iron oxide (red ochre). The base had probably been vegetable or tallow grease with perhaps a little gum resin, and the substance was evidently a form of rouge (Lucas, 1963).

The most important material used in red pigment is red ochre  *mnšt*.<sup>4</sup> The red pigment is a naturally occurring red oxide of iron, commonly hematite, but which would more expediently be described as red ochre. Ancient Egyptians extracted red ochre from Aswan and the Oases (Harris, 1961). It was produced from naturally coloured clay that was mined and washed then dried in the sun or burnt to achieve the red pigment. In Ancient Egypt, ochre was very significant in painting, magic and in medicine. Ochre was prescribed in the ancient Egyptian medical texts for healing the eye problems, burns, wounds, herpes, painful toes, animal bites, muscles and as cosmetic pigments for cheeks and lips (Dawson, 1934).

Cheek and lip pigments as well as eye pigments were grounded on palettes. Palettes have been found among the earliest burials of the pre-dynastic period and seem to be very essential items for the afterlife as well as daily life. Palettes were generally flat and made of stone, with a circular cavity carved into one side for grinding facial or body paint. They were frequently geometrical or animal shaped. The appearance of cosmetic palettes have been non-consistent throughout their history, cosmetic palettes went through an extreme sequence of changes; from rhomboidal to animal shaped, functional to ceremonial and from burial equipment to votive offering (Roberts, 2017).

### 3- Facial Cosmetics Treatment and Protection:

#### A- Wrinkles:

Egyptians were particularly concerned with physical appearance; their two greatest fears in life were of losing their hair and of developing facial wrinkles (Feliciano, 1998). A number of recipes for wrinkle removal or transforming an old man into a youth were found in Ebers Papyrus and other related medical texts. One of the more complicated preparation found effective, prescribes the oil from double cooked fenugreek as a facial cream for men. Ointments that helped to get rid of facial wrinkles were made of incense, wax, fresh olive oil, and cypress bark ground and rubbed on the face. This recipe should be compared with the

<sup>4</sup> Wb II, p. 89 (12-13).

almond meal mixed with water used by the modern beauty centres to remove wrinkles (Forbes, 1965).

Wrinkles could be a result of extreme exposure to sun and not just of old age. It was treated by applying a wax-based remedy containing gum, moringa oil, ground Cyprus grass and fermented plant juice, Apply daily. Another recipes to expel wrinkles from the face: *“Gum of frankincense 1, wax 1, fresh balarnites oil 1, rush-nut 1, are ground fine, put in viscous fluid and applied every day. Make it and thou shalt see”* this may found its modern counterpart in a cold cream consisting of white wax, almond oil, borax and stronger rose water (Forbes, 1965).

#### B- Spots and Scars:

To treat spots, ostrich egg was mixed with bullock’s bile and milk, then applied. There was also a mask used for spots, consisting of the fruit of the *ksbt* tree and red ochre. If the skin suffers from scars caused by burning, a special ointment was used to treat them. It consists of red ochre and kohl, ground and mixed with sycamore juice. Alternatively, an ointment made of frankincense and honey was used (Feliciano, 1998).

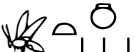
#### C- Derma Care:

Natron, alabaster, honey and sea salt all mixed with milk, were recommended to beautify the facial skin. Alabaster is the mineral calcite, and this ointment is probably the first recorded application of the procedure we know today as derma-brasion. A face peeling was maintained by applying acids (acetic acid in vinegar and sulfuric acid in oil of vitriol). Moreover, hydroxy acids (malic acid from apple pomades, tartaric acid from aged wine, lactic acid from sour milk, and glycolic acid from sugar cane). A type of face resurfacing was practiced with ground materials such as alabaster, seashell, limestone, or pumice (Feliciano, 1998). Honey and milk were preferred medium for mixing solid materials to treat the facial skin. This should be compared with the modern recipes for skin toning lotions, which may contain alcohol, glycerine, lactic acid, water and perfume (Forbes, 1965). The most important materials used for facial care were Oils and Ointments, milk, honey and alabaster.

Milk  irtt<sup>5</sup>

Milk had a high religious significance, it symbolized purity and rejuvenation (Nagy, 2016). A series of anthropomorphic vases depict women breast-feeding babies and these may have been used to contain mother’s milk as a medicine for sick children as it was believed that it contained a stronger element of suggestive magic (Stead, 1986), The ancient Egyptians used sour milk to aesthetically improve the skin. When sour milk was used to produce smooth skin, lactic acid and alpha hydroxy acid was the active agent (Harold et al, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> WB, I, p. 47.

**Honey**  bit (Faulkner, 1991)

Honey and Bess were important in Egyptian religion, as in the Pyramid Texts mention that Nut may appear as a bee. Temples kept bees for the production of medicines and ointments and to satisfy the desire of the gods for honey. In the New Kingdom, honey was often depicted being offered to private tombs owner (Kritsky, 2015), Honey was used in the embalming process as well as for conservation purposes. The beeswax was used for mummifying the dead, making mummy masks, lighting the temples and in religious rituals as well. Honey was used for sweetening as it was added to wine, bread and cakes as sugar was unknown to the ancient Egyptians (Kuropatnicki et al, 2013). It had a great role in the ancient Egyptian medicine as most of the prescriptions in the medical papyri mentioned honey as one of their components in the treatment. Honey was mentioned in a recipe in the Ebers Papyrus for daily face wash and anointing to make the face smooth. It was also mentioned in the Edwin Smith papyrus to beautify the skin (Sagrillo, 2001). Moreover, the London papyrus mentioned it in many prescriptions to treat the wounds for its antibacterial and fungicidal qualities (Bryan, 1930).

**Alabaster**  šs<sup>6</sup>

The alabaster means calcium sulphate (gypsum). The quarries of alabaster were at Wadi Gerrawi near Helwan and at Hatnub near El Amarna. Alabaster was used in building and in making stelae, statues, headrests, ointment jars and other objects. The powder of alabaster was used in the Edwin Smith papyrus (No. 3) to massage the skin with other materials for beautifying the face (Harris, 1961).

**Oils and Ointments:** ,  mrḥt;<sup>7</sup>  sgnn.<sup>8</sup>

In ancient Egypt oil was the base of most cosmetic products. The ancient Egyptians used all types of oils, ointments and unguents which were an essential part of the daily life routine among the different classes in the Egyptian society. They were used to protect and to soften their skin in the dry climate. The oil kept the skin supple while the unguents gave the skin its necessary elasticity in the heat of the sun (Forbes, 1965). Oils were used as salves or in liquid forms. They knew more than 30 types. These ranged from linseed and castor beans oil to expensive costly imported scented aromatics as frankincense. Other commonly used oil as moringa, almond and olive oil, balanos oil (Johnson, 1986). They applied oils and unguents to the face to stop ageing. These oils were mixed with organic and inorganic materials to obtain the final product. Lots of oils were mentioned in the Recipes of the Ebers Papyrus for skin and body to prevent the wrinkles (Nagy, 2016; Ikram, 2010). Table (1) is displaying

<sup>6</sup> Wb IV, p. 541 (1).

<sup>7</sup> Wb II, p. 111(1-10).

<sup>8</sup> Wb IV, p. 322(17).

some different materials of oils and ointment which was mentioned in the medical Egyptian papyri as facial cosmetics.

There are many oil containers in ancient Egypt which varied from time to time in shapes and materials. During the Old Kingdom, the vessels shapes were oval, cylindrical and animal. They were made from alabaster and stone only but during the Middle Kingdom, appeared other materials such as obsidian, black limestone and anhydrite. The usage of oval, cylindrical and animal vessels was continued but the oval vessels became more elongated. Moreover, the vessels in the pear-shaped body appeared with projecting edges during that period. In the New Kingdom, various new materials appeared as travertine, serpentine stone, turquoise glass blue faience, bronze, and ivory. The pear-shaped vessels were also used but in addition to the oval with elongated body, cylindrical and animal vessels underwent no great change. Furthermore, the bowls with a pedestal and the necked vessels with foot appeared from this period. Human shaped vessels appeared also during that period. Gold was used to decorate the rims and edges of the vessels during the Middle and New Kingdoms. Colors were used to paint the vessels during the New Kingdom. (Nagy, 2016).

Most people would have applied the make-up themselves, but for those who could afford it, there was the professional cosmetician, the *zḥyt*, the 'face painter'. People engaged in cosmetics were known as face paint artists. They were usually combined with perfumers, barbers, hair dressers and manicurists (Forbes, 1965). The titles of cosmeticians appeared during the Old Kingdom especially during the Fourth Dynasty. *Khonso* (One of the Senefru's daughter in law) was titled *Hkrt* which means 'cosmetician'. Another main title of cosmetician was the supervisor of the diadem. Although these titles appeared only in the Old Kingdom and related to the royal court many representations depict cosmeticians from different periods through the ancient Egyptian history (1999, ابو بكر).

## Conclusion

The concept of beauty in ancient Egypt means perfection, excellence and goodness. It motivated people towards perfection in every single detail in their life. Beauty was manifested almost in every aspect of their daily life as well as their afterlife

Taking care of the body has always been a general human practice. Hence, beauty has always been a goal to achieve. The best desired characteristics for the good looking in ancient Egypt were youth, health and beauty. Much care was given to facial beauty as face is the mirror for the general personal condition. Therefore, facial cosmetics were very integral part in their life.

The balanced food diet of the ancient Egyptians had contributed to the enhancement for their beauty as they ate much fruits and vegetables, low sugar, low fat and low carbohydrates. This diet also helped in the preventing of tooth decay and giving the good looking appearance for their teeth. Moreover, cleansing of the mouth was very important in ancient Egypt as they used to chew natron for the cleansing and for the better breath smell.

From the ancient Egyptian facial care recipes we can recognize the different procedures that were practiced in ancient Egypt concerning the facial cosmetics. There are three main procedures which were used as facial cleansing cosmetics, facial paint cosmetics and facial skin treatment and protection cosmetics.

**Firstly, facial cleansing cosmetics:**

Cleansing the face depend on soap and cleansing cream. They washed their faces daily with water and soap made out of natron salt and honey. Before sleep they clean their faces with soap made from vegetables, animal oils and perfumes. They also used a cleansing cream consists of animal or vegetable oils and lime. It was used to remove the facial make-up before sleep and for the body anointing.

**Secondly, facial paints cosmetics:**

To produce facial paint they used pigments from natural sources. They used to paint the eyes, lips and cheeks. For eye cosmetic, the ancient Egyptian used kohl which consisted of two main colors, green malachite and black galena. They were used for three reasons: medical, religious and defiantly cosmetic. Red ochre was the most common paint used for the lip and cheek cosmetics in ancient Egypt.

**Thirdly, Facial treatment and protection cosmetics:**

There are many medical texts that give recipes for facial skin care specially for the treatment and protection of wrinkles which mainly depended on oil, fat, honey, milk, plants and minerals. For spots, mask of fruit and red ochre was used and for scares, an ointment made of frankincense and honey. For the better good looking of the face they performed, face peeling, derma-brasion and face resurfacing.

The most significant materials that were used in the ancient Egyptian facial cosmetics were mostly from natural sources. They were Oils (Balanos, Moringa, Olive, almond and Castor), Minerals (Green malachite, black galena, red ochre, and alabaster) plants (Fenugreek, frankincense and acacia), animal products (Honey, milk and ostrich eggs) and salts (natron and sea salt).

The most important facial cosmetics tools and vessels were palettes in the shape of animals and geometrical shapes to grind the cosmetic pigments on it. Pigments were applied with small cosmetics applicators as sticks, spoons, brushes or simply with fingertips. They were made out of wood, ebony, stones or ivory. Cosmetics pigments and materials were stored in different vessels and containers varied in shapes and materials. All these cosmetic objects were held in cosmetic boxes which were carved out of different materials and sometimes inlaid with semi-precious stone.

Cosmetics in ancient Egypt were not restricted to certain social class. What actually differentiate rich from poor was not the existence of cosmetics but the luxury and the expense of containers and applicators. Most people would have applied the cosmetics themselves, but

for those who could afford it, there was the professional cosmetician. People who were engaged in cosmetics were known as face paint artists. They are usually combined with perfumers, barbers, hair dressers and manicurists.

The most significant finding of this study is confirming the fact that most basic modern cosmetics are from ancient Egyptian origin such as

- Eye liner, eye shadow and mascara
- Modern Skin toning lotions which consist of the main components of milk and honey as they were the base of many recipes for derma care in ancient Egypt
- Modern almond meal mixed with water to remove wrinkles is almost the same basic components of ancient recipes incense, wax, fresh olive oil, and cypress bark.
- Modern cold cream consisting of white wax, almond oil, borax and stronger rose water similar to the ancient Egyptian recipe of Gum of frankincense, wax, rush-nut, moringa oil and fermented plant juice also used for wrinkles treatment.
- Modern Kohl which used leads and soot in their components that are very similar to the ancient Egyptian Kohl.
- Additionally wet chemistry was proven to be first practiced in ancient Egypt in manufacturing different cosmetics product.
- Other modern facial cosmetics technique as face peeling, derma-brasion and face resurfacing were performed in ancient Egypt.

### **Recommendations**

-Further studies are needed to explore more secrets and components of the ancient Egyptian cosmetics.

-It is highly recommend creating a cosmetic trade line depending on pure ancient Egyptian cosmetics.

-Ancient Egyptian beauty centres should be scattered all over the world adapting the ancient Egyptian style of facial cosmetics, hair care, body care. In addition to Egyptian bath similar to the Turkish or Moroccan baths scattered everywhere inside and outside Egypt.

Make-up Scenes in ancient Egypt

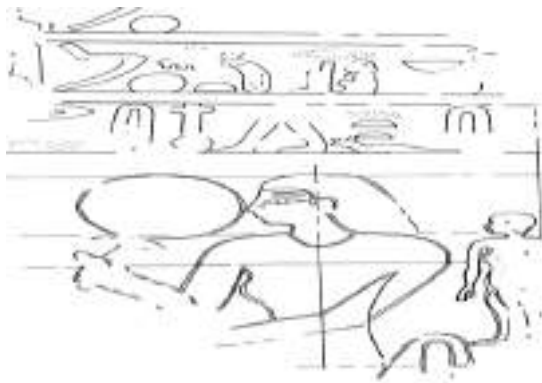


Fig.(1), *Face-examination scene*, 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. Old Kingdom, tomb of Ihy, el-Khokha, after Saleh, 1977, p. 24, fig. 56, pl. 15.



Fig. (2), Fragmentary stele of the lady Ipwet applying cosmetics to her face with a pad, Relief of unknown provenance; 11th Dynasty, British Museum no. 1658, after Stead, 1987, p. 53.



Fig. (3), A prostitute rouging her lips, 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, erotic papyrus, the Egyptian Museum in Turin after Mannich, 1999, p. 138.


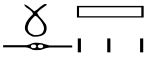




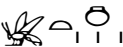

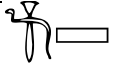
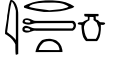

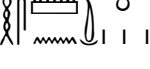




Fig. (4), An Ostraca, shows a woman nursing her child while a servant holds up a mirror and a khol tube probably from Deir el Madina, Ramessied period, the Louvre Muesum, Departement des Antiquites Egyptiennes, after lessingimages.com.2012.



Fig. (5), A wall-painting in the tomb of the queen Nefertari shows a clear circle on her cheeks of a darker red hue than the remaining part of her complexion, 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, Valley of the Queens, Thebes, after Manniche, 1999, p. 138).

Table (1): The most important materials used in cosmetic recipes in Ancient Egypt

material	Arabic name	Ancient Egyptian name	origin	usage
Acacia	السنت		Plant	Wounds treatment
Alabaster	الالبستر		Mineral	Renewing the skin Derma brasion Face resurfacing
Balanos	الهجليج		Oil	prevent mosquitoes stings.
Castor	الخروع		Oil	Wrinkles treatment
Fenugreek	الحلبة		Plant	Wrinkles treatment
Frankincence	لبان/ كندر		Plant	Wrinkles and scars treatment
Honey	العسل		Animal product	Renewing and smooth the complexion, Derma brasion Wounds treatment
Black Kohl	الكحل الأسود		Mineral	Eye paint
Malachite	المالاكيت		Mineral	Eye paint
Milk	اللبن		Animal product	Cleansing cream Spots treatment Smooth the skin
Moringa	بان/يسار		Oil	Wrinkles treatment
Natron	النطرون		Salt	washing mouth, cleansing soap, derma brasion
Olive	الزيتون		Oil	Wrinkles treatment
Red Ochre	الأوكر الأحمر		Mineral	Cheeks and lip paint, scars and spots treatment



## Bibliography

- إيمان أحمد أبو بكر، النظافة في الحياة اليومية عند المصريين القدماء، مكتبة مدبولي، 1999، القاهرة.
- حسن كمال، الطب المصري القديم، مكتبة مدبولي، 1991، القاهرة.
- **Abd El-Hakim, W., (2010),** *Purification Scenes in Theban Private Tombs during the New Kingdom*, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Minia University (Unpublished PhD).
- **Brested, J., (1999),** *The Edwin Smith Surgical Papyrus*, Reissued in Facsimile and Hieroglyphic Transliteration With Translation and Commentary in Two Volumes. Vol. 1, Chicago University of Chicago Press first published in 1920.
- **Brown, Cannon-, W. (2007),** *Nefer: the Aesthetic Ideal in Classical Egypt*, *African Studies*, Taylor and Francis Group, New York.
- **Bryan, C., (1930),** *The Papyrus Ebers*, The Garden City Press, London.
- **David, R. (2015),** *A Year in the Life of Ancient Egypt*, Yorkshire, Great Britain.
- **Dawson, H., (1934),** "Studies in the Egyptian Medical Texts", *JEA* 20.
- **Eid, H.(2016),** *Cosmetics* <http://www.frcu.eun.eg/www/universities/html/hamed2..>, accessed, 12.12.2016.
- **Erman, A., (1971),** *Life in Ancient Egypt*, Dover publication, New York.
- **Faulkner, R., (1991),** *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, Griffith Institute, Oxford.
- **Feliciano, B.D., (1998),** 'Beauty and the Body, the origins of Cosmetics', in *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, History of Cosmetics*, Vol. 105, No. 3 pp. 1196 – 1204.
- **Filer, J.M., (2001),** 'Hygiene', in: *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, II, American University in Cairo press, Cairo.
- **Forbes, R. J. (1965),** *Studies in Ancient Technology*, vol. III, Leiden.
- **Greco, M., Vitagliano, V. and Ciriaco, G. (2016),** *International Text Book of Aesthetic Surgery*, Filler, Springer, Heidelberg.
- **Green, L., (2001),** 'Beauty', in *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of Ancient Egypt*, by Redford, D., vol. I, pp. 73 –76.
- **Green, L., (2001),** 'Toiletries and cosmetics', in *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of Ancient Egypt*, by Redford, D., vol. III, pp. 167 – 171.
- **Harris, J. R (1961),** *Lexicographical studies in ancient Egyptian minerals*, Akademie Verlag, Berlin.
- **Harold J, Brody MD, Gary D. Monheit MD, Sorrel S. Resnik MD, Thomas H. Alt MD, ( 2000),** *History of Chemical Peeling*, *Journal of Dermatologic Surgery*, Vol. 26, Issue 5, May 2000 , Pages 405–409.
- **Hawass, Z., (1995),** *Silent Images Women in Pharaonic Egypt*, International Printing House, Cairo.
- **Ikram, S., (2011),** *Ancient Egypt an Introduction*, The American University in Cairo Press, Egypt.
- **Illes, J. (2000),** <https://www.touregypt.net/ancient/egyptian/eyemakeup/> accessed 16-2-2017.
- **Johnson, J. H, (1986),** *Adornment in Mistress of the Heaven, Mitress of the house, Women in Ancient Egypt*, Cincinnati Museum, Hudson Hill Press, New York. pp.75-91.
- **Kritsky,G.,(2015),** *The Tears of Re:* <http://ae.oxfordjournals.org/> accessed 12-3-2017

- Kuropatnicki, A., Szliszka, E., and Krol, W., (2013), 'Historical Aspects of Propolis Research in Modern Times' <http://dx.doi.org/10.1155/2013/964149>. Accessed, 23-4-2017.
- Lucas, A., (1962), *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Industries*, London.
- Manniche, L., (1999), *Egyptian Luxuries, Fragrance, Aroma Therapy, and Cosmetics in Pharaonic Times*, The American University in Cairo Press, Egypt.
- Nagy, B., (2016), *Massage and Reflexology in Ancient Egypt*, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Alexandria University (Unpublished PhD.).
- Roberts, P. Cosmetic Palettes in Ancient Egypt, Academia.edu, accessed in 6-5-2017.
- Ruiz, A. (2001), *The Spirit of ancient Egypt*, New York.
- Rutherford, M., (2007), [www.toureygypt.net/featurestories/beauty.htm](http://www.toureygypt.net/featurestories/beauty.htm). accessed 23-4-2016.
- Sagrillo, L. (2001), *Bees and Honey*, in Oxford Encyclopaedia of Ancient Egypt, by Redford, D., vol. I, pp. 172-174.
- Saleh, M., (1977), *Three Old Kingdom Tombs at Thebes*, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Kairo.
- Sandison, A.T, (1963), "The Use of Natron in Mummification in Ancient Egypt", in JES XXII, pp. 259 – 267.
- Sherrow, Victoria, (2001) 'For Appearance's Sake', The Historical Encyclopedia of, Good look, Beauty and Grooming, Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Stead, M., (1986), *Egyptian Life*, British Museum, London.
- Strouhal, E. (1997), *Life of the Ancient Egyptians*.
- Walter, P., Martinetto, P., Tsoucaris, G., Brniaux, R., Lefebvre, M., Richard, G., Talabot, J., and Dooryhee, E. (1999) *Making make-up in Ancient Egypt* in Nature 397, p. 483-484.
- Wreszinski, W. (1913), *Der Papyrus Ebers*, Leipzig, J.C. Hinrichs.

#### Websites

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/beauty>. accessed 23-4-2016

<https://www.lessingimages.com.louvre.museum.departement-des-antiquites-egyptiennes> last updated, 2012, accessed 1-5-2017.

#### ملخص البحث باللغة العربية

#### تجميل الوجه في مصر القديمة

يعتبر مفهوم الجمال من المفاهيم الأساسية في مصر القديمة التي كانت قوة دافعة للمصريين نحو طلب الاتقان والاهتمام بأدق تفاصيل الحياة رغبة في الوصول إلى الكمال في كل شيء، ولم يقتصر مفهوم الجمال في مصر القديمة على المعني المادي ولكنه شمل جمال الصفات والأشياء والأعمال والأماكن بالإضافة الي معناه المادي. ومن هذا المنطلق حرص المصري القديم على جمال مظهره العام وابرز مدي تمتعه بالشباب والصحة والنضارة. وبم أن الوجه هو مرآة للحالة العامة للشخص فكان الاهتمام بجمال الوجه جليا في مصر القديمة. ولقد هدف هذا البحث لتوضيح مفهوم الجمال في مصر القديمة و اكتشاف مراحل وأجراءات العناية بالوجه وتجميله بالإضافة الى تحديد أهم المواد المستخدمة في تجميل الوجه.

وقد اعتمدت منهجية البحث على تحليل الصفات الطبية الواردة في البرديات المصرية القديمة الخاصة بتجميل الوجه والاهتمام به و ابراز نضارته بالاضافة الى الاستعانة بالمناظر القليلة التي تظهر مظاهر تجميل الوجه المختلفة. و من النتائج التي توصل اليها البحث أن معظم المواد المستخدمة كانت من مصادر طبيعية مثل النباتات والحيوانات والمعادن والاملاح، وأن مظاهر تجميل الوجه شملت ثلاث مظاهر هي تنظيف الوجه واستعمال الأصباغ الخاصة بالعينين والشفنتين والوجنتين وأخيرا الاهتمام والعناية وعلاج بشرة الوجه من التجاعيد والندبات والحبوب. ومن أهم النتائج التي توصل اليها البحث أيضا أن كثير من منتجات تجميل الوجه الحديثة تعتمد على مواد مماثلة لما كان يستخدمها المصريين القدماء في التجميل بالاضافة إلى أن المصريين عرفوا تكنيك تقشير الوجه بالاضافة ان ما يعرف باسم ( wet chemistry ) التي تمت ممارستها لأول مرة في التاريخ في مصر القديمة منذ أكثر من 4000 عام.

الكلمات الدالة: الجمال/ تجميل الوجه / مصر القديمة