

Christian Mummification: An Interpretative History of the Preservation of Saints, Martyrs and Others

Ken Jeremiah



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A mention of mummification immediately brings to mind the ancient Egyptians--but the Roman Catholic Church has long used the practice to preserve notable members of its faith. In Italy alone, more than 300 preserved bodies appear on display in churches and cathedrals--the mummified remains of saints, priests, martyrs, and other high-ranking Roman Catholic officials.

This study explores the history of Roman Catholic mummification, which continues to this day in the use of New Kingdom Egyptian mummification procedures on popes. It explores various types of mummies, the connections between the Catholic Church and Egyptian religious practices, the treatment of the dead by other faiths, and the veritable cult that has arisen in Italy surrounding the saints whose bodies are preserved. By examining this unusual practice from both scientific and cultural perspectives, the book sheds light on a relatively unstudied aspect of the Roman Catholic faith.

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