Who is she, this little mummy girl?

Northwestern scientists and students have worked to unravel some of her mysteries, including how her body was prepared 1,900 years ago in Egypt, what items she may have been buried with, the quality of her bones, and what material is present in her brain cavity. These findings and others, including results from a visit to Argonne National Laboratory’s Advanced Photon Source (APS), have culminated in a Block Museum exhibition, “Paint the Eyes Softer: Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt.” The exhibit is free and open to the public through April 22. The Northwestern team — which included Stuart Stock, cell and molecular biology, and Marc Walton, materials science and engineering and a senior scientist at the Northwestern University–Art Institute of Chicago Center for Scientific Studies in the Arts (NU-ACCESS) — collaborated with scientists at Argonne and used the extremely brilliant high-energy synchrotron X-rays produced by the APS to probe the materials and objects inside the mummy. Co-presented by the Block and McCormick School of Engineering, the exhibit brings to Northwestern a series of mummy portraits produced in Egypt during the Roman period, alongside a complete intact mummy, and other archeological finds from the Fayum region.

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