

SYMPOSIUM IN MEMORIAM. ARTHUR C. AUFDERHEIDE  
THE SCIENTIST, THE FRIEND (1922-2013)

## CRONOS PROJECT. BIOANTHROPOLOGY OF GUANCHE MUMMIES

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**Abstract.** For those who had the privilege to meet Arthur and Mary during their first visits to Tenerife during the 1980s and 1990s, the couple will always be linked to the so-called *Cronos Project. Bioanthropology guanche mummies* that was organized by Tenerife's Archaeological Museum, belonging to the Organismo Autónomo de Museos y Centros of the Ca-

bildo de Tenerife (government of the island) from 1989 to 1992, concluding in the now famous I World Congress on Mummy Studies because I can affirm that without our two Duluthian friends the project could not succeed. Therefore, our eternal gratitude to them. In the next lines I'll tell the story.

**Keywords.** Aufderheide. Arthur. Mary. Bioanthropology. Cronos.

### THE STORY

Everything began by chance. I speak of a forgotten day at the end of the 1980s when Conrado, now Director of the Museo Arqueológico de Tenerife and the Instituto Canario de Bioantropología, reviewing the old library of the Museo Arqueológico, found a lost and forgotten letter from Eve Cockburn, editor of the Paleopathology Newsletter, dated two years before, asking for pictures of Guanche

mummies for the new edition of the book *Mummies, Disease and Ancient Cultures* (1980). The pictures were sent along with a short article on Guanche paleopathology to be published in the *Paleopathology Newsletter* that was read months later by Dr. Aufderheide who immediately wrote asking for bibliography on Guanche mummies. Conrado and I answered and, for our surprise, we got other letter from him saying thanks and proposing a visit to the island. We accepted and in October 1988 came to the island with Mary, his wife. Empathy and good feelings appeared from the very beginning and after discussing several scientific issues he proposed a small project on Guanche mummies.

During several months, we increased and set about that Project that was presented to the then President of the Cabildo (the island's government) Adán Martín who strongly supported the project and funded it with an important amount of money. The good new was transmitted to Arthur who returned to Tenerife in October 1989 with Mary and Odin Langsjoen, Emeritus Professor at the UMD-School of Dentistry, also in Duluth, and his wife Mavis.

His presence and the real possibility that several American relevant specialists could come to Tenerife to analyze the Mummies, reinforced the project and, therefore, the President gave green light to three main areas under the title "CRONOS.



Fig. 1. Arthur Aufderheide and Rafael González Antón observing Guanche mummies.



Fig. 2. Christmas greeting card of Arthur and Mary Aufderheide.

Bioantropología de las Momias Guanches'' with a date: February 1991. These areas were:

First. Research on Guanche mummies to be carried out by American and Canarian scientists. So, in May 1990 Odin Langsjoen, Larry Tieszen, Marc Kelley, Derek Notman, etc. came to Tenerife to begin the research under the coordination of Dr. Aufderheide, along with myself (Rafael González-Antón), Conrado Rodríguez-Martín, Fernando Estévez-González, Mercedes del Arco, Candelaria Rosario, Mercedes Martín, etc. Archaeology and Guanche life like agriculture and funerary practices and mummification methods; habitat and environment; pathology; etc. were some of the topics included in this research project (Fig. 1).

Second. The organization of an international exhibition entitled "Mummies, secrets of the past", under the design of Domingo González, designer of the Museo following the scientific texts of the own museum's scientific staff. Mummies from Tenerife, Chile, Perú, Bolivia, Colombia, USA, etc. and other elements of the material culture related to funerary archaeology around the world were shown there.

Third, the opening of the First International Congress on Mummy Studies, to be held in February 1991.

The work continued according to the plan until the outbreak of the Gulf War in January 1991 that obligated to postpone the whole thing until 1992 when the things were more calm at a global level (Fig. 2).

The First International Congress on Mummy Studies was finally held in Puerto de la Cruz between February 3 and 6, 1992, under the Presidency of Dr. Aufderheide, with myself as Vice-President, and Drs. Fernando Estévez-González and Conrado Rodríguez-Martín as Scientific Secretaries. The papers were published as Proceedings in two volumes with authors from Spain, Austria, Germany, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Denmark, USA, France, the Netherlands, England, Italy and Venezuela.

To finish I want to emphasize the exhausting effort that CRONOS implied that I'm sure was not lesser than that made by the organizers of Athanatos now. Congratulations for the success of the present project and ... because you got here alive.