

MUMMIFICATION

A mummy is the preserved body of a human or an animal. After a person had died, his/her body was washed with spices and wine. Organs that might decay were removed and dried separately to later be put in small containers called Canopic Jars. The lungs, stomach, liver, and intestines were then put into a chest that would be buried with the mummy. A long metal hook was inserted through the nose to remove the brain.

The preserving of bodies was made possible by the use of natron, a natural salt which removed moisture from the body and caused it to dry. While the inside of the body was stuffed with packets of natron, it was placed on a tilted embalming couch to catch any stray liquid which might drip from the body. These fluids were collected and buried with the body.

The body was then covered with natron and left to dry for 40 days. The salt was removed and the entire body was again washed with oil and fragrant spices. The mummy's head and body were stuffed with linens so the body would

regain its shape. Then the body was decorated with gold and jewelry. The body was then wrapped with layers of linen and often would have magical amulets placed between the layers. ~~Resin~~ ^{Resin} was also added to to seal the body. This process could take up to a ~~40~~ weeks - 2 weeks

The Egyptians made mummies of the deceased because they believed so strongly in the afterlife. They believed the the soul of the person had to transform into a form called an akh that would live in the afterlife. In order to help the spirit, people recited magical chants over the mummy that would change it into an akh, therefore making it possible for the spirit to survive.

Once the wrapping was complete, the mummy was placed into a series of coffins which had a death mask so the spirit would recognize it. The ancient Egyptians believed that each body had a Ka and a ba. The ka was the soul and the exact double of the person and the ba was the person's personality. They believed the spirit lived in the heart and needed the things the body needed in life. That is why things like Food and drink were buried with the mummy. The spirit entered the body at birth and left at death. In the afterword, the spirit traveled during the day and returned to the body at night.

People thought the preserved body appeared to be soaked in a black, glossy tar-like substance called bitumen(similar to asphalt on driveways). The Persian word for this tar like substance is moumia, which later became translated to mummy.

The entire process of mummification took approximately 70 days.