

The Burial Site



The temples of Ancient Egypt remain as a constant reminder of the power and glory

of the Egyptian state and its Gods. Each of the major gods had their own cult center with a temple complex as well as the 'state' temples at Luxor and Karnak. In addition the Pharaohs also built mortuary temples where their bodies were prepared for their eternal rest. Several of these survive at

Luxor. The surviving tombs provide a treasure trove of both objects and information. The paintings and models included with the burials give a



glimpse of the everyday life of the ordinary people and the texts provide invaluable information which helps to build up family trees and to establish the chronology.

The Message



The Egyptian hieroglyphic writing system consists of several hundred picture signs.

Egyptians were very much aware of the decorative value of hieroglyphic writing and elaborately carved and painted hieroglyphs were often



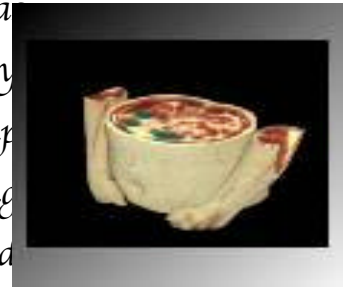
an important part of the decorative scheme of an Egyptian temple or tomb.

The Process



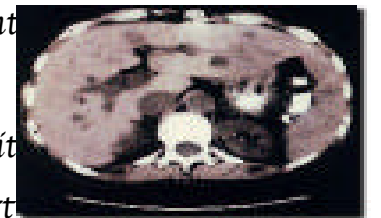
When a body was mummified the internal organs were usually preserved in some way. This was

not true of the brain which was often just discarded. This was usually done by inserting a hook up the nose and using it to slice up and



remove the brain tissue, with the cavity then being washed out. The reason for this treatment of the brain was that

the Ancient Egyptians believed that it was the Heart which was where the 'soul' lived.



Methods of Organ Preservation

In certain burials, such as those of the Pharaohs, the provision for the protection of the internal organs was often more sophisticated. This



Canopic Coffin is one of a set found in the tomb of Tutankhamun. The embalmed organs were placed inside the coffin which were then put into an alabaster canopic chest with the four stoppers carved with the Pharaoh's likeness.

In an alternative method the internal organs were placed in a solution of Natron salt and interred in a special Canopic Chest, or returned to the body cavity. In these cases dummy canopic jars may have also been included in the tomb.

Feet & Hand Special

At the peak of the mummification technique particular care was taken when preserving the hands and feet. In the late Middle Kingdom it even became common practice to tie the finger and toe

securely in the body in Natron to prevent them from



recent study as part of the NMS Mummy Project in Edinburgh involved detailed examination of a mummy which had been previously unwrapped. The body was found to be so well preserved that fingerprints were still visible.

Another common practice in richer burials was to cover the fingers and toes in metal caps to preserve their look. King Tutankhamun had a full set of gold covers of this type which were discovered when the mummy was unwrapped by Howard Carter.

Mummification and You



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