

Egyptian Achievements

Mummification

Preparing a body for the afterlife in Ancient Egypt was a long and complicated process. The Egyptians believed that preserving the body in death was important to keep their soul alive. The embalmers were priests who were trained in the mummification process. Mummification was a ritual, so the priests who participated were trained to perform the process with both surgical and ritual precision.

The head priest wore a mask in the form of Anubis. Anubis was the chosen god of surgeons, and for priests performing the mummification process. By wearing the Anubis mask, it symbolized that Anubis was watching over them to guide the ritual. The first step in the process was to make a cut in the abdomen, below the ribs on the left side of the body. They had to cut into the body to remove the special organs which were the liver, lungs, stomach and intestines. Once removed the organs were placed in canopic jars, which were inscribed with spells that would enable the organs to rejoin the body when it was resurrected.

After the organs are placed in jars, the brain must be removed. A long hook is used to smash the brain and pull it out through the nose. Resin was then poured in the head to keep it from collapsing. The heart was left in place because in the underworld, Anubis would weigh the heart and guide the soul. Every body part and rag that was used is placed with the body in the tomb. Then the body and organs were preserved with spices and dried out with natron salt.

The entire preservation took about 70 days. After the process was complete, the body was wrapped in linen. Death masks were placed on the head of the mummy around the bandages to be used as a replacement head in case something happened to the real skull. Special amulets were placed within the wrapping of the mummy to protect it. Finally, a “mummy tag”, similar to a toe tag, was placed around the mummy’s neck to identify it.

Egyptian Art and Science

Pyramids, temples and other monuments show the artistic ability of the Egyptians. Artists and sculptors followed particular formulas in style. This gave Egyptian art a distinctive look. Statues were made of kings, queens, scribes, animals, and gods and goddesses. Frequently, human and godlike attributes and symbols were combined.

Drawings depicted in tombs and temples are scenes of everyday living, models of people and animals, glass figures and containers, and jewelry made from gold and semi-precious stones. The wall and pillar drawings are perhaps the best known. In these drawings, it can be seen that people are going about the everyday business of baking, fishing, boating, marketing, and meeting together in family groups. Such drawings were also used to help the deceased to live forever by giving them all of the instructions they would need as they met the gods on their way to eternal life.

Egyptians also made advances in mathematics and science. They used geometry and learned how to calculate area and volume. This helped the Egyptians build the pyramids. They also developed a 365-day calendar. This calendar used three seasons each made up of four months. The seasons corresponded with the cycles of the Nile.

They were also experts in human anatomy. They used splints, bandages, and compresses to treat fractures, wounds and diseases. They learned many of these techniques from the mummification process. They had a basic understanding of the functions of the body, except for the brain and heart (which they believed served opposite functions). Some of the early medical procedures Egyptians used were embalming, surgery and autopsy.

Fill out the chart below discussing the impact of the achievements of the Ancient Egyptians.

Achievement	Description	Impact/Significance
Mummification		
Art, Science & Medicine		
Architecture		
Writing		