

THE MUMMIFICATION PROCESS

An important man has died and his body needs to be prepared for burial. The process of mummification has two stages. First, the embalming of the body. Then, the wrapping and burial of the body.

Embalming the body

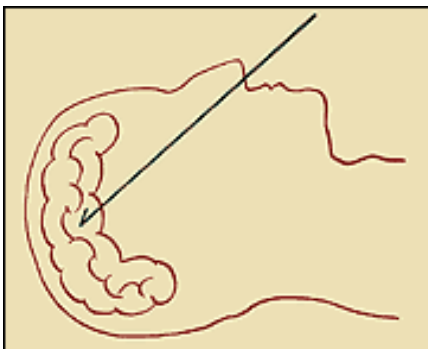
First, his body is taken to the tent known as 'ibu' or the 'place of purification'.

There the embalmers wash his body with good-smelling palm wine and rinse it with water from the Nile.

One of the embalmer's men makes a cut in the left side of the body and removes many of the internal organs. It is important to remove these because they are the first part of the body to decompose.



The liver, lungs, stomach and intestines are washed and packed in natron which will dry them out. The heart is not taken out of the body because it is the centre of intelligence and feeling and the man will need it in the afterlife. A long hook is used to smash the brain and pull it out through the nose.



The body is now covered and stuffed with natron which will dry it out. All of the fluids, and rags from the embalming process will be saved and buried along with the body. After forty days the body is washed again with water from the Nile. Then it is covered with oils to help the skin stay elastic.

The dehydrated internal organs are wrapped in linen and returned to the body. The body is stuffed with dry materials such as sawdust, leaves and

linen so that it looks lifelike. Finally the body is covered again with good-smelling oils. It is now ready to be wrapped in linen.

In the past, when the internal organs were removed from a body they were placed in hollow canopic jars. Over many years the embalming practices changed and embalmers began returning internal organs to bodies after the organs had been dried in natron. However, solid wood or stone canopic jars were still buried with the mummy to symbolically protect the internal organs.



The body has been cleaned, dried and rubbed with good-smelling oils. Now it is ready to be wrapped in linen.

Wrapping the mummy

First the head and neck are wrapped with strips of fine linen. Then the fingers and the toes are individually wrapped. The arms and legs are wrapped separately. Between the layers of wrapping, the embalmers place amulets to protect the body in its journey through the underworld.

A priest reads spells out loud while the mummy is being wrapped. These spells will help ward off evil spirits and help the deceased make the journey to the afterlife.

The arms and legs are tied together. A papyrus scroll with spells from the Book of the Dead is placed between the wrapped hands. More linen strips are wrapped around the body. At every layer, the bandages are painted with liquid resin that helps to glue the bandages together. A cloth is wrapped around the body and a picture of the god Osiris is painted on its surface.



Finally, a large cloth is wrapped around the entire mummy. It is attached with strips of linen that run from the top to the bottom of the mummy, and around its middle. A board of painted wood is placed on top of the mummy before the mummy is lowered into its coffin. The first coffin is then put inside a second coffin. The funeral is held for the deceased and his family mourns his death. A ritual called the 'Opening of the Mouth' is performed, allowing the deceased to eat and drink again.

Finally, the body and its coffins are placed inside a large stone sarcophagus in the tomb. Furniture, clothing, valuable objects, food and drink are arranged in the tomb for the deceased. Now his body is ready for its journey through the underworld. There his heart will be judged by his good deeds on earth. If his heart is found to be pure he will be sent to live for all eternity in the beautiful 'Field of Reeds'.

Bibliography

<http://www.ancientegypt.co.uk/mummies/story/main.html>



Question

1. Read the text and number the images in order

