

Making a Mummy

Read the following then answer the questions in full sentences.

It took 70 days to make a mummy. Several people were involved. The place where the mummy was made was called the **per nefer**. The chief embalmer wore a jackal mask to look like Anubis, the god of mummification. His assistants were called **wetyw**.

When the body arrived one of the assistants made a cut on the left side of the abdomen so that the internal organs could be removed. It was thought to be bad to "hurt" a body like this, so the other assistants would throw stones at the one who made the cut. This was not supposed to hurt him, it was just part of the ceremony.

The brain was removed from the body through the nose. The Egyptians did not think that the brain was important enough to be preserved.

After the organs had been removed the body was washed with wine and rubbed with spices. This killed the bacteria which cause decay. The body was then covered with natron for 40 days and left to dry out. At the end of this time, it was shrunken, wrinkled and leathery. It was cleaned again and rubbed with oils to soften the skin.

When the body was fully dried and cleaned it was decorated with jewellery. It was packed inside with linen coated in scented oil so that it had the proper shape. The body was then bandaged in lots of layers of linen. Small charms, or **amulets** were put into the bandages to protect the spirit on its journey. Each layer was coated with resin, which made a waterproof seal. This part of the process could take as long as a week.

After wrapping, the head was covered with a painted mask so that the spirit would recognise it. The mummy was then put into several gilded coffins, and finally into a **sarcophagus**.

1. How long did it take altogether to make a mummy?
2. What was the per nefer?
3. What were the embalmer's assistants called?
4. Why were stones thrown at the man who made the first cut in the body?
5. Why was the brain not preserved?
6. What did the body look like after being in natron for 40 days?
7. What did they put inside the body so that it had the proper shape?
8. Why did they put amulets inside the bandages?
9. How long did the bandaging part take?
10. Why did the body need a mask?

