

-roman i received
from timothy stoker
also



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

-Roman Cultures Mythology Burial Practices of the Ancient Egyptian and Greco-Roman Cultures Ancient Egyptian and Greco-Roman practices of preparing the dead for the next cradle of humanity are very intriguing.

These two cultures differ in a multitude of ways yet similarities can be noted in the domain of funerary services. In the realm of Egyptian afterlife, The Book of the Dead can provide one with vital information concerning ritual entombment practices and myths of the afterlife. The additional handouts I received from Timothy Stoker also proved to be useful in trying to uncover vital information regarding the transition into another life. Regarding the burial practices of Greece and Rome, parts of Homer's *Odyssey* are useful in the analysis of proper interment methods. One particular method used by the Egyptians was an intricate process known as mummification. It was undoubtedly a very involved process spanning seventy days in some cases. First, all the internal organs were removed with one exception, the heart.

If the body was not already West of the Nile it was transported across it, but not before the drying process was initiated. Natron (a special salt) was extracted from the banks of the Nile and was placed under the corpse, on the sides, on top, and bags of the substance were placed inside the body cavity to facilitate the process of dehydration. After thirty-five days the ancient embalmers would anoint the body with oil and wrap it in fine linen.

If the deceased was wealthy enough a priest donning a mask of Anubis would preside over the ceremony to ensure proper passage into the next realm. One of the practices overseen by the priest was the placing of a special

funerary amulet over the heart. This was done in behest to secure a successful union with Osiris and their kas.

The amulet made sure the heart did not speak out against the individual at the scale of the goddess of justice and divine order, Maat. The priest also made use of a “peculiar ritual instrument, a sort of chisel, with which he literally opened the mouth of the deceased.” This was done to ensure that the deceased was able to speak during their journeys in Duat. Another practice used by the Egyptians to aid the departed soul involved mass human sacrifice.

Many times if a prominent person passed away the family and servants would willfully ingest poison to continue their servitude in the next world. The family members and religious figureheads of the community did just about everything in their power to aid the deceased in the transition to a new life. The community made sure the chamber was furnished with “everything necessary for the comfort and well-being of the occupants.” It was believed that the individual would be able of accessing these items in the next world. Some of the most important things that the deceased would need to have at his side were certain spells and incantations. A conglomeration of reading material ensured a successful passage; The Pyramid Texts, The Book of the Dead, and the Coffin Texts all aided the lost soul in their journey through Duat into the Fields of the Blessed.

“Besides all these spells, charms, and magical tomb texts, the ancient practice of depositing in the tomb small wooden figures of servants was employed.” These “Ushabti statuettes” as they are called, were essentially

slaves of the deceased. If the deceased was called to work in the Elysian fields he would call upon one of the statues to take his place and perform the task for him. It was not unheard of for an individual to have a figure for every day of the year to ensure an afterlife devoid of physical exertion.

Just about everything the embalmers and burial practitioners did during the process was done for particular reasons. Many of the funerary practices of the ancient Greco-Romans were also done with a specific purpose in mind. Unlike the Egyptian's the Greco-Roman cultures did not employ elaborate tombs but focused on the use of a simple pit in the ground. Right after death, not too dissimilar from the practices of the Egyptians, it was necessary for the persons to carefully wash and prepare the corpse for his journey. It was vital for all persons to receive a proper burial and if they did not they were damned to hover in a quasi-world, somewhat of a "limbo" between life and death. One Greco-Roman myth that illustrates this point is *The Odyssey* by Homer.

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