

Resurrection imageries: A study of the motives for extravagant burial rituals in ancient Egypt

Author:

Jock M. Agai¹

Affiliation:

¹School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa

Correspondence to:

Matthew Jock

Email:

leadershipserve@yahoo.ca

Postal address:

PO Box 11108, The Tramshed 0126, South Africa

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Unlike in the New Testament whereby faith in Christ can resurrect the dead, the ancient Egyptians believed that the bereaved created the resurrection of their deceased through burial rituals and by encouraging the living to serve their kings. They thought that faith alone in god or the gods was not enough to resurrect the dead, thus they seemingly superimposed resurrection alongside burials. Using the various forms of Egyptian burial rituals and evaluated from the perspective of the Christian concept of resurrection, this researcher attempts to search for the motives behind specific Egyptian burial rituals. The researcher proposes that the activities of the bereaved or of the living over the dead were paramount in resurrecting the dead in ancient Egypt. The purpose of this research is, firstly, to explain how the Egyptian burial rituals influenced their thoughts on resurrection and, secondly, to show that the Egyptian god(s) might have depended on the living to raise the dead.

Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications: The ancient Egyptians lived their lives mainly to satisfy the interests of the dead, hence their extensive burial rituals. Whilst they believed in the power of the gods to raise the dead, there seemed to be another motive behind their burial practices which suggested that the living may have had more power to raise the dead. The power was realised in the activities of the living in the form of burials, tomb designs, mummification, food offering, and in remembering the dead. This research explains that these burial activities were relevant in resurrecting the dead without which the gods alone were not able to do that.

Introduction

Death is inevitable and all those who live know that there will be a time that they too will have to die. People are now aware that life is short and that death is certain (Rensburg & Eck 2008:1499). Rensburg and Eck (2008:1499) think that there are few people who can honestly say that they have no interest in afterlife issues, with even those who often feel uncomfortable talking about the subject still desiring to know what would happen to them in the afterlife. Apart from respect for the dead which often results in extravagant burial rituals amongst peoples of various cultures, the idea of the resurrection of the dead has often been regarded as the main purpose why the living respects the dead and buried the dead extravagantly.¹ The fact that many people desire to know what would happen to them in the afterlife suggests that the concept of resurrection is important amongst various peoples of different cultures. It seemed the ancient Egyptians regarded burial rituals as a sine qua non for the resurrection of the dead, whilst Christians on the other hand teach that faith in Christ can resurrect the dead irrespective of some kind of extensive burial ritual. Hence the questions; how did the ancient Egyptians view resurrection with regard to the motives for their burial rituals, and how did the Christians' view of resurrection by faith shed light on the Egyptian concept of resurrection by burial rituals?²

Generally, the word 'resurrect' is a verb which means the act or the art of bringing back into use something – a belief system or a practice that has disappeared or has been forgotten. More so, the word 'resurrection' is a noun which qualifies the term resurrect. Christians associate the term resurrection with the return of Christ from death; and the return of all those who believe or do not believe in Christ shall also rise from death at an appointed time (Hornby 2001:1004–1005). Bronner (2013:2) says that the word resurrection comes from the Latin word *resurrectus* (to rise again). She adds, '[R]esurrection is defined as the belief that in the future, the dead will rise from their graves, bringing about a revival of the whole person, body and soul' (Bronner 2002:2).

1. Among the Yorubas of Nigeria, the deceased is buried together with his or her beautiful clothing, money, pieces of silver and any object the deceased requires during his or her journey of death (Awolalu 1979:56–57). The Yorubas can be distinguished from other tribes because of the lavishness of resources during the burial of their loved ones. It is the wish of all Yoruba parents that their children would outlive them and bury them when they die and, during such burials, great festivities and jollification would be carried out (Adamolekun 2001:610).

2. It is important to note that this research is not a comparative study of the Egyptian and Christian concepts of resurrection, but the researcher hopes to highlight the motives for Egyptian burial rituals using a Christian lens and this includes the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is important because Christians emphasise faith in Christ whilst the Egyptians emphasised burial rituals. This distinction can enable the readers of this research to properly understand why the Egyptians valued expensive burial rituals in contrast to faith in God alone.

The early Church also believed that at the Second Coming of Christ, the dead shall resurrect with a new kind of body, because they had faith in Christ before their demise (Hick 1985:279; McKenzie 1965:731). More so, Christians believe in the literal resurrection of the body and that the resurrection of Jesus guaranteed the resurrection of all those who believe in him. Hence, faith in Christ is the main criteria for resurrection and not burial rituals (1 Cor 13–17). Christian martyrs chose to die because they thought they would be resurrected; what qualified them to resurrect was not because they gave their lives to die for Christ or because of their good works, but because they had faith in Christ; they thought his resurrection guaranteed their resurrections (Little 1988:50). It is because of this Christian emphasis on resurrection by faith that Bertrand Russel, for example, criticises Christians and the early Church for over-emphasising the doctrine of resurrection which was equally recited in the Apostolic Creed.³ Russel believed that the idea of resurrection after death was merely human fallacies or human inventions, which cannot be proven (Russel 1927:30; cf. Harpur 1991:94). Whilst Christians rely on faith through Jesus Christ as the main criteria that resurrects the dead, what were the perceptions of the ancient Egyptians on the concept of resurrection? What were the criteria that warranted resurrection in ancient Egypt?

The ancient Egyptians were popular for many reasons, one of which was their extensive burial rituals which they practiced, because they thought the dead resurrected. The Egyptians believed that the deceased were judged by Osiris (MacGregor 1992:60; cf. James 1976:156). The ancient Egyptian use of spells including the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*,⁴ the *Amduat*⁵ and most importantly their services to their earthly patrons were essential in resurrecting the dead⁶ (Bernstein 1993:13; Rensburg & Eck 2008:1510).⁷ Moreover, because the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* together with the *Amduat* were written by the Egyptians themselves, it suggests that their concept of sin, which influenced their views concerning the destinies of the dead, had more to do with obeying highly placed people whom they thought

represented god or the gods.⁸ These two concepts, that is, devotion to earthly patrons, and reliance on spells create ambiguity about the most relevant factor that resurrected the dead in ancient Egypt (Rensburg & Eck 2008:1510). Evaluating certain Egyptian practices, particularly their service(s) to please their respective pharaohs or wealthy class of people, the design of their tombs and rituals, their mummification and their elongated burial processions, this researcher was able to determine the motifs for such practices. This researcher proposes and emphasises that devotion to earthly figures through these rituals overrides both the spells and the decision of the Egyptian god of resurrection, Osiris, to resurrect the dead. The researcher suggests that contrary to popular beliefs, the bereaved or the living had seemingly greater authority in resurrecting the dead through burial rituals than just faith in a god or in the gods. The objective of this research is to show that resurrection in ancient Egypt was made possible because the living or the bereaved thought and acted that the dead lived and not because there was a literal resurrection of the dead. In other words, the resurrection of the dead in ancient Egypt was centred on the activities of the memory achieved through certain rituals that reminded the living that the dead lived. These rituals included the veneration of their earthly patrons and extensive burial rituals. Although the Egyptians believed in the power of the gods to raise the dead, this researcher points out that, in actual fact, it was the living that resurrected the dead and not necessarily the gods.

Death as a journey

Ancient Egyptians strongly believed that death was mainly a transition; they thought that the *Ka*, *Akh* and *Ba* (soul) in all human beings does not die (Jordan 1976:147).⁹ They believed

3. Russel was an atheist and his opinion was reproduced in the form of a lecture delivered at the Battersea Town Hall on Sunday, 06 March 1927 with the support of the National Secular Society, South London Branch. It was issued in booklet form at the suggestion of many people. It should be noted that Russel's opinions were his alone, because his views never went through an intensive scrutiny by the National Secular Society. It is not a surprise that his atheistic background made him to denounce the Christians' views on resurrection in his book *Why I am not a Christian*.

4. The Egyptian *Book of the Dead* illustrates the Egyptian mythologies surrounding the journeys of the dead and it described what would happen to a deceased in the afterlife. The *Book of the Dead* served as a kind of an amulet aimed at helping the deceased's soul to pass through a successful evaluation of human deeds in the afterlife by certain judges (Bernstein 1993:13). The *Book of the Dead* could also prevent the judgment of the heart by cautioning the deceased's heart from utterances against the deceased. As a result of the use of the *Book of the Dead*, there would be no reason to condemn the deceased to a second death (Spronk 1986:95).

5. The *Amduat* is a book which conveyed various issues to the Egyptians. The text described the journey of Re in the netherworld. It also described the rituals which would resurrect the dead. The book, though found in royal tombs, does not only contain information regarding funerals, but, also speaks about the normal life of the Egyptians and how their lives can be rejuvenated (Dungen 2012:1–4).

6. The dead were normally buried together with the *Book of the Dead* close to the coffin but from 1600 BCE, when the Hyksos came into power, The *Book of the Dead* was no longer kept in the grave beside the coffin but was put inside the coffin (Hubert 1996:39).

7. A number of heart scarabs with some amulets have been found in Egypt. One of the amulets is said to have belonged to King Sobkemsaf of the early 17th dynasty (James 1976:159).

8. Sin in ancient Egypt was associated with disobeying earthly leaders which suggests that the living influenced the minds of the gods who judged the dead. Concerning information on ancient Egyptian motifs, researchers today rely on ancient Egyptian artefacts, papyri, inscriptions, hieroglyphs, mummies, and other objects found in ancient Egyptian tombs and pyramids to interpret or understand how the ancient Egyptians lived their lives. Using modern techniques or knowledge and understanding, researchers defined the thoughts of the ancient Egyptians over certain rituals they had by examining these objects. Partridge's book (1994) is full of information about the mummification of royal mummies in ancient Egypt. The author, who left with a distinction in Egyptology from the University of Manchester in 1989, examined a number of mummies together with illustrations from previous authors. Using modern knowledge, he suggested that the ancient Egyptians had certain motifs over certain burial rituals in Egypt. In addition, Africanists have made a profound note that the dissociation of the ancient Egyptians and their civilisation from Africa or Africans have led to distortions in the interpretation of ancient Egyptian artefacts (O'Connor & Reid 2003:1). Adamo argued that the ancient Egyptians were Africans (Adamo 2013:73–74). Agai argues that the interpretation of Egyptian culture or artefacts with a view to how other Africans view or interpret their individual culture is paramount in the contemporary definition of ancient Egyptian knowledge: '[I]n order to have a better understanding of Egyptian culture, researchers ought to read ancient Egypt with an "African lens"' (Agai 2013:98). This researcher evaluates Egyptian burial rituals with a view that the ancient Egyptians were Africans.

9. The ancient Egyptians perceived the *Ka* as a person's spirit, an invisible entity that was said to be born in every human being. The *Ka* was believed to be present at birth; it was thought to be indestructible and different from human personality. The *Ka* was not associated with human social class in ancient Egypt, thus ancient Egyptians believed that all human *Kas*, whether of rich or poor people, went on a journey and needed food and water during such journeys. The difference was that the *Ka* of poor or unprivileged people suffered in the afterlife because they had little or no food or water to support their journey through the afterlife (Bernstein 1993:13). The ancient Egyptian *Akh* was that radiant and shining aspects of humans which dwelled on in the *Sahu*. The *Akh* was believed to have transcended death and lived with the gods. Apart from viewing the *Akh* from the perspective of its spiritual function, it had material significance, as the ancient Egyptians believed that the *Akh* also meant the 'shadow of man' represented as a black figure in most tomb paintings (Seawright 2013:1). Another important part of the human being in ancient Egyptian thought was the *Ba* (*Bai* or soul), which was often represented as a

that the soul, after bodily death, flew to the other world in the daytime and with the help of *Re* (the sun-god), the soul returned to the tomb by night to meet its embalmed body (Murnane 1992:37, 47; Schwantes 1969:65). They believed that the sun-god crossed the heavens in a boat daily during the daytime and that he sojourned in the underworld at night carrying the soul of the dead:

Be pure; occupy your seat in the bark of *Re*
May you row over the sky and ascend to the distance ones;
Row within the Imperishable stars,
Receive the freight of the Night-Bark. (Spronk 1986:88)

The ancient Egyptians' extensive practices during mummification and in serving food offerings to the dead suggest that they believed that the body would resurrect after death. For example, after the death of King Teti,¹⁰ the ancient Egyptians thought that the king would rise to continue with his journeys in the afterlife, so they buried him with goods he needed in order to continue his journey. The ancient Egyptians linked the journeys of the dead with natural phenomenon such as the functioning of the sun, the sky, and particularly the seasonal cycles of the Egyptian Nile valley.¹¹ The Nile played an enormous role in the prosperity of Egypt. Failure of the Nile River to rise at its appointed time or season meant disruption in the natural rhythm of Egyptian lives. The rising and setting of the sun and the waning and waxing of the moon and stars were connected to the yearly seasonal changes of the Nile (Murnane 1992:36). Towards the end of the Old Kingdom, Osiris¹² was associated with these natural cycles (Jordan 1976:146) and particularly of the Nile's fertile mud, which symbolised resurrection. As a result, *Re* and Osiris became important Egyptian gods, who were associated with the resurrection of the body and soul (El-Shahawy 2005:73).

For the Egyptians, death was a journey without which there was no resurrection and, whilst the gods had powers in assisting the bereaved to resurrect the dead, the activities of the deceased before death together with the actions of the bereaved over the dead through extensive burial rituals had a great role in determining the kind of resurrection expected of the deceased. What were the motives behind certain burial practices in ancient Egypt and how do these assumed motives affect the dead with regard to resurrection? It should

.....
(footnote 9 continues...)

human-headed bird and was believed to have possessed full human characteristics (Murnane 1992:40, 41). The *Ba* was perceived as that which does not die (James 1976:156) and it represented the dynamic forces, both physical and psychic, of the personality. It was the *Ba* that journeyed out of the tomb in the daytime and returned to the preserved body at night. This surviving entity, the *Ba*, according to ancient Egyptian belief, was endowed with will and personality. It was believed to have the ability to mingle with the gods above the sky and, at the same time, to live with the deceased in tombs and to bring air and food to the deceased (Parrinder 1951:203–204; Seawright 2013:1).

10.Detailed information about Teti is not available. Grajetzki (2003:67–68) says that the discovery of his tomb in the year 2000 CE shows that he was a 'treasurer', who worked under King NubkheperreIntef. He could probably have been King NubkheperreIntef's son.

11.The ancient Egyptians also believed that after death, the soul of the deceased associated itself, or became one entity with, the circumpolar stars which do not set. The association of the soul with the sun and circumpolar stars could be a symbolic representation of eternity (Jordan 1976:145; Murnane 1992:36).

12.Osiris is sometimes pluralised. Osiris, one of the earliest Egyptian gods was believed to have power to raise the dead and would be a judge in the afterlife (Jordan 1976:146).

be noted that this researcher did not reject the idea that the gods also influenced the resurrection of the dead; rather the researcher is concerned with emphasising the roles of other humans in resurrecting the dead in ancient Egypt.

Motives for serving human figures

During the Old Kingdom periods, pharaohs were thought to have divine powers and the ancient Egyptians thought that wealthy people, like kings, were meant to act as god's representatives on earth. As a result, people were willing to work hard in order to please their respective kings, so that they could be rewarded in the afterlife. Hence, serving kings became a religious duty. Kings, in return, honoured their subjects with certain titles such as *rech-nesw*, meaning 'acquaintance of the king' (Schwantes 1969:63) and the title *Shabtis* or *Ushabtis*¹³ (Spronk 1986:93). For example, King Tutankhamen was said to have had 414 *shabtis* in his tomb, whilst people with lesser responsibilities on earth enjoyed the services of just one or two *shabtis* in the afterlife (Turner 1993:15). In some instances, those who were committed to the king were given the opportunity to collect the revenue of some villages (Schwantes 1969:63) and because the king¹⁴ was associated with Osiris, the god-king of the dead, it was thought that the king had the power to help his loyalists gain resurrection. It was also believed that Osiris could not deny the request of the king to provide salvation to the king's servants (Spronk 1986:87–91), and this is why servants would do all they could to satisfy the desires of their respective kings. In order words, for an Egyptian to be resurrected in the afterlife, he or she had to serve the king because kings had automatic powers to influence Osiris in resurrecting the dead.

Pharaohs, likewise, identified themselves with the sun-god *Re*. It was believed that the sun-god ruled in the daytime and went to *Tuat*, or the netherworld, or the land of the dead, at night. Pharaohs also believed that, at death, they would ascend into heaven where they would live eternally, and that is why Pharaohs were regarded as divine beings and referred to as 'those who are not punished and not found guilty of crime' (Bernstein 1993:12, 14). Moreover, Pharaohs, who were yet to die, identified themselves with Osiris during their lifetimes and, as a result, they claimed an equal spiritual status with Horus (son of Osiris). The Osirian myth teaches that Osiris was thought to be murdered by his brother Seth (Bernstein 1993:12). It was believed that Osiris' wife and sister, Isis, conceived a son 'posthumously' called Horus (Jordan 1976:146). Osiris was resurrected by Isis, who was a magician (Bernstein 1993:12).

Osiris became known as the god of resurrection and of renewal, or of regeneration. He was linked to the rebirth of annual natural vegetation and also to human resurrection

.....
13.This means a king's servant, who was willing to die and be buried together with the king. In this case, the king was charged with the responsibility of the resurrecting his servants in the afterlife.

14.Even after a king's death, it was thought that the king would live among the stars, hence his bodily needs had to be met and his name remembered by his subordinates (Spronk 1986:90).

after death (Jordan 1976:146). For example, a shallow tray-like figure of Osiris filled with mud from which corn stems sprouted, was found in Tutankhamen's tomb. Also, a papyrus in the Louvre shows Osiris as a supine figure from whom sprout stalks of corn and an erect phallus. Jordan (1976:146) believes that these findings clearly indicate Osiris' association with renewal (in relation to the growth of plants) and with resurrection; likewise with potency and fertility. At the close of the Old Kingdom, pyramids were built in such a way that they could accommodate a pharaoh, his relatives and loyalists. For instance, in the Old Kingdom period, King Zoser (Djoser), the last king of the third dynasty, built a step-mastaba or step-pyramid¹⁵ of about 204 feet, using precisely cut stones for himself and to accommodate others (Schwantes 1969:58).

Pyramids were often built before the death of a king, but it is probable that some pyramids were built after the demise of a king. The pyramid was designed as a shelter for the deceased where he would have to commence their journey to the other world. Ancient Egyptians believed that farming and business activities like tilling, irrigation, brewing, baking, trades, and craft would continue in the afterlife, where servants would continue to serve their rulers (Cavendish 1977:21). The remembrance of the dead through certain rituals like mummification, building of pyramids, food offerings,¹⁶ continual ritual of utterances in favour of the deceased and the remembrance of the deceased's name, became the sole duty as it was believed that the living lived strictly to please the dead. It is on this issue of respect and living for the dead that Jordan (1976:142) stressed that the 'remembrance of the soul' required the daily attention of its surviving relatives in ancient Egypt. Even after the death of a king, the care for the dead was prioritised and taken as an important part of societal-religious norms. It pleased the living to provide earthly provisions for the deceased:

[For over four thousand years] of eventful history ... the care of the Egyptians for their dead remained the striking and constant feature of their religion ... Several of the old-world customs survive in almost their ancient form. Amongst these are the periodical visitation to the tombs, the feasting and observances on these occasions, the prayers and invocations made almost directly to the dead, the belief of the presence either in or near the tomb of the 'good spirit' or double of the deceased, and the provisioning of the tomb with food. (Davies 1999:27)

This section of research indicates that certain human figures were important in ancient Egypt and that they had a role in resurrecting the dead. Their power to resurrect the dead was given to them by the ancient Egyptians themselves. It can be suggested that resurrection:

- Can only be achieved by pleasing the king by adhering to the wishes of the king, who may be regarded as the main decision maker and who determined whether a deceased should be resurrected or not.

15. A step pyramid comprises many layers of chambers (*mastabas*) built on top of each other in ever decreasing sizes until the sides appear triangular in shape.

16. Food offering was an important burial ritual in ancient Egypt. The relatives of the deceased were expected to continue to offer food at the deceased's grave (Jordan 1976:144), which suggests that the deceased would continue to need food for the journey.

- Meant performing activities that will remind the bereaved about the deceased, hence resurrection meant remembering the deceased by the bereaved.
- Meant thinking and acting in a way which suggests that the dead lived. In other words, the ancient Egyptians did not believe in resurrection because they actually saw people rising from the dead, but because they thought the dead lived alongside the living or that the dead lived in the other world.

Motives for burial rituals

The tomb: For the ancient Egyptians, the tomb was perceived as the starting location where the dead needed to begin the journey towards resurrection (Otey 2004:1–2). Murnane (1992:38) noted that tombs built by ancient Egyptians were most often situated some distance away from the living, and that tombs were mostly located either in the neighbouring desert or across the river and more frequently in the west where the sun sets. Ancient Egyptians associated burials with the setting of the sun, as it was connected with the ending of the day (Murnane 1992:38). Predynastic Egyptians buried their deceased in simple shallow graves, but when the process of embalming became the norm, larger tombs were built, particularly for leaders and wealthy people of the Egyptian societies (Partridge 1994:6–7). Tombs of important personalities were constructed with structures which included the creation of a burial chamber, where burial goods were stored and a space created for cultic services in respect of the deceased's spirit (Murnane 1992:39). The motive was that during such cultic services, it was assumed that the dead person was present amongst the living. Apart from the space meant for cultic services, Partridge (1994:6–7) believes that other reasons for tomb enlargement included the need to provide adequate protection for corpses and burial goods.¹⁷ He added that the length of time required for building larger monuments for the preservation of the deceased body is responsible for increasing tomb size in ancient Egypt.

The building of tombs often started during a person's lifetime, but they had to be completed before burial could take place (Partridge 1994:7). Tombs were therefore built by an organised and skilled workforce sponsored by the living person in the preparation for death. Grave goods were gathered and a priest appointed for a burial procession even before the death of the person concerned (Murnane 1992:35). A proper burial ritual conducted around tombs, and continued cult activities around the tombs of the deceased, aided their journey to the afterlife. These burial rituals were aimed at honouring and equipping the deceased for the journey ahead. They also enabled the deceased to be remembered, a form of immortality bestowed on the deceased and relatives (Murnane 1992:39). The remembrance of the deceased through certain rituals carried out in tombs is another conceptualisation of resurrection as a passive term that mainly existed in the hearts of the bereaved.

17. The enlargement of tombs had contributed to the protection of the burial goods from the hands of criminals, who would not find it easy to penetrate tombs because of their large and complicated nature. Tomb enlargement was also meant to accommodate the deceased's loyalists in the case of a deceased king (James 1976:157).

Mummification: Ancient Egyptians did not document specific methods of mummification (Partridge 1994:7) hence, methods of mummification are interpreted today using modern scientific methods (Scheffler 2000:1). The practice of cremation was not common to the ancient Egyptians (Scheffler 2000:123). Researchers depend on two main sources to understand the processes involved with mummification. The first is found in Herodotus' writings. Herodotus was a Greek who travelled to Egypt several times. He wrote at length about mummification in ancient Egypt in the fifth century BCE. The second source is the contemporary medical examination of mummies which Partridge (1994:10–11) says agrees with the writings of Herodotus concerning the ways ancient Egyptians mummified their deceased rulers. Also few depictions and fragments on papyri have helped researchers to understand how the process of mummification was completed.¹⁸

During the Predynastic period, there were no specific methods of mummification and the dehydration of the bodies of the deceased was achieved naturally by exposing the deceased's body to the warm and windy weather conditions of ancient Egypt (Jordan 1976:144–145; Partridge 1994:6). During this period, corpses were simply buried in shallow graves in the desert and the natural warm weather of ancient Egypt removed moistures from corpses creating a natural mummification (Murnane 1992:37). This process could be the precursor for applied mummification which was also used to prevent the decomposition of the body or body parts (Jordan 1976:144–145). In hot climates, the corpse decomposed very quickly, hence the need to bury a corpse immediately after death. The building of larger tombs for a deceased, means that more time was needed to prepare for burial, which prompted the need to preserve the body (Partridge 1994:8).

One of the first steps of mummification in ancient Egypt involved bandaging the corpse. Egyptians believed that every mummified body had been given the ability to rise after being mummified and would leave behind the bandages (Spronk 1986:93). It is normal that a decomposing body, if left for more than two days, would begin to swell, losing its recognisable shape. Every part of the body would be affected, but the abdomen, in particular, would be most damaged because of the gasses produced by bacteria in the intestines. This was why body extremities such as fingers and toes were tightly bandaged so as to prevent the formation of blisters on the skin caused by body fluids which appeared in the first stage of decomposition. The tightness of the bandages would restrict any form of swelling and stop the air from having any contact with the body, to slow the rate of deterioration. Although the skin's protective shell deteriorates within, the outward appearance was well preserved by these bandages (Partridge 1994:8). In some cases, evisceration¹⁹ was carried out as the first step towards mummification. This practice also prevented the deceased's body from swelling (Partridge 1994:8).

During the New Kingdom, the dehydration of the body was achieved by the removal of both the brain and the viscera (James 1976:157–158). Other steps practiced during that period involved leaving behind the heart, whilst other organs were removed like extracting the brain through the nose by puncturing the ethmoid bone and keeping them in Canopic jars in the burial chamber. From the Old Kingdom through to the Ptolemaic period, it became a custom to keep the viscera extracted from the body in four Canopic jars (James 1976:157–160; cf. Otey 2004:1). Body fluids were absorbed through the hollow parts of the body with the use of a brackish chemical compound called natron salts²⁰ (Jordan 1976:145) which was in surplus on the fringes of the Nile valley (Murnane 1992:38). After the absorption of the body fluids, the human carcasses would be left open for 42 to 45 days to allow for dehydration. The contents of the Canopic jars were also treated with natron separately (Jordan 1976:145). The use of natron in a corpse was meant to last for 70 days to complete the desiccation of the corpse (Murnane 1992:38). Natron was also used to thoroughly cleanse the mouth which prepared the deceased to speak and sing during his journey in the afterlife (El-Shahawy 2005:75).

The final step for mummification involved the sewing up of the abdominal incision from where the internal organs were removed. After this, the eye sockets were plugged with wads of linen and artificial eyes may have been inserted into the eye sockets. The body was, at this stage, treated with ointments, spices and resins, then wrapped in linen and finally bandaged. In order to enhance the journey of the deceased and to lessen the lengthy and turbulent nature of the journey, amulets of different types were placed in the linen wrappings, including the heart scarab which was often placed on the breast of the deceased (Cavendish 1977:21). The heart scarab is said to have contained some exhortations and oracles which were meant to guide the heart not to bear false witness against the deceased in the presence of Osiris on the Judgement Day (James 1976:158–159).²¹ However, from the 22nd dynasty, mummy-making began to decline; many ancient Egyptians wanted to become mummies upon death and as a result the normal process of mummification was not followed. During the period of decline, there was pessimism and scepticism over death being a journey to the afterlife; people began to doubt the afterlife (Spronk 1986:68). Mummification was aimed at allowing the soul to return to the body which was assumed to be a 'normal body' (because it has been mummified) in the daytime and to enable the deceased to journey through the dangerous parts of the netherworld successfully at night (Spronk 1986:93).

20. Natron is a natural substance made up of sodium carbonates and sodium bicarbonates. It is not known precisely when natron was introduced as an ingredient for body preservation in ancient Egypt and it might have been discovered by accident (Partridge 1994:9). The function of natron was to facilitate the dissolving of body fats. During the process of extracting body fluids, great caution was exercised so as not to extract all body fluids from the body, because some of these body fluids helped to maintain biological body form (James 1976:157–160; cf. Otey 2004:1).

21. The identification of certain leaders with specific animal-like symbols such as lions and birds, led to the mummification of animals. These mummified animals were later regarded and venerated as sacred beings. The practice of animal mummification in Egypt extended through the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods (James 1976:160–161).

18. See <http://www.kingtutone.com/mummies/mummification/>

19. Involved the removal of the internal organs like the brain and many more.

Partridge (1994:10) pointed out that the initial purpose of mummification was sanitation and that it developed later into preservation and then resurrection. If the body of King Tutankhamen had not been mummified, it would not have been found in the same manner that it was.²² Furthermore, mummification was aimed at glorifying the mummified body as *Sah* in heaven (Spronk 1986:90), because the mummification of the body guaranteed resurrection:

The Egyptians alone believe in the resurrection, as they carefully preserved their dead bodies. They have a custom of drying up their bodies and making them as durable as brass. (Davies 1999:27)

Mummification allowed the ancient Egyptians to view the deceased as a naturally resurrected person. In other words, without mummification, there would have been no resurrection. Therefore, mummification was an act of resurrecting the dead achieved through the activities of the ancient Egyptians themselves.

Burial procession: Burial methods varied according to ancient Egyptian chronological periods, except for the period of decline, when ancient Egyptians stopped extravagant burials. During the Predynastic period people were buried in ordinary graves, often covered with animal skins or mats (James 1976:155), but during the end of the Predynastic period, burials became elaborate, especially for rulers. During burial processions conducted between the Old and Middle Kingdom periods, a cleric, relatives and well-wishers were expected to sing ceremonial hymns and pray for the deceased. After the hymns and prayers, the mummified body would be transported by boat, first across the Nile, and then across the land on a sleigh pulled by oxen. Relatives of the deceased and well-wishers carried gifts, Canopic jars, ceremonial oils, vegetation, powders, scarves, belts, pieces of clothing to serve as hair ribbons, and other provisions that were required for the journey to the afterlife. The cleric was expected to lead a burial ritual in accordance with the rules of Osiris. These rituals, if properly carried out, were designed to ensure the deceased a peaceful journey in his transit to the other world, and also to gain salvation for him or her. Burial expenses and funeral internments were normally a community effort (El-Shahawy 2005:75–77; James 1976:157).

Four vases of water (representing a petition to the four gods at the four cardinal points in heaven) were used to lustrate the corpse and to purify the deceased. The deceased was fumigated with natron to enable him or her to have communion with the gods. At this stage, natron was sprinkled on the deceased's mouth in order to purify it so that the deceased could be able to read hymns to the gods in the afterlife. Part of this ceremony of purification included the presentation of a calf's foreleg, and an amulet which were placed together with the rest of the food offerings on the offering altar. The various parts of the deceased's body would then be touched by some magical objects (like metals, limestone, a knife, a stick shaped like a serpent head and a ram's horn) aimed at ensuring that the deceased would be

able to implement the outcomes of the rituals performed when arriving in the world of the afterlife. All other gifts, including a feather, were brought by the deceased's family members, friends and well-wishers, and were placed in the tomb, but not directly onto the mummy until they were purified. The presence of the feather signified that the burial rituals were performed appropriately in accordance with the customs of the time (El-Shahawy 2005:75–77).

During the 'anointing ceremony' all offerings that were brought to the tomb were purified and presented to the mummy. El-Shahawy (2005:78) stressed that the food offerings at this stage were not meant to be physically eaten by the deceased, but to show the life-preserving powers of the mummy. The aim of the anointing ceremony was to make the deceased's heart happy and to give the body a form of renewed youthful life. The ceremony was carried out using seven oils mixed with animal fat, resin, and glue whilst a perfume wax cone was placed on the mummy's head. All these activities were carried out meticulously following the appropriate gestures, and the right incantations. The reading of the ritual liturgical texts was carried out by the priest. Many priests attended the burial processions alongside the deceased's eldest son, who sometimes wore a leopard skin at the funeral and whose role symbolised the role of Horus, the son of Osiris. These extensive burial rituals continued throughout the time of the Old Kingdom (El-Shahawy 2005:78).

One of the last burial ceremonies performed at the graveside was the 'Opening of the Mouth Ceremony'²³ where the deceased's mouth would be left open permanently. In addition, the practice of this ceremony was aimed at allowing the deceased to communicate, eat or celebrate in the other world with other deceased souls. The ceremony commenced when the mummy was brought in a coffin and made to stand upright in front of the tomb, often supported by the son of the deceased, a priest or a family member of the deceased (El-Shahawy 2005:75). In the New Kingdom, the ceremony was extended to include a series of about 75 to 100 episodes, but in the Ramesside period, the ritual was shortened and carried out at the tomb by several priests at the same time. In the midst of many, one lector priest was appointed to read aloud the formulas of the 'Opening of the Mouth' rite from an unrolled papyrus (El-Shahawy 2005:78). The final ritual involved the insertion or laying of the casket with other objects into the tomb (James 1976:158–159). As the deceased was placed inside the tomb, it was believed that he or she would return to life and would be received by Imntt,²⁴ because a mummy of the Ramesside period²⁵ was shown being welcomed by Imntt in one of Egypt's early tombs (El-Shahawy 2005:78). After the burial, an event was organised to both mourn and celebrate the departure of the deceased

23. The purpose of this ritual was also to ensure that the deceased regained full control over his sense organs in order to enjoy the celebrative parts and sessions of the other world during his/her journey. The main purpose of this practice was to enable the deceased to continue a normal life in the healthiest and happiest way in the worlds of the dead (Watson 2010:4–5).

24. One of the 'watchers', who receives the souls of the dead in heaven.

25. The Ramesside period started at the end of the New Kingdom when the people of ancient Egypt began to doubt and fear the afterlife (Jordan 1976:147).

22. Cf. Spronk (1986:55, 57); Lange (2004:40); Lucas (1970:410–418).

(James 1976:158–159). The elaborate activities of the ancient Egyptians during burial processions suggest the need to properly exit the deceased for proper resurrection without which there would have been no resurrection.

Conclusion

Jesus' death and resurrection was fundamental to the dying and resurrection of other Christians (1 Cor 15:1–58). The Egyptians seemingly claimed that Osiris was responsible for resurrecting the dead. However, the Egyptians conceptualisation of burials through the veneration of their rulers together with their thoughts concerning their rulers as god's representatives, their elaborative burial rituals, mummification, tomb design, and continued offering to the dead, suggest that the living or the bereaved had a seemingly great role to play in the resurrection of the deceased, even more than the gods (Osiris/Re), who sometimes needed information from certain individual figures about a deceased before judgement could be passed. This also means that the ancient Egyptians superimposed resurrection motives in their burial rituals. Although the conceptualisation of resurrection by the ancient Egyptians appears in different imageries, for the ancient Egyptians, resurrection may be defined all inclusively as rituals carried out by the living over the dead so that the dead would continue to be remembered amongst the living; for without these rituals, there would not be resurrection. One of the implications for this kind of ancient Egyptian tradition, where humans had seemingly greater roles to play in defining the destiny of a deceased, is that *humans and not the gods are the inventors of the resurrection theories*. In other words, the bereaved were the ones that resurrected the dead in ancient Egypt, not because any deceased had ever been resurrected, but because the bereaved thought and did certain rituals to remind them that the dead lived. It can, therefore, be proposed that resurrection in ancient Egypt meant activities of the living which reminded them that the dead lived. These activities are mainly burial rituals and these rituals supposed that the living had a great role to play in resurrecting the dead. Christians on the other hand preached that rituals alone cannot raise the dead, but only faith in Christ. To them, resurrection is solely an act of God, and that humans have no or a lesser role to play in resurrecting the dead. Even the Apostles who prayed for the dead to rise, believed that it was only God's power that resurrected the dead and never human power (Ac 9:40, 41) (McDowell 1972:143).

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