



# Death in Civilizations



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# Table of Contents

- ✎ Mesopotamia
- ✎ Mesopotamia
- ✎ Ancient Egypt
- ✎ Ancient Egypt
- ✎ Ancient Egypt
- ✎ Modern Canada
- ✎ Modern Canada
- ✎ Ancient Rome
- ✎ Ancient Rome
- ✎ Ancient Rome
- ✎ Vikings
- ✎ Bibliography

# Mesopotamia

- ∞ The Mesopotamians took a very different view towards death than the Egyptians. It was a very dark and negative event. Bodies were buried but they were not preserved like the Egyptians.
- ∞ The Mesopotamians thought that humans were made from clay and mixed with the flesh and blood from a god that was sacrificed. After a death it was believed the soul would carry on, but had a hard life eating only dust and clay and no water. But, the dead's relatives could offer them food.

# Mesopotamia

Mesopotamians were fearful of the dead. They always made sure a proper burial was done so that evil spirits could not come back through the ears of the dead into the living world. Bodies were buried in cemeteries.

Since the Mesopotamians didn't believe in a good afterlife not as much effort was made to be good like the Egyptians.



# Ancient Egypt

- ☞ Death and afterlife was a huge part of ancient Egyptian culture. They would preserve the bodies using a method called mummification. This was completed over 70 days. The mummies were the Egyptians who could afford to preserve their bodies. The reason the bodies were preserved was because the Egyptians believed in an afterlife. So if they were preserved then the bodies could be used in afterlife. Afterlife was basically life after death. When they died they would make a journey to a new world.



# Ancient Egypt

- ☞ All the things they needed to start a new life were buried with them. Sometimes their slaves were also buried with them. It cost a lot of money to be mummified. The poor Egyptians were buried in the sand.
- ☞ The process of mummification took 70 days. The priest doing the ritual would wear the mask of the jackal. This was to represent the god Anubis.
- ☞ There were many steps in mummification. The body was first washed and the organs except for the heart were taken out. Next it was filled with stuffing and covered with natron to absorb the moisture. After 40 – 50 days the stuffing was taken out and linen or sawdust was put in the body. Lastly the body was wrapped in linen and covered with a sheet and then placed in a stone coffin called a sarcophagus.
- ☞ After you died you hopefully went to the Land of Two Fields. If you had a light heart, a preserved body and your name written down the God Osiris would open the door to the Land of Two Fields for you. To have a light heart you would have to do good deeds during your life. The Egyptians believed in a soul.



# Ancient Egypt



# Modern Canada

- ∞ There are many different views on death in Canada because of all the different religions. In general it is a time of sadness and loss but then a celebration of that person's life.
- ∞ Most families hold funerals after a death of a relative. The funerals differ based on religious views and cultures. Sometimes the funerals are held very quickly like in the Muslim religion and the body is buried quickly but in the Catholic religion the funeral will take place more slowly and the body is present at the ceremony.





# Modern Canada

- Funerals are often held at churches
- A newer trend is to have a celebration of life for the deceased. This ceremony honours the person's life without a religious part.
- In the past it was more common in Canada for the body to be buried but now cremation is becoming more popular. Some religious groups such as the Sikhs require the eldest son in the family to prepare the body for burial but most families hire a funeral home to prepare the body for burial.



# Ancient Rome

- ✎ In the first and second centuries AD, cremation was the burial practice used in ancient Roman Empire. Cremation is when the dead body is burned to ashes. When Christianity became more popular among the Romans inhumation replaced cremation. Inhumation is where the corpse is buried in the grave. This became a very common practice.



# Ancient Rome

☞ There were several steps put into preparing the body to be buried. The first step was the body was washed and cleaned. A coin was placed in the mouth of the body to pay Charon, who was believed to take the dead to the underworld. The relatives would call out the name of the departed and close the eyes.

After the body was prepared it was put on display. If the person had a high social status their body was put on display for up to a week.



# Ancient Rome

- After the body was finished being on display a parade was held by the relatives outside of town during the night. The body was forbidden to stay within the city limits. A large fire called a pyre was built for the cremation. After the funeral pyres were put out the ashes were gathered by a family member and placed in an urn.





# Vikings

- ❧ Vikings had strong beliefs of what happened after death. There were two places they were sent after they died. The Vikings who were killed in battle were sent to Valhalla and the other Vikings were sent to Hel. All Vikings wished to be killed in battle. Valhalla was pictured as a huge banquet hall. This was the residences of the Gods. The was said to be the ultimate life for Vikings. The days were spent preparing for battle and at night they would feast with the Gods. Hel was a dark terrible place. However there was not said about Hel other then how bad it was.



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