

# What can we find out about ancient Egypt from what has survived?

## Learning Objective:

To learn about Egyptian tombs, pyramids and burial sites.

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The ancient Egyptians believed in lots of different gods and goddesses who ruled different aspects of their lives.

For example, there was:

Re - the sun god

Isis - the goddess of nature

Anubis - the god of death

Gods and goddesses often had the bodies of humans but the heads of animals.



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They had temples where they worshipped and where the gods and goddesses lived, usually in the form of a statue. This picture shows the temple of Horus at Edfu.

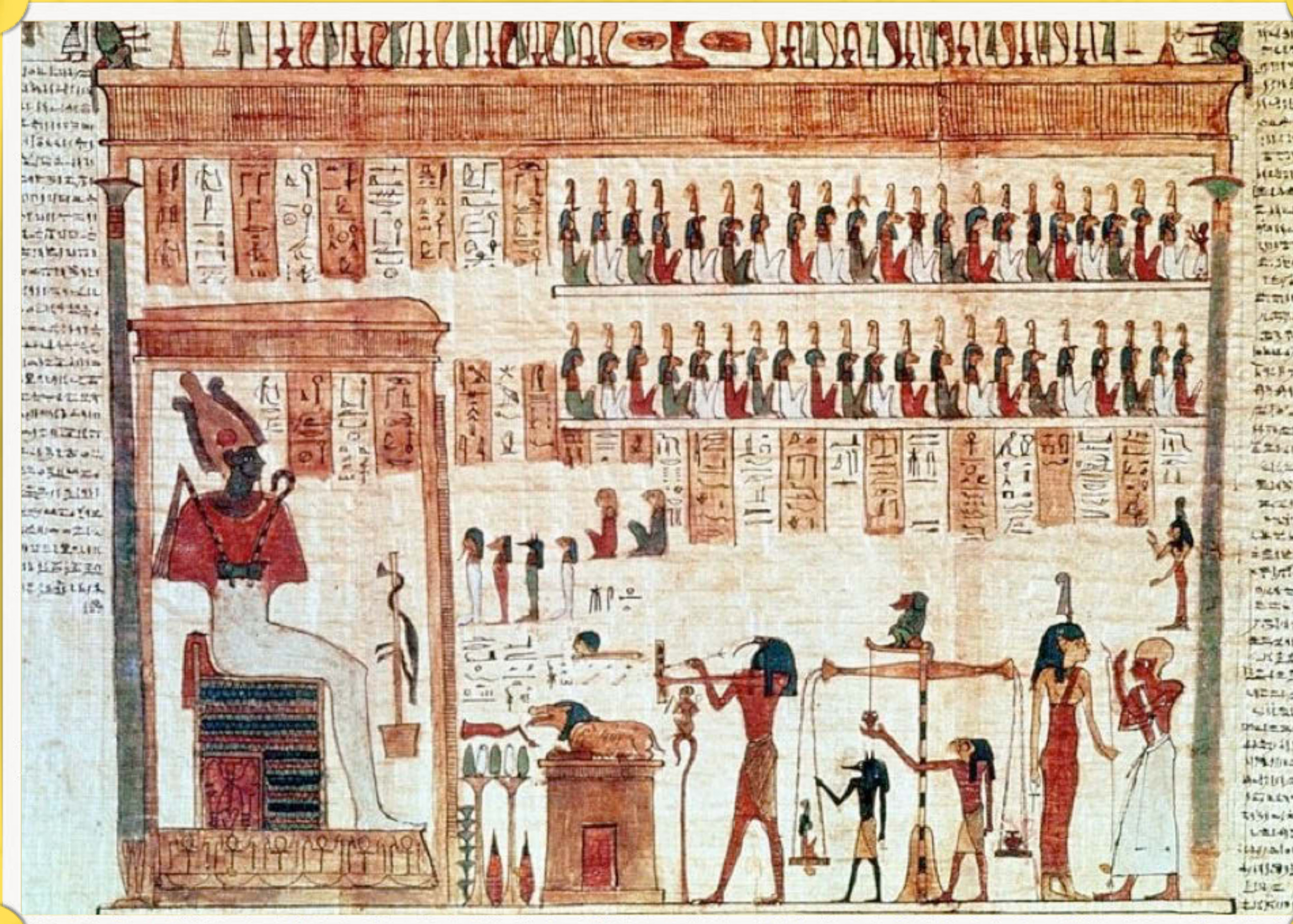


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The ancient Egyptians believed in an underworld called Duat. They believed that when you died, you went to Duat and the Hall of the Two Truths where your heart was weighed against the deeds you had committed in your life. If your heart was good enough, you could travel through to a new land.



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Ancient Egyptians used a process called mummification to preserve dead bodies because it was believed that the body would be needed in the after-life. Only richer people could afford to be made into mummies.

There is no written evidence from the Egyptians about the process of mummification but there is a first-hand account from a Greek traveller who saw the process around 450 BC. We can also look at mummies that have survived to find out how they did it.



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First, the body was washed and cleaned.



Then, the brain was pulled out through the nose with a hook.



The intestines, liver, stomach and lungs were removed through a slit in the side of the body. The organs were then placed in canopic jars. The heart was left in.



The body was covered in a special salt called natron. This dried the body out. It was left for around 40 days.

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After 40 days, the natron was washed off and the body was stuffed with sawdust or linen.



The body was then coated with oils and resin.



It was wrapped in bandages from head to toe.



A mask of the person's face was placed over the mummy which was finally laid in a coffin, or series of coffins, called a sarcophagus.

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This illustration shows what the embalming process might have looked like. What can you see?



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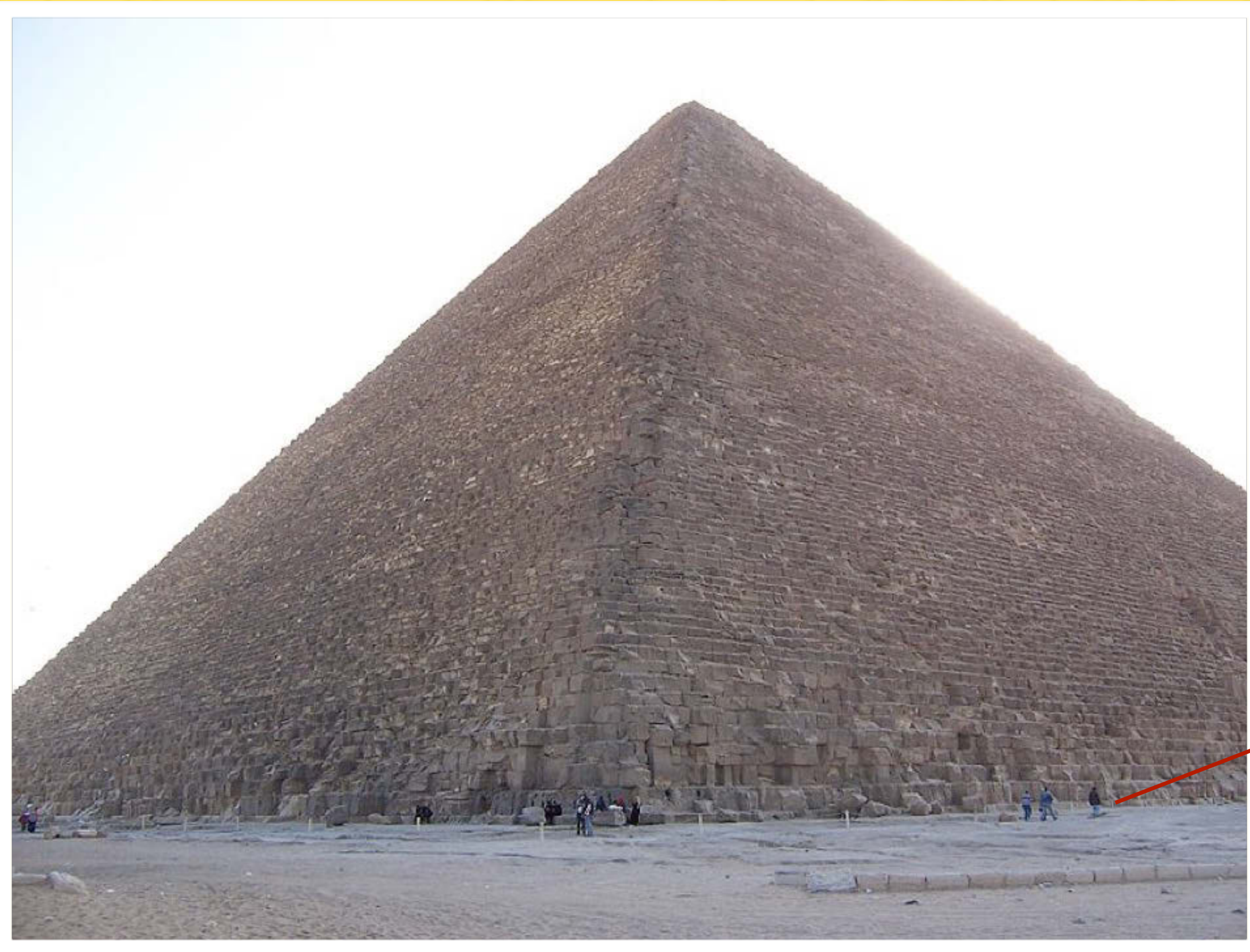


Pyramids were built as tombs for the pharaohs of Egypt. The shape of the pyramid was to symbolise the mound that came out of the earth when the world was created by Re. Inside the pyramids are a series of rooms and burial chambers.

The biggest is the Great Pyramid at Giza which is 138 metres tall!



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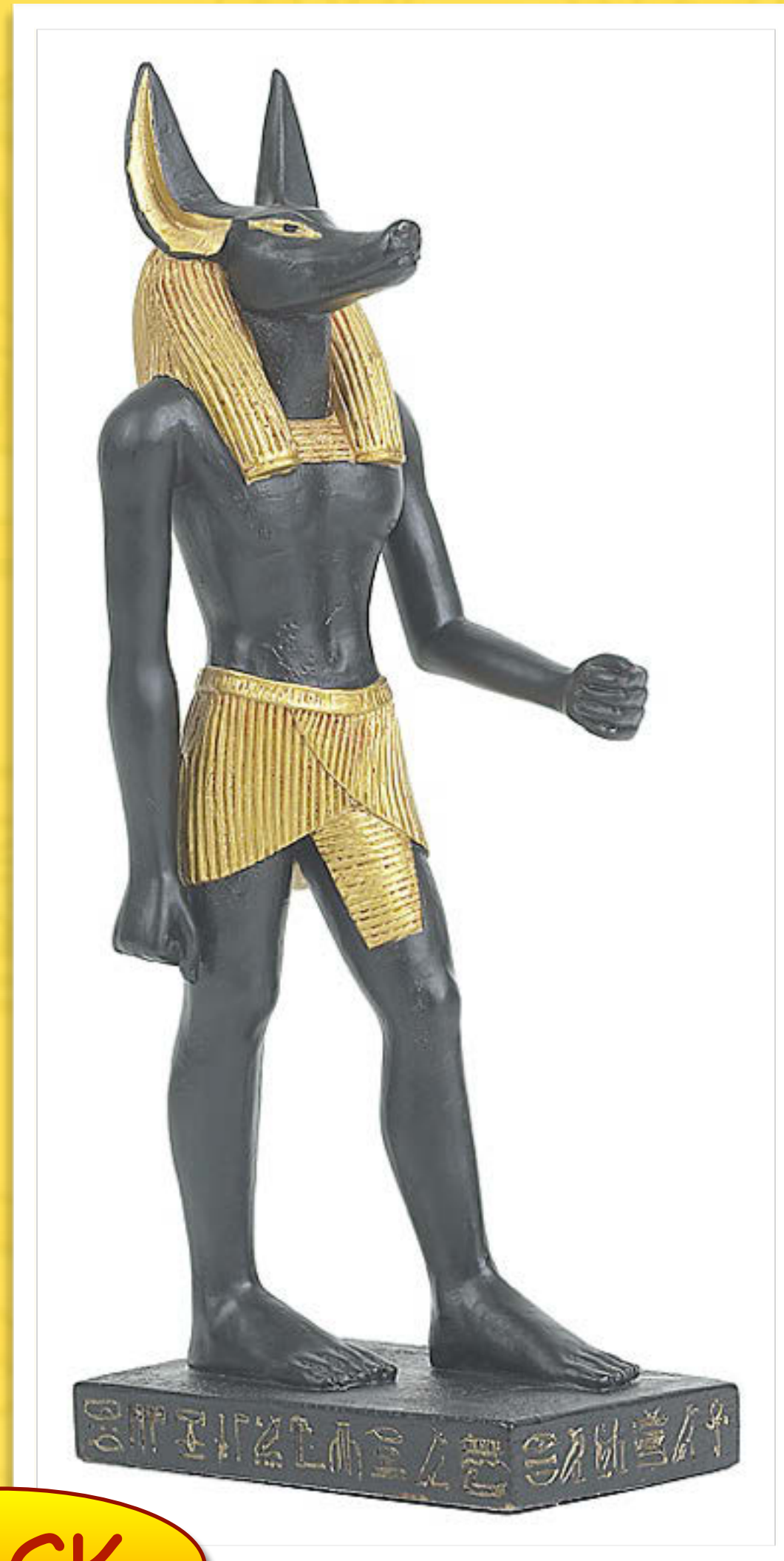


You can see just how big the pyramid is by looking at how small the people look!

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Can you describe what each of these objects tells us about ancient Egyptian beliefs on life and death?



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