

The pyramids of ancient Egypt were designed for a very specific purpose. They were tombs. The funerary monuments, therefore, were arranged in order to help the deceased royal members of the family reach the afterlife.

They included rooms that held canopic jars holding the main organs. They held the things the deceased would need in the afterlife like honey and furniture. They held the sarcophagus itself and the mummy inside. They included writings and drawings of the deceased on the walls. They included the scroll of the dead including prayers and spells to help them reach the afterlife without trouble. All of these items were part of the purpose of the pyramid – to house and transfer the body to another world. It had to be large enough to contain these items and this purpose, as well as grand enough to show off to the living that the royal family was worthy of veneration.

The rooms that contained these items were not random. For example, in the pyramid of Khufu, there was a king's chamber, a queens' chamber, a false hallway to deflect tomb robbers, and halls that helped let stagnant air out of the pyramid. Thus the complicated halls helped protect the dead on their journey from the living who would thwart them.

The Egyptians believed that after death the heart would need to be weighed on a scale to see if it was lighter than a feather and therefore worthy of going to paradise. This is evidenced by paintings in the pyramids showing a sort of "paradise" including birds, reeds, water, and plentiful fruits of the land (that aren't always realistic in the real lives of Egyptians in a desert environment). These paintings don't reflect Egypt. Because the buildings held bodies, future archaeologists understood them to be tombs, and therefore the paintings are likely to represent wishes, hopes, or beliefs about where the dead would end up once they'd left this world.

In addition to being tombs, it is worth noting that the pyramids are monumental architecture. The culture that built them certainly had access to tools, mathematical knowledge, and abundant manual labor. It valued building these monuments to their kings and queens. This suggests they idolized them like gods. The paintings inside use a hierarchy of scale to show the kings and queens are literally larger than everyone else – this confirms that the people of Egypt likely believed they were "more than" the common citizens of Egypt.

Finally, mummification also suggests that Egyptians believed their kings and queens deserved a life after life and were worthy of extraordinary care. They spend months mummifying the bodies. They removed the brain, broke the nose, preserved the organs, and wrapped the body including precious gems, putting the final product in layers of material and wooden sarcophagi, and finally an elaborately painted outer coffin that

showed the likeness of the deceased. Certainly, this practice reflects a culture that adored its royalty and respected them in death as they must have in life. This is a culture that really thought about death as well as believed in building memorials to the dead, and finally, believed deeply in the afterlife.