

Art Masterpiece: Mummy Case of the Lady Teshat, 1085-710 BC, 21st-24th Dynasty, Painted and Varnished Linen on pine, 67” Long

Lesson: Egyptian Art – Mummy Cases and Burial Masks
Keywords: Cartonnage, Line, Pattern, Repetition and Outline
Grade: 6th
Activity: Mummy Cases



****NOTE TO VOLUNTEERS: Most 6th grade classes study a unit about Egypt. Attached to this lesson is background information about Mummification and its origins. It is not necessary to go over this information again if the class has already studied these elements.**

About The Mummy case of Lady Teshat:

This mummy case encloses the remains of Lady Teshat (Teh-shet), a young girl from ancient Egypt. The hieroglyphics (symbolic characters and writing) on the wooden coffin state that Lady Teshat, was the daughter of the treasurer of the Temple of Amon at Thebes. Due to her family's high standing with the Pharaoh, her coffin was discovered in an elaborate stone tomb decorated with wall paintings and supplied with food, furniture and clothing to provide for her ka's (life-force) comfort in the afterlife.

Lady Teshat died in her mid to late teens, one of several wives in a harem. Many protective gods and symbols are pictured on her **cartonnage (linen and plaster casing)**. Also bands of prayers ask the gods to accept the tomb offerings in her behalf. Teshat's mummy case is also exceptional because X-rays show that an extra adult skull was placed in Teshat's wrappings between her feet. Archaeologists believe this may have been the act of grave-robbers.

Burial Masks

Masks were a very important aspect of Ancient Egyptian burials. They put a personalized mask over the face of every mummy, or they made the mask part of the mummy case like Lady Teshat's. Egyptians believed that these masks provided the dead with a face in the afterlife which enabled the spirit to recognize the body. Both the mummy case and the cartonnage of Lady Teshat bore representations of her face but her likeness is not considered a portrait. Burial masks did not always depict specific individuals or even indicate gender. They merely showed the deceased in an idealized form much like a divine immortal. Masks of both men and women had exaggerated eyes and half-smiles. The "Bib" of the mask covered the chest and was usually painted with elaborate motifs and colorful **patterns. (repeated designs)**.

Masks made for royalty were often made of gold like King Tutankhamun's and embellished with colored glass and jewels. (Show transparency or small reproduction). His mask was found inside his mummy cases (they were 3 nested one inside another) and his mask included a "false beard" which was symbolic of "Kingship" or "Pharaohs".



Q and A

Which elements are most noticeable on Teshat's Mummy Case?

(Eyes - outline, hair-dark color and large surface area and bands of designs on her bib - color and contrasting patterns)

Where do you see **repetition (repeating)** of a design or pattern? (On bib)

What creates the designs?(**lines – all art begins with a line**)

Can you point out instances of thick lines, thin lines? Where?

Where do you see **outlines? (Outlines are lines that define the outside edge of an object or figure-eyes are heavily outlined)**

Have them note their Egyptian Symbol handouts:

Do you see any Egyptian symbols on the Mummy Case? What is a **symbol? (picture that represents a word or idea)**. Invite some to point a few out.

Ankh, (on her chest)

Eye of Horus- (On the very bottom panel, one on each side)

Winged Sun Disk (another symbol of Horus towards bottom of print),

Anubis-Guide of the Underworld (at the very bottom of the print)

Mayet-Goddes of truth (Hard to make out, next to ankh)



Mummy Case Activity

Artwork:

Students will create and design small mummy cases using Egyptian symbols, Lines, Color and Pattern

Supplies:

Mummy Case Outline, Egyptian Symbols handout, pencils, erasers, pastels or markers. Optional: Gold metallic pens

Process:

1. Remind students of elements of ancient Egyptian Art. Egyptians communicated meaning through symbols and hieroglyphics. Stylized eyes, serpents, birds half-man and half-beasts were all part of Egyptian art. Pass out Egyptian symbol and mummy outline hand-outs.
2. Have students think of their own mummy case design. Have them think about what they want to communicate. They can use symbols or hieroglyphics to give their cases meaning.
3. Remind students to focus on the burial mask. White works well for the face, although in ancient Egypt men were often depicted with brown faces and women with yellow. Be sure to talk about the use of black lines around the eyes, the shape of the headdress, decorative items like the false beard and idealized facial expression. "Pharoh" mummy cases can use the gold metallic pens.
4. For the overall look of the case. Students should start with bands of dark outlines into which design elements are arranged. Here is where the symbols, patterns, line and color can be used.
5. When the surface area is full of color and imagery, your Mummy case is complete.

Background Information

Egyptian Myth:

The ancient Egyptians believed that if certain gods were worshipped and certain procedures followed, the souls of the dead would live on in the Underworld. We know this thanks to the Greek author Plutarch who was the first to write it down this Egyptian legend:

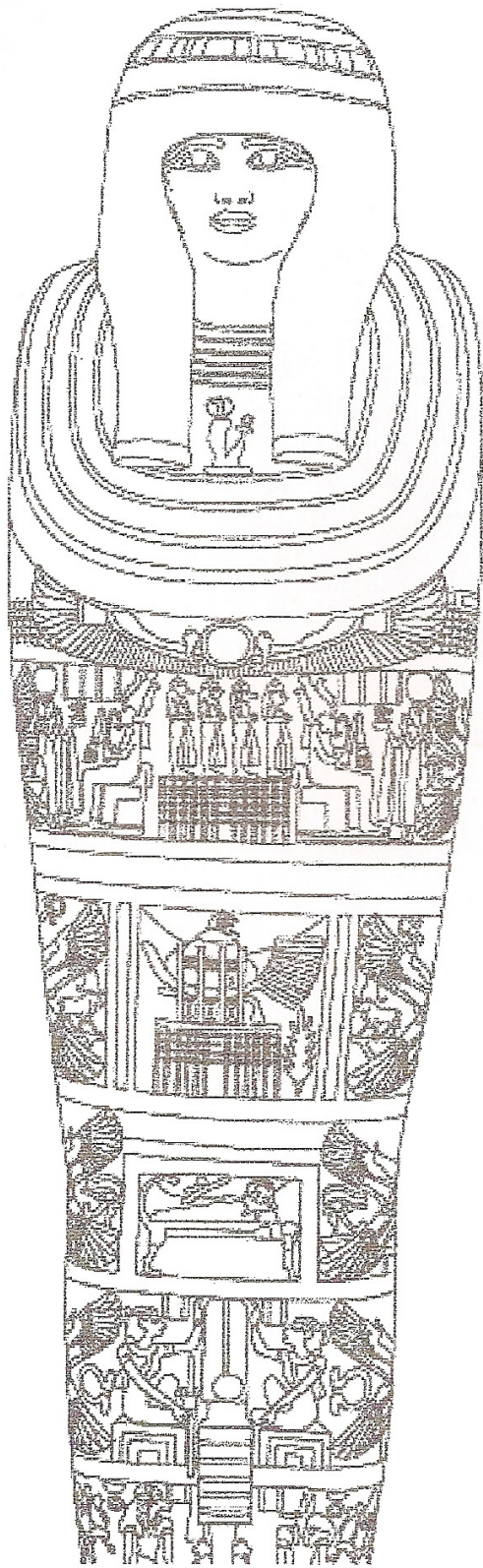
The gentle God Osiris (Oh-sigh-rus) ruled on earth and brought people the gift of civilization and agriculture. During his reign, he traveled the land to spread law and order and to teach people farming skills. While away, he left his wife Isis (eye-sus) to rule the land. His brother Seth became jealous of Osiris and murdered him upon his return to Egypt. Seth put Osiris' body in an elaborate wooden coffin and cast it into the Nile River. Osiris' coffin washed ashore at Byblos (Lebanon) where a Tamarisk Tree grew around it. The King of Byblos, impressed with the size of the tree, decides to place it in the main hall of his palace. In the meantime, Isis has learned of her husband's death and begins a search his body. When she finds it at the palace, she is allowed to take his remains back to Egypt. There, a furious Seth, cuts Osiris' body into pieces and scatters the remains throughout the land.

Isis sets out again to find her husband. This time, when she finds a part of Osiris, she creates a wax duplicate of the part, has it blessed by a priest and puts it in a temple so her husband's memory may be worshipped. When Isis has nearly all the body parts, she uses her own great magic and magic from other gods to put Osiris back together again. They preserved his body and wrapped it in linen bandages which created the first mummy and helped to establish the funeral ritual for the burials of all important people. Magically Isis breathes life into Osiris, bringing him back from the dead. When Osiris returns to life, he decides he prefers to be the ruler of the Underworld and leaves his son Horus to rule all of Egypt.

Mummification:

Initially the god Osiris was only worshipped by the Pharohs and royal families. However, by the 18th Dynasty, Egyptian culture dictated that everyone who worshipped Osiris was promised life after death. The Egyptians believed their ka (kah), a spirit double, would live on in the Afterworld if they preserved the dead through a complex system of embalming and mummification. Mummification involved removing the internal organs for storage in separate containers, and treating the corpse with a type of salt called natron and various resins. Finally, the corpse was wrapped in linen bandages and enclosed in a cartonnage, (a casing of plaster and linen). Prepared bodies were often enclosed in decorated coffins much like Lady Teshat's. Egyptians preserved the body because the ka (lifeforce) could live on only if it had a place to reside (a body or statue, for example).

Cases and coffins were covered with standardized image symbols to assist the ka in its passage to the Afterworld. These symbolic characters, called hieroglyphics, make up a system of writing used in ancient Egypt, in which figures or objects represent words, ideas or sounds.



The Symbols



(WINGED SUN DISK - Symbol of the Egyptian Sun God Horus. It can be found towards the bottom of Lady Teshat's Mummy Case print)



ANKH - SYMBOL OF LIFE, ETERNAL LIFE,
AND GOOD LUCK



Basket (nebet) - "All", "Lord"



Bow (iunet, pedjet) - "Enemies"



Brazier (khet) - "Fire"



Cobra -Protective symbol used on crowns
of royalty. Believed the cobra would spit fire
at any approaching enemies.



Ear (mesedjer) - "Hearing"



Feather (shut) - "Truth"



Gold (nebu) - "Tomb"



Headrest (weres) - "Sun"



Heart (ieb) - "Soul"



Ka (ka) - "Conscience"



Knot of Isis (tiet) - "Life"



Mountain (djew)



Nefer - "Beauty"



Palace Wall (serekh) - "King's Home"



Pool (she) - "Water"



Sail (hetau) - "Breath"



**SCARAB = GREAT POWER AND STRENGTH.
SAID TO PUSH THE SUN INTO THE SKY AT
THE DAWN OF EACH DAY.**



Shen Ring = "Protection and Eternity"



Sky (pet) - "Sky"



