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Canopic Jars

Richard Fazzini: Mummification was in one sense the preservation of the body. And this required desiccation, or drying, of the body to get rid of moisture, which if left in would eventually cause the body to rot. It also proved useful for the ancient Egyptians to remove soft internal organs and mummify them separately, and hence they had to be put in some container after they were mummified.

Those containers we call canopic jars, and each one was identified with a deity—one of the four sons of Horus. And each one would protect one part of the deceased's body, or internal organs. You're looking here at jars which have a falcon-headed image, a human-headed image, an ape-headed image, and a canine-headed image.

These jars were made for a man named Chenry, who was a supervisor of works under King Ramesses II of the 19th Dynasty. And as a supervisor of works, he was probably in a good position to get some very fine canopic jars made for himself. And these indeed are. And not only do they have the heads of each of these gods on them, they also have on each of them a scene of Chenry, praying to this deity, who is in fact protecting one of his body parts.