

Scarab Magic

Significance of Scarabs in the Funerary Sphere

Scarab Amulets as Protection

The use of amulets was apart of life for Egyptians at all levels of society and scarab amulets were incredibly common, both in everyday and funerary use. These scarabs were often worn as jewellery, threaded onto necklaces and rings. They were usually inscribed with the name of a king, other royal, or god.



- material: faience
- length: 1.2cm, width 0.9cm, height 0.5cm
- Thutmose III (18th Dynasty) or later
- Inscribed with the Djed Pillar, representing the backbone of Osiris, a symbol of strength and power



Heart Scarabs

The Egyptians believed that wisdom and intelligence was kept in the heart and that after death their heart would be weighed against the feather of Maat. This ceremony determined whether the deceased was worthy of entering the afterlife, the unworthy would have their hearts consumed by the Devourer and experience true death.

The heart scarab came into use during the Second Intermediate period and were usually inscribed with Spell 30B from the Book of the Dead. The spell begs that the heart does not betray its owner so that the deceased may pass the weighing of the heart ceremony and gain their place in the afterlife.

The heart scarab was usually made from a dark green stone and were sometimes given human faces.



Spell 30B

O my heart which I had from my mother! [...] Do not stand up as a witness against me, do not be opposed to me in the tribunal, do not be hostile to me in the presence of the keeper of the balance, for you are my ka which was in my body [...] do not tell lies about me in the presence of the god; it is indeed well that you should hear!



Scarab Symbolism

Scarabs were associated with the god Khepri, one of Ra's four main forms. Khepri was depicted either as a beetle or as a beetle-headed man. Every morning Khepri was reborn with the rising of the sun, pushing the sun across the sky, just like the beetle pushes balls of dung across the sand.

The scarab beetle was a symbol of rebirth in Egyptian belief as they were thought to magically regenerate themselves. The beetles lay their eggs in the balls of dung they roll and the Egyptians, seeing the larvae emerge and possibly not realising that there were eggs in the dung, associated this with miraculous rebirth.

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