

Object 348.004

Collection of amulets

This collection of amulets and beads, strung on a piece of modern string, were one of many parts of the Henry Southey collections of Cyfartha Castle Museum.

Amulets and their functionality in burials

Amulets were amongst many different types of goods found in tombs across Egypt. Their placement within a tomb was chosen in order to enhance their protective magic, or ensure the divine connection of gods and goddesses remained strong even during the journey to the afterlife (World History, Edu, 2025). Objects such as shabti dolls were also common, magical figures created from various materials - such as faience or carve-able stones, serving the purpose of assuming manual work in the afterlife on behalf of the deceased (Koopmanrob, 2025). Scarabs were also a popular image found in burials, possibly one of the most recognisable images associated with burial goods, represented both wingless, and with their wings outstretched.



Faience

Faience was a popular material for creating amulets, beads, shabtis, and even decorative wares throughout Pre-Dynastic Egyptian history, and continued to be produced until the Late Period (The Study of Egyptian Faience, Priscilla Lo, 2014). Composed of silica, lime, water, and colourants such as copper (Exploring the Composition of Egyptian Faience, Falcone, Aquilino & Stoppa, 2024) - the resulting paste created by the materials would then be shaped using moulds, before being fired, typically at a temperature of over 800C. Use of such moulds would have allowed for larger production of items, and potentially attributed to the vast number of repeated imagery in tombs, such as scarabs.

Gods connected with death and burial

Typically, when a person thinks of Egyptian burials, Anubis is the god most associated with tombs and the afterlife, however he is not the sole god connected with death and burial. Osiris, for example, is highly significant in the journey of the dead person throughout the afterlife, as he stands as one of the judges of the soul (Koopmanrob, 2025).



Dimensions

While there are varieties in the sizes of beads, none are larger than 24.2mm, the length of the scarab amulet.

Despite its incredible detail, the head amulet (most likely Isis) is incredibly small; H 21.1mm – 14.3mm, W 12mm, D 14.5mm

Damage to the bottom of the head indicates it was once part of a larger amulet, perhaps in a similar style to the statuette of Isis seated with Horus in her lap (Statuette of Isis, The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Bibliography

Statuette of Isis and Horus - Late Period–Ptolemaic Period - The Metropolitan Museum of Art. (n.d.).

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World History Edu. (2025, January 6). Amulets in Ancient Egypt.

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Image of the amulets, with Isis facing forward, Lexin Jessopp (2025)

Image of scarab amulet, Lexin Jessopp (2025)

Image of Osiris Papyrus column amulet, Lexin Jessopp, (2025)

Image of wedjat eye amulet, Lexin Jessopp (2025)

