



Unknown (Egyptian)
Mason's level and square amulet, no date
stone
1 x 1 1/8 in., 3/16 in. (2.6 x 2.8 cm, 0.5 cm)
Anonymous gift
93.1.12.J

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Mason's level and square amulet

Amulets were personal adornments worn by the living and placed on mummy wrappings to provide protection and aid on the journey from death to the Afterlife. The color, shape, and other qualities of the materials were believed to endow the amulet and its wearer with special powers and protections. This amulet is one part of what was normally a two-amulet set: the mason's square and plumb-line. This is the plumb-line; the real life object would have a length of cord with a weight at the end, hanging from the center. A plumb-line was used to check verticality. The mason's square takes an "L" shape, used to measure right-angles. These amulets would ensure integrity and moral uprightness as well as emotional equilibrium.

Source

Andrews, Carol. *Amulets of Ancient Egypt*. 1994 (British Museum Press). University of Texas Press, 1998.



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DISCUSS

Mason's level and square amulet

Mason's level and square amulet This amulet takes the shape of an ancient Egyptian tool. The six simple machines (the wheel, lever, wedge, screw, inclined plane, and pulley) were used by ancient Egyptians. To learn more about how Egyptians constructed the pyramids using these machines, visit the Franklin Institute website:
(http://www.fi.edu/learn/tut/k-4/tut_print_k-4_simple.pdf).

How does 21st century technology compare with ancient Egyptian technology?

How were ancient civilizations able to build monuments like the Pyramids without trucks and power tools?

What tools did they use that we still use today?

Learn more about ancient Egyptian tools and technology at:

- Ancient Egyptian Tools
<http://www.reshafim.org.il/ad/egypt/trades/tools.htm>
- Farming Tools
<http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/Homework/egypt/farming.htm>

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CREATE

Mason's level and square amulet

When a mason used this type of tool it would have had a plumb line attached to it. A plumb line is a string with a weight at the end that can be used to find true vertical lines. It was used to check vertical lines in buildings to make sure they were really vertical.

Try making your own plumb-line!

1. Cut a length of string 16 inches long.
2. Tie a small weight like a metal washer to one end.
3. Hold up the free end of the string. Your string should show you a true vertical line. Is your room straight or crooked? Hold your plumb line up in the corner of a room or next to the legs of a table and put them to the test!

The plumb-line also represented the idea of being emotionally and spiritually balanced and upright. What kinds of tools have you used? What ideas could they represent?

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