



Unknown (Egyptian)
Large scarab of Amenhotep III, Dynasty 18 (ca. 1570–1293 B.C.)
steatite with traces of blue glaze
3 7/16 x 2 3/16 x 7/8 in. (8.8 x 5.5 x 2.3 cm)
Gift of Mrs. Cole Porter
SEG.9

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Large scarab of Amenhotep III Dynasty 18 (ca. 1570–1293 B.C.)

Scarabs had a number of uses in ancient Egypt, including a commemoration for special events. Amenhotep III commissioned scarabs to honor important events in his life, such as his marriage and heroic deeds. This scarab commemorates Amenhotep III's lion hunt, praising his strength and bravery. It says he killed 102 lions.

Scarab beetles were popular amulet forms because they symbolized the sun god Re. Seeing beetles push balls of dung along the ground on their backs, Egyptians associated this behavior with the apparent movement of the sun across the sky from east to west, setting at night and re-emerging at dawn to be reborn. Adding to the association with rebirth, scarab beetles lay their eggs inside balls of dung. To the ancient Egyptians who observed the young beetles emerging from the dung it seemed that they had magically come into being.

RELATED IMAGES



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Shawabti with the cartouche of
Psammetichus
ca. 660 BC
faience; 7 3/16 x 2 x 1 1/4 in. (18.2 x
5.1 x 3.2 cm). Gift of Mr. Horace Mayer
(62.32.6)

Sources

Curatorial file, translation of hieroglyphics

"Scarab." Global Egyptian Museum Glossary Entry.
<http://www.globalegyptianmuseum.org/detail.aspx?id=4377>

"Scarab Amulets [Egyptian] (10.130.910_27.3.206)". In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–.
http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/10.130.910_27.3.206 (October 2006)



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DISCUSS

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Carved scarabs like this one had a number of different functions in ancient Egypt. This one commemorated Amenhotep III's strength and bravery during a lion hunt. As is typical with carved scarabs, one side (see the photo at the bottom of the page) was carved to resemble a scarab beetle, which symbolized the sun god Re. The other side is flat and is inscribed (carved with writing) with hieroglyphs (one form of ancient Egyptian writing) telling the tale of Amenhotep III's hunt.

View the scarab with the magnifier. What hieroglyphs do you see? Click on the CREATE tab to find a hieroglyph translation key.

A cartouche is an oval drawn around a group of hieroglyphs to mark a person's name. Can you spot one?

Why do you think there are carved lines (registers) running across this scarab?

Click on the EXPLORE tab to learn more about scarabs.



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CREATE

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Pharaoh Amenhotep III commissioned this scarab to commemorate his strength and bravery during a lion hunt in which he killed 102 lions (according to the account written on the scarab).

Create your own scarab telling the tale of one of your adventures or heroic deeds. Use this hieroglyph key to translate your tale into Egyptian writing!

<http://library.thinkquest.org/TQ0312440/Hcodes.gif>
<http://www.egyptartsite.com/hiero.html>

Don't forget to put an oval (cartouche) around your name whenever it appears.