



Scarab bead

Date

c. 600-570 BCE

Medium

Probably steatite

Description

Scarabs, such as this one, were an important part of ancient Egyptian art and culture and were associated with spontaneous generation, transcendence, renewal, and rebirth. Egyptians observed how scarab beetles pushed balls of dung containing their eggs across the ground until the eggs hatched, and in turn connected this action with the sun's daily movement across the sky. Consequently, scarab beetles were associated with the two gods responsible for the sun and its movement, Ra and Khepri. In fact, the connection between these gods and scarab beetles was so strong that Khepri is always depicted with a scarab beetle as his head. Scarab beetles became a popular design for amulets beginning in the Old Kingdom (ca. 2686 – 2160 BCE), and eventually were used as stamps and seals engraved with various

messages and names. (Written by Christina Naston '20) Transversely pierced on base. Inscription on bottom.

Dimensions

Overall: 5/8 × 7/16 × 5/16 in. (1.6 × 1.1 × 0.8 cm)