

Basic Detail Report



Scarab

Date

c. 600-570 B.C.E.

Medium

Probably steatite, gold

Description

Many nineteenth century tourists, including Winslow, accidentally and purposefully collected reproductions of antiquities. Antique jewelry dealers often restrung ancient beads or repurposed ancient amulets to better please — or deceive — collectors. Though the scarab on this swivel ring is likely ancient, its mount is modern. (Written by Kayley Boddy '22) Scarabs 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) Stone (probably steatite) scarab in gold setting; scarab neatly carved. On bottom, handle is ice-pick shape with grooves on either arm; link in loop at top.

Dimensions

Overall: 11/16 × 1/2 × 5/16 in. (1.8 × 1.3 × 0.8 cm)