

# Gayer-Anderson Scarab Collection

in the Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon USA

## Highlights of the Gayer-Anderson Scarab Collection

in the Portland Art Museum

Portland, Oregon USA

by John Sarr



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# **Gayer-Anderson Scarab Collection**

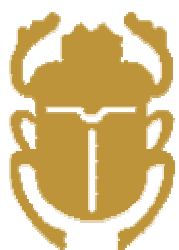
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## Introduction

The Portland Art Museum's Egyptian scarab collection is rich and varied, with over 1300 beetle-back scarab amulets and seals.

This collection was assembled by the Englishman Major R. G. Gayer-Anderson between 1907 and 1917 in Egypt, loaned to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford from 1917 to 1925, and sold in 1927 to Portland's well-known architect and then president of the museum's Board of Trustees, Albert. E. Doyle. In 1929, a year after Doyle's death, the museum received the collection as a donation in his memory.

This presentation is the result of several years work spent documenting and researching the entire collection, at present, no longer on public view except for a few study pieces. With the arrival of the **Splendors of Egypt** exhibit from Hildesheim, Germany, at the Portland Art Museum in the spring of 1998, I was asked to put together a display of some of the highlights of the collection. I brought together and described approximately 100 items from the collection, using the scarabs to connect the images and symbols of four major themes in the study of ancient Egypt:

- The Land: its flora and fauna, its life-giving Nile waters and life-threatening deserts
- The King: the ruler, guardian of world order, a god incarnate on earth
- The Gods: ancestors of the king, intercessors and protectors of individuals in this life and the next
- The Hieroglyphs: the 'words of the gods,' the signs used to write the language and inherently provide power and protection

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## What is a scarab?


A scarab is an amulet in the form of a dung beetle (*scarabeus sacer*), a creature commonly found throughout Egypt. It usually bears an inscription or design on the underside and has as its purpose protection from harm or assurance of good luck. In certain periods of Egyptian history, these amulets, worn as rings, bracelets, or necklaces, also functioned as seals to secure objects or indicate possession.

With scaraboids, the beetle is replaced by the heads of gods and humans, animal forms, rectangular plaques, and cowrie shells (also called cowroids).

## Why was the scarab beetle used as an amulet?


The scarab beetle had a symbolic association with the solar cycle, and by extension was at the center of the cosmic powers of creation and rebirth. The perfectly round ball of dung that the beetle fashioned and rolled along the ground reminded the Egyptians of the sun that rose from the earth and moved across the sky; and when the ball of dung was carried below ground as a food store for the beetle, the Egyptians continued the solar analogy and likened this to the sun disappearing below the earth at sunset.

The beetle also laid its eggs in the buried dung. As the eggs hatched, the young seemed to spring whole from the ground, just as the morning sun reemerged in the east from its place below ground. The beetle was thus seen as having power to make life emerge from beneath the earth after some hidden period of transformation. The word in Egyptian for "to transform" or "to come into existence" is

'kheper' and is written with the hieroglyph for a beetle . As a result of its activity, the beetle became the embodiment of the creator god Khepri, who brought the sun from the underworld and moved it through the sky. The god Khepri is represented as a man with a dung beetle for a head.

The Egyptian possessor of a scarab was reminded and reassured of his





place in the cyclical and eternal universe; that, like the sun, his life would go out, he would be transformed, then he would reemerge to a new life. This powerful symbol coupled with the words, images, or designs on the underside of the scarab, which provided further protection, strength, or good wishes, offered the wearer a safe and ordered world in both this life and the next.

## How the scarab amulet worked

The power of the scarab amulet lay in its heka, a word often translated as *magic*. Heka was, according to Egyptian beliefs, the energy that helped create the world, shaping order out of chaos. Elements of the Egyptians' earthly realm--the life-giving river as well as the plants, animals, and minerals of the land--and the divine realm--deities, kings, and the written symbols handed down from the gods--all contained this creative energy. Connecting the image or symbol of any of these with an individual through an amulet established a power network that enabled an individual to maintain the order established in the beginning of time and, as a result, maintain order and help control many of the events in his own life.

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## Scarabs: The Land



# Gayer-Anderson Scarab Collection

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### The Egyptian Scarab

#### **The Land: its flora and fauna, its life-giving Nile waters and life-threatening deserts**

The scarab was one of the most popular amulets in Egypt, used continuously from the end of the Old Kingdom until the Ptolemaic period, a period of approximately 2000 years.

The size of scarabs ranged from less than a half to over seven centimeters in length (.25in. to 4 in.), with most measuring about 1.5-2 cm (3/4 in.).

Scarabs were carved in a realistic manner, but also appear as a stylistic approximation of a beetle. At times the beetle sported an animal or human head, or had the back of a small beetle on the legs and base of a large beetle.

The majority of scarabs were made of steatite and were glazed green or blue. The glaze has long worn off most scarabs, leaving a white or brownish surface. Steatite, also called soapstone, is a soft, easily carved stone that withstands the high temperatures used in the glazing, which explains its popularity. Other materials used in the manufacture of scarabs included semi-precious stones, faience, glass, metals, ivory, and resin.

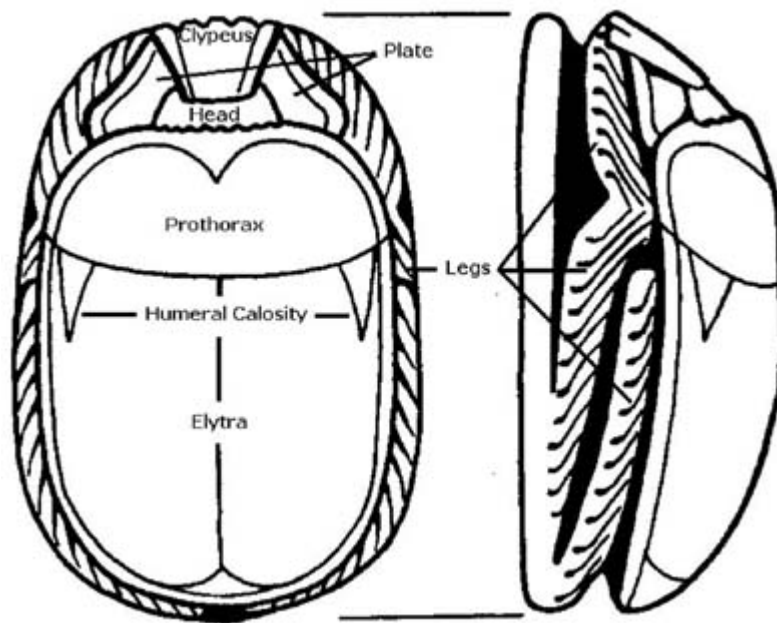
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## The Egyptian Scarab



Naturalistic heart scarab with detailed rendering of back and legs. No inscription. Black-green stone. New Kingdom. 4.7 X 3.5 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.M1.



Cursory rendering of a scarab with little detail of back and simple grooves for legs. Spiral design on base. Steatite. Middle Kingdom-Second



Intermediate Period.  
1.6 cm. Portland Art  
Museum 29.16.22a.



Small scarab back  
with large scarab  
legs and base.  
Steatite. Inscribed  
with a winged  
serpent over a sphinx  
wearing the crown of  
Upper and Lower  
Egypt, possibly a  
cryptogram for the  
god Amon. New  
Kingdom. 4 cm.  
Portland Art Museum  
29.16.57a.

This style of scarab is  
found mostly in the  
Ramesside period,



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## Scarabs Of Semi-Precious Stones and Gold

### **The Land: its flora and fauna, its life-giving Nile waters and life-threatening deserts**

The Egyptians sometimes used semi-precious stones in the manufacture of scarabs, not only for their intrinsic amuletic value but also for their pure beauty. Scarabs made from these hard stones are often uninscribed, usually because the stone in itself contained the necessary amuletic power. Sometimes they are placed in a chase with a gold plate fitted on the bottom to carry an inscription.

Some of the semi-precious stones used for scarabs include amethyst, carnelian, jasper, feldspar, lapis-lazuli, and basalt. Except for lapis (which came from the area in present day Afghanistan), the stones were mined in Egypt's Eastern Desert. This area also provided a source for gold, from which a few scarabs were also made.

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## Scarabs of Semi-Precious Stones and Gold



Scarab in lapis lazuli with no inscription. Middle-New Kingdom. Portland Art Museum 29.16.D6.

Lapis was the most highly esteemed of all semi-precious stones. The color of the night sky, the word for this stone was often used as a synonym for 'happiness.'



Scarab in carnelian with no inscription. New Kingdom. 2.1 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.18a.

The red color symbolized blood, and by extension energy, power, and life.



Scarab in rock crystal with no inscription. New Kingdom. 1.8 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.18c.



Scarab in feldspar with no inscription. Middle-New Kingdom. 2.5 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.18d.

The green color of the stone symbolized new life.



Scarab in dark amethyst with no inscription. Middle Kingdom. 2 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.19a



Scarab in basalt inscribed with two crocodiles arranged tête-bêche within a circle. New Kingdom. 1.3 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.19b.



Gold repoussé scarab. Late Period. 4 X 3.4 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.119a.

Gold was likened to the flesh of the gods, and became closely associated with the divine and



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## Scarabs With Plants, Animals, and Humans

### **The Land: its flora and fauna, its life-giving Nile waters and life-threatening deserts**

Many of the plants and creatures of the land held special significance to the Egyptians. Plants were depicted on scarabs to convey their regenerative aspect or royal power. Papyrus, with its green color, symbolized life and renewal. The lotus, which closed at night and reopened in the daylight symbolized renewal and rebirth. The sedge plant symbolized Upper Egypt as well as the king of the entire country.

Creatures such as scorpions, crocodiles, and lions could be harmful to Egyptians. To appeal to these fearful beings, they were inscribed on scarabs in an apotropaic manner, and thus offered protection from harmful encounters. As creatures that had the power to give or take life, crocodiles and scorpions were associated with regenerative powers that could assure rebirth in the next life. The crocodile and lion were associated with the king, who likewise commanded the forces of life and death, and thus their image offered assurances of power and strength.

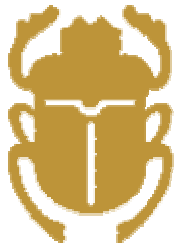
Other less harmful creatures, such as hares, hedgehogs, and gazelles, lived in and survived the life-threatening desert, and as a result symbolized survival and regeneration.

Cowroids, which imitated cowrie shells from the Red Sea, served to protect women, especially pregnant women, and ensure fertility.

A special class of scarabs depict human figures standing with a lotus or sedge in the hand, or have their beetle back replaced by a human head and face. The exact meaning of the human figure scarabs is not certain. The standing figure may represent a god and the face may be a way to anthropomorphize the scarab.

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## Plant and Animal Scarabs



Scaraboid of a gazelle. Two crocodiles surrounding a human figure are inscribed on the base. Steatite. New Kingdom. 1.6 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.36a.



The gazelle, like most desert dwellers, represented rebirth, surviving on a daily basis a deadly environment.



Scarab inscribed with a lion over a crocodile, facing a uraeus. Second Intermediate Period. 2.1 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.91b.



Cowroid with two scorpions in a tête-bêche arrangement. Steatite. Middle-New Kingdom. 2 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.6a.



Hedgehog scaraboid inscribed with an ankh sign and a uraeus. Steatite. New Kingdom. Portland Art Museum 29.16.36b.

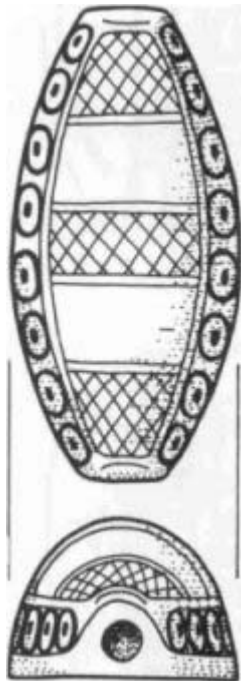
The hedgehog is a symbol of rebirth as a result of the observation that it was an animal that reappeared after a period of hibernation and was a



survivor of the rigors of the desert. Hare scaraboid inscribed with the 'Memphis, life.' Faience. New Kingdom. 1.2 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.36c.



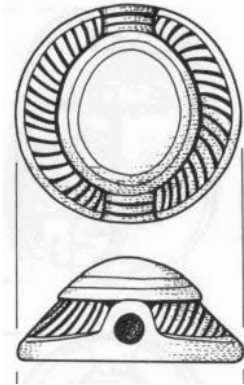
Elongated cowroid. Base inscribed with the god Bes with bound captives and monkeys (symbolizing protection against one's enemies). Steatite. New Kingdom. 3.1 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.13a.



The cowry shell-shaped scaraboid, like the real cowry, assured fertility and safe child bearing for women. It was worn on bracelets, necklaces, and belts.

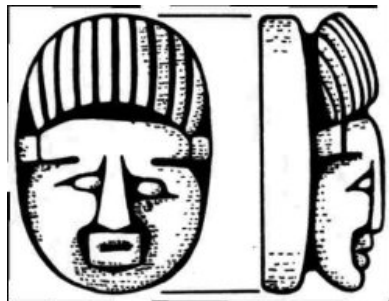


Round cowroid. Base inscribed with the emblem of the goddess Hathor. Steatite. Middle-New Kingdom. 1 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.26a.



Scaraboid of a human face. Base inscribed with the name of the god Amon. Faience. New Kingdom. 2.3 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.36d.

The head of the scarab has become the face of the human and the scarab's elytra the human's hair.



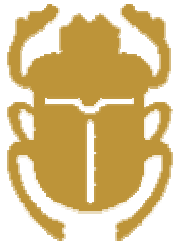
Scarab inscribed with human in a short kilt smelling a lotus. Steatite. Second Intermediate Period. Portland Art Museum 29.103a.





Scarab inscribed with a sedge plant, symbolizing Upper Egypt, and a bee, symbolizing the Lower Egypt. Together these signs read 'the king of Upper and Lower Egypt.' Accompanying these symbols is the king's additional epithet 'Lord of the Two Lands.' Steatite. Middle-New Kingdom. Portland Art Museum 29.85a.

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## Nile animal scaraboids

### **The Land: its flora and fauna, its life-giving Nile waters and life-threatening deserts**

The Nile was the life line of Egypt. Its annual floods rendered the surrounding fields fertile and made the crops flourish. The Nile waters themselves contained a bounty of fish. As a result, the Nile was viewed as a source of life and the symbol of fecundity and abundance.

Animals found in or around the Nile were venerated as symbols of fertility. Scarabs bearing images of these creatures assured the wearers, mostly women, of a life with many children. At times, particularly in the New Kingdom, we find that instead of placing the image of an animal on the underside of a scarab, a three-dimensional version of it was carved, entirely replacing the beetle form. This object is called a scaraboid. The most numerous Nile animal scaraboids are those portraying hippopotami, fish, frogs, and ducks.

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# Gayer-Anderson Scarab Collection

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## Nile Animal Scaraboids



Hippopotamus scaraboid. Steatite. Base inscribed with the god Seth. New Kingdom. 1.5 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.37a.



Tilapia fish plaque. Base inscribed with a neb basket over a beetle between two facing uraei. New Kingdom. 1.8 X 1.2 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.12b.

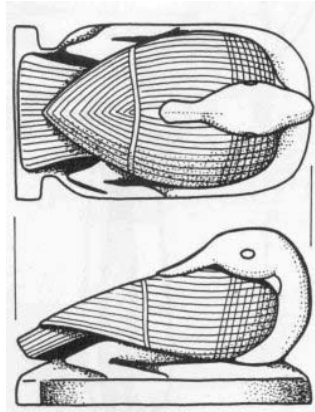


The tilapia maintains its eggs, and even its hatched young, in its mouth, and was associated with the solar mythology, wherein the sun is swallowed at sunset and born again at dawn.



Duck scaraboid. Faience. New Kingdom. 1.5 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.38a.

Ducks, with the head turned round and resting on the back, evoked a sleeping state and symbolized an imminent awaking or rebirth. Some believe that this image of a duck had an erotic significance, and thus served as a fertility amulet.



Frog scaraboid. Faience. New Kingdom. 1.4 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.39b



The frog, with its prolific breeding habits, symbolized fecundity for the living, particularly for women. In addition, it is reported that the Egyptians believed that the frog had spontaneous generation and was self-creating. In the New Kingdom a frog was sometimes used to write 'repeating life,' a term used after the name of the deceased that symbolized the promise of rebirth.

Frog scaraboid. Steatite. Middle Kingdom. 2.2 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.39a



## Scarabs: The King



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### Scarabs With His Image

#### **The King: the ruler, guardian of world order, a god incarnate on earth**

The king was considered to be divine, the incarnation of the falcon god Horus, the son and avenger of his father Osiris. As a divine being on earth, the king possessed powers to command the forces of nature and maintain maat, the order of the universe established out of chaos at the beginning of time.

The king is always depicted as young and powerful. In animal form he can be represented by a falcon, bull, lion, or sphinx, often vanquishing an enemy. In human form he can be found seated in majesty, riding in his chariot in battle, or trampling his enemies. Images of the king were placed on scarabs not to glorify the king, but to assure a portion of the king's power and protection for the owner.

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## Image of the King on Scarabs



Scarab showing the king holding a mace and striking down the enemy. Montu, the god of war, holds out a weapon. The hieroglyphs over the figures give the royal name of Menkheperre, (=Thutmose III). Steatite. 1.9 cm. New Kingdom. Portland Art Museum 29.16.74a.



Scarab showing the king seated on a throne, a winged disk hovers and a man stands before the king. Steatite. 1.6 cm. New Kingdom-Third Intermediate Period. Portland Art Museum 29.16.87a.



Scarab showing the king standing in a chariot drawn by two horses. The hieroglyphs over the horses give the royal name of Menkheperre, (=Thutmose III). Steatite. 2.1 cm. New Kingdom-Third Intermediate Period. Portland Art Museum 29.16.49a.



Scarab with a lion, representing the king. A royal epithet is inscribed over the lion: "The Good God, the Lord of the Two Lands." Steatite. 1.4 cm. New Kingdom. Portland Art Museum 29.16.87b.



Scarab showing the king smiting an enemy. The hieroglyphs may be read Menkheperre, (=Thutmosis III). Steatite. 1.5 cm. New Kingdom. Portland Art Museum 29.16.74b.

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## Scarabs With His Name

### **The King: the ruler, guardian of world order, a god incarnate on earth**

The king's name was as powerful as his image. By the Middle Kingdom, the titulary of the king was standardized to include five titles and five names individual to each pharaoh. On scarabs we find usually just the king's throne name and occasionally his given name.

In English, the kings of Egypt are referred to by the name they received at birth, such as Thutmosis, Amenhotep, or Ramesses. This name was the king's given name or Nomen and was always written in a cartouche, an elongated hieroglyph meaning "encompass," which symbolized the king's power to rule all that can be encompassed.

In Egyptian, the king is most often referred to by his throne name or Prenomen. It likewise appears in a cartouche and almost always contains the name of the sun god Re. Examples include Men-Kheper-Re (Thutmosis III), Neb-Maat-Re (Amenhotep III), and User-Maat-Re-Setep-En-Re (Ramesses II).

In addition to the names of kings we find those of queens, who, beginning in Dynasty XVIII, also had their name written in cartouches like their ruling husband. Their association with the living god on earth imbued them with special powers that would likewise protect the wearer of a scarab bearing their name.

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## The Name of the King



Scarab with the prenomen of Senwosret I (Kheperkare). Steatite. 2.2 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.102a.

This is a reissue made in the Second Intermediate Period and not contemporary with this king of Dynasty XII.



Scarab with the name of Hyksos king Jacobhor (y'qbhr) of Dynasty XV. Steatite. Second Intermediate Period. 2.1 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.67a.

The Hyksos rulers left few monuments with their names. Scarabs are often the sole source of evidence that these rulers held power in Egypt.



Scarab with the prenomen of Ahmose (Nebpehtyre), founder of Dynasty XVIII. Steatite. New Kingdom. 1.5 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.32a.



Scarab with the prenomen of Thumosis I (Aakheperkare) of Dynasty XVIII. Steatite. New Kingdom. 1.6 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.80a.



Scarab with the prenomen of Amenhotep II of Dynasty XVIII along with the epithet "Ruler of Thebes, Lord of Power, Beloved of the Gods." Steatite. New Kingdom. 1.6 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.66a.



Scarab with the prenomen of Amenhotep III of Dynasty XVIII, along with the epithet "Conqueror of Foreign Lands." Steatite. New Kingdom. 1.5 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.66b.



Scarab with the combined prenomens of Seti I (Menmaatre) and Ramesses II (Usermaatre Setepenre) of Dynasty XIX. Steatite. New Kingdom. 1.5 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.62a.



Scarab with the prenomen of Ramesses II (Usermaatre) of Dynasty XIX. Steatite. New Kingdom. 1.7 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.81a.



Scarab with the prenomen of Si-Amon of Dynasty XXI. Steatite. Third Intermediate Period. 0.8 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.40b.



Scarab with the names of Sheshonq I of Dynasty XXII. Steatite. Third Intermediate Period. 1.9 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.66c.

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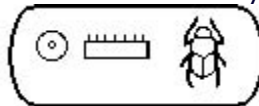
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## Menkheperre (Thutmosis III) Scarabs

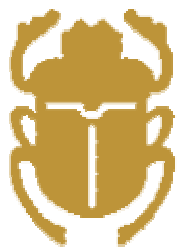
### **The King: the ruler, guardian of world order, a god incarnate on earth**

Not all scarabs bearing a royal name are contemporaneous to the ruling pharaoh. Some kings were held in particularly high regard, and thus their name appears on scarabs hundreds of years after their reign. Thutmosis III of Dynasty XVIII was particularly honored in this way, with his prenomen--Men-kheper-re



--being used on scarabs for a period of approximately 1000 years. Given the time span during which the scarabs with this name were manufactured, it stands to reason that the name Menkheperre is the king's name found most often on scarabs. The Portland Art Museum collection contains over 100 of these "Menkheperre" scarabs.

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## Menkheperre Scarabs



Scarab with the hieroglyphs for Menkheperre. Steatite. New Kingdom. 1.5 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.46a.



Scarab with Menkheperre in a cartouche over uraei wearing royal crowns, a nefer sign and maat feathers. Steatite New Kingdom. 1.6 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.46b.





Scarab with the hieroglyphs for Menkheperre, with the scarab drawn with wings. Steatite. New Kingdom. 1.3 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.46d.



Scarab with Menkheperre in a cartouche next to a uraeus. The epithet "Lord of the Two Lands" appears over the cartouche. The goddess Bastet is mentioned, indicating the scarab was made when this goddess was of particular importance, namely the Third Intermediate Period. 3.7 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.57b.



Scarab with two cartouches containing Menkheperre over the sign for gold within a rope border. An image of the god Bes is carved on the scarab's back. Steatite. New Kingdom. 4.1 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.56d.



Scarab with the hieroglyphs for Menkheperre. Steatite. New Kingdom-Third Intermediate Period. 1.5 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.47a.



Scarab with Menkheperre in a cartouche with a uraeus, sun disk, and neb sign. Steatite. New Kingdom. 2.3 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.49c.



Scarab with the hieroglyphs for Menkheperre, facing a sphinx with a royal crown. Over the sphinx is the royal epithet "Good God, Lord of the Two Lands." Steatite. New Kingdom. 1.8 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.49b.



Scarab with the hieroglyphs for Menkheperre and the epithet "Ruler of Thebes, Beloved of Re." Steatite. New Kingdom. 1.6 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.82a.



Scarab with the combined names of Merneptah (Hetep Her Maat) of Dynasty XIX and Thutmosis III. Steatite. New Kingdom. Portland Art Museum 29.16.65a.



# Gayer-Anderson Scarab Collection

in the Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon USA

## Amenhotep III Commemorative Scarabs

### **The King: the ruler, guardian of world order, a god incarnate on earth**

A singular group of large scarabs, some over 7 cm. in length (3-4 in.) commemorate events in the reign of Amenhotep III of Dynasty XVIII. These scarabs, made of glazed steatite, are drilled lengthwise, indicating that these sizable objects were somehow suspended, either around the neck or from some object for display.

The more than 200 documented commemorative scarabs are divided into five themes: the marriage of Amenhotep III and his wife Tiye, the creation of an artificial lake for the king's wife Tiye, the arrival of the Mitanni Princess Gilukhepa to the court of the king, the king's wild bull hunt, and the king's hunting of lions. Out of the 140 known copies of the lion hunt commemorative scarab, the most numerous of the five types, two belong to the Portland Art Museum collection..

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# Gayer-Anderson Scarab Collection

in the Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon USA

## Amenhotep III Scarabs

Lion hunt commemorative scarab of Amenhotep III. Steatite. New Kingdom. 7.3 X 5 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.114a.



The inscription reads: The Living Horus, Strong Bull Appearing in Truth; Two Ladies, Establishing Laws and Pacifying; Golden Horus, Great of Valor, Smiting the Asiatics; King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Neb Maat Re; Son of Re, Amenhotep, Ruler of Thebes, given life and the Great Royal Wife Tiye, may she live. Number of lions taken by his majesty by his own shooting, beginning in year 1 (of his reign) to year 10: 102 fierce lions.



Lion hunt commemorative scarab of Amenhotep III. Steatite. New Kingdom. 5 X 5.5 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.114b.



Scarab with the prenomen of Amenhotep III. Steatite. New Kingdom. 3.7 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.56b.



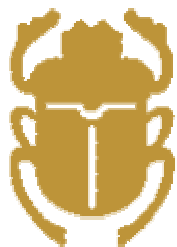
Scarab with the name of Tiye, wife of Amenhotep III, in a cartouche along with the epithet "Great Royal Wife, May She Live." Steatite. New Kingdom. 4.2 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.56c.



Oval plaque inscribed with Ankhesenamen, the name of the wife of Tutankhamen and of other royal women during Dynasty XVIII. The reverse shows a recumbent lion. Steatite. New Kingdom. 1.8 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.8b.

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## Scarabs: The Gods



# Gayer-Anderson Scarab Collection

in the Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon USA

### Scarabs With Their Images And Names

#### The Gods: ancestors of the king, intercessors and protectors of individuals in this life and the next

The pantheon of Egyptian gods was complex, with gods waning and waxing in popularity and deities merging and assimilating characteristics in a syncretistic manner. This intricate system, perhaps confusing to us, no doubt made great sense to the Egyptians, as it developed and flourished for over 3500 years.

An Egyptian god can appear in several forms: as a human with a crown and a scepter, as an animal that is often associated with him, or as a human with an animal head. Images and names of gods appeared on scarabs and brought the wearer the protection of the depicted or named deity.

The gods most represented on scarabs include: **Amon**, chief god at Thebes; **Khonsu**, the son of Amon; **Ptah**, creator god of Memphis; **Sekhmet**, wife of Ptah; and **Bastet**, a protective goddess. Of particular importance and frequency are the protector gods **Hathor** and **Bes**.

**Bes**, a household god, was popular with the common people. He appears as a dwarf, with a mask-like face, and the mane of a lion. Bes is the protector of the family, women in childbirth, and children in general. He was considered the god par excellence for protection against danger and enemies.

**Hathor**, a mother goddess of beauty, love, and protection who interceded on behalf of women and children, was depicted as a cow or as a woman with a cow's ears and horns and a sun disk on her head. On scarabs she can be represented by a sistrum, a ceremonial rattle with a woman's face with cow ears. Her iconography is sometimes assimilated with that of Isis, Bat, Sekhmet, Bastet, and other protective goddesses.

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# Gayer-Anderson Scarab Collection

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## Scarabs and Scaraboids with Gods' Images and Names



Amulet stamp seal of the god Bes.



Inscribed with a wadjet eye on the base. Steatite. Third Intermediate Period. 2.5 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.11c.




Plaque with the god Bes. Base inscribed with 'Amon-Re.' Steatite. New Kingdom. 3 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.11a.



Plaque with the god Bes, showing only his bearded face. Base inscribed with 'Menkheperre-Thutmosis III.' Steatite. Third Intermediate Period. 2 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.11b.





Plaque with the goddess Hathor inscribed with the symbol of the king  on the back. Steatite. Middle-New Kingdom. 2.4 X 2 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.12c.



Cowroid with the Hathor emblem. Steatite. New Kingdom. 2cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.2a



Cowroid with the Hathor emblem. Steatite. Middle Kingdom. 1.6 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.6b.



Plaque with Isis suckling Horus while hiding in the marshes. The back shows four monkeys in a palm tree, the symbol for a wish for a good new year. Steatite. Late Period. 2.3 X 2.7 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.12d.





Scarab with the inscription 'The goddess Bastet is bountiful.' Steatite. Third Intermediate Period. 2 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.43a.



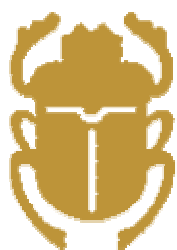
Scarab with the god Ptah with two human-headed Ba birds on djed pillars representing the souls of Re and Osiris. Steatite. New Kingdom. 1.9 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.77a



Scarab with the inscription 'The god Khons is (my) protection.' Steatite. New Kingdom. Portland Art Museum 29.16.63a.



Scarab depicting the lioness-headed goddess Sekhmet along with the god Bes. Steatite. New Kingdom. 1.5 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.75a.

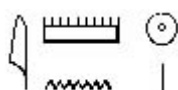


# Gayer-Anderson Scarab Collection

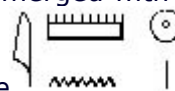
in the Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon USA

## Scarabs With The Name Of Amon

### The Gods: ancestors of the king, intercessors and protectors of individuals in this life and the next



Amon was the principal god of Thebes who rose to popularity in the Middle Kingdom and merged with the sun god Re in



the New Kingdom to become Amon-Re. As "king of the gods," he became a national deity with a large and powerful priesthood. Although images of the god are rare on scarabs, his name is the one found most often. This attests to the esteem in which he was held and the power he possessed.

Because Amon means "the hidden one," his name is often written with special cryptograms that "hide" the reading of his name. This cryptographic writing is based on an acrophonic principle, where the three phonetic values needed to write 'Amon' (i + m + n) are taken from the initial sound of otherwise unrelated words.

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# Gayer-Anderson Scarab Collection

in the Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon USA

## Amon-Re Scarabs



Scarab with 'Amon-Re' written within a rope border. Steatite, New Kingdom. 1.8 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.79a.



Bundle back stamp seal inscribed with 'Amon-Re, Lord, Ruler of Thebes.' Faience. New Kingdom. 5.5 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.105a.



Scarab inscribed with 'Image of Amon' over a neb basket. Steatite. New Kingdom. Portland Art Museum 29.16.79b.






Scarab inscribed with 'Amon-Re.' A ram's head replaces scarab's head. Steatite. Late Period. 2.8 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.57c.

The ram is a symbol of the god Amon.






Scarab with a cryptographic writing for Amon-Re. Steatite. New Kingdom-Third Intermediate Period. 1.3 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.60a.

( itn 'sun disk' / 'god Re' = i/  
Re,  maat 'truth' = m,  
 neb 'basket' = n)





Scarab with a cryptographic writing for Amon. Steatite. New Kingdom-Third Intermediate Period. 1.4 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.60b.

( itn 'disk of a mirror' = i ,  
 maat 'truth' = m,  neb  
'basket' = n)





Scarab with a cryptographic writing for Amon. Steatite. New Kingdom. 1.7 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.74c.


( i3i 'to praise' = i,  mnw



'monument' =m+n)

Scarab with a cryptographic  
writing for Amon-Re. Steatite.  
New Kingdom-Third  
Intermediate Period. 1.9 cm.  
Portland Art Museum 29.16.72a.

( =Amon-Re,  i3i 'to

praise' = i,  m3w-hr 'mirror'=  
m,)

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# Gayer-Anderson Scarab Collection

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## Heart Scarabs

### **The Gods: ancestors of the king, intercessors and protectors of individuals in this life and the next**

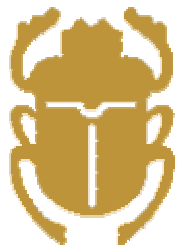
The heart scarab, which first appears in Dynasty XIII, provided a deceased wearer with the assurance that at the final judgment-as depicted in Chapter 125 of the Book of the Dead, where the heart is weighed against *maat*, the feather symbol of universal order and correctness- he would be found 'true of voice' and accepted into the eternal afterlife under the rule of the god Osiris.

Many heart scarabs bear part or all of what is known as Chapter 30B from the Book of the Dead, a prayer to the heart not to bear false witness against the deceased when he is being judged before Osiris.

The Book of the Dead also instructs that the heart scarab be made of the *nemhef*-stone, which has been identified as green jasper, serpentine, or basalt, and be set in a gold chase suspended from the neck. It appears the stone was chosen not only for its greenish color, which symbolized life and regeneration, but also for its weight. The heart could not weigh more than the feather of *maat*, so a heart scarab of just the right heft would work in favor of the deceased. This was just one more safeguard the Egyptians put in place on the dangerous road to the afterlife.

Not all heart scarabs bear texts. Those without an inscription can be summarized to be heart scarabs if they are made of dark stone, large, and not drilled through, like most scarabs, as it was meant to be encased in a gold frame.

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# Gayer-Anderson Scarab Collection

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## Heart Scarabs



Heart scarab with excerpt from Chapter 30b of the Book of the Dead. Green stone. New Kingdom. 5.4 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.119b.



Translation: O my heart that I received from my mother, my heart that I have had since birth, my heart that was with me through all the stages of my life, do not stand up against me as a witness! Do

not oppose me at the tribunal! Do not tip the scales against me in the presence of the Keeper of the Balance! You are my ka of my body, you are the creator god Khnum who makes my limbs sound. Go forth to the Hereafter...



Heart scarab in the shape of the hieroglyph for 'heart' with remains of Chapter 30b of the Book of the Dead. Green/black stone. New Kingdom. 6.7 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.119c.

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# Gayer-Anderson Scarab Collection

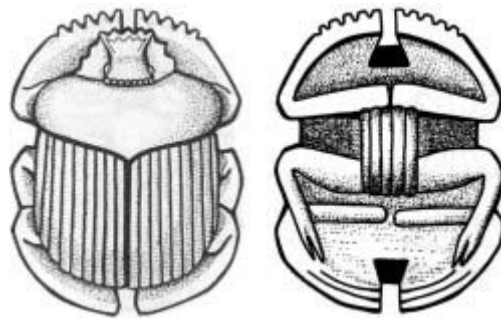
in the Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon USA

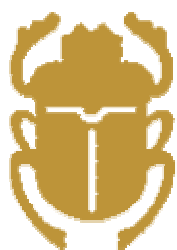
## Pectoral Scarabs

### **The Gods: ancestors of the king, intercessors and protectors of individuals in this life and the next**

Pectoral scarabs appear beginning in Dynasty XXV and had as their role to assure the transformation and rebirth of the deceased in an effort to join the gods in the afterlife. These scarabs were sewn to the wrappings or the bead net placed on the body of the deceased, and each has eyelets to make the attachment easy. These large, often winged faience scarabs were placed over the chest of the deceased, and are sometimes accompanied by the chthonic protector gods, called the four sons of Horus, who protected the mummified internal organs of the deceased placed in canopic jars.

In Dynasty XXVI a naturalistic scarab, with its legs in carved relief tucked under its belly, appears. A loop in the middle of the base allows for attachment by stitching to the mummy. Groupings of these are found on the chest and other parts of the body of the deceased, acting as another protective device for the perilous journey to the next world.





# Gayer-Anderson Scarab Collection

in the Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon USA

## Pectoral Scarabs



Pectoral scarab with separate wings, perforated for sewing to the bandages or bead net of a mummified body. Blue faience. Late Period. Portland Art Museum 29.16.120a-c.



Four sons of Horus (-jackal-headed Duamutef, -baboon-headed Hapy, -human-headed Imsety, -falcon-headed Qebhsenef) who protected the remains of the deceased. Blue paste. Late Period. 7.5-8.2 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.120d-g.



At times these gods appear as the guardians of the deceased's canopic jars with his embalmed viscera.

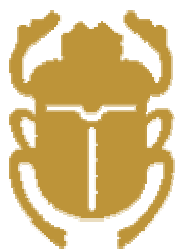
Naturalistic scarab. Blue faience. Late Period. 3 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.21a.



Pectoral scarabs were sewn to the wrappings or the bead net placed on the body of the deceased, and each has eyelets to make the attachment easy.

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## Scarabs: Hieroglyphs



# Gayer-Anderson Scarab Collection

in the Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon USA

### Scarabs with Designs

### Hieroglyphs: the 'words of the gods,' the signs used to write the language and which provide inherent power and protection

Many scarabs have carved on them designs or patterns, some of whose meanings are not fully understood. They may have a hidden significance, or may relate to Egyptian hieroglyphic writing. Designs found on scarabs can be simplified to fit one of four basic patterns:

- spiral scrolls
- concentric circles
- knots
- crosses combined with spirals, circles, floral motifs, and knots

Among the words used in Egyptian for amulet, are *sa*, written with the hieroglyph for a knotted cord that forms an animal hobble , or with the hieroglyph of a rolled papyrus mat . Using cords, knots, and rolls to write the word for a protective device may explain the frequent use of spiral, knot, and loop designs on scarabs.

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# Gayer-Anderson Scarab Collection

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## Hieroglyphic Designs on Scarabs



Scarab with spiral design with two mirrored nefer signs. Steatite. Middle Kingdom-Second Intermediate Period. 1.8 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.22d.



Scarab with spiral design with two mirrored nefer signs. Steatite. Middle Kingdom-Second Intermediate Period. 1.5 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.22b.



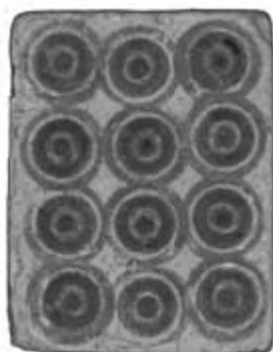
Scarab with spiral design with two nefer signs, one above and one below a neb sign. Steatite. Middle Kingdom-Second Intermediate Period. 1.6 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.23a.



Scarab with spiral design with a nefer sign. Steatite, Middle Kingdom. 2.2 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.102d



Plaque with 15 concentric circles surrounding an ankh sign with an oval border. A cross pattern appears on the reverse side. Steatite. Middle Kingdom. 2 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.7a.



Plaque with 12 concentric circles in rows. A tilapia fish appears on the reverse side. Steatite. New Kingdom. Portland Art Museum 29.13b.



Scarab with knot pattern. Steatite. Middle Kingdom. 2.2 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.101b.



Scarab with knot pattern. Steatite. New Kingdom. 1.6 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.102c.



Scarab with knot pattern. Steatite. Middle Kingdom. 1.5 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.22c.



Scarab with knot pattern, lotus blossom at each end. Steatite. Middle Kingdom. 1.8 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.23b.



Scarab with cross pattern formed from spirals, concentric circles, and petals. Steatite. New Kingdom-Third Intermediate Period. 2.7 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.55a.



# Gayer-Anderson Scarab Collection

in the Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon USA

## Scarabs with Individual Signs

### **Hieroglyphs: the 'words of the gods,' the signs used to write the language and which provide inherent power and protection**



In Egyptian the hieroglyphs were called *medew neter* 'the words of the god,' which bears witness to the sacred and divine nature attributed to these signs that few could read. This helps to explain why some scarabs contain hieroglyphic writing that does not combine into words. These individual signs, often arranged symmetrically, appear to bestow magical protection or power from their inherent nature, given that they relate to the kingship and its divine power on earth, as well as to beauty, wholeness, and life.

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

## Hieroglyphic Signs on Scarabs

Meaning of signs found on scarabs



Scarab with    signs. Steatite. Middle Kingdom. 1.5 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.93a.



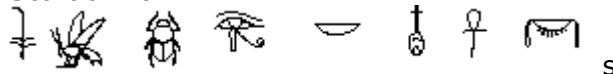
Scarab with     signs within a spiral pattern. Steatite. Middle Kingdom. 1.8 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.93b.



Scarab with signs. Steatite. Middle Kingdom-Second Intermediate Period. 1.5 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.102b.




Scarab with



signs. Steatite. Middle Kingdom. 1.3 cm.  
Portland Art Museum 29.16.103b.



Scarab with  signs within a spiral pattern. Steatite. Middle Kingdom. 2.5 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.54a.



Scarab with  signs within a spiral pattern. Steatite. Middle Kingdom. 1.9 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.94a.



Wadjet eye plaque. Faience. New Kingdom. 1.9 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.15a.





The wadjet eye represents the left eye of Horus, lost in a battle with Seth, but restored by Hathor. This restored eye is referred to as the wadjet eye, Egyptian for 'the sound' eye. The Wadjet eye came to symbolize the process of making whole and healing, thus its representation offered its wearer protection, strength, and perfection.



# Gayer-Anderson Scarab Collection

in the Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon USA

## Hieroglyphic Symbols found on Scarabs

	<i>wadjet</i> eye, sign for the sound eye of Horus
	<i>ka</i> , sign for protection and life force
	sign for transformation, rebirth
	sign for the Horus falcon (symbol of the king)
	sign of the royal uraeus (symbol of power and protection)
	signs for the sedge and bee (symbol of the king of Upper/Lower Egypt)
	sign for the red crown of Lower Egypt (symbol of the king)
	<i>ankh</i> , sign for life
	sign for green papyrus (symbol of youth and prosperity)
	<i>nefer</i> , sign for goodness, beauty
	sign for the joining of Upper/Lower Egypt (symbol of unity, strength)
	sign for endurance
	<i>djed</i> , symbol of stability
	sign for the rising sun (symbol of rebirth)
	<i>was</i> scepter, sign for dominion
	sign for gold



*neb* basket, sign for lord or owner; adjective intensifier meaning "all"

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# Gayer-Anderson Scarab Collection

in the Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon USA

## Scarabs with Good Wishes

### **Hieroglyphs: the 'words of the gods,' the signs used to write the language and which provide inherent power and protection**

Beginning in Dynasty XVIII, hieroglyphic inscriptions appear on scarabs and contain wishes for good health, protection, prosperity, and fertility. The inscriptions often include a divine name to further ensure the power of the words. Examples include wishes for a happy new year, wishes for many children to perpetuate the name of a person, and formulae for obtaining the protection of a god.

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# Gayer-Anderson Scarab Collection

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## Good Wishes



Scarab inscribed with "Amon is the strength of the individual." Steatite. New Kingdom. 1.8 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.81c.



Scarab inscribed with "May the god raise up the one who loves him." Steatite. New Kingdom. 1.6 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.81b.



Scarab inscribed with "Happy New Year" and having a *djed* and *nefer* sign on the back of the scarab. Steatite. New Kingdom. 1.6 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.80a.



Scarab inscribed with a slightly cryptographic writing of "Happy New Year" with two monkeys (=good, happy) around a palm tree (=year and new). Steatite. New Kingdom. 1.6 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.88a.



Scarab inscribed with "Amon is vigilant. I am content." Steatite. New Kingdom-Third Intermediate Period. 1.9 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.79c.



Scarab inscribed with "Amon is behind me, I have no fear." Steatite. New Kingdom-Third Intermediate Period. Portland Art Museum 29.16.81d.

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# Gayer-Anderson Scarab Collection

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## Scarabs and Scaraboids as Seals

### **Hieroglyphs: the 'words of the gods,' the signs used to write the language and which provide inherent power and protection**

Hieroglyphs and designs were essential when the scarab amulet also functioned as a seal. Seal impressions have been found on lumps of clay attached to cords, jar stoppers, and papyrus roles with an owner's mark, having the purpose of discouraging theft or indicating possession.

The earliest seals are cylindrical, probably modeled after similar forms found in Mesopotamia. Round, button-like seals appear in the First Intermediate Period with geometric maze patterns. By the Middle Kingdom, when the scarab first appears as a seal, geometric designs continue to be used along with those bearing the names and titles of private individuals. By the New Kingdom, the use of scarabs as seals had declined and few examples are found.

Private name seals give the title and names of officials, and were used mostly in the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period. In the New Kingdom, private name seals are rare except for those individuals with some connection to the cult of the god Amon. The right to use such titles on seals was confined to an elite class of Egyptians. For the less privileged Egyptians, a personal mark or design was used as a seal.

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# Gayer-Anderson Scarab Collection

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## Hieroglyphs on Seals



Cylinder seal showing the deceased seated before a table of offerings, possibly with the name Iti-Neith. Black steatite. Archaic Period. 1.5 X 1.3 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.40c.



Cylinder seal, possibly with the name Sensen-Hor, 'United with Horus.' Black steatite. Archaic Period. 1.2 X 1.2 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.40d.



Scarab with maze pattern. Faience. First Intermediate Period. 1.4 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.31a.



Scaraboid of a double-sided seated scribe inscribed with a maze pattern on the base. Steatite. First Intermediate Period. 1.1 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.37b.



Stamp seal possibly inscribed with a stick figure of a man. Faience. First Intermediate Period. 1.4 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.51a.



Private name scarab seal which reads: "Sa Neb, seal bearer of the king, sole companion, commander of the army." Steatite. Middle Kingdom. 2 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.82d.



Private name scarab seal which reads: "Montuhotep, controller of the ruler's table, son of Sobekhotep, controller of the ruler's table." Steatite. Middle Kingdom. 1.8 cm. Portland Art Museum 29.16.82b.



Private name scarab seal  
which reads: "Prince (son  
of the king) Sobekhotep."  
Steatite. Middle Kingdom.  
2.8 cm. Portland Art  
Museum 29.16.82c.



Private name cowroid seal  
which reads: "Maay,  
Chantress of Amon."  
Steatite. New Kingdom.  
1.8 cm. Portland Art  
Museum 29.16.27a.



# Gayer-Anderson Scarab Collection

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