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Ancient Egyptian Funerary Tools and Beliefs

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ABSTRACT

Ancient Egyptian burial practices have long fascinated scholars and the public alike due to their intricate rituals and the significant role of funerary objects. These practices offer profound insights into the spiritual beliefs and societal norms of ancient Egypt, highlighting the importance of the afterlife in their culture. Understanding the symbolic and practical purposes of these funerary objects enriches our knowledge of ancient Egyptian religion and cultural practices, offering a clearer picture of their worldviews and how they sought to ensure a successful transition to the afterlife. This paper examines the diverse range of objects used in ancient Egyptian burials, focusing on their intended functions and the beliefs associated with them. It explores the significance of protective amulets, shabti figurines, scarab beetles, and funerary texts in the context of ancient Egyptian culture. This paper will review existing literature on Egyptian funerary practices to argue that Egyptian funerary objects served three main purposes: to protect, to resurrect, and to communicate.

Objects to Protect

Protective Amulets in Ancient Egyptian Culture

Introduction to Egyptian Amulets

In ancient Egypt, amulets were believed to endow magical powers, which could be influenced by factors such as the shape, size, and inscription of the amulet. Amulets were extremely abundant and affordable to many, not just the wealthier classes. Ranging from bracelets to pendants to small charms, they were often worn or placed on the body to directly transfer their protective qualities to the wearer[1]. The first recognizable amulets are thought to date back to the predynastic period—what Egyptologists believe ranges from c. 6000-3150 BCE—often displaying depictions of animals such as a hippopotamus or an antelope. Other animal amulet shapes include the head of a lion, dog, or bull, probably representing the idea of protection. As time went on, peaking in the Late Period (c. 713–332 B.C.E.), funerary amulets became more detailed and evolved from depictions of animals to deities and sacred figures[2].

Symbolism and Function of the Eye of Horus

The Eye of Horus (figure 1.), also known as the Wedjat Eye amulet, holds profound symbolic significance in ancient Egyptian mythology and religion, especially in the context of funerary traditions. Representative of the falcon-headed god Horus, a deity often associated with protection, kingship, and healing, the eye symbolizes the concepts of health and divine protection.

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[1] Carol Andrews, "Amulets of Ancient Egypt," Journal of near Eastern Studies 56, no. 1 (January 1997): 61–62, https://doi.org/10.1086/468509. (accessed February 22, 2024)

[2] Stünkel, Isabel, "Ancient Egyptian Amulets | Essay | the Metropolitan Museum of Art | Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History," The Met's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, 2019, https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/egam/hd_egam.htm. (accessed march 2, 2024)

Figure 1. The Eye of Horus--also called the Wedjat Eye Amulet. (Wedjat Eye Amulet | Ptolemaic Period | the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2024)

One of the most popular amulets from Egypt, the amulet depicts a combination of a human and a falcon eye. In Egyptian mythology, Horus' eye was injured or stolen by the god Seth and then restored by Thoth; thus, the amulet embodies healing powers and is thought to protect its wearer[3]. The Wedjat Eye amulets were commonly placed on the deceased during the embalming process or included in their burial wrappings. Amulets were often inscribed with spells and incantations from the ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead, reinforcing their protective properties with the goal of invoking blessings from the gods for a safe passage.

Materials and Craftsmanship

Wedjat Eye Amulets, as well as nearly all Ancient Egyptian amulets as a whole, were crafted from a range of materials, each of which was thought to serve a different purpose. Egyptians believed that the different materials used would have an effect on the spells and protective properties of the amulets. Within the early dynastic period (c. 3000–2686 B.C.E.), amulets were most commonly made from glazed composition, also known as faience. Glazed composition describes objects created from a ceramic material made by fusing finely powdered quartz grain or sand with alkali through heating. The result would be mixed with water and colored pigments, then modeled by hand, thrown or molded, and finally fired[4]. The glazed composition was especially popular because of its soft and easily malleable properties that allowed for it to be molded into virtually any amuletic shape.

Figure 2. Wedjat Eye Amulet with colored pigments. (File:Wedjat Eye Amulet MET DP164714 (Cropped).Jpg - Wikimedia Commons, 2022)

[3] "Wedjat Eye Amulet | Late Period | the Metropolitan Museum of Art," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2024, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/550997. (accessed March 2, 2024)

[4] "Amulet | British Museum," The British Museum (British Museum, 2024), https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA54207. (accessed February 24, 2024)

Additionally, although less popular and not as commonly used, precious metals and gemstones were also used to craft amulets. Gold and silver were used to create especially intricate amulets; however, they were often reserved for the elite or royal individuals who could manage to afford them. Precious stones such as lapis lazuli, turquoise, and carnelian were also sometimes used to embellish amulets, adding to their value and significance, but they were not openly available to the general peasants and commoners due to high costs. Turquoise, jasper, lapis lazuli, and obsidian are all examples of gemstones that were used to create amulets[5]. Carnelian, a brownish-red mineral said to have metaphysical properties to ward off the Evil Eye and instill peace, was also commonly used as "the setting sun" by the Egyptians that wore it.

Shabtis in Ancient Egyptian Culture

Symbolism and Function

Egyptians believed that whatever was required in life would also be needed in the afterlife. Thus, the Egyptians felt the need for a servant in the afterlife. Shabtis (Figure 3.), small statuettes also known as ushabti, were used as substitutes for living servants in the tombs of kings, particularly during the 1st Dynasty, which spanned from 2925 BCE to 2775 BCE (hereafter "1st Dynasty")[6]. The term "shabti" is derived from the ancient Egyptian word "shabtiu," meaning "answerers," indicating their role as obedient servants to the deceased[7]. The concept of shabtis originated from the belief in an afterlife where the deceased would continue their existence and require assistance with agricultural or manual labor. While the first use of shabti was strictly for the kings and wealthy, in the Middle Kingdom, shabtis extended to commoners, aiding them in various tasks to ensure a fulfilling afterlife[8].

Figure 3. Shabti of Setau. (Brooklyn Museum, 2024)

Initially, spiritual representatives, shabtis, were bewitched to transform into representations of agricultural slaves serving Osiris in the afterlife during the Third Intermediate Period[9]. The number of shabtis placed in a tomb

[5] Carol Andrews, "Amulets of Ancient Egypt," Journal of near Eastern Studies 56, no. 1 (January 1997): 61–62, https://doi.org/10.1086/468509. (accessed February 22, 2024)
[6] Brian Alm, "Ancient Egyptian Religion - Part 5," Academia.edu, April 19, 2018, https://www.academia.edu/36447420/Ancient_Egyptian_Religion_Part_5. (accessed March 2, 2024)
[7] Donald Spanel, Through Ancient Eyes (University of Washington Press, 1988). (accessed March 5, 2024)
[8] "Shabti of Yuya | New Kingdom | the Metropolitan Museum of Art," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2021, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/548343.
[9] Donnally, Kristina , "Servants for the Dead: An Egyptian Shabti Figurine from the Las Vegas Natural History Museum," the Virtual Curation Laboratory (the Virtual Curation Laboratory, March 26, 2020),

varied depending on the individual's status, wealth, and personal beliefs. Wealthier individuals often had larger sets of shabtis, sometimes numbering in the hundreds, reflecting their desire for ample assistance in the afterlife. The figurines often depict a servant with arms crossed, and they are covered in hieroglyphic writing. The hand position and overall structure of the figures are meant to mimic Egyptian mummies and mummiform coffins.

Mentioned in the sixth chapter of the Book of the Dead is a version of an ushabti spell found in the Papyrus of Nu, part of the mid-eighteenth Dynasty. Written below is the spelling translated into English by the University College London:

"O shabti figure(s)
If N is called up to do any work that is done there in the underworld
Then, the checkmarks (on the work list) are struck for him; there
As for a man for his (work service) duty
Be counted yourself at any time that might be done
To cultivate the marsh, to irrigate the riverbank fields
To ferry sand to the west or east
I am doing it; see, I am here, you are to say."

As seen here, the sole purpose of the shabti was to serve, whether that may be as a loyal servant, an agricultural servant, or a protective servant[10]. The primary goal of a shabti was to perform any task required to sustain the deceased's existence in the afterworld. In some cases, a shabti could act as a proxy in the event that the mummy of the dead was damaged or destroyed[11].

Materials and Craftsmanship

Shabtis were typically crafted from a variety of materials, including wood—which was commonly used for crafting shabtis due to its availability and ease of carving. Additionally, faience—a type of ceramic ware—was used due to its durable material and vibrant colors (Figure 4.). Specifically, for durability and longevity, some shabtis were carved from stone, such as limestone or granite. These materials lasted much longer than wood or ceramic; however, they were much harder to carve in comparison. Finally, pottery shabtis were more simplistic in design and often accompanied individuals of lower socioeconomic status[12].

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https://vcuarchaeology3d.wordpress.com/2020/03/26/servants-for-the-dead-an-egyptian-shabti-figurine-from-the-las-vegas-natural-history-museum/.(accessed March 5, 2024)

[10] "Book of the Dead Chapter 6," Ucl.ac.uk, February 18, 2002, https://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums-static/digitalegypt/literature/religious/bd6.html. There are many translations of this text. For an example of an alternate translation, see: E A Wallis Budge, Sir and British Museum. Department Of Egyptian And Assyrian Antiquities, The Book of the Dead : An English Translation of the Chapters, Hymns, Etc., of the Theban Recension, with Introduction, Notes, Etc. (London: Routledge And Kegan Paul, 1899), 27.

[11] "What Is a Shabti?," National Trust, n.d., https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/discover/history/art-collections/what-is-a-shabti.

[12] Donnally, Kristina , "Servants for the Dead: An Egyptian Shabti Figurine from the Las Vegas Natural History Museum," the Virtual Curation Laboratory (the Virtual Curation Laboratory, March 26, 2020), https://vcuarchaeology3d.wordpress.com/2020/03/26/servants-for-the-dead-an-egyptian-shabti-figurine-from-the-las-vegas-natural-history-museum/.

Figure 4. Shabti Dolls made from faience. (Mark, 2012)

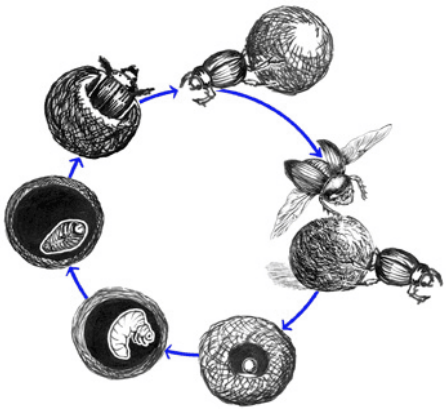
The shabtis themselves were inscribed with hieroglyphic texts, typically excerpts from Chapter Six of the Book of the Dead. These inscriptions included spells and incantations invoking the shabti's duty to perform tasks on behalf of the deceased in the afterlife. These inscriptions were carefully and thoughtfully detailed on the shabti so as not to ruin the incantation by making mistakes in the inscription[13]. Craftsmen believed that sculpting or carving made the images real, and the spiritual was as real as the physical for the Egyptians.

Objects to Ressurect

The Scarab Beetle in Ancient Egyptian Culture

Introduction to the Scarab Beetle

The scarab beetle held immense significance in ancient Egyptian culture, serving as a potent symbol of rebirth and regeneration. These small, dung-rolling insects were believed to embody the daily cycle of the sun, led by the god Ra. This concept stemmed from the Egyptian understanding of the scarab beetle's life cycle (Figure 5.), in which the scarab beetle undergoes complete metamorphosis, starting as an egg laid in dung, then hatching into a larva that feeds on the dung, pupating within a cocoon, and finally emerging as an adult beetle. This concept, which demonstrated the circle of life and the idea of rebirth, made the scarab a revered symbol and spirit in ancient Egypt[14].



[13] Brian Alm, "Ancient Egyptian Religion - Part 5," Academia.edu, April 19, 2018, https://www.academia.edu/36447420/Ancient_Egyptian_Religion_Part_5.

[14] "Scarabs for Kids," Unl.edu, 2024, https://unsm-ento.unl.edu/Scarabs-for-Kids/cycle.html.

Figure 5. Diagram of Scarab Beetle life cycle. (Scarabs for Kids, 2024)

The scarab's symbolic role in the afterlife was particularly profound. Egyptians believed that the scarab represented the soul's journey—just as the beetle emerged from its dung ball, the deceased would emerge from the mummy and ascend to the heavens. Scarabs, especially those known as "heart scarabs," were often placed on the mummies of the deceased, charged with the task of guiding the soul through the underworld and ensuring a successful transition to the afterlife. These heart scarabs were inscribed with spells and incantations from the Book of the Dead, invoking the protection of the gods and the deceased's righteous deeds.

The materials and craftsmanship of scarabs also held deep symbolic meaning. Favored materials included glazed steatite, which was believed to suffuse the amulet with protective powers, as well as precious stones like lapis lazuli, turquoise, and carnelian, which were thought to have metaphysical properties (Figure 6.). The intricate carvings and inscriptions on scarabs were seen as imbuing the amulet with the power of the gods, making them highly sought-after objects by both the elite and the common people. The widespread distribution of scarabs throughout the ancient Mediterranean world attests to their significance as symbols of Egyptian religious and cultural beliefs.

Figure 6. Egyptian Scarab Amulet. (Peters, 2020)

The Significance of Scarab Beetles in Ancient Egyptian Culture

The scarab beetle was one of the most significant and symbolically important amulets in ancient Egyptian culture. These small insects were believed to have profound religious and mythological associations, representing concepts of rebirth, regeneration, and the sun god Khepri. The Egyptians' fascination with the scarab's life cycle, in which the beetle emerges from a ball of dung, led them to equate this process with the daily rising and setting of the sun. As a result, the scarab became a potent symbol of the cyclical nature of life and the afterlife[15].

Scarabs were ubiquitous in ancient Egypt, produced and used as amulets, seals, and even decorative elements across all social classes. Scarabeus seals were often carved onto an elliptical base, which was often inscribed with an ornamental pattern (Figure 7.)[16]. The most frequent size of the seals in this class is around three-quarters of an inch, by half an inch broad and a quarter of an inch high. They could range in length from a fifth of an inch to four or even five inches. These small objects were ingrained with symbolic meaning and believed to possess resurrecting powers for the living and the dead. For use, the scarab seal was simply pushed against the clay that was going to bear the impression. The scarab's association with the sun god and the cycle of rebirth made it a powerful talisman for ensuring a successful transition to the afterlife. As symbols of regeneration, scarabs played a crucial role in the Egyptians' efforts to secure the safe passage of the deceased to the afterlife.

[15] "Scarab," National Museums Liverpool, 2024, https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/artifact/scarab-394.

[16] Percy E. Newberry, "Scarabs, by Percy E. Newberry," Gutenberg.org, 2019, https://www.gutenberg.org/files/59233/59233-h/59233-h.htm.

Figure 7. Scarab-shaped seal of glazed steatite. (Scarab, 2024)

Beyond their symbolic meaning, scarabs also served a practical purpose as amulets to provide protection and blessings for both the living and the dead. Inscribed with spells, incantations, and the names of deities, these small carved beetles were thought to imbue the wearer with magical powers to ward off evil spirits and ensure a successful transition to the afterlife. Scarabs were universal in ancient Egypt, affordable even to the common people, and highly valued for their metaphysical properties[17]. In the Valley of the Kings and Queens in Luxor, as well as in other tombs around the kingdom, the scarab emblem is frequently inscribed on sarcophagi or tomb chambers, demonstrating how the scarab's protective properties as an amulet were believed to work by the Egyptians[18].

The scarab's deep significance in Egyptian culture is evidenced by its widespread use and the care with which it was crafted, from the choice of materials to the intricate inscriptions. Through their enduring symbolism and spiritual power, scarabs remain a hallmark of ancient Egyptian belief systems and funerary practices.

Craftsmanship and Materials of Ancient Egyptian Scarab Amulets

Ancient Egyptian scarab amulets were crafted from a variety of materials, each believed to serve a distinct purpose. The most common material used was glazed composition, also known as faience. Faience was a ceramic material made by fusing finely powdered quartz or sand with alkali through heating[19]. This allowed the material to be easily molded into a wide range of amuletic shapes and designs.

In addition to faience, scarabs were also produced in precious metals such as gold and silver, as well as various gemstones, including lapis lazuli, turquoise, and carnelian (Figure 8.). These more valuable materials were often reserved for the elite or royal classes, as they were less accessible to the general population. The choice of material was thought to imbue the scarab amulet with specific protective or symbolic properties.

[17] Elaine A. Evans, "McClung Museum - Egyptian Scarabs," Unl.edu, 2017, https://unsm-ento.unl.edu/Egyptian_Sacred_Scarab/egs-text.htm.

[18] Jakada Tours Egypt, "The Egyptian Scarab Beetle | Scarab Symbol Meaning," Jakada Tours Egypt (Jakada Tours Egypt, May 2, 2021), https://jakadatoursegypt.com/the-egyptian-scarab-beetle-and-its-meaning/.

[19] "Scarabs | Middle Kingdom | the Metropolitan Museum of Art," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2024, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/688614.

Figure 8. Blue faience carved scarab beetles. (Lot - Six Ancient Egyptian Blue Faience Carved Scarab Beetle Fetishes., 2019)

The craftsmanship and design of scarabs evolved over the different dynastic periods in ancient Egypt. Throughout all of Egyptian history, the different types of scarabs included heart scarabs, marriage scarabs, winged scarabs, lion hunt scarabs, commemorative scarabs, ornamental scarabs, and scarabs decorated with figures and animals[20]. During the early dynasties, scarabs often featured simple animal depictions such as hippos or antelopes. Over time, the designs became more complex, transitioning to representations of deities and other sacred figures. Inscriptions with royal names, religious motifs, and magical spells were also commonly added to scarabs, further enhancing their symbolic and protective significance. The variations in style and execution across dynasties were likely influenced by changing trends and the availability of new materials.

Objects to Communicate

Funerary Texts in Ancient Egyptian Culture

Introduction to Funerary Texts

The ancient Egyptians held a profound belief in the continuity of life after death, a concept deeply ingrained in their cultural fabric. Contrary to popular belief, the Egyptians were not obsessed with death but with life. To ensure a smooth transition into the afterlife, they developed a comprehensive collection of funerary texts that modern scholars have categorized and divided into three categories—the Pyramid Texts, Coffin Texts, and Book of the Dead. These sacred writings reflected an unwavering conviction that life continued after death, a foundational pillar of Egyptian belief systems. Mortuary texts were not mere words but the legacies of the dead and the guidebooks that provided the knowledge and spells necessary for achieving eternal existence in the afterlife. Writings such as the Pyramid Texts were thought to have been first written as far back as 2300 BCE, etched onto the walls of royal pyramids during the Old Kingdom period (c. 2700–2200 BCE). By unraveling the mysteries within these texts, one can gain a deeper understanding of the fundamental concepts that shaped this remarkable culture[21].

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[20] Elaine A. Evans, "McClung Museum - Egyptian Scarabs," Unl.edu, 2017, https://unsmento.unl.edu/Egyptian_Sacred_Scarab/egs-text.htm.

[21] "Funerary Texts in Ancient Egypt," The Australian Museum, 2021, https://australian.museum/learn/cultures/international-collection/ancient-egyptian/funerary-texts-in-ancient-egypt/.

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Significance of Pyramid Texts: The Pyramid Texts represent the earliest known corpus of ancient Egyptian funerary literature, thought to have first appeared with King Unas of the Fifth Dynasty (c. 2375–2345 B.C.E.) (Figure 9.). These texts aimed to help the deceased avoid decay and provided the guidance and communication needed to ascend to the celestial realm as "imperishable stars."[22] By articulating the spells and rituals needed to achieve immortality and a smooth transition to the next world, the Pyramid Texts communicate invaluable insights into the ancient Egyptian worldview. Initially, these pyramid texts were intended to protect a dead king or queen and ensure life and sustenance in the afterlife, exclusive to royalty. However, over time, they were revised during the Middle Kingdom--around 2100 BCE--to be used by officials and nobles alike. The phrase "words to be spoken" opened each segment of the text. In addition to the funerary rites and incantations, the text aimed to aid the departed in their ascent to the heavens to unite with the gods, offering essential information like the names of gatekeepers they would meet and guidance to overcome obstacles along the way[23]. One such spell in the chamber of King Unis goes as follows:

"Ho, Unis!
You have not gone away dead: you have gone away alive.
Sit on Osiris's chair, with your baton in your arm, and govern the living;
with your water lily scepter in your arm, and govern those of the inaccessible places.
Your lower arms are of Atum, your upper arms of Atum,
your belly of Atum, your back of Atum, your rear of Atum,
your legs of Atum, and your face of Anubis.
Horus's mounds shall serve you; Seth's mounds shall serve you."

These spells played a crucial role in ensuring the success of the rebirth cycle, facilitating the daily transition from death to life.

[22] Amy Calvert, "Introduction to Ancient Egyptian Mortuary Texts – Smarthistory," smarthistory.org, May 24, 2022, https://smarthistory.org/ancient-egyptian-mortuary-texts/.
[23] "The Pyramid Texts: The Oldest Known Religious Texts : History of Information," Historyofinformation.com, 2024, https://www.historyofinformation.com/detail.php?entryid=2189.

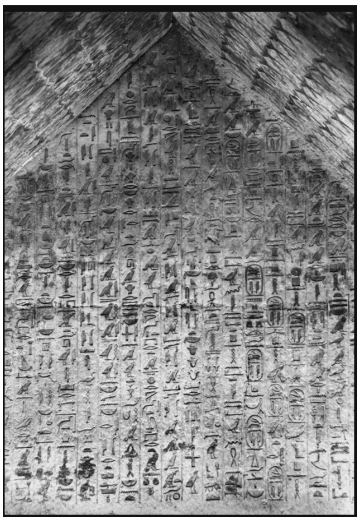

Figure 9. Western Gable of the Sarcophagus Chamber. Plate 69 from Alexandre Piankoff's 'The Pyramid of Unas.' (The Pyramid Texts: The Oldest Known Religious Texts : History of Information, 2024)

Craftsmanship and Creation: The craftsmanship involved in creating the Pyramid Texts is a remarkable display of ancient Egyptian artistry and technical skill. Artisans meticulously carved the hieroglyphs into the stone walls of the pyramids, often highlighting them with blue-green pigment, a color symbolizing regeneration and rebirth. The hieroglyphs were inscribed in vertical columns, with anywhere from three hundred to eight hundred spells inscribed in a given burial chamber. The glyphs were especially precise, as it was believed that even small imperfections could ruin the magical properties of the spell. If the symbols were cast and carved correctly and precisely, it was thought that they would be animated in the afterlife and could be of aid to the dead in the next stages of life. This meticulous attention to detail underscores the Egyptians' sophisticated approach to integrating art and religion in their burial practices.

Coffin Texts in Ancient Egyptian Culture

Significance of Coffin Texts: Over time, the Pyramid Texts eventually developed into a collection of spells that were often painted on coffins, hence the name Coffin Texts. Derived from and intricately combined with the earlier revered Pyramid Texts, these inscriptions represented a continuation of the ancient Egyptians' profound reverence for the afterlife. The Coffin Texts were used extensively in the Middle Kingdom for private burials. Because they were painted on graves or coffins, rather than being chiseled into the walls of a burial chamber, they were made more accessible to a broader range of society. These texts were often inscribed on wood paneling of coffins of non-royals by carvings or paintings (Figure 10.). The artistic process also involved painting the hieroglyphics in vivid colors to add to both their visual and spiritual impact[24]. These texts often included vignettes (illustrations) and maps, such as the Book of Two Ways, which provided guides through the netherworld and emphasized transformation into various forms and reunification with loved ones in the afterlife. Written in first person, they aimed to provide practical assistance to the deceased. Together with the Pyramid Texts, the collection of the Coffin Texts forms the most extensive body of Egyptian religious literature available to modern scholars.

[24] Amy Calvert, "Introduction to Ancient Egyptian Mortuary Texts – Smarthistory," smarthistory.org, May 24, 2022, https://smarthistory.org/ancient-egyptian-mortuary-texts/.

Figure 10. Sarcophagus covered in Coffin Texts. (Leigh, 2023)

The Book of the Dead in Ancient Egyptian Culture

Significance of the Book of the Dead: The Book of the Dead held immense significance in ancient Egyptian funerary practices, marking a culmination of centuries of evolving religious texts aimed at ensuring a successful journey to the afterlife. Used from about 1500 BCE onwards, the Book of the Dead was a collection of spells, passwords, and images for the deceased in the underworld written out on coffins and papyrus rolls (Figure 11.). Because it was written on papyrus, the Book of the Dead was significantly more affordable and accessible to the common public. With over 200 spells, however, the number of spells purchased depended on the needs and wealth of the buyer. The worst thing Egyptians believed could happen to the deceased was known as the "second death," in which the soul was killed and had no way of coming back. Thus, there would be no afterlife. Consequently, the Book of the Dead was meant to prevent this second death and provide instructions and spells on how to make it to the afterlife without any complications.

Figure 11. Papyrus page from the Book of the Dead, 18th dynasty; in the Egyptian Museum, Turin, Italy. ("Book of the Dead | Funerary Texts, Spells & Rituals | Britannica," 2024)

The most elaborate and most well-known spell in the Book of the Dead remains Spell 125, commonly known as the "Weighing of the Heart."[25] Spell 125 was intended to provide the deceased with a favorable judgment before the gods in the afterlife. It ensured that the deceased's heart, representing their conscience and morality, would be found pure and in balance with the feather of Ma'at, the goddess of justice and cosmic order. Written below is an excerpt from the spell translated by the University College London[26]:

[25] "Book of the Dead," Ucl.ac.uk, 2024, https://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums-static/digitalegypt/literature/religious/bd125a.html.
[26] "Book of the Dead | Funerary Texts, Spells & Rituals | Britannica," in Encyclopædia Britannica, 2024, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Book-of-the-Dead-ancient-Egyptian-text.

Address at arrival at the broad hall of the Two Goddesses of What is Right,
shielding N from all forbidden things that he has done and seeing the faces of the gods.
Hail great god, lord of the place of the Two Goddesses of What is Right.
I have come before you so that you may bring me to see your perfection.
I know you; I know your name,
I know the name of these 42 gods who are with you in this broad court of the Two Goddesses of What is Right,
who live on the henchmen of evil and eat of their blood
on that day of calculating characters in the presence of Wennefer.
See, your name is He of the two Daughters, he of the two Chants, lord of the Two Goddesses of What is Right,
See, I am come before you, I have brought What is Right to you, I have removed What is Wrong for you.
I have not impoverished the divine herd (people); I have committed no crime in place of What is Right;
I have not known (explored) nothingness; I have not done any evil
I have not made a daily start in labor over what I did

Spell 125 underscores the importance of moral integrity and ethical behavior in ancient Egyptian religion. It reflects the belief that a righteous life leads to a favorable outcome in the afterlife. More importantly, the spell provides valuable insights into the religious beliefs and values of ancient Egypt.

Conclusion

To conclude, funerary artifacts in ancient Egypt symbolized deep spiritual and cultural values that come in three categories of distinct purposes: to protect, to resurrect, and to communicate. For example, amulets were designed to protect the dead from evil forces and help ensure a safe journey to the afterlife. Symbolic of the rebirth, scarab beetles played a huge part in the resurrection process, signifying regeneration and journeying on of the soul to immortality. Lastly, funerary texts such as the Pyramid Texts and the Book of the Dead served as communicative tools to impart the most crucial knowledge as well as incantations in conducting existence in the afterlife. All these taken together reflect a holistic means toward death, and an indication of the quest for eternal life among the Egyptians, as beliefs in the metaphysical are weaved in it intricately. Understanding these categories actually endows us with a good understanding pertaining to the religion of ancient Egyptians and just how intricate their burial was, hence ensuring a smooth transition from life to death and beyond.

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