

The Symbolism of Heart Scenes in Ancient Egypt

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Abstract

Ancient Egyptians believed in life after death and the heart was the key to the afterlife. It was conceived as surviving death in the netherworld, where it gave evidence for, or against its possessor. It was thought that the heart was examined by Anubis and the deities during the weighing of the heart ceremony. If the heart weighed more than the *feather of M Aat* it was immediately swallowed by the monster *amam*.

The current study was undertaken to shed light on the symbolism of heart in Ancient Egyptian religion. To study the importance of heart in Ancient Egyptian conceptions. To spot light on the function of the heart scenes on the walls of Ancient Egyptian Monuments. To focus on the different types of heart scenes in the ancient Egyptian tombs during the New Kingdom and their symbolism. To spot light on the locations of heart scenes inside the ancient Egyptians tombs. To study the scenes of the heart inscribed on the walls on the Ancient Egyptians tombs at Thebes. To study the relation between the heart and the cult of god Osiris. To focus on the book of the Dead chapters dedicated to speak about the protection of the heart . To study the name of heart in hieroglyphs. To focus on the different expressions in the Egyptian language which incorporate the word *ib*.

The preliminary results indicated that heart scenes were illustrated in different places of ancient Egyptian New kingdom like the burial chamber and its chamber thereto. The heart is represented in the ritual scenes like the purification of the deceased and the funeral cortege. The heart sign, in these scenes, is held by the deceased, the deceased wife, the purification priest or the offering bearer. Heart was not depicted in daily life scenes in the Eighteenth dynasty private tombs at Thebes.

Key Words

Heart Scenes, Ancient Egypt, Religious Symbolism, Types of Heart Scenes, Private Tombs, New Kingdom, Thebes.