

Symbolism of Materials

Gold = divine and imperishable. = Flesh of gods, Hathor especially associated, called the Golden One often patroness of miners as Goddess of desert.

Silver -- bones of gods made of silver. Associated with moon. Thoth statues of baboons of silver.

Iron -- Prior to NK from meteors = Metal of Heaven. Used for amulets and other magical instruments like blades used during Opening of Mouth ceremonies.

Lead -- for magical plaques for mummies, love charms, captives. Unsure why, perhaps malleability, low melting point and mysterious heaviness suggested supernatural potency. For captives melting would be useful property in execration ceremonies.

Gemstones -- Serpentine = snake charms, Lapis = heavens, blue speckled with gold, carnelian = sun, jasper = blood. Others less clear, heart scarabs sometimes lapis, often out of green stone, perhaps for green = rebirth symbolism?

Hippo Ivory for magical protective wands.

Wood -- wood of coffin = Hathor/sycamore, womb of goddess to whom deceased returns in death for protection.

Wax -- extensively used in magic both funerary and everyday. Preservative qualities = defensive symbolism, combustibility = destructive symbolism, and malleability = productive symbolism. Produced by bees related to Re.

Mud -- Primeval substance, recalls original creation and cycle of life and fertility. Osiris/grain figures, birthing bricks, magical bricks, magical figurines of enemies and scorpions, etc.

Symbolism of Colors

Skin of figures, dress and accoutrements, backgrounds, etc., also color of individual hieroglyphs.

Red = fire and blood, life and regeneration, but also hostile desert, destructive forces aiding and opposing deceased. Connected to Seth, but also Sun and normal skin tone.

Blue = Heavens and water/primeval flood = life and rebirth, fertility - Nile gods colored blue. Blue also connected with Amun-Re so sometimes he and kings associated with him have this skin color.

Yellow = Eternal and imperishable = gold. Priests wearing Anubis mask in funerary rites may have colored their arms and legs yellow.

Green = Fertility and life in opposition to red = destruction. Afterlife = Field of Malachite. Osiris with green skin.

White = Cleanliness and purity = in clothes, esp. of priests, Merikare talks about wearing white sandals in service as priest.

Black = night and death = the Underworld. Also resurrection and life by corrolary. Black soil = fertility. Thus Osiris black skin for both symbolic reasons.

Numbers

2 = Duality, Maat and Isfet, Horus and Seth. North-South, East-West, Symmetry in general. Also Unity in unification of Duality in Two Lands.

3 = Plurality, Triads of deities, Father-Mother-Son/Daughter. 3 = plural.

4 = Totality, Completeness, 4 cardinal points, 4 canopic jars, ritual of driving four calves or shooting 4 targets.

7 = divine cows = sustaining powers of universe connected with Hathor, Maat and Re also have 7 bas or manifestations.

9 = Ennead = 3 groups of 3. Plurality of Pluralities = ultimate plurality, a great number or even all possible. Thus groups of Nine deities could represent all of the gods.

12 = also completeness, 12 hours of the night or a completion of pluralities.