



Gifts of the Nile: Ancient Egyptian Faience

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Created from common materials, but possessing the majesty of gold and semi-precious gems, the ceramic now known as faience was used by the ancient Egyptians for a variety of luxury objects. Dolls were fashioned from it, as were baby feeders decorated to magically protect mother and child. Faience could be shaped into mummy masks, amulets, chalices, bowls, inkwells, jewelry, tiles and inlays for furniture. Its great popularity could have been due to one particular characteristic: radiance and brilliance, to the Egyptians a perfect metaphor for life, death and rebirth. This work analyzes the significance of faience, and presents illustrations of nearly 200 pieces drawn from public and private collections in Europe and America. It shows how faience was used and produced, as well as its symbolic values and meanings.

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