





Scorpion and his wife labor in the lush landscape of the Fields of Iaru, or Fields of the Blessed (17). In the register above, the weighing of the Ma'at is central, one of the moments of the deceased's flight, and Anubis and his wife take their hands in adoration of a group of gods seated on a platform in the form of the lotus (for water in the houses above, the two gods, the Anubis), seated in the boat while one balances weighing him.

dead who could travel with Re in his day and nighttime boats. Others deal with amulets, detailing their colors and where they should be placed on the mummy for the protection of the deceased on his perilous journey to the next world.

#### Wighing of the Heart

One of the single most important chapters of the *Book of the Dead*'s 132 (according to a modern numbering system), the Weighing of the Heart. This represents the culmination of the deceased's journey to the Netherworld. After passing many obstacles, he was imagined to reach the Hall of Judgment. Led by the falcon-headed Horus, he was brought to face Osiris, often accompanied by his and Nephthys, in the presence of 41 gods. The deceased addresses each of these gods in turn, naming them and stating that he has done no wrong in his life: "O Embreter of Feet, who comes forth from Khon-Ahu: I have not done violent robbery;" or "O Overthrower, who comes forth from Canopus: I have not trespassed."

After this "Negative Confession," Horus would take the deceased's heart and hand it to the jackal-headed god Anubis to weigh on a scale against the ostrich feather that represented *ma'at*, loosely translatable as justice and truth. The result was recorded by the hawk-headed Thoth. If the pans balanced, the deceased would be welcomed by Osiris and the other gods into the company of the blessed dead, and could move on to eternal existence in the Fields of Iaru. If the scale did not balance, the heart would be fed to a monstrous creature named Ammit, and the amorette deceased would be thrown into the lake of fire to die a second time, this time forever.

The game *senet* was a popular pastime, known as early as the 3rd Dynasty, in which opponents threw gaming sticks to guide the moves of their pieces around a board with 30 squares. By the end of the 18th Dynasty, this was evolving into a highly symbolic game, in which the deceased could play against an invisible opponent (perhaps his soul), in order to reach the afterlife safely. From this time on, gameboards have images and inscriptions in their squares which transform them into miniature models of the Netherworld, with the squares representing important locations and events from the Netherworld Books.

#### Fields of Iaru

Once the deceased had passed the test of the Weighing of the Heart, he or she could proceed to their eternal life in the Fields of Iaru (*Rastu*), also known as the Fields of the Blessed. Here, forever in the prime of life, they would enjoy an idyllic existence, surrounded by abundant food and drink, free of all cares and responsibilities.

#### THE BOOKS OF THE UNDERWORLD

The *Book of the Amduat*, *Book of Gates*, *Book of the Earth* and the *Book of Caverns* all focus on the journey of the sun god through the Netherworld during the 12 hours of the night. In contrast to the *Book of the Dead*, which is an illustrated collection of spells, these books are highly annotated depictions of the landscape and inhabitants of the netherworld itself. The sun god was imagined to grow old during the day and then die at dusk and descend to the netherworld. There he is shown,

