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Symbols, Signs & Flags

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The hippopotamus is an extremely powerful animal, both on land and in the water. Its massive size and fierce demeanor, yet also its association with fertility, all contribute to its potent symbolic meaning.

One location where the hippopotamus held powerful meaning was in ancient Egypt, since they frequented the banks of the River Nile. The goddess Taweret, who presided over childbirth, was strongly associated with the creature and



was depicted as part human and part hippopotamus in varying capacities. The goddess Rerat, who was also associated with the hippopotamus (and physically combined with the animal), was one of the guardians of the realm of the dead, which was known in ancient Egypt as Duat or Tuat. Given the nature of the hippopotamus, these associations are easy to understand; whether it's protecting their young (childbirth) or defending their territory (guardian), hippopotami are highly aggressive and dangerous creatures- even towards other top predators such as crocodiles- so it's no wonder that the Egyptians came to revere them.

The hippopotamus also plays a role in Jewish tradition. The Old Testament's Book of Job describes two immensely powerful creatures known as the Behemoth and the Leviathan, which are traditionally said to hold dominion over land and sea, respectively. As one of

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What's This?

the largest and most powerful animals known in ancient times, the hippopotamus was commonly believed to be a symbolic representation of the Behemoth. In some cases, the crocodile filled this role, but the symbolism was clearly the same, regardless.

Graphical characteristics:

Asymmetric, Open shape, Monochrome, Contains curved lines, Has no crossing lines.

Categories: Animal Symbolism (/category/13), Egyptian Hieroglyphs (/category/14), Religious Symbols (/category/5).

Hippopotamus (/symbol/2238) is part of the Jewish Symbols (/group/3) group.

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More symbols in Jewish Symbols (/group/3):

Jewish signs and symbols. read more » (/group/3)





More symbols in **Egyptian Hieroglyphs** (/category/14):

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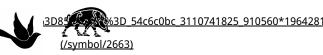
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