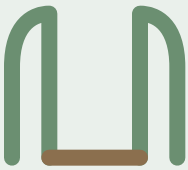
The Egyptian Ka: Museum Spotter's Guide

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1. Signs to look for



The ka sign (Gardiner D28): two arms raised, palms out. Look for it in personal names, in royal names inside cartouches, and on top of the head of ka statues.

The offering formula: often the top line of a false door or stela. It opens with hetep-di-nesu, "an offering which the king gives," and ends "for the ka of" the owner, followed by a name.

2. Ka, ba and akh in one line each

Concept	Shown as	In one line
Ka	Raised arms, or a matching figure	Vital force made with you; stays with the tomb and needs offerings
Ba	Bird with a human head	Your power to move; flies out by day, returns at night
Akh	Crested ibis sign	"Effective one"; the goal, formed when ba and ka reunite
Shut	Black silhouette	The shadow; goes out with the ba
Ib	Heart	Character and memory; weighed in the judgment
Ren	The written name	Identity; saying it aloud keeps the person remembered

3. Famous ka objects

Object	Where	What to notice
Ka statue of King Hor Awibre	Egyptian Museum, Cairo, JE 30948	Ka arms on the head; found inside its own wooden shrine at Dahshur
Seated statue of King Djoser	From the serdab at Saqqara, JE 49158	Oldest known life-size Egyptian statue; made to house the king's ka
Soul house (offering tray)	British Museum, EA32610	Modeled bread, fish and meat: food for the ka that never runs out
Divine Birth scenes of Hatshepsut	Temple at Deir el-Bahari, Luxor	Khnum shapes the queen and her ka; Heqet offers the ankh

4. Gallery checklist

[ ] Find the ka sign in a personal or royal name [ ] Find an offering formula on a stela or false door

[ ] Find a false door, and look for the name of its owner [ ] Find an offering table or soul house

[ ] Find a ba bird on a coffin or papyrus [ ] Read one ancient name aloud, as Egyptian tomb texts asked visitors to do

Museum: _____ Date: _____ My favorite object: _____

Sources: Encyclopaedia Britannica; Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; Bolshakov (1997); Global Egyptian Museum; British Museum. The ka is presented here as an ancient belief. There is no evidence it exists as a physical energy (NCCIH).