

# Two Iron Age Scarab Seals from Khallet el-Qa<sup>s</sup>aqir – el-Kom village

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The two scarabs were discovered in a tomb in Khallet el-Qa<sup>s</sup>aqir near el-Kom village (sea level 425m, E-146590 N- 104440), about 13 km south west of Hebron during a salvage excavation carried out by the Department of Palestinian Antiquities and Cultural Heritage on 15 June 2014. The current location of the objects is in Hebron Antiquity Department, closet 5, shelf 3, case 61. On 11 June 2015 they were made available for study.<sup>1</sup>

## 1. *Archeological context*

The tomb (length 1.80 cm, width 1.60 cm, height 90-100 cm) in which the two scarabs were found, has revealed skulls, bone remains belonging to 4 persons suggesting that either it has been functioned as collective burial or reused many times. About 60 archeological finds including 53 complete objects, mainly pottery vessels as well as beads, a small Egyptian statue and the two scarabs under discussion, these finds can be dated to the end of the Late Bronze II Age – Iron Age (Unpublished preliminary report issued by the Department of Antiquities in Hebron, July 2015).

## 2. *Stylized features and inscribed elements*

The two scarabs were finely made of bone and are in a good state of preservation. They have no coating or glazing. Both objects have been longitudinally drilled through suggesting that they had rings which were for some reason went missing. The types of heads, backs, and sides of the scarabs reflect different designs (see below). The features<sup>2</sup> inscribed on the bases of the two objects are:

- Fauna motif of two walking lions on the base of HB 5086.
- Hieroglyphic signs on the base of HB 5087.

### 1. *HB 5086*

Object: scarab, E2/I/e11, oval base, border line, partially broken, hollowed out engraving. Material: bone. Dimensions: 17 x 12 x 5 mm.

Base: in horizontal arrangement two loins<sup>3</sup> *m3j* (§ 536 9E1, 536–542) or two felidae walking parallel to each other are represented with closed mouths, see Keel 1997, OBO.SA 13 Afek Nr. 41; Akko Nr. 91, 126; for two walking lions with four-legged animal in front, see Keel 2010, OBO.SA 29 Bet Shemesh Nr. 11; Keel 1994, OBO.SA 135 Pl. 8 Nr. 10, Pl. 10 Nr. 22. For two lions with an archer in front, see Keel

1. I thank Mr. J. Yasin, the director of excavations and museums at the Department of Palestinian Antiquities and Cultural Heritage who granted me an access to study the two objects. My thanks should also go to Kh. Khanfar, who has given hints about the existence of the two pieces and to I. Iqtet for preparing the drawings.

2. The description of the types of heads, backs and sides as well as the inscribed features here is following Tufnell's classification of designs and motifs 1984:32–38, 115–150, that has been adopted and developed by Keel 1995, *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel, Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit, Einleitung* (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis, Series Archaeologica 10) (= OBO.SA) 10:41–62, 158–246; and Keel 2013, OBO.SA 33:xv.

3. For lions on MB stamps, see (Keel – Uehlinger 1992, § 12). It is known as class 9E (Tufnell 1984, II:133ff., Pl. 40; Ben-Tor 2007, OBO.SA 27:97, 177, Pl. 100).

1997 OBO.SA 13 Akk Nr. 89. The tails of the two lions are raised over their backs and sharply bent towards the front. For a single lion with the same representation, see Keel 2010, OBO.SA 31 Tell el-Fara South Nr. 881; Egger – Keel 2006, OBO.SA 25 Pella Nr. 67; Tall as-Sa'idiya Nr. 6, 18, see also Hornung – Staehelin 1976:387 Nr. B 83. In front of the lion figures there are remnants of a deep vertical scratch which is probably part of a Maat-feather “truth” (§ 462)<sup>4</sup> see Keel 2013, OBO.SA 33 Tel Gamma Nr. 71, Keel 1994, 29f., Pl. 8,11, or part of a *nb*-sign “lord” (§ 458) see Keel 1997, OBO.SA 13 Achsib Nr. 15, 104, Akko Nr. 139, or *j* “reed panicle/leaf” (§ 456).<sup>5</sup>

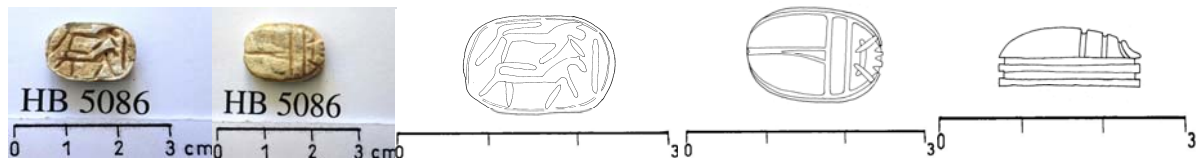
Displaying apotropaic potent and powerful animals which are symbolically representing the pharaoh (see Keel 2010, OBO 29 Bet Mirsim Nr. 99) on the base of the scarab was intended to enhance apotropaic power of the amulet. *m3j* = “lion” and is an acrophony for *m* and the vertical scratch is a *nb* an acrophony for *n*, thus we have *jmn* the name of the god “Amun” (see with crocodile Keel 1997, OBO 13 Achsib Nr. 15, 104).

Date: 20–21<sup>th</sup> dynasty (ca. 1130–945 B.C.).

Find's context: tomb, Khalet el-Qa'aqir – el-Kom village.

Collection: Department of Palestinian Antiquities and Cultural Heritage, HB 5086.

Bibliography: Previously unpublished.



## 2. HB 5087

Object: scarab, D5/II/d5, oval base, border line, hollowed out engraving. Material: bone. Dimensions: 14 x 10 x 7 mm.

Base: four hieroglyphic signs have been vertically carved on the base: an overturned<sup>6</sup> *nfr* “perfect” (§ 459),<sup>7</sup> below it there is *z3* “goose, flying pintail duck”<sup>8</sup> which indicates “son” (§ 465 (Gardiners<sup>9</sup> 39, 40)) with the wings raised high.<sup>10</sup> On the upper right side of the base there is another sign, it is *hz*-vessel “favor, praise” (§ 455 (Gardiners W14)),<sup>11</sup> see Keel 2010, OBO.SA 29 Ekron Nr. 6. A lizard, gecko<sup>12</sup> (II) occupies

4. Or traces of what could indicate something being hunted (?) (see Rowe 1936, Pl. 21 Nr. 851). For two figures of four-legged animals in similar setting but in combination with a griffin (see Giveon 1985, OBO.SA 3 Gezer Nr. 58).

5. For representation of a single lion with vertical *j* “reed panicle/leaf” in front, see Keel 1997, OBO.SA 13 Achsib Nr. 104; 2010, OBO.SA 29 Bet Shemesh Nr. 12.

6. For a pair of overturned *nfr*-signs, see Keel 1997, OBO.SA 13 Tell el-<sup>c</sup>Agul Nr. 12. For a combination of *nfr* and *z3* see Keel 2010, OBO.SA 29 Betanien Nr. 9, Ekron Nr. 36; 2013, OBO.SA 33 Geser Nr. 362. For *nfr* with *z3* and *r<sup>c</sup>* see Keel 2010, OBO.SA 29 Bet Mirsim Nr. 70, Tell el-Fara South Nr. 148, 411.

7. Or *mj* “like” (Gardiners W19), which it could be read as *mrj* “beloved”, for the combination of *mj* (= *mrj*) and goose, see Keel 1997, OBO 13 Ashkelon Nr. 10.

8. A pintail duck (Gardiners G38) see Keel 2010, OBO.SA 29 Bet Shean Nr. 238. For a pintail duck spreading wings on sides and *nfr*, see Keel 2013, OBO.SA 33 Tel Gamma Nr. 159. For a bird spreading its wings, See Keel 2010, OBO.SA 29 Bet Mirsim Nr. 80, also 2010, OBO.SA 29 Bet Shean Nr. 51.

9. Gardiner’s sign list of Egyptian Hieroglyphs. <http://www.ancientegyptonline.co.uk/Gardiner-sign-list.html>, accessed 20 August 2015.

10. Duck spreads wings low, for *z3* and *r<sup>c</sup>* and uraeus, see Keel 2010, OBO.SA 31 Tel el-Fara South Nr. 608.

11. (Keel 1995, OBO 10:171; “praise” Hornung – Staehelin 1976:169 and Nr. 713, 767, 805, 807).

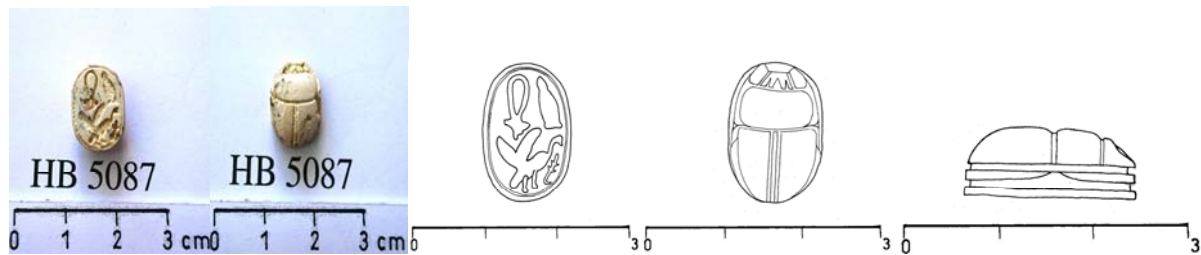
the lower left side of the base; it means ʕ3 “rich, plentiful” (Hornung – Staehlen 1976:109f.). See Keel 2010, OBO.SA 29 Dor Nr. 35, Bet Shean Nr. 225; 2010, OBO.SA 31 Tel el-Farʕa South Nr. 354, 452.<sup>13</sup> It may read *nfr/mrj z3* “perfect/beloved of, (is) the son”.

Date: 20–22<sup>th</sup> dynasty (ca. 1190–713 B.C.).

Find’s context: tomb, Khalet el-Qaʕaqir – el-Kom village.

Collection: Department of Palestinian Antiquities and Cultural Heritage, HB 5087.

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12. This was classified as class ID by Ward 1978:51f., for a lizard in combination with a human figure (Ward 1978, Pl. 5 Nr. 145, Pl. 6 Nr. 160–63).

13. See Petrie 1925, Pl. 18 Nr. 1401; Hornung – Staehlen 1976, Pl. 90 Nr. 805, 807.

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