Two previously unpublished scarab seals\(^2\) have been found in a tomb during local construction works in Jabal \textit{El-Tawahin} grid reference 155700/98400 near El-Fawwar Refugee Camp south of Hebron in 2002. The two objects were given to me and hosted in the Palestinian Institute of Archaeology at Birzeit University.\(^3\) They will lately be given numbers. The archaeological context of the two scarabs is unclear, and no associated material has been indicated, thus other criteria like typology, iconography, and comparisons with published parallels will be used to make stylistic analysis and to date them. The typological study of the two scarabs was based on the features (the shape of head, back, side, dimensions and the base design) created by W. Ward and O. Tufnell and applied for Middle Bronze II scarabs in their work \textit{Studies on Scarabs Seals} (2 volumes), 1978, 1984, and Keel, 1995, 41–56.\(^4\)

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\(^1\) The site Jabal \textit{El-Tawahin} grid reference 155700/98400 which is locally called Kherbit \textit{Umm Et-Tawahin}, has Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman occupational levels indicated by pottery sherds and a fortress. The site was not excavated and the survey results showed no remains from the Bronze age (Greenberg/Keinan, 2009, \textit{N}^2 5719). This might mean either that the site has Bronze remains but still buried below the surface, or the tombs where the two scarabs have been found belong to Fawwar E site grid reference 156500/98500 north of Jabal \textit{El-Tawahin} which displays EB1/EB3, MBIIa and MBIIb remains like cairn, massive wine/oil press and limekiln (ibid \textit{N}^2 5716).

\(^2\) I would like to express my deep gratitude to Professor Dr. Othmar Keel, Department of Biblical Studies, Universität Freiburg (Switzerland) for the reading of the manuscript of this paper and for the many valuable comments. My thanks also go to Professor Dr. Karl Jansen-Winkeln, Institute of Egyptology at the Freie Universität Berlin for granting me a help and access to the most important literature.

\(^3\) I thank Dr. Hamed Salem from the Department of History and Archaeology at Birzeit University for granting me a permission to study them and to Mr. Ibrahim Qtait for drawing up and photographing the material.

Hebron 1

Object: Scarab, B6/0/d5, the type belongs to group D. Ben-Tor listed it under the heading “Other early Canaanite features” (2007, pl. 72,9. 12. 14. 16), well preserved except the rim of the base is slightly damaged, the engraving is linear (§ 326f.). Material: steatite with white coating (§ 386–390). Dimensions: 18 × 13 × 8 mm.

Base: Frame of two oblong hooked scrolls on each side; they are connected at the bottom but stay open at the top (§ 510), the two upper scrolls of the framing end in lotus flowers (§ 429–430); that is unusual; there are scroll borders on Egyptian private name seals which are closed at the top but the scroll before the closing line ends in a lotus flower (Martin 1971, pl. 4,28 and 34); there are scroll borders of round scrolls ending at the top in a kind of wîs-sceptres (§ 463) or in uraei (§ 522) as Tell el-ʿAĝul N 174 and 703; for a certain predilection of lotus flowers on the back of early series scarabs see Keel, 2010, Bet-Mirsim N 50; Tufnell, 1970, 96, fig. 1; except the ending in lotus flowers the scroll frame is very similar to the framing of scarabs with the names of Hyksos kings; cf. Tell el-ʿAĝul N 128 (Aamu), 379 and 834 (Sheshi), 1035 (Maaibre; cf. Tufnell, 1984, pl. 32,2364–2367); the design has to be situated between the just mentioned Egyptian private name seals and the Hyksos kings. The scroll framing includes a column of hieroglyphs or rather pseudo hieroglyphs: a tiny disc, probably a ṣr (§ 461), two n (§ 458), ṣd (§ 449), again n or maybe mn (§ 457), a kind of cable (cf. Tell el-ʿAĝul N 887) one more n and a nbw-“gold”-sign (§ 458); for similar columns of pseudo script on scarabs of the early series see Tell el-ʿAĝul N 402 and 981; Jericho: Kirkbride, 1965, 626, fig. 294,13; local Canaanite product.

Date: Early MB IIB (ca. 1700–1600).

Find’s context: Unknown.

Collection: Birzeit University, Palestinian Institute of Archaeology.

Bibliography: Previously unpublished.
Hebron 2

Object: Scarab, D6/0, with reddish brown stripe, see § 98/e9, one part of the upper or fore part respectively is broken, otherwise it is well preserved, the engraving is linear (§ 326f). Material: steatite with white coating (§ 386–390). Dimensions: 19 × 14 × 10 mm.

Base: The space is divided by a small bar into two parts; on the bar is based a $dd$-pillar (§ 451) flanked by two sedge plants; their shape is typical for the late Middle Kingdom (Ben-Tor, 2007, pl. 10,1–13); above the $dd$-pillar is a tiny disc, probably a $r'$ (§ 461); the lower half of the base is filled by the so-called single line thread, derived from the hieroglyph V16 with the meaning “protection” (§ 465 and 495–496; for parallels see Ben-Tor, 2007, pl. 13,1–23, particularly No 7); for the combination of a hieroglyph flanked by sedge signs above and the single thread motif below see Ben-Tor, 2007, pl. 10,9–10 and 13,8; the piece was made in Egypt and imported to Palestine.

All three elements were carved over a flat surface represented by double straight and closed lines, probably indicating “$ta$”-sign “earth, land” (§ 463). It also separates them from lower register. For parallels (cf. Keel, 1997, 100, fig. 5 (= Tufnell 1984 II pl. 10, 1513)), (Keel, 1997, 436, fig. 977 (= Tufnell, 1984 II, pl. 14,1616)).
Date: 12th–13th dynasties (ca. 1818–1700), beginning with Amenemhet III.
Find’s context: Unknown.
Collection: Birzeit University, Palestinian Institute of Archaeology.
Bibliography: Previously unpublished.
Bibliography


— 1973: The Middle Bronze Age Scarabs from Burial on the Mound of Megiddo. Levant 5, 69–82