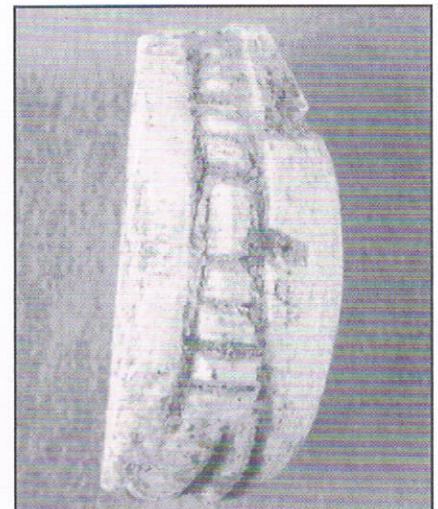
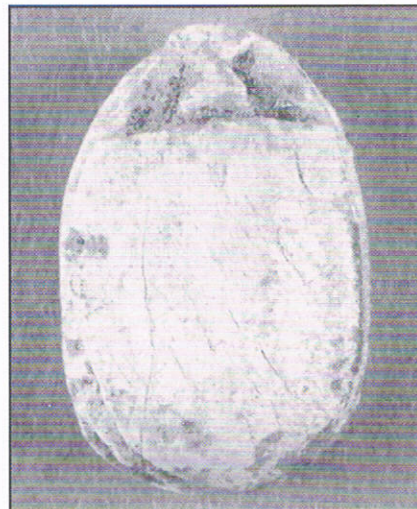
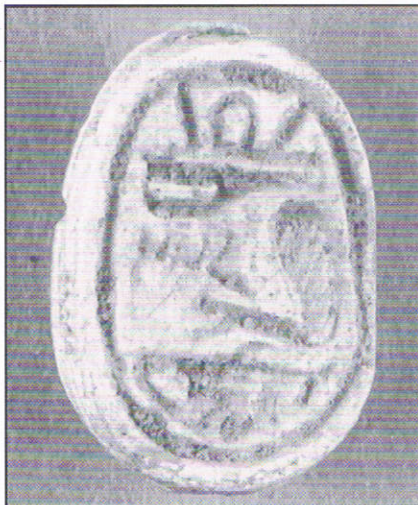


Henri Charles Loffet

EXAMINATION OF SEVERAL SCARABS FROM SIDON 2002 SEASON OF EXCAVATION



No. Δ 4053/868


Material: Faience or light coloured frit.

Provenance: Saïda/Sidon excavations. Jar burial 20. Found with the skeleton of an infant 3 months old.

Dimensions: 1.3 x 0.9 x 1 cm.

The scarab was placed near the elbow of the infant.

On the base, completely enclosed within an incised line, are seen, from top to bottom, an

'*h*tp' sign, a serpent  facing right and apparently positioned on an '*nb*' sign. Behind this serpent, on the left of the base, one or more incised signs (?) can be discerned, but it was not possible to determine them precisely.

Being found in a funerary context, the phrase might nonetheless be understood to mean:

'*h*tp *i*'rt *nb*' = 'may Iaret be fully satisfied'.

The association of the goddess 'Iaret (better known as Ureus, the Latinized form of her name) with the funerary domain and thought of ancient Egypt is well attested. From as early as Pyramid Texts she is ubiquitous in her role of protectress of the pharaoh¹. She is found again in the Sarcophagus Texts (at § 397), where she is invoked at the moment the deceased presents himself to the ferryman Aken to be taken to the eastern bank and to find his father again in the hereafter². In the Book of the Dead (New Kingdom version) this goddess is also mentioned, in Chapter 142, where she takes the expanded name 'Iaret-who-resides-in-the-temple'. Chapter 142 is placed in the tomb of the deceased so that he may know all the names of Osiris and may thus be protected by Iaret when: '*he walks long and tirelessly [and he] goes out to the surface by day in all the forms in which he wishes to*'³.

- 1 L. Speelers, *Vocabulaire*, vol. 2 of *Les Textes des pyramides Égyptiennes* (Brussels, 1924), p. 6 for references to the relevant chapters.
- 2 P. Barguet, *Les Textes des sarcophages égyptiens du Moyen Empire* (Paris, 1986), p. 349.
- 3 P. Barguet, *Le Livre des morts des anciens Égyptiens* (Paris, 1967), p. 188.

No.
 Δ 4071/870
 Material:
 Faience or
 light-
 coloured
 frit.

Provenance: Saïda/Sidon excavations. Jar burial 22. Found with the skeleton of an infant 3 months old, together with scarab no. Δ 4077.

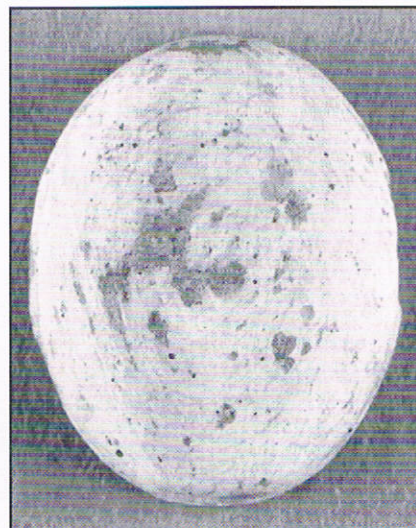
Dimensions: 1.6x1.3x0.6cm.

This scarab was found near the knee of the infant.

On the base, whose inscribed surface is completely enclosed within a fine incised line, is a well drawn 'nfr' sign within a rectangle realized by two vertical incised lines connecting the sides of the surrounding line.

On either side of the 'nfr' sign is a papyrus flower in full bloom: 'w3d' apparently blooming between two knolls. These may very well represent the two horizons of the universe or the mountain of the necropolis.

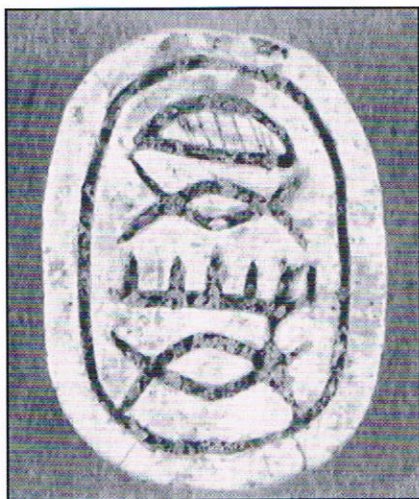
The funerary symbolism of the papyrus stem and flower is well attested in the religious beliefs of the Egyptians and of various civilizations that have embraced these funerary beliefs, such as those of the Lebanon and Phoenicia. The most concrete form taken by this symbolism is in the colonette-wadj amulet, which represents just such a stem surmounted by a papyrus flower in full bloom, and which the deceased wore on a chain round his neck. The symbolism




this represents is that of the return of young greenery, of eternal youth, of the integrity of the deceased in the hereafter. Cited earlier in the Sarcophagus Texts (§ 106)⁴, it is invoked several times over in the New Kingdom Books of the Dead, in Chapters 105, 159 and 160⁵. It is not uncommon to find one or more bouquets of papyrus flowers next to the deceased in Egypt, symbolizing the triumph of eternal life over death⁶.

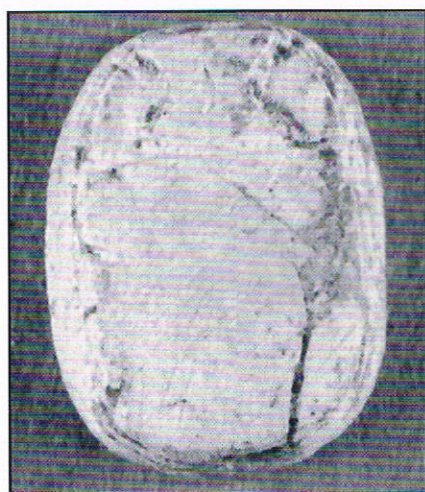
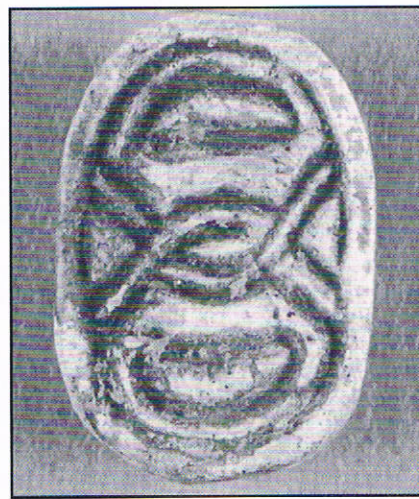
In a funerary context such as this, the symbolism on this scarab can only represent a hope for the eternal life of this infant. That is why I assume that the significance attributable to this short text cannot be anything other than '*May eternal youth be achieved (for him)!.*'


- 4 P. Barguet, *op. cit.*, p. 144.
- 5 P. Barguet, *op. cit.*, pp. 140–141, 226, 227.
- 6 J. Yoyotte, *Dictionnaire de la civilisation égyptienne* (Paris, 1959), pp. 211–212.

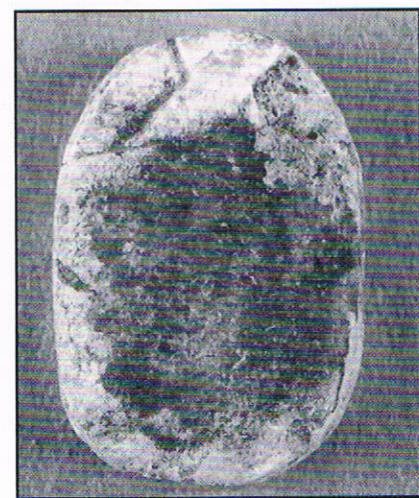


funerary object may be understood as: 'may he remain in good health, may he keep his integrity and be completely safe'.

7 This is actually a simplification of the sign V 26:  in A. H. Gardiner's Sign-List. This writing should be compared with the cursive writing of ancient Egypt: the hieratic. This sign is often found written in this manner on small objects, such as amulets, the bezels of rings and, naturally, scarabs.



8 This again is a sign in sketchy form corresponding to l' Y 5:  in A. H. Gardiner's Sign-List. The remarks in note 7 apply here as well. For examples of this writing on scarabs, see J. Vercoutter, *Les objets égyptiens, et égyptisants du mobilier funéraire carthaginois*, (Paris, 1945), nos. 13, 168, 225, 682. For a study of this form of writing, see S. Cauville, D. Devauchelle and J.-C. Grenier, *Catalogue de la fonte hiéroglyphique de l'imprimerie de l'I.F.A.O.*, rev. ed. (Le Caire, 1983), p. 466, no. 9. *Valeurs phonétiques des signes hiéroglyphiques d'époque gréco-romaine*, vol. 5 (Montpellier, 1990), p. 822, no. 53.



No. Δ 4077/870

Material: Faïence or light-coloured frit.

Provenance: Saïda/Sidon excavations. Jar burial 22. Found with the skeleton of an infant 3 months old, together with scarab no. Δ 4049/870.

Dimensions: 1 x 0.7 x 0.4 cm.

This scarab was found near the knee of the infant.

On the base, completely enclosed within an incised line, are seen, from top to bottom, a 'd' sign,⁷ an 'mn' ⁸ sign, another 'd' sign and finally an 'nb' sign⁹.

The hope expressed by this

9 For the adverbial sense of this morpheme, see D. Meeks, *Année lexicographique*, vol. 2 of *Egypte ancienne* (Paris, 1978), p. 190, no. 78.2046. For an example, see *Dendera VIII*, pp. 118, § 7.



No.
Δ 4082/890

Material:
Faience or
light-
coloured
frit.

Provenance: Saïda/Sidon excavations.

Found on a floor surface.

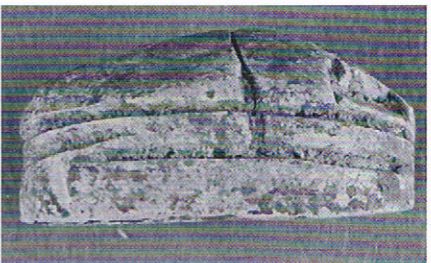
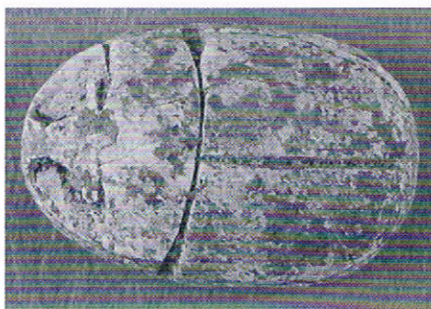
Dimensions: 1.6x1.1x0.7 cm.

The interlaced design on the base is completely enclosed within an incised line. This scarab may be regarded as a true seal that belonged to a merchant or shopkeeper.

It is of a type already known from an example at the Musée Calvet at Avignon¹⁰.

It should probably be dated to the Hyksos period, that is to Middle Bronze II C (c. 1650–1600 BC).

10 S. Aufrère, 'Égypte & Provence: Civilisation, survivances et "cabinet de curiosité" exh. cat. Musée Calvet, November 1985 – March 1986 (Avignon, 1985), p. 133, no. 21 (Inv. no. 22 032^{es}).



No. Δ 4087/893

Material: Faience or light-
coloured frit

Provenance; Saïda/Sidon excavations. **Found on a floor surface.**


Dimensions: 1.5 x 1 x 0.8 cm.

This scarab, whose base is completely surrounded by an incised line, may be an invocation of a well known Egyptian deity: 'Wenen-nefer',¹¹ the owner of the scarab putting himself under the protection of the deity, unless this is, quite simply the owner's anthroponym¹². In that case, this scarab should be considered as a true seal once used by a merchant or shopkeeper. The only peculiarity in the writing on this object is in the way

in which the two signs for:

~~~~~ = 'n' (N 35 in Gardiner's Sign-List), located between the sign of the crou-

ching hare:  = 'wnn' and

the sign:  = 'nfr' are written. In fact, this style of writing is characteristic of the writing on small surfaces during the Middle Kingdom and the Second Intermediate Period<sup>13</sup>.

11 This is the name given to Osiris in his aspect of Sovereign of the Kingdom of the Dead. See J. Vandier, *La Religion égyptienne* (Mana), (Paris, 1949), pp. 188–189. S. Rossini and R. Schumann-Antelme, *Nétér: Dieux d'Égypte*, (Lavaur, 1992), pp. 146–150, § 43.

12 H. Ranke, *Die ägyptischen Personennamen*, vol. 1 (Glückstadt, 1935), p. 79, no. 19. This anthroponym is attested from the Old Kingdom. The Graeco-Romans were to translate this epithet of Osiris as 'Onophri/Onnophris'; later, it was to pass into Byzantine Christian hagiography under the name of 'Saint Onophrios/Onophrius'; his veneration in Egypt and Nubia is attested by the frescoes in the cathedral of Faras. M. Rassart-Debergh, 'Palmiers et arbres de vie', *Le Monde de la Bible* 116 (January-February 1999), p. 56.

13 There are numerous examples of this writing in G.T. Martin, *Administrative and Private-Name Seals Principally of the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period* (Oxford, 1971). *Idem*, 'Private-Name Seals in the Alnwick Castle Collection', *Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts: Abteilung Kairo* 35 (1979), pp. 217–219. W.C. Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt, Part I: From the Earliest Times to the End of the Middle Kingdom* (New York, 1968), p. 343, fig. 226. I. Vodoz, *Les Scarabées gravés du Musée d'art et d'histoire de Genève*, (AE H. 6) (Geneva, 1978), pp. 13, 122 notes 2



# EXAMINATION OF SEVERAL SCARABS FROM SIDON

and 3. R. Weill considers that this form of writing is later than the reign of Sesostris III. See R. Weill, *La Fin du Moyen Empire égyptien* (Paris,

1918), p. 250. In fact, it is now known that it appeared during the XII dynasty.

14 M. C. Guidotti and E. Leospo, *La collezione egizia del Civico museo archeologico di Como* (Como, 1994), p. 71 (L24), fig. 75, Inv. no. ED 231. This scarab is, however, here dated to the New Kingdom.

15 Is not the Egyptian funerary scarab the symbolic reflection of the 'principle of eternal return' hoped for by the deceased and, for some among them, the bearer of Chapter XXX of the Book of the Dead, who thus prevents the heart of this same deceased from bearing witness against him at the moment of the judgement of Osiris? J. Yoyotte, *op. cit.* p. 259.

There is a scarab that bears the same text at the Archaeological Museum in Como, in Italy<sup>14</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

Except for no. Δ 4082/890, which can indubitably be dated to the Hyksos period, that is to Middle Bronze II C (c. 1650–1600 BC), on the grounds of their typology and their inscriptions all the other scarabs examined here should be dated to a period that lies between the XII and the XIII dynasties, that is to Middle Bronze II A (c. 1991–1600 BC). Two of the scarabs could well be true seals (nos. Δ 4082/890 and Δ 4087/893), while the three others (nos. Δ 4053/868, Δ 4071/870 and Δ 4077) may with a high degree of probability be regarded as funerary scarabs, in view of their having been found in graves and in view of their inscriptions<sup>15</sup>.