Two Royal-Name Scarabs of King Amenemhat II from Dahshur

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Two amethyst royal-name scarabs of very fine workmanship were found among the jewelry of Queen Weret II (ca. 1850 B.C.), who was buried in the pyramid complex of Senwosret III at Dahshur (Figures 1–8; Colorplate 1).\(^1\) Noted for his military campaigns and building activities, Senwosret III, a fifth king of Dynasty 12 (ca. 1878–1870 B.C.), was one of the most distinguished rulers of the Middle Kingdom (ca. 2040–1650 B.C.). His funerary complex at Dahshur (Figure 9) consisted of a main pyramid, a pyramid temple, and small pyramids of queens and other female members of the royal family. Pyramid 9 contained the burial remains of Queen Weret II (Figures 10–12), which include fragmentary inscriptions identifying her as the king’s wife. The large dimensions of her tomb and its location under the king’s pyramid suggest that she was the king’s main consort.\(^3\)

The queen’s jewelry deposit was discovered at the pyramid complex in 1994 during excavations directed by Dieter Arnold for The Metropolitan Museum of Art.\(^4\) The jewelry was found in a small chamber cut into the east wall of the shaft leading to both the queen’s burial chamber and her ritual south tomb (Figure 11). At the east end of the chamber’s north wall was a 53-centimeter-wide niche with a pit in the floor that contained the jewelry; the niche was sealed with a vertical limestone block at its entrance and a horizontal limestone block that covered the soil-filled pit (Figures 11[a], 13, 14). No identifiable remains of a box or other container for the objects were located. Because all of the original string had completely decayed, the jewelry was mixed with the pit’s soil in disarray.\(^5\)

Placement of a royal jewelry deposit at the bottom of a shaft is unique and probably accounts for its survival, since the tomb robbers who pillaged the rest of the queen’s burial would not have thought to look there for valuables. Judging from the limited evidence available, it seems that such royal jewelry was at that time in Egyptian history either laid on the mummy itself or put in containers in the burial chamber or an annex room.\(^6\) An empty pit also filled with soil—but lacking any remains of objects—was found in Queen Weret II’s south tomb and may have been the original resting place of the deposit (Figure 11[1]). It is possible that when alterations were undertaken in the south tomb, the queen’s jewelry was moved for safekeeping to the chamber cut into the bottom of the shaft.\(^7\)

Many questions persist as to the original arrangement of the jewelry elements.\(^8\) Now on display in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, the pieces have been reconstructed; the two amethyst scarabs under discussion here, however, remain as individual items. As a group, Queen Weret II’s jewelry conforms to our knowledge of the types of objects placed in burials of royal women in Dynasty 12. They display the same mastery of manufacturing techniques, choice of precious materials, and extraordinary beauty noted by William Haycs in his discussion of the large collection of Middle Kingdom jewelry at The Metropolitan Museum of Art,\(^9\) which includes an impressive selection of royal jewelry of the type found in the deposit of Queen Weret II, some of which is included in the discussion below (see Figures 20–22).

Almost identical in size, features, and designs, the two royal-name scarabs constitute a nearly perfect pair; both are inscribed with a name of King Amenemhat II (ca. 1849–1843 B.C.). Scarab A (Figures 1–4, Colorplate 1) bears the king’s throne name, nsw-h3w-r; scarab B (Figures 5–8, Colorplate 1), the king’s birth name, jmn-m-h2.t. Both names are preceded by the royal title nfr nfr (perfect god) and are enclosed in a distinct variation (see discussion below) of a scroll border.\(^10\) Small gold caps enclose both ends of the holes on both scarabs, showing signs of wear that suggest the scarabs were originally strung on gold wires and most likely worn as rings (see Figures 17–19). The
Figure 1. Scarab A from the treasure of Queen Weret II from Dahshur (excavation 1994.1078/1), ca. 1850 B.C. Amethyst, L. 2.56 cm, W. 1.64 cm, H. 1.19 cm. Egyptian Museum, Cairo, 98778A. See also Colorplate I.

Figure 2. Base of the scarab in Figure 1, inscribed with the throne name of King Amenemhat II.

Figure 3. Head of the scarab in Figure 1.

Figure 4. Side view of the scarab in Figure 1.

Figure 5. Scarab B from the treasure of Queen Weret II from Dahshur (excavation 1994.1078/2), ca. 1850 B.C. Amethyst, L. 2.57 cm, W. 1.64 cm, H. 1.17 cm. Egyptian Museum, Cairo, 98778B. See also Colorplate I.

Figure 6. Base of the scarab in Figure 5, inscribed with the birth name of King Amenemhat II.

Figure 7. Head of the scarab in Figure 5.

Figure 8. Side view of the scarab in Figure 5.
plinth edges of both scarabs are chipped, perhaps indicating that gold plates covered the base.\textsuperscript{11}

Considering the limited corpus of royal-name scarabs that can be attributed with certainty to Dynasty 12,\textsuperscript{12} the clear archaeological context of these scarabs is of great significance. Their confirmed Dynasty 12 date, some of their particular features, and their association with a royal family member provide invaluable information that may help resolve some of the controversy concerning these objects. Two main issues remain: the date of the initial occurrence of royal-name scarabs (and thus the highly debated question of contemporaneous examples) and their original function.

**Dating the Initial Occurrence of Royal-Name Scarabs**

The initial occurrence of royal-name scarabs is currently attributed to Dynasty 12, although the earliest ruler whose name is attested on contemporaneous examples is a subject of debate.\textsuperscript{13} The main difficulty in determining the absolute dates of early Dynasty 12 scarabs is that most examples have no archaeological provenance. Moreover, those unearthed in excavations were not found in archaeological deposits that can be securely dated to the reigns of the kings whose names they bear. Consequently, the dates proposed for many of these scarabs are based primarily on inconclusive stylistic arguments.\textsuperscript{14}

It is now generally accepted that no royal-name scarab can be dated to the reign of the first ruler of Dynasty 12, Amenemhat I (ca. 1981-1952 B.C.). The contemporaneity of the relatively large number of scarabs bearing variations of the throne name of his son and successor Senwosret I (\textit{hpr-k3-r}) (ca. 1961-1917 B.C.), however, is highly debated.\textsuperscript{15} Most scholars agree that this group includes examples displaying incorrect orthography or distinct late features, which therefore are largely considered to be reissues.\textsuperscript{16} Ward argues that those examples that exhibit correct orthography and no distinct late features should be considered to be contemporaneous, thus dating the initial occurrence of royal-name scarabs to the reign of Senwosret I.\textsuperscript{17} Ward
As dating criteria, the designs and stylistic features of scarabs of the first half of the second millennium B.C. have frequently proven to be inconclusive. In recent studies, therefore, it has been widely accepted that a chronological typology of these scarabs must be based on excavated series from clear archaeological contexts. However, the difficulties associated with dating Middle Kingdom archaeological deposits in Egypt, and Middle Bronze Age deposits (largely dating to the first half of the second millennium B.C.) in the southern Levant (where a significant number of scarabs of this period originated), generated scholarly debate over the absolute dates of many groups. Moreover, the Canaanite origin of the bulk of the excavated scarab series from Middle Bronze Age Palestine was not recognized, and regional variations were often attrib-

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**Figure 10.** Remains of pyramid 9 at Dahshur with the pyramid of King Senwosret III in the background, seen from the southwest

**Figure 11.** Plan of pyramid 9, showing the ritual south tomb of Queen Weret II and her burial chamber in the north tomb, under the king's pyramid (a: jewelry pit in the chamber cut into the shaft between the south and north tombs; b: empty pit in the south tomb that may have been the original resting place of the jewelry). Drawing by Richard Velleu from a drawing by Dieter Arnold

**Figure 12.** Antechamber of the north tomb of Queen Weret II, seen from the southeast, with her burial chamber and sarcophagus beyond

Further proposes that the relatively large number of scarabs bearing this king’s throne name reflect the restoration of political stability and the growth of government administration attributed to his reign. Other scholars, arguing that not a single example originated in a securely dated archaeological context, consider the entire group to be reissues associated with the cult of the venerated dead king and date the earliest royal-name scarabs to the reigns of Senwosret III and Amenemhat III (between ca. 1878 and 1815 B.C.) in late Dynasty 12. As these conclusions have implications for the original function of royal-name scarabs, and for the religious developments that generated their production, a reexamination of the evidence on which the differing arguments are based is in order.
Some of these scarabs, previously dated to the First Intermediate Period (ca. 2150–2010 B.C.; Ward’s Periods 3 and 4), are now dated to the early Middle Kingdom (late Dynasty 11 and early Dynasty 12 [ca. 1850–1800 B.C.]). The notably small number of scarabs displaying early Middle Kingdom characteristics argues that this group predates the mass production of scarabs in Egypt. The archaeological contexts of published groups of scarabs and sealings from Middle Kingdom cemeteries and habitation areas in Egypt and Lower Nubia indicate that the mass production of scarabs in Egypt began in late Dynasty 12, around 1850 B.C., sometime during the reigns of Senwosret III and Amenemhat III and probably in association with the religious and administrative developments attested in Egypt during this period. The great majority of Middle Kingdom scarabs and seal impressions have been found in late Middle Kingdom cemeteries and administrative units dating from late Dynasty 12 well into Dynasty 13. Based on the ceramic assemblages associated with them, the bulk of these late Middle Kingdom excavated series date from Dynasty 13, although Dynasty 12 examples are probably included in all groups. Most deposits do not allow differentiation between late Dynasty 12 and Dynasty 13 scarabs, and much of the material can therefore only be defined as “late Middle Kingdom.”

Scarabs bearing the names of early Dynasty 12 kings exhibit designs and stylistic features that strongly argue for their posthumous production. Not a single example among the scarabs bearing the names of Senwosret I, Amenemhat II, and Senwosret II (reigns dated between ca. 1961 and 1878 B.C.) displays designs or features that are attested on early Middle Kingdom scarabs of Ward’s Period 4. Moreover, all present

The reexamination of archaeological deposits at a number of sites in Egypt where the earliest scarabs were found argues for lowering their absolute dates.

Figure 13. Plan and east-west section through the jewelry pit in the shaft leading to the south and north tombs of Queen Weret II in pyramid 9 at Dahshur. Drawing by Dieter Arnold

Figure 14. Blocking stone still in position in the jewelry pit in the side chamber cut into the shaft between the tombs of Queen Weret II in pyramid 9 at Dahshur, seen from the southwest
Figures 15 and 16. Scarab from the treasure of Princess Sithathoryunet from el-Lahun, ca. 1850–1813 B.C., with a view of its base inscribed with the throne name of King Amenemhat III surmounting the symbol of millions of years (eternity). Lapis lazuli, L. 1.7 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund and Henry Walters Gift, 1916 (16.1.22)

Figures 17 and 18. Scarab with ring from the treasure of Princess Sithathor from Dahshur, ca. 1858–1840 B.C., with a view of the gold plate on the scarab’s base inscribed with the throne name of King Senwosret III. Amethyst with gold plate and gold ring, L. 1.3 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1926 (26.7.756)

Figure 19. Scarab with ring from the treasure of Princess Sithathoryunet from el-Lahun, ca. 1887–1813 B.C. Gold inlaid with carnelian, lapis lazuli, turquoise, and blue and green paste, the base a plain gold plate, L. 1.7 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund and Henry Walters Gift, 1916 (16.1.24)

either late Middle Kingdom, Second Intermediate Period, or Canaanite characteristics, which suggest their later dates or Canaanite production.

Supporting evidence for the posthumous production of the scarabs bearing names of early Dynasty 12 kings is provided by the fact that not one of them originated in a contemporaneous archaeological context. Although Ward contends that a scarab bearing the name of Senwosret I from tomb 66 at Ruweise on the Lebanese coast originated in a contemporaneous context, his suggested date for tomb 66 at Ruweise has been challenged. Moreover, the other scarabs found in the tomb include late Middle Kingdom Egyptian examples and a small number of Canaanite pieces, confirming the Dynasty 13 date indicated by the pottery discovered there. A scarab from tomb 73 at Ruweise presented by Ward as a contemporaneous royal-name scarab of Senwosret II is in fact a late Middle Kingdom design scarab displaying a symmetrical arrangement of hieroglyphs. The scarabs from tomb 73 at Ruweise show distinctive late Middle Kingdom designs, indicating that this tomb, like tomb 66, should be dated to Dynasty 13.

Ward also argues for the contemporaneous context of a scarab bearing the name of Senwosret II from Beth-Shean stratum XI. However, level XI at Beth-Shean is dated, based on its pottery assemblages, to the last phase of the Early Bronze Age (twenty-first
The Cultural Context of the Earliest Royal-Name Scarabs

The royal-name scarabs found in the princesses’ treasures were part of their elaborate jewelry ensembles (see Figures 20–22), which included diadems, pectorals, bracelets, girdles, beads, amulets, and a number of uninscribed scarabs (see Figure 19) as well as scarabs bearing the names and titles of their female owners.57 Most of the scarabs found in these treasures are made of the finest materials, mainly semiprecious stones and gold, and they occasionally form rings with gold-wire shanks (Figures 17–19).58 The two amethyst royal-name scarabs from the jewelry of Queen Hetep II at Dahshur—the subjects of this article—were found in a similar context, and their function was probably identical to that of the scarabs from the jewelry ensembles of the princesses, as discussed below.

Many of the jewelry items belonging to these royal women were presented to them by the kings to whom they were related.59 Therefore a majority of these gifts most likely reflect the symbolic role of royal women in cults associated with the Egyptian perception of kingship. Indeed, the role of royal women as the feminine complementary aspect of kingship is attested from the early phases of the Pharaonic civilization and follows mythic prototypes.60 In this role, royal women—mother, wife, and daughter of the king—acted as a generative force that is expressed in Egyptian mythology in the duality of both male and female and parent and child.61 The double role of mother and daughter is manifested in Egyptian mythology as a feminine prototype, which applies to the three generations of royal women in association with the renewal of kingship.62 Lana Troy argues that “the queenship of ancient Egypt has been defined as consisting of four elements: identification with the mythic prototype, actualization of the powers of the prototype through enactment of a ritual role, embodiment of the generational hierarchy found in the feminine prototype as medium of transformation, and, as the final element, participation in the kingship as the feminine aspect and representative of that office.” During the Middle Kingdom the importance of the kings’ daughters in this context is attested in a distinct type of sculpture depicting a female sphinx, which first occurs during this period bearing exclusively the title ‘et nswt (king’s daughter).63 The burials of royal women within the king’s pyramid complex reflect their role as manifestations of the feminine prototype representing the powers of renewal in the king’s afterlife,64 while the lack of conclusive evidence for burials of male members of the royal family, aside from the king, in the royal pyramid complexes further emphasizes the exclusive role of the royal women in the funerary cult of the king.

The royal gifts found among the tomb offerings of these women undoubtedly include items associated with their symbolic role, as indicated by comparable types of objects found in the treasuries of Dahshur and el-Lahun.65 Some of the jewelry bears names of particular kings displayed in symbolic settings or portrays their images in glorified victorious postures,66 both of which symbolize the king’s primary role as guardian of divine order (see Figure 21).67 The fact that names of more than one king were found in most of the jewelry ensembles (Figures 21, 22) implies that the women’s role was associated with kingship in general and not necessarily with the particular king in whose pyramid complex they were buried.

Jewelry incorporating royal names is considered by most scholars to have been gifts presented to the women by the particular kings whose names are inscribed on the pieces, which are thus usually dated to the reigns of the respective kings.68 Although stylistic
who was buried in the pyramid complex of Senwosret III at Dahshur, is alternately identified as his daughter74 or as the daughter of Senwosret II,75 based mainly on a pectoral found among her jewelry bearing the latter’s name.76

The fragmentary and frequently unclear nature of the archaeological and textual evidence associated with these women leaves a number of unresolved questions, which have implications for the absolute date of the jewelry. There is no evidence to determine either the qualifications required for a princess to take part in the royal funerary cult or the reason for her burial in a particular pyramid complex. As noted above, the burial of a princess within a pyramid complex of a particular king does not necessarily indicate filiation with him. Moreover, there is no evidence attesting to the marital status of any of these women and, thus, to whether a married princess could take part in the royal funerary cult.77 Princesses married to various officials are attested in the Middle Kingdom,78 and there is no evidence implying that certain kings’ daughters remained unmarried for cultic purposes during this period. Furthermore, as the bodies of the three princesses under discussion have not been found, the suggested ages of some of these women,79 as well as the assumption that the royal-name objects in their jewelry ensembles were presented exclusively by the kings whose names they portray, cannot be corroborated.80

The jewelry of the three princesses—Sithathoryunet at el-Lahun and Sithathor and Mereret at Dahshur—show such striking similarities in design, manufacturing techniques, and quality of workmanship that they have frequently been considered to have been made by the same craftsmen.81 A chronological distinction, however, is usually made between objects attributed to the reigns of Senwosret II and Senwosret III and those ascribed to the reign of Amenemhat III. This distinction is based primarily on the quality of workmanship of objects bearing royal names and their comparison to other items; most scholars consider pieces with paste inlays and less meticulous workmanship as belonging to the later group from the reign of Amenemhat III.82 The difference in the quality of workmanship that is apparent in some of the jewelry corroborates the chronological distinction for selected items. However, the evidence does not always allow distinguishing between objects given to a royal woman by an early king, heirlooms, and posthumous productions.

The jewelry of Middle Kingdom royal women is usually divided between those pieces found on the mummy inside the coffin, which are identified as funerary jewelry, and those items located in boxes
hidden in a cache in the vicinity of the coffin, which most scholars consider to be personal jewelry worn in life. This distinction is corroborated by the consistent distribution of certain types of jewelry in both groups, by signs of wear noted on some of the objects of the latter group, and by occasional missing inlays that were most probably lost before the objects were buried. Moreover, representations of royal women wearing similar jewelry are well attested. The scarabs from the jewelry ensembles discussed here were found exclusively among items considered by most scholars as jewelry worn in life.

Symbolizing new life and regeneration, scarabs were used as amulets for the living as well as for the dead. Scarabs of the Middle Kingdom royal women may have been worn in life as part of necklaces or rings and may have been placed in the tomb as funerary offerings together with other jewelry. As argued above, these particular pieces of jewelry, especially those bearing royal names, probably reflect the symbolic role of the royal women in cults associated with kingship. The royal-name scarabs among this type of jewelry, being the earliest securely dated examples of their kind, suggest that the initial occurrence of these scarabs should be considered within the same religious context.

Scarabs, appearing initially in the First Intermediate Period, became the most favored amulets in Egypt in late Dynasty 12 and maintained their extreme popularity until the end of the Late Period (mid-nineteenth to fourth century B.C.). The amuletic role of scarabs is clearly indicated throughout their long period of use, though various other functions are attested during different periods, including use as seals for the central administration as well as affiliation with royal and temple cults. Based on the widespread use of scarabs as seals in the late Middle Kingdom, royal-name and private-name scarabs have frequently been considered as royal and official seals. While the main function of private-name scarabs remains controversial, most scholars view royal-name scarabs primarily as amulets endowed with the protective powers of the king. Seal impressions made by royal-name scarabs are extremely rare, and not a single example indicates their use as official royal seals; the few known impressions were made by scarabs of poor quality that rarely display royal titles and whose use is identical to that of design scarabs. Design scarabs were used in the Middle Kingdom as funerary amulets and as seals for the central administration, and the same use is attested for royal-name and private-name scarabs during this period (see below). It should also be noted that Middle Kingdom royal seals are attested on sealings made by large rectangular stamp seals bearing the king’s Horus name. Made of precious materials, the royal-name scarabs found in the treasures of Middle Kingdom royal women show a superb quality of workmanship that indicates manufacture in royal workshops, yet the shallow engraving of the inscriptions makes it highly unlikely that these scarabs were used as seals.

The evidence discussed above suggests that royal-name scarabs were initially produced in late Dynasty 12 for royal-associated cults. The almost exclusive origin of the surviving examples in jewelry ensembles of royal women of this period argues that the original function of these scarabs was associated with the cultic role of these women. Nevertheless, as almost no funerary offerings from burials of Dynasty 12 kings are known, the possible use of similar scarabs by the kings of the period should not be ruled out.

Apart from the royal-name scarabs found among the jewelry of royal women, royal-name scarabs of inferior quality, made of glazed steatite, have been found in late Middle Kingdom contexts. The most commonly attested Dynasty 12 royal name on such examples is that of Amenemhat III. Based on the typologies of the early and late Middle Kingdom excavated series noted above, it is now possible to show that scarabs bearing the name of Amenemhat III include examples with distinctive late Middle Kingdom designs, indicating a likely contemporaneous production. Most examples presented by Ward as contemporaneous royal-name scarabs of Senwosret III exhibit characteristics that argue for posthumous production. The evidence therefore suggests that large-scale production of royal-name scarabs no longer restricted to the use of the royal family occurred during the reign of Amenemhat III.

DATING THE ROYAL-NAME SCARABS FROM THE JEWELRY OF QUEEN WERET II

The archaeological evidence associated with Queen Weret II’s burial, as noted above, suggests that she was the main wife of Senwosret III, in whose pyramid complex she was buried. Her physical remains indicate that she died between the age of fifty and seventy; the uncertainty of the date of her death and burial, however, does not allow the determination of whether she was the daughter of Senwosret II or Amenemhat II. Moreover, as the title “daughter of the king” has never been found in connection with her, there is no certainty of her royal filiation, and she may have been of humble birth. The Amenemhat II scarabs found among her jewelry show close similarity in features and design to the Senwosret III and Amenemhat III...
scarbs of Sithathor and Mereret, suggesting a short time span for their production and the possibility of the same workshop. The jewelry of Queen Weret II exhibits first-rate workmanship, similar to the jewelry attributed to the earlier ensembles of the princesses noted above, which are usually dated between the reigns of Senwosret II and Senwosret III. The absence of paste inlays in Weret II's jewelry further indicates a date earlier than the reign of Amenemhat III, a conclusion corroborated by the funerary pottery found in her burial, which, according to Susan Allen, is earlier than the pottery found in the burials of princesses dated to the reign of Amenemhat III.

Although the identification of Queen Weret II as the daughter of Amenemhat II is far from certain, the possibility cannot be ruled out, and it could thus be proposed that the royal-name scarabs bearing his name were given to her by Amenemhat II. The scarabs, however, display late Middle Kingdom characteristics, which argue against dating them earlier than the reign of Senwosret III. Among the most distinctive of these characteristics, and strongly arguing against dating the scarabs to the reign of Amenemhat II, are the paired scroll borders that enclose the names. While similar paired borders customarily enclose private names on late Middle Kingdom scarabs, they are completely absent in the known corpus of early Middle Kingdom scarabs. The scarabs of Queen Weret II also exhibit, as noted earlier, a close stylistic similarity to the scarabs bearing the names of Senwosret III and Amenemhat III from the treasures of the princesses discussed above, which further support their late Middle Kingdom date. The serpent heads that end the paired scrolls are extremely rare, occurring almost exclusively on late Dynasty 19 royal-name scarabs, including the scarab bearing the name of Senwosret III from the jewelry of Sithathor at Dahshur and three late Dynasty 19 royal-name scarabs of glazed steatite. The evidence thus suggests that the scarabs found among the jewels of Queen Weret II were manufactured during the reign of Senwosret III, in whose pyramid complex they were found.

Other Types of Name Scarabs

The initial occurrence of royal-name scarabs very nearly coincides with the first appearance of another type of name scarab, bearing the names and titles of royal women. Such scarabs were also found among the jewelry of Sithathor and Mereret at Dahshur. One scarab of Sithathor and five scarabs of Mereret show the princesses' names with the title s2† nswt (king's daughter). The scarab of Sithathor and two of the scarabs of Mereret include the funerary epithet nbt imḥ (possessor of reverence), suggesting the association of the scarab with the funerary cult. However, 'nh-ti (alive) follows the name on another scarab of Mereret, and 'nh-di (alive forever) is found on one of her scarabs that is inscribed with queenly titles, indicating the use of these two examples during Mereret's lifetime. The identical context of the scarabs with names and titles of royal women and those bearing kings' names signal similar symbolic use, suggesting that the production of the women's scarabs may have been generated by those inscribed with kings' names.

Private-name scarabs bearing names and titles of officials or their wives, which are not attested in archaeological contexts earlier than late Dynasty 12, most likely developed from royal-name scarabs and those bearing names and titles of royal women. Their initial large-scale production in the late Middle Kingdom has been attributed to administrative changes attested during the reigns of Senwosret III and Amenemhat III, and they have been viewed primarily as official administrative seals. However, this period also saw significant religious developments, and it has been postulated that the primary function of private-name scarabs was amuletic. Their use as funerary amulets is attested by funerary epithets following the names on about 22 percent of the known examples, by scarabs that depict the owner holding an 'nh sign, indicating his or her representation as deceased, and by the large number of excavated examples found in or near cemeteries.

The widespread use of scarabs as amulets and as sealing devices for the central administration seems to have begun simultaneously in the late Middle Kingdom, and the evidence suggests that the separation between religious and administrative function was not as distinct for the Egyptians as it has been in modern times. Scarabs used in the administration during this period, for example, are identical to those found in tombs, including private-name scarabs with funerary epithets, and scarabs seem to have been randomly selected for sealing, regardless of their designs and inscriptions. The evidence implies, as correctly noted by Williams, that scarabs of the late Middle Kingdom, whether initially intended for use as seals or amulets, were likely to have been reused for a secondary function and that these uses became interchangeable.

As no archaeological evidence exists for private-name scarabs before the late Middle Kingdom, their production seems to have been inspired by royal-name scarabs and by scarabs bearing the names of royal women, both representing cults associated with the king. The adaptation of cults reflecting royal privileges
by the elite during the Middle Kingdom is attested in the so-called democratization of royal-associated cults and symbols, of which private-name scarabs may constitute an additional example.14 The funerary epithets and formulae attested on private-name scarabs and the images of the owners as deaccessed clearly associate these scarabs with the funerary cult.125 Names and titles of Egyptian officials and their wives with or without funerary epithets are repeatedly inscribed on tomb walls and on funerary-related objects such as coffins, canopic jars, stelae, and statues to ensure the eternal survival of their owners. It is primarily the aspiration of sharing the eternal sphere of the afterlife with the king that generated the adaptation of royal-associated cults by Egyptian officials throughout the long history of Pharaonic civilization.

NOTES

1. This paper was written while I was the Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellow in the Department of Egyptian Art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Metropolitan Museum for granting me the opportunity to study objects in its outstanding Egyptian collection, to Dieter Arnold and Adela Oppenheim for offering me the opportunity to publish the scarabs, and to Dorothea and Dieter Arnold, Susan and James Allen, Claudia Farias, Marsha Hill, Adela Oppenheim, Diana Craig Patch, Catharine Roehrig, and Christine Llewquist for their generous assistance and helpful remarks.


2. The length of Senwosret III’s reign is controversial; some scholars argue for nineteen years, while others suggest thirty-six or thirty-nine years. See Arnold, Oppenheim, and Allen, Pyramid Complex of Senwosret III, p. 117 n. 418.

3. The numbering of the pyramids by the 1894–95 excavator Jacques de Morgan included two additional pyramids that he numbered 5 and 6; these pyramids do not exist. See ibid., p. 75.

4. Ibid., pp. 57–84, 127–33.

5. Ibid., p. 137.


I thank Adela Oppenheim for the information concerning the findspot of the jewelry.

8. For a detailed discussion of the jewelry, see Arnold, Oppenheim, and Allen, Pyramid Complex of Senwosret III, pp. 75–83, 125–33.


11. The gold plates may have been inscriptions identical to those engraved on the scarabs themselves, as is the case on the scarab of Imen from Lisht; Geoffrey T. Martin, Egyptian Administrative and Private-Name Seals, Principally of the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period (Oxford, 1911), nos. 195, 196. The amethyst scarab of Sithathor from Dahshur (Figure 17) has a gold plate on its base bearing the throne name of Senwosret III.


18. Ibid., p. 151.

19. Stock, Studien, pp. 17–18; Hornung and Starckelin, Skarabäcn und andere Siegelamulette, pp. 49–50; Kemp and Merrillees, Minoan Pottery, p. 41; O’Connor, “Chronology of Scarabs,” pp. 37–38; Othmar Keel, Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus...

23. The extremely popular and widespread distribution of scarabs in Middle Bronze Age Palestine were undoubtedly the outcome of the large-scale settlement of Canaanites in the eastern delta during the late Middle Kingdom and their subsequent rule over northern Egypt in the Second Intermediate Period. See Ben-Tor, "Relations between Egypt and Palestine," pp. 167-88.


24. See Ben-Tor, "Relations between Egypt and Palestine." Ben-Tor, "Date of the Montet Jan Scarabs;" Daphna Ben-Tor, "Egyptian Levantine Relations and Chronology in the Middle Bronze Age: Scarab Research," in The Synchronisation of Civilisations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Second Millennium B.C., vol. 2, ed. Manfred Bietak (Vienna, 2003), pp. 293-348. The typologies of scarabs of the first half of the second millennium B.C. from Egypt and the southern Levant are presented in a study currently in preparation by this author, which argues for the Canaanite origin of the bulk of the scarabs from Middle Bronze Age Palestine. See also Keel, Corpus der Stempelägel-Ameutete, pp. 31-35.


28. The early Dynasty 13 date of the Montet Jan scarabs from Byblos (Ward’s Period 4) was confirmed based on the ceramic context of the scarabs and sealings from Abu Ghaiba, which display identical designs. See Ben-Tor, "Date of the Montet Jan Scarabs;" Ward, Studies on Scarab Seals I, p. 2; Ward and Dever, Studies on Scarab Seals III, p. 117; Ben-Tor, "Date of the Montet Jan Scarabs;" p. 14.


49. Compare the designs and features of scarabs of Period 4 presented in Ward, Studies on Scarab Seals I, pls. IX-XV, with those presented in Tufnell, Studies on Scarab Seals II, pls. LI-LII.


51. Beck and Zevulun, "Back to Square One"; Weinstein, "Wolf in Sheep's Clothing"; Ben-Tor, "Relations between Egypt and Palestine."


53. Brunton, Treasure, p. 36; Winlock, Treasure of El-Lahun, p. 56, pl. XII-D.


55. De Morgan, Fouilles à Dahchour, pp. 69, nos. 40, 41, figs. 148, 149; Newberry, Scarab-Shaped Seals, p. 354, nos. 37411, 37413, pl. XVIII; Vernier, Bijoux et orifrices, p. 91, nos. 32244, 32245. For the possible identification of Mereret as queen, see Arnold, Oppenheim, and Allen, Pyramid Complex of Senwosret III, p. 71. I thank Adela Oppenheim for this reference.


57. De Morgan, Fouilles à Dahchour, pp. 61-79; Newberry, Scarab-Shaped Seals, pl. XVIII, 37400-37420; Brunton, Treasure; Vernier, Bijoux et orifrices, pls. XX, XXII; Winlock, Treasure of El-Lahun.


59. Brunton, Treasure, p. 43; Winlock, Treasure of El-Lahun, pp. 3-4; Hayes, Scepter of Egypt, p. 293.

60. Lisa Troy, Patterns of Queenship in Ancient Egyptian Myth and History (Uppsala, 1986), pp. 53-114, 145-50.

61. Ibid., p. 146.


63. Ibid., p. 53.


65. Troy, Patterns of Queenship, pp. 72, 112.


67. De Morgan, Fouilles à Dahchour, pl XXI; Winlock, Treasure of El-Lahun, pl. VII.


70. See Birn Fay, The Lowen Sphinx and Royal Sculpture from the Reign of Amenemhat II (Mainz, 1996), pp. 43-47, with bibliography.

71. During the Middle Kingdom the title ḫ3 ṣnst rfrs almost exclusively to the daughter of the king; Bettina Schmitz, Untersuchungen zum Titel ḫ3 ṣnst Königswöll” (Bonn, 19976), pp. 194-205, 200-202; Troy, Patterns of Queenship, pp. 194-205; William A. Ward, Essays on Feminine Titles of the Middle Kingdom and Related Subjects (Beirut, 1988), pp. 19-63; James F. Romano, “A Statuette of a Royal Mother and Child in the Brooklyn Museum,” Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo 48 (1992), p. 145; Betsy M. Brian, “In Woman Good and Bad Fortune Are on Earth: Status and Roles of Women in Ancient Egyptian Culture,” in Mistress of the House, p. 7.}

72. A number of princesses buried in the pyramid complex of Amenemhat II who were considered as his daughters are now dated to the reign of Amenemhat III; Fay, Lowen Sphinx, p. 43 and nn. 146, 149. See also Lythgoe, “Treasures of Lahun,” p. 18, for the uncertain filiation of the Middle Kingdom princesses.

73. Winlock, Treasure of El-Lahun, p. 32; Bertha Porter and Rosalind Moss, Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings, vol. 3, Memphis, 2nd ed., ed. Jaromir Malek (Oxford, 1974), pp. 883-84. Mereret was also identified as the daughter of Senwosret II (Winlock, Treasure of El-Lahun, p. 4; Wilkinson, Ancient Egyptian Jewelry, p. 51) and as a queen of Senwosret III (Wilkinson, Ancient Egyptian Jewelry, p. 51). Winlock carefully refers to Sitchathoryunet as a relative of Senwosret II and not as his daughter, for lack of conclusive evidence; Brunton, Treasure, p. 19.

74. Troy, Patterns of Queenship, p. 159. 12.29.


76. Winlock, Treasure of El-Lahun, p. 4.

77. See also Lythgoe, “Treasures of Lahun,” p. 20.


79. Most scholars consider Sitchathoryunet, whose jewelry ensemble included pectorals of both Senwosret I and Amenemhat II, to have lived among both reigns and therefore to have been in her forties when buried in the pyramid complex at el-Lahun: Lythgoe, “Treasures of Lahun,” pp. 18-40; Winlock, Treasure of El-Lahun, pp. 3-4; Hayes, Scepter of Egypt, pp. 135-36; Nora E. Scott, “Egyptian Jewelry,” Bulletin of The Metropolitan Museum of Art 26 (1964), pp. 290-311. For the fragmentary and inconclusive evidence associated with the Middle Kingdom pyramid complexes at el-Lahun and Dahshur, see also Barry J. Kemp, “Dating Pharaonic Cemeteries, Part 1: Non-mechanical Approaches to Seriation,” Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo 31 (1933), pp. 260-67.


83. Lythgoe, “Treasures of Lahun,” pp. 17-18 n. 1; Brunton, Treasure, p. 42; Winlock, Treasure of El-Lahun, pp. 23-24; Andrews, Ancient Egyptian Jewelry, pp. 24-25. This distribution is accepted by most scholars in spite of the fact that there is no case in which both types of jewelry were found in association with the same woman.
96. See also Winlock, "Treasure of El-Lahun," p. 57; Wilkinson, Ancient Egyptian Jewelry, pp. 70-77.

97. The scarab referred to in note 95 above is the only published example of a Dynasty 12 royal-name scarab of royal-workshop quality, the origin of which is unknown.

98. See, for example, Tufnell, "Seal Impressions from Kahun Town and Uronarti Fort," fig. 12: 147-149.

99. Flinders Petrie, Ilahun, Kahun, and Girsu (London, 1891), pl. 8: 92-95; Reginald Engelbach et al., Riqsheh and Memphis, British School of Archaeology in Egypt (London, 1915), pl. 17: 1, 3, 6, 8, 9; Tufnell, "Seal Impressions from Kahun Town and Uronarti Fort," fig. 12: 138-142.

100. See, for example, Tufnell, Studies on Scarab Seals II, p. LIII: 3077-80, displaying symmetrical arrangements of hieroglyphs well attested on late Middle Kingdom design scarabs: Tufnell, "Seal Impressions from Kahun Town and Uronarti Fort," figs. 5-6: 251, 254, 300-304.

101. Most scarabs and other seal amulets bearing the name of Amenemhat III, as well as those bearing names of earlier Dynasty 12 kings, were found in mixed late Middle Kingdom contexts that include material from Dynasty 13 and later. Moreover, none of the Amenemhat III royal-name scarabs presented by Ward (Tufnell, Studies on Scarab Seals II, p. LIII) and Keel (Corpus der Steinsiegel-Amulette, p. 232) comes from a contemporaneous archaeological context. The absolute dates of these objects are therefore uncertain (see also Kemp and Mervillee, Minosau Pottery, p. 41), as they are based primarily on stylistic grounds; Stock, Studies, pp. 17-18; Hoving and Staehelin, "Skaraibum und anden Siegelamulettene," p. 50. A late Dynasty 12 date for some examples may, however, be implied by scarabs and other seal amulets that bear the name of Amenemhat III together with names of other Dynasty 12 kings, see, for example, Tufnell, Studies on Scarab Seals II, p. LIII: 3091-94; Engelbach et al., Riqsheh and Memphis, pl. XVII: 1. One such seal was found with a medium-size globular pottery jar with a wide flaring neck in tomb 386 at Riqsheh (Engelbach et al., Riqsheh and Memphis, pl. XXIX: 389b2), together with a cylinder seal bearing the name of Amenemhat II (Engelbach et al., Riqsheh and Memphis, pl. XVII: 2). The published draught of the jar was examined by Susan Allen, who dated it to Dynasty 12.

102. Tufnell, Studies on Scarab Seals II, p. LIII: 3049-71. These include the Canaanite art (nos. 3058, 3068, 3070), the rope border (nos. 3066-71) not attested on securely dated Dynasty 12 scarabs, the winged sun disk (no. 3059, see above), and the unusual form of scroll border (no. 3082). The only securely dated example among the scarabs presented by Tufnell is no. 3065, from the jewelry of Princess Sithathor at Dahshur. See also Ben-Tor, "Egyptian-levantine Relations," p. 242.

103. See Arnold, Oppenheim, and Allen, Pyramid Complex of Senusret III, p. 75.

104. Ibid., pp. 75-76.

105. The design and stylistic elements of the Amenemhat III scarab from the treasure of Sithathoryunet (Figures 15, 16) are unique, displaying features unknown from other semiprecious stone scarabs of the Middle Kingdom. The body of the scarab has a gold cylindrical tube inserted into the open area, and the clypeus may have been made separately; Brunton, Treasure, p. 36.

106. I thank Adela Oppenheim for sharing her observations and conclusions with me. See also Oppenheim, "Jewelry of Queen Weret."


108. Martin, Egyptian Administrative and Private-Name Seals, pls. 5-16.

109. De Morgan, Fouilles a Dâchouch, p. 62, fig. 132.

110. Tufnell, Studies on Scarab Seals II, p. LIII: 3087, 3094, 3095. Only one late Middle Kingdom private-name scarab bearing this design is known; Martin, Egyptian Administrative and Private-Name Seals, pl. 11: 12.

111. Newberry, Scarab-Shaped Seals, pl. XVIII: 17400, 17404-

112. Ibid., pl. XVIII: 17400, 17407, 17408.

113. Ibid., pl. XVIII: 17346.

114. Ibid., pl. XVIII: 17341.

115. Martin, Egyptian Administrative and Private-Name Seals, pp. 175-77.


119. Martin, Egyptian Administrative and Private-Name Seals, pl. 41: 33, 36, 37; Ben-Tor, "Historical Implications," pp. 19-20; Ben-Tor, Allen, and Allen, "Seals and Kings," pp. 54-55.

120. Williams, "Aspects of Sealing," pp. 139-38; Ben-Tor, "Historical Implications," p. 8.

121. Williams, "Aspects of Sealing," p. 139.

122. The original administrative function of particular types of late Middle Kingdom official seals is clearly indicated by archaeological evidence attesting to their exclusive administrative use and by their inscriptions, which frequently include the word "seal" and always bear names of administrative units; Ben-Tor, "Historical Implications," p. 8; Martin, Egyptian Administrative and Private-Name Seals, pls. 43-45, 47; passim. However, objects of identical form bearing only private names and titles, sometimes with funerary epithets, support the interchangeable function of scarabs and seals in the late Middle Kingdom; Martin, Egyptian Administrative and Private-Name Seals, pls. 45: 2, 3: 44: 5, 10, 15, 18, 24: 45: 4.

123. One exception is the silver scarab of Wah, which is dated to the reign of Amenemhat I in early Dynasty 12; Dorothy Arnold, "Amenemhat I and the Early Twelfth Dynasty at Thebes," Metropolitan Museum Journal 26 (1991), pp. 34-35. This scarab, however, is unique in every respect: its size is larger than that of other private-name scarabs; its material is, so far, unique for private-name scarabs; the name of Wah is inscribed together with that of his superior official, Meketra; and both names are inscribed on the back of the scarab rather than on its base. It should also be noted that the design comprising scrolls on the base of this scarab differs from the scroll borders enclosing the name and title on late Middle Kingdom scarabs. The material and the low engraving of the design on the base strongly argue against the use of this scarab as a seal. Moreover, the symbolic mutilation of its head most probably relates to its funerary function; Henry G. Fischer, L'écriture et l'art de l'Egypte ancienne.
Quatre leçons sur la paleographie et l'épigraphie pharaoniques, Collège de France, Essais et conférences (Paris, 1986), p. 131; Andrews, Ancient Egyptian Jewels, p. 177. The inscribed names of Wah and Meketre on the back may suggest that the scarab was awarded to Wah by his superior.


125 Wegner, “Institutions and Officials at South Abydos,” pp. 93–97, states that such epithets do not necessarily imply a funerary function, as they are attested in relation to living individuals. However, this does not argue against their funerary connotation, as funerary-associated inscriptions on stelae, statues, and tomb chapels were often made during the individual’s lifetime to assure his or her eternal survival in the afterlife.