A SCARAB FROM DOR

Stefan Münger
University of Bern
stefan.muenger@theol.unibe.ch

Caveat: Bibliographic references marked with * could not be checked in original publication.

Object: Scarab; unknown type; linear and hollowed-out engraving with hatching; possibly Enstatite; measurements unknown.

Description: Falcon or hawk (GS; KEEL 1995: § 454.467)1 facing to the right, flanked by two antithetical (KEEL 1995: § 416 fig. 264) uraei/co-bras (I12-13; KEEL 1995: §§522); two confronting uraei above. The scene is (partly) framed by a line. It seems – based on the photograph – that there is a line going off from the tail of the upper left uraeus and meets the framing line, which ends in some sort of a bud(?) slightly above of the head of the lower right uraeus. Such a ’playful’ element can be found on scarab bases from various times and is not discussed in detail below.

Interpretation: The falcon (or in rare cases the awl) flanked by two uraei (TUFNELL’s design class 9C3; see ead. 1984: pl. 37; see also KEEL 1995: § 526) is – according to CHRISTA MLINAR – a very common motif on late 15th dyn. scarabs and scaraboids (whereas the falcon is the semogram for Horus, the uraeus symbolizes protection). MLINAR catalogued, in addition to a newly found item from Tell el-‘Ajjul (ead. in FISCHER/SADEQ 2002: 144 fig. 29.5), 29 items with this motif from Egypt and the Southern Levant (ead. 149-51 with figs. 33-34; note that the falcon is [interchangeably] facing either to the right or to the left). Two years after MLINAR’s publication, BARUCH BRANDL, when discussing an item found at Beit Mirsim (idem 2004: 139f no. 30 with fig. 3.30), cited further items from Megiddo (LAMON/SHIPTON 1939: pl. 67,23), Barqai (*GOPHNA/SUSSMANN 1969: 10 no. 3 with fig. 10.3), Memphis (PETRIE 1909: pl. 34:10) and Sanam (*GRIFFITH 1923: pl. 27:60). To these, a yet unpublished item from Horvat Zelef (reg.-no. 1245; KEEL/MÜNGER forthcoming) should be added. – Seemingly, this primary motif has altered and/or extended in different ways (see the catalogue in Brandl 2004: 139-140).

Parallels: The ‘extended motif’ of the falcon flanked by two uraei with two additional uraei atop can be found in Cis- and Transjordan, as well as in Egypt. Examples are: Tell el-‘Ajjul, Stratum II, late MB III (2 items, both with an additional nb serving as an exergue; KEEL 1997: no. 28 and 53 with bibliography); Acco, context un-

1 One might argue that the central bird is an awl (G17; KEEL 1995: § 456) since the beak on the present item is not typical for the falcon/hawk (cf. the overview in MLINAR in FISCHER/SADEQ 2002: fig. 33), Note, however, that the awl generally faces straight towards the beholder (e.g., KEEL 1997: Tell el-‘Ajjul nos. 162 and 880). This is clearly not the case on the scarab base discussed here.

Date: As mentioned above, MLINAR (op. cit.) dates the primary motif to the late 15th dyn.; equally, BRANDL (op. cit.) dates it to the Hyksos period, dubbing such items as ‘LMBCS’ = ‘Late Middle Bronze (Age) Cananeite Scarabs’; similar are the dates given by KEEL or EGGLER (op. cit.). Therefore, the absolute date of production of the present item from Dor would be ca. 1600-1500 BCE.

Bibliography

—. BRUNTON G. 1924. Sedment II (BSAE 34), London.

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