**Three Scarabs from Shiloh**

**Chronology, Typology, and Iconography**

**Authors\***

**Abstract**

Recent excavations (2017–2023) at Shiloh (Khirbet es-Sailūn) yielded thirteen Egyptian-style scarabs. Most of the scarabs are contemporary with the Middle Bronze Age IIB–Middle Bronze Age IIC (=MB III) in Canaan, three of which we examine here. These scarabs differ from the rest of the corpus. Only Scarab One dates to Egypt’s New Kingdom. Only Scarab Two bears a hieroglyphic reference to Upper Egypt. Only Scarab Three displays the “anra” (ʾnrʾ) composition. This article analyzes these three scarabs, the context of their discovery, their hieroglyphic inscriptions, and their typology. These factors offer insights into the scarabs’ periods of production and use. This discussion includes known parallels from clean archaeological contexts. Gardiner’s sign list serves as the basis for interpreting the hieroglyphic signs. The other scarabs will be the subject of future publications.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Keywords: Shiloh, Middle Bronze Age, Late Bronze Age, Egypt, Canaan, scarab, typology

**Introduction**

The site of Shiloh is ca. 30 kilometers north of Jerusalem in the West Bank of Israel to the west of the modern Israeli community of Shiloh and north of the Palestinian town of Turmus Ayya. The tell is approximately 300 meters wide and rises 715 meters above sea level. The total area is about 3 hectares (Finkelstein 1993: 1). Most of the tell consists of soil and exposed rock with several visible ruins. On the north side of the tell, there is a lower terrace (Buhl and Holm-Nielson 1969: 10). Beyond this area is a steep drop to the Wadi Sailūn. The north, east, and west sides of the tell are relatively steep compared to the south side, which has a more gradual grade. Access to the tell is generally from the direction of the modern settlement of Shiloh on the south side.

The remains discovered during four Shiloh expeditions over the past ca. 100 years date from the Middle Bronze Age II through the Mamluk period. Hans Kjaer, on behalf of the Danish National Museum, excavated three seasons between 1926 and 1932. Marie-Louise Buhl and Svend Holm-Nielson completed the Danish excavations in 1963.[[2]](#footnote-2) Between 1981–1984, Israel Finkelstein on behalf of Bar-Ilan University excavated four seasons. Scott Stripling currently directs the Associates for Biblical Research (ABR) excavations (2017–Present) on the northern and eastern slopes, under the auspices of the Staff Officer of the Civil Administration of Judea and Samaria (KAMAT). The KAMAT also periodically operates salvage excavations and has recently explored the summit and southern slope under Reut Ben Arie’s direction.

The ABR team has discovered thirteen scarabs during five seasons. In contrast, the Danish team discovered three in four seasons (Buhl and Holm-Nielson 1969: 28–29, 37–39), the Bar-Ilan team found five scarabs in four seasons (Brandl 1993: 205–207, 211–212, 215), and KAMAT excavations have yielded five scarabs over the past decade.[[3]](#footnote-3) Most of the scarabs found by ABR derived from wet sifting, an integral aspect of the team’s excavation protocols. The three scarabs in this analysis include two found in mixed contexts, one of which came from wet sifting. Workers discovered the third scarab in situ in a clean context. This study considers the hieroglyphic signs, the typology, and the context of these scarabs’ discovery. An examination of these three aspects of the scarabs suggests the date of their manufacture.

Ward (1987: 508) posited that if scarabs are to be useful as a dating criterion, there must first be a typological sequence based on an archaeological context. A typological analysis addresses each scarab’s unique features including its base, head, back, and sides. Our typological analysis relies primarily on the work of Olga Tufnell, with updates by Ward and Dever, Daphna Ben-Tor, and Othmar Keel that rely on large groups of scarabs from clean archaeological contexts.[[4]](#footnote-4)

**Descriptions and Context**

Base Design and Hieroglyphic Signs: The analysis lists each scarab’s Egyptian hieroglyphs in square brackets [ ] as they appear in Gardiner’s sign-list (1927: 432–531). We present the reading order for each scarab required for accurate translation. Ancient Egyptians wrote hieroglyphs right to left and sometimes left to right (Allen 2014: 4). Although they typically wrote right to left, they also composed symmetrical inscriptions (Allen 2014: 4).[[5]](#footnote-5) Hieroglyphs aligned vertically in a column, usually read from top to bottom and not bottom to top (Manley 2012: 14).

Context: This analysis provides the archaeological context of each scarab including its associated ceramic corpus and stratum. The study also considers the occupational history of the site, which contributes to an understanding of the presence of Egyptian style scarabs based on known historical facts.

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Table 1: Stratigraphic Sequence at Shiloh.

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Figure 1:Aerial view of Field H1 with ABR’s grid, highlighting the locations for the scarab discoveries (photo by Gary Urie and graphics by Steven Rudd).

**Scarabs**

***Scarab One***

Shiloh Object 1000 (K46108), Field H1, Square AH29, Locus 7, Pail 60.

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Figure 2: Scarab of Thutmose III, 18th Dynasty. Photos courtesy of Michael C. Luddeni.

Material: Glazed Steatite.

Dimensions: Length 1.68 cm, Width 1.27 cm, Height 0.80 cm, Weight 2.16 gm.

Method of Manufacture: Carving, abrading, drilling, incising, and glazing.

Workmanship: Hieroglyphs are crude but clear. Head, legs, and back are clearly distinguishable.

Technical Details: The scarab is perforated lengthwise on front and rear with linear engraving.

Preservation: The scarab is mostly complete with some damage to the back and head.

Base Design: The scarab has seven hieroglyphic signs depicted horizontally along its length. There are three signs inside a cartouche in the center of the design flanked on both sides by two closely intertwined signs, a Ma‘at-feather and an uraeus serpent.

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Figure 3: Drawing of Scarab One (Object 1000) by Gary D. Urie.

Typology:

The head of Scarab One is type B2 with a double “hourglass” outline and a horn. Type B2 scarab heads can have a single or double “hourglass” outline, with or without a horn (Tufnell 1984: 32, 34; Ward and Dever 1994: 162–163).

Its back is type VLV, demonstrating V-shaped humeral callosities, or type I, with one line dividing the elytra (wing case) (Tufnell 1984: 34–35).[[6]](#footnote-6) Ward and Dever (1994: 164–165) label this type as LN (Lined Naturalistic) with a rounded pronotum (plate between elytra and head) and one or more lines dividing the elytra.

The notches on the fore, mid, and hind legs indicate that the sides are type d6 (Tufnell 1984: 36–37; Ward and Dever 1994: 164–165).

The presence of a royal name places Shiloh Scarab One in design class 11A (Tufnell 1984: 30). Ben Tor (2007: 134, 167) based her revised classification for the design on Tufnell’s work and labelled it design 3D2, Actual Cartouches for Early and Late Palestinian Scarabs. The design 11A (Tufnell 1984: 140–141) or 3D2 (Ben-Tor 2007: 85, 134, 167) scarabs include the royal name of Thutmose III in a cartouche, which provides a relative chronology.

Archaeological Context: The scarab derived from a mixed context at an elevation of ca. 701.50 m, a locus associated with an Early Roman structure in Stratum 3 (Square AH29, Locus 7). Locus 7 was the southwest area of the square with the dimensions 4.15 m × 2.90 m, covering an area of approximately 8 square meters. Excavations revealed that Locus 7 came after the Early Roman structure since it sealed against it without any evidence of a foundation trench. The material retrieved from this locus ranged from the Early Roman period to the Middle Bronze Age. This Locus yielded several other important objects from various time periods, including a ceramic pomegranate, a bronze axe head, and a coin (Stripling 2018: 84–85). The pomegranate is the subject of a previous publication (Lopez, Stripling, and Ben-Shlomo 2019: 37–56).

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Figure 4: Aerial view of Square AH29 before the excavation of Locus 7. Photo by Greg Gulbrandsen.

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Figure 5: Section drawing of Square AH29; the red line in the top plan marks the location of the section. Drawing by Tim Lopez.

***Scarab Two***

Shiloh Object 1282 (K46514), Field H1, Square AE27, Locus 4, Pail 5.

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Figure 6: Scarab depicting Egyptian good-luck signs. Photos courtesy of Michael C. Luddeni.

Material: Glazed Steatite.

Dimensions: Length 1.32 cm, Width 1.17 cm, Height 0.75 cm, Weight 0.84 gm.

Method of Manufacture: Carving, abrading, drilling, incising, and glazing.

Workmanship: Hieroglyphs are very clear. Head, legs, and back are clearly distinguishable, except for damaged areas.

Method of Manufacture: Carved.

Technical Details: The scarab is perforated lengthwise on front and rear and has linear engraving.

Preservation: The scarab is broken with ca. two thirds remaining.

Base Design: The scarab is broken, but two complete and two partial signs are visible and oriented horizontally along its length. The third sign from the right appears to be the center sign with similar signs on the right and left of it. The missing sign(s) may be like the sign on the far right, which would make the inscription symmetrical, and thus potentially readable to the right and left from center (Allen 2014: 4–5).

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Figure 7: Drawing of Scarab Two (Object 1282) by Gary D. Urie.

Typology:

The head of Scarab Two is type B2 with a double “hourglass” outline and a horn.

Its back is type O since there are no lines dividing the elytra (Tufnell 1984: 34–35). Ward and Dever (1994: 164–165) classify plain backs without lines as PN (Plain Natural) or PS (Plain Stylistic), indicating the lack of lines between the elytra and the pronotum. The back of this scarab appears to be PN (Plain Naturalistic).

The sides may be type d5 and appear to have plain legs with a squared base (Tufnell 1984: 36; Ward and Dever 1994: 164–165).[[7]](#footnote-7)

The presence of sedge plants, sometimes paired, in a symmetrical pattern indicate the design class is 3B5 (Tufnell 1984: 120, 286; Ben Tor 2007: 131 and 164).

Archaeological Context: Square AE27, Locus 4. The locus was in the south side of the square. It yielded 54 objects, most notably this ca. 60 percent intact scarab from Pail 5. The mixed pottery assemblage read primarily as Early Roman and Iron Age II (Stripling 2019: 17). Other objects discovered in the same pail include three coins, a sling stone, a grinding stone, and an unknown metallic object (Stripling 2019: 20).

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Figure 8: Square AE27 on the discovery day of Scarab Two. Drawing by Gary D. Urie.

***Scarab Three***

Shiloh Object 1100 (K46110), Field H1, Square AE30, Locus 14, Pail 44.

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Figure 9: Scarab Three reflecting “anra” (ʾnrʾ) composition. Photo courtesy of Michael C. Luddeni.

Material: Glazed Steatite.

Dimensions: Length 1.2 mm, Width 0.9 mm, Height .6 mm, Weight .75 gm.

Method of Manufacture: Carving, abrading, drilling, incising, and glazing.

Workmanship: Most hieroglyphs are clear, but some are crude and difficult to read. Head, legs, and back are clearly distinguishable.

Technical Details: The scarab is perforated lengthwise on front and rear and has linear engraving.

Preservation: The scarab is mostly intact with minor damage to left side of the head.

Base Design: There are eighteen hieroglyphs aligned vertically in three columns. The signs in the left and right columns are the same and are in the same order. There are four signs in the center column, and two appear to be the same. Angled lines appear in the lower right and left corners of the design side adjacent to the design border and below the right and left columns. A proper reading of the signs is from top to bottom beginning with the center column (Allen 2014: 4–5). Below, we provide a complete analysis of the signs.

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Figure 10: Drawing of Scarab Three (Object 1100) by Gary D. Urie.

Typology:

The head of Scarab Three is type B2, with a double “hourglass” outline.

As with Scarab Two, Scarab Three’s back is type O or PS (Plain Stylistic).

The sides, with the fore and mid legs fringed and the hind legs notched are either type e6c (Tufnell 1984: 36–37), or type e6 per Ward and Dever’s (1994: 164–165) revision.

The design is class 3C, also known as formulae or ʾnrʾ style (Ben-Tor 2007: 165–166; Tufnell 1984: 121).[[8]](#footnote-8)

Archaeological Context: This scarab derives from a clean context in Square AE30 (Locus 14, Room AA, Stratum 7) (Stripling 2018: 31). Other objects from this locus include three loom weights, two jar-stoppers, a grinder, a Middle Bronze Age juglet, and a shell bead. The pottery dated exclusively to the Middle Bronze Age IIB–Middle Bronze Age IIC (=MB III) (Stripling 2018: 31).

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Figure 11: Square AE30, Locus 14, Room AA. Photo by Greg Gulbrandsen.

**Discussion**

The scarab typology utilized in this analysis is likely accurate since it relies on large groups of scarabs from clean archaeological contexts. Scarab parallels supplement the typological analysis and where available the head, back, and sides of the parallels are compared to the respective scarabs.

Ben-Tor (2007: 43) provides an update to Tufnell’s scarab typology by distinguishing between scarabs manufactured in Egypt and scarabs manufactured in Canaan. In Ben-Tor’s (2007: 117) refinement of the studies on scarabs, she argues for a Canaanite origin for most scarabs found in ancient Palestine (Canaan). She (2007: 115) bases her approach on the work of Schroer (1985; 1989) and Keel (1989; 1994: 207–225; 1995; 1997), who first presented solid evidence of the Canaanite origin of Middle Bronze Age scarabs. She (2007: 117, 155) labels scarabs from Canaan as belonging to either the Early Palestinian Series or the Late Palestinian Series. Brandl (2014: 2) accepts Ben-Tor’s designations but broadens her terms to Early and Late Middle Bronze Age Canaanite Scarabs.

The Early and Late Palestinian Series scarabs come primarily from Canaanite tombs (Tufnell 1984: 4–23; 2007: 186). Ben-Tor’s (2007: 186) Early Palestinian Series indicates close cultural interaction between Canaan and Egypt in the first half of the second millennium BCE and corresponds with the occupation levels at Tell el-Dab`a earlier in Middle Bronze Age IIB. The scarabs from this period reflect Late Middle Kingdom styles (Ben-Tor 2007: 186). Ben-Tor’s (2007: 186) Late Palestinian Series reflects the local manufacture of considerably more scarabs during the last part of the Middle Bronze Age IIB to Middle Bronze Age IIC (=MB III) than previously thought. These scarabs reflect Middle Kingdom styles but have a variety of designs from Egypt and the Levant (Ben-Tor 2007: 186). Ben-Tor (2007: 186) ascribes scarabs of the later period in Palestine to the ascendancy of the 15th Dynasty (Second Intermediate Period) at Tell el-Dab`a during the late Middle Bronze Age IIB–Middle Bronze Age IIC (=MB III).

***Scarab One***

Preliminary Analysis: Ben-Tor describes this scarab as containing the throne name of Thutmose III of the 18th Dynasty and indicates that it is an Egyptian scarab of the 19th Dynasty from the Ramesside period in the Late Bronze Age IIB.[[9]](#footnote-9) Van der Veen describes the style as late 18th Dynasty and dates it to the Late Bronze IB to IIA during the Egyptian New Kingdom.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Analysis: Head type B2 is more prevalent in the Early Palestinian Series (Keel 2004: 92–93; Ben-Tor 2007: 151), indicating an earlier date during the New Kingdom. Its features resemble the late Middle Kingdom style as indicated by Ben-Tor (2007: 151).

Tufnell (1984: 34, 36), noted the back type VLV-Humeral Callosities may not be earlier than the New Kingdom, but Ben-Tor (2007: 109, 111) cites earlier examples. Ben-Tor (2007: 177) indicates that the V-shaped markings on the shoulders (Humeral Callosities) are characteristic of the 18th Dynasty (Ben-Tor 2007: 177, 183). She advised that the feature may date as early as the 15th Dynasty and as late as the 19th Dynasty.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Ward and Dever (1994) exclude the use of humeral callosities in their revised typology of scarabs. Their classification is LN (Lined Naturalistic). This back type is common among early Canaanite scarabs (Early Palestinian Series) but much less common than plain backs by a 2:1 ratio (Keel 2004: 92–93; Ben-Tor 2007: 151).

The type d6 sides are one of the dominant types in the Late Palestinian Series (Ben-Tor 2007: 183), indicating Scarab One originates from a period earlier than the Late Bronze Age IIB. The type d6 sides appear on royal named scarabs of the Second Intermediate Period (Ben-Tor 2007: 112). They also appear in the Late Palestinian Series in late Middle Bronze Age IIB–Middle Bronze Age IIC (=MB III) (Ben-Tor 2007: 183).

Name Ring Signs: The cartouche contains three signs. Reading from top to bottom, the first sign is a sun, N5 [𓇳] (Gardiner 1927: 474). The second sign is a game board or draught board, Y5 [𓏠] (Gardiner 1927: 518). The third sign is a scarab-beetle, L1 [𓆣] (Gardiner 1927: 467).

The signs inside the cartouche are phonograms. From top to bottom, they read Rā-men-kheper or Men-kheper-Re. This is the throne name of Thutmose III (Rowe 1936: 111; Allen 2014: 83).

Other Signs: The signs inscribed to the immediate left and right of the cartouche are feathers (H6) [𓆄] (Gardiner 1927: 464). The signs immediately to the right and left of the feathers are outward facing erect cobras (uraei), I12 [𓆗] (Gardiner 1927: 466).

The signs on the sides of the cartouche are ideograms. The feather (H6) represents the goddess Ma‘at and means truth or proper behavior (Gardiner 1927: 464; Allen 2014: 119, 147, 482). The erect cobra or uraeus (I12) is a determinative for goddesses (Gardiner 1927: 466; Allen 2014: 483; Rowe 1936: 112).

A parallel (Figure 12) from Tel el-Far`ah-South, No. 646, Cemetery 900, Grave 935, dates to LB IIB–IA IA (Keel 2010: 646, 304–305). Keel cites additional parallels from Tell el-Ajjul, Tell el-Far`ah-South, Tell Jemmeh, Gezer, and Lachish but does not suggest dates. The Tel el-Far`ah-South scarab (No. 646) has a similar head, back, and sides as Scarab One. The hieroglyphs are very similar and orient horizontally like Scarab One.

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Figure 12: Scarab from Tell el-Far`ah-South, No. 646 Cemetery 900, Grave 935 (Keel 2010: #646, 304–305).

A parallel (Figure 13) cited by Keel for the Tel el-Far`ah-South scarab parallel came from Lachish Tomb 4004 and dates to MB IIC (=MB III)–LB III; 1600–1370 BCE (Tufnell 1958: Pl. 38: 283). Tufnell indicates that the Thutmose III scarabs from the tomb were contemporary to his reign. She (1958: 97 and 281) also mentions reuse of the cave (tomb) in ca. 1220 BCE. The head and back types are like Scarab One. There are no sides for this parallel depicted in the Lachish report.

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Figure 13: Scarab from Lachish Tomb 4004 (Tufnell 1958: Pl. 38: 283).

***Scarab Two***

Preliminary Analysis: Ben-Tor describes this scarab as a Middle Bronze Age Canaanite scarab displaying a design that is absent on Egyptian Middle Kingdom or Second Intermediate Period scarabs.[[12]](#footnote-12) Ben-Tor (2007: 19) contends most scarabs found in Israel are of Canaanite manufacture and that this scarab is an imitation of a Middle Kingdom prototype. Van der Veen describes it as a Late Middle Kingdom, Second Intermediate Period scarab and suggests it may translate as “Enduring is the goodness of the king of upper Egypt.”[[13]](#footnote-13)

Analysis: Like Scarab One, head type B2 typically occurs in the Early Palestinian Series and rarely appears in the Late Palestinian Series.

The back type is O following Tufnell’s classification or PN (Plain Natural) following Ward and Dever’s classification and is more common than lined backs on the early Canaanite scarabs (Early Palestinian Series) with type B2 heads (Keel 2004: 92–93; Ben-Tor 2007: 151).

The sides are likely type d5. The legs are plain, and the base is square (Tufnell 1984: 35–36; Ward and Dever 1994: 164–165). As previously noted, the damage to this scarab inhibits a more refined classification for the sides.

Scarab Two’s design is class 3B5-Paired Sedge Plant or Symmetrical Pattern Sedge Plants (Tufnell 1984: 120, 286; Ben Tor 2007: 131 and 164). According to Tufnell (1984: 120) paired sedge plants are most popular in Dynasties 13–15. The design (class 3B5) is more common in the Late Palestinian Series (MB IIB–MB IIC [=MB III]) (Ben-Tor 2007: 131). Evidence of this class from Tell el-Ajjul indicates its popularity in the Middle Bronze Age IIB and the Second Intermediate Period (Ben-Tor 2007: 164).

The sign in the center of the scarab is a reed column, R11 [𓊽] (Gardiner 1927: 489), probably meaning stable or enduring (Gardiner 1927: 489). The signs to the right and to the immediate left of center are all M24 [𓇔] (Gardiner 1927: 472), which is a combination of sign M23 [𓇓] (Gardiner 1927: 471), over a mouth, D21 [𓂋] (Gardiner 1927: 444). Gardiner (1927: 472) describes M24 as a sportive pictorial for South. Allen (2014: 485) describes it as an ideogram for *rsw* or South. The sign on the far right is a heart and windpipe (F35) [𓄤] *nfr (nefer)* (Gardiner 1927: 456).

The missing sign or signs are likely the same as the signs on the right. The nefer sign means good or beautiful (Gardiner 1927: 456). The śwt plant or sedge plant is typical of Upper Egypt (Gardiner 1927: 471). Sign M24 [ 𓇔]rsw (South) and other sedge plant sign variations (signs M23, M25, M26, and M28) refer to the South or Upper Egypt (Allen 2014: 485). This indicates a non-Hyksos design for the scarab since they were rulers of Lower Egypt in the north, and the design is indicative of Upper Egypt in the south under the rule of indigenous (Theban) Egyptians (Silverman 1997: 31; Grimal 1988: 187–189). This scarab’s description comports with a parallel from Jericho (below).

There is a parallel from Jericho (Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 80:10) that Keel (2017: No. 308, 158–159) also notes, stating that it is MB IIB, 1650–1550 BCE. It came from Grave D13, Reg. No. 24. It is unknown to which of Kenyon’s groups the tomb belongs. The head and back are like Scarab Two. The sides also appear to be like Scarab Two, but the damage inhibits a precise comparison.

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Figure 14: Similar Scarab from Jericho (Keel 2017: #308, 158–159).

***Scarab Three***

Preliminary Analysis: According to Ben-Tor, the design of this scarab indicates a Middle Bronze Age Canaanite production consistent with its context.[[14]](#footnote-14) She (2007: 164–165) assigns the scarab to the Late Palestinian Series.[[15]](#footnote-15) She (2007: 133) describes the design as the “anra” (ʾnrʾ) design (class 3C) which is a typical Canaanite design first appearing in the Early Palestinian series and more often in the Late Palestinian Series. Based on the description from van der Veen, it is a scarab with pseudo-hieroglyphs in three columns with the central column reading Kheper-ka-Re (ḫpr, r, k3, r, ).[[16]](#footnote-16) The scarab has the “anra” (ʾnrʾ) composition which van der Veen indicates suggests a later Canaanite production.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Analysis: This scarab derives its date from the context, hieroglyphs, and typology. It came from a clean context in Square AE30 as noted above (Locus 14, Room AA, Stratum 7, MB III) (Stripling 2018: 31).

As stated in the previous analysis, head type B2 is typically found in the Early Palestinian Series and is rarely found in the Late Palestinian Series.

As with Scarab Two, the back type is O following Tufnell’s classification or PS (Plain Stylistic) following Ward and Dever’s classification and is more common than lined backs on the early Canaanite scarabs (Early Palestinian Series) with type B2 heads.

The sides are type e6c (Tufnell 1984: 36–37), or type e6 per Ward and Dever’s (1994: 164–165) classification. This type of side appears in Late Middle Kingdom Egyptian scarabs (Ben-Tor 2007: 41, 103) and in the Late Palestinian Series (Ben-Tor 2007: 165), which imitate Egyptian Middle Kingdom styles (Ben-Tor 2007: 186).

Signs (center column): Reading from top to bottom, the first sign is a scarab beetle, L1 [𓆣] (Gardiner 1927: 467). The second sign appears to be a mouth, D21 [𓂋] (Gardiner 1927: 444). The third sign is two arms, D28 [𓂓] (Gardiner 1927: 445). The last sign, like the second sign, appears to be a mouth.

Other Signs (left and right columns): The outside columns contain the same signs inscribed to the immediate left and right of the center column. The first sign is probably a sedge plant, M23 [𓇓] (Gardiner 1927: 471) but could be a supinated hand with curved palm, D47 [𓂩] (Gardiner 1927: 447), above the second sign, a mouth, D21 [𓂋] (Gardiner 1927: 444). The third sign is an arm and hand, D36 [𓂝] (Gardiner 1927: 446). The fourth sign is a water ripple, N35 [𓈖] (Gardiner 1927: 479). The fifth and sixth signs repeat D21 and D36, and the last sign is above a corner line or angled base line. This description comports with known parallels discussed below.

The design class is 3C, also known as formulae or “anra” (ʾnrʾ) style and is most typical of the Late Palestinian Series (Ben-Tor 2007: 165–166; Tufnell 1984: 121). Richards (2001: 11) defines “anra” scarabs as those with a sequence of hieroglyphs on the base that always include ʾ, n, r, and ʾ (signs D36 [𓂝], N35 [𓈖], D21 [𓂋], and D36 [𓂝]). The exact appearance and chronology of the “anra” scarab is unknown, but 70% of “anra” scarabs originate in Palestine (Richards 2001: 162). Richards (2001: 162) indicates that they coincide with the Second Intermediate Period or MB IIB–MB IIC (=MB III).

Van der Veen indicates that Scarab Three contains pseudo-hieroglyphs in three columns with the central column (ḫpr, r, k3, r, Kheper-ka-Re) reflecting the royal name of Senwosret I (Senusret I).[[18]](#footnote-18) Senusret I reigned ca. 1919–1875 BCE (Silverman 1997: 28). The iconography is suggestive of his prenomen (throne name), but there is not a cartouche around the hieroglyphic signs. Also, it does not have the requisite sign for the sun, Re N5 [𓇳] (Gardiner 1927: 474), but has two mouths, D21 [𓂋] (Gardiner 1927: 444).

There is one parallel from Tel el-Ajjul (Petrie 1933: Pl. 3: 8; Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 79: 22), that Keel (1997: No. 378, 230–231) also notes. It dates to the Late 13thDynasty–15th Dynasty, 1675–1522 BCE. Petrie (1933: 4) indicated it derives from a time after the Hyksos and was likely manufactured in Canaan.

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Figure 15: Scarab from Tel el-Ajjul (Petrie 1933: Pl. 3: 8; Keel 1997: No. 378, 230–231; Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 79: 22).

Ceramics: The ceramic assemblage corresponding to this scarab is from the Middle Bronze Age (Stripling 2018: 31) as indicated by the following: 1.) Middle Bronze Age Juglet, Object 1083 from Locus 14 (Stripling 2018, Figure 11, 31); 2.) Middle Bronze Age Lamp, AE30.14.39 (Stripling 2018: Figure 6, 138–139); and 3.) Middle Bronze Age Storage Jar, AE30.15.43.2 (Stripling 2018: Figure 5, 137).[[19]](#footnote-19)

Bonafil (2019: 88; Pl. 1.3.30 1, 2, 4, and 6) describes similar juglets from Megiddo as buff, elongated, oval-shaped, with high outwardly inclined necks. According to Freud (2018, 3), lamps with a rounded base or small disk base date to the Middle Bronze Age IIB–Middle Bronze IIC (=MB III) (Figure 19). She (2018, 3) describes the pithoi with a splayed high neck and everted molded rim as more typical to the later part of the Middle Bronze Age (Figure 21). Table 2 lists parallels.

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Figure 16: Ceramic assemblage associated with Scarab Three. Photo courtesy of Michael C. Luddeni. Drawings by Ortal Harush.

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Table 2: Parallels for ceramic assemblage associated with Scarab Three.

The following table lists the strata range for each Shiloh scarab and shows how all three scarabs date from ca. 1750–1220 BCE.

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Table 3: Date Ranges for Shiloh Scarabs. Courtesy of Gary D. Urie.

**Heirlooms and Postdeposition Activities**

The dates for scarabs, especially Thutmose III scarabs, can vary greatly. The idea a scarab is commemorative or posthumous is often presented as an explanation for scarabs from earlier pharaohs found in later contexts. However, scarabs should be dated according to their typology and not assumed to date to another period, especially if found in a clean context. This assumption relies on the accuracy of current scarab typology.

Brandl provides possible explanations for scarabs from earlier periods appearing in later contexts. His (2019: 155) example is a 17th century BCE Middle Bronze Age scarab from Nahal Aviv that appeared in an Early Roman context. He (2019: 155) explains that the appearance in a later context may be due to “The Heirloom Paradigm” or postdeposition activities. In the first explanation, scarabs passed down from generation to generation appear in a later context (Brandl 2019: 155). In the second explanation, small finds from earlier periods move around at sites because of settlement activity and reemerge in later contexts (Brandl 2019: 155).[[20]](#footnote-20) Other post deposition activity may include scarabs from burial tombs or burial caves becoming the personal property of others then passed to later generations or even reburied with a subsequent owner (Brandl 2019: 155). Tombs are the greatest source for scarabs, especially those from the Early and Late Palestinian Series scarabs, which according to Ben-Tor (2007: 186), come primarily from Canaanite tombs.

**Conclusion**

Although only Scarab Three derives from a clean archeological context, all three Shiloh scarabs through either chronology, typology, or iconography, or a combination thereof, provide insight into their origins and the history of Shiloh.

The earliest date for Scarab One derives from its design containing the royal name of Thutmose III. His accession dates range from ca. 1451–1476 BCE (Schneider 2010: 377). The typological features range in date from the Early Palestinian Series to the Late Palestinian Series. A parallel cited by Keel (Pl. 38: 282, 283) and subsequently by Ben-Tor, who cites Keel, came from Lachish Tomb/Cave 4004.[[21]](#footnote-21) Tufnell dates it to Middle Bronze Age IIC (=MB III)–Late Bronze Age III; 1600–1370 BCE. However, she (1958: 97 and 281) mentions reuse of the cave in ca. 1220 BCE. The range of dates for this scarab are 1476­–1200 BCE (LBI–LBII).

Scarab Two provides a relative date despite its damage. The typological features range in date from the Early Palestinian Series to the Late Palestinian Series. The design class (3B5) is more prevalent in the Late Palestinian Series type [MB IIB–MB IIC (=MB III)]. The parallel dates to MB IIB, 1650–1550 BCE. This scarab is likely a Canaanite imitation of a Middle Kingdom style dating to Middle Bronze Age IIB but not later than Middle Bronze Age IIC (=MB III).

Scarab Three dates to the Middle Bronze Age IIB–Middle Bronze Age IIC (=MB III) based on the context of its discovery (stratigraphy). Its typology ranges from the Early to the Late Palestinian Series. Its iconography as indicated by the “anra” composition dates it to MB IIB–MB IIC (=MB III). The parallel from Tel el-Ajjul dates to the same timeframe (1675–1522 BCE).

**Appendix**

**Catalog of ABR Shiloh Scarabs (Seasons 1–5)**

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1. The Appendix contains a catalog of all the scarabs discovered at Shiloh over six seasons. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Aege Schmidt executed several initial sondages in 1922. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Personal communication with Reut Ben Arie. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. We are grateful for the helpful feedback of scholars Daphne Ben-Tor and Pieter Gert van der Veen. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Symmetrical inscriptions begin with a middle hieroglyph between other hieroglyphs. Reading starts in the center and proceeds left to right or right to left. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. According to Tufnell (1984: 36), Humeral Callosity is a term entomologists use to denote the shoulders of beetles. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The damage to this scarab inhibits a more refined classification for the sides. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Design class 3C appears in Palestine earlier than in Egypt. Poorly rendered signs and pseudo-hieroglyphs are typical of this class (Ben-Tor 1997: 171–75; 2007: 83). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Ben-Tor, personal correspondence, January 16, July 8, and October 19, 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. van der Veen, personal correspondence, July 24, 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ben-Tor, 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Ben-Tor, 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. van der Veen, 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Ben-Tor, 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Ben-Tor, 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. van der Veen, 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. van der Veen, 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. van der Veen, 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Locus 15 is contiguous with Locus 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Contamination could also explain the anachronism. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Ben-Tor, 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)