



AMULETS IN CONTEXT: A VIEW FROM LATE BRONZE AGE TEL AZEKAH

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents evidence for the function of Egyptian amulets in daily life at Late Bronze Age Tel Azekah. The finding of the remains of two individuals in a destroyed Late Bronze Age building along with clusters of Egyptian scarabs and figurative amulets indicates that these artifacts were their personal belongings. It is argued that these Egyptian-originated charm practices were adopted and adapted by the locals, who incorporated them into their own religion.

INTRODUCTION

Scholarly perception of the days of the Egyptian hegemony in the southern Levant has changed in the past two decades, from a generalized reconstruction of subjugators and subjugated to a more balanced picture of mutual interaction. Alongside the accepted view of Egyptian military and economic hegemony over Canaan during the 15th–early 12th centuries BCE,¹ there is growing scholarly interest in the Egyptian–indigenous colonial encounters, especially in the exchange of ideas between the indigenous population and the Egyptians and the choices made by the indigenous population in the southern Levant in their appropriation of Egyptian-originated artifacts and practices.²

One aspect in the material record of the Late

Bronze southern Levant that illuminates this colonial discourse is the local usage of Egyptian amulets. Throughout this period, Egyptian seal-amulets, mostly scarabs, were imported in large numbers, along with Egyptian figurative amulets, which were introduced into the area from the LB IIB.³ In the southern Levant, the common discovery of these artifacts in tombs led to their identification as personal items, continuing the apotropaic function they fulfilled in their owners' lifetime,⁴ although supporting evidence was limited to clusters of amulets found in temples and individual amulets in occupational levels. In this paper, we present evidence for the daily use of Egyptian amulets, found in the remains of a Late Bronze III⁵ building at Tel Azekah. Following the presentation of the

artifacts,⁶ we evaluate their appropriation by their owners, placing them within the context of the broader indigenous–Egyptian discourse.

TEL AZEKAH AND AREA T2

Tel Azekah, located on the northern edge of a ridge running north–south in the hilly Shephelah (Fig. 1), overlooks and controls a strategic junction of roads leading from the coastal plain in the west through the Ella Valley to the highlands in the east. The Lautenschläger Azekah Expedition, which began in 2009, included five excavation seasons during 2012–2016.⁷ Seven sections were excavated along the southern (Area S1), eastern (Areas E1 and E3), western (Areas W1, W2 and W3) and northern (Area N1) slopes; one area (Area S2) was opened at a lower terrace to the south of the mound; and two areas (Areas T1 and T2) were excavated on its summit (Fig. 2). To date, the Late Bronze Age is the most notable period to have been uncovered at Tel Azekah, with occupational remains dating from its various phases found in eight of the ten excavated areas.⁸

The excavations in Area T2 (Fig. 3) unearthed the remains of a large architectural compound, Building T2/F627, in the southeastern sector, as well as an open area—probably a street—to the west. The building has not yet been exposed in its entirety, and some of its features were disturbed by later, Iron II and Persian-Hellenistic, occupations. The structure consists of two main parts: a northern room (T2/F628) and an area to the south, partitioned into three sub-spaces (T2/F630, T2/F631 and T2/F639). The entrance led into the southern part of the structure. The northern room was roofed and the top of the structure was used for storage.⁹ On the ground floor, in the middle of the northern room, there is an elaborate grinding installation with an adjacent collecting vat. To the north of the building, remains of another structure destroyed in this phase were exposed; further investigation is necessary to determine the architectural relation of the two structures.

The architectural compound was found below thick destruction debris, evidence of a devastating event. The debris includes collapsed architecture with melted mudbricks, large amounts of intact and smashed ceramic items and precious objects. More than 200 complete vessels were uncovered from the destroyed building. The assemblage includes almost the entire range of pottery that can be found in southwest Canaan during the LB IIB and III (Fig. 4), including types such as carinated bowls with a

hammer rim and bowls with a sigma rim and a circular decoration that made it possible to further narrow down the timeframe to the LB III.¹⁰

The remains of four individuals were uncovered in the destruction debris of Building T2/F627.¹¹ They were all found pinned under heavy fallen objects, some of their bodies contorted in apparent positions of self-protection in response to the collapse of the building. All four individuals also exhibited evidence of moderate to heavy burning in their bones. The first individual, between 13–17 years of age, was uncovered in Room T2/F628 (Locus 13/L220), next to a grinding installation (Fig. 5). The second individual, found in the northern part of the compound (Locus 14/L407) (Fig. 6), probably female, between 15–20; the skeleton's slender build and very light muscle markings suggest that this individual

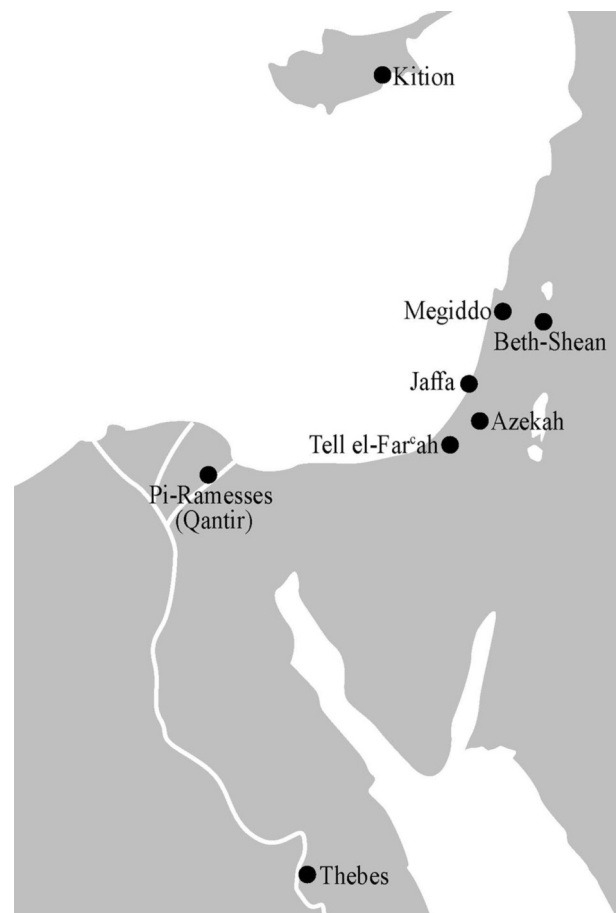
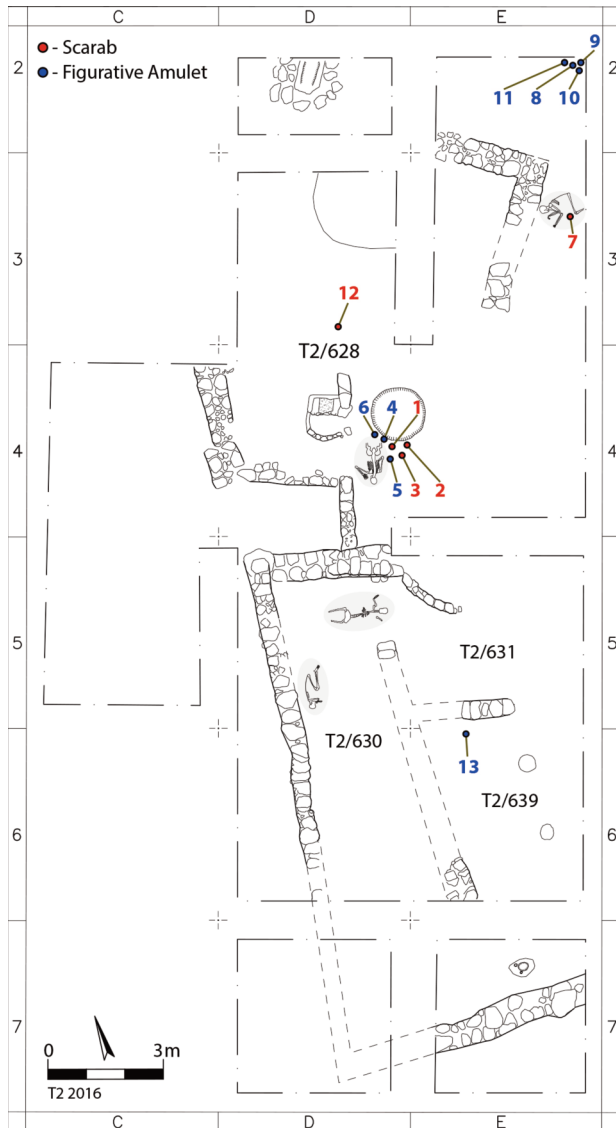


FIGURE 1: Location map of Tel Azekah.

FIGURE 2: Plan of excavation areas at Tel Azekah.



FIGURE 3: Plan of Area T2, Phase T2-3a, Building T2/F627.



was not accustomed to manual labor. Two individuals were uncovered in room T2/F630 (Locus 13/L262): one was an adult male and the other was a female, both over the age of 19; the skeletal evidence of both individuals indicates chronic physiological stress, possibly reflecting a significant episode of

illness or malnutrition that ended some time before death. These two individuals also exhibit changes in the spine consistent with load-bearing activity, possibly suggesting heavy lifting or other manual labor, and the adult female has muscle markings showing strenuous use of the arms, such as might be seen in weaving or grinding.

LATE BRONZE AGE AMULETS FROM AREA T2

Five scarabs and eight figurative amulets were found in Area T2 (Table 1), in addition to 95 beads, not discussed here.¹²

Twelve artifacts were unearthed in four clusters alongside the remains of two of the individuals:¹³

1. Locus 13/L220: The remains of the young individual were found along with three scarabs (nos. 1–3), three figurative amulets (nos. 4–6) and 65 beads.¹⁴
2. Locus 14/L407: One scarab (no. 7) and 16 beads were found alongside the remains of the individual in the northern part of the area.
3. Locus 14/L411: Four figurative amulets (nos. 8–11) and a large elongated bead were found about four meters to the north of the second cluster.



FIGURE 4: Pottery assemblage from LB III destruction layer in Area T2.



FIGURE 5: Human remains in Locus 13/L220.



FIGURE 6: Human remains in Locus 14/L407.

4. Locus 14/L427: A figurative amulet (no. 13) was found together with 13 beads in a room (T2/639), located in the southeastern part of the compound.¹⁵

1. SCARAB, L. 220, NO. 40901/80, STEATITE, BLUE GLAZE, 17X13X8 MM (FIG. 7.1)

A single-line frame encloses a vertically arranged scene depicting an anthropomorphic figure on the right, adorned with a typical royal marker—the blue crown decorated with a uraeus. The figure stands in an adoration posture in front of a falcon-headed anthropomorphic figure holding a schematic w^3s scepter. Below there is a double line, perhaps representing a nb sign (Gardiner's V30). Above the two figures three signs (from right to left) read: w^3r (F12), m^3t (C10), and a short horizontal line that might represent R^c (N5); if this is correct, the R^c sign might identify the hawk-headed figure as Re-Horakhty; alternatively, all three signs might stand

for a royal name, such as $Wsr-m^3t-r^c$ [*Stp.n.-r^c*] (Ramesses II), $Wsr-m^3t-r^c$ [*mrj-jmn*] (Ramesses III), or $Wsr-m^3t-r^c$ [*Stp.n.-jmn*] (Ramesses IV, during his first year of reign).

No exact parallel has been published. A more detailed scene, with the name of Ramesses II written in full, is depicted on a scarab uncovered in LB IIB–III Tomb 984 at Tell el-Far'ah (S).¹⁶ Other variants depict a different worshipped deity, the most common of which being Ptah, worshipped by a king, sometimes accompanied by a similar constellation of signs.¹⁷

2. SCARAB, L. 220, NO. 41477/80, STEATITE, RED AND GREEN GLAZE, 19X14X8 MM (FIG. 7.2)

In this vertically arranged depiction, a single-line frame encloses the name of the god Amun-Re ($Jmn-r^c$) with two sun-disks above a n sign (N35) and a nb sign (V30), all embraced by a lotus flower. Identical parallels come from an unknown context at Tell Beit-

TABLE 1: Late Bronze Age Amulets from Area T2.

NO.	CONTEXT	OBJECT	TYPE	DATE	FIG.
1	L. 220, destruction debris on floor of room T2/F628	40901/80	Scarab	19th–20th Dynasties	7.1
2		41477/80	Scarab	20th Dynasty	7.2
3		41729/80	Figurative amulet	19th–20th Dynasties	7.3
4		40902/80	Figurative amulet	20th Dynasty	8.1
5		4094080	Figurative amulet	20th Dynasty	8.2
6		41780/80	Figurative amulet	20th Dynasty	8.3
7	L. 407, destruction debris on floor T2/14/F603	42815/80	Scarab	20th Dynasty	9.1
8	L. 411, destruction debris on floor T2/14/F603	43005/80	Figurative amulet	20th Dynasty	9.2
9		43019/80	Figurative amulet	20th Dynasty	9.3
10		43011/80	Figurative amulet	20th Dynasty	9.4
11		43020/80	Figurative amulet	20th Dynaty	9.5
12	L. 105, destruction debris on floor of room T2/F628	41078/80	Scarab	19th–20th Dynasties	10.1
13	L. 427, destruction debris on floor of room T2/F639	42567/80	Figurative amulet	20th Dynasty	10.2

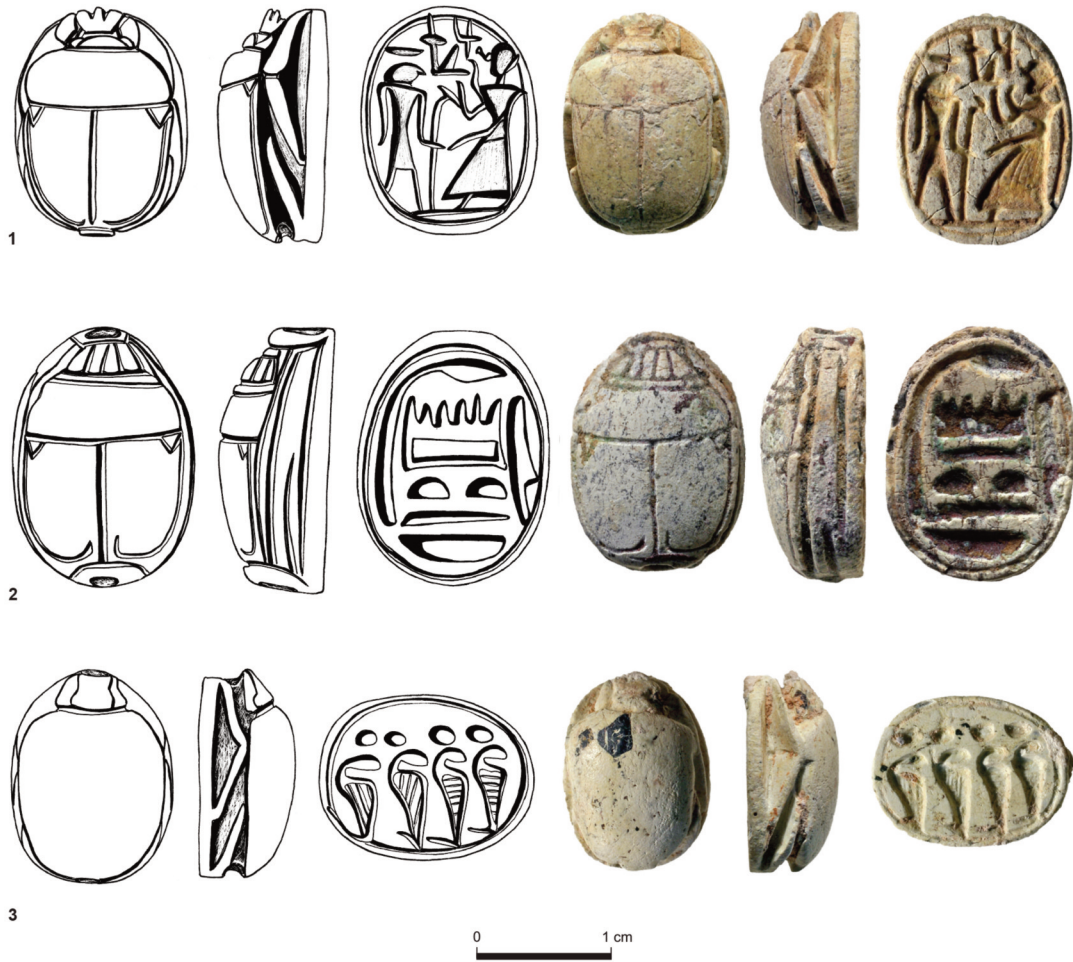


FIGURE 7.1: Scarab 40901/80.

FIGURE 7.2: Scarab 41477/80.

FIGURE 7.3: Scarab 41729/80.

Mirsim Stratum C,¹⁸ from Tomb 7 in the northern cemetery of Tel Beth Shean,¹⁹ from Tomb 11 at Tel Beth Shemesh,²⁰ and from Tomb 934 at Tell el-Far'ah (S).²¹ See also a rectangular plaque from Tell Jemmeh.²² Lalkin suggested that this group dates from the 20th Dynasty, based on the context of Tomb 934 at Tell el-Far'ah (S).²³ Together, this group constitutes part of a broader phenomenon of Amun-Re seal-amulets that spread in the southern Levant throughout the Late Bronze Age.²⁴

3. SCARAB, L. 220, NO. 41729/80, STEATITE, 15X12X7 MM (FIG. 7.3)

On this scarab, a single-line frame encloses four

uraei with sun-disks in a horizontal arrangement. A similar depiction appears on an oval plaque from Tomb 39 at Tel Megiddo;²⁵ four diskless uraei decorate a scarab from Stratum VII at Tel Beth Shean²⁶ and a plaque from Tomb 934 at Tell el-Far'ah (S).²⁷ Based on parallels, this artifact should be dated to the 19th–early 20th Dynasty.

4. FIGURATIVE AMULET, L. 220, NO. 40902/80, COMPOSITE MATERIAL AND GREEN GLAZE, 38X13X8 MM, AMUN (FIG. 8.1)

This amulet depicts a figure with a feather crown, its right hand holding a stick. Other distinctive features are the divine beard and the short kilt. From the



FIGURE 8.1: Figurative amulet 40902/80.

FIGURE 8.2: Figurative amulet 40940/80.

FIGURE 8.3: Figurative amulet 41780/80.

position of the legs it is evident that the figure is walking. The right arm droops down at the right side of the body. The back was left blank, and the figure is perforated directly below the crown. This amulet should be identified as depicting the god Amun, as the *atef* crown with two large feathers, the divine beard, and the short kilt are characteristic features.²⁸

Amun amulets, very rare in Egypt, are usually made of precious metals or well-modelled glazed composite material.²⁹ In the southern Levant, although the name of Amun was common on scarabs since the 18th Dynasty (above), objects

depicting the god himself are very rare, with only a single example uncovered, in Tomb 513 at Tell el-Far'ah (S), assigned to the 20th Dynasty.³⁰

5. FIGURATIVE AMULET, L. 220, NO. 40940/80, COMPOSITE MATERIAL AND GREEN GLAZE, 26X14X5 MM, BES (FIG. 8.2)

This amulet depicts a standing figure with bended knees, its head displaying the typical features of Bes: a grotesque face, with broad nose and ears, inflated cheeks and a long tongue. Both hands hold the round belly. The left leg, the penis and the base are broken off. Considering the parallels, this amulet was probably originally decorated with a long penis. The back was left blank, and the figure is perforated directly below the ears. Bes amulets were common in the New Kingdom and constitute one of the most common types in the southern Levant.³¹ This simple representation, without crown or weapon, is typical of the LB IIB–Iron I.

The Bes with grotesque face and long penis is the most common Bes type and can be found in LB III strata such as Beth-Shean Stratum VII,³² Tel Lachish Level VI,³³ Tell Jemmeh Phase 10,³⁴ and contemporaneous tombs at Tell el-Far'ah (S),³⁵ Deir el-Balah³⁶ and Tel Lachish.³⁷ One unstratified Bes amulet was found at Tel Beth Shemesh,³⁸ and another specimen was found by Macalister at Tel Gezer.³⁹

6. FIGURATIVE AMULET, L. 220, NO. 41780/80, COMPOSITE MATERIAL, 15X8X6 MM, BES (FIG. 8.3)

This amulet depicts a standing figure with bended knees. Both hands hold the round belly, and a long penis is visible between the bended legs. Although it bears the features of the standard Bes depiction, contrary to the previous example it shows no facial features. On the head, however, a lion's mane, known as another typical feature of Bes,⁴⁰ is visible.

7. SCARAB, L. 407, NO. 42815/80, STEATITE, 16X12X7 MM (FIG. 9.1)

In this horizontal arrangement, a suckling gazelle accompanied by two branches and an oval with the throne-name of Thutmose III (*Mn-hpr-r*) are enclosed within a single-line frame.

No parallels have been published to date. A surface find of a scarab from Tel Beth Shean is decorated with a similar composition, consisting of a gazelle (without offspring) accompanied by a branch, a lotus bud and a papyrus bud.⁴¹ A typologically similar scarab found in Tomb 9 at

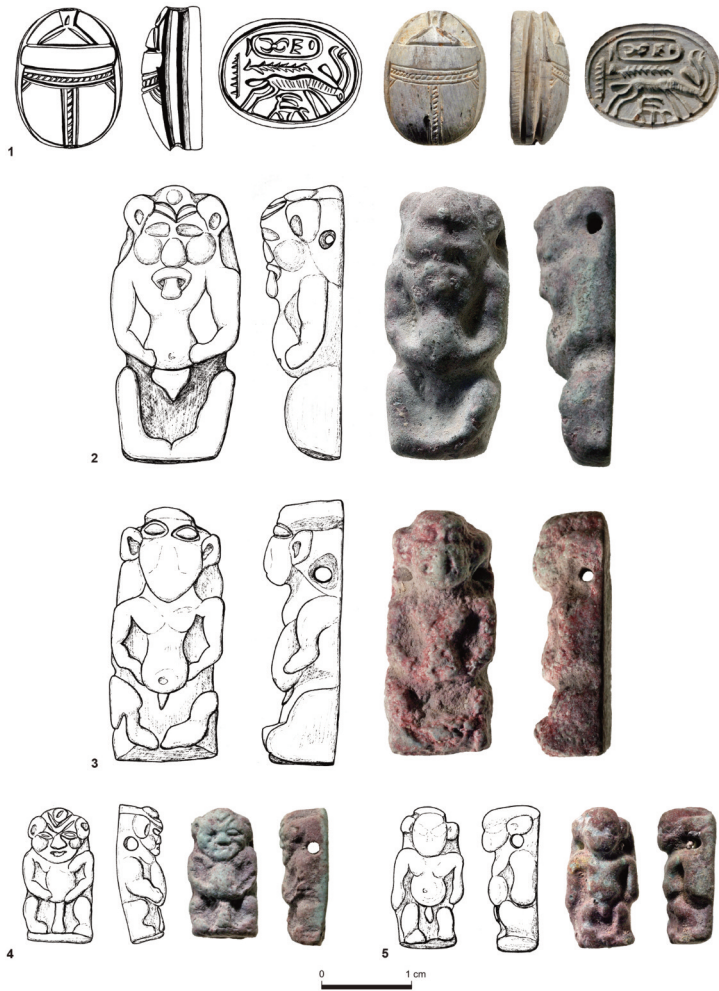


FIGURE 9.1: Scarab 42815/80.

FIGURE 9.2: Figurative amulet 43005/80.

FIGURE 9.3: Figurative amulet 43019/80.

FIGURE 9.4: Figurative amulet 43011/80.

FIGURE 9.5: Figurative amulet 43020/80.

Kition depicts a similar scene, in which a lizard stands for the upper register.⁴² A plaque from Tomb 252 at Tel Gezer depicts a more complex scene, featuring a suckling gazelle along with additional elements;⁴³ the reverse side depicts the figures of Ramesses III alongside two deities above a cartouche of Thutmose III; and the narrow sides of the plaque depict an oval with the king's throne-name (*Wsr-mꜣꜥt-rꜥ mrj-jmn*) and an oval with his personal name (*Rꜥ-msj-sw ḥqꜥ Jwnw*).

The suckling gazelle scene is known from Egypt as early as the Old Kingdom; it stems from the closeness of the inhabitants of the Nile Valley and those of the desert, leading to the integration of desert animals in various pictorial depictions.⁴⁴ Its combination with the oval of Thutmose III is peculiar, albeit not unique; the scarab found in an unknown context at Tell Jemmeh is decorated with a scene depicting an antelope with the oval, accompanied by a *Mꜣꜥt* feather and *ḥꜣ* sign (N28).⁴⁵ The oval with the name of Thutmose III has been long interpreted as a cryptographic writing of the name of Amun-Re.⁴⁶

8. FIGURATIVE AMULET, L. 411, 43005/80, COMPOSITE MATERIAL, 31x14x9 MM, BES (FIG. 9.2)

The head of this standing figure with bended knees bears the typical features of Bes: the grotesque face, with broad nose and ears, inflated checks and long tongue. Unlike other Bes amulets uncovered at the site, this example has a small penis. Both hands hold the round belly. The back was left blank, and the figure is perforated directly below the ears. This exemplar was probably made in a mold found at Qantir.⁴⁷

9. FIGURATIVE AMULET, L. 411, NO. 43019/80, COMPOSITE MATERIAL, 15x8x5 MM, BES (FIG. 9.3)

The head of this standing figure with bended knees displays the typical features of Bes: the grotesque face, with broad nose and ears, inflated checks and outstretched tongue; the long penis is also characteristic of Bes. Both hands hold the round belly. The back was left blank, and the figure is perforated directly below the ears.

10. FIGURATIVE AMULET, L. 411, NO. 43011/80, COMPOSITE MATERIAL, 28x13x8 MM, PATAIKOS (FIG. 9.4)

The head of this standing figure with bended knees is characterized by its pronounced ears and big eyes. The figure's breasts are visible. Both hands hold the round belly, which is marked with a distinctive belly button. The back was left blank, and the figure is perforated directly below the ears. The relatively simple representation of the face and the small penis give these amulets the appearance of a small human, the Pataikos. This type was, together with Bes, one

of the most common amulets in the southern Levant during the Late Bronze Age.⁴⁸ In this simple representation, with no head, collar, weapons, or a scarab as a headdress, this type is typical of the LB IIB–Iron I.

An identical mold was found at Qantir,⁴⁹ and an almost exact parallel was uncovered in Tel Megiddo Stratum VIA.⁵⁰ More than 50 examples of this type were unearthed in Cemetery 900 at Tell el-Far’ah (S),⁵¹ along with additional parallels from tombs at Tel Beth Shemesh⁵² and Tel Lachish.⁵³

11. FIGURATIVE AMULET, L. 411, NO. 43020/80, COMPOSITE MATERIAL, 16x8x6 MM, PATAIKOS (FIG. 9.5) The head of this standing figure with bended knees is characterized by its pronounced ears; however, it has no further characteristic features. Both arms are laid straight down at the sides of the body. A small penis is visible between the legs. The back was left blank, and the figure is perforated directly below the ears.

12. SCARAB, L. 105, NO. 41078/80, STEATITE, 16x12x8 MM (FIG. 10.1) On this scarab, the name of the god Amun (*Jmn*), together with another sign, perhaps a schematic thin *nb*, are enclosed within a notched frame in a horizontal arrangement. A fine parallel comes from

Stratum N-4 at Tel Beth-Shean;⁵⁴ see also several similar compositions from contemporaneous Tombs 978 and 984 at Tell el-Far’ah (S).⁵⁵ Based on these parallels, we date the scarab from Tel Azekah to the late 19th–early 20th Dynasty.

13. FIGURATIVE AMULET, L. 427, NO. 42567/80, COMPOSITE MATERIAL, 30x15x9 MM, BES WITH LOIN CLOTH (FIG. 10.2)

The head of this standing figure with bended knees displays the typical features of Bes: the grotesque face, with broad nose and ears, inflated checks and long tongue. Both hands hold the round belly, which is marked by a distinctive belly button. Contrary to the standard Bes, this type is depicted with a loin cloth. The piece of decorated fabric between the legs is usually identified with the long penis of the Bes⁵⁶ or with an ape’s or lion’s tail.⁵⁷ However, the distinct pattern on the object and other pictorial parallels⁵⁸ clearly demonstrate that this type of Bes features an elaborate loin cloth, rather than a long penis. The back was left blank, and the figure is perforated directly below the ears. This Bes amulet with a grotesque face and a loin cloth belongs to a very specific type. Parallels have been found at LB III Tombs 929, 947 and 960 at Tell el-Far’ah (S).⁵⁹

DISCUSSION

The large concentration of amulets, coupled with our knowledge of their spatial distribution in relation to the human remains, calls for an evaluation of the items’ function and symbolic character. More specifically, it raises questions regarding the place of these Egyptian amulets in the daily lives of their owners. Our point of departure is the long history of scarabs in the southern Levant since the Middle Bronze Age, when Middle Kingdom scarabs were imported there and prosperous local production of scarabs developed, leading to the widespread distribution of numerous amulets across the country. This production was based upon a limited range of appropriated Egyptian pictorial concepts (from good-luck formulae to figures of deities or their attributes), entangled with local pictorial traditions.⁶⁰ In a slow and gradual process during the Late Bronze Age and more visibly during

FIGURE 10.1: Scarab 41078/80.

FIGURE 10.2: Figurative amulet 42567/80.



the LB IIA onwards, Egyptian imports largely replaced the locally produced scarabs, reaching the zenith of their popularity during the LB IIB. They were distributed throughout the southern Levant, mediating royal propaganda featuring royal and divine figures, best known from the era of Ramesses II.⁶¹ At the same time, sudden and widespread importation of figurative amulets into the southern Levant commenced, most probably orchestrated from the eastern Delta.⁶²

The vast majority of these artifacts were found in burials, sometimes composing a necklace placed on or next to the body of its owner.⁶³ It has been proposed that these Middle Bronze burials of amulets indicates that these were personal items, buried with their owners,⁶⁴ or alternatively, that they were part of a funeral kit, an essential component in the afterlife of the deceased.⁶⁵ The discovery of two individuals, each accompanied by a cluster of scarabs, figurative amulets and beads in the destroyed structure at Tel Azekah, seems to strengthen the former interpretation, at least with regard to the LB III. The burial of individuals and their amulets is attested in Egypt since the First Intermediate Period, and the function of these artifacts can be understood against the background of Middle Kingdom texts describing rituals that include incantations and a symbolic threading of amulets, beads, and seashells onto a necklace, functioning as a charm, a physical embodiment of divine protection.⁶⁶ The amulets discovered in tombs should therefore be viewed, in our opinion, as relics of their owners' lives.

Owners of Egyptian amulets in Late Bronze Canaan usually belonged to the indigenous population of the region.⁶⁷ From its initial stages, Egyptian activity in the southern Levant was accompanied by collaboration with local groups, and through the many generations that followed, an intermediate elite emerged. Its members continuously interacted with Egyptian officials and other agents and were exposed to various practices and ideas that they selectively adopted and appropriated. The material remains of such interactions attest to a gradual, yet constant, transformation of local pictorial depictions,⁶⁸ cuisine,⁶⁹ cult practices,⁷⁰ architectural concepts,⁷¹ and pottery-production techniques.⁷²

Along the same line of thought, we suggest that the appropriation of Egyptian amulets by the indigenous population throughout the Middle and Late Bronze Ages reflects the entanglement of

Egyptian artifacts in local practices. Moreover, upon their acquisition by locals, the amulets (figurative amulets and seal-amulets alike) were detached from their Egyptian context and were given new meanings, based upon local pictorial conventions. They could possibly have been taken as protective intermediaries between the common people and the divine sphere⁷³ or as prestigious jewelry attesting to social status. Over the centuries, this process had a dual outcome: (1) the consumption of the Egyptian amulets was shared by Egyptian and indigenous groups for both the living and the dead, and (2) further Egyptian pictorial concepts and even complete scenes were appropriated and localized.⁷⁴

SUMMARY

We have presented above direct evidence for the daily use of Egyptian amulets by the inhabitants of Tel Azekah in the LB III. At least two clusters of amulets were found in direct association with two individuals, thus suggesting that the use of these objects goes beyond their function as funerary items. Moreover, it has been suggested that for those possessing the amulets, the Egyptian symbols and motifs were contextualized within a local meaning. Thus, for example, the king was considered to be a guardian and perhaps even a mediator with the gods, and not merely an aggressor to be feared. Finally, this study expresses the multifaceted character of Egyptian-indigenous colonial encounters in the Late Bronze Age, as well as the complex interaction of negotiation and collaboration that brought about the integration of Egypt into local daily life.

¹ Ellen F. Morris, *The Architecture of Imperialism. Military Bases and the Evolution of Foreign Policy in Egypt's New Kingdom* (Leiden—Boston: Brill, 2005); Mario A.S. Martin, *Egyptian-Type Pottery in the Late Bronze Age Southern Levant* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2011).

² Carolyn R. Higginbotham, "Elite Emulation and Egyptian Governance in Ramesside Canaan," *Tel Aviv* 23 (1996): 154–169; *Egyptianization and Elite Emulation in Ramesside Palestine: Governance and Accommodation on the Imperial Periphery* (Leiden—Boston—Köln: Brill, 2000); Ido Koch, "Goose Keeping, Elite Emulation and

- Egyptianized Feasting at Late Bronze Lachish," *Tel Aviv* 41 (2014): 161–179; "Revisiting the Fosse Temple at Lachish," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 17 (2017): 64–75.
- ³ Christian Herrmann, *Ägyptische Amulette aus Palästina/Israel. Mit einem Ausblick auf ihre Rezeption durch das Alte Testament* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1994), 31; *Amulettführer durch die Welt der Ägyptischen Amulette aus Israel/Palästina* (Wangen: Evangelisches Pfarramt Gachnang, 2012), 6; *Ägyptische Amulette aus Palästina/Israel. Band IV: Von der Spätbronzezeit IIB bis in römische Zeit* (Fribourg—Göttingen: Academic Press—Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016), 1. The most common types in the southern Levant were the Udjat eye, Pataikos, Bes and figures with feline heads (Herrmann 2012, 5).
 - ⁴ See, for example, Assaf Yasur-Landau "Socio-Political and Demographic Aspects of the Middle Bronze Age Cemetery at Jericho," *Tel Aviv* 19 (1992): 238–239.
 - ⁵ We have opted for this terminology (following, e.g., Michael B. Toffolo et al. "Absolute Chronology of Megiddo, Israel, in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages: High-Resolution Radiocarbon Dating," *Radiocarbon* 56 [2014], DOI 10.2458/56.16899.) instead of others, such as Iron IA (Seymour Gitin [ed.], *The Ancient Pottery of Israel and Its Neighbors from the Iron Age through the Hellenistic Period* [Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2015]) or Transitional (Late) Bronze and Iron Ages (TBI) (Martin 2011, 18–20), since it highlights the continuation in settlement pattern, consumption practices, and cultic practices, alongside the intense Egyptian presence.
 - ⁶ The full publication of the amulets is in preparation by Koch and Kleiman.
 - ⁷ The expedition is conducted under the auspices of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University and the Theological Seminary (Wissenschaftlich-Theologisches Seminar) at Heidelberg University and is directed by Oded Lipschits, Yuval Gadot and Manfred Oeming.
 - ⁸ Sabine Kleiman, Yuval Gadot and Oded Lipschits, "A Snapshot of the Destruction Layer of Tell Zakariye/Azekah Seen against the Backdrop of the Final Days of the Late Bronze Age," *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 132/2 (2016): 105–133; Oded Lipschits, Yuval Gadot, and Manfred Oeming, "Four Seasons of Excavations at Tel Azekah: The Expected and (Especially) Unexpected Results," in Oded Lipschits and Aren M. Maeir (eds.), *The Shephelah during the Iron Age: Recent Archaeological Studies* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2017), 1–25.
 - ⁹ Sabine Metzger, *On the Eve of Destruction: Analyzing the Chronology, Function and Distribution Pattern of a Late Bronze Pottery Assemblage from Tel Azekah* (unpublished MA thesis, Tel Aviv University, 2015), 127–128.
 - ¹⁰ Kleiman, Gadot and Lipschits 2016, fig. 4:7, 9.
 - ¹¹ These human remains are currently being studied by K. Berendt of the University of Alberta. For a preliminary description, see Sabine Kleiman et al. "Late Bronze Age Azekah – an Almost Forgotten Story," in Aren M. Maeir, Itzick Shai and Chris McKinny (eds.), *'And the Canaanite was then in the land': New Perspectives on the Late Bronze Age of Southern Canaan and its Surroundings* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, forthcoming).
 - ¹² The bead assemblage is being prepared for publication by R. Hoofien of Tel Aviv University.
 - ¹³ Even though, due to the severe nature of the destruction, the objects were not found in articulation, it is relatively safe to assume that at least the clusters found alongside the human remains form interconnected necklaces, bracelets, or similar items. Items were identified as a cluster when found in a radius of less than 50 cm. The location of each amulet was either mapped by Total Station or could be very precisely assigned after the sifting of very specific areas, e.g. directly next to the human remains.
 - ¹⁴ One of the beads is shaped like a pomegranate, a popular motif in Egyptian jewelry. See Christian Herrmann, "Egyptian Amulets from Tell Jemmeh," in David Ben-Shlomo and Gus W. Van Beek (eds.), *The Smithsonian Institution Excavations at Tell Jemmeh, Israel, 1970–1990* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, 2014), 158.

- ¹⁵ Note that one of the items (80x40 mm) is a pendant molded in the shape of the head of Hathor, similar to ten specimens found at the Fosse Temple (Third Phase – LB IIB) at Tel Lachish (Olga Tufnell, Charles H. Inge and Lankester Harding, *Lachish [Tell ed-Duweir] II: The Fosse Temple* [London: Oxford University Press, 1940], Pl. 14) and Late Iron I Stratum IVA at Tel Miqne (Herrmann 1994, nos. 232–238).
- ¹⁶ Othmar Keel, *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel 3: Von Tell el-Far`a-Nord bis Tell el-Fir* (Fribourg—Göttingen: Academic Press—Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 358–359 no. 781.
- ¹⁷ Othmar Keel, *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel 2: Von Bahan bis Tel Eton* (Fribourg—Göttingen: Academic Press—Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 156–157 no. 134 with parallels.
- ¹⁸ Keel 2010 (above, n. 17), 58–59 no. 34.
- ¹⁹ Keel 2010 (above, n. 17), 138–139 no. 89.
- ²⁰ Keel 2010 (above, n. 17), 270–271 no. 124.
- ²¹ Keel 2010 (above, n. 16), 290–291 no. 612.
- ²² Othmar Keel, *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel 4: Von Tel Gamma bis Chirbet Husche* (Fribourg—Göttingen: Academic Press—Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 60–61 no. 138.
- ²³ Nir Lalkin, *Late Bronze Age Scarabs from Eretz Israel* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Tel Aviv University, 2008), 154.
- ²⁴ Othmar Keel, *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel. Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit: Einleitung* (Fribourg—Göttingen: Academic Press—Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 242–243; Silvia Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels und der Alte Orient 2: Die Spätbronzezeit* (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2011), 156.
- ²⁵ Philip L.O. Guy, *Megiddo Tombs* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1938), pl. 165 no. 1.
- ²⁶ Keel 2010 (above, n. 17), 104–105 no. 19.
- ²⁷ Keel 2010 (above, n. 16), 298–299 no. 633.
- ²⁸ Carol Andrews, *Amulets of Ancient Egypt* (London: British Museum Press 1994), 15–16;
- Philippe Germond, *The Symbolic World of Egyptian Amulets: From the Jacques-Édouard Berger Collection* (Milan: 5 Continents, 2005), 35.
- ²⁹ Andrews 1994, 16.
- ³⁰ Herrmann 2012, 48–49.
- ³¹ Andrews 1994, 40; Herrmann 2012, 87.
- ³² See, e.g., Frances W. James and Patrick E. McGovern *The Late Bronze Egyptian Garrison at Beth Shean. A Study of Levels VII and VIII*. Volume II (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology, 1993), fig. 58:5.10.
- ³³ Benjamin Sass, “Pre-Bronze Age and Bronze Age Artifacts. Section A: Vessels, Tools, Personal Objects, Figurative Art and Varia,” in David Ussishkin (ed.), *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973–1994)* (Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, 2004), fig. 23.19:7–8.
- ³⁴ Herrmann 2014, fig. 24:1g.
- ³⁵ See, e.g., Eann Macdonald, James L. Starkey, and Lankester Harding, *Beth-Pelet II* (London: British School of Archaeology in Egypt, 1932), pl. LIV:960.
- ³⁶ See, e.g., Trude Dothan, *Excavations at the Cemetery of Deir el-Balah* (Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1979), fig. 203.
- ³⁷ See, e.g., Olga Tufnell Olga, et al. *Lachish IV (Tell ed-Duweir): The Bronze Age* (London—New York—Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1958), pl. 29:53.
- ³⁸ Herrmann 1994, KatNr. 360.
- ³⁹ R.A. Stewart Macalister, *The Excavation of Gezer 1902–1905 and 1907–1909*. Vol. II (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1912), pl. CCX: 7.
- ⁴⁰ Patrick E. McGovern, *Late Bronze Palestinian Pendants. Innovation in a Cosmopolitan Age* (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, 1985), 16.
- ⁴¹ Keel 2010 (above, n. 17), 178–179 no. 182.
- ⁴² Jean Leclant, “Appendix III: Les Scarabées de la tombe 9,” in Vassos Karageorghis (ed.), *Excavations at Kition, 1: The Tombs* (Nicosia: Department of Antiquities, Cyprus, 1974), 148

- and fig. 1.
- ⁴³ Keel 2013, 210–211 no. 100.
- ⁴⁴ Dorothea Arnold, *An Egyptian Bestiary* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1995), 7–23; Åsa Strandberg, *The Gazelle in Ancient Egyptian Art Image and Meaning* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2009), 98–99, 123–124.
- ⁴⁵ Keel 2013, 28–29 no. 62.
- ⁴⁶ Keel 1995, 242–246 with previous literature.
- ⁴⁷ Herrmann 2016, 41, 130.
- ⁴⁸ Andrews 1994, 39.
- ⁴⁹ Herrmann 2016, 42, 144.
- ⁵⁰ Gottlieb Schumacher, *Tell el-Mutesellim. Report of the Excavations Conducted from 1903 to 1905 with the Support of His Majesty the German Emperor and the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft from the Deutscher Verein zur Erforschung Palästinas* (Leipzig: Haupt, 1908), pl. XXVI:m.
- ⁵¹ See, e.g., Macdonald, Starkey and Harding 1932, pl. LIV.
- ⁵² Duncan Mackenzie, *Excavations at Ain Shemesh (Beth Shemesh)* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1912–1913), pl. XXVIII:16, 18, 29, 22–23, 32.
- ⁵³ Herrmann 1994, KatNr. 507–509.
- ⁵⁴ Baruch Brandl, “Glyptics: Scarabs, Seals, Sealings and Seal Impressions,” in Nava Panitz-Cohen and Amihai Mazar (eds.), *Excavations at Tel Beth-Shean 1989–1996, Vol. III: The 13th–11th Century BCE Strata in Areas N and S* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2009), 641–642, no. 4.
- ⁵⁵ Keel 2010 (above, n. 16), 230–231 no. 476; 370–371 no. 813.
- ⁵⁶ Herrmann 1994, 341.
- ⁵⁷ McGovern 1985, 16.
- ⁵⁸ See, e.g., Veronique Dasen, *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt and Greece* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 81 and pl. 6:1.
- ⁵⁹ See, e.g., Macdonald, Starkey and Harding 1932, pl. LIV:960.
- ⁶⁰ Daphna Ben-Tor, *Scarabs, Chronology, and Interconnections: Egypt and Palestine in the Second Intermediate Period* (Fribourg—Göttingen: Academic Press—Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007); “Egyptian-Canaanite Relations in the Middle and Late Bronze Age as Reflected by Scarabs,” in Shai Bar, Dan’el Kahn, and J.J. Shirley (eds.), *Egypt, Canaan and Israel: History, Imperialism, Ideology and Literature: Proceedings of a Conference at the University of Haifa, 3–7 May 2009* (Leiden—Boston: Brill, 2011), 23–43; Orly Goldwasser, “Canaanites Reading Hieroglyphs: Horus is Hathor?—The Invention of the Alphabet in Sinai,” *Egypt and the Levant* 16 (2006): 121–160; Silvia Schroer, “Die Göttin aus den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina/Israel,” in Othmar Keel, Heidi Keel-Leu, and Silvia Schroer (eds.), *Studien zu den Stempelsiegel aus Palästina/Israel 2* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1989), 89–207; *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels und der Alte Orient 2: Die Mittelbronzezeit* (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2008). For further discussion of Egyptian–Levantine interactions in the Middle Bronze Age, see Roxanna Flammini, “Northeast Africa and the Levant in Connection: A World-System Perspective on Interregional Relationship in the Early Second Millennium BCE,” in Toby C. Wilkinson, Susan Sherratt and John Bennet (eds.), *Interweaving Worlds: Systemic Interactions in Eurasia, 7th to 1st Millennia BC* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2011), 205–217; Susan L. Cohen, “Synchronisms and Significance: Reevaluating Interconnections between Middle Kingdom Egypt and the Southern Levant,” *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 4.3 (2012): 1–8; “Reevaluation of Connections Between Egypt and the Southern Levant in the Middle Bronze Age in Light of the New Higher Chronology,” *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 13 (2017): 34–42; Anna-Latifa Mourad, *Rise of the Hyksos: Egypt and the Levant from the Middle Kingdom to the Early Second Intermediate Period* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2015); Thomas Stabuli, “Cultural and Religious Impacts of Long-Term Cross-Cultural Migration between Egypt and the Levant,” *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 12 (2016): 53–57.
- ⁶¹ Lalkin 2008; Daphna Ben-Tor, “Political Implications of New Kingdom Scarabs in Palestine during the Reigns of Tuthmosis III and Ramesses II,” in Aston, David, Bettina Bader,

Carla Gallorini, Paul Nicholson, and Sarah Buckingham (eds.), *Under the Potter's Tree: Studies on Ancient Egypt Presented to Janine Bourriau on the Occasion of her 70th Birthday* (Leuven—Paris—Walpole, MA: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2011), 201–214.

⁶² Herrmann 1994, 31; 2012, 6.

⁶³ Not many LB burials have been fully preserved or documented in detail, and this has hindered the study of the relations between interred individuals and their associated objects. Among the LB III burials at Tel Beth Shean (Eliezer D. Oren, *The Northern Cemetery of Beth Shan* [Leiden: Brill, 1973]), Tomb 7, of a single individual in an anthropoid coffin, includes two 20th-Dynasty scarabs (Keel 2010 [above, n. 17], 134–135 nos. 83–84) and six figurative amulets (Oren 1973, Fig. 41:30–33). Tomb 955 at Tell el-Far'ah (S) includes the remains of a child (Macdonald, Starkey and Harding 1932, 24, 32, pls. 50, 60, 87, 92; Susan L. Braunstein, *The Dynamics of Power in an Age of Transition: An Analysis of the Mortuary Remains of Tell el-Far'ah [South] in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age* [Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1998], 807–808), accompanied by two scarabs (Keel 2010 [above, n. 16], 252–253 nos. 525–526) and a necklace consisting of seven figurative amulets (Herrmann 1994, nos. 355–356, 377, 504, 832–833, 918). Tomb 960B includes the remains of another individual with at least two scarabs (Braunstein 1998, 814, 816; Keel 2010 [above, n. 16], 332–333 nos. 713–714), together with a necklace of nine figurative amulets (Herrmann 1994, nos. 338–339, 376, 561–562, 902–905), and nearby Tomb 960C includes another individual and 11 scarabs (Keel 2010 [above, n. 16], 332–337 nos. 715–725), the latest dating from the reign of Ramesses IV, together with a necklace of five figurative amulets (Herrmann 1994, nos. 505–506, 1234–1246). Also worthy of mention is a necklace found in Tomb 929 at Tell el-Far'ah (S), containing most of the types of figurative amulets uncovered in Area T2 (for a drawing of this necklace, see Herrmann 2012, Fig. 23): the standard Bes, the Pataikos and the Bes with loin cloth, which can only be found at Tell el-Far'ah (S). Of the types present in the necklace from Tell el-Far'ah (S), only the Sachmet and Chnum amulets are missing at Azekah; instead of these types, an Amun amulet was

uncovered in Area T2; its only parallel beyond the Egyptian homeland was found at Tell el-Far'ah (S).

⁶⁴ See, e.g., Yasur-Landau 1992, 239.

⁶⁵ Jill L. Baker, “The Funeral Kit: A Newly Defined Canaanite Mortuary Practice Based on the Middle and Late Bronze Age Tomb Complex at Ashkelon,” *Levant* 83 (2006): 2; Ben-Tor 2007, 155–156; 2011 (above, n. 61), 204; Susan L. Braunstein, “The Meaning of Egyptian-Style Objects in the Late Bronze Cemeteries of Tell el-Far'ah (South),” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 364: 18. Ben-Tor (2007, 119 with previous literature) suggested that the introduction of scarabs to Canaan during the Middle Bronze Age reflects the indigenous “adaptation of an Egyptian funerary practice that was transmitted though the Canaanite population in the eastern Delta”.

⁶⁶ Ulrike Dubiel, “Protection, Control and Prestige—Seals among the Rural Population of Qau-Matmar,” in Regulski, Ilona., Kim Duistemaat, and Peter Verkinderen (eds.), *Seals and Sealing Practices in the Near East: Developments in Administration and Magic from Prehistory to the Islamic Period* (Leuven—Paris—Walpole, MA: Uitgeverij Peeters en Departement Oosterse Studies, 2012), 67–69.

⁶⁷ Some scholars have argued that high numbers of Egyptian imports and Egyptian-style artifacts in a given site attest to an actual presence of Egyptians, most probably officials and soldiers (e.g., Itamar Singer, “Merneptah's Campaign to Canaan and the Egyptian Occupation of the Southern Coastal Plain of Palestine in the Ramesside Period,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 269 [1988]: 1–10). For a critique of this approach, see Koch 2014, 166–168.

⁶⁸ Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 65–108; Schroer 2011, 18–27.

⁶⁹ Koch 2014, 169–172.

⁷⁰ Izak Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Ba'al: Late Bronze and Iron Age I Periods (c 1500–1000 BCE)* (Fribourg—Göttingen:

- Academic Press—Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994); *The Many Faces of the Goddess: The Iconography of the Syro-Palestinian Goddesses Anat, Astarte, Qadesh, and Asherah c. 1500–1000 BCE* (Fribourg—Göttingen: Academic Press—Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004); Keiko Tazawa, *Syro-Palestinian Deities in New Kingdom Egypt: The Hermeneutics of Their Existence* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2009); Koch 2017.
- ⁷¹ Manfred Bietak, “The Function and Some Archaeological Roots of the Fosse Temple at Lachish,” in Eliezer D. Oren and Shmuel Ahituv (eds.), *Aaron Kempinski Memorial Volume* (Beersheba: Ben Gurion University Press, 2002), 58–74; Higginbotham 2000.
- ⁷² Martin 2011; Nava Panitz-Cohen, “The Organization of Ceramic Production during the Transition from the Late Bronze to the Early Iron Ages: Tel Batash as a Test Case,” in Christoph Bachhuber and R. Gareth Roberts (eds.), *Forces of Transformation: The End of the Bronze Age in the Mediterranean: Proceedings of an International Symposium Held at St. John’s College, University of Oxford 25–6th March, 2006* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2009), 186–192.
- ⁷³ Kathlyn M. Cooney and Johnna Tyrrell “Scarabs in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Part I. Distributed Propaganda or Intimate Protection,” www.PalArch.nl, *Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*, 4, 1 (2005), 6–8.
- ⁷⁴ The local production of scarabs during the Middle Bronze Age (see above) localized Egyptian concepts, such as the image of Hathor, which was then applied in depictions of local goddesses (Schroer 1989; Ben-Tor 2007, 150, 181–282), or the symbol of the winged disk, which was localized throughout the Levant and beyond (Tallay Ornan, “A Complex System of Religious Symbols: The Case of the Winged Disc in Near Eastern Imagery of the First Millennium BCE”, in Claudia E. Suter and Christoph Uehlinger [eds.], *Craft and Images in Contact: Studies on Eastern Mediterranean Art of the First Millennium BCE* [Fribourg—Göttingen: Academic Press—Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005], 207–210). No major local production of scarabs is known from the Late Bronze Age (cf. Baruch Brandl, “The Cape Gelidonya Shipwreck Scarabs Reconsidered”, in Bietak, Manfred [ed.], *The Synchronisation of Civilisations In the Eastern Mediterranean in the Second Millennium B.C. II: Proceedings of the SCIEM 2000—EuroConference, Haindorf, 2nd of May–7th of May 2001* [Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2003], 249–261). Yet, Egyptian pictorial concepts did spread in the southern Levant, such as the so-called “Seth-Ba’al,” which lasted until the Iron Age II (Keel and Uehlinger 1998, 114–116).