

## Three Seals from Sahab Tomb «C»

by

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In the publication of Sahab Tomb C, discovered in June 1968, Mr. Rafiq Dajani, Tech. Assistant Director of Antiquities, already briefly mentioned the three seals which form the subject of this article,<sup>1</sup> written at his suggestion.<sup>2</sup> Since the tomb contained Late Bronze and Early Iron Age pottery, the seals under study cannot be later than the tenth century B. C., but may be considerably earlier.

1. (J11937) An Egyptian stamp seal of green frit, oval in shape and of rather crude workmanship. The edges show some minor breaks. The seal is 29 mm. long, 18 mm. wide, and 12 mm. thick. It was found in Section C which, according to Mr. Dajani, contained LB burials. In contrast to the Egyptian scarabs and most other seals, the Sahab specimen is not perforated lengthwise but crosswise. Its back has an unusual shape, showing ribs that must have been shaped in a mold, looking like two shells placed back to back. The base contains the inscription *men-men kheper-Re*, a corrupt form of the prenomen of Thutmose III,

the correct spelling of which contains only one *men*-hieroglyph.<sup>3</sup> To the right of the inscription is a crude representation of a god, probably Seth, which indicates that the stamp seal comes from a period not preceding the nineteenth dynasty, the period when Seth came into prominence.

A number of seals similar to the Sahab specimen have been found in several places. The British Museum collection possesses two stamp seals that are close parallels to the Sahab seal. One of them has the same length and width, a ribbed back similar to the Sahab seals, and a crosswise perforation; it is made of blue frit, and contains a corrupt form of the prenomen of Thutmose III.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, unlike the Sahab seal, it does not contain the picture of a god. Hall attributes the British Museum seal to the Ramesside period, with a question mark. In view of the evidence from Sahab, his identification is undoubtedly correct. The other British Museum seal with a similar shape as the Sahab seal is of green frit and is slightly

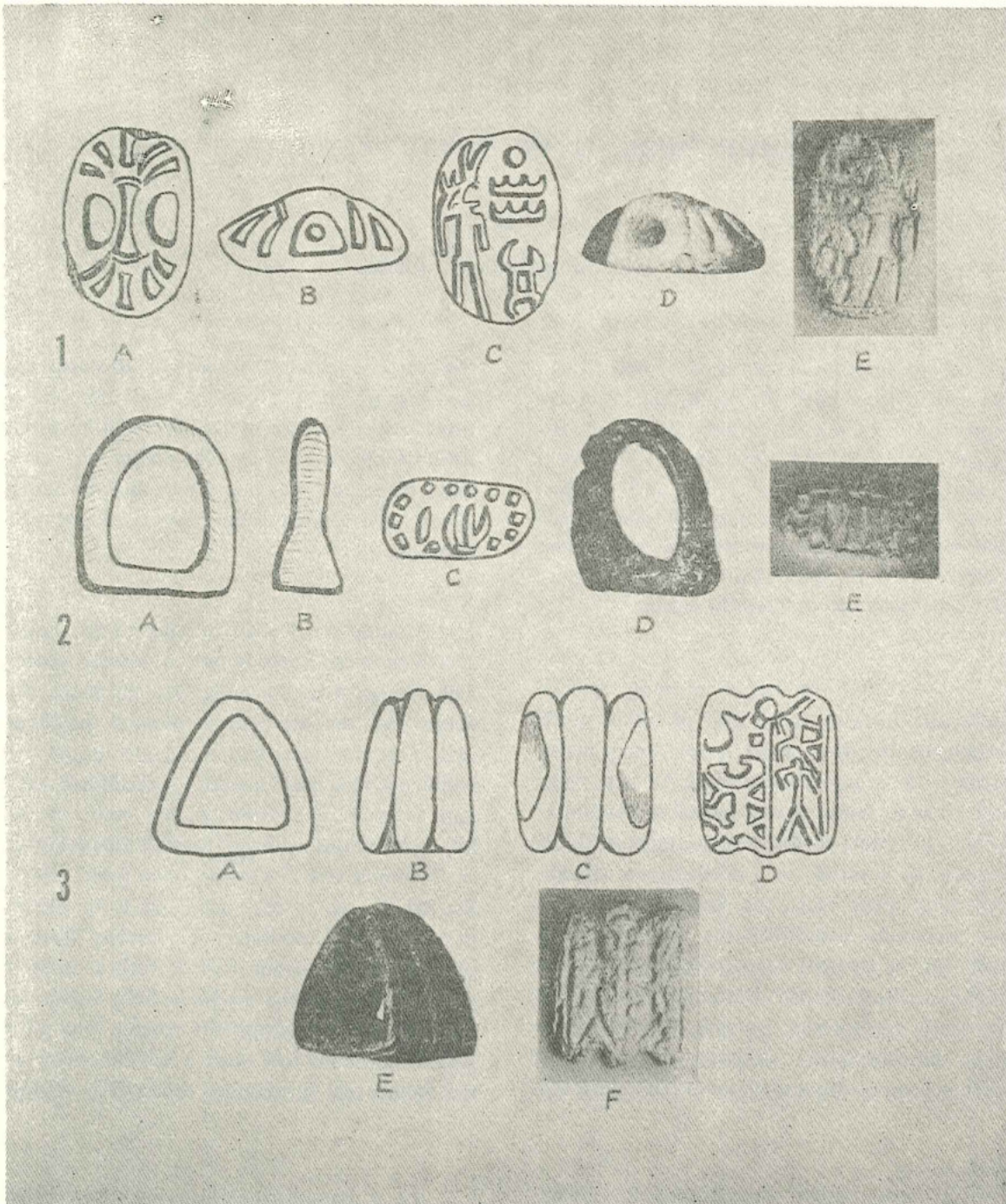
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(1) Rafiq Dajani, "Sahab Tomb C," *ADAJ*, XV (1971), p. 34.

(2) I thank Mr. Dajani, as well as Mr. Mansour Bataineh, the Director of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, for giving me the opportunity to study and publish these seals, which are housed in the Amman Museum. The photographs of Plate I were made by the department's photographer, Mr. Abu Hannah.

(3) A scarab in the private collection of Professor James L. Kelso, which he purchased in Jerusalem, contains the same corrupt prenomen of Thutmose III in a cartouche. Dr. Kelso's scarabs will soon be published by Dr. Hans Goedicke and myself.

(4) H. R. Hall, *Catalogue of Egyptian Scarabs, etc., in the British Museum* (London, 1913), p. 120, no. 1227.



1. Egyptian Seal: A. Top View; B. Side View; C. Base; D and E. Photographs of Side View and Impression of the Base.

2. Seal: A. Front View; B. Side View; C. Base; D and E. Photographs of Side View and Impression of the Base.

3. Seal: A. Front View; C. Top View; D. Base; E and F. Photographs of Side View and Impression of the Base.

(Drawings and photographs are approximately actual size)

smaller (26×15 mm.) than the Sahab seal. It contains a corrupt royal name. <sup>5</sup> Hall dates it to the nineteenth to twenty-second dynasties. Since it came to the British Museum from the Salt Collection in 1835, its Egyptian origin can hardly be doubted, because Salt obtained his collection in Egypt through agents who operated in that country. The collections of the Egyptian Museum in Berlin Charlottenburg also possess such a seal (No. 5183) which in its base bears Thutmose III's prenomen. <sup>6</sup> There other seals of a similar shape were found by Petrie at *Tell el-Far'ah* (south) which he dates in the twenty-first dynasty. Again these three specimens carry corrupt hieroglyphs. <sup>7</sup> Two similar seals, also of frit and containing corrupt hieroglyphs, were discovered in Stratum III (1100 - 925 B. C.) at *Tell Abu Hawâm*; <sup>8</sup> and four similar seals of blue frit came to light at Vrokastro in eastern Crete, also carrying a corrupt hieroglyphic inscription. <sup>9</sup>

The evidence gathered from these various seals enumerated indicates that this type of seal has its origin in Egypt, for only in this way can it be explained that specimens of these unusually-shaped seals have been found in Egypt, on the island of Crete, along the coast of Palestine, and in Transjordan. All are made of either green or blue frit and most of them contain corrupt hieroglyphic inscriptions. They seem to have been produced either in the last phase of the Late Bronze Age or during the Early Iron Age, *i. e.*, between the thirteenth and eleventh centuries B. C.

(5) *Ibid.*, p. 46, no. 427.

(6) Karl-Th. Zauzich of the Berlin Museum kindly furnished the information that this seal was obtained in 1859 from the collection of the Swedish orientalist N. G. Plain, who, prior to his death in 1842, had obtained many Egyptian antiquities during his long periods of diplomatic service in the Near East.

(7) W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Beth Pelet I*

2. (J11938) A seal in the form of a finger ring of badly corroded copper with a design that defies decipherment. The base measures 24×10.5 mm. The seal was found in Section D of the tomb, which contained Early Iron Age burials. The base shows an oval with small circles, oblongs, and squares surrounding the central field that contains four incised lines running from side to side at irregular intervals with two of the lines forming a V. It is questionable that the signs present an intelligent inscription.

3. (J11959) A well-preserved stamp seal of unusual shape with triangular, vault-shaped ring, too small to be worn on anyone's but a child's finger; hence it was probably carried on a chain or string around the neck. It seems to have been made of a flat copper plaque and three thick copper wires soldered together so that they form a vault-shaped handle. The base measures 25×20 mm., the height of the seal is 23.5 mm., and its width at the top is 10.5 mm. The thickness varies from 3.5 to 4.3 mm.

Its base contains an incised design. A line drawn lengthwise creates two equal oblong fields. On the left side is a standing human figure with only the crudest indication of legs, arms, and head. Above him seems to be a horned animal, perhaps an ibex, equally crudely made, standing on a ground formed by a line to the left of the seal's base. The center line forms the ground on which two animals stand,

(London, 1930), Pls. XXXI: 301; XXXIII: 366; XXXV: 395.

(8) R. W. Hamilton, "Excavations at Tell Abu-Hawân," *QDAP*, IV (1935), p. 28, nos. 150, 151; Alan Rowe, *A Catalogue of Egyptian Scarabs, Scaraboids, Seals and Amulets* (Cairo, 1936), pp. 259, 260 nos. S. 84, S. 85, Pl. XXIX: S. 84, S. 85.

(9) J. D. S. Pendlebury, *Aegyptiaca* (Cambridge, England, 1930), p. 39, nos. 58 - 61.

the one to the right seems to be a horned bovine with a hump, perhaps a buffalo-like animal. The animal to the left defies identification.

A similar stamp seal was discovered in October 1949 during the excavations for the building of the Amman Museum on the Citadel Mound. This badly corroded seal came from an Umayyad stratum and has on the bezel a design faintly resembling a spider.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, the collections of the Egyptian Museum in Berlin Charlottenburg possess

two bronze stamps of similar and uniform shape, but of different sizes, one being *ca.* 1.5 cm. square while the other is *ca.* 6.0 cm. square. Both seals carry the inscription *pr-'Inn*, "House (= Temple) of Amon." indicating that they came from administration of the great Amon temple at Karnak. The museum catalogue suggests that the larger of the two stamp seals may have served for the branding of cattle.<sup>11</sup> Another seal belonging to this category in the Berlin Museum has an unreadable Egyptian inscription in two fields on the base.<sup>12</sup>

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(10) G. Lankester Harding, "Excavations on the Citadel, Amman," *ADAJ*, I (1951), 10, pl. II:5.

(11) *Agyptisches Museum Berlin-Ostlicher Stülerbau am Schloss Charlottenburg* (Berlin, 1967), p. 55, nos. 562 and 562a. The larger stamp (no. 562) came to the Berlin Museum from the collection of G. Passalacqua in 1826, while the smaller stamp (no. 562a) was originally owned

by H. C. M. Minutoli from whom it was acquired by the Berlin Museum in the first half of the nineteenth century.

(12) No. 5208 in the *Agyptisches Museum (West)*. According to the information obtained from Dr. Zauzich, it was also obtained from the Minutoli collection.