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A Scarab from a Polish Private Collection

The Ancient Egyptian small objects such as scarab-beetles standing upon elliptical bases are found in great quantities in museums and in private collections. In Ancient Egypt those specimens were used for many purposes: as seals, amulets or medals commemorating historical or other events.¹

A specimen carved in the form of the sacred scarab-beetle² is in the possession of Mrs. Kamila Kołodziejczyk, a Polish archaeologist interested in Ancient Egyptian archaeology.³ She purchased it from a private dealer during her sojourn to Abydos in 1962. The scarab is in a well preserved state. It is made of grey steatite; it is 19 mm long, 13 mm wide, and 9 mm high. It is pierced longitudinally with a hole, the size of which is just sufficient to receive a thread or a thin wire.

The back of the scarab is plain; there are only two semicircular notches indicating the top of the prothorax.⁴ They divide the prothorax from the marked head and descending to the base they form a line at the base of the elytra. A short notch on each side indicates a division between the prothorax and the elytra. There is also a short line at the end of the elytra and it marks their end.⁵ The head and clypeus are carved. The head beside clypeus shows the eyes. The legs are not shown.⁶

This scarab summarily renders the details of a natural beetle; it stands on a base which is oval. In the base there is a hieroglyphic inscription. Another hieroglyphic inscription has been engraved on the back of the beetle.

The inscription on the base seems to read from the bottom of the base to the top and from right to left. It contains a god's name. Perhaps it also contains the name of

¹ P.E. Newberry, *Ancient Egyptian Scarabs*, London 1905; LÄD V, 969 A and note 2.

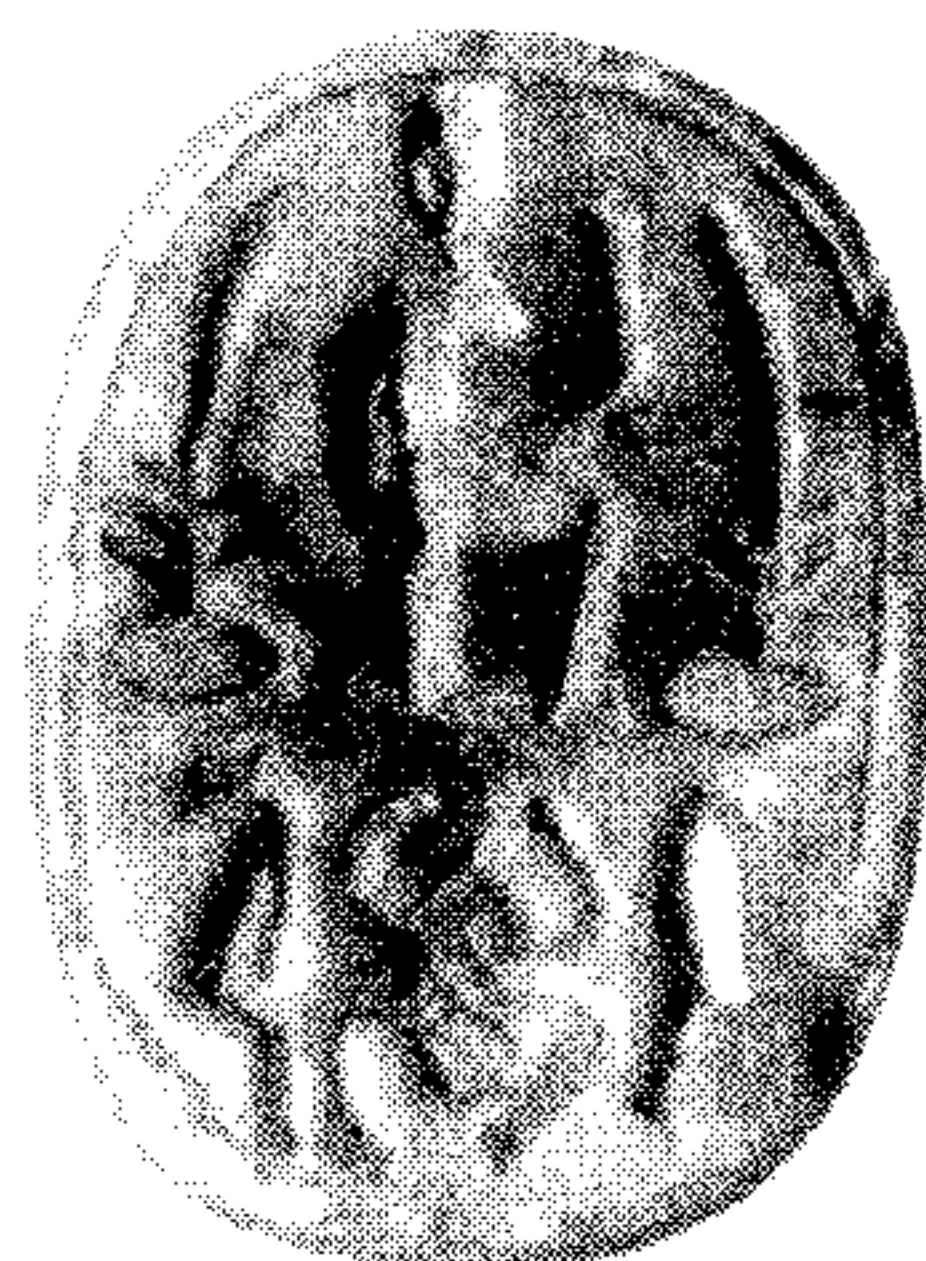
² *Scarabaeus sacer* L.. On *scarabaeus sacer* see A. Leńkowa, *Święty skarabeusz*, "Wszechświat" 4(1951), pp.97–103; Alfieri, "Bull. de la Soc. Entomologie d'Egypte" 40(1956), pp. 451–2.

³ I would like to thank Mrs. Kamila Kołodziejczyk who has placed this specimen at my disposal and has allowed me to publish it.

⁴ H.R. Hall, *Catalogue of Egyptian Scarabs*, London 1913, v. I, XXXII, D 5; E 4 and G 1. This type goes back as far as the Middle Kingdom, cf. G.F. Martin, *Egyptian Administrative and Private-Name Seals*, Oxford 1972, pl. 52, type 3 h, pl. 53, type 7a,b,c, pl. 54, type 10.

⁵ Cf. Newberry, op. cit., pp. 72–75.

⁶ Cf. Hall, op. cit., XXXIII, J; also G.F. Martin, op. cit., pl. 56, type 6.



sanctuary of this deity or a place name. The inscription runs as follows: 𓂏𓂏𓂏𓂏𓂏 *imn* *r^c* *s/w/rr/y/* (?) 'Amon-Rē^c ⁷ of (=worshipped in) the temple *s/w/rr/y/*'.⁸ But the orthography of the word designating the temple (?) resembles the orthography of the word *swrswr* designating a group of African people inhabiting Nubia.⁹ Thus one may read this inscription as follows: *imn r^c swrswr* 'Amon-Rē^c of (=worshipped by) the *swrswr*-people'.¹⁰

The scarab also bears a hieroglyphic inscription on its back, which is the fourth name of Thothmes III. In the cartouche 𓂏𓂏𓂏𓂏𓂏 *mn hpr r^c* 'the form of Rē^c endures' ¹¹ is inscribed. But considering the so-called cryptography it is possible to read this inscription as follows: *imn* "Amon".¹² So, two inscriptions engraved on this scarab contain the name of Amon, the principal deity at Karnak, who became "King of the Gods" during the Theban supremacy in the history of Ancient Egypt, and who was worshipped in many temples and shrines erected in various places in Egypt. His greatness and his popularity are marked not only on monuments that have survived but also on small objects such as scarabs of amuletic character.

⁷ $\text{𓂏} = i$ and $\text{𓂏} = n$, $\text{𓂏} = m$, cf. E. Drioton, *Trigrammes d'Amon*, WZKM 54(1957), 14, 16; B. Jaeger, *Essai de classification et datation des scarabées Menkhéperrê*, Fribourg 1982, 281 note 41.

⁸ H. Gauthier, *Dictionnaire des noms géographiques*, V(1928), 18.

⁹ Cf. Gauthier, op. cit., p. 19 where this word has been written with 𓂏 -sign as its determinative.

¹⁰ Although the word *s/w/rr/y/* (?), *swrswr* has been written with hieroglyphs that could be read *imn* / $\text{𓂏} = i$, $\text{𓂏} = m$, $\text{𓂏} = n$, Drioton, ibid., 23 (No. 69), 27 (Nos. 98 and 99) one can hardly believe it is true.

¹¹ A.H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 3rd ed, London 1957, p. 72.

¹² B. Jaeger, op. cit., p. 94 and note 215 and 218; R.P. Charles ASAE LVIII (1964), p. 7.