

APPENDIX 4 NOTES ON THE GLYPTIC MATERIAL AND OSTRAKA

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INTRODUCTION

The glyptic material consists of two scarabs, one scaraboid, one impression and one cylinder seal. Inscriptions are represented by two ostraka. The material has been published in preliminary reports and catalogues. Here the material is collated and some additional comments will be made.

THE OBJECTS AND THEIR CONTEXTS

1. *Scaraboid* (N1388; Figs. 341:1, 342 and 466:1; from Room 12: find position in plan in Fig. 250)

Dimensions (cm): $1.8 \times 1.3 \times 0.7$, d. of hole 0.2; material: steatite.

The scaraboid derives from the early Iron Age compound, Phase IX, Area 9 East. It is from L267, which is in Room 12, one of the 22 hitherto excavated rooms of the basement of this compound (see Figs. 250 and 251; further context description and interpretation in Chapters 2 and 5). Room 12 contained numerous complete vessels from a primary context. The finds include storage jars, jugs, juglets and a lamp. One of the small vessels is of alabaster in the shape of a pyxis. From the same locus derive two pilgrim flasks which are related to the Philistine sphere of culture. Our scaraboid was found together with the scarab N1389.

The scaraboid shows the incised representation of the head of an animal, which we interpret as a stylized horse, instead of the common representation of the beetle's pronotum and the wings. In addition to the triangular, linear, outlines of the head, the nose and the mane are indicated. Three drilled circles with a centrally placed dot indicate the eyes and the muzzle. There are also 13 identical circles with dots on the base. Parallels are rare but there is one from Tell el-Far'ah South (KEEL 2010b: 422–423, no. 947), which is somewhat related to ours and which is dated to the 19th – 20th Dynasty: The upper part of the object is almost identical to ours with linear straight lines indicating a mane and two drilled circles with a dot in the middle for the eyes (?) while the lower part is not preserved. Similarly, it has five circles with dots on the base. This type of decoration is used during MB IIB and appears again in the Iron Age I. There is a compa-

rable chronological situation concerning the bowl standing on three loop handles (N1372; see Figs. 280:17, 281, 389:15 and 452:5) which first appears in the Middle Bronze Age and has a revival in the early Iron Age.

Another related scarab comes from Beth-Shemesh (KEEL 2010a: 312–313, no. 216). Also here – but engraved into the base – each of the four triangular heads has three circles indicating the eyes and the muzzle of rams or bulls, and the manes are also indicated. One of the main differences between our item and that from Beth Shemesh is that the style of the former is strict linear (except for the drilled circles) and that the latter is executed in a curvilinear style.

2. *Scarab* (N1389; Figs. 341:2, 343 and 466:2; from Room 12: find position in plan in Fig. 250)

Dimensions (cm): $1.3 \times 1.0 \times 0.7$, d. of hole 0.2; material: light yellow medium-hard composition.

The context is also early Iron Age and it derives from the same compound as the scaraboid, i.e. Phase IX, Area 9 East, L267, Room 12. Concerning the context description, see above.

A rather mediocre version of “Men-Kheper-Re” (= Tuthmosis III's throne name) is depicted. However, this is not clear beyond doubt, and one of the signs could also read “user/woser”. The hieroglyphs are certainly locally executed which makes a definite reading difficult. It may be an heirloom but scarabs with the name of Tuthmosis were also mass-produced long after his reign (MÜNGER 2005, 395).

3. *Scarab* (N38; Figs. 47:12 and 466:3, find position in plan Fig. 44)

Dimensions (cm): $1.7 \times 1.1 \times 0.8$, d. of hole 0.2; material: bright Egyptian Blue of quite hard composition.

The context is Phase XV/2, Area 1, L30, which is the most recent Iron Age phase of which almost no architectural remains are preserved. In fact this phase represents today's surface. It should also be highlighted that the scarab was found close to a cistern which seems to have been in use for a considerable period.

A walking lion with its tail bent above its back is depicted. Above the tail is a line. Naukratis scarabs

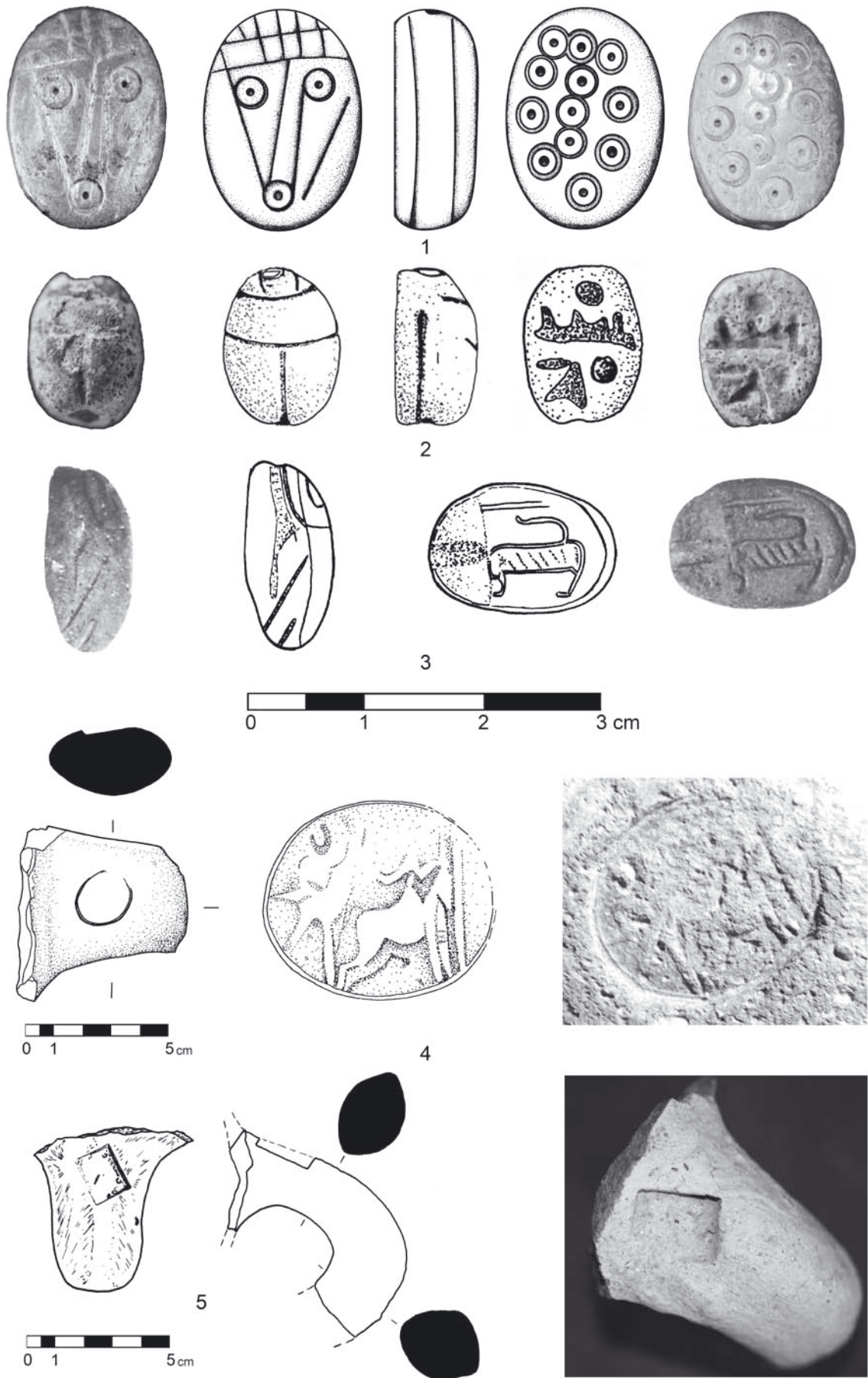


Fig. 466 1. Scaraboid (N1388). 2. Scarab (N1389). 3. Scarab (N38). 4. Seal impression (TXXXIVC-coll-1)

usually show walking lions with a sun disc above the back. However, the sun disk can be absent when the head of the lion is turned backwards (cf. GORTON 1996: 73–88, 95; see also EGGLEER and KEEL 2006: 278:1 and 279:1). This group of scarabs is usually dated to the 26th Dynasty (620/600 to shortly after 550 BCE).

4. *Seal impression* (Trench XXXIVCL463-1; Fig. 87:6, 88 and 466:4)

Dimensions (cm): 2.0×1.75 ; impression on handle of Iron Age II storage jar: wheel-made, hard-fired, light brown fabric, grey core, coarse, multicoloured inclusions, self slip. The handle derives from the surface layer in Area 2 North (not on plan).

The impression is not clear. A quadruped with a w-shaped sign (horns?) faces a vertical line (tree?). Behind the animal is a standing human being (?). A moon crescent may be depicted above the scene (cf. EGGLEER and KEEL 2006: 278:3 and 279:3).

The only “parallel” is from Tell Abu al-Kharaz itself (see cylinder seal N1161 below). The basic arrangement resembles battle scenes on Neo-Assyrian cylinder seals (cf. HERBORDT 1992: pls. 4:1 and 6:5–7; see also PORADA 1948: pl. 107:722).

5. *Seal impression* (Trench XLIXBL516; Figs. 174:6 and 466:5, find position in plan Fig. 158)

Dimensions (cm): 1.7×1.4 ; impression (and fingerprints) on handle of storage jar: wheel-made, hard-fired, brownish-red fabric, thick grey core, coarse, multicoloured inclusions, self slip. It is from an open space between two houses in Area 7 West, Phase XIII (see L516 in Chapter 2).

The impression is not clear because of the coarse fabric. An interpretation is not possible.

6. *Cylinder Seal* (N1161; Figs. 229, 453:6 and 467:1, find position in plan Fig. 182; see also SCHMIDL 2009: 145–147)

Dimensions (cm): 2.9×1.0 – 1.1 , d. of hole 0.3, Wt 5.2 g; material: steatite, traces of brownish-red pigment in depressions.

The seal derives from L348 in Trench XLVIB, Area 7. It belongs to Phase XIV. It was found inside one of the spaces of a compound which is interpreted as a workshop for the production of bronze and iron objects, mainly arrowheads (see Chapter 2).

The seal is engraved with fairly deep, hand-cut lines. Between two collars there is one scene depicting a human figure and an ungulate. Other motifs are a crescent moon, a pair of wedge-shaped elements and a tree-like element with branches at the top. The bearded human figure, obviously a man, which fills the entire space between the two collars, is depicted in profile, facing left (as seen on the seal). Only one foot

is slightly indicated. The figure is clad in a belted, full-length skirt which leaves the upper part of the body naked. He has a high, split headdress. His right arm is stretched away from his body, the left one is raised up to his face with elbow at the level of his shoulder in order to aim, or draw, a bow which is nearly two-thirds the size of its owner. The fairly detailed arrow points at an ungulate whose head is turned away to face a tree. The depiction of its four legs is relatively detailed, showing joints and hooves. A long, S-curved horn and an ear are shown. The mane and tail are depicted. The latter ends in a tassel between the hind legs. Lines across the body seem to indicate a harness. The crescent moon and the pair of wedges cover the space between the bow and the animal's neck.

This seal is definitely an import. The scene shows the well-known motif of archer and prey, with the prey being attacked from behind. However the standing archer is found predominantly on faience seals (COLLON 2001: 3). The relatively common feature of a stylized tree or plant might denote the sacred tree which is defended by the archer (PORADA 1948: 73). The seal is engraved in the so-called “linear style” which is typical of Neo-Assyrian seals, commonly dated between the ninth and eighth centuries BCE (COLLON 2001: 2–3). There are several related scenes with archer, various animals including winged human-headed ones or monsters but they are normally not as deeply cut as in our seal (cf. TEISSIER 1984: 34; BRENTJES 1983: 153). This style continues into the seventh to sixth centuries BCE (TEISSIER 1984: 34). PORADA (1948: 72) favours a connection between the Kassites and the evolution of the linear style in Neo-Assyrian times due to the non-realistic but ornamental or decorative way of depicting scenes. HERBORDT (1992: *passim*) and COLLON (2001: *passim*) prefer categorization according to motifs instead of style and technique as suggested by PORADA (1948: *passim*).

The most striking parallel was published by COLLON (2001: 29; cf. also COLLON 1987: no. 337, originally published in WISEMAN 1959: pl. 51): it shows an archer pointing his bow towards a winged bull facing the attacker. Above the bull are other comparable elements such as a tree, even though less stylized, a crescent moon and two wedges, in this case separated from each other. Another one depicting the standing archer with a similar garment is shown by PARKER (1962: pl. XI, 3) or the stylized tree which is shown on a tablet from Nimrud (HERBORDT 1992: pl. 16, 5; cf. PARKER 1955: 121, fig. 21, pl. 28, 1). Crescent, wedges and standing archer are not uncommon (see e.g. COLLON 2001: 19, 27, 28, 31). There are seals with animals which are a kind of mixture between bull and horse

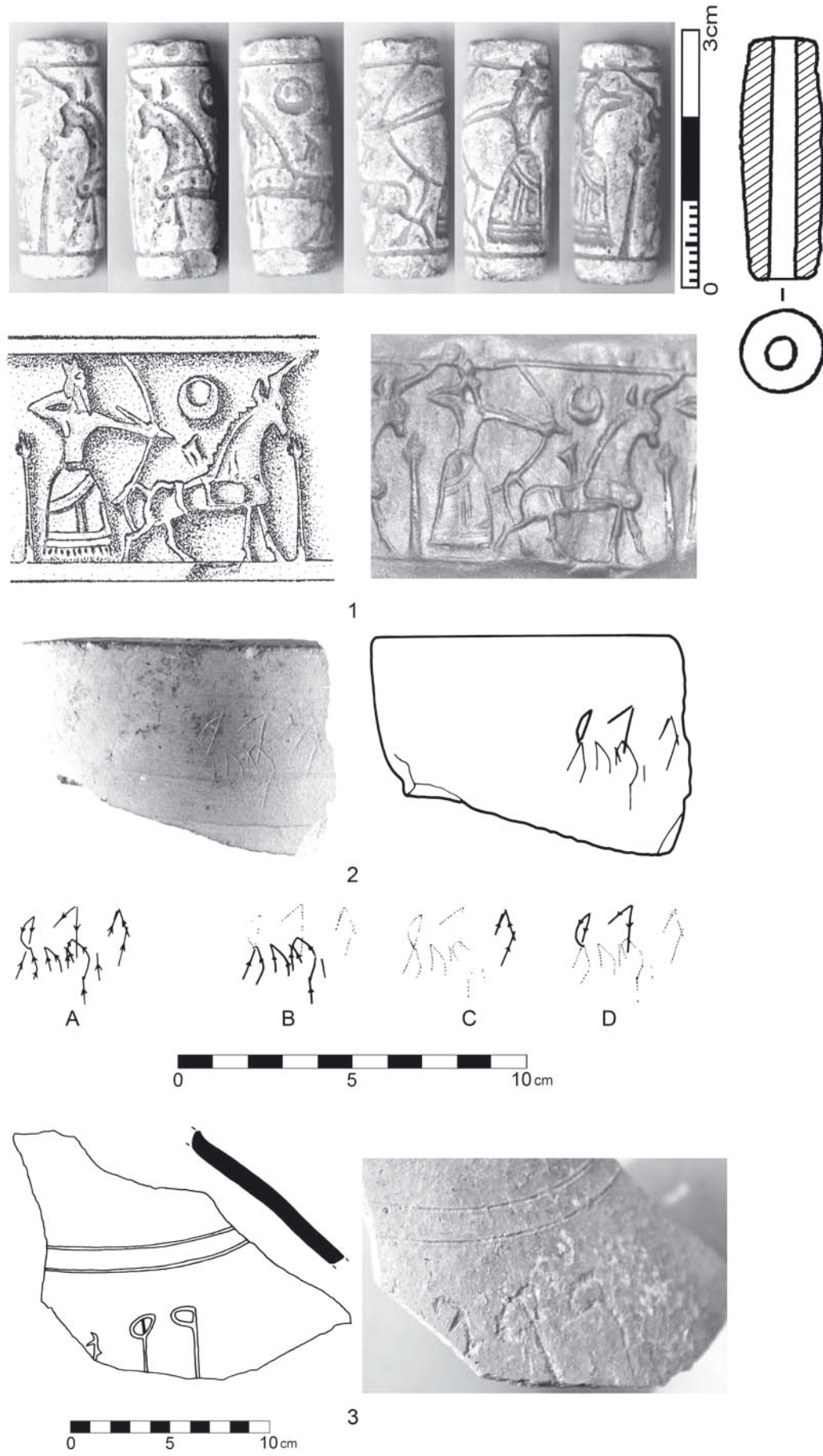


Fig. 467 1. Neo-Assyrian cylinder seal (N1161). 2. Ostrakon 1 (TXXXIVL5-1). 3. Ostrakon 2 (Trench XLVIB L356-1).

(*ibid.* 24 and 25), or where a bull has been re-modelled as a horse (KIST 2003: 338). Another example is shown by DOUMET (1992: 137–138) where an archer with a similar garment is aiming at a horned quadruped. Other seals with comparable elements are: KEEL-LEU and TEISSIER (2004: 168 and 170); PORADA (1948: 617 and 621); and TEISSIER (1984: no. 163, 167, 168).

In addition to a “parallel” from Tell Abu al-Kharaz itself (see seal impression above) there are no exact counterparts to our cylinder seal in Jordan. There are just two motifs which – to a very limited extent – can be compared with that on our cylinder seal: One is a stylized motif on a scarab from Khirbet an-Nuhas (EGGLER and KEEL 2006: 126:1 and 127:1), and another one, even more abstractly depicted, on a conoid from Sahab (EGGLER and KEEL 2006: 267, 14).

It seems to be evident that our cylinder seal is imported from the Assyrian sphere of culture. The unfortunately extensively damaged seal which is similar to ours (PARKER 1962: pl. XI:3) could point to Nimrud as the area of origin but this remains a conjecture. Finally, the motif and style support a date in the 9th or 8th century BCE.

The remains of a red colour in the depressions of the seal are interesting. Concerning the seal of fairly bright steatite from Tell Abu al-Kharaz one could argue that the red colour was added to enhance to motifs. There may be another explanation: In 2011, the Swedish Cyprus Expedition at Hala Sultan Tekke uncovered a Late Bronze Age cylinder seal of black chlorite which also had remains of a red colour in the depressions (FRANZ 2012). An accumulation of murex shells in one of the rooms close to the find spot of the seal points to the production of purple dye in the building where the seal was found. I have at several occasions suggested that the Hala Sultan Tekke cylinder seal could have been used to roll the motifs of the coloured seal, for instance, on fabric. The function of the seal from Tell Abu al-Kharaz was maybe the same.

7. *Ostrakon 1* (Trench XXXI, L5-1; Figs. 380 and 467:2, find spot in Fig. 376; see also AL-GHUL and KHOURI 1998: 155–161)

Rim and part of neck of jar (d. of rim approx. 15 cm, Th approx. 1 cm), wheel-made, hard-fired, yellowish-brown fabric, coarse, mainly grey inclusions, self slip; inscription; Figure 467:2 shows how the incisions were done (A), and three groups of signs (C–D).

This ostrakon was found in the north-western room (Room 1) in L5 in the “White Building” of Area 10 close to the 0-point of the site. The date of the foundation of this structure, which is interpreted as a tower, is placed in Phase XIV or possibly XV.

The incised signs seem to represent a writing exercise (cf. FISCHER 1997a: 136–137; AL-GHUL and KHOURI 1998; RICHELLE 2010: 247–249). The signs themselves are associated with the Ammonite writing tradition, which suggests a dating within the 1st millennium BCE, maybe 9th – 6th centuries BCE. The pottery collection from inside the building also suggests a dating within the second half of the Iron Age. However, outside the building, large amounts of Late Roman sherds were found, which points to reuse of the foundation of the structure in Late Roman times.

8. *Ostrakon 2* (Trench XLVIB, L356-1; Figs. 219:3 and 467:3, find spot in Fig. 182; see also RICHELLE 2010: 247–249).

Neck of storage jar, wheel-made, hard-fired, reddish-brown fabric, medium-coarse, mainly white inclusions, light reddish-brown slip.

This ostrakon derives from the same compound as our cylinder seal (N1161, see above). It was found inside one of the spaces of this compound which is interpreted as a workshop for the production of bronze and iron objects, mainly arrowheads (Phase XIV, see Chapter 2).

The partly preserved inscription is possibly Aramaic (RICHELLE 2010: 247–249). There are three letters “R”, “Q” and most likely “Y”. The interpretation is speculative but it could be read as a name/owner, a measure or information about the contents. Richelle suggest the name of the owner which may be a combination of a verb and a god or just a nickname. A likely reading could be: “... the God has benevolently looked upon (somebody)...”

