A 184 Afr-Egy-Amulet-Sekhmet-Faience-525-334 BCE

**Case No.: 2**

**Accession Number: A183**

**Formal Label:** Amulet-Sekhmet-Faience-525-334 BC

**Display Description:** Late Period aquamarine faience lion-headed Sekhmet (Sekhmet hieroglyph) portrays her as her name implies in hieroglyphs with her sekhem or scepter of power which she holds in her right hand, with the Sun disk above as her father Ra, with a loaf of bread below as a nourisher, and as her seated as an arbiter). As an Upper Egyptian protectress of pharaohs she both led them in warfare and was worshipped after all battles to end bloodshed. Her headdress combines a solar orb (Ra) with a uraeus (*iaret*, "rearing cobra") the sign of her divinity. In her capacity as Ra’s daughter she is associated with the *wadjet*, “eye of Ra,” as a divine arbiter in the Judgment Hall of Osiris.

Since Sekhmet's wrath must be placated daily, her priestesses performed a pacifying ritual before a different statue of the goddess on each day of the year, which resulted in at least 365 statues and faience representations of the goddess being preserved at each location of her shrines. It is estimated that at least 730 (365 x 2) statues of Sekhmet once stood in one funerary temple alone, that of Amenhotep III (ruled 1386 or 1388 to 1349 or 1351), on the west bank of the Nile. An annual festival of excessive drinking, dancing and music was enjoyed in order to soothe Sekhmet’s obstreperousness to avert another incident when she nearly destroyed humanity.

Upper Egyptian Sekhmet as a lioness warrior goddess was parallel with Bastet in Lower Egypt who, only during the 22nd Dynasty (ca 945–715 BCE), was transformed from a lioness warrior deity into a cat as a protectress. This connection between the two feline deities suggests that this amulet is possibly from the Bubasteum, a Ptolemaic and Roman temple complex dedicated to Bastet in the cliff face on the ne edge of the Saqqara cemeteries where Sekhmet was also worshipped and where similar faience Ushabtis were made in local workshops of Bastet and of Anubis from the neighboring Anubeion shrine

**LC Classification:** DT62.U84

**Date or Time Horizon:** Late period, 525-334 BCE.

**Geographical Area: Saqqara, Egypt**

**Map, GPS Coordinates:** 29.85000 31.21667; [29°52′16″N 31°12′59″E](https://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Saqqara&params=29_52_16_N_31_12_59_E_type:landmark)

**Cultural Affiliation:** Late Period, Egypt, 525-334 BCE.

**Geographical Area: Saqqara, Egypt**

**Medium:** Faience

**Dimensions: H 209.15mm, 8.234 in  
Weight:**

**Provenance: old European collection**

**Condition: original**

**Discussion:**

“The earliest jackal-form amulet, made of bone, was found in a Pre-dynastic Naqada 2 burial and shows the animal couchant, in profile and with the scored markings characteristic of contemporary amulets. By the Sixth Dynasty glazed-composition walking jackals and, rather more significantly, jackal-headed walking human figures occur, the earliest amuletic representation of an animal-headed deity. . . Thereafter these two forms and the jackal-headed deity, both walking and seated, continued to be made until the end of the dynastic history, generally in glazed composition or metal. … Amulets representing major gods remained comparatively rare until the end of the New Kingdom, when they suddenly flourished, and became as a group the most prevalent type until the end of the Late Period Anubieion” Andrews 1994: 46-47). A cemetery of mummified jackals was discovered along the ne edge of the Saqqara cemeteries (Giddy 1992) next to two huge adjacent brick shrines, the Anubieion in the n and the Bubasteion in the s (Jeffreys and Smith 1990). These structures date to the reign of King Ahmose (570-526 BC - 26th Dynasty), who was responsible for building the town of Naukratis, the Greek colony in Egypt and the main trading point between Egyptians and Greeks. Greek influence may have encouraged the flourishing of amulets such as this one in the delta during the Late Period.

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