

## Hatmehit

*Egyptian goddess.* H. is attested since the 4th dyn. (2670-2500). The sacred animal associated with her is the fish. As local goddess of the nome of Mendes, she was called “The foremost of the fishes” (GAMER-WALLERT 1970: 20). During the Late Period she was integrated into the myth of →Osiris as helper in the search for his members, and thus associated with →Isis (BONNET 1952: 282; GAMER-WALLERT 1977: 1042f). During this time the goddess appears infrequently. Examples include a bronze statuette (SAHRHAGE 1998: fig. 62) or a faience amulet (PETRIE 1975: pl. 30:173a-b) with a fish on her head. The zoological identification of her attribute animal is uncertain. The representations point to the Schilbid catfish (*Schilbe mystus*) (ENGELBACH 1924: 161ff), a fish that appears quite frequently as a Late Period amulet (HERRMANN 2003: nos. 937-941), but certain Egyptologists consider it to be a catfish (*Barbus bynni*) or dolphin (GAMER-WALLERT 1970: 99f).

In Palestine/Israel H. is attested only twice, both times on amulets (1\*-2). The find context is known only for 1\*, which comes from tomb I at Beth Shemesh. Both examples are so similar that a common place of manufacture seems probable. The pieces were not crafted in Palestine/Israel but in Egypt. Stylistic features, material, and the kind of production method date these amulets to Iron Age IIB (925-720/700) (HERRMANN 1994: 227).

The verso of both amulets is inscribed. On the piece from Beth Shemesh (1\*) the goddess seems to be called Ḥeti; the one without known provenance (2) mentions the goddess →Bastet. In both inscriptions the deity says words of protection or preservation of life: *ḏd mdw in Ḥti: di nḥ* “words spoken by Ḥeti: (I) give life; *ḏd mdw in Bḥstt: sḥ* “words spoken by Bastet: (I will give you) protection” (ROWE 1936: 271). The association with Ḥeti and Bastet indicate that in the form of an amulet, H. functioned as a goddess of life and protection.

### Catalogue

1\* Amulet, faience, 57 x 13 x 12 mm, Beth-Shemesh, 925-700. Jerusalem, Rockefeller Museum, J231. MACKENZIE 1912-1913: 60, pl. 28; B1; ROWE 1936: 271, pl. 30:A19; \*HERRMANN 1994: 226f, no. 184 2 Amulet, faience, 925-700. ROWE 1936: 271, pl. 30:A18; HERRMANN 1994: 227f, no. 185

### Selected Bibliography

ENGELBACH 1924: 161ff • GAMER-WALLERT 1970: 98ff • HERRMANN 1994: 227 • HERRMANN 2003: 33

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