



[28] Storage jar fragment bearing the names of Seti II

Tell el-Farah (South) | New Kingdom, 19th Dynasty (late 13th – early 12th century BCE) | Pottery, partially restored | W: 48 cm H: 38 cm | IAA | I.9834

This fragment of a large Egyptian storage jar bears the lower parts of the throne name and birth name of Seti II enclosed in cartouches and flanked by palm branches (meaning “Years”), ending with tadpoles (meaning “100,000”) above *shen* signs (meaning “Eternity”). This standard combination of signs often accompanied royal names and signified the divine promise for the king’s reign of hundreds of thousands of years. The fragment was found in the courtyard of the Egyptian headquarters at Tell el-Farah (South), which was used

throughout the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Dynasties. The royal names engraved on this fragment, however, date the jar to the reign of Seti II in the Nineteenth Dynasty. This is, in fact, the only object found in southern Canaan bearing the name of this king, which is not surprising considering the unstable political situation in Egypt during the late Nineteenth Dynasty, which eventually led to the collapse of the Egyptian Empire in the Twentieth Dynasty (see pp. 140–41).

Little is known of the activity of Seti II in Canaan, but fragments of two identical storage jars bearing the names of this king were found in the courtyard of one of the Egyptian forts in the Ways of Horus in northern Sinai. These vessels, which were probably sent from the king’s palace in Egypt, clearly reflect

Egyptian administration and attest to the continuing Egyptian presence in northern Sinai and in southern Canaan during the reign of Seti II.

DBT

References:

Goldwasser 1980; Macdonald et al. 1932, 28–29, pls. LXI, LXIV.

[29] Statue of Ramesses III

Beth Shean | New Kingdom, 20th Dynasty (12th century BCE) | Basalt | H: 148 cm Base: 78 x 39 cm | IAA | S-886

The statue depicts a life-size seated figure of Ramesses III, the second king of the Twentieth Dynasty, who ruled Egypt for 32 years (ca. 1185–1153 BCE) and who is often referred to as the last great pharaoh of ancient Egypt. The king is identified by his throne name and birth name, which are engraved on his shoulders, enclosed in cartouches.

The statue was found mutilated and broken in two at the front of the northern temple of Level V at Beth Shean, the head and torso lying face down near the lower part of the body and throne. Level V is dated mainly to the eleventh century BCE, postdating the reign of Ramesses III and most probably also the Egyptian Empire in Canaan. The original context of the statue is therefore assumed to be in Level VI, which is dated to the early Twentieth Dynasty and where Egyptian inscriptions bearing the names of Ramesses III have been found (see no. 30). The statue is often regarded as a form of Egyptian propaganda – an attempt to exercise power at a time when Egypt’s actual hold over Canaan was in decline. Similar self-promoting measures



may be seen within the Egyptian stronghold at Beth Shean, where an exceptionally large number of official Egyptian inscriptions and monuments of the early Twentieth Dynasty have been found (see no. 30).

The statue's material (local basalt) and artistic style clearly indicate that it was made in Canaan, though its artisans were undoubtedly Egyptian, as in the case of other Egyptian monuments found at the site (see no. 30). The statue was badly damaged in the course of the temple's destruction, but there are also signs of deliberate mutilation, such as the missing arms and left hand, the chipped facial features, and the break at the waist. The statue displays some stylistic peculiarities in the wig and facial features, and, especially, in the broad gap between the legs, which is highly unusual in Egyptian statuary. These peculiarities are usually attributed to local production. The possibility has also been raised that this was a reworking of an older statue depicting a divine figure with a worshipping king standing or kneeling between his legs, something that could explain the gap. However, as there is no supporting evidence for this interpretation, it remains more likely that the statue's Canaanite manufacture accounts for its stylistic irregularities.

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References:

Higginbotham 1999; James 1966, 35, fig. 81:3; Rowe 1930, 38, pl. 51.