



[Fig. 24] Scarab in a gold frame bearing the throne name of Seti I. IAA. 2015-1344

dipper juglets inside, were deposited near the coffin's lower end.

Notably, less than three meters to the southeast of the burial pit in which the coffin was deposited, four additional contemporary plain pit burials were uncovered, all with the same east-west orientation as that of the coffin and undoubtedly associated with it in one way or another. In so far as it was observable through the limited prism of the small-scale excavation at Tel Shadud, this spatial arrangement seems to be part of a distribution pattern better seen at the more extensively excavated contemporary burial ground at Deir el-Balah; there, similar clay coffins were unearthed 3–5 m apart from one another, with the spaces in between filled with simpler burials

Apart from Tel Shadud (1 coffin) and Deir el-Balah (ca. 60 coffins), similar clay coffins have been unearthed at Beth Shean (ca. 50 coffins), Tell el-Farah (South; 3 coffins), and Lachish (2 coffins). The latter four sites also provide clear

evidence for the existence of an Egyptian administrative and military presence in their midst, and it thus seems a foregone conclusion that evidence of this kind will one day also be revealed at Tel Shadud. It is hoped that this site, situated in the Jezreel Valley, midway along the ancient land route leading southeast to Beth Shean, at the junction of the Jezreel and Jordan Valleys, and northwest to Akko's Coastal Plain, with its access to maritime routes, will someday be identified with one of the Canaanite toponyms mentioned in Seti I's topographic lists. EvdB

References:

Dothan 1972; Dothan 1979, 99–100; Macdonald et al. 1932, 25, pl. 53; McGovern et al. 1993; Oren 1973, 139ff., figs. 12, 53:4, 80 (Tomb 66) and figs. 9, 52:1–4, 78–79 (Tomb 90); Petrie 1930, 6–9; pls. 19 and 24; Rowe 1930, 23, 39–40, pls. 37–40; Tufnell 1953, 219, pl. 126; Tufnell 1958, 36, 66, 131–32, 248, pls. 45–46.

[52] Fragment of a sphinx of Menkaure (Mycerinus)

Hazor | Old Kingdom, 4th Dynasty
(26th century BCE) | Gneiss | L: 43 cm
W: 27 cm | IAA | 2015-1334

A fragment preserving the front paws of an Egyptian sphinx was found in excavations at Hazor. The fragment is made of gneiss, a valuable and very hard, dark stone, which was used in Egyptian sculpture predominantly for royal and divine statues. The measurements of the fragment suggest that the original length of the sphinx was around 170 cm, which, taking into consideration the material from which it was made, suggests that it was a monumental statue produced in a royal workshop in Egypt. This is supported by the inscription engraved between the sphinx's paws, which includes the name of King Menkaure (Mycerinus) enclosed in a cartouche, as well as the royal epithets "Beloved of the Souls of Heliopolis" and "Given Life Eternally."

Menkaure (Mycerinus) ruled Egypt for 28 years (ca. 2532–2504 BCE) and was one of the kings associated with the great pyramids at Giza; the smallest and latest of the three Giza pyramids was his burial place. The epithet "Beloved of the Souls of Heliopolis" engraved on the fragment suggests that the statue originally stood in that city. The "Souls of Heliopolis" are documented in Egypt as one of the divine groups that assisted the king in his ascent to heaven after his death, and they may represent the divinized dead kings of the city. A temple dedicated to the "Souls of Heliopolis" is mentioned on a number of royal statues from different periods,



and the Hazor sphinx may have originally been presented to it. The Hazor sphinx is the earliest known royal sculpture to bear a reference to this divine group.

The inscriptions and stylistic features of the fragment clearly date it to the time of the Old Kingdom, and there is little doubt it that was made during the reign of Menkaure. Although a relatively large number of statues of Menkaure have survived, the fragment found at Hazor is as yet the only known sphinx of this king. It is also the only fragment of a monumental Old Kingdom royal sculpture found in the Levant.

The most intriguing questions surrounding this sphinx concern the time and circumstances of its arrival at Hazor. The fragment was found in the destruction level of Canaanite Hazor, which is dated to the thirteenth century BCE. As the most extravagant Egyptian object ever found in a Canaanite city of the second millennium BCE, the sphinx was most probably a prestigious official gift. It is unlikely that it was bestowed during the reign of Menkaure, considering the nature of the relations between Egypt and southern Canaan in this period and the complete absence of Old Kingdom objects of this scale in the Levant, even in the region of the Lebanese coast, which had strong commercial and cultural contacts with Egypt at that time (see p. 23). We may therefore assume that the sphinx arrived at Hazor at a later period, when the relations between Egypt and southern Canaan were such that a gesture of this magnitude toward a Canaanite city state would not be out of the question. The most likely periods are the Middle Bronze

Age, which corresponds to the Hyksos Period in Egypt, and the Late Bronze Age, which corresponds to the New Kingdom. During the Middle Bronze Age, Hazor was one of the largest and most important cities in southern Canaan, and northern Egypt was under Hyksos rule. As the Hyksos kings frequently usurped earlier royal monuments, it is plausible that one of them moved the sphinx from Heliopolis to Avaris, and, subsequently, sent it to Hazor. It is more likely, however, that the sphinx was brought to Hazor during the time of the New Kingdom, when Hazor was the largest city in southern Canaan, “the head of all those kingdoms” (Joshua 11:10). The distinguished status of the king of Hazor in the Late Bronze Age is indicated in the Amarna Letters, where he is the only Levantine ruler referred to as king.

While the sphinx may indeed have been sent as an official gift to the king of Hazor during the time of the New Kingdom, it is even more likely that it was dedicated at that time to a local temple at the site. The dedication of New Kingdom royal statues to Canaanite temples is attested at Beth Shean, where a locally made statue of Ramesses III was most probably dedicated to the temple of Level VI (see no. 29) and, possibly, at Megiddo, where the bronze base of a royal statue of Ramesses VI, most probably imported from Egypt, was found in a secondary context (see no. 57). The usurpation of royal statues occurred during most periods of Egyptian history, and the fact that the sphinx bears the name of an Old Kingdom pharaoh does not argue against its being sent as an official gift by a New Kingdom king, who may have even had

his own names added to other parts of the sphinx on the occasion.

Like the fragmentary sphinx of Amenemhat III found at the site (see no. 9), this fragment clearly underwent deliberate mutilation, its paws having been intentionally detached from the body. Considering the discovery of this statue in the destruction level of the Late Bronze Age city, it seems that, as in the case of other mutilated statues found at the site, the sphinx of Menkaure was disfigured by those responsible for the final destruction of Canaanite Hazor.

DBT

References:

Ben-Tor 2006; Ben-Tor 2013; Sourouzian 1996.