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Protodynastic excavations at Tell Hassan Dawud (Eastern Delta)

Tell Hassan Dawud is situated to the south of Ezbet Hassan Dawud and of el-Qasaseen village in the Markaz el-Tell el-Kebir. It lies in Ismailia province, about 10 km east of el-Tell el-Kebir, and 40 km west of Ismailia city. The tell has a sandy structure and occupies an area of about a hundred and fifty-seven feddans and its height ranges from about 1.5 m to 3.5 m above the level of the surrounding lands.

The tell was put under the control and supervision of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization in 1977 by the Inspectorate of the Canal Zone, who had found potsherds dating to the Graeco-Roman period. In 1988 the EAO made sondages at the tell. Some mud brick buildings which belong to the Graeco-Roman period were found. In 1989, excavation work was resumed and many graves containing pottery, alabaster and schist vessels and palettes dating to the Protodynastic period were found for the first time. From 1989 to 1992 the EAO continued excavations (Leclant & Clerc 1993; el-Hagary 1992) at the tell, recognizing the importance of the site in the Protodynastic period, especially in reference to its location on the road of the Wadi el Tumilat.

The excavations have mainly revealed two distinct cemeteries of two periods i.e. the Graeco-Roman period and the Protodynastic period, besides the remains of a Graeco-Roman settlement.

The importance of this tell lies in the fact that its antiquities throw some light on the evolution of the tell located on one of the main and vital roads to the Sinai from the Eastern Delta (i.e. Wadi el-Tumilat). It probably served as a link between the cultures of the contemporary settlements which developed on the Nile branches of the Delta and those of the Sinai. The finds of this tell may contribute in solving some problems relating to this period.

From 1989 to 1992, one hundred and ninety-three tombs of the Protodynastic period were found in an area of about one feddan. The tombs are in line with the main features of other Protodynastic tombs. They were mostly small,

rounded, oval or rectangular pits in the ground. The depths of the tombs range from 20 cm to 250 cm, and some tombs were built of mud bricks or mud. The superstructures of the tombs were not found in any case.

Copper harpoons, axes or daggers were found in some tombs. Large quantities of different types of pottery and stone jars were found. Many jars with pot marks also occurred. These are similar to others found in the Delta and Upper Egypt. One tall jar had the mark of the *serekh* containing the name of Narmer engraved on the upper part of the vessel.

The presence of the name Narmer here has a special importance as it was found before at other sites of the Delta such as Minshat Abu Omar and Kufur Nigm and also at el-Beda.

The bodies position was mostly contracted, placed on the left or the right side with the head to the north, to the south, to the east or to the west.

References

- LECLANT, J., & G. CLERC. 1993. Fouilles et travaux en Égypte et au Soudan, 1991-1992. *Orientalia* 62: 190.
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