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PALESTINIAN POTTERY FROM TELL EL-FARA SOUTH IN THE COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM IN CRACOW

A group of Palestinian vessels are being kept among the collections of the National Museum in Cracow. In the wake of closer examination, it has been successfully established that several of them come from W. M. F. Petrie’s excavations at Tell el-Fara South\(^\text{1}\).

The site is situated on Nahal Besor, in the borderland between Judea and the Negev. The problem of its identification has not been decidedly resolved, and both Petrie’s proposal to link Tell el-Fara South with Beth Pelet\(^\text{2}\) and W. F. Albright’s theory connecting it with Sharuhen\(^\text{3}\) remain unaccepted.

\(^1\) This pottery was donated by the Institute of Archaeology in London following the action of Violet and Władysław Włocho. Their activity was described by O. Hirsch-Dyczek, *Dary muzeów brytyjskich*, Prace Archeologiczne 19, Studia z Archeologii Śródlądnomorskiej 3, Kraków 1974, pp. 57—62 and also by J. Michaleczak, *Krokodył, arrasy i... czy*, Dziennik Polski, 29–30 XII 1990, pp. 5 and 8. Thanks to a kind help of Mr. Mirosław Kruszynski, M. A., whom I would like to express my appreciation, an archival note was obtained from the Institute of Archaeology, London University. It shows, that the vessels discussed in this paper had been transferred to Cracow on March 25, 1948 (the note is handwritten by K. M. Kenyon in a list containing an inventory of nine vessels from Tell el-Fara, and five other vessels as well as one fragment from Tell el-Fara or Tell el-Hesi). Concerning other examples of ancient pottery from the donation of Mr. and Mrs. Włocho to Cracow, see Z. Kaper, *Cypriot pottery in the National Museum in Cracow*, Prace Archeologiczne 29, Studia z Archeologii Śródlądnomorskiej 5, Kraków 1980, pp. 25–38 and J. Ostrowski, *Charakterystyka zbioru lampek starożytnych w Muzeum Narodowym w Krakowie*, Studia Archeologiczne 2, Warszawa 1984, pp. 13—16.


The excavations were conducted in the years 1928 – 1929 on behalf of British School of Archaeology in Egypt. In the course of the campaign, the tell and adjoining cemeteries were explored. Two excavation seasons proved an almost uninterrupted settlement on the tell from Middle Bronze IIB until as late as the 1st century A.D.4

The analysis of the material from Middle Bronze IIB coming from the excavations on the tell and cemeteries (comparative studies on pottery by K. M. Kenyon5 and D. Price Williams on acarabs6) have resulted in some more exact determination of the chronology of the site. It is thought that the settlement had begun in the later phase of Middle Bronze IIB period, contemporary with reign of the 15th and 16th Hyksos dynasties in Egypt. The obscure stratigraphy of the tell and complete lack of finds on the cemeteries from the mid-9th to the 7th century B. C. indicate the settlement hiatus in this period.

The identification of eight vases from Tell el-Fara South presented here has been achieved by means of confronting the markings borne by them with excavation reports7 and a publication by J. G. Duncan contemporary with them, systematizing the pottery finds from Palestine within the framework of typology created by W. M. F. Petrie8.

It has been successfully proved that five among the vessels presented here (Cat. Nos. 1 – 5) come from the cemetery "500". A more systematic description of the tombs situated in it was undertaken by D. Price Williams9. Having used the information contained in original tomb cards, kept in the Institute of Archaeology in London, and catalogues of the museums which acquired that pottery, he was able to elucidate many obscurities and inconsistencies in hurriedly published excavation reports. He failed to reach all materials, among others some contained in the present paper, yet he mentions that "three of these divided groups were given to Mrs. Wloch, Poland and so disappeared"10. Thanks to this work, it was possible to establish several mistakes connected with excavation markings on two from among the vessels presented here (cf. Cat. Nos. 2 and 3).

All the vessels considered here belong to the native tradition of pottery making in Palestine. They are very typical and characteristic of the periods they date from, i.e. Middle Bronze IIB and Iron II, at the same time being the instances of the most popular finds originating from Tell el-Fara South.

Regarding the fact that Palestinian objects are so rarely encountered among Polish collections, this group is of particular importance for didactic and exhibition purposes, with its significance augmented by having its provenance established.

8Duncan, *CPP*.
9Williams, *The Tombs*.
10Ibidem, p. 3.
CATALOGUE

1. Bowl

Inv. No. MNK XI—A—679 (formerly Inv. No. 87626). English Cat. No. E. V. 23/j. Inside the ring of the base, markings: F577c and 23G4 with Indian ink. The same is marked with pencil at the lower part of the body[F stands for the first letter of the site's name, 577 for tomb number, c denotes the position in the tomb complex, the markings 23G4 inform on the place in typology where 23 denotes the type "Carinated bowls", while G4 designates its internal differentiation]. Height: 7.8 cm. Max. diam.: 16.3 cm. Base diam.: 5.4 cm. Dark beige, well-fired clay. Scarcely amounts of inorganic admixtures, fine- and coarse-grained. Light beige, with a very delicate slip on the whole surface of the vessel. Small losses on the rim and one insignificant vertical fracture of the vessel’s rim. Base: jagged. Mineral, beige layer on the surface.

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A bowl on low ring base, with hemispherical body, bent inwards in its upper part. Mouth spreading out, with S-everted rim. The vessel represents one of many variations of the carinated bowls type, widespread in the entirety of Palestine and Syria. Middle Bronze IIB.


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11 It was possible to explain the meaning of these markings thanks to above publications, presenting the excavations' material.

2. Bowl

Inv. No. MNK XI — A — 685 (formerly Inv. No. 87625). English Cat. No. E. V. 39/1. Inside the ring of the base markings: F576c and 23G4 with Indian ink; with pencil: IX [the vessel was mistakenly marked: it comes not from tomb 576 but from tomb 574; the meaning of the remaining markings like in Cat. No. I]. Height: 10.2 cm. Max. diam.: 19.2 cm. Base diam.: 6.8 cm. Clay: brick-red. Fine- and medium-grained inorganic admixtures. In the fracture, a grey core. Light beige slip on the whole surface of the vessel. Broken into several fragments, glued. Losses in mouth section. Slip fragmentarily preserved, with numerous minor chippings. Mineral, beige layer on the surface.


A bowl on a fairly tall ring-base, of half-round body and wide mouth made through inverting the walls at some 2/3 of vessel’s height, and their repeated widening upwards. Rim is rather strongly everted. The bowl of the type as Cat. No. 1.


3. Bowl

Inv. No. MNK XI — A — 682 (formerly Inv. No. 87624). English Cat. No. E. V. 14/1. On the bottom of the base markings: F548 and x2G with Indian ink, in bending of the body part: 548 28Y2 with a pencil [the vessel was mistakenly marked: not Y2 but Y4 or Y5; the meaning of the remaining markings as in Cat. No. I]. Height: 6.8 cm. Max. diam.: 15.5 cm. Base diam.: 5—7 cm. Dark beige well-fired clay. Small amounts of fine grained inorganic admixtures. Light beige, very delicate slip on the whole surface of the vessel. Rim jagged in one place, with mineral beige layer on the surface.

A bowl on a low flat base, with a hemispherical body, bent inwards in its upper part. Mouth widening outwards, with S-everted rim. The bowl of the type as Cat. No. 1.

Cf. Cat. No. 1 and besides: Kenyon, Jericho I, p. 274, Pl. 160:10 (the closest type appears in tomb group III).

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Petrie, Beth Pelet I, Pl. L; Duncan, CPP, Pl. 28: Y4 or Y5; Williams, The Tombs, p. 3.

4. Juglet


A juglet of fusiform body, pointed at the bottom. Slender, cylindrical neck slightly widening upwards, with a shaped spout. Single handle, round in diameter, connects the upper body with the mouth just below the rim with rim slightly inverted. A standard example of dipper juglets type, widespread in the entirety of Palestine and Syria. Middle Bronze IIB.

Cf.: Albright, Tell Beit Mardim I, pp. 15, 21—22, PIs. 6:6, 7, 30—31, 42:9, 11—14, 43:5; Tell Beit Mardim IA, pp. 78, 86, Pl. 15:7—11 ("long-pointed, one-handled juglets" occur mainly in strata E and D); Guy, Megiddo Tombs, pp. 150—151, Pl. 25:2, 15—17; Kenyon, Jericho I, pp. 287, 379, 459, 506, PIs. 151:7—8, 195:5, 219:12 ("dipper juglets" are encountered in each of five tomb groups; the closest type: B1b appearing in groups III and V); Amiran, Ancient Pottery, pp. 106, 112, 136, PIs. 33:10, 34:10, 46:7—8.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Petrie, Beth Pelet I, Pl. L; Duncan, CPP, Pl. 51:GIV; Williams, The Tombs, p. 103.
8. Juglet


BIBLIOGRAPHY: unpublished.

ABBREVIATIONS


Duncan, CPP — J. G. Duncan, Corpus of Palestinian Pottery, London 1930.

Grant, Wright, Ain Shems IV — E. Grant, G. E. Wright, Rumeileh, Ain Shems Excavations IV, H Aveford 1938.


Williams, The Tombs — D. Price Williams, The Tombs of the Middle Bronze Age II Period from the “500” Cemetery at Tell Farah (South), London 1077.
5. Juglet

Inv. No. MNK XI - A - 675 (formerly Inv. No. 87622). English Cat. No. E. V. 27/3. On the shoulders, number 500 with a pencil. On the bottom, almost illegible in Indian ink: W. B. 19/3 [the number “500” is most probably the name of the cemetery in which the vessel was found without any context].

Height: 12.0 cm. Max. diam.: 8.0 cm. Diam. with a handle: 8.5 cm. Dark beige clay. Fine- and coarse-grained inorganic admixture. Light beige slip. Part of the mouth with a neck is missing. Vertical fractures running from vessel’s shoulders to the lower body, then horizontally along the line of the bottom.

A juglet of cylindrical body and separated, slightly convex bottom. The convex shoulders blend into narrow and short neck somewhat widening upwards. Strongly everted mouth. Hand-make handle, rectangular in cross-section and bending at right angle, connects the rim and the upper part of the body. Standard example of cylindrical juglets type, widespread in the entirety of Palestine and Syria. Middle Bronze IIB.

Cf.: Duncan, CPP, Pl. 74. The vessel belongs to "Oil flasks" type; the closest subtypes: 02, 03, 023 come from cemetery "500". Albright, Tell Beit Mirsim IA, pp. 77 - 79, PIs. 9:2, 5, 15:1 - 3, 6 ("Cylindrical juglets" appear in strata G - F, with most of them found in stratum E; also encountered in stratum D); Guy, Megiddo Tombs, pp. 150 - 151, PIs. 25:11, 26:3, 6, 27:1, 2, 18, 46:18, 47:11; Kenyon, Jericho I, p. 286, PIs. 142:7, 186:3, 189:13, 212:7 ("Cylindrical juglets" occur in tomb groups III - V. The closest type B1 appears in the same groups); Amir, Ancient Pottery, pp. 107, 112, 146, PIs. 23:12 - 13, 34:17 - 18, 46:2 - 3; Williams, The Tombs, p. 9, PIs. 4:3 - 4, 13:7 - 11, 22:6 - 10, 26:5 - 7, 51:4 ("Cylindrical juglets" were found in cemetery "500" in very large quantities, among others in the tombs 545, 551, 555 and 556).

BIBLIOGRAPHY: unpublished.

6. Juglet

Inv. No. MNK XI - A - 678 (formerly Inv. No. 87629). English Cat. No. E. VII/65/1. On the shoulders next to the handle, following markings: FL68x in Indian ink, on the lower part of the body: IAG70 with a pencil. It was impossible to establish the meaning of these markings on a basis of excavations’ publications. Height: 13.8 cm. Max. diam.: 6.6 cm. Diam. with handle: 8.4 cm. Brick-red, well-fired clay. Inorganic fine-grained and individual coarse grained admixtures. Dark red slip. Well preserved, with slip partly abraded. Traces of white deposit. Very distinct traces of turning as rings outside and inside the neck.

A juglet of ovoid body and rounded bottom, with short neck, slightly widening upwards. Rim flattened, cut inwards. Small vertical handle, triangular in cross-section, connects vessel’s rim with the shoulder. A standard example of round-bottomed juglets, common in the entire Palestine. Iron IIA.

12 Duncan, CPP, p. 5.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: unpublished.


7. Juglet


A juglet of irregularly pear-shaped body with slight bend marking the transition into a rounded bottom. Fairly wide short neck widening upwards; somewhat thickened rim. Irregularly shaped, triangular in its cross-section handle links the rim with the shoulder. The vessel of the type as Cat. No. 6. Differences: atypical body, less frequently encountered.

Cf.: Cat. No. 6 and also Duncan, CPP, Pl. 73:C5 (the vessel belongs to "one-earred flasks" type); Grant, Wright, Ain Shems IV, Pl. LXIV:42 (a vessel of similar form but with shaped spout was classified here as typical of Iron II A).

BIBLIOGRAPHY: unpublished.