



TELL EL BORG, A FRONTIER DEFENSIVE SITE AND CROSSROAD TO THE EAST

James K. Hoffmeier
Trinity International University

Tell el-Borg was investigated from 1999-2008 under the direction of the writer. Located on Egypt's eastern frontier, it is situated about 5 km SE of Hebua II, Egypt's frontier fortress of Tjaru (*htm n Brw*). At Tell el-Borg two forts from the New Kingdom were discovered, but they were badly denuded due to their location within several kilometers of the Mediterranean coast in New Kingdom times, and therefore subject to rain and strong winds. Then too, great damage was done to the site by the Israeli and Egyptian armies had set up camps on the tell from 1967 to 1982, and then in the 1990s, further destruction to the forts, tombs and public space occurred when the As-Salam irrigation project cut canals, laid roads and dug trenches for pipe across the site. Nevertheless, important data about the design of the frontier defense network was retrieved.¹

Another important factor about the location of this site is that not only was it on the overland route to Canaan and is that it was situated on a previously unknown Nile distributary.² This means that the fortress at Tell el-Borg was strategically situated on a land and sea crossroads. While its primary function was a

defensive one, its frontier location put it in reach of important trade centers of the Near East and Mediterranean world. As a consequence, a significant number of Levantine wares were discovered, especially amphorae, which likely brought choice wines from the east. A surprising number (675) of Cypriote sherds and vessels were uncovered, along with a lesser number of elegant Mycenaean wares. These data suggest that Tell el-Borg's location at a frontier crossroads was the reason for the presence of these imported wares.

Presently we are currently reviewing the page proofs for *Tell el-Borg* Volume I, which is scheduled for release early in 2014 by Eisenbrauns. This volume will include chapters on the foreign ceramics discovered at Tell el-Borg. Egyptologists, Levantine and Mediterranean archaeologists will find this publication beneficial as it provides new data and interpretations about the interconnections between these regions.

NOTES

¹ "Reconstructing Egypt's Eastern Frontier Defense Network in the New Kingdom (Late Bronze Age)," in *The Power of Walls - Fortifications in Ancient Northeastern Africa* (eds. Friederike Jesse & Carola Vogel; Africa Praehistorica, Köln: Heinrich-Barth-Institut), 163-194.

² James K. Hoffmeier & Stephen O. Moshier, "New Paleo-Environmental Evidence from North Sinai to Complement Manfred Bierak's Map of the Eastern Delta and Some Historical.