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EXHIBITION ANNOUNCEMENT

PHARAOH IN CANAAN: THE UNTOLD STORY

THE ISRAEL MUSEUM, JERUSALEM, ISRAEL

4 MARCH 2016– 25 OCTOBER 2016

PRESS RELEASE
THE ISRAEL MUSEUM, JERUSALEM

A MAJOR exhibition opening at the Israel Museum will provide audiences with an unprecedented opportunity to explore the cross-cultural ties between Egypt and Canaan during the second millennium BCE. On view March 4 through October 25, 2016, *Pharaoh in Canaan: The Untold Story* presents more than 680 objects that reflect the cross-fertilization of ritual practices and aesthetic vocabularies between these two distinct ancient cultures. From large-scale royal victory stelae and anthropoid coffins to scarabs and amulets, the display features an array of archaeological artifacts discovered in Israel and Egypt—including many drawn from the Museum's own collections, together with major loans from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, N.Y.; the Louvre Museum, Paris; the Kunsthistorisches Museum; Vienna; the Egyptian Museum in Turin, Italy; and numerous other collections.

"This exhibition explores a crucial, yet forgotten chapter in the history of ancient civilizations. *Pharaoh in Canaan* tells the revelatory story of the cross-cultural dynamics between Canaan and Egypt and the resulting and often astonishing aesthetic, ritual, and cultural affinities that developed between these two distinct peoples," said James S. Snyder, the Anne and Jerome Fisher Director of the Israel Museum. "It is especially appropriate that the Israel Museum tell this remarkable archaeological story from its setting in Jerusalem and with its rich collections that trace the ancient roots of the region around us."

The story of Egypt and Canaan is most commonly known from the biblical narratives of Joseph and Moses in Egypt. The exhibition expands this story by examining two crucial periods in history: the settlement and rise of a Canaanite dynasty in the eastern Egyptian Delta during the Middle Bronze Age (circa 1700–1550 BCE); and the extended period of Egyptian rule over Canaan by the Pharaohs during the Late Bronze Age (circa 1500–1150 BCE), both of which led to the commingling of deities, arts, rituals, and technologies between the two cultures.

The exhibition will feature a variety of Egyptian and Egyptian-inspired objects from Canaanite sites as well as illustrative objects from Egypt, ranging from large-scale architectural reconstructions to small-scale personal effects.

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

EGYPTIAN SCARABS: Bearing divine and royal names and images, these objects were found in Canaanite tombs, reflecting the adaptation of Egyptian burial customs by the local Canaanite elite.

EGYPTIAN PRIVATE STELAE: Made locally by Egyptians stationed at the Canaanite site of Beth Shean, these stelae depict Egyptians worshipping Canaanite gods, among them the goddess Anat, who was also worshipped in Egypt at that same time, and the god Mekal, a local god of Beth Shean.

FRAGMENT OF A MONUMENTAL SPHINX OF MYCERINUS: The only Old Kingdom royal statue found in the Levantine region, this fragment was likely an official gift either to a local ruler or to the temple at Hazor when it was a site of great power during the Late Bronze Age.

TUTANKHAMUN INSCRIBED SOLID GOLD RING: The only object excavated in Israel bearing the name of this king, the ring was found in an elaborate tomb in Tell el-`Ajjul together with other Egyptian and Egyptian-style jewelry that reflects the local emulation of Egyptian aesthetic traditions.

STATUE OF RAMESSES III: Placed in a temple at Beth Shean—one of the most important Egyptian strongholds in Canaan during the time of the empire—this is the only evidence of a locally made royal statue in Canaan—and a stunning example of Egyptian cultic activity in Canaanite temples.

ROYAL STELAE: Two stelae of Seti I erected at Beth Shean commemorate victorious military campaigns of the king to suppress local rebellions and reinforce Egyptian control over Canaan.

ANTHROPOID COFFINS: Locally made Egyptian-style clay coffins, found mainly at Egyptian sites in Canaan, served both Egyptians stationed at these bases as well as Canaanites working in their service.

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