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Bronze Jewellery from Marina El-Alamein

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Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.
Bronze jewelry, found in recent excavations at Marina el-Alamein (seasons 2002-2004), is presented in this provisional report in recognition of its complementary role in any study of the customs, traditions and beliefs of a given community and the potential image it gives of cultural relations and influences at the site. Most of these objects were recorded in sound archaeological contexts, although some surface finds have been included as well.

1. **Ring with bust of Sarapis** [Figs. 1, 2]
   Inv. no. 106/H10"E"/02
   House H10"E", room 4 (contextual dating to the 1st-3rd centuries AD)
   Dia. 2.6/2.5 cm (inner 1.8/1.5 cm); H. of bust 2.3 cm
   Ring band slightly convex on outside, widening towards the bust of Sarapis, which is executed in high relief. The deity is clad in a *chiton* and *himation* and has a *modius* on his head. Locks of hair descend to the shoulders. The beard and moustache are clearly marked, as are the facial features. The bust stands on a small base. Good state of preservation.
   Dated to the 1st-2nd century AD.
   Published: *PAM XIV, Reports 2002* (2003), 97, Fig. 10.

   Parallels: F.H. Marshal, Catalogue of the Finger Rings, Greek, Etruscan and Roman in the Departments of Antiquities, British Museum (London 1907), 178, 204, Pl. XXVIII, no. 1122; XXXI, nos. 1301-1302.

2. **Ring with presumed bust of Sarapis-Amon** [Fig. 2]
   Inv. no. 10/S/03
   Surface find
   Dia. 1.9 cm (inner 1.6 cm); H. of bust 1.1 cm
   Band widens toward bust of Sarapis-Amon. Bust rounded off in semicircular fashion. Small *modius* on head, ram's horns marked on either side. Severely damaged, band incomplete; Sarapis image blurred.
   Dated to the 1st-2nd century AD.

3. **Ring [Fig. 2]**
   
   **Inv. no. 50/H19/04**
   
   House 19, room 22
   
   Dia. 2.5 cm (inner 1.7 cm); H. of bust 1 cm
   
   Thick band narrowing toward nondescript image (possibly lion³).
   
   Severely damaged, band cracked and broken. Ornament strongly worn and seriously corroded.
   
   Dated to the 1st-3rd century AD.

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**Fig. 1.** Bronze jewelry from Marina el-Alamein. Numbers refer to items in the catalogue (Drawing G. Bąkowska, M. Ujma; 4 - I. Zych, A. Błaszczyk)

4. **Ring with empty bezel** [Fig. 1]  
   Inv. no. 14/H10"E"/02  
   House H10"E", room 15 (contextual dating to end of 1st/2nd century AD)  
   Dia. 2.4 cm/2cm (inner 1.9 x 1.3 cm); bezel 1.3 x 1 cm  
   Shoulders widening slightly toward bezel. Decorated with two cut lines, which draw apart as they approach the oval bezel. Glass bead or gem could have been mounted in the shallow bezel (1.17-0.22 cm). Cracked along the bezel, heavily corroded. Dated to the 2nd century AD.  
   Parallels: Marshal 1907, op. cit., Pl. XXIX, no. 1188; XXXII, no. 1399.

5. **Fragment of ring with bezel**  
   Inv. no. III-21/04  
   Main town square, east of South Portico, room 1 (contextual dating to end of 1st/early 2nd century AD)  
   Bezel: W. 1.1 cm. Glass gem: top 1 x 0.8 cm; bottom 0.8 x 0.6 cm, Th. 0.15-0.2 cm  
   Fragment of ring with oval bezel. Green glass gem, engraved with faint lines on the top. Partly preserved, heavily corroded surface. Damaged gem.  
   Dated to the 1st-2nd century AD.  
   For parallels, see cat. no. 4 above.

6. **Ring band** [Fig. 1]  
   Inv. no. 15/H10"E"/02  
   House H10"E", room 15 (contextual dating to 1st and 2nd centuries AD)  
   Dia. 2.4 cm (inner 1.7 cm)  
   Outer band surface convex, thicker in places, flat inside and sides. Good state of preservation.  
   Dated to the 2nd century AD.  
   Parallels: F. Henkel, Die römischen Fingerringe der Rheinlande und der benachbarten Gebiete (Berlin 1913), vol. I, nos. 1-3;

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![Fig. 2. Bronze jewelry from Marina el-Alamein. Numbers refer to items in the catalogue (Photo W. Grzegorek (2,8); all others P. Zambrycki)](image_url)
7. **Ring band** [Fig. 1]
   Inv. no. 20/H10"E"/02
   House H10"E", room 15 (contextual dating to end of 1st/2nd century AD)
   Dia. 2.4 cm (inner 1.9 cm)
   Band consisting of a number of thin wires tightly twisted together, forming irregular outer surface.
   Heavily corroded all over.
   Dated to the 2nd century AD.

8. **Ring or earring with circular ornament** [Figs. 1, 2]
   Inv. no. 11/S/03
   Surface find.
   Dia. c. 2 cm; H. of ornament 1.6 cm; dia. 0.9 cm
   Circular ornament in front with two lines crossing in the middle, the intersection marked by a tiny bezel (dia. 0.1 cm). Base below ornament, parallel to band (L. 1 cm, Th. 0.15 cm); second one 0.14 cm further down, same length but thicker (0.4 cm).
   Half of band preserved, gem missing from bezel.
   Dated to the 1st-3rd century AD.
   Parallels: V. Sarianidi, Bactrian Gold from the Excavations of the Tillya-Tepe Necropolis in Northern Afghanistan (Leningrad 1985), 252, no. 2, Ill. 33. For the circular motif in jewelry, cf. H. Hoffmann, Greek Gold Jewelry from the Age of Alexander (New York 1966), 144, Fig. 51A; Die Alamannen (Stuttgart 1997), 187, no. 194, 462, no. 529.

9. **Fragment of pendant** [Fig. 2]
   Inv. no. 60/H19/04
   House 10"E", room 6
   Dia. of circle 0.78 cm, L. pres. 1.2 cm
   Necklace fragment featuring round bezel. Slightly convex back suggests pendant. Not a ring. Glass bead presumably mounted in shallow bezel (0.1 cm deep).
   Damaged, but bezel in fairly good condition.
   Dated to the 1st-2nd century AD.

10. **Pendant** [Figs. 1, 2]
    Inv. no. 71/H10"E"/02
    House 10"E", room 15 (contextual dating to 1st-2nd century AD)
    H. 2.4 cm, W. 1.7 cm
    Presumably female face rendered with thick hair and a cap slightly askew with raised tip serving as pendant mounting, the hole (Dia. 0.3 cm) pierced through it perpendicular to face. Indistinct facial features. Back side of pendant slightly concave. Similar images can be found on appliqués.² Heavily worn surface, evident traces of corrosion.
    Dated to the 1st-2nd century AD.

11. **Fibula** [Figs. 1, 2]
    Inv. no. 40/H10"E"/02

House 10"E", room 15 (contextual dating to 1st-2nd century AD)
Dia. 4.6 cm
Enamel fibula in the form of a six-arm star. Each triangular arm terminates in a circle. Enamel preserved in the triangles and circles, alternately cream and turquoise in color. Center of star also filled with enamel. In the very center, a small boss (H. 0.5 cm), possibly decorated with cream-colored enamel. Back smooth. Fastening: pin length 2.1 cm, arch 1.2 cm. Object refers to fibulae of type 27b 1 in J. Philippe's typology. Enamel missing in places, pin broken, but otherwise in good condition. Dated to second half of the 2nd century AD. Published: PAM XIV, Reports 2002 (2003), 97, Fig. 9.

COMMENTARY

The finds of jewelry appear to have been grouped in room 15 of House H10"E" (eight of the items), the remaining pieces coming from another house and from a room off the main town square. Two objects were surface finds. Apart from the latter two items, all the finds have been dated contextually (assemblages included pottery, coins, lamps), as well as by comparison with published parallels. Some of the objects appear to be unique, but the majority are typical of Mediterranean culture.

The Sarapis ring (cat. no. 1 above), when viewed in context of other representations of the god known from the Marina el-Alamein
excavations, could indicate the widespread cult of this deity in Marina. The god depicted as Sarapis-Amon (cat. no. 2 above) may have been connected with the locally popular worship of Amon, whose temple was found in Siwa Oasis, for example. Images of Sarapis with ram’s horns and modius were found on Elephantine, where the ram-headed Chnum was worshipped. Zeus-Amon was also represented with ram’s horns; the image is frequent on the coins of Vespasian and Trajan among others, and of neighboring Cyrenaica.

The ring or earring with round ornament refers to the goddess Nemesis, who was often depicted in the first centuries AD as a griffin placing one paw on a wheel or globe, and interpreted as a symbol of power over destiny. The said motif of a wheel could also refer to Egyptian symbols. The enameled brooch immediately brings to mind a wealth of such fibulae found in Gaul and the Rhineland. Obviously the piece must have made its way to Marina in the effect of overseas contacts of the local residents, hardly surprising considering the thriving harbor town that Marina must have been.

More work on the material as well as future finds could further contribute to studies of various aspects of everyday life in Marina el-Alamein.

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7 More on this subject in Daszewski, "The gods", op. cit., 94-95; on Sarapis-Amon, see also Stambaugh, loc. cit.
8 Grimm, op. cit., 144, Pl. XXXb.
10 E.g. C.M. Kraay, Archaic and Classical Greek Coins (London 1976), 296-297.
11 M. Abbiati Brida in: E.A. Arslan, Iside. Il mito il mistero la magia (Milano 1997), 227 (relief thought to be from Alexandria); see also B. Lichocka, L'iconographie de Fortuna dans l'Empire Romain (Varsovie 1997), 195, 225, i.a. nos. 145, 162, 514.
12 The wheel decorating this piece of jewelry recalls the shen sig, cf. R.H. Wilkinson, Reading Egyptian Art (London 1992); it could also be referred to the Egyptian sign for the universe, an X in a circle (L. Kákosy, "Iside. Magia, astrologia, alchimia", in: Arslan, Iside, op. cit., 147).
13 They were common in eastern Gaul and in lands on the Rhine, where they are dated to the second half of the 2nd century AD, cf. Philippe, loc.cit. See also P. Kaczanowski, J. Rodzińska-Nowak, Provinzialrömische emaillierte Scheibenfibel aus der Siedlung der Przeworsk-Kultur in Jakuszowice, Sbornik Národního Muzea v Praze, Ser. A, LJ (2000), 57-62.