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Naqlun, Egipt : Excavations in 2014

Światowit : rocznik poświęcony archeologii przeddziejowej i badaniom pierwotnej kultury polskiej i słowiańskiej 12 (53)/A, 247-254

2014

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

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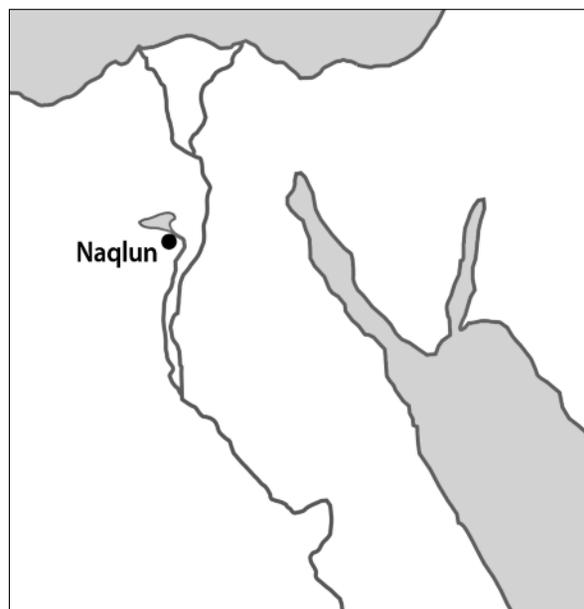
NAQLUN, EGYPT. EXCAVATIONS IN 2014

Keywords: Fayum, hermitage, monastery, Naqlun

The Mission of the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of the University of Warsaw conducted fieldwork in the monastery at Naqlun (the Fayum Oasis) from 14 September 2014 to 15 October 2014.¹ Work focused on the western parts of Buildings I and J, which also contained burials dating from the 12th c. (Cemetery A). In addition, conservation works and salvage excavations were conducted in Hermitage E.6 in the south-western part of the Naqlun hills.

Hermitage E.6

In the southern part of the eastern cluster of hermitages, unknown persons partly removed the fill from one dwelling space inside Hermitage E.6. It was decided to conduct salvage excavations in this part of the hermitage and to document its interior. After removing the remains of the fill from two interconnected spaces forming one dwelling complex of the hermitage (Fig. 1), it became clear that also the storage pit in the larger Room E.6.a.1 had been excavated and subsequently backfilled. The pit was re-excavated in order to determine whether it had been completely emptied of ancient deposits. Only the bottom strata of the pit's original fill were found in situ. The secondary fill contained fragments of papyri, sherds of early pottery (dated to the 6th–7th c.; Fig. 2) and pieces of the original cover of the pit, which suggests that the secondary deposit most likely originated from the pit. It cannot be excluded that Greek documents whose fragments were scattered in the fill had been taken or discarded by the clandestine



explorers of the hermitage. The storage pit (Fig. 3:a) was found to have a well-preserved air vent that opened on the face of the slope into which the hermitage had been cut (Fig. 3:b). Such evidence is very interesting and uncommon. In both rooms series of niches were carved in the walls, the surfaces of which were plastered and bore several layers of whitewash.

The excavated rooms were certainly part of a larger complex. Similarly to other previously explored hermitages, E.6 had at least one other dwelling unit, as well as a kitchen. The hermitage will be excavated completely in 2015. On the basis of the uncovered fragments of Greek papyri and numerous pottery sherds, the use of the hermitage can be dated to the 6th–7th c. AD.

¹ The staff of the Mission included: Prof. Włodzimierz Godlewski, archaeologist (IA UW); Ms Joanna Ciesielska, anthropologist (IA UW); Mr Szymon Maślak, archaeologist (PCMA UW); Ms Marzena Anna Ożarek-Szilke, anthropologist (IA UW); Ms Joanna Wegner, papyrologist (IA UW). The

Supreme Council for Antiquities, department in Fayum, was represented by Mr El Galal Mohamed Ahmed Ali, Mr Ahmed Mohamed Abdel Kader, and Mr Aly Ramadan Said Al Said, inspector of the SCA in Fayum.

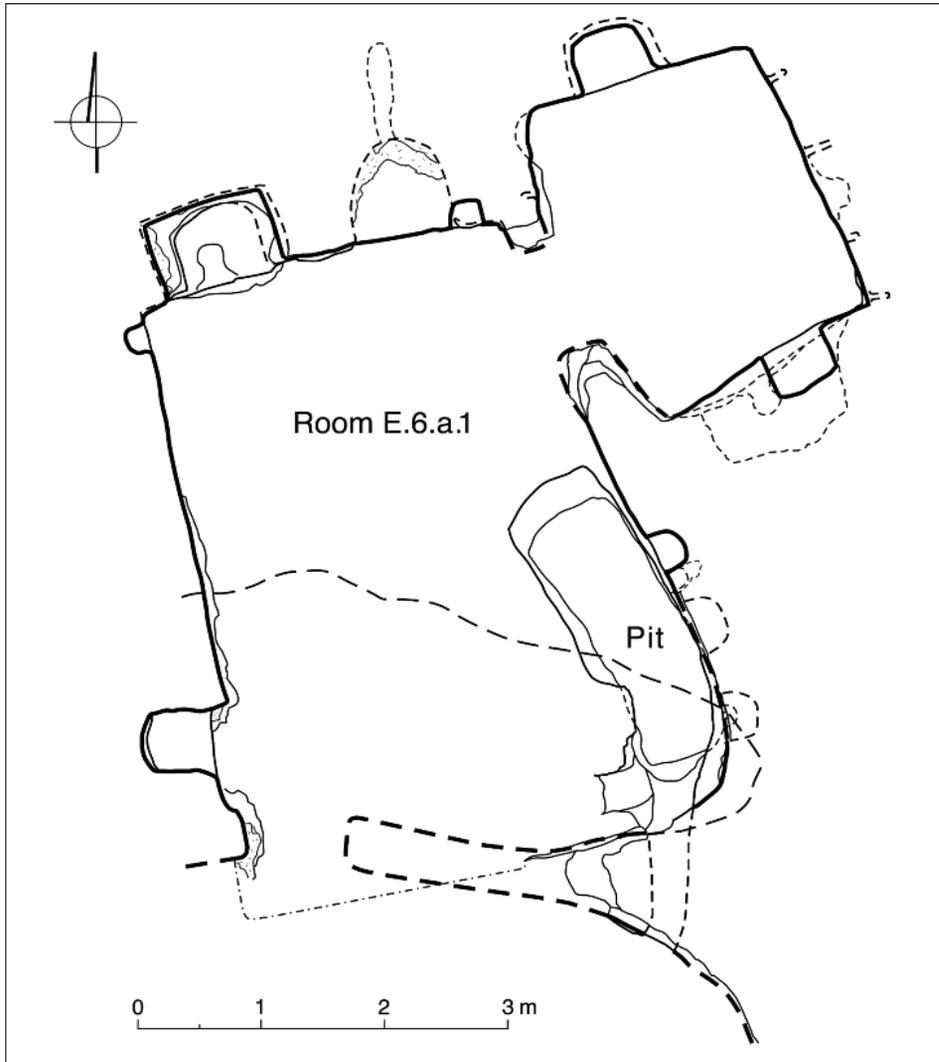


Fig. 1. Hermitage E.6. Plan (Drawing and digitalisation S. Maślak; Archive of PCMA).
Ryc. 1. Erem E.6 – plan.

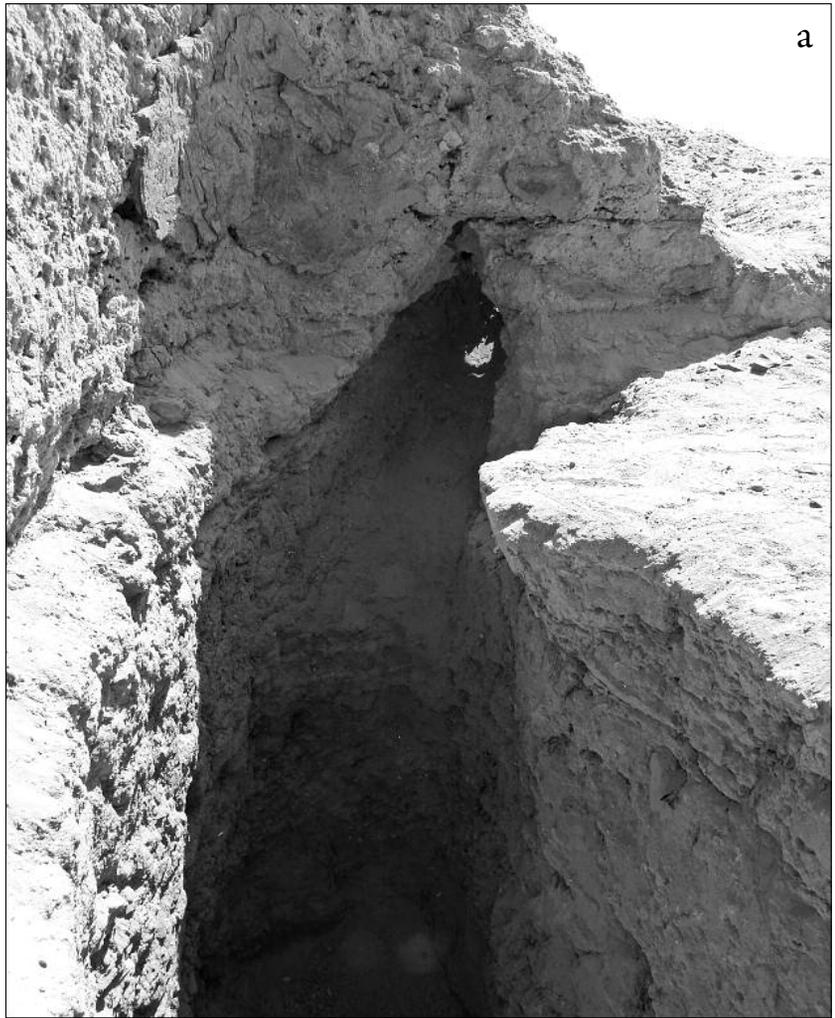
Fig. 2. Hermitage E.6. Bowl, from the secondary fill; inv. No. Nd.14.260.6 (Photo W. Godlewski; Archive of PCMA).

Ryc. 2. Erem E.6 – czarka znaleziona we wtórnym zasypisku, nr inw. Nd.14.260.6.



Fig. 3. Hermitage E.6. Deep pit in the large room, with a ventilation canal; a – inside; b – outside (Photo W. Godlewski; Archive of PCMA).

Ryc. 3. Erem E.6. Głęboka jama w większym pomieszczeniu, z kanałem wentylacyjnym; a – wewnątrz pomieszczenia; b – na zewnątrz.



Building I

Excavation work was conducted in Building I, erected to the east of Building J and connected for a time with Room J.2. Both rooms were cleared to the level of the upper mud floor (Fig. 4). The deposit covering the floor yielded an assemblage of vessels produced in Aswan, as well as local products (plates, bowls, a chalice, a vase) datable to the end of the 10th c. (Fig. 5). The function of the uncovered rooms has not been determined, but they do not seem to have been residential in character.

Cemetery A

The vast Coptic cemetery spread around the church of Archangel Michael and in its interior, functioning from the second half of the 11th c. to the early 13th c., has been investigated by the Mission since 1997. Over 500 graves have been excavated. The exploration was brought

to an end in the last season, during which work focused on graves located in the south-western part of the cemetery. This area spread over the southern part of Building J, completely destroyed during a conflagration that consumed the monastery in the mid-10th c. A total of 11 graves were excavated and studied (T.442; T.495–T.505) – five of the buried individuals were male, three were female and three were children. Three of the burials excavated last season preserved brick superstructures. They were rectangular and carefully coated with lime plaster, with curved top surfaces. The best-preserved superstructure belonging to Grave T.442 measured 2.6×1.4 m and rose to a height of 0.34 m (Fig. 6).

The deceased were buried in rectangular, flat coffins assembled using wrought iron nails. The wood, as well as shrouds and garments in which the deceased were buried, were completely decomposed. The only preserved objects were grave goods placed inside the coffins: glazed vessels and glass bottles, as well as modest jewellery.



Fig. 4. Building I, view from the south (Photo W. Godlewski; Archive of PCMA).

Ryc. 4. Budowla I, widok z południa.

Fig. 5. Goblet found in Building I;
inv. No. Nd.14.297.3 (Photo
W. Godlewski; Archive of PCMA).
Ryc. 5. Puchar znaleziony w budow-
li I; nr inw. Nd.14.297.3.

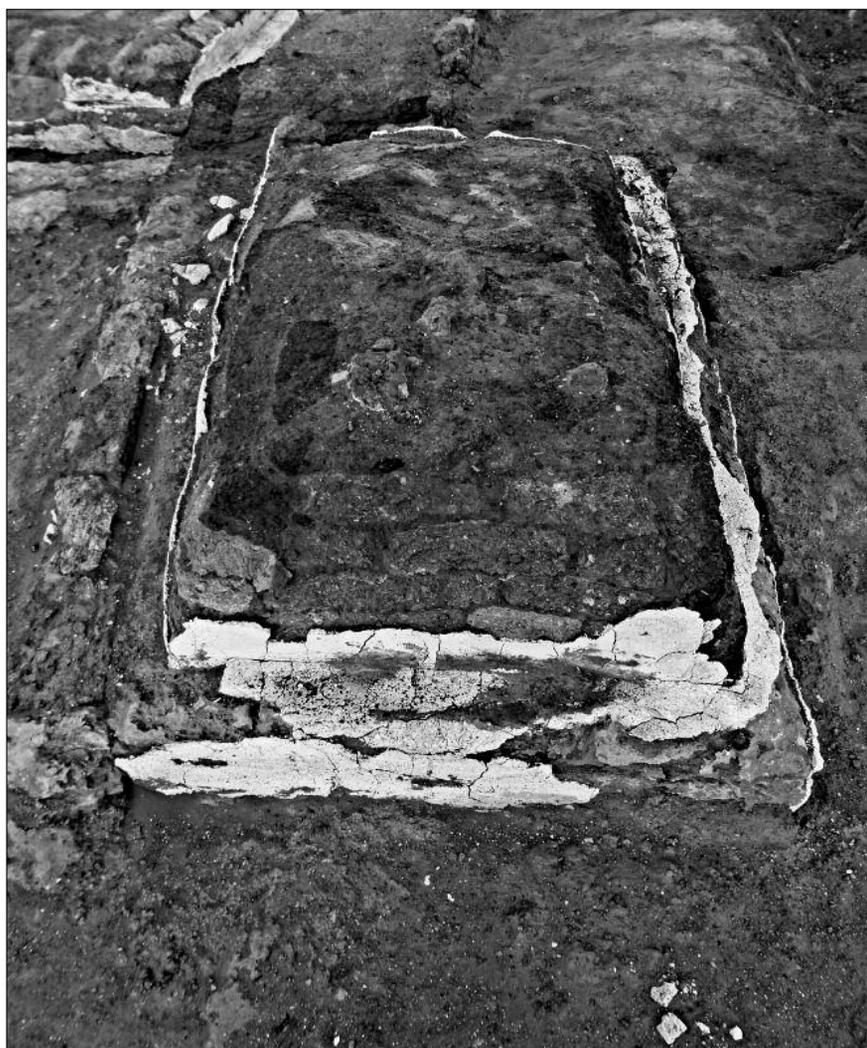


Fig. 6. Cemetery A. Grave T.442
(Photo W. Godlewski; Archive of
PCMA).
Ryc. 6. Cmentarz A, grób nr T.442.



Fig. 7. Small decorated glazed bowl from Grave T.495; inv. No. Nd.14.221.1 (Photo W. Godlewski; Archive of PCMA).

Ryc. 7. Niewielka glazurowana czar-ka z dekoracją, grób T.495; nr inv. Nd.14.221.1.

Fig. 8. Building G, room with pro- tected walls (Photo W. Godlewski; Archive of PCMA).

Ryc. 8. Budowla G, pomieszczenie z zabezpieczonymi ścianami.



The vessels most likely contained fragrant oils placed there in anticipation of the transport of the deceased to the cemetery in Naqlun from the villages in which they lived. A remarkable find discovered in Grave T.495 was a small glazed bowl with a round base, decorated on the inner surface with a floral-geometrical motif and bearing a Pseudo-Coptic inscription below the rim (Fig. 7).

Protective works in previously uncovered buildings on Kom A

Protective works were conducted in several buildings requiring urgent consolidation of damaged walls. In

Building A the southern and eastern walls were repaired, in Building D – Room D.11 and in Building DB.II – the western wall, as well as the rooms of Building G (Fig. 8) and in the street to the south of Building A (S.1). Damaged fragments of walls were refilled with original medieval bricks, baked or sun-dried depending on the structural requirements. The used material was recovered from collapse layers excavated on site and bonded with mud mortar. Reconstructed fragments of the walls were left unplastered.

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NAQLUN, EGIPT. WYKOPALISKA W 2014 R.

Misja Centrum Archeologii Śródziemnomorskiej UW pracowała na stanowisku monastycznym od 14 września do 15 października. Badania i przedsięwzięcia konserwatorskie objęły następujące sektory:

- erem E.6 (**Ryc. 1**) – wykopaliska ratownicze, po nielegalnym przekopaniu przez nieznaną sprawcę: eksplorowano jamę zasobową, ze znaleziskami z VI–VII w. (**Ryc. 2**) i kanałem wentylacyjnym (**Ryc. 3:a,b**);
- budowla I (**Ryc. 4**) – w warstwie nad podłogą znaleziono bogaty zespół ceramiki, zarówno importowanej z Asuanu, jak i lokalnej produkcji, datowanej na schyłek X w. (**Ryc. 5**);

- cmentarz A – przebadano 11 grobów, z pochówkami pięciu mężczyzn, trzech kobiet i trojga dzieci. Część grobów zachowała fragmenty nadbudów z cegły suszonej, pokrytych wapiennym tynkiem (**Ryc. 6**). Z grobu T.495 pochodzi dekorowana, glazurowana czarka (**Ryc. 7**);
- na komie A, w budowlach A, D i G dokonano konsolidacji i uzupełnień murów, z użyciem oryginalnych cegieł średniowiecznych, suszonych lub wypalanych (**Ryc. 8**).

Szersza informacja o badaniach tego i wcześniejszych sezonów znajduje się na stronie internetowej UW: www.polacynadnilem.uw.edu.pl.