

Unpublished Varia From Tell el-Balamon 1978”•

I – Introduction:

In 1978, The University of Mansoura Expedition discovered in the eastern quarter of a populated area at the Tell el-Balamon a variety of objects: many vesseles, a demotic stela, of fragmentary statuttes, scarabs , plaques, amults, coins and bronze objects. Most of these objects date back to Ptolemaic and Roman Periods. The excavations had been carried out under the supervision of Dr. F.A.M., Ghattas, He had published two primary reports on these discoveries¹ .

In addition to Ghattas’ publications, I have published a research inculding 69 unpublished pottery vessels from the same excavations.²

This paper aims to study other unpublished minor objects discovered in the excavation season of 1978 .

II – Description:

A : Metal Objects:

1 - Hemispherical bowl of copper with external rim and wide-mouth. The round base of this bowl was broken into ten fragments and difficult to reconstructur restor.

Diameter : 20.5 cm

(PL I , fig. 1)

2 - Four smaller copper weights of circular shape with a slighty convex top, covered by rust:

Height No. 1 , 1.8 , Diameter, 1.8 cm.

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¹ F. A.M. Ghattas, “ Tell el-Balamoun 1978” in : ASAE 68, 1982, P. 45ff , id: “Some

Selected Amulets from Tell el-Balamon Abu Gallal “ in : ASAE 65, 1983, P. 149ff

² رضا سيد أحمد : " أوان فخارية غير منشورة من حفائر جامعة المنصورة بتل البلامون ، كتاب المؤتمر الخامس لجمعية الآثار بين العرب ، دراسات في آثار الوطن العربي (3) ، الندوة العلمية الرابعة ، القاهرة ، 2002 ، ص 166 ومابعدھا.

Height No. 2, 1.2 cm , Dimeter, 1.2 cm.

Height No. 3, 1.2 cm , Diameter 1.2 cm.

Height No. 4, 1.0 cm , Diameter , 1.0 cm

(Pl. I. fig. 2)

B. Pottery Objects:

1 - A good pottery lamp in lucid shape and a bowl-formed body, plus a long nasus from which a great part was lost. The handle is also broken in a crescent shape. As for the discus. It has a hole for pouring oil surrounded by a deep circle in which there are three in-depth holes, perhaps for ventilation or for inserting certain types of needles for installing and regulating the burning thread. The lamp's shoulder is decorated by embodied ornamentations. As regards the base of the lamp, it is circular in shape. This lamp's counter part were 1) used during the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods in lighting private homes, public buildings as well as on important occasions. Furthermore, They were 2) given as offerings in the temples or 3) kept with the dead as part of their funeral burials in their graves³. Since these objects have been found in a populated area of Tell el-Balaamon, Their first use is more likely.

Maximum Length: 10.5 cm ; Maximum Diameter : 7.0 cm ; Height: 3.2 cm (Pl. I, Fig. 3).

2 - Small pot with circular body, small round base, curve handle, short-necked with external rim which a great part was lost. As for the nozzle, It has narrow and short.

Height 5.6 cm ; Diameter the base 2.3 cm (Pl. I, fig. 4)

3 - Rough dish with a base which has some curves. The surface of this dish was divided into two halves, of which one was divided into two parts. This dish was broken, but a great part of it was restored.

Hight, 4.5 cm ; Diameter. 18.6 cm (Pl. I fig. 5)

³ H. B., Walters, History of Anient Pottery, London, 1905, Vol. 鈕? 俾? II ,P.395ff

C : Stone Objects :

1 - Roughly basalt weight of square shape, each side 3.5 cm long (Pl. II, Fig. 1)

2 - Basalt weight of circular shape, with two reliefs in the lip, probably for lifting the weight.

Height 16.2 cm ; Diameter the lip 16.0 cm ; Diameter the base 11.0 cm (Pl. II, Fig. 2).

3 - Three basalt kohl-sticks, cylindrical in section with bases larger than the tops.

Stick I: Height 7.0 cm ; Diameter the lip 3.2cm; Diameter the base 4.5 cm

Stick 2 : Height 5.0 cm ; Diameter the lip 2.4 cm ; Diameter the base 3.0 cm.

Stick 3 : Height 4.0 cm ; diameter the lip 1.6 cm; Diameter the base 2.0 cm.

(Pl. II, Fig. 3)

4 - Roughly Limestone sink of rectangular shape. It was broken from the top with some external and internal scratches. Length 38.0 cm ; Height 13.0 cm ; Width 7.8 cm .

Internal Height 10.5 cm

Internal Length 31.0 cm.

(Pl. II, Fig. 4)

5 - Limestone circular column with square base. The top of the column has a simple groove, perhaps to be used for fixing one of the daily use tools or toilet .⁴

Height the base 14.0 cm ; Base length 20.0 cm .

Height the column 32.0 cm ; Diameter 14.0 cm

(Pl. III, fig. 5)

6 - Alabster cylindrical vase with wide mouth and external rim,

⁴ For a similar model of a square column and of another in a cylindrical shape from the Roman Period used as a holder for a evaporator, found in Ayn Al-Labakha. See : A. Hussein , Le Sanctuaire rupestre de Piyris, a Ayn Al-Labakha, in : MIFAO 116, 2000, P. 56, Fig. 106-107

the two handles were broken and there were some parts from the base and the lip of the vase aslo were broken on the lip still remained some burns.

Height 6.5 cm; Diameter the lip 3.5 cm

(Pl. III, Fig. 6)

7 - Granite palette of square shape, with roughly base and soft surface.

Side length 8.0 cm

(Pl. III, fig. 7)

D: Terracotta⁵

1 - Female head statutte, corronated y by a headdress, prolonged from the middle and the sides are short and eminent. This female has Greek features and outlooks: round-faced, sharp-nosed, and soft-lipped. The head was broken from the neck, however white colour still remained. The head is hollow from the interior.

(Pl. III, fig. 1)

2 - Upper part of statuette, with unclear Greek features on the face, representing a man raising his right hand to the head. There is a shield on the left shoulder. The statuette probably represented a soldier.

Height 5.0 cm ; Width 6.0 cm.

(Pl. III, Fig. 2)

3 - Terracotta weight in the form of a horse's head⁶ with two

⁵ Terracotta is a term used by scholars to refer to the shapes made up of burned mud in the Graeco-Roman periods. For more details.

See : P. perdrizet, Les Terres Cuites, grecques d'Egypte de collection Fouquet, 2 Vols, Nancy, 1921 S. mollard-Besques , les Terres Cuites grecques, Paris, 1963; R.A. Higgins, Greek Terracottas, Me Thuen's Hand book of Archeology, London, 1967.

⁶ For a parallel Limestone weight in the form of a bull's head, discovered at Tell el-Balamon, dating back to the third century B.C.

See: A. J.,Spencer, Excavations at Tell el-Balamun 1991-1994, London, 1996, P. 75 , Pl. 71,5

smaller ears and a straight standing lock of hair. The head was broken under the neck and the detail of the face of the animal were roughly engraved.

Height 5.0 cm ; Width 6.0 cm

(Pl. III fig. 3)

4 - Terracotta piece represented the hieroglyphic sign “hnw”⁷. The right leg and the neck of the animal are not clear-cut. It was broken and on one of its sides are remnants of burns. This piece was probably used as a bolt or lock⁸.

Length 7.0 cm ; Width 3.4 cm

(Pl. III, Fig. 4)

5 - A headdress similar to a clump of papyrus on which there are remainders of a white stuff, perhaps for ornamenting the head of a statuette such as the above – mentioned female statuette.

Height 9.3 cm

(Pl. III, Fig. 5)

6 - Roughly net-sinker or loom weight of terracotta, circular in shape with central perforation.

Length 7.8 cm ; Diameter 6.2 cm

(Pl. III, Fig. 6)

Analysis:

1 – Weights:

In the previous varia several pieces have become prominent as being used in weights made up of diverse materials, different shapes and various sizes : for of copper (A 2)' two of basalt (C. 1,2) two of terracotta (D. 3,6) . Spencer has found in his own excavation

⁷ About this sign, which represented the skin of a goat,

See: A. Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar, 3 rd ed., Oxford, 1978, Sing-List, No.F 26

⁸For a parallel iron piece discovered from the same hill dating back to the Ptolemaic period, and used as a key, See : A.J. Spencer, Op. Cit., P. 83, Pl. 77 .

in the same hill other pieces similar to these in a house for the ptolemaic period⁹.

This possibly signifies that Tell el-Balamon city had witnessed great economic and commercial activities owing to the buy-sell transactions. In addition, there are the commercial exchange with its neighbours. This supported by its location (5 kilometers west of the Damietta branch and 19 kilometers south of the Mediterreanan. The City was the capital of the 17th region of the delta, since the New kingdom.¹⁰

Some Delta cities shared the same destiny such as Naukratis which “Herodotus” described as the Sole port in Egypt¹¹ and Defenneh in which “Petrie” had found several stone pieces of diverse shapes and sizes, used in weights.

Some of pieces found resemble those found in Tell el-Balamon¹² Furthermore, there is the city of Sais in which the Mid-Delta Mounments Expedition in the season of 1999-2000 has found different and various types of sizes and shapes of weights from the Graeco-Roman. These are an eyewitness for what Sais has enjoyed during this period in the form of economic and commercial activities.¹³

2 - Toilet Tools:

Three basalt sticks are found and square granite palette used by their owners for grinding green kohl for eye-make-up and

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¹¹ Herodotus, II , 179 For Further Commercial Zones in the Delta.

See, Sobhy A. Younis, Hellenic Minorities in Aciert Egypt during the Late Period (664-332 C) Unpublished Thesis, Cairo University, 199, P. 254 f.

¹² W.F. Petrie , Yanis, Paart I, London, 1888, P. 81 ff. Pl. XLVI, 9, 10, 27.

¹³ مجدى إسماعيل عبد العال : سايس فى العصر اليونانى الرومانى ، المؤتمر السادس لجمعية الآثار بين العرب ، كتيب البرنامج وملخصات بحوث الندوة العلمية الخامسة ، القاهرة ، 2003 و ص 45 ومابعدھا .

For more details about Sais, See, J.Malek.Sais , in: LAV, 1984, S.,355ff

reducing the negative effect of sun-rays and eye diseases.¹⁴

3 - Vessels :

The previous varia also contain some various and diverse vessels in terms of their shape, materials and uses. The sink made up of limestone resembles the shape of sarcophagus (C.4) which was probably used by its owners for its depth and width for purification and purgation.

On the otherhand, the vessels made up of copper (A.1) and alabaster (C.6) were probably used for keeping fats and fragrances. This follows the model used by the ancient Egyptians in using such precious vessels very long times ago. This is further enhanced by the humble remains of rotted fat materials inside the alabaster vessel.

As for the pottery-made dish (B.3) whose upper surface is divided into two equal halves of which a half is sub divided into two parts. This may have been one of the table utensils whose divisions were used for keeping and using different kinds of food. The pottery-made bowl in the shape of a pot (B.2) was also probably used as a table utensil for pouring liquids through its nozzle. Such a bowl with a narrow and short nozzle was in common used in Palestine and Syria ages ago¹⁵. Such a type appeared in Egypt since the age of Merimda-Beni-Salama.¹⁶

Conclusion:

The present varia shed light on as do the previous explorations on the political economic and cultural importance of

14 For more details about the palettes and the Egyptians' use of them since the age of Tasian Culture , See, W. Westendorf, Paletten, in LAIV, 1982, S.654ff أنور شكرى ، الصلايات ، تطور أشكالها ونقوشها ، وما توخاه منها المصريون من أغراض ، القاهرة ، 1952 ، ص 1 وما بعدها .

15 H. Kantor, "The early Relations of Egypt with Asia" in JNES I, 1942, P. 174 ff.

16 H. Junker, Merimde, 1939, Abb 9,K. L; West Delta, 18-19, Abb XX.

the city of Tell el-Balamon, as the capital of an important region in the east delta. (The 17th region) have played a vital economic and commercial role manifest in the number of weights uncovered. This paramount importance has continued through the Graeco-Roman periods.

This commercial role has perhaps enriched the population as manifest in the individuals use of toilets furthermore, lamps, locks and bolts were indicative of richness and wealth.

The soldier statue and coronated female statue both in Greek features indicate diversity in the demography of the city. The rough manufacture of the majority of these varia indicate that they are locally made in the city by a group of laborers working in this populated areas. This supported by discovering an furnaces area or pottery of factory in this excavations .¹⁷

¹⁷F.A.M. Ghattas, in: ASAE 65, 1983,p. 152.

Plate III
Plate II



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

Terracotta

Plate I



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Metal Objects



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

Pottery Objects

Plate II



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

Stone Objects