



New Roman mosaic floor from Alexandria

Once again, the Kom el-Dikka site in Alexandria was a scene of an important discovery: a new mosaic was found by a team of Polish archaeologists.

The site located in the heart of the ancient city has been excavated archaeologically since 1960 by the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw (PCMA) expedition in cooperation with the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities. Digging has uncovered successively a vast fragment of the Late Antique city (4th–7th centuries AD) including a small theatre, the grand Imperial bath and a unique group of twenty-two lecture halls – apparently the remains of an ancient "university".



In recent years, excavation work concentrated on the study of the still mostly unknown residential architecture of Roman Alexandria (1st–3rd centuries AD). – *The buildings of that period are known to have often been lavishly decorated – a rule that found confirmation in Alexandria this season: in one of such houses we have discovered a fine Roman floor mosaic – says Dr. Grzegorz Majcherek, the director of the team of PCMA archaeologists working at the site.*

The main square field of this multi-coloured pavement (measuring 2.60 by 2.60 m) is composed of six hexagonal panels featuring lotus flowers, framed by a circular guilloche pattern. Lotus buds can also be seen in spandrels. Overall, the design of the mosaic, additionally equipped with a transversal field in front decorated with astragals and rosettes, is typical for the triclinia – the most imposing of the dining rooms in a Roman house.

The composition, featuring a circle inscribed into a square, so exceptionally popular in Roman Egypt, is considered distinctive of Alexandrian style. This latest discovery, coupled with other polychrome tessellated floors previously found at the Kom el-Dikka site and displayed in the mosaic shelter ("Villa of the Birds"), once again points not only to the affluence of the residents of these houses, but also to the popularity of mosaic art in Alexandria.

Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw coordinates Polish archaeological research in the Eastern Mediterranean since 1959 (since 1990 under the present name). In recent years it broadened its scope of interest into the Arabian Peninsula and the Caucasus. Currently about 30 projects in Egypt, Sudan, Cyprus, Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Armenia and Tunisia. The PCMA also runs a Research Centre in Cairo and the Polish Archaeological Unit in Khartoum.

For more information on the PCMA go to: www.pcma.uw.edu.pl/en/ ; www.facebook.com/pcma.uw/

Read more on the results of Polish–Egyptian research on Kom el-Dikka on the PCMA website:

[Alexandria, Kom el-Dikka](#)

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