The evidence for Cretan presence in the ancient town of Marina el-Alamein

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Researchers tend to consider "imports" habitually as a reflection of trade patterns, an easy marker of the nature and directions of commerce at both local and supraregional level. This natural indication of "foreignness", hence assumption of foreign contacts, cannot be accepted however as straightforward evidence of such ties or commercial relations. In fact, it could be misleading when considered just on the face of it, without separating individual categories of finds and considering them in a general, social as well as strictly commercial context. The presence of one category of find need not express the same patterns or customs as another.

The ancient town of Marina el-Alamein was a Graeco-Roman harbor which flourished from the 1st century AD through the 3rd century AD when it shared in the general slump experienced by the Roman imperial economy in the second half of that century [***Figs 1–2***]. It picked up again in the later 4th and in the 5th century, supporting a Christian community (identified tentatively as the bishopric of Antiphrae (Ball 1942: 104). The town ceased to exist in the early 6th century, which could coincide with the disappearance of many settlements decimated by the first wave of the bubonic plague (Little 2007).

More interesting, however, is the founding of the town and harbor and the character of the early settlement preceding the Roman harbor. To date, there has been no evidence forthcoming concerning the identification of the site. Early attempts by the discoverer and excavator of the site, Wiktor Andrzej Daszewski, to identify the port with Strabo's Leukaspis (Strabo 17.1.14, Daszewski 1990) have been dropped (W.A. Daszewski, personal communication). Assuming Strabo's credibility in his description of this section of the Egyptian coast (for a discussion of this issue, see esp. Knight 1999; also Yoyotte *et alii* 1997), one cannot but wonder why he would have missed a lagoon harbor of such apparent safety and prominence, a town which archaeological and architectural research by teams from the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of the University of Warsaw[1] has proved to be, at least in the centuries of the Early and Middle Roman

[1] The site was explored archaeologically by a team directed by Prof. Wiktor Andrzej Daszewski since its discovery in 1986 until Prof. Daszewski's retirement in 2007. A conservation team (for the past 16 seasons directed by Prof. Stanisław Medeksza and following Prof. Medeksza's demise in 2011 by Dr. Rafał Czerner

Fig. 1. *Panorama of the ancient site at Marina el-Alamein looking from the southern fringes of the necropolis toward the sea, April 2004. Reconstructed pillar tombs constitute a characteristic landmark in the ancient townscape today; the town ruins are hidden in a dip in the ground in the right-hand part of the view (Photo montage, I. Zych, private archives)*

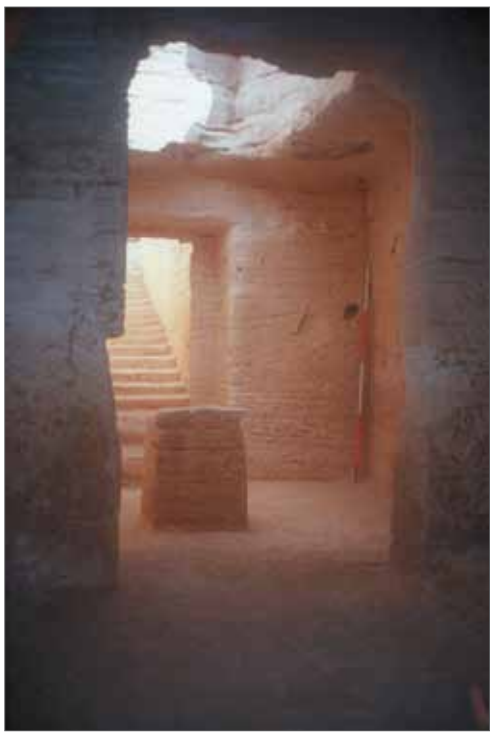

Fig. 2. *Courtyard of hypogeum tomb T29, view from the chamber toward the staircase; the Cretan amphora discussed in the text was found in the corner (Photo W.A. Daszewski, PCMA archives)*

Fig. 3. *Burial niches in the western chamber of hypogeum tomb T13; two of the Cretan lamps were found with individual burials in the lower niche (Photo I. Zych, private archives)*

Fig. 4. *View of the lower town, House H21 in the foreground, view extending toward the northeast (I. Zych, private archives)*

Empire, of considerable local status and affluence (even if presently indeterminable in ancient legal terms for lack of written or epigraphic material). One possibility comes to mind: Strabo failed to identify the harbor at the site of Marina el-Alamein simply because there was no harbor of commercial significance to note in his time. The ruins presently to be seen on site, which Polish conservators have been restoring, largely date to late 1st through 3rd century AD. The quarter of private houses, as well as the recognized public buildings, stand on ruins of 1st century AD architecture, but at the present stage of research it is still not easy to estimate the size and affluence of this earlier settlement. The necropolis in this case is more telling as it contains, besides the extensive scattering of 1st through 3rd century AD underground hypogea with more or less monumental and extended superstructures, also tombs of earlier date [***Figs 1, 2–3***]. Among these are the scenic pillar tombs now restored at the site and the step-pyramids that are associated with similar tombs of Hellenistic date from Alexandria (e.g. Chatby necropolis, Breccia 1912, Adriani 1963, 109–110, 117–120, 124–127). These tombs, concentrated in the central part of the southern necropolis of the ancient town, dated to the 1st and even 2nd century BC (Daszewski 1998), are proof of the existence of a settlement, more likely a town than a seaside village, on the shore of the lagoon also in Hellenistic times. How much of a harbor it was at this time cannot be ascertained for lack of clear-cut evidence. For that matter, since no harbor installations of any period have survived and are presumed to have been lost to sand and coastal subsidence processes in recent times, the status of the harbor from Roman Imperial times is also largely a matter of conjecture, based on the evidence of a few structures identified as potential waterfront warehouses and a variety of imports found on site.

The archaeological record testifies to a considerable spread of "imports", that is, objects of foreign provenience that reached the site over the centuries. From the Roman Imperial Age there are many finds that reflect the trading process. Amphorae from all over the Mediterranean: Cilicia, Palestine, Syria, North Africa, Tripolitania, Mauretania and Italy, constitute a major share of the pottery assemblage. Supplemented by Cypriot, Eastern Sigillata A and Çandarli wares, as well as some Knidian lamps and relief wares, they point to thriving traffic in mass commodities like wine and oil, as well as individual more or less luxury goods (Daszewski *et alii* 1990: 43–51). Equally so, while keeping in mind the bias inherent to discoveries from limited archaeological excavations, there are telling absentees, like Eastern Sigillata B or Egyptian Red Slip wares of the Early Roman Age.

In all of this, there is also a notable share of irrefutably or quite possibly Cretan finds, that is, objects which were carried from Crete either direct or by intermediary. Foremost, there is the pottery, which again comprises mainly amphorae. A surprisingly

from the Wrocław University of Technology) has accompanied the archaeological work from the very beginning, realizing a program of preservation and conservation in agreement with Egypt's Antiquities authorities. Both authors have been part of the archaeological excavations and have supported as archaeologists-specialists the conservation project from the start of the work, receiving encouragement and permission from both Prof. Daszewski and the late Prof. Medeksza to study and publish various aspects of the finds.

numerous group is formed by oil lamps of the so-called Cretan or "Ivy-leaf" type, unprecedented in any Egyptian assemblages (and outside of Crete for that matter). There is the possible adoption of a Cretan-sourced custom of using gold plaques with Orphic symbolism, placed in the mouths of initiates (Zych 2010; for an interesting overview of Cretan society in the Early Roman age, see Wieland 2009). Finally, there is a name in Doric Greek carved on one of the pillar tombs, which, if interpreted as a female name (Łajtar 2005: 106, but *SEG* 55[2005]: no. 1833), could have belonged to a woman of Cretan origin (for Cretan multiculturalism in Classical times, Baldwin Bowsky 1997: 202ff.; for Dorian social practices in Early Roman Crete, see, e.g., Watrous *et alii* 2004: esp. 357). The purpose of the present article is to examine this evidence and to inquire into possible interpretations.

Amphorae

The list of products for which Crete was famous in antiquity is exceptionally long (Harrison 1993: 116–117). But while trade in medicinal herbs, reeds as material for arrow shafts and honey and quince preserves is difficult to observe in the archaeological material, the export of Cretan wine is incomparably easier to trace due to the durability of the vessels used for its transport. The import to Egypt of honey and olive oil, among other products, has been confirmed in papyrus sources already for the Ptolemaic period (SB XIV 12074; P.Tebt. III.2 997.5). Cretan wine was also brought to Egypt at this time, as indicated by finds of a few stamped amphora handles from Hierapytna, found in Alexandria (Empereut *et alii* 1992: 639–640). A substantial quantitative growth in wine imports occurred in the Roman period, when the sweet *vinum creticum,* often identified with *passum*, became a staple on dining tables in Italy. It was carried in amphorae produced in a few dozen centers scattered around the island.

This widely documented expansion of wines from Crete coincides with the *floruit* of town occupation in Marina. Indeed, with the share of Cretan amphorae reaching 10–15 % of the entire amphorae assemblage recorded from excavations in Marina, the town appears as one of the biggest places of consumption of this product (Majcherek 2007). Most of the seven amphora types distinguished by A. Marangou (1996) have been identified in Marina, encompassing both principal forms and capacity variants. Amphorae designated as AC 1 are the most common [***Fig. 5:1–4***], but this hardly distinguishes Marina with regard to other sites in Egypt. Containers of this kind, specifically Cretan in shape and carrying from 20 to 24 liters of product, were the most frequently exported vessels from Crete. It is a pity that no evident morphological evolution of the shape over an exceptionally long period during which these containers were produced, from the 1st through the 4th century AD, makes the AC 1 amphora virtually useless for précising the chronology of economic phenomena. The second form, AC 2 [***Fig. 6***], which was modeled on Coan amphorae and widely imitated in different ceramic manufacturing centers around the Mediterranean centers, occurs in lesser quantities. A similarly low

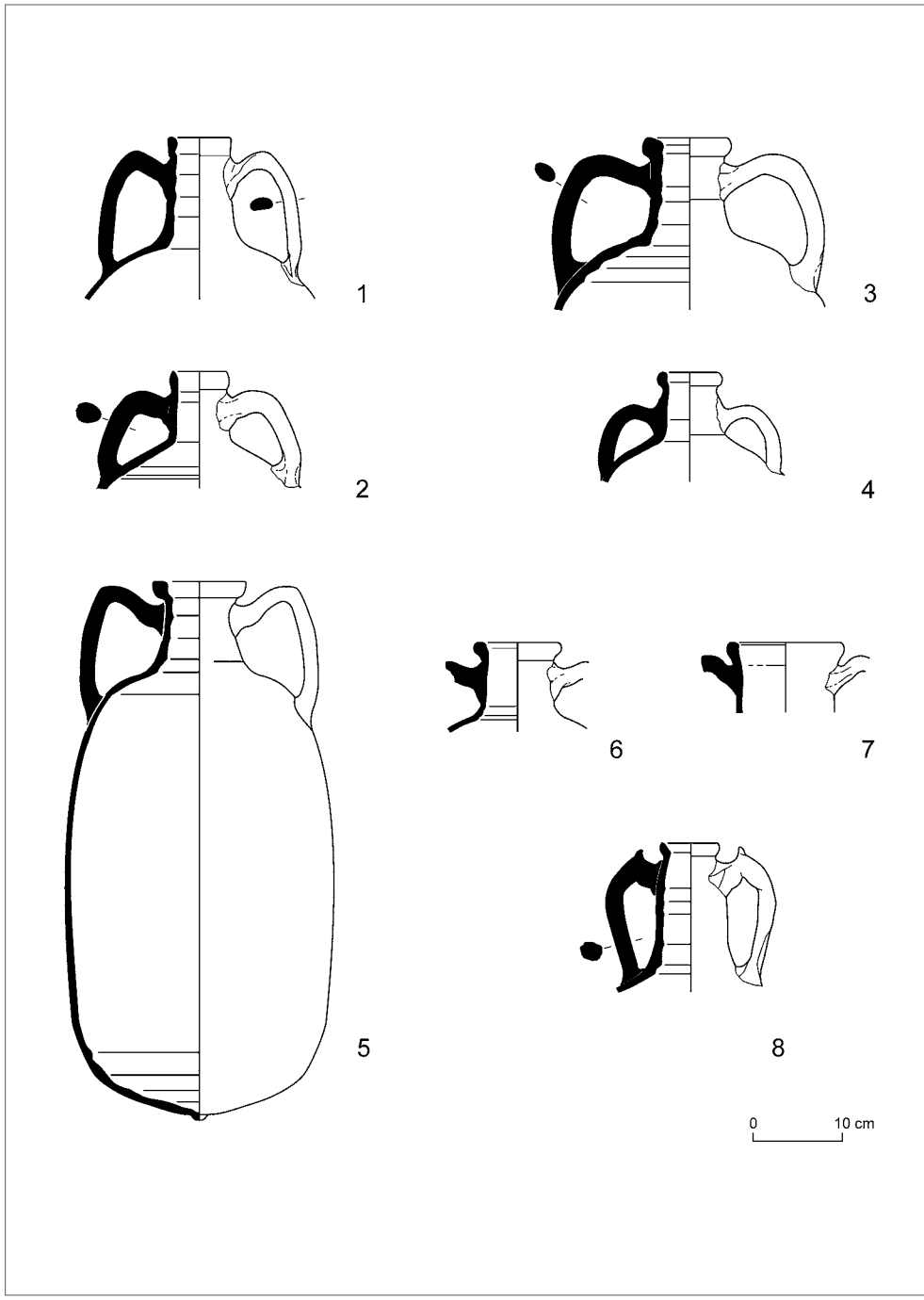

Fig. 5. Cretan amphorae from excavations at Marina el-Alamein (Drawing G. Majcherek, digitizing M. Momot)

frequency has been recorded for the AC 3 amphora [***Fig. 5:5–7***], which was produced in workshops in the central and eastern part of the island. The AC 4 type of amphora with the characteristic "horned" handle, referring to Rhodian models, has been noted only sporadically [***Fig. 5:8***].

In Marina, Cretan amphorae have been recorded in practically all the habitational contexts excavated in different parts of the town. Their commonness is borne out furthermore by the presence of such vessels in the necropolis area, although there the finds are by necessity of secondary nature presumably and in most cases cannot be directly associated with mortuary cult. An excellent example is provided by a complete amphora of AC 2 type found complete [***Fig. 6***], leaning against the wall in the courtyard of hypogeum tomb T29. In virtually all the archaeological contexts, amphorae are present in concurrence with Cypriot sigillata, most of the forms of which are included in a chronological horizon from the first half of the 1st through the middle of the 2nd century AD (Daszewski 1996). Importantly, this horizon corresponds to the greatest expansion of certain of the Cretan amphora types (AC1–AC2) in the Mediterranean basin. A. Marangou has demonstrated major-scale export of Cretan wine starting from the

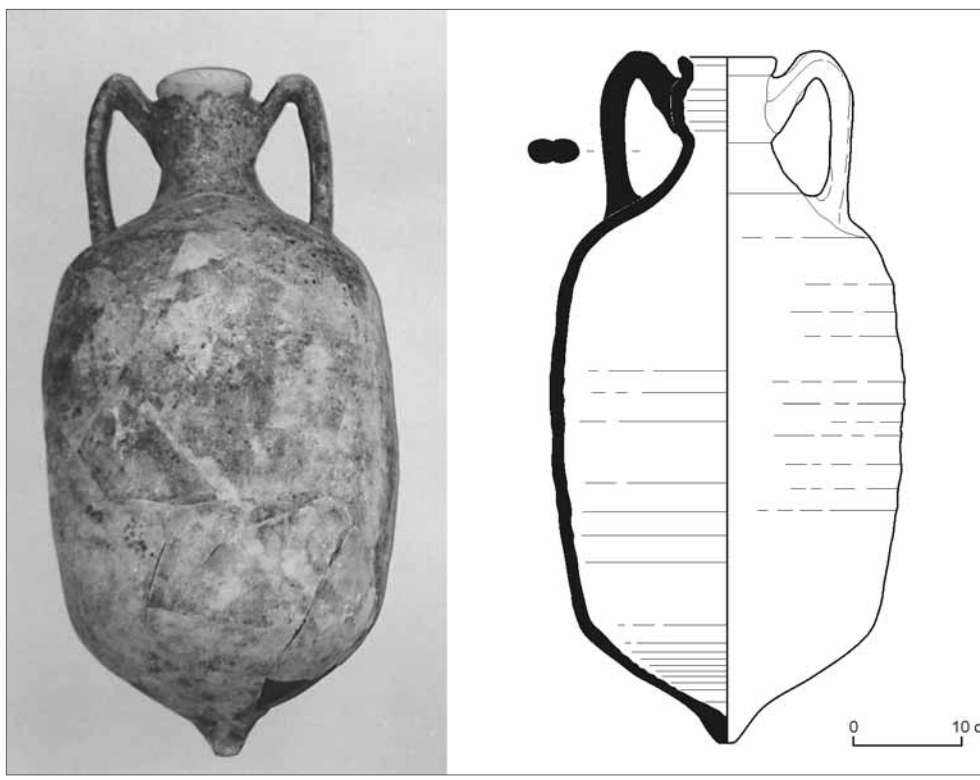

Fig. 6. *Cretan amphora of AC 2 type from hypogeum tomb T29 (Photo W.A. Daszewski; drawing I. Zych, digitizing M. Momot)*

1st century AD, including the choosy markets in the West, primarily Campania, but also southern Gaul and even the Rhineland (Marangou-Lerat 1996: 156–160). The same phenomenon was noted in the Eastern Mediterranean. Of particular merit are the data for Berenike (Benghazi), the only city of the Pentapolis for which reliable statistical data is available. Cretan amphorae (Benghazi Early Roman Amphora 1=AC 3) constitute a numerous group there, totaling some 9 % of the finds from layers dated mainly from the early 1st century to the middle of the 2nd century AD (Riley 1979: 145). The containers from Crete continued to have a high share in the material, oscillating around 8 %, through the 3rd century (Riley 1979: 180–183; Benghazi Middle Roman Amphora 2 = AC 1).

Cretan amphorae are not commonplace among finds from Egypt. Apart from Marina, where their position, as we have seen, was exceptional, containers from Crete have been recorded at, among others, Taposiris Magna (Marangou 1996: 70), Schedia, Buto (Bourriau, French 2007: 126, Fig. 3:5) and Tebtynis (Marangou, Marchand 2007: 247, Fig. 31). Amphorae confirming wine imports from Crete have also been identified in the Roman *praesidiae* of the Eastern Desert in assemblages from the 1st–3rd centuries AD. They have been found at Didymoi and Maximianon (Brun 2007: 505–523) and at Mons Claudianus (Tomber 1996; 2006).

The only other site beside Marina where a substantial frequency of Cretan amphorae has been noted is Alexandria. This phenomenon is fully understandable from the point of view of the huge consumption market in the metropolis, but it also reflects the special place held by Crete in the city's trade exchange (Marangou 2000; 2004). Even so, the frequency indicator was never as high as in Marina; indeed, the share of Cretan amphorae in assemblages from the territory of the western cemeteries of the metropolis did not exceed 1 % (Şenol 2001: 382, Fig. 10:21; 2003: 469, Fig. 2). From excavations in the town itself, however, the quantitative results were much different. Early Roman layers from the Kom el-Dikka site, excavated by a Polish team from the PCMA, produced a fairly numerous set, constituting a few percent of the total count of amphorae (Majcherek 1999), while corresponding layers from the Old Diana Theatre site dug by a French team yielded material constituting 5.54 % of the amphora finds (Şenol 2007: 68). Another indicator of the scale of wine imports from Crete was supplied by a shipwreck containing a cargo of these amphorae, recently discovered by J.-Y. Empereur on the roadsteads of the harbor in Alexandria (Empereur 1997).

This brief review of the distribution of Cretan amphorae within the territory of Egypt points to two regions where most of the recorded examples are concentrated: the Mediterranean coast with Alexandria and Marina in particular, where there is a notably high frequency of finds, and the Eastern Desert with a lower frequency. Relevant amphorae from other regions, including the Red Sea ports, are exceptionally sporadic. This geographic distribution pattern merits attention in the light of what it can tell us about consumers and their individual and collective preferences.

Lamps

The assemblage of "Cretan" or "Ivy-leaf" type lamps from Marina [***Figs 7–8***], consists of nine more or less complete specimens and 11 fragments. Six of the whole lamps are from burial contexts (deposited as grave goods with individual burials or as in one case, that of the "jumbo" lamp in a large window opening in the front wall of a burial chamber) and three lamps (two of them practically twins) can be reasonably assigned to a large hypogeum tomb uncovered by Egyptian archaeologists.[2] One lamp [***Fig. 7B***, bottom left; ***8***, top], missing the nozzle but otherwise more or less complete, was found in a well dated domestic context, crushed by collapsing walls in a quake in the early second half of the 2nd century AD (AD 162?). All of the fragments came from individual private houses surrounding the public square situated in the center of the ancient town.[3]

These highly specific mould-made lamps are easily recognizable thanks to the "ivy-leaf" motif, a bilobate heart-shaped form with relief circles impressed at the wider ends of the lobes. Apparently no two lamps of this type are exactly the same (Bailey 1985; Catling, Catling 1992), in Crete where hundreds of these lighting devices have been found as well as in the few places around the Mediterranean where such lamps have been discovered. The distribution pattern is interesting to say the least (even assuming the natural randomness of archaeological discoveries): the largest assemblage outside Crete comes from Benghazi (Sidi Khrebish) (Bailey 1985: 4–5), the next largest group is the one originating from Marina, and single examples have been reported from a domestic context in Ptolemais (one certainly identified lamp top [***Fig. 9***] and one possible nozzle from leveling fill coming from a 1st–3rd century AD context),[4] the collection of the Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria (inv. no. 8267, lamp seen in the museum display prior to renovation works), and Herod's Palace in Caesarea (Sussmann 1995: 278; 1996: 350–351 and notes 12–13). No other examples from Egypt have been noted in the published record, at least to the author's knowledge.

Two lamps, the one from the Graeco-Roman Museum and the one from Caesarea, are comparatively huge, over 35 cm in length when 20–25 cm is the usual upper range. V. Sussmann must be close to the truth when she concludes that "such a giant lamp

[2] SCA Inspector Mohamed Ali from the Hammam office conducted excavations of a huge hypogeum tomb (T24) as part of his regular duties at the site in 1998 when the archaeological mission was not present. The finds were transferred ultimately to the Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria where they were seen by one of the present authors in 2003 in the stores at Mustapha Pasha. They were registered as a study collection originating from Marina el-Alamein, but no further documentation was made available. Permission to study and publish these lamps was granted by GRM Director Ahmed Abdel Fattah, see Zych 2004.

[3] Both from cleaning works by the Polish-Egyptian Conservation Mission operating on the site concurrently with the archaeological team and from excavations carried out by the Marina Archaeological Site Presentation Project (ARCE/EAP) in 2006, see Zych *et alii* 2009. Permission to study and publish the results of the MASP Project was given by ARCE Deputy Director Dr. Michael Jones in 2008.

[4] I would like to thank Dr. George Yacoub, head of the Laboratory of Archaeological Research in Libya — Ptolemais, Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw, who is continuing the work of the late Prof. Tomasz Mikocki, for permission to publish this find. Dr. Piotr Jaworski from the Ptolemais team kindly provided the archaeological interpretation of the find context.

could not have been brought to Caesarea by chance, but probably was chosen for a special purpose or occasion" (1996: 350–351). There can be no doubt that these lamps were never traded. Despite their individual appeal, their glamor was more in the eye of a very concrete beholder, one for whom these lighting devices constituted a very special object, a mark of cultural belonging, a souvenir of home, a religious attribute perhaps. Their extensive presence in Benghazi may be connected with the workshop of Gamos,[5] which Bailey would like to locate there. Even if the Gamos workshop was located in Crete, which seems less likely, the lamps were hardly commercial goods. When they traveled,

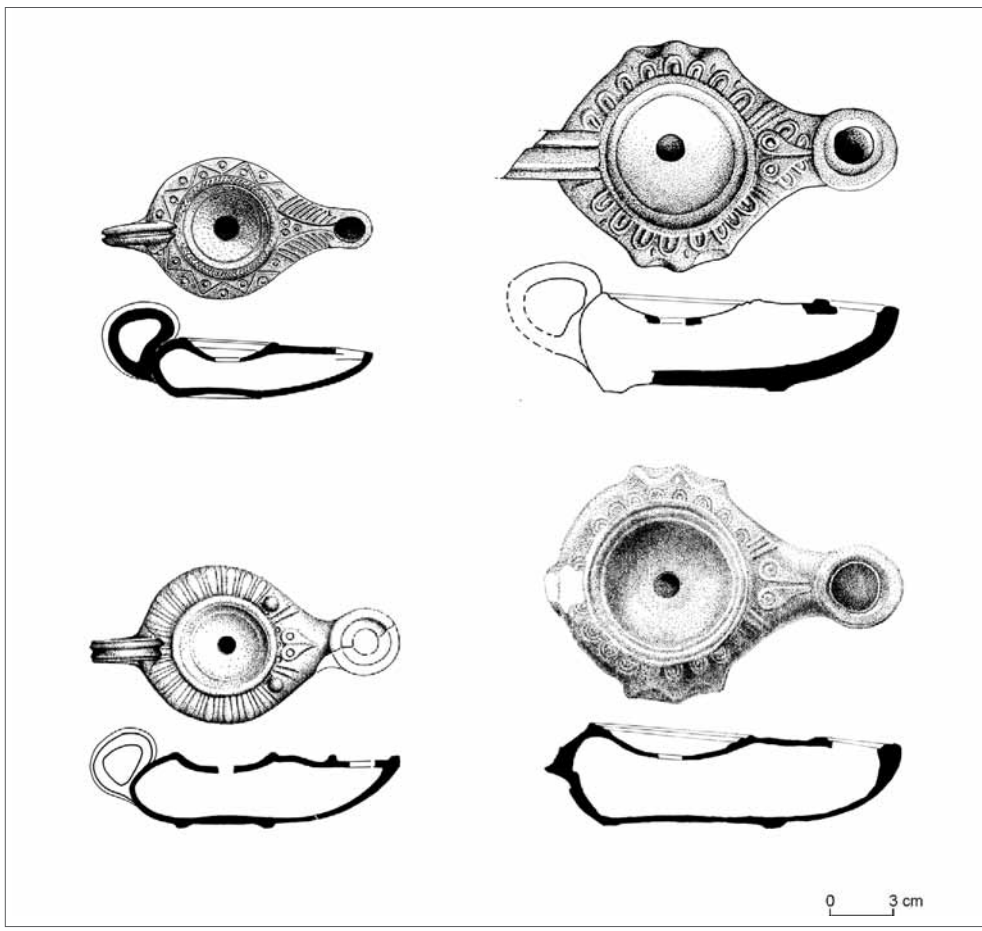

Fig. 7A. Cretan lamps from burial contexts in Marina el-Alamein: Field Reg. Nos (counterclockwise from top left) FR 5/90, FR 8/97, E 3923, AR 3/00 (Drawing M. Burdajewicz, T. Witczak, I. Zych; digitizing M. Puszkarski)

[5] Gamos is identified tentatively as a Cretan; for his name appearing in signatures on terracotta oil lamps from the imperial times, see Chaniotis 1989: 70 and references cited there.

whether to the African part of the province, or further afield, like Marina, Alexandria and Caesarea, it was for a special purpose. If public, then as a gift; if private, then for a variety of individual reasons, which can be guessed at, but not proved. In Marina, the private factor must have figured strongly considering that the lamps were part of the

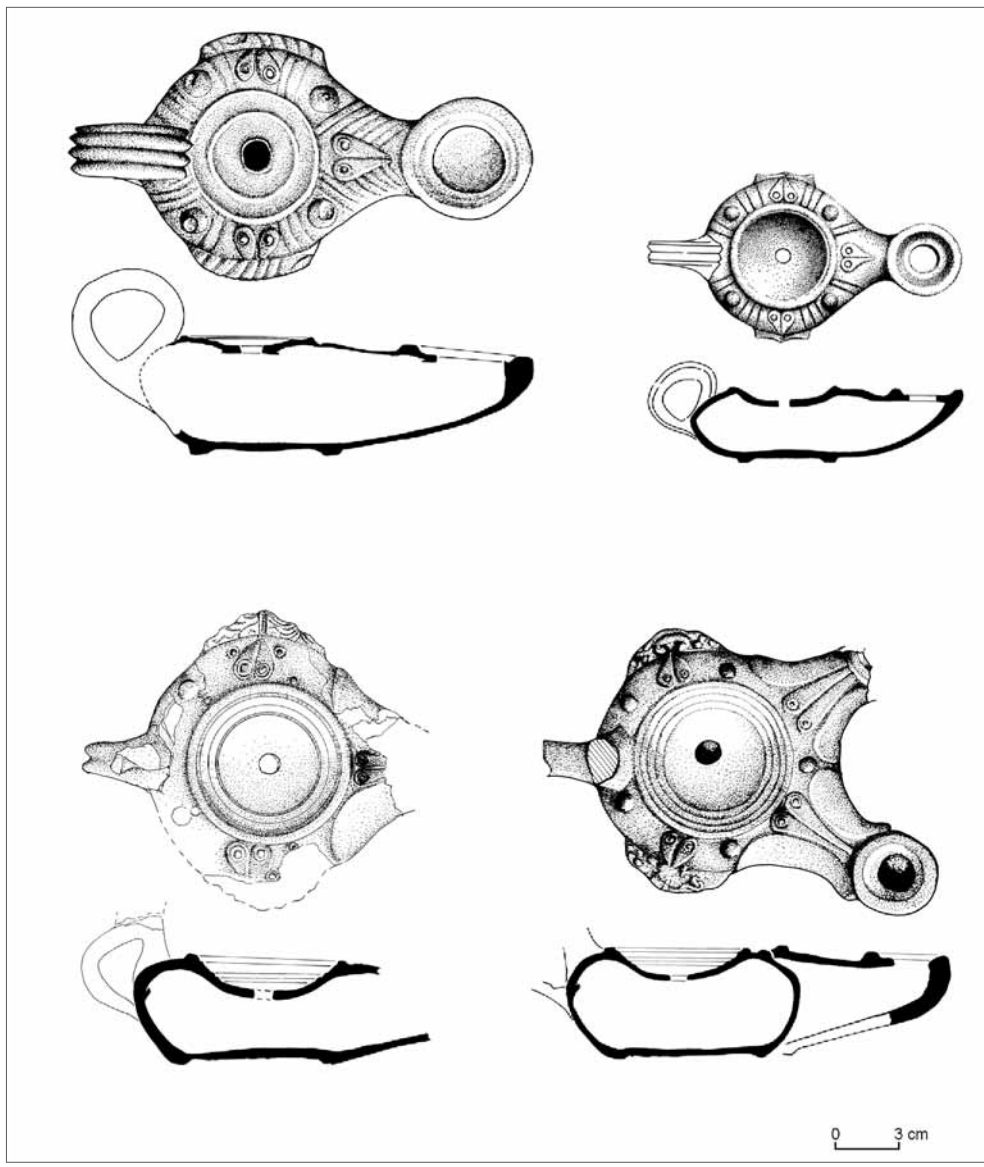

Fig. 7B. Cretan lamps from burial contexts in Marina el-Alamein: Field Reg. Nos (clockwise from top left) FR 4/98, FR 10/97, E 3947+E 33+36, and one domestic context, Reg. No. MASP06/Tr04/012/01 (Drawing M. Burdajewicz, T. Witczak, I. Zych; digitizing M. Puszkarski)

Fig. 8. *Cretan lamp, Reg. No. MASP06/Tr04/012/01 (top and underside view) and other fragments from domestic contexts (excavations of the MASP Project in 2006 and finds made by the Polish-Egyptian Preservation team after 2001 (Photos A. Obłuski, courtesy MASP ARCE/EAP archives; W. Grzegorek, I. Zych, PCMA archives)*

grave goods category. In Marina, burial offerings were relatively not as frequent as is commonly assumed (see Zych forthcoming), but lamps were definitely one of the most universal forms of burial furnishings, evoking a universal belief in eternal light providing for the soul etc. That at least seven lamps (out of a total of about 17 found with burials in Marina) were of the "Cretan" type means two things. Firstly, that they were at hand to be used for such a purpose, and secondly, that those arranging for a burial had the ingrained need to furnish their near ones with such a lamp.

No absolute dating evidence is forthcoming for any of the five documented examples of "Cretan" lamps found in burials (nothing can be said in this respect of the two lamps from Egyptian excavations). Relative stratigraphic dating of the four tombs gives a horizon of from the later half of the 1st century AD (FR 5/90, ***Fig. 7A***: top left), through the middle of the 2nd century AD (FR 8/97, ***Fig. 7A***, bottom left; FR 10/97, ***Fig. 7B***, top right). The jumbo lamp from T19 (FR 4/98, ***Fig. 7B***, top left) does not seem to fit easily into the general scheme, but it still appears most likely to be from the end of the 1st or the beginning of the 2nd century AD. The one complete "Cretan" lamp from an urban context represents a sure, not later than the mid-2nd century form [MASP06/Tr04/012/01, ***Fig. 7B***, bottom left and and ***Fig. 8***, top]. Naturally, there is no way of knowing how long such a lamp could have been "treasured" in a domestic context, as a family heirloom or memento of home. In any case, the overall horizon for the presence of "Cretan" lamps in Marina is from the Flavians to Antonine times.

Since the lamps appear to have been worked each one individually, resulting in the absence of exactly the same forms, scholars have refrained from designating any subtypes. The assemblage from Marina is too small to support any such ideas. However, there seem to be two general tendencies, which were brought together in the burials from T13, the two lamps being separated by only a few years, assuming the burials had not occurred all at once (Zych 2010).

The first lamp in the sequence is an early form, the only one without an "ivy leaf", but considered prototypical for the Cretan production (Zych 2004: 81–83). Three other lamps, already with the bilobate leaf on the nozzle top, preserve the general pattern of

Fig. 9. *Cretan lamp from Ptolemais, Reg. no. I/332/06 (Photo D. Frankowska-Delman)*

shoulders decorated with a continuous motif. The zigzag and dot pattern of the first lamp is replaced with narrow ovules, changing in the specimens later in the sequence into a series of wide relief ovules. The later shape is also already furnished with the side handles, a fashion that appeared on lighting devices in the later 1st and 2nd century AD (Bailey 1985). Nozzles are already big with a raised ring around the wick hole which is usually centered, leaving a ledge for the wick to rest on.

The other group is characterized by a repetition of the bilobate leaf motif on the nozzle and at right angles on the shoulders. The resulting right angles (the handle marks the opposite of the motif on the nozzle top) are bisected and marked with large round relief bosses. The shoulders are decorated either with relief rays (also on the nozzle sides) as in the prototypical form, or by impressed dotted circles of the same kind as the circles on the bilobate leaf motif. The side handles repeat known ornamental patterns used also on other types of lamps: wavy ribbon, acanthus leaf, voluted vegetal. The later lamps in the sequence, from the mid 2nd century AD, already have wide fleshy volutes on the nozzles. The handles, where preserved are mostly double-ridged ring handles. The jumbo-lamp has a seldom encountered four-ridged handle, which is still however a ring handle.

There is one example of a *dilychnoi*, that is, two-nozzled lamp, undoubtedly the richest formally in this assemblage and possibly the latest in this sequence.

Recapitulation

Crete's bilateral relations with Egypt — political, cultural and commercial — which took on extended depth in Hellenistic and Roman times, are of much earlier date in fact. Much has been written on Egypt's contacts with the Aegean already in the Bronze Age and the body of archaeological evidence has been growing continuously (suffice it to mention Cline 1999; Bietak 1995). Mercenaries from Crete, excellent archers which the island was famous for, made an appearance in Egypt in the 5th century BC, leaving graffiti on the walls of the temple of Ramesses II in Abydos (Masson 1976: 305–308; for an overview of Cretan mercenaries in the Classical Greek world, see Trundle 1997).

The territorial unification of Egypt and Crete under the rule of the Ptolemies introduced a completely new quality to these mutual relations. For one thing, it facilitated the transfer of goods and people. The founding of Alexandria, which shifted the focus of political and economic life in the Egyptian realm to the northern coast, had far-reaching consequences on a supra-regional scale, as it created the biggest consumer site that had to affect trade relations with partners near (*vide* Marina el-Alamein) and far, encompassing the Aegean as well as the Eastern Mediterranean. On the Cretan side, an evident prosperity enjoyed by the island in the Late Hellenistic and Roman times also fostered the growth of commercial ties (De Souza 1998: 113–114). De Souza's argument that "Crete was economically strong enough to resist the domination of Roman and Italian businessmen", can be taken one step further: Cretan 'businessmen' may have

held their own as middle-men in the trading of Cretan products exported, not the least, to Alexandria and Egypt. Following from this is an assumption of individual Cretan families settling in places of importance on the Cretan export routes. On a lighter note, the 2nd-century BC Greek historian Polybius (6.45–47) may be cited as saying: "The Cretans are the only people in the world in whose eyes no gain [κέρδος, commercial profit] is disgraceful … money is held in such high honor that its acquisition is not only regarded as necessary but most honorable" (after Watrous 2001: 134).

The relative abundance of available evidence, both written and archaeological, testifies to the scale and variety of the relations connecting Egypt and Crete. Egypt seems to have been a preferred destination for migrating Cretans, considering, for example, the sizable ethnic element present in the Ptolemaic capital and outside it as well. Recognized Cretans included colonists, artisans, merchants and primarily army mercenaries (see, e.g., πολιτεύμα Κρητῶν ἀνδρῶν, in the Arsinoe nome, Uebel 1968; the case of Dryton and his first Cretan wife, Vandorpe 1992; a case study of Cretan mercenary families in Egypt among others, Loman 2004: 60–65; for Cretans overseas serving the Ptolemies in various capacities, see Spyridakis 1981). The Cretan contingent appears to have formed the core of the Alexandrian city garrison (Fraser 1972: 66, 70). Ethnic affiliations also identify a large group of Cretans, soldiers included, in the epigraphic material from the necropolis in Hadra, Chatby and Ibrahimieh (Delia 1996: 45, note 27 and 32; Launey 1950: 250–251).

More importantly, these relations were not one-sided. Successive Ptolemaic rulers made efforts to control the entire island politically, hence the aggregated evidence of Hellenistic Egyptian presence in Crete (including possible Egyptians or Egyptians from ethnically mixed families, Baldwin Bowsky 1997: 202–203 and note 22). A key role in this process would have been played most probably by the Ptolemaic garrison in Itanos (Fraser 1972: 79, 89; Bagnall 1976: 118–121). The case of the so-called "Hadra vases", a category of vessels associated inextricably with Alexandrian art is perhaps the best illustration of the process. Research has shown that these luxury vases were originally imported from Crete and became such a fashion in the Alexandrian metropolis that their production was undertaken on a massive scale in the local ceramic workshops (Callaghan 1980: 1985). The vessels created here, decorated with new and innovative patterns, subsequently returned to their source of origin, appreciated by consumers in the Aegean (Enklaar 1986).

Roman expansion in the Mediterranean brought the integration of Crete within the new pan-Mediterranean economic system, simultaneously intensifying economic ties with Egypt. For one, Crete was at the receiving end of a booming trade in stone building material quarried by the Romans in the Eastern Desert of Egypt in the first 250 years of their rule. Knossos, Gortyn, Lyttos, Hierapytna and Itanos have all produced, from 2nd and 3rd century contexts, numerous examples of columns made of Egyptian granodiorite (*marmor Claudianum)* and even smaller architectural and sculptural elements of porphyry and onyx embellishing public buildings (Paton, Schneider 1999). It is noteworthy that imperial quarries operating in Mons Claudianus, from where the

granite would have come, have yielded finds of Cretan amphorae, although in admitedly very small quantities (Tomber 1996; 2006: 205). And for the first time in this period, Egyptian amphorae were noted in assemblages from archaeological sites in the Aegean and the island of Crete in particular. Most of the finds come from shipwrecks off the island's shores (poignantly illustrating the dangers inherent in maritime trade), but they have also been identified in Knossos and Gortyn (Marangou 2007: 668–669). Most of these finds are wine amphorae (AE 3) produced, both the containers and the wine in them, in the Mareotis region. More importantly, some of them may have even come from Marmarica, where ceramic workshops specialized in the manufacture of containers of this kind have also been found (Majcherek, Shennawi 1993).

The presence of Cretan products in the material from Marina, both containers for products and the products themselves, as well as other object categories, rests well within the frame of this overall picture of mutual contacts. One is entitled to wonder, however, whether the substantial numbers of both lamps and amphorae, distinguishing the site against a backdrop of evidence from other Egyptian sites, could be treated as proof of special ties (or status perhaps) of the town, possibly connected with the existence of a Cretan colony. The natural preference for things and foods from back home, generally characterizing expatriate communities, could explain the concentration of these finds in Marina. On the other hand, it could equally well be an entirely normal side effect of the town's location on the maritime trade route heading for Alexandra.

The first possibility would need much more tangible evidence than what the site of Marina el-Alamein has supplied up to now. Without any written or epigraphic testimony, we are left with such intangibilities as the golden *lamellae*, suggested elsewhere (Zych 2010) as representing a late expression of ancient religious practices associated with Crete (and the Classical Greek world), and the questioned identification of a name on a tomb monument from Marina as the female Prota used in Doric Greek, which could (but not necessarily, of course) identify the deceased as a woman of Cretan origin (see above, 359). The rest is more a medium for imagination and for largely improvable ideas of when and how Cretan mercenaries with their families or independent tradesmen moved through this coastal town. Anthropological research on the skeletons from tombs in Marina el-Alamein (see M. Kaczmarek in this volume) have suggested a lifestyle involving heavy wear on joints and the bone frame of males especially. The first thing that comes to mind in a harbor town is carrying heavy loads, which would be natural, if the port was used for the transfer of goods (like amphorae with wine) on and off ships. But was there really such extensive traffic in this harbor? On the other hand, if the inhabitants were army veterans, for instance, would not their skeletal frames and joints have suffered from a lifetime of wearing armor and carrying weapons? More analysis is needed, but a tentative possibility exists that at least some of the town's inhabitants were veteran soldiers (Cretans not excluded), living out their lives with their families in relative comfort. The argument of Cretan lamps included in the fairly poor set of grave goods with individual burials in three or possibly four of the tombs as reflecting stronger

Cretan ties must rest on its own merit, for it can only be explained by a preference and fondness for objects bringing to mind the greener pastures of a native land.

The second possibility requires a closer look at commercial links in the Eastern Mediterranean. Researchers are nearly unanimous in emphasizing the prosperity enjoyed by Crete in the first three centuries of Roman rule in this part of the Mediterranean (e.g. Francis, Harrison 2003) and connecting it with a more open wine-producing economy (Harris 1999). The contrast with the "subsistence" economy of earlier periods, when the sole alternative was to offer services as mercenaries or piracy (in which the Cretans were apparently equally accomplished as in the military profession), is overpoweringly clear (Chaniotis 1999; Brule 1978: 156–161). Naturally, Crete's strategic situation on important maritime trade routes, not the least the Roman "Corn Route" from Alexandria to Rome, bears impact on the island's economic development (Rougé 1966: 86–88; Rickman 1980: 266). The "Corn Route" was surely responsible for the appearance of Egyptian-made amphorae in Crete as they could have accompanied Egyptian corn. On the other hand, the north–south route connecting the Aegean with the southern shores of the Mediterranean would explain the exceptional representation of Cretan products in Marina, as well as in Berenike (Benghazi). The ties with Cyrenaica must have been even deeper than with Egypt, considering that for several centuries in the period in question, from 67 BC through the reforms of Diocletian in the end of the 3rd century AD, the two lands constituted a single administrative unit as a senatorial province.

There the case stands for now: a choice between the material aspects of the evidence pointing to broader economic processes and transformations, and the intangible human aspect behind all activity reflected in the archaeological record. Perhaps the Cretan presence in Marina, as described here, can be interpreted as a little of both.

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ABBREVIATIONS

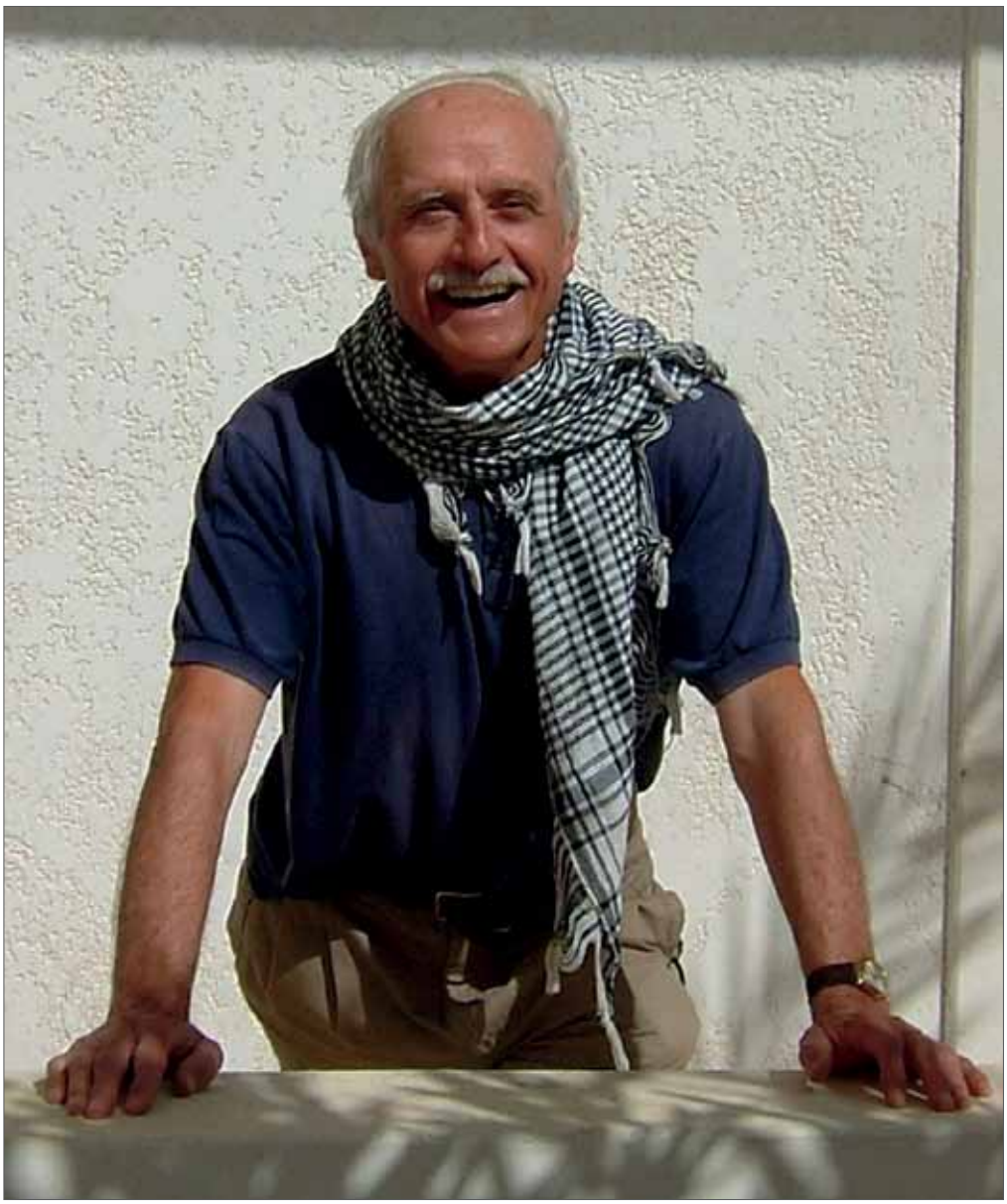
AA	*Archäologischer Anzeiger*, Berlin
AAAS	*Annales archéologiques arabes de Syrie*, Damas
ABSA	*Annual of the British School of Athens*, London
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*, New York
APF	*Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete*, Leipzig, Stuttgart
ASAE	*Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte*, Le Caire
BAAL	*Bulletin d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Libanaises*, Beirut
BABesch	*Bulletin antieke Beschaving,* Louvain
BCH	*Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*, Paris
BdÉ	*Bibliothèque d'étude,* Le Caire
BEFAR	*Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome,* Rome, Paris
BIFAO	*Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale*, Le Caire
BSFE	*Bulletin de la Société française d'égyptologie*, Paris
CCE	*Cahiers de la céramique égyptienne,* Le Caire
CCEC	*Cahiers du Centre d'études chypriotes*, Nanterre
CdÉ	*Chronique d'Égypte*, Bruxelles
CRAI	*Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*, Paris
CSEL	*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, Vienna
EtTrav	*Études et travaux*, Varsovie
GM	*Göttinger Miszellen*, Göttingen
GRBS	*Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, Durham, NC
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*, Jerusalem
JbAC	*Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, London
JGS	*Journal of Glass Studies*, New York
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*, London
JJP	*Journal of Juristic Papyrology*, Warsaw
JRA	*Journal of Roman Archaeology*, Ann Arbor, MI
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*, London
KHKM	*Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej*, Warszawa
LIMC	*Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae*, Zurich
MDAIA	*Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung*, Berlin
MDAIK	*Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Abeilung Kairo*, Wiesbaden
MEFRA	*Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'École française de Rome. Antiquité*, Paris
MIFAO	*Mémoires publiés par les membres de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale,* Le Caire
NC	*Numismatic Chronicle*, London
NumAntCl	*Numismatica e antichità classiche*, Logano
OLA	*Orientalia Lovaniensia analecta*, Louvain
PAM	*Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean*, Warsaw
RACrist	*Rivista di archeologia cristiana*, Cité du Vatican
RBK	*Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst*, Stuttgart

RDAC	*Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus*, Nicosia
RdÉ	*Revue d'égyptologie*, Paris, Louvain
REPPAL	*Revue du centre d'études de la civilisation phénicienne-punique et des antiquités libyques*
RMNW	*Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie*, Warszawa
RSO	*Rivista degli studi orientali*, Roma
RTAM	*Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, Gembloux
RTAM	*Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale,* Gembloux, Louvain
SAAC	*Studies in Ancient Art and Civilization*, Kraków
VetChr	*Vetera christianorum,* Bari
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, Bonn

* * *

DACL	F. Cabrol, H. Leclercq, *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie,* Paris, 1907–1953
LCI	E. Kirschbaum, W. Braunfels (eds), *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, Rom: Herder, 1968–1976
RealEnc	A. Pauly, G. Wissowa, W. Kroll, K. Mittelhaus*, Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft,* Stuttgart–Münich, 1893–1980

CLASSICA ORIENTALIA



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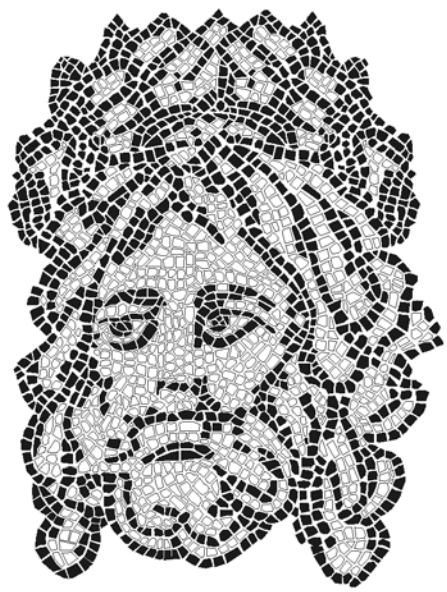

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Wiktor Andrzej Daszewski
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