

## Message to the Members

Last July, I visited the northern Greek province of Macedonia, the home of King Philip II and his son, who is generally known as Alexander the Great. The occasion was to participate in what was called a 'symposium' entitled "Macedonia and the Hellenistic World". I realized later that this occasion would not be the usual kind of event I am familiar with but something utterly different and for me quite a new experience.

The invitation was from Photis Constantinides, an Alexandria born well known producer of top quality Greek cultural documentaries. One of his productions was a film that dealt with our Bibliotheca Alexandrina from the early stages of its construction to the grand official opening in 2002. It was in those early years that I first had the pleasure of meeting him, when he interviewed me several times. We got on well together and have been friends ever since.

As is customary when I attend symposia, I prepare a paper to read, so I asked Photis if he had a specific aspect in mind he wished me to tackle within that vast and undefined title "Macedonia and the Hellenistic World"? His reply was that what he had in mind was in a way a Socratic kind of symposium between a limited number of scholars who would represent the Hellenistic world and combine both East and West. He therefore chose Robin Lane Fox from Oxford, Angeliki Kottaridi, chief director of archaeological excavations at Vergina and Mostafa El Abbadi from Alexandria. Thus, Robin would represent the West, Angeliki, Macedonia and Greece, while Mostafa would stand for the East. But even with this explanation, the nature of the 'symposium' remained vague and rather undefined in my mind.

To add to my apprehension, we were told that the recording would not be confined to one location or setting, but would move around within Macedonia over a period of three days in the following manner:

- 1- **Vergina** (ancient Aigai), which has commanded world attention as a top archaeological site since 1982 when the eminent Greek archaeologist Andronicus announced the discovery there of the tomb of Philip II. Due to the fragile condition of the tomb, it was decided to set up a special museum to accommodate almost all the contents of the tomb. This was accomplished to perfection by Angeliki, assistant and successor of Andronikos. Another major discovery, still in progress, is the great palace of Philip II on raised ground while down the slope there is a theatre attached to the palace. The entire complex was the scene of one of the most tragic events in history; for it was there that in the summer of 336 B.C., Philip had prepared a great feast to celebrate his second wedding to Cleopatra, of a noble Macedonian family. On the wedding day, Philip, at the head of a magnificent procession moved out of the palace, down to the theatre; within the passage that led to the theatre, he was suddenly attacked and stabbed to death by at least three men. Immediately, the twenty year old Alexander was declared King of Macedonia. Although two men were accused of Philip's murder and executed on the spot, the conspiracy was never fully investigated.

It was late in the afternoon of the first day of our arrival that the four of us, Photis, Angeliki, Robin and myself, sat on large lime stone blocks at the edge of a terrace of Philip's palace and following Photis' lead we speculated about the significance of Philip's historical role in connection with Alexander's ensuing achievements and the creation of the Hellenistic world.

We all agreed that Philip's role was a necessary foundation for the realization of the New Age. With an exceptionally clear understanding of the situation within the Greek cities to the south and the Persian Empire to the east, he was able to transform Macedonia from being merely on the margin of Greek politics into a dominant Greek power. This was the result of his adoption of a very shrewd and pragmatic policy, militarily, economically and culturally. In this connection, we may add, that Philip was also a great father who – following earlier royal tradition – particularly cared for the education and training of his son.

Angeliki, naturally dwelt on the ideal choice of location, design and arrangement of the entire palace complex. Whereas Robin stressed the far reaching revolution that took place in the sciences as best represented in Alexandria. He selected Euclid of Alexandria as an example who dates back to the early third century B.C., whose theorems in mathematics are still studied by almost every school pupil the world over. In this connection, I added that it is of interest that in the Middle Ages, it was reported that Euclid's *Elementa* was the first work to have been translated from Greek into Arabic in Islam in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Later on, around 1200, we hear that Abelard of Bath, from Britain, visited Spain, Greece, Asia Minor and Egypt and that he was able to acquire an Arabic version of Euclid which he rendered into Latin. It is further reported that late in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there was at the British (Museum) Library a copy of that Latin translation which was read by Isaac Newton who wrote marginal notes in his own hand. And as late as 1908, when Albert Einstein published, in a Swiss Quarterly, the first part of his research on the effect of magnetism on the spread of light, he delayed four years before he finished his study in 1912. In order to justify this long delay, he stated in his introductory statement of the second part, that he had found himself confronted with one of the rules of Euclid which took him that long to solve.

2- **Mieza** is the location of the school which Philip had constructed for Aristotle wherein to instruct Alexander and his fellow peers. The site was recently identified in the early 1980's, by a physician by the name of Aristoteles who was keen on tracing the foot steps of his namesake, the great Greek philosopher. The site as it now stands, is rocky, wooded and wild, with a spring and stream of running fresh water as well as attractive caves and recesses. Remains of stone benches carved out in the rock are still in good shape while hollowed marks can still be seen, for fixing roof-beams (now lost) for the 'peripatos' where Aristotle gave his inspiring classes. The appellation 'peripatetics' which is applied to the followers of Aristotle, is more likely to have been derived from the roofed walk 'peripatos', rather than from the verb 'peripateuw'(i.e. to walk), which implies that Aristotle used to teach while walking. Sitting on a stone bench, we speculated about the age of the young Alexander and his fellow class mates (about 13-14 years old) and about the kind of education Aristotle imparted to them. At least one topic is certain which was the study of Homer; a version of his Iliad, edited by Aristotle himself, accompanied Alexander wherever he went. Politics and the study of Nature and Ethics would equally have been two other possibilities.

3- **Pella**. After spending an hour and a half at Mieza, we drove for less than an hour to Pella, the ancient capital of Macedonia. The remains of the city are extensive and the various monuments are well marked and covered with magnificent and famous mosaics that are considered among the earliest and best survivals of that art. As in the case of Vergina, a special site-museum had been set up to accommodate some of the mosaic masterpieces and other valuable artefacts. Yet there still are in the open, some top quality pieces in their original site under the protection of adequate shelters. The photographer found it rather difficult to shoot the monuments and mosaics inside and outside the museum, as the work was

repeatedly interrupted by groups of visiting tourists. Moreover, shooting inside a museum is quite an intricate process. Although our team used extremely sophisticated modern equipment, yet several factors have to be taken into consideration, for example all other objects have to be eliminated from the frame needed and this is not always easy to do. Besides, objects are often kept inside glass cases that reflect light and the photographer has to use technical effects to eliminate any reflection of light.

Meanwhile, Robin and I were asked to make our round of the museum exhibits and make our own selection for commentary. Photis suggested two statuary pieces, an excellent '*head of Alexander*' which he considered the best ever made, as well as an almost complete marble statuette (some 60-70 cm high) of '*Alexander as god Pan*' (as indicated on the label) with two small up-right horns above the forehead (attributes typical of Pan). For my choice, I added two mosaic masterpieces, that of the famous '*lion hunt scene*' and '*Dionysus riding his panther*'. Robin Fox started the commentary by stressing the idealized style of Alexander's head and then he turned to the '*god Pan*' statuette and expressed his doubt about its identity as Alexander, in spite of the similarity in their looks. He suggested that it was commissioned by Antigonus Gonatas (a later king of Macedonia) for himself as Pan in the likeness of Alexander and he argued that the person who commissions a work of art, dictates the image of his own choice.

In my turn, I too expressed my admiration of the marble head of Alexander, especially the sharp and determined look, so well expressed in the right eye which is still in perfect condition. I further noticed a connection with the mosaic of the '*lion hunt*' scene, in which the artist expressed a most moving scared look in the eyes of the lion, in contrast to the undaunted courage expressed in the look of the two hunters, one in front and the other at the back of the lion. Undoubtedly, this confident courage in battle, was a characteristic of Alexander himself.

I next moved to the Dionysus mosaic. Though in predominantly simple black and white pebbles of various sizes, it is one of the most lively scenes in this form of art. It is obvious that the artist showed greater genius in his presentation of the panther than in the image of the god himself. The panther's firm body is vigorously running, almost floating in the air, whereas the god comfortably reclines on his back. Moreover, the choice of Dionysus is not without interest. He had become increasingly popular shortly before and during the Hellenistic period. In Egypt, the Greeks identified Dionysus with the great Egyptian deity Osiris. More important still, there had developed in the fourth century B.C. a skeptic theory about the gods as having once been mortals who due to their sagacity and the good services they rendered to mankind, had attained immortality. According to Diodorus Siculus, some of them were Kings of Egypt. As an example Diodorus quoted an account of the career of Osiris who on his succession to kingship, mustered a great army as well as men experienced in agriculture, with the intention of visiting all the inhabited earth to teach mankind how to cultivate the vine and sow wheat and barley. He went as far as India and people welcomed him everywhere as a god because of his benefactions. Diodorus concludes by saying that on his return to Egypt, Osiris was granted the gift of sacred immortality.

The obvious similarity between the two expeditions, of Osiris and Alexander, cannot be overlooked. In the same way, the emphasis on the original human nature of Osiris and his subsequent deification is a justification for the establishment of the Alexander cult in Alexandria. Against this background, we can look at the little statue of Alexander in the image of the god Pan in a new light and see in this identity a development of the cult of Alexander

into the universal god Pan of all nature.

The above is a brief account of the main points dealt with in our exciting and *unprepared in advance* dialogues. As I mentioned at the beginning, it was, for me, quite a new and interesting experience.

**Mostafa El-Abbadi**

## **Archaeological News**

### **Lake Mareotis: Reconstructing the past**

Last April, the Faculty of Arts in Alexandria University, in collaboration with the University of Southampton, UK, organized an International Conference on the Archaeology of the Mareotic Region. The conference was entitled "Lake Mareotis: Reconstructing the past".

### **The Lake Mareotis Project**

During the past decades, several sites around the shores of the lake have been subject to archaeological investigation. However, a pilot survey carried out in 2004 by a team from the University of Southampton and the Egyptian Supreme Council for Antiquities, revealed that there are numerous archaeological sites in the region which have not been systematically studied. Moreover, the survey resulted in the identification of over sixty sites; more than two thirds of them were new discoveries. Accordingly, the Lake Mareotis Research Project was initiated in order to record, quantify and assess the archaeological resources of the area in a comprehensive manner. It is a collaborative project between the Centre for Maritime Archaeology of the University of Southampton and the Department of Underwater Antiquities of the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, and it is funded by grants from the British Academy and the Leverhulme Trust.

The project focuses on addressing the nature of maritime and economic activities conducted around the western arm of the lake, particularly during the Graeco-Roman period, when Lake Mareotis is believed to have been most active.

In 2006, 2007 & 2008 a detailed systematic investigation was carried out for archaeological sites located along the northern and southern shores of the Mareotic arm and the shores of the Mareotis Island. The sites were prioritised for detailed survey based on their archaeological value and the degree of threat to which the sites were subject. The survey included a topographical survey of each site carried out using a GPS-based Real Time Kinematic (RTK) satellite navigation system, which provided a high level of accuracy. Also a number of specific buildings/features were planned in detail using a Total Station and the data downloaded on site into AutoCAD via TheoLt software. Moreover, a magnetometer survey was carried out at some sites in order to determine whether or not there were any structures beneath the sediments. Also

ceramic assemblages were collected from all sites for identification and dating purposes and to help determine the nature and function of each site. Finally, auguring was carried out at some sites to extract sediment samples from different depths. The study of the sediments will shed light on the changes that occurred on the water levels in the region during different periods. The survey was aided by a high resolution Quickbird satellite image of the Mareotic arm which is used as a base for a Geographic Information System that will incorporate different types of survey data.

### **Results and Forthcoming Work**

The sites surveyed until present extend along the northern and southern shores of Lake Mareotis western arm and on the Mareotic Island. The survey has explored several features reflecting economic activities in the region including numerous maritime structures which could have been used for receiving and dispatching merchant vessels, as well as what could be warehouses and storage facilities. The survey also revealed abundant evidence for industrial activities, mainly amphora and wine production, which included kiln structures, ceramic slag and kiln wasters, which correlates with much archaeological and textual evidence for viniculture and wine production in the region including the existence of a number of wineries in the Mareotic region which date from the early Roman to the Byzantine period.

Other significant features which were discovered during the survey were the remains of a number of round structures which are believed to be water wheels (Sakkia). This could be an indication of extensive agricultural activities that once took place in the region.

It was also realised during the survey that there is a possible spatial and functional relationships between some sites on the Mareotic Island and other sites on the northern shore. Further study of the ceramic collections from these sites and the sediment analyses will shed more light on any functional relations between them.

Limited excavation of a number of structures at the east and western ends of the Island revealed that most of these structures had been subject to several building phases, probably influenced by fluctuation of water level in the lake as well as the problem of siltation affecting the Island's north shore.

At present, all the survey data is being compiled into a GIS which will enable us, after studying to draw a clearer picture of the nature of these sites and their relationship with the changes of the Lake's water level. This will provide scholars and archaeologists with much needed data upon which future research can be based

It became evident during the survey project that the Mareotic Region has unique potentials for archaeological exploration and research. Therefore, the research team has decided to extend the project in future seasons with the aim of excavating some key sites in the region which will provide us with a better understanding of the role that Lake Mareotis played in the economy of ancient Alexandria and of Egypt as a whole.

### **The conference**

The above mentioned conference aimed at gathering members of the teams of all the archaeological missions who carried out projects in the region, in order to discuss the results of their work and relate them to what the Lake Mareotis Project has revealed during the last three years.

The main objective is to produce a coherent overview of the region's past and to achieve a better understanding of the nature and extent of its economic and maritime activities, which would help shed light on what could be one of the key elements in the economy of Greco-Roman Egypt .

The fourth session of the conference was devoted to the Lake Mareotis Research project, in which **Lucy Blue** presented an overview of what has been achieved in a paper entitled: "Lake Mareotis Research Project – the Story to Date". **Dylan Hopkinson** spoke of "The Provisional Survey Findings of Mareotis Island" and **Ahmed Shoukri** presented an insight about the "Threats Endangering Archaeological Sites in the Mareotic Region". The context of the Mareotic Region was the main subject of the first session of the conference. "A Note on Byzantine Mareotis" was the title of a paper presented by **Mostafa El-Abbadi** in which he dealt with a text of Sophronius which includes an account of the property of the Church of Alexandria in the Mareotic region early in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Another view of the activities of the region is presented by **Mohamed Abd El-Ghani** based on the available literally and documentary sources. Then "A Study of the Evolution of Lake Mareotis through Maps" was delivered by **Mohamed Awad** from the Centre d'Etudes Alexandrines. The second session was fully devoted to Marea or Philoxenite, the city which lies on the southern shore of the western arm of the Lake. A view of the first excavation work ever to be carried out in the City was drawn by **Mona Haggag** under the title of: " The City of Marea and/or Philoxenité: Reflections about the Alexandria University Excavations 1977 – 1981". "On Interpretations of Archaeological Evidence Concerning Marea and Philoxenite" was the subject of **Mieczyslaw Rodziewicz**'s paper in which he added his own insight to the interpretation of various buildings uncovered during the previously mentioned excavations. **Hanna Szymańska** and **Krzysztof Babraj** gave an account of their recent field work at the same area in a paper entitled: " Marea or Philoxenite? Polish Excavations at the Mareotic Region 2000-2007". In the third session, the conference focussed on the current work in the Mareotic Region. The German expedition contribution in tracing the route of the Schedia canal which conducted fresh water from the Canopic branch of the Nile to Lake Mareotis was clearly explained by **Marianne Bergmann** and **Michael Heinzelmann**. **Penelope Wilson** spoke about "Recent Survey Work in the Southern Mareotis Region".

In the second day of the conference, in addition to the fourth session about the Lake Mareotis Research project, two other sessions took place. The fifth was devoted to the economic activities in the region in which **Jean-Yves Empereur** gave an account of the work achieved by the *Centre d'Études Alexandrines* during the last three decades. **Emad Khalil** combined his expertise in the study of maritime activities and the fruits of his participation in the ongoing research project of Lake Mareotis in a paper entitled: "Maritime Activities and Waterfront Installations in the Mareotic Region". "Wineries of the Mareotic Region" were thoroughly surveyed in the paper of **Dorota Dzierzbicka**. **Valérie Pichot** gave an idea of the industry and trade as represented in the results of the work she carried out with a team from the *Centre d'Études Alexandrines* in the Marea Peninsula (the area of the Byzantine East harbour). The session ended with a study on the "Protection and Site Management in Marea/Philoxenite" presented by **Bassem Ibrahim**.

The panel discussion and the closing statement of **Lucy Blue** showed without any doubt that the Mareotic region is in dire need for greater care from the authorities as well as the community at large to protect its remains and environment and to enhance its potentials as a site of important cultural heritage of Egypt. For decades to come, more profound scholarly projects have to be carried out in the area as much as archaeology, site management and tourist activities are concerned.

**Mona Haggag and Emad Khalil**

## **The Opening of the Alexandria Centre for Maritime Archaeology and the Underwater Cultural Heritage**

**Thursday 23 October 2008**

In spite of the amazing archaeological activities that took place during the last three decades in Alexandria to locate and salvage monuments that had once been submerged under the waters of the Mediterranean, yet Egypt has no specialized institution for the Education and training of Maritime Archaeology. Thanks to the efforts of Emad Khalil (Egypt) and Lucy Blue (UK), the Faculty of Arts of Alexandria University took the initiative of applying to the Trans-European mobility Scheme for University Studies (TEMPUS) for funding the establishment of a centre for postgraduate studies in Maritime Archaeology. Very positively the EU allocated a €245,850 grant for the project.

Six organizations collaborated in the establishment project, namely: Alexandria University – Southampton University, UK - the Centre d'Etudes Alexandrines of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, France – the Nautical Archaeology Society, UK - the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport - and the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities.

Other donators contributed to the project such as the British Gaz Company, the Institute for Nautical Archaeology (INA), USA and Mansour Chevrolet, Egypt.

The Centre is the first academic institution specialized in education and training in maritime archaeology and underwater cultural heritage ever in Egypt and the Arab World. Archaeology graduates as well as other students from different backgrounds can join the Centre's programmes to obtain either a Diploma or Masters in Maritime Archaeology or just to have a training course in archaeological excavation underwater.

**Mona Haggag**

## **Announcement**

Publications of the Society are now sold at a discount of 25%

Announcement

**Special discount will be given for the first 10 students or young archaeologists to subscribe for any of the Society's excursions.**

### **Regulations for Subscribing in Excursions organized by the Society**

- Excursion receipt number is always the same as the seat number in the Buss
- Reservation for the one-day excursions should take place two weeks before the time of the excursion. In case of apologizing, the Society should be informed one week ahead.
- Reservation for the longer trips (more than one day) should take place one month before the time of the excursion. In case of apologizing, the Society should be informed two weeks ahead. Afterwards, only 50% of the subscription can be paid back.
- Reservation for excursions outside Egypt should take place 45 days before the time of the excursion. In case of apologizing, the Society should be informed three weeks ahead, otherwise, flight tickets can not be paid back.

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