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**ΜΕΤΑ ΤΟ ΟΝΟΜΑ ΤΟΥ ΣΑΡΑΠΙΣ:  
AN INSCRIBED BRONZE RING  
FROM MARINA EL-ALAMEIN**

FOR THE PAST FEW SEASONS, the Polish-Egyptian Conservation Mission worked in the Roman baths at the archaeological site of Marina el-Alamein situated on the Mediterranean coast of Egypt, c. 100 km west of Alexandria (fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> The baths are located south of the main square of the ancient town cautiously identified as the forum (fig. 2).<sup>2</sup> During the research and restoration work in the south-western part of the baths, where the latrines were discovered, to the south of them, a bronze ring with an inscription was found in the upper layer of sand, out of context.<sup>3</sup> Jewelry is a relatively rare find in Marina el-Alamein.<sup>4</sup> Almost exclusively,

<sup>1</sup> G. BĄKOWSKA-CZERNER & R. CZERNER, 'Roman baths in Marina el-Alamein', [in:] B. REDON (ed.), *Collective Baths in Egypt, II: New Discoveries and Perspectives: Balaneia = Thermae = Hammâmât [= Études urbaines 10]*, Cairo 2017, pp. 173–191.

<sup>2</sup> W. A. DASZEWSKI, 'Graeco-Roman town and necropolis in Marina el-Alamein', *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 20 (2011), pp. 421–456, at 423.

<sup>3</sup> R. CZERNER, G. BĄKOWSKA-CZERNER, & G. MAJCHEREK, 'Research and conservation in the Roman baths of Marina el-Alamein in the 2012 and 2013 seasons (Polish-Egyptian Conservation Mission)', *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 24/1 (2015), pp. 113–138, at 128.

<sup>4</sup> G. BĄKOWSKA, 'Bronze jewellery from Marina el-Alamein', *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 16 (2005), pp. 100–105.



Fig. 1. Situation of the ancient town of Marina el-Alamein in the Eastern Mediterranean (drawing by R. Czerner)



Fig. 2. Plan of the Marina el-Alamein archaeological site with the place the finger ring was found marked with grey circle (drawing by K. Majdzik, M. Krawczyk-Szczerbińska, and R. Czerner)

it was made of copper alloy. Among the rings, most have an oval setting, which contains glass or a stone gem. Others have plastic busts of gods attached; there are also key finger rings. The object presented here is unique because of the inscription on it.

The elliptical, smooth hoop (1.9 × 1.6 cm) of non-uniform thickness and width has a D-shaped cross-section (fig. 3). The back is thin (0.12 cm), the shoulders are thicker (0.2–0.3 cm) and wider (0.5 cm). The ring expands towards a rectangular bezel with a flat surface (0.9 × 0.8 cm) containing the inscription. It was probably made by lost-wax casting. The ring is well preserved, after conservation a red-green patina is visible in a few places.<sup>5</sup> Its small internal size of 1.7–1.4 cm indicates that a woman or a child could have worn it.<sup>6</sup>

Considering the shape of the ring, it can be compared to type 13 according to Emilie Riha.<sup>7</sup> Rings of this type with a rectangular but smooth bezel were found in a context that dates back to the late first / mid-second century CE.<sup>8</sup> Rings with stamped or engraved inscriptions, classified as type 7, appeared at the beginning of our era, but more often in the third–fourth century CE.<sup>9</sup> Inscriptions usually contain wishes, dedications, abbreviations, the owner's name or monograms.<sup>10</sup>

The flat top surface of the ring from Marina el-Alamein carries a Greek inscription in three lines framed by a rectangular border. The

<sup>5</sup> M. KOCZOROWSKA & W. OSIĄK, 'Selected conservation work in Marina el-Alamein in the 2012 and 2013 seasons', *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 24/1 (2015), pp. 101–112, at 112.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. A. R. FURGER, 'Exkurs 3: Ringgrößen', [in:] E. RIHA, *Der römische Schmuck aus Augst und Kaiseraugst [= Forschungen in Augst 10]*, Augst 1999, pp. 49–51, at 49.

<sup>7</sup> RIHA, *Der römische Schmuck* (cit. n. 6), p. 37.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 38; cf. p. 132, no. 58, pl. 9. See also H. GUIRAUD, 'Bagues et anneaux à l'époque romain en Gaule', *Gallia* 46 (1989), pp. 173–211, at 181–185 (type 2).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. RIHA, *Der römische Schmuck* (cit. n. 6), pp. 34, 130–31, nos. 118–127, pl. 7, particularly nos. 121–122 (silver). See also J. GERRARD & M. HENIG, 'Brancaster type signet rings: a study in the material culture of sealing documents in Late Antique Britain', *Bonner Jahrbücher* 216 (2017), pp. 225–250, at 235–236 (type IC2).

<sup>10</sup> F. H. MARSHALL, *Catalogue of the Finger Rings, Greek, Etruscan, and Roman in the Departments of Antiquities, British Museum*, London 1907, pp. xxviii–xxx; RIHA, *Der römische Schmuck* (cit. n. 6), pp. 34–35.



Fig. 3. Finger ring with an inscription discovered in Marina el-Alamein  
(photo R. Czerner)

inscription has a proportional layout with each line containing seven letters. The letters are round majuscules, mostly vertical, but sometimes showing a slight inclination to the left. The *alpha* has a vertical bar, the arms of the *mu* are slightly oblique, and the *omicron* is very narrow.

Μέγα τὸ ὄ-  
νομα τοῦ  
Σάραπισ.

*Great is the name of Sarapis.*

The inscription contains a well-known acclamation exalting the greatness of the god Sarapis embodied in his name. The acclamation is found twenty-or-so times inscribed on various objects of jewelry, especially on gems made of semi-precious stones and glass-paste, and destined for inserting into rings or necklaces, but also on ring bezels, medallions and bracelets made of bronze or iron.<sup>11</sup> The objects are generally dated to the first three centuries CE. They are kept in museum and private collections throughout the world, and their provenance is unknown except for four items: A ring bezel made of iron was found during regular excavations in Karanog in Lower Nubia,<sup>12</sup> a cornelian intaglio was discovered in Alexandria,<sup>13</sup> a glass-paste intaglio once in a collection in Turin supposedly came from

<sup>11</sup> The objects are listed in R. VEYMIERS, "Ἰλεως τῶ φοροῦντι. Sérapis sur les gemmes et les bijoux antiques [= *Mémoires de la Classe des lettres de l'Académie royale de Belgique*. Collection in-4°, 3<sup>e</sup> série, t. I, n° 2061], Brussels 2009, nos. I.AB 16, I.AB 63, I.AB 100, I.AB 127, I.AB 185, I.AB 186, I.AB 230, I.AB 234, II.AB 15, V.AAD 7, A 1, A 3, A 17, A 19, A 23, A 29, A 40; IDEM, "Ἰλεως τῶ φοροῦντι. Sérapis sur les gemmes et les bijoux antiques. Supplément I', [in:] L. BRICAULT & R. VEYMIERS (eds.), *Bibliotheca Isiaca* II, Bordeaux 2011, pp. 239–271, nos. A43, A45, A48; IDEM, "Ἰλεως τῶ φοροῦντι. Sérapis sur les gemmes et les bijoux antiques. Supplément II', [in:] L. BRICAULT & R. VEYMIERS (eds.), *Bibliotheca Isiaca* III, Bordeaux 2014, pp. 207–244, nos. I.AB 353, V.CB 17; IDEM, "Ἰλεως τῶ φοροῦντι. Sérapis sur les gemmes et les bijoux antiques. Supplément III', [in:] L. BRICAULT & R. VEYMIERS (eds.), *Bibliotheca Isiaca* IV, Bordeaux 2020, pp. 307–342, nos. I.AB 412, I.AB 413, I.AB 424.

<sup>12</sup> VEYMIERS, "Ἰλεως τῶ φοροῦντι (cit. n. 11), no. A 19.

<sup>13</sup> VEYMIERS, "Ἰλεως τῶ φοροῦντι. Supplément II' (cit. n. 11), no. I.AB 353.

Puteoli,<sup>14</sup> and a white coral intaglio in the antiquities market (formerly in a private English collection) is said to come from either Adrianopolis or Prusa.<sup>15</sup> The provenance of some other objects can be guessed on the basis of their modern history. Such is the case of gems kept in Italian private collections going back to the sixteenth/seventeenth century and in local museums, which were likely found on the territory of the Apennine Peninsula.<sup>16</sup> As with the provenance of the objects, the location of their production also remains unknown except for the glass-paste gems, which are suggested to have been made in Latium workshops.<sup>17</sup> The acclamation ‘Great is the name of Sarapis’ either occurs as the sole ornament of the objects in question<sup>18</sup> or is an addition to a figural representation. The subject of the representation is Sarapis himself, either alone or in company of other gods, and once, rather unexpectedly, the god Hermes. Sarapis is shown in bust or full figure; he wears a chiton and himation, and has a calathos on his head. Two items, accidentally kept in the same collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des monnaies, médailles et antiques, has the acclamation of the name of Sarapis connected with an acclamation of the goddess Neotera. One of them is a bronze plaque (originally a central part of a bracelet) decorated with two rows of Egyptian gods, fourteen figures each, separated by an inscription reading [μ]έγα τὸ ὄνομα το[ῦ] Σάραπισ, μεγάλ[η ἢ Ν]εωτέρα ἢ ἀνείκητος. Another is a jasper intaglio with the inscription μέγα τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου Σάραπισ on the avers and μεγάλη τύχη τῆς ἀνικήτου Νεωτέρας on the revers.<sup>19</sup> A striking feature of all inscriptions with the acclamation ‘Great

<sup>14</sup> VEYMIERS, *Ἰλιεως τῶ φοροῦντι* (cit. n. 11), no. I.AB 230.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, no. I.AB 234.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, nos. I.AB 185–186 (previously in the Borgia collection, now in Bibliotheca Apostolica in Vatican).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, nos. A 17, A 29.

<sup>18</sup> It is interesting to observe that the objects: *ibidem*, nos. A 17, A 29 (both glass paste gems probably produced in Latium), A 45 (an engraved gem in the British Museum), V.CB 17 (a bronze bracelet in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) have the same disposition of the inscription as the ring from Marina el-Alamein studied in this paper.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, no. A 37. The object belonged formerly to the collection of Henri Seyrig, which suggests that it originates from the Syro-Palestinian area.

is the name of Sarapis' occurring on the objects of jewelry, including the one on the ring from Marina el-Alamein discussed in this paper, is that they consequently display the same incorrect form of the name of the god: *Σάραπισ* / *Σέραπισ* instead of *Σαράπιδος* / *Σεράπιδος*<sup>20</sup> expected from the point of view of the syntax. It is not clear how this incorrect form should be analyzed: Either the name was considered indeclinable by the person(s) who invented the acclamation or he (they) incorrectly used nominative for genitive. Whatever the case, the consequent repetition of this incorrect form shows that once the acclamation was invented it functioned as a fossil, whose grammatical inaccuracy was accepted thoughtlessly. Outside of the jewelry, the acclamation 'Great is the name of Sarapis' is found only once in an inscription on a wall of the Mandulis temple in Kalabsha in Lower Nubia (I46/7 CE), coupled with a *proskynema* addressed to the owner of the temple.<sup>21</sup> Interestingly, it assumes the grammatically correct form *μέγα τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Σαράπιδος* there.

Apart from the acclamation *μέγα τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Σάραπισ*, inscriptions on jewellery record the acclamation *μέγα τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ*, 'Great is the name of the god', whereby the word 'god' is sometimes provided with an additional epithet such as *μόνος* or *ἅγιος*.<sup>22</sup> The same acclamation is found in an inscription on a stone block from Marmaris (antique Physkos) in south-western Asia Minor inscribed within a *tabula ansata*.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> For the fluctuation of the name of the god (*Σάραπισ* versus *Σέραπισ*), see F. Th. GIGNAC, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, I: *Phonology* [= *Testi e documenti per lo studio dell'antichità* 55/1], Milan 1976, p. 279; for the declension of the name *Σάραπισ* / *Σέραπισ*, see IDEM, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, II: *Morphology* [= *Testi e documenti per lo studio dell'antichità* 55/2], Milan 1981, 57. Documents of the Roman Imperial period regularly use the consonant declension.

<sup>21</sup> H. GAUTHIER, *Les temples immergés de la Nubie. Le temple de Kalabchab* I, Cairo 1911, p. 286 n. 10; SB V 8522.

<sup>22</sup> Examples collected in E. PETERSON, *Eἰς θεός. Epigraphische, formgeschichtliche und religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* [= *Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments* 41, NS 24], Göttingen 1926, pp. 205–206, 208–210, 281–282. See further L. ROBERT, *Heltenica: recueil d'épigraphie, de numismatique et d'antiquités grecques* X, Paris 1955, pp. 84–89.

<sup>23</sup> A. BRESSON, *Recueil des inscriptions de la Pérée rhodienne (Pérée intégrée)* [= *Annales littéraires de l'Université de Besançon* 445; *Centre de recherches d'histoire ancienne* 105], Paris 1991, no. 30,



A variant of this acclamation with the attribute ‘great’ repeated two times (μέγα, μέγα τ’ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ) occurs in an inscription from Arabören near Seyietgazi (antique Nacoliae) in Phrygia.<sup>24</sup> There is no reason to suppose that an anonymous god of these acclamations is Sarapis: Here any god may be invoked provided that he or she was considered worthy of this acclamation by his/her believers. In the case of stone inscriptions from Physkos and Nacoliae, the addressees of acclamations were probably local gods, patrons of local communities. Such an interpretation holds true for a graffito in the gymnasium at Delphi, which records a series of acclamations reading: Ἄγα[θῆ Τύ]χη· [εἰς θ]εός· μέγ[ας] θεός· μ[έγιστ]ον ὄν[ομα τ]οῦ θε[οῦ]· Πύθιος μέγ[ας] Ἀπ[όλλων]· μεγά[λη Τύ]χη Δελφῶν τόπος [--- ο]υ Πλα[ταίως? παιδὸς] δι[α]υλ[οδρόμου Πυθιονίκου ---], ‘Good Fortune! One is god! Great is God! The greatest is the name of the god! Great is Apollo Pythios! Great is the fortune of the Delphians! This is the place of --- from Plataia?, a boy double-stadium runner, winner at the Pythia.’<sup>25</sup> These acclamations, which originally were probably shouted in the stadium during the Pythian games for a victorious athlete, exalt the city of Delphians and the local god Apollo Pythios. Another instructive example is yielded by a stele from the neighbourhood of Ephesus, which carries a representation of a young male in radiated crown in the field and above it an inscription reading: μέγα τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ· μέγα τὸ Ὅσιον· μέγα τὸ ἀγαθόν· κατ’ ὄναρ, ‘great is the name of the god; great is the Pure one (Hosion); great is the good one; (erected) according to the (command

with bibliography, to which one should add: W. BLÜMEL, *Die Inschriften der rhodischen Peraia* [= *Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien* 38], Bonn 1991, no. 506; L. BRICAULT, *Recueil des inscriptions concernant les cultes isiaques (RICIS)* [= *Mémoires de l’Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres* 31], Paris 2005, no. \*204/0801. The inscription is dated to the Roman Imperial period.

<sup>24</sup> Edited in ROBERT, *Hellenica* X (cit. n. 22), 84–86, on the basis of a copy by Georges Redat made in 1886. The inscription is dated to the Roman Imperial period.

<sup>25</sup> SEG LI 514 (late 2nd/early 3rd cent. CE). Other graffiti with similar contents are known in the Delphi gymnasium. For a full presentation of this material, see F. QUEYREL, ‘Inscriptions et scènes figurées peintes sur le mur du fond du xyste de Delphes’, *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 125 (2001), pp. 333–387.



of the god given in) dream.<sup>26</sup> The god mentioned anonymously in the first acclamation must be the Phrygian Hosion as demonstrated by the second acclamation. The acclamation of the great name of God is attested in Biblical writings. A variant reading in Jer. 10:6, not adopted in the standard edition of the *Septuagint*, has: *σύ, κύριε, μέγας εἶ σύ, καὶ μέγα τὸ ὄνομά σου ἐν δυνάμει σου*, ‘you, Lord, are great, and your name is great in your power’.<sup>27</sup> The Biblical usage of acclaiming the name of God was adopted and further developed in the Christian tradition, which knew the acclamations *μέγα τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ*,<sup>28</sup> *μέγα τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*, *μέγα τὸ ὄνομα τῆς Ἁγίας Τριάδος*, with numerous variants. Some of these acclamations have been used until present in the Greek Church, especially in liturgical contexts. The idea that the name of a god is ‘great’ can be found also outside of religious acclamations. It is especially common in Greek magical papyri, in curses through the names of different gods of the magical pantheon.<sup>29</sup> It is also present in prayers. An inscription on a column from Golgoi on Cyprus reads: *εἷς θεός· τὸ μέγιστον, τὸ ἐνδοξότατον ὄνομα βοήθη πᾶσι δεόμεθα*, ‘one is god; we pray: the greatest and most glorious name, would you like to help all people’.<sup>30</sup> The inscription is accompanied by the representation of two wreaths and palms, and the name *Ἥλιος*, which suggests that the anonymous addressee of the prayer (and of the initial acclamation *εἷς θεός*) is the Greek sun-god. A similar usage is known in the Christian tradition as is attested by an epitaph from Eumeneia in Phrygia with the malediction *ἔσται αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸ μέγα ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ*, ‘he (= tomb desacrator) will be dealing with the great name of the God’.

<sup>26</sup> R. MERIC *et al.*, *Die Inschriften von Ephesos VII/1* [= *Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien 17/1*], Bonn 1981, no. 3100 (with earlier bibliography).

<sup>27</sup> One compares Mal. 1:11, where God speaks of himself: *μέγα τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν*, ‘my name is great among the nations’. See further, Ps. 75:2: *γνωστός ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ὁ θεός, ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ μέγα τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ*, ‘God is renowned in Judah, in Israel his name is great’.

<sup>28</sup> Thus, e.g., on a lamp from Medamud near Thebes in Upper Egypt (*SEG VIII 711*).

<sup>29</sup> See *PGM III* (Index), p. 145, *s.v.* ὄνομα. The names in question are frequently *voces magicae*.

<sup>30</sup> PETERSON, *Eἷς θεός* (cit. n. 22), pp. 281–282 (with earlier bibliography).

The acclamation *μέγα τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ*, ‘great is the name of the god’, equals the acclamation *μέγας θεός*, ‘the god is great’. The latter acclamation gave rise to the divine epithet *μέγας*, ‘great’, attested with relation to different gods in textual record dating from the Roman Imperial period.<sup>31</sup> That a god (a goddess) or his (her) name might have been acclaimed ‘great’ is explainable in the context of religious trends of these times. In the quest for the divine, the inhabitants of the Roman Empire considered some gods as singular or unique in the polytheistic system, and ascribed them a sort of superiority over other gods. This religious attitude, which Angelos Chaniotis called ‘megatheism’,<sup>32</sup> was based on a personal experience of divine presence, which manifested sometimes in supernatural phenomena (miracles). Any god (goddess) could have been considered and acclaimed as ‘great’ by his (her) believer, however, this qualification was most frequently applied with relation to local gods, patrons of local sanctuaries and rulers of human communities living around them. Such is the case of Pythian Apollo in Delphi acclaimed as ‘great’ in the graffito in the gymnasium mentioned above, Artemis in Ephesos addressed with the same acclamation in the famous story of Saint Paul’s visit to the city recounted in Apostolic Acts (19:23–40), and the Anatolian Men in towns and villages of north-western Lydia exalted in the so-called confession inscriptions.<sup>33</sup>

In the sphere of the ritual, ‘megatheism’ had an important oral component in addition to offerings, with acclamations playing a particularly

<sup>31</sup> On *μέγας* as a divine epithet, see B. MÜLLER, *Mέγας θεός* [= *Dissertationes philologicae Halenses* 21/3], Halle 1913.

<sup>32</sup> A. CHANIOTIS, ‘Megatheism: the search of the Almighty God and the competition of cults’, [in:] St. MITCHELL & P. VAN NUFFELEN (eds.), *One God. Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire*, Cambridge 2010, pp. 112–140. On megatheism, see further R. GORDON, review of MITCHELL & VAN NUFFELEN (eds.), *One God*, *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 27 (2014), pp. 665–676; A. CHANIOTIS, *Age of Conquests. The Greek World from Alexander to Hadrian*, Harvard 2018, pp. 344–385.

<sup>33</sup> G. PETZL, *Die Beichtinschriften Westkleinasiens* [= *Epigraphica Anatolica* 22], Bonn 1994, nos. 5.4, 37.1, 39.1, 55.2. Other gods are acclaimed as ‘great’ in the confession inscriptions, viz. Meter (nos. 40.1, 55.1), Meter-Anaitis (no. 68.1), Artemis-Anaitis (no. 69.2), Anaitis (nos. 73.1, 74.1), Nemesis (no. 7.8), Apollo Leimenos (no. 109.1), and ‘gods in Azitta’ (no. 69.23).

prominent role.<sup>34</sup> They were either spontaneous, performed by worshippers witnessing a miracle, or were part of ritual actions, which took place in the temple of a god on a daily basis or on the occasion of a feast. Essentially a speech act, acclamations were sometimes communicated to others in form of an inscription. An excellent example is provided by the acclamation εἰς Ζεὺς Σάραπισ, ‘one is Zeus-Sarapis’. The so-called ‘Tale of Sarapis and Syrion’ preserved in the papyrus *P. Oxy. XI 1382* shows it shouted by the inhabitants of Pharos, who witnessed the miracle of sweet water procured by the god.<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, the acclamation in question is found in numerous inscriptions on different media including, in the first line, jewelry.<sup>36</sup> The situation with the acclamation μέγα τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Σάραπισ must have been the same as with the acclamation εἰς Ζεὺς Σάραπισ. Originally, it most probably was part of Sarapis rituals held in his cult places. The ritualistic use of the acclamation explains its grammatical inaccuracy: The corrupt form was obviously warranted by the force of sanctity and tradition. As a well-established element of ritual practices, the acclamation spread thanks to the believers, who listened to its oral performances or even took part in them, to be recorded on pieces of jewelry, produced as serial objects or to individual order. Worn on fingers, wrist or otherwise on the body, these gems, rings, and bracelets

<sup>34</sup> On antique religious acclamations, see A. CHANIOTIS, ‘Acclamations as a form of religious communication’, [in:] H. CANKIĆ & J. RÜPKE (eds.), *Die Religion des Imperium Romanum. Koine und Konfrontationen*, Tübingen 2009, pp. 199–218.

<sup>35</sup> The text is reprinted in: G. MANTEUFFEL, *De opusculis Graecis Aegypti a papyris, ostracis lapidibusque collectis*, Warsaw 1930, p. 92, no. 4; V. LONGO, *Aretalogie nel mondo Greco*, I: *Epigrafi e papiri*, Genoa 1969, pp. 116–117, no. 64; M. TOTTI, *Ausgewählte Texte der Isis- und Sarapis-Religion* [= *Subsidia epigraphica. Quellen und Abhandlungen zur griechischen Epigraphik* 12], Hildesheim – Zurich – New York 1985, pp. 32–33, no. 13. Most important studies: O. WEINREICH, *Neue Urkunden zur Sarapis-Religion* [= *Sammlung gemeinverständlicher Vorträge und Schriften aus dem Gebiet der Theologie und Religion* 86], Tübingen 1919, pp. 13–18; A. JÖRDENS, ‘Wasser für Pharos’, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 190 (2014), pp. 69–75.

<sup>36</sup> PETERSON, *Εἰς θεός* (cit. n. 22), *passim*. On the acclamation εἰς Ζεὺς Σάραπισ and generally on acclamations of the type εἰς θεός, see more recently N. BELAYCHE, ‘deus deum ... summorum maximus (Apuleius). Ritual expressions of distinction in the divine world in the imperial period’, [in:] MITCHELL & VAN NUFFELEN, *One God* (cit. n. 32), pp. 141–166.

confirmed worshippers' faith and testified to the power of the god. As personal objects, they constructed the illusion of direct contact with the god and assert a privileged relationship with a divinity.

The described ring is difficult to date because it is a surface find. Given the shape of the ring and the content of the acclamation placed on it, which, according to some researchers, appeared during the reign of Antoninus Pius,<sup>37</sup> and the comparison with the inscription in the temple in Kalabsha, which is also dated to his time, it can be assumed that it was produced in the period from the second half of the second century CE to the beginning of the third century CE.

The ring enriches the collection of objects related to the cult of Sarapis known from the site of Marina el-Alamein. It includes a painting with the representation of Sarapis, Harpocrates, and Helios in the lararium of one of the houses,<sup>38</sup> two bronze rings with a plastic bust of the god,<sup>39</sup> terracotta

<sup>37</sup> E. LE BLANT, *750 inscriptions de pierres gravées inédites ou peu connues* [= *Mémoires de l'Institut de France, Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* 36], Paris 1898, pp. 78–79.

<sup>38</sup> Z. KISS, 'Deux peintures murales de Marina el-Alamein', *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 106 (2006), pp. 163–170, at 163–166, fig. 1; S. MEDEKSZA, R. CZERNER, & G. BĄKOWSKA-CZERNER, 'Forms and decoration of Graeco-Roman houses from Marina el-Alamein', [in:] P. KOUSOULIS & N. LAZARIDIS (eds.), *Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Egyptologists, University of Aegean, Rhodes, 22–29 May 2008* [= *Orientalia Lovanensia analecta* 24], Leuven 2015, vol. I, pp. 1739–1758, at 1747, 1756–1757, fig. 11; G. BĄKOWSKA-CZERNER & R. CZERNER, 'Worship and places of worship in the Greco-Roman town at Marina el-Alamein', [in:] G. ROSATI & M. C. GUIDOTTI (eds.), *Proceedings of the XI International Congress of Egyptologists. Florence, Italy 23–30 August 2015, Museo Egizio Firenze* [= *Egyptology* 19], Oxford 2017, pp. 140–147, at 141–142, 144–145, figs. 2 and 3.

<sup>39</sup> (1) S. MEDEKSZA, with contributions by G. BĄKOWSKA, R. CZERNER, M. UJMA, & P. ZAMBZYCKI, 'Marina el-Alamein: the conservation season in 2002', *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 14 (2003), pp. 85–98, at 97–98, fig. 10; BĄKOWSKA, 'Bronze jewellery' (cit. n. 4), p. 100, no. 1, figs. 1.1 & 2.1; G. BĄKOWSKA-CZERNER, 'Divinità egizie nelle città greco-romana di Marina el-Alamein', *Aegyptus* 89 (2009), pp. 125–140, at 131 & 139, pl. II, fig. 1; VEYMIERS, 'Ἰλεως τῶ φεροῦντι. Supplément III' (cit. n. 11), no. I.G 13; (2) BĄKOWSKA, 'Bronze jewellery' (cit. n. 4), pp. 100–101, no. 2, fig. 2.2; BĄKOWSKA-CZERNER, 'Divinità egizie' (cit. above), p. 130; R. CZERNER & G. BĄKOWSKA-CZERNER, 'Le influenze dell'Occidente romano sull'antica città di Marina el-Alamein in Egitto', [in:] P. RUGGERI (ed.), *L'Africa romana. Momenti di continuità e rottura: bilancio di trent'anni di convegno L'Africa romana. Atti del XX Convegno Internazionale (Alghero, 26–29.09.2013)*, Rome 2015, pp. 1617–1630, at

lamps with the image of enthroned Sarapis, most probably imitating his statue from the Alexandrian Sarapeion,<sup>40</sup> and a fragment of a terracotta figurine representing the bearded head of the god.<sup>41</sup> All this indicates a vivid cult of Sarapis on the site of Marina el-Alamein in both the domestic sphere and the private one, which cannot surprise considering the proximity of the site to Alexandria, the cradle and the main centre of the Sarapis worship.

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1620-1621, fig. 3; VEYMIERS, “*Ἰλεως τῶ φεροῦντι*. Supplément III’ (cit. n. 11), no. VI.BA 38. Ring (1) was discovered in house H10 ‘E’ in room 4, ring (2) is a surface find

<sup>40</sup> W. A. DASZEWSKI, ‘The gods of the north-west coast of Egypt in the Graeco-Roman period’, *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome, Antiquité* 103/1 (1991), pp. 91-104, at 102-103, fig. 6; ABDEL BASSET Ali Abdel Fattah Saad, ‘Two unpublished terracotta oil lamps from Marina el-Alamein in Egypt’, *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 28/1 (2019), pp. 461-467, at 463-464.

<sup>41</sup> DASZEWSKI, ‘The gods of the north-west coast of Egypt in the Graeco-Roman period’ (cit. n. 38), p. 103, fig. 8. The fragment is a surface find.



# THE JOURNAL OF JURISTIC PAPYROLOGY

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**Keywords:** Roman Egypt, violence, *aikia*, petitions, social control, rhetoric, Greek law, Roman law.

Grażyna BĄKOWSKA & Adam ŁAJTAR

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**Keywords:** Marina el-Alamein, Roman jewelry, Sarapis, religious acclamations, 'megatheism', Greek inscriptions.

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**Keywords:** Roman will, M. Sempronius Priscus, P. Berol. inv. 7124, ChLA X 412, CPL 220.

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parallelism allows, in turn, to understand better the text of the papyrus and to supplement a technical term referring to relatives' consent to the manumission of slaves.

**Keywords:** Philonides of Laodikeia on the Sea, Herculaneum papyri, Greek manumission, ἀπελευθερώω, εὐδοκεῖν.

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**Keywords:** Bawit, Egyptian monasticism, monastic economy, household.

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**Keywords:** Athanasius, bishops of Philae, ceremonies of episcopal ordinations, end of paganism, Nubians.

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In this article I focus on the legal conditions delimiting the transfer of headship over monastic communities and their reflection in mundane reality. My aim is to see how documents of legal practice relate to the imperial legislation dealing with the appointment of the people in charge of the monasteries. The analysis of the superior selection process will allow for commenting on both the legal framework within which the monastic communities functioned, and the much broader issue of imperial policy towards the emerging holy houses. It should also enable some conclusions on the legal status of monastic communities and how it may have influenced the realities of appointing their administrative and spiritual heads.

**Keywords:** monks, monasteries, Late Antiquity, papyri, legal practice, *proestos*, abbot, *begoumenos*, monastic legal capacity, Justinian, imperial legislation.

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**Keywords:** Greco-Roman Egypt, *homologia*, Justinian, Leo, stipulation.