

Ain el-Gedida 2010 Study Season

SCA Report

The 2010 study season at the site of Ain el-Gedida (Dakhleh Oasis Project site no. 31/405-N3-1) was carried out from 23 January to 1 February 2010 by a team sponsored by New York University, under the direction of Professor Roger Bagnall.

The DOP conducted a preliminary survey of the site in 1980, and the local Coptic and Islamic Inspectorate carried out three seasons of excavation between 1993 and 1995, under the direction of Ahmed Salem and Kamel Bayumi. The southern part of mound I was the main object of archaeological investigation. Excavation was resumed in 2006 and continued until 2008, focusing on the northern half of the main hill and revealing several structures, among which were a church complex and a ceramic workshop. A first study season followed in 2009.

The staff of the 2010 mission consisted of Prof. Roger Bagnall, project director; Dr. Nicola Aravecchia, archaeological field director; Dorota Dzierbicka, archaeologist and small finds registrar; Dr. Delphine Dixneuf, ceramicist; Bruno Bazzani, photographer and computer specialist. The inspector was Sayed Saleh Sayed Nasr of the local Coptic and Islamic Inspectorate.

Permission was granted to access the small finds collected during the 2006-2008 excavation seasons and currently kept in the magazines of the local inspectorate. The finds included complete ceramic vessels, coins, ostraka, choroplastics, and miscellaneous objects made of different materials, such as wood and bronze.

The goal of the season was to analyze and study in detail the small finds and to check their graphic and written documentation, which was carried out during the previous campaigns. Measurements were verified and several new drawings were made. Additional cleaning and consolidation were performed on some objects that needed special treatment or to increase their readability, such as coins from significant

archaeological contexts. Furthermore, new sets of photographs were taken on almost all objects using a Digital Single-Lens Reflex camera, which allowed for very high-quality photographs.

The ceramicist continued the documentation and study of the complete vessels and the large amount of sherds that were found and collected during the 2008 and, partly, the 2007 excavation season. The diagnostics were drawn, photographed, and recorded and the general catalogue of forms and fabrics from Ain el-Gedida was updated.

The systematic study of all documentation from the 2006-2008 seasons, including forms, drawings, and plans –both in digital and hard copy–, was continued in 2010 and its results will be published in the final report.

Prof. Roger Bagnall
Project Director

Dr. Nicola Aravecchia
Archaeological Field Director

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