

# AMHEIDA 2015

## Report

### SMALL FINDS

#### AREA 2.4

#### LIST OF OBJECTS

Category	Quantity
Glass vessel	3
Jewellery	2
Lamp	1
Lid	1
Gaming piece	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>

Area 2.4 was investigated during the painted plaster survey. A total of 8 objects was found in the test trenches and among them two bracelets are significant because they are of a type not particularly frequent at Amheida: inv. **16722** and **16724**. Inv. **16722** has a semicircular section and the external surface is decorated with a coil of white dull glass that forms a crossing-waves pattern (**fig. 1**). Inv. **16724** has a semicircular section as well, and it is decorated with glass inlays, different in color, size, and shape (colors = red, light blue, white, yellow; mean dimensions = 0.5 x 0.25 cm; mean shape = oval; **fig. 2**).



Fig. 1: bracelet with coils of white dull glass, forming a crossing-wave pattern (inv. **16722**).  
Fig. 2: bracelet with colored glass inlays (inv. **16724**).

## AREA 2.6

### LIST OF OBJECTS

Category	Quantity
Coin	1
Stone (other)	1 (flint scraper)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>

Area 2.6 was also investigated during the painted plaster survey. Only 2 objects were found: a fragmentary Roman coin (**16888**) and an incomplete flint scraper, sharp along the edges on both sides (**16655**).

## AREA 2.7

### LIST OF OBJECTS

Category	Quantity
Coin	2
Glass vessel	3
Glass (other)	1 (window pane)
Faïence vessel	1
Lamp	1
Lid	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9</b>

Nine objects were found in the test trenches carried out in Area 2.7, during the painted plaster survey. In Test Trench 1, 2 Roman coins were uncovered, but they were not identified because they are not restored yet (inv. **16866**, **16867**). Particularly interesting is the fragment of a window pane with a straight rounded edge, transparent and colorless (**16649**), found on the surface layer.

## AREA 4.1

### LIST OF OBJECTS

Category	Quantity
Ostrakon	6 (5 Hieratic; 1 Greek)
Glass vessel	6
Stone vessel	1 (basin)
Metal object	2
Jewellery	3
Pottery statuette	1
Lamp	4
Lid	1
Unfired clay object	7 (6 stoppers, semi-fired; 1 ball)
Decorated blocks	64 (16 reliefs)

Stone (other)	32 (1 Thoth statue; 1 unclear object; 1 stele; 15 grinding stones; 6 hammer stones; 2 weights; 2 sickle implements; 1 polishing stone; 1 whetstone; 1 ball; 1 mortarium)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>127</b>

127 objects were registered for area 4.1; among the ostraka, only one Greek item was found (inv. **16925**), while the 5 remaining are all Hieratic.

The fragment of a glass lamp (inv. **16671**, **fig. 3**) made of light yellow transparent glass was discovered in DSU 251, a surface layer. The lamp, with bulging sliced-off rim and vertical wall, is decorated with two bands of thin and shallow incised lines and dots of different sizes, made of dull blue glass. It is dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. (Parallel: Cat. 425, p.239 in N. Kunina, "Ancient Glass in the Hermitage Collection," 1997).

In DSU 254, mud brick debris in pit F159, just below surface DSU 251, the torso of a pottery statuette was found (inv. **16679**, **fig. 4**), well outlined with anatomical details, like the abdomen protruding outwards indicating pregnancy, the navel represented with a small cavity on the abdomen, the pubic triangle with pubic hair, the vulva and the glutei. The female figure is standing with joined legs, which are only partially preserved. Remains of the five fingers of the left hand are visible on the hip, while the right hand was probably bent below the breasts. Similar objects, even if not identical, were unearthed in Balat and are dated to the Second Intermediate Period/XVIII dynasty (S. Marchand, G. Soukiassian, "Balat VIII," Le Caire, 2010).



Fig. 3: fragment of a glass lamp decorated with blue dull glass dots and incised lines (4<sup>th</sup> century A.D.).

Fig. 4: front and back of a pottery statuette representing a female figure (2<sup>nd</sup> Intermediate Period/XVIII dynasty?).

In the same pit F159, from DSUs 258, 266 and 274, 3 conical stoppers were uncovered (inv. **16759**, **fig. 5**; 16764; 16926), all incomplete and all made of reddish-brown clay with medium-fine texture. All the stoppers have been semi-fired and this may explain the reddish color of the clay. Similar objects were discovered in Balat, and they are dated to the Second Intermediate Period (for parallels, see fig. 292, p. 221 in S. Marchand, G. Soukiassian, "Balat VIII," Le Caire, 2010).

Three additional conical stoppers, having the same characteristics as the previous ones, were found in pit F164 (DSUs 278, 281) and in pit F171 and F182 (DSUs 301).

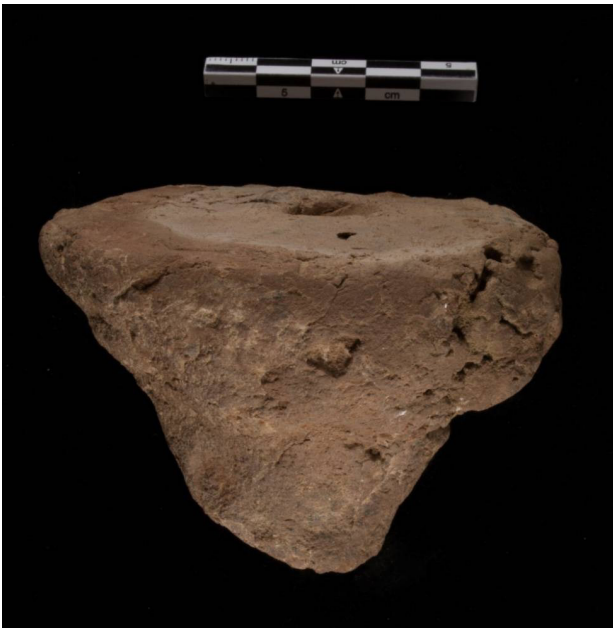


Fig. 5: DSU 258, pit F159, inv. num. 16759. An incomplete conical stopper made of semi-fired clay. A small oval cavity is visible almost in the center, possibly an intentional finger print (2<sup>nd</sup> Intermediate Period?).

One fragmentary sandstone statue depicting the god Thoth in the shape of a seated baboon (inv. **16957**) was found in DSU 262, a mud-brick debris and blocks cluster in pit F162. Only the genitals are preserved, while the bent legs and the feet are only partially preserved. The surface is polished and smoothed and traces of a thin layer of white plaster are visible in places. Yellow paint covers the plaster on the base, while red paint is brushed over the baboon's body. The underside of the base is roughly worked with both punch and straight chisel.

15 passive elements of grinding stones were recorded, 5 of which came from DSU 253, a layer below surface DSU 251 and above pit F159.

64 architectonic elements were unearthed, including blocks, column drums, cavetto cornices, screen walls, etc. 16 of them were decorated with reliefs, mainly sunk reliefs.

## AREA 8.1

### LIST OF OBJECTS

Category	Quantity
Ostrakon	87 (all Greek; 9 still embedded in unfired clay stoppers)
Glass vessel	9
Faïence	2
Jewellery	3 (1 bronze ring)
Lamp	7
Lid	1
Stopper	15
Stone (other)	1 (mortarium)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>125</b>

In area 8.1 87 Greek ostraka were discovered, 9 of which were still embedded in unfired clay stoppers, sealing wine jars (the content of the jars was confirmed by archaeobotanical analysis done during the campaign by Valentina Caracuta). Most of the ostraka (51 in total) were found in DSU 13, a layer of floor collapse located in most of room 1. The mud stoppers were also found mainly in DSU 13 and, except the ones still sealing the wine jars (inv. **16895**, **16897**), are all incomplete, as the lower part of the body is generally missing. They can be either CC type (convex-concave) or F type (*fungo* or T-shaped).<sup>1</sup>

In the case of CC type stoppers, the inner part is concave and the impressions of vine leaves are visible; along the edges the impression of the upper profile of the jar (rim, neck and a small portion of the shoulder) is also preserved (for example inv. **16732**, **fig. 6**).

In F type stoppers, the inner part is convex and also in this case impressions of vine leaves are sometimes visible. The particular shape of these stoppers is due to the presence of at least 3 different kind of plugs, fixed inside the neck of the jar. The plug can consist of a small ball made of vine leaves (inv. **16842**, **16854**, **16856**, **16923**), a ceramic vessel - either a footed vessel or a bowl with a short foot (inv. **16949**, **16955**) - or a lid made from a pottery body sherd (inv. **16921**, **16956**). The plug is preserved only in inv. **16956**, while in all the other cases there are just plug impressions. Along the edges the impression of the upper profile of the jar is occasionally visible.

The upper part of both the types of stoppers is generally convex with semicircular section, in some cases flattened in the middle part where the ostrakon is placed.



Fig. 6: unfired clay stopper inv. num. 16732, type CC. On top, ostrakon inv. 16731 is embedded (left). The inner part is concave. Rim, neck and shoulder impression of the jar is visible as well as vine leaf impressions.

The complete stoppers have a plano-convex section and cover rim, neck and shoulder of the jar. Their surface was consolidated with Paraloid B72 in acetone and some cracks were filled in with a reddish-brown moisture made of a powder of modern backed bricks mixed with water. The conservation was carried out by conservators Emiliano Ricchi and Alberto Sucato.

The external surface of stopper inv. **16895** (**fig. 7**), sealing jar inv. 30189, is characterized by the presence of several round, small impressions, potentially caused by hail or rain droplets. These are visible on other stoppers, like inv. **16956**.

Probably the jars were exposed to the atmospheric agents.

It might be fascinating to note that unfired clay stoppers are not particularly common in Serenos' house, where plaster stoppers made of gypsum are more representative. Also, in Serenos' house there are few jars and many kegs. The content of jars and kegs is different and for this reason also

<sup>1</sup> For the typologies of the stoppers cf.: P. Davoli, *Oggetti in argilla dall'area templare di Bakchias (El-Fayyum, Egitto). Catalogo dei rinvenimenti delle Campagne di Scavo 1996-2002*, Pisa-Roma 2005.

the stoppers used to seal the vessels are made with different materials. We may argue that gypsum stoppers sealed only kegs and unfired clay stoppers only jars.



Fig. 7: unfired clay stopper inv. 16895, sealing jar inv. 30189. The impressions are potentially caused by hail or rain droplets. The arrow indicate the cracks filled in with a moisture made of a powder and water, reddish-brown in color.

In DSU 23 a bronze ring was found (inv. **16865**) with an oval front part tapering from the front to the back.

## AREA 8.2

### LIST OF OBJECTS

Category	Quantity
Glass vessel	12
Coin	5 (all Roman)
Jewellery	3
Lamp	1
Ceramic (other)	1 (lamp mould)
Stone (other)	2 (1 ball, 1 flint)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24</b>

Area 8.2 was investigated during the painted plaster survey. In the test trenches a total of 24 artifacts was uncovered. A particularly interesting find is represented by the upper valve of a mould for a circular lamp with decorated deflector, incomplete (inv. **16750**, **fig. 8**). The external surface is coarse and slightly concave in the central part. The inner side is convex and a plain discus with central circular filling hole, collared, is visible. The discus is surrounded by three concentric grooves, for shoulder decoration. The handle/deflector is hand-made by a finger impression. The handle decoration consist of a palmette in relief with six fronds in total, three on each side of the

central stalk, decorated probably with nine parallel grooves. In Amheida lamps made with this kind of mould have not yet been found so far. Moreover, parallels for this type of lamp are not yet identified.



Fig. 8: valve of a lamp mould, inv. num. 16750.

5 Roman coins were found, but conservation is needed in order to identify them.

Among the jewellery, there is a bracelet (inv. **16703**) with semicircular section and an uncommon decoration made of perpendicular lines of five sunken squares each. Only two lines are extant. The decoration was made using a five-toothed tool.

## AREA 0.0

### LIST OF OBJECTS

Category	Quantity
Coin	1
Glass vessel	2
Jewellery	1
<b>TOT</b>	<b>4</b>

Only 4 objects was found in area 0.0. In particular, near the temple area a complete prismatic bead with hexagonal section was discovered, made of dull blue glass (inv. **16702**).

During a one-day survey carried out by Silvia Prell on 02/08/2015, between the pyramid and a sandstone tomb, a fragment of a glass ribbed bowl (inv. **16954**, Isings type 3) was found, made of

green transparent glass and, by reference to C. Isings, it is dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD (C. Ising, *Roman glass from dated finds*, Groening 1957).  
The only coin found needs conservation for its identification.