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Studies of the Fayoum oasis written by Russian speaking scholars over the last decade (2012–2022). Part 1. Archaeology and history

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This article presents the first part of survey of scientific literature devoted to historic, natural, related and multidisciplinary studies of the Fayoum oasis that have been being conducted by Russian speaking scholars over the last decade (2012–2022). It is focused on studies in the field of Fayoum's history and archaeology (including studies on pottery, archaeological textiles, reconstruction of funeral rituals that took place in various periods), while the next article that is the second part of this survey will be devoted to physical anthropology, papyrology, textual criticism, descriptions of Russian museum collections, history of architecture and textiles, history of Egyptian clothing and textile, studies of cultural history and history of everyday life, fine arts and ecology. Many of these studies contain the first publications of unique artifacts, texts, historical monuments.

Keywords: Fayoum (Fayyūm), Fayoum oasis, Egyptology, Coptic studies, history of Egypt, archaeology of Egypt, studies of Egyptian pottery, Ptolemaic Egypt, Roman Egypt, ancient Egyptian masks, Egyptian funerary ritual.

Necessity of this survey is caused by two trends, the first of which is connected with external factors, such as changes in the Fayoum *muhafaza* and its development over the last decade. These changes in economic, political, social and cultural life of the region took place after the Egyptian 2011 revolution and asserted influence over its study. A direct and the most evident (but not the sole) example of this influence is the increasing anthropogenic load on archaeological sites¹, which is connected both with demographic growth of Egyptian

¹ According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in 2012 the population of Egypt had numbered 84 418 thousand of people, but by

the year 2021 this figure rose to 102 061 thousand. See *Demographic Yearbook*, 72nd issue, p. 114, URL: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/products/dyb/>

population² and with the drastic increase in the pace of housing construction driven by the Egyptian program for construction of housing. In some cases the realization of this program has led to construction of urban areas and related infrastructure directly near the area of archeological excavations³. Moreover, the increase of inflation, weakening of Egyptian currency and some other negative trends in economy exert a certain influence on study of archeological sites in the Fayoum *muhafaza*.

The second trend is connected with the fact that numerous and multifarious scientific works in various fields of social and natural sciences and humanities devoted to the Fayoum have been published for the last decade. Many of them contain first publications of unique artifacts, texts, historical monuments.

This article does not aim to become a full and complete bibliographic or (even less) a historiographic study⁴. It only reflects some modern trends in studies on various aspects of the Fayoum oasis that are conducted by Russian speaking scholars and represents an attempt to reflect the development of research work over the last decade.

It should also be noted that due to specifics of vocalization of the oasis' Arabic name **فيوم** its different versions are present in Russian (Фаюм, Файюм, Файйум) and English (Fayoum, Fayom, Faiym, Fayyum).

Both publications are entirely devoted to the Fayoum oasis and those that have only partial relevance for it, but are of importance to its study are mentioned in this survey.

During the search for information on scientific works devoted to the Fayoum both international (*Scopus*, *Web of Science*, *Academia.edu*) and Russian (*Russian Science Citation Index* and *ISTINA*) databases along with leading peer-review journals have been inspected. Nonetheless it is quite likely that for whatever reason some publications have remained outside the focus of my attention. In this case, I would be very appreciative if the authors whose studies have been left unconsidered in this article could kindly provide me with copies of their works (of course if they consider it necessary) to empower me with the option to improving and correcting the content of these surveys.

dybsets/2021.pdf (accessed on 20.12.2022). Thus, the Egypt's population has increased by 20,9% over the last nine years.

² According to figures at the official website of the Fayoum *muhafaza*, the population of Fayoum was 3 705 708 in 2018, and there were 732 545 inhabitants in the *markaz* (a municipal district) of Itsa. See **التقسيم الإداري للمحافظة/السكان في محافظة الفيوم** (*Administrative division of the muhafaza / Population of the Fayoum muhafaza in 2018*), URL: <http://www.fayoum.gov.eg/engazat/Administrative%20division/default.aspx> (accessed on 20.12.2022). But the quantity of inhabitants of a new city of New Fayoum (El-Fayoum el-Gedida), which has been separated from the *markaz* of Itsa, in case if it would be fully populated will rise to 140 000 by 2050. In January, 2022, when this official report was drafted there were 3500 inhabitants in New Fayoum. See the section on New Fayoum of the Bulletin

of New Urban Communities Authority, January 2022 at its official website. URL: http://www.newcities.gov.eg/know_cities/Fayoum/%D9%86%D8%A8%D8%B0%D9%87%20%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A9%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%85%20%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%B1%202022.pdf (accessed on 20.12.2022).

³ A new city, which is known as El-Fayoum el-Gedida, has been built in close proximity to borders of an archaeological site of Deir el-Banat. The approximate distance from the nearest apartment building to the necropolis amounts to 300 m. An administrative border of the new city is directly adjacent to this archaeological site.

⁴ For example, it does not include discussion of surveys and reviews of scientific publications, such as Kuzmin, Ladynin 2015.

The publications' assignment to a certain sphere of scientific knowledge is quite conventional in some cases. For example, if authors consider problems connected with religious or ideological matters in the context of social relations, they work at the intersection of comparative religious and historical studies; if they describe textiles found during archaeological excavations both as typological and dating objects of material culture and as material on the history of costume in the Fayoum, they act at the junction of archaeology, history of art and of everyday life and cultural studies, etc.

Archaeology

*Белова Г. А. Некоторые особенности погребального обряда на некрополе Дейр эль-Банат в греко-римский период*⁵

The author describes some individual features of the funeral rite, which took place in Fayoum in the Graeco-Roman Egypt, according to the excavations of the CES RAS mission to Deir el-Banat.

Pit graves and graves with undercuts are mainly present at the necropolis. Occasionally one of these graves was intended for members of the same family and was used within a period of a few generations. The majority of remains are mummified — different strata of Egypt's population could afford mummification at that period. The author provides detailed information on various types and methods of bodies' preparation and interment and analyses them on materials from the graves 176, 196/3, 240/2, 256. Cases of both high- and low-quality mummification are recorded, and the author supposes that the latter one was caused by loss of interest in traditional religious aspects of the bodies' preservation. Primitive mummification that comes down to dehydrating the body by means of natron also occurs. The author notes that the quality of mummification at the Deir el-Banat necropolis was relatively low. She attributes this fact both to increased number of foreigners, who mingled with local population, and to commercialization of the rite, which took place along with decrease of mummification workshops' quantity.

*Белова Г. А. Предварительный отчет о работе миссии Центра египтологических исследований Российской академии наук (ЦЕИ РАН) на памятнике Дейр-эль-Банат (Фаяумский оазис) за 2017 г.*⁶

The paper contains a preliminary report on the 13th season of multidisciplinary archaeological studies at the site of Deir el-Banat (the Fayoum oasis), which were carried out by the CES RAS mission in 2017. During this season archaeological excavations, studies of archaeological textiles, of the anthropological material and of archaeological finds, field conservation of the finds and restoration of the most valuable items that were intended for transferring to museums' storages took place.

Seventy one graves have been discovered, 30% of them were dated back to the Graeco-Roman period. The bodies were laid into wooden anthropomorphous or reed coffins. There

⁵ Белова 2012.

⁶ Белова 2017.

were both painted and unpainted sarcophagi; some of them were supplied with masks. Artificial mummification by means of natural resins and high-quality wrapping of mummies, their coating with cartonnage plates are characteristic features of these graves. Some masks are gilded.

Pectoral crosses were discovered for the first time. A custom of placing plants or their fragments between layers of textiles was placed on record. Approximately 600 fragments of textiles, 35 skeletons and 28 skulls were studied. The studies of anthropological samples let the scholars make a conclusion about predominance of males and relatively high infant mortality rate (33%). The study of texts written on papyri was continued. A literary papyrus containing a fragment of a previously unknown historical work and a Ptolemaic document mentioning the towns of Herakleopolis and Aphroditopolis are among the most important of such finds.

Eleven sarcophagi and their fragments were found. Hieroglyphic “texts” on painted sarcophagi imitate traditional inscriptions. Depictions of gods are also not in the line with Egyptian standards. This fact may indicate a purely mechanical reproduction of traditional Egyptian characters and forms.

*Belova G. A., Ivanov S. V. Preliminary report on the work of the CES RAS archaeological mission at Deir el-Banat (Fayoum). The 14th season (March 3 — April 24, 2019)*⁷

This paper is devoted to description of work held during the 14th season of archaeological excavations of CES RAS at Deir el-Banat (Fayoum).

The work was focused on identifying typical features and peculiarities of burial customs performed at the necropolis. Seven types of burial customs were described and preliminarily identified (as a result of studying more than 20 burials). Among them there are those that were performed in intermediate periods of Egyptian history. Nor can we ignore the fact that the extensive illegal digging, which took place both in ancient times and in our day, caused great damage to the necropolis.

During the season of 2019 finds from excavations conducted in 2003–2017 were continued to be studied. Sixteen coffins and their fragments were examined. About 300 textile objects were studied and described. Special attention was paid to description of darning or patching.

The remains of 30 individuals were examined and described. For each individual a procedure of mummification was reconstructed. The obtained data will allow establishing local versions of mummification techniques and procedures.

The work on pottery was concentrated on sherds collected from the surface at the “nunnery”, Northern and Southern necropoleis during previous seasons. The majority of this pottery date to the period from the late 5th century AD to the end of the 7th century AD.

Papyri from damaged cartonnages found in 2017 were described and studied. Most of the papyri are written in Demotic, and some are written in ancient Greek. A papyrus fragment from a cartonnage found in grave 315 contains a date in ancient Greek (the “29th year”).

⁷ Belova, Ivanov 2019.

*Белова Г. А., Васильев С. В., Боруцкая С. Б., Иванов С. В. Проблемы формирования населения Файюмского оазиса Египта в греко-римский период*⁸

The authors focus their attention on the problems connected with formation of the Fayoum oasis' population in the Graeco-Roman period, backing up their assertions with evidence obtained as a result of many years of work of the CES RAS mission at the archaeological site of Deir el-Banat.

Ethnic structure of the oasis population was enriched with the Greeks, Persians, Romans, etc. Mixed marriages led to even greater mixture of ethnicities and religious rites. This contributed to extraordinary amplification of interethnic and interreligious relations in the Fayoum society of that period.

Grave goods in graves of the Deir el-Banat necropolis are poor; archaeologists have not traced any tombstones; quantity of pottery found in the graves is scarce. Only children's graves contained jewellery (earrings, rings, hand bracelets) and wooden toys.

The authors argue that active mixing of local population with the Greeks (primary males) during the pre-Ptolemaic period and process of migration, which took place in the Ptolemaic period, had no impact on anthropological composition of the population in the region. Their hypothesis is based, on the one hand, on changes of rites in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods and, on the other hand, on results of anthropological studies.

*Белова Г. А. Проблемы хронологии некрополя Дейр-эль-Банат (Файюмский оазис) и вопросы терминологии*⁹

The paper discusses problems associated with dating of the archaeological site of Deir el-Banat and terminology. The necropolis dates back to the period from the beginning of the Ptolemaic rule in Egypt until the early Middle Ages. Establishment of its relative chronology and study of funeral traditions and rites that were performed in different periods are the main tasks of scholars studying the necropolis. Several factors, most notably poor preservation of burials that is conditioned by both natural processes and barbaric excavations together with centuries of plundering, make these tasks more difficult.

Stratigraphic observations at the Deir el-Banat necropolis do not allow drawing a general picture of the site's chronology. Configuration of graves is not always its defining characteristic, because there were no strict rules of making pit graves.

Grave goods are quite poor, and thus the scholars studying the burials miss time based markers. Remains of superstructures are hardly traceable. It is not possible to use peculiarities of funeral rites for dating, because they are present in burials that occurred at different times. The errors of radiocarbon dating that amount to 100–150 years do not allow scholars to make a clear distinction between different historical periods. Published scientific works show that every site has its own specific character, which makes search of answers even more difficult.

Moreover, additional difficulties rise while studying the funeral rites, which altered dramatically over time under the influence of religious beliefs of newly arrived population. Synthesis of local and imported traditions led to the emergence and development of new rites having another form and content.

⁸ Белова и др. 2020.

⁹ Белова 2021.

The practice of burying bodies at one necropolis also makes it difficult to identify ethnic and (or) religious affiliation of those who were buried there. The authors identify five groups of burials that have been detected at the site and that can be clearly dated according to various criteria.

*Voytenko A. Preliminary report on Coptic burial custom at the necropolis of Deir el-Banat*¹⁰

The author makes some preliminary conclusions on study of a funeral rite based on archaeological excavations of the CES RAS missions to Deir el-Banat (Fayoum). Fifty five burials (some of them are fragmented) have been studied. Bodies were buried according to the Coptic burial rite. They were wrapped in linen funeral shrouds with some protrusions in the leg and head areas.

The author's dating of this type of burials to the 4–8th centuries AD is based on some analogies. The primary part of the studied material constitutes to remains of heads and legs due to the fact that the necropolis was plundered. Completely preserved burials are rare.

The author gives some details about the rite and describes the basic burial technique as “wrapping” shrouds.

Some children's burials were also studied.

The author describes burial textiles that have been found on the dead bodies. He puts forward a hypothesis that deviation of the rite from the norm in some burials was deliberate and intended to furnish them with some “luxury”. Children's graves are marked by simplified “adult” rite.

The author offers a reconstruction of the burial rite practiced during that period.

*Voytenko A. Grave 249/2 at Deir el-Banat. A typical example of Coptic ordinary burial custom*¹¹

Burial rite at the site of Deir el-Banat excavated by the CES RAS mission is considered in this paper by means of an example of the grave 249/2.

The author attempts to determine features of a typical Coptic burial. Usually it is a simple pit grave, the deceased was buried in extended supine position in a narrow pit with rounded corners. The deceased had not a wooden (or cane) coffin; he was usually wrapped in two layers (“exterior” and “basic”) of coarse linen fabrics fixed with tapes and this wrapping had significant protrusions at the head and the feet.

The structure of a burial was reinforced with a framework usually made of sticks. The body was dressed in a cerement (or shroud) usually consisting of a tunic, often supplemented with a shawl placed over the face and chest.

The author illustrates these conclusions with an example of the grave 249/2.

¹⁰ Voytenko 2012.

¹¹ Voytenko 2016.

*Ivanov S. V. Greco-Roman coffins from Deir el-Banat (Fayoum)*¹²

The paper is based on materials from the CES RAS excavations at the site of Deir el-Banat in 2006–2017 (1200 m² were excavated and 371 graves were studied).

Article is based on analysis of 93 caskets. Out of 93 coffins 79 are made of wood, 11 — of reed, and three — of burnt clay. Thirty percent of excavated graves date back to the Ptolemaic and early Roman periods. These graves usually contain coffins with mummified bodies (most with cartonnage elements — helmet-masks collars, pectorals, foot-cases, etc.).

The author ranges the sarcophagi into the following categories and subcategories: wooden coffins (anthropoid coffins with masks of a lapidary style), undecorated anthropoid coffins (38 undecorated, all technical details are clearly visible), painted anthropoid coffins (39 were adorned with a polychrome painting, images and inscriptions are difficult to recognize — artists who decorated the coffins, followed traditional patterns and did not fully realize the meaning of these images), rectangular coffins (two coffins, one of them contained a mummified body decorated with a gilded mask), reed coffins (11 items, bad state of preservation) — and describes their characteristic features.

He emphasizes that anthropoid coffins of average quality constitute the majority of Greco-Roman burials at the Southern necropolis of Deir el-Banat. Shape and dimensions of the caskets remained unchanged throughout the long period of existence of the cemetery; the quality of the workmanship was a marker of social status.

*Ivanov S. V. 'Faces' of Deir el-Banat*¹³

The author describes the usage of wooden masks that were attached to Graeco-Roman wooden sarcophagi found during excavations of the Deir el-Banat necropolis by the mission of CES RAS.

The masks that had been made separately were attached with dowels to the front part of the cover of minimally decorated coffins dating back to the Graeco-Roman period (approximately 30% of the graves at the archeological site).

The masks were carved in lapidary style, showing the main facial features (eyes, nose, cheeks, chin). The level of detail reflected the welfare of the deceased's family. The majority of masks were made of several panels. Most of the masks display simplified features.

The author provides a detailed description of these masks and gives some analogies.

*Иванов С. В. Антропоморфные доски из погребений некрополя Дейр-эль-Банат*¹⁴

The paper presents a survey of anthropomorphic boards discovered by the CES RAS mission to the site of Deir el-Banat (Fayoum) and a discussion of this element of the burial rite of the 4–6th centuries AD.

Burials that date back to the 4–6th centuries AD contain anthropomorphic boards made of a single piece of a palm trunk. The upper part of each board is rounded and separated with

¹² Ivanov 2017.

¹³ Ivanov 2019.

¹⁴ Иванов 2021.

notches from the main segment, which gradually grows narrow downwards. Thus the artisans provided the board with an anthropomorphic form.

There are no traces of decorations. The anthropomorphic boards were necessary for providing some rigidity to the deceased's body, which was required for its transportation to the cemetery and internment. Only three anthropomorphic boards have been found in situ, but there are boards discovered out of archaeological context together with textiles and bandages that stuck to it.

The author makes a hypothesis that anthropomorphic boards served within framework of a funeral ritual, which had evolved but at the same time retained some traditional features, as amulets — they took place of guarding inscriptions on sarcophagi.

The paper also point out that quantity of such boards found at the necropolis is small.

The article is accompanied with a catalogue of anthropomorphic boards found at the necropolis of Deir el-Banat.

*Малых С. Е. Египетские рельефные фляги греко-римского времени в Гизе*¹⁵

The paper analyzes Egyptian flasks with relief decorations related to the Fayoum oasis and discovered in the course of excavations of the Russian archaeological mission of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the RAS to Giza in 1999–2017. The author dates them to the 1st century BC.

A flask covered with red engobe probably was manufactured in Athribis or Fayoum. The oasis was presumably one of centers for production of flasks with relief decorations, because one of moulds for making them has originated therefrom. Fayoum (Tebtunis, Crocodilopolis, Bakhias, Narmouthis) ranks second after Memphis in number of relief flasks found in course of archaeological excavations; the range of their distribution has a single-point character.

The style of decoration is not Egyptian — it's Hellenized. The author supposes that flasks of this type were associated with Ptolemaic city centers situated in the Middle Egypt, including those of the Fayoum oasis.

The author assumes that such artifacts were owned by the urban middle class, but the majority of population, i. e. peasants, was unable to afford them.

*Орфинская О. В., Толмачева Е. Г., Белова Г. А. Текстильный комплекс позднеантичного времени из могилы 213 на памятнике Дейр аль-Банат (Фаям, Египет)*¹⁶

The authors study an Egyptian late antique textile complex from one of burials at the necropolis of Deir el-Banat (Fayoum). Textiles found by the CES RAS mission in a burial 213 are introduced into scientific circulation for the first time. The burial contained four woolen tunics and one tunic made of linen, a linen scarf or a towel, two pillows (one had been placed under the head of the deceased and the second one was situated in the leg area). There was an unfinished linen fabric that had been laid off the loom under the first pillow. The deceased was wrapped in textiles — coarse linen shrouds that had been arranged in layers.

¹⁵ Малых 2020.

¹⁶ Орфинская и др. 2017.

The textile complex of the grave 213 contains various textiles — coarse burial shrouds, interior textiles, clothes.

There were a few types of looms in Egypt in the 4–7th centuries simultaneously that were suitable for production of different kinds of textiles. Coarse funeral shrouds were produced with a vertical loom furnished with two drums, and the warp was reinforced directly on the drum. Fabrics for tunics and more sophisticated items were woven on looms, where the warp that presumably had already been threaded was reinforced.

Various textile accessories were used for weaving along with the loom.

Textiles specially made for the burial (coarse funeral shrouds) and textiles that had been used during the lifetime of the deceased (clothes, interior textiles) were employed in the funeral ritual. There are no specific funeral garments discovered at the necropolis.

A great number of textiles used in the funeral ritual are a testimony to a significant role of weaving and woven textile fabrics in economy of late antique Egypt. Individual items found in the grave probably had been produced in small house workshops; production of other textile had required high professional skills.

*Орфинская О.В., Толмачева Е.Г. Египетская туника с дионисийскими мотивами из раскопок ЦЕИ РАН на некрополе Дейр аль-Банат (Фаяум)*¹⁷

An Egyptian late antique tunic with depiction of a dyonisiac procession has been published in this paper for the first time. The tunic was found in course of excavations at Deir el-Banat necropolis (Fayoum), which is dated back to the late antique — early Islamic period. The tunic is a perfect example of Egyptian early medieval weaving.

The paper describes in detail peculiarities of this tunic's weaving, analyzes a pictorial composition, which is placed on tapestry inlays attached to the tunic and have a symbolic meaning. A graphic reconstruction of the tunic was produced on the base of well-preserved fragments that had been found in course of excavations.

Depictions of dancing Bacchantes in the technique of tapestry weaving have been preserved at the tunic. Dyonisiac motifs at “Coptic” textiles is associated with ideas of fertility and resurrection.

Analogies to the artifact found in various museum collections are cited in the paper.

*Орфинская О. В., Толмачева Е. Г. Археологический текстиль и его значение при решении вопросов социально-этнической и религиозной принадлежности населения египетской хоры в греко-римское время: по материалам некрополя Дейр аль-Банат (Фаяум)*¹⁸

The paper contains a comparative analysis of textiles found at the necropolis of Deir el-Banat (Fayoum) through the lens of their technological features. The authors describe in detail an archaeological context and compare quality and quantity of textiles found among other grave goods in different burials. The archaeological textiles are regarded by the authors as markers of social and religious status of a deceased. The paper also deals with the prob-

¹⁷ Орфинская, Толмачева 2017.

¹⁸ Орфинская, Толмачева 2018.

lem of funeral rite's transformation influenced by Christianization of Egypt in the 3rd–4th centuries AD.

The authors make preliminary conclusions that inhabitants of the Fayoum oasis buried at the necropolis in their lifetime had come from middle strata of mixed Graeco-Egyptian population and practiced Egyptian religious rituals and cults. The economic set-up, in particular textile industry, is characterized by important role of Egyptian traditions.

*Орфинская О. В. Анализ подъемного текстильного материала, полученного в ходе работы экспедиции ЦЕИ РАН на памятнике Дейр-эль-Банат*¹⁹

The author characterizes and analyzes surface textile finds coming from excavations of the CES RAS mission at the necropolis of Deir el-Banat.

The main array of surface textile finds was collected in 2008–2010 on a territory that had previously been excavated by Egyptian archaeologists. This material was placed on record, photographed, described and placed into storage.

Textile material from surface of the Deir el-Banat necropolis is a significant addition to textiles found in situ in burials. Surface finds reflect common trends in development of textile production. Its analysis has showed that there were workshops for production of funeral textiles, in particular coarse funeral shrouds, workshops for production of cut-out inlays and for cap plaiting in the oasis. This fact provides evidence of complexity of social arrangement at that period.

*Симоненко А. А. Палеолитические местонахождения в окрестностях некрополя Дейр-эль-Банат: предварительные результаты исследования*²⁰

The paper is devoted to inspection of the archaeological site of Deir el-Banat (Fayoum) and to discovery of Paleolithic artifacts at the course of the CES RAS excavations there.

Some exploration activities were carried out during field seasons of 2017, 2019 and 2020 for retrieval of Stone Age artifacts. Three points where finds had been concentrated were found.

Locations containing artifacts of the Paleolithic appearance on the day surface belong to a type of sites, which is very common for the North of Egypt. The author emphasizes that such locations cannot be taken as valuable archaeological sources, but it is relevant and necessary to study them, because there is an absence of stratified sites dating to lower and middle Paleolithic periods in the northern part of the Nile Valley.

The author gives analogies to artifacts found in course of excavations. The paper contains drawings and photographs of the finds, maps, and plans with a binding to the terrain.

¹⁹ Орфинская 2021.

²⁰ Симоненко 2020.

*Tolmacheva E. Archaeological textiles at the Deir el-Banat site (Fayyum): parallels, study, conservation and general description*²¹

The author describes archaeological textiles found in course of excavations at the site of Deir el-Banat (Fayoum). She provides a brief overview of the archaeological site and gives analogies from other archaeological sites in Fayoum. The author deals with principles and peculiarities of organization of archaeological textiles' study at the site of Deir el-Banat.

The paper contains a detailed description of the process of textiles' field conservation carried out by members of the CES RAS mission. There is also a detailed classification of textile finds, photos of the most egregious samples, examples of textile products' reconstruction in the article.

*Толмачева Е. Г. Археологический текстиль ранневизантийского времени некрополя Дейр аль-Банат (Фаям, Египет)*²²

The paper is devoted to archaeological textiles of the early Byzantine period, also known as "Coptic". The author uses finds from the Fayoum necropolis of Deir el-Banat as an example of such textiles. Due to the peculiarities of their admission to the world museum collections it is not possible to establish the origins of such artifacts. Significance of archaeological textiles is huge.

The paper characterizes archaeological context of 900 samples of textiles dating back to the 4–7th centuries AD. Funeral shrouds and ribbons, with which they were fastened, make about 70% of the collection. The other group consists of clothes, i. e. linen and woolen tunics.

There is also a description of tasks for future field seasons in the paper, including technological analysis of textiles, detection of imported fabrics, further search of analogies coming from comparable archaeological sites.

*Толмачева Е. Г. Погребальный обряд позднеантичного Египта по данным археологии: христианство, язычество, двоеверие?*²³

The paper deals with specifics of the funeral rite that was customary in late antique Egypt by the example of finds coming from archaeological sites in Fayoum, including Fag el-Gamous, Deir el-Banat and Deir el-Naqlun. The author emphasizes that study of symbolism of clothing becomes particularly important due to a small quantity of traditional grave goods.

There are depictions of crosses on the textiles; Christian symbols often occur along with pagan ones. The author supposes that this fact is caused not by syncretism, but by peculiarities of popular religion. There is a possibility that Christian crosses were used not as religious markers, but as amulets. Usage of various amulets was a widespread practice in Egypt in all periods of its history, including nowadays.

²¹ Tolmacheva 2017.

²² Толмачева 2018.

²³ Толмачева 2020.

*Фридманн А. М. К вопросу о предварительном изучении погребальных масок, найденных на некрополе Дейр аль-Банат (Фаяумский оазис)*²⁴

The author gives a description and a preliminary attribution of funerary masks found at the necropolis of Deir el-Banat (Fayoum) in the course of archaeological excavations carried out by the CES RAS mission.

According to the author, the main problem of studying artifacts found at Deir el-Banat is the fact that, in contrast with ones of high artistic level exhibited in museums, deliberately selected by collectors and thoroughly studied (but frequently having an unknown origin), they are items of mass production, intended for the middle class.

The author studies several Graeco-Roman funerary masks found at Deir el-Banat and having stylistic similarity with samples that have already been attributed. She describes five funerary masks and cartonnage onlays found by the CES RAS mission.

The paper contains an attempt of dating the masks by using known analogies. Three masks are dated to the end of the 1st century BC — the beginning of the 1st century AD, the fourth one is dated to 332–330 BC and the last one — to the 1st century AD. There are photographs of the finds in the paper.

*Yarmolovich V. I. An unusual storage jar with a face from Deir el-Banat (Fayoum oasis)*²⁵

The author assumes that an unusual fragment of pottery found at the Deir el-Banat necropolis is a shoulder of a vessel. The diameter of this vessel was approximately 55,8 cm. A face — two eyes and a nose — is depicted on its outer surface. They were made with lumps of clay.

The type and function of this vessel are unknown. However, existence of comparable Egyptian vessels allowed the author to reconstruct the jar from Deir el-Banat and to date it to the 8th century AD.

*Ярмолович В. И. Изучение керамики из «монастыря» в Дейр-эль-Банате (Фаяумский оазис, Египет): полевой сезон 2020 г.*²⁶

The article is devoted to studying of pottery found by the CES RAS mission at the necropolis of Deir el-Banat (Fayoum) in 2020. During the season 1640 fragments and complete vessels originating from the territory of a so-called “monastery” were studied. It should be noted that amount of ceramics found there significantly exceeds quantity of pottery originating from the necropolis.

The fragments and vessels found at “the monastery” belonged to tableware, kitchenware, household and transportation pottery. They are produced of local types of clay; imported pottery is much less common.

Transportation pottery, *i. e.* Egyptian amphorae belonging to a type called Late Roman Amphora and dating back to the 5–11th centuries AD is found most frequently; fragments of

²⁴ Фридманн 2015.

²⁵ Yarmolovich 2019.

²⁶ Ярмолович 2021.

big storage vessels are also documented. Their analogies are found at other sites in Fayoum. The pottery found at the Deir el-Banat “monastery” dates back to the 5–10th centuries AD.

History

*Басалова Н. С. Проблема обеспечения жильем воинов птолемеевской армии в эллинистическом Египте*²⁷

The paper deals with a problem of Ptolemaic soldiers’ resettlement in Egypt, including the Fayoum oasis. According to a Macedonian tradition, in the Hellenistic period all mercenary warriors had *cleres* (pieces of land that were granted to them by the king) scattered throughout Egypt.

The author demonstrates that the majority of *cleres* (ranging in size from 1 to 250 ha) that had been handed to soldiers were situated on swampy territories of Fayoum ploughed up during the first Ptolemies. *Cleres* could consist of one or several pieces of land situated at various locations. Processing of land involved considerable expenses, time and efforts of the *clere*’s owner. An economic crisis that took place in the middle of the 2nd century BC led to “villagization” of the Ptolemaic army. The soldiers turned from mobile warriors into *cleruchs*, *i. e.* military settlers.

Documents from the collection of Tebtunis papyri mention that soldiers belonging to different units of the Egyptian army, who had to move from place to place for their service needs used tents for temporary housing. They had to take these tents with them on their journey, because usually there was no permanent housing in places of their temporary deployment in Egypt.

*Крол А. А. «Записки» из церкви архангела Гавриила Дейр эн-Наклун в Фаюме*²⁸

The author considers a modern type of a written source — messages (or notes) written by believers and originating from a Coptic monastery Deir el-Naqlun (Fayoum).

In 1991 monks of the monastery, who carried out some earthworks, found burials containing dead bodies that had come through natural mummification. Local church authorities proclaimed that the monks had unearthed bodies of martyrs and placed them to the monastery church. This event led to these bodies’ veneration by Coptic believers and emergence of the messages. The author does a serious analysis that is aimed to establish historical context of these buried people’s death.

The author dates the messages to 1991, when the bodies were first put on display in the church. The paper contains description of these messages, copies of their texts and their translation into Russian from Arabic.

²⁷ Басалова 2016.

²⁸ Крол 2012.

Krol A. A. The «Disappearing» Copts of Fayūm²⁹ / Крол А. А. «Исчезнувшие» копты-христиане Файйума³⁰

The paper is devoted to decline in population of Fayoum in the 7–13th centuries AD.

The author studies a reference from “The History of Faiyum and its Villages”, written in the 13th century, that there were 1142 grown up male non-muslim taxpayers in the oasis. At the time of the conquest of Egypt by the Arabs the population of Fayoum was 120 thousand. It is not clear how Christian population reduced approximately 70 times in the 13th century.

The paper contains a detailed discussion of three hypotheses as to why the text mentions negligible size of non-muslim population in comparison to preceding periods: islamization of Egypt, natural disasters and “bedouinization” of Fayoum, during which the Copts were probably physically expelled from the land of the province.

The author concludes that number of Christians in Fayoum reduced gradually. Drastic reductions in population took place three times from the 7th to the 13th century: in the period of “Coptic uprisings” (8–9th centuries) and in the beginning of the 9th century, when there was a serious persecution of Christians and Jews. Famine and epidemics that took place in the reign of khalif al-Mustansir had a decisive influence on reduction of Copts living in Fayoum. Probably at that moment Bedouins belonging to two Arabic and one Berber tribe moved to these lands, and their migration was accompanied with looting and violence against inhabitants of Fayoum.

Орехов Р. А. «Гимны диадемам»: к вопросу о времени составления³¹

The paper puts forward the theory that texts known as “Hymns to diadems” (pMoskau 314) and originating from Fayoum were used in course of ceremonies performed in the temple of Sebek in Shedet (Crocopolopolis), the major economic and religious center of Fayoum. They glorified and exalted Sebek of Shedet as the master of gods and men in course of imposition of royal diadems and crowns on his head. Sebek received royal status only during the reign of Amenemhet III (the 12th Dynasty). Prior to this period, he had not stood out and had played a very modest part in the Old Kingdom Fayoum.

The author attributes such change of Sebek’s status to irrigation works in Fayoum that were continued by Amenemhet III and included deepening and broadening of a natural channel leading from the Nile Valley to Fayoum and flowing near Hawara. Moreover, in course of irrigation works marshy areas of the oasis were turned into new arable lands necessary for expanding of agricultural production. At the same time Fayoum was used as a some kind of a water basin to mitigate the damage caused by floods in the part of the Nile Valley situated downstream.

To proclaim an idea of transfer of power over Fayoum and to become Sebek of Shedet, Amenemhet III built a grandiose temple, where the ritual of his coronation (and later those of his descendants) took place. This ritual included liturgical chanting recorded in the Golenischeff’s papyrus. The king received a sacral right to own the land of Fayoum in course of this ritual.

²⁹ Krol 2015.

³⁰ Крол 2016.

³¹ Орехов 2021.

*Поршнев В. П. Садово-парковое искусство птолемеевского Египта*³²

The paper is devoted to innovations in the field of garden art and agricultural technics set by the Ptolemies in Egypt, including Fayoum, to colonize it.

The author makes a hypothesis that Macedonian conquerors found in Egypt an existing system of garden art and improved it to master (above all else) the Fayoum oasis.

Royal gardens of Alexandria, where Mediterranean plants underwent acclimatization, helped developing of the Fayoum oasis and transforming it into the main center of Greek colonization of Egypt. In the middle of the 3rd century BC old channels were cleaned and new ones were dug in Fayoum, dams were built. Lake Moeris, which had dried up, was filled up with water again. Two royal architects — Cleon and Theodorus — managed an irrigation and building project carried out in Fayoum. One of channels dug under Cleon's leadership was named after him.

The author supposes that Archimedes' screw was used in the gardens of Fayoum for the first time due to the scale of the project and its importance for the oasis' development. Fayoum was ahead of other Egypt's regions in terms of plant varieties diversity.

In the reign of Ptolemy III vineyards vegetated in Fayoum, and imported myrrh, fig, apricot and apple trees grew there in abundance. Young plants were brought from Chios, Lydia and Cilicia. There were vast olive plantations in Fayoum, but olives were also planted as ornamental trees.

Preliminary notes

The second part of the survey will discuss studies of the Fayoum oasis written by Russian speaking scholars over the last decade and devoted to physical anthropology, papyrology, and textual criticism, history of architecture, descriptions of museum collections, cultural science and history of everyday life, fine arts and ecology. There also will be a brief review of conference reports devoted to Fayoum and a general conclusion for both parts of this paper.

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³² Поршнев 2017.

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Исследования русскоязычных ученых по тематике, связанной с Файюмским оазисом, за последнее десятилетие (2012–2022 гг.). Часть 1. Археология и история

С. В. Литвиненко

Данная статья представляет собой первую из двух частей обзора научной литературы, посвященной исследованиям Файюмского оазиса, как собственно историческим, так и смежным и естественнонаучным, написанным русскоязычными авторами на протяжении последнего десятилетия (2012–2022 гг.).

В первой части приводятся работы по археологии и истории Файюмского оазиса (включая исследования керамики, текстиля из археологических раскопок, реконструкцию погребальных ритуалов различных периодов истории Египта), в то время как следующая статья — вторая часть этого обзора — будет посвящена исследованиям по антропологии, папирологии, текстологии, истории египетского костюма и текстиля, культурологии, истории повседневности и искусства, экологии Файюма, статьям, в которых содержится описание связанных с Файюмом коллекций российских музеев.

Многие из рассмотренных в настоящем обзоре статей представляют собой первые публикации, а значит, вводят в научный оборот уникальные археологические находки, тексты и исторические памятники.

Ключевые слова: Фаюм (Файюм), Фаюмский оазис, египтология, коптология, история Египта, археология Египта, изучение египетской керамики, птолемеевский Египет, римский Египет, древнеегипетские маски, египетский погребальный обряд.

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