

della città o mostrano un particolare interesse per la sua biblioteca senza tuttavia collegarla al resto del paese); nel secondo invece la città era sinonimo di Egitto (sono soprattutto i poeti di età augustea in occasione delle vicende di Antonio e Cleopatra o gli scrittori dei secoli successivi che identificano la triade Alessandrina di Iside, Serapide e Horo come culto tipicamente egizio); nel terzo infine Alessandria e la cultura Alessandrina divennero un vero e proprio simbolo dell'oriente. Non sempre cronologicamente presente e meno evidente delle precedenti rappresentazioni quest'ultima si manifestò gradualmente e soprattutto a partire dagli ultimi anni della Repubblica: la donazione di Alessandria nel 34 a.C., l'abolizione dei culti Alessandrini sotto Tiberio e il diffondersi del cristianesimo, altra religione 'orientale', segni di una separazione dell'impero sempre più imminente.

Tre i contributi di argomento filosofico: M. EL NASHAAR in lingua araba con un breve riassunto in inglese (*Causality in the Metaphysics of Proclus*, pp. 141-56), C.C. MARCONDES (*La Contribution philosophique de l'École d'Alexandrie. Remarques sur Plotin: l'effroi comme émotion esthétique*, pp. 259-60) e L.SANTORO BRIENZA (*The Originality of Plotinus' Aesthetics*, pp. 339-44).

Segnaliamo infine per l'interesse che questi lavori possono avere per ulteriori studi in campo archeologico i seguenti contributi: A.H.A. EL ATTA, *Herakles of Alexandria. A Comparative Study of the Forms of the Hero throughout the Graeco-Roman Epoch in Alexandria*, pp. 27-39; P.GROSSMANN, *The Triconch of Early Christian Churches of Egypt and their Origines in the Architecture of Classical Rome*, pp. 181-90; Z.KADOUS, *Roman Lampe. An Unpublished Collection in the Graeco-Roman Museum of Alexandria*, pp. 227-40; K.PARLASKA, *Römisch-ägyptische Grabreliefs. Der aktuelle Stand eines Forschungsprojekts*, pp. 265-72.

Del II Convegno si è già detto, il III si terrà invece a Roma nel 1995 e avrà come tema: L'Egitto in Italia dall'epoca classica al medioevo.

Alessandra Bertini-Malgarini
University of Cairo

Alexandri (La "imitatio Alexandri" nel mondo romano, pp.299-304).

Un altro aspetto molto interessante dell'incontro fra l'oriente egizio e l'occidente romano e' quello relativo ai culti egizi a Roma, la cui diffusione e' attestata da numerosi ritrovamenti di materiale archeologico. La difficoltà degli scavi in un'area urbana ad alta densità abitativa rende particolarmente difficile stabilire con esattezza l'ubicazione e le caratteristiche architettoniche di questi luoghi di culto. Le ricerche fino ad ora condotte (C.ALFANO, Problemi archeologici relativi all'identificazione dei luoghi di culto egizio a Roma, pp. 41-46) fanno ipotizzare la presenza di almeno tre templi grandiosi (Campese, Serapeo del Quirinale, Tempio della III Regione) e l'ubicazione di altri templi e santuari fuori del Pomerio, ma sempre nella parte centrale della città. Queste presenze attestano una diffusione non casuale e neppure marginale dei culti egizi fra la popolazione romana anche di classi sociali diverse. Una conferma si ha anche dall'esame delle fonti letterarie (M.CICERONI, Introduzione ed evoluzione dei culti egizi a Roma in età repubblicana. La testimonianza delle fonti letterarie, pp.103-107): accanto al noto passo di Apuleio (Met.xi,30) che fa risalire all'età di Silla la penetrazione di culti egizi a Roma, altri autori attestano una presenza egiziana già nella seconda metà del II sec. a.C. (Diod., Liv., Val. Max., Quint., Plin., etc., oltre alla controversa testimonianza di Ennio nel de divinatione di Cicerone). Localizzabili inizialmente in una zona limitata della città, i culti egizi si sarebbero estesi ulteriormente - e non solo - fra le classi sociali più basse, all'inizio del I sec. Gli dei egizi divennero però in seguito soprattutto simbolo delle classi più povere contrapponendosi ai culti ufficiali. La risposta, i continui decreti di proibizione del Senato romano a partire dal 213 a.C. (Attilio Regolo vieta sacrifici in luogo pubblico o sacro con rito starniero) e fino al 21 a.C.(Augusto attraverso Agrippa relega fuori dal Pomerio i seguaci di Iside).

Il volume, i cui contributi sono ordinati alfabeticamente, si chiude con lo studio di L.A.-W.YEHYA (Alexandria and Rome in Classical Antiquity. A Cultural Approach, pp. 355-64) che ci sembra sia anche il più idoneo a concludere questo nostro cursorio e per forza di cose incompleto resoconto del Convegno. Ad Alessandria - e dunque alla cultura alessandrina - il mondo romano, sostiene lo studioso, si avvicinava in tre modi differenti: nel primo Alessandria veniva considerata un'entità adiacente ma separata dal resto dell'Egitto (e' il caso in cui gli scrittori - da Cicerone ad Ammiano Marcellino - descrivono la bellezza e lo splendore

seduttrice e rovina del valoroso Antonio. Del suo desiderio di potere e di dominio le fonti romane sottolineano soprattutto come Cleopatra fosse disposta a tutto pur di conservare il suo trono e ampliare i suoi possedimenti, anche quello di sedurre i capi romani per averli come alleati. Ma questa rappresentazione di parte, non renderebbe giustizia a Cleopatra, "donna di stato" ed eccellente conoscitrice del suo ruolo nel mondo politico orientale. E infatti esistono fonti di origine non romana e di epoca ellenistica - in forma di oracoli - che presentano Cleopatra come una patriota mandata dalla provvidenza per salvare l'Oriente ellenistico dall'occupazione romana e dalla tirannide imperiale. Anche se queste fonti altro non fossero che la risposta dei Tolomei alla propaganda imperiale romana, prosegue Etman, rafforzano - proprio per la loro provenienza - quell'immagine di Cleopatra che i romani tentarono di manipolare e rivelano l'esistenza in Oriente di un senso di insofferenza contro i Romani e il loro interferire in Egitto. Nei poeti augustei, all'ra voce della propaganda romana e dunque di parte e non molto veritiera, Cleopatra e Antonio sono alle volte guardati con un nascosto desiderio di imitazione (Properzio come Antonio e' pronto a sacrificare la gloria pur di godere dell'amore della sua Cynthia), con paura (Orazio, ma anche autori posteriori quali Plutarco e Dione Cassio, vedono in Cleopatra un incombente pericolo per Roma) e infine di sollievo per la vittoria di Azio (Ovidio e Virgilio).

Una ricostruzione cronologica degli eventi piu' importanti concernenti gli incontri e i viaggi fra Roma e l'Egitto di Giulio Cesare e Cleopatra e' il contributo di A.A. ALY (Cleopatra and Caesar at Alexandria and Rome, pp.47-61) e consente una migliore comprensione storica dell'intera vicenda.

Anche nel teatro romano andrebbero ricercate e approfondite le possibili influenze di origine orientale: analogia con i rituali che si usavano al tempo dei Faraoni nei Versi Fescennini e numerose citazioni che richiamano l'elemento egiziano in alcune trame del teatro plautino (Mostellaria, Mercator, Poenulus), oltre ad una partecipazione del pubblico alla rappresentazione (Menaechmi) molto simile a quella liturgico-teatrale del popolo egiziano. Lo propone M. THOMADAKI (I contributi degli elementi egiziani nel teatro romano, pp. 345-51). Le imprese di Alessandro Magno in Egitto - il condottiero macedone lo libero' dal dominio persiano nel 332 a.C. facendo ritornare l'Egitto a una funzione di potenza equilibratrice nel Mediterraneo - ebbero un riflesso molto interessante soprattutto fra i condottieri e gli imperatori romani favorendo quel fenomeno, diffusamente esaminato da G. PUGLIESE CARRATELLI legato all'imitatio

virgiliano "viridem Aegyptum nigra fecundat harena", al mosaico di Palestrina che corrisponde esattamente all'idea che i romani si erano fatti e avevano del paese: lo scorrere del Nilo, i cocodrilli, gli ippopotami e le palme. Dall'altro l'importanza tangibile dell'Egitto nella vita economica, sociale e culturale romana: grano, spezie e papiri, senza dimenticare il ruolo svolto dall'astronomo Alessandrino Sosigene per la definizione del nuovo calendario ad opera di Giulio Cesare nel 45 a.C. Non si deve però neppure tralasciare, sottolinea Manfredi, l'altro aspetto di questa presenza: la cultura latina in Egitto. I ritrovamenti (soprattutto ad Antinos) di papiri con testi di Terenzio, Giovenale, Cicerone, Virgilio, Lucano, Sallustio, Livio, Ulpiano, Gaio e Cornelio Gallo, testimoniano della necessità di scuole latine in Egitto, un segno di costante attenzione e interesse da parte di Roma. Una serie di abecedari, sillabari, corsi di grammatica latina, esercizi di traduzione, etc. ritrovati in papiri di origine egiziana vengono esaminati da M.H. IBRAHIM (Education of Latin in Roman Egypt in the Light of Papyri, pp. 219-26). Della rappresentazione dell'Egitto negli autori latini si discute anche nel contributo di G. MONACO (Connotazioni dell'Egitto negli autori latini, pp. 261-64). Ripercorrendo alcuni passi di scrittori pagani e cristiani lo studioso individua alcuni elementi dell'Egitto che colpiscono in modo particolare la fantasia degli autori latini: la grandezza e diversità del territorio, il clima torrido, ma fertile, ricco e felice, oltre alla stranezza delle pratiche religiose delle popolazioni locali, che come scrive Giovenale "Quis necit ... qualia demens Aegyptus portenta colat?". Nonostante questi come altri echi e senza dimenticare la grande importanza economica e politica del paese, gli scrittori romani non furono mai molto accurati nella descrizione geografica dell'Egitto e soprattutto della parte desertica occidentale (M.A. IBRAHIM, The Desert of Egypt in the Classical Writings of the Roman Era, pp. 209-17).

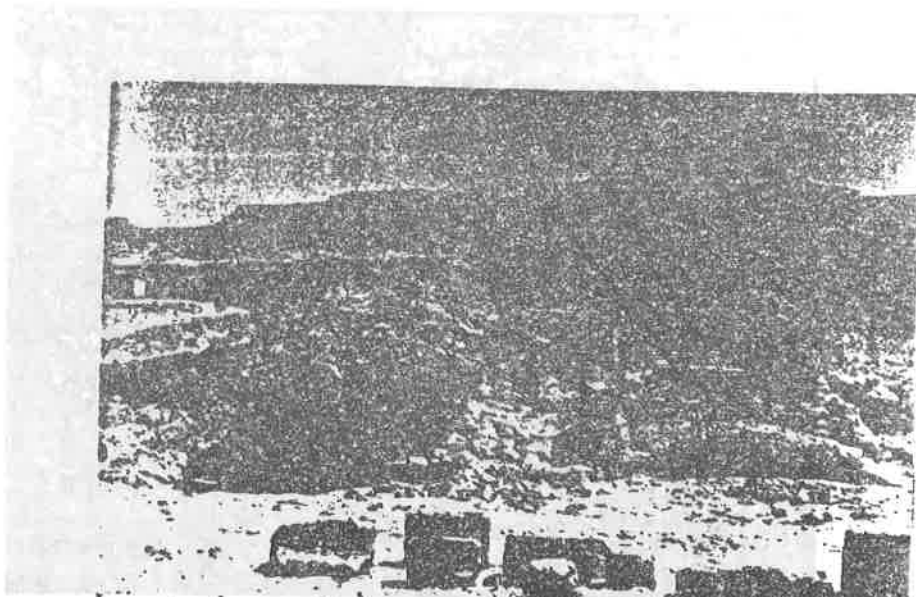
Un incontro particolarmente suggestivo e inquietante per i romani fu senza alcun dubbio quello con Cleopatra, la cui presenza nella poesia latina dell'età augustea viene esaminata da A. ETMAN (Cleopatra and Egypt in the Augustan Poetry, pp. 161-75). Due gli aspetti dominanti nella rappresentazione della personalità di Cleopatra: da un lato il suo edonismo e una prorompente sensualità, dall'altro una smodata ambizione. Il primo aspetto, di estrema popolarità, non è altro, sostiene lo studioso, che una accorta e consapevole esagerazione: Cleopatra era certamente una donna di particolare bellezza, profonda cultura e grande ingegno. E la propaganda imperiale romana non fece altro che servirsi di questi elementi per trasformare Cleopatra in una prostituta,

ROMA E L'EGITTO NELL'ANTICHITA' CLASSICA CAIRO 6-9 Febbraio 1989 (Atti del I Congresso Internazionale Italo-Egiziano). Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato Roma 1992, 384 pp. folio.

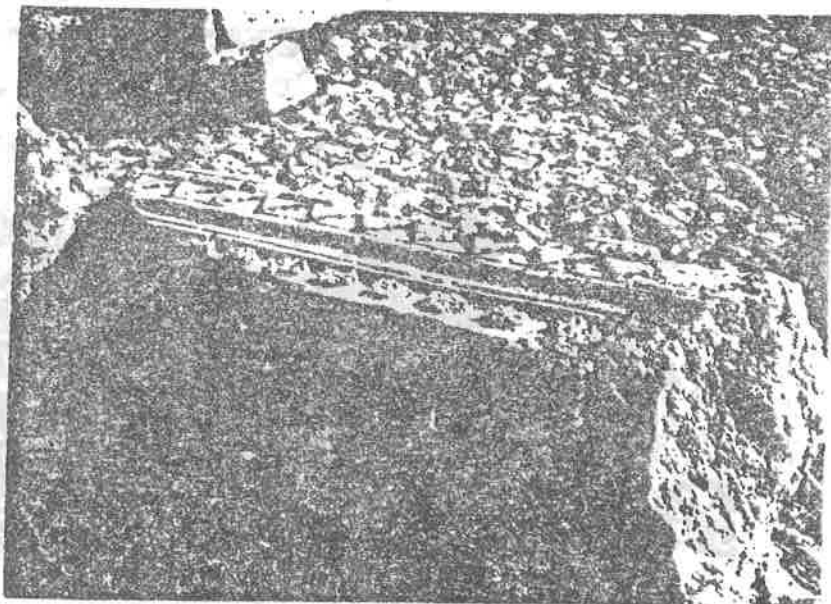
Promosso e organizzato dall'Istituto Italiano di Cultura del Cairo, in collaborazione con la Società Egiziana per gli Studi Greci e Romani e il Dipartimento delle Antichità Classiche dell'Università del Cairo, il I Congresso Internazionale Italo-Egiziano rappresenta un felice esempio della fruttuosa collaborazione a livello internazionale di istituzioni accademiche locali e istituti di cultura italiani. Gli atti, che raccolgono i contributi di una quarantina di studiosi provenienti dall'Italia, dall'Egitto e da altri paesi europei, testimoniano un lavoro e un impegno comune rivolto ad una sempre migliore comprensione di aspetti del mondo classico specifici quanto suggestivi: gli elementi artistici, letterari, religiosi, sociali, filosofici - e non solo - egizi a Roma e romani in Egitto. Il volume può leggersi anche come una vera e propria monografia dedicata al continuo reciproco specchiarsi e confrontarsi di questi due paesi: da una parte Roma e l'occidente, dall'altra l'Egitto - un paese che nella storia della cultura del Mediterraneo ha rappresentato e continua a rappresentare il "meeting point of three continents, Asia, Africa and Europe", come giustamente ricorda M.M.AMAN nel suo contributo sulla "ricostruzione" della biblioteca di Alessandria (The New Bibliotheca Alexandrina. A Link in the Historical Chain of Cultural Continuity, pp. 63-68)¹. Dal momento che è impossibile in questa sede ricordare tutti i temi trattati nel congresso ci soffermeremo solo su alcuni degli aspetti di questo millenario incontro.

M.MANFREDI nel suo intervento di apertura (The Influence of Egypt in the Literary Field, pp. 253-58) partendo proprio dalle domande "what kind of country was Egypt for the Romans" e "what is the true significance of Egypt to Republican and Imperial Rome" segnala alcuni degli elementi più significativi di questa presenza dell'Egitto a Roma. Da un lato le suggestive immagini artistico-letterarie: dal

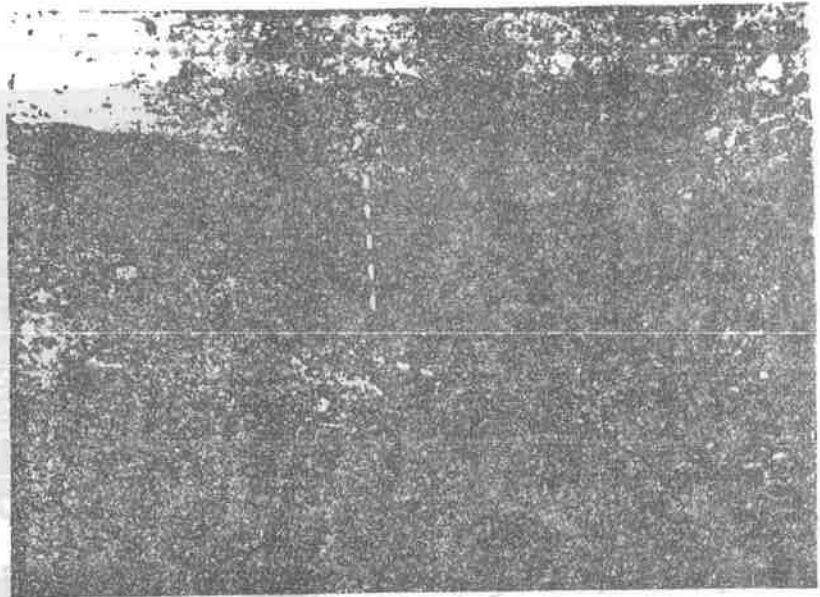
1. Alexandria and Hellenistic-Roman World è stato il tema del II Congresso, tenuto ad Alessandria e Cairo nel novembre del 1992 in occasione del primo centenario della fondazione del Museo greco-romano (la pubblicazione degli Atti è prevista per il 1993).



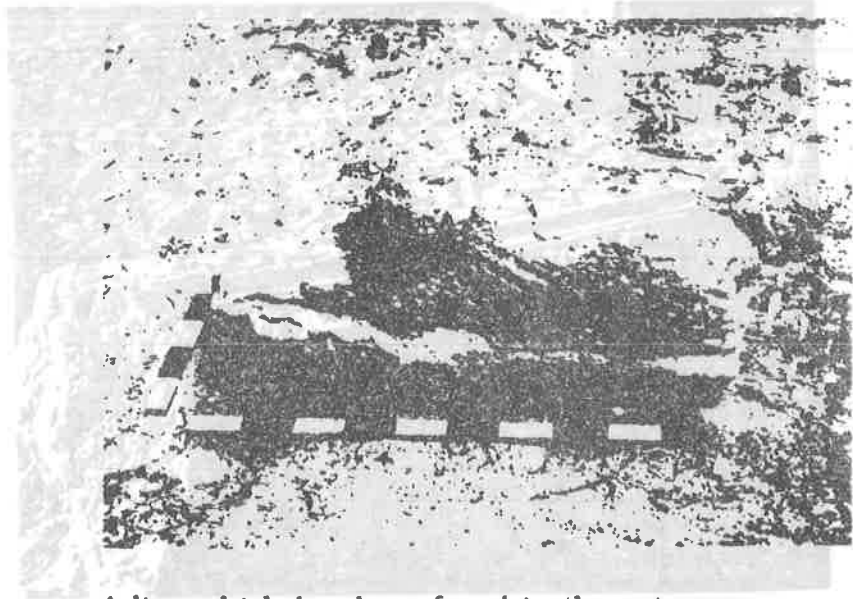
The entrance of the tomb with the shrine room on the right hand. In the depth at the top of the tumulus is a tomb - temple can be seen. Excavations 1989.



The metope of the adytum of the temple with rosettes and oak leaves. Excavations 1989.



A part of the corridor's wall from the Western side, the pseudoisodomo system can be distinguished, Excavations 1989.



A lion which has been found in the entrance of the corridor of the tomb. Excavations 1989.

Siwan language and it means the territory around the tomb where construction was not permitted because it belonged to the dead man.

Today Siwans with this word mean a special place which belongs to a certain man, a place without any constructions.

The voice of the Oracle of Amun stopped many centuries ago, but the presence of Amun is still there.

The voice of Alexander the Great has stopped too, but his memory remained alive in the hearts of people.

For 2314 years the secret of his tomb remained in silence well hidden by the sand in the desert of Amun to the moment that in December 1991 the Greek - Mission revealed the secret and the truth was lighted that really Alexander was buried according to his will, desire and wish near Amun in El - Maraqui in Siwa Oasis.

The discovery of the tomb of Alexander the Great in El Maraqi Siwa Oasis is for me very important concerning the fact that the ancient writers were right when were mentioning that Alexander had the desire and wish not to be buried in Greece, Babylon, Memphis, Alexandria but only near the land of Amun, in the Western Desert where his tomb is located now.

The tomb of Alexander the Great is located in the west far from the lakes in an area of unique beauty full of legends about him ; in an area where Amun and Alexander were still worshipped as Gods even in 600 A.D.

The name of El - Maraqi it is not arabic or in siwan language but it comes from the Greek word MEIRAKION and this is ninth proof dealing with the location of the tomb. This word through the centuries lost its correct pronunciation and it is now pronounced as El - Maraqi. It has two meanings but both of them lead to the same conclusion.

The first meaning was "a young man" who has lost his life early ; Alexander the Great was still young when he died and his fame remained alive in the heart of the people from all the nations he conquered till now. So, it means the place where a young man dead and buried.

Also this word as a second meaning means the slave, but here it means the man who is already in the hands of God as his own slave (doulos) in Greek Alexander after his death became the slave of God Amun at last with the meaning that he was in the possession of the God not in the possession of his generals and successors. The ideal solution for them to stop quarreling for the legacy of the succession

So El - Maraqi from Meirakion it means the man who as dead is under the possession and protection of the God. I think that this second meaning is the most suitable for Alexander the Great and the name of the place where his tomb is.

The tenth proof is the word TOPOS a Greek word still existing in the

This star was the emblem of Alexander the Great and nobody had the right to use it. So after his death, his successors had other emblems, not even his successors in Macedonia Greece.

This star has a symbolic meaning and it means the sacred connection with the divine, the God Zeus. We all know the divine origin and connection of Alexander the Great with Zeus and Amun.

Further study and research revealed to me that Diodorus describing the catafalque of Alexander he says that the emblem of the star was c.a the wheels of this catafalque.

Also, there is a very valuable fragment and I think unique in the whole world, a fragment of a vase which present Alexander as Kosmokrator and on his head you can see the star. This piece is in the Museum cinquantenaire de la Brussels no A , 1938 from Amnisos in Pontus, probably 2 nd century B.C.

So, after that there is not any doubt that this tomb which was discovered by the Greek - Mission is the tomb of Alexander the Great.

I think it is time to hear the words of two ancient writers first Callisthenes a relative of Aristotle who accompanied Alexander in Asia and later in Egypt and speaks about the will of Alexander .

"Ptolemy will be the guard of my body and he must take care of it and he knows what to do, because we agreed about it "privately". And we know from Callisthenes that Alexander had expressed his wish to be buried in Siwa.

Also Arrian of Nicomedia (2 nd C. A.D) who wrote on account of Alexander's expedition in 7 books and was based on two writers Ptolemy the founder of Ptolemaic dynasty and Aristobulus of Cassandra, both of them contemporaries of Alexander and regarded by Arrian as trustworthy sources, he says : " The council of Generals in Babylon had directed that the body of Alexander should be set on a magnificent catafalque and brought to the oasis of Amun, there to be laid to rest".

In the tomb of king Philip the archeologists discovered the diadem of Macedonian kings Philip and his son Alexander. This diadem is a wreath from oak leaves and it is now in the Archeological Museum in Thessalonike, n. 17. Its inside diametre is 185 m (7/11).

Also when Diodorus speaks about the magnificent catafalque which was carrying the dead body of Alexander, he says that such a wreath was placed on the roof of the catafalque which was the royal diadem of Alexander.

This decoration with the rosettes and oak - leaves was the seventh proof that this tomb was connected with a very important person, king hero and demigod probably this person was Alexander the Great.

After that we had to remove the debris and the sand from the interior of the tomb which had also three chambers. The first chamber had a floor covered with big slabs and it had also false - crypts covered by sand. In the second room the same was continued, so that to be sure that this was done on purpose to avoid future thieves to reach the real crypts. In the third room we found blocks fallen from the temple maybe from the adytum, so we left everything untouched because we had not time to continue as it was so near the end of the permission.

But digging in the tomb we were lucky at the last days of the digging to discover the most important proof in order to identify the owner of this tomb. We had in front of us the eighth proof the "key" for whom this impressive and magnificent tomb had been built.

There fallen, inside the debris in front of the entrance of the first chamber of the tomb was a stone piece decorated with the EMBLEM OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT the STAR WITH THE 8 RAYS the star of Vergina which is in the tomb of king - Philip, which is also engraved on the golden larnax of king Philip, the royal Emblem of Alexander the Great and his family, for him and his father!!.

(Thrigos) such as a wonderful cornice with decoration of flowers and plant, that is rosettes (Rodakes) and a plant which reminds the leaf of a oak - tree or present the tree itself. This cornice had fallen from the top of the adytum.

From this very moment we started to think about the person who had been buried inside, because of these emblems the rosettes and the oak leaf. The rosettes are engraved in the cornice which has length 1.26 m the height of the decoration is 0.29 cm. And the diametre of the rosette 0.5 cm.

These rosettes are also is the golden lamax which was discovered in the tomb of king Philip the father of Alexander the Great.

The oak - tree is another symbol connected with Alexander the Great only. In the tomb of Philip there is a painting presenting a hunting scene. In the center of the composition is a young rider with a spear in his right hand and a wreath in his hair. His pose is that of Alexander in the well known mosaic from Pompei in the Naples Museum. A "leafless tree" frames the center of the figure. This tree is an oak - tree and is connected with the figure of Alexander the Great and it has a symbolic meaning connected only with him.

This meaning has to do with the divine power of Zeus as it comes from the oracle of Dodone the oldest oracle in Greece which is connected also with the Oracle of Amun. Alexander from his mother's side was initiated to the mysteries of the Oracle which had its Sacred Symbol the Oak - tree. Why this oak - leaf in El Maraqi has been put in this tomb ? Is it possible to be a connection with Alexander? These questions had started to make our minds think and think more and more. In the area and in the whole Egypt there is not such a tree. Why then there is the Oak - leaf in the decoration of the tomb ?

Further study gave to us two more evidences about the oak - leaf and Alexander.

Classical and Hellenistic period for mysterious ceremonies. They used to put in the small holes different kind of grains (Panspermia). There were also kernoi as votives in case that their holes were not deep. This kernos from the tomb El - Maraqui seems to be a votive one and it is made of sand - stone.

The Amphoras is another evidence that the tomb was for an important and rich person. The Amphoras characterise rich tombs and royal tombs. Usually they were full of wine and oil, two necessary elements for an important dead according to the Greek burial customs.

Greeks used to make libations to the deads pouring wine, or in some cases wine mixed with water (kekramenos oinos) and pour it to the special pit I mentioned before. If the wine was solid this libation was with (akratos oinos).

Also we discovered in the corridor a small solid clay vase for incenses and a basin broken too, for water in order the priest clean his hands before and after a ceremony. This basin has the following dimensions : length 0.52, wigth 0.32, height 0.22 and depth 0.15. In Greek this basin is called (Gourma).

The sixth proof that we had a very important royal tomb in front of us was what we saw removing the big blocks that had fallen from the doric temple which was built once on the top of the tumulus. This temple itself shows to us that this tomb was dedicated to a very important person, king, hero and demigod, because funerary temples are built only for very important persons in their tombs.

This temple was like a "HEROON" in Greek and it means a monument in which there is a worship of a hero or demigod. This temple was consisted of a porch, cella and adytum raised upon a soiled base and was destroyed from earthquakes or other reasons. This temple contained the burial chamber.

Removing the blocks we found pieces coming from the entablature

Also the decorated pieces and the colours we found in some of them are the colours we see in Macedonia tombs like white, sky - blue , deep red and in our case this tomb even in its smaller details expresses the Harmony and Beauty of the magnificence of the Hellenistic Architecture and Art of the Greek Spirit and civilization of Hellenistic Period.

This tomb it is unique; is typical Greek and has nothing to do, not even to be compared with Pharaonic or Ptolemaic monuments. It is unique in the whole Egypt and Greece.

During 1991 this feeling was completed by the fact that the dimensions of this tomb are really magnificent because the length of the tomb from the exterior is around 51 meters and its width about 10.25 meters from one corner to the other. And I can say that it is the biggest tomb ever found either in Greece or in Egypt. As you see such a tomb can only be for a very important person, a king, hero and demigod.

The fourth proof that we had in front of us a royal tomb of a very important person was the round pit (hole) for liquid offerings which was discovered in the end of the corridor on the right side which has a depth of 0.75 cm. The existence of this hole is undoubtedly a very important evidence because this kind of a pit was for special liquid libations that the priest had to do when the dead was an important person : king, hero, or demigod.

All the other offerings we discovered inside the tomb, except of the bones of small animals like goats, sheep, gazelles and small birds, ashes, broken glass from different kind of vases, coins fully destroyed from salt and damp are the fifth proof that this tomb was for a very important dead who was a king hero and demigod and I mean the discovery of a special offering item which is called Kernos and big pieces (broken) of clay coming from Amphoras.

The kernos is a special pottery which was used in tombs during

lion is placed on the tomb, this tomb belongs for sure to a hero or demigod because then the lion is especially selected as an emblem of valour and force. This we see clearly from the epigram of Simonides on the marble lion which was commemorated the valour of Leonides at Thermopylae.

" Θηρῶν μὲν καρτίστος ἐγὼ , θνατῶν δὲ ὅν ἐγὼ νῦν φρουρῶ τῆς
τῶν λατῶν ἐμβεβαῶς "

"I am from the wild beasts the most brave as the dead man here is the most brave from all the mortals".

Of course it is also true that lions occur as a marked feature in the design both of Hellenic and Etruscan tombs. In many cases the simple idea of custody may be sufficient to explain the impact of this symbol. But the testimony of the ancients themselves as the motive which led them to adopt the lion as the epithema of very important tombs as in our case is so distinctly given, i.e. there is any need to seek for a less obvious explanation of this symbol by connecting it with local myths of any individual city. From these lions the first is a little bit damaged by salt and its dimensions are length 1.67, wide 0.7 cm and height 0.26 cm. From the second only the base is saved in which you can see the two front legs of the lion.

Before ending this period of digging in 1989, we had from the excavated part of the building the third proof from the dimensions only that we had in front of us it seems a very impressive tomb having length around 30 to 35 meters and width in its facade around 7 meters. This was the proof that this tomb was of Macedonian type having all the elements of it, that is very long in the length very narrow in the width like the similar tombs in Macedonia of Greece, but this one is more big than the biggest tomb in Macedonia Greece which is a royal one and it is named the tomb of Kounos or Pidna and has the following dimensions; length 15 meters and width 2 meters.

The Tomb of Alexander the Great

in El Maraqi, Siwa Oasis

LIANA SOVALTZI

For the first time in the history of the area the Geek Mission of the institute of Hellenistic studies, started excavations in 1989 in El Maraqi.

Every thing was covered by sand and only on the top of a tumulus some blocks in ruins were scattered around from a temple which was standing once at the top and was named by some travellers as the Doric temple (Rolph, Calliand in 1919.).

We started digging from the south and removing the sand we discovered the entrance and the walls of a long corridor which was built with the pseud-isodomic masonry of the 3rd century B.C.

From this very moment I was sure that we had in front of us a tomb. Continuing to remove the sand we discovered very beautiful architectural pieces like cornice, metope, triglyph from the frieze, Abacus, Gattoe, etc. And finally we discovered a room in the right side of the entrance having the entrance from inside in the following dimensions length 3,85, width 1,43. height of the northern wall 1. 68 and the opening of its own door 0.58.

This was a shrine room without any doubt, and it was the first proof that we had in front of us a special tomb which was built for an important person, because such a room inside a tomb is only built for a person who had acquired the status of a hero or demigod at least.

Before the end of the first week in 1989 we had the second proof that this tomb was not only for an important person but a royal one because we discovered two lions made of sand stone. These lions were lying down and maybe had fallen from the roof of the entrance or from the stairs of the entrance. It is clear from the evidence of the ancient literature, that when the