

VII.—GRECO-ROMAN SITE FINDS FROM THE LIBYAN DESERT.

BY J. H. CORBITT.

The site finds which are here reported were brought to my attention by the late Mr. Davis, Curator of the Museum of Science and Engineering, Newcastle upon Tyne, and were discovered by him in the Libyan Desert south of Cairo.

Site. The actual site where the coins were excavated is about six miles west of Miniah, and they were found during the construction of a light railway from Miniah to the Baharieh Oasis during the 1914-18 War. According to the Department of Egyptian Antiquities at the British Museum, the "Topographical Bibliography" of Porter and Moss mentions no site which lies within the required distance from Miniah, and I am also advised by the Director General of the Egyptian Antiquities Service in Cairo, that, after considerable enquiry, he is unable to find out anything about a settlement in that area. Mr. Davis was of the opinion that, the excavation being part of a military undertaking in war-time, the Antiquities Authority were not informed at the time with the result that the "find" was lost sight of.

It would appear, therefore, that this is an unrecorded site; hence the necessity of ensuring that these finds are placed on permanent record.

Coins. The coins do not call for any particular comment. They range from a piece of Ptolemy III—246-221 B.C.—to a single coin of Justin II and one of Heraclius, apart from four illegible (but possibly Mamluk) pieces.

In all there are 29 coins, of which 20 are Roman Imperial, 9 of them from the mint of Alexandria. A complete list is appended to this report.

Other finds. Associated with the coins were two earthenware lamps and another object, on which a full report has been prepared by Dr. David Smith of King's College, University of Durham, and is also appended to this report.

The only other object found, a little further west than the actual site, was a large sea-shell, fossilized, about $3\frac{1}{4}'' \times 2\frac{1}{2}'' \times 2''$, identified by the King's College Geological Department as belonging to the Cretaceous period, dating the period when the desert was a sea floor.

LIST OF COINS FOUND.

PTOLEMAIC.

1. Ptolemy III. Head of Zeus r. horned, border of dots.
Eagle stdg. l. on thunderbolt, wings closed,
border of dots. Symbol between legs.
2. Ptolemy IV. as above.
Hunter Cat. p. 379.
3. Illegible Ptolemaic.

ROMAN IMPERIAL.

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| 4. | Hadrian. AE. Drachm. | Year 12. | Milne 1264. |
| 5. | Tacitus. Bil. Tetradr. | Year 1. | Milne 4499. |
| 6. | Probus. Tetradr. | Year 4. | Milne 4586. |
| 7. | Probus. Antoninianus. | RIC 499. | |
| 8. | Maximianus. Antoninianus. | Cohen 51. | Alexandria. |
| 9. | similar. | | |
| 10. | Severus II. Antoninianus. | Cohen 8. | Alexandria. |
| 11. | Maximinus II. Antoninianus. | Cohen 9. | |
| 12. | Licinius I. Ae. | Cohen 110. | Antioch. |
| 13. | Licinius I. Ae. | Cohen 112. | Treveri. |
| 14. | Constantine I. Ae. | Cohen 299. | |
| 15. | Constantius II. Ae. | Cohen 44. | Nicomedia. |
| 16-17. | Constantius II. Ae. | Cohen 98. | Antioch (2). |
| 18. | Constantius II. Ae. | Cohen 101. | Treveri. |
| 19. | Constantius Gallus. Ae. | Cohen 17 | Alexandria. |
| 20. | Theodosius I. Ae. | RIC 18b. | Alexandria. |
| 21-22. | Two illegible Roman. | | |
| 23. | One illegible Roman tetradrachm. | | Alexandria. |

REPORT ON THE ASSOCIATED OBJECTS.

BY DAVID SMITH.

1. Oval lamp moulded in the likeness of a Satyr's face. No handle. Wick-hole in the chin. Flat base with palm-leaf stamp. Grey fabric, unglazed.
Length $3\frac{1}{8}$ " , width $2\frac{1}{4}$ " , depth (or height) $2\frac{1}{8}$ " .
Probably made in Egypt in the Hellenistic period.
2. Circular lamp with unpierced handle and blunt nozzle. Depressed top decorated in relief with a male figure, head to right, arms raised aloft, between two filling-holes, and flanked by two (?) lions. Reddish brown fabric, perhaps originally glazed. Diam.: $2\frac{7}{16}$ " .
Perhaps made in Egypt. Probably second century A.D.: Cf. B.M. Catalogue of Lamps, sec. 7, Roman Lamps, *passim*.
3. Approximately hemispherical object moulded on the convex side in the form of a female face, the back hollow and provided with a handle. Reddish-brown terracotta, unglazed. Diam. $2\frac{1}{4}$ " , depth overall excluding handle $1\frac{3}{8}$ " , including handle 2" .
Date and origin uncertain, but probably made in Egypt in the Roman period.

The purpose of the object is also uncertain. Professor Richmond suggests that it may be an oscillum, an object in the form of a human face made to be suspended from a tree and believed to induce fertility in the surrounding earth. My own opinion is that it is too small to be an oscillum, and would differ from known examples of oscilla in the manner of its suspension. I wonder whether it was a die for making moulds in the pottery industry. The products of the moulds would be applied as ornament to vessels before they were fired. But I am far from sure of this explanation.

