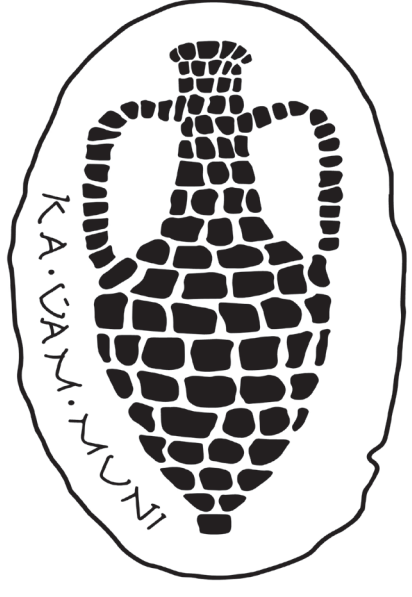




# ARSW and its Importance for Dating of Late Roman Contexts in the al-Hayz Oasis, Bahariya, Western Desert, Egypt



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The Roman settlement of Bir Showish is located in Al-Hayz, part of the Bahariya Oasis, close to the village of Gharbeja, and it's situated on the bottom of a large fossil lake. The time span of the settlement stretches between the 2nd and the 6th century AD. The dating is based on the results of prospection which, among other materials, revealed chronologically sensitive African Red Slip Ware (ARSW) and transport amphorae, the latter showing the peak of the settlement during the late Roman period, i.e. between the 4th and the 6th century AD. Inhabitants of the oasis were interconnected with other parts of the Roman world. Presented pottery (as well as other findings) clearly point to interconnectedness of late Roman world, especially North African provinces and Al-Hayz oasis.

**Al-Ris Fortress** -- In cemeteries, fragments of ARSW were found (3rd – early 4th c. AD; bowls and plates of the type Hayes F 43, 51), in “governor’s palace” area – 3 fragments of ARSW, open-shaped bowls and plates of type Hayes F 43, F 5, or 51 (3rd or the first half of the 4th c. AD; Hayes 1997, 59–64), and inside the fortress of Al-Ris: two fragments of the ARSW, a fragment of the wall and parts of the rim of a low plate, decorated by carved circles (3rd or 4th c. AD); palmetto roulettes (late 4th or the early 5th c. AD). As indicated by the surface pottery survey, the fortress and the “palace” existed simultaneously; the Red Slip Ware pottery dates the locations mainly to the 3rd or 4th century AD. Both the palace and the fortress were abandoned in the first half of the 5th century AD.

**Bir Ain Naga** -- ARSW fragments – just like in the Al-Ris fortress, they also were flat and date back to 4th century.

**Qasr Masouda** (centenarium) -- No African Red Slip Ware were found; the luxurious category is only represented by a few fragments of red listered pottery (with light yellow shards). The assessed pottery fragments can be mainly dated to the 2nd–4th c. AD.

**Ain Gomma** -- The prospection of the buildings provided three fragments of the ARSW. One of the fragments of the rim of a flat bowl, with a chute on the leaflike rim, belongs to the type Hayes F 60, or F 67, which can be dated to the period 350–400, or 360–470 AD.

**Tahuna** -- There are mainly fragments of the late Roman or Byzantine pottery and glass, such as the fragment of African Red Slip Ware, a bottom of a flat bowl/plate from the 4th–5th c. AD.

## Bir Shawish

**House 1** -- A modest assemblage of documented shards included a fragment of ARSW Hayes F 60 (period 350–400 AD).

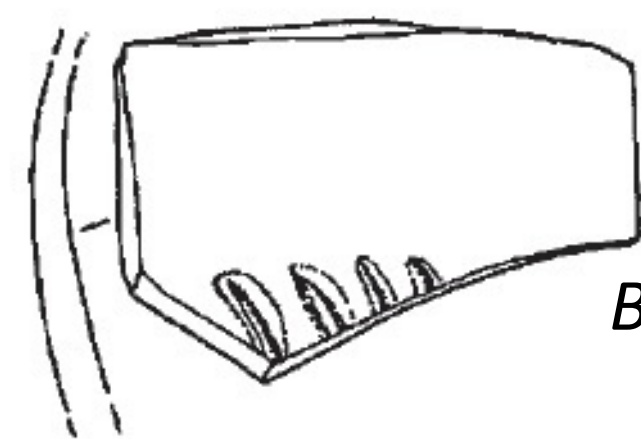
**House 2** -- Several fragments ornamented by rouletting, eventually flat plates originating by shape from ARSW (5th to the first half of the 6th c. AD).

**House 3** -- The largest group of pottery production consists of the fragments of clay vessels; their number is 8656. The most frequent shapes include transport and table amphorae,

ovoid vessels with cylindrical neck (gara), globular water containers, bowls, gutti and cooking vessels. In the rooms 1 and 8, a set of fragments of the ARSW bowl was documented – type Hayes F 65 (2nd half of the 4th c. or the early 5th c. AD; 86 and 87/BS/07);

bowls and plates (often imitating the better imported ARSW). Other contexts: pieces of good-quality Red Slip Ware, imported from Tripolitana, in addition to the shapes Hayes F 65; they include bowls of the same age, with different profile of the rim.

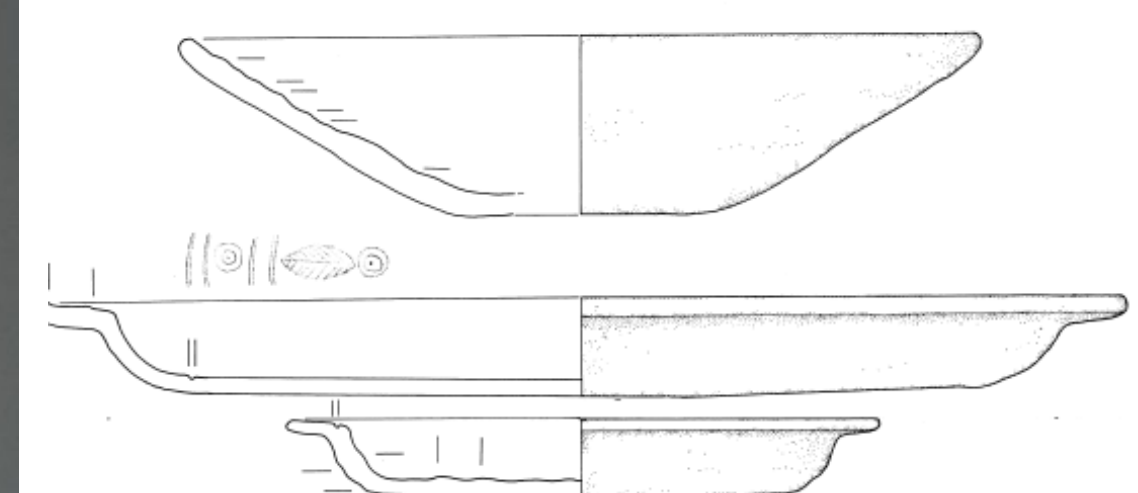
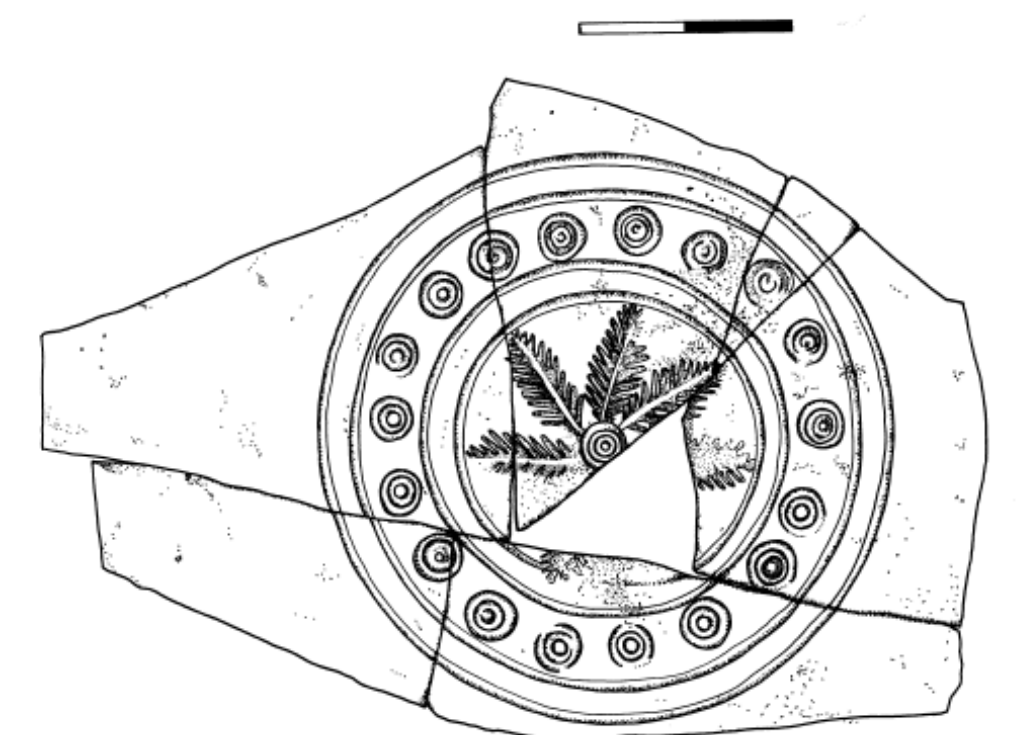
Present are also ARSW bowls of type Hayes F 59 (320 to 380/400 AD), Hayes F 67, then Hayes F 45, 59, 67 (Bonifay sigillée Type 41), F 78, 91 (Bonifay sigillée type 91 A), which can also be dated from the 2nd half of the 4th to the 6th century AD. Local pottery is also often included in the pottery collection. High number of cases within ceramics collection also holds local pieces – especially utility amphorae with ringed foot, cups, gutti, terracota lamps. Collection is further supplemented by ovoid bowels with narrow neck (gara – costrel), cullenders and terracota fumigators.



Bir Ain Naga



Bir Showish, finds of ARSW from House 3



ARSW, No.	Room, context	Hayes / Bonifay – Form	Dating
28/BS/05	Room 16, cont. 02	F 59	320–380/400 AD
72/BS/07	Room 11, cont. 03	F 59	320–380/400 AD
86/BS/07–1	Room 1, cont. 01	F 67	360–470 AD
86/BS/07–2	Room 1, cont. 01	F 67	360–470 AD
87/BS/07	Room 8, cont. 01	F 59 A	320–380/400 AD
96/BS/07	Room 11, cont. 04	F 91 A, sigillée type 49	400–450 AD
175/BS/07	Room 12, cont. 06	F 67, sigillée type 41	360–470 AD
BS/07	Room 14, cont. 02	F 91 A, sigillée type 49	400–450 AD
BS/07	Room 1, cont. 01	F 67	360–470 AD
BS/07	Room 12, cont. 06	F 45 C	mid 4 <sup>th</sup> century
BS/07	Room 8, cont. 01	F 78 (?)	probably 5 <sup>th</sup> century
BS/07	Room 12, cont. 06	F 59	320–380/400 AD
BS/07	Room 7, cont. 01	F 67 (?), sigillée type 41	360–470 AD
BS/07	Room 12, cont. 06	F 59	320–380/400 AD

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