

MINOAN, CANAANITE, PHOENICIAN MARITIME CULTURES
ON THE SHORES OF THE WEST NILE DELTA:
A BREAKING ARCHAEOLOGICAL STATEMENT

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ABSTRACT

In this new maritime study, the author, Serge R. Collet, following those led on the Phoenician sea oriented culture in the nineties and the much more archaeological recent one on the Minoan presence nearby the Cape skyllaion in South Tyrrhenian sea, reports his findings from the coastal margin of the West Nile delta: Alexandria shores and southern Maryut Lake.

In spite of a heavy and disturbed social context in 2011-2012, he surveyed still accessible stretches of the shores and lake banks, bringing to light amazing ceramics evidence for imported Minoan, Canaanite, Phoenician and Sea People vessel. This ceramics is related to three type of maritime installations: a true marine cult place, a quay and a harbour basin holed in the Kurkar ridge on the south bank of Maryut Lake.

To understand fully the reason why of the existence of such maritime structures it is necessary to deepen the notion of «sea orientation» by including the coastal environmental determinations as well as those bound to an imaginary of the sea, to a positive valuation of the sea as entity. The sea and marine environment remain essentially extraneous to the Nile culture.

These new findings and breaking considerations lead the author to a re-evaluation of the completely forgotten discovery of impressive submersed harbour installations at the west of the Homeric Pharos Island by the French maritime engineer Gaston Jondet and their accurate re-examination by Sir A. Evans, who argues for a Minoan origin. They inaugurated in some way the maritime archaeological researches so well developed since the eighties by Avner Raban at the Leon Recanati Institute for Maritime studies, he founded at the University of Haifa. Avner Raban is deceased in February 2004. This contribution is devoted to his memory.