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Roman, Islamic Ruins Unearthed By Polish Team

Alexandria, United Arab Republic—(AP)—Excavators are digging their way into the ancient city of Alexandria the Great.

Prof. Kazimierz Michalowsky, chief of the Polish Center for Mediterranean Archaeology, has announced important archaeological discoveries in the Kom El-Dik area in the center of Alexandria, dating from the 1st to 16th Centuries. "The excavations," he said, "will continue to the Ptolemaic strata dating to the dynasty that reigned in Egypt immediately following the death of Alexander the Great."

Michalowsky emphasized that his current excavations are by no means an attempt to discover the tomb of Alexander the Great.

Historians believe Alexander the Great died at Ctesiphon, near the present day Baghdad, and some say he probably was buried in Alexandria.

"I think," said Michalowsky, "the tomb of Alexander the Great is in Alexandria. The mausoleum of Alexander was built in the early days of the Ptolemaic city, and it would be much nearer the harbor where the royal palace and the mausoleums of other kings were built."

"We have some pictures of ancient mosaics showing the Alexandria harbor and the Pharos (the lighthouse), and in one of them you can see the mausoleums of Ptolemies and Cleopatra close to the harbor."

Kom El-Dik is a hill which is now being leveled by the Alexandria municipality. The Egyptian Antiquities Department has entrusted the Polish mission with the task of excavating the area.

Michalowsky said that preliminary excavations brought into light two cemeteries, one dating from the 15th to the 16th Century and one from the 10th to the 11th Century. "Digging deeper," he said, "we found military walls and fortifications built in the Islamic period—from the 8th to the 9th Century."

"When we reached the depth of 10 meters (32 feet) we found three vaulted chambers of a huge stone buildings belonging to the end of the 7th Century and the beginning of the 8th Century—the transitional period between Byzantine and the Moslem rule. These are the first discoveries of this period."

"The three vaulted chambers are well preserved, but there must be a lot more. We have excavated only part of this huge building. Inside there are empty water channels."

"Next to this Islamic building with vaulted chambers we found the remains of Roman public baths of the 1st Century A.D. made of bricks, plaster and mosaics, stucco painted. All these are fine specimens of Roman art."

The archaeologist said that so far his mission has opened an area of 160 square meters (1,722 square feet) to a depth of 10 meters. "We still have five-and-a-half meters (18 feet) to reach sea level; so we still hope to find some Ptolemaic buildings. We have not yet arrived at the Ptolemaic strata."

Four Meters
"Alexander the Great's city was built approximately four meters (13 feet) above sea level."

"We cannot destroy the Roman baths. We will continue excavating further away and deeper to find the Ptolemaic strata."

Michalowsky emphasized that never before have such systematic excavations been made in Alexandria, once the world center of culture and education.

"Egyptian history is the common past of our civilization," Michalowsky said. "When our work is completed, tourists will be able to see the strata of Alexandrian civilization from the present day to the Ptolemaic period."

Electronic Nerve Cell To Be Built

Falls Church, Va. (Science Service)—An electronic nerve cell with the power to simulate elementary "thinking" will be built by Melpar, Inc., here.

The nerve cell, called ARTRON for artificial neuron, will "learn," as in animal studies, from reward and punishment signals. When it comes up with the right answer, it will receive reward signals; the wrong answer will bring a punishment signal.

In time the machine will make its own decisions. The nerve cell, which will be built under contract with the U.S. Air Force, may be the forerunner of "thinking machines" for weather prediction or unmanned space vehicles.

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