



The Rundle Foundation for Egyptian Archaeology

NEWSLETTER No. 13

MAY 1984



A decorated tomb recently discovered at Saqqara

REPORT ON THE SAQQARA EXCAVATIONS

After the initial investigation at Saqqara carried out in January-February 1983, short seasons were conducted from mid-August to the end of September 1983 and from mid-January to the end of February 1984. The result was the discovery of nine new tombs to the north-west of the Pyramid of Teti and the mastaba of Mereruka. All the uncovered tombs were built with mud-brick and partly cased with stone which was decorated in relief. The status of the tomb owners varied, but was mostly of the middle-class officials who held relatively moderate rank titles in addition to their various responsibilities in the palace and temples. Some were scribes, other physicians and many were in charge of some duties in the palace, or responsible for the personal protection of the king.

Excavations in this area started in 1943 by Zaki Saad, from the Egyptian Department of Antiquities, who decided, after his initial

assessment of the cemetery, not to proceed with the dig. Certainly many other sites in Egypt have yielded more spectacular tombs built with stone and richly decorated in magnificent relief. As a result our cemetery remained, so far, unexcavated. However, for the historian, a short inscription placed in the most humble tomb, could be more valuable and informative than the long stereotyped, self-laudatory texts usually found in the tombs of high officials.

The tombs of Semdent, Tjetetu, Iri and Mehi discovered by our expedition contained a great deal of information on the unsettled, and hitherto poorly documented, period of the early VIth Dynasty. We know from previously discovered sources, that King Teti, founder of the VIth Dynasty, was assassinated, that the throne was usurped by Userkare, then regained by Teti's son, Pepy I, against whom a number of conspiracies were organised. But there were many gaps in our knowledge of this period and the newly discovered tombs go far towards filling in many of these gaps.

These Old Kingdom tombs were buried through the years under a mound of sand and debris and the cemetery was later re-used during the XVIIth Dynasty, once more by minor officials. Many of the XVIIIth Dynasty tombs were found untouched and, although poor, they produced a large number of small gold objects, alabaster cosmetic jars, imported perfume vessels and a great deal of pottery, some of which is of rare shape and design.

Soon after the excavation began the Egyptian Department of Antiquities realised its importance and, wishing to participate, sent Dr Ali el-Khouli, Director-General of Antiquities in Middle Egypt, to work with us, making our task easier in many respects.

A full report of the excavation is being prepared for publication and will appear later in the year.

THE APPOINTMENT OF DR BOYO OCKINGA

It is a great pleasure to announce the appointment of Dr Boyo Ockinga to the staff of the School of History, Philosophy & Politics at Macquarie University.

Dr Ockinga graduated M.A. from the University of Auckland, and has recently gained the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Egyptology from the University of Tübingen, West Germany. Dr Ockinga will arrive in Sydney on 15 May, 1984.

HIEROGLYPHS COURSE

For the second year, an 'Introduction to Egyptian Hieroglyphs' course has been run by the Foundation and 35 people attended regularly.

AN INTRODUCTION TO ANCIENT EGYPT

On 14-15 April, the Third Week-End course, 'An Introduction to Ancient Egypt' was held at the University and was attended by 45 members of the Foundation and their friends.

FILM ON SAQQARA

A crew of eight from the 'Look' Film Company accompanied the expedition to the Saqqara dig and recorded various aspects of the work and life at the dig. The film is being edited and will be shown on one of the commercial T.V. channels later in the year. Members will be advised of the viewing time.

PUBLIC LECTURE

A Public Lecture : 'The Australian Excavation at Saqqara, Egypt', will be given by Professor Naguib Kanawati in ~~W6A.337~~, on Wednesday, ~~8 August~~ 1984 at 8 p.m.

OPEN DAY

Members are invited to visit the Macquarie University Teaching Collection in W6A.337 during the Open Day on Saturday, 11 August 1984. There is a large collection of Ancient Egyptian artefacts and many exhibits from Greece, Israel and Cyprus as well as Roman, Etruscan and other articles.

THE RUNDLE FOUNDATION THIRD ANNUAL DINNER

will be held at - North Sydney Leagues Club
Abbott Street, Cammeray

on MONDAY 4 June, 1984 at 7.30 p.m.

Dr Kenneth A. KITCHEN will be Guest of Honour

Tickets : \$15.00

Enquiries to: Miss Joan Beck
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Macquarie University
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'Phone 88.9385 Monday, Tuesday &
Wednesday

RUNDLE FOUNDATION MEMBERSHIP 1984

We thank all those who have renewed their membership for 1984, and remind members that their support is needed and greatly appreciated.

Please make cheques payable to 'Macquarie University' and forward to:

Miss Joan Beck at the above address

DR KENNETH A. KITCHEN, VISITING FELLOW OF
THE RUNDLE FOUNDATION FOR 1984

PROGRAM

WEDNESDAY, 23 MAY 1984 8.00 p.m. W5A.T2 (Macquarie University)
(in conjunction with Macquarie Ancient
History Association)

A PUBLIC LECTURE

'THE HUMANITY OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS'

Admission \$2.00 (non-members) (Members of the Foundation and M.A.H.A.
free)

The Rundle Foundation and The Australian Museum

WEDNESDAY, 30 MAY 1984 8.00 p.m. Sydney Grammar School
College Street
(Stanley St. entrance)
SYDNEY

A PUBLIC LECTURE

'RAMESSIDE MEMPHIS & SAQQARA'

Tickets available at door

FRIDAY, 1 JUNE 1984

ALL-DAY SEMINAR from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in
Macquarie University Library Seminar Room 1A

and

A PUBLIC LECTURE at 8 p.m. in Price Theatre
Macquarie University

'RAMESSES THE GREAT, PHAROAH OF EGYPT'

Tickets \$15.00 (Seminar & Lecture) Lecture only \$2.00