



The Rundle Foundation for Egyptian Archaeology

NEWSLETTER No. 21

February 1987



The Study Tour of Egypt

A tour of Egypt is an unforgettable experience, full of excitement and surprises, with never a dull moment.

Before dawn on 4 January, 1987, 20 members of the Rundle Foundation were driven by mini-bus from Cairo airport to the Cleopatra Hotel in chilly Cairo. From the restaurant of the hotel, where an uninteresting breakfast was served, there was an excellent view of Tahrir Square, the Cairo Museum and the Nile Hilton. After rooms were allocated and warmer clothing donned, most of us visited the Cairo Museum or obtained supplies of mineral water.

Later in the day the group exchanged notes on their experiences at the Cleopatra. There were those who were unable to manipulate door locks, some had had hot showers while others had leapt in and out of cold showers, a number flooded their bathroom floors when flushing the lavatory and some were intrigued by the manner in which floor mats were 'cleaned' by being flicked with used bath towels.

Nagla, our excellent guide in Cairo, met everyone early on 5 January. In a comfortable mini-bus, we drove to Memphis, past palm groves,

heavily laden donkeys, the canals, and people clad as they probably were in Biblical days. We viewed the immense statue of Ramesses II, the alabaster sphinx, and other archaeological items, then visited the site where the Apis Bulls were embalmed on huge alabaster tables. At Saqqara we were enchanted with the 5th Dynasty mastaba of Ptah-hotep, a high official, the 6th Dynasty mastaba tomb of the vizier Mereruka, the Step pyramid complex of Djoser, the causeway and pyramid of Unas, where we marvelled at the pyramid texts. We were very privileged to visit Dr Martin's site at Saqqara, where, during a light sand-storm, we inspected Horemheb's tomb. We could see the Bent pyramid at Dahshur, in the distance. Only a few of us clambered into the hot and airless Great Pyramid of Khufu (Cheops) before viewing the pyramids of Khafra and Menkaure, the Sphinx and the wonderful 'Boat of Cheops' which is over 4000 years old. This cedar boat has been re-assembled and a museum built around it above the pit from which it was extracted. Dust, sand and grit now filled our ears, hair, clothing and cameras. Cameras could be cleaned, but it was to be some time before we would again know the luxury of feeling thoroughly clean ourselves. That evening, Dr Martin joined us for dinner and coffee and he gave us a fascinating talk on his excavation of the tomb of Horemheb.

Old Cairo was fascinating. Of particular interest were the ceilings, woodwork and richly coloured, semi-precious stone windows of the Coptic Museum. The Hanging Church, the Babylonian Fortress, the Ben Ezra Synagogue, the Citadel and magnificent mosques were also inspected. Time was spent in the Khan Khalili Bazaars, the Islamic Museum, the Mokkatam Hills, the City of the Dead where the impressively ornate tombs of the Caliphs are located, and the luxurious Seheimy House with its fabulous tiling, windows and woodwork was also greatly admired. Anyone who has seen the ceilings of the chateaux in the Loire Valley would really enjoy such architecture.

The drive to Alexandria via the desert road was full of interest and the swamp areas recalled the marsh scenes depicted on the walls of the tombs. At Alexandria we saw Pompey's Pillar, the site of the Light of Pharos, the old royal palaces and gardens. We visited the Graeco-Roman Museum and carefully negotiated floating planks in the flooded Kom es-Shogafa Catacombs which are more substantial and interesting than those in Rome.

After returning to Cairo, we spent an evening of luxury in suites in the Cairo Sheraton Hotel before leaving on the 6.30 a.m. flight to Aswan. There we stayed at the Old Cataract Hotel, in enormous rooms overlooking Elephantine Island and feluccas gliding along the Nile. As renovations were incomplete, some of us slept on stretchers, hung clothing on umbrella/hat stands, scrawled letters by the single dim light (something to which we were to become accustomed), and patiently pierced each hole in the new shower rose with a safety pin before we were able to shower.

The group sailed in feluccas to the cliff tombs overlooking the Nile at Qubet el-Hawa. After climbing the steep causeway leading from the river, we trekked across to the 12th Dynasty tombs of Sarenput I, Mayor and Overseer of the Priests of Satis, and Sarenput II, Overseer of Priest of

Khnum and Commander of the Southern Frontier Garrison, plus the 6th Dynasty tomb of Harkhuf, Overseer of Foreign Soldiers. This tomb was of special interest to those who had done the Advanced Hieroglyphs Course as it contains the letter from the boy pharaoh, Pepy II, to Harkhuf, ordering him to return immediately with a dancing dwarf.

Very clear weather continued for our flight to Abu Simbel, which was breathtaking and made even more interesting by Sheila Whale's illuminating commentary. Several members of the group then travelled by felucca and hiked to a Nubian village, where they examined the famous rock inscriptions which date from the 6th Dynasty to Ptolemaic times.

The constant climbing and walking was now strengthening the leg muscles of everyone in preparation for excursions ahead. There was an excellent museum on Elephantine Island where we also saw a wonderful filmometer and the Temple of Khnum. Having crossed the Nile again by felucca, we climbed to the Aga Khan Mausoleum, from which the view of the Nile and Aswan was sensational. We then trekked to St Simeon's Monastery which had been abandoned after the Arab conquest.

The visit by taxi and boat to the Temple of Philae was achieved after much haggling and pushing and pulling of boats by Lew Griffiths who eventually obtained a very reasonable price for our trip to the island. After leaving Philae we set sail on the 'Aton', a Sheraton Nile cruiser. The huge rooms of the Cataract Hotel made the cabins seem miniscule, especially the lavatory/shower cubicles. It was in the dining-room of this large cruiser that avoiding salads was most difficult as the buffet meals looked so appetising. During the cruise we visited the Temples of Kom Ombo and Edfu and our group won first prize one evening for performing an ancient Egyptian tableau. We also visited the Temple of Esna before reaching Luxor, and got stuck on numerous sand banks before negotiating the lock. It was a fascinating experience to see one of the crew jump over the side with a rope to tie the huge boat up to a palm tree!

Our visit to the Western Bank at Luxor was full of interest. In the Valley of the Kings we visited the tombs of Tutankhamen and Ramesses VI, after which I felt compelled to sprint to the end of the Valley and climb the cliff nursing the tomb of Thutmose III while the others quenched their thirst at the kiosk. In the Valley of the Queens we visited the tombs of Teti and Amen-Khopshef and later, Hatshepsut's temple at Deir el-Bahari. After partaking of a box-lunch, while sitting in the dust beside our coach, we visited the huge funerary Temple of Ramesses III, Medinet Habu, and the Ramesseum in which we marvelled at the massive broken statue of Ramesses II made famous by Shelley in his poem 'Ozymandias'. The workmen's village of Deir el-Medina and the tombs of Sennedjem and Sennutem recalled the T.V. series of John Romer.

Rich colour was still visible on the protected sections of the Great Temple of Amun at Karnak. One could spend a whole day there accompanied by a knowledgeable guide. Following our tour of the Temple of Luxor, several of us returned to the Tombs of the Nobles on the West Bank while others visited Chicago House, the American Institute in Luxor, which is

recording all the inscriptions still in existence in Luxor.

The comfort of the new Egotel Hotel, Luxor, was complete after repairing the lavatory cistern, unlogging the wash-basin and mopping up the floor. By this time we were developing skills we didn't know we had! A little determination, patience and improvisation do make travelling in Egypt a smoother adventure. Egypt, after all, is rather like journeying through the set of a Cecil B. de Mille Biblical epic. Farmers still use the shaduf, harvest crops by hand, use oxen to plough their fields, live in mud-brick huts, travel by donkey or camel. Shepherds and goatherds still tend their flocks, women do their washing in the canals and on the river's edge and the majority of children do not attend school.

Before reaching Sohag, we toured the Temples of Dendera and the marvellous Temple of Seti I at Abydos, which contains one of the King Lists and some wonderful reliefs.

At Sohag, Professor Kanawati had managed, after a great deal of trouble, to obtain two adjoining three-bedroom flats for the 20 of us. There was even a stove in one of the flats and he was able to procure a gas cylinder which enabled us to make use of our tea-bags and instant coffee. Having allocated the rooms we adjourned to a club on the banks of the Nile for refreshments and after organising the shower roster, we shared evening meals with the 'dig' team. It was a strange experience to have the guards checking our rooms at 3 a.m., but, after all, we were unknown foreigners!

Our visit to the dig at El-Hawawish was quite an experience. The taxis deposited us at the foot of the mountain. The workmen had specially hewn a pathway to facilitate our climb, a path which unobservant visitors may not have noticed. Climbing the mountain is not for the faint-hearted. As one member was heard to remark "Fancy having to climb this every day for 6 weeks!" Professor Kanawati guided us through many of the tombs, gave a most interesting commentary, took us down a shaft to the burial chamber and drew our attention to the representation of the artist Seni, featured as the logo for this newsletter. The students and photographer prepared a delicious salad lunch, which we ate with relish, not only because we had expended a good deal of energy, but because it was so expertly prepared and was the first salad we dared to eat. Lunch was enjoyed in a cool tomb, sitting on one's haunches or in the dust, so beige or grey clothing proved to be most practical. We were given the opportunity to try our hand at tracing, preservation of walls, and pottery drawing. Treading the loose rocks and gravel whilst descending the mountain required all our attention. It would have been quite easy to twist one's ankle on the shifting stones.

Climbing to Dr Oekinga's tombs at Mashayakh was effortless compared with El-Hawawish. Dr Oekinga also gave a very interesting commentary as he guided us through the tombs he was recording. After a hair-raising taxi trip during which it was discovered that the thread was stripped from the nuts holding a wheel to the taxi, we had another enjoyable lunch under the palms at Macquarie's second site, El-Salamuni. We climbed to the Temple of Ay, which had been excavated by Dr Kuhlmann, our Visiting Fellow for 1987, and noticed that the mountain was literally honeycombed

with tombs.

Our visit to the Macquarie digs was both fascinating and memorable, due to the efforts of Professor Kanawati and the team and workmen at the site.

The last part of our trip to El-Amarna was made in an iron troop wagon, pulled by a tractor. We climbed to the wonderful tombs there, then viewed the palace of Akhenaten. Later, we boarded a ferry to cross to Beni Hasan where, after climbing again, we were able to inspect superb Middle Kingdom tombs.

The evening spent at the newly opened Etap Hotel at Minya was fraught with difficulties. The Hotel was fully booked and we arrived with three extra students plus our guide. Eventually extra beds were put into some of the rooms to accommodate everyone. A number of people were directed across the road to terraced rooms with paper-thin walls, where the lavatories did not flush, the showers flooded the floors, the warm water lasted for two minutes, where there was nowhere to place clean clothes in the bathroom without them becoming drenched. The door knobs jammed and the lighting was almost totally ineffective. Arriving at the dining room we were obliged to wait until every member of the group arrived before we could be served! That interesting sojourn, however, was forgotten when we arrived at the Cairo Sheraton again for our last night in Egypt.

On our way back to Cairo we were fortunately granted permission to visit the pyramid of Meidum, now in a military area. Tiny bats accompanied us inside the pyramid and also inside the mastaba of Nefermaet and Itet which features the palace facade and in which the famous frieze known as the "Geese of Meidum" was found. We saw the causeway leading from the pyramid, the mortuary temple and were delighted to find the shell of a scarab beetle in the sand. Some of us then scrambled through the robbers' entrance of an unknown 3rd Dynasty mastaba. We had to traverse the final stretch on our stomachs to reach the burial chamber. The massive blocks of stone there left us speechless, as did the huge granite sarcophagus.

It was luxury to bathe, wash our hair and dine at the Sheraton that evening. During our evening meal, it was with much pleasure and sincerity that we expressed our appreciation to Joan Beck our Tour Leader, who organised the most wonderful tour of Egpt. This is quite an achievement in a country where anything CAN happen to make life 'interesting'.

After sad farewells to several members of the party, the rest of us flew to Greece with Joan for a delightful tour of Athens, the islands of Aegina, Hydra and Poros and beautiful Crete (where there was falling snow and warm sunshine), as well as Delphi before returning to Athens and finally Sydney.

Hopefully we'll return in the not too distant future.

Jennifer Draper

Discussion Groups

Members are invited to attend "Discussion Groups" each Monday, commencing MONDAY 2 March, 1987, in W6A 420 from 7-9 p.m. These sessions are free and all members are welcome.

At the first meeting on 2 March, topics for the following weeks will be decided. On 2 March we will have a short discussion on the Temple of Medinet Habu (Ramesses III)
Enquiries: Miss Joan Beck 805 8848 (please note new 'phone number).

Aspects of Ancient Egypt

A general interest course of 8 lectures will be given by Mrs Juliette Bentley each Wednesday commencing WEDNESDAY 11 March, in W5C 220, from 7-9 p.m. The course considers many of the distinctive features of the ancient Egyptian culture, including religion, art, architecture, learning and literature. All lectures will be illustrated and an introductory lecture on Egyptian history will be given.

There is a minimum enrolment of 20 and a maximum enrolment of 60. The fee is \$60. Foundation members, \$55.

Enquiries: Miss Joan Beck

Colloquial Egyptian Arabic

Professor Kanawati will be conducting an 8 weeks course in colloquial Egyptian Arabic (not the written Arabic script). The course will be held each Friday night, commencing FRIDAY 3 April, 1987, in W6A 420 from 6.30 - 9.30 p.m.

There is a minimum enrolment of 20 and a maximum enrolment of 60. The fee \$65 includes a text book. Foundation members \$60.

Enquiries: Miss Joan Beck

Visiting Fellow for 1987

The Visiting Fellow of the Foundation for 1987 will be Dr Peter Kuhlmann of the German Institute of Archaeology in Cairo.

Dr Kuhlmann has been involved in field work on many sites including Thebes and Akhmim and has written the only comprehensive history of the province of Akhmim.

A week-end Seminar will be organised around his visit (provisional dates 18/19 July). Scholars from many universities working in the Mediterranean region, will present illustrated lectures on their excavations.

Dr Kuhlmann will be giving public lectures during his visit and is expected to visit other states.

Details will be announced.

November Study Tour of Egypt

Dr Boyo Oekinga will be Guest Lecturer for the Tour of Egypt at the end of November, 1987. The Tour will include members of the Australian Museum Society as well as members of the Rundle Foundation. As numbers have to be limited, it was decided to allot 15 places to each. The Australian Museum Society has filled its quota and has a waiting list of 29 persons. We are holding 15 places for Foundation members as this is the first notice many will have received. If you are interested, please contact Miss Beck as soon as possible as places fill rapidly.

The cost of the Tour is estimated to be approximately \$4000 for 18 days. This is subject to the fluctuation \$A. The Tour will depart 21 November, returning about 8 December.

The Rock Tombs of El-Hawawish

We remind members that Vol. VI of The Rock Tombs of El-Hawawish, is now available. \$25 (members \$20) plus \$2.50 postage. Previous volumes are also available.

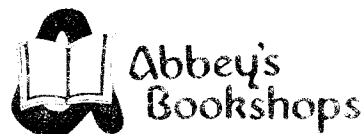
Enquiries: Miss Joan Beck.

Membership

Subscriptions to the Foundation date from 1 February each year and are paid annually (ordinary membership). Subscribers may become Life Members or Governors at any time upon payment of the appropriate subscriptions.

New members joining after September in any year receive membership cards for the following year.

We would like to emphasize that the success and progress of the Foundation relies only on the support of its members and in this respect the Foundation urges its members to renew their subscriptions and encourage new members to join. Our objectives can only be achieved by increased membership.



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ORTON: MATHEMATICS IN ARCHAEOLOGY Non-technical introduction to the use of mathematics in archaeology.	\$30.50 paper

We found the copy of: **TEXTS FROM HELLENISTIC BABYLONIA
IN THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM** by Gilbert McEwan at \$20.00

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