



# The Rundle Foundation for Egyptian Archaeology

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VISITING SAQQARA. L TO R, HIS EXCELLENCY MIKE SMITH, THE HON. BARRY JONES  
AND PROFESSOR NAGUIB KANAWATI

## EXCAVATIONS AT SAQQARA

The November/December 1996 season at Saqqara was extremely rewarding. Numerous burials were uncovered in the upper layer of the excavated mound, some with complete and well preserved skeletal remains and interesting accompanying funerary objects. The examination of the human remains revealed some of the ailments and deformities suffered by the ancient Egyptians. These burials will be published in a special volume, *THE TETI CEMETERY AT SAQQARA*, Vol. 2, later in the year.

The excavation of the Old Kingdom mastaba of Minu-inu was completed during the season. Formed of five rooms the chapel of the mastaba proved to be fully constructed of large limestone blocks. Three rooms were decorated in painted relief, including a large false door which was formed of one monolithic block of limestone. The other two rooms were undecorated and in the larger of these a shaft, approximately 12 metres deep, leads to the burial chamber. It was a surprise to discover that the burial chamber was cased with limestone and decorated with painted reliefs, although these were of poorer quality than those of the chapel. The sarcophagus had been broken into and no remains of the body of Minu-inu were found. However, some of the fine funerary objects belonging to this tomb were left behind by the tomb robbers. While Minu-inu held the title of 'Overseer-of-Upper Egypt' in the decoration of his chapel, the office of Vizier was found inscribed on his sarcophagus. Could it have been a late promotion in his career?

The tomb owner held a 'Priesthood of the Pyramid' of Pepi I, during whose reign he most certainly held office.

Minu-inu was the Vizier, the top administrator in the country, at a rather turbulent and difficult period in the history of the Old Kingdom. The role he played in the events of the time will be assessed for many years to come.

An illustrated lecture on this significant find will be presented at the Conference, *DIGGERS ON THE NILE*, on Saturday, 19 July, 1997.

The expedition had the pleasure of receiving on site His Excellency the Australian Ambassador to Egypt and the Sudan, Mike Smith, and the Hon. Barry Jones MP, both of whom expressed great interest in the work.

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Dr Boyo Ockinga and Dr Christiana Köhler are currently in Egypt and will report on their digs in following Newsletters.

### **COURSES FOR FIRST SEMESTER**

*TUTANKHAMEN: The King and His Treasures:* Mr Michael Birrell will conduct an 8-weeks course from 7-9 pm each TUESDAY, commencing 11 March. Lectures will cover the reign of Tutankhamen, the discovery of his tomb, and will also give an overview of the Amarna Period.  
Cost: \$80 (members \$75).

*ANCIENT EGYPT OFF THE BEATEN TRACK:* Professor James Hoffmeier from the Department of Archaeology, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill. USA, will give two illustrated lectures on WEDNESDAY, 12 March, from 7-9.30 pm, entitled:

1. *A Visit to Unvisited Pyramids*
2. *Recent Exploration in North Sinai: Some Implications for the Israelite Exodus*

The lectures will be followed by supper when members can meet Dr Hoffmeier.

Early Booking is essential. Cost: \$20 (students and pensioners \$15).

*EGYPTIAN MUMMIFICATION AND BURIAL CUSTOMS:* Mr Paul Bentley will hold a one-day Seminar on SATURDAY, 3 May, from 10 am to 5 pm. The lectures will be fully illustrated and will follow the development of tombs and pyramids and cover the history and processes of mummification and the funerary beliefs and practices.

*THE LAND OF THE PHARAOHS: An outline of Egyptian History:* Ms Rodna Siebels will conduct an 8-weeks course from 7-9 pm each WEDNESDAY, commencing 14 May. The course will study a dynasty-by-dynasty history from Pre-dynastic to Graeco-Roman times; the pyramid builders, the Hyksos period and the era of the warrior pharaohs, with special emphasis on the reigns of Hatshepsut, Akhenaten and Ramesses II.

### CONFERENCES

**The Society for the Study of Early Christianity** will hold a weekend Conference on 9 and 10 May. For further information please contact Mrs Pat Geidans on 9850-7512.

*DIGGERS ON THE NILE: The Australian Centre for Egyptology* will hold a Conference on SATURDAY, 19 July, from 10 am to 5 pm, in X5B Theatre 1. The Australian Egyptologists will discuss their excavations in the important sites of Helwan (Early Dynastic); Abu Sir (Old Kingdom); the Teti Cemetery at Saqqara (Old and New Kingdoms) and Thebes (New Kingdom).

Cost: \$35 (Students and Pensioners \$25).

### NEW PUBLICATIONS

*THE TETI CEMETERY AT SAQQARA* - N. Kanawati et al.

This is the first volume reporting on the present excavations in the cemetery of King Teti, founder of Dynasty VI. It gives a full description of the tombs of Nedjet-em-pet (the mother of the vizier Mereruka) and Kaper, the 'Overseer-of-all-the-works-of-the-king', as well as some other objects discovered in the last two seasons.

## **EGYPTIAN DISCUSSION GROUP**

The first meeting of the Discussion Group for 1997 will be held on 28 February in the Seminar Room, 3rd Floor, X5B from 7-9 pm. Members and friends are welcome and there is no charge. Meetings thereafter will be held fortnightly on Fridays.

As the first meeting will be a social evening, would everyone kindly bring a small plate, either savoury or sweet. It will also be an opportunity for everyone to get to know each other.

## **THE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE**

The Activities Committee has produced a number of items which are suitable for personal use or as gifts, these include:

\* Tea/coffee mugs which have scenes from the New Kingdom tomb of Amenemope in Luxor recorded by Dr Ockinga. The first mug produced in 1995 has been sold out; the 1996 mug is white background with either black or terracotta line drawings. The cost is \$8 each, or 2 for \$15.

\* Also available are notettes (\$2 each or 12 for \$20) and gift tags (\$1 each or 12 for \$10), with different scenes in line drawings from the Old Kingdom tomb of Nefer-seshem-Ptah at Saqqara recorded by Professor Kanawati.

\* T-shirts (\$20 each) and sloppy-jos (\$17.50 each) are still available with the Australian Centre for Egyptology logo.

If ordering by mail please make your cheque or postal order payable to the **Activities Committee**.

**ALL ENQUIRIES: MISS JOAN BECK - (02) 9850 8848**