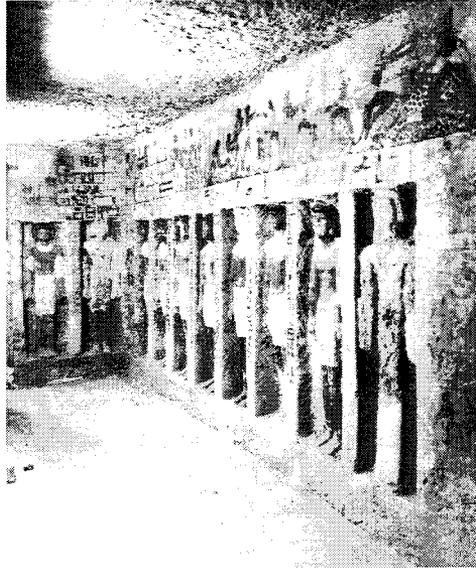




The Rundle Foundation for Egyptian Archaeology

NEWSLETTER NO. 63

January 1998



THE TOMB OF IRU-KA-PTAH, SAQQARA

An Unusual Tomb in the Unis Cemetery, Saqqara

The Australian Centre for Egyptology initiated a new project at Saqqara in 1997. In August and again in November/December work was undertaken by Dr. Ann McFarlane to record the tomb of Iru-ka-Ptah in the Unis Cemetery. This is one of a group of late Fifth Dynasty tombs lying immediately south of and nearly ten metres below the Unis Causeway. These tombs as well as the causeway were all discovered by the Egyptian architect Abd el-Salam Mohammed Hussein during his excavations in 1938-39. The tombs are of more than usual interest for several reasons. First, they are well preserved, having been buried and thus protected as a result of the construction, not long after they were completed, of the causeway during the reign of Unis. Second, the tombs in this area are largely rock-cut, unlike most of the tombs at Saqqara which are mastabas constructed of stone blocks. Third, the owners did not bear high offices in the civil administration but appear to have personally served the king within the royal palace.

Iru-ka-Ptah's main titles are 'Master butcher' and 'Overseer of the breakfast of the king'. His tomb consists only of two rooms, an entrance court partly constructed in stone and partly rock-cut and a narrow corridor chapel hewn into the native rock. The court shows no evidence of decoration but in the chapel two walls and a false door have painted relief decoration, with the bright colours in a good state of preservation. The most remarkable feature, however, is the large number of high relief statues, a total of 14, cut into the native rock. Rock-cut statues are very rarely found at Saqqara, presently attested in only four other tombs at that site. That an official with relatively modest titles would be able to have such an unusual tomb is unexpected, and presumably reflects favours gained by Iru-ka-Ptah through his close personal service to the king. In 1998 other tombs in the area will be investigated for purposes of comparison to be incorporated in a forthcoming monograph studying this important section of the Unis cemetery.

PUBLICATIONS

A.C.E. Reports:

Reports 9 - N. Kanawati and A. Hassan, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara Vol. 2, The Tomb of Ankhmahor*. Cost: \$45 (members \$40).

Reports 10 - B. G. Ockinga, *A Tomb from the reign of Tutankhamun at Awlad Azzaz (Akhmim)*. Cost: \$40 (members \$35).

A.C.E. Studies:

Studies 4 - J. Walker, *Studies in Ancient Egyptian Medical Terminology*.
This work was originally written as a PhD dissertation and all three examiners agreed that it should be published.

Studies 5 - F. Giles, *The Amarna Age: Western Asia*.
Cost: \$40 (members \$35) per volume.

Postage: \$5 within Australia and \$9 outside Australia, per volume.

Still available: Reports 1 - 8.
Studies 2 and 3. (No. 1 now out of print).
Bulletin of the A.C.E. Vols. 1 - 8.

LECTURES PLANNED FOR FIRST SEMESTER, 1998.

WOMEN IN ANCIENT EGYPT: Ms Rodna Siebels will give a public lecture on WEDNESDAY, 25 February at 8.00pm. This lecture includes images of women in literature and art, the legal position, marriage, children, health and the Egyptian household. Women of power, royal women and the expectations of women.

Cost: \$5.

EGYPTIAN MUMMIFICATION & BURIAL CUSTOMS: Mr Paul Bentley and Ms Rodna Siebels will give public lectures on SATURDAY, 4 April from 10am to 5pm. The fully illustrated lectures follow the development of tombs and the religious beliefs, the history and process of mummification and funerary beliefs and practices.

Cost: \$55.

COURSES PLANNED FOR FIRST SEMESTER, 1998

EGYPTIAN CURIOSITIES: Ms Rodna Siebels will conduct an 8-weeks course each WEDNESDAY from 7-9pm, commencing 11 March. The course covers a wide range of topics including technology, symbolism in Egyptian art, pygmies and dwarfs and excavations in the Valley of the Kings, the Tomb of Tutankhamun, scientific evidence from mummified remains and the workmen's village at Deir el-Medina.

Cost: \$70 (members \$65).

INTRODUCTION TO HIEROGLYPHS: Professor Naguib Kanawati will conduct an 8-weeks course each THURSDAY from 7-9pm, commencing 12 March. The course introduces participants to the ancient Egyptian system of writing with the aim of reading simple texts. No previous knowledge is required.

Cost: \$75 (members \$70).

ASCENT OF MANKIND: HUMAN EVOLUTION: Mr Paul Bentley will conduct an 8-weeks course each TUESDAY from 7-9pm, commencing 17 March. This course will take an historical overview of human evolution, examining the major fossil discoveries of the last 150 years.

Cost: \$100.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 1998 Conference will be held in the second semester. Date and venue to be announced in the April Newsletter.

STUDY TOUR OF EGYPT - JANUARY, 1999

The last incident in Luxor has caused the immediate cancellation of many tours to Egypt. However, our tour is currently fully booked and no one has withdrawn nor indicated their wish to do so. As our tour will not take place until January 1999, this certainly gives us the opportunity and time to closely monitor the degree of success of the new measures of security which the Egyptian government has recently introduced.

***** SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT *****

JOAN BECK'S RETIREMENT

Joan Beck will be retiring at the end of 1998 and the Foundation is seeking the help of a volunteer(s) who would be prepared to work with Joan in 1998 in anticipation of replacing her as Hon. Secretary in 1999. The work is varied and involves membership, distribution of publications and assisting in organising functions.

The work could be handled by one or more volunteers. Anyone interested please contact

Joan Beck - 9850 8848 (Mon. & Wed. 8am to 1pm).

**ALL ENQUIRIES: JOAN BECK - (02) 9850 8848
(Mon. & Wed. 8am to 1pm)**