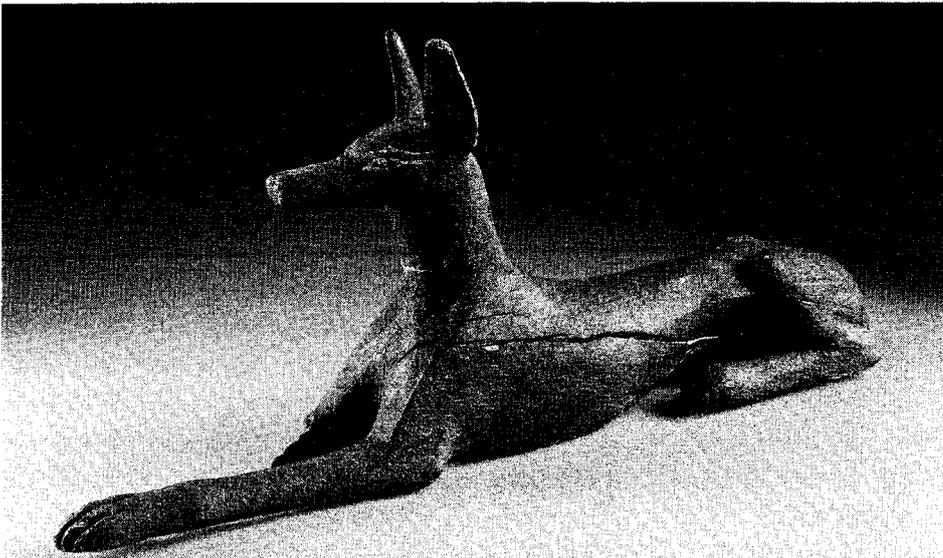


The Rundle Foundation for Egyptian Archaeology

NEWSLETTER NO. 74

October 2000



ONE OF THE OBJECTS IN THE *EGYPT BY TOUCH* EXHIBITION

EXHIBITION – EGYPT BY TOUCH AN EXHIBITION FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGHT IMPAIRMENT

The beautiful art of Ancient Egypt is not only visually appealing but can now be enjoyed by touching and feeling objects such as sculptures and reliefs, thus introducing Egyptian culture to people with sight impairment. The Nàprstek Museum of Asian, African and American cultures in Prague, which is part of the National Museum of the Czech Republic, has pioneered a special exhibition of Egyptian objects for those with sight impairment

In 1995 the museum produced true replicas of a limited number of carefully chosen objects to mount the first exhibition of *“Egypt by Touch”* in Prague. The exhibition was reproduced in Egypt, both in Cairo and Alexandria, and remains in Alexandria on permanent display. Both exhibitions included objects of daily life, sculptures, images of gods and burial equipment.

The Director of the Nàprstek Museum has agreed to reproduce the same objects for exhibition in Australia, based on the original models in the possession of the museum, and to provide a Curator to coordinate the exhibition. The Museum has also supplied the text for the catalogue and labels to accompany each object, which will be reproduced in Braille and print. An audio guide has also been prepared. The exhibition comprises 31 replica objects, the vast majority produced in the original materials of clay, wood, bronze and stone with only a few made of plaster.

Dr Val Rundle has generously provided funding for the reproduction of the objects in the Czech Republic. Professor Di Yerbury, Vice Chancellor of Macquarie University, made available the monies necessary for the manufacture of the special tables required for the exhibition. 2UE Radio Station has donated the funds required for all the voice equipment and the recording of the narration, which describes objects in the exhibition that will be individually triggered when an object is touched.

The exhibition will be launched on 19th October 2000 and will be displayed in the New South Wales Parliament House until 5th November, before it is moved for permanent exhibition at Macquarie University. **Opening times 10am and 4pm: free entry to all.**

GUIDES REQUIRED: Volunteers are required to act as guides at the above exhibition. Shifts are of 2 hour duration and free parking will be available at Parliament House if car registration is advised in advance. Please contact A.C.E. office if interested.

GOOD NEWS ABOUT HELWAN

In the last Newsletter members received a brochure on the results of the past three years of work at Helwan and in the Egyptian Museum Cairo. In order to raise awareness about this site, and to raise extra funds for next season, the team members of the Helwan project organised a photographic exhibition and a study day. The good news to report about Helwan is that both events were very successful and also great fun.

On the evening of July 26th the exhibition, "*Egypt before the Pyramids – Australian Excavations at Helwan*" was launched by His Excellency, the Consul General of Egypt, Dr Essam Ramadan, who spoke highly of the work of the A.C.E. to some 120 invited guests.

The exhibition consisted of 12 two metre high panels of text, plans and photographs that had been designed and produced with modern computer technology by Shane Lovejoy and Rachel Kemp. There were almost 100 photographs, taken by Dr Michael Birrell, Dr David Pritchard and other members of the Helwan team, of the tombs and the objects found on site as well as in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. One such object is a beautiful ivory plaque of a lady called Neith-Hotep. She is no less than the wife of Narmer, the first king of Egypt. The exhibition stayed open at Collins Booksellers Superstore at Broadway Shopping Centre for two weeks. It will now travel around Australia and overseas with the first destinations being Newcastle, Adelaide and Perth.

On August 12th at the Valhalla Cinema in Glebe, the end of the exhibition was marked by a very successful special day of events that featured lectures by Helwan team members about on-going museum and fieldwork. Of special interest was a presentation given by Mr Ian Casey, a Ph.D. student at University College London, who travelled to Stockholm Sweden earlier this year to study, for the first time, the contents of several Helwan tombs taken back to Sweden by Hjalmar Larsen. Larsen had excavated at the site in the 1930's before the Egyptian archaeologist Zaki Saad started his massive project in 1942. The series of lectures was followed by a raffle of prizes donated by Singapore Airlines, in conjunction with Twin Wings Airtravel, Maat Books, Aveda Cosmetics and Lonely Planet Publications. Congratulations to Fay Lamont who won the first prize – a Singapore Airlines return ticket to Cairo! Finally, the program was rounded up by a special screening of the most recent blockbuster movie "The Mummy", an hilarious satire on the curse of the mummy and how NOT to conduct archaeological research in Egypt. The whole day was a nice mix of scholarship and entertainment and great fun for its 100 or so participants.

Funds raised during these activities will flow directly into the up-coming excavation season at Helwan in December and January and will enable us to make a significant contribution to the site's protection and preservation.

Obviously these great activities only happened because of the hard work and dedication of the following members of the Helwan team: Dr Michael Birrell, Sharan Bradley, Joffre Carter, Ian Casey, Fred Hardtke, Ezzat Kamel, Christian Knoblauch, Erin Kuch, Anna Leffers, Dr David Pritchard, Joanna Quinn, Jane Smythe, Linda Sullivan, Dr Kevin Vang and Robyn (Bob) Whight. Very special thanks go as well to Collins Booksellers and Liquorland, and especially to Quickcut, the principal sponsor of the Helwan exhibition and study day.

E. Christiana Köhler and David Pritchard

2001 CONFERENCE

SATURDAY, 11TH AUGUST

Following the success of the conference: *“Egypt in Turmoil – The Amarna Age”* it was decided to hold another in 2001 on an equally fascinating period of Egyptian history: the reign of Hatshepsut. Overseas guest speakers will be Professor Gay Robins and Professor Peter Dorman. The tentative date for the conference is Saturday, 11th August, so be sure to mark it in your diary.

BAHARIA OASIS

Two members of the Macquarie University team working at Saqqara in January – February 2000, visited the Bahariya Oasis, which is 330km southwest of Cairo. After a hot, sporadically air-conditioned, four and a half hour bus trip, we were hustled towards our base for two days, the El Beshmo Lodge, the newest hotel in the main township of Bawiti.

That afternoon we were treated to an informative tour by the local antiquities inspector. The first stop was the Temple of Ain El-Moftella, which was built by a mayor of the oasis during the reigns of the 26th Dynasty kings Apries and Amasis. It consists of chapels decorated with scenes of kings making offering to various deities.

Next was a modest temple of Alexander the Great, excavated by Ahmed Fakhry between 1938 and 1942. Built in 332BC, when Alexander visited Egypt, it is thought that the temple was built in his honour after he passed through the oasis on his return to Memphis from either Alexandria or Siwa. The temple was still in use until the 12th Century AD. The inner sanctuary is decorated with scenes of Alexander, accompanied by the mayor of Bahariya, presenting offerings to Amun. The temple consists of two sandstone chambers and an enclosure wall surrounding them. In front, there are 45 mud-brick storerooms.

We also visited the tombs of nobles who lived in the oasis. The Tomb of Bannentiu, a wealthy merchant who lived during the 26th Dynasty, and that of his father, Djed-Amun-ef-Ankh, were particularly interesting. There is also the tomb of Amenhotep, called Hwy, the mayor of Bahariya Oasis during the 19th Dynasty. Unfortunately the cemetery of the Golden Mummies, which is near the temple of Alexander, is not open to the public, but we were able to see five of the recently discovered mummies in the Inspectorate as well as a stone statue of the god Bes.

That night, after a sumptuous dinner at the hotel, we were taken to some hot springs for a swim. There are numerous hot and cold springs in the area, including Bir al Sukhna (hot sulphur springs 3km north of Bawiti) and the El Beshmo spring, which is only a five minute walk from the El Beshmo lodge. We were also privileged enough to watch and listen to some traditional Bedouin music around a campfire.

Due to lack of time we had to forgo a trip to the White Desert, which is 140km away towards Farafra Oasis and be satisfied with spending our last day having a lazy picnic

amidst the numerous sand dunes of the surrounding desert. We returned to Saqqara that night tanned, relaxed and much later than we had planned.

Kim McCorquodale and Karen Schamberger

PUBLIC LECTURE
EXCAVATIONS AT SAQQARA

Details of the recent findings at this site will be given by Professor Naguib Kanawati.

THURSDAY October 12th 7 – 8p.m.

Cost \$10 (inclusive of GST)

Tea, coffee and biscuits will be supplied

N.B. New venue: Building E7B Theatre T2

CHANGES TO PROCEDURES

The A.C.E. is now on computer and hopefully this will help to process all business more efficiently.

A.C.E. BULLETIN: With the view of ensuring that members are informed of the exhibition *Egypt by Touch* by the opening date, this newsletter has had to be mailed without the Bulletin. The Bulletin will now be despatched in January.

RETURN OF RECEIPTS: To help save costs, all receipts will now be forwarded with the following Newsletter mail out, unless otherwise requested.

PAYMENT BY CHEQUE: All cheques should be made payable to “MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY” – all items can now be included on the one cheque.

E-MAIL ADDRESSES: We would like to have members E-mail addresses on file so that we can make contact if necessary. Changes to the membership form are now being made to allow more space for these details. We would appreciate E-mail addresses being clearly printed as we have encountered some problems in reading some of them.

LATE CHANGES TO ARRANGEMENTS: A recording will be left on our answering machine regarding any changes made to venues or times for lectures, etc. Please ring after **5PM in the week before the function**. Due to insufficient initial response, courses have in the past been unnecessarily cancelled, or difficulty encountered in booking appropriate substitute venues. In future we ask that bookings be returned by the given closing date.

PEN PALS

A young member of the Rundle Foundation, Taryn McGlynn, has suggested that some members may be interested in forming a Pen Pals Club. If anyone is interested, please supply your details to this office and we will endeavor to facilitate contact.

WEB SITE

Please continue to check the web site for last minute information regarding our activities. Make sure you are looking at the current website, though – the address is:

www.egyptology.mq.edu.au

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