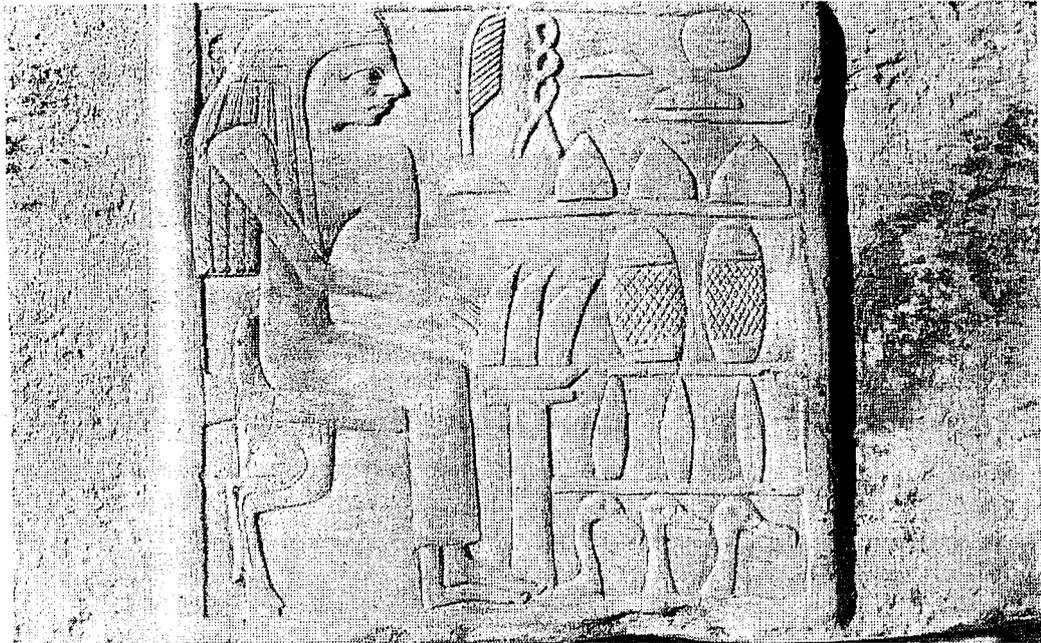


# The Rundle Foundation for Egyptian Archaeology

NEWSLETTER NO. 81

July 2002



FUNERARY STELA OF THE LADY *HYT* FROM HELWAN

## EXCAVATIONS AT HELWAN – DECEMBER 2001 TO EARLY JANUARY 2002

The team for the fifth season of archaeological excavations in the Early Dynastic necropolis at Helwan consisted of the project director, Dr. E. Christiana Köhler, nine Macquarie University students and graduates as well as a palaeobotanist, Dr Ahmed Fahmy, who assessed the plant remains of previous seasons. During seven weeks of excavations a total of twenty-nine new Early Dynastic graves were uncovered, fully mapped and documented, – their archaeological features and contents conserved, reconstructed and accurately recorded.

Five of these graves belonged to children, which was particularly interesting as it gave insights into the degree to which funerary customs were applied to non-adults in this early society. Most of the other tombs belonged to adults of different wealth and rank; the majority of which were very poor and could barely afford to have a tomb pit excavated and their body wrapped in a reed mat. These graves did not contain any grave goods and were therefore difficult to date; nevertheless, the tightly contracted body position, as well as their location within the cemetery, allowed for a conclusion that they belong to the Early Dynastic period. Other tombs were owned by wealthy individuals who had invested an enormous effort to excavate and furnish them for the afterlife. The wealthier examples gave us the opportunity to study two different architectural types and a wide range of grave goods. These included pottery and stone vessels for food and drink, grain silos, stone tools and personal belongings such as jewellery including ivory and shell bracelets and beads of semiprecious stones.

The objects and the tomb architecture assist in providing accurate dates for each individual interment, pivotal for subsequent social and chronological analysis.

One such tomb, no. 4/19 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty, belonged to a mature age male who was buried in a subterranean chamber accessed via a deep staircase. The entrance to the burial chamber was originally sealed by a large stone slab. As with many of our graves, this tomb was robbed at least twice in antiquity. The floor of the burial chamber was covered with debris and large amounts of fragmentary stone and pottery vessels, which had accompanied the deceased into the afterlife. The owner's bones were found near the remains of the decayed wooden coffin and were badly disarticulated due to the plundering. Most importantly, one of the walls of the burial chamber was broken into via a deep robber's shaft excavated from above. In this shaft we found three stone slabs which turned out to be Early Dynastic funerary stelae. Such funerary stelae, inscribed with hieroglyphs and an offering scene, are very rare during this early period. For example at Helwan, with its 10,000 tombs, only thirty-four pieces were discovered during the 1940s and 50s by its earlier excavator Z. Saad. Nevertheless, for a long time these stelae represented the largest known corpus of such early and yet elaborate funerary inscriptions and art representations. Their discovery made Helwan a landmark for Early Dynastic art and archaeology.

Our discovery of three new stelae was therefore totally unexpected and hence attracted substantial media coverage nationally as well as in Europe, Asia and the Americas. Also, for the first time, it was possible to record and study the exact archaeological context and circumstances of their deposition, which will greatly assist in the dating and interpreting of such early examples of hieroglyphic writing and art representations. On the basis of a few examples found *in-situ*, it has been suggested by modern scholarship that such stelae were originally located in the cult niche of a mud brick superstructure, or mastaba, where the tomb owner's relatives conducted the mortuary rituals. However, most stelae were found at the bottom of a robber's shaft and one can deduce that these were subsequently recycled as fill material after their mastabas had been abandoned and started to decay.

The three stelae follow the common iconography by showing the tomb owner seated on a chair on the left before an offering table laden with slices of bread, surrounded by other offerings such as roast meats, beer, wine, oil and textiles. Two stelae belong to women who would have been fairly wealthy inhabitants of early Memphis; the third is that of a man who had the title of a funerary priest of the king. The preservation and quality varies, but all three have remains of red and black paint. The most beautiful one belongs to a lady, whose name is probably read *Hyt*, and who is shown with an elaborate heavy wig, a small, very finely carved face and a range of offerings. The quality of the relief carving is excellent and bears witness to the artistic standards of workshops in Egypt's first capital city at the beginning of the historical era, and to the significance of the Early Dynastic period as a foundation for pharaonic civilization.

Christiana Köhler

### REPORT FROM THEBES BY DR. BOYO OCKINGA

The ACE team working in Thebes had a very successful season from late December 2001 to mid-February 2002, with a number of interesting new discoveries. The completion of the excavation of the courtyard of Saroy's tomb (TT 233) revealed a clear series of occupation levels, throwing light on the usage of the site in the Late New Kingdom and Late Antiquity. Under the Late Period level evidence for the first plundering of the tomb was found in the form of charred remains of funerary equipment; these were from a fire lit by the robbers to melt the gilding that covered the objects (sieving even retrieved tiny molten fragments of gold). A plundered Late New Kingdom shaft tomb containing the burial of a woman was excavated at the southern end of the Broad Hall of TT 233 and work on the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty tomb associated with TT 233 revealed that its 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty user was Amenhotep-Huy, Saroy's associate. Epigraphic work in TT 233 identified further Book of the Dead material (Chapter 68, 69, 71 and 125) amongst the very damaged ceiling texts. In the courtyard of the tomb of Amenemope (TT 148) another Late Period shaft tomb (also plundered) was found. Of greater significance, at a depth of 5 meters in the shaft a tomb robbers' hole gave access to an otherwise unknown early 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty tomb chapel complex. The latter is of the *sqk*-tomb type, with a 4 pillared portico at the façade, and has a total length of 19 meters. It is filled almost to the top of the ceiling with rubble and no evidence has yet been found of its owner's name.

## 2002 DINNER

The 2002 Annual Dinner was held on Saturday June 15<sup>th</sup> at the Heritage Function Centre, Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club. A total of 188 members and guests attended a very enjoyable and friendly event. The after dinner speaker was Dr. Karin Sowada, who when speaking about *The Mummies in the Nicholson Museum*, highlighted the results of recent research undertaken on the mummies by pathologists, anthropologists and DNA experts. Not only is Dr. Sowada the assistant curator of the Nicholson Museum, Sydney University, she also has a close working relationship with Macquarie University being a frequent member of the Egyptian archaeological teams working in Luxor and Saqqara.

A survey conducted on the night revealed that although people don't mind combining the Annual Dinner with a mini-conference (i.e. a series of talks on the ACE excavations at Helwan, Saqqara/Giza and Luxor) on a Sunday, they also enjoyed the present format on a Saturday evening. Consequently in 2003 we will have both! The mini-conference will have an afternoon tea.

Another highlight of the evening was the drawing of the raffle for a beautiful lapis lazuli and antique silver necklace and earrings donated by some members of the Rundle Foundation including Ms. Susanne Binder (silver) and Mrs. Janet Gale (design and manufacture). The Activities Committee would like to thank them for their generosity. The lucky winner was Mr. John Hatzaras, a guest of member Mrs Debbi Jandagi.

We would also sincerely like to thank the following individuals, members and businesses who donated other prizes, adding to the success of the evening: *Alabaster Pyramid Clock* – **Planet Egypt**, 69 Parramatta Road Leichhardt (02 9649 4342); *Egyptian Glass Pyramid Paperweight* – **Sphinx Gallery**, 368 Military Road Cremorne (02 9953 6668); *Podiatry Consultation* – Mrs. Ann Anderson, **Pennant Hills Foot Clinic**, 16 Fisher Avenue Pennant Hills (02 9980 9909); *Hand Painted Papyrus Cards* – **Mr. Andrew Smith**, 1/228 Campbell Parade Bondi Beach (02 9365 1296); *Book Page Weights* – **Nellies Notions**, P.O. Box 15 Bribie Island Qld 4507; *Carry Packs of Wine*, - Mr. & Mrs. James and Philippa Davern, **Wandin Valley Estate**; *Egyptian motif Carry Bag* – **Mr. Bob Parker**; books *Hieroglyphs and the Afterlife* (Forman and Quirke), *Life in Ancient Egypt* (Strouhal), *Egyptian Temples* (Snape) and *Ramesses Egypt's Greatest Pharaoh* (Tyldesley) – **Maat Books**, P.O. Box KL 706 Kings Langley (02 9674 2181); book *Egypt Gods, Myths & Religion* (Gablin) – **Ms. Susanne Binder**; and book *Fragments Icons from Antiquity* (Anna-Meryke) – **Prof. Naguib Kanawati**.

Leonie Donovan

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Saturday, 17<sup>th</sup> August 2002

### *HOME AND AWAY: Intrigues, Crime and Diplomacy in the Ramesside Period*

Two distinguished scholars, Dr Stephen Snape and Dr Joyce Tyldesley will present papers at this year's conference. Dr Snape who lectures at the University of Liverpool will talk about "The Ramesside Fortress at Zawiyet Umm el-Rakham" and "Trade and Foreign Relations in Ramesside Egypt". Dr Tyldesley has a PhD from Oxford and is an honorary research associate at Liverpool. She will discuss "Queens and Conspiracies in Ramesside Egypt" and "Crime and Punishment in Deir el Medina". At the end of the day there will be a session devoted to question time.

**Cost: (includes GST)** Members \$40  
Non-Members \$45

Pensioners, School or University Students \$30  
Groups of 5 or more school students \$25 each  
One teacher accompanying 5 students – FREE

**Venue:** Building E7B, **Mason Theatre**, Macquarie University  
**Time:** 9.30 for 10 am (First paper will commence at 10 am sharp)

**Please note change of venue from previous conference. A Booking Form accompanies this newsletter.** We expect that as usual the conference will be fully booked before the day.

## JANET GALE JEWELLERY

Janet's striking Egyptian inspired jewellery will be on sale as usual at the Annual Conference.

## COURSES and LECTURES

### *Excavations at Helwan – A Study Day*

This study day will focus on the recent discoveries as well as on the results of five years of excavations at this important site. Fully illustrated lectures will be given by the project's director, Dr. Christiana Köhler as well as by members of the Helwan Project. The proceedings of this study day will contribute to the funding of the up-coming field season at Helwan.

**Date:** Saturday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2002. **Time:** 11 am – 4.30 pm **Venue:** to be advised  
**Cost:** \$35 (incl GST)(excludes lunch) A Booking form will accompany next Newsletter

### *The Nubian Pharaohs: Egypt's 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasty - Dr. Michael Birrell*

The pharaohs of the 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasty were invaders from the south. This lecture examines the history of the period and the extensive remains of their buildings in the Theban region.

**Date:** Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> August **Time:** 7.30 pm – 9 pm **Venue:** W5A Theatre 2  
**Cost:** \$11 per person (includes GST). A Booking form accompanies this Newsletter

## CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES FOR 2<sup>nd</sup> SEMESTER 2002

Please see insert for details. Those interested please complete application form on insert or contact Ann Irish on 9850 8833.

### TENTATIVE LECTURES

Two lectures are currently being planned – further details will be confirmed in the next newsletter

#### *New Discoveries at the Sacred Animal Necropolis at Saqqara*

Dr. Paul Nicholson, lecturer in Archaeological Science University of Wales, College of Cardiff  
 Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November – evening.

#### *18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty Theban Tombs*

Professor Gay Robins Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> Oct. – evening

### EGYPT BY TOUCH

The "Egypt by Touch Exhibition" will be on display from 2<sup>nd</sup> July to 19<sup>th</sup> September at the Centennial Bakery Museum, 319-321 Forest Road, Hurstville. Phone 9580 4040 for further details.

### PUBLICATIONS

**Report No. 16** - N. Kanawati, *Tombs at Giza, Kaiemankh (G.4561) and Seshemnefer (G.4940), Volume I*

**Report No. 17** - N. Kanawati and M. Abder-Raziq, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara, Volume VII. The Tombs of Shepsipuptah, Mereri (Merinebti), Heft and Others.*

**Study No. 6** - F. Giles, *The Amarna Age: Egypt.*

**All Reports and Studies - \$44 (incl. GST)**

### A.C.E. OFFICE

Miss Kaliopi Loucas, who has been assisting in the A.C.E. office over the last twelve months, has returned to teaching. We would like to express our appreciation to Kaliopi for her hard work and pleasant company. Our very best wishes go with her.

**Please note this mail out includes an invoice for your membership of the Foundation for 2002-3.**

**CHEQUES PAYABLE:** Please make all cheques payable to MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY and forward directly to this office.

**LATE CHANGES TO ANY EVENTS OR FUNCTIONS:** A recording will be left on our answering machine notifying any changes. Please ring **after 5 pm in the week before any function or event.**

*All mail should be addressed to:*  
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 Macquarie University 2109

*Enquiries*  
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 9 am – 3 pm Monday to Wednesday  
 e-mail: [egyptology@hmn.mq.edu.au](mailto:egyptology@hmn.mq.edu.au)