



# The Rundle Foundation for Egyptian Archaeology

NEWSLETTER NO. 85

July 2003



THE FACILITY FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH AT HELWAN (FARAH) DURING COMPLETION

## REPORT ON THE 6<sup>th</sup> SEASON OF EXCAVATIONS AT HELWAN

The team, which comprised the director, the inspector of antiquities Mr Atef Tawfiq Mohammed, and the following Macquarie University students: Jane Smythe, Christian Knoblauch, Sharan Bradley, Anna Leffers, Frederick Hardtke, Arron MacDonald, Andrew Wiese, Katherine Semler, Natalie Barlow, Ronika Power and Arwen Morath, arrived in Egypt in late November. They started with a three week long study season during which several thousand pottery fragments, uncovered during previous seasons, were fully classified and recorded. Also, a large body of small finds, such as stone vessels of calcite, schist and other materials, were reconstructed, catalogued and photographed. The large quantities of ancient plant remains were again examined by Dr Ahmed Fahmy.

Once this was accomplished, new excavations were resumed in the area of Operation 4, where the mission has been excavating since 1998 and where 11 new tombs were uncovered. This brings the total of new tombs found to 51. The new graves range between late Dynasty 1 and Dynasty 4 and again it appears as though several different levels of society from ancient Memphis are represented in the sample, the poorest being an adult man who was buried without grave goods but whose tightly flexed body was

wrapped in a coarse piece of textile. The tombs of wealthier individuals of late Dynasty 2 were again large staircase tombs with subterranean burial chambers, where the heavily plundered remains of the owners were found together with a range of new types of stone and pottery vessels. One of these staircase tombs contained two bodies, an adult female and a small infant. Of particular interest was the tomb of a young woman of late Dynasty 1 which, while repeatedly robbed in antiquity, contained large amounts of pottery and stone vessels, remains of jewellery and cosmetic utensils as well as several dozen small bone and ivory inlays. These inlays are probably all that is left from a richly decorated wooden box or a gaming board.

It is widely acknowledged that the main phase of occupation in the Helwan necropolis was the Early Dynastic, therefore, the discovery of two Old Kingdom mud brick *mastabas* was rather surprising. Although both structures await further excavation and examination, it is nevertheless possible to state that on the basis of associated ceramics they both date Dynasty 4, hence, they will ultimately allow us to investigate the later history of this cemetery and its relation to the better known Memphite necropolises of Giza, Saqqara, and Dahshur.

After completion of this year's field work on-site, a part of the team moved into the Egyptian Museum in Cairo where they were welcomed by the very friendly curatorial staff. The team continued the recording of the large collection of finds that were discovered last century by Helwan's earlier excavator, Zaki Saad. Among the 300 or so objects studied were highly interesting artefacts, such as cosmetic palettes, jewellery, stone vessels and many objects bearing royal names. The majority of these artefacts have never been published before, and the aim of this work is to assemble a database and record of each piece in order to reconstruct grave assemblages and to better understand the material culture of this important phase of the early history of Egypt's capital city, Memphis.

Apart from the archaeological work, the project has also engaged in on-site construction activity, carried out under the supervision of the Helwan antiquities inspectorate. In 2002 the project was awarded a grant for the construction of an on-site storage and laboratory building by the Institute of Bio-Archaeology in San Francisco/USA. The first stage of the building was completed in late February and inaugurated in a small ceremony by the Institute's director, Mrs Roxie Walker and Mr Mohammed Abdel Gelil, Mr Magdy Abu el-Ela and other representatives of the Supreme Council of Antiquities in Egypt. Its official name is FARAH which stands for Facility for Archaeology Research at Helwan and it will allow the team, for the first time, to enjoy studying and conserving ancient artifacts, floral and human remains indoors, and also to safely store this material for future research.

**E. Christiana Köhler**

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE

### *Sakkara Surprises*

The Annual Conference will be held on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2003 and guest speakers will be *Dr. Martin Raaven and Dr. Rene Van Walsem*, who will be talking about the results of the recent Dutch excavations at Sakkara.

**VENUE:** X5B Theatre 1

**TIME:** 9.30am for 10am start

**N.B:** Please see **Booking Form for the Conference enclosed with this Newsletter.**

### JEWELLERY BY JANET GALE

We have recently been advised by Janet that she will not have her beautiful, Egyptian style jewellery available for sale at this year's conference.



Among her many talents Christiana can number M.C. extraordinaire. Linda Evans' presentation was fascinating and I was struck yet again by the depth of scholarship required by a serious student of Egyptology.

In thanking her, Professor Kanawati reminded us that Egyptology is greatly enriched by the contribution made by experts in other disciplines. It was a happy, interesting evening.

A New Student Member

### WINNERS OF RAFFLE AT ANNUAL DINNER

The following people won prizes in the raffle drawn during the Dinner:

Alison Whitford – Folio Society Book  
 Delma Cavanagh – Necklace;  
 Joan Pollett – 2 Annual Conference Tickets.

### NEW PUBLICATIONS

**Reports 18** - N. Kanawati, *Tombs at Giza, Volume II: Seshathetep/Heti (G5150), Nesutnefer (G4970) and Seshemnefer II (G5080)*.

**Reports 19** –B. Ockinga, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara Vol. VIII: The Tomb of Amenemone*.

### 25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Next year will be the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Egyptology at Macquarie University and there are some new and exciting activities planned. Don't forget to renew your membership and be part of the celebrations.

### A SPECIAL LECTURE BY ROSALIE DAVID

For all further details, please refer to the enclosed information sheet.

### LIFE MEMBERSHIP & RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP FOR 2003-2004

Life Membership for the Rundle Foundation is \$550.00 per person. We now have available a *Double Life Membership for \$650.00 per couple*.

**N.B:** Enclosed with this newsletter is a renewal slip for membership for 2003-2004. **Please note:** to save on costs, all receipts will be forwarded with the next newsletter. If you particularly require your receipt earlier, please advise the A.C.E. office.

### VOLUNTEER ACCOUNTANT

The Rundle Foundation is very grateful to have gained the services of Mrs Debbie Jandagi, who has agreed to look after our accounting requirements for the next year. The Rundle Foundation would like to thank Debbie for her time and expertise.

### A.C.E. OFFICE

The office is staffed between 9.30am and 3pm all days **except** Fridays.

**Cheques** should be payable to MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY and forwarded to this office.

**LATE CHANGES TO ANY EVENTS OR FUNCTIONS:** A recording on our answering machine will notify members of any late changes to events or functions. **Please ring after 5 pm in the week before any function or event.**

*All mail and enquiries should be addressed to:*

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