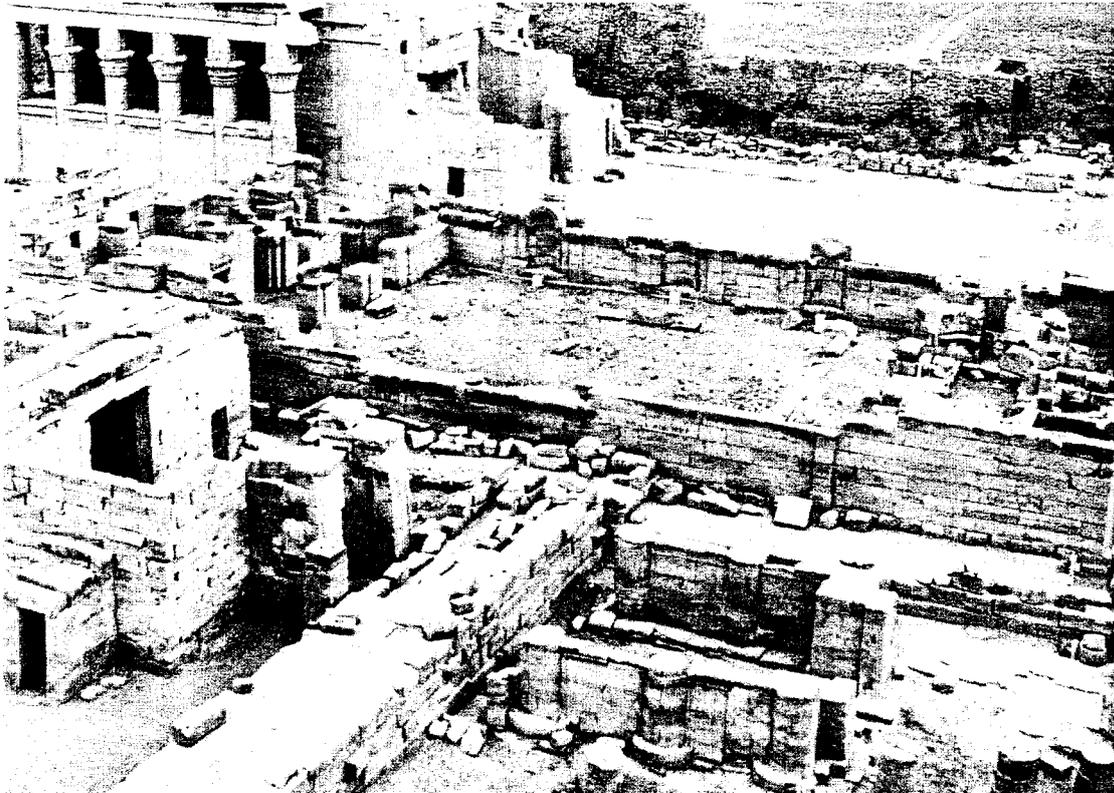


The Rundle Foundation for Egyptian Archaeology

NEWSLETTER NO. 91

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1. THE CHURCH IN THE TEMPLE OF HATHOR AT DENDARA,

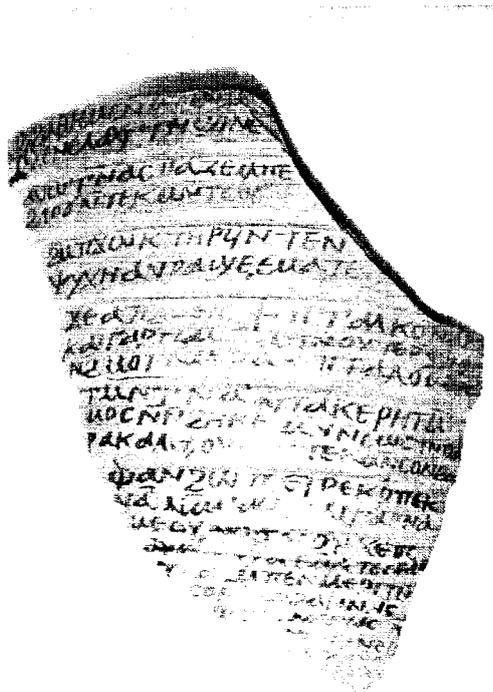
COPTOLOGY COMES TO MACQUARIE

In the olden days of Egyptology, for many scholars and amateurs, Egyptian history stopped with the death of Ramesses II after the dissolution of the great Empire that Thutmosis III had created in the 18th dynasty. Everything was “decline and fall”, interrupted by some desperate if doomed attempts to restore national unity and build upon the glories of the past.

This view is now outdated and justly so: Egypt “after the Pharaohs” is a fascinating study. Egypt of the first Millennium CE was a truly multicultural, multilingual, and multireligious society. At any given time between the First and the Eighth centuries C.E. there were at least three languages spoken simultaneously in Egypt, whose population was made up of various ethnic groups. Alexandria was the centre of philosophy, first pagan and then Christian, and Egypt was home to some of the most prominent figures of the Christian church. One of the most important contributions of the Egyptian church to the history of Christianity was monasticism with such towering figures as St Anthony and St Pachomius. Even after the Arab conquest of Egypt in 641/2 Coptic language, literature and culture flourished within and outside of the numerous monasteries dotting the landscape.

Unfortunately, many of the fascinating remains of post-pharaonic Egypt were destroyed, not so much by the vicissitudes of medieval history, but by a combination of modernization, population increase and scholarly neglect in the Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries. The mud brick architecture, of which most of the material remains of Christian Egypt consisted, was destroyed by peasants digging for fertilizer or by early industrialisation. Egyptologists, on the other hand, neglected what was left in favour of the more outwardly impressive monuments of the pharaohs. This led to the clearing away of Coptic remains as debris, with insufficient or no documentation, especially if they were found inside a pharaonic tomb or temple, as was often the case, since many of the earlier monuments had been reused as living quarters in the Christian era. It is difficult to imagine today that the Temple of Karnak once was home to several monasteries and churches, which have all been cleared away. In other temples at least floors and walls of Christian basilicas are still visible (see picture above).

Debris with writing on it, however, was a different story, and the same archaeologist who had ruthlessly disposed of the mud brick walls of a monastery would pick up a Coptic ostrakon such as the one depicted here and send it to his home museum to be studied by some of his less adventurous colleagues.



2. COPTIC OSTRACON FROM WESTERN THEBES: THE WRITERS, ANANIAS AND PISRAEL, ASK THE RECIPIENT, JOHN, TO HELP A POOR MAN

Coptology, the study of Coptic language, literature, and culture and the Egyptian church, has thus traditionally been considered an appendix of Egyptology, with Egyptologists being mainly interested in the language side, or a minor subject within the vast field of religious studies. However, this important subject deserves to be studied in its own right, and this is precisely what is going to happen at Macquarie University.

From the first semester, 2005, Coptic Studies will be offered as an independent M.A. degree by coursework. The units will cover the study of the Coptic language and various aspects of Coptic civilization, with an emphasis on the Fourth to Ninth centuries C.E., when Egypt was a predominantly Christian country. It will enable students, at the completion of the degree, to read Coptic texts in the original language, to study the enormous political, social and religious changes Egypt underwent in the First Millennium and to have an in-depth view of several of the most

important aspects of Coptic culture: Egyptian monasticism, Coptic art and archaeology, and Coptic literature.

Macquarie University is ideally situated for the introduction of such a degree. The unique placing of First Millennium Egypt at the intersection of many fields is mirrored by the university's strengths in Egyptology, Late Antiquity, Greek papyrology, and Early Christian Studies.

The degree is supported and partly funded by Sydney's large Coptic community of about 50,000, who see their historical and religious roots in the great age of Egyptian Christianity, which will be precisely at the centre of teaching and research in Coptic Studies here at Macquarie.

Photo sources:

1. Massimo Capuani, *Christian Egypt. Coptic Art and Monuments throughout Two Millennia*, Cairo 2002, pl. 79
2. British Museum Department of Egyptian Antiquities, EA 14223, from H. R. Hall, *Coptic and Greek Texts of the Christian Period from Ostraka, Stelae, etc. in the British Museum*, London 1905, p. 84f

Heike Behlmer

THE RE-RECORDING OF DEIR EL-GEBAWI

The cemetery of Deir el-Gebrawi occupies two cliffs, separated from each other by approximately 1.5km. Both groups of tombs were recorded in 1900 by N. de G. Davies and the whole cemetery was published in two volumes in 1902 by the Egypt Exploration Society (formerly called the Egypt Exploration Fund).

Whilst recording these tombs Davies used one of the undecorated tombs on the south cliff as a dwelling for his expedition, which lasted for seven weeks during the northern winter of 1900.

Considering the height of the two cliffs and the distance between them, it is not surprising that Davies' record of the tombs of the southern cliff is far the more complete of the two and that more attention and care was given to the tombs of the southern cliff. Accordingly their publication is more complete than those of the northern group.

The individuals buried at Deir el-Gebrawi are of particular importance. Whilst holding the title of provincial governors of the Upper Egyptian province No. 12, two of them were also viziers of the south and three others added the governorship of Abydos (province No.8) to that of Deir el-Gebrawi.

The Australian Centre for Egyptology has started a new project to re-record these important tombs and to republish them. Being on study leave, Naguib Kanawati spent the month of October at Deir el-Gebrawi laying the groundwork for this project.

MINI CONFERENCE

Our Annual Mini Conference is to be held on 17th April 2005 starting at 1.30pm for 2pm start. The location, as in previous years, will be the **Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club**.

Members are invited to attend in order to hear progress reports of all excavations of the Australian Centre for Egyptology at Helwan, Giza, Saqqara and Thebes. The speakers will include Professor Kanawati and Dr. Köhler. The talks will be held in a relaxed atmosphere with afternoon tea being provided.

COST: \$25 (includes afternoon tea).

NB: Please see Booking Form enclosed with this Newsletter.

CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES IN 2005

The following courses will be available for Continuing Education Students at a cost of \$150 each subject.

AHST 100 *Introduction to Egyptian Archaeology* **Dr Köhler**

This unit will deal with developments in Ancient Egyptian society from the Prehistoric Period to the end of the New Kingdom as reflected in the archaeological record.

AHST 260 *Introduction to Hieroglyphs* **Prof. Kanawati**

This unit is an introduction to the hieroglyphic system of writing and the classical ancient Egyptian language written in this script.

AHST 261 *Egyptian Culture and Society* **Dr. Köhler**

This unit is a study of Egyptian history and civilisation in the predynastic and pharaonic periods. In addition to the historical problems, themes covered will include the development of the state, administration, imperialism, art, architecture, literature and society. *Enrolment may be limited for this unit, which is offered subject to availability.*

For all enquiries please contact Anne Irish on 9850 8833.

QUEEN HATSHEPSUT AND THE EGYPTIAN EMPIRE

Dr Michael Birrell will examine the early 18th Dynasty from the expulsion of the Hyksos down to the end of the reign of Tuthmosis III.

DATE: Saturday 9th April, 2005 COST: \$66 VENUE: To be announced

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Reports 21 - N. Kanawati and M. Abder-Raziq, *Mereruka and His Family, Part 1: The Tomb of Merytet* (Oxford 2004)

Reports 22 - B. G. Ockinga et al, *Amenemone the Chief Goldsmith. A New Kingdom Tomb in the Teti Cemetery at Saqqara* (Oxford 2004)

A.C.E. PUBLICATIONS

Lists of the contents of B.A.C.E. (1990 – 2004) and also the A.C.E. current publications are available on request to anyone interested in purchasing a publication.

The price of **Reports 1 to 18 is \$44 each** (incl.GST) and **Reports 19 onward is \$55 each** (incl. GST). The price of the **Bulletin has been increased to \$12** (incl. GST) **for Members and \$15** (incl. GST) **for Non-members**. These new prices apply to all back issues.

CALICO BAGS

We have a limited number of calico bags left for sale at a cost of \$5.00 per bag. There is a choice of a black or red design. You may purchase these direct from the A.C.E. office or forward a cheque made payable to "Macquarie University" for \$6.45 per bag (includes postage).

All cheques should be made to MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY and all prices quoted include GST

All mail and enquiries should be addressed to

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