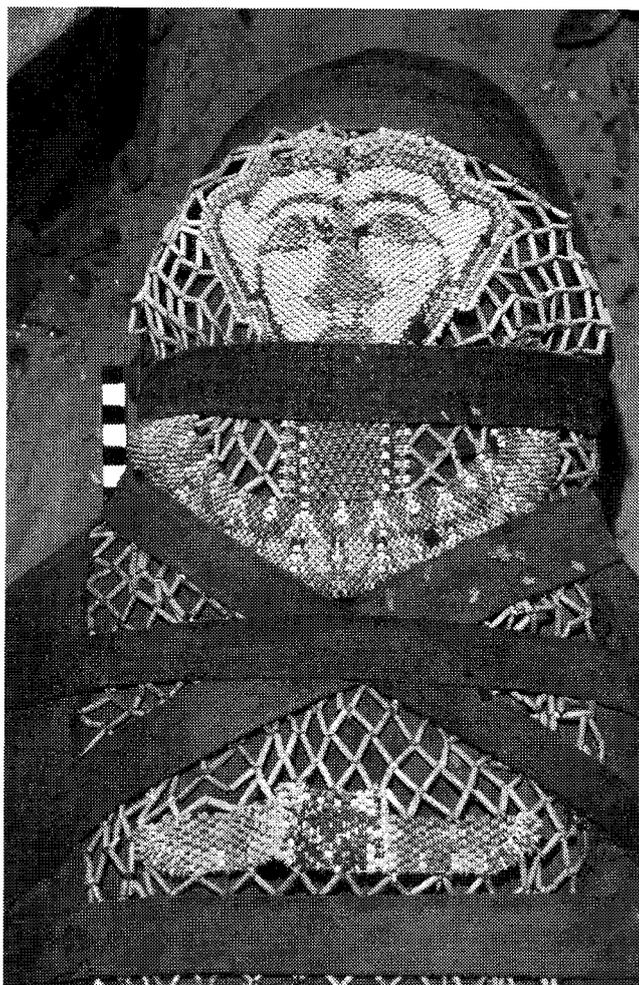




# The Rundle Foundation for Egyptian Archaeology

NEWSLETTER NO. 92

April 2005



BEAD NETTING COVERING ONE OF THE NEWLY DISCOVERED MALE MUMMIES

## A SEASON FULL OF SURPRISES AT SAQQARA

Some of the oldest clichés of archaeology is that the season produced many surprises or unexpected results and that the most fascinating discoveries were made in the last few days of the season. Repeated statements, yes, but absolutely true! I was not looking for mummies or tombs this season, being unusually busy with the massive epigraphic work of recording the magnificent tomb of Mereruka and finishing and completing the work on the tomb of Inu-Min in preparation for publication in 2005. Both men were viziers and both

were buried in the Teti Cemetery, although Inu-Min's service was extended into the reign of Pepy I.

The excavation work this season focused only on the north-west corner of the cemetery and aimed at tracing the outline of the cemetery's enclosure wall. Earlier excavations gave us sufficient evidence for the outline of these walls on the east, west and north sides of the cemetery, with the southern side occupied by the pyramid itself. The excavation in the north-west corner was needed only to confirm what seemed to be the obvious. The west enclosure wall immediately adjacent to the tomb of Mereruka was expected to continue northward to where it would meet the north wall. However, there are likelihoods and certainties and in order to draw a clear line on our map of this important cemetery, the north-west corner had to be cleared. This was not a simple task and was undertaken with some hesitation, as this corner was covered by more than 17 metres of sand and debris, some of which was the dump resulting from earlier excavations.

Contrary to all our expectations this season turned out to be one of the most exciting. Even in the upper level dump some superb amulets were discovered, but the real surprise was when we reached the level approximately 9 metres from the bedrock; three coffins, probably belonging to the Late Egyptian Period 600 B.C., were discovered within 2 metres of each other. Not only were the solid-built wooden anthropoid coffins well preserved, but the mummies inside them with bead-net overlays were also in an excellent state of preservation. The team spent great efforts in clearing the sand without disturbing the bead formation and then using reversible glue to fix them to the mummy bandages themselves, since the threads upon which the beads had been strung had completely disintegrated. On the lower level a burial from the New Kingdom was also recovered along with beautiful cosmetic jars.

Reaching the Old Kingdom level, the real surprise was that the expected enclosure wall simply did not exist in this corner. Either it was not built or that it was removed to allow this already small cemetery to expand westward. Two new Old Kingdom tombs were discovered and, although they do not belong to the massive stone-built mastabas typical of the Teti cemetery, they nevertheless have special importance. One of these two tombs belongs to a man named Meri who was the tutor of the king, perhaps the young Pepy I. The title 'king's tutor' is extremely rare in the Old Kingdom and the discovery of this tomb is therefore a welcome addition to our information. Meri and his wife, Beby, owned an exquisite pair statue made of limestone and coloured.

What started as a low-key excavation turned out to be an exciting, rewarding and very busy season. It also received the attention of the world media and scholarship.

Naguib Kanawati

### **MINI CONFERENCE 2005**

Our Annual Mini Conference is to be held on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2005 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. Professor Naguib Kanawati will speak on his season at Saqqara and Deir el-Gebrawi. His talk will include an illustrated description of the recently publicised mummies found at Saqqara. Dr. Christiana Kohler will give progress reports on all the activities at Helwan, while in the absence of Dr. Ockinga, members of the team at

Thebes will present illustrated talks on the results of the excavation season there. 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. If you have already booked please give this booking form to an interested friend.

### ANNUAL DINNER

The Annual Dinner for 2005 will be held on Saturday July 30<sup>th</sup> in the function rooms at the Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club at 6.30 for a 7 pm start. As we are required to advise the club of the numbers attending, it will be necessary to **reply by June 17<sup>th</sup>**. The cost will be \$50 per person. A booking form is included with this Newsletter.

### ANNUAL CONFERENCE

#### *Abydos, the City of Osiris*

The Annual Conference will be held this year on the 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2005. Guest speakers will be Dr. Steven Harvey from University of Chicago and Dr. Janet Richards who is from the University of Michigan.

The venue will be at Macquarie University in Building X5B. Costs remain the same as last year at Members \$50, Non-Members \$60, Students \$30, Pensioners \$30 and School groups with a minimum of 5 students, \$25 per student – a teacher with 5 students, FREE.

NB: Further details and a booking form will be enclosed with the next Newsletter.

### GRANTS RECEIVED BY MEMBERS OF THE AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR EGYPTOLOGY

The Australian Research Council has awarded two projects of A.C.E. some of the largest grants offered to the Humanities in Australia.

1. "Enduring is the Perfection: State Formation and Socio-Cultural Change in the First Capital of Ancient Egypt (c.3200 to 1069 BCE)" directed by Professor N. Kanawati, Dr. C. Kohler, Dr. B. Ockinga was awarded \$660,000 over a five-year period.
2. "The Design and Decoration of Burial Chambers in Old Kingdom Egypt" directed by Professor N. Kanawati, was awarded \$215,000 over a five-year period.

The A.R.C. described the projects as:

1. "An unprecedented and systematic investigation of the Egyptian state and its extraordinarily rich society and culture over 2,000 years. It will impact profoundly on the disciplines of World History and Egyptology, confirm Australia as a world leader in ancient Mediterranean studies, and provide exciting new opportunities for academic and cultural exchanges between our country and the Middle East. By making a major contribution to preserving, interpreting and explaining Egypt's magnificent but imperilled heritage, it will significantly enhance Australia's image there and underwrite our country's strategic and commercial relations with our most important partner in the Arab world."
2. "It represents a significant attempt to understand the rationale behind the evolving design and decoration of Ancient Egyptian burial chambers. The undertaking of this important research by Australian based scholars will continue to establish Australia as a leading

nation in the important international discipline of Egyptology, while also continuing to forge a relationship with Egypt. During an era in which Australians have in general engaged in discourses of insecurity and threat, our project will resonate with many contemporary concerns, asserting a link between the growing sophistication of society and a concomitant sense of threat and insecurity."

### **“LIFE BEYOND THE TOMB: DEATH IN ANCIENT EGYPT” EXHIBITION**

Naguib Kanawati will be giving a lecture entitled *Murder and Conspiracy in the Egyptian Palace* on Thursday, 21 April 2005, 6.30pm for 7.00pm at the Australian Museum. For bookings and information about the exhibition and some of the exciting events associated with it, go to Museum's web site at <http://www.amonline.net.au/life/exhibition/>

### **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. Ockinga et al, *Amenemone the Chief Goldsmith. A New Kingdom Tomb in the Teti Cemetery at Saqqara* (Oxford 2004)

For the first time our publications will include, in addition to the printed plates in the book, an attached CD also containing all the plates pertaining to the book. This will allow the readers to view the plates on their computer screen, enlarging any section they require. The CD will also include full colour plates (if appropriate) of whatever colours have survived. The CD may also be used in a DVD drive. This will be a standard practice with all our future publications.

Cost of each publication will be \$55 (including GST).

### **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 are \$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).

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**All cheques should be made out to MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY  
(all prices quoted include GST)**

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