



THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGY FUND NEWSLETTER

Issue 6

2020

Deir el-Ballas Expedition

Our goals for the Deir el-Ballas 2019-2020 season, which ran from December 1 to January 25th, were to continue the conservation work at the ‘South Palace’ along with the some of the houses to the west of the North Palace and the North Palace itself. The houses in particular were threatened by the expansion of the modern cemetery, which had destroyed a number entirely. The team consisted of Peter Lacovara as director, surveyor Piet Collet, archaeologists Nick Brown, Tom Hardwick and Victoria Jensen, ceramicist Bettina Bader, palaeoethnobotanist Amr Shahat and architectural conservator Tony Crosby. Richard Harwood from the University of Arizona also came to study the ship timbers found last season. Hassan Mohamed Ali acted as field director organizing all aspects of the site work.

We began by cleaning House D, which we had covered at the end of the season last year to protect it, prior to reconstructing the walls with modern unbaked mud brick made to match the original. Nick Brown began to clean House E, which Peter Lacovara had originally cleared in the 1980’s and had been planned by Reisner in his 1900-1901 season. To the southwest of House E we began exploring a structure that had been cut by a modern roadway that we designated ‘House F.’ Although this house appears to have been originally excavated by Reisner and noted in a 1980 survey, we still found a thick deposit of mud seals and mud ‘eggs’ that appear to have been made as blanks for seals.



A long stretch of the southern enclosure wall was reconstructed in order to protect the North Palace area.

Top: Reconstruction of part of the North Palace casemate core. The new bricks were made thanks to John Sherman of the Luxor office of the American Research Center in Egypt. The massive bricks, which copy those made for the original construction, are a cubit in length.

Lower left: Bettina Bader recording a pot stand recovered from House F.

Lower right: Mud ‘eggs’ found in House F.



We continued the reconstruction of the main façade wall of the ‘South Palace’ that had been undermined by looters. In addition, we began the reconstruction of the southern part of the main enclosure wall of the North Palace in order to protect it from the further encroachment by the modern village. We also began reconstruction of the southwest corner of the casemate core of the North Palace, in danger from a neighboring roadway. In addition, according to the requirements of the Inspectorate office in Qena, we had the area around the North Palace cleared of modern trash dumped around it, and made a survey before the construction of a brick and concrete barrier wall to protect the antiquities area.

We would like to thank Dr. Khaled El-Enany, Minister of Antiquities and Tourism; Dr. Mostafa Waziri, Secretary-General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities; Dr. Nashwa Gaber, Supervisor of the Permanent Committee of the Antiquities Department; Mostafa Hassan, General Director for the Egyptian Committee; Iyman Hindy, General Director of Qena Antiquities; Maryanne Danielle, Director of the Qena Area; Abdullah Mohammed Abdullah, Director of West Bank Antiquities of Qena; Amr Gad el Rab, Head of Foreign Missions and Excavations of Qena; Ahmed Sawarat Mohar and Hashem Hassan Abdel Rady, Conservators of the Qena Area, and our Inspectors, Georgette Wagi Hanna and Marwa Abdel Hamed Denderawi. We also want to thank our antiquities trainee Mohammed Shahat Shamrouk along with Dr. Salima Ikram, Mr. Magdy Aly and the American University in Cairo for their help and support, and to Dr. Pearce Paul Creasman and the University of Arizona Egyptian Expedition for their kind and generous hospitality.



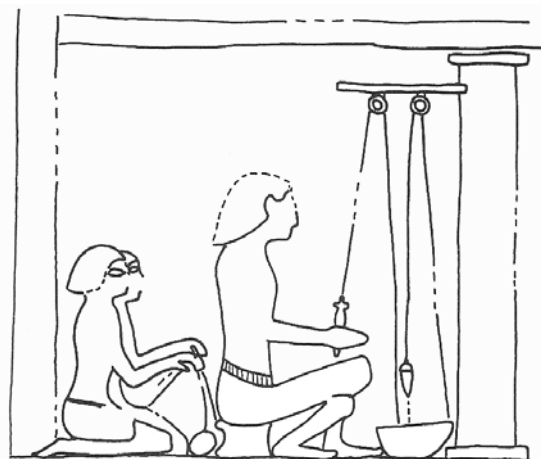
Re-excavating House E

This season Nick Brown re-excavated House E. The structure had been partially excavated and planned by the Hearst Expedition in 1900-1901 and was re-excavated by Cynthia Shartzer in 1985. One small section was exposed to floor level and was revealed to be a textile workshop in a remarkable state of preservation. A wooden beam that would have held a grasped spindle for making thread was found beside a column base, which had a socket cut into it to support the beam. Beside that was a limestone saddle-shaped bench for the weaver to sit on and a pottery spinning bowl, as depicted in a scene showing a weaver's shop from the tomb of Djehutynefer. There was even a wool roving and woollen thread in the fill associated with the finds.

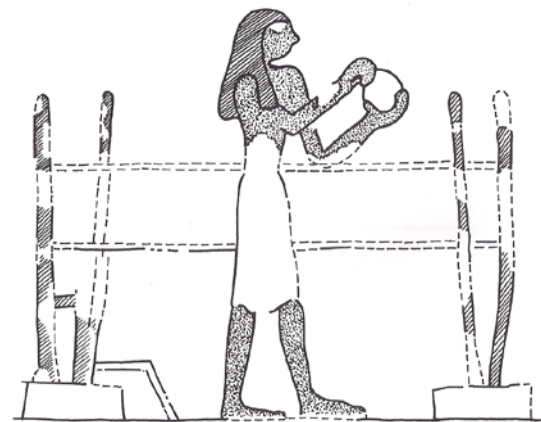
At the north end of the section were two mud-brick bins, one of which still contained an upright post, as shown on a tomb painting in the tomb of Neferhotep depicting the manufacture of textiles using a warping frame.

While the elements had remained intact in House E, looters had dug a large hole through the center of the adjoining unexcavated room, although a great deal was left, including Egyptian pottery, fragments of Nubian Kerma ware and a Canaanite amphora. The remains from just this small area illustrate the great potential Deir el-Ballas has to help us understand daily life in ancient Egypt.

Top: Section of House E, showing the weaving installations (left) and the looters' hole (right).



A depiction of making thread with a grasped spindle, from the tomb of Djehutynefer.



A scene showing a woman weaving at a warping frame, from the tomb of Neferhotep.

Oral History Project

This coming year we hope to add more interviews to our series on the oral history of American Egyptology. The recordings are posted on the Fund website and YouTube channel, and made freely available to whoever would like to use them.

Helene Kantor Symposium

Last October 4th and 5th, the Fund co-hosted a Symposium on the art of the ancient world with the Pennsylvania chapter of the American Research Center in Egypt. This was on the occasion of the Helene J. Kantor Centennial.

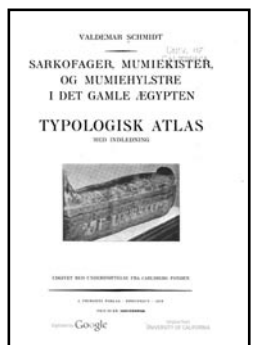
Helene Kantor (July 15, 1919-January 13, 1993), was a pioneer at a time when there were few women in field archaeology and one of the last of the great scholars to cover the entire ancient world. She published articles and papers and taught classes in Iranian art and archaeology, Mesopotamian and Egyptian art and architecture, and Aegean art.

The papers given at the symposium are being edited and should be published this year.



Fund Publication Projects

In addition to the planned Deir el-Ballas publications, the Ancient Egyptian Heritage and Archaeology Fund has undertaken a number of publication projects, including a series under its own imprint, to make available and update important early Egyptological publications. The first of the projected volumes is an English translation by Ziff Jonker of Valdemar Schmidt's *Sarkofager, Mumiekister og Mumiehylstre i det gamle Aegypten*, the classic work on ancient Egyptian funerary art, at present available only in Danish. It is currently being edited by Sue D'Auria and Jonathan Elias. The Fund will also make available a previously unpublished manual on archaeological techniques written by George Andrew Reisner.



The Ancient Egyptian Heritage and Archaeology Fund is a private nonprofit organization with a mission to support the research and conservation of Egyptian history and culture. It seeks to safeguard, record and publish sites and monuments at risk from agricultural and urban expansion, looting, vandalism and climate change.

The organization will also work to foster a greater awareness of the risks to Egypt's archaeological heritage and to promote education and training in site management and protection.

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