

Deir el-Ballas Report for Qena Inspectorate Office

Having been delayed by the pandemic, we returned to Deir el-Ballas on May 3rd 2021 for a brief season to continue the restoration work in the North Palace and the 'South Palace' as well as exploring what we had previously thought was the administrative area for the settlement located in the mouth of the South Wadi. Given the excessive heat and Ramadan we are worked shorter hours on site from 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and followed the new MSA Covid regulations.

We began where we left off last season working to stabilize and reconstruct the collapsed façade of the 'South Palace.' We were able to stabilize the façade wall as well as the inner stairway wall that had further collapse from looters pulling out a wooden beam.



Reconstruction work on the 'South Palace.'

After the end of last season a brick, steel and concrete wall was begun between the school and the North Palace and we hope to finish a large part of it next season. Given its location between the school and North Palace and facing the modern village we commissioned famed Egyptian artist Alaa Awad <<http://alaa-awad.com>> to create a mural for it that will explain the importance and history of the site.



Barrier wall under construction

We have also begun clearing debris from the South Wadi that was surveyed by Peter Lacovara And Mark Lehner in 1983. In this area that had not been excavated before by the Hearst Expedition we found a dense cluster of buildings resembling somewhat the Central City at Tell el-Amarna. It is an important feature of the site that needs to be explored and preserved. We exposed two large areas here (tentatively designated Areas 1 and 2). In just cleaning the debris off the surface we can see two very different patterns of construction: a very long, large building in area 2 made up of a number of small rooms, and in area 1 we see a cluster of large and small structures extending over a broad area. This further supports our theory that this area of the site, like the Central City at Tell el-Amarna was an administrative district. Moreover, the location of these structures at the mouth of a wadi running down to the river may signal that this was the location of the port for the settlement.



South Wadi area.

After we finished up our restoration work on the 'South Palace' we moved on to the North Palace and undertook some more reconstruction on the casemates at the western end of the Palace. Piet Collet completed surveying the "South Palace" and planned the structures in South Wadi areas 1 and 2. Ayman Demarani photographed the objects and a number of features at the site. We completed work on site on May 17.

We also were invited to make a presentation about our work to the Governor of Qena Province, Major General Ashraf Al-Dawdi that was posted on his official website, as well as covered in the local press.



Restoration work on the North Palace

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, and Mostafa Hassan, General Director for the Egyptian Committee. We are particularly grateful to lyman Hindy, General Director of Qena Antiquities, for all his encouragement, help and support. We would also like to thank Maryanne Danielle, Director of Qena Area, Abdullah Mohammed Abdullah, Director of West Bank Antiquities of Qena, Amr Gad el Rab, Head of Foreign Missions and Excavations of Qena, and our wonderful inspector, Mohammed Shahat Shamrouk along with Dr. Salima Ikram, Mr. Magdy Aly and the American University in Cairo and the American Research Center in Egypt for their help and support and to Dr. Pearce Paul Creasman and the University of Arizona Egyptian Expedition for their kind and generous hospitality.