

Deir el-Ballas Report for Qena Inspectorate Office

We began work at Deir el-Ballas on January 6, 2022. We began by continuing the restoration on the “South Palace” and have now largely finished the façade wall and the inner stairway wall and began plastering the stairway to protect it. During the cleaning to cap and stabilize the inner stairway wall, we discovered more wood fragments embedded in the mud-brick including a cedar fragment that had been painted red with pegged mortise and tenons, an important innovation in the evolution of ancient Egyptian shipbuilding. Another piece had a heavily worn surface and was perhaps originally part of the ship’s decking. Both fragments were firmly embedded in the wall and could not be taken out safely and so they were recorded and covered over to protect them. Piet Collet and Ellen Morris investigated the top of the platform but it had been so turned over even before Reisner’s excavations in 1900, that little or nothing of the original surface seems to have survived. Nicholas Brown continued his work in House E, defining the periphery of the structure and finishing up the interior rooms.



The work of restoration on the 'South Palace' is now almost complete.

Sara Ahmed Abdelaziz and Hassan Elzawy began working with the team on the restoration of the casemates in the North Palace. We were alerted by the police that there were ancient remains at the east end of the South Wadi and Piet Collet surveyed the area which did contain traces of mudbrick structures that are ephemeral and threatened by encroachment from the modern village and pottery workshops. While no excavation work is planned in this area this season, it is important for the expedition to map and plan these structures properly for future archaeological investigation.



Restoration work in the North Palace.

Ellen Morris, Sara Ahmed Abdelaziz and Hassan Elzawy, began excavation work in House F, a structure that lies 32.5 meters southeast of House E in the North Suburb. This is the structure where the expedition discovered the hundreds of mud “eggs” back in the 2019-2020 season which were possibly seal blanks for administrative purposes. As so far revealed by the excavation work this season, the house has many in-situ deposits of archaeological materials such as beads, needles, and grinding stones. Numerous fragments of storage jars and household pottery were discovered lying on the floor of the courtyard of the structure. An enigmatic structure towards the center of the North Palace Main Enclosure wall turned out to house a Coptic baby burial excavated by Nicholas Brown, who also continued his work of last season on House E. We hope to be finished with the recording of these two houses next season and to begin their reconstruction and we completed work on February 13.



House F with column base.

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