



THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGY FUND NEWSLETTER

Issue 9

2023

Deir el-Ballas Expedition



The completed conservation work on the "South Palace."

Our excavations took place between January 3rd and January 30th, 2023. The restoration on the "South Palace" is now largely complete. It had suffered from looters emptying out some of the casemate foundations and digging holes beneath and through the façade of the eastern wall of the platform. This had caused significant parts of the brick facing to collapse. We re-built the façade that served as a retaining wall for the structure, which was largely composed of fill behind it, with modern, unbaked mud bricks. These were stamped with an AUC logo and made to the same size as the original "South Palace" bricks, with the guidance of earthen architecture conservation specialist Anthony Crosby.

The structure was in fact not a royal residence, but served as sort of a watchtower with a platform reached by a broad staircase. The entire structure was built around the top of a natural hill enclosed by brick casemates to create the impression of a fortified hilltop building. During the cleaning to cap and stabilize the inner stairway wall, we discovered some wood fragments embedded in the mud-brick that are probably re-used ship timbers from the Theban fleet used to expel the Hyksos.

The actual royal residence, the North Palace, is an enormous structure over 200 meters wide by more than 350 meters long. This palace was situated in the approximate center of the ancient settlement. It was being encroached upon by the modern town to the south and the modern cemetery to the north. We have begun rebuilding the palace's casemate foundations and will re-fill them to prevent trash being dumped there, and to restore the original paving to make a platform for tourists. We are also rebuilding the original enclosure wall of the palace to act as a protective barrier for the structure and to demarcate the antiquities area.

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The Romano-Coptic additions to the North Palace were investigated by Gillian Pyke to gain a better understanding of the later occupation of the structure. To the west of the North Palace, we continued our work on a group of houses that were partially destroyed by the expansion of the modern cemetery. Ana Oliveira took over the excavation of House F, tracing the outer extensions of the structure, while Nicholas Brown continued his work on House E and was joined by Matei Tichindelean. They both explored the periphery areas of House E and what ancient activities may have taken place outside in the courtyard areas.

Gillian Pyke investigating a Coptic structure built within the North Palace.



Another group of dwellings to the north of the North Palace was investigated in 2023 by Victoria Shakespeare. This new settlement area of the site was previously excavated by George Reisner in 1900, but never properly mapped or documented. Over the course of two weeks, the Expedition cleaned the surface of three buildings (North Structure 1, North Structure 2, and the South Structure) in order to delineate their walls and to document and map them, in the course of which a largely complete ceramic oven was discovered.

Nick Brown and Piet Collet excavating the oven.



Matei Tichindelean photographing House E.

Bettina Bader rejoined us this season to continue her studies on the ceramics from the excavation and was assisted by Hassan Elzawy. Amr Shahat returned this season and was joined by Clare Malleeson to study the botanical remains. Piet Collet continued the survey of the site and the documentation of the artifacts along with Sarah Ahmed Aziz.




Bettina Bader examining ceramics.




Studying botanical remains.


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To help visitors understand the site and to encourage tourism, two signs were created for the North Palace and "South Palace," which were approved by Dr. Bassem Ibrihim. These provide information in English and Arabic about the history of the site and its importance. We hope to have these installed on-site shortly. The Qena Inspectorate Office has made a request for an additional guard house near the North Place as well as a lighting system that could be devised to illuminate the structure at night.







North Palace in 2017, prior to restoration
القصر الشمالي عام 2017، قبل ترميمه



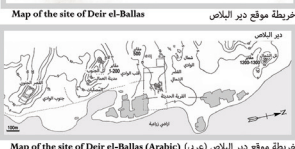
Reconstruction of the North Palace by Fran Weatherhead
إعادة تصوير للقصر الشمالي بواسطة فران ويذرهد



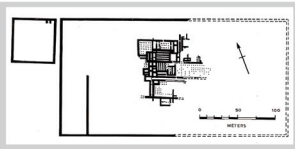
Restoration work being conducted at the North Palace
أعمال الترميم بالقصر الشمالي



Map of the site of Deir el-Ballas
خريطة موقع دير البallas



Map of the site of Deir el-Ballas (Arabic)
خريطة موقع دير البallas (عربي)



Ground plan of the North Palace
مخطط للقصر الشمالي

دير البallas، القصر الشمالي

أحد أهم المواقع الأثرية في مصر القديمة، ويعد من المستوطنات المصرية القديمة التي تعود إلى الفترة الفرعونية (حوالي 1550-1776 قبل الميلاد). اكتشفت المستوطنة على الضفة الغربية لنهر النيل، على بعد حوالي 2 كيلومتر من مركز مدينة قنا. اكتشف الموقع في عام 1900 من قبل جورج أندرو رينير وبعثة جيست بجامعة كاليفورنيا، وتم ترميم الموقع بشكل الجماعي الأمريكية بالقاهرة ومركز البحوث الأثري في مصر.

Deir el-Ballas: The North Palace

Deir el-Ballas is an important site, both as one of the few preserved pharaonic Egyptian settlements as well as the forward capital for the Theban kings during the Hyksos expansion (around 1576-1550 B.C.). It stretched out on the desert edge of the Nile floodplain for a distance of about 2 kilometers and at its center was the North Palace, built by King Senusert III as his campaign palace and also used by Kamose and Ahmose. The palace was built on two levels, the upper one was built on casemate foundations: rectangular boxes for mud brick that contained rocks, sand and gravel that were paved over with mud brick to form a level surface. Unfortunately, only the foundations remained when it was excavated, but the lower level had a series of limestone column bases indicating that there were a number of columned halls.

The entire palace was surrounded by a large walled enclosure 150 meters wide by 300 or more meters long. The palace was the center of a town that included houses for the court officials, a workmen's village, chapels, an administrative center and cemeteries. The site was largely abandoned after the defeat of the Hyksos but during the Christian Period a Coptic church was built on top of the ruins of the North Palace.

The site was first excavated in 1900-1901 by George Andrew Reinier and the Hearst Expedition of the University of California. It has been restored thanks to the American University in Cairo and the American Research Center in Egypt.

For additional information about the North Palace:

لتحميل على معلومات إضافية عن "القصر الشمالي"

The Fund looks forward to future collaboration with the Antiquities Inspectorate in Qena and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities to find additional ways to protect and preserve this important site. We would like to thank Ahmed Issa, Minister of Tourism and 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; Dr. Ayman Ashmawy, Head of the Egyptian Antiquities Sector; Dr. Mohamed Abdel Badie, Director of the Central Administration of Upper Egypt; Dr. Fathi Yasen, General Manager of Upper Egypt; Ayman Hindy, General Director of Qena Antiquities; Maryanne Danielle, Director of Qena Area; Abdallah Mohamed, Director of West Bank Antiquities of Qena; Amr Gad el Rab, Head of Foreign Missions and Excavations of Qena; Sayed Abed, General Director of Conservator of the Qena Area; and our Inspectors, Mohammed Mohammedin Osman and Mohammed Shahat Shamrouk.

We are grateful for the hard work and dedication of the expedition staff of both seasons, Piet Collet, Nicholas R. Brown, Bettina Bader, Amr Shahat, Claire Malleson, Matei Tichindelean, Sarah Ahmed Aziz, Hassan Elzawy, Ana Oliveira, Victoria Shakespeare and Gillian Pyke. Their efforts were greatly facilitated in every way by Hassaan Mohamed Ali.

We would also like to thank 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.



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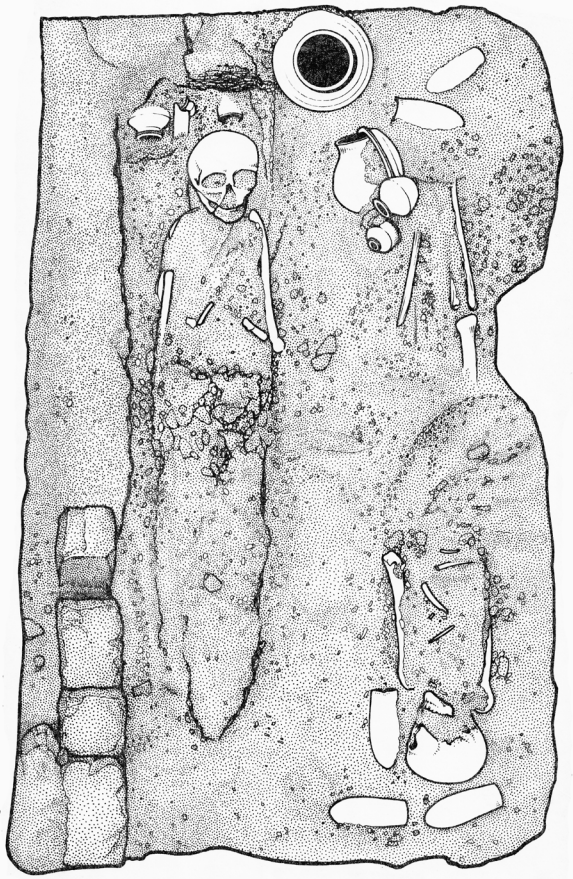
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Fund Publication Projects

We hope this year to finish the manuscript for the first volume of the publication of George Andrew Reisner's original excavations at the site as the Phoebe A. Hearst Expedition of the University of California in 1900-1901. The first volume will concentrate on the cemeteries, with a catalog of the tombs by Victoria Jensen, and discussions of the pottery by Bettina Bader and Christian Knoblauch and of the artifacts by Peter Lacovara. This work has been funded by the Shelby White and Leon Levy Fund for Archaeological Publications and by donations to the Ancient Egyptian Heritage and Archaeology Fund.



Tomb drawing by Andrew Boyce.

In addition to the Deir el-Ballas publication, we are working on a number of additional publication projects, including studies on the Palace-City of Amenhotep III at Malqata and the Treasure of Queen Ahhotep.

The Oral History of American Egyptology

We are planning to continue our important series of interviews with the "next generation" of scholars still involved with fieldwork. This will include Dr. Betsy Bryan, Dr. Elizabeth Bolman, Dr. Sameh Iskander and Dr. Leslie Ann Warden.

All these exciting projects do present fundraising challenges and we welcome your suggestions and help.

Please encourage anyone you know who might make a contribution to the Fund at:

<https://www.ancientegyptarchaeologyfund.com/donate/>

You can also donate online via our Facebook page

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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.

To subscribe to this newsletter and help support the Fund's work, please make a tax-deductible contribution to:

The Ancient Egyptian Heritage and Archaeology Fund

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