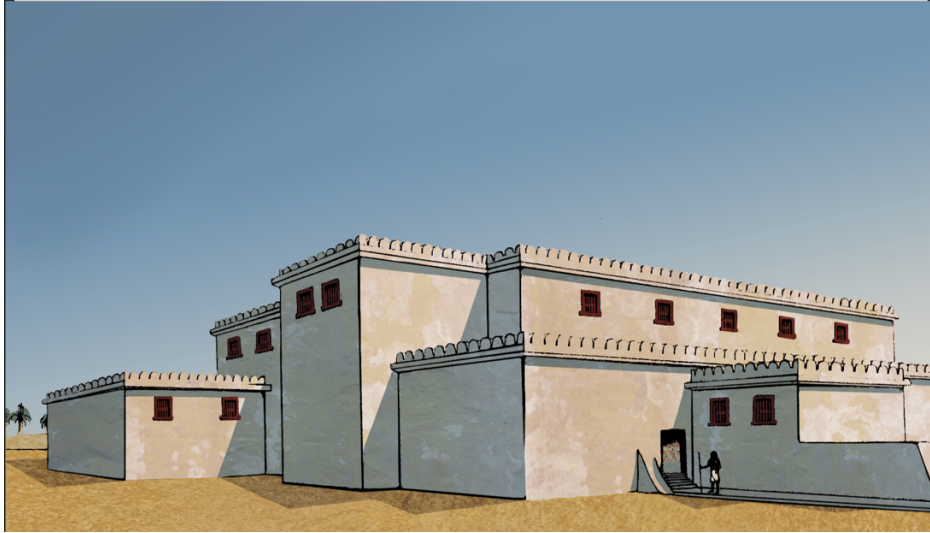


## History of Deir el-Ballas

As the capital city and administrative center of the Theban kings during the Hyksos expulsion during the 17th Dynasty, Deir el-Ballas is of tremendous importance in the history and archeology of Egypt. The site is located on the west bank of the Nile to the north of the town of Ballas proper by the villages of El-Deir and El-Deir el-Gharbi.



*Figure 1: Reconstruction of the North Palace by Fran Weatherhead and Andrew Boyce.*

At the center of the site is a monumental structure known as the North Palace that must have served as the campaign palace for the Kings Seqenenre, Kamose, and Ahmose. Around the palace, there are a series of houses, including large villas for the royal court, a workmen's settlement with cult chapels, storage magazines, and cemeteries. At the southern end of the site is a massive watchtower known as the "South Palace," which gives a commanding view of the Nile and the territory around. It would seem to be from here that the Theban fleet was marshaled and sailed north to victory.



*Figure 2: Our excavation work of the Coptic Monastery site*

The site was later reused during the Late Antique Period to host a local Christian community of Coptic monks. They built a monastery over the ancient palace remains, and thus gave the name “Deir” to the modern villages nearby.

### History of Excavation



*Figure 3: An Egyptian team excavating one of the cemetery sites and the village of El-Deir el-Gharbi in 1900.*

The site was first excavated by the Hearst Expedition from the United States under the direction of George Reisner in 1900-1901. In order to clarify the records of that expedition and publish the site, four seasons of archaeological work were undertaken by Peter Lacovara between 1980-1986 under the sponsorship of the American Research Center in Egypt and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston in the United States.

### Current Work on Site



*Figure 4: Restoration work at the North Palace.*

The goals of the new work of the Deir el-Ballas Expedition are twofold, to publish George Reisner’s original excavation records along with our new archaeological research at the site- to understand the previous excavations and to protect and preserve the ancient monuments. Since it is also one of the few settlement sites to be extensively cleared, Deir el-Ballas also provides us with important information into the daily life of the ancient Egyptians. Information like what the people ate, what crafts they made at home, and what the quality of life was like for them in Pharaonic Egypt.



*Figure 5: Restoration work at the “South Palace”.*

### **Site Protection and Conservation**

Since 2017 the Deir el-Ballas Expedition has been working together with the Antiquities Inspectorate of Qena to restore and protect these archaeological remains and to preserve this important site for future generations. Our work includes restoring the monuments like the North Palace and “South Palace” with modern mud-bricks, to prevent erosion and decay. We also are developing the site for the local community to enjoy and to bring international tourists to the area.



*Figure 6: The Deir el-Ballas Expedition Team.*