

bulletin

of the American Research Center in Egypt

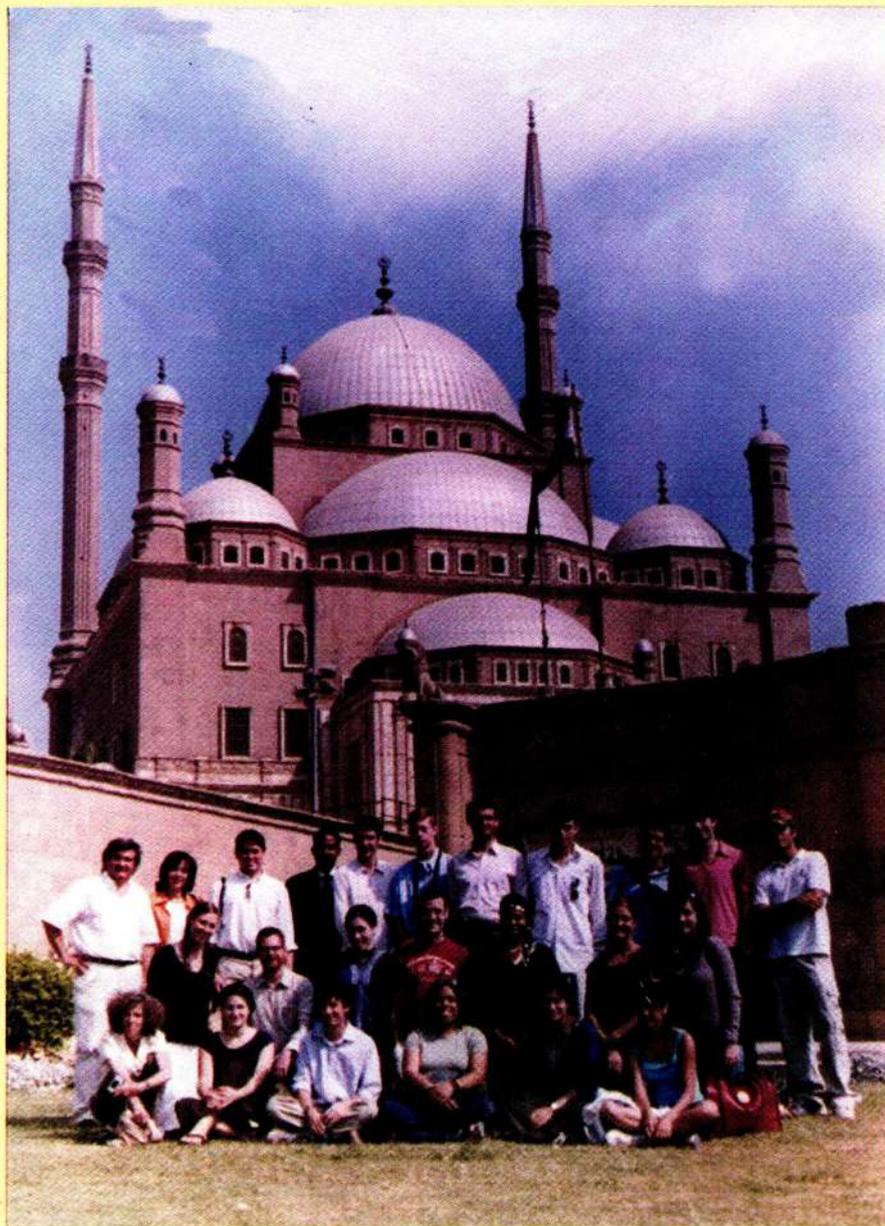
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Arabic Language Instruction at ARCE

Daniel Beaumont

In June of 2006 ARCE broke new ground by offering - for the first time - a full-fledged course in Arabic. The program was part of a larger initiative called the "Critical Language Scholarships Program," and was funded by the US State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) through a grant to the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC). This pilot program ran from its orientation in Washington, D. C. on June 9th through to the students' departure from Cairo on July 26, 2006. The program is designed to introduce and encourage American college-level and graduate students to study "critical languages", including Arabic.

The goal for ARCE's program was to provide beginner-level Arabic language training within an enriching cultural experience that would instill an appreciation



Students visit the Citadel with guide Dr. Tarek Swelim

in the students of not only the Arabic language, but also of the rich cultural heritage of Egypt.

On June 9th twenty students selected by CAORC to study Arabic at ARCE's Cairo headquarters assembled in Washington D.C. for their orientation sessions arranged by CAORC. Among the speakers were Thomas Farrell, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Academic Programs at the US State Department, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, who described the purpose of the program and its importance. Another State Department official spoke about security, and a consultant in cross-cultural training discussed "culture shock." Then I, as the ARCE-selected Cairo Program Director, spoke about Egypt and the program.

Two days later, on June 12, Shari Saunders assistant director of ARCE greeted the students, freshly arrived in Cairo, for their Cairo orientation session. Also participating in the session were ARCE's distinguished Associate Director for Government Relations, Mme. Amira Khitab; Michael Jones, who now oversees ARCE's conservation initiatives; and Kathleen Scott, who welcomed the students on behalf of ARCE.

Then the students began their classes under the tutelage of five Egyptian Arabic language instructors led by Nancy Fahmy of the Episcopal Training Center in Cairo. They were divided into two groups: a group of nine students with no prior

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training

Clockwise from top:

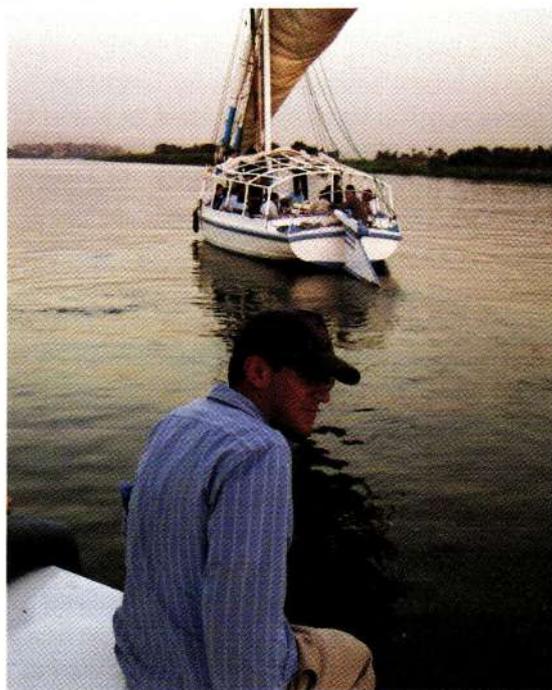
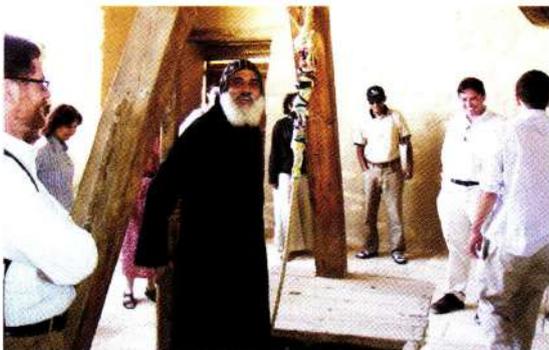
Ambassador Francis Ricciardone discusses his career with students at the American Embassy.

Student Samuel Kigar, of Reed College enjoys a relaxing evening faluka ride on the Nile.

Father Maximous el Anthony gives students a tour of St. Anthony's Monastery near the Red Sea.

ARCE director Gerry Scott holds an informal review session during a visit to the Red Sea.

Photos: Kathleen Scott



me) cosmopolitan city. I only regret that we have to leave..."

"This was my first time out of the US and I am so glad I came. The culture and food are amazing, and I am in love with the language."

"Speaking with locals, visiting sites, experiencing the culture first hand were all invaluable experiences that cannot be learned elsewhere. Being in Cairo brought the language alive."

"My Arabic has improved, but more than just a classroom setting, this has been an incredible cultural learning experience."

From the very beginning the students threw themselves into the study of Arabic with enthusiasm, and they plunged into the whirl of Cairo with a similar enthusiasm. All those involved at ARCE look forward to the possibility of continuing this exciting new summer program next year. ■

The Tausert Temple Project and AEF Student Training Grant

Richard H. Wilkinson



RICHARD WILKINSON is a Professor of Egyptian Archaeology at the University of Arizona and Director of the University of Arizona Egyptian Expedition.

Excavation of the area to the west of the courtyard of the Tausert Temple site.
Photo: Richard H. Wilkinson

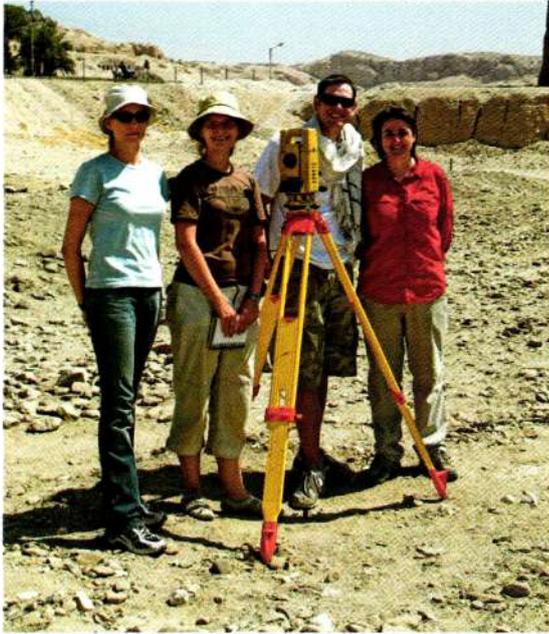
Tausert, the little known queen who ruled as a king at the end of the 19th dynasty – and who, as Manetho tells us, is mentioned by Homer as the queen of Egypt at the time of the Trojan War – largely remains a mysterious figure to us today. While her tomb in the Valley of the Kings is well known, little is known of the memorial temple she constructed in Western Thebes. The site was briefly examined by William Flinders Petrie in 1896¹ and has since been largely ignored - both because the temple was never completed in antiquity, and because it has long been presumed that Petrie's examination of the site was thorough. After careful study of Petrie's field notes showed the very limited actual time spent on the site, however, the University of Arizona Egyptian Expedition decided

that it would be extremely worthwhile to clean, record, plan, conserve and publish the remains of this largely unexamined temple. The Supreme Council of Antiquities kindly granted us permission to begin this project,² and we completed initial field seasons in 2004 and 2005³ and a third season in May, 2006.

Rediscovery of an "Excavated" Site

In our first two seasons we cleared and recorded the deep sand-filled foundation trenches and surface areas at the sides of the temple's courtyard area and the great trench that runs across the width of the temple at the rear of this court. It was obvious from the beginning of our excavation that many of the areas we were uncovering had not been examined

training



AEF Student Training Grant recipients (Left to Right) Jennifer Harshman, Ashleigh Goodwin, Damian Greenwell, Heather Kelly.
Photo: Richard H. Wilkinson

previously. In our latest season we began to push back into the inner part of the site and our work revealed once again that Tausert's memorial temple was only partially explored by Petrie and that the monument was further developed than he had realized based on his very limited examination. Although Petrie published a map of the temple, ostensibly recording the foundation trenches that had been dug across the site, he did not accurately map these trenches (missing many of them and guessing others) and so we are constructing a properly surveyed map of the site as well as a fully detailed AutoCAD model which will be used as the basis for an integrated matrix containing all our data.

Because Petrie's men also only examined very limited areas of the site, our Expedition has been able to learn much more about the nature and history of the temple's development through careful and systematic excavation. Many areas that we have cleared in our first three seasons were clearly untouched by Petrie's men, and even in previously worked areas numerous small artifacts were found (including faience plaques, amulets and beads, as well as ostraca, shabtis and other objects placed in the foundation trenches by the ancient Egyptians) - showing that Petrie's men were not at all thorough even in areas where they did dig. For example, in the

2006 season we found hundreds of beads and amulets as well as a faience plaque with the throne name of Tausert, *Sitre-Meritamun*, in a single, previously "excavated" two-meter excavation unit (TA14:16.).

During our 2006 season specialist team members studied our pottery and small finds in detail. Rexine Hummel (ceramicist) and Lyla Brock (archaeologist and artist) studied, recorded and illustrated as many of the finds as possible. A number of wares - including imported vessels - were found to be present, and it became apparent that the ceramic material from the site is of particular value because well dated assemblages of the late New Kingdom are very few in number and the corpus from our own site is from a sealed level which can be quite precisely dated because of a foundation inscription which we discovered this season (see below). Due to the potential value of our ceramic corpus, every diagnostic sherd from the foundation sand level was recorded, drawn and described with special attention to its ware and surface treatment. The body sherds found with the diagnostic pieces were also sorted, counted, and described.

Old Features and New Facts

Even more significant for our understanding of this temple than the many small artifacts we found in our recent seasons, however, are the architectural features which we uncovered. Literally dozens of small mud brick walls have been uncovered in the foundation trenches we have excavated so far - often only a meter or so apart - and these walls seem to be unique as nothing like them has been found in other Theban temples. Whether they played some role in the stabilization of the foundations is yet unclear but they provide a good example of features not found or noted by Petrie yet which are clearly important aspects of the site.

A good deal of building in mud brick seems to have been accomplished in Tausert's Temple in fact (an aspect of the site which is being closely examined in our excavation) and a number of mud bricks with cartouche stamp impressions were found in the 2006 season. While many of the impressions are unclear or only partly legible (which is common for stamped bricks), some of the ones we found were readable. In



Ashleigh Goodwin works with Lyla Brock in recording the hieratic foundation inscription found in the 2006 season
Photo: Richard H. Wilkinson

addition to the throne name of Tausert, bricks with the apparent cartouches of Thutmose IV and Merenptah indicate that building materials from these earlier royal memorial temples -located to the immediate north and south of our site- were used in the initial construction of Tausert's monument.

The rear part of the unfinished temple appears to be much better preserved than the outer courtyard area which appears to have been exposed to the elements over a long period of time. While some jumbled stone foundation blocks were found in the trenches of the outer courtyard area which were excavated in our previous seasons, it was clear that most of these huge blocks must have been robbed by later rulers for use in their own building projects. In the part of the inner temple area cleared in the 2006 season, however, we began to find these massive stone blocks *in situ*, on top of the layer of clean sand placed in the trenches by the ancient Egyptians. One of these foundation blocks in our excavation unit TA13:5 revealed an important hieratic inscription⁴ on its upper surface which seems to date the founding - or more likely, the expansion - of

Tausert's Temple in her eighth year, a fact with a number of historical implications.

Physical and Virtual Conservation

In the process of clearing the temple's foundation trenches and surface areas we continue to carefully assess each 2 meter excavation unit in terms of the condition of the walls and floor of each trench and the condition of the surfaces between the trenches. Every unit is assessed as being intact, good, fair, poor or destroyed. We also assess all the mud brick walls and foundation pits uncovered in the trenches in this manner. This data is being entered into a database program which will enable us to record the level of preservation needed for each section and to group units of similar level of preservation needs together for parallel assessment and treatment. Temporary stabilization of some of the temple's features has already been enacted and permanent stabilization measures are to be put in place as our project continues.

Eventually we plan to incorporate all our data for the site into a three-dimensional GIS model based on

our completed AutoCAD file. This will give full and immediate access to all excavation and survey data from our project. In the completed program, clicking on any area of the map of the temple site will show full excavation, artifact, feature, unit and conservation details for that locus. The GIS model will incorporate textual and photographic evidence as well as statistical analysis of the site's data being built up as our project continues.

AEF Student Training Grant

The nature of the Tausert Temple site provides an excellent opportunity for the field training of graduate students in Egyptology. Because the site combines some areas which have previously been worked and others which are untouched, teaching of standard excavation and conservation techniques can be combined with advanced techniques of working with complex, previously disturbed strata. Thus, our third season was also utilized as a Student Training Project kindly supported by a grant from ARCE's Antiquities Endowment Fund.⁵ Four graduate level students from the University of Arizona were selected as grant recipients and a program of on-site training was developed to give these students further experience in excavation methods and procedures in Egyptian archaeology. The students were Damian Greenwell (prior training at Pima College and University of Arizona), Ashleigh Goodwin (prior training at University of Liverpool and University of Arizona), Heather Kelly (prior training at University of Pennsylvania and University of Arizona) and Jennifer Harshman (prior training at University College London and University of Arizona).

Before the season was initiated the student trainees participated in class-work covering some of the theoretical and synthetic aspects of field excavation with topics ranging from site selection and mapping to the use of recording systems such as the Harris Matrix. Once our field work began, on-site responsibilities were intentionally varied throughout the season to give our students and trainees exposure to different aspects of our work. Depending on prior experience the trainees functioned as section supervisors or supervisor's assistants, rotating through all our excavation sections

in order to learn from all the supervisors and to get a wider understanding of the site. The trainees were also given special projects to work on such as carefully assessing the physical condition of newly cleared trench and surface areas for our conservation database, or inputting the day's finds in our computerized artifact log.

In addition to the on-site training activities, special presentations were also scheduled during the season to update the students on the progress of our work and give extra information on key areas and methodologies. A presentation by our ceramicist, for example, gave background on the way the ancient potters produced ceramic vessels as well as explaining methods of analysis, modern systems of classification and the interpretation of the ceramic corpus.

The complete training program aimed at covering a wide range of aspects of an Egyptological field project. These areas included the project application process, S.C.A. regulations and project responsibilities, site surveying and mapping, excavation planning, physical excavation techniques, data collection and recording, the writing of reports, working with recovered artifacts, and the basic principles of conservation. While ambitious, our program worked with all these areas and was particularly successful in introducing many aspects of responsible Egyptological fieldwork to young scholars who plan to continue to develop careers in archaeology. ■

NOTES

1. Petrie, W. M. Flinders, *Six Temples At Thebes* (London, 1897), pp. 13-16.
2. We would like to thank the Director General and members of the Permanent Committee of the Supreme Council of Antiquities for granting us permission to initiate and continue this project, as well as the SCA officers and inspectors who have helped us in our work. Mr. Magdy El-Ghandour, Director of Foreign Missions, Mr. Mansour Boraik, Director of Antiquities in Upper Egypt, Mr. Ali El-Asfar, Director of West Bank Antiquities, and our assigned inspectors have been particularly helpful.
3. Richard H. Wilkinson, "The Tausert Temple Project: 2004 and 2005 Seasons", *The Ostrakon: The Journal of the Egyptian Study Society* 16:2 (Summer 2005), pp. 7-12.
4. This inscription was kindly studied and translated by Dr. Eugene Cruz-Uribe.
5. Thanks are due to Dr. Gerry Scott and the staff of the American Research Center in Egypt which facilitated our Expedition and the AEF grant - and especially to Shari Saunders and Mme. Amira Khattab whose ongoing help we greatly appreciated.

Conservation of the Mediaeval Wall Painting in the Church of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus (Abu Serga)

Angela Milward Jones

In 2005 ARCE generously awarded an Antiquities Endowment Fund grant for a project to conserve and clean a fragmentary mediaeval mural painting uncovered in the Church of St. Sergius and St. Bacchus (known locally as Abu Serga) in Old Cairo¹. The painting survives in an arc around the semi-dome of the apse of the southern chapel of the church and had been covered by plain plaster.

Although fragmentary and obscured by dirt, it had been dated by experts to the mediaeval period as, in style and technique, it follows the same tradition as the thirteenth century paintings at St. Anthony's Monastery (Red Sea) which were conserved, documented and published by the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE) between 1996 and 2002².

Few wall paintings of this early date have been found in Cairo so it was important to clean and study this example³. The subject of the painting is Christ seated on a throne surrounded by the four 'living creatures' and flanked by two archangels. The whole of the central portion of the painting is missing. Only the head and raised right hand of Christ survives as well as parts of his throne, surrounded by a mandorla and a band of flames.

Two of the four 'living creatures' are preserved emerging from the mandorla and enclosed within the circle of flames; the human-headed one on Christ's right and the eagle on his left. On either side stand the archangels; Michael on Christ's right with the sun above, and Gabriel on Christ's left with the moon above; inscriptions in Coptic name the archangels.

Below the few surviving fragments of Christ's throne, approximately half the painting is missing; the original composition would have extended down the apse wall at least as far again. In the wall below are three niches; two small ones, 0.97m high x 0.63m wide, and one long, central niche, about 2m high and 0.75m wide. The parts of the painting that are now missing – the two lower



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Figure 1. The south chapel before conservation work.

Figure 2. The apse of the south chapel before cleaning; the left and central parts of the painting are visible behind the dome. On the right of the dome, one of the window-niches is visible.

Photos: Tim Loveless



conservation

Figure 3. The central portion of the semi-dome before cleaning, showing Christ's head and the surrounding band of flames. A crack runs up from the left niche and across below Christ's head. Photo: Tim Loveless



Figure 4. Alberto Sucato cleaning the left side of the painting. Photo: Alberto Sucato

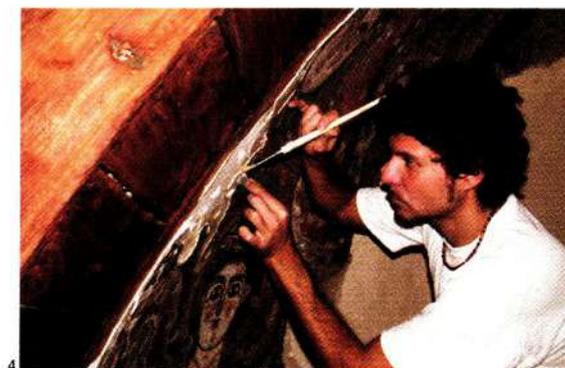


Figure 5. Beside the moon, an earlier painting of an angel is just visible. Photo: Alberto Sucato

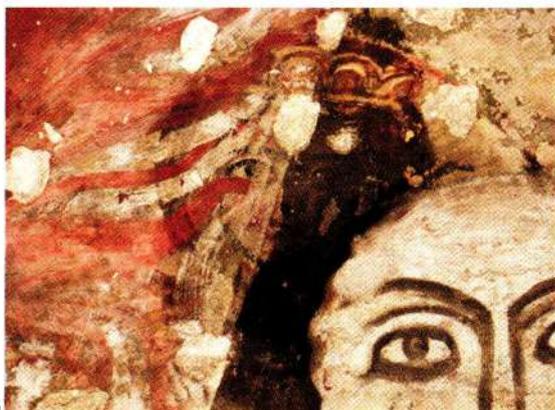
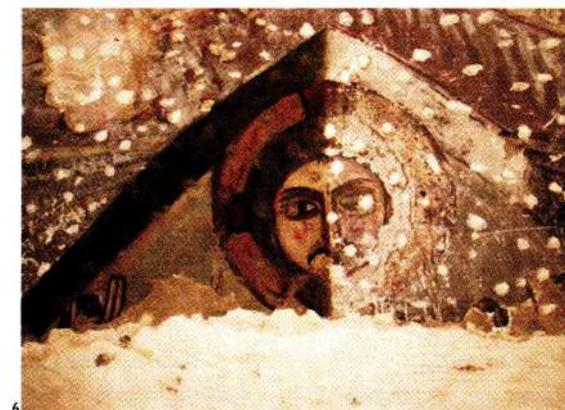


Figure 6. The half-cleaned face of Christ; the right side still shows the visual interruption of the white holes; in the cleaned left half, the holes have been treated. Photo: Alberto Sucato



'living creatures', the lion and the ox, and the lower part of Christ's throne – would have extended down over these niches. The mural had also been damaged in the past when holes had been hammered into the painted layer to prepare the surface to receive another coat of plaster. These holes were very white against the colors of the pictorial area. It was noticeable, though, that in all the surviving faces, the pupils of the eyes had been spared from damage by the hammering.

The success of this conservation project was due to the dedicated team of Italian conservators led by Alberto Sucato with Emiliano Albanese and Emiliano Ricchi with Luigi de Cesaris as consultant. They began work in mid October by recording the existing conditions and removing the dust and dirt from the paintings and the remnants of the overlying plain plaster layers. Tim Loveless, the photographer, made a complete photographic documentation before any conservation work began, as well as during and after completion of the work.

Before the conservators began cleaning the paintings, they made cleaning tests to find the right solvents to

clean off the accumulated dirt without risking damage to the paint layer. A suitable combination was a weak alkaline solution with a low percentage of acetone diluted in water. This was applied to the painted surface with cotton buds or painted over paper tissue to minimize and control the amount of time that the solvent was in contact with the paint. As the cleaning of the paintings proceeded, the conservators consolidated and re-attached insecure areas of plaster using injections of an emulsion of dilute acrylic resin.

The colors revealed under the dirt were brighter and clearer than anticipated. Unexpectedly, as the cleaning proceeded, we could see an earlier painted layer clearly visible in places. The traces indicate that the subject matter of both phases was basically the same and the main figures were repainted in the same places. Details such as the band of flames around the mandorla were added to the later composition and the faces of the sun and moon are painted over discs enclosing a winged angel. One of these is just discernible beside the face of the sun and a similar disc exists beside and under the moon's face.

The faces of Archangels Michael and Gabriel and the human-headed 'living creature' also reveal faint traces of earlier lines, a centimeter or two higher than the existing features. The existing upper layer is in fact an overpainting, following almost the same design as the earlier one. As the upper paint was relatively well preserved, it was not removed to reveal the earlier layer which is still faintly visible but not intrusive. From their condition, it seems that the earlier paintings were not exposed for long; at least, very little dirt or dust had accumulated before the later figures were painted directly on top. The later paintings, also, had not been blackened by centuries of incense and candle smoke before they were plastered over.

As well as cleaning the paintings, the conservation team also minimized the visual impact of the pocked surface by treating the holes with lower tones of color similar to the surrounding preserved areas so that they harmonize instead of contrasting with the painted surface.

However, where the faces had been damaged, and only when the original lines were certain, the conservators filled in the holes with plaster and restored the details with watercolors using a technique called 'tratteggio' where very fine vertical lines are made across the restored area. This is only visible close up and makes a clear distinction between the original and the restoration. From a distance, the aesthetic integrity of the faces is preserved which is important for their function as icons in the church.

To link the different preserved fragments of the composition, the conservators used a plaster similar to that below the painted layer to fill the gaps to the same level, and gave the modern plaster a neutral patina so that it blends more with the mediaeval surface. Thus, although there are large lacunae in the paintings, the neutral colored surface unifies and balances the composition, so that the eye can restore the missing parts.

A few detached fragments were cleaned, treated and re-attached to the wall. Finally, the paintings were protected by spraying them with dilute acrylic resin. The ciborium (dome) over the altar was moved during the work, as it also needed cleaning and repairs. It has been replaced on a new wooden frame at a slightly lower level.

While the conservators were working on the paintings in the upper part of the apse, Father Maximous was organizing the replastering of the lower section. Here, a tall central niche and two smaller side niches had been stripped of their plaster. In the two side niches, a brick blocking had been revealed under the plaster, and partly removed. We decided to remove the rest of the blocking which consisted of random brick rubble that included fragments of earlier building material packed in a coarse mortar. Two broken pieces of plaster with stone inlays and impression of inlays



Figure 7. The left niche contained many fragments of limestone paving as well as bricks.

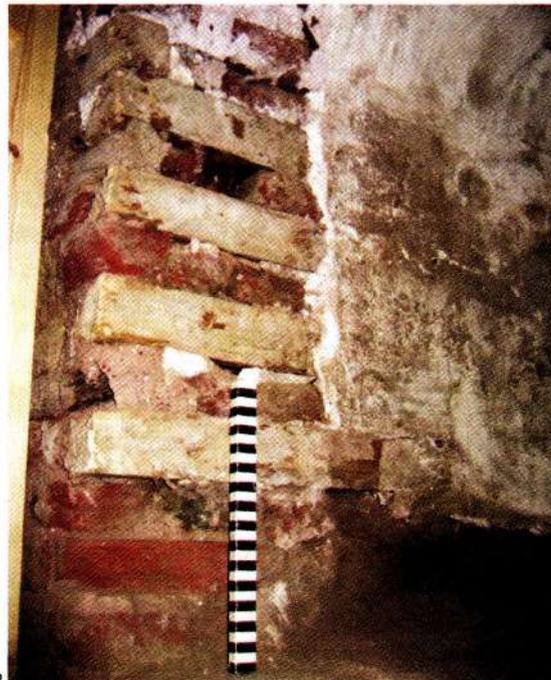


Figure 8. The wooden beams in the corner of the right niche running back under the original plaster; scale 0.30 cm.

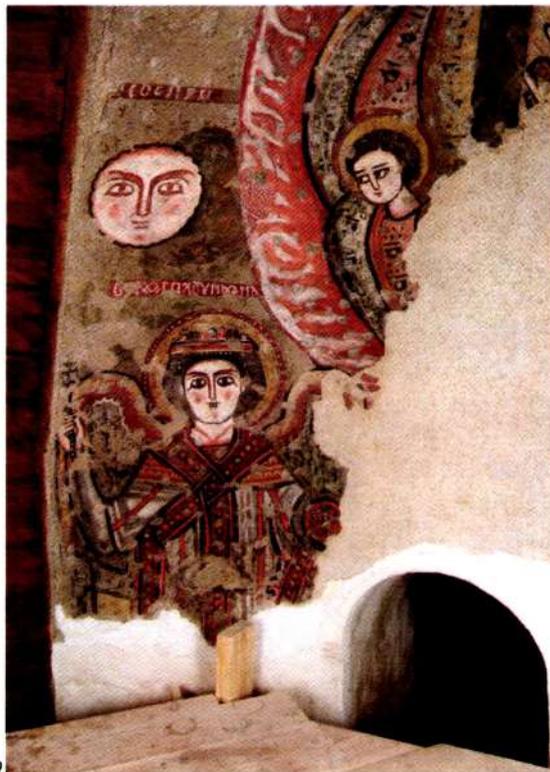
Photos: A. Milward Jones

conservation

Figure 9. Left side of the painting and left window-niche; Archangel Michael with the sun above and the human-headed 'living creature'.

Figure 10. Right side of the apse with the top of the right niche, Archangel Gabriel with the moon above and the eagle-headed 'living creature' to the left.

Photos: A. Milward Jones



came from the right niche, together with a slab cut from an alabaster column.

When we had taken out this blocking, the niches proved to have originally been windows, 0.84m deep, running through to the back of the apse wall. Both niches were constructed using courses of wooden beams running from the corners alternately along the apse wall and into the depth of the niche with brick courses between the beams. In the left niche, the wood has survived very badly, and at some time, the beams at the back became rotten and disintegrated, while most of those at the front of the niche had been replaced with bricks. In the right niche, the wooden elements have survived better, as the original plaster of the niche still exists in the vault and down the walls.

The far end of the right niche is blocked by a brick wall, possibly modern, but the left niche opens at the back into a cavity between the outside of the central apse wall and the outer east wall of the church. This is roofed with palm logs and rough timbers and seems to be just an empty space between the south apse and the central apse of the church.

The brickwork around and in the niches shows that they are part of the original building of the apse, not additions, and were originally designed as windows. The brickwork above the central niche showed that the original arch at the top was at the same level as the window-niches on either side and has identical brickwork and mortar. It was presumably designed as another window-niche, perhaps the same size as those flanking it, or longer. The window-niche on the right still has the original plaster in the vault and on the walls, lying over a hard pinkish mortar. This very fine, white plaster corresponds in colour and material to the plaster layer that in places lies directly over the bricks of the semi-dome (plaster layer 2), an indication of an earlier phase predating the painting, when the apse was plain white and the windows were functioning. However, to complicate this picture, in the central part of the apse, a tiny area of damage to this layer 2 white plaster revealed an even earlier layer with traces of reddish-brown paint (layer 1), which could not be further investigated without damaging the main paint layer (layer 4). This layer 1 paint was not encountered anywhere else.



Figure 11. Central portion of the apse after cleaning showing Christ surrounded by flames and two of the 'living creatures' emerging from the mandorla. Photo: A. Milward Jones

When the apse was painted in the first half of the thirteenth century, the window-niches (including the central niche) must have been blocked and plastered as the composition originally extended over them. The paintings are thus just one episode in a sequence of repairs and alterations to the south chapel.

The murals were made on a very thin 'skin' of fine white plaster (layer 4) sometimes only one millimeter thick, which had been applied over a thick bedding layer of coarser buff coloured sandy plaster full of organic material (layer 3). These layers lay over the early white plaster but in a few places, notably above the left niche, this bedding layer lay directly over the bricks of the apse, or over a coarse brown mortar, indicating that the earlier plaster had already fallen off in places. A crack that runs up from the left niche and across the apse may have been the cause of the damage as the painted layer does not survive below it nor below the top of the window-niches (figure 3). At some stage, perhaps within a few decades, a coat of hard plain plaster (layer 5) covered the painted layer whose surface had first been pecked to allow the upper layer to adhere. Perhaps the paintings had been damaged, or the plaster over the blocking in the window-niches had detached and fallen (as it did in the west nave of St. Anthony's Monastery Church⁴) damaging the murals, or the political climate may have discouraged pictorial representations.

Later still, the plain plaster was covered by yet another plaster layer. This last one may have been the work of the Comité⁵ who worked in this church at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. It

may also have been the Comité who partly unblocked the left and right window-niches for about thirty centimeters to make two shallow niches. The central niche was substantially altered, probably again the work of the Comité; it was partly unblocked to a depth of over fifty centimeters and widened, another arch was constructed below the earlier one, and its floor was lowered so that its present height is nearly two meters.

The results of this project have been more striking than anticipated. The surviving wall paintings, though fragmentary, have retained much of their original color and detail; the face of Christ at the top of the apse is particularly impressive. The gaps have been filled with a neutral background that harmonizes with the color tones of the fragments thus unifying the elements of the paintings. The style and technique of the paintings relates them to those in the Old Church in St. Anthony's Monastery, dated to 1232-3. The Abu Serga paintings may be slightly earlier or later than this date, but they were certainly made by the same school of talented painters working in Egypt and probably based in Cairo in the thirteenth century. ■

NOTES

1. Our thanks are due to Dr Gerry Scott, Director of ARCE and to Shari Saunders, Grant Administrator, for making this project possible.
2. Elizabeth S. Bolman, Ed. *Monastic Visions: Wall Paintings in the Church of St. Antony at the Red Sea*. (New Haven: Yale University Press and the American Research Center in Egypt, 2002). See also Bolman's article about the history of these paintings on page 14.
3. The project was carried out in collaboration with the Supreme Council of Antiquities and the Coptic Orthodox Church, with the blessing of His Holiness, Pope Shenuda III. We thank Dr. Zahi Hawass, Secretary General, Dr. Abdullah Kamel, Head of the Coptic and Islamic Sector, and Mr. Magdy el-Ghandour, Head of Foreign Missions Affairs. In Old Cairo, we were greatly assisted by Mr. Mahmoud Mahgoub, Chief Inspector, and by inspectors Ahmed Abdel Aty, Shaimaa Salah Mohammed, Sherif Hamid Hassanein and Dalia Samir el Gohary, and conservator Sharouq Ashour. We are extremely grateful to Father Gabriel who allowed us to work in his church and supported the project from the beginning and to Father Maximous el-Antony who acted as church liaison and organized all the practical aspects of the work, and, as always, assisted us in every way possible.
4. M. Jones in *Monastic Visions*, 'The Church of St. Antony', p.29, note 12 with a good example illustrated on p. 42, fig 4.6.
5. Le Comité pour la conservation des monuments de l'art Arabe.

The Newly Discovered Paintings in Abu Serga, Babylon, Old Cairo: The Logos Made Visible

Elizabeth S. Bolman

BETSY BOLMAN is Associate Professor of Medieval Art at the Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Philadelphia; and also Director of the Red and White Monastery Projects.

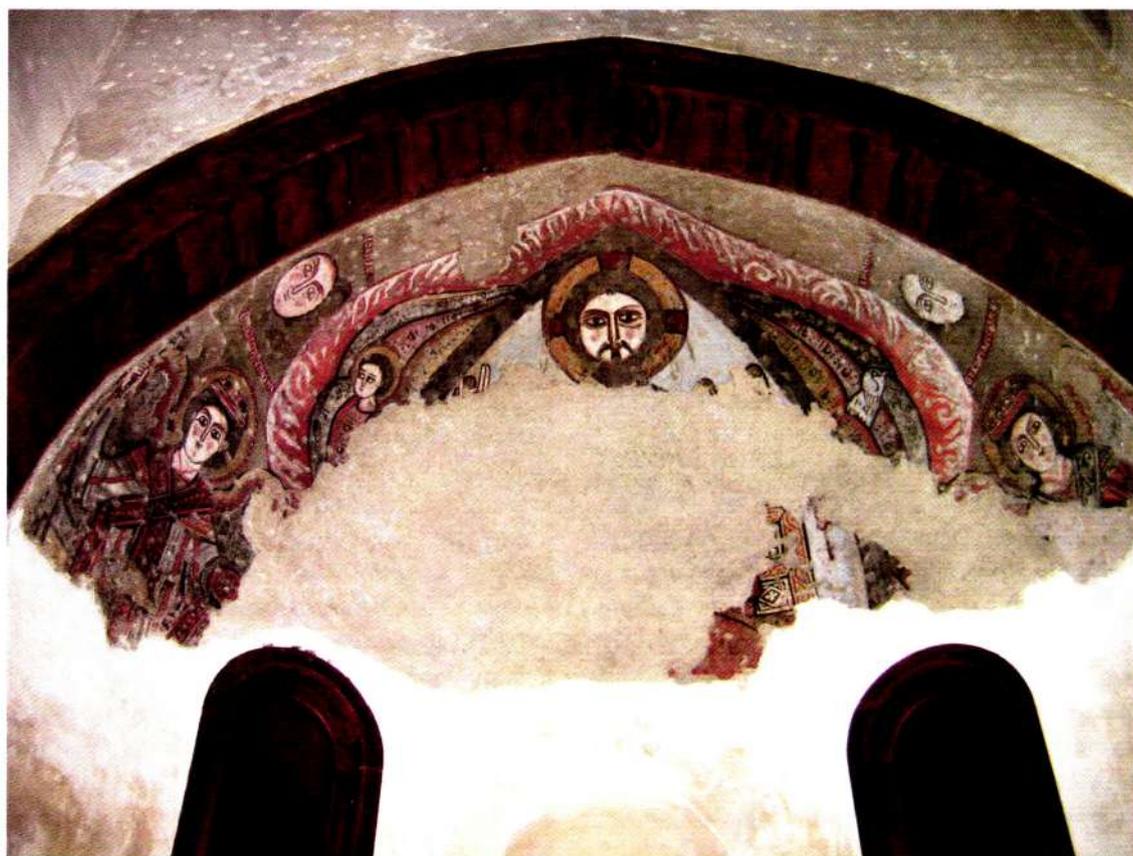


Figure 1. The conserved painting in the apse at the end of the work. When the composition was complete, the figure of Christ would have extended below the tops of the niches.
Photo: A. Milward Jones

The discovery and conservation of partially preserved wall paintings in the southern apse at the Church of Abu Serga, in Old Cairo, are representative of the exciting developments that have been transforming the state of Coptic art history in the last decade. While incomplete, the paintings have survived well enough for us to identify the principal subject without question: an enthroned Christ in majesty, in a mandorla (body halo) supported by the four incorporeal living creatures, and flanked by both the sun and the moon, and two archangels. The subject of the painting is perhaps the

most popular in all of Coptic art, of both the late antique and medieval periods. Most commonly, it comprises the upper part of a two-zoned composition. The Virgin Mary, usually with the Christ child, appears below.

A broad arc of painting has survived, with a few additional fragments, fortuitously including: the faces of the major figure of Christ and the two archangels; the sun and the moon; and part of a throne. Christ sits within the oval of a pale blue mandorla, edged with a black border. One star has survived in this frame, near his head, to our right. Christ's halo is cruciform, and he

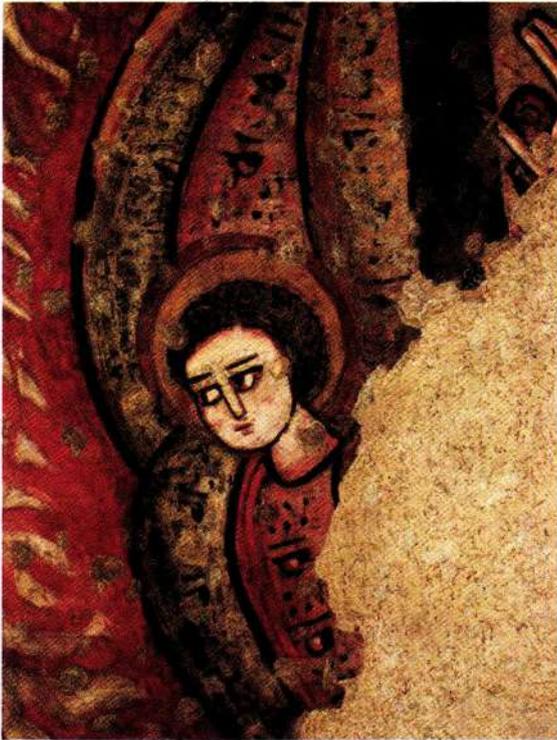


Figure 2. The human-headed 'living creature' on Christ's right.

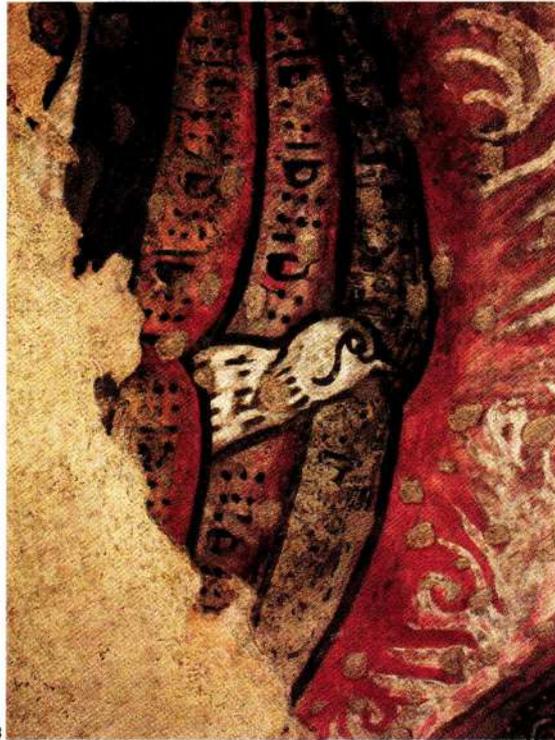


Figure 3. The eagle-headed 'living creature' on Christ's left.

Photos: Aberto Sucato

raises his right hand in a gesture typically understood to indicate blessing. The central missing area would almost certainly have included not only Christ's body but also a large book, held in his left hand. Two of the four superior angels emerging from behind Christ's mandorla, called the incorporeal living creatures, can still be seen with their three pairs of wings with eyes. The four are typically each shown with a different head, in addition to their special wings: one with the head of a man (upper left); one with the head of an eagle (upper right); and, now lost in this painting, one each with the head of a lion and an ox. Described in both Old Testament and New Testament visions, these extraordinary creatures guard the throne of the Lord. They are sometimes associated with the four evangelists, although this connection is more common in the West than it is in Egypt.

Unusually in this painting, a wide white stripe encompasses a band of flame, encircling the mandorla and the angelic creatures. A similar, but more complete painting in the Monastery of St. Antony shows Christ's feet on a rounded inscription band reading: "Behold, heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool" (Isaiah 66:1). This is an image of Christ outside of time, conveyed not only by such passages from the Old Testament, but also by the presence of both the sun (left) and the moon (right), which exist simultaneously in this

eternal realm. The archangels Michael (left) and Gabriel (right) flank him, dressed in garments reminiscent of those of the imperial Byzantine court, and underscore the formality and magnificence of the scene.

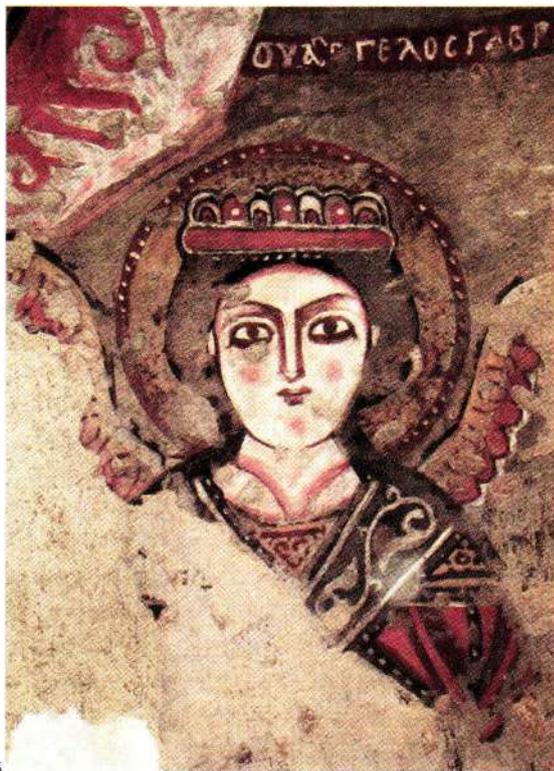
The arc of the mandorla shows that the painting would have continued down the wall a considerable distance, meaning that the windows would have been filled in and painted over, and that the deep niche dates to a later renovation of this apse¹. Very likely, an enthroned Virgin and child would have been paired with this scene, as one finds in churches such as those in the Monastery of the Martyrs (Esna) and the Monastery of St. Antony (Red Sea). Abu al-Barakat ibn Kabar (d. 1324 A.D.), priest of the Hanging Church – only a few minutes' walk from the Church of Abu Serga – wrote about the meaning of paintings of the *Christ in Majesty*. He said that: "it shows Him as the Word of God," namely, the *Logos*.² If this painting originally included two zones, as I think is almost certain, it would have made a statement about humanity and divinity in Christ. Christ enthroned manifests divinity beyond time, while below, as a child with the Virgin Mary, he would have been shown as the incarnate Word of God.

Numerous parallels exist in Coptic art for the location of this subject in the apse of a sanctuary. The image represents the belief that Christ is present at the

Figure 4. Archangel Michael on the left side of the apse.

Figure 5. Archangel Gabriel on the right side of the apse.

Photos: Aberto Sucato



celebration of the Eucharist, when heaven and earth meet. They show in paint what normal human eyes are not spiritually elevated enough to see in actuality. They relate, along with the architectural form of the church, the altar itself, and its implements, to complex ritual actions, and are not by any means simple decoration.

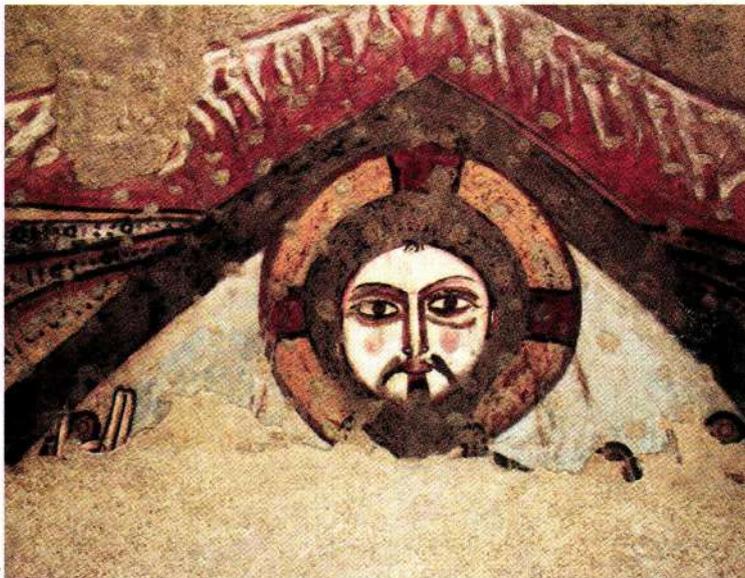
The principal subjects and their positions (i.e. the iconography of the painting) are standard over the centuries, while the artistic style in which they are rendered changes considerably. We therefore date such paintings principally on the grounds of stylistic comparison. These most recent finds show very close stylistic parallels to other late twelfth- and thirteenth-century wall paintings from both remote monastic churches and urban ones. It is possible to assign the newly found paintings to circa 1230, a much more precise dating than can usually be proposed for a work of Coptic art lacking a dedicatory inscription.

The first of the two painted programs with some very close similarities to the paintings in Abu Serga is that created by an artist named Theodore, in the Church of St. Antony, Monastery of St. Antony, in 1232-1233 A.D.³ The rendering of the face of Christ has many parallels, among them the long eyes with a slightly extended line at the outside ends, the bright spots of color rather low on the cheeks, and the pointed termination of the nose. However, I do not think that Theodore worked at Abu Serga, because in Old Cairo the face is rounder, the hair does not flow over the shoulders, and the formation of the mouth and beard area is quite different. The angelic being with the head of a man, supporting the mandorla to our left, follows almost the same template used at St. Antony's for the same head and several others, but once again includes significant variations, for example the shaping of the mouth. The method of outlining figures, of creating patterns out of drapery, and the palette used in both, show a closeness indicating that they were done at or about the same time, hence my dating of the Abu Serga painting circa 1232 A.D.

The second group of paintings is harder to use for comparison, because they are in very poor condition. They are in two chapels, on the gallery level of the Church of St. Mercurius, in Old Cairo, and have been dated to the mid or late twelfth century.⁴ A second type



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of eye, almost rectangular, with a sharply downward turning termination on the outside, is visible in the face of Christ at the Church of St. Mercurius (Chapel of St. George), and in several figures in the Abu Serga paintings, particularly the moon. Other parallels in rendering and drapery connect the two sets of images. The artists who produced all three were working in the same traditional medieval Coptic style and iconography, within about fifty years of each other. This point is particularly important because it shows that artists with the same kind of training, and the same high level of technique, were involved in commissions at both urban churches in the Christian heart of the capital, and out in remote desert monasteries.

This new discovery highlights the ever present possibility of the survival of paintings under later layers of plaster, as yet unknown, and reminds us

that all architectural renovations should be undertaken with great care, after first examining the plaster for remnants of earlier works of art. The Abu Serga paintings improve our understanding of Coptic working practice in very interesting ways, and add one more treasure to the corpus of Coptic art. ■

NOTES

1. See Milward Jones article
2. Abu al-Barakat ibn Kabar, *La lampe des ténèbres*, chapter 24; translated in Ugo Zanetti, "Les icônes chez les théologiens de l'église Copte," *Le monde Copte*. 19 (1991) 84.
3. For the dated inscription and the name of the artist in the St. Antony paintings, see: Birger Pearson, "The Coptic Inscriptions in the Church of St. Antony," chapter 14 in: E. Bolman ed., *Monastic Visions: Wall Paintings in the Church of St. Antony at the Red Sea*. (New Haven: Yale University Press and the American Research Center in Egypt, 2002) 227, 230, 235. For visual comparisons, see images throughout *Monastic Visions*, especially in chapter 4, 37-76.
4. The most comprehensive study of the paintings in the Chapel of St. George is: Gertrud J. M. van Loon, *The Gate of Heaven: Wall Paintings with Old Testament Scenes in the Altar Room and the Hurus of Coptic Churches* (Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, v. 85) (Istanbul: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1999) 17-30. I have dated these paintings slightly later than van Loon, due to what I see as closer similarities with the paintings in the Monastery of St. Antony than van Loon recognizes. Bolman, "Theodore's Style, the Art of Christian Egypt, and Beyond," chapter 5 in Bolman, ed. 2002, 86.

Figure 6. Christ Pantocrator in the sanctuary of the Church of St. Antony at the Red Sea.
Photo: Michael Jones

Figure 7. The head of Christ at the top of the apse.
Photo: Aberto Sucato

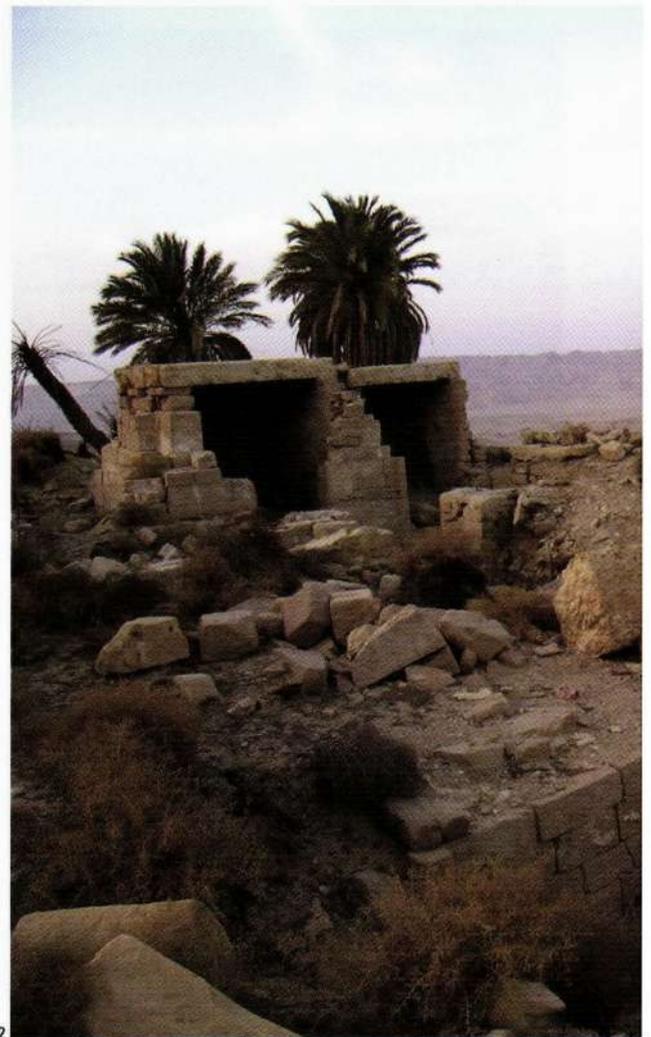
Paths, Petroglyphs, and Piety: the North Kharga Oasis Survey 2006 Season¹

Salima Ikram

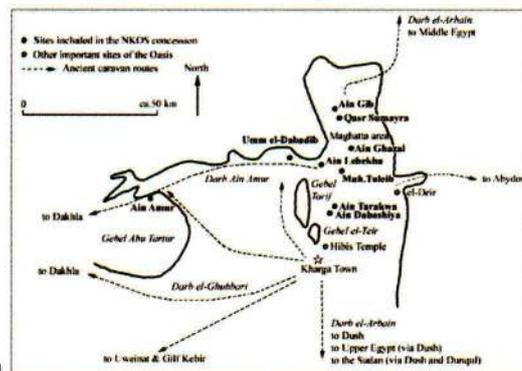
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The sixth season of the American University in Cairo's North Kharga Oasis Survey (NKOS) focused on investigating the *Darb Ain Amur*, the ancient caravan route (Image 1) that stretches between Kharga and Dakhla oases. This route begins at the mini-oasis of Umm el-Dabadib, site of a large mud-brick fortress with surrounding settlements, temples, churches, cemeteries and fields. It wends its way for several kilometres through the sand dunes and barren rocky landscape that eventually lead to the spring of Ain Amur located to the west, halfway up the escarpment that leads to the Abu Tartur plateau and Dakhla Oasis. This site, documented by H. E. Winlock, was the last water source before the long hard march to Dakhla, and was also explored by the NKOS team² this season (Image 2).

This hitherto unexplored area proved to be extraordinarily rich in sites of all periods. The team explored the area by both driving and walking surveys,

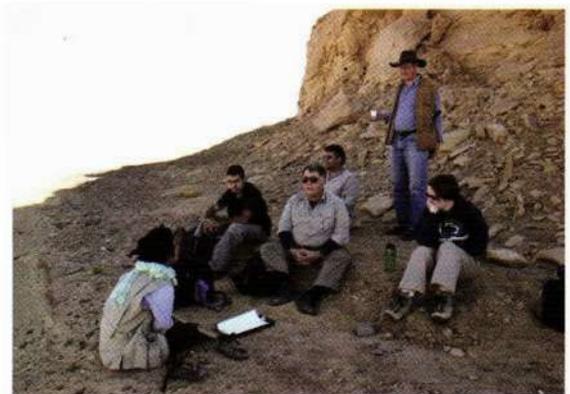


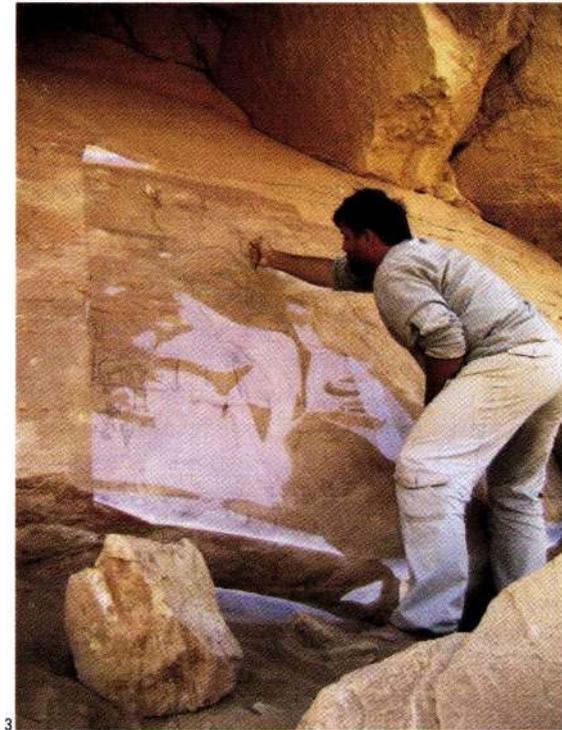
discovering new sites of prehistoric rock art, way stations that had been used at least from the New Kingdom through the Islamic Period, and cult places



Schematic Map of the Kharga Oasis

Team photo – left to right: Salima Ikram, Arto Beledanian, Craig Boyer, Pieter Collet, Nicholas Warner, and Leslie Warden. Photo: Allison Gascoigne





dedicated to the desert god Seth. These archaeological sites were marked by a Global Positioning Satellite (GPS), and thoroughly documented through photography and drawing.

The first area where the NKOS team focussed their attention was a large rock along the east west axis between Umm el Dabadib and Ain Amur. This rock (Image 3), discovered during a previous season has been dubbed 'Aa's Rock' due to the proto-dynastic *serekh* that adorned the north-eastern side of the rock, with other images surrounding it.³

Several new inscriptions were discovered on this rock (Image 4). They were highly eroded, and some had been overwritten. Two of these probably date to the late First Intermediate Period as the name, Intef, is



prominent, although this might also indicate a Second Intermediate Period date, although this is less likely (Image 5). Another longer inscription that might be

conservation

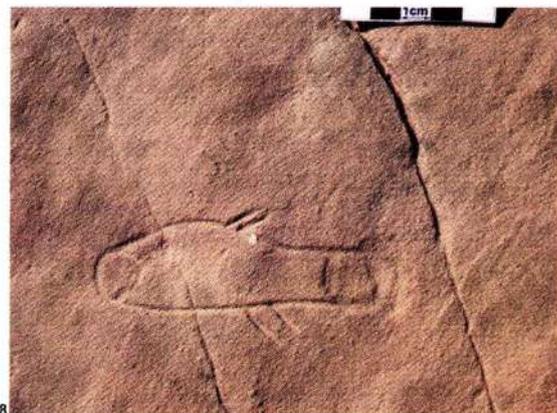
of Old Kingdom date was found, and is in the process of being deciphered. Clearly, this rock provided a stopping point and shelter for travellers going west in the desert.

During the course of exploring the rock, a team-member found a large decorated area, hidden behind a rock-fall. This was covered by graffiti of several periods. An image of Tawesret (Image 6) was also found, together with more prehistoric images of quadropeds, and some form of as yet unidentified writing. Several panels of petroglyphs were also documented. They showed giraffes, cranes, oryx, gazelles, and other creatures (Image 7) that must have made the oasis their home in the ancient past. Some portions of petroglyph panels had fallen to the ground, the soft sandstone crumbling against the forces of time and nature. These were also recorded, and underscore the importance of documenting these pieces of evidence from antiquity.

Not far from Aa's rock at least three areas of Prehistoric activity were identified. The remains included grinding stones and flint scatters. These

presumably were the areas occupied by the artists who adorned parts of Aa's rock.

During the course of exploration, a site some way off the ancient route, but clearly occupied and active in the prehistoric period, was identified. This was dubbed 'Fish Rock' due to the petroglyphs of fish found there (Image 8). It was fully explored and documented. It appears to be primarily prehistoric in date due to the number of petroglyphs scattered about the faces of three upstanding massifs. One image of a boat that might be of a later date with oars on either side was also found, together with a small scatter of pottery dating to the 3rd to 5th centuries AD. On a low rise overlooking the site, over twelve huts, crudely constructed of stone were found. They contained nothing that would point to their date. Perhaps they were the homes of the men who fished in the ancient lake below and who carved images of their prey on the rocks. To the west (about a kilometre and a half away) another Prehistoric site with grinders and petroglyphs and a Roman period jar was identified.



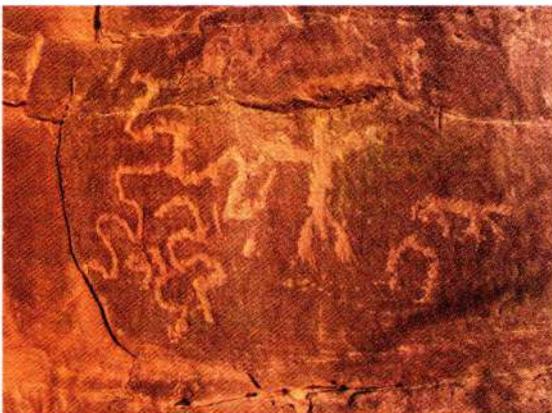
About 30 kilometres to the north-west of Aa's rock, another site, dubbed 'Split Rock' was identified and studied (Image 9). To its east lies an area with a concentration of sherds that have tentatively been dated to the fourth/fifth centuries AD. This was possibly a water depot or way station on the route between Umm el Dabadib and Ain Amur. Emplacements to store water jars were found here, together with sherd debris. This area had also been inhabited in prehistoric times as some very faint remains of petroglyphs (giraffes and other quadrupeds) were found on a face of a *wadi* bed.

Split Rock consists of a sandstone rock that is broken into two portions, one small one to the north, and the other larger one to the south. The northern section is quite tiny and the main decorative panels still visible after considerable weathering over the ages consist of *wasms* and prehistoric animal figures. Some later animal figures, primarily cattle, are also etched upon the stone. At a high level there are three hieroglyphic inscriptions that are very faint and difficult to make

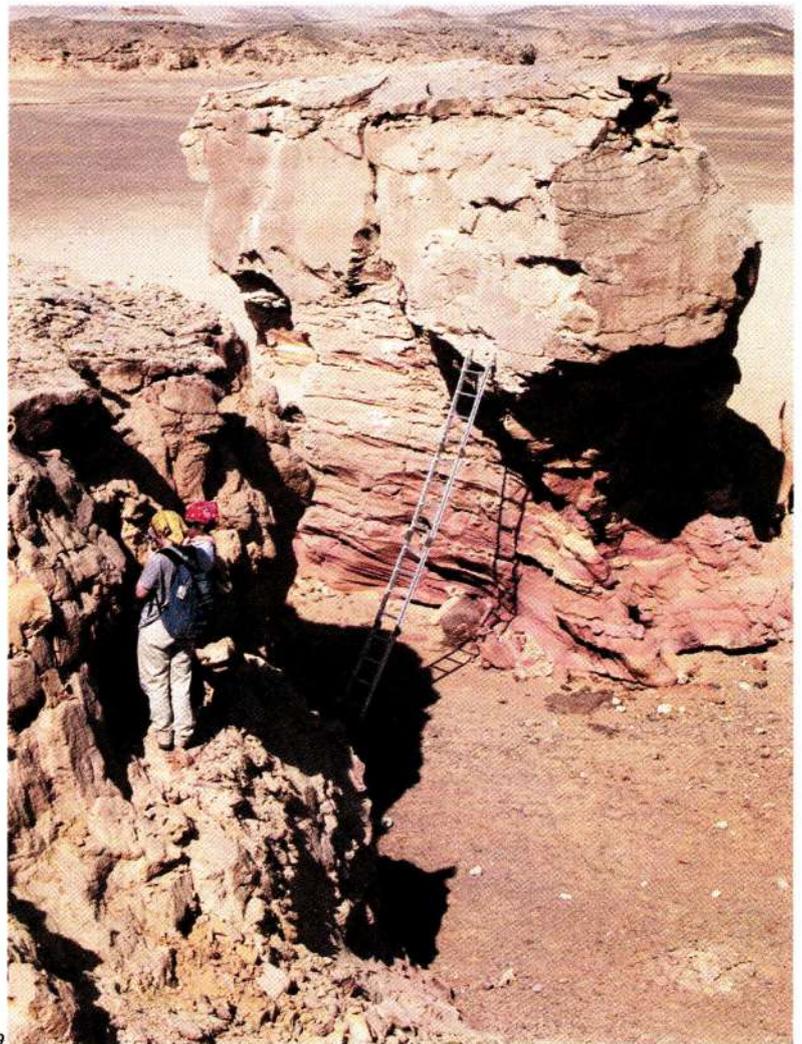
out. The southern section of the rock is much longer, with only the eastern side showing any remains of decoration. For the most part this is prehistoric in nature with a particularly fine panel showing giraffes and oryx. There is also a clear, deeply incised Pharaonic inscription, reading *Inpw dw*. Another broken one reads *sesh heka* (Image 10), and seems to have been carved by a talented and literate person, being larger (almost monumental) and more formal than the others found on this rock. A third, longer inscription that is very indistinct was also identified. Another image, possibly of Pharaonic date, shows three seated men below what appears to be an *ankh* sign. Clearly, this was a very important site and a main stopping point in



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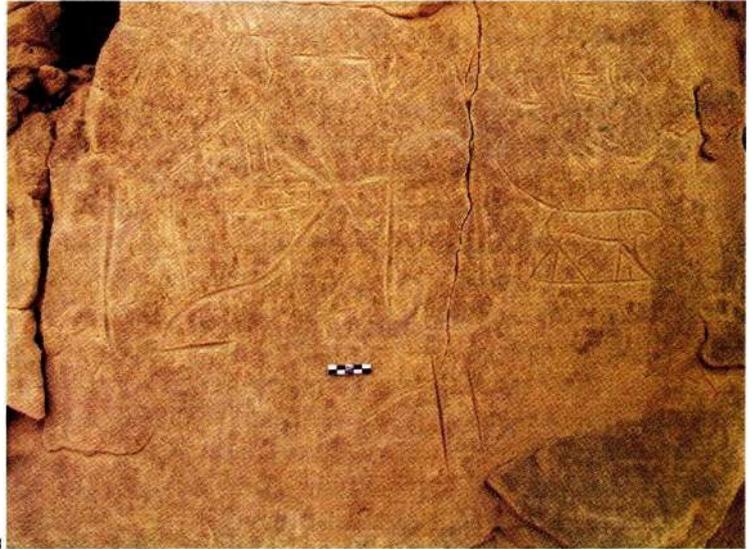


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antiquity. The topography suggests that some sort of water source was available here, although, without a thorough geological investigation, it is difficult to tell when it dried up and the site was abandoned as a stopping place.

To the west of Split Rock lies a significant Prehistoric site that goes along a narrow wadi. The petroglyphs (Image 11) here were truly stunning, showing human figures, oryx, gazelle, giraffe, snakes and elephants. One highly decorated area was clustered together in a sheltered area, probably the site of an ancient camp, with two other densely decorated areas located at the mouth of the wadi. The remainder of the wadi had dispersed groups of petroglyphs, many of which were serpents.

The team continued to trace the ancient caravan route to Ain Amur. En route, a few rocks that had been used as rest stops in the Roman Period, and probably before, were identified by dense pottery scatter. The pottery dated from the Late Period through the Medieval Period. Diagnostic ceramics were gathered and drawn. The team also identified possible Prehistoric dwellings along the way. Most of these consisted of crude stone shelters with no ceramics associated with them. They tended to be located on top of



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bluffs and rises, and are made of irregular sandstone rocks that are piled high.

One of the most extraordinary finds of the season was a rock with a natural aperture that had been enhanced and dedicated to the god Seth, lord of the deserts. This rock, which is riddled with holes that might have once housed foxes, jackals, or other desert creatures sacred to Seth, sported several brief inscriptions naming the god. The inscriptions were centered on the north and west of the rock, close to the prominent, but small, cave, reminiscent of the cave of Hathor at Serabit el-Khadem, and that of Satet at Elephantine. The majority of the inscriptions were very eroded and difficult to decipher, although the images of Seth were clearly identifiable (Images 12 & 13).

Seth Rock also hosted a few Prehistoric petroglyphs, as well as several images of pilgrim sandals carved near the mouth of the cave, and along the short way up to it. A Coptic graffito naming Apa Silas

was also found here. The ceramics at this site included New Kingdom amphorae as well as the usual Roman repertoire dating to the 3rd-5th centuries AD.

After Seth Rock, the NKOS team continued to follow the route of the Darb Ain Amur and identified yet another site. This rock, dubbed Scribe Rock, is named for an inscription of the scribe Userhat-Amun, and is probably late New Kingdom in date. The ceramics at the site were curious in that they included two Medieval pipes in addition to the Roman ceramic remains.

The *Darb Ain Amur* was traced from here to the temple site of Ain Amur. Several variations, north and south, of the main route were identified, based on the texture and hardness of the sand, as well as the sherd scatter along the way.

At the site of Ain Amur the team was alarmed to find front loader tracks leading toward the temple with clear evidence of illicit digging in the temple area and

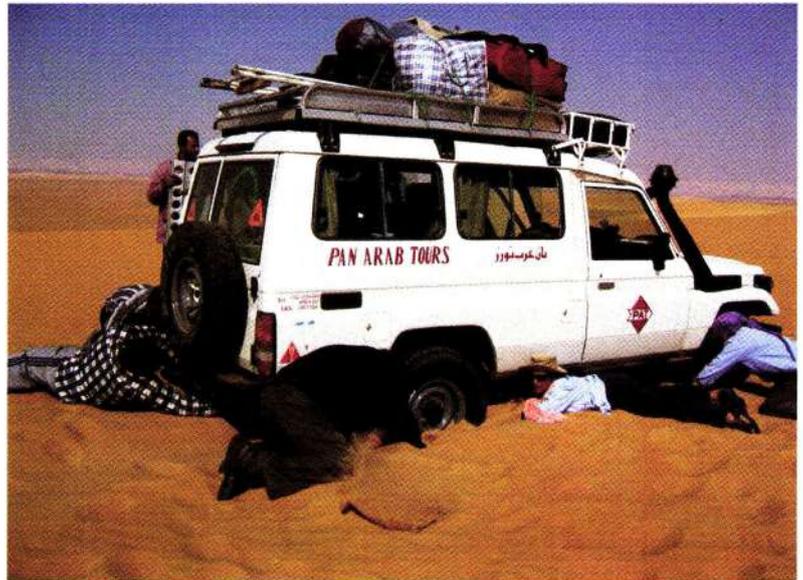
in the surrounding cemeteries. Considering that last year large parts of the site of Umm el Dabadib were destroyed by loaders,⁴ the team was concerned about this development and reported it to the SCA. At the site all the modern graffiti (post its erection) found in the temple was recorded and collated, and the temple photographed so that it could be compared with those taken by H. E. Winlock. A sketch plan of the temple area was made and the settlement area surrounding it identified, together with an industrial area located to the south. The cemetery, consisting of crude rock-cut tombs, was located to the south and east of the temple. Some bodies had been crudely mummified, while others had not been mummified at all. Several fragments from two separate limestone anthropoid coffins were discovered and photographed. They appear to be quite late in date, possibly Roman, and the stone must have been imported to this area that is dominated by sandstone deposits.

As the area around Ain Amur was explored a lookout point situated some four kilometres to the west at the edge of the escarpment was discovered and drawn. It consisted of several rough stone shelters that flanked the pedestrian path up to the plateau. Just behind the temple the main ascent to the Abu Tartur plateau was identified. It was marked by a clear path, and a significant deposit of sherds.

Exploration of the area lying some 2.5 kilometres east of the temple revealed a relatively well constructed stone rubble and mud building built using a rock overhang. Its walls and ceilings were smoothed over with mud plaster and a lime wash. In some areas painted decoration was faintly discernable, and one fragmentary Coptic inscription was noted and recorded. Some pottery was collected and drawn from here; it appears to be of Roman date.

A little further to the east (approximately 5 kilometres from the temple) a rock overhang containing painted decoration was found. The area seemed to be a temporary shelter or lookout point as the site commanded a fine view of the route and the plain below. The paintings appear to be multi-phased with some Pharaonic period paintings and some dating to the Coptic Period.

As the team explored further to the east, the major route leading from the temple of Ain Amur to the plain



below was traced along the cliffs for 8 kilometres, and its descent into the desert established. Ancient cairns and potsherds still mark this path that took caravans down from the heights of the plateau to the low desert, and on to the safety of Kharga Oasis. Although much of this ancient route has been established, there are still more treasures to be revealed by the shifting sands of the Western Desert. ■

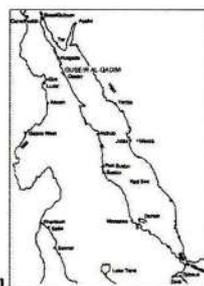
NOTES

1. We are very grateful for this season's funding that came from the Antiquities Endowment Fund of the American Research Center in Egypt and a donation made by C. and C. Boyer in memory of Anthony Vitiello to whose memory this article is dedicated.
2. The team consisted of: Arto Belekdanian (surveyor and Egyptologist), Craig Boyer (surveyor and technical assistant), Pieter Collet (artist), Alison Gascoigne (ceramicist), Salima Ikram (director), Pamela Rose (ceramicist), Corinna Rossi (co-director), Nicholas Warner (architect), Leslie Warden (ceramicist and Egyptologist), and Inspector Jamal Abu Bakr Abdel Mejjid Ali.
3. S. Ikram and C. Rossi, (2004) 'An Early Dynastic *Serekh* from Kharga Oasis', *JEA* 90: 211-15.
4. S. Ikram, (2005), 'Brief Report of the North Kharga Oasis Survey's 2005 Season', *Bull. ARCE* 187: 8-11.

The Sheikh's House at Quseir Al-Qadim

Katherine Strange Burke

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Located about eight kilometers north of the modern town of Quseir on the Red Sea is the archaeological site of Quseir al-Qadim. This site is less well known than the Ottoman period fortress that was recently conserved and turned into a visitors center by ARCE's Antiquities Development Project. Quseir al-Qadim sits partly within, but mostly to the west of, the Mövenpick Resort El-Quseir. It was the subject of archaeological excavations and regional survey by Donald Whitcomb and Janet Johnson of the University of Chicago in 1978, 1980, and 1982, and by David Peacock of the University of Southampton from 1999 to 2003.¹

At the end of the twelfth century the geographer Yaqut observed of Quseir: "هو اقرب موضع في بحر القلزم الى القوص" ("Quseir... is the closest place on the Sea of Qulzum to Qus"),² and indeed it does sit at the eastern end of the Wadi Hammamat, the shortest overland route from the Red Sea to the Nile Valley (fig. 1). The Islamic settlement had its origins in the Ayyubid period and was built on the remains of the prominent Roman port Myos Hormos. In all periods of occupation proximity to the Nile Valley must have been the justification for Quseir's location, for the climate is extremely arid and supports no agriculture, and additionally the town appears to have had no nearby source of fresh water.³ Ease of communication with the Nile Valley allowed

Quseir to participate in the transshipment of goods from Egypt to other Red Sea locales such as Arabia and the Yemen, and thus ultimately to participate in the Indian Ocean trade. In the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods Quseir communicated primarily with Qus, the capital of the Sa'id, and served as one of its ports, although it was second to 'Aydhhab in importance. This is testified to in several Arabic sources, including al-Kutubi, al-Nuwayri, al-Maqrizi, and Abu'l-Fida, all of whom describe Quseir al-Qadim as قوص فرضة, "the port of Qus" and locate it on the shore of the Red Sea, with some variation on its exact distance from Qus.⁴ Yaqut also notes that Quseir is frequented by Yemeni vessels, which is confirmed by the excavations, as will be discussed below.

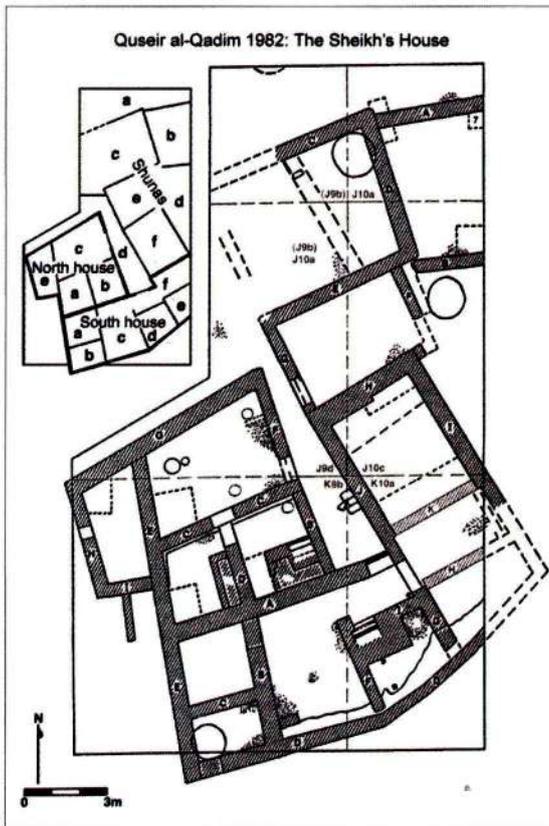
Archaeological work at Quseir al-Qadim demonstrates that the Ayyubid-Mamluk settlement was an orderly collection of stone and mud brick houses, storerooms, areas dedicated to light industry such as leatherworking,⁵ as well as to areas for storage of goods for shipping (fig. 2). "The Sheikh's house," revealed by the University of Chicago team during their 1978 and 1982 seasons, has been the focus of my work on Quseir al-Qadim and is the subject of my doctoral dissertation (fig. 3). This is an area in the center of the site, on a low rise at the southern end of a platform or promontory

1. Location of Quseir al-Qadim, after Meyer 1992

2. Quseir al-Qadim from the south.

3. Plan of the Sheikh's House, courtesy Donald Whitcomb.

Photos: Katherine Strange Burke



that forms the landscape of the northern half of the site, and overlooks the silted-in Roman harbor. This complex of structures is interpreted as two adjoining houses and associated storerooms. The two houses are on the west and south sides of the rise, and the storerooms line up northwest to southeast along the east side (fig. 4). Each house consists primarily of one large room, two smaller rooms alongside, and preserved a stairway (with wooden treads) to the second floor or roof. The houses do not appear to communicate directly and were entered off a central corridor, as were the storerooms. Two large wooden keys were hidden beneath the threshold of one storeroom, one of which is inscribed with the name of its owner, which is possibly read as *Hajj Baraka*.

The excavation of these houses provided a rich assemblage of artifacts, all well preserved. Artifacts of wood, leather, fiber, basketry, floor matting, bundles of reeds (which were probably for roofing), cloth, paper, bone, and plant matter were found in and around the house, in addition to ceramic, glass, and stone



artifacts. Perhaps the most exciting finds were the paper artifacts: thousands of fragments of letters, documents, and even the occasional ink drawing were discovered all over the site of Quseir al-Qadim, including at least 870 fragments from the Sheikh's House itself (fig. 5). These documents were scattered among the debris that remains from the occupation and abandonment of the houses and storerooms, for the most part having been crumpled up and thrown away after they had served their purpose.

The Sheikh's House documents consist mostly of business letters, shipping notes, and account records, and they detail the business transactions that were undertaken by Sheikh Abu Mufarrij (after whom the house is named) and his son Sheikh Abu Ishaq Ibrahim b. Abu Mufarrij as they participated in the Indian Ocean-Red Sea to Nile Valley trade during the late Ayyubid period.⁶ Through reading and reconstruction of the letters and business receipts, Li Guo of the University of Notre Dame has been able to describe the family and the family business, identifying not just the two sheikhs, but three other of Abu Mufarrij's sons, their mother, their uncle (Abu Mufarrij's brother), and numerous named business associates, employees, and clients of the two principal partners. The main commodity traded seems to have been grain, presumably intended to feed the *Haramain*, the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, across the Red Sea. Numerous other articles are identified in the shipping notes, however, such as dates (very large quantities of date pits were found in the excavations), cooking oil, baked goods, and nuts, in large enough quantities to suggest commercial use, and vegetables and other perishables that were

4. The Sheikh's House from the north.

5. Letter fragments found in the South House, Room b, now in the Museum of Islamic Arts, Cairo.

Photos: Katherine Strange Burke

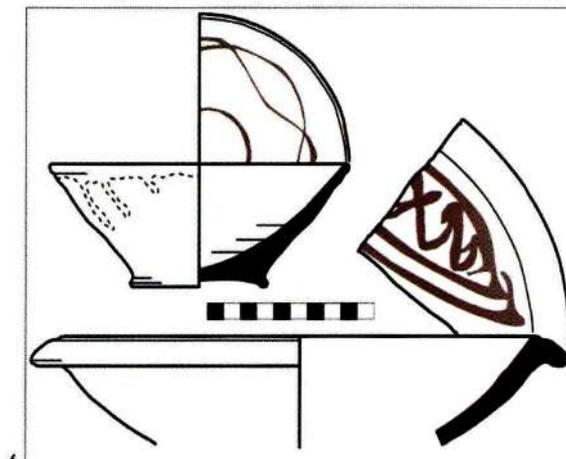
fellows report

6. 'Black on yellow' ware from the Sheikh's House: Red alluvial body with well-preserved yellow glaze and overglaze brown paint.

probably for local consumption. Luxury goods such as henna, rosewater, perfume, pearls, and semi-precious stones (such as carnelians, a few of which were found in the excavations) appear more rarely in the documents and may have been intended for local use.⁷

Only four of the letters are dated, but the dates fall within the first four decades of the seventh century AH / thirteenth century AD (AH 612–633/AD 1215–1235); the coins found in the house complex confirm this date; twelve are Ayyubid issues, three of which are datable to the reign of Sultan al-Malik al-Kamil. A few residual coins of the Fatimid period were found, as well as one crusader coin, but no Mamluk issues.⁸ Thus the dated documentary evidence from the sheikh's house can be assigned to the period of rule of the sultans al-Malik al-'Adil (AH 596–615 / AD 1200–1218) and his son al-Malik al-Kamil (AH 615–635 / AD 1218–1238). If all the evidence for dating can be taken at face value, the occupation of this domestic and mercantile complex seems to have lasted less than half a century. The ceramic evidence seems to confirm the documentary dating, and thus publication of the Sheikh's House ceramics in my dissertation will provide a rare example of a purely Ayyubid ceramic pottery corpus, a phase of the Egyptian Islamic ceramic chronology that is not very well understood.

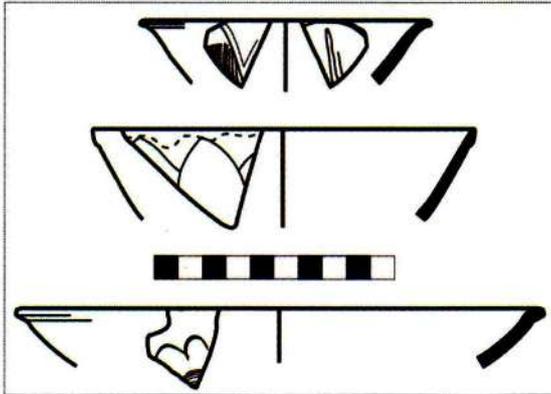
Some of the pottery types excavated from the Sheikh's House provide evidence of its far-flung cultural contacts; several of the glazed sherds are what is termed alternately "mustard ware" or "black on yellow ware," and consist of a red clay body (Nile silt) covered with a yellow glaze and often simple designs painted over the glaze in brown or black (fig. 6). Similar examples have been found in Fustat, Nubia, the Yemen, and at sites in East Africa.⁹ There is a current debate among archaeologists as to whether this ware was made in the Yemen and exported, or, as seems more likely, made in multiple locations. Either way it is indicative of cultural contacts along the length of the Red Sea and beyond, and calls to mind Yaqut's observation that the port at Quseir received Yemeni ships.¹⁰ Other samples of coarseware resemble Yemeni store jars in clay and surface treatment. There are also sherds from at least two unglazed jars bearing what looks to be a standing cobra motif alternating with an elongated crescent, in



brown or red paint. The jars bear some resemblance to Nubian painted pottery, but their provenance is still unknown. Other imports come from China in the form of stonewares of gray clay with olive green glaze (celadons), white ware porcelains, and brown glazed stoneware jars.

That the pottery corpus consists mostly of Nile valley ceramics but includes a few Yemeni, Nubian, and even Chinese imports, is not unexpected for a ceramic corpus of this period. The percentage of imports does appear rather high, however, and is probably due to Quseir's function as a node of trade and transport. Celadons and white-glazed porcelains were widely traded in Egypt and the Near East as commodities themselves and as containers for medicines and other goods, and ceramics of Nubian provenance, or even Nubian influence, are common in Egypt.¹¹ Excavations at Fustat, for example, have yielded large quantities of Chinese ceramics dating from the ninth through the fifteenth centuries.¹² Correlates to all of the Fustat examples can be seen at the Sheikh's House at Quseir (fig. 7), although at Fustat they tend to be dated earlier than Whitcomb and Johnson date the main occupation at the Sheikh's House. This may indicate the value of these objects as heirlooms, which the Sheikh and his family had kept in their family for generations.¹³

As my dissertation research progresses I will fully articulate my argument about both the Ayyubid dating of the Sheikh's House ceramic corpus, and the significance of imports or local imitations of imports.



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Another major component of my dissertation will also be to map the artifacts and pottery by location within the houses and storerooms, and correlate them with the read contents of the letters and documents found in those locations. This opportunity to contextualize texts, although it has occurred occasionally in Egyptian Islamic sites, is all too rare in the wider field of Islamic archaeology, and is one of the more exciting aspects of the site of Quseir al-Qadim.

I have many people to thank for making my research in Egypt possible, but here I confine myself to a few. First, of course the US Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs for the grant to undertake this research and the excellent staff of the American Research Center for administering the grant and supporting me in all my efforts here. I also must thank the Supreme Council of Antiquities and its Secretary General Dr. Zahi Hawass for allowing me to research in the first place, and Mr. Magdy al-Ghandour and Mr. Mohammad Abd el-Latif for all the help in trying to track down my objects of study. Finally many people in the museums here gave me tremendous help, but may I just single out Dr. Wafaa al-Sadik of the Egyptian Museum and her Deputy Director Mme. Nariman Hanim 'Abd el-Fattah 'Azab, without whom I never would have made it to that mysterious and wonderful place that is the basement magazine, and Mr. 'Abd al-Mohsen al-Qadi, Director of the Beni Suef Museum, who suspended his own inventorying duties in order to give me access to the Quseir objects. The curatorial staff was professional and helpful as well. Muhammad Abbas of the Museum of Islamic Arts and his curatorial staff

have been extremely gracious and welcoming despite the ongoing renovations there. ■

NOTES

1. For a summary treatment of Quseir in the Islamic periods, see Katherine Strange Burke, Quseir al-Qadim. In *The Mamluk Studies Online Encyclopedia*, edited by Bruce Craig. The Middle East Documentation Center (MEDOC) The University of Chicago: Chicago. 2006 (BETA version posted Feb. 2006). Also see the preliminary reports by both excavations: David P. S. Peacock and Lucy Blue, *Survey and Excavation at Myos Hormos—Quseir al-Qadim 1999–2003. Volume 1: The Survey and Report on the Excavations*. University of Southampton Archaeological Monographs Series. Oxbow Books: Oxford, 2005; Donald S. Whitcomb and Janet H. Johnson, *Quseir al-Qadim 1978: Preliminary Report*. American Research Center in Egypt: Cairo, 1979; Donald S. Whitcomb and Janet H. Johnson, *Quseir al-Qadim 1980: Preliminary Report*. ARCE Reports 7. Udena: Malibu, 1982.
2. Yaqut, *Kitab Mu'jam al-Buldan: al-Tarikh al-Imam Shihab al-Din Ibn 'Abd Allah Yaqut Ibn 'Abd Allah*. 4 vols: Tehran, 1965, p. 159.
3. In the Roman period water was most likely procured from Bir Nakheil, located 15 km from Quseir in the Wadi Nakheil, but it is unclear whether it was still in use in the Mamluk period, as no ceramics later than the sixth century have yet been identified from this site. Peacock, "1999 – Regional Survey" in David P. S. Peacock, et al., *Myos Hormos – Quseir al-Qadim: A Roman and Islamic Port Site. Interim Report 1999*. University of Southampton - Department of Archaeology 2000; Graeme Earl and Darren Glazier, "2001 – Survey at Bir Nakheil" in David P. S. Peacock, et al., *Myos Hormos – Quseir al-Qadim: A Roman and Islamic Port Site. Interim Report 2001*. University of Southampton - Department of Archaeology 2002; idem, "2002 – Survey at Bir Nakheil" in David P. S. Peacock, et al., *Myos Hormos – Quseir al-Qadim: A Roman and Islamic Port Site. Interim Report 2002*. University of Southampton - Department of Archaeology 2003. I thank Professor Peacock for drawing this to my attention.
4. Abu'l-Fida, *Tawqim al-buldan (Géographie d'Abulféda)*: Paris, 1840, p. 111; Wahwah al-Kutubi, Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Yahyá, *Mabahij al-fikar wa-manahij al-'ibar. Selections*. Silsilah al-turathiyah. al-Majlis al-Wahani li-Thaqafah wa-al-Funun wa-al-Adab: Kuwait, 1981, p. 98; Ahmad b. 'Ali al-Maqrizi, *al-mawā'iz wal-i'tibār fi dhikr al-khitat wal-athār. Mémoires publiés par les membres de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire* 30, 33, 46, 49, 58. Institut français d'archéologie orientale: Cairo, 1911, p. 61; Shihab al-Din Ahmad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Nuwayri, *Nihayat al-arab fi funun al-adab*. Cairo, 1964, p. 243.
5. Peacock, "1999 – Trench 5." In David P. S. Peacock, et al., *Myos Hormos – Quseir al-Qadim: A Roman and Islamic Port Site. Interim Report 2000*. University of Southampton - Department of Archaeology 2001; idem, "2001 – Trench 8a" In Peacock, et al., *Myos Hormos – Quseir al-Qadim: A Roman and Islamic Port Site. Interim Report 2002*.
6. See especially Li Guo, "Arabic Documents from the Red Sea Port of Quseir in the Seventh/Thirteenth Century, Part 1: Business Letters." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 58 /3 (1999): 161–90; Li Guo, "Arabic Documents from the Red Sea

7. Celadon ceramics from the Sheikh's House. From top to bottom: light olive glaze over a light gray stoneware body, incised; opaque greenish-blue glaze over light gray stoneware body with incised lotus leaves; dark olive glaze over gray stoneware body, incised.

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7. Guo, *Commerce, Culture, and Community*, pp. 38-44.

8. Unpublished field report by Michael Bates.

9. Bowls similar to these have also been found in the Ago Khan's excavations at the Ayyubid Wall in Cairo, but they may be of a different class (Julie Monchamp, personal communication Feb. 9, 2006).

10. Whitcomb and Johnson, *Quseir al-Qadim 1980: Preliminary Report*, p. 149; E. J. Keall, "The Dynamics of Zabid and its Hinterland: the Survey of a Town on the Tihamah Plain of North Yemen." *World Archaeology* 14 /3 (1983): 378–92, see especially pp. 379-391; Christopher Ciuk and Edward J. Keall, *Zabid Project Pottery Manual 1995. Pre-Islamic and Islamic Ceramics from the Zabid area, North Yemen*. BAR International Series 655. British Archaeological Reports: Oxford, 1996, p. 108; Rebecca Bridgman, *Report 2001 – The Islamic Pottery: some preliminary findings*. University of Southampton - Department of Archaeology.

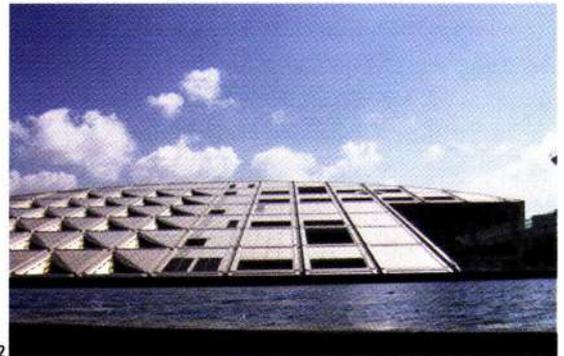
11. For example, see Włodzimierz Godlewski, "Coptic pottery from Deir al Naqlun (Fayum)." In *Coptic and Nubian Pottery, part 1*, edited by Godlewski. National Museum Occasional paper. vol. 1: Warsaw 1990; Tomasz Górecki, "Coptic painted amphorae from Tell Atrib – introductory remarks on decoration." In *Coptic and Nubian Pottery, part 1*, edited by Godlewski. National Museum Occasional paper. vol. 1: Warsaw 1990; Karol Mysliwiec, *Keramik und Kleinfunde aus der Grabung im Tempel Sethos' I in Gurna*. Archäologische Veröffentlichungen 57. Philip von Zabern: Mainz am Rhein, 1987; Genevieve Pierrat, "Poteries Trouvées dans les fouilles de Tôd 6e – 12e siècles après J.C." In *Coptic and Nubian Pottery, part 1*, edited by Godlewski, pp. 29–33. National Museum Occasional paper. vol. 1: Warsaw 1990.

12. Bo Gyllensvärd, "Recent Finds of Chinese Ceramics at Fostat, I." *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm* 45 (1973): 91–119, see especially p. 92. Also see Bo Gyllensvärd, "Recent Finds of Chinese Ceramics at Fostat, II." *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm* 47 (1975): 93–117; R. L. Hobson, "Chinese Porcelain from Fostat." *Burlington Magazine* 1932 /September (1932): 109–13; Oscar Raphael, "Fragment from Fostat." *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* (1923-24): 17–25; Tatsuo Sasaki, "Chinese ceramics excavated at Fostat-1985." *Trade Ceramics Studies* 6 (1986): 99–103; G. T. Scanlon, "Egypt and China: Trade and Imitation." In *Islam and the Trade of Asia: A Colloquium*, edited by Richards, pp. 81–95, 271–91. Bruno Cassirer: Oxford 1971.

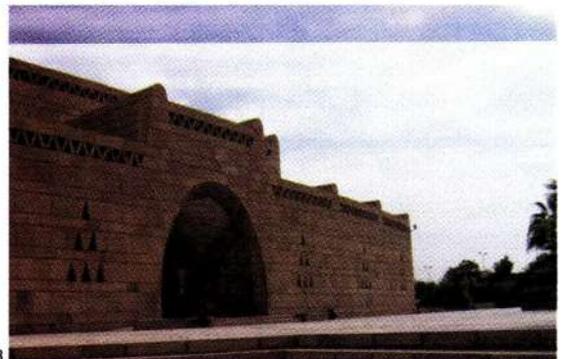
13. See Katherine Strange Burke and Donald Whitcomb, "Quseir al-Qadim in the 13th Century: A Community and Its Textiles." *Ars Orientalis* 34 (forthcoming).



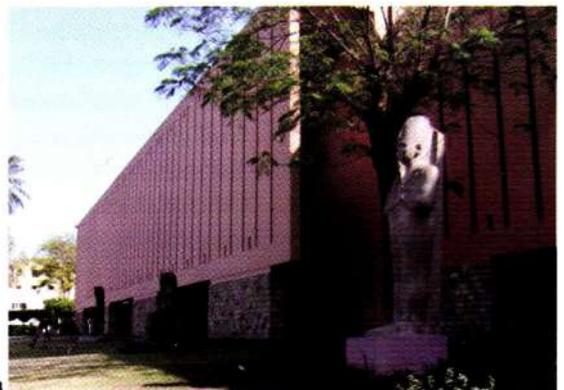
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Egyptian Museography: Patterns of Archaeological Representation in National Museum Practice

Wendy E. Doyon

As a student of museology, I study processes of preserving, documenting and communicating material culture, as well as the institutional structures that support the long-term social benefits of museum collections. Museography may be defined as a set of methods forming the practice of museums, as both institutionalized collections and public organizations. The exhibition is the visual expression of museum logic, thus serving as a 'textual' representation of a material process, which originates in cultural production and concludes in institutional production. To support the critical study of museums in society, museology relates the applied principles of museography to the history, philosophy, ethics, and social agency of all museum types.

My research centers on methods of archaeological representation in Egyptian museum practice. The purpose of this study is to identify patterns in the structure of Egyptian history and culture, as it is presented by the national museum program of Egypt. Consequently, this project investigates technical standards of exhibition and methods of material arrangement in exhibit design, as well as the circumstances of public museum administration in Egypt.

Archaeological representation generally refers to the production of meaning through a visual language of communicating the past. There have been a number of studies concerning the repeated use of symbolic imagery in popular interpretations of archaeology, such as in literature and film; and emerging areas of cultural studies have also begun to apply empirical methods of analysis to the representation of archaeology in museums, examining how the display of archaeological materials acts as an agent of cultural identity. This work approaches the exhibition as a visual narrative which determines people's associations with the past, by observing patterns

in the arrangement and distribution of material culture.

By observing the methods in which objects are arranged into meaningful groups, and how these groups are positioned in relation to other groups to form meaningful displays, (along with additional design features such as media, furniture, lighting and orientation), one can discern patterns of cultural significance. Major categories of significance by which objects are often grouped together in Egyptian museums include chronology, typology (i.e. object grouping by material type), iconography, geography, ethnography, and taxonomy. These represent systematic material groupings, which are significant by virtue of shared object properties, as distinct from thematic material groupings, which are significant by virtue of shared contextual features. Thematic display methods are far less common than systematic display methods in Egyptian museums.

The use of "visual chronology" in the presentation of Egyptian material cultures is a major pattern of exhibition and cultural representation. Of 18 museums which I visited*, 15 of them base their displays, in some way, on the concept of chronology. All of the principal archaeological museums, with the exception of the Luxor Museum, use chronology as the primary basis of object arrangement, with all other methods of display supporting the major theme of time. Among those museums where exhibitions are primarily arranged according to other categories of interest (such as geography, biography, ethnography, iconography or taxonomy), chronology is often used as a

*These include the Abdin Palace Museum; the Ancient Egyptian Agriculture Museum; the Agricultural Museum Scientific Collections; the Alexandria National Museum; the Aswan Museum; the Bibliotheca Alexandrina Antiquities and Science Museums; the Cheops Solar Boat Museum; the Egyptian Museum in Cairo; the Egyptian Geological Museum; the Egyptian National Railways Museum; the Ethnographic Museum in Cairo; the Luxor Museum; the Mummification Museum; the Museum of Islamic Ceramics; the National Military Museum; the Nubia Museum; and the Postal Museum.

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1. The Egyptian Museum in Cairo
2. The Bibliotheca Alexandrina
3. The Nubia Museum in Aswan
4. The Luxor Museum

Photos: Wendy E. Doyon

secondary arrangement, when the collections exhibited cover a broad enough range of material. This pattern becomes significant as a system of meaning when we consider the variety of material represented. Taking the examples of a history museum, an archaeological museum, and a natural history museum, to illustrate this point, it can be suggested that the concept of historical continuity is a primary method of communicating cultural significance in Egypt, and of relating different cultural traditions through time.

Visitors to the National Military Museum at the Citadel are first greeted by a series of reliefs at the entrance to the museum, depicting a New Kingdom chariot scene alongside images of war in the “Islamic, Modern, and Present” ages. The interior exhibits begin with one of Tutankhamun’s royal chariots, and a wall caption listing its provenance as “Modern Kingdom, the Eighteenth Dynasty”. The Military Museum also contains a private gallery displaying the military history of ancient Egypt, which is reserved for military personnel and VIP visitors. As you proceed through the galleries, your visit ends in recent time, with a horse-drawn carriage model from twentieth-century Egypt.

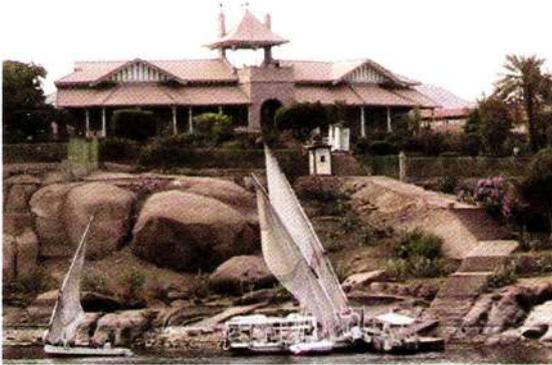
At the Alexandria National Museum, inaugurated in 2003, there are three levels of material culture representing the Pharaonic periods below, the Graeco-Roman period on the main floor, and the Coptic, Islamic and Modern periods above. Each of these periods is presented using identical methods of material arrangement, which suggests a visual correspondence between cultural traditions which are punctuated by time. Within each period, material-type groups such as ceramic, glass, or stone vessels, tool groups, textiles, jewelry, inscriptions, and figural groups, are visually and spatially distinguished from one another, and from classic object categories such as statuary, stelae, architectural remains, and funerary materials. Objects from this second category of monumental or iconic materials often occupy central or transitional spaces within galleries, while object groups based on material type or function usually form an edge or visual boundary of some kind. The positioning of objects and groups is nearly always symmetrical, according to strictly visual object properties, including material type, function, size, shape, color or other distinctly visual features. These specific object properties of form and function

tend to supersede other possible shared themes, such as historical context, or social distribution. The emphasis on symmetrical object arrangement according to material types is a standard feature of exhibit design throughout Egyptian museums, and can be seen, to varying degrees, in all 18 of the museums listed.

The Egyptian Geological Museum in Maadi, is also arranged according to natural object properties, first making organic and inorganic distinctions, followed by chronology and geography. The central exhibit corridor displays major vertebrate specimens, along with an assortment of prehistoric and early Egyptian material culture representations at the rear of the museum. The cultural displays here are also arranged according to material composition, in groups of stone, bone, ivory, and mineral, and it seems that the inclusion of archaeological materials in this way makes the sequence of geological history more accessible to a modern audience.

In the same way, it seems that in the case of archaeological and historical museums, the repeated pattern of arrangement by material-type groups throughout sequences of time is used to create visual associations between different cultural traditions, and provides a sense of historical continuity. The symmetrical placement of certain types of objects in relation to other types, with both large and small object groups arranged to complement each other visually, illustrates an aesthetic pattern based on the symmetry of object forms and types, regardless of historic content. Considering the primary importance of chronology in addition to material composition, it can be suggested that these patterns represent more than just an aesthetic standard, but an interpretive standard as well.

Of the same 18 museums sampled, 16 of them represent two or more periods of material culture tradition from prehistory to the present; 9 of them directly link the past with modern Egyptian history; and 6 of them display prolonged sequences in time from the prehistoric age to the approach of modern traditions. This pattern can be seen in museums throughout Egypt, whether they are traditional, contemporary, or still in development. Both the Antiquities Museum at the Alexandria Library and the Nubia Museum in Aswan were established in response to specific local circumstances, but in both cases the transfer of objects from all periods of Egyptian



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5. The Aswan Museum on Elephantine Island

6. Middle Kingdom Gallery in the Alexandria National Museum

7. Vertebrate Gallery at the Egyptian Geological Museum, Cairo

8. Tools and Implements Gallery, room 34 on the upper floor of the Egyptian Museum

Photos: Wendy E. Doyon

history was an integral part of exhibit development. In comparing presentation at the Aswan Museum on Elephantine Island and the newer Nubia Museum in Aswan, the latter features more contemporary design features and extensive historical text. In both museums, however, the existence of a continuing tradition of object arrangement and interpretation which operates apart from the influence of modern exhibit technologies is apparent. Both museums present similar chronologies, and nearly identical material groups and captioning throughout those chronologies, despite fundamental differences in funding and administration. Similarly, proposals for the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization in Fustat and the El-Arish Museum in the Sinai, are also based on this philosophy of design. The new National Museum in Fustat plans to give the most extensive overview of all periods of Egyptian history, and to promote the representation of cultural continuity through time¹. Furthermore, in certain circumstances where authentic historic artifacts are not available to represent different time periods, they are often fabricated. This practice can be seen, for example, at the National Railways Museum,

the Hunting Museum in Manyal, the Postal Museum, and the Agricultural Museums. Thus, even in museums which are largely devoted to specific histories, such as geology, military, communication, transport, agriculture, or period histories, the inclusion of multiple cultural traditions throughout Egyptian history is fundamental.

A general conclusion of this study is that the presentation of historical continuity through visual material classes is a common display ideology in Egyptian museums, perhaps serving to strengthen the relevance of the distant past to the cultures of today. The overall implication of this display scheme is that cultural traditions are most significant in relation to other cultural traditions; but more importantly, this standard display pattern makes those cultural associations accessible visually. For a variety of reasons, the centralized governance of Egyptian museums is somewhat restrictive to producing exhibit didactics, meaning authoritative text. But, I have also found that even in museums with resources for comprehensive labeling, such as the Nubia Museum, the Abdin Palace Museum, and the new museums of Alexandria, the configuration of object groups according to chronol-

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ogy and material type is generally the most immediate form of orientation when you enter an exhibition, and precedes most other interpretations. In most museums the use of object labels, exhibit guidebooks, audio guides, catalogs, and graphic aids are clearly secondary ways of accessing historical information, underscoring the importance of visual arrangements to the production of meaning in Egyptian museums. So it seems that systematic object positioning is not just an aesthetic choice, but also a fundamental form of communication.

9. Old Kingdom Gallery, room 42 on the ground floor of the Egyptian Museum

10. Tutankhamun Gallery, room 3 on the upper floor of the Egyptian Museum

11. Entrance to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo

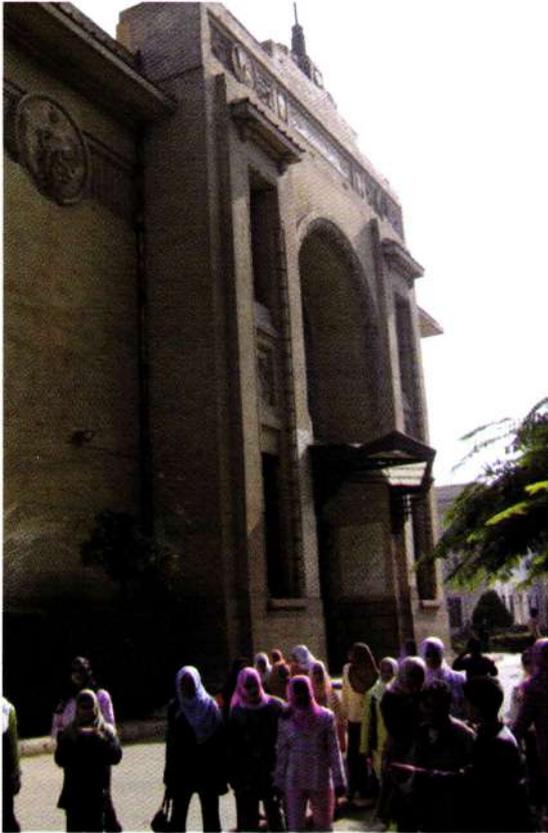
Photos: Wendy E. Dayon



A basic administrative analysis of Egyptian museum operations illuminates a large variety of factors which have a direct influence on the public structure of museums. These include institutional regulations governing the movement of objects and the control of information within museums; interpretive conflicts between curators and tour guides; the social history and context of museum control (including the historical as well as contemporary effects of foreign funding sources); the structure of museum governance; and issues of general public administration and policy.

The control of objects and information in most cases requires a regulated committee process, involving administrative oversight, centralized approval processes within the Ministry of Culture, and the coordination of specified tasks assigned to curators, object handlers, gallery attendants, carpenters, conservation specialists, and security personnel, who all perform very different functions. Activities which often require committee work include all object movement between cases, galleries and storerooms; opening and cleaning vitrines; replacing labels or light sources; object photography; and collections inventory. The fabrication of exhibit furniture, cases, light fixtures, and labels, is also a centralized function of the Ministry, and public service personnel are often contractual with private companies, whose interests are commercial rather than public. This is true, for example, at the Egyptian Museum, where custodial staff do not work under the direct authority of the museum.

In fiscal year 2003-2004, the Egyptian Museum earned 6.7 million US dollars, amounting to approximately 73% of the national museum revenue for that year². The museum generally receives less than a 1% return on its annual income for museum operations, and – importantly – this operational budget is not managed internally by museum staff, but is controlled entirely by the Ministry. As public institutions, museum budgets are a function of social funding priorities, and support for museum operations is proportionate to the impact of their public services. In the case of Egyptian museums, the lack of coordinated public policy between the Ministries of Tourism and Culture has a severe effect on the work of curators and museum administrators; and standardized methods of display, emphasizing visual rather than didactic presentation, would seem to have a



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12. The Agricultural Museum in Cairo
Photo: Wendy E. Doyon

direct correlation with the governing politics of public administration.

The Ministry of Culture represents approximately 62% of the control of Egypt's national museums. Within the Ministry of Culture, the Supreme Council of Antiquities controls 49% of Egyptian museums, and the Sector of Fine Arts controls 13%. The Supreme Council of Antiquities qualifies archaeological museums as those which represent Egyptian culture up to the era of Mohammed Ali, and historical museums as those which represent Egyptian culture during and following the era of Mohammed Ali. Within the governing structure of archaeological museums, curatorial appointments are classified by time period and/or material type, so that individual curators are held responsible for discrete and institutionalized object categories such as 'wood', 'jewelry', or 'Old Kingdom statuary'. These administrative divisions represent an important organizational and national tradition, which demonstrates a fundamental correlation to the public presentation of Egyptian heritage, vis-à-vis the chronological and typological structure of museum exhibition. In addition to staff organization, policies governing the proportional distribution of archaeological material among various local, regional and specialized museums also reflect an institutional tradition of diachronic representation, regardless of a recipient museum's functional context.

Issues of interpretive privilege between the Ministries of Culture and Tourism often distance museum staff significantly from public programming. Curatorial responsibility includes both the oversight of collections and public relations, but tensions of public authority often leave curators at a disadvantage. There are at least five distinct audience groups who visit Egyptian museums (these are local visitors, tourists, student groups, researchers, and VIP visitors), but very little formal administrative policy exists for the management of these disparate groups within the national museum program. However, despite the lack of formal guidelines for both commercial and non-commercial public service in museums, trends in curatorial authority vary circumstantially from museum to museum. Public relations are a major function of curatorial work in many museums, and a growing number of museums have begun to place restrictions on tour guides in their exhibit galleries, promoting instead in-house interpretive services. This can be seen at the museums of Luxor, the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, the Abdin Palace Museum and the Museum of Islamic Ceramics. Historical sources indicate that the tradition of tour guides and touristic literature in Egypt diverged from the institutional development of museum practice beginning in the 1940s, when guidebooks written by museum staff began to decline in production.

Of the 18 museums listed for this report, half of them are non-touristic, meaning that their audience base is predominantly local. The other half of this museum group, which may also be considered touristic, receives varying degrees of local visitation. For example, of the paid admissions to the Luxor Museum in 2003 and 2004, 16% was local visitation, compared to 45% at the Nubia Museum and 57% at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in 2004 and 2005. Exhibit practices in Egyptian museums must also be approached from a social perspective, taking into account a variety of issues, such as illiteracy rates (which averaged 45% for the country in 1999), the needs of local school groups, resources for language translation, and social funding priorities.

Many of the issues raised in relation to Egyptian museums are extremely controversial and critical within museology, including issues of cultural affiliation, the influence of funding patterns on public presentation, and the control of public access to museum collections.

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13. The Solar Boat Museum in Giza

14. The Abdine Palace Museum in Cairo

15. Graeco-Roman Gallery, room 39 on the upper floor of the Egyptian Museum

Photos: Wendy E. Doyon



to the Pharaonic, Graeco-Roman, Coptic and Islamic traditions, reflects a specific philosophical structure in the development of Egyptian national museums; one which raises meaningful implications for the construction of national identity.

Based upon my research season with ARCE, I have compiled a survey of museological data for the 110 museums known, or proposed, to operate for the public in Egypt. The basic information included in the survey profiles the purpose, type, location, date of establishment, and governing authority for each museum, as well as specific details, where possible, on the collections, exhibits, design and interpretation, public programs, facilities, visitor services, staff and administration, funding, visitorship, foreign support, publication references, and historical circumstances for each museum. The documentation of these categories of information for museums of archaeology, art, ethnography, history, and natural history, continues to reveal a relationship between the organizing principles of national museum operations and those features of public presentation which they all share in common as an expression of Egyptian nationality. It is my hope that a basic assessment of Egyptian museum organization will support further study of the role museums play in shaping national identity, and I look forward to sharing the results of this survey with members of the ARCE community in the near future.

It has been a great pleasure to work with the American Research Center in Egypt, and I am very grateful to the outstanding staff at ARCE, and to the Supreme Council of Antiquities for supporting this project. I also want to thank the exceptional group of museum professionals in Egypt, especially the staff of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, the Luxor Museum, the Nubia Museum, and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina Antiquities Museum, for facilitating this research. ■

Egyptian history enjoys worldwide popular appeal, but there is no universal qualification among museum practices for the form or meaning which historical presentations may take. In approaching Egyptian museums it is crucial to recognize the basic principle of museology, that representations of historical meaning and significance are relative to varying perceptions of history, and its value to different communities. While it is beyond the scope of this project to fully substantiate any of these issues, it is nevertheless striking to note a pattern for the representation of deep cultural time in the institutionalized structure of Egyptian heritage. I argue that this pattern of diachronic representation from the prehistoric

NOTES

1. A.A. Maniem in *Museum International*, 57.1-2: 24-30. UNESCO, 2005.
2. A.R.E., Ministry of Culture, Supreme Council of Antiquities, Museums Sector. Annual Statement of the Arrangement of Principal and Rural National Museums by Income. Cairo, 2002, 2003, 2005.

Annual Meeting

The American Research Center in Egypt's Annual Meeting for 2006 took place in Jersey City, New Jersey – with its dramatic view of Manhattan's skyline just across the Hudson River – from April 27th to 30th.

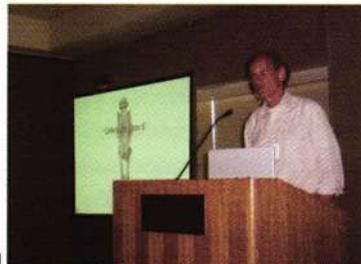
ARCE is grateful to this year's generous sponsors, including, in alphabetical order, *Astronomy Magazine*, The Brooklyn Museum of Art, Columbia University's Department of Anthropology, Columbia University's Department of Classics, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York University's Institute of Fine

Arts, and New York University's Kevorkian Center. ARCE also takes this opportunity to encourage you, our members, to join us in Toledo, Ohio for what will surely be another memorable meeting April 20-22, 2007.

The Jersey City Annual Meeting was marked by several special occasions. On Thursday evening (April 27th), two events took place. The first was a special cocktail reception hosted by ARCE President Carol Redmount to recognize and thank our leading donors. The second event that evening was a special symposium jointly

organized by ARCE's New York Chapter and *Astronomy Magazine*, entitled, *Illuminated in Lightland: The Archaeoastronomical Origins of the Seat of the First Occurrence in the Egyptian Solar Cult Religion*. The symposium was hosted by Patricia Blackwell Gary of New York University and Richard Talcott of *Astronomy Magazine*. Entertainment and a special telescope viewing followed the symposium.

On Friday afternoon (April 28th), the ARCE Chapters hosted a well-attended lecture by popular speaker Dr. Bob Brier. That



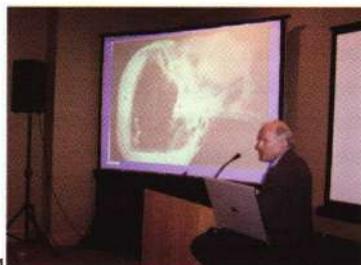
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1. Dr. Bob Brier presents Chapter Fundraiser Lecture.

2. Metropolitan Museum of Art Reception.

3. Tiffany Jenkins, Claire Edwards, Miriam Fettman, Candy Tate, Rachel Mauldin, and Matt Silva.

4. Dr. Ben Harer delivers talk on King Tut.

5. Tracy Musacchio is named winner of the Student Paper of the Year Award.

6. Jack Josephson is honored for his service to ARCE.

7. Andrew Bednarski delivers his paper.

8. Patricia Gary, Richard Talcott, Gerry Scott, Kate Scott, Carol Redmount, and Candy Tate at NY Chapter/Astronomy Magazine Special Reception.

9. Gerry Scott reports on the ARCE Egyptian Museum exhibition.

Photos: Kathleen Scott

evening, a special treat for Annual Meeting attendees was an evening at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where ARCE members could view two special exhibitions, "Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh" and "The Art of Medicine in Ancient Egypt," followed by an exclusive reception in the Temple of Dendur court, co-hosted by the Metropolitan's Department of Egyptian Art and ARCE.

Saturday, April 29th, the ARCE Chapter Presidents convened for their annual breakfast meeting, and later joined ARCE President Carol Redmount, ARCE Director Gerry Scott, and ARCE Director of Development Kathleen Scott for a luncheon meeting, where ARCE Associate Director of the Egyptian Antiquities Conservation Project (EAC), Michael Jones, spoke on ARCE's current conservation efforts in Egypt. That evening, ARCE members and Annual Meeting attendees enjoyed a festive reception, hosted by this year's sponsors. During the reception, the ARCE Chapters also presented their second annual best student paper award to Tracy Musacchio of the University of Pennsylvania for her paper, *Warfare in the First Intermediate Period: The Case at Dendera*.

In addition to these special events and three days filled with the presentation of scholarly papers, ARCE also successfully conducted its annual business with productive meetings of the ARCE Board of Governors and several of its committees. Especially important was the meeting of ARCE's reconstituted Finance Committee, which took important steps toward selecting a professional financial advisor and to determining a strategy for the continued health of ARCE's endowment. Other productive committee meetings included those of the Executive Committee, the Library Committee,

and the Antiquities Endowment Fund Committee, who voted additional funds over the course of the next three years to assist ARCE Librarian Chuck Van Siden as he seeks to improve the holdings of ARCE's Simpson Library.

A particularly important moment during the Annual Meeting occurred at Saturday's General Meeting and Members Forum where ARCE honored long-time member and distinguished Egyptologist, Jack A. Josephson for his many years of dedicated and selfless work on behalf of ARCE, including service on ARCE's Board of Governors and the Finance Committee, the Endowment Committee, the Long Range Planning Committee, and the Egyptian Antiquities Project (EAP) Oversight Committee. He also worked tirelessly to build ARCE's Antiquities Endowment through his keen financial acumen, and he and former ARCE President Richard Fazzini took important strides to implement the Antiquities Endowment Fund grant program, which has now benefited thirty-four projects.

The annual meeting of ARCE's Board of Governors was held on Sunday, April 30th. At the conclusion of the meeting, Board member (and Research Supporting Member representative) Roxie Walker presented ARCE Director Gerry Scott with the first contribution to launch ARCE's capital campaign. On behalf of all of us at ARCE, our deepest thanks to Ms. Walker for this generous – and crucial – donation!

ARCE also extends thanks to all of you, our members, for your continued support of our organization and its many programs and activities. We hope to see you all next April 20 to 22 for what should be a very special 2007 annual meeting in Toledo. ■

10. Roxie Walker, John Adams, Chuck Van Siden, Bob Busey, and Rick Moran

11. The Executive Committee thanks John Adams for his service as Chapter Representative.

Photos: Kathleen Scott





The Abaza Family and Librarian Chuck Van Sicken pose in front of the donated library

Photo: Kathleen Scott

THE WILLIAM KELLY AND MARILYN SIMPSON LIBRARY continues to improve on a wide number of fronts. Between January 1, 2005 and September 30, 2006, the Library has added over twelve hundred new titles. In addition, journals runs continue to be filled in and series completed. The large amount of new material has precluded publication in the Bulletin of further "New Acquisition" lists. The care of the collection continues apace, and regular shipments of books and journals are being sent to the bookbinder.

The fields of interest for the Library cover the countries of the eastern Mediterranean region from prehistory to the present day, with a primary focus on Egypt. While it may be taken as a given that books on Egypt are appropriate for the Library, there is equal need for books that tie Egypt to the broader world of the Ancient Near East, the Classical World, Byzantium, the Arab World and Islam. For the past few years, the major funding source for Library acquisition has been an annual grant from the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC). This grant is used for purchases in all fields of interest. Beginning July 1, 2006, the Library also has been able to draw upon a restricted grant from the ARCE's Antiquities Endowment Fund to be used for purchases focusing on the conservation, documentation and study of the monuments of Egypt. In addition, the Library continues to receive bequests and donations both in cash and in kind. It regularly (although not always) receives publications from scholars whose work has been supported or facilitated by ARCE. Some donors give books or cash simply because they understand the value of a good library to the work of ARCE.

On November 17, 2005 a reception was held to honor the gift to the Library of the books of the late Mrs. Tati Abaza (see *ARCE Bulletin* 186, p. 15). These books on ancient Egypt have now been integrated into to the Library collection.

ARCE member Dr. Michelle Raccagni was instrumental in obtaining for the Library a collection of books formed by the late Waguih Takla (1943-2005). Mr. Takla was born in Egypt of Egyptian and French parents but moved to Lebanon and later France and the United States. Much of his career had to do with French interpreting for the American film industry. In his later years he also appeared in a number of films and television. His books reflect his interest in ancient Egypt and some of its more esoteric interpretations.

Another ARCE member, Dr. Mohamed El-Shafie, presented a collection of books reflecting interest in both ancient Egypt and medieval Islamic medicine. In addition, he provided a run of the JARCE that will be used for exchange purpose.

The ARCE library has also received a significant collection of books on papyrology that formed the library of the late Dr. Naphthali Lewis (1911-2005). This gift occurred through the good offices of Prof. Roger Bagnall of Columbia University and the generosity of Dr. Lewis' children: Mrs. Judith L. Herman and Dr. John Lewis. Naphthali Lewis was an eminent scholar in Greek papyrology, and Distinguished Professor Emeritus at City University of New York. He is best known to the general public through two books that bring alive Egypt during the Graeco-Roman Period: *Greeks in Ptolemaic Egypt* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986) and *Life in Egypt under Roman Rule* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983)—both books are still available. Papyrology is predominantly the study of Greek texts written on papyrus, but also texts in Coptic, Demotic Egyptian, Latin and Arabic. Since most documents are written on papyrus and come from Egypt, this field is well within the Library's purview. Papyrology as an academic subject is key in understanding the life and history of Egypt for a millennium or more beginning in 300 BC. The Library is richer for this gift that has partly filled a significant gap in its holdings.

Usama Mahgoub, Amira Gamal and Soliman Gomaa continue their work in the Library providing user services and/or performing general collections work as well as participating in the still on-going conversion of Library holdings to the Library of Congress cataloging system. The Librarian attended the Annual Meeting in New Jersey in April and made a report to the Library Committee. ■

**JARCE
(JOURNAL OF
THE AMERICAN
RESEARCH
CENTER IN
EGYPT)**

Dr. Ann Macy Roth, the present editor of JARCE, has tendered her resignation due to health problems and a combination of other circumstances that have prevented her from serving as editor effectively. JARCE volume 41 (2004) is now in production, and it is expected to appear in early 2007. It is planned that volume 42 (2005) will appear during summer 2007, along with volume 43 (2006), a special ARCE conservation issue.

JARCE volume 44 (2007) is now accepting submissions. It is hoped that the issue will be closed by June 1, 2007, and that the volume will appear by the end of 2007. Electronic submissions should be sent to the interim editor, Charles C. Van Sicken III (chuck.vansicken@gmail.com), and hard copy texts should be sent to the ARCE business office (ARCE, 8700 Crownhill Blvd., suite 507, San Antonio, TX 78209-1130).

annual report 2004-2005

ARCE Expeditions 2004-2005

Ray Johnson

Epigraphic Survey, University of Chicago

Dieter Arnold

Dahshur, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Matt Adams

Northern Cemetery and Funerary Enclosure of Khasekhemwy, University of Chicago

Steve Harvey

The Temple of Ahmose-Nefertari, Abydos, University of Chicago

Willeke Wendrich

Fayoum Expedition, University of California

Peter Brand

The Karnak Hypostyle Hall Project, Memphis University

Renee Friedman

Hieronkonpolis, The British Museum-University of Arkansas

Elena Pischikova

Tomb of Nespakashuty, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Harold Dibble, Shannon McPheron

Survey of Paleolithic Sites near Abydos, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

Richard Fazzini

Mut Temple, Brooklyn Museum of Art

Betsy Bryan

Expedition to the Precinct of the Goddess Mut, The Johns Hopkins University

Joann Knudson

GPS Survey, University of California

Mark Lehner

Giza Mapping Project, University of Chicago

Mark Lehner

Nile Survey, University of Chicago

Don Ryan

Valley of the Kings, Pacific Lutheran University

ARCE Fellows 2004-2005

Ziad Fahmy – ECA Fellow

Predocctoral University of Arizona
"Popularizing Early Egyptian Nationalism: Popular Culture, Vernacular Print Culture, and the Press, 1877-1919"

Fakhri Haghani – ECA Fellow

PhD candidate, Georgia State University
"The Supermarket of Fashion: Gender, Modernity, and the Making of the Public Sphere in Interwar Egypt and Iran"

Mahmoud Ibrahim – NEH Fellow

Professor and Chair, Dept. Of History, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

"An Edition of the Manuscript Ta'rich Al Jazari"

Robert Kevin Jaques – NEH Fellow

Assistant Professor, Dept. of Religious Studies, Indiana University

"Medieval Islamic Biographical Dictionaries: Understanding Rhetorical Strategies and Historical Context"

Terence J. Kleven – NEH Fellow

Professor of the Liberal Arts, Central College, Iowa
"Alfarabi's Short Treatises on Logic"

Theresa Musaccio – Kress Fellow

Predocctoral University of Pennsylvania
"Autobiographical Stelea of the First Intermediate Period"

Donald M. Reid – NEH Fellow and Scholar in Residence

Professor of History, Georgia State University
"Archaeology, Museums, and National Identity in Twentieth Century Egypt"

Sandra L. Russell – ECA Fellow

Professor History, Georgia State University

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The Oriental Institute of the
University of Chicago

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San Bernardino, California

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Massachusetts Institute of
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Catharine Roehrig

The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
New York (RSM)

Ann Macy Roth

Editor, Journal of the American
Research Center in Egypt (ex
officio)

New York University

Adina L. Savin (2007)

Los Angeles, California

Dona J. Stewart

Georgia State University (RSM)

Nancy Thomas (2006)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Robert L. Tignor

Princeton University (RSM)

Gerald Vincent (2007)

Stamford, Connecticut

Josef W. Wegner

University of Pennsylvania (RSM)

Timothy Whalen

The Getty Conservation Institute
(RSM)

► "The Role of Electronic
Technologies and Globalization
in Egyptian Woman's Reform
Strategies 1985-2000"

Elaine Sullivan - ECA Fellow

PhD. Candidate, The Johns

Hopkins University
"Re-entering the City of One
Hundred Gates: Excavations of
the New Kingdom City of Ancient
Thebes"

**Jason Thompson - NEH
Fellow**

Associate Professor, The
American University in Cairo
"A Biography of Edward
William Lane"

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Donor/Membership Recognition 2004-2005

ARCE sincerely thanks our membership for its continued support.

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annual report 2004-2005

The American Research Center in Egypt Statement of Financial Position June 30, 2005 and 2004

As audited by PriceWaterhouseCoopers
The notes, available by request from ARCE, are an integral part of these financial statements.

ASSETS	2004	2005
Cash and cash equivalents	9,523,651	11,240,025
Receivables and prepaid expenses	733,755	762,126
Grants receivable	618,093	474,553
Investments, at quoted fair value	42,887,892	41,549,231
Property and equipment, net	187,091	135,250
Library collection	835,440	835,440
Deferred rent	220,000	208,000
Total assets	\$ 55,005,922	\$ 55,204,625
LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	123,721	116,035
Grants payable	254,471	272,497
Refundable advances & custodial funds	8,751	8,148
Deferred revenue	4,250,954	5,573,637
Assets held in trust for others	8,294,458	8,593,482
Total liabilities	\$ 12,932,355	\$ 14,563,799
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted	3,058,544	1,028,216
Temporarily restricted	11,107,224	11,704,811
Permanently restricted	27,907,799	27,907,799
Total net assets	\$ 42,073,567	\$ 40,640,826
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 55,005,922	\$ 55,204,625

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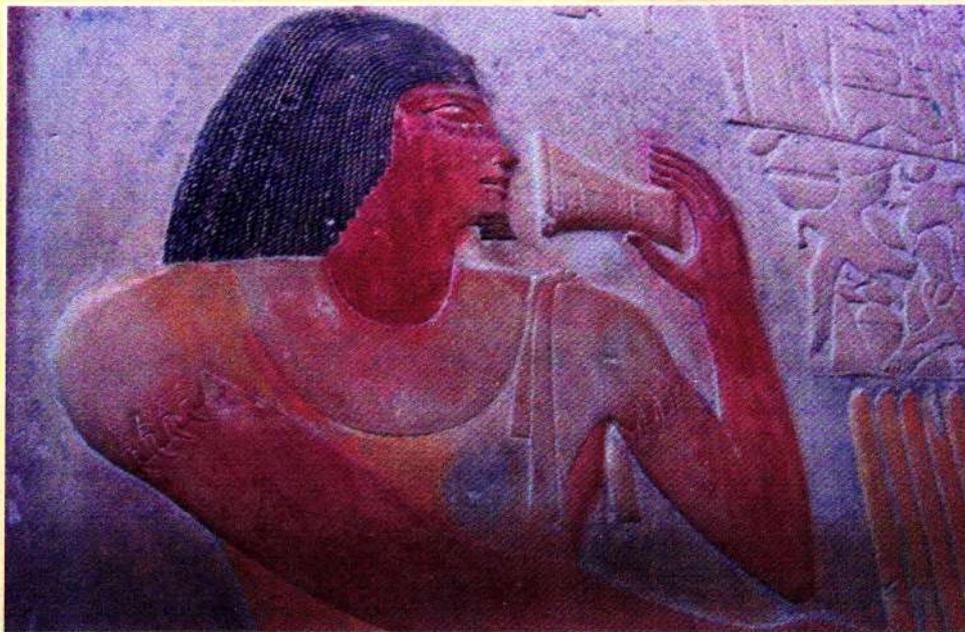
The American Research Center in Egypt, Inc. Statement of Activities For the year ended June 30, 2005

As audited by PriceWaterhouseCoopers

The notes, available by request from ARCE, are an integral part of these financial statements.

REVENUES AND SUPPORT	TOTAL	UNRESTRICTED
Grants	569,250	359,250
Membership dues	144,533	144,533
Contributions	13,308	13,308
Cultural endowment trust earnings	121,689	121,689
Meeting, lectures, and publications	89,169	89,169
Investment income	1,721,511	283,310
Net unrealized & realized gains on investments	(196,765)	
Other	22,771	22,771
Net assets released from restrictions		480,865
Total revenues and support	\$ 2,485,466	\$ 1,514,895
EXPENSES		
Program services		
Conferences and seminars	47,547	47,547
Expeditions/scholars services/special projects	440,402	440,402
Fellowships	63,120	63,120
Library	37,589	37,589
Public education	51,034	51,034
Publications	2,165,903	2,165,903
Restoration and conservation	12,927	12,927
Scholars residence		
Total program services	\$ 2,818,522	\$ 2,818,522
Supporting services		
Management and general	814,706	814,706
Membership development	29,625	29,625
Fundraising	1,193	1,193
Total supporting services	845,524	845,524
Total expenses	3,664,046	3,664,046
Total change in net assets before foreign exchange gain	(1,178,580)	2,149,151
Foreign exchange gain	(254,161)	118,823
Changes in net assets	(1,432,741)	(2,030,328)
Net assets at beginning of year	42,073,567	3,058,544
Net assets at end of year	\$ 40,640,826	\$ 1,028,216

Fellowships in Egypt 2007-2008



Fields of Study

Archaeology
Art & Architecture
Economics
Egyptology
History
Humanities
Islamic Studies
Language & Literature
Political Science
Religion

Application Deadline is January 5, 2007

Award notifications will be made in March 2007

FELLOWSHIPS TO BE AWARDED IN 2007:

The U.S. State Department Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Fellowships are available to pre-doctoral candidates in the all-but-dissertation stage and to post-doctoral scholars. Fellowships are restricted to U.S. citizens and are for a minimum stay of three months.

National Endowment for the Humanities

The NEH makes available 2-4 fellowships for post-doctoral scholars and non-degree seeking professionals for a minimum stay of four months. One of these fellowships is for the ARCE Scholar-in-Residence, established to promote collegiality at the Center.

The Samuel H. Kress Foundation

This Kress Fellowship in Egyptian Art and Architecture is an annual twelve-month fellowship given to a pre-doctoral candidate of any nationality.

The William P. McHugh Memorial Fund

The McHugh Award is a small grant given to a graduate student from any nation to encourage the study of Egyptian geoarchaeology and prehistory.

DURATION AND ALLOWANCES:

The fellowship year begins October 1, 2007 and ends September 30, 2008.

ARCE fellows receive a monthly stipend commensurate with academic status and number of accompanying dependents, plus round-trip air transportation for recipients only.



Atlanta Office • Tel: 404 712 9854 • Fax: 404 712 9849
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Applications available at www.arce.org