Tomb KV63 - The final excavation report
CONTENTS

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Editor:
Robert B. Partridge, 6 Branden Drive
Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 8EJ, UK
Tel. 01565 754450
Email ancientegyptmag@aol.com

Assistant Editor:
Peter Phillips

Consultant Editor:
Professor Rosalie David, OBE

Editorial Assistants:
Victor Blunden, Peter Robinson,
Hilary Wilson

Egypt Correspondent
Ayman Wahby Taher

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Advertisement Manager:
Michael Massey
Tel. 0161 928 2997

Subscriptions:
Mike Hubbard

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Regulars

From the Editor 4
Maps of Egypt 4, 5
Timeline 5
Bits and Pieces 6
Readers’ Letters 52
Subscribers’ Competition Winners 55

Subscribe 56
Back Issues 57
Book Reviews 58
Egyptology Society Details 62
Events Diary 64
Netfishing 67

Features

From our Egypt Correspondent
Ayman Wahby Taher with the latest news from Egypt and details of a new museum at Saqqara.

Friends of Nekhen News
Renée Friedman looks at the presence of Nubians in the city at Hierakoupolis, and their lives there, as revealed in the finds from their tombs.

The New Tomb in the Valley of the Kings
The fourth update on the recent discovery and the final clearance of the small chamber.

ANOTHER new tomb in the Valley of the Kings?
Nicholas Reeves reveals the latest news on the possibility of another tomb in the Royal Valley.

Royal Mummies on view in the Egyptian Museum
A brief report on the opening of the second mummy room in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

The Ancient Stones Speak
Pam Scott, in the first of three major articles, gives a practical guide to enable AE readers to read and understand the ancient texts written on temple and tomb walls, statues and stelae.

The Rekhyt Bird
Kenneth Griffin explains how the many representations of the lapwing are much more than a simple image of a bird; they have a more significant meaning.

Per Mesut: for younger readers
In this edition, Hilary Wilson looks at pomegranates.
June each year. Details of the 2007 Colloquium will be included in AE, when available.

More on the Lion of Amenhotep III

In AE 33 (Dec. 2005/Jan. 2006) an article featured a “new” lion of Amenhotep III, at the Citadel in Cairo, which was very similar to the two well-known lions of Amenhotep III from Soleb, now in the British Museum in London.

Two other similar lions of Amenhotep are known from Tanis, but the question was raised, where did this example come from? One of the Tanis lions was moved to Cairo and I did wonder if this was the one now at the Citadel.

In AE issue 34 (Feb./Mar. 2006), the lion was mentioned again as, following a visit to Cairo, the Tanis lion was spotted in a garden at Zamalek, in Cairo, leaving the issue of the original location of the Citadel lion wide open.

I am pleased to say that the problem has been solved, thanks to Hourig Sourouzian, the Director of the Colossi of Memnon and Amenhotep III Temple Conservation Project.

Hourig saw the article in the magazine, and her knowledge of the sculpture of Amenhotep III meant that she knew that the “Citadel lion” was actually a cast of one of the British Museum Soleb lions! Close examination of the less-well preserved of the two lions (I included a photograph of the best preserved example, and it is the second lion that was cast), reveals this to be correct.

Hourig was not certain when the plaster cast was made, or when the lion was placed at the Citadel. Older guide books about the citadel state that two lions were located there at the base of the steps of the Police Museum, but only one is there now. Perhaps casts of both lions were once located there?

The Soleb lions came into the collection of the British Museum in 1835. It does seem an extraordinary amount of work to mould the lions in the UK and to send a cast (or casts) to Egypt, so it is possible that the lions were cast when they were still in Egypt, en route to the UK.

However, at the end of the nineteenth century and in the early years of the twentieth, many international museums exchanged plaster casts of some of their best-known objects. This was a time when few travellers went to Egypt and when there were hardly any books on the subject; museums were quite happy to display casts. The British Museum sent casts of many of its objects all around the world, as far afield as Australia. In return, casts of objects in other collections were sent back and, in the main sculpture gallery, the Museum displayed for many years a number of casts of statues from the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

As museums filled up with newly-excavated statues, the casts were removed and placed in storage.

It is most likely, therefore, that the lions were cast as a special request from the Egyptian Museum, in return for
Touring Exhibition in Japan from the Egyptian Museum in Cairo

A special Exhibition has been put together that will tour ten Japanese cities over a period of two years. This is a token of gratitude for Japan’s major support for the establishment of the new Grand Museum of Egypt to be built at Giza.

The Egyptian Minister of Culture Farouq Hosni explained that the Exhibition of over three hundred pieces would include many objects discovered during the last forty years by the Japanese Waseda University’s archaeological mission to Egypt.

One of the objects, a Middle Kingdom cartonnage mask (shown above, photo: J. Rutherford) was temporarily on display in the new Imhotep Museum at Saqqara. Found at South Abusir and belonging to a man called Senw, it was in a very damaged and delicate state. To enable it to go on the tour, it has been expertly conserved, by conservators Richard and Helena Jaeschke, using the latest techniques for the conservation of cartonnage (linen and plaster).

Re-Opening of the Coptic Museum in Cairo

At the end of June, President Hosni Mubarak formally re-opened the Coptic Museum in Cairo, following a major refurbishment that has cost over £E30 million.

In his address during the opening ceremony, the Minister of Culture Farouk Hosni said the Coptic Museum is one of Egypt’s most important museums, with a collection of over one thousand three hundred objects on display in twenty-six galleries.

Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) Zahi Hawass said, during a tour of the museum conducted by the President, that the restoration project included the addition of a new gallery devoted to the history of churches in Old Cairo and that a special gallery for temporary exhibitions has also been built.

The restoration began in 2003 and meant that the museum was closed for almost three years.

The Museum has an important collection of manuscripts, some of which date back to the fourth century AD, including thirteen bibles. The collection also features textiles, icons and woodwork, as well as many large pieces of stone sculpture and carvings from sites around Egypt.

New Appointment by the SCA

Dr Zahi Hawass is pleased to announce a new appointment, that of Adel Hussein Mohamed to the post of General Director of Sharkia. Adel began his career with the Supreme Council of Antiquities in 1979, where he worked as an Inspector in Minia; in his later career he held Directorships of the New Valley, Ain Shams, Saqqara and the Giza...
When embarking on a project at a site as large and at least superficially featureless as the desert portion of Hierakonpolis, the first order of business is to conduct a surface survey and figure out what you’ve got. This is exactly what Walter Fairservis and Michael Hoffman did in the early years of the Expedition beginning in 1964, making inventories of, and assigning locality numbers (HK6, HK29, etc.) to, the various features identified throughout this immense site. These surveys revealed not only interesting facets of the Predynastic occupation, but also the presence of three discrete cemeteries of the Nubian inhabitants of Hierakonpolis in the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period: HK21A and HK47 located at opposite edges of the site; and HK27C in the centre, near the Fort.

All three were assumed to belong to the Pan Grave culture – Nubian mercenaries, probably the ‘Medjay’ of Egyptian sources, who were brought in to defend Egypt during the troubled times of the Second Intermediate Period. Cemeteries of this distinctive culture have been detected all along the Nile Valley, but the people remain a mystery. We still do not know for certain who they were, where they came from, and where they went when the job was done. They were first discovered by Flinders Petrie, who coined the name “Pan Grave” because their shallow round graves resembled frying pans, and indeed some of them do.

Test excavations at HK21A in 2001 uncovered six of these pan-like graves, all unfortunately badly plundered, but with enough of the characteristic incised pottery and jewellery to mark their presence.

Far richer and better preserved were the graves at HK47, which had been dug deeply into the loose white sand and lined with multi-coloured goat and cow skins. Although all of the burials had been plundered, the funerary offerings left outside the graves escaped untouched. These above-ground offerings are typical of Nubian funerary practices and here included a number of pots (Egyptian and Nubian) and baskets as well as a little bottle, which had been deposited together with a leather bag containing a kit for making carnelian beads. The leather of the bag had deteriorated, but still preserved was the band of woven beads that once adorned it. White, blue, and dark blue faience beads were used to create an intricate diamond pattern, which thanks to modern consolidants, we were able to recover still in position.

Despite the disturbance of the graves, we found a surprising amount of new information about the appearance and profession of the Pan Grave people. Many graves still contained remnants of leather garments, often dyed red and occasionally decorated with charming leather tassels, in addition to elaborately woven fringed cloth with which they apparently lined their leather kilts. Large quantities...
Anyone visiting Egypt or museums with Egyptian collections, or even reading magazines such as *Ancient Egypt*, cannot fail to be aware of the huge number of hieroglyphic inscriptions to be found both on the monuments and on objects of all kinds.

Since the decipherment of the hieroglyphic script in the early nineteenth century, these texts have added immeasurable to our knowledge of the ancient Egyptian civilisation. For most people, however, these inscriptions remain a tantalising mystery. In this three-part series, I will introduce the basic principles of the hieroglyphic script and show you how you too can begin to make “the ancient stones speak”.

The signs

To the uninitiated, the hieroglyphic script appears to be a series of unrelated pictures – birds, animals, human figures and objects – and indeed the ancient Egyptian script probably did begin as simple pictures. In some instances this pictographic use of signs continued, so that the symbol of a bull for example, could be used to represent the word “bull”. Early on, however, the technique was developed of using pictures to represent other ideas that were not as easily expressed in pictorial form, but happened to have a similar sound. A good example of this is the familiar ankhu sign. It is actually the picture of a sandal-strap (imagine the loop going around the ankle, the crossbar across the instep and the post between the toes), the word for which was ankhu in ancient Egyptian. However, the word ankhu (or something very similar) also meant “live” and other related words so, in order to express this rather more complex concept, the ancient scribes used the picture of...
Images of the Rekhyt from Ancient Egypt

The lapwing was represented in ancient Egyptian art for a period of over three thousand years, but these images are much more than just a representation of the bird, as Kenneth Griffin reveals.

The lapwing (Vanellus vanellus), has, for a period of over three thousand years, been abundantly represented in both Egyptian art and hieroglyphs. The lapwing can be identified by its characteristic short pointed bill, rounded head, long squared tail and especially by the long crest on its head. To the Egyptians the bird was referred to as rekhyt. They were often depicted in Egyptian art in papyrus marshes, perching on their nests. It is generally accepted that the rekhyt people are to be identified as the lowest class of society in ancient Egypt and have been called “subjects”, “common people”, “plebeians” or “mankind”. However, other scholars have suggested that the rekhyt people were actually foreigners who had settled in Egypt.

The lapwing first makes an appearance in Egyptian art during the Protodynastic Period. The bird is depicted on the deck of a boat, on a fragment of slate palette known as the “Plover Palette”, which is housed in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

From the same period comes the limestone ceremonial mace-head of “king” Scorpion, on which a series of standards with lapwing birds hanging from their necks are depicted. This scene has been interpreted by many scholars as depicting Scorpion’s victories over the people of the Delta, who are depicted as the rekhyt people. However, the scene could also depict the sovereign’s control over all the people of Egypt.

The earliest depiction of the rekhyt bird during the Old Kingdom comes from the statue base of the pharaoh Djoser. This base, which is on display in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, depicts three rekhyt birds, each with their wings intertwined, under the feet of the pharaoh. As
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