

The 'Beautiful Ones'
RAMESSIDE QUEENS' TOMBS

Walk Like a Pharaoh
TUTANKHAMUN'S STICKS

A Palace Fit For a King
MALQATA EXPEDITION

SCRIBE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN RESEARCH CENTER IN EGYPT

THE Objects, Art, & Architecture ISSUE

INSIDE THE RED MONASTERY

SPRING 2020

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THE Objects, Art, & Architecture ISSUE



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PHOTO: HEATHER LEE MCCARTHY

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PHOTO: A.J. VELDMEIJER/E. ENDENBURG

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ON THE COVER
The external face of the South Portal of the Red Monastery after conservation
PHOTO: THEO GAYER-ANDERSON

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sally El Sabbahy".

Sally El Sabbahy
Editor In-Chief

Objects, Art, and Architecture

In our last issue of *Scribe*, we explored the concept of sustainable heritage. This issue, we're sharpening our thematic scope to examine the tangible elements that compose much of Egypt's historic remains, and the nuanced, highly technical expertise that is required to not only conserve them, but to interpret and present them to modern audiences and users. Accordingly, our Spring 2020 theme revolves around 'Objects, Art, and Architecture,' and the often painstaking but largely unseen efforts that go in to ensuring their survival.

It's one thing to tell others that a building has been conserved, its architectural integrity protected, and its structure made sound. It's another thing completely to show someone the nitty gritty behind that effort, to effectively express the many variables, considerations, and challenges – financial, physical, and otherwise – that go in to such undertakings. The same can be said of conducting original research; how many times do we stop to wonder how many hours or years were spent to produce a single academic publication or larger body of work?

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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Who knew that among the many dazzling objects that Carter pulled out of Tutankhamun's tomb was a collection of walking sticks – some veritable works of art in themselves – many of which had not been formally documented until one of the project teams highlighted in this issue decided to put in the time to do so? Good work, whether it's from behind a desk or on top of a dune in the desert, takes time. To borrow from my generational slang, the undercurrent in this issue of *Scribe* is all about 'showing your work.'

Accordingly, we've elected to make the content in this issue more technical than in our previous ones, partially also because of the timing of its release. Many of you will be reading this during the Annual Meeting, ARCE's yearly gathering that brings together scores of academics and practitioners to share their findings and contributions in the field of Egyptian cultural and historic studies. We want *Scribe* to reflect this same energy of discovery and devotion to research, and so we are giving a direct voice to the project directors and researchers that are doing extraordinary and valuable work in the field every day.

From ARCE's final season of conservation in the nave of the Red Monastery in Sohag, to a conservation project in the King's Palace in Malqata, to the documentation of sticks from Tutankhamun's tomb, and finally, to a past fellow presenting her research from Luxor's Valley of the Queens; this issue of *Scribe* is dedicated to the labor intensive and passion-driven work of the scholars that make ARCE what it is.

Best of all, it's presented in their own words. 🌟

Locate the fieldwork, historic sites, and other key places featured in this issue of Scribe



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Updates on excavation, conservation, and research projects developing across Egypt



Dr. Louise Bertini
Executive Director

New Projects, a Symposium, a Member Tour, and More

It is that time of year again when ARCE's Annual Meeting takes over a North American city and fills its streets and hotel rooms with Egyptologists, archaeologists, and all manner of Egyptian studies students, practitioners, scholars, and enthusiasts. For those of you that have received *Scribe* in your Annual Meeting goody bag, welcome to the 2020 installment of ARCE's biggest programmatic event! For those of you reading this at home, in your university library, or elsewhere, we hope you will join us at next year's meeting.

Since last fall we've seen a number of projects start and finish, exciting events occur, and a new cohort of fellows (see page 40), research associates, and Antiquities Endowment Fund (AEF) grant recipients begin their work in the field. I am especially pleased

that, for the first time, we have a dedicated section in *Scribe* for updates on our AEF projects (see pages 48-51). We've had a busy year, and it's always wonderful to share our news with our dedicated donors, members, and supporters.

In my last update, ARCE was gearing up for our Member Tour to Egypt, which took place from October 20-November 4, 2019 (see page 38). Our 17 participating members were an absolute joy to travel with, bursting with energy at every early morning wake-up call, and eager to explore Egypt through ARCE's eyes. Our first day kicked off at the paws of the Sphinx with Dr. Zahi Hawass, and the next two weeks took us to Historic Cairo, Luxor, Aswan, Sohag, and Edfu. Some of my favorite highlights include our private dinner in Luxor Temple, cruising from Luxor

Nicholas Warner, project director of the final season of conservation at the Red Monastery, guides the 2019 Member Tour through active work in the nave



RIGHT: The entrance to the Rabbi Haim Cappoussi portion of the Basatin Cemetery

to Aswan, and the delicious meal we all shared one night at a cozy Lebanese restaurant around the corner from the ARCE Cairo Center. Owing to the success of the 2019 tour, we have already begun planning for a very special 2020 tour and tailoring in even more sites and guest speakers. Members, take note!

You may also recall from *Scribe* Fall 2019 that ARCE received a U.S. Ambassador’s Fund for Cultural Preservation to clean, document, and propose a management plan for the remaining portions of the Basatin Jewish Cemetery in Cairo. On-site cleaning began in the late winter of 2019 with substantial amounts of modern debris removed from the site,

BELOW: The 2019 Member Tour posing for a group photo in the Mammasi in the Dendera Temple complex



FROM L-R: Amina Elbendary and Dina Bakhom speak during their panel on popular history and living religious heritage during the Symposium on Egyptian Popular Culture
PHOTO: MOSTAFA ABDEL ATY

and photo documentation and surveying taking place. On January 21, the project was officially inaugurated with a reception graciously hosted by Ambassador Jonathan Cohen at the U.S. Embassy premises in Cairo. We will continue to work on the project over the summer, and will deliver a management and proposed development plan before the end of the year.

Another exciting project we are currently rolling out is a regional workshop to strengthen the capacities of involved stakeholders to effectively combat illicit antiquities trafficking, which will take place in subsequent sessions in Cairo, Amman, and Tunis.

From February 22-23, ARCE hosted a kick-off strategic planning session at the Cairo Center with the directors of all regional American overseas research centers. In this session, we identified our commonalities, priorities, and objectives for the regional workshop, and addressed the logistics of undertaking such a transregional effort. The first installment of the workshop is scheduled to happen in Amman, Jordan, later this year.

The Red Monastery in Sohag also underwent its final season of conservation work in the fall of 2019, wrapping up in time for the new year (see page 14). With more than 16 years of ongoing and dedicated efforts to conserve this incredible monument under ARCE's cap, it was somewhat bittersweet to see our last season of conservation end. However, thanks to the immense generosity of our supporters and members that donated to ARCE's end-of-year campaign, we do not have to say goodbye to the Red Monastery quite yet! The proceeds of our 2019 fundraiser will go towards preserving an adjacent archaeological zone at the Red Monastery, and improving its overall site management in order to encourage visitation at the site.

Closer to home in Cairo, we also hosted a very successful symposium on Egyptian popular culture from January 17-18 (see page 39). The ARCE Cairo Center saw leading practitioners such as the artist Khaled Hafez and museographer Karim Shaboury, conservators like photographic curator Heba Farid and architect Dina Bakhoum, and thought leaders including ArabLit's M. Lynx Qualey and El Beit magazine's Sawsan Ezzelarab, come together to discuss and debate the production, consumption, and conservation of Egyptian pop culture. It was a whirlwind two-day event that generated thoughtful and reflective conversations – and best of all, saw the active participation of ARCE fellows, past and present. For more on this symposium from the perspective of our brilliant outgoing fellow, N.A. Mansour, who played a pivotal role in its planning, flip to page 64.

On the U.S. side, we will soon be gearing up for Dr. Zahi Hawass's 2020 lecture tour. With Dr. Hawass as a member of ARCE's President's Advisory Council (PAC), you can rest assured that ARCE will be along for the ride with him as he makes his way across the United States. The first lecture will take place on May 4 in Los Angeles, and we hope to see many of our West Coast members there! 🌸

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Tutankhamun's Sticks and Staves

The Importance of Deceptively Simple Objects

BY ANDRÉ J. VELDMEIJER AND SALIMA IKRAM

The abundance of sticks in ancient Egyptian two and three-dimensional art, their mention in texts, and the many actual examples found are clear indications of the importance of these objects in the secular and sacred lives of the ancient Egyptians, whether they were peasants or pharaohs. Sticks have been found in many tombs, and do not necessarily indicate infirmity as they serve a variety of other purposes in addition to being supports: tools, weapons, status symbols, and elements of regalia.

Transporting some of the sticks from the permanent exhibition in the Egyptian Museum to the lab for study

PHOTO: A.J. VELDMEIJER

Of the several tombs in which actual sticks were found, one stands out: that of Tutankhamun (KV62), which contained over 130 examples of these objects. The king's sticks range from simple pieces of polished wood to ones that are elaborately decorated and enhanced with gold, silver, and inlays of different sorts.

Although nearly 100 years have passed since the discovery of the tomb, most of its contents remain unpublished, which was one of the reasons to initiate the 'Tutankhamun's Sticks and Staves Project' (TSS), conducted by an international team of scientists, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism, the Egyptian Museum, and the Grand Egyptian Museum Conservation Center (GEM-CC). The work was supported by a generous grant from ARCE's Antiquities Endowment Fund.

Into the Sticks

The project's goal was to document and describe the sticks and staffs of office both verbally and visually,



to identify the materials used to create them, to analyze the technologies used to produce them, to try to identify their uses, to understand their role and position in Tutankhamun's tomb, as well as in his life (both sacred and secular), and in death. This was part of a larger study to understand the roles of sticks in the lives and culture of the ancient Egyptians through documenting and analyzing visual, textual, and archaeological evidence.

At the project's inception, the sticks were held in the Egyptian Museum, but during the course of the project, many were moved to the GEM-CC, so the work took place in both museums. The first step in the study was to create an initial list of these items using Howard Carter's excavation notes and lists, and Harry Burton's photographs, all of which have been generously and efficiently made available on the [Griffith Institute's website](http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/discoveringTut).

url is:
www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/discoveringTut

This provided the TSS team with a basic knowledge of the material, as well as their find spots, which might have ritual implications linked to the king's resurrection. A study tying the type of stick to its location and interpreting it will constitute the final part of the project.

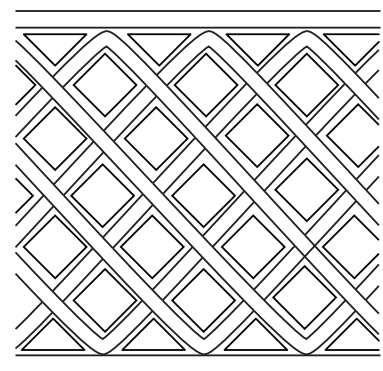
The sticks themselves were studied macroscopically and microscopically and a verbal description was written. They were then photo-documented and drawings were made, together with a catalog of decorative motifs that appear on the sticks. Insofar as any archaeometrical analysis was permitted, it was carried out in an effort to identify the materials that were used to make or decorate the sticks.

Preliminary Observations

The condition of the sticks and staves varied greatly. For example, those made of (mainly) gold with inlays are in good condition. However, those made of more perishable materials, such as wood and leather, were in much worse condition due to the deterioration that was caused, among other factors, by the high humidity levels in the tomb. Carter writes extensively about the damage in his notes, and explains why some heavy-handed consolidation using paraffin wax - which was standard procedure at that time - had to be carried out.



ABOVE: Documenting the sticks was a time consuming task
 PHOTO: A.J. VELDMEIJER



TOP: Diagram of some of the designs that are part of the motif catalogue

LEFT: Carter Number 230: This stick is one of the best-preserved sticks, showing colorful and intricate designs

DIAGRAM: E. ENDENBURG/A.J. VELDMEIJER
 PHOTO: A.J. VELDMEIJER/E. ENDENBURG

There is a wide variety of sticks and staves, a few examples of which are seen here

PHOTO: H. BURTON. COURTESY OF THE GRIFFITH INSTITUTE OXFORD



The first-aid consolidation and conservation by Carter and his team has greatly helped them to survive until today, but the melted paraffin wax has also caused problems over the years, such as discoloration and adherence of dirt. In addition, some of the sticks have warped, adversely affecting their decoration. Insects have also played a role in the destruction of some of the sticks. The different way that various materials have reacted to the environment within the tomb (and post-excavation), and the wide variety of materials on each stick makes conservation a very challenging and complicated affair, which the GEM-CC staff is dealing with efficiently.

The sticks fall into several well-known categories, such as so-called straight staff; curved handle *awt* sticks; crook-like *tsw* staffs; *mdw* staffs resembling tent poles; *was* and *djam* scepters with their animal head and forked tips; forked tipped *abt* staffs; bulbous *Ams* staffs; ceremonial *mks* staffs with a papyrus umbel located along its length; *awt* staffs that are forked at the top; double *pedj-aha* staffs; and papyri-/loti-form *wadj* staffs. There are also more enigmatic, shorter sticks that curve and probably fall more properly into the category of weapons, though they can certainly double as staffs. Clearly, Tutankhamun's sticks were used for different purposes and occasions.

Most of the sticks are made of wood, but a few are made of precious materials, one of silver and another of gold, both adorned with a statuette of the youthful king (Carter No. 235a, b). Others were elaborately decorated with gold and inlays of glass and semi-precious stones, as well as ivory. Some of the more mundane materials of which the sticks are made include reeds and palm ribs. The latter, however, also carry a strong iconographic message, as they echo the hieroglyphs for year and frequently figure in group-symbols indicating that the king would rule for millions of years. Perhaps these acted in part as props when the king appeared before the people, creating a living glyph.

Unfortunately, most of the wood could not be identified as it was either covered with decoration or masked by old conservation work. Moreover, without destructive sampling, it is often difficult to identify wood accurately. The sticks were decorated in a variety of ways. A simple but elegant group consisted of those that were straight, with gold, silver, or electrum handles



Carter Numbers 235a and b. A silver and gold stick surmounted by a statuette.

PHOTO: A.J. VELDMEIJER/E. ENDENBURG

and ferrules. A large group were elaborately decorated with bands of different decorative motifs made out of a vast variety of local and imported materials, such as birch bark, ebony and/or African hardwood, ivory, gold, silver, electrum, leather, rawhide, insect wings, faience, semi-precious stones, and glass.

The motifs included garlands, petals, simple bands of alternating colors, zigzag, and wavy lines, checkerboard patterns, diamonds, four-pointed stars, chevrons, feather/scale patterns, nets, rosettes, plants, and detailed depictions of bound enemies. Brief inscriptions with the king's titulary and cartouches adorn several of the sticks, as well as longer inscriptions appearing on a select few. While some knob-handles were made of faience, ivory, or metal, the majority of the lotiform or papyriform knobs were made of a strip of leather wound around in layers and secured with adhesive. This was then covered with bark or metal, and adorned with appliqué, generally consisting of a rosette or the royal name.



This was part of a larger study to understand the roles of sticks in the lives and culture of the ancient Egyptians through documenting and analyzing visual, textual, and archaeological evidence.

Carter Number 098. Detail of the stick's elaborate gold decoration

PHOTO: A.J. VELDMEIJER/E. ENDENBURG



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FROM L-R: A) Stick o48b with a curved handle in the shape of a Nubian foe with his arms tied behind his back; inset: Detail of the handle; B) Stick o50uu with a curved handle in the shape of a Nubian and an Asiatic foe; Inset: Detail of the faces of the foes; C) Carter Number o48c, Detail of the Nubian foe.

PHOTO: A.J. VELDMEIJER/E. ENDENBURG.

A particularly curious feature of some sticks is a red wash covering the gold, imparting a coppery hue to the material; this has been noted (by Ikram) in some of the coffins found in KV63, and on the coffins of the fetuses from Tutankhamun's tomb (Carter No. 266g) too. The color is more that of the red ball of the sun at sunrise or sunset, rather than the yellow of the sun at other times of the day. Perhaps the choice of this color is a result of, or influenced by, the Amarna period and Akhenaten's aesthetic choices.

Curious Curves

Five of the most elaborate, yet enigmatic sticks had three-dimensional images of the enemies of Egypt depicted as arching backward. These look as if they form the handle, with the king's hand being placed over them and thus controlling them. However, the other end of the stick is surmounted by lotiform or papyriform knobs inscribed with the king's cartouche. Clearly, these could not have been on the ground and thus must have served as the handle. Thus, it would seem that the king would grasp the stick from the floral knob, and with each stride, crush the body of Egypt's enemies into the ground.

A more unlikely way of using these sticks (there are two pairs) would be for the king to put his feet in the curve formed by the enemies' bodies and walk on them. This would require practice and good balance, and it is improbable that the king would take a chance of walking thus in public if there were the

slightest chance of him stumbling or falling. Perhaps these particular sticks were used in specific rituals where the enemies were stamped on, one at a time. The bodies of the enemies do not show evidence of much abuse or use. Thus far, the TSS team has found no texts or images relating to these sticks, but research is ongoing, and an answer might yet emerge to clarify the mystery.

Comparisons in decoration on similarly constructed objects from within the tomb, such as the bows, are also being made in order to establish if single workshops were producing all of these objects. The technology and some of the materials and motifs are similar enough to suggest that the decorators of many of the sticks and the bows were the same.

One of our particular points of research was to document signs of wear on the sticks, particularly at the tips. Although some wear has been found, it is surprisingly little, with most sticks, including the simplest and sturdiest, showing no evidence of hard use. Of course, for sticks with metal ferrules, wear would have been limited; however, many of the sticks that have gilding on the tip are fairly intact. This suggests that these sticks were not used as supports, and were more likely ceremonial accessories/objects that did not hit the ground frequently. Of course, if used indoors it is possible that they had contact with mats rather than earthen or plastered floors, although regular use over time should leave some impression. Thus, it does not seem as if Tutankhamun leant heavily for support on the sticks that have been found in his tomb.

More to Learn

The assemblage of sticks and staves from the tomb of Tutankhamun provide a unique opportunity to learn about the use and function of these objects in the private and public lives of kings, most particularly Tutankhamun. Particularly poignant is Carter No. 229 that has an inscription stating that it has been specifically made by the king: “A reed which His Majesty cut with his own hand.”

This group of objects also elucidates the extensive trade networks in place at the time that allowed for the import of such diverse materials as birch bark, silver, and ebony/African hardwood, and provide an insight into the different technologies used by the ancient Egyptians when making a variety of wooden objects.

The absence of wear on the tips of the sticks suggests that the king was stronger and more able-bodied than has been suggested, not needing a stick as a walking aid, but using it more as a stylish accessory or as part of his royal regalia, as would have been the case for any other pharaoh.

And still, Tutankhamun’s sticks provide conundrums that remain to be solved, by introducing new types of objects that are not seen in two or three-dimensional representations. Clearly, Tutankhamun’s tomb and its contents still provide scope for decoding the physical and metaphysical lives of ancient Egyptian royalty. ♡

RECOGNITION

The Tutankhamun’s Sticks and Staves Project team are grateful to the American Research Center in Egypt’s Antiquities Endowment Fund for their continuous support during the years that this project was underway. We would like to thank the Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism, the Egyptian Museum, the Grand Egyptian Museum, and their curators and conservators for their collaboration. We would also like to particularly thank Tarek Tewfik, Mohamed Mostafa Abd el-Maguid, Mamdouh El Damaty, Mahmoud el-Helwagy, Mohammed Ismail, Hany Abu El Azm, Hassan Mohamed, Husein Bassir, Mohammed Ibrahim, Halla Hassan, Medhat Abd el Rahman, Hussein Kamal, Christian Eckmann and Erno Endenburg, as well as The Griffith Institute in Oxford.

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Positioning a fragmented
granite column in the nave
PHOTO: NICHOLAS WARNER



Wrapping up the Monastery

ARCE'S LONGEST RUNNING

PROJECT NEARS COMPLETION

BY NICHOLAS WARNER

Since 2003, ARCE has been documenting, conserving, and studying the late 5th century Red Monastery church in Sohag, Upper Egypt. As a result of this work, the monument is now recognized as one of less than ten early Byzantine churches worldwide to have survived with a large portion of its original decoration intact. In the last months of 2019, the 16-year undertaking entered its final phases, with the project team focused on completing the conservation of the nave of the church and the recording of both the church and its surrounding archaeology.

The nave after completion of anastylosis

PHOTO: NICHOLAS WARNER

The work was extremely diverse in scope, ranging from 'heavyweight' interventions such as finalizing the architectural reconstruction of the granite columns in the basilica of the church to more delicate interventions such as the conservation of the two outstanding 5th century carved limestone portals of the church, as well as a remaining area of untreated medieval plaster belonging to a now lost staircase that once led to the roof of the building.

Both the church and the archaeological area around it were recorded through high-resolution photography and 3D laser scanning. Smaller details, such as re-used pharaonic blocks, were also drawn

