

**Build, Restore, Save**  
SPOTLIGHT ON NAIRY HAMPIKIAN

**A Lifeline to the Necropolis**  
JOB CREATION IN LUXOR

**Digital Archaeology**  
GIZA BOTANICAL DATABASE

# SCRIBE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN RESEARCH CENTER IN EGYPT



*from* TRADE  
to TOURISM  
THE RESURRECTION OF  
QUSEIR FORT

FALL 2019 | ISSUE 4

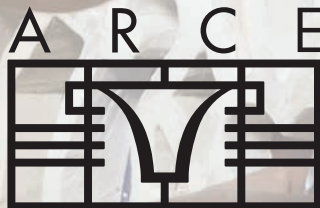




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For more than 70 years, ARCE's members have played a critical role in promoting the discovery and protection of Egypt's cultural heritage.

We thank our members for their generous support in safeguarding Egypt's heritage for generations to come.



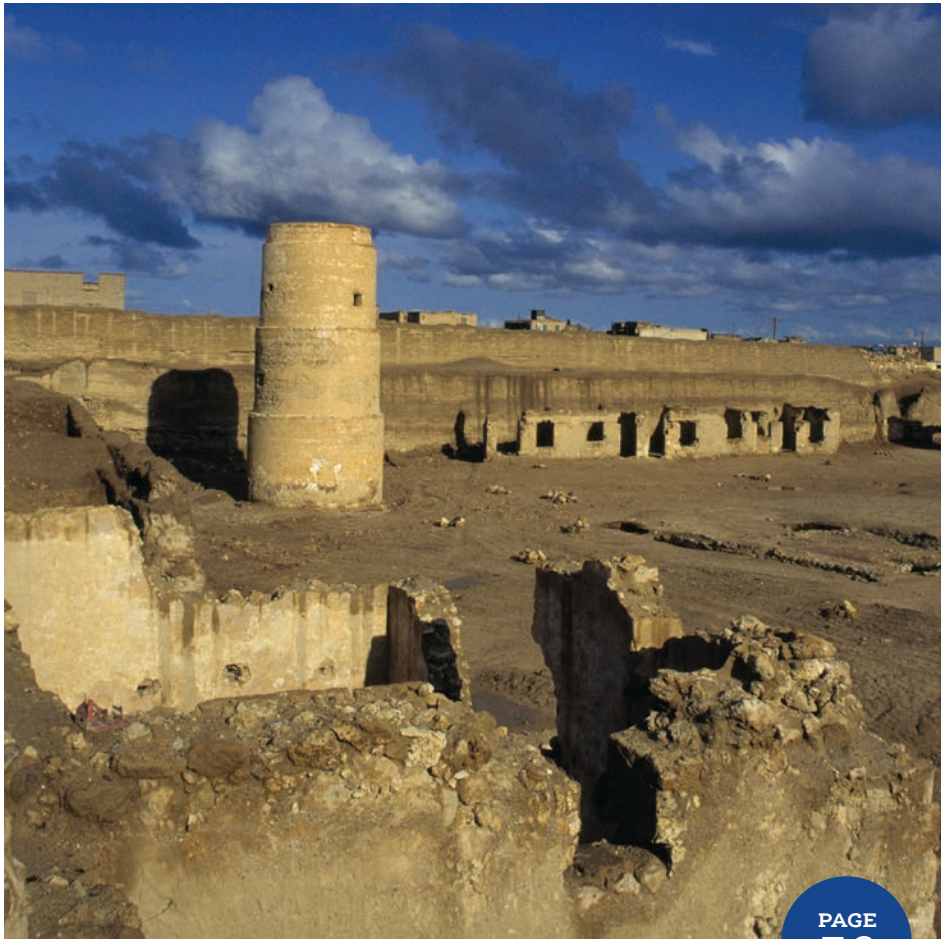
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Photo: The Mosque of Aslam al-Silahdar during conservation



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THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN RESEARCH CENTER IN EGYPT

#### EGYPT

Dr. Louise Bertini,  
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John Shearman,  
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Rebecca Cook, *Development and Membership Associate*

Beth Wang,  
*Communications Associate*

#### EDITOR IN-CHIEF

Sally El Sabbahy

#### ASSOCIATE EDITOR

David Everett

#### DESIGN

Made In Co.

#### CONTRIBUTORS

Nada Ahmed Farag  
Anny Gaul

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#### Cairo Center

2 Midan Simón Bolívar  
Garden City, Cairo, 11461  
20.2.2794.8239

#### U.S. Office

909 North Washington Street  
Suite 320  
Alexandria, Virginia, 22314  
703.721.3470  
info@arce.org

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SCRIBE, FALL 2019, ISSUE 4  
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**Sally El Sabbahy**  
Editor In-Chief

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## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Are you a student or researcher interested in contributing to Scribe? Have feedback or questions about any of our featured projects or content? Get in touch. [scribe@arce.org](mailto:scribe@arce.org)

# Sustainable Heritage

**S**ustainability has increasingly become the word du jour across a number of professional and academic fields in the past few years. Once consigned to discussions about environmental changes, sustainable practices and solutions are now sought to address a slew of concerns that confront us in the 21st century: gender inequality, access to education, resource management, social equity, and increasingly, the preservation of cultural and historical assets. This latter point is known as the field of Sustainable Heritage.

Sustainable Heritage is, in its most basic interpretation, a forward-thinking approach to heritage conservation philosophy. It draws heavily from the concepts of economic, social, and environmental resilience and development and seeks to reconcile how cultural heritage can be preserved, be accessible, and be beneficial in a world where climate change, limited resources, urban expansion, conflict, mass migration, and population growth have placed unprecedented pressures on communities and governments.

Accordingly, it requires an interdisciplinary approach, bringing together the private and public sectors, and drawing from the expertise and skills of

professionals like conservators, heritage managers, urban planners, archaeologists, engineers, tour guides, economists, architects, and digital scientists. These passionate individuals not only strive to inform and upgrade heritage conservation and management practices and policies so that they can anticipate future risks and needs, but they also challenge themselves to address how heritage assets can contribute towards economic, environmental, and social equity, security, and growth.

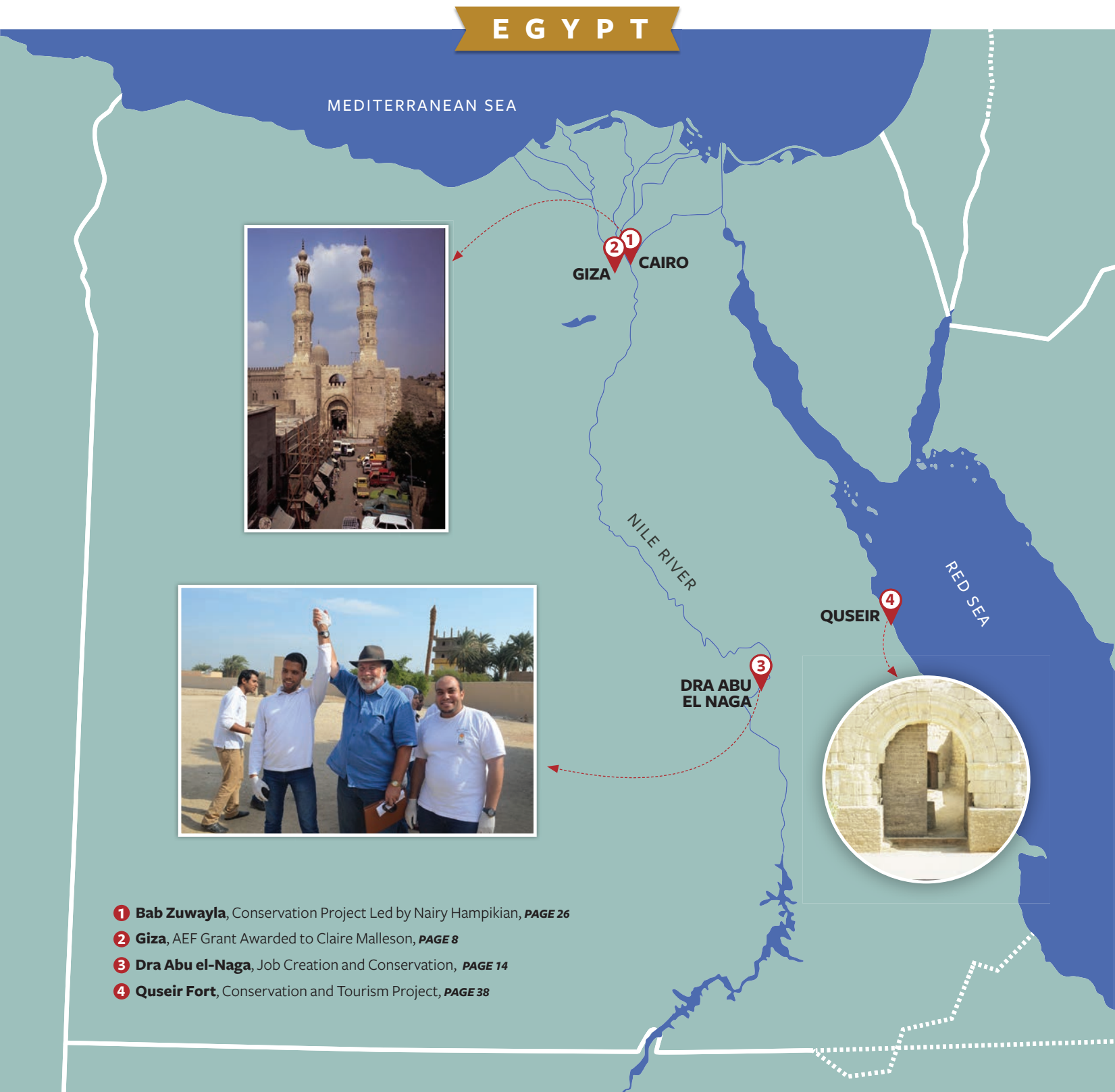
This is no easy task. Heritage is tangible and intangible, rural and urban, ancient and contemporary, inspiring and sobering. It gives people and nations a sense of grounding and identity, and in this respect alone it is invaluable. Heritage assets also wield incredible economic power, creating and dictating jobs and fueling domestic and international tourism industries. In embracing sustainability, we can continue to preserve heritage and its values while confronting - not fearing - the change that the future will inevitably demand.

And so, this issue of *Scribe* is dedicated to the practice of Sustainable Heritage and the ways in which ARCE has fostered this in its projects, both past and present. From conserving a fallen Red Sea fortress and creating jobs in Luxor, to supporting digital projects, local leaders, and young researchers, ARCE has increasingly embedded - and in many ways pioneered - sustainable methods in the cultural heritage sector in Egypt. Moving forward, this will not be the exception, but an organizational trademark of the projects, partners, and research that we proudly foster.

Welcome to the future of heritage! 🌱



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

## ARCE's 2019 AEF Cohort Announced

**W**ith the traditional summer slow-down in Egypt coming to a close, it is with great anticipation that we look forward to the events kicking off the fall season at ARCE. One that I am personally excited about is our Member Tour to Egypt, which will take place from October 20 – November 4. This beautifully organized tour will take our 20 participating members across Egypt, with stops in Giza, Sohag, Luxor, Edfu, Aswan, and of course, our home base of Cairo.

In addition to visiting key ARCE projects like the Byzantine-period Red Monastery and the sprawling

Pharaonic burial site of Dra Abu el-Naga (featured in this issue on page 14) we will be joined by leaders in their respective fields, including Egyptologist Mark Lehner and restoration architect Nairy Hampikian, who, incidentally, you can also read a profile of on page 26.

We are so privileged to have partners and colleagues like Mark and Nairy, as collaboration and mutual support for our fellow researchers and trailblazers is one of the key qualities that defines ARCE's work in Egypt. Our 2019 cohort of Antiquities Endowment Fund grant recipients (see page 7) is an excellent reflection of this and



## AERA Ancient Egypt Research Associates

Invites you to join us in

### DISCOVERING

We ask big questions: How did the Pyramids build Egypt? How did Egyptians manage their complex construction projects? For over 30 years AERA has been finding answers through excavation and survey at the Lost City of the Pyramids and the Giza Plateau.

### CONSERVING

We conserve ancient archaeological structures to protect them and to make them available for scholars, students, and the public to view.

### TRAINING

We train Inspectors in the Ministry of Antiquities through field schools in archaeological field methods, analysis, conservation, salvage archaeology, and site management, at Giza, Luxor, and Memphis. Many of our graduates go on to become AERA team members. We share the results of our work through lectures, site tours, publications, films, and our website.

Become an AERA Member and help support research, training, and conservation. Join online at our website: [aeraweb.org](http://aeraweb.org)

Ancient Egypt Research Associates, Inc., is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt, nonprofit research organization based in Boston and Giza.



“...Applications for our fellowship program will **open on November 1**, so be sure to encourage any young scholars you may know to apply.”

represents some of the finest experts working in Egyptian archaeology and heritage.

All of the 2019 awarded projects are exciting in their own way, but I will share a few of the highlights here. Egyptologist Lyla Pinch Brock will be restoring the fragmented sarcophagus lid of Takhat, a suspected royal daughter and wife whose partial sarcophagus remains were found in KV10 in the Valley of the Kings. Islamic art and architecture historian Tarek Swelim will be undertaking the documentation and

conservation of Mamluk-period decorative lintels in Historic Cairo. Lastly, sustainable tourism consultant Ahmed Shaboury will be training inspectors and Ministry of Antiquities staff on site management in Saqqara, culminating in the site’s first ever management plan.

The relationship between tourism and heritage is something that has come increasingly under the microscope given the expected increase in tourist numbers to Egypt and the government’s desire to offer new sites to visit. Perhaps catalyzed by the impending opening of the Grand Egyptian Museum, the Ministries of Tourism and Antiquities have prioritized the need to present and manage heritage assets in ways that are accessible and meet international benchmarks. Private sector engagement is starting to take place to provide additional resources and expertise to ensure that the goals of the Government of Egypt can be met in this respect.

Board of Governors  
President Dr. Betsy Bryan  
welcomes invitees to the  
President’s Reception,  
hosted at the historic  
DACOR Bacon House.  
PHOTO: MARK VOSS



This has presented a unique opportunity for ARCE to lead a successful case study on the benefits of public-private partnerships in heritage conservation and management. I am pleased to announce that we have been the recipients of a U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation grant to carry out documentation, emergency conservation, and the production of a site management plan for the remaining portions of the Basatin Jewish Cemetery in Cairo. Working alongside stakeholders from the relevant local authorities, the Egyptian Jewish community, and the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, we expect this project to be a prime example of the benefits of interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches in preserving and managing heritage properties in Egypt.

As ARCE ventures into these new but also somehow familiar waters, it is worth providing a roundup of some of our signature programs that have also seen developments since the *Scribe* Spring 2019 issue. The 2019 Annual Meeting was, as always, an exhilarating experience! Set in charming Old Town, Alexandria, it was especially meaningful that this was the first meeting to be hosted in ARCE's new U.S. base in Virginia. We were honored to have preeminent Egyptologist Dr. Dominique Valbelle as our Keynote Speaker, whose presentation on her work in Kerma/Dokki Gel in the north of Sudan has revealed jaw-dropping ancient urban remains. More information about this successful installment of the Annual Meeting is available on page 46.

This fall we are also welcoming a new batch of ARCE fellows and research associates to Cairo (see page 50). Representing universities that include Harvard, McGill, and UC Berkeley, and covering topics from engineering to archaeology, this incoming group of ambitious researchers is, as always, a great source of pride for ARCE. On this note, applications for our fellowship program will open on November 1, so be sure to encourage any young scholars you may know to apply to this excellent opportunity to conduct their fieldwork in Egypt under the umbrella of ARCE.

Finally, I would like to present our first themed issue of *Scribe!* This issue showcases some of the ways that ARCE has promoted and integrated sustainable heritage research and methods into its work since we first began operating as project implementers in the 90s. I hope you all enjoy reading this issue as much as we have enjoyed putting it together. 🌸

## AEF GRANTS

### Antiquities Endowment Fund 2019 Recipients

**Ahmed Shaboury**

'Building the Capacity for Site Management at Saqqara Necropolis'

**Alaa El Habashi**

'Reveal and Accentuate the Values of the Façade of Hammam Bashtak, Souq al-Silah Street, Historic Cairo'

**Anke Weber**

The Ramses III (KV11) Publication and Conservation Project'

**Christina Mondin, Mohamed Kenawi, Michele Asolati**

'The Rehabilitation of the Amasili Complex: Creating an Integrated Cultural Hub in the Heart of Rosetta'

**Claire Malleson**

'Giza Objects Online'

**Elena Pischikova**

'Conservation and Reconstruction of the Tomb of Padibastet'

**Lyla Pinch Brock**

'Restoration of the Sarcophagus Lid of Takhat in KV10, Valley of the Kings'

**Lynn Grant**

'Conservation Survey of Papyrus Collection'

**Mark Lehner, Zahi Hawass**

'Great Pyramid Temple Conservation'

**May al-Ibrashy**

'Al-Shurafa Shrine Conservation Project'

**Scott Bucking**

'Beni Hassan South Preservation Project'

**Tarek Swelim**

'Decorative Lintels in the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo'

**Vanessa Davies**

'The Oxford Handbook of Egyptian Epigraphy and Palaeography'

**W. Raymond Johnson**

'Scanning, Conservation, Image Identification, Database Design, Data Entry, and Archival Housing of the Photographic Archives of Edwin (Ted) Brock and Albert Raccah'



# Reading Seeds

Giza Botanical Database Spreads Knowledge Worldwide

COMPILED BY DAVID EVERETT FROM REPORTS BY CLAIRE MALLESON

As the baker hastily brushed out his still-warm oven, he ignored the charred seeds among the ash that he spread across the trampled floor. Moving quickly, he prepared another batch of bread in a big pot called a bedia, knowing he had much more baking to finish for hungry workers at Giza’s nearby royal pyramids. Below his feet and over weeks and months, the charred seeds slowly were buried.

For 4,500 years.

In 2016, Claire Malleson joins our tale, third in a three-decade line of archaeobotanists who use excavated seeds to study everyday life in that baker’s now-famous village of pyramid workers. As her two predecessors had

done since 1988, Malleson found the charred remains by dumping an excavated bag of soil in water to let lighter seed float away from dirt. Next on the seeds’ journey was Malleson’s examination and sorting at the Ancient Egypt Research Associates/Ministry of Antiquities lab in Giza, then an entry into a notebook.

But the seeds’ odyssey was not yet complete. Thanks to a Conservation, Excavation, Preservation, and Presentation grant from ARCE’s Antiquities Endowment Fund (AEF), anyone in the world can now learn the details of the tiny burnt seeds – the completion of an unintended passage that began 45 centuries ago with that baker’s oven brush and that ends now among honored company in one of the largest, most valuable, online botanical databases in existence. The ARCE-funded Giza Botanical project exemplifies a world-wide trend to promote and preserve digital heritage, a 21st Century effort led in part by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). With the Giza Botanical Database Project and others like it, archaeological information is going global.

Claire Malleson working in the AERA Giza workshop

PHOTO: © ANCIENT EGYPT RESEARCH ASSOCIATES



“This constitutes one of the largest datasets of archaeobotanical botanical remains anywhere in the world in terms of both number of samples and duration of the project,” Malleon wrote in a recent ARCE AEF report, adding in a later interview: “The more ways we share information, the more discoveries that will be made.”

Since 1988, teams from Ancient Egypt Research Associates (AERA), have excavated the 4th Dynasty “workers town” of Heit el-Ghurab at the foot of the Great Pyramids and, more recently, the nearby “priests’ town” of the Khentkawes Monument. When AERA began work in the late 1980s, flotation and sieving for archaeobotanical remains was not standard practice on excavations in Egypt. But founder Mark Lehner, the prominent Egyptologist, was determined to create a body of standardized information from AERA’s long-term exploration. The result since 1988 is that the two excavations are among the few ancient settlements in the world from which botanical remains have been systematically and carefully sampled for the entire history of site work, creating a huge, unique resource.

Reading seeds is a revelation. By learning what ancient peoples grew, harvested, cooked, or ate, experts can determine whether they lived at a site, were just passing through, or conducted trade with others. Plant remains help reveal the health, diet, and farm practices of ancient peoples, plus the state of their economy, whether they were experiencing climate change, what kind of medicines they developed, even what was used as fuel, animal fodder, bedding, or fabric.

At AERA’s botanical excavations, standardization is a key to revelation, to learning about ancient lives through more than 4,100 samples representing nearly 400,000 individual plant or seed items. AERA teams kept computer records of those samples over decades, overcoming glitches and challenges that make any “big data” difficult to use and manipulate. They spent years meticulously excavating and recording ancient plant remains and their context, but, only a “very tiny portion” of this information was available to the research community.

The Giza Botanical Database changes all that. Not only is the data now available worldwide, but digitization organizes data so that students and



scholars can search, manipulate, combine, or compare information with a few key strokes.

The AERA Giza botanical collection was begun by Wilma Wetterstrom of Harvard University’s Botanical Museum, continued by Mary Anne Murray from University College London, and is now inherited by Malleon, AERA’s Director of Archaeological Science and assistant professor of archaeology at the American University of Beirut. Under Lehner’s leadership, the trio maintained continuity in archaeobotanical methods and approach. Records began on paper, then gradually shifted to computers. But the original AERA data storage was valuable only to AERA botanists who understood its foibles. The ARCE AEF grant allowed Malleon and Rebekah Miracle of AERA to join Eric and Sarah Kansa of the Open Context scientific data organization to review, expand, and, where needed, correct and update information, then make it all digital and online.

The results can be seen at Open Context online at Giza Botanical Database.

### The Linguistics of Old Plants

Botanical research is a modern elaboration of traditional excavations – another instrument in the toolbox needed to reveal the ancient past. Egyptologists have found that botanicals can be as important as the text on papyrus or tomb walls. In fact, Malleon opines that the lives of everyday Egyptians may be disclosed more realistically from seeds or plants than from what pharaohs and other elites wanted us to know from their royal, finely curated depictions.

AERA lab team sorting “heavy fraction” outside the AERA Giza workroom

PHOTO: © ANCIENT EGYPT RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

#### The url is:

<https://opencontext.org/projects/10aa84ad-c5de-4e79-89ce-d83b75ed72b5>.  
*Try it with your cell phone.*



## Seeds and other remains can reveal droughts, prosperity, trade, health, cooking habits, **even what may have been part of more popular recipes.**

“It’s basically the garbage,” Malleon said. “When you look at people’s garbage, you learn a lot about them. You learn the reality of everyday life – the normal people who don’t appear in texts and art.”

Botanical samples arise from archaeobotany, the study of seed and plant remains from excavations. Paleoethnobotany uses the archaeological record to discern interactions between people and plants. Beyond that, paleobotany is the study of fossilized plant remains from distant times when our ancestors were evolving alongside other humanoids.

The language has expanded to include the remains themselves. Macrobotanicals are stuff you can see, like husks and seeds and leaves or other parts. As you might expect, the other size is microbotanicals, or those needing magnification.

The field has become specialized. Experts now study wood, grain, seeds, plant scenes on tomb walls, even those tiny grains of pollen. Such skills require knowledge and training well beyond archaeology. For example, botany and the field of plant identification and classification (taxonomy) often are taught in different departments at universities than archaeology.

But such specialties are only the start of studying ancient plant remains. Archaeological context – where a sample is found – is critical to botanicals as much as it is to any excavated artifact. Finding a seed or plant residue on a tooth means it probably was eaten as food, or maybe ingested as medicine. And, of course, seeds found in an ancient hearth or an excavated latrine had very different “lives.”

### **The World’s Memory**

Historically, Egyptologists have been interested in botanicals since the 1820s, when fruits and other

specimens were found in tombs. Thanks to the lack of moisture, dried flower garlands were found next to mummies, including the famous one of Tutankhamun. The field grew more important over the past half century as researchers realized that tiny remains carry weighty information. In less royal sites, hard seeds and dense fruit pits can endure over the centuries even if leaves and stalks decay into dust. As with other artifacts, Egypt’s dry, sandy conditions preserved ancient plant remains. The picture in settlements is different. Most ancient towns and villages in Egypt are located in the wetter floodplain, so most plant remains decayed. However, burned plants or seeds like those from our Giza baker survive even in wet conditions, meaning botanicals in dwellings or villages often are found in firepits, hearths, floors, or what is left of animal excrement. Charred remains like those found in AERA’s excavations at the two villages are especially useful. Over time, as technology and expertise developed, botanical artifacts became more important.

Finding seeds and other plant remnants continues to be based on a simple technique: seeds float, sand and rock sink. Flotation is conducted before material is sifted and separated by hand. When team members dump the sample in water, plant remains usually rise to the top. The sieve skims off samples for drying and precise identification in the lab, sometimes under a low-resolution microscope. Reference libraries help with identification.

“It’s very low-tech compared to a lot of archaeological science,” Malleon said. “I’ve done flotation with a bunch of buckets next to a canal in Egypt. All you need is clean water and a high-quality, fine sieve.”

Digitizing the Giza Botanical information allows comparisons of seeds not only within other parts of the Giza excavations, but with sites across Egypt and the Mediterranean. What if you find a seed in Egypt that was grown only in what is now Syria? What if some people had access to “rarer,” more expensive plant-foods than others? What if more food had to be produced, as the need for workers increased? Seeds and other remains can reveal droughts, prosperity, trade, health, cooking habits, even what may have been part of more popular recipes.

The goal of Open Context, which focuses on archaeological and cultural heritage data, is to make

all this information free and easy to use. So far, Open Context has digitized archives from 116 projects and counting, many from around the Mediterranean but also ranging from India to China, from Australia to the U.K. In North America, Open Context offers information from Minnesota to Texas, from the Presidio of San Francisco to Harvard's Peabody Museum of Zooarchaeology.

For AERA and ARCE, Open Context is also the home of the 1979-1983 Sphinx Mapping Project, the records of the first extensive and detailed mapping of the Great Sphinx— a feat whose field director was Lehner. If digital heritage means preservation, Open Context is one of archaeology's stars, but database enterprises have developed in many other fields of science. As the world creates more and more data, the goal is to make sure it is not lost.

Digital heritage not only is about preservation over time, but also for an unknown future. One tricky goal of organizations such as Open Context is to secure data in ways that might remain accessible even as technology changes. That means having a database and other copies that might be used by a program or machine not yet conceived, much less invented. It is like the inventor of celluloid film pondering how a motion picture could be transferred to a computer data stick. These and other hurdles are being addressed in part by UNESCO through its ambitiously named "Memory of the World" program.

The preservation of digital heritage, as with anything of historic value, applies to digital versions of non-digital information, such as the Giza Botanical Database. But UNESCO also targets digital-only heritage, as it declares in one report: "New forms of expression and communication have emerged that did not exist previously. The internet is one vast example of this phenomenon."

### Millions of Cells

Digitization, in all of its wondrous usability, isn't always easy. Records and notes from the days of paper and pen, or from individuals who used different field techniques, sometimes don't fit easily into the cells of a spreadsheet. AERA's Giza database involves information from typical archaeological grids and squares, plus the notebooks and bag labels that recorded each day's discoveries. Numbered bags of



soil, sieved flotation samples, context numbers, and grid locations all became columns in the database, with both old and new features also inserted: dates, amounts, charcoal contents, and so forth.

Despite AERA's standardized excavation techniques, information for the database also had to be updated to accommodate changing scientific practices. The Giza records were old enough that some early notes used scientific terms that have since been changed. In some cases, the Latin names for plant families were revised internationally. For example, the grass family – Graminaeae – has become Poaceae, and beans/peas – Leguminoseae – have become Fabaceae. The new names were applied to the AERA lists.

Another change came from previously unidentified specimens. Using newer techniques or simply more information, mysterious specimens from AERA's earlier excavations could now be named. One example was a set of four clearly different types of small clover-like seeds that had been previously listed in the Giza records only as "Type A," "Type B," etc. Over the years archaeobotanists identified the seeds, but the old, informal names remained on the AERA records. The new database has the answer: "Trifolieae – Type A" is "Trifolium sp." and "Trifolieae – Type B" is "Melilotus sp."

Even the grid system of the Giza excavations changed in 1995, so the old locations had to be updated to a new one that fit the before-and-after records.

Archaeobotany trainee  
Essam Ahmed Soliman

PHOTO: © ANCIENT EGYPT  
RESEARCH ASSOCIATES





AERA/ARCE AEF Database workshop participants and instructors. From L-R: Mohamed El-Badry, Claire Malleison, Hend Hussein, Aya Mohamed, Reham El-Sayed, Samar Mohamed, Nourhan Salem, Basem Gehad.

PHOTO: CLAIRE MALLEISON

The team also had to combine the workers village information kept since 1988 with data from a 2013 study of archaeobotanical remains from the ruins of the Khentkawes Town for priests. These newer data had been kept in separate computer files because a computer glitch prevented Malleison from adding them to the original lists. This new data dump, plus an enormous cache of both old and new samples analyzed by Malleison and trainee Essam Ahmed Soliman during the 2018 excavation season, led to the new specimen count of more than 4,100, with the total number of individual examples of those specimens approaching 400,000. More will be added each year.

As with any digitization project, data entry was the real chore. Someone always must enter each bit of data, then cross check and verify before it is accepted. Over hours, days, weeks, and months, this means typing numbers or letters into the cells of spreadsheets, then confirming each one. The process clearly is meticulous and mind-numbing. “I don’t know how many millions of cells I had to check,” Malleison said, “but it was very much a labor of love – a painful labor of love literally going cell by cell, checking numbers.”

As information was reviewed, errors were found and corrected. Often, the only way to check was using the original notebooks or bag labels that recorded

a day’s work in the field or lab. Typos remained a challenge, whether penciled into a dirty notebook after a tiring day of digging or from an errant keystroke in an air-conditioned office. Maybe a 33553 was accidentally written as 35533. The doyen of the Giza database, Malleison knew that entering a mistake from raw data into a spreadsheet or other digital form does not change the error, except making it look more “official.” An estimated 200 corrections were made before the information was allowed to join the online database: “It was exceptionally time-consuming,” Malleison wrote, “and involved a great deal of detective work.” This “data cleaning” turned up a 2012 notebook whose entire contents were missing from information destined for the database. The notebook was Malleison’s own.

Even possible questions about AERA’s records were flagged for the database project. Malleison could identify who obtained and examined which samples in the past, so that information was added to the database to note any personal style in identifications.

“No two botanists have the same level of knowledge about every type of seed/plant item,” explained Malleison.

With this daunting cross-checking responsibility, Malleison became obsessed with backup copies. She lived in fear of hitting the wrong key and deleting the database, or hitting delete for a cell but accidentally disappearing a row or column: “That fear of making a change that somehow would wipe out all kind of things was very big,” she said.

These corrections, changes, and updates spawned enormous labor with the database, which in most cases should be considered a gargantuan spreadsheet. The species updating, for instance, affected more than 27,000 cells. In line with “best practice” for archives management, the team also scanned and copied all documents and notebooks. The originals remain in Cairo, with copies sent to AERA’s office in Boston; digital records are held and copied on the AERA and Open Context servers.

Yet other work was required. Because AERA site code names have changed over time, Rebekah Miracle had to check and update the codes to the ones AERA now uses in their Geographic Information System (GIS). The Giza data had to be adjusted and tested to make sure it was compatible with other Open Context databases – a feature that eases comparisons

worldwide. The Giza Botanical Database was also linked to modern botanical web resources. Downloadable, ready-made tables were created to make data easier to manipulate. In the end, the ARCE-funded database is like having a vast botanical library from Giza on your office desk or cellphone. And the information from Lehner's standard-practice operation became even more accurate and usable through the process of creating the database.

As with all Egyptian missions today, training became another goal of the database project. In May 2018, six inspectors from different Ministry of Antiquities departments joined an AERA workshop in Cairo to discuss database educational needs. The resulting recommendation is for an advanced field school for inspectors at excavations, museums, storage magazines, and ministry offices. Their challenges include understanding the fundamentals of databases as well as managing overwhelmingly large historical archives of records and objects.

The AERA teams will next digitize records on material culture and objects – pottery, tools, bones, other items found at the Giza settlements – so they also can be shared and compared worldwide. Lehner's group received another AEF grant to undertake this work, which started in July with AERA's Emmy Malek and Dan Jones.

Meanwhile, the new botanical database is ready to be updated with each season's new data. Because of ARCE's funding, AERA's work, and Open Context, the project ensures the integrity and security of information, plus makes it all easier to use. Combining data from the excavation of the Khentkawes Town for priests and the "Workers Town" (Heit el-Ghurab) allows scholars to compare two settlements with different purposes. This global access to online information could inspire exciting research into farming, livestock, trade, and administration practices – all from reading those seeds. 🌱

*Claire Malleson, an archaeobotanist originally from the U.K., manages the Ancient Egypt Research Associates Lab in Giza, and is assistant professor of archaeology at the American University of Beirut. She is the author of The Fayum Landscape: Ten Thousand Years of Archaeology, Texts, and Traditions in Egypt (AUC Press, 2019).*

*David Everett is Scribe's associate editor.*

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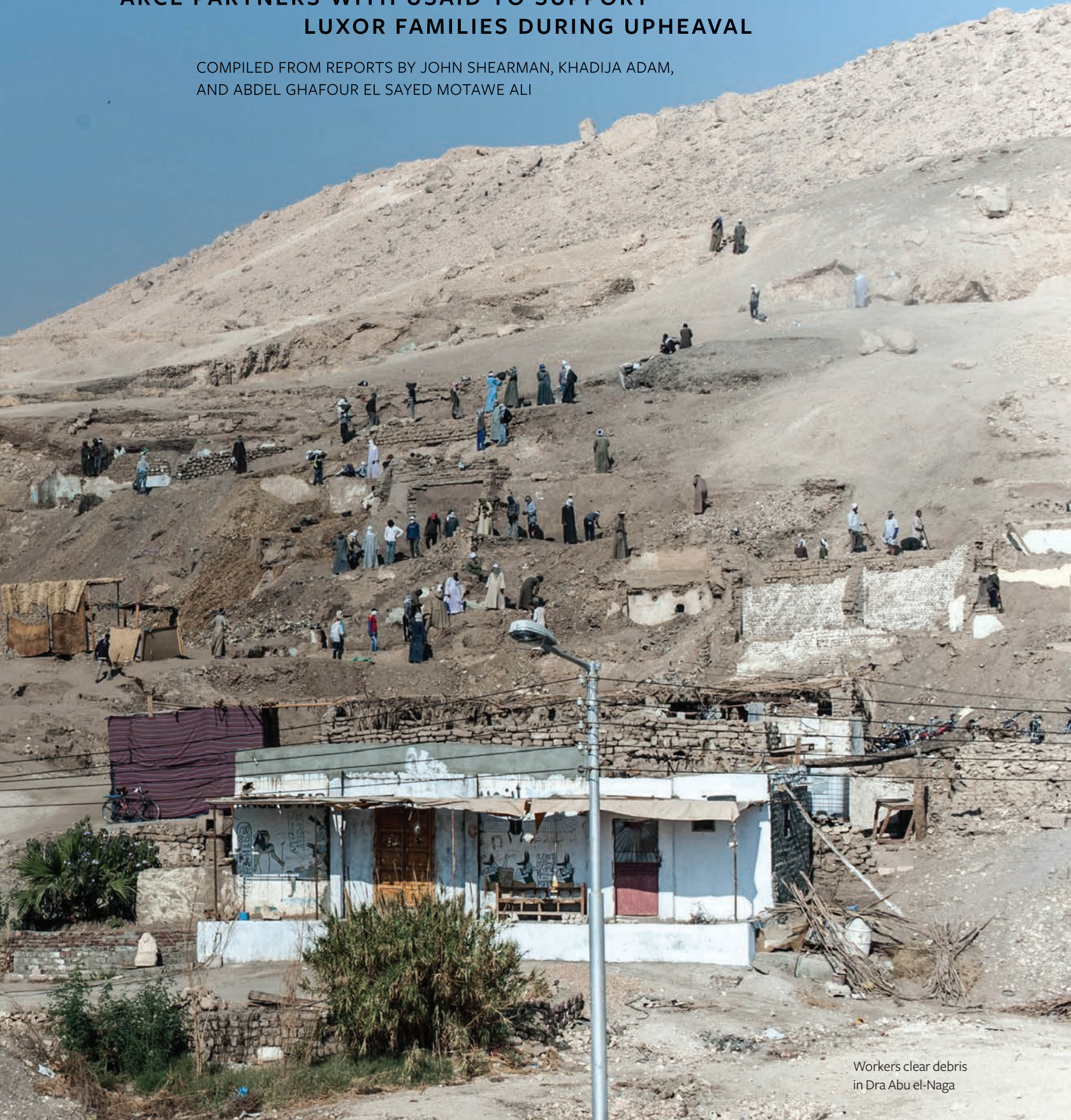
# A Sustaining Handshake





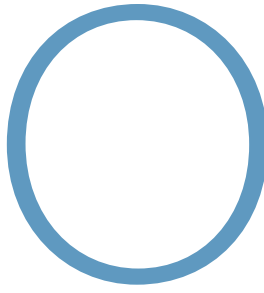
# ARCE PARTNERS WITH USAID TO SUPPORT LUXOR FAMILIES DURING UPHEAVAL

COMPILED FROM REPORTS BY JOHN SHEARMAN, KHADIJA ADAM,  
AND ABDEL GHAFOUR EL SAYED MOTAWA ALI



Workers clear debris  
in Dra Abu el-Naga





**F THE MULTI-FACETED** turmoil from Egypt's 2011 political upheaval, among the most damaging for residents of the Luxor area was the collapse of the tourism-dependent economy. Not only did

locals suffer from a decline in visitors, they also saw fewer opportunities to make a living by serving archaeological expeditions. Even some government employees, including inspectors and conservators from the Ministry of Antiquities, found little money for months after 2011, including in what had been their regular paychecks.

But then, in a largely unheralded move, ARCE stepped in. With two major grants from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the support of the Ministry of Antiquities, ARCE led broad job-creation programs that sustained an estimated 1,600 Upper Egyptian families from 2011-2018 and that supported scores of conservators and inspectors during the difficult time. The ARCE programs to alleviate poverty and promote development became more noteworthy because of their key target areas: the celebrated Dra Abu el-Naga necropolis, where Middle and New Kingdom tomb discoveries have

continued for more than a century, several hamlets around the headline-spewing Qurna relocation area, and other West Bank sites near the famed Tombs of the Nobles. Together, the grants and the Ministry's evolving oversight of ARCE's diverse work illuminate Egypt's continuing efforts to develop the best economic and political blends of security, tourism, and the preservation of its unique cultural landscape. As the economy recovers and tourism returns, ARCE's efforts also represent models for future cooperation between the wider archaeological community and the nation whose heritage it cherishes. In effect, ARCE offered a sustaining American handshake across the Atlantic and up the ageless Nile.

"I think the whole project dealt with the humanity perspective," said John Shearman, ARCE's Associate Director for Luxor and organizer of the numerous projects. Not only did the employment program help support hundreds of families, but "we wanted to show that USAID supported work to produce well-trained and professional individuals in the Ministry."

#### **An Economic Tsunami**

When the modern era of Egyptian exploration began in the 1800s, employing local workers quickly became tradition as much as convenience for foreign-led archaeological missions. So-called "basket boys"

ARCE staff tour Dra Abu el-Naga in October 2018





helped dig and remove rubble, savvy crew managers often were hired from the Qufti area, and food and supplies were sourced locally. As discoveries continued and Egypt developed its own political and cultural identities into the 1900s, the relationship between local workers and foreign missions evolved from these expected but informal arrangements to formal requirements and permissions to dig. Today, foreign missions not only hire locals and Egyptian managers, but they also offer trainings to Ministry of Antiquities inspectors and others. Many excavations are led in joint arrangements between foreign and Egyptian experts, and, in addition to both Egyptian and foreign student trainees, an increasing number of excavations are managed by Egyptians with all-Egyptian crews.

One obvious result from this evolution in exploration has been the opening of scores of famous sites along the Nile that attract visitors from around the world – creating yet another widespread benefit: Thousands of Egyptians in and around Luxor, Giza, Cairo, and Alexandria increasingly relied on tourism for their primary income. In Luxor, up to 70% of local residents were tied in some way to tourism or the operation of ancient sites, according to one ARCE estimate. Whether they worked in official capacities or helped provide the food, housing, or related services that visitors required, these tens of thousands of

Egyptians were devastated when tourism foundered, especially in outlying areas, after the 2011 revolution. Meanwhile, as the government twice changed hands and cabinet reshuffling continued, it took months for financial operations to resume at some agency offices, including providing work and paychecks. The result, according to one UN report, was a decline in the previous rate of 15 million annual visitors to less than a third of that, with subsequent upheavals adding to the decrease. While tourism in Egypt picked up again in 2018, the multi-year disintegration of the industry and the accompanying spotty pay for official employees had previously created a tsunami swamping local economies.

The United States and other allies recognized the calamity in advance, spurring USAID to seek ideas on how to support Egypt's economy and protect its heritage until both the government and tourism could recover. One result was Shearman's proposal for ARCE to employ hundreds of workers and scores of inspectors in and around Luxor and elsewhere in Upper Egypt.

The ARCE goals of both USAID grants, which totaled \$12.8 million, were as diverse as they were ambitious: provide regular income for as many families as possible, use those workers to clean or improve existing archaeological sites, hire workers and experts

Mud brick production on-site





to excavate and conserve new or dormant sites, provide government inspectors and conservators temporary replacement income by paying them to work on sites, help the economy by buying supplies and other essentials locally, and enhance tourist access around Luxor and other areas to build economic sustainability as the turmoil subsides.

Several specific excavation or conservation projects targeted in the grants and other funding have been previously described to ARCE members and *Scribe* readers, but few may have realized the projects were supporting USAID themes of sustainability through foreign aid. In an era of increased cynicism about U.S. assistance to struggling nations, officials from ARCE and USAID rallied to make sure Luxor families were the primary beneficiaries as much as possible.

### The Ruins of Eviction

The first USAID/ARCE project, worth \$4.42 million from 2011-14, targeted several hamlets around Qurna, a name associated with one of the past century's most contentious disputes in Egyptian archaeological and cultural history. The hamlets were located around, among, and on top of the Tombs of the Nobles, one of the most important sites in Luxor. Some families had

lived near the tombs for decades, perhaps centuries. As excavations increased in the 1800s, more locals moved into the area to help foreign missions, some of which built their own administrative structures. Later, many villagers joined in guiding or supporting the increasing flow of visitors who stopped by the site on their way to the awe-inspiring Karnak and Luxor Temples across the Nile, or to the adjoining Valley of the Kings. Over generations, more and more of these villagers escaped the heat by moving over or even into some tombs, and some added adjoining homes connected to the convenient chambers.

Egyptian officials wanted them out, arguing that some villagers were abusing or looting the ancient sites. Indeed, some tombs were damaged and used as barns or for waste disposal, jeopardizing part of what UNESCO, in 1979, had declared a World Heritage Site throughout Luxor. Yet by then, entire families of residents had lived in Qurna for generations. They fought the removal plans, arguing that their presence was needed to serve two centuries of tourism. And the removal of artifacts? That was fueled by foreign demand, not home-grown looting – or so said those who supported the villagers' presence amid the tombs. The impasse was settled as the government

Workers clear away rubble from the entrances of several tombs







Newly installed visitor paths and infrastructure



gradually and controversially decided to evict residents, sending in bulldozers in 2006-2010 and moving most Qurna residents to new housing nearby.

After the 2011 revolution, Shearman and others knew that tons of rubble remained from those evictions and demolitions, so a major goal of the first USAID employment grant was to remove debris and what else was left of the homes that surrounded or connected two Qurna hamlets to the ancient sites. Those hamlets, Sheikh Abd El Qurna and El Khokha, encompass “one of the most intensively archaeologically examined sites of the world due to the large number of non-royal tombs that lie scattered across the hillsides,” reported one ARCE document. “The destruction of the hamlets left large portions of the UNESCO World Heritage Site in visual disarray, with debris piles and the remains of partially demolished buildings in and around tombs open to visitors.”

To address the mess, ARCE planned to employ one male representative of up to 600 families, “many of whom lived or were related to people who lived in the hamlets,” Shearman stated.

For laborers, the pay was not as much as they had previously earned from tip-happy tourists, but it helped when that tourism money dried up. “We didn’t make them rich by any means,” Shearman said, “but we wanted to keep them having a steady income.”

These crowds of workers were managed by Shearman and a team of ARCE and local leaders. The long list of tasks started with debris removal but expanded to the respectful archaeological recording of the ruins from the century-old hamlets that had been demolished. The team prepared a map of the remaining structures that mainly consisted of foundations. This recording was done by Ministry inspectors who had been trained in previous Ancient Egypt Research Associates (AERA) field schools and now earned ARCE-funded pay while on leave from their regular jobs. Meanwhile, much of the mud brick debris removed with the rubble was re-used on-site or elsewhere, and new tourist pathways and signs were installed along with solar-powered security lighting.

Yes, some of the USAID/ARCE workers came from families who had been evicted. But the emotional response to removing rubble from their former homestead was measured, Shearman remembered: “There wasn’t much (emotion) shown, but they were always eager to provide you information on who lived where, what they did for a living, how many children they had, even the names of the children.”

Finally, after more than a century of dispute, many of the remnants of the non-ancient occupation were gone, with the original tombs and their entrances

The conservation team at Deir El Shelwit, with Adam at center





restored to how they may have looked before the village had developed.

### Diversity and Discovery

The USAID funding expanded the job creation and conservation work to other projects approved by the Ministry. Khadija Adam, ARCE's Conservation Manager in Luxor at the time, directed an impressive number of conservation field schools at five different sites. The other projects included:

**Tomb of Djehuty:** The forecourt was cleared and parts of the tomb were excavated and conserved at this 18th Dynasty site, also known as Theban Tomb 110. Djehuty was the royal cupbearer to Egyptian kings Hatshepsut and Thutmose III. The conservation field schools led by Adam had to deal with extensive smoke damage to ancient wall paintings and structural decay in the tomb. The excavation, conservation, and epigraphy work that Adam directed was followed later by an epigraphy field school at TT110, as outlined in the Fall 2018 *Scribe*.

**Deir El Shelwit:** The Roman-era temple at this site was built between the 1st and 2nd Centuries CE to honor the goddess Isis, an ancient Egyptian figure whose cult spread throughout the Roman Empire. Worshipped as a magical healer, Isis was known as the wife and sister of Osiris and mother of Horus. The temple at Deir El Shelwit, which is south of the West Bank's Valley of the Kings, is decorated with scenes of three Roman emperors. ARCE hired dozens of workers during two field seasons to improve the area around the temple and prepare it for visitors. The teams also built an inspectorate office, guard quarters, and a visitor restroom.

At this project, the international, century-skipping ironies of ARCE's sustainability goals were deep: American funds were used in Egypt to recycle mudbrick and limestone aggregate from the demolished Qurna hamlets to make it easier for 21st Century visits to a Roman-era temple that honored a mythical goddess from Egypt's far older past. At Deir El Shelwit, the recycled mudbrick and aggregate was used to build a parking area and pathways.

In the job creation component of the Deir El Shelwit work, some locals also were trained in basic skills for plumbing, electrical wiring, and construction. Inside the temple, Adam led an advanced conservation field school that helped clean the painted walls, which were covered in dirt, soot, and bat guano.

To ensure the greatest economic impact, Rais Ali Farouk, who helped find and manage many of the USAID-funded workers for ARCE – including at Deir El Shelwit – tried to make sure only one job was granted per family. As Shearman explained:



“He went house to house in the local village next to the temple to find villagers who would benefit from the project.”

By June 2013, 53 conservation trainees had graduated from Adam's training program. The USAID work also paid for solar-powered lights in and outside the monument in what is thought to be one of the first times such lighting was added to an ancient heritage site in Egypt. A key predecessor of this practice was ARCE's project at Quseir Fort, which is also featured in this issue on page 38. Deir El Shelwit was opened to the public in January 2014 by Dr. Mohamed Ibrahim Aly, then Minister of Antiquities.

**Mut Temple:** ARCE has been working with teams from Brooklyn Museum and Johns Hopkins University since 2007 on a series of projects in the Mut precinct,

**Top:** The forecourt of TT110 before conservation

**Bottom:** The forecourt of TT110 following the completion of work by ARCE





**Top:** The facade of TT286 before ARCE's interventions

**Bottom:** The facade of TT286 following intervention

which is part of the larger Karnak Temple Complex on the East Bank. The Mut site includes several temples that represent nearly two thousand years of ancient history from different royal building campaigns. The USAID-funded part of ARCE's work involved hiring 120 workers to build pathways, install lighting, and erect platforms for statuary, including at a small open-air museum near the temple's sacred lake. The area and its new features were opened to the public in a ceremony in January 2014.

**Photography Field School:** ARCE photographer Owen Murray, with help from Abdallah Sabry, trained three ministry inspectors in archaeological and conservation photography, which is used to document projects before, during, and after intervention. The three trainees were selected from six who joined a two-week introductory course. The field school, in

which trainees were given a Nikon camera and lenses plus an iMac computer, was conducted from ARCE's Luxor office in two sessions from 2012-2013. Two of the trainees took a leave of absence from the Ministry during the 2013-14 season to continue working with ARCE. One of the original trainees, Ayman Damarany, led the final few years of the field school with two conservation trainees from the Ministry of Antiquities.

**Data Management:** A 24-terabyte data management system was purchased in 2011 to organize and store all of ARCE Luxor's records. ARCE's IT Manager, Zakaria Yacoub, built the system to track and monitor workers and projects during the USAID funding. The system includes individual databases for archaeology, conservation, photography, osteology, and ceramics.

**Other Projects:** After rules for the use of USAID funding changed, three new job creation and tourism development projects were approved: About 90 workers were hired over five months to re-build the mudbrick security wall at the West Bank site of Medinet Habu in conjunction with Chicago House. Up to 116 other workers cleared weeds and built platforms, plus other projects, at the Karnak Temple Complex, where the grant also funded repairs to the air conditioning and lighting at the visitors' center.

By the end of 2014, Shearman and the ARCE team had employed more than 700 young people and others for up to 20 months. Sixty-one conservators were trained, plus 35 archaeologists and three photographers. Most money for supplies and services was spent locally, and a new data system was up and running. Despite officials not moving to approve the construction of visitors' centers at Mut and Qurna, many of the first grant's major goals in job-creation, training, and tourism development had been met.

### **The Fame of Dra Abu el-Naga**

The second USAID grant, for \$8.37 million, continued these employment, conservation, and training themes, plus additional goals of promoting tourism and cultural awareness. The primary targets in Luxor were conservation work inside Khonsu Temple at Karnak on the East Bank, plus continued work at the bustling site in and around TT110. Perhaps most noteworthy, though, was more debris removal from eviction sites around the famed Dra Abu el-Naga. The collection of tombs for the ancient Egyptian elite is at the northern edge of the West Bank area that includes the Valley of the Kings, Valley of the Queens, and other renowned tomb complexes. One end of Dra Abu el-Naga is close to the former home of legendary Egyptologist Howard Carter and directly across the Nile from the Karnak Temple complex. The hillside necropolis includes the



*In an era of increased cynicism about U.S. assistance to struggling nations, officials from ARCE and USAID rallied to make sure Luxor families were the primary beneficiaries as much as possible.*

suspected tomb of Amenhotep I and was used to bury New Kingdom officials. In the Coptic era, the Deir el-Bachit monastery once commanded a hilltop view over the ancient cemetery and toward the majestic structures across the Nile. Discoveries continue to this day, including the recent unveiling of a 3,500-year-old, mummy-filled tomb built for a goldsmith.

With Adam’s work continuing almost non-stop in TT110, the second grant’s site clearance and improvements started in 2015 at Dra Abu el-Naga and Qurnet Mar’i, another hamlet near the Qurna sites from the previous grant. This new West Bank work, which in part targeted the hiring of unemployed youth, included the challenges of managing an astonishing collection of more than 500 workers at its peak. The goal was to return the area more closely to what it

may have been like before villagers settled in and over the tombs. However, the tourism angle was also satisfied: Pathways, lighting, shaded benches, and signs were erected for visitors, with both new and recycled mudbrick used for the built infrastructure throughout. When possible, workers were trained in masonry, paving, welding, light installation, and the making of mud bricks – which are still used throughout the country. In a unique result of this training, tens of thousands of new mud bricks were made and provided to nearby conservation projects of other missions.

An interesting and often emotional part of the process was the archaeological documentation of hundreds of artifacts and related items from in and around the homes of the evicted villagers. Some

Workers and the ARCE team during a site visit in 2017







**Top:** Adam in TT159 in 2016, touring the then U.S. Ambassador to Egypt

**Bottom:** The interior of TT159 before intervention

were typical ancient artifacts, including amulets or mummy case fragments. But most were inscribed or painted blocks from ancient tombs that had been removed and re-used by the villagers to build homes or other structures.

On a more human level, Shearman said, “many personal things were found in the debris,” including old photos and prayer notes that had been inserted between the mud brick joints of some demolished homes.

The ARCE-led workers closed up more than 100 entrances to caves and tombs that contained no scenes or paintings. However, nine painted tombs were secured by iron doors, and two of those tombs with remaining artwork were selected for excavation and conservation so they might join the area’s tourism attractions. Dating to the 19th Dynasty, the Tomb of Raya (TT159) belongs to the fourth prophet of Amun and his wife, Mutemwia. The T-shaped tomb includes a forecourt, transverse hall, and a shrine that once held a statue of the seated

couple. The 20th Dynasty tomb of Niay (TT286) was built for an official whose title was “Scribe of the Table.” This multi-chambered tomb includes wall decorations and other important features. Both tombs were the home of conservation field schools directed by Adam, who is now an independent conservation consultant based in Cairo.

The TT286 work involved finding and conserving an ancient mud brick wall outside the tomb entrance. New bricks were made to combine with the old wall, and the tomb entrance itself was strengthened. The guards at the necropolis had rescued some of the painted wall fragments after the villagers were evicted, so the conservation students examined the fragments and succeeded in reconnecting a few to their original locations on the painted walls. To accommodate visitors, a wooden floor was erected over the bedrock, with motion-activated solar-powered lighting.

The Tomb of Niay is an example of the threats of the past and the promise of conservation. Photos taken by The University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in the late 1960s show a Book of the Dead wall scene that has since been vandalized. After her conservation efforts on the tomb, Adam hopes a photographic panel from the Penn Museum picture can be affixed over the spot on the wall where the vandalism occurred, allowing visitors to experience the complete ancient artwork. The work by Adam and her ARCE field school students was featured in the summer 2018 issue of *Nile* magazine.

At TT159, the entrance was rebuilt, and the painted wall and ceilings inside were cleaned and conserved. The team also found and filled a large crack that had formed over the main hall. At both tombs, the surrounding area was restored as close as possible to its natural state, with the goal of providing visitors as authentic an experience as possible. Both of the conserved tombs were inaugurated with an official ribbon cutting ceremony on September 8, 2019.

In addition to a project in the chapels of Khonsu Temple on the East Bank – which included field training in conservation, site supervision, and photography – another major part of the second USAID grant focused on multiple conservation and tourism initiatives at the celebrated Red Monastery in Sohag.

### Serving the Locals

Not all of the projects contemplated for the two USAID grants were approved. Egyptian government debates over priorities and other concerns prevented the installation of visitors’ centers at two sites in Luxor. According to ARCE’s final report on the second grant,



more effort is needed “to enhance heritage values within community life. While the Ministry is aware of these (concepts), the capacity to implement them is seriously lacking and is hindered by conflicting interest groups.”

Overall, however, the two USAID grants were fruitful in terms of creating jobs, stimulating the economy, training conservators, and improving access to new and existing sites. The largess was spread around, Shearman recalled: “Each worker worked for approximately two years, and we did not have workers from the first grant work on the second. They were all new hires.”

From untrained laborers to experienced Ministry inspectors, ARCE targeted only those willing to work. “With our program they worked very hard – sometimes in difficult conditions,” Shearman said. Personal relationships, which are valuable throughout Egypt, were also critical to the USAID projects, he said.

This ranged from having tea with government officials to managing large numbers of workers hauling loads of recycled mud brick in the site. For some parts of the second grant, Shearman was the only non-Egyptian in the field. “The bottom line is that it was extremely difficult,” he said, “but I used

many skills I learned as a construction manager on American and foreign construction endeavors to get the project done.”

The two ARCE jobs programs also demonstrated the efficiency and capabilities of local workers and experts, challenging the pervasive stereotype that the presence of foreign teams and consultants is the only way to ensure an adherence to international benchmarks. The field archaeologists for the first grant were managed by Andrew Bednarski, but Egyptian Essam Shehap handled that role for the second grant. Another measure must be Adam, herself an Egyptian trained in Cairo who led five different fields schools during the two grants. One of the biggest achievements of the USAID program, Shearman said, was “it also proves that Egyptians can do projects in a correct manner.”

“Everything that Khadija and I and other staff did was meant to serve the locals,” Shearman said. “Everything was directed toward the service of that.” 🌟

*John Shearman is ARCE’s Associate Director for Luxor. Khadija Adam is an independent conservation consultant and field school director.*

*Abdel Ghafour El Sayed Motawe Ali is a conservator.*

Installing solar-powered lighting in the hall of TT159





Hampikian inspects the results of her work. The doors of the Bab Zuwayla now open and close for the first time in over 500 years. Photographed in 2002.



SOMETHING TO

# SAY

**BUILD, RESTORE, SAVE:**  
**NAIRY HAMPIKIAN**  
IS ALWAYS READY WITH A PROJECT OR  
PLAN FOR HER BELOVED CAIRO

BY DAVID EVERETT



**B**Y THE TIME NAIRY HAMPIKIAN was helping conserve various Cairo projects in the 1990s, she was accustomed to swinging forth and back among dualities. A trained architect who designed new buildings, she would soon earn her Ph.D. in archaeology to focus on preserving ancient structures. She grew up in the insular Armenian enclave in Cairo, but she proudly embraced her Egyptian side after attending schools outside her community.

Builder or restorer, Egyptian or Armenian, Hampikian oscillated with work and friends and

family – until that day in the 1990s when she spotted a storefront bearing an old Egyptian version of her grandfather’s true name Krikor: Karrar, it read. The simple sign jolted her into realizing that the dualities were intended to synergize, that she was not one at a time but all of them together.

“I thought to myself,” Hampikian remembered during a newspaper interview years later, “I was enriched by the two equal identities that I belonged to equally.”

Today, with her headline-making career thriving, these embedded dualities help Hampikian confront the daily balancing act between the development her country

Hampikian leading a tour of Bab Zuwayla in 2003





needs and the equivalent responsibility to preserve its heritage. And so, through scores of projects and plans both small and landmark, Hampikian wades into these challenges as a combined, energized Egyptian-Armenian, architect, archaeologist, teacher, heritage manager – and force of nature.

Of her many projects, two are among Cairo’s most iconic: the famous Bab Zuwayla gate with its double minarets, and the formidable Citadel, the medieval fortress and mosque complex that commands Cairo’s historic center. At Bab Zuwayla, Hampikian led a five-year restoration of the 900-year-old monument. For the Citadel, Hampikian has proposed a stunningly



ambitious conservation and redevelopment of the abandoned lower portion known as Bab al-‘Azab, once the main gateway from the city to its rulers.

Hampikian attends a social gathering this past June

Since 2000, she has taught various courses at Misr University, and, since 1999, she has spent several months each year as the site architect for The Colossi of Memnon and Temple of Amenhotep III Conservation Project in Luxor. She founded the latest iteration of her own company, Hampikian Architecture and Heritage Management, in 2005.

In more than three decades of these and other achievements, Hampikian, now 60, has emphasized the importance of the social fabric that birthed and surrounds the structures she helps design, explore, conserve, adapt, and teach about.

To describe Hampikian, her friends and colleagues use many of the same adjectives chosen by those who have debated her: **realistic, philosophical, blunt, intellectual, down to earth, obstinate, empathetic, worldly, relentless.**





Hampikian in 2003 with Farouk Hosny, then Minister of Culture, Zahi Hawass, then Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, and David Welch, former U.S. Ambassador to Egypt

“The value of this heritage is not only the monuments and the minarets and their very romantic ideas, but it is the people around it all,” Hampikian says. “Heritage is keeping people in a city, the people who make the city what it is.”

### Embracing Reality

To describe Hampikian, her friends and colleagues use many of the same adjectives chosen by those who have debated her: realistic, philosophical, blunt, intellectual, down to earth, obstinate, empathetic, worldly, relentless. To those descriptors, Hampikian herself adds that, while she is not politically correct, she is indeed a naturalist, in all of its real-life, unromantic complexity.

“I am what I am,” she reflects. “I don’t polish my words with my boss, and I don’t lower the standards of my talk for a worker. I talk the way I talk to everyone... when I am angry, I am angry. When I’m not, I’m not.”

As with any heritage marked by traumatic immigration, Hampikian’s past carries the weight of the early-20th century genocide that prodded thousands of Armenians such as her family to flee their homeland and settle in places like Egypt. Even her name is classic Armenian, derived from the ancient Nairi peoples that established the land itself. Armenia always was a bridge between Europe and Asia, between Rome and Persia. For Nairy Hampikian, that bridge continued in her upbringing in Cairo’s Armenian community, then extended into the Egyptian foundation of her identity.

Her degrees reflect this paired, international past, beginning with a bachelor’s in architecture from Ain

Shams University in Cairo, then a master’s in the same field from the Armenian Polytechnic Institute in Yerevan. After another master’s in Islamic Art and Architecture from the American University in Cairo, she earned various certificates in conservation, including from the Italian Institute for Restoration and, in Germany, in everything from computerized photogrammetry to stone conservation. She took the next step toward the ancient with her final degree, a 1997 Ph.D. in archaeology from UCLA in the U.S.

Her professional career began in the mid-1980s as a freelance architect, designing everything from private villas to tombstones in the Armenian cemeteries





in Old Cairo and Heliopolis. But public service and prominent projects soon attracted her talents. She helped salvage monuments damaged by the 1988 earthquake in Armenia, and, in Egypt, she documented the quarry marks on fallen blocks from the pyramid in Dahshur. Since this start, she has managed conservation projects and designed private homes, public buildings, church renovations, excavation houses, visitors' centers, and many other structures. The conservation and adaptation work grew in importance to eventually include Bab Zuwayla and, just this year, her proposal on Bab al-'Azab, which was funded by ARCE's Antiquities Endowment Fund (AEF).

To say practicality guides Hampikian is an understatement. She embraces and exploits reality. In a chapter she wrote for a 2004 book on revitalizing Cairo, she decided to list the challenges facing the state of preservation in the city at the time, as compiled at a joint government/UNESCO conference. Beware, as the length of her "summed up" list is revelatory of the person who decided each item needed attention: "a lack of available funds for conservation work; the disaster-prone state of the infrastructure; a malfunctioning refuse disposal system; pollution due to factories in the area; a lack of coordination between the different bodies; a general failure of the planning

Cutting the foot of the east door of Bab Zuwayla before its removal for restoration







Visitors tour Bab Zuwayla

process in conservation activities, a lack of qualified and conservation-conscious supervision on the projects; the absence of properly trained people to work on the conservation projects ...”

[We interrupt this list to remind you, *Scribe* reader, that Hampikian believes the 2004 litany remains a strong summation of many current conservation obstacles in Cairo and throughout Egypt.]

“...a failure to follow up with the maintenance of registered buildings; the absence of a body that has systematically studied urban planning in His-

toric Cairo; the unclear borders of Historic Cairo; the absence of legal channels to safeguard the old city as a ‘protected area;’ the absence of efforts to register non-registered building; authorities failing to adopt the idea of adaptive reuse of historical and non-registered buildings.” [Whew!]

Has her gender ever been an issue in a field often seen as historically dominated by men? “Maybe yes, but I have forgotten,” she slyly jokes, quickly offering that that her gender can be a “very good advantage” if she ever must argue with men: “I can shout, but when they start to shout back, they stop shouting because I am a woman.” Mostly, though, when her gender or her minority Christian religion might ever intrude, she simply re-focuses on the work and the respect it earns her. “I don’t let things go there. Instead, we talk about things we need to do.”

### The Philosophy of Reports

The writing style of most grant reports can be sedate, even tedious. But Hampikian always has something to say far beyond documenting the routine details of grant expenditures. Her reports venture into what can only be termed philosophy, such as when she used one report to define a building as “the result of a vision to limit emptiness.”

Here is what Hampikian wrote in the first part of a massive, five-volume report on the Bab Zuwayla project: “The first step in the conservation process is to understand the building from its initial moment of creation – empty space and a vision in the abstract, to its present intricate state – the culmination of all the alterations that the building has gone through in time.” A project manager must develop “an immeasurable respect to all of the other recorded and not recorded events that a building experiences throughout each moment of its struggle for survival.”

Such pronouncements are anthropomorphic, portraying a structure as growing through a birth, adolescence, and adulthood that break from its parentage: “A building starts to disengage itself from the methodical discipline outlined by its original creator and starts to obey other masters, such as gravity, weather, internal environment, natural disasters, new owners, new functions, renovations according to a new fashion, (and) consolidation according to new material ... Some buildings change more than others, but all of them do change in time and become defined as ‘old buildings.’ Once a building has survived long enough and has still kept a glimpse of its original character, it is labeled as a ‘historic building,’ which is then targeted as an object to be conserved.”

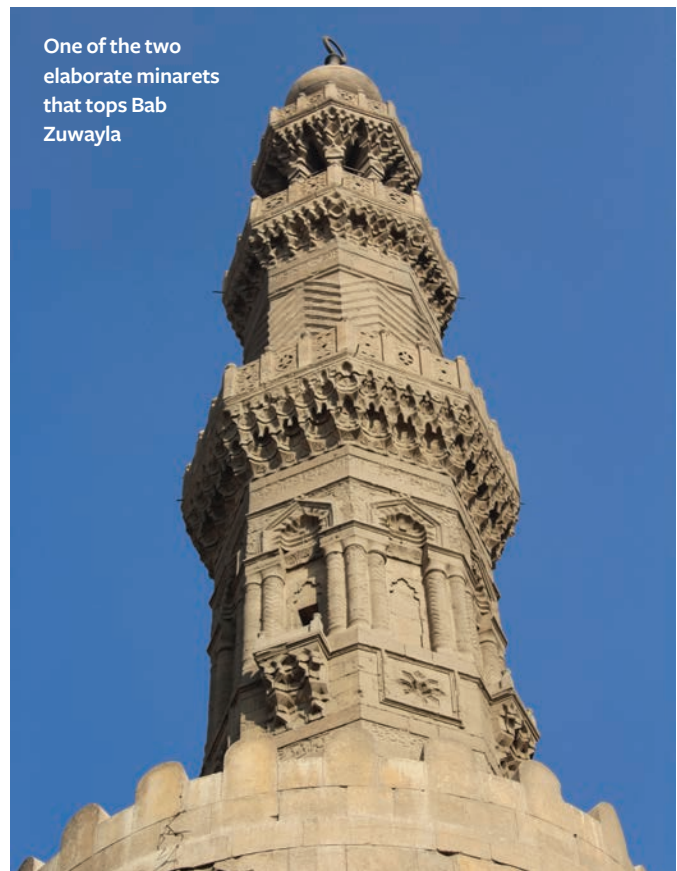


In the 2004 book chapter, this philosophical approach was evident as she described the need to individualize conservation efforts to the specific challenges of a structure: “Each building has its own pulse of resistance and rhythm of aging...To achieve the goals of the project does not mean giving the same medicine to all the patients in the hospital.”

Further quotations from the Bab Zuwayla report are worth exploring as insight into the duality-enriched mind of the writer, who, we should remember, is both an architect of the new and a preserver of the ancient: When facing a restoration project such as Bab Zuwayla, an archaeologist and conservator must adopt “a time-swinging mode: back and forth between the ‘compound present’ and the ‘initial pure vision’ of the creator master builder ... it is by this oscillatory movement through time that a conservation project proceeds during all its stages; between the ‘pasts’ and the ‘multi-faceted present, conservation projects conceive the ‘future’.”

**Bigger Than the Pyramids**

Hampikian’s Citadel plans focus on a portion of the complex located down the hill from the main fortress and mosque. The Bab al-‘Azab area remains in deterioration, with its main gate to the historic city unused. Yet it endures as part of the 1979 UNESCO World Heritage Site listing for Historic Cairo. To Hampikian, the area has become her team’s “dream project” to demonstrate how Egypt’s heritage can lead to economic, cultural, and social sustainability. Bab al-‘Azab



One of the two elaborate minarets that tops Bab Zuwayla

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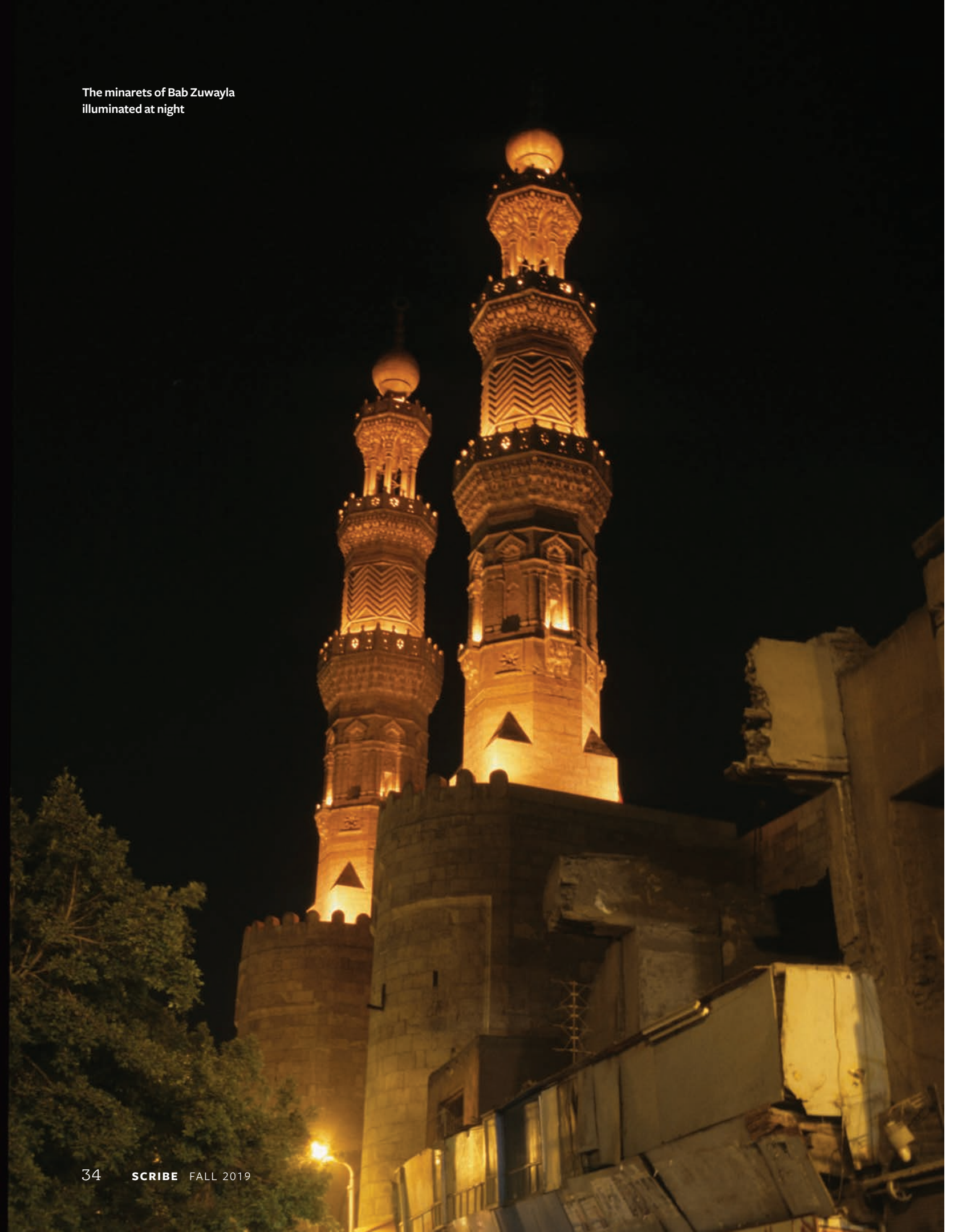
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The minarets of Bab Zuwayla  
illuminated at night





may be one of the most neglected areas in Historic Cairo, she says, but it also presents one of the city's greatest opportunities for the benefits of smart, adaptive heritage management.

The Citadel was the administrative, residential, religious, political, and military center of Egypt's rulers from the 12th century to the middle of the 19th. The history is important, Hampikian wrote in the final report for her AEF grant, "to realize how much of this fantastic Pandora's box is not exploited to attract foreign tourists and locals."

"If used knowingly, it is not an exaggeration to mention that the Citadel can convey to its visitors much more than what the Pyramids can, but it has to be known and also told in such a way as to make the audience crave for more."

Today, the Bab al-'Azab area is eclipsed by the monumental upper area of the Citadel complex, where tourists and locals flock to the famous Mosque of Muhammad Ali and other attractions.

Hampikian's 2018 plan for the little-used Bab al-'Azab proposes to start with a series of emergency conservation projects to halt the decline of the area, then a careful inventory of what should be conserved and what can be adapted. After that, she wrote, a broadly-based think tank should create a master plan for the area. To kickstart that plan, Hampikian envisions a thriving blend of excavation, conservation, protection, and sustainable support for visitors and residents alike. Her "dream" list includes a tantalizing assortment of projects that could emerge amid the monuments: a Citadel museum; schools of conservation, calligraphy, and music; a performing arts center with a movie house and puppet theater; a textile museum and workshop center especially to employ local women; plus the requisite collections of shops, restaurants, and cafes.

With more anthropomorphism, the report declares that the Bab al-'Azab area contains "the collective memory of the Citadel since its foundation in 1176-1183 by Salah al-Din up to this day. This is why we believe it is high time that this precious lost-in-time memory spot regain its presence."

### Reading the Walls

From 1998-2003, Hampikian was the mastermind manager for the conservation of the Bab Zuwayla gate and its twin minarets – a project funded in part by ARCE's Egyptian Antiquities Project (EAP). In her usual perceptive reflection, Hampikian said the project required "reading the walls" to learn of the many restorations, re-envisions, and

## EXPLORE THE ANCIENT WORLD



[oi100.uchicago.edu](http://oi100.uchicago.edu)





A technician cleans Bab Zuwayla with a pressurized water jet. The Citadel is visible in the distance.

revivals of the 900-year-old landmark. The result of Hampikian's leadership is evident in the restoration of the honey-colored limestone through, around, and inside the gate, which is one of three surviving in the city's old Fatimid core but the only one now fully open for visitors.

Hampikian's wall reading included finding surviving hieroglyphs on pharaonic blocks that were reused in the medieval period to reinforce the original gate. Under her supervision, the gate's massive doors also were removed, cleaned, and restored to their original appearance.

Built in 1092, the gate was named after the Berber soldiers of Zuwayla, who were housed nearby. Four centuries after its birth, the reigning sultan at the time added a minaret on each of the gate's towers, creating the recognizable monument that has come to symbolize Historic Cairo.

Over the centuries, the gate was where sultans watched the start of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, but it also was where heads of criminals were displayed after execution. In 1517, Egypt's last independent

Mamluk leader was hanged from the gate. After centuries of further restorations, reconstructions, and repairs, the gate remained a central boundary of Historic Cairo. Hampikian also reported that sometime in the 19th century, residents began believing that an invisible Islamic saint named Mitwalli al-Qutb could appear at the gate, performing miracles upon request. The resulting tradition involved wedging hair, teeth, a piece of cloth, or another item into the gate's doors to solicit the saint's help. The gate and its conglomeration of surrounding, intruding buildings were among the structures registered and restored in the early 20th century as part of the Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe's work to preserve Islamic and Coptic monuments in Cairo and elsewhere in Egypt.

#### **Cairo's New Soul**

For Hampikian, Bab Zuwayla, the Citadel, and other structures in her beloved Cairo may be its body, but the city's people are its spirit. Any plan for a monument must balance heritage and infrastructure with the



people who live among – and utilize – both. She worries that Cairo’s average citizenry could be left out of urban development and adaptive reuse decisions.

This is best summarized in her 2004 book chapter: “Harmony and discord simultaneously characterize the streets of Historic Cairo thanks to its main components, the poles that have paradoxically fed on each other and coexisted through time: the frozen moment of history represented by the majestic domes, minarets, sultanic inscriptions, monumental portals – and the mobile world of the living, urban fabric represented by the ever-changing non-registered buildings, the people, and their daily activities around the monuments.”

“Will Historic Cairo lose its soul?” Hampikian asked in the book. “Or should it be replaced by a new soul that is more appropriate to its historically justified, high economic value? Within the boundaries of Historic Cairo, monuments, non-registered buildings, and daily activities must survive and co-exist together.”

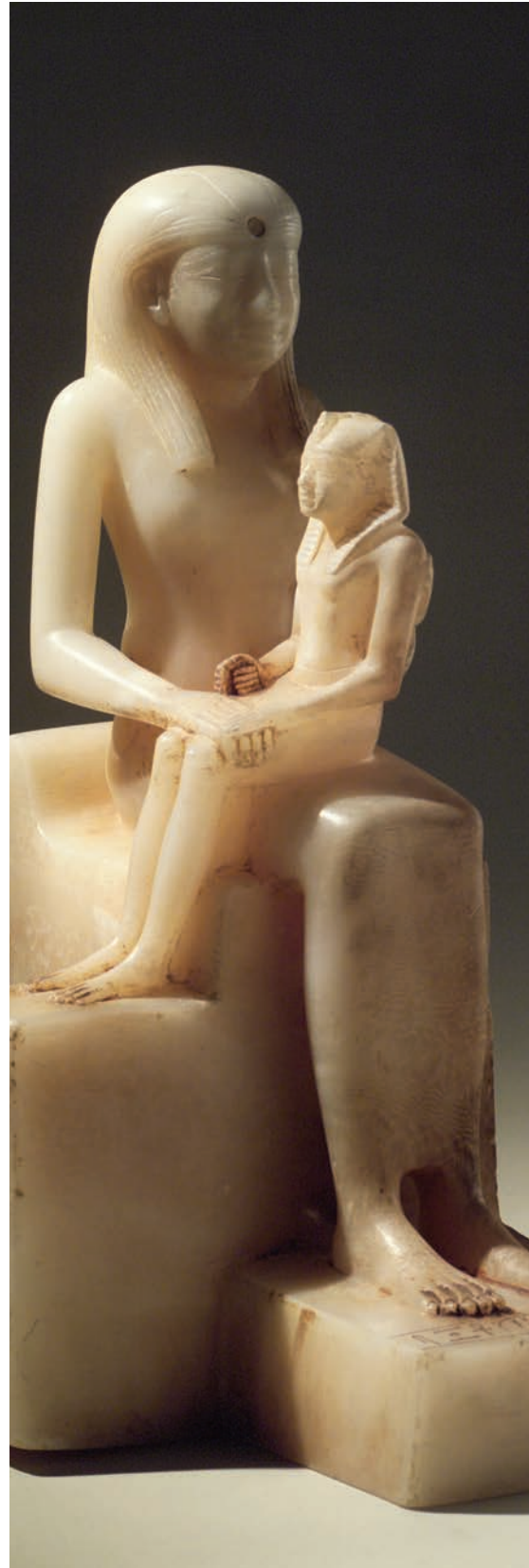
To accomplish that duality, she endorses the idea of adjoining tourist and community nodes or hubs that allow disparate elements to thrive without generations of residents being removed from their city. “The fruit seller need not sell gold and pharaonic statuettes, nor would the neighborhood bakery be forced to sell baguettes,” Hampikian concluded. “The node system would allow the local community to abide side by side with the tourists: in segregation and yet in a continuous and pleasing connectedness.”

She is encouraged by what she sees as expanding discussions of balancing tourism, economic development, and heritage preservation in her city. But she also realizes the seductions that confront some of Cairo’s citizens, who are tempted to abandon their own homes for development. “It is not just the architect or the developers,” she observes. “It is themselves. This is the danger.”

She synthesizes this front-door phenomenon as the difference “between a lump sum and regular income.” Her both-feet-planted realism suggest that, instead of selling and moving away, a Cairo resident should instead create a basement flat “to stay and live with the new residents. This is sustainability.”

And what would the dream-filled, straight-talking Nairy Hampikian do if she were fancifully reinvented as queen of Cairo, perhaps one with sweeping power? “I would gather all of the stakeholders in development and heritage and tourism, from every committee, and put them in a one room. And then I would let them fight for one year, but keep them in one room. That would start a conversation, wouldn’t it?” 🐦

*David Everett is Scribe’s associate editor.*



**Image:** Statue of Queen Ankhnes-meryre II and Her Son, Pepy II, ca. 2288-2224 or 2194 B.C.E. Egyptian alabaster, 15 7/16 x 9 13/16 in. (39.2 x 24.9 cm). Brooklyn Museum, Charles Edwin Wilbour Fund, 39.119.

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The ARCE team  
assesses Quseir Fort  
in a pre-project visit

# THE Resurrection OF Quseir Fort

HISTORICAL REPRODUCTIONS

AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

BY NADA AHMED FARAG

**L**OCATED AT THE EASTERN TERMINAL OF THE SHORTEST TRADE route connecting the Red Sea to the Nile, roughly 140 miles from Luxor, stands the town of Quseir. One can date Indian Ocean trade concluding here back to the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. Previous historic investigations offer some insight into how Quseir al-Qadim's ("Old Quseir") port, lying 5 miles north of modern Quseir, was resurrected under the Ayyubids and early Mamluks after a millennium of inactivity. With a new political emphasis on regional unity engendered by strategic confrontations – most notably with the Crusader states – taking place in the Red Sea, the medieval port operated under an elevated status due to the state's consolidation of power along the coastline, paving the way for the development of one of the most significant historic monuments standing in Quseir today.



### **A Cycle of Abandonment and Rebirth**

Under the Mamluks a reinvigorated emphasis on the state's endorsement of Islam swept across the country, manifesting in the construction of infrastructure meant to enhance the security of the Hajj pilgrimage. Quseir al-Qadim was a key point in this campaign due to its location on the shortest of the Hajj pilgrimage routes and its close proximity to the Nile Valley, where these factors also contributed to its vital position as a strategic outlet for rich agricultural produce from the Upper Nile Valley. In spite of all this, by the 15th century the medieval port had been permanently abandoned. This can be attributed to the late 14th century shift

in favor of northern trade ports, such as al-Tur and Suez, over the southern Red Sea harbors.

However, with Ottoman expansion into the Red Sea in the 1520s as a means of extending Ottoman hegemony over the coastline, a "new" Quseir came into existence by 1523. But by the second half of the 16th century, Ottoman authorities were struggling to keep Upper Egypt under their control, and the new port in Quseir was regularly subjected to Bedouin raids. Amidst a significant security crisis that called for the intervention of the central government, a garrisoned fort was constructed in 1571. Given Quseir's strategic position, it comes as no surprise that disagreements existed between the sheikhs of the town, who were

The fort's nearly completed map of the Red Sea in 1999





chosen from the local Bedouin tribes, and the Ottoman garrison in the years following the fort's foundation.

Surely, the fort's position as a site of contestation and power struggle was heightened by the Napoleonic occupation of Egypt. In hopes of undermining British dominance in the region, the French took steps to secure major Red Sea ports such as Quseir. They were able to seize the city and occupy the fort in May 1799, after their first attempt failed due to local resistance led by a certain al-Sherif Hassan who was most likely a Hijazi tribal leader.

Napoleonic reconstruction of the fort was already underway when two British ships arrived and bombarded Quseir and its fort non-stop on August 15, 1799, for three

consecutive days, which included the firing of at least 6,000 cannon balls, and resulted in acute structural damage. The aim of the attack, according to Commodore Blankett, the commander of naval operations in the Red Sea at the time, was to deter the Sherif of Mecca from allying with the French. The months after the attack witnessed the rebuilding of the fort after British withdrawal, however, reconstruction was brought to an abrupt halt as the French withdrew from Egypt in 1801.

### **An Untold History**

For the modern residents of Quseir, the fort, locally known as al-Tabiya or al-Qal'a ("the Citadel"), is associated with Muhammad Ali owing to the changes he introduced to the town in the early 19th century. After the consolidation of his power in Cairo, Muhammad Ali pinpointed Quseir as the main port of departure for subsidies of wheat and other commodities going to Mecca and Medina by making treaties with the Bedouin and giving the townspeople certain privileges, such as exemption from military service, to encourage new settlers and the construction of public buildings. The fort was also restored and served as a base for the campaigns marshalled by Muhammad Ali's sons against the Wahhabis in Saudi Arabia. Although Quseir was industrialized during the reigns of Khedives Ismail and Tawfiq, its importance slowly declined with the introduction of new European steamships that were incapable of anchoring at Quseir's shallow harbor and with the transfer of the majority of international trade to Suez.

Much of the aforementioned information was brought to light by ARCE's project at the fort in 1997-1999, when the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), as part of its initiative for environmentally sustainable tourism on the Red Sea coast, provided ARCE's Antiquities Development

Workers pose beside a solar panel following installation







**Top:** Phosphate trolleys during installation in the courtyard

**Bottom:** A pearl diving boat built for the fort's outdoor exhibit, prior to completion

Project (ADP) with a grant to restore the fort as a visitors' center for cultural tourism in the Red Sea. When the project first started, not much was known about the history and evolution of the fort aside from the fact that it had accommodated Ottoman and Napoleonic garrisons, and had been associated with Muhammad Ali. Much of the knowledge pertaining to the history of the town was due to the scholarly endeavors of a local man named Kamal el-Din Hussein Ali - popularly known as Mr. Hammam. In fact, the modern existence of Quseir Fort can be partially attributed to Mr. Hammam's fiery opposition to frequent past threats of demolition to make way for the construction of housing and roads.

During the project at the fort, ARCE excavated and documented valuable material culture, such as

clay pipe-bowls, pottery, basketry, blue-and-white Far Eastern porcelain, glass bracelets, and animal bone remains, as well as other items. The finely decorated pipe-bowls were originally used as part of the chibouk, a long stemmed Turkish pipe, consisting of three parts: the bowl, a varying-length wooden stem, and a turned mouthpiece to smoke tobacco – or hashish on some occasions. Some of the pipes indicate, in a clear but limited manner, that smoking had taken place in the fort during the early years of the 17th century; which seems to conflict with the fact that Ottoman authorities in Istanbul were imposing severe penalties on smoking at the time. However, this correlates with the evidence of early 17th century pipe smoking in another citadel on the Yemeni Red Sea coast at Zabid. A possible explanation is that the “prohibition” of smoking was not applied to the administrative nucleus of the empire, owing to army men being the strongest opponents to the smoking ban. This, in turn, made the Red Sea an ideal place to station the hard-smoking, elite Turkish soldiers known as the Janissaries.

This unraveling of the material culture at the fort demonstrates the ways by which historical narratives are anything but static, as they are constantly being investigated, scrutinized, and nuanced. However, the archaeological excavations carried out by ARCE at the fort were not driven with the intent of deriving knowledge for an exclusive and academic audience. The project worked along the early frameworks of sustainable tourism and heritage practice, where the reuse of the fort into a visitors' center would ensure its future preservation – to an extent – by providing both tourists and locals with access to the site, and subsequently to Quseir's rich and complex history. The project also recognized how the consumption of cultural heritage, in an environmentally conscious manner that respects and involves local indigenous values and knowledge, can contribute to the development of local economies.

The project was part of the Promotion of Sustainable Tourism Cultural Activities agenda, also known as the Mubarak-Gore agreement, which sought to develop and preserve the natural and historic assets of the Egyptian Red Sea coast through sustainable tourism. Being the best maintained historic monument on the eastern coastline that was also endangered by the accelerating pace of uncontrolled development, Quseir Fort was a clear-cut candidate for conservation.

#### **A Fort Fit For Tourism**

Before the commencement of the project, the fort was used as a soccer pitch and dumping ground for

The unravelling of the material culture at the fort demonstrates the ways by which historical narratives are anything **but static since they are constantly being investigated, scrutinized, and nuanced.**

debris. The project, designed by architect Michael Mallinson, and implemented by Nicholas Warner, the site architect on the ARCE team, initially focused on making the fort more accessible. For instance, a cistern that was built by the French underneath the fort's courtyard was only accessible through a disintegrated flight of stone steps. Its western vault had an enormous hole, several blocks in its supporting piers and central stone arch were disintegrated, and trash rose nearly 6.5 feet inside the space. After the restoration of the collapsed segment of the vault, ARCE was able to build a raised concrete slab over the entire area of the cistern to shelter the vaults from the damage brought about by pedestrian traffic. A map of Egypt's Red Sea coastline was laid over

the concrete slab. Not only does the map have all the Roman routes connecting the Nile Valley to the Red Sea inscribed on it, but it also functions as an orienting device with a north-south division leading visitors to the different towers of the fort. Visitors can climb the Muhammad Ali watchtower, look down at the map, and see Egypt oriented as it is in reality. Restorations inside the cistern also included interpretive and practical works such as installing a curving ramp entrance from the cistern onto the Red Sea portion of the map, so that visitors can walk down the ramp and 'into' the Sea.

ARCE worked on the renovation of structural and aesthetic problems in other parts of the fort as well, such as the towers, the courtyard walls, and



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The Joint Expedition to Malqata is made possible by



The excavation of the pyramid complex of Senwosret III at Dahshur is made possible by The Adelaide Milton de Groot Fund, in memory of the de Groot and Hawley Families, and the Institute for Bioarchaeology.

Left: Preservation of the King's Palace at Malqata. Right: Reconstructed Senwosretankh mastaba with the pyramid of Senwosret III at Dahshur in the background.





Visitors in one of the fort's tower exhibits

the entrances. These renovations often involved the sustainable use and reuse of material. In the restoration of the walls of the fort, existing loose stones from the site were reused, as well as stone that was sourced from a hill in Quseir. Other material, such as palm logs, were obtained from Qena while others, like metalwork, were imported from Cairo. Accessibility to the fort was also enhanced by introducing facilities that may seem minor but are actually quite important for access: stairs, solar-powered interior lights, toilets, and guidance and information panels.

Moreover, improving accessibility was not restricted to just physical access, but also targeted visitor access to the history of Quseir and its fort. Exhibits were installed in different parts of the fort to highlight its various phases and embodiments and to educate visitors on the historic value and cultural production of Quseir. The exhibits are as follows: Red Sea trade and harbors in the south tower, trade routes to the Nile in the west tower, the Ababda and local Bedouin culture in the north tower, and Quseir as a departure for Hajj pilgrimage in the watchtower. Exhibits on modern Quseir and the history of the fort and on monasteries

and mining are presented in the entrance area and cistern respectively. A locally manufactured boat that was used for fishing and pearl diving stands in the courtyard. It is of a type that has ceased to exist and was left partially constructed to allow visitors to appreciate the manufacturing method. Visitors will also find four 18th century cast iron cannons on their original wooden bases in the courtyard, while two others stand on the wall overlooking the street. Warner found these cannons standing outside the Town Hall of Quseir painted with aluminum paint. Warner and ARCE were able to collect them, strip the paint off, and re wax them for conservation purposes.

Two phosphate trolleys were also obtained from the Quseir Phosphate Company and were staged on railway tracks for an exhibit on the company. The Phosphate Company of Quseir, built by Italians in 1916, extracted phosphates from the mountains of Quseir. Warner, having visited Quseir last year, described the company as being a “destitute place now.” However, he was present when the company last operated and was able to witness the impressive process of boats in the harbor being loaded with

powdered phosphate using an aerial ropeway system of delivery. The company, according to Warner, is a model of its time because of the facilities it had provided for phosphate miners and their families. These facilities included housing and a hospital staffed by nuns.

### The Bigger Picture

“One of the tragedies,” Warner believes when it comes to Quseir is that something such as “the Phosphate Works was not preserved as a piece of industrial archaeology.” This, he posits, stems from a narrow perception of what constitutes ‘true’ archaeology and heritage that unfortunately excludes modern heritage and the industrialization processes that created it.

Quseir is indeed filled with other examples of heritage from the early modern period. The Quarantine, which hosts childcare and mothercare facilities these days, is probably the oldest surviving building in Quseir. It seems to have been a grain store of service to Hajj pilgrims – a *raison d’être* that is highly probable given the presence of a sheikh’s tomb within its walls. There is also the town’s police station, which presumably dates back to Muhammad Ali, as well as various shrines and mosques bearing

the names of sheikhs from countries such as Somalia. While there was official interest in revitalizing the town through restoring and reusing historic buildings, this never materialized due to a lack of funding and organization - with the sole exception being the conversion of the “Sheikh Tawfiq House” into a boutique hotel by a private investor.

As for the current status of the fort, it is still operational and open to visitors, although maintenance has proven to be a challenge. Visitors may need to use flashlights in some areas of the fort as the solar-powered lights no longer work due to their aged technology.

According to Warner, this can be attributed to a general overemphasis on project implementation but a subsequent neglect of post-project maintenance, a common mistep with many early – and current – conservation interventions in Egypt. Despite this, Quseir Fort remains an early milestone project for sustainable heritage and tourism in Egypt, and Warner attests that the town is now drawing renewed interest as the discourse surrounding sustainable development gains more momentum in Egypt. ♡

*Nada Ahmed Farag is a history major at the American University in Cairo and a Scribe contributing writer.*



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The latest from ARCE's Chapters



1



2

## Annual Meeting 2019

**A**RCE's 70th Annual Meeting was held on April 12-14, 2019, in Alexandria, Virginia. The Westin Hotel Old Alexandria was host to over 420 meeting attendees, 125 paper sessions, and 12 exhibitor and sponsor displays over the course of the weekend.

The Keynote Lecture was held off-site at the stunning George Washington Masonic Memorial Temple. Dr. Dominique Valbelle, co-director of the Swiss-Franco-Sudanese Mission of Kerma/Dokki Gel, spoke about the Mission's excavation at Panebes "The Town of the Jujube-Tree" and the settlement that was there during the second millennium B.C.

2019 was another successful year for the Chapter Council Fundraiser. Nancy Donnelly, Senior Producer and Writer for the National Geographic Channel, discussed her 2008 documentary titled Egypt's Underworld. This film was made in collaboration with Dr. Zahi Hawass, former Minister of Antiquities. All proceeds from ticket sales contributed directly to the awards given to the students who placed in the Best Student Paper/Poster competitions and covered the registration costs of all 12 students who participated.



3

At the annual Members' Dinner, Margaret Geoga of Brown University and Eslam Salem of the University of Arizona were honored for their excellent work, winning first place in the Student Paper and Poster competition, respectively.

The ARCE Annual Meeting would not be possible without the generosity of our sponsors and underwriters. Thank you to our Platinum Sponsor EgyptAir, our Gold Sponsor Walbridge, our exhibitors ISD, Brill, Johns Hopkins University, AUC Press, the Washington D.C. ARCE Chapter members who so graciously helped host this event, and of course, our 20 volunteers who worked tirelessly alongside staff to make this event memorable for all in attendance.

The 2020 Annual Meeting is set to take place from April 3-5, 2020, in Toronto, ON, Canada. More information will become available at ARCE.org as the date approaches. 🦋

**1** The Keynote Lecture in the George Washington Masonic Memorial Temple

**2** Executive Director Dr. Louise Bertini is accompanied to the President's Reception by her husband, Dr. James H. Sunday

**3** Attendees at the Members' Dinner pose outside the banquet hall

**4** From L-R: Hisham Hussein, Mohamed El Saidi, Asmaa Ali El Din Ali, Sherin Amin (all Ministry of Antiquities), Mohamed Hamza (Cultural Attaché Egyptian Embassy in D.C.), and Hisham Fahmy (CEO, AmCham Egypt) at the President's Reception

**5** Associate Director for Luxor, John Shearman and his wife, conservator Khadija Adam, in attendance at the Annual Meeting

PHOTOS: MARK VOSS



## Updates from Alexandria, VA

The U.S. office has had an active spring and summer, putting on many special events and lectures for ARCE members all across the country.



**On March 2, the Minneapolis Institute of Art (MIA) hosted and co-sponsored an ARCE lecture by Dr. Richard Jasnow (left) of Johns Hopkins University titled 'The Temple of the World: Egyptian Religion Under the Ptolemies.'** Dr. Jasnow's lecture

was inspired by the Egypt's Sunken Cities exhibit at the MIA, and contextualized the exhibit's sculptures by describing Egyptian religion under Greco-Roman rule. More than 150 members of the Minneapolis community filled the MIA's lecture hall, and all were invited to view the exhibit for themselves afterwards. Egypt's Sunken Cities will continue its tour of the United States at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond on May 23, 2020.

**Fresh off the 2019 Annual Meeting hosted** this year in the Washington, D.C. area, ARCE's U.S. office collaborated with the ARCE D.C. Chapter to put on a very special joint lecture on May 3 in downtown Washington. Former Egyptian Minister of Antiquities Dr. Mamdouh El Damaty and ARCE Board of Governors President Dr. Betsy Bryan collaborated to present two perspectives of royal and elite women in Pharaonic Egypt. Dr. El Damaty spoke about the respected professions that elite and royal women occupied over the course of Egyptian history. Dr. Bryan drew from the objects featured in the Queens of Egypt exhibit at the National Geographic Museum to illustrate her portion of the lecture about the nuanced role of women in the Ancient Egyptian family. The captivating presentations encouraged the audience to think differently about Ancient Egyptian women and the ways they navigated their society.

**To round out the spring and summer lecture season,** the U.S. office and the ARCE New York Chapter threw a well received gathering at the National Arts Club of New York City on June 20. Michelle Kidwell Gilbert, a member of the New York Chapter and ARCE's newly formed President's Advisory Council, helped to arrange a lecture titled 'The Great Ramesside Monuments at Abydos.' During the lecture, Dr. Ogden Goelet and Dr. Sameh Iskander, co-directors of The New York University Epigraphic Expedition to the Temple of Ramses II in Abydos, spoke about monuments constructed during the Ramesside period (1293 - 1070 BCE), and compared the Abydos temple of Ramses II with his father, Seti I's, great temple.



*The latest from ARCE's offices in the U.S. and Egypt*

## ARCE/ACOR Exchange

Third Annual Archival Skills-Sharing Workshop  
in Amman, Jordan

**F**rom July 2-3, ARCE's Cairo-based Project Archives Specialist, Andreas Kostopoulos, attended a digital collections workshop organized by The American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR) and co-hosted by the National Library of Jordan in Amman, Jordan. Given ARCE's recent receipt of a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to begin the process of digitizing the sizable Cairo Center archives, this workshop proved to be an excellent and beneficial exchange between the two sister organizations.

The first day of the workshop took place at the National Library of Amman and the second day was in ACOR's facilities. ACOR previously received an award from the U.S. Department of Education to digitize and publish their photographic collection. The grant duration of the project is from 2016-2020 and the project's objective is to digitize and make publicly available ACOR's institutional photographic archive of more than 100,000 35mm slides, prints and born-digital photos. The majority of ACOR's photographic collection consists of director's photographs, project photographs, and some private subcollections.

The first day of the workshop kicked off with brief welcoming remarks by the General-Director of the National Library of Amman, Dr. Nidal Ahmad Al-Ayasrah, followed by an introduction from ACOR's Director, Dr. Barbara A. Porter. The speakers that followed included Jack Reed, a software engineer from Stanford University, who presented on the International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF) model for presenting and annotating digital representations of objects; and John Hayhurst, a content specialist from the British Library, who spoke about the partnership between the British Library and the Qatar Foundation to develop an online portal that provides digital access to a significant collection of archives and manuscripts relating to the Gulf region and wider Arabic-speaking world.

The second half of the day consisted of lectures delivered in Arabic from various Jordanian professionals and experts. A presentation on book scanning followed a talk by Ahmed Lash, the head of the Archaeological Loans Sector in Jordan's Department of Antiquities, on the history of the Department. The last presenter was Samya Khalaf, Project Coordinator and Assistant Librarian at ACOR, who is responsible for researching and adding metadata, and overseeing uploads on Starchive (ACOR's photo archive catalog) software platform. Her presentation focused on metadata research methods.

The second day of the workshop began with Dr. Jack Green, Project Lead and ACOR's Associate Director, giving a preview of their project and high-



ACOR staff



Workshop participants

lighting why digitization is valuable. The following presentation was on one of the collections that the ACOR staff have successfully digitized. Rachael McGlensey, ACOR Project Archivist, provided some technical information on the Nancy Lapp collection, including the different slide formats and the scanning resolution used for each.

The next two presentations were technical and delivered in Arabic. Jihad Kafafi and Dr. Yosha Al Omari from The Jordan Museum presented a 3D scanning camera and trained participants on how to use this specialized hardware. They were followed by Dr. Hashem Khries from the Department of Antiquities, who presented on the documentation of objects in the Jordan Archaeological Museum. The last day of the workshop ended with an interesting presentation by Abbad Diranyya, a young scholar and active member of Wikipedia. Diranyya joined Wikipedia as a volunteer in 2008 and has contributed about 1,000 articles and 25,000 edits to Arabic Wikipedia since.

This is the second year in a row that this workshop has been organized at ACOR and it was a great success on all accounts. Bringing together different professionals from reputable local and international organizations to share skills and knowledge helps to broaden the awareness of digital preservation and foster future projects. The workshop also offered the benefit of professional networking, allowing presenters and attendees to exchange ideas and foster a wider network of digital humanities experts and enthusiasts. ♡

*Thanks and acknowledgement are owed to the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC) for funding and supporting this visit.*

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**Far Left:** Luke Hollis prepares for the initial scan of the ground floor of the Mosque of Aslam al-Silahdar

**Left:** Mary Sadek, ARCE's Deputy Director for Government Affiliations, stands in the entry of the mosque during set-up

and sites, as well as explore engagingly designed informational exhibits about art movements, historic events,

## ARCExArchimedes Digital Conduct 3D Scanning in Cairo for Google Arts & Culture Project

On July 29, Andreas Kostopoulos, ARCE's Project Archives Specialist, and Luke Hollis, Archimedes Digital founder and engineer, completed a full 3D scan of the Mosque of Aslam al-Silahdar in al-Darb al-Ahmar. The restoration of the mosque, which took place in 2005-2009 in partnership with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, will be the launch project for ARCE's recent collaboration with Google Arts & Culture.

Google Arts & Culture is an online platform developed by Google that allows people anywhere in the world to take digital tours of museums, monuments,

and significant cultural spaces and landscapes. In joining this exciting digital movement, ARCE will be able to provide wider access to high-quality information and images of its projects.

The 3D scan of the Mosque of Aslam al-Silahdar will accompany ARCE's Google Arts & Culture exhibit on the restoration of the Mamluk-era monument. This will be followed by two more kick-off exhibits featuring the Tomb of Menna in Luxor and the Monastery of St. Anthony in the East Desert. 🌟

### LEARN MORE

Congratulations to the successful candidates who have been awarded fellowships or research associate status with ARCE for the 2019/2020 academic year! We look forward to welcoming them to ARCE's Cairo Center beginning this fall.

#### Fellows

##### Brian Wright

Homicide and the Egyptian Penal Code of 1883  
*McGill University*

##### Mariam Sheibani

Islamic Law in an Age of Crisis and Consolidation: Izz al-Din Ibn al-Salām and the Ethical Turn in Medieval Islamic Law  
*Harvard University*

##### Samaa Elimam

On Site: Engineering, Empire, and the Geography of Modern Egypt  
*Harvard University*

##### Rebekah Vogel

Development and Usage of Iconographic and Textual Elements in Triumph Scenes with Topographical Lists  
*University of Memphis*

##### Margaret Dean

Official Obliteration: Defaced Images and Texts in Eighteenth Dynasty Non-Royal Theban Tombs  
*University of Memphis*

##### Brooke Norton

Disentangling the Divine: Egyptian Cultic Installations in the Sinai and Levant  
*UC Berkeley*

#### Research Associates

##### Ida Nitter

Tradition in an Age of Reform: The Lives and Teachings of Sufi families in 18th-19th Century Egypt  
*University of Pennsylvania*

##### Ines Torres

Burial Traditions and Funerary Architecture at Giza in the Late Old Kingdom (c. 2465-2150 B.C.E.): The Mastaba of Akh-meretnisut (G 2184)  
*Harvard University*

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*The latest from ARCE's Chapters*

**ARCE Chicago News**

SUBMITTED BY EMILY TEETER



Chapter Meeting: Robert Andresen Annual Graduate Student Symposium

On April 6, the Chicago chapter sponsored their 9th annual symposium, giving graduate students at the University of Chicago the chance to present their paper or poster to about 50 people before the Annual Meeting. This year's presenters were (left to right): Emilie Sarrazin, Luiza Osorio G. Da Silva, Ella Karev Kaplan, Oren Siegel, and Raghda (Didi) El-Behaedi, who won 3rd place for her paper. The annual symposium is named in honor of the late Robert Andresen, a past president of the Chicago Chapter.



Chapter meeting: James Hoffmeier, speaking on 'Akhenaten and the Origins of Monotheism'

On May 4, Dr. James Hoffmeier presented a talk titled 'Akhenaten and the Origins of Monotheism' to the Chicago Chapter at the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago. About 55 people attended. Hoffmeier (right) is shown with Chapter President Dennis O'Connor.



Chapter Meeting: Lisa Heidorn speaking on 'Psametik's Nubian Venture'

On June 1, Dr. Lisa Heidorn of the University of Warsaw and the University of Chicago presented her recent research on the Nubian site of Dorginarti and 'Psametik's Nubian Venture' to the Chicago Chapter at the Oriental Institute. Bruce Williams contributed a display of Nubian handicrafts.



Chapter Meeting: Douglas Inglis speaking on 'The Abu Sir Boat-Burial, and the Entangled Ships of Ancient Egypt'

On July 13, Douglas Inglis of Texas A&M presented 'The Abu Sir Boat-Burial, and the Entangled Ships of Ancient Egypt,' a fascinating look at how boatbuilding was integrated into all facets of Egyptian life and belief, with information from his recent work on the boats at Abu Sir. About 45 members of the Chicago Chapter and guests attended the talk at the Oriental Institute.

**ARCE D.C. News** ARCE D.C. hosted their annual fundraiser and party on Saturday, May 18, which included Middle Eastern treats (the best baklava in the D.C. area!), a 'souk' featuring all of Hands Along The Nile Development Service's (HANDS) best goodies, a hieroglyphic station at which Craig Boyer wrote attendees' names on papyrus, and a culminating lecture by Dr. Joshua Roberson about royal mortuary cults.

## ARCE Northwest News

SUBMITTED BY ROBERT NIELSEN

Kicking off the New Year from December 23, 2018, to January 6, 2019, ARCE Northwest Board members Ben Harer, Kathy Law, Robert Nielsen, and Cynthia Smith took a Christmas and New Year's trip to Egypt. Also traveling with them were Sandra Nielsen and Adina Savin. The trip started in Cairo with visits to Dr. Mark Lehner's Giza dig house, the Giza Plateau, and Saqqara. They then flew to Luxor to visit the archaeological sites there on the East and West banks of the Nile. A day trip from Luxor took them to the Abydos sites and the new museum in Sohag. In Luxor they boarded a dahabiya for a 6-day cruise up the Nile to Aswan. The group agreed this is the only way to cruise on the Nile! One of the many stops along the way was at Djebel Silsila to visit John Ward and Maria Nilsson, who are excavating some of the quarries there. While in Aswan, many of the group members visited the West Bank Tombs of the Nobles. The whole group returned to Cairo for a mandatory visit to the Egyptian Museum before heading back home to the U.S.

ARCE Northwest has also organized a number of popular events since January, leading with a lecture on January 16 by Dr. Katherine Law, an independent scholar. The talk was titled 'Accessing Egypt through Technology: An Interactive Session.' This was a hands-on demonstration about the rapidly advancing technology available through the use of Virtual Reality and how it can help assisting in some of the latest archaeological discoveries. In February, ARCE's Executive Director Dr. Louise Bertini also presented on 'As Offerings, As Food, and as Companions: Animals in Ancient Egypt,' and in March, graduate student Bryan Kraemer from the University of Chicago, gave a presentation titled 'Revelation of the Mysteries of Osiris, Lord of Abydos: The Secret Rituals of Reviving a Murdered God.' Both events took place at the University of Washington.

In a highly anticipated event on May 9, Dr. Kent Weeks, Director of the Theban Mapping Project, gave a lecture titled 'The Future of Egypt's Past: Protecting Ancient Thebes.' Dr. Weeks explained how he got started with his work in the Valley of the Kings to record, photograph, and map every temple and tomb in the Theban Necropolis. This led to the rediscovery and excavation of KV5, the tomb of Ramses' Sons. When KV5 was first discovered in 1825 by James Burton and then in 1902 by Howard Carter, it was thought to be an "insignificant" tomb, passed over and forgotten for the most part. Recognized now as a tomb for the sons of Ramses II, it is probably the most important find since Carter's discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb, KV62.

Dr. Weeks has also been actively working on other projects. These have included building a library in Luxor that can be used



Khafre's Pyramid with Cynthia Smith, Sandra Nielsen, Kathy Law, and Robert Nielsen

PHOTO: SAYED SALAH ABD EL-HAKIM

by Egyptologists as a reference source as well as the general public of all ages. Dr. Weeks discussed his involvement with several of the ARCE Field Schools providing Egyptians with the knowledge and skills to perform archaeological excavations and conservation.

June was also a busy month for ARCE Northwest, with Chapter Board members Ben Harer, Kathy Law, Robert Nielsen, Don Reid, and Cynthia Smith traveling to Southern California on June 8 to visit with the ARCE Orange County Chapter. The primary reason for this trip was to see how the Orange County Chapter has been so successful in growing their Chapter and see if their lessons learned could be applied to the ARCE Northwest Chapter. The host for this event was Eva Kirsch, ARCE Orange County President, and Kate Liszka, ACRE Orange County Vice President.

While the ARCE Northwest Board was in Southern California they also took the opportunity to visit the Robert and Francis Fullerton Museum of Art at California State University at San Bernardino (CSUSB) on June 9. The museum contains a great collection of ancient Egyptian artifacts – many of which were contributed to the museum by ARCE Northwest member Ben Harer. Bryan Kraemer provided a tour of the museum and Ben Harer added interesting commentary about how he obtained some of the objects. Kate Liszka accompanied the group and explained how she uses many of the objects in the museum's collection to augment the classes she teaches at CSUSB.

If you are interested in Ancient Egypt – and you probably are if you are reading this – you should put this on your list of things to do when you are in the Southern California area, if it is not already on it! 🦋



The latest from ARCE's Research Supporting Members



From L-R: Deborah Harris, Bethany Jensen, Gabr ibn Atti and Farag ibn Atti creating a museum quality storage container for the Seila Pyramid foundation deposit jar.

PHOTO: KERRY MUHLESTEIN

## Brigham Young University: Dr. Kerry Mulhstein

During the Brigham Young University (BYU) Egypt Excavation Project's 2019 conservation season we properly conserved and housed a number of objects from both the Seila Pyramid and the Greco-Roman era Fag el-Gamous cemetery. This included pottery, stone objects, jewelry, glass artifacts, and textiles. We ran a textile cleaning and conservation field school wherein the participants learned how to successfully unfold, clean, conserve and house several Roman era tunics. Highlights of the season included conserving and moving a 4,600 year old Snefru Stela from the Seila Pyramid to the Fayoum's government storage magazine. The same was done with the foundation deposit jar of the Seila Pyramid, dating from the same time period. We are grateful for the excellent work of our team and the inspectors and conservators from the Fayoum office of the Ministry of Antiquities.

## American University in Cairo: Dr. Salima Ikram

The American University in Cairo's (AUC) Egyptology Unit has hosted several lectures, particularly a series on the Predynastic material in the Aswan area, including rock art. Field work was carried out at the South Asasif Conservation Project, directed by Dr. Elena Pischikova, by Dr. Mariam Ayad and a team of AUC students working on epigraphy, and Dr. Salima Ikram, with other AUC students, working on animal bones. The Amenmesses Project KV10/KV63, directed by Dr. Ikram, worked on ceramics and epigraphic documentation of the tombs' decoration.

Ikram on scaffolding contemplating the east wall of corridor B of KV10

PHOTO: OSAMA ABD ELHAMEE





Dr. Donald B. Redford

PHOTO: © PENN STATE UNIVERSITY

### The Ancient Egypt Heritage & Archaeology Fund: Dr. Peter Lacovara

One of the projects of the Ancient Egyptian Heritage and Archaeology Fund is a series on the Oral History

of American Egyptology. We hope to document the careers of some of the most prominent Egyptologists in the field. So far we have been able to record video oral history interviews with Dr. David O'Connor, Dr. Christine Lilyquist, Dr. Kent Weeks, and Dr. Jack Josephson. Our latest interview has been with Dr. Donald B. Redford and we have many more projected for the future. This project has been entirely funded by generous contributions through the Fund's Facebook page, and the videos are available on the Fund's website.



The KHPP team on-site. PHOTO: NICHOLAS S. PICARDO

### Roanoke College: Dr. Leslie Anne Warden

The Kom el-Hisn Provincialism Project (KHPP), directed by Dr. Leslie Anne Warden (Roanoke College), returned to Kom el-Hisn in July/August 2018 for an excavation season and in March 2019 for a study season. The project is focused on settlement remains of the Old-Middle Kingdoms at the site. KHPP is working with InfoSol, a leader in business intelligence, to apply digital solutions and dashboards to the ceramic data, allowing for large-scale analyses of the material.

"Whoever lets himself be led by heart will never lose his way."

- Egyptian Proverb



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*Conversations with ARCE fellows past and present*



## Food For Thought

A Discussion with Former ARCE Fellow Anny Gaul

BY SALLY EL SABBAHY PHOTOS BY ANNY GAUL

In September 2016 Anny Gaul arrived in Cairo as a pre-dissertation travel grant recipient with ARCE. Her research for her (now completed as of May 2019) dissertation, titled ‘Kitchen Effects in Modern Northern Africa,’ was still underway, and Egypt was the last stop in a laundry list of countries that she had lived in across North Africa and the Middle East in the three years prior. “Directly after I finished my undergraduate degree, I joined the Peace

Corps and was living in a small village in Morocco for two years,” Gaul recalled, “And part of the idea for my dissertation came from the fact that I had a food blog.”

Gaul had always enjoyed cooking for friends and family, but something about the rural dishes that she ate on a daily basis in the southern Moroccan village where she lived – and how much they differed from the food she would find in commercial outlets across the country – sparked her interest in understanding the sometimes-conflicting ways in which a culture chooses to present its food. “The food that you get in southern Moroccan villages is very different than what you get in restaurants and often hard to find in restaurants at all, and so I think that food became this really important way that I related to the place,” she explained.

---

“When I got back to the States I started a food blog to recreate some of the things I had eaten and share them with others. It was a way to stay connected to where I had lived...It was really just a hobby at first, but I had a couple of professors who knew that I had this food blog and that I was interested in gender and culture, and so they encouraged me to start thinking about food studies to see where I would be able to contribute.”

The field of food studies is a relatively young one in the broader research environment of Middle East Studies, but Gaul was convinced to dive in headfirst following a two-year hiatus between her M.A. and Ph.D. programs, where she spent a summer in Lebanon followed by nine months in Jordan and a full year in Egypt. In Cairo, her dissertation research led her to the crammed stalls of used book markets in search of Egyptian cookbooks from the early to mid-20th century. One day, a shopkeeper matter-of-factly told Gaul that Abla Nazira (“Auntie Nazira”) was the first – and perhaps last – Egyptian cookbook author she should be hunting for. But who was this Abla Nazira?

“I hadn’t heard of her before, and then I started investigating and realized that nobody had written a full scholarly study about who she was and her significance to Egyptian culture,” Gaul explained of the woman more formally known as Chef Nazira Nicola. “Everyone I spoke to knew who she was but there wasn’t a book written about her, which is exactly what you want when you’re looking for a dissertation topic! So, I started exploring her, how she fits into cookbooks in Egypt, looking at how her cookbooks were actually used, asking what is the relationship between her cookbooks and the way that Egyptians actually cook – and how that has changed over the past century.”

To round out her dissertation topic, Gaul decided to make a comparative project between Egyptian and Moroccan food, given her close relationship to both countries and familiarity with their cuisines, cultures, and dialects. Her period of research focused on cookbooks produced between the 1930s and 1970s and primarily covered the language used in the explanation of recipes, the types of recipes that were presented, and the preparation or awareness of those recipes in actual households. An interesting twist that Gaul observed in the Egyptian cookbooks she collected and studied was specifically related to the language utilized in them – which in this case was Modern Standard Arabic, or *fuṣḥá*.



**Top:** Tasting koshari in Port Said



**Left:** Research in Cairo's used book markets  
PHOTO: JONATHAN GUYER

“That is something I tried to figure out in my dissertation, because no one talks about cooking so formally like that. So why were the authors writing that way? The easy answer is that they were really deliberately written in formal language, and in the case of Abla Nazira and her coauthors they actually specifically thank a male scholar in the introduction, probably a member of the Academy of Arabic Language, who checked their language. It was very specific and clear that this was a state sanctioned publication, and so it was very important to their authority and the way they framed their book that it be in ‘real’ proper Arabic.”

But what do cookbooks have to do with state interests? Gaul made an interesting connection. These cookbook authors – especially in the 1930s and 1940s – were trying to accomplish a number of things through the production of cookbooks, chief among them being the simultaneous preservation and modernization of these recipes and dishes that were thought of as national heritage. “The authors,” she continued, “were envisioning a new middle-class woman who would be educated and able to read and understand *fuṣḥá* and they also assumed that she





**Top:** A wabūr being repaired in Sayyeda Zaynab

**Right:** A used bookstall in Marrakesh



beyond written sources and engaging with actual people and families, to observe how they eat and what they cook. “Since food is tangible and intangible you can’t just look at objects or texts, you have to talk to people. I would be doing these interviews and I was less interested in defining what food is ‘truly Egyptian’ and more interested in what stories people told about their food and how it made them Egyptian or experience life as an Egyptian.”

In most cases, Gaul found that the most commonly used recipes were passed on through verbal exchanges between neighbors, parents and children, friends and coworkers, but rarely followed from cookbooks. One such example of this is a recipe for duck roasted in a tomato-based glaze (see page 64 for the recipe!) that Gaul developed after multiple conversations with Egyptian friends and their families, and by watching them cook at home. She didn’t come across a similar version in any local cookbook, however.

“I find the way that certain dishes get preserved and passed on really interesting,” she reflected. “Cookbooks can preserve the name of a dish and the way of making it, but in terms of what you learn when you actually learn to prepare a dish from another person it’s very hard to replicate that in a cookbook.”

would cook for her family and not have servants to do it – so it’s trying to preserve these recipes for the sake of Egyptian culture and society.”

Here, Gaul paused to chuckle: “But then during my research, people I spoke to would actually laugh at the notion that you can really effectively preserve those things in fuṣḥá because food exists in gesture and colloquial Arabic and learned behaviors. So much of culinary knowledge can’t be learned from a book, so things do inevitably get lost. In my Egyptian material, there are women who remember Abla Nazira as a figure and who had her cookbook, but never centered her as being the reason they actually learned to cook.”

This observation reflects a vital part of Gaul’s research methodology. Namely, the value of going





The natural question then is whether these cookbooks actually accomplished their goal to preserve Egyptian national dishes? “I don’t think they did,” Gaul laughed. “Abla Nazira as a cultural figure is significant, but her cookbooks did not have the impact that her and her coauthors intended on Egyptian society. Cookbooks were used as gifts, they were doing other things. They were status objects – owning a book means something in any culture. A lot of cookbooks today in America, for example, function as coffee table objects, and the ones in Egypt present a lot of information but not necessarily how Egyptians

relate to their cuisine.”

So, is a cookbook of her own in the works for Gaul? Not for the time being at least, if her busy schedule is any indication. Following the successful defense of her dissertation this last May, she co-organized a conference from June 7-8, titled ‘Making Levantine Cuisine: A Critical Food Studies Symposium’ at her alma mater, Georgetown University. Aside from her current teaching commitments, she is also planning to turn her dissertation into a book proposal, and possibly add an additional chapter to indulge her fascination with a somewhat enigmatic fruit that has risen to a staple status in the Egyptian diet.

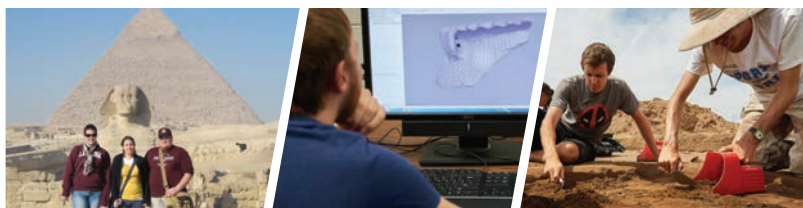
“I’m hoping to expand my research earlier in time, specifically to the introduction of the tomato because it completely revolutionized North African food. I think it was introduced to Egypt in the 19th century at some point – so relatively late. Tomatoes appeared in Morocco much earlier, so I need to chase down the sources on that...but what were everyday Egyptians cooking with before the tomato?!” 🍷

*For more recipes and information on Amny’s work, visit her websites: <https://cookingwithgaul.com> and <http://annygaul.com>*

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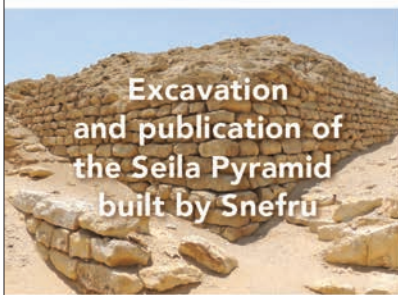
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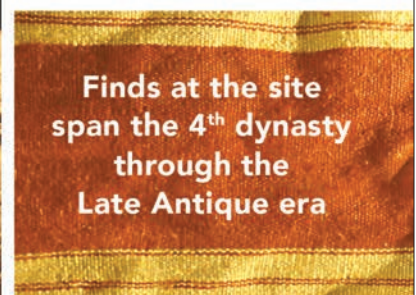
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## Statement of Financial Position

AT JUNE 30, 2017 AND JUNE 30, 2018

<i>All amounts in U.S. Dollars</i>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	3,041,917	3,222,050
Short-Term Investment	3,767,689	3,608,005
Other receivables and prepaid expenses	218,574	94,493
Pledge receivable	90,386	103,023
Grants receivable	236,188	257,316
Deferred sub-grants - AEF	1,581,153	1,028,479
Investments at quoted fair value	77,341,933	73,738,199
Property, Plant and equipment, net	38,098	42,306
Library collection	835,440	835,440
Deferred rent	48,600	60,750
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>87,199,978</b>	<b>82,990,061</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Pension	434,084	-0
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	245,054	567,167
Grants payable - AEF	516,317	419,232
Refundable advances and custodial funds	19,614	30,670
Deferred revenue	40,845	60,170
Assets held in trust for others	13,701,1100	13,059,962
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>14,957,024</b>	<b>14,137,201</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Unrestricted	4,446,107	3,924,502
Temporarily restricted	36,724,664	33,870,075
Permanently restricted	31,072,183	31,058,283
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>72,242,954</b>	<b>68,852,860</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>87,199,978</b>	<b>82,990,061</b>

# Statement of Activities

FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2018

<i>All amounts in U.S Dollars</i>	<b>UNRESTRICTED</b>	<b>TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED</b>	<b>PERMANENTLY RESTRICTED</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>REVENUES AND SUPPORTS</b>				
Grants	1,827,675			1,827,675
Membership dues	141,397			141,397
Contributions	89,565	2,000	13,900	105,465
Meetings, lectures and publications	177,742			177,742
Investment income	173,101	1,262,944		1,436,045
Net unrealized and realized gain / (loss) on investments	214,046	3,941,789		4,155,835
Other	6,956			6,956
<b>Total Revenues and Supports</b>	<b>2,630,482</b>	<b>5,206,733</b>	<b>13,900</b>	<b>7,851,115</b>
<b>NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTIONS</b>				
Satisfactions of grants released from restrictions				- 0
Satisfactions of investment income released from restrictions	2,352,144	(2,352,144)	-	- 0
	2,352,144	(2,352,144)	- 0	- 0
<b>Total Revenues and Other Support</b>	<b>4,982,626</b>	<b>2,854,589</b>	<b>13,900</b>	<b>7,851,115</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
<i>Program services:</i>				
Conferences/seminars	(183,494)			(183,494)
Fellowships	(273,055)			(273,055)
Library	(126,850)			(126,850)
Public education	(83,410)			(83,410)
Publications	(46,319)			(46,319)
Restoration and conservation	(1,737,110)			(1,737,110)
<b>Total program services</b>	<b>(2,450,238)</b>	<b>- 0</b>	<b>- 0</b>	<b>(2,450,238)</b>
<i>Supporting services:</i>				
Management and general	(1,366,494)			(1,366,494)
Membership development	(417,399)			(417,399)
Fundraising	(204,716)			(204,716)
<b>Total supporting services</b>	<b>(1,988,609)</b>	<b>- 0</b>	<b>- 0</b>	<b>(1,988,609)</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>(4,438,847)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(4,438,847)</b>
<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS BEFORE FOREIGN EXCHANGE</b>	<b>543,779</b>	<b>2,854,589</b>	<b>13,900</b>	<b>3,412,268</b>
Foreign exchange (Loss) & gain	(22,174)			(22,174)
<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>521,605</b>	<b>2,854,589</b>	<b>13,900</b>	<b>3,390,094</b>
Net assets at beginning of year	3,924,502	33,870,075	31,058,283	68,852,860
<b>NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR</b>	<b>4,446,107</b>	<b>36,724,664</b>	<b>31,072,183</b>	<b>72,242,954</b>





## ‘IDEOLOGY NEVER COOKED A DUCK’

### A Recipe for Roast Duck, Egyptian Style

BY ANNY GAUL PHOTOS BY ANNY GAUL

**This recipe is a microcosm of Egyptian food history.** It’s seasoned with cardamom and mastic gum, a combination that many Egyptian women I’ve met identify as characteristic of their grandmother’s cooking. The bird is cooked with citrus – which, according to researcher and cookbook writer Nawal Nasrallah, was a common practice in medieval Egypt. Nasrallah also notes that mastic gum has long been used in Egyptian cooking to offset the strong odors of meat and poultry. This particular use of mastic is a uniquely Egyptian phenomenon in a region where the spice is typically used to flavor sweets and confections.



There’s so much a cookbook can’t quite communicate about technique, judgment, flavoring, and taste, when to stick to a tradition or pattern, and when to innovate – all sorts of contingencies that are better communicated

in person or in conversation, or learned through trial and error. The first time I made this recipe I used a ready-made marinade in the form of tomato paste, woefully unaware of the range of approaches that Egyptian women use to concoct their own, fresher, better version. My appetite for the recipe was piqued by experiences eating duck in Egypt, from a family-owned restaurant in Luxor to the home of a friend, and my understanding of it is made up of dozens of phrases of advice offered to me by Egyptian home cooks.

I tried this recipe numerous times in attempts to reconcile all those experiences with my own practical culinary sense, adjusting the boiling time and embellishing the roasting technique with tips picked up from culinary authorities in my own culture, like Ina Garten. This process is a remarkable contrast to the form of cookbooks written in mid-century Egypt. Those books were essentially an attempt to translate a particular ideology that dictated norms of rationalization, refinement, and nutrition, into recipes, and yet their practical function seems to have been much more along the lines of establishing forms of social distinction than preserving or transmitting culinary knowledge.

That’s not to say that all cookbooks work in the same way, of course. But it does draw attention to limitations that written recipes entail. In so many ways written recipes are like placeholders or signposts: the tip of the iceberg in terms of what it really takes to produce a meal. This is what I mean when I say that ideology never cooked a duck. For every duck recipe printed in a cookbook, surely there are thousands of ducks like the one in this recipe, simmering away in kitchens and off the page. As scholars, conscientious cooks, or simply people who care about food, it’s up to us to seek them out and celebrate them. 🌿

## the RECIPE

### INGREDIENTS:

1 tablespoon cardamom  
5 pieces mastic gum  
5 onion, thinly sliced  
1 duck

### For the marinade:

3 tomatoes, skinned and grated  
1 tablespoon tomato paste  
1 tablespoon clarified butter, plus more as needed for basting  
1 tablespoon honey  
1 cup orange juice  
Salt and pepper, to taste

### METHOD:

Place the duck, cardamom, mastic gum, and onions in a large pot, cover with water and simmer gently for 45 minutes. Add water as needed to keep the duck immersed as it cooks.

While the duck is cooking, combine the grated tomatoes, tomato paste, clarified butter, honey, orange juice, and salt and pepper in a saucepan. Bring to a boil and then lower the heat to a simmer until the marinade reduces to a paste consistency.

Preheat the oven to 425° F.

Place the boiled duck in a broiler pan or baking dish and prick it in several places with a knife. Secure the neck to the body of the duck using a toothpick.

Rub the marinade all over the duck and then place in the oven for 15 minutes.

Baste with the remaining clarified butter, then roast for another 5 minutes.

Remove the duck, allow it to rest for 10 minutes, then carve and enjoy!

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Photo : John G. Ross

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A close-up of the large iron nails that protrude from Bab Zuwayla. Photographed in 2019.