Starting in relatively peaceful May this season ran through another turbulent period in modern Egypt, but Luxor is far from Cairo and we were able to operate normally throughout, losing only one working day to the political troubles. The result was a very productive 4½ month season with work well balanced from excavation to conservation and specialist study. The conservation/reconstruction work this year focused on the West Wall in the Second Pillared Hall which incorporates the false door and the statue of Osiris. Elena’s article in this newsletter describes this work specifically so this piece will mainly focus on the project’s other activities of the season.

2012 had seen considerable clearance within the tomb of Karakhamun but we had two core excavation tasks remaining. The first was to complete the clearance of the Open (Solar) Court, so initial work focused on the Southern areas of the court. The court was a centre of ritual activity well into the Ptolemaic period and the finds reflect this. These included impressively well preserved ceramics, still in some cases perhaps in-situ with their contents.

Welcome to this third newsletter of the UK South Asasif Conservation Trust. The trust continues to go from strength to strength and our contribution to the project continues to grow.

This year the financial contribution of the trust proved vital as the current situation in Egypt reduced funds from other sponsors, the dig was literally kept open by the funds raised by the friends and patrons of the trust. To do this we completely exhausted our reserves, as well as using two years of gift aid money. This makes our fundraising over this winter more important still, the subscriptions of friends and patrons are deeply valued as we work to do as much as we can for the 2014 season.

Meanwhile in this newsletter we look back to what despite everything proved to be an amazing 2013 season. Luxor was peaceful and certainly the financial contribution we make to the local economy was deeply welcomed. Work continued both inside and outside the tomb of Karakhamun and we started a major new phase of excavation in the tomb of Karabasken. Additionally as Elena reports in this newsletter major reconstruction was underway in Karakhamun.

As you read this the project is just weeks away from its first major publication with a second in the pipeline. However it is here in this newsletter we have the latest news! I hope you enjoy this edition and it will be wonderful to see as many friends and patrons as possible at our March Essex study day. We’re deep in planning now for Summer 2014 and it promises to be another exciting season!
The second area was also situated in the Open Court and was a cut shaft-like area (probably at one stage to hold water for libation) that we had detected the previous season. Excavation of this area was again fruitful for ceramics, but also yielded an impressive funerary cone dated to the New Kingdom. The inscription is well preserved and belongs to Merymose who was Vizier and King’s Son of Kush during the reign of Amenhotep III. It is tempting to suggest that the Kushite title held by Merymose is connected to the location of this cone in our tomb, but the discovery in the past of other examples of this cone at Deir el-Medina would mitigate against this. Both areas in the court produced a range of faience finds, with a well-preserved scarab and a baboon amulet of Hapy, one of the sons of Horus.

Following last season’s excavation of the steps this year we started excavation at the top of the steps with the expectation of a pylon demarcating the entrance to the tomb. Of course in archaeology you do not always find what you expect and we had some weeks of relatively unproductive work clearing down from Abdel Rasoul housing to Jebel, although possibly a group of worked limestone blocks in the north-west section may be related to the foundations of a First Pylon. However, we then moved excavation to the area immediately above the vestibule overlooking the Open Court and within a few days we discovered our first ancient Late Period mud brick. It took a few days to clear enough to gain an initial picture, but we clearly have a pylon connecting to the enclosure walls and preserved from 1 to 5 courses of bricks, perhaps the Second Pylon of the tomb.

Remains of the north part of the enclosure wall were also located and 20.4m of the wall was exca-
The wall was built in a shallow trench 4.5m away from the steps and 2-3 courses remain in most areas. The south enclosure wall is obscured by the remains of a modern house. Trial clearance around the foundations of the house showed that it was built on an ancient deposit which could have been formed by flood or tomb building activities. A strip of ancient bricks was detected on top of the 70cm high deposit right under the concrete floor of the house. Future clearing and research will show if the south wall was built on much higher ground than the north wall. More work remains in these areas for next year, but each season we are gaining a more complete picture of the sacred landscape and tomb architecture created by Karakhamun.

The final significant area of excavation this season took us away from Karakhamun to the open court of Karabasken (TT 391), a mayor of Thebes, perhaps in the 25th Dynasty reign of Shabaqa. Work this season has focused on the south side of the court. As with most of our site this area has been heavily reused during later periods, with some remains of Abdel-Rasoul buildings including an impressive oven in one corner. Below this we also encountered flood debris but in square S2 we found what are clearly remains of a later burial including cartonnage and painted plaster. Work later in the season focused on bringing down to Jebel the far south west of the court adjacent to the tomb itself (squares S4 and C4). Here we encountered further intrusive burials with once again an interesting collection of cartonnage and painted plaster with some painted wood. Very initial dating for these finds are intriguing, with less Ptolemaic emphasis than the court of Karakhamun and some material that perhaps dates back to the Third Intermediate Period. More detailed study of these artefacts together with excavation this season will hopefully provide a clearer picture of what promises to be a fascinating picture of use and reuse in the court of this tomb.
However it was on the wall of the tomb itself across the border of S4 and C4 that we encountered perhaps the most important discovery of the season. Suddenly we started to reveal a stela and in front of it an altar which at its very base utilizes reused blocks. The top of the stela is rounded and designed with an image of a winged disc symbolizing Horus of Behdet. The vignette area is occupied by images of Anubis supporting a mummified...
body from the back and a group of three priests performing the Opening of the Mouth ceremony.

Below this are remains of twenty rows of hieroglyphs. Preliminary cleaning has allowed decipherment of a large section of the inscription. Based on the accessible sections of the stela and preliminary research, it can be said that the stela had an intrusive nature. It was carved for the Overseer of the Upper Egypt, High Steward of the God’s Wife, Padibastet. The name of his son, Pabasa is also mentioned on the stela. This in turn raises the question of his relationship to the later Pabasa A, the owner of TT 279 and a bearer of the same titles. Our epigraphy team are currently studying the implications of this stela which could contribute to our understanding of the chronology of the period. There is a possibility that Padibastet was buried in the court of the tomb of Karabasken or in his burial chamber. Clearly with most of the court of Karabasken and the area below the back of the tomb all remaining to be excavated, the possibilities for what will be revealed in future seasons are growing.

Conservation work with our own team of Egyptian conservators continued in the vestibule and the burial chamber. Here the reconstruction of the room including the astronomical ceiling was supported once again by Dr Miguel Angel Polo identifying the right place for increasingly tiny fragments. Indeed this work is an excellent example of the many ways in which the tomb reconstruction is achieved, while epigraphic and scholarly identification is often key, the condition of the original ceiling varied requiring plaster of different thickness to level the decoration. This variation of the plaster on the back of the fragments has proven very useful in supporting our Egyptian conservation team to match many displaced fragments to their original location.

While Miguel and Ken Griffin continue to work on our texts from the Book of the Dead this year we were joined by Professor Erhart Graefe who is a specialist in the Studenritual (Book of the Day), an unusual version of which is preserved in TT223. This painstaking epigraphic work carried out with our thousands of stored fragments is an essential prerequisite to the later reconstruction of Karakhamun’s walls and pillars.

While much was accomplished this year, we still have significant work to do and the team has some exciting plans for 2014!
Volunteer Experience 2013—Sharon Davidson (Canada)

I have returned for my second year as a volunteer to work on the South Asasif Conservation Project. Last year I had the benefit of being trained and experiencing some of the important functions required as a volunteer. From all of my experiences from last year I would have to say that my favourite job on site is doing field work (site supervision). You work alongside the workmen who dig in a designated area to clear away the levels of stratigraphy. Through this process some small “treasures” come out of the sand. Some of the things we find, then label to send to registration are decorated pottery, and lots of undecorated pottery; limestone fragments, tiny beads and sometimes we even find pieces of cartonnage. Today we were not finding much in the area where we were digging, so my attention was diverted to where the workmen beside me were lowering a huge block of limestone into the tomb of Karakhamun. Limestone is an important material used in the restoration of the tomb.

The men loaded the block on a cart and brought it to the edge of the tomb where they flipped it onto some small planks of wood. They then placed metal pipes underneath to roll the stone block on top of the wood. As it rolled along the men would continue to remove the pipe from behind and place it to the front until the block was over the area where it could be slowly lowered down into the tomb by a winch. The large wooden beams were then moved to the side so it then could then be lowered down the centre. It was interesting to watch how effective this technique was and I was surprised at their efficiency in completing the task clearly devoid of any modern machinery. I couldn’t help but wonder if the ancient Egyptians used similar techniques when they were building the temples and tombs. Just another interesting day working on the site experiencing all of the many tasks required for the restoration of these beautiful tombs.
Volunteer Experience 2013—Yvonne Buskens (Netherlands)

As a new volunteer, excited and a bit nervous, I arrived in July at the South Asasif Project, West Bank Luxor, where I was welcomed on my first day by Dr. Elena Pischikova and her team. At that time the sun was just rising. As it is Ramadan we get our briefing from Dr. Elena Pischikova at 05.00. The actual dig work starts at 05.30.

I was very excited when I got assigned my task, doing field supervision in the court of Karabasken. The court of Karabasken is full of sand, stones and other debris deposited there for many years as a result of floods and occupation by the locals, in antiquity and modern times. An excavation plan was made of the court. It is divided into several trenches (North, Central and South) and this season (2013) the excavation started with the trench at the south side of the court. The trench is divided in 4 squares each 3.70 x 3.80 metres and they are numbered S1-S4. (see stratigraphic layers in left hand photo below)

As a Field Supervisor it is your primary task to collect the finds which are separated by day, by sector and by level for context recording and bagging/labeling. There are different kinds of finds. Limestone fragments, decorated or undecorated must be labeled on the back or side of the fragment. Pottery shards can be decorated or undecorated and the latter must be separated out and bagged in separate bags.

Also faience beads are sometimes found, some are very small, and there have also been some pieces of faience rings. Again, these are bagged and labeled. The last few days we excavated some exciting small pieces of decorated wood from a coffin and a piece of cartonnage which shows a partial figure.

The hard work of taking out the sand in baskets is done by the local workmen. It is very hard work. The men are working in an open court, fully exposed to the sun and heat. During Ramadan time (now) it is even harder as they don’t eat and drink. The workmen are a joyful bunch of men, who make jokes and sing sometimes. They are supervised by Rais (foreman) Mohammed Ali Ayad.

Rais and the workmen are teaching me some basic Arabic words as I love to know what they are speaking about. When the workmen are done with their work at 10.30 the second part of my task starts. I have to fill out a context sheet for every square that has been excavated and I have to take level measurements. After that I photograph the area with a photo board, meters and a north arrow. All the labeled bags are being stored for registration, which will be done by another team. At 11.30 I leave the dig, hot and dusty but with such a rewarded feeling: I made a contribution at the excavation site in the court of Karabasken.
Reconstruction of the False Door of Karakhamun by Dr Elena Pischikova, Director, South Asasif Conservation Project

Reconstruction of the False Door of the tomb of Karakhamun was one of the main features of the 2013 season. It was one of the most important features of the tomb, being the focal point of the tomb’s decoration. It represents the culmination of the divine and offering cycles, bringing them together in the innovative temple-tomb structure of Karakhamun’s burial monument. The false door shared the fate of the Second Pillared Hall within the tomb of Karakhamun. While the First Pillared hall collapsed more naturally as its pillars crumbled due to damage by people, fire and floods, the Second Pillared Hall was mostly ruined during stone quarrying behind its walls. The walls were deliberately brought down into the room and the stone was reused to fill the shafts, and as building blocks in the fences and walls of the houses outside the tomb. The American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE) Qurna mission found in September 2013 quite a number of blocks from the Second Pillared hall during their work on the cleaning of the area adjacent to the tombs of Irtieru and Karakhamun. I receive regular updates from our Egyptian team members informing me that more fragments were found in the foundations of the neighbouring village houses. These deposits remain for our team to take care of. Recording and registration of these fragments will be our first task on our return in May 2014. We expect to see more elements of the decoration of the Second Pillared Hall and possibly the false door in particular. Although more ruined than the First Pillared Hall, the Second Hall’s decoration might be reconstructed to a higher degree of completion because its destruction was a more controlled process, and therefore we have been able to recover entire sections of the walls and pillars in shafts and the staircase to the burial chamber.

None of the walls stand higher than one metre. The false door retained only 16 cm of its original height above the ramp. The remaining lower part gave us enough information on its original profile, with three superimposed frames. Calculation of its height was a more difficult task. Architecturally, the Second Pillared Hall imitates the hypostyle hall of a temple, with the central aisle higher than the side aisles. A small surviving section of the ceiling in the northeast corner of the hall provides information on the height of the side aisles. The higher ceiling of the central aisle was supported by now collapsed pillars and pilasters, which left us with no vertical references at all. Fortunately the East-North pilaster, found in 2010 already collapsed, was photographed by the architect of the Project Dieter Eigner in the 1970s, still intact. Using this photograph we found and reconstructed the top of the pilaster, crowned with a section of cavetto cornice. The height of the cornice showed that the ceiling level in the central aisle of the Second Pillared Hall was about 70 cm higher than the side aisles (339 cm as opposed to 265 cm in the side aisles). This reference gave us the possibility to calculate the position of the found fragments from the top and from the bottom of the door. Although 221 fragments were incorporated into the reconstruction, they are mostly small and many of
them are not direct joins, therefore it proved particularly time-consuming to calculate their most probable original locations. The offering texts of the false door were written in two directions starting from the centre of the lintels. The right and left sides are similar but they are not exact mirror images of each other.

The identification of the fragments belonging to the false door on the earlier stages of work was achieved based on the colour scheme. Apparently the door was the most decorative element of the tomb, brightly painted red with blue painted hieroglyphs in sunk relief. The fragments of the lintels were very small and of different depths, which complicated the floor reconstruction. Already in the earlier stages in 2010 the conservators cut a large slab of limestone and started cutting “pockets” into it to insert the ancient fragments. Therefore when we started *in situ* reconstruction in 2013 we already had an almost complete top part of the door. The reconstruction was possible until 2013 because we did not have enough fragments from the middle section to imagine the door. The 2011-2012 excavation of the court yielded many missing fragments as they were used to construct division walls for the stable arranged in the court by the local villagers.


*The Second Pillared Hall before reconstruction in 2012 (LHS) and at the end of the 2013 season (RHS)*
This season the door was built up to 295 cm (right under the cavetto, including torus) The reconstruction of the false door consists of three superimposed door frames, a central panel and a central niche topped with a drum and a statue of standing Osiris placed in the central niche. The statue was found in five fragments: feet in situ, torso in three fragments and the crown in debris. Until 2012 we had only the feet and the crown of the statue with little hope for more. The fragments of the torso were
found in the open court at the entrance to the vestibule. The torso was given a limestone support connecting it with the feet, and the crown was attached to the wall above the torso. The proportions of the figure of Osiris were calculated based on a parallel in the tomb of Harwa (TT 37) and contemporary bronze statuettes.

The door was flanked by three registers of offering bearers, two in every register. It is an Old Kingdom tradition best represented by the largest false door in the tomb of Ti at Saqqara of Dynasty 5 which was adapted by the artists of the 25th – 26th Dynasty. The best known later example is the tomb of Sheshonq (TT 27) in the North Asasif. Found in small fragments, the pieces of the figures of the offering bearers in the tomb of Karakhamun were put together for the first time this year. Establishing their original location was challenging as almost every group included a male and female bearer carrying poultry, baskets with fruit and leading offering animals.

Theoretically any group could be placed into any register. One of the main placement criteria we established was the style and quality of carving. The door was located in one of the darkest areas of the tomb and the highest areas were the worst lit. Therefore, the artists paid less attention to the imagery and inscriptions in the higher areas of the hall. The groups of offering bearers show clear differences in the depth, modeling and detailing which helps to establish their original locations. The combination of traditional Old Kingdom offering bearers approaching a false door and the false door itself transformed into a divine niche, is the best reflection of the theological and ritual meaning of a Kushite tomb as a temple-tomb. Only one group was installed in situ this year. The work will continue in 2014.

*The 1970s survey by Dr Dieter Eigner has been very valuable to the project and Dieter is still a valued team member, seen here at work in the court of Karakhamun in the 2013 Season (LHS) and two of our Egyptian conservators working on the false door reconstruction (RHS)*
Join the UK Friends

By becoming a friend or patron you can make a real difference to the project. A friend’s subscription of £20 will support the conservation of multiple painted limestone or fragile wood fragments while a patron’s subscription of £100 will hire an Egyptian workman for the season. All donations by UK taxpayers through the South Asasif Conservation Trust will be eligible for Gift Aid enabling the charity to maximise the value of your gift, and higher rate taxpayers to reclaim the difference. Please complete Donation Form below to support the project.

Friends of the South Asasif Conservation Trust

A regular donation provides a dependable stream of income for the project, enabling planning for the season. For just £20/year Friends will receive an annual newsletter, regular email updates, priority booking for UK trust events and special study tours, 10% discount on South Asasif Conservation Trust merchandise and priority consideration for volunteer roles on the mission (subject to skills, qualifications, experience and Egyptian MSA approval)

Patrons of the South Asasif Conservation Trust

By becoming a regular patron you can really make a significant difference to the work of the project on an on-going basis. For only £100/year Patrons will receive all the friends benefits plus highest priority booking for trust events and tours, acknowledgement of support in newsletter and on the South Asasif Project Website and invitation during working season for a personalized tour of the South Asasif site by Dr Elena Pischikova (by prior appointment and subject to Egyptian MSA approval)

Donation Form

I enclose a cheque payable to the ‘South Asasif Conservation Trust’ as follows:

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All cheques must be in British Pounds Sterling drawn on a UK bank. Details for electronic transfer can be provided on request. Please send to Treasurer, South Asasif Conservation Trust, 3 Tithe Barn, Merton, Bicester, Oxfordshire, OX25 2NF
**News in Brief**

- The trust is now registered with easyfundraising.org.uk, please see email with instructions and at no cost to you the trust can receive a small donation when you shop with major online retailers.
- A major volume of preliminary archaeological reports from the South Asasif Conservation Project is now in Press and will be available from AUC Press in January 2014 (see below for details and cover image).
- A volume of proceedings from the ‘Thebes in the First Millennium’ conference is under final editing and is expected to be available late 2014.
- We have a limited number of Egyptian Cotton Blue South Asasif Polo Shirts available in L/XL (but Egyptian sizes are smaller) for £15 + £2.50pp (UK) and have a new expanded range of T-Shirts available for the same price, please contact John Billman for details.
- The Season in 2014 will run from May to September, Patrons who will be in Luxor during that time are reminded that it may be possible to visit the site if you contact us in advance.
- Friends and Patron subscriptions for 2014 are now due, your continued support is deeply appreciated.

**Patrons 2013 (Final List)**

*The South Asasif Conservation Trust gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the following Patrons:*

- Paul Bennett
- John Billman
- Barry Budd
- Sharon Davidson
- Richard Grant
- Annie Haward
- Glenn Janes
- Paul Lynn
- Patricia Mason
- Terri Natale
- Kathryn Preece
- John and Sue Robinson
- Mike Stammers
- Joy Stamp
- Kerry Webb
- John Wyatt

**Publication due out in January 2014**

Now available for pre-order this is the first major publication of the project. Featuring scholarly articles on the excavation work itself as well as analysis covering the history of the Kushite ruling dynasties in Egypt and the hierarchy of Kushite society, the history of the South Asasif Necropolis and its discovery, the architecture and textual and decorative programs of the tombs, and the finds of burial equipment, pottery, and animal bones.

**South Asasif—On the Road!**

The South Asasif Roadshow is already underway this winter with a successful event at the Manchester Museum, featuring Dr Elena Pischikova, Dr Campbell Price and John Billman.

Our next event will be on Saturday March 8th 2014 in conjunction with the Essex Egyptology Group, we do hope that you can join us.