

● Phase Three
● Issue Four
● Sep. 2006

Contents:

- **System Population**
Collaboration with ESA
..... p2
- **The Historical Sites of Egypt**
Ihnasya al-Madinah
..... p2
- **Cultural Resource Management**
Rosetta / Rashid Contemporary Heritage (Part One)
..... p3
- **Feature**
Ancient Foreign Communities in Ash-Sharqiyyah
..... p4
- **Events**
..... p4

The Egyptian Antiquities Information System (EAIS), a pioneering project by Egypt and Finland, is now creating the first comprehensive register of all historical sites in Egypt to be used as a tool in site preservation and the safeguarding of the country's cultural heritage. The work of EAIS includes the creation of an up-to-date Geographical Information System (GIS) that combines official site borders, the collection of archaeological and historical data, and the evaluation of physical threats to sites and monuments, as well as revision of their registration status.

Egyptian Antiquities Information System

The official GIS Centre of the Supreme Council of Antiquities

Ancient basalt quarry road, Widad al-Faras, al-Fayyum



Marwa M. Sadeq,
Database unit head,
27 years old,
recently married.

Marwa got her Bachelor's degree in Physical Planning from Cairo University in 2000 and her IT diploma from Information Technology Institute (ITI) the following year. In 2001, she joined EAIS as a junior database engineer and was promoted to the database unit head position in 2004.

The main role of the database unit is to construct and maintain the EAIS database which archives tabular data (non-cartographic data) of SCA registered archaeological sites and unregistered sites recorded during EAIS archaeology unit's research. The Database unit's tasks include fulfilling changing user needs and maintaining

access to the database and its security.

Marwa's database team consists of two other members: Azza el-Kholy who is responsible for the map and bibliography database applications and Shahira Abd el-Ghani, responsible for the transliteration system used in the bilingual database and EAIS publications.



Inside the DB room

The unit is currently upgrading the database to the SQL server and the .NET environment which is expected to be finished soon.

Please, contact Marwa for more information on the EAIS Database
marwa.sadeq@eais.org.eg

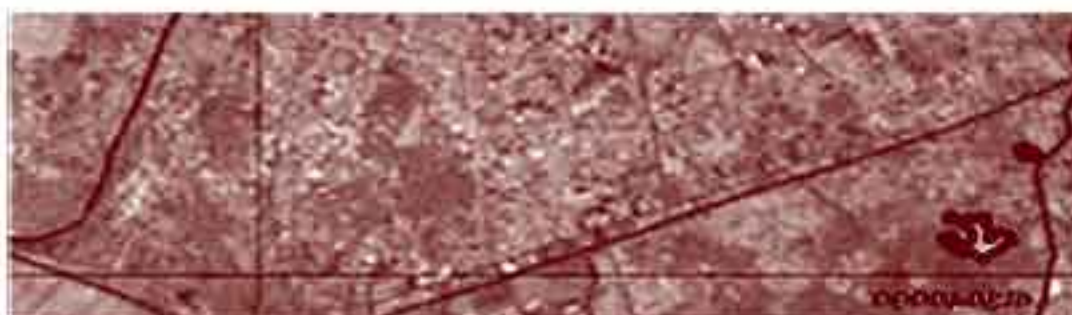


WELCOME TO EAIS

You are most welcome to visit our premises in the Supreme Council of Antiquities Building between 9 and 3 pm from Sunday to Thursday.

If you wish to bring a larger group of visitors, call us
02 7350287/9

We can organise a more extensive guided tour fitting to your field of interest.



System Population

COLLABORATION WITH NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

The Egyptian Survey Authority (ESA) is currently the only governmental organisation responsible for national cadastre and land registration schemes and the map coverage of the country. It is the official supplier of background maps used in the GIS of EAIS.

Background maps

EAIS regularly purchases ESA maps of various types and scales (topographical 1:25000 - 1:50000 and cadastral 1:2500 - 1:10000). These background maps are essential for the integration of data in the GIS.

EAIS's main objective is to record and digitise official borders of SCA sites. The latest ESA background maps help the SCA and local authorities to identify any negative developments at the sites e.g. shifting of official site borders, uncontrolled urban expansion etc.

Official SCA site border maps

As we mentioned in the previous newsletter, Amlaak – the SCA's survey and

property department – provides EAIS with the official SCA site border maps which are often out of date. When original Amlaak site maps are either missing or unreadable, ESA maps are acquired by EAIS for the department to complete its main archaeological site-archive, so called "Amlaak archive".

In an attempt to overcome these problems, a project was initiated with ESA in the Ash-Sharqiyyah governorate to test a different method for producing official maps. By using the latest technology, ESA surveyed and delineated current borders of three SCA sites on cadastral map.

The project produced maps for the sites showing the "official" and current site borders.

Although, the results of the trial were excellent and the method would update the outdated Amlaak archive quickly, it is very expensive.

For info: rabab.kader@eais.org.eg

COVERED GOVERNORATES

Ancient Egyptian Sites ★ = New

Governorate	SCA Sites	Unregistered Sites
Ash-Sharqiyyah	110	16
Al-Isma'iliyyah	54	6
Port Said	17	5
North Sinai	34	15
Al-Fayyum	37	36
Ad-Daqahliyyah	49	46
Bani Suwayf	23	46
★Damietta	7	15
★South Sinai	21	28

Islamic and Coptic Sites

Governorate	SCA Sites	Unregistered Sites
Ash-Sharqiyyah	12	1
Alexandria	34	2
Port Said	5	-
★Al-Isma'iliyyah	7	-



Blue line is the official border and yellow is the current one.

Historical Sites of Egypt

IHNASYA AL-MADINAH - Bani Suwayf



Ihnasya al-Madinah is located on the west bank of the Nile in the governorate of Bani Suwayf.

Ihnasya was the capital of the 9th and 10th dynasties, the site of ancient Neni-Nesu (Classical Herakleopolis Magna), the cult centre of the god Herishef, later identified with the Greek god Heracles. Herakleopolitans were engaged in a long lasting war with the contemporary Theban

dynasties, which ended with the reunification of Egypt by the Theban king, Mentuhotep, the founder of the Middle Kingdom (2125-1793).

It remained the capital of the Herakleopolitan nome during the Graeco-Roman period and was still an important centre in the Byzantine and Islamic periods. It was much destroyed in the 13th century AD and. Today it is mostly covered by the modern town of Ihnasya.

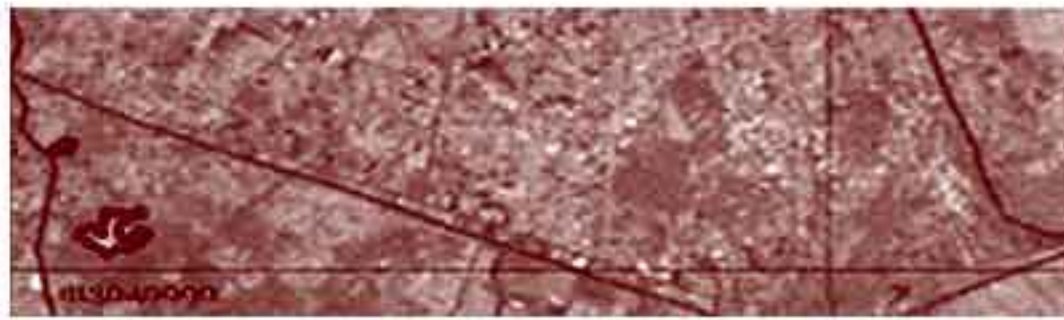
The archaeological remains are spread over several mounds covering an area of 67 hectares. Many of the houses in the surrounding villages are built on SCA property or land under SCA supervision. It is currently being excavated by the National Archaeological Museum of Madrid.



Amlaak map showing borders of Ihnasya al-Madinah



The site borders overlaid on Landsat satellite image



CRM Projects

ROSETTA - Part One

Conservation proposal:

Evaluation and protection of the Ottoman heritage of Rosetta.

In May 2005 an important Ottoman period house suddenly collapsed in the heart of Rosetta. The house had officially been registered as a heritage site by the SCA since 1951. To the heritage authorities, the disaster was a reminder about the inadequate site protection procedures of the SCA. The "SCA heritage registration" can only be counted as the first step towards protection and the rest depends on the willingness of the local authorities and inhabitants to cooperate. Several buildings in Rosetta remain in similar state. Urgent action should be taken by the SCA and the local governmental authorities to safeguard them.

Rosetta's Ottoman houses are built in the distinctive 'Delta-style' on three or four levels with the characteristic red and black brickwork on the facade. The ground floor was typically used for the running of a business and it also contained a cistern and storehouses. The second floor was reserved for the men of the house and the third floor for the women. The upper floor was exclusively for summer use.

Several historical houses are preserved in the city centre, making Rosetta, one of the most important cities with Ottoman architecture. Only 22 houses, 12 mosques, a bath and a mill are currently registered by the SCA.

In 2004, with the support of EAIS, a team was created by combining the forces of Universities of Bari-Italy and Paris Belleville-France to work on the problems.

The first part of the Rosetta case study aimed at drawing attention to the problem of protecting individual historical buildings which are a part of a fast

developing urban fabric. In Rosetta many of these heritage sites are legally owned and registered by the SCA but virtually lacking protection and maintenance in practice.



Overview of Al-Amasyali House

EAIS field work outlined two main problems:

- 1) Environmental and man-made threats such as humidity and salt build-up high, water table, seeping sewage system and the exposed location of the buildings on the Mediterranean coast are causing destruction to the antique wood and brickwork.
- 2) The general ignorance of heritage value among the local authorities and the inhabitants. The unique identity is being destroyed by continuous and unplanned modernisation.

There is a need for the SCA to develop site management concepts that concentrate on involving the locals. It is important to develop their awareness of the heritage as a valuable part of their identity. It is also essential to change the common misconception that the heritage sites are worth preserving only if they can bring money through tourism.



Debris of the collapsed building "Khalil Dir' House"

The second part of the case study provided the authorities with practical solutions for the problem. It was proposed that Rosetta's heritage sites be integrated with the modern city's needs. The plan included a suggestion for the transformation of an unoccupied residential building into a music centre and relocating public services such as bus stops. The second part of the Rosetta case study will be discussed in the December Newsletter.

For info: rawda.yousri@eais.org.eg

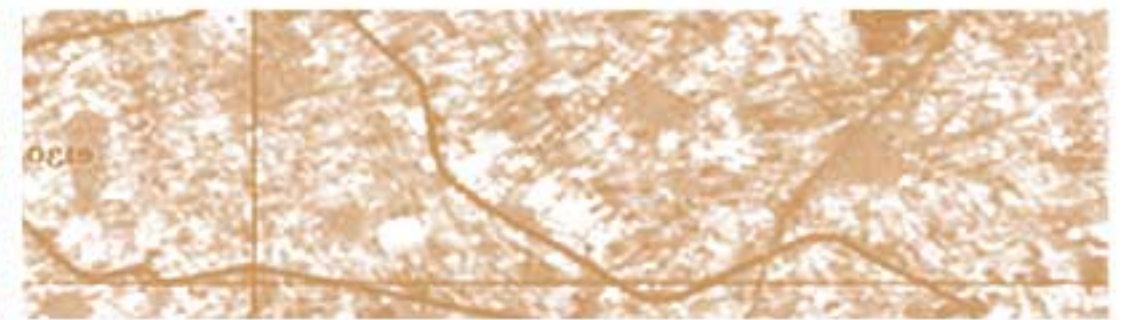
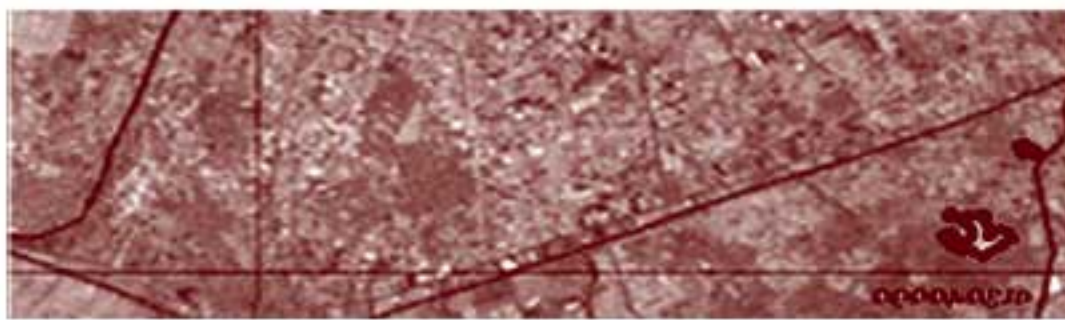
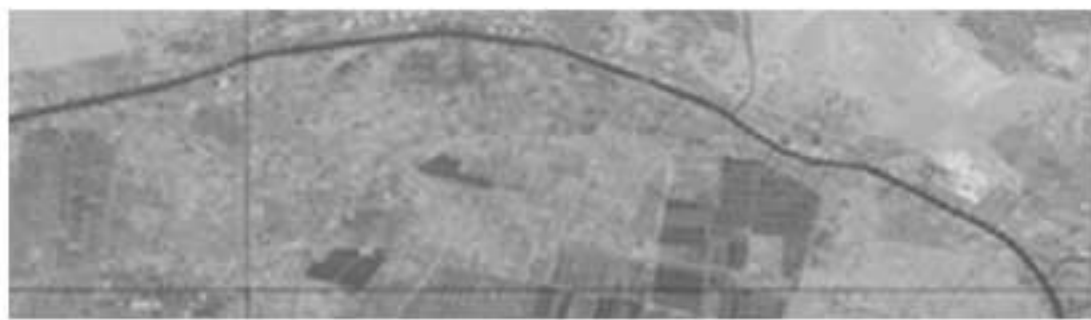


Site under research

is one of the legal statuses EAIS uses in its system to label sites for which reliable legal records cannot be found in the SCA archives. Commonly, EAIS finds incomplete or contradicting information in the Amlaak maps and their related records. Often a site is only mentioned in one official property list, either in the Amlaak or the ESA Sigel 'Ayni property list. It is therefore difficult to cross-check data.

Preparing datasheets in the EAIS Archaeology Unit

EAIS archaeological data is collected through research and site visits. Once the EAIS GIS and Legal units have prepared a list of the official SCA sites with the SCA Property Control, Amlaak, the archaeology unit starts library research. Datasheets in a standard format are prepared for each site with archaeological and historical information, lists of missions and any conservation or restoration done. The archaeological information focuses on remains present at the site today, rather than movable statues and other remains now in museums. During the site visit, physical setting and threats affecting the site are listed and described. Datasheets include extensive bibliographies.



Ancient foreign communities in the Eastern Delta Ash-Sharqiyyah governorate.... *Charlotte Booth*

The governorate is situated in the eastern Nile Delta, west of the Suez city, its northern tip touching the coastal Lake, Al-Manzalah. The governorate is one of the fastest growing and its historical sites the least studied areas in Egypt. The capital is Az-Zaqaziq.

EAIS's publication *"Historical Sites of Egypt, Volume I - Ash-Sharqiyyah"* is an important addition to the study of this area of Egypt.

The ancient Pelusiac Nile branch which used to run through the governorate was once the main route into Egypt from the Sinai and the wider near east. Ash-Sharqiyyah is especially important for the study of foreign communities in ancient Egypt.

The Hyksos ruled Egypt in the Second Intermediate Period and are often referred to as an invading force (1645-1550 BC). The archaeological evidence however shows that settlers from the Canaanite region lived in the Eastern Delta for over a century before the Hyksos rule. The earliest evidence dates to the Middle Kingdom (2125-1793 BC) in the form of a settlement at Tall ad-Dab'ah including a palace, with elaborate gardens, temples and cemeteries.

As with many integrating societies, the final aspect of their culture to change is the funerary customs, which is the case here. All of the burials from the Second Intermediate Period are Canaanite in origin. The most conspicuous characteristics of these burial practices are the servant and donkey burials. The servant burials were laid outside the doorways of the tombs, with the face of the servant facing towards the entrance. It would appear that these servants, all in their 20's, died at the same time as their master. The donkey burials are unique to this site, and consist of one or more donkeys, sometimes with burial goods of their own. Here the donkeys are buried without harness trappings although similar burials have been discovered in Canaan and Cyprus including trappings.

The site of Tall ad-Dab'ah continued to flourish after the Hyksos were evacuated by the Theban 17th dynasty, and contained an 18th dynasty palace with Minoan decoration of bull leapers and labyrinthine geometric designs.

During the reign of Ramses II (1279-1213), a new city was built slightly north of Tall ad-Dab'ah, known as Qantir, or Pi-Ramesses, the new capital of Ramses II. There was a large military presence here and under the stratum of

the garrison a huge workshop for bronze production (18th-19th dynasty) was uncovered including seven 'melting channels' and at least three furnaces. Moulds have also been discovered for making bronze Hittite shields, indicating that a corps of the army of Ramses II was Hittite in origin and were manufacturing their traditional weapons in the area for use in the Egyptian army.

Manfred Bietak has been excavating in Tall ad-Dab'ah since 1966 with University of Vienna, Austria and Edgar Pusch in Qantir since 1978 with Roemer-Pelizaeus Museum, Germany. Ash-Sharqiyyah has a lot more information to offer on the foreign communities in Egypt.



Charlotte Booth

is currently working as an archaeological researcher for EAIS. She is studying for her PhD at University of Wales, Swansea, focusing on the

foreign communities in Egypt in the New Kingdom. She teaches Egyptology in the UK, and for the British Council in Cairo and Alexandria. She has been published on a number of subjects including the Hyksos period in Egypt.

Widan al-Faras Old Kingdom Basalt Quarries – The Fayyum

Last June, the SCA established a special Quarry Department, headed by Mr. Adel Qelany, in Aswan. The department works to ensure the protection of ancient quarry landscapes in Egypt.

Recent basalt quarrying activities at Widan al-Faras (See EAIS March 2006 Newsletter) have destroyed large parts of the Old Kingdom quarry contexts. In August, Mr. Adel Qelany, SCA Supervisor of Ancient Quarries, met with the authorities of the Fayyum and Giza governorates, the SCA and the quarry companies to draft a plan for the relocation of the modern quarries and a proposal for the SCA to recognise the Widan area as an important archaeological site.

EUMEDIS 10-12 June 2006

*Bibliotheca Alexandrina
Alexandria, Egypt*

EAIS presented its work and the latest publication the "Historical Sites of Egypt – Volume I – Ash-Sharqiyyah" in the final EUMEDIS conference: "Closing the Gap in the Mediterranean Region".



Egyptian Antiquities Information System

Supreme Council of Antiquities
3 Al-Adel Abou Bakr St., Zamalek, Cairo
Tel/Fax: (202) 735 0287
Tel: (202) 735 0289
e-mail: eais@eais.org.eg
Website: www.eais.org.eg