



Salima Ikram | Sue D'Auria | Tom Hardwick (eds.)

No Good Deed Goes Unpunished

Egyptological Essays in Honor of Peter Lacovara



NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED

MATERIAL AND VISUAL CULTURE OF ANCIENT EGYPT

Series Editors

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NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED:
EGYPTOLOGICAL ESSAYS IN HONOR OF PETER LACOVARA

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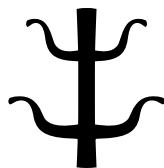
edited by

Salima Ikram

Sue D'Auria

and

Tom Hardwick



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EGYPTOLOGICAL ESSAYS IN HONOR OF PETER LACOVARA

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Cover design by Susanne Wilhelm. Cover photograph: detail of a modern copy of a fragment of floor painting from the throne room of Amenhotep III at Malqata, commissioned by Peter Lacovara from Keli Alberts, 2020. The copy is now installed at Malqata. Photograph: K. Alberts.

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Acknowledgments

If anyone deserves a Festschrift, it is Peter Lacovara. In addition to his innumerable contributions to the fields of Egyptian archaeology and Nubian studies, and his voluminous publications in so many areas, Peter is well known to all of us for his wonderful sense of humor, unparalleled baking skills (including the reproduction of ancient monuments), and thoughtful gifts. Despite never having held a permanent teaching position, he has taught in a variety of institutions all over the world, inspiring several generations of students. He has also mentored a stable of colleagues in museums and excavations, and has been unfailingly generous with sharing data and ideas with anyone who might ask.

Arch titles now seem almost *de rigueur* for Festschriften; in this case the title is one of Peter's most frequent utterances, and has been adopted by many of us—sometimes during the extended gestation of the present work—as we continue in our efforts to follow Peter's example.

We are most grateful to Billie Jean Collins of Lockwood Press for her gracious acceptance of our renegade citation system, generosity in terms of production, and endless patience throughout the process, and also to Christina Geisen, series editor, for going above and beyond the call of duty with grace and humor—they may well feel that Lockwood's Good Deed is not going unpunished.

We thank Janet Richards, aided and abetted by Joana Pinto, for compiling Peter's extensive bibliography, The Petty Foundation for logistical support, and a horde of funders and supporters of the project that are too numerous to mention outside the tabula gratulatoria.

Cairo and Tampa, 2025

Peter Lacovara: Archaeologist of Egypt and Nubia

JANET RICHARDS



Figure 1. Peter Lacovara, in a rare formal moment.

How can one biographical essay possibly capture the depth of wisdom and experience, mordant wit, phenomenal storytelling, and unwavering loyalty of our esteemed colleague and adored friend Peter Lacovara? He has been learning Nile Valley archaeology since childhood, practicing it in museums and in the field since 1974, and teaching it since 1979. His curiosity, energy, and wonder remain as fresh as his earliest interest in the human past, as far as he can remember, reading books and watching everything relevant on television—but always, he says, he was fascinated by ancient Egypt in particular.

Peter's formal training began with his undergraduate studies at Boston University, where at first he took general courses in archaeology, followed by some directed studies on ancient Egypt. Then he saw a posting for a class to be taught at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and called to see if he could get an appointment. He spoke to Ann Russmann ("the first Egyptologist I ever spoke to!"), who was both gracious and encouraging, so he enrolled for the class.

From that pivotal moment in 1974–1975, his junior year at BU, Peter's engagement with ancient Egyptian material culture, archaeology, and museology intensified, beginning with a volunteer position cleaning and organizing in the MFA's basement storage. He worked for four years with retired curator Dows Dunham, who was still coming into the office at that time to work on publications, and would tell engaging stories about doing fieldwork with George Reisner and at other places in Egypt. Eventually too, Peter assisted Mr. Dunham with the *Kerma VI* publication, thus adding ancient Nubia to his growing skill set in material culture and archaeology.

Peter's mentors in the MFA's Egyptian Department urged him to pursue graduate work in Egyptology. He wanted to do archaeology, and had, by that time, met and informally trained with Janine Bourriau, so he was thinking about Cambridge University. But everyone at the museum told him to go to the University of Chicago. ("Except Mr. Dunham," he relates, "who said, 'Oh, that dreadful place!' He had started there in 1913, found it 'so Teutonic,' quit, and joined the French army for World War I!")

Peter did go to Chicago, nonetheless, and had the good fortune to study art history and archaeology and environment with Helene Kantor and Karl Butzer. He gained invaluable hands-on experience in exhibition design and conservation as a student assistant with Judy Frank and Barbara Hall in the Oriental Institute Museum, assisting them with the reinstallation of the Mesopotamian gallery as well as other curatorial projects. He also served as Acting Registrar at one point, and as a research assistant in 1980 for the Museum's collab-



Figure 2. Peter at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, early 1980s. Photograph: Museum of Fine Arts.



Figure 3. Survey at Deir el Ballas, 1983. Photograph: Sue D'Auria.



Figure 4. Packed and ready to head to the site. Outside the El-Salam Hotel in Qena, where the team stayed while excavating at Deir el-Ballas, 1985. Photograph: Sue D'Auria.



Figure 5. Peter and team at dinner in Qena. Deir el-Ballas excavations, 1985. Photograph: Sue D'Auria.

oration with the Department of Anthropology at the Field Museum of Natural History for the renovation of its Egypt galleries.

Peter began to do archaeological fieldwork in graduate school, attending field school at the University of Arizona's Grasshopper Pueblo project, then participating in his first fieldwork project in Egypt with Michael Hoffmann at Hierakonpolis. From that project, he went on to work with David O'Connor at Abydos, beginning a close professional and personal friendship that would endure until O'Connor's death in 2022.

In 1979–1980, Peter received an American Research Center in Egypt fellowship to begin his research at the early Eighteenth Dynasty site of Deir el-Ballas, initiating his career-long interest in that site, and in ancient Egyptian urbanism, royal cities as cosmos, palaces as key components of those conceptual landscapes, and site management and conservation. For that first season at Ballas, he says, Ricardo Caminos offered to lend him tents he had in storage—which turned out to be Mrs. Walter Emery's Riviera beach tents from the Nubian rescue campaigns—"Very pretty, but impractical!" he says—leading Peter to join Caminos subsequently for a survey season at Silsila East. That strenuous field season was to yield one of Peter's most famous dig house dinner stories, about falling asleep outside, tired and hungry; and waking up to see vultures circling overhead...

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, he directed four seasons of survey and clearance at his own site of Deir el-Ballas, participated in O'Connor's project on the Early Dynastic funerary enclosures at Abydos, worked



Figure 6. Peter (left) at Abydos with mentor David O'Connor (center) in 1986. Photograph: J. Richards.



Figure 7. Peter, Salima Ikram, and Janet Richards inspecting Weni mummification materials at Abydos, 2011. Photograph: K. D. Turner.

with Mark Lehner's Giza Plateau Mapping Project, and joined Nicholas Reeves for excavations in the Valley of the Kings. In 1996, he joined the team of the University of Michigan's Abydos Middle Cemetery Project, of which he remains a senior member. But throughout, he says, his personal research interests always remained in issues around urban archaeology—not tombs—and the people who inhabited these settlement landscapes.

From 1980 onwards, Peter published articles, essays, and catalogue entries on daily life and urbanism, material culture, and mortuary traditions of both ancient Egypt and Nubia, and on Deir el-Ballas—including his first volume on his Ballas excavations, *Preliminary Report on the Expedition to Deir el-Ballas: 1980–86* (1990), and his monograph, based on his dissertation, *The New Kingdom Royal City* (1997).

Peter also began a long period of employment at the MFA during those decades, holding a 1981–1982 National Endowment for the Humanities internship for the MFA's exhibition "Egypt's Golden Age," followed by appointments as department assistant, curatorial assistant, and ultimately as assistant curator in the Egyptian Department from 1986–1998. Those years were characterized by intensive involvement with collections research and exhibitions, the latter in part building on interpersonal connections Peter had already forged during his undergraduate years. His coursework in museology and American history at BU had led him to participate in an exhibition called "Victorian Boston" for the Bicentennial, overseen by a prominent Boston citizen named Adelaide "Smoki" Bacon. They remained friends, and upon his return to Boston, Mrs. Bacon made possible the funding for a small MFA exhibition on ancient Nubia in City Hall, for African American Month.

Throughout the 1980s, Peter undertook continual work in the permanent Egyptian galleries and continued collections research and organization in the basement. During that time, Brigham and Women's Hospital became interested in CT-scanning the MFA's Egyptian mummies, which attracted so much press that the MFA director, Jan Fontaine, suggested the museum produce an exhibition on mummies. Peter and his colleague Sue D'Auria saw this as an opportunity to conserve and publish a large number of related objects in permanent collections storage, and they successfully applied for a large National Endowment for the Humanities grant to support this work. In this way, the seminal 1988 exhibition "Mummies and Magic: the Funerary Arts of Ancient Egypt" was born. Its catalogue *Mummies and Magic: The Funerary Arts of Ancient Egypt* (1988, co-authored with Catharine Roehrig) remains a go-to general introduction to the topic.

Peter also conducted extensive work in collections storage of the MFA's Egyptian department, re-organizing its entire contents by sites, dates, and tomb groups, to better facilitate research on the collection. As part of this long-term project, he oversaw a major extended object sharing collaboration between MIT's Museum

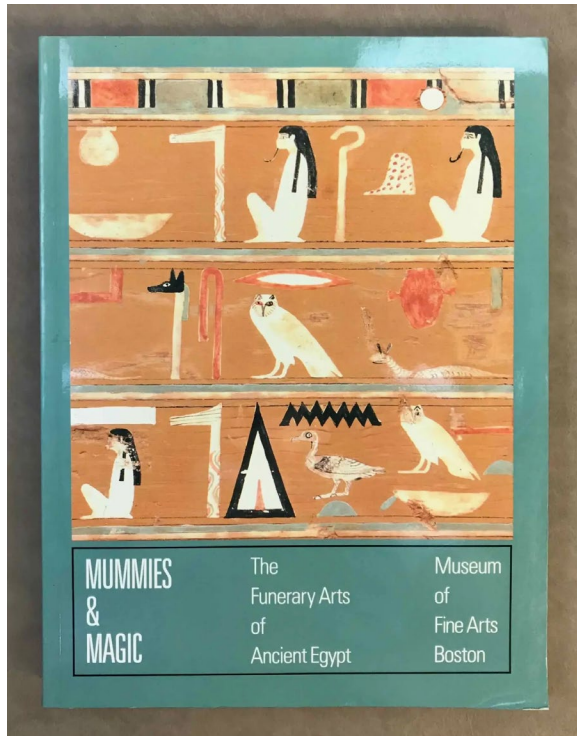


Figure 8. Catalogue for “Mummies and Magic” exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



Figure 9. View into “Mummies and Magic.” Photograph: Peter Lacovara.

Loan Network, the MFA, and the San Antonio Art Museum, a partnership that was then joined by Alan May and the Dallas Museum of Art, who secured a large Neiman Marcus Foundation grant to support these loans of MFA objects to both Texas museums, in exchange for their conservation treatments and maintenance.

Another project in basement storage in line with his practice of methodically “excavating” historical museum collections was to open, draw, and publish the contents of a number of crates full of objects from Reisner’s work in the early twentieth century with the Archaeological Survey of Nubia. Funded by a grant Peter secured from the National Endowment for the Humanities, this long-term partnership with Lisa Heidorn continues to the present day. These crates, which had never been opened, held a legally granted sample collection from Reisner’s excavations during those seasons. This focus on Nubian material inspired the Department to pursue a third NEH grant, and to secure AT&T funding for its first-ever separate Nubian Gallery.

Peter continued to emphasize collaboration and artifact-sharing among museums with Egyptian and Nubian collections, overseeing an exchange of Nubian objects between the MFA and the University of Pennsylvania Museum (then the University Museum) in connection with Penn’s major 1992 traveling exhibition “Ancient Nubia: Egypt’s Rival in Africa,” that addressed site and object category gaps in both of these museums’ collections. He consulted on the reinstallation of Egyptian collections at the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, the cataloguing of the Egyptian collections and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (1990), and the installation of the Egyptian galleries of Baltimore’s Walters Art Museum. He assisted with a small exhibition for the Children’s Museum in Portland, ME; and in Massachusetts assisted both the Boston Science Museum with its Ramses exhibition, and the Harvard Semitic Museum (now Harvard Museum of the Ancient Near East) for an exhibition on Reisner and Giza.

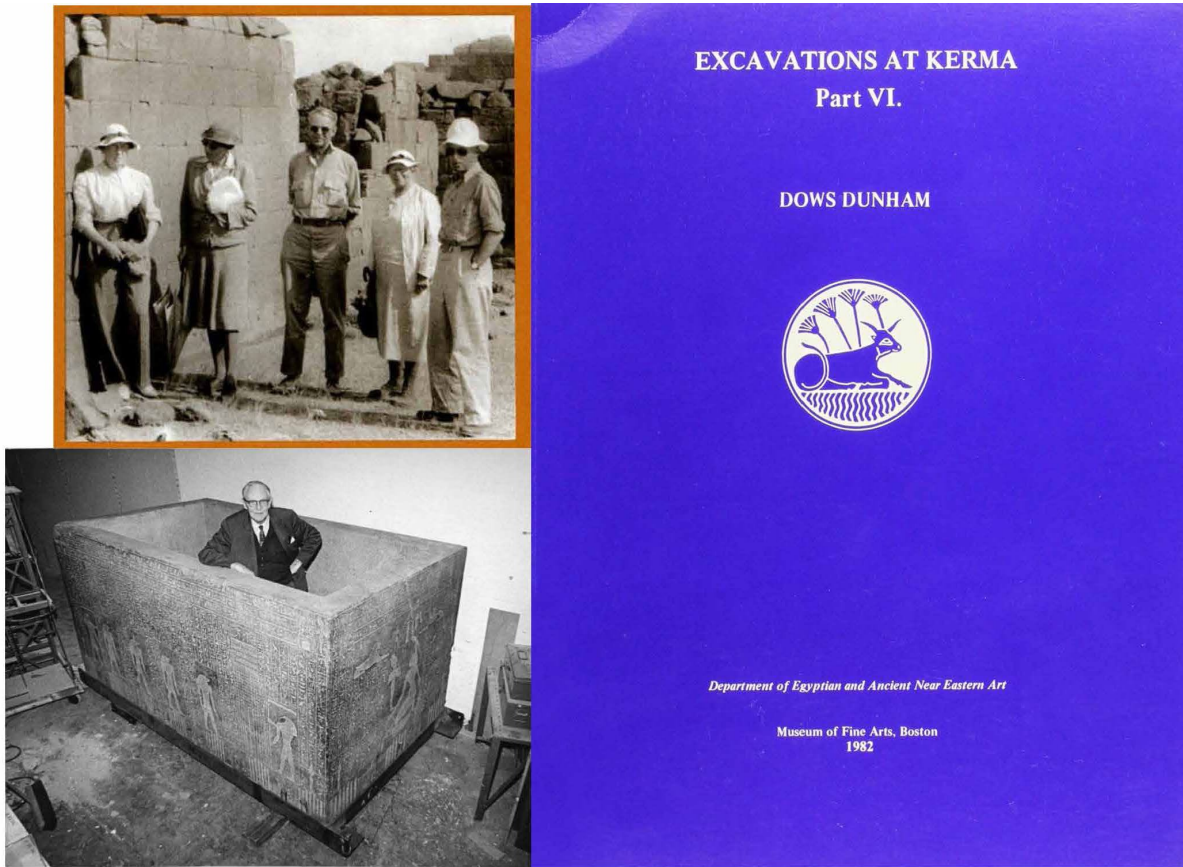


Figure 10. One of Peter's first mentors in the field was Mr. Dows Dunham, who told stories of working in Nubia with Reisner. Peter assisted him with preparation of the Kerma VI volume. Photographs: Museum of Fine Arts, Archives.

Peter began teaching classes on ancient Egypt and Nubia in 1979, periodically offering courses at the MFA and at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from 1983–1996. He resumed university teaching in 2008 with seminars for Georgia State and Emory University/Coursera, Virginia Commonwealth University, and courses at the University of Albany and Syracuse University until 2015, and was appointed W. K. Simpson Distinguished Visiting Professor of Egyptology at the American University in Cairo for Spring 2010.

In 1998, Peter accepted the position of Senior Curator of Ancient Egyptian, Nubian, and Near Eastern Art at the Michael C. Carlos Museum of Art, Emory University, which he held until September 2014. During those 16 years, he ramped up exponentially his pace of activities and his commitment to disseminating knowledge and conserving culture heritage on all fronts—collections enhancement, exhibitions, building relationships with prominent donors and fundraising, and consulting and collaboration with other museums in the US and in Egypt. He also began a period of fieldwork at Amenhotep III's palace site of Malqata in 2008 (following up on that initial season in 2015–2017 after his retirement, with work conducted under the aegis of his nonprofit foundation The Ancient Egyptian Heritage and Archaeology Fund). The latter project was at the suggestion of W. Raymond Johnson, then Director of Chicago House, and Holeil Ghaly, then Chief Inspector of Luxor, who were concerned about modern threats to the site.

Within a year of his arrival at the Carlos, Peter was a key player in fundraising efforts to support the purchase of a significant group of ancient Egyptian antiquities, collected in the late nineteenth century, from a



Figure 11. At the Carlos, in gala mode: Peter with Carlos supporters.



Figure 12. “Show Me The Mummy” pin from fundraising initiatives for acquiring the Niagara Falls collection.

small private museum in Niagara Falls, Canada. His imaginative “Show Me the Mummy!” initiative attracted the enthusiastic participation and support of schools and other groups all across Atlanta—ultimately making it possible for the Carlos to substantially enrich its Egyptian collections and leading to his reinstallation of the museum’s Egyptian galleries in 2001.

Peter convened experts, including Salima Ikram, Bob Brier, and J. R. Harris, to study in particular the provenance and characteristics of an ancient Egyptian mummy in the Niagara Falls collection. They confirmed his suspicion that the mummy in question was possibly that of a royal individual, most likely Ramesses I. Following the mummy’s appearance in the 2003 Carlos exhibition “Ramesses I: Science and the Search for the Lost Pharaoh,” the museum returned the mummy to Egypt in 2003, in a gesture of international cooperation. Thus, thanks in large part to Peter, the (putative) founder of the New Kingdom’s Nineteenth Dynasty now rests in the Luxor Museum next to Ahmose, founder of the Eighteenth Dynasty (who inhabited the royal city at Deir el-Ballas, where Peter continues to focus his field research).

Including the Ramesses I exhibition, Peter installed no fewer than eight special exhibitions on ancient Egypt, Nubia, and the ancient Near East at the Carlos from 2001 to 2011, both large and smaller scale. These included a gorgeous exhibition on the Royal Tombs of Ur (2002), emphasizing, as he always does, the importance of understanding the process of discovery and the significance of context. The exhibition “Life and Death in the Pyramid Age” (2011), allowed him to integrate new scientific studies of Emory’s Old Kingdom mummy collected in the early 1900s (from Abydos), both with other contemporary holdings in the Carlos collections, and with data from his work with the ongoing Michigan Old Kingdom-focused excavations in the Middle Cemetery at Abydos.

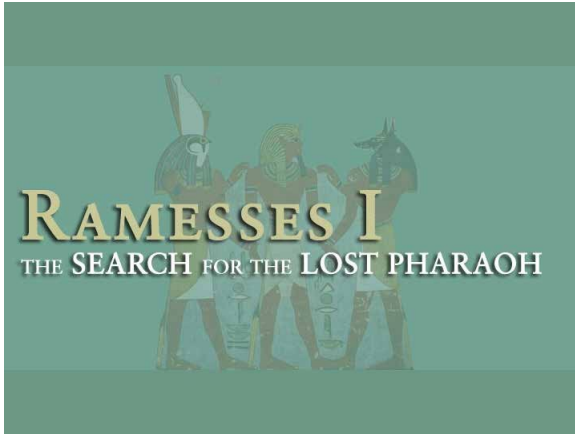


Figure 13. The possible mummy of Ramesses I, after appearing in the Carlos exhibition “Ramses I: Search for the lost pharaoh,” was repatriated to Egypt in 2003.



Figure 14. Ramesses I in the Carlos exhibition. Photograph: Michael C. Carlos Museum.



Figure 15. “Excavating Egypt” traveling exhibition, co-curated by Peter with the Petrie Museum of Archaeology. Photograph: Peter Lacovara.



Figure 16. Peter and Salima Ikram co-curated the reinstallation of the Predynastic Gallery in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo. Photograph: Salima Ikram.

Peter also continued to honor his commitment to collaboration with other institutions. In 2005, he spearheaded an ambitious partnership between the Carlos and the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology and developed the traveling exhibition “Excavating Egypt: Great Discoveries from the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology,” providing a comprehensive look at the discoveries of Sir William Flinders Petrie through 220 spectacular artifacts from the Petrie’s collections, and examining the development of archaeology in Egypt from the 1880s into the present.

He co-authored, with Stephen Quirke and Betsy Teasley Trope, the accompanying and highly readable catalogue. It’s a hallmark of Peter’s exhibition catalogues (and indeed of all his published work) that they are dense with information and analysis, yet so clearly written that they are accessible for scholars and popular audiences alike. His enthusiasm for and joy in this scholarship, and in sharing it broadly, is infectious, and shines through across all his scholarly and public-facing output (as well as in conversations, interviews, tours, and exhibitions).

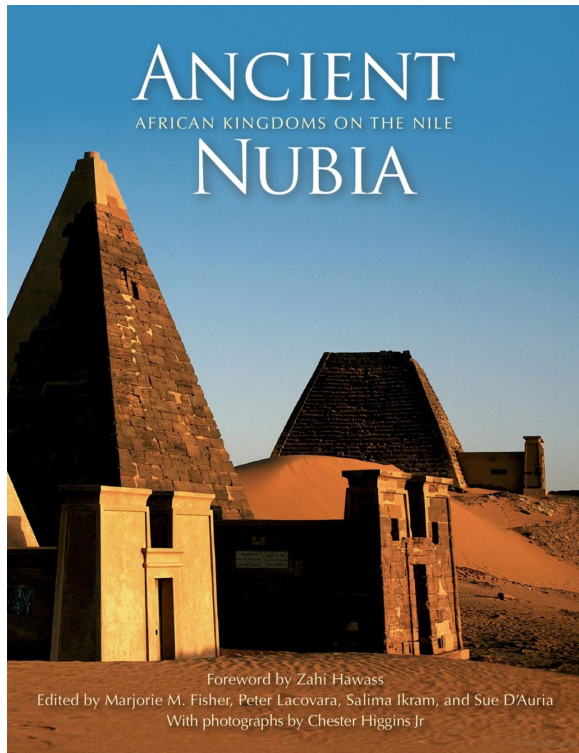


Figure 17. Peter was a co-editor, with M. M. Fisher, S. Ikram, and S. D'Auria, for the volume *Ancient Nubia: African Kingdoms on the Nile*; named Best Book in the Archaeology and Anthropology category for 2012, at the 37th annual American Publishers Awards for Professional and Scholarly Excellence.



Figure 18. Peter and Heather Tunmore at the Meroe pyramids site in northern Sudan. Photograph: Janet Richards.



Figure 19. In retirement, Peter founded The Ancient Egyptian Heritage and Archaeology Fund.

Peter consulted on the Detroit Institute of Art's reinstallation of its Egyptian galleries in 2007; and in the same year he and Salima Ikram redesigned and reinstalled the Predynastic galleries at the Egyptian Museum, Cairo funded by a grant from the American Research Center in Egypt.

Peter's steady flow of publications across his areas of expertise continued apace during his time at the Carlos, including the comprehensive illustrated volume *Ancient Nubia: African Kingdoms on the Nile* (2012), which he co-edited with Marjorie Fisher, Sue D'Auria, and Salima Ikram. This indispensable reference work for the study of Nubian archaeology, published by The American University in Cairo Press, was named best book in the Archaeology and Anthropology category during the 37th Annual American Publishers Awards for Professional and Scholarly Excellence.

Peter stepped down from his post at the Carlos in 2014. At the event honoring Peter's retirement, MCCM supporters Joop Bollen and Pyush Patel, with whom he had built a cordial relationship during his years in Atlanta, donated the First Intermediate period mortuary stela of Nebetiotef to the museum, in his honor. This stela (now Carlos Museum 2014.033.001) was an important addition to the Carlos' collection: it bears on its reverse a rare and beautifully preserved "Letter to the Dead" from Nebetiotef's husband to his deceased wife, asking for her help with his illness and including a postscript from her brother. As an artifact of real people going about their ancient lives and exercising their social networks in times of need, it fit elegantly both with Peter's own research interests in the lived experience of ancient Egyptians, and his own personality, as an

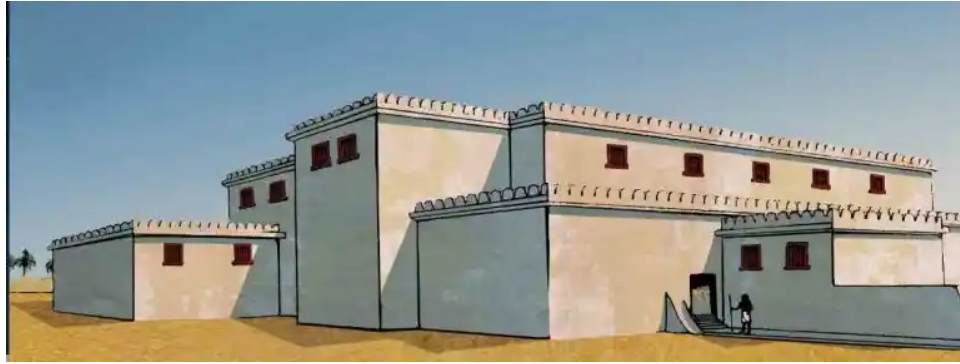


Figure 20. The Fund's new campaigns of work at Deir el Ballas: a 3D imagining of the North Palace. Image: Andy Boyce.

individual deeply engaged with his networks of friends and colleagues worldwide, and always generous with his time and support.

Now officially in “retirement”—retirement? he is never still!— Peter founded and became director of the private nonprofit, The Ancient Egyptian Heritage and Archaeology Fund, in 2014 (<https://www.ancientegyptarchaeologyfund.com/>) The Fund's main goal is to record and publish sites and monuments under threat from modern expansion, looting, and climate change. Under Peter's leadership, the Fund promotes education about cultural heritage, training in site management, and publishing excavations past and present as a crucial part of supporting heritage preservation.

A primary focus of the Fund's work to date is the renewed archaeological, conservation, and site management work at the late Seventeenth/early Eighteenth Dynasty royal site of Deir el-Ballas, beginning in 2016. This sprawling site, the earliest example of a royal city for the New Kingdom and the likely launching pad for the Theban kings' campaigns against the Hyksos, was originally excavated by George Andrew Reisner in 1900–1901, working for the Phoebe A. Hearst Expedition of the University of California. The site was afterwards unpublished and neglected, and has endured considerable destruction and damage over the last 125 years, due to all of the factors listed above.

Peter and his team have undertaken an ambitious program of excavation, mud-brick stabilization, and preservation at key sites across Ballas, including current work on protecting and restoring the North Palace, a royal residence which likely housed Seqenenre Taa II, Kamose, and Ahmose during campaigns of the war against the Hyskos; reexcavation and protection of surviving houses and production areas in the associated settlement, especially “House D;” new excavations of areas both to the north and south, one of which seems to have housed an administrative district; and, in the South Wadi, what might be the re-



Figure 21. Peter standing on top of the newly restored watchtower at Deir el Ballas (Reisner's “South Palace”). Photograph: M. Fisher.



Figure 22. Mud-brick restoration at Deir el Ballas. Photograph: Nicholas Brown.

mains of a harbor. They have also further investigated, stabilized, and restored Reisner’s “South Palace,” which they have revealed to be instead a watchpost established on a high hill overlooking the Nile, a vantage point from which to oversee the launching of the Theban fleet in the final stages of the war (a conclusion which was backed up by the discovery in its construction of recycled cedar timbers from a boat).

Finally, in collaboration with the Supreme Council of Antiquities, Peter and his team are in the process of building a site protection wall, to be decorated with a mural designed by the Egyptian artist Alaa Awad; bilingual signage for tourism; and literature in Arabic for the local communities to foster a sense of inclusive partnership in the preservation of this important site.

Peter’s and his Fund’s commitment not only to excavation and conservation at Ballas, but also to publication of research past and present at this site, has already materialized at a phenomenal rate: in a series of articles, bilingual pottery and mud-brick Deir el-Ballas manuals, and an initial published volume on the new excavations, *Deir el-Ballas: Preliminary Report on the Deir el-Ballas Expedition 2017–2021* (Peter Lacovara, Sue D’Auria, and Jonathan Elias, eds., 2022). Work is also underway on a volume that will publish Reisner’s research during his original Ballas expedition of 1900–1901. The current project is also supported by a grant from the Shelby White and Leon Levy Program for Archaeological Publications, and integrated with the results from the Fund’s new excavations, Peter’s 1980s work at Deir el Ballas, and his ongoing research in museum collections, will energize our understanding of the evolution of ancient Egyptian urbanism in the mid-second millennium BC.

But those are not the only outputs so far from Peter’s work with the Fund. In 2020, he published a previously unreleased manuscript on archaeological technique by George Andrew Reisner (which he co-edited with Sue D’Auria and Jonathan Elias), providing an invaluable window onto a pivotal moment for methodology in Egyptian archaeology. In 2022, he facilitated an English translation of Valdemar Schmidt’s still indispensable survey *Sarkofager, Mumiekister, Og Mumiehylstre I Det Gamle Ägypten Typologisk Atlas Med Indledning* (1919), previously available only in Danish; and in 2023, he published a volume on the



Figure 23. From the Fund's publication of work at the site of Malqata, Franck Monnier's colorized reconstruction of the throne room at Malqata palace.

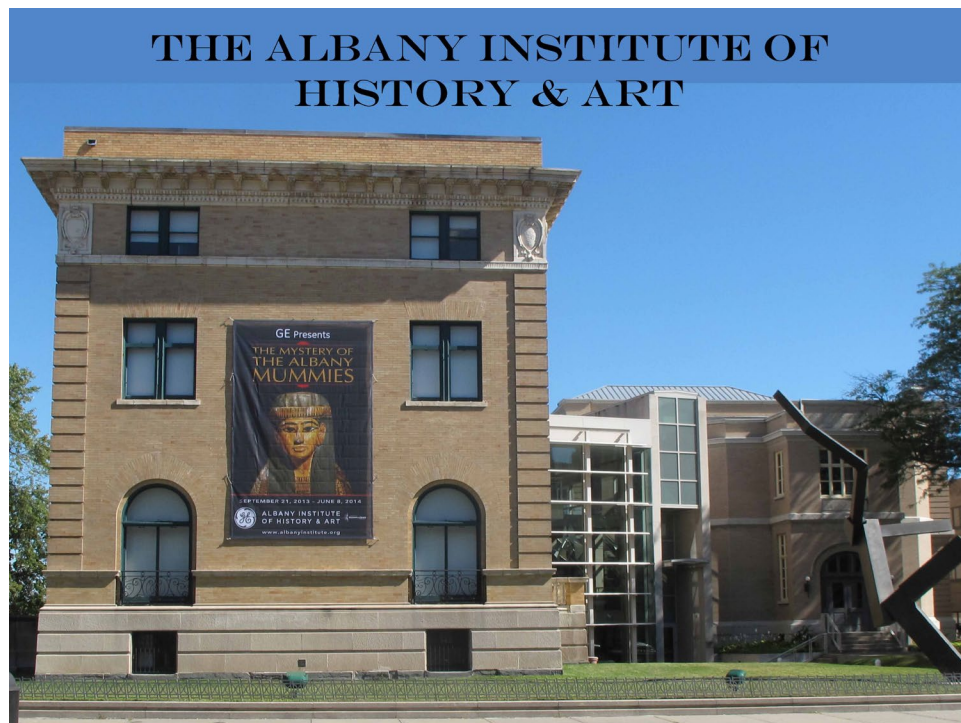


Figure 24. Exhibition "The Mystery of the Albany Mummies" at the Albany Institute of History and Art. Photograph: P. Lacovara.

2008–2017 work he directed at the Eighteenth Dynasty palace site of Malqata (*Studies on the Palace of Amenhotep III at Malqata*, P. Lacovara, D. I. Lightbody, F. Monnier, and J. Elias, eds., with an Arabic summary by H. Elzawy).

And finally, he has initiated an oral history of Egyptology, conducting interviews with groundbreaking scholars in the recent history of our field, starting with his own mentor David O'Connor and, most recently, interviews conducted by and of Egyptian team members and workers of the Fund's projects.

On museological fronts, Peter has continued his affiliation with the Albany Institute of History and Art, installing the special exhibition "The Mystery of the Albany Mummies" in 2013–2014; reinstalling their permanent Egyptian galleries (2014–2015), and co-authoring with Sue D'Auria an associated catalogue (*The Mystery of the Albany Mummies: the Ancient Egyptian Collection of the Albany Institute of History and Art*); all the while consulting on the reinstallation of the Egyptian galleries at the St. Louis Museum of Art. In 2022–2024, he was a co-curator for the collaborative American Research Center in Egypt/Antiquities Endowment-funded exhibition "The Governor of Upper Egypt Weni the Elder and the Origins of the Osiris Festival at Abydos," in the Sohag National Museum. And in 2023, he curated and wrote, with Yvonne Markowitz, the exhibition catalogue for the spectacular special exhibition "Jewels of the Nile: Ancient Egyptian Treasures from the Worcester Art Museum" in Worcester, MA.

In planning for 2025–2026, Peter will return full circle to honor one of his earliest mentors in the field, Dows Dunham, with an exhibition at the Albany Institute entitled "From the Hudson to the Nile: Dows Dunham and Archaeology in Egypt and Sudan."

In this essay so far I have related Peter's astounding mountain of professional achievements and steadfast stewardship of cultural heritage since his undergraduate years, attesting to the activities and commitment of a brilliant, creative, and incredibly hard-working scholar. But I would like to conclude this archaeological biography on a less formal note, harking back to comments I made in the opening sentences of the essay—about Peter, the person. Those with the honor of counting themselves among Peter's associates will tell you that there is no human being who is more kind, more loyal and supportive, or more hilarious than he is. He is a colleague who keeps in mind the specific interests, research or otherwise, of his vast circle of acquaintances, and never hesitates to step up to help, be it by joining our research teams or fundraising tours (wielding his twinkling charm with irascible tourists!), sharing his encyclopaedic knowledge of all things ancient Egyptian and Nubian, or providing advice for complicated issues between field, museum, and other institutions. Not only does he generously wield his expertise on matters archaeological or museological, he is a friend who never forgets a holiday or a birthday or a bereavement; who showers his friends with an endless stream of cards, emails, articles, candies, Egyptair cookies, vintage books, novelty trinkets, etc., often through the United States Postal Service (which he seems determined to singlehandedly keep afloat). Nor does he confine this



Figure 26. Peter with baby Xenia Ivanova, Cairo, March 2017. Photograph: S. Ikram.



Figure 26. Peter on the 2019 University of Michigan fundraising tour; with Margie Fisher, Salima Ikram, and Jay Heidel. Photograph: J. Richards.



Figure 27. Peter's cat Gracie, with him from 2019 to 2023, starred in his holiday greetings to friends. Photographs: P. Lacovara.



Figure 28. Numerous members of Peter's vast fan club attended a virtual presentation of his Festschrift on his 70th birthday.

largesse to adult humans: children and pets, with whom he is a universal favorite—no doubt because, with zero hesitation, he will get right down on the floor to play with them—can also expect fresh infusions of entertainment and cool toys whenever he visits.

Peter is a buoyant spirit who not only inspires us but keeps us laughing. We have learned never to look in his direction if a speaker makes a ridiculous statement in a public lecture—a guaranteed trigger for one of his famous grotesque faces; or to eat or drink anything right before Peter arrives at the punchline of one of his wickedly hilarious stories. A life-long cat lover, he often enlisted the incomparable Gracie, his sidekick from 2019–2023 (may her feline soul be blessed) as his co-conspirator in comedic antics across email and Facebook, from sending Halloween wishes to expressing disdain at idiocy (“Gracie is not convinced”).

We know that to be in Peter's company means never to be bored; and we know that he always has our backs.

Peter Lacovara reminds us of the joy not only of thinking and sharing and protecting ideas and knowledge, but also of the gift of being part of an international community of like-minded souls. We raise our glasses of Stella, or sparkling water, or chocolate bars (or Egyptair cookies) to him, with profound gratitude and admiration!

Our Peter

CHESTER HIGGINS

Peter Lacovara is a man admired by a large group of colleagues and friends for his generous spirit and enthusiasm. He is also a strong force laboring to reenergize work on a mostly forgotten military site in Upper Egypt at Deir el-Ballas, crucial to Seventeenth Dynasty Theban kings during ancient Egypt's Second Intermediate period. The original site excavations were made by a team led by George Andrew Reisner from 1900 to 1901, but little had been published until recent times. Today, Peter has produced two compilations: one in 1990, *Preliminary Report on the Deir el-Ballas Expedition, 1980–1986*, and another in 2022, *Preliminary Report on the Deir el-Ballas Expedition, 2017–2021*.

I met Peter in 2007, when he was a curator in the Carlos Museum at Emory University in Atlanta. He was interested in my photographs from two trips to the Sudan, where I made images of many of the sprawling antiquity sites there as well as of objects in the collection of The National Museum of Sudan.

With his keen eye and deep understanding of ancient history, Peter selected some of my images to accompany objects for his 2008 very successful “Nubian Dreams” exhibition at the Carlos Museum.

As my own interest in ancient Egypt and Nubia intensified, I began to see that Peter knew everybody and everybody knew and loved him. Our paths kept crossing, again and again. In 2010, my photographs were selected to illustrate much of the breakout book project *Ancient Nubia: African Kingdoms on the Nile*. I found it exciting to work on a project that for the first time viewed Nubians through Nubian eyes—no longer in the shadow of their foes, the ancient Egyptians. Of course, Peter is a major contributor to this grand book!

My co-author and traveling companion Betsy Kissam and I began keeping in touch with Peter, meeting him for occasional dinners during his visits to New York City. We find his enthusiasm about all things ancient Egyptian enlightening and contagious.

In January 2022, we traveled to Egypt coincidentally at the same time Peter was working there. Serendipitously, we connected with him at the New Memnon Hotel on the West Bank in Luxor. While lunching with him and his colleague Ellen Morris from Barnard College, we were informed of the ongoing work at Deir el-Ballas. Eager to



Figure 1. Aksum, Ethiopia. 2001. Ethiopian Spirit door (as early as 400 BCE) were placed at the base of grand obelisks above royal tombs. Royal Aksumite Necropolis. Photograph: C. Higgins.



Figure 2. Abu Simbel, Egypt 1988. Interior of Great Temple of Ramesses, completed in 1224 BCE for King Ramesses II. Photograph: C. Higgins.



Figure 3. Peter at Deir el-Ballas. Photograph C. Higgins.

see what we had just heard about, we asked to join them. We left Luxor for Deir el-Ballas the next morning, following Peter's very fast caravan that sped through the desert along the early morning, empty highway, stopping only at police checkpoints. Small desert mountains defined the western horizon. After an hour or so we arrived at the dig site, which was silhouetted by the early morning sunlight; workers were already engaged removing sand from the "southern palace." Stepping out of the car, we encountered a persistent wind as our eyes took in the site's rough contour. Peter walked us around, pointing out newly uncovered structural elements, including a large stone pit that workers were just beginning to clear.

He led us up a stone staircase to the highest level of the remaining structure that afforded a sweeping panoramic view of the Nile River and beyond—likely the same sight seen by King Ahmose's commanders during their fight with the Hyksos.

Peter's work at Deir el-Ballas is helping to refocus attention on this strategic military site, which lay for decades under the academic radar and has suffered from looting, most recently in 2011 during the Egyptian Revolution against then-President Mubarak, and from the encroachment of the nearby village cemetery. That tour offered us a glimpse into the potential wealth of historic knowledge yet to be unearthed and reclaimed at Deir el-Ballas.

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SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

As Curator and Cocurator:

Oriental Institute Museum

Reinstallation of the Mesopotamian Galleries (1977)

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Special exhibitions:

Museum of Fine Arts Excavation History installation (1994)

Mummies and Magic: The Funerary Arts of Ancient Egypt (1988)

In the permanent galleries:

Egyptian Funerary Gallery Reinstallation (1998)

Nubian gallery (1993)

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston-Dallas Collections Share Agreement (1989)

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston-San Antonio Collections Share Agreement (1989)

Boston City Hall

Ancient Nubia (1992)

Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University*Special exhibitions:*

Life and Death in the Pyramid Age: The Emory Old Kingdom Mummy (2011)

Tutankhamun's Tomb: The Thrill of Discovery (2008)

Nubia: Ancient Kingdoms of Africa (2008)

From Pharaohs to Emperors: recent acquisitions (2006)

Ramesses I: The Search for the Lost Pharaoh (2004)

The Royal Tombs of Ur (2002)

Jewish Life in Ancient Egypt (2003)

The Collector's Eye: Masterpieces of Egyptian Art from the Thalassic Collection, Ltd. (2001)

Traveling exhibition:

Excavating Egypt: Great Discoveries from the Petrie Museum of Egyptology (2005)

In the permanent galleries:

Reinstallation of Egyptian Galleries (1999)

Worcester Art Museum*Special exhibitions:*

Jewels of the Nile: Ancient Egyptian Treasures from the Worcester Art Museum (2023)

In the permanent galleries:

Reinstallation of Egyptian Gallery (2023–2024)

The Albany Institute of History and Art*Special exhibitions:*

From the Hudson to the Nile: Dows Dunham and Archaeology in Egypt and Sudan (2025–2026)

The Mystery of the Albany Mummies (2013–2014)

In the permanent galleries:

Reinstallation of Egyptian Galleries (2014–15)

Egyptian Museum, Cairo

Predynastic Gallery Reinstallation (2007–2008)

As Consultant:**Sohag National Museum, Sohag**

The Governor of Upper Egypt Weni the Elder and the Origins of the Osiris Festival (2024)

St. Louis Art Museum

Egyptian Galleries Reinstallation (2015)

Detroit Institute of Arts

Egyptian Galleries Reinstallation (2007)

Walters Art Museum

Egyptian Galleries Reinstallation (1995)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Cataloguing of the Egyptian Collection (1990)

Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh

Egyptian Galleries Reinstallation (1985)

Abbreviations

General

c.	century
ca.	circa
ht.	height
km	kilometer
m	meter
sq m	square meters

Bibliographic

IFAO	Institut français d'archéologie orientale
KCD	Karnak Cachette Database. https://www.ifao.egnet.net/bases/cachette/ck349 .
LÄ	W. Helck and E. Otto. <i>Lexikon der Ägyptologie</i> . Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1972–1992.
PM	Bertha Porter and Rosalind L. B. Moss, <i>Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings</i> , 8 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1960–.
PN 1	Ranke, H. <i>Die ägyptischen Personennamen</i> . Vol. 1: <i>Verzeichnis der Namen</i> , 1935.
PN 2	Ranke, H. <i>Die ägyptischen Personennamen</i> . Vol. 2: <i>Einleitung; Form und Inhalt der Namen; Geschichte der Namen; Vergleiche mit anderen Namen; Nachträge und Zusätze zu Band I; Umschreibungslisten</i> . Glückstadt: Augustin, 1952.
SERaT	<i>System zur Erfassung von Ritualszenen in altägyptischen Tempeln</i> , Institut für Ägyptologie, Universität Würzburg.
TLA	Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae. https://thesaurus-linguae-aegyptiae.de/home .
Wb.	Erman, A., and H. Grapow, eds. <i>Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache</i> . 7 vols. plus 5 vols. Berlin: Belegstellen, 1926–1963.

