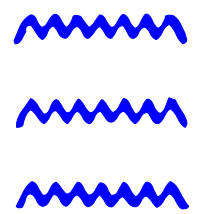


NILE



BECAUSE YOU LOVE ANCIENT EGYPT

KHUFU'S PYRAMID TEMPLE
The Lost Temple Takes Shape

NEFERTARI
The Enigmatic Queen

SPHINX AVENUE REOPENS

GALLA FATTAH
REIMAGINING ANCIENT EGYPT IN FINE ART





6

UPDATE
FROM



Jeff Burzacott

With ARCE's support, Drs. Zahi Hawass and Mark Lehner launched the Great Pyramid Temple Project to protect Khufu's cult temple and have it better understood by visitors. They were rewarded with some amazing discoveries.



12

QUEEN NEFERTARI

Rebecca Batley

Ramesses II's first and foremost queen looms larger than any of his other wives. Who was this enigmatic figure who played a prominent role in Egypt's religious and diplomatic circles?



32

SPHINX AVENUE OPENS

Jeff Burzacott

For the first time in around 2,000 years, the Sphinx Avenue—the processional way between Karnak and Luxor Temples—is open.

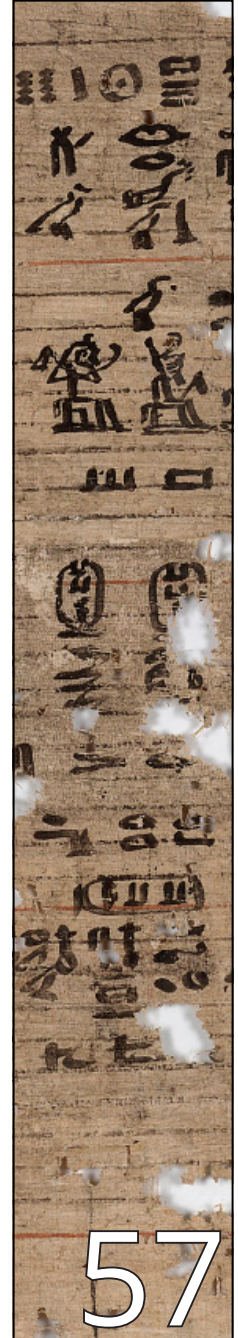


37

THE COMPOSITE BOW

James Bowden

In around 1550 B.C., a new, advanced weapon appeared on the Egyptian battlefield: the composite bow. **James Bowden** explores the game-changing edge that the composite bow gave to Egypt's warrior pharaohs.



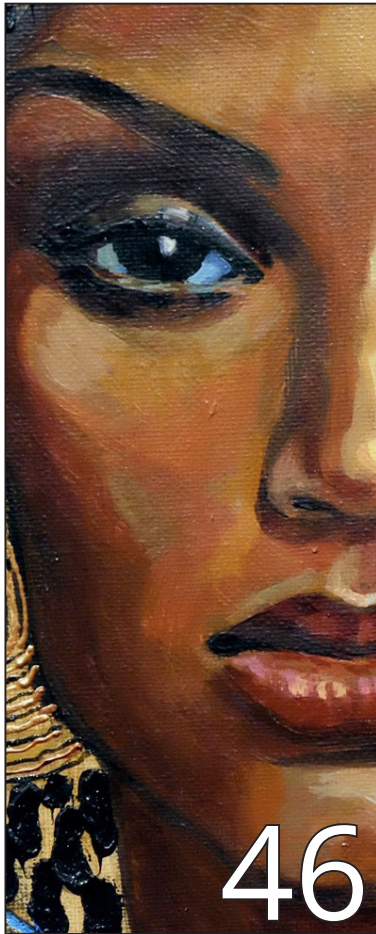
57

THE ROYAL MORTUARY CULT

Miroslav Verner

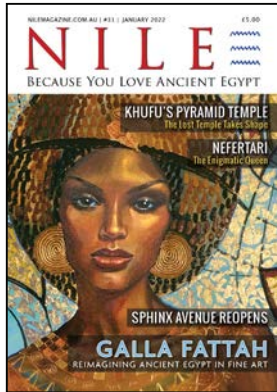
An abridged extract from the new and revised edition of his groundbreaking book, *The Pyramids*. **Miroslav Verner** explores the cult of the king, as revealed through the Abusir Papyri.

NILE



© GALLA ABDEL FATTAH. PHOTO BY MIKHAIL BYKOVSKY

COVER STORY



GALLA FATTAH

Victor Solkin

Karomama was an Egyptian high priestess in the 9th-century B.C. Today, her stunning bronze statue, highlighted in gold, wows visitors to the Louvre. Here her statue has been transformed into the portrait of a living priestess by Russian/Egyptian artist Galla Fattah.

Egyptologist Victor Solkin introduces us to a modern artist who reimagines ancient Egypt in fine art style—and the results are mesmerising.

46

#31
JANUARY 2022

- 4 Map of Egypt
- 5 Timeline
- 65 Exhibitions & Events
- 66 Looking Back
- 68 Coming Up
- 68 Contact **NILE**
- 69 Back Issues
- 69 Subscribe to **NILE**

SUBSCRIBE & SAVE!

Get *NILE Magazine* delivered to your door every two months and save over 20%.

Every 6th magazine is free!

See page 69 for your fabulous subscription offer.



FROM THE EDITOR

IT NEVER RAINS, BUT IT POURS. As mentioned on page 1, we're going to hear a lot about Tutankhamun and Jean-François Champollion this year. And rightly so. At the same time, important discoveries continue to be made in Egypt.

In early February, the Czech Institute of Egyptology announced a major discovery at Abusir, 12 km south of Giza—the largest embalming cache ever found.

Dated to late Dynasty 26 (ca. 525 B.C.), an enormous shaft, some 14 metres deep, was found to contain 370 large pottery storage jars that still held the remnants and residues of various mummification materials. In addition to the embalming cache, the team discovered canopic jars bearing the name of Wahibre-mery-Neith, presumably the tomb owner.

The embalming cache was undisturbed, so the hope is that the burial in an adjacent shaft will also be intact. It's an exciting prospect, and I'll keep you up to date.

Welcome to issue #31. As always, I hope you enjoy your NILE time!



© CZECH INSTITUTE OF EGYPTOLOGY, CHARLES UNIVERSITY, PRAGUE. PHOTO: PETR KOŠÁREK

The shaft of the largest embalming deposit ever discovered. Some 370 jars were found at various depths in 14 distinct clusters, one of which you see here.

Jeff Burzacott 
editor@nilemagazine.com.au



ARCE UPDATE

CURRENT RESEARCH, EXCAVATION AND CONSERVATION PROJECTS IN EGYPT

THE GREAT PYRAMID TEMPLE PROJECT

FASCINATING DISCOVERIES AS KHUFU'S SACRED COMPLEX TAKES SHAPE



PHOTO: DAN JONES FOR ANCIENT EGYPT RESEARCH ASSOCIATES (AERA)

Khufu's Pyramid Temple takes shape. Today, thanks to the efforts of the Great Pyramid Temple Project, visitors can inspect the remains of Khufu's temple from a wooden walkway installed around the outer wall line. The walkway delineates the temple's footprint and

suggests to visitors to "keep off" the ancient temple itself. The fenced-off hole in what would have been the Pyramid Temple's innermost sanctuary is the shaft of an unfinished tomb, sunk during the Saite (26th Dynasty) or Roman Periods, over 2,000 years after Khufu's time.

TEMPLES WERE PLACES FOR THE GODS to reside on earth, linking the mortal and divine realms, and giving humans the ability to interact with the god through rituals. When a pharaoh died, his cult temple became the place where he would be worshipped, and the liminal zone between this world and the next.

The Pyramid Temple of the pharaoh Khufu, the builder of Egypt's Great Pyramid, once nestled up against the eastern side of the pyramid, while the king's body lay secure (supposedly) within the pyramid's burial chamber. While Khufu's mortal remains disappeared when the pyramid was first breached, probably within a few centuries of his interment, the temple designed to perpetuate his life among the stars lasted a little longer. But not much. By the Middle Kingdom,

Khufu's pyramid was being mined as a source of fine reliefs. Decorated blocks bearing his name have been discovered in the Middle Kingdom pyramid complex of Amenemhet I at Lisht, 55 km to the south. Amenemhet began his reign around 1955 B.C.—some 600 years on from Khufu's time.

Today, only the striking black basalt flooring of Khufu's pyramid temple remains in what was an open court surrounded by a pillared colonnade. Until recently, scores of visitors, camels, horses and buggies beat a path daily over the remnants, not appreciating the craftsmanship present even in the remnant pavement, built 4,500 years ago. Few would have realised that they were aiding in the gradual destruction of a vital part of Khufu's pyramid complex.

The efforts of ancient quarrymen and the indignity of



PHOTO: RUSSELL KORD / ALAMY.COM



PHOTO: MARK LEHNER FOR AERA

Photographed shortly after discovery, this block with painted relief was part of the original decoration of Khufu's Pyramid Temple. It shows a row of tent shrines erected for the king's Sed Festival, a celebration of the king's 30-year jubilee that renewed his physical prowess

and divine mandate to rule. These temporary shrines may have been similar to the "dummy" shrines built in stone within the Step Pyramid complex of King Djoser (TOP), around a century before Khufu's reign. These buildings meant that Djoser could celebrate an eternity of jubilees.

was absolutely necessary, the workers instead altered the depth of the sockets in the much softer limestone bedrock.

The western side of the open court, the temple's inner sanctuary, remained in shadow, perhaps containing statues of the king. This was a liminal zone between this world and the divine realm. And towering above it all, an immense statement of absolute power: the shimmering white limestone face of Khufu's Great Pyramid.

When Mark Lehner mapped the temple in 1995, he realised that not all of the basalt flooring was as the ancient builders had intended. A "restoration" of loose fragments set in cement made up some 40% of the visible pavement.

This modern refurbishment had even covered three of the pillar sockets and so in 2020, permission was granted to remove the restored blocks above these sockets so that they could complete their documentation.

THE DISCOVERIES

On lifting the restored basalt blocks, the team encountered sandy debris which they assumed was used as fill to support the restoration. But when the debris was cleared from the first pillar socket, they were surprised and delighted to find a block of fine limestone, about 80 cm long (above). One face was carved in low relief, still with traces of paint. This

HER LIFE AND AFTERLIFE QUEEN NEFERTARI



“Great of Praise”



“Sweet of Love”



“Lady of Charm”



“God’s Wife”



“Mistress of All the Lands”



“She for whom the sun shines”

REBECCA BATLEY

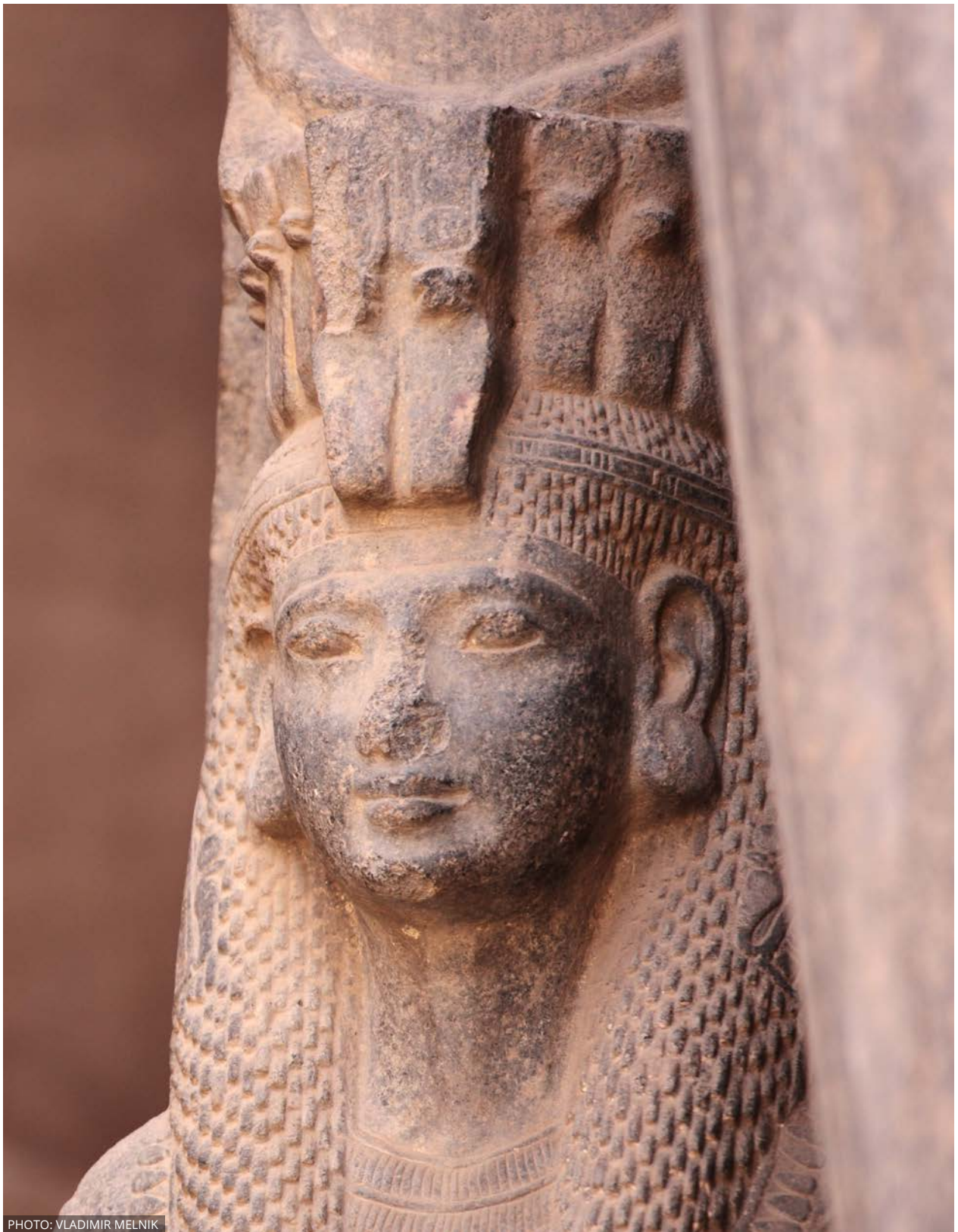
(OPPOSITE)

Nefertari stands beside a colossal statue of Ramesses II in the First Court at Luxor Temple. The queen’s headdress is loaded with divine imagery connecting her with the sun’s daily resurrection and the powerful goddesses of the New Kingdom.

Nefertari wears a modius (cylindrical crown base) surrounded by a frieze of cobras with sun disks on their heads. Above that are two tall feathers fronted by a sun disk cradled between two cow horns. This headdress is associated with the goddess Hathor, as well as Mut, the Theban consort of Amun. Just as Nefertari’s husband, Ramesses II, used the epithet “Beloved of Amun,” Nefertari is “Beloved of Mut,” symbolically connecting the king and his foremost queen with the Theban divine couple.

In early 1904, the director of Turin’s Museo Egizio, Ernesto Schiaparelli, was excavating in the Valley of the Queens for treasures to bolster his museum’s collection. He came across a fabulously decorated tomb that we now know as QV (Queens’ Valley) 66. The area had been explored previously, but the last man to do so—Richard Lepsius in 1845—had missed the tomb entrance by mere metres.

As Schiaparelli peered into the gloom, what soon emerged was a series of extraordinary painted decorations, dominated by the face of one woman: Queen Nefertari, the first and foremost wife of Ramesses II. Today, QV 66 is considered one of the most magnificent tombs ever found. In scene after scene, Nefertari appears beautiful, royal and adored by the gods. But who was this enigmatic queen?



NEFERTARI'S ORIGINS

Nefertari's origins, like those of so many Egyptian queens, are shrouded in mystery. Her family remains invisible, although one small object recovered from the debris in her tomb may provide a clue. Among the scraps that Schiaparelli discovered—considered worthless by thieves and discarded during their ransacking of the tomb—was a curious object: either the pommel of a cane or a knob from a chest. The object bore the name of the 18th-Dynasty pharaoh

Ay, who succeeded Tutankhamun to the throne, around 40 years before Nefertari's time. The presence of the object in her tomb has led some to speculate that Nefertari was in some way related to the pharaoh. If this was the case, she would have to have been his granddaughter, as he died long before Nefertari was born. However, nowhere does Nefertari claim a connection to royalty, and her title of *iret-pat* “hereditary noblewoman”, instead suggests that her family was of noble rather than regal rank.



© MANNA NADER - KAIROINFO4U

This 94 cm-high granite statue of an Egyptian queen is one of a kind; there is no other known instance of a standard-bearing sculpture of a queen.

That the statue belongs to one of the wives of Ramesses II is explained by the dedication in hieroglyphic text on the staff of the standard. The text and translation is to the right.

Although the statue's original base is missing—along with it the queen's identity—it is widely attributed to Ramesses II's first and foremost queen, Nefertari.

The standard is topped by the head of Mut, the goddess from whom Nefertari enjoyed divine love and protection—the epithet “Beloved of Mut” was ubiquitously included within Nefertari's royal cartouche. The standard also highlighted Nefertari's well documented participation in temple rituals and religious ceremonies. It is said to have been found at Karnak Temple.

When this striding figure was sold by Christie's auction house in 2005, bidding was particularly vigorous. After all, it isn't every day that a figure of (probably) Nefertari appears on the antiquities market. The auction catalogue described the figure as wearing an “elaborately-pleated garment pulled tight and knotted below her breasts, its diagonal pleats accentuating the sensuous form of her body, bejeweled in a multi-strand broad collar... her idealized oval face (features) large, convex lidded eyes beneath modelled arching brows that merge with her slender nose, the cheekbones pronounced, her lips pursed into a slight smile.”

And the price realised on auction day? US\$ 2,256,000.

Its previous owners had graciously allowed the statue to be studied and included in exhibitions. Let's hope the new custodians of Nefertari's statue are as generous.

THE TEXT ON THE DIVINE STANDARD



“The perfect god,
 Son of Amun,
 Born of Mut,
 Lady of Heaven,
 In order to rule
 all that the
 sun disk encircles,
 Lord of the Two Lands,
 Usermaatse Setepenre
 (Throne Name of
 Ramesses II),
 Beloved of Amun-Re.”



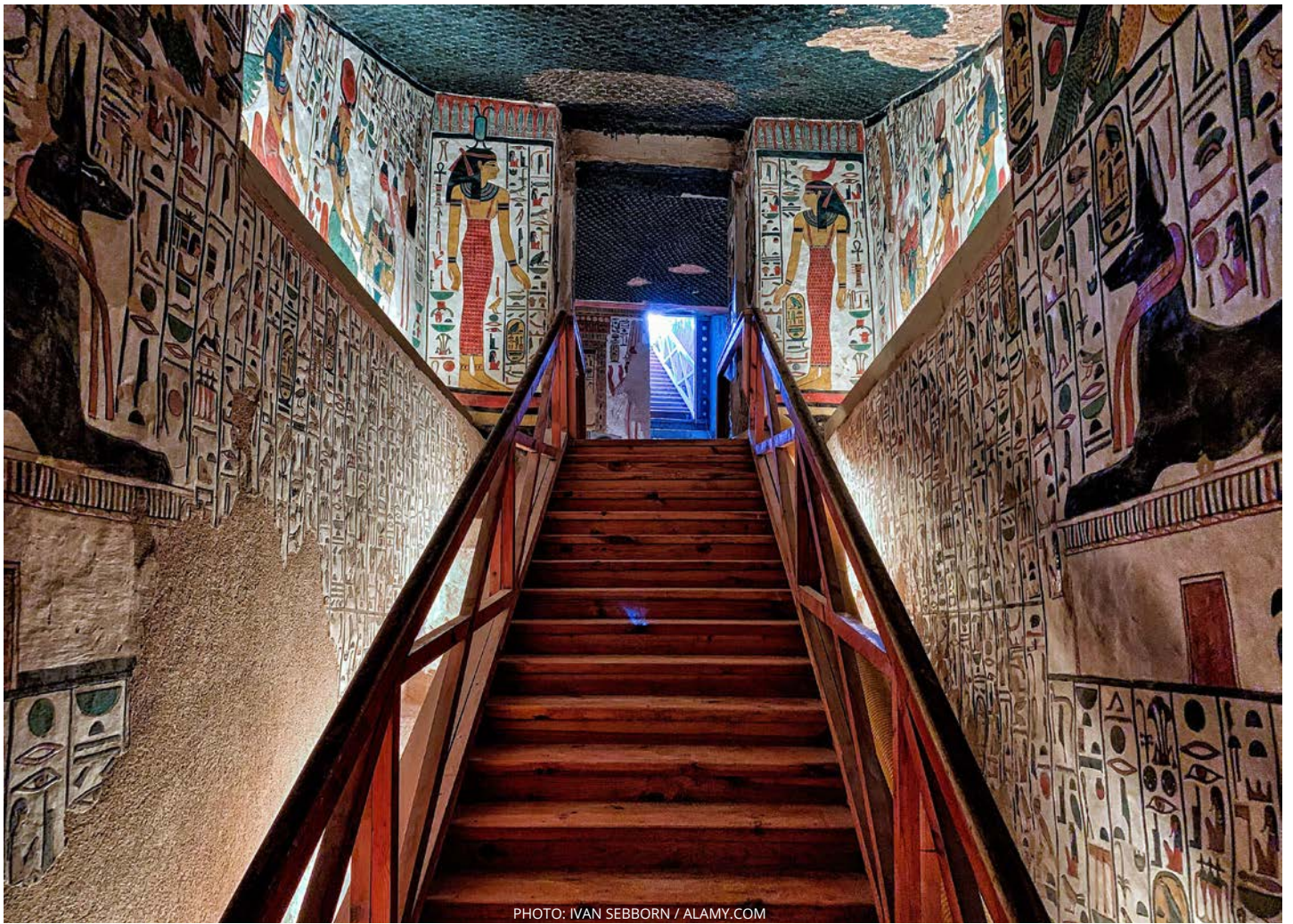
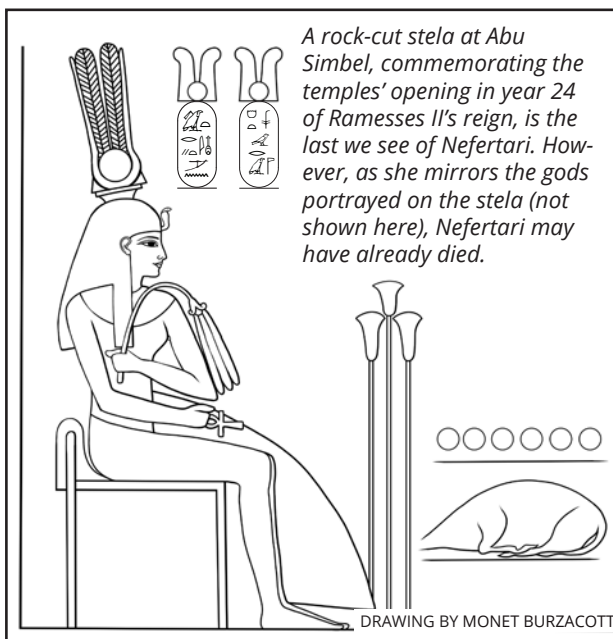


PHOTO: IVAN SEBBORN / ALAMY.COM

Beneath the modern wooden stairs, the original bedrock stairway leading down from the Antechamber into the Burial Chamber has a slipway along the middle for the queen's sarcophagus. Looking up, however, here and throughout the tomb, the midnight-blue ceiling is covered with thousands of five-pointed yellow stars.

The stars are not arranged to imitate the real-life

constellations, but point to Nefertari's infinity among the heavens. Egyptologist John K. McDonald explains that the stars refer to "the imperishable circumpolar stars, astral sentinels who never sink below the horizon and were thus equated with the souls of gods and beings who survived the perilous passage through death to the beyond" (The Tomb of Nefertari: House of Eternity).



A rock-cut stela at Abu Simbel, commemorating the temples' opening in year 24 of Ramesses II's reign, is the last we see of Nefertari. However, as she mirrors the gods portrayed on the stela (not shown here), Nefertari may have already died.

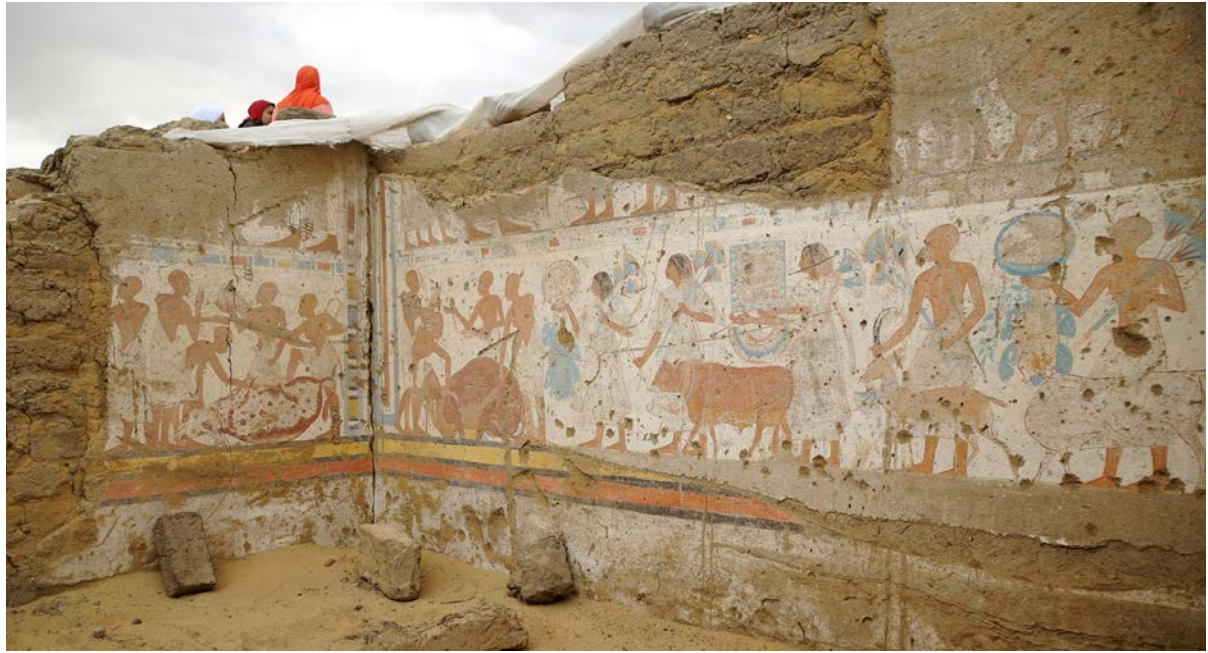
Nefertari may not have lived to see the temples of Abu Simbel finished. The Heqanakht Stela may represent the queen in her deified state.

Alternatively, it has also been proposed that the seated image of Nefertari may indicate that she was suffering from some sort of physically debilitating illness which prevented her from taking part in the inauguration ceremonies. However, such a display of non-perfection in Ramesses' time is hard to fathom. For Ramesses II, like most pharaohs, image and reputation were everything.

Queen Nefertari would have been about 42 when she died, which was the average life expectancy at the time. Her life was one of privilege and comfort but she had also birthed six children for her king, and this would have taken a toll on her body. Pharaoh's words on the death of his wife do not survive but he could not but have felt the loss of his first wife very deeply.

After her death, Nefertari's body would have undergone the full and complex ritual of mummification. As each part of her body was wrapped, embalmers would have uttered

SIDEBAR: THE TOMBS OF NEFERTARI'S FAMILY



The upper part of Ptahemwia's tomb is described as a "cemetery-temple", consisting of a series of courtyards and pylons leading to a sanctuary at the western end, crowned with a pyramid. The decoration of the courtyard shown here features a procession of live offerings which ends with a scene of a calf being slaughtered.

The head of the Egyptian mission excavating the tomb, Dr. Ola El Aguizy, explains that "the mission has not finished its work yet, because it has not yet opened the burial well; only the entrance has been discovered so far."

Nefertari's past is largely a mystery. None of the tombs of any of Nefertari's family have been discovered, which seems a little unusual given that she is likely to have been born into a noble family with royal connections.

Where would these tombs likely be? Perhaps at Saqqara, part of the vast necropolis of ancient Memphis, which was the capital of Egypt at the time. Saqqara was a favourite for the burials of 19th-Dynasty nobility and members of the royal court.

In late October, a mission from the Faculty of Archaeology at Cairo University unveiled the Saqqaran tomb of Ptahemwia, one of Ramesses II's senior officials. Ptahemwia was a contemporary of Nefertari, and served Ramesses during the start of the king's reign.

Ptahemwia was involved in the administration of temple resources at Ramesses' cult temple at Thebes: the Ramesseum. The right-hand column of hieroglyphs on the door jamb shown on the right, tells us that Ptahemwia served as a "Royal Scribe" and "Great Overseer of Cattle in the Temple of Ramesses II (i.e., the Ramesseum), in the domain of Amun". The second column in from the right tells us that he was also a "Royal Scribe of Divine Offerings for all the Gods of Upper and Lower Egypt".

Not far from this recent discovery is the tomb of Ramesses II's sister, Tia, and her husband, also named Tia, which was uncovered in 1975. It may be that the tombs of Nefertari's family lay hidden nearby. Their discovery would expand our knowledge of this rather enigmatic queen to a phenomenal degree. To the missions working in Saqqara, we have one message: keep digging!



Ptahemwia's tomb was first recorded in 1859, when French Egyptologist Théodule Deveria—the curator at the Musée du Louvre—photographed one of the tomb's exposed doorways after the area had been subject to uncontrolled excavations/looting. Since then, Ptahemwia's tomb had been lost to the desert sands until it was rediscovered this year.

Here we see Ptahemwia seated on a chair before an offering stand. The text above spells out some of his titles (see text on the left).

LUXOR'S SPHINX AVENUE OPENS

YOU CAN NOW WALK THE ANCIENT ROUTE OF THE ANNUAL OPET FESTIVAL



PHOTO: MOHAMMOUD AHMED / ALAMY.COM

The grand opening of the Avenue of Sphinxes in Luxor saw the recreation of the ancient Opet Festival, whereby the sacred barques of the Theban triad—Amun, Mut and Khonsu—were paraded along the processional way.

Although most Egyptian rituals were never witnessed by the public, the grand procession of the sacred barques was an exception. The spectacle was witnessed by a crowd making a joyous din with drums and sistrums.

IT'S BEEN AROUND 2,000 YEARS SINCE A DIVINE BARQUE was last carried along the sacred route between Karnak and Luxor Temples. That all changed on November 25, 2021, when the opening ceremony for what is today called the Avenue of Sphinxes, saw three modern recreations of the sacred barques of Amun, Mut and Khonsu travel between the two temples, accompanied by great fanfare. Now, the ancient processional way is cleared, restored and ready for modern pilgrims to follow suit.

If 2022 is about anniversaries—the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb and the decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphs—then 2021 was about processions. First, there was the spectacular Pharaoh's Golden Parade in April, relocating the royal mummies in Cairo's Egyptian Museum to the National Museum of Egyptian Civilisation, some five kilometres away. In August, Khufu's "Solar Boat"—as old as the Great Pyramid—was moved in grand ceremony from

its purpose-built museum on the south side of the pyramid to the Grand Egyptian Museum at Giza. Then November brought the year's final grand procession: the long-awaited opening of the Avenue of Sphinxes in Luxor.

THE OPET FESTIVAL

This processional way was originally established for the purpose of the annual celebrations of the Opet Festival. Luxor Temple was considered to be the place where the god Amun-Re was born, and all of creation with him. Karnak Temple, almost three kilometres to the north, was where the god resided for most of the year. But because the Egyptians believed that time was cyclical and endlessly repeating, Amun of Karnak was obliged, once a year, during the great festival of Opet, to travel back to Luxor Temple to be reborn and rejuvenated.

For the journey south, the cult statue of Amun-Re

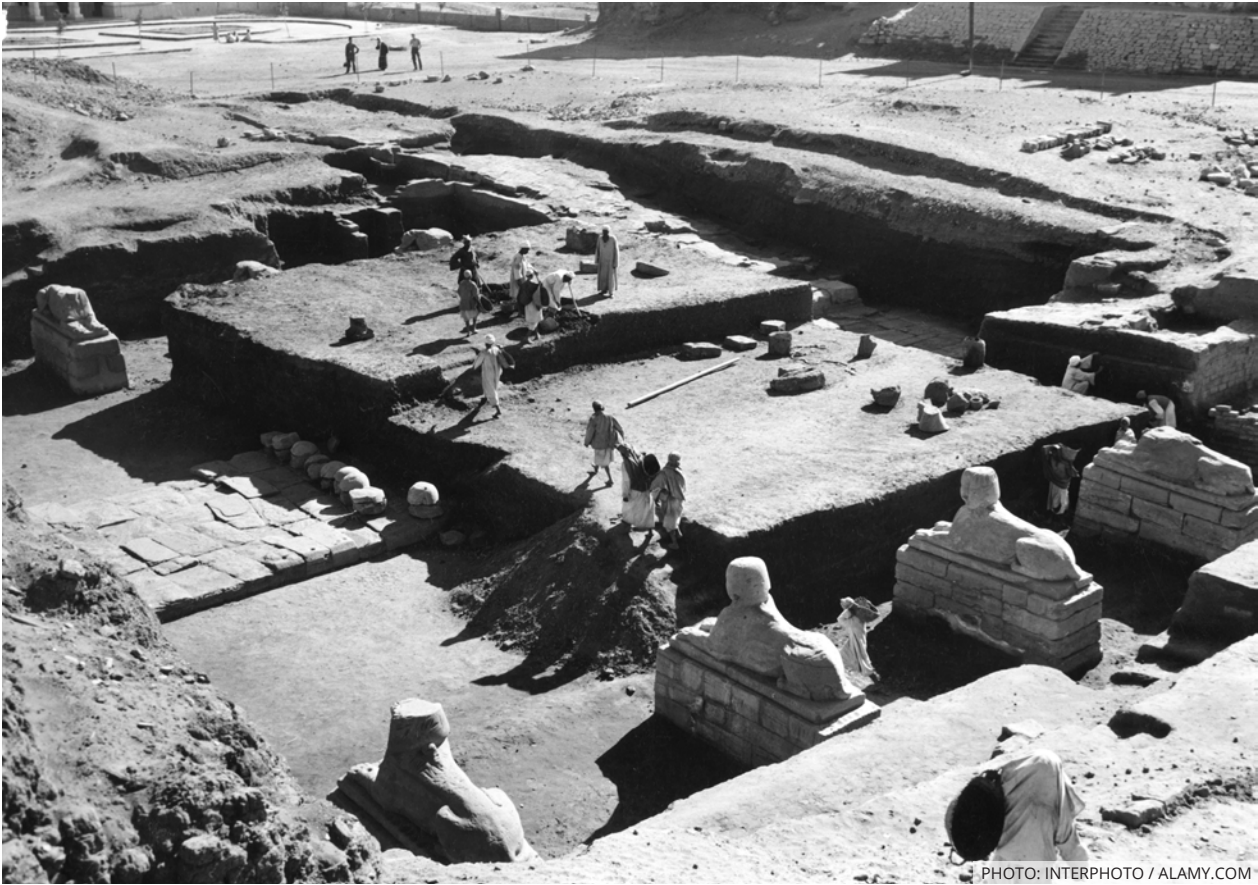


PHOTO: INTERPHOTO / ALAMY.COM

The first eight sphinxes in front of Luxor Temple were discovered in January 1949 by Egyptian archaeologist Zakaria Ghoneim. The route of the processional avenue had been long known, but this was the start of the modern excavations that have eventually led to the opening of the

avenue in November 2021. The above photo, from around 1955, shows excavations in full swing.

Sections of the avenue have been progressively opened for visitors as restoration of the pathway and the rows of sphinxes continued. The photo below was taken in 2010.



PHOTO: EGYPTIAN MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND ANTIQUITIES

𓆎 𓆏
 “The Good God,
 𓆎 𓆏 𓆐 𓆑 𓆒 𓆓
 Strong of Bow, Possessed of Might,
 𓆔 𓆕 𓆖 𓆗 𓆘 𓆙 𓆚
 Victorious in drawing it,
 𓆛 𓆜 𓆝
 Son of Re, Lord of Appearances,
 𓆞 𓆟 𓆠 𓆡 𓆢 𓆣
 Tutankhamun, Ruler of Thebes, Given Life, Like Re.”
 (Inscription on composite bow discovered in the Antechamber of
 Tutankhamun’s tomb. [Cairo JE 61523].)

The Egyptian Composite Bow

James Bowden, M.A.

The New Kingdom introduced the greatest warrior pharaohs in Egyptian history—self-described battlefield heroes such as Thutmose III, Seti I and Ramesses II. At their disposal were some new technologies that enabled these kings to dominate their enemies. One of these developments was the laminated composite bow, which allowed Egyptian archers to bombard their foreign troops with more power and from a much greater distance. As you’ll read, the composite bow helped the New Kingdom’s pharaohs push Egypt’s frontiers deeper into the Levant and Nubia.

Howard Carter described the gilded and granulated decoration on this compound bow as a “work of almost inconceivable fineness—a masterpiece of jewellers’ craft”. It was one of a number of compound bows found in the Antechamber of Tutankhamun’s tomb.

The bow is now in the collection of the Grand Egyptian Museum, which is due to open later this year. (Acc. No. GEM 4860 / JE 61517.)

PHOTO © LABORATORIOROSSO, VITERBO/ITALY





PHOTO: ROBERT HARDING / ALAMY.COM

The gilded wooden "Ostrich Hunt" fan (Cairo, GEM 284 / JE 62001) of Tutankhamun was found in the Burial Chamber of the king's tomb. Wielding his composite bow, Tutankhamun chases down his quarry whose feathers once adorned it.

Hunts like this were not only a fun pursuit for a young king, but also symbolic of the pharaoh's physical strength and ability to maintain control.



We see it in movies all the time; armies are pitted against each other in long lines, each side yelling and taunting the other, calling out names and getting ready for the challenge. A leader stands in front of the line and pulls out a sword. It is usually the biggest, longest, and has some highly elaborate design. He levels it at the enemy or raises it higher in the air, and then comes the call to charge. The two armies clash in near inseparable chaos.

While this picture makes for a moment that is worth a thousand words—and millions of dollars—it is often incorrect, especially when looking at the ancient Near East and Egypt. Instead, we would see two armies lined up against each other, the warrior pharaoh out in front, rallying the men. The two sides would then pull out their arrows, draw

their bows, and release a shower of arrows into the opposing lines. Not Hollywood, but real.

The bow and arrow have always been present in Egypt. Prior to the New Kingdom, the Egyptians used self-bows, made of one piece of wood. The Egyptians perfected this weapon, and large numbers of troops were devoted to the archery corps. But the New Kingdom (beginning *ca.* 1550 B.C.) was when bow technology became more sophisticated, and the laminated, composite bow gave Egypt's archers an even greater edge.

From the Amarna Letters—a library of diplomatic correspondence between the late 18th-Dynasty pharaohs and their Near East counterparts—it appears that archers obtained a reputation that was second to none. The records show that Egypt's vassal states in the Canaan region, when under pressure from hostile forces, called upon Egypt's archers more than even the chariot corps.

THE ORIGINS OF THE COMPOSITE BOW

The composite bow, with a more complex construction and larger in diameter, was likely introduced by the Hyksos—settlers of Canaanite origin—who held power in Upper Egypt between Egypt's Middle and New Kingdoms, around



PHOTO: ALBUM / ALAMY.COM

The Theban Tomb of Userhat (TT 56) includes this image of the tomb owner hunting game from his chariot. Userhat was a Royal Scribe, Great Confident of the King, and Overseer of the Herds of Amun during the reign of the 18th Dynasty king Amenhotep II (ca. 1400 B.C.).

Such a scene highlights what historian Margaret Lucy

Patterson calls the “aristocracy at play”—well connected nobles indulging in what are normally royal pursuits.

Userhat stands in his chariot with the reins wrapped around his waist, taking aim at his quarry. In reality, the chariot would have been controlled by a charioteer, so that Userhat would be free to shoot.

their personal propaganda to increase their merit and abilities in the eyes of the people.

WHO OWNED THE BOWS?

Of great interest is the reality that, despite royal inscriptions to the contrary, bow ownership and use appears to have been widespread. The majority of composite and other bows were not found in royal tombs but rather those of ordinary people (see above), and that it was this group that used the bow most frequently.

The ability to have a composite bow meant either that there was a certain level of general knowledge that had been acquired which allowed for general, personal construction and use, or that we have a very early example of weapons manufacture that could be purchased by both the government and civilians, as happens in our own time.

There may not be a way to solve the question, but archery was certainly not reserved for the palace or the royal archery corps. This is not to say that using the bow was easy, and the royal boasts do have some truth to them inasmuch that it did take skill and strength to master the bow and arrow, and the material of its construction was not something that could be handled by just anybody.

BUILDING A BOW

Construction of a composite bow was not a quick process, especially given that materials were not always readily at

hand and sometimes had to be imported. Older simple self bows were constructed of local acacia wood, but later examples increasingly show woods imported from Canaan and the Levant—modern Lebanon and northern coastal Syria—such as birch and ash.

A scene from the Tomb of Puyemre (TT 39) at Thebes displays what amounts to an 18th Dynasty bow factory in the workshops of the Temple of Amun at Karnak, with completed bows hanging on the walls.



So we can see an early assembly line production process which may have turned them out quite rapidly. A high reliance on imported parts, however, meant that even local manufacture of bows was vulnerable to disruption.

Egypt was a central meeting point of the trade route flowing north from Africa and south from the Levant. Byblos, Ugarit, and Akko were three key cities along the



© JEFFREY ROSS BURZACOTT

This limestone fragment (ÄM 14141), now in Berlin's Neues Museum, is part of a larger relief from the Upper Terrace of the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari in Luxor. The larger scene features a ceremonial procession along the Nile, escorted by Egyptian soldiers and Nubian

mercenaries. The soldiers are shown carrying axes, powerful compound bows, and quivers of arrows.


The rightmost figure here displays distinctive Nubian features and is likely one of the elite Nubian troops who were recruited by the Egyptians for their bow skills.

eastern Mediterranean coast, and all supplied Egypt with goods. However, towards the late New Kingdom period, Egyptian relations with these Levantine cities had gone sour and basic goods such as cedarwood were increasingly hard to obtain. A decline in Egyptian political power and influence came at about the same time as uprisings in the Levant and Canaan became more frequent. Many of the Amarna letters that speak of disruptions in the trade relationship with Egypt come from Byblos, with the king of Byblos repeatedly mentioning that if his kingdom fell, trade would cease. It may be that disruptions in the trade networks contributed to the decline in the use of the composite bow. Writing about the composite bow, Egyptologist Robert Morkot notes that “there is little firm evidence for its use after the 20th Dynasty”.


WHAT'S IN A BOW?

The elements in a composite bow made it more elastic so that it could be drawn further without breaking. Horn, which could take compression, supported the side of the bow facing the archer, while sinew, which could stretch, was bonded to the wood on the side facing the enemy, the whole thing then secured with pliable bark, usually birch.


All of these woods would have required training and strength to flex in just the right manner to achieve the right draw strength. The woods could not be too flexible or they would snap in the process, nor could they be too tough, but had to be just right to be pliable.



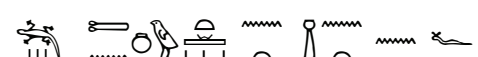
And there are no words of exaggeration therein.



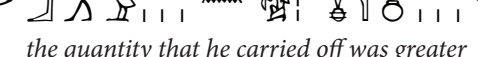
When he spent a moment of recreation,




hunting in any foreign land,



the quantity that he carried off was greater than what the entire army achieved.





He slew seven lions with arrows in an instant.”

(The Armant Stela of Thutmose III [Cairo JE 67377].)

Thutmose III took time out while on campaign to indulge his taste for big game hunting, which included lions, elephants and, on rarer occasions, rhinoceros.



Galla Abdel Fattah



What happens when a modern Russian artist reimagines ancient Egypt in fine art style? The answer is in the unique works of Galla Fattah.

VICTOR SOLKIN

Very few modern artists are able to provide an insight into the ancient civilization that flourished along the Nile and formed the basis of modern Egyptian mentality. Despite the passage of millennia, the culture of the pharaonic period still exerts a strong influence over today's Egyptians: their worldview, literature and artistic thinking. *Shahsiya masriyya* or “personality of an Egyptian”, as it's understood in the

modern Arab world, has deep roots, and can be reflected in artworks that celebrate Egypt—not only as a birthplace of fine art, but as a land that produced masterpieces belonging to the heritage of humankind.

Egyptian style—bright, spectacular, and filled with undermeanings—is instantly recognizable today, as modern artists apply their interpretations to ancient styles they find unfading and perfect.

(OPPOSITE)

“KAROMAMA”

OIL, GOLD ON CANVAS (2020)
PRIVATE COLLECTION: MOSCOW

Karomama was not only a princess but also a “God's Wife of Amun”—a high priestess who played music to Amun's ram-headed cult statue at Karnak Temple. She held this important religious position during the reign of the 22nd-Dynasty pharaoh Osorkon II (ca. 860 B.C.).

Karomama's bronze statue (right), highlighted in gold, is one of the masterpieces of the Louvre, transformed by Galla Fattah into the portrait of a living priestess.

The artwork depicts Karomama in a Nubian-style wig, decorated by a uraeus which has fallen out of the statue. She wears an elaborately pleated dress which is made to resemble the vulture wings of the mother goddess Mut, encircling her body protectively. The Louvre statue once held sistra—rattles used to revive and delight the gods—which Galla Fattah has restored to make the piece complete once more.



MUSÉE DU LOUVRE, ACC. NO. N 500. PHOTO: RAMA



"KHEKERET NESU OR 'THE ROYAL ORNAMENT'"
 OIL ON CANVAS, ACRYLIC, GOLD (2020)
 PROPERTY OF GALLA ABDEL FATTAH

The title 'Royal Ornament' was borne by the king's lesser wives who resided in the royal harem. This artwork, however, was inspired by an anonymous noble woman—one of the most elegantly sculptured female figures from ancient Egypt (right).

This limestone statue captures the delicate features of the wife of Nakhtmin, a military officer who is thought to be the son of Tutankhamun's successor, the pharaoh Ay. Her statue is considered one of the great masterpieces of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (Acc. No. JE 31629/CG 779B).

Galla has reproduced beautifully the texture of her large, enveloping wig that was popular for high-ranking women in the latter half of the 18th Dynasty. The wig is held in place with a band of petals, decorated with a blooming lotus flower in the center, a symbol of regeneration and therefore of eternal life. Egyptologist Nicholas Reeves describes the statue as "generally considered one of the most sensual works ever produced by an Egyptian sculptor."

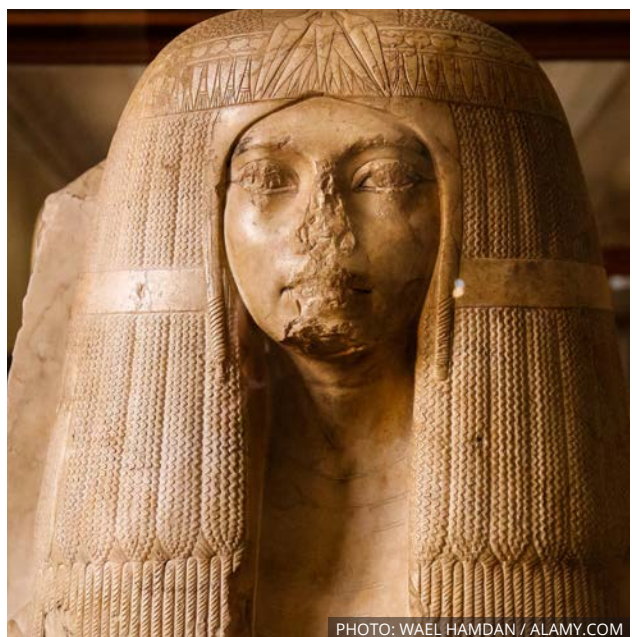
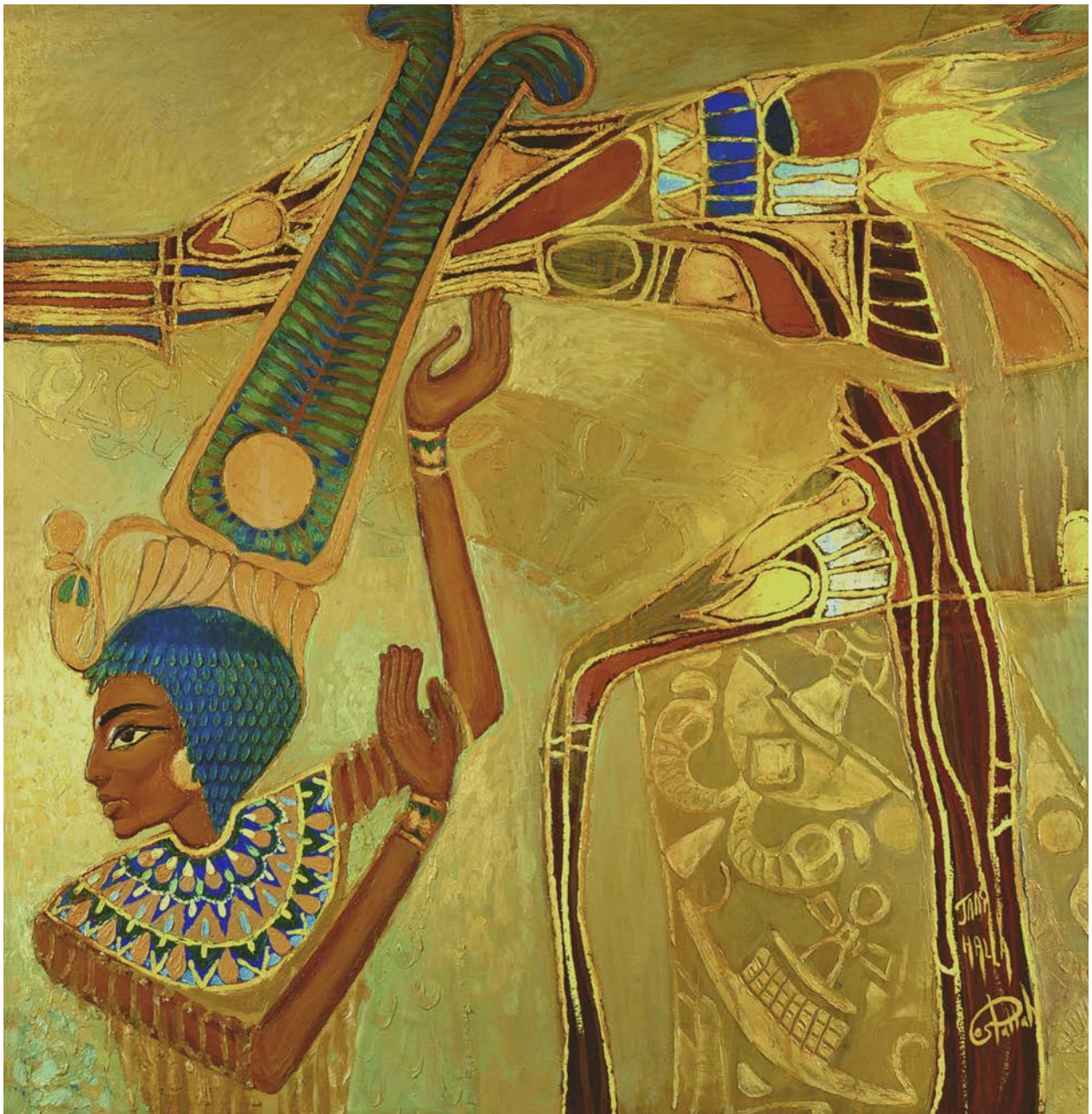


PHOTO: WAEL HAMDAN / ALAMY.COM



"FLOWERS OF THE NILE"

OIL ON CANVAS (2020)

PRIVATE COLLECTION, MOSCOW

This beautiful piece represents an Egyptian queen dancing among flower garlands, waterlilies, poppies and papyrus. The image traces back to the portrait of Tutankhamun's wife Ankhesenamun, on the "Golden Throne" (left), discovered in the king's tomb. The golden, glowing background has been captured beautifully in the painting.

Ankhesenamun is adorned with a shuty (double-feathered) crown, fronted by a red sun disk and cow's horns. The queen anoints her husband with perfume—thus lathering him with the divine aroma of the gods.

Galla has embraced the sensual and dynamic Amarna style of art, ushered in by Ankhesenamun's father, the 18th-Dynasty "maverick" pharaoh, Akhenaten.

The Golden Throne (Acc. No. JE 62028) is now part of the Tutankhamun collection in the new Grand Egyptian Museum.



THE ROYAL MORTUARY CULT

MIROSLAV VERNER

AN ABRIDGED EXTRACT FROM *THE PYRAMIDS*

PHOTO: KENNETH GARRETT / ALAMY.COM

Less than 20 years after the death of the 4th-Dynasty pharaoh Menkaure, who built the smallest of the Giza pyramids, a new dynasty of pharaohs chose Abusir, 16 km to the south, to cluster their pyramids (above).

The first pyramid at Abusir was that of Sahure, whose monument is shown on the right. Next to rule was his brother, Neferirkare, who built the leftmost pyramid, with

Neferirkare's son, Niuserre, placing his pyramid in between his father's and uncle's.

Among the treasures discovered in the ruins of the Abusir pyramid field are the Abusir Papyri—fragile scraps of administrative documents that provide an invaluable insight into the management of the cult of the king during the Old Kingdom.

NILE Magazine is pleased to bring you a taste of Dr. Miroslav Verner's book, *The Pyramids (New and Revised): The Archaeology and History of Egypt's Iconic Monuments*. This abridged chapter focusses on the Abusir Papyri, which have provided a window into the sacred rites of the cult of the pharaoh during Egypt's Old Kingdom.

THE KING HAD AN EXCLUSIVE POSITION in ancient Egyptian society. The son and heir of a king, the god living on earth, he himself became a god after his coronation and ascension to the throne. In the person of a king, the world of the gods and the world of men intersected. His primary role was to sustain the order of the world granted to Egypt by the gods, protect the land from outer and inner evil, and take care of the welfare of the people of his time.

The rule and duties of the king, however, did not terminate at his death; they continued after his departure from

this world as well. The pyramid complex—his burial place and seat of his life-giving force *ka*—became the king's symbolic residence in the other world, from which he continued to rule and be beneficial to the people of his time. However, the prerequisite for the successful fulfilling of the king's duties was the maintenance of his royal mortuary cult. The continuity of the family and of power, through succession to the throne, further guaranteed the survival of the worship of dead monarchs. Therefore, the relationship between father and son assumed exceptional importance, and also found its expression in myth. Here



© PÊCHEUR D'IMAGES / PHILIP PLISSON

This aerial image of the Abusir pyramid field highlights the findspots of the Abusir Papyri. It has been suggested that the diagonal formed by the northwest corners (the left-most corners in this picture) of the pyramids of Sahure,

Neferirkare and Neferefre points to Heliopolis—the site of the sacred benben stone. The diagonal was broken by Niuserre, who slotted his pyramid inbetween his father's (Neferirkare) and his grandfather's (Sahure).

we may recall the pious relationship between the god Horus, as heir to the throne, and his murdered father and the legitimate ruler of Egypt, Osiris.

The royal mortuary cult started immediately after the funeral ceremonies and mystical transfiguration of the dead king, and burying of the king's mummy in the burial chamber of the pyramid. Some earlier theories that the funeral ceremonies took place in the mortuary temple at the foot of the pyramid were refuted by Egyptologist Dieter Arnold. His careful examination of the temple architecture proved that the coffin with the king's mummy would not fit through the doors of the temple's rooms.

Invaluable information on the organization of the royal mortuary cult in the Old and Middle Kingdoms is offered to us in the papyri discovered at Abusir and al-Lahun. The

papyri were once part of the archives kept in the local royal mortuary temples. In Abusir, fragments of three temple archives have been found: King Neferirkare's, Queen Khentkawes II's, and King Neferefre's.

Scraps of papyri from Neferirkare's archive were first discovered by grave robbers in 1893, within the ruins of the temple storerooms, adjacent to the king's pyramid. Shortly afterward, these fragments fell into the hands of Egyptologists, causing great excitement among scholars. Most of the papyri were bought by museums in Cairo, London, Berlin, and Paris. However, the ancient cursive writing proved to be difficult to decipher and seemed at first sight to consist only of accounting records of little historical interest. And so the papyri once again fell into oblivion, this time in museum storerooms.



PHOTO: EVERETT COLLECTION INC. / ALAMY.COM

Wahtye was a high-ranking priest/official who served under King Neferirkare, one of the kings whose pyramid temples offered up portions of the Abusir Papyri. Wahtye's grand titles included "Purified priest to the King" and "Overseer of the Divine Estate".

This relief is from one of the two false doors in the above-ground visitation chapel of Wahtye's family tomb, which was discovered at Saqqara in 2018. These doors acted as portals between this realm and the netherworld, with one belonging to Wahtye and the other to his mother.

of the entire body of documents has been preserved.

All the mortuary cults were, in principle, managed from one center: the Residence, which was the seat of the country's government. The central directing of all the royal cults was practical and cost-saving and, among other things, it prevented the complete extinction of some poorly funded cults. How well the cult (and the temple personnel) was funded primarily depended on how many funerary domains the king managed to establish during his reign. All the resources coming from the funerary domains were concentrated in storerooms of the Residence, which subsequently regulated the deliveries of offerings for the individual cults. Despite the gradual material decline of the royal mortuary cults over the course of time, the number of the cults steadily exhausted the material resources of the country.

These papyri also refer to the daily temple rituals. Every morning and evening priests visited the offering hall in the intimate, western part of the temple, adjacent to the pyramid, and placed on the altar in the offering hall gifts for the *ka* of the dead king. The gifts for the king's *ka* were indispensable for his beneficial activities. The lector-priest rolled out the papyrus scroll and recited the formulas written on it. When the ritual was completed, the priests sprinkled the room with water purified by a small piece of natron and wiped away the traces of their presence as they went out, so that they would not be exploited by evil spirits. Every day, the priests also went around the pyramid, sprinkling it with purified water and ritually cleansing it. After all the prescribed ceremonies were finished, they put the cult



The family tree of Egypt's 5th Dynasty is comprised of nine pharaohs who ruled for around 150 years. The short-lived reigns of some pharaohs means that the succession of kings is far from settled. Neferefre, for example, ruled for around three years, and his barely-started pyramid meant that his pyramid never took shape. It rose above the desert by just a few courses of stone before it was sealed with a layer of clay (see the aerial photo on page 58).



PHOTO: MAGICA / ALAMY.COM

Dressed in a priestly panther skin, Ptahhotep breathes the perfume from a vessel of ointment, emulating the creator god Atum, who was brought into being by the divine scent of the lotus. In this way, Ptahhotep maintained control of his eternal daily resurrection, just like the sun at dawn.

Ptahhotep was the vizier (Chief Minister) to the reigning king Djedkare and was "inspector of the priests of the

pyramid of Djedkare," as well as "of the wab-priests of the pyramid of Niuserre (and) of the priests of the pyramid of Menkauhor". This means he helped manage the cults of the living ruler Djedkare, and those of the previous two 5th-Dynasty pharaohs.

This colourful relief is from the shared tomb of Akhet-hotep (his father) and Ptahhotep (D62) at Saqqara.

god in his typical *henu* barque, with the head of an antelope turned backward on the tip of the prow (see opposite page). The procession would visit the valley temples of the pyramid complexes and, in this way, Seker would symbolically meet the kings to whom the complexes belonged.

On the occasion of the feast, offering gifts were brought to the dead throughout the entire necropolis. According to an incomplete text on a fragment of papyrus from the Neferefre archive, a great quantity of offerings was distributed on the occasion of an unspecified feast via the Temple of Ptah in Memphis, and probably also the mortuary temple of Neferefre. A large number of bulls and other offerings, including thousands of various kinds of bread and pastries, hundreds of jugs of beer, and many pieces of poultry, would be brought to Ptah. The Feast of Seker, requiring such a quantity of offerings, is considered to have been the greatest event held at the Memphis cemetery.

On a fragment of papyrus from the Neferirkare archive is a mention of the preparation for the Feast of Hathor, or,

to be more precise, the preparation of the ceremonial boat of the goddess on the occasion of this feast. It is not indicated when the feast was held, but Paule Posener-Kriéger associated it with celebrations of the flood and so, in her view, it did not have a fixed date in the civil calendar. As regards the setting of this feast, in Neferirkare's pyramid complex, which the goddess attended in her barque, we might most plausibly imagine it as a voyage along the canal linking Neferirkare's valley temple with the quayside of the king's sun temple. The goddess would be represented by her statue set in a naos in the middle of the barque. We can only speculate whether the voyage of the goddess in her barque was accompanied by the small boats of the inhabitants of the surrounding villages, lit with lamps, as was the case in later times—in Dendera, for example.

At the very end of the civil calendar year, the feast of the Five Epagomenal Days was celebrated in the temples, both divine and mortuary. Though no evidence of the feast survived in the Abusir papyri, we can plausibly assume that

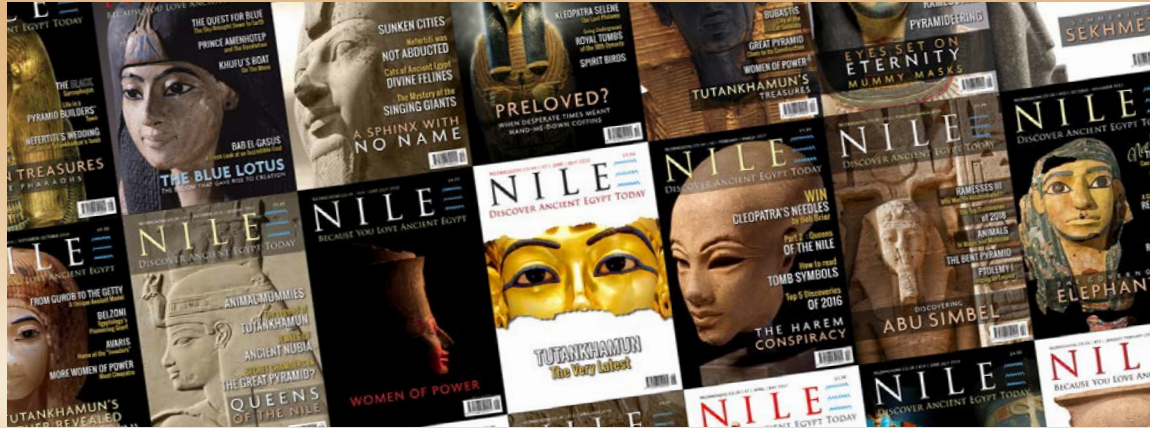


COURTESY OF THE PEGGY JOY EGYPTOLOGY LIBRARY

NILE

BACK ISSUES

AMAZING PHOTOGRAPHY, THE LATEST DISCOVERIES
ANCIENT EGYPT'S HISTORY, MYSTERY AND WONDER



Back issues sell out quickly.

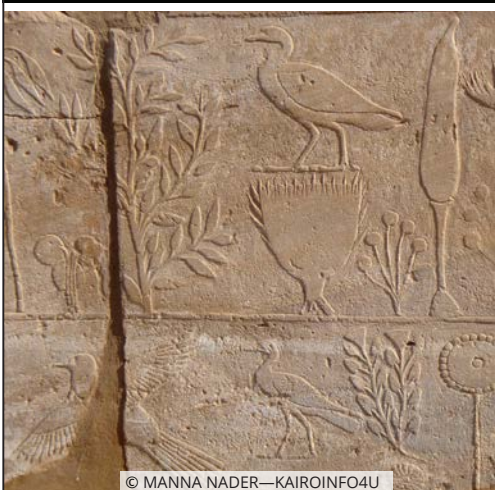
Purchase yours by calling 01202 087629, or head to nilemagazine.com.au.

SUBSCRIBE

BECAUSE YOU LOVE ANCIENT EGYPT TOO

Subscribe and receive every issue delivered to your door.

NEXT ISSUE



© MANNA NADER—KAIROINFO4U

THUTMOSE III's "BOTANICAL GARDEN"

The walls of a sanctuary built for Thutmose III at Karnak Temple are decorated with the strange and exotic flora and fauna that he encountered on his military expeditions through the Levant. *Khadija Hammond* explores the king's "Botanical Garden" and investigates its purpose.

UK

6 ISSUES

£29

Save 15%
off the cover price

EUROPE

6 ISSUES

£39

€43

U.S.A. &
THE REST OF
THE WORLD

6 ISSUES

£49

US\$62

Prices are based on British Pounds. Euro and U.S. Dollar prices can vary slightly according to the current exchange rate.

Call our order hotline on

+44 (0)1202 087 629

Open 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday (excluding bank holidays)

Or visit www.selectmagazines.co.uk/product/nile-magazine

Email enquiries:

nilesubs@selectps.com



U.K. subscribers can now
pay by Standing Order
Call 01202 087629