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The Legend of the Pharaoh's Lost Tomb

A TALE FROM THE VALLEY OF
THE GOLDEN MUMMIES

BAHARIYA OASIS, about 360 kilometers southwest of Cairo in the Western Desert, offers a rare quality among today's archaeological sites—it is quiet and remote. When the sun sets, everyone goes home to dinner with his family, and the entire town of El-Bawiti becomes silent. Our excavation at the site of the Valley of the Golden Mummies, as it is now known, due the spectacular discoveries first announced two years, has increased tourism to the town and caused seven new hotels to be built there. The local residents do not like to show that they are happy with this business. But I believe they want their oasis to be famous—and it is.

When I arrived on the first day in our first season of excavation in March 1999, I sat down in a cafe. The owner came over to me and said "Sir... please mention our town when you talk on TV." Three months later, his town became more famous than the Valley of the Kings—or so it seems from the burst of publicity that followed. Our all-Egyptian archaeological team went to sleep early in the evening and woke up early in the morning. Almost every night I would dream of the mummies and the next day's digging. But I will never forget the dream that I had the day before we entered a particular burial chamber. The chamber was closed and we could see only the face sculpted on a sarcophagus. It was left like this for a year until we came back in our second season at Bahariya to start this great adventure in archaeology—and to know who is the owner of this tomb.

I hoped that it could be the lost tomb that everyone had been looking for since 1939—the tomb of a powerful man of antiquity:

Zed Khonsu-euf-Ankh. When I arrived in Bahariya accompanied by twelve members of the expedition, and even on the road, I was thinking about this tomb. I said to myself, "I have been a lucky archaeologist... I have always revealed secrets." I felt that I would discover the source of the legend of the lost pharaoh's tomb. I dreamed that night that I was inside a room that had no end. The room was full of smoke and I could see nothing. I was afraid and called for help in a loud voice, but my voice did not carry, muffled in the thick air of the subterranean space. I saw the face that I had seen through the hole of the first chamber. It was the face of a man coming towards me. I was ready to fight, but I could not move my hands or my legs. He came closer and then I screamed and screamed again.

At that moment I awoke, drenched in sweat. But I could not decipher the meaning of the dream.

The next morning I got up at 5:30 am and took part of my team to Sheikh Sobi, the site of the discovery of the legendary lost tomb. This site is named for a religious man by the name of Sobi. The title "sheikh" is given to any religious person. The townspeople built a cenotaph for the Sheikh in the middle of the town El-Bawiti, capital of Bahariya Oasis, and gave this area his name.

I decided that this morning we would work on the documentation of the tomb. Mahmoud Afifi and Mansour served as my archaeological assistants, and Moustafa Abdel Kader was assigned to restore and conserve the inscriptions and scenes for further study. Noha Abd El Hafiz was our epigrapher, and Abdel Hamid Koteb supervised consolidation of the tomb. I also asked for the two *Reises* (*Reis* is an Arabic word given to the overseer of workmen) who came from Saqqara to help Abdel Hamid in the consolidation of the walls, and in the opening of the sarcophagus.

Safety was a real issue here, for the tombs are a maze of corridors, sometimes up to twenty-five feet below ground. Cracks were apparent in the ceiling and on the sides of the walls of the first chamber. Above all, we didn't want a cave-in—for the sake of both the tombs and the archaeologists working within them.

While we were working, I thought back to what Ahmed Fakhry, the great pioneer of Western Desert archaeology, had

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written about Bahariya in his book on the oasis, half a century ago. He wrote that he hoped that the tomb of the Governor of Bahariya, Zed-Khonsu-euf-Ankh, would be discovered. He had searched for it, but it was never found in those days. I was thrilled to be the fortunate Egyptologist who discovered this tomb.

I had to go again to visit the nearby temples of Ain-el-Meftela where the Governor and his brother built chapels to the Kings Apriis and Ahmose II of the 26th Dynasty (about 664-525 BC). The chapels were built of sandstone and cased in a very thin layer of mortar. These chapels were found in 1900 by the German archaeologist George Steindorff. In one of these chapels, Zed Khonsu-euf-Ankh is shown as the second and the third priest of the god Amun. The Governor is depicted equal in size to the king, showing that he was a very important figure and ranked second after the monarch. The name of his father is mentioned, Bady Isis, and his mother and wife both had the same name, Naes. His brother, Sheben Khonsu, who also served as Governor of Bahariya, was mentioned in the chapel inscriptions. The family totaled sixteen members.

When I entered the burial chamber to find out the name of the person who is buried there, I thought that he was a king because the features of his face were royal. I still reflect upon my sensations when I entered the tomb. It felt as though arrows of fire were attacking me. A cloud of golden-yellow dust filled the room. My eyes closed and I could not breathe because of the horrendous smell. I covered my mouth with my left hand and held a flashlight with my right. I ran to the sarcophagus with the yellow powder streaming about it, and the smell become very strong. I felt as though I was dying. I stood on the lid of the sarcophagus, and found the name of its occupant—it was the tomb of the Governor. My heart rejoiced.

I rushed outside. I asked the workmen to remove the powder in plastic bags. They put masks on their faces. I will never forget this moment, a moment in which the evil smell alone would have driven anyone to leave the chamber. But a true explorer does not turn back, and will venture into the darkness to discover the unknown.

Discovering this tomb and opening the sarcophagus are the most important parts of this story—the essence of the adventure of archaeology. Before I tell the rest, let me describe what we found depicted on the walls of the first chamber and the burial chamber. Perhaps most critically, it delineates the family tree and the relations of the various members in the ruling family.

The high priest, who headed the family, was known as Harkhef. He married a lady called Ta-Irw. With her Harkhef had a son by the name of Bed-Ashtar, whose tomb we had already found, and who was priest of the gods Khonsu and Horus. Bed-Ashtar married Ta-Nefret Bastet, whose tomb was found beside that of her husband. They had two children, a boy called Bady Isis and a girl called Naes.

Bady Isis married Naes and bore two boys, Sheben Khonsu and Zed-Khonsu-euf-Ankh. Sepesen Khonsu was the Governor of Bahariya and he is the one who started building the temples of Ain-el-Meftela. His brother Zed-Khonsu-euf-Ankh held the same position following the death of his brother.

The study of the long inscription that started from his chin and extended to the end of the sarcophagus shows that Zed Khonsu-euf-Ankh was the second priest of Osiris, Isis and Khonsu. He was also the hereditary Governor of Bahariya Oasis—at that time called Wahat-Smnkht, meaning “The deep-rooted oasis.” This was a new name given to Bahariya that had not been seen before, because previously the Dynasty 26 name that we knew it by was *Ds-Ds*. Perhaps the new name we found was given as an epithet to the Oasis because of its long and peaceful rule, for the Governor ruled Bahariya without trouble or any move against him or against the Kings of Dynasty 26. His duty before the king was to protect Bahariya from attack by the Libyans. I infer that he carried the title “second priest” because the king, who ruled from the Delta capital Sais, was the first priest.

Cut into the sandstone and colored with scenes and descriptions, the tomb of Zed-Khonsu-euf-Ankh is located to the northwest of the tomb of Bed-Ashtar—one of the tombs that was rediscovered. Its owner commanded that a domed room be

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placed before the burial chamber and the whole tomb encased in mortar. He introduced in this tomb a vault in which he ordered inscriptions to be done in sunken relief, and the painting was done directly on the mortar. This alone indicates that he was a powerful man, as he was able to bring in a special sculptor and artist from Memphis or Sais to design his tomb in the finest style of the period.

The plan of the tomb consists of a vaulted ceiling room, a passage leading to the burial chamber, and the burial chamber itself. The tomb also contained a shaft, located to the north, that was covered with limestone blocks. Since limestone was a precious building material in that region, these blocks show us the importance of this shaft, and tell us for sure that it leads to other tombs sealed with similar blocks.

The vaulted ceiling room is built rectangularly of sandstone blocks, and can be seen from the main shaft. The entrance is located on the east, while another entrance on the west has not yet been excavated. A door on the south leads to the burial chamber.

The ceiling of the tomb is decorated with scenes of vultures arranged in two rows; each row has six birds, and two above each other. Between the birds is a hieroglyphic line which reads, "an offering is given by the king and by Osiris who makes everything... the great god, Lord of Abydos... an offering of beer, oxen, birds and cloth."

At the north entrance of the room, a scene represents the mummy of the deceased. In front of the mummy's head is a vessel made of alabaster. On the eastern side of the entrance in the upper register is a scene of the Governor wearing a short skirt and raising his hands in front of Isis. In front is the following inscription: "The deceased Zed-Khonsu-euf-Ankh, Heir and Governor of the Standing Oasis, the Second Priest." Behind Isis stands the ba (soul) in the shape of a bird with the human face of the deceased, and behind her, sitting on a stand, is the god Horus in the shape of a hawk. Below this scene are six rows of hieroglyphics from Spell 17 of *The Book of the Dead*. These religious writings were expressed in several different "books," descendants of *The Pyramid Texts and Coffin Texts of the Old and*

Middle Kingdoms. Several of these were exclusively to decorate the kings' tombs and had a common theme of the nightly journey of the sun god Ra, who was depicted as a ram-headed human carrying the sun's disk on his head. The dead king was thought to travel on the boat of Ra as it passed through the twelve regions of the Underworld, bringing light to the inhabitants there. In the morning, the sun was reborn on the eastern horizon, an assurance that the dead king would also be reborn into another existence. In Dynasties 19 and 20, new variants of this theme were added. *The Book of Gates* depicted the twelve gates of the Underworld guarded by monsters. *The Book of Night and Day* describes the birth of the sun-god from the body of the sky-goddess, Nut. *The Book of Caverns* deals with different regions of the Underworld, characterized by caverns and pits. Collectively, these writings were known to the Egyptians as *The Books of the Underworld*. *The Pyramid Texts* and *The Book of the Dead* became important features of the tombs during the 26th Dynasty.

On the west side of the entrance on the upper register, we also see a scene of the Governor wearing the long skirt and raising his head in attitude of prayer—but, unfortunately, the rest of the scene is lost.

On the eastern wall of the room we find other scenes on the upper register, the most interesting of which are from *The Book of the Dead*, Spell 17. Also found are scenes, working from the north to the south to the entrance, beginning with a standing figure, possibly the Governor, wearing a long skirt. In front of him is a boat carrying a sphinx with a sundisk atop it, and four individuals are rowing the boat. Another scene follows with two seated lions, and between them, the sign *akht*, meaning "horizon." The first lion is called "Tomorrow," and the second one is called "Yesterday."

The next scene shows the *pnw* bird and a scene of the mummy of the Governor shown on the mummification bed. The head of the bed has the shape of the lion-goddess Sekhmet. Another scene shows Eternity in the shape of a sitting lady, and an unidentified god sitting within a *naos* form containing the cobra topped with the three plumes of Maat, goddess of cosmic order.

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A scene is also shown of Thoth, god of wisdom, in the shape of a baboon in front of a table. The next scene depicts the Governor worshipping the god Mehtwert in the shape of an ox. The scenes, all in all, consist of twenty-three rows of inscriptions from *The Book of the Dead*.

All that remains on the north side are nine scenes of the sun god Khepry. One scene has the winged scarab; in front of him stands a man and behind him stands the god Thoth or Horus with the head of a hawk, while a human holds the oars of the god's boat.

On the south lintel of the eastern entrance is a scene of two seated baboons. Another scene shows the same two baboons, and behind them a man wearing the long skirt and adoring the god Osiris, who is sitting on a chair in the Osiride form. In front of him is the lotus flower, symbol of resurrection. The man represents the Governor. Zed-Khonsu-euf-Ankh is also shown behind this, in an attitude of adoration. Below are inscriptions from Spell 15 of *The Book of the Dead*.

Other scenes on the eastern wall are damaged except for a scene of the god Thoth holding the was staff in his hand. He is shown with a human body and the head of an Ibis, and in front of him is a scene of the goddesses Isis and Nephthys.

The western wall of the vaulted room has an entrance to another room that was excavated later. On the upper register of this wall, from north to south, the god Osiris is depicted sitting in a chair, wearing the Osiris robe and holding the tool of *hka* (the ruler), and the mace. On his head is a crown, and in front of him is an offering table full of fruit.

After that is a scene of the goddess Nephthys, sister of Isis. The Governor has his hands raised and wears the long skirt, and in front of him the goddess Isis is depicted receiving him. This scene is followed by a one of a priest standing wearing the short skirt who holds in his hand a vessel known as *hs*. This is followed by a scene of the solar boat, and below it is the god Ra'-Horakhty holding the *waset* sign which indicates that he is the ruler. Below are inscriptions from *The Book of the Dead*.

Other scenes show an offering table, and on it are three loaves

of bread; a priest with a shaven head stands next to it wearing the short skirt and holding the *hs* vessel in his hand. Others show two goddesses followed by a scene of an obelisk, then by another with Zed-Khonsu-euf-Ankh in an attitude of adoration; in front of him is an offering table topped with bread and a vessel. Below are twenty lines of hieroglyphic inscriptions representing Spell 1 from *The Book of the Dead*.

The south wall of the room is among the most vital, because it leads to the burial chamber. In the middle of it is the lintel in the shape of a temple pylon used to seal the burial chamber, surrounded by chunks of sandstone cased with white mortar. The whole wall is decorated with scenes as a way to hide the burial chamber, so that nobody would suspect that there is anything behind this wall. These remaining scenes show Osiris in the middle, sitting on a chair in his Osiride robe, holding the mace and the ruler signs with inscriptions that say, "Osiris, the great god, lord of Abydos and lord of the netherworld." Behind him, Isis holds in her left hand the *ankh* sign, meaning "life," as if she is giving life to the Governor, and her right hand is raised to protect Osiris. Her name is written next to her. Behind Isis stands her sister Nephthys, holding in her left hand the ankh sign, and in her right a fan. Her name is also inscribed, with a decorative scene of the plumes of justice and the sacred cobra.

Behind the vaulted ceiling, the winged sun, known as Phdt, gives down the ankh sign depicted in three rows. The winged sun is colored red; on both sides of it, the sacred cobra is colored yellow, the wings are colored blue and red, and the life sign (*ankh*) is also blue. Directly below this scene is one of the mummy of Zed-Khonsu-euf-Ankh which fills the whole top of the wall. The face is colored blue, and the body of the mummy is colored dark brown, while the hair is red. The head faces east to receive the rising sun, and beside the head is a vessel known as an ewer, and beside the feet is a small vessel.

Below this scene are three more rows of scenes. The upper register shows scenes from east to west of Zed-Khonsu-euf-Ankh standing with his hands to his side, and the heart of knowledge is depicted in front of him. The next scene has Thoth, god of wis-

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dom, standing on a platform and in front of him again is the heart of the deceased, as if testifying that the Governor did good things in his life. This is followed by a scene of Zed-Khonsu-euf-Ankh worshipping the sun god, represented as the sun disk with rays.

Other scenes show the boat led at its prow by the god Thoth, with Osiris in front of him, and a man erect, representing the Governor, worshipping him, while another man stands at the prow of the boat. Another scene shows Thoth in human form, while in front of him stands the Governor wearing a short wig. Next we see the Governor facing the previous scene worshipping, and a scene of the god Ra'-Horakhty with a head of a hawk topped with the sundisk. All these scenes represent the trip of the Governor on his journey to the afterlife.

The middle register starts with an inscription reading *imntt*, meaning west. Then two baboons are shown in a posture of adoration, followed by a scene of the Governor's *ba*. Another scene shows Shu, the god of air, and the Governor's *ba* is repeated, portrayed in the shape of a bird with a human face. The lower register shows the Governor seated, raising his hands in attitude of worship, and another scene represents him holding the *hrp* sign, indicating power; in front of him are two pottery vessels.

We reached the burial chamber through a small entrance. The room is cut in the sandstone and encased in white mortar. On it are the remains of scenes of different gods, colored in yellow. The most important are the baboons on the south wall in attitude of adoration. Below are scenes of Osiris, Isis, Nephthys, and Horus.

On the south, east, and west sides, there are two small holes on each wall, used for wooden sledges to transport the sarcophagus, which is 2.3 meters in length and 1.2 meters in width. On top there is a huge cover with the face of a human, representing the Governor with beautiful, large features. (The chin is broken). On the body of the cover, Isis is shown mourning, and on the two sides Osiris is depicted in large scale with his robe, holding the *hka* (ruler) tool and the mace. Beside the head is a scene of Osiris, with Isis in front of him, and behind him Nephthys.

In the middle of the anthropoid sarcophagus, a line of hieroglyphics, from top to bottom, reads, "Offering was given by the

King and by Osiris, Lord of the West, the Great God, Lord of Abydos, the offerings are bread, linen and alabaster given to the Heir and the Governor of the Oasis, the Second Priest, Priest of Osiris and Isis, Zed-Khonsu-euf-Ankh, the son of Bady Isis, born of Lady Naes.”

The most interesting thing that we can notice from the scenes of *The Book of the Dead* is that they are marred by many mistakes. It seems that the artist who inscribed it did not have the text in front of him, and wrote it from memory. It appears he was a local artist without the experience and talent of the royal artist trained at the capital of Sais or Memphis.

THE DAY OF THE OPENING

I talked to everyone in the team, who informed me that the tomb had been fully documented and restored. I asked Abd El-Hamid to remove the pylon-like entrance of the burial chamber, so that we could enter and take out the anthropoid sarcophagus. I also consulted with Reises Ahmed and Talal about how we could move the sarcophagus the following day. I told them that I wanted to meet the three of them in the evening to discuss our strategy. In the afternoon, I went down alone to look at this huge, heavy coffin, marveling at how the Egyptians had moved its sixteen tons all the way to the Oasis. I could see from the modeling of the face that it was the work of a sculptor at Memphis, located some 225 miles north east of Bahariya. The Governor asked the overseer of his work to go to the north to Tureh, where the fine white limestone was quarried. They cut a huge piece of limestone and moved it from the east of the Nile to the west, where the sculptors of Memphis worked to form its features, and artists drew scenes of Osiris and Isis and inscribed it with hieroglyphics. They then moved the coffin to El-Bahnasa at Middle Egypt, about 115 miles to the south, and headed east through the desert for about 110 miles, perhaps using the same route that the donkey caravans used to transport wine.

The architect and the two chief workmen came to see me, and I imagined that I could see their pharaonic ancestry in their features. Ahmed and Talal were very polite, always using the title

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“Sir”; their faces are dark and strong, and they are sure of their expertise. They said, “Do not worry, sir—remember our adventure with you at Abusir when we opened the twenty-ton sarcophagus of the director of the palaces and the vizier Iuf-aa.”

The next morning, everyone was quiet at breakfast, and I sat in thought, pondering the sarcophagus that we would move that day. I was so absorbed, I could not even say good morning to anyone. I could see everyone eating his or her meal in complete silence. A telephone call from Cairo came to Ahmed and Talal, saying that their father was dead. They had to go to Saqqara for the funeral. Everyone said that it is the Governor's Curse, and that this man dead more than 2,000 years did not want his tomb to be trespassed. This talk—the daily and evening talk of all the villagers—“the Governor's Curse... the Governor's Curse”—became a song of the children in El-Bawiti. Meanwhile, Ahmed and Talal took the bus right away to Cairo and stayed for one week. This is the custom of the people from upper Egypt; they had to sit at home to meet the people who came to give their sympathy. They returned after one week and met me at the hotel.

I asked Ahmed and Talal to come with me in my car next morning. I wished to break the silence. I said to them, “I hope you will forgive me for not going to Saqqara to offer my regrets and sympathies to your family.” They replied, “Your support was with us all the time.”

I said, “Did you know what the workmen said about you after you left Bahariya? The people started murmuring that it was the curse of the Governor's tomb that killed your father.” I could see the smiles on their dark faces. They were not superstitious about their work.

I asked three archaeologists to accompany me as well: Tarek, Mahmoud, and Mansour, along with Abd El-Hamid the architect, and about five workmen. All of us were inside the burial chamber, I with my notebook in hand, and Tarek was taking pictures. And there was only one foreign friend. Ken Garrett the photographer of the National Geographic, who accompanies me on all of my excavations. I always appreciate his smile and his kindness—he always brings luck, and has become a good friend.

I believe that the five hours that we spent inside the burial chamber cannot be described. It is beyond imagination, this adventure of archaeology. I can say that these five hours were among the best of my life.

It was very hot and everyone was sweating. We started to put wooden beams under the lid and began to push the sarcophagus to the south. During a pause, I wrote in my diary about my impressions of everyone in the room. They began again and Reis Talal called for everyone to push, while the workers chanted, “Hela Hob, Hela Hob, Hela Hob,” an Arabic slang song to help in moving weighty things. They also said, “Sali ala al-nabi, sali ala al-nabi,” a prayer for the Prophet Mohamed to help all of us to move the sixteen-ton limestone sarcophagus.

I was standing on the other side of the sarcophagus and thinking of the surprise waiting for us when we opened this huge, ancient piece of stone. We were sure that we would find another one inside, but we did not know what it would look like. I saw that they had moved the sarcophagus some centimeters to the south. I asked Abd El-Hamid to pass me a light because I wanted to examine the sarcophagus and see if it was intact or if it had been opened before. I bent down and the sweat was trickling into my eyes, and dirt drifting into my ears, but I didn’t care. But I had to stand still because the remains of the foul-smelling yellow powder still surrounded the sarcophagus. I asked Tarek to take more photographs from the lower side of the sarcophagus. I continued to peer with my flashlight, and Mansour asked me, “What do you see?”

I replied with excitement, “It is intact! It was never opened before!” But then I noticed a small hole on the side of the sarcophagus. “Wait,” I said. “It seems it was opened in the Roman period.” Everyone was looking at me with dismay but I said, “Don’t worry, the discovery is still exciting, and surely the ancient robbers won’t have been able to steal everything. I can smell gold in this room...” And I said that my nose always detects what comes from the past—and I sensed what was coming.

We began to place the sledges in one place and asked everyone to participate. Some pushed, some pulled the rope tied to the

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sledge, and so we began, with everyone reciting prayers invoking the name of God and the prophet Mohamed. I heard again the words “Hela Hob, Hela Hob” like thunder in my ears. The lid was moved about two feet to the south. We saw an inner sarcophagus inside encased in a black material, which, upon closer examination, appeared to be alabaster. Alabaster came from Hetnub in Middle Egypt, located a few miles to the north of Tel el-Amarna, the city of Akhenaton, the king who believed in only one God. The name Hetnub has an ancient meaning: “Het” means “place” and “nub” means “gold,” i.e. the place of gold. The Governor Zed-Khonsu-euf-Ankh sent an expedition to Hetnub to cut the alabaster, a very fine material for the inner sarcophagus.

Moustafa Abdel Kader and Salah, the restorers, came to the burial chamber and started to carefully clean the surface of the sarcophagus. We found that there was an attempt to make the inner sarcophagus anthropoid as well, but the work was not very good. It was quite primitive and no one believed that this could be the work of the skilled Memphite workmen. Thus I concluded that this inner sarcophagus was made at Bahariya, because the artists there were not trained well to do this work.

We decided to move the inner alabaster sarcophagus to the north of the room; it took us one hour to move. It weighed about five tons. We took an hour to rest, and came back to open it. We found the remains of a coffin, and inside, the mummy of the Governor.

Inside the burial chamber and around the third inner coffin were about twenty-two amulets made of faience. Some of them were inscribed with the names of Isis and Osiris. We also found five amulets with the eye of Horus, and three amulets representing the heart, along with a large number of *shawabti* and two canopic jars. The most interesting discovery was the eight pieces of gold found within the sarcophagus. This the the gold of history. One represented a sacred winged cobra, while another had the shape of the winged *ba*, and there were two other cobra amulets.

The third season began in January 2001 and lasted to the end of April. We had to demolish six houses that were in the way. I

went to the people who owned these houses and told them that I would give them only a piece of land, and that they were responsible for building new houses for themselves. They all agreed. We brought the city council's bulldozer to tear the houses down, and we began our third season's adventure. The site became more important, when also we found another twenty-two mummies in the Valley of the Golden Mummies—the discovery that the media called the “Tutankhamun of the Greco-Roman era.” This season we excavated north of the Governor's tomb, and found the tomb of his wife, Naes the Second. Near her limestone sarcophagus we found two hundred and twenty-four shawabtis inscribed with her name, and when we opened the sarcophagus, we found her mummy and one hundred and three pieces of gold. The most important of these pieces was an amulet engraved with the name of King Wah-Ib-Ra'. The artist had made the amulet in the shape of a heart topped with the sundisk. The upper part bears the word *Wah*, then the heart, which is *ib* in hieroglyphics, and a sundisk represents the sun god Ra. And that shows how the artist used art in writing hieroglyphic. A beautiful ring was on the finger of the lady. We also found scarabs, one of them a heart scarab. These gold treasures made all of us happy, and big smiles were on the faces of my assistants.

The excavation also revealed the tomb of his father Bady Isis, and around it were twenty-nine shawabtis, beautifully carved with hieroglyphic inscriptions of the name and titles of the Governor's father. Another striking amulet was about seven centimeters high and represented Qebeh-Sennuef, one of the sons of the god Horus.

To date, we have found six tombs of the family of the Governor of Bahariya. We are still waiting to discover the rest. We demolished more modern houses that were illegally built over the site, and we are expecting more great discoveries. We never know what secrets the sands of Egypt may hide.