



THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE
The University of Chicago
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BETWEEN HEAVEN & EARTH: *Birds in Ancient Egypt Tour*

March 6 – 24, 2014

Escorted by **ROZENN BAILLEUL-LESUER**

Left: *Birds in an Acacia Tree*, Nina de Garis Davies, 1932.

Cover: Baskets of eggs beside a small flock of captured Dalmatian pelicans (*Pelecanus crispus*). Tomb of Horemheb, Thebes.

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Dear Members and Friends of the Oriental Institute,

Our latest special exhibit *Between Heaven & Earth: Birds in Ancient Egypt*, gave us an unprecedented glimpse at the importance of these feathered denizens of the sky in the world of ancient Egyptians. I now want to invite you to join the exhibit guest curator, Rozenn Bailleul-LeSuer, in exploring firsthand the impact of birds on ancient Egyptian culture, while having the opportunity to admire the real-life models that inspired Egyptian craftsmen. Offered for the first time by the Oriental Institute, this tour to Egypt combines a unique historical discovery of the country with an ornithological flavor, which will make this program a wonderful journey not only for art-history aficionados and archaeology buffs, but also for bird watchers. The tour has been specifically timed to coincide with the peak of spring migration, when the myriads of Palearctic birds that winter in sub-Saharan Africa return to their breeding grounds in Europe and Western Asia. In the breathtaking landscape of the Nile Valley, surrounded by the splendors of ancient Egypt, we will have exciting opportunities to observe these splendid species.

Rozenn Bailleul-LeSuer's expertise in Egyptology, combined with her knowledge and passion for Egyptian avifauna, will motivate our guests to develop a deep appreciation for Egypt's cultural and natural heritage. She will be joined by a remarkable team of onsite experts and local birders to give you an experience of a lifetime. Whether you have visited Egypt before or not, this tour will undoubtedly provide you with a new and fresh look on the fascinating world of ancient Egypt.

Gil J. Stein
Director, Oriental Institute



THURSDAY, MARCH 6:
Depart from Chicago.

FRIDAY, MARCH 7: CAIRO

We arrive into Cairo and transfer to the Mena House Hotel, situated on the Giza plateau. This evening we will meet with Rozenn Bailleul-LeSuer for dinner.
MENA HOUSE HOTEL (D)

SATURDAY, MARCH 8: CAIRO

Our tour begins at Saqqara with visits to the newly opened museum and the Step Pyramid complex of Djoser. Here we might sight a pharaoh's eagle owl. We will also tour the bird catacombs of North Saqqara, the smaller Pyramid of Teti, the mastaba tombs of the nobles Ti and Ptahhotep, as well as the small, unfinished tomb of Neferherenptah, known as the "Bird Tomb" for its agricultural and bird hunting scenes. After lunch, we will meet with our birder for an afternoon of birding at Lake Dahshur. Some of the common birds we might spot today are the common kestrel, laughing dove, the unique Eurasian hoopoe, pallid swift, hooded crow and the dainty white wagtail. We may also have the good fortune to see many of the other migrants that pass through this region.
MENA HOUSE HOTEL (B/L)

SUNDAY, MARCH 9: CAIRO

This morning we continue our birding at the Abbassa fish ponds in the Eastern Delta. Here a nice mix of water and bush country birds can be seen, including Senegal thick-knees, little bittern, squacco heron, purple swamphen, and clamorous reed-wabler, white-throated, pied kingfishers and also possibly jack snipe, crested lark, and bluethroat. Later we continue to Tanis, Zoan of the Bible, and capital of Egypt during the 21st and 22nd Dynasties. Tanis served as the burial place of some of the dynasties' most important leaders. These pharaohs embellished their temples with decorated stones and monumental sculptures brought

Clap-Netting scene from the tomb of Nakht (ca. 1400-1390 BC). Four fowlers are shown having caught in their net a wide variety of colorful waterfowl, for the most part ducks and coot (Fulica atra). From Nina Davies 1936, vol. 1 pl. 48.

from the Delta. Today the site is an impressive outdoor museum.

MENA HOUSE HOTEL (B/L)

MONDAY, MARCH 10: CAIRO

We will spend the morning at the Egyptian Museum and discover highlights of its huge collection, including the "Geese of Meidum," a fragment from the temple of Userkaf, the new animal mummy room, and the objects from the tomb of Tutankhamun. After lunch, touring continues to the only surviving



Rozenn Bailleul-LeSuer is a Ph.D. candidate in Egyptology at the University of Chicago, a life-long birder, and, most recently, the curator of the special exhibit *Between Heaven & Earth: Birds in Ancient Egypt* at the Oriental Institute Museum. After studying chemical engineering in France, as well as Greek and Latin in Vermont, she is now able to combine her passion for birds and her academic interest in Egypt. Her dissertation research tackles the economic impact of birds on Egyptian society, as they were used as offerings for the gods and the dead, and food for the living.

representatives of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, the Pyramids of Giza and the Sphinx. Time permitting, we will stop at the remarkably preserved remains of the Solar Boat of Cheops housed in a small museum.

MENA HOUSE HOTEL (B/L)

TUESDAY, MARCH 11: FAYYUM OASIS

After an early departure, we will first stop at the important Greek and Roman site of Karanis (Kom Washim), which housed two limestone temples and a large agora. We then transfer to 4x4 Jeeps for our touring around Lake Qarun, the largest saltwater lake in Egypt. Touring continues at the Ptolemaic town of Soknopaiou Nesos (Dime es-Siba'). Ringed by a high mud-brick wall, it is reached by a processional way of stone lions ending at the remains of its large temple. The remainder of the day will be spent birding around the Lake Qarun and Wadi El Rayan, where we are likely to see grebes, coots, ducks, and shorebirds.

HELWAN HOTEL FAYOUM (B/L/D)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12: FAYYUM OASIS

Today's touring to Medinet Madi (Narmouthis) will give us a chance to see a site famous for its temple built by Amenemhet III and IV in the late 12th Dynasty. This well-preserved complex also exhibits two Late Ptolemaic temples, with an avenue of Greek and Egyptian-inspired sphinxes and wonderful lion statues. We will then head to Tebtunis (Umm el-Breigat), one of the largest Graeco-Roman towns in the Fayyum, where the first of innumerable papyrus scrolls was found, enabling archaeologists to begin to understand the local history during this period. Our last visit today is to Hawara to see the remains of the Pyramid of Amenemhat III and site of the labyrinth thought to be his mortuary temple.

HELWAN HOTEL FAYOUM (B/L/D)

THURSDAY, MARCH 13: MINYA

After visiting the collapsed Pyramid of Meidum, built by Snefru, possibly the earliest true pyramid, we drive to Minya. We will stop to visit Tuna el-Gebel, with tombs and catacombs of sacred baboons and ibises dating to the Graeco-Roman period, as well as Akhenaten's Amarna boundary stelae. The day ends at Hermopolis (Ashmounein), whose patron deity was Thoth, the god of wisdom.

HORUS HOTEL (B/L/D)

FRIDAY, MARCH 14: SOHAG

Touring begins at the Middle Kingdom rock-cut tombs of Beni Hassan, with their lively paintings of daily life. Here the offering chapels of Baqet III, Khety, and Khnumhotep II include stunning bird representations



including the famous "Birds in an Acacia Tree." We then continue to the small town of Sohag.

EL NILE HOTEL (B/L/D)

SATURDAY, MARCH 15: LUXOR

An early departure will allow us to reach Luxor in time for lunch at our hotel. Our drive will be along canals and fields, where the sharp-eyed among us might spot some of the area's birds, in particular the numerous cattle egrets feeding alongside the Egyptians working in their fields. We will then spend the afternoon touring the magnificent sanctuary of Amun-Re at Karnak, with its maze of monumental gateways, obelisks, pillared halls, and subsidiary shrines.

STEIGENBERGER HOTEL (B/L)

SUNDAY, MARCH 16: LUXOR

This morning our birder will join us to explore the extensive fields on Crocodile Island. Here we are likely to see strikingly bright green bee-eaters, pallid swift, masked

shrike, brown-necked raven, graceful prinia, and the beautiful Nile Valley sunbird. At this time of the year there will be flocks of migrating western yellow and white wagtails, and trumpeter finches. This afternoon we will visit Chicago House, the home of the Oriental Institute Epigraphic Survey project, and Luxor Temple. Beginning at the newly renovated Avenue of the Sphinxes, which originally linked Luxor and Karnak temples, we examine the Roman fresco paintings restored jointly by Chicago House and the American Research Center in Egypt, as well as the open-air museum and blockyard conserved by Chicago House.

STEIGENBERGER HOTEL (B/L)

MONDAY, MARCH 17: LUXOR/CRUISE

This morning we will cross the Nile to the west bank to continue our touring at the temple and chapels of Medinet Habu and the most famous of the hundreds of tombs of the Kings, Queens, and Nobles, spread over two square miles. These tombs are of special interest for their artistic and naturalistic murals, which give us an intimate view of life in ancient Egypt. We will choose some of the tombs with the best bird representations in their chapels. We will also visit the Ramesseum, where the fallen statue of Ramesses II inspired Shelley's famous poem "Ozymandias." Our lunch will be on board the deluxe *Farah Nile Cruiser*, our floating hotel for the next four nights.

FARAH NILE CRUISER (B/L/D)

TUESDAY, MARCH 18: SAIL/EDFU

This morning will be spent at leisure to explore the local suqs or the town. During lunch on the *Farah*, we sail to Edfu to dock for the night.

FARAH NILE CRUISER (B/L/D)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19: SAIL/KOM OMBO

Touring begins this morning at the Temple of Edfu, a completely preserved Ptolemaic



temple dedicated to the falcon god Horus. Species of eagles, little owls, breeding kestrels and barn owls have been seen in and around the temple. We will have several hours to enjoy the sundeck and pool as well as the ever-changing panorama of life along the Nile as we sail up the river. In the late afternoon, we arrive at Kom Ombo, often called the Acropolis of Egypt for its spectacular site overlooking the Nile. It is also unusual in being equally dedicated to two gods, Horus the Elder and the crocodile god Sobek. We will dock in front of the illuminated temple for the night or possibly sail on to Aswan.

FARAH NILE CRUISER (B/L/D)

THURSDAY, MARCH 20: ASWAN/CRUISE

We sail on to Aswan to tour the quarry, where an unfinished obelisk remains embedded in its native stone, the High Dam and Philae, the Ptolemaic temple dedicated to Isis, an incredible complex of chapels and shrines as well as the last bastion of paganism in the Byzantine Empire. This afternoon we will go birding by felucca around Kitchener's Island and the First Cataract.

FARAH NILE CRUISER (B/L/D)

FRIDAY, MARCH 21: ASWAN

We will disembark and spend the morning birding at Tut Amun village fish ponds, where we will spot water birds and possibly the elusive three-banded plover. In the afternoon we will visit the Museum of Nubian Civilization.

ASWAN MÖVENPICK HOTEL (B/L)

SATURDAY, MARCH 22: ABU SIMBEL

A memorable day! We fly to Abu Simbel, where the rock-cut temples of Ramesses II and his favorite queen, Nefertari, have been saved from the rising waters of the Nile resulting from the Aswan High Dam. The temples were built to honor the deified royal pair and to awe the Nubians. The afternoon will be spent birding around the lake. This area is known for its excellent birding. We hope to see a wonderful variety of species including the Egyptian goose, greater flamingo, great white pelican, Eurasian spoonbill, osprey, spur-winged plover, marsh and wood sandpipers, black-tailed godwit, common crane, slender-billed gull, and many more. One birder even reported a rare sighting of a mourning collared-dove.

SETI FIRST HOTEL (B/L/D)

SUNDAY, MONDAY, MARCH 23 & 24: CAIRO

There will be some time for some last-minute birding to enjoy the Egyptian avifauna before we fly back to Cairo. On Monday we will transfer to the airport for our flights home.

RADISSON BLU AIRPORT.

White breasted kingfisher in Giza.



For additional information, please contact
the Oriental Institute Membership Office
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oi-membership@uchicago.edu

or
Archaeological Tours
271 Madison Avenue, Suite 904
New York, NY 10016
(Toll free) 1-866-740-5130
archtours@aol.com.



COST OF TOUR: \$8145
(excludes international airfare)

Single Supplement: \$1320

THE TOUR RATE INCLUDES:

- Internal flights within Egypt. Surface travel by air-conditioned motor coach and cruise ship as detailed in the itinerary.
- Accommodations are based on two persons sharing a twin-bedded room with private bath as listed or similar.
- Meals as listed in the detailed itinerary, table d'hôte.
B – Breakfast L – Lunch D – Dinner
- Baggage handling for one suitcase per person.
- Arrival and departure transfers on tour dates only.
- Gratuities to tour manager, escorts, guides, birders, drivers and porters.
- A \$600 contribution to The Oriental Institute.

NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR COST: International airfare, passport and visa fees, excess baggage charges, transfers for tour participants arriving or departing on flights other than the group flights, insurance, beverages and items not on the menus.

TARIFFS: Based on rates in effect April 2013 and a minimum of 21 participants. For groups falling below 21 participants, a small groups surcharge of \$350 will be added. All rates subject to change.

DEPOSITS & PAYMENTS: A \$1200 deposit is required to book. Final payment is due twenty weeks before departure.

SINGLE ROOMS: For those traveling alone but who prefer to share with another, we will endeavor to work out congenial rooming arrangements. If impossible, or if a single room must be assigned due to the roommate's canceling or incompatibility, or for any other reason, even if at the last moment or while on tour, the single supplement or prorata thereof must be collected.

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CANCELLATIONS: In the event of cancellation, refund in full less a \$350 handling fee will be made until twenty weeks before departure. From twenty to twelve weeks before departure, the penalty is \$2500. From twelve weeks until eight weeks before departure, the penalty is \$5900, and after that time the penalty is \$7100 plus any penalties levied by hotels and operators. Penalties are also levied on the single supplement. These penalties could reach 100% for last-minute cancellations. There will be no refund for cancellations on the day of departure or thereafter. Cancellation of the tour by the Oriental Institute: full refund. **Note: Neither the Oriental Institute nor Archaeological Tours accepts liability for any airline penalties incurred by the purchase of nonrefundable airline tickets.**

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