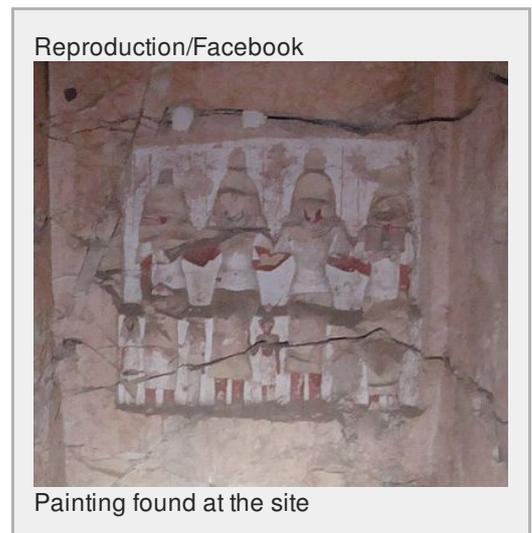


Brazilians wrap up diggings in Egypt

A team headed by archeologist José Roberto Pellini, from Sergipe Federal University, spent two weeks exploring the tomb of a noble man in Luxor. Research will continue next year.

Alexandre Rocha*

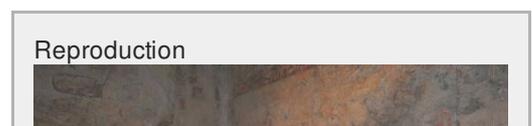
São Paulo – An unprecedented Brazilian expedition carried out diggings in an archaeological site in Luxor, Egypt. Headed by archeologist José Roberto Pellini, from the Sergipe Federal University (UFS), the team opened and explored the tomb named TT 123 throughout two weeks. The tomb belongs to Amenemhet, state officer and royal scribe during the kingdom of pharaoh Thutmosis III (1504 to 1450 B.C.) of the 18th dynasty. The initials “TT” comes from “Theban Tomb”, since Thebes, current Luxor, was the capital of Ancient Egypt during the so called New Kingdom. In September of last year, ANBA had published that the expedition was going to take place in March 2017.



According to Pellini, his team was the first to enter the tomb since the beginning of the last century and to perform a scientific exploration of the place. “We performed a general exploration, of the physical conditions, embossments and drawings,” said the researcher by phone from Cairo. They found fragments of ceramics, sarcophagi and mummies, among other artifacts. “The most important thing is the quality of the embossments, there are very rare scenes [depicted],” he said to ANBA.

On the human remains, the professor says that it is difficult to say if they belong to the original owner or not, since these places were later used as rubble storage and can present fragments from other tombs. There’s still a whole lot to explore.

“The mission was 100% positive, beyond our expectations, the tomb is even more special than we could have imagined, maybe it rivals with Ramose’s in



the quality of the embossments and paintings,” said Pellini, mentioning the well-known and the beautifully decorated tomb of a noble man, also located in Luxor. “But it’s still too early to tell, many scenes need conservation and restoration,” he added. This time, however, there was not an expert team in hand for this job. Among the “rare” scenes, he mentioned images of pigs and chariots.



During the diggings, the archeologists found pathways to a room inside TT 123 itself and to another tomb. This adjoining tomb, named TT 293, is practically unexplored. “We know almost nothing about it, but we are thinking about digging it in the future,” said Pellini.

One of the main difficulties faced by the team, according to the researcher, was the conditions of another adjoining tomb, TT 380, belonging to Amenotep-Huy, to which the team also has the exploration concession. “The conservation status was really bad, part of it was threatening to collapse, so we had to take urgent steps, place wood posts, for safety reasons and so it’s still standing next year,” he told. This work was done with the aid of local experts.

Return

The work that was done was the first phase of the diggings. The researchers are planning to return between December of this year and February of the next for a longer term of 45 days. “Next year, we will perform a more detailed work,” said Pellini. For an expanded research, however, the group will need funding.

They are also planning to use virtual reality to offer the general public the possibility to get to know the site. Something along these lines, using 360° photos, was posted on a Facebook page.



Pellini also said that the fact that it’s the first Brazilian mission of its kind caught the attention of people in Egypt positively, although Brazilian researchers have taken part in international groups. “The welcome was fantastic, they (the Egyptians) have great appreciation, great affection for Brazil”, he said.

In addition to Pellini, also part of the team were Julián Sánchez, who has a doctor’s degree in Archeology from the National Museum (Rio de Janeiro Federal University) and research associate in Sensory Archaeology at Sergipe Federal University (UFS), Caroline Murta Lemos, a doctorate student and also a research associate of the same laboratory, and Bori Németh, Hungarian Egyptologists. They worked together with a group of six experts from Egypt’s Center of Documentation of the Supreme Council of Antiquities.

See more images from the diggings on the Facebook page of the mission: www.facebook.com/BAPEResearch

***Translated by Sérgio Kakitani**

