The Great Oasis of Egypt

*The Great Oasis of Egypt* provides the first full study of the Dakhla and Kharga oases in antiquity, written by participants in several of the current archaeological projects in this region. The oases were closely tied to Egypt and to each other, but not always easy to control, and their agricultural productivity varied with climatic conditions. The book discusses the oases' geology, water resources, history, administration, economy, trade connections, taxation, urbanism, religion, burial practices, literary culture, and art. New evidence for human health and illness from the cemeteries is presented along with a synthesis on the use of different types of cloth in burial. A particular emphasis is placed on pottery, with its ability to tell us about how people lived and about the extent to which we can identify imports and exports through its shapes and fabrics, and also on literature and art, which suggest full participation in the culture of Greco-Roman Egypt.

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The Great Oasis of Egypt

The Kharga and Dakhla Oases in Antiquity

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Preface

Like many collective volumes, this one is the product of a conference, held at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, New York University, in September 2014. But this conference was simply the conclusion to a multi-year collaborative project supported by a grant from the Partner University Fund (Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the United States) to the universities of Limoges and Poitiers and New York University. The publication of the book gives us an opportunity to thank the PUF again for their help. The grant was intended to foster mobility between the teams as well as the sharing of data and insights. In the event, this sharing was particularly valuable in the areas of geomorphology and ceramics, where members of the French team associated with the excavations at El-Deir took an active role in the work of the American-led (but actually international) team at Amheida. But readers will be able to see the results of collaboration in a number of other chapters as well. The intellectual goals of the collaborative project are set out in the Introduction and do not need to be sketched here.

We do, however, wish to thank those who do not figure in the list of authors but who nonetheless contributed to the success of the project and the conference. Above all, these are the other members of the El-Deir and Amheida teams, our partners in the field and in conversation. We cannot list them all here, but many of them figure in the bibliography and footnotes. A list of the Amheida team over the years can be found at www.amheida.org, and a list of the members of the El-Deir team is available at oasis.unilim.fr. We would signal the importance of the work of Bruno Bazzani in creating the Amheida database (www.amheida.com) and generating much of the visual documentation for the Amheida excavations and the objects found. The work of Joëlle Carayon and Aurélien Bolo, in charge of the El-Deir archaeological database and geographical information system, and the support of Rémi Crouzevialle
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and Fabien Cerbelaud for the creation of visuals and maps is also to be highlighted. For the conference, we depended on several members of the ISAW staff, most importantly Kathryn Lawson, Eliana Katsiaouni, Tiffany Wall, and Diane Bennett; on the French side, Corinne Sylvestre, Magalie Fajardo, and Céline Chrétien provided full support.