

# Minister Eldamaty opens the Temple of Hibis – Kharga Oasis

Dr. Mamdouh Eldamaty, Minister of Antiquities has opened Temple of Hibis today (Thursday October 29 2015) at Kharga Oasis to all the visitors, after the ministry has finished the project of saving and restoring the temple which started in 2005, with a total cost of about 71 Million and 650 thousand L.E.

Eldamaty clarified that this project goes with the ministry's concern with the maintenance and restoration of the archaeological sites through all ages to protect the Egyptian cultural heritage, and to keep it for the coming generations as our ancestors left them. He also said that the opening of this temple to the visitors will increase foreign tourism; it will also achieve the plan of the Ministry in putting more governorates on the international tourism map.

The Minister said that the project has been performed by a number of engineering experts and experts in different fields of restoration who work at the Ministry's Project Sector and that reflects the ability of the Ministry in protecting its cultural and archaeological heritage.

Engineer Wa'd Alla Muhammad, Head of the Project Sector said that this project started with the phase of preparing the studies in 1999, then the actual work started, it contained many important phases. The phase of the foundations works which contains the making of the filter wall around the temple and its extensions, the wall is 80 cm in width, 13 in depth, and it prevents water to reach the temple foundations.

The project phases also contain works of walls binding. After the decision of keeping the temple in its original location, it became necessary to bind the walls, all rooms has been bound, the ceiling of the Persian and Ptolemaic portal, also the floors have been replaced with floors of sand stone similar to the stones that were used in the temple.

The rebuilding works of the archaeological elements which had been unbound in 2001, were carried out, such as the dock and the Mamisi (house of birth), and the Romanian and Ptolemaic portal, and the monumental wall around the temple, and also the out wall around the archaeological site to protect the building, in addition to make a road out the new wall to serve the nearby area.

Wa'd Allah added that, the fine restoration works contain restoring the inscriptions and the murals, filling the cracks, and completing the columns.

Mahmoud Afify, Head of the Ancient Egyptian Antiquities Sector said that ,many works have been completed, the construction works of the visitors building on a space measures about 1000 M, the fire alarm system, building of an entrance for visitors only with a highly safety system to protect the site. The site now is ready, visitors from all over the world can come and visit, the place has been cleaned manually to protect the site, there are many passages to ease the tour of the visitors inside the site, the internal and external lightning system works have been completed, the alarm units, the

safety system against fire, movable and immovable cameras are fixed to complete the watching system of the temple and its extensions.

Bahgat Ibrahim, General Manager of Kharga Area referred to the historical importance of the temple, it is the only one which remains from the Persian Saitic Period (26<sup>th</sup> dynasty), most of its inscriptions have been completed during the 27<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, the name of the temple Hibis is the old name of Kharga, and the Greek name of the old Egyptian word Hypt which means plough.

This temple was built for the worship of the Trinity Amon, Mut, and Khonsu in addition to the Gods Osiris, Horus and the goddess Isis, the upper floor of the temple has a booth for the God Osiris

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