

NEKHEN

NEWS

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The Friends of Nekhen

WELCOME TO THE FRIENDS OF NEKHEN

IN THIS FIRST ISSUE of "Nekhen News" the staff of the Hierakonpolis Expedition would like to welcome our new members to the FRIENDS OF NEKHEN. Thank you for your support.

THE PURPOSE of this newsletter is to keep you posted on what's going on at Hierakonpolis and in the larger archaeological scene in Egypt. When a new discovery is made at Hierakonpolis, you will get the inside story first. When an exhibit or special event is held, you will receive a personal invitation to the opening festivities.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, comments or information to share, you are invited to send them to:

The Editors, Nekhen News
Earth Sciences & Resources Institute
University of South Carolina
Columbia, South Carolina 29208

WE ARE LOOKING FOR ENTHUSIASTIC EDITORIAL VOLUNTEERS AND CONTRIBUTORS. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, PLEASE WRITE US AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS.

FRIENDS OF NEKHEN TO VISIT HIERAKONPOLIS EXPEDITION THIS SEASON

NORMALLY, HIERAKONPOLIS IS NOT OPEN TO VISITORS. By special arrangement, however, we have organized two archaeological tours of Egypt which feature short stays with our expedition and seminars by staff on topics ranging from archaeology and Egyptology to natural science and art plus visits to out-of-the-way places.

The dates of this season's expedition tours are:

November 8 - 24, 1985

January 13 - February 3, 1986

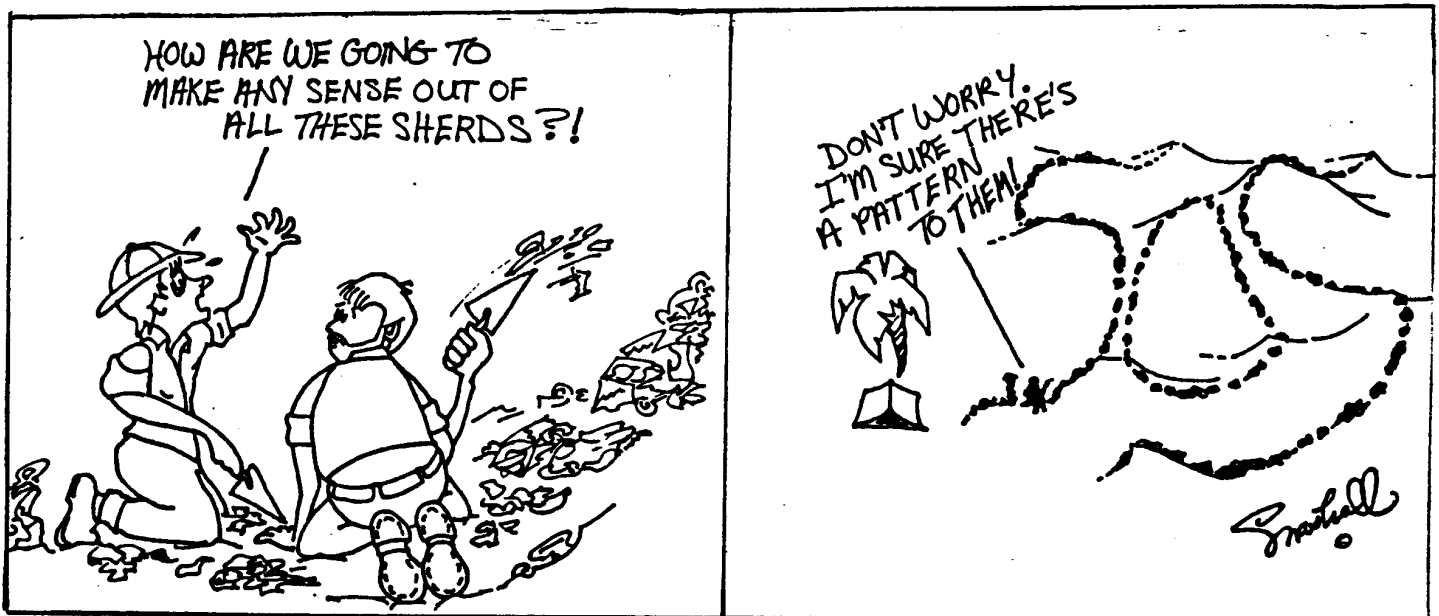
Although this season's events are booked, we are considering offering



similar opportunities next time. For those of you who might be interested or who have friends who have always wanted to get an insider's view of Egyptian archaeology while cruising the Nile in style, this is a great opportunity. Even better, a portion of your fare counts as a tax deductible contribution to our expedition!

If you are interested in information about future expedition tours, please write:

Travel Information--Friends of Nekhen
Earth Sciences & Resources Institute
University of South Carolina
Columbia, South Carolina 29208



PATTERNS AMONG THE SHERD PILES
IN SEARCH OF EGYPT'S EARLIEST ARCHITECTURE

FOR YEARS archaeologists visited the huge Predynastic settlements at Hierakonpolis and proclaimed them totally disturbed.

SKEPTICAL of such pronouncements by traditionally trained excavators, we have spent years sensatizing ourselves to READ THE DIRT (or perhaps we should say, sand) to recover ancient Predynastic building plans much the way Egyptologists learn to read badly eroded walls for faded inscriptions.

IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH OF 1985 we located the corner of what seems to be a very large building of early to middle Gerzean date (ca. 3300 B.C.). In the past, archaeologists would have been content just to find such a structure, but we realize that the material associated with it is also important and needs to be analyzed. Sometimes this is easier said than done. The amount of cultural debris in the ancient settlements of Hierakonpolis is staggering. For example, in one 10 X 5 meter area alone, we recovered over 30,000 potsherds weighing in excess of 560 kg (1,232 lbs.), thousands of pieces of chipped flint, bags full of animal bones including vertebrae from Nile fish perhaps 2 or 3 meters long, and numerous well preserved botanical remains.

THIS COMING SEASON we plan to return to the same site (designated HK-29A) and face the thankless but scientifically essential task of analyzing, counting and weighing half a million potsherds!

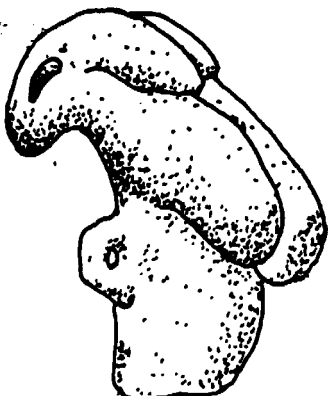
PLANS FOR THE UPCOMING 1985-86 SEASON AT HIERAKONPOLIS

Thanks to your financial help through the FRIENDS OF NEKHEN and a matching grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, we are making a major effort at Hierakonpolis this year with a combined excavation and study season.

We will work from November through February, a time when the Upper Egyptian weather is nearly perfect for archaeology. Days are sunny and clear with temperatures ranging in the 70's and low 80's, while nights are cool with the mercury dipping into the 40's. We are never rained out, although sandstorms can occasionally make the going difficult.

THE FIRST HALF of our season we will excavate in two Gerzean town sites dating between 3500 and 3200 B.C., and map a large stone mound which we believe was either a temple or palace. By recovering community plans from this period, we will complete a regional sequence of settlement development spanning the formative years of Egyptian civilization from about 4000 B.C. to 2230 B.C.--that is, from the Predynastic through the Pyramid Age or "Old Kingdom."

THE GERZEAN era (also known to archaeologists as the Naqada II or Late Predynastic period) was a time of political expansion, warfare and growing international trade. Already, our 1985 test excavations have recovered imported Palestinian pottery, while older British diggings unearthed a unique "Painted Tomb" of a local king only a short distance from where we will be working.



CERAMIC "CAPTIVE"
FIGURINE FROM TOMB-11
HK-6, CA. 3200 B.C.

ALTHOUGH THOUSANDS OF GERZEAN TOMBS have been dug, virtually nothing is known about the way people lived from day to day in their towns and villages. To correct this bias, we will be employing modern scientific techniques to excavate parts of two well preserved settlements.

SINCE HIERAKONPOLIS POSSESSES THE LARGEST AND BEST PRESERVED PREDYNASTIC SETTLEMENTS IN EGYPT, the information we recover will be of great importance to the study of Egyptian history as a whole and to the problems of urban origins in the Nile Valley.

AFTER FINISHING OUR SETTLEMENT EXCAVATIONS, we plan to complete work begun in 1982 at a Protodynastic royal tomb about $2\frac{1}{2}$ km. farther into the desert. Between about 3200 and 3100 B.C. the cemetery we have identified by the unromantic label of "HK-6" was used by the last Predynastic kings of Hierakonpolis before the unification of Egypt under the first pharaohs. Whether these pharaohs, such as Narmer, actually came from Hierakonpolis is still a matter of dispute among experts. What is clear, however, is that continuing to argue over old often badly excavated evidence is not the way to solve the problem.

ONLY BY CAREFULLY AND SCIENTIFICALLY EXCAVATING CEMETERIES LIKE HK-6 at Hierakonpolis do we have a chance to unravel the origins of kingship in Egypt. Our expedition is especially fortunate in being able to study all aspects of the archaeological evidence-- from settlements to cemeteries.

IN 1982 TOMB-11 produced a wealth of rich artifacts, including wooden bed legs carved like bulls' feet, lapis lazuli beads shaped like small flies and shells, ivory and stone inlay, imported obsidian (volcanic glass) sickle blades and fired clay figurines.

THIS YEAR we will finish tracing the foundations of a wood and reed mortuary temple that once stood over the grave and excavate two remaining ancient looters' backdirt piles. Expectations of important finds are running high!

WHO ARE WE? OUR 1985-86 HIERAKONPOLIS EXPEDITION STAFF

- Prof. Michael Allen Hoffman--University of South Carolina,
Director
- Mrs. Barbara Adams--Petrie Museum, University College London,
Egyptologist, artifact analyst, conservator
- Mr. Carter Lupton--Milwaukee Public Museum, Assistant Director,
archaeologist
- Ms. Renee Friedman--University of California, Berkeley, ceramicist,
Egyptologist
- Prof. Ralph O. Allen--University of Virginia, analytical chemist
- Mrs. Patricia Hill Cresson, MFA--New York, artist photographer
- Dr. John McArdle--The Humane Society of the U.S., archaeo-
zoologist
- Prof. Nabil El Hadidi--Cairo University, archaeo-botanist
- Mrs. Hala Barakat--Cairo University, assistant archaeo-botanist
- Prof. Hany A. Hamrrouch--Cairo University, geologist and geochemist
- Mr. James Mills--Charleston, S.C., assistant archaeologist, photo-
grapher, surveyor
- Ms. May Trad--The Egyptian Museum, Cairo, toponymist, registrar
- Mr. Jonathon Elias--University of Chicago, assistant archaeologist,
surveyor, artist
- Mr. Robert Snashall--Washington, D.C., assistant archaeologist,
registrar

SINCE the Hierakonpolis staff varies from year to year depending on expedition objectives, individual availability and our level of funding, many members are not listed here.

SPECIAL welcome to Prof. Walter A. Fairservis, Jr. of Vassar College, expedition co-director who will be visiting with us in January 1986. We would like to thank Dr. Diane Lichtenstein of Case Western Reserve University, member of our February-March 1985 staff, for contributing so many ideas to the FRIENDS OF NEKHEN.

EDUCATION AND THE HIERAKONPOLIS EXPEDITION

THE HIERAKONPOLIS EXPEDITION IS UNIQUE in providing an opportunity to students from many colleges and universities in the United States, Egypt and England to participate in an interdisciplinary research project incorporating a wide range of scientists, scholars and artists working together in a conducive social and educational atmosphere.

STUDENTS FROM THE FOLLOWING COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES have received training at Hierakonpolis over the years:

1. University of Wisconsin, Madison
2. University of South Carolina
3. University of California, Berkeley
4. University of Chicago
5. Cairo University
6. Vassar College
7. University of London
8. Washington University, St. Louis
9. University of Virginia
10. University of Washington, Seattle

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING "HIERAKONPOLIS" GRADUATES

Jeremy R. Geller--awarded M.A. in Anthropology from Washington University, St. Louis, Dec., 1984. Thesis title: The Predynastic Ceramics Industry at Hierakonpolis.

John Frederick Harlan III--awarded Ph.D. in Anthropology from Washington University, St. Louis, May 1985. Dissertation title: Predynastic Settlement Patterns: A View from Hierakonpolis.

Hany A. Hamrroush--awarded Ph.D. in Chemistry from University of Virginia, August 1985. Dissertation title: Archaeological Geochemistry of Hierakonpolis in the Nile Valley.

WHERE DO YOU STAY AT HIERAKONPOLIS ?

IN THE LATE 1890's English archaeologists lived in an old tomb. In 1935 the Metropolitan Museum of Art staff had big tents and fancy porcelain.

THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS we have been given free room and board by the Egyptian Ferrosilicon Co. at its guesthouse in Edfu thanks to the interest and enthusiasm of its Chairman, Mr. Memdouh Bayoumi and the hospitality of his staff. This year our expedition tour visitors will stay on luxury Nile boats in lieu of suitable on-site accommodations.

WE ARE NOW PLANNING AN EXPEDITION HOUSE to be built on the site. The Egyptian government has already agreed to provide the land and we have selected a secluded location with a grand view. In addition to offering reliable accommodations to our staff and guests year after year, the expedition house will allow us to devote more time to research and less to travel. It will perform an important educational function by providing a base not only for archaeologists and Egyptologists but for our geologists, botanists, zoologists, architects and film makers, many of whom are already attached to Egyptian universities and who will be able to bring their own students here for interdisciplinary training.

UNLIKE OUR EUROPEAN COLLEAGUES whose governments maintain well appointed institutes and dig houses throughout Egypt, we must rely on the support of private and corporate sponsors to build our house. Although building materials are still inexpensive in Upper Egypt by American standards, they are going up sharply every year, so the sooner we build, the more we get for our money!

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO WORK WITH OUR EXPEDITION HOUSE COMMITTEE, please write us in early March 1986 when the drive will be getting underway. Address inquiries to:

FRIENDS OF NEKHEN
EXPEDITION HOUSE COMM.
EARTH SCIENCES & RESOURCES INSTITUTE
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COLUMBIA, S.C. 29208



