

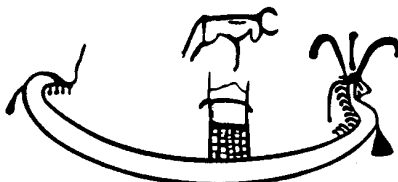
NEKHEN NEWS

published for

THE EGYPTIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

Vol. IV, No. 2

Summer 1988



Included in this issue:

"The First Egyptians" is Milwaukee Bound

Updates: Congratulations to Catherine; Grand Opening of Exhibition at McKissick

An Archaeologist Reconstructs His Past


Fish Stories and Tall Tails


Mapping Hierakonpolis

MILWAUKEE BOUND

On June 19, after all our visitors to the McKissick Museum have gone home, our staff will begin taking down "The First Egyptians" and preparing it for its journey to the Milwaukee Public Museum. The process is not as simple as might be imagined. The greatest care must be taken with artifacts, models, and panels. Exhibition Curator Karin Willoughby will supervise the process and Project Coordinator Elizabeth Stanton must see that reports are filled out on each piece as it is taken from its case, carried to secure storage, and then repacked in custom-made shipping boxes for its journey north. After arriving in Milwaukee, the boxes must sit a day or two to allow the objects to get acclimated. Then they will be unpacked under the supervision of Carter Lupton, Assistant Curator of Anthropology, and status reports filed. And then the whole time-consuming but rewarding task of remounting the show must begin again so the July 23 opening deadline in Milwaukee can be met. It will be a busy and hectic occasion — one which must be repeated each time our exhibition travels across the country. For those of our members in the midwest or those who might wish to visit Milwaukee, we recommend you make reservations early and stay to enjoy the city's famous Summerfest.

NEKHEN NEWS UPDATES

 CONGRATULATIONS CATHERINE C. SMITH (outgoing Editor of Nekhen News and Research Associate with the Egyptian Studies Association). Catherine has been awarded a prestigious full scholarship to pursue her doctorate in anthropology at Harvard University. We hate to lose Catherine but know she is going on to great things. Best wishes from the Egyptian Studies Association and all her many friends at South Carolina.

 It was a balmy Tuesday evening when almost 600 people donned black tie or pearls and joined to celebrate the opening of "The First Egyptians" exhibition at the McKissick Museum here in Columbia. Guests traveled from as far away as Egypt and California to get a preview of a show which is truly a "first" in many senses of the word.

For the first time, these more than 130 artifacts, from handaxe to pharaoh's dagger, are being displayed together. For the first time, a museum exhibition has been produced on ancient Egypt which goes beyond the artifacts themselves and tells the viewer about archaeologists, their trade, and how artifacts help us to interpret the past. And for the first time, Egypt before the pharaohs is the focus of a national traveling exhibition.



Good Luck to Catherine C. Smith



Opening night festivities →

J. O. Mills, Associate Director of the Hierakonpolis Project, in foreground; geologist Dr. Steven K. Perry and Ms. Elizabeth Revelis inspect the "time line."




Young visitors to "The First Egyptians" on a tour led by McKissick Museum Assistant Jiles Bishop. Mummy mask courtesy of the Harer Family Trust.


Since opening night, compliments have been pouring in from both professionals and the public at large. From the artifacts to the text panels and from the design layout to the slide-tape show, viewers have been impressed by both the academic and artistic quality of the show. And while the exhibition has barely had time to be acknowledged by professional journals, *Museum News* published a write-up on the show in their latest issue, and the 8-minute slide-tape presentation which accompanies the exhibit has already won a bronze in the prestigious CASE Award competition.

Lest you think that all the work is over for Dr. Hoffman and the museum staff, just remember that they are busy preparing the show for its next venue in Milwaukee. Dr. Hoffman has also had a very busy schedule of TV and radio interviews on stations from North Carolina to Georgia.

Response to the show here in Columbia has been immense. The number of visitors to McKissick is almost triple what is normally expected at this time of year. School groups have been taking advantage of the educational packages prepared for teachers, and children from first grade on up have been visiting the exhibition every day from 9 until 2 — some from as far away as North Carolina!

As "The First Egyptians" makes its national tour, we hope that those members of the Egyptian Studies Association who didn't make it to Columbia will be able to see the show closer to home.

 A special thanks to all the Friends of Nekhen who helped make the opening reception of "The First Egyptians" exhibition a smashing success. We were glad to see you and hope the opening in Milwaukee brings everyone out again! Ms. Carol McCanless, Mrs. Onni Lattu, Ms. Suzanne Rowland, Professor Marshall Clagett, Ms. Rene Friedman, Dr. Steve Perry, Dr. W. Benson Harer Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Olan Mills II, Mrs. Sharon Mills, Mr. and Mrs. Fredrick Lord, and Mr. Bob Snashall.

 The Earth Sciences and Resources Institute and the McKissick Museum sponsored four weeks of lectures in conjunction with "The First Egyptians" exhibition. Our visitors included such eminent speakers as Dr. David O'Connor, University of Pennsylvania; Dr. Zahi Hawass, Egyptian Antiquities Organization; Dr. Fekri A. Hassan, Washington State University; Dr. Walter A. Fairservis, Vassar College, New York; and our own Dr. Michael A. Hoffman, University of South Carolina.

"THE FIRST EGYPTIANS" EXHIBITION

Milwaukee Public Museum, Milwaukee, Wisconsin:
July 23 through September 25, 1988

AN ARCHAEOLOGIST RECONSTRUCTS HIS PAST

by Carter Lupton

Milwaukee Public Museum

Carter Lupton, a staff archaeologist with the Hierakonpolis Expedition and Assistant Curator of Anthropology at the Milwaukee Public Museum, recently completed a prehistory of his life (i.e., life before joining the Hierakonpolis Expedition). Nekhen News was fortunate enough to obtain exclusive publication rights to his story...

The Pre-Formative Era (AD 1961-1969)

Prior to 1961, I do not recall having any career ambitions, but in that seminal summer I was introduced to my future — the past. For my 12th birthday I received, among other things, a gift subscription to the popular illustrated journal *Star Spangled War Stories*. It was in the pages on this prestigious publication (which jealous detractors insist on labeling a "comic book") that I was introduced to dinosaurs. Of course I had known of them for years, but this was total immersion — the beginning of a life-long passion for things extinct, or at the very least long-dead. (I have a passion for living things too, but that doesn't lead to Nekhen — or does it?)

My dream of becoming a vertebrate paleontologist stayed with me until college when I was told (by a person who studied mammal fossils and therefore should have been suspect) that "no one studies dinosaurs anymore!" Actually, at that time almost no one did — at least not respectable scientists. That has all changed in the last dozen or so years and dinosaurs are now a hot item, whether you're arguing the pros and cons of warm-bloodedness or suggesting their extinction was due to supernovae, volcanoes, or meteorites. [I have finally gotten my wish to work with dinosaurs, having participated in four field expeditions in the past decade, but you'll have to wait for the publication of my next work, *My Life Before Prehistory* for that story...]

The Age of Enlightenment (AD 1969-1971)

In 1969 I sublimated my loss of dinosaurs as a career and turned for solace to the study of other, potentially more interesting fossils — those of man and his ancestors. Thus, my major shifted from geology to anthropology. Unfocused at first, I was interested in everything from Australopithecus to the Inca, from cave man to pharaoh. Gradually, I narrowed my interests to complex civilizations and their origins, until finally my primary subject became Egypt, particularly the transition from Predynastic village life to pyramid-age grandiosity.

A prominent stimulus to my movement in this direction was one of my University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee professors, Bill McHugh. During a seminar on early civilizations, Bill loaned me a dissertation on work at Hierakonpolis by one of his fellow doctoral candidates at UW-Madison. Guess who? That's right — none other than Michael Hoffman.

In the summer of 1971, I was lucky enough to be one of a small group of students that Bill [of course, he was "Dr. McHugh" to me then] took on an archaeological field trip to Europe. In Germany we ran into Dr. Hoffman. What could be more natural? After all, it's only logical that two people who are interested in Predynastic Egypt and who have spent several years attending universities just over an hour's drive from each other should finally meet at a Mesolithic rock shelter 6,000 miles away! At any rate, we did meet and chat a bit about Hierakonpolis (no digging was in progress at that time), but Mike left after a few days and I'm sure forgot virtually all about me.

The Dark Ages (AD 1971-1980)

About three years later, early in 1974, I wrote to Mike in advance of a trip I was making to attend the Society for American Archaeology meetings in Washington, DC, fairly close to his home in Virginia. We arranged to meet, again briefly [as I recall it was for about twenty minutes], but I did purchase my own copy of his dissertation for \$5 as proof of my sincere interest in the Hierakonpolis project. By that time, however, work had been stopped at the site for five years — with little hope of it resuming in the near future.

I had just finished my Master's degree, having spent my summers digging at Cahokia Mounds in Illinois while regaling my fellow grad students with predictions of my glamorous future working on the Nile, which in fantasy seemed so exotic compared to the reality of the Mississippi. But even my venerated professors dissuaded me from looking to Egypt for my future; "be realistic and stay in the Midwest," they counseled. Despite the bleak outlook, though, things did get better.

In 1976 I started working at the Milwaukee Public Museum, originally as surveyor for Dr. Rudy Dornemann's Bronze Age excavations at Tell Hadidi, Syria. Euphrates Valley archaeology wasn't my ideal, but it came closer than Indian mounds. More important, by working in Syria I was able to at least visit Egypt, if only as a (fairly knowledgeable) tourist. And that's just what I did for the next three summers — not the best time to be in Egypt, with temperatures as high as 130°F, but I kept going back!

During this period, in 1977, I learned from a colleague that there was a possibility of renewed excavation at Hierakonpolis. I scrambled off a letter of interest. And in 1978 fieldwork did resume at the site. But without me! I even heard that the Expedition was making good progress. They seemed to be managing just fine — sans Lupton. Hierakonpolis was the only place I wanted to be but it seemed that Nekhen and I were just

not destined for each other. So, over the next couple of years I pretty much gave up the idea of ever working professionally in Egypt.

The Dawn of History (AD 1980-present)

That's when Bill McHugh miraculously reappeared — the *deus ex machina* of my story. He had sparked my interest in Predynastic Egypt to begin with, and he had led the European trip that resulted in my initial contact with Mike Hoffman. He would come through yet a third time.

No longer teaching at UW-Milwaukee, he had returned in October of 1979 for a regional archaeology meeting. That's where I bumped into him — by accident — in a hotel lobby. Casual chitchat revealed that Mike was about to return to Hierakonpolis for his third field season in as many years, this time as the Expedition's Director, and Bill thought he might be able to use me. I called Mike the next day, jogged his memory (we hadn't talked in over five years and neither of our meetings had exactly constituted a summit), and, hard as it is for me to believe even today, that was that. Two months later, in January of 1980, I was again on a plane for Egypt, but this time I wouldn't be a tourist.

The rest, as they say, is prehistory . . .

FISH STORIES AND TALL TAILS

by D. J. Brewer

University of Illinois

Working with dead critters does nothing to increase your circle of friends. Riding back from the desert with a dead jackal tied to the top of the truck (legs straight and sticking upright towards the sky), a Frenchman, while sitting in one of Cairo's horrible traffic jams asked, "What is that?" My reply, "A dead jackal." He didn't believe me, then got out of his car and exclaimed, "It is a dead jackal." "Of course, why should I lie." I then went into a Tom Sawyer-type explanation of why a dead jackal was of use to me.

Each bone is a blueprint of the animal's life. For example, if the animal was a fossorial creature (*i.e.*, digging) you can see huge over-developed areas on the bone where the digging muscles were attached. If you find an animal bone in an archaeological site, you usually can presume it was placed there by man. Most bones can be identified to a particular animal species. We know each animal has certain environmental requirements in order to survive. If you find a bone of a particular animal and know it lived nearby, the environmental conditions necessary to support it must have existed as well.

Identifications are made by comparing an unknown bone to a known modern counterpart. Consequently, before the identification of bones recovered from an archaeological site can begin, a reference collection of

animal skeletons from that area must be made. Building a collection of Egyptian materials has its problems — particularly if your landlord is an unwilling participant in your laboratory work. Many a Cairo landlord paying a visit to my balcony has stared in amazement at hundreds of dried and hung animal corpses. The polite ones simply leave, but usually the sight inspires a long conversation.

During one trip to Egypt, a colleague was invited to a plush Luxor hotel to work on the local fauna for the hotel's tourist guide. Because fishing was one of the attractions, and fish are my particular area of specialty, I was invited to spend a few days at the hotel as well. After my second day, we were informed that the maid would not be back to clean our room. The dead and stuffed birds (future museum specimens) were hard to take, she said, but the two huge catfish (ca. 4 feet long) living in the bathtub were the factor that tipped the balance. No maid entered our abode for the remainder of our stay.



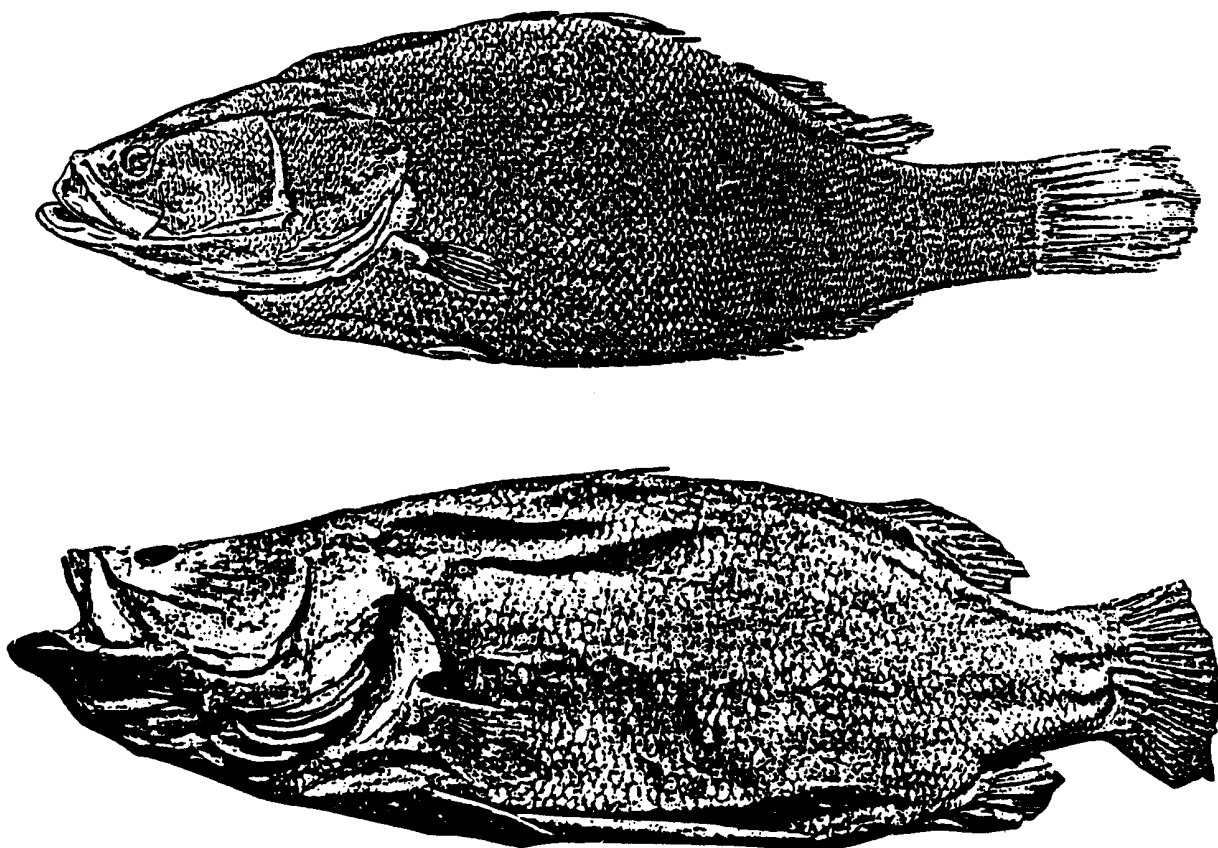
Fish are playing an important role in research at Hierakonpolis. The Hierakonpolis "Fish Dating Study" [this does not imply that we are romantically interested in pisciform life!] is a means to chronologically order a

site based on the growth rings found in fish vertebrae. Growth rings are like tree rings and have the potential to supply the archaeologist with a relative date for the site as well as important information on the environment during the fish's lifetime. Like trees, one ring is laid down each year of a fish's life and reflects local environmental conditions. One species of fish I am working on is *Lates niloticus*, the Nile perch (see illustration below). It can grow to be over 6 feet long, weigh in excess of 300 pounds, and exceed 20 years in age.

Just imagine returning from Egypt with 14 modern specimens and clearing them through Customs. Incidentally, they have been dead for at least two weeks. Funny, I always have a clear path through Customs and out to the next flight.



Fish have played an important role in Egypt as far back as 18,000 BP. They have been heavily relied upon as a food source throughout Egypt's prehistoric and historic periods, and they serve as excellent environmental indicators. Even Egypt's first king, Narmer, was named for a fish — in this case a "catfish." At first glance, compared to the rather aggressive names of his counterparts one might get the impression that someone who takes his name from something as insignificant as a



Mummified Nile perch (*Lates niloticus*) from Esna (after Lortet and Gaillard, 1905).

catfish might be somewhat of a wimp. In Egypt, however, catfish can be tough customers. Some are voracious feeders, others are heavily armed with serrated spines and possess natural bony helmets to protect the head. One species can give an electric shock of over 200 volts. This feature has gotten the attention of many an unsuspecting tourist.



To better understand the habitat preferences of the Nile fish, and to appreciate the techniques used to catch these creatures, I worked and traveled with a group of fishermen up and down the Nile for the large part of one summer. This trip has apparently become embedded in the local fishermen's stories. A year and a half after my work with the Nile fishermen, I was sitting in Edfu at a local tea house along the Nile. I explained to the curious patrons of the shop what I was doing in Edfu. There was a little flurry of excitement and one asked if I knew of a *hawaga* (foreigner) that lived in the deserts and did nothing but look at birds. I said that, yes, he is a good friend of mine. The patrons then began to recite many a tall tale about my ornithologist colleague. One man, wishing to top the stories, then brought up the subject of a *hawaga* he had heard of that traveled with the fishermen of the Nile. He presented a sequence of tall tales that sounded vaguely familiar. It finally dawned on me that I was the individual they were discussing. Because I wanted to hear more, I did not let on that I was the subject of their conversation. The two things that stick in my mind are, number one, the stories had certainly been stretched to the limit, and two, interestingly, the work I had done with the fishermen was conducted near Minya, which is a full day's drive from Edfu. Just as the tail of the great Nile catfish moves him up and down the Nile, so have the tales of the fishermen spread my notoriety up and down those shores.

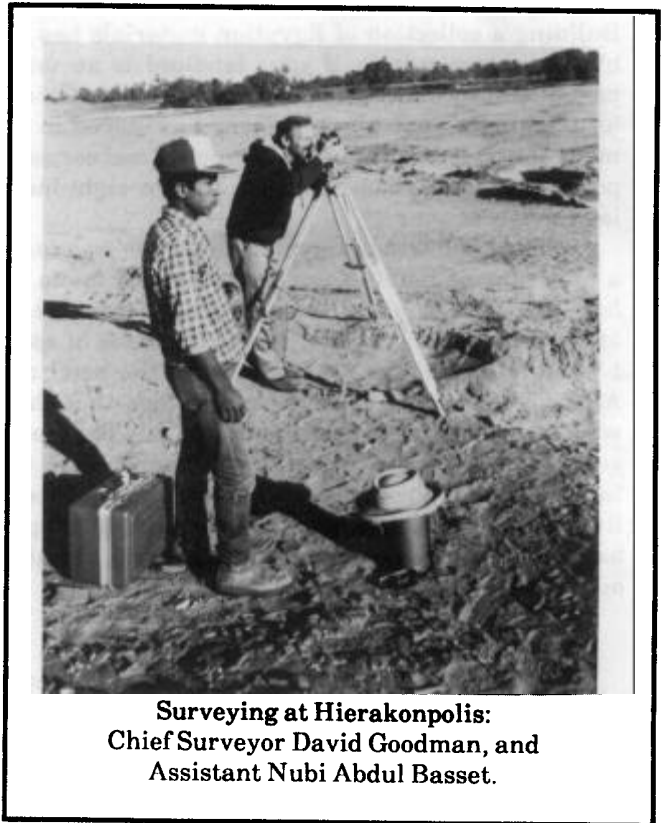
MAPPING HIERAKONPOLIS

by James O. Mills

Associate Director, Hierakonpolis Expedition

In a vast archaeological concession like Hierakonpolis, covering perhaps 100 square kilometers and containing over 90 separate sites, good maps are essential to the success of our work. Ironically, we simply can't buy good topographic maps of our remote area in Egypt — we have to make them.

Napoleon's scientists were the first to attempt mapping archaeological sites at Hierakonpolis, in about 1798. Walter Fairervis started our own mapping project in 1967, the year he began his detailed foot surveys of the concession. At the same time, a grid system was put in place on the Kom el Ahmar (ancient Nekhen) to guide excavations. In 1978, Michael Hoffman estab-



Surveying at Hierakonpolis:
Chief Surveyor David Goodman, and
Assistant Nubi Abdul Basset.

lished a master grid system for the whole concession. The following year, architects Mike Osteen and Chris Tigh produced a handsome 1:4000 topographic map of the central part of our region and, in the course of his doctoral work in 1982-83, Fred Harlan updated the Osteen-Tigh map.

The master grid system has served us well over the past decade as the basis for excavations, mapping, and the interpretation of Predynastic settlement patterns. We have had to face one serious problem, however; the grid system is inadequately marked. The few existing markers (wooden stakes and iron rods) were limited to sites of previous excavations and were poorly anchored. A few were driven deep into the dried silt beds in the desert, but most were set in the desert sand. Consequently, stakes were knocked out of alignment or dislodged by foot traffic around sites or by passing Sudanese camel caravans. In addition, as we have expanded into new, remote areas such as Locality 64 (site of the new rock painting mentioned in the last issue of the *Nekhen News*), which is over two km away from the nearest marker, traditional methods of surveying required inordinate time and effort to simply establish accurate grid coordinates.

Our solution: establish a series of permanent markers set in concrete or stone. Such "control points" would be placed at strategic locations, so that from any site at least one monument would be within view and, hopefully, not far away.

Michael Hoffman and I reviewed the expedition's surveying needs and, at the 1987 annual meeting of the

American Research Center in Egypt, consulted a professional surveyor, David Goodman. David qualifies as an "old Egypt hand" and has spent over eight years surveying such spectacular monuments as the Giza Pyramids and the royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings with his new laser equipment. It was a great moment when David agreed to join our staff.

We began our work in January, the coolest month of the year in Egypt, when heat waves don't obscure vision until ten o'clock in the morning. One big advantage to working in the desert is the total absence of vegetation — the bane of surveyors in the eastern United States. The survey crew — which consisted of David Goodman, his assistant Nubi Abdul Basset, and myself — established a total of 19 cast aluminum monuments. We anchored the aluminum discs to bedrock with epoxy. Where there was no rock, we dug holes one-half meter deep, drove a meter long iron rod into the soil, and filled the hole with cement to provide a permanent base for the marker.

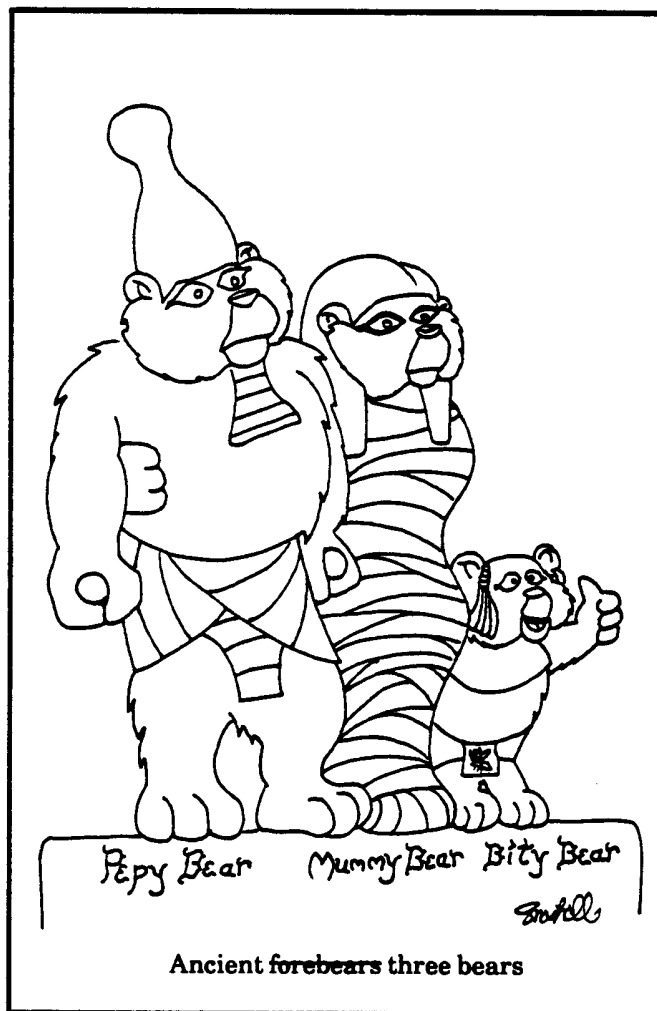
We placed monuments throughout the concession — on easily seen promontories, if possible, near major sites or concentrations of sites. Once the monuments were in place, we then surveyed their locations relative to one another by means of a closed traverse — a dot-to-dot survey which returns to the point of origin so that trigonometric calculations can check accuracy. The monument locations were then "tied" to the Hierakonpolis grid using two secure grid markers at the Predynastic Temple Site (Locality 29A). Monument elevations were converted to their height above mean sea level by tying the traverse to an 83 meter mark on a nearby canal sluice gate.

To accurately and expeditiously survey the vast Hierakonpolis region, we used electronic distance measuring equipment (EDM) and a theodolite accurate to within one second. The EDM is nothing more than a precision stopwatch, infrared gun, and sensor. When the target is in the cross-hairs and the trigger tripped, infrared light is shot to the target (a bank of prisms set up over the observed station) and reflected back to the instrument. The elapsed time provides the unadjusted distance via division by the speed of light — a far cry from toting a 100 meter tape across the desert and playing tug of war with the wind!

The degree of accuracy was achieved not only by the precision of our instruments, but by our use of a strict regimen in the field. At night, we converted our readings to mapping data through computations which took into account atmospheric pressure, temperature, elevation above sea level, and the earth's curvature. Imagine our satisfaction when we completed the survey, coming 360 degrees around the traverse, and our calculations

brought us to within one millimeter of the original "X" on the first monument!

One might well ask, "What good is such accuracy?" In truth, an accurate series of reference points has two functions. First, it allows us to better relate and analyze the settlements, cemeteries, kilns, and rock inscriptions of Hierakonpolis and to view the area as a geographical/geological whole. Second, as the expansion of farming and sandstone mining threaten sites throughout our concession, establishing and maintaining accurate boundaries for the archaeological area becomes a critical step in protecting it for future generations. We soon hope to develop new approaches to mapping and eventually to be able to integrate our "on the ground" results with aerial and space imagery.



"THE FIRST EGYPTIANS" EXHIBITION

Milwaukee Public Museum, Milwaukee, Wisconsin: July 23 through September 25, 1988

"THE FIRST EGYPTIANS"

Official Tour to Egypt

October 28 - November 13, 1988



EGYPT, LAND OF THE PHARAOHS

This unique tour is being offered in conjunction with "The First Egyptians" exhibit which is touring the United States in 1988 until March 1990. It has just been presented at the McKissick Museum at the University of South Carolina and is on its way to Milwaukee.

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- Two days in Luxor, where visits include: the Luxor Temple and Museum, Karnak, Dendera, and Abydos. Sound and light presentation in the evening at the Luxor Temple — an outstanding sight.
- During the next four days, you will cruise the Nile (on boats belonging to either the Sheraton or the Hilton). Stops and visits will be made to the Valley of Kings (where you will enter tombs of kings and queens), Edfu, Kom Ombo, Philae, and more. There will be time during the cruise to sit in the sun and watch the fascinating scenery of the Nile, which will mesmerize you.
- During a two day stop in Aswan, you will fly to Abu Simbel to visit the magnificent temples of Rameses II and Queen Nefertari — a most impressive sight. In Aswan, you will visit the High Dam and sail in a traditional Nile felucca to visit the Elephantine and Kitchener Islands.
- Upon your return to Cairo, you will still have two days to visit sites not previously visited, and there will be an optional "revisit" to the Museum.
- Flight back to the United States.

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THE FIRST EGYPTIANS

CATALOGUES NOW AVAILABLE

A valuable resource for both the novice and professional, this catalogue contains three informative essays concerning Egypt on the brink of history around 3100 BC. The 120-page catalogue also contains maps, charts, descriptive information, and 16 color and 92 black/white photographs of the artifacts in "The First Egyptians" exhibition, which is traveling nationally through 1990.

Each catalogue sells for only ~~\$19.95~~ \$14.00
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Egyptian Studies Association

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THE EGYPTIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

I would like to help the Hierakonpolis Expedition by joining **The Egyptian Studies Association**. In return for my tax deductible contribution, I understand that I will receive a membership certificate and card, badge, and **NEKHEN NEWS**, and that I will be entitled to travel discounts with expedition tours and reduced rates on expedition publications and Egyptian archaeological slide sets.

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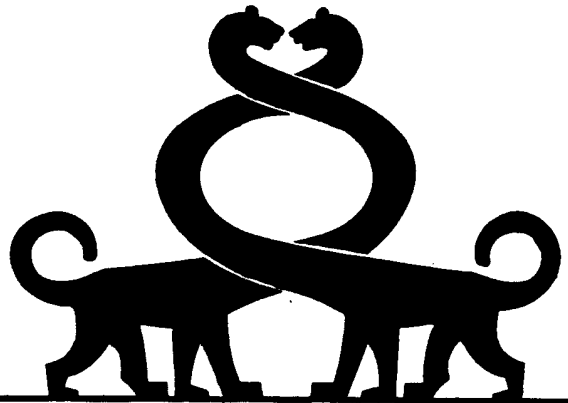
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**T H E F I R S T
E G Y P T I A N S**



INSIDE: Update on "The First Egyptians"

THE EGYPTIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

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