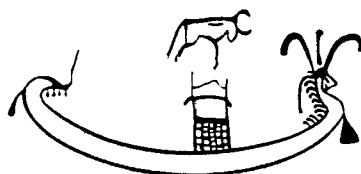


NEKHEN NEWS

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Spring/Summer 1989



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1988-89 FIELD SEASON AT HIERAKONPOLIS

by Michael Allen Hoffman

Director of the Hierakonpolis Expedition

The second half of the 1988-89 field season was both busy and productive. Earlier, Jay Mills, as Acting Director, assisted by Tom Cox, had put in our water system so that the Research Center site had running water by the time I returned to Egypt on January 12, 1989. Barbara Adams had also come and gone, leaving numerous restored pots in her wake!

On arriving in Cairo I received a note from Renée Friedman, who had taken over from Jay, that, during the Christmas break, her famous rock painting site had been vandalized. Prompt response by our own and local Egyptian Antiquities Organization personnel kept the damage to a minimum and, in fact, things turned out to be far less serious than originally suspected. Nevertheless, the incident pointed out to us the fragile nature of all antiquities and the need to protect them.

Between January and March, Renée was able to re-photograph and draw many of the glyphs and, at the end of the season, we completely buried HK-64 to preserve it for future research.

In addition to Renée's research, Jeremy Geller (also finishing up his PhD with the Expedition) returned to his now famous brewery site (HK-24A) and conducted tactical cleaning and excavations to clarify the extent and depth of the structure. Surprisingly, the brewery

installation turns out to be quite complicated and appears to be part of a much larger complex with well-preserved walls up to 70 cm high and huge amounts of preserved plant remains. Currently, Professor Nabil el Hadidi and his staff at the Cairo University Herbarium are analyzing some of these finds. An even greater surprise at HK-24A was the possible discovery of a Neolithic occupation buried beneath the brewery itself. Because the test pit was so small and the stratigraphy is so complicated, exploration of this very exciting possibility will have to wait for a while.

As if Jeremy didn't have enough to keep him busy, he also conducted a re-study of the Plum Red Ware pottery from the HK-59 and -59A kiln sites. Jeremy wrote his MA thesis on this material in 1984. Since then, we have learned much about ceramics and greatly improved our system of classification. Jeremy's work gives us a better idea of the shapes of fine vessels being produced at Hierakonpolis in the late Amratian (ca. 3600-3500 BC). His test excavations at HK-59 unexpectedly revealed traces of original flooring and raised new questions about the function of that site.

In addition to supervising the Expedition and helping on various projects, my own special interest involved returning to the Gerzean temple site (HK-29A) we discovered in 1985-86. We already had a pretty good idea that it was used between about 3400 and 3200 BC and then abandoned. The presence on the desert surface of a small patch of pottery dating a hundred years after the abandonment to about the time of Egypt's first king, Narmer, did not seem to fit this picture, however.

Earlier (see NEKHEN NEWS, Vol. II, Nos. 1 and 2) we had noted the intriguing resemblance of our temple complex to a picture on the ceremonial macehead of King Narmer in which the king sits on a high pavilion, wearing the crown of Lower Egypt and Heb Sed robes, and gazes out over an oval temple compound. That macehead was found in 1898 only 800 meters east of HK-29A in Nekhen. The question was: could we establish by excavation the presence of Narmer at HK-29A and so link our prehistoric archaeological evidence to iconographic representations of Egypt's earliest king? If this could be done, then we would be able to duplicate the direct stratigraphic link between the two periods we established at Nekhen in 1984, only in a specifically political context — culture, not just sherds!

The results of this season's work are tantalizing but not conclusive. We have determined that a badly ruined mud and mudbrick structure (number V) at HK-29A was clearly built after the abandonment of the temple because, as geologist Dr. Hamrroush pointed out, it sits above the last temple floor on a thin stratum of wind-blown sand. Moreover, Renée Friedman's study of the pottery associated with this structure indicates a Dynasty 0-early First Dynasty date (*i.e.*, the time of Narmer). Architecturally, Structure V looks like the kind of ephemeral foundation that could have supported a stepped pavilion like the one shown on the Narmer macehead. Unfortunately, no inscriptions have been found. That type of definitive evidence, along with the rest of the enigmatic Structure V, lies buried beneath nearly a meter of sand and will require extensive excavation in the future.



HIERAKONPOLIS — "A GREAT ADVENTURE" — FROM AN ENGINEER'S POINT OF VIEW

by Jesse T. "Tom" Cox

Mr. Cox is a Professional Engineer and Landscape Surveyor, and also a Friend of Nekhen.

I have been interested in Egypt and archaeology for several years, ever since reading C. W. Ceram's *Gods, Graves, and Scholar*. Thus, I was pleased to have the opportunity to visit "The First Egyptians" Exhibition at McKissick Museum at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, where I first met Dr. Michael Allen Hoffman in June 1988. Afterward, I was invited to become a part of his Hierakonpolis Expedition and began making plans to go to Egypt in October 1988 to supervise the installation of a waterline from an existing well to the proposed Research Center site.

I met the Associate Director of the Hierakonpolis Expedition, Mr. James O. "Jay" Mills, in Frankfurt, West Germany, and we flew to Cairo together. There, we began meeting with equipment and material suppliers to get prices and proposals on items that would be required. We received some valuable assistance from the Ameri-



can Chamber of Commerce in Egypt. Shopping for waterpipe, fittings, valves, pumps, electrical panels and wire, electrical conduit, and a fiberglass water reservoir was an interesting experience indeed. In the Egyptian markets where all our purchases were made, we were constantly redesigning the system according to what was available. It took a total of twenty days to purchase everything we needed, but we were making sure to do it right.

Once the necessary purchases and shipping arrangements were made, we left Cairo by day train for Edfu and checked into our living quarters about midnight. Early the following day, we made courtesy calls on the local Egyptian Antiquities Organization officials. Later, after Jay had arranged for a driver and taxi, we drove out to Hierakonpolis and the Research Center site, located in the desert. While walking out toward the water well, I recall asking Jay if there was anything else I needed to know, now that I was here. He responded by saying to never pick up a rock without first kicking it clear to see if there was a small 10-12" snake under it, as these are very poisonous.

After our waterpipe, pumps, and other materials arrived, Jay and I purchased some imported wood (most wood used in Egypt must be imported) to build a form for the concrete base that would support the water pump. After securing the reinforcing steel and mixing the concrete, we poured the pump base, later stripped the forms, cured and rubbed the concrete base, and set the pump. (Friends of Nekhen will remember geoarchaeologist Hany Hamrourh, who built the well and toasted the first water sample with Dr. Hoffman; see NEKHEN NEWS, Vol. III, No. 2.) Jay then employed some laborers (mostly local farmers) to dig the trench for the waterline, assist in laying pipe (Jay and I made up between two and three hundred pipe joints), and backfill the trench. We chose to run the pipeline along an old wadi bed to avoid possible archaeological sites.

While the pipe was being laid, Jay contracted with a local stone and mudbrick mason to construct a pump-house of sandstone and mudbrick. Sandstone was used as a base to withstand erosion in times of periodic flooding; the remainder was designed to be built of mudbrick because of its cooling ability. As the pipe installation was being completed, and the pumphouse finished, the fiberglass water storage reservoir was set in place at the Research Center site. The entire water line project came together the last work day, just prior to our departure for Luxor to catch the night train back to Cairo, and then to leave for America.

Being in Edfu and Hierakonpolis for about two months was a "great adventure" for me. As we worked out of the village of Kom el Ahmar during the day, we visited the storage "magazin" daily and I was impressed with the artifacts recovered from Hierakonpolis and stored there. I still find it amazing to think that thousands and thousands of pottery sherds were just "lying about on the site," not to mention the oldest brewery in Egypt right there!

The local villagers were friendly, warm, and downright wonderful to us. Daily, they would offer us tea, bread, vegetables, and, on the last day, they gave us a basket disc woven by the village women.

It's been almost a year since I left for Egypt, and a friend recently asked if I had gotten over my trip. My reply — "I'll never get over it!"



"THE FIRST EGYPTIANS" EXHIBITION:

Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History
April 21 — November 5, 1989

National Museum of Natural History
at the Smithsonian, Washington DC
December 8, 1989 — April 1, 1990

**OLD BONES, NEW IDEAS:
ZOOARCHAEOLOGY AT HIERAKONPOLIS, PART I**

by Dr. John McArdle

Senior Staff Member of the Hierakonpolis Expedition

It has only been a few decades since the time when most archaeologists, especially those working on classical sites in the Near East, routinely discarded as useless any animal bones found in their excavations. For those individuals working on historical sites, this attitude reflects their emphasis on such obviously cultural finds as pottery, tools, and architecture, and the belief that the written records of those ancient civilizations contain all the necessary information needed to understand the human-animal interactions within each culture. I was once told by several archaeologists that they already knew what animals the inhabitants of a particular city ate from reading ancient writings. This observation was sufficient to justify discarding all of the faunal remains they had found. Fragments of animal bones, however, are cultural objects, modified by the humans who exploited animals for such uses as fiber, food, and transportation. Comprehensive examination and analysis of such "old bones" can tell us much about the cultural and environmental context in which both the humans and non-humans lived.

In the few instances where historical records have been compared to the excavated faunal remains, the latter provide a more complex picture than expected from a simple examination of the available literature. Another problem, particularly for historical sites in Egypt, is the misidentification of faunal representations on artifacts, architecture, and petroglyphs. Dr. Dale Osborn, the leading expert on the modern mammals of Egypt, is currently working on an exhaustive study of all portrayals and mummies of animals found in Dynastic sites throughout Egypt. He has found numerous examples of errors; for instance, drawings, statues, and mummies associated with the god Anubis are often attributed to the jackal, whereas they are really foxes, and much of the rock art in Upper Egypt has, over the last century, been assigned to the wrong species. This has not, however, been the case at Hierakonpolis.

When the focus of the excavations is on the pre-historic periods of time, as with the Predynastic sites at Hierakonpolis, even the limited information in written records is not available and the value of every piece of animal bone increases. When properly studied, these bones provide evidence for ancient diets and methods of cooking; herding, husbandry and hunting practices; spatial and temporal cultural differences in the patterns of animal exploitation; possible trade associations; and the environmental conditions that existed at the place and time that the animals died. Once one learns to read the language of comparative osteology, the bones have a complex story to tell.

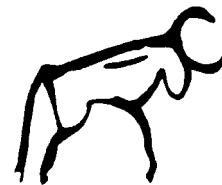
From its inception the Hierakonpolis Expedition has recognized the importance of faunal remains, very care-




Once found, faunal remains are bagged with the same care and detailed cultural context information as for other artifacts. Each sample of bones is first subdivided into identifiable bones or fragments and scrap material that can be allocated to a specific type of bone but not a particular species. This latter material does provide useful information and is subjected to its own detailed examination. By comparing the number of known to unknown (*i.e.*, with respect to species) pieces, it is possible to provide a general measure of the degree of fragmentation of the bones. This is further enhanced by also determining the relative sizes of the fragments (*i.e.*, either larger or smaller than 3 cm). If bones are badly broken anciently, this may reflect their lying exposed on the ground for long periods of time, methods of butchering the animals, or the presence of significant numbers of domestic dogs. Dogs are incredibly efficient destroyers of bones, often only leaving the hardest portions of the joints for subsequent zooarchaeologists to discover and ponder over. Which of these possibilities, or others, is represented by the samples can be resolved by closer examination of the individual pieces of bone. The fragments are also divided and counted according to the specific type of bone (*i.e.*, longbone shaft, vertebrae, ribs, scapulae, or tooth). This is done to determine if all portions of the skeletons are present, or if there is some differential representation that would indicate cultural manipulation of the dead animals.

Each identifiable bone or fragment is provided with a detailed numerical description that is later used to facilitate computer analysis of the faunal data. There are thirty-six possible unique fields of information for each specimen, with some fields having as many as seventy distinct characteristics. Individual teeth and jaw fragments tend to have the most lengthy descriptions, in particular with respect to determining the relative age of the individual animals at the time they died.

Zooarchaeological research at Hierakonpolis is, in many respects, unique. There is excellent preservation of very large sample sizes, all of which are subject to comprehensive analysis to determine cultural and paleo-environmental information. In future issues of **NEKHEN NEWS**, we will examine the stories these old bones have told us about life in Predynastic Egypt.



NEKHEN NEWS UPDATE

 **IKRAM NOOSHI**, a well-known Egyptian architect, has been retained to design and help build our Research Center. Already, several beautiful vaulted and domed rooms have been completed. Look for details in your next issue of **NEKHEN NEWS**.

fully preserved them, and extracted the maximum amount of information from them. They have told and continue to tell us much about the lives of the Predynastic people who inhabited the area. Although faunal analysis at many archaeological sites often consists of little more than a "laundry list" of the species and skeletal elements found in the excavations, this represents the minimal amount of information that can be determined from such specimens and may be all that can be done with very small sample sizes. In contrast, the excavations at Hierakonpolis are characterized by large collections of identifiable complete and broken bones, now numbering in the thousands. These bones and teeth are exceptionally well preserved, in some cases with dried muscle, ligaments, tendons, or articular cartilage still attached. Because of this excellent preservation, much can be learned from each fragment and any differences in the geographic or temporal distribution of individual skeletal remains or species represents clear evidence of cultural activity rather than the biasing effect of poor preservation or selective retrieval during excavation.

HIERAKONPOLIS COMES TO BEVERLY HILLS

by Noel Sweitzer

Ms. Sweitzer is President of the Southern California Chapter of the American Research Center in Egypt and a member of the Egyptian Studies Association.

My first recollection of Dr. Michael Allen Hoffman dates to a cold December day in 1985. The tour bus of seventeen intrepid Egyptology enthusiasts from Southern California had just arrived at Nekhen and was parked along the line of vegetation. As passionate students of ancient Egypt, this stop was to be a high point for us. We were only about three blocks, as the crow flies, from Khasekhemui. One of the oldest standing mudbrick structures in the world was within our viewfinders. Not close enough to detect the niching and the other bits of architecture that are intriguing about the building. Nor could we see the dumps in the center of the "fort" left by the Metropolitan Museum in its dig at the site in the mid 1930's. However, that would all be remedied in a moment when we would step out of the bus and walk over to the precious jewel in our trip to Egypt.

That was when I met Dr. Michael Allen Hoffman!

Over the horizon to our left, actually coming from what I was later to learn was the Predynastic temple site, this mad apparition was running at our group, followed by a number of screaming Egyptians. The leader of this pack was none other than the excavation's director. Remembering that we were in the Twentieth Century, I knew our lives were not in danger. But with galloping intensity, I also knew that this was not a friendly welcoming party. It turned out that, although

our's was a pretty serious group of adults accompanied by the late Dr. John Callender, Michael was unable to let us on the site or get nearer than about two feet out of the bus for a "photo opportunity." Hardly satisfactory, but it had to do.

Since that time, it has been the extreme pleasure of the American Research Center in Egypt's Southern California Chapter to host more than seven lectures by Dr. Hoffman. And even those of us who were "thrown off" the site by Michael have learned to care for him and totally respect the goals of his expedition. In fact, Michael was lucky on that day, because one of those asked to leave Hierakonpolis was Charles H. Thomas, an established businessman in Los Angeles and Oakland.

Well, enough background! What this is leading up to is a terrific opening for "The First Egyptians" Exhibition at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County on April 21, 1989. More than four hundred people attended an opening reception at the Museum, hosted jointly by the Trustees of the Museum and the University of South Carolina, and toured the exhibit.

Furthermore, to demonstrate the strong, positive feelings in Southern California for Michael and his work, Charles Thomas held a black tie dinner in his Beverly Hills home following the reception. The 120 guests included Museum Trustees and administrators; University of South Carolina faculty, staff, and alumni; members of the American Research Center in Egypt's Southern California Chapter; contributors to the Egyptian Studies Association; and various Hierakonpolis staff members.

Charles provided a lavish meal, including poached salmon with hollandaise sauce, Cornish game hen stuffed with wild rice, asparagus braised with butter,



Mr. Charles Thomas hosts a black tie dinner following the exhibition reception in Los Angeles. From the left: Mr. Michael York, Dr. Michael Allen Hoffman, Mr. Charles Thomas, Dr. James B. Holderman, Ms. Jane Wyatt, and Mr. Macdonald Carey.



Dr. Peter Keller, Associate Director of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, greets University of South Carolina President and Mrs. James B. Holderman while Dr. Michael Allen Hoffman and Mrs. James Rex look on.

whole-wheat pasta in pesto, fettucini Alfredo, Brie with fresh fruits and petite croissants, and whole table full of desserts.

Naturally, no Beverly Hills party would be complete without a sprinkling of "stars," and the exhibition opening did not lack celebrities. For instance, Dr. Timothy Leary, an acquaintance of Roxie Walker, attended. I knew something was up when I greeted a guest who was

wearing black tie and tennis shoes — Dr. Leary. Somehow, while the face was older, for a moment it seemed that the turbulent '60s had returned. The irony was that when I overheard some of Dr. Leary's conversation, he was talking about upper middle class items such as horses and parties and other topics that do not fit the public image of this leader of LSD groupies.



New members of the Egyptian Studies Association and LA Museum Fellows Dr. and Mrs. Robert Sloves on the right, with two Friends of the LA Museum.



Have pressures from "The First Egyptians" Exhibition sent Mari Custodio over the edge?

A lovely face from the past was Jane Wyatt's. She looks just as good as she did when she was on *Father Knows Best*. Michael York and his wife Pat also attended; Mr. York was to be the host, the following Monday, on a television show about treasures of the Second World War. The Yorks were delightful company and seemed to enjoy themselves. Another guest was Macdonald Carey, who has recently had his book of verse published by the University of South Carolina Press; he was interested in sharing its contents with those of us able to spend some time talking with him.

Noteworthy guests for the evening were Ambassador and Mrs. Nabil el Orabi. Ambassador el Orabi is the Egyptian Consul General stationed in San Francisco. He and his beautiful wife, Nadja, not only attended the reception and dinner, but they both stayed for the next morning's lecture by Michael at the Museum. Michael was pressed into service for a Saturday morning talk to the benefactors of the Museum. After the lecture he gave a personal tour of the exhibit.

Altogether, the reception and dinner for the "The First Egyptians" Exhibition was an extraordinary activity. Many people worked to make it possible. In fact, you can see Mari Custodio hanging by her heels collecting Charles' ivy; she had to hang over the wall in order to clip the best pieces for decoration of the dinner tables. Not shown is how I was late in picking up Ambassador and Mrs. el Orabi. When they landed, I was nowhere to be seen! They were about to turn around and go back to San Francisco when they saw this crazed female running down the corridors of Los Angeles International Airport trying to get their attention.

Well, you see, there is a symmetry to this story. At the beginning you have one frenetic person charging at

visitors, and at the end you have another frenetic person doing the same. I guess the bottom line is that, over the years, those two persons have run in tandem at times. The reason is that they both care about Hierakonpolis. Certainly, their achievements would not have been the same in Southern California without the warmth and organization of the University of South Carolina, the The Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, and the American Research Center in Egypt's Southern California Chapter, as well as the unending generosity of Charles Thomas.

So now the only thing left to do is invite you to join us here in Los Angeles for a visit to "The First Egyptians" Exhibition. The show will run through early November 1989 at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History. Those of us who remain in the ARCE/SC Chapter would love to take you around the city and the exhibition. Y'all come, ya hear?



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NEKHEN NEWS UPDATES

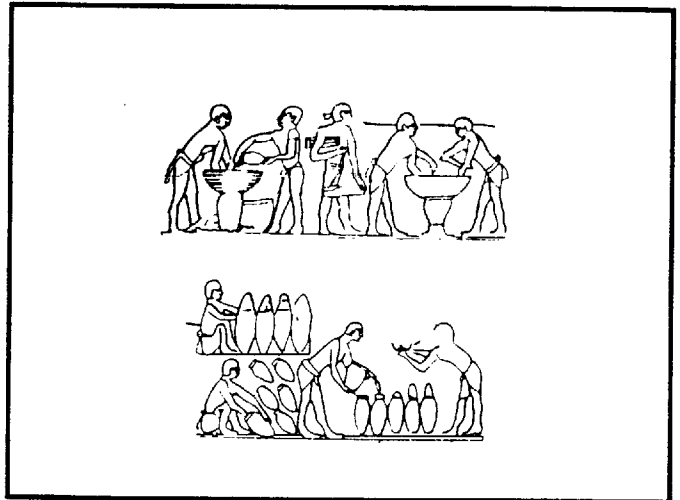


SECOND ESA ADVISORY BOARD MEETING — The second meeting of the ESA Advisory Board took place on April 8, 1989, at Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. In attendance were: Mr. H. Leighton Steward, Mr. and Mrs. Olan Mills II, Professor Marshall Clagett, Mrs. Marian Becker Clough, Professor James A. Morris, The Honorable Robert E. McNair, Mr. Donald Russell Jr., Professor William H. Kanen, Professor Michael A. Hoffman, and Ms. Liza Morris. Presentations included a report on the Research Center by J. Mills, a discussion of the proposed Bioanthropology Center by R. Walker, and an overview of ESA and the Hierakonpolis Expedition by M. Hoffman. A general discussion focused on a proposal for establishing an endowment that would enable ESA to operate more efficiently in the future.

LOS ANGELES MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY Fellows tour Egypt — Between June 6th and 13th, 1989, Dr. Hoffman accompanied the official Fellows Tour of the Los Angeles Museum of Natural History on a whirlwind trip to Egypt. In addition to the usual (and unusual) sites and scenes of the Nile Valley, the Fellows group was granted a long official interview with Mrs. Mubarek. She discussed her interest in developing children's museums and libraries and expressed delight in receiving a copy of **"The First Egyptians"** Exhibition catalogue and an illustrated account of the University of South Carolina.



YOU ASK, "WHAT'S BREWING?" — Word of Jeremy Geller's excavation of the oldest known brewery in the world has caught public attention. An article about the 5,400 year old brewery appeared in the May 21, 1989, issue of *The Washington Post* and was then picked up by papers all across the country. National Public Radio's "All Things Considered" then did a radio interview with Jeremy on May 26th, featuring the Predynastic brewery. Friends of Nekhen will remember the article in the last issue of NEKHEN NEWS (Vol. IV, no. 3, Fall 1988): "New Light on a Most Ancient Yeast," which was written by Jeremy soon after completion of his field season at Hierakonpolis.



Dr. Hoffman takes tea with Mrs. Mubarek during the official LA Museum Fellows Tour to Egypt.



Jeremy Geller (Washington University, St. Louis) cleaning ancient beehive vat at HK-24A.

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JANUARY 1990

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In Egypt you will visit Hierakonpolis and be conducted around the site by Dr. Michael Allen Hoffman, Director of the Hierakonpolis Expedition.

13 - 28 January 1990

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 and hope you will continue to
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IN MEMORIAM — DR. WILLIAM H. MCHUGH

by Michael Allen Hoffman

Director of the Hierakonpolis Expedition

Members of the Hierakonpolis Expedition mourn the untimely passing of Dr. William H. McHugh of a heart attack in May of this year. I knew Bill for over twenty years, since we both attended graduate school at the University of Wisconsin. At the same time I was doing my doctoral work at Hierakonpolis, he was preparing his dissertation on the rock art and ancient climate of the Western Desert of Egypt. He was the first scholar to argue that the ancient rainfall which periodically greened the Sahara came from the south — not, as most experts then argued, from the Mediterranean.

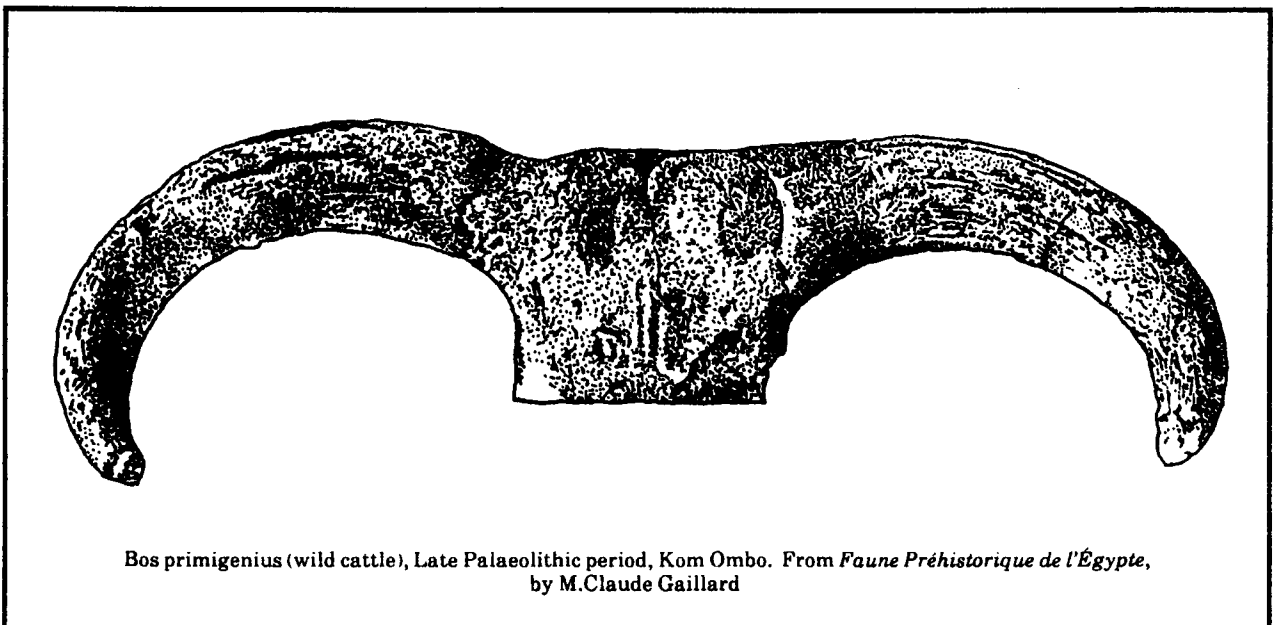
Bill first visited Hierakonpolis in 1978 and participated in the 1980 season. His account of the stone tools of site HK-29, published in our 1982 monograph *The Predynastic of Hierakonpolis*, was a valuable contribution. More recently, he had participated in an expedition lithics symposium with Dr. Diane Holmes, Janet Long, and myself in May 1987.

Bill taught anthropology at several institutions, including the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (where he helped train ESA's own Carter Lupton) and Bowling Green State University in Kentucky. Later, he turned to public archaeology, serving for a number of years as

chief archaeologist for GAI, Inc., in Pittsburgh. My last stint in New World archaeology, just a few years ago, was done under Bill's supervision.

His most recent contribution, cited in *The New York Times* just before his death, was to the so-called "radar rivers" explorations in the Sahara. These ancient water courses, buried for millennia beneath the sand and discovered with the aid of satellite radar imagery, were studied by Bill McHugh and his geologist colleagues at the USGS offices in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and in the Smithsonian Institution. Bill's particular contribution was to locate and excavate datable archaeological remains such as Acheulian handaxes. Subsequently, his team was able to produce the first absolute dates on the Lower Palaeolithic of the Western Desert.

Although the various "firsts" in climatology and chronology achieved by Bill McHugh often went unnoticed in the wake of more aggressive, publicly visible projects, his scientific achievements in the study of the prehistoric archaeology of Egypt's Western Desert provide the foundations for serious future research. Bill will be missed as both a close friend and a dedicated and innovative scholar.



THE FIRST EGYPTIANS

CATALOGUES

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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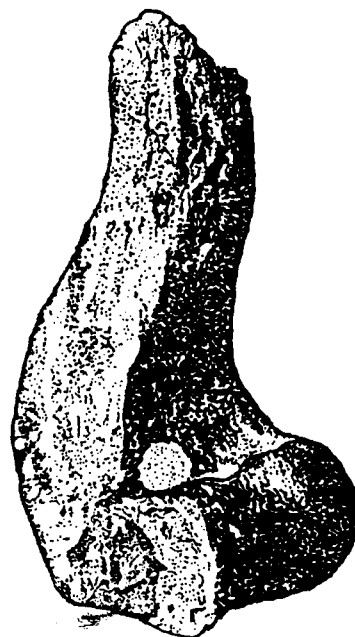
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and Assistant Editor of NEKHEN NEWS

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INSIDE: Bones —
Sus scrofa (pig), Neolithic period,
Toukh

THE EGYPTIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

Earth Sciences and Resources Institute
University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC 29208 USA

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