

NEKHEN NEWS



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We're Back!

This past winter the Hierakonpolis Expedition returned to the field under the direction of Dr. Renée Friedman (University of California, Berkeley) and Barbara Adams (Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, University College London), after a hiatus of four years following the death of Michael Hoffman and the subsequent passing of Walter Fairservis, who had directed the Expedition since 1967. The seven week field season commenced on January 17 and ended on March 7. Although we set out with relatively modest intentions, the 1996 campaign turned out to be action-packed and successful. The expedition team included veteran staff members Joseph Majer and Jay Mills (Archaeologists), May Trad (Egyptologist) and Roxie Walker (Physical Anthropologist) along with new participants Sonia Guillen (Physical Anthropologist), Will Schenck (Illustrator), Peter Hayman (Photographer) and Ed Johnson (Conservator).

The primary goals of the 1996 field season were: 1) to complete the professional photography and final study of the finds stored in the on-site magazine from the elite Predynastic and Early Dynastic cemetery at Locality HK6 in preparation for a comprehensive publication of these excavations by Barbara Adams; and, 2) to continue the excavation of the petroglyph station and Old Kingdom campsite at HK64 and to make facsimile records of the petroglyphs, rock drawings and inscriptions revealed by this and the 1987 season of excavation.

Best laid plans, however . . . although the above objectives were achieved, a new and critical situation dictated immediate rescue excavations at Locality HK43, a large and previously unexplored Predynastic cemetery in serious danger of being destroyed by a land reclamation scheme. As one of the few relatively unplundered cemeteries at Hierakonpolis and one for which the associated settlement (HK54) can be identified, it is of extreme importance.

In conjunction with these excavations, some 3.5 kilometers of barbed wire fence was installed along the eastern and northern edges of the Hierakonpolis concession to mark its limits, protecting HK43 and the famous "Painted Tomb" cemetery (HK33) nearby from further encroachment. The long overdue installation of iron doors on four of the Dynastic rock-cut tombs at Hierakonpolis was also accomplished; we will begin to clean and restore these historically significant monuments in the coming season.

Several funding bodies made the 1996 campaign possible, but in particular the generous donation from Raymond and Beverly Sackler allowed us to return to the field again after this long hiatus. We are deeply grateful to them for their benevolence and trust. Photography and study of the objects from HK6 was made possible by a grant from the Schiff-Giorgini Foundation. A National Geographic Society grant funded the excavations at HK64. Contributions from the Sacklers and other Friends of Nekhen allowed salvage and rescue excavations at HK43. The Bioanthropology Foundation kindly made funds available to build the fence around the cemetery there and to install the doors on the decorated tombs. Thank you, one and all.



The Two Ladies: Hierakonpolis 1898.
These intrepid Victorian expedition members sit on a rock beneath the Burg el-Hamman hill where the British camp was located. Miss Anne Pirie was an assistant on James Quibell's excavation; she subsequently became his wife. His sister, also called

Anne, was in Egypt during the winter of 1896-7, so she may also have worked at Hierakonpolis. (From an archive negative in the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, University College London).



The Two Ladies: Hierakonpolis 1996.

This time we are sure of the identity of the present co-directors of the expedition—Renée Friedman is on the right, and Barbara Adams is on the left.

The Predynastic cemetery at HK43: We need your help

—by Renée Friedman

As soon as we arrived at Hierakonpolis, we were informed of the reclamation scheme initiated by a local farmer along the eastern edge of the concession adjacent to the Wadi Khamsini. When we inspected this area we were horrified by the extent of this encroachment. An elevated brick-lined canal had been partially constructed to cultivate an area of the Hierakonpolis concession over one kilometer long and 300m wide. A large tract had already been graded for agriculture and partially planted.

This eastern portion of the site had been surveyed in 1979 by Michael Hoffman, who identified several sites: HK45a-d, a series of small Predynastic settlements marked by light scatters of sherds and lithics; HK43 and HK44, two contiguous Predynastic cemeteries; and a Ptolemaic village site. All of these sites have been cut through by the canal or damaged by the building of it. Once put into



Fig. 1: Jay Mills conducting test excavations at HK43

use, the leakage of water from the canal will have a decidedly negative effect on preservation, particularly of human burials. The most seriously affected of these localities is HK43, a large Predynastic cemetery connected with the famous Painted Tomb cemetery (HK33) examined by F. W. Green in 1898.

The HK43 cemetery has been bisected by the canal and its surface partially bulldozed to create the raised banks. Quantities of human bone and pottery thrown up by the bulldozer litter the sandy surface. Only a low ridge of silt and sand running grid E-W was noted on the 1982 map of the concession, but the cemetery is far larger. To either side of the ridge are scatters of human bone and pottery, often in discrete clusters which mark the graves. Surface indications suggest that the area to the south of the ridge dates to the late Amratian (Naqada Ic-IIa) and the area to the north to the early Gerzean (Naqada IIb). The burials on the ridge itself appear to be later, dating to the mature Gerzean (Naqada IIcd).

On the west side of the canal the cemetery stretches along the eastern edge of the large settlement locality HK54 and certainly served as the burial place for its inhabitants throughout the Predynastic period. Together these two localities form one of the last units of settle-

ment and cemetery still extant anywhere in Egypt. The opportunity to examine the associated remains of the living and the dead has rarely been accomplished, but is of critical importance for understanding Predynastic society and the birth of the Dynastic state.

HK43 is one of the few cemeteries at Hierakonpolis with the potential of providing a large number of relatively unplundered graves and important palaeopathological data for population studies. On January 23, 1996 the Expedition initiated emergency salvage excavations at various portions of the cemetery endangered by the raised canal and threatened with imminent destruction. We all pitched in. Barbara Adams, Jay Mills, Roxie Walker, Sonya Guillen and May Trad put their physical anthropological skills to good use while Joe Majer mapped the site. In all, 25 burials were examined.

These preliminary investigations suggest that this cemetery contains as many as 2000 burials, many of which may be relatively intact. The proper excavation of this large cemetery will take several years. The preservation and security of the cemetery zone is a critical issue.

To protect and demarcate the limits of the concession and this cemetery more clearly, in effect "staking our claim," the Edfu Inspectorate suggested that the Expedition install a fence along the eastern and southeastern boundaries. Funds kindly provided by the Bioanthropology Foundation made it possible to purchase three hundred iron stakes and employ thirty men for one week to dig post holes (figure 2) and set the posts in concrete. The fence has just two strands of barbed wire strung for a distance of 3.5 kilometers. It surrounds the canal area and also continues along the edge of the cultivation to protect the area of the Painted Tomb which is also under threat. We are extremely grateful to The Bioanthropology Foundation for making it possible to install this fence, but more is needed. The best security is our continued presence at the site, next year and every year.

That is why we need your help. In 1997, physical anthropologists from the University of South Carolina headed by Dr. Ted Rathbun will begin to rescue the cemetery. We hope to salvage over 300 burials, a good start, but time is running out. Your donations help to field the Expedition and to pay the guards and workmen. Help us insure the security of Hierakonpolis with your membership in the Friends of Nekhen. There is so much still left to learn. *You can make the difference.*



Fig. 2: Constructing the fence in the shadow of the canal at HK43

Installation of the Tomb Doors

Over the past four years a great deal of illicit excavation has taken place in and around the Dynastic tombs at Hierakonpolis. New acts of vandalism and theft have also been observed. Doors for these tombs have been long overdue. With a grant from the Bioanthropology Foundation it was finally possible to install these doors on four tombs which still retain their decoration.

Custom made iron doors set in concrete and bolted to the tomb walls were fitted for the tombs of Pepi-nen-anekh (Old Kingdom) and Horemkhawef (Second Intermediate Period) located in the knoll behind the funerary "fort" of Khasekhemwy. The tomb of Horemkhawef has suffered badly over the past four years. Besides an attempted theft of the painted inscription on the ceiling, the unique scenes painted upon the flint boulder embedded in the tomb wall were destroyed. Graffiti left by tourists deface the remaining painted portions. Numerous fragments of painted plaster were collected from the tomb floor and consolidated; they are now stored in the on-site magazine. We hope to restore the tomb in future.

In the Burg el Hamman (Pigeon Hill), at the edge of the Great Wadi, the tombs of Dhouty (Dynasty 18) and Hormose (Ramesside) were fitted with doors. In 1989 thieves had tried to remove the famous, but never facsimiled, biographical inscription in the tomb of Dhouty. Although the thieves were apprehended in the act, the shattered inscription was left in the tomb. This year we collected the fragments and placed them in the onsite magazine for safe-keeping until we can restore them to the tomb. Due to the natural fissure in the ceiling, an internal door was installed to protect the remaining portions of this inscription.

The tomb of Hormose was encased in several panels of iron to protect its fine painted decoration without putting undue weight on its fissured rock walls and ceiling. This proved to be a massive task. Our generator could not produce sufficient electricity to solder the panels in place, thus requiring pre-soldered portions of this giant cage to be hauled laboriously up the steep cliff. A hardy crew of eight men groaned their way up the hill, serendipitously revealing a collection of Early Dynastic bead-making materials from the Temple of Nekhen cached by the British excavators in 1899 along the way! Who knows what other treasures are waiting to be rediscovered while others are being preserved.

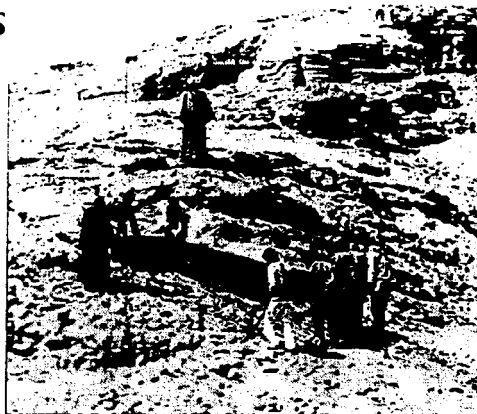


Fig. 1:
Hauling the doors up
the Burg el-Hamman



Fig. 2:
Fixing the cage over
Hormose's tomb

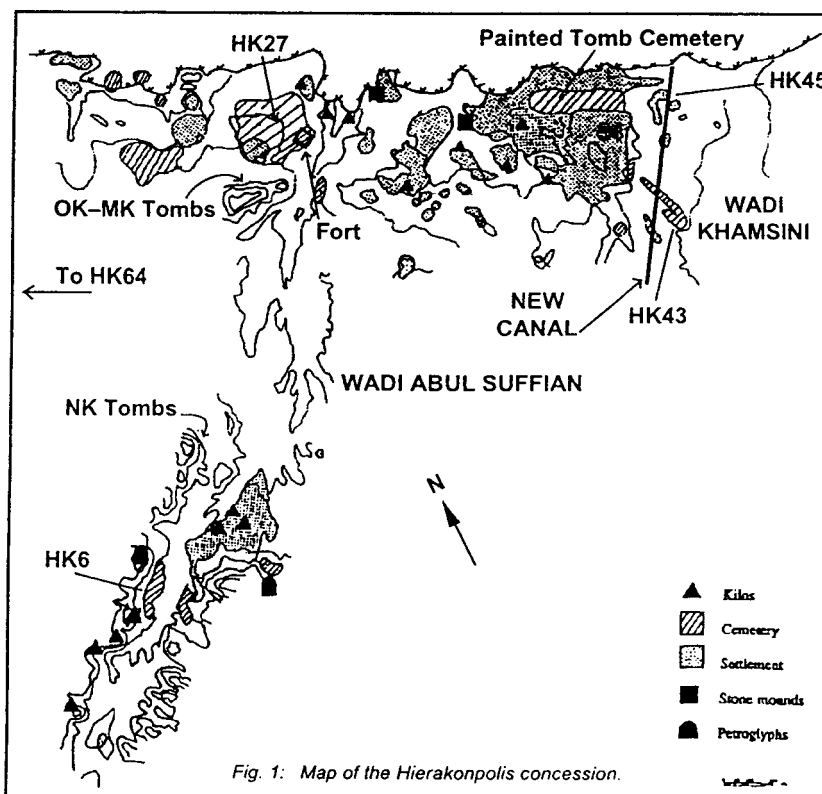


Fig. 1: Map of the Hierakonpolis concession.

New Secrets from HK64

—by Renée Friedman

When the fever hit me in the early days of 1988 (and when I turned that unappealing shade of yellow several days later) I never thought that it would be eight years before I could return to that isolated sandstone outcropping, some 2 kilometers into the Western Desert, known as HK64. My brief excavation of the site at the end of 1987 had revealed a surprisingly dense array of incised and pecked petroglyphs, several hieroglyphic inscriptions, and the well-kept secret of a painted boat manned by five human figures; at the time, the only known petrograph (rock painting) north of the First Cataract of the Nile. A less astonishing, but more intriguing discovery was the well preserved camp-site of people of clearly non-Egyptian material culture dating to the late Old Kingdom who were most certainly responsible for some of the petroglyphs (see R. Friedman, "A New Discovery: HK-64 reveals a well-kept secret" *Nekhen News* 4.1 (1988): 3-5; "Pots, Pebbles and Petroglyphs: Excavations at HK64" in Friedman and Adams (eds.) *The Followers of Horus*, Egyptian Studies Association 2. Oxford. 1992).

Over the ensuing years speculation about the function and purpose of HK64 has ranged from quarry and mining camp to nomadic campsite to strategic border station. The resumed excavation and study of this remote desert site made possible by a National Geographic Research Grant in 1996 confirms that no single explanation is sufficient. Scarcely 30m in diameter and rising only some 4 to 10 meters above the barren desert, this hillock was the focus of a number of activities, the elements of which when put together archaeologically and epigraphically tell a very full, exciting, and unexpected story.

My main objective was to record the petroglyphs found in 1987 and to resume excavations at the site to find out what brought people to this barren place. Once the limits of the inscribed faces of the outcropping were defined, the illustrator, Will Schenck, proceeded to record the exposed rock face in its entirety (figure 1). A series of over 50 overlapping acetate sheets were laid over the inscribed areas. All lines, pecks, paint streaks, gouges and scooped out areas were recorded, carefully delineating areas of super-imposition. As a result, it is possible to see how the individual petroglyphs and other incisions relate to one another and to distinguish distinct scenes or units.

Although the meaning and subject of all of the petroglyphs cannot yet be determined, this complete record



Fig. 1: Will Schenck copying petroglyphs at HK64.

should make it possible eventually to decipher the significance of the recurring and non-random set of symbols inscribed on this intriguing outcropping. Indeed, several patterns emerged; most suggestive was a recurrent unit of scooped out area or natural crevice, sandal outline or name in hieroglyphs, an ostrich or an oar and several small circular pecked holes (figure 2). The depressions, natural or man-made, were no doubt to receive libations from the individual signified by name or sandal-print for the deity symbolized by ostrich or oar. But it was not until the excavations were resumed at the foot of the outcropping in the campsite that the significance of these petroglyphic units finally became clear.

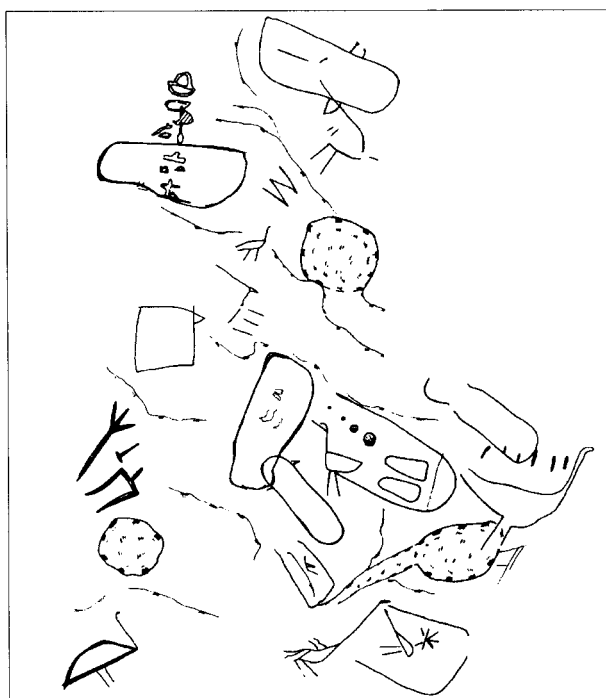


Fig. 2: Recurrent units of scoop hole, incised ostrich and sandal or inscription.

The campsite is located on the leeward side of the outcropping. Once the overburden of sandstone debris was removed, a series of adjacent and superimposed fire-places appeared within the sands. These "camp fires" were filled with charcoal and surrounded by a scattering of pottery and bone. Fragments of distinctive orange polished Meydum bowls of late Dynasty 6 date (c. 2200 BC) were found together with pottery of the Nubian tradition. As in the 1987 excavations, large amounts of chipped quartz debris typical of the Nubian lithic industry continued to be present, but chipped flint was also not rare, though identifiable tools consisted of a single blade.

When Friend of Nekhen Carol McCannless arrived, I feared that this unrelenting collection of pebbles would make for a rather dull visit. I needn't have worried. No sooner had we begun the excavations below the campsite when the small amounts of ostrich feathers (Carol's job

to collect) turned into a large circular mass of feathers. Was this a discarded head-dress? Or a buried bird? Gingerly excavating around the mass, it soon became clear that it was a deposit of feathers, carefully laid within a circular pit some 50cm in diameter and 20cm deep. The pit had been lined all around with the long tail feathers placed quill end up. Within this, several layers of smaller feathers were placed. Nestled between the layers was a small inscribed stone which provides an unexpected explanation for this deposit and the recurrent visits to this remote site (Figure 3).

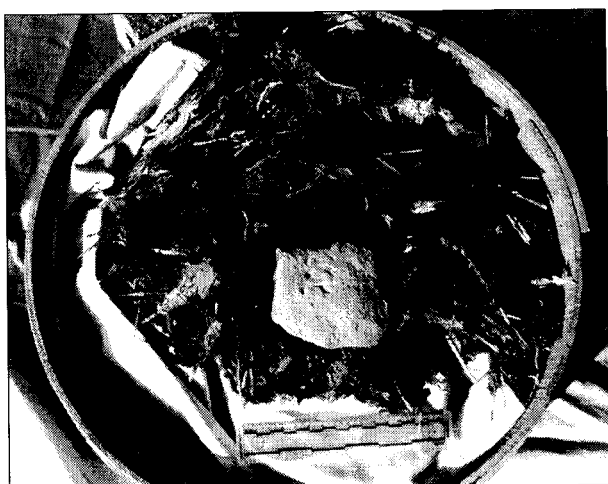


Fig. 3: Ostrich feather deposit and dedicatory stone after excavation and conservation.

Three hieroglyphic signs carved on the small piece of sandstone read: "The Gold, she appears in glory" and this refers to the goddess Hathor. The statement concerning Hathor indicates an offering to Hathor in her function as a solar goddess. The goddess Hathor, as the wandering eye of the sun, left Egypt in anger, and roamed the deserts of the far south and east, in the form of a bloodthirsty lioness. Deities such as Thoth and Onuris had to seek her out and entice her back to Egypt. Ritual texts relate that when Hathor returned from her sojourn in Nubia she and her entourage were greeted with much acclaim, drinking and dancing. Among those who escorted her back to Egypt were the Mentyw, Libyo-Nubian tribesmen who lived in the desert to the west of the Nile. They danced for her and made specific offerings in her honor. A stanza from the Mut Ritual papyrus reads: "Let us take for her feathers off the backs of ostriches which the Libyans slay for you with their throw sticks... and let the Libyans dance dances for you..."

This hymn suggests that the ostrich feather deposit in association with a campsite of desert tribesmen at HK64 is part of the ritual celebration of the yearly return of Hathor. The unique discovery of the actual remains of this celebration is an exciting new explanation for the activities at the site. As a yearly event, it explains the superimposed series of campsites at HK64 extending back well into Old Kingdom/A Group Nubian times and the

numerous depictions of ostriches, cows, stars and other celestial symbols.

The return from the south of the distant goddess was a popular celebration and corresponded with the coming of the Nile inundation in late June/early July. New research on the geomorphology of the Nile Valley and religious iconography suggests that a desert location such as HK64 was in fact the natural place to greet the inundation. The millennia of silts deposited by the Nile on its banks meant that the floodplain was actually higher than the low desert which surrounded it. Long before the Nile would actually flood its banks, a rise in ground water would be notable in the low desert, particularly where the high plateau of the desert was close by. Even today at HK64 the high water table is evident. Hathor's return, during the hottest part of the year, would certainly coincide with the northern seasonal migration of desert-folk. The rapid growth of desert flora caused by the higher ground water would have been a magnet to parched nomads and a potent signal to their urban neighbors. The ritual texts show that, although officially despised, the desert inhabitants themselves eventually became symbols of Hathor's return and came to play a key role in this and other celebrations.

The entire Hierakonpolis region can be seen from the promontory at HK64, thus making it an ideal place to watch and wait for Hathor to return. But it also had strategic importance. Evidence for this aspect of the site is discussed by John and Deborah Darnell, who visited the site on January 28 and examined the often crude and frequently defaced hieroglyphic inscriptions.

HK64 continues to surprise, but it is no secret that this little hill with its complex history contains a remarkable amount of new information about little-known facets of Ancient Egyptian popular religion and ritual. And there is still more to discover. An additional season of exploration is planned for the coming year and we hope that HK64 will give up more of its long-held secrets.



Fig. 4: Carol McCanless and helpers are delighted with their new discovery—the ostrich feather deposit immediately after excavation.



Pharaonic Rock Inscriptions at Gebel Norée

—by John and Deborah Darnell

In the low desert to the north of Hierakonpolis, roughly equidistant between the cultivation and the escarpment of the high desert plateau, is a small *inselberg*, an isolated sandstone hill. Officially designated HK64 but named Gebel Norée by the local workmen, a metathetic version of the name of its excavator (Renée), the hill is the home of a rich and exciting collection of epigraphic and archaeological remains.

The authors of this note are epigraphers with the Epigraphic Survey of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. Since 1992 we have also worked on our own "weekend" project, the Theban Desert Road Survey, during which work we have discovered many remains of the pharaonic period in the Western Desert of Thebes, including hundreds of pharaonic rock inscriptions. Knowing that we were already happily awash in the difficult palaeography and staccato ligatures of lapidary hieratic, Hierakonpolis Project Director Dr. Renée Friedman was kind enough to ask us to look at the inscriptions of Gebel Norée. For the invitation to work at the site, for the hospitality of Beit Hoffman, and for the invitation to provide commentary on the pharaonic inscriptions in the forthcoming publication of HK64, we are grateful beyond measure.

The howling north wind has blasted Gebel Norée for millennia since the earliest designs and texts were carved, and one marvels not at the poor state of preservation of the texts and images, but at the fact that any have survived. The first eroded signs we examined were signa-

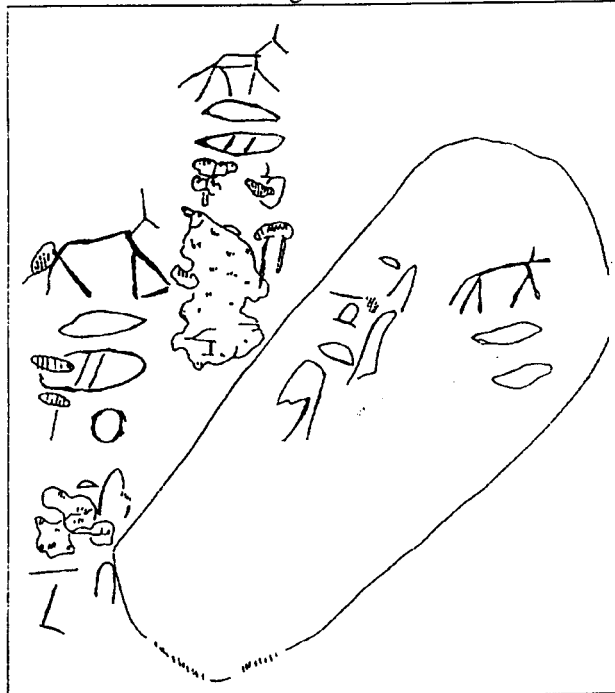


Fig. 1: Inscriptions of the Sab-ra-Nekhen



Fig. 2: Stela in the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, London (UC.14413).

tures, as are most of the surviving texts: "The officer of the royal bodyguard Renseneb; the officer of the royal bodyguard Awib."

The signs show a mingling of hieratic and hieroglyphic forms; rather than betokening ignorance, such examples of the use of monumental forms suggest a somewhat higher level of education, an acquaintance with the monumental signs of the temples.

Remarkably, we know one of these men rather well. Barring the unlikely possibility that a man of like name and title carved this graffito, and its geographical location speaks against this, the first of these two men is the owner of Tomb No. 9 just across the river at El Kab, an officer of the royal bodyguard named Renseneb who must have witnessed the passing of Dynasty 13 at the time of the Hyksos invasion and the loss of Memphis, and the foundation of the pugnacious and ultimately victorious Dynasty 17 at Thebes.

A few meters farther along the surface of the rock are the intentionally effaced signatures of three holders of the title *sab ra-Nekhen*, men who acted as liaison between the palace and the officials charged directly with provincial government and the leading of expeditions (Figure 1). The title dies in mid-Dynasty 12, but reappears during Dynasty 13. The names of the "expeditionary officials" suggest a Dynasty 13 date. In fact, one of the names—

unfortunately broken—may be that of the “liaison officer Nehy,” who appears with our friend the overseer of the royal bodyguard Renseneb on a stela in the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, London (UC.14413, Fig. 2). The names of officers of the royal bodyguard and expedition liaison officers on Gebel Norée suggest a significant Dynasty 13/17 presence at Gebel Norée. This is in keeping with the evidence from our Theban desert road sites.

Gebel Norée overlooks a number of desert tracks heading north and west out of Hierakonpolis. The Theban Dynasty 17 had close relations with Edfu, and given the presence of royal bodyguards at HK64, one may suggest that the king or some member(s) of his family may have traveled the Darb el-Bitan south out of Thebes. At one of our Theban desert sites a red ink inscription, apparently of the Dynasty 13 or early Dynasty 17 (on the basis of palaeography), records that the king traversed that desert road on his way to Thebes. The heavily military and expeditionary nature of the inscriptions on Gebel Norée is in keeping both with the location of the texts, and the highly militarized society of the late Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period. Titles and other terminology of the Second Intermediate Period suggest a certain interchangeability of Nekhen as the old center of the independent south, and Thebes as the new center of the embattled but independent south.



John and Deborah Darnell

The badly weathered inscriptions from HK64 provide vivid snapshots of pharaonic life, and show the importance of treating textual and archaeological evidence together. From the texts of Gebel Norée we can see Egyptians and Libo-Nubian tribesmen of the late Old Kingdom, camping at the hill, drinking and singing the drinking songs and dancing the Libyan and Nubian dances of celebration for the goddess Hathor,

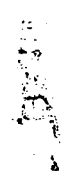
and burying as an offering to the goddess the feathers of the ostrich so important in the cult of the far-wandering goddess. We can imagine expeditionary officials and royal bodyguards gathered on the gebel during the tumultuous times of the Hyksos wars, waiting to join the royal entourage from Thebes, perhaps on their way to begin the reconquest of Nubia.

It is astonishing how very much one may learn from a few small signatures, and it is frightening to contemplate just how easily these priceless bits of knowledge

may vanish, or be destroyed. We feel fortunate to be able to take part in one aspect of the very important efforts to study the wealth of information preserved at Hierakonpolis. The satisfaction we felt at the end of a day's work, reviewing texts by lantern-light under the magnificent Upper Egyptian desert sky, has left us eager to return to this extraordinary site. ➤



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see Page 15 for
membership information



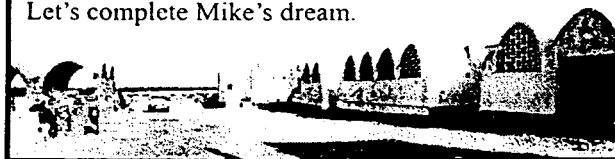
Dig House Update

It was always Michael Hoffman's dream to live at the site of Hierakonpolis and in 1996 that dream came true for the team to whom he bequeathed the site. The dig house, Beit Hoffman (or more prosaically Hoffman House in English), planned and partially built by our late director and Jay Mills, was used for the first time.

Although only the storage magazines along the southern side of the compound have been completed, these airy, barrel-vaulted rooms made for congenial and spacious accommodations—once outfitted with locally made beds and wardrobes. We thank the Sacklers for the initial grant which made these purchases possible.

In spite of temporary glitches in the water supply, the newly installed plumbing worked well and the kitchen sink leaked only occasionally...not bad for any new house. The electrical supply proved more difficult to sustain, but kerosene and butane lanterns lent a romantic glow to evening activities. It was a magical experience for old members of the Expedition to live out in the Western Desert at Hierakonpolis, to absorb the sheer majesty and presence of the site, to muse on Michael, *and* to avoid downtown Edfu!

Plans are now underway to complete more of the main house so that a larger crew and visiting Friends of Nekhen may be housed. We also hope to secure solar collectors and water heating systems in the near future, but we need your help. Your donations and gifts in kind for Beit Hoffman will be gratefully accepted. Let's complete Mike's dream.



HK43: 1996 Season Report on the Human Remains

—by Roxie Walker

This report deals with the human remains recovered from surface salvage at the site of HK43, a Predynastic cemetery which forms part of the larger site of Hierakonpolis or Ancient Nekhen. I was first called to the site on an emergency basis on January 20, 1996 to assist in planning the salvage protocols, returning on January 27 for an intense three day surface scatter clearance. On February 16, I returned to the dig house to make an initial evaluation of the recovered material.

The material consisted, for the most part, of broken, incomplete human bones collected from specific areas of the bulldozed cemetery. These clearly derived from the uppermost level of burials, and the individuals involved were thus broken up and scattered by the bulldozer activity. The only exception was material from locus R-6-D, which was excavated following the discovery that an exposed cranium was associated with a flexed skeleton beneath the surface. Despite the extremely fragmentary nature of the material, the scientific and bioarchaeological data we were able to recover, even in the short time available, were significant.

The basic procedure was to spread the bones from a given scatter site on several tables, identify the fragments wherever possible, sort by individual bone, mend bones wherever possible, and attempt to form a census of the number of individuals involved. This was done by making an inventory of the unique bones of the body, namely the frontal and mandibular symphyses, and by counting the number of paired bones, such as the scapula, femur, etc., sorted by side. A final step was to attempt to sort the bones by sex and general age (infant, child, adolescent and adult) when possible. In a few cases, such as in area R-6-D, sufficient material was recovered to allow description of specific individuals.

In the case of surface point R-6-D, the skeletal remains of three different individuals were recovered. Two of the people involved were sufficiently complete to jus-

tify a more complete inventory and attempt a sort of "skeletal biography."

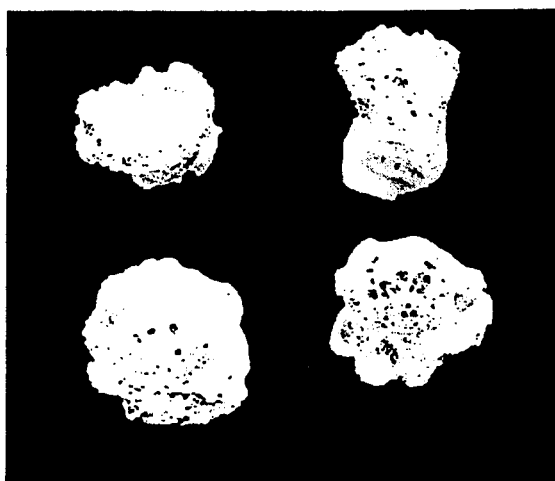
Burial R-6-D-1 was an older (over 60) adult male. Although his skeletal material is incomplete, we can observe not only that he suffered from dental abscesses, but also that the great toes of both feet show the characteristic signs of gouty arthritis, said to be caused by rich diet. Given the state of deformity of these joints, he must have had serious difficulty walking, with chronically painful feet.

Individual R-6-D-2 was a young adult man about 169cm tall with healthy teeth and strong bones when he died. At some time earlier in his life, he fractured his lowermost lumbar vertebra, which healed without fusion of the two resulting parts. Although clearly able to walk about and live a functional life once he recovered, he most likely walked very carefully so as not to cause the un-united portions of the neural arch to shift about and cause pressure on the spinal nerves to his lower limbs, resulting in sudden pain.

These two individuals give us a glimpse into life in Ancient Nekhen. The remains from the other loci indicate that the cemetery at HK43 was used for individuals of both sexes and all ages, therefore promising a reasonably complete cross section of the population during this time and in this place in Egyptian history.

Much work remains to be done on this material. Some of it has not yet been examined due to time constraints. In addition, there is reason to believe that material from different scatters may indeed be from the same individuals, but this must be tested by attempting to match the actual fragments.

Test excavations conducted by Jay Mills indicate that the site is extremely rich in potentially intact burials at deeper levels. The work reported above is a mere hint of the bioarchaeological wealth contained here. I look forward to the coming seasons.



... given the state of deformity of these joints, he must have had serious difficulty walking ...

Figs. 1 and 2:
Toes with gouty arthritis from HK43

Happy Cemetery Snapping: Photographing the Objects from HK6

—by Barbara Adams

Locality HK6 is a large Predynastic and Early Dynastic cemetery located in the Great Wadi just beyond the Burg el Hamman hill. Excavations by the late Dr. Michael Hoffman in 1979, 1980, 1982 and 1985 uncovered several large tombs of the elite inhabitants of Ancient Nekhen. Although repeatedly plundered both in ancient and modern times, careful excavation succeeded in recovering many fine objects as well as human, animal and other organic remains. In all, 12 graves were cleared during the four seasons of exploration (for overview see Barbara Adams, *Ancient Nekhen* 1995).

My main objective of the 1996 season was to photograph the objects from these graves in preparation for a comprehensive publication of the excavations in the planned site report series. Although photographs had been taken at the time of discovery and study shots of the artifacts had been taken during subsequent study seasons, virtually none of these were of publishable quality.

Peter Hayman, photographer of the Egyptian Department of the British Museum arrived at the site on February 5 and immediately began to work with me in the magazine in the village of Kom el Gemuwia where a makeshift photography studio was erected. Peter soon showed how incredibly adept and resourceful he was in taking good pictures in (to put it mildly) difficult conditions. Access to the objects was expedited by the site inspector, Osama Ismaili Ahmed, to whom we extend our appreciation.

Work began with the objects from the Predynastic tombs excavated at the southeastern end of the cemetery (tomb nos. 3, 6, 9). Photographs were taken of the pottery and the fine series of transverse chert arrowheads and porphyry disk mace-heads found in these tombs. In preparation for the photography, careful re-analysis of a wide assortment of organic remains also revealed that what was once considered a miscellaneous collection of twigs was,

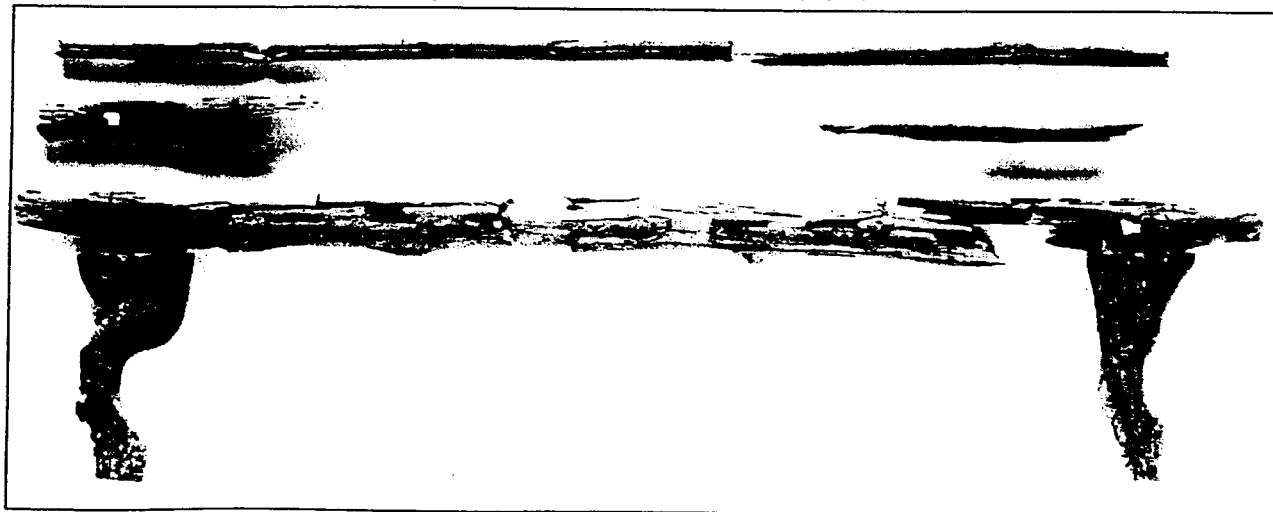
in fact, fragments of a funerary bier constructed of layers of wood, reeds and plaster.

Work then proceeded to the objects from the Protodynastic tombs (nos. 1, 10, 11) excavated at the northwestern end of the cemetery. These included special artifacts such as the mud sealing from Tomb 10 and a range of fine materials from Tomb 11 including amulets of lapis lazuli and beads of turquoise, garnet, carnelian, faience, pottery, gold and silver. Gaming pieces in stone, ivory carvings, pottery and stone figurines, obsidian, rock crystal and flint tools, all attesting to the wealth and status of the Hierakonpolis nobility, were photographed with wonderful results.

While Peter Hayman worked on this material, I took the opportunity to check and collate information on the objects for the catalogue raisonné which will form a major portion of the final publication. As the work proceeded so smoothly, I found time to reconstruct the fragments of the wooden bed, which had been thrown out of Tomb 11 by looters. Extracting the actual bed pieces from the collected mass of uncarved wood fragments from the tomb's roof, I put together the remaining side of the bed frame with its two carved bull's feet legs for the first time (figure 1). Analysis of the fragmentary human skeletal material from this tomb by Jay Mills indicated that a number of juveniles had been buried within it, confirming my original suggestion that it was the tomb of a child based on the size of the wooden bed, the pottery box coffin and the nature of some of the models. It is not unusual for rich funerary goods to accompany children in this period.

Although there was no intention to take photographs of every fragmentary piece and scrap of material from the cemetery, because quite a number will be reproduced as drawings or described in analytical form in the publication, all photographic requirements for the cemetery were realized thanks to Peter's steady progress.

Fig. 1: The reconstructed wooden bed from Tomb 11.



Elephants, Hippopotami and Pigs: Museums, Stores and Rooting

—by Barbara Adams

There is a duality in many lives which involves different, but complementary activities. Mine are: what seems a lifetime in the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology at University College London and occasionally another life in the field at Hierakonpolis. Working procedures in both areas are similar and the subjects covered not unconnected, both requiring a certain awareness of what is there and its possibilities.

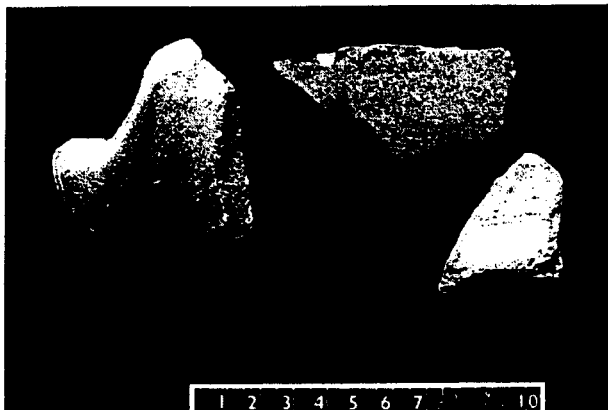


Fig. 1-A: Animal model from HK27, side view

Between 1980 and 1985 I was active in the archaeological sense as part of Michael Hoffman's team when he dug in the elite cemetery at Locality HK6 and in the town site of Nekhen. I returned to Egypt in 1986, 1988 and 1992 to spend a few weeks studying the objects which we had excavated in the cemetery. Thanks to the renewed initiative and focused drive of Renée Friedman in re-launching the expedition, and a grant from the Schiff Giorgini Foundation, I was able to return during the winter season of 1996. This time my objective was to produce a proper photographic record of the funerary material, an aim achieved with the professional photographer, Peter Hayman.

Some of my previous undertakings have involved me in research into the unpublished manuscripts of early scholars such as Frederick Green, who dug at Hierakonpolis in 1897-99, and John Garstang, who was there in 1905-6. This sort of work not only requires the reconstruction of excavations from notebooks (see "Excavating Old Archaeologists," *Nekhen News*, Vol. III, No. 1, Winter 1986-7: 3-4), but also the location of objects in museums, which can be a never ending process. A certain amount of "excavating" in the on-site store at Hierakonpolis is also necessary.

Between shots, as Peter worked on taking photographs of the objects from the cemetery, I was able to look into some of the boxes of special material which did not come from my part (the Locality HK6 cemetery) of the excavations. It seems that in their early days at the site (1969) both Michael Hoffman and Walter Fairervis, our late directors, were prone to picking up "goodies" from the sur-

face of the concession. Thus a small accumulation of pretty surface finds built up, which did not fit into the scientific analysis of the settlements and cemeteries which they later excavated. Dealing with this type of material is notoriously difficult because it lacks context and therefore dating criteria, and they obviously never got back to these finds to publish them as separate items, or to incorporate them into other studies.

One of the objects "re-discovered" this season was a calcite animal model found on the surface of the Predynastic cemetery at Locality HK27 by Michael Hoffman. Although in three pieces (see Fig. 1-A [left] and Fig. 1-B [below]), it was immediately familiar from similar objects in the Petrie Museum, so photographs were taken for comparison in England. What is exciting about these fragments is the fact that they come from a Predynastic site and can therefore validate similar examples which were purchased by Petrie.

The new pieces compare most closely to a calcite vase in the Petrie Museum (UC.15754) which W. M. Flinders Petrie published in his *Prehistoric Egypt* (pl. XXXVI, 63, XLII, 225) catalogue of the collection in 1920 (Fig. 3). Another vase fragment (UC.15752) with two similar heads one above the other (Fig. 2) was also published in *Prehistoric Egypt* (pl. XXXVI, 65, pl. XLII, 223). Both of them had been published previously by Jean Capart in 1905 (*Primitive Art*, p.78) and Margaret Murray in 1911 (*Historical Studies II*, pl. XXII). Capart thought the vases represented hippopotami, but Murray and Petrie believed they were elephants because of the "upward turn of the front."

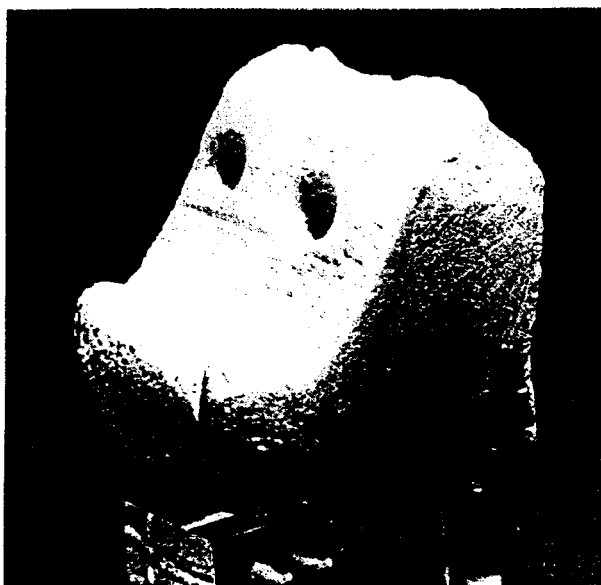


Fig. 1-B: HK 27, front view

Although the profile of the intact vase is exactly similar to the fragment from Locality HK27, it can be seen that it is longer from the eyes to the snout, which is turned up at the end on both. Length alone, however, does not



Fig. 2: UC. 147512.



explain the disparity in nose length. The piece with the two faces (Fig. 2) shares with the Hierakonpolis example the characteristic bumps at the top edges to represent small ears, and the double heads have two incised lines rising up at either side of the mouth to represent large, lower canine tusks.

The hippopotamus lived on the Nile river in Predynastic times. It is frequently represented on White cross-lined pottery in the Naqada I or Amratian period. It was also popular in model and amuletic form from various sites throughout Naqada I and II, often in red or pink stone which may connect with the idea that the hippopotamus sweats blood, when in fact it excretes a pinkish liquid from glands in its skin. Its nostrils are situated on top of its snout and often appear as knobs on clay models. These figures may have been protective devices against the marauding animal which could trample crops during nocturnal excursions. Another excavated example, which is a most convincing hippopotamus when viewed from above with its fat, oval body and head up with its mouth level with the water, is a limestone lid (Ashmolean 1895.210), which was also excavated by Petrie in the

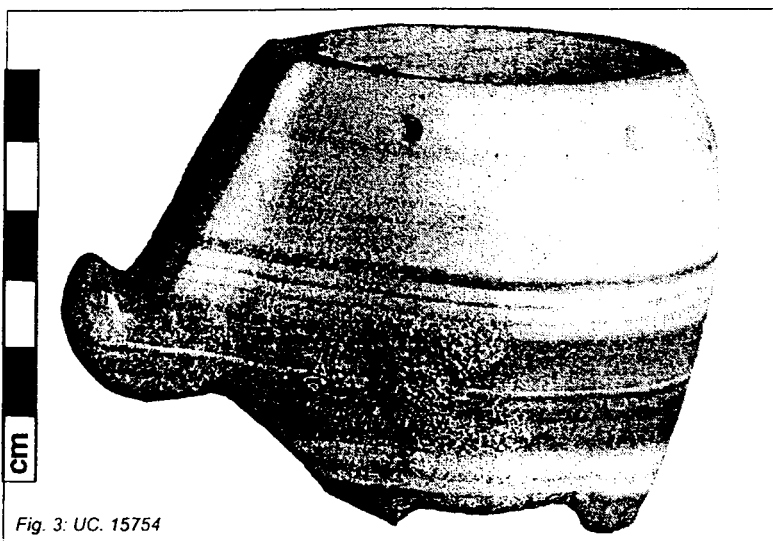


Fig. 3: UC. 15754

constitute an authentic trunk, so its identity as an elephant is at best tenuous. It is wise, in the case of Petrie's purchased Predynastic objects, to retain a healthy skepticism about authenticity, until some corroborating evidence, such as this archaeological example, comes to light. In the case of UC.15754 it might still be wise to maintain the doubt, as it could still be a modern copy of an original and this could

South Town at Naqada and is dated to Naqada IIc-d (Payne, *Catalogue of the Predynastic Egyptian Collection in the Ashmolean Museum*, 1993, No. 1208).

It seems that the case has been made for the Hierakonpolis fragments to join the Naqada I/II Predynastic family of hippopotamus depictions but it is worth remembering that there may be another identification. The most unconvincing aspect is the fact that neither this object nor its parallels in University College have the spatulate snout of the mature hippopotamus. This, when viewed in life (or stuffed in a natural history museum), has rounded protuberances on each end which are clearly visible as an exaggerated feature in definite hippopotamus models, even if the nostrils are absent. The Hierakonpolis and double faced examples here also have incised lines across the top of the narrow snout, indicating a certain flexibility in this proboscis, which is not a facial feature of the hippopotamus. This puzzling anomaly no doubt helped to confuse the earlier authors and caused the differing determinations.

It is known from modern excavations in the Predynastic town (John McArdle in Hoffman et al., *The Predynastic of Hierakonpolis*, 1982) that the pig, *Sus scrofa*, was domesticated at Hierakonpolis. The wild pig (Fig. 4), also *Sus scrofa*,



Fig. 4: The wild pig.

which has tusks which curve up, was also depicted as a votive model in the Main Deposit in the temple of Nekhen, identified by the crest along its back. It is known from Barry Kemp's excavations at the workmen's village at Tell el Amarna that the bristly body of the wild pig was retained in the domestic pig in the New Kingdom. The same dark-skinned type with a long snout is now found only in Coptic villages in Egypt as it is an unclean animal to Moslems. Herodotus said the pig was also shunned by the ancient

Egyptians, and in historic times it was connected with the god Seth (as was the hippopotamus), the slayer of Osiris, but, although this connection with the Horus and Seth cult colored nineteenth and early twentieth century interpretations, the association was probably not made in early times. Unfortunately neither the model vase from Hierakonpolis nor those in the Petrie Museum retain a lid with a crest or neat surface detail such as bristles. As the hippopotamus is related to the pig family, similarities in form are to be expected and, after weighing up the evidence, in the final analysis the identification can only be instinctive and subjective. Let me know what you think.

Hierakonpolis: A View through the Lens Cap

—by Peter Hayman, Photographer, British Museum
February 1996

My first view of The Compound across the desert gave me the feeling that I might be joining the Foreign Legion and when I was reported to the “Lady Commandant” for going out without a hat, I knew I *was* in the Foreign Legion.

Reveille was 6 AM: wash if water was to be found. Breakfast: help yourself to whatever was available, usually local brown bread, cheese and honey with lots of tea, but no milk. After hunting around the kitchen a few times, things got easier. A lot of food had been donated by well-wishers, so the food stock was a strange collection—packet soup, honey and jam, peanut butter, pancake mix, popcorn, maple syrup, chocolate, whiskey, corn-flakes, to name but a few. Feel free to add your own particular selection next time you visit. All gifts were greatly appreciated.

By 7 AM the local workers were ready, standing in the open-backed pickup truck. The truck lurched over the desert, up and down, round and round, dropping off different people at different sites. It was like bronco riding, holding onto the truck with one hand and your hat with the other.

It was Ramadan, the Muslim holy month of fasting from sunrise to sunset, and the local people were very tired each morning. Out of respect, we were advised not to drink water during the day in front of the locals. It was just as well not to drink too much because toilets in the desert were scarce. Thank goodness for dehydration! Because of the feasting all night long, the inspector was scheduled to arrive late to open the storage magazine so that photography of the objects could commence. In the meantime, Renée gave a guided tour of each site to be photographed, showing me all the different work that was going on. Then it was back to the village for work in the magazine. Once opened, the magazine was a revelation to one used to museum conditions: no lights, only daylight from the door and two windows; a deep sand floor; shelves piled high with pots, boxes and bags, all covered in thick dust. A small space by the window became the “photo studio” and Faisal, my local assistant, became very adept at reflecting the sun light through the window with a mirror. The results were not bad, indeed.

On the first day the local workmen discovered that I knew no Arabic and they were keen to teach me some useful words: Good morning, “Sabakh el khir” and Praise be to God, “Humdulillah”. I did learn a few more phrases and found them very handy during my stay.

2 PM: Home for lunch of stuffed corgette, potatoes, tomatoes and lots to drink. The food was always fresh, lots of homemade soup, rice, chips, vegetables and oranges. Supper was more of a do-it-yourself affair: anything left over from lunch, plus anything from the amazing stock of food. Looking at my diary I note: “mushroom soup, very lumpy just like wallpaper paste, but tasted better.” Barbara was very good at getting supper; I think



Peter Hayman photographing the tombs.

it was a welcome change from sticking pots together. Barbara was also very good at ignoring our comments about what was for supper, usually leading to a lot of laughter followed by Bimbos (chocolate covered cookies, not dumb blondes).

I also note in my diary: a lot of talking about all kinds of subjects. After awhile the desert has its effect and it's easy to fantasize. A sense of humor is very useful when the electricity and water is off. The generator was out of action, so we could not pump water or provide light. Chicago House offered to bring out the necessary new part and we had great hope of water and light—but it was the wrong part. However, they did bring us a cake every time they came, and eventually even the correct part and mechanic to install it. Bless them.

Visitors were popular at The Compound. Renée was keen to take visitors around the large site (as long as they wore hats). One day the word came out that visitors were coming to stay the night. As there was goodly covering of sand about the floors of the house, it was decided this was a good excuse to have a general clean up. My duty was the toilets and the court yard. I was already well acquainted with the toilets. I had spent the previous day photographing objects in the courtyard, moving across it with the sun. For my last shot, I ended up perched on the toilet seat to catch those last rays of sunlight. Renée, Barbara and May had a good laugh at my predicament. But I had the laugh on clean-up day when Faisal and I created a dust storm which sent the ladies running away from their favorite pastime of sticking pots together. They would be at it until late at night, mending by lamp light at 9 PM.

Evenings were very pleasant. The ladies would sit in the court yard sticking pots under the stars, talking and laughing. The stars were unbelievable; the sky so dark, the stars so bright, it almost hurt to look up. Jay would point out the groups of stars. It was a very happy time for me, with all the helpers telling me about their work, sharing what they were doing, what they hoped for the future. You think you will do so much and of course there is never enough time to do it all. Then it is time to say goodbye. But that is Egypt and things do not always proceed as intended—all part of the charm and way of life in pursuit of ancient Egypt.



Hierakonpolis in Dublin

—by Renée Friedman

In preparation for a new display of their Ancient Egyptian holdings, the National Museum of Ireland called in experts from the British Museum to assess and make selections from their remarkably extensive and fine collection. A lengthy entry in the registry of 1899 listed over 100 pots from Hierakonpolis. As one of the pot ladies of Hierakonpolis, I was asked to go to Dublin and take a look. Of course, I was intrigued but also a little bit skeptical. The turn of the century marked the apex of Predynastic cemetery excavations of both scholarly and illicit nature. I wondered whether documentation existed for this attribution, or was it just hearsay?

Doubt was replaced by excitement when the cramped but distinct hand of F.W. Green jumped out at me from a letter bound into the antique registry book. Indeed these pots and several slate palettes were a gift from Green from his 1899 excavation at Hierakonpolis, and many were from graves surrounding the famous Painted Tomb, near the area we were now excavating at HK43! It was then that Barbara Adams' efforts in *Ancient Hierakonpolis Supplement* (1974) really paid off. Using her transcriptions of Green's notes it was possible to associate almost every pot with its original tomb group and make sense of what at first appeared to be a miscellaneous collection of pots.

The collection included bowls, jars and bottles, mostly of straw-tempered Rough ware typical of the Gerzean/Naqada II period. Some small Decorated jars and elegant Black-topped red pots were also present. Most exciting, however, was one rather unprepossessing jar of a gritty white fabric with flat ledge handles. Upon examination this proved to be an authentic piece of imported Canaanite pottery. A drawing of this pot in *Hierakonpolis II* (pl. LXIX.3) had long intrigued me (Figure 1). It didn't look like the standard Egyptian Wavy-handled pot, but there was no way to be sure without seeing the actual vessel—and there it was. This pot now joins a corpus of only about a dozen examples of actual imported vessels from this period known from Upper Egypt. It is notable that Hierakonpolis is the farthest south that such pots were transported. It is not surprising that such an effort was made, given the importance of the site as the early capital city.

Even more interesting was the brown matter still intact within this pot, providing the potential discovery of

what it was that induced caravans to carry these pots over a thousand kilometers from their home. Further, none of the Hierakonpolis pottery in Dublin has ever been washed, a unique situation among museum collections. Newly developed and very sophisticated content analysis may be able to unlock the secret of what was placed in these pots as grave offerings. It is an exciting project that the

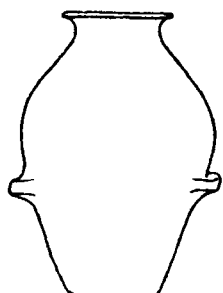
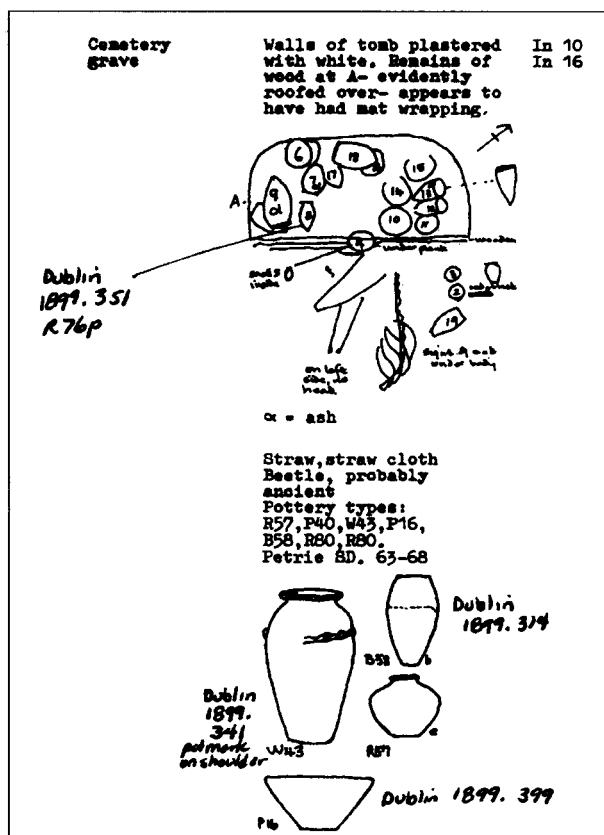


Fig. 1. Drawing from Hierakonpolis II, pl. LXIX.3



Transcription of Green's notebook from Adams' Ancient Hierakonpolis Supplement with new catalogue numbers from Dublin.

Hierakonpolis Expedition will be exploring in the near future.

Rediscoveries can be as exciting as new discoveries, and in this case with the added benefit of exploring Dublin after hours and even sneaking a peek at the stunning collection of Celtic jewelry beautifully displayed at the National Museum. The Egyptian collection, including selected pieces from Hierakonpolis, will open in 1997 and I can highly recommend a visit to Dublin for all of its treasures. ☐

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—by Barbara Adams

Egyptian Studies Association Publication No. 3
SIA Publishing 1995
ISBN 1-872561-03-9

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—edited by Jeffrey Spencer

British Museum Press 1996
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Nekhen is the ancient Egyptian name for the modern site of Hierakonpolis. The Friends of Nekhen is a group of concerned organizations and individuals, scholars and lay persons alike, which is helping the Hierakonpolis Expedition to continue its work and achieve its goals.

In return for their support, Friends of Nekhen will receive an attractive badge bearing the project's official insignia—a Predynastic boat petroglyph from Hierakonpolis with the logo, Friends of Nekhen written in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs and in English. The members' newsletter, NEKHEN NEWS, describes and illustrates the Expedition's latest discoveries and accomplishments. Membership in the Friends of Nekhen also entitles you to special travel arrangements with Expedition tours and reduced rates on Egyptian Studies Association publications.

Why your help is needed

To achieve the project's goals of excavation, preservation and publication, building upon past discoveries and accomplishments, we must continue the fund raising efforts initiated by the late Michael Hoffman. Dr. Renée Friedman and Barbara Adams, the current project co-directors, have made site report publication and resumed excavations their priorities. Your tax-deductible contribution will support important research that might not otherwise be possible.

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New Home and New Look for the NEKHEN NEWS

On September 1, 1996, The Milwaukee Public Museum officially became the new home for the Friends of Nekhen. Many thanks are due to the American Research Center in Egypt, Southern California Branch for their temporary service in that capacity.

Our man in Milwaukee is Carter Lupton, Curator of Ancient History and Head of the History Section at the Milwaukee Public Museum. He conducted excavations at Locality HK6 in 1980, 1982 and 1985 and has led many study tours to Egypt for his museum and for the Smithsonian, as well as tours sponsored by the Friends of Nekhen which visited Hierakonpolis in 1985 and 1988.

D.G. Park, graphic designer of the NEKHEN NEWS' new look, is owner/operator of The Edge Desktop Publishing, located in Piedmont, California. Ms. Park has run her own graphics design/desktop publishing business since 1987.

This issue of NEKHEN NEWS was done on a PowerMac 6100, using Quark Express, PageMaker and Photoshop software, a UMAX Vista-S6E scanner and an Apple LaserWriter 600dpi printer.



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