

# DIGGING DIARY

## Kafr Hassan Dawood, Egypt

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**Location:** The eastern Wadi Tumilat 8km east of El-Tell Al-Kebir, in Lower Egypt.

**Principal Investigator:** Prof. Fekri A. Hassan (Petrie Professor of Archaeology, UCL).

**Institutions:** Institute of Archaeology University College London, the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) and Uppsala University.

**Field Season:** 4 June-16 July 1996.

**Brief description of work:** The site covers 91 feddans (95 acres or 382,200 m<sup>2</sup>) and has two periods of occupation: Terminal Predynastic to Early Dynastic Period (c. 3300 BC-2900 BC) and Late Period to Roman (c. 610 BC-AD 150) (conjectural site dates). To date more than a thousand graves have been excavated, 920 by an Egyptian team, and 80 in the last two seasons by the international co-operation team led by Prof. F. A. Hassan. Burials from the Late Period to Roman Period being interspersed with the earlier graves.

This season, the second season of the UCL and SCA co-operative project (the main object of which is to examine the transitional period of unification c. 3000 BC), 41 graves were excavated, comprising 22 Terminal Predynastic to Early Dynastic and 19 Late Period to Roman. Most of the early graves were of the simple inhumation type with the burial position being tightly flexed on the left-side with the head to the north but facing east. Three compact mud-lined graves were also excavated: one was particularly rich in grave goods, including a slate bowl, numerous calcite vessels, and a variety of fine and coarse wares. The most exciting find of the season was that of a large (6.9m x 7.1m) compact mud Early Dynastic tomb (970), with three probable ante chambers. This large tomb lies to the south of the other large tomb found in the 94/5 season by the SCA, in which was found a pottery jar with the *serekh* of Narmer inscribed on it. West of, but adjacent to, tomb 970 is an enigmatic circular area 10m in diameter consisting of vegetable matter mixed with aeolian sand.

The main objectives of the forthcoming season's (1997) work will be the systematic excavation and recording of the large tomb 970, which is expected to form part of a mortuary complex belonging to a local ruler, and the continuation of the examination of the relationship between biological indicators and cultural indicators for the cemetery as a whole. The conservation of the artefacts from the site forms a significant part of the project, and this year, because of the large number of objects expected from tomb 970, the systematic recording and conservation of these artefacts must be considered of paramount importance, and accordingly, a team of conservators will be sent out from UCL to assist with the work of SCA conservators.

An area in the south of the site will also be excavated in an attempt to determine the earliest use of the site, which may possibly have commenced as early as the Late Predynastic *c.* 3500-3300 BC. The international team, with a significant IoA contingent, will work closely with Egyptian colleagues to ensure that the most up to date methodologies, theories and equipment will be applied. It is hoped that the benefits accruing from the enhancement of the on-site laboratory facilities and the implementation of a proposed Cultural Heritage Management project, will mean that Kafr Hassan Dawood can be treated as an open museum in future seasons. Moreover, the emphasis to be placed on the teaching of CHM, including the conservation of artefacts and skeletal remains, should ensure this site a valuable role as a field training venue for future generations of national and international archaeologists and conservators.