

The history and research of the Naqada Region Collection

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(PLATES VI–IX)

Between 1978 and 1981 Professor Fekri A. Hassan led a survey of the west bank in the Naqada region between modern Ballas and Danfiq, an area of about 15 km (Predynastic of Naqada project). These sites cover the Predynastic to Early Dynastic Period (ca. 3,900–2,900 BC). The material collected in this survey was exported under licence to Washington State University, USA (1981–2). While in the USA, it formed the focus of study for such scholars as Diane Holmes and Renée Friedman as part of their respective doctoral theses. In 1994, when Hassan was appointed Petrie Professor of Egyptian Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, UCL, he brought with him the Naqada study collection. When he retired in 2008, the future of the collection needed to be secured and, after consultation with UCL, Hassan donated his study collection to the Egyptian State. Now housed in the Dakbla Oasis Magazine, theoretically this collection is open for research and some objects may eventually be put on display. Although already the subject of many scientific investigations (radiocarbon dating, archaeobotanical and zooarchaeological analysis), during inventorying of the collection it was felt necessary to record all artefacts not previously recorded: thousands were drawn and photographed, and new analyses instigated, including thin section analysis for pottery, phytolith analysis of dung and lead isotope analysis of selected copper objects. This decision was taken because all the artefacts from the survey were in one location, and future access not guaranteed. Results will augment the on-going project for final publication of the original project.

Introduction to Research at Naqada Region

The Naqada region is located to the north of Luxor in Upper Egypt. The settlement of Nubt-South Town is located on the west bank of the Nile halfway between the modern towns of Kom Billal and el-Zawayda and is the most famous and largest settlement in the Naqada region, which consists of a cluster of sites of differing sizes and types (pl. VI). Together with Hierakonpolis and Abydos, Nubt-South Town is one of the most important sites for understanding the socio-economic developments that occurred during the Predynastic (Naqada I–II, 3,900–3,300 BC) to Protodynastic (Naqada III A–B, 3,300–3,060 BC) periods, and represents one of the primary political centres of early Egypt. As such, it was a major player in the process of state formation.¹ As the funerary remains

1. T.A.H. WILKINSON, *Political unification: Towards a reconstruction*, in « MDAIK » 56 (2000), pp. 377–95.