

Jiménez Serrano and Tassie 2006: 707-709). The reasons behind this misunderstanding are impossible to determine. In any case, the reader should take into account that dates mentioned throughout the book do not fit the academic consensus on chronologies of such periods.

Beyond these problems, and returning to the initial comment of this review, the author's main objective for this book has to be adequately pondered, namely to publish in Spanish language, in order to strengthen the Spanish Egyptology. In the frame of such a worthy attitude, Jiménez Serrano says he hopes this book can serve "as a grain of sand in that claim" (p. 32; my translation). And there is no doubt that, in this sense, *Los primeros reyes y la unificación de Egipto* honours the purpose to which it was written.

Bibliography

HASSAN, F.A., JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, A. & TASSIE, G., 2006. The sequence and Chronology of the Protodynastic and Dynasty I Rulers [in:] CHLODNICKI, M. *et al.* (eds.), *Prehistory of Northeastern Africa: New ideas and discoveries*. Studies in African Archaeology 9. Poznan: 687-722.

HENDRICKX, S., 2001. Arguments for an Upper-Egyptian Origin of the Palace-façade and the *Serekh* during the Late Predynastic-Early Dynastic times, *Göttinger Miszellen*, 184: 85-110.

HENDRICKX, S., 2007. Les grands mastabas de la Ire dynastie à Saqqara. *Archéo-Nil*, 18: 61-88.

JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, A., 2001. The Origin of the Palace-façade as Representation of the Lower Egyptian Élites. *Göttinger Miszellen*, 183: 71-82.

JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, A., 2002. *Royal Festivals in the Late Predynastic Period and the First Dynasty*. BAR International Series 1076. Oxford.

JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, A., 2003. Chronology and Local Traditions: The Representation of Power and the Royal Name in the Late Predynastic Period. *Archéo-Nil*, 13: 93-142.

JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, A., 2007. The Funerary Meaning of the Nighed Architecture in Egypt during the Third Millennium BC. *Göttinger Miszellen*, 213: 23-38.

VAN DEN BRINK, E.C.M., 2001. Some Comments in the Margins of 'The Origin of the Palace-façade as Representation of the Lower Egyptian Élites'. *Göttinger Miszellen*, 183: 99-111.

Marcelo Campagno

Le gisement épipaléolithique de ML1 à 'Ayn-Manâwir. Oasis de Kharga

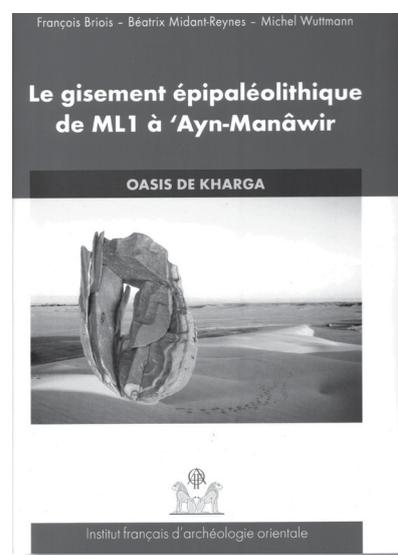
François Briois, Béatrix Midant-Reynes & Michel Wuttmann

Institut français d'archéologie orientale ; FIFAO 58

Le Caire, 2008, VII-154 p., 84 fig., 11 tabl., cartes, plans - ISBN 978-2-7247-0492-1

In these times, where it has become increasingly more difficult to raise money for detailed and well-illustrated archaeological monographs almost everywhere, it is a great pleasure to have this publication by François Briois, Béatrix Midant-Reynes and Michel Wuttmann. This volume presents the careful excavation of the epipalaeolithic site 'Ayn Manâwir ML1 (Doush/Kharga

Oasis) and its accurate and in-depth analysis of the lithic technology. Such final site-reports with numerous drawings and a detailed compilation of the stone artefact assemblages provide a valuable basis for other researchers. Furthermore, this site inspires scientific discussion about regional epipalaeolithic developments in the Eastern Sahara, about which only little is known at present.



'Ayn Manâwir ML1 was discovered during a survey of the archaeological mission of the *Institut français d'archéologie orientale* (IFAO) in the oasis of Doush, approximately 100km south of Qasr el-Kharga. On the eastern slopes of the 'Ayn Manâwir hill, a dense scatter of epipalaeolithic stone artefacts and fragments of ostrich eggshells was observed on the edge of a small sandstone plateau. Excavated between 1999 and 2001 by Francois Briois and Béatrix Midant-Reynes, the stone artefacts represent a great deal of coherence and homogeneity; 513 m² corresponding with the main artefact concentration of this scatter of around 800 m².

The volume is well-arranged and organised into seven chapters and stands out due to its clear and comprehensible description of the archaeological approach and methodology. The reader is introduced to the Doush/'Ayn Manâwir area in chapter 1 (pp. 1-4), which describes the discovery of the site, the territory of the Doush and Kharga Oases, as well as the geographical characteristics. Chapters 2 and 3 (pp. 5-16) focus on descriptive specifications of the excavation and recording methods of ML1 with its different features. The core of this publication is the presentation of the archaeological material in chapter 4 (pp. 17-101), complemented by the spatial distribution patterns of the archaeological material and numerous refittings in chapter 5 (pp. 103-119). Subsequently, after this rather descriptive section, chapter 6 (pp. 121-138) examines 'Ayn Manâwir ML1 in

the context of other Holocene sites (between 9,000 and 3,100 calBC) in the Eastern Sahara and the Nile Valley. Based on a typological comparison with the artefact assemblages presented before and the available radiocarbon dates of ML1, the site is chronologically classified by the authors. The monograph concludes with the summary of the results of the archaeological analysis in chapter 7 (pp. 139-141).

With nearly 11,000 excavated stone artefacts and almost 1,200 stone tools, the assemblage of 'Ayn Manâwir ML1 constitutes an impressive background for archaeological comparisons and statistical analysis. Such a quantity of artefacts is rarely found in other Holocene sites of the Egyptian Eastern Sahara. Characteristic for ML1 – as well as for other Holocene inventories in the surrounding of the Egyptian Limestone Plateau (e.g. Djara, Abu Gerara) – is the homogeneity of raw material and the dominance of a few variants used for the production of stone artefacts. It can be traced back to the fact that some of the Eocene formations of this Limestone Plateau contain high quality flint, wherefore raw material was easily accessible. Likewise in 'Ayn Manâwir, 62 % of the flaked stone artefacts and 94 % of the stone tools were made out of a grey flint, which was localised in-situ 40km south of the archaeological site. Of great help for comparisons with materials from other archaeological sites is the exemplary integrated plate with colour photos, visualising the different shades of the most fre-

quently used raw materials, a grey flint and chalcedony.

Subsequently the volume focuses on the different technological aspects of the "*chaîne opératoires*" of the 'Ayn Manâwir ML1 assemblage. Most striking is the enormous number of blades, bladlets and microbladlets (over 3,500 blanks) mainly produced on-site. These blanks were used afterwards for the production of microlithic tools. And indeed, most frequent in the ML1 assemblage are geometric microliths forming nearly 34 % of all stone tools, followed by backed bladlets (almost 22 %). An impressive number of 333 elongated triangles (Tixier type 95) were found; they are the dominant geometric tool type in ML 1 and account for nearly 28 % of all stone tools. The presentation of the artefact material in this volume always features detailed descriptions with numerous high-quality artefact drawings of cores, tools and also of blanks and refittings (most welcome). It is commendable that the editors took the time for this elaborate but also time-consuming process of reconstructing the production sequence. As a result, 46 refittings are represented, described in detail and often illustrated by photos or drawings as well as an indication of their spatial schemes of distribution.

After this comprehensive presentation of the archaeological material and the results of its examination, chapter 6 discusses the chronological position of 'Ayn Manâwir ML1 as related to other Holocene sites in the Eastern Sahara and the Nile Valley. The time period under

consideration extends from 9,000 until 3,100 calBC, which is sub-divided in the first part of this chapter into five chronological sections (pp. 121-131). Each chronological section is briefly outlined and identified by their most significant archaeological sites, dating and chronological positions as well as the considerable innovations of this phase. Such an overview is highly beneficial and helps readers to easily find their way into the current archaeological research in this area; especially as during the last 20 years many investigations have been conducted by analysing new archaeological sites; taking absolute dates and upgrading the climate history. The second part of this chapter (pp. 131-137) deals with a typological comparison of the tool types of 'Ayn Manâwir ML1 with other sites from the Eastern Sahara and the Nile Valley. All significant sites, for which published tool lists are available, were chosen for a comparison by a correspondence analysis. The only downer at the moment is that such lists exist only for the sites of Nabta Playa/Bir Kiseiba area in southwest Egypt (Combined Prehistoric Expedition) and from Elkab in Upper Egypt (Belgian Middle Egypt Prehistoric Project). A clearly arranged table with the quantities of all types of stone tools makes the approach comprehensible for the reader. Due to the results of the factor analysis (p. 136) 'Ayn Manâwir ML1 can be associated from the typological point of view with the el-Ghorab phase at Nabta Playa/Bir Kiseiba (7,500 and 7,300 calBC). The most important tools that coincide between ML1

and other sites of this phase are microburins and elongated scalene triangles.

Unlike the results from the typological comparison, the absolute dates from ML1 rather fit into the chronologically successive phase el-Nabta/el-Jerar (7,000 and 6,100 calBC). From the centre of the artefact concentration two radiocarbon dates, with results around 6,500 calBC, were taken from pieces of ostrich eggshell. For such an inconsistency, two possible explanations are adduced by the editors. The ostrich eggshells might not indeed belong to the early Holocene material, originating from subsequent reuse of the site. As further proof for this assumption, a single Ounan point and a few bifacially retouched arrowheads are mentioned, which do not fit well into the lithic assemblage. On the other hand, the enormous amount of eggshells and their distribution directly into the centre of the epipalaeolithic artefact concentration argue against this. The second explanation (one preferred by the authors) is connected to an essential discussion on the regional developments of early Holocene Egypt. For the epipalaeolithic site of Elkab, comparable absolute dates are provided and interpreted as a result of a regionally disparate development; a similar occurrence is assumed for 'Ayn Manâwir.

Little is known at present about such regional developments in the Epipalaeolithic of the Eastern Sahara, and therefore it emphasises once more the importance of such detailed archaeological approaches as the one reviewed

here. At the moment most of the archaeological information originates directly from the Nabta Playa/Bir Kiseiba area, where such early Holocene phases (like el-Ghorab for example) were defined. Future research should also focus on the possible periphery, its cultural characteristics and contacts with the centre (interactions between desert and Nile Valley). Therefore it is desirable that the authors continue with their research on early Holocene sites in the area of Doush/Kharga Oasis.

This volume is an excellent final site report with outstanding documentation of the archaeological material. Many line drawings, colour photos and clearly arranged tables emphasise this well-structured research. In addition, numerous references in the text to artefact tables and drawings with thematically composed plates and schematic drawings of the different core types (pp. 28-29) or the synthesis of techno-typological characteristics of the assemblage ML1 (p. 95), facilitate reading and provide a convenient and fast general idea. The aforesaid makes this archaeological approach an excellent basis for the work of other researchers in this area. In general, this work is up to the usual high standards for archaeological publications of the *Institut français d'archéologie orientale*.

Karin Kindermann