



a non-profit organization of Palaeolithic

### **Three activity centres of Palaeolithic - 400 000 - 250 000 - 10 000 BC near Luxor.**

Hunting strategies of big game in natural trap areas by Palaeolithic Man and other items.

#### **I. Reconnaissance sites and survey**

One km north-west of the tourist valley of the Queens a vast wadi fan (Low Desert) - fed by long wadis of unknown age - is the location of three activity centres of Palaeolithic. This was the result of my survey 2005/2006. Some km east of the Valley of King after 7 short wadis another large wadi fan is visible on NASA photos with two Coptic cloisters of Deir El Melak and Deir Mari Buctur. Also this area has many living floors since Acheulian time and was the last excavation place by Vermeersch of 25 years excursions (Pierre M. Vermeersch: Palaeolithic living sites in Upper and Middle Egypt, 2000, pp. 159). But to economize my survey I concentrated my reconnaissance activities of human impact on the natural environment during Palaeolithic in the western part of the West Banks of Thebes, Luxor.



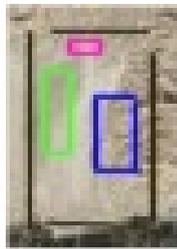
NASA Photo

The reconnaissance survey 2005/2006 was supported by using satellite photos in large scale of the NASA and map data informations by hand-held Garmin utilities. By the satellite Global Positioning System (GPS) I localized the sites and created a local cartography with waypoints and tracks within

an accuracy of 4-5 m. Photo-documentation completed the survey.

I got the concentrated presence of mankind of three different Palaeolithic times:

- a) Killing fields of Middle Palaeolithic hunters (older than 70 000 BC) bordered by the impressive cliffs at the east side of the area, ( blue square-section);
- b) frequent presence of Late Acheulian or older (400 000 BC) (green square-line) at the west side of the area;
- c) many samples of knapping sites of Late Palaeolithic (10 000 BC) at the north end of the large wadi fan where the small wadis enter the low desert coming from the 500 m high plateau of the Limestone Desert which is a part of the hyper arid Sahara of today (pink zone).



Depict of schematic

tripartite zone

In the south the area is limited by the floodplain of the Nile. So we get a square of 10 x 5 km.

## 2. Geomorphology

The 400 m high escarpments (steep cliffs bordering the 80 m high floodplain of the Nile marking the west side of the large Limestone Desert) have thick horizontal layers of Early Eocene limestone, the Serai Formation of the Thebes Group, marine deposits of the 50 million years old Thetis, the old Mediterranean Sea. Like the northern border of coral reefs and lagoons of the Thetis - the Fränkische Jura in Germany - the eroded deposits of limestone yield the flint stone, the ideal material of tools of Old Man.

Within the cliffs three terraces with steep slopes are visible - the lowest is the platform of the killing fields of Middle-Palaeolithic. Two theories exist about the terraces. One thesis says that during the uplift of the deposits in late Miocene or early Pliocene the old Nile carved channels deep into the Pliocene filling which created the series of terraces. Another theory says that groundwater sapped out of the limestone while the massive of marine deposits lifted up. On top of the cliffs the vast flat surface of the High Desert (limestone plateau) may reflect the water level of old Thetis like in the Franconia Jurassic near Dollnstein, Germany. Seen

from the Low Desert eastward you have the impression of a large amphitheatre.

Late Miocene, 6 million years ago, as the Mediterranean waters evaporated, the Nile carved a vast canyon into the layers of soft rock. Other erosions widened the valley of the Nile. At this time the basis of the river was 1000 m below the actual level creating a canyon longer and deeper than the Great Canyon of Arizona.



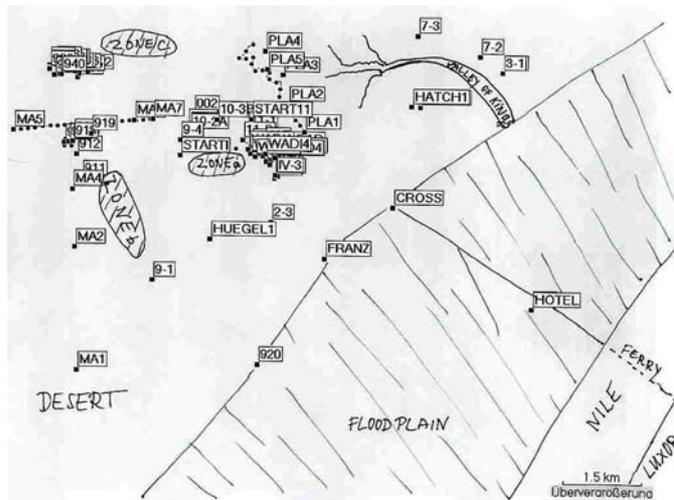
During humid periods when sediments had refilled the banks of the Nile fluid water carved intensely into the platforms of lime rock and created gravels to form the landscape of today dry wadis. The time of shaping this colluvial material is unknown but older than Middle-Pleistocene.

At the west side of the area and going south directed to the Nile the isolated hills and very flat terraces - prebuilding a hard desert-pavement - are testimonies of eroded wadis of unknown times.

The Low Desert, the large wadi fan with an intersection of 3 km, is divided into two parts:

- a) a smaller eastern side: the white Holocene fan of late "fresh" water influence, where chalk dominates with some Holocene sites (10 000 BC);
- b) western side: the so called dark Pleistocene fan where dark blue/grey varnished flint stones dominate. Many of these flint stones are artifacts of Acheulian and Middle Palaeolithic times. In chapter 4 we will present an intersecting track of wadi fan with profile of height

The southern side of the Low Desert (large wadi fan) is limited by the sharp border of the fertile floodplain of the Nile. By GPS we marked some way points: cross road (Wp cross), the headquarter of French archaeologists (Wp Franz) and a cubic temple of Roman time (wp 920). Hotel marks the wonderful hotel El Fayrouz.



Total GPS map

Since Pleistocene the area seems to be "calm" without many disturbances by nature. This is the reason why there are abundant artifacts of mankind like nowhere in the world. But the shore of the floodplain had changed many times. Some authors proclaim the rise of the Nile during its "wild" time. Theoretically it was possible that floods of the Nile could have destroyed large areas of the sites within the Low Desert since Acheulian times. But my observations, Vermeersch excavation in the eastern Large Wadi Fan (wp Deir2 2548047-3241819) and the geological analyses of the Nile (Rushdi Said: The river Nile, London 1993) show another picture.

The shores of the floodplain changed many times during the periods of Eonile (late Miocene 6-5 million years), of Paleonile (Pliocene 5.4 - 1.8 million years), of Prenile (Pleistocene 1.8 - 0.8 million years). About 800 000 years ago the mighty "wild" river Prenile (Pleistocene) began carrying huge loads of gravel and silt northward. The presence of layers of this silt is today a mark to date excavations. But even in its "wild" episode its water level rose only 8 m in the eastern vicinity of the Valley of the Kings (Vermeersch p 162).

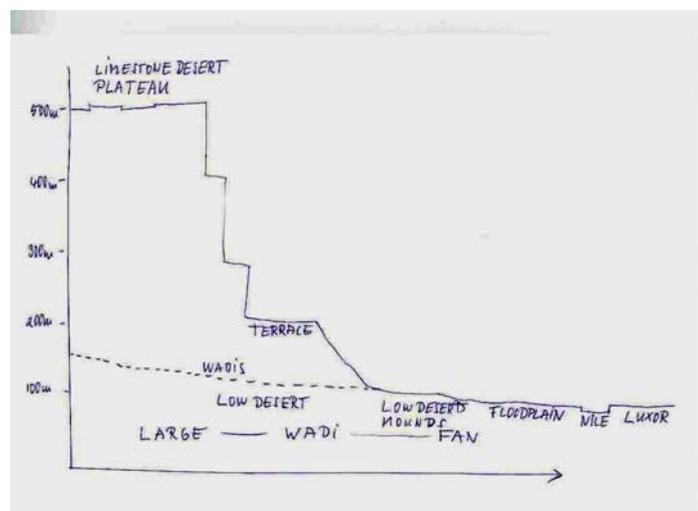
When the climate in its drainage basin during Pleistocene (Neonile 400 000 - 12 500 BC) became arid, the Nile disappeared nearly and there were only intermittent flows. About 12 500 BC the modern Nile obtained most of its water from Ethiopian and African sources. The modern Nile is very young from the geomorphologic point of view.

#### Summary:

Since Late Acheulian there seems to be no remarkable Nile fluctuation to effect the Low Desert. During the Middle Acheulian (800 000 BC) the mighty Prenile could have affected the lower parts of the Low Desert. But as we show in chapter 3.3. we find artifacts including hand axe of Middle Acheulian in the area of hard dark pavement (lowest platform), 60 m above today Nile level.

### 3.1. Eastern Area of the Large Wadi Fan: Hunting strategies of Middle-Palaeolithic in natural trap-areas

The east-side of the flat wadi fan ends in a trap-area enclosed by two 400 m high south and north pillars of steep eroded inaccessible cliffs. Short wadis at a 100 m sea-level are deeply carved into the gravel and rocks with dead ends. Three terraces of different altitudes build up the slopes of the High-Pavement of the large Limestone-Desert. The lowest terrace is 200 m high above sea level and the operation-area of hunting. Only the side to the low desert is accessible at some places.



Schematic cross-section of slopes with altitudes

Schematic cross-

We decide two hunting areas:

#### a) Hunting areas using 200-m-terraces

During humid climate periods of Middle Palaeolithic (70 000 - 350 000 BC) the landscape of the Sahara was often wetter and greener than today (American Scientist magazine, Jan-Febr. issue 2006). The Savannah of the flat wadi fan was the feeding area of big game like wild cows, Arab gazelles, antelopes, shackles - till today you can see the mammals of younger times depicted on the walls of Pharaonic temples and tombs. Watching the landscape with the eyes of hunters you get the impression of a master plan for organized hunting of game. The kind like sites are dispersed within the scenery corresponds with this working hypothesis.

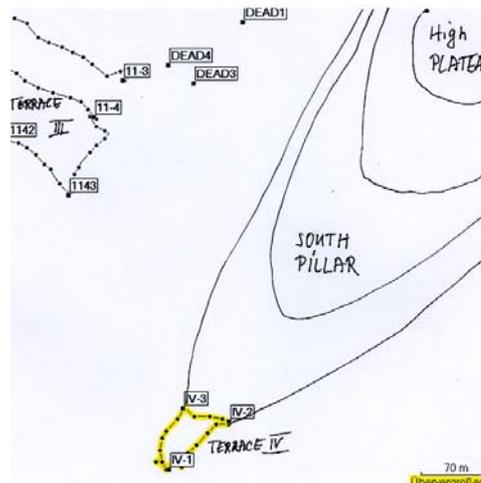
The idea is simple and we can prove it by the sample of terrace I: The herds in the flat Savannah were observed by higher posts at locations of reconnaissance guards (sites 8/8, 9/4). The herds or part of them were driven slowly by beaters into the direction of the Amphitheatre and over special ridges towards the lowest terrace (sites Start I, 9/4). Upstairs



Terrace III is hidden within a net of wadis and slopes. It was far away from the meadows of the flat wadi Savannah and it was not possible to watch from this place the grazing herds of game. So I guess that this place had more the function of a pass like in Pharaonic time, with many paths crossing the terrace. May be the wild animals were driven through a long wadi to the terrace. The edges of this wadi have concentrations of artifacts, some may belong to the Acheulian period (wp 11/4, 1141,1142,1143).



But not all terraces are good hunting places. Terrace IV is the prolongation of the dominant south pillar of the cliffs. Its contours of 400 m high slopes can be seen from 20 km distance. It is the only low terrace that has an altitude of 240 m and not 200 m.



track terrace IV

The whole long north-west side of the terrace has a gradient of only 45 degrees. It was impossible for a small group of hunters to hinder the game to escape. The surface is destroyed by later settlements of Coptic hermits of early Christian time with the rests of pottery of water vases carried by adoring people from the floodplain of the near Nile.

Also terrace V more than 100 m above the famous temple of Hatshepsut does not suited to be a hunting place. This outside

part of our survey (hatch1) lies behind a police station on the steep hill route to the Valley of the Kings. The few possible ascents are by far too steep to drive game to the terrace. But at the top there are some artifacts within a completely disturbed surface by Arabs who collected Acheulian and Middle Palaeolithic cores and flakes to construct Arabic letters. Amid the artifacts I found a small leaf bifacial point (photo) of Middle Palaeolithic.

In the whole area we find a spur of dispersed artifacts like a faint veil put over the surface - testimony of the continuous presence of Old Man everywhere conserved by the calm geomorphology.

#### **b) Hunting areas using narrow wadis and channels**

The second hunting strategy was the driving of game from the large wadi Savannah into the narrow wadis till they had to stop at their dead ends. These narrow clefts in dramatic scenery (photo) are possible product of fossil waterfalls, of cascades spilling over the edge of the Limestone Plateau 100-200 m down into the channels apparently following folds in the Thetis deposits during humid time of Pleistocene.

Within a short time I found two of these dead ends:

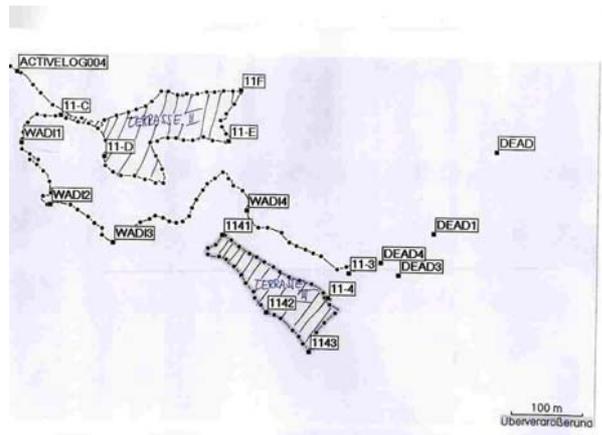


Within the gorge of Wadi Gharbi, 400 m distant from the dead end (Start1), on a 4 m high remnant of a terrace above the actual level of the wadi (wp 11-1) there is a dense carpet of black varnish flakes without tools - obviously a quarry. Driven into this trap it was possible to kill the animals perhaps with the help of tree-barriers to block off the fierce pushing back of the frightened animals.

The Theban writer and priest Butehamuns visited frequently Wadi Gharbi with a group of the workers village of Thebes 1000 BC (John Romer: *Sie schufen die Königsgräber*, p.314, 1986). There are remnants of old huts. Chalk boulder and rockwalls are covered by hieratic inscriptions of the time of Ramses XI, the latest Pharaoh of the great time of Thebes. Romer and other

suggest that within the cliffs and the deep cracks are some undetected Pharaonic tombs buried by natural garbage of the cliffs. They were constructed during the "time of renaissance" after the tombs of the Valley of the Kings were robbed and honest priests like Butehamun looked for safer tombs.

The second trap of a narrow long channel separates terrace I and II.



Track Wadi1 -

Wadi2 - Wadi3 - Wadi4 ...waypoints: Dead4 - Dead3 - Dead2 - Dead1 - Dead End

Between Wadi3 and Wadi4 the sides of the channel are only 10 m higher than the bottom of the Wadi.



At this place the animals driven upward were within easy reach by spears from the sides. At the bottom of the wadi white boulders of limestone dominate. This is a sign of Holocene water influence burying the stone-weapons. But at both sides of the channel there are many remnants of human presence. At the very rich site of 11/3 we have an affluent collection of fine scrapers, flakes, Nubian points. This is the post where one way goes into the direction of the killing terrace III and the other goes into the direction of the end of the wadi.

**3.2. West area of the Large Wadi Fan: Acheulian style hand axes (Lower Palaeolithic).**

The west-side of the large wadi fan is marked by a long small mound chain of gravels 20-30 m above the ground of the large wadi fan running north - south parallel to the fossil water course down to the Nile - a non-eroded testimony of old gravel surface. North of this hill chain follows a flat but large terrace 7 m above the ground of the large wadi with a dark cement hard desert pavement of millions and millions of artifacts (more than 100 chips per square meter). When you approach the hill chain from the floodplain in the direction south-west (Ma1) you can see 2 km far away the black spots which mark the slopes of the hill with dense concentrations of flint-stones mostly knapped by homo erectus.



At the south end of the hill chain (91), in the west-middle part (MA2) and at the north end (MA4) I collected very fine Acheulian handaxes (Ahand) of Late Acheulian with sharp edges together with Middle-Palaeolithic (MP)points and cores.

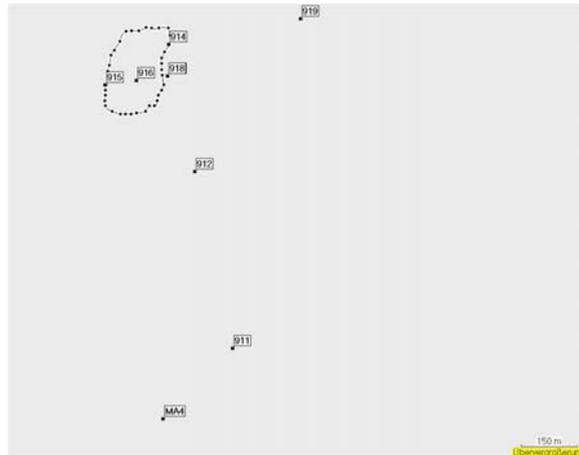


1 Ahand/  
Ahand-1 core

1 Ahand/  
Ahand-1 core

1 Ahand-1 A scraper/1 MP point-1  
Ahand-1 core

Within 2 hours of search I found half of all my hand axes I picked up in the last 35 years of intensive field research. Further north within the flat dark terrace I draw a circle.



Within this circle I found a heavily weathered proto hand axe and weathered flakes (also 912,913,914). My working thesis is, that these artifacts with wearied sides and edges may belong to the Middle Acheulian (800 000 BC) in contrast to the sharp edged handaxes of Late Acheulian. Due to the hard cemented desert pavement and the altitude of the flat terrace beyond fossil water influence the artifacts lye in an undisturbed environment. Therefore we have a lot of knapping places with weathered cores and chips of a time nearly 1 million years old! The artifacts are severely wind polished and bore a well developed mottled dark brown to black patina of desert varnish. I know no other surface place like this one.



### **33. North area of the Large Wadi Fan: Many undisturbed sites of Epi-Palaeolithic (10 000 BC)**

At the north side of the large wadi fan where the wall of the 500 m high Limestone Plateau borders the fan - only in the north-east edge two long tributary wadis enter the wadi fan penetrating the cliffs - I made another astonishing discovery: Within a circuit walk of 2 hours I found 18 undisturbed flint knapping places, 2-4 diameter, of simple blade technology



6 selections of finds 921 - 940; down left-up right stone-chairs in the chipping-centre

The sites have always the same pattern: Round one rest-core all of its homogenous chips with plain bases are in situ, which could easily be refitted. The cores are irregular, no bifacials, no prepared cores. The patina is lead-coloured (grey-blue) the first stage of patination. These sites are embedded in the fresh white chalk channels of early Holocene or late Pleistocene at the bottom of the wadi.

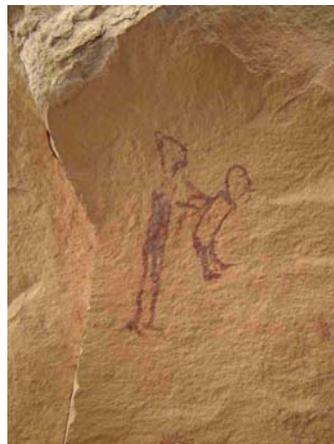
This means that also the deepest parts of the wadi had no remarkable water influence since thousands of years despite intermitted rainfalls. This result contradicts the reports about the situation of the Valley of the Kings where despite 3 mm annual precipitation occasional local thunderstorms can dump tons of water down the narrow wadis and threaten the tombs of the kings. In January 2006 I observed the traces of a faint rainfall causing prints of raindrops in the silt and small one meter long fans before the water evaporated or trickled away. It was enough water to let the rare dehydrated plants flourish with small blossoms but it is not enough volume of water to create a flood running down the lowest parts of the wadis of today.



The strong evidence of undisturbed Epi-Palaeolithic delivers the possibility to calibrate other sites far away from this concentration. Two waypoints we did mark:

a) Wp 919 in the part of white wadi fan, south of Wp 921 and others of the big concentration. This find indicates that more sites of the same periods are scattered in the field research zone.

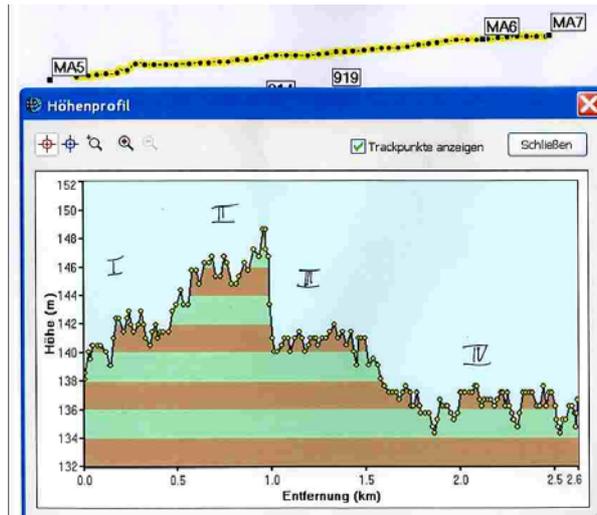
b) Wp 7-2 of Epi-Palaeolithic is east of the Valley of the Kings at a pass connecting two valleys and at its slopes. The lowest part of this site reaches to a natural shelter caused in unknown times by water flow. At the ceiling of the shelter is a depict in red color - a man strangling a big bird perhaps a wild goose.



Despite the vicinity of the Quarry of the memorial temples of Hatshepsut and Amenhotep III with hieratic inscriptions translated and interpreted by Japanese students as calculations of daily excavations and Pharaonic paintings I think that the depict can also be predynastic. It looks like the depicts of late Palaeolithic of Libyan Sahara.

#### **4. Profile of the northern part of the Great Wadi Fan**

At the northern part of the large wadi fan I drew a 2,6 km long track that intersected the wadi with my handheld Garmin from west to east to get a profile of the whole wadi. I started the track from a gravel wall coming down from the northern part of the 500 m high Limestone Plateau and stopped at the eastern foothills of the great arena of the western cliffs.



The track profile reflects in some way the different sites. We have four sections of different altitude and functions of Palaeolithic time:

Section I of 138 - 142 m shows a small channel of the white limestone gravel fan of Holocene without finds. The small curve within the track marks the difficulty to climb up the steep shore of the small channel to the II: section. On the surface of the low terrace of 146 - 149 m are the dense artifact-carpet of Acheulian/Middle-Palaeolithic, engraved 1 - 1,5 m deep by fossil "baby-wadis".

The III. section 140 - 143 m is the grey -blue part of the large wadi fan of Pleistocene age, with Middle-Palaeolithic sites (wp 919).

The lowest part of the area, section IV, 134 -137 m is the white gravel fan. The white limestone gravel fan - calcareous gravels, white quartz sand to clays, small and larger pebbles - reflect the power of water thousands of years ago. Since what time? The dominant opinion is that the last but one pluvial time - when man still used chert as tools - ended 6000 BC. The last pluvial period about 3000 BC (American Science magazine 01/02/06) carried not enough volume of water to influence the white part of the wadi fan.

One evidence of this is an undisturbed site of Epi-Palaeolithic (MA6). Also here the zone is carved by many 1 - 1,5 m deep small channels of "fresh" pluvial influence.

## 5. The High Plateau

The high plateau is the eastern top-end of the large Limestone Desert with its western end at the Kharga and Dakhla oases. Because of the Great Bend of the Nile river the Northern border of this part of the roof of the High Desert steps down within 50 km into the floodplain of Naj Hammadi - from 510 to 80 m altitude. NASA-pictures from the International Space Station show that crossing the bend in the north direction

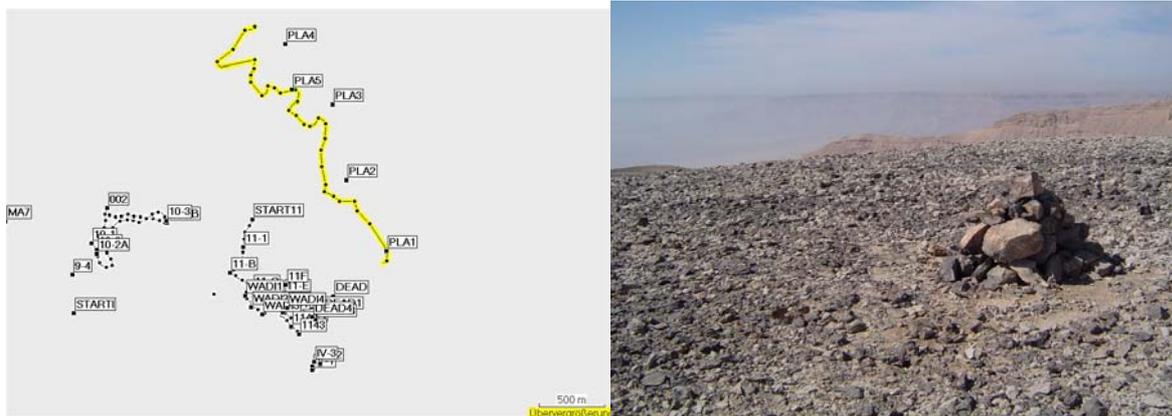
would end in large dunes before reaching the floodplain near Naj Hammadi. Generated by dominant winds from the northwest these dunes are the source of long small aeolian streaks blown away in the south-east direction until they settle in the large wadi fan - our operation zone. From the space the astronauts could recognize the contrast of the white streaks to the darker desert varnish chert on the rock surface of the limestone.

From the Westbank of Luxor only two or three accesses are possible to climb up the cliffs. The "easiest" way is from the long wadi (Dead4) following a small "Pharaonic" path. Above a small terrace destroyed during the time of Ramses XI by "channels and basins" to collect intermittend precipitation (Romer p. 317) a small hollow only 50 m under the plateau (Plal)I found an Acheulian style hand axe presenting Lower Palaeolithic of 400 000 BC or older at this uncomfortable zone. This handaxe has on its ventral side the negative of a flake. Maybe the Acheulian handaxe was used some 100 000 years later during Middle-Palaeolithic as a core to produce a flake.



At the top of the High Plateau we find similar situation like McPherron in Abydos 70 km further north (look at the link bottom of this homepage).

On the plateau a desert pavement of shattered flint fields spreads out. To the east, west and south nearby the steep slopes of cliffs limit the plateau. At the east side of the plateau a small wadi of 50 cm depth starts which later will end 400 m below in the Valley of the King. Sometimes the plateau has a width of only 3-400m. To the north the flat zone of the plateau stretches as far as one can look. The waypoints Plal-Pla4 mark the highest level of the plateau 500 - 510 m, dominated by stone piles.



The area of highest artifact densities is articulated with surrounding landscape. The sites are marked by dark dots, natural concentration of flint stones within 20 or 30 diameters. One can watch them from distance. As one moves away from the high-density area the artifact-density quickly falls to zero. The knapping sites of Acheulian or Middle Palaeolithic appear to be directly correlated with the natural supply of flint stone. They are quarries and represent no settlements for living.

This may be an answer to the problem what early man did at this height. Hunting strategies like 300-400 m downstairs seem to be outside of question because it was impossible to drive herds some hundred meters up the steep cliffs. Regarding the long time of human presence in the whole region the quarries reflect the visit of man by chance or they used the same "easy" access like I did at waypoint Pla1 to reach the plateau from where it was possible to wander northwards to the other side of the Nile to take a short cut of the Great Bend.

With some exceptions: Walking along the west border of the plateau following the edges of the cliffs which descend some hundred meters down drawing a track of 2.4 km with the handheld Garmin in the blank map feeling dizzy of a man looking down the cliffs of the Grand Canyon of Arizona I found a dark concentration of at least Middle Palaeolithic cores and flakes at the starting point of a wadi.



It may be a fossil waterfall of pluvial times, following a crack in the plateau rock before falling down the cliffs and steep slopes in cascades. This favourite place may have attracted travellers a short time to stay and chip lithics. More field research is necessary.

## **6. Endangered sites - Last minute help to save irreplaceable sites**

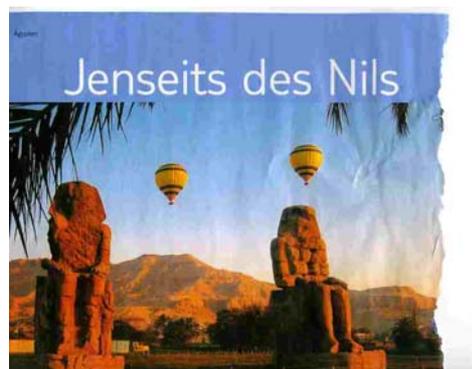
World Monuments Fund, ([www.wmf.org](http://www.wmf.org)) the worldwide organization dedicated to the preservation of historic culture, publishes the World Monuments Watch list of 100 most endangered sites. Among these is the West Bank of Luxor. Of course the interest is focused to the monuments of the Theban Necropolis which are threatened by theft and vandalism, uncontrolled tourism, rising groundwater, neglect and development pressures. But also Palaeolithic workstations are mentioned.

The living floor of more than a half million years of human presence is part of the heritage of mankind. The investigated zone of the Low Desert, some terraces and the High Plateau is threatened by natural and human impacts. Salt and hydration shattering of rocks in desert climate have been well-documented. Since Pharaonic time the landscape is threatened by human interference. But in modern times the waste of surface reaches a new peak.

### **Uncontrolled tourism**

Four Egyptian groups (2006) are engaged in Balloon flights with tourists to let them watch the Nile from the sky. Trucks and jeeps are driven recklessly over the flat desert to start the balloons or to follow them until they land. Often they do not follow the desert paths. With their wheels they destroy the sites.

Within some years the precious living floor of the flat zone of Early Man will be destroyed. Even Berlin Airs, the second great Airline Company of Germany enlists customers with balloons in their publicity brochure distributed in its airplanes.



### **Economic interests**

Many quarries within the gravel of the Pleistocene Pluvial deposits disturb the surface of the living floors

### **Rubbish**

Without organized waste disposal sites the villagers of the floodplain put their garbage into the Low Desert, especially into the wadis where they are watched by wild dogs.

### **Respectless Negligence**

Stones are worthless. Stones have no property, patronage or supporters. Nobody reckons the artifact character of Silex as the only heritage of Old Man. Without value stones are protected from being robbed. Neglect is the great advantage of stones compared with temples, burial places, precious shrines, nobles tombs. But this neglect also takes no notice of the rich culture in the desert.

## **7. Perspectives**

### **7.1. General social economic Programmes**

World Monument funds enlisted within the 100 most endangered places also the West Bank of Luxor.

link <http://wmf.org>

The intention of World Monuments Fund is to stem the losses through advocacy, grantmaking, education and training working with the local communities and partners - generally to create a feeling of responsibility and protection. A management plan for the entire West Bank is the objective of the current Watch listing. The implementation of the plan, however, will take much money. I plead for enclosure the zone of the desert with its Palaeolithic living floors within this management plan.

Confronted with the rapid process of destruction one of the urgent parts of such a management plan must be the systematic field research of the lithic sites by archaeological survey..... This systematic fieldwork in the steps of my reconnaissance survey can not be delayed. The addresses of support are World Monuments Fund, the Supreme Council for Antiquities in Cairo, regional and local Antiquities inspectorate officers and other Egyptian political responsible representatives.

Within this context it would be very helpful also for the tourist industry if the Luxor region should become a member of the World Culture Heritage programme of the United Nations, to be pushed by the Egyptian government. The preservation of endangered landscape of Palaeolithic time should have a scope within such a programme.

The Luxor region depends economically one-sided on the Tourist flows of luxurious Nile boats. From there the tourists are carried to the Pharaonic highlights by buses within some hours. The big money of Cairo is pumped into some five Stars hotels and restaurants without great participation of the normal folk. Broadening the places of interests within restricted areas of the West Bank would help the small hotels, restaurants, bicycle hires and small shop owners.

The Egyptian forces are too weak and the institutions too poor to start own initiatives and to finance such programmes only by themselves. Therefore the ignite initiative and finance power has to come from outside. German support has to be organized by Governmental organizations like the Federal Ministries of Science and of Development. Private funds can give additional aid.

## **7.2. Professional archaeological research and prevention**

A professional crew of archaeologists has to reconstruct the different activity centres in an intensive systematic way. They have to study the relation between activities, climate and landscape formation. What were the dynamic forces of Palaeolithic occurrences, of migration, settlement and hunting in different times?

They have to examine the best places for excavations to prove the surface results.

Can the trap-hunting thesis be backboned by elaborating clear categories of analysis? For example linking the hypothetic steps of hunting strategies with the sites?

What are the human and geological processes to form living floors on hard desert pavements?

The identical locality of different cultures within one million years is a challenge to develop better criterias of flint-knapping, the process of flaking in sequences. To get a better comprehensive understanding of Palaeolithic lithic technology the studies have to concern:

- the transition from Middle to Late Acheulian,
- the transition from Late Acheulian to Early Middle-Palaeolithic
- the transition between Early - Middle - Late Middle Palaeolithic.

## **7.3. Luxor - Future Centre of Prehistoric Studies - Predynastic Academy**

The Egyptian archaeology is focused on Pharaonic times. There is no much experience with predynastic times. No systematic archaeological survey of Palaeolithic of the Sahara and the zone has taken place. Although the Sahara played an important

role in mankind, the huge subcontinent is a pioneering field on the archaeological map. We have no much information about the Nile in prehistory. Luxor is a good place to deliver the infrastructure, the equipment and the know-how for archaeological working. And the West Bank is near by the Sahara.

The idea is to build up a Centre of Prehistoric studies at Luxor - a sort of Predynastic Academy.

Some groups are working without much coordination: Abydos, Luxor, North Sudan are the centres of actual Palaeolithic works. Luxor is the geographic centre. An important thing is to interchange results, coordinate campaigns. In a Prehistoric Academy published works and articles can be collected. Luxor can be the place to investigate existing Egyptian magazines of finds.

To the Centre should be attached a School of Archaeology, a branch of the University of Cairo or Alexandria concentrated to prehistoric time.

The foundation of the Centre of Prehistoric studies is a national task of the Egyptian government. The project management is a joint venture of Egypt and German institutions like Max Planck Institut or universities - with a new kind of partnership between institutes of "Egyptology" which have their experience of working in Egypt and institutes of "Ur- und Frühgeschichte". Foreign countries with experiences in North African Palaeolithic like the British Museum, the Gdansk Museum of Poland, the Leuven University of Belgium are invited to participate (look at the link bottom of this homepage).

Gerd Elvers 21.2.06

