

## Carol Meyer

**Carol Meyer** spent November through February in Cairo on an American Research Center in Egypt/National Endowment for the Humanities (ARCE/NEH) grant in order to write as much as possible of the final reports on the last four field seasons at Bir Umm Fawakhir in the central Eastern Desert of Egypt. The 1996 and 1997 seasons were survey only, but the team succeeded in completing the map of the main settlement at Bir Umm Fawakhir and mapping in detail two-thirds of Outlier 2. The 1999 season was the sole opportunity to excavate, and 2001 was a study season. Two volumes are now planned, one on the survey and mapping and one on the excavations. All data from all the 1996 and 1997 field notebooks were extracted and written up as two chapters, one on the main settlement at Bir Umm Fawakhir and another on the outlying clusters of ruins, particularly Outlier 2. The lists of registered objects and photographs were completed and concatenated and will appear as appendices in the first volume. Research at the Egyptian Geological Survey library in Cairo turned up some valuable references, chiefly mining and engineering reports on the nearby Wadi el-Sid mines, which have evidence of hard rock mining activity as far back as the late New Kingdom. Meyer also succeeded in returning to Bir Umm Fawakhir in order to field check the final maps and plans. The saddest finding was that the site is being looted; more positively, a large number of small corrections should improve the accuracy of the final site map. The main settlement is strung out for more than half a kilometer in a long narrow wadi, and since the site was plotted at 1:200 the basic map is about three meters long and hard to handle. All the segments were therefore scanned to make more manageable digital images for additional work in Cairo, primarily cleanup, labeling, and corrections from the site visit. While in Cairo, Meyer also presented formal lectures on Bir Umm Fawakhir at the Egyptian Geological Survey and ARCE and met informally with the Geology Department at Cairo University for some valuable conversations about ongoing research, desert sites, and an interesting proposal to start a program in geological archaeology. Finally, Meyer and colleagues completed a major article for the *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* on mining and ore reduction techniques at fifth–sixth century A.D. Bir Umm Fawakhir and late New Kingdom Wadi el-Sid. The paper is a joint effort between an archaeologist, a mining engineer (Bryan Earl), a geologist (Mohamed Omar), and a physicist (Robert Smither).

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