

SYMPOSIUM IN MEMORIAM. ARTHUR C. AUFDERHEIDE  
THE SCIENTIST, THE FRIEND (1922-2013)

## THE INIMITABLE AUFDERHEIDES: AN APPRECIATION

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Art (Arthur) and Mary Aufderheide are very well known in the world of mummy studies, as well as that of physical and forensic anthropology. For me, the sight of his cheerful visage, signature bolo ties, enthusiastic greetings, and a hug from Mary always heralded the start of a great conference and lively discussions about subjects ranging from the rate of fly infestations in corpses, to ethics of autopsies, to music.

Art was very much a Minnesota man. He was born on 9<sup>th</sup> September, 1922 in New Ulm, he attended St. Olaf's college, then medical school at the University of Minnesota, and ultimately taught in Minnesota, after a brief sojourn in Rochester (NY) and a stint in the army medical corps (1947-1949). He married a Minnesota woman, Mary (née Buryk) who was a nurse and a linguist and as daring and unconventional as Art. It is probably the Minnesota weather that helped inspire one of Art's more extraordinary adventures - a trip to the North Pole (Plaisted Expedition) on snowmobiles. Being a glutton for punishment, he went there not once, but twice (1967 and 1968), facing down polar bears as well as the elements. He also spent three winters with the Inuit, channelling his inner anthropologist, an experience that served him well in his life as a palaeopathologist. Once mummies entered his life in the mid-1970s, due to Michael Zimmerman, Art did not restrict his adventures to cold places - he went wherever there were bodies to be found, regardless of climate or conditions, with Mary frequently by his side. Thus, Art ex-

amined human remains from all over the world, throughout the Americas, Europe, Africa, and Asia, which gave him a deep understanding of diseases, both ancient and modern, and how they affect populations, both living and dead.

As a result of his passion, Art became a driving force in the study of palaeopathology, perhaps the most enthusiastic advocate of it since the time of Marc Ruffer (1859-1917), who is generally seen as the father of the discipline. Art has assembled the world's largest collection of tissue samples from mummified remains, and built an International Mummy Registry at the University of Minnesota, starting in the 1950s.

Art's publications are legion and there is Indeed, Art has influenced many medical practitioners to add palaeopathology to their repertoire, and for others to adopt it as a way of life, giving up on live patients altogether.

Although Art's scientific production is colossal it is perhaps his role as teacher that has influenced most lives, whether in the fields of pathology, palaeopathology, or mummy studies - indeed, the creation of the Mummy Congress owes a great deal to the enthusiasm of Art and Mary. Above all things, Art was an educator and mentor, drawing the best out of students, colleagues and friends, with a light touch and a dash of humour. Most of us who work with mummies never studied formally with Art, yet he



Fig. 1. Portrait of Arthur Aufderheide. Courtesy of his family.



**Fig. 2.** Arthur Aufderheide and other colleagues in an early pathology meeting.

influenced all of us, and we in turn, are (hopefully) passing on some of Art's knowledge and wisdom to our own students and colleagues. He was an incredibly kind, generous, approachable scholar who was encouraging and helpful to colleagues, young and old, students, and indeed anyone who asked him for help. He was never too busy or too proud to take the time to help, advise, explain, and share - not only information in the form of experiences, images, and publications, but also samples.

I benefited from his expertise and generosity time and again: getting advice about how to best deal with the stickiness of the resin or bitumen when your mummies melt because of the heat, establishing the rate of fly infestation in corpses, getting lists of the diseases particularly prevalent in the oases of Egypt, and innumerable other topics. Art is an example to us all as to how to behave, both personally and professionally, and remains my favourite role model (as does Mary). They are both sorely missed, but they live on through their work and the lives that they have influenced.

