

POLISH CENTRE OF  
MEDITERRANEAN ARCHAEOLOGY IN CAIRO  
WARSAW UNIVERSITY

# Newsletter

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Since our last issue, nine missions have worked in the field in Egypt, three in Sudan, three in Syria, and one in Lebanon. In Egypt, the Kom el-Dikka project in Alexandria continued through the summer. The work in Deir el-Bahari, Marina el-Alamein, and Tell el-Farkha took place in winter and spring. A short mission to Tell el Farama (Pelusium) followed in August. The excavations in Marea, Naqlun, and Saqqara West have just been concluded, in time to be included here. In Syria, the excavations in Palmyra were in spring, and at Tell Arbid and Tell Qaramel in September-October. The winter season in Sudan was particularly busy, with prospections and trial digs in the area to be flooded by a projected dam in the region of the Fourth Cataract. Older projects in Dongola and Banganarti proceeded according to plan.

In June, Tomasz Pelc, who has already worked with us on the excavations in Alexandria, took over from Jadwiga Iwaszczuk as Director's Assistant. He will be with us for the next two years, taking care of the Centre's day-to-day administration.

The scholarship program of the Polish Ministry of Education is in its third year with the holders for 2004/2005 being Ewa Czyżewska from Warsaw University and Joanna Then from Jagellonian University, Cracow, both for the full term, and Anastazja Stupko from Warsaw University for the first semester. All three are Egyptologists.

The news of Lech Krzyżaniak's unexpected death in July 2004 in Poznań came as a great shock. Leszek was associated with the Centre throughout his professional life, excavating

mainly in Sudan, but also searching for petroglyphs around Dakhleh Oasis, for the last time in February 2004. He was a recognized authority on the Neolithic in the Nile Valley and Director of the Archaeological Museum in Poznań. He also served for many years as Chairman of the Centre's Advisory Board in Warsaw. His expertise, energy, and most of all his human sensitivity shall be greatly missed by his friends, and he had many.

Barely a week later, the former Chairman of our Board, Waldemar Chmielewski, Professor Emeritus at Warsaw University, an eminent prehistorian, passed away, too. His good advice and honesty carried the Centre through many difficult times in the 1980s. He shall remain in the fond memory of many of us.

## Excavation and Restoration in Egypt

### ALEXANDRIA

The Polish-Egyptian Mission in Kom el-Dikka, run by Grzegorz Majcherek, returned to work following a short summer recess.

Excavations revealed a complex of well-preserved lecture halls of Late Roman date (5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries AD). Some of these halls were explored as far back as the 1980s, but only now, when their number totals at least thirteen, has their actual destination become apparent. The halls stretch all along the so-called Theater Portico (and likely beyond), the latter now safely assumed as the eastern colonnade of a large public square in the city center. The halls are all of more or less the same size with rows of tiered benches lining the

walls and an elevated seat for the lecturer featured at the rounded end at the back.

The complex has now been interpreted convincingly as an academic institution, shedding entirely new light on the character of the well-known "theatre" from Kom el-Dikka. The latter structure now takes its place in the alignment as the biggest lecture hall of them all.

The intellectual life of ancient Alexandria is well documented in the written sources. The names of professors and former students are known from their writings and biographies. Among the most prominent Alexandrian scholars of Late Antiquity were the pagan philosopher and mathematician Hypatia and her pupil and future bishop, Synesius of Cyrene. Other celebrities included Horapollon, the Egyptian author of *Hieroglyphica*, and Severus, Boethius and John Philoponus, all three Christian theologians and literati. The

fame of professors of medicine Palladius and Paul of Aegina spread throughout the ancient world, as far away as Rome and Constantinople.

It should be emphasized that this discovery of the remains of an ancient teaching institution is the first ever on a site anywhere in the Mediterranean.

## **DEIR EL-BAHARI**

### **THE TEMPLE OF HATSHEPSUT**

One of the objectives of the last season (late December 2003 to mid-March 2004) of the Polish-Egyptian mission directed by Zbigniew Szafrński was to complete the restoration of the Solar Cult Complex and the Northern Chapel of Amun-Re, both off the north side of the restored courtyard on the Upper Terrace.

The most important task, however, was to assess the foundations of the rooms on the south, that is, the chapels of Hatshepsut and of Tuthmosis I, in preparation for the forthcoming restoration.

The recording of fragments of decoration has also progressed significantly.

## **SHEIKH ABD EL-QURNA**

### **(TOMB 1152)**

In February-March 2004, Tomasz Górecki excavated a Coptic hermitage installed in

this New Kingdom tomb. Several mud-brick structures within the tomb corridor and in front of it were unearthed. A mud-brick tower, preserved on two levels, was also cleared during the season.

A large amount of pottery, including sherds of about 800 amphorae, plus kitchen and tableware, was found in the dump on the slope beneath. Coptic and Greek ostraca abounded as well.

Apart from these finds, all dated between c. 450 and 650, there are some ancient Egyptian objects from the original tomb: a few dozens of *ushebti* figurines, faience amulets, fragments of cartonnage and wooden painted coffins, etc.

## **MARINA EL-ALAMEIN**

### **EXCAVATIONS**

From late February through early April 2004, Wiktor A. Daszewski excavated both in the necropolis and the town of Marina, a Graeco-Roman site on the Mediterranean coast of Egypt. A funerary mausoleum (no. 21) featuring three mosaic emblemata in the banquet hall was cleared completely, leaving the exploration of the associated underground tomb for the next season. This aboveground structure was an elaborate affair, complete with colonnaded vestibule, several rooms including a kitchen, and stairs leading to a rooftop or upper storey. Another tomb, no. 30,

exemplifies a type of box-like tomb with burial niches. A limestone statue of a woman, distinctive for its provincial *charme*, was found there.

Daszewski also excavated in the so-called Town Square, which is a paved rectangular space surrounded by porticoes on three sides. It was used from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD on and was abandoned apparently in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Sections of Ionic columns of somewhat simplified form are being found lying on the pavement just as they had toppled in Antiquity.

## **MARINA EL-ALAMEIN**

### **RESTORATION**

In May and April 2004, a joint Polish-Egyptian mission under Stanisław Medeksza continued work at Marina. The restoration effort is focused on five of the houses excavated in the 1990s. Protection of the ancient ruins from further degradation and substantial restoration of the structures completed so far has rendered a considerable sector of the Roman town more easily legible and appealing to visitors.

Pillar tomb T1K was re-erected using the tumbled members excavated in the sand and introducing new stones where necessary. The pillar contains a rectangular

gabled niche with a *kline* and remains of a reclining figure in it.

Another tomb where restoration work went on is a hypogeum, of which an aboveground portal at the top of the stairs has been rebuilt.

## **MAREA**

At Marea on Lake Maryout, the mission of Hanna Szymańska returned to continue exploring the great basilica close to the port. The church, as surveyed by Peter Grossmann, is 49 m long and had a 47 m wide transept. This time several annexed rooms were cleared, including a chapel to the left of the apse. In one room a quantity of glass lamp fragments and a coin hoard were found, in another a huge collection of discarded marble pieces of *opus sectile*.

The bones of over one hundred people buried in the crypt below the apse were examined.

## **SAQQARA**

Last year's season at Saqqara closed too late to be reported in our last issue, while this year Karol Myśliwiec and his team have just completed fieldwork, hence the following is a combined report of two campaigns. As usual, the sand of the upper layers contained many Ptolemaic burials, but beneath them three more tomb chambers of the Sixth Dynasty were

discovered in the face of the cliff close to the funerary chapel of Meref-nebef. Two of these remain anonymous, but the third contains rich painted relief decoration, complete with three false doors and corresponding offering tables. A long inscription on the façade above the entrance lists the many titles of the owner, one Ny-ankh-Nefertum, “god’s servant of the pyramid” of Wenis and of Teti, and “majordomo of the Great House” among other functions.

Fifteen tomb shafts were explored in 2003 and more this year, all of them dating to the late Old Kingdom. Some of the more humble tombs contain wickerwork sarcophagi. A few other shafts were cut into the fill of an older ramp leading downwards.

The team’s restorers continued to work on the small finds, while closely monitoring the condition of the paintings and reliefs discovered so far.

## NAQLUN

The team led by Włodzimierz Godlewski worked at the site of the ancient monastery of the Archangel Gabriel (Deir el Malak) in September and early October of this year. More than sixty new graves were explored on the Christian cemetery dating to the Fatimid and Ayyoubid periods (11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries), raising their total number to

390. As before, wooden coffins, shrouds, mats, baskets, linen robes with silk embroidery, and various personal belongings were found with the dead.

In one of the rooms of the old monastery, used later as a burial ground, a collection of parchments and papyri of 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century date was recovered. The documents, 30 in all, written in Arabic and Coptic, consist of letters, contracts, and distribution lists.

At the same time, another cemetery, dating to the 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries was probed and five shaft tombs explored. The dead in this burial ground had cartonnages and were deposited in small chambers opening off the bottom of shallow shafts.

## TELL EL-FARKHA (GHAZALA)

From April to mid June 2004, a joint team from Poznań and Kraków, under the direction of Marek Chłodnicki and Krzysztof Ciałowicz, worked again on Tell el-Farkha in the village of Ghazala (Daqahliya Governorate).

Excavations on the Western and Central Koms unearthed three more breweries, similar to the one found on the site in 2000. The complexes form a chronological sequence spanning the Naqada culture. Underneath, furrows, pits and potholes in the ground reveal the remains of several

houses built of perishable material, representing the Lower Egyptian culture.

On the eastern kom, occupied by a cemetery, 19 more graves of Pre-Dynastic and Early Dynastic periods were explored.

There are also mud-brick structures belonging to the Early Dynastic period.

## Excavations in Sudan

### OLD DONGOLA

#### THE TRINITY MONASTERY

Since 2002, Stefan Jakobielski has been excavating the main building of the monastery, having cleared previously the so-called NW Annex built at a later date outside and above the enclosure wall. Most rooms are preserved completely up to the vaults, which rise at the average height of 4.5 m. The walls of the NW Annex bear magnificent paintings, mostly of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and the same is true of the SW Annex cleared during the last season (January-February 2004). Especially remarkable among the new paintings is a scene representing a festival in honour of an icon of the spinning Virgin, with masked figures of men leaping and dancing, shaking sticks, censers, and rattles, and apparently singing texts in Old Nubian that accompany the picture. The

distinctly African flavour of this scene is unique.

Other motifs include the Massacre of the Innocents observed by King Herod on his throne, a Nativity, and scenes from the life of an unknown saint.

Another highlight of the season was the discovery of the tombstone of Joseph, former bishop of Aswan, who died in Dongola in AD 668.

#### BANGANARTI

Bogdan Żurawski completed the operation of securing the wall paintings and inscriptions in the upper church. A solid roof now covers the building entirely.

The main effort, however, was directed at surveying a part of the Nile Valley to be submerged. The first results, up to 2003, are presented in book form, B. Żurawski *et al.*, "Survey and Excavations between Old Dongola and Ez-Zuma", just out now.

### RESCUE MISSION ON THE ISLANDS

#### ULI AND SAFFI

In February and March 2004, a team under Włodzimierz Godlewski and Bogdan Żurawski surveyed these two islands close to the site of the future Merowe Dam on the Nile near the 4<sup>th</sup> Cataract. Over 150

sites were recorded, most of them tombs ranging from the Neolithic through Kerma up to New Kingdom, and again in the period of Nubian kingdoms. No Meroitic remains were identified.

Some tombs were excavated on Uli island: circular pits of the Kerma horizon and four Post-Meroitic tumuli.

## **Excavations in the Levant**

### **PALMYRA (SYRIA)**

The last season, in April-June 2004, was entirely devoted to documentation and arranging of the storerooms. Hundreds of monuments found in our excavations since 1959 were regrouped in good order in a room put at our disposal by the Palmyra Museum. It was an opportunity to study anew some categories of finds: stone sculpture, mainly from the sanctuary of Allat, stuccowork, and a hoard of Sasanian coins.

Concurrently, a project to build a shelter over the Bellerophon mosaic found two years ago was prepared by architects Daria Tarara and Wojciech Terlikowski. The same duo, collaborating with Michał Gawlikowski, proposed a computer project for a new presentation of the Palmyra Museum, as requested by the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums.

### **TELL ARBID (SYRIA)**

This tell in the Upper Jezira region of Syria represents an urban centre of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, covering periods known as Niniveh 5 and Early Dynastic III. For the ninth time in a row, the excavations were led there by Piotr Bieliński. Beside a close-knit fabric of mud-brick houses, a “Public Building” on top of the tell, and a building partly made of stone, probably a neighbourhood temple, were recently identified.

### **TELL QARAMEL (SYRIA)**

A mission led by Ryszard Mazurowski working in Tell Qaramel north of Aleppo discovered in the past three seasons no less than 35 circular, ovoid or rectangular houses belonging to the very beginnings of settled life in the Levant. The chipped stone and ground-and-pecked stone industries represent the full sequence of Early Neolithic culture connected with plant and animal domestication and the development of architecture.

Radiocarbon dates have shown that the settlement existed without notable interruption from about the mid-ninth to the mid-eighth millennium BC. It started in the very early horizon of el-Khiam culture and developed through the Pre-Pottery Neolithic A.

### **SHHIM AND JIYE (LEBANON)**

We have no news yet of the season just closed in this Roman village in the Chouf mountains, where many oil presses were discovered around a Roman temple and a Christian basilica of the late 5<sup>th</sup> century.

Last September Krzysztof Jakubiak started a survey in the upper valley of Nahr el-Awali in the Chouf mountains. Some Roman remains, including a temple in Bisri and probable ruins of another, as well as village architecture were found.

**NAHR EL-AWALI SURVEY  
(LEBANON)**



## **Members on the Polish Centre active with other missions in Egypt**

**Tomasz Herbich** (archaeologist-geophysicist):

North Kharga Oasis Survey (Directors Salima Ikram and Corinna Rossi);

Colossi of Memnon and Amenhotep III Temple Conservation Project, Thebes  
(Director Hourig Sourouzian);

Abydos South, University of Pennsylvania (Director Joseph Wegner);

Saqqara, Musée du Louvre (Director Christiane Ziegler);

Deir el-Barsha, Katolieke Universiteit Leuven (Director Harco Willems);

Tell el-Dab'a, Austrian Institute in Cairo (Director Manfred Bietak);

Abydos, Middle Cemetery Project, University of Michigan (Director Janet Richards)

**Anna Południkiewicz** (ceramologist):

Tebtynis (IFAO – Università di Milano, Director Claudio Gallazzi)

**Ewa Parandowska, Cristobal Calaforra-Rzepka** (restorers):

Restoration of paintings in Deir el-Suriani, Wadi Natrun (Director Karel Innemée)

## **Lectures held at the Polish Centre:**

**Tomasz Herbich**, Geophysics in Egyptian Archaeology : recent results (January 13<sup>th</sup>)

**Romuald Schild**, The Sacred Places of Nabta Playa, SW Desert (January 27<sup>th</sup>)

**Adam Łukaszewicz**, Cleopatra's Signature (February 17<sup>th</sup>)

**Nabil Swelim**, The Dry Moat Surrounding the Step Pyramid in Saqqara (March 9<sup>th</sup>)

## **and opening the new season 2004/2005:**

**Grzegorz Majcherek**, The Lecture Halls of Ancient Alexandria (October 12<sup>th</sup>)

**Karol Myśliwiec**, Neighbours in Death: Tombs of Fefi and Temi in Saqqara (October 26<sup>th</sup>)

Last February, several members of the Centre took part in the "Coptic Seminar on Monasticism" held at Deir el-Azab in the Fayum: Włodzimierz Godlewski on the Naqlun monastery, Ewa Parandowska on restoration of wall paintings there, Maria Mossakowska on glass, Anetta Łyżwa on basketry, Barbara Czaja-Szewczak on textiles, and Tomasz Derda on papyri found during the Naqlun excavations. Iwona Zych presented a paper on the worked wood from Naqlun at the 8th Congress of Coptology held in Paris in June/July of this year.

At the IX International Congress of Egyptologists in Grenoble last September, **Michał Gawlikowski** gave a paper on *Les activités récentes du Centre polonais d'archéologie de l'Université de Varsovie au Caire*. Also in September, **Grzegorz Majcherek** lectured on *Academic Life of Late Antique Alexandria: A View from the Field* at the conference "What happened to the Ancient Library of Alexandria?", held at the *Bibliotheca Alexandrina*.

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