

European Archaeology Abroad

Global Settings, Comparative Perspectives

edited by:

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1.5 Polish archaeology in Egypt and Sudan: an historical overview

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Abstract

This paper analyses the phenomenon of Polish archaeological excavations in Egypt and Sudan within their changing socio-historical contexts. In particular, it will focus on the motives and objectives that lay behind the emergence of the Polish School of Mediterranean Archaeology as well as the complex circumstances accompanying its development.

The paper will illustrate both the relationships between successive stages of Polish archaeology abroad and the general context in which the scientific research was carried out. The confrontation of archaeological projects conducted out of Poland with the contemporaneous domestic and international situation will form a major topic of discussion. The last section of the paper will be devoted to changing patterns in relationships and cooperation between archaeologists and local communities, arguing that it constitutes a crucial element in Polish archaeological research in Egypt and Sudan.

Résumé

L'archéologie Polonaise en Égypte en au Soudan. Un Aperçu Historique

Cet article présente une analyse du phénomène de recherches archéologiques polonaises en Égypte et au Soudan, compte tenu de leurs contextes socio-historiques changeants. L'article porte en particulier sur les motivations et les objectifs qui sont à l'origine de la création de l'École Polonaise d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne, et sur les circonstances complexes de son évolution.

L'article vise à illustrer l'enchaînement des étapes successives du développement de l'archéologie polonaise à l'étranger, ainsi que le cadre général des ces recherches scientifiques. La confrontation entre des projets archéologiques réalisés à l'étranger et la situation nationale et internationale forment le thème de la discussion. La dernière partie de l'article se concentre sur l'évolution des relations et de la

coopération entre les archéologues et les communautés locales, en affirmant que cela est un élément crucial pour la recherche archéologique polonaise en Egypte et au Soudan.

Extracto

La Arqueología polaca en Egipto y Sudan. Un resumen histórico.

Este informe analiza el fenómeno de las excavaciones polacas en Egipto y Sudan dentro de sus marcos socio-históricos variables. Se enfocan en particular los motivos y objetivos que se encuentran detrás del surgimiento de la Escuela Polaca de Arqueología Mediterránea tanto como las circunstancias que acompañan su desarrollo.

El artículo demostrará ambas relaciones entre las fases sucesivas de la arqueología polaca en el extranjero y el marco general en el que se realizó la investigación científica. La confrontación de proyectos que se realizan fuera de Polonia en la actual situación nacional e internacional será un tema esencial de debate. La última sección del artículo se dedicará a las estructuras variables en las relaciones y la colaboración entre arqueólogos y las comunidades locales, en que argumenta que constituye un elemento crucial en la investigación arqueológica polaca en Egipto y Sudan.

صخلم

ةى خىرات ةحمل :نادوسلاو رصم ىف ىدنلوبلا راثآلا ملع

شتى و و مىلك شوى داكر أو شتى و و مىلك اىشى رتاب

ادنلوب ،نانزوپ ،جيوي كيم مدآ ةعماج ،خير اتال البق ام دهعم

ن مض ن ادوسل او رصم يف ةيدن لوب ا قيرث أل اتاير فحل اقر هاظ قورول ا هذه لل حت هجو يلع ،زيكرت ل امتاق ايس و قريخ كمل التي عن الله عن الله المتاق ايس من عن الله عن الله المتاق ايس تقل الله عن الله عن

راث آل الملع نم قبق اعتمل الحارمل ان يب تاق العلى انم الك ققرول اهذه حضوت و . هيف يمل على اشحبل الميف يدن لوبل الله عيم لعلى المعلى ال

Keywords

Polish School of Mediterranean Archaeology, Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, excavations in Egypt and Sudan

Introduction

Our aim in this paper is to presents a broad historical overview of the long-term activities of Polish archaeologists in the Middle East. This brief account will address some of the major aspects leading to the establishment of a Polish School of Mediterranean Archaeology (see discussions in English in Jakobielski and Karkowski 1992; Laskowska-Kusztal 2007). As part of our overview, we propose to regroup Polish archaeological activities in the Middle East into four successive stages. This will enable us to take into consideration the changing socio-political contexts and cooperation policies that have significantly influenced archaeological research over the last 100 years.

In doing so, however, we will not be able to discuss all areas or subjects. For instance, no mention will be made of the presence of Polish research in Egypt and Sudan prior to the twentieth century. Very few Polish individuals had actually participated in archaeological explorations in the Middle and the Near East during the nineteenth century (Tyszkiewicz 1994). Most of these were actually men of noble birth, with good social and financial positions, whose motivations were focused on increasing their private collections and galleries of ancient art. As such, their activities in the region cannot really represent reliable scientific research.

Polish archaeologists in scientific missions organized by the Partitioning Powers in the years 1907–1914

Polish archaeological research undertaken in Egypt and Sudan have had relatively fewer spectacular results than similar endeavours carried out by other European countries, such as France, Great Britain, Germany and the Netherlands. Already before official Polish missions in North Africa began in 1937 (see next section), several qualified archaeologists of Polish origin were carrying out research on the banks of the river Nile since the beginning of the twentieth century, at a time, it is worth recalling, when Poland did not exist on the map of Europe as a sovereign state.

These activities were however of a marginal character, with little impact on scientific research and public interest. As just noted, the territory of Poland was in those years still partitioned between Russia, Prussia and Austria. Being subordinated to the alien interests and economic systems of these three partitioning powers was not conducive to the development of any idea of archaeological excavations abroad. Only the residents of the region located in southern Poland (Galicia) had opportunities to conceive research concepts, in the more liberal context and autonomy achieved within the federation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Knopek 2005: 328). Most Polish researchers therefore concentrated around Galician universities (Cracow, Lvov) as well as the Cracov branch of the Polish Academy of Arts and Science. These institutions had only limited resources at their disposal, which made it impossible to organize their own research expeditions outside Europe. Moreover, only few archaeologists and historians of art were interested in this type of research, as most academics and intelligentsia believed that it was of utmost importance and priority to preserve the Polish national heritage and to

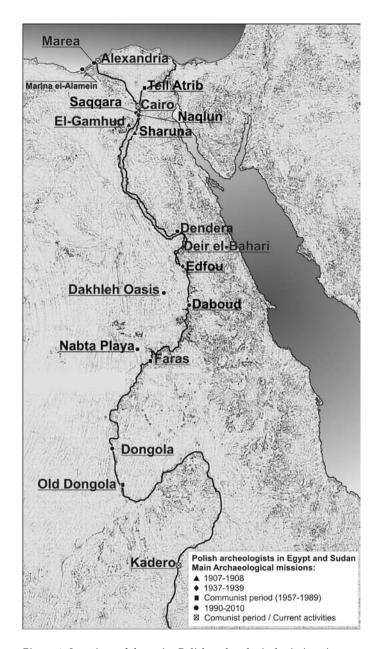


Figure 1. Locations of the major Polish archaeological missions in Egypt and Sudan taking into account their chronological division (Illustration: A. Klimowicz).

protect the historical monuments of the former Kingdom of Poland, instead of exploring the history of other countries.

In that difficult period, only a few Polish archaeologists participated in archaeological excavations along the banks of the Nile. The first was Tadeusz Smoleński (1984-1909), who arrived in Cairo on his doctor's recommendation

due to a poor state of health. Once in Africa, he immediately took an interest in the culture of ancient Egypt and started his Egyptological studies. When in 1907 the Hungarian merchant Fülöp Back applied to the Egyptian Antiquities Service for financing excavation work, Smoleński was chosen to head the Austro-Hungarian research (Smoleński 1907; Pilecki 1969; Śliwa 2002, 2007, 2008, Vörös 2008: 20-29). As a result, two campaigns were carried out between 1907 and 1908, on the sites of Sharuna (Kom El-Ahmar Sawaris) and El-Gamhud (figure 1). However, Smoleński died soon after the completion of the project, at the age of twenty-five.

A few years later, an agreement was reached between the Cracov Branch of the Polish Academy of Arts and Science and the Academy of Sciences in Vienna: in return for subsidizing the Viennese expedition, researchers of Polish origin, such as Piotr Bieńkowski, Karol Hadaczek and Tadeusz Wałek-Czernecki, were allowed to participate in the work headed by Herman Junker (Śliwa 1998; Knopek 2005: 329-330). Nevertheless, the results of the research expedition were rather poor in terms of the quantity and scientific value of the uncovered monuments, and the project did not fulfil the organizers' expectations. Apart from the participation of several Polish representatives in archaeological missions, who were then able to collect some artefacts, study and exhibit them in Polish museums, these archaeological activities abroad did not generate much interest among the general public. However, the individuals and institutions who gained professional experience in this way could have formed a solid basis for the further development of Polish Egyptology. These developments were however hindered by the outbreak of the First World War and by subsequent changes in the international arena, which resulted in suspending Polish excavation activities on the Nile for almost a quarter of a century.

First Polish archaeological excavations in Egypt and the Nile in the Interwar Period (1937–1939)

While Poland regained its independence after the First World War, the situation remained very unstable and the country's borders were eventually defined only in 1922 (Dębicki 1962; Biskupski 2000). The difficult economic and social situation resulting from the unification of three different regions, previously ruled by the partitioning powers, had a huge influence on the situation of science in general (Jaczewski 1982; Nałęcz 1991). A lack of specialists posed major difficulties, and most archaeologists got their education in different districts of partitioned Poland as well as in other European countries already before the War. This notably had effects on the whole higher education system, which needed to be totally reorganized and modernized. Not surprisingly given these priorities, the first steps towards excavation work in North Africa were taken only as late as in the mid-1930s.

Archaeological excavations in that particular region were mainly conceived in the circle of classical archaeologists and following their interest in Greek and Roman culture, rather than an interest in Egyptology itself (Michałowski 1974a, 1983: 59). Moreover, the focus on Egypt resulted mostly from material considerations. Compared to other Mediterranean and Near Eastern states, Egypt had in place a

relatively liberal law which allowed foreign archaeological missions to keep a part of their archaeological finds (Michałowski 1974b, 1986: 104). It must be recalled that researchers at that time were guided by such considerations, and that the possibility of expanding the limited collections of ancient artefacts then owned by Polish museums was a central motivation, as it was in other countries. Indeed, another important incentive was the possibility of participating in the ongoing international archaeological 'competition', so as to raise the profile of the Polish state. This conviction expressed the popular opinion of those days, whereby the level of culture in any country as well as its degree of civilization could be measured by the undertaking of its own excavations in Egypt (Michałowski 1974a: 8-11; Szafrański 2007a: 44).

Research in Egyptian archaeology was initiated at Józef Piłsudski University in Warsaw (Warsaw University): in accordance with the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Education, two of its professors were sent to Egypt in the mid-1930s. One was the originator of the idea, Kazimierz Michałowski (1901-1981) (figure 2), who represented classical archaeology, and the other was the ancient historian Tadeusz Wałek-Czernecki. During their stay in Egypt they began talks with the French Institute of Eastern Archaeology in Cairo (IFAO) in order to initiate cooperation (Michałowski 1990: 259). This partnership was necessary to ensure assistance and obtain permission to excavate in Egypt, given that there was no Polish institution in the region at that time.



Figure 2. Kazimierz Michałowski at the beginning of his career, in 1937 (Photo: the National Archive of Digital Sources; English version of the sentence quoted after Szafrański 2007).

Field prospections and in-depth research made it possible for the Polish-French team to localize a site in Upper Egypt called Edfu for their excavation (see figure 1). This site was chosen in view of the possibility of securing interesting archaeological finds as early as in the first season. The presence of some remains of an ancient agglomeration dating to the Ptolemaic period ensured spectacular results in a very short time. They proved to be of vast importance for strengthening the idea of research in the eyes of the public in Poland (Michałowski 1957: 193).

The organization of excavations at Edfu called for the support of several state institutions, as none of them was able to cover the expenses of such a mission on its own. The following institutions participated in funding the project, in accordance with their financial capacities: the Ministry of National Denominations and Education (responsible for education), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Municipality of Warsaw and the Chancellor of Józef Piłsudski University (Michałowski 1986: 154). This question of financing excavations in Egypt soon became the subject of discussions by the press. In 1937 it was suggested that Poland could not afford these expensive archaeological missions in North Africa, and that the funds should have been used to subsidize local archaeological research, such as in the newly discovered well-preserved site of Biskupin in western Poland (Michałowski 1986: 154-155). These reactions in the press reflected the



Figure 3. Opening ceremony of the Ancient Art Gallery in the National Museum in Warsaw (September 1937). Present persons: Vice-Minister of the National Denominations and Education J. Błeszyński, President of Warsaw; S. Starzyński, Ambassador of France to Poland; Leon Noel, co-leader of the excavation at Edfu; K. Michałowski (Photo: the National Archive of Digital Sources).

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involvement of local archaeologists in state propaganda, whose priority was to identify the ethnogenesis of the Slavs and to prove the Slavic origins of the territory of Poland since Late Bronze Age (Michałowski 1974a: 21).

The three years of cooperation at Edfu, between 1937 and 1939, proved however to be extremely fruitful. The uncovered monuments and artefacts, transported to Poland in over 90 boxes, became the basis of the Ancient Art Gallery opened, as early as in 1937, in the newly established National Museum in Warsaw (figure 3). The exhibition served as a reply to the alleged waste of public money. Its success strengthened the position of the mission at Edfu, gained public support and developed a general interest in the cultures of Ancient Egypt (Michałowski 1937, 1938, 1957, 1990: 642-643; Aksamit 2007: 31-40).

The Second World War interrupted this research, which had become the starting point for the development of the Polish School of Mediterranean Archaeology under the leadership of Warsaw University. At this point, the role of Professor Kazimierz Michałowski must be emphasized. Thanks to him, the small-scale mission at Edfu became not just a short episode in Polish science: on the contrary, the work in Upper Egypt formed the foundation of the development of Mediterranean archaeology, and brought substantial contribution to that science in post-war reality in Poland (Bernhard 1986a).

Polish excavations in Egypt and Sudan during communist times. The origins of the Polish School of Mediterranean Archaeology (1957-1989)

After the Second World War, Poland found itself under the influence of the Soviet Union (figure 4). The communist government and ruling party (the Polish United Workers' Party) commenced the reconstruction of the country destroyed by the war. All state structures were reorganized according to the Soviet model. This pertained also to academic institutions, which were to follow the principles of Marxism (Lech 1998: 57-95; Biskupski 2000; see also Klimowicz and Klimowicz, this volume).

These new conditions affected Polish Egyptology as well. Despite the enormous wartime destruction of Warsaw by the Germans, Poland's capital city remained the focal point of developments also in this branch of archaeology. In 1946 the National Museum in Warsaw became the centre where all ancient artefacts were gathered from all over the country. Three years later, the Ancient Art Gallery was reopened. It exhibited all the monuments from the Edfu mission which survived the war. While Michałowski continued to direct the Department of Mediterranean Archaeology, his efforts to take up research in Egypt remained fruitless, as Polish researchers were unable to carry out any work outside the Soviet-bloc countries (Michałowski 1964: 315-318; Lech 1998: 83-84; see also Klimowicz and Klimowicz, this volume). The years between 1949 and 1955 have been termed 'the Stalinist period', a time when it proved especially difficult to develop any field of science in the People's Republic of Poland. The Communist system applied strong pressure for the vulgar implementation of the Marxist doctrine in all aspects of life



Figure 4. Europe's geopolitical situation in the second half of the twentieth century, highlighting 'the Eastern Bloc' countries and the Soviet sphere of influence within the Continent (ca. 1955–1989) (Illustration: A. Klimowicz).

(Lech 1998: 85), and the main task of the government at that time was to steer the country towards nationalization of the industry and the development of a centrally planned economic system.

This situation altered very slowly, beginning with the death of J.V. Stalin in 1953, and gradual transitions in the international arena, especially within 'the Eastern Bloc'. As a result, Polish archaeologists could by the mid-1950s increasingly enjoy contacts with the outside world. At the same time, Northeastern Africa also evidenced significant shifts, including the full independence gained by Egypt and Sudan, and their implementations of post-colonial diplomatic relations. In the second half of the 1950s, when 'the Cold War' was flourishing, the Egyptian policy led by G.A. Nasser launched closer economic, military and cultural cooperation with the Soviet Union and with the countries of 'the Warsaw Pact'.'

This changing orientation, away from the traditional colonial powers, created favourable conditions for Polish excavations to be renewed in the Nile Valley (Michałowski 1986: 218-228; Lech 1998: 83-84). In 1956, a new permit was obtained for carrying out research at Tell Atrib (figure 1). The excavations there were however delayed due to 'the Suez Crisis', so that the Polish expedition reached the ancient *Athribis* only as late as in February 1957. Along with a Dutch mission, it was the only group of foreign archaeologists allowed in Egypt at that time of political conflicts (Michałowski 1974a: 47-51; see also Van den Dries, Slappendel

¹ The period between 1955 and 1973 is considered to be the peak of Soviet-Middle Eastern involvement. Alongside arms sales and an ever expanding external trade, this involvement is also manifest in the opportunity given to thousands of Arab exchange students to complete their cost-free university education in Eastern European countries (Beck 1963; Kreutz 1999).

and Van der Linde, this volume). Already in 1958, Michałowski undertook archaeological explorations in Nubia and subsequently in the Nile Delta: the report of that survey was presented to the Director of the Egyptian Antiquities Service as well as to the Egyptian Minister of Culture (Michałowski 1959, 1974a: 69; Szafrański 2007a). When, in 1960, the government of the United Arab Republic of Egypt began the construction of the Aswan High Dam, the Polish archaeological missions immediately joined the international cooperation efforts to save the ancient monuments of Nubia (both in Egypt and the Sudan) destined to be submerged by the rising waters of the Nile (Hassan 2007: 81).

These rapid developments in Polish research in Egypt and Sudan, especially the involvement of the International Nubian Programme carried out under the auspices of UNESCO, made it necessary to create a permanent archaeological base in Egypt. The Polish Centre for Mediterranean Archaeology of Warsaw University (PCMA) was created in Cairo in 1959, and rapidly became an essential anchor for Polish archaeological missions in the region (Michałowski 1974a; Daszewski 1986; Bernhard 1995). The Centre (figure 5) was responsible for the organization and implementation of all Polish archaeological expeditions in the Middle and Near East, including excavations and monuments restoration. Unlike most other Eastern European institutions of the type (*i.e.* Czechoslovakia, Hungary), PCMA as a unit of Warsaw University was in fact placed under the Ministry of Education, and did not report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jakobielski 2001).



Figure 5. Premises of the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of Warsaw University in Cairo - abbreviated PCMA (Photo: M. Drzewiecki).

Kazimierz Michałowski became the first and enduring director of the Centre. His authoritative position was also manifested in him having responsibility for the three institutions concerned with excavation work in Egypt: Warsaw University (with its Cairo outpost), the National Museum in Warsaw, and The Department of Mediterranean Archaeology of the Polish Academy of Sciences (Bernhard 1986b: 17-23, 1995: 7-18). It should be emphasized that, as one of the most influential representatives of the scientific community in Poland, Michałowski had a key role in gaining funding from the state – the state providing then the only support for science and research in the absence of any private sector. The financial aspect of these Near Eastern activities was often raised by journalists, who wondered whether Poland could afford to conduct archaeological excavations abroad. Michałowski's firm reply was that "Poland cannot afford to be absent in this research!" (Jakobielski, pers. comm.).

This response emphasized the cultural significance of excavations abroad, and the opportunity they provided to introduce Polish achievements to the world arena. In this way Michałowski reconciled questions of costs, cultural objectives and symbolic influence. This firm position made it possible to secure funding for the three mentioned institutions and to undertake research abroad without serious economic difficulties. This created favourable circumstances for the development of the discipline, which had no parallel in the human sciences at that time. Moreover, the secured financial contributions were carefully divided in accordance with the activities undertaken: funds for Warsaw University were dedicated to cover the excavation costs, those for the National Museum provided the expeditions with equipment, and those for the Polish Academy of Science were used for producing reports and monographs, as well as for specialist analyses (Jakobielski, pers. comm.).

These activities were related to the aim of establishing scientific institutions which would be autonomous from political and ideological involvements (see also Klimowicz and Klimowicz, this volume). Michałowski's ostensibly neutral attitude implied that engaging in political matters might have a deleterious influence on the discipline. In his opinion, benefit from direct financial assistance from the Ministry of Education could reduce to a minimum the relations with the Communist government itself. As a consequence, the activities of Polish archaeologists abroad have been considered to be "non-aligned" (Szafrański 2007a: 55-56).

The Polish archaeological mission in Nubia specifically addressed the needs of the Sudanese government, and it was as such that excavations at Faras began in February 1961 (see also Klimowicz and Klimowicz, this volume). The sensational discovery of well-preserved mural paintings in the ruins of the Coptic cathedral was a great scientific and cultural success of the Polish team (Emery 1965: 98; Burstein 2008: 56-57). Faras has become the most famous site explored by Polish researchers, but it is worth recalling that at the beginning of the 1960s they carried out numerous other projects, such as in Aleksandria, Deir-el-Bahari or Old Dongola (see figure 1). The number of archaeological expeditions grew systematically, and with them greater independence for Professor Michałowski's

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students. Most research in Egypt and Sudan at that time was carried out under the auspices of the PCMA of Warsaw University, the only exception being the joint American-Polish-Egyptian Combined Prehistoric Expedition headed by Fred Wendorf and Romuald Schild (Wendorf, Said and Schild 1970; Schild and Wendorf 1980, 2002; Wendorf and Schild 1998).

The research work in Egypt and Sudan became very popular in Poland and it was constantly presented by the media. Michałowski was frequently interviewed by the press, radio and television, as were later his assistants. Consequently, the achievements of Polish archaeology were acclaimed and recognized by the general public at home (Lech 1998: 84-85; see also Klimowicz and Klimowicz, this volume). This period of enormous interest in excavations abroad coincided with a period of prosperity in Poland. The 1970s saw economic reforms and industrial modernization, which also resulted in more public subsidies for the Polish School of Mediterranean Archaeology.

In 1981, after Kazimierz Michałowski passed away, his students were faced with the necessity of organizational changes as none of them was capable of replacing the *Master* and heading the three institutions simultaneously. The changes coincided with the introduction of Martial Law (in 1981) and the escalation of constraints in Poland. Nevertheless, the decade brought many significant successes with regard to excavation as well as conservation. Considering the extensive efforts of the 1980s, special attention must be drawn to the implication of Polish archaeologists at Saqqara (in 1987) and to the prehistoric prospection of the Western Desert (1986), including the documentation of rock art and the Stone Age sites survey (Krzyżaniak 1988; Myśliwiec 2007).

Polish excavations in the Nile Valley after 1989

The collapse of the Communist system in the Eastern Europe in 1989 created a new geopolitical reality that also affected science significantly. Following a transitional period, Polish archaeologists gained more freedom and more opportunities to engage in collaborative projects with other countries. Research cooperation with western institutions soon increased significantly, and the PCMA began to publish reports and monographs more frequently in English. However, the shift from a centrally planned economy to a free market economy generated a chronic underfunding of the scientific domain, due to hyper-inflation and an unstable monetary sector. Warsaw University still remained the major centre of education for young archaeologists, but it no longer had a research monopoly position in the Nile Valley. Also the tripartite scheme of costs and activities mentioned in the previous section collapsed. The new conditions made it necessary to turn for support to scholarly institutions and to private sponsors.

Such cases of inadequate funding soon made it necessary for various museums and universities from across the country (Cracow, Poznań and Gdańsk) to cooperate in order to be able to undertake field research abroad. A greater number of archaeologists from all over Poland were thus to participate in North African expeditions. Their work led to setting up permanent exhibitions of Egyptian and

Sudanese ancient artefacts in several cities. This in turn increased considerably public interest in archaeological research in Northern Africa, and also opened new opportunities for acquiring donations from private sponsors. The number of projects co-ordinated by the Warsaw university PCMA centre grew dramatically, and it soon became apparent that its organization and Cairo premises were too limited. With the assistance of the Foundation for Polish Science, a new building much more suited to the needs of Polish archaeologists and international teams was purchased in 1994.

Character and patterns of the cooperation International circumstances accompanying the presence of Polish archaeologists abroad

On the question of international cooperations (Polish-Egyptian; Polish-Sudanese), it must be acknowledged that they had many opportunities to develop favourably over the century of Polish archaeology abroad. As noted above, archaeological research activities were often in tune with the broader constructive patterns of worldwide relations. For instance, the presidency of G.A. Nasser (1954–1970) coincided with a resurgence and intensification of Polish archaeological activities in the Nile Valley (see also Klimowicz and Klimowicz, this volume), and this was partly due to the amicable relationships developed by Nasser with the Soviet Union in the mid-1950s. This Egyptian inclination towards the Eastern Block gave Polish researchers the opportunity to resurrect their work in the Middle East. These circumstances changed notably during the era of President Anwar al-Sadat (1970–1981), who improved US-Egyptian diplomatic relations and expulsed much of the Soviet personnel (Saliba 1975: 55). Coincidently Poland itself became at that juncture more open to capitalist influences, notably as a result of receiving aid and loans from Western European countries in the 1970s.

From the perspective of international relations, it is worth recalling the official agreements signed by People's Republic of Poland with the Republic of Egypt (in 1957) and with the Republic of Sudan (in 1967). These agreements were the first of their kind, and opened cultural, scientific and technical cooperation between these nations. The contracting parties assured each other of further strengthening the bonds of friendship and of promoting cooperation in the field of science and culture, in particular of fostering mutual assistance between their Academies of Sciences and research institutes. Most important with regards to archaeology, both parties agreed to develop facilities for admission to libraries, archives, and museum collections, and also to create an extended exchange programme of free transfer of information and expertise.

Remarkable gestures of appreciation for these inter-state cooperations were expressed by national decorations: thus, several Polish archaeologists (e.g. S. Jakobielski, L. Krzyżaniak) received the Order of the Two Niles (2nd Class) conferred by the Sudanese President. Bestowing the country's highest national decoration on foreign archaeologists recognized their involvement in saving and protecting the archaeological heritage of Sudan. Similarly, one of the most

significant Polish Orders of Merit for enhancing Polish research activities in Egypt was granted in 1989 by the Polish President to Dr Abou al-Youn Barakat (Sohag and Alexandria Universities).

Without doubt, the Polish archaeological research carried out in the Middle Eastern republics served to reinforce links between the nations. However, these relationships extended over time beyond the frame of archaeology and political affairs (Szafrański 2007a: 55). This seems to be confirmed by the activities of the Polish-Arab Friendship Association. Many of its prominent members were actually archaeologists, and some of them performed even presidential functions there (e.g. K. Michałowski, T. Dzierżykay-Rogalski, Z. Szafrański). With its aims to improve relations between Polish and Arab people, the association encourages a broadly-defined Polish-Arab dialogue and organizes conferences and cultural and artistic events.

Cooperation with Local Communities

Polish researchers abroad could always count on Egyptian assistance. This was the case not only at the level of official contacts with authorities, but also on the ground, in terms of ongoing cooperation with local communities and workers, with whom Polish archaeologists interacted on a daily basis. The latter type of relationships, which include some often anonymous inhabitants of remote parts of the countries, at this point call for special attention. In this respect too, the figure of Professor K. Michałowski, the unquestioned founder of the Polish School of Mediterranean Archaeology, deserves further recognition. His abilities in organizing missions abroad were accompanied by an unusual talent for winning the favour of local communities and indigenous authorities. This provided a model for archaeologists to follow. His rules were formulated explicitly at the beginning of every season, as a type of agenda for conduct. The protocol was obligatory for all members of the Polish missions, and effectively shaped their behaviour pattern.

With hindsight, it appears that some of these rules of behaviour differed from those of other archaeological missions at that time. For instance, the custom of shaking hands with the Egyptian supervisor (*Rais*) and workers (*Fellaheen*) assumed harmonious relations between the staff members and the local communities (Michałowski 1974a: 30). The request that archaeologists refrain from being seated during working hours within the excavation area followed from a similar logic, as an expression of respect for the *fellaheen's* labour. Another very important issue in this context was the necessary adaptation to the socio-cultural environment, including the wearing of appropriate cloths (*e.g.* avoiding shorts) and the respect of indigenous rules associated especially with the religious conviction of local communities. For instance during the fast of the *Ramadan* the staff refrained from eating, drinking and smoking during daylight hours in the work area (Jakobielski, pers. comm.).

In addition, the archaeologists always ensured that their expeditions would be well equipped with medicines, and to provide also for the workers and their families. These circumstances undoubtedly created an atmosphere of trust, loyalty and sometimes led to honest long-lasting friendships (Jakobielski, pers. comm.). An unusual approach to the *fellaheen* included the possibility of individual promotion upon general approval. Consequently, a worker may be appointed by the director of the excavation on the nomination of the *Rais* (supervisor) after in-depth recognition of his skills and abilities, acquiring as a result considerable position and responsibilities in the expedition. One of the enduring *Rais* received on his retirement a pension from the PCMA in recognition of his loyalty and dedication to his work. In some cases, relationships between Polish archaeologists and Egyptian workers and their families have extended over three generations (Szafrański 2007a: 50).

Another example of the attitude towards the local communities propagated by Michałowski was the custom of a courtesy visit to the Elders' homes, in order to introduce the director of excavation to the prominent people living in the immediate vicinity of the site. During these meetings the elders were informed about the archaeological objectives, actual events and contingent discoveries. Of course, these successful relationships with local communities were also strengthened by the fact that the United Arab Republic and the Republic of Sudan, as newly independent states in decolonized Africa, preferred hosting researchers from countries which had never had any colonial involvement in the area (Michałowski, 1974a: 30, 47-48; Hassan 1998: 207-209). With this behaviour, Michałowski gave intellectual authority and leadership to his students and collaborators, instilling principles that may be seen as his worthy legacy.

Scholarly Cooperations

Following the idea that whatever is discovered needs to be returned as closely as possible to its original form, conservation efforts have always been a crucial part of Polish archaeological activities abroad. The presence of highly-specialized teams of restorers, engineers and architects was an integral part of the missions since the late 1950s. These contributions to the renovation of famous monuments world-wide led to the recognition of the 'Polish School of Conservation' (Szafrański 2007a: 53). Building on their experience in the reconstruction of devastated Poland after the Second World War, Polish conservation experts have repeatedly shared their specialized knowledge and experience in several cooperation projects with the Egyptian and Sudanese Antiquities Services.

The list of joint conservation efforts is a long one. First among those is the Temple of Hatshepsut, the Polish-Egyptian preservation mission in Deir el-Bahari (1960s) which soon led to other similar projects all over Egypt (Lipińska 2007; Szafrański 2007b). For instance the preservation mission on the Mosque of Qurqumas (1972-2001) and the Sultan al-Ashraf Inal complex (1989) occurred in the Cairo's City of Dead, Marina el-Alamein on the Mediterranean coast (1988) and Tuna el-Gebel in the Middle Egypt (2004) (Daszewski 2007; Witkowski 2007). These jointly restored monuments, did also, as importantly, cement the bonds of international friendship. Excellent cooperation between Polish researchers and the Egyptian Antiquities Service has been emphasized with regard to the successfully dismantled

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Nubian temples at Tafa and Dabod (1960-61). In this context the Abu Simbel Temples represented the most challenging attempt of transferring this example of Nubian art and subsequently returning them to their former magnificence.

Mutual cooperation involving Polish conservation expertise was particularly reinforced during the Nasser presidency. At that time, thousands of Arab students took the opportunity to complete their cost-free university education in Eastern European countries, including Poland (Kreutz 1999; see also Klimowicz and Klimowicz, this volume). Such an opportunity was possible due to already discussed Soviet influence in the Middle East (Daigle 2004). At the beginning, Egyptian and Sudanese archaeology students were enrolled in Warsaw University at Polish expense. Over time, the scholarship system evolved to meeting the changing needs and fields of expertise in the discipline. In this respect, the remarkable achievements of Polish conservation projects in saving the heritage of ancient civilizations led to the organization of restoration courses for foreign students. Nowadays, most of these former students are prominent inspectors employed in the Egyptian and Sudanese Antiquities Services (Szafrański 2007a: 53).

Although international contacts in higher education have changed considerably in recent times, it is still noteworthy that Middle Eastern students have a preference for attending PhD courses in Poland, be it in Warsaw, in Poznań or in Cracow.

Conclusions

The phenomenon of Polish archaeological research in Egypt and Sudan is composed of numerous elements. The stormy history of Poland as well as the changes occurring in the international arena during the twentieth century, discussed above in detail in four historical contexts, have all undoubtedly influenced the unique development of the Polish School of Mediterranean Archaeology. In retrospect, it is clear that the School owes its conception to one man, Kazimierz Michałowski, whose vision and ambition to create from scratch an internationally recognized school of Polish archaeological research in the Near East eventually came to fruition.

Although this School initially built on the experience of other European researchers (mainly French), it gradually came to acquire its own, distinctive character. One of the essential traits of Polish archaeological activity in the southern Mediterranean (e.g. Syria, Cyprus, Libya, Lebanon, Palestine) has been its willingness to develop advanced specialization in research areas of lesser interest to international counterparts, such as research on the Predynastic period in Egypt, as well as on the Greek, Roman and Coptic periods. Although we did not set out here these international developments in relation to the patterns and areas of interest of Polish archaeology in Poland itself, it may nonetheless be noted that within Poland there had always been strong emphasis on the prehistoric periods, especially the Stone Age (including the Neolithic), as well as the Middle Ages.

In any case, the interdisciplinary cooperation of Polish archaeologists and experts in a wide range of studies, as well as the open-minded attitude displayed in interactions with local populations, have received international recognition and even appreciation. An additional feature characteristic of Polish archaeological missions

abroad has been an attempt to maintain a balance between scientific concerns and political involvement (see also Klimowicz and Klimowicz, this volume). The latter condition guaranteed that Polish researchers working abroad have not been associated with diplomatic activities and have never been put in an uncomfortable position in the context of the changing socio-political configurations prevailing over the last century.

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