

FOREWORD

The 11th International Conference for Nubian Studies took place in Warsaw exactly 34 years after the 2nd Conference which Kazimierz Michałowski organized in 1972 in conjunction with the inauguration of the Faras Gallery at the National Museum in Warsaw. It was then, in Warsaw in 1972, that the International Society for Nubian Studies took life, becoming a *spiritus movens* of international Nubian studies, confirmed once again by a conference that brought around 200 participants from several dozen scientific institutions representing Europe, the United States and Canada, as well as Sudan and Egypt, to Warsaw University between 27 August and 2 September 2006, where they were hosted by the University's Institute of Archaeology and the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology.

Growth in Nubian studies has been dynamic over the years, most recently stimulated by yet another dam construction project being carried out on the Fourth Cataract of the Nile. The building of the Great Dam on the First Cataract in Aswan in the 1960s was, as we all know, the event that prompted the development of Nubian studies in the first place. Building investment has always been a natural cause of intensified archaeological exploration, but the great hydrological projects on the Nile which are connected with the permanent inundation of extensive areas in the river valley have required, then and now, an archaeological effort on an international scale to investigate a couple hundred kilometers of the Nile Valley and to protect many monumental objects and sites. The transfer of the temples of Abu Simbel shall always remain a beacon of that international effort, as will the wall paintings from the Faras cathedral, which were discovered and saved for posterity, and can now be admired in museum galleries in Khartoum and Warsaw. The Fourth Cataract salvage effort is reported on regularly at separate meetings, which were initiated in 2004 in Gdańsk and have been continued on an annual basis successively at Berlin, Cologne and Lille.

The stimulation offered by regular meetings of interested scholars organized under the auspices of the International Society for Nubian Studies has been another factor determining this intensive development. These conferences – from Essen-Villa Hügel in 1969 through Warsaw (1972), Chantilly (1975), Cambridge (1978), Heidelberg (1982), Uppsala (1986), Geneva (1990), Lille (1994), Boston (1998), Rome (2002) and Warsaw again (2006) – have always provided the time and place for broad discussion and confrontation of different views, conceiving of new ideas and rethinking old ones with regard to the rise and fall of ancient cultures in the valley of the Nile south of the first cataract from prehistoric times through the neolithic, the cultures of Kerma, Napata and Meroe, to the medieval kingdoms of Nobadia, Makuria, Alodia and the post-medieval Funj.

The contribution of the governments of Sudan and Egypt toward an effective development of fieldwork and conservation activities in this region should be remarked on with appreciation. Not the least, the Sudanese and Egyptian authorities have had their share in the development of Nubian studies through their well placed policies of building new museums and generously loaning objects of ancient Nubian culture for temporary exhibitions worldwide.

The organizers of the 11th International Conference for Nubian Studies wish to express their gratitude and appreciation to the authorities of Warsaw University, Faculty of History, Institute of Archeology and the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology for their generous and comprehensive assistance at all stages of the project. For the smooth running of the conference and the ambience we have enjoyed we should thank Iwona Zych, secretary of the conference. Dobrochna Zielińska designed all of the conference materials, as well as prepared the exhibition

Dongola: City of Kings and Bishops, which certainly added special color to our meeting. Krystyna Polaczek managed the financial side of the conference. The rest of the organizing staff: Ewa Czyżewska, Ewa Domańska, Robert Mahler, Grzegorz Ochała, and assistants: Iwona Antoniak, Grażyna Bąkowska, Cristobal Calaforra-Rzepka, Małgorzata Melon, Artur Obłuski, Marta Orylska, Tomasz Pelc, Sławomir Rzepka, Joanna Then, Anna Wodzińska, Bartosz Wojciechowski and Aleksandra Zych have earned our warm sympathy and gratitude for their dedication and efficiency throughout the course of the conference.

There can be no doubt, however, that the success of the 11th Conference for Nubian Studies is entirely dependent on the Participants, their energy and talent, and their effort to present to their colleagues the current state of Nubian researches and their views on the development of ancient civilizations in the Nile Valley, between the cataracts south of Aswan. We shall surely be speaking for all our colleagues in Nubian studies when we express our heartfelt thanks for all the heated debates, words of friendship and support, as well as criticism, that were voiced in Warsaw.

At the same time we shall keep in grateful memory colleagues who will no longer come out with us in the field and who have left us the fruits of their intellectual labors: Hanna Jędrzejewska, Francis Geus, Lech Krzyżaniak, Patrice Lenoble, Nicholas B. Millet, Osama en-Nur, Peter L. Shinnie, Bruce G. Trigger.

For the first time also Friedrich W. Hinkel was absent. He had devoted his entire adult life to the ancient monuments of Sudan, their salvaging, recording and conservation. It is to Him that we dedicate the first volume of the Warsaw conference proceedings. His momentous documentation work and achievements will remain with us in our studies.

The efficient publication of the acts of the conference has been the work of Iwona Zych and Ewa Czyżewska with the assistance of Marta Momot.

With this we would like to thank all of you once again for the pleasant and intellectually stimulating days spent together at and around Warsaw University during the late summer of 2006.

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