

# Michałowski, Kazimierz

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## The Polish school of Mediterranean archeology

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1980

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*Kazimierz Michałowski*

(Warsaw)

## THE POLISH SCHOOL OF MEDITERRANEAN ARCHAEOLOGY

When we speak of a school in science we must know first of all what are its specific features, its achievements, its contribution to world science: all these elements must be distinct enough to make stand out this particular line of research from other activities in this field. But let us say frankly: the originality of a research method is not sufficient to justify the name of a scientific school. Indeed the achievements must be so outstanding as to exceed regional boundaries; their significance for world science must be so great as to make this revealing research draw attention also to the specific method of the given team of scientific workers. Of course the value of a research method is only then fully acknowledged when it is — wholly or partly — adopted by other scholars who do not belong to this “school.”

Today it seems to be beyond any doubt that one can justifiably speak of the Polish school of Mediterranean archaeology as having been a fact for the last quarter of a century. The very extent of its explorations made it necessary for it to use a method that was different from that applied before in the field of archaeology of the ancient world. The very name of Mediterranean archaeology was adopted rather accidentally in Poland as a result of purely administrative dispositions which aimed at separating this type of scientific research from the areas of other branches, long-established in the West and in prewar Poland. But it so happened, of which the persons in charge were unaware when deciding on the change from the name of the chair of classical archaeology to that of the Mediterranean archaeology, that just in Poland there was a possibility of creating a new branch that would embrace not only the classical world — called sometimes antiquity — but also the great civilizations of the ancient East: and all this enclosed within a single programme of university research, a single system of teaching students. Of course many obstacles had to be overcome, but while overcoming them it was possible to work out a new system of university training which — as we can see it today — not only has been successful but has also contributed to the formation of a new method of scientific research and this in turn created conditions for the emergence of a specific Polish school of archaeology, different from other scientific centres of this kind.

How did it come about? The young adepts of this branch were getting from the initial years of university study a broad view of the ancient world

as being a unified culture in the basin of the Mediterranean. They were taught, what their predecessors did not know, that the great achievements of the Greek culture were based first of all on the achievements of the ancient Egyptians and only transformed by the Greek genius into seemingly original achievements. Another important factor of this university training in the Mediterranean archaeology was a close contact of students with original objects of art and material culture, collected first of all in the National Museum in Warsaw. The former system of training was not applied — which is astonishing — in the world's major centres of these studies, having at their disposal magnificent museum collections, and was largely based on the "knowledge from books." Pictures were used there to a great extent instead of studies of original objects — these being sometimes replaced by plaster casts.

Another element which lay at the foundation of the new system of scientific research was a closer connection of archaeology with philology, both with classical and oriental one. As early as the third year of study, the student had to decide in choosing the theme of his master's thesis whether it would relate to the classical world or to the culture of the ancient East. From that moment on his accessory studies — independently of his knowledge of classical philology, the foundation of the whole Mediterranean archaeology — had to be supplemented by the study of ancient eastern languages and writings e.g. Egyptian hieroglyphs and the Mesopotamian cuneiform writing. It might seem that this additional burden of material, extending the obligatory range of examinations, could discourage young people from taking up studies in this field. But just the opposite was the case. There were such years when the majority of students used to take up, within framework of the Mediterranean archaeology, studies of the ancient East archaeology. Of course, this choice was considerably influenced by our discoveries in Egypt, Syria and Sudan, made in the late 50ties and early 60ties.

And these could be made largely owing to the fact that towards the end of the 1950s a Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, an institution connected with Warsaw University, had been set up in Cairo. In view of the widening range of our exploration in the Near East it was necessary to establish a base there from which the excavations could be organized in the particular countries of that area. In time the scope of the Centre's activities grew to an extent that surpassed the number of teams in the field of such major institutions as for instance the French Institute of Eastern Archaeology in Cairo.

The Centre proved an extremely important base for the further education of our archaeological graduates. We would thus enable the most gifted of them to take part — for at least a year — in our excavations in the Near East during which time they could, in most cases, collect the necessary material for their doctor's thesis. While still at university, our undergraduates had the possibility of meeting eminent specialists in this field who accepted our invitations to lecture at the University, Academy or Museum, acquainting themselves at the same time with archaeological documentation, collected regularly from all our digging sites. This direct contact with the

explorers whose names were known to the students from text-books or archaeological journals was very important for the latter since it strengthened their awareness of studying not at an outlying place but in one of the world centres in this field. That is why when they worked at the excavations, say in Egypt or Syria, our young graduates had no feeling of inferiority in their contacts with colleagues from France, Britain, Germany or the United States, just the opposite: on numerous occasions it turned out that they were better prepared for responsible work than the graduates from other countries.

Yet a prerequisite of this situation was a good knowledge of foreign languages. Indeed from the very beginning, at my first meetings with the young putting in for the study of the Mediterranean archaeology, I have been laying a special stress on the necessity of learning by them foreign languages. I have been telling them — not in order to frighten them and neither to encourage them too strongly to study this field of archaeology — that apart from the normal curriculum obligations they would be also obliged to learn four major languages, i.e. French, English, German and Italian, assuming that they had already learned Russian at school. I have been also making it clear to them that their university studies would be of little avail to them if they would not be able to turn their knowledge to good account. And this could happen only through a good knowledge of the so called “Congress” languages consisting not only in the ability to read, but also to conduct discussions in at least two languages (e.g. French and English) and a capacity to write in at least one of them. I have made it a practice in time that the so called *journal de fouilles* (excavation diary) and inventory of finds have been made in one of the congress languages, mostly in English. Thanks to it, in Faras for instance, our notes and field elaborations could be at once available to the excavation missions, at that time present in Sudan and of course eager to get to Faras which at the time had won the fame of being the greatest archaeological find of the so called “Nubian campaign”.

The heavy curriculum of studies and the necessity to acquire a good knowledge of foreign languages brought about an automatic selection among the young: only the persevering, diligent used to remain, those in fact who subsequently proved themselves in the field. It was necessary for the young Polish archaeologists, working in the Near East, to be equipped for their job not only as thoroughly as their colleagues from Britain or France but even more so. Only then the situation could arise that an archaeological office — in Egypt, Sudan or Syria — having to entrust a foreign archaeologist with a task and facing the necessity to choose a pupil of major research institutions: French, German, would choose in this competition a Pole who had already proved in the international rivalry the high qualities of his knowledge and character.

It was not easy to achieve this position, i.e. to win for our scientific undertakings and for our research workers who took part in them an opinion that would meet the expectations of others. But we have done it. There were cases when we were charged with very responsible tasks and it was done in situations when for these concessions had been applying more



heavily staffed and richer institutions. And as regards our pupils their cooperation was sought not only by the departments of antiquities, but, what is even more important, by other archaeological missions active in those territories. Indeed by missions who had no shortage of their own well-trained archaeologists. As head of the Centre I would occasionally agree to "lend" one of our young Egyptologists or other specialists from the Centre to American, German or French missions. I must confess that just these cases of "lending" my pupils to other foreign institutes gave me most profound satisfaction. I had lived to see that the position was just opposite to that of my young days when I myself had to solicit the job of a trainee at a foreign mission; now the relationships were reversed. It was not us now who were trying hard to get a training at foreign archaeological sites, but instead accepted at our sites pupils of foreign institutions, while sending our own young doctors — at the request of foreign mission — as experts at their sites.

When we were starting our archaeological exploration in Egypt in the second half of the 1950s we were not coming there as beginners, that is empty-handed. We had already behind us a three-year-long Polish-French exploration campaign at Edfu in Upper Egypt, conducted by us jointly with the French Institute of Eastern Archaeology. The three-volume publication in French, whose particular volumes appeared quickly almost one year after each campaign (except the last volume the printing of which was interrupted by war and completed only in 1949) was a sort of our credentials not only with the Egyptian archaeological authorities but also with the international scientific milieu. Already in this publication found their expression some new methods we had introduced into archaeology. These had to do with a cooperation in the field with anthropologists and made use of anthropological investigations in drawing archaeological-historical conclusions.

Indeed it became after the war in a sense a rule that at all sites where a necropolis was discovered anthropologists cooperated with us headed by Prof. Tadeusz Dzierżykray-Rogalski. They publish the results of their research, conducted within the systematically done excavations of a site, in our series of publications issued by the Institute of Mediterranean Archaeology at the Polish Academy of Sciences; particularly noteworthy are in this respect the anthropological explorations done at the Arab necropolis at Kom el-Dikka in Aleksandria.

Apart from this specific feature in our research there was yet another one. It consisted in our close cooperation in the field with the epigraphists, that is philologists, and in making directly use of their statements in dating particular cultural strata and groups of finds. In this respect our Warsaw papyrologist, Jerzy Manteuffel, proved to be in Egypt not only an accomplished expert in papyri but also, and above all, in ostracs. He aquired such a practice in this area that it took him a little more than ten minutes, an hour at the most, to read Greek ostracs extracted from rubble and inform me at once about the meaning of the inscription and date. So as the strata of the Ptolemaic — Roman premises were uncovered — owing to the cooperation with an architect — always present at our excavation —

enabled me to present already in the first report a chronological plan of the uncovered part of urban buildings of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods.

Here we come to yet another element which — with the mentioned ones — contributed to making our system of field research so specific, different from the methods applied then in Egypt and Greece by other missions. It was a daily cooperation with an architect who would immediately draw on paper the uncovered fragments of walls and thus add them to the overall plan of excavations. It must be remembered that at that time it was the usual method in the field to invite an architect only on the last days of a mission's stay at a site so that he might make the necessary measurements, draw the plans and in some cases make the drawings of some details.

We were trying to apply the experience gained earlier at Edfu to our first post-war excavations at Mirmeki on the Crimean peninsula, in 1956. After our first campaign of excavations there we were already able to try and issue a volume of publications which contained the results of our explorations done by means of a new method, worked out by us. Among the most valuable finds, the news of which was reported by the newspapers the world over, was the discovery of a very well preserved wine press. Our cooperation with the Soviet colleagues proved then very fruitful, although they applied a quite different excavation method. The comparison between these two systems of work in the field and the Polish way of reporting the results increased considerably the knowledge of both teams.

The efflorescence of the Polish school of Mediterranean archaeology began in the early 1957 at Tell Atrib in the Nile Delta. I had received this concession back in the October of the previous year, but the war activities in the Suez Canal area made it impossible to start any excavations there. Yet we arrived there soon after the armistice and began in the early March normal diggings. It was a difficult and complicated task to organize the work at Tell Atrib. We were obliged to do it by ourselves, without the help of the French Institute, as it had been the case at Edfu, since this time all French excavations were closed and so was also the French Institute. Having at our disposal small financial resources we had to organize our subsidiaries, tents, household equipment and transport, all of which was hard to obtain in a country being in fact at war with such powers as Britain, France, not to mention Israel. It must be noted that we were the only foreign mission to begin excavations in Egypt in those circumstances. The phonetical similarity of the Arabic words for "Poland" and "Holland" ("Bolana" and "Ollanda") led to a confusion, so that the Egyptian press, keen on giving information about the only two foreign teams working then in Egypt, would sometimes attribute the results of our excavations to the Dutch mission and the other way round.

Tell Atrib became a hard and very responsible excavation training for our young adepts of Mediterranean archaeology. With a ten-year break (1970—1978), due to the state of war and occupation of our digging site for military purposes, our work at Tell Atrib has been conducted since 1957 until today. The excavation results were first published in the "Annales de Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte", then in "Études et Travaux." In the initial stage our finds related to the period of the 26th dynasty and to the

Roman period. Particularly as regards the Roman period Tell Atrib proved very rich in important discoveries concerning a public baths system, being erected there from the reign of Augustus to the end of the 2nd century. It may be assumed that in that period the ancient Athribis had in this town area a kind of health resort baths. This does not mean that as regards other periods the excavations at Tell Atrib did not bring interesting finds, part of which got the National Museum in Warsaw. In recent years we have been conducting, on the instigation of the Coptic Church, explorations aiming at finding the site of the most ancient Christian basilica which — according to Magrizi, the Arab 14th century writer — is supposed to have been there from as early as the 4th century. As Arab sources report it had golden columns. Indeed our digging uncovered fragments of capitals and shafts of columns with distinct traces of gilding: so our investigations did definitely confirm the veracity of Arab literary documents concerning this basilica.

One of our major archaeological activities in Egypt, and then in Sudan, was our part in the great Nubian campaign, sponsored by UNESCO. Our initial exploration, carried out in 1958 along the Nile from the first cataract down to Abu Simbel, was to become of considerable importance for the subsequent development and organization of research on ancient Nubia. It was precisely our report on this exploration, submitted to the Egyptian ministry of culture, which caused UNESCO to assume the sponsorship over the preservation of Nubian monuments from being submerged by the Nile waters after the erection of a new dam to the south of Assuan, the so-called Saad el-Ali. The final result of this archaeological campaign, in which dozens of missions from all over the world took part, was the saving of the temple at Abu Simbel, and lately the campaign was closed by the inauguration of a group of temples from the island of File which have been moved to another place.

To the position and significance our Mediterranean archaeology had won in Egypt already in the late 1950s testifies the fact that it was the head of the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology who was elected chairman of the international Committee of seven experts who had for ten years surveyed the transportation of the rock temples of Abu Simbel up on the desert plateau, sixty metres higher, and their reconstruction there. As difficult as the technical operation itself of hewing out the temples of Ramses II in the thirty-ton blocks, transporting them up on the desert plateau and placing them there, was the harmonization and unification — through compromises — of the often very divergent views and opinions, held by this bery of international specialists, at the particular stages of the whole operation.

During the few year period, after the first excavations at Tell Atrib and the opening of our Archaeological Centre in Cairo, our presence in the international archaeological competition in Egypt became clearly visible. And it must be remembered that archaeological investigations in that country have a by far greater international importance than those done in other territories, for instance in Europe. The results of these investigations are closely linked with the economy of the country, tourism being there one of the main sources of income. The institutes established there, such as the

French, German, Italian or American one, no matter which, influence in a sense the cultural life in the capital of modern Egypt. From the emergence of archaeological investigations in Egypt, that is for 100 years, we had not been present there. The more significant is the fact therefore that our presence has been so quickly noticed during only a few years. This was undoubtedly due first of all to our close participation in the investigations in Nubia. As early as the late 1950s the young members of our Centre were working out — together with their Egyptian colleagues — the division of the Nubian territory into particular concessions. The young Polish architects were the first who, with Egyptian architects, dismantled the first two Egyptian temples: at Tafa and at Dabod.

So to the surprise of some of our foreign colleagues, the Department of Egyptian Antiquities charged us, in the early sixties, with the task of archaeological work at some most exposed positions: a) to do the trial pits, very quickly transformed into regular excavations, on the place left from a leveled out artificial hill in the centre of Alexandria, the so called *Kôm el-Dikka* which led to the sensational discovering of a Roman marble theatre; b) archaeological — renovatory work in one of the most beautiful temples of ancient Egypt — the Hatshepsut temple at Deir el-Bahari, concluded by the discovery of the until then unknown temple of Totmes III with a magnificent granite statue of the ruler; c) investigation and description of one of the royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings; it was the tomb of Ramses III, the study of which was initiated by one of my most gifted pupils, the young Polish Egyptologist Dr Tadeusz Andrzejewski who died prematurely; the study is being continued at present and nearing conclusion, being done by one of our distinguished specialists in this field, Dr Marek Marciniak.

All this activity was conducted almost simultaneously with the excavations done at Palmyra, which we had begun in 1959 at the invitation of the Syrian government, and with those in Sudan taken up also on the initiative of the Sudanese Department of Antiquities and which involved the same problem as in Egypt, i.e. saving Nubian monuments from being submerged by the Nile waters. It so happened, by the way, that taking intensively part in the international explorations of Nubia, conducted in Egypt, we did our greatest discovery not in Egypt but just in Sudan.

In order to realize the position we won in the Egyptological and archaeological exploration in the late 50s and early 60s let us quote an important fact, namely that from then on it was not we who applied for concessions, as it is usual and as I myself had done back in 1956 when I applied for the licence at Tell Atrib, but now it was governments and departments of antiquities in such countries as Egypt, Sudan or Syria who addressed themselves to the Centre with a proposal of investigating some excavation sites. And it must be said that not all of those proposed sites were accepted by us. Each of the possibilities submitted to us we used to consider in our team after having collected a detailed documentation in libraries. So when I did decide to undertake excavations at a proposed site I had been by then convinced that they would bring interesting results. Of course one could never tell what sort of finds there would be, but that they would be important I felt in advance. So for instance as regards Faras I did expect



there might be inside an artificial Kôm, formed by sand brought by wind, a building dating from the Meroic period; instead however we dug out, as is well-known, a magnificent Christian basilica dating from the late 7th and early 8th centuries, with a beautiful interior adorned with a whole gallery of wall-paintings dating from the period spread between early 8th and early 13th centuries.

At that time I had at my disposal only a small team of young qualified research workers while propositions to undertake excavations were growing in number. In Egypt alone we had behind us, apart from Tell Atrib, Alexandria, Deir el-Bahari, the dismantling of Nubian temples at Dabod and Tafa, and after this was done, excavations on the site of the temple at Dabod; in Sudan we had Faras and once our investigations had been completed there we were asked to take over the concession in Dangola and then in Kadero. We explored Palmyra systematically each year, and after having completed Faras it was Paphos in Cyprus, then Nimrud in Iraq. So with a small team of my assistants, including a photographer and an architect, we were moving from one site to another, having only a few days for rest at the Cairo Centre during which time there were passport and visa formalities to be settled and equipment to be completed before setting off to another place.

I was fully aware of the fact that what I was doing was entirely contrary to the methods applied in our profession. It is usual in it that an institute which carries out the exploration of a number of archaeological sites keeps for each of them a separate team of archaeologists. The point of it is that the young adepts of this branch should specialize in particular historical periods or cultural areas. It would be unthinkable for instance for French archaeologists working in Upper Egypt to be transferred to the excavation sites in Syria and Cyprus. Even within the archaeology concerning only one country groups of specialists are formed studying particular periods: i.e. in Egypt there are those who investigate archaeological relicts belonging to the pre-dynastic age, others work at the sites of the Old Kingdom, some devote themselves to the Middle Kingdom, others to the New Kingdom, still others to the Epoque Age, and finally there are those who specialize in the excavations of the Greek-Roman period.

In my team the situation was different. It was impossible, in view of the shortage of trained personel, to let young candidates for professional work in archaeology to be definitely attached from the first seasons to specific sites and to only one epoch. This could be the case only later when we already had a larger number of trained specialists. But I had the feeling at the same time that to use the same team at various excavations in a number of countries and belonging to various periods had also its positive sides. What the young French, German, British archaeologists could not gain was attainable to their Polish colleagues. They would come to know different excavation sites which compelled them to apply in each case another research method. They would broaden their knowledge by seeing directly monuments known to them before only from books. Besides, I knew from my own experience how instructive it was for an archaeologist to know various sites as a result of having worked at them. I myself had begun





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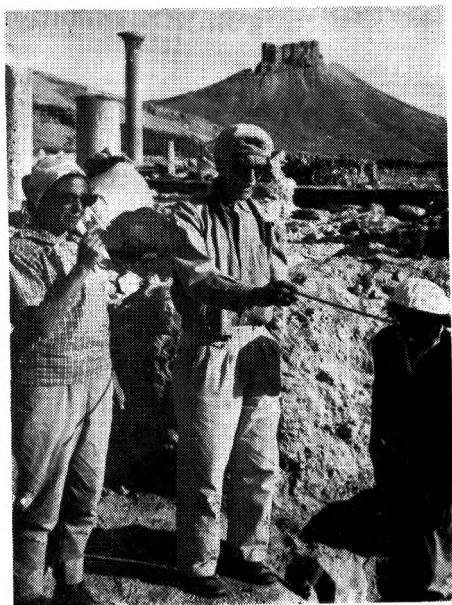


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Phot. 1. Prof. Gajdukiewicz, prof. Bławacki, prof. K. Michałowski, excavations Mirmeki, Crimea 1956

Phot. 2. E. Kalinowska, prof. K. Michałowski, T. Andrzejewski, B. Ruszczyc before the tent, Tell Atrib 1957

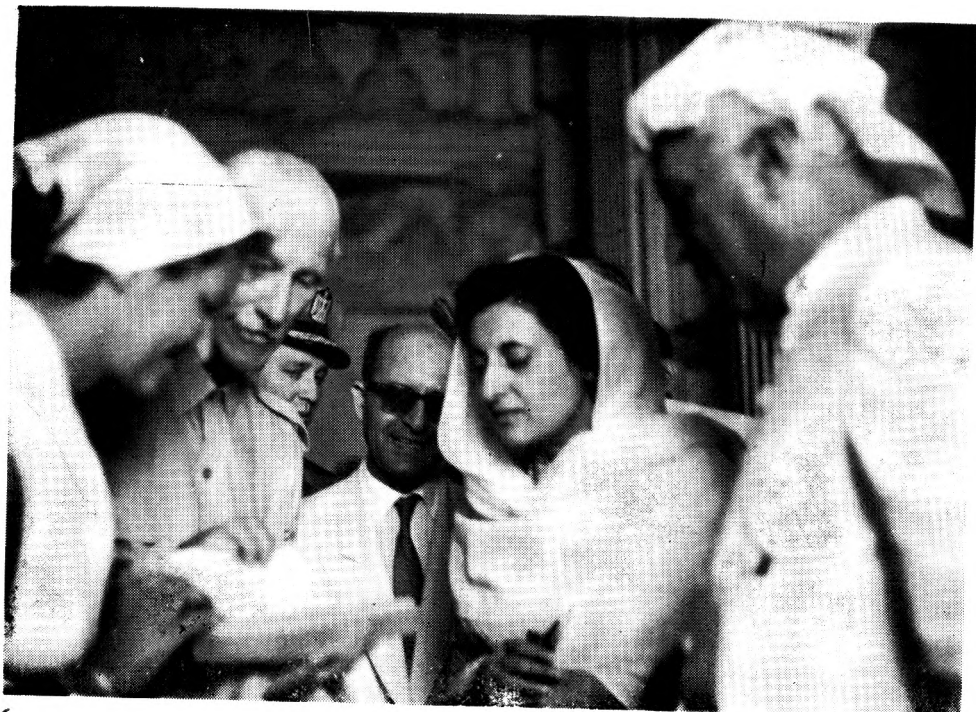
Phot. 3. M. Bernhard, deputy field director of excavations at Mirmeki, Crimea 1956



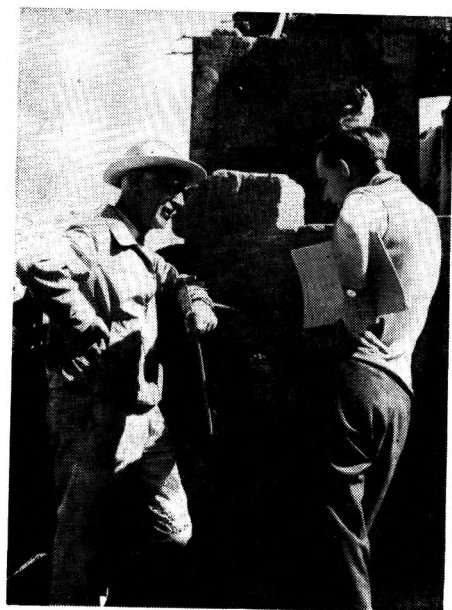
Phot. 4. Prof. K. Michałowski with A. Sadurska (left) and B. Filarska (right) excavations at Palmyra, Syria 1959



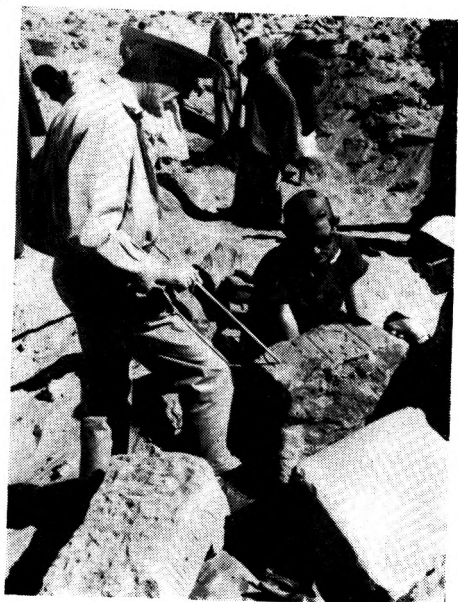
Phot. 5. S. Jakobielski treating a wounded workman, Palmyra, Syria 1962



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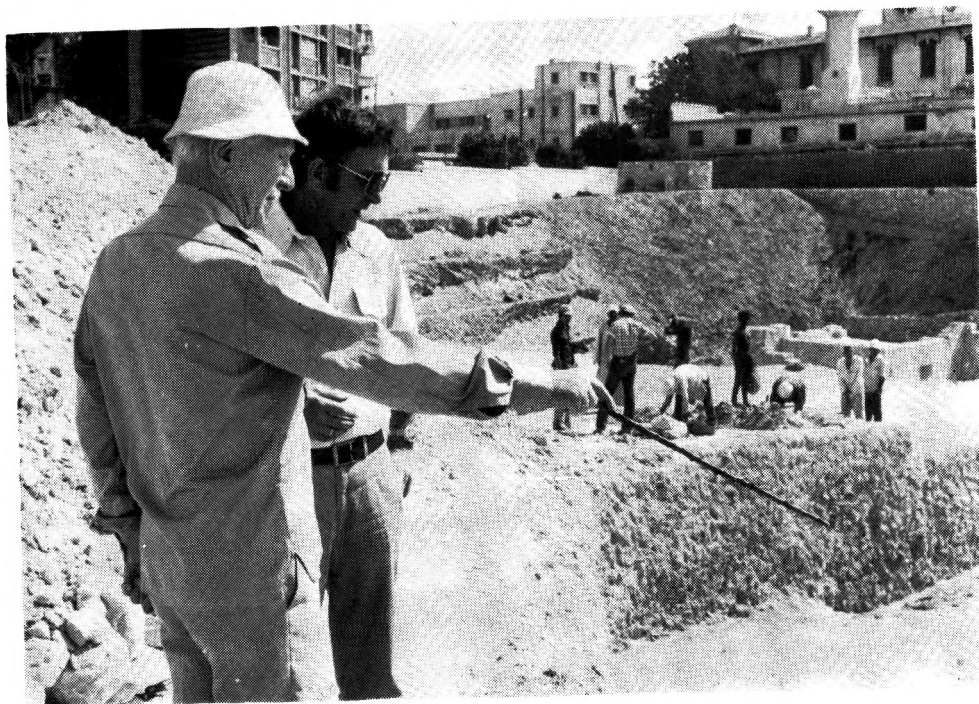


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Phot. 6. R. Jawaharlar, Nehru and Mrs Ghandi, prof. and Mrs. Michałowski  
polish excavations at Palmyra, Syria 1963

Phot. 7. Prof. K. Michałowski with prof. A. Shore (University of Liverpool) Faras,  
Sudan 1962

Phot. 8. Prof. K. Michałowski with M. Marciniak and B. Ruszczyr examining  
inscribed pharaonic blocks, Faras 1961



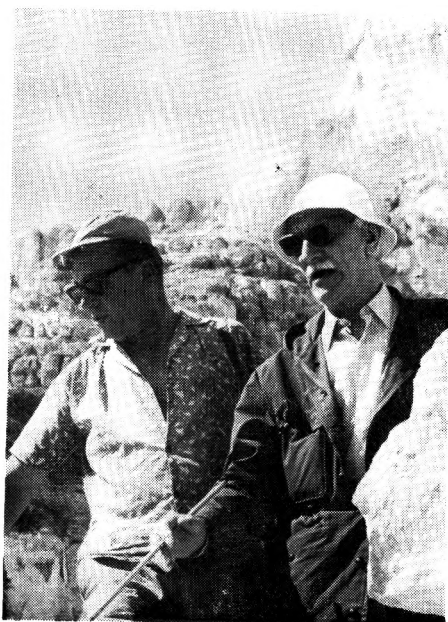
Phot. 9. Prof. K. Michałowski with T. Andrzejewski in Palermo 1956. For the first time Polish Archaeological School is officially represented on the international meeting

Phot. 10. M. Rodziewicz, field director, with prof. K. Michałowski, excavations at Kom el-Dikka, Alexandria 1978

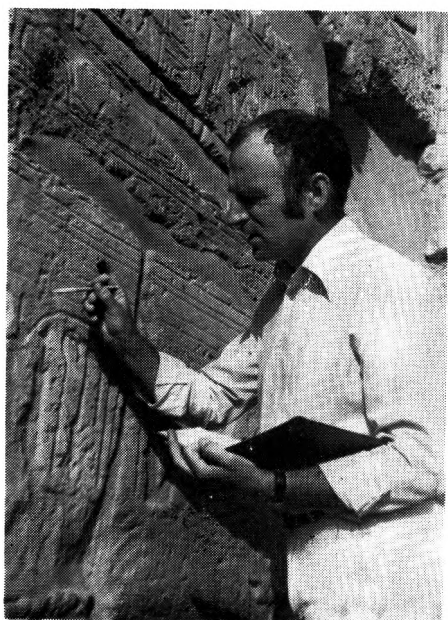




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Phot. 11. M. Rodziewicz, field director, with prof. K. Michałowski, excavations at Kom el-Dikka, Alexandria 1978

Phot. 12. Eng. Z. Wysocki, field director with prof. K. Michałowski in front of Hatshepsut Temple, Deir el-Bahari 1971

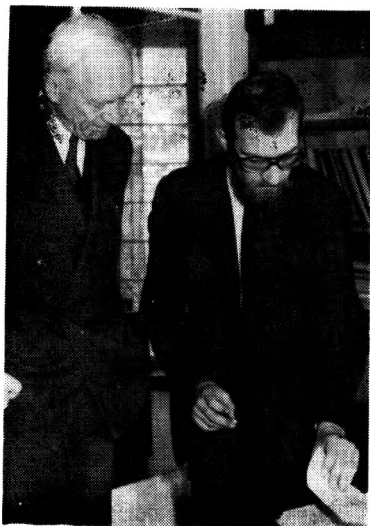
Phot. 13. K. Myśliwiec copying a hieroglyphic inscription in the temple of Luxor 1980





Phot. 14. J. Karkowski examining hieroglyphic inscription, temple of Hatshepsut, Deir el Bahari 1979

Phot. 15. The staff of the Department of Graeco-Roman, Egyptian and Nubian Antiquities, National Museum, Warsaw 1968



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Phot. 16. Prof. D. van Berchem (Geneva University) discussing a publication with S. Jakobielski in the Documentation Centre in Podkowa Leśna 1971

Phot. 17. Prof. L. Robert (Collège de France) with Polish archaeologists and egyptologists discussing in the Documentation Centre in Podkowa Leśna 1972

Phot. 18. Prof. I. Edwards (Director of the Department of Egyptian Antiquities British Museum) with S. Jakobielski reading an inscription in the Documentation Center in Podkowa Leśna 1971



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Phot. 19. Prof. E. Sève-Söderbergh on the Symposium for Nubian Studies National Museum, Warsaw 1972

Phot. 20. Mrs. Morenz, W. Koziński (Polish Archaeological Centre), prof. P. Demargne (Sorbonne), prof. K. Michałowski, prof. S. Morenz (Saxonian Academy, Leipzig), prof. W. Y. Adams (Kentucky University) studying documentation of Polish excavations, Warsaw 1966

Phot. 21. Prof. J. M. Plumley (Cambridge University) in discussion with S. Jakobielski, Warsaw 1972



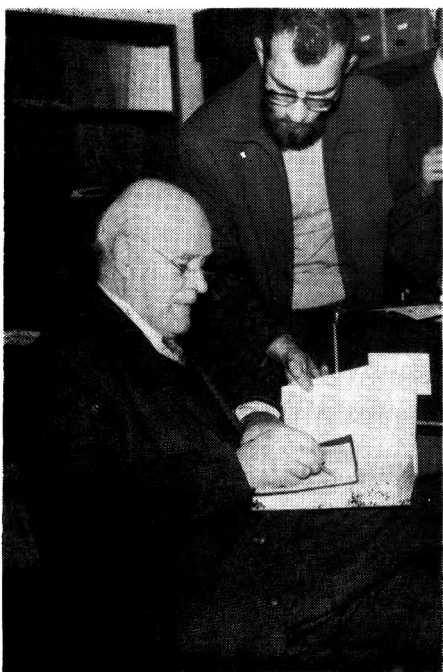


Phot. 22. Prof. W. Y. Adams (Kentucky University) addressing young members of Polish Archaeological School, Warsaw 1966

Phot. 23. Group of international experts for conservation of painting examining a mural from Faras in the National Museum Warsaw. From right to left: dr Daifuku (Unesco), dr Plunderleith (British Museum), H. Jędrzejewska (National Museum Warsaw), prof. K. Michałowski, Mr. de Varine-Bohan (director of ICOM,) prof. Novotny (Prague), a Lady delegate from Mexico, Warsaw 1967)



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Phot. 24. Prof. A. Amandry (director of French Archaeological School, Athens) with prof. K. Michałowski, to the right — Polish egyptologist E. Dąbrowska-Smektuła, Warsaw 1965

Phot. 25. Sitting prof. D. Talbot Rice (Edinburgh University) with S. Jakobielski studying a publication, Warsaw 1966

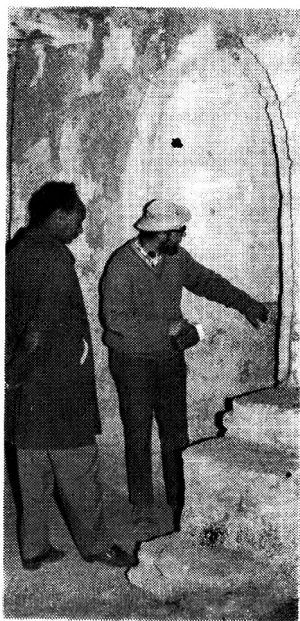




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Phot. 26. From left to right: prof. P. Demargne (Sorbonne), prof. K. Michałowski and prof. S. Morenz (Saxonian Academy, Leipzig) studying a document, Warsaw 1966

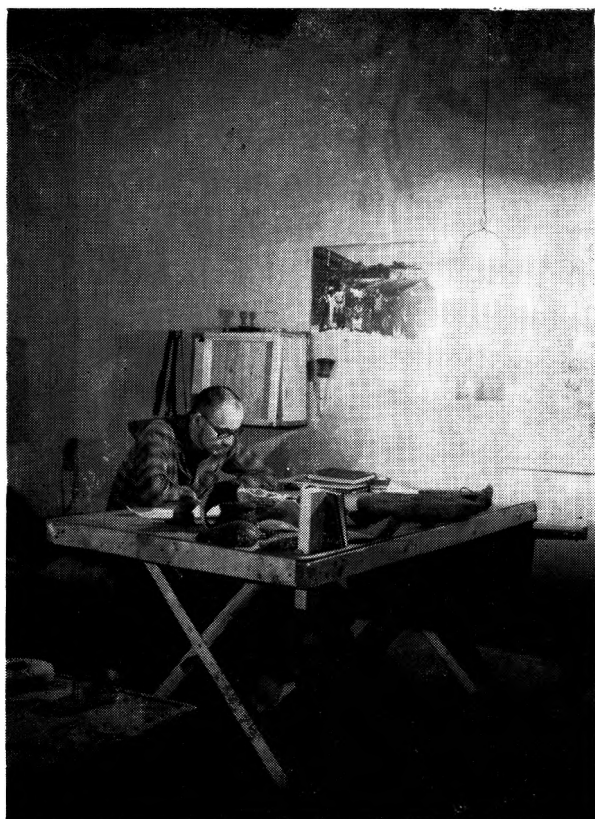
Phot. 27. Z. Sztetyło with the discovered Roman marble Aphrodite, excavations at Nea Paphos, Cyprus 1973

Phot. 28. S. Jakobielski, field director, with the Sudanese director of Antiquities, excavations in the Mosque at Old Dongola 1973





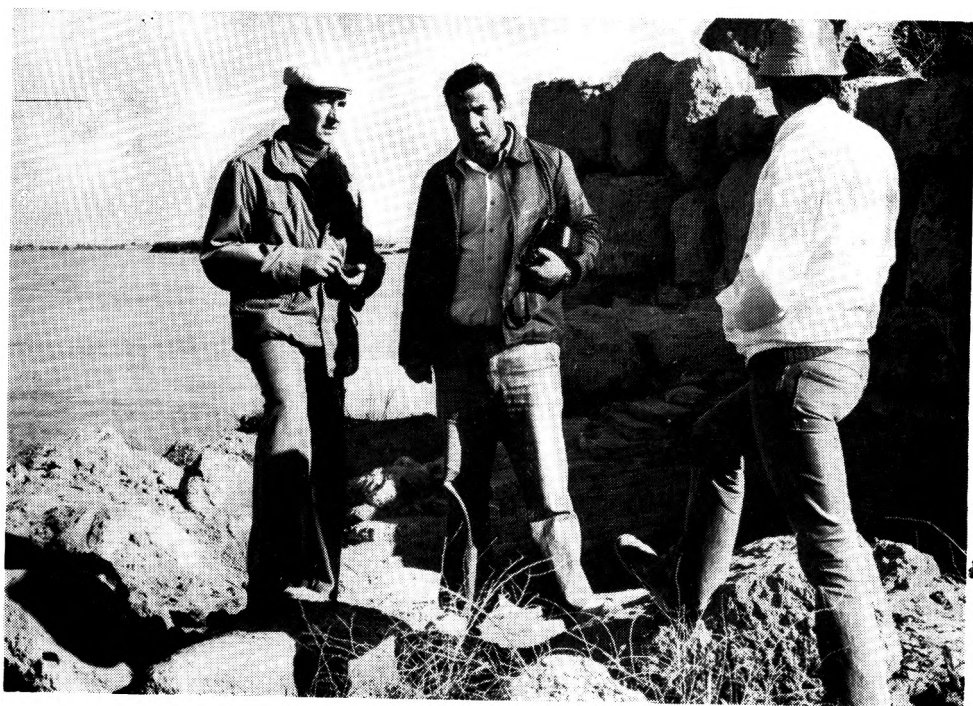
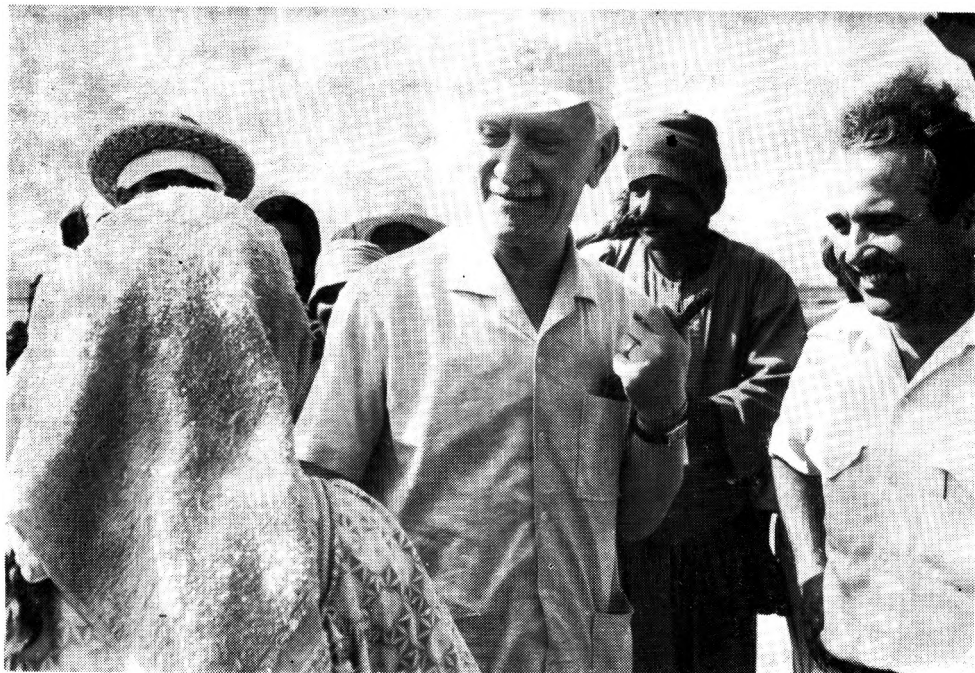
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Phot. 29. T. Dzierżykray-Rogalski exploring a tomb on the predinastic cemetery at Kadero, Sudan 1975

Phot. 30. W. Godlewski studying nubian pottery, Expedition House, Old Dongola 1973



Phot. 31. L. Krzyżaniak, field director, with prof. K. Michałowski on the international excavations at Minshat Abu Omar, Egypt 1978

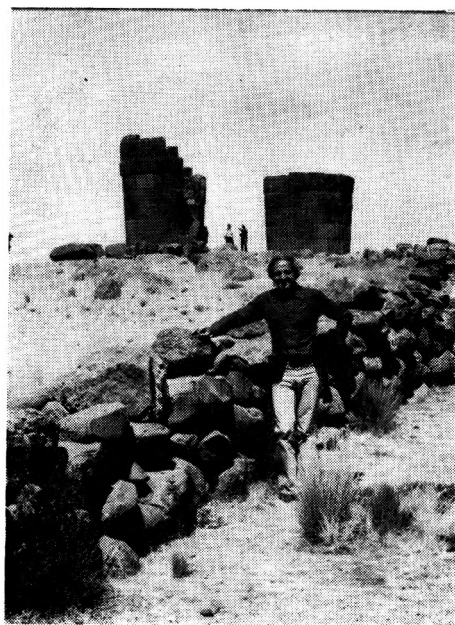
Phot. 32. M. Gawlikowski, field director, with the local inspector of Antiquities, excavations on Bijan Island on the Euphrate, Iraq 1980



Phot. 33. Polish participants on the first Coptic Congress, Cario 1976

Phot. 34. General Assembly of the Society for Nubian Studies, Cambridge 1978.  
The Board from left to right: prof. J. Vercoutter (director of French Archaeological Institut, Cairo), prof. J. M. Plumley (Cambridge University), speaker prof. K. Michałowski, prof. E. Dinkler (Heidelberg University), prof. J. Leclant (Collège de France)





Phot. 35. Polish delegation on the Nubiological Symposium in Cambridge 1976

Phot. 36. Tombs of Incas, Chulpas standing W. A. Daszewski, Sillustrani, Peru 1978.





Phot. 37. Prof. K. Michalowski with members of the Polish Centre of Archaeology in Cairo lying the wreath on the Monument of Polish Soldiers Cemetery, Cairo

in Greece, and so when I started later the excavations in Upper Egypt I hand behind myself some practice in the field of classical archaeology. Thus what I had observed during the exploration of Thasos proved very useful in my evaluation of the specific features of the Edfu site. I had an advantage over my French colleagues, used to working only in Egypt, in Upper Egypt at that, in that I had wider experience gained in a completely different area.

So realizing, at the late 50s and early 60s, that we could not afford sending specialized teams to particular places, I tried to make up for this deficiency by replacing it with a positive element, i.e. enable young people to gain as much experience as possible at various exploration sites. To quote an example: the afore-mentioned young Egyptologists, Tadeusz Andrzejewski and Marek Marciniak (the first of them specializing in demotics, the second — in hieratics, thus in a rather narrow area of Egyptian writing) took part in my excavations, the first at Mirmeki and Palmyra, the second in Egypt, also at Palmyra and Faras, and in Sudan. In Egypt itself they were trained at various sites — Tell Atrib and Deir el-Bahari, Dabod — owing to which they aquired an excellent knowledge of exploration methods and of how to organize an archaeological expedition — both being indispensable to a highly qualified Mediterranean archaeologist.

Later came the time for specialization. Dr. Stefan Jakobielski, who has won by now a name for himself in the world of science as a specialist in Nubiology and who is conducting jointly with Dr. Włodzimierz Godlewski our excavations at Dongola, between the 3rd and 4th Nile cataract in Sudan, on the site of the capital of the once united Nubian kingdom of early Middle Ages, had been earlier taking part in the work at Tell Atrib in Egypt, as well as Palmyra in Syria. Doc. Andrzej Daszewski, before specializing in Cypriot problems on which he wrote his doctor's thesis, had worked at the excavations in Alexandria and in Palmyra, without mentioning his participation in the exploration in Sudan. It was him I "lent" for a few years to UNESCO for archaeological and organizational work on the site of ancient Carthage in Tunesia. His qualifications were highly regarded there; so, invited by UNESCO, he went several times to Latin America to lecture there. The same can be said about another representative of our school, Doc. Karol Myśliwiec who has brought out several books on archaeology and the religion of ancient Egypt, of course in the congress languages; he passed through almost all our exploration sites before becoming a specialist in the art and culture of Egypt, especially of the epoch of the New Kingdom I "lent" him too on several occasions to other archaeological missions. Of course not all my pupils could stay for several years at our Centre in Cairo and take part in excavations. Many of them were obliged to use their competence and experience in university teaching, as did Prof. Bernhard, holding the chair of Mediterranean archaeology at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, or as did also Prof. Anna Sadurska at Warsaw University. But both these ladies-archaeologists have been trying to use their time so as to be able — apart from teaching activities — to broaden their specialist qualifications. Prof. Maria Bernhard is now an expert of renown in Greek

vase paintings; while Prof. Anna Sadurska has been specializing in the Roman art of the early period of the Roman empire and in the Roman portrait.

The picture of our Mediterranean archaeology is now different from what it used to be twenty years ago. The range of our archaeological exploration in the Near East has been considerably extended. Some of the sites have been completed, others — temporarily suspended, but at most of them exploration is still going on. So we have: in Egypt — Alexandria, Tell Atrib, Deir el-Bahari, in Sudan — Dangola between the 3rd and 4th cataract and Kadero near Khartum, in Irak — the island of Bijan and Saabiga in the area of ancient Mesopotamia, in Syria — Palmyra, in Cyprus — Paphos. In Alexandria, where there is a branch of our Cairo Centre excavations are going on practically the whole year round; at Deir el-Bahari the half-year winter seasons are devoted to archaeological preservation work; at the remaining sites we conduct seasonal investigations, in spring and autumn. Apart from these sites, still being explored by our Centre mention should be also made of those where work has been completed, such as Mirmeki on the Crimean Peninsula, Faras and Dabod in Nubia, or has been temporarily suspended, as for instance at Nimrud in Mesopotamia, after the tragic death of the field director on the site there, Dr. Janusz Menszyński, one of my most gifted pupils.

A review of all these sites shows a great variety of periods and cultures. And just because of that Polish Mediterranean archaeology presents so wide a range of knowledge as it has been the case in the major traditional research institutes. At Saabiya in Irak we explore the culture of the Neolithic age (Doc. Kozłowski); at Kadero which has been headed for years by one of the members of our Centre Doc. Lech Krzyżaniak from Poznań, we go into the predynastic and Meroic age. At Edfu the object of our exploration were the mastabas of the 6th dynasty of the Old Kingdom and a necropolis of the First Period and of the Middle. The widest range of our exploration in Egypt is concerned with the New Kingdom, represented by such magnificent buildings as the Hatshepsut temple or by our sensational discovery of 1963, the until then unknown temple of Totmes III. This great Egyptian military commander, who had little liking for his aunt Hatshepsut, built his temple on artificial substructures which elevated it above the temple of Queen Hatshepsut and the Mentuhotep temple of the Middle occupying the southern part of the valley Deir el-Bahari. A fairly big team of research workers is concerned with Deir el-Bahari and the period of the 18th and 19th dynasties. Among them is Doc. Jadwiga Lipińska; she too had passed through all our excavation sites from Alexandria to Faras; for some years she has been conducting a scientific reconstruction of the Totmes III temple and apart from numerous articles has published in English two volumes in the series "Deir el-Bahari". Dr. Marek Marciniak is also author of a volume in this series, but — as I have mentioned — he is at the same time busy studying the tomb of Ramses III in the Kings' Valley.

Along with these senior pupils of mine, a group of younger ones is also connected with Deir el-Bahari. Among them Dr. Janusz Karkowski, who had worked on the hieroglyphic inscriptions at Faras, is today probably the most competent specialist in the bas-relief decoration of the Hatshepsut

temple. He is assisted by two young archaeologists: Franciszek Pawlicki and Maciej Witkowski, while Dr. Ewa Laskowska has specialized in the Ptolemaic period of that temple. Doc. Lipińska has her own team of pupils, my grand-children as it were, who do the connecting of the enchantingly decorated blocks from the walls of the Totmes III temple. Apart from the archaeologists, there is a team of architects and conservators from the Gdańsk Institute for the Conservation of Monuments of Art and they too fulfil an important function. For many years the team was headed by Zygmunt Wysocki, a distinguished architect from Gdańsk. The architects and Egyptologists must cooperate very closely since it is unthinkable to reconstruct a wall, a piece of architecture without the control of an Egyptologist, specialist in this particular field. Of course people have changed during the last ten years both in the archaeological team and in the Gdańsk Institute, so it would be pointless to mention all the archaeologists, epigraphists, architects who have worked at Deir el-Bahari. All of them have contributed to the high position of our Mediterranean archaeology.

The site that has longest been explored by us in Egypt is Tell Atrib. Almost all my pupils have passed through these excavations which, as I said, have become for them partly a training ground. In the initial years I myself directed work there; lately however our investigations have concentrated exclusively on the Coptic cultural strata and are now conducted by Dr. Barbara Ruszczyk from the National Museum in Warsaw.

Let us move now to Irak for a moment where the excavations we have been doing for two years on the island of Bijan on the Euphrates have led to the discovery, under a Partian stratum, of fortifications dating from the Assyrian period and over the Roman ruins. This is an important find for the study of the history of the New-Assyrian Kingdom and its contacts with the neighbours to the north. This research is being done by Doc. Michał Gawlikowski who was my assistant at the Palmyra excavations and who has now for some years been in charge himself of the exploration there, of Palmyra that most magnificent archaeological site of Roman Syria whose impressive columns are among the most precious relicts of that period's architecture. Our serial publication in French "Fouilles Polonaises, Palmyre" runs already into 7 volumes.

The exploration of Alexandria has also a long history. Its beginning goes back to 1958 when I held the post of "visiting professor" at Alexandria University. Our investigations were at that time concerned with a system of cisterns in the area of the Nabi Daniel mosque. Having obtained concession for Kom el-Dikka we began excavations on a big scale of the public baths there, and after the discovery of the theatre we concentrated our attention first of all on this monument. Alexandria became also the place where young archaeologists specializing in classical archaeology were winning their spurs. One of those who worked at Alexandria still on a scholarship, when the reconstruction of the theatre had been directed on our side for 10 years by the architect, Wojciech Kollataj, was Dr. Mieczysław Rodziewicz who has now himself with help of his wife Dr. Elżbieta Rodziewicz, specialist in charred bones, taken over the direction of the whole area of Kom el-Dikka. This beautiful and arousing envy discovery, done by us in the central area



of Egypt's second capital, has alas not been described so far in a scientific publication. The series "Alexandria" deals, in the publications of the Institute of Mediterranean Archaeology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, with marginal finds, such as ceramics, stamps on amphorae which, though widening our scientific knowledge, have not the value of our publications devoted to Faras, Palmyra, Deir el-Bahari and Paphos.

The Alexandria area gives us a review, apart from a few relicts of the Ptolemaic period, of a number of strata dating from the Roman period (to which belong the two most monumental objects, i.e. the theatre and baths), the Byzantine one (the urban complex to the east from the theatre), up to the Arab necropolises. Of course this diversity of monuments makes it necessary to send to Alexandria specialists in various fields. For instance, Doc. Zbigniew Borkowski who too had passed through all our sites at Dongola, Palmyra, Deir el-Bahari and Paphos, has made a study of Bizantine inscriptions on the theatre's marble blocks. Doc. Promińska distinguished herself in anthropological research work. Two of our numismatists, Doc. Stefan Skowronek and lately Dr. Barbara Lichocka also contribute in their domain to the study of the Alexandrian finds. It must be also mentioned here that Prof. Anna Świderkówna, connected with our activities in the Near East, has made jointly with Mrs. Mariangela Vandoni a study of a section of Greek papyri from the Museum in Alexandria. Besides our work in that city is not restricted to excavation at Kom el-Dikka, since we have also on our record treatment of artifacts in the field and partial reconstruction as it has been the case at the theatre.

I decided to take the concession in Cyprus, at the suggestion of my friend, the late Prof. Porphyriou Dikaïos who in the early 60s was director of the Department of Antiquities there, mainly because Cyprus had been for c. 300 years under the rule of the Egyptian Ptolemies and so was closely connected with the area of our main archaeological activities. The excavations made from 1965 at Paphos have uncovered a big palace structure dating from the Roman period in which, apart from sculptures in marble, we found also magnificent mozaic floors belonging to the finest monuments of this kind (Theseus fighting with Minotaur in the labyrinth; the first bath of Achilles). I was beginning my work in Cyprus also with a small team of archaeologists, but as time went by it was gathering momentum. Today systematic investigations in the palace grounds are conducted by the said Doc. Andrzej Daszewski, although my other pupils are also taking part in them. Among them Prof. Zofia Sztetyło must be mentioned who had worked with me at Mirmeki and it was there that she began to be interested in the amphoras — stamps becoming in time a distinguished specialist in this very specific branch of archaeology. Along with her, Jolanta Młynarczyk, once research worker at the mission in Alexandria, has now for some years been studying Paphian problems publishing in annals of the Cypriot Department of Antiquities, among others things, reports on the olive lamps found in the grounds of our excavations.

The excavations at Paphos, Alexandria and Tell Atrib relate first of all to the Roman and late-Roman, even Byzantine periods. Within the wide

range of civilizations we have been investigating in the Near East we have been obviously also very concerned with the Coptic and Nubian arts, i.e. of the early Christian period. The most important discovery in this area is of course that of Faras, but there have been also explorations at Dongola, the second capital of the united kingdom of Nubia, which we began after having completed Faras in 1964. The early Arab period closes the list of our archaeological explorations. It includes an Arab necropolis over the buildings discovered at Kom el-Dikka in Alexandria which I have, by the way, already mentioned while speaking of our cooperation with anthropologists, and our reconstruction work in the Kurkumas Mosque in Cairo conducted by the Kielce Institute of Renovation as part of the Center's study programme.

Apart from our own excavations the Centre had been taking part in exploration done jointly by missions. So for example, when the British, that is the Egypt Exploration Society, decided to resume their excavations at Kasr Ibrim, ancient fortress on a hill, and recently on an island or peninsula on the Nubian lake, they asked us for cooperation. It is very significant that in starting exploration in the area of Nubian culture they thought of us as specialists in this relatively young branch of archaeology. It was in Warsaw in 1972, on the inauguration of the Faras Art Gallery in the National Museum, that an international society was set up which called itself the Society for Nubian Studies and of which I was elected the first chairman. It was a general view that we had in Warsaw the best, most valuable documentation of art monuments relating to ancient Nubia and that our archaeologists — to judge by their publications — had much to say in that field. So the expedition to Kasr Ibrim established itself eventually as a team made up of three schools: British, Polish and American. In the several-year-long excavations took part from our side: Dr. Stefan Jakobielski and Dr. Marek Marciniak, and the architects, Przemysław Gartkiewicz and Ryszard Sobolewski. Another international action in which we are participating is the exploration of Minshat Abu Omar on the eastern fringes of the Nile Delta where, along with the German archaeologists from Munich, also Doc. Lech Krzyżaniak, Doc. Karol Myśliwiec, and our documentalist, Waldemar Jerke and Tomasz Gorecki are working. It must be noted that wherever our archaeologists are taking part in mixed missions their presence is conspicuous, both because of their professional competence and their organizational experience.

Considering the present position of the Polish school of Mediterranean archaeology one can surely state that it is regarded in the world of this particular science as being an equal partner in the exploration of major civilisations of the past in the Middle East. Of course the range of our archaeological activities could be still extended. There have been suggestions, even invitations for us to participate in archaeological explorations in Iran and Libya, not to mention Mexico which is beyond the range of our studies. However, taking into account our present possibilities, these areas cannot in the near future be included in our archaeological activities. The Polish school of Mediterranean archaeology is not prepared now, neither as regards

its members nor material basis, to direct its studies to a growing number of territories. What really matters is the fact that we have fulfilled a requirement, strange though it may seem, prevailing in the international scientific milieu, that only the original contribution of that country is really significant which has been conducting its own excavations in Egypt.