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Special theme:
PREHISTORY OF NORTH-EAST AFRICA
Volume dedicated to Prof. Michał Kobusiewicz
on his 80th birthday

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Editorial

The current, 58th volume of *Archaeologia Polona* with the special theme – *The Prehistory of North-East Africa* is devoted to Professor Michał Kobusiewicz on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of his birth. Being aware of Michał's many significant research achievements, we would like through this collection of contributions to especially honour the African chapter of his scientific life. Although he has been engaged in activities in several African countries, over most of this period, his main areas of research were Egypt and Sudan. The Polish contribution to research on the prehistory of NE Africa has a long tradition. This goes back at least to the launch and initial projects of the Combined Prehistoric Expedition (CPE) in Egyptian and Sudanese Nubia in the early 1960s (Wendorf 1965). Michał Kobusiewicz was part of the first wave of Polish prehistorians contributing to the work of the CPE, joining the expedition in 1967. Since then, he has taken part in several dozen African missions resulting in abundant publications greatly increasing knowledge about the past of NE Africa. We may for example mention the articles in *Science* (Wendorf *et al.*, 1976; 1984) or the monograph *The Production, Use and Importance of Flint Tools in the Archaic Period and the Old Kingdom of Egypt* (Kobusiewicz 2015). A detailed account of the African activities and publications of Michał Kobusiewicz are given in the initial chapters of this volume, the first by Romuald Schild – *The African Chapter in the Scientific Life of Professor Michał Kobusiewicz* and the second, compiled by Przemysław Bobrowski – *African Research of Michał Kobusiewicz: Calendar and Bibliography*. Judging by this presentation of the geographical and chronological scope of interests and scientific results, it would perhaps not be an exaggeration to suggest that Michał Kobusiewicz, may justifiably be considered as one of the few individuals that could be considered as a colossus of African archaeology. Fred Wendorf, in his *Desert Days*, describing a field school for Egyptian inspectors writes that Michał was: “regarded as a great teacher and knew more about lithic typology than anyone in the camp, except possibly Schild” (Wendorf 2008: 272).

The papers in this volume honouring Michał Kobusiewicz have been written by his friends, colleagues, acquaintances and also by former students and present collaborators. All consider the archaeology of NE Africa with the same broad chronological and thematic scope as the interests of Professor Kobusiewicz.

The first four papers consider the oldest episodes of hominin presence in NE Africa. Mirosław Masojć and colleagues in their paper *Acheulean Bifaces from Khor Shambat, Omdurman (Sudan), Comparative Studies in the Nubian Context* discuss a recently discovered Palaeolithic assemblage from Omdurman and its statistical comparison with

several other Acheulean sites. The second paper, *The Middle Palaeolithic Assemblage with Bahari Technique from Site 21b in Deir el-Bahari (Western Thebes), Upper Egypt* by Barbara Drobiewicz and Bolesław Ginter presents interesting knapping technique observed in the Egyptian Palaeolithic assemblage from Deir el-Bahari. Marta Osypińska and colleagues focus on the *The PalaeoAffad Project and the Prehistory of the Middle Nile*. The last article in this group, by Donatella Usai, *The Qadan, the Jebel Sahaba Cemetery and the Lithic Collection*, reassesses the chronology and affiliation of the world-famous Sudanese cemetery with the oldest evidence of warfare.

The second group of contributions consider Mesolithic and Neolithic societies both from Egypt and Sudan in the form of a site reports, geophysical surveys and a synthetic papers. Lenka Varadinová and Ladislav Varadin report on *The First Notes on the Second Khartoum Mesolithic Cemetery at Jebel Sabaloka (Sudan)*. Another Mesolithic and Neolithic cemetery from Omdurman, Sudan is presented by Maciej Jórdeczka and colleagues in the next paper, *Neolithic Inhabitants of Khor Shambat I, Sudan*. The third paper in this group, *Comparison of Different Gouge Collections from Central Sudan* by Katarína Kapustka and Małgorzata Winiarska-Kabacińska, involves technological and functional analysis of Neolithic gouges from Sudanese collections. An important Neolithic sites in the Egyptian Desert is discussed by Jacek Kabaciński and a group of co-authors and by Przemysław Bobrowski and colleagues in the next two papers, *Towards Understanding the Late Neolithic of the Egyptian Western Desert: Gebel Ramlah, Site E-16-02* and *The Early Holocene Archaeological Evidence (Site E-05-1) in Bargat El-Shab (Western Desert Egypt)*. It must be said that geophysical surveys have been very rarely undertaken on prehistoric NE African sites, but one is reported by Fabian Welc and Przemysław Bobrowski from the area of Bargat El-Shab in the paper titled: *Results of Geophysical Survey in Bargat El-Shab in Southern Egypt. Insight into the Early Holocene Settlement Pattern of the El Nabta / Al Jerar Interphase*. The last paper in this group, *Recent Research on Neolithic and Predynastic Development in the Egyptian Nile Valley* by Agnieszka Mączyńska, is an important review of the recent results of studies concerning the origins of the Neolithic in Northeastern Africa.

The next group, of two papers, considers the later prehistory of the area. The first of them, *A few Remarks about Cosmetic Palettes from Tell el-Farkha* by Krzysztof Ciałowicz discusses an aspect of this important site in the Nile delta. The second paper, *Flints from the Road: on the Significance of two Enigmatic Stone Tools Found along the Darb el-Tawil* written by Heiko Riemer and Karin Kindermann, discusses the phenomenon of the interpretation of surface lithic finds and the issue of knapped stone artefacts being produced and used in the period after the Stone Age in Africa.

Rock art, one of the beloved subjects of Michał Kobusiewicz's research, is the theme of the fourth and last group of papers in this volume. Friederike Jesse presents her observations from the Sudanese site Zolat el Hammad in the paper titled: *Rock Art and Archaeology – a Short Visit to Zolat el Hammad, Northern Sudan* and Paweł Lech

Polkowski discusses rock art from Egyptian Dakhleh Oasis: *Animal Hill – a Large Prehistoric Rock Art Site COI78 in the Central Dakhleh Oasis, Egypt*.

We believe that the above listed contributions, in many cases based on or discussing the results of Michał Kobusiewicz's research, represent the range of his scientific involvement with Africa, and thus form a tribute to his work. These fifteen papers have been reviewed and improved by a group of international reviewers to whom we owe our gratitude. In alphabetical order the following reviewers were so kind to contribute to improving this volume: Mirosław Furmanek (Wrocław), Elena Garcea (Cassino), Maria Gatto (Leicester), Bolesław Ginter (Cracow), Tomasz Herbich (Warsaw), Karla Kroeper (Berlin), Alice Leplongeon (Leuven), Maria Kaczmarek (Poznan), Andrea Manzo (Naples), Arkadiusz Marciniak (Poznan), Henryk Paner (Gdansk), Tomasz Płonka (Wrocław), Włodzimierz Rączkowski (Poznan), Andrzej Rozwadowski (Poznan), Jiří Svoboda (Brno), Philip Van Peer (Leuven), András Zboray (Budapest).

Finally, the editors would like to express our wish that this volume will reach a broad audience. It was a pleasure to edit and work on the volume to honour the Professor whom we not only respect as a scientist but also admire a lot as a person. On behalf of all the contributors to this volume, the authors and the reviewers, we would like to wish Michał many more successes and achievements in his ongoing work in Africa!

*Przemysław Bobrowski
Mirosław Masojć*

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CONTENTS

Editorial	1
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SPECIAL THEME:
PREHISTORY OF NORTH-EAST AFRICA
VOLUME DEDICATED TO PROF. MICHAŁ KOBUSIEWICZ
ON HIS 80th BIRTHDAY

The African Chapter in the Scientific Life of Professor Michał Kobusiewicz <i>Romuald Schild</i>	9
African Research of Michał Kobusiewicz: Calendar and Bibliography <i>Przemysław Bobrowski</i>	17
Acheulean Bifaces from Khor Shambat, Omdurman (Sudan), Comparative Studies in the Nubian Context <i>Mirosław Masojć, Amel Hassan Gismallah, Grzegorz Michalec, Andrzej Gałaś</i> <i>and Maciej Jórdeczka</i>	39
The Middle Palaeolithic Assemblage with Bahari Technique from the Site 21b in Deir el-Bahari (Western Thebes), Upper Egypt <i>Barbara Drobniewicz and Bolesław Ginter</i>	63
The PalaeoAffad Project and the Prehistory of the Middle Nile <i>Marta Osypińska, Piotr Osypiński, Marek Chłodnicki, Michał Kuc, Paweł Wiktorowicz</i> <i>and Robert Ryndziejewicz</i>	79
The Qadan, the Jebel Sahaba Cemetery and the Lithic Collection <i>Donatella Usai</i>	99
The First Notes on the Second Khartoum Mesolithic Cemetery at Jebel Sabaloka (Sudan) <i>Lenka Varadzinová and Ladislav Varadzin</i>	121
Neolithic Inhabitants of Khor Shambat 1, Sudan <i>Maciej Jórdeczka, Łukasz Maurycy Stanaszek, Przemysław Bobrowski, Marek Chłodnicki</i> <i>and Iwona Sobkowiak-Tabaka</i>	135

Comparison of Different Gouge Collections from Central Sudan <i>Katarína Kapustka and Małgorzata Winiarska-Kabacińska</i>	165
Towards Understanding the Late Neolithic of the Egyptian Western Desert: Gebel Ramlah, Site E-16-02 <i>Jacek Kabaciński, Agnieszka Czekaj-Zastawny, Hebatallah A. A. Ibrahim and Jakub Mugaj</i>	179
The Early Holocene Archaeological Evidence (Site E-05-1) in Bargat El-Shab (Western Desert Egypt) <i>Przemysław Bobrowski, Maria Lityńska-Zajac, Marta Osypińska and Maciej Jórdeczka</i>	195
Results of Geophysical Survey in Bargat El-Shab in Southern Egypt. Insight into the Early Holocene Settlement Pattern of the El Nabta / Al Jerar Interphase <i>Fabian Welc and Przemysław Bobrowski</i>	221
Recent Research on Neolithic and Predynastic Development in the Egyptian Nile Valley <i>Agnieszka Mączyńska</i>	235
A few Remarks about Cosmetic Palettes from Tell el-Farkha <i>Krzysztof M. Ciałowicz</i>	245
Flints from the Road: on the Significance of two Enigmatic Stone Tools Found along the Darb el-Tawil <i>Heiko Riemer and Karin Kindermann</i>	257
Rock Art and Archaeology – a Short Visit to Zolat el Hammad, Northern Sudan <i>Friederike Jesse</i>	275
Animal Hill – a Large Prehistoric Rock Art Site CO178 in the Central Dakhleh Oasis, Egypt <i>Paweł Lech Polkowski</i>	289

DISCUSSIONS AND CRITICISM

Green Saharas, Grey Markets: Commercial Exploitation of North African Prehistory, an Overview <i>Paul M. Barford</i>	311
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BOOK REVIEWS

Iwona Sobkowiak-Tabaka, <i>Rozwój społeczności Federmesser na Nizinie Środkowoeuropejskiej</i> [The Development of Federmesser Communities on the Central European Plain], Warszawa 2017 (<i>Andrzej Wiśniewski</i>)	337
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Photo: M. Jórdeczka

Professor Michał Kobusiewicz at Meroe (Sudan, 2012)

