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## **The birth of nubiology - a new field of scientific studies as a result of the UNESCO Nubian Campaign**

### **English Summary**

Nubia is a historic land that covers the middle Nile valley in south-eastern Africa, territorially reaching the borders of Ethiopia. Currently, these areas are located in southern Egypt and northern Sudan. The name of this region comes from the hieroglyphic consonantal root "nb", which meant gold. It was therefore a country rich in this precious metal. Nubia was also referred to, inter alia, as the Land of Archers (it was famous for this type of military formations), and later (in the New Kingdom Period) was known as Kush.

Leaving aside the Prehistoric Period, we can speak of the beginnings of settlement and the culture of this region as Nubia from around the middle of the 4th thousand years BCE. This area was inhabited by various peoples, creating their own civilizations. Many relics left by these organized communities have survived to our day. These are hidden in the sands of the desert. This is especially true of the periods when Egyptian influences prevailed there, as well as when Christianity and then Islam prevailed.

The ruins situated in Nubia were at first only a tourist attraction. It happened relatively late for only at the beginning of the 19th century, although Egyptian cities - such as Memphis or Thebes - were already known and visited. They were made famous by scientific expeditions in Egypt initiated thanks to the expedition of Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821), and later the deciphering of the hieroglyphic script by the French J. F. Champollion (1790-1832) and subsequent expeditions, such as the Prussian one led by K. R. Lepsius (1810-1884). The initial lack of interest in Nubia was mainly due to the fact that it lay in the area south of the 1st Nile cataract. So it was out of reach for many.

The actual archaeological activity began at the beginning of the 20th century, when the construction of the Aswan Dam was caused the flooding of part of Lower Nubia. Subsequent extensions of the dam in the 1930s resulted in the next activity of archaeologists in its area. In the 1950s, the government of Egypt (then the United Arab Republic) decided to build a High Dam (Sadd el-Ali) south of Aswan. The consequence of its creations was a 500 km long lake reaching as far as the Dal cataract. Practically it was associated with flooding the entire Lower

Nubia, causing enormous losses of cultural and natural heritage. Thanks to the subsequent Nubian Action, UNESCO partially managed to save them.

In 1959, the governments of Egypt and the Sudan asked UNESCO for help in order to prevent the thousands of years old monuments and temples of ancient Nubia from being flooded by the waters of the Nile in connection with the construction of the High Dam. A worldwide campaign was launched to save the ancient monuments, including the extraordinary value of the temples on Philae and Abu Simbel. There, the chairman of the Group of Archaeological Experts was a Pole - professor Kazimierz Michałowski (1901-1981). The entire action lasted 20 years, but only during the first five years it was possible to carry out excavations in the area designated for the flooding.

Specialists from 44 countries took part in the Nubian Action. Thanks to this unprecedented undertaking, it was possible to move 22 complexes of architectural monuments (mainly Egyptian temples) to a safe place and to undertake archaeological research, at least by prospecting, the entire area. It is worth adding that thanks to this campaign, work began on the UNESCO convention, which concerned the protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage, as well as on the creation of the World Heritage List. The convention was adopted in 1972, and salvaged objects from Nubia were added to that list in 1979.

This doctoral dissertation ("The birth of nubiology - a new field of scientific studies as a result of the UNESCO Nubian Campaign") is about a new field of scientific studies, or even a new field of knowledge inextricably linked with archeology. It is nubiology, or the science on ancient Nubia. It concerns the broadly understood history and culture of this region.

Until now – as far as I know - no comprehensive and scientific elaboration has been created that would provide information and systematize knowledge related to the above-mentioned topic. Therefore, this dissertation is the first of its kind of wider study.

Apart from the table of contents, introduction, conclusion, abbreviations, bibliography and illustrations the dissertation consists of six chapters. The first of them ("Nubia - land and inhabitants") characterizes Nubia as a historical land, described the people living there, the languages they used and speak, and puts a question about the chronology of its history. The next chapter ("Nubia research until 1959") presents the accounts of historians, travelers (including Poles), historians and researchers from the 5th century C.E. and ending with the 1950s. This list of course also includes the major scientific research of Nubia, up to the Nubian Action. The next part of the work ("UNESCO Action to save Nubian monuments") presents UNESCO and the international efforts of this organization together with the Governments of Egypt and the Sudan in order to save the ancient cultural heritage of this region, which was to

disappear irretrievably in the waters of the Nile. It is an overview of the chronology of the protection of these monuments in the Nubian Action based on direct reports and UNESCO documents up to 1972 inclusive. The fourth chapter ("Results of the Nubian Action and the rise of nubiology") demonstrates the effects of activities in this unique event on a global scale, the sites that have been saved, the contribution of individual states and institutions. It covers the term "nubiology" itself, the creation of the Society of Nubian Studies and their meetings. It is also a review of nubiological journals, publishing series about Nubia and activities undertaken in the field of culture. The successive chapter ("Nubiology writes a new story") presents the history of Nubia from prehistoric times to the Islamic Period, including discoveries made during and after the Nubian Action, which in many respects changed the perception of the history of these country. The sixth chapter ("Polish Nubiologists") presents the scientific profiles of over fifty compatriots, including the creators of nubiology and those who continue research on this field. The construction of this chapter as a list of persons is a deliberate attempt to apply the method of seeing the whole through a part of it. The author's intension was to show, on the example of the quantity and quality of Polish research, how great is this field, of which Poland is a important, but in fact only one of its participants. The arrangement of names in the alphabetical order is to made to facilitate the reader finding Polish scholars like in an index.

The work was based on solid scientific printing sources (I have a quite a part of them at home) and on UNESCO reports and documents (they are available on the Internet).

It is a presentation of the process of creating a new field of science and its extremely rapid progress. There are as yet no syntheses from many historical periods, although a number of attempts have been made in this regard as the discipline is still evolving. Literally every day brings new information. It is about the results of archaeological works from many sites, years and missions carried out by various countries and institutions. So far, not all the results of past and present excavations have been published; and yet they are still taking place.

The Nubian Action gave rise to further work and research. It made that the birth of nubiology that rewrote the history of this part of Africa. It is developing according to the results of new appearing studies. There were significant changes in all periods. An example could be Faras, where Polish discoveries allowed, inter alia, to revise the perception of the history of Christian Nubia and its art.

Finally, it should be emphasized that the contribution of Poles to the creation and development of nubiology is unique on a global scale. We belong to the strict elite of researchers, a family of nubologists numbering about 400-500 scholars.

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