

PREFACE

This volume is part of and concludes the project entitled *The Nile Delta as a centre of cultural interactions between Upper Egypt and the Southern Levant in 4th millennium BC*. It contains a collection of papers by researchers involved in investigating the development of the Nile Delta in the Pre- and Protodynastic Periods. Nearly all of these papers were presented at the same-titled conference held on June 21 and 22, 2013 in the Archeological Museum in Poznań, Poland. Although originally planned as a workshop presenting the results of research carried out as part of the project, the conference eventually evolved into a major event and became an opportunity to meet and talk about the role of Delta communities in the development of the Egyptian civilization in the 4th millennium BC, with particular emphasis on their relations with neighboring areas, *i.e.* the Southern Levant and Upper Egypt. The conference was attended both by project partners and by invited guests whose papers made an excellent addition to the main topic of the event. Most lectures concentrates on sites from Lower Egypt and today's Israel. A notable exception is thus the paper by W. CLAES *et al.*, presented at the conference by S. HENDRICKX, on the site of Elkab in Upper Egypt. The decision to include this paper in our publication was determined by the fact that the paper presents findings “fresh off the site” and by the scarcity of information from contemporary research in this region. In addition, although S. HENDRICKX had not been personally involved in the research in the Delta, he actively participated in heated debates on the issue. Only the paper by STEVEN ROSEN was presented at a workshop *Imports during the Naqada Period: Investigating Two Sides of a Phenomenon* organized in W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem on November 26, 2012. The main goal of the workshop was to meet Israeli archeologists, who keep finding Egyptian imports on various sites. An important element of the workshop was the opportunity to discuss Egyptian-Levantine relationships not only from the Egyptian, but also from the Levantine perspective. The article by STEVEN ROSEN is a fine example here.

As a project, *The Nile Delta as a centre of cultural interactions between Upper Egypt and the Southern Levant in 4th millennium BC* continued for 3 years, from May 2011 to April 2014. I conceived the project's idea when investigating the Tell el-Farkha site, which year by year provided new evidence confirming the site's importance from the moment of its inhabitation by representatives of the Lower Egyptian culture through to the formation of the Egyptian state, and finally to the Early Dynastic period. This evidence seemed to contradict the prevailing vision of the region, generally seen as a venue for (or background to) changes. In that vision, the Delta communities in the Pre- and Protodynastic Periods did not play any major role in those changes, and finally came to be either replaced or assimilated by Upper Egyptians, who were more developed socially, economically and politically. Meanwhile, findings yielded by excavations in Tell el-Farkha showed that the settlement's residents were actively involved in all processes taking place in the 4th millennium BC, *i.e.* in the exchange of goods with neighboring regions, development of craft specialization and emergence of the Egyptian state (CHŁODNICKI *et al.* 2012;

CHŁODNICKI *this volume*). Therefore, the project's main assumption was not only to provide evidence confirming that the Delta and its residents were involved in processes and changes, but also to inspire discussions among researchers. Although the data from Tell el-Farkha were an important element of the project, evidence coming from other sites in the Delta (and their interpretation in the light of studies from Tell el-Farkha) was of equal importance.

Since archeology is hardly a predictable discipline, the original project assumptions had to be modified as excavation works progressed. Furthermore, the project was affected by the political situation in Egypt in 2011 to 2014. As the project's leader I am fully aware that my view of its results is subjective and therefore I leave it to others. However, I do hope that these results can be treated as another step forward in investigating the still mysterious prehistory of the Nile Delta. Quite surely, completion of this project does not close the issue tackled by me in 2011, and ongoing excavations in the Delta will keep providing new important discoveries.

The project included excavations at the Tell el-Farkha site held from 2012 to 2014 and specialized analyses – petrographic pottery analysis by MARY F. OWNBY (*this volume*) and metal ware analysis by THILO REHREN (REHREN & PERNICKA *this volume*). Furthermore, the project gave fruit in the form of 3 publications that may constitute a rich source of information for all researchers investigating the Pre- and Protodynastic Nile Delta. For the first time, a comprehensive report covering materials from Polish explorations of the Tell el-Farkha site was published (CHŁODNICKI *et al.* 2012). The project also allowed me to amend, update and publish my doctoral dissertation (written nearly 10 years earlier) on the interactions between Lower Egypt and the Southern Levant in the 4th millennium BC (MACZYŃSKA 2013). In its turn, this volume is the third book published as part of the project. I greatly hope that it will be useful for all researchers investigating the area in question. Last but not least, the project allowed me and my colleagues to participate in a number of important conferences, *e.g.* in New York, Cairo, Jerusalem, and Vienna, where we had an opportunity to present the project, its assumptions and results. Throughout the project I was assisted by two archeology students selected in competitions, namely: JACEK KARMOWSKI of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, and KONRAD ZIÓLKOWSKI of the University of Warsaw. In 2012 and 2013 they wrote their MA theses on project-related issues, and received grants from the Foundation. The results of JACEK KARMOWSKI's thesis are incorporated in this volume.

The project *The Nile Delta as a centre of cultural interactions between Upper Egypt and the Southern Levant in 4th millennium BC* was financed by the Foundation for Polish Science as part of the Parent Bridge Programme, addressed at young parents-researchers returning to research work after a parenting break. For many years the Foundation has supported the development of young Polish researchers. This time the Foundation chose to offer assistance to those who suspended their research career and studies and became parents. In many countries (including Poland) young parents-researchers must often choose between

research and family, and the choice is by no means easy. A growing family always involves changes and very often makes it difficult or downright impossible for young researcher mothers and fathers to return to work. The Parent Bridge Programme allows young parents-researchers to launch their own projects and thus return to the world of research. Furthermore, by financing the total cost of projects the Foundation gives researchers the comfort of financial and scientific independence.

In the area of *Bio, Info and Techno* disciplines, the Parent Bridge Programme is co-financed with European Union funds as part of the European Regional Development Fund (Innovative Economy Operational Programme). Projects outside the *Bio, Info, Techno* research area are financed with the Foundation's own funds. The last (seventh) call for proposals was launched in 2013. Thus far, a total of 86 *Bio, Info, Techno* projects and 10 projects from other disciplines received financing from the programme.

I personally believe that the idea of the Parent Bridge Programme fully worked for my project and my research career. Although fairly intensive, the last three years allowed me to develop immensely. The project became a kind of a springboard that gave me a kick start in my professional life after a break caused by giving birth to two children.

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The project would not have taken place without the assistance and scientific support of the two heads of the Polish Archaeological Expedition to the Eastern Nile Delta: MAREK CHŁODNICKI and KRZYSZTOF M. CIAŁOWICZ, as well as all team members from the years 2012-2104, including in particular two grant holders of the project: JACEK KARMOWSKI and KONRAD ZIÓLKOWSKI.

Similarly, the project would not have been possible without the support of the Archeological Museum in Poznań, where I normally work. I would like to acknowledge the support offered to me by professor MARZENA SZMYT, the Museum's Manager, as well as by the entire Accounting Department who took care of the formal dimension of the project, including in particular the challenging financial aspects.

Great thanks are also due to all members of the Conference (see list below) who agreed to come to Poznań, present their research, participate in discussions and send in their papers for publication.

One person whom I would like to particularly thank is EDWIN C.M. VAN DEN BRINK, who wrote the introductory remarks to this publication despite an injury to his right hand (not to mention his professional duties). EDWIN C.M. VAN DEN BRINK is the editor of two important publications concerning the Delta: *The Archaeology of the Nile Delta. Problems and Priorities* (Amsterdam 1988) and *The Nile Delta in Transition: 4th–3rd Millennium B.C.* (Tel Aviv 1992). Although he is not currently involved in archeological studies in Egypt, I find his comments on changes taking place in this region's archeology to be highly valuable. No book written after 1992 concentrated on the Delta area alone. Thanks to the papers featured in this publication, it may become a rich source of information about the region, just like the two books indicated above.

All of my efforts over the last 3 years would not have been possible without the financial support of the Foundation for Polish Science, whose approach to professional careers of young researchers is remarkable.

Finally, I would like to thank my family: my husband DOMINIK, and my two children: my son TYMOTEUSZ and my daughter JOWITA. Although the arrival of my children caused quite a revolution in my life and slowed down my research activity, it is thanks to them that I had an opportunity to carry out this project. All of you together make my life and work meaningful.

AGNIESZKA MĄCZYŃSKA

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