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Considerations on the "Analytical Bibliography of the Prehistory and the Early Dynastic Period of Egypt and Northern Sudan"

A growing tendency towards independence from the egyptological world

The increasing success of the international symposia on the later prehistory of northeastern Africa, which are held every four years since 1980 at Dymaczewo near Poznań (Krzyżaniak & Kobusiewicz 1984, 1989; Krzyżaniak et al. 1993), is only one indication for the growing interest in this period of the human past. At the same time, a notable increase can be observed with regard to field activity at prehistoric, Predynastic and Early Dynastic sites in Egypt and Sudan. This is of course a fortunate development but, as a consequence, the number of publications dealing with this topic, increased strongly since the middle of the seventies. In the "Analytical Bibliography ..." (Hendrickx 1993¹), 416 entries were made for the five years from 1971 until 1975. This augmented to 918, more than the double, for the five years between 1986 and 1990. At the same time, the number of authors involved increased as well, since quite a large number of young scholars became interested in the matter. This implies that the number of publications is very likely to rise even more in the near future.

Another phenomenon is that more and more articles appear in new journals or are published in journals which are not always commonly known to people dealing with the prehistory of Egypt and Sudan. This is especially the case for a number of themes, for which a great interest exists in present day archaeology. One might mention, among others, lithic technology and social anthropology. For many years, articles on the prehistory and Early Dynastic period of Egypt were primarily published in egyptological journals. The tradition survives, the most important of these journals being the "Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte", the

¹ At the Poznań symposium, the author presented the database for this bibliography and asked for comments and additions. The publication having appeared since, publishing the paper presented became quite meaningless. Therefore, only a number of considerations regarding the importance of bibliographical work for the prehistory and Early Dynastic period of Egypt and Northern Sudan, as well as some clarifications on the "Analytical Bibliography ..." itself, are presented here.

"Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities" and especially the "Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Abteilung Kairo". These journals, however, restrict themselves mainly to the Late Predynastic and, especially, the Early Dynastic period. The Palaeolithic period is presently almost completely omitted from the egyptological literature. This evolution is of course in the first place due to the growing specialisation of scholars, the majority of them no longer being egyptologists interested in prehistory but prehistorians which happen to work in Egypt. Another important reason, however, is the appearance, mainly during the last ten years, of specialised journals, such as "Archéologie du Nil Moyen", "Archéo-Nil" or "Sahara". A particular problem is raised by journals dealing mainly with regions adjacent to the Nile valley, but also including, sometimes very important contributions on Egyptian and Sudanese prehistory. One might mention for the Near East "Eretz Israel", the "Journal of Near Eastern Studies", "Paléorient" and for African archaeology the "African Archaeological Review" and "Nyame Akuma". These journals tend to be absent from egyptological or pre-historical libraries.

There seems to be a tendency for egyptologists and prehistorians working in Egypt to get less and less frequently in touch with each other. For a number of countries, especially the United States of America, this is of course a result of the structure of the universities. The departments of prehistory and anthropology generally belong to the science faculties while egyptology mainly belongs to the faculty of humanities. As a result interdisciplinary contacts tend to become scarce. This is also illustrated by the organization of other symposia on the Prehistory and Early Dynastic period of Egypt than those at Poznan. For the last years one has to mention: "The Beginnings of Egyptian Civilization", London, British Museum, 27-28 July 1987; "The Nile Delta in Transition: 4th-3rd Millennium B.C.", Cairo, the Netherlands Institute of Archaeology and Arabic Studies, 21-24 October 1990 (van den Brink 1992); "The Rise of Complex Society and the Early State in Egypt", Boston University, 25 April 1991. On the other hand, the prehistoric section at the last session of the "International Congress of Egyptology", held at Torino, 1st-8th September 1991, attracted only a limited number of participants, most of them being egyptologists and none of them dealt with a subject reaching back before the 4th millennium.

Also with regard to the general public, the Egyptian prehistory and the Early Dynastic period have, on several occasions, been presented separately from the Dynastic period. However, nearly all of the large exhibitions concerning Egypt, of which so many were organised these last years, started chronologically with Predynastic objects. The first important exhibition which dealt only with the Prehistoric and Early Dynastic period was organised already in 1973 in Paris, under the title "L'Égypte avant les pyramides" (de Cenival 1973). In more recent years, the public could see "The First Egyptians", in Columbia and other U.S.A. locations, 1988-1990 (Hoffman et al. 1988) and "L'Égypte des millénaires obscurs", Marseille, 1990 (Marseille 1990).

Finally, the separated paths which egyptology and Egyptian prehistory tend to take are illustrated by the way field archaeology is organised. In the past, excavations on Predynastic and Early Dynastic sites were almost exclusively carried out by egyptologists. Even those scholars who only occupied themselves with Egyptian prehistory, generally worked within the framework of egyptological organizations. This was for instance the case for G. Caton-Thompson and E. W. Gardner, who first worked for the British School of Archaeology in Egypt and afterwards for the Royal Anthropological Institute, and K. S. Sandford and A. J. Arkell, working on behalf of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. In the more recent past for example, the activities of F. Wendorf (1968) and A. E. Marks (1970) in Nubia during the sixties, were part of the Nubia campaign organised by egyptologists. Even the work of a purely prehistoric expedition, such as the "Belgian Middle Egypt Prehistoric Project", dealing almost exclusively with the Palaeolithic period, only became possible after the participation of P. M. Vermeersch, its director, at the excavations at Elkab (Vermeersch 1978), directed by Belgian egyptologists. Presently, however, both the "Combined Prehistoric Expedition", directed by F. Wendorf (Kobusiewicz 1987) and the "Belgian Middle Egypt Prehistoric Project" are completely independent from the egyptological world. This is also the case for the very important "Besiedlungsgeschichte der Ost-Sahara" project (Kuper 1989). Publications concerning these projects appear largely outside the traditional egyptological literature.

Still, excavations at Predynastic and Early Dynastic sites often continue to be organised by egyptological organizations. This is for instance the case for the work of G. Dreyer at Umm el Qaab (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Abteilung Kairo), A. J. Mills at Dakhla Oasis (Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities and Royal Ontario Museum), B. Midant-Reynes at el-Adaima (Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale), D. Wildung and K. Kroeper at Minshat Abu Omar (Ost-delta Expedition) and L. Krzyzaniak at Kadero (Polish Center of Archaeology in Cairo and Archaeological Museum Poznan). And even those expeditions which are independent, such as the one to Hierakonpolis headed by the late M. Hofman, sometimes have strong connections with the egyptological world. Progress reports as well as final publications of these excavations are mainly appearing in egyptological journals and series.

"Language barrier", toponyms and editorial principles

As a result of this, it becomes more and more difficult for each scholar to keep his/her bibliographical references up to date and even to have a general view on the periods contiguous to the one(s) of his/her primary interest. This is reflected in some striking observations which can be made from recent literature.

A first observation is the fact that among prehistorians dealing with Egypt and Sudan, publications cited are mostly of Anglo-Saxon origin, which is far less the case for the egyptological literature where German (Wörterbuch der Ägyptologie; Lexikon der Ägyptologie) and French (publications of the Institut Français

d'Archéologie Orientale) are indispensable. This implies that the Palaeolithic period is mainly treated in English, while French and especially German still remain important for the Predynastic and even more for the Early Dynastic period. Besides the three languages mentioned, publications can occasionally be written in for other languages, for example Italian, Spanish, Dutch, Polish, Russian or Hebrew. This is the case mainly for articles which address themselves to a "national" audience. In most cases the same subject will also be treated by another article in an "international" language. However, some exceptions exist. The, at the time, very important book on Predynastic and Early Dynastic art by Asselberghs (1960), was written in Dutch, fortunately with an extensive English summary. More recently, a number of preliminary reports on Egyptian objects found in Early Bronze Age sites of southern Palestine, were published in Hebrew (cf. Brandl 1992).

The fact that the "language barrier" still exists can be illustrated by numerous publications. An obvious example is the essential work by W. Kaiser (1957, 1959-1964, 1985, 1990), which is written exclusively in German and which despite its importance, is not yet commonly acknowledged. Only a few years ago, a general book on the Egyptian prehistory and history up to the end of the Old Kingdom (Rice 1990) was written without a single reference to Kaiser's work. For the Palaeolithic period, publications in French may cause a problem. For instance the Elkabian, the only excavated Epipalaeolithic industry in Upper Egypt, was published in French, as a separate volume in a primarily egyptological series (Vermeersch 1978). It took about ten years before this basic publication became well known in literature.

A second observation concerns the lack of uniformity in terminology and spelling. No generally accepted terminology exists for the chronology and the material cultures of the Predynastic and Early Dynastic period. This has been stressed by several authors, most recently by B. Mortensen (1991: 11-18), and therefore, does not have to be repeated here. A similar situation can be found for the Palaeolithic, Epipalaeolithic and Early Neolithic periods. However, one has to admit that this is not merely a matter of agreement upon terminology, but also a question of interpreting the basic archaeological information. Far easier to solve is the inconsistency in the spelling of toponyms. This does not necessarily mean that Arab names should be transcribed in a similar way for different languages, but at least the variation in spelling of the same name within one language should be avoided, since this obviously will cause problems for consulting indexes etc.

A final observation can be made on a rather polemical problem. Although it is extremely delicate to judge the "quality" of a publication, certain responsibilities should be placed with the editors of journals, anthologies and series. It seems obvious that authors should be withdrawn from publishing the same article, be it in a slightly modified way, more than once. Still this happens, be it fortunately not often. One can also occasionally find publications lacking references and far more often with incomplete or erroneous references. As for the contents of publications, the more the literature increases, the more serious omissions and errors become

possible. On rare occasions one might wish the editors would have protected the author against him- or herself. Despite the fact that several examples could be given, the situation certainly is not dramatic. On the contrary, most of the publications keep up with the general standards of history writing.

The "Analytical Bibliography of the Prehistory and the Early Dynastic Period of Egypt and Northern Sudan".

All in all, it is obvious that the need for a bibliographical resource system made itself felt more and more during the last decade. Bibliographical work was already undertaken fifty years ago by C. Bachatly (1942), who, at that time, gathered about 500 titles. Far more important, however, is the work presented by K. Weeks (1985). This contains 2515 entries, which, contrarily to the title, also deal with northern Sudan and the Early Dynastic period. For some specific subjects, separate bibliographies have been published. This was the case for rock-art (Davis 1979) and the relations between Egypt and Palestine during the Late Predynastic and Early Dynastic Period (Brandl 1992).

The "Analytical Bibliography of the Prehistory and the Early Dynastic Period of Egypt and Northern Sudan" differs from the previous bibliographies by the fact that it is indexed. The 6000 entries include all kinds of publications, monographs and articles as well as small notices, with the notable exception of reviews. Dissertations and unpublished reports are also not included since they are not generally available. The absence of reviews may be regretted, but a large number of those published before 1985 can be found in Weeks (1985). On the other hand, one may question the inclusion of small notices. For example, those presented every year by Leclant and Clèrc in "Orientalia" on the recent excavations in Egypt and Sudan ("Fouilles et travaux en Egypte et au Soudan"), are included as separate entries for every site discussed by Clèrc and Leclant. Small notes, however, can be of great importance, since in more than one case they are the only reference ever published for certain excavations or accidental finds. Still, one has to admit that the way in which certain authors repeat preliminary excavation reports in slightly altered forms in several journals, does not add much to our knowledge. However, it would always remain arbitrary to decide which reference should be included and which should not. Therefore it is preferred to leave the appreciation, as much as possible, to the reader.

Nevertheless, some restrictions had to be made. Books which present a general view of, for instance, Egyptian history or art, are only included when the author deals more or less extensively with the Predynastic and Early Dynastic periods. It is obvious that the decision of withholding some works and rejecting others is arbitrary to some extent. Furthermore, it is impossible, and in most cases not of great interest, to include books and articles which are primarily dealing with the archaeology and history of regions other than Egypt, but which make some comparisons or references to Egyptian prehistory. Consequently, this kind of publi-

cations was left aside, with the exception of a number of important works relating mainly to the Near East.

Some explanation might be requested for the fact that the upper chronological limit was placed at the end of the 2nd Dynasty and not at the beginning of the 1st Dynasty. Since the dynastic culture evolved without interruption out of the Naqada culture, and since therefore also the material culture does not show any marked change, it can be very difficult, if not impossible, in a number of cases, to decide whether a certain find still belongs to the Late Predynastic or already to the Early Dynastic period. This is especially true since inscribed material from the 1st Dynasty is very scarce or completely absent at most sites. It was among others the uniformity of the material culture of the Late Predynastic and the Early Dynastic period which lead W. Kaiser to extend his relative chronology of the Naqada period into the 1st Dynasty (Kaiser 1990: Abb. 1). The difference between the 2nd and the 3rd. Dynasty, on the other hand, is easier to be made. Of course, there is no radical change in culture, but clear indications are given by the shift of the royal burial place from Abydos to Memphis and by a number of archaeological "guide types". Among these, the disappearance of the Wavy Handle jars and the appearance of Meidum-bowls and new types of bread moulds (Jacquet-Gordon 1981) are especially noteworthy.

The lower chronological limit was placed at the beginning of the Palaeolithic period. Reports and studies regarding the tertiary fauna and flora, for which the Fayum is an important source of information, fall beyond the scope since they represent a completely different branch of science.

From the geographical point of view, the bibliography deals with all sites situated within the present territory of Egypt. However, exception is made for the area of Gebel Uweinat, as far as rock art is concerned. This is because of the fact that the rock art of Gebel Uweinat has to be studied in relation to the Saharan rock art, which would mean the inclusion of another field of research, published mainly outside the journals and series frequently occurring in this bibliography. On the other hand, although outside Egypt, a number of sites in southern Palestine were integrated because of their great importance for the Early Dynastic period. For the Sudan, all sites are incorporated up to the latitude of Khartoum, with the exception of those situated on the Atbara. This is a somewhat arbitrary decision, which was mainly made for practical reasons, the problem being that there is no clear geographical or cultural borderline which might be used.

Two indexes are added to the "Analytical Bibliography ...", one on subjects and a site index. A third one, on chronology, had been planned but had to be abandoned, because assignments to a certain period, especially for the Palaeolithic period, are frequently subject to a change of interpretation (e.g. Vermeersch 1992). Also the lack of uniformity in terminology mentioned above proved to be a serious handicap. A particular problem is raised by the rock art. The determination of chronological periods for rock-art is still a highly debatable subject. It is often

impossible to determine the chronological position of rock-drawings, especially as different chronological periods seem to be represented at the majority of the sites.

The geographical index, which consists of over 500 sites, probably is the most interesting of the two indexes. For every site, references were gathered relating to both the excavations and objects originating from this place, as well as to discussions regarding the site itself or finds from it. But, in establishing the list of sites, a number of problems occurred. In the first place, it was not always possible to define the exact location of sites. This is especially the case for older excavation reports or small notes, which contain insufficient details. A well known example are the flint artifacts which were collected at the end of last century and during the first decades of this century by several persons near Helwan, in the Fayum, on the western bank at Luxor or in the oases. In more recent times, the opposite became a problem. Sites within a limited area receive different identifications, normally by numbering them. This is of course absolutely correct from the archaeological point of view, but in this way the sites can not be included into a geographic index, since this would make the index incoherent. Therefore, a number of sites had to be grouped according to villages in the neighbourhood of which they are situated. Thus, the numerous sites discovered in Nubia during the Nubia Campaign were grouped according to the administrative sections existing before the flooding of Nubia.

The oases cause a problem of their own. The older publications only rarely specify the location of a site within an oasis. This is of course especially problematic for large oases such as Dakhla or Kharga. Even if a more detailed location is given, there is a strong tendency towards naming only the oasis itself when finds or facts are discussed in more recent publications. If the different sites within one oasis should be taken into account, the redaction of the geographical index would have become far more laborious than it already was. Therefore, no difference is made between the sites occurring in one oasis, not even for the Fayum.

Besides the geographical index, a thematic index was made. This kind of index will of course always be incomplete and reflects the personal interests of the one who defined the subjects included. It is almost impossible to deal with subjects of general historical, economical or social interest such as agriculture, demography or social stratification. Therefore, it was decided to include only those subjects which can be defined in a very restricted sense. This is of course the case for classes of archaeological objects such as decorated pottery, stone vessels, ivories or decorated palettes and maces. However, excavation reports and catalogues of museums and exhibitions were not used for the indexes of objects since such publications tend to include all or most of the categories of objects. Other subjects which proved to be appropriate for thematical indexation are for instance archaeozoology, archaeobotany, physical anthropology, rock-art and architecture.

The main problem of bibliographical publications is of course the fact that they are already outdated at the moment of their appearance. Regular additions and yearly information regarding newly appearing titles are therefore indispensable. As

far as the prehistory and Early Dynastic period of Egypt and Northern Sudan are concerned, they are included in several bibliographical lists. The most important series of references are to be found in "The Annual Egyptological Bibliography" and the "Preliminary Egyptological Bibliography", "le Bulletin signalétique" sections "Préhistoire et Protohistoire" and "Art et archéologie, Proche-Orient, Asie, Amérique" and the yearly appearing "Bibliographie annuelle générale" in "Paléorient". However, none of these will or can claim to be exhaustive.

Since it was anyhow the intention to continue the database serving for the "Analytical Bibliography ...", an agreement was made with "Archéo-Nil". The redaction of this journal accepted to publish every year an additional list of references. In order to make this possible, authors are requested to send their publication lists, off-prints and additions to the "Analytical Bibliography ..." to the following address:

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All off-prints send will be kept in the library of the Egyptian Department of the "Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire" at Brussels.

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