

LECH KRZYŻANIAK (1940–2004)

The eminent archaeologist and world-class scholar Professor Lech Krzyżaniak died on 10 July 2004. Renowned for his research into the archaeology of Central Europe and North-East Africa, he was a member of numerous international archaeological organizations, instigator of various wide-reaching research initiatives, and a distinguished museologist and university lecturer. From the outset of his career he was closely associated with Poznań Archaeological Museum, which he became Director of in 1982.

Although his initial research interests lay in the Bronze Age and Iron Age cultures of Central Europe, from the moment of his first visit to Egypt in 1965 his passion became the study of the earliest civilizations of the Nile Valley.

Professor Lech Krzyżaniak was an excellent organizer, who loved working in the field and was very adept at directing Egyptian and Sudanese workforces. He devoted many years of his professional life to the excavations at Minshat Abu Omar, where, from 1978, as field director, he led the Munich East Delta Expedition. Whilst carrying out research into rock art in 1981 he headed an expedition to Tassili-n-Ajjer in Algeria. His greatest discoveries were, however, made in the Dakhleh Oasis in Egypt, where he conducted a programme of excavation from 1986 onwards.

His first steps in the Sudan were taken at Old Dongola, where in 1966 he joined a team excavating the capital of Nobadia and Makuria. Whilst involved in this project, spurred on by his interest in prehistory, he also embarked upon an archaeological reconnaissance of the surrounding desert resulting in the first ever report on the Stone Age of this region. Among his other pioneering missions was a reconnaissance of the Blue Nile in 1985.

His greatest achievement came, however, with the work he carried out at the Neolithic settlement and cemetery in Kadero. Over thirty years of excavations at this site brought to light a wealth of invaluable information about the early agrarian societies of North-East Africa. The Sudan was undoubtedly his greatest research passion, and one which he managed to infuse many of his friends and students with.



He supported numerous initiatives and promoted archaeological work in the Sudan, being the „godfather“ of the Gdansk Archaeological Museum Expedition to Sudan and the expedition of Berlin’s Egyptian Museum to Nagaa, which he was an active participant of.

In December 2003 he involved the Polish Centre for Mediterranean Archaeology of Warsaw University in Cairo in the Fourth Nile Cataract archaeological rescue programme. In recognition

of his contributions to the study of Sudan’s archaeology he was awarded the Order of the Two Niles.

Professor Lech Krzyżaniak was author of several books and over 200 academic articles of major significance in furthering our understanding of the late prehistory of Egypt and the Sudan. He was Chairman of the Research Council of Warsaw University’s Centre for Mediterranean Archaeology, Chairman of Commission No. 24 of the International Union of Pre- and Protohistoric Sciences (UISPP), and expert and member of the UNESCO Executive Committee for Egyptian Museums, the Polish National Committee of ICOM, the International Society for Nubian Studies, and the International Association of Egyptologists.

As long-serving director of Poznań Archaeological Museum he radically transformed its image, creating an institution which enjoys a conducive atmosphere for research work and is furnished with attrac-



tive public displays. Thanks to his many years' collaboration with the Staatliche Sammlungen Aegyptische Kunst in Munich and the Egyptian Museum in Berlin Poznan is home to the exhibition „Death and Life in Ancient Egypt“, comprising items on deposit from German museums. His involvement in saving the Sudan's cultural heritage led to Poznań's Archaeological Museum being granted in deposit from the National Museum in Khartoum a valuable collection of artefacts, forming the highlight of the „The Archaeology of the Sudan“ exhibition.

When Professor Lech Krzyżaniak began his career in Poznan as a researcher into the prehistory of the Nile Valley he was a lone pioneer. His resolute efforts and infectious enthusiasm, have ensured that he leaves behind him a host of students eager to take carry on where he left off. It is thanks to him that Poznań is now a world-ranking centre for studies into the prehistory of North-East Africa and since 1980 has regularly played host to the symposium devoted to the archaeology of North-East Africa.

MAREK CHŁODNICKI, POZNAŃ, 2004

