

| The Collection of Ancient and East Christian Art and Archaeological Excavations of the National Museum in Warsaw

Antiquities excavated by Polish archaeologists are an important component of the Collection of Ancient and East Christian Art of the National Museum in Warsaw. The first group of some 3,000 objects came from the Franco-Polish excavations at Edfu (1937–39) before the Second World War. Some twenty years later, the collection was augmented by relics from digs conducted in 1956–58 at Myrmekion in the Crimea, today's Kerch.

Professor Kazimierz Michałowski, the creator of the pre-war Ancient Art Gallery and for many years after the war the deputy to the museum's director, Stanisław Lorentz, played a key role in the museum's archaeological activities. Thanks to him, the museum conducted its own excavations in Tell Atrib in Egypt (1957–58) and Palmyra in Syria (1959). In 1959 Michałowski created the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology under the aegis of the University of Warsaw, and organized subsequent expeditions within this partnership. The two institutions have continued to cooperate closely, and employees of the National Museum in Warsaw still take part in missions organized by the University of Warsaw. These excavations have enriched the museum with about 8,000 objects from Cyprus, Sudan, Egypt and Syria. The most valuable of them are murals from the cathedral in Faras.

Currently, the National Museum in Warsaw specialists are directing the mission in the temple of Tuthmosis III at Deir el-Bahari and in the Coptic hermitage at Gurna in Egypt and taking part in University of Warsaw digs in Egypt and Kuwait. Since 2008 our museum has also conducted its independent excavations in Tyritake (Kerch). Their outcomes are regularly published in professional archaeological literature.

Project “Tuthmosis”

November 2008 began a new era in the modern history of the temple of Tuthmosis III at Deir el-Bahari: after a twenty-year break, the archaeological mission charged with studying the remains of the temple was reactivated.¹ In 2010 the project on “Restoring the iconographic programme and architectural shape of the temple of Tuthmosis III at Deir el-Bahari” obtained funding from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and later, following the reform of the system of learning, from the National Science Centre.

¹ Reports of the mission's activities have been published in *Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie* and *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* reports published by the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of the University of Warsaw and in archaeological chronicles in *Orientalia* (Pontificium institutum biblicum, Rome).

The temple's recent history can be summarized as follows:

1962 – discovery of the temple. When the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology was entrusted with the reconstruction of the temple of Queen Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari, Professor Michałowski ordered the removal of a mound located to the south of the temple. No one, including the professor, expected that under the piles of rubble, between two already identified temples, Mentuhotep's and Hatshepsut's, there would be room for another, which loomed over them, the temple of Hatshepsut's stepson and successor, Tuthmosis III (1479–25 BC) (**fig. 1**).

1962–67 – excavations. Over the course of six seasons, several hundred workers supervised by Polish architects and archaeologists (including Professor Jadwiga Lipińska) removed rubble and sand, revealing details of the floor, tambours of columns, lower parts of walls and thousands of pieces of polychrome limestone and sandstone reliefs, which had once decorated the temple's walls, door frames and architraves. There were also many sculptures, stelae, votive objects and other items used in the temple throughout its existence. Parts of the temple – some 5,000 larger fragments and blocks, as well as tens of thousands of small pieces – were transported to a specially built storeroom nearby (**fig. 2**).

1976–77 – work in Poland. Two Master's theses based on scaled photographs of the reliefs were written under Professor Lipińska's mentorship.

1978–96 – Tuthmosis III mission and, from 1983, the Polish-Egyptian Archaeological Conservation Mission at the Temple of Tuthmosis III at Deir el-Bahari. In the autumn of 1978, Professor Lipińska created a separate archaeological mission, initially made up of her students and later expanded to include artists, architects and conservators. After the painstaking and lengthy work of sorting the stone material, the team was able to create a theoretical reconstruction of the temple. The first step was to recreate as many fragments of the scenes that had decorated the temple as possible; it then became clear that it would be possible also to reconstruct sequences of scenes and decoration of entire walls. Determining where the restored scenes and walls had been located became the next challenge. Over seventeen seasons, the team finished reconstructing the decorations in most of the rooms, even though some material remains unattributed. Reconstruction and conservation were conducted simultaneously with the fundamental goal to protect the antique matter and to make the temple plan legible. The team knew from the start that the degree and state of the temple's preservation would make it impossible to reconstruct the whole building. Instead, it set the goal of reconstructing one exemplary wall with the most fully preserved decoration made up of about thirty blocks (which had been rebuilt out of hundreds of smaller pieces), with polychrome reliefs on both sides. We also wanted to place the most important architectural elements, particularly the granite portal and parts of the columns, on the reconstructed floor, in situ. This goal had been partly realized by 1996, when the mission's activities were suspended.²

And, finally, the current phase began in 2008. In that year, we successfully resumed the work of the Tuthmosis mission to operate, again, with the support of the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of the University of Warsaw, on the basis of the cooperation agreement between the University of Warsaw and the National Museum in Warsaw. Working

² A bibliography of works about the temple (up to 2008) can be found in Monika Dolińska, "Temple of Tuthmosis III at Deir el-Bahari after 30 years of research," in *8. Ägyptologische Tempeltagung: Interconnections between Temples*. Warschau, 22.–25. September 2008, hrsg. von / edited by Monika Dolińska and Horst Beinlich (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), pp. 57–66. *Königtum, Staat und Gesellschaft früher Hochkulturen*, 3.3.

at the mission are Egyptologists, conservators, architects, a photographer, a graphic artist and an archaeology student. So far, the team has completed five seasons of work.³

The mission's unchanging main goal is to give the temple of Tuthmosis back to the world. This can be achieved in a variety of ways. A reconstruction in the original location is, again, out of the question. But it is possible to present the most interesting, valuable and impressive pieces in the museum that we hope will be built near Deir el-Bahari. There, a reconstructed temple wall could be put on show, together with a series of royal portraits (**fig. 3**), fragments of a religious procession with exceptionally surviving painted details, piles of offerings in fairy-tale colours and many other elements of polychrome, sculpted decorations. To attain this goal, the items planned for the exhibition must be conserved (the polychrome reliefs must be cleaned and desalted, hardened, the fragments glued and the connections between them possibly reinforced). The polychromes, which survived thanks to exceptional conditions (being cut off from light and air under rock rubble), are exceptionally valuable and delicate, and therefore require especially tender conservation.

The way to open the temple to the world, and not only to the scholarly world, lies through publications, which should include photographs and drawings of the reliefs, copies and translations of hieroglyphic texts, as well as a scholarly interpretation of the iconographic programme, architectural analyses and studies about the history of the construction and the temple's functions. Research on these aspects has been under way for many years and has yielded a detailed reconstruction of its layout, with functions assigned to most rooms and scenes to specific walls. Our knowledge about the temple has grown with every season, and we have been solving new riddles about the sequences of scenes, assigning them to particular rituals, and placing such key elements as lintels and door jambs, all of which allows us to reconstruct the temple more and more fully (**fig. 4**). New scaled drawings of the walls are created, older ones are successfully redrawn in graphic programmes. Fragments of the decoration are photographed, and selected scenes are assembled from these photographs. A book about the temple, by Monika Dolińska and Janina Wiercińska, is being planned as a multi-volume publication. The temple will also be presented in other forms, such as 3-D models, also on the Internet. We have already created the first model, a purely architectural one, on the basis of the latest research, with greater precision and corrections of earlier plans. The next model, which also incorporates the wall decorations, is currently being made. Plans include creating a website devoted to the temple and the outcomes of the mission's activities.

There is no end to the theoretical work on reconstructing the temple of Tuthmosis: some decorated fragments will always evade placement. But as soon as the precious findings are preserved and publicized, and the book about the temple appears, we will be able to declare the completion of project "Tuthmosis."

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³ 8.11–13.12.2008: Monika Dolińska (mission director), Janina Wiercińska (Egyptologist), Zbigniew Doliński (photographer), Marek Puzzkarski (graphic artist), Zbigniew Godziejewski (conservator); 8.11–15.12.2009: Monika Dolińska, Janina Wiercińska, Zbigniew Doliński, Marek Puzzkarski, Zbigniew Godziejewski, Joanna Lis (conservator); 11.11–9.12.2010: Monika Dolińska, Janina Wiercińska, Piotr Czerkwiński (Egyptologist), Zbigniew Doliński, Marek Puzzkarski; 1.11–13.12.2011: Monika Dolińska, Janina Wiercińska, Piotr Czerkwiński, Zbigniew Doliński, Joanna Lis, Andrzej Karolczak (conservator), Mariusz Caban, Szymon Caban (architects), Filip Taterka (student of archeology); 28.10–12.12.2012: Monika Dolińska, Janina Wiercińska, Piotr Czerkwiński, Zbigniew Doliński, Marek Puzzkarski, Mariusz Caban, Filip Taterka. The last three seasons were funded by the National Science Centre.

Archaeological Exploration in the Coptic Hermitage at Gurna (Egypt). The Research Programme, the Particulars of the Research and Initial Findings

During several archaeological trips to Western Thebes (today's village of Gurna, a part of Luxor) in 1982–85 and 2000–2001, I became interested in a tomb dating to the Middle Kingdom, which was marked on a map published by Herbert Winlock with the number XI (tomb no. 1152).⁴ I was attracted to several of its features: a unique construction (the so-called tower) in front of the tomb and remains of dried brick walls that could be seen under the rock debris, numerous fragments of late utilitarian pottery scattered before it and the leftovers of modest tri-colour Coptic wall paintings inside. Compared to other tombs and temples in Thebes, the damage done to it by antiquity hunters and visitors was minimal.

In 2001, the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of the University of Warsaw requested permission to excavate in this location. The first two work seasons (2003–2004) and an initial analysis of the ceramic materials revealed that the hermitage, which had most likely been built in the sixth century within tomb no. 1152, had been abandoned at the turn of the eighth and ninth centuries. It became clear that the work plan should also encompass the large area in front of the hermitage. Removal of the upper parts of the heap revealed a widespread rubbish dump with used-up objects from the monks' household mixed with rock rubble, organic remains, scraps of textiles and weavers' half-finished products.

Archaeological work in this area began in 2004. The excavated objects (including also pottery, ostraca and limestone chips, yarn, pigments and scraps of leather) gave us a picture of the monks' daily life, what they ate, what jobs they performed, what tools they used and how they communicated among themselves. It quickly became evident that the exploration could not be confined to the functional strata, stratigraphic interpretations and found objects.⁵ A research programme was needed for future seasons that would go beyond routine archaeological work. To study a place that over the centuries had first been used as a grave, then inhabited (the hermitage) and then visited ("tourists" and robbers), it was imperative to enlist the services of an Egyptologist, a papyrologist, a conservator and other specialists who could take turns joining in the work of the mission.⁶

It took six seasons to clear the monastic complex thoroughly, and the work was completed in 2008. The team isolated at least two periods when the complex was used by several groups of eremites. The last time that the hermitage was furnished was probably in the middle of the seventh century. It was then that the two-storey adobe "tower"⁷ was constructed on one side

⁴ Herbert E. Winlock, Walter E. Crum, *The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes. Part I* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, [s.n.], 1926), map on plate I. This publication continues to be used as the definitive study of Theban monasticism.

⁵ Tomasz Górecki, "Sheikh Abd el-Gurna. Coptic Hermitage. First Interim Report," *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean*, 15 (2004), pp. 173–9; id., "Sheikh Abd el-Gurna. Hermitage in Tomb 1152. Second Season of Excavations, 2004," *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean*, 16 (2005), pp. 239–43.

⁶ Apart from routine archaeological and Egyptological research, supplementary studies were conducted in geology, archaeology, papyrology, ceramology, numismatics, anthropology, archaeozoology, paleobotany, dendrology, studies of weaving and plaiting and geophysics. Wall paintings, papyri, metals and leather were conserved. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Janina Wiercińska and Monika Dolińska, my colleagues at the National Museum in Warsaw, for their indispensable advice, Ewa Parandowska for her conservation of the paintings and Zbigniew Doliński for his photographic documentation of many of the artefacts.

⁷ Górecki, "Sheikh Abd el-Gurna. Coptic Hermitage...", op. cit., fig. 4 (view before excavation); id., "Sheikh Abd el-Gurna," in *Seventy Years of Polish Archaeology in Egypt*, Ewa Laskowska-Kusztal, ed. (Warsaw: Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, Warsaw University, 2007), p. 189, fig. (view from the north-east).

of the rock courtyard. A door led inside on the ground floor, and the second-storey room was reached by ladder through an opening in the western wall.

The space in front of the entrance to the monastery and immediately inside it served as a reception area. Outside, on its south side, stood a large, low stone-and-brick bench. Immediately inside the entrance, along the left wall of the corridor, was a second, longer bench: a hermit could meet with his visitors here.⁸ The walls of the corridor were partly covered with a “plaster” made of clay mixed with rock dust and a layer of whitewash that served as ground for paintings, mostly squares, circles and crosses (one of them in the *aedicula*). Across from the bench, on a subsequent layer, was painted an equestrian saint in the type of the *martyr victor*, holding high in his right hand a *crux gemmata*. The floor in the reception had been made out of bricks laid in a herringbone pattern, and further inside out of irregular-size stones.

The mission’s greatest achievement was its discovery in the southern, peripheral part of the rubbish heap, below the monastery courtyard, of three Coptic manuscripts.⁹ They were buried almost directly on the rock, on top of a thin layer of rock debris mixed with ash and some broken pottery (fig. 5).¹⁰ After they were uncovered, it turned out that two of them were leather-bound papyrus books. The third was a set of parchment sheets inserted between two small boards forming the binding.

The first manuscript was identified as the so-called *Canons of Pseudo-Basil*.¹¹ It is a set of 107 rules (canons) from the sixth century regulating aspects of church life. Significantly, it is the only surviving complete copy (148 pages) of such a canons in the Coptic language; until now scholars had only known about one in the Arabic version, probably from the fourteenth century.¹² Its leather binding (31 × 23 cm) is decorated with square fields of a geometrized plaiting incised in leather, inside of which are four different patterns of stamp imprints made on slightly wet leather.

The second manuscript was also bound in leather (32.5 × 24 cm), and only its front cover survives with a painted red and black decoration of a rosette enclosed in plaiting. It is about one hundred pages long and includes “A laudation of Saint Pisenthios,” bishop of the city of

⁸ See Ewa Wipszycka, “Socjologiczna lektura planów eremów egipskich mnichów z V–VII w.” (with English summary: “Sociological reading of the plans of Egyptian monks’ hermitages from 5th–7th centuries”), in *Non solum villae. Księga jubileuszowa ofiarowana profesorowi Stanisławowi Medekszy*, Jacek Kościuk, ed. (Wrocław: Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Wrocławskiej, 2010), pp. 323–6.

⁹ Tomasz Górecki, “Sheikh Abd el-Gurna (Hermitage in Tomb 1152). Preliminary Report, 2005,” *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean*, 17 (2007), pp. 263–72; id., “Sheikh Abd el-Gurna,” in *Seventy Years....*, op. cit., pp. 183–90; id., “Sheikh Abd el-Gurna,” in *Seventy Years of Polish Archaeology in Egypt. Catalogue of the Exhibition. Egyptian Museum in Cairo, 21 October – 21 November*, Aleksandra Majewska, ed., exh. cat., Egyptian Museum in Cairo, 21 October – 21 November (Warsaw: Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, Warsaw University, 2007), pp. 176–81.

¹⁰ The first work to secure objects in Luxor was done by Izabela Mazur and Janina Wielowieyska of the National Library in Warsaw, later by Daria Kordowska and Anna Thommee of PPKZ S.A. (Books, Prints and Archives Conservation in Toruń); see Daria Kordowska, “Conservation work on three Coptic manuscripts from Sheikh Abd el-Gurna,” *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean*, 18 (2008), pp. 311–6; Anna Thommee, “Koptyjskie manuskrypty z Gurna (Egipt). Historia znaleziska i metody konserwacji” (with English summary: “Coptic Manuscripts from Gurna (Egypt). The History of Discovery and Conservation Methods”), in *Studia o sztuce Bliskiego i Środkowego Wschodu*, Jerzy Malinowski, ed. (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Trio, 2009), pp. 34–42.

¹¹ Prof. Alberto Camplani is preparing this manuscript for publication. For the story of the identification of both papyrus coda made almost immediately after their discovery, see Górecki, “Sheikh Abd el-Gurna (Hermitage in Tomb 1152)...,” op. cit., p. 272, n. 4 and 5.

¹² Wilhelm Riedel, *Kirchenrechtsquellen des Patriarchats Alexandrien* (Leipzig: A. Deichert’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung Nachf. [Georg Böhme], 1900).

Keft (Koptos) who lived in 568–632 (fig. 6).¹³ It is probably the full text of his life, known also from other copies written in the seventh–eleventh centuries; the conservation of the last part of this manuscript has not yet been finished.¹⁴

The third find contains a few dozen parchment sheets inserted between two boards that serve as its cover (23 × 18 × 1 cm). Written on the sheets in Coptic is a section, about 20 per cent, of the Old Testament Book of Isaiah and the first verse of the Book of Jeremiah.¹⁵ Initials and floral ornaments embellish its margins (fig. 7). A few of the sheets are written in a different hand; they may have been in the original book, and after the original text was washed off (palimpsest) they were used to write the martyrdom of Saint Peter (*Martyrium Petri*) from an apocryph known as *Acta Petri* (The Acts of Peter).

Also found in the dig were 337 ostraca.¹⁶ They are shards of pottery and limestone chips, the latter characteristic of the area around Thebes, used to record prayers, contracts, accounts, and, primarily, letters with requests or orders. Except for a handful in Greek, the majority are written in the Coptic language. We have succeeded at dividing them into basic groups: the largest are letters, then official documents, accounts, religious texts (prayers and biblical texts) and exercises in forming letters.

There is no room here to discuss all the aspects of these discoveries exhaustively or to present examples of the different groups of found objects. I must stress, however, that the vessels used in the monastery (there were about 7,000 of them) have given us priceless information about its chronology and are an important source of knowledge about the everyday life of the hermits. Laborious work has resulted in pasting together hundreds of pots, including tableware and storage vessels, water bottles, cups, cooking pots and transport amphorae. The Late Roman pottery is an exceptionally valuable group that will no doubt allow us to establish a more precise chronology of the hermitage's use.

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Polish Excavations in Tell Arbid (Syria) in 1996–2012

The rescue excavations conducted by the University of Warsaw Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology near the city of al-Hassake in the southern part of the Khabur River basin, which were completed in 1995, confirms the enormous research potential of northern Mesopotamia.¹⁷ In 1996, in view of the huge role played by the area of the Syrian Jezirah in

¹³ The page with the introduction to his life was translated by Wincenty Myszor, "Enkomion of St. Pisenthios from Sheikh Abd el-Gurna," *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean*, 17 (2007), pp. 273–4.

¹⁴ Caspar Detlef Gustav Müller, Gawdat Gabra, "Pisentius, Saint," in *Coptic Encyclopedia*, Aziz S. Atiya, ed., vol. 6 (New York: Macmillan, 1991), pp. 1978–80; Renate Dekker, "Encomium on Pesynthios of Coptos: The Recently Discovered Sahidic Version from Shaykh Abd al-Qurna," in *Christianity and Monasticism in Upper Egypt*, vol. 2: *Nag Hammadi – Esna*, Gawdat Gabra, Hany N. Takla, eds (Cairo–New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2010), pp. 21–31; ead., "The Sahidic Encomium of Pesunthios, Bishop of Keft: Towards a New Understanding, Based on a Recently Discovered Manuscript" (Ph.D. thesis, Leiden University, 2008).

¹⁵ Prof. Tito Orlandi from Rome identified all the parchment texts.

¹⁶ Anne Boud'hors of the CNRS in Paris is preparing a publication about the whole set of ostraca. See also Iwona Antoniuk, "New Ostraca from Thebes," in *Christianity and Monasticism...*, op. cit., pp. 1–6; for an overview of related issues, see ead., "Preliminary Remarks on the Coptic Ostraca from Seasons 2003 and 2004," *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean*, 16 (2005), pp. 244–7.

¹⁷ Research at three archaeological sites in Tell Abu Hafur, Tell Jassa el-Gharbi and Rad Shakra was conducted in 1987–95 under the direction of Prof. Piotr Bieliński of the Institute of Archaeology of the University

the development of the civilization of northern Mesopotamia, the Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology launched a research project about the settlement of this region in the third millennium BC. The joint Syrian-Polish exploration (represented from the Syrian side by the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums of the Syrian Arab Republic) in Tell Arbid, in the central part of the Upper Khabur River basin is the core of this project.¹⁸

Tell Arbid covers an area of 38 ha, comprised of the main tell with an approximately 20-metres-high “citadel” and a “lower city,” and three small satellite tells about 60 metres to the west. Settlement in this area, of various degrees of intensity and with interruptions, dates back with its beginnings to the period of the Halaf culture, and lasted until the end of rule of the Seleucid Empire in this region.

A settlement dated to the Halaf period was located about 200 metres to the east of Tell Arbid,¹⁹ but there are reasons to believe that other settlement from this period may lie under the tell itself. In the first half of the third millennium BC, there was a city here that included both the main and the satellite tells. The earlier phase of its development covers the period of Nineveh 5 pottery (according to local chronology, Early Jezirah II, c. 2800–2600 BC) and the later, so-called early dynastic period III (Early Jezirah III, c. 2600–2450 BC).²⁰ Monumental buildings used for administration and as temples were placed on the centrally located “citadel.” The so-called Public Building stood on its north-eastern slope; it was erected in a later phase of settlement but repeated the layout of an older building, up to two metres of whose walls were preserved.

The archaeologists unearthed large areas of tightly built residential quarters made up of multi-room houses with central courtyards within the “lower city” in the north-western (sector D) and eastern (sector C) parts of the tell. Kitchen installations and pottery vessels used for conserving, preparing and consuming food survived in many rooms (**fig. 8**). The narrow streets meandering between the houses formed a unique accumulation of trash, made up of ashes, many pottery shards and animal bones. Entrances to the houses were located in side alleys, which branched off the main thoroughfares.

The religious-ceremonial complex of the Nineveh 5 period excavated on the southern slope of the tell (**fig. 9**) was an exceptional and important discovery. Its main building is the so-called Southern Temple (with an altar, hearth and censer), and preserved walls up to two metres high, plastered in white on the inside, survive. The temple went through several phases of use and was erected on the walls of an older building with a similar plan. An artificially shaped slope with several steps attached to the temple’s south-facing front, exposed the building from the entrance side. This is the first example found so far of this kind of architectural solution in northern Mesopotamia in the early third millennium BC. Dwellings, storerooms and ovens unrelated to the ceremonial complex were attached to the northern side of the temple. The complex included the smaller and somewhat later North-West Temple exposed on the west

of Warsaw. There were well-preserved remains from the early Bronze Age, according to local chronology Early Jezirah III (2600–2350 BC). In the late 1990s, 100 objects, mostly pottery, from these sites were added to the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw. Andrzej Reiche, “Polish Archaeological Research in North-Eastern Syria,” *Bulletin du Musée National de Varsovie*, XLII, n° 1–4, (2001) pp. 95–106.

¹⁸ Prof. Piotr Bieliński, head of the mission, has since 1997 been publishing preliminary reports from the successive excavation campaigns in the annual reports of the Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of the University of Warsaw, *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean*.

¹⁹ It was found in 2001 by Jerzy Wierzbicki, and since 2005 has been explored by a Czech archaeological team from Masaryk University in Brno led by Dr Inna Mateiciuciova.

²⁰ On the archaeology of Jezirah in the third millennium BC, see Dorota Ławecka, *Północna Mezopotamia w czasach Sumerów* (Warsaw: Agade, 2006).

side, as well as an L-shaped ceremonial courtyard surrounded by a wall that touched the Southern Temple at its north-western corner.

The second half of the third millennium BC saw a restriction of settlement, as fragments of buildings dated to the Post-Accadian period (Early Jezirah V, c. 2150–2000 BC) were uncovered only on the “citadel” and the eastern slope. A few richly equipped tombs also date from this era.²¹

Settlement flourished again in the Old Assyrian state (Old Jezirah II, c. 1900–1800 BC), with the material characteristic of the appearance of so-called Khabur ware, which is decorated with geometrical motifs painted with red slip. In this period, small, isolated groupings of residential buildings appeared in different places in the “lower city,” as well as on the “citadel,” where the accumulation of layers dated to the first half of the second millennium BC was about 2.7 metres thick. The houses were accompanied by chamber tombs built of dried brick (over 30 of them were uncovered). The dead were accompanied by gifts, mostly sets of pottery (fig. 10).²²

In the Mittani period (Middle Jezirah I B, c. 1400/1350–1270 BC), settlement was limited to two areas. On a satellite tell (sector A) a large family household was built, and the peak of the main tell was used for both living and burials. Two chamber tombs of dried brick, containing richly endowed women’s graves, were excavated there.²³ Both contained gifts that included over a dozen clay vessels, food and jewellery,²⁴ evidence that the women buried in them came from elite families.

After a nearly seven-century long break in settlement, people settled on this site again in the New Babylonian period (seventh–sixth centuries BC), primarily in the area of the satellite tell (sector A), where a large residence has been uncovered.²⁵

The last time that people occupied this site was during the Seleucid Empire (late fourth – mid-second century BC). A multi-phase village settlement developed on a satellite tell (sector A), and a cemetery for the villagers was located at the north-western slope of the “lower city.” Because of destruction by contemporary pits, the remnants of Hellenistic buildings are very fragmentary. Many pieces of local table pottery typical of the entire Hellenistic world, different from household ceramics whose forms and technology continued the local ceramic tradition, were found.

In the course of excavating the settlement’s remains, leftovers of the material culture characteristic of different periods were found. In all the periods, fragments of various pottery vessels were the most numerous. In the layers from the third millennium BC, the archaeologists found several cylinder seals and clusters of clay bullae with seal imprints used to seal storeroom doors or containers holding wares. Bronze pins used to close clothing were another group of objects characteristic of the third and early second millennia BC. The second largest group of

²¹ The tombs were uncovered in the so-called sector P, explored in 2008–10 by a mission from the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań led by Prof. Rafał Koliński.

²² Zuzanna Wygnańska, “Burial customs at Tell Arbid (Syria) in the Middle Bronze Age. Cultural interrelations with the Nile Delta and the Levant,” *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean*, 20 (2011), pp. 605–18.

²³ Andrzej Reiche, “Tell Abu Hafur ‘East’, Tell Arbid (Northeastern Syria), and Nemrik (Iraq) as examples of small-scale rural settlements in Upper Mesopotamia in the Mittani Period,” in *The Archaeology of Political Spaces. The Upper Mesopotamian Piedmont in the Second Millenium BCE*, Dominik Bonatz, ed. (Berlin–Boston, Mass: DeGruyter 2014), pp. 43–59.

²⁴ Anna Smogorzewska, “Mittani Grave at Tell Arbid,” *Damaszener Mitteilungen*, 15 (2006), pp. 63–93.

²⁵ Rafał Koliński, Andrzej Reiche, “After the Fall of Assyria,” in *Fundstellen. Gesammelte Schriften zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altvorderasiens ad honorem Hartmut Kühne*, Dominik Bonatz, Rainer M. Czichon, Florian Janosha Kreppner, eds (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008), pp. 51–9.

artefacts across all the periods were animal figurines made of clay, representing mostly sheep, and in the first half of the second century BC also horses. Human figurines were much more rare and usually very schematic. The strata from the third millennium BC frequently contained terracotta models of chariots and carts.²⁶ A set of unbaked clay toys, mostly miniature tables and tabourets found in the ruins of a Khabur-period house, were an exceptional find, which offered us an idea of furniture from that period.

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The Polish Archaeological Mission “Tyritake” of the National Museum in Warsaw. Five Years of Study

An agreement signed on 20 December 2007 between the National Museum in Warsaw and the Kerch Republican Historical-Cultural Museum in Ukraine, made it possible to begin a five-year archaeological campaign in the ancient city of Tyritake as part of Ukrainian programme on “Bosporan City Tyritake.” In June 2012 the Warsaw museum signed an agreement with the Institute of Archaeology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine enabling us to continue the excavations for another five years.

The choice of location was not accidental: in 1956–59 an archaeological mission of the National Museum in Warsaw headed by Professor Kazimierz Michałowski had worked in Kerch, albeit at the Myrmekion site. The reason for wanting to work at Tyritake again was not only an interest in continuing the tradition, but also the attractiveness of the site.

The ancient polis Tyritake is located in the southern part of modern Kerch, about 11 km from Pantikapaion, the capital of the Bosporan Kingdom, on the northern coast of the former sea bay, which today is a dried out part of Lake Churubash. The city was founded by the Greeks in the middle of the sixth century BC, and Pseudo Arrian, Ptolemy and Stephanus Byzantinus²⁷ mention it. Pliny writes about the town of Dia in this very area, but he may actually have in mind a Roman city, the name of a smaller locality or its Greek name.²⁸

Aleksandr Yefimovich Lutsenko was the first archaeologist to explore the area of the polis, digging in a few tumuli in 1859 and 1861. Archaeological research on the city itself began in 1932 under the direction of Yuri Yurievich Marti and continued under Lazar Moiseyevich Slavin, and the necropolis by Vladimir Dmitrievich Blavatskii and Yuri Marti. The excavation gathered momentum in 1946–57 when it was directed by Viktor Frantsevich Gaydukievich. In the 1970s and ‘80s the Kerchen Museum managed the site, and Oleg Dmitrievich Chevelov directed the exploration of the necropolis. In 2000 Viktor Nikolaevich Zin’ko took over, and his plans include extensive conservation and the creation of a modern museum devoted to Tyritake. Beginning in 2008, the Polish Archaeological Mission “Tyritake” of the National Museum in Warsaw joined in the work.

The findings in the north-western part of the city and the definition of the city wall played a large role in determining where the Polish team should work. The Poles agreed with the Ukrainians that they would begin their exploration at the continuation of the line marked by the western wall, as close as possible to trench XIV explored by Professor Gaidukevich’s

²⁶ Mattia Raccidi, “Chariot terracotta models from Tell Arbid,” *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean*, 21 (2012), pp. 605–23.

²⁷ Ps. Arrian, *Periplus Ponti Euxini*, 50, 9; Ptolemaius, *Geografia*, 3, 6, 3, 2; Stephanus Byzantinus, *Ethnika*, 642, 12.

²⁸ Gaius Plinius Secundus, *Naturalis Historia*, 4, 86–7.

crew and near the newest Ukrainian trench XXVI. The task was to confirm the course of the fortifications in this part of the city, to locate Gaidukevich's trench XIV, which had been destroyed during the Second World War, and in the future to begin work in the unexplored area between trenches XIV and XXVI. The strategic goal of the excavation was to uncover a broad swath of the city between its western and eastern limits.

During five seasons, 520 m sq of the ancient city were unearthed, 759 individual artefacts were found and a much larger number of mass objects were described. One of the mission's greatest accomplishments was the unearthing of a richly equipped kitchen complex (third-fourth centuries AD), a defensive wall (sixth-fifth centuries BC) and building complexes from the period immediately before and after the construction of the wall. Because of the exhibition value of the defensive wall, the Ukrainians decided to finish conserving and reconstructing it by the end of 2009. Upon the request of the Ukrainians, in the first excavation season work was also done on the grounds of the early Christian basilica from the fifth-sixth centuries AD. Using plans created by the Polish archaeologists, the Ukrainians made a reconstruction plan for the basilica.

In 2010–11 the archaeologists successfully located the corner of a house built near the wall and belonging to the earliest phase of the city (second half of the sixth century BC) and established the date of the construction of the defensive wall unveiled in 2009 as 480 BC. The work conducted in 2010, 2011 and 2012 led the team to conclude that the construction of this building conforms to the style of a typical house in the neighbourhood, something that until then had been challenged by some researchers (**fig. 11**).

In 2012 a key finding in pit 19 (**fig. 12**) were the skeletons of four horses and excellently preserved vessels from Attica, dated 500–450 BC. Both findings, the topographic context and the clear differences between the foundations of house A and of the other buildings from this period allow us to advance the thesis that in the Archaic period the Pantikapaion acropolis was located in this area, and that house A is the remnant of a temple. If this hypothesis is confirmed, this discovery will fundamentally change our understanding of this area's architecture in the Archaic period.

In 2010–12 stone constructions from early Byzantium or late Rome, as well as the Roman remnants of a kitchen complex made up of two rooms, were uncovered. One room contained a stone mortar, a quern and a table top, and the second a stone table top with remnants of kitchen ware, a clay oven and pithos with graffiti in Greek (**fig. 13**). This discovery, which thanks to stratigraphy can be dated with great precision, is an exceptional discovery in the Bosporan Kingdom. Its in-depth study has already yielded interesting results, while a full publication will significantly contribute to our knowledge about the everyday life of the people of this region in antiquity.

Conservation is an important component of the "Tyritake" mission, as defined in the co-operation agreement between the National Museum in Warsaw and the Warsaw University of Technology Faculty of Civil Engineering. The conservation of these antiquities will make it possible to develop the archaeological park, to make the outcomes of the work of the Polish archaeologists available to tourists, and to secure the remaining structures for the winter.

The work of the archaeological mission at Tyritake has brought more than purely scholarly outcomes. It has also become permanently lodged in the Crimean landscape and been observed with friendly curiosity by the local population and the authorities. Frequent visits from tourists and Ukrainians and Russians, as well as officials, including the president of Ukraine, are clear evidence of it.