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ARCHAEO-ORIENTAL STUDIES
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Consultations in Nubiology

Between 29 August and 9 September 2022, as a part of Archaeo-Oriental Studies, consultations were held with Habab Idriss Ahmed Idriss and Elgazafi Yousif Eshag Abdallah, from the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM) of Sudan and with Zakieldeen Mahmoud Mohamed Babiker also from Sudan who is a member of the archaeological expedition to Old Dongola. The dates for the consultations were synchronized to coincide with the 15th International Conference for Nubian Studies hosted by the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology at the University of Warsaw. This is the most important event of its kind in the world. Our colleagues from Sudan took part in this conference.

In addition to our colleagues from Sudan, the bioethical consultations included: Michele Buzon (Purdue University), Kari Guilbault (Purdue University), Sarah Schrader (Leiden University), Robert Stark (University of Warsaw), Tomomi Fushiya (University of Warsaw), and Robert Mahler (University of Warsaw). The results of our meeting can be encapsulated in three main conclusions:

1. A need for a change in the way we communicate plans and the results of our research. It would be beneficial if we presented local communities with both a project and its potential even before starting to excavate graves. It would also be advisable to present the results and conclusions, if reached, at each stage of the project;
2. The regulations concerning taking and exporting samples of human remains from archaeological excavations in order to perform physicochemical analyses will be subject to greater restriction in the future than has been the case so far;
3. The archaeological excavation of Muslim graves will not be possible in the foreseeable future;
3a. However, it is permissible to investigate Muslim graves using non-invasive methods.

Our colleagues from Sudan were also consulted on the cognitive research which Tomasz Michalik (PCMA UW) plans to conduct in Sudan. These consultations comprised of two stages. First, the participants were asked to help improve a research questionnaire to measure different aspects of the way Sudanese students think about time and the past. Particular attention was devoted to: the accuracy of the translation into Arabic, to cross-cultural differences in the way the questions are asked, and in the construction of the questionnaire and to the visual stimuli that are an integral part of the questionnaire.

In the second stage of the cognitive consultations, an eye-tracking study on how to analyse non-intrusive data in archaeology was discussed and an indepth interview was conducted with our colleagues concerning the availability of such data in archaeological practice in Sudan. During the interview, issues of cognitive metaphors that organize thinking about space and the preferred strategies for its schematization were raised. Furthermore, an experiment was conducted in which the participants were asked to analyse satellite images and identify the archaeological objects that were visible. The second stage of the cognitive consultations made it possible to gather information on the availability of non-invasive methods in Sudan and to identify the research areas that should be taken into account in the planned analysis.

Verification of the modifications made to the research tools based on the feedback during the consultations as well as an evaluation of the planned experiments will be performed during subsequent consultations, this time via the internet.