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Edited by Claudia Näser and Mathias Lange

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Editorial

*Claudia Näser and Mathias Lange*

Most of the papers published in this volume were presented at a conference organized by the Seminar of Northeast African Archaeology and Cultural Studies of Humboldt University Berlin for the missions participating in the Merowe Dam Archaeological Salvage Project (MDASP). In August 2005 representatives of all missions which were then active in the area of the Fourth Cataract followed the invitation to Berlin in order to present and discuss their work.

The history of the Fourth Cataract Conferences began when in May 2003 an international meeting was held at the British Museum in response to an appeal of Hassan Hussein Idris, Director General of the National Corporation of Antiquities and Museums (NCAM) of Sudan. The meeting was organized by the Sudan Archaeological Research Society and brought together representatives of many archaeological missions working in the Sudan. Its aim was to widen and to coordinate the salvage activities in the area of the Fourth Nile Cataract, where presently a huge dam is under construction, which eventually will lead to the flooding of about 170 km of the Nile valley. In consequence of this meeting, several new missions joined the parties which had already been working in the area for several years. One of them, the *Humboldt University Nubian Expedition* (H.U.N.E.), started fieldwork in March 2004. A second result of the London meeting was the initiation of a series of working conferences dedicated to the archaeology of the Fourth Nile Cataract. The first of these conferences took place in Gdansk and Gniew in July 2004. Its proceedings have since been published (Paner, H. and S. Jakobielski [eds.], *Proceedings of the “Archaeology of the Fourth Nile Cataract”. Gdańsk – Gniezno, 23-25 July 2004*. Gdańsk Archaeological Museum African Reports 4: 9-19).

The *Second International Conference on the Archaeology of the Fourth Nile Cataract* was held at the Berlin Humboldt University from 4 to 6 August 2005. Its results are mirrored in the papers united in this volume. Our thanks go to all colleagues and participants in the Berlin conference who submitted their contributions for publication. In addition, the present volume contains one paper, by Annett Dittrich, Kerstin Gessner and Baldur Gabriel, which was not presented at the conference but concerns outcomes of research in the Fourth Cataract, and thus thematically finds its appropriate place here.

In the meantime a third conference on the archaeology of the Fourth Nile Cataract has taken place from 13 to 14 July 2006 under the auspices of the ACACIA Collaborative Research Centre at the University of Cologne. A fourth meeting was held at Lille from 22 to 23 June 2007.

There is not much time left now for the archaeological salvage work in the Fourth Cataract, and the situation in the area has become tense. We hope that the present volume is a vivid and useful contribution to our joint efforts in rescuing the (pre)history of the region. We wish to thank all colleagues and students, who helped with the organisation of the Berlin conference and with editing this book. Our special gratitude goes to Karin Lippold and Cornelia Kleinritz, Humboldt University, to Baldur Gabriel and to the staff of our publisher, Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden.

*Claudia Näser  
Berlin, August 2007*