

SUDAN & NUBIA

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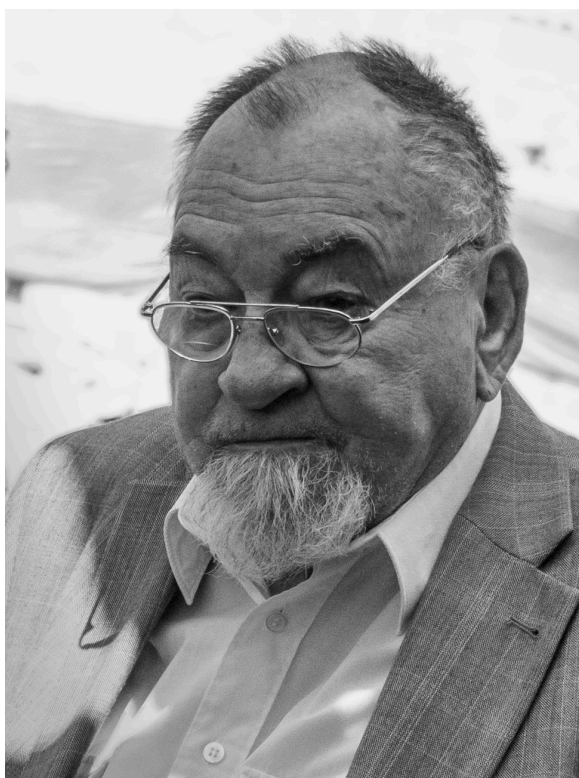


Front cover. Stone slab A3 used as a paving slab in Temple 4, Qasr Ibrim, showing Taharqa and Amun (photograph courtesy of F. Aldsworth).

Above. Frontal scan of lion head, Naga (Kroeper and Perzlmeier 2022, fig. 21, © Naga Project, 3-D scans by TrigonArt BauerPraus GbR).

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Obituaries



Steffen Wenig.

Steffen Wenig (1934-2022)

Steffen Wenig was born in Berlin on 15th July 1934. He was the son of a bookbinder and although he did not follow in his father's footsteps, books were one of his great passions throughout his life. After his graduation from high school in 1953, he worked as a trainee at the *Akademie Verlag* in Berlin where he met Hermann Grapow and Hildegard von Deines, who encouraged him to study Egyptology. In 1951, his later teacher Fritz Hintze was appointed Professor of Egyptology at the German Academy of Sciences in Berlin and taught Egyptian philology in the workrooms of the *Altägyptisches Wörterbuch*. Steffen took part in these lectures as a guest student as early as 1954 and got to know several Egyptologists working there, including Wolfhart Westendorf and Otto Firchow. From 1955 to 1959 he studied Egyptology with Fritz Hintze and African Studies with Ernst Dammann at the Humboldt University of Berlin.

It was Hintze's interest in ancient Sudan that brought Steffen into close contact with Meroitic

studies. In spring 1958, he took part in the reconnaissance survey to the Butana led by Hintze. The mapping and documentation of partly unknown Meroitic sites in the vast savannah landscape northeast of Khartoum, the heartland of the ancient Meroitic kingdom, was groundbreaking for his later academic career: in the future, he would intensively study Meroitic culture.

First, however, he completed his studies in 1959 and went to the Berlin Egyptian Museum as a Research Assistant. In that year, the *Aegyptiaca* taken to the Soviet Union in 1945/46 were returned, and Steffen was involved in their reintegration into the museum. After being temporarily entrusted with the management of the Museum from 1960-1961, the reorganisation of the Egyptian collection became one of his main tasks. In 1961 he published a concise catalogue of the collection's outstanding Egyptian antiquities and in 1963, together with Fritz Hintze, another catalogue on its Nubica. His Egyptological interests focused on art historical studies and, in particular, research on the art of the Amarna period. In addition, he published Egyptian artworks in various collections, on the role of sports and of women in ancient Egypt. In 1967 he was appointed Curator and in 1971 Deputy Director of the Egyptian Museum. It was during this time that he explored new approaches to the publication of collections. The idea that he developed together with colleagues from various countries, to publish museums' objects in a loose-leaf catalogue, eventually evolved into the 'Corpus Antiquitatum Aegyptiacarum' (CAA), which to this day comprises an extensive production of museum publications.

In addition to the museum activities, already, in the very beginning of his academic career, Steffen chose Meroitic studies as his academic focus. With the dissertation 'Untersuchungen zur Ikonographie der Darstellungen der meroitischen Königsfamilie und zu Fragen der Chronologie des Reiches von Meroe' (1964) and various other contributions, he actively participated in the lively academic discussion of Kushite royal chronology, which had been initiated in the 1950s by Dows Dunham's publication of

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Reisner's excavations. The Humboldt University's archaeological mission to Musawwarat es-Sufra, led by Fritz Hintze, took him to Sudan again in 1965/66 and 1968. The Apedemak temple in Musawwarat had collapsed in antiquity, so it was possible to reassemble most of the fallen blocks into almost complete wall reliefs. This relief decoration formed the source corpus of his habilitation *Die Darstellungen am Löwentempel von Musawwarat es-Sufra, Untersuchungen zu Ikonographie, Inhalt und Komposition der Reliefs*. In addition to participating in the excavations at Musawwarat, he conducted fieldwork in the royal pyramid cemeteries at Meroe, documenting previously unpublished chapel reliefs still *in situ* in the Begrawiya North Cemetery and conducting a photographic survey of individual relief blocks scattered throughout the entire pyramid field. This first major field study at Meroe since the end of G. A. Reisner's excavations in 1923 proved that the drawings from the Lepsius expedition and later explorers were often inaccurate in their details and that there was a lot more relief material preserved than the publications of Cailliaud and Lepsius as well as Reisner and Dunham suggested.

An outstanding academic achievement was undoubtedly his tremendous commitment to the exhibition 'Africa in Antiquity. The Arts of Ancient Nubia and Sudan'. Shown at the Brooklyn Museum in New York in 1978, it was the first major exhibition on the cultures of ancient Sudan and Nubia. The idea for this extraordinary exhibition had been developed by Bernard V. Bothmer and Steffen in 1973. In the following years, they undertook many trips to Sudan, Egypt and museum collections in Europe and the US to choose the objects for the exhibition. Responsible for the choice of objects and the scientific supervision of the exhibition, it was Steffen Wenig who subsequently assembled the comprehensive exhibition catalogue and thus published the first exhaustive overview of the art of ancient Sudan from prehistory to the Middle Ages. As hoped in its preface, it became a relevant standard work on the art and culture of ancient Sudan—and remains unsurpassed to this day.

In 1978, Steffen was engaged as a Senior Research Assistant at the Department of Egyptology and Sudan Archaeology/Meroitic Studies at Humboldt University. He defended his habilitation thesis the following year, became a university Lecturer in Meroitic studies in 1981 and in 1984 was appointed Associate Professor. Teaching the archaeology, art and architecture of ancient Sudan as well as ancient Egyptian art and archaeology, he was an enthusiastic and unconventional lecturer who inspired many generations of students. Since a university degree in Sudanese archaeology and Meroitic studies was at that time offered only at Humboldt University, he was invited as an academic visitor and imparted his knowledge at universities abroad. Thus, from 1985 to 1989, he taught art, history, and archaeology of Sudan for several semesters as a Visiting Professor at the Institute of Egyptology at the University of Vienna.

The political events of 1989 profoundly affected the academic landscape in the former East Germany. They brought changes that were by no means always positive and generated a long-lasting struggle for the survival of various disciplines at the universities, among them Egyptology and Sudanese Archaeology at the Humboldt University. In the end however, the Institute, and with it Sudanese archaeology, were retained at Humboldt University thanks to his many activities and to those of his students. Steffen remained Director of the Institute until his retirement in 1999. The university tasks were extensive. In addition to teaching, he supervised qualification theses, administered the Institute, was involved in committee work as Vice Dean at the University Faculty, published the series *Meroitica* founded by Fritz Hintze, and organised conferences such as the Meroitic conference in Gosen in 1992. He remained faithful to his passion for collections, ceramics and art objects: together with his students, he arranged the first public presentation of finds and pottery from Musawwarat, which Fritz Hintze had brought to Berlin as part of the division of finds in the 1960s, by setting up a study collection at the Institute.

These years, however, also offered new opportunities for field research. Together with Khidir A. Ahmed from the University of Khartoum and Arne Eggebrecht from the Roemer-Pelizaeus-Museum

at Hildesheim, he initiated the 'Meroe Joint Excavations' as a joint field research project at the city of Meroe. This Sudanese-German cooperation project had a high potential for interdisciplinary research on Meroitic iron production. Unfortunately, only a preliminary season could take place in 1992, as the project was discontinued due to reasons of university policy. A weekend excursion by the excavation team at that time to the Institute's former excavation site at Musawwarat es-Sufra was shocking: sand dunes, unthinkable in the 1960s, had engulfed many monuments, amongst them the Apedemak temple and the 'Great Enclosure', and were severely damaging them through sand erosion, while their walls were crumbling due to the summer rains. He spontaneously decided to resume the Institute's excavations and, in parallel, to intensively promote the preservation of the local antiquities – a decision which, at that time, was far ahead of many German and other international research institutions that have only in the last decade understood such tasks as a fundamental obligation of archaeology.

After preliminary campaigns in 1993-1994, funding by the German Research Foundation enabled long-term field research until 2004. The extensive material still needs to be processed and the results of the excavations have only partially been published. Accompanying the archaeological activities, however, extensive measures for the preservation of the local antiquities were undertaken for the first time. Addressing the difficulties of financing cultural heritage preservation and site management, Steffen initiated the 'Sudanarchäologische Gesellschaft zu Berlin e.V.'. As the Society's founding father and its long-time chairman, as well as editor of the Society's journal *Mitteilungen der Sudanarchäologischen Gesellschaft* (later *Der antike Sudan*), he was eminently committed to the conservation of the monuments at Musawwarat. Alongside the conservation work of professional restorers, volunteers from the Society supported conservation and site management under his direction for many years after his retirement in 1999. One of the highlights of these activities was the establishment of an open-air museum at the site. In this way, too, he was far ahead of many archaeological missions in Sudan. Through the Society it was also possible to generate publicity and activities to support the excavation project and site management at Musawwarat. He initiated lecture series and exhibitions, and, in addition to organising tours to various museums in Europe, was also the driving force behind the idea of popular tours to Sudan for amateurs interested in the archaeology of the country.

From the mid-90s, Steffen had become increasingly interested in the archaeology of the northern Horn of Africa. After being asked by the German Foreign Office in 1995 to be of assistance in documenting Eritrean cultural heritage, he visited a number of ancient sites, amongst them the high plateau of Qohayto. The German Aksum expedition led by Enno Littmann had documented various antiquities there in 1906. Being overwhelmed by the large number of still unknown archaeological sites on the plateau, he developed a field research project, the 'German Archaeological Mission to Eritrea' (GAME). In the course of two seasons of topographical and archaeological reconnaissance, almost 1,000 structures were identified and briefly documented in 1996-1997. Unfortunately, the renewed outbreak of military conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia and the subsequent uncertain political situation in the country did not allow for further fieldwork; however, this did not affect his interest in the Abyssinian highlands. In the years that followed, he continued to study, teach and publish on the history, archaeology and art of the Aksumite and pre-Aksumite cultures in Tigray. Worth highlighting is the publication of anthologies reappraising many aspects of the Aksum expedition and the organisation and publication of several conferences in honour of Enno Littmann, the founder of modern Ethiopian studies. The German-Ethiopian excavations and the related conservation and site management activities near the town of Wuqro in Tigray, which began in 2008, are also due to his initiative, and as their outstanding finds were to remain close to the excavation site, he initiated the foundation of the Berlin-based 'Society for the Promotion of Museums in Ethiopia e.V.'. As its chairman, he was committed to the establishment of a major museum project in the

town of Wugro through countless trips, meetings, and negotiations accompanying the conception of the museum, its construction, the installation of the exhibition and the training of local museum staff.

It is needless to emphasise that through all these activities Steffen remained very active in cultural heritage preservation and the communication of archaeology to the public for many years after his retirement in 1999, in addition to continuing the campaigns in Musawwarat es-Sufra. It was of great concern to him that things ‘go on’ and he supported initiatives where he could by sharing his knowledge and ideas.

This text would be incomplete without a tribute to his ‘good soul’, his wife Ingrid Wenig. They met at school, got married, and went through ups and downs through life. Steffen could not get over her death in April 2020. A heart attack in the summer of 2021 forced this active and self-determined man into a wheelchair. Until shortly before his death on 11 January 2022, he was still working on academic contributions to the art and culture of the Abyssinian highlands.

In a way, Steffen ran on several tracks that were to stay with him throughout his life: he was an Egyptologist and a distinguished specialist in Meroitic studies, and he became an enthusiastic archaeologist of the northern Horn of Africa. He was a researcher with an academic focus and at the same time remained a ‘museum man’. With his passing, these fields lose an important and, above all, extremely energetic scientist. He was a force of nature with sheer unstoppable energy and a highly inspiring nature, a gifted scholar who devoted his entire personality to his work and his scholarly interests.

Angelika Lohwasser and Pawel Wolf



Romuald Schild.

Romuald Schild (1936-2021)

Professor Romuald Schild was born in 1936 in Lviv (currently Ukraine). He completed his studies in archaeology at the University of Warsaw in 1957, was granted his PhD in 1962 at the Institute for the History of Material Culture of the Polish Academy of Sciences (currently the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology), and earned the title of Professor in 1983.

Professor Schild’s academic interests included above all the study of the oldest prehistoric periods. He is known around the world as an outstanding researcher of Central Europe and Northeast Africa in prehistoric times. In Poland, he focused primarily on the study of the early prehistoric period, specifically the middle and late Palaeolithic as well as the Mesolithic. His interests centred around cultural distinction and

its chronology, the economic base, types of settlement and the organisation of camps of early people, as well as the types of raw materials used to produce tools and the methods of acquiring and distributing these tools. Based on the results of these multi-disciplinary studies, which revealed a great deal about the lives of hunters and gatherers, the scientific community was able to abandon the term ‘industry’ in favour of ‘culture’, commonly used for later prehistoric periods.

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Research conducted over several seasons at selected sites led to the publication of extensive monographs. Key sites studied include Zwolen in the Middle Palaeolithic (*The Killing Fields of Zwolen. A Middle Palaeolithic Kill-Butchery-Site in Central Poland*, 2005), Rydno in Central Poland (*Rydno. Stone Age Red Ochre Quarry and Socioeconomic Centre. A Century of Research*, 2011), Całowanie in the late Palaeolithic and Mesolithic (*Całowanie. A Final Palaeolithic and Early Mesolithic Site on an Island in the Ancient Vistula Channel*, 2014) and Wilczyce in the late Magdalenian period (*Wilczyce. A Late Magdalenian Winter Hunting Camp in Southern Poland*, 2014). Professor Schild also contributed to nearly 300 papers and to 25 books which he either authored, co-authored or edited.

One of the key areas of study led by Professor Schild were the periods of the Palaeolithic and Neolithic in Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia. He was one of the first scientists to recognise and describe the effect of the environment and climate changes on the life of early peoples of the Eastern Sahara.

From 1963 onwards, he was associated with the Polish-American-Egyptian Combined Prehistoric Expedition, the largest uninterrupted prehistoric expedition in Africa. For over 50 years, members of the expedition continuously conducted excavations in the countries mentioned above. From 1970 to 1999, Professor Schild was Deputy Director of the expedition, and after Fred Wendorf retired in 1999, he took over and headed the expedition until 2007.

Professor Schild's contribution to the study of prehistory in the Eastern Sahara was enormous. In addition to the excavations he personally led at a number of sites, Professor Schild was also involved in geomorphological studies, stratigraphy and the chronology of many features studied within the scope of the Combined Prehistoric Expedition. To a large extent, his long-term efforts supported by numerous specialists in auxiliary sciences have provided answers to key questions regarding the prehistory of northeast Africa. These discoveries helped explain how changes in climate and the environment, as a result, had an effect on social systems in the region.

The research demonstrated that after a period of drought lasting 50,000 years, favourable changes from the rainfall brought by monsoons originating in the Indian Ocean made conditions in the region of the eastern Sahara friendly once again. As a result, the area of the Egyptian Western Desert turned into a savannah. The climate in the eastern Sahara, which was much more humid than it is today, facilitated human settlement. Around 9,000 years ago, groups of Neolithic pastorals from the Nile Valley appeared in the vicinity of a seasonal lake called Nabta Playa. Research conducted by the Combined Prehistoric Expedition uncovered abundant traces of settlement from several different periods of the Neolithic. One of the discoveries was a vast Ceremonial Centre that was a cult place for sacrificial offerings. Around 6,500 years ago, the inhabitants of Nabta Playa built fields of remembrance for their ancestors by erecting grouped anthropomorphic stone stelae which symbolised clans or extended families. They also constructed rows of menhirs made from stelae, which were directed towards bright stars that were key in their cosmology. Megalithic tumuli containing human remains and cow burials and fields of small sacrificial tumuli as well as a kind of astronomical observatory built from stones were also studied. Around 17km from Nabta Playa, a cemetery - probably ancestral - was examined, which held the burials of 63 people dated to the late Neolithic. The burials had abundant grave goods, including several that exhibited the style of the subsequent ancient Egyptian civilisation. Thanks to the studies in Nabta Playa, researchers also determined the existence of clear social division among groups of people at the end of the Neolithic as well as the emergence of a chiefdom system.

Over the course of 6,000 years, the savannah once again became too dry for human settlement. As studies show, prehistoric pastorals, concentrated until that time in numerous small settlements, set off to search for favourable living conditions and made it to the Nile Valley. With them, they brought their beliefs, which became an important part of the religion of Ancient Egypt; this included the beginnings of

astronomy, the sanctity of the polar regions of the sky, the cult of cattle, a concern for the preservation of the body after death and the amulets worn, as well as the social distinction and chieftom system mentioned above.

The research conducted by the Combined Prehistoric Expedition largely led by Professor Schild provided the basis for many scientific publications and over 20 books. Three such books have been a part of the archaeological literary canon for many years: *Prehistory of the Nile Valley* (1976), *Prehistory of Eastern Sahara* (1980), and *Holocene Settlement of the Egyptian Sahara. The Archaeology of Nabta Playa, Vol.1*, (2001). In November 2021, just before his death, Professor Schild completed and submitted for publication a large detailed monography on the Ceremonial Centre in Nabta Playa.

Professor Schild gained the recognition of the international scientific community not only because of his discoveries, but also because of his scientific versatility and experience in the field. In his work, he used an extensive set of research instruments which were ground-breaking for the time and applied an innovative method, the so-called dynamic analysis of flint assemblages. He also used radiocarbon and luminescence dating methods, which were a novelty then, and focused on issues of climate evolution and geomorphology, fields which were completely disregarded. He was continuously managing the work of large research teams, which would bring together dozens of scientists from numerous disciplines. In doing so, he paved the way for other scientists conducting research in the region of northeast Africa.

Professor Schild's accomplishments are ranked as one of the greatest and most significant studies of early prehistory specialising in the archaeology of the Old World. His work not only provided us with a more profound knowledge of humans and their environment in the oldest prehistoric periods, but also led to the change of many prevailing opinions on the subject.

From 1990 to 2007, he was head of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology at the Polish Academy of Sciences. In 1971, 1982 and 1983, he was a Lecturer at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, as well as at the British Academy. He was a member of the Committee on Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences and an active member of the Historical-Philosophical Department of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was the first Polish scientist elected to the National Academy of Sciences of the United States in 1998. He was also an honorary member of the Society of Antiquaries in London, and honorary chairman of the Society for Later Prehistory of Northeastern Africa. He received an honorary doctoral degree from the Institute for the History of Material Culture of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

He received the Commander's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta in 2005 for his scientific achievements, while in 2020 he was awarded the Prize of the Foundation for Polish Science, the so-called Polish Nobel Prize.

Professor Schild's death is a great loss for science and the source of deep sorrow for his friends and colleagues.

Michał Kobusiewicz

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