



## Discovery of wall paintings at Old Dongola in Top 10 archaeological discoveries of 2023

The prominent 'Archaeology' magazine has published its Top 10 list of the most significant discoveries of 2023. It features paintings from Old Dongola (Sudan), discovered by an expedition of the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of the University of Warsaw headed by Prof. [Artur Obluski](#).

Old Dongola (Tungul) was the capital of Makuria, one of the most prominent states of medieval Africa. This spring, media in Poland and abroad covered the discovery of magnificently preserved, unique paintings ([link to press release](#)). The finding was made during research conducted under the European Research Council (ERC) Starting Grant: 'UMMA – Urban Metamorphosis of the community of a Medieval African capital city'.

The paintings, which depict the Virgin Mary, the Eternal God, the Archangel Michael, Christ, and the Makurite King David kissing the hand of Christ, have also generated considerable interest in the scientific community. One of the reasons was the unique iconography featuring representations hitherto unknown in Christian art, such as the depiction of Mary, or of the direct contact between a mortal and a supernatural being.

It is precisely such discoveries – scientifically significant and at the same time appealing to a wide audience – that are selected by the editors of 'Archaeology' for their 'Top 10' list published each year in the December issue. The 'Archaeology' magazine is the leading popular science periodical in its field. It has been published by the Archaeological Institute of America for over 70 years. Currently appearing on paper and online, it reaches a worldwide audience interested in archaeology and cultural heritage (2.1mil followers on Fb, 581k on X).

Polish scholars have pioneered research on the medieval Nubian kingdoms in Sudan. The PCMA UW expedition has been working in Old Dongola since 1964. This accolade for the latest discovery at the site is all the more welcome as it is a reminder of Sudan's rich cultural heritage at a time when the country is being torn apart by civil war.

- Link to the story in 'Archaeology' magazine's [Top 10](#)
- Read more about PCMA UW research in [Old Dongola](#) and on [other sites in Sudan](#)
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*Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw (PCMA UW) coordinates Polish archaeological research in the Eastern Mediterranean since 1959 (since 1990 under the present name). In recent years, it broadened its scope of interest into the Arabian Peninsula and the Caucasus. Currently, about 20 projects are ongoing in [Egypt](#), [Sudan](#), [Tunisia](#), [Cyprus](#), [Lebanon](#), [Kuwait](#), [Oman](#), [Georgia](#), and [Armenia](#). The PCMA UW also runs Research Centres in Egypt, Sudan, Cyprus, and Georgia.*

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