



PCMA UW expedition's discovery nominated for the MocArtY 2023 award!

The discovery of paintings from Old Dongola (Sudan) by an expedition of the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw has been nominated in one of radio RMF Classic's MocArtY competition categories. The winner will be selected in an internet poll that will conclude by February 25th.



The discovery of new paintings by the expedition led by Assoc. Prof. Artur Obłuski, Director of the PCMA UW, was announced in the spring of 2023 ([link](#) to information about the discovery). It was widely reported in Polish and foreign media and at the turn of the year, was included among the most important archaeological discoveries of 2023, including in the Top 10 discoveries of "Archaeology" magazine ([link](#)) and the most important foreign discovery by a Polish team in a poll by "Archeologia Żywa".

However, the nomination for RMF Classic's MocArt Award is special because of the nature of this competition: it is not a specialized award for archaeological achievements but one that covers noteworthy events in culture, science and society. Yet, with a great variety of topics to choose from, the listeners and editors of RMF Classic found the discoveries in Old Dongola interesting and significant enough to merit a nomination.

It was thanks to the work of Polish archaeologists that the general public first heard about medieval Nubian paintings. In the 1960s, an expedition headed by Prof. Kazimierz Michałowski, the founder of the PCMA UW, discovered the exquisite paintings adorning the walls of the Faras cathedral about to be flooded due to the construction of a dam on the Nile. Rescued and restored, half of the paintings can now be admired in the Faras Gallery of the National Museum in Warsaw.





The newly discovered paintings are just as interesting. They show the Virgin Mary, Christ, and a scene depicting the Nubian King David with Christ and the Archangel Michael. The details in the latter scene are highly unusual: the king bows to Christ seated in the clouds, and kisses his hand. The ruler is supported by archangel Michael, whose spread wings surround both the king and Christ himself in a gesture of protection. Such a scene has no parallel in Nubian painting.

Another mystery, is the character of the rooms where the wall paintings were located. The vaulted room is quite small and it belonged to a set of enigmatic rooms with vaulted and domed mud-brick roofs. Although at the moment of discovery it seemed to resemble an underground crypt, it was actually originally situated 7 meters above the coeval ground level.

For the time being, clarifying the nature of this building and determining its actual function and relationship to the largest sacred building in medieval Nubia (also discovered by the PCMA UW expedition: [link](#)) is not possible due to the ongoing brutal civil war in Sudan. Therefore, it is all the more gratifying for the Old Dongola archaeological team to know that the results of their research have reached a wide audience who could learn about Sudan's rich cultural heritage.

The MocArty Awards were established in 2010. This years' nominations were given in four categories: Person of the Year, Event of the Year, Film Music of the Year, and "MocNa Rzecz" (MocArty . From listeners' submissions, the editors selected the most interesting and frequently mentioned candidates. An online poll will determine the winners.

✓ **Join the fun and vote: <https://www.rmfcclassic.pl/mocarty-2023>**

Learn more:

- See an animated visualization of the room with the paintings on PCMA UW YouTube channel ([link](#))
- Read more about PCMA UW research in Old Dongola ([link](#)) and on other sites in Sudan ([link](#))
- View 3D visualizations of the Old Dongola monastery: virtualnubia.uw.edu.pl
- Contact the head of the PCMA UW expedition in Old Dongola: [Artur Obłuski](#) - a.obluski@uw.edu.pl

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.

Learn more: <https://pcma.uw.edu.pl/en/> **Fb** [@pcma.uw](#) **Insta** [@pcma_uw](#) **X(Tt)** [@PCMA_UW](#) **YT** [@PCMAUW](#)
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