



## **Albert Hesse**

### **In commemoration of the sixty-fifth birthday anniversary**

After an engineer degree at the *École nationale supérieure des Arts et Métiers*, Albert Hesse became an extracurricular student of the *École du Louvre* and worked towards a Ph.D. degree in applied geophysics, which he received in 1964 under the direction of Prof. L. Cagniard and A. Leroy-Gouhran.

Albert Hesse has devoted his entire professional life to working for the French Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS). Starting out as a trainee engineer in 1960, he advanced through the file and rank to hold the highest office of Research Director at the CNRS. He was in charge of the Scientific Cooperation Program no. 509 (1978–1982), after which he headed (1982–1987) the Geophysical Research Center at Garchy, one of Europe's leading institution for the application of geophysical methods in archaeology.

Albert Hesse has been exceptionally active in the fields of organizing scientific cooperation and disseminating the results of research. He was a founding member and secretary general (1976–1980), then president (1980–1987) of the Group for

Physical and Chemical Methods in Archaeology (GMPCA), later turned into the Group for Interdisciplinary Methods Contributing to Archaeology. He is also counted among the founders of *Revue d'Archéométrie*. Hesse sits on the editorial board of the periodicals *Paléorient* and *Histoire et Mesure*. A permanent member of the Comité Technique des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques (CTHS) in the Commission de Pré- et Protohistoire, he was also on the Standing Committee of the *Archaeometry* Symposium (1990–1998) and an associate editor of *Archaeometry* (1990–1998) as well as *Archaeological Prospection* (1994–1998).

As a university lecturer he has lectured on archaeological prospection at Paris 1 University (1970–1999). He has provided guidance for such scholars as Vittorio Illiceto (President of the Environmental and Engineering Geophysical Society in 1997–2000), Alain Tabbagh (professor at Paris 6 University), Patrice Cressier, Michel Dabas and Christophe Benech.

He has published close to 150 articles on a broad range of matters concerned with archaeological prospection, breaking ground in the following fields:

- As one of a generation of scholars to initiate the use of magnetic and geoelectric prospection in archaeology, he was the first to introduce magnetic gradient mapping (Mirgissa site in Sudan) and continuous (while moving) geoelectric measurements (Pincevent site in France).

- He was also the first to apply in archaeological prospection multivariate statistical methods for analyzing the distribution of surface artifacts.

- He was the first to confront relative archaeomagnetic dating of sites in the Near East (Tepe Sush and Djaffarabad, Iran) with studies of their extended stratigraphy.

- He was part of a group which pioneered geophysical prospection not only as a regular preliminary step in planning archaeological excavations, but also as a tool for an entirely non-invasive survey of potential archaeological space.

For those interested in the archaeology of Egypt, he will always be the one who “reconstructed” the course of the Heptastadion in Alexandria without turning over a single spade of soil.

From the Central and Eastern European perspective, we cannot fail to mention Albert Hesse's openness and readiness to assist scholars from the region who in the past did not have such free access to research centers in Western Europe. For many of us scholarships at Garchy were the proverbial window onto the world, eye-openers that allowed us to apply what we had learned there in our everyday work, frequently resulting in new research ideas upon returning home.

Judging by his unflagging energy and brimming ideas, there is every reason to think that this brief review of Albert Hesse's contribution to the science of archaeological prospection is in need of updating even as it is published!

*Alain Tabbagh and Tomasz Herbich*