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PREFACE

Textiles, omnipresent in a man's everyday life, rarely become the subject matter of archaeological research. Being made from organic materials, they hardly ever survive in a good state of preservation in comparison with, for example, ceramics or metals, which are much more frequently unearthed. In addition, analysis of fabrics requires at least fundamental specialist knowledge or constant cooperation with experts in textiles.

Although archaeologists did pay attention to textiles when the first bog burial finds were discovered, more serious scientific research into archaeological fabrics had not been carried out until the 1930s and 1940s. G. Sage, K. Schlabow, W. v. Stokar (Germany), M. Hald (Denmark) and A. Geijer (Sweden) are regarded as the forerunners of textile research.

After World War II, research into archaeological textile and ancient textile technology in general flourished. The beginnings of relevant studies in Poland were mainly connected with the large-scale archaeological excavations preceding the 1000th anniversary of the Christening of Poland and the beginning of the Polish state celebrations. The discovery of several hundred textiles in Gdańsk resulted in cooperation of archeologists, who lacked the knowledge necessary to conduct textile analyses on their own, with a textile technologist, which led to the publication of the precursory work by J. Kamińska and A. Nahlik *Włókiennictwo gdańskie X-XIII w. (10th-13th Century Gdansk Textile Manufacturing)*. This study has become the foundation for textile research methodology in Poland and a model study for further research works.

At the turn of the 1970s, archaeological textile researchers, including archaeologists, historians and textile technologists, came to the conclusion that a symposium needs to be organised in order to present the most recent research results, exchange experiences, as well as to establish the most important directions in further studies. The conference was held at the Textilmuseum Neumünster in Germany in 1981 on the initiative of L. Bender Jørgensen from Denmark and K. Tidow, the then manager of the Neumünster Museum. Over twenty persons from the United Kingdom, Denmark,

the Netherlands, Germany, Norway, Poland and Sweden arrived in Neumünster to participate in the event. Judging from a present-day perspective, they must have constituted about 80 percent of the contemporary archaeological textile researchers in Europe. The author of the present preface was the only researcher coming from so-called Eastern Europe to attend the conference, which was a result of the relatively liberal policy of the contemporary Polish authorities towards scientists. Although the research carried out in those countries at that time was extremely interesting, fellow scientists from the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia or the Soviet Union had no chance of participating in such a meeting. The participants of the conference decided to meet every three years in various cities across Europe and to call the meetings the North European Symposium for Archaeological Textiles. Ten conferences have been held since then. The fact that over 100 persons took part in the last meeting in Copenhagen best illustrates the development of archaeological textile research in Europe which has taken place over the last years.

Topics connected with ancient textile manufacturing have previously been discussed in "Fasciculi Archaeologiae Historicae" (articles by K. Tidow, P. Walton-Rogers or J. Maik). However, we have decided to devote a separate *fasciculus* to this theme in order to draw archaeologists' attention to an issue frequently omitted or considered as less important in numerous publications.

We realize that in such a small volume the topic cannot be thoroughly dealt with nor can all the most important directions of studies into ancient textile technology mentioned. We do, however, hope to interest a larger number of researchers in this topic and, through inviting authors from various European countries to cooperate, to make even the smallest contribution to the development of scientific cooperation in Europe.

Łódź, October 2010

(translated by Zuzanna Poklewska-Parra)

