



Embassy of Italy  
Cairo

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Patrimonio Culturale

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# ARCHAEOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT ANCIENT BORDER COMMUNITIES BETWEEN SAND AND WATERWAYS

Interdisciplinary Workshop  
Cairo 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Under the auspices of  
**PROF. FAGR ABDEL GAWAD**  
Acting President of the National Research Centre



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NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE, New Hall  
33 El-Bohouth St., 12622,  
Dokki, Giza, Egypt



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The international workshop is organised by CNR-ISPC in collaboration with the National Research Centre.

Its aim is to share and discuss recent data from the excavations at Tell el-Maskhuta, and to discuss the existence of an important city at the borders of Egypt and along important communication routes.

The topic of the workshop has been extended to archaeological sites in the same region or in areas with similar characteristics.

Tell el-Maskhuta is an archaeological site in the eastern part of the Wadi Tumilat (eastern Delta, about 15 km west of Ismailiya), investigated for several years by the CNR-Multidisciplinary Egyptological Mission (CNR-MEM) of the Institute of Heritage Science (ISPC) of the National Research Council of Italy, that works with the institutional recognition of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

The CNR-MEM works in Tell el-Maskhuta applying advanced technologies, such as electromagnetic geophysical surveys, implementation of numerical models of the tell and the structures etc. This approach allows a very accurate documentation of the archaeological site.

Tell el-Maskhuta, identified with the ancient city of Tjeku and located not far from the Suez Canal, conceals a large ancient city that owed its importance to its location along the Wadi Tumilat on Egypt's extreme northeastern border, along one of the most important routes toward the Levant. Furthermore, in ancient times, a navigable canal – the so called Canal of the Pharaohs – was dug along the Wadi Tumilat.

Ancient Tjeku was a wide town, rich for international trade. Some parts of a big enclosure wall (about 200 m x300 m) have been excavated, in some sections preserved in all its elevation. In such a border area, the walls of Tjeku had to show the power of Egypt, its kings and its gods, to people arriving from the Levant. The northern side of the enclosure retains astonishing dimensions: about 8 m above the current ground level and 22 m thick.

During the recent excavation campaigns, a large ramp has been found which starts from the top of the huge northern wall and descends towards the outside. Moreover, a large dump of amphorae has been found. The large accumulation, only partially excavated, is a typical dump of unusable containers that formed near a commercial harbour. The dump provides a mine of data on ancient Egyptian trade and indicates the proximity of a port on the navigable channel. The great northern wall can therefore be identified with a civil infrastructure of the port on the navigable canal. Moreover, core drilling has yielded fascinating insights into the ancient environment, with key indications of past water bodies.

In conclusion, the recent campaigns reveal new important data about the course of the ancient navigable channel that connected the Mediterranean and the Red Sea in ancient times.





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## PROGRAMME

### 9.00-10.00 Welcome speeches

### 10.00-10.40 I Session: NRC for cultural heritage

Chair: Medhat Ibrahim

1. Medhat A. Ibrahim, National Research Centre, Egypt,  
*Molecular Modeling and Spectroscopy: Technologies Applied for Cultural Heritage*
2. Ahmed Refaat, National Research Centre, Egypt  
*Integration between Cultural Heritage and Spectroscopy: Spectroscopic Analyses of Icons of Historical and Artistic Value*

### 10.40-11.40 II Session: Borders communities

Chair: Gihane Zaki

1. Gihane Zaki, Institut d'Égypte, CNRS - UMR 8167, SHS – Université Paris Sorbonne  
*The impact of Climate changes on the island of Biggeh. Archeology under Third Millennium challenges*
2. Amr Abdel-Rauf, Zagazig University  
*Paleoenvironmental reconstruction of the settlement area of ancient Bubastis, southeastern Nile Delta (Egypt)*
3. Mohamed Abdel-Maksoud, Tell Hebua the Eastern gate of Egypt

### 11.40-12.40 Coffe break

### 12.40-13.40 II Session: Borders communities

Chair: Gihane Zaki

4. Sayed Abdel-Alim, Hanin Mustafa, Ain Shams University  
*Paleo-waterscape in Northwestern Sinai. Impact of the Pelusiac Nile Branch on the Continuity and Rupture of the Urban and Military settlements.*
5. Mustafa Hassan, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities  
*Recent archaeological discoveries in the Ismailia Antiquities area*
6. Mustafa Nur el-Din, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities  
*Ancient artificial canals in Wadi Tumilat and the Isthmus of Suez*

### 13.40-16.30 III Session: Tell el-Maskhuta and the Canal of the Pharaohs. Sharing data on border communities

Chair: Tarek Tawfik

1. Bruno Marcolongo, National Research Council of Italy, Institute of Heritage Science  
*On the trail of ancient Tumilat with the eye of the geomorphologist*
2. Giuseppina Capriotti Vittozzi, National Research Council of Italy, Institute of Heritage Science  
*Tell el-Maskhuta and the Canal of the Pharaohs: Recent discoveries*
3. Andrea Angelini, National Research Council of Italy, Institute of Heritage Science  
*Technological Applications to the recent excavations in Tell el-Maskhuta: the harbour infrastructures.*
4. Ilaria Mazzini, National Research Council of Italy, Institute of Environmental Geology and Geoengineering  
*Preliminary reconstruction of the Holocene landscape in the area of Tell el-Maskhuta*

