



Studies on fossil diatoms from the Gulf of Suez, Egypt

Thesis Submitted for Master Degree of Science in Botany
(Phycology)

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B.Sc. (2006)

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Acknowledgments

First of all, and above all, I am thankful to merciful God, since all what I have reached, all the health, all the success and everything are just a bless from his kind potent will.

I would like to express my deep thanks to Prof. Dr. Afaf A. Badawi, Professor of Plant Taxonomy, Faculty of Science, Ain Shams University, for the efforts she have done in the completion of this work, her continuous advising and her concern.

I would like to express deepest gratefulness to Prof. Dr. Ahmed A. El Awamri, Professor of Phycology, Faculty of Science, Ain Shams University, for suggesting the subject of this study, his tender supervision and helpful direction, his deep concern, his valuable suggestions, his continuous encouragement throughout the completion of this work, his help in the preparation and the revision of this manuscript, and finally a special thanks for being a teacher, and guider for me.

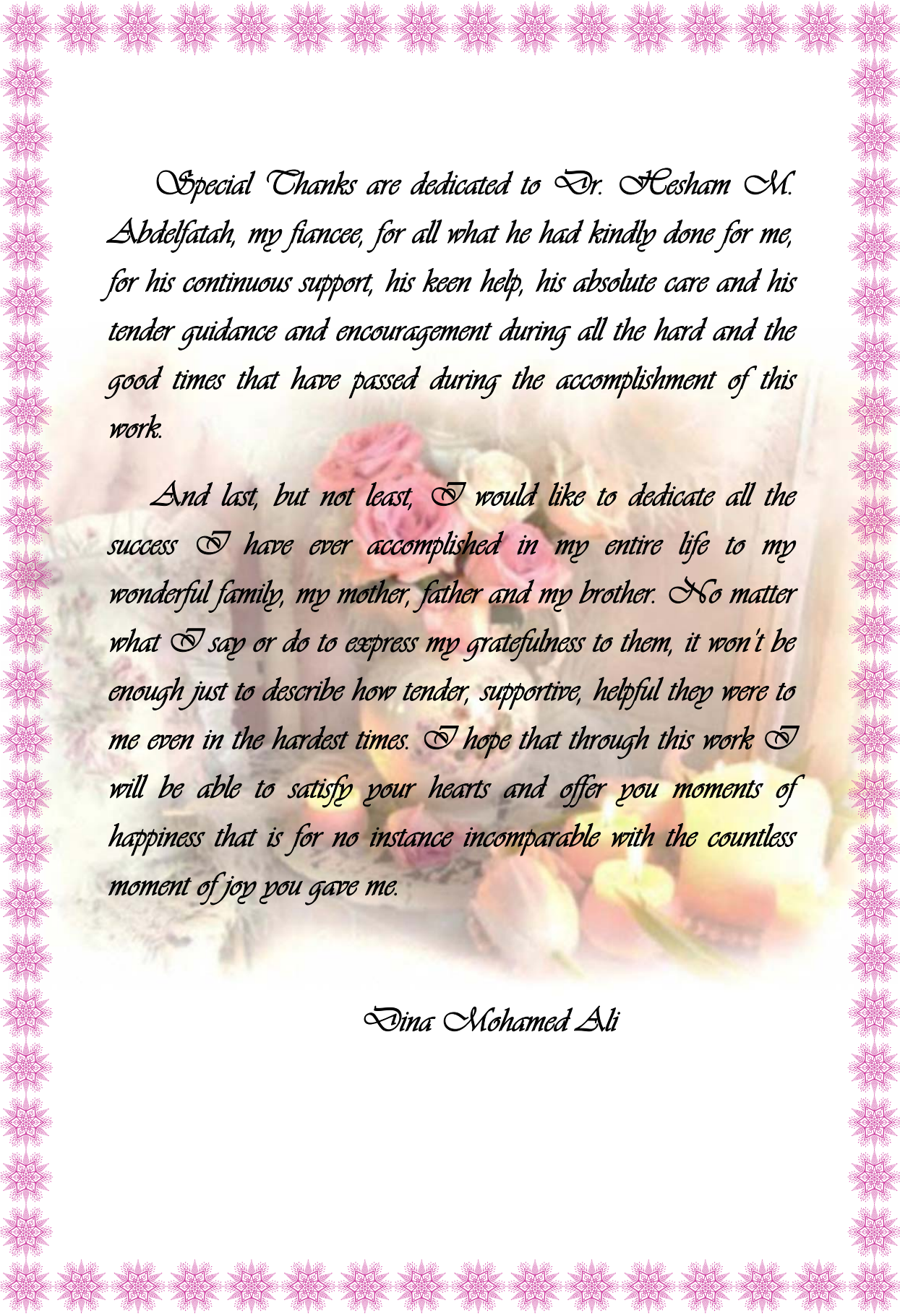
I am deeply indebted to Prof. Dr. Adel F. Hamed, Professor of Phycology, Faculty of Science, Ain Shams University, for his keen supervision, his

encouragement and sincere help in the accomplishment of this manuscript.

I am also thankful to Prof. Dr. Amira A. Hassanein, Head of Botany Department, Faculty of Science, Ain Shams University, and Prof. Dr. Azza M. El Shafey, Ex Head of Botany Department, Faculty of Science, Ain Shams University, for their encouragement and support. I would like to thank all my colleagues and the Botany Department staff members for their support and encouragement.

I am deeply grateful to members of The Gulf of Suez Petroleum Company (GUPCO), Maadi, Cairo, for providing me with samples and valuable information about the studied petroleum wells. Special thanks are dedicated to Mr. Essam Tawfic for his continuous help and support, Mr. Saber Sakr and Mr. Hassan Hataba for their help and guidance during the accomplishment of this study.

Many thanks are dedicated to the Ministry of Petroleum and Mineralogical Resources for offering many facilities needed for the completion of this work.

A decorative border of pink, multi-petaled floral motifs surrounds the text. The background features a faint, artistic image of pink and yellow roses.

Special Thanks are dedicated to Dr. Hesham M. Abdelfatah, my fiancée, for all what he had kindly done for me, for his continuous support, his keen help, his absolute care and his tender guidance and encouragement during all the hard and the good times that have passed during the accomplishment of this work.

And last, but not least, I would like to dedicate all the success I have ever accomplished in my entire life to my wonderful family, my mother, father and my brother. No matter what I say or do to express my gratefulness to them, it won't be enough just to describe how tender, supportive, helpful they were to me even in the hardest times. I hope that through this work I will be able to satisfy your hearts and offer you moments of happiness that is for no instance incomparable with the countless moment of joy you gave me.

Dina Mohamed Ali

Abstract

The present study is aimed to investigate diatoms in sediments of the Post Zeit Formation within the northern, middle and southern provinces of the Gulf of Suez, Egypt. The three wells belong to two geological formations, Zaafarana Formation in the north and Ashrafi Formation in the middle and south. Three oil wells were chosen for the accomplishment of this work. Collectively, 166 samples were subjected to examination from the three petroleum wells, 58 samples at different depths were examined in the northern well North October (NO 124-1); 58 samples were also studied from the middle well GS 285-1 and 50 samples were studied from the southern well Shoabali_A9 (SA_A9). Taxonomical and morphological results from the three wells collectively yielded to the identification of 125 diatoms and silicoflagellate taxa, those taxa of paleoecological significance are described, giving their known geological age, their occurrence, distribution and salinity tolerance. From the northern well NO 124-1, 38 taxa were identified. Quantitatively, members of the Class Coscinodiscophyceae were dominant, only 26% of the species identified were autochthonous. Concerning the middle well GS 285-1, a total of 108 taxa were identified from this well. Quantitatively, members of the Class Coscinodiscophyceae were dominant, 42% of the species identified from this well were autochthonous. From the recorded taxa, a hundred and two were newly recorded at this site in the gulf. Finally, the flora of the southern well Shoabali_A9 (SA_A9) was discussed, a total of 39 taxa were identified; thus, this well was considered

the poorest one according to the number of taxa. Quantitatively, members of the Class Coscinodiscophyceae were dominant, only 36% of the species identified are autochthonous. From the previous interpretation, a pursuit of the Gulf of Suez palaeoenvironment from north to south was made possible. A succession of shallow marine-deep fresh water environment in the north, a deep marine in the middle and a shallow fresh water environment in the south is obvious. This illustrates a multi-purpose configuration of the gulf where the center was the core of the marine water body, and the extremities were abruptly occupied by temporary or transgressional section of neighboring fresh water bodies. These results came compatible with the submerging of the northern part of the Gulf of Suez with Alluvial and deltoid sediments in the Miocene, which in turn points to the presence of a fresh water source. From all the identified taxa collected from the three wells, 52% were autochthonous, i.e., have lived at the place of deposition. *Neodelphineis pelagica* was recorded for the first time from marine Japanese estuaries as rare and new diatom species in 1982, this species was found commonly in GS 285-1 and is thought to be recognized for the first time in Egypt.

Through the study of the autecology of the identified diatoms, some palaeoecological parameters of the Gulf of Suez were interpreted. It can be assumed that this work is a trial to begin a large-scale configuration and reconstruction of the Egyptian water bodies in the past ages, which can be a magic tool to decipher their future in the light of their past and present.

Keywords: Fossil diatoms, Gulf of Suez, Palaeoecology, Miocene, Pliocene.

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