

# K E R M A

2011-2012

SOUDAN

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I M P R E S S U M

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Cover figure : The northern part of the Kerma cemetery. Photo: Matthieu Honegger

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS AT KERMA (SUDAN)  
PRELIMINARY REPORT TO THE 2011-2012 SEASON

The investigations of the Swiss Archaeological Mission started on 3<sup>rd</sup> of December 2011 and ended on 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2012. As usual, the mission was organised in two teams.

The team directed by Matthieu Honegger worked in the eastern cemetery of Kerma and at the site of Wadi El-Arab. The team was composed of the *rais* Khidir Magbul who supervised six local workers. Two Swiss specialists worked in their respective domains: Marc Bundi (supervision of the construction of the walls protecting the eastern cemetery, work in the Museum and in the new resthouse) and Daniel Conforti (archaeology and drawing). Seven collaborators or students from Neuchâtel (Camille Fallet, Bastien Jakob, Julien Spielmann, Philippe Marti, Laure Bassin, Laure Prétôt, Alice Vanetti) and a curator of the Kerma Museum (Shahinda Omer) participated in the mission.

This year, the team was strengthened by the presence of four persons who each stayed at least three weeks in January. Veerle Linseele (Dr., University of Leuven) came to study the fauna of Wadi El-Arab as a replacement of Louis Chaix (see her contribution in this volume). Martin Williams (Prof. emeritus, University of Adelaïde) led a campaign of geological observations to study the sedimentary and geomorphological history of the region, in particular around Wadi El-Arab (see his contribution in this volume). Michel Mauvilly (archaeologist in the Department of Archaeology of Fribourg) came to complete the excavation team. He assisted, amongst others, Hélène Delattres for a week in her program of prospection around Sedinga, to the North of Kerma. Finally, Stéphane Goël (film maker, Climage), who realised a few years ago the film “Sur les traces des pharaons noirs”, followed the work of the mission in order to produce short films for the future exhibition which will take place in the museum of the Latanium (Neuchâtel) in 2014.

Since august 2011, Isabelle Crèvecoeur (CNRS, Université de Bordeaux) resumed the study of the skeletons of both cemeteries of El-Barga (Mesolithic and ancient Neolithic), where the excavations ended a few years ago. After a second stay at Neuchâtel during the summer of 2012 to examine the collection, she delivers her first results in this volume.

The team led by Charles Bonnet pursued its works at Dukki Gel and conducted restoration projects in the ancient city of Kerma and at Dukki Gel. It was made up of the *rais* Gad Abdallah, Saleh Melieh, Abdelrazek Omer Nuri and Idriss Osman Idriss who supervised 60 local workers. Abdelmagid Mahmud, director of the museum participated to the excavation. Five specialists from Switzerland worked in their respective domains: Philippe Ruffieux (ceramology), Inès Matter-Horisberger

(archaeology and drawing), Alain Peillex (archaeology and drawing), Patricia Jehger (drawing) and Jean-Michel Yoyotte (photography). Prof. Dominique Valbelle (University of Paris IV, La Sorbonne) worked on the publication of the engraved blocs of Dukki Gel.

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The investigations during this campaign focused on the following sites:

- Wadi El-Arab, where destructions of a part of the site led us to extend the stratigraphic trenches to better understand the succession of human occupations and the sedimentation processes. A new surface of 64 square metres was opened to the west to search for the presence of additional huts dug into the ground.
- The eastern cemetery with the continuation of the excavation in the area of Ancient Kerma. In parallel, the low protection wall was completed with the building of a new section of about 1000 metres.
- Dukki-Gel, where Charles Bonnet continued his work on temples, sanctuaries and fortifications of Nubian or Egyptian traditions (18<sup>th</sup> dynasty). He also pursued the restoration of the site by reconstructing in mud brick the foundations of the main buildings.

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