

K E R M A

2008 - 2009

SOUDAN

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Université de Neuchâtel
Documents de la mission archéologique suisse au Soudan
2009 | I

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I M P R E S S U M

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A first inauguration of the Kerma Museum took place on 19 January 2008, bringing together local authorities and representatives of several foreign countries, notably the Swiss ambassador. However, museographic work had not been entirely completed and the construction and installation of the three scale models representing the reconstruction of the main sites had yet to be done. These models were created between the end of 2007 and June 2008; they were the objects of a focus exhibition at the museum of Laténium, which opened on 17 June 2008. The exhibition closed on 25 August, a few days before the models were sent to Sudan. This event was covered by the media (*Le Temps*, *Le Matin dimanche*, *le Courrier*, *l'Express*, regional news reports and two broadcasts on the show “Impatience” on the SSR).

The three models, created by Hugo Lienhardt, represent the Mesolithic hut of El-Barga at the scale of 1/10 (7000 BC; fig. 23), the Pre-Kerma agglomeration at the scale of 1/100 (3000 BC) and the city of Kerma, scale of 1/100 (2500-1500 BC; fig. 24). Following their installation in the Kerma Museum at the beginning of the year, a second inauguration was held on 10 January 2009. The second event was attended by a Swiss delegation comprised of political, scientific and academic personalities, by Sudanese ministers, and representatives from the local and regional authorities. On this occasion, the members of the Sudanese Committee of the Kerma Museum have stressed the importance of the cultural centre located near the museum complex (fig. 25).

Figure 23 | Scale model of El-Barga in the gallery dedicated to the Mesolithic period.



Figure 24 | Scale model of the city of Kerma.

Indeed, this centre will enable studies related to the excavations and the museum collections to be conducted, will increase the interaction between Swiss and Sudanese researchers, and will increase the participation of universities in this field (universities of Dongola, Karima and Neuchâtel).



Figure 25 | View of the museum and the cultural centre during construction.





Figure 26 | Members of the Swiss delegation at the museum on the inauguration day.

The interest shown towards the Museum by the local and regional population in 2008 exceeds our expectations. Whereas foreign visitors count only for 500 admissions (the country remaining difficult to enter), the number of Sudanese visitors is close to 16,000.

This incredible success can be explained by the population's participation in the excavations for several decades, their sensibility towards their cultural heritage and their interest in everything concerning their origins and their identity. The Swiss delegation noted the success of this undertaking and the relevance in developing collaborations in the fields of culture and training, even in a country that appears at first glance to present other priorities (fig. 26).

During the winter 2008-2009, a website has been created which presents the activities of the Swiss archaeological mission in Sudan. Made in French and English, it shows the main activities of the team, the historic of the research, the scientific results, many images, some publications in PDF file and the work on the museum. The address is www.kerma.ch.

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FIGURE ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Camille Fallet	Palaeoanthropology of human skeletal remains found in the Ancient Kerma graves
Charles Bonnet	Dukki Gel: temples and fortifications
Philippe Ruffieux	The pottery of Dukki Gel
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