

K E R M A

2009-2010

SOUDAN

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Neuchâtel.

Cover figure : figurine of a giraffe found in the Kerma cemetery during the 2009-
2010 season. Dimensions : 6x4x2 cm. Photography : Philippe Marti.

The investigations of the Swiss Archaeological Mission started on December 4, 2009 and ended on February 2, 2010. As usual, the mission was organized in two teams. The first conducted by Matthieu Honegger studied one of the oldest sedentary settlements of the area (Mesolithic/Early Neolithic) and followed its program on the beginning of the Kerma civilisation in the eastern cemetery. During the same time, the second team directed by Charles Bonnet excavated the site of Dukki Gel in order to understand the end of the Kerma kingdom and the development of Egyptian colonisation of the area. Mr. Abdelhai Abdelsawi, inspector and director of the Museum of Kerma, monitored the fieldwork.

The team directed by Matthieu Honegger worked in the site of Wadi el-Arab, in the eastern cemetery of Kerma and in the Museum of Kerma. A new excavation house was also built on the NCAM concession in the eastern cemetery. The team was composed of the *rais* Khidir Magbul who lead 20 local workers. Three specialists from Switzerland worked in their respective domain: Marc Bundi (supervision of the construction of the new house), Magali Babey (HeArc Le Locle, design of the Museum showcases) and Daniel Conforti (archaeology and drawing). Six students from the University of Neuchâtel (Lucie Bovet, Camille Fallet, Giovanni Foletti, Bastien Jakob, Philippe Marti, Cécile Wiedmer) and a student from the University of Khartoum (Shahinda Omer) participated in the mission. Three of the Swiss students are writing Masters' theses on a subject linked with Kerma archaeology. Camille Fallet is working on the biological anthropology of the ancient Kerma graves of the eastern cemetery, Bastien Jakob on the technology and typology of the lithic artefacts of Wadi el-Arab and Cecile Widmer on the creation and operating of the Museum of Kerma.

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 composed of the *rais* Gad Abdallah, Saleh Melieh, Abdelrazek Omer Nuri and Idriss Osman Idriss, who lead 60 local workers. Five specialists from Switzerland worked in their respective domain: Philippe Ruffieux (ceramic studies), 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 epigraphic material of Dukki Gel, in view of their forthcoming publication.

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The investigations focused on excavations of :

- a new sector in Wadi el-Arab
- ancient Kerma graves in the northern part of the eastern cemetery
- fortifications and temples in Dukki Gel.

The team also worked on the restoration and preservation of the main archaeological sites:

- restoration of the Nubian fortifications of Dukki Gel with mud bricks bastions
- construction of a wall at the top of the western deffufa for visitor security and protection of the monument (figure 1); reconstruction of a chapel with a type of temenos built with bastions
- reinforcement of the embankment protecting the eastern cemetery and topography of the NCAM lot to stop the perpetual problem of the expansion of the adjoining cultivated fields
- construction of a new excavation house close to the eastern cemetery and a house for the new *gaffir* of the eastern cemetery (Khidir Magbul).

Finally, the installation of the Museum of Kerma was continued in 2010:

- Permanent installation of two exhibition cases in the Prehistoric section in January: labels English/Arabic, display of the objects, drawings and images. This is a test for the upcoming installation of twenty other cases that is scheduled for winter 2011-2012
- In March and April 2010, a team blocked all the windows and some unused entrances of the Museum to protect the exhibition area from the dust, so abundant in Sudan.

Figure 1 | The western deffufa with the new wall built at its top.



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FIGURES

Matthieu Honegger	Figures 1, 3, 6, 7, 20, 22, 25
Bastien Jakob	Figures 2, 10
Camille Fallet	Figures 11, 12, 14, 15
Philippe Marti	Figures 5, 8, 9, 13, 16, 17, 26, 27
Team of Charles Bonnet	Figures 18, 19, 21
Philippe Ruffieux	Figure 23
Jean-Michel Yoyotte	Figure 24

SUMMARY

- Matthieu Honegger & Charles Bonnet Archaeological excavations at Kerma (Sudan)
Preliminary report to the 2009-2010 season
- Matthieu Honegger Mesolithic and early Neolithic habitation remains
of Wadi El-Arab
- Matthieu Honegger The ancient Kerma area of the eastern cemetery
- Camille Fallet Paleoanthropological study of the oldest sectors
of the eastern cemetery
- Philippe Marti The Kerma eastern cemetery :
design of a relational database
- Charles Bonnet New discoveries at Dukki Gel
- Philippe Ruffieux The pottery of Dukki Gel
- Matthieu Honegger Protection of the eastern cemetery
and building of the new house