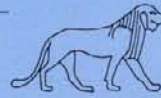


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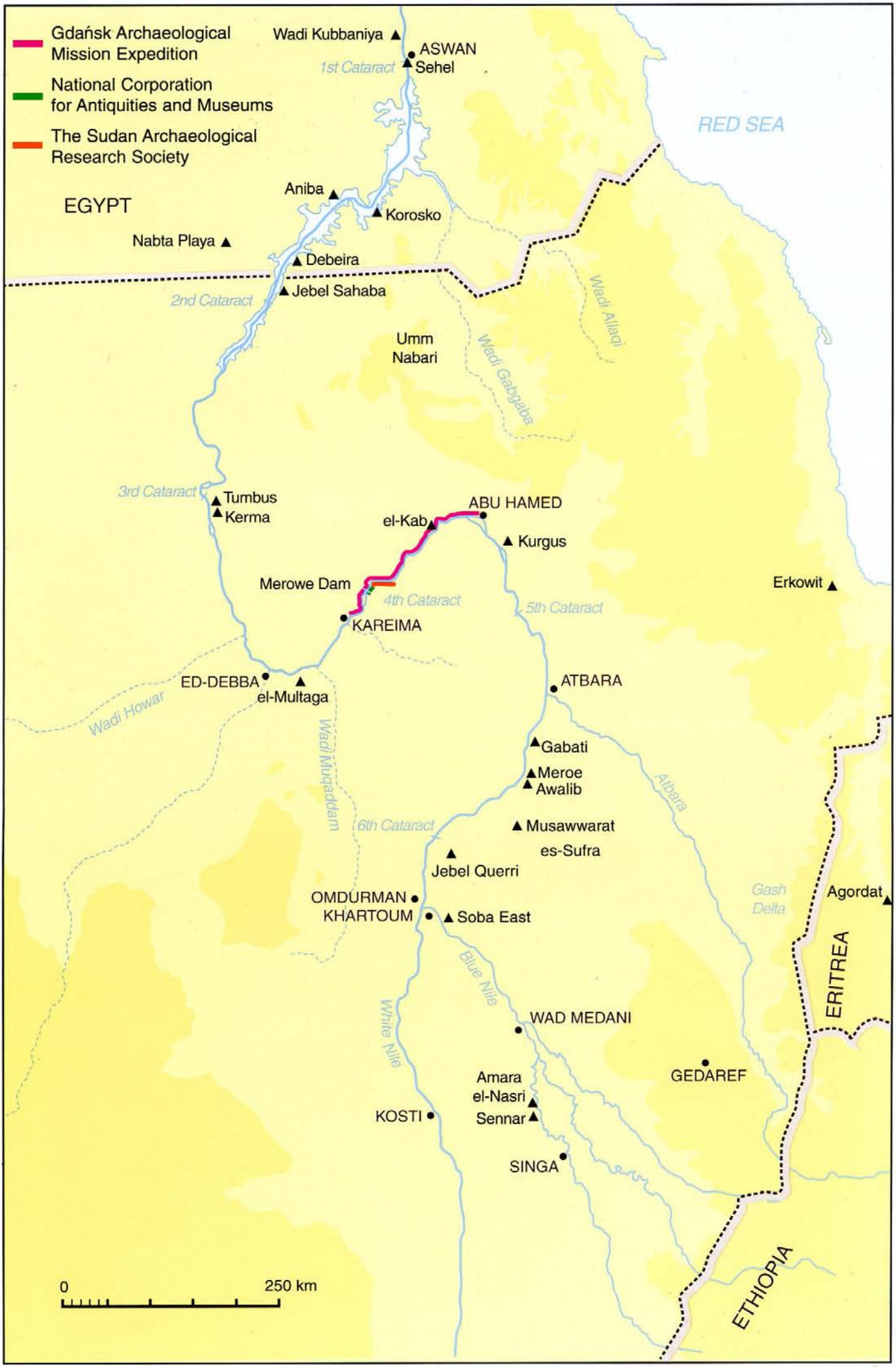
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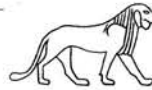
2003





SUDAN & NUBIA

The Sudan Archaeological Research Society



Bulletin No. 7 2003

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Introduction

Vivian Davies

The Society's two major events of the year, the results of which are published here - the Kirwan Memorial Lecture delivered in October, 2002, and the colloquium on recent fieldwork held in May, 2003 - were extremely well attended. The colloquium incorporated a special session, led by Dr. Salah Mohamed Ahmed, NCAM Director of Excavations, on the Merowe Dam salvage project. The response has been encouraging. Since the colloquium, several organisations have applied for concessions, joining the existing four missions of Gdańsk, NCAM, the French Unit and SARS. Many more are still needed. Interested parties should contact Dr Salah at NCAM tel./fax. 249 11 786784 or the International Society for Nubian Studies c/o dwelsby@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk.

The work of the Gdańsk Archaeological Museum Expedition in the Sudan

Zbigniew Borowski

The Gdańsk Archaeological Museum occupies a building which was formerly home to the Society of Natural Sciences (*Societas Physicae Experimentalis*), founded in 1742. During the Second World War, when the city of Gdańsk suffered heavy damages, the Society building was destroyed (Plate 1), and its existing collections were mostly lost or dispersed.

In the years after the war, efforts were made to restore the Museum's exhibitions, based on materials recovered from regional excavations. However, a growing collection of artefacts donated to the Museum by Polish emigrants, seamen and voyagers also led to considerable public interest in more exotic cultures. The popularity of these exhibitions resulted in the Museum establishing a department of Non-European Cultures. Close co-operation with other Polish archaeologists already working in the Sudan gave us the opportunity to set up our own Nubian archaeological mission.

Our first visit to Sudan, in 1993, did not get off to a good start — the ship carrying our vehicles and expedition equipment to Port Sudan got as far as Holland before colliding with another vessel and having to turn back to Gdańsk. So any success our group had during this first season was only achieved thanks to the help of colleagues from the Sudanese Antiquities Service.



Plate 1. The Gdańsk Archaeological Museum's main building in 1945.

Season 1: Jebel Querri

Ultimately, in accordance with an earlier agreement dating from November 1993, the Gdańsk Archaeological Museum Expedition (GAME) started survey and mapping work at the reportedly Neolithic site of Jebel Querri (Plate 2), some 70km north of Khartoum, near the Sixth Cataract (Paner 1998).

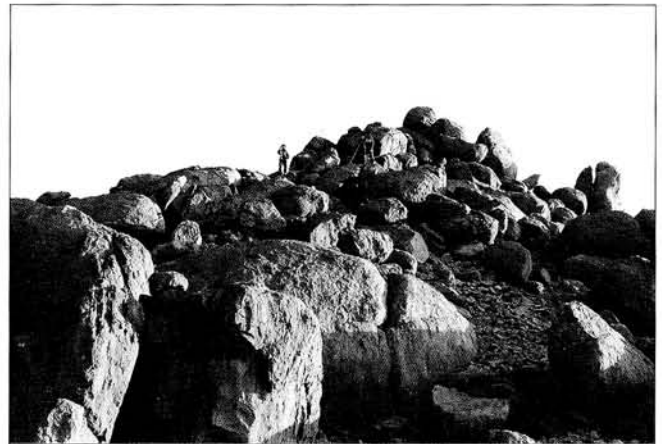


Plate 2. Site survey at Jebel Querri, 1993.

Site Topography

The Jebel Querri site lies in an almost flat area of desert, sloping off slightly towards the east, south and south-east. The most prominent relief is two vertical *jebels* separated by a dirt road running east–west. Within the boulders of the larger *jebel* there is a shallow valley closed to the east by an artificial construction of piled stones.

Preliminary examination led to several different features being identified at this site.

At first glance the site appears to be multi-cultural, occupation extending far further back than the Neolithic period. Among the stone artefacts many forms bear a strong resemblance to products of the Levallois culture (60,000–40,000 BP). A row of horseshoe-shaped constructions found along the south side of the *jebel* probably represent the remains of human dwellings.

Neolithic material lies scattered all around *Jebel 1*, as well as within the aforementioned valley. It consists predominantly of grindstones, querns, mace heads, all types of blade and stone debitage. Other than the lithic artefacts a substantial amount of pottery was also noted, some of which belonged to the wavy line variety. Several tumuli were recorded on the south and south-east side of *Jebel 1*.

A cave showing traces of modern usage was found in *Jebel 2*. Nevertheless, its location strongly suggests much earlier occupation as a shelter for prehistoric people.

Sennar

After completing our work at Jebel Querri we were asked by the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM) to carry out an archaeological reconnaissance in



and around the present-day town of Sennar (Colour plate XLIII), to determine the boundaries of the old capital of the Funj Sultanate. During this survey an overall map of the site was produced. Thanks to aerial photographs some of the less prominent features of the town were localised, such as fortifications and other walls of larger buildings. The surface finds we collected, mostly pottery fragments, were put in storage at the National Museum in Khartoum.

Season 2: Shendi Atbara – Awalib

In January 1995 GAME was asked to take part in the Khartoum – Atbara road project, working on the section of road from Shendi to Begrawiya.

The main aim of the project was to survey both sides of the planned course of the road, covering a belt of approximately 200m in width, and to record all visible features and scatters of archaeological material noticed within this zone.

Special attention was to be paid to three sites which, despite being near the road, were outside the planned fieldwalking zone, and therefore not in any immediate danger from the road construction works. These sites were:

1. A group of tumuli in Begrawiya
2. Awalib
3. Abu Erteila

The survey covered a well-known region where several long-term archaeological projects had previously taken place. A total of 38 archaeological sites incorporating 221 features were recorded.

Particular attention was given to the Awalib temple site resulting in a 3-D representation and detailed contour map of all its features and the surrounding terrain. This site had probably first been discovered by Cailliaud, although he referred to it as el-Maroug and Dangiella (Cailliaud 1826). Later it was mentioned by Crowfoot in his book *The Island of Meroe* (Crowfoot 1911) and was also recorded by Hintze in his article on survey work in the Butana published in *Kush* 7 (Hintze 1959).

Altogether six *koms* were identified with evidence of buildings within four of them. This evidence consisted of fragments of ceramic building materials, structural elements and sandstone masonry detail. Only pottery sherds and human bones were found in the other two features, as well as numerous grave robbers' shafts. The entire site occupies an area of approximately 100,000m².

Some 300m south of Awalib there are two large mounds within the perimeter of an extensive hafir, covered with fragments of fired bricks. Five large sections of column drum on the west slope of Feature 148 point to the remains of a public building there. At the time of our reconnaissance work the Awalib site was being progressively destroyed by lorry traffic using a route cutting through the centre of the site. Observations at the time led us to believe that it was also being looted of its remaining architectural detail and sandstone blocks, a fact confirmed by later inspections. These

findings were reported to NCAM and the results of our survey, together with accompanying documentation, was published in volume 17 of *Kush* (Paner 1997).

Finally, at Abu Erteila we recorded what also seemed to be a building complex composed of four mounds. All four of these features consisted of heaped up fragments of fired bricks with no evidence of any other building materials present. The thin scatter of pottery within the site was mainly Meroitic.

Seasons 3, 4 and 5

GAME applied for a concession to work at the Awalib temple complex, but NCAM pointed to the necessity for rescue work in the Fourth Cataract region. Thus, during the next three seasons we concentrated our efforts on the Hamdab Dam project (see Paner, this volume) and did not return to Awalib until 2001.

Seasons 6 and 7

The first season of excavation work at Awalib concentrated on two areas: *Kom A* and *Kom B*.

The largest of the six mounds, *Kom A*, was about 4m high, 61m long and 39m wide (Plate 3). We wanted to reveal the external walls of the feature hidden beneath this *komp*, in order to assess its size and extent. The outer walls of the construction, about 1.25m thick, formed a rectangle (46.27

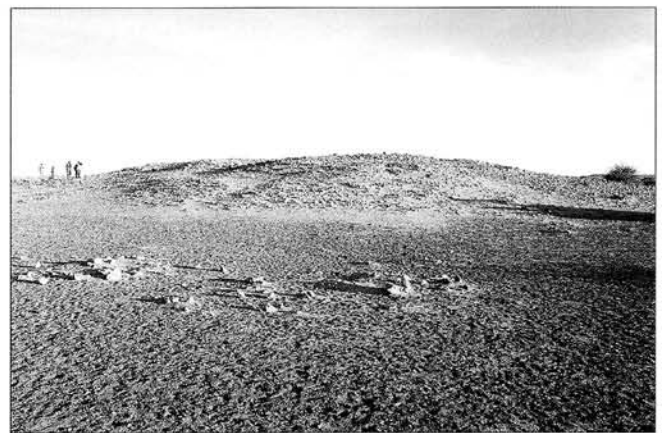


Plate 3. The Awalib temple complex, Kom A.

x 24.23m). Its longer walls were orientated roughly west-east, with a slight south east inclination. There were two entrances into this building, the main one from the east, flanked by pylons, and a smaller one from the south. The southern entrance may have had a kind of portico, one drum of which was found in situ. Excavation showed that the building had been badly damaged by stone and brick robbers. Nevertheless, the outer walls were still visible allowing for a fairly accurate reconstruction of the plan. The upper part of the mound, which probably contains the core of the building, was not explored during this season.

In later years, when the complex was no longer used as a

temple, the mound served as a cemetery, probably for passing nomads. Burials excavated to-date are scattered very thinly around *Kom A*; the lack of any grave goods makes it difficult to date them.

In this same area, about 30m south west of the main temple, stood *Kom B*. Excavation of this kom revealed the stone foundations (Colour plate XLIV) of what had probably been a service building situated behind the main temple. The building in question was rectangular in plan, measuring 31 x 25m. Its longer walls ran along a roughly south-north axis. The north-west section of the building, situated beneath a contemporary vehicle route, had been damaged. Ten rooms survived, adjoining the outside walls and surrounding a large inner room or courtyard. The central room was divided from the outer rooms by an internal corridor. In seven of the ten rooms numerous fragments of pottery were found. These mostly took the form of large storage jars which had had their bases removed and been positioned upside-down on the floor. Large amounts of ash were found inside these vessels. What they were used for is not entirely clear — they may have served as small stoves, either for heating or cooking. Two rooms each contained more than a dozen examples of this type of vessel. Other pottery finds included domestic wares and fine ware.

The excavated building had been damaged in a number of places when graves (probably Christian or Islamic) were later dug here (Plate 4).

The exact function of this building is difficult to estab-

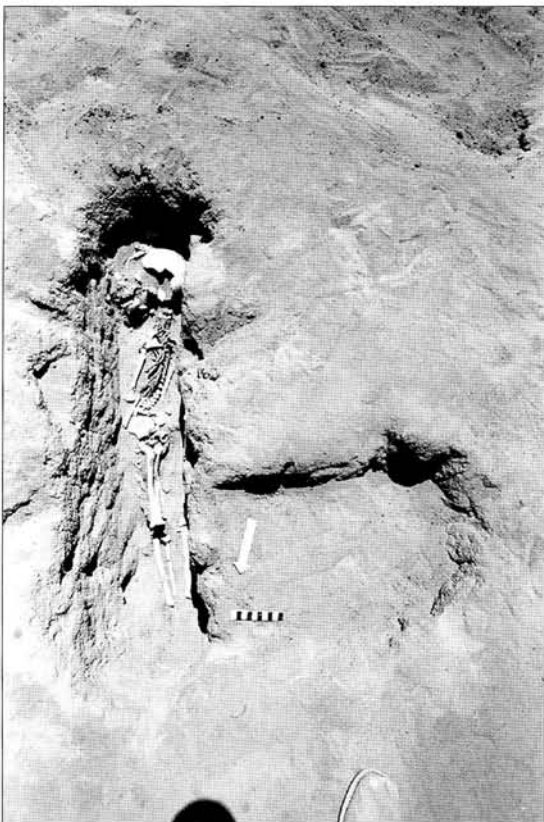


Plate 4. Intrusive burial at the Awalib temple complex.

lish. It seems possible that it may have been a storehouse or kitchen on the edge of the temple complex. Following a break during 2002 (which was entirely devoted to the Fourth Cataract project), excavations at Awalib were resumed in 2003 (Figure 1).

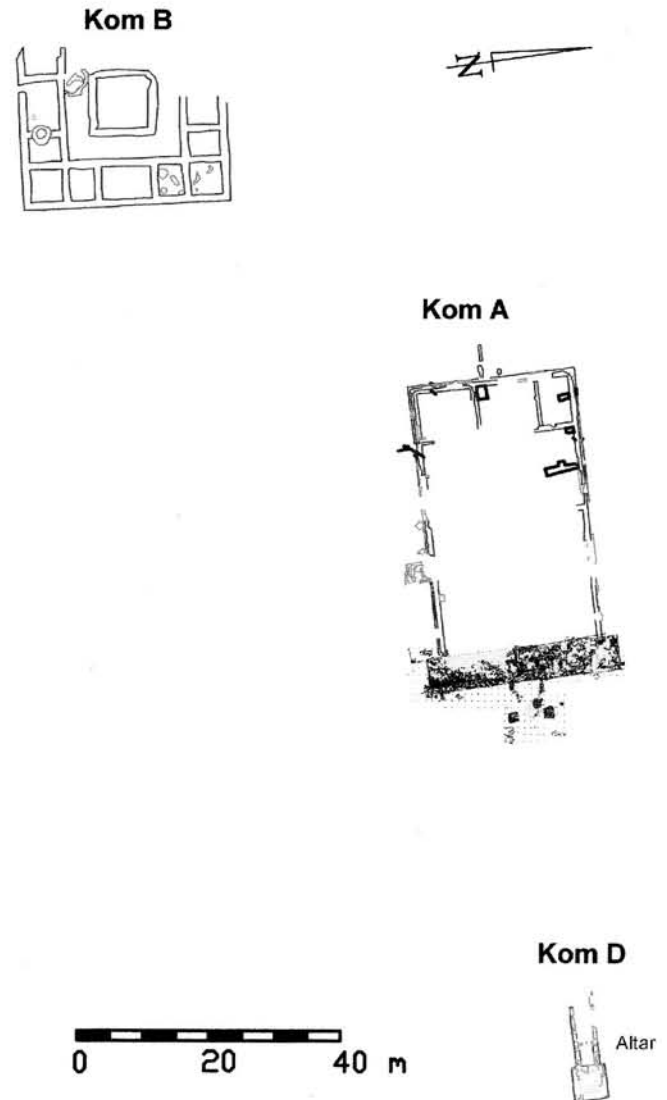


Figure 1. Plan showing areas excavated at the Awalib temple complex.

This time work started systematically at the east entrance and proceeded along the whole front, up to the area behind the pylons. New evidence for several phases of the complex was found, including two rectangular foundations for some, now missing, sculptures which probably lined the way to the temple, and at least two floor levels leading to the central building, which has yet to be excavated. The foundations of a construction made of re-used stone blocks from the main temple and the remains of a kiln provided evidence of a later habitation phase.

Kom C was also investigated. Surprisingly, below the sandy mound no traces of any constructions were found. In fact, the mound looked like a spoil heap from some previous ex-



cavations, either controlled or carried out without any permission from the relevant authorities. We will need to do some checking in the archives to shed more light on this matter. Having found nothing of interest, as regards the temple, in *Kom C* we shifted our attention to *Koms D* and *E*. Beneath *Kom D* the foundation of another construction was discovered, consisting of square mastaba-like feature (5 x 5m), and bordering it from the west a rectangular annexe with two rooms. The precise function of this structure is not clear, but it seems to have been connected with the main building, as it appears to lie at the prolongation of the main approach to the temple. As was the case with almost all of the features excavated, two later burials were found here. Another two were located on *Kom E*, which again were difficult to date because no grave goods accompanied them.

Other than our archaeological work, GAME also has an ongoing ethnographic project led by our ethnographer colleague Andrzej Błażyński. His work has been especially important in the Fourth Cataract region, where the construction of the dam will lead to local people being resettled and some of their existing customs being lost. Błażyński's research deals with scarification (Colour plate XLV) and circumcision rites, especially of the Shaigiya and Manasir tribes. Observing the rapid changes taking place among Sudanese communities, GAME has also taken an interest in preserving the material culture of other parts of the country. Thus we have undertaken numerous trips — to Kassala in the east, Suakin and Port Sudan in the north, Jebel Mara in the west, and as far south as it was possible to travel (to Rosseires). The ethnographic artefacts acquired during these trips, together with our archaeological finds, became the foundation for a permanent Sudanese exhibition (Plate 5) which is one of the main attractions for the public visiting Gdańsk Archaeological Museum.



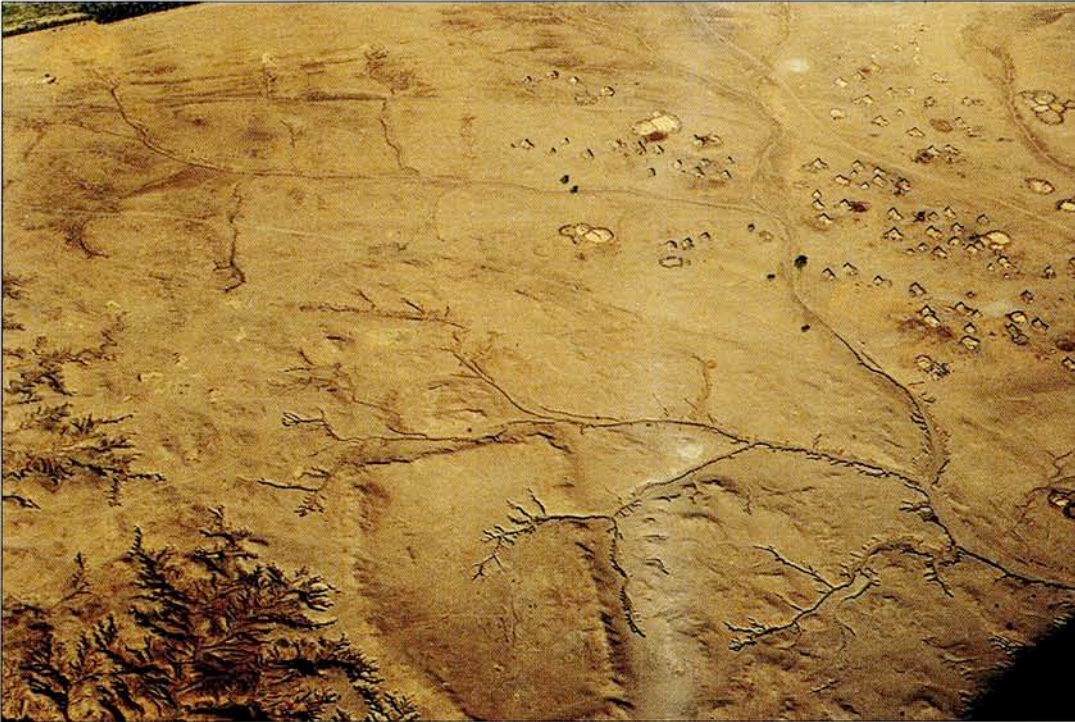
Plate 5. Part of the ethnographic section of the Gdańsk Archaeological Museum's Sudanese exhibition.

To integrate Polish archaeologists working in Sudan, from the very first year of our work there we have organised a three-day Nubiological conference at the end of every season. This gives all Polish missions an opportunity to present

and discuss their most recent results. Papers presented at conference are subsequently printed in our publication: *Gdańsk Archaeological Museum African Reports*.

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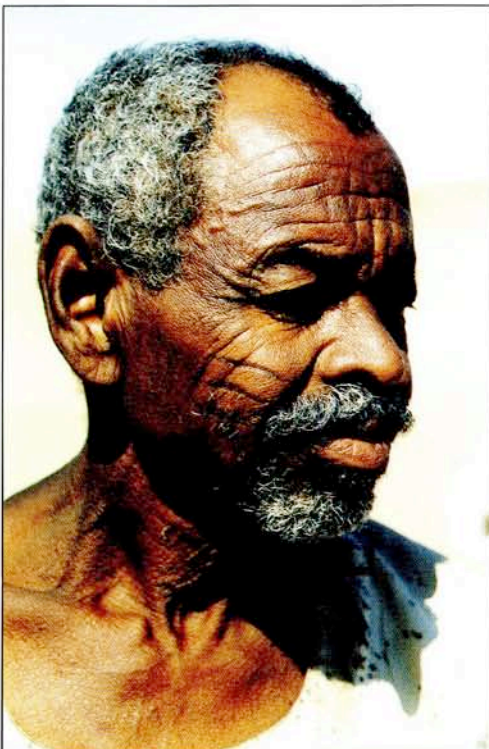
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Colour plate XLIII. Gdańsk Archaeological Museum Expedition. Aerial view of Sennar.



Colour plate XLIV. GAME. Part of the stone foundations discovered beneath Kom B at the Awalib temple complex.



*Colour plate XLV. GAME.
An example of Shaigiya facial scarification.*