

ELEVENTH SEASON OF EXCAVATIONS AT KADERO (SUDAN)

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The eleventh season of excavations at Kadero, Khartoum Province, Sudan, lasted from 3rd February through 1st March 1989. Similarly to all previous seasons, the project was carried out by the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of Warsaw University in collaboration with Poznań Archaeological Museum. The field party was composed of seven members who were delegated by such Polish institutions as the Poznań Archaeological Museum, University of Poznań and the Jagiellonian University in Kraków; in addition members of the Sorbonne University in Paris (IV) and the Egyptian Museum in Munich (West Germany) also took part in the excavations.

Traditionally, the expedition enjoyed the cooperation and assistance of the Sudan Directorate for Antiquities and National Museums in Khartoum.

The programme of the season included testing of the Neolithic settlement and its burial ground. In particular, the testing of the Neolithic burial ground dated to the 5th millennium BC was of major importance, since it would shed more light on the social composition of the local human population, its morphology and demography.

The testing of the settlement midden situated in the northern part of the mound was executed by excavating a pit of 3 square meters reaching the depth of 0.60 m. Typical refuse was found in the pit and its contents (lithics, ceramics, animal remains) is under study by appropriate specialists. Interesting results are awaited from the investigation of plant remains recovered through flotation of the soil from the pit.

The testing of the Neolithic burial ground situated in the central part of the mound was done by excavating total area of c. 800

square meters. It was an extension of the trench excavated here in the last three seasons. The dig was done to a depth of 1 m. Altogether 31 graves were found and explored this season (nos. 86-116) but six of them were found outside the trench, on the heavily eroded surface of the mound (a careful inspection of the mound is routine practice carried out in the morning hours when human remains are best visible). Out of all these graves, 29 inhumations were of Neolithic date and two were of the Meroitic period.

While most of the Neolithic graves did not contain any furnishing, about one third of them did, and several of the latter contained particularly rich belongings by the standards of the Neolithic/Pre-dynastic cultures of Sudan. This furnishing consisted of personal adornments (carnelian beads and marine shells forming necklaces and armlets), palettes of porphyry and sandstone, malachite/amazonite and ochre lumps, blades of composite tools of quartz, bracelets made of elephant ivory and sherds of pottery vessels of a fine (table) ware. The pits of these rich graves were oval in plan and up to 0.95 m deep. The bottom had a discolouration which undoubtedly resulted from the ochre paint having been applied either to the container for the corpse or to the corpse itself. These rich graves adjoin several others found in the previous three seasons in this part of the mound and they form together a clear cluster of inhumations. It is thought that they are the burials of the Neolithic social elite. The dead were adult men and women as well as children, according to the determinations made in the field by physical anthropologists. It is thought that they represented the Neolithic social elite.

The Meroitic graves did not contain any equipment and their chronology was determined on the basis of the position of the skeleton and bone preservation. These traits were similar to those of other Meroitic graves found earlier at Kadero in association with grave goods.

The next season at Kadero is planned for the winter of 1991 and its major goal will be further testing of the Neolithic cemetery and flotation of the settlement midden.

It is worth adding that as a result of the partition of the major part of the contents of the Neolithic graves made between Sudanese authorities and the expedition, a very valuable assemblage of finds was transferred to the Poznań Archaeological Museum for conservation treatment, specialized studies and display.