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Research in the PCMA UW Concession on the Fourth Cataract (Hamdab Dam Rescue Project) : Interim Report 2009

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RESEARCH IN THE PCMA UW CONCESSION ON THE FOURTH CATARACT (HAMDAB DAM RESCUE PROJECT). INTERIM REPORT 2009

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Abstract: The main aim of research in 2009 was documentation of rock art discovered during previous seasons, as well as newly found this year. Research was concentrated on rock drawings near Keheili, Gamamiya and in the Gebel Gurgurib region. The survey in the desert along the wadis going from the south to the Nile in the area of Keheili and Gamamiya recorded 27 new sites, dated from the Middle Palaeolithic to modern times. The archaeological material is modest, but confirms penetration of the desert, especially in Neolithic times. A few sites were tested in the vicinity of El-Ar village. Site El-Ar P1 contained graves dated to Middle Kerma and Late Meroitic, El-Ar 37 was a separate grave of Kerma date and El-Ar 31 comprised four Post-Meroitic tumuli.

Keywords: Fourth Nile Cataract, rock-art, Kerma, post-Meroitic

The last season of investigations in the concession of the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of the University of Warsaw (PCMA UW) took place in January–February 2009. The main

goal was to document rock art found in the concession. An archaeological survey of Gamamiya and Keheili regions was also completed, concurrently with excavations carried out in the El-Ar area.

ROCK ART DOCUMENTATION

Most of the team focused on documenting rock art discovered during the previous seasons, as well as newly found this year. In addition to the site Hagar el-Beida 38 (Chłodnicki *et alii* 2007: 342), three different areas were visited: Keheili, Gamamiya and Gebel Gurgurib (for previous reports on

rock art recording by Polish teams in this area, see Kuciewicz 2008; Piasecki 2008; Jaroni, Kuciewicz 2010).

In the Keheili area, the following sites were documented:

Keheili 5 (N 19°23'18.9"; E 32°50'20.5")

Keheili 14 (N 19°23'33.5"; E 32°50'49.2")

Keheili 16 (N 19°23'38.2"; E 32°50'49.5")
 Keheili 17 (N19°23'38.6"; E 32°50'46.1")
 Keheili 19 (N19°24'1.3"; E 32°50'55.8")
 and newly discovered Keheili 38, and
 Keheili 39 (for details, see gazetteer below).

In the Gamamiya area, two known sites,
 Gamamiya 13 (N 19°19'13.8"; E 32°48'
 15/6") and Gamamiya 67 (N 19°21'19.1";
 E 32°48'37.8") were revisited and the
 following sites recorded:

Gamamiya 30 (N19°20'34.6"; E 32°48'24.4")
 Gamamiya 75 (N19°21'22"; E 32°48'48.8")
 Gamamiya 79 (N19°21'24.6"; E 32°48'53.4")
 Gamamiya 80 (N19°21'26.7"; E 32°48'56")
 Gamamiya 105 (for details, see gazetteer
 below).

The third concentration of petroglyphs,
 on which the team focused attention, was
 located in the Gebel Gurgurib area.

The petroglyphs were documented
 in threefold manner: digital photography,
 tracing of selected images on transparent
 film (polyethylene) and taking silicon casts
 [Fig. 1]. All images were photographed,
 but only the most representative ones were
 traced, the selection being determined by
 formal differentiation of given images.

In turn, the cast technique was developed
 by Kazimierz Raba from the Poznań
 Academy of Fine Arts in an effort to
 reproduce back home exact gypsum copies
 of rock images. About a dozen casts were
 made. A collection of 20 petroglyphs on
 small loose stones was also collected for
 study purposes. For a detailed report on
 this work and the findings, see Kuciewicz,
 Rozwadowski 2012, in this volume.

A kind of rasp(?) was found on the
 site of Gamamiya 30 (see below, 380 and
 Fig. 8). The site was discovered in 2007
 (Chłodnicki *et alii* 2010), but the whole
 surface of the object had not been cleaned
 until now. Pottery from the Neolithic
 and Kerma periods was collected in the
 vicinity.

Chronological and cultural attribution
 of rock art encounters many difficulties,
 but at least in a few cases the archaeological
 material from the neighborhood could
 be dated to the Kerma or late Meroitic–
 post-Meroitic periods. Christian symbols
 recognized in places indicated the date
 of some of the sites (see Kuciewicz,
 Rozwadowski 2012, in this volume).

Team

Dates of work: 18 January–10 February 2009

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NCAM representative: Fathiya Abdelrahman

Archaeologists: Artur Buszek, Dr. Maciej Czech, Dr. Anna Longa, Ewa Kuciewicz, Michał Kurzyk,
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Anthropologist: Dr. Maurycy Stanaszek (State Archaeological Museum in Warsaw)

Zoologist: Dr. Jan Śmiałowski (Poznań University of Life Sciences, Faculty of Animal Breeding and
 Biology)

Photographer: Maciej Jawornicki (freelance)

Sculptor: Prof. Kazimierz Raba (Artistic University in Poznań)

Student: Łukasz Trusewicz (Artistic University in Poznań)

EXCAVATIONS

Sites situated in the vicinity of the village of El-Ar were excavated. All of them were located at the edge of the desert, on the top of small hills.

Three further graves were noted on the site of El-Ar P1, where excavations had started in 2007 (Longa 2010). They were located in the northern and southern parts of the site. Two were dated to the Middle Kerma period and one to late Meroitic times. A separate grave located to the southeast of El-Ar 1 was numbered El-Ar P37. There were no grave goods in it. Potsherds obtained from the trench indicated Kerma chronology for the grave pit. El-Ar P38 was excavated close to the

quartz outcrop to the west of El-Ar P37. The pottery there was also of Middle Kerma date. No structures of any kind were discovered (for details of the above excavations, see Longa 2012, in this volume).

Four post-Meroitic tumuli located on the northeastern periphery of a large tumuli cemetery at El-Ar P31 were explored. They were from 6 m to 11 m in diameter and the superstructure was 0.50–0.60 m high. All had been looted, but even so excavations yielded pottery vessels and beads, the latter made mostly of ostrich eggshell (for a report, see Buszek, Kurzyk 2012, in this volume).

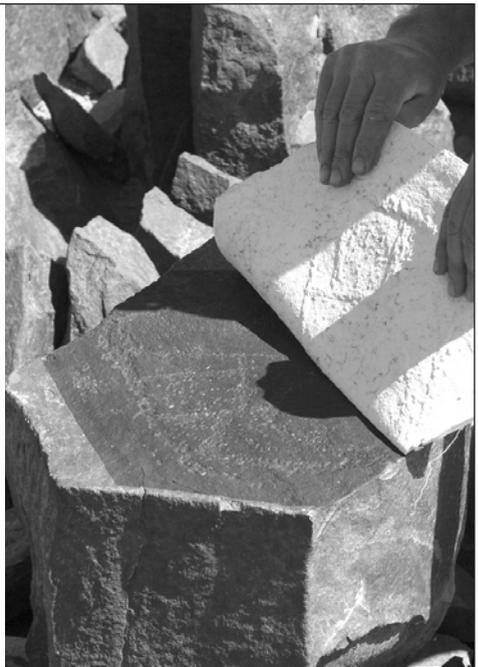


Fig. 1. Documentation procedures: tracing on film (Gamamiya 67), left, and taking a silicon cast (Keheili 17) (Photos E. Kuciewicz)

SURVEY

The survey team discovered 27 new sites, the date ranging from middle Paleolithic to modern. Not the least were a camp and a single grave of Kerma date, both of them identified in the near vicinity of the site of El-Ar P1, where excavations were being carried out this season. More sites were recognized in the Gamamiya and Keheili areas, in wadis reaching the Nile from the south.

A thorough investigation of the neighborhood of the most spectacular rock art site in the Polish concession, Gamamiya 67 (see Osypińska 2012, in this volume), revealed three rock shelters. One shelter was located at the eastern end of the gebel, giving a panoramic view to the north, east and south. A rectangular upper room, 3.40 x 1.60 m, was located some 2 m above the lower room, which measured 2.50 x 1.40 m. An oblique shaft, 0.80 m in diameter, joined the two. Small petroglyphs with representations of cows and gazelles were traced on the walls of the upper chamber. A rock with incised cross and rectangular and two Christian potsherds were also found.

The second shelter was located below the scene of the shepherds (Chłodnicki *et alii* 2010: Fig. 1). The rectangular unit measuring 2.00 m x 1.40 m was filled with soil and rock fragments.

The third shelter, located in the western part of the gebel had a view of the river. It, too, was provided with an upper and lower part, both measuring 2 m by 1 m. The upper chamber contained only soil and rock fragments, whereas the lower one yielded hundreds of potsherds. Most of the pottery was undecorated, made of clay with organic temper, brown surfaces and

black fractures. Red-slipped pottery was also common. A group of potsherds bore mat impressions on the surface. Most of the pottery appears to be connected with the post-Meroitic phase, but earlier (Kerma?) pottery has also been found [Fig. 2:5–6, 9–13; Fig. 3].

Pottery was also found under the representations of giraffes, the sherds decorated with incised lines and comb impressions, as well as brown and plain. The fabric contained either mineral or fine organic temper. The assemblage appears to be classifiable as Kerma production [Fig. 2:3–4, 7–8].

Pottery of the Kerma Horizon was also found around the destroyed tumuli located in the vicinity of the rock art [Fig. 2:1–2]. Some of the blocks in the tumuli bore petroglyph decoration and below these images, three hammerstones, made of quartz and chert, were discovered along with an axe made of green stone.

In the Keheili area the survey team proceeded about 3.5 km into the desert up the Khor Na'ama. Sites were located on the terraces and the highland above the khor. Archaeological material was scarce, but confirmed penetration of human settlement into the desert, especially in Neolithic and Kerma times [Fig. 4:4–8].

Documentation of petroglyphs at the site of Gamamiya 13 resulted in the additional discovery of a group of sites located between the site and the Nile valley. Archaeological material from the newly identified features was scarce. A decorated bowl [Fig. 4:1] was among the sherds found at a large rounded shelter located on flat ground, already in the desert (Gamamiya 103). Painted pottery

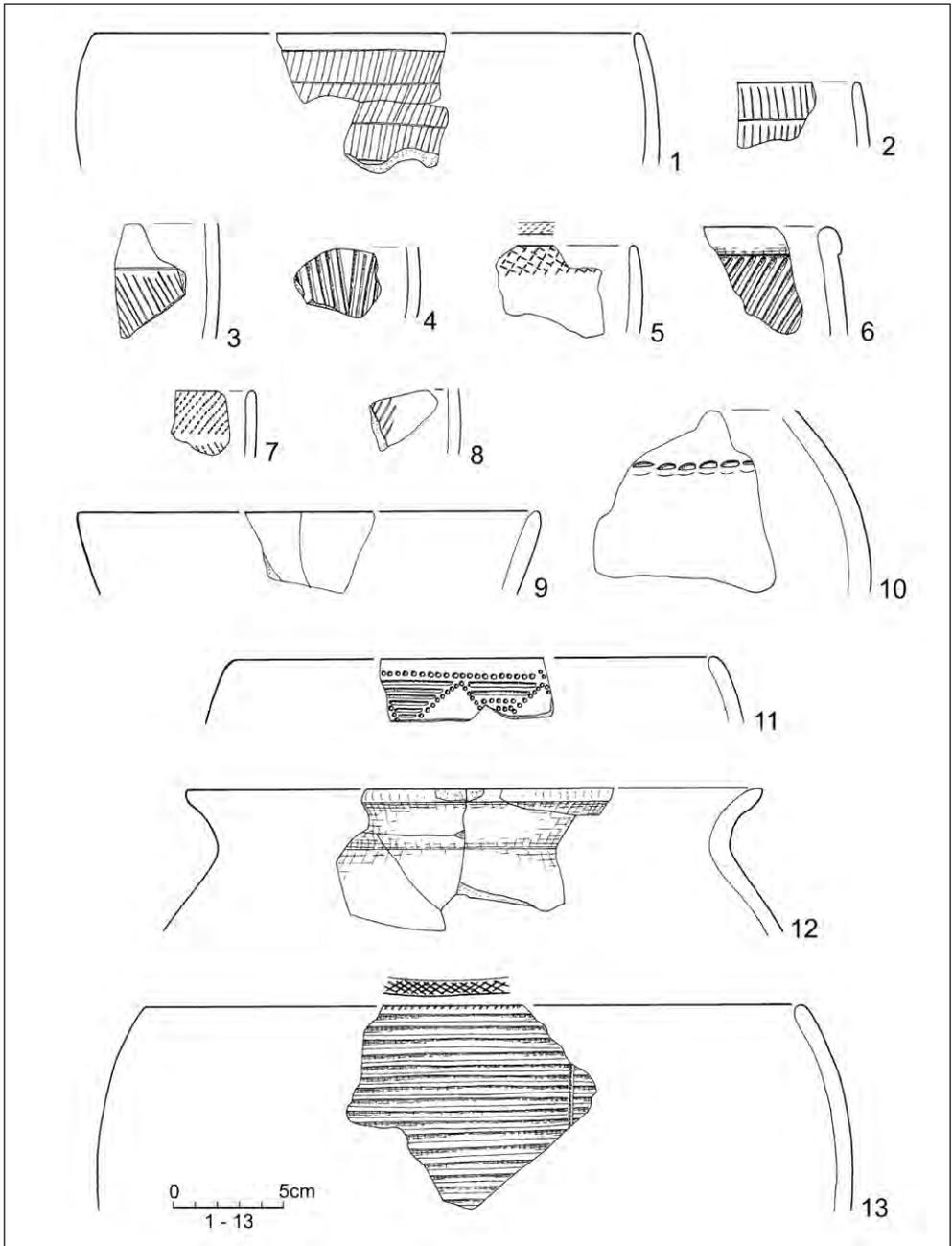


Fig. 2. Selection of Kerma-period pottery from site Gamamiya 67: 1–2 from around the tumuli; 3–4, 7–8 from below giraffe petroglyphs; 5–6, 9–13 from Shelter 3 (Drawing M. Chłodnicki)

[Fig. 4:2–3] came from a Christian site (Gamamiya 104), which appears to be a Christian site farthest from the Nile.

Finally, recording of rock art in Gebel

Gurgurib brought the team to three new prehistoric sites. One of them (GG 2) was located high in the mountains, like the other Paleolithic sites in this region.

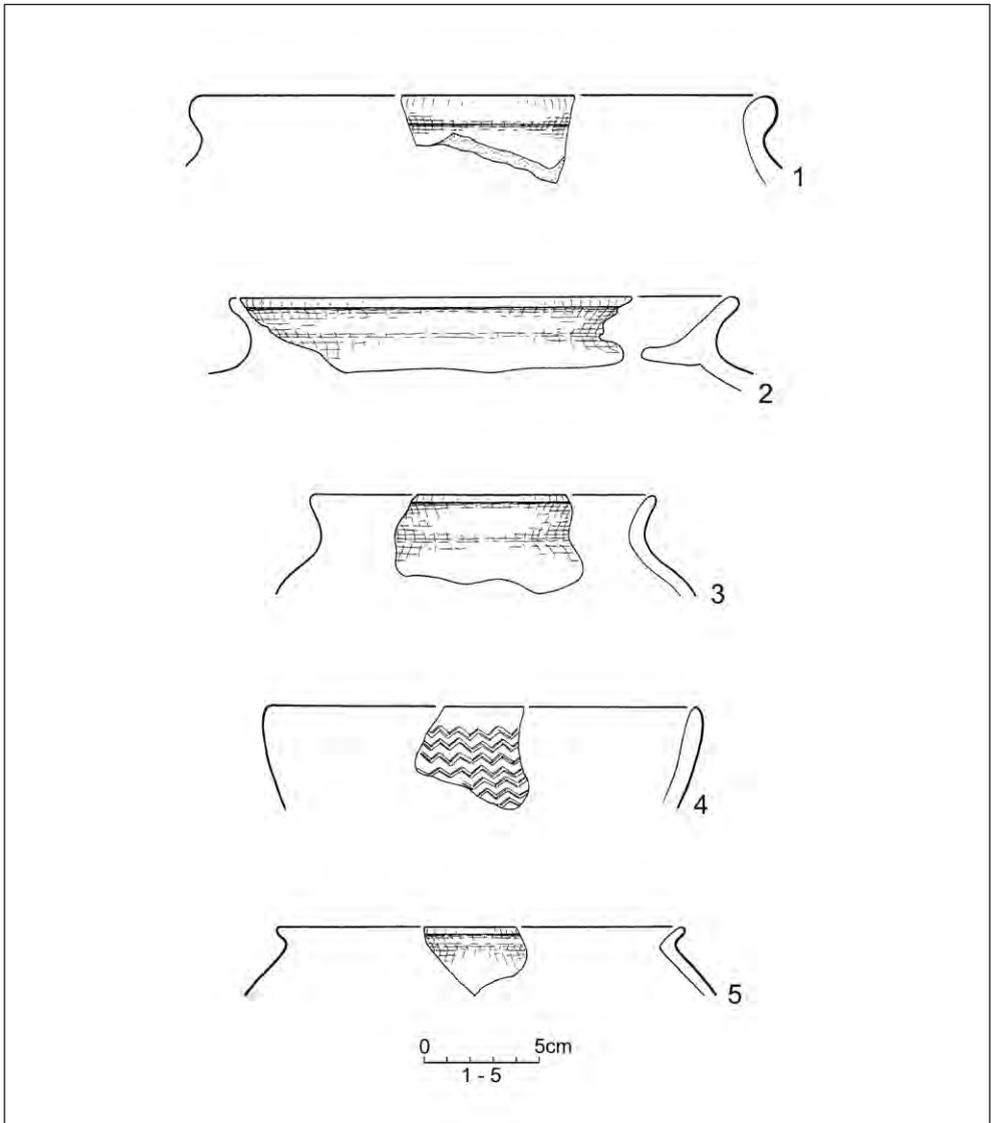


Fig. 3. Kerma-period pottery from Shelter 3 at site Gamamiya 67 (Drawing M. Chłodnicki)

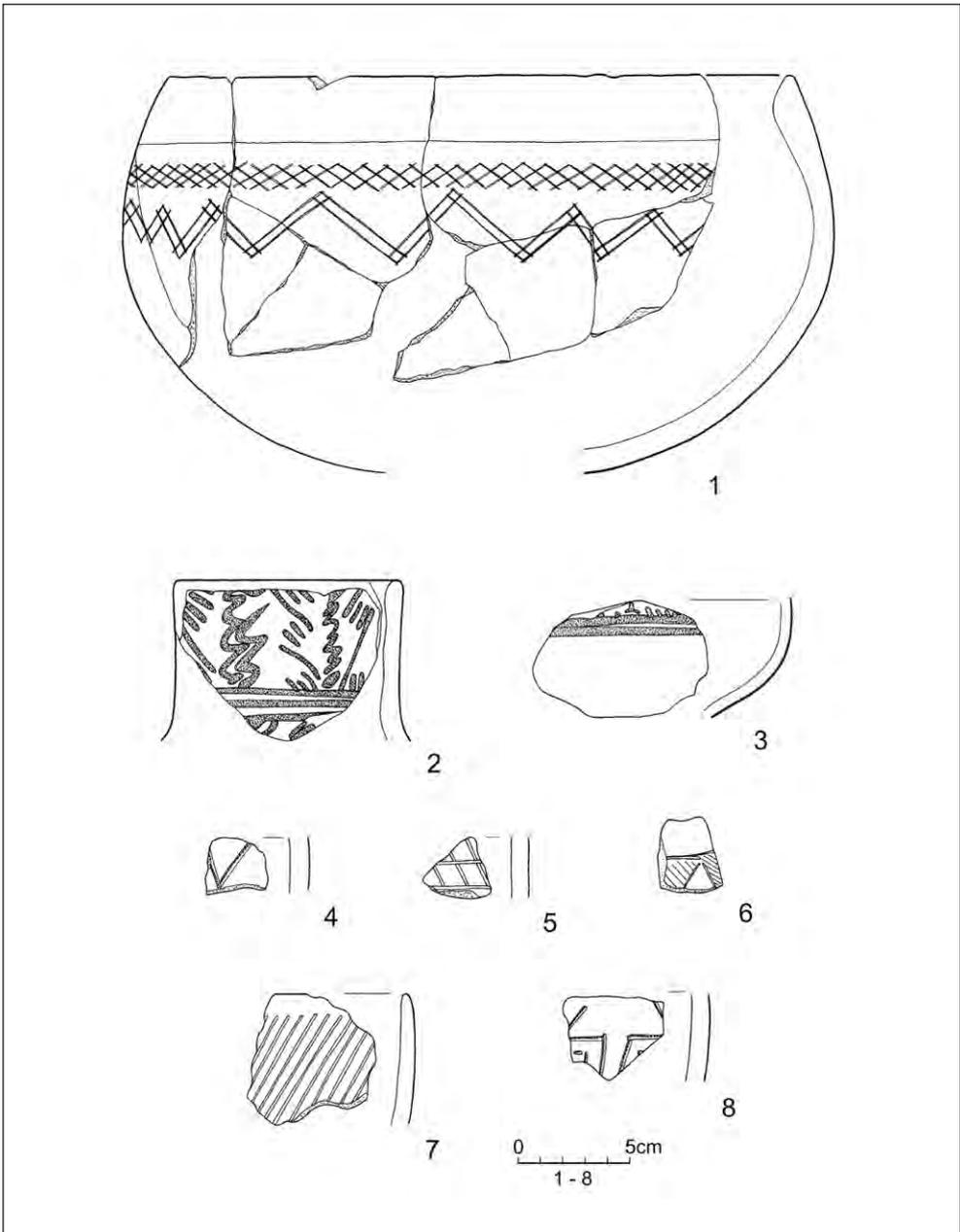


Fig. 4. Selection of pottery from the Gamamiya area: 1 – Gamamiya 103; 2–3 – Gamamiya 104 (Christian), and from the Kebeili area: 4, 5 – Kebeili 46; 6 – Kebeili 47; 7, 8 – Kebeili 51 (Drawing 1 E. Kuciewicz, 2–3 A. Longa, 4–8 M. Chłodnicki)

SURVEY

SITE NO.	SITE TYPE	REMARKS	PRELIMINARY PERIODIZATION	GPS COORDINATES
El Ar				
El Ar 37	Cemetery	Single grave	Middle Kerma	N 19°27'22.9" E 32°55'23.5"
El Ar 38	Settlement	Scattered potsherds	Middle Kerma	N 19°27'21.7" E 32°55'21.6"
Keheili				
Keheili 32	Settlement	Scattered potsherds and flint implements	Paleolithic Neolithic	N 19°22'50.5" E 32°50'52.7"
Keheili 33	Rock art	Petroglyph of cow and dog(?) near the rock shelter	?	N 19°22'37.3" E 32°50'57.2"
Keheili 34	Settlement	Stones, sometimes arranged in circles, scattered potsherds	Neolithic	N 19°22'35.4" E 32°50'59.0"
Keheili 35	Stone rings	Three stone rings, each 2 m in diameter, close to one another	?	N 19°22'45.3" E 32°51'00.6"
Keheili 36	Cemetery	Two tumuli, each 3 m in diameter	Kerma?	N 19°22'52.8" E 32°51'01.7"
Keheili 37	Settlement	Remains of stone structure, scattered potsherds and flint implements	Neolithic	N 19°23'04.7" E 32°51'04.3"
Keheili 38	Rock art	Dozen petroglyphs on flat stones	?	N 19°23'34.2" E 32°50'41.7"
Keheili 39	Rock art	Dozen petroglyphs on flat stones	?	N 19°23'33.3" E 32°50'42.1"
Keheili 40	Settlement	Remains of stone structures, single pottery fragment	Late/Post Meroitic?	N 19°23'20.4" E 32°51'01.0"
Keheili 41	Cemetery?	Destroyed stone structures, small tumuli and circles	Kerma?	N 19°23'16.3" E 32°51'01.9"
Keheili 42	Stone rings	Two small stone circles, flint flakes	Neolithic?	N 19°23'12.0" E 32°51'04.5"
Keheili 43	Settlement	Destroyed stone structures, scattered potsherds, crescent made of chert	Neolithic	N 19°23'05.1" E 32°51'10.7"
Keheili 44	Stone rings	Three stone rings, each 2–3 m in diameter	?	N 19°23'03.3" E 32°51'16.7"
Keheili 45	Settlement	Destroyed stone structures, scattered potsherds and flint implements	Kerma?	N 19°23'01.7" E 32°51'22.8"

SUDAN

Keheili 46	Settlement	Destroyed stone structures, scattered potsherds and flint implements	Kerma?	N 19°22'59.9" E 32°51'35.6"
Keheili 47	Settlement	Scattered potsherds	Neolithic? Kerma?	N 19°22'55.7" E 32°51'45.8"
Keheili 48	Settlement	Scattered potsherds	Post Meroitic	N 19°23'02.0" E 32°51'48.7"
Keheili 49	Stone rings	Three stone rings, each 3 m in diameter	?	N 19°23'08.5" E 32°51'31.6"
Keheili 50	Settlement	Shelter, 5 m in diameter, and two small stone rings, scattered potsherds	Post Meroitic?	N 19°23'09.9" E 32°51'15.9"
Keheili 51	Settlement	Scattered flint implements and potsherds	Christian	N 19°23'13.8" E 32°51'11.9"
Gamamiya				
Gamamiya 101	Rock art	Several small symbolic petroglyphs	?	N 19°19'31.3" E 32°47'58.9"
Gamamiya 102	Settlement	Scattered potsherds on a hill	Neolithic	N 19°19'30.8" E 32°47'54.6"
Gamamiya 103	Settlement	Scattered potsherds inside shelter 10 m in diameter	Post-Meroitic?	N 19°19'34.2" E 32°47'45.8"
Gamamiya 104	Settlement	Scattered potsherds between stone blocks	Christian	N 19°19'46.9" E 32°47'45.3"
Gamamiya 105	Cemetery Rock art	Several destroyed tumuli along the wadi	Kerma?	N 19°19'43.2" E 32°46'54.2"
Gebel Gurgurib				
GG1	Settlement	Rounded spots with removed stones, potsherds and flint crescent	Neolithic	N 19°28'43.3" E 33°01'37.3"
GG2	Settlement	Scattered flints on the top of a hill	Paleolithic	N 19°28'29.9" E 33°02'03.1"
GG3	Settlement	Scattered potsherds and flint implements	Neolithic Kerma	N 19°28'23.5" E 33°00'10.7"

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