

## Popular scientific project summary

Kerma Culture is the term used to designate the civilisation that developed in the valley of the Middle Nile, existing from ca. 2500 BC to 1500 BC, located in present-day south Egypt and north Sudan, with its centre in the city of Kerma, situated in the region of the 3rd Nile cataract.

The Kerma Kingdom, also called the Kingdom of Kush, successfully competed with Egypt, while the capital was a city with rich architecture that included defensive walls, palaces and royal necropolises. In one of the royal tombs, over 300 skeletons of men and women were uncovered, buried there as funerary sacrifices. The Kerma tombs are often richly equipped, including pottery vessels, weapons, faience and quartzite jewellery, and even gold products. Until a few years ago, it was considered that the borders of the kingdom were limited to the area between the 1st and the 3rd cataracts. Research conducted in the 4th cataract region have shown that the cultural and probably also the political influence of Kerma in the east reached past Mograd Island and the area of the present-day town of Abu Hamed. The range of Kerma's influence to the south remains unknown. The research conducted thus far by the Gdańsk expedition conducted in the Bayuda Desert have shown traces of the presence of Kerma culture also in this region.

Since the Kerma Kingdom performed an important role as an intermediary in the trade between Central Africa and Egypt, we can expect further spectacular discoveries of sites connected to this culture also further south of the 4th Nile cataract. The project aims to verify this thesis, while the multi-faceted research will enable both the absolute dating of the history of the expansion of the Kerma Kingdom into these territories and a reconstruction of the local and supra-regional natural and cultural environment. One of the most significant results will be the inclusion of the Bayuda Desert, which up until now has functioned as a white spot on the map of settlement (ca. 100 000 km<sup>2</sup>), into the history of Ancient Nubian settlement in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC.

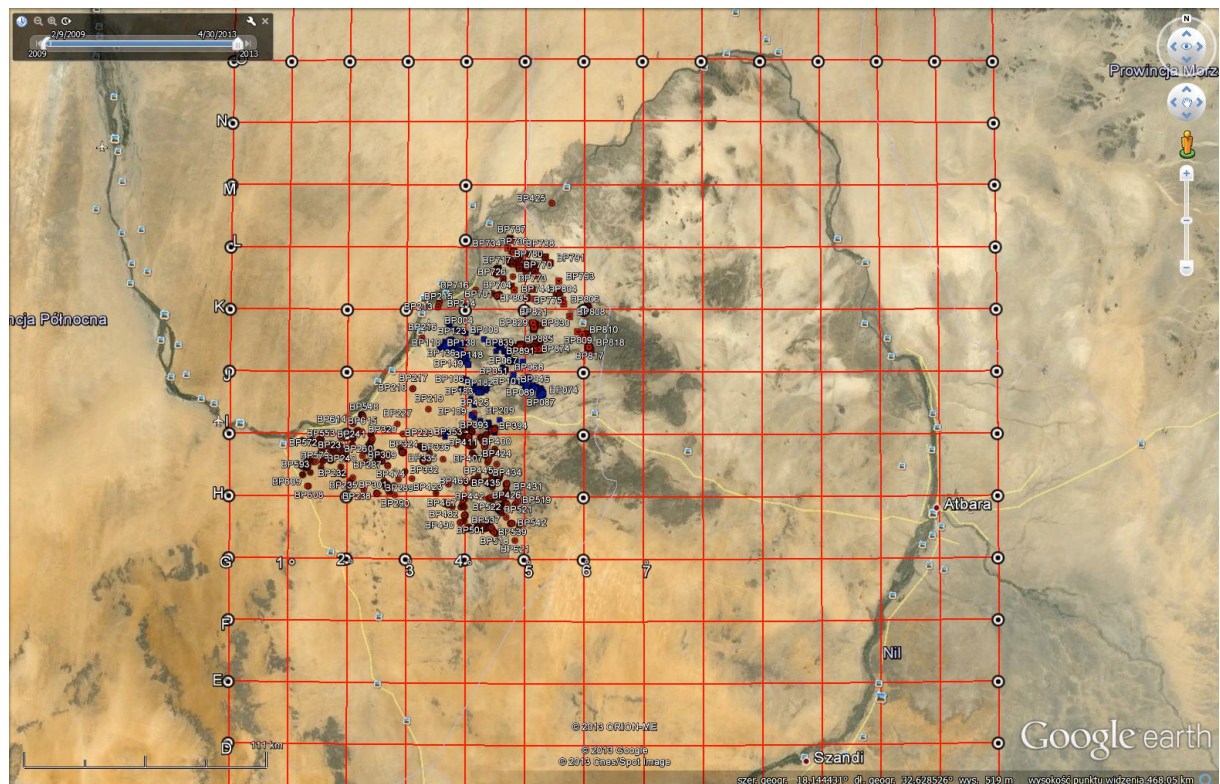


Fig. 1. Sites discovered by Gdańsk mission in the Bayuda Desert between 2010–2014.