PALEO-ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT THE MOLLUSCS OF WADI ABU-HASHEM, SW OMDURMAN (SUDAN)

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Abstract: The three sites of Wadi Abu Hashem, SW of Omdurman, provided the malacological material from soils with evidence dates to the Early Holocene wet period. The molluscs are associated with freshwater, generally coming from lake habitats with gentle enundation and from environments with shallow water: ponds and marshes. Most of terrestrial species are from habitats next to water and damp soils. Zootecus insularis and Limicolaria cf. turriformis come instead from dry bushy savannah.

Key words: malacology, Early Holocene, habitat, swamps, savannah.

Foreword

The Is.I.A.O. (Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente) El Salha Archaeological Project started in November 2000. This project, located near Khartoum is aimed at rescuing the archaeological sites in an area which covers a transect of 35 by 5 km, starting from the left bank of the White Nile to the West, including the area of the Gebel Baroka.

Beside surveying, excavations and more limited samplings were undertaken in some Mesolithic sites along the Nile (10-X-6, 16-D-4, 16-D-5) and in Mesolithic and Post Merotic sites (10-U-3, 10-U-21, 10-U-34, 10-W-4) in more internal areas (Salvatori & Usai 2006; Usai 2005; Usai & Salvatori 2002, 2005, 2006a, 2006b). During this multiyear activity, a basic program of geomorphologic investigation of the area between the El Salha and Wadi Hab (Fig.1) was undertaken in 2004 by Prof. Mauro Cremaschi and Dr. Andrea Zerboni of the University of Milano. For further information about the activity of Is. I.A.O. El Salha Archaeological Project, check also www.sudanplanet.net.

1: Map of the area under IsIAO concession, showing surveyed areas and distribution of prehistoric sites with extent of palaeo-lacustrine formation (from Cremaschi et al., 2006).

Wadi Hab is a large flat valley covered by a sandy-clay deposit rich in mollusc shells. The geomorphology position and sedimentological characteristics suggest a lacustrine or swamp origin and the age of this unit may