

MEROE

THE SUDAN EXPEDITION

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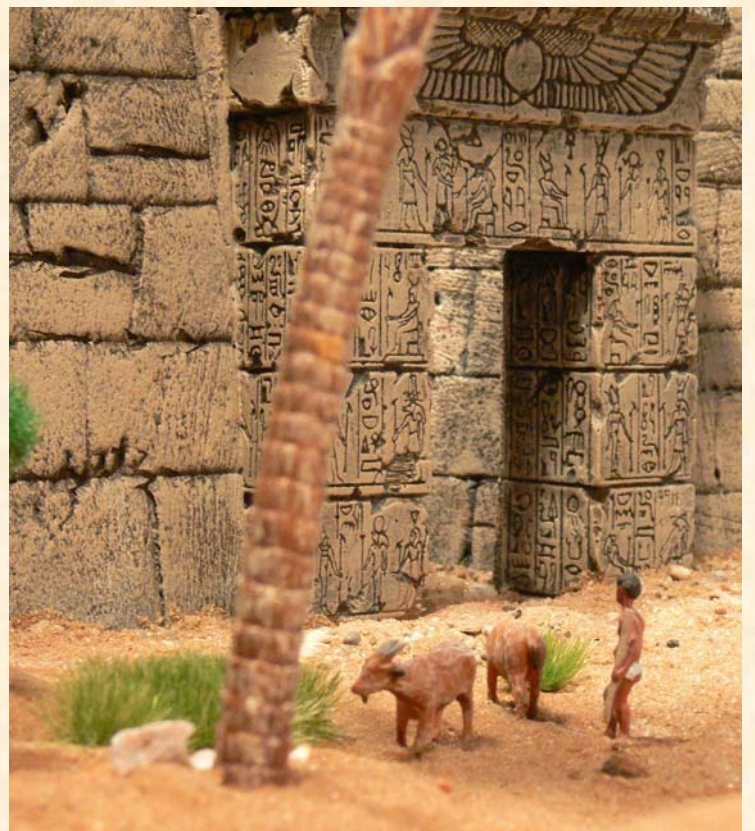
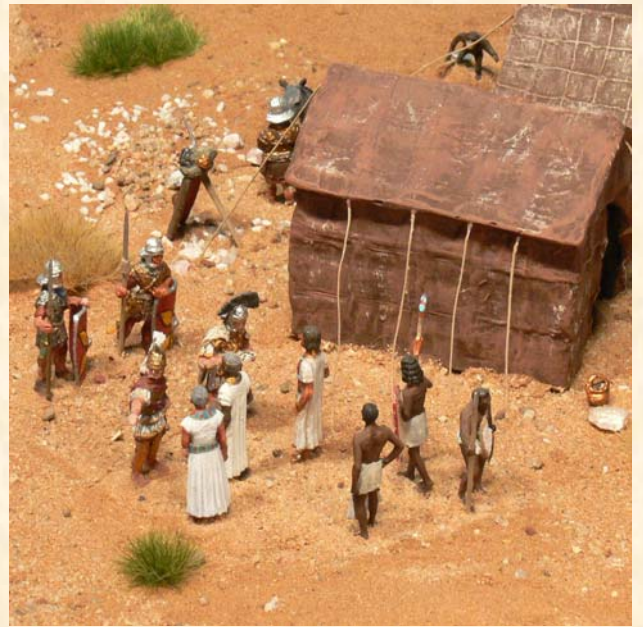
Emperor Nero sent in 61 AD a party of praetorians under the command of a tribune and two centurions deep into present-day Sudan. The motivation behind this expedition remains controversial, and several explanations exist: Was it really just geographical curiosity and the quest for the source of the Nile? Or was it, rather, a preparation for a full-scale invasion? Or perhaps the true reason was control of trade routes in Eastern Africa?





Leaving such speculations aside, it is clear that relations between Rome and the Kingdom of Meroe, the southern neighbor of Roman Egypt, were good at that time. And it is obvious that without the cooperation of the Meroites, the praetorians would never have been able to travel that far through unknown territory.

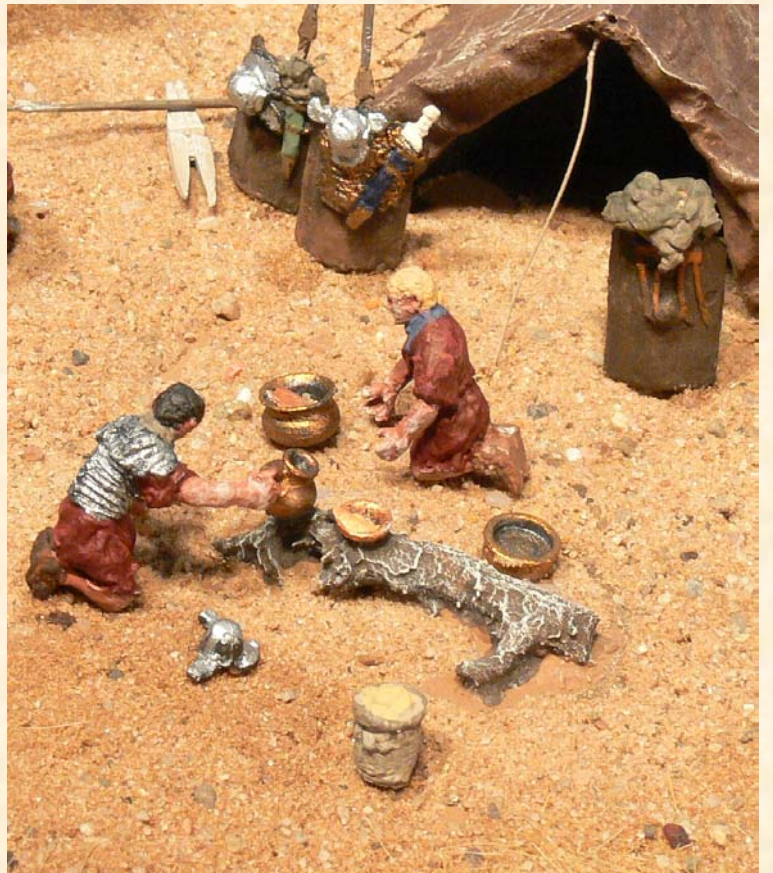






The diorama shows accordingly a part of the Romans' marching camp where an encounter with Meoritic dignitaries is taking place. Meroitic culture was deeply influenced by Egypt, and the building of monuments in pharaonic style continued for centuries after Egypt itself had become first hellenized and then, romanized.







The tents and the Roman figures are from Art Miniaturen (sets JS/0093a and 94, with additional figures from sets JS/0001 and 9). The Nubians are a mix from old sets (Atlantic 1501 and 1503 as Nexus re-issues; Airfix 01733 Tarzan Figures re-issued as H&T 7018 Jungle Adventure). The pylon in the background is mainly scratch-built, but the central gate is a 28 mm piece from Grendel (10058).





Further reading:

- Jackson R.B. (2002) *At Empire's Edge. Exploring Rome's Egyptian Frontier*. Yale University Press, New Haven, London.
 Kirwan L.P. (1957) Rome beyond The Southern Egyptian Frontier. *The Geographical Journal* **123**: 13-19.
 Phillips J. (1997) Punt and Aksum: Egypt and the Horn of Africa. *The Journal of African History* **38**: 423-457.
 Scholz P.O. (2006) *Nubien. Geheimnisvolles Goldland der Ägypter*. Theiss, Stuttgart.

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