The Great Marib Dam –
the eighth wonder of the world

Styrodur® lets the Kingdom of Sheba rise once again

Everyone knows about the seven wonders of the ancient
world – but there is a monumental structure archeologists
and historians like to call the eighth wonder of the world:
the Great Marib Dam in southern Arabia, in what is today Yemen.
The ancient society there demonstrated great engineering ingenuity
in order to take advantage of the periodical monsoon rains.
Without water there is no life. True to this maxim, the subjects of
the ancient Kingdom of Sheba in Marib collected water by building
a gigantic dam so as to be able to supply their cities with this
precious liquid.

Antiquity
brought to life

Time and again, archeologists and historians have ventured back
into history to discover new chapters. Whereas the archeologist in
the movie “Indiana Jones” – whose fourth sequel is being filmed
right now – was more interested in lost treasures and life-threaten-
ing adventures, the researchers studying the Marib dam are deal-
ing with hardcore science. Then again, the history of the great dam
is certainly “movie material”.

In fact, a piece of ancient history has now become a hands-on
reality. At the College of Applied Sciences in Hamburg, Germany,
under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Michael Schütz, an imposing
model of the dam has been created that can almost rival the
original; in fact, the replica of just the south structure of the dam
is a full seven and half meters wide by three meters long.
The model provides an insight into the ancient construction and
allows us to experience up close the sheer dimension of the dam,
a real feat of engineering for its time. This model was made possi-
ble with the assistance of BASF: it donated the requisite amount of
Styrodur® as the anything but “ancient” construction material.
Owing to its low water absorption and high pressure resistance,
this foamed material is absolutely ideal for the miniature version of
this irrigation wonderwork and it enabled the Kingdom of Sheba to
rise once again.