A Programme of Extensive Excavations in the Geili Region

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Excavation at Tamanyat

During the 1993/94 season, the Mission conducted different activities, including field research, laboratory and on-site analyses, radiometric datings, topographic documentation, and data processing\(^1\).

A new site, called Tamanyat, located on the ancient river terrace on the right bank of the Nile, 42 km north of Khartoum, was excavated. The site was already known from a surface site survey carried out in 1985 and it yielded Mesolithic and Neolithic materials (Caneva 1988).

Like most prehistoric sites in the area (cfr. Caneva 1993; Caneva in press), Tamanyat was later reused as a Late Meroitic and Christian cemetery. The construction of 40 tumuli completely changed the morphological features of the site, at the expenses of the prehistoric evidence. Mixed prehistoric materials occurred on the surface, suggested that the area had been occupied during different periods. The present research aimed at reconstructing the topographic position and the stratigraphic sequence of the different occupations. Several sondages were dug and some historical tumuli were opened in order to bring to light the remnants of the prehistoric surface, as previously made (Caneva in press). Trenches were excavated at the border and in the centre of the cemetery across the tumuli. They were north-south oriented and only the eastern half of the tumuli, where the entrance is usually located was opened.

**Tumulus A Trench.** Tumulus A is situated at the south-western border of the cemetery. A 3x5 m trench was opened, revealing a plundered Late Meroitic tomb. The entrance to the grave comprised an east-west ramp giving access to a small room excavated into the bedrock. A human skeleton was almost completely in situ, in spite of the plundering. A large necked jar covered with an upside bowl lied near the body’s feet. A group of iron arrowheads was located at the centre of the grave, near the original position of the head. An

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\(^1\) Members of the Mission were: Isabella Caneva, director; Renato Caciagli, topographer; Marco Caciagli, drafsmen; Alfredo Coppa, physical anthropologist; Hala Barakat, arcaeobotanist, Antonella Argentero, assistant.
ostrich eggshell necklace and an archer loop were also found near the head. Unfortunately, the cranial and hand bones were messed up by robbers. The prehistoric deposit underlying the tumulus was too thin to be excavated.

**Tumulus B Trench.** Tumulus B is located at the north-eastern border of the cemetery. A 2x10 m north-south trench was opened across the tumulus. The trench was divided into 2x2 m squares and every other square was excavated. The first one included the access to the Late Meroitic tomb, the second one comprised the Mesolithic layer underlying the tumulus, the third one revealed the limits of the area occupied by the tumulus, that is, where the earlier surface had been cut and the prehistoric deposit removed to build the tomb. The grave had a vertical, cylindrical access and had been damaged by plunderers. Neither the skeleton, nor the grave goods remained in situ. Ostrich eggshell beads and potsherds were scattered in the filling.

In this part of the site, the prehistoric deposit was 30 cm thick and yielded a few potsherds and lithics dating to the earlier Mesolithic phase of the Wavy Line horizon.

Another trench connecting Tumulus A and Tumulus B was excavated in order to reconstruct the ancient surface. The ancient deposit was cut about 6 m from the grave of Tumulus A.

**Tumulus C Trench.** The tumulus is situated east of Tumulus B. A 30x9.5 m trench revealed a Late Meroitic tomb with a cylindrical pit access. The access was originally covered with a roof made of wooden branches radially arranged around the opening. Plunderers destroyed the central part of the roof and the access to the grave. Because of these conditions, the tomb was only partially excavated.

The southern area of the trench (6x2 m) was excavated into the ancient surface. The underlying deposit first yielded material with fine burnished pottery probably from the Late Meroitic. This layer covered an earlier, Mesolithic occupation which appeared to further extend to the south. A north-south, 14x1 m trench was then excavated south of Tumulus C, confirming the different positions of the Late Neolithic and Mesolithic sites and their partial superimposition.

**Tumulus Y Trench.** A 4x8 m trench was opened at the centre of the cemetery, cutting through a deeply eroded tumulus. It brought to light remains of several Late Meroitic tombs covered by light wooden roofs. Such structures appeared severely disturbed and were not further excavated.
The northern area of the trench (2x4 m) was dug below the ancient surface aiming at detecting the nature of the prehistoric deposit under the tumulus. Only scattered materials, probably belonging to a Late Neolithic occupation, were found.

Tumulus Z Trench. The tumulus was located in the central area of the cemetery. A 3x8 m trench was opened to the east. The northern side of the trench included a Late Meroitic tomb with a cylindrical pit access, which was covered by wooden branch roof, mostly destroyed by plunderers. The skeleton was severely damaged, although the pottery containers remained in situ. Ceramic forms comprised a large jar, two bowls, and a small vase; another small vase sealed the jar's mouth.

On the southern side of the trench, the excavation found the prehistoric deposit underlying the tumulus. Scanty material was found, suggesting a non residential occupation in this part of the site.

Archaeobotanical analyses started on the spot by meticulously sieving the soil by a 1 mm mesh to collect all botanical samples. The specimens are presently under study at the palaeoecology laboratory of the CNRS (National Council for Scientific Research) in Marseille (France).

Faunal remains were also collected for zooarchaeological analysis and will be examined, as usual, by A. Gautier from the University of Ghent (Belgium).

Excavation at Kabbashi Haitah
Purpose of the 1994/95 field season was to extensively investigate the already known and most remarkable Mesolithic evidence occurring in the area (Caneva 19882; Garcea 1993b). An extensive excavation had been already carried out at Saggai 1, just north of Kabbashi Haitah (Caneva 1983).

In particular, the new research aimed at focusing on two major concerns: a. the analysis of the spatial organisation of Mesolithic settlements; b. the study of formation processes of archaeological deposits from these contexts. The former implied the identification of specific activity areas inside the habitation and, consequently, the recognition of the internal settlement organisation. The latter aimed at analyzing the dynamics of deposit accumulation and distinguishing them from the following post-depositional processes which brought the site to the

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2 Members of the Mission were: Isabella Caneva, director; Savino di Lernia, archaeologist; Renato Caciagli, topographer; Marco Caciagli, draftsman; Francesca Merighi, graduating student.
present conditions. The different processes of deposit formation consistently affect the artifact conservation, frequency, and spatial distribution. Thus, their study is required for the interpretation of the archaeological evidence as it appears from the excavation (Caneva, di Lernia in press).

Kabbashi Haidah was selected for this research. It is the southernmost site in the concession area, some 34 km north of Khartoum. The settlement lay on the gravel terrace on the ancient right bank of the Nile. The present course of the river is located 4 km west from the ancient terrace. Previous investigations conducted by the Mission at this site brought to light an exceptionally deep deposit (160 cm), rich in potsherds, lithic artifacts, and faunal remains (Caneva, Garcea, Gautier, Van Neer 1993). Such evidence suggested a substantially permanent and continual occupation by groups of hunter-gatherers tightly linked to aquatic resources constantly available from the river. Riverine resources included plenty of fish and various molluscs and seem to have been sufficient to sustain a residential population producing, among other manufacts, pottery containers (Caneva 1983; Garcea 1993a). It is likely that the settlement organisation comprised multiple activities. According to the previously collected cultural assemblage and radiometric dating, the site was attributed to the early Mesolithic or Wavy Line horizon (Caneva 1988; Garcea in press).

A flat area of the site was selected for excavation. It was partially eroded, but it did not indicate disturbances by Late Meroitic tumuli, elsewhere built by using prehistoric deposits. A 6x10 m trench was opened and was divided into smaller excavation units following a 50x50 cm grid. The deposit was 40-45 cm deep and showed a sequence of five clayey-gravelly layers accumulated on the base gravel substratum. All identifiable objects were plotted on a topographic map according to the different layers. All the sediment resulting from the different units and layers was sieved through a 4 mm mesh. A preliminary examination shows some differences in the frequency and conservation of the artifacts, although their study is presently in progress.

Several Mesolithic burials were found, as well. They were dug through the prehistoric deposit down to the gravel bank and, therefore, should be probably attributed to the final phase of the settlement. Human bones were partially fossilised and fragmented, as many other Mesolithic burials in the region. However, the skeletons had a different position from those to-date known. The bodies rested in an elongated, instead of contracted, position and were lying on the left side or on the back. The shape of the pits was elongated and oval, slightly larger than the body. No grave goods were associated to these burials. The present depth of the pits is never more than 50 cm. However, we can infer that the original surface was at least 50-60 cm above the present one, providing a clue on the minimal erosion of the area. Other sondages were made at the
borders of the present extension of the site in order to identify the limits of the original site.

The excavation also included two Late Meroitic tumuli located on the prehistoric site, partially destroying the prehistoric deposit. Of the two tumuli, one, named AA, was lying over a 160 cm thick Mesolithic deposit; the other, named CC, was built outside the borders of the ancient site, on the sterile surface, in spite of the prehistoric material in the soil employed for the tumulus mound. Tumulus AA contained a tomb that had been so brutally plundered that the access to the funerary chamber was completely destroyed. Inside the chamber, the vault had collapsed and neither the original structure nor the grave goods were preserved. Outside the tumulus, its northern side was protected by a wall made of small stones and Mesolithic artifacts.

Tumulus CC had a lateral ramp and two steps, east-west oriented, giving access to a small and deep room. This grave, as well, had been plundered and the upper part of the human body, lying on the right side, oriented to the south, in a partially contracted position, had been scattered by robbers probably searching for precious stone or metal necklaces or shoulder decorations. Three pottery containers were still in situ on the floor of the grave: a black pottery bottle, a typical Late Meroitic bowl, and a beaker. The bowl contained some baby goat bones still in connection, probably from the original offer. Next to this tomb, another one, probably dating to the Christian era, was excavated from the top of its tumulus. The human body was lying in an almost prone position, west-east oriented, and was wrapped in a woollen mantle.

Laboratory analyses included a detailed study and classification of lithics and pottery, archaeozoological analyses of the faunal remains, and determination of radiometric datings. A systematic refitting study is presently in progress at the laboratories of the University of Rome "La Sapienza" with particular concern for Mesolithic potsherds.
References

Two Field Seasons in the Napata Region

Irene Vincentelli Liverani

In 1992, the first field season of the Italian-Sudanese Joint Mission in the Napata region started with a surface topographic and archaeological survey.\(^1\) The area under study stretches along the western bank of the Nile for about 30 km between the villages of Barkal and Magashi. The main purpose of the survey was to create a basic archaeological map on which endangered localities could be marked and further discoveries could be added with the progress of the work.

A preliminary research on the existing documentation, mainly earlier maps and aerial photographs was first carried out. A cartographic base at scale ‘1:25,000 was then drawn and all the found sites were marked. We scanned the region by foot and even entered in the houses, when necessary, in order to locate all archaeological remains. All names of geographical interest, such as villages, khors, and main reliefs were mapped. The same procedure was followed for ancient as well as modern structures of any cultural interest, such as cemeteries, chapels, fortresses, quarries, and prehistoric sites. Thirty five points of archaeological and topographic interest were mapped through the Global Positioning System (GPS) and cross-checked through an azimuth prospection and the recognition on the spot of localities visible on aerial photographs.

More detailed maps at scale 1:1,0000 were drawn for the two villages of Sheba and Hillat el Arab where a Napatan cemetery was identified. the maps are constantly updated and single tombs are added as the excavation proceeds.

The results of the first phase of the work went beyond what had been expected. Fourteen prehistoric sites dating from the Late Acheulean to the mesolithic were located. Samples of lithics, including a perfectly retouched hand-axe, were collected for further studies.

A cemetery with tombs covered by large tumuli was identified at the locality called el-Dati, about 14 km south of the Jebel Barkal archaeological area.

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\(^1\) The fieldwork was carried out by Irene Vincentelli, Salah Mohammed Ahmed, Elena Garcea, Abdel Rahman Ali, Renato Sebastiani, Fabio Parenti, Silvia Bonamore.
not far from the remains of a large city (Kajabi) dated of the Nubian Christian
Kingdoms and the earliest Islamic Age.

A series of squared blocks with hieroglyphics and basrelief scenes was
noted at the locality called Marawe Shark (6.900 km south of the Barkal
Temples). They had been apparently reused in the external wall of the Medieval
fortress (Pl. 1. 1-2). Such discovery suggests that there must have been a
considerable building dating to the Egyptian domination in the nearest vicinity.
However, a thorough examination of the entire fortress showed that in some cases
smaller, flat stones, which were used to build the fortress, laid over and covered
larger squared blocks, typical of earlier building technique. Therefore, the
fortress might result from a remake, in Medieval times, of a large, much earlier,
built, rather than a simple reuse of ancient blocks. Arkell reports that he saw
a walled block in the same fortress, with a hieroglyphic writing mentioning the
"city of Amenemhat".2

The quarries of sandstone used in Egyptian, Napatan, and Meroitic times
were identified in the Khor el Marazaween, not far from the village of Marawe
Shark at the distance of about 5km south of the Barkal Temples. Remains of the
quarries may be presently seen over an extension of about 1km towards the
desert. Pieces of cut columns, pillars, a fragment of stone basin, chunks and
debris appeared to have been abandoned, as if the work had just been interrupted.
The typical oblique grooves, made with simple drills, the holes for thrusting
wooden wedges that removed the blocks from the bedrock, are visible
everywhere. They testify to the hard work and the techniques that provided the
material for the temples and palaces of the great Napata.

Last is the most attractive, though not the most important, discovery. A
small flat rock ridge on Jebel Salih Babekor (8.700 km south of the Barkal
archaeological area), located in the desert, but with a view on the Nile, showed
a number of engravings, one next or over the other, with animals, hunting scenes,
ships, cupules, foot-prints, and short parallel lines perhaps resembling counting
elements (fig. 1). The engravings show evident superimpositions, the animals
being the earliest, which were then cut by the ships. Gazelles, long-horned cattle
a hippopotamus, a man with bow and arrows seem to be still running on the rock.

2 Khartoum Museum, Antiquities Collection No. 5772; see A.J. Arkell, A History of the
Numerous crews of small simply sketched men, among which taller and larger chiefs stand out, are aligned on the ships. These have different dimensions and show long helms and many oars. Further studies will provide the historical meaning of such impressive scenes.

A series of sondages was made at Sheba (4.1 km south of the Barkal Archaeological area) and Hillat el-Arab (2.9 km south of the Barkal area), revealing that a cemetery lays under the two villages. The opening of the accesses to the underground tombs are visible under a thin layer of soil and sand in the narrow streets and small squares, as well as in the courtyards of the houses.

Many of these accesses, now appearing as shallow basins in the ground were later used for preparing bricks or as deposits of dung. The same happened to the tombs which were cut along the bank of the two khor across the village of el-Arab (fig. 2). Two of them, ARA 5 and ARA 6, were completely excavated.

ARA 5 is cut into the southern bank of the khor and shows a kind of porch that brings to a first, square-shaped, room. A door on the western wall opens to a second, smaller, room. Both rooms are east-west oriented. This tomb was completely emptied of any object, as it always remained in the open-air and was used as garbage collector (Pl. 2.1).

ARA 6 is located on the northern bank of the khor. It includes a rectangular room, south-north oriented, to which the access is through a large step cut into the sandstone (pl. 2.2). This tomb was also found completely empty. Two other tombs were identified in the area between the two khors, on a terrace closed to the east and to the west by the external walls of two houses. Only one of them (ARA 3) was opened.

ARA 3 is a chamber tomb, east-west oriented, reached from the level surface by a stairway with six steps (fig. 3.3). At the lower and there is a small landing with a door opening toward a square room (approximately 3 x 3 m) with a roughly-made niche carved into the western wall. The architectural structure was perfectly preserved, but its interior was totally plundered.

A roughly rectangular shape cut into the sandstone of the rock floor, against the northern wall (around 15 cm below the floor), could be intended as
the lodging for the funerary bed. This appears particularly interesting as it recalls angareb sepultures of Nubian tradition (P. 3.1).

A few scattered bones of the bodies, eaten by ants, had been cemented in the laminar, compact mud that filled a large part of the room that remained open after the plundering.

Fragments of bronze objects and a part of a bracelet are all what is left from the grave goods. A few potsherds and a complete vessel were the most important findings. As a matter of fact, the vessel is a beer jar, the shape and fabric of which are well known from the 18th Dynasty down to the Napatan times⁴ (Fig. 4.1). On the other hand, one of the fragments, a neck with a flattened shoulder and large loop handles (Fig. 5.3), seems to belong to one of the store jars that can be found in the Levant in contexts dating from the 15th century B.C.⁴

During the second field season (November and December 1993) the work concentrated on the central prat of the village of Hillat el Arab.⁵ Here, in the

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³ Peter French, "Late Dynastic Pottery," in B.Kemp, Amarna Reports III, London 1986, P. 158, Fig. 9.19 No, 2; K. Mysliwiec, Keramik und Kleinfunde, P. 39 nos. 55-57, P. 49 nn. 258-94; A.M. Loyrette-M. Fekri, Cahiers de la ceramique egypienne, 2, Le Caire 1991, P. 17 Fig. 10.

⁴ The most famous finding is from Ugarit (Minet el Beida) with a deposit containing as much as eighty jars. C.F. J.F.-A. Schaeffer, Ugaritica II, Paris 1949, Pl. XXXI.1, P. 8; Idem, Les fouilles de Minev-el Beida et de Ras-Shamra, troisieme campagne, Syria 13 (1923), pl. III.3. Other similar types are from Megiddo (G. Loud, Megiddo II, Chicago 1948, pl. 59:11; 71:13; 83:3; P.L.O. Guy - R.M. Engberg, Megiddo Tombs, Chicago 1983, tomb 122 pl. 5:7, Tomb 899 pl. 17:14, 97:18), Tyre (Tyre, Strata XVI-XIII pl. 34:10; 39:9; 47:11), Hazor (Hazor III-IV, pl. 172. 172:10), Dier el Balah (T. Dothan, Excavation at the Cemetery of Deir el Balah, Jerusalem 1978, tomb No. 114, Fig. 17,18, P. 10), Beth Peleth (J.L. Starkey - L. Hardin, "Beth Pelet Cemetery," in: Beth Pelet II, London 1932, Fig. LXXXV, N. 962, Pl. XLIX), Sarepta (J.B. Pritchard, Sarepta. A Preliminary Report on the Iron Age, Philadelphia 1975, Fig. 23-24 e 50, particularly No. 24.3 with a high neck, type SJ 7. Soundings Y: Storage Jars).

⁵ The fieldwork was carried out by Irene Vincentelli, Salah Mohammed Ahmed, Abdel Rahman Ali, Stefano Savona, Rita Vargiu, Lia Beatrice Ferrera, Corrado Alvaro, Homaion Kiarass Shirazi, Silvia Bonamore. Adriano Vincentelli was in charge of the photographic documentation.
previous season, different traces of underground structure were identified in an area easily accessible for the absence of modern houses.

The little square was surveyed and drawn in detail in order to provide a basic grid for the excavations. Three trenches were then dug in the centre of the area aiming at understanding the use of the land surrounding the tombs in Napatan times, and bringing to light the possible remains of other types of structures connected with the tombs, such as funerary chapels. But, unfortunately, all traces of superstructure seem to have been destroyed during the long period of use of the village. Four tombs were excavated: ARA 7, ARA 8, ARA 9.

ARA 4 consists of a rectangular pit, 1.05 m deep, giving access to 3 rooms located on the eastern, northern, and western sides. Only the eastern room was completely excavated during this season (Fig. 3.1). It is actually a tunnel (2.20 m long) where the remains of not less than 17 individuals were piled up with many other disconnected human bones. The burials, which were roughly laid on three different layers, did not seem to follow any order. The individuals that could be at first recognised on the spot include 10 adults (5 males and 5 females), 2 individuals between 7 and 12 years old and a child (from 0 to 6 years old). The entrance of the room was found sealed and therefore the apparent confusion of the bodies suggests that there was a second burial, probably made to provide more space in the main room of the tomb.

A few objects from the grave goods remained with the bodies. Nevertheless, they resulted of great interest as they were well preserved. They include two beer jars and a bowl of rough pottery (Fig. 4.5), a green faience scarab with two scorpions engraved on the flat side (Fig. 7.3), a faience scaraboid with a sign nfr engraved on the flat side (Fig. 7.4) and several red and blue faience beads. Particularly interesting are two black topped hand-made globular bowls (Fig. 4.2-3). This is the typical domestic Nubian pottery which became famous in the Kerma period, though it is found throughout the Nubian history. Ultimately, two bronze objects, a razar, and a long thin blade (Fig. 4.4), complete the grave goods.

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ARA 7 shows the accessing stairs with 1 steps, a large room (5.80 x 4.50 m), and an inner funerary chamber. The three rooms are north east-south west oriented (Fig. 3.5 and pl. 3.2).

This tomb has some interesting architectonic features. The main room is very large and rectangular in shape with three central non-aligned columns which must have supported the roof, now completely collapsed.

A niche with a bench and a small pillar was excavated on the eastern end of the long southern side. An unusual structure, cut into the sandstone, with a drain, is located along the same wall, next to the door to room B (Pl. 4.1). It may have possibly been an offering or slaughtering table, but no similar structures are yet known to me. The floor of this room is quite irregular and blocks prepared to be removed are still sitting around the floor. The original purpose of this work seems to be the levelling of the floor, but project was probably abandoned when the use of the tomb became urgent.

This room had a complex history from the time it was abandoned, as the variety of its filling suggests. First of all, the central part between two columns was sealed when the stone roof collapsed, preserving a quantity of pottery, although in small sherds, and some burials. A pit was excavated in the south-eastern corner and was later filled with dung. Another pit was next to this one and was later used for mixing cement. A deep fissure in the north-eastern corner allowed the leak of some very compact laminar silt. Ultimately, the western side and the north-western corner were cut away to construct the narrow road that now crosses the little square of the village.

Five burials of adults (3 males, a female, and another individual whose sex could not be determined) and one of a child between 4 and 7 years old were found. All burials appear contemporary and remained undisturbed, except for the much later works in this part of the village. In fact the position and the topology of the findings indicate that the recent filling pits were responsible for most of the damages in the grave. All bodies were in an elongated position, whereas their orientations were all different (Fig. 4 a). No traces of any kind of coffin were found and the bodies were not even wrapped in bead nets, as one could have expected. Remains of a horse burial were found in the western sector of the grave (Chaix pers. comm.).

Grave-goods are plentiful and of a high quality. Some bronze objects are
quite interesting. A large jug (height: 23 cm) with a lotus flower-shaped handle (Fig. 5.6) and a bowl (diameter: 17 cm) with rounded bottom and flat, everted rim were found in the western sector (Fig. 5.8), under burial No. 1, which evidently covered and protected them (Fig. 4.b). A fragmented bowl and an incomplete juglet were found at the feet of burial No. 4. Another juglet with ribbed body and a small mobile ring handle were next to burial No. 2 (Fig. 5.7). A long conical scraper was recovered not far from the other goods, under the collapsed roof.

Pottery includes a series of bowls with a red band painted both inside and outside the rim (Fig. 7.1-2). Moreover, there are a small pilgrim flask of a well purified pink fabric and decorated with concentric circles (Fig. 7.4), a large cream-slipped jar with handles and rounded bottom where a little hole was drilled (Fig. 10.2), a large red slipped storejar (Fig. 6.1), a beer jar, roughly and quickly made (Fig. 7.6), similar to other jars found at ARA 8, ARA 4, ARA 3. Lastly, an amphora with two handles (height: 40 cm) and cream slipped surface was perfectly preserved near the central column (Fig. 6.2). There is no neck and the rim appears to have been smoothened to be reused after it broke. Both burials and the grave-goods are in a layer of mud which is 15-20 cm above the chamber floor. This evidence, together with the position of burial No. 4 above the bronze vessels, could point to a reuse in Napatan times of the tomb, which must have been built much earlier.

The inner chamber, completely plundered, still shows a part of the closing stone near the entrance door. This block is broken in the middle and rests on two small stones, which kept it at a higher level than the floor. Nothing but some

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8 Such bowls, as the cups found in ARA 8, are a common feature both in Napatan cemeteries and settlements. It is not the case to quote all the occurrences but see for all: A. Villa, La Necropole de Missiminia, part 1: Les Sepultures Napateennes. La prospection de la Valee du Nil de la cataract de Dal (Nubie soundanaise), Vol 12, Paris 1980, type I-1, P. 156; Salah El-Din Mohammed Ahmed, L’aggloméeration napaateenne de Kerma, Paris 1992, type I D6b, I déj., P. 55, Fig. 15; similar cups and bowls from Egyptian sites are dated between the New Kingdom to the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, see P. Brissaud, "Repertoire preliminaire de la poterie trouvée a San el-Haagar," Cahiers de la ceramique egyptienne 1 (1987), pl. 10:129, 134-35.
very badly preserved bones and a few beads, which had been evidently lost by the plunderers near the door, were found.

ARA 8 includes a sloping access, a first squared room, and a rectangular inner chamber. The three rooms are east-west oriented (fig. 3.2).

The first room (2.90 x 2.80 m; depth: 1.80 m) was found with only part of the stone roof, whereas the inner room was perfectly preserved. This burial had been also plundered in the past and its content was disturbed. In fact, potsherds from the same vessel were found at different levels up to the surface.

The first room had 4 phases of reuse, featuring burials with grave-goods. In spite of the plundering, much was left from the earliest layer. The dead were taken out of the actual funerary chamber, which was very small and therefore uncomfortable. They were taken to the first room, which was larger and more suitable. Here, the thieves had easily searched between the bands around the bodies for jewels and precious ornaments, which must have been plentiful and remarkable. In fact, disconnected bones were found scattered on the floor of Room B (Pl. 4.2) together with a few ornaments that the plunderers had forgotten: about fifty faience amulets in the shape of Horus eye, blue vitreous paste, carnelian, and gold beads, and a green faience pendant plaquette with scenes on both sides. God Amon with a female figure who plays the sistrum were on one sides, two lion-headed divinities protecting the Horus eye with their open wings are on the other side (Fig. 7.7).

Pottery mostly includes cups of different dimensions and almost all well preserved (Fig. 7.8-9). They are wheel-made with in most cases a red washed band on the rim. A decorated incense-burner (Fig. 8.5), a small bottle with short neck and everted rim (Fig. 7.3), and a jar with the body decorated with rippled bands and two small handles were also found (Fig. 8.1). Jars similar to the latter were found in other Napatan cemeteries, like Kurru, Missiminia and Qustul.

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10 No 55 19-3-195 a, p. XL m A 2; idem, *Nuri, Royal Cemeteries of Kush*, Vol. 2, Boston 1995, P1. LXXXV, LXXXVII, CXXXIV; A. Vila, *Missiminia*, type III-5 Fig. 184, P. 161; B. B. Williams, *Twenty-fifth Dynasty and Napatan Remains at Qustul: Cemeteries*
Little grave goods also occurred in the inner room, which was evidently plundered: a series of amulets in the shape of Horus eye, some silver rings, a silver gold-plated ring, a scarab, and a little well-preserved pottery. Ceramics include a short necked, pinch-handled flask11 (Fig. 7.5) and a few cups similar to those from Room B. A miniature alabaster vessel in the shape of a little flask is one of the most interesting findings.

ARA 9 consists of 2 rooms, south-north oriented, a square hall and an inner rectangular room (Fig. 3.4). The access to the first room is on a terrace, excavated in the sandstone slope. A large part of the elevation and the entire roof of the first room had already fallen in earlier times. Moreover, the tomb had been plundered and reused for later burials with no grave goods. Potsherds appeared scattered in all layers and only some interesting vessels could be reconstructed. Among them, a storejar with handles and rounded bottom, made of a fine marl clay, should be mentioned (Fig. 10.1). Another storejar, very similar to the previous one, shows the engraving of a ram head with a lotus flower, as the representation of god Amon (Fig. 9.2). Furthermore, a globular hand-made pot with a beak on the rim is entirely preserved (Fig. 9.1). A jar, imported from Egypt, with a hieratic line written in ink on the wall, was unfortunately broken (Fig. 8.2).

The cemetery appears to have been used over a long time and the graves that were excavated go from one dating to the 25th Dynasty (in terms of Egyptian chronology) to other earlier ones. The grave goods from ARA 8 appear homogeneous and may be attributed to the 25th Dynasty. On the contrary, ARA 3 and 4 contain some material that suggests an earlier attribution to the Late New Kingdom. This means that the graves in the Hillat el Arab cemetery enclose those "centuries of darkness" on which we hope to obtain more information in the future.

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11 B.B. Williams, Twenty-fifth Dynasty and Napatan Remains, p1. 8 a; Dunham, El Kurru, P1. XLIII Fig. 35c. P. 105; idem, Nuri, Royal Cemeteries of Kush, vol. 2, Boston 1955, 80 Fig. 27c, 89 Fig. 29d, 92 Fig. 30b and 105 Fig. 35c; idem, West and South Cemeteries at Meroe, The Royal Cemeteries of Kush, vol. 5, Cambridge 1963, 337 Fig. A: 31:23-3-154 from W. 503; M. Schiff Giorgini, Soleb II: Les necropoles, Firenze 1971, Fig. 752; A. Vila, Missinimia, P. 123 Fig. 130:4. Examples from Egypt are in A.J. Spencer - D.M. Bailey, Ashmunein (1985), London 1986, Occasional Papers No. 67, P. 11 1985/27, P. 12 1985/39-40, Fig. 8.6, 9.6, 7.
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Jean Leclant et Catherine Berger

Jean Leclant et Catherine Berger C'est en 1965, il y a trente ans, que sont parues les premières publications soulignant l'intérêt de mener des travaux à Sedeinga (n° 1-3)\(^1\), même si le site archéologique était connu depuis longtemps grâce à la présence du temple de la reine Tiy, l'épouse d'Amenhotep III, souverain dont le fameux temple jubilaire se dressait à Soleb, à une quinzaine de kilomètres plus au Sud.

Depuis 1963, la mission\(^2\) dirigée par Michela Schiff Giorgini \(^3\) avait entrepris une reconnaissance du site de Sedeinga. Les campagnes suivant les premiers travaux furent consacrées essentiellement à un secteur de la très vaste nécropole situé, un peu à l'écart sur une butte, à l'extrémité Ouest du site.

Au cours de trois campagnes, furent mis en évidence les vestiges de neuf installations funéraires (W T1 à W T9). Plusieurs d'entre elles avaient abrité deux inhumations successives, attestées par les vestiges tant humains que par les restes du matériel, malheureusement pillé; extérieurement, elles étaient caractérisées par le jumelage de deux pyramides d'époques différentes, la plus récente construite sur la descenderie et bloquant ainsi, de façon définitive, l'accès au caveau. Le matériel recueilli témoignait d'intéressants usages funéraires (n° 6, 7, 12, 19), en particulier la pratique du bris rituel de vases au bas de la descenderie; cette cérémonie ne pouvait qu'avoir été effectuée au cours d'une libation sacrificielle. Dans les vestiges de matériel de cette "nécropole de l'Ouest", en particulier dans la tombe W T8, furent recueillis de précieux documents : des bagues-cachet, des bijoux, des petits Osiris de bronze et surtout une magnifique collection de verreries exceptionnelles dont deux flûtes en verre bleu peint et doré, inscrites d'une légende en grec (n° 12,14, 20, 21, 41, 43, 48, 49).

Au devant de la tombe W T1, construite elle-même en blocs de schiste noir, plusieurs blocs de grès plus ou moins effondrés au fond de la descenderie pouvaient s'assembler; ils correspondent aux vestiges de ce qui semble être des montants de porte décorés des restes de cartouches correspondant à ceux de Taharqa, le fameux souverain de la XXVe dynastie; les traits du personnage royal qui y étaient gravés étaient ceux mêmes du

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1. Les numéros en gris renvoient à la liste des publications présentée infra, p.
2. Sous la direction de Michel Schiff Giorgini, la mission co,prendait Clément Robichon et Jean Leclant.
Pharaon bien connu par une riche iconographie (n° 1, 3, 12, 36, 39).

Cette tombe W T1 s'était installée sur un ensemble de petites fosses néolithiques où ont été recueillis en particulier les restes d'un bracelet d'ivoire et de fines aiguilles en os. La fouille de ce niveau de très haute époque ne put être alors achevée.

Dans la grande nécropole d'époque napato-méroïtique, qui s'allonge plus près du fleuve sur 800 m environ du Nord au Sud, on a ramassé en surface de nombreux éléments architecturaux et des restes de statuaire en grès, ainsi que des fragments de stèles avec d'intéressantes inscriptions méroïtiques. Une seule tombe fut fouillée : I T1, dont la pyramide de brique crue était conservée encore sur une assez belle hauteur. Une fois vidée la longue descenderie Est-Ouest, l'appartement funéraire fut atteint (n° 1).

Le bilan de ces trois campagnes de fouilles de la mission Michela Schiff Giorgini permettait de confirmer que Sedeinga correspondait bien au Hout-Tiy du Nouvel Empire égyptien ; c'est ce nom qui a subsisté à l'époque napato-méroïtique sous la forme d'Adeye, nom encore utilisé aujourd'hui par les anciens habitants de la région pour désigner les ruines de ce lieu. Ainsi se trouvait mise en évidence la présence d'une métropole notable d'une province frontière de l'empire méroïtique.

On en était resté là lorsque Michela Schiff Giorgini décida de se retirer du Soudan pour se consacrer à la publication du temple de Soleb. Concernant Sedeinga, le partage avait attribué à sa mission un certain nombre de documents qu'elle légua dès lors pour la plupart à l'Université de Pise (n° 49). Bien consciente de l'importance des problèmes méroïtiques, elle nous demanda de reprendre les travaux de Sedeinga, où fut transporté le matériel de sa mission qu'elle voulut bien nous confier. C'est alors que se produisit de façon brutale son décès prématuré, en août 1978.

Dès 1977, la nouvelle équipe de Sedeinga était revenue sur le site ; elle était alors composée de Jean Leclant, Catherine Berger, Audran Labrousse et Georges Soukiassian. Tandis que l'on procédait à l'installation de cette nouvelle mission, une attention spéciale fut accordée dans le secteur de Nilwa à des vestiges qui se révéleront ceux d'une petite église de type nubien classique (n° 29).

Par la suite, les fouilles de la grande nécropole portèrent essentiellement sur le secteur le plus au Nord, le secteur I, à partir de la tombe I T1 qui avait dégagée la mission M.S. Giorgini. Les sépultures pyramidales, de grandes dimensions, semblent régulièrement alignées en rangées Nord-Sud. Construites en briques crues, elles portaient au sommet un pyramidon de grès surmonté d'une boule couronnée d'un panache (n° 56). Les longues descenderies d'axe Est-Ouest donnent accès à des appartements funéraires souvent constitués de deux pièces. La plupart des monuments dégagés avaient malheureusement été très sévèrement pillés, réoccupés après un temps plus
ou moins long et violés à nouveau le plus souvent.

En 1991, on a passé le premier ouadi et entrepris le dégagement du coeur de la nécropole, dans le secteur II. Les sépultures, beaucoup plus modestes dans leurs dimensions, n'y ont jusqu'à présent livré chacune qu'une seule chambre au bout d'une courte descenderie Est-Ouest. En surface, là aussi, on a pu mettre en évidence des petites pyramides de briques crues; à l'Est, au-dessus de la descenderie, s'élevait une chapelle également en brique; parfois, encore plus à l'Est, le socle d'un autel (ou le support d'une statue ?) a pu être repéré. Une de ces pyramides a livré plusieurs assises en place de briques enduites d'une belle couleur rouge. Bien que très pillée, comme le secteur I, cette partie de la nécropole a livré du matériau très intéressant (verreries, linteaux, stèles, statues d'oiseau-ba plus ou moins complètes, amphores, poteries, bols de métal, etc.), avec des objets identiques ou très proches de ceux mis au jour dans le secteur Ouest par la mission M.S. Giorgini. C'est dans cette zone également qu'on a pu mettre en évidence, pendant la campagne 1994, un enterrément du groupe X dans une tombe plus ancienne à pyramide; il faut sans doute admettre qu'à cette période Sedeinga avait dû perdre de son éclat. Depuis 1991, Frédéric Cartier, dessinateur-photographe, et Francis Janot, archéologue-anthropologue, ont rejoint la mission. L'étude anthropologique systématique des squelettes a été entreprise, avec l'aide des plusieurs laboratoires (n° 50, 51, 54, 57, 63, 65). En 1991 également, Jacques Reinold, Yves Lecointe et Jean Biallas reprirent la fouille néolithique du secteur Ouest, mettant en évidence des tessons caliciformes, ainsi qu'un matériel très intéressant, dont une dent d'hippopotame façonnée en étui à pigment (n° 52, 58). En 1993, enfin, Michel Wuttmann, restaurateur à l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, venait sur place pour étudier les modalités d'un sauvetage des ruines de TIy; le temple construit dans le mauvais grès local présente désormais un éboulis de blocs très fragiles qu'il faudra sans doute soigner et traiter chimiquement avant de pouvoir envisager une quelconque intervention. La base d'une statue de la reine TIy a pu être dégagée pendant ces travaux (n° 61, 64). Une prospection géologique du site a été confiée en 1994 à Abdelhai Abdelsawi, inspecteur au National Board of Antiquities; des analyses sont en cours et les recherches vont se poursuivre pour tenter de détecter l'éventualité d'une exploitation de quartz aurifère sur le site.

Si le cimetière méroïtique a toujours été au coeur de nos recherches, la récolte de textes que nous étions en droit d'espérer d'une nécropole de cette importance n'a pas eu encore l'ampleur attendue. De l'époque napatéenne, nous serions tentés de dater un fragment de stèle retrouvé dans une construction du village. Pour les textes méroïtiques proprement dits, ce sont essentiellement des epitaphes de notables locaux qui nous décrivent complaisamment leur cursus honorifique ou ceux de leur parenté 4.

4. Cf. infra, P.
5. Cf REM 0407 : cf. Török,
Reste à repérer le centre administratif et urbain des époques napatéenne et méroïtique. Il est sans doute proche de celui des Égyptiens du Nouvel Empire, dont le cimetière n'a pas été découvert non plus. Où se trouvaient les sanctuaires d'Isis et d'Horus dont nous connaissons par les textes les cultes à Adeye ⁵, aux premiers siècles de notre ère ? Le temple de Tiy les abritait sans doute et le dégagement minutieux de ce monument pourrait donner des indications à ce sujet.
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2 Schiff Giorgini (M.), Scavi di Sedeinga, Levante XII, 3-4, 1965, p. 13-31.

3 Leclant (J.), Orientalia 34, 1965, p. 218-219, fig. 39-42.


6 Leclant (J.), Usages funéraires méroïtiques d’après les fouilles de Sedeinga (Nubie soudanaise), Bulletin de la société Ernest Renan 15, 1966, p. 12-17.

7 Leclant (J.), Usages funéraires méroïtiques d’après les fouilles de Sedeinga (Nubie soudanaise), Revue d'Histoire des Religions CLXXI, n° 437, janvier-mars 1967, p. 120-125.


9 Leclant (J.), Orientalia 36, 1967, p. 211.

10 Leclant (J.), Orientalia 37, 1968, p. 121.

11 Leclant (J.), Orientalia 38, 1969, p. 288-289, fig. 54-59.


13 Schiff Giorgini (M.), Novità archeologiche a Soleb e a Sedeinga (Sudan), Levante XVIII, 1-2, 1971, p. 5-29.


16 Leclant (J.), Orientalia 40, 1971, p. 252-255.
17 Leclant (J.), Les fouilles méroïtiques de Sedeinga (Nubie soudanaise) Revue française d'histoire d'Outre-Mer 59, n° 214, 1972, p. 505-506.

18 Leclant (J.), Orientalia 41, 1972, p. 274-276, fig. 35-36.


20 Leclant (J.), Glass from the Meroitic Necropolis of Sedeinga (Sudanese Nubia), Journal of Glass Studies XV, 1973, p. 52-68, 17 fig.

21 Leclant (J.), Les verreries de la nécropole méroïtique de l'Ouest à Sedeinga (Nubie soudanaise), Nubia, récentes recherches, Actes du colloque nubiologique international, Musée National de Varsovie, 1975, p. 85-87, 8 pl. (19 fig.).


23 Leclant (J.), Soleb-Sedeinga, Nyame Akuma 10, 1977, p. 46.


25 Leclant (J.), Sedeinga (Nubie soudanaise), Nyame Akuma 13, 1978, p. 41.

26 Leclant (J.), Orientalia 48, 1979, p. 393-394, fig. 33-36.


31 Leclant (J.), Orientalia 52, 1983, p. 522, fig. 53-58.


33 Leclant (J.), Recent Excavations at Sedeinga (Sudan, Nubia), Proceedings of the XXXIst ICHSANA II, 1984, p. 935-936.

34 Leclant (J.), Sedeinga, Lexikon der Ägyptologie V, 5, 1984, col. 780-782.

35 Leclant (J.), Sedeinga, Meroitica 7 (= Meroitische Forschungen 1980), 1984, p. 483.

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37 Leclant (J.), Bouteilles globulaires à long col de Moyenne Nubie, Mélanges offerts à Jean Vercoutter, Paris, 1985, p. 185-204, 18 fig.

38 Leclant (J.) et Clerc (G.), Orientalia 54, 1985, p. 396.


42 Leclant (J.) et Clerc (G.), Orientalia 57, 1988, p. 376-377, fig. 64-65.


44 Bresciani (E.), Le vie del vetro, Egitto e Sudan, 1988, p.


46 Leclant (J.) et Clerc (G.), Orientalia 59, 1990, p. 419.


49 Bresciani (E.), Silvano (Fl.), La collezione Schiff Giorgini, Università di Pisa, Musei di Ateneo, Catalogo delle Collezioni Egittologiche, I, Pisa, 1992.


51 Janot (Fr.), Odontologie et archéologie funéraire, L'Information dentaire, 75, n° 22, 3 Juin 1993, p. 1599-1606.


53 Leclant (J.), Soleb et Sedeinga, Aménophis III, Connaissance des Arts, H.S., n° 36, mars 1993, p. 40-47, 7 ill.
54 Janot (Fr.), A la rencontre des habitants méroïtiques de Sedeinga, Dossiers d'archéologie, La Nubie, n° 196, Septembre 1994, p. 40-41.


57 Janot (Fr.), Strazielle (C.) et Cussenot (O.), Les restes humains de la nécropole de Sedeinga. La tombe II T 14: approche pluridisciplinaire, MNL 25, septembre 1994, p. 125-133, 5 fig.

58 Reinold (J.), Les sépultures primitives de Sedeinga dans le contexte du néolithique soudanais, Hommages à Jean Leclant, BdE 106/2, Le Caire, 1994, p. 351-359, 3 fig.

59 Leclant (J.) et Clerc (G.), Orientalia 63, 1994, p. 451, fig. 49-52.


61 Labrousse (A.), Sedeinga, une métropole régionale au coeur de l'Empire méroïtique, Dossiers d'archéologie, La Nubie, n° 196, Septembre 1994, p. 34-39.

62 Berger (C.), Janot (Fr.), Cartier (Fr.) et Labrousse (A.), Au coeur de la Nubie soudanaise: la nécropole de Sedeinga, Arts, Sciences, Techniques, Connaissance des hommes, n° 15, printemps 1995, p. 22-27, 9 fig.

63 Janot (Fr.), Strazielle (C.), Miller (N.) et Cussenot (O.), Étude crânio-faciale de l'occupant de la tombe II T 14 provenant des fouilles archéologiques de la nécropole de Sedeinga (Nord Soudan), Information dentaire n° 37, 26 octobre 1995, p. 2883-2891.

64 Leclant (J.) et Clerc (G.), Orientalia 64, 1995, p. 326, fig. 56-57.

Inscriptions méroïtiques de Sedeinga :

REM 0080 : MNL 1, Oct. 1968, n. 9, p. 11.

REM 0081 : MNL 1, Oct. 1968, n. 9, p. 11.

REM 0141 = Berlin, Inv. n° 1071.

REM 1042 : MNL 3, Oct. 1969, p. 6, Sawarda ?


REM 1114 : MNL 10, Juillet 1972, p. 3.
Cf. Brescian et Silvano, 1992 (notre n° 47), n° 182, p. 87 et pl. VII.

REM 1115 : MNL 10, Juillet 1972, p. 3.
Inscriptions méroïtiques de Sedeinga :

REM 0080 : MNL 1, Oct. 1968, n. 9, p. 11.

REM 0081 : MNL 1, Oct. 1968, n. 9, p. 11.

REM 0141 = Berlin, Inv. n° 1071.

REM 1042 : MNL 3, Oct. 1969, p. 6, Sawarda ?


REM 1114 : MNL 10, Juillet 1972, p. 3.

Cf. Bresciani et Silvano, 1992 (notre n° 47), n° 182, p. 87 et pl. VII.

REM 1115 : MNL 10, Juillet 1972, p. 3.


*REM 1116 : MNL 10, Juillet 1972, p. 3


REM 1120 : MNL 10, Juillet 1972, p. 5.


REM 1122 : MNL 10, Juillet 1972, p. 5.
S.F.D.A.S. - un quart de siècle de coopération archéologique.

Jacques Reinold


Bien que le programme initial ait été centré sur l’étude de la région du Darfour, les premiers travaux de terrain concernèrent la Nubie. Une prospection systématique et des fouilles de sauvetage, y furent entreprises pour l’élaboration de la carte archéologique du pays; en reprenant à la latitude atteinte par les missions internationales qui avaient répondu à l’appel pour la Campagne de Sauvegarde des Monuments de Nubie.

Mais très vite le développement économique du pays a contraint de modifier ce programme afin de faire face aux destructions répétées de gisements archéologiques (programmes d’irrigation, urbanisation, routes...). C’est ainsi que depuis 1976, tout en poursuivant des travaux de terrain, dans le cadre de thèmes de recherche spécifiques, la S.F.D.A.S. n’oeuvre pratiquement plus que sur des opérations dites de ‘sauvetage’.

Si certains des sites ont déjà fait l’objet de publication détaillée, bon nombre d’entre eux, ne sont connus que par des articles ou des rapports préliminaires. Il nous a paru opportun d’en donner ici une liste exhaustive, accompagnée d’une brève description et d’une bibliographie incluant aussi les études menées par des collaborateurs extérieurs à la S.F.D.A.S., lorsqu’elles sont en liaison directe avec ses travaux de terrain.

1) PROSPECTIONS ET RECONNAISSANCES :

PROSPECTION SUD DE DAL (1) - suite directe de la Campagne de Sauvegarde des Monuments de Nubie, cette prospection s’est déroulée entre 1970 et 1975, sur un brief s’étendant en latitude depuis la cataracte de Dal à l’île de Nilwatti. Elle a permis la reconnaissance de 462 gisements (dont 400 sites d’habitat - 215 cimetières et 28 stations rupestres), qui recouvrent 623 présences culturelles, pour lesquelles les attributions chronologiques sont effectuées selon la classification proposée par Trigger et vont en s’échelonnant du paléolithique à l’islamique ancien.

PROSPECTION SUD DE DAL (2) : ABUDIYA - poursuite, entre 1976 et 1978, de la prospection engagée au sud de la cataracte de Dal, sur le district d’Abudiya (rive est), où quelques 200 ‘sites’ furent recensés. Pratiquement, toutes les périodes, bien qu’en pourcentages fort variables, y sont représentées. L’enregistrement fut effectué selon un système de classement différent de celui utilisé auparavant, afin de tenir compte des variations relevées au sud du Batn el Haggar (en particulier avec l’absence des Groupes A et C, qui demeurent spécifiques de la Basse-Nubie).


IVe. CATARACTE - l’annonce de la construction d’un barrage devant submerger de la pointe ouest de l’île de Mograt à la région juste en amont du djebel Barkal a entraîné plusieurs reconnaissances sur ce parcours (1989-1990). Dans cette zone soupçonnée pauvre en vestige, la découverte de plus de 500 sites fut une surprise; une évaluation du potentiel archéologique multipliera au moins par 2,5 ce chiffre. On retiendra surtout l’importance des cimetières qui totalisent près de 70%. Toutes les périodes sont représentées, cependant si pré- et protohistoire ne représentent que 5,5%, le postméroïtique lui monte à 18% et le chrétien culmine à 40%. Il faut souligner que cette zone doit correspondre à la frontière méridionale du royaume de Kerma, puisqu’aucun site n’y fut reconnu.


RÉGION DE SHENDI : PROSPECTIONS - elles concernent une reconnaissance sur le tracé de la route Geili-Atbara; une autre pour le recensement des structures tumulaires entre les VIe et Ve cataractes (en rive occidentale); ainsi que des visites sur une série de sites préhistoriques et historiques, qui ne firent l’objet ni de sondage ni de ramassage (El Sideir, El Hassah, Fikhikhira - dit aussi Qoz Burra, Qoz Badur, Qerqur, Sera el Suqur, Umm Kadissa, Abu Huna, Es Selema, El Metemma, Abu Haraz, wadi El Hawad, Hosh ben Naqa, El Korumab...). Ces gisements furent enregistrés en raison de leur rapports avec les sites principaux d’étude (El Kadada et El Hobagi).


RÉGION DE KHARTOUM : RECONNAISSANCES - diverses inspections ponctuelles permirent l’enregistrement de nouveaux sites néolithiques : Hillat Kuku (fouillé depuis par la mission de l’université de Madrid), El Lamab, Djebel Aulla, Baqeir el Quddami (ce dernier fut accompagné d’une collection de surface).

d’objets en or furent fortuitement découvertes. Cette reconnaissance fut aussi étendue à la zone de Kenana et à l’île d’El Aba. Le retour, effectué sur la rive ouest du Nil Blanc, permit d’enregistrer plusieurs buttes (terrasses ou dunes fossiles), occupées principalement aux périodes préhistoriques.


RAHAD - cette vaste zone qui s’étend sur le rive droite de la rivière Rahad, affluent du Nil Bleu, fit l’objet de prospections en 1994, suite à la décision de mise en service d’un programme d’irrigation. Elle fournit essentiellement des vestiges d’occupation de la période Fung, quelques objets néolithiques et une gravure rupestre d’un type inédit.


Reinold 1987p - Jebel WASAI - découverte, en 1993, dans la région de la ‘Station n° 6’, d’un site de surface de faciès néolithique et de gravures rupestres animalières


2) FOUILLES ET SONDAGES.UKMA OUEST - fouille de sauvetage conduite en avril 1969, sur un site touché par la montée des eaux du barrage d’Assouan, qui fournit un cimetière de l’époque Kerma, de 228 sépultures, dont le mobilier et les coutumes funéraires s’accordent avec l’évolution remarquée sur la nécropole éponyme.


MISSIMINIA - fouille de sauvetage, entre 1972 et 1975 d’une nécropole découverte à Abri-Missiminia, lors de la prospection au sud de Dal. La construction d’une école entraîna la fouille exhaustive d’une vaste nécropole
de près de 1.600 tombes dont 960 purent être exploitées. S’échelonnant du IXe siècle avant au XIIIe siècle de notre ère elle témoigne des grandes attributions culturelles reconnues en Nubie en fournissant 140 tombes napatéennes, 377 méritoïques, 351 Groupe X, 685 chrétiennes et 37 de datation incertaine. Le développement d’un tel espace funéraire ne pouvait s’effectuer de manière régulière ou continu et il fut possible de définir dix phases d’occupation.


SEDEINGA - mission conjointe avec la SEDAU (CNRS, Paris), qui permit, en 1991, sur le petit cimetière néolithique, situé sous une pyramide de la XXVe dynastie, d’ajouter 11 tombes aux 9 précédemment enregistrées (1971). Cet ensemble livre les premières sépultures néolithiques du nord Soudan, découvertes en aval de la IIIe cataracte. Il doit refermer une trentaine d’individus et a livré peu de matériel, mais d’un type suffisamment caractéristique pour qu’il soit possible de le rattacher à la phase chronologique définie par le cimetière KDK.1 de Kadruka.


KADRUKA : NEOLITHIQUE - depuis 1986, les fouilles portèrent sur quatre cimetières (KDK. 1 - 18 - 2 et 21), dont les deux derniers sont encore en cours d’exploitation. Excepté le n° 2, couvrant une longue période, les autres, de petites tailles, sont utilisés par un groupe humain précis; ils nous renseignent donc sur l’évolution des coutumes funéraires et montrent des transformations dans les structures sociales de ces groupes qui tendent à privilégier un personnage principal et dénotent le passage à une organisation en chefferie.


KADRUKA : PÉRIODE KERMA - les cimetières néolithiques KDK.1 et KDK.2 renferment aussi des sépultures de la civilisation Kerma (phases ancienne et moyenne), d’un type différent de ceux du site éponyme, qui traduisent un faciès rural. Entre autre les récipients en céramique se rapprochent plus des types communs rencontrés en contexte d’habitat.


El ARAB - fouille de sauvetage, en 1988, de deux sépultures collectives attribuables au napatéen ancien. L’une d’elle comporte une décoration peinte limitée aux encadrements des portes (bateaux, personnage assis sous un dais,
plusieurs bovins et un personnage tenant une autruche). Le matériel funéraire bien que très pillé livra de nombreux vases en céramique, quelques bronzes et objets en or.

Leclant et Clerc 1989b - 1991d - Lenoble 1989k - Reinold 1988 -

BERBER - fouille de sauvetage, en 1986, suite à la découverte accidentelle d'une tombe postméroïtique à double descenderie (voûte effondrée lors du passage d'un camion). Elle caractérise un rite funéraire particulier d'origine royale, avec sacrifice de chien.


EL KADADA : PÉRIODES PRÉHISTORIQUES - un programme d'irrigation entraîna la fouille de sauvetage de ce gisement, entre 1976 et 1986, qui permit la reconnaissance de plusieurs habitats (dont un attribuable au Dotted wavy line) et d'au moins quatre cimetières d'époque néolithique, pour laquelle trois d'entre eux permirent la découverte d'une phase récente (ou finale), qui fit du gisement un site éponyme. Au total, 314 sépultures sont enregistrées, dont le matériel et les coutumes funéraires autorisent à décéler pour cette seule période au moins quatre phases d'occupation, dont deux pour la seule phase finale et des transformations structurelles dans l'organisation sociale.


EL KADADA : PÉRIODES HISTORIQUES - le gîte d'El Kadada, étendu aux lieux-dits jouxtant, vit la fouille de nombreuses tombes historiques dont les plus anciennes remontent au napatéen et les plus récentes à l'époque chrétienne. A l'époque méroïtique on assiste à une évolution progressive, déjà décelable dans l'architecture des fosses, qui aboutit à deux types. Les tombes dites post-méroïtiques succèdent à la période de transition
du méroïtique récent, dont elles soulignent l'identité culturelle. Découverte qui aboutit à la possible remise en cause de la ‘Fin de Méroé’ et à la poursuite de l’enquête sur l’autre rive à El Hobagi.


**EL GHABA** - exploité entre 1980 et 1986, cette nécropole voisine d’El Kadada, livra 321 sépultures dont hormis 67 tombes, qui s’échelonnent du méroïtique à la période chrétienne, les autres sont attribuables au néolithique tel que défini sur le site d’Ésh Shaheinab. Pour ce dernier, les sépultures ‘étagées’ sur trois niveaux témoignent d’au moins deux phases d’occupation. Leur matériel et les coutumes funéraires laissent à penser qu’il n’y a pas de solution de continuité avec la phase kadadienne.


**EL HOBAGI (ou UMM MAKHAROKA)** - suite à la découverte de sépultures mêlant des caractéristiques méroïtique et post-méroïtique à El Kadada, l’enquête se poursuivit dans la région d’El Hobagi où six tumulus et tombes furent exploitées : deux sont chrétiens et quatre post-méroïtiques, pour lesquelles deux, en raison de la spécificité de leur matériel, décrits des sépultures de la ‘sphère royale’. Si les dernières pyramides sont bien construites au IVe siècle de notre ère, le contenu des tombes et l’isisme funéraire, eux perdurent jusqu’à la christianisation, vers le VIe siècle. La continuité litturgique du méroïtique récent conteste de la ‘Fin de Méroé’ tant sur le plan politique que religieux, elle fait proposer pour cette période et cette région le terme de ‘méroïtique post-pyramidal’ en remplacement de l’appellation post-méroïtique.


203 — RUSH

RÉGION DE SHENDI : SONDAGES - ARDEB ET ABU AMERA (DJEBELS) : ces deux djébels qui sont situés à l’est de Méroé, flanquent le confluent du wadi Hawad et de la vallée du Nil. Leurs flancs sont jonchés de tessons de céramique d’époque méroïtique. Il semblerait que ces récipients aient été jetés depuis les sommets pour des rites religieux encore inexpliqués.

Leclant et Clerc 1990a - 1994f - Lenoble 1992e - Reinold 1987n - 1988g -

ATRA, EL : fouille de sauvetage d’un tumulus postméroïtique, situé sur une terrasse entre Shendi et El Kadada, pour tenter d’arrêter le ‘carrièrage’ qui menaçait le cimetière de destruction.

Geus 1986f - Leclant 1984f - Reinold 1983k -

HILLAT HASSAB HALLAH : situé près de Kabushiya, ce site fit l’objet de relevés et de sondages, entre 1985 et 1988. Sa situation sur le tracé de la route Gelli-Atbara, le vouait à la destruction. Daté du méroïtique classique il présente un cimetière et un habitat de huttes avec trous de poteau, foyers et fosses à détritus. L’industrie lithique, essentiellement sur quartzite et les témoins de faune (bovidés et ovicapridés) d’une population d’éleveurs nous livrent une image d’un monde rural, bien différente de cette civilisation connue seulement par des fouilles urbaines.


HOSH EL KAFIR : forteresse située près d’El Hobagi, elle présente un plan quadrangulaire avec un édifice central très mal conservé et une enceinte qui comporte deux portes. Des relevés et sondages entrepris entre 1985 et 1988 touchèrent principalement certaines des constructions (pièces carrés et rectangulaires), appuyées contre la face interne du mur sud. L’une de ces structures est un atelier de forgeron (qui livra des vestiges de four, tuyères, moules et scories), dont c’est le premier exemple trouvé, hors de la ville de Méroé. Ce camp devait avoir des fonctions palitiales mais aussi servir pour la garnison assurant la protection des tombes d’El Hobagi.


MAKBOR (DJEBEL) : en rive droite du Nil, entre Shendi et Kabushiya, le djebel Makbor est l’une de ces nombreuses buttes-témoin gréseuses qui parsèment les terrasses de l’embouchure du wadi Hawad, et qui livrent à profusion des tertres funéraires. Une fouille, en 1985, limitée à quatre de ces
tumulus livra cinq tombes et sept individus, de diverses périodes. Si bien enten-
du les époques méroïtiques, postméroïtiques et chrétiennes y sont reconnus, la surprise vint avec l’un de tumulus, qui produisit une sépulture datée du IIe. millénaire avant notre ère, fournissant la première tombe protohistorique de la région du Nil sahélien.

Privati 1987k - Reinold 1985f - 1985g - Reinold et Lenoble 1987r

SHAQALU, ESH : fouille de sauvetage en banlieue de Shendi, d’une
tombe postméroïtique, en 1980, suite au passage répété des véhicules qui en
creverpent la voûte.

Geus 1983b - Geus, Hinkel et Lenoble 1986g - Leclant 1982k - Lenoble
1992d - 1994l

SHENDI : sondage, en 1980, dans les faubourgs de Shendi, d’un site
déjà répertorié par Arkell et en voie de destruction par l’urbanisation. Il révé-
la l’existence de sépultures dont le matériel les rapprochent du néolithique
final kadadien.


SHETEIB, ESH : c’est l’un des nombreux champs tumulaires établis
sur la haute terrasse du Nil. Choli à titre de test, quatre tumulus furent ex-
plorés en 1985. Bien que très pillées, les tombes livrèrent suffisamment de
matériel céramique pour pouvoir être datées de la phase de transition entre
les périodes méroïtique et post-méroïtique.

- Reinold 1985f - Reinold et Lenoble 1987r

USHARA, El : sondage, en 1982, sur un gisement, une dizaine de kilo-
mètres en amont d’El Kadada, situé sur une terrasse très en retrait du
fleuve et utilisé comme gravière. Il révéla l’existence probable de deux ni-
veaux d’occupation rapportables au néolithique tel que définit à Esh Shahe-
nab.

- 1987l - Salah 1984j

EL AHAMDA - entre El Geili et El Kadero, plusieurs gravières mena-
cent différents sites archéologiques, dont un cimetière néolithique de type ka-
dadien fit l’objet de ramassages de surface ; il a depuis été étudié par la mis-
sion de l’université de Rome sous le nom d’El Kenger. Un autre cimetière du
méroïtique final fit l’objet de tests, en 1983, dans le cadre d’une ‘école de
fouille’ pour l’entraînement des collaborateurs du Service des Antiquités. Le
matériel livra des céramiques, dont une forme peut suggérer une date anté-
rérieure (napatéen ?), des perles et deux bronzes.


RÉGION DE KASSALA - mission conjointe avec l’Université de Naples, en 1984, qui consista en des prospections sur les ‘montagnes de Kassala’ et en la fouille de plusieurs tumulus, pour lesquels une chronologie longue est proposée, du postméroïtique aux périodes récentes.

Coltorti, D’Alessandro, Fattovich, Lenoble et Sadr 1984m - Leclant et Clerc 1985d - Lenoble 1984n -
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Canadian Excavations at Hambukol, October - December 1993

Krzysztof Grzymski

1. Introduction

The 1993 field campaign at Hambukol and in parts of the Letti Basin was carried out between 21 October and 10 December 1993. The expedition was sponsored by the Royal Ontario Museum and largely funded by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Our work in the Sudan was made possible thanks to the support and assistance provided by Professor Ahmed M. Ali Hakem, Chairman of the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums, Mr. Hassan Hussein, Director General, and Dr. Salah Mohamed Ahmed. We would also like to thank Mr. Abderahman Ali Mohammed, Mr. Fathi Abdelhamid and other colleagues and officials for their assistance. The staff of the expedition comprised Dr. Krzysztof Grzymski (Director), Ms. Julie Anderson (Associate Director), Ms. Stephanie Blitz, Ms. Donatella Usai, Mr. Daniel Barrett, Mr. David Murray (Archaeologists), Mr. Sean Gaukroger (Artist) and Mr. Fathi Abdelhamid (Inspector). Additionally two prehistorians Dr. Michal Kobusiewicz and Mr. Jack Kabacinski joined our team for a short time.

The field activities of our mission involved continuation of the excavations at Hambukol as well as salvage operations in the Letti Basin in the areas threatened by agricultural development and new housing.

2. Excavations at Hambukol

The site of Hambukol which is located north of El Ghaddar village and west of the Hambukol hamlet has been excavated by our expedition since 1986. The reports on the previous seasons have been published in this and other journals (Grzymski 1989; 1990; 1993a; 1993b; Grzymski and Anderson 1994; Anderson 1994a). The site comprises two mounds separated by an irrigation canal. The larger, southern mound extends for about 450 m from north to south and rises up to 14 m above the surrounding plain. The smaller, northern mound measures around 100 m in diameter and is characterized by an abundance of red brick scattered on its surface.

The excavations on the main mound concentrated in Area B, which was first investigated in 1988 when several mud brick walls were first discovered.
Since then more walls and rooms were revealed in an attempt to locate the outer limits of the structure and to identify its function. However, after several seasons of work on this site those limits have not as yet been identified as the building is larger and better preserved than expected. It is also fully covered by wind-blown sand and therefore the actual digging process is very time-consuming. During the 1993 campaign two new trenches were opened to the east and south-west of the previously identified rooms. The east trench, measuring 30m by 10m revealed a continuing complex of rooms running all the way to Area C.II. The excavation showed a complex series of events taking place over an extended period of time. The area of the eastern trench has been extensively robbed-out at some point post-occupation. Clusters of pits were found cut through most of the site. Interestingly the walls, although cut by the pits were not robbed out suggesting that the "robbers" were interested in other items. While most of the walls were made of mud brick in a few instances red brick elements were also found. Generally, the appearance of the east trench structure in Area B is that of a squatter settlement reusing earlier building. There is no C-14 dating available for this unit and the pottery found is uniformly ordinary utility ware. This secondary occupation most likely took place toward the end of the late Christian period. The south-west trench was located further down the slope from previously unearthed rooms. In order to ascertain the size of the Area B structure the emphasis was on exposing the wall tops. Therefore the south-west trench was excavated horizontally rather than vertically and no floor levels were reached. It seems that the rooms in this part of the building were better preserved than in the east trench and in some instances suggested the existence of a second story. The discovery of a grain bin tempts one to see this as a storage/kitchen area, but any such interpretation without further excavation would be premature. It is quite possible, though, to see the whole Area B structure as an example of the Late Christian period large habitations known previously from Qasr Ibrim and Gebel Adda as suggested by Adams at the Nubiological conference in Lille.

The excavations at the North Kom of Hambukol began in 1992 when a 25 m by 6m trench was laid out (Anderson 1994b). After the removal of the surface material a smaller 6m by 6m unit was then excavated resulting in the discovery of one room with mud brick walls and another room built of red brick with a red brick floor. In the current campaign the whole 25m by 25m is being explored. The overlying debris covered a dense layer of red brick and mud brick rubble that was up to 2m thick. The building found beneath this rubble was made of red-brick walls covered with high quality white plaster. traces of the bottoms of wall paintings done in red, black and yellow paint were found in some instances on the
plaster. All the rooms found within the core of the building had red brick pavements. The walls were up to 1m thick and the bricks measured 30cm by 17cm by 7cm in size. The main entrance appears to have been at the south. In the centre of the buildings portions of two columns were unearthed. The columns were constructed of sandstone drum segments which, probably at a later date, were reinforced by mud brick casing. Similar columns are known from the recently excavated church at Kom E at Old Dongola (Zurawski 1994). Other stone elements found within the North Kom structure include a column capital and an inscribed threshold possibly bearing the monograms of the founders. The red-brick core was surrounded by rooms made of mud brick. In many instances barrel vaulting was still recognizable suggesting a height of about 2m for these rooms. The height of the core building is unknown as the red brick walls and stone columns stand only about 1m high.

The small finds from Area B and the North Kom comprised mainly the pottery. The two areas in question produced different kinds of ceramic material. Those found in Area B included mainly ordinary, undecorated utility wares, among them large numbers of cooking pots, while pottery from the North Kom contained substantial quantities of high quality amphorae and other containers, some of which were imported from Aswan. Dating based on decorated wares suggests 11th to 13th century AD for the Area B and 7th to 8th century for the North Kom. Another common find in Area B was that of grinding stones and mortars.

3. Survey in Letti

The Letti Basin, or Khor Letti, was first explored in the 1984-86 reconnaissance (Grzymski 1987). In recent years the government of the Sudan provided support for a large scale irrigation scheme that will convert all the lands contained between the Nile channel and the depression known as Khor Letti into agricultural areas. Moreover, a new town, called New Ghardar is presently being constructed in the southern portion of the Letti Basin in the immediate neighbourhood of the Hambukol (ROM 33) and Jogob Sheik Mohammed (ROM 34) sites. In response to the request from the local council and with support and permission of the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums the Canadian Mission undertook necessary rescue operations. These involved revisiting the known existing sites and establishing their precise outer limits on the basis of surface indications. Additionally a search for previously unidentified remains was also carried out by means of criss-crossing the Letti "Island" between Meguda and Jogob on the west and Letti Sections 3 and 4 on the east. The results not
only confirmed the previously reported presence of early material but also suggested that occupation density was much higher than previously thought. The Bugbugakutti (ROM 29) site contained the earliest material dated by our prehistorians to the Late Palaeolithic period. However, the most prevalent seemed to be the Neolithic and Kerma occupation. One of the Kerma tombs was excavated in the vicinity of site Rom 34 on the way to the new settlement of New Ghaddar. The cemetery site is already partially destroyed by the newly built canal. The overall impression one gains from surficial study of the Letti "Island" is that of a continuous series of settlements, workshops and cemeteries of various periods occupying the whole area. Another endangered zone is a long the terraces near Jebel Ghaddar. The area is gradually being taken over by new settlers. The Stone Age sites referred to in the 1987 report were briefly investigated this season. One of the sites was tentatively identified as a Middle Paleolithic shelter somewhat similar to that found at Arkin during the Nubian Campaign.
References


Canadian Expedition to Nubia: the 1994 Season at Hambukol and in the Letti Basin

Krzysztof Grzymski

1. Introduction

The 1994 field campaign at Hambukol and in parts of the Lettie Basin (Figure 1) was carried out between 11 November and 7 December. The expedition was sponsored by the Royal Ontario Museum and financially assisted by the University of Toronto and private donors. Our work in the Sudan was made possible thanks to the support and assistance provided by the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums. The author wishes to express his gratitude to Mr. Hassan Hussein Idris, Director General, and to other colleagues and officials of the corporation as well as to Mr. Elfadil O. Ahmed, Charge d'affaire, Sudan Embassy, Ottawa, for facilitating our work in the Sudan. The staff of the expedition comprised Dr. Krzysztof Grzymski (Director), Ms. Julie Anderson (associate Director), Dr. Marek Chhodnicki, Dr. Jacek Kabacinski and Prof. Michael Kobusiewicz (Prehistorians) and Mr. Hassan Ahmed (Inspector). Additionally, Dr. Bogdan Zurawski joined our team for part of the season.

The main objectives of our short field season were as follows:
1. Continuation of excavations at the North Kom;
2. Study of some structures in Area B;
3. Study and salvage of threatened prehistoric sites in the Letti Basin.

2. Excavations at North Kom

The excavations at the North Kom of Hambukol began in 1992 and were carried out annually ever since (Anderson 1994). During the past seasons remains of a red-brick building were partly uncovered (Figure 2). To the north and south of this structure there were other walls, made of mud-brick. Their relationship to the core building remains presently unclear. The walls of the red-brick building were up to 1 m thick and still stand about a meter high. The bricks themselves measured 30 cm by 17 cm in size. These red-brick walls were covered with white plaster and in some instance traces of red, black and yellow paints were found, suggesting that the walls were once decorated with paintings. All the rooms found within the core of the building had red brick pavements, while stone was used for thresholds and for stairs in the south and north entrances. So far two columns constructed of sandstone drum segments were
Although the main research objective is to conduct a complete, intensive surface survey of the entire concession, the actual execution was based on the need to study the endangered areas first. It was for this reason that the fieldwork was concentrated in two places: (1) around the newly excavated irrigation canal near the new suq and buildings of New Gheddar, and (b) on the Nile terraces northeast of Old Dongola.

An irrigation canal running westward from the new suq for about 500 m towards the houses of the hamlet of Jogob Sheik Mohammed turns northwards before actually reaching the houses. The canal then continues its northwardly course towards the village of Megauda. Preliminary investigations were carried out near the new Letti suq in 1993 on the north side of the canal revealing the presence of shreds dating to the Neolithic, Kerma and Christian periods. Some badly eroded graves located in the vicinity of the suq were investigated at that time and on the basis of the body positions were identified as Christian. Additionally, scatters of Neolithic pottery, possibly from a settlement were also noticed in the area. About 300 m NW from there, on the west side of the northward canal, there were scatters of pebbles and occasional shreds, the only surface indications of what turned out to be a small Kerma cemetery. The pebbles were leftovers from the eroded mounds measuring approximately 10 m to 15 m in diameter. One of these Kerma tumuli was excavated in 1993 and although it was robbed it contained several identifiable potsherds. Another tumulus was excavated during the present campaign (Figure 3). Both tumuli were hardly recognizable on the surface, however, once the surface was cleared the outline of the dromos became visible. Tumulus 1/94 was also robbed and only part of the skull was found in situ, while some other bones were found in the filling of the dromo. With the exception of some beads, no grave goods were found. The bottom of the burial chamber of tumulus 1/94 was located 2.4 m below the present surface.

On the east side of the same canal and about 200 m further north there was another cemetery. The tumuli there were 3 m to 4 m in diameter and rose to about 0.2 to 0.3 m above surrounding ground. The mounds were covered with small pieces of sandstone, which included palaeolithic flakes and cores. One of these small tumuli was excavated, however, except for a single ostrich egg bead no bones or objects were found. The second tumulus excavated in the same area differed from the rest by its size (diameter: 7 m) and the fact that it was marked with pebbles, rather than sandstone fragments. It was also devoid of grave goods, but the position of the skeleton suggests that the body was lying on its
discovered. The columns were reinforced by mud brick casing in the later phase of the use of the building. Similar columns were recently discovered by Zureawski in the church on Kom E at Old Dongola (Zurawski 1994). A decorated granite column capital was found on the floor in one of the rooms in the centre of the building.

The work is currently being conducted within a 25 m by 25 m unit. During the last season, the work was limited to the excavations and planning of the eastern part of the building and to the study of the pottery. While it would be premature to draw any conclusions regarding the function of the building prior to the complete clearance of the structure, one notices striking similarities to a church excavated by Zurawski at Kom E in Old Dongola.

The pottery recovered so far on the site is almost exclusively wheel made with predominance of large amphorae. This includes both finely ribbed Aswan amphorae of Adams’ Ware U2 as well as local imitations probably produced in the Old Dongola Kiln. Other interesting finds included some Fayumi Ware shreds and a single Aloa "beer-jar" shred. Many small dish lamps were also unearthed as were the bases of other vessels rescued as lamps. The pottery groups suggests a 7th-8th century date for the use of the building.

3. Main Kom: Area B

The excavations of a large structure, or structures, within area B have been carried out on and off since 1988. A large number of walls and rooms was revealed over the years in an attempt to identify the Size and the outer limits of the building. This emphasis on the horizontal exposure prevented us from fully exploring the contents of individual rooms. Thus, the work conducted last season was concentrated on the stratigraphic study of room 18 in the southeastern part of Area B. Like other rooms previously explored, (Grzymski 1993; Grzymski, Anderson 1994) this one was devoid of artifacts, except for some pottery fragments. In an attempt to identify the wall foundations it was discovered that below room B18, and possibly below other parts of the building there was another building level. Exceptionally well preserved mud-brick arches with lamp niches were uncovered. Due to the lack of time and for safety reasons further exploration of this new, and unexpected find was postponed until the next season.

4. Survey in the Letti Basin

The 1994 season marked the beginning of a systematic survey in and around Letti based on the preliminary observations made in the previous year.
back, head turned to the west, and was placed on a funerary bed of some sort. Thus, the burial could be of the Napatan period.

To the north and northeast of this cemetery, numerous Neolithic shreds and stone tools were found, suggesting the presence of a Late Neolithic settlement and cemetery there. The terraces extending along the eastern edge of Khor Letti were known for some time to have the Stone Age deposits (Jakobielski, Krzyzaniak 1967-68:143-151; Grzymski 1987:14). After a brief inspection of the sites in 1993 (Kobusiewicz 1994) a more detailed study was carried out this season when the whole area south of Jebel Ghaddar was field walked. It was found to be densely covered with Palaeolithic implements, especially on the wadi banks. Even these sites, located away from the cultivation are presently endangered as a result of the establishment of semi-permanent settlements by nomadic Arab tribes attracted to the fast developing region of Ghaddar/Old Dongola. One of the sites was selected for a more detailed study. It was located on a small hillock above a wadi. This small elevation has been named "Jebel Kobkaba" by the excavators. This, however, is not a local name, but an artificial one formed from the first syllables of the excavators’ last names: Kobusiewicz-Kabacinski. On the side of "Jebel Kobkaba" there were large outcrops of ocher and on the summit there was a group of large rocks lined in a relatively regular manner suggesting that they might be the remains of a wind shelter. About 10 m away from the supposed shelter was a natural sandstone outcrop around which were piles of lithic debitage. Study of the lithic density showed that whereas near the outcrop there were approximately 100 tools and flakes per square meter, in the so-called "shelter" area there were only 10 to 15 per square meter. The tools were mainly hand axes and flakes used as scrapers; there were also small pebble choppers made of Nile chert. All of these materials have been identified as Middle Palaeolithic.
References


Ceramics from the Sudan Archaeological Research Society
Survey Begrawiya to Atbara 1993-94
A Comparison Between Surface Collection and Excavated Ceramic Assemblages

L. Smith

1. Introduction:

The archaeological survey between Begrawiya and Atbara during 1993 and 1994 was undertaken by the Sudan Archaeological Research Society at the request of the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums in order to record archaeological sites along the line of the new road under construction from Geili to Atbara. The area of the concession lay between Jebel Ardeeb just to the north of Begrawiya (Meroe) and the River Atbara. An initial ground survey was undertaken, followed by excavation at sites which were considered to be at risk, and which appeared to be archaeologically most significant on the basis of the ground survey.

In this paper, the main groups of ceramic collected during the ground survey and the most important pottery recovered in the excavations carried out this year will be presented. During the survey, surface material collected in transacts each site, since the majority, particularly the tumulus fields, covered considerable areas. In general, the transacts were about 1 m wide and were located about 5 m apart, evenly spaced across the site. Using this scheme, approx. 20% of the site surface area was sampled.

The featured shreds have been divided into twenty-one main ware groups, mainly on the basis of similarities in type of manufacture, whether apparently hand or wheelmade, surface treatment, style and form of decoration, and fabric. Forms within the groups were classified in general terms according to a form classification on that used at Soba and by Adams (Welsby and Daniels 1991; Adams 1986).

2. The Ceramic Groups:

Groups 1a, 1b and 1c

These groups comprise handmade wares. The fabric of all three is porous with much vegetable temper and sparse quartz grains ranging up to about 1-2 mm in diameter being present. The fabric of group 1a is characterised by very rare to rare opaque, whitish, subround to rounded inclusions, of medium to high sphericity and ranging from medium to coarse size. These may be identified as calcitic inclusions. Fabric in Group 1b is distinguished by a lower proportion or absence, of the opaque whitish inclusions in the fabric and in Group 1c by the presence of frequent coarse, irregular greyish in-
clusions, probably rock fragments.

Surface of vessels in these Groups are distinguished by some degree of smoothing with both plastic and incised decoration. Vessels within these Groups occur in jar and bowl forms together with one form considered to be a censer (Fig. 1a) and in jar or bowl forms with lugs (Fig. 1b, 1c) or angular handles in Group 1c. Decoration often comprises linear zigzags, or cross-hatched shapes or panels (Figs. 1a, 1d). Forms of bowls include a characteristic type having exterior bosses on the rim and interior and exterior panels of shallow impressed dots (Fig. 1e).

Dating:

This group may represent some considerable period of time; however, some assemblages can be assigned to a general period on the basis of certain vessel forms and decoration. In particular the censers appear in Adams' classification as Form R, and are said to occur exclusively in the handmade wares of the Terminal Christian and of the Islamic periods (Adams 1986, 104). According to this ware typology, they occur in the wares of Group DIII. The nearest equivalent to the survey Group is Ware H6, of which the main period of manufacture is given as 1350-1600 A.D. Fairly similar forms to the survey specimens also occur at Hambukol, in the Dongola Reach, where they are generally assigned to the Islamic period (J. Phillips, pers. comm., 1993) and at Old Dongola itself, where they are dated to the end of the Christian period on (W. Goldewski, pers. comm., 1994).

Secondly, in terms of decoration, the cross-hatched panels can be paralleled in Adams classification in the decoration characteristic of Group DIII of the Late-Terminal Christian period in Lower Nubia (Adams 1986, 239). Decoration comprising bosses similar to those shown in (Fig. 1f) is also known from context dated between the 15th and 17th century at Old Dongola (W. Godlewski, pers. comm., 1994).

The distinctive fabric of Group 1c may relate to the wares H15 or H16 described by Adams in the DIV group, comprising schist-tempered wares considered to have their main period of manufacture between 1550 and 1800 (Adams 1986, 434). The main indications of date for Group 1 material are, therefore, from the end of the Christian period onwards into the Islamic Period.

Groups 2a/2b:

These Groups are characterised by an unclipped or burnished, generally rough surface in 2a, and smoothed, sometimes lightly polished surface in 2b. Vessels are handmade, probably from Nile silt. Both groups have fabric with abundant vegetable temper, voids from this ranging up to c. 2-3 mm in length. The main inclusion types are sparse very fine quartz and sparse very fine feldspars; the fabric of 2a, in particular, having fairly prominent white,
possibly calcitic, inclusions.

Vessels occur mainly in globular jar forms (Fig. 2a-c), and also in jar and bowl forms. Such vessels tend to have linear zigzag decoration and other linear motifs, including a cross-like motifs on one jar-rim interior (Fig. 2b).

Group 2c:

Group 2c has been included with the previous two groups on the basis of form and surface treatment, but has been distinguished from them through differences in fabric. The Group 2c fabric is an earthenware, of dark-grey fired colour. It is hard, with a hackly fracture and a dense texture. In the break, rare irregular voids 0.5 mm in size are evident, but not the abundance of vegetable temper present in the previous two groups. Inclusions of quartz, mica, feldspars and ironstone all occur in fine to medium size, with rare rock fragments of coarse size.

The most characteristic form included in Group 2c is a jar (Fig. 3) having an inturned upper body. It is distinguished by a very thin rim and a body wall thickening slightly just below the rim. The maximum wall-thickness is about 5 mm. The exterior has a dark and burnish, together with plastic decoration in the form of an 'M' like motif.

Dating:

The forms of the necks of the globular jars have more parallels with those present at Soba than they have with usual Meroitic or Post-Meroitic globular jar types. The most clearly-identifiable globular jar rims from the survey, shown in Figs. 2a-c, are most similar to the forms 3A, 10A and 28A at Soba (Welsby and Daniels 1991, 167-168).

Similar thin-walled burnished jars to the Group 2c ware are known from Soba in the Class M jars and a motif of the same tripartite form, though more angular, is also known amongst the relief decoration (D. Welsby, pers. comm., 1994). Whilst it is not possible to interpret the significance of the cross-motif in the decoration of the globular jars unambiguously, in the virtual absence of any other Christian symbol on the ceramics, this motif taken in conjunction with the form parallels with Soba, may indicate that the globular jars from the survey and the Group 2c ware and, hence, at least a part of the Group 2 material may be assigned to the Christian period.

Group 3:

This group is distinguished mainly on the basis of decoration type and the presence of inclusions apparently of shell in the fabric, although it is in other respects similar and is, perhaps, related to those of Groups I and 2, though the general grain size of inclusions tends to be finer. The characteris-
tic examples of the Group comprise inturned jars, having decoration involving curving looped or arched motifs, done with fine incised lines (Fig. 4a, 4b). This ware is not clearly datable on the basis of study so far; it is possible that it represents an element of a local Post-Meroitic or Early Christian tradition.

Group 41:

The fabric of Group 4a shreds is an earthenware, having a greenish-grey core with light red-brown to orange outer zones as regards fired colour. It is hard, with a laminated fracture and a porous texture. Frequent voids ranging up to c. 3mm in length, representing vegetable temper, are evident in the break.

In the break, white inclusions having a laminated texture, occurring as frequent, subangular to rounded, grains of low to high sphericity and of fine to coarse size appear predominant, together with sparse, red-brown, opaque, subangular to rounded grains, very fine to coarse in size, and of low to high sphericity which may be identified as ironstone fragments.

The most characteristic form is a jar (Fig. 5) with a short, upright neck and a slightly rounded rim, thickened on the interior just below the upper surface. The form has a marked groove demarcating the division between the neck and the shoulder of the vessel. A sherd from a vessel with a pointed base has also been assigned to this group. Both sherds are wheelmade; the base sherd, in particular, has marked interior ribbing.

Dating:

The form of the identifiable jar assigned to this group indicates that it is of Napatan, or early Meroitic date (P.J. Rose, pers. comm., 1994). Four more main groups of Meroitic wares were distinguished:

Group 4b:

Group 4b comprises sherds with a fabric usually white in fired colour, sometimes with a light-grey tint. It is hard, with a partially conchoidal fracture and a dense texture. It contains frequent fine linear voids, ranging up to c. 1 mm in size, which are considered to be pores, rather than evidence of vegetable temper. Mineral inclusions are mainly of very fine size, including sparse very fine and rare fine quartzs; very rare, red-brown, opaque inclusions, very fine to fine in size, and of high sphericity which may be identified as ironstone fragments and black inclusions which occur as rare, subangular to subround, of very fine size which are also likely to be a form of ironstone. This fabric is considered to be a kaolintic, residual, clay.

Material assigned to this group comprises mainly small very thin-walled bowls (Fig. 6a, 6b), either white or red-slipped and a cup, decorated with painted rim stripes and stamped 'ankh' motifs (Fig. 6c). This material can be identified by fabric, forms and decoration as belonging to the group of
Meroitic fine wares which includes the famous "eggshell wares", classed by Adams as 'Family M' (Adams 1986, 435-440) and 'Type F' by Shinnie and Bradley (1980, 154). All rim sherds can be classed within Adams' Ware W26, whilst the red-slipped body sherds can be placed in Ware R35 (Adams 1986, 436-439).

Forms of the bowls are similar to Adams' plain bowls within Family M, types C20 or C25 (Adams 1986, Fig. 254). The third form has been classed as a drinking vessel, or cup/goblet and has some similarities with Adams' form B24 (Adams 1986, Fig. 24). The decoration of the cup falls within Adams' style NIB, (Adams 1986, 240-241; Fig. 138) comprising plain body strips and impressed decoration.

Dating:

The most characteristic piece with white background having painted strips below the rim and the stamped design is similar to stamped types shown amongst the illustrations of material from the West Cemetery at Meroe (Dunham 1963, Fig. G. nos. 22, 23, 25, 36). This decoration falls within Adams' style NIB, Adams 1986, 240-241; Fig. 138) comprising plain body stripes and impressed decoration. Therefore, a date of 1st century A.D. may be suggested on the basis of the parallels with the West Cemetery examples. However, the type could extend from 1st or 2nd century B.C. to 3rd century A.D.

Groups 4c and 4d:

These groups are likely to be at least partly contemporary. They differ mainly in fabric, since that of group 4c is softer, and more porous than that of 4d, having abundant vegetable temper, whilst the Group 4d fabric is hard and dense in texture.

Examples of sherds, from Group 4c, include a number of probably wheelmade bowl and small jar forms, characteristically red-slipped (Figs. 7a-c). Forms in Group 4d, for example, also include medium-sized and larger bowls, either plain (Fig. 7d) with shallow ribbing (Fig. 7e) or with everted rim and small logs (Fig. 7f).

Dating:

The small bowls and jars in Group 4c can be paralleled at the Western Cemetery of Meroe, in vessels such as a small bowl or cup from Tomb W109, dated to 167-317 A.D. (Dunham 1963, Fig. F, No. 2; 137; 1957, 7). Additionally, sherds of a vessels occurring in Group 4d comprising a broad shallow dish with at least one handle and a base form consisting of a high footring, (Fig. 7g-h) can be considered to be sherds from the footed dish with handles', of Dunhm. The sherds recovered are of very similar form to examples from the West Cemetery, from Tomb W5, dated to period 26-10 BC (Durham 1963, Fig. C, Nos. 27, 28; 1957, 7).
The base may also relate to vessels such as the 'offering dishes' or 'stands'. It is fairly close in form to a stand from Tomb W125, although the Mere example has an arise on the exterior of the foot, absent from the survey sherds. Tomb W125 is dated to the period 93-246 AD. (Dunham 1963, Fig. H, No. 7; 159; 1957, 7). It has a similar shape to the footring of Form No. 129 illustrated by Shinnie and Bradley (1980, Fig. 41) from the excavations at Meroe itself.

Group 4f:

The fabric of Group 4f is an earthenware, of black fired colour. It is soft, with a laminated fracture and a porous texture. Voids representing fine burnt-out vegetable temper are evident, being frequent to abundant in occurrence, and ranging up to c. 4 mm in length.

Amongst the mineral inclusions, quartz is present in sparse, subrounded fine grains and in rare medium-sized, subrounded to rounded grains, whilst other salient inclusions comprise rare, very fine, mica grains, and rare, translucent, reddish rounded grains, of low to high sphericity and very fine size. This fabric is particularly characterised by the occurrence of rounded cream-coloured inclusions, of low to high sphericity, probably calcitic, and the presence of greyish, subangular to subrounded rock fragments.

The Group is characterised by jar forms (Fig. 8) generally black-burnished or brown. These are characteristically decorated in comb-impressed decoration forming, for example, lozenge-or diamond-shaped motifs, either occurring alone or in combination with single or double horizontal lines composed of similar comb-impressions.

Dating:

The example in Fig. 8 can be compared in form, and in general character of decoration, to examples of black-burnished jars and bottles also from the West Germany at Meroe and including examples dated to the period 25-184 A.D. (Dunham 1963, Fig. J, nos. 12 and 17; 262, 7).

In terms of general fabric and decoration, this group has similarities to Adams' Ware H11 which is mainly dated to the period c. 100 B.C. to 350 A.D. (Adams 1986, 419). It is also close in these terms to vessels of Type K, in the Meroe classification, variety Kc. This is a ware described as a variant of Adams' H11 and occurring commonly from c. 300 B.C. onwards (Shinnie and Bradley 1980, 157, 162). Group 4f may, therefore, be characterised as Meroitic handmade black ware.

Group 5a:

This is another quite distinctive group, generally having a hard-fired fabric, tending towards a greenish buff fired colour. It is quite fine textured, with sparse fine pores, together with fine, rounded quartz and rare rounded
tic examples of the Group comprise inturned jars, having decoration involving curving looped or arched motifs, done with fine incised lines (Fig. 4a, 4b). This ware is not clearly datable on the basis of study so far; it is possible that it represents an element of a local Post-Meroitic or Early Christian tradition.

Group 41:

The fabric of Group 4a shreds is an earthenware, having a greenish-grey core with light red-brown to orange outer zones as regards fired colour. It is hard, with a laminated fracture and a porous texture. Frequent voids ranging up to c. 3mm in length, representing vegetable temper, are evident in the break.

In the break, white inclusions having a laminated texture, occurring as frequent, subangular to rounded, grains of low to high sphericity and of fine to coarse size appear predominant, together with sparse, red-brown, opaque, subangular to rounded grains, very fine to coarse in size, and of low to high sphericity which may be identified as ironstone fragments.

The most characteristic form is a jar (Fig. 5) with a short, upright neck and a slightly rounded rim, thickened on the interior just below the upper surface. The form has a marked groove demarcating the division between the neck and the shoulder of the vessel. A sherd from a vessel with a pointed base has also been assigned to this group. Both sherds are wheelmade; the base sherd, in particular, has marked interior ribbing.

Dating:

The form of the identifiable jar assigned to this group indicates that it is of Napatan, or early Meroitic date (P.J. Rose, pers. comm., 1994). Four more main groups of Meroitic wares were distinguished:

Group 4b:

Group 4b comprises sherds with a fabric usually white in fired colour, sometimes with a light-grey tint. It is hard, with a partially conchoidal fracture and a dense texture. It contains frequent fine linear voids, ranging up to c. 1 mm in size, which are considered to be pores, rather than evidence of vegetable temper. Mineral inclusions are mainly of very fine size, including sparse very fine and rare fine quartzs; very rare, red-brown, opaque inclusions, very fine to fine in size, and of high sphericity which may be identified as ironstone fragments and black inclusions which occur as rare, subangular to subround, of very fine size which are also likely to be a form of ironstone. This fabric is considered to be a kaolintic, residual, clay.

Material assigned to this group comprises mainly small very thin-walled bowls (Fig. 6a, 6b), either white or red-slipped and a cup, decorated with painted rim stripes and stamped 'ankh' motifs (Fig. 6c). This material can be identified by fabric, forms and decoration as belonging to the group of
Meroitic fine wares which includes the famous "eggshell wares", classed by Adams as 'Family M' (Adams 1986, 435-440) and 'Type F' by Shinnie and Bradley (1980, 154). All rim sherds can be classed within Adams' Ware W26, whilst the red-slipped body shreds can be placed in Ware R35 (Adams 1986, 436-439).

Forms of the bowls are similar to Adams' plain bowls within Family M, types C20 or C25 (Adams 1986, Fig. 254). The third form has been classed as a drinking vessel, or cup/goblet and has some similarities with Adams' form B24 (Adams 1986, Fig. 24). The decoration of the cup falls within Adams' style NIB, (Adams 1986, 240-241; Fig. 138) comprising plain body strips and impressed decoration.

Dating:

The most characteristic piece with white background having painted strips below the rim and the stamped design is similar to stamped types shown amongst the illustrations of material from the West Cemetery at Meroe (Dunham 1963, Fig. G. nos. 22, 23, 25, 36). This decoration falls within Adams' style NIB, Adams 1986, 240-241; Fig. 138) comprising plain body stripes and impressed decoration. Therefore, a date of 1st century A.D. may be suggested on the basis of the parallels with the West Cemetery examples. However, the type could extend from 1st or 2nd century B.C. to 3rd century A.D.

Groups 4c and 4d:

These groups are likely to be at least partly contemporary. They differ mainly in fabric, since that of group 4c is softer and more porous than that of 4d, having abundant vegetable temper, whilst the Group 4d fabric is hard and dense in texture.

Examples of sherds, from Group 4c, include a number of probably wheelmade bowl and small jar forms, characteristically red-slipped (Figs. 7a-c). Forms in Group 4d, for example, also include medium-sized and larger bowls, either plain (Fig. 7d) with shallow ribbing (Fig. 7e) or with everted rim and small logs (Fig. 7f).

Dating:

The small bowls and jars in Group 4c can be paralleled at the Western Cemetery of Meroe, in vessels such as a small bowl or cup from Tomb W109, dated to 167-317 A.D. (Dunham 1963, Fig. F, No. 2; 137; 1957, 7). Additionally, sherds of a vessel occurring in Group 4d comprising a broad shallow dish with at least one handle and a base form consisting of a high footing, (Fig. 7g-h) can be considered to be sherds from the footed dish with handles', of Dunhm. The sherds recovered are of very similar form to examples from the West Cemetery, from Tomb W5, dated to period 26-10 BC (Durham 1963, Fig. C, Nos. 27, 28; 1957, 7).
The base may also relate to vessels such as the 'offering dishes' or 'stands'. It is fairly close in form to a stand from Tomb W125, although the Mere example has an arise on the exterior of the foot, absent from the survey shreds. Tomb W125 is dated to the period 93-246 AD. (Dunham 1963, Fig. H, No. 7; 159; 1957, 7). It has a similar shape to the footring of Form No. 129 illustrated by Shinnie and Bradley (1980, Fig. 41) from the excavations at Meroe itself.

Group 4f:

The fabric of Group 4f is an earthenware, of black fired colour. It is soft, with a laminated fracture and a porous texture. Voids representing fine burnt-out vegetable temper are evident, being frequent to abundant in occurrence, and ranging up to c. 4 mm in length.

Amongst the mineral inclusions, quartz is present in sparse, subround to rounded fine grains and in rare medium-sized, subround to rounded grains, whilst other salient inclusions comprise rare, very fine, mica grains, and rare, translucent, reddish rounded grains, of low to high sphecity and very fine size. This fabric is particularly characterised by the occurrence of rounded cream-coloured inclusions, of low to high sphecity, probably calcitic, and the presence of greyish, subangular to subrounded rock fragments.

The Group is characterised by jar forms (Fig. 8) generally black-burnished or brown. These are characteristically decorated in comb-pressed decoration forming, for example, lozenge-or diamond-shaped motifs, either occurring alone or in combination with single or double horizontal lines composed of similar comb-impressions.

Dating:

The example in Fig. 8 can be compared in form, and in general character of decoration, to examples of black-burnished jars and bottles also from the West Germany at Meroe and including examples dated to the period 25-184 A.D. (Dunham 1963, Fig. J, nos. 12 and 17; 262, 7).

In terms of general fabric and decoration, this group has similarities to Adams' Ware H11 which is mainly dated to the period c. 100 B.C. to 350 A.D. (Adams 1986, 419). It is also close in these terms to vessels of Type K, in the Meroe classification, variety Kc. This is a ware described as a variant of Adams' H11 and occurring commonly from c. 300 B.C. onwards (Shinnie and Bradley 1980, 157, 162). Group 4f may, therefore, be characterised as Meroitic handmade black ware.

Group 5a:

This is another quite distinctive group, generally having a hard-fired fabric, tending towards a greenish buff fired colour. It is quite fine textured, with sparse fine pores, together with fine, rounded quartz and rare rounded
reddish-brown grains, probably of iron oxide. It may be considered an example of an Egyptian marl fabric, associated with an Upper Egyptian provenance. Forms known from iron shreds comprise mainly short-necked jars, one example of which may have been used as a small potstand (Fig. 9a-9c).

Dating:

The forms of the rims in Group 5a indicate that they can be dated to the New Kingdom, most probably to the XVIIIth or XIVth Dynasty. A close parallel for the form in Fig. 9a exists amongst the material from an early XVIIIth Dynasty context at Kom Rab'ila, Memphis (J. Bourriaud pers. comm. 1994).

Group 5b:

A second Pharaonic group has been distinguished on the basis of a potstand in a fine, relatively dense, Nile fabric (Fig. 10). Within this fabric rare voids, representing burnt-out vegetable temper, ranging up to c. 4mm in length, are present. The main inclusions visible are sparse, very fine, subangular to rounded quartz grains, together with rare medium-sized quartz grains. Sparse very fine mica is also noticeable. Calcitic inclusions, probably limestone, are present in rare, fine to medium-sized, subangular to rounded grains. Two further reddish-brown opaque fine, rounded, grains of high sphericity which are probably ironstone fragments and grey opaque fine grains, rounded and of medium sphericity. The latter are either clay pellets or rock fragments.

Dating:

This Group also dates to New Kingdom period. A fabric of similar type is classed as Fabric G6 in the classification used at Memphis, considered to be made from a Nile alluvial clay. A specimen with a similar form is illustrated from amongst the ceramics from Kom Rab'ila (J. Borriaud, pers. comm., 1994). Such forms are characteristic of the XVIIIth to XIXth Dynasties.

Group 6:

Group 6 material is characterised by a dark siltware fabric, fairly soft and porous, moderately vegetable tempered, with fine quartz, fine mica and sparse, possibly calcitic, inclusions. Characteristic forms within the Group comprise inverted jars, generally with rounded rims, in some cases thickened on the interior (Fig. 11a-c). Surfaces of most shreds recovered are rather eroded, but appear to have been lack in colour, possibly burnished. Characteristic decoration includes (1) deep parallel grooving (11d) or (2) incised lines forming chevrons or triangular panels (11e) or, more rarely, (3) dotted patterning (11f). This is sometimes (4) combined with the grooved decoration (11g). Motifs include (5) curving zigzags comb motifs (11h) and (6) fingernail impressions (11i).
Dating:

The material in Group 6 can be compared with examples from Shaqa-
dud Cave, in the Butana, where shreds with similar features of decoration oc-
cur. Several examples of Shaqadud Cave ceramics exhibit deep grooving. A
type similar to (2) is shown in the article by Marks and coworkers, Fig. 14e.
A design similar to (4) is shown in Fig. 14a and to (6) in Fig. 14d. This mate-
rial is dated there to the later IIIrd Millennium B.C., the equivalent of the
Pre-Kerma period (Marks et al., 1985).

Two main groups of Neolithic material were recovered:

Group 7a:

The fabric of Group 7a is an earthenware, usually grey to mid-brown in
fired colour. No voids were evident in the break. In the break, quartz ap-
pears predominant, with frequent, subangular to subrounded very fine to fine
grains, and rare, subrounded to rounded medium-sized grains being present.
The fabric is characterised by the presence of sparse semi-translucent, whit-
ish, subangular inclusions which may identified as feldspar and polycrys-
talline quartz. There are also present very rare, red, opaque, subangular fine
grains, of low sphericity which are likely to be ironstone fragments and
white, opaque, inclusions which occur as very rare, subrounded grains of med-
ium size which are probably calcitic.

The material assigned to Group 7a comprised a number of decorated
body sherds, but only a few rim sherds. Most forms distinguished were jars
having inturned upper body (12a-c). Decoration (see Plate 1) is characterised
by some (1) linear dotted patterning, but mainly by varieties of curved zigzag
patterns, made either with (2) comb or rockerstamp or in (3) linear impres-
sions. The bands of zigzag can be either wide or narrow. One variety (4)
comprises contiguous rows of zigzags, forming a fishscale) pattern. Another
type of closely-speaced zigzags forms (5) rows of separate 'T'-Shaped motifs,
pointing in opposed directions in alternate rows. Dotted decoration forming
(6) overlapping semicircular panels also occurs.

Dating:

The decoration types 1-5 can be paralleled in the Neolithic of Nile Val-
ley, particularly at Shaheinab, the type-site of the 'Shaheinab Culture' dated
to C. 5600-5000 B.P. (Caneva 1991, 7) and outside the Valley, as at Shaqadud
(Marks and Mohammed Ali 1990). The decoration (6) involving semicircular
patterning is similar to several examples of decoration comprising semicircu-
lar panels of incised lines at Shaheinab (Arkell 1953, Plate 33, nos. 9 and 5)
and to examples of such decoration at the site of El Ghaba (Lecointe, 1987.
Fig. 6a, 6b).
Dating 7b:

This group has a fabric related to that of Group 8, but the whitish inclusions, and fine mica occur in smaller proportions. Forms recovered included mainly bowls with rounded and thickened rims (Fig. 13a-c).

The decoration differs from that characteristic of Group 8, comprising (see Plate 2): linear impressed grooves, either continuous, or with individual impressions apparent. These occur in a variety of spacings, sometimes with discontinuous lines and sometime slightly curved lines (1). There are a few examples with linear comb-impressed decoration, forming blocks of long and short lines (2). Irregular rows of short, oblique lines, longer shallow cuts and of deep sub-rectangular impressions (3) also occur. Two rather different types comprise shallow oblique incised grooves, all over the surface, comprising a series of approximately horizontal lines passing into series of oblique lines (4) and dark red burnishing with a 'ripple' effect, all over the surface (5).

Dating:

A similar type of linear decoration occurs amongst the types at Shaqadud (Caneva and Marks 1990, P1.III, 1) whilst examples of surface features executed with a scraping comb are similar to those illustrated from Geili (Caneva 1988, Fig. 16) and at Shaheinab (Arkell 1953, P1.33, 1 and 2). The red burnished 'rippled' decoration appears similar to the 'rippled ware' also known from Shaheinab (Arkell 1953, P1.33, No. 11) and at Geili (Caneva 1988, Fig. 17, 1 and 5). Such decoration is considered to be an indication of later Neolithic contexts (Caneva 1988, 106).

Finally, several groups of Mesolithic material were collected:

Group 8a:

This Group is distinguished largely on the basis of fabric, being an earthenware, usually with a black or very dark brown fired colour. Inclusions comprise mainly abundant medium-sized rounded or angular quartz grains, and frequent to abundant opaque whitish or cream, generally, sub-rounded grains, of medium to coarse size. These grains comprise feldspars, polycrystalline quartz and sandstone fragments.

The Group includes four main decoration types: (1) a series of approximately horizontal lines, composed of oblique, rectangular impressions, which may have been executed with cord (14a) on a fragmentary jar rim. Secondly, a swirling pattern (2) composed to shallow incised lines, forming overlapping approximately semicircular motifs (14b). Thirdly, (3) a deeply-incised undulating pattern of large amplitude, closely spaced all over the surface (14c) and, finally, (4) a more shallow-incised decoration of undulating lines of small amplitude, relatively widely-spaced on the vessel surface (14d).
Dating:

These decoration types can be attributed to the 'Wavy-line' type, thus having parallels with the 'Early Khartoum' mesolithic traditions (Arkell 1949). Amongst the sherds recovered on the survey, decoration (1) is closest to that termed 'careless Wavy Line' (Arkell 1949, P1. 62, No. 1) whilst decoration (3) is closest to examples of 'careful Wavy Line' (Arkell 1949, P1. 61, No. 1; P1. 66). Decoration (2) can be parallel in some examples of the sherds decorated with impressions of twine (Arkell 1949, P1. 76, No. 1), which may not be contemporary with the true 'Wavy Line' ceramics, although the fabric of the example from the survey is very similar to those with the 'Wavy Line' decoration. Decoration (4) is similar to an example of alternately pivoting stamp decoration illustrated by Caneva, this type being common in early Mesolithic context (Garcea 1994, 83; Fig. 3, No. 5).

Group 8b:

Group 8b fabric is an earthenware, usually with a black or very dark brown fired colour. Amongst the salient inclusions are abundant medium-sized rounded or angular quartz grains, and frequent to abundant opaque whitish or cream, generally subround grains, of medium to coarse size. These grains comprise feldspars, polycrystalline quartz and sandstone fragments. The fabric of this Group is related to that of others in the Mesolithic Groups, for example 8d.

The decoration is characterised by rows of often deep short incisions. These incisions range in shape from oval or sub-oval to approximately triangular (Fig. 15a-c). The rows of incisions vary in spacing between c. 2-c. 7mm.

Dating:

The patterning consisting of incisions is fairly similar to examples illustrated from Shaqadud (Caneva and Marks 1990, P1. viii, 6; P1. ix, 1). Hence this group may also be assigned to the Mesolithic period, being an example of the earlier of the two phases of the Khartoum Mesolithic distinguished by Caneva (pers. comm., 1994).

Group 8c:

Material in Group 8c comprises sherds from handmade vessels, having a smoothed, but polished or burnished surface. The fabric is an earthenware, which may be related to that of Group 8a, having a similar abundance of opaque white, possibly feldspathic, inclusions together with a small proportion of fine mica.

Decoration of sherds in this group (Plate 3) comprises: some linear dotted patterning (1) but is most often composed of large areas of rockerstamp impressions (2) and, more rarely, areas of approximately triangular shallow cut-marks (3), combinations of large and small deep oval impressions (4), or
areas of short incised dashes forming 'v'-shapes (5).

Dating:

The majority of the decorative patterns on the Group 8c sherds falls within the class of 'rockerstamp, evenly-serrated edge, packed zigzags', in the classification scheme of Caneva (198), 83-110, whilst the other main variety of rockerstamp decoration falls within the class of 'spaced zigzags'. Similar examples are known from a number of sites, such as Kabbashi (Caneva et al. 1993, Fig. 7, No. 2; Fig. 8, No. 6). The Group can, therefore, be assigned a mesolithic date.

In fabric, this group may be related to that of Groups 8a and 8c, also having abundant opaque white feldspathic inclusions. However, it does differ, and been separated from them, on the basis of a high proportion of coarse-sized mica inclusions, evident in the fabric and on the surface.

Only a few rim sherds were recovered amongst the material assigned to this group. The main form is a jar with inturned upper body (Fig. 16). In terms of decoration (Plate 4) the Group also exhibits (1) a dotted patterning produced by alternate pivoting stamp, together with sherds having (2) large areas of rockerstamp impressions decoration. Linear dotted pattern (3) also occur; these can be discontinuous (4). Finally, there are (5) curving bands of rockerstamp decoration.

Dating:

The rockerstamp decoration (2) has similarities with material from the Geili region dated to the Mesolithic (Caneva 1988b, Fig. 3 and 4). In particular, examples from the survey resemble Fig. 4, nos. 2 and 4. Decoration (3) is similar to the linear portions of Fig. 3, No. 6, whilst decoration (5) resembles the dotted wavy line pattern in Fig. 3, No. 5, for example.

3. Summary of sites and their dating:

The numbers of sites with featured sherds falling into the different Groups and hence periods, is given in Table 1. This shows that the largest number of single-period sites falls into the Islamic, Christian and Meroitic periods. A small number fall into the 'Third Millennium', or 'Pre'Kerma' groups and into the Neolithic and the Mesolithic.

This table also shows that there are a number of apparently mixed-period sites. In this case, the largest number are assignable to the Islamic and Christian period, with approximately half as many falling into the Islamic Meroitic, and the Islamic, Christian and Meroitic periods. Further, small, numbers of sites were assignable to the Christian and Meroitic and to the Islamic Period and the late Third Millennium. All other combinations of Groups/periods occurred at only one site each.
4. General conclusions on the basis of the ground survey:

The following main conclusions were drawn from the study of the ground survey material:

1. The majority of sites were assignable, on basis of pottery, to the Dynastic through to the Meroitic Periods (i.e. from the later 3rd Millennium B.C. to c. 4th century A.D.) and to the time from the later Medieval period on towards the present.

2. There was, apparently, a relatively small amount of material attributable to the Post-Meroitic Period.

3. The material recovered tended to confirm earlier impressions that in the historic period, the region falls within a 'southern' general culture area, rather than that relating to the Dongola Reach and further north. This appeared to be so for the Meroitic period, since virtually no painted wares associated with the northern Meroitic province were found, the material recovered falling more within the tradition of southern Meroitic wares, and for the Medieval period, since the pottery seemed generally within an Alwan, rather than a Makourian/Nobatian tradition.

5. Complete vessels from excavation at site 159.2:

The most extensive collection of complete vessels from excavations, undertaken at selected sites from which surface collections had been taken, was recovered from the site at 159.2, near Gabati. This collection provides some significant contrasts with the majority of the material from the ground survey. This is so, both in terms of the types of vessels represented, and in certain of the period to which they can be assigned.

5.1 Meroitic period:

The burial which provided evidence of the earliest period of use of the cemetery, was Tumulus 11. The majority of the vessels in the tomb were globular jars, of which ten were recovered.

Amongst the complete or partial vessels, two were of globular form, with short necks, and were decorated in a yellowish slip, with a single, continuous motif consisting of an undulating stalk with 'flowersheads' stemming from it around the body.

Examples with a very similar design can be found in cemeteries further north, for example, from the Meroitic cemetery at Kerma (Bonnet 1990, Fig. 357). The vessel in Fig. 358 has a very similar form to the Gabati specimens, but has a different design. Both these examples from Kerma are dated to the 1st century B.C. (Torok 1990, 239).
Three jars were plain red-slipped, each with an incised sign on the shoulder (Fig. 7a). The larger of these two has a short line of Meroitic in addition to the single sign.

Similar material is, again, attested from further north. An inscribed jar, having a form similar to the smaller of the red-slipped jars from Tumulus 11, is known from Gemai, Tomb 115. Here, the dating given by the excavation is very broad, since they ascribe the cemetery only to the general period between 100-600 A.D. (Bates and Dunham 1927, Plate LXII, No. 27; p. 115).

Four jars were dark grey in surface colour. Of these, one has concentric lines of impressed dashes, on the shoulder, and oblique comb-impressed lines just below the rim exterior. A second has impressed decoration consisting of panels of cross-hatched comb-pressed decoration, forming a series of vertical 'comstalk' motifs. The third has a similar type of decoration, consisting of bands of two vertically contiguous rows of rockerstamp zigzag decoration.

Jars with similar general form and type of comb-pressed or rouletted decoration are known from the Western Cemetery at Meroe, (Dunham 1963, Fig. 155, No. 9; Fig. M, No. 10) from Tombs W29 and W423. A relatively early date of c. 715-510 B.C. is assigned to the first tomb (Dunham 1963, 221; 274) but the second is undated. The same general style of impressed decoration occurs at sites in Lower Nubia: a similar type of pattern being found amongst the material from the hinterland survey at Qasr Ibrim. Here, such vessels are assigned a 1st-2nd century B.C. date (Rose 1994, 201-206; pers. comm., 1994).

The final vessel recovered was a small lekythos (Fig. 17b). The form of this vessel has parallels amongst material from sites further north, for example at Faras (Griffith 1924, Pl. XXII, type XXXIVa) and Gemai from where examples with very similar body form have been excavated. An example from the broadly-dated cemetery at Gemai is closest in form, (Bates and Dunham 1927, Pl. LXIV, Fig. 23). A further example, although with a slightly squarer body, is illustrated in the catalogue of the Kerma exhibition (Bonnet 1990). This specimen is considered by Torok to be comparable to vessels in Adams; Ware R30, and is dated by him to 1st century B.C.-1st century A.D. (Torok 1990, 239-240).

5.2 Late Meroitic/Post Meroitic Period:

Tumulus 1 contained two vessels: the first is a black-burnished open bowl (Fig. 18a). The exterior is plain, but it is decorated on the interior, a little way below the rim, with incised decoration comprising a motif consisting of two joined zigzags, each end of the pair of zigzags being terminated by an oblique line.
This type of bowl, and the decoration, is similar to several examples found at Soba, although an identical form is not present. The most similar form, amongst the published material from Soba, is Form 139N (Welsby and Daniels 1991, 210).

Parallels also occur amongst the material excavated by Garastang from the Garastang at Meroe, the closest being Type H (Garastang, Sayce and Griffith 1911, Plate LXII, No. 7) known from tombs 300-399 in the 'Middle Necropolis'. This necropolis is generally considered to date to the late Merotic and Post-Meroitic periods, following the reassessment of the dating by Kirwan (1939, 41-42). However, there is evidence to indicate that the cemetery was in existence before c. 200 A.D. (Hakem 1988, 58).

The second vessel is closer to a jar in form, having a slightly everted thinned rim, and squat body (Fig. 18b). The decoration of this vessel consists of incised designs infilled with white. There is long, irregular rectangular panel, on each side, framed by a single incised line. In between the two sets of these motifs is a panel with vertically-arranged incised undulating loop motifs, which retain traces of white infill. There are some similarities to this vessel in form and in the presence of deeply incised, infilled, decoration among some rare-occurring vessels at Soba (D. Welsby, pers. comm., 1994).

Tumulus 2 also contained two vessels. Firstly, there was a reddish-brown slipped jar with a slightly out-curving ring abse, a lightly ribbed body broad at the foot, tapering in to a narrow, neck, with an outflaring rim (Fig. 19a).

Secondly, the tomb contained a black-burnished jar with inturned upper part of the body, and with a slight carination. Decoration is in relief and incised. The relief decoration consists of two think vertical cordons, each with oblique incised lines along is length. The other, incised decoration comprises two sets of motifs comprising triangular arms radiating from a central point, the arms being infilled with incised lines (Fig. 19b).

A parallel for the incised motif is illustrated by Garastang from amongst sherds of the black-burnished handmade wares from Meroe whilst there is a fairly similar form known amongst the same wares, comprising Garastang's type ZT (Garastang, Sayce and Griffith 1911, Plate XLVI, No. 48; Plate LII, No. 6).

The jar, of which a second, less well-preserved, example was found in Tumulus 4, has a reasonably close parallel in form amongst the 'Class I' material in the classification of Adams. The vessel may be identified as an example of Ware R30 in Group AI, considered to have been made in the vicinity of Aswan (Adams 1986, Fig. 299 and P. 534). One form in the class of small amphorae, in Adams' classification, has a similar body shape, being broad at the base, and tapering in to the neck, although the neck itself is of different form (Adams, 1986, Fig. 299).
The fabric of the Tumulus 2 vessel appears, from macroscopic examination, to be similar to that of Adams' wares. Ware R30, in particular, is dated to the period 100-475 A.D. by Adams, for its main period of importation into Nubia. However, it may still persist as late as c. 550 A.D. Fragments of both a base and neck of such a vessel, in a fabric considered to be of Aswani origin, have been recognised at Soba (D. Welsby, pers. comm., 1994). If the attribution to an Aswani production centre is secure, the vessel from the Gabati site indicates, potentially, probable trading contacts between this region and Lower Nubia during the later Merotic to Post-Merotic periods.

Five vessels were found in Tumulus 5. These comprised firstly, a poststand, or incense-burner, with both interior and exterior decoration of wavy lines and crescentic shapes in thick white paint, on a dark reddish-brown background (Fig. 20a). The vessel shows no sign of burning on the interior; and so may have been a poststand, rather than an incense-burner.

Secondly, there was a small, shallow, open bowl, having a similar background colour and decoration to the previous vessels. The decoration in this case consists of two sets of closely-spaced triple wavy lines in white paint crossing the vessel interior at right angles to each other.

Secondly, there was a small, shallow, open bowl, having a similar background colour and decoration to the previous vessel. The decoration in this case consists of two sets of closely-spaced triple wavy lines in white paint crossing the vessel interior at right angles to each other.

Thirdly, there was found a small, thin-walled bowl with an outturned upper part of the body. The vessel is plain red and highly burnished on the exterior, and has a single small piece approximately oval lug, a little below the rim on the exterior (Fig. 20b).

Fourthly, there was a spouted jar (Fig. 20c). It has a short neck, having a single shallow groove mid-way down, and a body approximately hemispherical in its upper part, but tapering in the lower portion to a narrow, rounded base. The vessel is redslipped, with decoration consisting of isolated motifs consisting of white rectangular patches having designs upon them executed in black lines. The first comprises two sets of curving diagonal lines within square, whilst the second comprises a kite-shape within a square. The largest motif, one being placed on the centre of each side of the vessel, consists of an apparently vegetal motif, comprising an upright stalk with two branches, one bearing a large form similar to a closed bud.

The fifth vessel was a bottle or lekythos (Fig. 20d). This specimen has a body of somewhat squarish form, lightly ribbed in the central zone, and having a low, hollow, footring and narrow neck. The rim is outflating, strongly ribbed, and has an intruned lip. The vessel originally had two handles, and is red-slipped.
Close parallels to the form and decoration of the potstand can be found in the material from Garstang's excavations in the necropoleis at Meroe. Such vessels were termed 'tables' or 'stands' by Garstang. The closest form illustrated by Garstang is Type 'P4', from Tomb 307 in a group of tombs considered to date to the Post-Meroitic period. Garstang, Sayce and Griffith 1911, Plate XLII, No. 3).

Two further, close parallels to the form of the vessel from Tumulus 5 were found in a grave at Berber. On potstand is particularly close in form to the Tumulus 5 example, having a relatively short central stem (Lenoble 1991, Fig. 3 No. 4). The decoration of these vessels comprises undulating lines in white, although in both vessels they run horizontally rather than vertically. These parallels may indicate a date f c. 5th century A.D. for Tumulus 5. The similarity in terms of decoration between the potstand and the small open bowl indicates that they can be considered to be products of the same tradition and thus both indicate a similar dating.

The red-burnished inturned bowl can be paralleled in the material illustrated by Garstang, from Tomb 321 in the 'Middle Necropolis' from which an inturned jar of highly burnished dark red colour was recovered. The example illustrated by Garstang has a design in relief, but the vessel form is very similar, having a rounded shape, with a relatively broad, low profile (Garstang, Sayce and Griffith 1911, Plate XLII, No. 5).

The form of the spouted jar can be quite closely paralleled amongst the forms characteristic of Adams’ Ware R2 in Group NII (the 'X-Group' wares) and may be classed as form G42 (Adams 1986, Fig. 269). Ware R2 is a Transitional ware dated, in Lower Nubia, to 550-650 A.D. A similar form is known from recent excavations of the fortifications at Old Dongola. The vessel found is compared with Adams G42, but is considered by the excavator to be a local variant of a similar tradition (Goldeski, 1991, Fig. 7b; 117).

In terms of the decoration, some examples of similar designs can be found both to the north, and to the south. The motifs comprising cross-hatches within squares or rectangles, executed in black on white, are similar to motifs on very Early Christian pottery from the Old Church and Building X at Old Dongola (Pluskota 1990, Fig. 5) from contexts datable to the Transitional Period. This period is dated c. 550-650 A.D. by Adams.

The two sites further to the south provide parallels. There is one example of painted decoration consisting of a cross-hatch within black framing lines, quite similar to the motifs on the vessel, illustrated by Garstang from Meroe (Garstang, Sayce and Griffiths 1911, Plate LI). At Soba, there are some sherds known exhibiting painted vegetal motifs executed in a similar style to the Gabati example, though of a rather different form. Other elements in the same style include panels with linear decoration (D. Welsby, pers. comm., 1994). Such motifs are closer to those from Gabati than are those from Old Dongola, since the latter are more often attached to a band below
the rim than occurring as isolated panels lowre on the body. In the case of such decoration at Soba, certain motifs appear to be crosses. Since the vegetal forms are rather different from the more strictly geometric designs evident in the material from Old Dongola, they may indicate 'southern' variant of a more general tradition current within the whole region during the 'Transitional' period.

The red-slipped lekythos also has a fabric which is similar to that of the 'Aswani' wares of Adams. The form, also, is consistent with the vessel being an example of Adams Ware R30, being closest to lekythos Form M14, in body shape and in the presence of ribbing on the neck (Adams 1986, Fig. 300). However, the overall form of the neck in Adams' example differs from the Tumulus 5 specimen since it is not outflared to the same extent.

The main period of importation of Ware R30 into Nubia is given as 100-475 A.D. by Adams. However, this Ware continued in use until c. 550 A.D. (Adams 1986, 534) so that a later placing of the vessel in the tomb would have been quite possible.
CAPTIONS

Figures 1-8: Characteristic vessel forms and decoration types of the Groups: 1a-1e, Group 1; 2a-c, Group 2a-2b; 3, Group 2c; 4a-b, Group 3; 5, Group 4a; 6a-c, Group 4b; 7a-h, Groups 4c, 4d; 8, 4f.

Figures 9-16: Characteristic vessel forms and decoration types for the Groups: 9a-c, Group 5a; 10, Group 5b; 11a-i, Group 6; 12a-c, Group 7a; 13a-c, Group 7b; 14a-d, Group 8a; 15a-c, Group 8b; 16, Group 8d.

Figures 17-20: Vessels from tomb chambers at the cemetery of Gabati: 17a-b, Tumulus 11; 18a-b, Tumulus 1; 19a-b, Tumulus 2; 20a-d, Tumulus 5.

Plate 1. Characteristic decoration types of Group 7a: linear dotted patterning (top row, left), zigzag pattern with serrated edge (top row middle) zigzag pattern in linear impressions (top row, right and middle row), 'fishscale' pattern (bottom row, left), single, closely-spaced rockerstamp motifs (bottom row, middle), overlapping semicircular panels (bottom row, right).

Plate 2. Characteristic decoration types of Group 7b: varieties of linear impressed grooves (top row), linear comb-impressed decoration (bottom row, left), irregular short cuts and deep subrectangular impressions (bottom row, mid left), shallow linear scraping (bottom row, mid right), burnish 'ripple' ware (bottom row, right).

Plate 3. Characteristic decoration types in Group 8c: linear dotted patterning (top row), varieties of rockerstamp impressions (middle row and bottom left), triangular shallow cut-marks (bottom row, mid left), large and small deep oval impressions (bottom row mid right), short incised oblique dashes (bottom row, right).

Plate 4. Characteristic decoration types in Group 8d: dotted patterning (top row), packed rockerstamp impressions (top row, right, bottom row, left), linear dotted patterns (middle row), discontinuous linear dotted pattern (middle row, right), curved bands of rockerstamp decoration (bottom row, middle), irregular linear incisions (bottom row, right).
INTERIM REPORT

M. Mallinson

MEROE

The expedition began work based at the Sudanese Antiquities' Rest House next to the Pyramids at Meroe. From here three sties were excavated at the south end of the SARS concession area (BM99-274). The first site consisted of four tumuli directly on the road line at Jebel Ardeb (BM 101-1); The second site was at Jebel Abayud (BM 112) and was a series of small tumuli and a hut circle located at the bottom of a wadi which the road has to pass through; and at the third site a camp site was excavated, of possible military origin, across the other side of Wadi Dein (BM. 118).

At Jebel Ardab (BM 101-2) the tumuli proved to have an origin in the late Meroitic period with the largest (101.1/T1) having a shallow grave surrounded by large stones, the burial was accompanied by pottery, beads, a metal ringlet and was laid on a mat. In this tumulus the burial was followed by later probably post-Meroitic burials two of which were in a semiflexed position aligned roughly north-south with head to south, but unaccompanied by grave goods, and seemingly disturbed, the last was a small child just to the north of the first burial. All four of these burials were on the south of the mound. In the centre of the tumulus was found a Christian Burial with a child buried at his feet. The body was laid out extended east-west with head to east. There were no grave goods, and the fill of the tumulus above suggested that the grave may have been dug down at a later period. The alternative is that the grave had been dug beside the earlier burials and then the original tumulus either moved over the new burial, or constructed over both. The other two burials at this site to the south were both Christian, one a young adult male (101.1/T2.1) and one female (101.1/T3.1) contained under a smaller mound. The single burial excavated at 102.1T1 also proved to be female Christian under a small mound. The Christian burials were characterised by the remarkable preservation of the bones. The mounds were built from the ferricrete sandstone from the Jebels, mounded over the fill excavated from the grave cuts.

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The site at Jebel Abayud proved to be less certain in provenance. The burials (112.4/T1-T5) were very shallow, almost on the surface and covered in a mound of ferricrete sandstone, and were either robbed or eroded. The bodies were aligned east west, although insufficient remained to establish where the head was located or whether the bodies were contracted or extended. The presence of beds in two of the burials suggests a possible post-Meroitic rather than Christian date. The hut circle (112.5/S1) excavated contained Group II (late Christian/Early Islamic Pottery) and a hearth. The site was covered though in some beautiful decorated Classic Christian Period sherds.

The Camp at Wadi Dien (BM 118 FS2/S1-S3) had been surveyed last year, this season three hut circles were excavated. The huts proved to have compacted floors, with Christian Group II Pottery, and a well preserved hearth and pot stand post holes. No post holes were apparent at the hut circle perimeter stones, which suggests they may have been weight stones to a tented structure. on the near by jebel were found pilgrims’ feet carved were distinctive due to the details of hobs nails, and thong patterns, the carvings included an islamic inscription of to girls names. these were recorded. one tumulus was tasted at the site, and proved empty, last year the excavation of a tumulus here had contained a single christian burial.

GABATI

On April 1st the expedition moved to a new dig house at the village of Gabati. The house was hired from the Local Sheikh Hashim. Gabati is a small village without running water, electricity, or adequate markets. The expedition used up to 300 litres of water for drinking and washing each day, this was raised by hand in the local well which frequently was cloudy, and a constant concern.

From the new base the marked as Gabati (Form 17° 10’ - 17° 14’ North, and 33° 44’ - 33° 45’ East) on the 1:250,000 series maps was worked on between BM 153-170. A total of five different sites were studied. The first three to the south of the area were located in the Hor Shangarite. Here we excavated a Christian Hut, two tumuli, and a fortified Christian house. The Hor Shangarite when surveyed last year proved an extremely rich site, full of structures, several hundred tumuli, and a diversity of pottery and surface finds. The hut circle
(163.8/S1) which was at the head of the valley contained a large quantity of Group II pottery, a hearth, and a wind shelter that marked the door as on the eastern side. The two tumuli excavated proved inconclusive, one was empty apart from three fragmentary bones (154.5/T2.1), and the other (154.5/t1.1) had an east-west aligned burial with a male buried face down with head to east without grave goods in an extended position. No other tumuli were directly on the rood line, so the large cemeteries either side remain uncertain in period, but are probably from the early Medieval period. The final excavation in the area was as substantial fortified house (155.4/S1). This was cleared and planned, and two phases of construction established. The first phase was a substantial stone wall built in dry stone construction established. The first phase was a substantial stone wall built in dry stone construction similar to that used at Meroe, but which also continued well into the medieval period. This enclosed an area 10 x 15m with a door way in the south east. The north and east walls were curved together. The interior of the house was originally roofed around all sides. This was evidenced by the post holes, and perimeter pits. The later stage involved the construction of light weight stone walls to form two rooms on the east side, one of which contained a hearth and the other, two substantial pits, presumably for the storage of grain. The post holes indicate that the structure had a sheltered courtyard, as the central area was much worn, and lacked pits. Outside the house to the south side was a large hearth surrounded by stones. The remote position of the house was due probably to either a control of trade route the desert, as the Hor Shangarite provides a short cut between the Wadi Gabati and the plain north, or possibly judging by the other structures surrounding, a small village which related to a wet season utilisation of the wadi. A final possibility is some used related to the surrounding cemeteries.

The most northern site studied from Gabati was adjacent to Bm 168, next to the village of El Adalea and Jebel Abu Sheifa. The site is close to the foot hills of the Jebel, which are covered in Tumuli. The Group of five tumuli (170.1/T1-T5) proved top be all of relatively young burials. The bodies were all fully contracted, with heads to the east, and the sex was undetermined. The graves were shallow, and the mounds insubstantial heaps of the surrounding ferricrete sandstone. Neolithic pottery has been uncovered in the area, and one burial had a single sherd. It was possible, which will need substantiation with
C14 dating, that these are therefore extremely ancient. The condition of the bones was very poor, and certainly a post-meroitic date would otherwise be probable. Two other sites in the area was checked, at 164 and 175, but it was felt that although close to the road, they might avoid damage due to their proximity to houses.

They were both marked. At 164 further possible Neolithic pottery was found but no associated graves or structures were apparent in the area which evidently floods regularly.

The final site studied was at Bm 159, east of the village of El Natalia. The site (159.1) is on a low mound in the middle of the plane between the tumuli covered foothills and the cultivation. Adjacent on the jebel is a quarry, possibly modern or modern working of an ancient mine. The village was founded anciently by a Queen Koptoi (or Kaptin).

The new road line passes directly through the middle of the site and would destroy at least 50% of the 80 visible mounds, and render inaccessible the remainder, as banking at this point would cover the remaining area. After excavation of nine of the mounds it was possible to determine the approximate extent and nature of the cemetery. About 22 mounds are of probable Christian date, and the other 58 of Late Meroitic date. A clear area in the centre of the cemetery possible contains a number of early meroitic date structures one of which was excavated this season. The importance and uniqueness of the site will be discussed below.

The nine tumuli excavated were chosen due to their proximity to the eastern edge of the cemetery, which were the most vulnerable ones even if the road had been moved eastward as discussed with the road engineers last year. In fact after the seasons work it was discovered that it had been decided already, following a meeting in January between the National Corporation of Antiquities and Museums of Sudan and the Director General of Road Building and Public Works, that he cost of moving the road of about 20,000,000 Sudanese Pounds was too much, and that the road line is to remain unaltered. This has increased the urgency of excavating this cemetery particularly due to its likely contents as described below, and the starting of the work later this year.
Site 159.2 - Gabati:

Tumulus 1:

A large gravel tumulus with a late Meroitic tomb structure beneath. The tomb consists of a rectangular shaft aligned at a right angles to the local river approximately east-west. It was cut down two metres through orange gravel to the white gravel underlayer. At the west end a chamber had been hollowed out of the white gravel as shown below. They are similar to the form of those uncovered by John Garstang in 1909-10, and published in Meroe the City of the Ethiopians, (Oxford 1911).

T1 SECTION:

Tumulus
Edge Stones
Tomb Shaft
Tomb Blocking Stones
Burial Chamber

The tomb was that of a man laid head to south in a semi-flexed position facing east. The body had been laid originally on a bed, but this had collapsed in time, and remains of the bed surrounded the burial. Accompanying the burial at the head were two bowls one a wide dish, similar to that of Type H as defined by Garstang (O. Cit. Chapter VIII. P.37.49), but with
incised zigzag decoration inside, at the head end, and the other a Beaker/Bowl with steep sides, incised decoration filled with white paint similar to Type ZW but decorated differently, laid in the centre beside the bed. Both these types are from tombs numbered 302-307 at Meroe, and like these tombs the burials were on beds with carved legs around 30 cm high. The absence of inscriptions is notable from these burials, and the beds are lighter. The only other burial of this size No. T5 also had pottery similar to these tombs. Garstang dates these tombs to be the middle Meroitic period (150B.C.-150 A.D), although they are now considered to be Late to Post Meroitic (150 A.D.-350 A.D.). It is possible that these larger tombs could be from this date, the absence of inscription may have been due to the distance from a temple or city where a literate scribe might be available.

Objects Registered: 159.2/T1

Unit No. 124
1. Rust coloured textile fabric
2. a,b,c, Rope fragments
3. Wood sample
4. Leather work
4a. Leather work
5. Rust coloured textile fabric
6. Bed frame south
7. Bed frame west
8. Bed post
9. Bed post
10. Bed post
11. Striped fabric
12. Leather work
13. Fabric and Leather
14. a,b,c. Leather
15. Stitched leather
16. Stitched leather
17. Cloth
18. Dagger tip Iron
19. a,b Stitched leather
20. Rope
21. Platted Leather
22. Coloured Beads
23. Leather thongs
24. Large dagger tip iron
25. Leather work
26. Platted Rope
27. Large Bowl 159.2/T1/1/41C
28. Small Bowl 159.2/T1.1/42C

Tumulus 2:

This was the first grave of this kind uncovered. This time the tumulus was much shallower, and a ring of black stones marked the perimeter, in a manner similar to that recorded by Garstang at the 300-399 Cemetery at Meroe. The shaft descended 1.5 metres to the bottom of the pit, and large stones in four layers blocked the tomb entrance. The burial was of a woman fully clothed with her head to the north facing east. She had a baby buried under her legs in a bag, and had been laid on a bed which had short legs 200 mm high. The bed had collapsed and grave goods buried with her lay at head and foot. They consisted of a red fully bottle with a narrow flared top, at her head, and a small black burnished bowl with twist rope vertical applied decorations on three sides, at her foot. The jug which is similar to Form G32 dated to later X-Group by Adams (Page 538-542 W.J. Adams Ceramic of Medieval Nubia. University of Kentucky 1986) type rarely seen south of lower Nubia. The burnished bowl is of common shape, although the decoration is unusual, type ZT in Garstang’s classification. The bottle may be for burial libations, or just food for the dead, as the other bowl continued black seeds possibly grain. The burial was remarkable in the variety of the textiles and different types of bead decoration worn.

Objects Registered 159.2/T2
Unit 118

159.2/T2.1/31C Red Bottle
159.2/T2.1/32C Black bowl
1. Cloth and toe bones
2. Textile, 3 beads and foot bones
3. Leather and foot bones
4. Textile
5. Pelvis sample
6. Leather work
7. Baby skeleton
8. Textile fabric
9. Worked wood and leather
10. Worked wood and leather
11. Skin/leather fabric
12. Skin/leather fabric
13. Cloth
14. Pink cloth threads
15. Scalp hair and textiles
16. Textiles
17. Skin/ear/leather
18. Scalp hair and cloth
19. Cloth and leather
20. Cloth and leather
21. Cloth and leather and woven matting
22. Cloth and leather
23. Cloth and leather
24. Textile
25. Ginger textile
26. A Cowry shell and small beads
27. Seed beads and white beads
28. Baby bones
29. Striped textiles
30. Bed leg
31. Platted leather
32. Bed frame sample
33. Sieved Beads

**Tumulus 3**

This was a Post-Meroitic/Christian Burial under a small ferricrete sandstone mound. The grave cut was shallow and there were no grave
goods. Some small fragments of cloth remained. The body was head to
south facing east, and the skeleton was in a good state of preservation.

**Tumulus 4**

This was a grave very similar to that of Tumulus 2. It was selected for
evacuation to see if these small tumuli were related to the large burial at Tumulus
1. The tomb contained an adolescent women head to south facing east laid on an
higab. The grave goods included a fully bottle similar to that in T2 but damaged,
and a gourd. Two dome palm nuts lay beside the body, and a bronze
Fibulae/Spatula lay near by. This object called a Kohl Stick by Woolley in the
burials from Karanog also occurred in a bent form in one other burial. (C.L.
Woolley Karanog, Romano-Nubian Cemetery, Vol. IV, Plate 36). The burial
lacked substantial quantities of fabric cover it, but was still adorned with rings,
necklaces, and an anklet with large beads. The skeleton was in excellent
condition, and the unfused nature of the bones was clear to see. The state of the
burial pots may reflect the status or youth of the burial. After excavation was
finished here, and prior to closing up it was observed that the tomb had cut
through the underside of an earlier burial laid in a shallow grave exposing the
skeleton imbedded in gravel. The grave cut was not apparent from above, and
as it was not possible to excavate, it was left for a further season.

**Object Registered 159.2T4**

**Red Jug 159.2/T4/29C**

**Unit No. 136**

1. Anklet and large beads
2. Leather work
3. Small beads
4. Textile
5. Ring
6. Gourd
7. Bed leg
8. Bed legs
9. Bed leg
10. Bed frame
11. Small blue beads
12. Bronze Spatula/Fibulae
13. Small basket
14. Sieved Beads
15. Large Beads

Tumulus 5

This was a substantial gravel mound with a tomb similar in structure to Tumulus 1. The tomb was the larger though, and the burial the most impressive uncovered. One of the stones of the tomb blocking had been cut into an oval shape, and inscribed with an axe head shape. The skeleton was of a male buried head to south facing east, and the bed had massive carved legs 350mm long and 100mm square. The grave goods were placed at the foot, although it was hard to tell whether these had originally been on the bed or not. There were five pots, again similar to some of those of tombs 300-399 at Meroe. One was a pot stand type P, (illustrated as No. 26 Pl.XLV, found in Tomb 307), with white painted decoration. A small red bowl was decorated to match. A small red burnished bowl beside this is similar to Garstang’s Type J, found in Tomb 304, and also a red jug similar to R2 Type as defined by Adams of Nubian Production (Op. Cit. Page 470 Form G39) with a handle, in almost perfect condition, a second handle was missing. Beside this was a red burnished spouted vessel with decorations painted on small white backgrounds. The form is similar to Garstang’s Type ZK, found in Tomb 15. This tomb was thought to have been of an early Meroitic period by Garstang but the spouted vessels are normally associated with a much later even Christian period. And this combined with the absence of inscriptions does tend to suggest a late-Post Meroitic period for these burials. On the other hand amongst the grave goods were found, a turned ivory object similar to that found in tomb W34 in the West Cemetery (Published in D.Dunham, Royal Cemeteries of Kush, P. 220, Fig. 155, No. 13) and this was dated to Generation 24-37, a first century BC date. Grave goods can though date from much earlier than the burial, particularly high quality products.

Other grave goods include a wooden comb, a bent bronze Fibulae, and a mirror possibly silver and hinged as it came in two parts. This again would point to a Roman import, and a later date. The importance of this grave is the scale of the burial, and concentration of quality grave goods. Although the Garstang
Cemeteries may have had richer grave goods prior to plundering they are not known about as none of them survived undisturbed, and the intact nature of the cemetery at Gabati offers the opportunity to understand what those burials may have been like. It also indicates the importance of the Gabati region in this period and the level of trade that may have taken place. The tomb was of an individual of quite high status and access to expensive goods which suggest that he may have been a local ruler or noble. In the Christian period the top of the mound was pitted and a large quantity of Christian pottery was found in the fill. The may have been failed robbing pits, but David Edwards suggested that this could reflect the use of cemeteries as a safe place to store food and grain in times of trouble, as holes dug in cemeteries are less conspicuous, and perhaps even though to have been protected by the presence of the burials.

**Objects Registered 159.2/T5**

**Unit 150**

1. 159.2/T5.1/92C Painted Red Pot Stand
2. 159.2/T5.1/93C Spouted Bowl
3. 159.2/T5.1/94C Red Jug with handles
4. 159.2/T5.1/95C Painted Red Bowl
5. 159.2/T5.1/96C Red burnished bowl
6. 159.2/T5.1/97C Stone bowl with attenuated corners

1. Large Beads
2. Small Black and White Beads
3. Bent Bronze Fibulae, and nail?
4. Textile
5. Ivory Pot/Scent Jar
6. Mirror-two parts, Silver/Bronze?
7. Small Beads
8. Leather
9. Small Black and White Beads
10. Various Beads
11. a-k, leather bag or apron
12. Textile
13. Textile threads
14. Bed leg
15. Bed leg
16. Bed leg
17. Bed leg
18. Bed frame
19. Leather pieces
20. Wooden Comb
21. Sieved Beads
22. Sieved Beads

Tumulus 6

This tumulus was similar to Nos. 2 and 4 in structure, except that the grave pit was shallower, and the edges less well square and more kite shaped. In this respect it more closely resembled the Post-Meroitic graves found by Francis Geus and Patrice Lenoble at El Kadada. (Melanges Vercoutter, Paris 1985 P. 67-92). Tumulus 6 though was lacking grave goods, and the burial was the only one not on a Higab. The body of a elderly man lay head to south facing east. The body was covered in thick shroud, and its head lay on a sacking pillow. The only other contents was a leather object, possibly a shoe which lay over the foot. In all five of the tomb burials leather fragments were found associated with the legs, and it is supposed either this was some part of the offerings or an item of clothing. Leather was also found as part of the structure of the bed frame. Curiously in the upper part of the fill of this burial the remains of wood with leather ties was found. It can only be supposed that this was the remains of the bier on which he was carried. The absence of grave goods in this tomb would tend to confirm that if this was a late representative of the type of burials discussed above then this would situate them just prior to the conversion to Christianity. Alternatively, it may just reflect extreme poverty of the individual concerned.

Objects Registered 159.2/T6.1

1-7 Lower Half of Shroud
8-23 Shroud
24 Blanket
25-26 Leather2
**Tumulus 7**

This tumulus contained a conventional Christian Burial, aligned east west with the head to the east. The skeleton was in a fine state of preservation, and the tumulus was distinguished by the grave cut being in a slit layer not found elsewhere on this site. The tumulus was made of local ferricrete sandstone cobbles to half a metre depth.

**Tumulus 8-10 and 12**

These were not excavated as it was clear that they were intact and similar to Tombs 1-6, and would require more recording than time permitted.

**Tumulus 11**

Tumulus 11 was a small Christian Burial which it was intended to be the last excavated. On uncovering the tumulus top, a mud brick structure was uncovered which at first was thought to be the top of a Christian tomb as it was aligned true east west rather than 100° as the Meroitic tombs were. Further clearance revealed a square structure approximately 4m square this was filled with large black stones and a quantity of mud bricks. The top of the fill was full of fine quality Christian pottery. It was therefore decided to clear the structure, as it seemed to be a Christian structure. The bricks 37 x 17 x 10 cm were small for bricks, but variations are not unusual. Immediately a tomb shaft was uncovered which went down through mud layers to a depth of 2 metres, whereupon the remains of a tomb chamber were found, much disturbed but still containing intact seven large Globular Vessels, and five broken ones. The vessels were clearly Meroitic, and it was decided to record this last Meroitic tumulus in the remaining time to this level of excavation.

The final excavation revealed a structure 8.4m x 4.1 divided into a western section exactly 4.1 x 4.1m, and a attached chapel 4.1 x 4.3m. The walls were 60 cm thick of 1 and 1/2 brick construction, and had been rendered and painted white on the outside. At the east there was a door into the building which originally lead straight into the tomb shaft 120cm wide that sloped down to 2 metres below foundation level. The tomb was cut into the white gravel layer under the square west section of the structure and had originally been blocked with mud bricks. This had then been back filled with the original fill. At some
time in the past, the tomb had been disturbed, a shaft had been cut into the gravel fill, two attempts were made, as two pits were found in the gravel, and the blocking removed. The large stones found in the front of the chapel to begin with may have been part of this blocking, or may have been the fill to the entrance to the building, assuming it had some superstructure. The robbers after the disturbance had thrown back into the grave the larger vessels presumably of no value. The tomb seems to have been not at right angles to the shaft but a continuation of it, and the vessels would have been at the foot of the burial at the entrance end. The tomb was completely full of mud brick rubble, and the floor could not be excavated down to in the time available. Outside the original mud brick blocking there had been four pots including a painted white ware with a serpentine motive, and floral decoration. Inside the door were a further eight vessels.

The globular vessels were of four kinds. The first type of which there were four examples are black burnished and decorated with rocker marks, and impressions around the neck and rim. The vessels in form are very similar to that found at Shendi (Geus, Hinkle, Le Noble, Archeologie de Nil Moyen, Nubische Studien '86, 1982 Conference. P. 12 tomb No. SHQL 4), and also by Dunham in the Western Cemetery at Meroe tomb W29 (Op. Cit above P. 220, Fig. 155, No. 9) the date of both these examples is supposed to be first century BC. The second type is a red burnished vessel, 3 of which were found, these are similar
in form to that illustrated by Garstang Plate XLI No. 8, but unclassified. These are from the northern group of tombs (No. 400...). These the thought to be of a late date, but are now considered to be earlier. In particular interest on these pots appeared an inscription in Meroitic. This is the first example recorded in Sudan, but at Karanog, Woolley, notes in Plate 107, No. 26 G187. Fxii, inscriptions on a few of the vessels in Meroitic. The third type, of which two were found, are painted onto a white slipped vessel, the decoration is Serpentine with flowers, and has precedent only much further north, where until now they were thought to have been produced. Two examples are published by Charles Bonnet, (Kerma in GENVAYA; 1978, Fig. 16, P. 125, and Kerma Exhibition Catalogue, Geneva 1990, Nos. 357 and 360, also in colour page 14) they are from Tombs 10 and 3B in the Meroitic Cemetery excavated at Kerma, and date from 100BC-100AD. The final kind of vessel was a very small globular jar with neck and stand, these again have been found further north, and were published by W.Y. Adams as Oil Jars, examples of which were also published by Bonnet in the Kerma Catalogue (Page 246, Nos. 385). Five of the group of vessels were marked with a symbol.

Pot Mark Found on Necks of Five of the Globular Vessels

Which was also recorded by Dunham at the pyramids at Meroe in Tomb N11, which dates from Generation 36, around 1st C BC.

The only precedent available for this structure are those recorded at Karanog, where the super structures were partly stone, and an unpublished site by David Edwards south of the Dal Cataract. In both these cases though the superstructure was square and the chapel only a small eastern extension. Less
than half the width of the square. The uniqueness of these chapels makes it essential that further study is carried out, particularly due to their potential early date.

Cut into the side of the brick superstructure was a Christian grave. The body was aligned slightly north of east west, perhaps due to the difficulty of digging the brick work, with the head to the east. It was the small ferricrete tumulus over this burial which had started us to work on this site.

**Objects Registered 159.2/T11**

159.2/T11/99C  Vessel 1 - Black decorated with mark.
159.2/T11/100C Vessel 2 - Black decorated with mark.
159.2/T11/98C  Vessel 3 - Red.
159.2/T11/82C  Vessel 4 - Painted slipped (Broken).
159.2/T11/101C Vessel 5 - Painted slipped with mark.
159.2/T11/102C Vessel 6 - Red with inscription and mark.
159.2/T11/103C Vessel 7 - Small Red.
159.2/T11/104C Vessel 8 - Small Black decorated.
159.2/T11/105C Vessel 9 - Black decorated (Broken).
159.2/T11/106C Vessel 10 - Oil Jar.
159.2/T11/107C Vessel 11 - Sherds.

**Tumulus 13:**

This was a very small mound of Ferricrete sandstone that covered a female child buried east west, with head to the east. Unusually it included jewellery and textiles, but is probably Christian. A number of other small burials around it suggests this may have been the children’s section of the cemetery.

**Objects Registered:**

159.2/T13.1/71S Earring Bronze
159.2/T13.1/72S Textile
159.2/T13.1/70S Various cut beads for necklace

**Conclusions**

The work of expedition covered all the sites noted as being directly effected by the road line after last years survey. 26 Tumuli in 6 cemeteries were excavated, and 6 structures in 3 settlement sites. A total of 30 individual skeletal
remains have been recovered, 9 of the burials contained grave goods. The expedition was able to record all the material recovered from these sites in a suitable manner, but the tombs at Gabati have raised serious questions in respect of conservation. The tombs of which only five of a potential 50 with intact grave goods were opened created an enormous quantity of very fragile textiles, leathers, wood, ivory, bronze and metal work. This prevented any serious attempt this season to completely excavate the site. It would seem clear after our return to Khartoum that no serious attempt is considered necessary to re-route the road due to the additional costs. The road is due to start in the next three to six months, and a possible stay to the works around Gabati is likely to be possible until next spring. It is recommended that an excavation be carried out to complete the study of the site at Gabati as soon as possible. A conservator should be present, and a suitable laboratory set up. After consideration of the possibilities, I would recommend that the conservator be based at Atbara where there is good communications, electricity and supplies, and goods can be safely transported by train to Khartoum. It is 1:30 Hours by Landrover to Atbara, and the majority of this can be done out in the desert where the road is quite flat. A regular supply run to Atbara would also aid provisioning of the expedition and permit a better standard of living for the three months necessary to carry out this work. I enclose below the actual costs of the expedition, and budget for the future one. Bearing in mind the hardship of the location, and the length of period of the work, a minimum wage should be considered for those involved.
Caption

Figures 1-8: Characteristic vessel forms and decoration types of the Groups: 1a-1e, Group 1; 2a-c, Group 2a-2b; 3, Group 2c; 4a-b, Group 3; 5, Group 4a; 6a-c, Group 4b; 7a-h, Groups 4c, 4d; 8f.

Figures 9-16: Characteristic vessel forms and decoration types for the Groups: 9a-c, Group 5a; 10, Group 5b; 11a-i, Group 6; 12-1c, Group 7a; 13a-c, Group 7b; 14a-d, Group 8a; 15a-c, Group 8b; 16, Group 8d.

Figure 17-20: Vessels from tomb chambers at the cemetery of Gabati: 17a-b, Tumulus 11; 18a-b, Tumulus 1; 19a-b, Tumulus 2; 20a-d, Tumulus 5.

Plate 1. Characteristics decoration types of Group 7a: (1) linear dotted patterning, (2) zigzag pattern with serrated edge, (3) zigzag pattern in linear impressions, (4) ‘fishscale’ pattern, (5) single, closely-spaced rockerstamp motifs, (6) overlapping semicircular panels.

Plate 2. Characteristic decoration types of Group 7b: (1) varieties of linear impressed grooves, (2) linear comb-pressed decoration, (3) irregular short cuts and deep subrectangular impressions, (4) shallow linear scraping, (5) burnish ‘ripple’ ware.

Plate 3. Characteristic decoration types in Group 8c: (1) linear dotted patterning, (2) varieties of rockerstamp impressions, (3) triangular shallow cut-marks, (4) large and small deep oval impressions, (5) short incised oblique dashes.

Plate 4. (1) dotted patterning, (2) packed rockerstamp impressions, (3) linear dotted patterns, (4) discontinuous linear dotted pattern, (5) curved bands of rockerstamp decoration.
Sars Survey from Meroe to Atbara 1994 Season

Work Schedule as Executed:
1. Based at Meroe Dig House 24.3.94 - 31.3.94
SITE 101.1 3 Tumuli, 1 Mixed Period, 2 Christian Team A
SITE 102.1 1 Tumuli Christian Team A
SITE 112.4 5 Tumuli, 2 Empty, 3 Postmeroitic/Christian Team B
SITE 112.5 1 Structure Late Christian Team B
SITE 118 FS.2.1 3 Christian Structures, 1 Empty Tumuli, Inscriptions Team B

Team A:
Francis Thornton - Bone Analysis 101.1/T1.1, 101.1/T2.1, 102.1/T1.1,
Joyce Filer - Bone Analysis 101.1/T1.1 - 6, 101.1/T2.1, 101.1/T3.1
Salima Ikram - Site Supervisor 101.1/T1 - T3,
Fathi Abdel Hamid Salih - Site Supervisor 102.1/T1,
Fedullah - Excavator
Mahmoud - Excavator
El Amin Ali - Excavator
Abdel Minam Mohamed - Excavator
Abdullah Suliman - Excavator
Alker Ahmed - Excavator
Mohamed Abdullah - Excavator

Team B:
Joyce Filer - Bone Analysis 112.4/T3.1, 112.4/T4.1, 112.4/T5.1
John MacGinnis - Site Supervisor 112.4/T1, 112.4/T3-5, 118 FS.2.1/S1-3
Fathi Abdel Hamid Salih - Site Supervisor 112.4/T2, 112.5/S1, 118FS.2.1/T1
Michael Mallinson - Survey Drawings, Photography,
Ahmed Mohamed Ali - Excavator
Bereid Mohamed Ali - Excavator
Abu Sid - Excavator
Mahjoub Ali - Excavator
Anwar Mohamed Ali - Excavator
Fatah el Rahman Ahmed - Excavator

House
Laurence Smith - Small Finds / Pottery
Ahmed Mostafa - Cook
Hamid - House
From Pyramids at Meroe to Tumulus at El Hobagi:
Imperial Gaves of the Late Meroitic Culture
Franco-Sudanese Surveys and Excavations
Between 1983 and 1990

Patrice Lenable
Section Francaise de Recherche Archeologique au Soudan (S.F.D.A.S.)

Bringing to completion their programme of excavation at El Kadada which had lasted for a decade, the Sudan Antiquities Service and its French Unit for Archaeological Research found in 1987 a royal cemetery which might have been the successor to that at Meroe. This discovery put an end to the previously held theories of a "dark age" (Adams 1976: 382-429) in Sudan’s history, the so-called Post-Meroitic period between the Meroitic and Christian eras; an epoch reputed to be a barbarous one.

The discovery of this royal pre-Christian cemetery, sought for since 1983 at the request of Nigm el Din Mohammed Sharif (1979: 27, points 18 & 19) was achieved by the following steps:

1980-84: Comparative study of funerary rites, which demonstrated a probable cultural unity between the so-called Meroitic and Post-Meroitic periods;

1984-86: Survey between the 6th and 5th Cataracts over 350 km on both banks of the Nile. This resulted in the locating at el Hobagi of a tumulus-field datable to the 4th century AD, meeting with the set aim of the project, the discovery of a Meroitic necropolis immediately post dating the end of the tradition of pyramid building. This cemetery, on the left bank, 70 km upstream of Meroe, was first recorded by P.L. Shinnie in the 1950s and described by Chittick in 1957;

1986: Announcement of the imminent discovery at the Sixth International Conference for Nubian Studies in Uppsala. Details were given in advance of the expected contents of the seven graves, in order to test the arguments to be investigated in the coming excavation;
1987: At the request of Nigm el Din Mohamed Sharif, excavation of Tumulus VI at el Hobagi, the largest of the mound series; checking of its royal rank through a study of the buried insignia, chiefly its weaponry;

1990: At the request of Ussama Abd el Rahman el Nur, excavation of Tumulus III, the smallest of the series. The proof of the royal rank of the burial was amazingly repeated through the discovery of an almost identical equipment and, luckily, together with an inscription in Meroitic hieroglyphs.

Owing to various difficulties, including the delay resulting from, and the cost of, restoring a thousand or so objects, the discovery is not yet published. But it has already been popularized and discussed in a long series of preparatory papers, many of them written in French. A full report in Kush about the discovery would entail the printing of dozens of pages and of as many drawings which are already available in foreign scientific journals. Avoiding unnecessary repetition, the present paper summarises the literature already published in order to help Sudanese scholars and students in updating their Post-Meroitic bibliography.

To celebrate the rebirth of Kush, a journal that was badly needed for so long by historians of Africa and other scientists, unpublished material also is provided. Thanks to the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums, 14 metal objects belonging to the new royal collection were temporarily exported to France, restored at the Vienne Laboratory, and exhibited in Lille at the occasion of the 8th Conference of the International Society for Nubian Studies. Some of the most important engravings upon the bronze vessels were shown there for the first time. These will help both in defining the nature of the necropolis at el Hobagi and in preparing the SFDAS contribution to a main subject at the next Meroitic Conference, to be held in London in 1996; the "End of Meroe problem" might soon be completely re-written.

The Problem of Defining a "Post-Meroitic" Period in the Meroitic South.
1. Geus-Lenoble 1984

This short paper reports upon a fortuitous discovery; the first tumulus opened at el Kadada (KDD 107/6), in the vicinity of Meroe, yielded Meroitic industrial pottery and Post-Meroitic so called beer-jars, also of an industrial manufacture. Both writers voice their doubts: the Nubian post-Meroitic theory does not conform with the archaeology in the region of the Meroitic capital.

2. Geus-Lenoble 1985


Contrary to the conclusion of one of the Meroitic Conferences, several graves at el Kadada again yield the double ceramic assemblage, mixing wheel-turned pottery and hand-made beer jars. This totally undermines the theory of an abrupt End of Meroe. Is the Post-Meroitic theory valid only in Nubia? As the sahelian south of the Meroitic Empire included the wealthiest and thus the most populated provinces, it is essential that any theory of the End of Meore must take into account evidence from the Meroe province.

3. Fattovich et al. 1985

R. Fattovich, P. Lenoble and others, "Gash Delta Archaeological Project, 1984 Season, the K 1 Mounds", Nyame Akuma, 27 pp. 45-49.

Prof. R. Fattovich had discovered some Post-Meroitic pottery under tumuli in the Gash area (Site SEG 21). A joint expedition pays another visit to the mounds-fields around the three djebels of Kassala, and formulates a long chronology, up to modern times. Tumulus K 1, a mound-grave of the Christian epoch, excavated on this occasion near Mahal Taglinos, is published by R. Fattovich in Meroitica 10, 1989.


With the help of F. Hinkel’s Archaeological Map of the Sudan manuscript (Vol. V, The area of the Nile Valley between the 6th Cataract and Berber and the
adjacent Bayuda and Butana deserts), a theoretical programme is tentatively set up. Seen from ten years later, the intentions appear to have been at best unrealistic: the urban development in the Shendi province prohibits a detailed study of the Late Meroitic and pre-Christian settlement patterns; the call for palynological studies meets with too many difficulties.

A rescue excavation at Esh Shaqalu is published (SHQL 4), as well as the material from another grave in the same cemetery, collected by Arkell (SHQL 1).

Short Announcements About Work in Progress.

5. Reinold-Lenoble 1986


6. Lenoble 1986a


An opportunistic and fortuitous paper, aiming at testing the accuracy of a translation into Arabic. It contains an artistic drawing of HDN 70/24/40, a small perfume-bottle proving the imitation of Roman models by Meroitic potters.

7. Lenoble 1986b


A tentative definition of an "Early Post-Meroitic" ceramic facies in a province extending from the 6th Cataract to Mograt Island, centred at el Hobagi.

8. Lenoble 1989a

"Développement rural comapré des régions de Shendi et de Khartoum pendant l'époque méroïtique, Actes de la 6e Conférence internationale des Etudes méroïtiques, Rome, Meroïtica, 10 pp. 835-841, Berlin.

Uncorrected text, due to mistakes in editing and lack of proofs.

9. Reinold-Lenoble 1987


Exploration of the el Kadada mounds. First tentative surveys in the
Shendi region. First specific surveys at el Hobagi.

10. Reinold-Lenoble 1988

11. Reinold-Lenoble 1989

An attempt to complete part of the theoretical programme set up before 1984. The comparison between the two settlements helps in interpreting the Hosh el Kafir at el Hobagi, an exceptional monument which proves the continuing maintenance of a State in the Meroe region.

12. Reinold-Lenoble 1991a

The second campaign at Tumulus HBG VI, including the examination of mound HBG 4, the twin of the former. The excavation remains uncompleted.

13. Reinold-Lenoble 1991b

A short report about the excavation of a second walled mound. Again, the excavation yields a grave of imperial rank and remains uncompleted.

14. Reinold-Lenoble 1993

Due to the cost, resuming excavations at El Hobagi is not allowed after 1990. The beginning of the restoration work yields the expected evidence for Meroitic royal funerals by the first iconographical interpretation of motifs engraved upon metal basins, cups and goblets. This examination will involve an expensive restoration project in France, since parts of unique scenes and motifs have appeared, all belonging unquestionably to the Meroitic culture.
Longer Field Reports and Preliminary Discussions

15. Lenoble 1987a


This paper publishes three graves attributed to the 4th century AD. Seventeen plates of drawings are given. The reasoning behind the ritual interpretation of graves is elaborated for the first time: objects connected with the various rites performed in the funerals, and parts of various liturgies might be interpreted in the ceremony according to the different equipment buried. Meroitic and Post-Meroitic rites and liturgies cannot be differentiated, but the social rank can be. Common liturgies are constantly shaped according to the royal ceremony. Thus, the description of Meroitic rites from "Post-Meroitic" graves leads the writer to postulate the maintenance of the Meroitic Kingship at least in the Meroe region. A beer-jar type is considered to date to the 4th century AD in the region. The el Hobagi mounds, which yield numerous sherds of the type, is thus the site of a Meroitic royal necropolis.

16. Lenoble 1987c

"Quatre tumulus sur mille du Djebel Makbor, A.M.S. NE-36–0/3-0-1", Archéologie du Nil Moyen, 2, pp. 207-250, Lille.

A long study of the chronology of mounds in the Meroe region, which have never been examined. The literature about the tumulus fields in the Meroitic south is thoroughly criticised. An exemplary excavation, combining test excavations and a detailed survey at Djebel Makbor, proves that at least protohistoric, Meroitic and Christian mounds can be dated in the area. Hundreds of cemeteries with hundreds of thousands of mounds are concerned: the evidence from the Nubian desert areas cannot help in reconstructing the history of the Meroitic central provinces. Large stony mounds might document the first settlement near Meroe and the origin of the capital.

17. LENOBLE 1989b

"A new type of mound-grave (continued): le tumulus à enceinte d'Umm Makharoqa, près d'el Hobagi (A.M.S. NE--36-0/7-0-3)", Archéologie du Nil Moyen, 3, pp. 93-120, Lille.

The strange title acknowledges the initial work of the late H.N. Chittick,
Written in Oct. 1987, shortly after the excavation of the central grave of the first walled tumulus and after the first examination of the building of the enclosure wall and the mound, the paper reports upon the results in some detail, illustrated by 12 plates of photographs. A long description is given, not only of the unearthed objects, which will not be restored for years, but of the rites performed: exhibition of the body with a funerary couch, libations and their basins and cups, censing and its glass container, the banquet with dozens of large containers, the triumph and its specific weaponry, apotheosis with specific adornments, etc.

The dating is based pon a type of beer-jar, characteristic of the 4th century AD, and with the soteriological liturgies performed. It is concluded that this grave, which yields so much imperial armament, belongs to the Meroitic royal sphere, possibly of a Nubo-Meroitic culture unattested so far. Possibilities for further studies and interpretations are sketched out, caution is called for in order to avoid premature conclusions.

18. Lenoble et al. 1994

The paper reports upon the excavation of another walled tumulus, which was not observed by Chittick in 1957. Some detail is given, and illustrated by 20 plates of drawings. Again the enclosure wall, the mound and the curious shaft are amply described. Description also is provided of the contents of the central grave by dividing the unearthed artefacts in order to reconstruct the different parts of the funerary ceremonial and to yield the meaning of the various liturgies performed. Again the exhibition of the royal body, the celebration of its imperial rank with the provision of specific spears and an exceptional row of quivers, the performance of purification by censing and of different libations with many different kinds of symbolic bronze cups and goblets, the funerary banquet with more than 50 large beer-jars, and the sacrifice of oxen and of horse are analysed. Elements of this description lead us to conclude that the deceased is of imperial rank.

The progress report is minus one major announcement, that of the finding of a Meroitic inscription in four words. The bronze vessels have not been restored on the spot, REM 1222 will only be discovered upon the cup n HBG
III/1/135, late in 1991. The paper has not been revised accordingly: this last proof seemed then to be superfluous.

19. Lenobler 1992a

"Documentation tumulaire et céramique entre 5e et 6e Cataractes. Un exemple de "prospektion orientée" visant à renseigner la "Fin de Méroé" dans la Région de Méroé", in C. Bonnet Ed., Études Nubiennes, Actes de la 7e Conférence internationale des Études nubiennes, Genève, pp. 79-97, Genève.

The reasoning behind this thematic survey is based upon a critique of ancient arguments. These have used some poorly described varieties of handmade pottery and a vague knowledge of the distribution of tumulus-fields in the Meroitic South to infer that the Noba presence in the Mere province, indicates the disappearance of the capital. They have adapted the unstudied archeology of the sahelian regions to fit the conclusions drawn from decades of surveys and excavations in Nubia.

In order to begin describing the settlement pattern around the Meroitic capital at the time of the so-called "End of Meroe", a "transitional" beer-jar type is isolated, dated to the 4th century and sought for among hundreds of tumulus-fields between the 6th and the 5th Cataracts on both banks. Results of the survey are briefly detailed, revealing the maintenance of towns and confirming the conclusions drawn from the el Hobagi necropolis. Final comments attempt to show how the 4th century could be studied in other provinces of the former Meroitic Empire and how the progressive and evolutionary division of the former Meroitic territory should be understood. No one can understand why the upper Nile Valley is divided between three kingdoms in the 6th century unless this study has been undertaken. Political models are numerous, that may explain theoretically such a change within two centuries: the Nuba theory is obviously an oversimplified one.

20. De Paepe-Brijsse 1987

P. de Paepe & I. Brijsse, "La composition des céramiques d'el Kadada (Soudan central) au passage du Meroïtique au Postméroïtique", Archéologie du Nil Moyen, 2, pp. 149-164.

As part of a research program concerned with temper analysis and the bulk chemistry of prehistoric and historic ceramics of Central Sudan, the present paper focuses on the composition of 101 vessels found in six Meroitic graves at
el Kadada. The investigated material includes several categories of pottery which illustrate the technology of the ceramics produced in the Late Meroitic and the Post-Meroitic periods.

21. Lenoble 1987b

"Commentaires archologiques" de DE PAEPE-BRIJSSE 1987, Archéologie du Nil Moyen, 2, pp. 165-174, Lille.

In archaeological comments on the former paper, the archaeometrical study conducted by De Paepe and Brijsse is shown to confirm the ceramic topology based on the material found in the Late Meroitic, Final Meroitic and Post-Pyramidal graves at el Kadada. The study favours the theory that economic and not ethnic reasons should explain the revolution in ceramic production at Meroe during the 4th century AD.

Analysis of Funerary Rites and Liturgies

Since a number of legends and myths, originating in the research of the colonial period, are still in use for describing the so-called Post-Meroitic culture, conceived as barbarous and tribal in opposition to a Meroitic civilisation, the basic funerary documentation, gathered from Nubia chiefly in the 1920s and 30s and from Meroe from 1909 to 1923, is systematically re-evaluated. This reappraisal aims at clearing epistemological questions, the main one being the result of the fact that the royal graves of Nubia were rapidly published, an achievement of their excavators but no reference nor comparison could be made with the royal graves of Meroe, the publications of which came two to three decades later.

Royal and at times imperial liturgies performed at graves are under study. The first published results concern the sacrifices.

Animal Sacrifices

22. Bonnet et al. 1989


The sacrifice of the dog has a different meaning at different periods.

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Neolithic or Kerma graves cannot be compared to Napatan or Meroitic ones without an unforgivable disregard for historical reasoning.

23. Lenoble 1991b

"Chiens de païens, Une tombe postpyramidale à double descenderie hors de Méroé", Archéologie du Nil Moyen, 5, pp. 167-183, Lille.

The sacrifice of the dog continues from the Meroitic to the Post-Meroitic cultures. The rescue excavation of a grave at Berber provides the opportunity to collect the documentation, and to propose some interpretations. An uncommon sacrifice is that of packs of hounds, which constitute a regal symbol. The most significant sacrifice illustrates the role of the dog near official personages in power: the animal is the triumphal warden of the prisoners, the guardian to the royal authority. Thus the rarity in a funerary context of such killings, a feature which might help us in defining the spatial division within the Meroitic Empire and its evolution.

24. Lenoble 1994c

"Le sacrifice funéraire de bovinés, de Méroé à Qustul et Ballana", in N. Grimal, G. Clerc et C. Berger Eds., Hommages a Jean Leclant, I, Institut Français d’Archeologie Orientale, Le Caire.

As for the sacrifice of the dog, a catalogue is given of the occurrence of sacrificed bovines at important funerals, detailing the place of the immolation, number and type of animals, and looking for evidence of relationships with a libation rite or with a triumphal symbol. It is concluded that the sacrifice is that of a cow, at times accompanied by her calf. This liturgy aimed at confirming the charisma of the royal family, symbolically nursed by the divinity. In very rare cases, the killing is that of numerous bovines: it means the oxen sacrifice has not completely lost its old triumphal meaning.

25. Lenoble 1994

"Une monture pour mon royaume. Sacrifices triomphaux de chevaux et de méhara, d'el Kurru à Ballana", Archéologie du Nil Moyen, 6, pp. 107-130, Lille.

Again a catalogue of the known occurrences is produced, either of whole skeletons or of selected parts of them. So as to clearly illustrate the symbolic value of such sacrifices, iconographies and objects relating to horses, donkeys and
dromedaries, are listed. Various liturgies then appear, which are compared to what is known in the neighbouring Roman Empire: the exhibition of the royal horse or mehari, the royal hunt, the cavalcade; all such performances illustrate the triumphal rank by boasting the virtue and the imperium of the deceased.

The paper is lacking part of the documentation known so far, published by Bruce B. Williams at Chicago in 1991 after Seele’s 1974 report. The interpretation of contents of the sacrificial shafts near high ranking graves at Qustul will be added in Lenoble 1994e (below n 39), differentiating various roles played by the sacrificed victims.

The so-called human sacrifices

26. Lenoble n.d.2, press

"Les 'sacrifices humains' de Méroé, Qustul et Ballana. I, Le massacre de nombreux prisonniers", à paraître dans Beitrage zur Sudanforschung, 6 Vienna (Austria).

The concept of "human sacrifice" at funerals is thoroughly criticised: its literature clearly shows how the barbarism of human killing was irrationally attributed to various features of collective burials of different periods in the Sudan by American and European archaeologists working in an African colony. Again, a catalogue is provided of high ranking graves which yielded numerous human skeletons buried together. An explanation for this phenomenon is sought either in literary and epigraphic texts or in the iconography. "Meroites" and "Post Meroites" appear to have performed the same triumphal liturgy at the burial of qore or of dignitaries to whom imperium, of a religious and military nature, was delegated.

This conclusion is checked within the tombs selected in the catalogue, through association of victims with the insignia of the triumphal liturgy, be they pieces of armament, libating vessels or animal immolations. Emergy’s "sacrificed queen" is shown to be an undocumented legend. As several occurrences of "slaughters of prisoners" appear in various Nubian necropolis, possible implications for the political instability in the 4th and 5th centuries AD are formulated.

27. Lenoble n.d. ###, in Preparation

The killing of human beings at Meroitic graves of high rank cannot be entirely explained by the slaughter of vanquished prisoners. Although the use of an unique killed prisoner occurs at times, such as the rite "trampling on a prisoner", different liturgies seem to interfere with the triumphal ceremony. Indications by two Roman writers, derived from a single Hellenistic source, suggest that the king's "friends" (in Greek, philo "or hetairo") might accompany the dead sovereign. The archaeology of important tombs is examined in the light of this evidence. Who are the "members of the royal family", represented on the walls of the funerary chapels? What is the political utility revealed by this practice: is the funerary "custom" aimed at solving problems of succession and securing the maintenance of the State?

Other studies draw attention to the role played by the provision of specific armament at funerals:

The triumphal weaponry
The abundant armament recovered at el Hobagi is under restoration. The iron and bronze objects have been studied and drawn, and will be published type by type. Only arrows have been published so far. Spears, triumphal spears, axes, mace-head and swords will follow. Each weapon will be understood in its context in the liturgy performed at funerals.

28. LENOBLE n.d.3, in press
"Enterrer les flèches, enterrer l’empire. I, Flèches et carquois des tombes impériales d’el Hobagi". Texte lu à la 8e Conférence internationale des Etudes numbiennes, Little, September 1994, à paraître dans les Actes publiés par les Cahiers de Recherche de l’Institut de Papyrologie et d’Egyptologie de Lille, n 17.

The two Hobagi walled mounds yield an exceptional number of arrows (more than 700). The types, of a very limited variety, and their distribution within the grave cavities leads the writer to explain the symbolic value of either contents of full quivers or small groups of arrows buried in Meroitic graves: as imperial insignia these are very explained by iconography.

Furthering the symbolic interpretation, the peculiar role of the quivers retrieved at el Hobagi (at least 10 in HBG VI and 13 in HBG III) receives an explanation by comparison with the distribution of archer’s rings in Nubian imperial tombs. The funerary liturgy using archery equipment, although varying
from one province to the next; obviously reproduces a well known Meroitic symbolism, that of the vanquished nine bows.

The immediate consequences of this interpretation, if it was accepted, would be abundant. It is at least suggested that Silko's tomb may be identified with Tumulus 80 at Ballana; his triumphal inscription at Kalabsha being compared with the two archer's ring collections in that grave.

29. Lenoble n.d.####, in Preparation "Enterrer Les Flèches, Enterrer l'empire. II, L'administration de l'imperium Méroïtique"

The regalia is found in more and more graves from the 2nd to the 4th centuries AD, and may be found inside common graves in the 5th. Does it relate to the adoption of a soteriological liturgy? Or does it relate to a social hierarchy, that of the sovereign's military, political and religious empire (the equivalent of the Roman imperium), which is buried?

Sacramental Liturgies

Sacrifices and other political and triumphal liturgies were performed chiefly at some high ranking graves. Other liturgies, once characterising the royal funerals then propagated to common graves from the 2nd century AD onwards, receive specific analysis. The vessels and the meaning of funerary libations are first examined. Censings, funerary banquets, adornments, etc. will follow.

30. Lenoble 1991a


Trays with either four or seven goblets have been found in several graves at el Kadada. The iconography in the pyramid chapels explains their role. The performance of ritual libations even at common graves is shown to characterise the evolution of the funerary faith in Late Meroitic times, from the 2nd to the 5th centuries AD.

31. Lenoble n.d.5, in press

"La petite bouteille noire: un récipient méroéen de la libation funéraire", à paraître dans Archéologie du Nil Moyen, 7, Lille.
The small, black and handmade ceramic bottle, appearing at Meroe and el Kadada (around 40 occurrences on each site), is described and dated to the Late Meroitic and Post-Meroitic times. Iconographies of funerary chapels of the pyramids and offering tables indicate that the bottle is one of the vessels used for various libations. The role played by divinities in the libating gestures allows an understanding of the religious faith used at all funerals between the 2nd and the 5th centuries AD.

**Ranking The Important El Hobagi Burials**

32. Lenoble n.d.1 sous presse


A progress report on the analysis of Meroitic funerary liturgies,

33. Lenoble-Nigm Ed Din 1992


A report popularizing the discovery and the interpretation of the contents of the el Hobagi graves.

34. Shinnie-Robertson 1993


Prof. P.L. Shinnie and J.H. Robertson, excavators at Meroe-City, criticize the former paper (n 33) and stick to the traditional interpretation of an end to Meroe and to the Meroitic culture dated to around AD 350.

35. Lenoble 1993


The Meroë and the el Hobagi evidence cannot be compared when neither excavation is fully published. An example of the fecundity of the liturgical analysis is given, with the interpretation of silver vessels at Ballana, the purpose of which had remained unexplained so far. Their recognition as feeding vessels
indicates the reappearance of a royal Meroitic liturgy in the tomb of the successors postulated as barbarous or barbaric.

36. Lenoble 1992c

The method and the results of reanalysing grave contents and the documentation of the funerary liturgies and rituals by buried objects are shown through the continuous comparison between tomb archaeography and iconography. Logical conclusions are drawn, pleading for a revision of the "End of Meroe" theory and for a study of the progressive dislocation of the Meroitic Empire. Provincial secessions and local restorations, using the political ideology of the former imperial system, are suggested as a model.

37. Lenoble 1994a

An explanation of the failure, due to timing, of a joint venture by P. Lenoble and L. Torok, author of "Late Antique Nubia, History and archaeology of the southern neighbour of Egypt in the 4th-6th c. AD", Budapest, 1988.

38. Lenoble 1994b

A detailed progress report, written in 1990 and slightly revised in 1991. Objects yielded by the two large el Hobagi graves and by some Nubian tombs are grouped according to indications about their use given by funerary chapel reliefs at Meroe. Various liturgies are reconstructed, which separate imperial and royal tomb furnishing from common cult equipment, although some rites spread from royal funerals to normal interments. With the imperial equipment, such as the triumphal weaponry and sacrifices, it is concluded that Tumulus III and VI at el Hobagi covered burials of holders of the Meroitic imperium.

The identity of these high-ranking individuals, who existed in a Meroitic
cultural milieu, as kings, and whether or not they belong to the Noba people’s ethnic mosaic have put to be addressed. Only their Isiac funerary religion is acknowledged, as well as their use of the Meroitic political ideology. Both tombs find comparisons only in the West Cemetery at Meroe and in Nubia. Further analysis of burial liturgies and a greater understanding of the rites specifically performed at royal or imperial graves, may allow, in the near future a more precise ranking of the personages buried at el Hobagi.

But future consequences of such reasoning can be foreseen: if the immolation of some animal species at funerals and if some pieces of accoutrement actually are regalia, unsuspected or unexplained so far, it is clear that several Nubian mound necropolis also contain burials of Meroitic dignitaries holding some part of the Meroitic imperium, be it delegated by the qore or usurped. Is the Meroitic territory a true kingdom; or rather an Empire assembling a variety or a collection of kingdoms? How many "chieftains", not to say "kingdoms", should be counted in Nubia or in Silko’s "whole Ethiopia" before its Christianisation? Is it possible to describe the "End of MeroeU" as the progressive disruption of an empire, as the evolution of its various regional restorations and as their failure to reunify the Upper Nile territory, through conversion to Christianity aimed at obtaining a privileged relationship with Byzantium?

39. Lenoble 1994e

Thesis of the Sorbonne University, Paris, unpublished yet.

40. lenoble 1994f
Descriptions of el Hobagi objects for the occasion of their first exhibition. The notes unfortunately had to be written before completion of the restoration of the bronze objects at the Vinne Laboratory (France).

41. Dissaux-Reinold-Lenoble n.d.

Description of a libation basin (HBG VI/1/21, see below) and short comments about its engraved dance scene. A final drawing showing the whole scene is provided by Rene-Pierre Dissaux, after the Antiquity paper gave only part of it (see n 33)

Political Organisation of the Meroitic Pre-Christian Culture in the Sahelian Region

42. Leno Ble n.d.
   "The division of the Meroitic Empire and the end of the pyramid in the 4th c. A.D.: an introduction to further excavations of imperial mounds in the Sudan"

Main discussion paper to the debate around the question of an "End to Meroè", 8th International Conference for Meroitic Studies, London, 1996.

Meroitic Bronzes at el Hobagi
Engraving the Royal Rank Upon Libating Vessels

A cup found in the main grave cavity is wrapped in textile and caps a wheel-turned ceramic bottle. The encircled human face is engraved on the exterior of the base (Fig. 1). A second motif, a double falcon wearing a collar and crowned by a solar disc with two uraei (Fig. 2), is repeated four times around the external walls of the vessel. Under the lip is a frieze of vertical lotus buds, above which six small bells and a ring are soldered.

Iconographically, the face is that of Hathor, whose cow ears are clearly recognisable, and the falcons are representations of Horus. Comparative motifs
are found in the latest graves of the West Cemetery at Meroe. The Horus symbols obviously refer to the kinship after the dead king had become Osiris. In the 4th century AD, the Hathoric face obviously refers to Isis, the divinity presiding at funerals but furthermore the tutelary goddess of the kingship.

Whether the vessel was specially made for the political event of burying a personage of the royal sphere at el Hobagi or was borrowed from a temple treasure for use in the liturgy of a ceremonial funeral, it is certain that its presence indicates that its Meroitic symbolism was well known and that a proper use was being made of it.


A basin found in the same cavity, part of a set of bronze vessels, placed upon a goat skin wrapped in textile, above bundles of spears and axes. Inside the basin a small crocodile statuette is soldered to the bottom. Outside, on the walls beneath a frieze of lotus buds, four simple falcons facing left are represented crowned with the solar disc and holding three ankh signs under their wings (Fig. 3). Special emphasis is given to the form of uraei. One is a complete snake on the solar disc, itself capped with the Isis crown: another, appearing in on the back of the falcon, is the neck and the head of a cobra capped with the white crown of Upper Egypt.

The symbols, reminiscent of some famous carvings upon the walls of the pyramid funerary chapels, are even more evident than in the former instance. The crocodile is an Osirian avatar referring to the dead king. The four Horus refer to his successor, and their peculiar attributes, which have not found so far any equivalent in the Meroitic culture, might represent borne titles and be explained in the near future.

The iconographical detail might allow us to date the two vessels at least relatively. The form and the distribution of the feathers, the shaping of the legs, and, above all, the strange feature of the falcon eye drawn after an old Egyptian model curiously interpreted, suggest that the same hand engraved cup 11 and basin 19. Since similar iconographies appear in the late tombs at Meroe, we should at least be justified in dating these two objects to the 4th century. Can we also attribute them to an artist working specially for the prepared event, the king's death and his burial by his designated success?
Comparison: HBG III/1/209. Provisional drawing

Piece of silver found in the grave main cavity, broken by plunderers, belonging apparently to the body adornment. A falcon is engraved with outstretched wings, holding ankh signs in its beak and feet (Fig. 4).

HBG VI/1/21. The complex restoration is the work of Jean-Baptiste Latour, at the Laboratoire de restauration d’objets archéologiques, Vinne (France); the definitive drawing, which was made particularly difficult on account of the decoration having to be deciphered on a surface altered by pulverulent chlorides, is the work of Rene-Pierre Dissaux, draughtsman for the S.F.D.A.S.

Another basin of the set mentioned above, was heavily broken when the wooden cover of the grave cavity collapsed under the weight of the mound and was badly corroded. At least 16 personages, many of them holding a palm branch, are represented in a scene of drumming (see nb 33, Fig. 3 p. 631, a first drawing by Jean-Marie Bialais modified later by the addition of a new figure probably crowned with an uraeus) and dancing (Fig. 5, detail). Dancers wear either caps with chin straps or headbands, and loincloths with long belt sashes.

The scene which involves a two-sided drum suspended from the drummer’s neck, a jar and a possible tray of goblets, is known from two instances described by Tim Kendall in 1989 and again in 1996. It is also reminiscent of depictions of officials or dignitaries holding palm leaves and wearing either headbands or diadems, that are found upon the walls of qoresh funerary chapels at Meroë. These individuals have been described at times either as members of the royal family or as high-ranking attendants at the imperial funerals.

The interpretation is at present under elaboration and further explanations will be derived from many possible comparisons of details in the royal iconographies registered in tombs at the capital. It is obvious that an important liturgy is represented here, the performance of which is of political and religious significance.

One of the last questions, of utmost importance for a final interpretation of Tumulus VI, is that of its date. Whether it is an original engraving or a borrowing is not without consequence for the final ranking of the individuals buried at el Hobagi. A definitive conclusion has nevertheless already been
drawn: irrespective of whether the basin has been borrowed from a temple, or
from a pyramid, it was evidently used for its Meroitic symbolism and was a
component chronology of ceremony. On this point there is no doubt. The final
question is that of the relative chronology of the el Hobagi walled mounds and the
last pyramids at Meroe The interpretation of ritual and liturgical equipment used
exclusively at imperial funerals will allow a complete rewriting of the half-century
old problem of the end of the social pyramid of the Meroitic rule and of the
division of the former Upper Nile Empire down to its christianisation.

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