

SUDAN & NUBIA

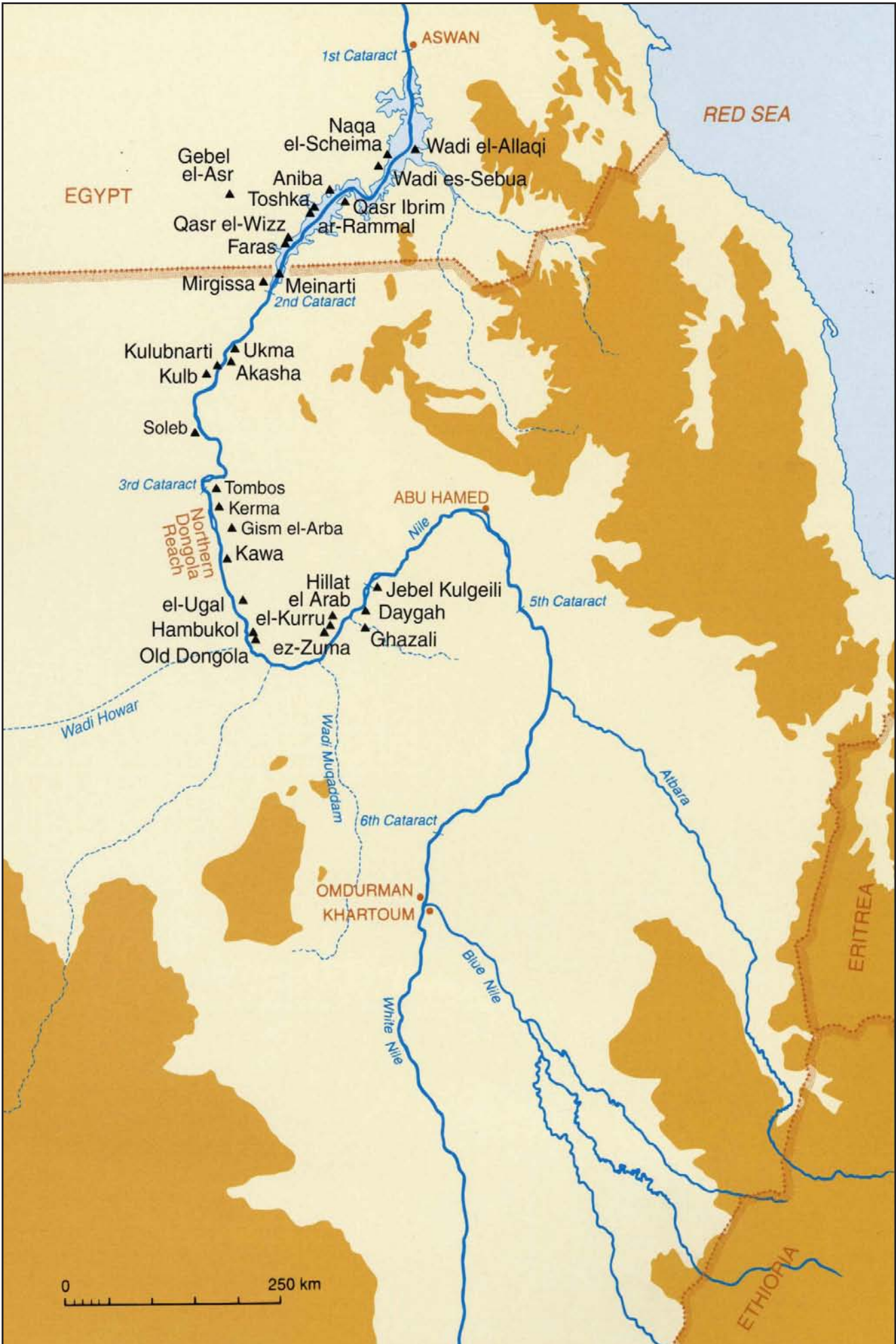
The Sudan Archaeological Research Society



Bulletin No. 3

1999





SUDAN & NUBIA

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Front Cover: Temple of Amenophis III at Soleb visited by
F. W. Green in 1909 (Photo D. A. Welsby).

Introduction

As the contents of this year's issue clearly demonstrate, *Sudan & Nubia* goes from strength to strength with a developing international profile. The Society's own work in the Dongola Reach is represented by two papers; the first, based on the analysis of human remains, provides fascinating insights into living conditions during the Kerma Period (Judd); the second outlines progress on the continuing research into the geomorphology of the region (Treves *et al.*). A complementary project, carried out in the same region by a French Expedition, has among other things identified a rare native settlement dating to the period of Egyptian conquest (reported on by Gratien). At Kerma itself, exciting new work, uncovering remains of the Napatan and Meroitic Periods, is dramatically extending the history of the site (Salah Ahmed), while of equal importance historically are the results from Hillat el-Arab (near Gebel Barkal), a cemetery with elite burials of the New Kingdom and very earliest Kushite Period (Vincentelli). Research into quarrying and stones receives fresh impetus from work at Gebel El-Asr in Lower Nubia (Shaw and Bloxam) and in Tombos and Daygah at the Third and Fourth Cataracts respectively (Harrell). Surveys in the latter region, threatened by a new dam, are confirming its great archaeological potential (Abdel Rahman and Kabashy Hussein). Among other possibilities, sites in the Abu Hamed Reach can be expected to shed important new light on Nubian monasticism, until recently a neglected subject (Julie Anderson). Further north, Qasr Ibrim, which has long been partially submerged, continues to repay the Egypt Exploration Society's commitment under difficult circumstances (John Alexander). Far from the Nile Valley, museum basements can also be a source of significant 'discoveries' (Wardley and Davies), as may unpublished archival material and archaeological diaries (Welsby Sjöström).

During the course of the year, SARS suffered a serious blow with the passing of its distinguished President, Sir Lawrence Kirwan. Larry was a source of encouragement, support and inspiration for us all. We salute his memory and his contribution to Sudanese and Nubian archaeology (see Obituary, by Harry Smith). We also regret the loss of Prof. Jack Plumley, a specialist in Christian Nubia, who for many years directed the EES excavations at Qasr Ibrim (see Obituary, by John Alexander).



Two Seasons in the Fourth Cataract Region. Preliminary Results

*Abdel Rahman Ali Mohammed and
Kabashy Hussein*

Introduction

In 1995 the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM) and the University of Dongola, Faculty of Arts and Human Studies, Dept of Archaeology, Kareima, established a joint research project in the Fourth Cataract Region in a locality called Jebel Kulgeili.

The main objectives of this research were threefold:

1. to train students of archaeology and related sciences in the techniques of fieldwork.
2. to rescue some sites which will be submerged by the waters of the lake created by the proposed Merowe Hamdab Dam, and to try and assess the impact of the dam on the remaining sites.
3. to establish a systematic documentation nucleus for the area and provide archaeological information for comparative studies.

The project is designed to shed light on an archaeological region which has received little archaeological attention

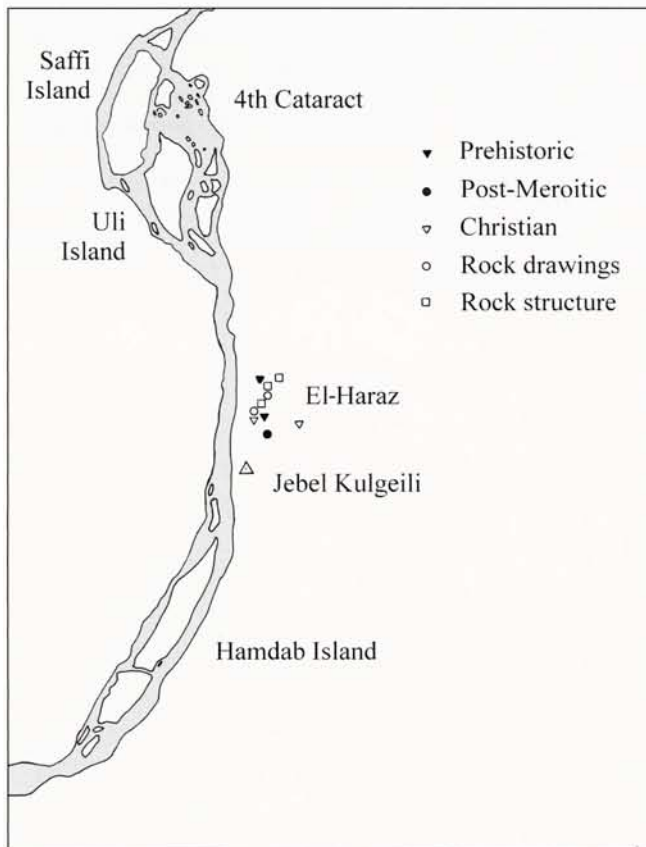


Figure 1. Location map

hitherto. The concession area lies on the left bank of the River Nile, about 43km from Merowe town (Fig. 1) and covers an area of about 8km from Jebel Kulgeili (the highest topographic landmark in the area) to latitude N 18° 45'.

The area is located at the periphery of the Abu Hamed Reach. It consists of extensive formations of the Pre-Cambrian basement complex which belong to the Rahaba series metamorphic strata, primarily biotite gneisses, foliated granitized of varying degree, masses of pegmatites, agglomerates of Jebel Kulgeili, and the younger formations which consist of rhyolite, basalts and quartz veins. Recent formations consist of Pleistocene and recent unconsolidated sediments ranging from clay to boulder size.

The concession area was identified and recorded with the aid of:

- Sudan Antiquities Service Survey cards
- Map sheets, scale 1:250,000
- Aerial photographs, scale 1:66,000
- Global positioning system.

During the archaeological surveys and excavations launched in 1995 and continuing in 1998 the following results were achieved:

The archaeological surveys

The archaeological sites recorded by the systematic survey consisted of prehistoric sites, post-Meroitic tumuli, Christian cemeteries, rock pictures, and small forts.

Description of the sites

Site no. 1. El-Haraz (HAZ)

Co-ordinates: N 18° 43' E 32° 03'

Type: post-Meroitic cemetery

Description: This is the main site in the area. It is located on a flat undulating gravelly plain with mountain ranges on the eastern side and with low levelled metamorphosed outcrops on the western side, forming a barrier which extends for 500m, which separates the site from the Nile. The el-Haraz site is largely dissected and drained by Khor el-Malaw which delimits the site to the north. The site was recorded in 1989 by NCAM during the archaeological reconnaissance surveys, which had accompanied the feasibility studies of the Hamadab Merowe Dam, as NE-36-F/19-G-1 (Al Hakim 1993, 23). The most prominent feature of the site is an extensive cemetery of tumuli of varying sizes. Principally they are grouped into two tumuli fields:

(A) A northern field which consists of about 300 stone covered tumuli. Each tumulus is designated as HAZ,1, 2 ... 95 etc. The archaeological excavations of the previous seasons were mainly concentrated in this field (Colour Plate XXIX).

(B) A southern field which consist of about 50 tumuli not yet thoroughly investigated.

All tumuli were made of a mound of earth consisting of

mixed gravels, sands, silts and weathered basement complex fragments. Their superstructures displayed a variety of geometric forms:

1. circular to sub-rounded tumuli consisting of a mound of gravely soil, bounded by pieces of rock slabs and cobbles forming a ring around each tumulus.

2. tumuli which appear to have a lobe made up of piles of stones or gravel. The lobe can be oriented to the south, east or west (Colour Plate XXX).

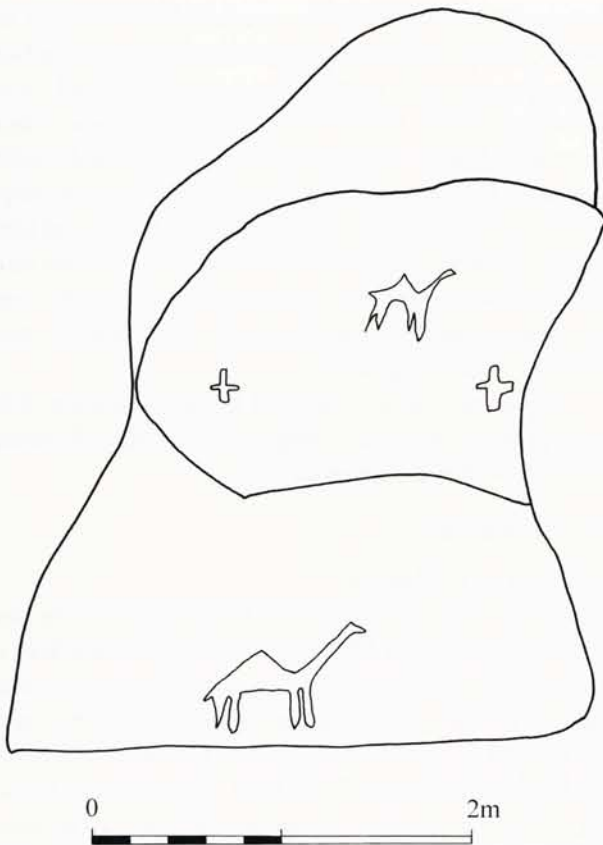


Figure 2. Wadi el-Bitareen, rock drawings

Site no. 2. El-Khizyain

Co-ordinates: N 18° 43' 8" E 32° 03' 51.1"

Type: Christian cemetery

Description: The site is located north west of the village of el-Khizyain and along the Wadi el-Bitareen on a sandy silty area, surrounded by low outcrops. The site consists of 107 Christian box graves, with rectangular superstructures and east-west alignments. There are also five circular stone structures located at the eastern corner of the cemetery.

Site no. 3. Umm Huzey

Co-ordinates: N 18° 43' 51.1" E 32° 03' 51"

Type: Rock art

Description: Rock pictures of camels and a donkey, facing east on a granitic block.

Site no. 4. Wadi el-Bitareen

Co-ordinates: N 18° 44' 25" E 32° 03' 56.7"

Description: Four conical stone structures two on each side of the Wadi el-Bitareen on a hilly outcrop. The eastern conical structures measure:

a. 2.5 x 2.4 x 0.97m b. 3.5 x 2.4 x 1.25m

Site no. 5. Wadi el-Bitareen

Co-ordinates: N 18° 43' 7.7" E 32° 03' 54"

Type: Rock art

Description: Rock pictures of a camel, a dog, and a cross on a granitic outcrop (Fig. 2).

Site no. 6.

Co-ordinates: N 18° 44' 34.2" E 32° 03' 40.0"

Type: Fort

Description: Small fort constructed of blocks and cobbles of granitic origin. The walls consist of two lines of stones filled in the middle with small rock fragments and gravel. The fort measures 19.5m x 32m. The thickness of the walls is 1.5m. The eastern wall survives to a height of 2m, the other walls to between 500 and 800mm (Fig. 3).

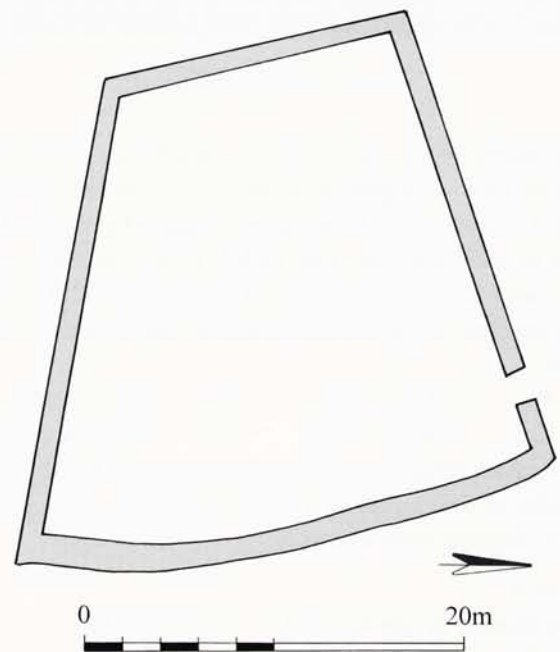


Figure 3. Small fort.

Site no. 7.

Co-ordinates: N 18° 44' 36.6" E 32° 03' 33.4"

Type: Grinding hollows

Description: Five lower grinding hollows on a granitic block, each approximately 250mm x 90mm in size (Plate 1).

Site no. 8.

Co-ordinates: N 18° 44' 36.5" E 32° 03' 47.4"

Type: Structures

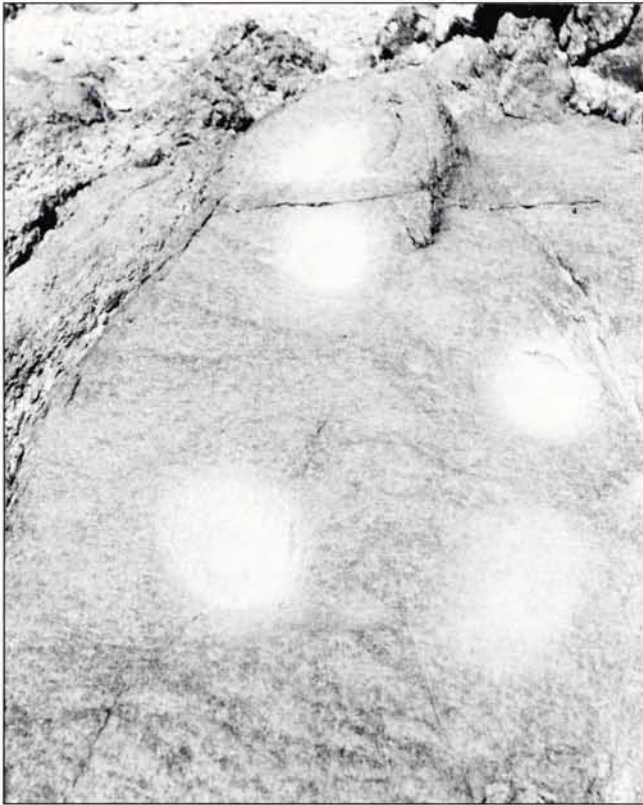


Plate 1. Grinding hollows.

Description: To the east of the fort on a flat sandy-silty area there are four rectangular stone structures oriented east-west, parallel to each other. Stone slabs are aligned along the four edges of each structure. The middle of the structures were filled with sandy-silty deposits (Colour Plate XXXI). The structures are designated in alphabetic order from north to south.

A.	39m x 1.20m	B.	38m x 1.20m
C.	40m x 1.18m	D.	38.3m x 1.0m

A test trench measuring 1.2 x 2m was excavated at the western edge of structure A to a depth of 900mm. No archaeological deposits were recovered.

Site no.9.

Co-ordinates: N 18° 42' 07.11" E 32° 04' 32"

Type: Box graves

Description: About 500m to the east of el-Haraz village, on a gently sloping plain, there were two Christian box graves (A and B), with rectangular superstructures and east-west orientations. Their superstructures measure:

A.	8.5 x 2.3 x 2.1m	B.	8.5 x 2.5 x 2.5m
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Site no.10.

Type: Khartoum related site

Co-ordinates: N18° 47' 07" E 32° 04' 03"

Description: Extending for 500m on the left bank of the Nile between low metamorphosed outcrops there are traces

of an eroded prehistoric site destroyed by the local people for the sake of the mineral rich fertile soil (named by the local people *maroq*). In an area of 100m, the following archaeological material was collected:

- a. incised pottery sherds
- b. dotted wavy line pottery
- c. grinding stones (upper and lower grinders)
- d. hand axes
- e. scrapers

The above systematic survey revealed that, although the Fourth Cataract region has received very little attention from archaeologists, yet it potentially possesses rich and varied archaeological sites. On the other hand, natural and human factors have largely contributed to destroying and damaging those sites. It is assumed that the identified sites are only a portion of the sites which originally existed. Pottery and lithic artefacts scattered on the surface testify to the former existence of archaeological sites, now without stratigraphic context. Some deposits were preserved, other deposits were eroded by weathering factors.

The survey was accompanied by the excavation of selected graves to provide a sample of the range of cultural variability within the surveyed area.

The Excavations

Excavation at el-Khizyain

During the 1996-98 seasons six Christian graves were excavated; five graves in el-Khizyain and one to the north of el-Haraz village. All the graves have rectangular superstructures made up of rows of rock fragments and filled in the centre with soil and gravel. The orientation is east-west. Superstructure heights range from 2.5-0.5m. Burials at el-Khizyain (Fig. 4) have a narrow rectangular shaft (0.7-1.1m deep), with one step either on the northern or the southern side. All the deceased were dorsally extended with the head to the west. The position of the hands shows variability; they are either extended beside, or crossed over, the pelvis. The skull is always surrounded by stones; two stones beside the skull and a slab on the top. A stone supporting the skull was not observed; however, the burial shaft was sometimes cut to form a step to support the skull.

About 2.5km to the east of el-Khizyain, east of the village of el-Haraz, two Christian box graves were recorded. Grave A has the same external characteristics as those of el-Khizyain. It had been excavated to a depth of 550mm. An extended burial was recovered, aligned east-west, laid on the left side with the head to the west facing south. The hands were laid in front of the pelvis. The deceased is covered with textile. The skull is bounded by three cobbles. The grave had a rectangular pit to a depth of 290mm, with an elongated round ended burial chamber (Fig. 5). None of the

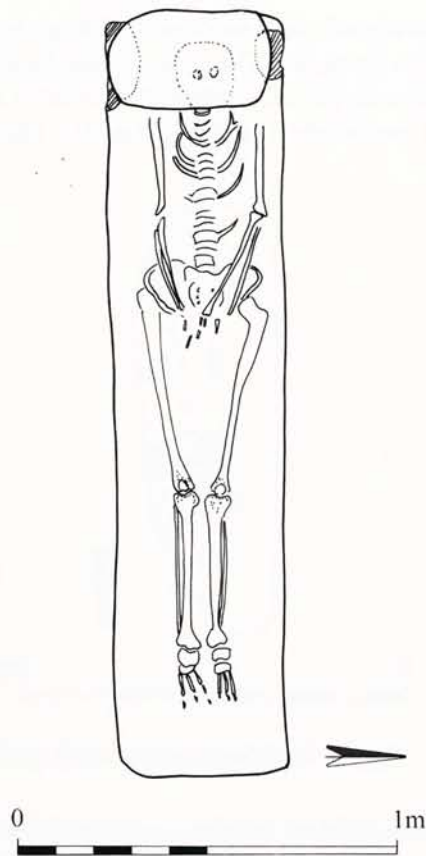


Figure 4. El-Khizyain, Christian burial.

graves were accompanied by offerings or personal ornaments.

Excavation at el-Haraz

The tumuli excavated during 1995 were designated in alphabetic order and those of 1998 were designated in numerical order.

Tumulus HAZ.A.95

Circular tumulus 7.5m in diameter and 0.40m in height. An oval burial chamber had been excavated to depth of 1.7m. A contracted adult female was laid on a north-south alignment on the left side with the skull to the north facing east. The hands were folded at an acute angle in front of the chest (Fig. 6). A red-rimmed wheel-made bowl (HAZ.A.95A), mat impressed on the bottom and with five parallel painted bands running around the body of the bowl (Plate 2), was found fitting into the knee of the left leg. Dia. 140mm; H.140mm. A hand-made grey brown jar (HAZ.A.95.B), had a single line of incised grooves running around the lower part of the neck. Neck Dia. 100mm; Body Dia. 850mm; H. 360mm. This jar was deposited in close proximity to the pelvis and near the southern side of the burial chamber where it is delimited by some rock slabs.

Tumulus HAZ.B.95

Circular tumulus 6m in diameter and 2.5m high. A simple

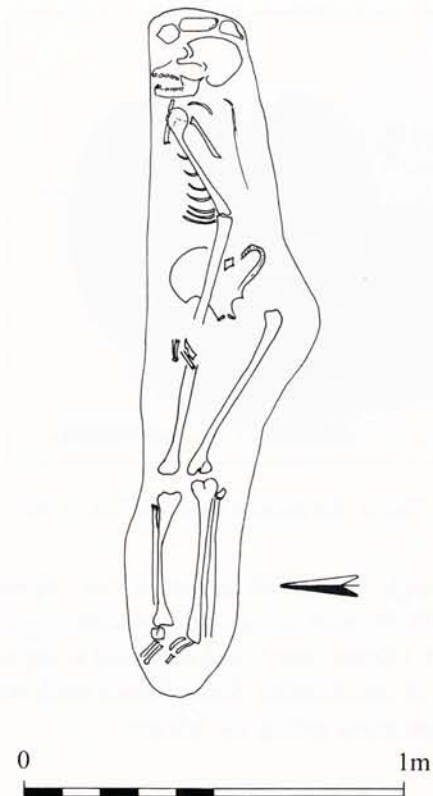


Figure 5. Christian burial to the east of el-Haraz.

rectangular burial chamber (1.40m x 0.6m) was excavated to a depth of 1.2m. It revealed an east-west semi-contracted adult female, laid on the left side with the head to the east facing south. The arms were laid in close proximity in front of the skull (Fig. 7).

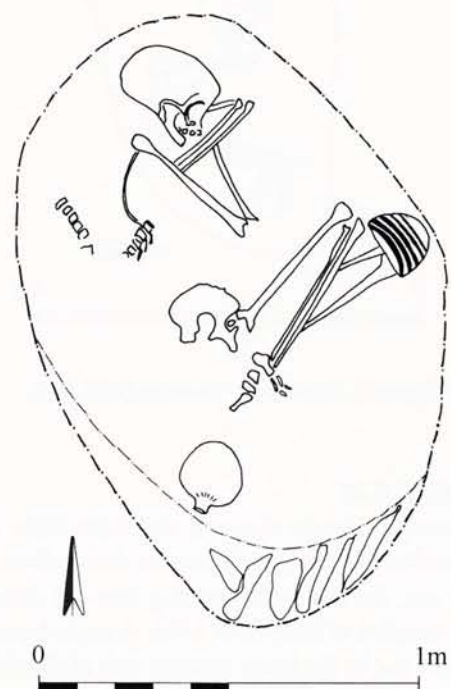


Figure 6. Burial under tumulus HAZ.A.95.



Plate 2. Red painted bowl (HAZ.A.95.A).

A single hand-made brownish mat-impressed bowl (HAZ.B.95.A) with a regularly undulating rim (Dia. 220mm; H.130mm) was found deposited at the north-eastern corner of the chamber. Some faience beads were recovered near the pelvis and by the left arm.

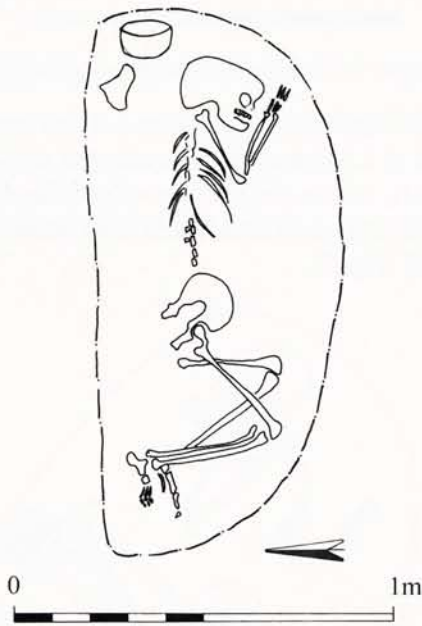


Figure 7. Burial under tumulus HAZ.B.95.

Tumulus HAZ.C.95

Circular tumulus, 6m in diameter and 0.3m high, with the lobe oriented to the east. It is located at the southern periphery of the site. An oval shaft was dug into the decomposed basement complex to a depth of 1.8m. A single burial chamber had been cut in the lower western wall of the shaft. Two gently sloping steps led to the entrance of the burial chamber which had been sealed with three slabs of metamorphic rock and fixed with mud mortar. An adult contracted

female was aligned north-south on the left side with the head to the south facing east. The arms are folded under the skull (Fig. 8). Two copper-alloy anklets (HAZ.C.95.1 and 2) were recovered around the folded legs (Fig. 9). Three jars were

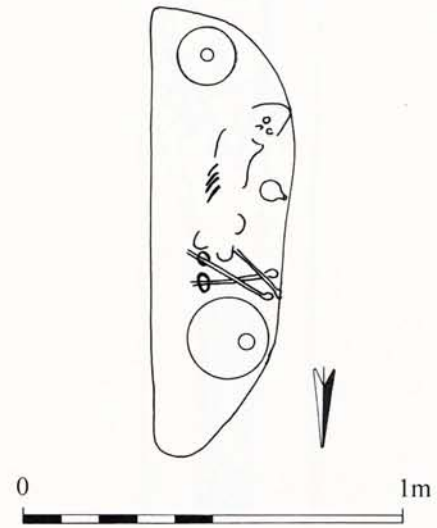


Figure 8. Burial under tumulus HAZ.C.95.

recovered in different locations in the burial chamber:

- a. Jar (HAZ.C.95.3): found in close proximity and delimiting the folded leg. Dia.400mm; H.460mm.
- b. Jar (HAZ.C.95.4): placed to the south of the skull. Dia.360mm; H. 400m.
- c. Jar (HAZ.C.95.5): placed to the west of the skull at the western end of the burial chamber. Dia.160mm; H.180mm. Bones of the right hand were found under this jar.

Other grave goods consist of:

- ostrich egg-shell beads recorded around the waist.
- five different necklaces of agate milky quartz and ostrich egg-shell beads were recovered from over the chest.

Due to percolation of water into the grave the deceased seemed to be slightly dislocated.

Tumulus HAZ.D.95.

Circular tumulus with the lobe to the east. It is 7.5m in diameter and 0.2m high and is located at the south-west corner of the site. A rectangular north-south oriented shaft (2.5 x 0.6m) was excavated to a depth of 1.1m. The shaft was approached by a single step cut at the eastern wall of the shaft. As the grave is plundered only the skull was found *in situ*, deposited at the northern corner. The burial chamber had been sealed with stone slabs and mud mortar.

Tumulus HAZ.38.98

Circular tumulus 5.5m in diameter and 25cm high. The superstructure was bounded by rings of stones. An elongated east-west shaft was excavated in the southern quarter of the tumulus approached from the north by a 200mm gentle step.

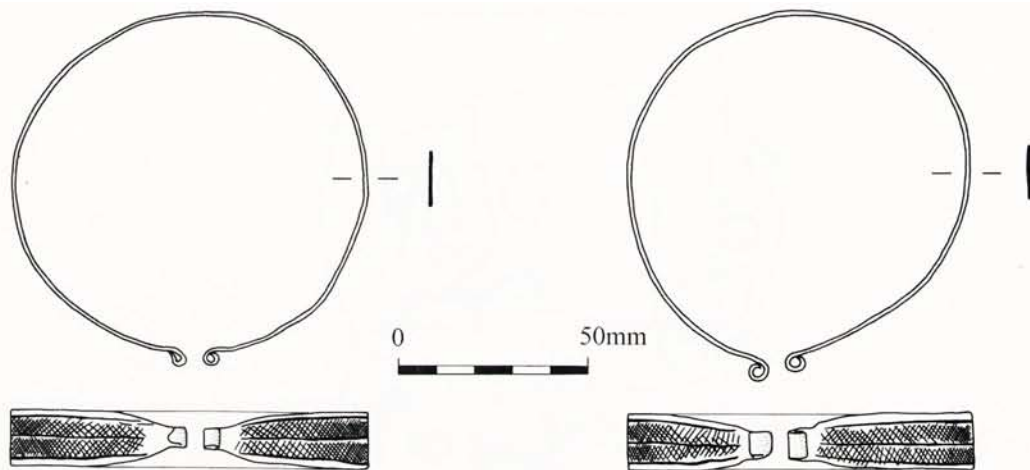


Figure 9. Copper-alloy anklets (HAZ.C.95. 1 and 2).

The contracted body of a child was recovered at a depth of 750mm. It was laid on the left side with the head to the east. The skeleton was disarticulated and confined to the eastern



Plate 3. Burial under tumulus HAZ.38.98.

half of the shaft (Plate 3).

Tumulus HAZ.48.98

Circular tumulus with the lobe oriented to the east. The superstructure was circular, 8.5m in diameter and 0.2m high. A rectangular shaft, 1.95m deep, had been excavated at the south-western corner of the tumulus where a compact floor was recorded sloping to the south west. Two chambers had been cut into the lower sections of the southern and western walls of the shaft. The entrance leading to the chambers had been sealed with stone slabs of metamorphic origin and compact sandy-silty mortar. The southern chamber, 1.9 x 0.85 x 0.6m in size, was found to be a burial chamber. A disturbed skeleton was recovered aligned east-west with the head deposited to the east at a higher level in the shaft (Fig. 10). A single reddish wheel-made cup (HAZ.48.98.1, Fig. 11.1) was found at the eastern end of the burial chamber. Dia. 114mm, H. 117mm.

The western chamber measures 1.5 x 0.9 x 0.5m and only contained the following pottery vessels:

a. Jar (HAZ.48.98.2); hand-made, grass-tempered, reddish brown in colour. Rim Dia. 45mm; H. 340mm; Body Dia. 240mm (Fig. 11.2, Plates 4, left, and 6).

b. Jar (HAZ.48.98.3); hand-made, brownish in colour, mat-impressed with rounded bottom. Rim Dia. 90mm (Fig. 11.3, Plate 4, centre).

c. Bowl (HAZ.48.98.4); hand-made, mat-impressed, brownish in colour. Rim Dia. 160mm; H.115mm (Fig. 11.5, Plate 4, right).

d. Jar (HAZ.48.98.5); brownish in colour hand-made, grass-tempered, mat-impressed bottom surface. Rim Dia.100mm; H. 44mm (Fig. 11.5, Plate 5).

e. Jar (HAZ.48.98.6): a red jar neck was recovered in the superstructure fill, hand-made. Rim Dia. 350mm (Fig. 11.6).

Other grave goods were:

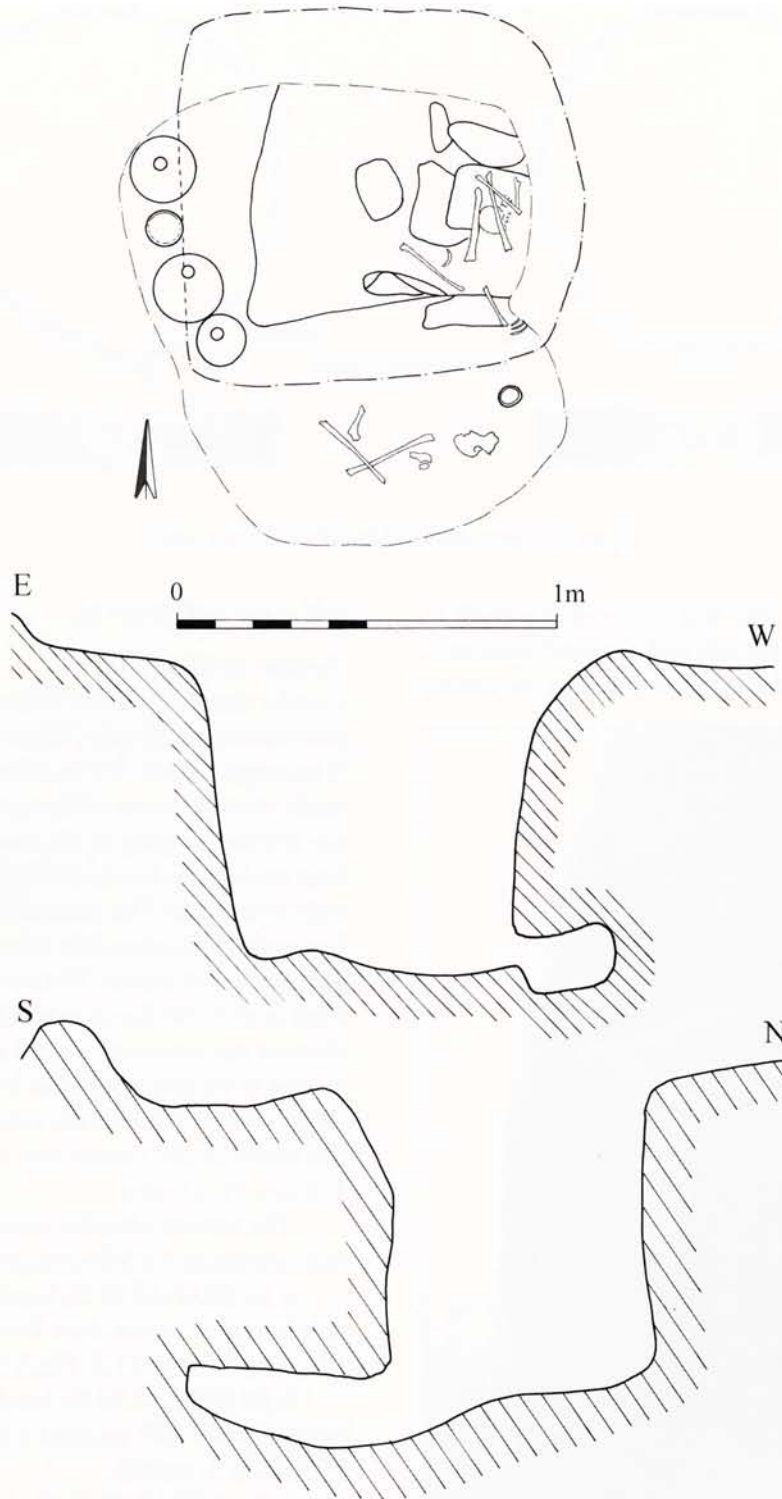


Figure 10. Tumulus HAZ.48.98, plan and sections.

- 12 milky quartz beads, oval to elongated in shape, together with faience beads. (HAZ.48.98.7) (Plate 7).
- two copper-alloy earrings (HAZ.48.98.8).

Tumulus HAZ.170.98

Circular tumulus with the lobe to the east, located in the western part of the site. The superstructure is circular

bounded with pieces of stone slabs and cobbles. It is 4.5m in diameter and 0.2m high. A rectangular shaft, with its long axis oriented north-south, had been cut into the central part of the tumulus. It measuring 2 x 1.1m at the ground level and 1.95 x 1.6m at the bottom at a depth of 1.10m. A single burial chamber had been cut into the lower section of the eastern wall of the shaft, into the decomposed basement



Plate 4. Pottery from HAZ.48.98.

complex. It measures 1.3 x 0.5 x 0.7m. The entrance to the burial chamber was partially sealed by three stone slabs and mud mortar. A disturbed contracted burial, oriented north-south, was laid on its left side, with the head to the south facing west (Fig. 12). The filling of the shaft consisted of:

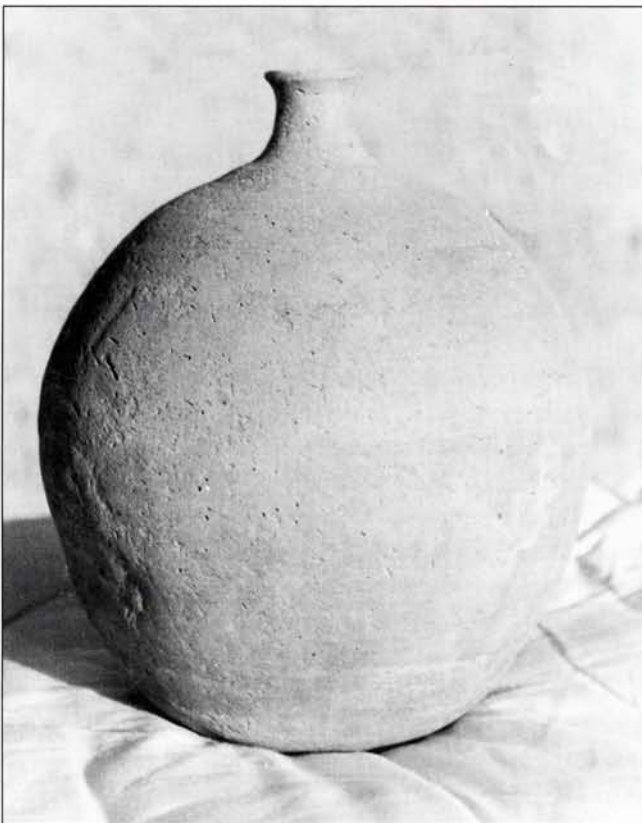


Plate 5. Jar (HAZ.48.98.5).

- pieces of stone slabs
- fragments of ostrich egg-shells
- pieces of gastropod shells
- two sherds of painted wheel-made pottery
- two pieces of red brick.

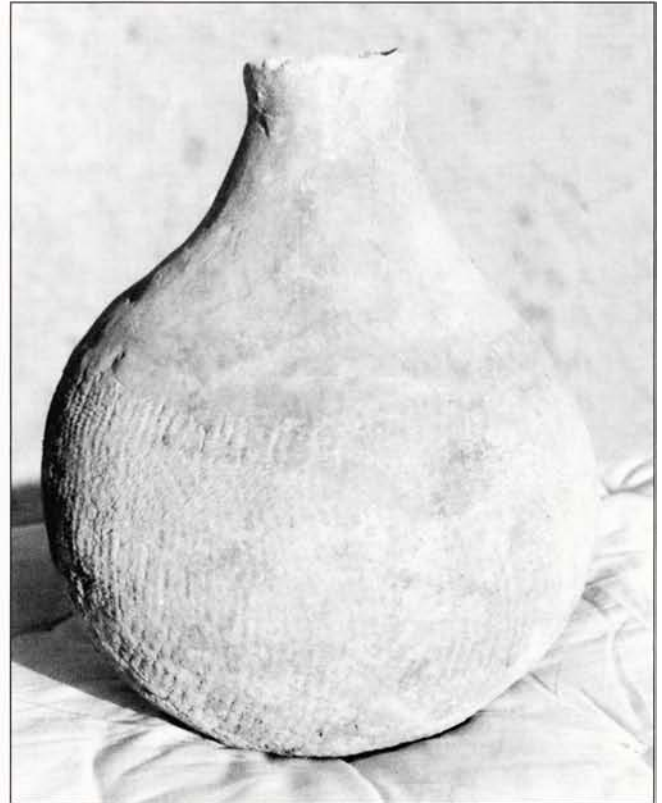


Plate 6. Jar (HAZ.48.98.2).

Sixty centimetres to the south of the shaft was a sub-rounded pit 350mm deep (Colour Plate XXXII). It contained the following pottery vessels:

- a. Cup (HAZ.170.98.1); wheel-made. Neck Dia. 102mm; H. 37mm (Fig. 11.7).
- b. Jar (HAZ.170.98.2); reddish in colour, hand-made, with two small handles. Neck Dia. 55mm; Body Dia. 200mm; H. 267mm (Fig. 11.8).
- c. Cup (HAZ.170.98.3); reddish in colour, wheel-made. Dia. 105mm; H. 75mm (Fig. 11.9).
- d. Jar (HAZ.170.98.4); brownish in colour, hand-made with a rough surface and flat bottom. Neck Dia. 270m; Body

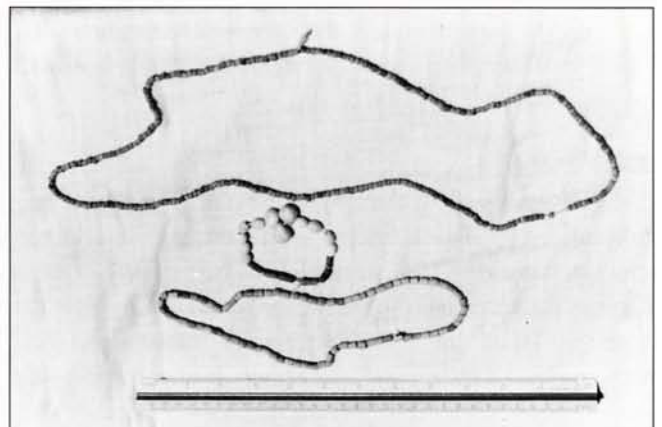


Plate 7. Faience and quartz beads (HAZ.48.98.7).

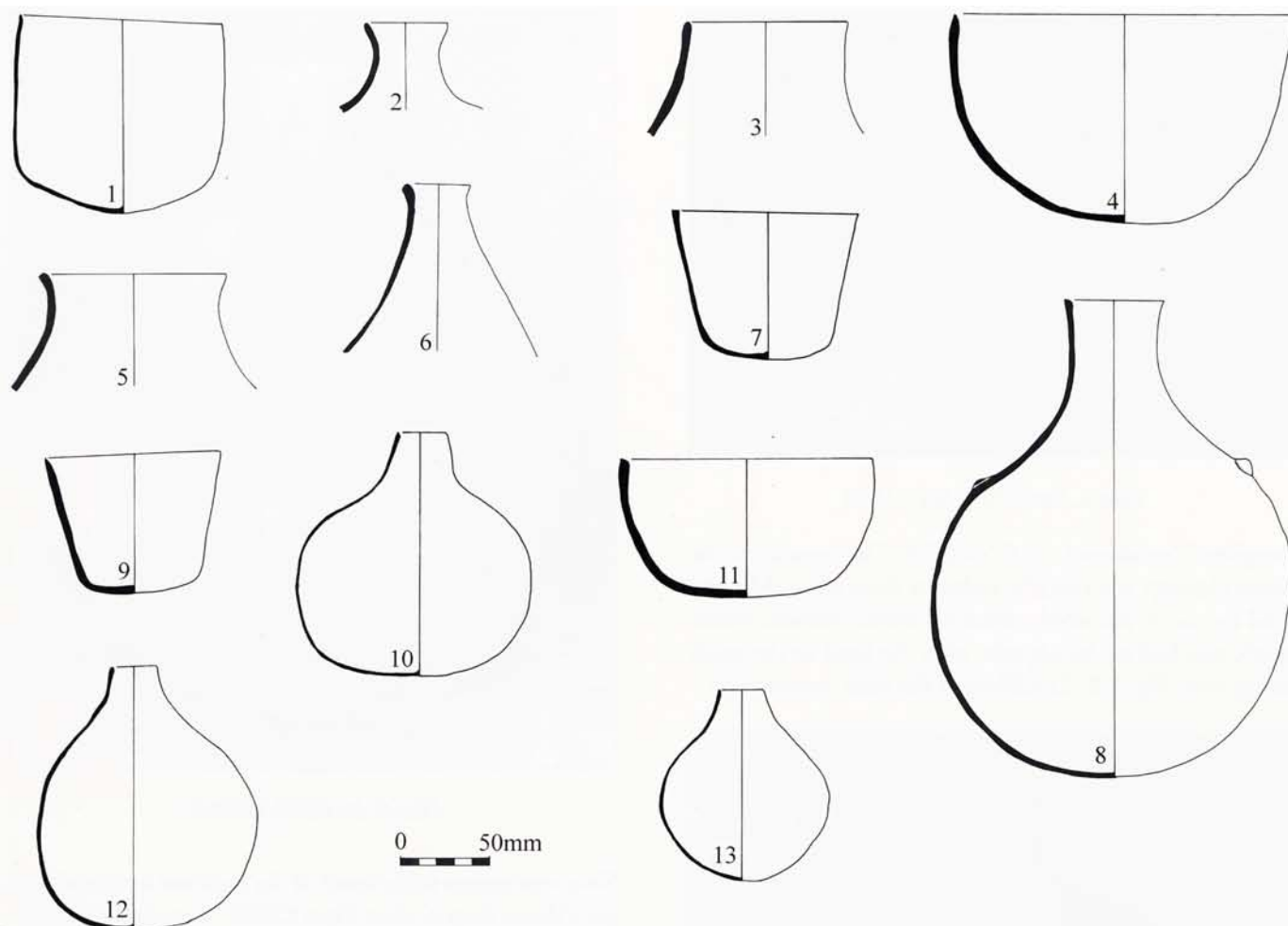


Figure 11. Pottery (scale 1:4).

Dia. 130mm; H.130mm (Fig. 11.10).

e. Bowl (HAZ.170.98.5); reddish in colour, wheel-made. Dia. 140mm; H.750mm (Fig. 11.11).

f. Jar (HAZ.170.98.6); brownish in colour, hand-made. Neck Dia. 250mm; Body Dia. 123mm; H. 145mm (Fig. 11.12).

g. Jar (HAZ.170.98.7); hand-made, rough surface with black spots. Neck Dia. 25mm; Body Dia. 95mm; H. 105mm (Fig. 11.13).

All the pottery vessels were covered with gravel and found to contain 92 pieces of gastropod shells and plant seeds (water melon).

Tumulus HAZ.225.98

Circular tumulus with the lobe to the east. The lobe is partially eroded by Khor el Malaw. It had a semi-circular superstructure bounded with stone slabs. The superstructure is 4.5m in diameter and 0.45m high. The burial chamber is a simple oval shaft dug at the centre of the tumulus and filled with compact sandy gravel. The shaft is aligned east-west and measures 1.5 x 0.8m. An adult contracted female skeleton was recovered at a depth of 6.5m. It is laid on the left side with the skull to the east facing south. The burial is

characterised by poor preservation of bones, and was plundered.

The data collected from the excavation of such tumuli adds more information to the emerging picture of the variability of the burial practices in the Fourth Cataract region in particular and at the periphery of Abu Hamed Reach in general. Tomb structures of the excavated tumuli can be classified into the following categories:-

1. Oval to rectangular shaft acting as a burial chamber.
2. Sub-rectangular to rectangular shaft with the burial chamber cut into the lower section of one wall of the shaft.
3. Sub-rectangular to rectangular shaft with two chambers cut in the lower sections of the walls of the shaft. One chamber acts as a burial chamber and the other as a pottery chamber.

Only in two tumuli were *in situ* pottery vessels recovered within the superstructure at two different levels. At tumulus HAZ.E.95 a beer jar was recovered situated in the north-eastern quarter at a depth of 250mm beside the burial chamber, and at tumulus HAZ.48.98 seven pottery vessels were recovered in a pit 370mm deep to the south of the main shaft.

The deceased were usually aligned east-west. However

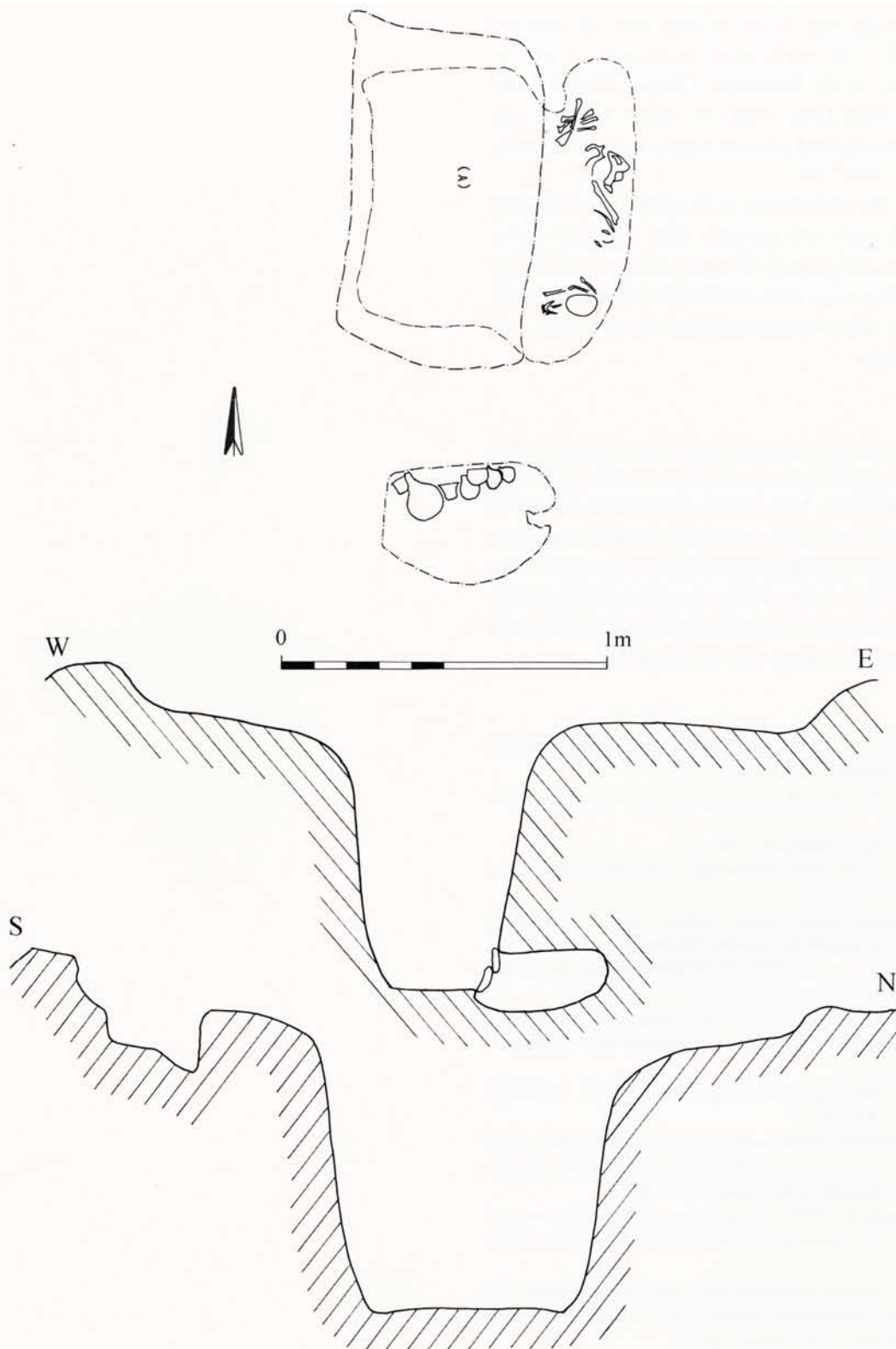


Figure 12. Tumulus HAZ.170.98, plan and sections.

north-south alignment existed in some cases. Burial attitudes range from semi-contracted to contracted and always the deceased was laid on the left side whether it is oriented east-west or north-south. Parallel burial practices had been recorded on the right bank of the Nile at el-Kassenger site

no. 45, tumulus no. 4, in which the two chambers had been cut in the lower section at the southern and eastern walls of the shaft (Paner 1996, pls 88, 89-9). This is similar to HAZ.48.98. On the other hand, at Khor el-Gareyn, the cavity is oriented north-south containing archaeological ma-



terial inside a niche dug at the western side (El Nur and Bandi 1993, 35). The north-south orientation is well recorded elsewhere, at the Khartoum Hospital (Arkell 1949, 4) and el-Gereif East (Geus 1984, 39), and it has been suggested that it was standard practice during the post-Meroitic period (Lenoble 1987, 95).

In spite of the plundering, grave goods were relatively frequent in each grave and generally they consisted of personal ornaments such as beads of quartz, faience, ostrich eggshell, copper-alloy rings and armlets and ceramic vessels. Ceramics consist of jars having variable form and shape, simple bowls and cups.

Conclusion

The co-existence of various burial traditions seems to be clear in the area, with parallel practices displayed on the right bank and the left bank of the Nile within the borders of the Abu Hamed Reach. Almost all the excavated tumuli were plundered and in some cases this may indicate the wealth of the tombs. The superstructures of these tumuli show great similarity to the post-Meroitic tumuli scattered all over the area between the Fourth Cataract and the Bayuda.

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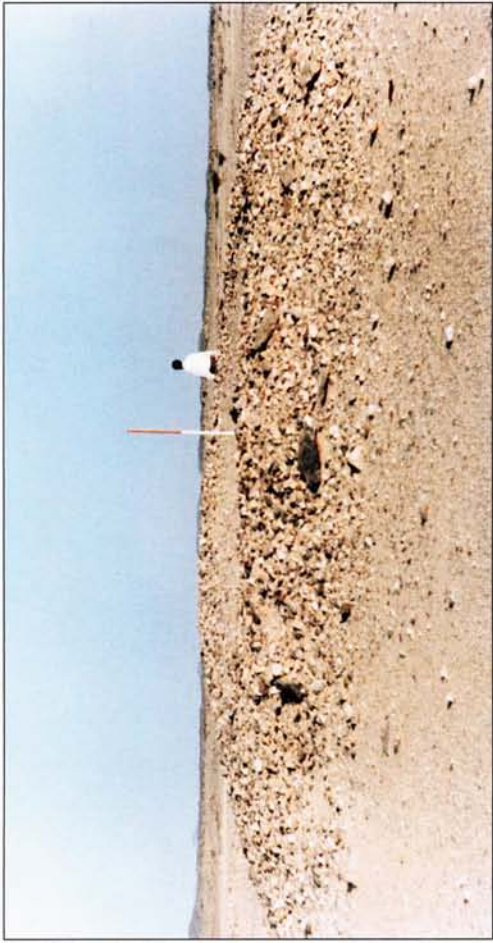


Plate XXIX. El-Haraz. View of tumulus made up of pile of gravel and rocks.



Plate XXX. El-Haraz. Ear lobe tumulus.



Plate XXXI. Jebel Kulgeili. Rectangular rock structures at Site no. 8.



Plate XXXII. El-Haraz. Tumulus (HAZ.170.98.B).