

SUDAN & NUBIA

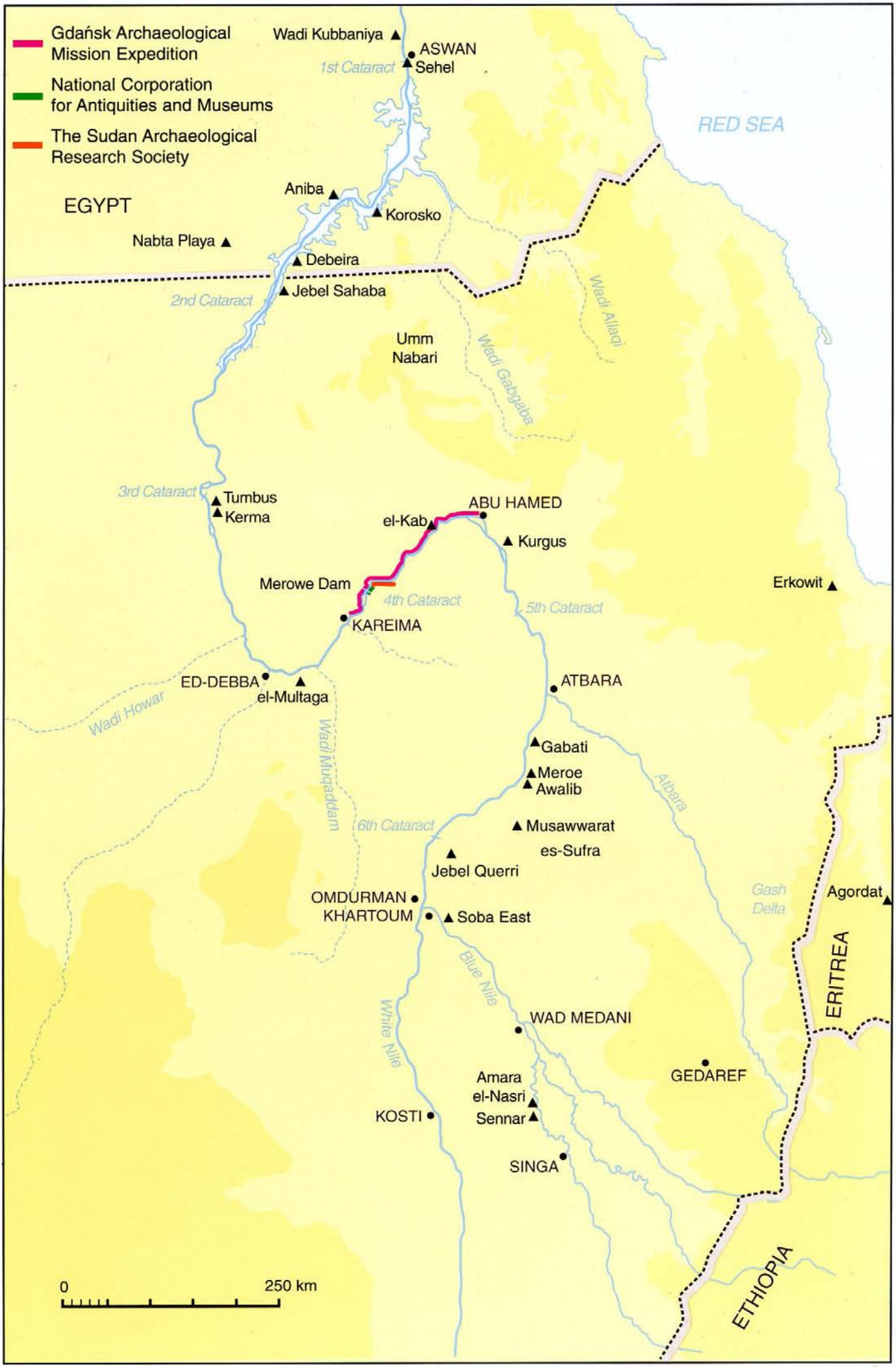
The Sudan Archaeological Research Society



Bulletin No. 7

2003





SUDAN & NUBIA

The Sudan Archaeological Research Society



Bulletin No. 7 2003

Contents

Introduction

Vivian Davies

1

Kirwan Memorial Lecture

Forty Years of Archaeological Research
in Sudanese and Egyptian Nubia

Fred Wendorf

2

The Merowe Dam Archaeological Salvage Project

Merowe Dam Archaeological Salvage Project (MDASP)

Salah Mohamed Ahmed

11

Archaeological Survey on the Right Bank of the Nile
between Karima and Abu Hamed: a brief overview

Henryk Paner

15

Old Kush in the Fourth Cataract Region

Elżbieta Kołosowska, Mahmoud el-Tayeb and Henryk Paner

21

The Amri to Kirbeka Survey: the 2002-2003 Season

Derek A. Welsby

26

Survey and Excavation at el-Multaga, a Resettlement
Area related to the Construction of the Merowe
Dam: preliminary results

Francis Geus and Yves Lecoq

33

Reports

The Egyptian Conquest and Administration of Nubia
during the New Kingdom: the testimony of the
Sehel rock-inscriptions

Annie Gasse and Vincent Rondot

40

Pharaonic Inscriptions along the Eastern Desert
Routes in Sudan

Alfredo and Angelo Castiglioni

47

Kush in Egypt: a new historical inscription

Vivian Davies

52

Kurgus 2002: the inscriptions and rock-drawings

Vivian Davies

55

Kurgus 2002: report on the archaeological work

Isabella Welsby Sjöström

58

Erkowitz, a Neolithic Site in the Red Sea Hills (Sudan):
interim report on the pottery

Ghanim Wabida and Abdelrahim M. Khabir

62

Painted Plaster Murals from Meroe Townsite

Rebecca Bradley

66

New Investigations into the Water Supply at

Musawwarat es-Sufra: results from the 2002 season

Thomas Scheibner

71

The Work of the Gdańsk Archaeological Museum

Expedition in the Sudan

Zbigniew Borowski

81

An Archaeological Exploration of the Blue Nile
in January-February 2000

Victor M. Fernández

85

The Blue Nile Archaeological Salvage Project:

Amara el-Nasri

Abdel Rahman Ali Mohamed

91

Miscellaneous

List of Archaeological Mission Activities in Sudan
between 1934 and 1984

Salah Omer Elsadig

98

Front Cover: Sehel Island: rock-inscriptions of Viceroys of Kush.

Introduction

Vivian Davies

The Society's two major events of the year, the results of which are published here - the Kirwan Memorial Lecture delivered in October, 2002, and the colloquium on recent fieldwork held in May, 2003 - were extremely well attended. The colloquium incorporated a special session, led by Dr. Salah Mohamed Ahmed, NCAM Director of Excavations, on the Merowe Dam salvage project. The response has been encouraging. Since the colloquium, several organisations have applied for concessions, joining the existing four missions of Gdańsk, NCAM, the French Unit and SARS. Many more are still needed. Interested parties should contact Dr Salah at NCAM tel./fax. 249 11 786784 or the International Society for Nubian Studies c/o dwelsby@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk.



Erkowit, a Neolithic Site in the Red Sea Hills (Sudan): interim report on the pottery

Ghanim Wahida and Abdelrahim M. Khabir

The Red Sea Hills archeological survey of 1978 was carried out jointly by Ghanim Wahida and Paul Callow, while the two were lecturers at Khartoum University. In February 1980 G. Wahida (by then based in Riyadh) paid a short visit to Erkowit (Eastern Sudan) in order to undertake further excavations financed jointly by G. Wahida and the Research Center, College of Arts, King Saud University, Saudi Arabia. For the preparation of the final report on the site, an additional grant was kindly provided by the Research Center, Kuwait University (Wahida and Callow, in preparation).

The Site

Two valleys, Khor Harasab and Khor Baraka, meet at Erkowit by a modern dam before entering a steep-sided ravine. To the north of the confluence of the two *khors*, lies a government plantation. The archaeological site of Erkowit (Figures 1 and 2), measuring about 80 x 30m, lies north of the reservoir and immediately adjacent to the southern bank of Khor Harasab (Callow and Wahida 1980). The site has suffered greatly from erosion over the millennia, by run-off from the granite hill just behind and by seasonal flooding of the *khors*.

A trial sounding, measuring 2 x 0.9 x 0.6m, was dug to virgin soil by arbitrary horizontal levels of 50, 100 and 150mm. Human evidence stopped at a depth of 600mm below the datum point at the surface of the archaeological deposits. Although the excavated area was small, the deposits proved rich in archaeological material (over 500 items of stone were recovered).

Pottery

In this paper the writers present an interim report on the

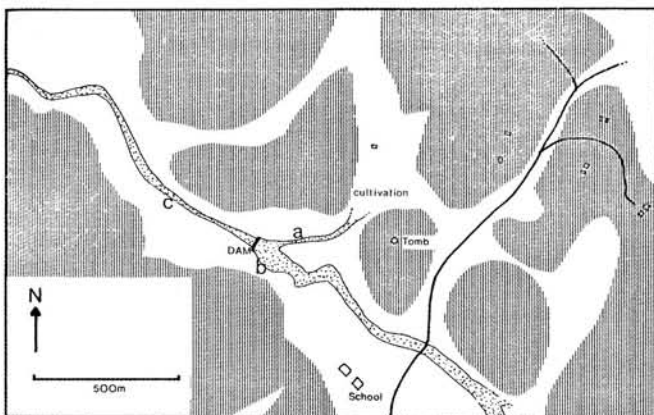


Figure 1. Location of the site.

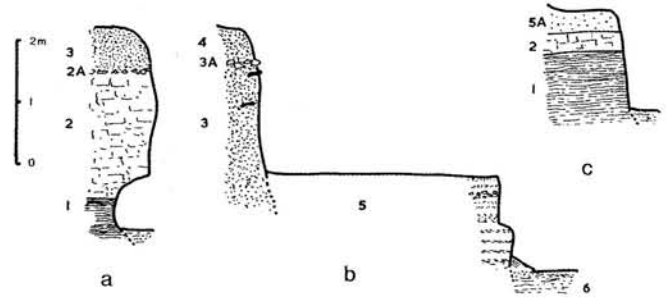


Figure 2. The site stratigraphy.

pottery from Erkowit, and compare it to pottery from adjacent areas, i.e., Agordad in the Baraka Valley, the Gash Delta (Kassala Province) and other sites in Sudan.

In the course of excavation at Erkowit 384 potsherds were recovered (no whole pots were found). A piece of a figurine, the upper body of a woman wearing a necklace, was found on the surface of the site (Figure 3, D and Plate 1, m). The bulk of the pottery was undercoated; decorated sherds account for 33% of the total collection (Table 1). Decorative techniques used on the vessel body included simple impressions, incision, combing, cord impression, rocker and

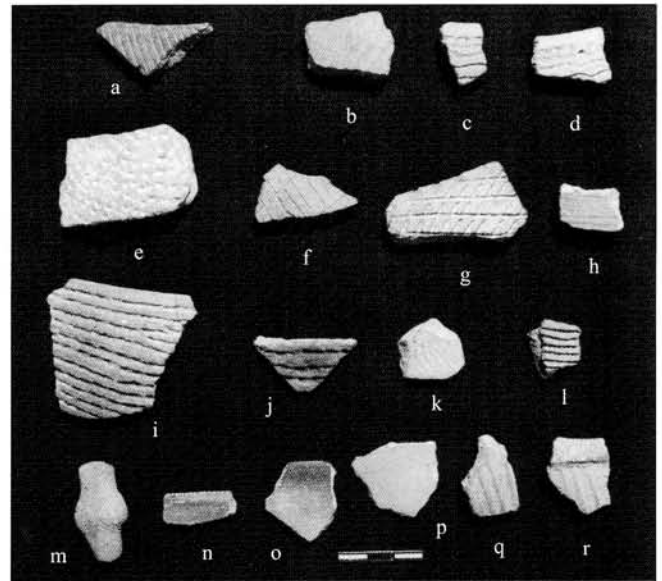


Plate 1. Pottery sherds - a zigzag; b,c,d dotted wavy line; e semi-circular panels of dots; f-g criss-cross combing; h impressed straight; i-j cord impressed; k fishnet; l catfish impression; n-o plain(B.T.R.W); p,q,r parallel grooving - and figurine (m).

single stamping techniques. The pottery was mostly burnished (85%). Of the total assemblage 15% had red-slipped surfaces (a pigment of ochre applied to both sides of the vessel). Potsherds decorated with criss-cross combing, parallel grooving motifs (Figure 4 and 5), brush striations and impressed straight lines (Figure 5, F and I) are the most popular among the inventory (Table 2). Motifs present in low frequency include dotted wavy lines (Figure 4, B), zigzag (Figure 4, E, Figure 5, L) and incised lines (Figure 5, M). On the other hand, semicircular panels of dots, catfish spine

Table 1. Distribution of decorated and undecorated sherds by stratigraphic unit.

| | Excavation units and depths (mm) | | | | | | | Total |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------|
| | E/O surface | E/1 50-100 | E/2 100-200 | E/3 200-300 | E/4 390-500 | E/6 200-500 | E/5 500-600 | |
| Decorated | 9 | 38 | 78 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 127 |
| Undecorated and/or Obliterated | 45 | 60 | 125 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 12 | 257 |

Table 2. Distribution of decorative motifs by stratigraphic unit.

| Motifs | Excavation units and depths (mm) | | | | Total |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------|
| | E/0 Surface | E/1 50-100 | E/2 100-200 | E/5 200-500 | |
| Dotted wavy line | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 4 |
| Zigzag | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Impressed straight lines | 0 | 8 | 20 | 0 | 28 |
| Incised straight lines | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| Brushed | 0 | 15 | 30 | 0 | 45 |
| Parallel | 0 | 6 | 12 | 0 | 18 |
| Criss-cross | 0 | 3 | 8 | 0 | 11 |
| Semi-circular panels of dots | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 5 |
| Catfish spine impression | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Fishnet | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Cord impressed | 0 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| Black-topped brown ware | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 8 | 39 | 78 | 2 | 127 |

impressions, fishnet motifs and black-topped brown ware, though present, are exceptionally rare (Table 2, Figure 5, G, J and K; Plate 1).

It can be seen from Table 2 that the potsherds are almost exclusively concentrated in the upper layers. Only two deco-

rated specimens were found at a depth below 20cm; in view of their small size they had perhaps percolated down from the upper layers.

The predominant surface colour of the potsherds was dark grey (7.5 YR 5/2) to reddish brown (5 YR 5/3) on the Munsell Soil Colour system. The colour of the fracture of the wares was mostly dark grey, often black or dark brown (7.5 YR 6/6 was common). Differences in colour of the same vessel, due to uneven firing, were observed. The pottery, tempered with sand, was well-fired.

Forty-nine rim sherds were excavated, accounting for 13% of the total assemblage. The rims were simple in shape

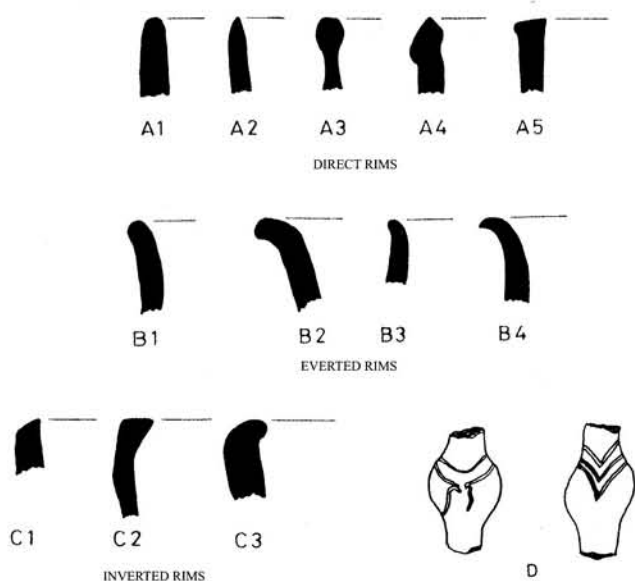


Figure 3. Rim types (A) - (C) and figurine (D) (scale 1:2).

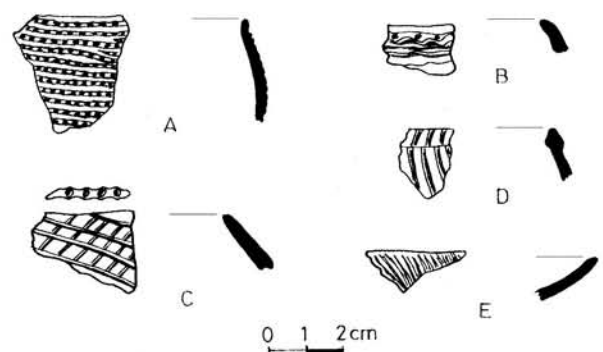


Figure 4. Decorated sherds, A-E (scale 1:2).

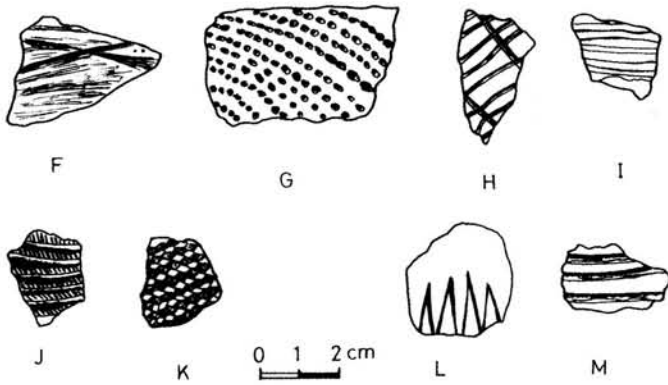


Figure 5. Decorated sherds, F-M (scale 1:2).

(Figure 3). Most examples were a direct continuation of the vessel walls (80%), and usually had a rounded or pointed top (Figure 3, A). Everted rims were infrequent (14%) and were curved outward to a varying degree. A few of them were distinctly curved outward (flaring) (Figure 3, B1-4). Inverted rims were rare and account for only 6% of the total rim collection (Figure 3, C1-3). Rims with flat tops, though present, were markedly few.

Most of the rim tops were devoid of decoration. Decorated rims represented 40% of the total specimens recovered; the motifs present were mostly impressed (Figure 6). The following types of decorative motifs were observed on rim tops:

- Oblique parallel impressions (A, C and D)
- Zigzag impressed straight lines (B)
- Vertical dotted impressions (E)
- Finger tip impressions (F)
- Short parallel impressions (G)
- Oblique parallel grooves (H)

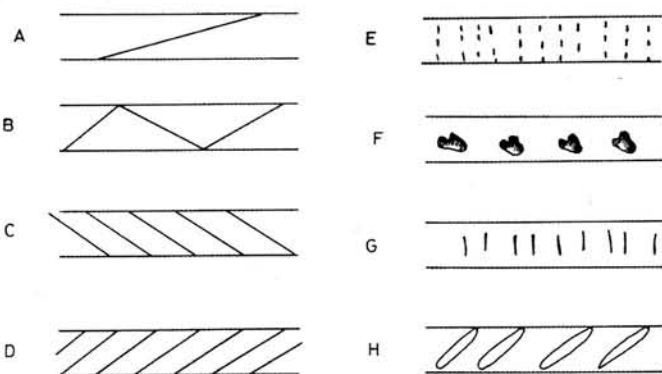


Figure 6. Rim top decoration.

About 20% of the rim sherds had bands of decoration with motifs including (Figure 7):

- Pairs of dotted impressions (A)
- Pairs of oblique lines with dots (B)
- A series of oval dots arranged in a triangular pattern (C)
- A band of oval dots (D)
- A band of lunates (E)

- Zigzag straight lines with vertical impressions (F)
- A row of oblique impressions, alternately made from opposite directions and producing wavy lines (G)
- Oblique parallel lines (H)
- A shallow groove (I)
- A combination of oblique impressed lines and vertical dotted lines ending with tiny circles (J)

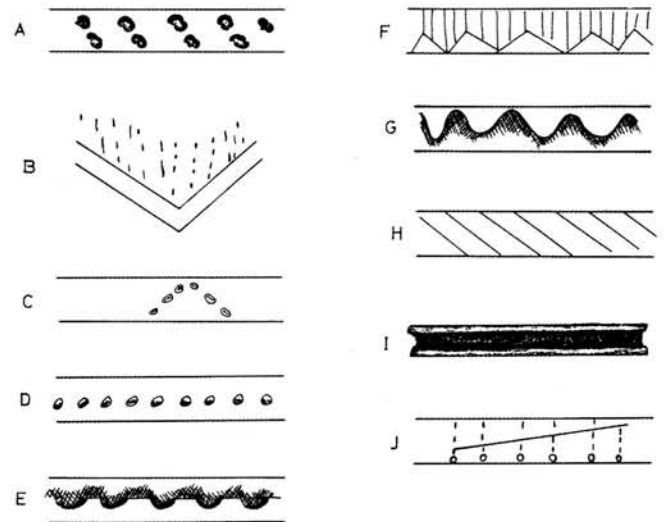


Figure 7. Types of rim bands.

The ceramic material discussed here represents a limited number of vessel forms. Those with rim diameters between 210 to 250mm were probably from large bowls. The inverted rims had diameters of 80 to 160mm and possibly were parts of hemispherical bowls. A few rims, exclusively of fine red ware, measuring *c.* 70mm in diameter and 2-5mm in thickness, were probably from cups. Wall thickness ranged from 5-16mm, but the majority were 5-6mm thick.

Of particular note was the absence of bases despite the considerable number of potsherds found. It could be inferred from this that the pottery mainly consisted of bowls in which the rounded base had nearly the same thickness as the rest of the pot.

The horizontal breakage and uneven thickness of walls raise the probability that the Erkowit pottery was made by the coil technique. Holes for repairing pots were observed on two specimens; the hole in each case was pierced through the pot with a pointed object from both sides.

The study of the Erkowit pottery has been problematic as a result of the absence of previous archeological work in the area: comparative material is lacking. Nevertheless, a few archeological excavations have been conducted in the region of Erkowit, although the test-pits excavated at Agordad in the Baraka Valley (Arkell 1954) were undated. Even the archeological research in the Gash Delta in eastern Sudan has not provided adequate well-dated material. The excavation of the major site of Mahal Teglinos at the north-eastern end of Jebel Taka near the Gash Delta provided four radiocarbon dates of the late 3rd-early 2nd millennium BC for the

late Neolithic and post-Neolithic occupations in Kassala Province (Fattovich and Vitagliano 1989, 39-40; Fattovich 1990, 16-20). Absolute dating of the bones from the Erkowit site by the conventional method of carbon-14 was not possible due to the low amount of collagen preserved. Hence, it has been difficult to establish a sequence for the cultural history of the Erkowit region. However, it seems plausible, on the basis of the pottery typology (see *infra.*) and cross-dating with two radiocarbon dates yielded from the earliest occupational phase at Mahal Teglinos (trench KBSKP), that a date in the range 3000-2500 BC can be postulated for the Erkowit pottery.

The present study shows that the pottery from Erkowit represents two distinct groups. One is represented by pottery embellished with dotted-wavy lines, typical of pottery known from Middle Nile Valley. Decoration with fishnet and zigzag patterns, all of which were burnished, have also been reported. The high degree of burnishing, coupled with the rarity of sherds sharing parallels with Shaheinab pottery (Arkell 1953), seems to suggest a post-Shaheinab date for the Erkowit site. The pottery of the second group is more related to the region around Erkowit in eastern Sudan. The presence of pottery ornamented with parallel grooving, criss-cross combing and brush striations links Erkowit with sites further to the south in the Gash Delta (Fattovich *et al.*, 1984, Fig. 6, 1-6:180). It also resembles pottery from Shaqadud cave dated to the 3rd millennium BC (Mohammed Ali and Marks 1984, 57, Fig. 4, top row: 56; Marks *et al.*, 1985, Fig. 13 f-h: 273; Fig. 14, g-h; Robertson 1991, Fig. 7-5, h, i; Fig. 7-8, i; Fig. 7-13, e, i). These types of pottery appear to share similarities with pottery from the Butana (3rd millennium BC) and Jebel Mokram (2nd millennium BC) groups of the Atabi ceramic tradition (Fattovich *et al.*, 1984, Fig. 4.5:180, Fig. 6, 3, 6:184).

Bibliography

- Arkell, A. J. 1953. *Shaheinab*. Oxford.
- Arkell, A. J. 1954. 'Four Occupation Sites At Agordad', *Kush* 11, 33-62.
- Callow, P. and G. Wahida 1980. 'Field work in Northern and Eastern Sudan 1977-1980', *Nyame Akuma* No. 18, 34-36.
- Fattovich, R., A. E. Marks and A. Mohammed Ali 1984. 'The Archaeology of the Eastern Sahel, Sudan: Preliminary Results', *The African Archaeological Review* 2, 173-88.
- Fattovich, R. and S. Vitagliano 1989. 'Radiocarbon Dates from Mahal Teglinos, Kassala', *Nyame Akuma* No. 31, 39-40.
- Fattovich, R. 1990. 'Gash Delta Project: 1988-1989 Field Seasons', *Nyame Akuma* No. 33, 16-20.
- Marks, A. E., A. Mohamed Ali, J. Peters and R. Robertson 1985. 'The Prehistory of the Central Nile Valley as seen from its Eastern Hinterlands: Excavations at Shaqadud, Sudan', *Journal Of Field Archaeology* 12, 261-78.
- Mohammed Ali, A. and A. E. Marks 1984. 'The Prehistory of Shaqadud in the Western Butana, Central Sudan: A preliminary Report', *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 17.1, 1-69.
- Robertson, R. 1991. 'The Late Neolithic Ceramics from Shaqadud Cave', in A. E. Marks and A. Mohammed Ali (eds), *The Late Prehistory of the Eastern Sabel*. Dallas, 123-172.