

SUDAN & NUBIA

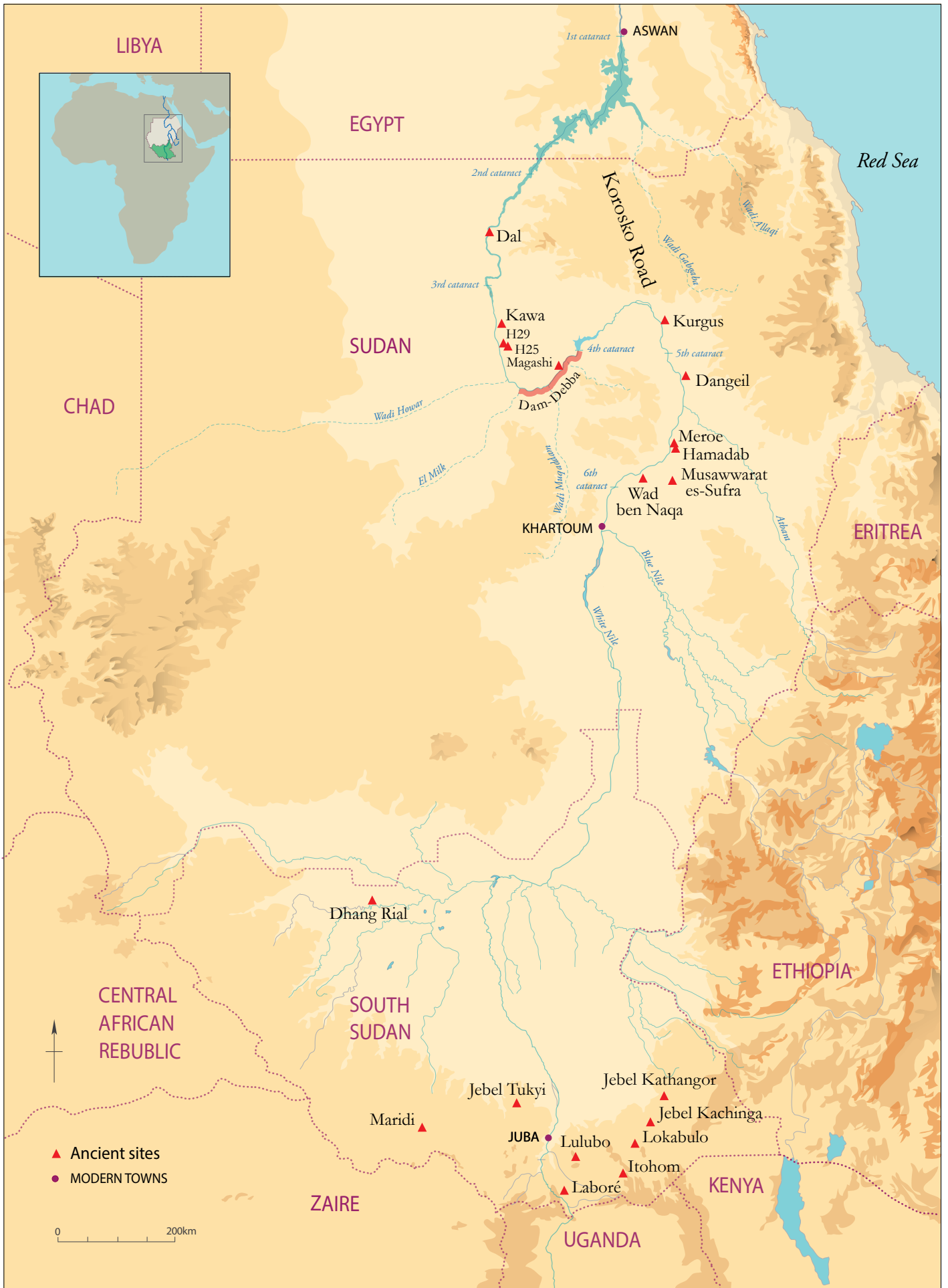
The Sudan Archaeological Research Society



Bulletin No. 18

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SUDAN & NUBIA

The Sudan Archaeological Research Society



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- Front cover:* Examining the pharaonic inscriptions at Khashm el-Bab on the Korosko Road, November 2013 (photo: D. A. Welsby).
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QSAP Dam-Debba Archaeological Survey Project (DDASP). Preliminary report on the NCAM mission's first season, 2013-2014

Mahmoud Suliman Bashir

Introduction

The Dam-Debba Archaeological Survey Project (DDASP) is conducted by the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM) and sponsored by the Qatar-Sudan Archaeological Project (QSAP). The Dam-Debba archaeological survey area covers about 195km on the left bank of the Nile between the Merowe Dam at the Fourth Cataract, downstream to the town of ed-Debba (Figure 1). The main activity of the project focuses on surveying the whole of the left bank in this region and the reconnaissance extends about 4km inland from the river.

Historically this area was very important. It includes the Napatan region which contains many important monumental sites from the Kushite kingdom (9th century BC-4th century AD), among which are Nuri, Sanam abu Dom, Jebel Barkal and el-Kurru. However, it is hoped that a systematic survey of the left bank will lead to the discovery of more sites dating from this important chapter of Sudan's history.

The region is also known to be rich in prehistoric, Christian and Islamic antiquities. In comparison with the right bank, this side of the Nile has received less archaeological attention.

A limited survey and excavation of prehistoric sites between ed-Debba and Korti was conducted in 1966-1967 by the Combined Prehistoric Expedition, directed by Joel L. Shiner (Żurawski 2003, 79). Survey and excavations were conducted by NCAM and the French Unit (SFDAS) between 2001 and 2008 in the resettlement areas related to the construction of the Merowe Dam (at New Hamdab and New Amri), under the framework of the Merowe Dam Archaeological Salvage Project (MDASP).

Short visits to the region by NCAM inspectors to investigate reports by local people about sites and objects discovered during their daily activities have also brought to light a large number of previously unknown sites.

Currently, the survey area is endangered by extensive irrigation schemes and one of the main canals coming from the Merowe Dam will cut through this region. It is of utmost urgency to begin rescuing and recording the region's antiqui-

ties before the execution of these agricultural projects and the construction of houses.

Survey

In this season the survey team¹ covered a distance of 45km starting from the town of ed-Debba up to the village of Mansourkuti. It is an open flat area covered with sand and gravel. Survey is mostly being conducted on foot and all features of the past are recorded.

An ethnographical survey was conducted alongside the archaeological activities by Abdel Nasir Sir Al-Khatim² and Mohammed Mustafa Al-Nour.³ The focus of this work is on studying the current population and the oral history, place names, popular beliefs and customs in the survey area. The ethnographical survey also recorded the current stories about the archaeological sites. Some of the oral testimonies that were collected during the interviews affirm the existence of archaeological sites, and revealed some discoveries by local residents amongst which were pottery and red bricks dated to the Christian period.

The survey recorded 53 sites dating from the prehistoric period to the 19th century (Figure 2). Prehistoric period sites were commonly identified by a scatter of potsherds and



Figure 1. The survey area.

lithic material on the surface; however, in the majority of sites sand dunes covered most of the features. Sites dating

¹ The members of the NCAM survey team are: Yassin Mohammed Saeed (surveyor), Hytham Mohammed, Magdi Awad (photographer), Al-Tayeb Hassan, Fakhri Hassan, Bedreldin Hammad (driver), Galal Al-Amin (driver), Sidieq Hamed (cook), Atif Mohammed (cook).

² Curator of the Republican Palace Museum in Khartoum.

³ Lecturer at the Red Sea University, Port Sudan.

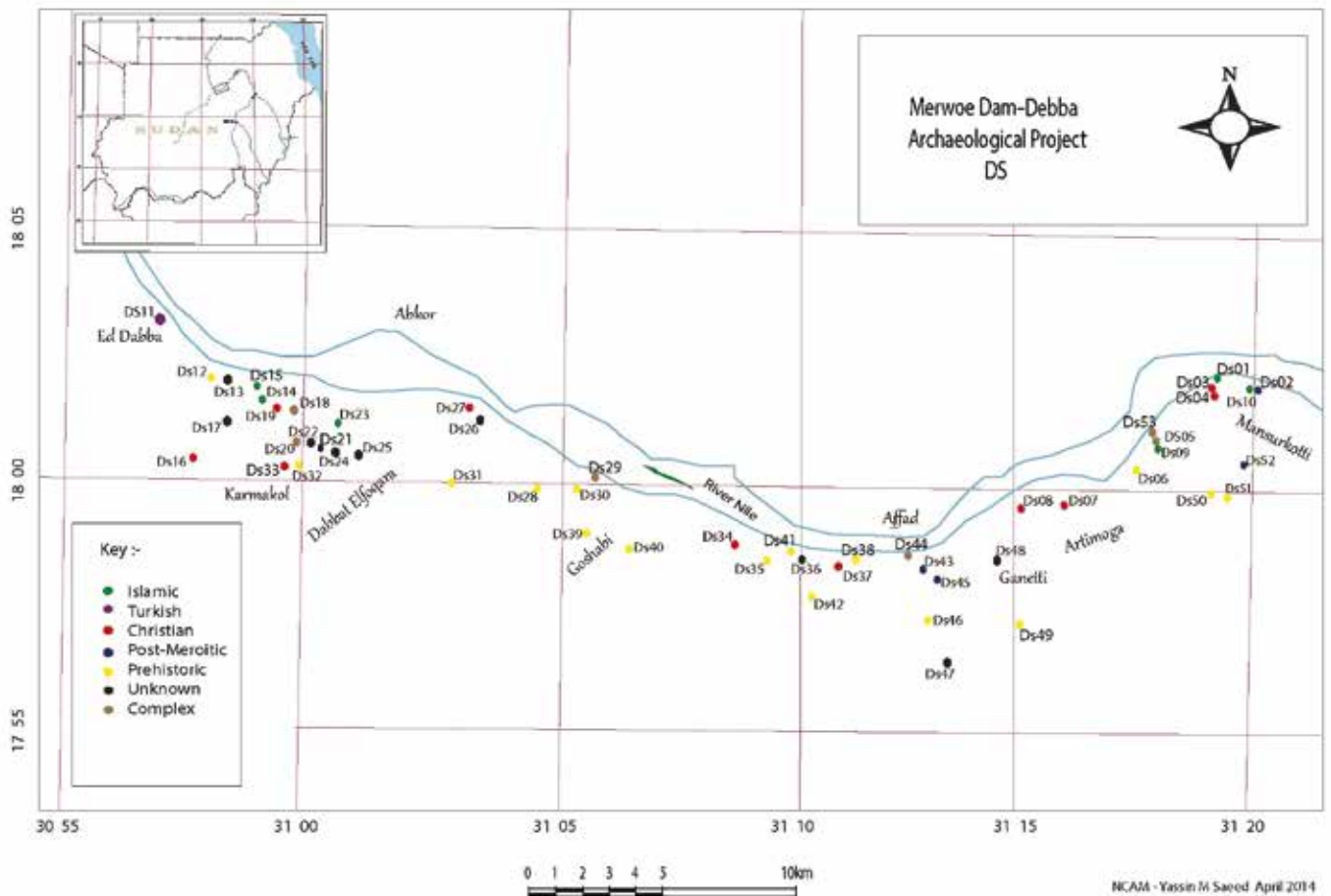


Figure 2. The sites discovered during this season.

to the Christian period are the most common. Churches and traces of Christian settlement were clear features in the area.

The discovered sites (see Appendix) represent different types and include burial sites, which comprise the majority and varied from an isolated mound to a field of tumuli. Tombs were the main monument surviving from the Kushite period. Tumuli of the late Kushite and Post-Meroitic periods were recorded. Settlement sites were also found and some examples preserve remains of buildings with a scattering of archaeological material on the surface.

Excavations

Site DS 2 – Mansourkuti

The NCAM team⁴ conducted an archaeological excavation within the cemetery at site DS2. Eighty one circular gravel mounds were plotted over an area of 460 x 200m (Figure 3). It is located north of Mansourkuti village, about 250m south of the left bank of the Nile. The mounds are distributed possibly along an old Nile terrace, running east-west. The site was discovered by the Sudanese Antiquities Service in

the early 1960s. These mounds have long been endangered and many have had their heights reduced by both natural and human factors. The gradual expansion of the Islamic cemetery immediately to the north and urban expansion to the south, in addition to the many vehicle tracks crossing the site and the use of the site as a gravel quarry by the villagers, are all contributing to its destruction. Archaeologically the site is of interest and should be excavated to obtain more information about the burial traditions of this period, as no other contemporary large cemeteries (late Meroitic – Post-Meroitic) exist in this area.

A total of 20 graves have been excavated. The strategy employed was to concentrate on the most threatened mounds in the cemetery, those bordering the Islamic cemetery and ones endangered by tracks. Only three out of those excavated were found intact, three were partially plundered, and the rest were totally plundered.

Different types of tomb structure were encountered in the excavated tombs at Mansourkuti cemetery.

1. The most common type is a vertical shaft with an oval-shaped, burial pit with a small niche, mostly to the south or west with burials aligned north-south.
2. A vertical circular shaft with cave opening on the south side.
3. A vertical circular shaft, narrowing with depth, with a

⁴ The members of the NCAM team at Mansourkuti are: Abdel Hai Abdel Sawi (field director), Hytham Mohammed, Magdi Awad (photographer), Ahmed Al-Amin Ahmed, Shawgi Daw Al-Beat, Bedreldin Hammad (driver), Galal Al-Amin (driver), Sidieq Hamed (cook), Atif Mohammed (cook).

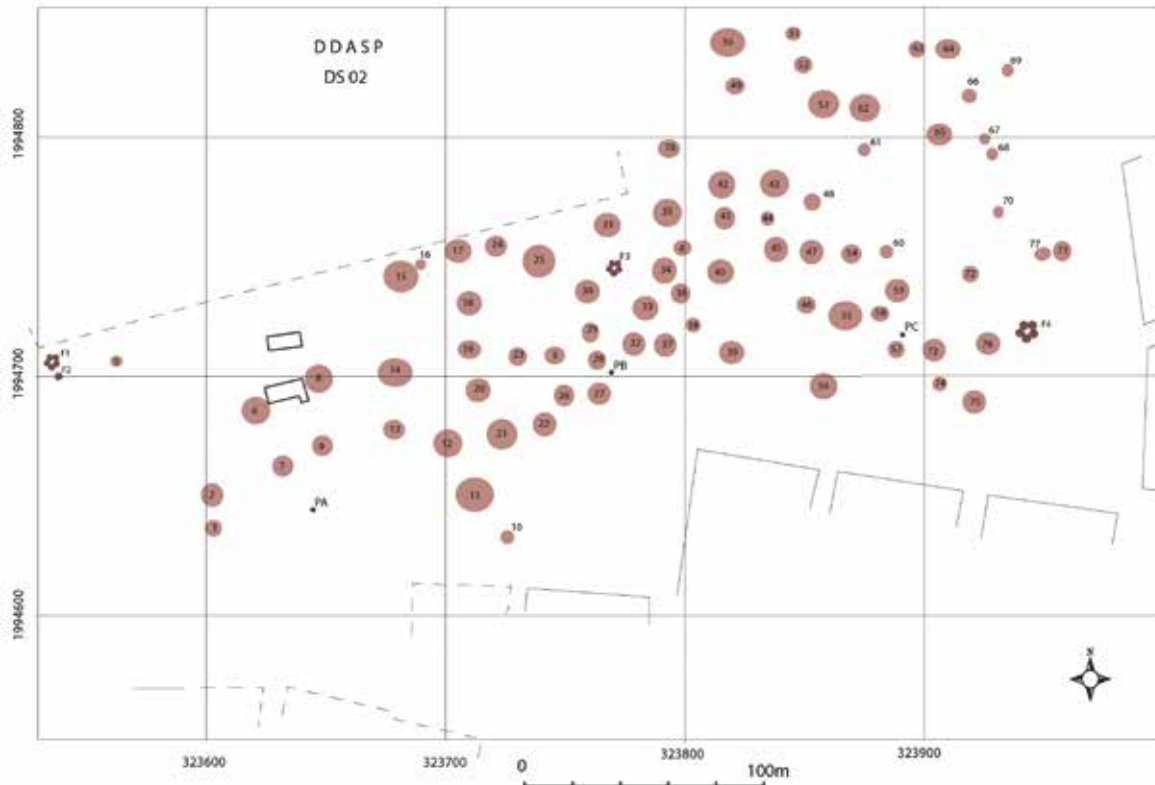


Figure 3. Distribution of tombs at Mansourkuti cemetery DS 2.

small niche to the south, and usually deeper, reaching more than 2m.

Concerning the burial tradition practiced in this cemetery information obtained from the preserved graves showed that, in general, the deceased were laid in a contracted position in an oval-shaped pit, orientated north-south, head to the north, facing west, with the hands in front of the face (Plate 1). Grave goods included ceramic jars and bowls usually not exceeding three vessels in any one grave. The most common are handmade bowls (Plate 2), in addition to the beer jars with mat impressions on their surface (Plate 3).

Personal ornamentation existed in almost all excavated graves, even in the fill of the completely plundered ones,

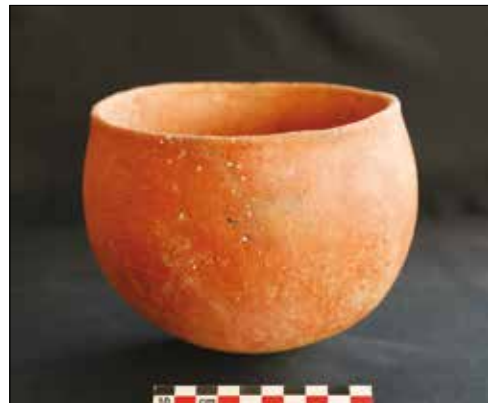


Plate 2. Pottery bowl from Mansourkuti cemetery DS 2.



Plate 1. A crouched inhumation with associated ceramics in Mansourkuti cemetery DS 2.

particularly beads of faience, ostrich eggshell and stone (Plates 4-6). Other objects include iron arrowheads, iron finger rings and stone archer's looses (Plate 7). In some tombs the deceased was wrapped with animal skin, mainly of sheep or goat of a brown colour and fabric of unknown material.

Site DS 7 – Ganatti

The church at Ganatti has seven complete, well preserved, granite columns lying on the ground surface, together with a dense scatter of red-brick fragments and plaster along with Christian potsherds. The site is considered as one of the most important recorded during the first stage of this survey; however, it is presenting a clear challenge for the NCAM team.⁵

⁵ The members of the NCAM team at Ganatti are: Dr Elgazafi Yousif (field director), Abdel Hai Abdel Sawi, Rihab Khidir, Inaam



Plate 3. Pottery beer jar from Mansourkuti cemetery DS 2.

The church is located in the middle of Ganatti Gubli village, surrounded by houses built along the northern and eastern sides, the Muslim cemetery on the western side, while on the southern side is the main road, with two electricity



Plate 4. Beads of faience from Mansourkuti cemetery DS 2.

Plate 5. Beads of stone from Mansourkuti cemetery DS 2.



Abdelrahman, Al-Tahir Adam Al-Nour, Magdi Awad (photographer), Bedreldin Hammad (driver), Galal Al-Amin (driver), Sidieq Hamed (cook), Atif Mohammed (cook).



Plate 6. Beads of ostrich eggshell from Mansourkuti cemetery DS 2.

Plate 7. Stone archer's loose from Mansourkuti cemetery DS 2.



poles. The site extends in an east-west direction covering an area of about 23 x 17m (Plate 8).

In light of this we considered that site protection and the extension of its boundaries were priorities. After negotiations and meetings with the local authorities, the Muslim cemetery committee, the electricity office at ed-Debba and the owners of the houses, we succeeded in the following:

The local Government at ed-Debba will compensate own-



Plate 8. Remains of the church at Ganatti DS 7.



ers of the houses by providing other residential lands within the village. Therefore, the houses have been dismantled.

The Muslim cemetery committee agreed to the extension of the western boundaries of the archaeological site. As a result the cemetery fence was moved back 17m to the west into the Muslim cemetery.

The electricity company dismantled the poles and re-erected them 15m further west.

A barbed wire fence was built for 35m on the southern side to delimit the site from the main road.

Excavation in DS 7

The site was divided into 5 x 5m grid squares and excavations started with surface clearance because the area around the columns had been used as a rubbish dump. However, only four squares around the columns' area were excavated to a depth of 300mm (Plate 9). These trenches revealed



Plate 11. A decorated column capital at Ganatti DS 7.



Plate 9. Excavations in the area of the columns at Ganatti DS 7.



Plate 10. Revealing a column base at Ganatti DS 7.

large quantities of diagnostic Christian painted potsherds, red-brick fragments and pieces of white plaster. The bases of seven columns (600mm diameter) were found *in situ* (Plate 10). In addition, four column capitals decorated with a cross on each of their four sides were revealed, some moved from their original location (Plate 11).

The small-scale excavation in the church at Ganatti shows

the importance and the richness of this site and revealed its great archaeological potential that could be realised through digging on this promising site (Plate 12).

Site DS 100 – Et-Tameer

Et-Tameer cemetery is located on the left bank of the Nile north of the ancient town of Sanam Abu Dom. It is a residential governmental area located at the northern edge of the recently extended town of Merowe. The cemetery was discovered by chance during a development project associated with the construction of the Merowe Dam.

A unique, possibly royal, tomb (DS100. tomb type TR1) was discovered by chance and previously published by Mur-tada Bushara, the NCAM resident manager of antiquities in the Northern State (Bushara 2014, 635-639). It shares some



Plate 12. The church after surface clearance Ganatti DS 7.

features with Kashta's tomb Ku.8 and Piye's tomb Ku.17 at el-Kurru, amongst which are a burial chamber roofed with a corbelled vault built of sandstone and the use of dressed masonry in the upper tomb walls (Bushara 2014, 638) (Plate



Plate 13. Tomb T1 built of well-dressed stone at et-Tameer cemetery DS 100 (photo D. A. Welsby).

13). The work on this cemetery has been incorporated into the present project, since it is located within the project area and the site has been recorded as DS 100 et-Tameer. The NCAM team⁶ continues excavations in the site and is focused on rescuing three endangered tombs.

DS 100/T 2

This tomb is located at the northern part of the cemetery, its main axis oriented east-west and consists of at least five chambers, three of them oriented east-west, one after the other, and the other four chambers, two to the north and two to the south, entered from the central chamber on the long axis. The excavation of this tomb is not yet complete.

DS 100/T 3

This tomb, located at the centre of the cemetery, is oriented east-west (Plate 14) and consists of a rectangular descenderly 2.9 x 0.95m with eight steps each 900 x 300 x 200mm in size; step no. 7 is linked with the door jamb leading into two vaulted chambers oriented east-west (Plate 15). An incomplete and disturbed skeleton was recovered in the eastern chamber



Plate 14. Tomb T3 at et-Tameer cemetery DS 100.



Plate 15. Tomb T3 descenderly at et-Tameer cemetery DS 100.

placed in a painted coffin oriented east-west. The western chamber was smaller than the the eastern one.

DS 100/T 4

This tomb, oriented east-west, consisted of a rectangular descenderly 1.39 x 0.88m in size with six steps 830 x 220 x

⁶ The excavation team members at et-Tameer are; Murtada Bushara (field director), Gasim Hassan (photographer), Mohammed Ahmed Abass (NCAM), Ahmed Mustafa (NCAM), Wafaa Zaki (student, Dongola University), Shazalia Hassan (student, el-Neelain University), Hozaifa Abdelmajed (student, Shendi University).



200mm in size leading into three chambers, two oriented east-west and the third oriented north-south located on the north side. An articulated skeleton lay on its back within a painted coffin in an extended position in the western chamber and a disarticulated one was recovered on the eastern side. Some bones and a ceramic beaker were found in the northern chamber (Plate 16). The beaker can be readily paralleled by many identical vessels from the early Kushite deposits at Kawa (pers. comm. Isabella Welsby Sjöström).



Plate 16. Pottery beaker from Tomb T4 in the et-Tameer cemetery DS 100.

The cemetery of et-Tameer resembles those at Hillat el-Arab and Sanam abu Dom. As they all contain similar tombs, the cemetery could be dated to the late New Kingdom period but, if this is the case, the beaker noted above indicates continued use into the early Kushite period.

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- Żurawski, B. 2003. *Survey and Excavations between Old Dongola and Ez-Zuma*. Warsaw.

Appendix. List of Recorded Sites.

Site	Location	Coordinates	Period	Description
DS1	Fageerinkuti	N 18° 02.204' E 31° 19.283'	Islamic	About 3 mound graves and foundations of mud-brick buildings together with scattered potsherds on the surface
DS2	Mansourkuti	N 18° 02.014' E 31° 20.098'	Post-Meroitic	Cemetery containing about 78 tumuli 8-12m in diameter, some are about 1m high
DS3	Fageerinkuti	N 18° 02.035' E 31° 19.168'	Christian	High mound covered by red-brick fragments. Human bones were observed on the surface
DS4	Fageerinkuti	N 18° 01.897' E 31° 19.259'	Christian	Large mound of earth with human bones on different parts of the mound
DS5	Artimoga	N 18° 01.002' E 31° 18.058'	Islamic	Mud-brick building foundation with scattered potsherds on the surface
DS6	Artimoga	N 18° 00.412' E 31° 17.637'	Prehistoric	Dense scatter of lithic material and potsherds on an open sandy area
DS7	Ganatti	N 17° 59.670' E 31° 16.081'	Christian	Remains of a church with well-preserved granite columns
DS8	Ganatti	N 17° 59.620' E 31° 15.147'	Christian	Remains of a mud-brick building's foundation
DS9	Artimoga	N 18° 00.917' E 31° 18.105'	Islamic	Mud-brick <i>qubba</i>
DS10	Mansourkuti	N18° 02. 089' E 31° 20. 005'	Islamic	Mud-brick <i>qubba</i> in the centre of a modern Muslim cemetery
DS11	Debba City	N 18° 03. 049' E 30° 57. 319'	Anglo-Egyptian	Mud-brick stable for horses
DS12	Debba	N 18° 01.940' E 30° 58.060'	Unidentified	Scattering of potsherds and stones on the surface in an open area. Also a number of mounds were recorded
DS13	Fashouda	N 18° 01.904' E 30° 58.435'	Prehistoric & Post-Meroitic	Scattered decorated potsherds on the surface of an open area, together with some mounds with rounded superstructure built of stone
DS14	Karmakol	N 18° 01.214' E 30° 59.165'	Islamic	Mud-brick <i>qubba</i> in the centre of a Muslim cemetery
DS15	Karmakol	N 18° 01.774' E 30° 59.037'	19 th century	Mud-brick palace of Mohammed Farah, the <i>Omda</i> of the area
DS16	Debba Airport	N 18° 00.414' E 30° 57.706'	Unidentified	Rounded to oval-shaped stone enclosure 142m in diameter
DS17	El-Multaga	N 18° 01.072' E 30° 58.427'	Unidentified	Oval shaped mounds with stone superstructure
DS18	Karmakol	N 18° 01.296' E 30° 59.950'	Christian & Islamic	Remains of a stone building probably a church and a mud-brick <i>qubba</i> in the centre of a Muslim cemetery
DS19	Karmakol	N 18° 01.341' E 30° 59.489'	Christian	Remains of stone buildings, Christian potsherds are scattered in the surroundings
DS20	Debba el-Fugara	N 18° 00.740' E 30° 00.020'	Post-Meroitic & Medieval	About 8 mounds of stone. On the surface are dense scatters of Christian potsherds
DS21	Debba el-Fugara	N 18° 00.626' E 31° 00.426'	Prehistoric	4 mounds covered by stones recorded in an open area with scattered potsherds and lithic material
DS22	Debba el-Fugara	N 18° 00.733' E 31° 00.269'	Unidentified	Mounds of stone probably tombs found in an open area
DS23	Debba el-Fugara	N 18° 01.094' E 31° 00.734'	Islamic	Mud-brick <i>qubba</i> within a modern Muslim cemetery
DS24	Debba el-Fugara	N 18° 00.554' E 31° 00.700'	Unidentified	About 15 mounds of stone rounded to egg-shaped, well-preserved found on high area
DS25	Debba el-Fugara	N 18° 00.500' E 31° 01.126'	Unidentified	4 low tumuli of stone
DS26	Gerra village	N 18° 01.539' E 31° 03.586'	Unidentified	Dense scatter of potsherds on the surface of a sandy area



Site	Location	Coordinates	Period	Description
DS27	Gerra village	N 18° 01.422' E 31° 03.181'	Christian	Dense scatter of potsherds and red-brick fragments in an area containing a number of mounds of stone
DS28	Abssa village	N 17° 59.911' E 31° 04.429'	Prehistoric	Scattered potsherds and lithic material on the surface. Also there are 3 egg-shaped mounds of stone, badly preserved
DS29	Abssa village	N 18° 00.140' E 31° 05.663'	Christian or Early Islamic?	15 mounds with circular stone superstructure. Some are disturbed
DS30	Gushabi village	N 17° 59.948' E 31° 05.239'	Prehistoric	High area containing scattered potsherds and lithic materials and 2 small tumuli
DS31	Debba el-Fugara	N 18° 00.037' E 31° 02.875'	Prehistoric	Scattering of stone tools and potsherds on open flat sandy area. Some features consisted of stone concentrations, probably tombs
DS32	Debba el-Fugara	N 18° 00. 287' E 31° 00. 045'	Prehistoric	Scattering of stone tools mainly grinding stones and potsherds on an open flat sandy area. Some features consisted of stone concentrations, probably tombs
DS33	Debba el-Fugara	N 18° 00,236' E 30° 59.728'	Prehistoric, Christian, & Islamic	Cemetery containing tumuli, Christian tombs and Muslim graves
DS34	Gushabi	N 17° 58.805' E 31° 08.642'	Christian	Remains of red-brick building surrounded by a scatter of potsherds on the surface
DS35	Gushabi	N 17° 58.511' E 31° 09.306'	Prehistoric	Scattered archaeological material consisting of lithic material and potsherds on the surface of flat area
DS36	Gushabi	N 17° 58.516' E 31° 10.084'	Christian & Islamic	Mounds of stone rounded in shape about 5m in diameter. Scattered Christian pottery. Mud-brick <i>qubba</i> in the centre of a Muslim cemetery
DS37	Abu Dom	N 17° 58. 394' E 31° 10. 873'	Unidentified	Mounds of earth covered with scattered lithic material and potsherds
DS38	Abu Dom	N 17° 58.632' E 31° 11.303'	Unidentified	Scattered potsherds on the surface of an open area
DS39	Abssa village	N 17° 58.971' E 31° 05.430'	Prehistoric	Open area with scattering of archaeological material on the surface and remains of human bones
DS40	el Mahbas village	N 17° 58.648' E 31° 06.363'	Unidentified	6 mounds 2-3m in diameter with a scattering of potsherds and lithic material on the surface
DS41	Abu Dom	N 17° 58.505' E 31° 09.821'	Prehistoric	Scattered of potsherds and lithic material on the surface
DS42	Abu Dom	N 17° 57.801' E 31° 10.312'	Prehistoric	Scattered of potsherds and lithic material on the surface of a flat sandy area
DS43	Khomasiyat village	N 17° 58.344' E 31° 12.892'	Post-Meroitic	Cemetery of more than 50 tumuli, rounded in shape with superstructures consisted of gravel and sand
DS44	Khomasiyat village	N 17° 58.712' E 31° 12.552'	Prehistoric	Scattered material on the surface including potsherds and lithics
DS45	Ganatti	N 17° 58.561' E 31° 13.534'	Post-Meroitic	About 30 circular tumuli of stone 12m in diameter
DS46	el-Multaga	N 17° 57.343' E 31° 13.024'	Prehistoric	Scatter of grinding stones, potsherds and human remains on the surface of a flat open area
DS47	el-Multaga	N 17° 56.540' E 31° 13.485'	Unidentified	Scattering of potsherds and lithic material on the surface
DS48	Ganatti	N 17° 58.576' E 31° 14.604'	Unidentified	Large mound about 20m in diameter, with a scatter of human bones and potsherds on its surface
DS49	Ganatti	N 17° 57.291' E 31° 15.137'	Unidentified	Dense scatter of potsherds on a flat rocky area and 2 tumuli
DS50	Klakla Village	N 17° 59.954' E 31° 19.211'	Prehistoric	Sandy area with a scatter of lithic tools and potsherds on the surface together with a number of stone tumuli
DS51	Mansourkuti	N 17° 59.868' E 31° 19.566'	Prehistoric	Sandy area with scattering of lithic tools and potsherds on the surface
DS52	Mansourkuti	N 18° 00.550' E 31° 19.847'	Unidentified	Circular mounds of stone, potsherds scattered on the surface
DS53	Artimoga	N 18° 01.189' E 31° 17.997'	Medieval	Dense scattering of Christian and Islamic potsherds on a rounded high mound

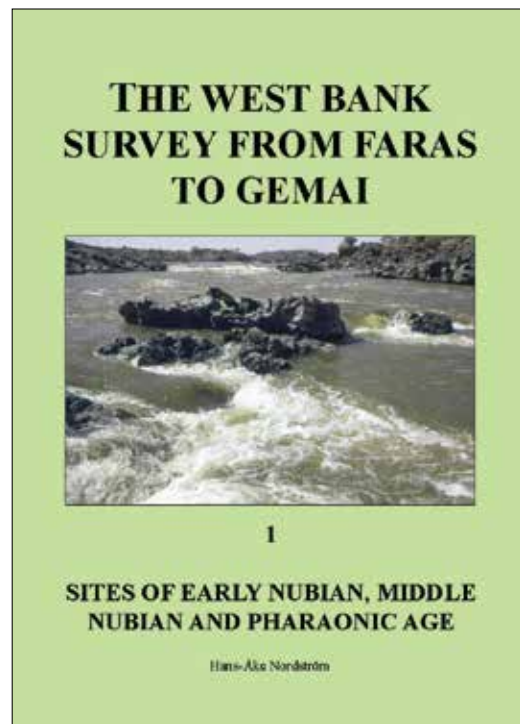
The West Bank Survey from Faras to Gemai 1. Sites of Early Nubian, Middle Nubian and Pharaonic Age

by H.-Å. Nordström
London, 2014

xviii + 178 pages, 29 tables, 33 plates, 74 figures
ISBN 978 1 901169 195

This volume completes the three-volume series devoted to the results of the survey and excavations conducted by the Sudan Antiquities Service between 1960 and 1963 during the UNESCO-sponsored Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia. The author reports in detail on the Pharaonic and earlier sites, the excavation of many of which he personally directed. Also heavily involved in the publication of the Scandinavian Joint Expedition's work on the opposite bank, he is ideally placed to provide a synthesis of the evidence for human activity in this part of the Nile Valley, now largely inundated.

Retail price £35. Available to members at the discounted price of £30 (p&p UK £4.90, overseas - Europe £9, rest of world £15)



Gabati

A Meroitic, Post-Meroitic and Medieval
Cemetery in Central Sudan.

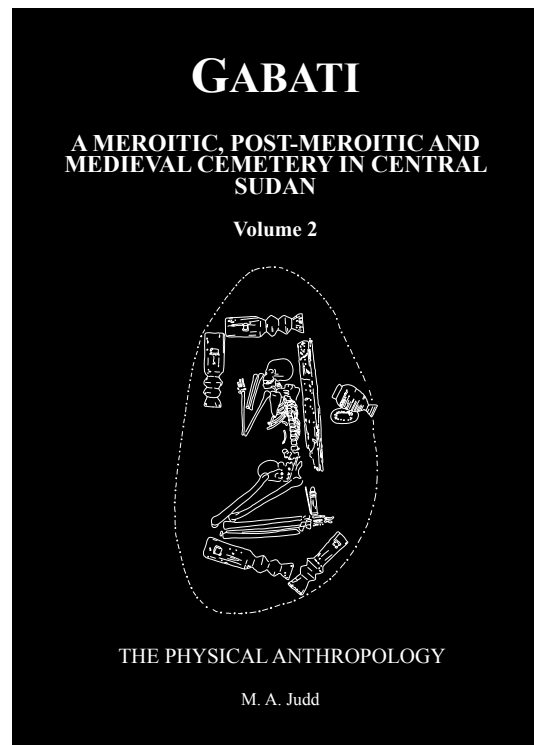
Vol. 2: The Physical Anthropology

by Margaret A. Judd,
with a contribution by David N. Edwards
London 2012

xii + 208 pages, 110 tables, 15 figures, 66 maps, 73 colour plates
ISBN 978 1 901169 19 7

The cemetery at Gabati, dating from the Meroitic, post-Meroitic and Christian periods was excavated in advance of road construction in 1994-5, the detailed report being published by SARS in 1998. This complementary volume provides an in-depth analysis of the human remains. A final chapter, a contribution from David Edwards, the field director of the project, in conjunction with Judd, assesses the archaeological results in light of continuing research in the region over the last decade and more.

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*View upstream along the Wadi Murrat from the late 19th century Anglo-Egyptian fort.
The pharaonic inscriptions are amongst the trees at the wadi edge in the far centre (photo D. A. Welsby).*



Horus, Lord of the Desert. A natural rock outcrop along the route from Buben towards Wadi Murrat (photo D. A. Welsby).