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THE A-GROUP CEMETERY AT TUNQALA WEST*

By ALICE STEVENSON

Evidence for A-Group tomb superstructures is exceedingly rare and only one cemetery has ever shown definitive proof that such monuments existed, that of Tunqala West. Located during the UNESCO international rescue campaign of 1961, only one tomb from this cemetery was ever published. Although this tomb was the best preserved, it did not possess some features seen elsewhere in the cemetery, such as evidence for dedicated offering places above ground. The remaining tombs are presented here for the first time together with a discussion of the significance of the site in light of 50 further years of research since the cemetery was discovered.

DURING the Egypt Exploration Society's 1961 survey of Nubia, Harry Smith and his team recorded a number of A-Group settlements and cemeteries. Of these, the most impressive was Cemetery 268 at Tunqala West near the Korosko Bend (fig. 1),¹ notable for its surviving tomb superstructures. These provide a rare insight into aspects of A-Group mortuary architecture and practices. Sixteen graves and two above-ground stone features not situated above tombs were excavated, drawn, photographed,² and mapped (fig. 2),³ although only one (grave 10) was published in detail; 'the remainder', Smith noted, 'must await the Egypt Exploration Society's final publication'.⁴ This never transpired, but in September 2009 Harry Smith's notes from the season were deposited at the EES's London office to form part of its Lucy Gura Archive. Among these papers are the field notes from the March 1961 excavation of this small, but important, cemetery.

The site was situated on a low mud-terrace in the desert plain behind the area excavated by Emery and Kirwan in 1929–30 (cemeteries 166–183).⁵ As it was 'away

* I would like to express my thanks to Chris Naunton for scanning the photographs from the original prints in the EES Lucy Gura Archive. Thanks also go to Lisa Mawdsley for her helpful suggestions on an earlier draft of this paper, particularly for her insights into the mud-brick superstructures at Tarkhan and the comparative dating of the pottery both there and at Tunqala West. I am also very grateful to Harry Smith for his encouragement and assistance during the preparation of this article.

¹ H. S. Smith, *Preliminary Reports of the Egypt Exploration Society's Nubian Survey: UNESCO's International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia* (Cairo, 1962), 64–9, figs 14–16.

² A total of 36 photographs were taken. These document most of the superstructures encountered in 1961, but exclude images of graves 1, 2, 6, 11, 17, and 18. Additionally, there were 11 shots of the objects recovered. Only two images of grave structures were published, both of grave 10 (see Smith, *Preliminary Reports*, pl. viii). A further five shots of the superstructures are published here and five object images. Three additional images were published in *EES Newsletter* 2 (summer 2011) and all images are currently available on the EES Flickr page.

³ The figure reproduced here was traced from the original map sketched in the field. This is to be considered a rough plan since comparison with the individual grave drawings (see tomb catalogue below) reveals some discrepancy in the placement of the grave shafts. On the individual plans, some are plotted as off-centre (e.g. graves 3, 7, and 8) in comparison with the above-ground monument, whereas these are depicted as more centrally placed on the cemetery map.

⁴ Smith, *Preliminary Reports*, 64.

⁵ W. B. Emery and L. P. Kirwan, *The Excavations and Survey between Wadi Es-Sebua and Adindan 1929–1931* (Cairo, 1935).

from any *wadi* and at a relatively high level [it] had not been affected by denudation like most A-Group cemeteries'.⁶ The cemetery, which covered an area 41 m by 22 m, was completely cleared over the course of four days. Unfortunately, it had been very heavily plundered and only two graves (5 and 10) were noted to be intact, or nearly intact. Nevertheless, 35 pottery vessels,⁷ or fragments of vessels, were recovered and these included ceramics that attest to a Terminal A-Group date for the site, corresponding to Naqada IIIA–B (c.3300/3200–3100 BC).⁸ Diagnostic pieces comprise two examples of indigenous decorated 'eggshell ware'⁹ vessels, found in graves 9 (fig. 3a) and 10.

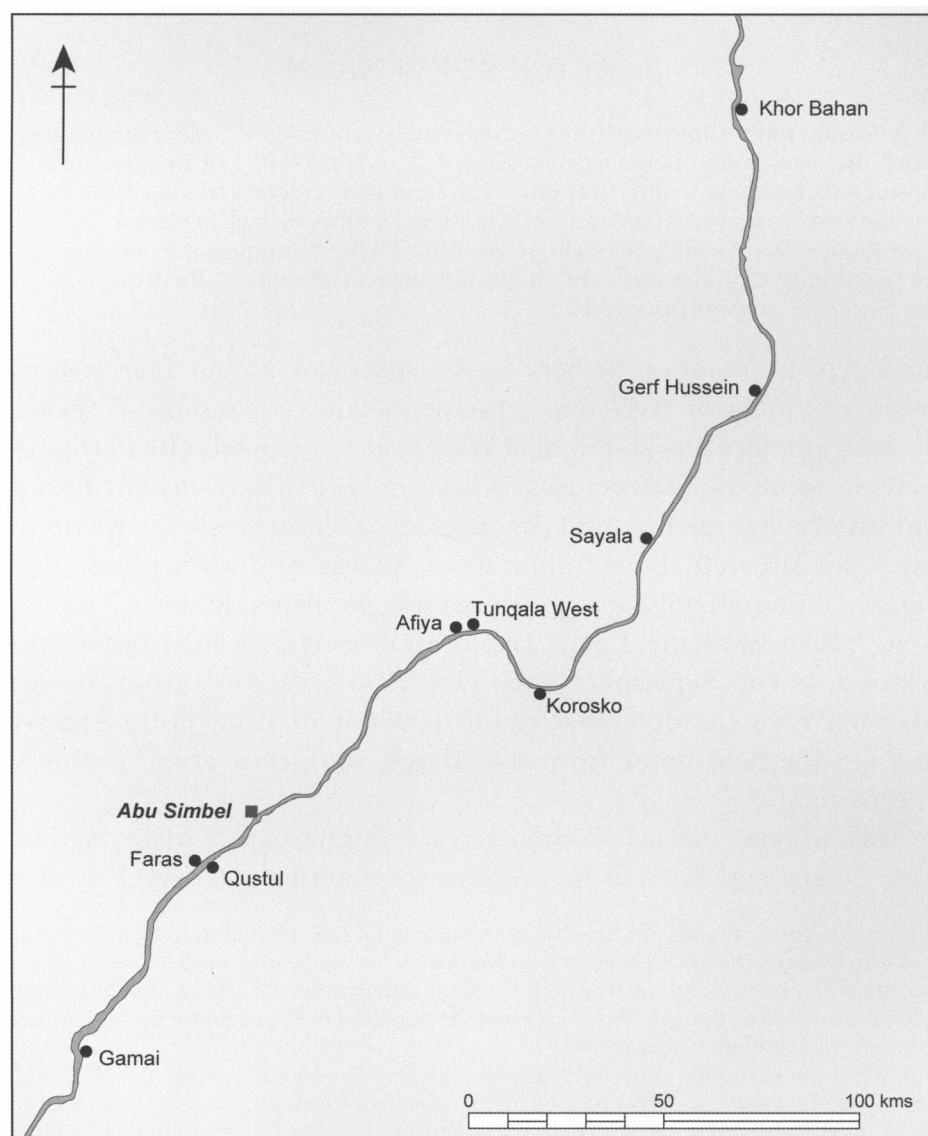


FIG. 1. Map of Nubia showing key sites.

⁶ H. S. Smith, 'The Nubian B-Group', *Kush* 14 (1966), 124.

⁷ These were classified in the field notes with reference to F. L. Griffith, 'Oxford Excavations in Nubia', *AAA* 8 (1921), 1–18. In the separate pottery corpus records (and in the catalogue below) they were classified with reference to Emery and Kirwan, *Wadi Es-Sebua and Adindan*, 497–501, pls 33–4.

⁸ Following the phases first outlined by H.-Å. Nordström, *Neolithic and A-Group Sites* (Scandinavian Joint Expedition to Sudanese Nubia 3; Uppsala, 1972), 27–32. See also M. C. Gatto, 'The Nubian A-Group: A Reassessment', *Archéo-Nil* 16 (2006), 67.

⁹ Nordström, *A-Group Sites*, 87–8, pls 175–7. This is a form that Griffith (*AAA* 8, 8) first described as 'variegated haematic ware'.

These specialised craft goods are characteristic of the final phase of the A-Group and were prominent in the ceramic assemblage at Qustul Cemetery L.¹⁰ Another distinctive type of local pottery container was found in grave 8 (fig. 3b) and is an example of Williams' Group V, 'interior red-painted bowls'.¹¹ These are noted¹² to be rare in other A-Group cemeteries, but were also relatively common in Qustul Cemetery L. Further examples are known from other Terminal A-Group contexts, including Cemeteries SJE 277¹³ and 142.¹⁴ The remaining Nubian pottery generally falls into Williams' Form Group VI (simple pottery),¹⁵ all of which are undecorated (e.g. fig. 3d) other than for the presence of what the excavation team referred to as 'black blotches'.¹⁶ No ripple-burnished pottery (Williams' Form Group II) was found and only one very small sherd with incised, chevron decoration was recovered from the fill of grave 14.

Amongst the imported ceramics from Egypt were at least six marl clay vessels, referred to by the excavation team as 'hard pink' or 'hard red ware'.¹⁷ Two of these, from graves 12 and 14, had been repaired prior to burial, indicating the valuable nature of such imports.

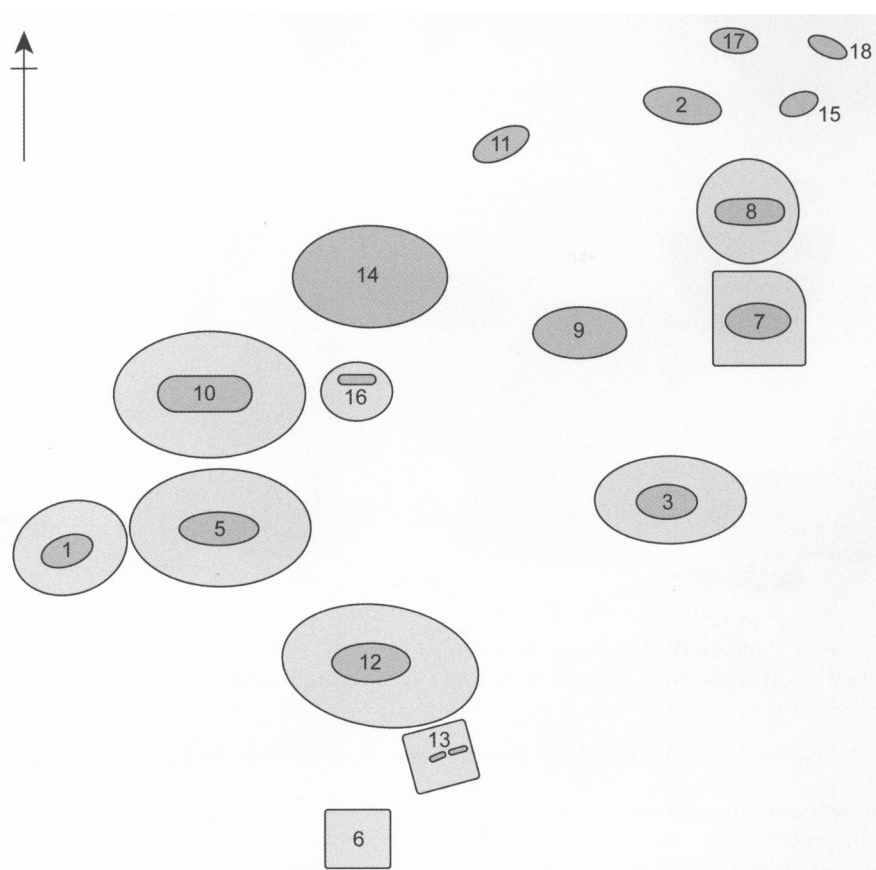


FIG. 2. Map of Tunqala West Cemetery 268 redrawn from original triangulations.

¹⁰ B. B. Williams, *The A-Group Royal Cemetery at Qustul, Cemetery L* (Chicago, 1986).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 61, fig. 25.a, pl. 12b.

¹² *Ibid.*, 61.

¹³ Nordström, *A-Group Sites*, grave 49, pl. 114.

¹⁴ C. M. Firth, *The Archaeological Survey of Nubia. Report for 1910–1911* (Cairo, 1927), grave 1, pl. 20.b.1.

¹⁵ Williams, *Qustul*, 61–2.

¹⁶ Such 'fire-blooms' have been considered as an intentionally produced effect. See Williams, *Qustul*, 106 n. 24.

¹⁷ I. H. Takamiya, 'Egyptian Pottery Distribution in A-Group Cemeteries, Lower Nubia: Towards an Understanding of Exchange Systems between the Naqada Culture and the A-Group Culture', *JEA* 90 (2004), 35–62.

Another example, a bowl with an everted rim and ornamental burnishing on both the interior and exterior (fig. 3c), is unusual. The shape is recognisable as Egyptian,¹⁸ albeit rare, but the patterned burnish is seldom found in combination with it. Other examples of such bowls with burnished patterns have been uncovered from A-Group contexts,¹⁹ including the unique settlement site of Afyeh.²⁰ More recognisably Egyptian are two wavy-handled jars, one from grave 5 (fig. 3d) and one from structure 6, both of which bear criss-cross decoration in dark red paint.²¹ This form of vessel corresponds to the Naqada IIIA2/IIIB phase.²² The remaining Egyptian imports included a wine jar and smaller storage jars, all from grave 10.²³

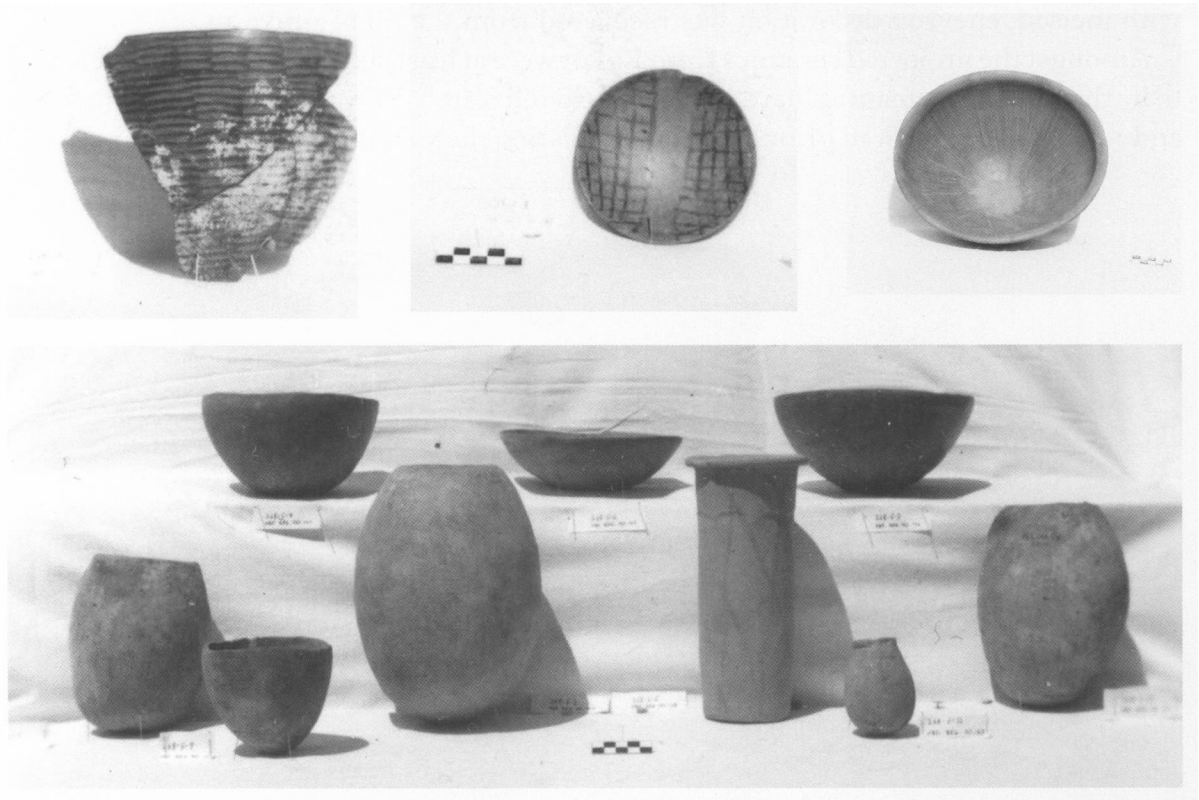


FIG. 3. Ceramics from Tunqala West: (a) egg-shell ware vessel from grave 9; (b) interior red-painted bowl from grave 8; (c) bowl with ornamental burnish from grave 10; (d) complete pottery assemblage from grave 5.

¹⁸ Cf. Emery and Kirwan, type A.X; W. M. F. Petrie, *Corpus of Prehistoric Pottery and Palettes* (London, 1920), pl. xlv.

¹⁹ E.g. Williams, *Qustul*, pl. 17.d and f.

²⁰ Although the report of this site is only brief and few of the pottery vessels were illustrated. Nevertheless, it was noted that of the pottery recovered 'amongst the more noteworthy ... were bowls and basins of red ware with pebble-burnished decorations both on the interior as well as the exterior': B. B. Lal, 'Indian Archaeological Expedition to Nubia, 1962: A Preliminary Report', *Fouilles en Nubie (1961-1963)* (Cairo, 1967), 108.

²¹ Cf. G. A. Reisner, *The Archaeological Survey of Nubia: Report for 1907-1908*, I: *Archaeological Report* (Cairo, 1910), fig. 300, E.D. type IX/18; cf. W. M. F. Petrie, *Ceremonial Slate Palettes and Corpus of Protodynastic Palettes* (London, 1953), type 46d.

²² S. Hendrickx, 'Predynastic-Early Dynastic Chronology', in E. Hornung, R. Krauss, and D. Warburton (eds), *Ancient Egyptian Chronology* (HdO 83; Leiden, 2006), 83-4. Such vessels are known from graves dating to between Naqada IIIA2 and IIIC1 at Tarkhan, but the vast majority from the site (some 47 examples) are from IIIA2 contexts (Lisa Mawdsley, personal communication).

²³ Compare with Petrie, *Protodynastic Corpus*, types 60m and 63e, as well as S. Hendrickx, *Elkab*, V: *The Naqada III Cemetery* (Brussels, 1994), 59, pl. xii. Type 60m is restricted to Naqada IIIA2/B graves at Tarkhan. Thanks are due to Lisa Mawdsley for pointing out these comparisons. See also Smith, *Preliminary Reports*, fig. 16. Photographs of these vessels are available in the Lucy Gura Archive.

Other notable and diagnostic grave goods included a Naqada III imported Egyptian mudstone (greywacke) palette of rectangular form (fig. 4) found in grave 2, which is also consistent with a Terminal A-Group date.²⁴ A typical Nubian rhomboidal-shaped quartz palette was recovered from grave 10. Also found in grave 10 was what was originally described as a stone mortar, but from the proportions and form of the object,²⁵ as well as the presence of a purple and dark black stain²⁶ on the upper surface,

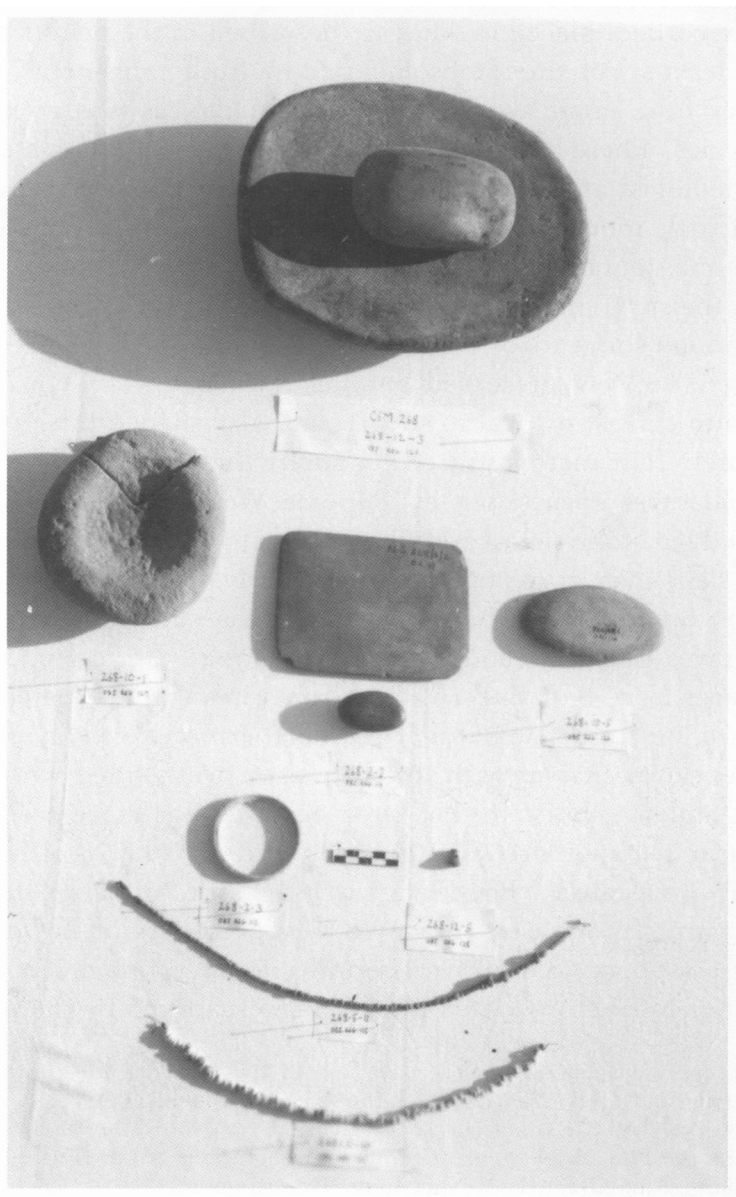


FIG. 4. Non-ceramic finds from Tunqala West. From top to bottom, and from left to right: grinder (grave 12), incense burner (grave 10), (greywacke) palette (grave 2), Nubian palette (grave 10), ivory bracelet (grave 2), pendant (grave 12), sets of beads (grave 5).

²⁴ Such pieces are rare in this part of Nubia at this date and this example is among one of the few known in the region. None are known in the Qustul area, for instance. J. Roy, *The Politics of Trade: Egypt and Lower Nubia in the 4th Millennium BC* (CHANE 47; Leiden, 2011), 189, 275–6, fig. 190.

²⁵ Smith, *Preliminary Reports*, fig. 16.1.

²⁶ This black stain was described in the field notes as 'kohl', but it is equally possible that this may have been soot.

this would seem to be an example of an undecorated incense burner, as Williams has suggested.²⁷ Such objects are uniquely A-Group products, of which roughly 39 are known, almost exclusively from Terminal A-Group contexts.²⁸ Also in common with other A-Group sites was the presence of leather garments (graves 5 and 15) and an ostrich feather fan (grave 10).²⁹ The only other artefacts found were beads (graves 4, 5, and 12), a bone bracelet or anklet (grave 2), and a stone grinder (grave 2).

The inhumations of 21 individuals, including one 'new-born infant' and four 'children', were recorded, placed in what are described in the field notes as 'uniformly deep' graves. At least six of the tombs enclosed multiple interments, with up to three contracted bodies in a single tomb (graves 5 and 10), as was common in Nubian A-Group cemeteries. These bodies were sexed at the time, although none of the team was a trained osteologist and in some cases the identifications were made on remains that consisted of little more than the skull. As such, the attributions of sex should be considered to be only tentative.³⁰

It is, however, the surviving architecture above ten of the graves that merits further comment, as although some 3000 A-Group burials across an estimated 126 cemeteries are known,³¹ there are few preserved parallels (see below). Typical tombs for the Terminal A-Group consist of oval to sub-rectangular-shaped pits, which vary in size up to approximately four metres squared. Usually there is no clear evidence for what may have covered these spaces, but at Tunqala West nine graves were found with large, well-dressed flat stone slabs carefully fitted onto ledges above the tomb floor (e.g. fig. 5). The five slabs over grave 10 were particularly well preserved, each measuring on average 1.2 m × 0.6 m. Above these covering stones, surface structures were erected over children (graves 8 and 16) and adults (graves 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, and 14) alike. In five cases (graves, 3, 7, 8, 9, and 16) the burial pit was not situated centrally under the superstructure, but rather was under the northern section. The majority of these constructions were oval-shaped with dry-laid stone walls filled with sand (graves 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, and 16), but two displayed evidence for more solid buildings with rectangular or near rectangular walls (graves 3 and 7)³² that Smith describes in his notes as being like 'mastabas'. The largest was the structure above grave 7 (fig. 6) at around 5 m × 4.35 m. In one case (grave 10) seven courses of uniformly-sized slabs (each on average 0.5 × 0.35 × 0.6 m) were found preserved to a height of 0.6 m. Given the large amount of loose stone noted to have been scattered by the plunderers across

²⁷ Williams, *Qustul*, 135, and compare pl. 26a.

²⁸ Around 30 were found at Qustul (Williams, *Qustul*, 108); two were found in Cemetery 47 (Reisner, *Survey of Nubia*, 277, pl. 64); two from the SJE campaigns at sites 298 and 332 (Nordström, *A-Group Sites*, 119–20); two from grave 147 at Faras (Griffith, *AAA* 18, 9); one from Cemetery 137 at Sayala (Firth, *Report for 1910–1911*, 208, pl. 21); one from Site AS 6-G-18 (H.-Å. Nordström, 'Excavations and Survey in Faras, Argin, and Gezira Dabarosa', *Kush* 10 (1962), 58, pl. Xa); and for a final example see A. J. Mills and H.-Å. Nordström, 'The Archaeological Survey from Gemai to Dal: Preliminary Report on the Season 1964–1965', *Kush* 14 (1966), 9, fig. 3. The possibility that these vessels were for grinding cosmetic materials has also been mooted, e.g. Nordström, *A-Group Sites*, 108.

²⁹ Similar examples were found in the SJE concession at Sites SJE 277, SJE 401, and SJE 600. See Nordström, *A-Group Sites*, 128, pls 96, 114, and 149. See also Reisner, *Report for 1907–1908*, 195, 274, pl. 66c. The ones at Tunqala West were not photographed or drawn.

³⁰ H. Smith, personal communication.

³¹ Gatto, *Archéo-Nil* 16, 62.

³² In the field notes for grave 7 it is recorded that 'clear evidence was forthcoming from masonry within the superstructure that this had originally been solid and in all probability covered the roofing slabs of the grave forming a solid structure'.



FIG. 5. Roofing slabs and superstructure of grave 3, viewed from the south-east.



FIG. 6. Superstructure of grave 7 when cleared, viewed from S.S.W., with grave 8 behind.

the site and surrounding the structures it is conceivable that these monuments were originally much taller.

The exception to these burials was the outlying grave 4, situated some 25 m west of the main cemetery, amongst a large amount of *gebel* stone adapted for tumulus building. Careful clearing of this scatter revealed traces of the bottom course of a circular superstructure placed above a mud-plastered, beehive-shaped pit. In the field notes Smith surmised this to be later in date than the rest of the tombs in the main cemetery, but such beehive-shaped structures are today generally considered to belong to an earlier A-Group phase.³³

What is significant about these above-ground monuments is that they could have served as visible foci in the landscape for surrounding A-Group communities, permitting continued engagement with the dead and grounding social and collective memory at the site. That these sites served as such a context for repeated acts of commemoration is indicated by both the accumulation of multiple burials and other ritual activities around the tombs of Cemetery 268. In terms of the former, for example, it is clear from grave 5 that it was opened at a later date, at which time a second adult body was interred, pushing aside the remains of the child. Evidence for a ritual focus post-burial was found above at least three, but possibly as many as six, of the graves in the form of offerings. Notably, all of these offerings were located on the western side of the monuments. Above grave 8 this took the form of two offering pots placed on the surface of the *gebel*, within the western walls of the superstructure and reportedly with an adjacent stone 'guarding them'. Above grave 10, in exactly the same position as that of the offering pottery in grave 8, was the incense burner.³⁴ Grave 12 (see below) also had evidence for pottery offerings at the west side. Although grave 14 was heavily plundered, it was recorded in the field notes as possessing an offering pot on a level with the roofing slabs and which was considered to be 'doubtless originally an offering from inside the west end of the superstructure, cf. grave 2'. Finally, a large 'pink ware' bowl resting on a stone at the west end of the grave 15 can perhaps also be considered to have been an offering pot originally from outside of the grave, at ground level.

Even more significantly, two of the above-ground monuments also incorporated either within or beside their architecture specific places for the reception of such offerings. The building above grave 16 had a dedicated spot to receive offerings in the form of a distinct break or 'door' in the west wall (fig. 7). More impressively, at the west end of the structure above grave 12 were three rectangular, thin slabs of sandstone that had been placed upright, one set against the superstructure and two at right-angles to it (fig. 8). The largest of these measured 0.88 m in height. These formed an open box-like feature, in which were recovered sherds of a large, coarse brown ware deep bowl. To the south, and in close proximity to grave 12, was an enigmatic structure, which although originally numbered 'grave 13', did not in fact show signs of ever having a tomb below it. This feature was described as being roughly square in shape and was formed of rough, dry stone masonry, one course thick, bounded on the north, only 0.5 m from grave 12, by a single large horizontal stone. Within this square were inserted

³³ H. S. Smith, 'The Development of the "A-Group" Culture in Northern Lower Nubia', in W. V. Davies (ed.), *Egypt and Africa: Nubia from Prehistory to Islam* (London, 1991), 102.

³⁴ As Stan Hendrickx (personal communication) has suggested, this may give an indication as to the original position and use of the famous Qustul Burner, which was not found *in situ* in the burial chamber, but above it.



FIG. 7. Superstructure of grave 16.



FIG. 8. Superstructure of grave 12 from the west showing offering place and pot.
The 'stelae' of structure 13 can be seen in the top right of the photograph.

two large, thin rectangular blocks of black *gebel* stone, originally standing erect 0.65 m and 0.55 m above the platform, with their broader sides facing the Nile (fig. 9). These, Smith suggested in his field notes, might be considered to be uninscribed 'stelae'. South of this again was another structure, numbered 'grave 6', but also not associated with a grave. Its features were not described in detail in the day book,³⁵ nor was a plan of it made, but it was certainly of A-Group date given the presence of the imported wavy-handled vessel noted above. A brief description of the ring-like structure is, however, jotted down on a piece of graph paper amidst Smith's plans of the other tombs: 'There was simply what appeared to be a superstructure, roughly oval in shape in an area at the extreme south of the cemetery where a lot of stone was lying'. The occurrence of such buildings not in direct association with a tomb suggest that such cemeteries were not simply places for the burial of the dead, but additionally were arenas for other types of social gatherings for the living that continued to centre upon engagement with the dead.



FIG. 9. Platform and 'stelae' of structure 13.

³⁵ The field notes state simply that 'grave 6 was a superstructure without apparent pit. The offering pottery: The ledge-handled cylinder jar (5) Reisner E.D. IX/18 with plum-painted criss-cross decoration belongs to the late Predynastic period and Egypt and is characteristic of the earlier part of the A-Group period. The bowl with red burnish (6), probably type A.XIII.B, should also belong to early in the period. The rest of the pottery is mostly domestic ware and offer little in the way of dating criteria'.

Parallels

Despite the fact that stone roofing slabs are well known from several Nubian A-Group sites³⁶ (and some Egyptian tombs),³⁷ these have not generally been found in association with superstructures, leading Nordström³⁸ and Geus³⁹ to argue that Tunqala West represented a 'local exception'. Bruce Trigger, on the other hand, maintained that the monuments of Cemetery 268 could be regarded as a typical 'distinguishing characteristic'⁴⁰ for Terminal A-Group burials. While Trigger's characterisation may be an over-generalisation, there is some evidence that suggests that substantial tomb superstructures were constructed at other A-Group sites. Smith, for example, noted that the surface of the heavily plundered A-Group Cemetery 269, just north of Cemetery 268, had strewn across it the remains of a large amount of loose stone, which 'suggest that the cemetery may have originally been of a similar character to Cemetery 268'.⁴¹ Similarly, Smith also observed⁴² that across the surface of Cemetery 137 at Sayala was a considerable amount of broken stone,⁴³ which he posited derived from the remains of stone tumuli or stelae. Also known to Smith⁴⁴ were examples from Firth's Cemetery 77/100 at Gurf Hussein, where three circular graves (114, 115, and 116) were found with dome-like rubble superstructures.⁴⁵ The tomb assemblages themselves did not include any definitively datable artefacts, but as a whole they seem consistent with a Middle or Terminal A-Group date, rather than a later C-Group one.⁴⁶ In another small cluster in Cemetery 77/1 were several circular and oval graves, some of 'beehive' form, and some with rubble superstructures (12, 13, 23, 27, and 33). These were originally attributed by Firth to the 'B-Group', a designation convincingly rejected by Smith.⁴⁷ Whether these are instead to be considered A-Group is uncertain given the lack of any firm datable evidence, although Smith has proposed that these may be considered to be early A-Group burials.⁴⁸ In terms of parallels for what was discovered by grave 12 in Cemetery 268, a round-topped stela found in a grave at Qustul Cemetery S can be

³⁶ E.g. Site SJE 308 (Nordström, *A-Group Sites*, 130, pls 78–9); Cemeteries 134 and 137 (Firth, *Report for 1910–1911*, 192, 204); Nag el-Qarmila (M. C. Gatto, 'The Aswan Area at the Dawn of Egyptian History', *EA* 35 (2009), 12–13).

³⁷ At Elkab, a Naqada IIIA2 grave (tomb 85) was roofed with at least four sandstone slabs, which Hendrickx suggests may have been visible on the surface. See S. Hendrickx, *Elkab, V: The Naqada III Cemetery* (Brussels, 1994), 194, pls lxiii–xv. Also two graves amongst Petrie's Hill cemeteries at Tarkhan had limestone roofing slabs: four in the case of tomb 2026 Hill S, dated to Naqada IIIC, and some are also indicated above tomb 1921 Hill T, dated to roughly Naqada IIIA2–IIIC (L. Mawdsley, personal communication).

³⁸ H.-Å. Nordström, 'Personal Equipment and Ritual Remains: Some Thoughts on A-Group Burial Customs', *CRIPPEL* 26 (2006–2007), 297.

³⁹ F. Geus, 'Burial Customs in the Upper Main Nile: An Overview', in Davies (ed.), *Egypt and Africa*, 59.

⁴⁰ B. G. Trigger, *History and Settlement in Lower Nubia* (New Haven, 1965), 76. See also B. G. Trigger, *Nubia under the Pharaohs* (London, 1976), 36–7.

⁴¹ Smith, *Preliminary Report*, 69.

⁴² H. S. Smith, 'The Princes of Seyala in Lower Nubia in the Predynastic and Protodynastic Periods', in C. Berger, G. Clerc, and N. Grimal (eds), *Hommages à Jean Leclant* (BdE 106; Cairo, 1994), II, 363.

⁴³ See Firth, *Report for 1910–1911*, pl. 6.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 64; Firth, in Davies (ed.), *Egypt and Africa*, 102.

⁴⁵ C. M. Firth, *The Archaeological Survey of Nubia: Report for 1908–1909* (Cairo, 1912), I, 124–6, figs 92–5.

⁴⁶ In particular the Nubian rhomboidal quartz palette from grave 115 and the 'slate' palette (imported Egyptian mudstone/greywacke) from grave 13. The feather fans from grave 115 are notable comparisons for the object found in grave 10 at Tunqala West, although such artefacts are also known from C-Group burials.

⁴⁷ Smith, *Kush* 14, 69–124.

⁴⁸ Smith, in Davies (ed.), *Egypt and Africa*, 102.

noted.⁴⁹ It therefore seems very possible, as Smith suggests, that stone tumuli and stelae may have existed at a number of late A-Group cemeteries, but these could have been plundered for stone by later C- and X-Groups who also built stone tumuli above their tombs. Certainly, in the case of Firth's Cemetery 137, it was noted that 'the whole place [had been] used as a quarry for stone'.⁵⁰ Alternatively, as Adams⁵¹ has suggested, the dearth of evidence for A-Group mortuary monuments may be due to their destruction through sheet erosion, which may also account for the shallow nature of some A-group grave shafts.

More recently, archaeological surveys in the Aswan/Kom Ombo region, conducted by the British Museum and the University of Milan, recorded an isolated early Nubian tumulus in the Wadi el-Lawi.⁵² Although heavily disturbed, a stone superstructure of a similar character to grave 4 at Tunqala West was recorded. It was composed of two concentric rings above a central, circular grave shaft and in association with part of the internal ring was a standing stone that was tentatively been identified as a stela. Pottery sherds with rippled impressions on dark brown external surfaces suggest an early date for the site, possibly in the fifth millennium or early fourth millennium BC. However, considering the absence of radiocarbon dates and the fragmentary nature of the finds, its affiliations are uncertain. If it is an A-Group site, then the presence of the ripple-burnished pottery would signal an earlier date than the burials at Tunqala West. Other seemingly A-Group related stone structures have also been recorded in Egypt's Western Desert, east of the Kurkur Oasis, although not associated with burials and of an earlier Naqada I–II date.⁵³

The focus of ritual activity at the western sides of the structures in Cemetery 268 has parallels in at least one other Nubian site, which in turn points towards a wider, shared conception of ritual conduct amongst some A-Group communities. At the proto-dynastic cemetery at Faras, Griffith noted three graves (8, 23, and 102), which all 'had a small shallower excavation at the west side of the main pit, containing charcoal and burnt stones'.⁵⁴

Cemetery 268 was not, of course, an isolated locale and cemeteries are not a unitary phenomenon. Rather, they are connected to a wider landscape in which ancient communities conducted their lives. Beyond the mortuary sphere, for instance, it is also noteworthy that Tunqala West lay close to Afiya, where the only known, well-preserved A-Group stone buildings of dry-stone masonry were located by the same EES team in 1961⁵⁵ and excavated by an Indian mission the following year.⁵⁶ The largest of these oblong stone structures covered some 200 square metres and included between six and eight rooms.

⁴⁹ B. B. Williams, *Neolithic, A-Group and Post-A-Group Remains from Cemeteries W, S, Q, T and a Cave East of Cemetery K* (OINE 4; Chicago, 1989), 100–4, fig. 60.

⁵⁰ Firth, *Report for 1910–1911*, 204.

⁵¹ W. Adams, *Nubia: Corridor to Africa* (London, 1977), 129.

⁵² M. C. Gatto, 'Egypt and Nubia in the 5th–4th Millennia BCE: A View from the First Cataract and Its Surroundings', *BMSAES* 13 (2009), 136; Gatto, *EA* 35, 12–15.

⁵³ J. Darnell and D. Darnell, *The Archaeology of Kurkur Oasis, Nuqʿ Maneih, and the Sinn el-Kiddab* <http://www.yale.edu/egyptology/ae_kurkur.htm> accessed 15.07.2011.

⁵⁴ Griffith, *AAA* 8, 6.

⁵⁵ Smith, *Preliminary Report*, 59–61. A. Stevenson, 'Social Complexity Set in Stone? The A-Group Site of Afyeh', *Sudan and Nubia* 16 (2012), 13–19.

⁵⁶ Lal, *Fouilles en Nubie*, 97–118.

This use of stone in A-Group mortuary and settlement architecture stands in contrast to contemporary Upper Egyptian practices where very few such stone features are known prior to the Early Dynastic period.⁵⁷ Within Predynastic cemeteries generally, graves rarely intersect, suggesting that some form of above-ground marker commemorated those below. There is, however, limited evidence for the form that these memorials might have taken, but as has been observed at Adaima a small mud hillock is one possibility.⁵⁸ Reisner suggested⁵⁹ that large rocks may have been piled on top of some of the burials at Naga ed-Deir cemetery N7000, as was perhaps indicated by four large limestone rocks found in the fill above grave N7595,⁶⁰ which dates approximately to the mid-Naqada II period. The most substantial above-ground mortuary buildings known for the early Predynastic period are the ones traced out by the post holes around graves in the elite cemetery HK6 at Hierakonpolis.⁶¹ Closer in date to the Tunqala West cemetery are the mud-brick structures from Tarkhan,⁶² the earliest of which are in the Valley cemetery and date to Naqada IIIA2.⁶³ These also have offering spaces, in the form of chambers, on the west side of the superstructures. Other, smaller burials at Tarkhan were found capped with what Petrie described as 'a slightly domed crust of sand mixed with gypsum'.⁶⁴ Overall, such features indicate different architectural traditions from later distinctive A-Group communities, but a similar concern with the importance of engagement with the dead.

Discussion

The examination of A-Group material is dominated by questions concerning chronology and cultural relationships as usually inferred through ceramic analysis.⁶⁵ Studies focussing on social differentiation and political organisation have been of equal importance.⁶⁶ These remain key areas of enquiry, but in abstracting such mortuary

⁵⁷ Stone architecture is known from Lower Egyptian Predynastic settlement contexts, but not the mortuary sphere. See, for example, U. Hartung, 'Rescue Excavations in the Predynastic Settlement of Maadi', in S. Hendrickx, R. F. Friedman, K. M. Ciałowicz, and M. Chłodnicki (eds), *Egypt at its Origins: Studies in Memory of Barbara Adams. Proceedings of the International Conference 'Origin of the State. Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt', Krakow, 28th August–1st September 2002* (OLA 138; Leuven, 2004), 340–1.

⁵⁸ E. Crubézy, T. Janin, and B. Midant-Reynes, *Adaima, II: La nécropole prédynastique* (FIFAO 47; Cairo, 2002), 454.

⁵⁹ G. A. Reisner, *The Development of the Egyptian Tomb Down to the Accession of Cheops* (Cambridge, 1936), 1–3, 367, fig. 174a, c, d; see also P. Podzorski, 'The Early Dynastic Mastabas of Naga ed-Deir', *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), 92–3.

⁶⁰ A. M. Lythgoe and D. Dunham, *Naga-ed-Dêr, IV: The Predynastic Cemetery, N7000* (Los Angeles, 1965), fig. 174a, c, d.

⁶¹ A. Figueiredo, 'Locality HK6 at Hierakonpolis: Results of the 2000 Field Season', in Hendrickx et al., *Egypt at its Origins*, 1–23; R. F. Friedman, 'Remembering the Ancestors: HK6 in 2008', *Nekhen News* 20 (2008), 10–11; R. F. Friedman, 'The Cemeteries of Hierakonpolis', *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), 8–29.

⁶² W. M. F. Petrie, *Tarkhan, II* (London, 1914), pls xii–xiv.

⁶³ Mastabas 852 and 1845 have been dated to Naqada IIIA2, mastabas 740, 1889, and 1890 to IIIB, and 1674 to IIIC1. See S. Hendrickx, 'Arguments for an Upper Egyptian Origin of the Palace-façade and the Serekh During Late Early Dynastic Times', *GM* 184 (2001), 100.

⁶⁴ Petrie, *Tarkhan, II*, 2. See also W. B. Emery, *Archaic Egypt* (Harmondsworth, 1961), 147, fig. 88.

⁶⁵ E.g. M. C. Gatto, 'Ceramic Traditions and Cultural Territories: The "Nubian Group" in Prehistory', *Sudan and Nubia* 6 (2002), 8–19; S. R. Rampersad, 'Relationships of the Nubian A-Group', *JARCE* 37 (2000), 127–42.

⁶⁶ E.g. D. O'Connor, *Ancient Nubia, Egypt's Rival in Africa* (Philadelphia, 1993); H.-Å. Nordström, 'The Nubian A-Group: Ranking Funerary Remains', *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 29 (1996), 17–39; H.-Å. Nordström, 'The Nubian A-Group: Perceiving a Social Landscape', in T. Kendall (ed.), *Nubian Studies 1998: Proceedings of the Ninth Conference of the International Society of Nubian Studies, August 21–26 1998* (Boston, 2004).

evidence to form indexes of 'culture' and wider social phenomena, their significance for also allowing insight into the construction of past world views can be overlooked. In this vein, several studies have returned to well-covered, published evidence in order to identify possible symbolic aspects of A-Group practices by observing patterns in the manipulation of material culture and the space in which it was articulated.⁶⁷ This is one discourse in which the Tunqala West evidence may be situated, for instance in the observation of offerings and special places for the reception of these on the western sides of tombs. These extend our perception of burial evidence from focussing simply upon the individuals buried here, to more fully considering the social practices of the surviving community within these spaces.

Another related perspective from which this evidence may be viewed is within approaches to mortuary archaeology, highlighting the role of funerary rituals and visible monuments as stages for ritual performance and the creation of collective social histories.⁶⁸ This literature also links such ritual acts with more recent approaches to 'landscape',⁶⁹ in which space is conceived not simply as a passive backdrop in which activities occur, but more holistically as a conceptual and cultural construction created through the relationships between people and place. Thus rather than characterise the 'energy expended'⁷⁰ on moving, shaping, and positioning the stone monuments of Tunqala West only in terms of representing higher social status⁷¹ or sophisticated political centralisation (as frequently used mortuary analyses might), it is equally possible to interpret them as a community's investment in a particular place. By reconfiguring the local landscape to create durable, visible monuments above ancestors—who themselves may become a fixed part of that terrain and the narratives concerning it through a 'genealogy of place'⁷²—such monuments could actively demarcate and create a social territory. Within this cemetery, an additional sense of place and collective

⁶⁷ E.g. Geus, in Davies (ed.), *Egypt and Africa*, 57–73; Nordström, *CRIPEL* 26, 379–98.

⁶⁸ See for example, M. S. Chesson (ed.), *Social Memory, Identity and Death: Anthropological Perspectives on Mortuary Rituals* (Arlington, 2001); E. Hallam and J. Hockey, *Death, Memory and Material Culture* (Oxford, 2001); H. Williams (ed.), *Archaeologies of Remembrance: Death and Memory in Past Societies* (New York, 2003). The theme has also been discussed throughout D. Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt: Social Transformations in North-East Africa 10,000 to 2650 BC* (Cambridge, 2006). For the manner in which places emerge out of the ways in which people interact with each other and elements of the landscape, see e.g. J. Thomas, 'Archaeologies of Place and Landscape', in I. Hodder (ed.), *Archaeological Theory Today* (Cambridge, 2001), 165–86. On the role of monuments in this process, see R. Bradley, *The Significance of Monuments: On the Shaping of the Human Experience in Neolithic and Bronze Age Europe* (London, 1998). Such approaches have been heavily influenced by P. Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge, 1989).

⁶⁹ K. Grzymski, 'Landscape Archaeology of Nubia and Central Sudan', *African Archaeological Review* 21 (2004), 7–30; D. Jeffreys, 'Regionality, Cultural and Cultic Landscapes', in W. Wendrich (ed.), *Egyptian Archaeology* (Oxford, 2010), 102–18. See also J. Barrett, 'The Living, the Dead and the Ancestors: Neolithic and Early Bronze Age Mortuary Practices', in I. Hodder (ed.) *Contemporary Archaeology in Theory* (Oxford, 1996), 405–6.

⁷⁰ Approaches instigated by workers such as A. A. Saxe, *Social Dimensions of Mortuary Practices in a Mesolithic Population from Wadi Halfa, Sudan* (New York, 1971); L. R. Binford, 'Mortuary Practices: Their Study and their Potential', in L. R. Binford (ed.), *An Archaeological Perspective* (New York, 1972), 235; J. A. Brown, 'The Search for Rank in Prehistoric Burials', in R. Chapman, I. Kinnes, and K. Randsborg (eds), *The Archaeology of Death* (Cambridge, 1981), 25–38; J. Tainter, 'Social Inference and Mortuary Practices: An Experiment in Numerical Classification', *WorldArch* 7 (1975), 1–15; see critique and further references in A. Stevenson, 'Social Relationships in Predynastic Burials', *JEA* 95 (2009), 175–92.

⁷¹ E.g. O'Connor, *Nubia*, 16, where it is noted that graves 'with large pits or superstructures required a greater investment of labor, time, and resources, and their owners were therefore of higher status and probably greater wealth than those of smaller, more modest graves'.

⁷² P. McNaney, *Living with the Ancestors: Kinship and Kingship in Ancient Maya Society* (Austin, 1995), 65.

identity could have emerged through ceremonies that further textured the area with memory. This is suggested by the vestiges of past experience at the Tunqala West offering spaces, including the embodied sensations of taste in the sharing of food and drink implied by the pottery vessels, as well as the scent of incense, as indicated by the incense burner.⁷³

From a regional perspective it is noteworthy that this social territory is situated between what have been interpreted as the two main districts or ‘centres’ of the Terminal A-Group,⁷⁴ namely the Sayala–Gerf Hussein area to the north and the Qustul–Faras–Gamai area to the south. Moreover, the relationship between desert routes and the Korosko area could also be significant in the site’s placement, as Maria Gatto has noted.⁷⁵ With this in mind, it is also worth considering approaches to understanding A-Group landscapes that, rather than seeing landscape as simply emerging out of fixed locations, instead view areas like Tunqala West as one of many interlinked focal points between desert routes.⁷⁶ It is from such pathways that concepts of landscape and territory may also emerge. It is hoped, therefore, that, with further publication of the field notes and new analysis from the areas in-between and surrounding Tunqala West, it will be possible to begin to further distinguish regional patterns of A-Group social practice and local A-Group identities⁷⁷ from wider cultural traits, as well as to establish their possible inter-relationships.

Tomb catalogue

The following catalogue has been compiled from four separate sources in the EES Lucy Gura Archive: Day Book 2 of the Egypt Exploration Society Nubian Survey 1960–1961 (first season), the finds register, the pottery corpus, and the tomb plans. The measurements of the tombs are not recorded explicitly in these, but have been inferred from the tomb plans, which were originally drawn on graph paper at a scale of 1:25. The pottery corpus references are to Emery and Kirwan, *Wadi Es-Sebua and Adindan*. All the plans have been inked and digitally enhanced by the author from the original pencil-sketched plans drawn by Harry Smith and his team.

⁷³ For literature on accessing archaeologically the sensual and emotional aspects of such practices see, for example, L. Meskell, ‘Dying Young: The Experience of Death at Deir el Medina’, *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 13 (1994), 35–45; L. Meskell, *Archaeologies of Social Life* (Oxford, 1999), 129, 133, 212; S. Tarlow, *Bereavement and Commemoration* (Oxford, 1999); Y. Hamilakis, M. Pluciennik, and S. Tarlow (eds), *Thinking Through the Body: Archaeologies of Corporeality* (New York, 2002).

⁷⁴ See Nordström, in Kendall (ed.), *Nubian Studies* 1998, 141–2, fig. 7.

⁷⁵ Gatto, *Archéo-Nil*, 68.

⁷⁶ E.g. L. McFadyen, ‘Landscapes in the Mesolithic and Neolithic’, in J. Pollard (ed.), *Prehistoric Britain* (Oxford, 2008), 121–34; C. Tilley, *Phenomenology of Landscape* (Oxford, 1994), 109.

⁷⁷ Gatto, *Archéo-Nil*, 69, for instance, has suggested that a distinction between northern and southern A-Group communities can be made. See also M. C. Gatto and F. Tiraterra, ‘Contacts between the Nubian “A-Groups” and Predynastic Egypt’, in L. Krzyzaniak, K. Kroeper, and M. Kobuiewicz (eds), *Interregional Contacts in the Later Prehistory of Northeastern Africa* (Poznań, 1996), 331; F. Geus, ‘Territorial Behaviour and Territorial Areas in the Middle Nile Valley from Later Prehistory to the End of the New Kingdom’, in I. Caneva and A. Roccati (eds), *Acta Nubia 2006: Proceedings of the Xth International Conference of Nubian Studies, Rome 9–14 September 2002* (Rome, 2006), 345–9; Takamiya, *JEA* 90, 44.

Grave 1 (fig. 10)

Plundered.

Superstructure Disturbed traces only within a large area of surrounding stone.

Substructure Oval pit just over a metre deep and $c.1\text{ m} \times 1.6\text{ m}$ wide at the top, cut into the clay. There was a niche for the deceased's head at the east end, extending the grave floor to a length of $c.1.85\text{ m}$. A ledge had been made to receive a roof of large, flat worked sandstone covering blocks.

Burials Two adult skulls: (A) female(?); (B) male(?). Both adult skulls were facing south; (C) bones of a new-born or still-born infant; at points (D) and (E) were rodent bones.

Pottery Three vessels stood between the two skulls: (1) handmade polished brown ware bowl of black section with black blotches (A.XXII.b); (2) handmade polished brown ware bowls of black section with black blotches (A.XIII.b); (3) intact hand-made drab ware jar (A.IV.c).

Grave 2 (fig. 11)

Heavily plundered.

Substructure Round-ended rectangular pit, $c.1.6\text{ m} \times 0.7\text{ m}$, with worked stone roofing blocks resting on a ledge at the top across the grave as in Grave 1. The grave was nearly 1.5 m deep and narrowed as it descended.

Burials Two adult skulls: (A) male(?); (B) female(?). Both found at the west end of the grave.

Pottery (1) sherd of a red polished black ware (RPBT) bowl found in the grave fill.

Finds (2) rectangular mudstone (greywacke) palette with pebble grinder; (3) shell bracelet or anklet; (4) large alabaster weight or grinder.

Grave 3 (fig. 12)

Heavily plundered.

Superstructure Two courses of superstructure built of gebel stone, $c.4.40\text{ m E-W} \times 3.15\text{ m N-S}$, had been laid dry and packed with sand on top. In shape, the tumulus followed that of the grave; it had straight sides and curved ends. It was not built centrally in relation to the grave pit, which descended directly by the north wall of the superstructure.

Substructure Rectangular pit, $c.1.8\text{ m} \times 1\text{ m}$, cut into clay, with rounded ends. There was a head niche at the east end. Worked stone roofing blocks of large size (one in position was $2\text{ m} \times 0.88\text{ m}$) lay across the grave. A slab, $c.0.7\text{ m} \times 0.3\text{ m}$, at the 'head end' of the grave may be an offering slab.

Grave 4 (fig. 13)

Heavily plundered.

Superstructure The stones preserved were not sufficient in number for the shape of the superstructure to be determined, but it seemed to be circular, with a diameter of $c.3.9\text{ m}$.

Substructure The grave, which was central to the superstructure, was of a round beehive type, lined with mud plaster on the walls and floor. It was 0.80 m across at the top and 0.85 m deep.

Pottery Sherds of a red ware bowl in the grave fill.

Finds Bone disk bead.

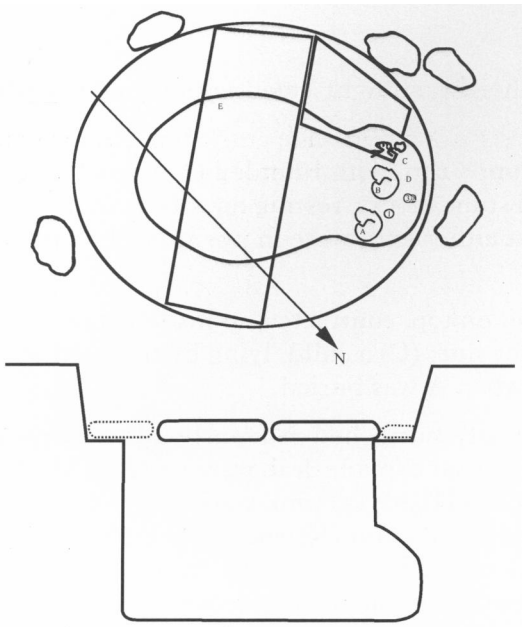


FIG. 10. Plan and section of grave 1. Not to scale.

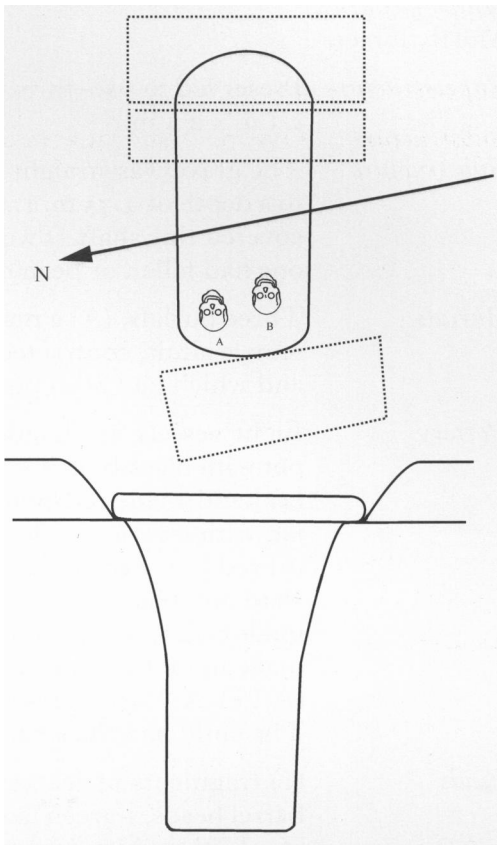


FIG. 11. Plan and section of grave 2. Not to scale.

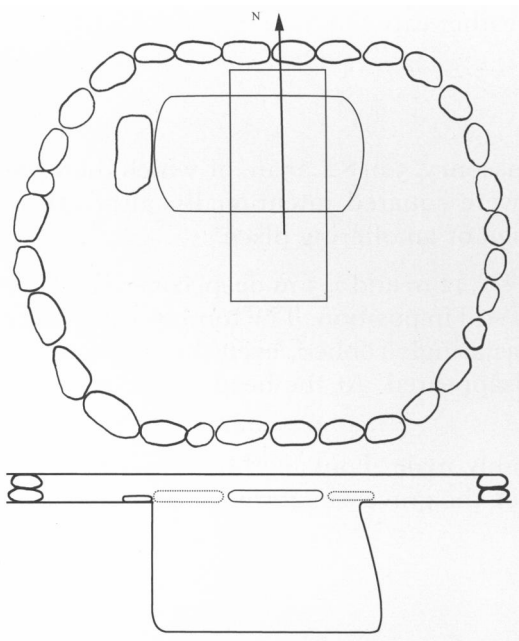


FIG. 12. Plan and section of grave 3. Not to scale.

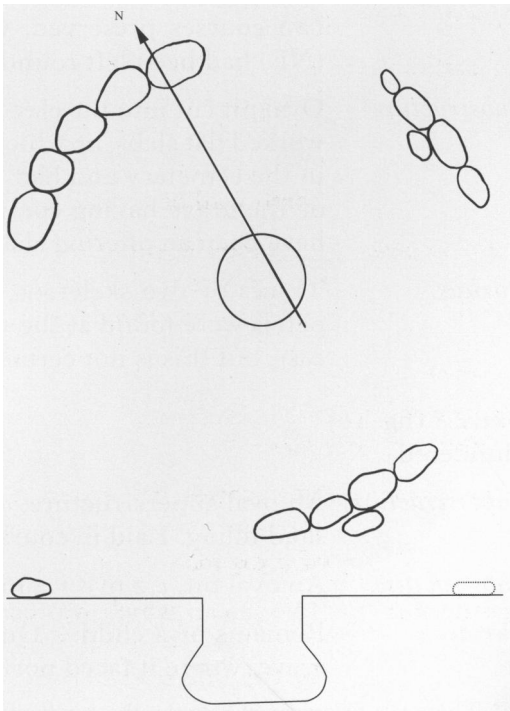


FIG. 13. Plan and section of grave 4. Not to scale.

Grave 5 (fig. 14)

Mostly intact.

Superstructure Preserved to two–three courses in height, straight-sided with rounded ends, c.3 m x 2.4 m.

Substructure The grave was straight-sided, c.1.6 m x 1 m, with rounded ends and was cut to a depth of 1.75 m. Large worked stone blocks, resting on a ledge at the top, covered this shaft. Two of these, at either end, were in position: the middle one had fallen or been dropped.

Burials Three burials: (A) a male adult, laid on top, contracted on his left side; (B) a female adult, contracted on her right side; (C) a child, lying by the head of B and which had been pushed aside when A was buried.

Pottery Eight vessels: (2) hand-made vertically burnished red-washed brown ware pot with black blotches (A.XXI.d); (3) hand-made drab ware jar (A.XXII.b); (4) hand-made red-polished bowl (A.XIII.b); (5) pink ware ‘wavy-handled’ jar, with criss-cross decoration in dark red paint (Reisner type E.D, IX, 18); (6) red polished bowl with black blotches. Some contents; (7) coarse brown ware pot, black blotches (A.V.b), containing rat or mouse skeleton; (8) hand-made coarse brown ware pot with black blotches (A.XXI.d); (9) very roughly made mud ware cup (Reisner type E.D. II.11); (12) miniature buff ware pot (A.I.e). At least four—vessels 3, 4, 5, and 7—may have belonged to Burial B. The child had the small mud jar (9) by its chest.

Finds (1) fragments of leather belt; (10) 85 white bone short beads, 2 white bone barrel beads, 1 green faience short bead; (13) trace of a leather cap; (14) traces of a leather skirt; (15) traces of a leather cap.

Grave 7 (fig. 15)

Heavily plundered.

Superstructure Rectangular, solid, dry freestone masonry, 5 m x 4.35 m, of which there were two courses preserved. Corners were squared intentionally, although one (NE) had been left rounded. No sign of an offering place.

Substructure Oval pit cut into the clay, c.2.15 m x 1.42 m and 1.5 m deep, covered by great worked flat slabs, of which one was still in position. The tomb was the largest in the cemetery and had been devastatingly robbed, even the covering slabs of the grave having completely disappeared. At the head of the grave may have been an offering slab.

Burials Traces of two skeletons, one possibly male. Four leg bones and parts of a pelvis were found at the west end of the grave, suggesting that the head was east, but this is not certain.

Grave 8 (fig. 16)

Plundered.

Superstructure An oval superstructure, c.4.3 m x 4 m, of rough, dry stone masonry, with a sand filling. Laid in courses, of which one–two are preserved.

Substructure An oval pit, c.2 m x 1.2 m, cut to a depth of 1.4 m.

Burial Remains of a child.⁷⁸ Only the skull was in position at the west end of the grave, where it faced north.

⁷⁸ There is a discrepancy between the day book description of the skeletal remains from grave 8, which state they belonged to a child, and the grave plan notes on the loose graph paper, which describe these remains as being of a male adult.

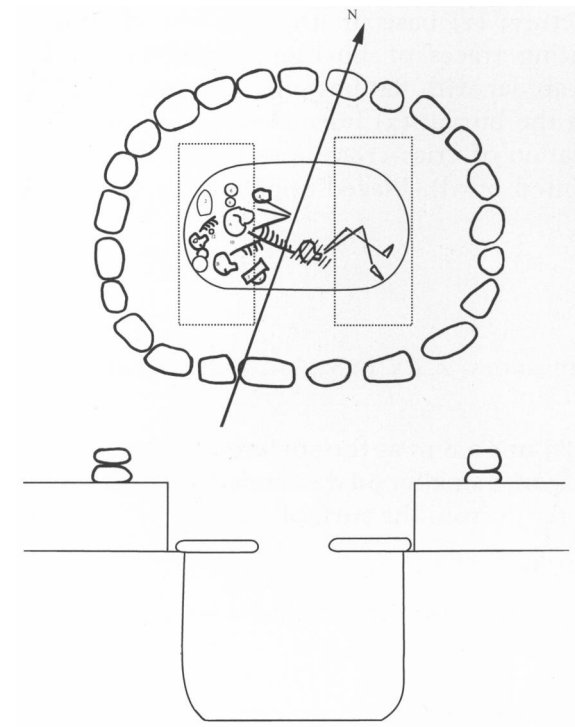


FIG. 14. Plan and section of grave 5. Not to scale.

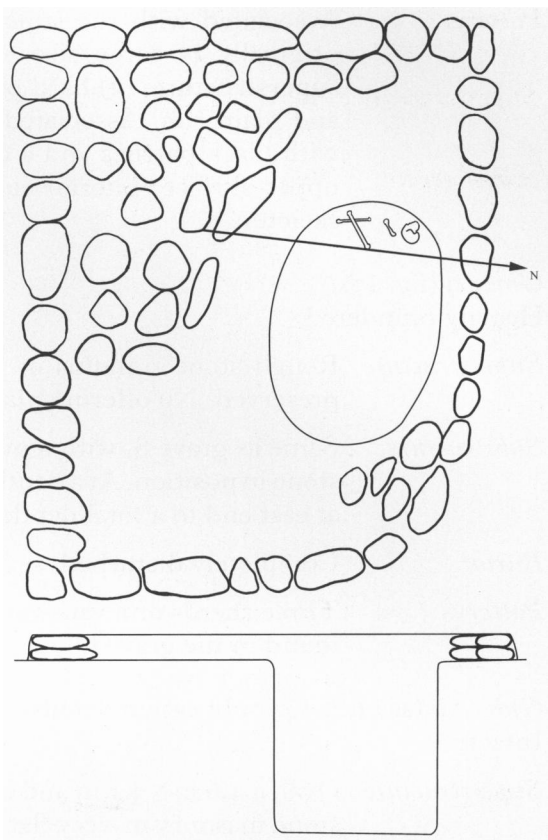


FIG. 15. Plan and section of grave 7. Not to scale.

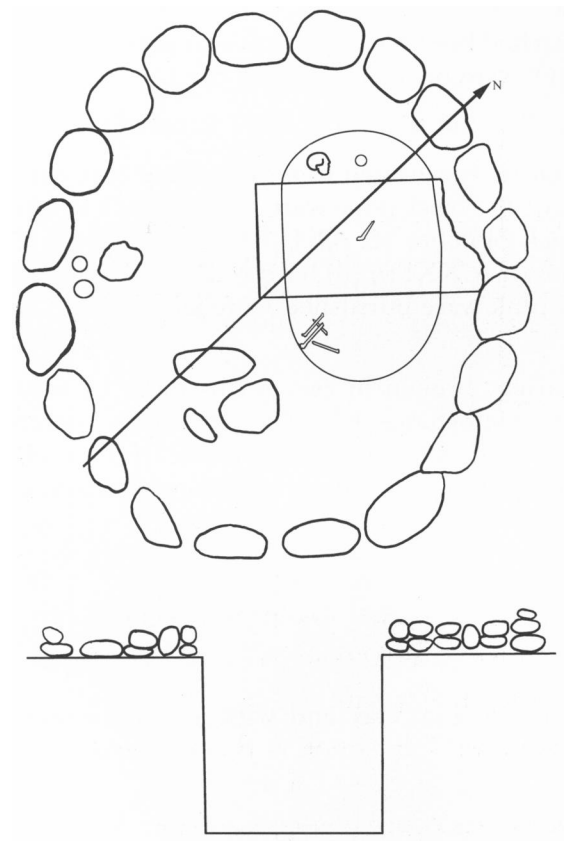


FIG. 16. Plan and section of grave 8. Not to scale.

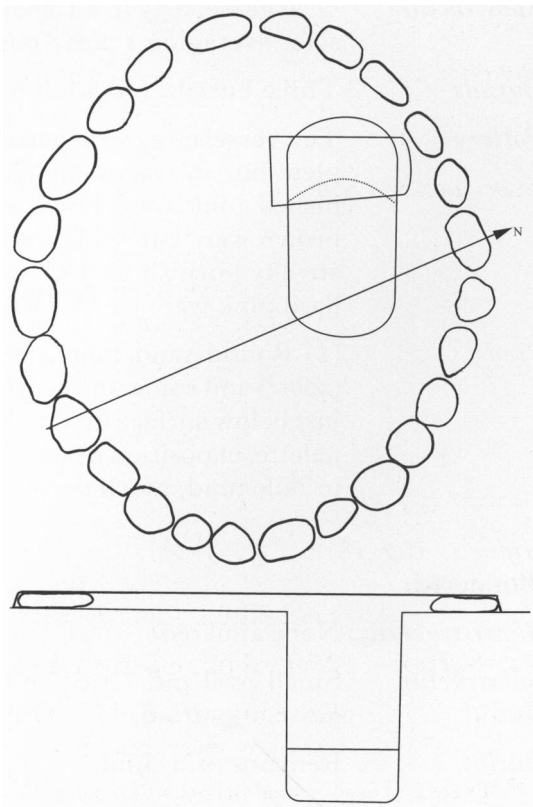


FIG. 17. Plan and section of grave 9. Not to scale.

Pottery Associated with the superstructure: (1) base of a coarse brown ware jar originally of large size exhibiting traces of burning, found on level of superstructure; (2) hard pink ware jar with flat bottom, low wide shoulders and plain rim. Associated with the burial: (3) burnished pink ware saucer with black patches and a decoration of criss-cross lines in red paint on the upper surface (interior red-painted bowl). Placed opposite the face of the skeleton.

Grave 9 (fig. 17)

Heavily plundered.

Superstructure Rough stone tumulus of dry masonry, c.4.5 m × 4 m. Only 1 course was preserved. No offering place.

Substructure Same as grave 8, with a pit c.1.83 m × 0.8 m at the surface and one covering stone in position. At a depth of 1.1 m, a smaller pit descended, c.1.3 m × 0.8 m, at east end to a total depth of c.1.5 m from the surface.

Burial Completely disturbed, sex uncertain.

Pottery Three sherds of a variegated haematitic (decorated egg-shell) ware cup were found in the grave fill.

Grave 10 (see n. 1 for publication details)

Intact.

Superstructure Oval, c.4.6 m × 3.1 m and beautifully preserved: it was built in courses of dry stone masonry of very flat slabs, each c.0.5 m × 0.35 m. In sand: on the south side seven courses were preserved up to a height of 0.6 m. On the south side also, where the grave was dug, the wall was doubled.

Substructure Oval grave, 2.35 m × 1.46 m, which had been covered by five large rectangular slabs averaging 1.2 m × 0.6 m: they were on average 0.1 m thick.

Burials Three burials: (A) adult male(?); (B) adult female(?); adult female(?).

Pottery Ten vessels: (2) variegated haematitic (decorated egg-shell) ware cup, complete but in fragments (A.XXI.a); (3) hard pink ware jar (A.I.c); (4) burnished pink ware bowl with black blotches (A.XXII.b); (5) see finds; (6) brown ware cup with black blotches (A.XXI.a); (8) hard red ware bowl with streaky burnish (A.IX); (9) hard pink ware burnished wine jar (A.I.b); (10) hard pink ware jar (A.IV.c).

Finds (1) Round sandstone incense burner, broken in two, with traces of kohl? (soot?) and some unidentified purple substance. Found inside superstructure just below surface in sand filled west end; (5) hard stone (granite?) rhomboidal palette, in position near face of burial (A); (7) fan of ostrich feathers embedded in Nile mud, much decayed.

Grave 11 (fig. 18)

Plundered.

Superstructure None apparent

Substructure Small oval pit, c.1.03 m × 0.53 m, cut into clay and with a straight-sided grave at bottom.

Burial Remains of a child.

Grave 12 (fig. 19)
Heavily plundered.

Superstructure Oval shaped, $c.2.95 \text{ m} \times 2.48 \text{ m}$, of the same type as 8, 9, and 10, filled with sand. At its west end, three rectangular thin slabs of sandstone were set upright, one placed against the superstructure, two at right-angles to it. The largest was 0.88 m high and the smallest 0.68 m high. The gebel around the grave was covered with a layer of clay, some 8 cm thick.

Substructure Rounded pit, $c.1.33 \text{ m} \times 2.3 \text{ m}$, with straight sides. It was cut to a depth of $c.1.1 \text{ m}$ and covered with flat worked slabs.

Burials Two burials: (A) skull, probably of a young female adult, at west end of grave, in original position but face up; (B) female adult, head at west end of grave, face down.

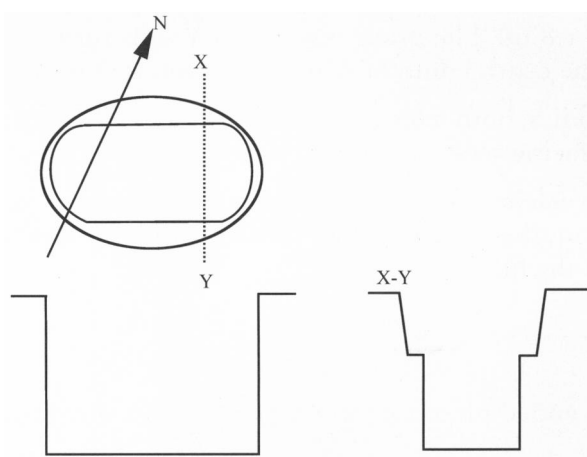


FIG. 18. Plan and section of grave 11. Not to scale.

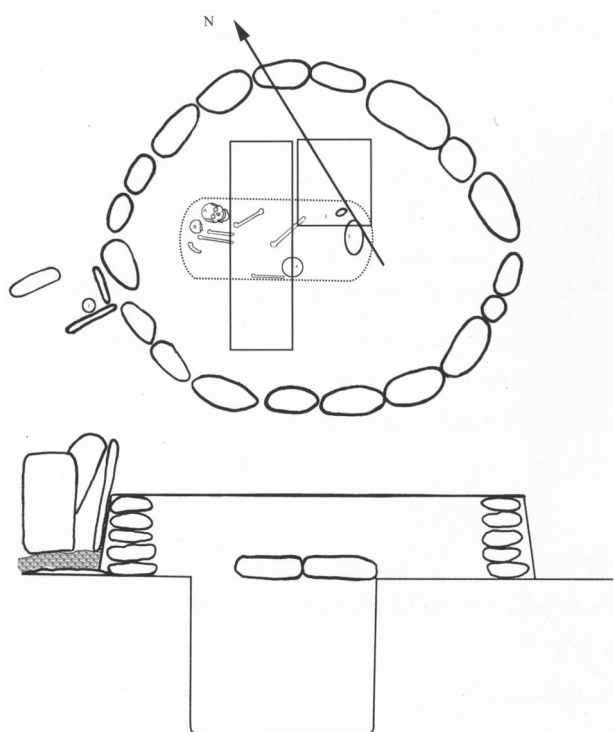


FIG. 19. Plan and section of grave 12. Not to scale.

Pottery Associated with the superstructure: (1) sherds of a large coarse brown ware deep bowl. Associated with the grave: (4) large broken polished pink ware bowl with black blotches at bottom of the grave. Mended anciently.

Finds (2) In position at foot (east) end was a grindstone of granite with traces of red pigment; (3) an 'alabaster' pebble rubber found beside the grindstone; (5) a blue glaze pendant bead was found in the fill, possibly dropped by plunderers along with; (6) a short bone bead.

Grave 14 (fig. 20)

Plundered.

Superstructure Badly destroyed. Only one course of flat stones was preserved on the south side.

Substructure Large oval pit, *c.* 2.5 m × 2 m at the top, 1.4 m deep, and with a grave floor of *c.* 2 m × 1.8 m. The grave was covered with very large worked stone roofing slabs, the central ones of which had been removed in the plundering.

Burial Two bodies, both male (?), one with a badly diseased pelvis (osteo-arthritis?). Heads facing west.

Pottery Three vessels: (1) half of a hard pink ware water jar, mended anciently; (2) black-mouthed red polished bowl with black blotches; (3) sherd of incised ware in the fill.

Grave 15 (fig. 21)

Plundered.

Substructure Round-ended pit, *c.* 1.33 m × 0.75 m, cut in alluvium to a depth of 0.88 m.

Burial Disturbed remains, probably a young female. Skull stained, possibly from a skull cap.

Pottery One vessel: (1) large pink ware bowl resting on a stone at the west end of the grave; (2) fragments of leather and vegetable fibre from clothes.

Grave 16 (fig. 22)

Superstructure A small, well-preserved oval superstructure, *c.* 2.08 m × 1.68 m, preserved to three–four courses. A deliberate break was found in the masonry at the west end.

Substructure The grave was a narrow rectangular trench, 1.5 m × 0.45 m, with round ends, found under the northern half of the superstructure. It was 1 m deep.

Burial Infant, head south at depth of 35 cm from top of superstructure, just laid in fill. At bottom of pit, another infant burial.

Pottery One vessel: (1) pink ware bowl recovered from the east end of the grave (A.XII.b).

Grave 17

Completely plundered out.

Substructure Oval pit, *c.* 1.23 m × 0.83 m, cut to a depth of 0.83 m.

Grave 18

Completely plundered out.

Substructure Oval pit, *c.* 1.4 m × 0.78 m, cut to a depth of 0.68 m.

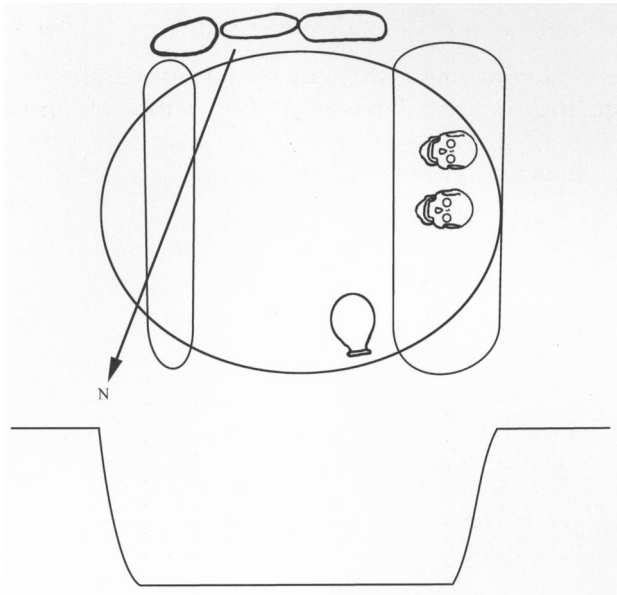


FIG. 20. Plan and section of grave 14. Not to scale.

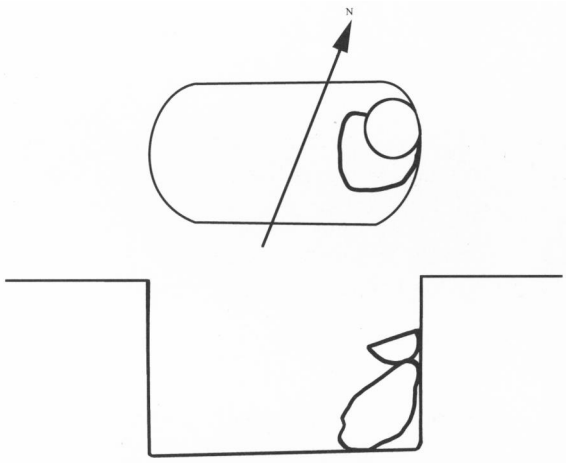


FIG. 21. Plan and section of grave 15. Not to scale.

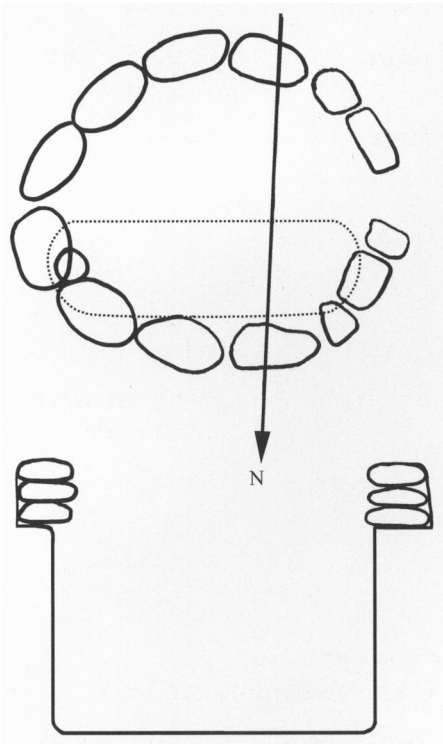


FIG. 22. Plan and section of grave 16. Not to scale.