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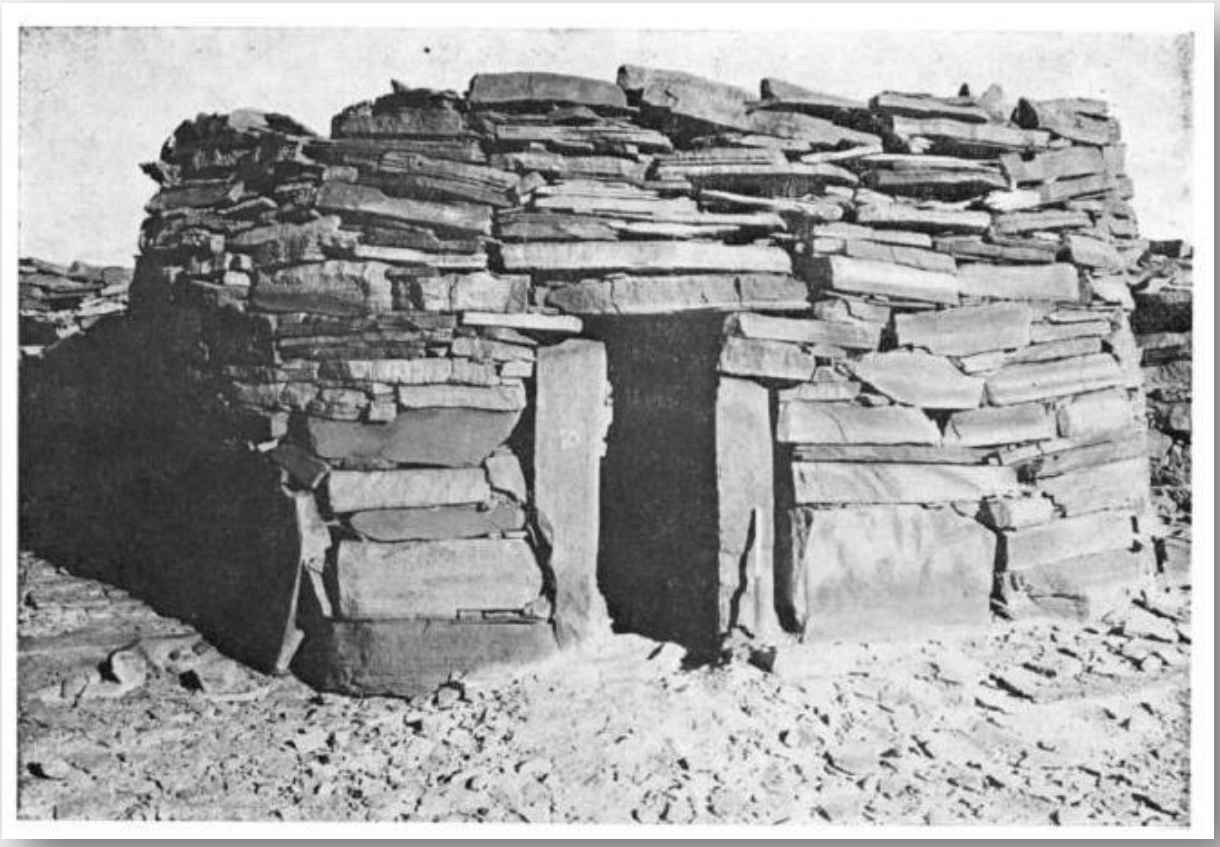
Comparative analysis of Early Bronze Age burials - A study in burial customs in Upper Egypt, Lower Nubia and the Sinai desert



The Nawamis near ‘Ein Huderah. Structure No. 10

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I. Preface

I first developed an interest for archaeology from north-eastern Africa when I took the ARK102 course. The course dealt with the first agriculturalists and metal users in north-Africa and the Nile valley. I also took a course in Egyptian history and hieroglyphs which was very informative, as well as RELV105 which touched upon ancient religions from different regions, including Egypt. My Bachelor thesis concerned burial rituals from the predynastic period to the end of the Old Kingdom in Egypt and I wanted to continue learning about this society and their closest neighbours.

Gathering the material for my thesis has been a challenge since much of the earlier work done in these regions is from early in the 20th century, when dating, sex determination and method for writing reports were different from today's standards. Also an issue was the excavation reports from Sinai which were written in Hebrew, I had to choose the two reports written in the English language. Both Reisner and Firths excavations in Lower Nubia were chosen due to their interesting finds and method. I chose to use the Scandinavian Joint Expedition report because it at the time it was published, contributed new information about the Nubian society. This was also the reason for choosing the Chicago Oriental Institute's report, since it gave previously unknown information about the "elite" inhabiting Lower Nubia. Since I was also focusing on Upper Egypt I had to use Petrie's report about the Naqada cemeteries. This because it was one of the first really big cemeteries located in the region and groundbreaking in its methodological approach. I also chose Randall-MacIver's excavation of El-Amrah due to his methods as well as the interesting burials uncovered. Peet's report on cemetery U at Abydos was chosen due to it having yielded so much information about the elite burials in Upper Egypt and because much of what has been published recently is written in German.

Since I was not able to travel to the areas concerning my thesis I had to fully rely on the excavation reports and their illustrations to guide me through the analysis. My main concern was when I was describing the different locations and analysing the findings, this because I had not been able to see the locations or the material *in situ*. On the other hand, I had the good fortune to travel to Sweden, Uppsala Museum, to see some of the material excavated from Lower Nubia and travel to England to visit the Petrie Museum and the Ashmolean Museum where much of the material from Upper Egypt used during the thesis are housed today.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my advisor Nils Anfinset for his feedback and help along the way. I would also like to thank my family who have supported and encouraged my education every step of the way. Especially to my parents, who have read my previous work, given me pointers and spellchecked. To my sister, Ragnhild, who has listened to my complaints and worries and helped me keep my motivation up. To Tobias, who has been my source of comfort and who always manages to bring the best out of me. To all my friends, even though they like to say they "are not interested in archaeology", who have listened to me explaining my work and encouraged me to finish. To my friends from University, who have given me many laughs, good conversations and wonderful distractions, but also invaluable feedback, I will forever cherish these last years of study.

Karoline Hareide Breivik
15th of May 2013

II. Abstract in Norwegian / Samandrag

I denne Masteroppgåva har eg sett på forskingsmaterial frå Øvre Egypt, Nedre Nubia og Sinai ørkenen. Eg har nytta både relativt gammal forsking av blant anna Petrie, Reisner og Firth, men også nyare frå den Skandinaviske ekspedisjonen samt frå Chicago Oriental Institute. Min metodiske framgansmåte baserer seg i stor grad på komparasjon, men også visuell og kulturell landskapsanalyse. Mitt teoretiske fundament er kognitiv og kontekstuell arkeologi, og her fokuserer eg på tolking av grava gjennom symbolikkbruk, landskapsarkeologi, ideologi, religion og overgansritar. For å kunne gje ein god kontekst til dei førestående kapitla der eg tar for meg materialet, omhandla kapittel fem geografi, landskap og klima i områda. For forståinga av kva menneske det var som nytta gravplassane, omhandla kapittel seks pastoralnomadar og deira tilpassing til ørkenområda. Dei tre neste kapitla tar for seg det teoretiske materialet til områda mine der eg fokuserer på gravstruktur, plassering av grava i landskapet, den døde, gravgods, kjønn og alder der det er mogleg. I analysen samlar eg materialet frå alle områda og sett dei opp mot kvarandre, her er det fokus på gravområdet, struktur, gjenstandar, handelsvarer, ideologi og symbolisme. Gjennom denne analysen forsøker eg å tolke materialet for å få ei betre forståing for korleis menneska levde, såg på seg sjølve og ikkje minst korleis dette vart portrettert gjennom gravlegginga og materialet i grava.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 – Introduction

Archaeological research shows that burial structures and its content have a massive potential for conveying what a society was like and developed into. Studying the material remains from burial sites can give the researcher a glimpse into the life of early societies before writing. The most striking form of ideology for which there is evidence is in burial practices and changes in these through time. Symbolism in burials did not only reflect the beliefs surrounding death, but also the symbolic means of social and economic control (Bard, 1990: 3).

This thesis will focus on the burials from Early Bronze Age (EBA) and the predynastic, 5000-3000 BCE, which represents the period that succeeded the Neolithic. This was a time when metal was being used for the first time and the development of more complex and hierarchical societies emerged. There was a number of cultural changes, such as in agriculture and subsistence strategies, building materials, the introduction and use of copper and metals, and exchange systems over larger areas and between cultures (Anfinset, 2010). Exchange and trade are important aspects of studying prehistoric societies. By locating the origin of wares and material one also find the contact zones of the cultures in question. Exchange in a broader sense can also imply ideology, technology and all forms of interpersonal contact. The trade of material objects give a concrete indication of interaction between different areas and societies (Renfrew and Bahn, 2008: 357-360).

During the EBA the emphasis was on herding, mobile wealth, a portable material culture and an increase in the investment on funerary display. Due to the more mobile patterns, there was more focus on the importance of social display which centred upon the body and not the house (Wengrow, 2006: 30-31). In the period between 4000-3650 BCE cereal farming began playing an important role and an increase in sedentism is also apparent. Copper objects, such as awls, hooks, harpoons and chisels were added to the existing decorative objects (Wengrow, 2006: 31-36).

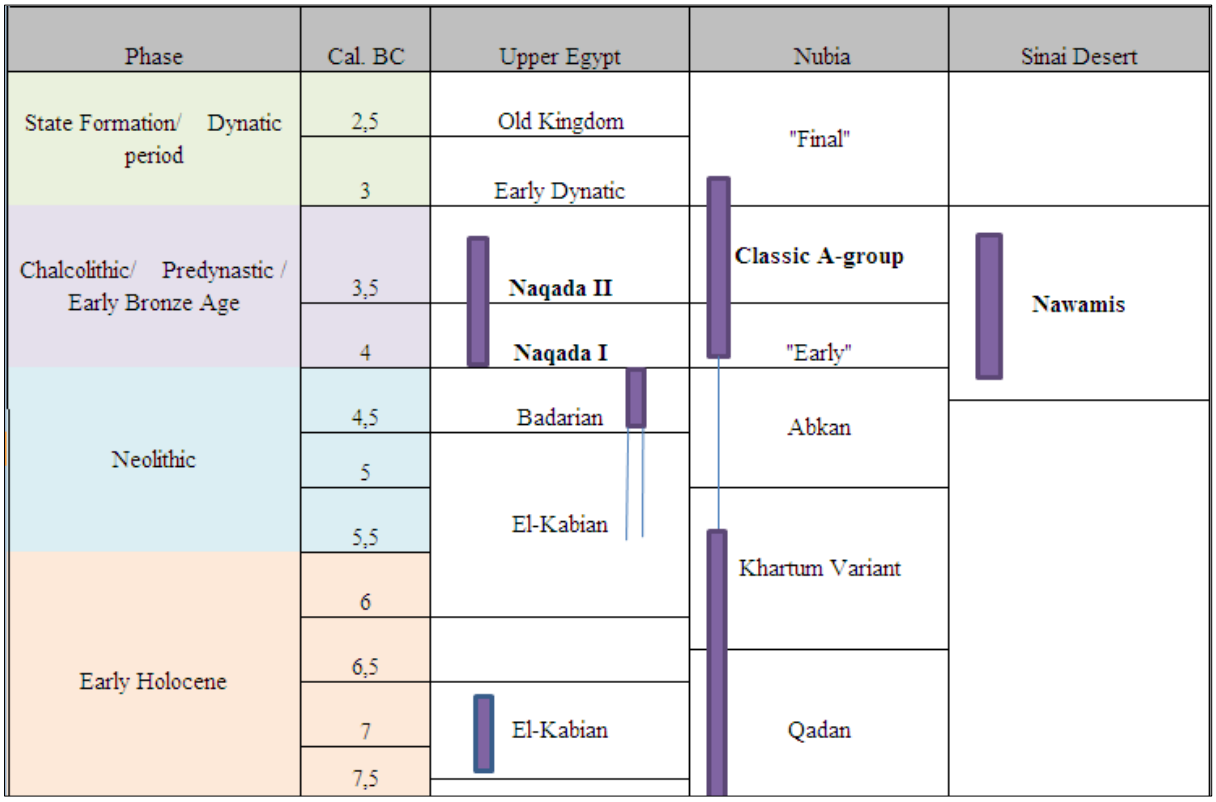

Table 1 The chronology of the different cultures in the areas of my study

1.2 – Delimitation in time and space

Here comes a brief outline concerning the area, period and material which will be used in the study.

1.2.1 – Area

The areas the thesis focuses on are in the north-east of Africa, which encompasses Egypt, the Sinai Peninsula and Lower Nubia. In Egypt the locus is on Upper Egypt, which is in the Nile Valley, specifically the area between Abydos and Hierakonpolis. In the Sinai the area is the margins of the High Mountains of Sinai and the Nubian sandstone fringes in the south. Lower Nubia is in the north of Sudan; here the focus is on the region between the First and the Second Cataracts.

1.2.2 – Period

The period which will be examined lies between 3500-2900/2800 BCE, Early Bronze Age and the predynastic period. This period is interesting because this is generally when cultures became more complex, in terms of agriculture, technology and exchange, which can be seen from the objects deposited in the grave along with the dead but also where the graves are placed in relation to the landscape.

1.2.3 – Material

The materials that will be studied are from burials in Upper Egypt, the Sinai and Lower Nubia. The thesis concerns what the material from the burials can be interpreted as; social differences, norms, ideology and religious ideas to name a few. The focus lies on the intention behind the objects placed in the burials with the deceased, as well as the burial in itself. In Egypt, the focus is on the predynastic graves from the Naqada culture, the nawamis in the Sinai desert and in the north of Sudan the A-group burials from Lower Nubia. The thesis also focuses on the placement of the burials, what they were made of. Where it is possible, the study will also focus on both "common/village" burials and "royal/wealthy" burials to illustrate the social organisation and how it changed over time.

1.3 – Research questions

The main goal of the thesis is to compare the burials from Egypt (Naqada), the Sinai desert (nawamis) and Lower Nubia (A-group) and find out if there are connections and similarities between the burials and the content.

- What can the placements and the sizes of the burials inform archaeologists about the social status of the deceased?
- Are the burials primary- or secondary burials?
- Can some form of shared ideology be seen through the burials and if so, how was it expressed? What is the burial content (burial goods)? Where are the burials located in the landscape, and what material was used to make them? How large were the burials?

1.4 – Structure of the thesis

The second chapter in thesis gives a brief outline of the research history that directly concerns the study. Chapter three describes the methodological approach used in the thesis. Chapter four focuses on the theoretical perspectives, giving a brief outline of the different paradigms and what has been chosen as important for the research on burials. Chapter five concerns the geography and climate changes of the regions chosen and what that might have meant to the societies who inhabited the different areas. Chapter six focuses on pastoral nomads since the EBA and the predynastic was a transition period where there was more focus on sedentism and less on movement and nomadic activities. The next three chapters describe the different cemeteries and the content from Upper Egypt, the Sinai and Lower Nubia. Chapter ten

compares and analyze the material and findings from the different regions and concludes if there were any similarities between them.

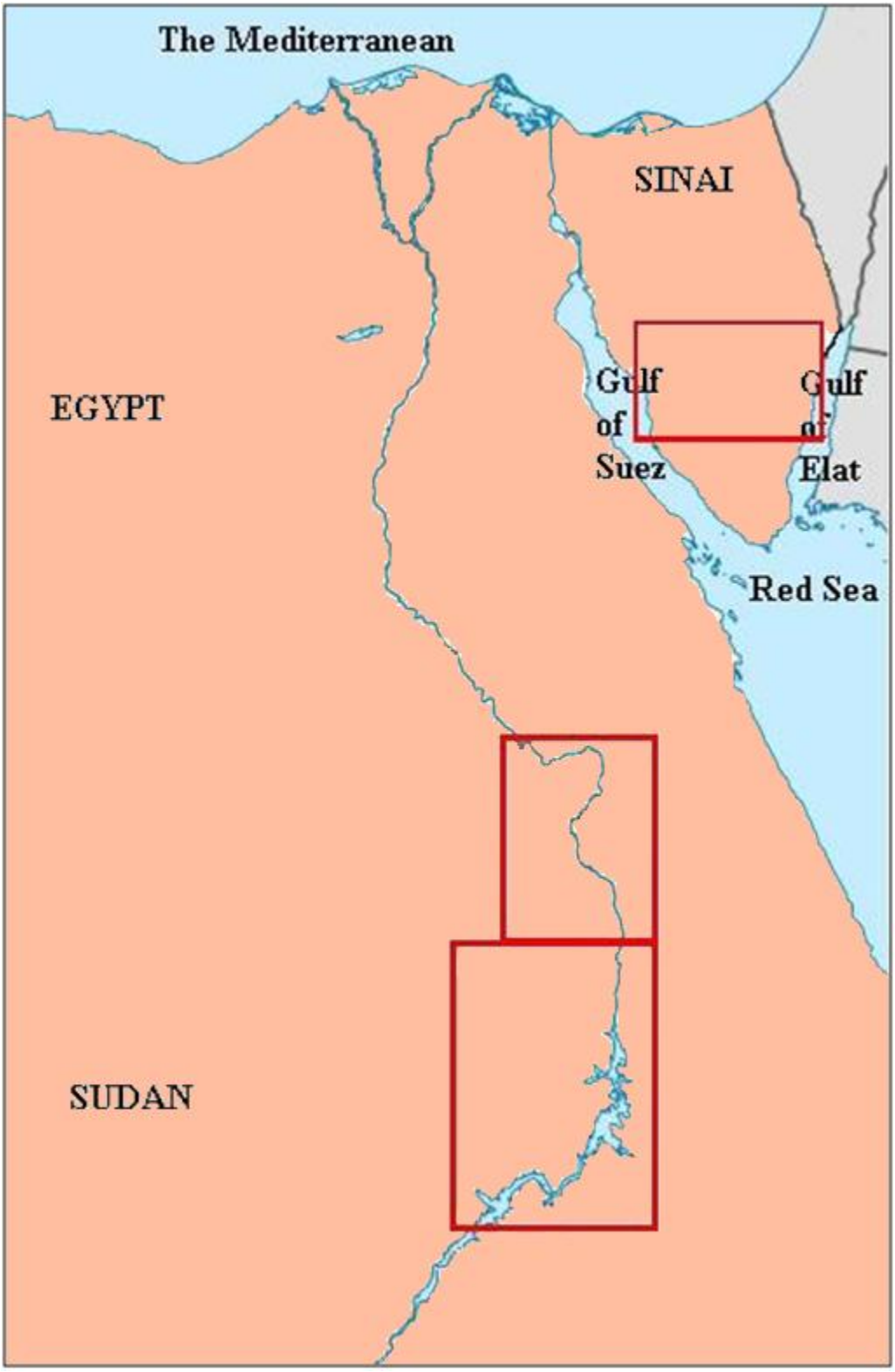

Fig. 1 The areas of my study

Chapter 2 – Research history

This chapter present previous research done in the areas directly concerning the thesis. This research and the published materials are the foundation on which the theoretical knowledge on the material is based. As will be shown there has been more research and publication on Egypt and Nubia than on the Sinai Peninsula from the time period chosen. This means that the theoretical foundation is slightly unequal, with more documentation from Lower Nubia and Upper Egypt. This is normal for any study on archaeological material, but it has to be mentioned.

Before reviewing the previous research in the areas of the thesis, it would be prudent to point out important aspects of early antiquarianism and archaeology which has dominated Western Europe. The different research methods mentioned here have all been used in some way for the collection of material used in this study. Archaeological surveys and research was mostly executed by foreign western archaeologist at the end of the 19th - and beginning of the 20th century. They took with them huge amounts of archaeological material back home, a form of imperialism and colonialism. Colonialists with no ties to the country or their past, practiced archaeology to show their own supremacy over the colonized country. An example here is the "tribal cultures" of Africa from a western European perspective as being static (Trigger, 1989, Trigger, 1984: 360-363) . In an article by Trigger he comments on nationalistic archaeology as a way to draw attention to earlier cultural and political achievements. Pointing out Israel and their archaeological focus on the population's right to land occupation due to earlier settlement in the past (Sinai). As well as Egyptian archaeology reliving past glories before Islamic times (Trigger, 1984: 358-360).

2.1 – Upper Egypt

Most of what is known from the prehistory of Egypt comes from grave monuments and not from settlements. The earliest treasure hunters of Egypt in the 19th century brought with them whole burials and temple walls and bad excavation techniques and equipment led to many locations being ruined. At the end of the 19th century this all started to change. Many archaeologists started seeing the value in a more methodical approach to the excavations. One of the pioneers was William Flinders-Petrie. His work was detailed and meticulous. He expressed that the archaeological data could be just as informative as the hieroglyphic texts. One of the methods he used was seriation, which is a relative dating technique, where

ceramics is placed in a chronological order based on its shape. This technique is still used today with just a few modifications (Wilkinson, 2008).

It was from Upper Egyptian cemetery sites such as Naqada and Ballas (Petrie et al., 1896) and el-Abadiya and Hiw (Petrie, 1901) that the predynastic was first recognized and classified. The Naqada burials were located in Upper Egypt, stretching from Abydos in the north to Hierakonpolis in the south (Wengrow, 2006). Petrie subdivided the predynastic period into three phases; the Amratian, the Gerzean, and the Semainean. Later, an even older unit than the Amratian has been recognized as the Badarian (Hassan, 1988: 138-139).

Petrie's excavation at Naqada, near Luxor, in Upper Egypt in 1895 was of great importance for the knowledge of Egyptian civilisation before the First Dynasty. There were three cemeteries, the Main Cemetery with more than 1900 burials, Cemetery B with more than 130 and Cemetery T with 58. Cemerety T had the richest and most important tombs and was contemporary with the later part of the two other cemereries and lasted through the whole Naqada II period (Baumgartel, 1970). Randall-MacIver was one of Petries followers and excavated El Amrah according to Petries principles. During the excavation he discovered two cemeteries from predynastic times, Cemetery A- and B (1902). T. Eric Peet conducted excavations in Egypt from 1909 and onwards for the Egypt Exploration Fund and among other things excavated at Abydos, Cemetery U (1911-1912), which has been further excavated on later occations.

2.2 – Lower Nubia

An important researcher on Nubian prehistory was the Egyptologist George Andrew Reisner. He was as meticulous as Petrie in his projects, making sure his workmen kept field notes, took photos and teaching them proper archaeological methodology. He dug at many important sites in Egypt such as Deir el-Ballas and Naga ed-Deir, but his main work was done at Giza. Both Reisner and Petrie where interested in pottery and spent considerable time studying the materials from excavations (Wilkinson, 2008: 11-12). Reisner was the first person to describe a non-Egyptian culture south of the First Cataract (1910a) during the season 1907/08 of the First Archaeological Survey. He divided them into different "groups" following the alphabetical letters (A to X).

Firth was first Reisner's assistant during the first season, but took over the project during the last three seasons. Both Reisner and Firth's excavations came about because of the continuing

construction on the Aswan Dam, which would inundate the regions between the First Cataract and the village of Derr. Reisner's chronological sequence coined the "A-Group" was defined as the last phase of the Nubian prehistory, which was supposed to be contemporary to the end of Naqada III, and the first two Egyptian dynasties (ca. 3100-2800 BCE).

A great improvement on the definition and knowledge of the A-Group was provided by the results of the UNESCO campaign in the Wadi Halfa reach and the Second Cataract area. Especially the investigations and surveys done by the Scandinavian Joint Expedition (Gatto, 2006b, Nordström, 1972a). In 1960, UNESCO launched an international campaign to save the ancient temples and monument in Lower Nubia, between the First and the Second cataracts, which was being flooded when the High Dam at Aswan was constructed. In addition, archaeological investigations and surveys were conducted in the endangered areas. During this time the Scandinavian Joint Expedition to the north of Sudan was one of the most prominent in the Wadi Halfa reach from 1961-1964. The Scandinavian team included Nordic archaeologists who took part in the fieldwork during the four seasons from 1961-64. The concession area was on the east shore of the Nile, from the Egyptian border in the north, to Gamai on the Second Cataract in the south, approximately 60 km. The centre of the concession area was the little town of Wadi Halfa. The sites investigated were rock drawings, churches, settlements and cemeteries from various periods of both Nubian and Egyptian history. In total there was 490 registered sites and 4200 excavated tombs (Säve-Söderbergh, 1979). There are now substantial collections in the Nordic countries because of find divisions and agreements between the expedition and the Sudanese authorities (Nordström, 1972a).

From 1962-1964 the Chicago Oriental Institute participated in the UNESCO rescue campaign to save the monuments of Nubia. The Institute explored the entire stretch of Nubia between the First and Second Cataracts, and got a concession which included the area on both sides of the Nile from Abu Simbel in the north, ending at the frontier of the Republic of the Sudan. The last season (1963-1964) was devoted to the excavation of A-group cemeteries. It was during this season that the two major burial sites of A-group remains were discovered, Cemetery L and Cemetery W (Williams, 1986b).

Fig. 2 Picture from the Aswan Dam: Lake Nasser (Private Picture)

2.3 – The Sinai Peninsula

From the summer of 1967, Israel occupied the Sinai Peninsula. What led to this occupation is known today as the Six-Day War which was fought between Israel and the neighbouring states (Egypt, Syria and Jordan). During this war Israel occupied the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and the Golan Heights. For a 15 year period following the Six-Day War of 1967, Israeli archaeologists excavated many sites in the Sinai. Israeli archaeological Institutions undertook large-scale surveys and excavations in Sinai. These surveys were the first systematic research expeditions done on the Sinai Peninsula and it is this research material I'm using in my thesis. In 1982, Israel returned the Sinai to Egypt and withdrew military and civil settlements and today the Sinai is no longer seen as an occupied territory. In 1979, Israel and Egypt signed the Camp David Peace Accord which stated that all antiquities excavated during the occupations were to be returned to Egypt by the end of 1994 (Horwitz, 2005).

Early 19th century travellers from Europe were the first to record the circular structures known as nawamis in southern Sinai.

There has been excavations and intensive research since the beginning of the 20th century (Palmer, Wilson, Petrie, Currelly and Rothenberg). Wilson (Wilson, 1869: 194ff) described the nawamis in his survey as dwellings due to the lack of bone remains and partly because of

their proximity to cultivated land. During Petrie and Currelly's survey in the Sinai, they came upon the nawamis in Wadi Nasb and defined them as burial structures built in the form of bee-hives from a very early date. Petrie also measured the thickness of the tomb walls, as well as noticed the orientation of the door. In the tombs they found a stone bead, disc-shaped of carnelian, copper instruments, twisted wire, shell armlet and shell beads (Petrie and Currelly, 1906: 243-244). One of the main groups of nawamis is located near 'Ein Huderah in eastern Sinai and was discovered by Rothenberg (1967-72). Since then, the site has become a tourist attraction and visitors to the structures were disturbing the context of the nawamis by their unauthorized digs. This led to the emergency excavation of the site with help from the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University, In the course of two season (1971-1972) work on 24 of the 42 nawamis were tested and excavated (Bar-Yosef et al., 1977).
The excavations of the nawamis and the habitation sites Gunna 25, 50 and 100 (South Sinai) was part of a salvage project led by A. Goren, Archaeological Staff officer for Sinai from 1977-1978. The necessity for a salvage excavation was due to the building of alternative roads from the Gulf of Elat to St. Catherine's monastery. During the three field season twelve nawamis, one cist tomb and three habitation sites were systematically excavated (Bar-Yosef et al., 1986). Since the bone preservation has been poor and there has been many plundering through the years, the chronology and time period of the nawamis has been difficult to ascertain, however the archaeologists have estimated the burials to be dated between the fourth and third millennium BCE (Bar-Yosef et al., 1986).

Summary

Reasons for choosing to use excavation reports from the early 20th century as well as from the 60s and 70s is due to them being conducted in a good and scientific way, as well as what was recovered has been of great importance in the study of Early Bronze Age in both Egypt and Nubia. In choosing these excavations and eliminating others, it of course limits the knowledge about other important excavations and their findings. This is normal in any study conducted, the time restrain, as well as the size of the material being studied, forces one to make choices about what is important to the study on the basis of what one wants to research. It is easy to get caught up in the reports and all the information given in them and not being able to extract the important points. This is also why the previous research is limited to only a few in each area. The thesis focuses on the "overall picture" and not specific burials; they are only there to illustrate the general tendencies from the different cemeteries.

Chapter 3 – Methodological approach

This chapter will describe the methodological approaches used during the thesis. The thesis is mainly built up using written reports as the foundation but I have also been able to visit the museum in Uppsala which has an extensive collection of the material from the A-group burials excavated by the Scandinavian Joint Expedition and the Petrie- and Ashmolean museums where some of the Naqada materials from Petrie's excavations are housed. Unfortunately, there was no opportunity to see the material from the nawamis in the Sinai. The method in the analysis is a comparative study of the material from the different burial sites chosen as significant to the study. Spatial analysis with visual landscape methods have also been used to study of the burials as structural elements which helped shape the ancient landscape.

3.1 – The comparative method

As mentioned above, a comparative approach was used during the study. Without comparison it easily becomes a culture-bound theory, which compresses and ignores variations and focuses on generalized similarities. In this study the focus lies on both the social and spatial scale through variations in time and space (Dark, 1995).

Comparative method is the study of similarities and differences between countries, societies and areas. It is based on comparable data surrounding different areas or contexts (Grønmo, 2004). The comparative method can increase our understanding of the social processes in the past. It is therefore important to use a scientific way to interpret the past and use primary data in the analysis. A scientific way means using the same methodological principles, the thought that processes and conditions are constant through time and space, using primary data leads to less prejudice and mistakes and studying the actual data from the archaeological register, rather than using secondary sources from other scientists (Smith, 2012: 325-326). It is important to remember that archaeology is not a neutral science. There are no safe forms of data, whether one is looking at an object or trying to interpret it. Every remark about an archaeological material contains some form of interpretation or opinion from the scientist and is therefore not just fact-oriented or objective. On the other hand can comparison be a useful aid in the process to a final theory about a phenomenon.

The study combines the comparative- as well as the qualitative interpretation method, were every object is seen as unique (Grønmo, 2004: 386-387). It is also case-oriented and "small

scale" were there are a small number of cases and every unit is analyzed deeper and with more contextualization (Smith, 2012: 7).

The thesis focuses on the material from three different burial sites in three different regions, but mainly from the same timeframe, Early Bronze Age and the predynastic; comparing the general features of the burials as well as where they are located. Studying the artefacts from the burials and the general layout of the bodies will give an indication as to whether there has been any contact between the different regions during this time, and if they might have had a shared ideology of some sorts. Comparing the placement of the burials is also useful as it can increase the understanding of the ancient landscape and what was seen as meaningful.

3.2 – Spatial analysis and visual landscape methods

A starting point for social analysis of burials according to Østigård (2006: 10) are three main variables; the way the body is treated (burnt or not), presence or absence of burial furnishings and if the burial is given a visual marker above ground (superstructure). What can be interpreted from these variables are social markers such as identity, status, power and claims of property.

Spatial analysis in the thesis focuses on burial complexes and its potential as being valuable concerning landscape archaeology as well as the material artefacts. The thesis focuses on the spatial distribution of burials and cemeteries from the different sites chosen. Where are the cemeteries located in the landscape and what might that reveal to the researcher? Number of burials, single or multiple, might also give an indication as to the size of the population at a certain time. Studying objects which are foreign to the culture and where they originated - contact-zones and trade routes. The burials can also convey something about the nucleus of the society, where are the wealthiest burials in the landscape, where are the more "ordinary" cemeteries?

3.2.1 – Structuring the visual landscape

Visual landscape analysis was developed during the so called post-processual paradigm in the 1990s by Keller, Jerpåsen and Gansum. By applying landscape architecture, a method was formulated to describe a landscapes visual structure and how a place relates to this structure. The method was mainly developed to analyze sacral works such as burial monuments. This method and its concepts are only used to illustrate and visualize the use of landscape.

The most central concept in this method is landscape space. To explain the different concepts a parallel is drawn to buildings. Space can be summed up as the compound view of the floor, walls and ceiling. The flat areas consist of the floor while elements such as hills and mountains make up the walls, whereas the sky is the ceiling. Space is a phenomenon in the landscape and is part of the landscapes topography. The important question here is to what degree the inhabitants related to this topography when structuring the landscape. Is there an obvious correlation between the burial placement and the visual structure of the landscape? (Gansum et al., 1997)

The thesis focuses on structuring the landscape – i.e. how the landscape was perceived in ancient times. Important questions are; what do the burials relate to in the landscape, which direction are they facing? The opposite is the view of the burials; can they be seen from far away, over great distances? Are the burials public or private, excluding or including?

Concepts that will be used when structuring the landscape are:
- *Borderlines and edges*: limiting elements in the landscape with a linear character. Examples here are mountainsides, valley edges, vegetation and water.
- *Movement lines and passages:* Linear elements in the landscape which gives natural transportation possibilities and a foundation for visual passage. Examples here are rivers, valleys, paths and vegetation free corridors.
- *Junction:* an area where there are several movement lines or a core area in a landscape. Examples here are houses, peaks, converging rivers, cross-roads and meeting places.
- *Landmarks:* distinct features in the terrain. Examples here are a dominant tree or mountain (Gansum et al., 1997: 13-16).

As pointed out by Gansum, Jerpåsen and Keller (1997: 18); humans are not passive viewers of the landscape and its changes, we participate in changing the landscape which surrounds us. We actively shape the landscape to suit our own needs, either economically, socially or ideologically. Limiting elements in a landscape, such as rivers, mountains, and valleys are also elements that are embraced and in a practical sense these elements can serve as territorial markers, outposts for guards, and natural safety. Rituals and symbolic meanings can also be applied to these elements in the landscape. In this instance the limiting elements become a part of the ancient peoples formation of cultural structures (Gansum et al., 1997: 18).
For this analysis to be feasible one has to rely on maps and the written source from the different archaeological surveys and excavations.

Potential concerns

It is important to point out that the material studied during the thesis is not at equilibrium with each other. Both the Naqada- and the A-group burials have been documented and published, while the nawamis in the Sinai have been studied but not published as extensively as the others (some in Hebrew). Due to the limited timeframe of the Master Thesis, the study had to rely on previous examinations by researchers for the presentation of the material as well as pictures and drawings from the excavated sites, maps and artefacts. The study also had to rely on the dating done by the previous researchers, mostly on ceramics. The dating of the A-group was done by comparing the ceramics with the Egyptian pottery, which had a good chronology. The materials from the nawamis in the Sinai had mostly been disturbed and bone preservation was poor, there were only indications as to the timeframe for these burials.

Summary

As illustrated, the comparative method is the cornerstone of the methodological approach of the material. As mentioned, it is important that the different sites are comparable and that they are in the same time frame. The spatial analysis focuses on the burial complexes, concerning landscape archaeology as well as the material artefacts in the burials. Also important is the spatial distribution of burials and cemeteries from the different sites. Here the main focus lies on the concepts such as structural landscape; how was the landscape perceived in ancient times, what do the burials relate to in the landscape, which direction are they facing, can the burials be seen from far away, over great distances, and are the burials public or private, excluding or including.

Chapter 4 – Theoretical perspectives

This chapter is organised in different sections with concluding remarks at the end. The different sections will describe the theoretical perspectives that are important concerning the rites surrounding death, which is the foundation of the analysis in the thesis. It contains general outlines concerning the theories as well as how they relate and have relevance to the study of burials.

4.1 – Cognitive and contextual archaeology

Post-processual archaeology was fronted by scholars such as Ian Hodder and Colin Renfrew in the 1980s and 1990s (Hodder, 1991, Renfrew, 1989, Hodder, 1985). The main idea behind this movement was that material culture could substitute written source. Their view was that material culture was packed with meaning where ideas and symbolism from the past could be conceived from archaeological study.

The main theoretical perspectives in the thesis are cognitive and contextual archaeology. These perspectives were developed by scholars such as Hodder and Renfrew (Dark, 1995: 143, Hodder, 1982, Renfrew, 1982). The thesis focuses on the symbolic and communicative aspects of material culture, especially how it is expressed through the burial ritual. The theory is also a hermeneutic way of interpreting the archaeological material, where one needs to understand and know the context before interpreting the archaeological remains (Olsen, 1997: 59-62, 102-104, Hodder, 1991).

Cognitive archaeology is based on the individual, where studying the social organisation is to try to understand the decisions made at an individual- and group level within a society. This will in turn give information about the social structure (Dark, 1995). The thesis studies the archaeological material from burials to trace the social structures of the different societies who utilised them. Symbolism, religion, ideology and identity are areas for cognitive analysis as long as they are empirically grounded. Structuralists use cognitive theory when suggesting that artefacts are expressions of human culture, meaning that artefacts are evidence of systems of belief in a broader sense and as evidence of "worldviews". Important here is the notion that one cannot reduce culture to one single pattern. The thesis also utilises a Marxist view were looking for contradictions is essential. Examples here are if burial practises are legitimate or mask what happened in life (Johnson, 1999: 89-97).

Contextual archaeology is also a useful way of approaching the material since it allows for multiple interpretations, the active role of the material culture, use of ethnographic analogy and the view that the role of the interpreter is not an objective or neutral one (Insoll, 2007). The idea behind contextual archaeology was that the only way to understand the material was to know the context in which it had been produced. Assigning meanings to objects which we assume were also in the minds of the ancient people who made- and used them. The view was that only by reconstruction of the specific culture-historic context could we begin to understand the meaning behind the material culture (Hodder, 1982). Without understanding the context of the material one can end up with objectified material, where typology and chronology is what matters. It is important to understand all aspects of the culture being studied before trying to interpret their material remains (Olsen, 1997: 102-103, 237). Context defined by Hodder is "*the totality of the relevant dimensions of variation around any one object*" (Hodder, 1991: 143). Reconstruction of past human activities relies on the context of the finds, such as artefacts, structures and organic remains. Without the context an object is just an object. It might be an impressive comb or an axe, but when all the contextual information is lost, one also lose the information about the society that produced it (Renfrew and Bahn, 2008: 52). This is why it is important to understand every aspects of the society being studied, whether it is an object or a burial. When it comes to burials, one has to understand that an object can have different meanings in different contexts. The thesis studies three different burial sites; cemeteries in Upper Egypt, A-group cemeteries in Lower Nubia and the nawamis in the Sinai desert. Important questions here are such as where were the objects placed alongside the deceased in the burial? What kind of person were they buried with? What other objects were they associated with? Were there similarities in the construction of the burial? Where are the burial sites located in the landscape?

4.2 – The burial

One of the most advanced areas in archaeology is the study of burial ritual. Where some archaeologists focus on the iconography and the symbolic aspects, others focus on the burial of the body itself and the rites surrounding it. Generally archaeologists have moved away from studies which view burial ritual as a passive action, and are now leaning towards seeing ritual as actively constructing the social order (Fogelin, 2007: 64). It is important to remember that there can be methodological problems where archaeologists tend to over-interpret the burial and its content. The placement of the body is often an idealistic one and not a realistic representation of the person buried (Dark, 1995: 92). The focus of the thesis is on single, both

primary- and secondary interments, as well as whole cemeteries and what can be interpreted from them, such as social hierarchy, ideology, religion, norms, rites and thoughts surrounding the dead and the living. The burial is also a social marker which conveys something about the status of the deceased. Where the burials are located at a certain point in time can also help archaeologist in interpreting the landscape and what it meant as well as how it was used in past times.

4.3 – Landscape archaeology

It is important to understand how people transform space into place. Here the emphasis is on the purity of space, the use of subsistence models based on the economically rational individual and environmental reconstructions. Of fundamental importance are the subjective elements of the landscape such as memory, power, identity, human agency and ritual. (Wilkinson, 2003: 4-6). Landscapes are worlds of cultural product and represent the record of dynamic processes of human interaction with their environments. A landscape approach provides a framework for assessing sources of behavioural variability in the archaeological record and allows observations in a context beyond the limits of the physical locations and boundaries of sites. By combining a landscape approach with traditional spatial and temporal systematics, it is possible to incorporate the dynamic scale of landscape analysis with the fine-scaled spatial and temporal analysis of patterns characteristic of traditional archaeological practice (Anschuetz, 2001: 191-192). By combining landscape archaeology with the other theoretical perspectives, the thesis will have a broader basis for the final analysis of the different burial sites.

4.4 – Symbolism

Symbols are often used to organize people and the material world. It can also display power and a form of hierarchy. Deposition of objects with the dead is often interpreted as a symbolic act, where the deceased is buried with objects of wealth and prestige (Renfrew and Bahn, 2000: 412, Dark, 1995: 115). In Hodder's words *"(...) symbol refers to an object or situation in which a direct, primary or literal meaning also designates another indirect, secondary and figurative meaning"*, he goes on saying *"(...) symbols do not 'reflect' but that they play an active part in forming and giving meaning to social behaviour"* (Hodder, 1982: 11-12). Leach argues that a *symbol* exists when A stands for B, and there is no prior relationship between A and B. He gives examples such as the snake being a symbol of evil in the Bible, when there is no zoological context where the snake is given any such meaning. He also distinguishes between *sign* and

symbol, were a *sign* exists when there is a prior relationship between A and B because they belong to the same cultural context. An example given here is where the crown is a sign of the ruling monarch and sovereignty (Leach 1976: 14). The focus lies on how symbols which express hierarchy and social status, wealth and ideology relate to the deceased, the burial and its content as well as the living.

4.5 – Rite of passage

Every life stage has rites of passage; from birth, youth, marriage, and in the end death. One can also call them an initiation, since one goes from once social state to another. Arnold van Gennep (1960) noticed a consistent pattern surrounding rites of passage. Almost all cases can be separated in to three phases, known as "*rites de passage*". According to Turner (1967: 93), "*rites of passages are found in all societies but tend to reach their maximal expression in small-scale, relatively stable and cyclical societies, where change is bound up with biological and meteorological rhythms and recurrences rather than with technological innovations.*" These divisions can also be used on death rites, which is the focus in the thesis. The first phase, called the separation phase, is when an individual goes from being alive to dead, i.e. when the person dies. This phase comprises symbolic behaviour signifying the detachment of the individual from an earlier fixed point in the social structure. This leads to the next phase which is called the liminal (margin) phase. This is the phase before the dead is buried. In this phase the individual becomes ambiguous, passing though a realm that has few or none attributes of the past or coming state. The last phase is called aggregation phase (incorporation), when the dead joins with his or her ancestors and the living can go on with their lives. In this phase the passage is consummated and the individual is in a stable state once more (Eliade, 1994, Turner, 1967: 93-111). Rituals can function both on a communal level and at an individual/personal level (Insoll, 2004: 158). As the thesis studies the burials from EBA in Upper Egypt, Lower Nubia and the Sinai desert, the focus will also be on the different phases described above and how they translate and can be seen in the different burials. Commitment to an individual after death can be seen in the burial treatment, burial structure and objects deposited. Objects might also signify the belief in a higher order. The overall homogeneity of the burials orientation shows a uniform ideology.

4.6 – Ideology and religion

Ideology is the body of doctrines, myths and belief that guides an individual, group or society (Fogelin, 2007: 55). The ideology surrounding death can be seen through objects, prestige items, jewellery and the burial itself. There are many different definitions on what constitutes

religion, but in the thesis Tylor's (1909: 424) minimum definition "*The belief in spiritual beings*" will suffice. Religion is often a system of collective and public actions (ritual) which express common beliefs or ideas (Insoll, 2004: 7). Religion can also be seen as a component which underlies all the use and meaning of a material culture (Insoll 2004: 154-155). While the sacred plays an important role in the regulation of human society, ritual serves a fundamental role in legitimizing social hierarchy by institutionalizing the ritual format, obtaining power by using symbols that regulate and captivate the individual participants of the ritual.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century scholars have been interested in the analysis and interpretation of ancient and modern rituals. The first attempt focused on the objectification, classification and distinction of rituals as fundamental to religious-sacred thought and behaviour. Ritual was viewed as an opposition to the profane activities of the society, where there was a clear distinction between the sacred and the profane sphere (Durkheim and Fields, 1995). In recent times, ritual has been interpreted in a broader social sense, being at the same time a religious phenomenon and a secular experience, seen whenever there is an association between action and symbolic meaning (Douglas, 1996).

In this thesis the object of focus is on how beliefs and ideas translate to the burials and the rites surrounding it. The burial in itself can signify a belief in a life after death, while burial goods show what the deceased and the community as a whole thought was important in life and what had symbolic meaning to him or her.

The analysis will use Rappaport's (1999) collections on definitions surrounding ideology, ritual, artefacts and the sacred:
Religious ideology "*not only formal religion, but also the various metaphysical beliefs, values, and behaviours that lie outside of the guidance of formalized religious institutions or dogmas. In this sense an ideology is a set of interrelated ideas that provides the members of a group with a rationale for their existence*" (Rappaport, 1999, in Conrad and Demarest, 1984: 4).
Ritual "*conventional acts of display through which one or more participants transmit information concerning their physiological, psychological, or sociological states, either to them- selves or to one or more of their participants*".
Ritual artefacts "*objects that are helpful in inducing religious experience or that can be used in rituals of sanctification. There are two categories of ritual artefacts, the exotic (made of materials foreign to the observer's/participant's experience) and the symbolic (manufactured into symbolic*

shapes or decorated with esoteric symbols)" (Rappaport, 1999, in Drennan, 1976: 357). Sacred "*the quality of unquestionable truthfulness imputed by the faithful to unverifiable propositions*" (Rappaport, 1999: 25-30).

4.7 – Identity

The term "identity" can be interpreted in many ways, but will in the analysis be used in a cultural sense, where identity is being projected from the cult surrounding the dead and the materials from the burial. What has been achieved in life, expectations, duties and status is expressed through sculptures, paintings, texts, burial goods and the buried body itself (Insoll, 2007). Identity and experience are included and grounded in the materiality of the body. The construction of the bodily identity can be socially changeable, but there is also a material constancy which helps to frame the individual (Insoll, 2007: 27). There is a point to be made surrounding the danger of archaeologists recognizing past identities along modern lines. It is important to exercise caution in projecting our social diversity on past societies and cultures (Insoll 2007: 3-4). The analysis focuses on how identity was expressed through the EBA burials from the Sinai, Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia and what they might inform archaeologists about these earlier societies. Identity is often shown through burial goods, the placement of the body and costumes. They can convey something about age, gender and the social status of the deceased.

Summary and concluding remarks

The different perspectives and theories presented here will be used during the analysis of the material. Using a cognitive and a contextual approach to the material while studying different aspects surrounding the burial, such as; landscape archaeology and placement, symbolism, rites of passage, ideology, religion and identity.

Being aware of different theories and approaches to archaeological material helps the researcher refine his or her own. The different theoretical perspectives are meant as tools for interpreting the archaeological remains found in the burials. The perspectives presented here are guidelines for how the study will be interpreting the material and analysing it further on in the thesis. They are also important with concerns to the final product. There will always be different approaches and views as to how archaeologists are to conduct their research and the ones chosen this study are just one of many ways going about interpreting the material from burials.

Chapter 5 – Landscape and climate changes

This chapter focuses on landscape and climate changes concerning the regions of the study. Climate and climate changes are often seen as explanations for social process and change. It forces people to adapt and develop defences against changes such as famine or draught (Wilkinson et.al., 2007). Being able to understand the environmental and climatic changes that occur is crucial for understanding human adaption (Rosen, 2007). As Bates and Rassam (2001: 1-2) summarized it *" It is thus impossible to separate cultural or social processes from the environmental setting in which they occur. The geological or topographical configuration, the climatic conditions, the distribution of water and minerals, and the occurrence of plant and animal life all affect the ways in which people live and, indeed, how societies has developed."* Revealing climate changes in the past helps our understanding of the human culture. Since Egypt, Nubia and the Sinai Peninsula are very dry regions and even the slightest change in annual rainfall might have had massive impacts on the societies living there and could have lead to draughts and famine.

5.1 – Upper Egypt an Lower Nubia

5.1.1 – Geography

Egypt is situated in northeast Africa. It borders to Libya in the west, Sudan in the south, the Mediterranean in the north, the Sinai Peninsula in the northeast and the Red Sea in the east. Egypt can be divided in two zones: *the black land* – the fertile land along the Nile and *the red land* – the inhospitable desert. The Nile stretches like a long oasis through Egypt all the way south to Ethiopia, approximately 6400 km from south to north. The Nile was the only source of water in Egypt as the desert surrounded the Nile on all sides. Along the Nile valley there is fertile land on both sides of the river, further out there is only season-based use. Before the dams were built along the Nile, the Egyptians were dependent on the yearly inundation from the Nile, which brought fertile sediment that was used in the fields for agriculture.

The northern Nile expands with the help from three side rivers from the south; the White Nile from Uganda, the Blue Nile from Ethiopia and Atbara in Sudan (Bar-Yosef et al., 1977). The Western Desert is characterized by plateaux and escarpments with large-scale depressions and a vast sea of sand, dominated by linear dunes, being essentially a gravel and sand desert. The Eastern Desert is a rugged mountainous region dissected by wadis, being essentially a rock desert (Anderson and Fisher, 2000: 27).

Sudan borders to Egypt in the north, the Red Sea in the northeast, Eritrea and Ethiopia in the east, South Sudan in the south, the Central African Republic in the southwest, Chad in the west, and Libya in the northwest. Sudan is situated in northern Africa, with an 853 km coastline bordering the Red Sea. The terrain is generally flat plains, broken by several mountain ranges. Lower Nubia is dominated by Nubian Sandstone, gravel formations and Pleistocene silt banks, dissected by wadis (Nordström, 1972c: 3). Nubia is part of the Nile Valley, its northern border is immediately south of Aswan at the First Cataract and has its southern border downstream from the Fourth Cataract. The geographical and cultural border between Egypt and Lower Nubia lies at Gebel es-Silsila at the northern end of the Kom Ombo plain, about 65 km to the north of the First Cataract and is today part of southern Egypt and northern Sudan (Nordström, 1972c: 3). Like Egypt, Nubia was also dependant on the Nile and its yearly inundation for agriculture. The western desert of Lower Nubia consists of an eroded sandstone plateau, broad expanses of rocky ground and poorly marked internal drainage into numerous closed basins (Wendorf, 1968: 6). The desert to the east of Lower Nubia is much more dissected than the western side due to a well developed drainage system between the Red Sea hills and the high ground of the Nubian Desert on one side and the Nile valley on the other. The structure is characterized by Nubian Sandstone and vast expanses of igneous (magmatic) and metamorphic rocks (Nordström, 1972c: 3).

5.1.2 – Climate

According to Gasse (2001) and Hassan (1997) the African climate is based on different factor such as the Intertropical Convergence (ITC) and the monsoons. The moisture in the tropical regions of Africa comes mainly from the highly seasonal African and Indian monsoons. The monsoons are triggered by the annual northwards expansion of the ITC. Postglacial movement was observed to coincide with high lake levels, whereas maximum glacial conditions were broadly matched with low lake levels. During the Last Glacial Maximum, northern Africa experienced a period of extreme aridity. Early to mid-Holocene the conditions were mild and humid in response to increased summer insulation over the northern hemisphere (Gasse, 1994: 435-436). Studies on lake levels in North Africa shows short term arid intervals at 9700- 9350, 8700-8600, 7900-7700, 7100-6900 B.P. in the Egyptian Sahara (Hassan, 1997: 215-216). About 5500 years ago the humid climate terminated and North Africa experienced more aridity which transformed the landscape from humid with high lake levels to the desert expanding and low lake levels (Gasse, 2001: 2259-2260).

The early Holocene landscape of the Nile Valley was formed by a distinct set of environmental conditions. From the south came the tropical summer inundations, while from the north came the Mediterranean winter-rainfall. This combined effect brought the valley to life with lakes and wadis. The rainfall pattern allowed savannah grasses to migrate into what are now hyper-arid areas. The river Nile created an ecologically diverse floodplain that supported a variety of fauna (Wilkinson, 2008). Between 8000 and 4000 BCE (Epipalaeolithic) the climate in the Nile valley was considerably wetter than it is today, the rain season lasted longer and it rained further north in the summer. This meant that the desert in Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia looked more like a savannah and could be used in different seasons. Around 4000 BCE the climate started to change, it rained less and the pastoral areas of the desert disappeared. There became more arable land along the Nile, which led to permanent settlers along the Nile. After a while these settlements became large settlements and villages (Wilkinson, 2008). The human influence on the Nile was restricted to construction of irrigated canals and basins. The rhythm of the early agriculture was determined by the inundation of the Nile which deposited mineral-rich sediment along its length (Wengrow, 2006). Further away from the Nile, both east and west, there are only the harsh deserts with few water sources or fertile land to grow crops or breed animals. Though the climate became dryer during the predynastic period, both the western- and the eastern deserts continued to be occupied due to the Oasis (Dakhla, Fayum, Kharga, Siwa). The natural resources in this part of the world are few and limited because of the extreme climate and characteristics of the land. (Säve-Söderbergh, 1987). Hassan (1988) argues for cultural transformation in the Nile valley as a response to the changing climate conditions at the end of the Early Holocene. These changes contributed to events such as migration, changes in subsistence and sedentary lifestyle.

5.2 – The Sinai Peninsula

5.2.1 – Geography

Sinai is situated between the Mediterranean Sea to the north and the Red Sea to the south, and is the only part of Egyptian territory located in Asia, making it a natural land bridge between Africa and Asia. Sinai is a triangular peninsula about 61,000 km^2 in area. Sinai borders to Egypt in the northwest and to Israel in the northeast. The Peninsula is separated from Egypt in the southwest by the Gulf of Suez and from Saudi Arabia in the southeast by the Gulf of Aqaba.

The Sinai Peninsula is an extremely hot and harsh arid desert. There are no sources of fresh water, rivers or natural lakes here. Indigenous water comes from rainfall, surface or ground water. Few oases, such as Ain Umm Ahmed and Wadi Feiran, are the only source of water in this otherwise hyper arid region (Zahran et al., 2009).

There are three distinct geomorphological regions in the Sinai. The south has narrow coastal plains with mountainous massif of Precambrian crystalline rocks in the centre cut by canyon-like wadis. The central region has an extensive plateau composed of sedimentary limestone ending in a sandstone escarpment dissected by large wadis in its southern end. In the northern region there is a broad, sandy plain with insular mountains in the hinterland intersected by valleys (Zahran and Willis, 1992). The mountains which form the igneous core of the Sinai Peninsula rise to considerably greater heights than any of those of the African part of Egypt. The highest peak, Gebel St Catherine, is 2641 meters above sea level. Because of its high altitude, the southern section of Sinai receives a good amount of rainfall which has produced wadis (Zahran et al., 2009: 215).

5.2.2 – Climate

The Sinai Peninsula is part of Egypt at the very northeast of Africa, which climatically points to a dry region. The climate can be divided in two zones; the arid and the hyper arid. The arid zone is in the north, where the summer is hot, and the winter mild with rainfall. The hyper arid zone covers the central and southern regions of the peninsula. Here the summer months are hot and the winters are mild (central Sinai) or cool (near the mountains) with some rainfall. Annual rainfall decreases from the northeast to the southwest (Zahran et al., 2009). Rainfall occurs in Sinai mainly during the winter season (November-March) and during spring or autumn. It decreases markedly or completely lacking from May to October. However, summer rain resulting from the influence of the Red Sea depressions causes floods (Zahran et al., 2009: 218-219). The Sinai Peninsula, being for the most part a desert with some mountainous regions, is highly sensitive to climatic changes. Before the Chalcolithic phase the Peninsula was experiencing a hot and dry phase, but coming in to the Chalcolithic a wetter and coolers phase occurred. During the Early Bronze Age the climate was still mild and cool, but the climate was slowly becoming more desiccated due to the same reasons concerning Lower Nubia and Upper Egypt (Issar, 1998). During this moist interval which offered attractive conditions, people might have been encouraged to settle in the marginal regions. The development of pastoralism could have been initiated by the climatic conditions which meant more economic security (Horwitz, 2005: 215-216).

Fig. 3 The Egyptian desert (courtesy of http://desertsafritours.blogspot.no/2012/01/eygpt-desert.html)

Summary

This chapter presented the geography and the climate changes concerning the areas of the thesis. Upper Egypt, Lower Nubia are situated on the north-east African continent with the Sinai Peninsula as a land bridge connecting Africa with the Middle East and Asia. The dominating feature in these regions is the desert, however, where the Egyptian and Nubian peoples had the Nile stretching through the countries acting as a long oasis as their main water source, the people of Sinai were dependant on rainwater or surface- and groundwater in an otherwise hyper arid region. Around 4000 BC the climate started to deteriorate from the previous mild climate; it rained less and the pastoral areas of the desert disappeared, which led to permanent settlers along the Nile. During the Early Bronze Age the climate in Sinai was mild and cool, but it was slowly becoming more desiccated. Pastoralism in this area might have occurred due to security reasons; being able to move around makes people less dependent.

Chapter 6 – Pastoral Nomads

"Pastoral nomad" is a geographical term; where "nomad" shows the use of space and landscape, whereas "pastoral" shows the livelihood which relates to domesticated animals through grazing (Chatty, 2006: 8). The quest for food either by raising crops or livestock or sometimes both, or whether by means of stationary or migratory patterns or both, has furnished a common goal and has structured the daily and yearly routines of the rural population since ancient times. Producers may adjust their strategies of production either in the direction of increased cultivation or increased pastoralism, this in turn may depend on climatic factors such as draughts or political factors such as dominance (LaBianca, 1990).

This chapter gives a brief outline of the research history concerning the study of pastoral nomads in North Africa and the Middle East. It also presents the connection between animals and territory, as well as the strategy of pastoral nomads. Further on the concepts of sedentarization and nomadization are introduced. Lastly, the different areas are reviewed; Upper Egypt, Lower Nubia and the Sinai desert and how they relate to pastoral nomads. This gives a good background as well as context for the preceding chapters where the different cemeteries are presented.

6.1 – Research history

Early research viewed the pastoral way of life as an intermediate stage between hunter-gatherer and an agrarian lifestyle. What separates hunter-gatherers and pastoral nomads is that while the hunter-gatherers economy centres on gathering and capturing food, the pastoral community produce food; they have two different reasons for staying mobile (Khazanov, 1994: 15). Many researchers theorized that the nomadic societies were not fully developed and that the next step was an agrarian society. This view changed in the 20th century when broad-scale, food producing economies, where herding also played a central role was identified. This discovery showed that early societies had a great deal of knowledge and understanding about the animals before they were domesticated, and that the early domestication came as a reaction to the lack of wild animals in the early Neolithic (Anfinset, 2010: 93).

Through the years there has been many different theories concerning pastoral nomads; some of them are ecological-, cultural-, ecological and cultural- and symbiotic theories and will be

presented in short here.

The ecological theory centres around the perception that populations with a mixed economy were forced to live in the marginal areas because this was their only viable option, to give up cultivating and move on to pastoral production and becoming nomads. The population ended up in the marginal areas, conceivably due to deforestation and climatic changes, which led to earlier fertile fields becoming barren (Sadr, 1991: 6-12, Barth, 1973). Other ecological theories view the growth in animal husbandry as the reason for the change to a nomadic lifestyle, because animals were a more lucrative investment than crops. Others view the climatic changes as leading to changes in subsistence strategies (Sadr, 1991: 6-7).

The culture theory approaches nomadism as a pastoral activity. Together with other specialized industries it developed when state administered regional markets led to populations specializing in one or another economic activity. Others recognize the nomadic societies as herders that had an original mixed economy, but were repressed when large-scale irrigation technology precipitated the process of deporting them from the agricultural areas (Sadr, 1991: 7, Levy, 1983, Lees, 1974).

Theories that use both ecological and cultural traits consider that nomads developed in a context with ample social, political and economic complexities. The evolution went from a mixed economy, to agriculture with pastoral adjustments, and in the end to a fully fledged nomadic lifestyle. This happened at the same time as there was a more complex socio-politic development; from a relative simple tribe-like organisation to a middle stage with chiefdom, to a relative complex early state organisation. (Khazanov, 1994, Sadr, 1991: 11, Rosen, 1988, Lynch, 1983, Sherratt, 1983).

The symbiotic theory concludes that no nomadic societies developed before state societies. The relationship between state and nomads was a coalition, where both parties had use of each other. Some studies give the impression that herder-societies were self-sufficient and that it is just recent economic and politic changes that have reduce their size, independence and autonomy. Pastoral nomads on the other hand, have always been part of a bigger economical and ecological system which includes farmers and urban centres (Eickelman, 2002: 64, Barth, 1956).

As shown, there have been many different theories concerning the origin and spread of pastoralism. Both the ecological and the cultural theories show important reasons that might

have stimulated the nomadic lifestyle, however the theories lack reasons for why this lifestyle persisted through time. The symbiotic theory on the other hand, utilizes the relationship between the nomads and the sedentary communities as a reason for the persistence of this lifestyle. Without the agrarian products from the sedentary communities, the nomads would have had to give up their lifestyle to become sedentary and start producing agricultural products.

6.2 – Animals and territory

According to Rosen (1988: 499), the development of pastoral nomadic societies occurred on the outskirts of settled regions, an important element in the rise of domestic economies and complex societies, seems to show a cultural line distinct from that of agricultural societies and should most likely be distinguished from the initial phases of animal domestication. Data from the Negev and Sinai (Bar-Yosef et al., 1986, Rothenberg and Weyer, 1980, Bar-Yosef et al., 1977) suggest that the rise of pastoral nomadism in these steppe- and desert regions occurred later than the Neolithic and was the result of processes different from those that produced the first experiments in animal domestication in the Mediterranean zone. Although animal domestication in the Mediterranean zone of the Levant seems to have occurred in the Pre-Pottery, Neolithic B, around 6000 BCE, together with early experiments in plant domestication, contemporary sites with faunal material in the Negev and Sinai show no evidence for domesticated animals or plants. The earliest direct evidence for animal domesticates in these regions, gathered from bone assemblages, dates to the Early Bronze Age, around 3000 BCE, although strong circumstantial evidence in the form of architecture and certain elements of material culture suggests that the transition to pastoral nomadic way of life took place in the late Pottery Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods around 4000 BCE. Rosen also suggests that adaption from a hunter-gatherer economy to pastoral nomads happened because of a least three factors;

1. Environmental changes – human adaption.
2. Technology change – increased ability to exploit animals.
3. The development of urban centres and increased complexity of socioeconomic relations (Rosen, 1988: 503).

Until the late 1990s archaeozoologists relied on morphological changes in target species to identify where and when wild animals were transformed into herded livestock. A proposed sharp and rapid reduction in the overall body size among the animal populations was the most widely accepted morphological marker (Meadow, 1989). Research (Zeder, 2008) however,

shows that these morphological changes did not occur as fast as previously thought; in most animal species, hunters focus on large adult animals, particularly males, to maximize return, and the bones of these larger animals generally dominate the game assemblages produced by the hunters. Archaeological assemblages generated by herders on the other hand, are usually dominated by the bones of smaller females, slaughtered after their prime reproductive years. Excess males not needed for herd-breeding, were killed at young ages and their more fragile bones are usually not as well represented in these assemblages. Traditional approaches to documenting domestication relied on the appearance of genetically driven morphological changes, such as body size reduction in animals, size and shape of horns. Studies in Iran and Iraq has shown that these morphological changes occurred 500-1000 years later than this demographic shift, when managed animals were moved from their natural habitat in the wild and introduced into hotter and more arid lowlands. The morphological changes likely reflect responses to new selective pressures and the now more limited opportunities for gene flow between managed and wild animals or the restocking of herds with wild animals (Zeder, 2008: 11597-11599).

Tribal organization and identity are important aspects when considering the social fluidity; it is necessary for the survival of the individuals and the households that they maintain networks of institutionalized relationships. Belonging to a tribe means belonging to a social entity that has control over particular natural resources or subsistence. Members of a tribe are provided with access to watering places and pasture as well as security from natural hazards and dangers by outsiders (LaBianca, 1990). People following a nomadic strategy usually do so within a customary habitat. Many have traditionally controlled territories, and large expanses of land were their homes as they trekked around within them. Others made long nomadic treks semi-annually, giving them the right of passage at a particular time on a particular route, as well as rights to customary summer and winter camps. Even where people controlled territories, land tenure was almost always collective and relatively open. Arrangements usually existed for the admission of outsiders to the territory, along with reciprocal arrangements for access to outside territories. However, access did not mean unbridled use, collective social, political, and ritual mechanisms were in force to control the use of territorial resources and conserve the environment to guarantee continued availability of resources in the future (Salzman, 2002: 260-261). As will be further discussed in chapter ten, the importance of the community as opposed to the individual can be traced from the burial structure and

disposal of the dead. Marking the territory by means of visible burials structures or displaying community cohesion through secondary burials.

6.3 – The strategy of pastoral nomads

From the available data known today, the adjustment to a nomadic lifestyle probably happened in the period between 5000-3000 BCE. (Sadr, 1991). Both sheep and goats in Africa are descendants from the Middle East, it is likely that pastoral groups slowly developed there, and moved farther to the south-west and on to the African continent (Anfinset, 2010: 165-166). The oldest animals domesticated were sheep, goats and cattle, which implies that the early sedentary communities were dependent on both animal husbandry and farming. Later, the pastoral nomads developed a specialized economic and cultural adaption associated with the domestication of new species (Anfinset, 2010: 93, Bar-Yosef and Khazanov, 1992).

Climactic changes can be traced back to the development of a pastoral economy; being able to move over big areas meant that nomads could live in dryer areas/zones which the sedentary communities could not, they had to stay in fertile areas to make sure that their domesticated animals had enough fodder (Anfinset, 2010: 95, Khazanov, 1994: 89). The nomadic strategy is one means by which people adapt to thinly spread resources and to the variability of resources across space and over time. It is also a strategy for avoiding other destructive environmental conditions, such as extreme heat or cold which could lead to draughts and diseases. Furthermore, as human hunters are always a risk, every adaptation is also political, involving the power relations among populations. Above all, the nomadic strategy is a means for maximizing culturally defined objectives, such as production, survival and independence. The nomadic strategy is put to use in different ways, but it often involves a variety of production activities, even if pastoral production of livestock is for some populations the predominant one (Salzman, 2002: 260).

In general, people using the nomadic strategy produce for their own consumption, even if they are heavily market-oriented, and subsistence is supported by a variety of products. Productive diversification, often made possible or facilitated by nomadic mobility, is an insurance mechanism, guaranteeing survival in the face of failure in one productive sector, such as loss of a flock from disease and predation, or loss of crops due to drought. Diversification within pastoralism has the same benefit, with small stock, providing a fall-back and a basis for rebuilding after the loss of large stock (Salzman, 2002: 260).

The subsistence strategies of pastoral nomads are concentrated around domesticated animals. In several geographical areas the settlement patterns are thus organized around the animals, which lead to an increase in mobility. This also leads to cyclic or repetitive visits to the same campsites. Products such as milk, wool, meat and skin are the most important economic contributions from the animals of pastoral nomads; they are either consumed or traded through markets in urban centres. Almost every region has a key-animal which defines their cultural pastoralism. In some regions it is the productive stock that is seen as the most valuable, while other places it is the animal used for transport (Anfinset, 2010: 81).
Bar-Yosef and Khazanov (1992) believes pastoral nomads in historical times, rarely had a surplus to purchase or trade items, and that they used their military and social supremacy against the sedentary population. They could do this because they had riding-animals like horses and camels. But how could the pastoral nomads get enough products from the agricultural societies without riding animals? One can ask if pastoral activity in a real sense really existed in early times, or as Sadr (1991) thinks, that they did not exist before state-like societies developed.

Fig. 4 Sheep and goats in the desert (courtesy of http://photography.nationalgeographic.com)

6.4 – Sedentarization and nomadization

In the Middle East and North Africa, nomadization and sedentarization have been an ongoing and complementary process for millennia. Frequently, individuals, families, or lineages shifted between a nomadic- and sedentary lifestyle, and back depending upon circumstances; people settled when it seemed beneficial to do so and became nomadic for the same reason. This shifting between strategies of adaptation in response to changes in conditions has been very common throughout the Middle East and North Africa. It is important to keep in mind that "settled" and "nomadic," rather than being two types, are better thought of as opposite ends of a continuum with many stages of stability and mobility (Salzman, 2002: 256).

LaBianca (1990: 33) describes sedentarization as *"adopting a sedentary mode of existence usually involving food system intensification"* while nomadization as *" adopting a nomadic mode of existence usually involving food system abatement"*. Conversion of nomadic members to settled villagers and vice versa shows the fluidity of social units in the rural regions. Mechanisms which make this fluidity possible are opportunities and incentives to become sedentary and the quest for food to become nomadic. The process of sedentarization and nomadization is often repeated several times during the course of a century. The sedentary communities are more easily exploited than the nomadic pastoralists; sedentary communities which cultivate have to turn over greater quantities of food surpluses because urban centres of power formulate policies in order to feed the growing population. In contrast, nomadic communities can be seen as a form of resistance to this exploitation, where the population has greater freedom and independence from the cultural and economic domination of the urban elites (LaBianca, 1990: 41-42).

6.5 – Upper Egypt, Lower Nubia and the Sinai Peninsula

At the end of the 6th millennium BCE the climate conditions started to deteriorate over North Africa and the Middle East, which meant that long seasonal occupation of the deserts was no longer an option. A shift towards more specialisation of activities had to be implemented to stay in the desert; such as cattle and sheep-goat husbandry, supplemented by hunting. A consequence of this was a more sedentary way of life along the Nile where fishing, foraging and framing were the main activities. The Nubian section of the Nile, especially between the First and the Third Cataract, was quite narrow and only suitable for a medium scale society of foragers and farmers (Gatto, 2011: 24-25). From the middle of the 4th millennium BCE the Nubian A-group economic subsistence was mainly based on herding. Agriculture seemed to play a secondary role, only attested along the Nile. Hunting and fishing were practiced as

well, but of less importance. On the contrary, a special position has to be recognized to trading activities. Its location had probably favoured a commercial specialization of the Nubian group living in the Second Cataract region during the predynastic period (Gatto, 2006b: 71-72).

The previously mentioned deterioration in climate led to droughts which in turn led to the dispersal of food-producing Saharan peoples into the Nile Valley and probably south of the Sahel. This might explain the dramatic increase in the abundance of "fireplaces" associated with nomadic pastoralists from 4500 to 3000 BCE (Gabriel, 1987). The merger of people from the Nile regions and Saharan settlers might have followed a pattern where people moved into the Nile Valley. A merger between Nilotic and Saharan groups easily accounts for the presence of a coherent set of Saharan elements as well as the persistence of indigenous Nilotic elements. This also is indicated by the fusion of a Saharan Neolithic economy (herding/cultivation) and a Nilotic fishing strategy (Hassan, 1988). It is assumed that up to about 6000 BCE, the inhabitants of the Nile Valley were engaged in a mixed economy of food extraction with variable degrees of reliance on fishing, hunting, and plant collecting (Gatto, 2011). The arrival of desert people with their cattle and sheep/goat herds and the subsequent cultural and demographic merger with the Nilotics are most likely to have been the critical events that ushered in a new way of life along the banks of the Nile (Hassan, 1988: 142-147).

In Upper Egypt the Naqada I-II period, around 4000-3200 BCE, the inhabitants along the Nile were largely food producers, engaged primarily in cultivating barley and stock-raising of sheep/goats, cattle and pigs. Hunting was only marginal as attested to by rare remains of wild game (mostly gazelle), but fishing was commonly practiced along the Nile (Hassan, 1988: 156-157).

According to Bar-Yosef (1983) the Sinai has been occupied mainly by nomads who lived on herding, some hunting, robbery and trade. Agricultural products were never an important source of subsistence, although small-scale horticulture was practiced at least since the Byzantine period. Finds from the nawamis, such as arrowheads, support the notion of a society which focused on hunting and mobility. Their economy was based on herding goats, maybe cattle, hunting and trading with Egypt and the Levantine world (Bar-Yosef et al., 1983: 52-53, 57-58)

Summary

This chapter has focused on the earlier research history concerning pastoral nomads where different theories have been put forward as to why people have chosen pastoralism as their strategy for survival. A theory from Zeder is presented where she points out the morphological changes, such as reduction in the size of animals probably happened over time (500-1000 years), and is associated with new pastures more than a direct consequence of domestication. Also mentioned are the different animals and territory; how nomads lived in their habitat as well as their reciprocal arrangements with each other. The strategies of pastoral nomads are also important as to how they adapt to climate changes through increased mobility. Concepts such as nomadization and sedentarization are pointed out because lives of nomads are never constant; they are adaptable and often shift through millennia, factors might be climate or domination by urban elites. The different areas which are the focus of the thesis are presented as to how they relate to pastoral nomadism, climate changes and adaptation; Upper Egypt, Lower Nubia and the Sinai desert. This chapter has given a context and a good background for the preceding three chapters where the material from the cemeteries will be presented, this to show how the people that made the burials lived and came to populate the regions.

Fig. 5 Drawing by Palmer of nawamis (Wilson, 1869: 317)

Chapter 7 – Burials in Upper Egypt

This chapter describes the different cemeteries from the Naqada culture and give examples of different burial types from Upper Egypt. The chapter starts by giving a brief description of the general features before commenting on the spatial distribution of cemeteries. It then goes on describing the different cemeteries at El Amrah (A and B), Naqada Cemetery T and the "Great New Race Cemetery" and finally the excavation at Abydos of Cemetery U. These cemeteries stretch from early predynastic until the beginning of the dynastic period.

7.1 – General features

The burials had a general orientation from north to south. The great majority laid north-north-west to south-south-east; this being the line which brought them parallel with the edge of the low table-land. The body was usually in a contracted position, where arms and legs were sharply bent. The body was laid with the head to the south, either on the left or on right side. There are of course some cases where this does not apply. The burial grounds were usually on the west bank, the earliest burials were shallow, round and small with only enough space for a contracted body. Later on, the interments became larger and more elaborate, with more artefacts and there seems to be a more hierarchal community emerging with elites.

7.2 – Spatial distribution

The Naqada burials are located in Upper Egypt and the culture has its name from the largest predynastic settlement. The core area was from Abydos in the north to Hierakonpolis in the south. Located 28 km northwest of Luxor on the west bank, the three predynastic cemeteries at Naqada ("Great New Race Cemetery" and Cemeteries B and T) were excavated by Petrie in 1894-1895. With over 2000 burials, these three cemeteries along with the estimated 1000 burials excavated by Quibell at Ballas (just north of Naqada) form the largest burial place in predynastic Egypt (Bard, 1987).

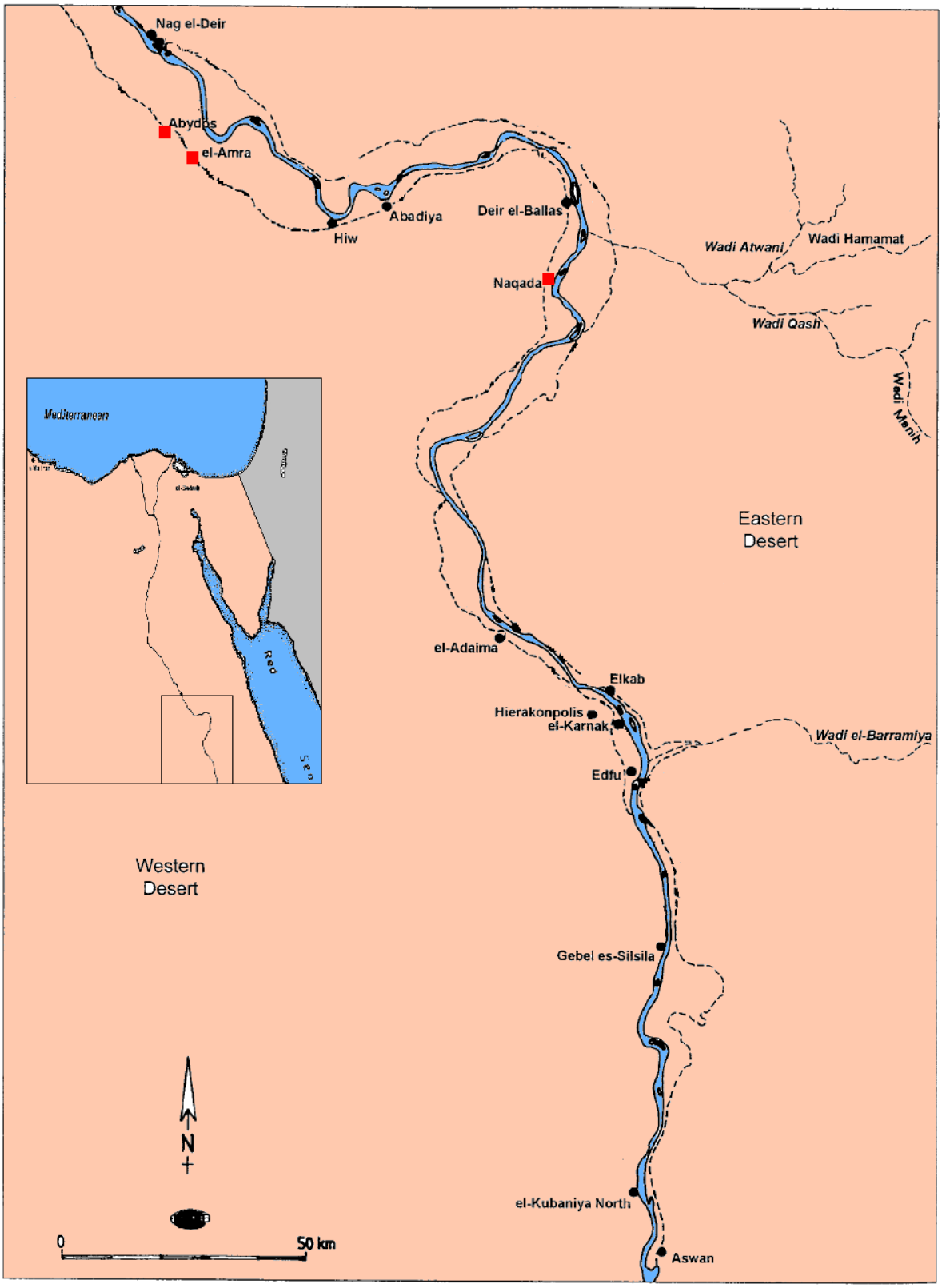

Fig. 6 Map of Upper Egypt and the cemeteries

7.3 – The cemeteries of Upper Egypt

The cemeteries in Upper Egypt were built by the first settled communities in the Nile Valley. They were pastoralists and engaged in agricultural activities. The predynastic period pre-dates the first dynasties of Egypt around 3200 BCE. It has been subdivided by ceramic assemblages into Naqada I (Amratian), Naqada II (Gerzean) and Naqada III on the basis of sequence dating developed by Petrie and refined by Kaiser (Nelson and Rosen-Ayalon, 2002: 43). The Naqada I-II burials contain a greater spectrum of artefacts that has been obtained through long-distance trade (Wengrow, 2006: 75). This period also led to a greater variety in burial customs and more experimentation in the burial methods than previously attested from the Badarian burials. Through Naqada I-II, Petrie (1896: 30), recorded cases of pre-burial dismemberment, describing a number of burials where there was *in situ* evidence for these practices. Data from excavations at el-Adaima have documented pre-burial skull removal from undisturbed Naqada II burials (Wengrow, 2006: 119).

The cemeteries described below are just a small sample of the cemeteries located in Upper Egypt. The reasons for choosing them are based on the cemeteries showing the whole time period and how the burials evolved over time.

7.3.1 – El-Amrah Cemetery A and B

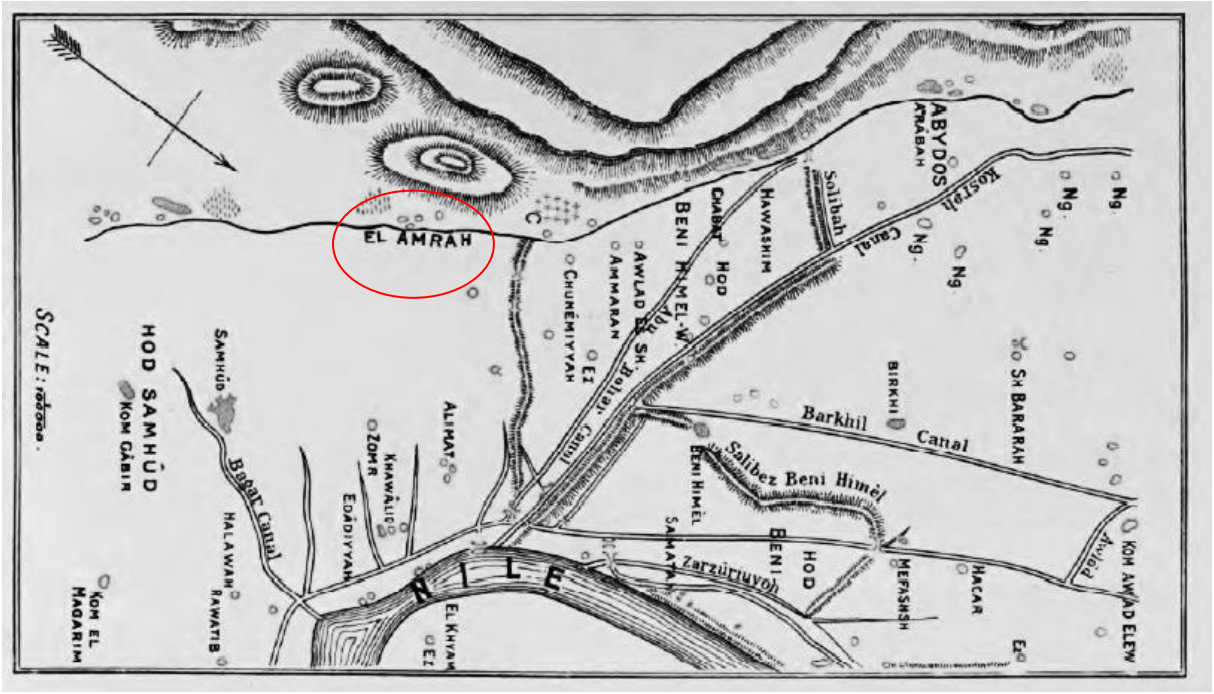

Fig. 7 Map of the location to El Amrah cemetery (Randall-MacIver and Mace, 1902: Plate I)

Site history

The Amratian culture, dating around 3600 BCE, was the first phase recognized in the predynastic and was named after the village of El Amrah. It has later been modified as a period preceded by the Badarian culture. The village lies about 10 km south-east of the royal tombs of Abydos while the cemeteries lie approximately 1 km north of the village.

El-Amrah Cemetery A was excavated by Randall-MacIver and Mace in 1900, previously by J. de Morgan and Amélineau in 1895. There were about 600 burials, 56 of them published, heavily disturbed, from the beginning of the predynastic period (Naqada IB-IID1).
El-Amrah Cemetery B was excavated by Patch in 1983, previously by Randall-MacIver and Mace in 1900, and by J. de Morgan and Amélineau in 1895. There were about 400 burials, 95 of them published, heavily disturbed, from the early predynastic period (Naqada IA-IIIB) (van den Brink, 2002: 359).

From the excavation report it seems that Cemetery A had no more than 600 graves and Cemetery B had about 400 burials. Both Cemetery A and B were plundered prior to the excavation by MacIver and Mace in 1901. From the published report Randall-MacIver gives a

description of 53 burials from Cemetery A and 53 from Cemetery B.

Burial types	Description
1.	Round shallow graves.
2.	Oblong or roughly oval graves averaging 1.5 meters.
3.	Graves with a recess which was cut in the rock.
4.	Graves with a rock-recess and with a coffin.
5.	Pot-burials.
6.	Plain quadrangular brick graves.
7.	Brick graves with a recess at one end formed by single partition.
8.	Brick graves in which the recess is further divided into two compartments.
9.	Brick graves with recess at both ends.

Table 2 Burial types from El Amrah (Randall-MacIver and Mace, 1902: 7)

MacIver used the word "class" when describing the different burial types. To give a standardized version "Burial types" will be used further on in the analysis. As seen from the table above, type 1 is the earliest, type 2 and 3 are nearly contemporary with it and with each other. Types 6-9 are contemporary with each other, though clearly subsequent to type 1-3. Types 4-5 are intermediate between those of 1-3 and 6-9 and may overlap at either end.

The burials

Burials such as A96 (male) and B62 (female) are examples of burials which displayed the norm at El Amrah; they were both type 2 burials, the body usually covered with skin, oriented north-west and south-east. In the graves there were found animal bones, maces, ivory pins, flint lances, beads, slates, stone and pottery vases and shells (Randall-MacIver and Mace, 1902: 19-20)

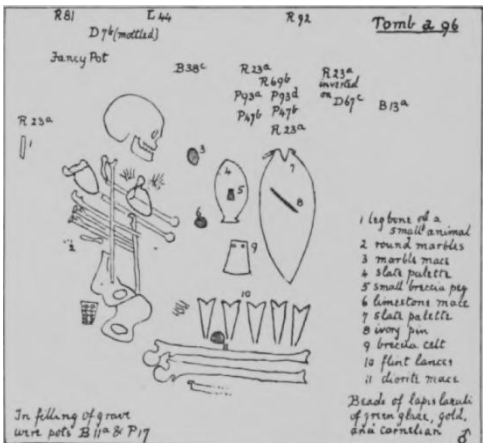

Fig. 8 Burial A96, (Randall-MacIver and Mace, 1902: Plate V)

Distribution of objects found in the burials

At the two cemeteries at El Amrah the excavators found objects such as:

Pottery	Vessels such as jars bowls and cups
Stone vases	Alabaster, basalt, limestone, breccias, slate and marble
Tools/weapons	Flint knives, bone harpoons and lance-heads, copper adze or chisel, flint lance-heads, arrowheads and flint dagger
Miscellaneous	Copper thin sheets, needles rings, chains, pins, anklets, bracelets, ivory pins, combs, bracelets, and spoons, beads, shells and slate palettes
Clay figurines	Animals and dolls with hair
Female	Male and female dolls, ivory bracelets, ivory spoons, slate, beads, pendants, ivory combs, necklaces, malachite, resin, copper pin, ostrich eggs, shells, copper rings, palettes, stone and pottery vessels.
Male	Male dolls, clay figurines, flint lances, beads, maces, flint knifes, slates, palettes, malachite, resin, copper needles, stone and pottery vessels.
Children	Clay figurines, dolls, basked-works, beads, slate pendants, bone harpoons, malachite, resin, ivory armlets, ivory comb, stone and pottery vessels

Table 3 Distribution of objects found at El Amrah

Norm

The norm from the El Amrah cemeteries are that the deceased were buried in number 2 type burial. The burials were oblong or roughly oval, averaging 1.5 meters. Double or triple burials happened, however it was not the norm. The bodies lay in a contracted position, no mention of direction. Men and women were buried together as well as adults and children, often with animal bones in the internment. Objects found were clay figurines, shells, combs, weapons and tools.

7.3.2 –Cemetery T, Naqada

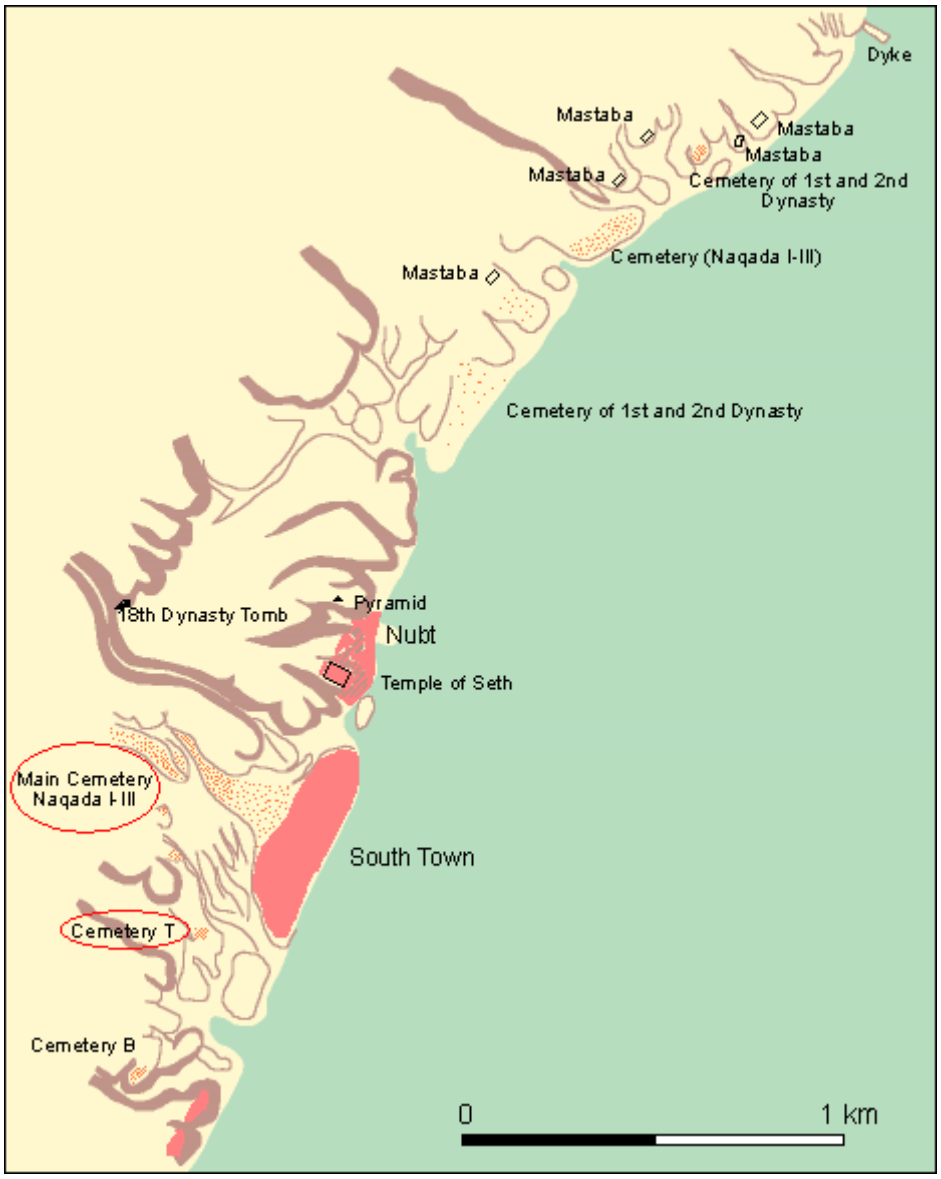

Fig. 9 Map of Naqada cemetery (slightly modified from digitalegypt. ucl.ac.uk)

Site history

The Naqada cemeteries are situated 28 km northwest of Luxor on the western bank. In ancient Egypt, Naqada was known as Nubt, which means "gold" and it might be that gold and other mineral deposits from the Eastern Desert, were the foundations for the success of one of the earliest towns in Egypt.

Cemetery T was excavated by Petrie between 1895-1896 and by Kaiser in 1958. It is a small elite cemetery from middle of the predynastic period (Naqada IIB-IIIB). Petrie only describes

the burial types generally as pit burials, where the wealthy ones were roofed over with beams and brushwood (Petrie et al., 1896: 18). From the published material there were identified 3 males, 4 females, 5 children, 6 adults, 26 unidentified bodies and two burials with ox bones from the 12 burials mentioned in the publication.

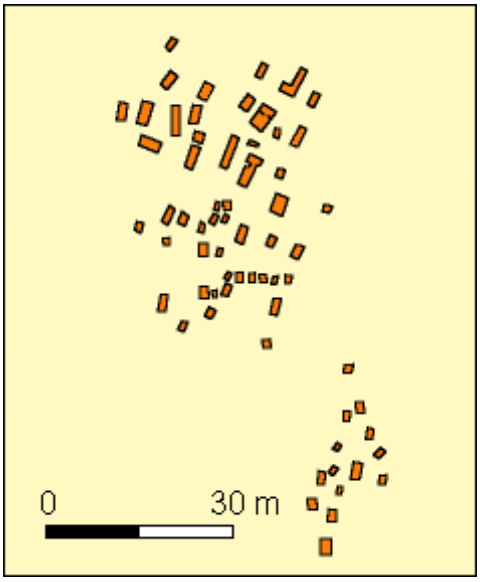

Fig. 11 Plan for Cemetery T (From digitalegypt. ucl.ac.uk)

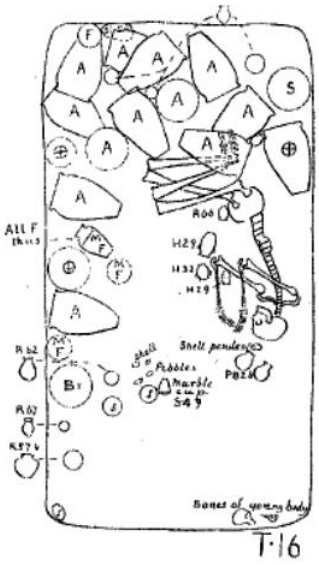

Fig. 10 Burial T16 (Petrie et al., 1896: Plate LXXXII)

The burials

Two burials of particular interest are T5 and T16, none of them plundered and with a wealthy artefact repertoire and big burial shafts. They are both good examples of rich burials, probably for elites with a huge deposit of burial goods such as necklaces, beads, palettes, vases and jars (Petrie et al., 1896: 19-20).

Distribution of objects found in the burials

Pottery	Wavy-handled jars, cylinder jars, strainer jars, ash jars and fat jars.
Stone vases	Marble
Tools/weapons	Arrow-heads, flint lances and mace-heads
Miscellaneous	Ivory pin, slate and beads
Female	Slate palettes, ivory pins, malachite and bowls, pots, saucers, stone vases and pottery vessels.
Male	Bone arrowheads, palettes, strainer jars, pots, bowls, saucers, clay beads, stone vases, pebbles and pottery vessels
Children	No mention

Table 4 Distribution of objects found at Cem. T

Norm

The bodies usually lay in contracted positions in mud-brick-built shafts, often more than one body, either they were buried together or the burials were used multiple times. The bodies were often wrapped or covered with matting. Ceramic vessels and decorative artefacts are the norm in the burials from this cemetery. The cemetery seems to have been used by a small number of ruling elite of some sort, being bigger and more richly equipped than other cemeteries from the same period. There was also found ox heads at T10 and T52 and a gazelle head at T36, as well as animal bones in the interments.

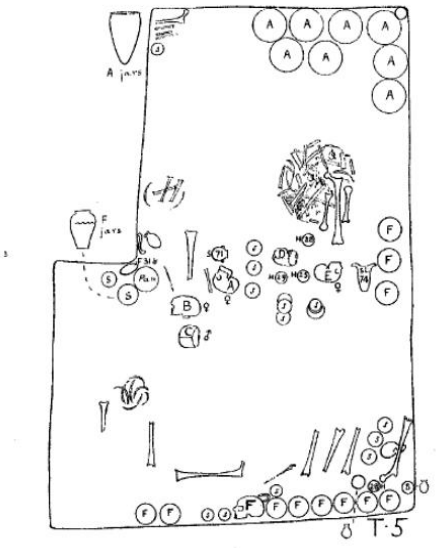

Fig. 12 Burial T5 (Petrie et al., 1896: Plate LXXXII)

7.3.3 – Main cemetery, Naqada

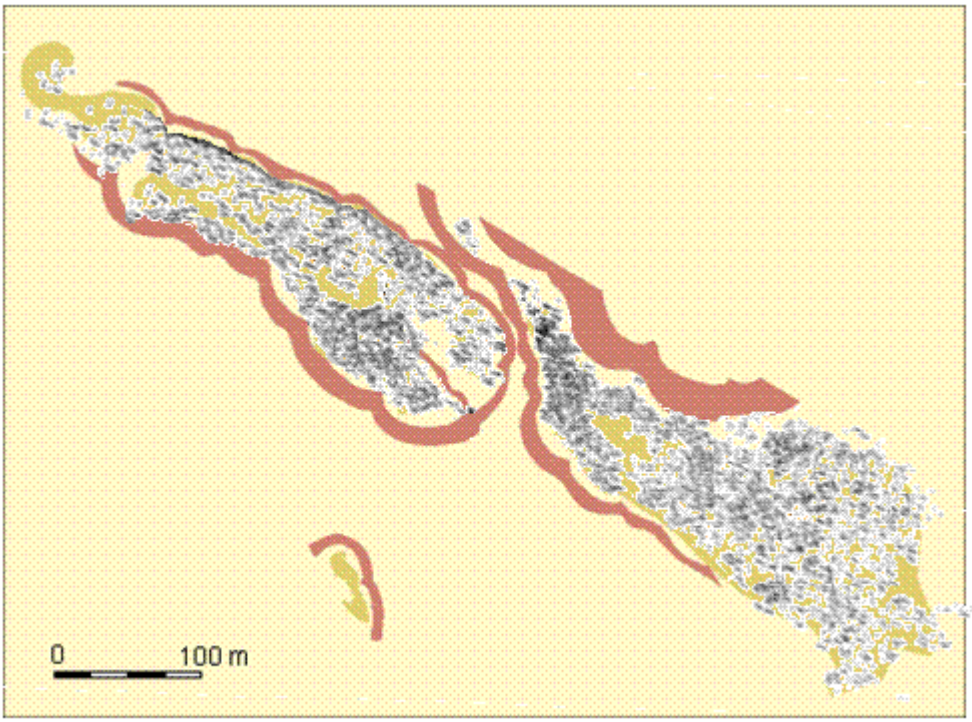

Fig. 13 Naqada Main Cemetery plan (combination of map from digitalegypt. ucl.ac.uk and original drawing from Petrie 1895: plate LXXXV)

Site history

The Main Cemetery or "The Great New Race Cemetery" lies north of Cemetery T on the western side of the Nile. As with many of the other cemeteries, this one had also been heavily plundered in antiquity. This cemetery was very large with approximately 2000 burials stretching through the predynastic period (Naqada IA-IIIC1). It has been excavated by Petrie between 1895-1896, but also in later times by Kaiser in 1958 (van den Brink, 2002: 360). From the published material from Petrie's excavation there were identified at least 8 males, 3 females, 11 children, 3 adults, 1 young, 1 infant 2 old and 63 unidentified bodies from the 106 burials worth mentioning according to Petrie.

The burials

From the Main Cemetery grave 260 and 869 illustrate the norm for the burials at this time; the dead was buried in pit shafts with ivory combs, bowls, vases, flint knives, palettes, malachite, pebbles, beads and vessels (Petrie et al., 1896: 26-27).

Distribution of objects found in the burials

The large, coarse pointed ash-jars were in the north end of the burial while the wavy-handled jars were in the south, sometimes in the west. The pointed jars are generally in the south. The decorated pottery was found in every part of the burial, but mostly in the south or west. The incised bowls were mostly towards the north. The slates are usually towards the south, but are found in all positions. The daggers were at the hips, the knives and lances were usually behind the body and the bags and patches of malachite and galena were usually by the hands (Petrie et al., 1896: 29-30).

Pottery	Wavy-handled jars, cylinder jars, bowls and cups
Tools/weapons	Copper adze or chisel, flint knives, flint lance-heads, arrowheads and flint daggers
Miscellaneous	Slate palettes with malachite stains, pebbles, beads, ivory combs, ivory statuettes, ivory spoons, ostrich eggs, copper pins, and stone vessels
Figurines	Of both humans and animals (clay, slate and ivory)
Female	Beads, ivory comb, ivory peg, slate palettes, mace-head and pottery vessels.
Male	Beads, combs, mace-heads, flint lances, flint knifes, malachite, slates and pottery vessels.
Children	Hair pins, ivory combs, slate palettes, and pottery vessels.

Table 5 Distribution of objects found at the Main Cemetery

Norm

The norm in the Main Cemetery was that the head was often detached from the rest of the body. In many of the burials there were more than one body, secondary burial might have been a normal practice. The bodies were often buried with large quantities of pottery vessels. Petrie mentions a wooden frame under some of the bodies, however most of them were either covered in matting or lying on some form of organic material (Petrie et al., 1896).

7.3.4 – Cemetery U, Abydos

Fig. 14 Map of Abydos and Cemetery U (curtsey of google.com)

Site History

Abydos lies approximately 500 km south of Cairo in the province of Sohag. The cemetery is located at el-Araba, c. 1.5 km from the cultivated area in the Western Desert. The cemetery covers an area of c. 150 m x 600 m south of a wadi, which emerges from a steep mountain range in the west. The oldest part of the cemetery is the prehistoric Cemetery U, which is situated on top of a plateau. The advantageous position at the intersection of the Nile, which most likely ran further to the west in the 4th millennium, and a traffic route that led from the Red Sea through Wadi Qena to the oases in the Western Desert must have been a crucial factor for the town's rise to an early centre of power. The modern name Umm el-Qaab (Arabic for "Mother of Pots") traces back to the large amounts of sherds of Late Period offering pots scattered in the piles of debris.

Cemetery U at Abydos has been excavated at different occasions; by Amélineau 1895-1896, Peet 1911 – 1912, Kaiser 1977, Dreyer 1985, 1988-1989, 1991-present. It consisted of about 400 burials which had been heavily plundered from the middle to the late predynastic period (van den Brink, 2002: 358). The graves were circular, oval or roughly rectangular pits in the hard sand usually about 100 to 150 cm deep. The body usually lay in the same position, tightly contracted, with knees well above the level of the hips, on the left side, with head to the south. In almost all cases the body was covered with reed mat. During the excavation in 1911-12, Peet discovered 32 graves, mostly intact. There were 6 males, 3 females, 3 children and 5 unidentified bodies from the 22 burials mentioned in the publication (Peet, 1911-1912: 14-16).

Fig. 15 Burial U19 (Peet, 1911-1912: Plate II)

The burials

Burials which illustrate the nature of the cemetery at Abydos from Peet's excavation are U13, U19 and U20; they were pit burials, the body often wrapped in some sort of cloth, contracted on the left side with the head to the south. Object found were vases, ivory pins, pendants, pebbles, animal bones, malachite, mace-heads and vessels (Peet, 1911-1912: 15-16).

Fig. 16 Burial U20 (Peet, 1911-1912: Plate I)

Distribution of objects found in the burials

Pottery	Vases (different types of B, P, W and C)
Tools/weapons	Stone mace-head, pear-shaped mace-head.
Miscellaneous	Figurines, malachite, pebbles, ivory pins and rings, necklaces, pendants, beads and gold foil
Female	Vases, ivory combs, malachite, pebbles and palettes
Male	Mace-heads, vases and matting
Children	Beads, vases and bracelets

Table 6 Distribution of objects found at Cem. U

Norm

The bodies were in a contracted position with the head towards the south. The burials were mostly shallow pits, oval. Some of them had a coffin and wrapped in cloth or matting, often with a vase in front of the skull.

Summary

The burials in Upper Egypt were usually shallow, oval pits or shafts. The bodies were in a contracted position on the left side, head to the south. From Petrie's descriptions it might seem that many of the bodies had been intentionally dismembered before interment, this is interesting to note since it might imply a form of secondary burial. Grave good were usually carefully placed around the body. Each object seemed to have had an appointed position, with wavy-handled jars usually placed above the head, large storage jars below the feet and objects such as palettes, beads, bracelets, knives, daggers, spoons and small stone jars were placed near the head and hands. There seems to be a gradual incline in objects distributed in the burials through time as well as larger and more rectangular shafts. There was also more emphasis on displaying wealth in the burials, where the deceased had more goods in the interment. From the different cemeteries discussed in this chapter there seems to be no noticeable differences between male and female burials. Females usually had the same funerary equipments or even more than found in male burials. Interesting to note is the occurrence of mace-heads associated with male burials and the clay figurines, this will be discussed further in chapter ten.

Chapter 8 – Burials in the Sinai desert

This chapter describes the different burial tombs near ‘Ein Huderah and at Gebel el-Gunna. As mentioned earlier they were both salvage excavations; either due to road building or tourist conducting unauthorized digs. The chapter starts by giving a brief description of the general features before commenting on the spatial distribution of the nawamis, continuing with the excavation of human remains and funerary artefacts near ‘Ein Huderah and at Gebel el-Gunna.

8.1 – General features

The burial tombs, nawamis, are dated to the Chalcolithic period and the beginning of the Early Bronze Age, between the fifth and fourth millennium BCE. They are thought to have been used both as primary and secondary burials where the earlier interment were pushed aside to give room for new ones (Ofer Bar-Yosef, 1977: 87-88).

All the nawamis have the same rounded plan, three to six meters in diameter and approximately two meters in height. The structures are double-walled, build with local Nubian sandstone. The entrances are small corridors made of either one or two standing slabs. The orientation of the nawamis are usually westwards (Bar-Yosef et al., 1983).

According to the Sinai Bedouins, the name nawamis means mosquito. In Bedouin legend, the *nawamis* were built as protection against mosquitoes by the Israelites of the Exodus during their wanderings in Sinai (Peet, 1915: 151). The Bedouin also give another explanation where the term *namusiyeh* (plural, *nawamis*) refers to any separate or freestanding structure, although in one dialect the term means graves (Bar-Yosef et al., 1983: 52).

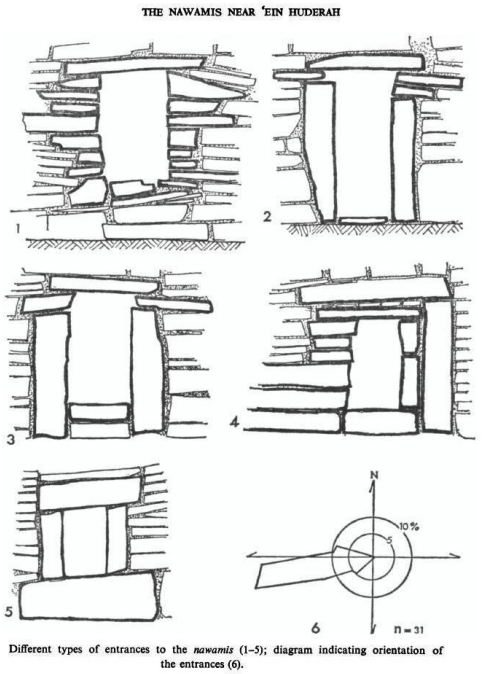

Fig. 17 Nawamis entrances (Bar-Yosef et al., 1977: 69)

8.2 – Spatial distribution of burials

The nawamis are located in southern Sinai, on the margins of the High Mountains of Sinai and the Nubian sandstone fringes. A survey in 1982 mapped 21 fields of nawamis in this

region, containing more than a thousand tombs, however single tombs do occur along the wadi courses of the region. Some of the *nawamis* are located in open fields (Gebel el-Gunna, 'Ein Huderah) while others are spread along wadi banks enclosed on both sides by high mountains such as Wadi Nasb and Wadi Hbar (Bar-Yosef et al., 1983: 52-53). Some were also placed on hilltops making them visible over a great distance. The nawamis were built at locations which were in proximity to ancient routes most likely travelled by the pastoralists.

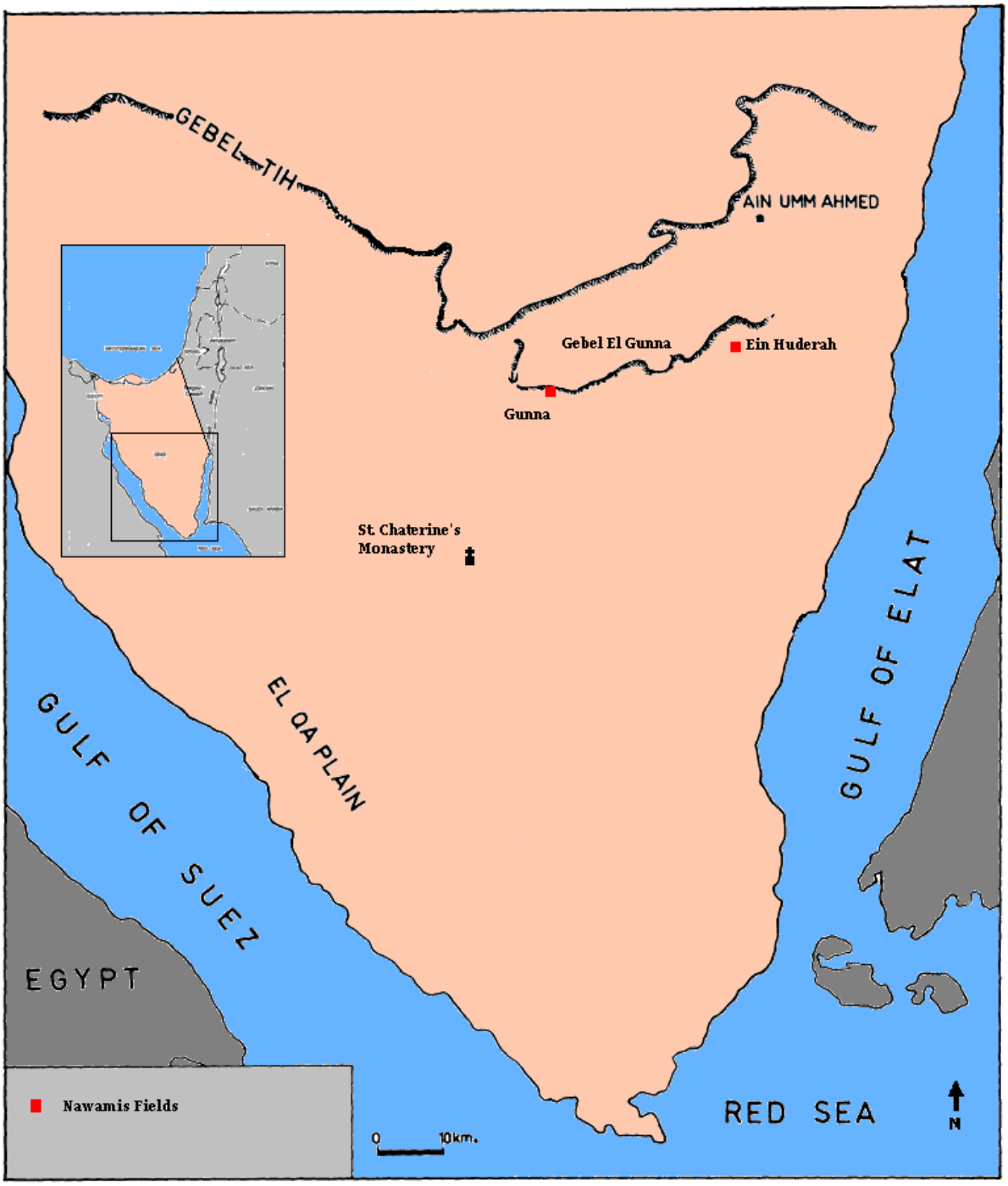

Fig. 18 Map of Sinai and the nawamis

8.3 – The nawamis in the Sinai desert

The people who built the nawamis were most likely pastoral nomads, living on herding, hunting and some trade with both the Levantine world and Egypt. From the nawamis it is possible to deduce the social organization as far as who was buried and with what. It should be noted that bone preservation from the nawamis are poor, making it nearly impossible to identify sex or age. Also important to point out is that most of the nawamis have either collapsed or been used in modern times. This affects the accuracy of the artefact inventory and might not be representative of the original grave goods (Bar-Yosef, 1977: 72), which in turn limits the interpretations. Also, most of the excavations have as mentioned been done by the Israeli and is therefore written in Hebrew. The only two excavation reports in the English language are from Gebel el Gunna and ‘Ein Huderah, which limits the knowledge about the burials for this thesis. The main artefacts in the nawamis were beads, pendants and bracelets (Bar-Yosef et al., 1986).

8.3.1 – The nawamis near ‘Ein Huderah

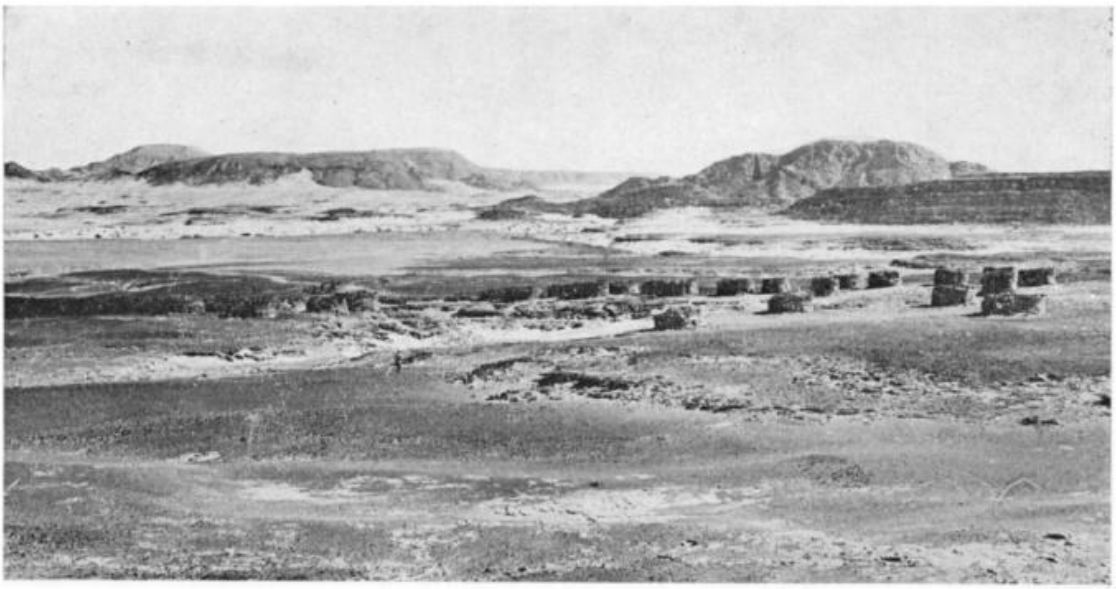

Fig. 19 The nawamis near 'Ein Huderah, looking east (From Bar-Yosef 1977, plate 9)

Site history

The nawamis were located on the sandstone plateau near ‘Ein Huderah, on the bank of Wadi ‘Abaya, a main tributary Wadi Gibi. There were in all 42 Nawamis of the ‘Ein Huderah group scattered over an area of about 0.7 sq. km. The main concentration comprised of 30 structures

built on a low, flat hill, generally 10-40 meters away from each other. The excavation was part of an emergency excavation because visitors were disturbing the context of the complete nawamis. Due to limited time, samples of only 24 nawamis were studied thoroughly by the excavators (Bar-Yosef et al., 1977: 66-70).

The burials

In all there were identified 45 individuals from the nawamis; 29 adults, 5 adolescents, 4 children and 7 infants. Typical for the nawamis were multiple burials, with all types of ages and sex.
Finds at no. 3 they found beads, arrowheads and quartz, at no. 9: beads, a arrowhead, other flint artefacts and bone tools.

Fig. 20 Beads from no. 22, Late Bronze Age (From Bar-Yosef 1977, plate 11)

Finds at no. 10: beads, a bracelet, arrowhead, other flint artefacts, quartz and bone tools, at no 31: beads, bracelets, arrowheads, fan scrapers, borers, other flint artefacts, quartz and bone tools

Finds at no. 32: beads, a bracelet, arrowheads, quartz, bone tools and metal points.

Finds at no. 35: beads, a bracelet, arrowheads, fan scrapers, other flint artefacts, bone tools, shells and metal points.

Finds at no. 42: beads, arrowheads and metal points.

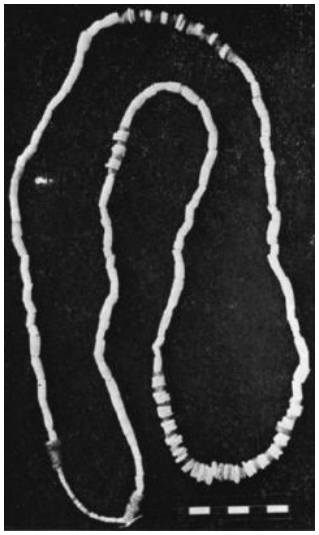

Fig. 21 Necklace made of beads from no. 31 (From Bar-Yosef 1977, plate 11)

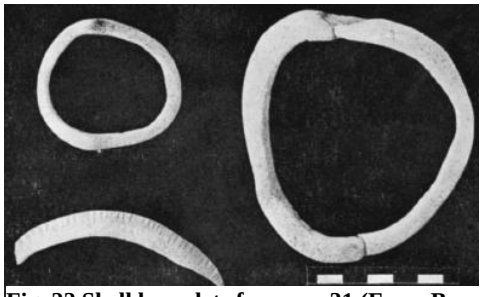

Fig. 22 Shell bracelets from no. 31 (From Bar-Yosef 1977, plate 11)

Objects found in the nawamis

Tools/weapons	Arrowheads, fan scrapers, borers, lunates, other flint artefacts, quartz, bone tools, shells, metal points and sherds
Miscellaneous	Beads of different material (dentalium, connus mother of pearls, nerita-natica-pinctada, carnelian, faience, bone and ostrich egg-shell and bracelets
Animal bones	One gazelle and one goat horn core
Females	Beads, bracelets, arrowheads, fan scrapers, bone tools, shells, metal points and quartz.
Males	Beads, bracelets, arrowheads, flint artefacts, bone tools, shells, metal points and quartz
Children	Beads, shells, bracelets, arrowheads and metal points

Table 7 Distribution of objects found at 'Ein Huderah

Norm

The norm for the nawamis near `Ein Huderah, was multiple burials, all types, both primary and secondary burials. Since the bones were usually found scattered, there was no way of knowing what artefacts belonged to who. Find in the nawamis were: shells, beads, different types of tools, bracelets.

8.3.2 – The nawamis at Gebel el-Gunna

Fig. 23 General view of Gunna nawamis (From Bar-Yosef 1986, plate 17)

Site history

Gebel el-Gunna is located about half way between the Gulf of Elat and the Gulf of Suez on the flanks of the El-Tih and Gebel Gunna sandstone/limestone escarpment which separates the central Sinai plateau from the southern crystalline hilly zone. Twelve nawamis were excavated in this area as well as habitation sites Gunna 25, 50 and 100. The excavation was part of a salvage project led by A. Goren, B. Sass, O. Bar-Yosef, A. Belfer-Cohen and I. Hershkovitz (Bar-Yosef et al., 1986: 121-123).

The burials

26 individuals, 18 adults and 7 children were identified, mostly in fragmentary conditions from the nawamis in Gebel Gunna. The excavation report by Bar-Yosef (1986) mentions that the number of individuals reported from each nawamis is probably the minimum. The bones were usually scattered except in structure No. 4. The skulls were usually placed against the wall.

Finds from no. 4: flint tools (fan scrapers and tranverse arrowheads), flint debitage (chunk and chip), quartz debitage (chip) and a copper pin.

Finds from no. 10: beads (dentalium, faience, carnelian, quartz and shell, unidentified), pendant (mother of pearl and bone), flint tools (borer, tranverse arrowhead and retouched

flake), flint debitage (flake and blade), quartz flake, bone point and a copper point.

Finds from no. 12: beads (dentalium, faience, connus, mother of pearl, carnelian and quartz), spacer of mother of pearl, a bracelet of glycymeris, flint debitage (chip) and a quartz flake.

Finds from no. 13: beads (dentalium, faience, ivory, mother of pearl and carnelian) pendants (bone), bracelets (lambis, glycymeris), fan scraper and a bone point.

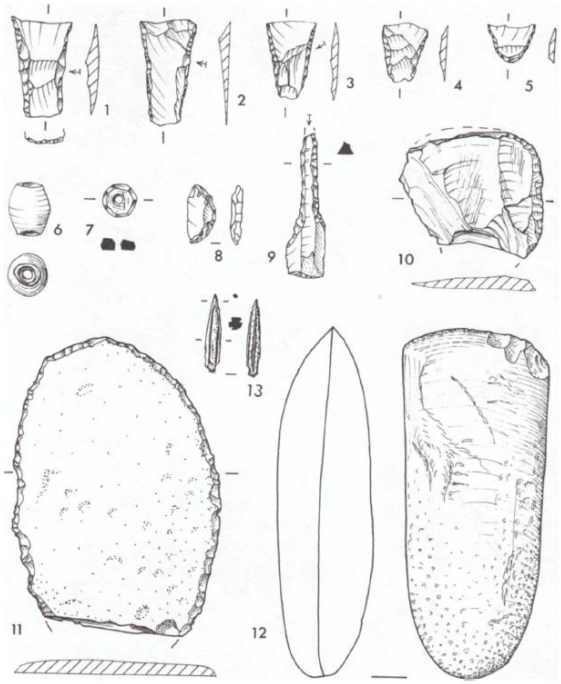

Fig. 24 Lithics and other finds from Gunna nawamis (From Bar-Yosef 1986, fig.7, page 135)

Finds from no. 15: beads (dentalium faience, limestone, connus, mother of pearls and carnelian), tranverse arrowheads, flint debitage (flake), quartz core and chip.

Finds from no 16: beads (dentalium, faience, mother of pearl and carnelian), flint tools (fan scrapers and tranverse arrowheads) and a quarts lunate.

Objects found in the nawamis

Tools/weapons	Fan scrapers, tranverse arrowheads and borers, a single quartz lunate
Miscellaneous	Stone artefacts, beads, pendants, bracelets, shells

Table 8 Distribution of objects found at Gebel el Gunna

Norm

The norm, as at Gebel el-Gunna, was multiple burials of all types; both primary and secondary internments. Of importance when it comes to the question about family burials is the discovery that three individuals from the same grave were afflicted by a rare congenital disease. This seems to favour the theory about family burials (Bar-Yosef et al., 1986: 163). The burial structure had the same rounded plan with an entrance facing west. Objects found in the nawamis were often beads, flint tools, arrowheads and shells.

Summary

The nawamis all had the same rounded plan with a door facing westwards. They were most likely used for both primary and secondary burials. There were burials of all types; males and females, females and children, males and children, males with other males and females with other females. Because of the poor conditions of the bones, the sex could not be identified from Gebel el-Gunna, which means that there is no way of knowing what objects were meant for males and females, and if there even was a distinction. At ‘Ein Huderah on the other hand, they managed to identify the sex of many of the individuals buried in the nawamis. It seems that there were not as much differentiation between sex and age when it came to the objects found in the nawamis; both males and females had beads, bracelets, quartz, flint artefacts, bones tools and metal points, as did the children. However, since the internments were always multiple, and sometimes the older ones were pushed aside for the new ones, the different objects could not be identified with a specific skeletons. Because the nawamis always seemed to have multiple burials they might have been made for families.

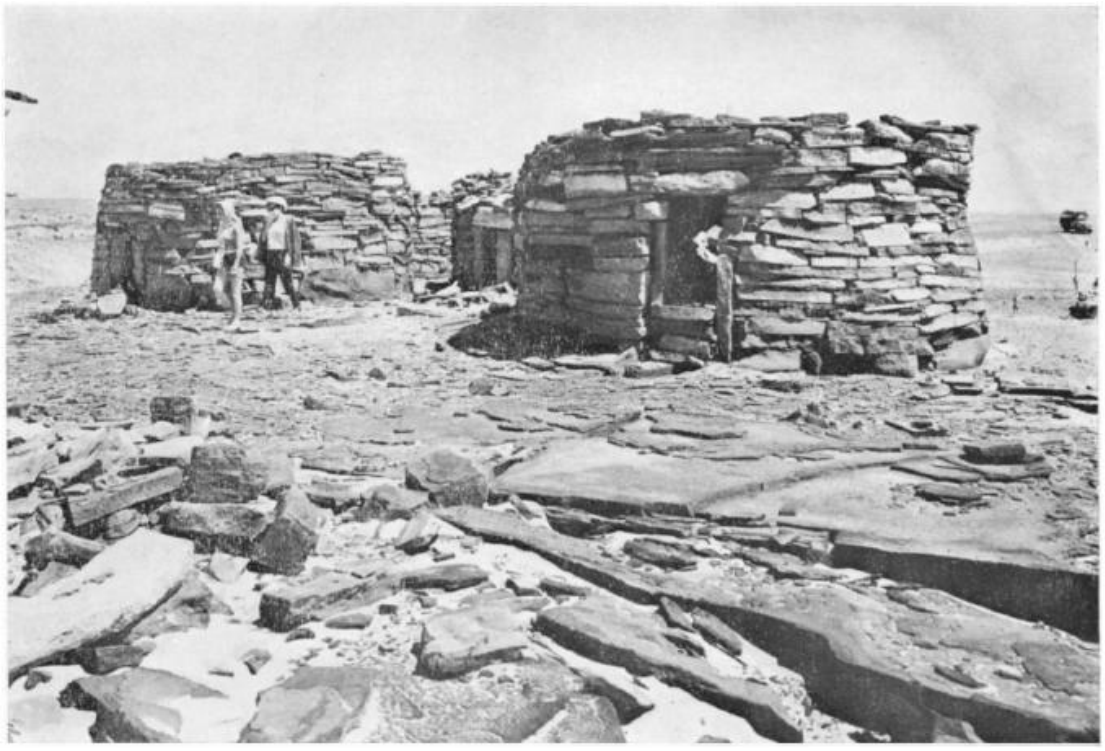

Fig. 25 Nawamis No. 9, 10 and 11 at ’Ein Huderah (Bar-Yosef et al., 1977: Plate 9)

Chapter 9 – Burials in Lower Nubia

This chapter describes the cemeteries and some individual burials from the A-group in Lower Nubia. The chapter first outlines the general features of the A-group, and where they are distributed along the Nile. Presenting the different A-group burials by giving a few examples from the earliest researches in the area. The cemeteries which will be discussed are Cemetery 45 and Cemetery 77/100, continuing with the excavation at Halfa Degheim Site 277, and the excavation of Cemetery L at Qustul.

9.1 – General features

The earliest permanent settlements were represented by the A-group, which flourished between 3500 and 2900/2800 BC (first and the second cataracts) in Lower Nubia (Nordström, 1972a). Nordström (2004, 1996, 1972a) has divided the Nubian A-group into three phases, Early A-group (?-3400 BC), Classic A-group (3400-3100 BC) and Terminal A-group (3100-2900 BC), which will be used in the thesis.

The majority of the A-group burials had no superstructure, but there are indications that many of them were marked in some way on the surface since multiple burials were relatively common. As a general rule the burials did not have superstructures and the shafts were closed by large stone slabs. Most of the Early A-group burial shafts were circular in shape, often with a bee-hive section, plastered internally. Some of the burials were covered with rubble domes (Gatto, 2006a: 224-225). In northern Lower Nubia a bee-hive structure with one or two chambers on top of each other was documented by Reisner and Firth (Firth, 1912a, Reisner, 1910a).

In the later phases of the A-group a great majority of the shafts were oval or sub-rectangular, with the principal orientation along a local north-south axis containing single or multiple burials in contracted positions with the head to the south or south-west (Nordström 1972: 27). A-group human remains were usually placed in a contracted position on the left or right side, the positioning of the hand and legs varied (Nordström, 1972c: 130-132).

9.2 – Spatial distribution

The northern limit of the A-group is at Kubania, about 10 km to the north of the First Cataract. The southern border is more diffuse, although recent surveys have found graves as far south as Turmuki (Nordström, 1972: 17). Cemetery 45, Cemetery SJE 277 and Cemetery

L were located on the East bank; Cemetery 77/100 was on the West bank. The cemeteries were located close to the Nile and at strategic areas, well connected to the desert areas.

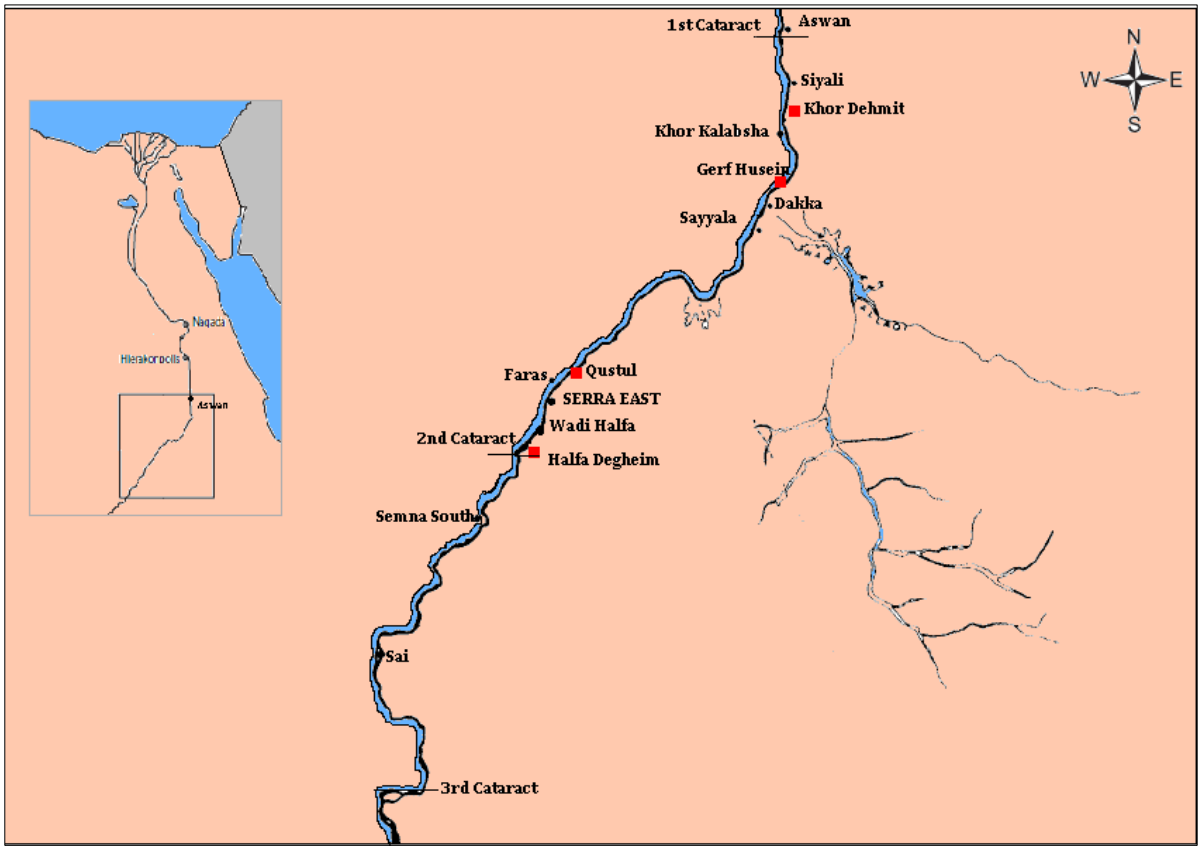

Fig. 26 Map of Upper Nubia and the cemeteries

9.3 – The A-group burials

As with the society of Upper Egypt, the people that inhabited Lower Nubia were also pastoralist dependant on the Nile for fishing and its early inundation for growing crops. The most important source material for the A-group comes from burials. They usually consist of bracelets or amulets, utility objects and other miscellaneous items. Most were made locally, but a substantial part where imported from Egypt.

To reconstruct the organisation of the A-group culture one has to take into consideration the special A-group site at Qustul and the "royal" tombs of Cemetery L, which was excavated by the Chicago Oriental Institute (Williams, 1987). The graves excavated by the Joint Scandinavian Expedition were more "ordinary" cemeteries with less elaborate burials (Nordström, 1996). I also consider excavations by Reisner and Firth as they illustrate the burial practices from the early stages of the A-group. I will use Cemetery 45 from Reisner's survey at Shem Nishai and Cemetery 77 at Gerf Husein from Firth, site 277 from the SJE

excavation and Cemetery L from the OINE excavation as examples for A-group burials in Lower Nubia.

9.3.1 – Cemetery 45 – Khor Dehmit (Shem Nishai)

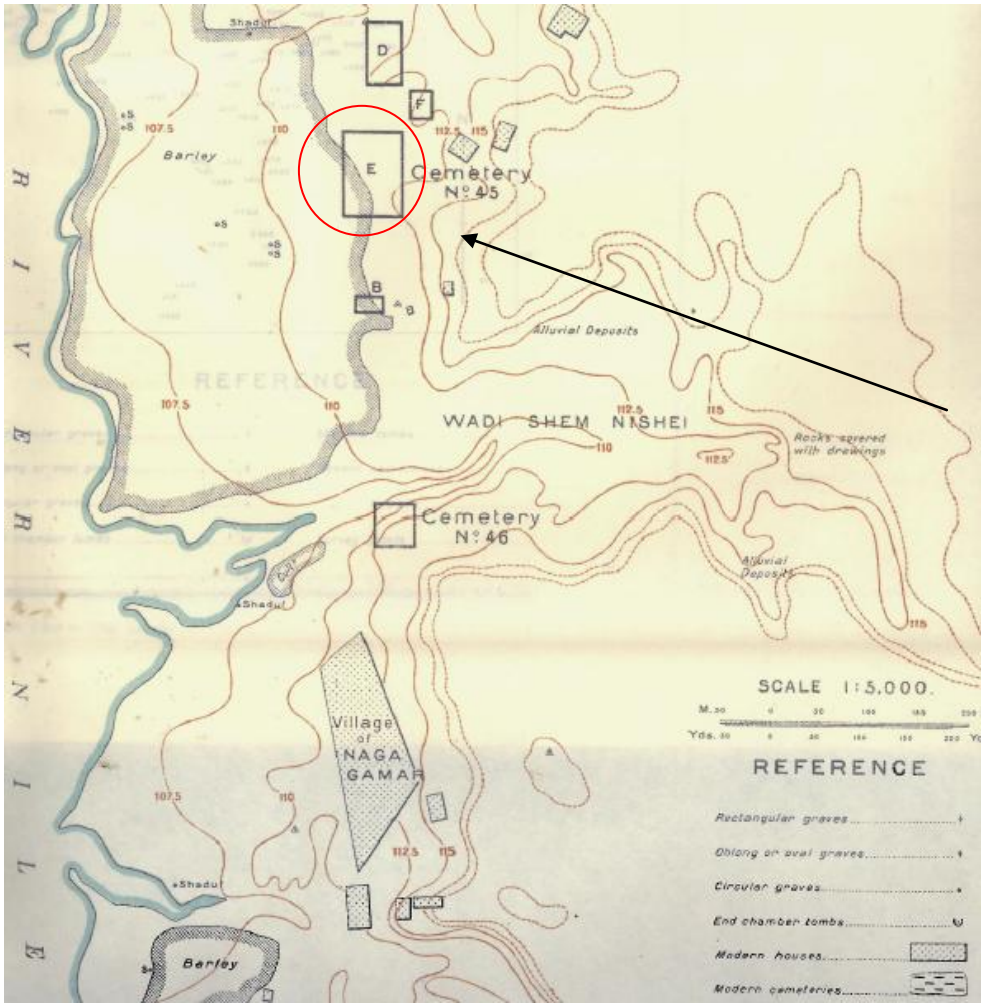

Fig. 27 Map of Cemetery 45 (Reisner, 1910b: Plan XXVII)

Site history

The cemetery laid in a series of mud mounds along the eastern bank of the river at Shem Nishai. From the excavation notes it seemed like the cemetery had been plundered in recent times. Reisner excavated about 400 burials, only a few of them were unplundered. Reisner divided the cemetery into blocks to distinguish the burial types and time period. Block E, which represents the main part of the cemetery, contained the earliest burials. There were 8 males, 12 females, 6 children, 32 unidentified bodies and 3 animals from the 50 burials mentioned in block E. (Reisner, 1910a: 258-260)

The burials were oval, circular, rectangular, and rectangular with rounded ends or a beehive type. The bodies were generally placed on their left side with the head south, on some occasions they were on their right side, but this was not the norm.

Burial Type	Description
Archaic type Ia:	Oval graves, nearly circular.
Archaic type Ib:	Oval graves.
Archaic type IIa:	Broad rectangular graves with rounded corners.
Archaic type IIb:	Broad rectangular graves with square corners.
Archaic type III:	Circular graves.
Archaic type IVa:	Circular beehive graves.
Archaic type IVb:	Rectangular beehive graves.
Archaic type V:	Double beehive graves.
Archaic type VIa:	Recess grave with sunk chamber.
Archaic type VIb:	Simple recess grave.

Table 9 Burial types (Slightly modified from G. A Reisner, 1910a: 300-301)

The burials

As described from Block E, burials such as 494, were usually beehive-shaped, with the skeleton contracted on the left side, head to the south. The burials were usually filled with pottery vessels such as jars and bowls, slate palettes, bone awls and pebbles (Reisner, 1910a: 273).

Distribution of objects found in the burials

Pottery	Bowls (hard pink ware, red-polished, black topped, bell mouth) and jars (coarse brown ware, red ware, hard pink ware, wavy handled, small necked, necked, side handles)
Tools/weapons	Copper needles and bone awls
Miscellaneous	Slate palettes, fan of feathers, shell bracelets, pebbles and ivory bracelets

Table 10 Distribution of objects found at Cemetery 45

Norm

The burials were circular shallow shafts with the body in a contracted position, usually head to the south. From what has been published of the human remains, it seems that both males and females were buried together, as well as females with children and males with children.

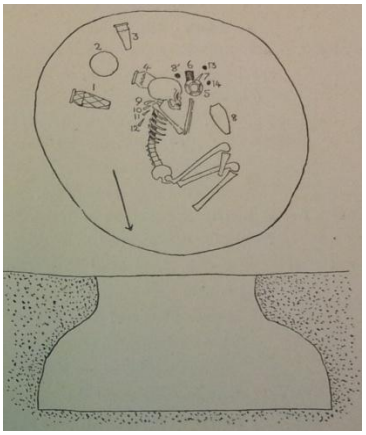

Fig. 29 Burial 45:494 (Reisner, 1910a: 273)

Fig. 28 Burial 45:403 (Reisner, 1910a: 269)

Fig. 31 Burial 45:400 (Reisner, 1910b: Plate 55)

Fig. 30 Burial 45:403 (Reisner, 1910b: Plate 55)

9.3.2 – Cemetery 77/100 – Gedelkol South (Gerf Husein)

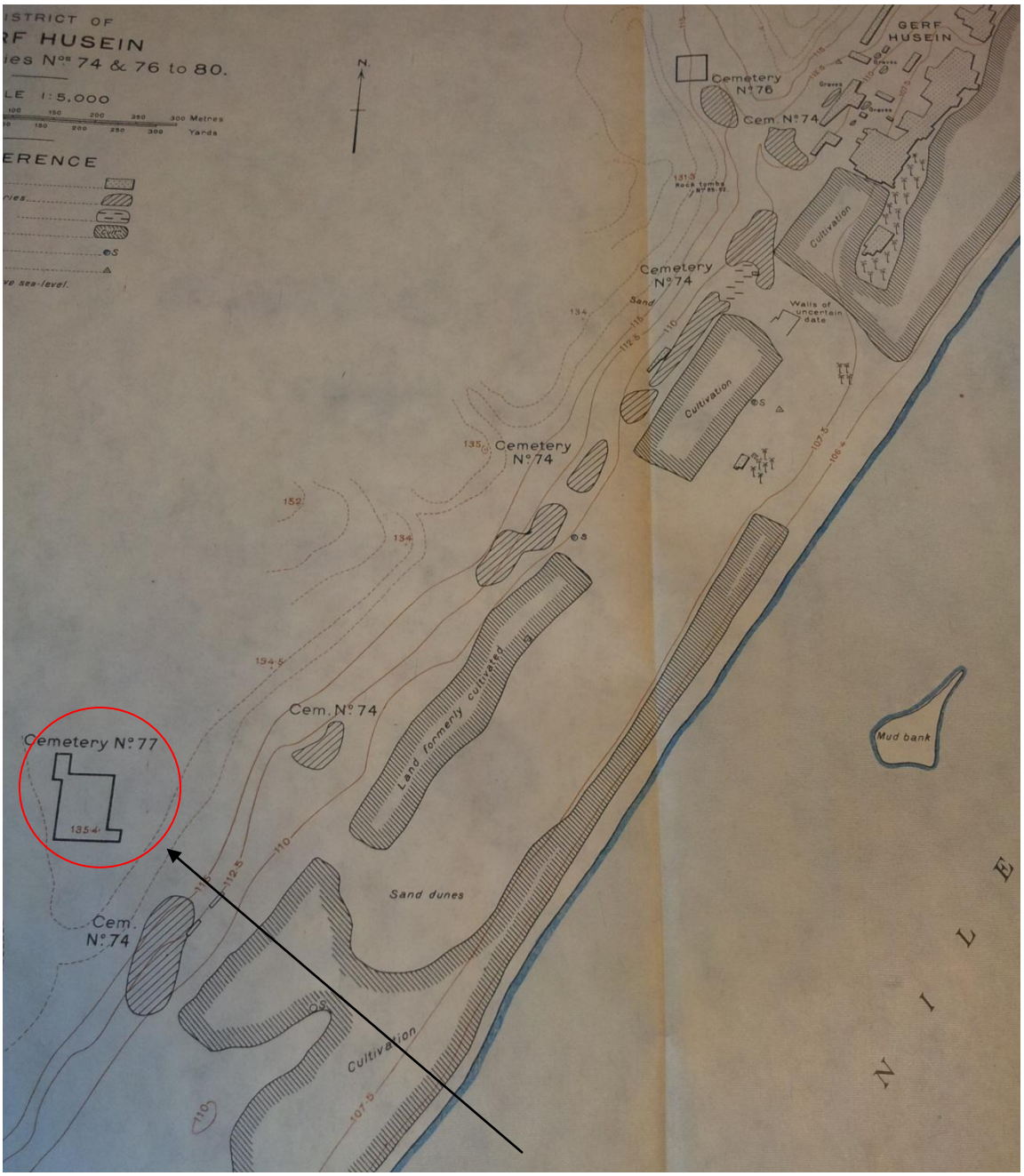

Fig. 32 Map of Cemetery 77 and Gerf Husein (Firth, 1912b: Plan XIII)

Site history

The cemetery was situated in the desert twenty meters above the Nile level on the west bank, close to the edge of the low cliffs and slopes which bound the river valley. The burials were dug in patches of a kind of indurated clay which occurs in beds in the sandstone.

The burials at Cemetery 77/100 were circular, mud plastered inside and were originally covered with beehive rubble domes. There was in all 27 burials, about half a dozen contained human remains, with only two burials being undisturbed. The burials had almost entirely been cleared out due to the search for fertilizing material for fields. There were 4 unidentified bodies, one male and one infant. Judging by the few surviving bodies from this cemetery the norm was contracted on the left side, laid on matting and linen, head either SW or W – local south (Firth, 1912a: 123-124).

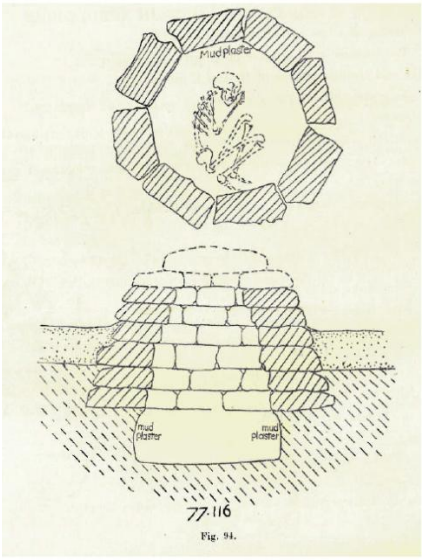

Fig. 33 Burial 77:116 (Firth, 1912a: 125)

The burials

Burials such as 115 and 116 illustrate the custom at Cemetery 77/100: They were circular burials, with a superstructure made of stone. The skeleton was usually contracted on the left side (Burial 115). The content of the burials were usually pottery vessels such as jars, bowls and pots, palettes, feathers (115) and beads (Firth, 1912a: 125).

Distribution of objects found in the burials

Pottery	Bowls (red-painted, red ware, polished) and jars (smooth red ware)
Miscellaneous	Palettes (slate, quarts), flakes of flint, rubbing pebbles, cups (ivory), feather fans, shells, beads and pendants.

Table 11 Distribution of objects found at Cemetery 77/100

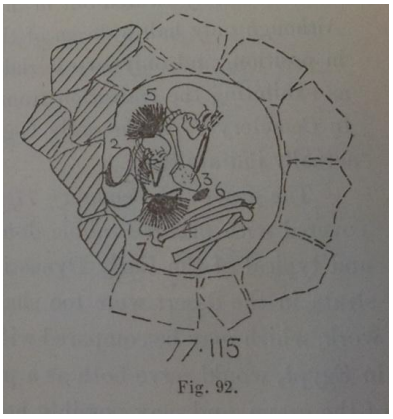

Fig. 34 Burial 77/115 (Firth, 1912a: 124)

Norm

The burials were circular shafts, body in a contracted position, usually head towards local south, the body being laid on or covered by matting or linen. Since the sex of the skeletons was rarely identified making it impossible to determine if it were usual to place males and females together. In burial 115, there was a male buried with an infant. The burials were dug in the desert and not in the alluvial mud as was the norm in Lower Nubia. Because the burials

are shallow it was necessary to continue the grave courses upwards by covering it with a low dome of stonework (Firth, 1912a: 14).

9.3.3 – Site 277 at Halfa Degheim

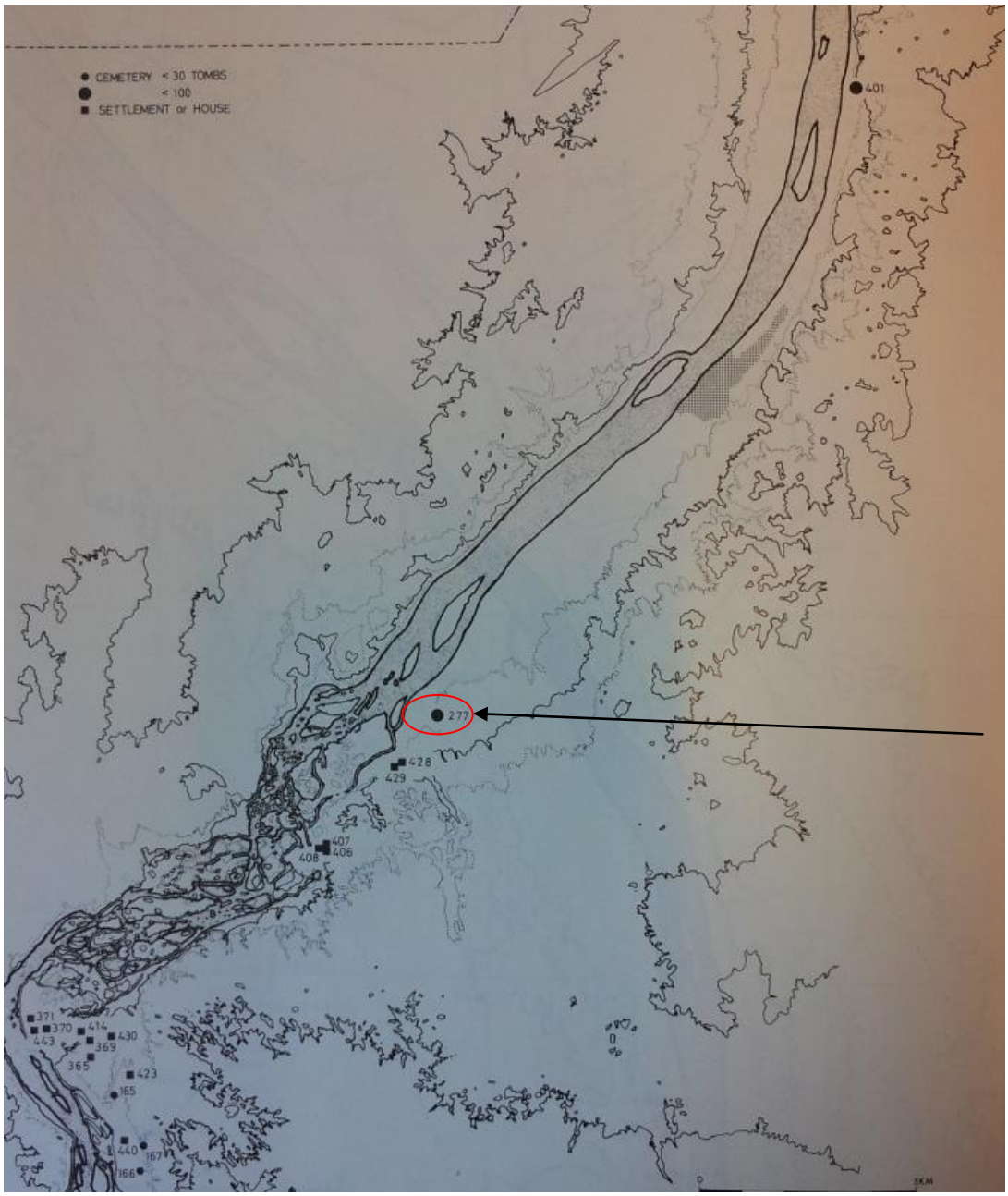

Fig. 35 Map of the location of site 277 (Nordström, 1972b)

Site history

This was an A-group cemetery site at Halfa Degheim and was the largest undisturbed cemetery in the area. C. 850 meters from the riverbank, the site was located 430 m to the east

of the main road between Wadi Halfa and Abka and 800 m to the SSW of the Turkish fortress of Musa Pasha. The site was discovered during the reconnaissance made in 1961-62. The only surface indications for the burials were very low mounds and a few stone slabs. There was no clear evidence for a superstructure (Nordström, 1972c: 190). The cemetery consisted of 66 burials, some with multiple interments, giving a total of 84 burials. There were 27 children or infant burials, 20 classified male burials, 22 female and 15 unidentified. Men and women were not buried together in the same shafts at Site 277. The finds where attributed to the Classic and Terminal A-group, most of the object being from the period preceding the First Dynasty of Egypt (Nordström, 1972c: 130-132).

Shaft/burial types at Site 277	**Description**
Irregular or shaft type 1	Usually shallow, uncommon.
Shaft type 2 (round)	Depth is generally between 0.7 and 1.1 m. Common on some of the cemeteries.
Shaft type 3 (oval)	Depth is generally between 0.6 and 1.4 m. This is the most common shaft type in the concession area.
Shaft type 4 (narrow, sub-rectangular)	Depth between 0.5 and 1.4 m. This shape is relatively common.
Shaft type 5 (broad, sub-rectangular)	Depth varies between 0.7 and 1.3 m. This type is represented by some shafts.
Shaft type 6 (round or sub-oval shape)	Depth between 1 and 1.5 m. Represented by a few shafts on Site 308

Table 12 Burial types from Site 277 (Nordström, 1972b: 130-131)

The burials

From burials such as SJE 11, SJE 21, SJE 34 and SJE 37 it is possible to discern a norm in the burial style of the classic A-group: the shafts were oval, usually of the type 3 style, oriented NE-SW. The body was usually contracted on the left side with the head in the south. Objects such as necklace, beads, pottery vessels, pottery strainers, ostrich eggs, palettes, copper awls,

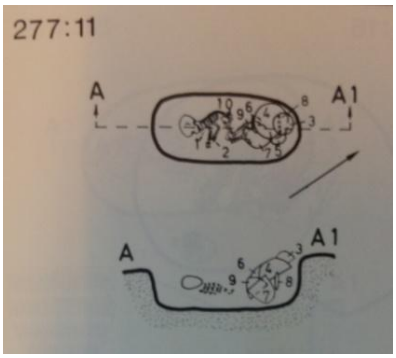

Fig. 36 Burial 277:11 (Nordström, 1972b: PL. 101)

malachite and pebbles were found depending on sex and age of the deceased. As seen from burial SJE 34- and 37; there were often multiple burials, one on top of the other (Nordström, 1972c: 193-197, 204).

Distribution of objects found in the burials

Pottery	Dishes, bowls, jars, pottery strainers, cups and saucers
Tools/weapons	Copper awls, bone awls, grinders, mortars, copper adzes and copper axes
Miscellaneous	Amulets, bracelets, pebbles, palettes, pendants, rings, beads, leather fragments, malachite, slate, ostrich feather fans, bags, wooden objects, ostrich eggs and shells
Figurines	Clay figurines
Female	Pottery vessels, amulets, bracelets, stone mortars and oblong grinders, collections of smaller grinding or burnishing pebbles and copper awls
Male	Decorated bowls, copper tools (adzes, axes, no copper awls), ostrich feather fans, leather caps and bags, wooden objects – true weapons and warrior graves are absent
Children	Pottery strainers (only in children's graves), ostrich eggs (the egg may represent food source or symbolize maturity in afterlife – O'Connor 1993), bracelets and plates

Table 13 Distribution of objects found at Site 277

Norm

The burials were oval shafts, the deceased were contracted on the left side, hands in front of body or head, head to the S/SW, facing N/NW. Females buried with other females and with children, men buried with other men. The pottery vessels were usually placed in the north part of the graves. Copper awls were only found in connection with female burials. Pottery strainers were only found with children.

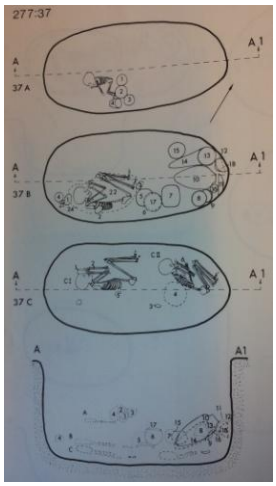

Fig. 37 Burial 277:37 (Nordström, 1972b: PL. 110)

9.3.4 – Cemetery L at Qustul

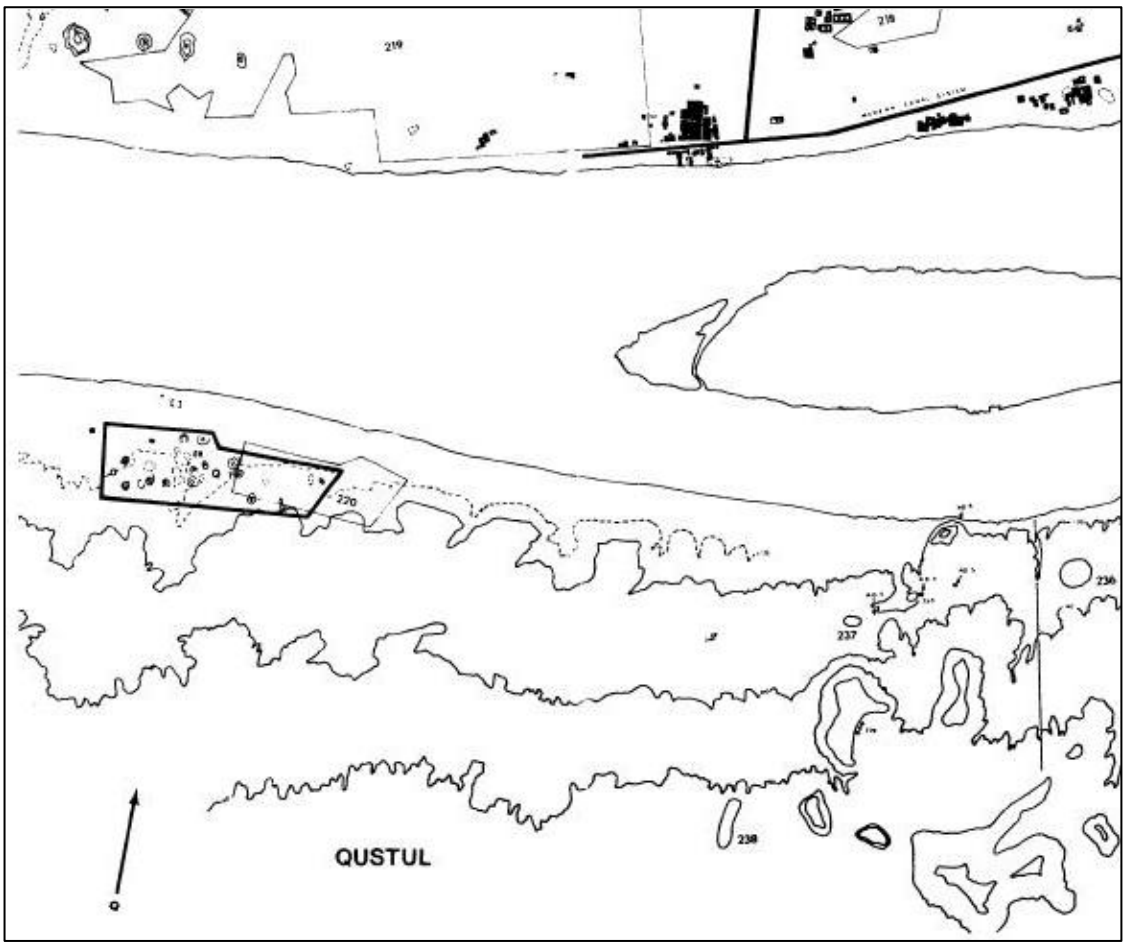

Fig. 38 Map of the Qustul cemetery (Williams, 1986a: Plate 3)

Site history

From 1962-1964 the Chicago Oriental Institute participated in the UNESCO rescue campaign to save the monuments of Nubia. The Institute explored the entire stretch of Nubia between the First and Second Cataracts, they got a concession which included the area on both sides of the Nile from Abu Simbel on the north, ending at the frontier of the Republic of the Sudan. The last season (1963-1964) was devoted to the excavation of A-group cemeteries. It was during this season that the two major groups of A-group remains were discovered, Cemetery L with 33 graves and 28 at Cemetery W.

The major centre for wealth during the predynastic period in Lower Nubia was just north of the Second Cataract, (Williams 1986). The largest A-group tombs have been found at Cemetery L at Qustul. Almost all of the material from this cemetery was dated to the Late A-group. Cemetery L should be dated before the First Dynasty of Egypt based on the pottery

and objects. The largest tomb in the cemetery was L 24 (Williams, 1986a: 165-166). At Cemetery L there was 7/8 animal burials, 5 female burials, 4 male burials, 2 child/infant burials, 5 multiple burials and 15 unidentified burials. Burial L28 was not an A-group burial, but used 27 times at a later period (Williams, 1986b).

Tomb/burial types at Cemetery L and W	**Description**
I. Royal and quasi-royals	Trench and chamber tombs.
II. "Patrician" tombs	Trench and bed-plan, trench and chamber, rectangular shaft, rectangular with rounded ends.
III. "Commoner" tombs	Rectangular with rounded ends, oval, shaft or trench with chamber.
IV. Storage pits	Simple circular, circular with depression in the centre, oval, convex sides and circular.
V. Animal burials	Rectangular shaft, rectangular with rounded ends.

Table 14 Burial types from Cemetery L (Williams, 1986b)

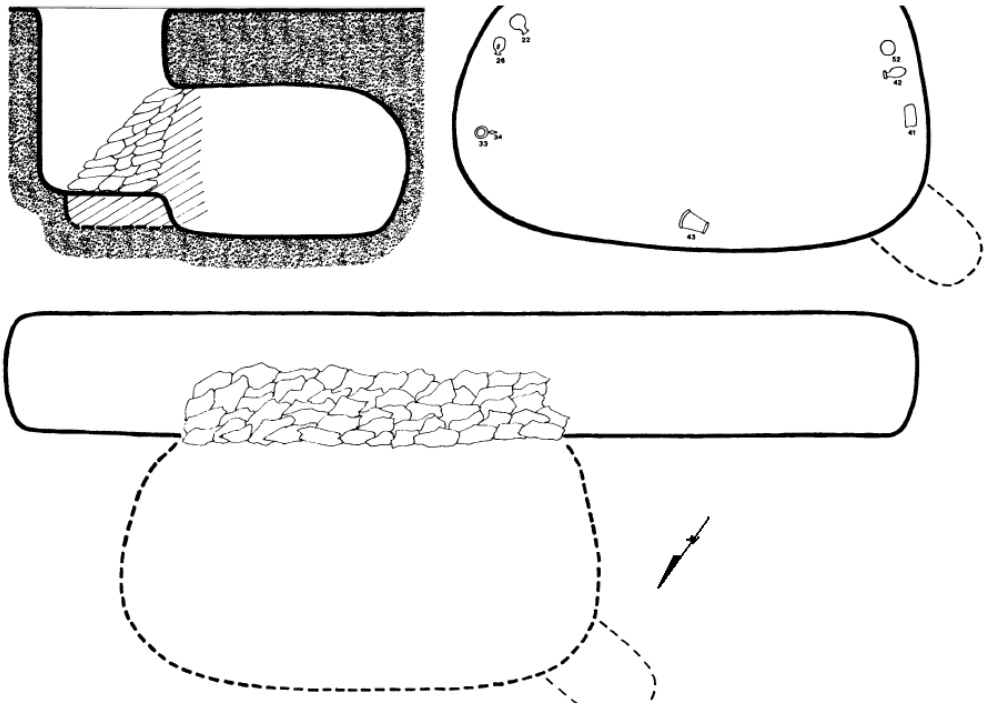

Fig. 39 Burial L24 (Williams, 1986a: 358)

The burials

Burials such as L17 and L24 give a good example of the type of burials that were the norm at Qustul: the shafts were of type I, for royal or quasi-royal. They were buried with prestige items such as the Qustul incense burner (L24) Egyptian storage- and strainer jars, exterior painted bowls, stone bowls, Shell bead necklace and stone beads, gold fly and beads, a copper awl (L17), gold bracelet, pile of shell ornaments, exterior painted cups, ivory spoon and two points, mortars and pestles, copper rings, green pebble, ivory cylinder seal, row of drilled shells, Egyptian bowls, interior painted bowl, miniature cup, lumps and slivers of resin stone vessels and clay hippopotamus. In other graves (L31) there was also found scattered animal bones (Williams, 1986a: 117).

Distribution of objects found at Cemetery L

The tombs were often plundered, the content burned and the valuable objects removed soon after burial. For this reason much of the jewellery and other valuable objects were missing from the tombs. But even though only a small portion of the valuables remained, the amount and variety of objects was many times greater than at any other A-group cemetery (Williams, 1986b: 108).

Pottery	Vessels such as jars, bowls, cups both local and import from Egypt
Stone vessels	Bowls and jars (alabaster, calcite, breccia, diorite and slate)
Tools/weapons	Mortars and pestles, bone tools, and shell hooks
Miscellaneous	Incense burners, palettes, jewellery of gold, metal and shells, shell objects, bracelets, beads, combs, pebbles, metal objects and ostrich eggs
Female	Palettes, studs, mortars, shells, shell hooks, beads, bracelets, combs, incense burners, pebbles, stone and pottery vessels
Male	Incense burners, shells, hooks, beads, ivory, pestles, palettes, ostrich eggs (fragments), pebbles, mortars, stone and pottery vessels
Children	Stone and pottery vessels

Table 15 Distribution of objects found at Cemetery L

Norm

The burials were trench shafts and chamber tombs. Women and men were buried together and both men and women were buried with children. Usually contracted on the left side, head to the south. This cemetery had larger and richer burials than at the other sites mentioned above. There were also burials which contained only animals.

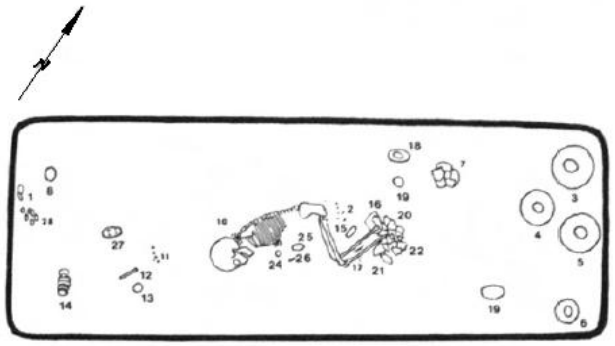

Fig. 40 Burial L17 (Williams, 1986a: 307)

Summary

The cemeteries were usually located on the western bank in close proximity to routes in the desert. The earliest graves were shallow, small and oval, given only enough room for a contracted body with a few objects. Some, like the ones from Cemetery 77/100 had a stone superstructure. Later on, as seen from Cemetery L at Qustul, the burials became larger trench shafts and rectangular with more objects and body adornment, displaying wealth. Around the bodies a variety of objects such as flint tools, slate palettes, stone objects and different types of pottery vessels were placed. The bodies had decorations such as necklaces, bracelets, rings and shells. The orientation of the bodies were usually facing west with the head to the south. There were also animal burials, either at separate burials as seen from Cemetery L at Qustul or together with human interments. From the burial items found both at Qustul and at Cemetery 277 there seems to be a clear divide between the male and the female burials; where the females were buried with more objects, maybe having a higher status than the males in this society. This will be further discussed in the analysis.

Chapter 10 – Comparative study and analysis

Chapter ten contains the analysis of the cemeteries from Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia and the nawamis burials from Sinai. The analysis gives empirical examples of the types of burials common for the given areas of the study as well as comparing them to each other. Landscape archaeology plays an important part in this analysis, since it gives a good background for the burial structures as to where they were built and in relation to what. The analysis also focuses on the different burial customs, the different symbolic aspects of the burials, the transformation of the social order, the social and cosmic landscape and how this can be interpreted from the burials and artefacts associated with them.

Even though the belief systems and rituals of prehistoric people have died with them, their cognitive universe might be perceived in the preserved material remains. Ideas of cultures do not develop independently and cultural process can not be interpreted based only on adaptive perspectives. The symbolism of power which developed as societies became increasingly complex and elites emerge is not just part of the general social evolutionary process, but the symbolism has meaning within the belief systems of cultures and therefore can take different forms (Bard 1990, 3-4).

10.1 – The burial customs

10.1.1 – Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia

The cemeteries for both Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia were usually located on the west bank of the Nile such as the Naqada cemetery, El Amrah and at Qustul cemetery L. However there were some cemeteries in Lower Nubia located on the eastern side as seen from Cemetery 45 and Cemetery 277. The size of the different cemeteries varies from small ones with less than a hundred to bigger ones as seen from the Naqada Cemetery which had about 2000 burials. In Upper Egypt the burials were usually single interments, in Lower Nubia on the other hand, there are often multiple burials as well as burials on different levels illustrated by cemetery 277 at Halfa Degheim (Nordström, 1972c). In both Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia the burial custom was usually head to the south, facing west. Often the body was contracted in a foetal position, with both arms and legs sharply bent. In Upper Egypt, as illustrated by Petrie, there were burials containing dismembered bodies; head detached from the rest of the body or a

meticulous arrangement of the bones in neat rows, showing that secondary burial was practised (Petrie et al., 1896). In the beginning of the predynastic period the burials were usually shallow and had a rounded or oval plan, generally only big enough for a contracted body and a few objects to accompany the deceased. Over time the burials became larger and had a more rectangular shape with niches and more elaborate funerary offerings. In Upper Egypt one also finds burials with mud-brick lining and on some occasions, wooden coffins. The only A-Group burial types not represented in Egypt were the beehive and double beehive forms such as the ones found at Cemetery 45 by Reisner (1910a: 268-276). The lack of the development of these types of burials in Egypt seemed to be a result of the softer soil conditions compared to the hard mud found in Nubia. To compensate for the softer soil, Egypt at this time developed a mud-brick lining for tombs, a feature which was completely unnecessary and absent in Lower Nubia (Rampersad, 1999: 175).

The funerary objects ranged from just a few pottery vessels and beads to elaborate jewellery, tokens, tools and vessels of both stone and pottery. The objects deposited with the deceased showed a clear distinction between the "common" people and the more wealthy ones. This distinction evolved over time since the earliest interments did not seem to be that different from each other. As seen from Naqada Cemetery T and Qustul Cemetery L (Williams, 1986a, Petrie et al., 1896), both rich cemeteries displaying a broad range of objects and larger tomb shafts in comparison to cemeteries such as at Cemetery 277 and 77/100 (Nordström, 1972c, Firth, 1912a) which are more common burial sites with less variations in funerary equipment. It would also seem that items deposited with the body had a specific place, as the vessels were usually placed in the north or south and the personal object close to the body. This will be discussed further on in the analysis.

10.1.2 – The Sinai Peninsula

In Sinai the nawamis were built on the same rounded plan, made of stones set in a circle with a beehive shaped roof and a small door to the west. The nawamis usually had more than one body in them and were probably used for both primary and secondary burials. Some of them had been reused and bones have been found scattered inside with the objects. Since it has been difficult to estimate the timeframe for when the nawamis were in use, most likely between 4000-3000 BCE, there is no way of knowing if the burial custom changed over time. However the nawamis in Sinai all had a similar layout and the same types of inventory which shows homogeneity as to the burial of the deceased. The nawamis had also been used in

recent times by Bedouins, which led to difficulty in determining if the bones and objects found inside were *in situ*. From the two excavation reports which has been studied, it does not seem to be much difference between the funerary offerings, however, due to the lack of sex determination at Gebel el Gunna, and the scattering of the bones, there is no way of knowing what objects belonged to who. Usual findings in the nawamis are stone implements and shells (Bar-Yosef et al., 1986, Bar-Yosef et al., 1977).

10.2 – Structuring the landscape

As mentioned in chapter three, important aspects worth remembering when structuring the landscape are to what degree the inhabitants related to the topography. Is there an obvious correlation between the burial placement and the visual structure of the landscape? What do the burials relate to in the landscape, which direction are they facing? The opposite is the view of the burials; can they be seen from far away, over great distances? Are the burials public or private, excluding or including?

The cemeteries in Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia are for the most part on the western bank of the Nile, but there are some cemeteries on the eastern side in Lower Nubia. On both sides of the Nile the desert is the main feature in the landscape. The cemeteries are usually located in strategic areas close to the Nile as well as connected to desert areas and ancient routes to the Red Sea.

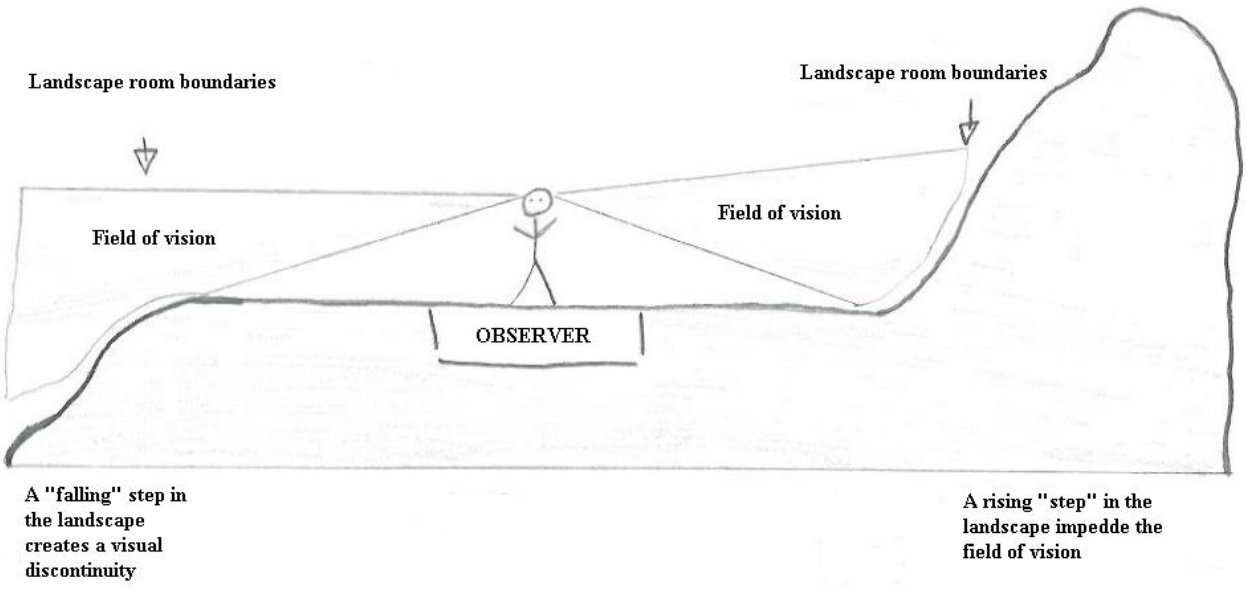

Fig. 41 Own drawing, copied from (Gansum et al., 1997: 14)

The nawamis are all in a similar geographical location, a belt around the high mountains in the vicinity of the monastery of St. Catherine. They are either located in open fields, as Gebel el Gunna and ‘Ein Huderah, on hilltops or enclosed by high mountains on both sides.

- *Borderlines and edges*

Both in Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia, the fertile Nile is a dominant feature in the landscape. The desert which surrounds the Nile could have been perceived as an edge and a borderline, infertile and harsh contrasting the life-sustaining Nile. As mentioned previously in chapter five, the climate changes led people to move closer to the Nile as it was the main source of water in an otherwise harsh landscape. The desert could have been seen as a sort of barrier and since there were no water sources available, the people settled along the Nile when the climate became more desiccated.

In the Sinai the landscape is dominated by the desert, mountains and wadis, the only way for people to survive in this harsh climate was to adjust to it. This meant that they had to stay mobile; move around with their herds and camps to find pasture. Some of the nawamis are located in areas with high mountains on all sides which could have been limiting elements in a landscape.

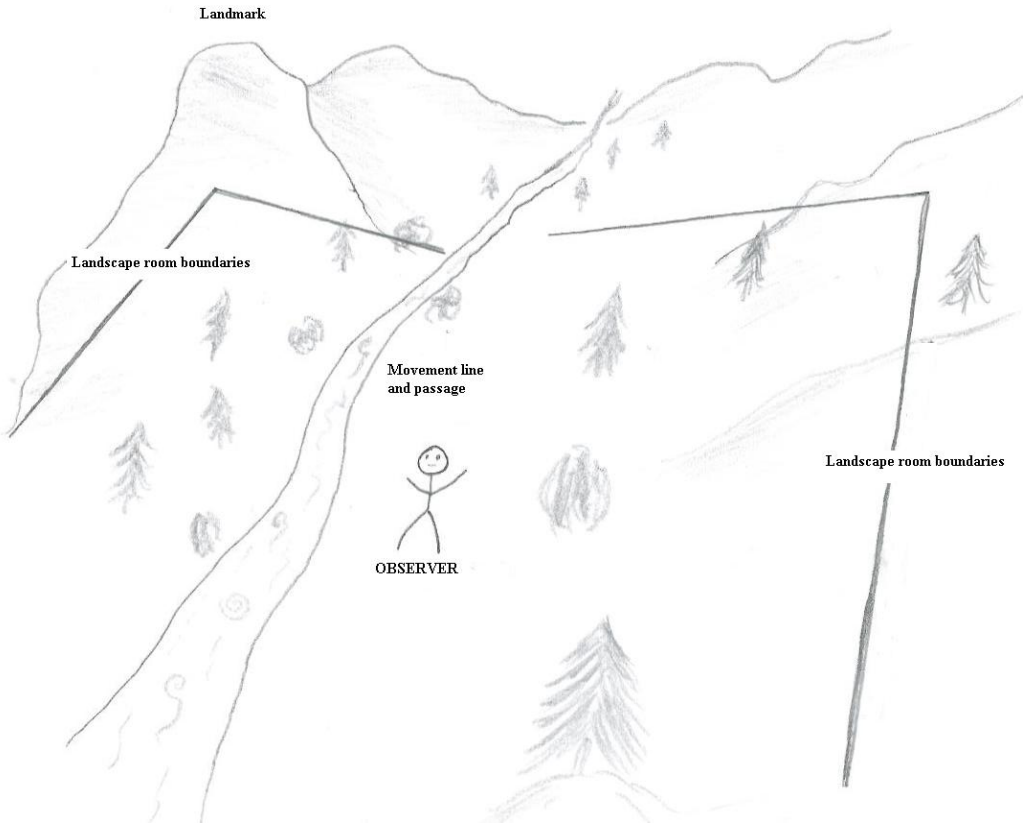

Fig. 42 Own drawing, copied from (Gansum et al., 1997: 14)

- *Movement lines and passages*

The Nile stretches along the desert as a fertile belt, making it both a source of life and a way of passage. As illustrated by Cemetery U, which is situated at an intersection on the Nile; it had an advantageous position as traffic routes went from the Red Sea to the oasis of the western desert. The cemeteries along the Nile were placed at strategic places in the landscape which had natural transportation possibilities and were easily seen from far away.

As mentioned, the nawamis are located in southern Sinai and form an arc around the high mountains with St. Catherine's Monastery at the centre. They are usually located around hilltops in the proximity to ancient routes most likely travelled by the pastoralists (Horwitz, 2005: 118-120). As some of them were placed on hilltops they were easily seen from far away. The nawamis were also placed in valleys and on flat terrain making them visible in the surrounding landscape.

- *Junction*

In Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia, the cemeteries are as mentioned located at strategic positions, in close proximity to roads, villages and water, a place with several movement lines in the landscape.

In Sinai, the nawamis were built at locations which were probably used at regular intervals as the pastoral nomads moved from camp to camp throughout the year.

- *Landmarks*

In Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia, the Nile can be viewed as a distinct feature in the terrain. The orientation of the bodies was almost exclusively to the south towards the Nile. Both Egypt and Nubia was dependant on the Nile as a source for food and water, being surrounded on both sides by the desert. Compared to other cultures, which relied on rain as their main source for life, the Nile was the only feature making it possible to live in an otherwise inhospitable region.

To the pastoralist in Sinai the high mountains of desert were a distinct feature in the landscape. This was where the nawamis were built, becoming markers which could be seen from far away.

10.3 – Symbolism

When interpreting the symbolic aspects of the material it is important to remember that the funerary data reflects a complex cultural reality. Taking into consideration the burials and how they relate to the society and their surroundings; symbols can be strategic manipulations of the social order by the display of wealth and prosperity when the reality might be something quite different.

The analysis will be considering the burial as a marker for social status as well as what it might have represented and evolved into as time progressed and the societies became more hierarchal. The objects are interesting as they can give clues as to the daily life as well as the status of the deceased. Objects such as trade goods shows what items were imported at the time and seen as exclusive. Offerings such as animals, different food items and drinks were also usual, as there are often vessels and scatterings of animal bones in the burials. Rites of passage from the funerary ceremony might be found and their belief in a transition to another life and upholding the community. This leads to ideology and religion and what might be perceived from the burial equipment as to how they structured their lives around a central thought surrounding the cosmos (Bard, 1990).

10.3.1 – The burial

The ideology surrounding death was centered on rites of passage; moving from one state of being to another. The symbolism surrounding this ritual is formed around what brings a person into this life; the birth. The burial symbolizes the transition from a woman's womb to the mother earth womb. It is normal to see a connection in the oldest agricultural societies between women's fertility and the crop. This thought can be found in association with the burial where it represents the mother earth. The association between mother, earth and the fertility of both can be seen from this ritual action (Haaland and Haaland, 1995: 115-120). As mentioned previously, the early burials in Egypt and Nubia were usually shallow and had a round or oval shape with a contracted body. The symbolic aspect might be connected to fertility and the mother womb and the clay figurines found with the deceased were often female. As seen from this, a connection can be drawn to the agricultural belief in the mother earth as life sustaining. Another explanation for the contracted burial is of a more practical nature; since a contracted body takes up smaller space, which in turn makes for smaller burial shafts and less work in digging them.

Later on, at the end of the predynastic period, the burials became larger, more rectangular and with niches for different objects, the body was usually in the north and western side of the burial. The burials also became more standardized in comparison to the earlier cemeteries where it seems clear that there was much more experimentation in both shaft type and artefacts as well as body composition. The new shape of the shafts might imply a connection with the house and that the deceased were buried with objects of everyday use to take with them to the afterlife. Burial with multiple bodies, either buried together or at different times, have been suggested as family burials. The orientation of the body; head to the south facing west has been seen by other researchers as a belief in "a land of the dead" in the west, represented by the suns path through the sky ending in the west. The standardized placement of the cemeteries on the west bank also suggests the same belief. The head to the south could imply a clear conviction about the Nile as the main source of life to both the Egyptian and the Nubians (Bard, 2008). As seen from early on in the dynastic era, the people along the Nile thought the river was controlled by the god Horus, and thus given to the people upon his command. In later times it was his father, Osiris who controlled the yearly inundation (Østigård, 2011). Given this later religious importance of the Nile, it is possible that for the newly settled people along the river, the Nile was the only life sustaining element in the region and thereby personifying and worshiping it.

In the Sinai desert the nawamis might be seen as representing the family house, the layout was on a rounded plan with a beehive roof (tent or a hut). There were often multiple burials which could mean that the buried all belonged to the same family and the nawamis were their "house" in the afterlife. The door was usually facing west, implying the same belief in the suns path across the sky, ending its daily travel in the west (Bar-Yosef et al., 1983). Compared to the changing burial customs in the other regions considered, the construction of the nawamis does not seem to change over time, which is interesting when it comes to their social structures as will be further analysed later on in this chapter.

Most of the burials in both Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia were primary burials. However some of the earliest burials from Upper Egypt shows signs of secondary treatment, this was also the case for the deceased found in the nawamis in Sinai. The custom of secondary burial stems from early agricultural societies, as attested to in the Levant by skull removal from the early Neolithic period. The transition from the Early to Late Natufian was characterized, at least to some degree, by an increase in the occurrence of secondary mortuary practices, specifically the appearance of relatively incomplete and unarticulated burials. One possible

explanation is that these practices were linked to changing settlement practices (Kuijt, 1996). In Upper Egypt at Naqada, skull removal from primary burials and secondary burial of complete skeletons was practised at the beginning of the predynastic period (Petrie et al., 1896). It was during this early period that people started settling along the Nile, gathering in villages and becoming more hierarchal. Secondary burial might have been a way for them to hide their social differences in death, becoming more focused on the community as a whole as opposed to the individual. Secondary burial is also attested to in Sinai, where it might reflect a society where the practice was to de-flesh the body when an individual died away from the camp and community, and then later be brought back for burial at a common burial site. This was also a way of uniting the community, giving all its members the same burial treatment as well as a public ceremony with participants.

Some researchers (Garfinkel, 1994, Amiran, 1962) suggest that secondary burial practices might have been linked to ancestor worship in general and that skull removal reflects one of several thematically interrelated aspects of a ritual belief system focused on enhancing community cohesion and reaffirming household and community beliefs as opposed to primary burial where the individual is at the centre (Goring-Morris, 2002, Kuijt, 2000, Kuijt, 1996). An important point concerning mortuary practices are that at least on some levels they touch upon aspects of the past, the collective memory and ideology. Morris (1991: 150) makes an important point in differentiating mortuary ritual from ancestor cult. He argues that mortuary rituals are primarily focused on rite of passage ceremonies that separate the living from the dead, while ancestor cults are focused on continued access to the deceased in the afterworld. With the latter, the affairs of the living and the dead are connected. The sanctity of this connection is also reinforced through widespread household and community participation in ritual action. Mortuary practices on the other hand, often involves communal events, usually controlled and directed by a limited number of individuals and enacted for an audience. As Kuijt (2001) explains it "*The power of ritual as a cohesive force is based, in part, on the realization that mortuary practice is a form of public action, a social drama designed and conducted by the living, often to produce community participation, and is not always a direct reflection of the status, authority, and importance of the deceased*" (Kuijt, 2001: 82). Given that some of the burials found in both Sinai and Upper Egypt had some form of secondary treatment, it seems fair to assume they practiced some form of mortuary rituals to affirm and cement their community.

10.3.2 – Personal adornments

Objects usually found in the burials ranged from personal adornment to weapons and various storage vessels. What they all had in common was that they were meant in some way as a social marker for the individual. They were not made just for burials, but were used in the everyday life as testified by findings in connection with settlements. The focus was on bodily ornamentation such as bangles, necklaces, cosmetic palettes (fig. 45), combs (fig. 44), beads (fig. 43) and shells. Large quantities of these items show that both the Egyptians and the Nubians thought them important as markers for identity as well as social status. There was also a focus on skin and hair as symbolic media as seen through the use of hides or fabric, cosmetics and ornamentations (fig. 46). The body was seen as the nexus of identity; these funerary items the individual might have worn or used in life, and which could have communicate membership of certain groups by gender or status, and also the interpretation of the individual as part of a wider network of social relations. By placing these items with the deceased they symbolized not just wealth and prosperity, but also an affiliation to the society as a whole and their belief system as the fundamental core. Some items, such as the copper awls found in Lower Nubia, have only been attested in a female burial context. Also of interest are the pottery strainers which have only been found in connection with child burials in Lower Nubia (Nordström, 1996). These objects were clearly only meant for either females or children, and belonged to their ideological sphere. Objects associated with power, such as the mace-head have usually been found in male burials in Upper Egypt (Petrie et al., 1896). Symbols of power were incorporated into the male burials due to them being seen as the providers and having the responsibility of safeguarding the family.

Fig. 44 Ivory comb with double -faced human head, Naqada I (Petrie Museum)

Fig. 45 Cosmetic palette, siltstone, type 57 H. From Naqada Tomb 869 (Petrie Museum)

Fig. 43 Garnet, 21 small rough lumps. From Naqada Tomb 1270 (Petrie Museum)

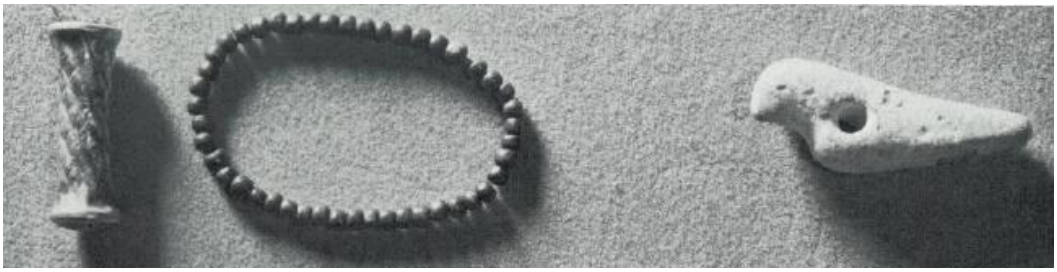

Fig. 46 Personal adornments from A-group burials: 277/36, 34 and 17. Gold cylinder, gold beads and a falcon pendant of alabaster (Nordström, 1972b: plate 195)

10.3.3 – Figurines

At El Amrah, MacIver documented clay "dolls" (fig. 51) representing both male and female in the burials. They might have been a representation of the deceased or functioned as dolls for children to play with. Clay figurines have also been found in Lower Nubia (fig. 53), where they are a predominant feature in graves of young girls. These figurines were also found by Petrie at the excavation of Naqada, they were of clay, ivory and slate (Nordström, 1972c, Randall-MacIver and Mace, 1902, Petrie et al., 1896). These might also have had the same function as the others, but the ivory ones are special, having raised arms and body paint (fig. 49). The same posture has also been found on pottery were there are several figurines; it has been interpreted as some sort of a initiation dance, with mothers leading their sons (Garfinkel, 2001). Others, like Relke (2011), have implied a connection between the "dancing figurines"

Fig. 49 Ivory figurines, (Petrie 1896: plate LIX)

Fig. 48 Woman clay figurine, Naqada period (personal picture from Ashmolean Museum)

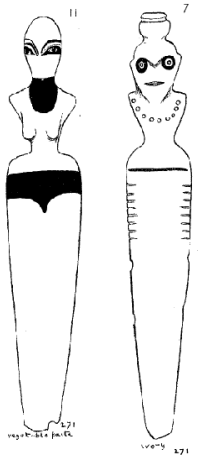

Fig. 47 Ivory figurines 271, (Petrie 1896: plate LIX)

and the historic Egyptian female deities such as Hathor, Nut, Isis, Nephthys, and Bat, symbolizing funerary cult and goddesses of the afterlife, the mother goddess and the cow goddess. Others have compared the figures with the Mother Goddess (fig.48), being reminiscent of the Venus of Willendorf. A problem with the Mother Goddess theory in Egypt is that it derives from areas where the earth was symptomatic with being fertile and therefore

female, while the sky and rain was male, in historic Egypt on the other hand, the earth was considered a male deity (Geb) while the sky was female (Nut).

In Ucko's work "The Interpretation of Prehistoric Anthropomorphic Figurines", he challenged the prevailing view of prehistoric figurines as representations of a universal Mother Goddess. He describes the criteria that might be used for distinguishing the different figurine functions as follows:

"For dolls: (1) the use of clay for the manufacture of the figurines; (2) the arm- stumps of the figurines; (3) the lack of any ritual context or signs of divinity on the figurines; (4) the size and portability of the figurines; (5) the non-conformist figures as well as the representations of animals.

Fig. 50 Clay "dolls" from El Amrah (Randall-MacIver and Mace 1902: plate IX)

For initiation figures: (1) the rare costly material as well as the common use of clay for the manufacture of the figurines; (2) the differences in technical achievement in the manufacture of the figurines; (3) the provenance of the figurines from habitation debris and rubbish areas as well as rarely from within houses; (4) the strikingly non-conformist figures as well as the representations of animals; (5) the lack of any signs of divinity on the figurines.

For vehicles of sympathetic magic: (1) either the sexless or the male and female figurines; (2) the provenance of the figurines from habitation debris and rubbish areas as well as occasionally from within houses; (3) the size and portability of the figurines" (Ucko, 1962: 47-48).

Fig. 52 Clay Hippopotamus, found in a grave at Hu, Naqada II (Ashmolean Museum)

Fig. 51 Clay animals from El Amrah (Randall-MacIver and Mace 1902: plate IX)

The clay figurines were made to depicted animals (fig. 51 and 52), male and female humans, as well as sexless humans. Some were thin and others fat; and some of each type were either clothed, tattooed or with hair. Animal figurines representing oxen has been interpreted as having a connection to an agricultural society, the ox being a treasured animal, and was most likely viewed as important and in some ways sacred. Representations of oxen were found at El Amrah (fig. 51) and they might have symbolised either of these views. Other animals were the hippopotamus, the lion, and the pig to name a few. As seen, there were probably many reasons behind the figurines usage and manufacture; they were dolls, ancestor figures, talismanic pregnancy aids, tools for sex instruction and puberty rites, twin substitutes in burials and concubine burial figurines. Giving them only one function limits our interpretations of them as well as our understanding of what they might have represented and symbolized.

Fig. 53 A-group clay figurines from site 277, burial 16. (Nordström, 1972b: plate 197)

10.3.4 – Weapons and tools

Even though the period is called "Early Bronze Age" it was not characterized, as in the European Bronze Age, with copper. There were some copper items, but mostly there were still tools made of stone and bone. At the end of the period there was an increase of copper items, both produced locally and imported.

Fig. 54 Mace head; white limestone; pear shaped; perforated from one side. From Gerzeh tomb 67, Naqada II (Petrie Museum)

Fig. 55 Mace-head from grave T22 at Naqada (Personal picture, Ashmolean Museum)

Weapons and tools have been found in both male and female burials; such as mace-heads, lances and knives, hooks, mortars and pestles. However, for the most part, they belonged to the male sphere. The pear-shaped mace-heads (fig. 54) are a good example of a weapon that

ceases to be used as a weapon and became instead a symbol of power and associated with chieftains in Upper Egypt as seen from the Naqada Cemetery T. This might also have been the case in Lower Nubia since the maces have been found in connection with rich burials.

At Cemetery 277 in Lower Nubia, Nordström (1996) points out that there were no real "warrior burials" or true weapons buried with males. This is quite interesting given that such items are fairly normal burial objects, signifying power, wealth and prosperity. This society on the other hand, seemed to be more female-oriented, giving a matrilineal tradition where the females were at the centre and had the authority (Nordström, 1996).

In the nawamis in Sinai, arrowheads, fan scrapers, borers, lunates, bone tools and metal points were found (Bar-Yosef et al., 1986, Bar-Yosef et al., 1977). These items are of a utilitarian form, used for hunting, there is unfortunately no way of knowing who they belonged to, however, given that the society was less stratified, the items might have belonged to either sex.

That these items were deposited with the deceased at all shows a belief in their importance either in the afterlife or as symbols of status and identity for both the living and the dead.

10.3.5 – Small-scale models of clay

Along with actual tools, small-scale models of tools have been found in some predynastic burials. Petrie excavated other model burial goods at Abadiyeh, including model ostrich eggs, and animal figures made of clay, stone, or "paste" (Petrie 1901:33) as well as the mud lumps and rosettes (fig. 56) found at Naqada (Petrie et al., 1896: 26). Substituting model goods for real ones involves an act of symbolizing in which the models take on the same value as the real materials (Bard 1990, 10). This might also be said for all the clay animal figurines found both in Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia as discussed earlier.

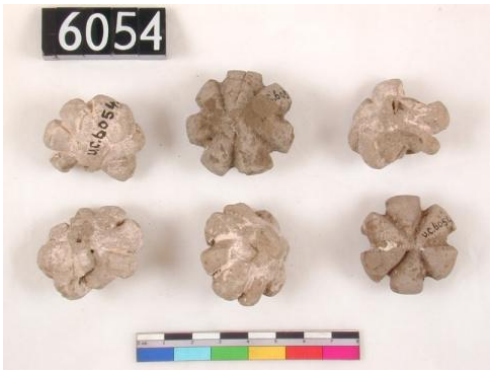

Fig. 56 Six clay models of garlic, out of nine found in a papyrus box in Naqada Tomb 260, Naqada I (Petrie Museum)

10.3.6 – Exchange goods

Exchange goods have been found in the burial pits in Upper Egypt, such as Lapis lazuli (fig 57) from Afghanistan and pottery vessels from both Palestine and Mesopotamia (Stevenson, 2009: 4-5, Bard, 1987: 91, Arkell, 1965: 154). They show increased connection with foreign

regions, which led to exchange of luxury items for the wealthy. In Lower Nubia the luxury items came from Egypt as attested by numerous pottery vessels of Egyptian design (Nordström, 1972c). Being able to control the routes and the income associated with it was a way of controlling the market by monopoly and in this way, also the people. Also important was the ability to remove them from circulation by burying them with the deceased, symbolized both power and wealth.

Fig. 57 Tube of lapis lazuli, grave 1247 and beads of lapis lazuli, garnet, serpentine, glazed chalcedony and carnelian, grave 133 from Hierakonpolis(Personal picture from Ashmolean Museum)

In the nawamis in southern Sinai the excavators found tranverse arrowheads and other hunting equipment which are suspected as having originated from Egypt. It might have ended up in the nawamis due to exchange relations between the two regions (Bar-Yosef et al., 1977: 63). Depositing them with the deceased in the nawamis could imply some sort of value in them; they were seen as important for the deceased either due to the long-distance trade or their utilitarian usage.

10.3.7 – Storage vessels

Large storage jars filled with food offerings were placed with the deceased as items they could take with them to the afterlife or as offerings to the deceased. The jars were either filled with food items or a liquid of some kind but also with burnt ash. In later times, both the food and drink was substituted with dirt and ash as Petrie describes from the Naqada burials (Petrie et al., 1896). In some burials, both in Lower Nubia and Upper Egypt, the vessels have been turn upside down, probably not intended for food or liquid but more as a symbolic gesture by the grieving. Unfortunately, due to poor preservation in the nawamis, as well as disturbances in later times, no intact pottery vessels have been found. At the nawamis near ‘Ein Huderah the excavators found

Fig. 58 Stone base, basalt, barrel shaped, type 55. From Naqada Tomb T 16 (Petrie Museum)

Fig. 59 Vase of black buff Serpentine, type S.84, wavy holes. From Naqada Tomb T 16 (Petrie Museum)

some sherds but were unable to determine from what kind of vessel they belonged to (Bar-Yosef et al., 1977). The significance of the vessels will be discussed in the next section where offerings of different kinds are addressed.

10.3.8 – Offerings

Although most objects can be argued as belonging to a mortuary ritual, some are more closely linked to the rituals performed at the funeral of the deceased. These include animal sacrifice, human sacrifice as well as food and drink offerings.

Fig. 60 Pottery jars and vessels from Naqada, cemetery T, grave T5 (Personal picture from Ashmolean Museum)

Burying animals, such as oxen, sheep, goats and dogs were common in north-east Africa. At Qustul, Cemetery L, there were even burials designated for the burial of oxen (Williams, 1986a). Bones of animals in burials have often been viewed as an offering to the deceased; either the animal had a special meaning and was a treasured pet, such as a dog, or the animal might have been sacred such as the oxen.

Because of the many multiple burials in Lower Nubia, researchers have speculated if there was some form of human sacrifice practice. One example comes from the Qustul Cemetery, L5, were one of the shafts contained the partial remains of an adult male and female, which may represent the sacrifice of one of the individuals in the burial of the other as argued by Williams (1986b: 303). At Naqada Cemetery T, T5 in Upper Egypt, Petrie also argued for human sacrifice in a burial where there was five detached skulls and a sixth on a brick at the southern end (Petrie et al., 1896: 19, 32). It has been suggested that the five skulls belonged to concubines accompanying the deceased. Even if human sacrifice was practised, it was most likely not the norm, and was only for the most wealthy and powerful of the elites. Burying animals on the other hand, seems to be a common practice in both Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia.

In the nawamis burials in Sinai at ‘Ein Huderah, the excavators found two horn cores of gazelle and goats from no. 35 and no. 31(Bar-Yosef et al., 1977: 78). The pastoralists of the

Sinai desert were dependant on their goats as a source for meat and milk. The presence of animal bones in the nawamis interments points to an increased investment in animals as an integrated part of the economic, political, spiritual and social life. The horns may represent the taming of wild forces as seen from early Egyptian burials in the desert and maybe it was an "elite" funerary item. The custom of intentionally burying animals with the deceased is not attested in the Mediterranean region of the southern Levant and therefore it seems highly likely an influence from north-east Africa (Horwitz, 2005: 25).

As mentioned previously, food and libation has also been attested in burials. Either as offering to the deceased as a farewell present, as a gift or as part of the ritual ceremony during the funerary rites. Food and drink would most likely have been consumed, as attested to elsewhere, as a way to commemorate the dead during the funerary rituals. When considering the mortuary ritual and all that it entails, on also considers the value behind placing objects and offerings with the deceased. There was a powerful symbolism in placing objects of value and offerings of different kinds in the burial. They were given both as gifts and as symbols of social status, both for the living and the dead. Bearing in mind that the funeral was a public event, one also had to show prosperity and wealth to the society and give the deceased his or her proper funerary objects.

10.3.9 – Ideology

The roles which are symbolized through mortuary ritual are idealized roles; they tell us something about how the society viewed itself, not how it really was. The social structure as seen from the burial might be denied, reflected or exaggerated by the participants.

The ideology of death can be seen from the different items deposited with the deceased. In Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia there was a clear trend towards depositing vessels of different types, even the poorest burials contained at least one vessel. Personal paraphernalia, such as jewellery and weapons, tools and cosmetic implements were often given to the deceased in the burial. From the burials in Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia the female burials often contained jewellery and items for personal use, while the burials for males had more tools and weapons.

The ideology surrounding the mortuary cult was functional for early agriculturalists in Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia, because it legitimized their exclusive rights of access to farmland,

and provided social cohesion as a rite of passage for members of the same social unit. As the society changed and became more hierarchal, this ideology also gave explanation and meaning to an individual's position in village society. That is why there were differentiated burials which symbolized the different social positions through size of burial and items deposited along with the deceased. In a larger sense this ideology also gave meaning to the individual's place in the mythological cosmos (Bard 1990, 15).

From both Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia most of the cemeteries which have been excavated did not have any superstructure worth mentioning. The beehive superstructures found at Cemetery 45 are an exception. The burials however probably had some form of markers above ground as there are many burials with intentional second interments, but has since not survived. The burial ceremony was probably a public event, where the living came to commemorate and give offerings to the deceased. The cemeteries in Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia are placed at strategic places, where they were seen, close to villages, the Nile as well as ancient routes giving them a public appearance. The nawamis, being for the most part superstructures, were highly visible in the landscape, placed where they were easily seen, on top of the hills and at vantage points, near routes where the pastoralists travelled, being a public display of their monuments to the dead. Since the inhabitants of southern Sinai were pastoral nomads, they most likely lived in small units, travelling over shorter or greater distances as the year progressed. The building of the nawamis might have been a way for them to come together, celebrating the dead as well as the living.

10.3.10 – Rites of passage

Funerary ceremonies and burials are rite of passages; a means of restoring the social fabric after death has transformed it (Huntington and Metcalf 1979:16). The ideologies surrounding mortuary rituals evolved as the cultures became more complex.

Secondary mortuary practices can be defined as social acts focused on the regular and socially sanctioned removal of all or part of a deceased individual from some place of temporary storage to a permanent resting place. They are highly visual social events within which personal and collective identities are defined and negotiated. The mortuary practices probably served as community events in which memories of collective and individual ancestries were actively negotiated and defined (Kuijt, 2001: 84, 89).

Secondary burials from both Upper Egypt and the Sinai can be interpreted as a way of prolonging the liminal phase; where the deceased's soul would not come to rest before the ritual of secondary burial was completed. It also prolonged the grieving period for the living, since they could not go on with their daily lives before the deceased was finally given his or her resting place. As pointed out by Bloch (1982: 211-227), rites of passage was also a way of toning down social differences; at a time with social tension and the emergence of more stratified societies, these rituals concerning the dead became more formalized. There was more focus on the community than the individual where the same burial treatment was given to all its members. The secondary burial practice, combined with the standardized burial objects, reflected a means of controlling or limiting the displays of identity, privilege, or wealth within these communities. As the societies became more stable, with more wealth and prosperity, there were also more differences between the "wealthy" and "common" people which were portrayed through burials. They became more focused on the individual, not on the society and the community-oriented burials as previously.

As concluded from the objects offered to the deceased as they moved from the living to the dead, the items were usually selected to have a specific purpose. Items of meaning were placed close to the body, vessels filled with beverage and food was placed along the sides. As pointed out in chapter four, the transition phase, where the deceased are neither here nor there was a crucial time and had to be treated with care. It would seem the dead had to be buried correctly and with items of importance as well as given a proper ceremony so that they could continue on with their journey to the land of the dead. The mortuary ceremony and burial was executed by the family and the other members of the society, giving the deceased a funeral and the living a sense of community cohesion.

Fig. 61 Demhid, Shem Nishai, Cemetery 45: groups 300 and 400, looking west (Reisner, 1910b: Plate 53)

10.4 –Social order in a changing world

From the earliest times in both Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia there were little differentiation between the burials, but as time passed the burials became more elaborate and with more funerary items. The society became more stratified and there was also more inequality to be seen for the different cemeteries. The burials as mentioned became more elaborate for the wealthy with more items deposited with the deceased. There were also burials which had few funerary objects and were of a smaller size. There were cemeteries such as at Qustul Cemetery L and Cemetery T at Naqada which might have belonged to the elite in the society. The cemeteries could also be seen as markers of hereditary claims, owning land and claiming ancestry, being able to show invading people your rightful claim of property to the land.

The cemeteries of Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia represented more than beliefs associated with the death of the individual and the living that executed the burial; the cemeteries were a symbolic space for the dead, set apart in the low desert from the space of the living (the villages, fields, and the river). In the early phases on the predynastic it was also a mortuary cult, where the members were treated as equals in death, with secondary burials and the same mortuary inventory. In later times, it can be seen as a form of ancestor worship outside the house and the village, where the cemeteries represented a sense of membership in the community. It might also have included an ideology of the right of that community to farm and control the surrounding land, as legitimized by descent from common ancestors buried in the village cemetery.

According to Nordström (1996), the burials from Cemetery 277 shows a community where the women belonged to the highest rank based on the ranking of funerary remains.
If Nordström is right in assuming the combination of copper awls and palettes as strictly female burial items, then the very rich L17 burial at Qustul probably belonged to a female. Given that the richest burials seem to be female in Lower Nubia, one could argue for a matrilineal society with strong hereditary claims, given that children were treated to the same burial customs which the adults were given.

In Upper Egypt, the burials for males and females are usually quite similar and it seems fair to suggest that females had a position along the same lines as males in the predynastic. The funerary items given to males were often weapons and pottery, while females were given jewellery, palettes and pottery.

In Sinai the nawamis had the same composition throughout the Early Bronze Age, as well as much of the same inventory; beads, bracelets, pendants, stone tools and weapons. The society was probably not as stratified as in Lower Nubia and Upper Egypt. It is also important to take in to consideration that each group were probably made up of family clans and the nawamis might reflect their social development. The overall composition of the nawamis gives a reflection of a society with limited social differentiation, where the emphasis was on the group and all its members. As seen from the burial context, with little differentiation between the nawamis, being multiple burials with females, males and children, and the secondary burials, demonstrating the importance of community before individual, displays a community where everyone did their part and was afforded the same burial privileges.

The predynastic burials imply a transition to a socially hierarchical society, a change in the social-political organization from “tribe” to “state”. In the burials one finds figurines, palettes used for makeup, ceramic containers and different artefacts that display a sophisticated and specialized society. In the elite burials there are beautiful objects and the standardized burial method at the end of the predynastic period implies religious rites and the decoration on the ceramic might have symbolized the duality in death and a belief in a new life after ones passing (Bard and Shubert, 1999).

The agricultural life in Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia was of a cyclical nature where seasons of the year and annual inundations influenced the belief system. These natural forces ensured the agricultural fertility and a somewhat stable food source. The cyclical nature of life and

death was tightly bound to the mythical cosmos, which was symbolized in the body orientation in the burials. The head was usually pointing south where the waters of the Nile came from, giving life, while the head was facing west; the direction of where the sun set each evening. The burial had at the same time an individual as well as a social meaning; where the social order and the cyclical nature of the cosmos were symbolized through the burials (Bard, 1990).

Much of the same can be said for the people inhabiting the Sinai; pastoral nomads moving from campsite to campsite in a cyclic route year round, moving from one place to the next, following the same patterns to other grazing sites. As for the orientation of the nawamis, the westward entrance recalls the Egyptian belief that the deceased were going to the land of the setting sun, following the suns course from east to west. Since the nawamis seem to cluster around certain areas it seem justifiable to assume they were used by the same group, when people died at other campsites, they probably brought them with them to be buried next to their family.

Summary and conclusion

The burial customs, as shown from Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia have changed over time; from small, shallow and round, to rectangular shafts with niches. The burial items also changed, becoming more elaborate as well as there being more of them, especially in the richer tombs. The orientation of the burials seemed to be quite constant; with the body facing west and the head to the south in a more or less contracted position. One might call it a burial norm, however there are no burials totally alike, that being the objects or positioning of the body. In Sinai the nawamis are of the same type, with a beehive roof and built on a rounded plan with an opening facing west. They usually contained multiple bodies with different funerary items such as beads, stone tools and shells.

The burials from all regions were usually built at sites which had good transportation possibilities, and were highly visible in the landscape with vantage points, as described when using the different concepts while structuring the landscape.

The symbolism of the objects deposited with the dead are hard to interpret and usually they might have had many meanings both to the deceased and to the living. As mentioned, the dead were often buried with personal paraphernalia such as combs, palettes and jewellery

which might have symbolized their membership to the community and personal identity. Figurines have been found in burials at El Amrah, Naqada and Cemetery 277, they could have had different meanings and there are many theories as to what they might have represented. Small scale models of clay might have a symbolic meaning where the models take on the same value as the real materials. Both weapons and tools have been found, for the most part they were made of stone or bone in the beginning of the Early Bronze Age, as time went on more items were made of copper. Trade items such as Lapis lazuli have been found in burials in Upper Egypt and tranverse arrowheads from Egypt have been found in the nawamis in Sinai, in Lower Nubia pottery from Egypt has been found in huge quantities. They might have represented some sort of elite burial equipment and were seen as prestige items reserved for the wealthy. The item which is most regularly found in burials in Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia is the pottery vessel, in both "rich" and "poor". They were usually located at the sides, either filled with some material or placed upside down. In the nawamis, the excavators only found fragments of pottery. Offerings of animals have been found in all regions of the study; in the Sinai nawamis two horn cores were found. The animal might have had a special meaning and was a treasured pet, such as a dog, or it might have been sacred such as the oxen. The roles which were symbolized through the mortuary ritual were most likely idealized roles. The different items deposited and the placement of them, were to legitimize both the living and the deceased's role and position in the society. The funerary ceremony, and items placed in the burial were part of the rite of passages; a way of restoring the social fabric after death had transformed it. In a sense the funerary ceremony along with the burial and the different items deposited with the deceased was all done to maintain the social status of the living, either by the display of status and wealth, or by claiming ancestors and community membership.

The main question of the thesis was if there was some sort of shared ideology between the three regions of the study. When studying the material, one finds that there definitely were some shared values when it came to burial customs. Being able to show that exchange occurred between the regions, one could claim that it is not so farfetched to suggest that there also was some sort of cultural idea flow between them as well. Especially considering the orientation of the deceased in Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia compared to the orientation of the opening of the nawamis as well as the burial equipment.

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