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THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF SUDANESE NUBIA 1963–69

The Pharaonic sites

edited by

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Front Cover: A view towards Kulb from Akasha West, 2013. (photo courtesy of Derek Welsby)

Back Cover (top): A view upriver towards Shelfak from near Diffinarti, October 1966 (photo ASSN F/333:1)

Back Cover (bottom): Inscription of Thutmose I, Akasha West, 2013. (photo courtesy of Derek Welsby)

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In memory of W.B. Emery, who introduced me to Nubia,
of Nigm ed-Din Mohammed Sharif, who welcomed me to his homeland,
and of William Y. Adams, who offered me the Batn el-Hagar as a place to work

A.J. Mills

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1. Introduction

The Archaeological Survey of Sudanese Nubia (ASSN)

Of the Nubian Archaeological Campaigns (see Adams 1992) responding to the construction of the Aswan High Dam, the survey and excavations carried out within Sudanese Nubia represent the most substantial achievement of the larger enterprise. Many components of the larger project of the UNESCO – Sudan Antiquities Service Survey have been published, in addition to the reports of a number of other major projects assigned separate concessions within the region. However, the results of one major element, the *Archaeological Survey of Sudanese Nubia* (ASSN) between the Second Cataract and the Dal Cataract remain largely unpublished. This volume is the first of a series which aims to bring to publication the records of the ASSN. These records represent a major body of data relating to a region largely now lost to flooding. This is also a region of very considerable importance for understanding the archaeology and history of Nubia more generally, not least in relation to the still often poorly understood relationships between Lower Nubia to the north and the surviving areas of Middle and Upper Nubia, to the south.

The ASSN project fieldwork was undertaken over six years between 1963 and 1969, investigating c.130km of the river valley between Gemai, at the south end of the Second Cataract, and Dal. A first reconnaissance survey traversed the whole region in 1963–64, passing through the administrative villages of Gemai, Saras, Semna, Attiri, Duweishat, Ambikol, Melik en Nasr, Songi, Ukma, Akasha, Kulb, Dakki and Dal (figs 0.1–2). During that initial reconnaissance, the first archaeological investigation of any kind in many of those areas, c.240 sites were located and registered (Mills 1965). That work started on the 22nd December 1963 and reached the end of the concession at Dal on 14th April 1964.

Beginning 4th November 1964, the ASSN survey team began to survey and excavate areas and sites not otherwise assigned to other missions, starting at Gemai, the most imminently threatened area. During that season it completed the survey of areas south of Gemai as far as Saras, investigating 69 sites between November 1964 and April 1965. A preliminary report on that work was published soon afterwards (Mills and Nordström 1966; see also Robinson and Hewes 1966).

The third field season (October 1965–March 1966) covered the region between Saras and Semna, recording a further 101 sites; a report relating to this was published in the next volume (for 1967–68) of *Kush*, albeit delayed for some years (Mills 1973). Reports on the subsequent seasons were not however forthcoming following the lapse of the journal *Kush* (not revived until 1993), so even preliminary published reports have been lacking for the three later seasons. Of those the 1966–67 season focused mainly on excavations in the Semna-Attiri area, while the final seasons, in between November 1967 – April 1968 and October 1968 – April 1969 took the survey southwards to Dal.

The final stages of fieldwork were largely completed in April 1969 with the excavation of the large Kerma cemetery [21-H-4] at Ukma West, under the direction of André Vila (Vila 1987). The consolidation and removal of a painted altar from a medieval (monastic?) site [21-N-11] at Akasha West represented the final site-based work, completed in mid-May, after which the field team returned to Wadi Halfa, leaving for Khartoum on the 21st May 1969.

The fieldwork carried out between Gemai and Dal by the ASSN teams was complemented by the work of a number of other projects. An early and important contribution was made by the German Epigraphic Mission led by Professor Fritz Hintze (Hintze 1963, 1964, 1965; Hintze and Reineke 1989). They explored the whole area due to be flooded both north and south of the

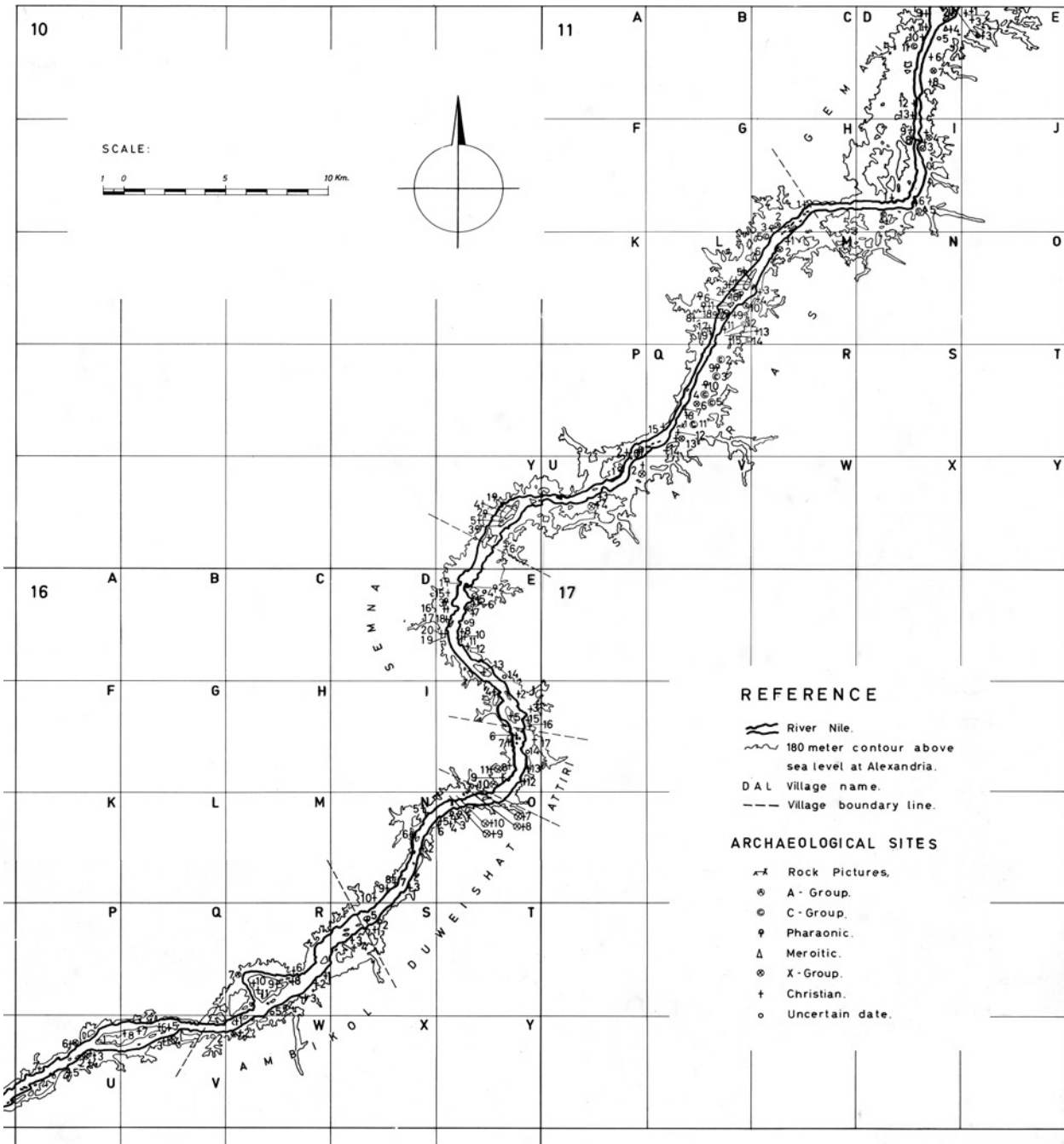


Figure 1.01 Northern end of ASSN Survey area, with sites identified during 1963–64 reconnaissance survey, between Gemai and Ambikol (based on Mills 1965, fig.1).

Second Cataract, with a brief to record the rock art and inscriptions (see below).¹ Parts of the east bank between Gemai and Firka were also investigated by a team from Columbia University² with a particular interest in the earlier prehistory and geology, in the field over the winter of 1961–62 (Solecki 1963). Further survey and site investigations of

a range of prehistoric sites of the west bank was later undertaken by a team from the University of Colorado Nubian Expedition over two fieldwork seasons in 1964–1965 and 1965–66 (Hewes 1966; Carlson and Sigstad 1973).

A number of more localized concessions were also allocated to other projects. Following the

1 Nubien-Expedition der Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin, DDR

2 In some records this is also identified as the New Mexico-Columbia Expedition (=NMC)

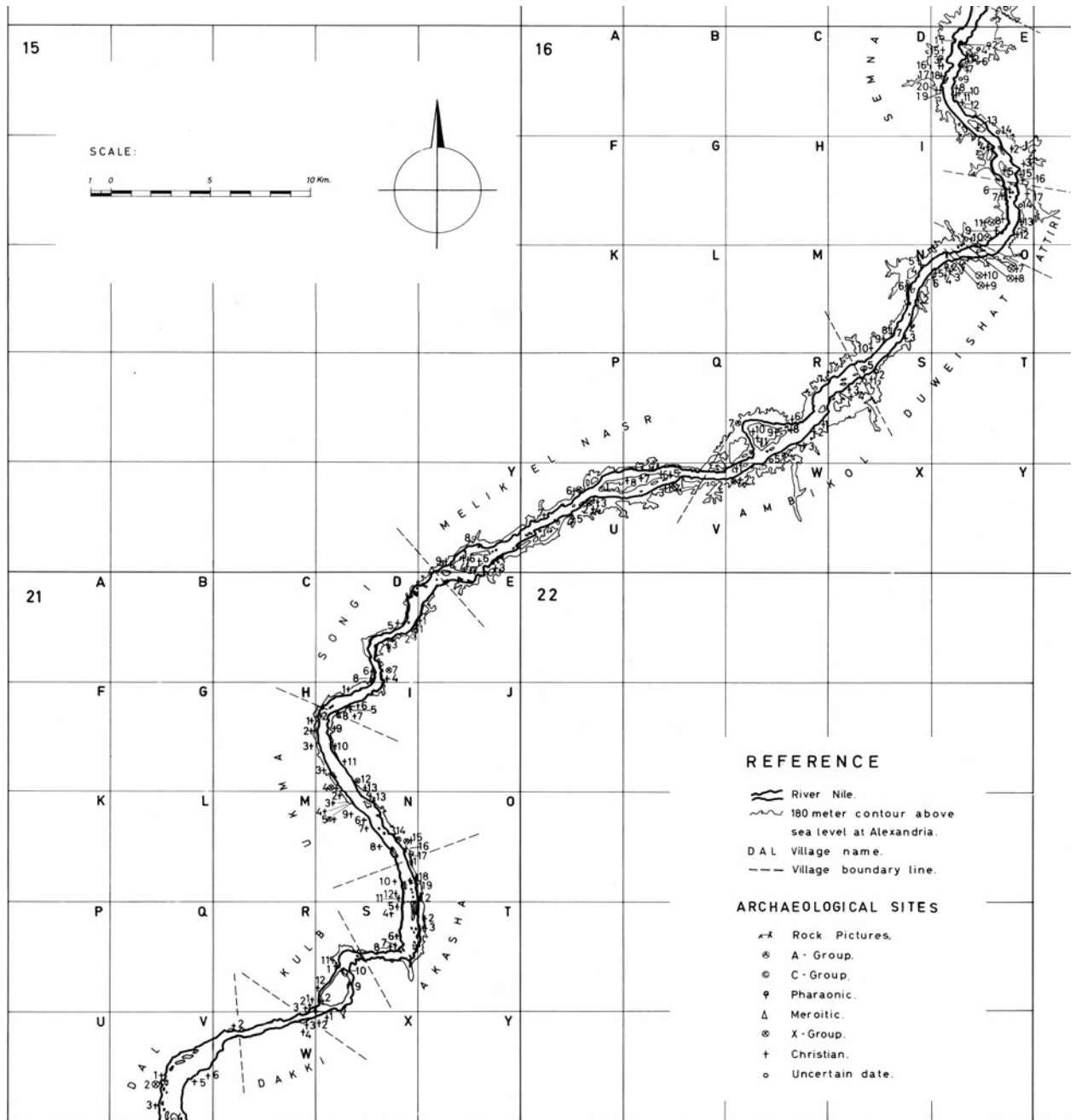


Figure 1.02 Southern end of ASSN Survey area, with sites identified during 1963–64 reconnaissance survey, between Semna and Dal (based on Mills 1965, fig.1).

initial reconnaissance survey of 1963–1964, 15km of the east bank from Gemai to Murshid was allocated for further investigation by the Finnish Nubian Expedition (FNE). The Finnish expedition conducted fieldwork between 21st December 1964 and 1st May 1965, their work including more extensive excavations on several sites identified by the ASSN reconnaissance. Its preliminary results were reported in the journal *Kush* (Donner 1973), and more fully in 1998 in a two-volume report (Donner 1998; see also Strouhal 1995). For the

sake of completeness, a summary of the results of the later work relevant to this volume is included here. The northernmost of the sites reported here (11-D-5 = FNE 15) lay c.1km south of the small groups of islands around Meili island, at the upstream end of the Second Cataract.

In the Saras area, the one major Middle Kingdom site which had not been investigated by Reisner’s expedition, at Askut, was excavated over two seasons in 1962–1964 by a team from the University of California at Los Angeles (Badawy

1964, 1966; S.T. Smith 1995). At a similar time, further epigraphic and architectural studies were also made of the New Kingdom temples at Semna West and East (Kumma) by a joint expedition of the Egypt Exploration Society and Brown University (Camino 1964, 1965, 1998a, 1998b). During 1966 an additional concession was allocated to the Oriental Institute Expedition to Sudanese Nubia (OINE) at Semna, in the central area of the region. This was focused on the Middle Kingdom fortified outpost at Semna South and an adjacent cemetery, and undertook two seasons of fieldwork in 1966–67 and 1967–68 (Žabkar and Žabkar 1982).

Further concessions were also allocated in the southern Batn al-Hajar, removing further areas from further ASSN investigations. On the west bank in the Songi (Sonki) area, an area of c.4km of the west bank was allocated to a team from the University of Rome (Donadoni 1970; Fanfoni 1979). A little upstream, a larger concession extending from Sonki East to Akasha (c.16km) on the east bank became the responsibility of a Swiss mission (Maystre 1970, 1975, 1980, 1996a, 1996b). In addition a group of medieval sites in the Melik en Nasr area (Sunnarti, Tangur and Turmukki) and at Kulb West were investigated by a German Archaeological Institute/University of Heidelberg team in 1967 and 1968 (Dinkler 1970, 1985; Rodziewicz 1972). As the ASSN Survey was drawing to a close, W. Y. Adams began new fieldwork on Kulubnarti in 1969, continued in 1970 and again in 1979, mainly concerned with investigating the post-medieval (Islamic) archaeology of the island but later also excavating two medieval cemeteries (Adams 1994, 4–9).

What was soon apparent from the fieldwork undertaken in this region was the great density of sites identified and recorded. By the mid-1960s the results of early fieldwork within Egyptian Nubia have been drawn together and assessed in Bruce Trigger's still important synthetic study: *History and Settlement in Lower Nubia* (Trigger 1965). Mainly sites recorded by the First and Second Archaeological Surveys of Nubia, these included c.151 sites recorded during 1907–11, a further 76 sites during 1929–34 (see Adams 1977, 72–76), and c.70 sites recorded by the Sondage Survey of the Egypt Exploration Society during early 1961 (Smith 1962, 3). Trigger's analysis also identified a range of factors likely to have contributed to both the uneven recovery as well as uneven preservation of sites of various types and periods within this

region (1965, 43–54).

The increasing intensity of fieldwork by the 1960s was soon reflected in its results. Within Sudanese Nubia in the area between the Egyptian-Sudanese frontier and the Second Cataract zone, the West Bank Survey subsequently recorded c.262 sites (Adams 2004, 1). The Scandinavian Joint Expedition (SJE) recorded c.490 sites over the corresponding area along c.60km of the east bank (Säve-Söderbergh 1992, 39), a total also including numerous rock drawing sites. As the SAS/UNESCO team had recognized during the later phases of their work (1961–62) within the Second Cataract zone, notwithstanding the rugged and inhospitable terrain south of Wadi Halfa this was not reflected in the number of sites encountered. As they recognized “the very barrenness ... has undoubtedly been responsible for the survival of minor remains which long since have disappeared had they been situated in more populous areas” (Adams and Nordström 1963, 11).

The subsequent work of the ASSN south of Gemai was to further demonstrate the often remarkable conditions of archaeological preservation at a more extensive regional scale. In this respect attention may also be drawn to experiences both of the Sudan Antiquities Service survey over c.64km of the Nile between Dal and Nilwatti which recorded more than 460 registered ‘sites’ (Vila 1979, 7–8) and the more than 700 sites identified in the often rugged Third Cataract region (Osman and Edwards 2012). More recently large numbers (still unquantified) of sites were identified in another sparsely inhabited cataract region during salvage work in advance of the Merowe Dam (Welsby 2003; Paner and Jakobielski 2005; Näser and Lange 2007; Wotzka 2012).

The ASSN Archive

The paper record produced by the project was extensive and built on the experience and practices of the earlier survey work downstream of Gemai and north of the Second Cataract (Adams 2004, 16–19). This included a handwritten field diary compiled by A. J. Mills, latterly archived as a typed document. Primary site records were compiled within a series of field notebooks, with details of individual sites recorded in one or more of these. These included 14 volumes compiled by A. J. Mills spanning the six field seasons from 1963 to 1969 (AJM II–XV), three by Bengt Schönback

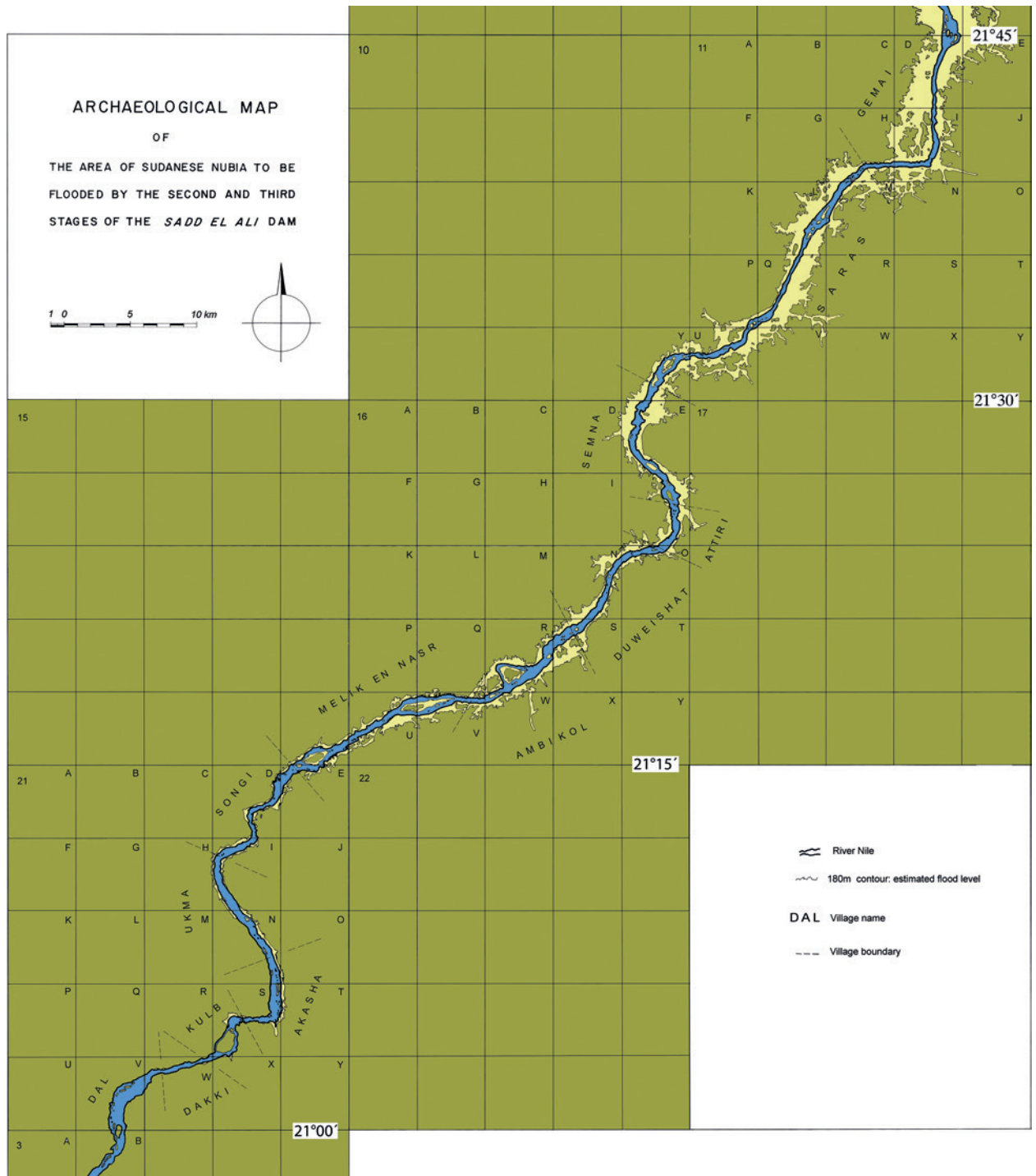


Figure 1.03 Survey area between Gemai and Dal. The 180m contour corresponded with the expected high water levels (based on Mills 1965, fig.1).

(BS I-III) for the 1967–6 season, four by J. E. Knudstad (JEK I-IV) and a further five for Lars Gezelius (Gez I-V) relating to sites examined during the seasons of 1967–68 and 1968–69. Some additional records were also made in one notebook of Nordström’s (Nordström VII) as well as a volume prepared by W. Y. Adams (WYA

XII). While the notebooks commonly included sketch plans and object drawings as well as written descriptions for sites, these were supplemented where necessary by additional paper site plans, of various sizes, but most commonly on c.A3 size squared sheets. In earlier seasons these made use of proforma record sheets originally devised for the

West Bank (Faras-Gemai) Survey. For excavated cemeteries these were commonly recorded as grave sheets for one or more burials with increasingly standardised formats. The quite standardized character and formatting of these records was developed to facilitate publication, and a quite similar format was later followed in the publications of the Dal-Nilwatti Survey. Examples of field notebook records and additional record sheets are illustrated in Appendix A.

The photographic archive relating to the ASSN Gemai-Dal Survey survey and excavations is substantial comprising more than 9000 images, as photographic negatives. These may be added to the c.3000 images in the archive of the West Bank Survey. Facilities for and practical experience in photographic work has already begun to be established in 1960 when the first fieldwork began in Sudanese Nubia and an associated documentation centre was established in Wadi Halfa. The development of the first phase of survey and excavation has been described elsewhere in the reports of the West Bank Survey (Adams 2004, 2005; Nordström 2014) and need not be repeated here. However, this early work was important in seeing the establishment of a photographic darkroom in Wadi Halfa as well as the acquisition of a series of field cameras, supplied by UNESCO, essential to the successful completion of the project. The museum assistant and photographer Arbab Hassan Hafiz also provided much valuable support for such work.

As described by Nordström, then as now, practical challenges of successful photographic work in the harsh Nubian environment were not inconsiderable. It is also evident from the archive how practical experience and expertise was accumulated over several years of fieldwork, producing an archive within which the generally high quality of the photographs is very evident. The very small number of poor quality images makes clear the care and attention taken in creating these records, care and attention perhaps less familiar in the age of almost limitless digital photography. The reasonably satisfactory condition of most of the photographic negatives some 50 years later may also be noted, although some physical deterioration is occasionally evident. Bearing this in mind, one early priority of this publication project has

been to ensure the creation of digital copies of the whole photographic archive.³

The care and skill evident in the photographic archive has ensured that a large proportion of images are significant and suitable for publication, and it is assumed that the majority were prepared with that in mind. That the continuous pressure of work did not always allow the best conditions to be established for photographic recording is sometimes apparent, seen for example in rather ad hoc attempts of providing shade for photograph in a desert environment of bright sunlight and often deep shadows. While the field photographic record remains generally closely focused on site recording, some more general content may also be found amongst this archive. On occasions interesting and valuable landscape views were recorded, all too rare perhaps for a landscape which has since disappeared or been radically transformed. On some other occasions fleeting glimpses of Nubian communities just prior to their removal may also be seen. Such records are also all too rare with the limited ethnographic record made of this region prior to its inundation, although we may be grateful to the more informal photographic record made by Herman Bell during his work in the region 1962–1964 (Bell 2009).

This part of the archive forms a continuation of the photographic records relating to the initial UNESCO-Sudan Antiquities Service West Bank Survey project (Nordström 2014, 3). Following on from that, there was one series of ‘field’ photographs (prefixed with an F/), and a second consecutive series of films used for objects/‘collections’ (prefixed with a C/). The majority of the former were medium-format (120) films, while the object photographs were largely 35mm. The sequence of site films for the ASSN Gemai-Dal Survey comprise eight 35mm films,⁴ and c.330 films of medium format (sequence F/293-F/618). The object/finds films comprise films C/049-C/180, continuing the sequence of films (C/001-C/048) of the West Bank Survey (Nordström 2014, 3). In total these represent a total of c.4,300 site photographs and c.4,700 object photographs, although to these may be added some photographs within the West Bank Survey archive relating to the first season’s work when both projects were underway.

³ The scanning of the photographic negative archive was assisted by a grant from the Sudan Archaeological Research Society in 2014, for which we are very grateful.

⁴ These include films F/197, 199, 200, 230–233, 260, 265; partly within the sequence used by the West Bank Survey.

A card index photographic record for Gemaidal Survey, begun for the West Bank Survey, is currently incomplete, but is being reconstructed as the publication programme develops, while also better integrating the paper and digital archives of both projects. A series of notebooks record on-site photography from 1964–1969. In addition the archive holds prints of c.850 aerial photographs (scale 1:15,000), most taken during late 1959, but with some earlier coverage (initiated by Jean Vercoutter) apparently dating to 1955–57 (Adams and Allen 1961).

Finds from sites were generally recorded in the field and those selected for retention were latterly photographed and registered into the Sudan National Museum (SNM) collections. These were recorded on standardized finds cards with descriptive information, generally including sketch drawings, record information and Sudan National Museum (SNM.xxx) registration number, as well as attached identification photograph. Identification numbers of small finds were allocated based on (AMS) site registration codes. An example finds card is also illustrated in Appendix A.

From Archive to Publication

Some further comments may here be offered concerning this publication programme and its objectives, and how it relates to the original fieldwork and its records. In the first instance it must be made clear that the primary objective remains to bring to publication, as far as possible, the existing archive in the form that it was originally created. Additional discussion and commentary is also added, in this volume mainly in section 7, but a priority remains to present the original data in a concise and accessible form. This follows a similar approach to the publications of the earlier West Bank Survey (Adams 2004 2005; Nordström 2014). In so doing, the publication has attempted to make the fullest use of the various elements of the original archive, using the original fieldnotes, drawings and site and object photographs. One more innovative feature of this work has however been to make better use of the extensive aerial photography archive to better visualise the archaeological sites within their landscape setting. This may be a first stage in rediscovering the landscapes of the Batn al-Hajar before their inundation. In so doing it has been felt desirable to make a full use of the aerial photographs the 1950s, in so doing

often being able to provide useful views of now lost landscapes.

In respecting the structure of the original site records, it has also been necessary to maintain the basic chronological scheme around which it was organized, in this case dealing only with sites identified as ‘Pharaonic’. That there are many potential problems with the original chronological scheme is recognized, not least with the division made between ‘Egyptian’ *Pharaonic* and potentially contemporary ‘Nubian’ sites (identified as *C-Group* and/or *Kerma*). As scholarship of more recent decades has made clear, both in Nubia and more widely, such distinctions may often be very problematic, not least where such boundaries may often have become very blurred in the long history of Egyptian/Nubian encounters, colonial or otherwise. Addressing such problems and the more general interpretative issues raised in exploring the encounters between Egyptians and Nubians must however await the completion of the basic publication of the data. Where the records relating to the C-Group/Kerma sites recorded by the ASSN are much more substantial than those relating to the ‘Pharaonic’ sites presented here, it was not felt possible to further delay the publication of this first element of the larger archive. That the complete study of the full archive is likely to throw new light on a number of sites presented here also seems very likely.

On occasions, where some sites are already identified as likely to be relevant to these ‘Pharaonic’ sites, they have however been noted in the text. This has been the case for example with what may be termed a ‘Late C-Group’ cemetery at Saras East [11-Q-57] which may be dated to early Dynasty 18, in exactly the period when Egyptian/Nubian identities are becoming blurred. The presence of what appears to be a ‘Kerma’ workshop site close to the area of New Kingdom gold-working at Duweishat is also noted. It should also be noted here that a number of sites initially registered as ‘Pharaonic’ (and on occasions identified as such in early publications), but which now may be interpreted otherwise, have also been included here, to avoid as far as possible the creation of further uncertainties in published accounts. One exception has been a number of rock drawing sites, mainly around Kulubnarti which while identified as possibly ‘Pharaonic’ (Adams 1994, Table 1.1, 288), cannot be easily dated. These sites have not been included here as this attribution requires further investigation. These are however recorded in the site listing in Appendix B.

It should also be noted that individual site records were generally compiled in a format looking forward to publication rather than a subsequent separate phase of post-excavation analysis and interpretation. As such there is limited scope for further re-interpretation of the site records, and as far as possible the degree of editing of the records has been kept to a minimum, so as to maintain as far as possible its original form. The one most common amendment to the original texts has been to change site descriptions phrased in the present tense to the past, reflecting their subsequent loss. That a number of sites (or at least their location), mainly in the southern Batn al-Hajar, have however survived above the Nile waters has been noted on a number of occasions, where known. Similarly, as much as possible of the original records are presented here, both in terms of site drawings and photographs. At this stage the original record photographs of objects are presented. That many researchers would wish to have new (and colour) photographs of objects is understood, but the major undertaking of relocating and re-recording objects in the Sudan National Museum collections is beyond the scope of this publication project, however desirable. The basic format for presenting the general site records as well as specific site components (e.g. grave descriptions) also closely follows the format devised by the ASSN team and used quite systematically within their field records.

As is often evident with some of the uncertainties concerning the date of some sites reported here, understandings of Pharaonic pottery at the time of the ASSN survey were often inadequate. That this material was recorded prior to the very important study by Holthoer (1977) of the pottery from the Scandinavian Joint Expedition concession to the north must be borne in mind. The general recording of pottery followed practices then current, such as the EES project at Buhen where A. J. Mills had been working (during the 1960–61, 1961–62 and 1962–63 seasons) prior to the ASSN Survey, which itself looked back to typological studies established much earlier in Nubian archaeology (Emery et al. 1979, 160). As such, particularly where dealing with fragmentary sherd material, much of the archaeological potential of the material recovered was never adequately exploited. Observations on the production technology of pottery sought only to distinguish ‘handmade’ and ‘wheelmade’ pottery, while observations of fabrics and wares remained at a rather

generalised level. Also following common practice of the time, record drawings of pottery were limited to more general formal records, mainly at a scale of 1:3. On occasions their scaled measurements also lack precision, although measurements were provided for most registered vessels on the finds registration cards. Where changes in width/height proportions of some Egyptian vessel forms have been recognized as chronologically significant (e.g. S. T. Smith 1995, 28–32) this ‘vessel index’ (VI) has been noted in the pottery records.

This lack of more detailed and nuanced recording can be especially frustrating where much progress has been made in the intervening years in developing more sophisticated understandings of Egyptian ceramic technology and its products. In view of this, the dating of pottery groups must often remain tentative, generally relying on the presence of more chronologically distinctive vessel forms. Where possible, likely dates for these have been noted, and we are very grateful for Lauriane Mielle [LM] for her work on reviewing this material. Pottery collections may be divided into two main bodies of material, those selected as individually registered finds and more general sherd collections, from within excavations and more general surface collections. Of the latter, the written records make clear that on occasions, some were examined by colleagues with more specialist expertise, notably W. Y. Adams in the case of Meroitic and a more recent pottery (‘Christian’ and ‘Islamic’), and H-Å. Nordström for prehistoric pottery. Their comments, with annotations relating to wares and fabrics are on occasions added to the field notebooks.

Site registration and the Archaeological Map of Sudan (AMS)

The ASSN continued the site registration system initiated north of the Second Cataract, a system later pursued by F. Hinkel with the Sudan Antiquities Service with the aim to develop a definitive *Archaeological Map of Sudan* (Hinkel 1977). All sites were assigned registration numbers within this system as the work progressed, and considerable progress was made in establishing a primary database, both at the time and in subsequent discussions between A. J. Mills and F. Hinkel (especially in 1990) and with D. N. Edwards. However, while Hinkel was able to make some progress in publishing a number of regional volumes of the

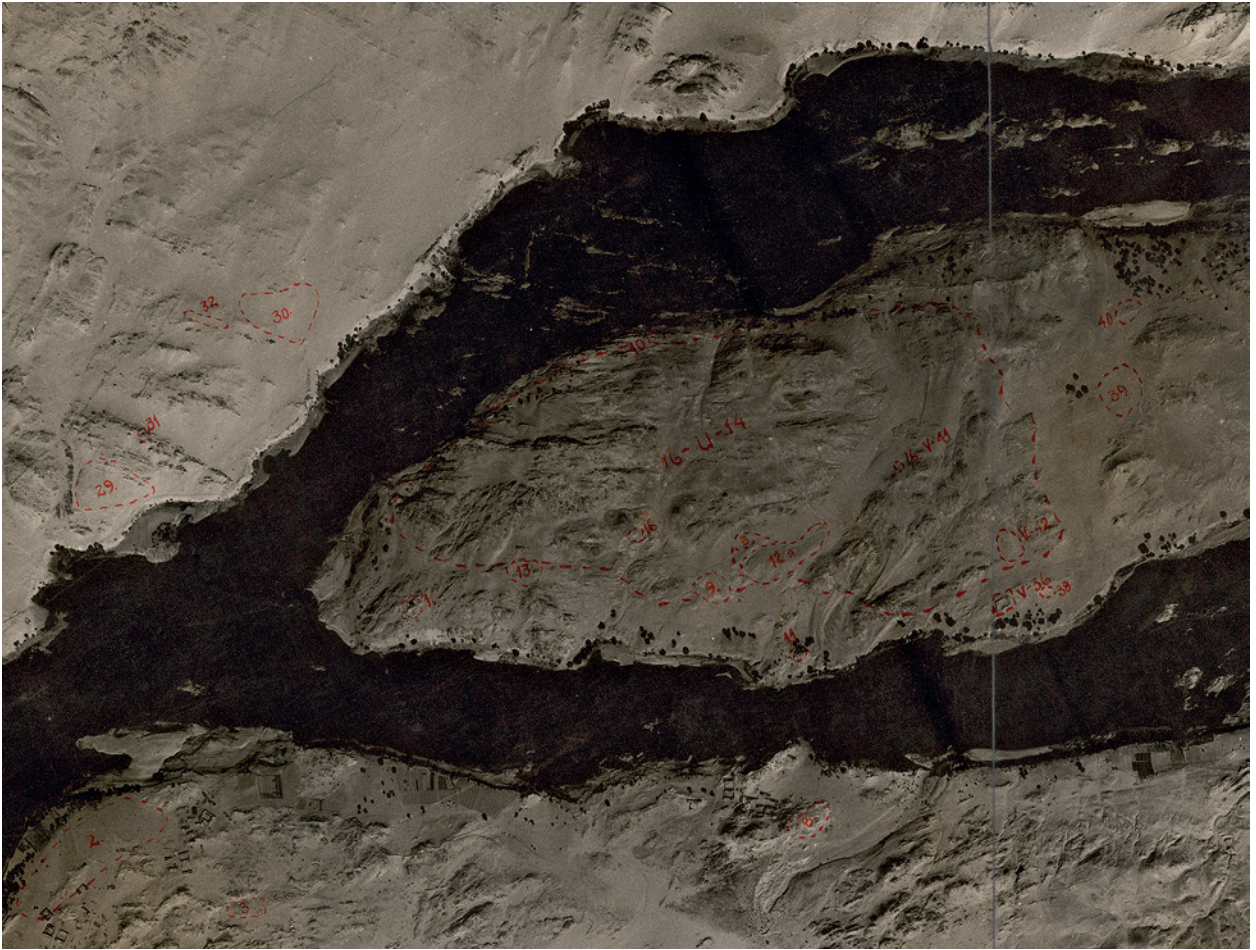


Figure 1.04 Detail of aerial photograph (AP328230) of area of Turmukki island (Melik en Nasr), with site locations marked.

Archaeological Map of Sudan, a definitive listing of sites in this region has yet to be completed. While it may be hoped that one outcome of the ASSN publication programme will be to complete that task (if no longer envisaged in the same form), this remains an ongoing project. The current work has for example identified a number of instances where sites have been mis-located and consequently assigned incorrect registration numbers.

A more substantial task remains the integration of site registers of other projects working in the region, most importantly those of the Epigraphic Expedition of the German Academy of Sciences (Nubien-Expedition 1961–1963 der Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin, DDR). As was recognized at the time there was some duplication of site registration numbers in the early stages of the ASSN. As reported in preliminary reports, it was initially

sought to avoid renumbering of sites where there has been duplication of ‘epigraphic’ site numbers and those assigned to archaeological sites (Mills 1965, 2; Hintze and Reineke 1989, 10–11; Otto and Buschendorf-Otto 1993, 13). However it was later recognized that this would be necessary and this process was begun, although not fully completed.⁵ At least one card index concordance was prepared by A. J. Mills, referring to 11 volumes of records prepared by the Rock Drawing survey registering 757 field files (*Feldakte*).⁶ Many of these had been assigned registration numbers which duplicated those of the main ASSN site register.

Integration of the large body of information collected by this team with the ASSN records was not completed at the time and presents a number of challenges. While the survey of rock drawings was published with an extended series of 46 maps,

5 The organising principles for site registration laid out by W.Y. Adams (1961) and later developed more fully by F. Hinkel (1977) in relation to the Archaeological Map of Sudan (A.M.S) clearly require a single unique reference for all sites

6 Note that Otto and Buschendorf-Otto indicate that 794 field files were created (1993, 13).

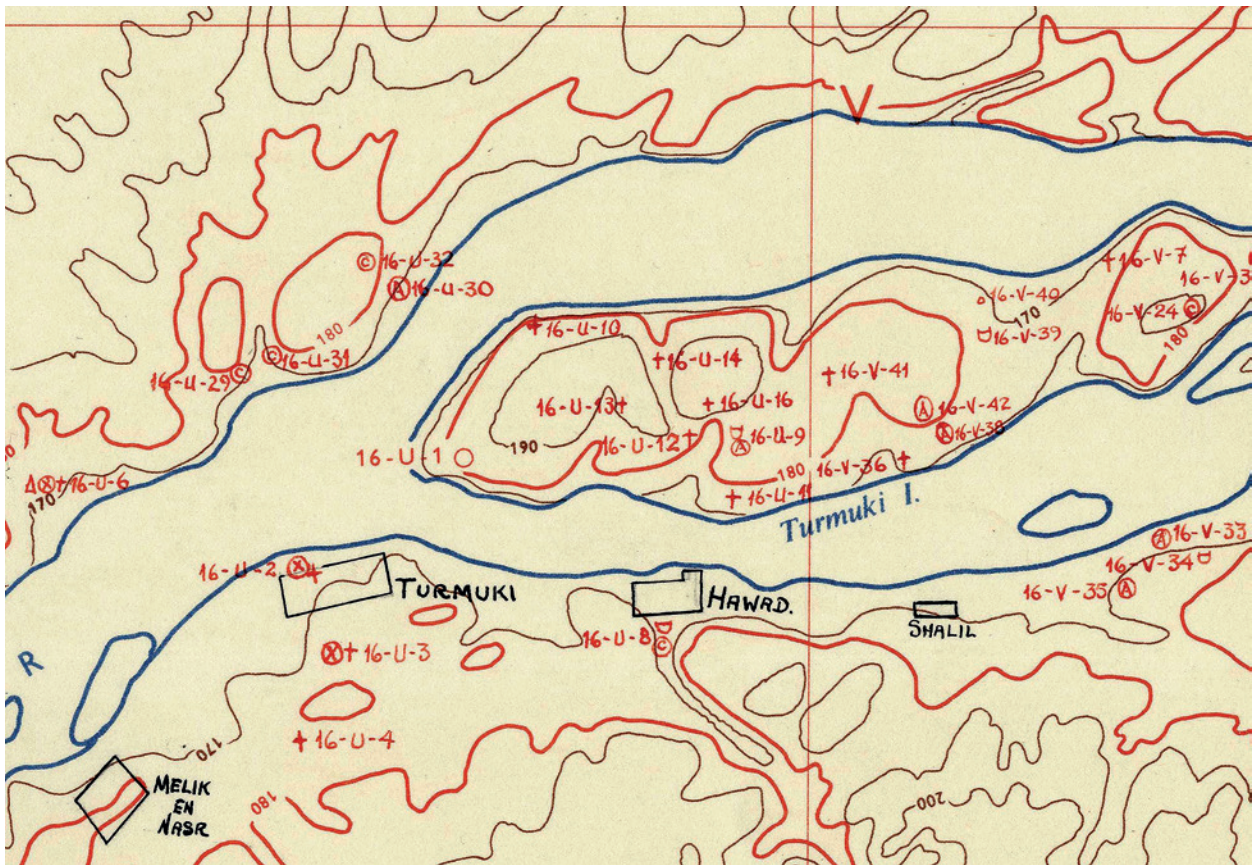


Figure 1.05 Detail of ASSN record map for Turmukki island area.

based on those also used by the ASSN, no such maps accompany the publication of the inscriptions (Hintze and Reineke 1989). This omission in itself creates practical problems for establishing basic documentation, and the exact location of some sites cannot always be established with confidence on the basis of the published records. More generally, however, the lack of topographical information also limits the possibilities for more detailed spatial analyses of such sites in within the landscape. On occasions, inscriptions and rock drawings were encountered together, some additional locational information may be extracted from the published records of the latter. Such shortcomings are of course by no means uncommon. Seidlmayer has recently drawn attention to similar issues encountered in older records of inscriptions in the Aswan area (2013, 206).

In relation to this volume only a small number of sites with Egyptian inscriptions/graffiti have been assigned new numbers (see also Appendix

B). Most of these were required by the duplication of registration numbers although, as noted above, occasional examples have been encountered where sites were allocated numbers within the incorrect grid squares, which are now renumbered. With the more general requirement for the renumbering of rock drawing stations which will need to be undertaken the preliminary concordance also suggests it may on occasions be necessary to assign additional numbers to large groups of drawings initially registered under a single number.⁷

The last key aspect of the registration of sites was their mapping on the series of ten 1:25,000 topographic maps prepared by W. Y. Adams during 1960–61 (Adams 1992, 13). While fieldworkers downstream of Gemai had access to an excellent series of 1:25,000 topographic maps prepared for the Survey Department of Egypt,⁸ the only existing map coverage further south was the Sudan Survey 1:250,000 series. Once printed by the Sudan Survey Department in 1962 the

7 e.g. with 11 groups of drawings (Otto and Buschendorf-Otto 1993, 275–278) originally registered at Semna East/Kumma as (16-E-5), their renumbering as six ‘sites’ (16-E-42* to 16-E-47*) was proposed.

8 These maps were prepared for the Survey Department by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1955, based on aerial photographs of 1953

new 1:25,000 maps provided functional base maps for plotting sites. These were also used as the base maps for the publication of the German Epigraphic Expedition. While useful for the compilation of general mapping, the primary locational data remained based on the aerial photography, on which sites could be located with some precision (Adams and Allen 1961, 14). In addition to the marking of individual sites on the standard imagery, a series of 35 larger prints at a scale of c. 1:8,333 were made on which sites were marked directly. An example (fig.1.04), may be compared with the more schematic registration map (fig.1.05).

Nubian toponyms

It may also be appropriate here to provide some background to the toponyms by which sites are recorded here, and how these may relate to our wider understanding of placenames within this part of Middle Nubia. At this time, Herman Bell's fundamental study of the placenames of the region (Bell 1970), based on fieldwork carried out

between 1962 and 1964 represents the most definitive record of the region's placenames, informed by his extensive knowledge of the Nubian (Nobiin) language. At the southern end of the survey around Dal some additional recording was undertaken by the SFDRA-Sudan Antiquities Service survey which continued the general survey upstream of the Dal cataract (Vila 1979, 63–64, fig.21). During the twentieth century various forms of toponyms are encountered in the archaeological records. In relation to the ASSN, the most common forms are those reproduced on the Sudan Survey 1:250,000 map series, which are supplemented by those which appear on the ASSN map coverage, elements of which are used in this report. As made clear by Bell in a number of studies (e.g. Bell 1970, 2018; Bell and Hashim 2002) a number of problems are commonly encountered in the way such toponyms have been represented. Here, while the most familiar forms of toponyms will continue to be used, additional information will also be provided on variants, including the more linguistically 'correct' forms. As an example, such well-known toponyms such as that of Gammai/Gemai may



Figure 1.06 ASSN staff of 1963–64 (reconnaissance survey) at Wadi Halfa. (left to right) Abdel Ghani Ali, Abdel Hadi Mohammed, ?, Mohammed Hamid, Said Beshir, Reis Ibrahim Mubarek, 'Satur'.



Figure 1.07 Reis Ibrahim Mubarek, Lesley Mills, Abdu Feriq, Arbab Hassan Hafiz, Yusuf Mohammed Yussuf, ?, Mohammed Hamid.

be compared with a more correct form of *Jemey* (Bell 1970, 47). While such modern placenames are only indirectly relevant to the ancient sites and landscapes described here, these may prove of greater relevance in subsequent volumes dealing with the medieval and more recent archaeology of the region.

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support throughout, notably Thabit Hassan Thabit and Negm el-Din Mohammed Sherif then Inspector of Antiquities resident in Wadi Halfa, as well as Gamal Ahmed Hassan and Arbab Hassan Hafiz. Following current practice and drawing on links with the Egyptian Exploration Society, field staff included both Egyptian workers, recruited from Quft, as well as locally recruited Sudanese staff. These were led in the early years of the Survey between Faras and Gemai by Reis Hufni, Reis Beshir and Reis Ibrahim Mubarek and latterly Yusuf Mohammed Yussuf el-Khouli.⁹ While a comprehensive record of all the field staff does not survive in the ASSN archive the names of some may be recorded here: (1963–64) Abdel Ghani Ali Maharib Dungul (Quft), Abdel Hadi Mohammed Osman (Quft),¹⁰ Khalifa Hamed Abdullah (El Kab), Mohammed Juma

⁹ It may be noted that Reis Ibrahim Mubarek worked with a number of other foreign archaeological teams during this period, for example accompanying the Swiss team working at Tabo (Argo) in the northern Dongola Reach, and the Italian team at Sonki.

¹⁰ The ASSN field diary records that the survey work began at 6.00a.m. on 22nd December 1963, with two Quftis, Abdel Ghani and Abdel Hadi

and Hamuda Ali (Ambikol), Mohammed Hamid Mohammed Hamid (Soleb), Abdel Salam Ibrahim Salem (Kosha), logistic support of drivers, cooks, water supplies and boats, Mohammed Osman Mohammed Daud Aga Derwish Ramadan (Abri), Said Beshir Mohammed Saleh Abdel Karim (Halfa), Abdel Moneim Mohammed Fadl (Kumma), Abdel Rashid Abdu Ali (Saras), Abdel Aziz and Suleiman Salih Beshari (Semna), Ali Mohammed Musa (Attiri), Idris Mohammed Fareg, Saleh Hussein Berkieh, Salih Ghassim; (1964–65) Hamid Shegah Ahmed, Ibrahim Idris Ibrahim, Ali Mohammed Ali, Saleh Berkieh; (1965–1966) Ibrahim Mubarek, Yussuf Mohammed Yussuf el-Khouli, Abdel Hadi Mohammed Osman, Mutawalli Hassan Ali; (1966–1967) Ibrahim Mubarek, Yussuf Mohammed Yussuf el-Khouli, Abdel Hadi Mohammed Osman, Ali Mustafa Shahat [Abdel Ati], Hassan Mohammed Musa; (1967–68) Ibrahim Mubarek, Yussuf Mohammed Yussuf el-Khouli, Abdel Hadi Mohammed Osman, Kamal Faris, Tewfik Ali Shahat, Abdel Majid Hussein, Mubarek Mubarek, Mahmoud Mohammed Ali el Far, Ramadan Mohammed Osman, Hussein Ibrahim, Hamid Mohammed Aboud; (1968–69) Abdel Hadi Mohammed Osman, Ibrahim Mubarek, Mubarek Mubarek, Tewfik Ali Shahat, Ali Mustafa Shahat, Abdel Majid Hussein, Yussuf Mohammed Yussuf el-Khouli, Abdallah el-Kurdi.

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