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This article investigates burial practices at the Meroitic Cemetery 214 at Abu Simbel North, exclusively using the data published soon after its excavation by W.B. Emery and L.P. Kirwan[1]. Previous studies on Meroitic burial practices in Lower Nubia mainly concentrated on describing general characteristics of these practices and on interpreting the archaeological evidence of grave goods. The latter were regarded as displaying the material wealth of the Meroitic society and as indicating religious belief in an afterworld where they would be needed or wished for as 'survival kits' or 'luxury equipment'. Alternatively, they were interpreted as directly marking social rank and status. In this article, I attempt to explore the data from Cemetery 214, emphasising the dimensions of human agency and experience in the structuration of burial practices.

Cemetery 214 was situated about one kilometre north of the two rock temples of Ramesses II at Abu Simbel[2], about 15km north of Ballana, Qustul and Gebel Adda and about 25km north of Faras. To the north of the cemetery stretches a barren area about 25km in length, in which no settlements but three Meroitic cemeteries are known. The next settlements to the north were located at Arminna and Toshka.[3]

Cemetery 214 lay in front of a large wadi mouth, less than 500m from the modern Nile. Its spatial extensions were about 180 by 70 metres (Fig. 1). It served as the burial place for the settlement Ash-Shaukan, which was situated about 500m north of it.[4] Like the settlement, Cemetery 214 comprises three occupational phases (cf. Williams 1991, vol. 1, 176). The first - of small scale - is tentatively datable to the first century BC/AD. The main occupation falls in the late second and the third centuries AD. One or several late episodes reach into the early X-group period. In Cemetery 214, altogether 303 individuals were recovered in 175 graves. They consist of 102 male adults, 99 female adults,[5] 10 adolescents, 86 children and infants - reflecting a normal demographic profile. David Edwards (1996, 64) estimated an average living population of 64 for the main phase of cemetery and settlement. Allowing for variation, average annual deaths must have been limited to one or two.

Grave Types and the Development of the Cemetery

Grave types in Cemetery 214 comprise pit graves with (W13, W12, W11) and without (W4, W14) lateral niches, and pit (W6, W7) and ramp (W8, W10) tombs with axial niches (Fig. 2).[6] The most common type is W13. Much less common are W12, W4, W14 and W10. The other types are extremely rare.[7]

From the spatial distribution of grave types the temporal development of the cemetery can be tentatively reconstructed (Fig. 3). Graves of the early occupational phase are recognisable within cluster III, and the probably somewhat later clusters II and IV: tombs with axial niches (W6, W7, W8, W10), and generally early dating connotations, form the nuclei of these three clusters.[8] While the niches of the tombs in the centre of cluster III are orientated to the west, they change to the east at its fringes and throughout clusters II and IV.

During the main occupational phase, the cemetery developed north- and southwards and the central part was filled with graves. W13 graves extend over the entire cemetery - with the exception of a densely populated area in the centre of the cemetery, henceforth designated 'cluster I'.[9] There, simple pit

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[1] Emery and Kirwan 1935, vol. 1, 23f, 417ff, 531f, vol. 2, pls. 27a, 27b, 29, 55, 68. For the anthropological report see Batrawi 1935, 94ff, 186f - where the skull from grave 44 is wrongly quoted as 174/44 -, pls. 4, 13ff, 27ff. The publication of a more comprehensive study of the cemetery is under preparation (Näser n.d.).

[2] Emery and Kirwan (1935, vol. 1, 417) wrongly write 'to the south'.

[3] For the general topography see Emery and Kirwan 1935, vol. 2, pls. 67ff; Smith 1962, passim, esp. 40ff; Trigger 1965, 116; Edwards 1996, 73ff, 96f, figs. 21f.

[4] For the settlement data see Smith 1962, 40f; Klasens 1963; Klasens 1964, 147ff; Klasens 1967; Jacquet 1971; Rose 1993, 85f; Edwards 1996, 63f, 83f.

[5] A further six adults were unsexed.

[6] In the following, the designations of Emery and Kirwan (1935, vol. 1, 488ff) are used, being in description and categorisation, if not in name, in agreement with all later typologies, e.g. Geus 1989, 173.

[7] But *contra* Vila (1989, 768), there are three, not one, graves of type W8 in Cemetery 214.

[8] The spatial boundaries of these clusters become defined by concentrations of later graves with multiple burials within them.

[9] Except grave 29, which is of W13 type, but seems to predate the main layout of cluster I.

graves (W4, W14) predominate. Cluster I also deviates from the rest of the cemetery in its demographic profile and in the general absence of ceramic grave goods (which makes its dating difficult). Apart from cluster I, simple pit graves occur mainly in the central and southern part of the cemetery. Since the southern extension is late and includes the X-group graves, which can be identified by their distinct ceramics, it can be suggested that in Cemetery 214 simple pit graves came in use *after* graves with lateral niches. Questions of finer chronology, mainly the occurrence and internal relationship of graves types during the main occupational phase and the assessment of the rarer subtypes W11 and W12, must remain open.

In Cemetery 214, the occurrence of the different grave types seems to follow a temporal pattern, rather than to express a hierarchical social stratification. For the Meroitic cemetery at Amir Abdallah, Fernández observed that the different types were temporally pervasive and connected with sequential changes in their social connotation, but their role in expressing 'social distance between the different levels was evidently minimal'[10]. This assessment might help to understand the evidence from Cemetery 214. Diachronically changing social connotations of certain grave types appear in this cemetery, which is frequented by a relatively stable and homogenous social community, as a temporal sequence of types.

Patterns of Grave Occupation

The spatial organisation of the cemetery, observable in the distribution of grave types, reappears in the patterns of grave occupation.[11] Single burials are widely distributed, occurring in 62.9% of all graves (Fig. 4). Double (17.1%) and triple (9.1%) burials are confined to the central part and the northern wing of the cemetery. Burials of four to eight individuals in one grave (9.1%) are restricted to clusters II to IV.[12] Cluster III, apparently the earliest foundation of the cemetery, is the tightest in the respect. It contains all three recorded burials of seven and eight individuals, all in tombs of types W8 and W10.

Because of the low annual death rate, it is certain that most if not all multiple burials were sequential. The distribution pattern shows that multiple grave use was restricted to certain areas in the cemetery. Thus, it does not represent an erratically employed, technologically simple method for disposing of the dead, but a deliberate, socially meaningful practice. To that, it could be objected that purely functional considerations, namely the larger volume of the tombs with axial niches, which are situated in clusters II to IV, conditioned their reuse. Indeed tombs with axial niches contain comparatively many multiple burials. But the investigation of the most common grave type, W13 with a baggy lateral niche, changes the picture: a chi-square test[13], exploring the interdependence between two variables, shows *no* significant association between the *volume* of W13 graves and the *number* of their occupants (tab. 1).[14] Single as well as multiple burials occur throughout all volume categories of W13. It can be concluded that in W13 graves the grave volume did not determine the number of secondary interments, i.e. neither was the layout of graves pre-planned for multiple occupation nor were only especially spacious tombs reused.[15] Rather, as argued above, the reuse was selective and associated with the symbolic significance of specific tombs. Criteria of selection were the location of the tomb in the cemetery, and thus its age, or - although this is impossible to ascertain - the social importance of the

[10] Fernández 1984, 431. His result is implicitly strengthened by Geus' (1989, 173f) more general discussion of the regional and temporal significance of Meroitic grave types. In contrast, Abdalla's (1984, 33f) strictly hierarchical approach refrains from interpreting evidences as for example are present in Cemetery 214.

[11] During the frequently attested plundering and reuse of the graves, bones and skeletons were removed, as is proved by the occurrence of fragmentary corpses in a number of graves (Batrawi 1935, passim, esp. 94). Thus, the archaeological evidence may only represent an incomplete state of grave occupation.

[12] For three graves, the remaining 1.8% of the total, no burials were recorded.

[13] For an introduction to this statistical analysis see Shennan 1987, 65ff. All tables presented here were obtained with the program SPSSWin (Norusis 1993, esp. 206ff).

[14] Three W13 graves, for which no volume could be calculated, are omitted from the table. Following the convention, I consider Chi-square tests to be valid and significant when a) the value for the Minimum Expected Frequency is not smaller than 1.00; and b) the number of cells with an Expected Frequency < 5 is not more than 25 % of all cells; and c) the Probability p (here listed under 'significance') is smaller than the Level of Significance (alpha), here taken at 0.05. In tab. 1, the test is valid, but, with p = 0.16396, the relationship between the two variables is statistically insignificant.

[15] In contrast, graves with straight lateral niche (W12) and nicheless pit graves (W4, W14), although close to W13 in construction and facilities, contained almost only single burials. Of altogether 52 graves of these types (W4, W12, W14) only two produced double and one a burial of four individuals. This supports the observation made above on the different spatial and temporal distribution of these grave types. The occupational pattern of the remaining W11 with *two* lateral niches deviates accordingly: altogether five graves of this type contained one single, three double and one triple burial.

primary occupant. Although double and triple burials, which also represent sequential interments, are more widespread in the cemetery, it is likely that the repeated access to graves - at least in clusters II to IV - was socially regulated and restricted.

Table 1. Chi-square analysis: volume and occupational categories of W13 graves

	Occupation				
Grave volume	single	double	multiple	Row	Total
</= 2.00	27	14	6	47	47.5
</= 4.00	16	8	12	36	36.4
</= 10.00	9	2	5	16	16.2
Column	52	24	23.2	99	
Total	52.5	24.2	23.2		100

Chi-Square
Pearson 6.51314 DF 4 Significance .16396

In Cemetery 214, the total average of individuals per grave is 1.73. This figure is close to the distribution observed by David Edwards (1996, 58f) for other Lower Nubian cemeteries of the same period. Thus, the pattern of single and multiple burials as observed in Cemetery 214 expresses a regional practice.

Looking at the spatial distribution of gender and age groups in the cemetery, no specific patterns could be traced, apart from an exceptionally high concentration of children's burials in cluster I, where they constitute 41.7% of all interments. The distribution of gender and age groups among the distinct grave types and occupational categories can be regarded as normal, although children are slightly underrepresented in multiple burials. This, however, might be a discovery bias.[16] Among the double burials, the combinations female/male and female/child are most frequent (each seven times), closely followed by male/child and male/male (each five times). This pattern invalidates the theory that children were preferably buried with their mothers.

Grave Reuse and the Concept of Grave Goods

The practice of grave reuse also throws light on the social conceptualisation of death and the dead in Meroitic society. Knowledge about old tombs was conveyed and mediated in their reuse, and the reuse transformed knowledge of the deceased: when a grave was reopened for a secondary interment, the partially decayed body of the first occupant[17] was exposed and its physical transformation after death was encountered. Finally this experience may have contributed to the dealing with former tomb occupants, as it was often recorded for multiple burials (Batrawi 1935, passim): they were 'simply' pushed aside, fragmentary skeletons indicate the removal of bones from the graves. Individual boundedness, already affected by the natural decay, was repealed. In the light of this observation, our concept of grave goods needs to be re-evaluated. With the decay and the distortion of the dead as a physical unity, the reference of the grave goods as physical objects became distorted, too. This creates doubt whether the significance of grave goods was primarily constituted by their duration in the graves. I want to emphasise their importance within the scenario of the funeral and its last act, the deposition of the burial in the grave.

Non-ceramic Grave Goods

Turning to the non-ceramic grave goods first, the scarcity and the inconsistency of objects is most striking. Bead jewellery, occurring in 16 graves, is the most frequent non-ceramic grave good. Findings of other objects are restricted to altogether 21 graves. They comprise body-associated items such as clothing and jewellery, i.e. bezel and plain finger rings, bracelets, anklets, glass studs, one earring and one leather pendant. Non-body-associated items include glass vessels, bronze bowls, kohl equipment, wooden boxes, two wooden staffs, one iron needle and one iron knife. Metal arrowheads and one grinding stone originate from X-group graves.

Often, the argument of grave plundering has been used either to diminish the potential of funerary data (Hofmann 1977, 193) or to justify the compilation of catalogues of 'basic elements supplied to the dead' (O'Connor 1993, 101), which in fact build on highly eclectic data. Even allowing for scepticism about the scale of plundering,[18] the above data contradict the statement that the 'high level of material prosperity enjoyed by the Meroitic north is attested by its ...

[16] The under-representation of children, especially infants, is commonly observed in archaeological contexts, including Meroitic Lower Nubia (Jungwirth 1967, 77; Edwards 1996, 61). Reasons for this are discussed e.g. by Vagn Nielsen (1970, 29) and Saunders (1992).

[17] Neither pre-treatment of the corpses nor the use of shrouds or coffins were detected at Cemetery 214 (Batrawi 1935, passim).

[18] Edwards (1996, 36f) suggests that noble metals were the main targets of plundering; ditto Lenoble and Sharif (1992, 633). However, regional and temporal changes in plundering practices, as shortly discussed by Fernández (1980, 14) and Vila (1984, 570), must be considered.

cemeteries'.[19] They do also not support the archaeological reconstruction of ritual 'survival kits' for the afterlife[20] or the search for social stratification within them.[21] On the contrary: the range and the quantity of the objects is limited. In relation to ceramic grave goods they appear nonconformable and almost supplementary, not being subject to a rigid concept of religious necessities and social rank positions, but following and expressing other social concepts. Where associations between certain types of objects and age and gender groups exist, they are never exclusive. Objects broadly associated with both genders, e.g. bronze bowls, occur slightly more frequently with males than with females.[22] I suggest that the actual choice of objects from a limited range of options, i.e. personal adornments, cosmetic equipment and few 'utilitarian' objects, was conditioned by horizontal social relations: social duties of the living towards the deceased as well as personal emotions. It is precisely the practice of subsequent plundering which makes it likely that the signification of non-ceramic goods was *retro*spective rather than prospective, namely emphasising the temporary integration of the dead in the world of the living during the funeral in a 'last activation' of a network of social relations.

Ceramic Grave Goods

Ceramic grave goods cannot be discussed *in extenso* here. In all, 269 vessels were recovered in 128 graves, or 73.1% of the total. Their relative frequency[23] reflects the basic integration of concepts connected with the provision and/or consumption of mainly liquid[24] food in Meroitic burial practices.

In Cemetery 214, the association between the number of occupants and the quantity of pottery in a grave is significant, but statistically weak (tab. 2).[25] Generally, the number of ceramic vessels per grave increases with the number of grave occupants. Thus, ceramic grave goods were connected with individual burials, and pottery belonging to earlier interments was not completely removed during plundering or grave reuse.

Table 2. Chi-square analysis: occupational categories and quantities of ceramic grave goods.

	Pottery per grave				
Grave occupation	0	1	=/>2	Row	Total
single	39	36	35	110	64.0
double	5	13	12	30	17.4
multiple	3	8	21	32	18.6
Column	47	57	69	172	
Total	27.3	33.1	39.5		100

Chi-Square
Pearson 16.43499 DF 4 Significance .00249
Minimum Expected Frequency - 8.198
Cramer's V .21858 Significance .00249 *1
*1 Pearson chi-square probability

The analysis of the 71 ceramic-yielding single graves with secure sexing of the burials revealed that the distribution of pottery is relatively even amongst adults; children and infants are slightly less equipped. This difference is, however, statistically insignificant (tab. 3).[26] Many of these graves contained only a *single* gourd, jug or cup. Although frequent, the often proclaimed combination of gourd and cup cannot be considered as the minimum standard equipment. When it occurs, amphorae and jugs can substitute for gourds, and bronze bowls for cups. The larger assemblages elaborate on the topic of gourds and cups. The exclusive occurrence of some specialised vessels in these assemblages, e.g. a mug and a klepsydra in

[19] Adams 1977, 348; contra already Edwards 1996, 36ff, 91.

[20] Khider 1987, 3, 96, 127f; contra Williams 1991, vol. 1, 93f.

[21] Abdalla 1984, 39ff; O'Connor 1993, 101f; contra already Edwards 1996, 41ff, 89. In contrast, Edwards remarks that on higher levels of Meroitic society, i.e. in 'elite burials' namely in the royal sphere, social differentiation is marked by the provision of specific grave goods.

[22] This pattern might, however, be influenced by a bias in the anthropological sexing; cf. Vagn Nielsen 1970, 29f.

[23] Still, only 29 of the 175 graves, i.e. 16.6% of the total, contained three or more vessels.

[24] For the rare evidence of solid food in Meroitic graves: ground grain, probably only beer brewing residue in Arminna grave 75 (Junker 1925, 125); nutmegs in Karanog G192, date stones in a wicker box in Karanog G199, dates in Karanog G241, grain in Karanog G351, Nubuq seeds in Karanog G523 and undefined 'food stuff' in Karanog G582 (Woolley/Randall-MacIver 1910, 148f, 156f, 176f, 200f, 210f, 418f). For the interpretation of ceramic grave goods as crockery used during funerary banquets in Upper Nubian Meroitic burials see Lenoble (1987); cf. Yellin (1995, 2879) for the same practice in Lower Nubia. On the use of ceramic grave goods as 'liturgical equipment' in libations during the funeral Edwards 1996, 41f; cf. Yellin 1982, passim; Yellin 1995, 2878ff.

[25] Three graves without burials are omitted from the table. The chi-square test is valid, and the relationship between the two variables is significant with p = 0.00249. To assess the strength of the association, Cramer's V, here 0.21858, can be used. This measure can theoretically range from 0 to 1, high values expressing strong, low values weak associations.

[26] Six single burials of infants and adolescents, three of which contained ceramics, are excluded from the table. The counts of ceramics are categorised. The test is valid, but the relationship between the two variables is insignificant with p = 0.51875.

grave 36,[27] reveals their supplementary character. Although specific associations of these more specialised vessel types to certain gender and age groups are observable, the distribution was never exclusive. Some types are proportionally often related to females and children, e.g. the relatively frequent lekythoi[28], the so-called 'cooking pots'[29], the 'feeding cups'[30] and some small late amphorae[31]. This means that the burial of certain members of the community, women and children more often than men, evoked a more diversified composition of their funerary assemblage, influencing the variety of types but not the overall quantity of vessels.

Table 3. Chi-square analysis: age and gender groups and the quantities of ceramic grave goods

	Pottery per grave				
Burial	0	1	=/>2	Row	Total
child	15	13	7	35	33.7
female adult	9	11	11	31	29.8
male adult	12	12	14	38	36.5
Column	36	36	32	104	
Total	34.6	34.6	30.8		100

Chi-Square
Pearson 3.23839 DF 4 Significance .51875

Gens à Anneaux?

In 47 graves of Cemetery 214, i.e. 26.9% of the total, ceramics are totally absent. Of these, 21 graves are located in cluster I. They are also distinct in yielding only single, unplundered burials with a comparatively high concentration of children's interments. André Vila (1984, 567f) identified these burials as '*gens à anneaux*'. These people are - according to him - a distinct population group in Meroitic Lower Nubia, recognisable in their burial practices which differ from those of other segments of the Meroitic society. As two of their characteristics, Vila quotes that they usurped older tombs and that - as their name says - they often wear specific anklets. Both criteria do not hold for the relevant burials in Cemetery 214. Cluster I is an originally late 'foundation' at the fringe of the cemetery without any evidence for reuse. Nevertheless, its simple pit graves and the lack of grave goods (including anklets) clearly separate it from the rest of the cemetery. Because of east-west orientated graves and extended burials, cluster I can be dated into the Meroitic period. There, diverse burial practices of the local community - although not a narrowly circumscribed group of '*gens à anneaux*' - become tangible for this time.

More Reuse: Ba-statues, Offering Tables, Stelae

In Cemetery 214, 22 Ba-statues, offering tables and stelae were associated with 13 graves.[32] In most cases, they could be identified as deliberately reused. Offering tables, stelae and bases of Ba-statues were found blocking niches in W12 and W13 graves and roofing pits in W4 graves. Some offering tables were deposited as grave goods proper, i.e. they were positioned on top of the covering slabs or within the grave itself. As in Ballana, this reuse can be dated into late Meroitic and X-group times.[33]

In Cemetery 214, no superstructures with which the objects might primarily have been associated were found. Thus, most if not all must have been 'imported' from other cemeteries. These procurement efforts and their relative frequency show that the reused objects still had a significance beyond their functional task of blocking the substructures. In primary use, offering tables were connected with possibly continuous offerings at the grave; whereas Ba-statues and stelae symbolised and commemorated different aspects of the dead. The objects were visible and accessible in the tomb superstructures. Their secondary inclusion in the substructures signifies a change in the conceptualisation of these objects: Their integration in the cult and their visibility were no longer important; and either object type could then substitute for the other and occur in multiple. Significance was achieved alone by their deposition in the substructures.

Further, the accessibility and the reuse of these objects by the social stratum represented in Cemetery 214 indicate changes in burial practices and in the regional social stratigraphy. And the procurement of

[27] Emery and Kirwan's types W.VIII.d and W.XVII.a (Emery/Kirwan 1935, vol. 1, 424, pl. 37f).

[28] Emery and Kirwan's (1935, vol. 1, pl. 37) types W.X.b, d, e, XII.a, b, c.

[29] Emery and Kirwan's (1935, vol. 1, pl. 39) types W.XLI.a, b and W. XXXIX.

[30] Emery and Kirwan's (1935, vol. 1, pl. 38) type W.XXXI. But contrary to the general assumption, 'feeding cups' can also occur with adults or adolescents as the evidence from Ballana proves (Williams 1991, vol. 2, 221); cf. Griffith 1925, 75.

[31] Emery and Kirwan's (1935, pl. 39) types X.I.d, e.

[32] Emery and Kirwan 1935, vol. 1, 417ff, 532, vol. 2, pls. 27, 29.

[33] Primarily by the location of the graves in the cemetery, their orientation and their ceramics. From their decoration, the offering tables at Cemetery 214 are related to these from the Meroitic cemetery at Ballana, dated to the second and third centuries AD (Williams 1991, vol. 1, 93ff, vol. 2, pl. 108ff). At Ballana, reuse started at latest in phase III and seemingly became more common later (Williams 1991, vol. 1, 93ff, vol. 2, passim).

these objects throws light on a hitherto neglected, although seminal aspect of Meroitic burial practices: the plundering of graves and the reuse of thereby acquired objects.

Plundering of Graves

In Cemetery 214, 135 of 175 graves, i.e. 77.1% of the total, were recorded as plundered. Statistically, there is a strong association between grave furniture, here exemplified by the quantity of ceramic grave goods, and plundering - only: in reverse to expectation (Table 4).[34] Most of the plundered graves still contained pottery, whereas most of the unplundered ones were totally empty. This pattern suggests that the plunderers deliberately neglected the unfurnished graves.

Table 4. Chi-square analysis: plundering of graves and quantities of ceramic grave goods.

	Pottery per grave				
Plundering	0	1	=/>2	Row	Total
no	30	5	5	40	22.9
yes	17	53	65	135	77.1
Column	47	58	70	175	
Total	26.9	33.1	40.0		100

Chi-Square
Pearson 61.21743 DF 2 Significance .00000
Minimum Expected Frequency - 10.743
Cramer's V .59145 Significance .00000 *1
*1 Pearson chi-square probability

In Cemetery 214, no tomb-markers were found. If they had existed they cannot have been of substantial nature and did not transmit information on the grave furniture as accurate as the plunderers possessed. Thus, plundering must have taken place soon after the burials, when the tomb equipment was still known to the living, i.e. contemporary to the actual use of the cemetery. This, the high number of afflicted graves and the spatial setting of the cemetery in a sparsely populated area suggest that plundering was not only noticed but also practised by the local community itself. In the light of this observation, the notion of plundering as a social crime (launched by offended archaeologists) needs to be reconsidered and related to social concepts of death and grave goods, as discussed above, where the event of the funeral has been defined as the focus of signification of the grave goods.

Summary

As the evidence has shown, in Cemetery 214, the funeral formed an arena of social communication both between the living, and between the living and the dead. It emphasised the coherence of the social community and the retrospective integration of the deceased. On the social level of the community of Cemetery 214, burial practices do not display hierarchical, i.e. status, differentiation. The orientation of the graves and the posture of the bodies were standardised: roughly east-west with extended burials in Meroitic times; north-south with contracted burials in X-group times.[35] Only minor attention was paid to exact alignments of the graves. This possibly reflects the production of the graves by non-professionals and the habituality of the practice. Neither pre-treatment of the corpses nor the use of coffins or shrouds were recorded. The use of certain grave types, perceived as a diachronic development in the archaeological record, is integrated in regional social patterns, but it does not express hierarchical stratification on an intra-assemblage level.

The only points where a social structuration might be detected is the prevalence of multiple graves in clusters II to IV and the confinement of certain segments of the population to cluster I. This and the layout of some graves in the northern part of the cemetery in short staggered rows (Fig. 1) indicate a deliberate organisation of space. In other areas, the distribution of the graves is irregular and comparatively widespread. Reasons for this may be sought in the relatively infrequent use of the cemetery and the absence of practices restricting and regulating the access to space.

I suggest that also the grave goods reflect practices centred around the coherency of the social community and the retrospective integration of the dead in this community. Ceramic grave goods were probably connected with feasting and/or libating during the funeral, i.e. with concepts of food expenditure and consumption by the living and/or the dead. Thus, the significance of ceramic grave goods needs to be assessed with respect to their involvement in the funerary rites and to the act of their final deposition with the burial. In contrast, the provision of non-ceramic grave goods appears optional; their compilation in the assemblages may have served to express specific horizontal social relations of the living towards the dead.

[34] The test is valid and significant with p = 0.00000. Cramer's V = 0.59145 indicates a relatively strong association.

[35] Some contracted burials occur in cluster I, where their dating is uncertain.

Turning shortly to the related settlement site, Ash-Shaukan, which supplements the evidence from Cemetery 214 in a remarkable manner: There, in the second, main phase of occupation about 20 to 30 'three-room' houses were built and partially joined into larger units.[36] Their basic architectural layout is very uniform. Non-standardised alterations and additions in and around the houses later restructured the space, but did not introduce hierarchical patterns.

It remains a task for the future to put the practices encountered in Cemetery 214 into their wider social context and to investigate their relationship to the evidence from other cemeteries, which may represent related as well as divergent concepts of death and burial mediated by other segments of Meroitic society.

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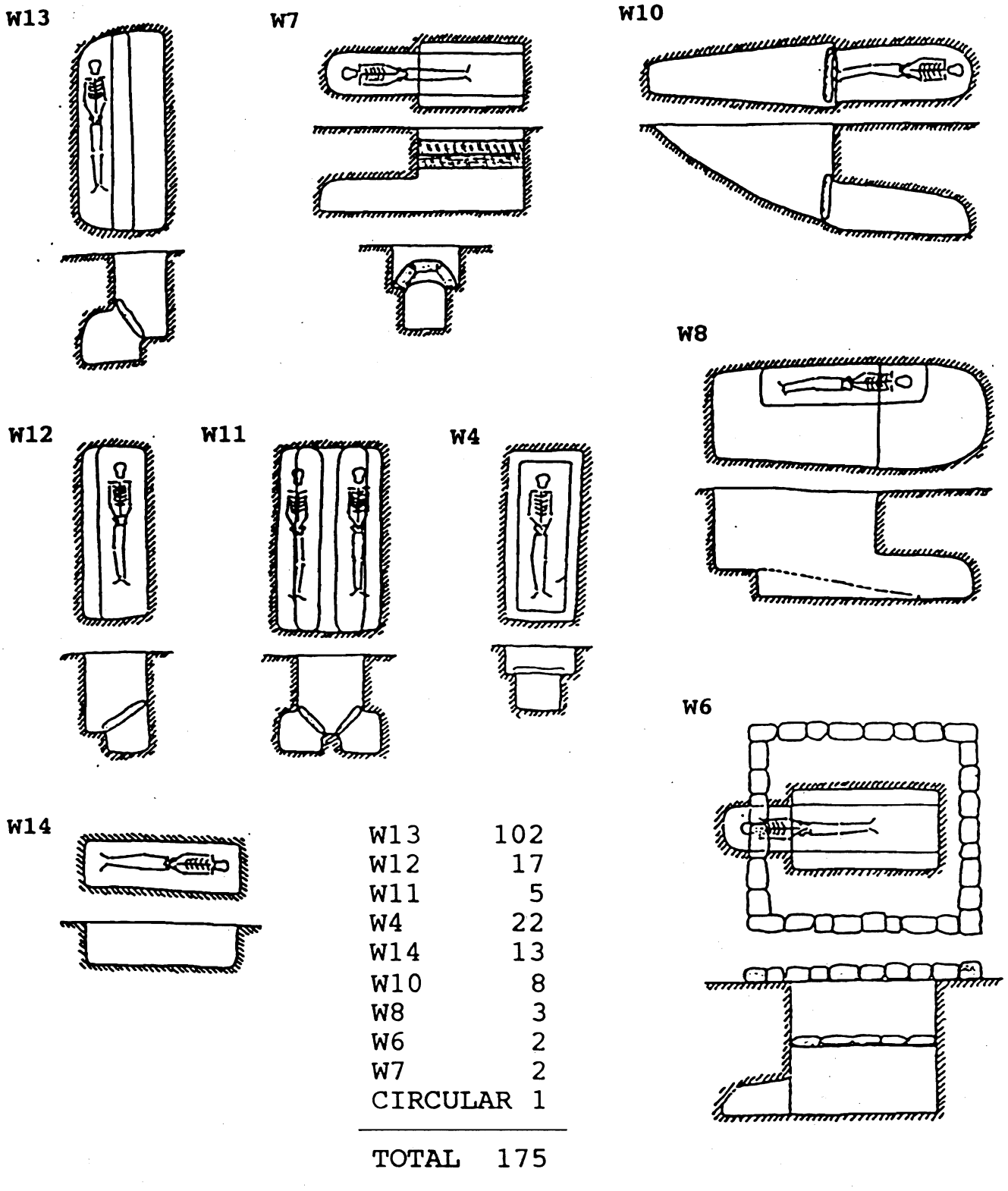
[36] Cf. Edwards 1996, 64, 83f, fig. 13. His interpretation of the site does, however, not include the first occupational phase; cf. Klasens 1963, 61f; Klasens 1967, 80.

Fig. 1 Site map (after the unscaled map in Emery and Kirwan 1935, vol. 2, pl. 55)



W13	102
W12	17
W11	5
W4	22
W14	13
W10	8
W8	3
W6	2
W7	2
CIRCULAR	1
TOTAL	175

Fig. 2 Grave types and their frequency (after Emery and Kirwan 1935, vol. 1, 488ff)

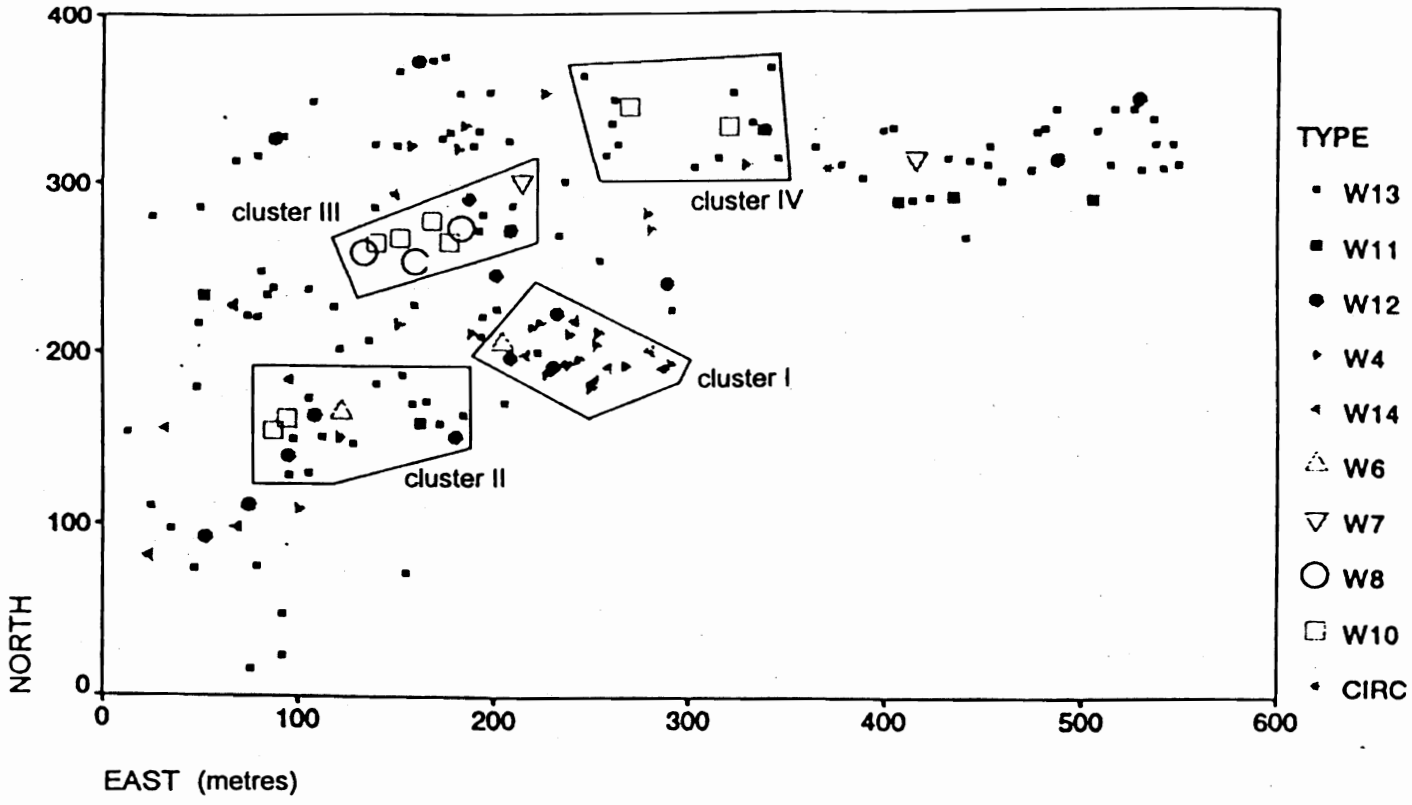


Fig. 3 The spatial distribution of grave types

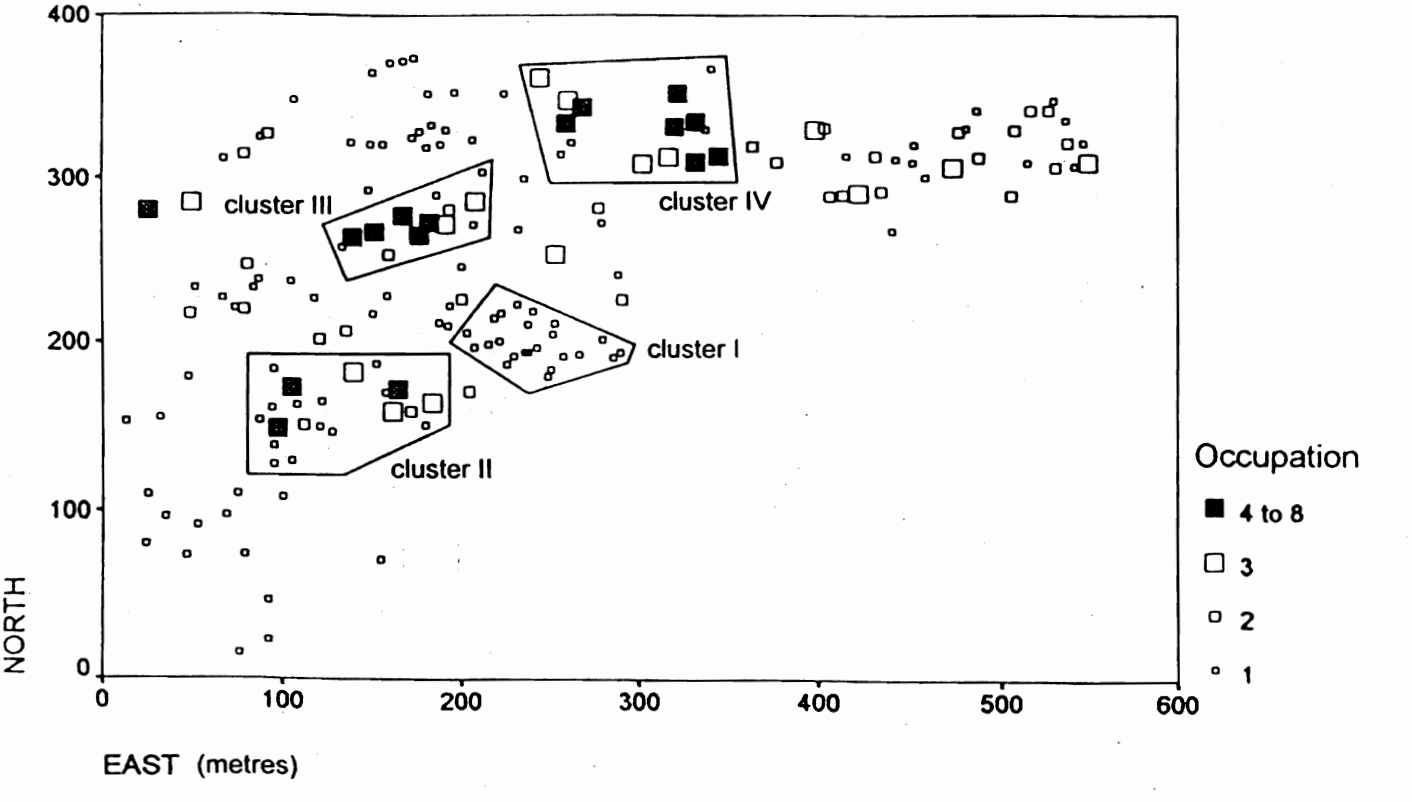


Fig. 4 The spatial distribution of single, double and multiple burials