



not only to excavate all graves in the cemetery, but also to excavate the entire area down to the ground surface contemporary with the construction of the tombs in order to identify possible funerary deposits outside the tombs (Figs. 1-2).

Using this method, we discovered four deposits of bowls placed upside-down in a



Fig. 3: Two upside-down bowls outside a tomb in Al-Widay I (Locus W-3, pot 1 to right; photo #442)

manner reminiscent of C-Group burials (Fig. 3) and two areas with signs of burning, evidence of sacrifice or preparation of funerary meals.

We also excavated 76 burials, of which the majority appear to be Middle Kerma in date and at least 4 (L-c, S-c, V-k, and Y-c) are Classic Kerma, although further analysis of the finds will be needed to clarify the date of these burials.

Many of the graves had been looted in antiquity, but we recovered a great

deal of material including over 150 ceramic vessels (Fig. 5).

Superstructures were constructed almost directly above the shaft. They comprised circles of large stones filled with soil, gravel and stones, smaller ones piled above, and curving inward to a height of about half a meter and paved over, in a kind of cushion-shape. (Fig. 4)



Fig. 4: Vertical photograph of the superstructure of Tomb U-h.

A basic set of ceramic burial offerings included a cup, a larger bowl or jar, and a small pot that probably contained incense. The body was laid on its right side, hands

near the head and legs tightly flexed (Fig. 6). The orientation of the graves was not entirely consistent, but most had



Fig. 5. Selection of pottery vessels from Al-Widay I. Above left, Pan-Grave type beaker; above center Kerma carinated black-topped bowl; above right, Egyptian Middle Kingdom jar; below left, Classic Kerma beaker; below center, Classic Kerma black-topped jar; below right, small, coarse local bowl with impressions and holes for suspension near the rim. It contained ashes, possibly from incense.

the head to the northeast (or pointing upstream). Some Middle Kerma graves contained faunal remains, either the horns of a goat or an entire animal. A few burials contained more than one individual, this season mostly an adult female and a fetus or infant. Middle Kerma graves had a round burial shaft with stones placed around the edges, while Classic Kerma shafts were rectangular and truly lined with stones. The Old Kush III/Classic Kerma burials found this year also confirmed a difference of location from the earlier phase, being all at the south end of the cemetery. In addition, we found a few Napatan graves at al-Widay I, dated by the distinctive beads and amulets of the period (Fig. 7).

Among the most interesting burials in the Al-Widay cemetery was the Middle



Fig. 6: Burial at Al-Widay (photo #514).



Fig. 7. Wedjat-eye amulet of the Napatan Period from Al-Widay I (photo #6535)

Kerma burial (X-h) of a child of about 10 years old that contained 2 pots, more than 850 shell, faience, and carnelian beads, an imported sandstone palette, a large oyster shell perhaps also for cosmetics, and two scarabs, one of which (Fig. 8) was inscribed with the name and rank of an Egyptian officer (and thus, certainly, not belonging originally to the child buried in the tomb). He was Nebsumenu with the rank Shemsu n Remen-tep, Retainer or Captain of the First Battalion who apparently served in one of the Egyptian fortresses near the second cataract, for sealings of these officers are known from Uronarti, and Serra East.



Fig. 8: Scarab inscribed with name and rank of Egyptian officer, from Al-Widay I, tomb X-h (2008.436, photo #7285).

Another Middle Kerma burial (W-k) contained a necklace of over 100 small gold beads along with five pots (one an Egyptian imported marl jar), and a sheep or goat.

Other intriguing individual finds included three additional scarabs, long bone points, an ivory bracelet (Fig. 9), trough-shaped palettes made of imported iron-bearing sandstone, 2 bronze razor blades (one with the remains of a wooden handle), a relatively large number of imported Egyptian ceramic vessels, and a number of pots very similar to those known from Pan-Grave burials further down the Nile.

The excavation of an entire single cemetery will provide rich possibilities for further analysis of change over time, including osteological analysis of a single community, analysis of plant residues (phytoliths and starches), as well as studies of spatial groupings and the distribution of ceramics within the cemetery.



*Fig. 9: Ivory bracelet in situ in Al-Widay I, Tomb U-n (2008.118; photo #338).*

### Umm Gebir survey

A walking survey of Umm Gebir Island located some 112 sites ranging in date from Neolithic to Islamic (Fig. 10) and several sites were selected for test excavations. In the western part of the island, these included a Neolithic site, with remains of fieldstone structures, a surprising result in an area where Neolithic structures are rare. Two Napatan dome graves, structural chamber tombs constructed of fieldstones, (UGS 049) of a cluster of four were excavated (Fig. 11), part of a larger group of clusters arranged around a hillside, itself a kind of cemetery. While clusters of dome graves, a tomb type unique to the Fourth Cataract are well known, the cemetery complex is of special interest.



*Fig. 10: Overhead view of Stone platforms and circles associated with burned layers in “post-classic” Kerma or Napatan settlement on Umm Gebir Island (UGS 112); features toward the north (above) were excavated by the Gdansk mission (photo montage)*

In the eastern part of the island, a cemetery of perhaps 75-100 burials turned out to be “post-classic” Kerma (Old Kush IV), at least in part and tombs there were definitely dated by



*Fig. 11: Pilgrim flask from Napatan Dome grave, photo #6649.*

imported pottery well into the Egyptian Eighteenth Dynasty. This is important, for it shows the continuation of traditions of the Kerma (Old Kush) period into the New Kingdom, a time otherwise quite poorly known in the Fourth Cataract. A settlement site nearby was partially excavated by the Gdansk mission (Fig. 12), who invited us to continue their work. It may be partially contemporary with the cemetery, but it definitely continued into the Napatan period, when a number of remarkable structures with stone-slab foundations were built with some circular stone outlines, probably bins, nearby. Further investigation of the cemetery and settlement together should enhance our knowledge of a region that escaped the effects of the otherwise pervasive Egyptian New Kingdom cultural penetration of Kush.



*Fig. 12: View of “post-classic” Kerma cemetery on Umm Gebir Island (UGS 101; photo 6801).*

### Geological work related to gold processing

Following our work last year at the Kerma/Napatan gold-extraction site at Hosh el-Guruf, James Harrell continued investigation into possible local sources of gold. After local surveys and discussions with local gold miners, who also showed small bars of gold they had mined, he was informed that they select sand for gold panning based on the visible presence of “feyrous”, in this case, garnets (Fig. 13). Garnet and gold are both dense, heavy minerals and so would settle in similar places in alluvial environments. He was able to predict the location of garnet deposits with some accuracy in the vicinity of Al-Widay.



*Fig. 13: sand rich in garnets (“fayrous”) found in a seasonal stream bed of the Nile, said by local people to be a sign that deposits contain gold (photo #6520).*

## Conclusion

The complete excavation of a cemetery, the first fully-excavated Kerma (Old Kush) cemetery in the region, a Neolithic site with structures, a Napatan dome grave cemetery, a Kerma (Old Kush) cemetery of demonstrable New Kingdom date, and a Napatan settlement with a previously unknown type of structure, are strong results for so brief a time. Given the fact that so much has only been sampled, and so much has not even been surveyed, the richness of these discoveries makes the impending loss of this entire region all the more poignant.

This field season was demanding, and we gratefully recognize the contribution of the excavation staff, who worked on a difficult task in challenging circumstances: Kathryn Bandy, archaeologist; Scott Bierly, archaeologist; Christina Fojas, human osteologist; James Harrell, geologist; Debora Heard, archaeologist; Megan Ingvoldstad, human osteologist; Megaera Lorenz, archaeologist; Justine James, archaeologist; Thomas James, archaeologist; Edyta Klimaszewska-Drabot, archaeologist; Margaret Wilson, paleobotanist.

