

KADERO, 1991

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The excavations of the Kadero site in Khartoum Province were continued in November and December 1991, when the twelfth field season took place.¹ The programme for this season stemmed from the results and experience obtained at this Neolithic site and concerned both the settlement and the burial ground. In view of extreme scarcity of the botanical evidence originating from the settlement it was decided to proceed with wet flotation of the soil excavated from the midden in order to obtain charred macroremains of plants. In the burial ground, it was thought to excavate more trenches to clarify the size and mutual relationship of two major clusters of inhumations found in the previous season.²

The soil for the wet flotation programme was obtained from the northern settlement midden where a series of 21 "flotation

¹ The mission included: Prof. Lech Krzyżaniak (head of the mission), Prof. Michał Kobusiewicz, Dr. Karla Kroeper, Dr. Marek Chłodnicki, Dr. Krzysztof Ciałowicz, Mr. Jacek Kabaciński (archaeologists) and Dr. Maria Kaczmarek (physical anthropologist). The season was a success thanks to the efficiency and help extended to the Expedition by the Sudan Directorate of Antiquities and National Museums, and particularly its Director General, Prof. Ahmed Hakim and the site inspector El-Sayed Abdelhai Abdelsawi Fedl el-Mula.

² Cf. L. Krzyżaniak, Eleventh season of excavations at Kadero, *PAM* II 1989-90, (1991), pp. 26-28, id., Early farming in the Middle Nile Basin: recent discoveries at Kadero (Central Sudan), *Antiquity* 65, (1991), pp. 515-532.

pits" of 1 square meter each were excavated. Flotation yielded a considerable amount of charred macroremains. The remains turned out impossible to identify during later laboratory examination, having been totally decomposed in the flotation. Only the charred remains of wood found in the remains of hearths localized on the outskirts of the midden where the Neolithic burial ground was already encroaching, seem to be appropriate material for further studies by a botanist.

The "flotation squares" excavated in the midden also yielded a typical habitation offal, such as potsherds, lithics (flaked and flaked-and-partly-ground implements, as well as fragments of grindstones) and bones of animals, domestic and wild.

One of the most important results obtained so far at the burial ground is the discovery of the two separate clusters of Neolithic burials: poor and rich graves. The objective of the fieldwork carried out during the last season was to enlarge the pit excavated prior to this campaign, thus making the spatial extent of both these clusters clearer. A further 528 square meters were explored in the central part of the site. In the excavated squares 17 Neolithic graves were found and seven more inhumations of this age were spotted on the eroded surface of the ground and explored. The distribution of the graves in the trench followed the same pattern as was established in the previous seasons. Both clusters of inhumations, poor and rich, were defined in terms of space. In addition, another cluster of rich graves seems to have been encountered in last season's excavations.

Similarly to the previous seasons, the rich graves – the inhumations of the elite of the local social group – are characterized by a complex structure and impressive grave goods. The

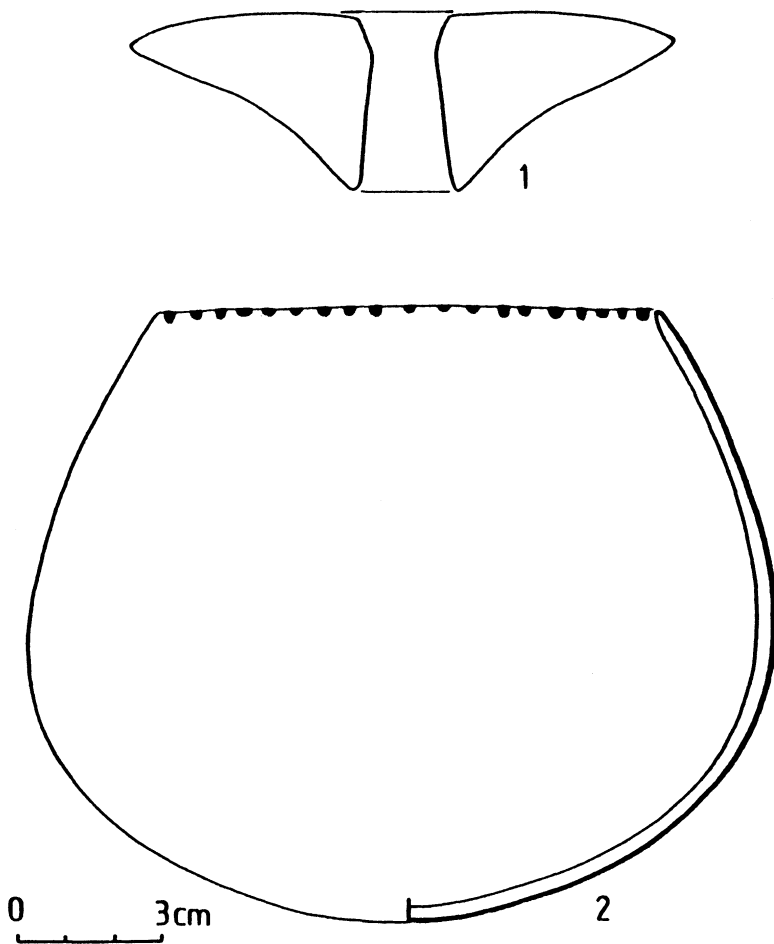


Fig. 1. Finds from Grave 130. 1 - discoidal macehead of porphyry, 2 - fine pottery vessel with black-topped rim.

regular, deep and oval pits reach a depth of up to 1 m and usually have a heavy content of red ochre, especially in the lower portion of the pit. The grave goods consist mostly of personal adornments (nose- and earstuds, ivory bracelets, marine shells, lumps of malachite, necklaces of carnelian beads), fine pottery vessels, one "gouge" made of rhyolite and a discoidal porphyry macehead. (Fig. 1)

The excavations carried out last season confirm the Neolithic chronology of both the settlement midden and burial ground at Kadero (Early Neolithic through the beginning of the Late Neolithic of the Central Sudan). In addition to the Neolithic remains, also two Meroitic and one Medieval (Christian) inhumations were found, all very poorly furnished.

The next season at Kadero is planned for November and December 1993.