

APPENDIX II

MOSLEM CEMETERY IN AREAS CW AND L ON KOM EL-DIKKA

(EXCAVATIONS IN THE 2005/2006 SEASON)

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During the 2005/2006 excavation season, new sections of the Moslem burial ground known to have occupied successively most of the Kom el-Dikka site were explored in Areas CW (northern part of the Theater Portico) and L (cistern in the southeastern quarter of the site). In the former area, all three phases of the cemetery were recorded:

Upper from the late 11th and early 12th century, Middle from the end of the 9th and early 10th century, and Lower from the 7th/8th century. In Area L, the Upper Necropolis level was superimposed directly on top of the Late Antique remains of drawing wells and water channels (for details, see above, the main body of the report).

AREA CW

UPPER NECROPOLIS

Area CW lies immediately to the northeast of the spot where the southern bath passage intercepts the Theater Portico. On the east it is bordered by the latrine, on the north by lecture hall AS. Excavations in this area, which measures 20 by 16 m, uncovered a total of 67 tombs from the Upper Necropolis [*Fig. 1*].

The layer containing the graves is strongly inclined, the difference between the eastern and western parts being more than 2 m. In the western part, which lay at an exceptionally low level, the tomb superstructures rested on the stylobate of the portico, while the burial chambers reached down even a meter below that.

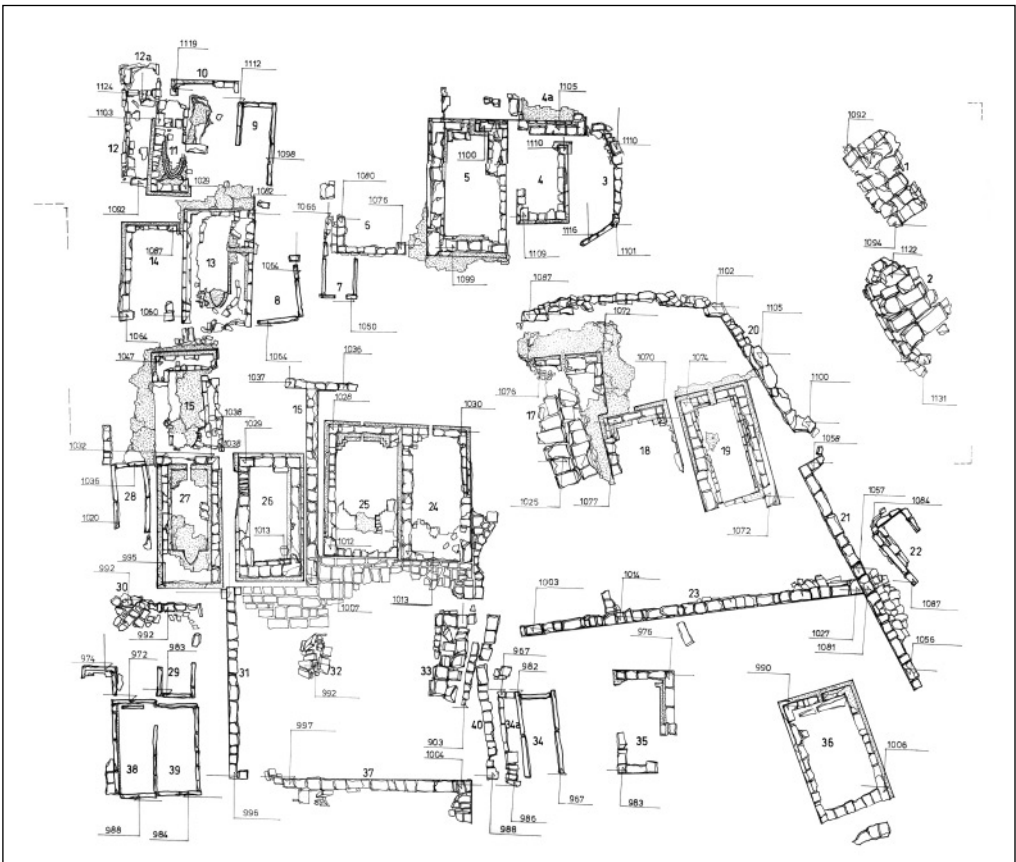
Eleven of the preserved superstructures were constructed of vertical limestone slabs: CW 8, 9, 29, 38, 39 (41, 42 were damaged), 53, 54, 56, 66. This kind of superstructure appears to be the oldest among the types distinguished in the Upper Necropolis. Burials CW 8, 39, 53, 54 and 56 were simple internments and so the bones have not been preserved. The other six tombs had cases built of small dressed stones, plastered on the inside and covered with limestone slabs. All the superstructures measured 2.10 m by 1.20 m, the cases being 2.00 m by 0.70 m. Some of the graves were damaged by later tombs, indicating that this simplest type was at the same time

the oldest kind of grave built in the Upper Necropolis.

The superstructures of 33 graves measured 2.00 m by 1.30 m and were constructed of small dressed stones which were plastered along with the floor inside the walls. Limestone slabs covered the cases in graves CW 4a, 6, 12, 12a, 18, 24, 26, 28, 30, 34a and 52, while graves CW 3, 4, 5, 7, 9a, 10, 14, 17, 19, 32, 33, 34, 36, 44, 60 and 67 had pitched roofs. CW 36 was the only grave in the construction of which mortar was used instead of the internal plastering which was the rule.

The third group includes superstructures of the same kind as already described, but much richer in form, with the plasterwork featuring a mihrab (CW 11, 13, 15, 25, 27 and 63). These superstructures were furnished with run-off channels draining fluids from the grave. The burial chamber accompanying this kind of superstructure was usually covered with a pitched roof of limestone slabs.

Most of the graves in the Upper Necropolis were multiple burials. Secondary internments were made through a special



superstructure in the eastern part of the tomb, pushing back toward the western end the bones from earlier burials. Burial chambers CW 15 and 25 were furnished with shafts which could be opened repeatedly; in CW 25 the special superstructure was positioned not in the eastern, but in the western end of the grave, and the bones were pushed to the east and not to the west as was common.

In a number of cases (graves CW 22, 35, 55, 58, 61-65), no cases were recorded and the bones in these earth burials were found completely decayed.

Some damaged cases could not be connected with any superstructures. They were presumably remnants of earlier graves belonging to the Upper Necropolis, destroyed by later and much more elaborate tombs.

Graves CW 17, 18 and 19 were surrounded by a low wall, which is interpreted as separating a family group from other graves in the cemetery.

MIDDLE NECROPOLIS

The Middle Necropolis layer [Fig. 3] slopes down in the same westerly direction as the overlying Upper Necropolis. Yellow seaside sand with pebbles and seashells is scattered inside the burial cases and the surrounding area.

All 24 superstructures of the Middle Necropolis (CW 200-224), mostly measuring 2.20 m by 2.50 m, are definitely bigger than those of the Upper Necropolis. They were built of one-to-two courses of big, regular stone blocks, sometimes plastered. All the burials in this phase were earth internments and therefore no bones have been preserved. Their presence is recorded as observable changes in the color of the soil and a smell of ammonia noted during exploration.

Marble stelae were found mounted in place at the western ends of the superstructures CW 200, 217 and 222 [Fig. 2]. Only the mounting of similar stelae was discovered in the superstructure of graves CW 204 and 216.

The superstructures of the Middle Necropolis were partly founded on ruins of Late Antique buildings, in this case of the auditoria. Many were damaged and destroyed by later tombs belonging already to the Upper Necropolis, which was not much higher up in the stratigraphy. Indeed, the two cemetery layers are practically conjoined.

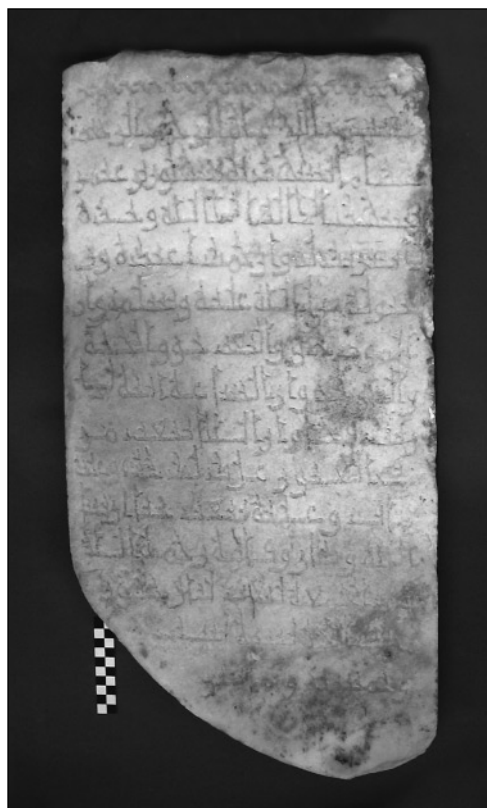


Fig. 2. Funerary stele from grave CW 217 (Reg. No. 5022) (Photo E. Kulicka)

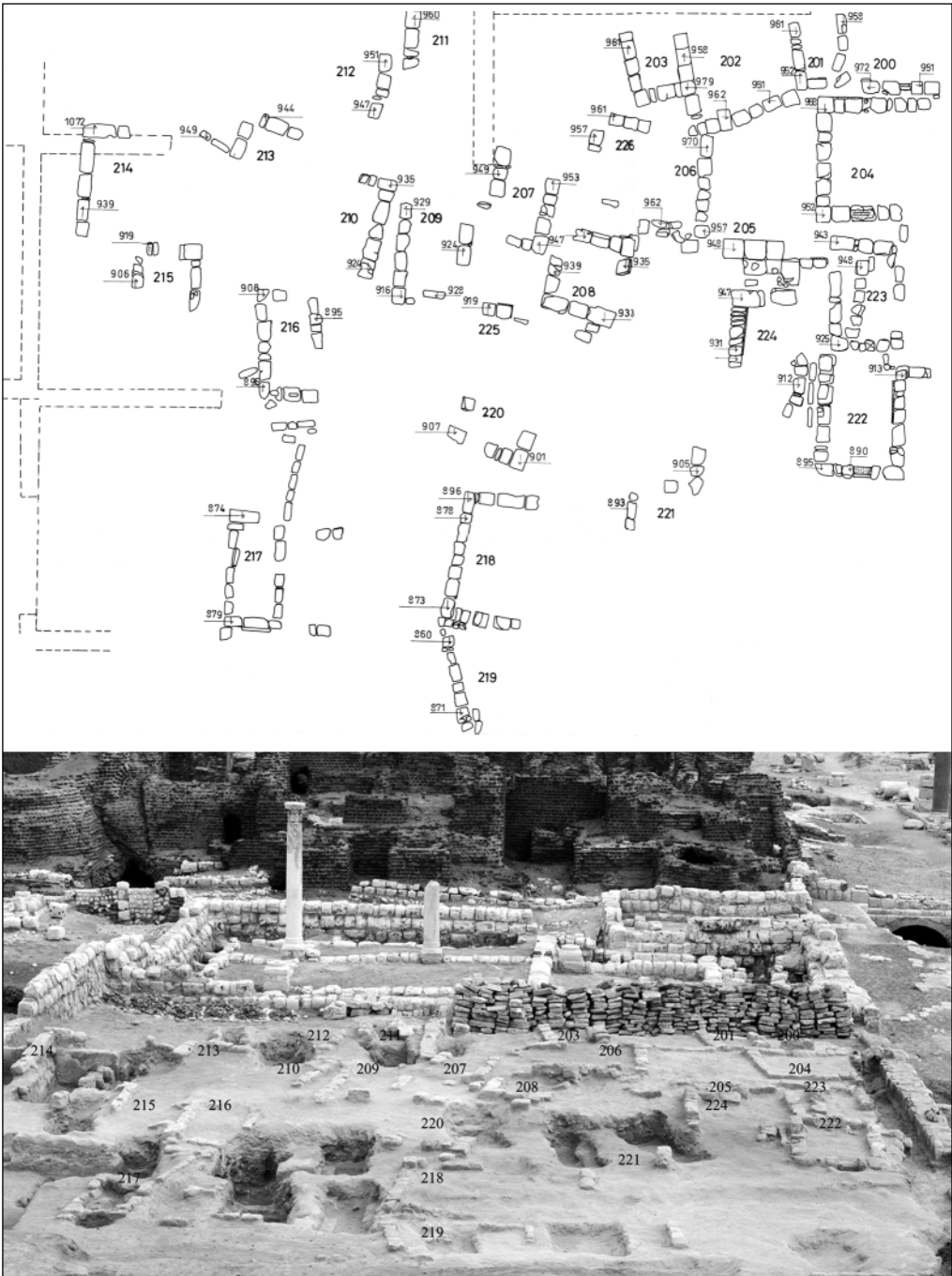


Fig. 3. *The Middle Necropolis in Area CW, plan and view from the west incorporating tomb numbers (Plan E. Kalicka, photo R. Mabler)*

LOWER NECROPOLIS

The level of the Lower Necropolis in Area CW was barely above the floor of the auditoria. Eleven tombs, measuring 1.80 m by 0.80 m (CW 300-310), were constructed in the same way: big limestone blocks covered with limestone slabs. Grave CW 305 was dug into the southeastern

corner of the room using the ancient walls; consequently the burial chamber needed to have walls added only on two sides and was covered with limestone slabs.

The Lower Necropolis tombs characteristically are devoid of any superstructures. The condition of the bones in the burials was very poor.

AREA L

UPPER NECROPOLIS

Area L, which was explored in 2005, is situated in the southwestern part of the ancient cistern. Altogether twelve burials from the Upper Necropolis have been preserved, some so fragmentary that it is difficult to attribute them to any specific type [Fig. 4]. Graves L 2, 4, 7 and 8 are simple earth internments with superstruc-

tures in the form of a rectangular case erected of upright limestone slabs. What sets these tombs apart is the use of stone clamps set in holes drilled in the sides of the slabs to hold the superstructure together.

The rectangular cases of two superstructures, L 3 and 9, were constructed of small dressed stones and the space inside was plastered. The burials in this type of



Fig. 4. *The Upper Necropolis in Area L, view from the southwest with the ruins of the cistern in the background (Photo W. Jerke)*

tomb were made in cases of stone covered with limestone slabs.

Despite heavy damages to their superstructures, graves L 5 and 6 still reveal traces of decoration in the form of a *mibrab*. Bricks were also used in their construction. The burial chamber in grave L 5 had a pitched roof; in L 6 it was flat.

Three graves (L 1, 10, 11) had shafts for multiple burials; unfortunately the superstructures in these cases were not preserved [Fig. 5].

Finds from the immediate neighborhood of the graves can be attributed to the three phases of the burial ground. The objects come from the layer into which the graves were excavated and their presence inside the graves is largely accidental. Glass vessels and Islamic glazed wares are the most numerous category of finds; glass weights, glazed oil lamps and bronze coins and unidentified fragments of bronze have also been recorded.



Fig. 5. Grave L 1. Burial chamber with shaft on the west side, view from the east (Photo E. Kulicka)