



Preliminary Report on the Archaeological Work in the Central Gezira: First Season

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Introduction

The work in the Archaeological, Heritage and Environmental Survey Project of the central Gezira Reach-south of Khartoum began on 2nd February 2017. The project has the concession to work in an area of 50km², starting from the west bank of the Blue Nile, between the areas of Abu Usher in the north, and Arbaji in the south. The project extends to cover an area 12km west of the western border of the Gezira Agricultural Scheme. The research project was designed to follow the banks of the palaeochannels to identify the surviving archaeological sites in the so-called *goz* (dune) area, which is a relatively elevated area on the bank of the channel. These dune areas often contain an abundance of archaeological finds. The project also studied the historical and religious sites in the target area. Thirty-two archaeological sites were discovered in the area between el-Feraigab village and Goz el-Sheikh Modawwi (Figure 1), a summary of which is presented in Table 1.

1. El-Feraigab 1: 14° 33.779' N / 33° 01.542' E

Located to the east of el-Zakereen station, and to the north east of the village of el-Feraigab. The site is bordered by the main irrigation canal to the north. It is in a flat area extending over an area of around 300m². The site contains remains of stone grinders, as well as very few sherds of undecorated pottery, which are small in size and are red or black in colour. The level of craftsmanship in the production on the pottery seems poor. In general, this site did not yield many archaeological finds. The site dates, most probably, to the Neolithic.

2. El-Feraigab 2: 14° 34.486' N / 33° 01.633' E

Located to the south of el-Feraigab 1 and within the modern Islamic cemetery of the village of el-Feraigab: it is located immediately to the east of the village of el-Feraigab. In the site, apparent are sherds of multi-coloured pottery, which are also of diverse finishes with both decorated and plain examples. Also found in this site are large pieces of grinding

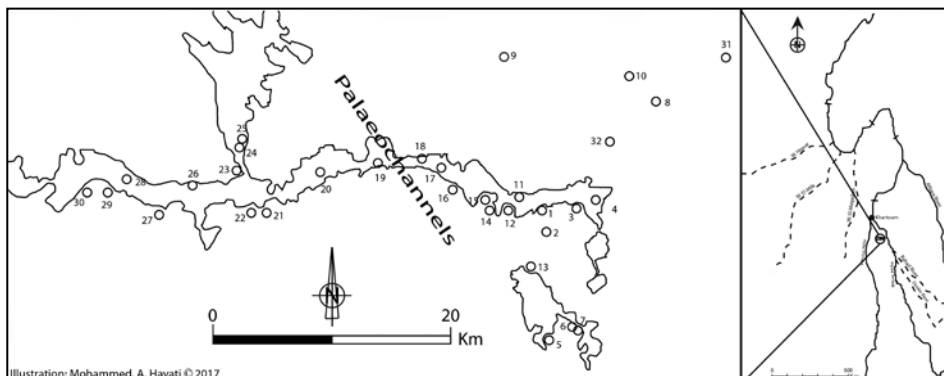


Figure 1. General view of the surveyed area and the sites documented.

Table 1. Inventory of sites.

No.	Name	Period
1	El-Feraigab 1	Neolithic
2	El-Feraigab 2	Neolithic
3	Goz Wad el-Bilaila	Mesolithic\Neolithic\Historical periods
4	Tomb of the lady Um Hassoun	Islamic period
5	Goaiz es-Shor	Neolithic
6	Cemetery of Sheikh es-Selahiabi	Neolithic\Islamic period
7	Maseed of Sheikh Kamal el-Din	Islamic period
8	Terrace Nagi	Islamic period
9	Um Tarfaya	Historic?\Islamic period
10	Tabat Sheikh Abdul-Mahmoud	Islamic period
11	Maseed Sheikh Ali	Islamic period
12	Goz Sheikh Ali	Neolithic
13	Station 25	Anglo-Egyptian
14	Goz er-Rehaid 1	Mesolithic\Neolithic
15	Goz er-Rehaid 2	Mesolithic\Neolithic
16	Abu Groon	Neolithic
17	El-Sidaira	Neolithic
18	Goz es-Semyin	Neolithic\Meroitic\Islamic periods
19	El-Uqda	Mesolithic\Neolithic
20	Goz Habbabna	Neolithic
21	Goz Abu Gunbak 1	Mesolithic
22	Goz Abu Gunbak 2	Mesolithic\Neolithic
23	Goz el-Eyaal	Neolithic
24	Jemailyia	Mesolithic
25	Goz Tarbanah 1	Mesolithic\Meroitic
26	Goz Tarbanah 2	Mesolithic\Neolithic
27	Goz Sheikh Wad Rai	Mesolithic\Neolithic
28	Goz Sheikh Modawwi 1	Mesolithic\Neolithic
29	Goz Sheikh Modawwi 2	Mesolithic\Neolithic
30	Goz Sheikh Modawwi 3	Neolithic
31	Government house of el-Rokn office	Anglo-Egyptian
32	Administration of Tabat Irrigation	Anglo-Egyptian

tools made of sandstone and sedimentary rocks. The latter were also found in multiple shapes and sizes. This site may also date to the Neolithic.

3. Goz Wad el-Bilaila: 14° 34.787' N / 33° 03.191' E

Located to the east of the village of Wad el-Bilaila, and to the west of the village of el-Lawotah el-Ahamdah. The site is on a *goz*, a feature which is found in this region, particularly in the areas close to the palaeochannels. There is a large number

of small shrubs on the site, especially Tarfa (*Tamarix aphylla*). A large number of human skeletal remains appear on the surface which is affected by natural and human factors. Most of the skeletons are in a contracted burial position. There is a scatter of Wavy Line and Dotted Wavy Line pottery, as well as plain pottery, in addition to small-sized grinding tools. The site probably dates to the Mesolithic, Neolithic and historic periods. It is much affected by digging carried out by the inhabitants of the area to remove mud and, therefore, needs to be urgently excavated.

4. Tomb of the lady Um Hassoun:

14° 34.320' N / 33° 04.140' E

Located in the south-eastern side of Goz Wad el-Bilaila in a forested and agricultural area with abundant *Acacia nubica* (lawot) and *Balanites aegyptica* (heglig) trees. The site contains the grave of the woman Um Hassoun, daughter of Sheikh Salama and mother of Sheikh Dafa-Allah el-Masoban, the Sheikh of the Arakyia Sufi sect, who was buried in Abu Haraz near Wad Medani. There is also the tomb of Sheikh Salama. There are remnants of a red-brick building, but it is much destroyed. The inhabitants of the area visit the site for blessing and to pray, especially on Fridays. There is a man who takes care of the tomb site.

5. Goaz es-Shor: 14° 28.711' N / 33° 02.035' E

Located to the north east of the village of Wad el-Hilaio, and to the west of the village of Sheikh Kamal el-Din. It lies to the south of the previous sites, and on the northern border of Manqil district. It is a slightly elevated *goz* situated in the center of the agricultural land and extends over an area of 500m². *Acacia nubica* trees spread densely on the outskirts of the site. It is a substantial Neolithic site consisting of an enormous amount of archaeological finds on the surface (Plate 1), with a notable density of small-sized grinding stones, made of sandstone and gneiss. There are also numerous pottery sherds in a variety of shapes and motifs. Distinct types and decorations, with multiple geometric forms, in addition to zigzag decorations were found. All parts of the pot, especially near the rim, were decorated. Also found were comb patterns bearing many similarities to those from the large Neolithic site of Shaheinab (Arkell 1953, pl. 29-35). A few microliths were noted on the surface of the site along with an abundance of land snails (*Limicolairai*). There were also heaps of grinding stones on the site, which seem to have been gathered by people to border graves, perhaps during more recent periods, as four mounds were found. This site has been subjected to random digging by gold miners.

6. Cemetery of Sheikh es-Selaihabi:

14° 28.412' N / 33° 03.787' E

Located some distance to the north east of Gwada village, and to the south east of the Sheikh Kamal ed-Din village, in the plain. Herbs and spiny shrubs abound on the surface of the site. The main feature is the *qubba* of Sheikh Mohammed As-Selaihabi, who passed away in 1275 AH. He was a disciple of Sheikh Ahmed et-Tayib, son of el-Bashir the first sheikh



Plate 1. General view of Goaz es-Shor site.

of the Sammanya Tareiqa in Sudan. The *qubba* is square at the bottom, octagonal in the middle and circular towards the top. Within are four graves containing the sheikh and members of his family. There are numerous graves of the inhabitants of the area around the *qubba*, especially of people from Gawada village. Traces of graveside ritual practices are present – such as placing pots on the edge of graves, in which, perhaps, the family of the deceased poured water from time to time, as a good deed gift to the deceased. This is a common practice in Sudan. The site also contains some remains which probably date back to the Neolithic, as well as to the historical period, but it is not easy to date these remains, especially as those of the historical period are incomplete. However, the Neolithic artifacts are clear. There are a number of large-sized lower grindstones, which were reused in cemeteries up to the present day as tombstones or for other purposes which we cannot identify.

7. Maseed of Sheikh Kamal ed-Din:

14° 28.337' N / 33° 03.189' E

Located within the village of Tayba Sheikh Kamal ed-Din in Manaqil district. The village was founded by Sheikh Kamal ed-Din, son of Ahmed, in the late first half of the 20th century. The site is a large religious complex containing a large mosque built in the 1950s, as well as another mosque which was established recently. The site also contains two *qubba* - one for Sheikh Kamal ed-Din, which is similar to that of Sheikh el-Seliahabi, and is taken care of by the sons of the sheikh and the devotees. There is also a newly-built *qubba* which is for the grandson of Sheikh Kamal ed-Din - Khalifa Abdul Qadir bin Khalifa el-Arabi bin Sheikh Kamal el-Din, which is not yet completed. In addition, there is a special room in Sheikh Kamal ed-Din's '*kehalwa*', where he used to meet his guests and devotees, and where he also worshipped. This room contains the sheikh's personal items including his bed (*angareeb*) and mattress, as well as his special clothes and some of the correspondences in the sheikh's handwriting addressed to friends and family members. There is also a sheep skin and a mat of palm leaves in the place where he prayed. In-



side the room is a classic old chest (*sabbara*), and the sheikh's stick and pitcher. The *khalwa* is in very bad condition, has not been open for a long time – the Sheikh died in 1965 – and needs urgent maintenance. In this area there is a *khalwa* for teaching Quran and for accommodating the students, in addition to others which are used for treating patients and receiving guests.

8. Terrace Nagi: 14° 39.018' N / 33° 07.750' E

Located in the agricultural area to the south west of the village of el-Amara Kasir. It is the place where the Sheikh Taj Eldin Elboharri who came to the Sudan from Baghdad during the Funj era, pledged his allegiance of Gadiriya Tareiqā to four great sheikhs in Sudan. According to the people, the area contains archaeological remains dating back to periods earlier than the Funj, but no remains are extant. Abdul-Jabbar Mohammed Ahmed (living in el-Amara Kasir, age: 85) said that the land today belongs to a person named el-Baloala. In the past, the devotees and sheikhs used to perform Sufi recitals at night in this area.

9. Um Tarfaya: 14° 41.831' N / 33° 00.016' E

Located to the east of the village of Um Tarfaya in an area stretching for about 700m², which is covered with *Acacia nubica*. This site contains two parts; the first is occupied by historical period remains represented by crude pottery and a few grindstones, but in general they are scarce, especially in low-lying areas. It is also difficult to determine their date. The other part has the remains of the *qubba* of Sheikh Ahmed Abdul Majeed, with a few of the graves surrounded by red bricks in an oval shape. The dome is completely destroyed but the west wall is still standing. Local stories recount that Sheikh Abdul-Mahmoud bin Sheikh Nur el-Dayim bin Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayib bin el-Bashir, dwelt in this region but then fell out with the local people and left to found the city of Tabat.

10. Tabat Sheikh Abdul-Mahmoud:

14° 40.100' N / 33° 05.548' E

Is the area which was established by Sheikh Abdul-Mahmoud in 1874 after he left Um Tarfaya (Al-Hafyan 2015, 90). It contains a large *mejid* with a huge mosque, rebuilt after the demolition of its predecessor. Most of the *qubba* have also been rebuilt. In addition, there are a number of *khalwas* and guest houses, as well as the Institute of the Quran and its Sciences.

11. Maseed Sheikh Ali: 14° 34.507' N / 33° 00.498' E

Located in the village of Sheikh Ali, which is one of el-Feraigab's neighbourhoods, in the north west of the town. The name of el-Feraigab originates from the Anglo-Egyptian period, and is a translation of the phrase: Free Gap. The village was established by Sheikh Ali bin Sheikh Mohammed Sharif Bin Sheikh Nur ed-Dayim bin Sheikh Ahmed et-Tayib bin el-Bashir, who was born in 1874 in the village of Gawada – south of el-Feraigab. His mother was a daughter of Sheikh Mohammed es-Selaihābi. He studied the Quran under Sheikh Mohamed Farah in Umm Marrahi. Also he was taught jurisprudence, intonation (*Tagweed*) and grammar by

his father Sheikh Mohammad Sharif. He toured a number of areas of Sudan, then founded his *maseed* in 1950, and died in 1965. The *maseed* consists of a large mosque, and *qubba* containing the burial of the sheikh and his family, in addition to *khalwa's* and housing.

12. Goz Sheikh Ali: 14° 34.753' N / 33° 00.644' E

Located to the north east of *maseed* Sheikh Ali, and in the low-lying area, extending over an area of 300m². It consists of the remains of a settlement that is represented by pottery, grinding tools and bones. Perhaps these antiquities date back to the Neolithic period but little distinctive archaeological material came from this site.

13. Station 25: 14° 31.308' N / 33° 01.630' E

Located to the west of the village of Dar es-Salaam, and about 3km² to the south of the town of el-Feraigab. This place is the location of a station for the train, which was being used to transport crops. It was one of a number of stations that were established during the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium within the Gezira Agricultural Scheme. The site consists of a residential complex with a number of rooms and baths. It is deserted today.

14. Goz er-Rehaid 1: 14° 34.950' N / 32° 59.794' E

A settlement site located to the north west of the village of Sheikh Ali and to the north east of Goz er-Rehaid. It extends over an area of 1km². It contains the remains of Mesolithic and Neolithic occupation, represented by various pottery forms, in addition to large amounts of grinding tools on the surface. No microliths were noted. Also on the surface were human and animal skeletons, an abundance of snail and other shells and some jewellery, including beads and a lip-plug. This site is threatened by digging, as the locals use the clay for multiple purposes, as well as by the passage of vehicles through it. The rainwater is eroding the remains from the surface to the low-lying areas.

15. Goz er-Rehaid 2: 14° 35.354' N / 32° 59.032' E

Located to the west of site Goz er-Rehaid 1, and to the south east of the village of Sheikh et-Tayib. It is in a high area, sandy-clayey like the nature of the soil in the palaeochannels, extending over an area of up to 2km². The site is covered in pottery and grindstones that are similar to that which has been found in Goz Abdel-Salam in the Halaween District (Hayati 2016, 17) as well as lithics (Plate 2); there are no microliths. The site is threatened by the establishment of a gas tank in the middle, which has concealed a lot of artefacts.

16. Abu Groon: 14° 36.322' N / 32° 56.025' E

Located to the south west of the village of Abu Groon, and 1km² north west of the village of es-Sidaira. It extends over an area of more than 2km² on a slightly raised flat area. There is Neolithic material, multi-decorated pottery, as well as grinding tools, in addition to some small-sized axes and jewellery. There is a density of snails and shells on the surface of the site. Human and animal skeletons also appear on the surface. This site is close to Abu Groon, which means it is impacted



Plate 2. Stone tools from the surface of Goz er-Rehaid 2.

by the expansion of housing. The largest threat comes from heavy machinery digging and moving earth.

17. Es-Sidaira: 14° 35.859' N / 32° 57.280' E

Located to the east of the village of es-Sidaira, and near the road leading to the village of Goz er-Rehaid. It is in flat area of clayey-sandy soil, extending over an area of up to 200m², surrounded by agricultural land. It contains Neolithic material, such as pottery decorated with various motifs, in addition to grindstones and a few microliths. Visible on the surface is a number of human skeletons, one of whom was lying in a contracted position wearing a necklace of ostrich eggshell and ivory beads. This site has been subjected to various factors of destruction; it is imperative that it be protected and studied.

18. Goz es-Semyin: 14° 36.625' N / 32° 56.564' E

Located just to the east of the village of Abu Groon, and separated from it by an irrigation canal. It is in the middle of agricultural land, surrounded by *Acacia nubica*, *Calotropis* (Usher), *Capparis* (Fundub), and *Acacia tortilis* (Sayyal). This site, which extends over an area of 300m², is very rich in archaeological remains dating back to the Neolithic. Finds consist of decorated and plain pottery, grinding tools, axes and adzes. There is a scatter of lip-plugs and beads on the surface. There are also some skeletons that may belong to the same period. There is also pottery and archers' looses which may date to the Meroitic period. The date of the tumuli is uncertain. There are also modern graves in the northern side of the site.

19. El-Uqda: 14° 36.222' N / 32° 53.564' E

Located to the west of the village of el-Uqda within its modern cemetery. It extends over a flat area of about 500m². There are abundant artefacts dating to the Mesolithic and Neolithic, in particular pottery and grinders. In addition, what may be a type of axe drilled through for installing the handle was also found (Plate 3). There were also abundant molluscs

on the surface. The presence of the modern cemetery has protected the site from encroachment and digging, but it has to be studied as the modern cemetery is expanding and encroaching on the site. The site can be compared with Early Khartoum in terms of Wavy Line pottery (Arkell 1949, pl. 61).



Plate 3. Axes with a hole for insertion of a handle – El-Uqda.

20. Goz Habbabna: 14° 35.561' N / 32° 51.110' E

Located to the east of the village of el-Mahraiba Bilal, to the west of the village of Wad Eghaibish, it extends over a large area of up to 5km², in an area of *goz*. This region does not fall within the Gezira Agricultural Scheme lands. Large quantities of archaeological remains dating to the Neolithic are visible on the surface, especially many different sized axes and adzes (Plate 4), grinders and pottery. A wide range of stone types were used to make the axes including flint, basalt and granite. Also on the surface were many types of ivory lip-plugs (Plate 5) and a few beads. This site is the largest of those studied during this season. It is closely similar to the sites along the Nile, especially those in the Khartoum district (Caneva 1988; Choldnicki *et al.* 2011). It is suffering from destruction in some parts due to indiscriminate digging, but other sections remain untouched.



Plate 4. Axes and adzes – Goz Habbabna.



21. Goz Abu Gunbak 1: 14° 34.657' N / 32° 48.378' E

Located on the south-eastern side of the village of Goz Abu Gunbak, surrounded by agricultural land, in a flat area interspersed with many *Acacia nilotica* (Sunt) and *Balanites aegyptica* (Heglig). There were a few artefacts dating to the Mesolithic: Wavy Line and Dotted Wavy Line pottery and fragments of grinding tools along with an occasional microlith. The site is being damaged due to heavy traffic movement around it.



Plate 5. Types of ivory lip, nose and ear-plugs – Goz Habbabna.

22. Goz Abu Gunbak 2: 14° 34.779' N / 32° 47.536' E

Located immediately west of the village of Abu Gunbak, and on the western border of the Gezira Agricultural Scheme. It sits on a few *goz*, within the flat area. There is an abundance of the archaeological finds on the surface of the Mesolithic and Neolithic, with a variety of types of decoration on the pottery. There is also an abundance of grindstones of various forms and maceheads (Plate 6), and there were some ivory lip-plugs. The human skeletons that appear on the surface are mostly contracted, and similar to those found at many sites in central Sudan, such as Jebel Sabaloka (Suková and Varadzin 2012, 125). However, one of them was lying stretched on its back, aligned north-south. There is widespread grazing over the site, which is threatening to cause damage to archaeological material.



Plate 6. Maceheads from the surface of Goz Abu Gunbak 2.

23. Goz el-Eyaal: 14° 35.273' N / 32° 45.973' E

A Neolithic site located to the west of the village of Abu Gunbak about 3km, and to the north of it there is palaeo-channel now used to drain excess water from the Gezira Agricultural Scheme. It is a moderately high *goz*, extending

over an area of 200m². Lying in a vast pastoral area it is notable for the abundance of *Acacia nilotica* (Sunt) and *Acacia tortilis* (Sayyal). There is a concentration of large grinding tools on the surface of the site, in addition to various forms of decorated pottery; however, the amount of pottery, if compared to other sites, is scanty.

24. Jemailyia: 14° 36.661' N / 032° 47.134' E

Immediately adjacent to the village of Jemailyia on its western side. The site, bordered to the west by a drainage channel, extends over an area up to 500m by about 200m in size. It contains Mesolithic material such as Wavy Line pottery, as well as grinding tools. Snail shells also are abundant on the surface of the site. This site is affected by its proximity to the village; clearly evident through the broken pottery sherds that have been exposed to erosion and crushing.

25. Goz Tarbanah 1: 14° 37.287' N / 32° 47.300' E

A Mesolithic\Meroitic site located between the villages of Tarbanah and Jemailyia, and bordered by a modern cemetery on the eastern side. This site is a huge *goz* extending for about 3km and with a width about 400-500m. There is much grass on the surface of the site. Despite the large area of the *goz*, there are few archaeological remains; pottery sherds are scattered on some parts of the site, in addition to fragments of grinding tools. There is Wavy Line pottery, in addition to Meroitic pottery, but it is in poor condition and eroded. Lip-plugs were also found. The site has been affected by digging, as well as by erosion of the archaeological remains by water during the rainy season.

26. Goz Tarbanah 2: 14° 37.757' N / 32° 47.234' E

Located to the north of Goz Tarbanah 1; the sites are separated by a depression. It is directly to the south of Tarbanah village. The small site, set on a *goz* of moderate height, extends over an area of c. 250m². It contains artefacts of both Mesolithic and Neolithic periods, with a diversity in the decoration of the pottery including Wavy Line and Dotted Wavy Line, in addition to geometric motifs. There are also a few grindstones and microliths. Despite the site's proximity to the village, it is in better condition than the previous site.

27. Goz Sheikh Wad Rai: 14° 34.823' N / 32° 43.324' E

This place is a high *goz*, set in the plain within a pastoralism area. It is circular in shape, with a diameter of about 300m. There are large quantities of grinding tools and their fragments on the surface of the site, as well as Mesolithic and Neolithic pottery. There are Islamic graves to the east of the site, but it is clear that the cemetery is no longer in use. On the eastern side of the site is a shrine of Sheikh Wad Rai, where some of the old grindstones have been used as markers. There are two features of this shrine, the first is smaller, and the other comprises oval tomb-like Islamic graves, surrounded by the grindstones. This shrine has served to protect the site from digging and vandalism.

28. Goz Sheikh Modawwi 1: 14° 35.847' N / 32° 40.723' E

Located just to the east of the village of Sheikh Modawwi,

in a goz area stretching for up to about 2km. Trees and grass cover large parts of it, as it descends toward the south and east. This site contains many forms of grindstones, as well as Mesolithic and Neolithic pottery. The presence of Dotted Zigzag pottery suggests that the occupation here represents a transition between the Mesolithic and Neolithic (Plate 7).



Plate 7. Pottery with Dotted Zigzag motifs – Goz Sheikh Modawwi 1.

Skeletal remains are visible on the surface of the site. There is a nearby small *goz* in the south west which contains a few archaeological finds. Rainwater erosion is the biggest threat to the site, in addition to the proximity of the village.

29. Goz Sheikh Modawwi 2: 14° 35.625' N / 32° 41.648' E
 Located to the east of Goz Sheikh Modawwi 1, in the same series of *goz*. The *goz*, of moderate height, extends over an area of about 400m². There is a high density of archaeological remains on the surface of the site; most are grinding tools, as well as Dotted Zigzag pottery. The site can be dated to the end of the Mesolithic and the beginning of the Neolithic. It is well preserved.

30. Goz Sheikh Modawwi 3: 14° 35.432' N / 32° 42.077' E
 Located to the east of Goz Sheikh Modawwi 2, it is in a flat pastoral area with some dispersed trees, on a *goz* of moderate height. Pottery is sparse and poorly preserved. Some of the grindstones and polished axes date to the Neolithic.

31. Government house of el-Rokn office:

14° 40.580' N / 33° 10.313' E

Located to the north of the Hasahisa – el-Feraigab road, close to the branch road that leads to the village of Wad Bahai. It is a building constructed during the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, consisting of residential units with a number of rooms. The construction of this building is of high quality; the style is British. This building is used for housing the inspector of the farms in the Gezira Agricultural Scheme.

32. Administration of Tabat Irrigation:

14° 37.119' N / 033° 04.580' E

Located to the south of the village of Wadi Shaer, in an area near the Hasahisa – el-Feraigab road. It is a large complex for the management of Tabat Irrigation which belongs to the Gezira Agricultural Scheme. It also contains the houses of workers, gardeners, as well as staff housing. In addition to the workshops of the plant protection unit buildings, it also contains a club and rest house.

Discussion

What is clear from the study of these sites is their homogeneity in terms of the archaeological artifacts, dating principally to the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods. This suggests a cultural diffusion facilitated by the water resources provided by the Blue Nile and the palaeochannels. We can observe that there is a cultural sequence starting from the early Mesolithic, passing through the Neolithic, but thereafter with some significant historical gaps when compared with the cultural sequence known in northern Sudan. Some evidence was discovered which can fill the hiatus from the end of the Kushite up to the later Islamic period. The evidence for

Christian period occupation along the Blue Nile is well known (Balfour Paul 1952, 211). The pottery allows us to recognise parts of the cultural sequence in this region. We find the classic style of the Wavy Line pottery that represents the early stages of the Mesolithic (Khabir 1987, 378), also several decorative patterns characteristic of the late Neolithic, such as the widespread use of the geometric motif (Sadig 2005, 3). On the basis of this material we can recognise occupation in the early and late Mesolithic, the early and late Neolithic, some evidence for the Meroitic era, and then of the later Islamic period. When we look at the archaeological remains we can see the strong cultural relationship between what has been observed near the river in the Middle Nile Region. Of course the geographical character of the Gezira Reach has played an important role in fostering this homogeneity. It is clear that the Gezira was culturally rich during late prehistory; furthermore, the climate played a major role in this cultural richness. The heavy rainfall during the Holocene wet phase stimulated people to live in those areas adjacent to the palaeochannels during late prehistory and in later periods. The Nile also played an important role as a cultural blender (Hayati 2017, 66), while the location of the study area between the Blue and White Niles facilitated cultural and social interactions reflected amongst all the cultural finds of the several periods discovered in this region.

This survey provided a good opportunity to conduct archaeological work in an area generally considered to be outside the traditional focus of archaeological work along



the Nile and north of Khartoum. It is notable that there is good technique and distinctive industry through most of the archaeological finds, especially the pottery. Some of the sites are rich in archaeological finds and their technique while others are very poor and suffering from destruction. There are two main activities that are threatening all sites, the first is the search for gold and the belief of the people that these sites definitely contain gold, hence their digging to obtain it. The second problem is destruction caused by heavy machinery used to remove earth. Therefore, the study area has to be investigated with some urgency, as some sites need rescue excavations and cultural resources management.

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