Two Thousand Years in Dendi, Northern Benin

Archaeology, History and Memory

Edited by

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Contents

PART 4

CATALOGUE M

Kusulabu (KUS-14-SI & SII)

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1 Location

Kusulabu is a settlement mound located west of Karimama. It was first surveyed by Mardjoua (2013: 63) in April 2013; he records it as KAR-13-33 and estimated its size at 1.29 ha. It is known locally as the oldest historical Gourma settlement of Karimama, known as *Kusu Gourma*. According to informants, a smallpox epidemic forced the inhabitants to leave (Mardjoua 2013). A sanctuary is located 500 m east of the site: it is materialised by a pierced baobab (Mardjoua 2013: 66).

2 Geographical Coordinates

LAT: 12,06132296 LONG: 3,169889012 (WGS84)

3 Discovery

The site was identified by Barpougouni Mardjoua in April 2013, who carried out a surface collection of pottery and studied it as part of his Masters thesis (Mardjoua 2013: 148–153). The site was subsequently test pitted by Alexandre Livingstone Smith and Nicolas Nikis on 4 February 2014.

4 Destruction Risks

The site is in a field. It is ploughed regularly. The site is near a river called "Goru" and its water runoff affects certain parts of the site.

5 Excavation

Kusulabu had never been excavated. Two 1 × 1 m test-pits were excavated by spits of 10 cm (except for the superficial layer which was excavated in one spit of 20 cm). Within each spit, archaeological contexts (i.e. distinct units) were separated, sieved and bagged separately. All spits were sieved down to 5 mm. The excavation was ended respectively at 30 cm (SI) and 45 cm (SII) in the natural substrate.

6 Site

Kusulabu is a low intensity settlement mound complex. It consists of several very low settlement mounds surrounding a higher rock outcrop. The test-pits were located on the slope leading north from the rock outcrop to a little watershed flowing east. The initial survey yielded some ceramic material (mainly pottery decorated with folded strip roulette).

7 Stratigraphy

The stratigraphy of KUS-14-SI consists of settlement rubble, with a pavement recovered in SII, visible on the left side of the east section. Both test-pits displayed very shallow occupations.

8 Finds

The material excavated at Kusulabu is very fragmentary and consists mainly of pottery decorated with folded strip roulette. Knotted twisted cord features several times. A single metal object was retrieved, in SII. It is a fragment of a ring (SF 2014-127), almost certainly a bracelet fragment.

9 Interpretation and Cultural Attribution

Kusulabu was identified to us as a former Gourmantche settlement. The excavation revealed a low intensity, likely medieval, occupation. The presence of a pottery a pavement points to parallels with Birnin Lafiya and other sites of this type.

FIGURE M.1 Kusulabu site view

FIGURE M.2 Pavement recorded in KUS-14-SII

FIGURE M.3
Kusulabu SII east section at completion

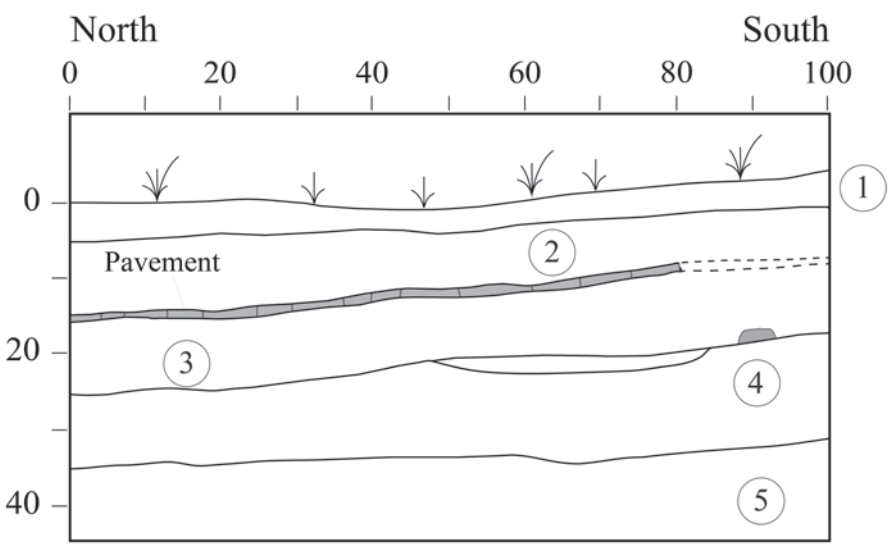

FIGURE M.4
KUS-14-SI, East section
1 Ploughed topsoil
2 Compact brown silty sand
3 Compact orange silt
4 Compact orange clayey silt
5 Orange clay (natural substratum)

10 KUS SI

TABLE M.1 Desampling

Level	#
0–20	320
20–30	21
Total	**341**

Analysis in the field by Barpougouni Mardjoua and at UEA by Sam Nixon

TABLE M.2 Category 4

Level	Undecorated	Illegible
0–20	31	34
20–30	6	0
Total	**37**	**34**

Analysis by Sam Nixon and David Kay

TABLE M.3 Category 3

Context	#	Burn	Dec1	Dec2	Dec3	Dec4	Dec5
0–20	6	ext/int					
	6	ext					
	9		rfp-1b				
	4		roul	ch			
	1		sp1-l	sp1-l	sp1-l	sp1-l	sp1-l
	1		rfp-1b	mch-2			
	1		rfp-1b	mch-2-t			
	1		rfp-1c				
	2		rfp-1b	sl-2			
	1		rfp-1b	plain			
	5		rfp-5				
	2		rfp-5	sl-2			
	6		roul				
	1		rc-1b				
	3	ext/int					
	1	int					
20–30	2		rfp-5				
	4		roul				
	1	int	plain	ch	sx-13		
Total	**57**						

Analysis by Sam Nixon and David Kay

TABLE M.4 Rims

Context	#	R. Type	Brn	Dec1	Loc1	Ang.	Diam.	Mx. thick
SI 0–20	1	S4				5		0.7
	1	E4				4		0.9
	1	E4				4		0.8
	1	E4						0.9
	1	E4				4		0.7
	1	E38	ext/int					1.2
SI 20–30	1	S1	ext			2		0.4
Total	**7**							

Analysis by David Kay

11 KUS SII

TABLE M.5 Desampling

Level	Number
0–20	1188
20–30	112
30–40	14
40–50	2
Total	**1316**

Analysis in the field by Barpougouni Mardjoua and at UEA by Sam Nixon

TABLE M.6 Category 4

Level	Undecorated	Illegible
0–20	73	39
20–30	7	11
30–40	2	1
40–50	0	0
Total	**82**	**51**

Analysis by Sam Nixon

TABLE M.7 Category 3

Context	#	Burn	Dec1	Dec2	Dec3	Dec4	Dec5
0–20	12	ext/int					
	16	ext					
	1	int					
	8		roul				
	2		indis	sl-1			
	1	ext	indis	sl-1			
	1	int	rc-3				
	1		rc-3				
	2		rc-1b				
	1		rfp-1b	indis			
	1		plain	sp1-l	sl-4	sp1-l	sl-1
	1	ext	sl-2				
	1		indis				
	1		peigEL-5+				
	16		rfp-1b				
	1		rfp-5	sl-1			
	10		rfp-5				
	1	int	perf	roul			
	1		rfp-5	sl-3			
20–30	3	ext/int					
	1	int					
	1		rc-3	rfp-1b			
	1	int	roul				
	4		roul				
	1	ext	roul	ch	rc-3		
	1		sl-2				
	1		sl-3				
	4		rfp-1b				
	3		rfp-5				

TABLE M.7 Category 3 (*cont.*)

Context	#	Burn	Dec1	Dec2	Dec3	Dec4	Dec5
30–40	2	ext/int					
	1	ext					
40–50	1		rfp-5				
Total	**102**						

Analysis by Sam Nixon and Anne Haour

TABLE M.8 Rims

Context	#	R. Type	Brn	Dec 1	L1	Ang	Diam	Mx. Thick
0–20	1	S1				2		0.6
	1	S1				4		1.0
	1	S1	ext/int					0.7
	1	S4	ext					0.8
	1	E4	ext/int					0.9
	1	E4				4		1.0
	1	E4	ext/int			4		0.8
	1	E4						0.7
	1	E4				4		0.8
20–30	1	E4				4		1.2
	1	E4	ext/int			4		0.9
	1	S2						0.7
Total	**12**							

Analysis by David Kay