

# Two Thousand Years in Dendi, Northern Benin

*Archaeology, History and Memory*

*Edited by*

Anne Haour



BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

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| AC | Tomboutou (TOU-14-SI)   | 546 |
|    | <i>Pascal Gnankpo Amoussou, Alexandre Livingstone Smith, Nicolas Nikis and Anne Haour</i> |     |
| AD | Kantoro (KRO-14)  | 551 |
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| AE | Garou (GAR-14-SI)   | 575 |
|    | <i>Alexandre Livingstone Smith</i>  |     |
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|    | <i>Alexandre Livingstone Smith</i>  |     |
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## Toutokayeri (TTO-14-SI, II & III)

*Nicolas Nikis, Alexandre Livingstone Smith and Anne Haour*

### 1 Location

Toutokayeri is a former settlement of Loumbou Loumbou, located just south-southeast of the present village. This settlement is said to have been abandoned sometime during the nineteenth century. It is located on a small plateau overlooking a humid valley, stretching south and east towards the Niger and feeding into the Kompagorou.

### 2 Geographical Coordinates

LAT: 12,2372830007225 LONG: 2,90778899565339 (WGS84).

### 3 Discovery

TTO-14-SI, II & III were identified and excavated by Nicolas Nikis and Alexandre Livingstone Smith on 27 January 2014 on the basis of local information.

### 4 Destruction Risks

The site is ploughed and part of it is on an eroding slope. It is not under any specific threat and mitigation measures are not urgent.

### 5 Site

Toutokayeri was a former village. The initial survey yielded a lot of ceramic material, among which we found folded strip roulette (rfp-1) decoration in some parts of the site, some *blepharis* decorated pottery, and a lot of undecorated material. The precise extent of the site is unknown but it covers the crest overlooking the valley to the north and the south. While the core of the site – as designated by the villagers – only yielded medium to low density pottery scatters, several concentrations were located on the crest overlooking the valley and below it, as well as on the opposite side of the valley. All were associated with rfp-1 decorated pottery.

### 6 Excavation

Toutokayeri had never been excavated before. Three test pits were excavated, all of them 1 × 1 m and excavated in spits of 10 cm, except for the superficial layer which was excavated in one spit of 20 cm. Within each spit, archaeological contexts were separated, sieved and bagged separately. All the spits were sieved down to 5 mm. Test pit SI was interrupted at 70 cm, 10 cm into sterile soil (compact yellow sand).

### 7 Stratigraphy

The stratigraphy of TTO-14-SI is shallow and simple, probably representing a single occupation event. It consists of a shallow feature of loose grey brown sand overlaying a pit filled with loose grey brown sand.

TTO-14-SII is located on the ridge overlooking the valley. The stratigraphy consists of three layers below the plough layer. The first is a layer of grey loose sand with charcoal fragments and artefacts fragments, mainly of pottery. This context overlays a unit of compact red silt (Context 2) with abundant rounded gravel, potsherds and charcoal. Below, at c. 45 cm, we found a layer of compact yellow sandy silt within which was a pottery pavement.

The stratigraphy of TTO-14-SIII is also shallow and simple, probably representing a single occupation event. It consists of a shallow layer of loose grey brown sand. Alternating layers of yellow and brown sand are visible in some parts of the southern profile.

TTO-14-SI and SIII are probably related to same horizon (late modern?). TTO-14-SII was, on the basis of the deposits and finds excavated, thought likely to be related to the medieval horizon already identified in most of the large tells of the valley, though, interestingly, it represents a much smaller area of occupation. This hypothetical date was subsequently borne out by ceramic analysis (Kay, pers. comm.) and by the radiocarbon date which yielded a Phase 4 age for level 20–30 (Beta-417596).





FIGURE B.1  
Site under excavation

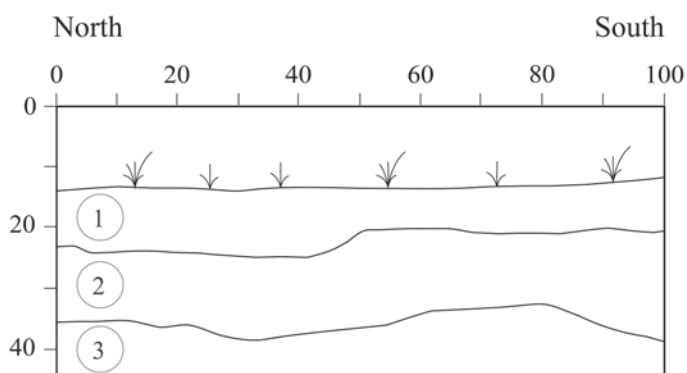


FIGURE B.2  
TTO-14-SIII, East section  
1 Grey brown sand with - top layer disturbed by ploughing  
2 Loose grey-brown sand (pottery, faunal remains and charcoal)  
3 Compact yellow sand (natural substratum)

## 8 Finds

As noted above, surface finds include potsherds displaying rfp-1 decoration on the crest and downslope as well as in SII, as well as perforated pottery, rfp-4 and rfp-5, and stabbed impressions. Small finds include a clay bead or possible spindle whorl and two cowries from SI (SF 2014-78, SF 2014-25 and SF 2014-26 respectively), a piece of glass from SII (SF 2014-37), and a strange item which we provisionally identified as metal from SIII (SF 2014-163). The pottery from the site as illustrated on Plate 3 clearly reveals the major differences between SI/SIII and SII: # 4 and 5 which are from SII show folded strip roulette,

stabbed decoration and appliqué nodules. # 1–3 and 6–9, which are from SI 0–20 and SIII above 30cm respectively, show painted decorations.

## 9 Interpretation and Cultural Attribution

The rather shallow deposits indicate a short span of occupation (perhaps one or two generations) for SI & III. SII, while slightly deeper than the other test pits, does not display the long stratigraphy seen at other sites. Oral testimonies, supported by the presence of newer types of pottery, may indicate a post-thirteenth century occupation.



Yet the presence of rfp-1 pottery concentrations on the surface, the pavement in s11 and the single radiocarbon date also support the hypothesis of an older occupation in the area. The glass from s11 is from the surface level (0–20) and does not put into question the identification of this layer as medieval. It is interesting to note this site is located far from the Niger River. At current conditions, the road heading west from the Niger River leaves the rather verdant riverside to cross a relatively arid-seeming flat plateau and reach the parklands around Loumbou Loumbou.

**10 Radiocarbon Dates**

|             |     |    |   |         |
|-------------|-----|----|---|---------|
| Beta-417596 | 630 | 30 | TTO-14-S11-178<br>Toutokayori, s11.<br>Shallow stratigraphy<br>with one horizon<br>20–30 BD | Phase 4 |
|-------------|-----|----|---|---------|

**11 T10 14 S1**

TABLE B.1 Desampling

| Level               | #          |
|---------------------|------------|
| 0–20                | 445        |
| 20–30               | 72         |
| 30–40               | 11         |
| Fosse Con. 2, 30–40 | 17         |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>545</b> |

Analysis by Anne Haour in the field and David Kay at UEA

TABLE B.2 Category 4

| Context/spit      | Undecorated | Illegible |
|-------------------|-------------|-----------|
| 0–20              | 55          |           |
| 20–30             | 19          |           |
| 30–40             | 1           |           |
| Pit Con. 2, 30–40 | 4           |           |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>79</b>   | <b>0</b>  |

Analysis by David Kay

TABLE B.3 Category 3

| Context | #  | Burn    | Dec 1       | Dec 2    | Dec 3    | Dec 4    | Dec 5     | Dec 6      | Dec 7    |
|---------|----|---------|-------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|------------|----------|
| 0–20    | 12 | ext     |             |          |          |          |           |            |          |
|         | 1  | ext/int |             |          |          |          |           |            |          |
|         | 1  |         | pnt-rc      |          |          |          |           |            |          |
|         | 1  |         | pnt-rc      | indis    |          |          |           |            |          |
|         | 2  | ext     | pnt-rc      | plain    |          |          |           |            |          |
|         | 1  |         | pnt-r (int) |          |          |          |           |            |          |
|         | 2  | ext     | plain       | pnt-rb   |          |          |           |            |          |
|         | 3  |         | plain       | pnt-rb   |          |          |           |            |          |
|         | 1  |         | plain       | pnt-rb   | pnt-rb   |          |           |            |          |
|         | 1  |         | pnt-rc      | pnt-BlB  | pnt-rc   | pnt-rb   |           |            |          |
|         | 1  | ext     | plain       | pnt-r    |          |          |           |            |          |
|         | 1  | ext     | plain       | pnt-rp   | pnt-r    |          |           |            |          |
|         | 1  | ext/int | undec       |          |          |          |           |            |          |
|         | 2  | ext/int | plain       | pnt-rb   |          |          |           |            |          |
| 20–30   | 7  | ext     |             |          |          |          |           |            |          |
|         | 1  |         | pnt-r       |          |          |          |           |            |          |
|         | 1  | ext     | plain       | pnt-r    |          |          |           |            |          |
| 30–40   | 2  |         | plain       | pnt-rc   |          |          |           |            |          |
|         | 1  |         | pnt-or-B    | pnt-4-Br | pnt-4-Bl | pnt-Br-T | pnt-Br-L3 | pnt-Bl-L-2 | pnt-Bl-T |
| 30–40   | 1  |         | plain       | rfp-1a   |          |          |           |            |          |

TABLE B.3 Category 3 (*cont.*)

| Context        | #         | Burn | Dec 1 | Dec 2  | Dec 3 | Dec 4 | Dec 5 | Dec 6 | Dec 7 |
|----------------|-----------|------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                | 1         |      | rc-1a | indis  |       |       |       |       |       |
|                | 1         | int  | plain | sp1-l  | sl-6  | st-4  |       |       |       |
| Pit C 2, 30-40 | 4         | ext  |       |        |       |       |       |       |       |
|                | 1         | ext  | plain | pnt-rb |       |       |       |       |       |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>50</b> |      |       |        |       |       |       |       |       |

Analysis by David Kay

TABLE B.4 Rims

| Context      | #         | R. type | Brn     | Dec 1 | Loc 1 | Dec 2 | Loc 2  | Ang | Diam | Mx. Thick |
|--------------|-----------|---------|---------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-----|------|-----------|
| 0-20         | 1         | E4      | ext/int |       |       |       |        |     |      | 0.6       |
|              | 1         | E4      |         |       |       |       |        | 4   |      | 0.6       |
|              | 1         | E4      |         |       |       |       |        |     |      | 0.6       |
|              | 1         | E4      |         | pnt-r | L     |       |        |     |      | 0.3       |
|              | 1         | E4      | ext/int | pnt-r | L     | pnt-r | U(int) | 4   |      | 0.7       |
|              | 1         | E1      |         |       |       |       |        |     |      | 0.6       |
| 20-30        | 1         | E4      |         |       |       |       |        | 4   |      | 0.5       |
|              | 1         | E5      |         |       |       |       |        | 4   |      | 0.6       |
|              | 1         | E32     |         |       |       |       |        | 4   |      | 0.9       |
|              | 1         | S4      |         |       |       |       |        |     |      | 0.7       |
|              | 1         | S1      | ext/int |       |       |       |        | 3   | 20   | 0.6       |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>11</b> |         |         |       |       |       |        |     |      |           |

Analysis by David Kay

**12 TTO 14 SII**

TABLE B.5 Desampling

| Spit         | #          |
|--------------|------------|
| 0-20         | 408        |
| 20-30        | 71         |
| 30-40        | 32         |
| 40-50        | 58         |
| 50-60        | 51         |
| 60-70        | 15         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>635</b> |

Analysis in the field by Anne Haour and Edith Anagonou Ahouéfa and at UEA by David Kay

TABLE B.6 Category 4

| Context      | Undecorated | Illegible |
|--------------|-------------|-----------|
| 0-20         | 13          | 21        |
| 20-30        | 5           | 7         |
| 30-40        | 3           | 5         |
| 40-50        | 2           | 4         |
| 50-60        | 2           | 4         |
| 60-70        | 1           | 3         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>26</b>   | <b>44</b> |

Analysis by David Kay

TABLE B.7 Category 3

| Context | #  | Burn    | Dec 1      | Dec 2 | Dec 3     | Dec 4 |
|---------|----|---------|------------|-------|-----------|-------|
| 0-20    | 18 |         | roul       |       |           |       |
|         | 1  | int     |            |       |           |       |
|         | 1  | int     | indis      |       |           |       |
|         | 1  | ext     |            |       |           |       |
|         | 1  | ext/int |            |       |           |       |
|         | 2  |         | rc-1b      |       |           |       |
|         | 1  |         | rc-1a      |       |           |       |
|         | 3  |         | rfp-4      |       |           |       |
|         | 1  |         | rfp-1a     | sl-1  |           |       |
|         | 2  |         | rfp-1a     | indis |           |       |
|         | 2  |         | rfp-1a     |       |           |       |
|         | 1  |         | rfp-1b     | indis |           |       |
|         | 2  |         | rfp-5      |       |           |       |
|         | 1  |         | roul       | sl-2  | sl-1      |       |
|         | 1  |         | roul       | sc-3  |           |       |
|         | 2  |         | sl-3       |       |           |       |
|         | 2  |         | sl-4       |       |           |       |
|         | 1  | ext     | plain      | indis | sl-2      |       |
|         | 1  |         | plain      | sl-2  | is-geo 10 |       |
|         | 1  |         | plain      | roul  | sl-2      |       |
|         | 1  |         | sl-1       |       |           |       |
|         | 1  | ext     | plain      | sl-1  | roul      |       |
|         | 1  |         | roul       | sl-1  |           |       |
|         | 1  |         | plain      | rfp   | sl-2      |       |
|         | 2  |         | sl-2       |       |           |       |
|         | 1  |         | sl-3       | indis |           |       |
|         | 1  |         | sl-5       | indis |           |       |
|         | 1  |         | sl-7       | indis |           |       |
|         | 1  |         | peigEL-13  |       |           |       |
|         | 2  | int     | rfp-4      |       |           |       |
|         | 3  |         | perforated | roul  |           |       |
| 20-30   | 3  |         | rfp-4      |       |           |       |
|         | 1  |         | rfp-1a     |       |           |       |
|         | 1  |         | rfp-1b     |       |           |       |
|         | 1  |         | rfp-1a     | indis |           |       |
|         | 3  |         | rfp-1b     | indis |           |       |
|         | 1  |         | rc-1b      | indis |           |       |
|         | 1  |         | sl-1       |       |           |       |
|         | 1  |         | plain      | sl-1  | indis     |       |
|         | 2  |         | roul       |       |           |       |
|         | 1  |         | plain      | roul  |           |       |
|         | 1  | ext     | mch-8 int  |       |           |       |
|         | 1  |         | perforated |       |           |       |
| 30-40   | 6  |         | roul       |       |           |       |
|         | 4  |         | rfp-4      |       |           |       |
|         | 1  | ext     |            |       |           |       |
|         | 1  |         | rfp-1a     | indis |           |       |

TABLE B.7 Category 3 (cont.)

| Context      | #          | Burn    | Dec 1  | Dec 2  | Dec 3          | Dec 4 |
|--------------|------------|---------|--------|--------|----------------|-------|
|              | 2          |         | rfp-1b |        |                |       |
|              | 2          |         | rfp-1a |        |                |       |
|              | 1          |         | plain  | rfp    | sl-2           |       |
|              | 1          |         | plain  | sl-1   | rfp-1a         |       |
|              | 1          |         | sl-1   |        |                |       |
|              | 1          |         | sc-4   |        |                |       |
| 40-50        | 1          | int     | rfp-1a | indis  |                |       |
|              | 4          | ext     |        |        |                |       |
|              | 1          | int     |        |        |                |       |
|              | 9          |         | roul   |        |                |       |
|              | 11         |         | rfp-4  |        |                |       |
|              | 1          |         | plain  | rfp-1a | indis          |       |
|              | 9          |         | rfp-1a | indis  |                |       |
|              | 2          |         | rfp-1a |        |                |       |
|              | 1          |         | rfp-1b | indis  |                |       |
|              | 1          |         | plain  | sl-1   | roul           |       |
|              | 1          | int     | plain  | sl-3   | roul           |       |
|              | 2          |         | rfp-1b | sl-1   |                |       |
| 50-60        | 1          | int     |        |        |                |       |
|              | 1          | ext     | rfp-1a | sl-1   | plain          |       |
|              | 2          | int     | roul   |        |                |       |
|              | 1          |         | rfp-4  |        |                |       |
|              | 1          |         | roul   | sl-1   |                |       |
|              | 6          |         | roul   |        |                |       |
|              | 1          | ext     | plain  | sl-2   | rc-1a          |       |
|              | 4          |         | rfp-1a | indis  |                |       |
|              | 1          | ext     | plain  | sl-1   | sp4-v or sp4-l |       |
| 60-70        | 5          |         | roul   |        |                |       |
|              | 2          |         | rfp-4  |        |                |       |
|              | 2          |         | rfp-1a | indis  |                |       |
|              | 1          |         | rfp-1b | indis  |                |       |
|              | 1          |         | rc-1a  | indis  |                |       |
|              | 1          | ext     |        |        |                |       |
|              | 1          | ext     | plain  | sl-1   | rfp-1a         | indis |
|              | 1          | ext     | plain  | sl-1   | rc-1a          |       |
|              | 1          | ext/int |        |        |                |       |
|              | 1          | ext/int | rpf-1a | indis  |                |       |
|              | 1          | int     | roul   |        |                |       |
|              | 1          | int     | indis  |        |                |       |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>176</b> |         |        |        |                |       |

Analysis by David Kay

TABLE B.8 Rims

| Context      | #         | R. Type | Brn     | Dec 1 | L 1    | Ang | Diam | Mx. Thick |
|--------------|-----------|---------|---------|-------|--------|-----|------|-----------|
| 0-20         | 1         | E4      |         |       |        |     |      | 0.6       |
|              | 1         | S4      |         | sl-1  | U      | 4   |      | 0.8       |
|              | 1         | E4      |         |       |        |     |      | 0.7       |
|              | 1         | S4      |         | sl-1  | U(int) | 3   |      | 0.9       |
|              | 1         | S1      | ext/int |       |        | 4   |      | 0.7       |
|              | 1         | S1      |         |       |        | 4   |      | 0.7       |
|              | 1         | E10     |         |       |        | 4   |      | 0.8       |
|              | 1         | S1      | ext     |       |        | 2   | 17   | 0.5       |
|              | 1         | S1      | ext/int |       |        | 2   | 10   | 0.6       |
|              | 1         | E11     |         | sl-1  | U      | 2   |      | 0.5       |
|              | 1         | S4      |         |       |        | 4   |      | 1.0       |
| 20-30        | 1         | E1      | ext     |       |        |     |      | 0.5       |
|              | 1         | E4      |         |       |        | 4   |      | 0.7       |
|              | 1         | E10     |         |       |        |     |      | 0.7       |
|              | 1         | S4      |         |       |        |     |      | 0.9       |
|              | 1         | E4      |         |       |        |     |      | 0.7       |
|              | 1         | S4      |         |       |        |     |      | 0.6       |
| 30-40        | 1         | E1      | int     |       |        | 5   |      | 0.7       |
|              | 1         | C1      | ext     | sl-2  | U      | 2   | 17   | 0.7       |
|              | 1         | E22     |         |       |        | 4   |      | 0.7       |
|              | 1         | E4      |         |       |        | 4   |      | 0.7       |
| 40-50        | 1         | S1      |         | sl-2  | U      | 3   |      | 0.8       |
|              | 1         | C1      | ext/int | sl-1  | U      | 2   | 10   | 0.5       |
|              | 1         | C1      | ext/int | sl-1  | U      | 2   | 13   | 0.6       |
|              | 1         | S4      |         |       |        | 4   |      | 0.9       |
|              | 1         | S4      |         |       |        | 4   |      | 0.7       |
| 50-60        | 1         | S4      | ext     | sl-2  | U      | 4   |      | 0.7       |
|              | 1         | E32     | ext/int |       |        |     |      | 0.5       |
| 50-60        | 1         | S4      | ext     | ch    | U      | 2   | 23   | 0.7       |
|              | 1         | S4      | ext/int |       |        | 4   |      | 0.6       |
| 60-70        | 1         | E4      | ext/int |       |        | 4   |      | 0.8       |
|              | 1         | S4      | ext/int |       |        | 4   |      | 0.6       |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>32</b> |         |         |       |        |     |      |           |

Analysis by David Kay

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TABLE B.9 Desampling

| Context      | #          |
|--------------|------------|
| 0-20         | 329        |
| 20-30        | 70         |
| 30-40        | 14         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>413</b> |

Analysis in the field by Anne Haour  
and at UEA by David Kay

TABLE B.10 Category 4

| Context      | Undecorated | Illegible |
|--------------|-------------|-----------|
| 0-20         | 43          |           |
| 20-30        | 7           |           |
| 30-40        | 1           |           |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>51</b>   | <b>0</b>  |

Analysis by David Kay

TABLE B.11 Category 3

| Context      | #         | Burnish | Dec 1    | Dec 2  | Dec 3  | Dec 4 |  |
|--------------|-----------|---------|----------|--------|--------|-------|--|
| 0-20         | 1         | ext/int |          |        |        |       |  |
|              | 15        | ext     |          |        |        |       |  |
|              | 1         | ext/int | sl-3     |        |        |       |  |
|              | 1         |         | roul     |        |        |       |  |
|              | 2         | ext     | pnt-rc   |        |        |       |  |
|              | 1         | ext     | pnt-rc   | plain  |        |       |  |
|              | 1         |         | pnt-r    | plain  |        |       |  |
|              | 1         | ext/int | pnt-nl-1 | plain  |        |       |  |
|              | 1         | int     | pnt-rb   | plain  |        |       |  |
|              | 1         | ext     | pnt-rb   | plain  | pnt-rb |       |  |
|              | 4         |         | pnt-rb   | plain  |        |       |  |
|              | 4         | ext     | pnt-rb   | plain  |        |       |  |
|              | 20-30     | 1       |          | pnt-rb | plain  |       |  |
|              |           | 1       | ext      | pnt-rc |        |       |  |
| 1            |           |         | pnt-rc   |        |        |       |  |
| 1            |           |         | sl-1     |        |        |       |  |
| 4            |           | ext     |          |        |        |       |  |
| 1            |           | ext     | sl-1     |        |        |       |  |
| 1            |           | int     | roul     |        |        |       |  |
| 1            |           | ext/int | pnt-r    | plain  |        |       |  |
| 1            |           | ext/int | undec    |        |        |       |  |
| 30-40        |           | 1       |          | rfp-1a | erod   |       |  |
|              | 1         | ext/int |          |        |        |       |  |
|              | 4         | ext     |          |        |        |       |  |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>51</b> |         |          |        |        |       |  |

Analysis by David Kay

TABLE B.12 Rims

| Context      | #         | R. type | Brn     | Dec 1  | L1    | Dec 2 | L2    | Dec 3  | L3    | Ang | Diam | Mx. Thick |
|--------------|-----------|---------|---------|--------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-----|------|-----------|
| 0-20         | 1         | S1      |         |        |       |       |       |        |       | 3   |      | 0.4       |
|              | 1         | S1      | ext/int |        |       |       |       |        |       | 4   |      | 0.7       |
|              | 1         | S6      | ext/int | plain  | U     | roul  | U     | sl-1   | U-int | 3   | 13   | 0.6       |
|              | 1         | S2      |         |        |       |       |       |        |       | 2   |      | 0.5       |
|              | 1         | E1      |         |        |       |       |       |        |       | 4   |      | 0.7       |
|              | 1         | E4      | ext/int | pnt-rc | C-int | plain | C-int | plain  | C     | 5   |      | 0.6       |
|              | 1         | E4      | ext/int | pnt-rc | C-int | plain | C-int | plain  | C     | 4   |      | 0.5       |
| 20-30        | 1         | E4      | ext/int |        |       |       |       |        |       | 4   |      | 0.6       |
|              | 1         | E1      | ext     | pnt-r  | L     | plain | C     | pnt-rb | C     | 4   |      | 0.7       |
|              | 1         | S6      |         |        |       |       |       |        |       | 3   | 20   | 0.6       |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>10</b> |         |         |        |       |       |       |        |       |     |      |           |

Analysis by David Kay