



Fig. 10: Schematic representation of the distribution of burial goods encountered on a contemporary burial site on Mejatto Island, Kwajalein Atoll. (Drawing: Dirk H. R. Spennemann)

burial space, which at some of the settlement areas, especially the Djarrit-Uliga-Delap area of Majuro Atoll, is already exorbitantly high (see below).

Today a dead person is laid up in his home, either on a mat or in the coffin, and all relatives are called to the wake (*ilumej*) to pay their last respects. The practice is such that acquaintances of grieving relatives too are asked to pay their respects. If a person previously employed by the government, or a relative of a present employee dies, the entire Ministry or relevant government agency, including the expatriates employed by that Ministry, are expected to pay the last respects. This wake is conducted in shifts, each of which lasting about 20 minutes. Before leaving it is required to leave a gift, in the 1950s and 1960s usually a bar of soap, a packet of laundry powder, or a box of matches, today more commonly a one US dollar note.

The modern cemeteries show a clear separation of adult's graves and children's graves. The grave markers are commonly made of concrete with reinforcement of steel/rebar both horizontal and vertical in the marker. The aggregate content of the concrete is very high and consequently the strength of the concrete low. A common grave monument (Fig. 9) is rectangular, measuring 1.2 by 2.4 m in horizontal dimensions and 0.2 m in

thickness. The flat monument has a solid flat surface or may have a central opening filled with coral gravel. The central section of the flat surface is often lined with an elevated narrow (100 mm wide) concrete rim. Both the flat surface and the rim may have four short lengths of 1-inch plastic pipe (diameter 2.5 cm) embedded, which act as receptacles for the stems of plastic and natural flowers. The pipes protrude between 40 and 100 mm above the concrete. The headstone, cemented into the monument, is in the shape of a cross set upon a square with bevelled corners, which in turn sits on a rectangle with bevelled corners (see Fig. 9).

Exhumations on Mejatto Island, Kwajalein Atoll, as part of a radionuclide intake assessment (Franke et al. 1995) allowed insight in some of the contemporary burial customs (Spennemann 1993a). The headstone extends below the underside of the flat grave marker and seems to have been erected before the concrete slab is poured. The marker and the monument are usually painted white with an inscription in black or blue paint. Based on informants' comments, it would appear that the grave stones are copied from each other by taking measurements of the predecessors when a new grave stone became necessary.

It is commonly assumed that the grave marker is erected exactly above the grave pit. The exhu-