

# The Scandinavian Joint Expedition to Sudanese Nubia

By TORGNY SÄVE-SÖDERBERGH

*A J. C. Jacobsen Memorial Lecture*

Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab  
Historisk-filosofiske Meddelelser 49:3



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### *Synopsis*

Within the framework of the international campaign to save the monuments of Nubia the four Scandinavian countries – Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden – organized an archaeological expedition to the northernmost part of the Sudan. During four seasons, 1961–1964, the expedition surveyed and excavated all sites of importance in a concession area of some 150 km<sup>2</sup> and documented thousands of rock drawings. About 4200 tombs were excavated as well as a number of settlements, fortifications and churches. The majority of the immense quantities of finds and primary data have now been published, and, even if some important complexes are still under work, it is possible to give an outline of the main results and their implications for the earliest known colonial history under the Pharaohs and on acculturation phenomena in a long range perspective over thousands of years.

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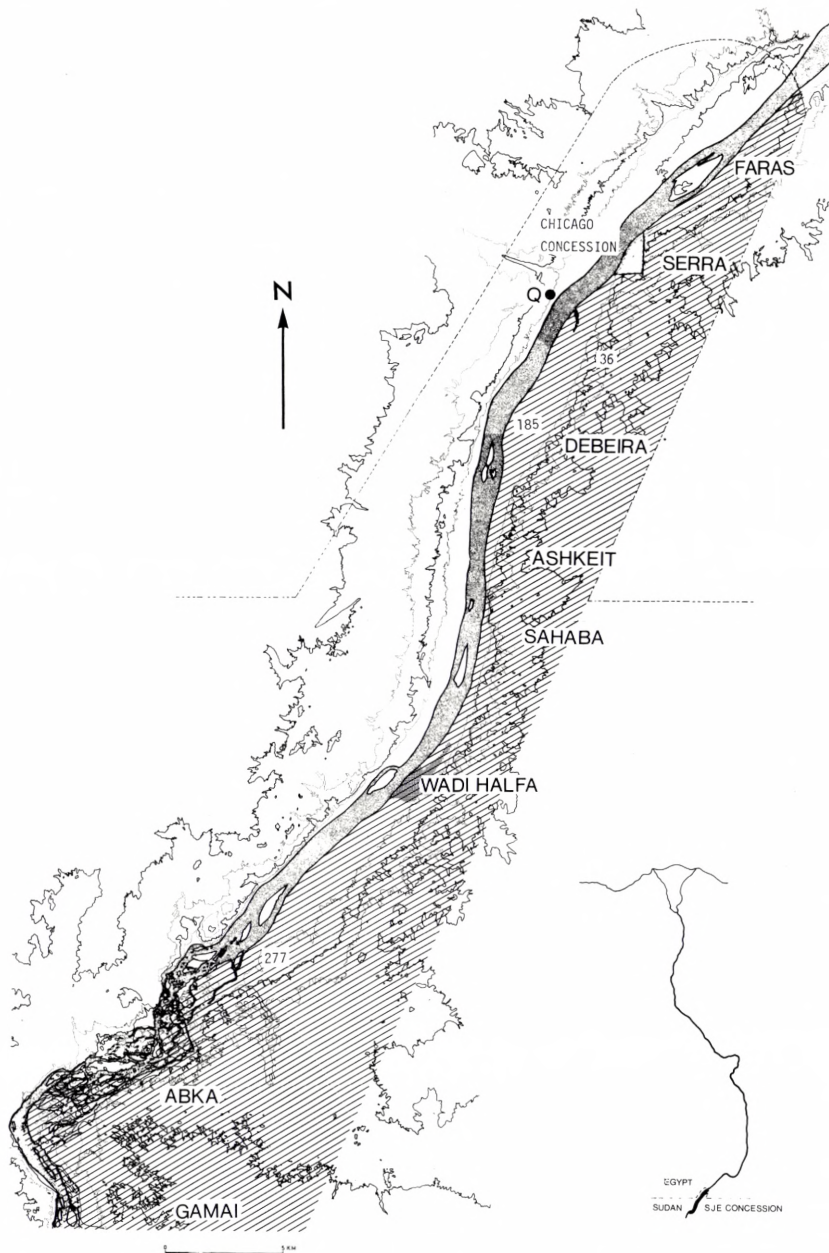


Fig. 1. The concession area of the Scandinavian Joint Expedition. Map of the districts and some important sites (277: A-Group cemetery; 185: New Kingdom cemetery; 36: tomb of Djehuti-hotep; Q: tomb of Amenemhet).

### THE INTERNATIONAL NUBIA CAMPAIGN

The Nile creates a long and narrow oasis in the endless North-African desert, and life is only possible on the areas which can be watered from the river. In order to make a more efficient use of the annual inundations a dam was constructed at the First Cataract already in 1898 and it was heightened twice, 1907–1912 and 1929–1931, thus raising the water in the reservoir to 121 meters above sea level. This earlier dam increased the area of arable land considerably and made three harvests a year possible on larger areas.

But the increasing population of Egypt made this first effort insufficient and led to a crisis in the 1950's. Egypt could no longer nourish a population which increased with 700.000 individuals each year. The population density averaged 750 inhabitants per square kilometre and in the Delta the figure reached 4000 inhabitants per square kilometre. Ambitious family planning programs were not sufficient to change the critical development. The cultivated area had to be enlarged, the irrigation must be made more efficient and an intensified industrialization was necessary to avoid a catastrophe.

It was therefore decided to construct the so-called High Dam about 7 kilometres south of the old dam and raise the highwater level in the reservoir by 63 meters (to 182 meters a.s.l.). This larger reservoir has an average width of 10 kilometres and a length of 500 kilometres and extends far into Sudanese territory. Its volume is over 150 billion cubic metres (against the 5 billion of the older reservoir), and is enough for the cultivation of more than 1.300.000 acres of land which had been unproductive, and to double the harvests from 750.000 acres of land already cultivated before the construction of the High dam. Moreover the production of hydro-electric power at the new power station of the High Dam amounts to 10 billion kilowatt hours annually.

The advantages of the High Dam are thus considerable, but there are also drawbacks. Most of them were calculated already from the beginning and were part of a profit and loss calculation. It was evident that large quantities of the water in the reservoir would be lost through evaporation. It was equally understood from the

beginning that the erosion pattern along the Nile banks and on the coasts of the delta would change and cause some problems. The gravest disadvantage has proved to be the increase of the occurrence of Bilharziosis owing to the fact that the canals are nowadays no longer dry for part of the year and that no fundamental preventive cure has been found against this endemic disease.

One great disadvantage has been more or less entirely overcome thanks to the efforts of the Egyptian and the Sudanese governments and thanks to international solidarity, by which a loss of irreplaceable cultural values was largely avoided.

The part of the Nile valley covered by the High Dam reservoir has with good reason been called one of the world's greatest open air museums.

The Nubian population – some 200.000 inhabitants in Egypt and the Sudan – had a very interesting and distinctive culture containing many old characteristics and their Nubian language is more than a thousand years old and represents a type of its own of great linguistic interest. This whole population had to be evacuated and their villages and houses, often admired for their architecture so well adapted to one of the harshest clima in the world, were lost for ever through the inundation. Different groups of anthropologists devoted years of study to this modern Nubian civilisation and followed the inhabitants to their new homes, at Kom Ombo in Egypt and a Khashm el Girba in the Sudan, to register the changes in their cultural patterns. Even if the losses can never be entirely compensated through scientific documentation it is not true, as is sometimes said, that the living were sacrificed and neglected in comparison to the old monuments.

It is true, however, that more could have been done to save this modern Nubian civilisation and that the main efforts were concentrated on the monuments and the culture of the past.

The area which was drowned through the construction of the High Dam was, from a cultural point of view, of special interest. It contained over twenty temples from the Pharaonic period, buildings of great monumentality and beauty; there was also a number of ancient Egyptian fortresses, numerous fortified towns of different periods and thousands of burial grounds from prehistoric times down to the Middle Ages.

These monuments had to be removed from the danger zone, or, if

a removal was not possible – as in the case of the fortresses built of sundried bricks or as the thousands of other archaeological remains – they had to be properly excavated and documented before they were destroyed.

This was evidently important from many points of view.

Our generation had no right to destroy a rich cultural heritage – wonderful buildings, and beautiful treasures in the form of “objets d’art”, etc. – for the benefit of a few present-day generations.

In addition there was the fact that if the archaeology and the cultural history of the Nubian region had remained more or less unknown and been left to destruction, important parts of the history of Africa would also have been lost for ever. Nubia is a link in the chain from the known to the unknown, from the well-known Mediterranean cultures in the north to the more or less unknown cultures further south in Africa. Nubia has with good reasons been called the corridor to Africa (Adams).

If the Nubian link in the chain had been broken, if this territory had not been properly investigated before it was drowned for ever, we would have deprived ourselves of the opportunity to restore the history of large parts of Africa.

Nubia is also the oldest instance of a country which had constant interrelations with a neighbour with a “higher” or more developed civilisation, and through millennia we can here study different acculturation phenomena when cultural patterns meet and adopt themselves to one another – phenomena which are still of intense interest also today in the contacts between different types of civilisation in a developing world.

It was an enormous task to rescue the cultural values at stake – to remove over twenty temples and to document and excavate thousands of archaeological sites in a territory covering over 500 kilometres of the Nile valley.

To accomplish all this in a short period of not much more than five years for the most important monuments and for the major part of the area seemed hopeless and everybody felt, to start with, more or less paralysed.

It was obvious that Egypt and the Sudan had neither the personnel nor the financial resources for this task and on 6 April 1959 Egypt appealed to Unesco for financial, technical and scientific assistance to save the monuments of Nubia. On 24 October 1959 the Sudan made

the same demand. These appeals were favourably accepted by the General Conference of 1959 and on 8 March the Director-General issued an appeal to all Member States and other institutions to show their solidarity by supporting the salvage of Nubia and its monuments.

This was the first time that international solidarity was put to the test as regarded cultural values and in this respect the Nubia project was a great adventure both for Unesco and for those implied.

To give the international campaign the necessary authority two Committees were set up.

The Committee of Patrons under the chairmanship of His Majesty King Gustaf VI Adolf of Sweden consisted mainly of royal persons and statesmen.

The other committee consisted of different famous persons and prominent experts and should assist the Director-General to organize the campaign in order to ensure contributions and the fullest participation of the Member States.

This latter committee was later replaced by the Executive Committee, to start with composed according to the same principals as the Action Committee but later of the delegates of 15 Member States elected by the General Conference. This Executive Committee was responsible to the General Conference and should report to it. Its chairman, H. E. Paolo de Berredo Carneiro, is still in charge of the Committee and much of its success is due to his diplomatic skill and energy. As a rule I myself, as the representative of Sweden, was together with the Egyptian and Sudanese delegates the only one who by profession had any connection with salvage archaeology, whereas the other members were as a rule the permanent representatives of their countries at Unesco. The function of the Committee was also to guarantee the correct use of donations and to tie a group of Member States to the Nubian project.

This is not the place to describe the progress of the Nubia project as a whole. Suffice it to mention the main results.

All the temples were salvaged, in most cases in their entirety or, exceptionally, when they were already in a bad state of preservation, the most interesting portions of them.

This salvage operation was the biggest one so far undertaken anywhere in the world.

Already the costs involved are imposing. The two famous rock temples of Ramses II at Abu Simbel were cut out of the rock, put together on a higher level and crowned with the biggest dome so far constructed carrying the weight of the reconstructed cliff above the temples. The cost of this very complicated operation was c. 42 million US dollars. The international aid, from fifty Member States, private funds and tourist tax amounted to over 21 million dollars.

In addition to Abu Simbel some twenty other temples were saved in Egypt. Some were given as “gifts in return“, as Dendur to the USA, Tafa to the Netherlands, Debod to Spain and Elleisyah to Italy.

Germany received a portico from the temple of Kalabsha in gratitude for the salvage of this large Roman temple, which the Germans moved to a site near the High-Dam. To the same site the small “kiosk” of Qertassi was transported by the Egyptians, as well as the rock temple of Beit el Wali, built by Ramses II.

Further south, at Wadi es Sebuia, the temples of Wadi es Sebuia (Ramses II), Dakka and Maharraqa (Greco-Roman) have been grouped together, and another group at Amada consists of the temples of Amada (Tuthmosis III and Amenophis II) and of Derr (Ramses II) and the small rock cut tomb of Pennut, an official of Ramses IV.

In the Sudan the temples of Aksha, Buhen, Semna East and Semna West have been moved to Khartum and re-erected in the National Museum there.

The last part of this immense salvage programme is to dismount temples on the island of Philae and to re-erect them on the higher island of Agilkia in the immediate neighbourhood of the original site. This large scale operation – at a cost of over 20 million US dollar – is now being finished and the inauguration of these temples on their new site in 1980 will mark the end of the Nubia campaign.

The other important part of the Nubia campaign was the archaeological investigation of the reservoir area. The northern part had already been surveyed when the old dam was first constructed and later heightened, but these investigations were restricted to the levels to be inundated. An immense effort was needed to survey and excavate the areas higher up and the large territory further south which had not been threatened through the construction of the old dam, but which would now be flooded for ever.



Fig. 2 a. The great temple of Abu Simbel in its original situation. (Photo Unesco-Laurenza).

This task was not organized as one enterprise under a united management, but Egyptian and Sudanese authorities in collaboration with international committees of experts were responsible for the co-ordination.

The archaeological salvage work was also a great success. In Egyptian Nubia more than forty expeditions from fifteen countries excavated all ancient monuments of any greater importance, with some exceptions due to the fact that, unfortunately, some expeditions did not fulfil their duties according to the agreements and contracts. Also the Sudanese part of the reservoir area was well investigated by expeditions from more than a dozen countries.



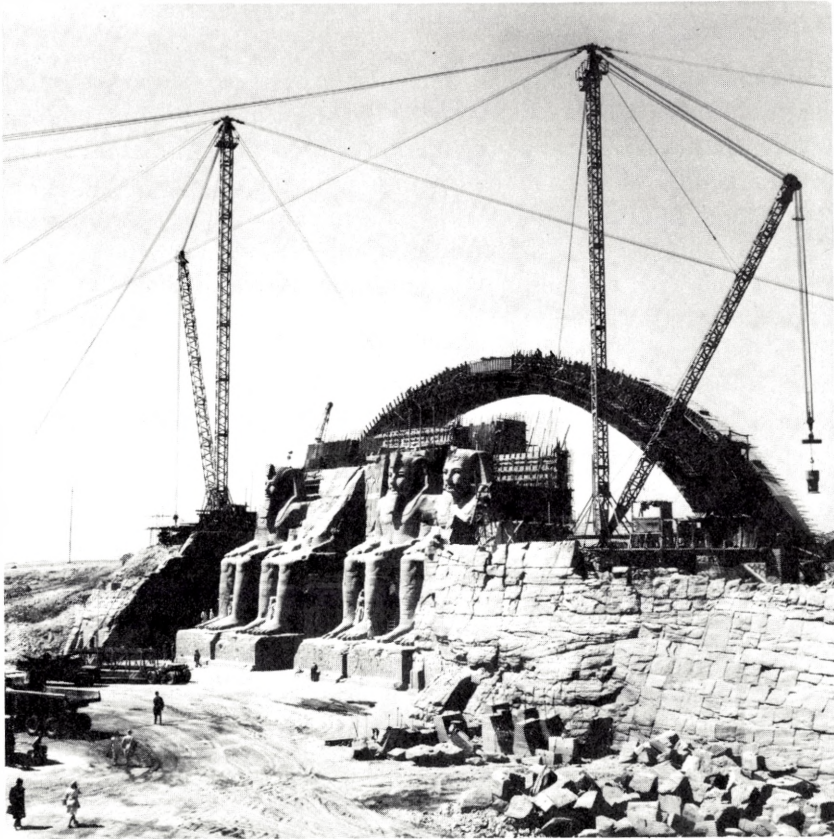


Fig. 2 b. The salvage of the big rock temple of Abu Simbel. The blocks are re-assembled after the cutting operation. (Photo Ehrenborg).

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that never before have so many archaeologists and other specialists been gathered in one area and that Nubia from an archaeological point of view, is one of the best surveyed areas in the world.

Many beautiful finds have been made, but the more important reward for the immense effort and concentration of resources is the fact that we can now reconstruct in great detail the cultural history of an area of fundamental importance not only locally but also for the history of mankind as a whole and for the proper understanding of the mechanisms of human behaviour when different types of civilisations meet.

## THE ORGANIZATION OF THE SCANDINAVIAN JOINT EXPEDITION

The idea of a co-operation in the Nubia project of Unesco was only a natural consequence of the fact that the Scandinavian countries have a long tradition of close co-ordination of their policy in Unesco. The desirability of such a co-operation in the Nubia project was stressed already in January 1960 at a meeting of the Scandinavian Commissions for Unesco and after my preliminary study of the threatened area a Scandinavian group of experts was convened in Stockholm in June 1960.

In Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden special committees for the Nubia project had in the meantime been organized and representatives of these committees agreed at the Stockholm meeting to recommend a technical and financial aid to Egypt, where, however, each country should act separately. For the Sudan a joint archaeological expedition was proposed, which would undertake a survey of a larger territory rather than select a major site for total excavation. The Sudanese authorities had already offered an area on the east bank of the Nile from the Egyptian border southwards to the Second Cataract.

The primary task should be a general survey with the aim to make an inventory of the ancient monuments and sites and, in so far as time and financial resources would permit it, some of the sites should be excavated. Other sites should be turned over to other expeditions.

After a renewed inspection of the area selected and after negotiations with the Sudanese authorities, these proposals were accepted first by the National Commissions for Unesco in the four countries and then by the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs.

The choice of task was dictated by many factors. We did not have so many experts who were trained to excavate larger architectural remains or complicated strata of the type to be expected on a major site like a fortress or a town. But the Scandinavian archeologists were used to surveys of large areas. This had the advantage that average Nordic archaeologists could be used for the field work without much extra training before they were put to work.

By combining forces the joint expedition of the Scandinavian countries became one of the largest, if not the largest, expedition in Nubia and had therefore both the personal and financial resources to survey a large territory, and, as it proved later, also to excavate practically all sites in the concession area.

Once the nature of the task had been settled, the choice of country and territory was rather selfevident. Egyptian Nubia had been largely explored and surveyed on the occasion of the building and heightening of the old Aswan dam, whereas Sudanese Nubia was more or less *terra incognita* from an archaeological point of view.

The northernmost part of the Sudan was in immediate danger but the southern districts had a longer respite. The west bank was already being surveyed by a Sudanese expedition of experts put at the disposal of the Sudan through Unesco. The east bank was very fertile and it could therefore be expected that it had been densely populated already in ancient times and that rich finds would illustrate the cultural development of the area.

Of course, we could have expected to find more beautiful objects suitable for exhibitions in museum had we chosen a larger site such as an Egyptian fortress or an administrative center. But it was agreed that the main purpose of the expedition should not be to bring home beautiful exhibits for our collections but rather to study the cultural development and the interrelations of cultures in this country which is the link between the Mediterranean and Africa further south.

The program of the expedition was gradually changed. In the first agreement with the Antiquities Service of the Sudan only a survey was envisaged and the expedition did not undertake to excavate any of the sites found. Only the date and the nature of the sites should be ascertained and the other sites should be turned over to other expeditions.

This program could not be followed, as wind erosion and other circumstances made it impossible to find out the nature, extension and date of a site without extensive excavation.

The scope of the expedition thus gradually changed to a total investigation or excavation of all sites in the concession area – an immense task in view of the size of the area. Some 60 kilometres had to be covered during four winter campaigns (1961–1964), including also the documentation of thousands of rock drawings and a detailed analysis of the architectural remains of churches and fortifications.

Despite the success of the international campaign to find expeditions willing to work in Nubia there was always a certain shortage of archaeological resources which forced every expedition to undertake as large a program as possible. This also induced us to change the program.

However, the number of sites proved to be overwhelming and we soon realized that this more ambitious program could not be fulfilled in time. So we ceded some major sites to other expeditions already at a rather early date.

The Pharaonic and Christian fortress of Serra East was turned over to the Chicago Oriental Institute which had already earlier asked for this concession area.

In the southern part of our concession two sites – the Christian town of Abka and the church of Qasr Ico – were taken over by the Spanish expedition.

Some pottery kilns were yielded to Professor William Y. Adams who had already then specialized in the study of the Late Nubian pottery, of which he is now the greatest expert.

Finally, we made an agreement with the Combined Prehistoric Expedition to Egyptian and Sudanese Nubia first to co-operate in the excavations of two Stone Age sites – one of them being the earliest cemetery so far ever found in the Nile valley – and then to entitle them to investigate or excavate any Palaeolithic or Mesolithic site in our concession, if we were only notified in advance, to avoid double work. This collaboration proved very fruitful to both expeditions and made it possible for us to fulfil our program.

The concession area was otherwise totally investigated with only very few exceptions in the villages and cultivated fields where we were not allowed to excavate according to the rules of the concession agreement.

In addition to this large territory on the east bank which, with these exceptions, was totally investigated from Faras at the Egyptian border and up to Gamai at the Second Cataract we also excavated the monumental tomb of the Nubian prince Amenemhet on the western shore opposite the tomb of his elder brother in the Debeira district on the east bank (site Q).

#### AIMS AND METHODS. ORGANIZATION

In view of the fact that this was a typical case of salvage archaeology in an area which would later be flooded and where no supplementary investigations could be done later, not even in a neighbouring, similar district, our scientific aims were to secure all possible evidence and make as complete an investigation and documentation as possible. Consequently we did not try to solve problems deduced

from some preconceived ideas, nor did we concentrate on any special period or type of remains. We thought it better not to let our program be influenced or directed by our own personal interests or by problems which were at that time regarded as being of primary importance, but we tried to collect as many data as possible so that future generations would also have a chance to find answers to other questions which will seem to them more vital.

Also in our publications we have tried to adopt the same policy – to present first of all the primary facts and documentation rather than lengthy interpretations or comparisons with other evidence outside our concession area, something which would still more delay the final publication. The immense wealth of finds and facts has anyhow made the publishing a difficult task which has lasted longer than we envisaged when we started the project.

This general policy did not, of course, prevent us from drawing obvious conclusions from our evidence nor was comparative research by any means excluded but rather desirable. Such investigations should not, however, delay the publication of the primary evidence.

From our results the conclusion has sometime been drawn that we were mainly interested in cemeteries and that we neglected e.g. settlements – as seems to have been the case with the previous Archaeological Survey of Nubia – because cemeteries as a rule yield a richer harvest of spectacular finds. This was, however, not the case. First of all, we did not have any such preconceived ideas as to what should or should not be excavated, but we tried to cover the whole ground in every respect. When we found that the settlements were underrepresented in our material and among our sites we did everything possible to augment the number of settlement sites in our records and investigated in detail also very poor and destroyed settlements which most expeditions would not have bothered themselves with.

The fact that so few settlements could be investigated depended on local conditions. In all probability the ancient settlements were in the same areas as the modern villages, i.e. on the lowest terraces above the cultivated areas near the river. The cemeteries were as a rule found on higher levels towards the *gebel*. We were not supposed to excavate in the cultivated or inhabited areas, but where we were permitted to do so it was there that we found traces of settlements.

These levels had been flooded in 1946 and this abnormal inundation had probably also largely destroyed the earlier settlements just as it did destroy the modern villages.

Unlike the earlier survey expeditions we did not proceed systematically from north to south, but instead we made a rapid survey by car and on foot, using as a topographical basis the excellent maps and aerial photographs put at our disposal by the Sudanese authorities, and tried to get a general idea of the whole concession area as rapidly as possible. We had to find out at an early date if it would be feasible in the time and with the resources at our disposal to survey an area 60 kilometres long.

At different points of special interest an archaeologist with a team of workers was put in charge of a closer examination – whether a trial digging or a total excavation. At the same time he should survey the surroundings in detail in order to locate other sites which had been overlooked during the rapid overall survey.

In this way the work was spread over large areas, but as we had four cars the archaeologists could as a rule be brought back every day to our headquarters in Debeira. In this way the expedition could be kept together as one team and the finds could be better taken care of than if we had been steadily on the move from north to south. By spreading the work over several districts it was also easier to recruit the necessary workers in the villages.

The expedition was a large scale operation and the strategy as well as the need to cover large areas necessitated a massive concentration of experts and workers. Thus we had as a rule between 100 and 200 local worker, and a dozen archaeologists, technicians, photographers, conservationists, architects and osteologists and tried to have so many trained archaeologists that several larger sites could be taken care of at the same time. Some of the other specialists joined the expedition only for shorter periods of concentrated work.

This is not the place to enumerate all the participants or to thank them for their work, but it may be proper to mention those who acted as field directors besides myself: C. F. Meinander, who was appointed field director for the first season at a meeting previous to the field work. B. Schönback, who usually acted as my stand-in, and J. Laessøe who was in charge for a short period.

I should like to express our thanks to Her Majesty Queen

Margrethe of Denmark who as Princess joined the expedition during the third campaign and took an active and efficient part in the field work as an ordinary archaeologist of the team, which was of great value to the Expedition.

It is hardly necessary to describe our methods of survey or excavation in detail – it has already been done elsewhere. The survey was done in the way that all the ground was walked over, and trial trenches were opened on all suspect spots. Then the ground was again walked over with lines of men probing the ground systematically with iron rods and making extensive trial excavations. In this way numerous sites could be located which were entirely invisible because they had been levelled by wind erosion and had been covered with silt or sand. To mention just one instance – our largest New Kingdom cemetery of approximately 700 tombs (No. 185) had left practically no traces on the surface and was found only thanks to this probing technique and trial excavation. The local conditions had often lead to a total destruction of all superstructures and the site had been levelled down to a smooth surface quite similar to the surrounding ground.

The excavation techniques were those ordinarily used in Scandinavia, including the use of compressed air to clean stone structures and of a “photographic turret”, a 12 meter high tripod, to produce “aerial photographs”.

Another innovation which proved sensationally useful was the introduction of spades and wheelbarrows, technical devices for the first time used in archaeological excavations in these parts of the world!

### THE CONCESSION AREA

The concession area was on the east shore of the Nile, from the Egyptian border in the north to Gamai on the Second Cataract in the south, a distance of approximately 60 kilometres.

In the center of the concession area was the little town of Wadi Halfa, the basis for the whole campaign in Sudanese Nubia. Here were the authorities responsible for the administration of the campaign – the Antiquities Service, the Governorate, the Customs Office etc. – and Wadi Halfa was the only place with banking

facilities, a hospital, a market and connections with the outer world – the railway southwards to Khartoum and the boats to Egypt.

The market was, however, a rather uncertain supply basis and in practice all the technical outfit and a lot more had to be imported from abroad.

North of Wadi Halfa were the districts (from north to south) of Faras, Serra, Debeira, Ashkeit and Sahaba, of which Debeira was the largest and richest. This northern part was structured as a so-called *mesa* landscape and the desert plateau sloped in terraces down to the zone of agriculture next to the river. Between the river and the mountains there were three different deposits: the cultivated modern alluvium on the 120-m level, a series of “lower silt” deposits on the 130-m level and the higher silts above 140-m a.s.l. The cemeteries were as a rule found on the silt deposits. In the district of Debeira the alluvial plain widened and in the center of the plain was an “island“ of sand and gravel. It was on this “island” that we found the large New Kingdom cemetery with some 700 tombs (No. 185).

Wadi Halfa itself was surrounded by large plains, formed by high silts covered with debris and sand. On one of these silt banks to the south of the town was the most important cemetery from the earliest historic times (A-Group) (No. 277).

The southernmost part of the concession area consisted of the districts of Abka and Gamai. This part was characterized by the treshold of igneous rocks (granite, etc.) which forms the landscape of the Second Cataract, very much like a “moon landscape” with steep rocks and hills of silt forming a labyrinth of narrow valleys leading down to the rapids of the river. In this labyrinth we found a number of prehistoric settlements and later fortifications, and, moreover, one of the largest concentrations of rock drawings in East Africa.

## THE QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Before I turn to a description of the main results regarding the different periods and types of problems, I should like to mention a few data to give an impression of the size of the enterprise and of the difficulties to publish the immense wealth of primary facts which resulted from four intense seasons of work in a large territory which was part of the “Open Air Museum” of Nubia.

The length of the concession area was about 60 kilometres and the



average width of the zone which should be flooded was a few kilometres. Thus approximately 150 km<sup>2</sup> were totally investigated.

The number of registered sites was about 490 and they represent the whole development from the earliest Stone Age to the Middle Ages, and practically all the sites were unknown before and were discovered by the expedition.

Some 4200 tombs were excavated, five churches and some fortified areas. Moreover, approximately 2600 rock drawings with c. 7000 figures were photographed, mapped in detail and documented.

The wealth of finds can be illustrated by the fact that there were some 3000 more or less complete vessels from New Kingdom contexts (middle of the 2nd mill. B. C.), 6000 fragments of textile were collected, conserved and published, and the osteological material represented 1500 individuals and its publication is based on some 35000 measurements.

## THE PUBLICATIONS

According to the stipulations of the concession agreement we should regularly present written reports on the progress of work during the field work and after each season report to the Commissioner for Archaeology the main results of the campaign. These yearly reports were published in the official journal »Kush«.

The final publications should appear within a reasonable time and we have tried to meet this obligation too.

It was, however, difficult to do so because of the immense wealth of primary data and finds and the series "Publications of the Scandinavian Joint Expedition to Sudanese Nubia" has, unfortunately, not been finished yet. One of the main reasons for the delays – except the size of the material – has been the difficulty to engage those who were active in the field work also in the desk work. Most of them had other careers to think of and had to abandon the work for the Expedition for other engagements.

Despite these difficulties and thanks to the support of the Scandinavian research councils – especially in Sweden – we have managed to be among those who have published most of their results. Only the Spanish expedition has fulfilled all its obligations and our expedition comes as number two.

So far seven volumes have appeared in nine books, c. 1040 pages in a large format and with 575 plates.

The groups of finds which have so far been published are:

Vol. 1:1 and 1:2 The Rock Drawings (Hellström and Langballe)

Vol. 2 Preceramic Sites (Marks)

Vol. 3:1 and 3:2 Neolithic and A-Group Sites (Nordström)

Vol. 5:1 New Kingdom Sites. The Pottery (Holthoer)

Vol. 7 Late Nubian Sites (Gardberg)

Vol. 8 Late Nubian Textiles (Ingrid Bergman)

Vol. 9 Human Remains (Vagn Nielsen)

Three of these volumes have been used as theses for the Doctor's degree, namely those of Nordström (Ph.D.), Holthoer (Ph.D.), and Vagn Nielsen (M.D.).

The remaining volumes will deal with finds from the second millennium B.C. (C.-Group and New Kingdom: Vols. 4 and 5) and with the Late Nubian cemeteries (Vol. 6). Much work has already been done on these volumes and what remains is mainly of a redactional character.

## THE MAIN RESULTS

It is of course impossible to summarize in a short article the results of such a large enterprise as the Scandinavian Joint Expedition to Sudanese Nubia, where already part of the results has been published in no less than over a thousand pages. What I can do is to report on results that seem to me to be of special interest either from a methodological point of view or because they open new vistas in the cultural history of Africa.

I shall follow the disposition which we have agreed on for the final publications, i.e. the finds and results grouped mainly according to their date and cultural context.

Volume 1, dealing with the rock drawings is an exception in so far as we have here chosen to group together documents from different periods but being fundamentally and technically of the same nature.

### *The rock drawings*

As already mentioned the southern part of our concession area contained one of the largest concentrations of rock drawings in East

Africa – in all not less than 7000 figures were documented. All the drawings were mapped in detail with measurements of the height above sea level, data which are of importance for the dating. The surrounding landscape was also properly mapped in detail and documented with photographic panoramas. Finally, the patina of the different drawings was registered according to a subjective scale, and overcuttings indicating internal relative dates were carefully noted.

Much of the material was rather stereotype and many figures could be adequately described through reference to similar ones, reproduced with a photograph or a drawing. In all a selection of some 2000 figures were thus reproduced arranged both topographically and according to subject. Freehand drawings were as a rule avoided and were replaced by photographs which through a special procedure were transformed into “drawings” where each trace of hammering etc. was accurately rendered. The procedure consisted in copying the negatives on a harder negative which was then copied on a paper with very hard contrasts. Traces which did not belong to the drawing proper, such as cracks in the rock, were then removed through a final retouch of the photograph. This method proved very efficient especially for the drawings of the southern district where the figures were hammered on a so-called “cataract skin” of a very dark hue and thus stood out more or less white, if they did not belong to the oldest ones which were covered by a later “cataract skin”.

An analysis of the chronology, which should be based also on comparative studies of other African rock drawings, especially in the Sudan further south and in Tsad, has been postponed, but a local relative chronology could be worked out for the rockdrawings in the Cataract region with the aid of overcuttings and the patina.

Thus we could distinguish some main groups which throw light on different cultural periods.

(1) The oldest drawings have a very dark patina and occur only on the 150-m level a.s.l. They are simple geometric figures. It is rather probable that they are of late Pleistocene date. If so, we know that this level was above the water only approximately 8000–7500 B.C. or later than 6500 B.C. The latter date is perhaps more plausible in view of the connections with the second group.

(2) This group has also a very dark patina but occurs on lower levels. C14 analysis indicates a date around 4600 B.C. which would



Fig. 3 a. Prehistoric rock drawing with giraffe and dance (?).

imply that these drawings would be contemporary with the subpluvial period c. 5000–3000 B.C., when the present day desert was a steppe or a savannah. The figures are schematically drawn giraffes, crocodiles, snakes, human figures and hands.

(3) To the same subpluvial period in all probability belongs a less patinated group with well drawn animals belonging to the fauna of the African savannah – elephants, giraffes, rhinos, antelopes, cheetas, lions, hyenas and ostriches.

(4) The remaining drawings are probably all of a later date and are dominated by pictures of cattle (41% in the southern district) and of human figures. They are presumably connected with the cattle-breeding groups of the 3rd and 2nd millennia (A-Group and C-Group, see below).

Some drawings of horses, camels and ships can, on stylistical grounds, be dated to Roman times or later. They are very similar to graffiti e.g. in the kiosk of Trajanus on the island of Philae and on late buildings on the island of Elephantine.

One negative observation is important – the extraordinary rareness of texts. There are only some isolated groups of hieroglyphs, names without any context, and also some names written with Greek



Fig. 3 b. Herdsman with cattle and dogs. (3rd or 2nd millennium B. C.).

letters. This is in striking contrast with what is the case in the neighbourhood of the administrative centers in Nubia, where large groups of Pharaonic and Late Nubian rock inscriptions occur abundantly. Our concession area is of a different character and represents the countryside, less influenced by foreign cultures than the administrative centres, and inhabited by a population which was more or less illiterate. This is in harmony with what can be observed e.g. in the New Kingdom cemeteries where again even the most necessary texts, from a religious point of view, are lacking.

If this interpretation is correct it gives a special importance to our concession area. It is here that we can study the development of the indigenous culture which was reluctant to adopt the more developed Pharaonic or, at a later date, the Graeco-Roman civilization. It is thus an illustration of the Nubian substratum to the more sophisticated culture of the population centres and towns.

#### *Preceramic Sites*

As already mentioned we had an agreement of collaboration with the Combined Prehistoric Expedition which had much better resources to deal with prehistoric sites and problems than we had. Most of the

sites we had located during our survey and where we had only done some preliminary work were turned over to the Combined Prehistoric Expedition as well as such sites where we had started to work but where the more penetrating examination had been done by them. These sites have been published in their large publication "The Prehistory of Nubia" (1968). This was e.g. the case with the oldest cemetery in the Nile Valley, dating to about 10.000 B.C., where the oldest remains of human skeletons from this part of Africa were found. The site had been located by our survey, the first human bones were a chance find by the Combined Prehistoric Expedition and the first excavation was a joint enterprise, which was later on completed by the other expedition.

Our other preceramic sites were analysed and published in Vol. 2 of our series by Anthony Marks, member of the Combined Prehistoric Expedition, and therefore in a position to correlate our finds with the wider framework, chronologically and geographically, of the other expedition. Some of these more or less local "cultures" are of special interest, one of them (No. 412) because it gives us a better knowledge about the so-called "Gamaian" culture, dated to approximately 16.000–15.000 B.C., and two others (Nos. 265 and 394) from a later stage of Neolithic, c. 6000–4000 B.C., represent what seems to be so far unknown variants, distinguished from the other Sudanese "cultures" and possibly of a western or northern origin.

### *The Late Neolithic*

Among the most startling finds of the expedition was a type of ceramic decorated with an impressed or incised decoration. There are two types of decoration "wavy line" and "dotted line", probably representing two different chronological stages. These types of ceramic were earlier known only in the neighbourhood of Khartum and on a site just north of Khartum, called Shaheinab. To find these two "cultures" so far to the north as in the region of the Second Cataract was quite as sensational as if one would find e.g. red-figured Attic vases in a contemporary context in Scandinavia – the distance from Khartum to our concession is approximately the same as from Denmark to Etruria.

The further analysis of these finds and other complexes of a similar structure – where, the imported pottery can be distinguished from the locally made wares – made it possible for Hans-Åke

Nordström to give an elaborate picture of the interrelations between different contemporary “cultures” of Late Neolithic date in Volume 3 of our series (Neolithic and A-Group Sites).

He distinguishes three big “technocomplexes” in north-eastern Africa, i.e. “cultures” of groups of “cultures” with the same or very similar technology, but therefore by no means necessarily representing political or ethnical units. The northernmost one we find in Egypt – e.g. as they are represented in Fayum and Merimde and in the partly later “cultures” of Tasa, Badari, etc. Further south there is the “A-Group” of Lower Nubia, which is presumably of a later date, and to the south and west of this group we find what we call the “Khartum variant”. This southern complex is now better known thanks to later investigations especially in the neighbourhood of Shendi, north of Khartum, where it seems to be represented also in a later stage, contemporary with the Lower-Nubian A-Group, to judge from imported pieces.

Together with these main types or technocomplexes of an international character, if we may say so, we found a more local “culture”, called “Abkan” which had been located in our concession area already before by Myers and which is at least partly younger than the “Khartum variant”.

The finds mainly consist of pottery sherds and stone implements and our understanding of them and what kind of subsistence pattern they represent is mainly due to the skilful technical analysis by Nordström, who was one of the first to apply modern models and techniques of analysis to these types of finds. He has thus been able to give a socio-economic picture of these different “cultures” and of their adaptation to the environment in the Nile valley and in the surrounding deserts, which at this time during the sub-pluvial period between 5000–3000 B.C. had the character of a steppe and savannah.

### *The “A-Group”*

What the archaeologists since long ago have called the “A-Group” is a complex of finds of a characteristic composition which we find mainly between the First and the Second Cataracts (from Kubanieh in the north to Melik en-Nasir or further south in the south). This “culture” or “group” – Adams uses the term “horizon” in his book “Nubia, corridor to Africa” – has been rather well known thanks to

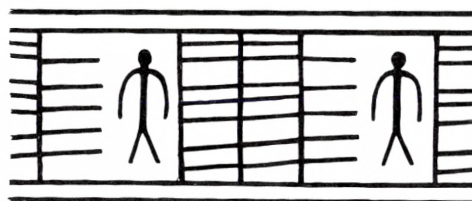
Fig. 4. Impressions of cylinder seals. A-Group.



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0 4 CM

 A horizontal scale bar with a vertical tick at the left end labeled '0' and a vertical tick at the right end labeled '4 CM'.

earlier archaeological work in Nubia since the construction of the first dam at Aswan, but nevertheless Nordström (in Vol. 3) through his analysis of the finds and Vagn Nielsen (in Vol. 9) through his work on the human remains have been able to produce new results, quite apart from the fact that several objects are beautiful museum exhibits and partly of types not known before.

The human remains show, according to Vagn Nielsen, that our material represents a rather homogeneous population and his analysis is of great importance for the problem whether the later inhabitants of Nubia were of a different race or not. For the palaeopathology our finds also yield new results as well as for different details regarding the living pattern – food, dress, transport, tools, weapons, pottery etc. The relations to contemporary Egypt are illustrated by many imported objects – pottery, stone vases, metal tools, seals, etc. Of the seals and seal impressions there is one of special interest as it is of a type otherwise known from the Djemdet





Fig. 5. Clay figurines from an A-Group tomb (277/16 B).

Nasr culture in Mesopotamia, and two seal impressions are more or less unique and without any direct counterparts in the Egyptian material.

The indigenous art is illustrated e.g. by two clay figures of a high quality, representing an opulent woman in her full age and a young girl. Such figurines of females have very often been interpreted as the sexual partners of a male buried in the tomb or as representations of a fertility goddess, but in this case the figurines were found in a grave where an adult woman and a young girl had been buried. They would thus rather be pictures of the deceased, placed in the tomb to secure their vitality.

Nordström has also analysed their subsistence pattern. There is little doubt that they lived on hunting and fishing in combination with agriculture and cattle breeding. Cattle, wild or domesticated, was sometimes depicted on the pottery, but no bones of cattles had been found in the tombs or on the settlements. So we had difficulties

to prove conclusively that the A-Group people really did have domesticated cattle. But when making the technical analysis of the pottery Nordström found that the temper contained chaff in a form which can only be obtained from cow dung, when the chaff has been digested by the cow. This find undoubtedly more or less proves the presence of domesticated cattle, since it would be very implausible that sufficient dung could be collected from wild and free roaming cattle.

Nordström has also drawn several conclusions regarding the social, political and religious structure of this “group”, which gives us a much more detailed picture, even if some assumptions are necessarily rather hypothetical.

One historically important result regards the chronology and especially the dating of the disappearance of the A-Group from Lower Nubia. The chronology has been worked out on the basis both of C14 analysis and of the more or less firm dates of the imported goods. Three different phases can be distinguished and the most important result is that no A-Group finds can with any probability be dated much later than the end of the first Egyptian dynasty. As the beginning of the next “group”, the “C-Group”, cannot be dated earlier than the Sixth Dynasty, we are left with a hiatus of about half a millennium. This hiatus can no longer be filled by the so-called “B-Group”, as we all assumed earlier, because H. S. Smith has proved the non-existence of this “group” as an independent entity, chronologically separated from the A-Group. It is rather to be regarded as a social contemporary group. Such empty periods are, however, rather a typical trait in the cultural history of Nubia – we find it again e.g. in the first millennium B.C.

What really happened and what caused the disappearance of the A-Group is difficult to say with certainty. It was hardly due to a change of climate, because the first change towards a drier climate occurred earlier, and the final change to the present day conditions occurred later.

According to Nordström it was rather that Lower Nubia was lagging behind in the cultural development in comparison to the rapid rise of the Egyptian civilisation, as a consequence of the formation of the first big state in the history of mankind. The trade becomes less and less profitable to Egypt, and Nubia is put outside the Egyptian “cash-crop” circle. Egypt also changes its attitude and

becomes more selfsufficient and aggressive, starting to raid Nubian territory – such raids are testified in the Egyptian historical records.

It seems plausible to assume that the A-Group leaves Lower Nubia and becomes a group of pastoralists and nomads on the steppes and perhaps emigrates further south.

### *The “C-Group” and the New Kingdom*

Towards the end of the Egyptian Old Kingdom we have several texts telling us about the trade between Egypt and Nubia, a trade which seems at first to have been peaceful but which later leads to difficulties and then to conflicts and devastating Egyptian raids.

Through the archaeological investigations in Nubia we know that the Nubian counterparts are represented by a complex of characteristic finds which we usually call the “C-Group”.

This “group” has many affinities with the A-group but is clearly distinct from it, especially with regard to its pottery.

In our anthropological material, according to Vagn Nielsen, only four discrete traits show a statistically significant difference between the two groups, and the anthropometrical analysis testifies to a great similarity. Vagn Nielsen is of the opinion that we are not justified to assume that we have to do with a new race.

Adams, who also assumes a close affinity between the two groups, has noted the fact that the two groups do not seldom use the same burial places and Nordström has shown the great basic technological similarity in the ceramic art, even if the differences in forms and decoration are obvious.

Our analysis is not yet finished and we have not come to any definite conclusions how to explain these and other facts. My own, still unproved theory is that the A-Group emigrated southwards – perhaps also westwards – and developed into what we call early C-Group. They then returned to Lower Nubia at a period when the climate deteriorated and the steppe turned into desert. The harder climate forced them down into the Nile Valley.

I hope that future analysis of our evidence and the material of other expeditions, as well as investigations outside Lower Nubia will prove or disprove this theory.

As our analysis is still not finished I shall restrict myself to a few points and refrain from a more detailed description of the C-Group and all the fascinating problems connected with it.

Historically as well as archaeologically we can distinguish several phases in the development of this Nubian culture.

Its beginning is dated by means of so-called "button seals" imported from Egypt. Some of them are represented in our material. The Egyptian texts give us the impression of a growing resistance against the Egyptian exploitation of the area, a fact which should perhaps be explained by the influx of more and more numerous population groups.

Gradually the conflicts between Egyptian and Nubians lead to an Egyptian military occupation of Lower Nubia. The Egyptians build a series of fortresses in the region of the Second Cataract to control the southern frontier of the Nubian province against the population of Dongola, which is now characterized by an archaeological complex called the "Kerma culture".

Further north, in Lower Nubia, the Nubian C-Group is controlled by other fortresses placed in their population centers. Two fortresses also guard the access to the rich gold mines in Wadi Allaqi.

One such fortress was placed at Serra E. in our concession area and was excavated by an expedition from Chicago Oriental Institute. It is surrounded by a natural glacis, a desert plateau covered with stone blocks, and to the north and south numerous C-Group cemeteries show that there had been a dense population contemporary with the fortress.

The archaeological evidence seems to show that the reaction against the military occupation was the usual one – an opposition against the occupants and a refusal to accept the superior civilisation of the occupants. The C-Group shows a separate development and only a few foreign elements reluctantly incorporated.

Our most important C-Group cemeteries belong to the next stage – the Second Intermediate Period and the New Kingdom (c. 1600–1400 B.C.).

The outlines of the historical background were known already before our work started. When Egypt was dominated by the Asiatic rulers, the so-called "Hyksos", Nubia became independent and was governed by the "Ruler of Kush", as he is called in the contemporary texts, presumably the ruler of Dongola with his residence in Kerma. Lower Nubia belonged to his kingdom and there an influx from Kerma can be noticed in the form of cemeteries or isolated tombs of the types characteristic for the Kerma culture.



Fig. 6. Egyptian New Kingdom Scarabs from a C-Group tomb (35/78).

The C-Group is still the dominant element in the archaeological picture of Lower Nubia, but two other groups are also represented – the Kerma culture and the so-called “Pan Graves”. The latter are also found in the southern part of Egypt, where they seem to be the tombs of mercenaries, who in the historical texts are called Medja – presumably to be combined with the later Bedja, a well known desert tribe.

These different groups represent the native elements, but we also find a number of tombs of Egyptian types, of which some belonged to Egyptian immigrants, who are mentioned in contemporary texts, others to Nubians who accepted the Pharaonic civilisation, when the Egyptians were no longer enemies and military occupants.

All these groups are well represented in our material, which adds many new traits to the picture and permit us to reconstruct in some detail the process of acculturation which leads to an entirely Egyptian civilisation in Lower Nubia, to judge from the archaeological finds.

When Egypt had liberated itself from the foreign rulers, Nubia was conquered again about 1500 B.C. and became an Egyptian colony, more or less entirely dominated not only politically but also culturally by Pharaonic Egypt.

Earlier it was believed – and that is the version of the handbooks – that the three native groups (C-Group, Kerma and Pan Graves) disappear soon after and as a result of the Egyptian reconquest of



Fig. 7. Fayence bowl with dancing Bes-figure. From a C-Group tomb with Pan Grave affinity (176/39). New Kingdom.

Lower Nubia at the beginning of the New Kingdom. We found, however, ample evidence that this was not the case but that the native traditions lived on side by side with the Egyptian culture at least for a century or two. We do not know exactly, whether this was a local phenomenon in our concession area, which was rather isolated from the Egyptian administration (see above), or whether also other territories show the same development outside the Egyptian administrative centers, where the Pharaonic culture dominates. In many cases the comparative material has not been properly published yet, but H. S. Smith mentions in his report on his survey of Lower Nubia quite a number of poor cemeteries which seem to date to the New Kingdom.

It should also be noted that the development e.g. of the Nubian tomb constructions is quite different in our concession area than e.g. on a classical site like Aniba, the administrative center of Lower



Fig. 8. Egyptian New Kingdom twin vessel (185/402) and fayence imitation of a Mucenaeen stirrup vase from a late C-Group tomb (218/12).

Nubia. Thus e.g. in the C-Group the tomb superstructures do not have any of the chapels, which are typical for the richer tombs at Aniba and were obviously influenced by Egyptian burial customs. We find a rich variety of different tomb types – Kerma shaft with four holes in the bottom of the shaft where a bed was placed on which the deceased rested, in the C-Group beside the ordinary types also some new elaborate variants and the Pan Graves, finally, are represented by rough superstructures of “ironstone”.

From the same period, the end of the Second Intermediate Period and the 18th Dynasty, we find, alongside with these different native types, a number of entirely Egyptianized or, perhaps, Egyptian tombs, both elaborate rock cut tombs and simple shafts, sometimes with adobe vaults, cut in the silt. Moreover, there were the tombs of two Nubian Princes – Djehutihotep and his younger brother Amenemhet.

Thus we have the whole register, from the most primitive shaft graves with rough stonings as superstructures to the entirely Egyptian, sophisticated tomb of Amenemhet with a statue chapel and subterranean chambers, the whole once crowned with a pyramid.

This wide range of types illustrates that the population of Lower Nubia – or at least of our concession area – consisted of many



Fig. 9. Miniature sculpture of a calf from a New Kingdom tomb (185/511).

different social and probably also ethnical groups. Some of them stubbornly preserved their native burial customs, others accepted the culture of their Egyptian lords entirely.

We can see in detail how these different groups react and how the burial customs are less apt to change than the nature of the objects placed in the graves.

Some C-Group cemeteries, dated to the New Kingdom by scarabs, yield very good Egyptian Pottery and only a lesser quantity of Nubian ceramic of an inferior quality, and we have even one case where practically all the pottery found is of Egyptian character, imported or locally made. Among the finds was an imitation of Mycenaean stirrup vase of fayence and its prototype is Myc. III c, i.e. later than 1230 B.C. This extraordinary find would indicate that the burial customs of the C-Group lived on also in Ramesside times, some two or three hundred years later than assumed.

Another thing which is interesting to note is that the Nubian groups represented by different types of cemeteries have different preferences in their choice of Egyptian vases to be deposited in the graves. In one cemetery there is a predilection for "carinated vases", in another for "pilger bottles".



This probably reflects different political attitudes and different cultural traditions also within such groups as the C-Group, which presumably consisted of several tribes with different traditions and attitudes to the aspects of Egyptian culture which they were willing to accept without abandoning their fundamental Nubian character as it is illustrated in the burial customs.

But the most interesting and at the same time most intriguing problem is the interpretation of the so-called Egyptian tombs.

Our biggest complex of this type was a burial ground (No. 185) in the village of Fadrus in the district of Debeira. It consisted of no less than 692 tombs, most of them more or less intact. In fact the greater part of our finds came from this one cemetery.

The tomb types vary, from simple shafts to complicated constructions with several valuted rooms. The bodies were in the Egyptian fashion covered with stucco, and over the face was a small stucco mask painted or decorated with gold leaf either in good Egyptian style or in local imitation. The personal adornments and jewellery consisted of necklaces with exquisite pendants in gold, semi-precious stones or faience in the form of amulets, fishes, ducks, etc. There were earrings of gold or stone, finger rings, scarabs, Egyptian



Fig. 10. Stucco mask from a New Kingdom tomb.



Fig. 11 a. The pyramid above the tomb of Amenemhet (Q).

weapons, beautiful stone vessels, a bronze service and faience vessels, and above all an immense wealth of pottery (more than 3000 vessels), all, with one or two exceptions, of purely Egyptian types. In our material the whole range of contemporary pottery is represented and on the basis of his analysis of thousands of vessels Rostislav Holthoer has published a detailed typology and a comprehensive catalogue. His volume (SJE Vol. 5:1) will be a classical manual for the New Kingdom pottery also in Egypt proper.

This book, which has been exceedingly well received, is the first part of the volume which will contain the rich finds from the New Kingdom contexts in our concession area.

The finds from these tombs as well as the tomb types themselves are thus purely Egyptian. As we know that at this time Nubia had been conquered by the Egyptians and that the Egyptians administered the country, it would seem obvious that these tombs and others of



Fig. 11 b. The entrances to the statue chamber.

the same type belonged to immigrated Egyptians. But for several reasons I believe that this is not the correct solution of the problem and that these tombs rather belonged to Egyptianized Nubians. The main reason is that a lot of elements are lacking which were essential to the dead according to Egyptian believes. Thus there were no objects bearing the name of the deceased – the names on scarabs or on vases are either royal or belong to persons not buried in Debeira – there were no *ushabti* figures, no magic texts and not even the simplest stela. All these objects are something that an orthodox Egyptian certainly would not have wished to be without in his tomb as they were necessary for his eternal happiness. The rich outfit of the tombs shows on the other hand that these items were not missing because of poverty of the tombs owners.

Thus it seems more plausible to assume that these tombs belonged to Egyptianized Nubians, to those who had not only changed the

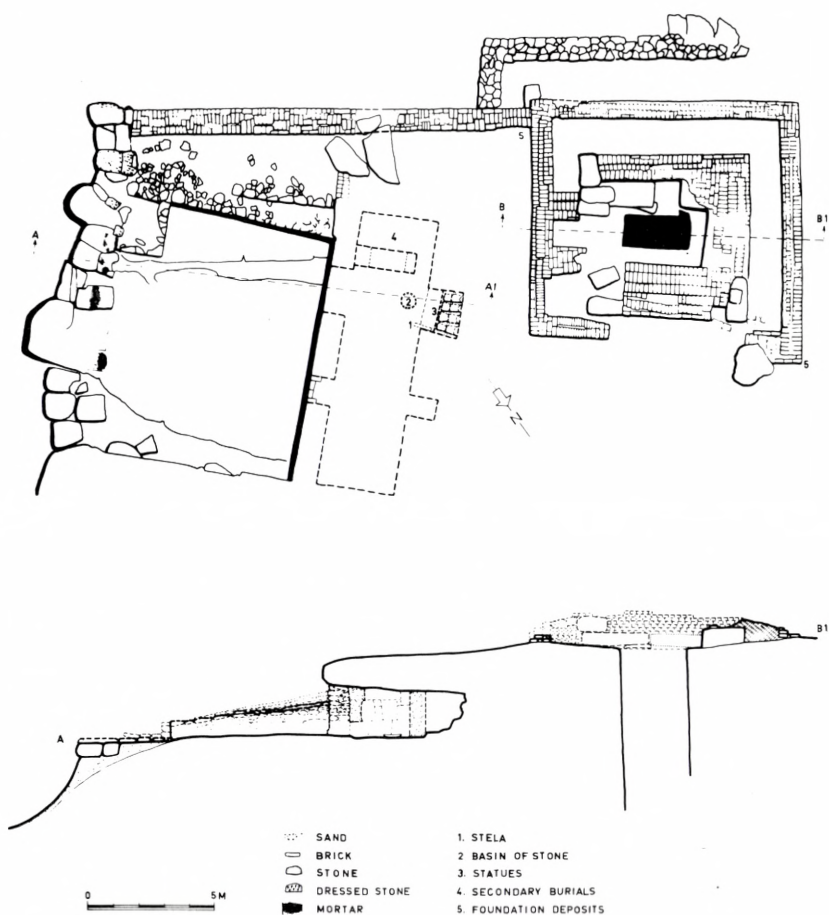


Fig. 12 a. The tomb of Amenemhet. Plan and section.

grave goods from Nubian to Egyptian objects, as did some of their contemporaries of the C-Group, but who also abandoned the traditional Nubian burial customs and tomb types.

An additional reason for this assumption is the fact that the owners of two tombs where the names of the deceased occur and where the burial customs are entirely Egyptian, were Nubian princes. In these two cases we know it thanks to the texts from the tombs.

One of these tombs belonged to a "Prince (*wr*) of Teh-khet" (= Debeira and its surroundings) by the name of Djehuti-hotep, who

also had the Nubian name Paitsy, and his parents had the un-Egyptian names Ruyu and Runa. His father had the same title and office, and one of his uncles, with the Egyptian name Senmose, was an official at Aswan where his tomb is found. The tomb of Djehuti-hotep had been excavated already before the Nubian campaign started, and I had published the mural paintings in his cult chamber which were in the style found in contemporary tombs at Thebes, the capital of Egypt. It is even probable that this tomb was decorated by an artist imported from the capital, despite the fact that the owner was a Nubian. From his titles it is clear that Djehuti-hotep had been educated at the Egyptian court.

His younger brother was Amenemhet who was first an official in the Egyptian administration and then succeeded his brother as "Prince of Teh-khet", His tomb was on the west bank, opposite that of his brother, and its axis pointed exactly towards the tomb of

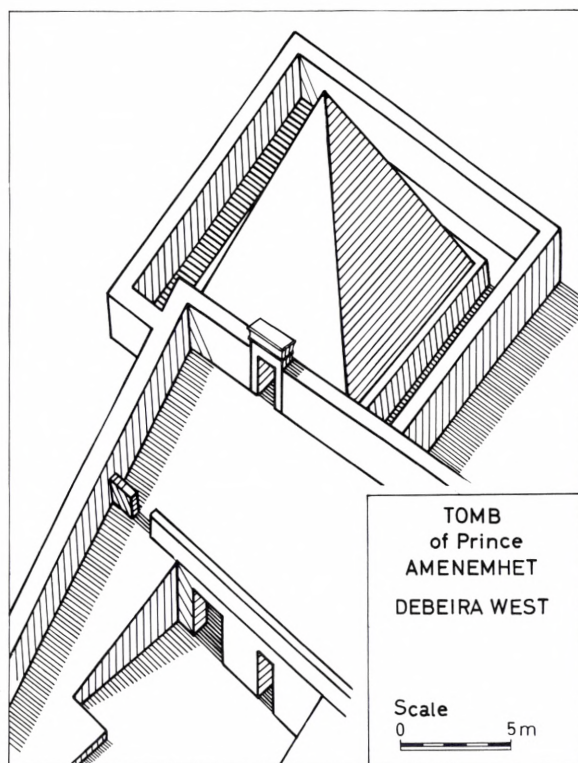


Fig. 12 b. Reconstruction.



Fig. 13. The stela of Amenemhet.

Djehuti-hotep. It had a lower cult chamber with four statues carved in the rock and in front of them we found a splendid stela with a long hieroglyphic text and pictures of Amenemhet, his wife and his parents. A side chamber yielded some beautiful faience adornments from secondary burials.

On the hill higher up were the remains of a pyramid built in adobe and in the center of the pyramid a deep shaft led down to subterranean rooms, which had unfortunately been plundered but contained large quantities of pottery and among other things the scribe's palettes and the canopic jars of his brother Djehuti-hotep. We do not know why Amenemhet took over some of his brother's grave goods or if he also reburied his brother in the new tomb on the west bank. The find of the canopic jars, which were intended to contain the embalmed entrails, may indicate such a procedure.

Maybe a satisfactory explanation can be found when this complex is analysed again for the final publication, which is being prepared by myself and Rostislav Holthoer.

The main problem – who were the owners of the other “Egyptian” tombs? – is, however, complicated by another fact. The analysis of the human remains shows according to Vagn Nielsen, that there is a statistically relevant difference between the two main groups – those buried in C-Group tombs and those of the “Egyptian” tombs. How this fact should be explained is not clear. The difference may be due to influx of new blood from the south, the Kerma group, which according to earlier analyses showed an anthropological type more similar to the Egyptian one than to that common in Lower Nubia. These aspects need more material for a solution, especially more comparative evidence from contemporary Egypt, which is, strangely enough, still insufficient.

To the New Kingdom dated also a fortress on an isolated mountain near the river, Gebel Sahaba, a fortress not known before and of a much simpler construction than those of the Middle Kingdom. It is possible that this development is due to more peaceful conditions.

In the cataract area we found a very strange construction, a long subterranean corridor built of well-carved sandstone blocks and roofed with large rectangular slabs. Its lowest parts were submerged in the ground water, and we found no explanation of this previously unknown type of architecture.

Practically all our finds from the New Kingdom date from the time before ca. 1400, i.e. down to the reign of Amenophis III. Occasional finds are later and show that this part of Lower Nubia was still inhabited. Thus we rescued a fragment with a hieroglyphic text mentioning a "Prince of Teh-khet" under the Viceroy of Ramses II, Heqanakht (Kush 11, 173 f.). This find is a valuable contribution to the unsolved problem of the depopulation in Lower Nubia after ca. 1400 B.C. Further south in Dongola there are several towns which can be dated to Ramesside times, i.e. to the 13th and 12th centuries B.C., whereas in Lower Nubia the famous Ramesside temples – Abu Simbel, etc. – are rather isolated and very few private tombs or settlements can be dated to these times.

### *The Late Nubian Sequence*

Both in our concession area and in Lower Nubia in general the end of the New Kingdom is characterized by a gradually decreasing number of cemeteries and settlements, and the whole first millennium B. C. is more or less a hiatus in the archaeological evidence except for a number of Ptolemaic temples. In view of the fact that Lower Nubia has been so intensively investigated the lack or scarcity of archaeological remains which can be dated to this period is significant and can hardly be due to chance.

The reasons for this decline, which undoubtedly must be interpreted as a depopulation of Lower Nubia, are much disputed. One explanation, which seems plausible to me, is that low Niles made agriculture in Lower Nubia less and less profitable, which led to a move southwards. Only when new devices for irrigation were introduced, especially the waterwheel (*saqia*), agriculture was re-established on a larger scale in Lower Nubia. Be this as it may, but in any case one of the most characteristic finds, when Lower Nubia is again flourishing during the first centuries A. D., are knobs of *saqia*-vessels (*qadus*), and it seems reasonable to combine the two facts – the repopulation and the introduction of the waterwheel.

Perhaps there were also other reasons for this development – e.g. the rise of the Meroitic power in the south and the vacuum in Lower Nubia which made a northward move of the Meroites natural.

Since we have no finds from the last millennium B. C. we can leave



it aside here and start our story again, when the Meroites had occupied Lower Nubia.

The centre of the Meroitic state was in the south, with the capital Meroe 250 km north of Khartum and a religious centre, Napata, further north at Gebel Barkal at the Fourth Cataract.

Shortly after the Romans had conquered Egypt the Meroites raided the Aswan region. The Romans under Petronius retaliated by sacking the town of Napata in 23 B.C., but the Meroitic queen (*candace*) reconquered the southern part of Lower Nubia, where after peace negotiations the frontier was established at Hierasykaminos (Maharraqa). Then the Meroites ruled the greater part of Lower Nubia for about 250 years.

One of their administrative centres was Faras, opposite the northernmost part of our concession area, but despite this neighbourhood we did not find many important objects from the Meroitic period, as most of the tombs had been plundered.

This plundering is probably due to the fact that the rulers and the people who succeeded the Meroites used the same cemeteries as they and some of our Meroitic finds came from tombs reused at a later date.

The Meroites probably represented only a thin social layer of ruling families and despite the fact that we can only partly understand the Meroitic texts the pedigrees of some of these families in Lower Nubia can be established. The Nubian substratum is represented by what we sometimes call "women's ware" in the ceramic art of the period, and these types continue also in the next archaeological "group", the so-called "X-Group".

The Meroitic kingdom disappeared about 350 A.D. when the Christian king Ezana of Axum conquered Meroe. In the north the Meroites had already lost control and there a new people from the desert, the so-called Blemmyes, had settled. In the 3rd century they repeatedly raided Egypt, and Diocletian called in another tribe, the Nobades, to protect the frontier. But the Blemmyes and Nobades made common cause, together attacking Philae in 450 A.D. A few years later the Romans compelled them to peace, a peace which lasted until Nubia converted to Christianity about a hundred years later, when the king of the Nobades Silko had conquered his opponents the Blemmyes.

Thus the Late Nubian period comprises three different "groups";



Fig. 14. Finds from Meroitic tombs.

the Meroites, the X-Group, and the Christian period, which is followed by the domination of Islam. Despite the fact that these three main components represent different cultural traditions, different religions, and to some extent at least different peoples, we find a continuum in the archaeological evidence.

This continuum was an important cultural phenomenon which had not been clearly observed before and which became very clear thanks to our investigations. On the majority of our cemeteries of Late Nubian date we found that the same burial ground had been used by the three groups, one after the other, and that the same tomb was sometimes altered to suit the changing burial customs.

The typical Meroitic tomb in our concession area had a trapezoid dromos leading down to a burial chamber. The ceramic art flourished at this time, but owing to plundering only few specimens survived. On the other hand we found some very beautiful glass of a type which is widely spread around the eastern Mediterranean. One of them is very thin and decorated with a laurel and a Greek text.

We also found beautiful personal adornments which are tantalizing in so far as they show what exquisite "pièces d'art" we missed.

The finds from the next period – the X-Group – are more numerous and practically all types of tombs as well as of objects which are characteristic of the X-Group are represented in our material in rich quantities.

The tombs vary from large tumuli, which replace the earlier chamber tombs, to different types of shaft tombs. The pottery is rather monotonous and betray a strong Byzantine influence. The most characteristic types are beakers with a simple decoration. From a technical point of view they are masterpieces and show a great precision in the art of mastering the potter's wheel.

Among the grave goods the weapons play a great rôle, and a conspicuous case was the tomb of a young warrior with his arrows and quiver of leather well preserved.

From the Meroitic and X-Group tombs, and to some extent also from the later Christian tombs, we have an immense collection of textiles. More than 6000 fragments have been cleaned and analysed



Fig. 15. Glass with Greek text from a Meroitic tomb (25/245).

by Ingrid Bergman, who published our textile finds in volume 8 of our publications.

Thanks to a detailed technical analysis she could make a clear distinction between imported and locally made fabrics. The import was rather small and in some cases “international” patterns were also locally fabricated.

Big quadrangular pieces of rather coarse woollen textile decorated in each angle with an inserted pattern in the form of the Greek letter *gamma* represent a type which occurs in several countries at the eastern Mediterranean, but they were sometimes locally made in Nubia. Decorated textiles of the types so common in contemporary Egypt hardly occurred at all, and one of the few specimens shows an elaborate pattern without direct counterparts in Egypt and is possibly of Meroitic origin. The typical decoration of the Nubian textiles was at little flower at the border. The skill of the weaver was rather shown in complicated knittings to secure the warp at the edge at the finishing end of the fabric.

The textiles were as a rule in a rather fragmentary state, not seldom reused as wrappings of the body in the tomb. Except for some skirts made of leather strings of the type in modern times worn by young Nubian girls and called *rahāt*, practically no dresses could be reconstructed, and there were few instances of pieces of textiles joined together with a seam.

Some triangular pieces probably served as underwear, on the model of diapers, as we can see already in the tomb of Tutankhamun. This underwear was presumable worn in combination with a large mantle, a type of dress which is nowadays typical for the cameldrivers from Darfur and Kordofan, who regularly pass Lower Nubia with their camels on their way to the markets in Egypt. It is in fact an ideal dress in the desert – the mantle is worn as a turban in hot weather and as a mantle or as a night cover when it is cold.

We already knew that camels were used by the X-Group people – many camels were found in the so-called royal tombs at Ballana and Qustul in Egyptian Nubia just north of the Sudanese border. But except for one model of a camel of doubtful provenance we had so far no proof that the Meroites had used the camel even if it was hard to understand how they would have been able to maintain their African empire without camels. It was therefore important to know the nature of the wool used for the textiles. With the aid of an



Fig. 16. Finds from the tomb of a young warrior. X-Group.

analysis of the cuticular patterns of the fibres with a method developed for criminological purposes it was possible to establish that camel wool was used for simple, locally made textiles already in Meroitic times, and so we could more or less prove the use of camels also by the Meroites, something we had only guessed before without being able to adduce other than general considerations in support of the assumption.

Meroitic and X-Group textiles had, of course, been found already by earlier expeditions. Large quantities did e.g. occur both in the royal tombs at Ballana and Qustul and at Meroe, but little attention had been given to this type of finds and no analysis had been published.

It has been a great pleasure to learn that Ingrid Bergman's publication, containing the first detailed analysis and typology, has

been used as a basic manual for the analysis of the much richer finds e.g. at Qasr Ibrim, where the textiles were taken care of by Miss Elisabeth Crowfoot.

When looking at the textiles from Qasr Ibrim or Gebel Adda, two important administrative centres of the periods in question, we again find the contrast between these internationally influenced places with a rich import of foreign luxury goods and our concession area representing the local substratum with conservative techniques and cultural patterns only reluctantly accepting foreign novelties.

The last part of the Late Nubian sequence is the Christian period which lasted for more than half a millennium (6th to 14th cent. A.D.), during which a rich culture and a strong political power developed in Nubia.

There were three kingdoms – Nobadia in Lower Nubia, Makuria in Dongola, and Alodia in the neighbourhood of Khartoum. The main centres in Nobadia were Faras and Qasr Ibrim, where Faras was the see of the archbishop of Nobadia, situated opposite the northernmost part of our concession area.

This is not the place to enter upon a description of the political history or the cultural development of Christian Nubia – I have published a survey in our volume 8, based mainly on the analysis by professor W.Y. Adams. Suffice it to mention a few of the more important facts.

The first stage of Christianity, marked by the official conversion in the 6th century, shows a strong influence from Byzantine Egypt and a continuity of the X-Group traditions. Thus the change of religion did not bring about a fundamental change in the cultural patterns.

When the Arabs had conquered Egypt they made two raids against Nubia, but because of the stubborn Nubian resistance as well as the poverty of the country the Arabs never made any serious attempts to occupy Nubia for good. A peace treaty was signed and peaceful conditions with Egypt are characteristic of the whole Christian era in Nubia with few exceptions.

Probably in 704 A.D. the two kingdoms Makuria and Nobadia were united and together they became a strong state and could even intervene against the Arabs in Egypt on behalf of the Copts, threatening the Arab capital Fustat with a large army.

Nubia now develops a special civilisation of its own. Nubian texts occur for the first time, alongside Greek and Coptic, and in the

ceramic art a new pottery industry breaks with the earlier artistic traditions which had been under a strong influence from the north. Also in the church architecture Nubia follows its own development, different from that of Coptic Egypt.

In the 9th and 10th centuries Nubia was acknowledged as one of the great powers in the contemporary world, and the artistic achievements of this flourishing Nubian culture can be admired in the extraordinary frescoes of the cathedral of Faras, found and rescued by the Polish expedition.

In 962 the Nubians invaded the southern part of Egypt, which became Nubian territory for about a century. During this period we also find a Muslim minority in Nubia, which seems to have lived in peace with their Christian neighbours and rulers. However, these immigrants were not the ones who caused the overthrow of the Christian kingdoms – at least we find no trace of them after the eleventh century. Their tombstones – two of which were found by our expedition – all date to a period when Christian Nubia was still flourishing, showing a great prosperity and stability and a lively trade with the north, which is testified archaeologically by the presence of a great variety of imported luxury goods.

The decline starts only in the second half of the 12th century, when Nubia suffered attacks both from the north and from the west. Recent analysis has shown that the real danger was not the coming of Islam from Egypt, but the deadly threat were the Arabized tribes of the western desert. The Egyptian Muslims never made any systematic attempts to overthrow the Christian Kingdoms or to convert the Nubian population to Islam.

Earlier Nubia had probably flourished because it had a monopoly on the transit trade between the Mediterranean and the central parts of Africa. Now this monopoly was broken by the desert tribes. The trade started to follow the desert routes instead of the river, and Nubia was impoverished. The Mamelukes tried with their interventions rather to defend the Nubian territory against the western desert tribes, and when they failed the total disruption of Nubia could not be stopped. An exodus of the population rather than a conversion to Islam puts an end to Christian Nubia.

Even after the political disruption of Christian Nubia and the final victory of Islam Christianity survived in Lower Nubia. The royal cathedral in Dongola was turned into a mosque in 1317 A.D., but still



Fig. 17 a. The church of Sahaba.

in 1372 A.D. a bishop was installed at Qasr Ibrim, and a text mentions a Nubian king in Gebel Adda as late as 1460 A.D.

From the Christian period our concession area had a number of monuments which were examined mainly by Dr. Gardberg who published them in our volume 7, "Late Nubian Sites". With Mr. Lindqvist as draughtsman he investigated the five churches in our concession. Of special importance was the church at Gebel Sahaba, where no less than thirteen stages of construction could be discerned, mainly dating from the 8th century but the church was in use to the very end of Christianity in Nubia, and in modern times it served as a holy place of a Muslim sheikh.

Gardberg also investigated several Christian settlements, especially in the cataract area, and also an enigmatic system of fortifications there. These fortifications consisted of large enclosures with walls of rough stones, and walls of the same type were also used to close some of the wadis in the labyrinth of rocks and valleys in the same territory. We did not succeed to date them with any precision, and



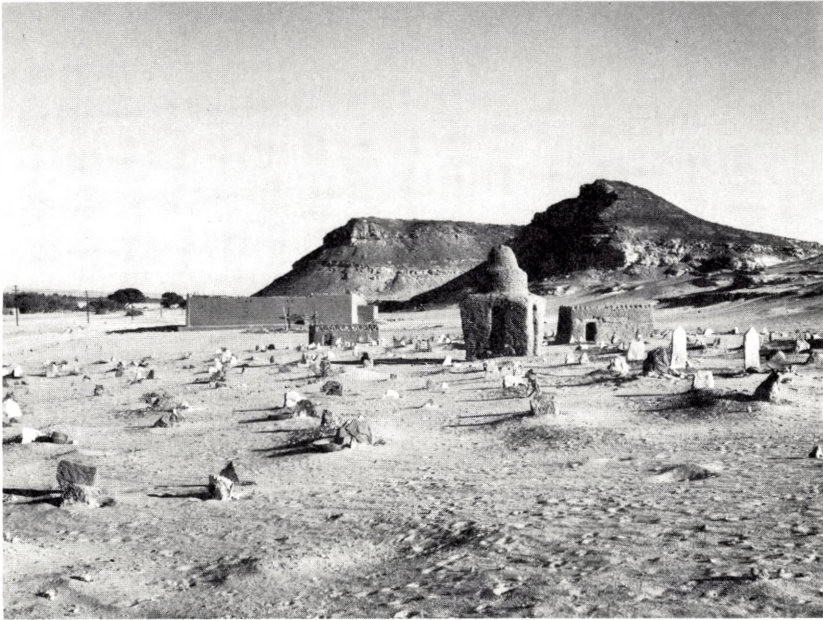


Fig. 17 b. Muslim and modern Nubian cemetery near Gebel Sahaba.

we interpreted them as Late Christian fortifications against enemies mainly relying on cavalry. We hope that finds from other parts of Nubia will throw more light on these fascinating constructions.

The New Kingdom fortification on the mountain of Gebel Sahaba near the church was also in use in Christian times when it was enlarged and repaired with walls of the same type as those of the fortifications in the cataract area.

Quite a number of graves from different Christian times were also excavated by us, and also some vaulted Muslim tombs. Two Greek stelae were found re-used in later tombs, one of them mentioning an otherwise unknown bishop Martyroforos who died in 1158/9 A.D.

Our latest finds came from the Muslim tomb vaults. In one of them next to one of the enclosures just mentioned, a girl was buried with a German 15th century coin used as a pendant in her necklace. But as a rule we did not excavate the Muslim tombs in order not to offend the feelings of our Nubian friends who regarded such tombs as belonging to their ancestors.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Scandinavian Joint Expedition to Sudanese Nubia was of importance not only because so many archaeological remains and objects were rescued from destruction and because so much more was learnt about important chapters of the local cultural development and of the history of mankind.

It was also an example of multilateral co-operation between four countries which by joining forces could make one of the largest archaeological contributions to the international Nubia campaign.

It was also important in so far as Nordic archaeological methods were introduced in this part of the world and that Nordic archaeologists learnt a lot from classical archaeologists and from other scholars, e.g. from the U.S.A., representing quite different schools of archaeology and different approaches to the problems, practical and theoretical.

This exchange of views and methods was also one of the gains of the Nubia campaign as a whole.

The international campaign to save the monuments and antiquities of Nubia is so far the biggest archaeological enterprise on an international basis. It was a success not only because so many cultural values were saved from irreparable loss, but also because it changed the general attitude towards international salvage programs. It has since been acknowledged that the salvage and preservation of antiquities and monuments are not only a moral duty of each country towards future generations, but that the international community has an obligation to support such efforts. Each country has a responsibility not only towards its own people, but is also responsible towards mankind as a whole for not destroying something which belongs to its cultural heritage.

The Nubian campaign has also proved that salvage of cultural values, in the form of objects of art, of monuments or of whole landscapes, is of importance also for the economical and social development, not least in poor countries. To invest in archaeology or in salvage operations like the salvage of Abu Simbel has proved to be a profitable business also from a purely economic point of view thanks to the income from tourism. Thus there is no conflict between cultural and economic considerations.

The Nubia campaign has also led to other results in the form of a series of conventions based on these new concepts, e.g. the adoption

by the member states of Unesco of the "Recommendation concerning the preservation of cultural property endangered by public or private works" of 19 November 1968, where it is stipulated that the preservation costs should be included in the budget of the construction costs.

And in 1972 the General Conference of Unesco adopted the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, where each member state acknowledges its obligation to preserve its cultural heritage through adequate allocations of means and where the international community declares its willingness to give assistance when necessary.

Finally, as a result of the successful Nubia campaign Unesco and other institutions are now involved in similar salvage operations all over the world.

Nubia, Abu Simbel and Philae are now the symbols and the monuments of a new type of international solidarity also in the domain of cultural values.



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