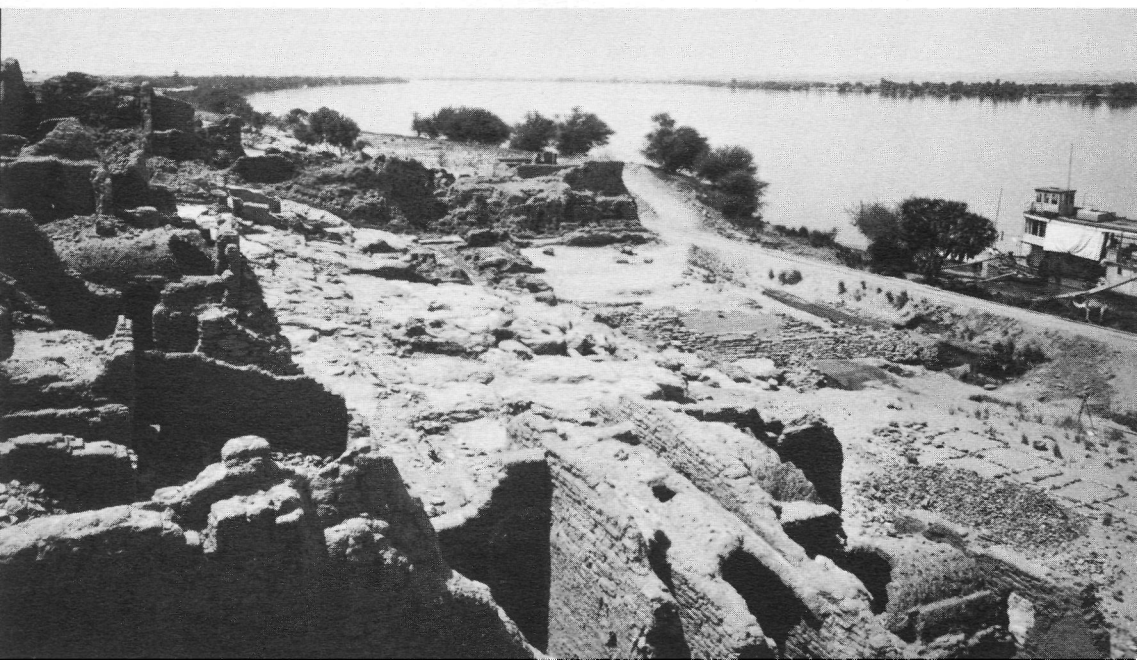


THE EXPEDITION TO NUBIA

The Institute's co-operation in the international salvage program occasioned by the building of the Assuan High Dam shifted its locus southward from the Lower Nubian area of the 1960/61 season to Sudanese Nubia. The scene of activity in 1961/62 was a place called Serra East on the east bank of the Nile about two miles south of the Egyptian-Sudanese border. In a campaign of three months, investigation of the ancient remains within the Institute's allotted area was well advanced. Chief among these remains were an Egyptian Middle Kingdom (2000-1800 B.C.) fortress and an indigenous "C-Group" cemetery about contemporary with the fortress. The cemetery consisting of 142 shallow pit graves was completely excavated. Normally this common type of grave in Nubia was enclosed in a low circular wall of loose stones. The burials yielded a good collection of attractive earthenware offering bowls and vases, bracelets, rings, beads and ear-pendants, almost all of which were given to the Institute in the division of finds.

The rectangular fortress was enclosed in massive mud-brick walls surrounded by a fosse. A Christian church and the remains of a complex of other Christian structures occupy the interior, and two smaller churches are situated just outside the fortress walls. The fosse and exterior of the walls have been cleared and slightly less than half

Panorama of the fortress at Serra East with Christian buildings in foreground, the cleared lower terrace and south wall beyond





Bases of butresses of the east wall of the fortress at Serra East

of the interior area has been excavated down to bed-rock or river silt. The fortress was built on the rocky slope of the river bank, its east wall on the brow of the slope. The slope was cut to form an upper and a lower terrace, and what appears to be a basin or harbor, although as yet only partially cleared, was constructed roughly in the middle of the west side of the lower terrace. This side of the terrace is now unfortunately cut through and obscured by the embankment of the Sudan Railways line running along the river.

In this first season at Serra very little was found in the way of objects from Pharaonic periods beyond the brick and stone structures and broken pottery of Middle and New Kingdom types. We prize, therefore, a jar handle from about 1500 B.C. stamped with the cartouche of Thutmose I and a fragment of a bowl stamped with the cartouche of Thutmose III. The large body of finds was of Christian date in association with the many Christian buildings. Besides the fine collection of Christian period pottery, the variety of small objects includes, for example, a Christian gravestone inscribed in Coptic, a small page of parchment bearing a magical text, and six foundation deposits found under the corners of Christian buildings. These deposits consisted of inverted pottery bowls covering in three cases ostraca bearing in Greek the name and ancestry presumably of the founder.

The staff of the expedition was made up of James E. Knudstad, Junior Field Architect of the Institute; Labib Habachi, formerly Chief Inspector of Antiquities of Egypt; Prof. Louis V. Zabkar of Loyola University, Chicago; and Prof. Ronald J. Williams of the University of Toronto, Canada. Dr. Charles F. Nims of the Epigraphic Survey in Luxor participated for a month at the beginning, and W. Herman Bell and David Weston assisted as student volunteers for about a month.

GEORGE R. HUGHES
Acting Field Director



The C-Group cemetery during clearance of drift sand from the circular grave enclosures (above) and after removal of the enclosures and excavations of the burial pits (below)

