



Nubian Expedition at Qustul during sandstorm

ARCHEOLOGICAL SALVAGE OPERATIONS IN NUBIA

Most of the operations described in the foregoing pages have been undertaken as matters of choice. Among a number of alternative possibilities, they have been consciously selected as best utilizing the Institute's presently available resources of staff and technical understanding to solve important historical problems. But research institutes such as this one have a more enduring set of responsibilities as well. We assume a share in the total task of preserving, recording, and communicating the cultural heritage of the Near East, a task which is already centuries old and which will continue indefinitely into the future. When a part of that heritage is threatened, therefore, the obligation of the Institute to respond cannot be limited by the current importance alone of what is placed in jeopardy.

The new High Dam under construction at Assuan represents such a danger. The immense reservoir to be backed up by this urgently needed dam will permanently submerge the greater part of Egyptian and Sudanese Nubia, removing from all future study the rock-cut temples, the cemeteries, and the settlements of this region on ancient Egypt's southern frontier. The magnitude of the threatened loss is indicated by the world's response to it: archeological expeditions from more than twenty countries are participating in a massive program of emergency salvage under the sponsorship and co-ordination of UNESCO.

The Oriental Institute has been involved in this program since its inception. Having assumed full responsibility for salvaging and recording along many miles of both banks of the Nile in the region to be flooded, expeditions have been sent to the field annually since 1960. To the Institute's own funds for this undertaking have been added blocked Egyptian currencies made available by the U.S. Gov-

Clearing fosse on south side of fortress at Serra East in Nubia



ernment under Public Law 480. A member of the Institute staff (and former Director), Professor John A. Wilson, has served as Executive Secretary of the U.S. National Committee for the Preservation of the Nubian Monuments and is its UNESCO representative. Other staff members, together with graduate students and volunteers, have served under the direction of Professor Keith C. Seele in an ambitious and wide-ranging field program.



Grave at Qustul in Nubia

Operations conducted to date include the complete epigraphic recording of a rock-cut temple of Ramses II at Beit el-Wali, the excavation of a Middle Kingdom Egyptian fortress at Serra East in the Republic of Sudan, and excavations in cemeteries near Kalabsha and Qustul. Some 900 ancient graves were cleared at Qustul in 1963, including an intact and particularly fine tomb in which were found the remains and funerary offerings of two Nubian wives of New Kingdom Egyptian officials.