

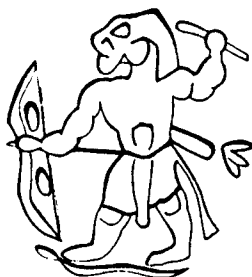
The Nubian Publication Project

Bruce B. Williams

The past year has seen a major effort to complete and submit manuscripts. Illustrations scattered in files were assembled into plates and figures. Studies of pottery and objects were joined into narratives with the inevitable tables, and the long lists of contexts and their contents were transformed into registers. The result was three new manuscripts, *Meroitic Remains from Qustul and Ballana* (OINE VIII), *Noubadian X-Group Royal Complexes at Qustul and Ballana and Private Cemeteries at Qustul* (OINE IX), and *Twenty-Fifth Dynasty and Napatan Remains from Cemeteries W and V at Qustul* (OINE VII). With these submissions, only volume VI, on the New Kingdom remains to be finished in order to complete all the volumes on ancient remains from

OINE VIII, a Meroitic ring bezel showing the lion-god Apedemak

OINE IX, a leather patch-insignia from an X-Group quiver showing a bull's head above a lotus.

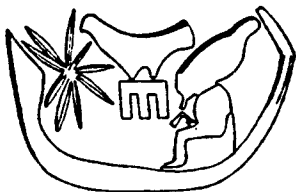


OINE VII, reverse of a seal plaque showing Amun, Dynasty XXV

the Abu Simbel to Sudan Border concession.

The concession at the southern end of Egyptian Nubia had been explored twice before, so it was hardly foreseen that it would produce major surprises. However, it did, and the greatest surprise was the sheer bulk of the material. Except for the modest Dyn. XXV-Napatan remains, each of the major phases has yielded among the largest bodies of material of its period in the country. Each phase has provided major evidence to revise our assumptions about the region and its people.

In addition to the evidence for chronology, settlement and the range of objects yielded by almost any large-scale excavation, each phase has had its own special feature that assures it an indispensable place in the archaeology of its period. These range from the lost pharaohs of A-Group in OINE III to the last pharaohs of Noubadian X-Group, with their obelisk, tiny sphinx, and long rows of funerary chapels. When

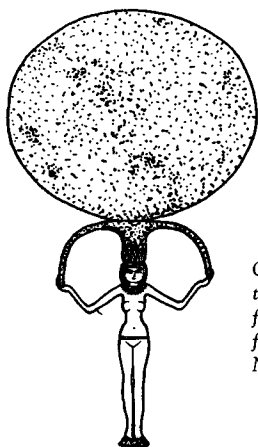


OINE III, the pharaoh from the Qustul incense burner, A-Group

the last volume is finished, the material from the Abu Simbel to Sudan Border concession will have been one of the major efforts in archaeological publication.

Work in Sudan also yielded a large bulk of material, from three fortresses, one very large cemetery and several small ones, not to mention a Meroitic "customs post" and a Christian town. Sherds and objects are being classified, sorted and recorded; records must be examined and combined. Drawing is a major project, and the help of volunteer Deborah Schwartz has been instrumental in this year's effort on the Serra fort. Serra's role in controlling the peoples of the Eastern Desert is amply confirmed by the large number of native Nubian "Pan-Grave" sherds of Second Intermediate Period date found in it.

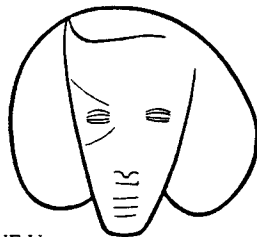
The fortress' continuing role in the Second Intermediate Period was emphasized this year by the "discovery" of many more seal-plaques



OINE VI;
the feminine-
form mirror
from Qustul,
New Kingdom



of the kind presented in last year's annual report. The group studied this year included a number of fragments that may hold the key to understanding these enigmatic but important objects. They are hand-sized pats of muddy clay, one side with deep finger impressions, the other stamped with a large seal. The seal was of wood, for the impressions of cracks are also found. Although a few such plaques were found intact in a deposit early in this century, most were broken—at Serra, they are generally broken in half. All



OINE V,
the C-Group head
of a man



OINE IV,
a giraffe incised on an
ostrich eggshell, Neolithic

were found in the fortresses of Nubia with some Second Intermediate Period occupation. Most often, the subjects are simple animal figures, a prisoner, or a prisoner pushed forward by a guard. Sometimes there is a simple sign or a round number, 60, 240, or 360. However, one of the seals used to make the plaques at Serra had a brief inscription with the number 60 and this may reveal the purpose of the plaques generally. Actually, they may have been magical objects intended to ensure the capture of the specified number of prisoners or animals.