

# THE POLISH ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECONNAISSANCE TRIP TO NUBIA

(January—February, 1958)

BY

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## INTRODUCTION

It is common knowledge that the problem of archaeological research in Nubia is today a matter of major importance in the historical sciences.

This arises from the unique and alarming fact of priceless relics of culture and art being consciously doomed to destruction in the interests of creating better conditions for the people inhabiting the surrounding area. The construction of the new dam to the south of Aswan will result in the Nile waters being raised by another 40 metres (130 feet), on top of the 30 metres (100 feet) given by the Aswan dam already in existence. The first Aswan dam, which was constructed before World War I and which has served as an all-season regulator of the supply of the Nile waters to the cultivated fields of Egypt, has already been responsible for substantial losses in relics of ancient Egyptian art. The splendid complex of Egyptian temples on Philae island has been inundated, as have entire mighty temples at Kalabsha, Debot and Dakka; the lower parts of other temples and monuments — in Sebua, Derr and Gerf Hussein — have been submerged.

In the course of the three summer months pursuant to the Nile's annual overflow, however, when the waters of that life-giving river were rushing past the flood-gates of the Aswan dam to invade with a resounding roar the valley of Upper Egypt,



there was always the possibility of reaching the Nubian temples, which then emerged from the water. Moreover, for the rest of the year that part of the relics which is located in higher-situated areas remained permanently accessible.

These relics, in addition to the temple at Amada and the fortresses of Kasr Ibrim and Tomas, include the two famous temples cut in rock at Abu Simbel at the order of Rameses II.

But now, even those relics are threatened with annihilation. The new dam is to constitute a gigantic permanent reservoir of the Nile waters; it will create a lake of over 500 kilometres (300 miles) in length and from 5 to 10 kilometres (3 to 6 miles) in width, covering an area that extends from the first to the third cataract. The lake, with a constant water surface area and a depth of some 70 metres (230 feet) at its main current, will reach far into the Sudan and will engulf all the areas of so-called Lower Egyptian Nubia, which were inhabited in antiquity and which continue to be inhabited today.

Obviously there remain, before this happens, a few years in which to secure and perhaps save everything found technically possible to save among the ancient monuments of art and architecture that have remained in Nubia to this day. During those few years, strenuous archaeological studies should be conducted throughout that area, all the as yet unstudied necropolises and ruins of ancient settlements should be excavated, and a complete scientific documentation collected of the rock drawings, with which, beginning with neolithic times, man has decorated the huge layers of Nubian *gebel* rock.

This immense task, which has now fallen on the shoulders of Egyptian archaeologists, prompted them to issue a world-wide appeal to all scholars who had ever conducted archaeological research in Egypt, to join this campaign of such great importance for the whole of humanity and for science. First to answer the call were the Poles. They were followed by the Germans, and then by the Italians.

The Polish Archaeological Mission in Alexandria, which I have the honour to lead, was invited by the Egyptian Government to embark upon extensive excavation in Nubia.<sup>1</sup>

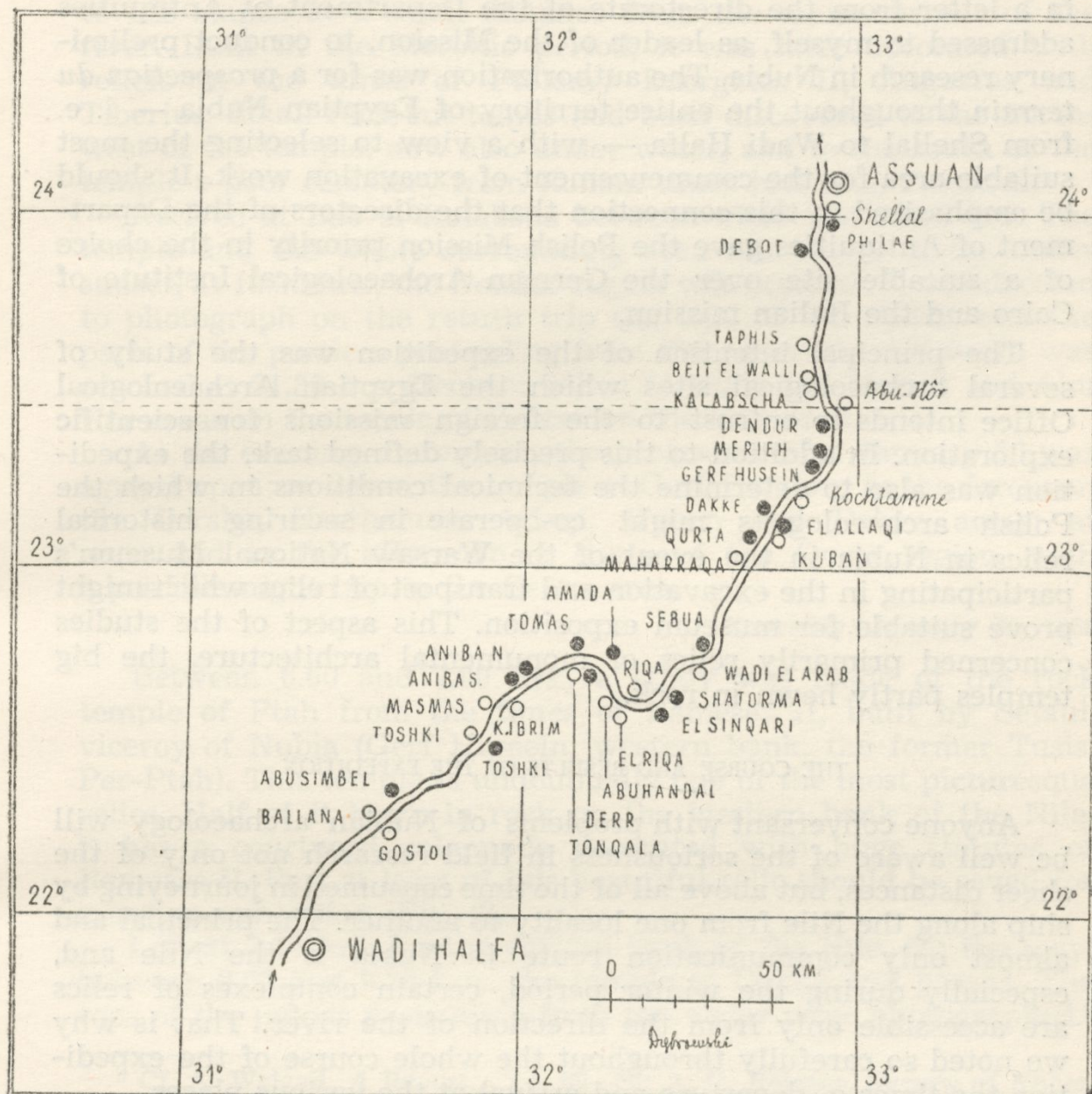
The members of the Mission collected in the libraries of Cairo and Alexandria the theoretical documentation of the 17 archaeological sites in Nubia left by the Egyptian Department of Antiquities to the foreign missions for exploration (see Fig. 1). Particularly valuable was the report by Weigall,<sup>2</sup> which, even

<sup>1</sup> The expedition comprised: Professor Kazimierz Michałowski, Tadeusz Andrzejewski, Leszek Dąbrowski, Barbara Gąssowska and Albertyna Szczudłowska.

<sup>2</sup> A. Weigall, *A Report on the Antiquities of Lower Nubia...*, Oxford, 1907; A. Weigall, *A Guide to the Antiquities of Upper Egypt, from Abydos to the Sudan Frontier*, New York, 1910.



though outdated, still constituted the best extant synthetized presentation of the entire archaeology of Nubia. As regards the survey of Nubian bibliography by Porter-Moss,<sup>3</sup> use was made of materials concerning the locality of Qurta, which was then



1. Map of Lower Nubia, 1 : 100,000.

\* Localities visited by the mission.

tentatively selected for a detailed on-the-spot reconnaissance.<sup>4</sup> For a documentation of sacred buildings, a study was made of the

<sup>3</sup> Porter-Moss, VII 50 (1951).

<sup>4</sup> Burckhardt, *Travels in Nubia*, p. 103; L. D. Text, V, pp. 76—77; A. Weigall, *A Report...*, p. 92; Gau, *Antiquités de la Nubie*, pl. 39; demotic graffiti: Griffith, *Dodekaschvonus*, other surveys in manuscript in the archives of the Department of Antiquities, quoted by Porter-Moss.



report by Professor Selim Hassan.<sup>5</sup> To facilitate location of the particular monuments in the field, the Survey of Egypt publications<sup>6</sup> was consulted. The provisional sketches and plans were prepared by architect Leszek Dąbrowski.

On January 26, 1958, the expedition was formally authorized, in a letter from the directorate of the Department of Antiquities addressed to myself, as leader of the Mission, to conduct preliminary research in Nubia. The authorization was for a *prospection du terrain* throughout the entire territory of Egyptian Nubia — i. e. from Shellal to Wadi Halfa — with a view to selecting the most suitable area for the commencement of excavation work. It should be emphasized in this connection that the directors of the Department of Antiquities gave the Polish Mission priority in the choice of a suitable site over the German Archaeological Institute of Cairo and the Italian mission.

The principal intention of the expedition was the study of several archaeological sites which the Egyptian Archaeological Office intends to entrust to the foreign missions for scientific exploration. In addition to this precisely defined task, the expedition was also to determine the technical conditions in which the Polish archaeologists might co-operate in securing historical relics in Nubia in the event of the Warsaw National Museum's participating in the excavation and transport of relics which might prove suitable for museum exposition. This aspect of the studies concerned primarily relics of monumental architecture, the big temples partly hewn in rock.

#### THE COURSE AND RESULTS OF THE EXPEDITION

Anyone conversant with problems of Nubian archaeology will be well aware of the seriousness in field research not only of the sheer distances, but above all of the time consumed in journeying by ship along the Nile from one locality to another. The principal and almost only communication route in Nubia is the Nile and, especially during the winter period, certain complexes of relics are accessible only from the direction of the river. That is why we noted so carefully throughout the whole course of the expedition the times of departure and arrival at the various places.

It seems indeed proper to retain for this report on the results of the expedition the log-book form, even though it be a log-book to a large extent supplemented by *ex post* studies of bibliographical material.

<sup>5</sup> Selim Hassan, *Report on the Monuments of Nubia likely to be Submerged by Sudd-el-'Ali Water*, Cairo, 1955.

<sup>6</sup> Of particular value was the publication by W. B. Emery and L. P. Kirwan, *The Excavation and Survey between Wadi es-Sebua and Adindan, 1929—1931* /Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte, Mission Archéologique de Nubie. 1929—1934/, Cairo, 1935.



Wednesday, January 29, 1958

After embarkation, we set out at 13.30 hrs. from the landing-place near the dam. Passed Philae island, entirely under water. Journey continued towards Debot, which was reached by 15.00 hrs. The temple was invisible, submerged. The temple dedicated to Isis stands at a small distance from the main current of the river. Built in the Meroitic period, it was later decorated with reliefs in the times of Ptolemy Euergetes II, Augustus and Tiberius. Small rock-cut tombs had been discovered to the north-west of the temple, now also under water, and to the south of the temple a poor cemetery from Roman times had been recorded.<sup>8</sup>

Arrived at Bab el Kalabsha between 17.30 and 17.45 hrs. The temple and the whole surrounding area was under water. After sunset, at 18.30 hrs., the Dendur region was reached. It was decided to photograph on the return trip the tops of the pylons and the parts of the porticos protruding from the water. Gerf Hussein was reached at 21.30 hrs. Decision taken to study the Merieh and Abu Hor areas on the tropic of Cancer on the way back.

At the evening conference, the programme for January 30 was agreed upon: at dawn, the temple at Gerf Hussein; in the forenoon the Qersha, Kosthamna, Allaqi, Kuban and Dakke areas; at noon and in the afternoon, a study of the Qurta region, with a possible night trip to the Sebua area.

Thursday, January 30, 1958

Between 6.00 and 7.00 hrs., a study was made of the rock temple of Ptah from the times of Rameses II, built by Setau, viceroy of Nubia (Gerf Hussein, western bank, the former Tuis, Per-Ptah). This temple is undoubtedly one of the most picturesque relics. Half of it hewn in rock on the western bank of the Nile, it has a courtyard colonnade decorated with huge statues of Rameses II. Part at least of this beautiful relic should be saved for museum exposition (Fig. 2).

Left at 7.30 hrs. for the eastern bank of the Nile. On the way, between 9.00 and 9.10 hrs., the temple at Dakke was passed. The tops of the pylons protruding from the water were photographed.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Cf. A. Weigall, *A Report...*, pp. 50—59; A. G. Reisner, *Survey of Nubia*, Report for 1907—1908, Vol. I, Cairo, 1908, p. 169; Roeder, *Debot bis Bab Kalabache*, pp. 1—100, pl. 130—134; *Ibid.* the older literature of the subject; this is mentioned by both Champollion. *Not. Descr.* I, pp. 155—158, and Rossellini, *Min. del. Culto*, text pp. 96—101; Porter-Moss gives under *Debot* a long list of literature, most of it in manuscripts, e.g. Bononi, Saint-Ferriol, Bankes, Linant de Bellefonds, Berny, Wilkinson, Nestor l'Hôte, housed in the archives of the Department of Antiquities in Cairo. *Illustr. Murray, Egyptian Temples*, pl. 4, XLVIII (2).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. A. Weigall, *A Report...*, pp. 85 ff.: A.S.N. Firth, *Report 1901—1903*, p. 162 pl. 1; Monneret de Villard. *La Nubie mediaevale* I, p. 63. The necropolis is of the pan-graves type. Weigall also reports on traces of a preserved cemetery from the Ptolemaic-Roman period, and Monneret de Villard mentions Coptic tombs.





2. Courtyard colonnade of Gerf Hussein temple.

This temple was located on the western bank at a distance of 20 kilometres (12½ miles) from Gerf Hussein, as the principal sanctuary of the ancient region of Pa-Selk (scorpion). The site of the necropolis at Dakke, located 1.5 kilometres (1640 yards) to the north of the temple, was not included in the plan of our research; neither was the *kôm* with the ruins of the town, now submerged.



The Allaqi area was examined between 9.20 and 10.20 hrs. This extends to the north and the south of the village of Kuban. The ancient fortress of Kuban, lying to the west, is now submerged. Erected by Sesostris I, it was later reconstructed.<sup>10</sup> In addition to the fortress, three temples also were flooded: one, constructed by Amenemhat III and renovated under the 18th Dynasty; the second, smaller, erected in the reign of Thothmes III and Amenofis III; the third, constructed by Rameses II.<sup>11</sup> To the south and the north of this complex, in the desert along the banks of the flood waters of the Nile, is a necropolis consisting of tombs cut in the surface of soft sandstone rock, in the form of irregular chambers, resembling caves. Some of the tombs, unearthed and once more covered, can be seen at the south end of the village.

In the northern part of the necropolis, a tomb painstakingly hewn in pink sandstone and partly supplemented with sandstone blocks, deserves attention. This tomb has the shape of a rectangular shaft. The entrance is on the eastern, shorter side of the rectangle. Perhaps this is the cemetery (shaft-tombs) of the Middle Kingdom, mentioned by Weigall<sup>12</sup> as being located at short distance to the south-east of Kuban. This would agree with the geographical location of the tomb which we examined. A hundred metres (330 feet) further to the south, we found tombs with visible remains of unbaked brick constructions. It would seem that some chaotic, extractive, excavation work was undertaken there. On the bank, there were a great number of fragments of coarse Roman and Coptic pottery. In all probability, this was the sites of the necropolis from the Coptic period, excavated by Firth,<sup>13</sup> and also mentioned by Monneret de Villard.<sup>14</sup> The pan-graves type necropolis reported on by Weigall,<sup>15</sup> on which excavation work was done by Garstang, must be situated further to the north, closer to the locality of Kuban.

The southern parts of Allaqi was reached at 10.40 hrs. A field reconnaissance of an area of one kilometre (3300 feet) along the bank and 200 metres (650 feet) inland was made. On the river bank, remains of ancient sandstone quarries were found, indicated by the several rows of small round holes for splitting the stone.

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. W. B. Emery, L. P. Kirwan, *op. cit.*, pp. 26 ff.; W. B. Emery, *Preliminary Report*, ASA, XXXI, pp. 70 ff.; Borchardt, *Alt-ägyptischen Festungen*, p. 13, Fig. 5; plan of the fortress: Tresson, BIFAO XXVII, p. 32; cf. several papers in manuscripts in the archives of the Department of Antiquities, quoted by Porter-Moss.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. A.S.N. Firth, *op. cit.*, p. 238, pl. 6; Borchardt, *Beiträge zur ägyptischen Bauforschung* 2, 1938. Table 22.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. A. Weigall, *A Report...*, p. 91.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. A.S.N. Firth, *op. cit.*, pp. 112—117, 125.

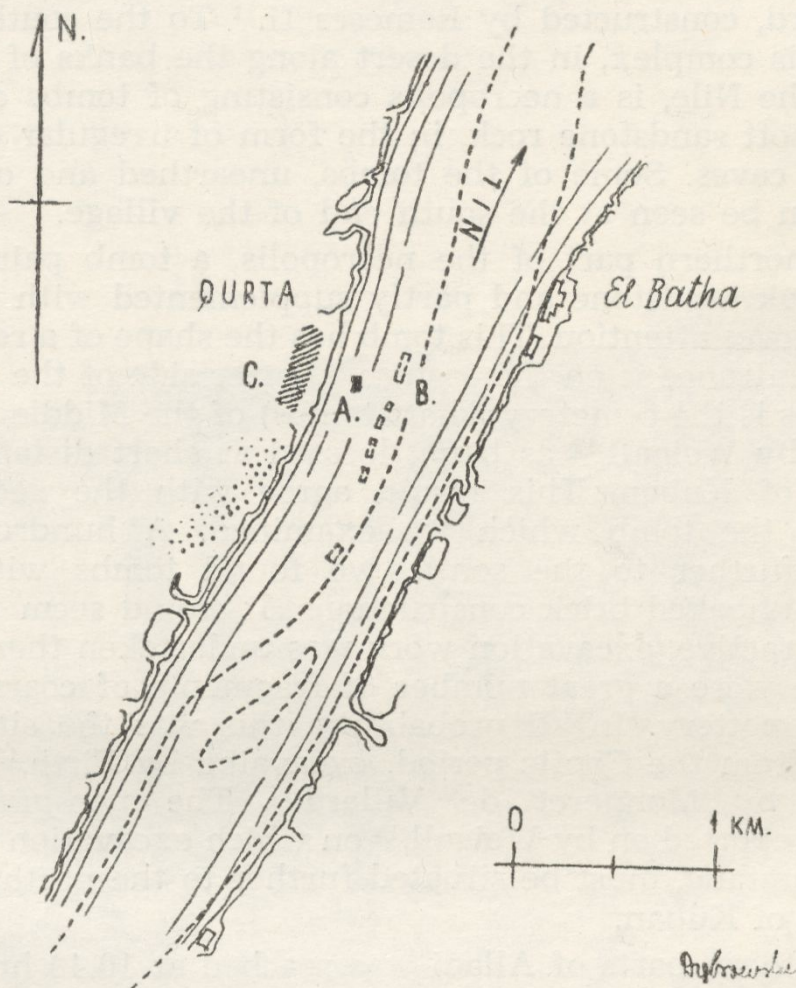
<sup>14</sup> Cf. Monneret de Villard, *op. cit.*, I, p. 64.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. A. Weigall, *A Report...*, p. 95.



All over this area were scattered shells of coarse painted Roman pottery (end of the 2nd century A.D.).

Left the Allaqi area at 11.45 hrs. for the western bank of the Qurta district.<sup>16</sup> The first field reconnaissance was made in the southern part (Fig. 3), on the boundary of the Maharraqa district. There is located the temple, now submerged, which was formerly



3. Qurta. Situation plan, 1 : 25.000

A — the flooded temple; B — the flooded village of Qurta;  
C — the transferred village of Qurta.

within the area of Ofeduineh village, currently belonging to the Qurta district. No traces of either *kôm* or necropolis (incorrect indication by the *gafir*) were found on the bank. The expedition then proceeded to the northern region of Qurta, more or less to the latitude of the few remains of the temple of Isis, erected in Roman times on the site of the temple from the New Kingdom period. In the village, the site was ascertained of the necropolis explored in 1933 by Emery.<sup>17</sup> Traces of decayed brick and of layers of building mud were noticed. On the bank, among the private

<sup>16</sup> Cf. A. Weigall, *A Report...*, p. 92.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. W. B. Emery, *op. cit.*



houses, a fragment of an Attic black-varnished vessel from the first half of the 4th century B.C. was discovered. This was most probably a fragment of a pyxis. It was found that the *kôm* reported on in older literature, and defining the site of the ancient city, was now submerged.

Left the Qurta region at 15.00 hrs. and proceeded to Sebuā, where a landing was made at 18.30 hrs., i.e. an hour after sunset. Halted about 50 metres (160 feet) to the south-east of the temple, which had been dedicated by Rameses II to Amon and Re-Harachte. In the course of the archaeological documentation work connected with the construction of the first Aswan dam, the building was reconstructed *in situ* from elements preserved on the spot. It is today one of the most splendid monuments of sacred architecture in Lower Nubia.<sup>18</sup> The ancient city, established under the 19th Dynasty to the east of the temple, is now submerged. In moonlight, from 18.45 and 19.45 hrs., the first reconnaissance of the site of the temple and the necropolis was made. In the temple, the water was found to reach the bases of the Rameses II colossi, one of which stood *in situ*, while the other, broken above the knees, lay partly submerged. With the help of the local *gafir*, the first reconnaissance of the desert necropolis was made; this stretches to the north of the temple, covering an area of about one square kilometre (0.4 square mile). The part of the necropolis situated on the hill had been excavated by Emery,<sup>19</sup> together with the south-western part of the necropolis, where a fragment of the lower part of a statue of Setaui (governor of Nubia under Rameses II), which Emery studied,<sup>20</sup> was found *in situ*. The north-eastern part of the necropolis, the most remote from the temple, had not so far, according to the *gafir*, been the subject of research. Professor Selim Hassan had visited this area recently. The entire necropolis was in the form of excavations hewn in rock, called pan-graves.<sup>21</sup>

It was decided to carry out at 6.00 hrs. the following morning another exploration of the site and to photograph the temple.

The following programme for January 31 was drawn up at the evening conference: up to 7.30 hrs., Sebuā; later, in the course of the forenoon, exploration of the areas lying on the right bank of the Nile: Wadi el Arab, Shatorma, Sinqari, Abu Handal, a visit to the temple at Amada, perhaps also at Derr, exploration in the Tomas-Afyā area, and night stay in Aniba.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Gauthier, *Le Temple de Ouadi es Sebuā*; A. Weigall, *A Report...*, pp. 97 ff.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. W. B. Emery, L. P. Kirwan, *op. cit.*, pp. 70 ff., 152 ff.

<sup>20</sup> W. B. Emery, *op. cit.*, pp. 71, 149, 150, 532; Cf. also A.S.N. Firth, *op. cit.*, Table 14a, pp. 233 and 235—237, Table XIV.

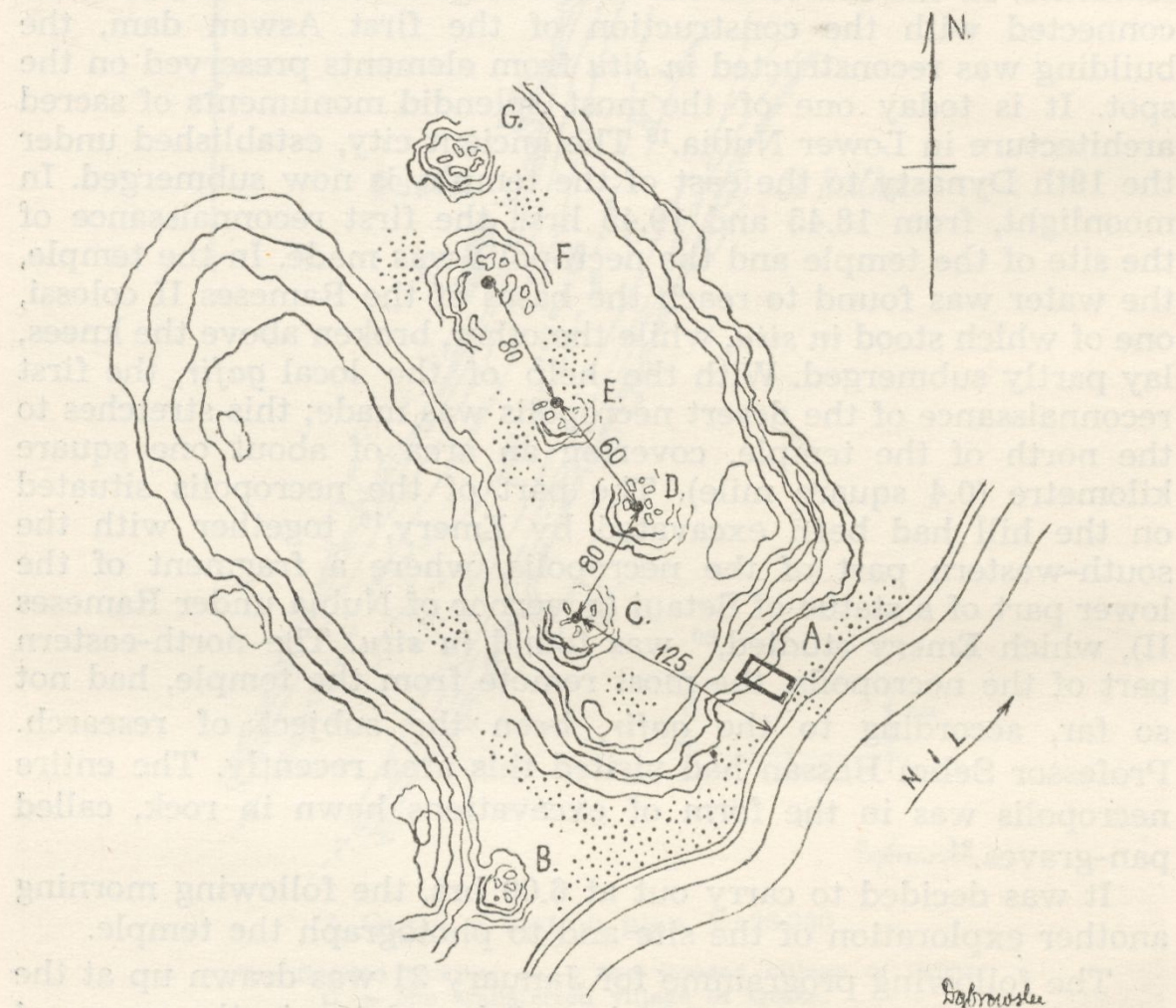
<sup>21</sup> Cf. A. Weigall, *A Report...*, p. 24.



A possible variant of the programme was: departure from Sebuia at 7.30 hrs., passing the day's sector without stopping, with Sebuia — Abu Simbel left for the return trip.

Friday, January 31, 1958

At 6.00 hrs., we proceeded to the exploration of the necropolis, situated to the north and north-west of the temple at Sebuia (Fig. 4). The complex of tombs marked by the letters C and D on



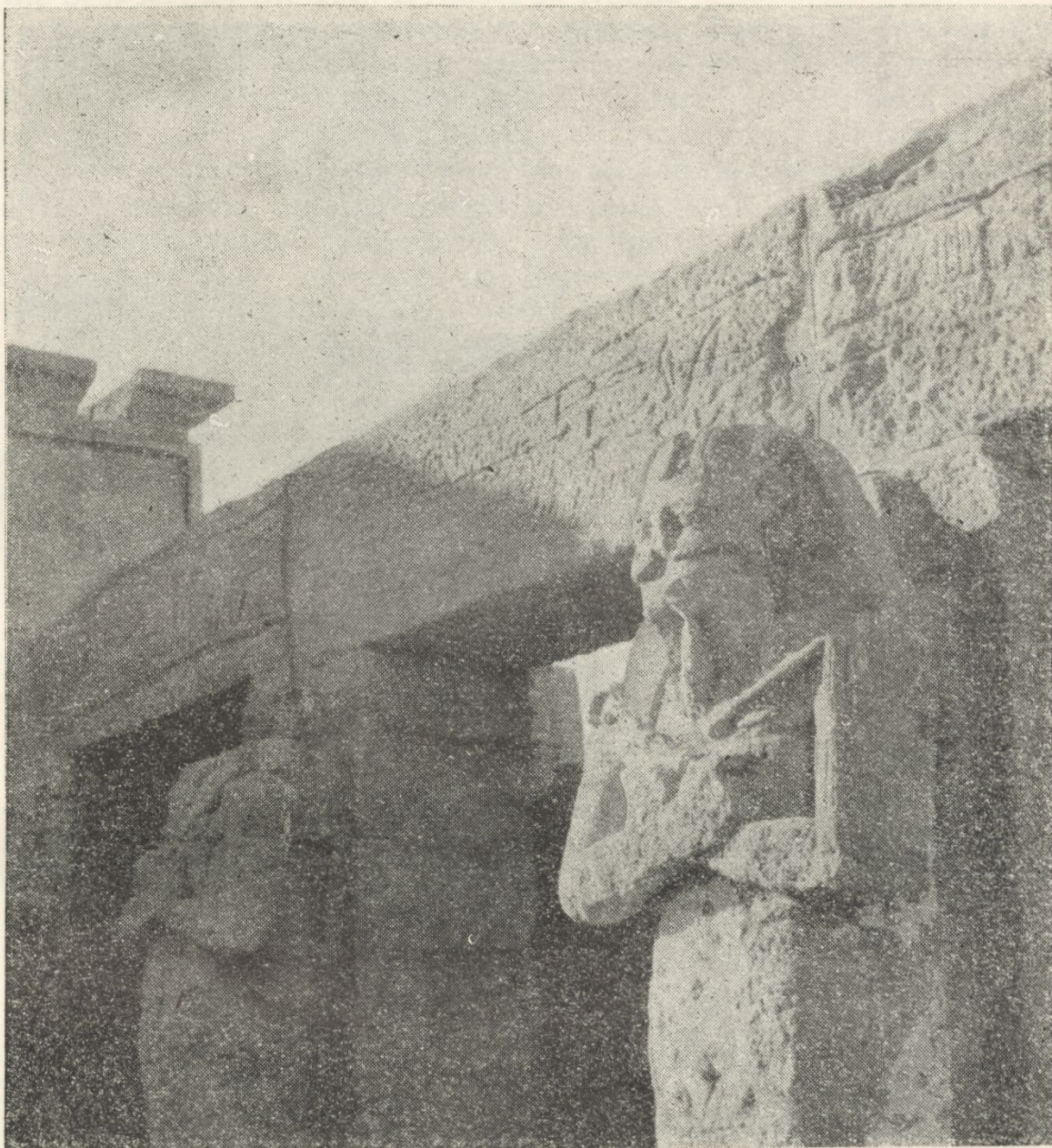
4. Sebuia. Situation sketch:

A — rock temple; B — fragment of Setaui's statue; C, D — complexes of graves; E, F, G — other parts of the necropolis.

the plan, as well as the tombs mentioned in the report for the preceding day and situated to the west of the temple, adjacent to the fragment of Setaui's statue, had already been excavated by Emery. It was not, however, impossible that the further part of the necropolis, marked by the letters F and G on the plan, might extend to the hill, situated further to the north-west, about 200 metres (220 yards) from the temple. This part had never before



been the subject of scientific study. It should be stressed that no distinct traces were found there, apart from the physical features of the terrain, which resembled those, where the excavations of the C and D complexes had been made by Emery. Next, we went on to the temple to study its interior (reliefs partly on stucco, with colours well-preserved, in some places covered by Coptic paintings). It was found on the other hand that the mound of sand



5. Fragment of courtyard of the Sebua temple.

and stones, extending on both sides of the temple, i.e. to the north and the south, was a heap piled up after a cleaning of the interior of the temple.

The huge statue of Rameses II, preserved to the knees and lying outside, to the right of the entrance to the temple, ought



to be transferred to a museum; e.g., Selim Hassan in his report proposes the removal of the two colossi to Aswan.<sup>22</sup> The statues of the sphinxes in the avenue now submerged (Fig. 5) could also be easily removed.

Left Sebua at 8.15 hrs. It was resolved to reserve for the return trip the archaeological sites, marked by the Department of Antiquities and situated on the eastern bank of the Nile before



6. The temple at Derr.

Korosko: Wadi el Arab, Shatorma (10.00 hrs.), Singari (10.25 hrs.), Riqā (11.15 hrs.), Abu Handal, which for the most part contain relics lying under water at this season of the year.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Selim Hassan, *op. cit.*, p. 12.



Amada was reached at 12.30 hrs. The surrounding area, which had abounded both in rock inscriptions from the 12th Dynasty and several cemetery complexes beginning with the pan-graves type up to Roman times,<sup>23</sup> was now submerged. A small temple, erected by Amenhotep II, Thothmes III and Thothmes IV, and later partly reconstructed *in situ* from original blocks of stone, was preserved on a hill. This had some very beautiful reliefs, among the best left by the 18th Dynasty in Nubia.

After visiting this temple, we proceeded at 12.50 hrs. in the direction of Derr, which was reached at 13.20 hrs. The temple of Re-Harachte, built under Rameses II, is, like Gerf-Hussein, a piece of architecture partly hewn in rock and partly erected from blocks of stone. It has been many times visited and described by travellers and, apart from the manuscript literature kept in the archives of the Department of Antiquities, possesses a considerable number of publications.<sup>24</sup> Because of the high level of water in the temple, it was impossible to visit the interior (Fig. 6).

Leaving Derr at 13.30 hrs., we landed at 15.35 hrs. in the northern part of Aniba, where a detailed examination of the archaeological site was made. Aniba, now the main urban and commercial centre of Nubia, with its own port on the Nile, a power station, schools and other public buildings, is one of the most thoroughly studied and described archaeological areas of Lower Nubia (Fig. 7). The most important excavation work there had been conducted by a German expedition under Steindorf and one from Pennsylvania University led by Woolley and Randall Maciver. Emery and Kirwan also had done some excavation work there in the 1930's.

In ancient times, the town had had a fortress reconstructed by Sesostris II, a temple of Horus from the 18th Dynasty, and another erected by Thothmes III. The ruins of the town had not, unfortunately, been sufficiently studied before they were submerged by the Nile waters. The only really attractive archaeological complex now left at Aniba consists of the many necropoles, situated on the present bank of the Nile and inland in the desert.<sup>25</sup>

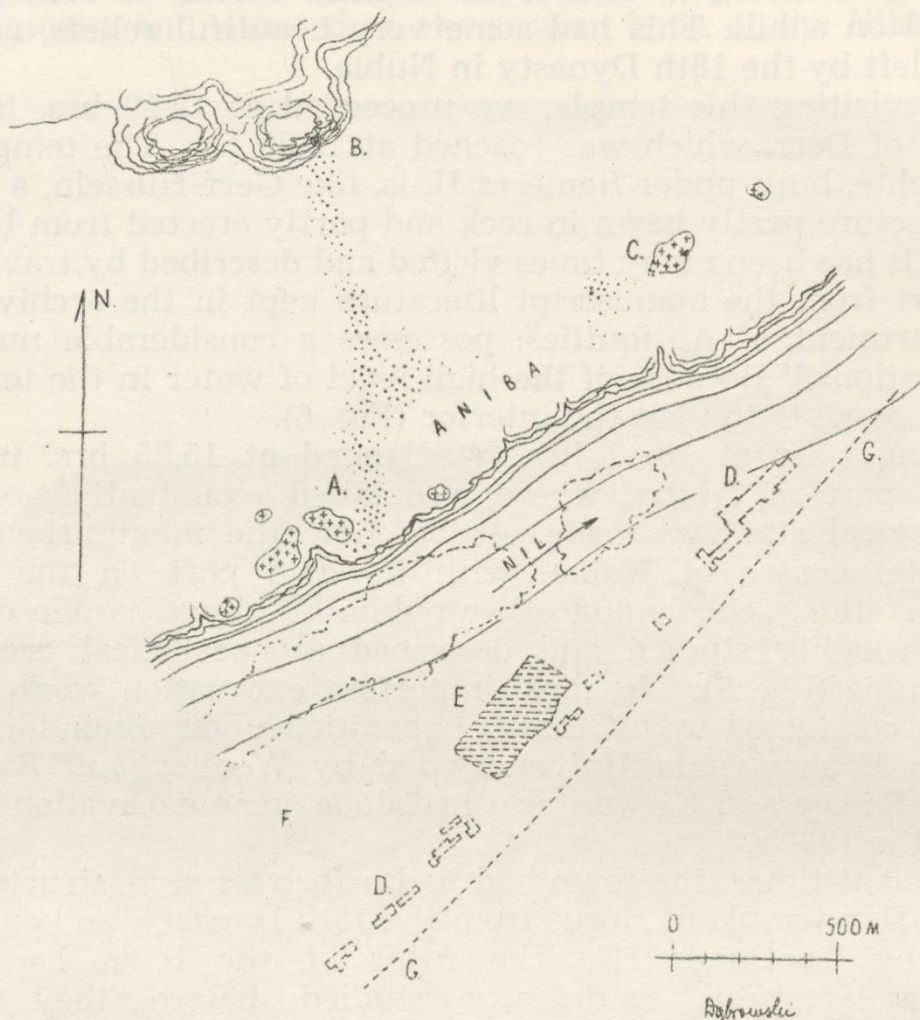
<sup>23</sup> Cf. A. Weigall, *A Report...*, pp. 101 ff.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Blackman, *The Temple of Derr*; Burckhardt, *Travels in Nubia*, pp. 27—29; Wilkinson, *Modern Egyptian Thebes II*, pp. 322—323; Champollion, *Not. Descr. I*, pp. 86—95; L. D. Text V, pp. 102—110; Prokesch, *Das Land zwischen den Katarakten des Nil*, pp. 136—139; Cadalvene, *Bernvery, L'Egypte et la Nubie*, II, pp. 75—76; A. Weigall, *A Report...*, pp. 110—112; Rifand, *Voyage*, pl. 156; Gau, *Antiquités de la Nubie*, pl. 51(a), 52; Horeau, *Panorama d'Egypte et de Nubie*, p. 32; Monneret de Villard, *La Nubie mediaevale I*, Fig. 83, p. 99; Murray, *Egyptian Temples*, pl. LXII (2); Cooper, *Egyptian Scenery*, pl. 30, Moore, *Views on the Nile*, p. 27 (below); Teyard, *Egypte et Nubie*, II, pl. 139—140; Maspero, *Rapports (& c.)*, pl. CXXXVIII—CXL.

<sup>25</sup> The most important literature of the subject: Steindorf, *Aniba*, I—II, Hamburg, 1935; Steindorf, *Aniba, Vorläufiger Bericht*, ASA XXXII, pp. 10 ff.; Steindorf, *Austellung Aegyptischer Altertümer...* Ernst von Sieglin,



Closest to the Nile is a large complex of tombs from the 18th—20th Dynasties, excavated by Emery in the 'thirties. The tombs are hewn in rock in the form of either shallow or deep rectangular shafts, leading to one or several tomb chambers. In one of them we read an inscription: "Treasury scribe Meri, son of Meri, the



7. Northern Aniba. Situation sketch:

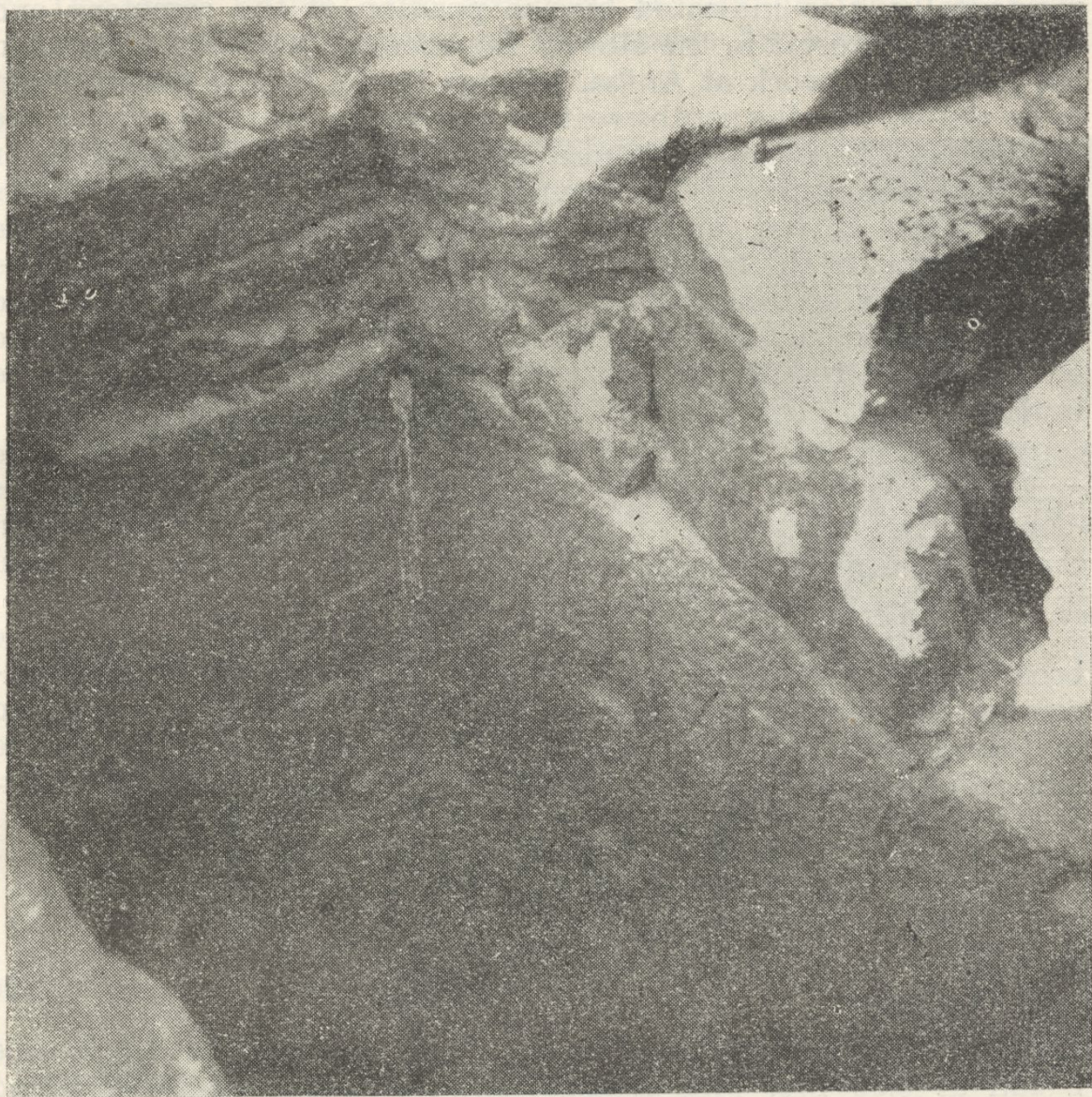
A — necropolis; B — grave of Pe-en-Ne; C — necropolis; D — the old village of Aniba; E — the submerged ruins of the city; F — flooded river bank; G — old river bed of the Nile.

military commander, and of a Lady of the House of Te-Cha" (Fig. 8). In the northern part of the necropolis there are remains of a small pyramid in baked brick, cut in half. In the southern part of this complex can be seen the outlines of the foundations of *mastabas* in baked brick (Middle Kingdom?), excavated by Steindorf.

*Expedition in Nubien 1912*; Woolley, Randall, Maciver, Eckley B. Coxe *Expedition to Nubia*, Archaeological Report, 1907—1908, Pennsylvania Univ. Museum Journal I (1910); A. Weigall, *A Report...*; Monneret de Villard, *La Nubie mediaevale I*, pp. 108 ff.; Wrzesiński, *Bericht über die photographische Expedition*.



We then proceeded through the desert to the *gebel*, for a visit to the 20th Dynasty grave of Pe-en-Ne (Fig. 7). From there we went on to the complex of necropoles situated on the eastern periphery and excavated by the American expedition from Pennsylvania University. This made an impression of having been wholly explored, with many holes among chaotically scattered small stones. Returned to the *dahabiah* at 17.25 hrs., together



8. Meri's rock tomb at Aniba.

with the *gafir* from Aniba. The *kôm* reported on in publications as a remainder of the old city, as well as the remains of the temples and the fortress, are now submerged. At 17.30 hrs., left by boat for the southern region of Aniba, passing Kasr Ibrim at 18.00 hrs. The port of southern Aniba was reached at 18.30 hrs.

In clear moonlight a reconnaissance was made of the two cemeteries situated in this part of the city. The cemetery located



at a distance of 3.5 km (2.2 miles) to the north-east of the port, had not been excavated before. It covers an area of about a hectare (2.5 acres) on the slope of a terrace falling down towards the river. It is marked along its four sides by iron posts. Under a thin layer of sand were found the outlines of tomb constructions from pressed Nile mud. A provisional sounding revealed the outline of a tomb, close in shape to an equilateral triangle, with its shorter side slightly curved, arch-like. This kind of burial, as, incidentally, also indicated by the position of the cemetery and the lack of interest in the site by the scholars who had conducted the excavation work at Aniba, belongs to the Coptic period. Next to be visited was the south-western necropolis, situated outside the settlement. The part of this necropolis situated closer to the river had also been explored by Emery in the 'thirties<sup>26</sup>. In the holes left by the graves, and in the provisional excavation in the northern part of the cemetery pressed Nile mud had been used. The great number of irregular flat stones from 30 to 40 cm (11.8 to 15.7 inches) in height, surrounding the graves constructed in the earth from irregular plates and excavated by Emery, is one indication that the tombs are of the Meroitic type.

It is not impossible that both this necropolis and the one in the north excavated by Emery may contain some individual graves or complexes of graves so far undiscovered. This may involve, in the northern part of the cemetery, the area closer to the river, and in its south-western part the area further up from the river.

The detailed examination of the Aniba area suggests some broad conclusions concerning the general problem of the forthcoming excavations in Nubia. These will be presented at the end of this report, after the notes on the exploratory work in the remaining archaeological sites. Returned to the boat at 20.45 hrs. Left for Abu Simbel at 22.00 hrs.

#### CONFERENCE IN ABU SIMBEL

Saturday, February 1, 1958

Abu Simbel was reached at 2.15 hrs. The visit to the temple began at 6.00 hrs. This magnificent monument of the art and architecture of Lower Nubia, the two temples cut in rock under the reign of Rameses II, cannot be the subject of the present report. Abu Simbel, it is well known, is a unique monument, having no equal among historical relics in other part of the world. The Cairo Centre de Documentation mission, led by Madame Desroches-Noblecourt of the Louvre and subsidized by UNESCO, which has been working there for some years now, has, among

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. W. B. Emery, L. P. Kirwan, *op. cit.*, pp. 227, 294, 491.



other things, been preparing a detailed photogrammetric documentation of the colossi from the façade of the main temple. We made a thorough study of the methods of work of the mission and its achievements so far in the form of plans, drawings, measurements and photographs. A joint conference lasting several hours was subsequently held, attended by the following members of the UNESCO Centre de Documentation mission, staying at Abu Simbel: Professor J. Černý (Oxford) and Mrs Černý, Professor S. Donadoni (Milan), the architect M. Jacquet and Dr Labib Habachi, Inspector General of Monuments for Upper Egypt and Nubia (Fig. 9).



9. The participants in the conference at Abu Simbel: (left to right) Professor Donadoni, Professor Černý, Mrs Černý, Professor Michałowski, Dr Labib Habachi.

In the course of the conference views were exchanged concerning present problems of Nubian archaeology. On the basis of own experience, and using in the discussions the bibliography of the



seventh volume of Porter-Moss, covering the 17 Nubian sites proposed by the Department of Antiquities for excavation work by foreign missions, an agreed view was reached which is embodied in the conclusions in the final part of the present report.

All the archaeological sites we studied had already, in the course of the previous forty years, been the subject of scientific research and excavation work, directed by archaeologists such as Professors Junker, Firth, Weigall, Steindorf, Woolley, Emery, Roeder and Gardiner, as well as by the archaeologists from the Department of Antiquities.

While not all the results have so far been fully published, the most important of them have by now been scientifically worked out. This permits the division of the monuments of Nubia into two categories.

The first embraces relics which for three-fourths of the year are within the inundation of the Nile. This is undoubtedly the most valuable group of relics and includes the majority of temples and *kôms* and remains of the ancient towns and settlements. No systematic excavation work is possible on this group in view of the constant action of the Nile; only cleaning work and occasional soundings are practicable, aimed at collecting a documentation both better and fuller than the one so far available. This, incidentally, is the scope of the work proposed by Professor Donadoni for the Italian Archaeological Mission in Nubia (Riqa and Maharraqa). It is this complex of monuments, too, which is the prime object of Professor Selim Hassan's large-scale plan for the translocation of some of the major relics of Egyptian architecture.

As regards the second category, which embraces the relics at present situated outside the inundation area, the plan concerns, apart from some temples like those at Abu Simbel and Amada and partly also at Sebuia and Gerf Hussein, primarily the complex of *graffitti* and rock tombs and cemeteries.

The problem of rock *graffitti* should be excluded, as being one of documentation rather than excavation. It can be accepted that in all probability almost all the rock tombs have by now either been unearthed or robbed. The hypothesis, raised by Dr Labib Habachi during the discussions, and concerning the existence in the eastern part of the locality of Toshki of a still untouched rock grave, was not confirmed in the course of the examination subsequently conducted by our mission on the afternoon of February 1 in the appropriate necropolis. As regards the robbed tombs, not so far reported on, the problem for the scholar consists in scientific documentation and not in excavation.

The cemeteries, for the most part of the pan-graves type, or of the so-called "C" and Meroitic periods, are a separate question. Certainly, there may remain some major complexes of cemeteries of this type, but most of them have already been excavated by



Professor Emery. In the course of the field studies so far conducted, our mission succeeded in finding three sites which might conceivably contain graves of this kind. These are primarily in the immediate vicinities of the cemeteries unearthed by Emery, e. g. at Aniba, Sebuia and Allaqi.

Excavation of the remaining parts of necropolises of this type cannot, from the scientific point of view, produce any fundamentally new elements to enrich the knowledge of Nubia's past history. It may at best furnish us with some additional elements, analogous to those acquired in earlier excavations. As regards their value as relics, these excavations cannot offer any more interesting documents to enrich museum resources. This is also to a certain extent true of the cemeteries from later epochs — Coptic and Byzantine — since we are dealing in this case with burials of poor people already well known to archaeology. As can be seen from this report, our mission confirmed the existence in Aniba of precisely this kind of cemetery, which, while not having so far been subjected to systematic excavation, had in fact been well known locally, even as regards the location of the individual graves now covered with sand. This very fact undoubtedly prejudices the issue concerning the exploration of the area by extractive excavations.

To sum up: this particular category of archaeological sites is of insufficient scientific value, not to speak of its absolute lack of historical attractiveness, to warrant the organization of costly foreign expeditions for further excavation work, which might just as well be conducted in a much more economical manner by the scientific personnel of the Department of Antiquities with the help of local labour.

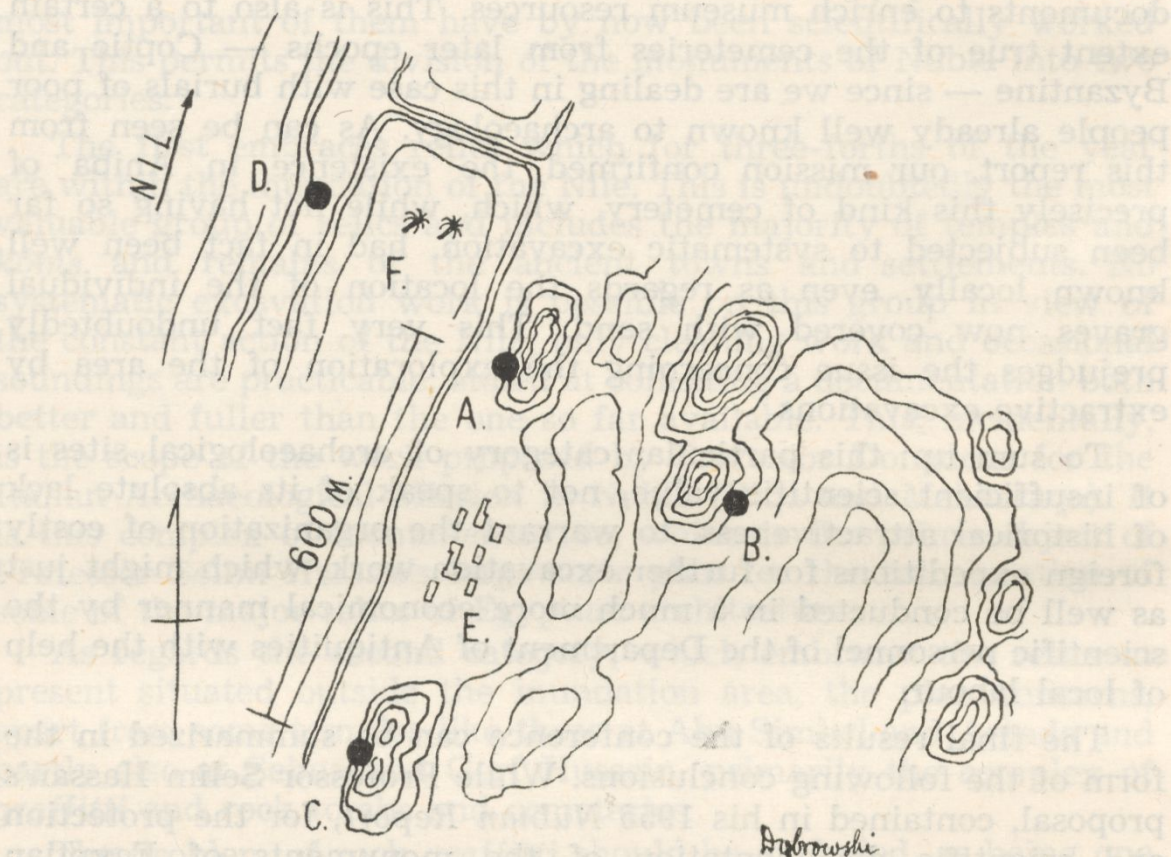
The final results of the conference can be summarized in the form of the following conclusions. While Professor Selim Hassan's proposal, contained in his 1955 *Nubian Report*, for the protection and scientific documentation of the monuments of Egyptian architecture and art in Nubia is wholly correct and practicable, the question of excavation work in the parts of Nubia not at present embraced by the inundation and not reserved to the disposal of the Department of Antiquities — like Ballana and Gostol — should be presented in a somewhat different light. The remaining areas, included in the list of the Department of Antiquities, are not of sufficient scientific value to make the considerable material effort of organizing large-scale excavation expeditions a worth while proposition. This does not, of course detract from the didactic value of excavation work in such areas, work which might be usefully conducted by the institutions engaged in the training of young scientific personnel in Egypt, e.g. the German Archaeological Institute.



\*

After the conference ended and the two temples had been photographed, our mission started on its return trip down the Nile. At 12.00 hrs. the first, and at 12.55 hrs. the second group of ruins of baked-brick buildings on the western bank of the Nile, which constitute remains of settlements from the Graeco-Roman period, were passed. The group closer to Abu Simbel is partly covered by sand. The group further to the north had by now been excavated.

Toshki was reached at 15.00 hrs. The archaeological site of Toshki can be divided into two parts, eastern and western (Fig. 10).



10. Toshki. Situation sketch:

A — rock graffiti; B — rock graffiti; C — rock graves and graffiti; D — landing place; E — village; F — area flooded by the Nile.

The latter embraces graves from the early dynasties up to the Meroitic period. The major part of this necropolis, in which there is no lack of tombs of the pan-grave type, had been excavated by Emery and Kirwan<sup>27</sup>. Of much greater interest is the eastern

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 358 ff., the type of graves most frequently encountered there; A. Weigall (*A Report...*, p. 123) mentions also graves from the Roman and Coptic periods, marked by Emery with the letter C (*op. cit.*, p. 482) and dated to the times from the First Intermediate Period to the reign of Sesostri III.



area of Toshki, embracing rock-cut graves and a considerable number of *graffitti* and rock drawings<sup>28</sup>. Accompanied by the chief *gafir*, who was placed at our disposal for the Toshki area by Dr Labib Habachi, we proceeded from the landing-place to the *gebel* area in so-called eastern Toshki. The road led by a narrow path through a dense, partly submerged palm forest, amidst profuse, almost tropical flora. The millions of tiny flies and mosquitoes, buzzing round our heads, completed the sense of being in a humid forest of Central Africa. The forest came to a sudden end in front of broken *gebel* rocks, with the tropical jungle abruptly changing into an almost moon-like landscape.

We examined and photographed several *graffitti* of the "prehistoric" type (giraffes, cattle), and the neighbouring rock drawings from later epochs — Egyptian, Greek, Coptic and Arabic. To the north of the "A" complex we observed the rock inscription of Ra-hotep,<sup>29</sup> known from scientific literature. A detailed examination of the site of the rock graves was then made. They were found to be in very bad condition. The grave suggested by Dr Labib Habachi as suitable for exploitation turned out to have been robbed.

The results of the examination of the Toshki area permit the following conclusion. This is undoubtedly an area which should be subjected to research with a view to the possible supplementation of earlier documentation; this concerns in particular the *graffitti* and rock drawings. An archaeological mission, consisting of experts, could be entrusted with the additional task of exploring the *gebel* rocks, and especially the three separate hills in the vicinity of the village. A great effort might perhaps lead to the discovery of some small graves still unknown. Any investigation in this area would require great pains and the use of extensive technical means in view of the danger of falls of huge blocks of the broken and vapid sandstone. The eastern Toshki area does not possess, suitable conditions for carrying out a systematic excavation campaign.

The area was left at about 18.00 hrs. We proceeded to Tomas for the night, arriving at 21.15 hrs.

Sunday, February 2, 1958

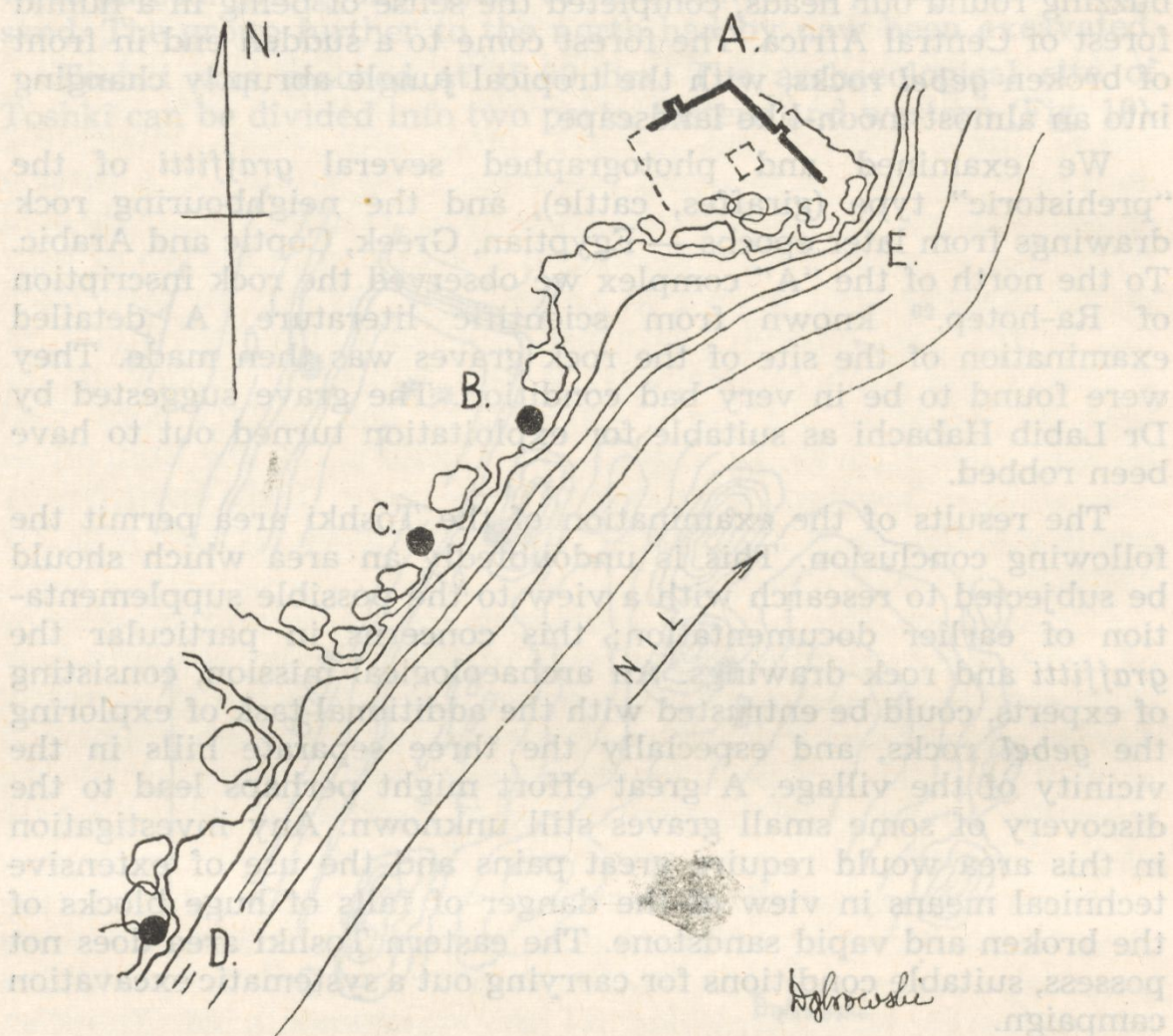
Exploration of the Tomas area was started before dawn, at 6.00 hrs. This area, like Aniba, is among the best studied regions of Lower Nubia (Fig. 11). Almost in the centre rise the ruins of a fortress from the Meroitic period, containing also a fortified

<sup>28</sup> The more important literature: A. Weigall, *A Report...*, Table LXV, p. 126; Gardiner, *Notebook*, 1908, p. 246; E. Meyer, *Neue Nachträge zur ägyptischen Chronologie*, AZ XLIV, p. 115; Gauthier, BIFAO, p. 133; L. D. Text V, p. 133.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Sayce, *Rec. d. Trav.* XVI, pp. 172 ff.



monastery.<sup>30</sup> Of greatest archaeological interest are undoubtedly the rock-cut inscriptions and the rock *graffitti*. The former include a text concerning Governor Setaui with a cartouche of Rameses II, a tombstone of Seti I, an inscription of Amenemopet, viceroy of "Kwš", etc.<sup>31</sup> The *graffitti* of Tomas, most of them dating from the 18th and 19th Dynasties, have already been recorded by Champol-



11. Tomas. Situation sketch:

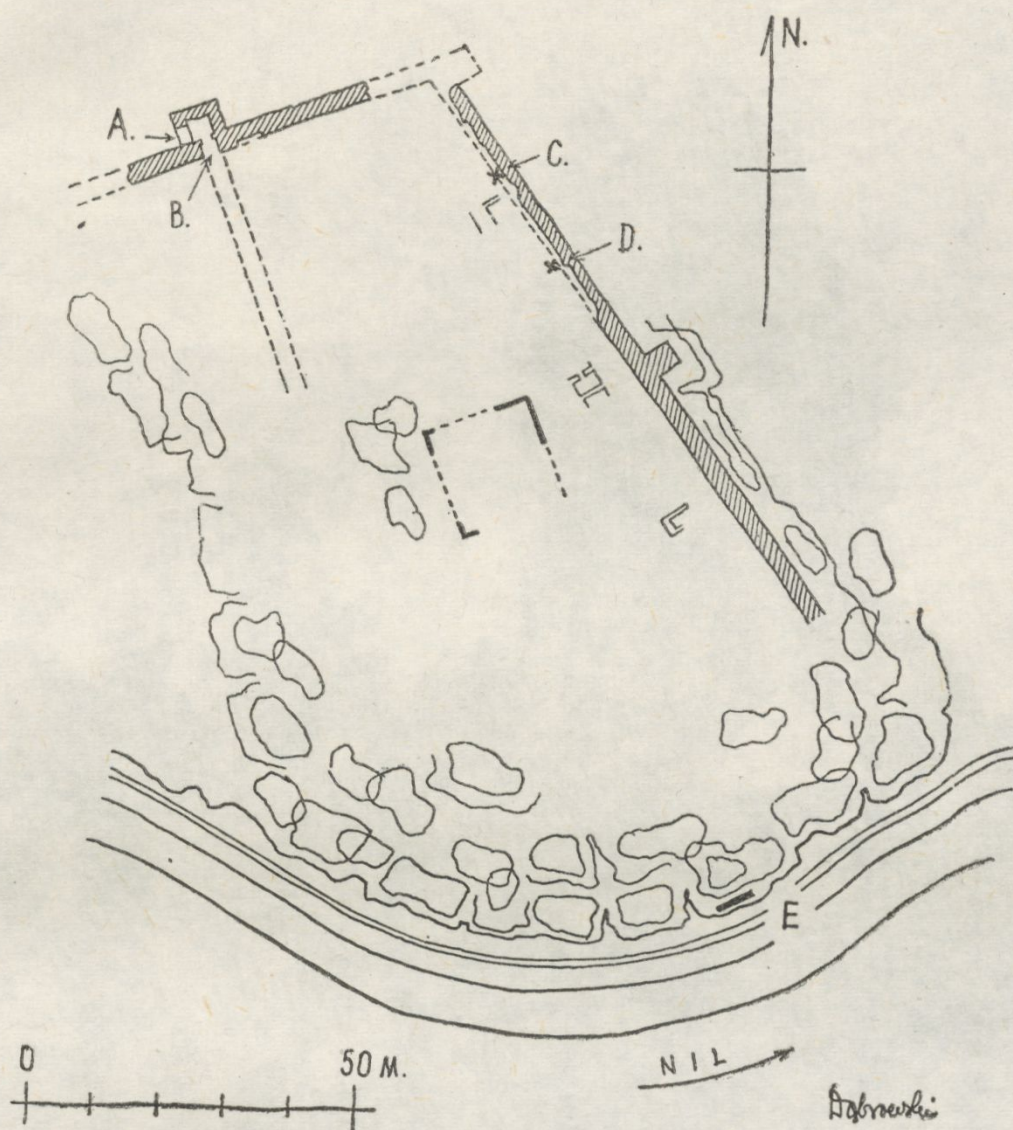
A — site of former fortress or fortified monastery; B — ancient quarries; C — rock *graffitti* and inscriptions; D — submerged graves.

<sup>30</sup> Wilkinson, *Modern Egypt and Thebes*, II, pp. 323 ff.; L. D. Text V, pp. 129 ff.; Woolley, Randall, Maciver, *Expedition to Nubia*..., III, pp. 2 ff.; A. Weigall, *A Report*..., pp. 119 ff.; Monneret de Villard, *La Nubie mediaevale* I, p. 109, Fig. 92; as well as several manuscripts in the archives of the Department of Antiquities.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. A. Weigall, *A Report*..., Table LIV, pp. 108 ff.; Gardiner, *Notebook*, p. 245; Möller, *AZ* LIV, pp. 129 ff.; Sethe, *Urk.* I, pp. 208 ff., (44) (135); Durnbar, *Sudan Notes and Records*, XVII Table. V, pp. 144, 156; Sayce, *Rec. d. Trav.* XVI, pp. 170 ff.



lion<sup>32</sup> and Rossellini.<sup>33</sup> A considerable number have been copied by Lepsius.<sup>34</sup> In addition to the manuscript papers in the archives of the Department of Antiquities, they have also been mentioned and in part reproduced in a number of publications.<sup>35</sup> These relics are only a small part of the Tomas archaeological complex, which stretches as far as the village of Afya (Fig. 12). The complex also includes a cemetery, largely excavated by Emery. The graves of poor people come from the so-called "C" period and the New



12 Tomas. Plan of fortress of fortified monastery:

A — stone arch of entrance gates; B — reconstructed arch; C — fragment of wall of clay-covered stone; D — fragment of baked-brick wall; E — traces of the temple or chapel, started in rock.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Champollion, *Not. Descr. I*, pp. 79 ff.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Rosellini, *Min. del Culto*, pp. 37 ff.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. L. D. Text V, pp. 123 ff.

<sup>35</sup> Morreau, *Panorama d'Egypte et de Nubie*, p. 33; Brugsh, *Thes.* 699; Brestead, photo 2529.



Kingdom; another group belongs to the Meroitic and Coptic periods.<sup>36</sup>

The main stress in the exploration work was laid on the ruins of the Meroitic fortress with the fortified monastery. The relic is in a state of complete desolation. The remains of the walls of one of the watch-towers and several chambers are partly covered with



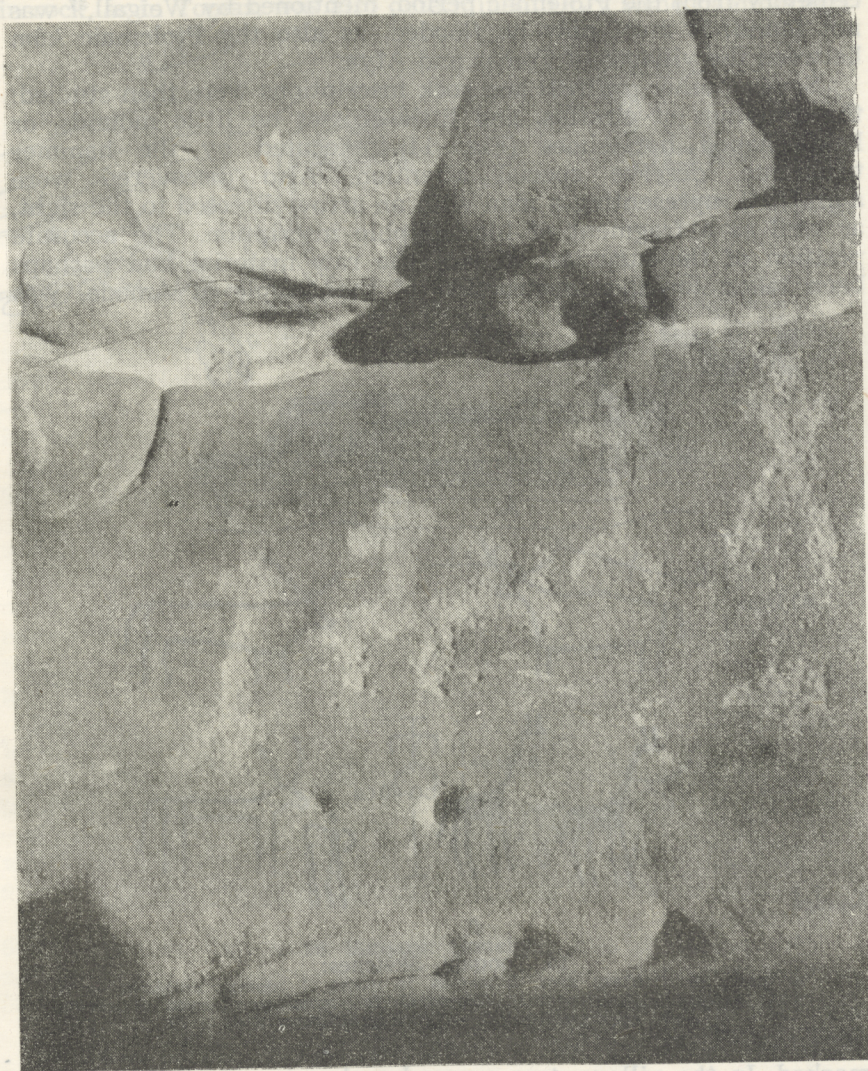
13. Stone gate at Tomas.

rubble and sand. The sandstone entrance gate with the arch (Fig. 13) and a second gate with an arch of baked brick have been relatively well preserved. This monument would be suitable for partial conservation, if it were to remain outside the limits of the

<sup>36</sup> W. B. Emery, L. P. Kirwan, *op. cit.*, pp. 208—212, 267 ff.



future Nile inundation. Moreover, the complex of ruins could be subjected to accurate conservation and documentation following cleaning operations, but it does not possess the character of an excavation site.



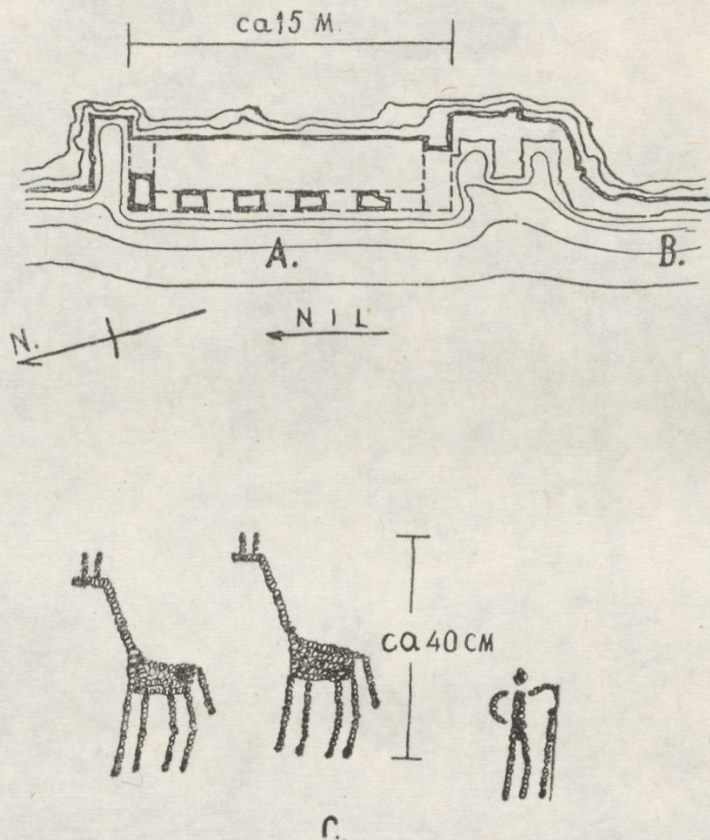
14. Graffiti at Tomas.

We proceeded to an examination of some of the rock inscriptions referred to above, and of the place, where hewing of a temple or chapel in rock had been begun in the times of



Rameses II. The stairs and the cavities for the *naos* have been preserved. Proceeding in the southerly direction, a search was made of the river-bank rocks and rock fissures in the southern part of Tomas village, up to Khor Bed er Risk. The robbed cemetery from the Ptolemaic period, mentioned by Weigall,<sup>37</sup> was not found; it must now be flooded, as also the Ptolemaic *kôm* between the villages of Tomas and Afya.

Several other *graffitti* and rock inscriptions were then studied; the drawings of giraffes, and little crosses on little mounds, or heart-shaped horseshoes (Fig. 14), executed by the hammer technique, deserve special attention. Also discovered were a *graffitti* representing a man with an arrow directed to the right, as well as a fragment of hieroglyphic inscription. The accurate position of the quarries, whence the raw material had perhaps been taken for the construction of the temple at Amada, was



15. Tonqala. Sketches:

A — unfinished rock structures; B — location of rock  
graffitti; C — rock graffitti.

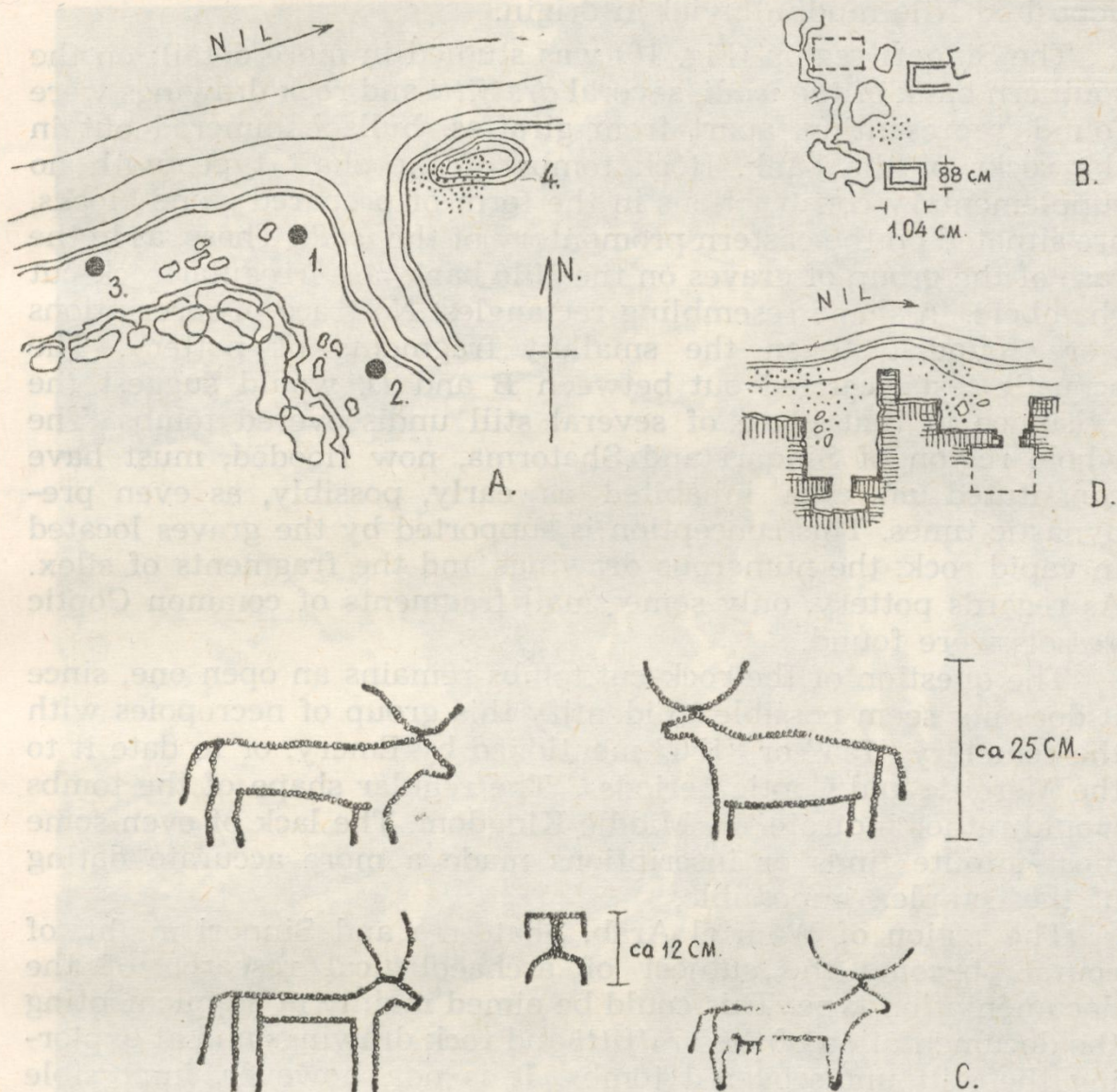
marked. In the village, two covered rock-cut graves of the shaft type were re-discovered.

At 8.30 hrs. left Tomas by boat for Tonqala on the eastern bank, where, between 9.00 and 9.25 hrs., an examination was

<sup>37</sup> Cf. A. Weigall, *A Report...*, p. 108.



made of the *graffitti*, "prehistoric" in type although in fact dating from the period of the Middle and New Kingdoms (Fig. 15): these represents giraffes, bulls and hunters, hammered in rock on the Nile bank.<sup>38</sup> In the vicinity, the position of the sanctuary started in rock, as in Tomas, was also determined. Only some hammerings



#### 16. Sinqara. Sketches:

A — situation sketch: 1. group of graves; 2. rock graffiti; 3. group of graves; 4. *kôm* from the side of the Nile; B — group of graves (A1); C — rock graffiti (A2); D — group of graves (A3).

in rock, taking the shape of niches and fragments of frames have remained. We failed, however, to determine the place of Emery's excavations in the necropolis from the Meroitic period.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> A. Weigall, *A Report...*, p. 113, Table LXIV.

<sup>39</sup> W. B. Emery, L. P. Kirwan, *op. cit.*, p. 210.



From Tonqala, we left for Abu Handal, whence, no archaeo-logical relics being found there, we moved on to the region of Sinqari, Shatorma and Wadi el Arab, which constitutes a geologically compact and geographically uniform complex of *gebel*, intersected by several *wadis*, characterized by the thick layers of deposited Nile mud, alluvial in origin.

The Sinqari region (Fig. 16) was studied in more detail; on the southern bank of the *wadi*, several *graffitti* and rock drawings were found, representing, apart from giraffes, bulls hammered out in the rocks of the bank. Rock tombs of the shaft type, with no supplementary constructions in the form of prepared stone blocks, are situated on the eastern promontory of the *wadi*. These, as in the case of the group of graves on the Nile bank, are irregular rock-cut chambers, in shape resembling rectangles. No trace of inscriptions were found or even the smallest fragments of pottery. The acoustic tests, carried out between B and D, would suggest the existence in that place of several still undiscovered tombs. The whole region of Sinqari and Shatorma, now flooded, must have constituted an area inhabited as early, possibly, as even pre-dynastic times. This conception is supported by the graves located in vapid rock, the numerous drawings and the fragments of silex. As regards pottery, only some small fragments of common Coptic vessels were found.

The question of the rock-cut tombs remains an open one, since it does not seem possible to identify this group of necropolises with the cemetery "155" or "156" mentioned by Emery, or to date it to the Meroitic and Coptic periods.<sup>40</sup> The regular shape of the tombs would rather indicate the Middle Kingdom. The lack of even some most minute finds or inscriptions made a more accurate dating of the complex impossible.

The region of Wadi el Arab, Shatorma and Sinqari might, of course, become the subject of archaeological research of the documentation type. This could be aimed mainly at supplementing the documentation of the *graffitti* and rock drawings and at exploring the still undiscovered tombs. It is not, however, impossible that they have already been the object of skilful extractive excavations.

The region of Sinqari and Shatorma was left between 13.00 and 14.00 hrs. On the way north, we stopped in front of the temple at Sebuia at 15.25 hrs. for additional photographs. At 21.30 hrs. we arrived at Merieh for the night.

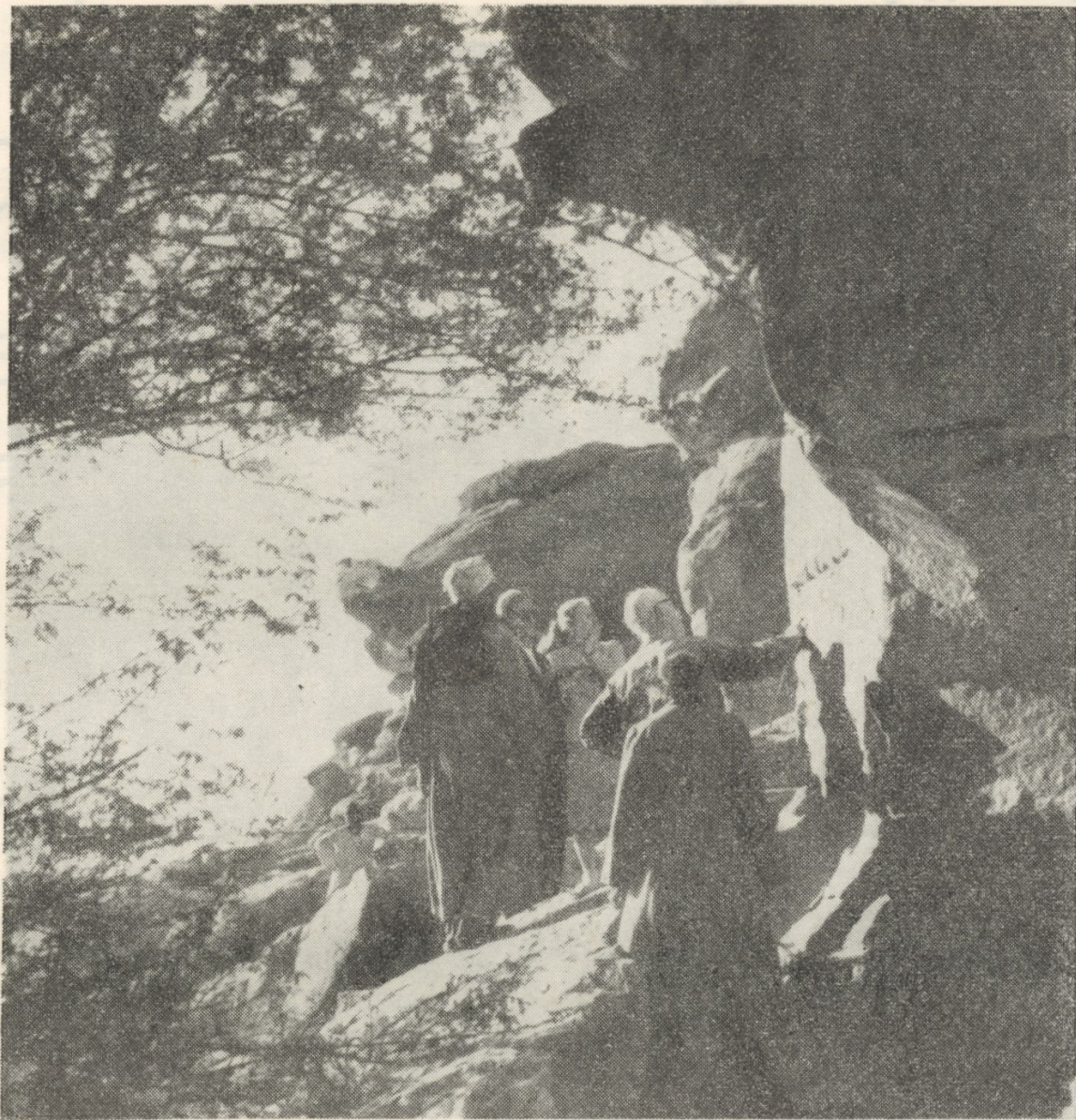
Monday, February 3, 1958

An archaeological examination of the Merieh area was made between 6.15 and 8.20 hrs. Under highly difficult conditions of terrain, on a rock promontory over a precipice, (Fig. 17) an

<sup>40</sup> W. B. Emery, L. P. Kirwan, op. cit., p. 148.



examination was made of a number of rock *graffitti*, representing boats and cattle; these included hieroglyphic and hieratic inscriptions (Fig. 18). Weigall<sup>41</sup> dates the texts to the 11th and 12th Dynasties. Some of them, however, seem to have had their origin



17. Examination of the rock *graffitti* at Merieh.

in the Old Kingdom period (Fig. 19). Also foot marks were observed on the road to the chapel mentioned by Weigall;<sup>42</sup> the chapel, however, was not found. It is probably situated under part of the new settlement of Merieh, moved on to a higher level after the enlargement of the Aswan dam.

<sup>41</sup> A. Weigall, *A Report...*, p. 30.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. A. Weigall, *A Guide...*, p. 116.



On top of the high plain rising over the steeply sloped *gebel* rocks, a number of shallow excavations were observed, stretching in several belts in the north-south direction; these were probably remains from the excavation of the cemetery, possibly of the pan-graves type, conducted in the area.



18. Graffiti and rock inscription at Merieh.

The Merieh area constituted the last stage of our expedition to Nubia. On our way back, we photographed the pylons of the temples at Debot and Philae protruding from the water.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Throughout our trip to Nubia, an evening report on each day's field work was prepared. A report in French for the Department of Antiquities contains the most essential conclusions drawn from



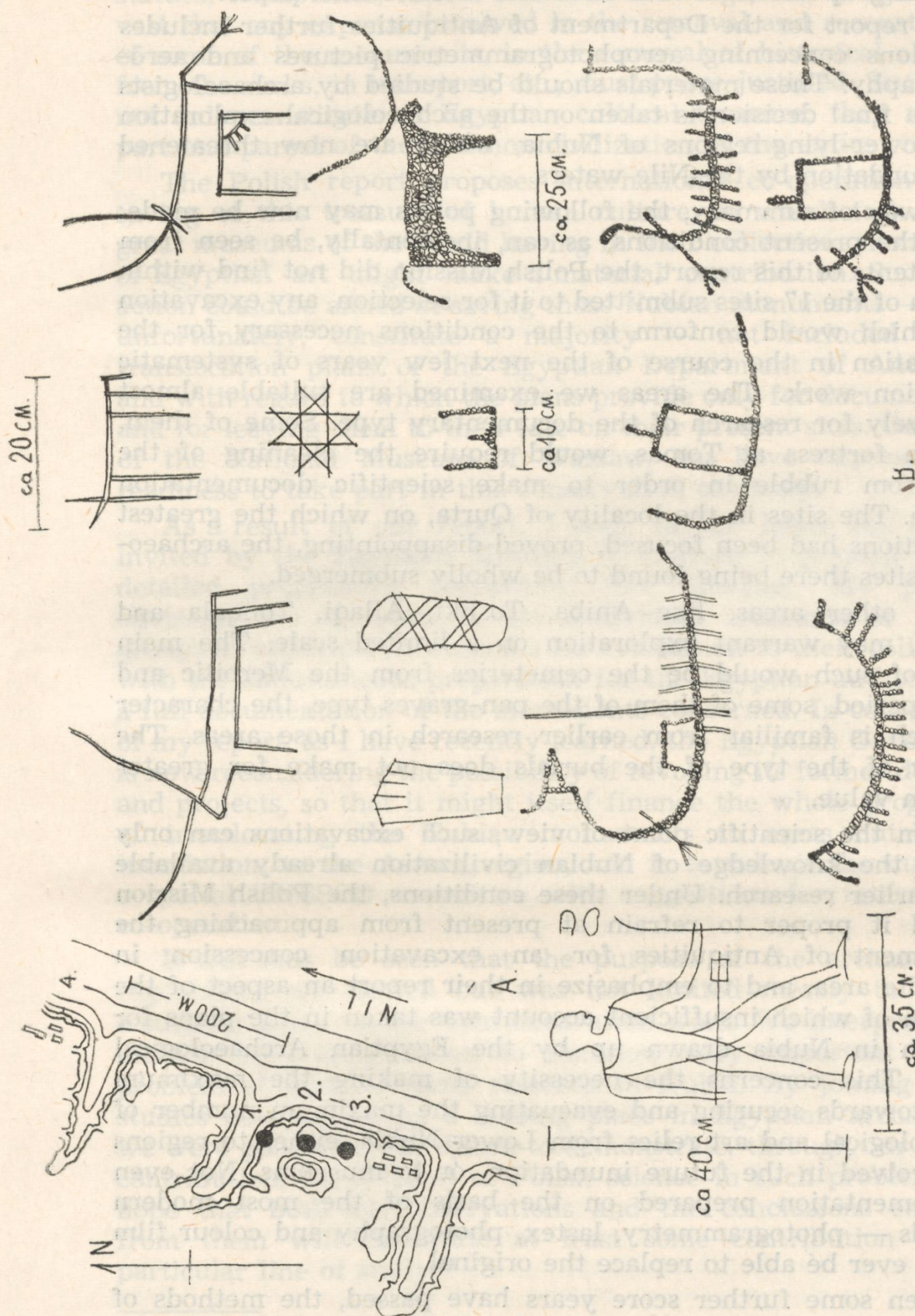


Fig. 10. Merieh. Sketches:

A — situation sketch: 1. rock graffiti; 2. traces of graves; 3. rock graffiti; 4. landing-place: B — rock graffiti.



the autopsy of the terrain; these constitute to a certain extent also a summing-up of the final conclusions of the Polish paper.

The report for the Department of Antiquities further includes suggestions concerning aerophotogrammetric pictures and aerophotography. These materials should be studied by archaeologists before a final decision is taken on the archaeological exploration of the lower-lying regions of Nubia, which are now threatened with inundation by the Nile waters.

By way of summary, the following points may now be made: Under the present conditions, as can, incidentally, be seen from the contents of this report, the Polish Mission did not find within the area of the 17 sites submitted to it for selection, any excavation sites which would conform to the conditions necessary for the organization in the course of the next few years of systematic excavation work. The areas we examined are suitable almost exclusively for research of the documentary type. Some of them, like the fortress at Tomas, would require the cleaning of the ruins from rubble in order to make scientific documentation possible. The sites in the locality of Qurta, on which the greatest expectations had been focused, proved disappointing, the archaeological sites there being found to be wholly submerged.

The other areas, like Aniba, Toshki, Allaqi, Tonqala and Sinqari, may warrant exploration on a limited scale. The main object of such would be the cemeteries from the Meroitic and Coptic period, some of them of the pan-graves type, the character of which is familiar from earlier research in those areas. The poverty of the type of the burials does not make for greater museum value.

From the scientific point of view, such excavations can only add to the knowledge of Nubian civilization already available from earlier research. Under these conditions, the Polish Mission deemed it proper to refrain at present from approaching the Department of Antiquities for an excavation concession in a definite area, and to emphasize in their report an aspect of the problem of which insufficient account was taken in the plans for research in Nubia drawn up by the Egyptian Archaeological Office. This concerns the necessity of making the maximum effort towards securing and evacuating the maximum number of archaeological and art relics from Lower Nubia, either to regions not involved in the future inundation, or to museums. Not even a documentation prepared on the basis of the most modern methods — photogrammetry, lastex, photography and colour film — will ever be able to replace the original.

When some further score years have passed, the methods of documentation at present considered as the last word in technique will quite probably prove to be absolutely inadequate and



outdated. The historical value of the monumental temples, statues, tombstones, reliefs and rock drawings, and *graffitti* is so vast that any expense involved in the removal and reconstruction of some of the monuments, in the removal of historical elements from the rocks, in transport, etc., must prove justified. Such relics not only constitute an Egyptian cultural treasure; they are also part and parcel of the common civilization of the entire world.

The Polish report proposes international co-operation in the saving of this treasure of human culture, to which task all the great museums of the world having in their collections monuments of Egyptian art might make a material contribution. Such joint action could be aimed at saving those Nubian monuments — which unfortunately, constitute a majority — not included in the translocation plans of the Egyptian Department of Antiquities and with regard to which the plans provide only for documentation and for leaving them to their fate on their present sites. On behalf of the National Museum of Warsaw, we have expressed our readiness to take part in this conservation campaign.

As a result of our report, I was, in the latter half of 1958, invited by the Egyptian Ministry of Culture to present a more detailed programme concerning this question. My proposal envisaged the allocation to the individual museums of specific groups of historical monuments for evacuation to their collections, with the simultaneous preparation for the Egyptian authorities of a full documentation of the monuments concerned. In consequence of my report, as I have recently learned, the Egyptian Government is now reconsidering the possibility of revoking its former decisions and projects, so that it might itself finance the whole programme of translocating the Nubian monuments to areas outside the inundation, to the Aswan region, and is to submit the matter to a special UNESCO committee with suggestions for international co-operation.

It will thus be seen that the purpose of the archaeological exploration we carried out was not limited merely to finding a suitable place for our own excavation work. We interpreted our mission as a contribution to the now very important general problem of archaeological research in Nubia. By joining in the studies now occupying a leading place in Egyptian archaeology, we were guided by the desire to demonstrate, through our modest contribution, the interest of Polish science in such problems. We hope that both our observations and the conclusions emerging from them will constitute at least some contribution to this particular line of study.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> The total distance covered by our expedition in both directions amounted to some 600 kilometres (370 miles).



## ANNEXE I

Assouan, le 8 février 1958.

Monsieur le Directeur Général  
du Service des Antiquités d'Égypte  
Le Caire

Monsieur le Directeur Général,

Conformément à l'autorisation que vous avez bien voulu me donner dans votre lettre N° 25/4/38, de 26 janvier 1958, la Mission Polonaise a effectué la prospection archéologique dans la Basse Nubie, à partir de Chellal jusqu'à Abou Simbel.

La mission a été composée de cinq personnes, à savoir: prof. K. Michałowski — directeur, M. T. Andrzejewski — adjoint, M. L. Dąbrowski — architecte de la mission, Mme B. Gąssowska — assistante et Mlle A. Szczudłowska — assistante.

La visite en Nubie a été effectuée avec le concours de l'Ambassade de Pologne au Caire qui nous a assuré le moyen de transport, une *dahabiyéh* avec le remorqueur, de 23 janvier jusqu'au 4 février.

Le but de ce voyage consistait à faire la prospection archéologique de tous les sites que vous avez présentés aux missions étrangères. Ainsi nous avons eu l'opportunité d'étudier sur place les lieux archéologiques suivants: Mariéh, El-Allaqi, Quttéh, Seboua, la région de Wadi-el-Arab — Shantorma — Sinqari, Abou Handal, Tomas, Tonqala, Anibéh et Toshki. En même temps nous avons profité de cette occasion pour visiter quelques temples: Guerf Houssein, Seboua, Amada et Abou Simbel.

Nous avons omis la visite de Ballana et Qostul qui, suivant votre information, seront prochainement fouillés par la mission du Service, dirigé par le professeur Selim Hassan et M. Zaki Saad.

Ayant organisé le trajet du bateau surtout pendant la nuit, la prospection se faisait toute la journée, depuis 6 heures du matin, c. à d. avant le lever du soleil, jusqu'à une heure après le coucher du soleil. Dans des certains endroits, on a pu prolonger la visite du terrain pendant les premières heures de la nuit, grâce au éclairage favorable de la lune. On a pu quelquefois effectuer des petits sondages de reconnaissance (p. ex. Anibéh), afin d'établir le caractère et la chronologie des certains ensembles archéologiques.

Ainsi, je me permets, à la base des recherches effectués par ma mission, de vous présenter les conclusions de mon rapport, plus détaillé, que je pense pouvoir bientôt publier. J'espère aussi de vous envoyer dans quelques jours les photographies et desseins, exécutés au cours de ce voyage.

La prospection archéologique en Nubie nous a permis de se rendre compte sur place, du caractère différent — en ce qui concerne l'appli-



cation des méthodes de recherche — de deux grands groupes de monuments et sites archéologiques dans ce pays.

Le premier groupe est composé de monuments et sites archéologiques, actuellement immergés par les eaux du Nil. Ce sont: la majorité de temples, tous les *kôms* de décombres des anciennes villes et villages, une partie de constructions militaires et quelques cimetières.

Le groupe en question comprend les monuments auxquels le plan dressé par le professeur Selim Hassan, vu la protection des biens culturels de Nubie, s'adapte parfaitement.

J'aimerais, de ma part, mettre encore en relief la nécessité d'utiliser tous les moyens possibles, économiques et techniques, afin de sauver pour l'humanité les chefs-d'œuvre de l'art et d'archéologie égyptiennes. Il me semble qu'il ne faut pas se borner seulement à la documentation de ces monuments (film en couleurs, moulage etc.), même la plus exacte, mais qu'il faut faire un grand effort, technique et économique, pour transporter ces monuments dans des régions non affectées par des inondations, ainsi qu'aux musées.

Il paraît qu'après la prochaine surélévation du barrage, ces monuments seront à jamais couverts par les eaux du Nil et qu'ils ne seront visibles même pendant une courte saison de l'année. On pourrait envisager ici un concours des musées étrangers qui seraient capables de se charger des frais du démontage, transport etc. Je crois que le Musée National de Varsovie, que j'ai l'honneur de représenter dans votre pays, serait tout à fait disposé de collaborer à une telle action.

Il va sans dire que les *kôms*, certaines nécropoles appartenant à ce groupe ne peuvent pas être objets des fouilles archéologiques systématiques. Une courte campagne des fouilles dans la saison d'été ne suffirait pas à relever un site entier, or la seconde campagne, dans l'année suivante, est impossible, vu l'affectation du chantier ouvert de la campagne précédente, par les eaux du fleuve. On pourra seulement se borner aux sondages, afin d'obtenir accès aux parties de certains monuments, pour les étudier d'une façon plus exacte. Par exemple ainsi est conçu le programme de la mission italienne du professeur Dunadoni qui pense étudier le temple ptolémaïque à Maharraqa.

Le second groupe de monuments et sites archéologiques en Nubie présente un aspect tout à fait différent. A ce groupe appartiennent tous les sites laissés par le Service aux missions étrangères, ainsi qu'une partie du terrain réservé par le Service à sa disposition (p. ex. Kasr Ibrim). Ce groupe comprend aussi quelques temples non immergés, mais les problèmes qu'ils présentent, vu l'étude archéologique et la protection des monuments, est analogue à ceux des temples appartenant au premier groupe. (Les temples d'Abou Simbel présentent un problème tout à fait spécial qui dépasse les cadres de mon rapport).

Il s'agit ici surtout d'une grande quantité de graffiti, d'inscriptions et d'une partie de stèles sur les rochers, et de cimetières de différentes époques. Exception faite des vestiges militaires et probablement religieux de la période byzantine, comme p. ex. les ruines de Tomas. Notre prospec-



tion détaillée a montré que nous avons à faire ici, au plupart, ou avec des nécropoles qui ont été étudiés par des missions précédentes (Junker, Firth, Weigall, Steindorff, Roeder, Woolley, Emery, Gardiner et Zaki Saad), ou bien avec des tombeaux complètement pillés au cours des fouilles clandestines.

Evidemment, il en reste, dans des certains endroits, des parties des cimetières faisant la suite des nécropoles fouillées, comme p. ex. à Seboua et Anibéh (est et ouest), ou à Allaqi. Il s'agit ici surtout de, soit disant, *pan-graves* dont le type de sépulture est bien connu, et, de point de vue archéologique, ne présente pas un intérêt spécial pour l'histoire du pays. On pourrait, évidemment, enrichir le matériel archéologique, en ouvrant une quarantaine de ces tombes, mais ce matériel ne fournirait ni de nouveaux problèmes, ni d'objets dignes d'exposition aux musées. On peut considérer de la même façon les cimetières coptes, caractéristiques par des sépultures pauvres. Nous avons pu nous rendre compte sur place, en étudiant à Anibéh, un cimetière copte, qui n'a pas été jusqu'à présent l'objet des fouilles systématiques, mais dont la situation des tombes particulières est bien connue par la population.

Il me semble que ce qui attend ce groupe de monuments, c'est un travail archéologique de caractère plutôt de documentation sur place (graffiti, inscriptions, stèles, forteresses), que de fouilles proprement dites.

Il va sans dire qu'une équipe, comprenant les spécialistes pour relever des différentes catégories de desseins et d'inscriptions, devrait faire en même temps une prospection détaillée, complémentaire, du terrain, à la recherche des monuments qui ont pu échapper à notre connaissance. Le site de Toshki présenterait un exemple très caractéristique pour ces méthodes d'exploration.

Je ne crois pas qu'il soit nécessaire d'organiser des fouilles archéologiques, à grande échelle, pour explorer ce qui reste de vestiges appartenant à ce groupe. On peut au plus penser aux valeurs didactiques et instructives d'une fouille qui p. ex. serait la continuation du travail de prof. Emery, dans un des sites, une fouille qui pourrait présenter l'intérêt pour un des instituts étrangers, établi au Caire, pour perfectionner des jeunes fouilleurs dans des méthodes des travaux d'exploration.

En vous présentant, Monsieur Le Directeur Général, mon opinion sur le caractère des sites archéologiques que vous m'avez présentés à choisir pour la fouille, je me permets d'ajouter quelques suggestions de caractère général.

Avant de dresser le programme définitif d'exploration archéologique de la Nubie, il me semble nécessaire d'exécuter l'aérophotogrammetrie et les aérophotographies de tout le terrain qui sera submergé après la prochaine surélévation du barrage. Les cartes dressées d'après le procédé photogrammétrique doivent donner les limites exactes des futures submersions. Les agrandissements des aérophotographies pourraient montrer aux archéologues les limites des sites archéologiques non encore connus. Je suis d'avis que l'adoption de ces deux méthodes techniques doit précéder toutes les décisions définitives concernant l'exploration archéologique de Nubie.



Je me réserve, après avoir étudié les données d'aérophotographie, de pouvoir changer mon opinion, basée seulement sur les méthodes traditionnelles de la prospection du terrain.

Je profite, Monsieur le Directeur Général, de cette occasion pour vous remercier, encore une fois, au nom de ma Mission, de nous avoir donné la permission d'effectuer ce très instructif voyage. Je vous prie de vouloir bien transmettre mes remerciements, très sincères, à M. Labib Habachi et M. Iakoub Farag qui nous ont donné toutes facilités dans l'étude difficile du terrain. Si vous, après avoir fait la connaissance de mon rapport, jugerez utile de me demander des informations plus précises sur le travail effectué par ma Mission, je suis toujours à votre disposition.

Veillez agréer, Monsieur le Directeur Général, l'expression de ma très haute considération.

*Prof. dr Kazimierz Michałowski*

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Directeur de la Mission Archéologique Polonaise  
en Egypte

P. S.

Le Caire, le 10 Février 1958.

Après avoir rédigé le présent rapport j'ai eu l'occasion, hier, à Shellal, de visiter le Bureau de Construction du Nouveau Barrage. J'ai constaté que le Bureau possède toute la documentation aérophotogrammetrique et aérophotographique de tout le terrain qui sera submergé. Il serait donc préférable que le Service des Antiquités prend le contact avec les autorités compétents du Barrage pour obtenir la dite documentation afin pour la mettre à la disposition des archéologues intéressés dans les fouilles en Nubie.

(—) K. Michałowski

## ANNEXE II

Varsovie, le 12 octobre 1958.

### Projet

du Prof. Kazimierz Michałowski, concernant la préservation des monuments d'art et d'architecture de la Nubie

Me référant à mon rapport de 8 février 1958, adressé à M. le Directeur Général du Service des Antiquités et concernant le terrain archéologique qui sera submergé après la prochaine surélévation du barrage, je me permet d'attirer l'attention à cette partie de mon rapport qui traite la question du démontage et du transport des monuments.



M. Sélim Hassan dans son *Rapport sur les monuments de Nubie* (Le Caire 1955) prévoit le sauvetage de certains temples et monuments et leur transport à l'île d'Assouan (p. 35). Ces monuments seraient: le kiosque de Kortasse, le temple d'Amada et certaines statues des temples d'Es-Seboua et d'Abou Simbel. En plus, dans son *Rapport* M. Sélim Hassan suggère la création d'un musée et d'un institut scientifique dans l'île d'Assouan, pour conserver et étudier les monuments sauvés de la Nubie. Dans le dit *Rapport* il a aussi évalué les frais de transport à 111 000 Lég. et de la création du musée à 80 000 Lég.

On ne peut que féliciter M. Sélim Hassan de son idée dont le but est sauver les oeuvres, les plus importants de l'art et de l'archéologie égyptienne de la Nubie. Mais il me semble qu'il faudrait faire le plus grand effort pour s'assurer la préservation non seulement de cette catégorie choisie des monuments, mais de tous les autres monuments qui seraient à jamais couverts par les eaux du Nil.

Il est compréhensible que pour l'archéologie égyptienne, une fois la documentation de ces catégories des monuments faite (films en couleurs, moulages etc.), ils ne présentent pas un intérêt spécial, vu la grande quantité de chefs-d'oeuvre d'art égyptien, préservés sur le territoire et dans les musées de l'Egypte. Mais du point de vue général, cet ensemble d'architecture sacrale qui, suivant le projet de M. Sélim Hassan, devrait rester sur place et être couvert à jamais par des eaux du Nil, présente tout de même un grand intérêt muséologique.

Il faudrait envisager ici un concours des musées étrangers qui seraient enclins de se charger du démontage et du transport de ces éléments qui n'entrent pas dans les projets du Service des Antiquités, comprenant la création du musée et de l'institut à Assouan.

Voilà la liste des monuments qui seront abandonnés à jamais en Nubie:

1. Le temple de Debôd
2. La citadelle et les carrières de Kortasse
3. Le temple de Kalabsha
4. Le temple de Beit el-Ouali à Kalabsha
5. Le temple de Dendour
6. Le temple de Guerf Houssein
7. Le temple de Dakké
8. Tous les éléments non prévus dans le projet de M. Sélim Hassan du temple d'Es-Seboua
9. Le temple d'El-Derr
10. Les temples de Qasr Ibrim
11. Le temple d'El-Lissieh
12. Le tombeau de Pennout, ainsi que les autres éléments des nécropoles à Aniba
13. Le temple à Maharraqa
14. Le temple d'Abou Oda.
15. Il va sans dire qu'à cette liste il faut ajouter les temples d'Abou Simbel dans le cas où le Service des Antiquités déciderait de les laisser



tels quels, vu les difficultés de la réalisation d'un des projets concernant la conservation sur place.

16. Il faut aussi envisager le transport des différents graffitti, inscriptions et stèles taillés dans le rocher dans des régions telles que Mérieh, El-Allaqi, Tomas, Shantorma, Singara, Abou Handel et Toshki.

Tout ce travail pourrait être organisé de cette façon que les missions des musées étrangers auxquels serait donnée l'autorisation de transporter de l'Egypte tels ou autres monuments archéologiques, seraient obligées à remettre au Service des Antiquités une documentation complète prise sur place comprenant les films en couleurs, les maquettes, les estampages et les moulages ainsi que se charger de la publication définitive des monuments.

Quels seront les avantages du programme proposé?

1. Tous les monuments d'art et d'archéologie de la Nubie seront préservés pour l'humanité.

2. L'enrichissement des grands musées en monuments provenant de la Nubie contribuera à la connaissance et à l'appréciation de la civilisation égyptienne. Ces monuments seront en même temps le meilleur ambassadeur de l'histoire de l'Egypte dans le monde entier.

3. Les futures études détaillées pourront toujours être effectuées sur l'autopsie des monuments originaux.

4. Le Service des Antiquités fera une économie de dépenses pour l'exécution des maquettes, films moulages etc. qui lui seront fournis par des missions étrangères qui prendront la charge du démontage et transport des monuments.

Pour résumer, nous voudrions encore une fois mettre en relief qu'il s'agit dans notre projet seulement de cette catégorie des monuments qui dans le projet du Service des Antiquités sont destinés à être à jamais perdus sous les eaux du Nil. Il ne s'agit pas donc des objets qui pourraient intéresser les musées d'Egypte. Pour réaliser ce projet le Service des Antiquités devrait effectuer une enquête parmi les grands musées du monde, afin de s'assurer la participation des missions étrangères compétentes parmi lesquelles se ferait le partage des sites en question.

A la fin il faut encore souligner un aspect plus général de cette exploration. Dans les travaux qui ont pour but sauver les grands monuments de la civilisation égyptienne en Nubie, pourra se manifester l'effort scientifique de la collaboration internationale beaucoup plus compréhensible pour les peuples de différents pays du monde que dans des fouilles complémentaires des sites pratiquement épuisés qui ne présentent d'intérêt qu'au groupe restreint de spécialistes.

(—) K. Michałowski