

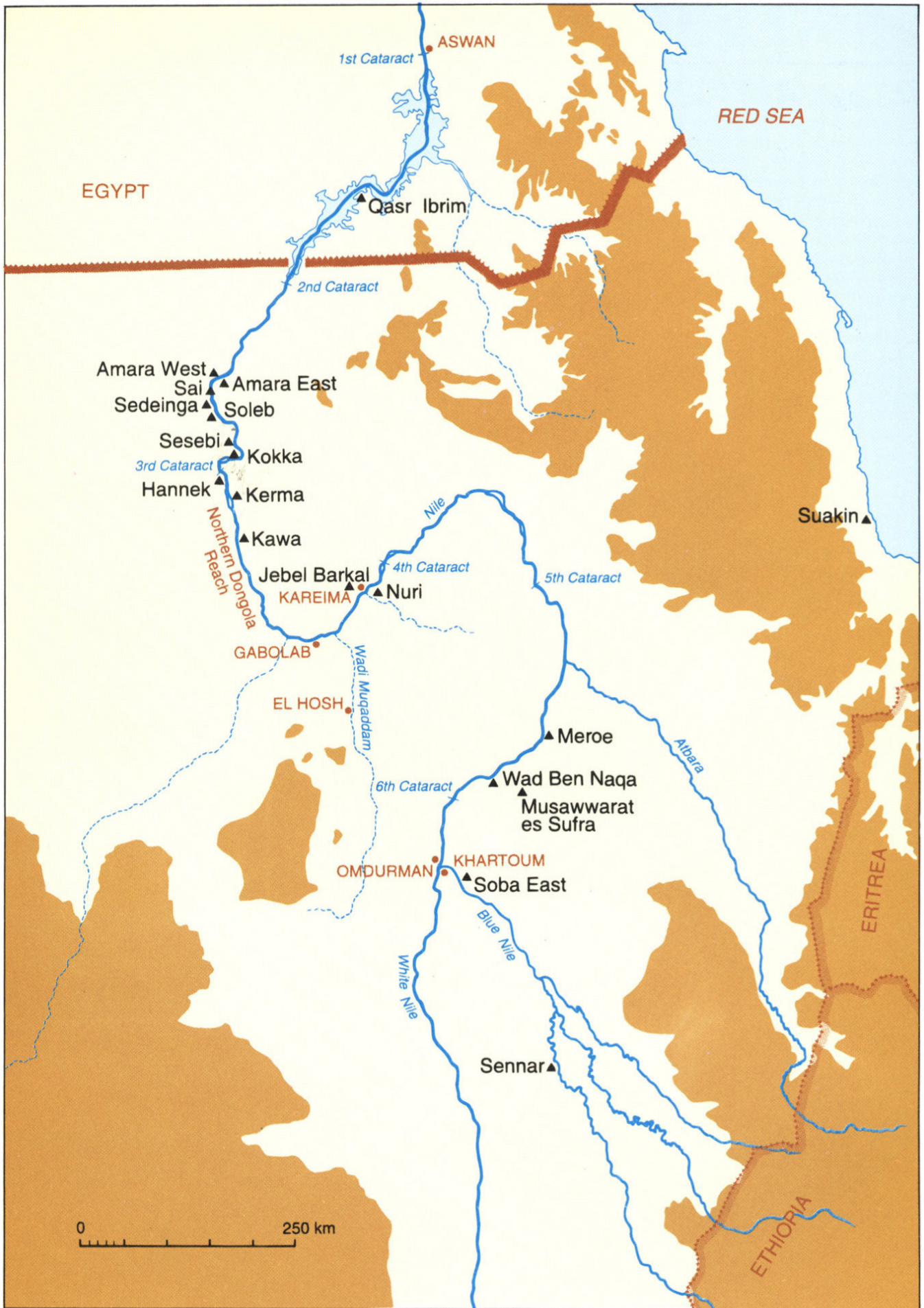
# SUDAN & NUBIA

The Sudan Archaeological Research Society



*Bulletin No. 1* 1997





# SUDAN & NUBIA

The Sudan Archaeological Research Society



Bulletin No. 1 1997

## Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	1
<i>Vivian Davies</i>	

## Field Reports

The Northern Dongola Reach Survey: the 1996/7 season	2
Excavations at Sites O16, P1, P4 and P37 <i>Derek A Welsby</i>	2
Kerma Moyen Pottery from the Excavations of the cemetery at site P37 <i>Isabella Welsby Sjöström</i>	10
Holocene Alluvial History in the Northern Dongola Reach of the Nile: the 1996/1997 field season <i>Mark Macklin and Jamie Woodward</i>	13
Qalat Sai, the most southerly Ottoman Fortress in Africa <i>John Alexander</i>	16
Recent Fieldwork at Musawwarat es Sufra <i>Pawel Wolf</i>	20
Preliminary Report: SARS Survey from Omdurman to Gabolab 1997 <i>Michael Mallinson</i>	30

## Recent Research

Amara West: Capital of Egyptian Kush <i>Patricia Spencer</i>	34
Napatan Period Metalwork: Further Analyses <i>Michael Cowell</i>	40

## Miscellaneous

Obituary – Prof. Dr Ahmed M. A. Hakem (1938–1996), a personal appreciation <i>Abdelrahim M Khabir</i>	44
The Nubian Studies and Documentation Centre	44
Forthcoming Events	45
The Authors	45

*Front Cover:* Relief of the Kushite King Taharqo (690–664 BC) in the Temple of Amun, Jebel Barkal. (Peter Hayman)

## Introduction

*Vivian Davies*

The appearance of *Sudan & Nubia* represents an exciting new development for our Society. Replacing the old *Newsletter*, and incorporating colour illustrations, it is designed to be a more substantial and attractive periodical, and of more lasting value. It will continue to publish reports of our own excavations and other scholarly activities but will also include papers dealing with relevant topics and material from other sources. *Sudan & Nubia* will serve, we hope, to promote interest both in the Society and in the field of Sudanese and Nubian archaeology in general, including that of Egyptian Nubia. It will appear, at least initially, once a year, in the Autumn.

This first issue contains an impressively wide range of subject-matter, covering a time-span of nearly five millennia. In the fieldwork section it will be seen that the Society's project in the Dongola Reach directed by Derek Welsby, comprising in this last season the rescue excavation of sites of the Kerma Period and related palaeohydrological research, continues to yield important new data, while a brand new project initiated by Michael Mallinson – a survey of multi-period sites in the Bayuda desert threatened by road-building – looks to be very promising. Pawel Wolf gives an account of the Humboldt University's fascinating and quite unexpected new discoveries at the great Meroitic temple-site of Musawwarat es Sufra. John Alexander reports on his investigation of an Islamic fortress on Sai Island, a military outpost (similar to Qasr Ibrim) which represents the southernmost point of penetration of the Ottoman Empire in Africa. There are two papers on recent research. Patricia Spencer has been reconstructing from old records the unpublished excavations at Amara West undertaken many years ago by the Egypt Exploration Society. She very usefully summarises the results of her work (recently published in full in an EES Memoir), which has shed valuable new light on this important pharaonic town-site. Finally, Michael Cowell provides an up-date on his programme of scientific examination of Nubian metalwork, a subject sorely neglected in the past. The project has now been extended to include Napatan foundation-deposits, source-material of special value for this kind of research in that the deposits are both well dated and richly endowed with metal objects.



## Recent Research

### Amara West: Capital of Egyptian Kush

*Patricia Spencer*

In the New Kingdom the official charged by the king with overall governance of Nubia was the Viceroy, the 'King's Son of Kush', who was based in Egypt. Nubia was divided into two administrative units: the northern part was known as Wawat, and the southern part as Kush. Each was governed locally by an official known as the Deputy (*idnw*), who resided in his governorate. In the Eighteenth Dynasty the administrative seat of the Deputy of Kush was at Soleb, but at the start of the Nineteenth Dynasty the administrative capital was moved north to the site known today as Amara West. The name of the Egyptian town from the reign of Ramesses II was 'House of Ramesses, beloved of Amun', later changed in the reign of Ramesses III to 'House of Ramesses, Ruler of Thebes'.

Amara is situated just to the south of the Dal Cataract in the Sudan. The temple/town mound is about 700m long with an average width of about 230m and is situated on the left bank of the Nile, about 75m from the river which, at this point, having made a sharp bend, flows from west to east (colour plate XVI). Since early travellers and archaeologists alike are conditioned to think that the Nile flows from south to north, the left bank site has become known as 'Amara West', though it should more accurately be described as 'Amara North'. It is generally believed that, in the New Kingdom, the town/temple mound was on an island in the river.

On the south bank of the river, at the site usually known as Amara East, there had been the remains of a Meroitic temple which was recorded by early travellers. The temple had, however, virtually disappeared by 1905 (Kirwan 1936, 101-2; Wenig 1977, 447-58).

The Egypt Exploration Society's involvement in the excavation of New-Kingdom Nubian sites began in 1936 when work started at Sesebi under the direction first of A. W. Blackman and then of H. W. Fairman. In March 1937 members of the Sesebi team made a tour of other sites in the region, including Soleb, Sedeinga, Sai and Amara, looking for another site at which to work. They were attracted by Amara where the positions of the enclosure wall, stone temple, well-preserved brick houses and extensive outlying cemeteries were clearly visible. In February 1938 at the end of the following, final, season at Sesebi, a team of three (Fairman, David Bell and I E S Edwards) moved all the Society's equipment north to Amara (pl. 1)



*Plate 1. H W Fairman with the Society's loaded vehicle on the move from Sesebi to Amara in 1938*

and carried out an initial week of work, during which they traced the outline of the brick enclosure and the stone temple and carried out tests in the town areas (Fairman 1938, 151-6). Fairman then submitted a detailed report to the Committee of the Egypt Exploration Society which agreed to fund full excavation at the site.

Two full seasons followed, in 1938-9 (Fairman 1939, 139-144) and 1947-8 (Fairman 1948, 3-11), the Second World War having prevented any intervening work. Fairman was then appointed to the Brunner Chair of Egyptology at the University of Liverpool – an appointment which prevented him continuing with fieldwork – so the final two seasons at Amara West, between 1948 and 1950 (Shinnie 1951, 5-11), were directed by Peter Shinnie, then Commissioner for Archaeology in the Sudan Antiquities Service, more recently of the University of Calgary, Canada. Although Shinnie directed the work of these seasons, the intention had always been that Fairman would publish the entire excavation, making use of expanded notes provided by Shinnie for the work for which he was responsible. Shinnie sent his expanded notes in 1959 to the EES in London, where they remained in the archives, awaiting integration into Fairman's text. However, pressures of teaching and administrative duties at Liverpool meant that little progress had been made with the publications of the excavations at Sesebi and Amara West by the time of Fairman's death in 1982. The excavation records were at that time scattered between Fairman's home in Liverpool, the University department and the EES archives in London. Professor A. F. Shore and Patricia Winker, Secretary of the School of Oriental Studies, collected together, sorted and listed the Liverpool records and transferred them to the Society's London office where they were amalgamated with those already in the archives, principally notebooks, plans and photographs recovered from Peter Fell after his death in 1979. For the first time, all the records of the Amara excavations were in one place and it became possible to assess

their extent and make plans for their long overdue publication. I am very grateful to the Committee of the Egypt Exploration Society, particularly the Honorary Secretary, Dr Anthony Leahy, for allowing me to undertake this task and to Professor Shinnie who encouraged my work and revised his original notes for inclusion in the first volume, the architectural report, which has been published recently by the Egypt Exploration Society (Spencer 1997). Further volumes will publish the pottery corpus, the limited work in the cemeteries, the object catalogue and the temple reliefs.

It would not have been possible to reconstruct the excavations had the various team members not made such detailed notes and left such a complete photographic record. Fairman had worked previously at Armant, under Oliver Myers, and at Amarna with John Pendlebury and he applied at Amara the meticulous recording techniques and practices he had learned from Myers and Pendlebury.

The plan of the Amara region made by the 1973 survey of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique shows the many archaeological sites on the north bank, mainly cemeteries, which extend into the desert beyond the town mound (Vila 1977, fig.1 (plan), 9, 17-8, 23-33, 61-2). Since there were no houses on the north bank, the Society's excavation team lived on the south bank in an imposing mud-brick house and had to sail across the river, often in the face of the wind, to the work each day. Sometimes the strong winds prevented the team from arriving until the *gufi*-supervised work had been underway for several hours, so a rota was devised for the team-members to take turns in camping overnight on the north bank so that at least one of them would be present each day when work started. It is worth pointing out that working and living conditions at Amara were always difficult and one cannot fail to be impressed by the amount of work accomplished, and well-recorded, by small teams working for long seasons in an inaccessible place.

The first full season took place from 9 November 1938 to 4 March 1939 and concentrated on the excavation of the temple and its brick storehouses and on copying the scenes and inscriptions in the temple (pl. 2).

The temple is unusual in plan, partly because its orientation had been changed during construction, but also because it lacks the brick or stone pylon which usually marks the entrance to a New Kingdom temple. Designed originally with an entrance from the south, the temple had been reoriented during its construction, so that the final entrance was from the north. Since the prevailing wind came from the north, this then necessitated the construction of an outer brick courtyard in front of the temple entrance. This took the form of a stone gate set in the north side of the buttressed brick wall which enclosed the temple, its brick storage magazines and the

town, which housed the Egyptian officials who controlled the governorate of Kush in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties. The wall enclosed an area about 108m square, was between 2.3 and 2.84m thick and stood in places to a height of 4m. It had at least two gates (in addition to the entrance to the temple) in its north and west walls. The west gate in particular was well-preserved with scenes of Ramesses II's Nubian campaign of about his year 20. The buttress at the south-east corner of the enclosure wall was removed by the excavators and bricks stamped with the cartouches of Seti I were found in its lowest courses, showing that the construction of the town had begun in his reign. Fragments of stelae of the same king and one reused block with his cartouche were also found during the excavation of the temple and the town. Since the enclosure wall was founded by Seti I it would seem likely that the temple was also, though Fairman was unable to find any foundation deposits which would have confirmed this, despite a fairly thorough search. There is no evidence for any constructions at Amara earlier than the reign of Seti I and the most likely scenario would seem to be that what was essentially an Egyptian town at Amara was founded in the early Nineteenth Dynasty to replace Soleb as the administrative headquarters of the Viceroy's local representative, the *idnw* of Kush. When Amara was founded monuments such as a stela of Amenhotep II were probably moved from another Eighteenth Dynasty centre such as Soleb or Sai. In one of the temple magazines at Amara were found hundreds of mud-seals many with cartouches of Hatshesut and Tuthmosis III. These probably came from papyri of a temple archive which was moved to Amara when the temple and town were founded and then removed again when Amara was abandoned at the end of the Twentieth Dynasty.

The temple, which was small by the standards of the New Kingdom, underwent several changes of plan, including the complete reorientation. All the changes, however, appear to have taken place in the reign of Ramesses II as blocks of this king were reused in the foundations of columns which were also decorated with his names and titles (pl. 3). The temple was constructed in sandstone, with flooring in places of basalt blocks, and had a simple plan with a peristyle court, hypostyle hall, transverse vestibule and three sanctuaries. A staircase at the rear of the temple led to the roof and it was flanked on both sides by brick storage magazines. The temple was dedicated to Amun and Nubian deities, such as Khnum, Anuket and Satet. The construction and decoration were completed during the reign of Ramesses II with the two great monumental stelae, copies of the Dream Stela and the Hittite Marriage stela, set into the back wall of the Forecourt. Since the only queen of Ramesses II attested in the temple is his first Great Royal Wife, Nefertari, the



Plate 2. Epigraphic work in the temple.



Plate 3. Amara temple, block of Ramesses II used in the foundations of a column decorated by the same king.

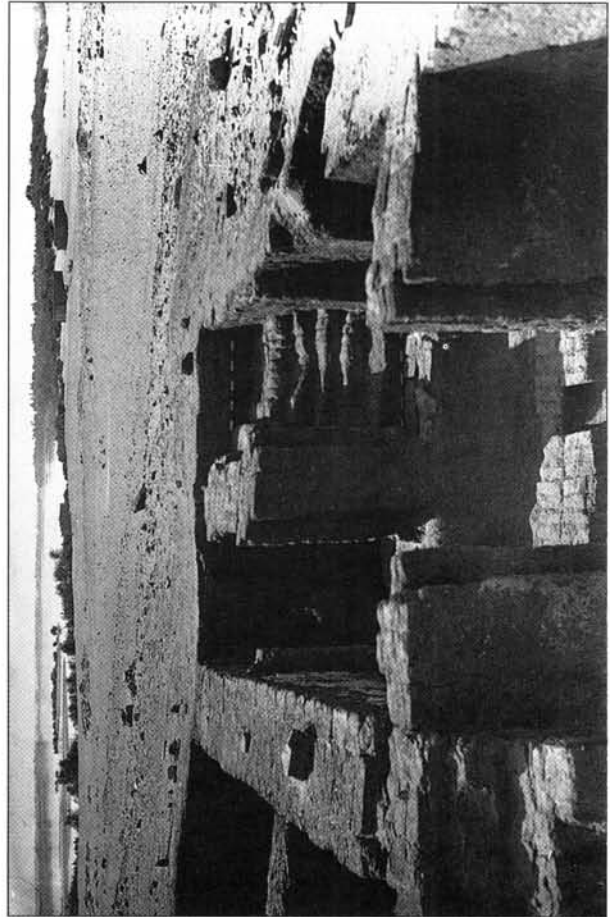


Plate 4. Brick-built houses in E.12 (west town) with the river in the background.



Plate 5. Stone doorways in D.14 (south town) showing two differently-aligned building levels.

Nubian campaign depicted on the walls of the West Gate of the town took place about his year 20 and the Hittite Marriage stela can be dated to his year 34, it can probably be safely assumed that the construction and decoration of the temple were completed during the first half of his reign. All the scenes on the interior walls of the temple and the columns were copied by the expedition and will be published in a future volume. The temple functioned continuously for the remainder of the Nineteenth Dynasty and the Twentieth Dynasty with added inscriptions of Merenptah, Amenmose, Ramesses III and Ramesses VI. The last king to leave an inscription was Ramesses IX, in his year 6, and it is possible that Amara was abandoned during or soon after his reign when the Egyptian administration withdrew from Nubia. The temple at Amara was closed down and the departing officials and priests removed the temple equipment and archives, together with most of the important stelae and statues which would have once filled its halls and chapels. Although a number of stelae were found, there were presumably originally many more, and the almost complete absence of statuary – only one headless statue of an official was excavated and not even a fragment of a royal statue was found – indicates that the clearance of the temple was undertaken systematically, with little left behind to be buried or reused. The temple then seems to have stood abandoned for some time before it was reoccupied by the indigenous population, who made use of the standing walls to construct storage bins in sheltered places.

When the EES team left the site in March 1939 a second season was planned for the winter of 1939-40. This had to be abandoned when war broke out and it was not until 1947 that Fairman and his team were able to return. The planning in the 1947-8 season was the work of Peter Fell, who had been photographer in the 1938-9 season and took over as surveyor only when David Bell proved to be no longer available. In addition the Society's equipment failed to arrive at the site until the season was nearly over and a not-fully-functional level had to be borrowed from Arkell in Khartoum. Unfortunately, although Fell was clearly at his best in coping with difficult field situations, he failed to produce, once back in England, the final level-plans without which Fairman could not begin to prepare the publication of the excavation of the town. The Society's archives contain many letters from Fairman complaining at the lack of progress with the plans and Fell finally completed them by the early 1960s. It is worth noting, in view of the long delay in publishing the excavation, that these plans were apparently never seen by Fairman, nor were they made available to Shinnie, and they remained in Fell's possession until his death in 1979 when they were returned, together with his notebooks and photographs, to the Society's archive.

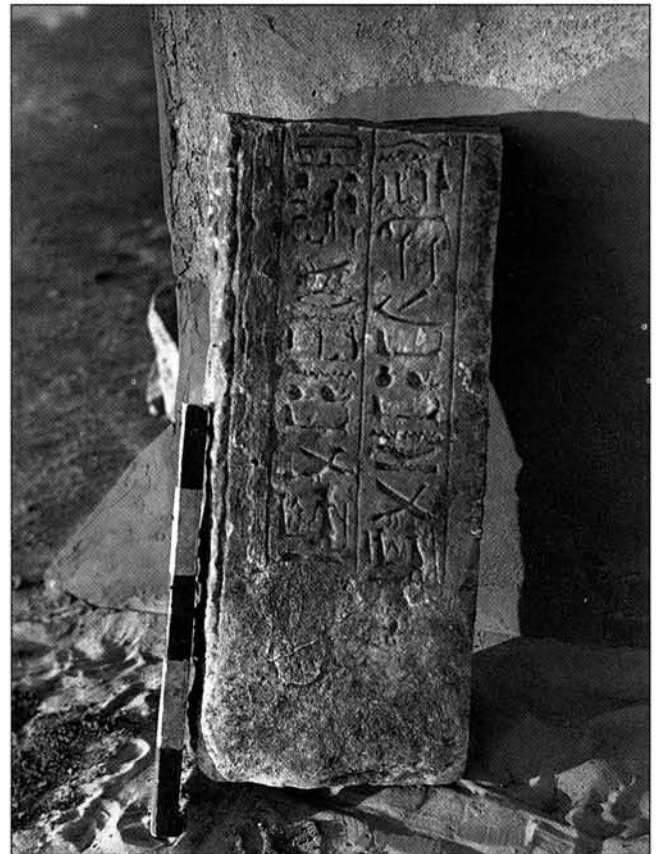


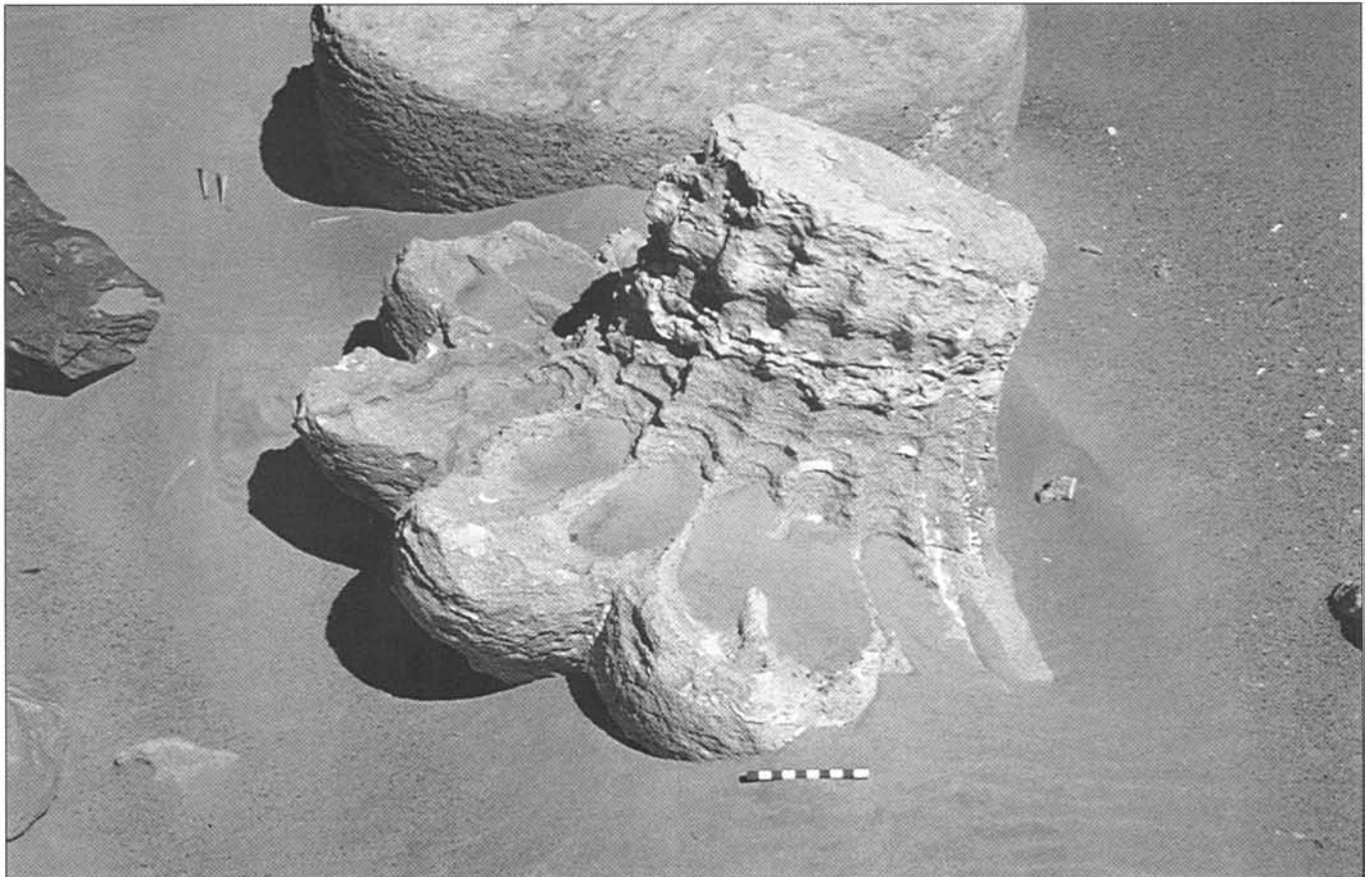
Plate 6. Lower part of a door-jamb of the *idnw* Paser, found loose in E.13.2.

During the war the temple had been left exposed to the driving wind and sand which made excavation at Amara so difficult (colour plate XVII). The first task of the expedition in 1947, therefore, was to backfill the temple to protect it. This was accomplished by excavating that part of the town immediately to the south of the temple and dumping the removed fill over the temple walls and columns. The same season saw the excavation of another part of the town in the west of the enclosure (pl. 4) where the residence of the *idnw* of Kush was situated.

Both excavated parts of the town contained four to five occupation levels (pl. 5), and the style of housing and types of artefacts found are of Egyptian, not Nubian design, showing that Amara was essentially an Egyptian town, probably inhabited mainly by Egyptians. Some of the pottery, as would be expected, is of local wares and types, but most is typically Egyptian in shape and form. The earliest level, Level Four, is assumed to belong to the reign of Seti I and associated with it is the *idnw* Sebau-khau of whom *in situ* door-jambs were found in the official residence. At some stage, possibly when the construction of the stone temple was completed, most of the Level Four buildings were levelled down to their foundations and the most substantial level, Level Three, constructed over the remains of Level Four, sometimes re-using the bases of earlier walls as the footings of new constructions. Level Three almost certainly dates to the reign of Ramesses II and was the main occupation level of the town. Level Two saw the residence



*Plate 7. Building No.4, excavated in the 1948-9 season, outside the enclosure-wall.*



*Plate 8. Column capital excavated by the EES, on site at Amara in 1995 (Derek Welsby)*



rebuilt again but was otherwise largely a period of repair and alteration to existing houses. The main building excavated in the town was the residence of the *idmw*, usually referred to as the 'Governor's Palace'. This was a large many-roomed structure, built of mud brick but with stone doorways and columns. The residence was redesigned and rebuilt several times during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties and stone blocks were often reused within the building. A number of officials are attested on blocks found either *in situ* or reused. The principal resident attested on inscribed door-jamb and lintels is the *idmw* Paser of the reign of Ramesses III (pl. 6) and his Viceroy, Hekanakhte, is attested in reused blocks in the town and on stelae from the temple. Other officials whose names occur in the temple are the Viceroys Hori (Ramesses III), Siese (Ramesses VI) and Naherhu and Wentawet (both Ramesses IX). They, of course, would have been resident in Egypt while their local deputy lived and worked at Amara. Level One in the west town seems to have been the last stage of occupation in the Twentieth Dynasty while Level One in the town south of the temple is a reoccupation, almost certainly by the people who were using the temple for storage, and later in date than Level One in the west town. The dating of this reoccupation is problematical but many of the Ramesside houses had fallen into ruin before they were adapted and reused.

The 1948-9 season (colour plate XVIII) was designed primarily to complete work in the west town for publication. In his first season at Amara Shinnie, therefore, excavated the extreme eastern part of the residence and unfinished houses in the west town (pls 7, 9, colour plate XIX). The team also investigated further the West Gate of the town, revealing a drainage system and clearing staircases which provided access to the top of the enclosure wall. Once this task was completed, Shinnie turned his attention to an area outside the eastern enclosure wall where several large mounds were suspected of containing burials. Excavation of these, in the 1948-9 and 1949-50 seasons, proved them to be natural formations of wind-blown sand and debris but led to the discovery of extramural buildings including a large house which, like those within the town wall, also showed four levels of occupation, garden plots and, intriguingly, shrines with possible evidence for a local snake-worship cult. The skeletons of a number of snakes were found in pots and they were identified as pythons by H. W. Frazer, then Keeper of Zoology at the British Museum (Natural History). Although there was much useful work that could still have been done at Amara, the 1949-50 season was the last one undertaken by the Society.

As the official Egyptian residence in Kush in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties, Amara was a very important town and it is unfortunate, from our point of view, that it was abandoned and cleared so thoroughly when the Egyptians left at the end of the Twentieth Dynasty as they took with them all the official records that must have existed, leaving little of historical importance behind. The unexcavated parts of the town, however, could still tell us much of the life

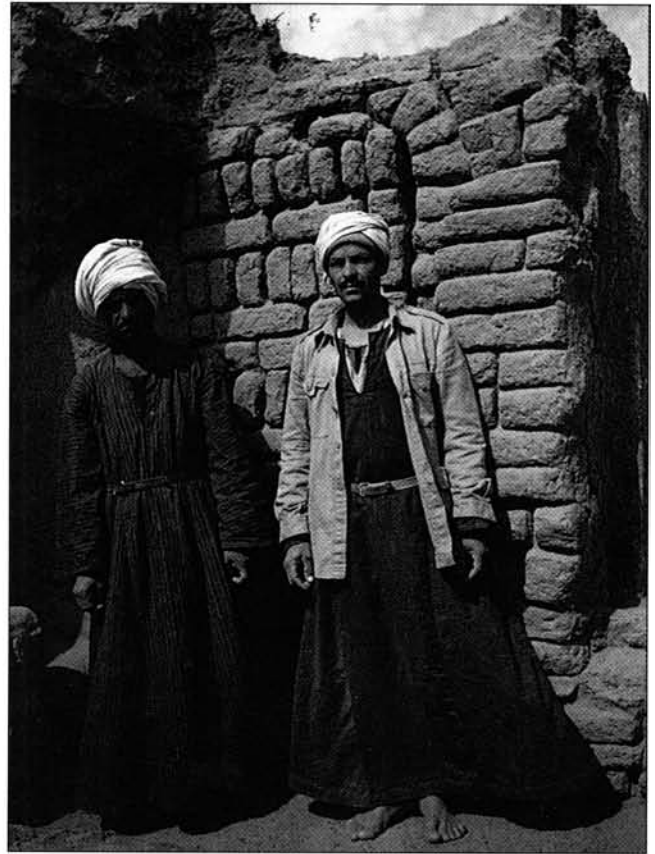


Plate 9. Workmen in front of a bricked-up door in the west town (Michael Apted, 1948-9)

of both Egyptians and Nubians in the New Kingdom and the surrounding cemeteries, of all dates, are virtually untouched. Amara West is one of the few major Egyptian sites in Nubia which has not been submerged beneath the waters of Lake Nasser (pl. 8) and it is a site which deserves further excavation.

### Bibliography

- Fairman, H. W. 1938. 'Preliminary Report on the Excavations at Sesebi (Sudla) and 'Amarah West, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1937-8', *JEA* 24, 151-156.
- Fairman, H. W. 1939. 'Preliminary Report on the Excavations at 'Amarah West, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1938-9', *JEA* 25, 139-144.
- Fairman, H. W. 1948. 'Preliminary Report on the Excavations at Amarah West, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1947-8', *JEA* 34, 3-11.
- Kirwan, L. P. 1936. Note quoted in 'Notes and News', *JEA* 22, 101-2.
- Shinnie, P. L. 1951. 'Preliminary Report on the Excavations at 'Amarah West 1948-9 and 1949-50', *JEA* 37, 5-11.
- Spencer, P. A. 1997. *Amara West I. The Architectural Report*. With contributions by P L Shinnie, F C Fraser and H W Parker (EES Sixty-third Excavation Memoir). London.
- Vila, A. 1977. *La prospection archéologique de la vallée du Nil au sud de la cataracte de Dal (Nubie Soudanaise). Fascicle 7. Le District d'Amara Ouest*. CNRS, Paris.
- Wenig, S. 1977. 'Der meroitische Tempel von Amara' in E Endesfelder *et al*, *Ägypten und Kusch*. Berlin, 447-58.

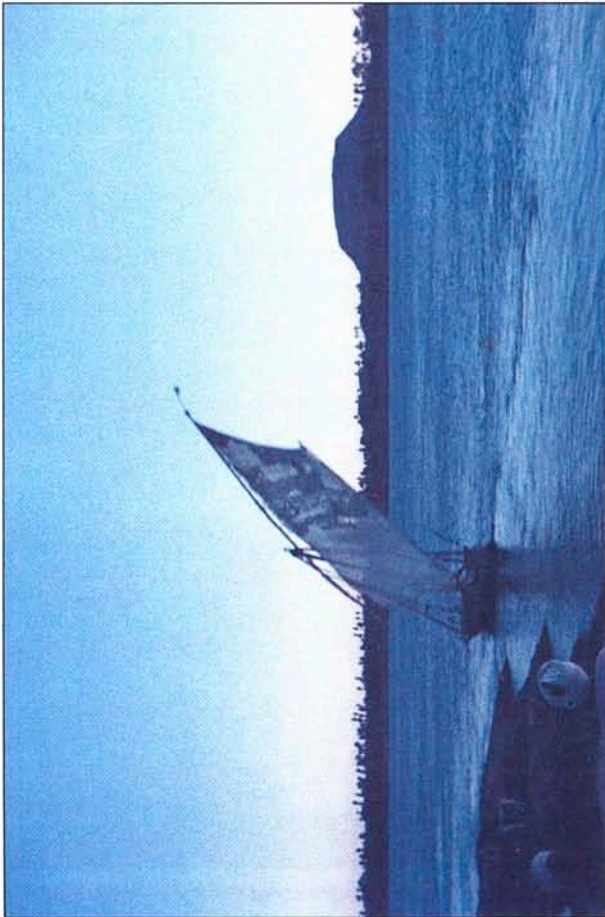


Plate XVI. The Nile at Amara with Gebel Abri in the background (Peter Fell, date uncertain, between 1938 and 1949). (see p. 34)



Plate XVII. Amara in 1995. Brick buildings excavated by the EES, now filled with sand (Derek Welby). (see p. 37)

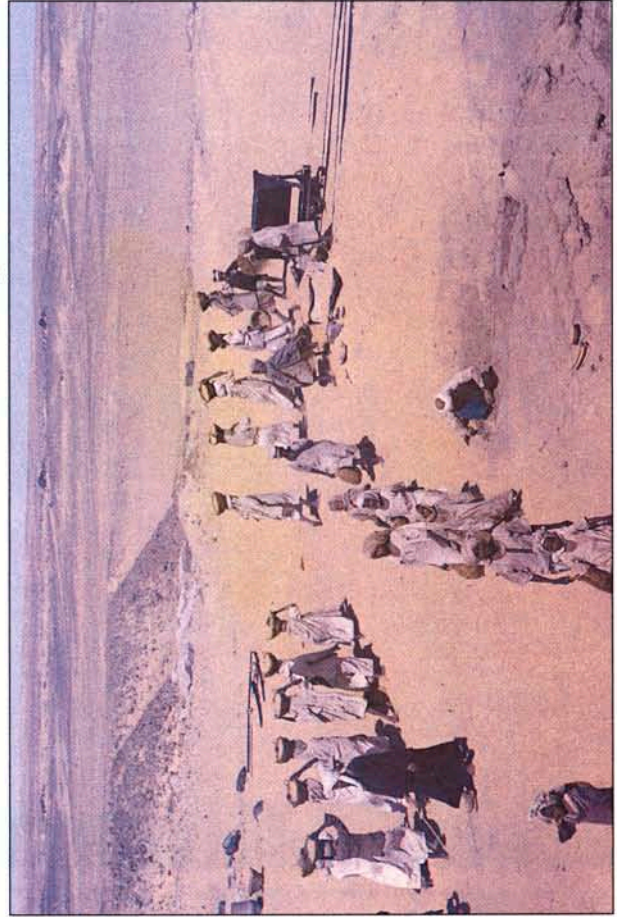


Plate XVIII. Excavations at Amara (Michael Apted, 1948-9). (see p. 39)



Plate XIX. Amara. Column drum found loose in the west town (Michael Apted, 1948-9). (see p. 39)