

Two directions were pursued in BRUCE WILLIAMS' personal research in the last year. The publication of "Narmer and the Coptos Colossi," in *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* XXV, and "An Early Pottery Jar with Incised Decoration from Egypt," in *Essays in Ancient Civilization Presented to Helene J. Kantor* (SAOC 47), explored the emergence of Egyptian images in ages beyond the First Dynasty. The first article dealt with objects that were late (Dynasty 0, c. 3200 B.C.) and monumental, the second, with images that were early (Naqada I, c. 4000-3800 B.C.), small, crude, and magical; both articles are part of an expanding body of evidence that links the period once known as "Predynastic" so firmly to the ages of the pyramids and later, that the term should be abandoned. A generation ago, such a proposal would have seemed inconceivable, but pioneer work in Germany by Werner Kaiser, followed by Wolfgang Helck, and in England, by John Baines, has gradually taken up a cause proposed by Helene J. Kantor in 1944 to find Egypt's origins its own earlier periods. It can now be foreseen that the comparison of images, objects, and even contexts from this early Naqada period will produce a network of evidence dense enough to extend our knowledge of Egypt's historical culture backward several centuries.

◆ The first direction continued an exploration provoked by the discovery of early documents in Cemetery L at Qustul. The second was also an extension of research in Nubia and dealt with the geographical and cultural frontier between the two countries as a problem in continuity. Because Nubia's cultural phases are often isolated in time and space, and sometimes overlaid with Egyptian influence, this is one of the most persistent and difficult ques-

tions in the history of Nubia. The occasion for the second direction was a colloquium on Nubia at the British Museum entitled "Egypt in Africa." The raw material was provided substantially by discoveries of the Oriental Institute, notably Cemetery L at Qustul, various C-Group tumulus cemeteries, the transition between tumulus and pyramid at Serra East in the early New Kingdom, and the Noubadian X-Group royal complexes at Qustul dating to c. A.D. 375. These discoveries provided formal links with other phases, at Kerma (c. 1650-1550 B.C.) and the great pyramid cemeteries of Napata and Meroe (c. 800 B.C.-c. A.D. 350), to indicate that the most important cultures near the Nile in Nubia and Sudan shared the basic elements of a great pharaonic impulse. This impulse may be characterized tentatively—and too simply—as two great poles of funerary expression; the one oriented toward the elaborate and celestial symbolism of Egypt, the other toward a more archaic, but also Nubian emphasis of action in this world.