Łajtar, Adam / Vliet, Jacques van der

Rich Ladies of Meinarti and their Churches. With an appended list of sources from Christian Nubia containing the expression 'having the Church of so-and-so'

The Journal of Juristic Papyrology 28, 35-53

1998

Artykuł został zdigitализowany i opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.
The position of women in medieval Nubia has never, as far as we are aware, been the object of systematic investigation. Nevertheless, indications of their independent status are numerous and appear in different social contexts. Thus, in the sphere of royalty, the queen mother enjoyed a privileged position, reflected in paintings and inscriptions. Usually, this phenomenon is being related to the supposed principle of matrilineal succession. As for the less exalted strata of society, business documents from Lower Nubia show a remarkable number of women acting independently in financial transactions. Equally conspicuous is the percentage of female donors of wall-paintings in major centres like Faras and Dongola. Finally, also among those who could


4 Faras: Jakobielski, Faras III, p. 180; Old-Dongola, monastic complex of Kom H: unpublished inscriptions accompanying wall paintings in the south-western part of the monastery.
afford inscribed tombstones with a Greek or Coptic text, obviously only a small portion of Nubian society, we find quite a number of women.

The present squib discusses a small group of funerary stelae of women, written in Coptic and discovered at the Nubian site of Meinarti. It will, more particularly, focus on the expressions used in two of them to describe these women as "owners" of an ecclesiastical establishment, either a church or, perhaps, a monastery. For a better understanding of these expressions, an inventory of their occurrences in medieval Nubian texts has been appended. As a first attempt to contextualize and interpret the Nubian phenomenon of church ownership, the following pages do not, however, pretend to be definitive, neither in their analysis of the sources nor in their conclusions.

THREE COPTIC STELAE
FROM 11TH CENTURY MEINARTI.

Meinarti was a village-size settlement on an island which occupied a strategic position at the northern end of the Second Cataract area. Before being flooded, in the sixties of this century, the site has been the object of large scale excavations. Unfortunately, these excavations have never been fully published and their results have been only summarily evaluated. For the medieval period, the archaeological evidence appears to point at a period of "urban renewal" perhaps towards the end of the 10th century A.D., when the village of Meinarti received its definitive shape. This phase of urban renewal, characterized by spacious houses, was followed by a "long period of stability." Apparently, these years of renewal and prosperity produced the main group of surviving text material associated with Meinarti: a small series of funerary stelae, in Greek, Coptic and Arabic, part of them bearing 11th and 12th century dates.

---


7 Thus ADAMS, Nubia, pp. 489-492.

8 A provisional list of funerary stelae ascribed to Meinarti, is given by ADAMS, Kush 12, 1964, p. 248; for later finds, see ADAMS, Kush 13, 1965, pp. 172-73. Both factually and bibliographically, Adams' list is very deficient. Besides, of those pieces which MONNERET DE VILLARD (La Nubia medioevale I, pp. 220-21) ascribed to Meinarti on formal grounds alone, the connection with this particular site seems doubtful.
These written sources, too, received very little scholarly attention and have remained partly unpublished. One of the texts, a Greek stela of 1161 A.D., commemorates Goassi, son of Sentiko(l), eparch of Nobadia and Chōiakeiksil.9 This piece of evidence suggests that, if Meinarti was not at the time itself a centre of political power, it was at least in contact with such centers.10 This holds certainly true if Meinarti has to be identified with the “Island of Michael”, repeatedly mentioned by Arab historians from the end of the 13th century onwards. Closely linked with the highest political authority in Lower Nubia, the eparch, this town played an important role in the military struggle of the Nubians with Mameluke Egypt, during the 13th and 14th centuries.11 It should be noted, however, that the identification of Meinarti with the “Island of Michael” rests upon an etymology which, although plausible, is by no means certain.12

To medieval Meinarti belongs a small but interesting group of three Coptic funerary stelae, now in the National Museum of Khartoum. They are remarkable for their size and material, a rather good quality sandstone, for the

9 Khartoum no. 3726 (formerly Wadi Halfa, H. 184); see MONNERET DE VILLARD, La Nubia medioevale I, pp. 218-19, and, better, J. W. B. BARKES, “Christian monuments from Nubia”, Kush 2, 1954, pp. 26-27, pl. V.a. This stela is to be republished by Adam LAJTAR in his forthcoming catalogue of the Greek stelae of the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum. It is interesting to note that from the textual point of view the epitaph of Goassi has two close parallels: (1) the epitaph of Papasa, a priest and Chōiakeiksil (died 1181 A.D.) now in the Louvre (cf. E. BERNAND, Inscriptions grecques d’Egypte et de la Nubie au Musée du Louvre, Paris 1992, no. 115); (2) the epitaph of a woman Eikkir (died 1084 A.D. or later) found in Ashkeit, now in the Sudan National Museum Khartoum (see below, our no 12). The epitaph of Papasa is of unknown provenance. On account of its similarity with the epitaph of the eparch Goassi it might be ascribed to Meinarti or its vicinity.

10 Close by, on the west bank of the Nile, an eparch of Nubia appears as the patron of the late church of Abd el-Qâdir; cf. В. РОСТКОВСКА, “Patronage of the arts in Nobadia on the basis of archaeological and written sources”, in PLUMLEY, Nubian Studies, p. 211. MONNERET DE VILLARD, La Nubia medioevale I, p. 220, believes that the Greek stela of yet another eparch of Nobadia, Ioannes (M. G. TIBILETTI BRUNO, Iscrizioni nubiane, Pavia 1964, no. 6; A.D. 1006), could also originate from Meinarti; this is highly uncertain.

11 Cf. U. MONNERET DE VILLARD, Storia della Nubia cristiana (= Orientalia Christiana Analecta 118), Rome 1938 (reprint 1962), pp. 135 and 140; Adams, Nubia, p. 467. For the Arabic sources in question, see G. VANTINI, Oriental Sources concerning Nubia, Heidelberg – Warsaw 1975, p. 813, index, s. v. “Mika’il, island(s)”.

12 For the etymology in question, see esp. F. LI GRIFFITH, “Oxford excavations in Nubia”, LAAA 14, 1927, p. 103; but cf. ADAMS’ cautious remarks in Kush 12, 1964, p. 223, n. 18. It may be added that there is no positive reason whatever to suppose that either the Island of Michael or Meinarti was the site of a Monastery of Saints Michael and Cosmas (pace G. S. MILEHAM, Churches in Lower Nubia, Philadelphia 1910, p. 5; ADAMS, Kush 12, p. 223; “Settlement pattern”, p. 191, n. 18). Indeed, it seems doubtful whether Meinarti ever possessed a monastery (cf. P. JEUTÉ, “Monasteries in Nubia: An open issue”, Nubica 3/1, 1989-1993, pp. 66-68 & 83). Significantly, monastic titles, well attested in Faras, Dongola and elsewhere, are lacking in the published epigraphic material from Meinarti.
length and fullness of their almost identical inscriptions and for the comparatively rich decoration of at least one of them. Moreover, they all were made for women. Two of our three stelae still carry a date which situates them in the 11th century. The third one should almost certainly be dated to the same period.

The first of these three stelae has been known since 1935, when its text was published by U. Monneret de Villard. It belongs to Michaeliko (ΜΙΧΛΗΧΙΚΟ), the daughter of a priest Iohannou, and is dated to December 11th, 1037 A.D. (Khoiak 15th, 754 A.M.). The stone lacks real sculptured decoration, although the text-field is surrounded by an embossed border of about 2.5-3 cms. width.

A second stela is as yet unpublished and bears the name of Iesousyko (ΜΧΟΥΣΥΚΟ), who died January 9th, 1046 A.D. (Tybi 14th, 762 Diocletian era). Among stelae from Christian Nubia, where unembellished plaques highlighting a plainly incised text are more or less the standard, it stands out by its nicely sculptured and painted decoration, which clearly continues late antique patterns. Its text is framed by an aedicula consisting of two columns which support an arched canopy containing a conch. Within Nubia, it has close

13 In La Nubia medioevale I, pp. 219-20 (cf. p. 212). The stela is Khartoum, National Museum, old inv. no. 14; it was collected on the site in the beginning of this century by J. W. Crowfoot. For a re-edition, see J. VAN DER VLIET'S forthcoming catalogue of the Coptic inscriptions of the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum.

14 Written thus in l. 24, ΜΙΧΛΗΧΙΚΟ in l. 6. Another occurrence of the same name (as ΜΙΧΛΗΧΙΚΟ) in Old Nubian graffito no. 15 in Tamit (Monneret de Villard, La Nubia medioevale I, p. 152; S. Donadoni, in: Tamit (1964): Missione archeologica in Egitto dell'Università di Roma, Rome 1967, pp. 67-68). Names ending in -ΧΙΚΟ are Nubian names formed with an adjectival suffix -ΧΙΚΟ (cf. G. M. Browne, Introduction to Old Nubian [= Meroitica 11], Berlin 1989, p. 11, sub 3.4.2); the final -Χ in l. 6 is a case-ending (cf. Browne, op. cit., p. 13).

15 Khartoum, inv. no. 18098, to be published in the catalogue referred to in note 13, above. It was found in situ in "one of the two or three oldest surviving graves" of Meinarti's cemetery during the Sudan Antiquities Service-UNESCO excavations, 1963-64 campaign (Adams, in Kush 13, p. 172; for the cemetery, see ibid., pp. 169-171, pl. XXXVII). The name Iesousyko (-ικο, -ικολ) is formed on the same pattern as Michaeliko; it is found in Ibrim as well, always for women: the daughter of a bishop (Coptic stela Leipzig no. 687, A.D. 1035; see Sebastian Richter, "Die neun Steine Ägyptisches Museum der Universität Leipzig Inv.-Nr. 680-688 mit der Herkunftssangabe Qasr Ibrim", forthcoming in: Acts of the Sixth International Congress of Coptic Studies, Münster 1996) and the queen mother (see G. M. Browne, Old Nubian Texts from Qasr Ibrim III, London 1991, nos. 35, l. 5; 38, l. 3; 40, l. 3; A.D. 1188-1200).


17 The late antique Egyptian models of this particular type of stelae have been variously interpreted, see e.g. A. Badawy, "La stèle funéraire copte à motif architectural", BSAC 11, 1945, pp. 5-6 (type 2.a); E. R. Goodenough, Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period, vol. 4, New York 1954,
iconographical parallels at i. a. Ibrîm (12th century bishops’ stelae),\textsuperscript{18} Toshka-West (Sakînya),\textsuperscript{19} Faras (stelae of Bishops Aaron, A.D. 972, and Georgios, A.D. 1097),\textsuperscript{20} Serra-West\textsuperscript{21} and Debeira (Komangana; stela of high official Staurophoros, A.D. 1069; our no. 11, below), sites which all are situated in the area north of Meinarti.

A third Meinarti stela survives, unfortunately, only as a fragment.\textsuperscript{22} Remains of an embossed border suggest that it may have been decorated too. However, just enough is left to obtain a general idea of its funerary formulae and to read the name of its owner, a woman Πετρονία, Petronia (l. 6).\textsuperscript{23} No further information about her person or lifetime has been preserved.

All three stelae bear an elaborate epitaph which, next to Coptic, incorporates elements in Greek (Michaeliko, Iesousyko) and Old Nubian (Iesousyko). The structure of these three texts is remarkably similar. They bear, moreover, a striking resemblance to the epitaph of a Deacon Petrou, the son of a bishop of Kourte, which originates from the same period (A.D. 1029) and region (Debeira-West).\textsuperscript{24} Thus, the stela of Michaeliko contains, following an extensive opening formula of the προνοίω-type, which quotes God’s judgment on Adam (Gn 3:19; l. 1-4), and lemmas containing the name of the deceased and the date of her demise (l. 4-8), a long composite prayer (l. 8-21). This is followed by a lemma stating the age of the deceased (l. 21-22) and by another prayer, now in Greek, for resting her soul (άνάπαυσον . . .; l. 23-25). Especially the prayer of l. 13-14 (absent from Iesousyko): “may He (i.e. God) cause the Archangel Michael to watch over her bones”, is a noteworthy feature which, to the best of

\textsuperscript{19} See Monneret de Villard, La Nubia medioevale I, p. 123, fig. 103 (his type 6): cf. ibid. IV, Cairo 1957, pl. CXXX-CXXXII.
\textsuperscript{20} See Jakobielski, Faras III, pp. 120-23 & 154-57.
\textsuperscript{21} A particularly well sculptured but fragmentary stela (Khartoum, National Museum, inv. no. 17041; unpublished); unfortunately, the greater part of its text is lost.
\textsuperscript{22} Khartoum, inv. no. 18105, unpublished; found “on the floor of a house” during the Sudan Antiquities Service-UNESCO excavations of Meinarti, 1963-64 campaign; cf. Adams, in Kush 13, 1965, p. 172.
\textsuperscript{23} A not uncommon name in Egypt, cf. F. Preisgge, Namenbuch, Heidelberg 1922, col. 321 & 328; D. Foraboschi, Onomasticon alterum papyrologicum, Milano-Varese 1967, p. 256; in Nubia attested at Ginâri, Ibrim and Toshka-West (Sakînya).
our knowledge, occurs outside Meinarti only in the stela from Debeira-West, mentioned above. The general impression which these three ladies' stelae convey is of conforming closely to a model which was current among the clerical and lay elite of the region during the 10th-11th centuries. As we will see presently, in the cases of Michaeliko and Iesousyko, something more can be said about their socio-economic status.

"OWNING" A CHURCH IN MEDIEVAL NUBIA.

The stela of Iesousyko, who died at the age of 34, mentions no parents. She is, however, qualified as: ἐχων φιλοθεος / ἱερος Νομαδος (ll. 6-7). Although part of this phrase, as it switches to Old Nubian, is difficult to interpret, it clearly begins with the Greek loanword ἔχων. The participle ἔχων, in combination with church names and toponyms, occurs several times more in Nubian epigraphy, both on stelae and in graffiti or dipinti, as well as in a documentary text (see the provisional list of sources given below). It qualifies the name of a person who, often next to other qualifications, is said to "have" a certain ecclesiastical establishment in a certain place. A rather well-known example is provided by the Greek funerary stela of Abba Marianos (our no. 2, below), who is styled "orthodox bishop of Faras and archimandrite of Pouko and envoy to Babylon (= Cairo) and ἔχων τέσσαρα ζώα νήσος Τημε: having (the Church of) the Four Living Creatures (on) the Island (of) Teme" (ll. 8-9). We may, therefore, expect the same ἔχων in the stela of Iesousyko to introduce the name of an ecclesiastical establishment. In fact, there can be little doubt that the φιλοθεος- of the Iesousyko stela stands for Saint Philotheos of Antioch, the well-known martyr, who was so widely venerated in Egypt that it is not astonishing to find traces of his cult in Nubia too. What follows appears to contain a form of the Old Nubian verb μογιουτ-, "to lead, to guide", but remains obscure otherwise. It almost certainly serves to identify the Saint

25 Cf. Junker, ZÄS 60, p. 130. For more commentary, see the catalogue announced in n. 13, above.

26 The group ῥο (beginning of l. 7) looks rather like η; the present reading was suggested by Adam Lajtar. Between ο and μ some space is left open, above which a small and thin η is added, close to the μ.

27 Up to now this epithet has only rarely been discussed, viz. by S. Donadoni, in: Tamit (1964), Rome 1967, p. 67, ad no. 13, l. 2 (cf. the same, "Les graffiti de l'église de Sonqi Tino", in: K. Michalowski, ed., Nubia: Récentes recherches, Warsaw 1975, p. 35), and A. Lajtar, "Varia Nubica (I-II)", ZPE 104, 1994, pp. 202-203.

RICH LADIES OF MEINARTI AND THEIR CHURCHES

Philotheos Church in question\textsuperscript{29} and may therefore either specify its location or give its (or, the Saint’s) local surname.\textsuperscript{30}

Until quite recently, the expressions with εχων (etc.) seemed limited to Greek or Old Nubian, resp. Greco-Nubian, texts and the person thus styled always a man.\textsuperscript{31} Iesousyko’s stela is conspicuous for the first attested occurrence of this Greco-Nubian expression in a predominantly Coptic context.\textsuperscript{32} Moreover, Iesousyko was a woman.

Here, the stela of Michaeliko offers an interesting parallel. Michaeliko, who died at the age of 75, is qualified as: ΘΥγάτηρ πρεσβύτερος ΜΙΧΑΗΛ · ΝΑΡΤΗ, “the daughter (θυγάτηρ) of Iohannou the priest (πρεσβύτερος), she (or, he) who has (the Church of) Michael at Argine” (ll. 6-7). There can be no doubt that πετευάντε (which in standard Sahidic should be either πετευάνται or πετευάντας)\textsuperscript{33} is the Coptic equivalent of the Greek loanword εχων used on the stela of Iesousyko. Owing to the Nubian uncertainty with respect to grammatical gender, which can also be noticed in the present stela, one might hesitate whether this epithet, “having”, goes with Michaeliko or with her father Iohannou: the head of the epithet is masculine, the possessor suffix being feminine. However, supposing the feminine to represent the marked choice, we would prefer to recognize in Michaeliko herself the owner of St. Michael’s Church.\textsuperscript{34}

That this is perfectly possible for a woman, is shown by the stela of Iesousyko.

Unlike the Church of St. Philotheos owned by Iesousyko, Michaeliko’s church is identified by a known toponym. It is situated not in Meinarti itself, but in a place called Argine, which occurs as Argini in our no. 12 below. This has been quite plausibly identified with modern Argin, a district on the west bank north of the Second Cataract, a few kilometers from Meinarti.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{29} Next to the stela of Bishop Marianos, just quoted, cf. below our nos. 3 (“the Jesus-Church of the mountain”) and 11 (“the Church of Severus in the town”).

\textsuperscript{30} A perhaps comparable epithet is to be found in a Greek-Old Nubian graffito at Assuan, see F. Ll. Griffith, “Christian documents from Nubia”, Proceedings of the British Academy 14, 1928, p. 145, l. 4, where it follows the (enciphered) name of St. Michael: ΧΙΝ (i.e. Michael) ΑΙΚΑΜΟΥΔΩΤΕ.

\textsuperscript{31} This latter aspect was earlier emphasized by Lajtar, ZPE 104, 1994, pp. 202-03, but see now our list of sources below.

\textsuperscript{32} And for a rare example of Coptic-Old Nubian code switching!


\textsuperscript{34} The inappropriate masculine forms used in both the Michaeliko and Iesousyko stelae (εξων, πετ-) may, quite apart from the Nubians’ weak sense for Coptic and Greek grammatical gender, reflect the predominant influence of a masculine standard form.

the ruins of a considerable church, perhaps that of St. Michael, could be seen even quite recently. What, we may presently ask, is the exact meaning of the expression εχων (etc.) and its equivalents? Especially since we are dealing with women in the Meinarti stelae, it seems less plausible that these could be “titulars” or “prebendaries” of any church or monastery, or that they could have a church “in consegna, in cura”, as S. Donadoni proposed. They might, of course, be the founders of the churches in question, but this is not what the texts say. Both the Greek εχων and its Coptic and Old Nubian equivalents are clearly denoting a relation of “possession”: the persons in question are said to “have” a sanctuary. For a parallel it seems appropriate to look where we can best expect it, in Byzantine Egypt.

Actually, in Byzantine Egypt private persons could, in spite of Justinianian legislation, be the full juridical owners of an ecclesiastical establishment. As its owners they might or might not be the founders of their sacred property. The rights of ownership over a church or a monastery could be transferred by testament. They could, moreover, be exercised by women as well. Although the precise juridical and economical implications of their ownership remain

1913, no. 8, p. 130), and P. L. SHINNIE, in a footnote in BARNES, Kush 2, 1954, p. 28, ad our no. 12, below.

36 See MONNERET DE VILLARD, loc. cit.; H.-Å. NORDSTRÖM, “Excavations and survey in Faras, Argin and Gezira Dabarosa”, Kush 10, 1962, p. 44 (the habitation sites mentioned seem not to have been excavated). It is needless to insist on the popularity of St. Michael in Christian Nubia, profusely attested by archaeological, prosopographical and literary material.

37 In: Tamit (1964), p. 67; cf. the same, in: K. MICHALOWSKI (ed.), Nubia: Récentes recherches, p. 35: “‘titulaire’ (ou quelque chose de semblable ...)”. Already ŁAJTAR, ZPE 104, 1994, pp. 202-03, pointed out that also non-clerics could be styled εχων (etc.).


39 On the rights of the κτίστης and its heirs, see particularly STEINWENTER, “Rechtsstellung”, pp. 5-23.

40 See STEINWENTER, pp. 7-8, 16-19.
obscure, we may suppose our ladies from Meinarti to have been the wealthy patrons of ecclesiastical establishments. They may have either founded these establishments themselves or acquired them by inheritance. As the case of Michaeliko shows, their property could be situated at some distance from the place where they lived or, at least, died.

The record of the other Nubian examples of the expression εχων (etc.) and its Coptic and Old Nubian equivalents (see the list below), may serve to supplement this picture. First of all, Iesousyko and Michaeliko are not the only ladies said to “own” a church: our nos. 12 and, perhaps, 17 are additional examples. Secondly, in as far as our examples are dated, it may be seen that they all belong to the 11th and 12th centuries, dates running from A.D. 1036 to 1184. Thirdly, as our no. 17, from the Old-Dongola region, shows, examples are geographically not limited to Lower Nubia alone. Finally, where professions or titles are mentioned, we count among the “owners” of churches a deacon, priests (as well as the daughter of a priest), bishops, high civil authorities and even a king. From all this we may conclude that “owning” a church was considered de bon ton among the upper classes of later medieval Nubia. In styling themselves patrons of a church, rich Nubians of both sexes proclaimed their status as well as their piety.

APPENDIX

LIST OF SOURCES FROM CHRISTIAN NUBIA CONTAINING THE EXPRESSION “HAVING THE CHURCH OF SO-AND-SO”

The present list bears a provisional character and is merely intended as a preliminary for more detailed studies. It is arranged geographically, from North to South, after the find-spots of the texts. Every entry contains the following elements:

- character of the source;
- find-spot and present whereabouts of the artefact in question;
- date;
- basic bibliographical data;
- language of the source;
- quotation of the fragment with the expression “having the Church of so-and-so”; if this expression is part of the more elaborate titulature of a person we quote the whole titulature for prosopographical reasons; while quoting

41 Thus, the question may be raised how it fits into a picture of Nubian economy as sketched e.g. by L. TÖRÖK, “Money, economy and administration in Christian Nubia”, [in:] Études nubiennes, Cairo 1978, pp. 287-311.

42 Compare, for even greater geographical distances, our nos. 1 and 10 below.
texts we occasionally propose corrections for the readings, sometimes important ones; we do not correct orthographic and syntactic mistakes abounding in Nubian Greek; Greek texts are normally printed in minuscules; when a text is a mixture of Greek and Old Nubian we give it in majuscules;
- translation;
- commentary.

1. Graffito in the temple of Ramses II in es-Sebû’a, which was turned into a church in the Christian period; date unknown. Published by F. Ll. Griffith, “The Nubian Texts of the Christian Period” [in:] Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-hist. Klasse, Berlin 1913, pp. 60-62, with pl. 3. Republished by G. M. Browne, “Griffith’s Old Nubian Graffito 4”, Études et Travaux 17, 1995, pp. 17-21. The graffito contains a prayer to St Peter the Apostle in Old Nubian (lines 1-7), set up by one Peter the priest as is stated in a subscript written in a mixture of Greek and Old Nubian (lines 7-8). Here follows the reading of the subscript, as established by G. M. Browne:

εις νετρο ἀγας παχώρακ ε ιον ηνος κ σταυρος παχώρακ
ἐνψυ χιλι ετάζα

I, Peter, being priest of Christ of Pachoras and . . . of the cross of Pachoras, today have set (this) up”.

We suggest to read εξων after παχώρακ. In Old Nubian majuscules ω and ο look very much alike and could have been easily mistaken by Griffith whose copy serves as a basis for any attempt at reading. The sense of the subscript would be: “I, Peter, the priest, having the Christ-Church of Pachoras and also being (something) of the Cross-Church of Pachoras, today have set (this) up”.

The Jesus Christ-Church of Pachoras is also mentioned in some graffiti in the Cathedral and in the Rivergate Church at Faras. Stefan Jakobielski, A History of the Bishopric of Pachoras, pp. 170-175 and 189, proposed to identify it with the Rivergate Church. The Cross-Church of Pachoras is attested also in a graffito near Ashkeit, below, no. 13.


In lines 6-9 the epitaph gives Marianos the following titles (here and in other epitaphs of the Euchologion Mega type, the genitives depend on either ἀνάπαυσον τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ δούλου σου or σὺ γὰρ εἰ ἀνάπαυσις τῆς ψυχῆς τοῦ δούλου σου):
6 ἄββα Μαριάνος ὁ ὅθοδοξος ἐπισκόπου Παχωρᾶς
7 καὶ ὁ ἀρχιμανδρίτης Πούκκο καὶ ἀπόστολος τοῦ
8 Βαβυλών καὶ ἔχων τέσσαρα ζώα νήσος
9 Τήμε

"(Rest the soul of Your servant) Abba Marianos, orthodox bishop of Faras and archimandrite of Pouko and envoy to Babylon (= Cairo) and having (the Church of) the Four Living Creatures on the Island of Teme".

The Island of Teme is otherwise unknown. A Church of the Four Living Creatures is attested three times elsewhere: 1) in a dipinto in the Faras cathedral, also in connection with ἔχων (see infra, no. 6); 2) in a Coptic epitaph of a priest Marianou from Faras, dated A.D. 955 (cf. J. van der Vliet, "Churches in Lower Nubia, Old and ‘New’, BSAC, forthcoming); 3) in graffiti in the church of Sonqi Tino, again in connection with ἔχων (see infra, no. 16). Nos. 1 and 2 may well refer to the same church, which was probably situated in Faras or its near vicinity; for the sanctuary of the Island of Teme and for the one mentioned in Sonqi Tino, which may have been a monastery, this must remain uncertain.

3. Old Nubian document from Qasr Ibrîm from the second half of 12th century: a contract of sale and cession of land by a certain Pōnitta, his daughter Persi as well as Nonnen, daughter of Mena to MaSSuda, Choiak-eiksil: G. M. Browne, Old Nubian Texts from Qasr Ibrîm III, London 1991, no. 34 ii. Among witnesses to the contract, the document mentions in line 18: "Einitta, who has the Jesus-Church of the Mountain". The church in question is otherwise unattested and its location is unknown. It is most probably to be situated somewhere in the vicinity of Qasr Ibrîm.

4. Graffito on a wall of the Church of the Archangel Raphael in Tamit; Greek with Old Nubian intercalations; date unknown: S. Donadoni [in:] Tamit (1964), Rome 1967, p. 67, no. 13:

[I]φιλοθεος, διάκονος ἐν Μαιαντίᾳ, εν Ποργονίᾳ ἔγραψε
[I]πληρημένος εὐφραίνων γνώμην ἐν" ἑορτῇ Αραφάλαμ.

4. Εἰρήνη.

"I, Philotheos, deacon, son of [ ], having Purgundi, have written (this) during the feast of the Archangel Raphael (of the) epagomenal day"

The name of Philotheos’ father should most probably be read [ΜΑΙΑΝΤΙΑ]. Donadoni, loc. cit., identifies Purgundi in this inscription with modern Furgundi, a locality on the East bank of the Nile, ca. 5 km. north of Abu Simbel, opposite of Tamit.
In the majority of cases cited in this list, the participle ἐχων or its Old Nubian and Coptic equivalents are connected with the name of a church, sometimes additionally identified by a place-name or another topographical specification. However, here and probably also in a dipinto from Faras cathedral (below, no. 6) and in the epitaph of Angelosko from Sheikh Arab Hag (below, no. 17), merely a place-name appears. In our opinion, also these three toponyms which appear in connection with ἐχων, viz. Purgundi, [ ]touri and Komati, should be understood as names of churches. We imagine the situation thus: Purgundi, [ ]touri and Komati were small villages boasting one church each. The names of the villages were for some reason so distinctive that their churches were called, at least in everyday speech, not by their official names ("The Church of Saint N.N."), but by the name of the village. The transfer of toponyms to cult places (temples and chapels) is well attested for Greco-Roman Egypt. We can also cite a parallel from present-day Poland. The village of Drelów in East Poland has a parish church of Our Lady that occupies the centre of the village. Three kilometers away, still within the administrative borders of Drelów, in a locality called Horodek (a Ukrainian loan word meaning "a small fortified town"), on a small hill among fields, meadows and trees, lies the Church of St Onnophrios. The church is never or very rarely referred to as the Church of St Onnophrios but only as Horodek. Even the parson, announcing the mass at St Onnophrios in the parish church, says: "the mass will take place in Horodek". Purgundi, Komati and [ ]touri could have been, mutatis mutandis, something similar to Horodek.


† เมφοχε ουμαε • εξων
ΘΜ οτον τελιφε, νο κι
ΣΑΦ • τον κε άλκο σιτων

The graffito does not permit a continuous translation; it apparently begins with names. ουμαε might be an incorrect rendering of ουμαε. This name appears, in a slightly different orthography, in another graffito from Tamit; Donadoni, *op.cit.*, pp. 65-66, no. 7. εξων seems to be connected with ΘΜ.

6. Faras cathedral, east pilaster to the right of the haikal. Dipinto E 203 a3 written in black ink to the left of a wall painting depicting Bishop Georgios (died 1097). The painting and the inscription are at present in the Sudan National

---

43 It is this very Church were Adam Łajtar was baptised and made his the First Communion.
Museum, Khartoum. The inscription remains unpublished. It can be seen on the photo of the painting reproduced in: S. Jakobielski, A History of the Bishopric of Pachoras, p. 159 and fig. 48. Contrary to what Jakobielski, loc. cit., says, the inscription is in Greek and not in Old Nubian. It begins with a prayer to the Virgin Mary and then continues with the personal data of a man whose name has not been preserved. Adam Łajtar reads from the photo in the archive of the Research Centre for Mediterranean Archaeology of the Polish Academy of Sciences:

6 [ ] NKÖ YEQ S BA TECAPA 3WÁ ÉXUN
7 [ ] JTOUPI ÉXUN etc.

For the Church (or, Churches) of the Four Living Creatures see above, no. 2. [ ]touri looks very much like an Old Nubian place-name. For toponyms used as names of churches see above, no. 4.

7. Faras cathedral. Legend to a painting showing a man in a richly decorated garment and wearing a royal crown of Nubia (King Moses George). The language of the legend is a mixture of Greek and Old Nubian. According to stylistic criteria, the painting may be dated to the end of the 12th century. The Moses George named in the legend was King of Dotawo in the second half of the same century. 44


Below we reproduce Jakobielski’s transcription from Études nubiennes, p. 148, with some changes resulting from comparison with the facsimile. Also Jakobielski’s translation has been modified.

† OYTOC ECTIM KBAYEX BAC
NYPXEX GEPWPHY BACIASY NÒPHIC
5 APÒXAS MAKPO : . Y MAKPO GEPW AEPH
4 OIKODOMIC ETHONOC 5 PALEX ZAKARPH GAK . TO
5 PALEX BACIASY ETHONOC ÂMHP FIB ÉXUN : —

“This is the Great King Moses George, King of (the) Nobadians and Alwa and Makouria. Being descendant of Maraña George, the Builder and also (something) of

44 For Moses George, see J. M. PLUMLEY, “New Light on the Kingdom of Dotawo”, [in:] Études nubiennes, pp. 236-239 (with a facsimile of the Faras inscription on p. 237).
Zacharias and also being descendant of King David, having (the Church of) the Virgin Mary”.

Although this inscription remains obscure on many points, the reading of the very end of line 5 seems obvious to us. ρνβ is a very well known numerical cryptogram for Μαρία (40 + 1 + 100 + 10 + 1 = 152) and ρνβ εχων must mean “having (the Church of) the Virgin Mary”; a numerical cryptogram in connection with εχων is also used in the epitaph of Bishop Tamer, below, no. 9: εχων χαθ Παχωρας. It is not quite clear to whom the title ρνβ εχων in this inscription refers. Two possibilities exist: (1) King Moses George, (2) King David who was an ancestor of Moses George. The former possibility appears to be more probable.

The Church of the Virgin Mary mentioned here was in all probability situated in Faras or its immediate vicinity. One should note the absence of topographical qualifications as if it was obvious to everybody which particular church of the Virgin Mary was concerned; note, furthermore, that the painting and its accompanying inscription adorned a wall of Faras cathedral. Under this circumstances one is tempted to identify the Church of the Virgin Mary from this inscription with the Cathedral of Faras itself which, as is well known, was dedicated to the Virgin Mary; cf. S. Jakobielski, _A History of the Bishopric of Pa-choras_, pp. 176-186. If this identification is correct we obtain a very nice and significant picture: a member of the Nubian royal family, actually the King himself, “owned” the main church of the capital of Nobadia.


   ερω χωριανα ερω
   παξ τωνα ερω

“I, Eli, having Toma of Faras”.

The word τωμα appears also in an unpublished dipinto E 251 h4 from a wall of Faras cathedral:

   Χαερεα Μαρία   κεκαριτομενη[ν - - - ]
   ηα τουραμων ηι ε τωμα[ - - - ]
   παξωρας 5 ΔΥ . . γραφη

τωμα may be identical with τονμα which is found, in combination with ερω, in a subscript to an unpublished dipinto G 61 h3, again from Faras cathedral:

   τωμα ερω [ blank ] η [ blank ] γραφων

We are unable to identify this τωμα (τονμα).
9. Funerary stela of Tamer, Bishop of Faras who died on March 30th, 1184 A.D. The stela was found around 1820 by Carlo Vidua in Kolasuča (Faras); since, it is kept in the Museo Egizio at Turin. The stele is inscribed with a Greek epitaph of the Euchologion Mega type. It has been edited several times; for the complete bibliographical lemma, see A. Łajtar, ZPE 104, 1994, p. 201, n. 2; cf. also id., ZPE 113, 1996, p. 105, no. 6. The most recent edition of the full text is: Kubińska, *Inscriptions grecques chrétiennes*, pp. 42-45, no. 10. The correct reading of lines 20-21, which are crucial for our present interest, was established by A. Łajtar, ZPE 104, 1994, pp. 201-203. The deceased is styled thus:

20 Ταμηρ ἐπισκ(όπου) Παχωρας θ(εο)ῦ τῇ
21 τὰ (καὶ) ἔχων χρῆ Παχωρας

"(You are the rest of) Tamer, by the grace of God Bishop of Faras, and having (the Church of the Archangel) Michael in Faras".

Until now, the Church of the Archangel Michael in Faras has not been attested elsewhere besides this inscription. Stefan Jakobielski, *A History of the Bishopric of Pachoras*, p. 188, tentatively identifies it with the church ruins in present day Nabindiffi, not far from Kolasuča where the stele of Tamer was discovered.

10. Epitaph of Iesousinkouda (died October 27th, 1102); provenance unknown, probably Wadi Halfa-region; Sudan National Museum Khartoum, without number; A. Łajtar, “The epitaph of Iesonsinkouda, eparch of Nobadia (?), domesticos of Faras and nauarchos of the Nobadae, died A.D. 1102”, *Gdańsk Archaeological Museum African Reports* 1, 1998, pp. 73-80. This epitaph is in Greek with Old Nubian intercalations. It is not of the Euchologion Mega type, which is surprising for the beginning of the 12th century. Iesousinkouda, who died in the age of 36, is thus designated:

6 ἰεσοῦς ἵκουδα
7 ά νι(ό)ς ἔχων Γ(α)β(ριε)λ ἐξ-
8 ουσία (τι) δέ (καὶ) δῶ-
9 μίστικος Παχ-
10 ὁ ῥός ναυάρχ(ος)
11 νο(βάδου)

“Iesousinkouda, son of the one who has (the Church of the Archangel) Gabriel, power and domesticus of Faras, nauarches of the Nobadae”.

Line 20, which is a later addition to the epitaph but done by the same lapicide who is responsible for the rest of the inscription, specifies that the church “owned” by the father of Iesousinkouda was that of Phrim (Ibrím):

20 ἔχων Γαβριήλ φρ.”

45 The term ἐξοιτία, “power” most probably describes Iesousinkouda as an eparch of Nobadia.
The Church of the Archangel Gabriel of Phrim is attested in an Old Nubian document from Qasr Ibrim from the second half of 12th century; G. M. Browne, *Old Nubian Texts from Qasr Ibrîm III*, London 1991, no. 60, l. 10. There it is stated that the land of the Gabriel-Church in Ibrim bordered to the south on the possessions of the Jesus-Church of Touggili.

11. Funerary stela of Staurophoros (died on December 4th, 1069) found by the Scandinavian Joint Expedition in Komangana (Debeira), now kept in Uppsala. The stele is inscribed with an epitaph of the Euchologion Mega type, edited by T. Hägg [in:] T. Säve-Söderbergh (ed.), *Late Nubian Cemeteries (= Scandinavian Joint Expedition to Sudanese Nubia VI)*, Solna 1981, pp. 56-59. The deceased is presented twice in this epitaph: lines 7-8 list his secular titles, in lines 24-25 his ecclesiastical title is given:

6 Σταυροφόρου
7 μεί(ζονος), ναυάρχ(ου) Νοβ(άδων), ναυ(κράτου) ἐπτά χώραι

24 Σταυροφόρου ἔχων Σευήρος
25 γίτττελσ

“(Rest the soul of Your servant) Staurophoros, meizon, nauarches of the Nobadae, naukrates of the Seven Lands”

“(You are the rest of the soul of Your servant) Staurophoros, having the Church of Severus in the town”.

In line 24 the stone has $\varepsilon \chi o\nu \zeta$. In his edition, Hägg left this in majuscules, but suggested the reading $\varepsilon \chi o\nu$, which, in our opinion, is indubitable. Severus, whose church is concerned here, must have been the famous anti-chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch from the first half of the 6th century. He had close ties with the anti-chalcedonian church of Alexandria and after his death was much venerated in the Nile valley; cf. H. Brakmann, “Severos unter den Alexandriniern. Zum liturgischen Diptychon in Boston”, *JAC* 26, 1983, pp. 54-58.

The words $\alpha \pi \pi θε\wedge\nu$ in line 25 were recognised by Hägg as Old Nubian but not read. We suggest the reading “in the town”, from $\alpha \pi \pi - “town, city” and $\alpha \nu (\alpha \nu) - “upon, at, to, for, over, etc.”. A similarly precise designation in an Old Nubian document from Qasr Ibrim, cited above as our no 3: “having the Jesus-Church of the Mountain”. The precise wording of the expression may suggest that there were at least two churches dedicated to Severus: one inside the town, another one outside it. Which town is meant here remains obscure.

12. Epitaph of a woman Eikkir (died August 6th, 1084 A.D. or later; for a discussion of the date, see Lajtar’s forthcoming re-edition of the text). Sudan National Museum Khartoum, inv. 3727. Found at Saqia 43, Ashkeit, near Wadi Halfa. Presented by Mohamed Mohamed Werdie to the Halfa Museum in
1940, whence it was transferred to Khartoum in 1941. The epitaph is of the Euchologion Mega type. It is in Greek, but the personal data of the deceased given in the end are rendered in Old Nubian. The epitaph was edited by J. W. B. Barns, *Kush* 2, 1954, pp. 28-29, who misunderstood the Old Nubian part. The text was revised by Adam Łajtar during his work on the catalogue of Greek Christian epitaphs in the Sudan National Museum at Khartoum. Below we present the text as established by Łajtar:

```
σὺ γὰρ (εἰ) ἀνά-
παυσις την δ(ούλην) ἐκκιρ
τι ἄρτιν κονάζα ἀπό
μαρτ(ύρων) ὁ τάννα ἄρεν οὐ
κριγυλλον ὃ πώ χεκ

ortion of Argini. (She died in the year)
since the Martyrs 800. The years of her life were 72. She departed on Mesore 13th"

κονάζα is an imperfect participle of the verb κον (a variant of κο) = “to have, to owe, to possess”; cf. E. Zyhlarz, *Grundzüge der nubischen Grammatik im christlichen Frühmittelalter (Altnubisch)* (= Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes XVIII 1), Leipzig 1928, p. 55. It is then an exact equivalent of the Greek ἔχων; compare also σαλ ἄρεν κονάζα (= λόγον ζωῆς ἐπέχοντες) in Griffith’s *Old Nubian Lectionary* 101. II. 7-8 (ed. by G. M. Browne, Rome and Barcelona 1982).

For Argini see above, note 35. ἄρεν from this inscription and ἄρεμα from the epitaph of Michaeliko are merely two forms of the same toponym, “η” and “ι” both being pronounced as “ι” at the time.

The name of the church owned by Eikkir was contained in lines 22-23, between the name of the deceased woman and the place-name ἄρεν. We are unable to reconstruct any reasonable word from the preserved rests of letters. In any case, μιχᾶ, as in the epitaph of Michaeliko, cannot be read here.


```

ἀε in line 1 is the ligature for πρε(σβύτερος).

The graffito does not allow a continuous translation. It should probably be understood: “I, Merke, the priest . . . having the Cross-Church of Faras, have written (this)”. For the Cross-Church in Faras, see above, no. 1.
14. Coptic epitaph of a woman Michaeliko (died December 11th, 1037 A.D.) found in Meinarti, now in the Sudan National Museum, Khartoum.

The blessed (μακάρια) Michaeliko(l), the daughter (θυγάτηρ) of Iohannou the priest (πρεσβύτερος), she who has (the Church of Saint) Michael at Argine

For a detailed discussion see above.

15. Coptic epitaph of a woman Iesousyko (died January 9th, 1046 A.D.) found in Meinarti, now in the Sudan National Museum, Khartoum.

For a detailed discussion see above.

16. The expression “having the Church of so-and-so” is attested in graffiti on the walls of the church in Sonqi Tino, too. Unfortunately, the epigraphic material from this site, apparently rich in data of different kinds, remains unpublished. It would appear from a somewhat unclear presentation by S. Donadoni, in: K. Michalowski (ed.), *Nubia: Récentes recherches*, Warsaw 1975, p. 35, that this expression occurs at least two times there, namely: εκών τετΣερά γεω and εκών [ ] ἘΠΥ (or, in a reversed order: τετΣερά γεω εκών and [ ] ἘΠΥ εκών). According to Donadoni, “the Four Living Creatures” mentioned here was a monastery. See, too, above, no. 2. We are unable to suggest anything for [ ] ἘΠΥ.

17. Greek epitaph of the Euchologion Mega type, commemorating one Angelosko. The epitaph was found in Sheikh Arab Hag near Old Dongola; now in the Sudan National Museum at Khartoum. Its date is unknown. See J. W. Crowfoot, *JEA* 13, 1927, pp. 228-229, no. 2 (SB IV 7429; SEG VIII 872; Tibiletti Bruno, *Iscrizioni nubiane*, no. 2).

In lines 17-18, the epitaph reads: σὺ γὰρ εἶ ἀνάπαυσις τῶν σῶν δούλων σου Ἀγγελόσκω ΚΟΜΑΤΙΕΧΩΝ. The letters ΚΟΜΑΤΙΕΧΩΝ have been variously interpreted by previous editors. Crowfoot, loc. cit., transcribed them κοματι εχων but translated “(Thy servant Angelosko) Komatiekhon”. In his commentary he put forward a hypothesis, however with a question mark, “that the name was Komati and that the last four letters are the present participle of the verb ἔχω, governing δούλον”. Tibiletti Bruno printed Ἀγγελόσκω Κοματίεχων and suggested in her critical apparatus the reading τοῦ σοῦ δούλου (σοῦ) ... Κοματίεχου. According to this suggestion, Komatiechhon would have been either the second name of Angelosko or the name of his (her) father. We are convinced that the correct reading of the passage in question is: Ἀγγελόσκω Κοματι ἔχων. Komati
must have been a toponym just like Pourgoundi in the graffito from Tamit (no. 4 above). It is probably to be situated somewhere in the vicinity of Old Dongola, but we are unable to identify it with any modern toponym.

It would be interesting to know whether the deceased person was a man or a woman. The name ἀγγελοςκω, an Old Nubian formation (Greek substantive ἀγγελος + Old Nubian predicative -κο), says nothing in this respect. Old Nubian did not distinguish grammatical gender and, consequently, names which are morphologically Old Nubian could have been borne, in principle, by both sexes. On the other hand, the data supplied by the Greek text of the epitaph are contradictory. In line 6, after ἀνάπαυσον τὴν ψυχῆ(ν) and before Ἀγγελοςκω, the feminine article τήν (for τὴν δούλην) appears, while in lines 17-18, already quoted above, we have the masculine substantive τῶν σῶν δούλον (for τῶν σῶν δούλον). Facing this situation we have to pronounce a non liquet.