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Dongola 2010-2011

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DONGOLA 2010–2011

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Abstract: A successive two seasons of excavations were carried out (in 2010 and 2011) in the ancient medieval Nubian city now known as Old Dongola. An expedition from the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw, continued the exploration of sites SWN and C.01 on the citadel of the Nubian metropolis and of the sanctuary of Anna (H.B.2) next to the church inside the monastery of Anthony the Great on Kom H. In the Mosque, which had once been the Throne Hall of the Makurian kings, a project to restore the murals was implemented. Investigations continued also on Funj-period (16th–17th century) architecture on the Citadel, both on site SWN and site B at the northern end of the citadel.

Keywords: Dongola, citadel, monastery, mosque, site C.1, palace of Ioannes/B.I, church/B.V, sanctuary of Anna/H.B.2, paintings, pottery

Updating the topographical record of the site for the purpose of preparing a site presentation project within a tourist development program for the medieval metropolis of Dongola was a major undertaking over the course of the two seasons reported upon here, running concurrently with the excavation program proper. The excavations were focused on two sites situated on the citadel: SWN comprising a royal building complex (B.I and B.V) [Fig. 1] and C.01 encompassing a domestic structure (B.VI) (the latter presented in separate reports, Obluski 2014 and Danyś-Lasek 2014, in this volume). The other site on the citadel where preservation and conservation steps were undertaken was Building B.V, which was partly covered with a shelter roof. In the monastery of St Anthony

the Great on Kom H, the excavation documentation of the monastery church (H.B.1) and the adjoining small sanctuary dedicated to one Anna (H.B.2) continued to be verified and the wall inscriptions from the sanctuary were re-examined by the epigrapher. The latter structure was protected and covered with a shelter roof. Anthropological examination of the remains discovered in crypt 2 in the Northwest Annex were also continued. The restoration of murals on the walls of the Mosque, formerly Throne Hall of Makurian kings, encompassed in the 2011 season the east wall of the square room on the upper floor, to the north of the *mibrab*. The post-Makurian architecture from the 17th and 18th centuries by Building V on the citadel and on kom B to the east of the Cruciform Church (H.100) was also investigated.

CITADEL

SITE SWN: BUILDING I

Excavations in the building interpreted as the 'Palace of Ioannes' (SWN.B.I) encompassed the western row of rooms between passage B.I.11 and the citadel wall on the river side (B.I.15; 36–37; 40–42) and the vestibule of the northern entrance to the palace (B.I.44 and 24) [Fig. 1].

The fill in the vestibule area of the building consisted of 4 m of mainly brick rubble, including dried and baked bricks, deliberately deposited there after the damage presumably incurred in the siege of the citadel by Mamluk armies in 1276 or 1286. Once the walking level was reached the entire entrance from the vestibule to the western passage (B.I.11) of the palace became visible. The vestibule, which measured 7.80 m in length by 3.40–3.80 m in width, had been divided

into two by massive buttresses on the south and north walls, respectively 1.30 m by 1.05 m and 0.90 m by 1.00 m, built of red brick. The buttresses reinforced this part of the structure. Similar wall reinforcement was recorded in rooms B.I.11 and B.I.41. The southern buttress in the vestibule stood on the last occupation surface, indicating that it had been introduced to counter the ill effects of the damage to the northwestern corner of the palace building, on the riverside. The northern palace entrance and the arcade leading to the passage B.I.11 were subsequently blocked on this walking level. There is no direct dating for these building works, but it seems evident that they came late in the sequence, possibly in the second half of the 13th century. The western entrance to B.I.44 was blocked at the same time, in

Team

Dates of work: 4 January–17 February 2010 and 4 January–15 February 2011

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Archaeologists/specialists/documentalists: Szymon Maślak, archaeologist and documentalist (PCMA UW) (2010, 2011); Bartosz Wojciechowski, archaeologist and topographer (independent) (2010); Dr. Artur Obłuski, archaeologist, site C.1 trench supervisor (independent) (2010, 2011); Dr. Joanna Then-Obłuska, archaeologist (2011); Dr. Dobrochna Zielińska, archaeologist and art historian (Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw) (2011)

Ceramologist/documentalist: Katarzyna Danys-Lasek (PCMA UW) (2010, 2011)

Architect: Dr. Teresa Kaczor, responsible for preparing a site presentation project (University of Technology, Wrocław) (2010)

Archeozoologist: Dr. Marta Osypińska (Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Poznań Branch) (2010)

Physical anthropologist: Robert Mahler (PCMA UW) (2010)

Painting restorer: Karina Joanna Sosnowska (independent) (2011)



Fig. 2. Amphora Add.10.214 with Old Nubian inscription (close-up in inset)
(Photo W. Godlewski, PCMA archives)



Fig. 3. Remains of the west wall of Building X, seen under the floor in room B.I.41 of the palace
(Photo W. Godlewski, PCMA archives)

connection with a reconstruction of the west and north walls of the room. There is good reason to link all this building activity with the effects of successive Mamluk raids against the town in the late 13th and early 14th centuries.

A test was made of the foundations of the south wall of room B.I.44 by the southern buttress and in the passage from the vestibule to passage B.I.11. Remains of earlier walls, preserved to a low height, from the preceding building (B.X) in this part of the citadel, were recorded directly on top of the bedrock. No dating material was recovered from the test trench, but it should be assumed on the grounds of the stratigraphy that the earlier construction project in this part of the citadel could not have been later than the middle of the 6th century. Building I is dated to the end of the 6th century.

Among the finds from the fill of room B.I.44 one can mention a partly preserved amphora (Add.10.214) found by the north wall. It bore an inscription on the shoulder in Old Nubian mentioning a producer of ceramics (amphoras) in Dongola: KERAMEUS (Danyś-Lasek, Łajtar 2012) [*Fig. 2*].

Excavations in the western rooms of the palace (B.I) searched for confirmation of the dating of the first occupation phase of the building, while establishing the nature of the changes that had occurred in the layout of the architecture in the space between the citadel wall and the palace, that is, the passage B.I.11 oriented N–S. It appears that the area was put to use only after the palace had been constructed. A very hard clay floor in room B.I.15 and a blocked doorway in the north wall of the unit, by the northeastern corner, indicates that the water and building

materials needed for the construction of the palace had been brought in from this side.

Earlier architecture preceding the palace was recorded under the walking level in room B.I.41. A fragmentary wall, probably belonging to building B.X, was observed in a stratigraphic sequence, but the remains are too modest to determine the nature of this architecture. It is clear, however, that this architecture corresponded with the foundation of the citadel wall from the river side. The wall was built of mud brick, set directly on bedrock [*Fig. 3*].

SITE SWN: BUILDING B.V

Excavations were planned over the entire area of the building (21 m by 17 m) in an effort to uncover the tops of the massive outer walls (1.20 m thick) and the upper parts of the central brick pillars and round pilasters on the east, south and north sides of the naos. The west wall and the western end of the north wall were dismantled down to the ground sometime in the 19th–20th centuries, apparently in search of building material. The southern and eastern parts of the structure stand to a height of 3.60 m and have preserved lime plastering with murals high on the walls, as well as on the pillars and pilasters [*Fig. 5*]. The plan of the building was drawn (except for the western part where the walls have not been preserved to comparable height) and it was found that it must have been a domed building raised on a central plan of a cross circumscribing a rectangle with an entrance in the northern annex facing the royal palace. Building B.V was therefore in all likelihood a church functionally associated with the royal palace (B.I). It certainly

appears to be one of the best built structures discovered so far in Dongola. The construction date is still vague, but it surely predated the 9th century. Church buildings on a similar plan of a cross

circumscribing a rectangle, have been discovered elsewhere in Dongola (Pillar Church by the western section of the citadel fortifications on the northwestern platform [Fig. 4] and church DC on

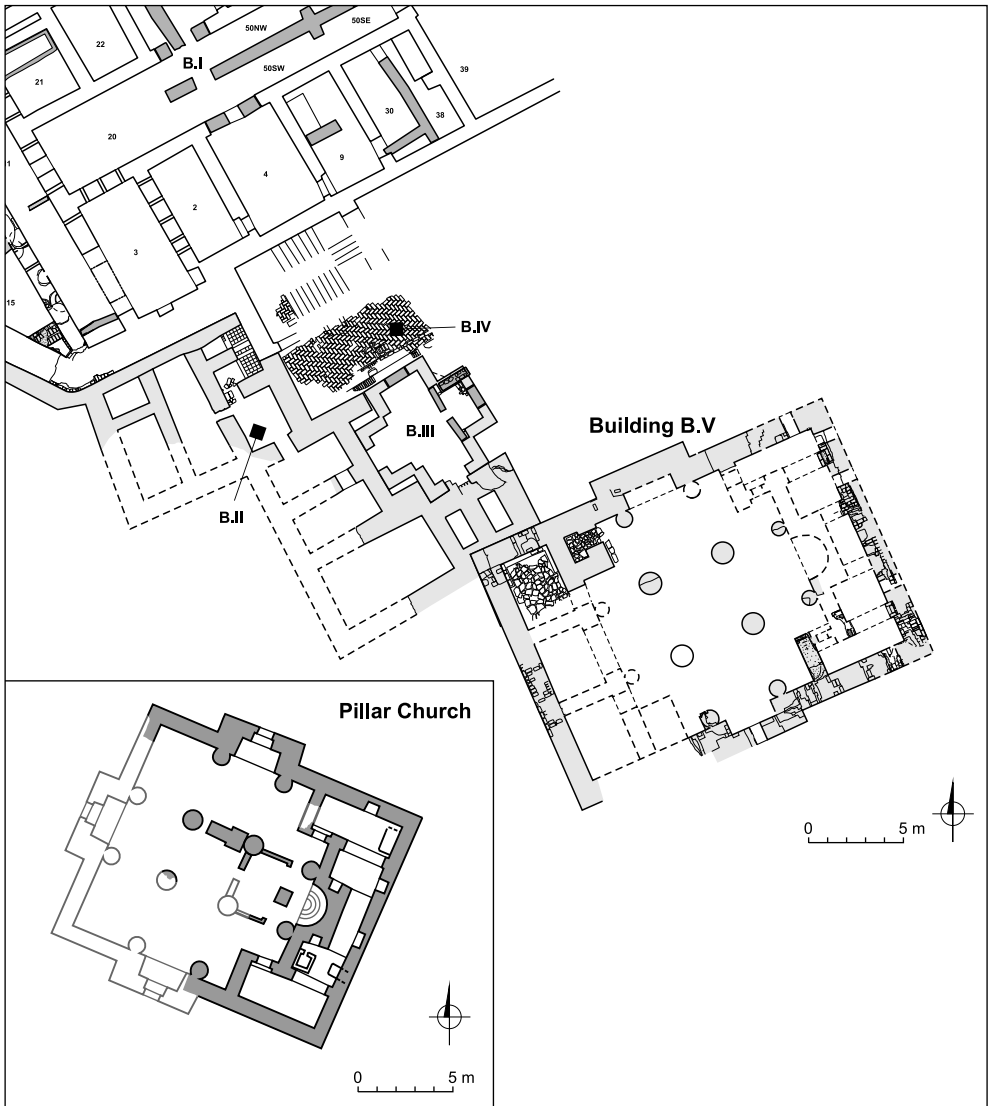


Fig. 4. Comparison of plans of building B.V and the Pillar Church (box at bottom left) (Plans W. Godlewski, S. Maślak, PCMA archives)

site D in the northern suburbs of the town) and in Hambukol (church by the canal, Godlewski 2006: 279–281), and presumably also in Banganarti (Lower Church LCH.3, Żurawski 2013: 170–274).

Exploration was suspended in order to build a shelter over the ruins in preparation for the conservation effort

that the apparently well preserved wall paintings will entail [Fig. 6]. A roof of corrugated sheet metal on a metal rod framework was installed over the wall tops and pillars. The western façade was left open, assuring proper ventilation inside the protected structure and facilitating further exploration as well as mural conservation.



Fig. 5. Pilaster in front of the apse of the church (Building B.V) (Photo W. Godlewski, PCMA archives)

SITE C.1: BUILDING B.VI

The third season of fieldwork on site C.1 led to a complete clearing of the original phase of building B.VI and the uncovering of the remains of the first building on the spot (B.IX) (for an archaeological report, see Obluski 2014, in this volume).

The northern part of Building B.VI as well as part of the western side were destroyed completely and it appears that the structure was deliberately cleared of all contents before being deserted. Only a few potsherds were found in the fill, this modest evidence dating the



Fig. 6. View of the shelter constructed over the central and eastern parts of building B.V (Photo W. Godlewski, PCMA archives)

foundation of the structure to the 12th or 13th century at the earliest and its abandonment to after the second half of the 14th century (for the pottery report, see Danys-Lasek 2014, in this volume).

The function of the structure remains uncertain. The plan reconstructed on the grounds of the excavations calls for rows of chambers on either side of a central hall with six pillars supporting the roof. This form shares many elements with the ground floors of Meroitic palatial complexes, such as Wad ben Naga, Napata, Meroe (Baud 2010), as well as with the Meroitic industrial complexes in Meinarti (Adams 2000) and Faras (Griffith 1927) (see Obluski 2014: 306, in this volume; see also Godlewski 2013a: 109. An economic function for Building B.VI is also very likely considering the siloses in the northwestern corner of the citadel, which were installed in the 12th–13th century on the site of the leveled ruins of private housing (H.105 and H.106). Both the

building and the siloses may have been connected with the operation of a river harbor, which has been tentatively located on the northwestern flank of the citadel. Certain elements of layout in common between Building B.VI and late antique granaries in the Fayum Oasis, at Karanis and Tebtynis, should also be noted. A central office, that of Keeper of granaries (shoung), named in documents from Qasr Ibrim from the end of the 13th century (Browne 1991: QI. 38, QI.40), which king Basil held, indicates that buildings of this kind existed in the urban centers of Makuria and therefore can be expected also on the citadel in Dongola.

The remains of the earlier structure (B.IX) found under Building B.VI, consisting of parts of the outer walls and some inner walls, are too meager at this point to support any conclusions concerning the form and nature of this structure.

MONASTERY OF ST ANTHONY THE GREAT ON KOM H

The necessity to verify data connected with the original foundation of the monastery church (HC.B.1) and its chronology necessitated cleaning of the interior and new documentation and analysis of the remains. The opportunity was taken also to clean the sanctuary attached to the western facade of the church (H.B.2 = BS) in order to supplement existing documentation of the murals and inscriptions preserved on its walls and to preserve the structure from further deterioration. Anthropologist Robert Mahler continued documentation

of human skeletal remains recovered from crypts 1 and 2 in the Northwest Annex (see Godlewski, Mahler, Czaja-Szewczak 2012).

MONASTERY CHURCH (HC.B.1)
The monastery church excavated in 2002–2005 by Daniel Gazda (2006) was cleared again in order to carry out additional research aimed at determining the construction date and layout of the first foundation. The original documentation of the building was supplemented with a detailed record of

the flooring and its relation to the stone footings under the central pillars and columns. In order to gain insight into the stratigraphy, a test pit was dug beneath the western edge of the southern face of the southwestern stone pillar in the church naos (trench 2010.1, *Fig. 7*). The pit was a meter long and 30 cm wide.

The floor slabs, each 0.50 m by 0.30 m, were laid parallel to the pillar face on a bedding of fine gray sand approximately 2–3 cm thick. The sand lay on top of baked bricks neatly laid in a layer perpendicular to the square foundation of the pillar. Lime mortar used to bond the stone blocks of the pillar was pressed out onto the bricks and its surface appears smooth, the plaster on the pillar faces and the render on the lower southern face of the pillar are the same, and there is evidence of the plaster dripping from the pillar face onto the brick floor next to the pillar. The southwestern pillar was constructed

on a square foundation and plastered when the layer of bricks adjoining the foundation was already in existence. The foundation stood on bedrock, giving a total height of approximately 0.38 m; it was constructed of baked brick (the southern face was cleared in the test pit), starting with a layer of bricks on end and three courses of bricks laid flat. The width of the square foundation, although not cleared in the test pit, should be assumed as no less than the pillar, that is, about 1.20 m. The substructure of the brick floor next to the southern face of the foundation consisted of a hard and homogeneous layer of packed, finely crushed rock and red-brick fragments. The ceramic floor tiles covered the foundation footing, but not the brick bedding layer which only reached the bench, hence it could not have been meant as the floor inside the church. Therefore, the ceramic-tile floor is the first original floor of the church interior and the brick layer underneath was the



Fig. 7. Trench 2010.1 on the south side of the southwestern pillar in the naos of the Monastery Church on Kom H (H.B.1) (Photo W. Godlewski, PCMA archives)

bedding. The smoothed surface of the bricks could have been the effect of long-term walking over this surface, possibly during the construction of the church and the furnishing of its interior. The fill from pit 2010.1 did not yield any finds whatsoever.

The present examination of the foundation of the four massive stone pillars in the central part of the naos (of which the southeastern one had been removed completely) as well as the four monolithic columns of granite (two of which, the southeastern one and the northwestern one, were preserved in place) revealed that all of these features were constructed simultaneously on a uniform foundation.

A review of the architectural evidence has demonstrated that the original

building was a three-aisled basilica with central tower and presumed wooden roof. None of the churches currently known from Makuria represents this type, which was modeled on late 5th and 6th century Byzantine buildings, such as, for example, the church in Alahan in Cilicia (Krautheimer 1986: 245–247). At the same time, the monastery church featured a tripartite design of the eastern and western ends of the basilica with characteristic twin entrances from the north and south in the western part, typical of Dongolan church architecture in the 6th and 7th centuries. The staircase in the southwestern unit must have led up to the emporas, which were supported on columns standing east and west of the central tower. A synthronon filled the

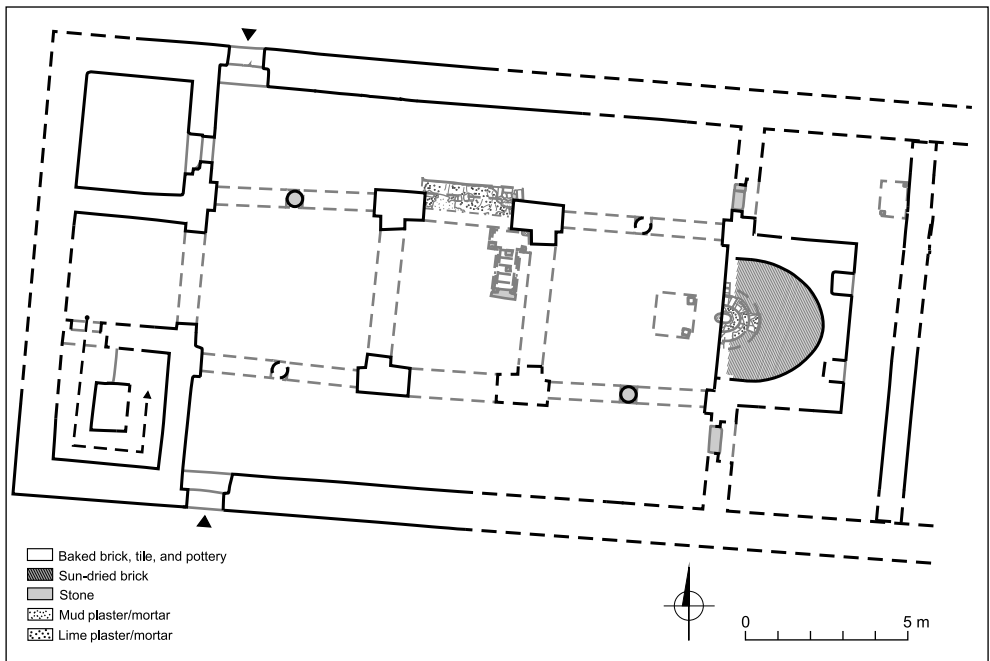


Fig. 8. Plan of the original foundation of the monastery church (HC.B.1)
(Plan S. Maślak, W. Godlewski, PCMA archives)

apse behind the sanctuary, which occupied the eastern end of the nave, although the position of the original altar screen could not be traced. An altar stood in the prothesis (northeastern unit) by the east wall, and the pulpit was located in the nave, by the northeastern pillar. Its position at right angle to the pillar is again a feature not encountered in other Dongolan church complexes. All things considered, the monastery church on Kom H should be recognized as representing a highly atypical architectural design [Fig. 8].

The dating of the monastery church, which was raised on virgin ground some 1500 m from the citadel, is based on an analysis of pottery coming from the burial in grave G.3 located in the southern part of the late sanctuary. Potsherds from the fill of the grave excavated in 2007 (Bągińska 2006) can be taken as proof that the monastery church was built in the first half of the 6th century and that it was contemporary with the Old Church.

BUILDING H.B.2: SANCTUARY OF ANNA

The sanctuary had been explored twice already, in 1990 (Jakobielski 1993a; 1993b) and in 1993 when the grave of the individual buried in the sanctuary was exposed (Room S.1) (Żurawski 1999) [Fig. 9]. The provisional protection of the complex put in place in 1993 was badly in need of repair. In 2010, the building was cleared again and protected in a more permanent fashion. The work occasioned a new documentation of all of the wall inscriptions and murals preserved in the building.

This small structure was attached to the western facade of the church at its

southern end. In its most developed form, the complex included five chambers, but originally there were probably only two rooms used by the individual living in the complex. Presumably after this person's death, the building changed its function, becoming a sanctuary for the cult of this individual. Its architectural form was modified to suit the needs of the cult.

The building was raised on top of earlier structures and adjoining poorly recognized units to the north. A wide bench of red brick covered with lime render, running by the western facade of the church, is the sole element evidently preserved from the earlier structure. It is 0.77 m wide and approximately 0.70 m high, running for about 8 m along the entire length of the later sanctuary. In chamber B.2.1, it was probably concealed under the east wall of the room and in chamber B.2.2, the bench was removed, but its position could be traced in the sections of the north and south walls.

The rectangular northern chamber (B.2.2 AB) was originally the largest hall measuring internally 6.10 m by 2.85 m. It was barrel-vaulted and probably had two entrances, one from the south and another one from the west. In all likelihood, it was part of a bigger complex that lined the western facade of the church, the northern part of which has not been excavated yet. The western doorway was completely transformed when the jambs were cut; the top has not been preserved, its width on the outside was 0.45 m, on the inside between the jambs 0.72 m. The doorway may have been pierced at a later date. The southern entrance, undoubtedly original, with profiled jambs, was topped with an arch constructed of red bricks [Fig. 10].

It was 1.60 m high and 0.45–0.77 m wide. The interior was mud plastered and whitewashed, providing a ground for paintings, inscriptions and engraved graffiti. The floor was of tamped silt. The bench by the west church facade may have been used in the interior furnishing of the sanctuary. It was dismantled along with the west wall of the church to provide

building material. Shortly thereafter the room was divided into a larger western part and a smaller eastern one. The partition wall was 0.24 m thick. A narrow doorway, 0.60 m wide, was left by the south wall, topped by an arch 1.65 m high. The partition wall was plastered and whitewashed; murals were preserved on the western face of this wall.

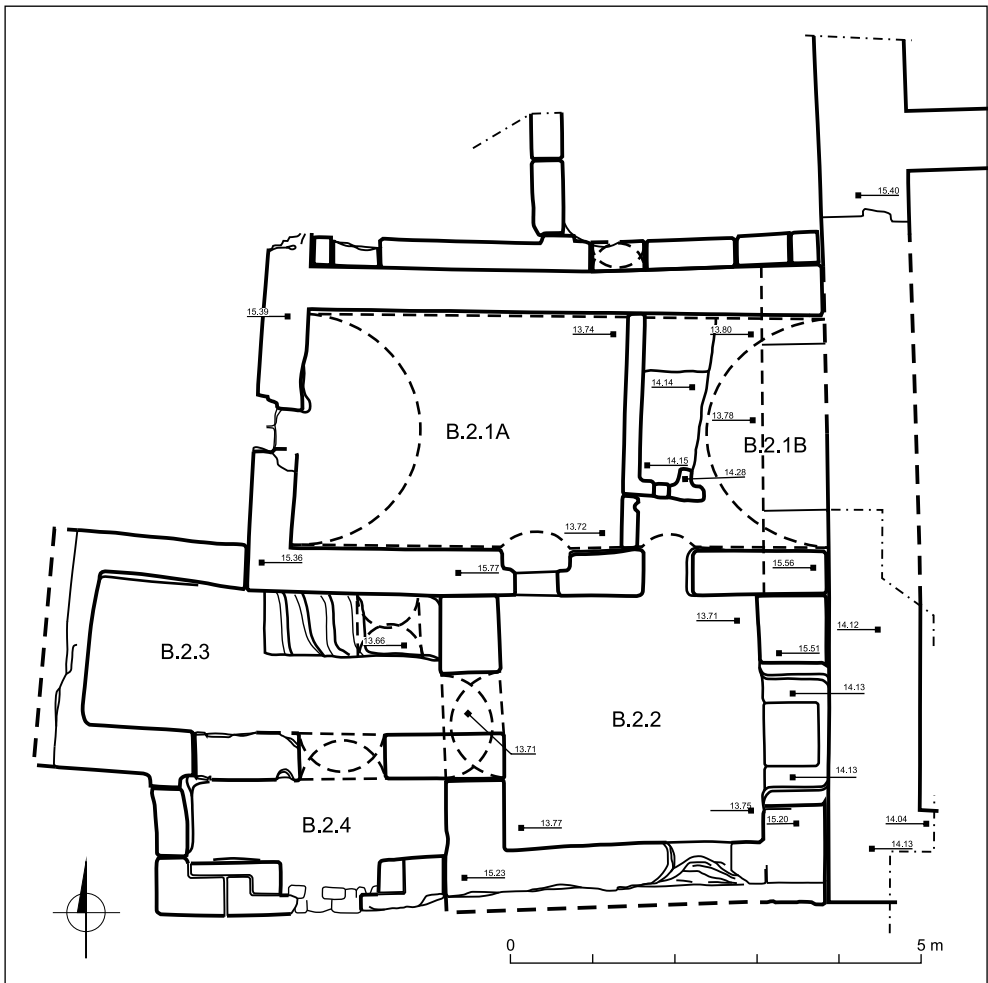


Fig. 9. Plan of the sanctuary of Anna on Kom H (H.B.2)
(Plan J. Dobrowolski, updating S. Maślak, PCMA archives)



Fig. 10. South entrance to the Sanctuary of Anna (H.B.2), viewed from inside
(Photo W. Godlewski, PCMA archives)

A new mastaba was built on the east side of the partition wall, between the doorway and the north wall. It was constructed of red brick and measured 2.03 m in length and 0.65–0.78 m in width; the height ranged from 0.38 m in the southern part and 0.52 m in the northern one [Fig. 11]. The south end was incorporated into the structure of the pilaster by the doorway, which was a wall 0.50 m high, 0.18 m wide and 0.80 m long. In the raised part of the bench at the northern end, it had an empty space measuring 0.44 m by 0.66 m internally, raised 0.35 m above the floor. Topping the bench was a stone slab, 0.84 m long and 0.66 m wide, which was at the same time the highest part of the bench. The empty space in the northern part of the bench formed a kind of cupboard that was accessed through a small opening.

In the third phase of the sanctuary, the doorway between the two parts of



Fig. 11. Bench inside room 2a of the sanctuary of Anna
(Photo W. Godlewski, PCMA archives)

the chamber was blocked and a passage to the southern chamber was opened in the eastern end of the south wall. The opening was 0.49 m wide and 1.60 m high. The jambs were not dressed properly.

The southern chamber (B.2.1) was small and square, and had massive walls supporting what was most likely a domed vault. The internal dimensions of this chamber were 3.14 m by 3.06 m. The walls were constructed of mud brick. The chamber was added in the corner between the south wall of the northern chamber and the west facade of the church. It was used in two successive phases, its function changing in the meantime. At first, it had two wide arched openings in the west and east walls. The western arch was rebuilt at a later date; it was 1.30 m wide originally and 1.80 m high. The eastern arch stood on the original bench by the west wall; it was 1.78 m wide, the preserved

height being 1.40 m (maximally about 1.65 m).

An altar was built of red brick on the old bench in the middle of the eastern arch. The mensa was slightly broadened, measuring 0.80 m by 0.85 m [Fig. 12]. A narrow arched doorway originally connected this room with the northern chamber. The interior was plastered and whitewashed with extra care. Fragmentary murals can be seen on the south and west walls; there is also an abundance of graffiti scratched in the plaster. The floor was of baked brick. A grave was cut in it in the southern part of the room. It was intended presumably for Anna, the man who lived in this complex. The trench was 0.40 m wide, 2.40 m long and approximately 1.34 m deep below the floor of the chamber. The burial was investigated already in 1993 and backfilled without removing the skeleton. An anthropological examination



Fig. 12. Altar in the eastern arcade of the southern room of the sanctuary of Anna
(Photo W. Godlewski, PCMA archives)

of the bones was now possible. The burial proved to be of an aged man, approximately 60 years old. It is not very likely that there was a tomb marker on the floor, although there were irregular traces of lime mortar on the bricks.

In the second phase, presumably after Anna was laid to rest in his grave, a small naos with a narthex was added to the complex. This necessitated a narrowing of the western arcade from the south side where the wall of the naos was constructed. The interior was plastered anew. Numerous graffiti were scratched in this lime plaster coating (for a discussion of epigraphic finds, see Łajtar 2014, in this volume).

A long chamber (B.2.3), 4.07 m long and 1.67 m wide, was attached to the western arcade of the tomb. The structural layering of the western ends of the walls could indicate that originally the chamber had been smaller, but the evidence for this

is insufficient. A doorway 0.99 m wide was located in the south wall; it was most probably a kind of arcade connecting the naos with the southern narthex (B.2.4). A pulpit in the northeastern corner of the chamber took on the form of a rectangular structure, 2.30 m long and 0.75 m high, in the eastern part where it was supported on a small vault open to the outside, 0.79 m wide and 0.60 m high. A set of five steps on the western side led up onto the platform.

A small vestibule (B.2.4) south of the naos (B.2.3) measured inside 3.10 m by 0.98 m. It was entered from the south; the modeling of the jambs demonstrates that the door could be closed from inside the chamber. The internal width of the doorway was 1.16 m wide, the external only 0.76 m. The walls, preserved to a low height, were of mud brick.

Building H.B.2 was constructed in stages. First there was a rectangular cell

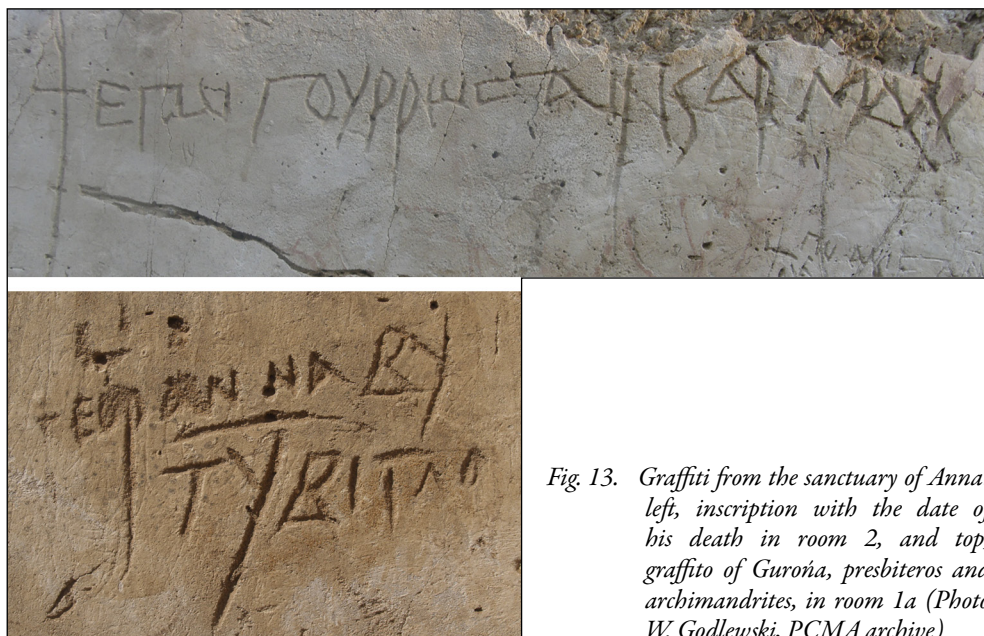


Fig. 13. *Graffiti from the sanctuary of Anna: left, inscription with the date of his death in room 2, and top, graffito of Guroña, presbiteros and archimandrites, in room 1a (Photo W. Godlewski, PCMA archive)*

that was attached to the western facade of the church and entered from the south, from the southwestern courtyard of the monastery. A pious man by the name of Anna (already mentioned above) lived in this cell, supporting himself on what the monastery and pilgrims coming to the monastery gave him. He was most probably a layman, because in the inscription on the west wall of B.2.2, where the man's grave was located, recording the date of his death on 10 Tybi, his name was not preceded by the monk's title, *abba* or *apa*, which would have indicated that he belonged to the monastic community (see Łajtar 2014: 292, in this volume) [Fig. 13, left]. At some point the cell was divided into a sleeping area and day room. His tomb was built to the south of his cell, most probably when he died, and he was buried in a trench dug in the southern part of the tomb. The mortar traces on the floor are not enough for a reconstruction of the funerary superstructure, but if it had existed, a funerary stela could have been placed in its western facade. Anna was recognized as a saint probably whilst still alive. An altar was placed in the eastern arcade of the tomb, by the church wall, and his sleeping area was transformed into a prothesis, isolated from the western part and connected by a doorway with the sanctuary. An entrance was pierced in the west wall of the cell (B.2.1A). A small naos was constructed on the western side of the tomb/sanctuary, furnishing it with a pulpit and adding a vestibule on the

southern side. A small sanctuary was thus created, frequented by pilgrims and visitors who left numerous graffiti scratched in the walls. Visitors included monastery archimandrites [Fig. 13, top], lower clergy, including one priest associated with the Great Church of Iesu (probably the Cruciform Church of Dongola) and other people. Anna's cult presumably evolved during the tenure of Archbishop Georgios (1063–1113) and may even have been inspired by him, at the close of the 11th and beginning of the 12th centuries. The dates present in the inscriptions, originally read by Stefan Jakobielski in 1993, had been lost with collapsing plaster from the walls, so they could not be verified, but the second half of the 11th century seems to be a plausible date for the establishment of the sanctuary after the death of Anna.

Anna's sanctuary in Dongola has a parallel in the Grotto of the Anchorite in Pachoras (Faras), the hermitage and tomb of a monk of the monastery in Pachoras (presumably Qasr El Wizz) going by the name of Theophilus, who recorded his "colophon" on the day of 8 Choiak in the year 455 of the Era of Diocletian (4 December 739) (Jakobielski 1972: 63–66; Griffith 1927: 82–90; Godlewski 2013b) and covered the walls of his hermitage with monastic texts and texts of Great Power above his tomb. The hermitage of Theophilus was also frequented by pilgrims who left numerous graffiti on the walls of the cell.

MOSQUE (THRONE HALL)

The conservation project carried out by a Polish–Sudanese team inside the Throne Hall, which had been the official seat of the Makurian kings until 1317 when the

building was changed into a mosque, was continued, focusing on the east wall and the southwestern corner of the chamber. The murals fragmentarily preserved on the

east wall north of the *mibrab* were cleaned and protected, revealing a large narrative composition of the Nativity that occupied the entire upper part of the east wall. It is possible to discern the image of a resting Virgin, the Child in a manger, Salome and Joseph, angels, shepherds and Magi on horseback.

Cleaning of royal images in the south-western corner of the hall revealed on

the earliest coat of plaster a narrative composition from the childhood of Christ. At present one can discern Mary holding the Child, who is picking dates from a palm tree that has bent its top toward Him [Fig. 14]. The scene, which is based on an apocryphal gospel of Pseudo-Matheus (PsMt), has not been noted hitherto in Nubian wall painting iconography (Godlewski 2012: 311, Figs 27–28).

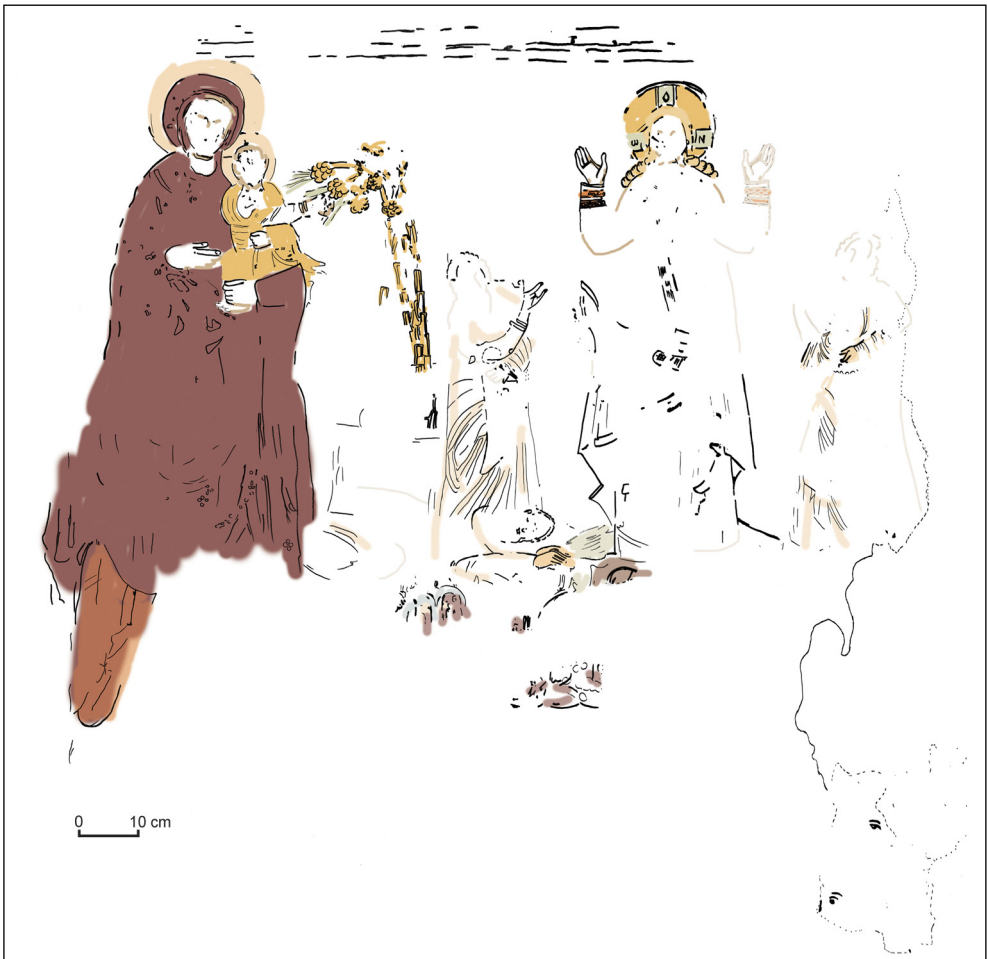


Fig. 14. *The Virgin holding the Child which is picking dates from a palm tree, painting from the south-western wall of the Throne Hall (Drawing D. Zielińska, PCMA archives)*

SITE B: LATE HOUSING ARCHITECTURE IN DONGOLA (DH.100)

Two 17th–18th century houses were cleared and partly investigated in an area east of the Cruciform Building (CC) and north of the citadel fortifications. The two complexes are typical of post-Makurian (Kingdom of Dongola, end of 14th through early 19th century) domestic architecture in Dongola [Fig. 16]. A dried-brick ground-floor structure comprising two rooms, it consisted of a bigger square room with two wall mastabas (platforms) and stone 'base' for a now missing wooden column supporting the ceiling, and a narrow domestic unit furnished with stone querns set in a podium, which also contained a vessel for collecting flour.

Among the finds from the houses there was the decorated bowl of a Turkish pipe [Fig. 15].



Fig. 15. Turkish pipe (Add. 11.072)
(Photo W. Godlewski, PCMA archives)

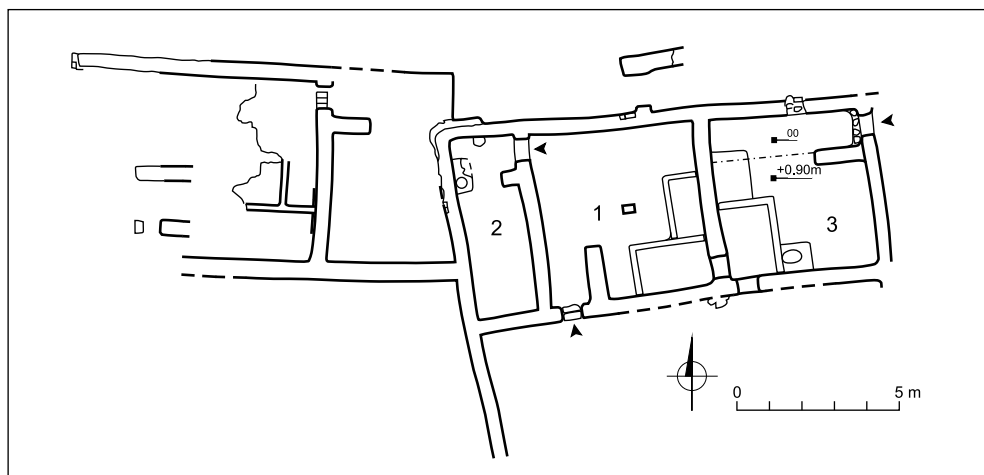


Fig. 16. House H.100
(Plan S. Maślak, PCMA archives)

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