

Adam Łajtar
Grzegorz Ochała

EPIGRAPHICA NUBICA*

IN THIS ARTICLE, WE WOULD LIKE TO PRESENT a series of notes on several inscriptions from Christian Nubia. The inscriptions in question have been accessible in scholarship in one way or another for a long time but require, in our opinion, a new treatment in the light of the current development of Christian Nubian epigraphy. The texts discussed here were written in Greek and Old Nubian, two of the languages of Christian Nubian literacy. They are found in a variety of media, including stone and terracotta stelae, walls of buildings and rock surfaces, objects made of various materials, etc. The inscriptions are also heterogenous as far as their contents are concerned. Our notes are arranged in topographical order of the origin of the inscriptions, moving from the north to the south. We hope that the present article is just the first in a series of corrigenda to the Christian Nubian epigraphic corpus.

1. AN ANCHORITE FROM BIGA ISLAND (DBMNT 530)

During excavations on cemetery 5 on the island of Biga in the region of the First Cataract in 1907–1908, a Greek funerary stela was discovered

* We would like to thank Jacques van der Vliet for his critical reading of a first draft of our article and his precious suggestions as well as Giovanni Ruffini for checking our English.

belonging to tomb 8. Its first transcription prepared by Cecil Mallaby Firth was published in the first volume of the reports from the archaeological survey of Lower Nubia connected with the construction of the first dam on the Nile in Aswan.¹ The reading was subsequently improved by Ugo Monneret de Villard.² In the meantime, Hermann Junker commented upon the name of the person buried with this tombstone.³ The present whereabouts of the stela are unknown, but fortunately a photograph of the stone was published, on which the inscription was mistakenly placed among a few tombstones from the cemetery of Ginari-Tafa.⁴

The name of the deceased, contained in lines 6–8, was the most troublesome part of the epitaph for all three scholars. Firth completely omitted some letters in line 7 and proposed the following reading (for unknown reasons the division of lines in Firth's transcription does not follow the stone; we give here the corrected version):

6 *ETEΛEYTH<EN O*
 7 *MAPIO< ABBA*
 8 *K ANXΩPHTH<*

Although this was not stated explicitly, Firth undoubtedly thought the word *MAPIO<* to be the name of the deceased. Junker was the first to suggest that one should read *μάριος*, which would stand for *μακάριος*, 'blessed'. He also proposed to read the doubtful place omitted by Firth at the end of line 7 as *ω* and to interpret it as an abbreviation for the name Ioannes. His suggestions were partly followed by Monneret de Villard, who presented an improved transcription of the inscription:

¹ C. M. FIRTH, 'Description of tombs in cemetery 5', [in:] G. A. REISNER, *The Archaeological Survey of Nubia. Report for 1907–1908*, Cairo 1910, p. 104.

² U. MONNERET DE VILLARD, *La Nubia medioevale* I, Cairo 1935, p. 14.

³ H. JUNKER, 'Die christlichen Grabsteine Nubiens', *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 60 (1925), pp. 111–148, at 117.

⁴ FIRTH, 'Description of tombs' (cit. n. 1), pl. 51a.3 (with the description 'From surface debris of Cemetery 55'). Corrected already in MONNERET DE VILLARD, *Nubia medioevale* I (cit. n. 2), p. 14 n. 2.

- 6 *ETEΛEYTHCEN O*
 7 *MAPIOC ABBA IaI*
 8 *K ANXΩPHTHC*

None of the three scholars seem to have paid attention to the *kappa* at the beginning of line 8. They must have interpreted it as an abbreviation for *καί*. However, a conjunction in this place is semantically unfounded and syntactically redundant. Moreover, the *kappa* bears no sign of abbreviation. On the other hand, one can observe that the text is clearly divided into two parts both formally and compositionally, the first part (ll. 1–5) being the Trinitarian formula, the other (ll. 6–10) presenting the deceased and giving the date of his demise. As is visible on the photograph (Fig. 1), the redactor's intention was to distinguish the first lines of both parts by the indentation of the remaining lines (2–5 and 7–10), thus forming a margin on the left-hand side of the stela. This arrangement is disturbed in line 8 by the above-mentioned *kappa*, a letter that was apparently not intended in this place. Consequently, it should be interpreted as the last letter of the deceased's name, which the stonemason failed to fit in the preceding line. He must have decided to place the *kappa* on the margin in order to avoid a further disturbance of the layout. The stonemason's attempts to contain the whole planned line 7 are well visible at the end of this line, where the letters become tighter. We thus propose a revised reading of the epitaph:

- † ἐν ὀνόματι
 τοῦ πατρὸς
 καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ
 4 καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου
 πνεύματος.
 ἐτελεύτησεν ὁ
 μα(κἀ)ριος ἄββα Ἰσαάκ-
 8 κ ἀναχωρητῆς
 ἐν τῷ μηνὶ Ἀθ-
 ὕρ ἐ' τῆς ζ' ἰνδ(ικτιῶνος).

7. or μα(κἀ)ριος || 7–8. 1. Ἰσαάκ || 8. 1. ἀναχωρητῆς

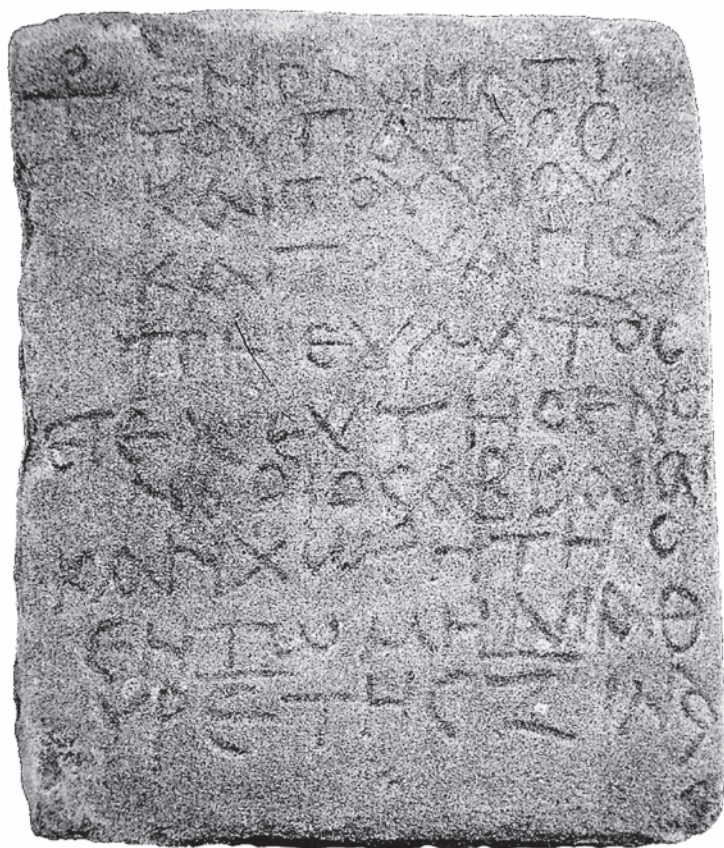


Fig. 1. Epitaph of anchorite Isak
(after Firth, 'Description of tombs' [cit. n. 1], pl. 51a.3)

† *In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The blessed abba Isaak, anchorite, died in the month of Hathyr, (day) 5, in the 7th indication.*

2. A VISITOR'S GRAFFITO IN THE TEMPLE OF KALABSHA (DBMNT 979)

This graffito is found on the inner façade of the northern pylon of Augustus' temple of Mandulis at Kalabsha, in Lower Nubia. It was first copied by the French traveller of German descent Franz Christian Gau during his voyage in 1819.⁵ After Gau's copy, the text was edited by Adolf Kirchhoff as *CIG* IV 8951 and included by Gustave Lefebvre in his *Recueil des inscriptions*.⁶ Ugo Monneret de Villard transcribed the inscription anew based on an autoptic examination of the original.⁷ The text was photographed and collated by Grzegorz Ochała during his recent visit to New Kalabsha (Fig. 2), the new site of the temple after its moving during the Nubian rescue campaign in the 1960s. However, before we propose our edition, it is worthwhile to have a look at the previous attempts at understanding the text.

According to Kirchhoff, the text reads:

† ΕΓΩΕΙΔΣΕΚΛΗΠΕΤΡΟϜ.

Lefebvre, largely adopting Kirchhoff's reading, edited:

+ εγω ειδσσ εκλη(σιαν) πετρο προ(οεδρος ?).

In the critical apparatus, he suggested following emendations: ειδσσ → ειδον; εκλη(σιαν) → εκκλη(σίαν); πετρο → Πέτρος; προ(οεδρος) might also be προ(εσβύτερος).

Finally, Monneret de Villard offered his diplomatic transcription:

+ εγω ειΔσσ εκλη⁸⁸ πετρο Ϝ.

Strangely, his reading text given immediately below does not follow this diplomatic transcription but goes back to that of Kirchhoff and Lefebvre:

Έγώ ειδ[ον] εκλη(σίαν) Πέτρο[ς] προ(εσβύτερος).

⁵ F. C. GAU, *Antiquités de la Nubie ou monuments inédits des bords du Nil, situés entre la première et deuxième cataracte*, Stuttgart 1822, pl. IV.33. The graffito was not transcribed by B. G. Niebuhr in his study of inscriptions copied by Gau attached to the volume. Apparently, the text was incomprehensible to him.

⁶ G. LEFEBVRE, *Recueil des inscriptions grecques-chrétiennes d'Égypte*, Cairo 1907, no. 618.

The autoptic examination of the inscription as well as our present knowledge about Nubian epigraphic tradition, allows us to establish a new reliable reading. First of all, what is rendered by Gau as a triangular letter with a dash above, which was taken by all previous editors as a *delta*, can now be confirmed to be an *alpha*. Second, the supralinear stroke from Monneret de Villard's edition is just damage to the surface of the stone block. And third, what Monneret de Villard transcribed as two signs resembling an *omicron* surmounted by the chevron of an *upsilon*, are in reality two *upsilons* designating the typical abbreviation for $\nu(\iota\omicron)\upsilon$ introducing the filiation.⁸ Taking all of this into account, we can propose the following reading of the inscription:

† ἐγὼ εἰακκε κλη(ρικὸς) $\nu(\iota\omicron)\upsilon$ Πέτρο(ν) πρ(εσβυτέρου).

I. I. υἱός

† I, Iasse, cleric, son of Petros, priest.

The inscription thus commemorates a clergyman, named εἰακκε, son of a priest named Petros.⁹ Alternatively, but less likely, one can understand it as an inscription of εἰακκε, son of an unnamed priest of a church of Peter.

As far as we are aware the personal name εἰακκε has not been attested outside of this inscription, and its etymology is unknown to us. It may be a

⁷ MONNERET DE VILLARD, *Nubia medioevale* I (cit. n. 2), p. 40.

⁸ The use of the genitive for the nominative is frequent in Nubian Greek, especially for personal names. See, e.g., A. ŁAJTAR & J. VAN DER VLIET, *Empowering the Dead in Christian Nubia. The Texts from a Medieval Funerary Complex in Dongola* [= *Journal of Juristic Papyrology Supplement* 32], Warsaw 2017, 226–227, with basic literature. The same abbreviation can be found in, e.g., visitor's inscriptions from Wadi al-Sebua, which we are preparing for publication (ΜΑΡΙΑΝΚΟΥΔΑ ΥΨ ΧΑΗΛ, ΜΗΝΑ ΥΨ ΚΟΜΟΥ).

⁹ If our interpretation holds true, the text can be treated as a proof that the ecclesiastic 'profession' could pass on from father to son in Christian Nubia. For similar phenomena with relation to Christian Egypt, see E. WIPSZYCKA, 'Fonctionnement de l'Église égyptienne aux IV–VIII siècles (sur quelques aspects)', [in:] Ch. DECOBERT (ed.), *Mélanges offerts au Père Maurice Martin*, Cairo 1992, pp. 115–145 (reprint with some changes in E. WIPSZYCKA, *Études sur le christianisme dans l'Égypte de l'antiquité tardive* [= *Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum* 52], Rome 1996, pp. 195–224).

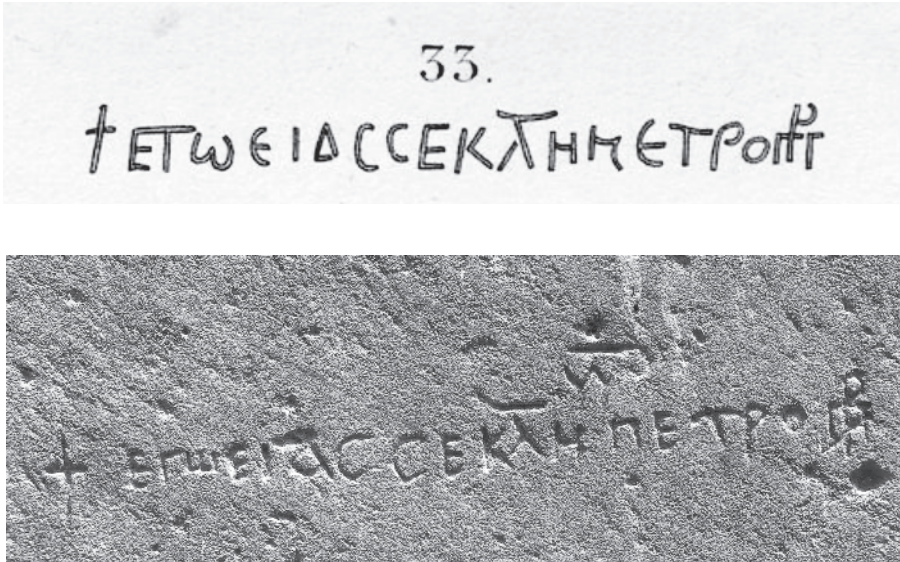


Fig. 2. Inscription of Iasse (drawing after Gau, *Antiquités de la Nubie* [cit. n. 5], pl. IV.33; photo G. Ochała)

variant of the Hebrew name Yishai, Greek Ἰεσσαί, borne by the father of King David in the Old Testament, but no examples of this name are known to us from the epigraphic and papyrological record from the Nile Valley.

3. A WOMAN'S EPITAPH FROM TAFA (DBMNT 543)

In his 1907 *Report on the Antiquities of Lower Nubia*, Arthur Weigall reproduced a rather free hand-made copy of an inscription that was apparently written on a stone slab or stela (Fig. 3).¹⁰ According to him, the object was re-used in 'the house of a native in the village' of Tafa.¹¹ The original location

¹⁰ A. WEIGALL, *A Report of the Antiquities of Lower Nubia (the First Cataract to the Sudan Frontier) and Their Condition in 1906-07*, Oxford 1907, pl. 27.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 64.

of the inscription is of course unknown, but it can be supposed that it came somewhere from Tafa or its immediate neighbourhood. Weigall's facsimile does not allow an estimate of the shape of the object or its dimensions. The present whereabouts of the stone are unknown and his copy remains our only source of information.

- ὑπὲρ{ε} μνήμης (καὶ) ἀναπαύ-
 σεως μακαρίας QNTPEIE[.]
 ΘΑ ἔμ μινὸς Ἀθὺρ κ [ἰνδικτι-]
 4 ὀν[ος] ἐνδεκά(της)[ς. Κ(ύρι)ε ὁ θε(ός)ς],
 ἀνάπαυσόν [σ]ε ἐν κ[όλ]π[οι]ς
 Ἀβραὰμ (καὶ) Ἰσα[ὰκ (καὶ)] Ἰακώβ,
 ἐνθ' ἀπέτρα ὁδὴν [καὶ]
 8 λύ[π]η (καὶ) στ[ε]ν[α]γμός· μ[ὴ]
 μ.[- - -], κ(ύρι)ε, διὰ [τὰς αἰ]μαρτί-
 ας αὐτῆς, ἀλλὰ [...]ησον
 μετὰ αὐτῆς ΚΑΤΦ. ΕΛΕΠΕΥ,
 12 ἀμήν.

3. 1. μινὸς Ἀθὺρ || 7. 1. ἀπέτρα ὁδὴν || 8. 1. λύπη

For the commemoration and rest of the blessed [- - -] on the 20th (day) of the month of Athyr, in the eleventh indiction. [O Lord God], rest you (sic) in the bosoms of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, whence pain, grief and lamentation have fled. Do not [- - -], O Lord, because of her sins, but [- - -] with her [- - -], amen.

We are obviously dealing with an epitaph for a woman, as the forms μακαρίας in line 2 and αὐτῆς in lines 10 and 11 clearly indicate; her name, contained towards the end of line 2, is, unfortunately, difficult to read (see our commentary *ad locum*). The epitaph belongs to the so-called 'commemoration' type¹² and it starts with the formula ὑπὲρ μνήμης καὶ ἀναπαύσεως

¹² See J. VAN DER VLIET, "What is man?" The Nubian tradition of Coptic funerary inscriptions', [in:] A. ŁAJTAR & J. VAN DER VLIET (eds.), *Nubian Voices: Studies in Christian*

ὙΜΕΡΕΜΝΗΜΗΡΑ ΣΑΝ ΑΤΤΛ
 C6W6MΔKΑΡΙΔΓΕΝΤΡΕΙΕ
 ΘΞΜΜΙΝΟC ΔΑΘΡΑ Κ
 ΟΝΕΝΔΕΚΑΒΑΝ
 ΔΑΝΔΑΥCΟΒΕΕΝΚΤC
 ΔΒΡΑΔΜΣΙCΔΑΚΙ
 ΕΝΘΑΤΤΕΤΡΑ ΟΔΗΝΗ
 ΛΧΑΥΤΗCΤΑΙΜΟΡΑΜ
 ΜΙ ΚΕΔΙΔΑΝΑΡΤΙ
 ΑΥΤΗΑΛΛΑΧΗCΟΝ
 ΜΕΤΑΔΥΤΗCΚΑΤΦΑΕΛΕΠΕΥ
 ΑΜΗΝ.

Fig. 3. Copy of the epitaph of a woman
 (after Weigall, *A Report of the Antiquities of Lower Nubia* [cit. n. 10], pl. 27)

τοῦ δεινός (ll. 1–2). This phrase is found in Christian inscriptions, mostly funerary but also dedicatory, from different places in the Greek-speaking world, and also from Lower Nubia.¹³ The formula is followed by the date of demise of the commemorated person (ll. 3–4), perhaps introduced by a verb, which, however, cannot be reconstructed (see our commentary *ad locum*). Starting with line 5, the inscription continues with a prayer for the soul of the deceased. The prayer consists of two parts. The first part (ll. 5–8)

Nubian Culture [= *Journal of Juristic Papyrology Supplement* 15], Warsaw 2011, pp. 171–224, at 187–197 (reprinted in J. VAN DER VLIET, *The Christian Epigraphy of Egypt and Nubia*, London – New York, 2018, pp. 389–426, at 397–402).

¹³ Generally, see M. KRAUSE, 'Die Formulare der christlichen Grabsteine Nubiens', [in:] K. MICHAŁOWSKI (ed.), *Nubia. Récentes recherches. Actes du colloque nubéologique international au Musée national de Varsovie, 19–22 juin 1972*, Warsaw 1975, pp. 76–82. To the list of attestations add I. Varsovie 104 (DBMNT 736).

contains a request for the eternal rest of the deceased woman. The wording of this fragment is the same as in the prayer $\acute{o}$ $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}s$ $\tau\acute{\omega}\nu$ $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\acute{\alpha}\tau\omega\nu$ $\kappa\alpha\iota$ $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\eta s$ $\sigma\alpha\rho\kappa\acute{o}s$ found in seventy or so Nubian Christian epitaphs in Greek.¹⁴ In the second part God is beseeched to remit the woman's sins. The reading of this part is not entirely clear because of the damage to the inscription (see our commentaries below).

1. Weigall's copy shows a clear *epsilon* between $\acute{\upsilon}\pi\epsilon\rho$ and $\mu\eta\eta\mu\eta s$. We have edited the text as if this *epsilon* were superfluous (a scribal mistake). However, there is a possibility that this is rather a trait of the pronunciation, either paragoge ($\acute{\upsilon}\pi\epsilon\rho\acute{\epsilon}$) or prothesis in front of the consonant cluster /mn/ ($\acute{\epsilon}\mu\eta\eta\mu\eta s$). Greek inscriptions from Asia Minor datable to the Roman Imperial period frequently show the paragogic form $\acute{\upsilon}\pi\epsilon\rho\acute{\iota}$ (see, e.g., *SEG* XLIX 1649, from Lydia; *I. Kios* 117; *I. Iznik* 802).

2. One expects the article $\tau\eta\varsigma$ before $\mu\alpha\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha s$.

The name of the woman is difficult to read. It seems to have no parallels in the existing onomastic material. We are dealing with either a new name or a mistake of Weigall's copy.

2–3. The dating lemma was probably introduced by a verbal form with the meaning 'she died, she departed'. The most common form occurring in this context in Nubian Christian epitaphs is $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\omicron\iota\mu\eta\theta\eta$, less frequently $\acute{\epsilon}\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\omega\theta\eta$, $\acute{\epsilon}\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\tau\eta\sigma\epsilon\nu$, or $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\epsilon\iota$ $\tau\omicron\upsilon$ $\beta\acute{\iota}\omicron\upsilon$ $\acute{\epsilon}\chi\rho\eta\sigma\alpha\tau\omicron$. A possible reading in this case could be $\acute{\epsilon}[\kappa\omicron\iota\mu\eta]\theta\alpha$, for $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\omicron\iota\mu\eta\theta\eta$, but the interchange of α and η has not been attested in late Greek. If our interpretation is true, it may simply be a scribal error.

3. *ΕΜΜΙΝΟC* can likely be interpreted as $\acute{\epsilon}\mu$ $\mu\iota\nu\acute{o}s$. If so, the supralinear stroke above the *mu*, probably marking a *shwa*, is superfluous. The construction $\acute{\epsilon}\mu$ $\mu\iota\nu\acute{o}s$ plus the name of the month is paralleled by an epitaph from Hambukol, where we read $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ $\Theta[\acute{\omega}\theta\ \mu\eta]$ $\nu\acute{o}s$ $\acute{o}\gamma\delta\acute{o}\gamma\eta$ (*I. Khartoum Greek* 19 [DBMNT 13], ll. 4–5). If this is indeed the case, one should interpret $\bar{\kappa}$ as an ordinal rather than a cardinal number: $\acute{\epsilon}\mu$ $\mu\iota\nu\acute{o}s$ $\acute{A}\alpha\theta\acute{\upsilon}\rho$ ($\acute{\epsilon}\iota\kappa\acute{o}\sigma\tau\eta$); we could even propose reconstructing $\acute{\eta}\mu\acute{\epsilon}\rho\alpha$ in the lacuna at the end of the line. The form $\acute{A}\alpha\theta\acute{\upsilon}\rho$, with a doubling of the word-initial *alpha*, has not been attested in Nubia, but this phenomenon is found in northern Nubia and southern Egypt: see, e.g., the form $\acute{\alpha}\alpha\mu\acute{\eta}\nu$ in the epitaph of Protokia, probably from Tafah (J. van der Vliet & K. A. Worp. 'Four north-Nubian funerary stelae from the Bankes collection', [in:] A. Łajtar, G. Ochała, &

¹⁴ For these epitaphs, see *I. Khartoum Greek*, pp. xxi–xxiii; see further A. ŁAJTAR, 'Varia Nubica IV: Das älteste nubische Epitaph mit dem Gebet vom sogenannten Typus Euchologion Mega?', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 113 (1996), pp. 101–108, with the most exhaustive list of the epitaphs to date, which requires updating, however.

J. van der Vliet [eds.], *Nubian Voices II: New Texts and Studies on Christian Nubian Culture* [= *Journal of Juristic Papyrology Supplement* 27], Warsaw 2015, no. 1 [DBMNT 3074], l. 10 n.)

5. [σ]ε, if correctly read, is out of place in connection with the second person singular imperative *ἀνάπαυσον*. One expects *αὐτήν* in this context. *σε* requires the third person singular subjunctive *ἀναπαύσης*.

8–11. We most probably have here a request formulated in the contrastive construction *μὴ ... ἀλλά*, ‘do not ..., but ...’. The first part must have contained a verb like ‘forget’, ‘abandon’, ‘be angry’, or similar, which would match ‘because of her sins’. For grammatical and semantic reasons, we cannot reconstruct here *μὴ μνησθῆς*, which immediately comes to mind in such contexts. After *ἀλλά*, we undoubtedly have a further request for God to do something to the soul of the deceased woman. Unfortunately, only the ending *-ησον* of the verb of request was preserved, which makes it impossible to establish the nature of the requested act. *μετὰ αὐτῆς* suggests that the sense of the supplication is that God stay/remain ‘with her’ during the hour of the Last Judgement. We fail to understand the final part, but the presence of the sequence of letters *KAT* and *EAE* suggests that we may have here a corrupted notation of the ubiquitous phrase *κατὰ τὸ μέγα ἔλεος σου* (Psalm 50:3).

The whole prayer part of the epitaph finds parallel in the prayer of Joasaph from Ps. John of Damascus’s *Barlaam and Joasaph*: *καὶ νῦν, ὦ κύριέ μου καὶ θεέ, ὁ ἀνεξιχνίαστον ἔχων τὸ τῆς ἀγαθότητος πέλαγος, τάξον αὐτὸν ἐν τόπῳ χλοερῷ, ἐν τόπῳ ἀναπαύσεως, ὅπου τὸ φῶς λάμπει τοῦ προσώπου σου· καὶ μὴ μνησθῆς ἀνομιῶν αὐτοῦ ἀρχαίων, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ πολὺ ἔλεός σου ἐξάλειψον τὸ χειρόγραφον τῶν αὐτοῦ πταισμάτων, καὶ τὰ γραμματεῖα διάρρηξον τῶν αὐτοῦ ὀφλημάτων, καὶ τοὺς ἀγίους σου καταλλάξον αὐτῷ οὐς πυρί τε καὶ ξίφει ἀνεῖλεν· ἐπίταξον αὐτοὺς μὴ κατ’ αὐτοῦ ὀργίζεσθαι* (eds. G. R. Woodward, H. Mattingly, Cambridge, MA 1914, p. 540).

4. A VISITOR’S INSCRIPTION FROM ANIBA (DBMNT 554)

The text was copied by Karl Richard Lepsius in a New Kingdom tomb, known as the tomb of Pennut, near the village of Aniba during his visit in the Middle Nile Valley in the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁵ During the Nubian salvage campaign in the 1960s, the tomb was moved from its original place to a new location in New Amada along with the temples of

¹⁵ LD V (text), p. 122; VI (plates), pl. 96, Gr. 492.

Amada and Derr. The text is written with red paint on the northern wall of the outer chamber, on the left side of the door leading to the inner chamber. Just as the pharaonic reliefs decorating the tomb, which suffered great damage in the first half of the twentieth century, the inscription is now in much worse condition than in the time of Lepsius, with its upper part completely illegible and the right part lost (Fig. 4). The first and so far only edition of the text was offered by Francis Llewelyn Griffith in 1913.¹⁶ Griffith claimed to have his 'own copy' of the text, but did not include it in his publication. Considering the present state of the text, Lepsius's facsimile remains the basis for publication.

According to Griffith, the text reads and should be translated as follows:

† ΔΠΟ`Μ' ΦΞΕ ΘΩΘΘ.
 ΚΕ · Ε`Μ' (?) · ΊΗΣΟΥ ΚΑ
 ΥC · ΡΗΖΑ : ΕΓΡΑΨΑ
 4 ΑΙΛΟ · ΔΜΗΡΑ

'From the Martyrs 765 (A.D. 1049), Thoth 25¹⁷ . . . I, the son of Reza, have drawn (?) (the figure of?) Jesus Christ . . .'

The recent progress in our understanding of Christian Nubian epigraphic production, especially visitors' inscriptions, allows considerably improving the reading and interpretation of the text. Below we offer our edition.

† ΔΠΟ`Μ' ΨΞΕ ΘΩΘ	† ἀπο μ(αρτύρων) ψξε' Θωθ
ΚΕ · Ε`Μ' ΊΗΣΟΥ ΚΑ`Θ'	κε'. εμ()ΊΗΣΟΥ πρ(εσβύτερος) καθ(ολικός),
ΥC · ΡΗΖΑ : ΕΓΡΑΨΑ	υ(ιό)ς ΡΗΖΑ, εγραψα.
4 ΑΙΛΟ · ΔΜΗΡΑ	αιλο ΔΜΗΡΑ.

† (*In the year*) *from the martyrs* 765, *Thoth* 25. *I, Iesou, catholic priest, son of Reza, wrote (this), I ...*

¹⁶ F. LI. GRIFFITH, *The Nubian Texts of the Christian Period* [= *Abhandlungen der Königl. Preuss. Akademie der Wissenschaften. Jahrgang 1913, Phil.-hist. Classe 8*], Berlin 1913, p. 63 (no. 8).

¹⁷ In a laconic commentary, Griffith adds: 'Perhaps ΘΩΘ Θ "Thoth 9" should be read'.

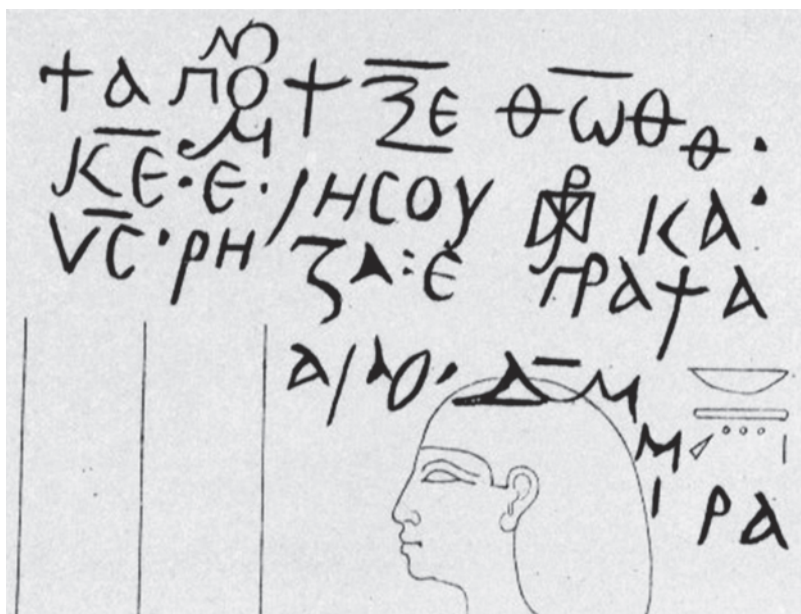


Fig. 4. Inscription of Iesou son of Reza
 (drawing after *LD*, VI [plates], pl. 96, Gr. 492, at <https://edoc3.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/lepsius/tafelwa6.html>; photo G. Ochała)

1. The letter θ transcribed by Griffith after the month name $\theta\omega\theta$ (and taken into consideration by him as a possible numeral designating the month day, see n. 17 above) does not belong to this line but to line 2. The letter is a part of the word $\kappa\alpha\theta'$ shifted to mark the abbreviation.

2. The abbreviation $\acute{\epsilon}\mu()$ can be resolved as either $\acute{\epsilon}\mu(o\bar{u})$ or $\acute{\epsilon}\mu(\acute{\epsilon})$.

The attribute $\kappa\alpha\theta\omicron\lambda\iota\kappa\acute{o}s$ used in reference to members of clergy, priests and deacons, is not very common in Nubia, but is attested in inscriptions from the so-called Gebel Maktub (unpublished, known to us from photos). The designation most probably refers to the fact of belonging to the staff of a church designated as $\kappa\alpha\theta\omicron\lambda\iota\kappa\acute{\eta}$, that is a main church in an area or a settlement, in which the liturgical services are held on daily basis (see E. Wipszycka, 'Καθολικὴ et les autres épithètes qualifiant le nom ἑκκλησία. Contribution à l'étude de l'ordre hiérarchique des églises dans l'Égypte byzantine', *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 24 [1994], pp. 191–212, reprinted in Wipszycka, *Études sur le christianisme* [cit. n. 8], pp. 157–175). The designation $\pi\rho\epsilon\sigma\beta\acute{\upsilon}\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma/\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\nu\omicron\varsigma$ $\kappa\alpha\theta\omicron\lambda\iota\kappa\acute{o}s$ seems not to be attested outside Nubia, in any case not in Egyptian papyri.

3. As far as we are aware the proper name $\rho\eta\zeta\alpha$ occurs only here. The linguistic origin of the name is not clear. It resembles the Persian Reza, less obviously the Arabic Riḏa. It can also be a name of Greek origin equivalent to the noun $\rho\acute{\iota}\zeta\alpha$, 'root'; this is especially tempting, as we know Nubian names with the same etymology: Doulista (from the Old Nubian $\Delta\omicron\gamma\lambda\tau$ -, 'root'), Ourse (from the Old Nubian $\omicron\gamma\rho\iota$ -, 'root'), and possibly Mamou/Mamel (probably cognate with the Nobiin $\mathfrak{m}\mathfrak{a}\mathfrak{m}\mathfrak{e}$ -, 'root, base, fundament').

4. The reading $\alpha\lambda\omicron$ (Griffith $\alpha\lambda\alpha\omicron$) was proposed in G. M. Browne, *Old Nubian Dictionary* [= *Corpus scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* 556, *Subsidia* 90], Leuven 1996, p. 45, s.v. $\Delta\mathfrak{m}$ -. It can be interpreted as the first person singular personal pronoun with the focus marker - $\lambda\omicron$, here marking 'an adjectival cleft sentence': 'It is I who ...' (G. M. Browne, *Old Nubian Grammar* [= *Languages of the World/Materials* 330], Munich 2002, p. 72).

The word $\Delta\mathfrak{m}\mathfrak{m}\mathfrak{p}\mathfrak{a}$ slopes down in order to fit the script into the free space between the figures of the original decoration of the tomb. $\Delta\mathfrak{m}\mathfrak{m}\mathfrak{p}\mathfrak{a}$ is obviously a verbal form. E. Zyhlarz, *Grundzüge der nubischen Grammatik im christlichen Frühmittelalter (Altnubisch). Grammatik, Texte, Kommentar und Glossar* [= *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 18], Leipzig 1928, p. 173, understood the word as a form of the otherwise unknown verb $\Delta\mathfrak{m}\mathfrak{m}\mathfrak{p}$ -, for which he proposed the meaning 'malen (?)', 'zeichnen (?)', apparently as an Old Nubian rendering of $\epsilon\gamma\gamma\rho\alpha\iota\sigma\alpha$. This interpretation cannot be held, because of morpho-syntactical reasons: $\Delta\mathfrak{m}\mathfrak{m}\mathfrak{p}$ - α would have to be a converb, which requires a serial verb construction with a finite verb at the end (see van V. W. J. van Gerven Oei, *A Reference Grammar of Old Nubian* [= *Orientalia Lovaniensia analecta* 299], Leuven – Paris – Bristol, CT 2021, pp. 108–112). Instead, this has to be the present predicative of $\Delta\mathfrak{m}$ -. This was already recog-

nised by Gerald Michael Browne who lemmatised the word under Δῆμ- (see above). A separate question is the meaning of the word. Browne retained Zyhlarz's proposition, 'to paint, draw (?)', but without any evidence in either medieval or modern Nubian languages. Δῆμ- is attested as an allomorph of ΔΟΥΜ(ῃ)-, ΔΟΜΗ-, 'to take, hand over'. This meaning does not necessarily fit the context, but one has to bear in mind that αἰο starts a new clause providing the reader with a new piece of information, the contents of which remains for now unknown.

5. NUBIAN CODE-SWITCHING IN A GREEK EPITAPH FROM ARMINNA (DBMNT 512)

The epitaph discussed here was found in Arminna-West during the 1962 season of work of the Pennsylvania-Yale Archaeological Expedition to Nubia. At present, it is kept in the Egyptian Museum at Cairo (Journal d'entrée 89739). It was published on the basis of a photo by John F. Oates in 1963.¹⁸

The epitaph commemorates a woman by the name of Marieo and belongs to a sizeable group of Nubian tombstones commencing with the prayer ὁ θεὸς τῶν πνευμάτων καὶ πάσης σαρκός.¹⁹ The text is interesting from a linguistic point of view. First, the Greek of the inscription is erratic to such an extent that it is sometimes difficult to recognise correct forms. Second, it contains an interesting instance of code-switching from Greek to Old Nubian. The latter occurs in lines 21–23 of the inscription, in the place where the text passes on from the prayer to the information about the deceased, that is from what is formulaic to what is individual. Oates did not include a reading of this part in his edition, but he proposed a transcription in line notes, without any translation of the passage or a commentary. What he managed to read is:

- 21 Υ . . ΡΕΚΟΥΕΣΝΔΟΥ . . ΝΔΟΥΜ`Υ'
22 ΓΑΛΟ ΠΑΗΝΗ ΙΖ ΑΠΟ ΜΑΡΤΗΡΟ
23 ΝΔ ΥῆΗ

¹⁸ J. F. OATES, 'A Christian inscription in Greek from Armenna in Nubia (Pennsylvania-Yale excavations)', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 49 (1963), pp. 161–171.

¹⁹ See above, n. 14.

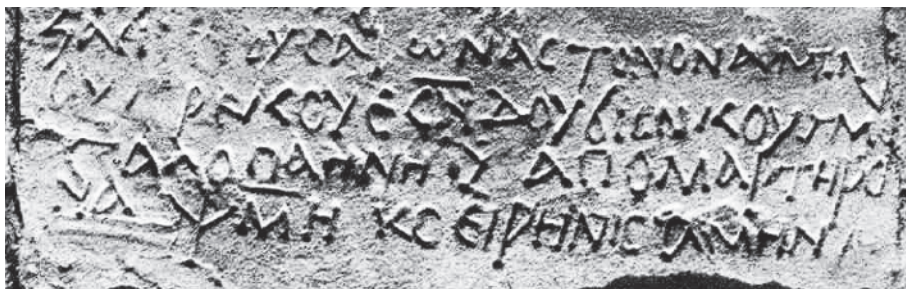


Fig. 5. Age formula in the epitaph of Marieo
(after B. G. Trigger, *The Late Nubian Settlement at Arminna West*
[= *Publications of the Pennsylvania-Yale Expedition to Egypt* 2],
New Haven – Philadelphia 1967, illustr. 347)

Thanks to a good photograph of the stela (Fig. 5), we can now propose an improved reading:

- 21 οὔκρεκοῦεῖν ΔΟΥΔΙ<Ι>Ν ΚΟΥΓΛΛΕ`./`
22 ζαλο, πανηη ζ απο μαρτηρο-
23 να ψηη.

*And the days she lived through on earth (were) 71; (she departed) on Pauni
7, in (the year) from the martyrs 748 (= 1 June 1032).*

What we have here are two separate clauses, which can be analysed as follows:

- | | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| (1) οὔκρεκοῦεῖν | ΔΟΥΔΙ<Ι>Ν | ΚΟΥΓΛΛΕ`./` | ζαλο |
| <i>oukr-e-koue-sin</i> | <i>dou-j-is-in</i> | <i>kou-gille (?)</i> | <i>71-lo</i> |
| day-PRED-PL.PRED-EMP | be-PLACT-PST2-2/3SG | earth-ALL | 71-FOC |

The sentence is obviously a Nubian counterpart of the Greek τὰ δὲ ἔτη τῆς ζωῆς αὐτοῦ (αὐτῆς) ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἡμέρα + number. Phrases of this type are found on a regular basis in Greek epitaphs from Christian Nubia, in the part presenting the details of the life of the deceased person, usually

placed at the end of the text. As far as we could check, the exact sentence has not been attested, but we find τὰ ἔτι τῆς ζωῆς αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς (I. *Khartoum Greek* 3 [DBMNT 3], ll. 21–22) and τὰ δὲ ἔτη τῆς ζωῆς αὐτοῦ (e.g. I. *Khartoum Greek* 20 [DBMNT 14], ll. 19–20), and variants thereof. In contrast to the Greek original, in which the subject of the sentence is ‘years’ (τὰ ἔτη), and ‘day’ (ἡμέρα *sic*), meaning ‘timespan’, is an auxiliary directly introducing the number, the Nubian counterpart makes ‘days’ the subject of the sentence omitting the word ‘years’.

ογκρεκογεῖ: the plural formant κογ- is a phonetic variant of the more common ρογ- (compare κογλ- for ρογλ- further on in the text); the copulative emphasiser -εῖ probably functions here as a counterpart of the Greek δέ found in analogous phrases.

ΔΟΥΘΙ<Ι>Ν: the pluriactional formant -θ- refers to ογκρεκογεῖ.

κογτλλε`´: κογ- is a phonetic variant of the more common form ρογλ- (compare κογ- for ρογ- earlier in the text); the word underwent regressive assimilation and then simplification of the geminate, κογλτλλε > κογττλλε > κογτλλε. It should be noted that the above interpretation is not entirely certain for both palaeographic and semantic reasons: (1) the letter following κογ must not necessarily be a ρ, and ττ looks more like a μ, though the second objection can easily be eliminated through the assumption of a mistake by the stonemason, who falsely identified ττ in the model text as a μ; (2) the postposition -τλλε is a little odd in this context; here we rather expect -λα, which renders the Greek ἐπί, thus κογλλα. Finally, we are unable to explain the strange sign in form of an open chevron standing above the final ε.

(2) παηνη	2	απομαρτηρονα	Υ̅MH
<i>Paene</i>		<i>apomartero-na</i>	
Pauni	7	‘from the Martyrs’-DAT	748

απομαρτηρονα: the Greek ἀπὸ μαρτύρων (= μαρτύρων) + the postposition -λα, ‘(in)to, in, from’, with regressive assimilation and then simplification of the geminate, απομαρτηρονα > απομαρτηρονα > απομαρτηρονα. A similar Graeco-Nubian formation is found three times in the Old Nubian part of the epitaph of the Makurian king Georgios (d. 1157), found and kept in the Monastery of the Syrians at Wadi al-Natrun in Lower Egypt

(DBMNT 558; edited in V. W. J. van Gerven Oei, 'The Old Nubian memorial for King George', [in:] Łajtar & van der Vliet [eds.], *Nubian Voices* [= cit. n. 12], pp. 225–262): ἀπομαρτυριονηα ὠκβλο (ll. 16–17); ἀπομαρτυριονηα ὠμηλο (ll. 18–19); ἀπομαρτυριονηα ὠοδ (l. 22). See also G. Ochała, *Chronological Systems of Christian Nubia* [= *Journal of Juristic Papyrology Supplement* 16], Warsaw 2011, p. 68–70, where the present epitaph is also discussed, but note that -ηα is taken there as the Old Nubian genitive marker.

6. A KING OF MAKURIA AND AN EPARCH OF NOBADIA IN AN INSCRIPTION FROM GEBEL ADDA (DBMNT 564)

Among the finds made by the mission of the American Research Center in Egypt on the site of Gebel Adda in the 1960s in the framework of the Nubian campaign, there is a curious inscription in Greek and Old Nubian mentioning two highest officials of the Kingdom of Makuria. The inscription was discovered during the second season of work on the site (1963/4). The discovery was reported by Nicholas B. Millet, the director of the mission, who gave a short description of the stone and summarised the content of the text, attaching a good photo of the object.²⁰ The fate of the inscriptions after the excavations is unknown to us. It cannot be found among finds from Gebel Adda kept in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto,²¹ which suggests that it may have remained in Egypt and may be stored now in one of the Egyptian museums, the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, the Coptic Museum in Cairo, or the Nubia Museum in Aswan. Thus, the data provided by Millet in his preliminary report, particularly the photo published by him, must remain our sole source of information about the object (Fig. 6).

According to Millet, we are dealing with a graffito standing on 'a sandstone corner block, presumably from a church or public building'. The text 'mentions a hitherto unknown king named Taanengo. The inscription was carved and painted by one Grailekor, the town-mayor or castel-

²⁰ N. B. MILLET, 'Gebel Adda Expedition preliminary report, 1963–1964', *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 3 (1964), pp. 7–14, at 11, pl. VIII.23.

²¹ Adam Łajtar's personal observation.

lan of a place called Akirimip. The inscription is presumably to be dated somewhere between 750–1000 A.D.’²²

The photo shows that Millet was mistaken when he designated the object as a ‘corner block’. The stone preserves its upper edge and probably also the lower one, but both of its side edges are obviously lacking. The destruction on the right-hand side is fairly regular, which may suggest that the stone was cut off intentionally and this could have given Millet a false impression of an original edge. It is our impression that we are dealing with a regular construction block, but this must remain hypothetical without the access to the original object.

Millet called the inscription a graffito and it looks as if he were right, as is also confirmed by the final παῖελο. The photo shows that the inscription was executed rather clumsily. The height of the letters varies from line to line. In line 1 the letters are big and deeply carved, resembling a monumental inscription. In line 2 they are considerably smaller, but the carving is still deep. In lines 3 and 4, with their shallow carving and clumsy script, a graffito character is the most patent. The script may be designated as Nubian-type majuscules, mostly inclined but partly also upright. One observes a tendency for angularity and for elongating the letters, especially in line 3, which is probably due to the hardness of the writing surface.

We do not know if the dating proposed by Millet (8th–9th centuries) was supported by archaeological context, for instance. It is, however, our impression that the inscription cannot be earlier than the eleventh century, most probably even as late as the fourteenth–fifteenth centuries.

On the basis of the photo the inscription can be edited as follows:

	[---] , ου X(ριστο)υ̇ I(ησοϋ)ς ὁ X(ριστό)ς . . [---]
	[---] . ἀμεϋδῆ τὸ τ᾽ τα ἀνεῖ . [---]
	[---] οὔροϋ ἔλ ἀκίρι μιγιν σοφοῦ ἀγρα . [---]
4	<i>vacat</i> ἰλο κορ παε[ῖελο]

[---] of Christ, Jesus Christ, [---] (being) tot of Ameudi, Ane[---] the king, (I) Akiri, eparch of Nobadia, being here on the 10th [of---], I wrote.

²² MILLET, ‘Gebel Adda Expedition’ (cit. n. 20), *loc. cit.*



Fig. 6. Inscription of eparch Akiri
(after Millet, 'Gebel Adda Expedition' [cit. n. 20], pl. VIII.23)

The exact reading of the inscription is impossible to establish due to its fragmentary state of preservation and the lack of analogies for supplementing the lacunae. The inscription obviously opened with an invocation of Jesus Christ in Greek, which apparently occupied the entire first line. Starting with line 2, the text continued with a statement of a historical or, better, commemorative character in Old Nubian. Judging by $\alpha\rho\alpha$, 'sitting, remaining, being', which is found in mementos left by visitors to cult places (see below), this inscription could also have commemorated such an event. The visitor and the author of the memento was apparently an eparch of Nobadia with the name Akiri. His visit took place on the tenth of a month, most probably Choiak (see the commentary below). The rest is enigmatic. In line 2, there is a question of a 'tot of Ameudi (or Meudi)'; the following ΔNEN . . [---] is either the name of another person or another title of the person described before as *tot* of Ameudi/Meudi. In line 3, a king is mentioned; his name, if it was given at all, is unfortunately lost in the lacuna at the beginning of the line. Strangely 'king', $\sigma\gamma\text{poy-}$, is the subject of the sentence as shown by the subjective $\overline{\epsilon}\lambda$. The inscription said possibly that the eparch Akiri visited a (cult?) place when the king was doing something.

1. Traces of a letter after the break fit a *tau*. This suggests the reading [---] τοῦ Χ(ριστο)ῦ. After Ἰ(ησοῦ)ς ὁ Χ(ριστο)ς, one sees a strange sign resembling a *kxi* or a *zeta*, and the left-hand side of a round letter resembling an *omega*. One is tempted to read ζω[ή]. If correct, this reading invites us to supplement φῶς in the lacuna at the beginning of the line. Summing up the above observations one can hypothesise the following reconstruction of the line: [† φῶς] τοῦ Χ(ριστο)ῦ Ἰ(ησοῦ)ς ὁ Χ(ριστο)ς ζω[ή]. According to this reconstruction the line contained the acclamation φῶς τοῦ Χ(ριστο)ῦ ζωή, ‘the light of Christ is life’, interrupted by another one, namely Ἰ(ησοῦ)ς ὁ Χ(ριστο)ς, ‘Jesus is the Christ’.

2-4. The Old Nubian part of the inscription can be analysed as follows:

ἈΜΕΥΔἈ	ΤΟ`Τ`ΤΑ	ἈΝΕΝ . . [---]	ΟΥΡΟΥΕΛ	ἈΚΙΡΙ
<i>Ameudi-n</i>	<i>tott-a</i>	<i>Ane-n . . [---]</i>	<i>ourou-eil</i>	<i>Akiri</i>
Ameudi-GEN	son-PRED	Ane-GEN(?)	king-DET	Akiri
ΜΙΓΙΝ	ΣΟΓΟΘ	ΑΓΡΑ	[---]	ΙΛΟ
<i>Migi-n</i>	<i>songoj</i>	<i>ag-r-a</i>		<i>io-lo</i>
Nobadia-GEN	eparch	sit-PRS-PRED		IO-FOC
ΚΟΡ	ΠΑΞ[ΙΣΕΛΟ]			
	<i>paei-s-e-lo</i>			
?	write-PST2-ISG.PRED-FOC			

ἈΜΕΥΔἈ: The reading ἈΜΕΥΔἈ is not entirely certain; it can also be ΜΕΥΔἈ, with Ἀ being the last letter of the preceding word. The genitive ἈΜΕΥΔἈ/ΜΕΥΔἈ must depend on the following ΤΟ`Τ`ΤΑ. The ambiguity of the word ΤΟΤ-, which means both ‘son’ and ‘village/town official’ in Old Nubian, does not allow us to decide whether ἈΜΕΥΔΙ/ΜΕΥΔΙ (or similarly) is a personal name or a place name, but the second possibility seems more probable to us because of the following predicate. ἈΜΕΥΔΙ/ΜΕΥΔΙ has been attested neither as a personal name nor a place name so far.

ΤΟ`Τ`ΤΑ: The reading is not certain but is possible. The word is most probably the substantive ΤΟΤ-, ‘son, village/town official’, with the predicative -α. Its function may be that of a predicate to ΕΙΝἈ, here omitted for some reason.

ἈΝΕΝ . . [---]: After ἈΝΕΝ there is a vertical elongated stroke belonging to a strange sign from line 1 (a *z* or a *z*; see above). The letters to the right of this stroke and before the lacuna can tentatively be identified as ΕΟ. One is tempted to introduce the word division after ἈΝΕΝ, which could then be analysed as the genitive of ἈΝΕ-, and to read ἈΝΕΝ ΕΟ[ΔΔΔ], ‘(being) lord of (the place called) Ane’. ‘Lord of Ane’ would have been another title of the person designated as *tot* of Ameudi/Meudi immediately before. The problem with this reading is that a place with the name Ane has not been attested thus far. Because of that, one

might suggest the reading ἀΝΕΝΕΩ[---], and interpret it as the beginning of the name of a person other than the *tot* of Ameudi/Meudi. Names beginning with ἀΝΕΝ- are attested in Nubian onomastics. One can cite here ἀΝΕΝΑ on record in a rock inscription at Abu Negila in Kordofan (G. Ochała, 'A king of Makuria in Kordofan', [in:] Łajtar & van der Vliet [eds.], *Nubian Voices* [= cit. n. 12], pp. 149–155), and ἀΝΕΝΙΚΟΛ occurring in a document from Qasr Ibrim (*P. Qasr Ibrim* III 36 i, l. 15).

ἀκίρι: An eparch of Nobadia by this name appears here for the first time in sources at our disposal. Both the person and his name were previously unattested. Most probably the name Akiri is of Nubian origin, we do not know its etymology.

ἀρπα: The word, also spelled ἀκπα, occurs several times in visitors' inscriptions in the upper church at Banganarti; see A. Łajtar, *A Late Christian Pilgrimage Centre in Nubia. The Evidence of Wall Inscriptions in the Upper Church at Banganarti* [= *Journal of Juristic Papyrology Supplement* 39], Leuven 2020, nos. 221 (DBMNT 3436), 383 (DBMNT 3584), 505 (DBMNT 3702), 839 (DBMNT 4014), and probably also 934 (DBMNT 4107). According to Browne, *Old Nubian Dictionary* (cit. no. 4, ad l. 4), p. 8, the verb αρ-, ακ- has the meaning 'to sit, remain, live'. In the visitors' inscriptions, the meaning is rather 'to be, stay'. This meaning has not been attested for the Old Nubian verb so far but is known for its Dongolawi counterpart *ág*; see Ch. H. Armbruster, *Dongolese Nubian. A Lexicon*, Cambridge 1965, p. 6, *s.v.* *ág*, who lists the following meanings of the verb in question: 'squat, sit down, settle, reside, live, remain, stay, wait, be in a situation, be continuously, keep, be present, be here, be there'.

Faint traces of a letter immediately before the break could belong to a x. This suggests the reading χ[οιακ] | ιο, 'on Khoiak ιο'. If correct this reading allows establishing the width of the lacuna on the right side as containing approximately 4–5 letters.

κορ: We do not know how to interpret this word. Alternatively, one can transcribe κορπαε[---], but no word beginning with κορπ- is attested in Old Nubian.

Adam Łajtar
Grzegorz Ochała

University of Warsaw
Faculty of Archaeology
Chair of Epigraphy and Papyrology
Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28
00-927 Warsaw
POLAND
e-mails: *a.lajtar@uw.edu.pl*
g.ochala@uw.edu.pl