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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 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.¹ Usually, this phenomenon is being related to the supposed principle of matrilineal succession.² As for the less exalted strata of society, business documents from Lower Nubia show a remarkable number of women acting independently in financial transactions.³ Equally conspicuous is the percentage of female donors of wall-paintings in major centres like Faras and Dongola.⁴ Finally, also among those who could

¹ See S. DONADONI, "MHTHP ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ", *SCO* 18, 1969, pp. 123-25 (reprinted in: ID., *Cultura dell'Antico Egitto*, Rome 1986, pp. 567-69); cf. A. OSMAN, "The post-medieval Kingdom of Kokka: A means for a better understanding of the administration of the medieval Kingdom of Dongola", in: J. M. PLUMLEY, ed., *Nubian Studies*, Warminster 1982, esp. pp. 188-89, 193 and 196.

² Thus S. JAKOBIELSKI, *A History of the Bishopric of Pachoras on the Basis of Coptic Inscriptions* (= *Faras III*), Warsaw 1972, p. 113, referring to A. & W. KRONENBERG, "Parallel cousin marriage in mediaeval and modern Nubia, I", *Kush* 13, 1965, pp. 241-260; cf. W. Y. ADAMS, *Nubia: Corridor to Africa*, London 1977, pp. 260 (pre-Christian) and 463 (medieval). This model of analysis, however, has now been challenged by J. SPAULDING, "Medieval Nubian dynastic succession" (paper read at the Ninth International Conference of Nubian Studies, Boston 1998).

³ Cf. W. E. CRUM, "La Nubie dans les textes coptes", *RdTTr* 21, 1899, p. 224.

⁴ Faras: JAKOBIELSKI, *Faras III*, p. 180; Old-Dongola, monastic complex of Kom H: unpublished inscriptions accompanying wall paintings in the south-western part of the monastery.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.⁵ 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.⁶ 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".⁷ 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.⁸

⁵ Cf. S. CLARKE, "Ancient Egyptian frontier fortresses", *JEA* 3, 1916, pp. 155-179. For the spelling Meinarti, which is retained here, see W. Y. ADAMS, "Sudan Antiquities Service excavations in Nubia: Fourth Season, 1962-63", *Kush* 12, 1964, p. 223, n. 18.

⁶ See: ADAMS, *Kush* 12, pp. 216-248; ID., "Sudan Antiquities Service excavations at Meinarti, 1963-64", *Kush* 13, 1965, pp. 148-176; ID., "Settlement pattern in microcosm: The changing aspect of a Nubian village during twelve centuries", in: K. C. CHANG, ed., *Settlement Archaeology*, Palo Alto 1968, pp. 174-207; ID., *Nubia: Corridor to Africa*, London 1977, esp. pp. 488-494. For an earlier account of the site: U. MONNERET DE VILLARD, *La Nubia medioevale I*, Cairo 1935, pp. 217-221; *ibid.* II, pl. XCIV.

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 Choiak-eikšil.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. BARNS, "Christian monuments from Nubia", *Kush* 2, 1954, pp. 26-27, pl. V.a. This stela is to be republished by Adam ŁAJTAR 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 Choiak-eikšil (died 1181 A.D.) now in the Louvre (cf. E. BERNARD, *Inscriptions grecques d'Égypte 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. B. ROSTKOWSKA, "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.¹³ It belongs to Michaeliko (ΜΙΧΑΗΛΙΚΟ),¹⁴ 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 (ἸΗΣΟΥΣΥΚΟ), who died January 9th, 1046 A.D. (Tybi 14th, 762 Diocletian era).¹⁵ Among stelae from Christian Nubia, where unembellished plaques highlighting a plainly incised text are more or less the standard,¹⁶ 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.¹⁷ 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, ΜΙΧΑΗΛΙΚΟΛ in l. 6. Another occurrence of the same name (as ΜΙΧΑΗΛΙΚΟ) 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 -ΙΚΟ are Nubian names formed with an adjectival suffix -κο (cf. G. M. BROWNE, *Introduction to Old Nubian* [= *Meroitica* 11], Berlin 1989, p. 11, sub 3.4.2); the final -λ 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 (-iko, -ikol) 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 Stelen Ägyptisches Museum der Universität Leipzig Inv.-Nr. 680-688 mit der Herkunftsangabe 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).

¹⁶ H. JUNKER, "Die christlichen Grabsteine Nubiens", *ZÄS* 60, 1925, pp. 122-24, but cf. M. KRAUSE, "Die Formulare der christlichen Grabsteine Nubiens", in: K. MICHAŁOWSKI, ed., *Nubia: Récentes recherches*, Warsaw 1975, p. 77, n. 16.

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),¹⁸ Toshka-West (Sakînya),¹⁹ Faras (stelae of Bishops Aaron, A.D. 972, and Georgios, A.D. 1097),²⁰ Serra-West²¹ 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.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 ΠΕΤΡΟΝ[ΙΑ], Petronia (l. 6).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 epithaph of a Deacon Petrou, the son of a bishop of Kourte, which originates from the same period (A.D. 1029) and region (Debeira-West).²⁴ Thus, the stela of Michaeliko contains, following an extensive opening formula of the ΠΡΟΝΟΙΑ-type, which quotes God's judgment on Adam (Gn 3:19; ll. 1-4), and lemmas containing the name of the deceased and the date of her demise (ll. 4-8), a long composite prayer (ll. 8-21). This is followed by a lemma stating the age of the deceased (ll. 21-22) and by another prayer, now in Greek, for resting her soul (ἀνάπαυσον ...; ll. 23-25). Especially the prayer of ll. 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

pp. 136-139; M. CRAMER, *Archäologische und epigraphische Klassifikation koptischer Denkmäler*, Wiesbaden 1957, pp. 1-11.

¹⁸ Cf. J. M. PLUMLEY, "Some examples of Christian Nubian art from the excavations at Qasr Ibrim", in: E. DINKLER, ed., *Kunst und Geschichte Nubiens in christlicher Zeit*, Recklinghausen 1970, pl. 104, 105 and 107.

¹⁹ See MONNERET DE VILLARD, *La Nubia medioevale I*, p. 123, fig. 103 (his type 6); cf. *ibid.* IV, Cairo 1957, pl. CXXX-CXXXII.

²⁰ See JAKOBIELSKI, *Faras III*, pp. 120-23 & 154-57.

²¹ A particularly well sculptured but fragmentary stela (Khartoum, National Museum, inv. no. 17041; unpublished); unfortunately, the greater part of its text is lost.

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.

²³ A not uncommon name in Egypt, cf. F. PREISIGKE, *Namenbuch*, Heidelberg 1922, col. 321 & 328; D. FORABOSCHI, *Onomasticon alterum papyrologicum*, Milano-Varese 1967, p. 256; in Nubia attested at Ginâri, Ibrîm and Toshka-West (Sakînya).

²⁴ Khartoum, National Museum, inv. no. 3990; ed. W. E. CRUM, in: MILEHAM, *Churches in Lower Nubia*, Philadelphia 1910, p. 21 (with p. 19 and pl. 7).

our knowledge, occurs outside Meinarti only in the stela from Debeira-West, mentioned above.²⁵

The general impression which these three ladies' stelae convey is of conforming closely to a model which was current among the clerical and lay élite of the region during the 10th-11th centuries. As we will see presently, in the cases of Michaeliko and Iesusyko, something more can be said about their socio-economic status.

"OWNING" A CHURCH IN MEDIEVAL NUBIA.

The stela of Iesusyko, who died at the age of 34, mentions no parents. She is, however, qualified as: ἔχων φιλοθεεεῖ / ἡ γοῖ μὲν ἰεροῦ (ll. 6-7).²⁶ 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).²⁷ 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 ζῶα νῆσος 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 Iesusyko to introduce the name of an ecclesiastical establishment. In fact, there can be little doubt that the φιλοθεε<ο>c- of the Iesusyko 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.²⁸ What follows appears to contain a form of the Old Nubian verb μΟΥΔΟΥ-, "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 ἡ γοῖ (beginning of l. 7) looks rather like π; the present reading was suggested by Adam ŁAJTAR. Between ο and μ some space is left open, above which a small and thin π 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. MICHAŁOWSKI, ed., *Nubia: Récentes recherches*, Warsaw 1975, p. 35), and A. ŁAJTAR, "Varia Nubica (I-II)", ZPE 104, 1994, pp. 202-203.

²⁸ Cf. M. VAN ESBRÖECK, art. "Philotheos of Antioch, Saint", in: *Coptic Encyclopedia*, vol. 6, pp. 1960-1961. The proper name Philotheos occurs in Nubia at Tamit (cf. our no. 4, below), Toshka-West (Sakinya) and Faras.

Philotheos Church in question²⁹ and may therefore either specify its location or give its (or, the Saint's) local surname.³⁰

Until quite recently, the expressions with ἔχων (etc.) seemed limited to Greek or Old Nubian, resp. Greco-Nubian, texts and the person thus styled always a man.³¹ Iesousyko's stela is conspicuous for the first attested occurrence of this Greco-Nubian expression in a predominantly Coptic context.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: ΘΥΓ' ΝΙΩΥ ΠΕΠΡΕΣ ΠΕΤΟΥΙΑΝΤΣ · ΜΙΧΑΗΛ · ΝΑΡΓΙΝΗ, "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 ΠΕΤΟΥΙΑΝΤΣ (which in standard Sahidic should be either ΤΕΤΕΟΥΨΤΑΣ or ΠΕΤΕΟΥΨΤΑΣ)³³ is the Coptic equivalent of the Greek loanword εχωμ 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.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.³⁵ There,

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").

³⁰ A perhaps comparable epithet is to be found in a Greek-Old Nubian graffito at Assuan, see F. L. 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: χῖε (i.e. Michael) ΔΙΚΑΜΟΥΔΟΥΕ.

³¹ This latter aspect was earlier emphasized by LAJTAR, *ZPE* 104, 1994, pp. 202-03, but see now our list of sources below.

³² And for a rare example of Coptic-Old Nubian code switching!

³³ The double shift between schwa and -a- which marks off ΠΕΤΟΥΙΑΝΤΣ from the standard Sahidic is certainly no mere slip, but a dialectical variant; cf. CRUM, [in:] H. E. WINLOCK & W. E. CRUM, *The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes I*, New York 1926, pp. 236 & 237, and P. E. KAHLE, *Bala'izah*, Oxford & London 1954, pp. 52 & 57: examples esp. from the Theban area.

³⁴ The inappropriate masculine forms used in both the Michaeliko and Iesousyko stelae (εχωμ. ΠΕΤ-) may, quite apart from the Nubians' weak sense for Coptic and Greek grammatical gender, reflect the predominant influence of a masculine standard form.

³⁵ By MONNERET DE VILLARD, *La Nubia medioevale I*, p. 212 (following F. L. GRIFFITH, "The Nubian Texts of the Christian Period", in: *Abhandlungen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-hist. Klasse*, Berlin

the ruins of a considerable church, perhaps that of St. Michael, could be seen even quite recently.³⁶

What, we may presently ask, is the exact meaning of the expression ἔχων (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.³⁷ They might, of course, be the founders of the churches in question, but this is not what the texts say. Both the Greek ἔχων 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.³⁸ As its owners they might or might not be the founders of their sacred property.³⁹ The rights of ownership over a church or a monastery could be transferred by testament. They could, moreover, be exercised by women as well.⁴⁰ 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 ἔχων (etc.).

³⁸ See A. STEINWENTER’s fundamental study, “Die Rechtsstellung der Kirchen und Klöster nach den Papyri”, *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung* 50, 1930, pp. 1-50; E. WIPSZYCKA, *Les ressources et les activités économiques des églises en Égypte du IV^e au VIII^e siècle (= Papyrologica Bruxellensia 10)*, Bruxelles 1972, pp. 26-27, 80-83, 90-91; both draw also on Coptic material. Private churches (εὐκτήριοι οἶκοι) were a common phenomenon in the Byzantine Empire. It was extensively studied by E. HERMAN: “Die kirchlichen Einkünfte des byzantinischen Niederklerus”, *OCP* 8, 1942, pp. 378-442, especially pp. 419-425; “Chiese private’ e diritto di fondazione negli ultimi secoli dell’impero bizantino”, *OCP* 12, 1946, pp. 302-321; “The Secular Church” [in:] *Cambridge Medieval History* IV 2, Cambridge 1967, pp. 104-133, especially pp. 116-125. Also monasteries could belong to private persons (χαριστικάριοι); cf. E. HERMAN, “Ricerche sulle istituzioni monastiche bizantine: typika ktetorika, caristicarie, monasteri ‘liberi’”, *OCP* 6, 1940, pp. 293-375; P. LEMERLE, “Un aspect du rôle des monastères à Byzance: Les monastères donnés à des laïcs, les charisticaires”, *CRAI* 1967, pp. 9-28.

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,⁴¹ 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.⁴²

The record of the other Nubian examples of the expression ἔχων (etc.) and its Coptic and Old Nubian equivalents (see the list below), may serve to supplement this picture. First of all, Iesusyko 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:

ἐγὼ ΠΕΤΡΟ Ἰ Χ̄C ΠΑΧΩΡΑC Ε.ΙΟΝ ΠΑ CΤΑΥΡΟC ΠΑΧΩΡΑC
 ΕΝΦΙΑ ἘΛΙ ΕΤΑΖΑ

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

We suggest to read ΕΧΩΝ after ΠΑΧΩΡΑC. In Old Nubian majuscules ω and ιο 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.

2. Funerary stela of Marianos, Bishop of Faras (died November 11th, 1036 A.D.), found in Qaṣr Ibrîm, now in the Coptic Museum at Cairo. The stela bears a Greek epitaph with a prayer of the Euchologion Mega type. It was edited by J. M. Plumley, "The Stele of Marianos Bishop of Faras", *Bulletin du Musée National de Varsovie* 12, 1971, pp. 77-84, and reproduced by J. Kubińska, *Inscriptions grecques chrétiennes* (= Faras IV), Warsaw 1974, pp. 38-40, no. 8.

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 εἶ ἀνάπαυσις τῆς ψυχῆς τοῦ δούλου σου):

- 6 ἄββα Μαριάνου ὀρθ(οδόξου) ἐπισκ(όπου) Παχωρας
 7 κ(αὶ) ἀρχιμανδρίτης Πουκω κ(αὶ) ἀπόστολος τοῦ
 8 Βαβυλῶν κ(αὶ) ἔχων τέσσαρα ζῶα νῆσος
 9 Τημε

“(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 Qaṣr Ibrîm from the second half of 12th century: a contract of sale and cession of land by a certain Poñitta, his daughter Persi as well as Nonnen, daughter of Mena to Maššuda, Choiak-eikšil: G. M. Browne, *Old Nubian Texts from Qaṣr Ibrîm III*, London 1991, no. 34 ii. Among witnesses to the contract, the document mentions in line 18: “Eiñitta, 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 Qaṣr 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:

[ε]ρω φιλο(θεος) διακονου ὙC
 []αριαντα εχων πουργουνδι
 [ε]παγωμενος εορην ραφανη
 4 [ε]γραψα

“I, Philotheos, deacon, son of []arianta, 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 [M]αριαντα. 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 ἔχων 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 ἔχων, 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.⁴³ 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.

5. Graffito in the Church of the Angels in Tamit; date unknown. U. Monneret de Villard, *La Nubia medioevale* I, p. 157, no. 26; S. Donadoni [in:] *Tamit* (1964), Rome 1967, p. 71, no. 29 b. The language of the graffito is Old Nubian with an admixture of Greek.

† ΜΕΠΟΛΕ ΘΥΜΔΕ • ΕΧΩΝ
 ΤΗΜ ΟΤΟΥ ΤΕΛΙΡΕ ΝΟ CΠ
 ΧΑΡ • ΤΟΥ ΙC ΧΕ ΟΝΟ ΕΙΤΩΝ

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

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 where Adam Łajtar was baptised and made his 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 [] ΝΚΟ ΥΣ Σ ΠΑ ΤΕCΑΡΑ ΖΩΑ ΕΧΩΝ
 7 [] ΙΤΟΥΡΙ ΕΧΩΝ 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

Facsimile of the inscription in: K. Michałowski, *Faras: Die Kathedrale aus dem Wüstensand*, Einsiedeln etc. 1967, p. 38. The first, still incomplete attempt at reading in: S. Jakobielski, *Klio* 51, 1969, p. 503, fig. 6. The reading of the whole text in: F. Altheim, R. Stiehl, *Christentum am Roten Meer I*, Berlin-New York 1971, pp. 487-508. Critical remarks to the latter with a new proposal for the reading of the text in: S. Jakobielski, "Inscriptions from Faras and the problems of the chronology of murals", [in:] *Études nubiennes*, Cairo 1978, pp. 147-151, pl. XL and XLIIIB.

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.

† ΟΥΤΟC ΕCΤΙΝ ΑΔΔΥΕΛ ΒΑC
 ΜΩΥCΕC ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΥ ΒΑCΙΛΕΥ ΝΟΥΒΗC
 Σ ΑΡΟΥΑ Σ ΜΑΚΡΟ : Υ ΜΑΡΑΥΑ ΓΕΩΡ ΑΜΝ
 4 ΟΙΚΟΔΟΜΙC ΕΓΓΟΝΟC Σ ΠΑΛ ΖΑΧΑΡΙC ΟΛ Ν ΤΟ
 Σ ΠΑΛ ΔΑΔ ΒΑCΙΛΕΥ ΕΓΓΟΝ[ΟC Δ] ΜΝ ΡΝΒ ΕΧΩΝ : —

"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. ρῆβ is a very well known numerical cryptogram for Μαρία (40 + 1 + 100 + 10 + 1 = 152) and ρῆβ ἔχων must mean “having (the Church of) the Virgin Mary”; a numerical cryptogram in connection with ἔχων is also used in the epitaph of Bishop Tamer, below, no. 9: ἔχων χπθ Παχωρας. It is not quite clear to whom the title ρῆβ ἔχων 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 these 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 Pachoras*, 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.

8. Greek graffito in the Rivergate Church at Faras; date unknown. F. Ll. Griffith, *LAAA* 13, 1926, p. 74, no. 14, pl. LXIV 2.

ΕΓΩ ΗΛΙ ΠΑΧ[Ω]
ΡΑΣ ΤΩΜΑ ΕΧΩ[Ν]

“I, Eli, having Toma of Faras”.

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

ΧΑΙΡΕ ΜΑΡΙΑ ΚΕΧΑΡΙΤΟΜΕΝΝ[Η - - -]
ΚΑ ΨΥΓΡΑΜΩΝΗ ΙϞ ΜΕ ΤΩΜΑ[- - -]
ΠΑΧΩΡΑΣ ΔΑΥ . . ΓΡΑΦΗ

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

ΨΥΓΡΑΜΩΝΗ
Κ, Γ ΜΕ ΤΟΝΜΑ ΕΧΩ [blank] Ν [blank] ΓΡΑΨΟΝ

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 θε(εο)ῦ τῷ
 21 τᾶ (καὶ) ἔχων χηθ 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 Iesusinkouda (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 (?), domestikos 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. Iesusinkouda, who died in the age of 36, is thus designated:

6 ΙΗΣΟΥΣΚΟΥΔΑ
 7 Δ υ(ιδ)ς ἔχων Γ(α)β(ριή)λ ἔξ-
 8 ουσία{ι} δὲ (καὶ) δω-
 9 μίστικος Παχ-
 10 ωρας ναυάρχ(ος)
 11 Νο(βάδων)

“Iesusinkouda, son of the one who has (the Church of the Archangel) Gabriel, power⁴⁵ 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 Iesusinkouda was that of Phrim (Ibrīm):

20 ἔχων Γαβριήλ φρμ.

⁴⁵ The term ἐξουσία, “power” most probably describes Iesusinkouda as an eparch of Nobadia.

The Church of the Archangel Gabriel of Phrim is attested in an Old Nubian document from Qaṣr Ibrīm from the second half of 12th century; G. M. Browne, *Old Nubian Texts from Qaṣr Ibrīm* III, London 1991, no. 60, l. 10. There it is stated that the land of the Gabriel-Church in Ibrīm 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 stela 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 χῶραι
24	Σταυροφόρου ἔχων Σευήρος
25	ⲁⲓⲡⲉⲗⲱ

“(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 ΕΧΩΗ. In his edition, Hägg left this in majuscules, but suggested the reading ἔχων 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 Alexandriner. Zum liturgischen Diptychon in Boston”, *JAC* 26, 1983, pp. 54-58.

The words ⲁⲓⲡⲉⲗⲱ in line 25 were recognised by Hägg as Old Nubian but not read. We suggest the reading “in the town”, from ⲁⲓⲡ - “town, city” and ⲁⲱ (ⲁⲟ) - “upon, at, to, for, over, etc.”. A similarly precise designation in an Old Nubian document from Qaṣr Ibrīm, 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:

- 21 σὺ γὰρ (εἶ) ἀνά-
 22 παυσις τὴν δ(ούλην) εἰκκίρ Δ
 23 ΤΙ ΔΡΓΙΝΙ ΚΟΝΔΓΔ ἀπὸ
 24 μαρτ(ύρων) ω΄. ΤΑΝΝΑ ΔΦΕΝ ΟΥ
 25 ΚΡΙΓΟΥΛΛΟΝ ΟΒ ΛΟ ΜΕΟ
 26 ΡΕΔ ἱΓ ΛΟ ΔΑΠΠΟΝΑ

“You are the rest of Your servant Eikkir, having . . . of Argini. (She died in the year) since the Martyrs 800. The years of her life were 72. She departed on Mesore 13th”

ΚΟΝΔΓΔ 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 ΚΑΧ ΔΦΘΙΝ ΚΟΔΓΔ (= λόγον ζωῆς ἐπέχοντες) in *Griffith's Old Nubian Lectionary* 101. ll. 7-8 (ed. by G. M. Browne, Rome and Barcelona 1982).

For Argini see above, note 35. ΔΡΓΙΝΙ from this inscription and ΔΡΓΙΝΗ from the epitaph of Michaeliko are merely two forms of the same toponym, “η” and “ι” both being pronounced as “i” 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 ΔΡΓΙΝΙ. We are unable to reconstruct any reasonable word from the preserved rests of letters. In any case, ΜΙΧΔΗΛ, as in the epitaph of Michaeliko, cannot be read here.

13. Greek graffito on a rock near Ashkeit; date unknown; see J. H. Dunbar, “Some Nubian rock pictures”, *SNR* 17, 1934, pl. II (infra; cf. p.164); U. Monneret de Villard, *La Nubia medioevale* I, p. 211.

εγω μερκη ϩε οθς
 πδ ϩε σταγρος εχω
 . ΓΡΑΡΑΦΟΝ

ϩε 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.

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 $\Delta\Gamma\epsilon\lambda\omicron\sigma\kappa\omega$, an Old Nubian formation (Greek substantive $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ + Old Nubian predicative $-\kappa\omicron$), 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 $\acute{\alpha}\nu\acute{\alpha}\pi\alpha\upsilon\sigma\omicron\nu\tau\omicron\nu\tau\eta\nu\ \psi\upsilon\chi\eta\iota(\nu)$ and before $\text{'}\acute{\alpha}\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\omicron\sigma\kappa\omega$, the feminine article $\tau\eta\nu$ (for $\tau\eta\nu\ \delta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\eta\nu$) appears, while in lines 17-18, already quoted above, we have the masculine substantive $\tau\omicron\nu\nu\ \sigma\omicron\nu\nu\ \delta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\omicron\nu$ (for $\tau\omicron\nu\nu\ \sigma\omicron\nu\nu\ \delta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\omicron\nu$). Facing this situation we have to pronounce a *non liquet*.

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¹ Au sujet de ces centres, voir les articles de J. ČAČOU dans *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, ed. Aziz S. Atiya, New York 1991 - Peabody, t. VI, p. 1921 - Enaton, t. III, pp. 354-358 - Oktoidesaton, t. VI, pp. 1826-1827 - Elision, t. VI, p. 951. Pour l'Enaton, voir aussi S. Davis, *Die christlich-koptische Ägypter in antiker Zeit*, t. II, Wiesbaden 1984, s. 2. «Die ar-Zaggag» et s. n. «Enaphon», III, t. IV, Wiesbaden 1988.