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Jitse H. F. Dijkstra

**LATE ANTIQUE INSCRIPTIONS
FROM THE FIRST CATARACT AREA
DISCOVERED AND REDISCOVERED**

NEW INSCRIPTIONS ARE USUALLY FOUND on stone during excavations and surveys, but they can also be found on paper. During a stay of several months at the Swiss Institute for Archaeological and Architectural Research of Ancient Egypt in the autumn of 2002, I researched the diaries, letters and other documents of the famous Egyptologist and founder of the Swiss Institute, Ludwig Borchardt, who studied the island and temples of Philae in 1895–1896.¹ In cooperation with Borchardt, Captain H. G. Lyons wrote a report on the island and the state of its temples with regard to the building of the first Aswan Dam, which would inundate the island to a certain height for parts of the year.² Although Lyons and Borchardt did much to preserve the temples of Philae, they removed the mud brick houses of the Late Antique and Arab periods, which covered the entire island. Although they did include a map with the ground plans of the

¹ I did this in preparation of my doctoral dissertation entitled *Religious Transformation on the Southern Egyptian Frontier in Late Antiquity (298–642)*. I would like to thank Cornelius VON PILGRIM, director of the Swiss Institute at Cairo, for allowing me to publish the inscriptions in this article. For valuable discussion of the inscriptions, I am much obliged to H el ene CUVIGNY and Klaas WORP. Jan BREMMER, Adam LAJTAR and Peter VAN MINNEN improved earlier versions of this article; Christopher LILLINGTON-MARTIN corrected my English.

² H. G. LYONS, *A Report on the Island and Temples of Philae*, London 1896.

houses, a short description of some of their features and several photographs, they did not leave sufficient archaeological documentation.³ It was therefore my intention to read through Borchardt's notes in order to see if I could find some additional information about the material remains of Late Antique Philae to that provided in the publications.

And indeed, among the documents pertaining to the campaigns of 1895-1896 is a sketch map of the island, in which Borchardt has indicated several Greek inscriptions inside the so-called East Church of Philae, which have remained hitherto unnoticed. In his diary, Borchardt wrote about these inscriptions: 'In der großen koptischen Kirche, die zwischen vier Strassen liegt, Inschriften, nur Namen, aber gut gemeißelt und roth ausgemalt'.⁴ And in a letter to the Egyptologist A. Erman, Borchardt mentioned the inscriptions again: 'An den Schranken stehen öfter Namen, ebenso an einigen Pfeilern (so und so)'.⁵ Since the East Church disappeared under water during the building of the Aswan High Dam in the 1970s, the inscriptions would have been lost, if they had not been transcribed by Borchardt.

The second group of inscriptions published here for the first time comes from the excavations on Elephantine Island. Recent excavations have unearthed a Late Antique quay wall, which contained four Greek inscriptions. Both groups of new inscriptions, then, have in common that they come from a specific area, the region of the First Cataract of the Nile, that they date to the same period, Late Antiquity, and that they were written in the same language, Greek. Each of them has its own details to add to our knowledge of the region during this period.

I. GREEK INSCRIPTIONS FROM THE EAST CHURCH OF PHILAE

The East Church of Philae is one of the two freestanding churches known from the northern part of the island. It disappeared under water for part of the year after the excavations of 1895-1896 and no attempt was made to exploit the remains before they definitively disappeared under water. In 1970, Grossmann published a reconstruction of the church in which he

³ LYONS, *Report* (cit. n. 2), pp. 13-15, photo nos. 46-50, 58-61, 66-67, plan I.

⁴ Diary L. BORCHARDT 1895-1896, 4 March 1896.

⁵ Letter L. BORCHARDT to A. ERMAN, 20 March 1896.

necessarily had to rely on the published maps. However, these could hardly account for the peculiarities of its ground plan. From the reconstruction, it appears that the church consisted of a strangely asymmetrical, four-aisled ground plan of which the fourth aisle formed a kind of entrance hall for laymen entering from the south. Grossmann dated the church to not before the end of the sixth century on the basis of stone carvings found within the church, although one of them, a "Transennenfragment", contained the name of a † Θεόδωρος †, who may be the well-known bishop of Philae (ca. 525 – after 577).⁶

On the roughly sketched map of the island of Philae (scale 1:200) Borchardt has transcribed the inscriptions (Fig. 1). They have been indicated on the map within the East Church with the letters w, x, y and z. The inscription under the letter "w" had apparently been inscribed on the western wall at the back of the church. Inscription "x" was incised on the southern wall, that is, in the extra, fourth aisle of the church. The inscriptions "y" and "z" were incised on a column in the western part of the church, "y" on the column's southern side and "z" on its eastern side.⁷ With Grossmann's reconstruction in hand, this column can easily be identified with the third in the back row of columns of the church, when viewed from the south (Fig. 2). The names are therefore positioned on quite conspicuous places within the church, especially the inscriptions "y" and "z".

In the following numbering of the transcriptions the sequence of Borchardt's numbering has been maintained ("w-z" = nos. 1-4). Because of the lack of context, no comments could be made about the condition, dimensions and form of the inscriptions, nor could Borchardt's transcriptions be checked. On the basis of the remark in Borchardt's diary, the only thing we know is that the inscriptions had been 'well cut and painted in with red paint' (cf. inscription no. 5 below). Relying on the dating of the church proposed by Grossmann, the inscriptions date to not before, and probably not long after the end of the sixth century.

⁶ P. GROSSMANN, *Christliche Architektur in Ägypten* (= *Handbuch der Orientalistik* 62), Leiden 2002, pp. 461-464. Cf. GROSSMANN, "Überlegungen zum Grundriss der Ostkirche von Philae", *JbAC* 13 (1970), pp. 29-41; S. G. RICHTER, *Studien zur Christianisierung Nubiens* (= *Sprachen und Kulturen des christlichen Orients* 11), Wiesbaden 2002, pp. 127-128.

⁷ Cf. BORCHARDT's observation in the above-mentioned letter that he had seen inscriptions 'on some pillars'.

1.	† <i>Μάρκος</i>	Markos
2.	<i>Νίγερ Δίος</i> †	Niger, Dios
3. <i>Λουκά διακ(όνου)</i> <i>Μακεδωνίου</i> . † <i>Δίος Κολλοῦθος</i>	[---] of Loukas, the deacon of Makedonios, ? Dios, Kollouthos
4.	† † <i>Θεόδωρος Σενήρος</i>	Theodoros, Severos

The names are quite well readable in Borchardt's transcription, although he seems to have hesitated in reading *Μάρκος* in no. 1. In no. 3, the letters of the first line are not clear, like the sign behind *Μακεδωνίου*. In nos. 2-4 two names are written behind each other which may be either a name followed by a patronymic or two separate names. Except for Niger and Macedonius, the names are quite common in Late Antique onomastics. Although the Latin name Niger is commonly attested in papyri and inscriptions of the Roman period, it is not attested after this date.⁸ Macedonius is a rare name in Egypt and is attested in only two papyri.⁹ The crosses are of the simple type, except for the first of the two crosses before the name Theodore, of which the arms end in cross-lines ("Krücken-Kreuz").¹⁰

Remarkably, four of the nine readable names are also known as belonging to bishops of Philae. Macedonius and Mark were the first two bishops of Philae (Macedonius is attested in 346 and Mark between 356 and 368), Theodore was a sixth-century bishop whose name may also have been

⁸ E.g. in a demotic inscription from Philae dated to 13 September A.D. 29 and published by F. L. GRIFFITH, *Catalogue of the Demotic Graffiti of the Dodecaschoenus* (= *Les Temples Immergés de la Nubie*, vol. 1), Oxford 1937, no. 58.4.

⁹ Spelled *Μακεδόνιος*, *P. Oxy.* VII 1028.2; *PSI* XIV 1421.11. Cf. the name of the first bishop of Philae, which is spelled variously in a Coptic saint's life from the region, E. A. W. BUDGE, *Coptic Texts*, vol. 5: *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*, London 1915: *ΜΑΡΚΕΔΟΝΙΟΣ* (*sic*, fol. 11b), *ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΟΣ* (12a, 13a-b) and *ΜΑΚΕΔΩΝΙΟΣ* (15b, 22b [2 times], 23b, 33a, 34b).

¹⁰ E. DINKLER & E. DINKLER-VON SCHUBERT, "Kreuz I" [in:] K. WESSEL & M. S. RESTLE (eds.), *Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst*, vol. 5, Stuttgart 1995, pp. 1-219 at 26-27 (no. 8).

written on the stone carvings found inside the church, and Severus is known as a bishop of Philae from a Coptic inscription dating to 17 December, 752.¹¹ Especially since the rare name Macedonius is written in one of the inscriptions, it may be suggested that the names were incised as part of a list of bishops of Philae as can be found, for example, at Faras. This seems not to be the case, however, since none of the names are specified as bishops, nor are there given any details about their dying day or length of episcopate, as at Faras.¹² When the function of a man is specified, it is not a bishop but the deacon Luke. These inscriptions, then, rather seem to refer to visitors of the church who left their names on stone. This was common practice in Late Antique Egypt, as can be illustrated by the names found in the Church of St. Stephen which had been built in the *pronaos* of the temple of Isis, also on Philae.¹³ Most of these inscriptions were incised on the southern wall directly to the left of the entrance to the church, just as inscription no. 2. If the people came from the Christian community of Philae or its region, it is perhaps not surprising that they were called after bishops of Philae.

II. GREEK INSCRIPTIONS FROM A LATE ANTIQUE QUAY WALL ON ELEPHANTINE

The second group of four inscriptions was only recently found during excavations of the Swiss Institute on Elephantine in 2000–2002.¹⁴ The excavations took place in the north eastern part of the antique city near the monumental Roman staircase. Fortunately, this area could be explored be-

¹¹ On Macedonius and Mark see A. MARTIN, *Athanasie d'Alexandrie et l'Église d'Égypte au IV^e siècle (328–373)* (= *Collection de l'École française de Rome* 216), Rome 1996, pp. 84–88 with references to the sources. On Theodore see RICHTER, *Christianisierung Nubiens* (cit. n. 6), pp. 99–102. On pp. 128–135, Richter also gives a new edition with German translation of the Coptic inscription which mentions Bishop Severus.

¹² S. JAKOBIELSKI, *A History of the Bishopric of Pachoras on the Basis of Coptic Inscriptions* (= *Faras III*), Warsaw 1972, pp. 190–201.

¹³ É. BERNAND, *Les inscriptions grecques et latines de Philae*. Tome II: *Haute et Bas Empire*, Paris 1969 (henceforth *I. Philae II*), nos. 205–15.

¹⁴ S. SCHÖNENBERGER in G. DREYER & al., “Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine. 28., 29. und 30. Grabungsbericht”, *MDAIK* 58 (2002), pp. 157–225 at 200–209.

fore the modern Nubian village would incorporate it. The excavations revealed constructions from the Ptolemaic until the Arab period, but especially a Late Antique quay wall, which had been partly constructed of reused blocks of the so-called "Temple Y".¹⁵ This Roman temple once stood nearby on Elephantine, but was reused for different building purposes in Late Antiquity.¹⁶ The quay wall now runs parallel to the Nile 50 m from the river, but would once have stood on the Nile. In 1985, an earlier exploration of the area already revealed Christian graffiti on the wall, which was then interpreted as belonging to the foundations of a church. The excavators also saw 'eine bislang allerdings noch unverstandene koptische Inschrift'.¹⁷

The recent excavation of the area has demonstrated that the quay wall could not belong to the foundations of a church, but that the wall supported a terrace on which it is possible that there once stood a church. In Late Antiquity several renovations were made to the quay wall: "Bauschichten" E (fifth-sixth century), D (Late Antiquity), C (Late Antiquity) and B (middle of the sixth century). The last level mainly consisted of two walls, M 1273 and M 1274 which were constructed almost exclusively of blocks from "Temple Y". The excavators now found 'zwei koptische Inschriften': the first one was the earlier discovered inscription, the second one was 'eine vierzeilige Inschrift' in Greek.¹⁸ Two more inscriptions, however, remained unnoticed. The first of these was incised just above the inscription of four lines. Yet another block contained a fourth inscription. The dating of the walls M 1273-4 on the basis of archaeological remains to the second half of the sixth century provides a dating to the inscriptions. Since the

¹⁵ General overview and frontal view of the Late Antique quay wall at Elephantine (S. SCHÖNENBERGER [in:] G. DREYER *et al.*, "Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine. 28., 29. und 30. Grabungsbericht", *MDAIK* 58 (2002), pp. 157-225, Abb. 14, 15c.

¹⁶ E. LASKOWSKA-KUSZTAL in G. DREYER & *al.*, "Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine. 31. und 32. Grabungsbericht", *forthcoming*. Cf. LASKOWSKA-KUSZTAL, *Elephantine XV. Die Dekorfragmente der Ptolemäisch-römischen Tempel von Elephantine* (= *Archäologische Veröffentlichungen* 73), Mainz 1996, pp. 21-24; W. KAISER, *Elephantine. Die antike Stadt. Offizielles Führungsheft des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo*, Cairo 1998, p. 54.

¹⁷ H. JARITZ [in:] W. KAISER & *al.*, "Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine. 13. und 14. Grabungsbericht", *MDAIK* 43 (1987), pp. 75-114 at 107.

¹⁸ SCHÖNENBERGER [in:] DREYER & *al.*, "28./29./30. Grabungsbericht" (cit. n. 14), p. 208 (n. 174).

quay wall was partly destroyed and the area was renovated from the seventh century onwards, the inscriptions were probably incised in or not much later than the second half of the sixth century.

5. *The actuarius Dios, son of Pasmēt (Fig. 3)*

The inscription measures 12 x 80 cm and letters vary in size between 3.5 and 12 cm. It was incised on block Y 39 (dimensions 42 x 96.5 cm) in the highest level of M 1273 in neat and fairly regular letters.¹⁹ Remains of red paint are still visible. The blocks to the left of Y 39 have disappeared, which explains why the inscription starts with *καί*: presumably, more would once have been readable on the stone to the left of the inscription. An oblique stroke runs through the *ρ*, which indicates that it is an abbreviation.

] *καὶ Δίος Πασμῆτ ἀκτουάρ(ιου)*

... and Dios, son of Pasmēt, *actuarius*

ἀκτουάρ(ιου): if another *actuarius* was mentioned before *καί*; the abbreviation should be read *ἀκτουάρ(ιου)*.

This inscription has two points of interest. Firstly, the name Pasmēt is one of a series of regional names, which is derived from Egyptian *mdw*, the staff of Khnum worshipped at Elephantine and carried around in processions.²⁰ Interestingly, the names return in several Late Antique papyri and inscriptions in Greek in varying forms such as Pamēt and Smet.²¹ The name Pasmēt was until now attested only in papyri, but is now also known on stone.²² Secondly, we should consider Dios' occupation as an *actuarius*. *Actuarii* were involved in the distribution of the *annona* in the Late Antique

¹⁹ See MDAIK 58 (2002), pp. 157–225, Abb. 14, on which the inscription is included.

²⁰ H. DE MEULENAERE, "L'enseigne sacrée du dieu Khnoum dans l'onomastique gréco-égyptienne", *CdÉ* 75 (2000), pp. 235–240.

²¹ Pamēt (from Egyptian *P3-n-mt(r)*): *I. Philae* II 191.1 (ca. 434); *P. Lond.* V 1722.60 (530). Smet (from Egyptian *N5-(p3)mt(r)*): *I. Philae* II 188.1 (408/9), 193.1 (448/9), 196.1 (452), 197.2, 13, 15 (452), 198.1–2 (454/5).

²² Pasmēt (a Greek derivative): *SB XIV* 12167 B 65 (314); *P. Edmonstone* 3, 20 (355); *P. Lond.* V 1734.26 (ca. 550); *P. Münch.* I 2.17 (578); *O. Wilck.* 287.3 (Πα...cμη?; ?).

army.²³ On the basis of the papyri of the Patermouthis archive already several *actuarii* were known from the regiment of Syene.²⁴ Recently, a preliminary publication of Coptic *ostraca* from Elephantine in the Louvre has revealed the first known *actuarius*, Jacob, from the regiment of Elephantine: ‘ce texte pourrait être une première attestation d’un actuaire de la forteresse de cette île’.²⁵ No doubt the inscription of Dios, son of Pasmēt, now gives evidence for a second *actuarius* of the regiment of Elephantine.

6. Indication of an indiction year (Fig. 4)

The inscription measures 22 x 25.5 cm and letters vary in size between 5.5 and 9 cm. It was deeply and neatly incised on block Y 212 (dimensions 50 x 76 cm), which was located in wall M 1273 in the fourth level of blocks from above where the wall was covered by an Arab “Latrine”. Underneath the inscription a cross has been incised with its arms swinging out.²⁶ The inscription was incised between parts of an Ancient Egyptian relief from “Temple Y” which reveals how the block was reused: firstly, it was laid upside down in the quay wall, then part of the high relief was smoothed and the inscription incised. The δ is written with a long oblique stroke which indicates that it is an abbreviation.

ια ἰνδ(ικτίονος)

†

at the eleventh indiction

²³ I.-M. ČERVENKA-EHRENSTRASSER, with J. DIETHART, *Lexikon der lateinischen Lehnwörter in den griechischsprachigen dokumentarischen Texten Ägyptens mit Berücksichtigung koptischer Quellen* (= *Mitteilungen aus der Papyrussammlung der Nationalbibliothek Wien. Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer. Neue Serie* 27), vol. 1, Vienna 1996, pp. 63–66; F. MITTHOF, *Annona militaris. Die Heeresversorgung im spätantiken Ägypten* (= *Papyrologica Florentina* 32), vol. 1, Florence 2001, pp. 152–156.

²⁴ J. G. KEENAN, “Evidence for the Byzantine Army in the Syene Papyri”, *BSAC* 27 (1990), pp. 139–150 at 147–148.

²⁵ S. BACOT & C. HEURTEL, “Ostraca coptes d’Éléphantine au Musée du Louvre”, [in:] N. BOSSON (ed.), *Études coptes VII* (= *Cahiers de la bibliothèque copte* 12), Paris 2000, pp. 17–45 at 27–29 (inv. no. AF 12561). Note that the word ἀκτουάριος is abbreviated in the same way as in the Coptic *ostrakon*.

²⁶ DINKLER & DINKLER-VON SCHUBERT, “Kreuz I” (cit. n. 10), p. 26 (no. 6). Unlike cross no. 6, however, this cross has arms of equal length.

7. *A εἷς Θεός acclamation (Fig. 5)*

The inscription measures 7 x 19 cm and letters vary in size between 1.5 and 4.5 cm. It is hardly visible and slightly and irregularly scratched in on block Y 51 (dimensions 41 x 78.5 cm). This block was situated in the one but highest level in the corner of wall M 1273 and M 1274 with the inscription turned towards the side of M 1274.²⁷ It was incised before no. 8 below, as the latter inscription runs partly through the present one.

εἷς (?) Θεός
ὁ βοηθός

there is one (?) God, the helper

This acclamation is epigraphically well known throughout the Mediterranean in inscriptions of the formula *εἷς Θεός ὁ βοηθῶν* 'there is one God who helps',²⁸ which is sometimes rendered with the variant *εἷς Θεός ὁ βοηθός*.²⁹ The first three letters are almost illegible but the parallels suggest that this is the most likely reading. From Philae a Late Antique inscription is known which, if restored correctly, contains the acclamation of the more regular type.³⁰

8. *A Commemoration
of the Inundation of the Nile (Fig. 5)*

The inscription measures 18.5 x 47 cm and letters vary in size between 1.5 and 6 cm. It is not neatly scratched in, but deeper than no. 7 and therefore more visible. It consists of four lines, of which the first line seems to end where the second line of inscription no. 7 was incised. It cannot be ex-

²⁷ See *MDAIK* 58 (2002), pp. 157-225, Abb. 14.

²⁸ E. PETERSON, *Εἷς Θεός Epigraphische, formgeschichtliche und religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen (= Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 41)*, Göttingen 1926; F. R. TROMBLEY, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization c. 370-529 (= Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 115)*, vol. 1, Leiden 1993, pp. 120-121 and *passim*.

²⁹ For examples from Egypt, see PETERSON, *Εἷς Θεός* (cit. n. 28), nos. 46, 61, 93.

³⁰ *I. Philae* II 227.1.

cluded that traces of more letters may once have been visible behind it, but the worn surface prevents any reading. The fourth line is indented, because the writer incised a cross there, of which the bottom part has been lost.

ἀνέβη ὁ traces ?

Νίλος ἐπὶ τῆς πόδ(αc?) ἐκίνου
 ὑποποδίου τοῦ σταύρου
 4 τοῦ μηνός Θώθ κ
 †

2. Νίλος read Νεῖλος, τῆς: read τοῦς (?), ἐκίνου read ἐκεῖνου

The Nile rose to the feet (?) of that foot bench of the cross in the month Thoth, the 20th

- 1-2. ἀνέβη ὁ Νίλος ἐπέ 'the Nile rose to'.³¹ In similar inscriptions, such as the third century inscriptions from Akoris, the usual formula is ἀνῆλθεν εἰς with the accusative. However, the form ἀνέβη, though not with ἐπί, is attested in a sixth-century letter on papyrus from Oxyrhynchus.³²
2. ἐπὶ τῆς πόδ(αc?): ἐπί should go with the accusative here and it is tempting to read πόδαc, in which τοῦc should be read for τῆc.³³ The reading of the δ, however, is uncertain and there is space for only one letter behind it. It is most likely that this letter is an abbreviation sign. ἐκίνου: the definite article τοῦ should be added here, although this phenomenon is known in the papyri.³⁴
3. ὑποποδίου: 'foot bench', a word not attested in the inscriptions from Egypt, and in only a few papyri.³⁵ It is commonly used in Greek and Coptic in the

³¹ For the terminology of the rise of the Nile, see D. BONNEAU, *La crue du Nil. Divinité égyptienne à travers mille ans d'histoire (332 av. – 641 ap. J.-C.)* (= *Études et commentaires* 52), Paris 1964, pp. 58–62 and *Le fisc et le Nil. Incidences des irrégularités de la crue du Nil sur la fiscalité foncière dans l'Égypte grecque et romaine*, Paris 1971, p. 181.

³² *I. Akoris* 29–41. Cf. *P. Oxy.* XVI 1830.7, 13, 19–21.

³³ For the exchange of η and ου, cf. F. T. GIGNAC, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods* (= *Testi e documenti per lo studio dell'antichità* 55), vol. 1, Milan 1976, p. 217.

³⁴ Cf. GIGNAC, *Grammar*, vol. 2 (cit. n. 33), p. 174.

³⁵ *P. Tebt.* I 45.38; *Stud. Pal.* XX 7.8; 15.11; *P. Mil. Vogl.* II 69 B iv 91; *P. Brook.* 84.3; *P. Ryl.* IV 627 iv 83.

biblical phrase ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν.³⁶ In the context of the inscription, however, it seems that this literary word has the technical meaning of the podium on which a cross is erected. The demonstrative ἐκίνου may refer to the cross which has been partly preserved underneath the inscription and which could originally have consisted of a podium underneath the cross.³⁷ The indication that the Nile rose to the feet of this foot bench has then to be considered literally as a way of indicating the height of the Nile inundation. From the position of the block within the wall, the height of the inundation could be approximated to slightly below 93 m.

4. Θῶθ κ: 17 (or 18) September. Usually in Egypt, the Nile reached its maximum height first in the Cataract area at the very end of August (28–30), after which it would remain in this condition for about 10 days.³⁸ For example, a Late Antique inscription from Philae commemorates that the river rose until the Gateway of Diocletian on 5 September.³⁹ The date of our inscription seems therefore slightly late for a maximum of the inundation level, but over time variations in the yearly calendar were quite common.⁴⁰

Marks of the Nile inundation have been incised on quay walls since the time of the Pharaohs.⁴¹ The Nile swelled to a certain maximum height and was then incised in an inscription or indicated with an inundation mark on quay walls, but also in Nilometers and on other constructions.⁴² In some cases, a particularly high inundation was commemorated and this practice continued into Christian times.⁴³ It has been generally acknowledged that

³⁶ *LXX Ps.* 98(9):5, 109(10):1; *Lk.* 20:43, *Ac.* 3:25, *Hb.* 1:13; 10:13. Cf. *Mt.* 5:5, *Ac.* 7:49, *Js.* 2:3. Cf. W. E. CRUM, *Short Texts from Coptic Ostraca and Papyri*, London 1921, nos. 189.1, 242.2, 268.2, 300.2, 325.2.

³⁷ For this type of cross, see DINKLER & DINKLER-VON SCHUBERT, "Kreuz I" (cit. n. 10), pp. 28–29 (no. 16).

³⁸ BONNEAU, *Crue du Nil* (cit. n. 31), p. 24.

³⁹ *I. Philae* II 187.

⁴⁰ S. J. SEIDLMEYER, *Historische und moderne Nilstände. Untersuchungen zu den Pegelablesungen des Nils von der Frühzeit bis in die Gegenwart* (= *Achet. Schriften zur Ägyptologie* A1), Berlin 2001, *passim*.

⁴¹ See, most recently, G. P. F. BROEKMAN, "The Nile Level Records of the Twenty-Second and Twenty-Third Dynasties in Karnak: A Reconsideration of Their Chronological Order", *JEA* 88 (2002), pp. 163–78.

⁴² See, generally, L. BORCHARDT, *Nilmesser und Nilstandsmarken* (= *Abhandlungen der königlich-preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophische und historische Abhandlungen* I, pp. 1–55), Berlin 1906; SEIDLMEYER, *Historische und moderne Nilstände* (cit. n. 40).

⁴³ E.g. *I. Philae* II 187 and *SB* I 3897, republished by A. ŁAJTAR, "Varia Nubica V", *ZPE*

in Late Antiquity, the practice of controlling the rising waters of the Nile continued, albeit sometimes adapted to a Christian context.⁴⁴ For example, the small Nilometer on Philae contained crosses, which demonstrates that it was still in use in Late Antiquity.⁴⁵ The uniqueness of the inscription from the quay wall of Elephantine is therefore not its appearance at this late stage, but rather its formulation: it is reminiscent of earlier inscriptions, yet has taken on its own, distinctively Christian shape. This inscription is therefore a nice example of the transformation that had taken place in Late Antique Egypt.

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136 (2001), pp. 62–64, an inundation inscription from Saï, an island between the second and third cataracts, written in Greek and Old Nubian and possibly dating to the second quarter of the 11th century.

⁴⁴ A. HERMANN, “Der Nil und die Christen”, *JbAC* 2 (1959), pp. 30–69; BONNEAU, *Crue du Nil* (cit. n. 31), pp. 421–39, “Continuité et discontinuité notionale dans la terminologie religieuse du Nil, d’après la documentation grecque”, [in:] N. FICK, J.-C. CARRIÈRE (eds.), *Mélanges Étienne Bernard* (= *Annales littéraires de l’Université de Besançon* 444), Paris 1991, pp. 23–35 and *Le régime administratif de l’eau du Nil dans l’Égypte grecque, romaine et byzantine* (= *Probleme der Ägyptologie* 8), Leiden 1993, pp. 291–305; R. S. BAGNALL, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, Princeton 1993, p. 270; D. FRANKFURTER, *Religion in Roman Egypt. Assimilation and Resistance*, Princeton 1998, pp. 42–6.

⁴⁵ LYONS, *Report* (cit. n. 2), p. 34; BORCHARDT, *Nilmesser und Nilstandsmarken* (cit. n. 42), pp. 10–1; BONNEAU, *Le fisc* (cit. n. 31), pp. 28–29. The Nilometer of the temple of Satet on Elephantine also contained a cross, see *Description de l’Égypte. Antiquités*, vol. 1, Paris 1820 (2éd.), pl. 33. Cf. BORCHARDT, *Nilmesser und Nilstandsmarken* (cit. n. 42), p. 14.

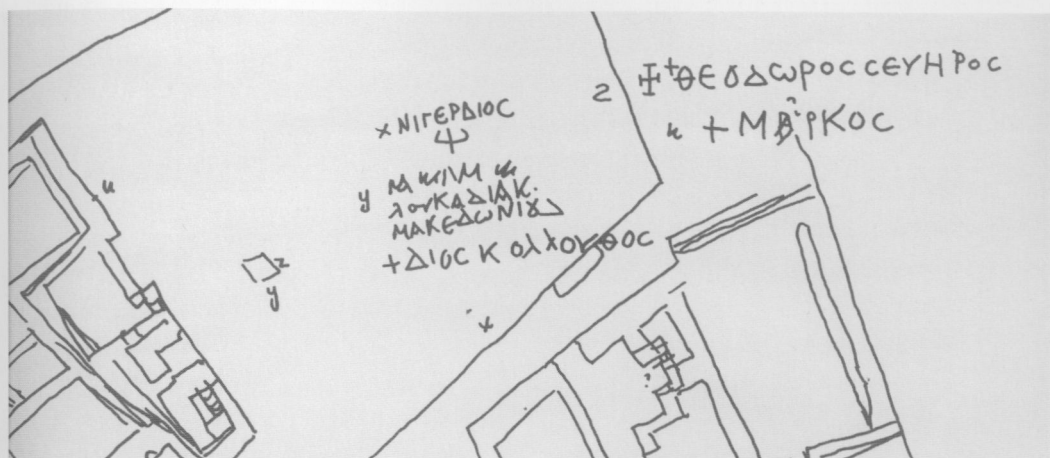


Fig. 1. Drawing of the East Church of Philae after Borchardt's sketch map with Greek inscriptions indicated (w-z = nos. 1-4)

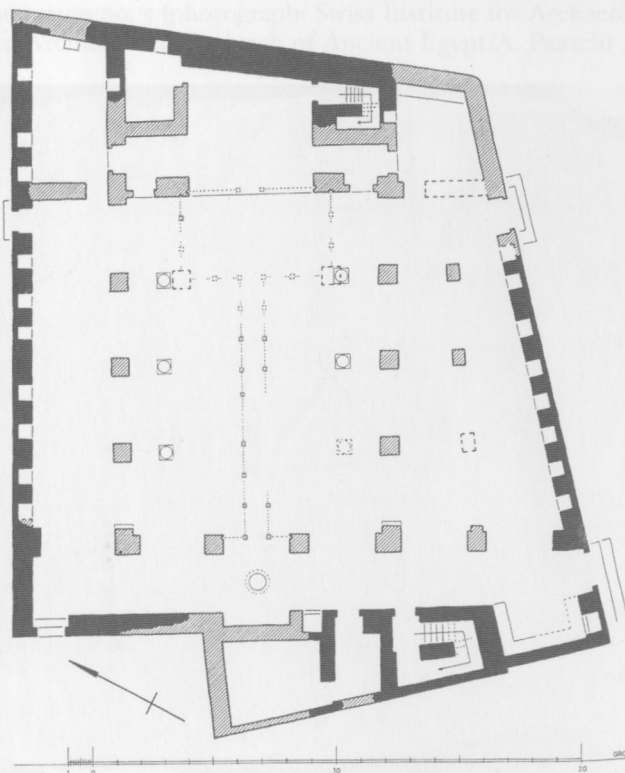


Fig. 2. Ground plan of the East Church of Philae (after Grossmann, *Christliche Architektur* [cit. n. 6], Abb. 78)



Fig. 3. Inscription no. 5 (photograph: Swiss Institute for Archaeological and Architectural Research of Ancient Egypt/A. Paasch)



Fig. 4. Inscription no. 6 (photograph: Swiss Institute for Archaeological and Architectural Research of Ancient Egypt/A. Paasch)

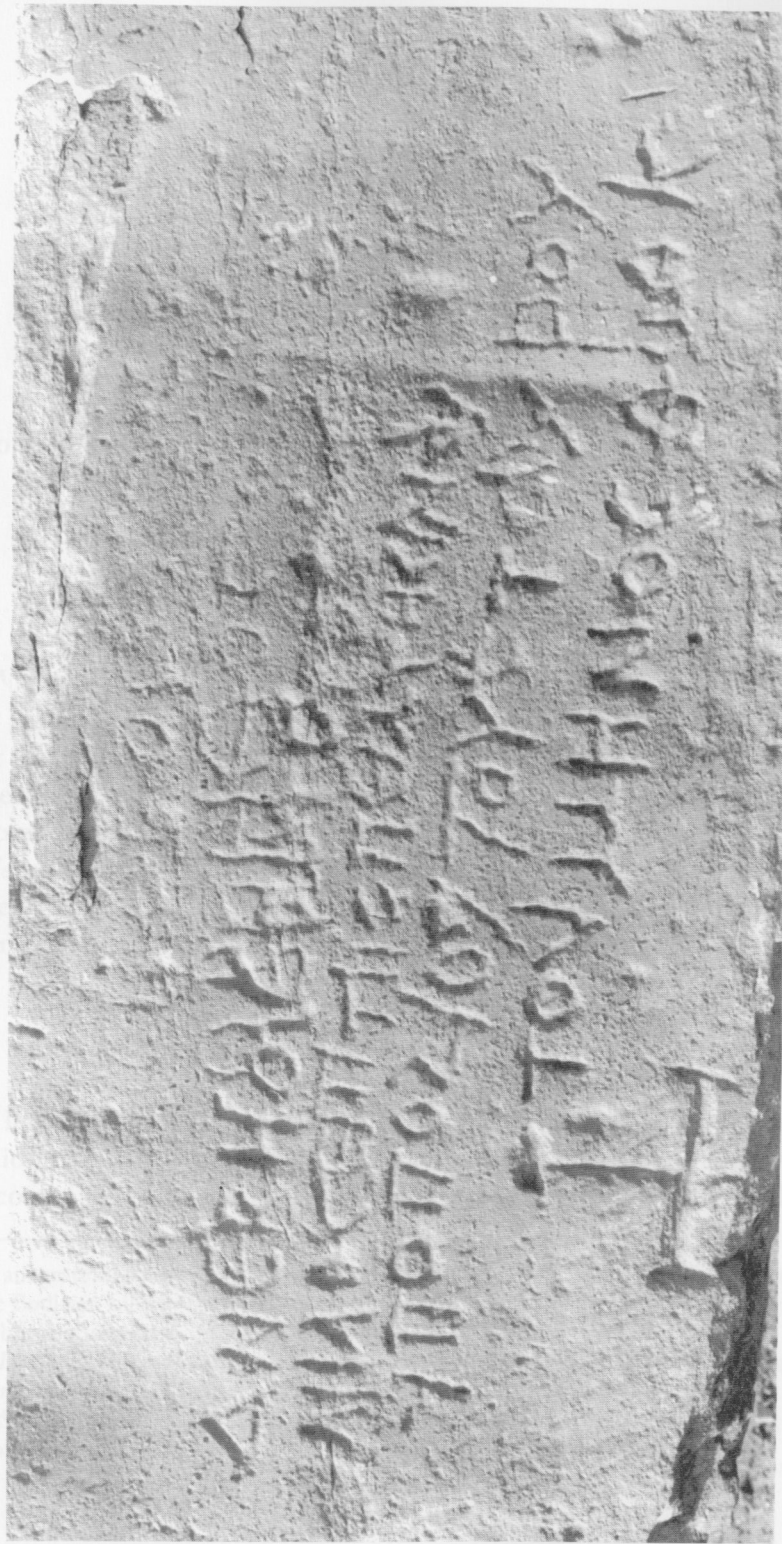


Fig. 5. Inscriptions nos. 7-8 (photograph: Swiss Institute for Archaeological and Architectural Research of Ancient Egypt/A. Paasch)