

PCMA Archaeological Guides, 1

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Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology,
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Qatar–Sudan Archaeological Project (QASP),
Nubian Archaeological Development Organization

With cooperation of



Kazimierz Michałowski Foundation

Włodzimierz Godlewski

Dongola – ancient Tungul

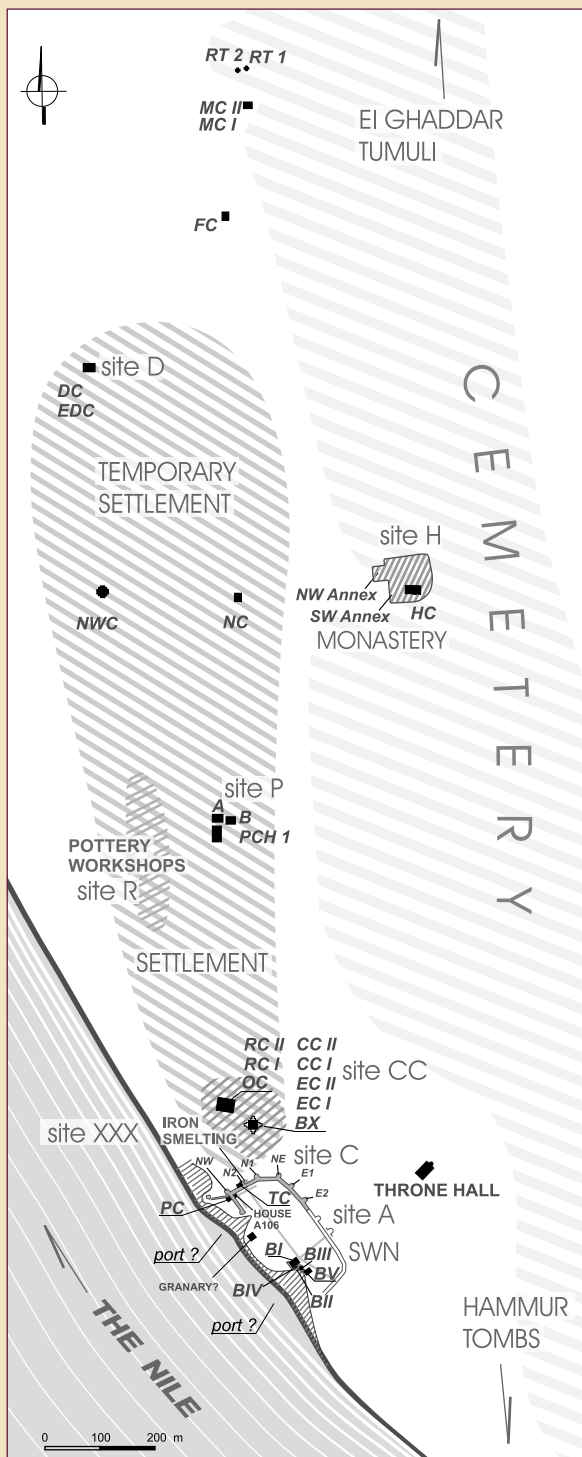
archaeological guide

TIME & SPACE

Guide to history and excavations

All major sites and buildings excavated in ancient Dongola, their location, field coding and a handy reference to place in the text

- B.I** Building I = "Palace of Ioannes" (Site SWN); late Building I
- B.II** Building II (Site SWN)
- B.III** Building III.1 = commemorative monument (Site SWN); Building III.2 = church (Site SWN)
- B.IV** Building IV (Site SWN)
- B.V** Building V = King's Church (Site SWN)
- BX** Building X (Site CC)
- CC.I** Cruciform Church
- CC.II** Second Cruciform Church
- DC** Church D (Site D)
- EC.I** First Cathedral = Church of the Stone Pavement
- EC.II** Second Cathedral = Church of the Stone Pavement
- EDC** Early Church D (Site D)
- FC** Church F
- H.HC** Monastic Church, Monastery of St. Anthony the Great (Kom H)
- H.NW** Northwest Annex, Monastery of St. Anthony the Great (Kom H) (H.NW.BI, BII, BIII – constituent parts of the annex)
- H.SW** Southwest Annex, Monastery of St. Anthony the Great (Kom H)
- House A.106** NW fortifications:
- Houses A, B, PCH.1** architecture on Site P
- MC.I** First Mosaic Church
- MC.II** Second Mosaic Church
- NC** North Church
- NW fortifications** Northwestern fortifications
- NWC** Northwest Church
- OC** Old Church
- PC** Pillar Church
- RC.I** Third Cathedral = Church of the Granite Columns
- RC.II** Fourth Cathedral = Church of the Granite Columns
- RT.1, RT.2** Rock-cut tombs
- Site = Kom A** Citadel
- Site C** northwestern citadel area
- Site CC** area around the Cruciform Church
- Site D** northern outskirts of the town settlement
- Site=Kom H** Monastery of Saint Anthony the Great
- Site P** northern town agglomeration
- Site R** pottery workshops
- Site XXX** Iron-smelting furnaces
- SWN** southwestern part of the Citadel
- TC** Tower Church
- Throne Hall** = Mosque Building



EARLY MAKURIA I	Rise of the Kingdom of Makuria; founding of Dongola 5th–5th/6th century	El Ghaddar cemetery 7, 14, 18, 110, 111, 114 Hammur cemetery 18 Citadel of Dongola 7ff., 15, 16, 17ff., 20, 21ff. , 35, 39, 41, 52, 57, 67, 69, 76, 97–99, 108, 109, 111, 119, 135, 139–140
EARLY MAKURIA II	Main center of the Kingdom 6th–early 7th century	Rock tombs (R.I and R.II) 111–113 , 116 Old Church (OC) 7, 10, 14, 22, 53, 59–60 , 64, 125, 130 Building X (BX) 7, 23, 49, 54, 59, 61–64 , 116, 119 First Mosaic Church (MC.I) 59, 64–65 First Cathedral = Church of the Stone Pavement (EC.I) 9ff., 49–51 , 61, 65, 79, 124, 126 Site SWN: Building IV 24, 28, 126 Monastery of St. Anthony the Great (Kom H) 9f., 13, 14–15, 19, 47, 52, 57, 59, 77, 78–95 , 114, 116, 117, 124, 127–128, 135 Site R: Pottery workshops 123, 129 Iron-smelting furnaces 121–123
EARLY MAKURIA III	Center of Great Makuria early 7th–early 9th century	Site SWN: Building I (“Palace of Ioannes”) 9, 10, 15, 23, 26–29 , 30, 31, 32, 35, 38, 39, 69, 119, 120, 132, 135 Site SWN: Building III.1 — commemorative monument 10, 35–39 , 41, 52, 69, 75, 124, 135 NW fortifications: House A.106 22, 97–99 , 127, 130, 132 Second Cathedral = Church of the Stone Pavement (EC.II) 51–52 , 66, 126 Third Cathedral = Church of the Granite Columns (RC.I) 7, 12, 17, 39, 48, 53–55 , 68, 120, 127–128, 135, 138, 139 Second Mosaic Church (MC.II) 52, 65–66 , 126 Site D: Early Church (EDC) 59, 65 Site P: House PCH.1 and Houses A and B 11, 100, 101–107
MIDDLE MAKURIA	Center of Great Makuria early 9th–mid 11th century	First Cruciform Church (CC.I) 6, 11 , 14, 15, 19, 35, 39–41 , 49, 55, 61, 75, 116, 117, 120, 135, 136, 138 Throne Hall 7, 12, 13, 23, 42–47 , 49, 137 Fourth Cathedral = Church of the Granite Columns (RC.II) 55–57 , 135, 138 Site SWN: Building V = King’s Church 69–70 Pillar Church (PC) 41, 67–69 Site D: Church (DC) 19, 46, 55, 70–71
LATE MAKURIA I	Dotawo Kingdom mid 11th–end of 12th century	Northwest Church (NWC) 19, 71 , 73 Northwest Annex (Monastery of St. Anthony the Great) 78, 80, 84, 85–91 , 92, 95, 116, 117, 125
LATE MAKURIA II	Dotawo Kingdom 13th–mid 14th century	New fortifications on the Citadel 136 Site SWN: Building II 23 Second Cruciform Church (CC.II) 6, 75–76 , 135, 136, 138 North Church (NC) 19, 73–74 , 135 Tower Church (TC) 74–75 , 135 Site SWN: Late Building I 135 Site SWN: Building III.2 = church 75–77 , 135 Mosque 13, 135, 136–137
LATE MAKURIA III	Small Makuria (Dotawo Kingdom); In Dongola: Kingdom of Dongola Town mid 14th–16th century	New houses 136, 138 Palace of the Mek 140 Southern settlement, <i>qubbas</i> 13, 136 South Wall 136, 139
FUNJ KINGDOM	Funj Kingdom 17th century–1822 In Dongola: Kingdom of Dongola Town	New houses 139 , 140 Southern settlement 13, 139



TOWN HISTORY

General Director of Sudan Antiquities, Dr. Nigm ed-Din Mohammed Sherif visiting with members of the Polish Mission during the excavations of the Cruciform Church in 1974

Dongola (Nubian *Tungul*, Arabic *Dunqula*) was among the most important centers of the medieval kingdom of Makuria (Godlewski 2004b). The town was situated on a rocky eminence overlooking the eastern bank of the Nile, halfway between the Third and Fourth Cataracts, at the southern edge of the Letti Basin, which served the city as an economic base. Contrary to earlier suggestions made by Egyptologists regarding the town's importance already in the Napatan period, it now appears that the city was not established until the end of the 5th century. The founder was likely one of the first kings of Makuria. He raised a huge fortress at a site away from the religious centers of the earlier kingdom of Kush (Napata), but located centrally in the new kingdom (see map of Early Makuria, page 9). The massive fortifications were built of mud brick and broken ferruginous sandstone.

This settlement was one of a series of newly established, heavily fortified sites that the rulers of Makuria apparently decided to build along the bank of the Nile. The purpose appears to have been more socioeconomic than military, the idea being presumably to foster a Byzantine-influenced process of urbanization. Thus, the Dongolan citadel became a center of power with royal

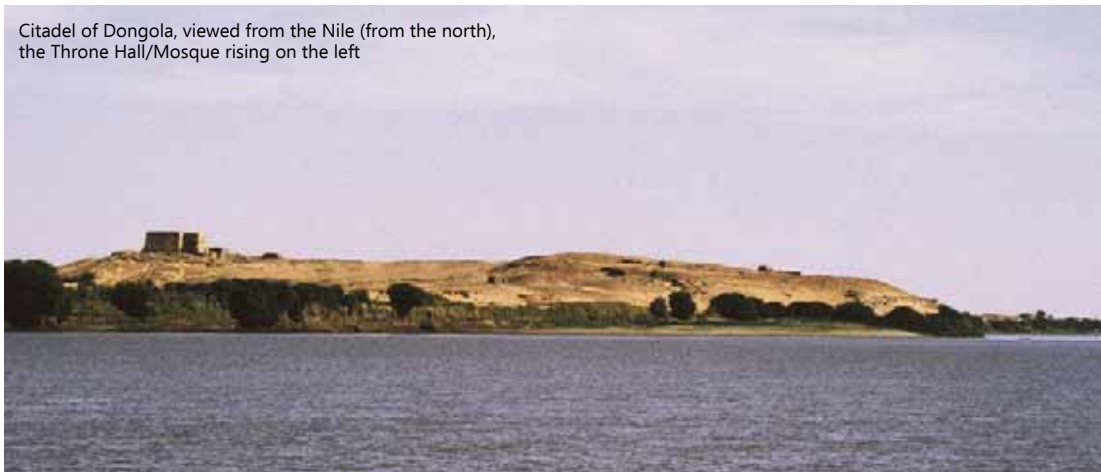
palaces and public buildings, and a place for concentrating economic resources.

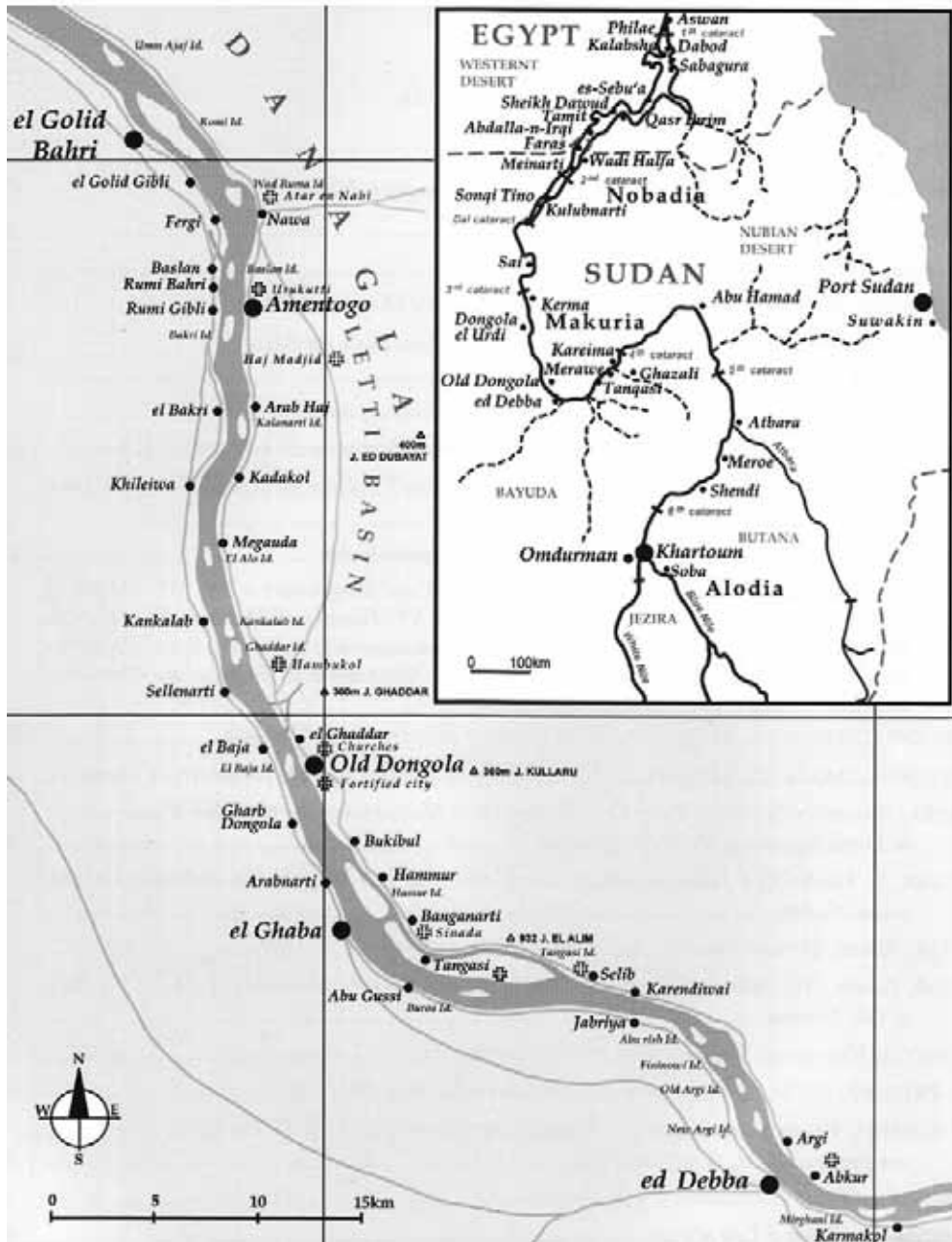
The first rulers to reside in Dongola may have been buried in rock-cut tombs erected in the desert to the north of the town, at the southern extremity of the burial ground near Gebel Ghaddar. Nothing but the burial chambers have been preserved, both with broad steps leading down from the west.

A new challenge came with the conversion of the kingdom to Christianity in the mid 6th century. The citadel, which must have been fully occupied already by the beginning of the 6th century, could not hold all the churches that the missionaries and rulers of Makuria expected to erect. New temples — the three-aisled Old Church with dwarf transept and the commemorative cruciform Building X inscribed into a rectangle — had to be constructed on more or less undeveloped ground to the north of the citadel (see the plan on page 18).

The missionaries, whose task was to Christianize Makuria, may have come from Constantinople and the first churches at Dongola had much in common with church architecture in Palestine and Syria. By the 570s, a bishopric had been established in Dongola. On the site of Building X, desecrated by a torrential Nile flood, a cathedral was

Citadel of Dongola, viewed from the Nile (from the north), the Throne Hall/Mosque rising on the left





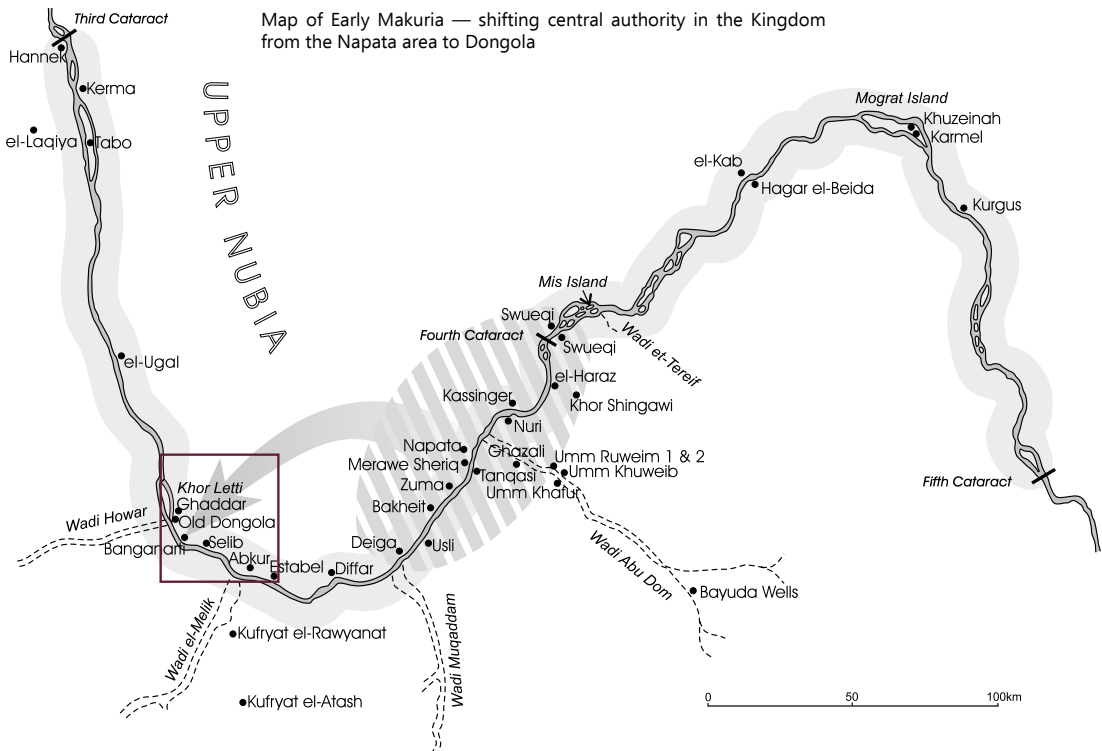
Location of Old Dongola and its environs, between the Letti Basin on the north and Tangasi Island on the south (After Jakobielski, Scholz [eds] 2001: Map on page VIII)

erected. EC.I was a five-aisled columnar basilica, dubbed by the excavators the Church of the Stone Pavement (see below, *Cathedrals*, pages 49ff.). Finely worked columns of pink granite supported a wooden ceiling. The pastophoria and connecting corridor running behind the apse formed a block arrangement in the east end of the building, and a stone balustrade screened off the sanctuary with table altar in the eastern end of the nave; the apse had a *synthronon* built into it. The new building incorporated under the apse the two crypts which had been part of the earlier commemorative structure. Buried in these crypts were two men, who are presumed to be the apostles of the kingdom.

Still before the end of the 6th century, one of the first Dongolan bishops — Merkurios — to believe a monogram on a surviving keystone of an inner arcade — probably established a monastery in the desert about

1.5 km east of the citadel hill. The church, a three-aisled basilica with central tower supported on four stone pillars, is the only part of the original foundation, which has been explored. As suggested by a funerary stela of the archbishop Georgios (who was also archimandrite) from 1113, discovered in the Northwest Annex to the west of the complex, the monastery was dedicated to the Great Anthony.

Having incorporated Nobadia at the turn of the 6th century and in the 7th century, Makuria came into direct contact with Byzantine Egypt. Numerous finds of Egyptian amphorae, identified as products of pottery workshops in Aswan, Middle Egypt and the Mareotis, as well as amphora imports from Palestine and North Africa, uncovered in deposits inside the “Palace of Ioannes” on the Citadel, attest to the intensity of the trade relations between the two countries.



Contacts with the Chalcedonian bishops of Alexandria quickly led to the establishment of new bishoprics in Makuria, permitting a rapid development of the Church in the kingdom.

In the middle of the 7th century, Arab troops laid siege to the citadel, but failed to take the fortress. The peace treaty or *baqt*, which was a continuation of the earlier relations with Byzantine Egypt, that the reigning King Qalidurut negotiated with Egypt's governor 'Abdallah b. Abī Sarh regulated Makuria's political and economic relations with the caliphate for the next 520 years. The city remained unconquered, but the cathedral was destroyed and other buildings north of the fortifications may have also incurred damages.

Under King Qalidurut and his heir Zacharias the ruins were rebuilt and the town developed harmoniously. The fortifications were enlarged with a huge tower being built on a platform on top of a rocky outcrop overlooking the river (see Citadel and fortifications, pages 20–23). Used in the foundations of this tower were the shafts and capitals of pink granite coming from the ruins of the first cathedral. The cathedral itself was rebuilt as a five-aisled domed basilica (EC.II), the dome and ceilings supported on piers and the floor of the presbytery covered with a geometric mosaic made of colorful desert pebbles.

Even before the end of the 7th century a new complex, the Church of the Granite Columns, was built on the spot of the Old Church. It was an uniquely Dongolan foundation, combining elements of a central plan, that is, two aisles ending in apses crossing in the center of the structure, with typical features of a basilica: columnar naos and narthex (see Cathedrals, pages 49ff.). The naos of the new cathedral was surrounded by side annexes serving different liturgical functions (pastophoria, baptistery). This building became a model for the cathedral that bishop Paulos founded in Pachoras in 707 (Godlewski 2006a).

Still in the reign of Qalidurut, a small cruciform structure with a dome in the center and an entrance in each of the arms was erected in front of the south facade of the royal palace in the southwestern part of the citadel. Fragmentary murals evince the quality of the interior finishing of this building, which appears to have been a kind of monument raised in commemoration of the defenders of Dongola (see Commemorative monuments, pages 35ff.).

Dongola of the 6th and 7th centuries was not only a citadel and complex of cathedrals. To the north there extended for more than a kilometer a vast urban district with regular residential architecture. The houses, all storied, measured some 100–120 m² in ground area (see Houses, pages 96ff.). The plans were functional: there were toilet facilities in the buildings and living quarters on the upper floor, where the standard of interior finishing clearly surpassed that of the service rooms on the ground floor. The upper-floor rooms had big windows fitted

Commemorative Building (B.III.1) on the Citadel
— digital reconstruction

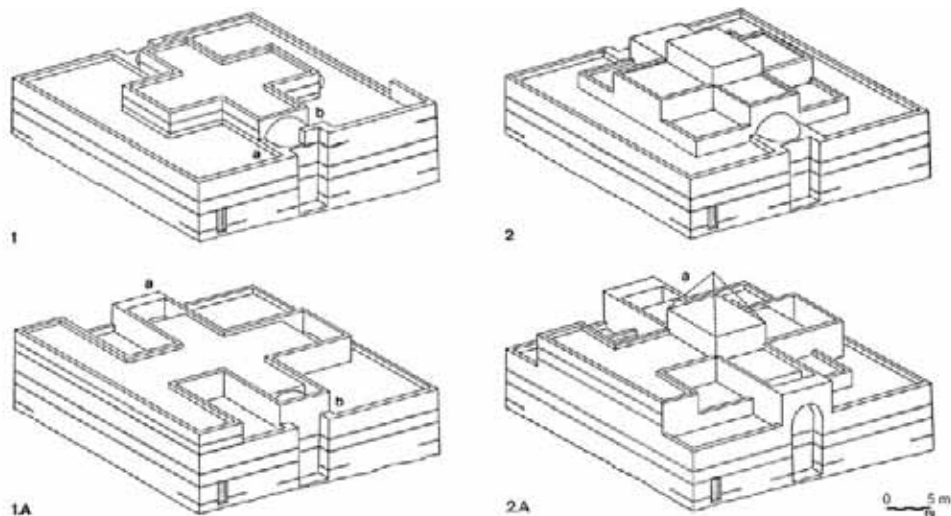


with terracotta grilles and the columnar halls opened on terraces with stone balustrades. In House A (see Houses, pages 103ff.), there was a bathroom on the ground floor with a furnace for heating water, which was then piped through to two pools for bathing; hot air from the furnace was circulated through flues in the walls to heat the building. Murals on the bathroom walls depicted Victorious Christ next to archangels, warrior saints, tonda with portraits and inscriptions, symbols and floral motifs. Friezes, symbols and floral motifs were also recurrent in the painted decoration of walls in other rooms on the ground floor.

The most representative buildings in Dongola, symbols of the kingdom, were founded in the 9th century (Godlewski 2002b), in the reign of Zacharias (*Augustus*) and Georgios (*Caesar*), who ruled Makuria jointly for twenty years (835–856). Upon the return of King Georgios from Baghdad in 836, a monumental Cruciform Church was erected on the spot of the domed basilica (see Cathedrals, pages 49ff.). This was to be the biggest building in the entire kingdom. The central part of the building, which was connected with the arms by porticoes, was covered with a dome that could have risen even 28 m above the pavement. The eastern

Cruciform Church in the Lower Town — digital reconstruction





Studies of the presumed form of the building of the Third Cathedral (After Gartkiewicz 1990)

arm of the structure contained a chapel above the crypts of the apostles of Makuria. The church became a symbol of the kingdom and the pride of its rulers until it was destroyed during the Mamluk wars in the late 13th century.

In the 9th century, a new royal palace was built on a rocky outcrop east of the citadel (see Throne Hall, pages 43ff.). The actual throne hall was situated on the upper floor and there was a terrace approached by a monumental set of steps, affording a breathtaking view of the town and river. Murals decorated the walls of the staircase and throne hall. This Byzantine concept of architecture expressed most fully the aspirations of the rulers of Makuria and their fond attachment to Byzantine tradition.

A small but very important church was constructed in the 9th century as well, on the riverbank, just below the western line of the fortifications (see Churches, page 67). The central plan of the Pillar Church, built on a cross-over-rectangle, highlighted yet again the genius of Dongolan architects.

Dongola in the 9th–11th centuries reached an apogee of development. Writing around 1200, the Egyptian monk

Abu el-Makarim (Vantini 1975: OSN 326) described the town: "Here is the throne of the king. It is a large city on the bank of the blessed Nile, and contains many churches and large houses and wide streets. The King's house is lofty, with several domes built of red brick".

But Dongola also featured important architectural complexes situated outside the city. In the desert, some 1500 m to the northeast of the citadel, there lay a vast monastery, the origins of which are purportedly ascribed to the first bishops of Dongola (see Monastery, pages 79ff.). The Northwest Annex, raised against the wall of the monastic compound sometime in the 11th–12th centuries, has been excavated, but it still defies interpretation; what is clear by now is that it was altered and renovated repeatedly. It was both sacral and residential, and its walls were painted extensively (Martens-Czarnecka 2011). The repertory constitutes today the fullest testimony to Dongolan painting in the Late Period, including a curious new trend of representing the dignitaries of the kingdom, presumably members of the royal family, inside small chapels, depicted under the protection of

an archangel and the apostles. This new type of official representation is evidenced for the first time in the second half of the 11th century and is connected with Georgios (1031–1113), archimandrite and archistilites, later archbishop of Dongola (Łajtar 2002). In any case, archbishop Georgios built his tomb with a chapel above a funerary crypt inside the monastery annex. The walls of the crypt were covered with a unique selection of Greek and Coptic texts of a religious and magic nature. The next bishops of Dongola after Georgios were also buried in the crypt (see Mausoleum of Bishops, pages 87ff.).

Dongola of the late 12th and 13th centuries continued to grow. After the conflict with the Ayyubids in 1172 and the relinquishment of the *baqt* treaty, Makuria faced new economic and military challenges. The fortifications of the capital city, not unlike those of other Makurian towns, were rebuilt and enlarged. New churches were also constructed on the northern fringes of the urban agglomeration.

The last stages of the drama were played out in the last quarter of the 13th century. King David's adventurous and unwise expedition on the Red Sea port of Aidhab and Aswan provoked Mamluk retribution. Sultan Baybars attacked and took Dongola in battle. Later, Egypt continued to meddle in Makurian affairs, backing various pretenders to the throne in Dongola. The main buildings of Dongola, the Cathedral and Cruciform Building, were destroyed at the turn of the 13th century, but the small churches remained in use. In 1317, the throne hall was turned into a mosque (see Kingdom of Dongola Town, pages 137ff.). The royal court abandoned Dongola in 1364, the rulers of Makuria being unable to cope with the desert tribes and losing to them the southern part of the kingdom all the way to Batn el-Hagar.

Even so, Dongola remained a center of importance. Over time new residential architecture mushroomed in the citadel area and the ruins of the Cathedral and

Cruciform Building. It reflected a different tradition, presumably connected with ethnic and social changes occurring in Dongola in the 15th century (see pages 148ff.). Onto the 19th century, Dongola was the seat of a local ruler reigning over a small kingdom subject to the Funj sultans. The settlement shifted to the south and into the neighborhood of the Mosque, which continued to occupy the upper floor of the old royal palace. Characteristic *gubbas*, or tombs, of local saints appeared in the old cemeteries (see page 135). Economic reasons presumably forced the decision to abandon the site at the close of the 19th century, but the Mosque, which was falling into disrepair, was not removed from public use until 1969 when it was finally closed down, becoming an important historic monument instead.



Poster exhibition of Polish excavations in Dongola
— beginnings of a site museum in El Ghaddar

NCAM Director General Dr. Nigm ed-Din M. Sherif with Stefan Jakobielski (left) and Włodzimierz Godlewski, inspecting work on the ground floor of the Mosque Building, 1974



DONGOLAN STUDIES: RESEARCH AND PERSPECTIVES

In 1964, having completed the salvage excavation of the cathedral at Faras (within the frame of UNESCO's Nubian Campaign), Kazimierz Michałowski was granted permission by Sudan's antiquities organization to continue research in Ancient Nubia. Dongola was the only logical choice after Faras in order to broaden the scope of Polish Nubian studies, which he spearheaded at the time.

Architect Antoni Ostrasz started with mapping the site. He opened trenches inside the Church of the Granite Columns (RC, Cathedrals 3 and 4), setting the tasks for the first two seasons of research (from 1964 to 1966). In 1967, Stefan Jakobielski took over as head of excavations and supervised the work for forty years. From 1990 his expedition concentrated on the site of the Monastery on Kom H, while another expedition, directed by Włodzimierz Godlewski, investigated the area of the Citadel (Jakobielski 2001a). In 2007, Włodzimierz Godlewski took over as head of the expedition. Excavation and restoration work has been concentrated in recent years on the Citadel, within the Monastery and inside the Mosque Building.

Of importance for understanding the Dongola agglomeration as a whole is other research conducted over the years at various points of the ancient town: exploration of the El Ghaddar necropolis by a Canadian expedition from the Royal Ontario Museum,

directed by Krzysztof Grzymski (1987), and by a mission from the Sudan Antiquities Service supervised by Mahmoud el-Tayeb (1994); investigations on Kom E in the neighborhood of the tumulus cemetery, by a team from the Research Center for Mediterranean Archaeology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, headed in the field by Bogdan Żurawski (1995).

The field survey carried out by the Southern Dongola Reach Survey (SDRS) of Bogdan Żurawski, encompassing the southern parts of the Dongola agglomeration, contributed to a better understanding of this part of the town (Żurawski 2003:106–117). Żurawski's aerial photographs of the site have also played a substantial role in a fuller recognition of site topography overall.

KEY RESEARCH ISSUES

1. Church architecture

P.M. Gartkiewicz's in-depth studies of the Old Church and Cathedrals 3 and 4, as well as initial research on Cathedrals 1 and 2 and the Cruciform Church, gave well grounded insight into church architecture at Dongola and its leading role in Nubian architecture overall (Gartkiewicz 1975; 1990). This is best exemplified by the observation, confirmed in further studies, that the churches of Dongola played an inspirational role in the construction of the cathedrals of Paulos and Petros in another major center

of the kingdom, in Faras. Gartkiewicz was also responsible for an overall vision of the dynamic and multidirectional development of Nubian architecture based on basilican and central complexes (Gartkiewicz 1980). Research on Nubian church architecture was continued by Włodzimierz Godlewski, who demonstrated the creative approach of the Dongolan milieu of architects and builders in drawing up plans for new cathedrals and in developing a new church plan superimposing a cross over a rectangle and adding projecting transept wings (Godlewski 2006a). Of particular importance is gaining an understanding of the role of commemorative monuments built on a cruciform plan, i.e., Building B.III on the Citadel (SWN) and the Cruciform Church (CC).

2. Civil architecture

Explorations of fortifications, palaces and houses of Dongola, by Włodzimierz Godlewski, have contributed a more rounded view of the town and its history, as well as insight into the role of the royal court for the development of the Dongola agglomeration (Godlewski 1982; 1991a; 1999).

3. Monastic architecture

Stefan Jakobielski's work on the Monastery on Kom H has highlighted the position of the monastery establishment in the life of the Dongolan community and its substantial contribution to the development of Makurite art (Jakobielski 2001b).

4. Wall paintings

Ongoing studies of murals decorating the monastic annexes, carried out by Małgorzata Martens-Czarnecka, have revealed the formal and thematic richness of Dongolan painting in the Late Kingdom of Makuria (Martens-Czarnecka 2001; 2011). Research by Dobrochna Zielińska and Włodzimierz Godlewski on the fragmentary paintings from commemorative building B.III and church B.V on the Citadel has led to the identification of royal painting ateliers working in the tempera technique from the 7th through the 11th century (Godlewski 2004a; Zielińska

2004; 2010). New paintings were recently uncovered inside the Mosque Building and inside the Royal Church on the Citadel (B.V).

5. Epigraphic studies

Initiated by Stefan Jakobielski, they are now being continued by Adam Łajtar, who has published all the Greek texts, as well as some of the Dongolan Greek–Nubian graffiti, furnishing his readings with extensive updated commentary (Łajtar 2003a; 2011; Łajtar, Twardecki 2003).

6. Cemeteries

Bogdan Żurawski's investigations of the extensive Dongolan necropolis have identified many elements characteristic of tomb construction and burial customs in force in the Kingdom of Makuria (Żurawski 1997a; 1999). Anthropological studies initiated by Tadeusz Dierżykray-Rogalski and Elżbieta Promińska are now being continued by Robert Mahler.

7. Pottery and pottery workshops

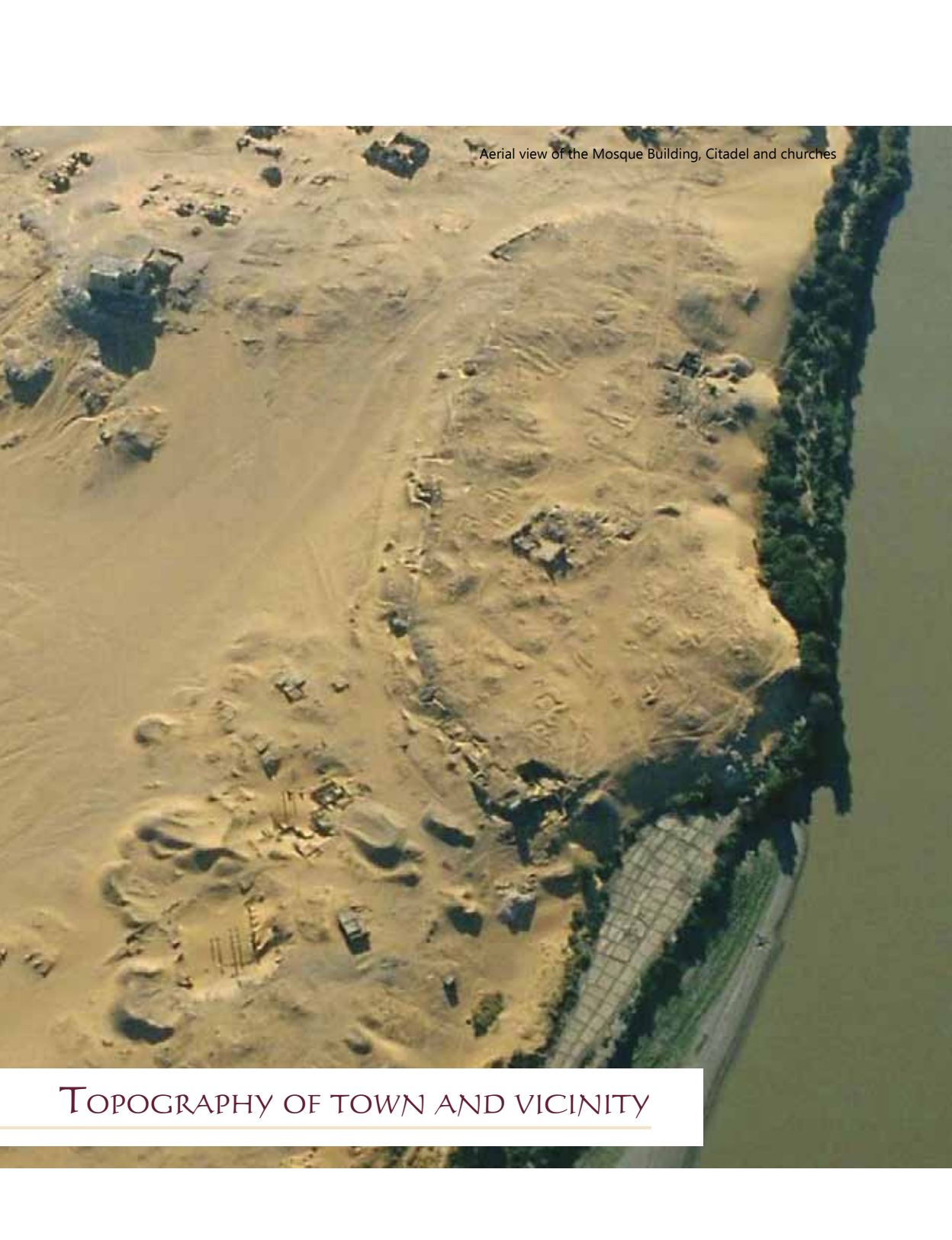
Krzysztof Pluskota spent several years studying the pottery workshops of Dongola and Dongolan pottery in general. His monograph on the subject is to be expected shortly (Pluskota 1990; 1991; 2001; 2010). New studies on the pottery uncovered recently on the Citadel have been published by Katarzyna Danys-Lasek (2012).

8. Animal bone studies

Marta Osypińska is working on the deposits of animal bones from the Citadel (2013).



Przemysław M. Gartkiewicz (left) and Stefan Jakobielski in the mission workroom, 1972

An aerial photograph showing a wide, sandy riverbank on the left and a narrow strip of land on the right. The narrow strip is densely packed with green trees and vegetation. Along the edge of this strip, several small, dark, rectangular structures are visible, which are identified as the Mosque Building, Citadel, and churches. The river water is a murky, brownish-green color. The overall scene depicts a historical or cultural site situated in a riverine environment.

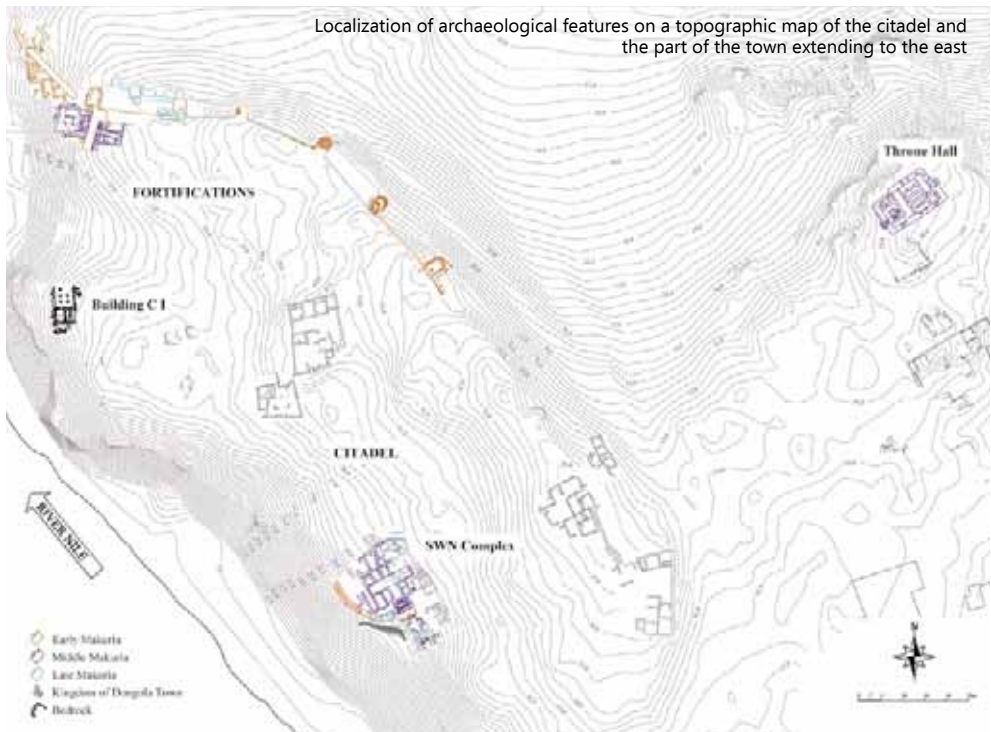
Aerial view of the Mosque Building, Citadel and churches

TOPOGRAPHY OF TOWN AND VICINITY

Dongola experienced its heyday upon becoming the main center of the Kingdom of Makuria in the early medieval period. The first step was building a citadel on an apparently uninhabited rocky plateau rising steeply above the Nile on the east bank of the river. This is believed to have taken place at the close of the 5th century and before the kings of Makuria adopted Christianity. The choice of place for the royal court was dictated by the needs of a developing kingdom. The seat of power had to be moved from the vicinity of Kushite Napata to a central position in the Kingdom of Makuria, away from the great religious complexes of the Kushite period (Godlewski 2006; 2013b). There is no doubt that the decision was as much strategic as political, the current trends in defensive architecture of the time requiring towns to be fortified in order to ensure the new rulers proper economic and political security.

A Meroitic tradition, as represented by the walled Royal City in Meroe, may have stood behind these new ideas, or perhaps it was the more contemporary fortified town at Merowe Sheriq (Godlewski 2007). It seems, however, that Roman military architecture adapted to local reality, as at Merowe Sheriq already in the 5th century, was the key source of inspiration.

The economic and social resources of Dongola were concentrated in the regions immediately to the north and south of the town. The Letti Basin began just 2 km to the north of the Citadel. Like the Kerma and Napata Basins, it was one of the extensive regions of agricultural, horticultural and industrial activities found in the Nile Valley between the Third and Fourth Cataracts and it most certainly supplied the economic needs of the capital town of Makuria. Settlement in the area has not been sufficiently recognized

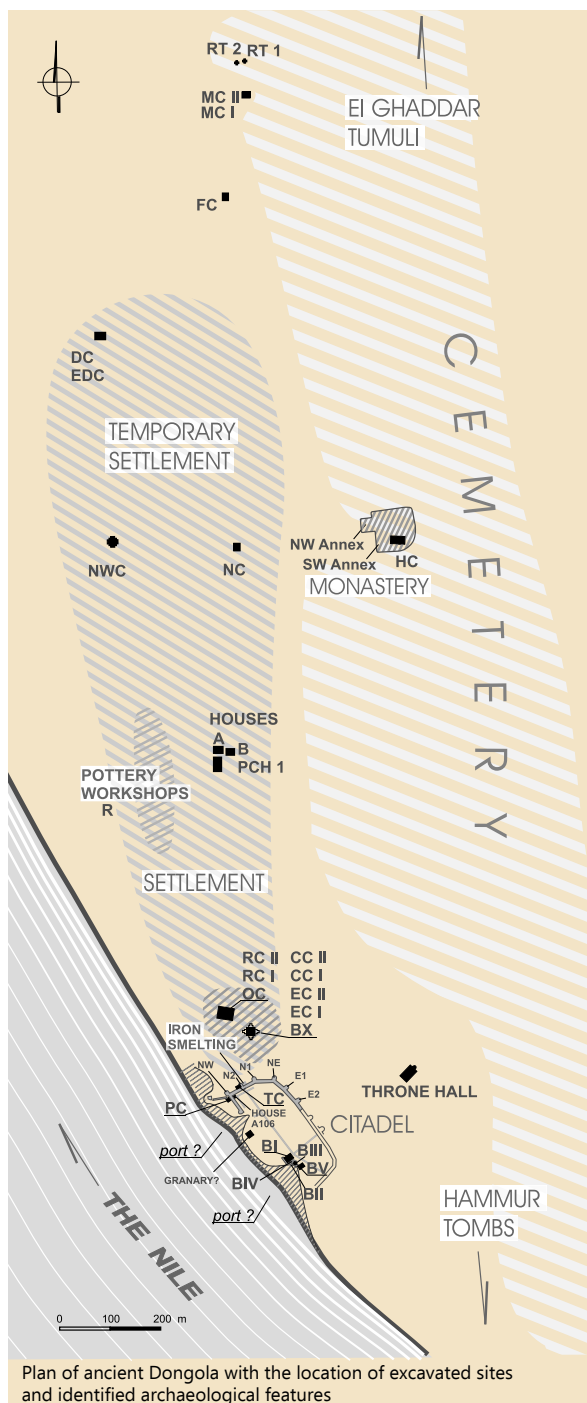


as yet, but the extensive tumulus cemetery near Gebel Ghaddar, spreading east of the modern agglomeration of El Ghaddar, is telling proof of the size and affluence of the population of the Letti Basin in the 4th through 6th centuries AD. The evidence is not enough, however, to suggest that the Basin was among the more important centers of Early Makuria in the 5th century (Grzyski 1987; El-Tayeb 2012; Godlewski, Kociankowska-Bożek 2010).

The tumulus cemetery at Hammur, situated some 8 km to the south of the Citadel in Dongola, includes some more elaborate tombs that can be attributed to the Early Makurian elite (El-Tayeb 2003). These tombs of the second half of the 5th century closely resemble the funerary monuments of Zuma and Tanqasi, considered the most important burial grounds of Early Makuria (El-Tayeb 2005; Godlewski 2008; Shinnie 1954). Whether the necropolis at Hammur is actually witness to an important center of power in Early Makuria cannot be determined at the present stage of research. No trace of a settlement has been recorded anywhere in the vicinity. The region was surely Dongola's hinterland to the south.

In economic terms, the large islands on the Nile from Tangasi upriver to the Letti Basin downriver were also of substantial importance. Constantly formed and modified by the waters of the Nile, they were mostly flooded at high water, hence impractical for permanent settlement. Fertile soil and unlimited water supply made them excellent, however, for cultivating gardens and fields.

Once the Citadel was established on the Dongola Rock, Gebel Ghaddar cemetery became the capital's official burial ground, as suggested by two rock-cut tombs, interpreted as royal burials, and the extension of the cemetery to the south in Middle and Late Makurian times. The oldest Christian tombs identified in preliminary investigations were found to occupy the northern end of the burial ground, near the tumulus cemetery (Żurawski 1997a).



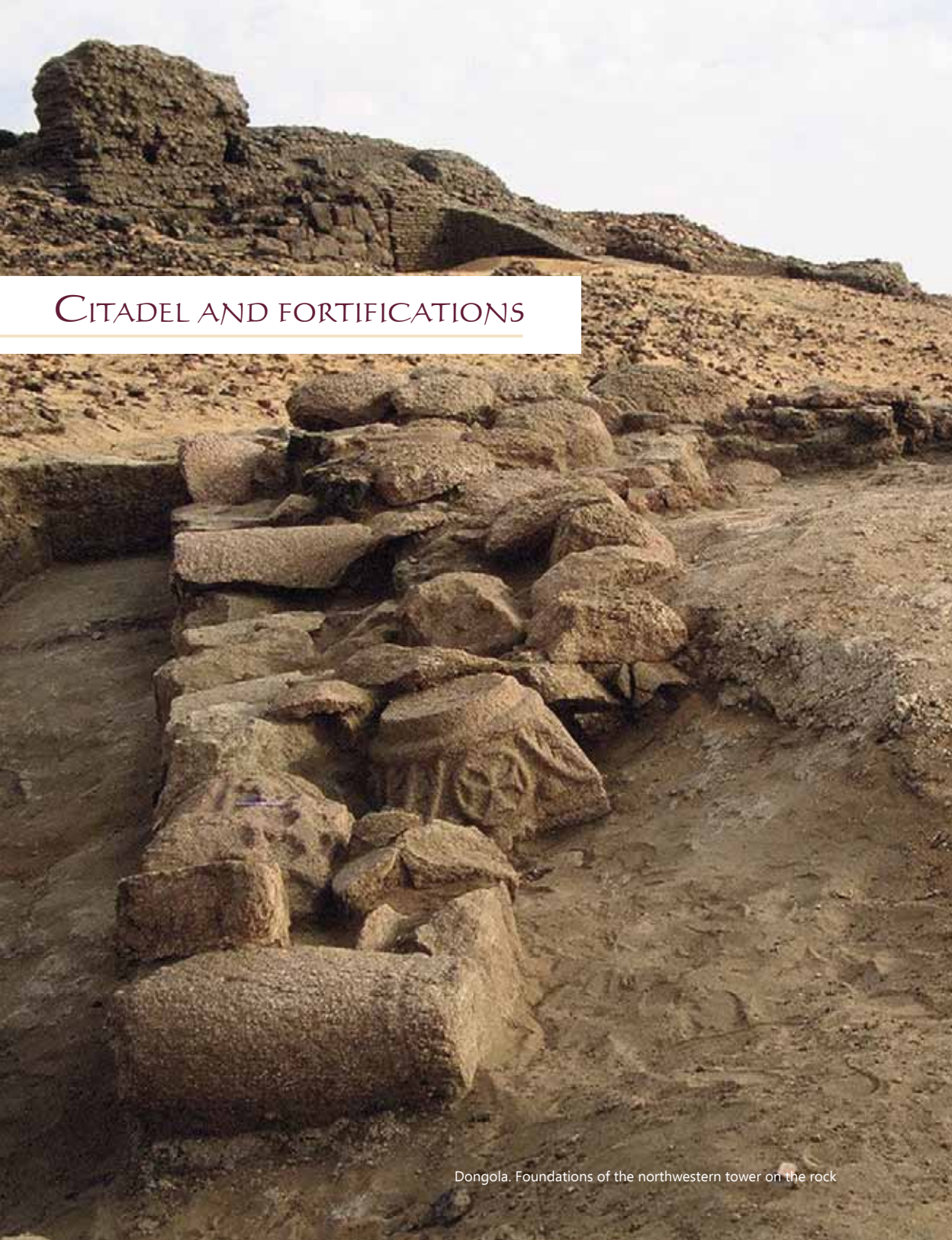
Plan of ancient Dongola with the location of excavated sites and identified archaeological features

The agglomeration developed as population increased, responding also to internal and external political events. On one hand, there were the needs of the royal court and church hierarchy, on the other, events like the siege laid to the town by the Arabs, the signing of the *baqt* treaty, conflict with the Ayyubids and termination of the *baqt* in the end of the 12th, destruction by the Mamluks, retreat from the town of the royal court, the establishment of a local Kingdom of Dongola and its gradual Islamization after the middle of the 14th century.

The first period in the city's existence, from the 6th through the 12th century, saw dynamic northward development in the direction of the Letti Basin. A religious complex sprang up just north of the Citadel, around the successive buildings of the Cathedral and the most important sacral structure of the kingdom, the Cruciform Church dedicated to Jesus (CC). The main monastery of the town, established on the desert fringes presumably already at the close of the 6th century, developed unhindered throughout this time. Nearer to the river, an extensive district of pottery workshops operated from the middle of the 6th century onward, and further inland, a residential district spread northward, in the direction of the Letti Basin. Freestanding churches were founded ever further north, e.g., Northwest Church (NWC), North Church (NC), Church D (DC), as well as Church F (FC). Being built of brick, these churches may be presumed to mark the extent of the Dongolan suburbs, the town itself being composed of less permanent architecture constructed of reeds, wood and mats. Mas'ud of Aleppo, who was sent as an envoy to Makuria in 1175, may have been referring to this part of the town, when he wrote: "Dongola has no brick-built houses, except the royal residence; all the rest consists of houses built of reeds" (Vantini 1975: OSN 370).

The cemeteries of the town were located in the desert on the eastern fringes of the town, extending from the tumulus burial ground in the north, the area around the Great Monastery to the wadi in the south that ran at the foot of the rock, on which the Throne Hall of the Kings of Makuria (turned into a mosque in 1317) was built.

The other direction in which the capital town developed was to the south of the Citadel. The settlement of Old Dongola, presumably established in the 17th century was located here, until its abandonment in the late 19th century. Explorations have been sporadic here, hence little can be said of the actual patterns of development. There was apparently little interest in the area during the heyday of the town, from the 6th through the 13th century. Freestanding church structures should be expected here (Wiewióra 2003: 501–502), as well as presumably impermanent architecture. The southward expansion of the town took on importance in the times of the Kingdom of the Town of Dongola, especially after the houses raised in the ruins of the great churches and the citadel complex were abandoned sometime in the 17th century, although such a dating cannot be more than intuitive at least for now. There are no good dating criteria for the archaeological material from this period. It is likely that the habitational district south of the Citadel and the long southern wall surrounding the southern plateau on the south and east were erected at this time, the defenses intended as protection for the inhabitants as well as their livestock against plundering. The entire agglomeration shifted south, concentrating around the Mosque which was located on the upper floor of the ancient Throne Room. The citadel was abandoned. The picturesque *qubbās* of the period were gathered in the southernmost part of the town cemeteries, to the east of the long wall.



CITADEL AND FORTIFICATIONS

Dongola. Foundations of the northwestern tower on the rock

The citadel of Dongola was raised on a flat stretch of ground on top of a rocky crag that rose steeply from the river edge. On the north and northeast, the terrain dropped gently toward a sand-filled wadi, while on the south and southeast it was just slightly elevated above the wide plateau stretching to the south. Excavations so far have uncovered the fortifications, complete with the founding, only in the northwestern corner of the citadel. The wall circuit in the northern and northwestern part of the town has been traced based on the surviving tops of the fortifications, preserved here to about 8 m in height. On the south side, the extent of the citadel has been traced, but no regular excavations have been undertaken. So far no evidence of occupation earlier than the fortifications has been recorded, but the investigations have been limited. Studies of the uncovered part of the fortified circuit have determined the technical parameters of the original fortifications, as well as the stages of development and alterations introduced most likely at the close of the 12th and in the 13th century.

The citadel walls were founded straight on bedrock without any work on leveling the surface. The defense circuit ran all around the plateau, wall construction in particular sections being adapted to the location. And so, on the river side, which was naturally defended, the walls were clearly less massive. Care was taken to protect the river harbors, of which the northern one was of a commercial character, whereas the southern one appears to have served the private needs of the royal establishment, including providing direct access to the royal residences (see plan, page 18).

The curtain wall of Dongola was a very massive structure of mud brick, each brick measuring 41–42 x 18–19 x 9 cm, and of undressed blocks of local ferruginous sandstone, both big and small, used for the external coat. At the base, the wall measured about 5.70 m, narrowing to

5.30 m at the preserved top six meters up. A slight inclination of the outer face of the rampart has been noted, but erosion of the inner surface throws a shade on measurement accuracy. The stone coat was built as one with the brick core, the two parts being bonded in mud mortar. At approximately 0.80–0.90 m in width, the stone facing constituted about 15% of the curtain thickness. Substantially bigger blocks were used for the towers and lower parts of the curtain. The upper sections were constructed of small blocks and slabs of stone. It should be expected that the rampart originally rose much higher than the currently preserved 6 m, attaining a height of more or less 11 m, as at Faras. There is no way of telling what the construction technique of this unpreserved part of the fortifications was.

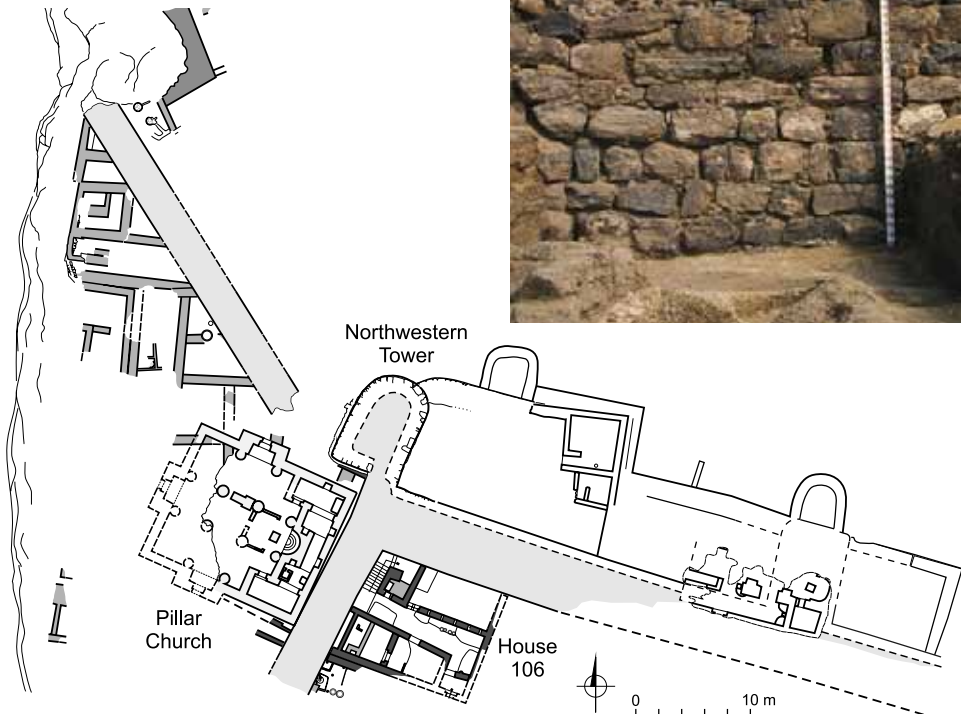
The curtain was reinforced with projecting towers set at fairly regular intervals of 32 to 35 m. These massive structures with rounded outer face were solid-built inside, 5.70–6.30 m wide and projecting from the face of the rampart 8.50–8.90 m. The two northern towers, N.1 and N.2, were only 22 m apart, presumably because they secured the entrance gate to the citadel arranged in tower N.2. The northwestern tower was somewhat more massive than the others, most likely because it was a corner bastion. This part of the circuit extending north of the commercial harbor was further reinforced with a mud-brick wall running at an angle, 3.10 m wide and terminating in a massive tower on a small rocky eminence rising high above the river bank. This tower, which has survived only in foundations, must have been built after AD 652, that is, after the siege laid to Dongola by the troops of 'Abdallah b. Abi Sarh. Fragments of architectural decoration, mainly from column shafts, but also from capitals and bases, believed to constitute the original interior decoration of the Dongolan Cathedral (EC.I), which was heavily damaged in this raid, were found reused in the preserved foundations.

The angled wall and tower on the rock defended an artificial platform erected on the slope of the plateau rising on the north side of the main river port. This platform was constructed on a grid of casemate walls filled with earth for stability.

The western fortifications were built on the edge of a steep rock cliff rising above the river bank. They were narrower and without towers thanks to a naturally defensive location. Parts of this curtain wall, constructed of mud brick with a stone coat, were uncovered in the northwestern corner of the citadel and in the central-southern part. It was 3.70 m wide at the northern end, narrowing to 2.10 m at the southern excavated end.

Initially the architecture inside the citadel left empty space running against the inside of the ramparts. But at least from the 7th century, buildings started to use the wall

as a structural support (e.g., House A.106 and Building I). This arrangement reflected a typical fortified settlement with a circuit street providing entry to various structures; similar arrangements were discovered at Ihmindi and Sabagura in the north of Nubia, and were used in Roman military camps from the time of Valentinian. The Dongolan citadel must have had regular architecture standing inside the walls already in the middle of the 6th century, as the great church complexes of the period when Makuria converted to



Plan of the northwestern part of the fortifications; above, the northwestern tower seen from the west

Christianity (Old Church and Building X, see pages 59–64) were constructed outside the stronghold, on a spot to the north of the citadel, where later the cathedrals were located as well.

The fortifications of Dongola were raised by builders, who had honed their skills on earlier complexes known from Merowe Sheriq and Bakhit in the Napata region. The actual technique of construction differed, because the earlier complexes had the lower parts of ramparts built of broken stone and the upper parts of mud brick with an outside stone coating being added at some point. It should be remembered, however, that compared to Dongola these were quite modest examples of military architecture. In all likelihood, the ramparts at Dongola were raised at the close of the 5th century (Godlewski 2008).

Once the Makurian kings signed the *baqt* treaty with the Caliphate in AD 652 (the peace treaty was observed by both sides for 520 years), they chose the citadel with all of its economic resources as their royal residence. The religious center with the cathedrals, the town and various workshops was located outside its walls, mainly to the north. Even the Throne Hall of the Kings of Makuria was erected away from the fortified rock, in a prominent location further to the east.

During the extended peace the walls fell into disrepair, but things changed dramatically after the fall of Fatimid Egypt. Salah-ed-Din, who took power in 1171, broke the treaty and invaded Makuria, occupying the northern reaches of the kingdom for several years. The threat prompted widespread rebuilding and alteration of the fortifications in all of Makuria. In the capital, the weakened outer stone face of the ramparts was given an additional coating of mud brick to soften the impact of catapult projectiles; additional towers were built, presumably in places where the damaged curtain posed a risk, and the space between the walls was filled with earth. These new sections of the defenses were erected on

top of sand dunes blanketing the earlier rampart. In the northern and northwestern part of the Citadel, these highly developed reinforcements appeared next to the northwestern corner bastion, by the northern gate and next to the northeastern tower; they have also been noted along the southern stretch of the fortifications. An extensive mud-brick structure (B.II), furnished presumably with an upper floor, closed the road running from the private harbor, protecting the palace entrance (B.I) and the facades of the Cruciform Building (B.III) and Building V. A river attack had obviously been anticipated in those troubled times.

Thus reinforced, the citadel remained the residence of choice of the rulers of the late Kingdom of Dongola Town, which existed from the end of the 14th through the 17th century. A new circuit wall was constructed in the northwestern corner of the old rampart, near the corner bastion, on top of the ruins of the Pillar Church (PC). New constructions can be presumed to have been constructed also in the northern and eastern parts of the citadel.



Northeastern tower, seen from the north



PALACE

Pavement of Building IV on the citadel, south of the "Palace of Ioannes" (B.I)

The rulers of Makuria envisioned the citadel in Dongola as a place of economic and social security, as well as a mark of prestige and a convenient and comfortable residence. The massive ramparts were designed to stop invaders, but the prime objective of all construction within the walls was to provide the king and his household with a residence, and to establish a center of royal administration, where wealth and economic resources could be collected as well. Knowledge of the architecture on the Dongolan citadel is still poor. Private houses certainly occupied the northwestern part of the Citadel and in the southwestern sector (SWN) three buildings making up the royal palace complex were uncovered: Building I ("Palace of Ioannes"), Cruciform Building (B.III) and Building V, a royal church. The second of these three was a commemorative structure raised in honor of the defenders of Dongola and to commemorate the signing of the *baqt* treaty with the Caliphate. Its presence here emphasizes the prestige of

the place, prestige further confirmed not only by the reason for the commemoration, but also by the form of the building and the decoration of the interior.

The extensive structure spreading north of the monument, Building I, appears to have been constructed earlier, in the end of 6th century. It was linked with the river harbor, which thus constituted an integral part of the palace complex. The river entrance to the building led up a staircase directly to the residential upper floor. The ground floor was accessed from a circuit street inside the citadel from the north and most probably also from the east.

On the other side of the commemorative monument stood a very fine building (B.V), undoubtedly of later date, furnished with a central dome on the ground floor. The King's Church is a medium-sized building, 24 m by 15 m, built on exposed ground, on an artificial platform. It was made of red brick, including bricks of special shape for the construction of round pillars and



Relics of earlier architecture under the walls of the "Palace of Ioannes" (B.I.41)

pilasters (see page 119). The plan was of the cross-over-rectangle type with projecting north and south arms.

The oldest building in this part of the town (B.IV) seems to be of 6th century date. Only a fragmentary brick pavement and the south wall were discovered in the area between the Cruciform Building and the “Palace of Ioannes”. Indeed, it was mostly taken apart when the palace was being constructed. Further excavations in the area should answer questions concerning the layout of this structure and its function. Relics of architecture dated by pottery finds to the mid 6th century were found also in the western part of the palace, below rooms B.I.41–42.

BUILDING I: “PALACE OF IOANNES”

This extensive building — the available area on the ground floor exceeded 1200 m² — was erected against the western curtain wall. The walls were constructed in a mixed technique, using red brick, sandstone blocks and mud brick. The outer face of walls was made of red brick, which was structurally interconnected with mud brick on the inside. Red brick was used in structurally important places inside the building, like staircase vaulting, window arches and nests under wooden ceiling beams on the ground floor. Sandstone can be seen reinforcing wall corners and in entrance facades and arches of the doors. The technique is especially well discernible in the staircase leading to the upper floor from the river entrance. The stairwell projected from the building facade. The bottom parts of the walls were constructed of stone blocks, particular courses rising highest in the entrance with its arch of stone voussoirs. The upper parts were faced with red brick, which was used also for the underlying vaults.

The other, northern entrance to the palace was more monumental. The decorated arch built of sandstone voussoirs had a keystone bearing the monogram of the founder Ioannes. This northern entrance led

to a spacious vestibule (B.I.24 and B.I.44). A stone arcade, which has partly been preserved, led from there, down a long corridor (B.I.11), to the western part of the edifice.

The ground floor was fairly high, walls being preserved to a height of 4.50 m. The ceilings were presumably of wood and there were big arched windows and narrow slots (110 x 13 cm), lighting up and ventilating the structure. The western part of the palace, situated immediately next to the citadel walls, served domestic functions and was lower than the rest of the building. The main part was divided into a few smaller segments separated by corridors running E–W and N–S. The function of particular rooms, not to mention the exact layout, requires further study, identification being made all the more difficult because the structure was rebuilt comprehensively in the 13th century and the ground floor rooms filled in with rubble at this time. The central and eastern part of the building was still operational in changed form in the 14th and 15th century, being inhabited presumably by entirely new residents. The upper floor of the palace has been preserved in places, but the layout is yet to be recognized.

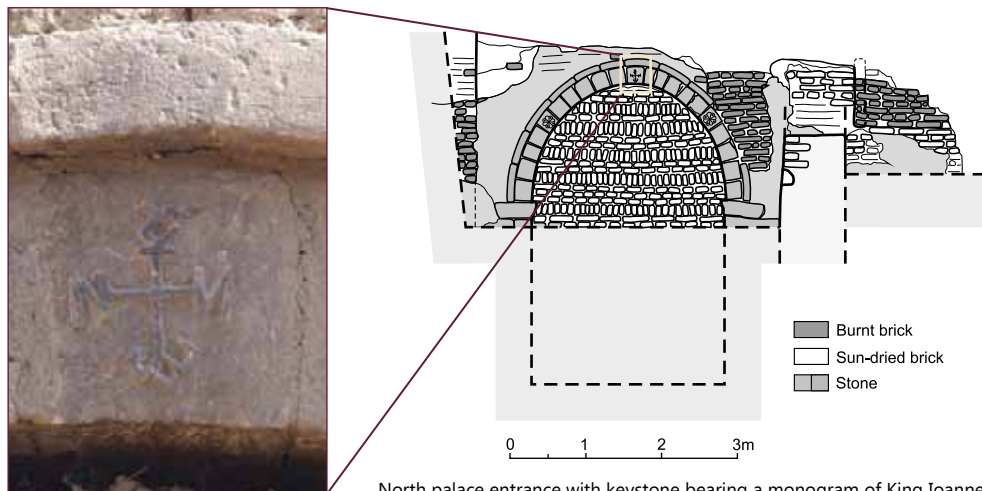
To recapitulate, the ground floor served administrative and economic functions, while the upper floor or floors were residential and official in character.



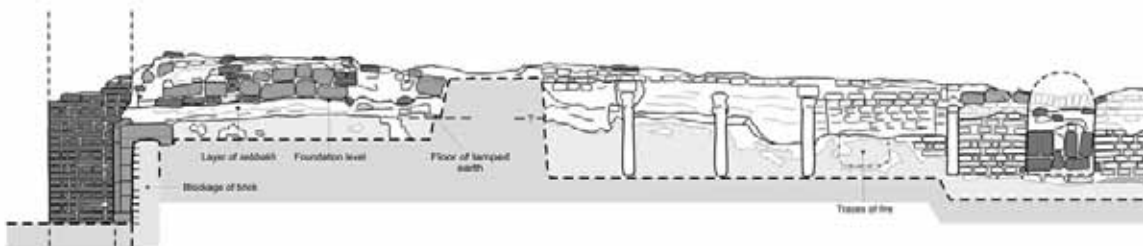
The king's staircase, entry to the upper palace floor from the river gate

The western, functionally subordinated part of the palace has yielded several deposits of pottery and other refuse, which have proved important for the dating of the original structure to the end of the 6th century. Imported amphorae from Egypt and the

Eastern Mediterranean, discovered in some quantity in the fill here, constitute tangible proof of effective regulation of the commerce between Makuria and Dar el-Islam, apparently in continuation of an earlier agreement between Makuria and Byzantine Egypt.

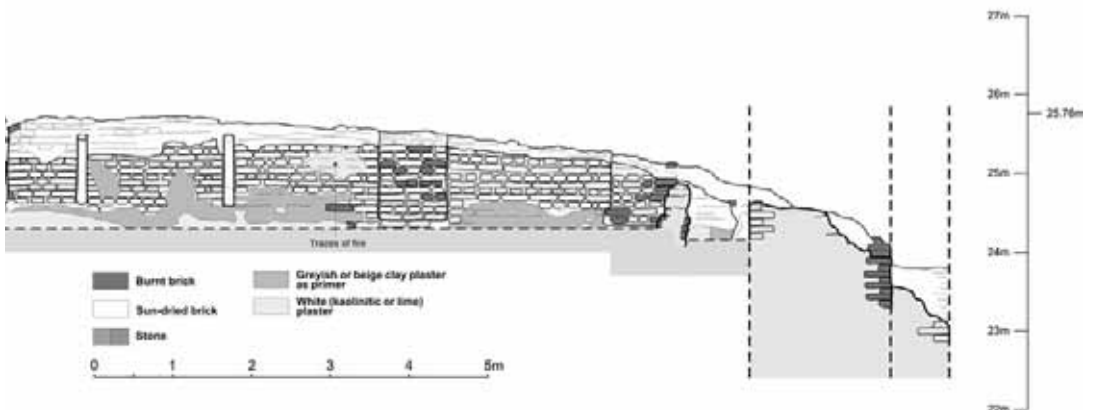


Plan of site SWN on the citadel



Cross-section looking east through Room 11 of the "Palace of Ioannes" (B.I)

Site SWN on the citadel: eastern part of the "Palace of Ioannes" (B.I) and Commemorative Building (B.III.1) in 2001



WINE

Units B.I.15 and B.I.36 in the “Palace of Ioannes” were most probably depositories of palace latrines located on the upper floor. They yielded a huge amount of amphorae, both imported and locally produced, as well as local tableware. Similar material of even greater interest came from a small trench excavated in the northwestern corner of room B.I.37, below floor level. It consisted of several hundred fragments of amphorae from Egypt and Palestine, among which the best represented were amphorae from the vicinity of Aswan, from Middle Egypt (LR 7) and the Mareotic region (Danyś-Lasek 2012: 322–327).

In Dongola it was the first such large ensemble of imported amphorae and mud stoppers with inscribed seal impressions, dated to the second half of the 6th and the

7th centuries. The presence of only pitched amphorae in deposits from units B.I.15 and B.I.36 suggested that the inhabitants of building (B.I) were fond of wine of Palestinian and Egyptian origin. The material has also given a better understanding of the political and economic relations of Makuria with the Byzantine administration in the 6th/7th century and with the Arab administration in the 7th century.

A count of amphora toes indicated that the material from this trench contained at least 17 Aswan jars and 20 Middle Egyptian ones. At least four separate Mareotic amphorae were counted in the set, although the quantity of sherds suggested a greater number. There were also two amphorae from Gaza and the region of Syria and Palestine, but these seem to have been isolated speci-



Amphora from the Mareotis region in Egypt, bearing a Greek inscription

mens. A small number of sherds was identified as local vessels, produced in Dongola.

Accompanying the amphorae were mud stoppers, two still attached to the rims of Aswan amphorae. One was made of lime mortar, three others of marl clay with the stamped surfaces concealed under a layer of mud and stamped again. The lime stopper had a *gamma* written on it in red ink. Several similar lime-mortar stoppers were found in the fill of units B.I.37 and B.I.42. The stoppers made of lime mortar and of marl clay may have been used with Mareotic amphorae. Of utmost interest are the stamped stoppers with mud cap, which appear to be unparalleled in the Nubian material published to date. This may have exemplified double marking of wine amphorae — by the producer and by the warehouse — when wine was transported over long distances and at least two customs check-points had to be crossed when entering and exiting a territory.

An initial study of the amphorae and stoppers from the “Palace of Ioannes” has led to the conclusion that the wine imported from the north must have been a luxury beverage for the royal retinue. The habit proved so compelling that vine saplings were adapted to local climatic conditions and wine started to be produced locally.



Deposit inside palace room B.I.15

The sudden rise in the manufacture of local amphorae on the spot in Dongola, dated to the 7th century, may thus be a reflection of this new industry.

This change of tastes certainly had to do with the establishment of close relations with the Byzantine world, especially with Egypt, in the second half of the 6th century. The journey of royal envoys of the king of Makuria bringing a giraffe and a leopard to the court of Justin II in Constantinople in 572, as described by John of Biclar, indicates Makuria's already lively relations with the Byzantine world. These contacts must have been associated with the Christianization of the royal court of Makuria by an imperial



Double-cap mud stopper sealing an amphora

mission in the 540s, indirectly mentioned by John of Ephesus. Egyptian wine, and presumably also Palestinian wine, much less common in the Dongolan palace, certainly came directly from Egypt.

Wine from Egypt and Palestine was transported across the lands of the kingdom of Nobadia, which, until the end of the 570s, in the time of the journey of bishop Longinus of Nobadia to Soba, did not have friendly relations with Makuria, as it is implied by John of Ephesus in his account of Longinus's trip. The bishop had to travel along the Red Sea coast. The Dongolan discovery of stoppers made of lime and of marl clay smeared with a layer of mud with new seal impressions may have to do with the transport of wine from Egypt to Dongola through Nobadian territory. At this point it is worth emphasising that goods known to have come from Nobadia, especially pottery, were not found upriver from the Third Cataract in the 5th and early 6th century, in early Makuria. This is an indication of there being no trade between the emerging kingdoms of Nobadia and Makuria, and most probably also political rivalry between these two states, which had emerged on the ruins of Meroe.

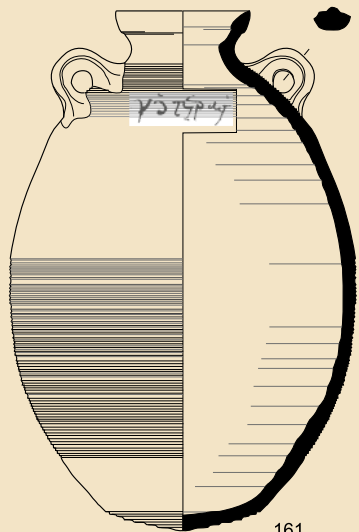
Clearly, trade between Makuria and Egypt was not limited to wine. In the trench below the floor of room B.I.37 there were glass and metal objects, most probably of Egyptian

origin as well. Knowledge of Makurian goods exported to Egypt is not sufficient. We can suspect, however, that the political and economic agreement signed in the mid-7th century by 'Abdallah b. Abī Sarh, the Arab governor of Egypt, and Qalidurut, King of Makuria, was a continuation of Makuria's earlier trade relations with Byzantium and it may have concerned a similar selection of so-called African goods and slaves (Godlewski 2013b).

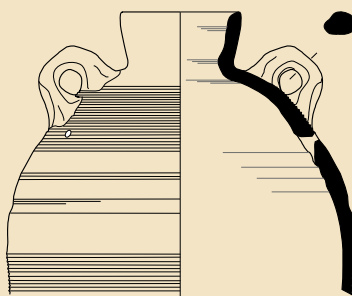
The import of wine from Egypt (and from the entire territory ruled by the early caliphs) was included in the political and economic treaty signed in the mid-seventh century (*baqt*) and material proof of its implementation is found in Dongola in the form of numerous Egyptian amphorae (Mareotis, Middle Egypt) and a few amphorae from Palestine found in the deposits filling the palace, dated to the second half of the seventh century. However, the plenitude of local amphorae also indicates that wine production was already thriving in the gardens of the Letti Basin, the economic hinterland of Dongola. The wines from Egypt and Palestine must have tasted better and been more appreciated at the royal table and were therefore mentioned in the *baqt*.



Stamped amphora mud stoppers from the palace store rooms



161



246a

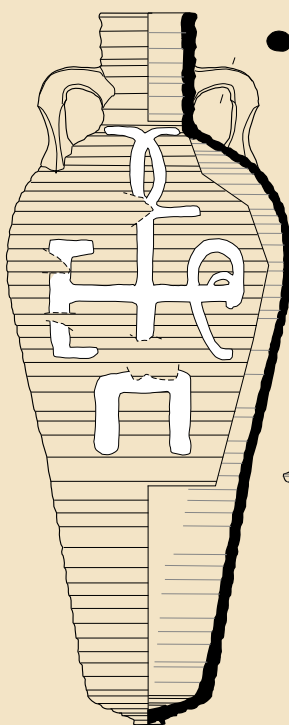
Mareotic LR 5/6



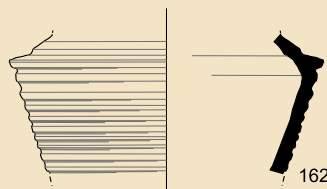
Palestinian



Aswan



170



162

Middle Egypt LR 7

0 3 cm

Face of a Makurian warrior,
fragment of a mural from the Cruciform Building (CB.III)



COMMEMORATIVE MONUMENTS

Two of Dongola's church foundations were of exceptional nature, as much because of their unique architecture — cruciform plan with free arms — as because of the symbolic meaning that they carried. They were the Commemorative Building (CB) and the Cruciform Church (CC), both royal foundations commemorating the same important event in the political history of Makuria, that is, the defending of the town against the Arabs and the negotiation of a political and economic treaty, *baqt*, between King Qalidurut of Makuria and Egypt's governor 'Abdallah b. Abi Sarh in AD 651. The Commemorative Building (B.III) was undoubtedly connected with these events and was erected in the last years of Qalidurut's life or at the beginning of the reign of his successor, Zacharias. The other building, which was also Dongola's largest ever, the Cruciform Church, was founded already by King Zacharias, following the safe return of his son Georgios from Baghdad after six months of negotiations in AD 836. Zacharias had reason to be thankful because Georgios had negotiated successfully an extension of the *baqt*. By incorporating into

the new construction the ancient crypts of the presumed apostles, the church foundation also commemorated the Christianization of the Kingdom. The kings of Makuria rejoiced in the splendor of this structure, emphasized by inner colonnades and a grand central dome. We can only presume that the murals decorating the inside of the church were as splendid as those in the earlier Commemorative Building.

COMMEMORATIVE BUILDING

(B.III.1 = CB)

Erected as a small freestanding structure, it stood south of the river entrance to the "Palace of Ioannes" (B.I), just 4 m away from the facade. The bedrock here fell away gently to the south and was already covered with an occupational layer of varying thickness at the time of the construction (Godlewski 2004a: 200–204).

The red bricks used in it measured 31–32 x 17 x 7.5–8 cm and were bonded in mud mortar. Wall structure was regular with alternating courses of headers and stretchers in the bondwork, corresponding to courses of two rows of bricks set crosswise to the line



Commemorative Building (B.III.1) on the citadel, view from the north



of the wall and courses of single bricks set crosswise between two outer rows of bricks lining the edge of the wall. The walls were 63–65 cm thick. The narrow walls closing the arms with the entrance arcades were 50 cm thick and featured a modified brick arrangement: one row lining the edge of the wall and the other row with bricks laid crosswise, alternating in position in successive courses, which resulted in alternating header-and-stretcher courses in the wall faces.

The foundation of the walls in the north arm, made of headers set on edge, was on the same level at either end. A foundation trench had been cut, partly damaging the south wall of the older building B.IV; the foundation bricks were laid on a layer of fill, approximately 15 cm thick, deposited on bedrock.

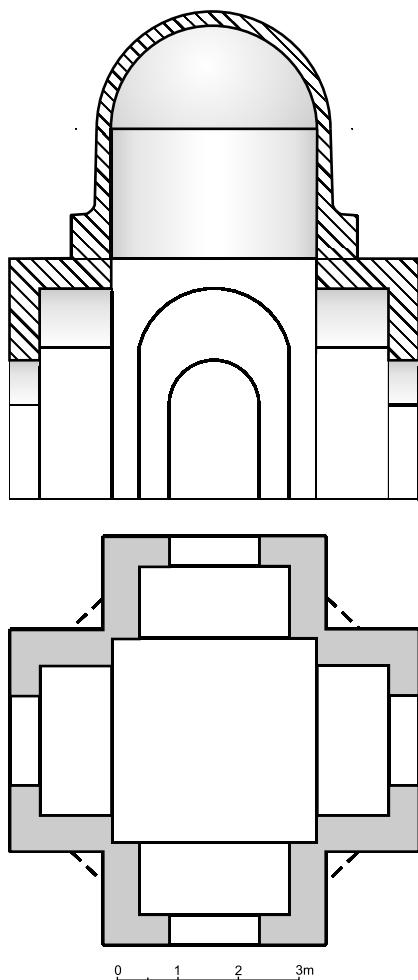
The outer dimensions of the building were 6.80 m by 6.80 m. Inside, the square central space measured 3.30 m by 3.30 m. The four arcades opening of this center-square were each 1.20 m deep and 3.35 m wide. The entrances in the end walls of each of the four arms also had an arcade that was 1.20 m wide and 2.50 m high. The highest that the walls of this building have been preserved was in the northeastern corner (up to 3.20 m above the floor), the lowest in the west and south (not exceeding 1.20 m in height).

The eastern arm, which is in the best condition, measured 1.20 m in length, 2.27 m in width at the outside, broadening to 3.25 m in two recessed steps toward the center of the structure. The eastern entrance in the central part of the arm, 1.22 m between the jambs, was blocked in the Late Period with a red-brick wall. A barrel vault covered the arm, the springing of the vault preserved on the south wall being approximately 2.70 m above the floor. The topmost point of the vault inside was most probably 3.85 m above the floor. The arcade on the inside must have been higher, but how much higher cannot be judged on the grounds of the present evidence.

In the outer, northeastern corner, where the northern and eastern arms meet, a block of sandstone was preserved, 14 cm thick and about 30 cm wide, squared and laid along the diagonal of the two joining walls, 3.34 m above the foundation level. It was structurally one with both walls and plastered on the outside like the entire structure. It must have been a kind of external support under the circular drum of the dome.

Based on the evidence of the full plan, the walls with the arcaded entrances in the

Commemorative Building (CB.III=B.III.1)



northern and western wings, the spring of the vaults and the stone support described above, a reconstruction of the building has been attempted. This small cruciform structure obviously had projecting vaulted arms and a central dome supported on a drum. The tentative total height of the structure was approximately 9.20 m.

The entire building was plastered on the outside, but the plastering is best preserved in the western part, especially on the north and south walls of the western arm, which were protected by screening walls of Building B.II with sand filling the gap. The lime plaster with coarse sand added as temper formed a thick coating, the surface was smoothened. In some sections, the plaster is peeling, revealing the presence of three coats (by the western entrance), which would suggest successive renovations of the outside walls, especially in the vicinity of the entrances.

On the inside walls, three successive coats of lime plaster have been noted, corresponding to successive renovations of the interior. Evidence of renovations has been preserved in the bottom parts of the walls, just above the original pavement and below the level of the late floor. It is not clear whether successive coats of plaster covered the entire interior or only the bottom parts of walls that were most exposed to damage in an open interior. The second coat of plaster was especially fine and very smooth. The entire interior was decorated with wall paintings, executed obviously by master painters in the tempera technique (Godlewski 2004a: 203, 214–215; Zielińska 2004; 2010). On the vault of the eastern arm of the building the first coat of plaster preserved a representation of Nubian warriors standing in a heavenly meadow. The bottom parts of the walls presumably had decoration imitating marble revetment and stuccowork, emphasizing the tectonics of the interior.

The original paving, obscured by a later cement floor, was cleared in the western,

southern and northern arms of the structure and partly in the center. It consisted of bricks (33 x 16 cm and 36 x 17 cm, thickness as yet unknown) laid flat in a regular arrangement. The bricks in the northern arm were arranged longitudinally, that is, parallel to the side walls. The southern arm presumably mirrored this arrangement. In the center and in the western arm, the bricks ran parallel to the side walls in this arm, that is, following an E–W orientation. This was presumably continued in the eastern arm. Thus, it seems that the bricks in the pavement of the original structure formed a cross, emphasizing the transverse arm with a continuous E–W alignment.

A coarse (sand with lime) cement floor, approximately 2 cm thick, was introduced on top of the pavement. The surface was smoothened and dark red in color. Two layers are in evidence, laid rather quickly one after the other, and the first layer was not smoothened.

Between the north facade of the building and the palace there was a courtyard with reused paving from the B.IV structure. As there was a difference in levels measuring about 35 cm between the Commemorative Building and the court, and the jagged edges of the south wall of B.IV were partly visible above its floor, the Commemorative Building was surrounded with a bench, recorded along the northern facade, but presumably running all around the building. This bench was 1.14 m wide, built of three courses of red bricks with a rubble, sand and stone core. In line with the entrance, on the outside of the bench, a step was discovered, also made of red bricks and measuring 0.85 m by more than 0.85 m (it must have been equal to the width of the entrance). This step made it easier to climb onto the bench.

No foundation stela has been discovered and there is no sufficiently well-dated foundation or under-floor pottery deposit to provide an independent dating for the structure. It was erected after B.IV had been

leveled to the floor, presumably shortly after the "Palace of Ioannes" (B.I) had been built. The suggested dating in the second half of the 7th century is very likely. Technological features, such as red brick used in its construction and the external plastering resemble materials used in the Third Cathedral (C.I), which is currently dated to the second half of the 7th century.

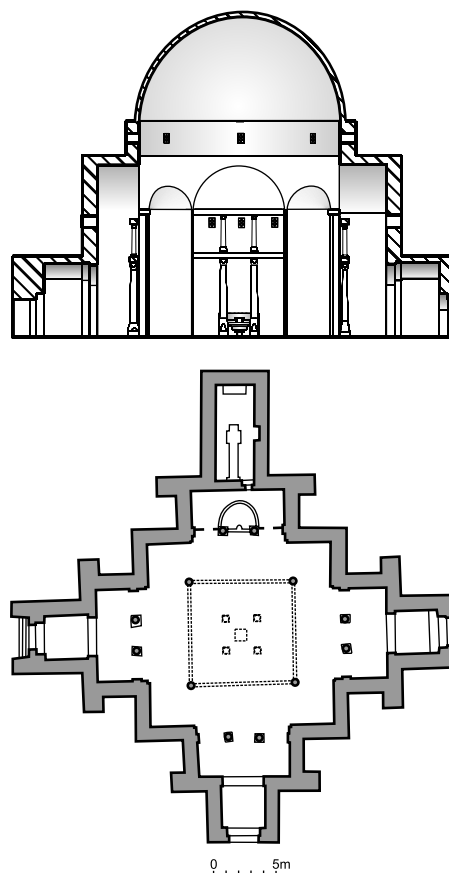
The importance of this building follows from its specific location: at the edge of a rocky elevation on the riverbank, above what is believed to be a private river harbor and in front of the entrance facade to the palace B.I. The small domed structure on a cruciform plan should not be interpreted as a strictly sacral building (it is open and has no recognizable interior furnishings). Nor should it be seen as a funerary monument (no tomb or sarcophagus identified anywhere inside the structure). It appears to have been a commemorative building marking an event of importance for the city and the residents of the palace B.I. The presence of representations of Nubian warriors in the vault of the eastern arm and the fine interior finishing, as well as repeated systematic renovations could suggest that we are dealing with a victory of some kind. The chronological horizon for the erection of the building, set in the second half of the 7th century, links the structure with the siege laid to Dongola by Abdullahi abu Sarh in AD 652, after which a *baqt* treaty was signed with the governor of Egypt. Thus, B.III.1 in its initial stage could have been a monument erected in honor of the defenders of the citadel and to commemorate the signing of the treaty.

CRUCIFORM CHURCH (CC): ROYAL AMBITIONS

The old cathedral, EC.II, was entirely dismantled, down to the level of the floor, which along with the basilica foundations became the building platform for the new structure, the Cruciform Church (Godlewski 1990), the biggest building discovered

in Makuria so far. Measuring 37.30 m by 34.80 m, it was built of red brick in the form of a cross, with a monumental dome over the central bay. At the core of the Cruciform Church was a central square bay (14 by 14 m), closed off on each side by a two-column portico (*triforium*). The cross was formed by arms radiating from the central part. Each of these arms was made up of two parts. The inner parts were wider (7.15 m) and had a portico opening into the central bay. The outer parts were narrower (3.40 m) and differed in function. The southern, northern and western outer sections formed entrances to the building, each arranged in a different

Cruciform Church (CC)



way. The eastern section was longer (7.40 m) and was separated from the building by a wall, in which there was a small doorway, giving access to the enclosed space.

It is very likely that the arms of the building were covered with barrel vaults, while the central part was domed. The total height of the building was most probably around 28 m. The red and grey granite columns used inside the building, in the *triforia* and central part, were *spolia* from the earlier buildings. Those of red granite could even have originated from the EC.I cathedral.

The partially preserved liturgical furnishings provided grounds for a functional reconstruction of the building. The interior was divided into two parts. The narrower part of the eastern arm was separated by a wall from the rest of the interior. This part of the eastern arm of the building formed a kind of commemorative chapel with an altar by the east wall and a structure in the shape of a Latin cross on the pavement over the crypts BX, containing most probably the tombs of the Apostles of Makuria, venerated in the previous buildings: BX, EC.I, and EC.II.

A large *ciborium* must have stood in the middle of the central bay, supported on the four granite columns found lying on the floor. Four composite columns (about 6.50 m high) at the corners of the central bay supported wooden beams from which lights were suspended around the *ciborium*. A *synthronon*, partly preserved, was located between the bases of the eastern *triforium* and the space on either side and behind the structure was set apart by wooden barriers placed between the columns and pilasters of the eastern portico. The position of the altar could not be identified.

The size and the exceptional form of the Cruciform Church suggest that it was a royal foundation. From Abu Makarim (Abu Saleh) we learn that (king – *augustus*) Zacharias commissioned the building of the church in Dongola as an expression of his gratitude to God for the safe return of his son Georgios from Baghdad in AD 835/6 (Vantini 1975: OSN 331). A keystone with an inscription (monogram), which can be read as “Georgios”, was found in the central part of the wall blocking the entrance through the

Cruciform Church (CC), views from the north (left) and from the south



western arm (see page 75); originally it must have been part of the arch of the western arm. It is very likely that the Cruciform Building was constructed in the middle of the 9th century.

The building belongs to a group of well known martyria and commemorative buildings constructed in the shape of a free-armed cross, scattered throughout Palestine, Syria and Anatolia. None of these, however, can be considered a direct model for the Dongolan structure, which demonstrates a whole spectrum of original features. A small cruciform building (B.III.1) had existed south of the palace on the citadel as early as the 7th century, which could have been model for this monumental building. It seems very probable that the monumental Cruciform Church (CC) was also an original achievement of the Dongolan architects' milieu. The penchant of the Dongolan architects

for buildings on central plans is particularly visible in the case of the 7th century new Cathedral (RC.I), as well as the Pillar Church dated to the 9th century.

The Cruciform Church (CC) performed several commemorative functions. The extended eastern arm contained a chapel over the tombs of the apostles of Makuria buried in the crypts of the BX church. The central part, under the *ciborium*, most likely housed a silver cross, taken by the Mamluk armies after a raid on Makuria in AD 1276 (Vantini 1975: OSN 472, 475, 534, 536); the cross may have contained splinters from the true cross. The entire building may have been a thanksgiving to God for the safe return of Georgios from Baghdad, and the renewed stable relations with the Abbasid caliphate, a fact of similar political and economic importance for Makuria as the *baqt* signed in AD 652.



Reconstruction of the interior of the Cruciform Church

THRONE HALL



Mosque Building, view from the northwest

The Mosque in Dongola can be seen from afar, especially from the direction of the Nile. It stands 12 m high on a rocky outcrop rising steeply from the desert at the edge of an extensive plateau east and south of the citadel, where the medieval town ruins are concentrated. Its massive silhouette at first glance recalls Pharaonic structures and seems more like a defensive building. Travelers have long described this large rectangular structure, 28 m by 18 m, as the only building in Dongola to have remained in use, even if with short breaks, from the times of Middle Makuria in mid-9th century until very recently.

Its history of destruction and rebuilding has resulted in considerable alterations of the interior on both floors and a virtual obliteration of any external traces of the original structure. The ground floor chambers are filled with layers of rubble up to 1.50 m thick. Interior windows have been enlarged to act as entrances. Walls and vaults are cracked and damaged. The coating that was meant to reinforce the structure on the outside, introduced presumably in the 13th and 14th century, has effectively concealed all architectural detail. Nonetheless, research carried out since 1971 has contributed a partial reconstruction of the original plan of the ground and first floors, and has identified the function of this structure (Godlewski 1982; Godlewski, Medeksza 1987).

Building materials included mud brick (35 x 18 x 8 cm), red brick (32 x 16 x 7 cm) and occasionally blocks of sandstone as corner and entrance reinforcements. Outer and inner walls were equally massive, reaching about 1.10 m in thickness, and were founded either directly on rocky ground or on ruins of older structures. Red brick was used for the wall facing on the outside and for window and door arches, in keeping with the principles of Meroitic building tradition which called for more durable material to be used in such spots.

The original building consisted of a ground floor that was cut off from the rest of the premises and an upper floor reached via a monumental staircase, which also led presumably to a terrace roof. Two entrances from the north led to long passages that organized the circulation on the ground floor. Two independent sets of chambers were accessed from the passages. The rooms in the center (Nos 4–7) could be reached from the northern passage with an entrance from the west, while the other small units on this floor (Nos 2, 10, 14–15) from a southern corridor with entrances at the opposite ends. All the rooms were narrow, from 1.60 m to 3 m, and very high, up to 6.50 m, with barrel vaulting. The interior was lighted through several rounded-arch windows. The extraordinary height of the ground floor is understood when one considers that it was the upper floor that was the important part of the building and the objective was to raise it as much as possible above the ground.

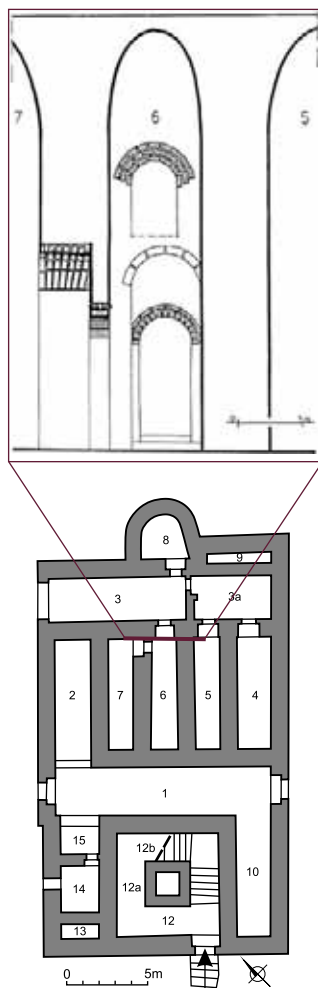
This upper floor was reached via a monumental staircase entered from the west, which was the approach from the city and river. Official delegations and processions making their way to the hall on the upper floor and the roof terrace could have followed no other way. The reveals in the entrance were built of sandstone blocks. The jambs and the construction of the transom and relieving arch have survived. The original entrance was 2.75 m high and 1.25 m wide.

The western facade of the staircase had two large rectangular windows opening onto the city and lighting the interior. The walls of the staircase were decorated with murals on two successive coatings of plaster. Probes carried out on a small-scale on the second and third platform of the staircase permitted the nature of these murals to be identified. In both cases, the frescoes on the second coating of plaster featured warrior saints. The one on the second platform of the staircase was a standing saint holding a spear in his raised right hand. The holding of the

spear, aimed at whatever was depicted at the saint's feet, is typical of warriors. Traces of yellow wings with red peacock feathers on both sides of the head suggested an identification with the Archangel Michael (Martens-Czarnecka 2001: 281). The mural observed on the second platform features a warrior saint on horseback. It, too, was painted over an older painting of a warrior saint, depicted most probably in standing position. Again, the condition of the earlier painting precludes its full interpretation.

The second floor of the building was strictly symmetrical in design. The central and most important hall is a square (7.00 m by 6.90 m) and is surrounded by a corridor running around it. One entrance led straight from the staircase, two others from opposite sides of the surrounding corridor, from the north and south. Four granite columns and corresponding pilasters in the walls supported a wooden coffered ceiling. Several ceiling beams of this construction have been preserved in original position in the south-

Throne Hall, Room 6 on the ground floor, view and section (right) looking east



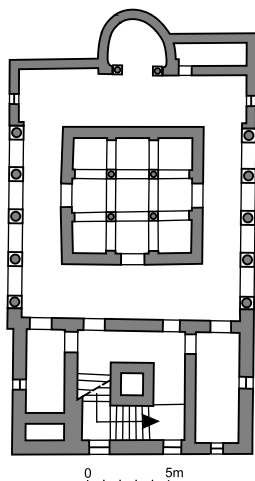
Throne Hall, ground floor

western quarter of the hall and one beam in the northwestern quarter. It is very likely that the roof took on the form of a cross with higher ceilings in the center sections on all sides and a small dome rising in the center. The interior was well-lighted through windows positioned in the raised cruciform part of the room. The walls of the central room were finely plastered and covered with paintings. On the walls of the northwestern corner section, at a height 2.60 m above the present pavement, just below the wooden ceiling, a frieze was identified, apparently crowning the compositions below.

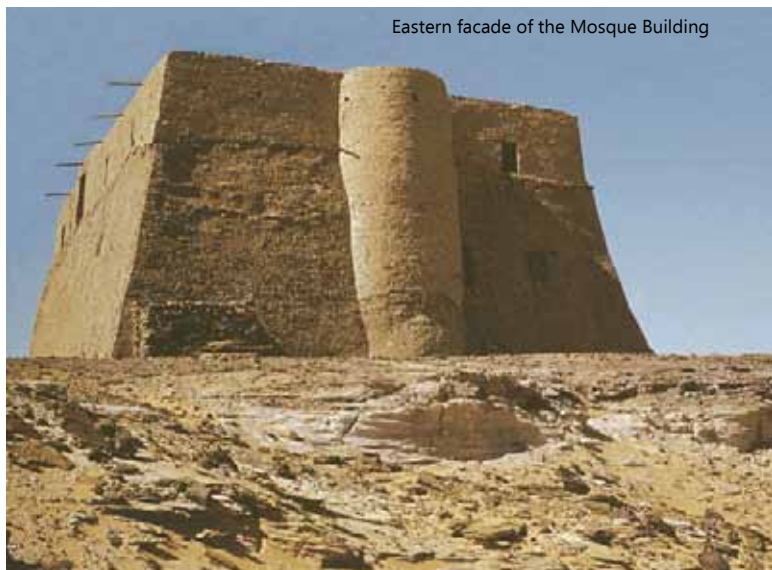
Conservation work in 2010–2012 uncovered all of the surviving painted decoration, including a number of surprising compositions, contributing new elements and themes to the known iconographic repertoire (Godlewski 2012: 310–313). Beside royal representations, fragmentarily preserved in the southwestern corner and archangels on the pilasters in the entrance, the murals included a few christological scenes, beginning with an elaborate Nativity on the east wall. A narrative composition from the childhood of Christ appeared on the earliest

plaster layer in the southwestern corner of the hall. At present one can discern Mary holding up the Child, who is picking dates from a palm tree that had leaned down at his mother's request. The scene, which is based on apocryphal gospel, has not been noted hitherto in Nubian wall painting iconography.

A composition of greater complexity than had been believed before conservation, was found on the north wall to the west of the entrance. The cross with five tondos — a central one with a representation of Christ and four with the apocalyptic beings on the arms — stood centrally at the top of a set of steps. Flanking the cross at the base was a series of white-robed figures seated on thrones; the exact number of these figures is difficult to ascertain due to the poor state of preservation of the wall plaster. These were most likely wise men (elders) and there should have been 24 of them, twelve each on either side. Other fragmentary figures, presumably adoring the cross, can be seen on either side at the base of the cross. The composition would therefore be unique in Nubian painting, referring to the text of the



Throne Hall, upper floor



Eastern facade of the Mosque Building

Revelation of St John and a text attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem, a fragment of which, translated into the Old Nubian language, was found at Qasr Ibrim in 1982. Translated by Michael Browne, it reads: "...when the four (living creatures) give glory, honor and thanksgiving, the twenty-four white, glorious priests, when they take off their crowns, worship the throne...".

The north and south corridors may have originally featured columnar porticos, resembling in this the recently uncovered Upper Church in Banganarti (Żurawski 2004: 234–242) or the Desert Church in Adindan (Mileham 1910: 38–39). The presence of such porticos in the building at Dongola is strongly suggested by a red-brick facing on the outside of the mud-brick walls forming the square hall. In the local building tradition, red brick facing was commonly used for external walls. Moreover, even in its present shape, the corridor around this central hall,

which was turned into a mosque in 1317, has windows in the north and south facade and there are large openings at the opposite ends of the western corridor. The use of columns in porticoes in the 9th century is borne out by other Dongolan foundations of the time, e.g., the Cruciform Church (CC) and Church D, where columns appeared both as structural supports and in porticoes.

In the middle of the eastern wing of the corridor, a large and deep apse opened off it. It was built atop a semicircular tower projecting from the eastern facade. Two granite columns flanked the apse entrance in the way of triumphal arches in the apses of early basilical churches.

Filling the space on either side of the staircase were two rectangular rooms with windows and wooden ceilings. They were accessible from the long platform at the top of the steps and from the western wing of the corridor.



Reconstruction of the Throne Hall as it may have looked in the mid 9th century, view from the west

A narrow compartment, now partly destroyed, was separated from the northern of these two rooms, at its western end. Another such compartment existed south of the apse (now accessible from the east wing of the corridor). These two installations recall the narrow rooms recognized as toilet depositories in houses in Makuria. A similar function of these compartments, or at least the one next to the stairs on the first floor of the Mosque building, is very likely. The room siding the apse may have served some liturgical function, perhaps as a small sacristy.

The staircase proceeded to give access to the next level, which was most probably a terrace roof around the raised part above the central hall. The exit from the staircase was presumably roofed over and there was a balustrade running around the terrace. It is also likely that the toilet in the northwestern corner of the building was roofed and

accessible from this level. Thus, the superstructure on the roof would have been 9 m long and 5 m wide. Its existence is further confirmed by some kind of roof construction documented on Frédéric Cailliaud's drawing of the building made in 1821.

The original building has been interpreted variously over the years: as a church, monastery and even royal castle. The unnaturally high ground floor, the monumental staircase leading to the first floor and terrace, and the upper-floor layout with central square hall, as well as the murals identified on the walls of the staircase and central hall, suggest instead that the building was of an official and non-residential nature. It may well have been intended as an awe-inspiring royal throne hall for official audiences and other ceremonies. The Bulgarian tsars had similar audience halls at Plisca and Preslav, imitating in this the monumental audience halls of the Byzantine emperors in Constantinople.



Tondo with Christ at the center of a cross with Four Living Creatures, mural from the Throne Hall



A king's crown, mural from the Throne Hall

CATHEDRALS



Capitals of grey granite from the Third Cathedral (RC.I)

None of the buildings discovered in Dongola to date have provided irrefutable evidence of their status as cathedrals, at least no proof as evident as the foundation stela, paintings and inscriptions that identified the Pachoras (Faras) Cathedral. Nonetheless, four structures can actually be interpreted as cathedrals, based on important formal similarities with the cathedrals at Pachoras and Phrim. The Church of the Stone Pavement is one of these: its original form of a columnar basilica (EC.I) and its form as a domed basilica (EC.II) can be interpreted as the first two successive cathedrals of Dongola. The other is the Church of the Granite Columns, which was undoubtedly a model for the Cathedral of Paulos erected in Pachoras in AD 707. Moreover, the two cathedrals, one in Dongola and the other in Pachoras, were rebuilt in the 10th century according to the same plan and in keeping with the same liturgical demands. The four structures, presumed to be the cathedrals of Dongola, were built and rebuilt in a chronological sequence from the first cathedral (EC.I) erected in the second half of the 6th century to the abandonment of the last cathedral (RC.II) in the second half of the 14th century.

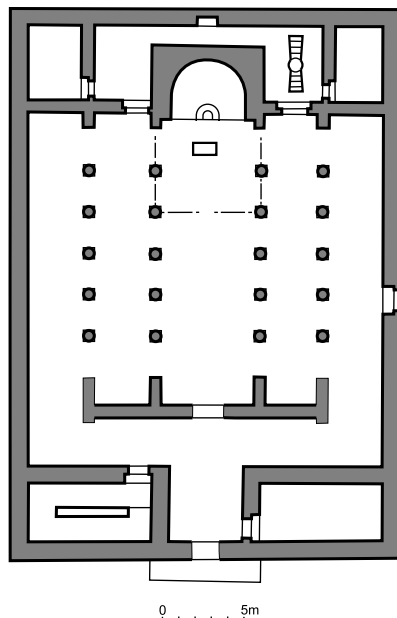
FIRST CATHEDRAL

(EC.I = Church of the Stone Pavement)

The founding of a diocese in Dongola, which occurred likely in the seventh decade of the 6th century (Godlewski 2002b), can be linked with the construction of a new church in Dongola. This building, EC.1, replaced the earlier Building X (BX), apparently damaged by a natural catastrophe. Thick deposits of black Nile silt found inside the remains of BX suggest a high flood that need not have harmed the building itself, but raised the occupational level inside it by a meter at least (see page 63). This opportuned a rebuilding of the naos into a five-aisled basilica that the first bishop of Dongola (and Makuria) presumably decided could function better as a cathedral (Godlewski 2006a).

The hull of the building and the layout of the eastern and western chambers remained unchanged. It was a large rectangular structure, 33.40 m by 23.60 m, built of red brick and entered from the west, on axis, as Building X before it. A new southern entrance was made in the center of the naos, to service the approach from the Citadel. The nave was one-and-a-half times wider than the aisles, which were accessible from the narthex. The aisles were separated by four rows of pink granite columns. Chips of granite from the setting of the columns have survived in the fill resting against the foundations. The column shafts were smoothly polished and the capitals had smooth corner leaves supporting an abacus with slightly concave sides. Between the leaves there were rings with inscribed Greek crosses of the Maltese type or straight-armed. Smaller capitals of pink granite found in the Cruciform Church (CC), as well as the Throne Hall, should be seen as spoils probably from EC.I. This

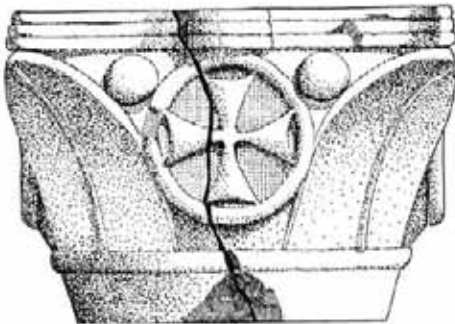
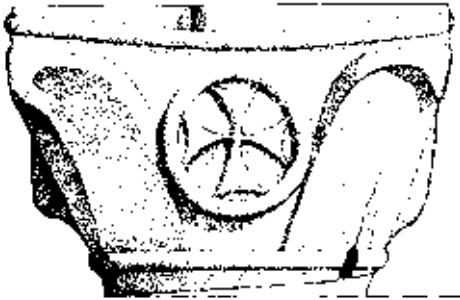
First Cathedral (EC.I)



suggests that the first Dongolan cathedral had emporia and upper colonnades at least in the nave. A staircase built into the north-western corner room led up to the emporia.

Wall paintings presumably filled the interior. Fragments of painted plaster imitating marble revetment were preserved on the walls of the baptismal pool. A wooden roof covered the basilica. Remains of liturgical furnishings included a *synthronon* in the apse, partly preserved, and a stone altar screen in the eastern part of the nave, enclosing a table altar in front of the apse. The location of the pulpit is uncertain. In the southern sacristy, which adjoined the apse, there was a round and deep baptismal pool, furnished with two sets of steps, one from the east and the other from the west. A passage backing the apse connected the *pastophories*. The entrance to the shaft of the crypts in Building X was adapted to the

Capitals of red granite from the First Cathedral (EC.I)
(below and lower right)

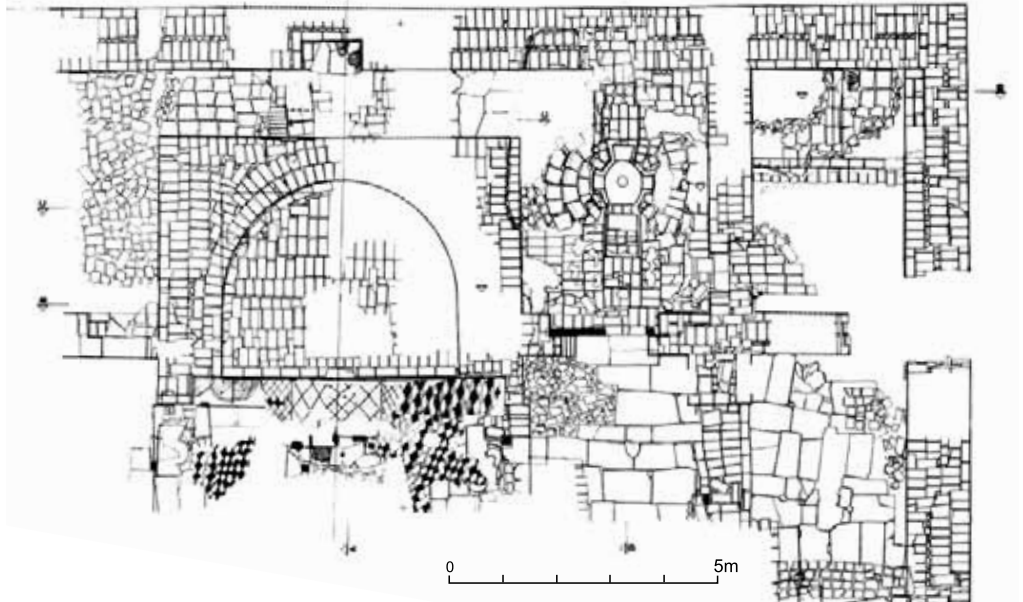


new stone floor level. A niche in the wall of the eastern corridor revealed heavy traces of burning oil on the sill.

The large five-aisled basilica that was thus constructed provided a template for other edifices of this kind in Makuria. It may have been the model for the rebuilding of the first cathedral of Bishop Longinus in Qasr Ibrim,

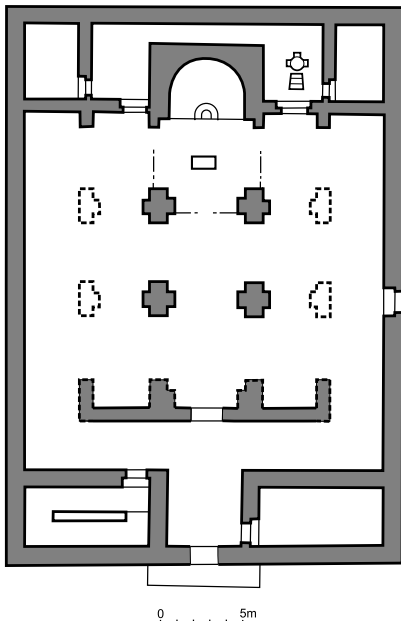
Baptistry tank from the First Cathedral (EC.I)





Baptistry and sanctuary with mosaic floor from the Second Cathedral (EC.II)

Second Cathedral (EC.II)



the Old Church, into a five-aisled basilica (Gartkiewicz 1982a: 87–94; Aldsworth 2010: 126–138), as well as for the construction by Bishop Aetios of a new cathedral at Pachoras (Godlewski 2006b: 33–41). The latter presumably followed the establishment of a diocese, as willed by the king and bishop of Dongola in the 620s.

While there are differences in fairly secondary characteristics, the basilicas from Pachoras and Qasr Ibrim and their potential prototype from Dongola constitute a type that is quite homogenous and which prevailed in Makuria in the first half of the 7th century.

SECOND CATHEDRAL

(EC.II = Church of the Stone Pavement)

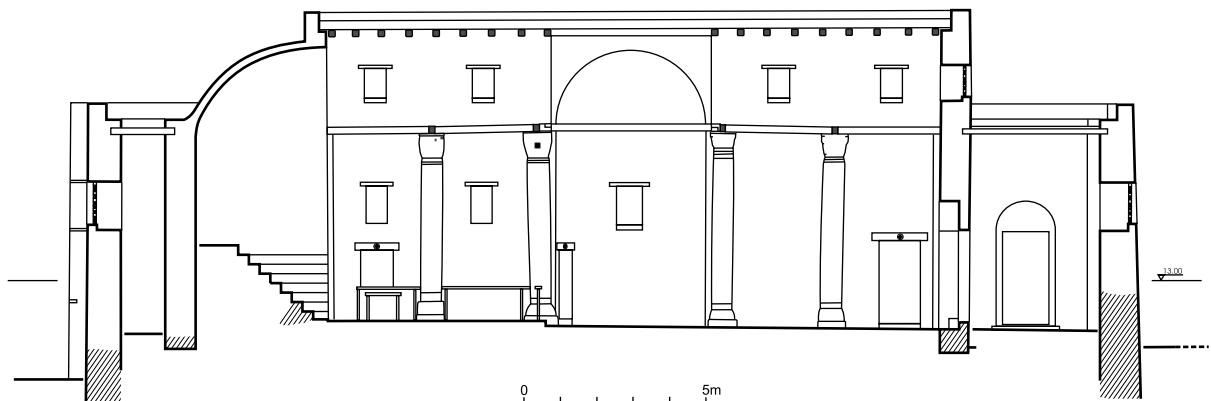
The modified design of Dongola churches from the latter half of the 7th century resulted from, on one hand, wartime destruction caused by the Arab siege of AD 652, and on the other hand, from a creative adaptation of domed basilica plans en vogue throughout the Byzantine Empire at the time (Krautheimer 1981: 252–270).



Bishop, mural from the Chapel of Archangel Michael in the monastery complex on Kom H

The changes in the original cathedral were certainly forced by heavy damages to the naos and Arabic sources indeed speak of the destruction of the main church of Dongola (Vantini 1975: OSN 528–529). The shattered columns and capitals were removed from the interior and were reused in the construction of a new defensive tower (see Citadel and fortifications, pages 20ff.) on the Citadel (Godlewski 1991b: 108–109). The naos was rebuilt (Godlewski 1990: 524–527; 2006a), enlarging the foundations of the central part and erecting four massive pillars probably to support a central dome. The aisles, separated from the nave by the pillars, were re-roofed with vaulting. The western and eastern parts of the basilica remained unchanged. Some modification of the liturgical furnishings was introduced. The baptismal pool was reduced, cutting the western stairs off from the cross-shaped basin (Godlewski 1979: 103–110).

The interior decoration was also, no doubt, refurbished, but the sole surviving remains are in the bema, where a geometric mosaic floor of black and off-white pebbles was laid in a clay-mortar bedding. This local form of mosaic, doubtlessly made by local artisans, is a good example of the aspirations of the founders (bishop? king?) to have Byzantine-inspired decoration in the interior, likely modeled on examples from Syria and Palestine (Godlewski 2011). The technical characteristics of the Dongolan mosaics (other examples of the art have been preserved in the Mosaic Church II) demonstrate that local workshops were cut off from their Mediterranean counterparts, which is understandable in the second half of the 7th century, but were charged with an ambition to imitate examples that they had seen or heard of. These ambitions were also present in the murals decorating the Cathedral and many other churches in Makuria, not to mention the Commemorative Building (B.III.1) on the Citadel in front of the palace facade, where early wall paintings survive.



Reconstructed section through the Third Cathedral (RC.I)

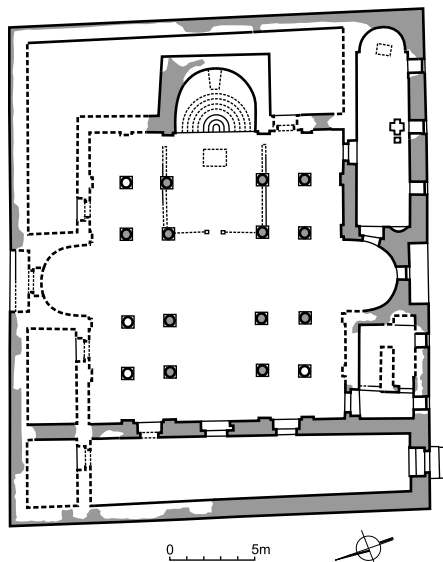
THIRD CATHEDRAL

(RC.I = Church of the Granite Columns)

The peace that followed the political perturbations of the mid 7th century stimulated building development in the capital. Not only was the Cathedral rebuilt (and perhaps other complexes like the Mosaic Church and the Old Church), but new foundations were initiated. One of these was the Church of the Granite Columns (RC.I), perhaps the church of the archbishop of Dongola. Sited on the ruins of the Old Church, it was bigger, measuring 29 m x 24.50 m (Gartkiewicz 1990: 109–304). The new cathedral followed a central plan with a five-aisled, columnar naos and two naves intersecting at right angles in the center of the complex. It was entered most likely through an entrance in the southwestern corner, leading to a narrow narthex. Another entrance from the north, leading to the transept, was reconstructed by P.M. Gartkiewicz on the grounds of parallels with the Cathedral of Paulos in Pachoras, but there is little architectural evidence or functional justification for this idea. From the narthex, three entrances allowed passage into the columnar naos, which was divided by rows of gneiss columns. The intersecting naves terminated each in an apse, the eastern

one being slightly wider than the others. Flanking the eastern apse were *pastophories* connected by a corridor running behind the apse. The northern sacristy, mostly destroyed, appears to have been shaped like a reversed L, filling the space between the northern and eastern apses. It must have been entered from the north side of

Third Cathedral (RC.I)



the naos. It joined the southern sacristy, which shared space inside the church with a long room, the baptistery, entered from the naos. Together these two rooms formed a mirror "L" shape to the northern *pastophory*. A staircase was located by the south wall, between the southern apse and the narthex. Two analogous chambers probably existed on the north side. One would have been by the narthex and the other by the northern apse, the walls of which have been preserved only in part; their function has not been identified.

The staircase is proof of the presence of galleries in the western part of the building, over the narthex and the western ends of the aisles, but there is no architectural evidence in support.

The liturgical furnishings included a *synthronon* in the apse, bema in the eastern end of the nave, surrounded by a stone altar screen, a table altar and a pulpit in the central part of the naos. In the baptistery, beside the sunken, cruciform baptismal pool, there was a small apse with table altar, and a sanctuary screened off by a low altar screen (Godlewski 1979: 110–124).

The date of the church foundation is relatively poorly documented in the archaeological record on site. The granite capitals of the naos, as well as terracotta window grilles from the baptistery(?) suggest the end of the 7th century. The capitals are an intermediate form between the architectural decoration of the cathedral in Qasr Ibrim and that of the Cathedral of Paulos in Pachoras. The latter is also the closest parallel to the Dongolan cathedral. Assuming P.M. Gartkiewicz was right in deducing the pattern of borrowings proceeding from Dongola to Pachoras, the new construction in the capital must have preceded the building in Faras. The most recent reconstruction of the naos of the Cathedral of Paulos as a five-aisled design (Godlewski 2006b: 43–82) further emphasizes the similarities. This reconstruction has been based

on a re-analysis of architectural elements in the Cathedral of Petros, which remained from the earlier church and were not moved during the 10th century rebuilding. Considering that the Pachoras cathedral is dated securely to AD 707, the construction of RC.I cannot be later than the close of the 7th century. Gartkiewicz's dating of the Dongola structure to the second half of the 8th century was grounded in the belief that the Faras cathedral had been built by Bishop Ignatios (766–802), but this is hardly justified. Paulos's building activity is evidenced in a number of inscriptions, while there is nothing at all in the way of evidence for Ignatios's involvement, whether in the architecture or the mural decoration of the church in Pachoras.

What's more, not only were the two complexes erected at the same time, but they were likely the work of the same group of craftsmen, which is evident from the carving of the capitals. The church at Sai, tentatively identified as an episcopal building, may have also been built on the same plan (Gartkiewicz 1990: 255–257), but it has not been excavated yet.

All facts considered, it seems likely that the new cathedral of Dongola (RC.I) exemplified a novel and, specifically Nubian design in the religious architecture of Makuria. Gartkiewicz (1990: 249–255) observed inspirations for the naos design in the Church of the Prophets, Apostles and Martyrs at Gerasa and for the multi-columnar division of the naos in the North African churches at Junca (Basilica B) and Carthage (Damous el Karita). Suggested Armenian influences were rejected by Peter Grossmann (2001). Gartkiewicz had already stressed the input of local traditions in the final shape of the Dongola building and his view has been borne out completely with the unearthing of several other church buildings (e.g., Building X, EC.I and EC.II), where these traditions can be discerned more clearly (Godlewski 1998). The predilection for central plans and five-

aisled naos is evident and the creativity of the Dongolan milieu of architects has also become more apparent. Thus, it may be said with conviction that when the emergence of the Umayyad Caliphate greatly reduced Byzantine influence in Makuria and restricted the influx of new patterns, Dongolan craftsmen were sufficiently prepared to fulfill the commissions of the royal court and bishops of Dongola.

The Church of the Granite Columns has no direct parallels in Byzantine church architecture. The architectural principles in general are similar, but on closer inspection the building in Dongola does not really represent the same form. It seems therefore that Dongolan architects and craftsmen independently created a new model of cathedral church, making use of experience gained from earlier building projects in the capital and their knowledge of Byzantine architecture. This creative period was to last throughout the 8th and 9th centuries, coming to fruit in such splendid buildings as the Cruciform Church (CC), the Throne Hall of the Kings of Makuria, and two other important churches, the Pillar Church and Church D.

FOURTH CATHEDRAL

(RC.II = Church of the Granite Columns)

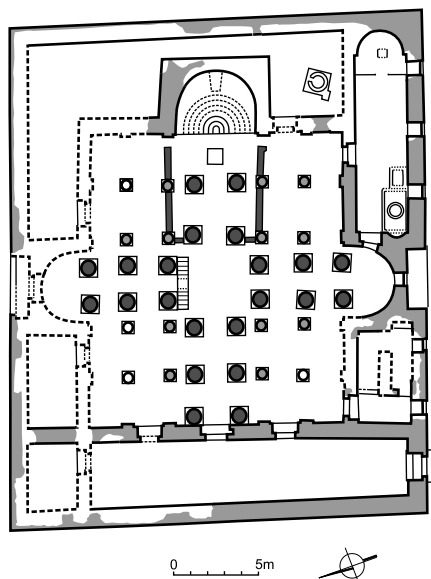
The rebuilding of the Third Cathedral (Gartkiewicz 1990: 264–299) should be viewed in the context of churches from the Dongola area planned as a cross-over-rectangle design. Actually, apart from a new system of vaults resulting from the modified plan, the Fourth Cathedral was not changed much in effect of the rebuilding. A set of round brick pillars was introduced in the nave and transept to carry the central dome and vaults, while leaving a columnar naos with wooden roof in the corners. Vaults resting on the columns above the corners of the naos were also suggested by P.M. Gartkiewicz, but it is hard to imagine this arrangement as being a stable one. There is no evidence

from Makuria of architectural designs with arcades over the columns.

The rebuilding of the Cathedral at Pachoras (Michałowski 1967; Godlewski 2006b: 93–110) is much clearer in terms of vault design. Pillars were introduced instead of columns to support a central dome, the nave and transept were covered with barrel vaults, and groin vaults appeared in other parts of the naos. The new Cathedral of Petros in Pachoras was a more harmonious building, and with its painted decoration, it must have been counted among the most magnificent edifices of the kingdom.

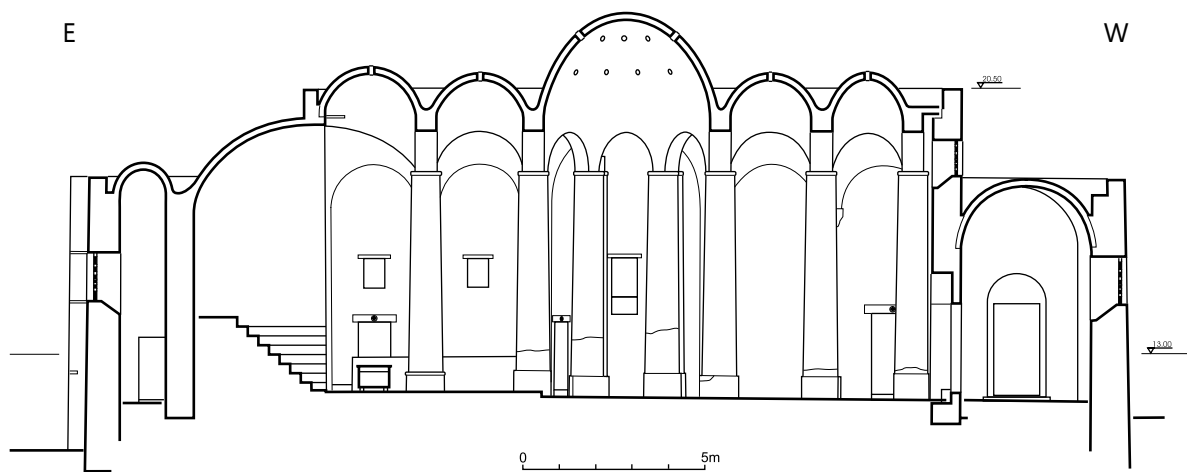
The alterations made in the Fourth Cathedral have not been dated precisely. Gartkiewicz suggested the close of the 10th century, based mainly on Abu Makarim's report concerning the introduction of domes in the palace of King Raphael (Vantini 1975: OSN 326–327). The cathedral at Pachoras was rebuilt during the second half of the 10th century, and it seems to have happened later than the reconstruction of

Fourth Cathedral (RC.II)





General view of the Fourth Cathedral (RC II)



Reconstructed section through the Fourth Cathedral (RC.II)

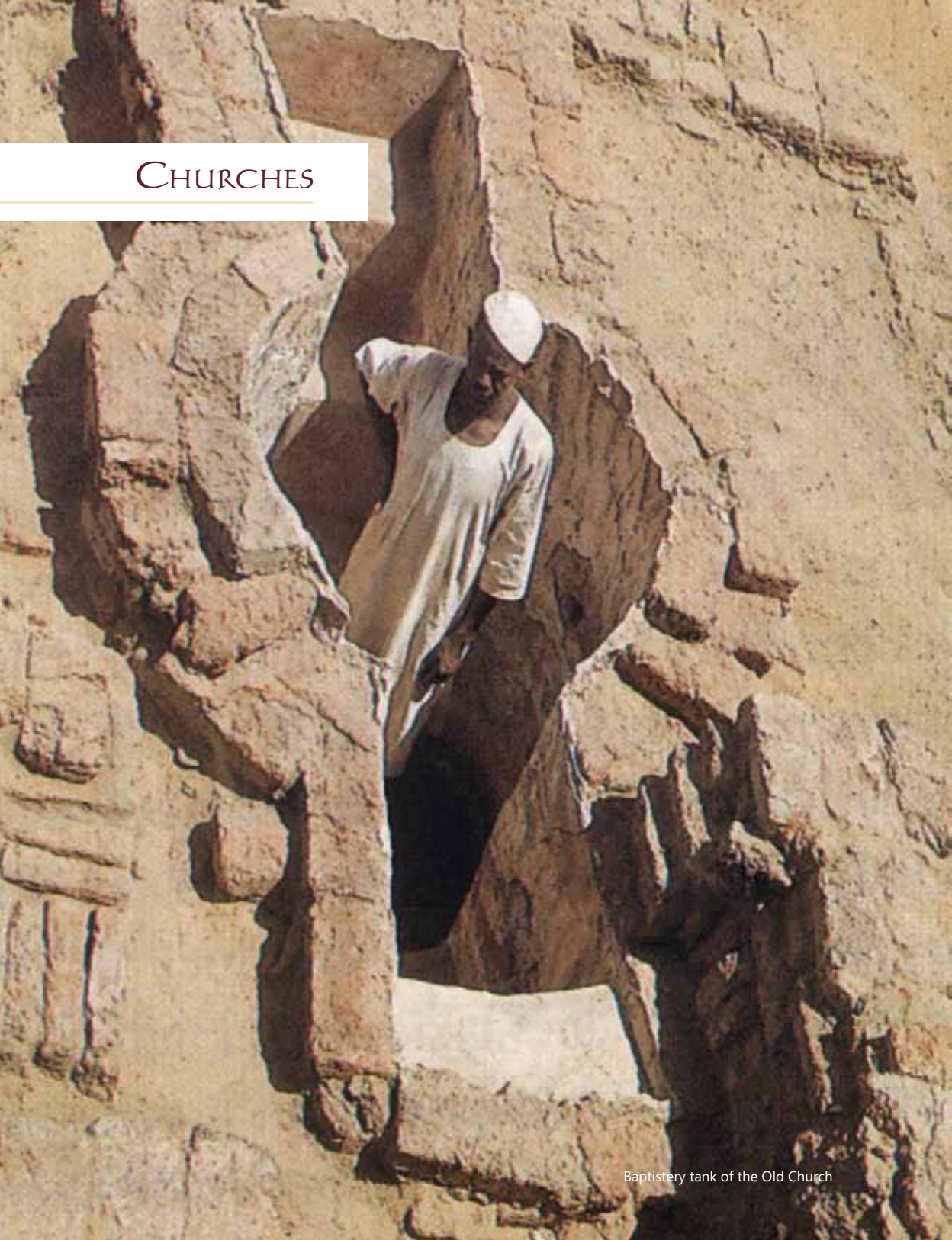
RC.II in Dongola. In view of the appearance in Dongola of new church buildings on the cruciform and cross-over-rectangle plans, the Pillar Church (PC) and the King's Church (B.V on the citadel) with its round pillars in particular, the alterations introduced in the Fourth Cathedral may be presumed to date from the close of the 9th century or even earlier. A strong argument in favor of an earlier date for RC.II is the tomb and funerary stela placed in the floor, in front of the new monolithic altar standing in a lateral chapel (baptistery) of the Cathedral. The burial is most probably of *Eparchos ton Gaderon*, Ioannes son of *Augustus Zacharias*, who died in AD 883 (Łajtar 2003a: 100–106). If the stela is indeed connected with the tomb, as well as with the new arrangement of the chapel, and if a similar placement of the stela of Mariankudda in the church at Hambukol is compared (Łajtar 2003a: 81–93), then Ioannes may be seen as one of the most important noblemen of the kingdom, the man responsible for the new form of the Cathedral. As the founder and a brother to King Georgios, he had the right to be buried in a chapel inside the Cathedral, but the event remains nonetheless unique in Nubian tradition. In any case, his tomb provides a connection with Zacharias that would suggest a likely date for the refurbishing in the 870s–880s, thus placing the Fourth Cathedral in the mainstream of architectural aesthetic and functional changes occurring in the religious architecture of Dongola at the time.

The last cathedral was open with no further apparent rebuilding until the 14th century when the church complexes north of the Citadel were finally deserted. The Mamluks did it no harm and indeed the columns continued to stand while sand slowly engulfed the ruins and the walls were dismantled in search of building material.



Priest, mural from the Chapel of Archangel Michael
in the monastery complex on Kom H

CHURCHES



Baptistry tank of the Old Church

The first churches were built in Dongola in a new quarter north of the Citadel. This sparsely settled area of the Citadel accorded opportunities for unhindered development, drawing heavily on outside inspirations to meet the growing needs. In form, these new buildings depended largely on the preferences and traditions introduced to Makuria by Christian missionaries, but their size and building technique were due to teams of local builders who had recently honed their skills in the construction of the Citadel. The first church structures in Dongola, the Old Church (OC) and Building X (BX), as well as the Mosaic Church I (MC.I) located already on the southern fringes of the Letti Basin, and also the first commemorative buildings, Early Church D (EDC), and the Monastic Church in the monastery on kom H (HC) were erected on very different plans and introduced a great variety of architectural templates to Dongola. It is also important that a considerable number of religious buildings of very varied function was constructed in rather less than fifty years, a very short period indeed.

The two largest, the Old Church and Building X, were raised alongside one another, giving rise to a religious complex that would continue to develop for the next 800 years. As there were no pagan temples in Dongola, the missionaries and first bishops were not tempted to convert them into churches, as was Theodore, the bishop of Philae, who did this systematically in Philae and Nobadia (Monneret de Villard 1935; Adams 1965, 2009; Gartkiewicz 1982b). In Dongola, everything was based on imported patterns right from the start.

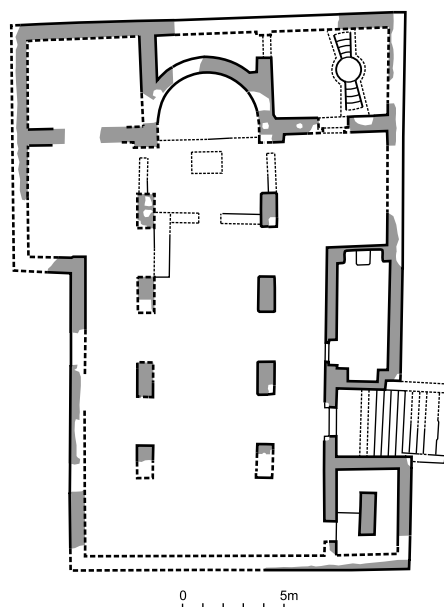
The two church buildings that were erected in the initial period of Christianity in Dongola, the Old Church and Building X, differed in layout and construction, and likely also in function. The Old Church was certainly an ordinary church, but the more monumental Building X with the two crypts under the apse must have served a commemorative function. Three other

smaller buildings believed to originate from this period were executed with different functions in mind, hence the varying architectural solutions. The Mosaic Church (MC.I) was a small, three-aisled basilica serving a local community, and may have been connected with the nearby rock-cut tombs, currently interpreted as belonging to royals. The Early Church D (EDC), connected with a tomb located by its northwestern corner, was in all likelihood a commemorative structure. On the other hand, the Monastic Church on kom H (HC) was one of the most ambitious building projects undertaken in Dongola.

OLD CHURCH (OC)

The oldest church in Dongola assumedly, the Old Church (Gartkiewicz 1990: 30–94) was a medium-sized (27.15 m by 19.10 m), three-aisled, pillared basilica with a naos that widened at the eastern end to form a sort of dwarf transept. It also had a narthex in the western part of the naos. The apse was

Old Church (OC)



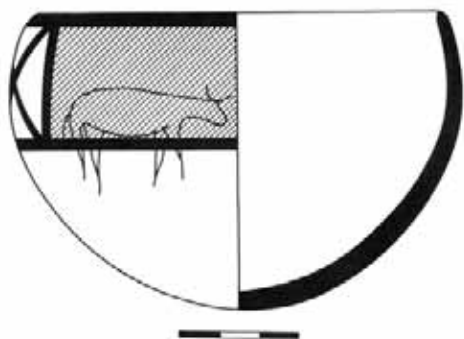
separate from the eastern wall of the church, but there is doubt as to whether the passage between the *pastophories* was already in existence. The two *pastophories*, one on either side of the apse, were accessible from the naos through centrally positioned doors. The southeastern room doubled as a baptistery, being furnished with a round and deep pool and two sets of steps, from the east and west. The monumental southern entrance, seemingly the only entrance to the church, was located beside a corner staircase, which suggests emporia. East of the entry there was an annex serving as a chapel. The liturgical furnishing were characteristic: a *synthronon* in the apse, the altar in the sanctuary (bema) in the eastern end of the nave, separated from the rest of the naos by a partially preserved altar screen. The pulpit was located by the northern arcade of the nave, abutting the western end of the altar screen.

Gartkiewicz dated the construction and use of the church initially to the period between the mid-6th and mid-8th centuries, and later to the first half of the 7th century (Gartkiewicz 1990: 278-279). Godlewski (1990) placed the construction in the second half of the 6th century, perhaps even the middle of the century, when the Kingdom of Makuria converted to Christianity. A deposit of Dongolan pottery, consisting of small bowls of Red Ware with painted decoration, uncovered in the foundation

layer of the church staircase, confirmed the mid-6th century dating (Pluskota 1990). Gartkiewicz also suggested that the builders had not come from local workshops, but the skilled use of mud brick would favor local masons, perhaps working under the supervision of a missionary who would have introduced architectural ideas from his native region.

P.M. Gartkiewicz (1990: 88-94) pointed to sources of inspiration for the layout of the Old Church in Egypt as well as Cyrenaica (basilica at Hermopolis Magna, Eastern Church of Apollonia), but also Palestine and Syria (churches in el-Tabha and Sardijilla). He considered the dwarf transept and the block form of the east end of the building as key characteristics of the Dongolan church. The Syrian and Palestinian examples are nearer to the Old Church in scale and layout, as well as in the block form of the east end of the building. The basilica at et-Tabha (Krautheimer 1981: 168-169) also had a passage joining the *pastophories* behind the crescent-shaped apse, making it the closest parallel of the Dongolan edifice. Another characteristic apparently shared by the Old Church is the connection between the naos (transept) and the *pastophories* via doorways centered in the separating walls. Basilicas possessed of transepts were popular solutions only during the 5th and 6th centuries, thus nicely positioning the Dongolan variant within the mainstream of Byzantine architecture.

Red Ware bowl from the Old Church (mid 6th century AD)





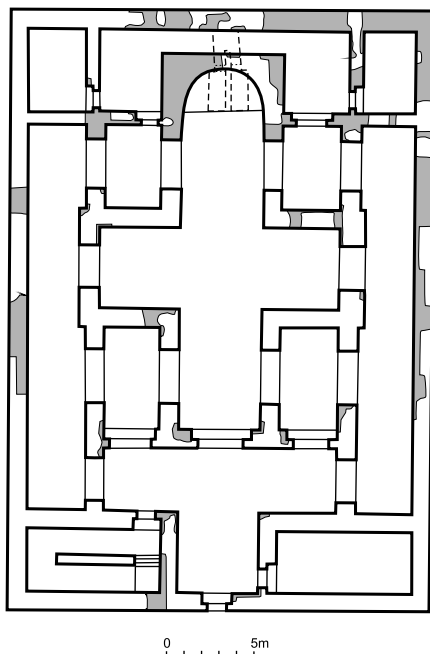
Staircase in the northwestern room of Building X (BX)

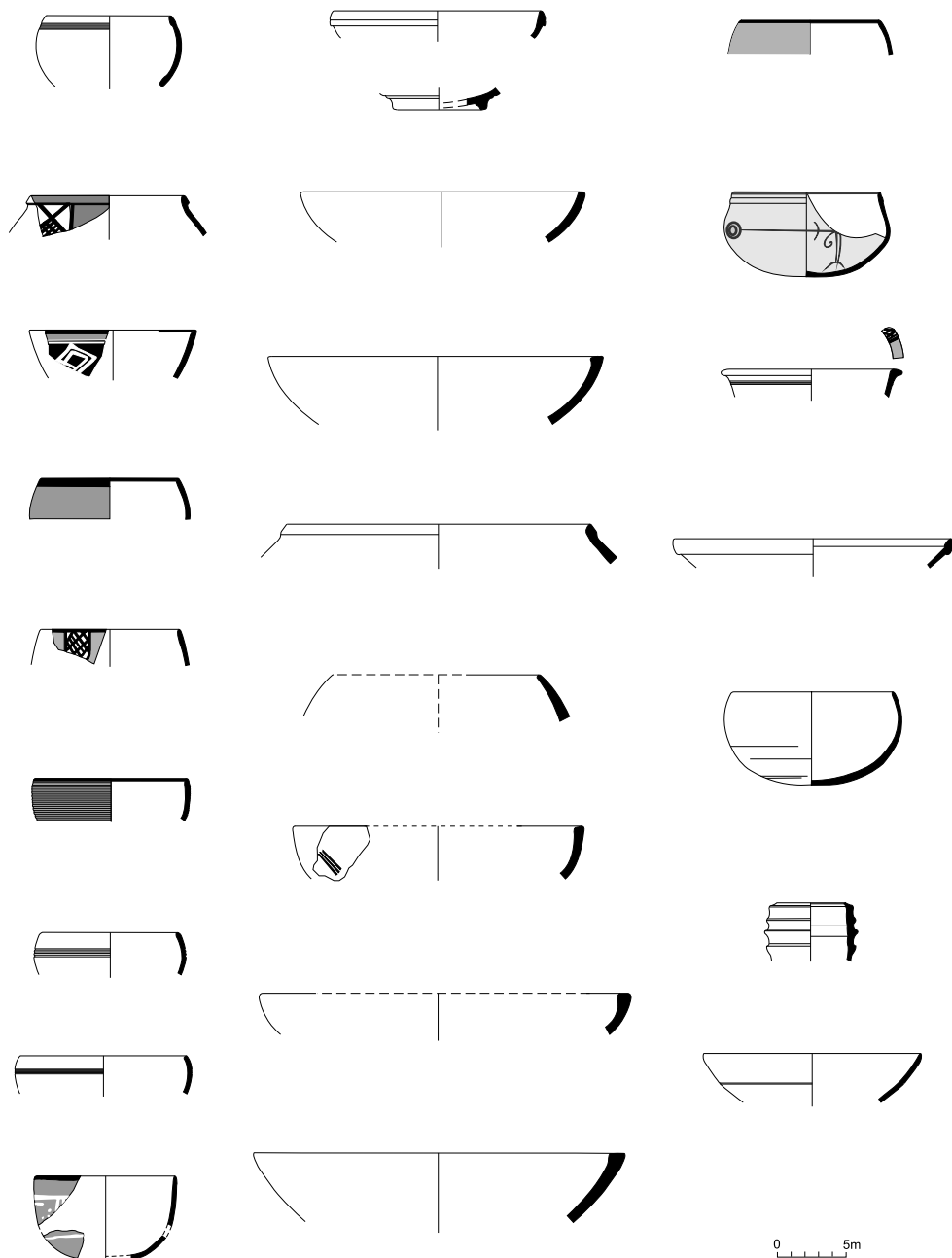
BUILDING X (BX)

Building X (Godlewski 1990) was built on empty ground between the Old Church and the northern gate of the Citadel (some evidence of earlier construction was noted in the western part of the building). Solidly built of red brick with a brick floor, this structure was without parallel in Makuria, but it played an important role in the development of several Makurian church plans.

It was the first building to be erected on the spot and has been investigated only fragmentarily, owing to the fact that the First Cathedral (EC.I and EC.II) and later the Cruciform Church (CC) were built on top of its remains. Explorations below the stone floor of the later buildings have helped to recognize the plan and size of the structure (33.40 m by 23.60 m). The central part had a cruciform layout with the west and east arms slightly longer than the others, the east one ending in an apse. Rectangular rooms appeared between the arms; long corridors sided the building on the north and south, and on the west there was a kind of narthex,

Building X (BX)





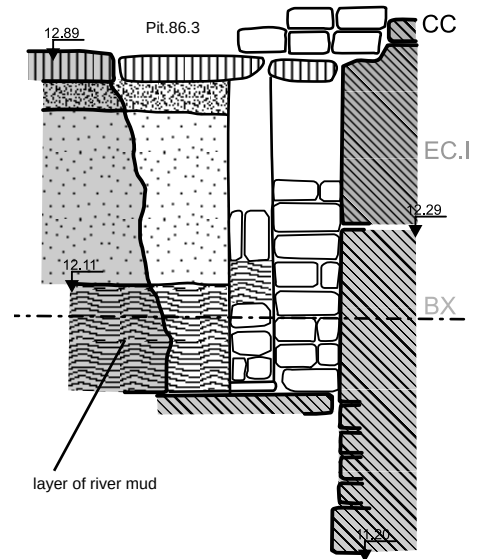
Repertoire of mid-6th century pottery from Building X (BX)

joining the square entrance vestibule in the centre. Two rectangular corner chambers flanked this vestibule, the northern one containing a staircase.

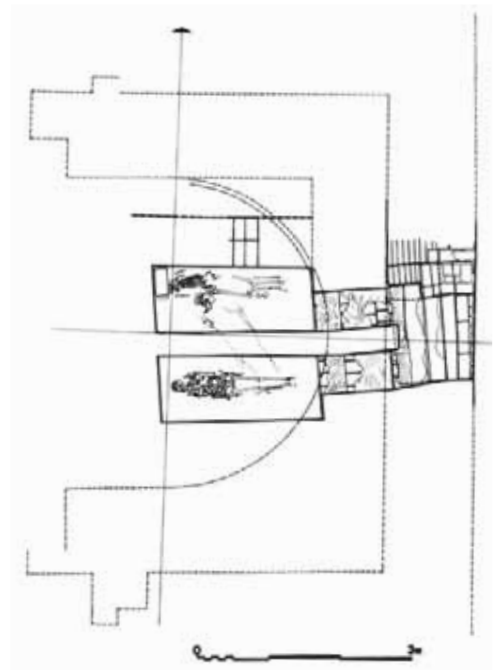
The apse projected between the *pastophories*, which were connected by a passage behind it. Each *pastophory* consisted of two interconnected chambers, being entered through a doorway immediately next to the head of the apse. No traces of a *synthronon* or altar were found, but it was noted that



Section through the western part of Building X, recording a thick layer of river mud



Two crypts of Building X (BX)



the floor in the apse was raised. This proved to be due to two crypts of about the same size, which were located underneath the apse. They were entered from a vertical shaft, the opening of which was centered in the passage behind the apse. Buried in the crypts without any tomb equipment were the bodies of two men (Promińska 1979), individuals of particular importance for Makuria, considering that they were venerated in each successive religious building built on the spot right to the end of the 15th century. It seems plausible to connect the original burial (and building foundation) with the Christianization of Makuria. This would make the structure contemporary with the Old Church.

Like many other buildings in the Byzantine Empire and Italy, Building X was related conceptually to the Apostolorum Basilica in Constantinople (Krautheimer 1981: 72–73, 254–256). The nearest parallel for the naos, however, is the Church of St. Titos

in Gortis on Crete (Krautheimer 1981: 268). The character of the building, its layout and function were probably determined by the needs of the newly baptized ruler of Makuria on the one hand, and the influence of the missionaries and first priests connected with the Byzantine circle on the other. The parallel with the Apostolorum Basilica of Constantinople, built by Constantine the Great and reworked by Justinian, is without doubt symbolic, testifying to the aspirations of Makurian court circles.

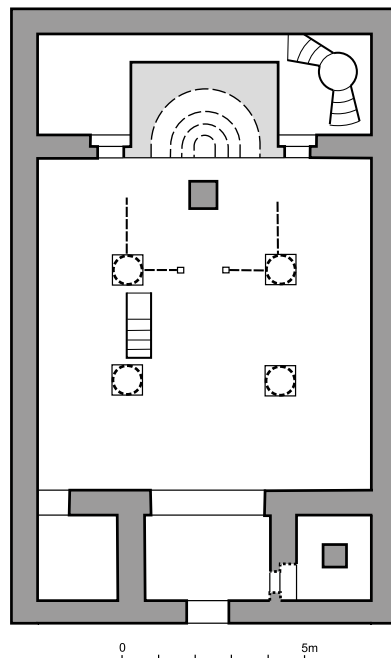
FIRST MOSAIC CHURCH (MC.I)

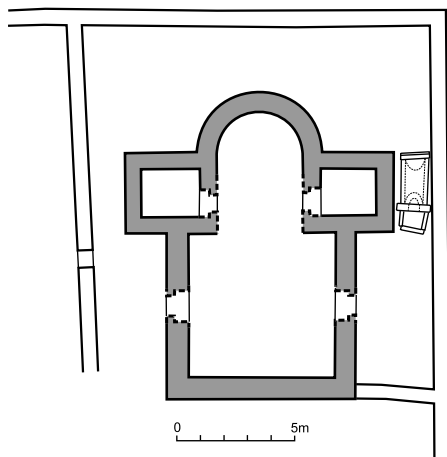
The First Mosaic Church was a small, three-aisled basilica (16.70 m by 10.40 m) serving the needs of a local community, perhaps connected in some way with the rock-cut tombs in the vicinity. Both the western and eastern ends of the structure followed Dongolan designs. Doors on either side of the apse gave access from the naos to the



Sandstone capital from the First Mosaic Church (MC.I)

First Mosaic Church (MC.I)





Early Church D (EDC)

pastophories, which were connected by a passage behind the apse. The western end was tripartite with a central vestibule and corner rooms, of which the southern one had a staircase installed in it. The body of the church was presumably divided into three aisles with two pairs of columns, which ended up in the western portico after the rebuilding. The floor was paved with stone slabs. The liturgical furnishings followed a standard: *synthronon* in the apse and *cancelli* screening off the altar in the eastern end of the nave. A panel of carved floral and geometric decoration from the southern chancel post presumably belongs with the original interior decoration of this building. A stone pulpit stood between the pillars screening off the north aisle. A deep round baptismal pool furnished with two sets of steps on opposite sides was fitted into the southern sacristy (Żurawski 2012: 153–156).

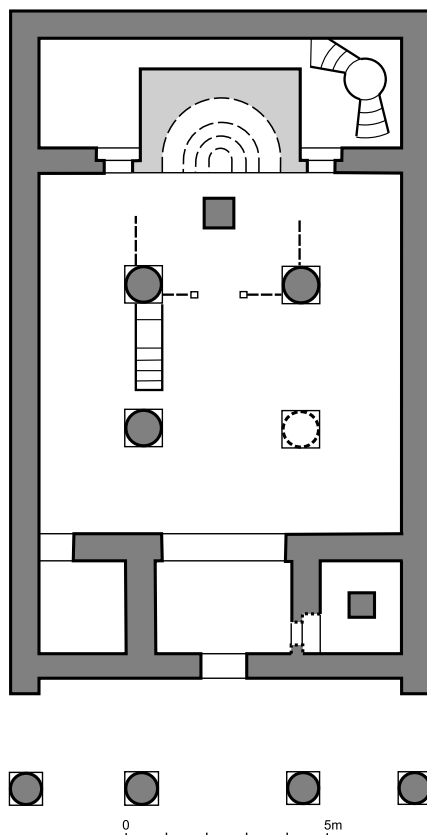
There can be no doubt that the First Cathedral with its five-aisled body provided the model for this church. It was raised presumably in the second half of the 6th century. Corinthianizing capitals presented an awkward stylization of acanthus leaves and were most certainly of local manufacture, based on imported patterns.

EARLY CHURCH D (EDC)

Early Church D, located on the northern fringes of the agglomeration, was connected with a tomb located by its northwestern corner. It was small and square in plan (13 m by 11.50 m), single-aisled with an apse and *pastophories* on either side of the bema. The projecting *pastophories* imparted on the building the plan of a Latin cross, the top arm being formed of a projecting apse (Dobrowolski 1991).

SECOND MOSAIC CHURCH (MC.II)

The building boom that followed the siege of Dongola in the middle of the 7th century



Second Mosaic Church (MC.II)

included the reconstruction of the First Cathedral as a domed basilica. This provided inspiration for a number of church renovation projects all over Makuria, not to mention local foundations. Modifications of the same kind were introduced in the Mosaic Church (Żurawski 1997b; 2012: 157–156), although little can be said for certain. Presumably after the columns were removed from the central part of the basilica, four round pillars were erected instead, using voussoir-like blocks of stone for the purpose. These pillars stood on the stone floor of the basilica and most likely supported a central dome, thus establishing a domed basilica plan, but with new, significant features. The span of arches between the central pillars was wider than the spans of lateral arches to the west and east, highlighting the central position of the naos.

Interior decoration was also a major concern in the Second Mosaic Church (MC.II), as revealed by the floor mosaic. It was more of a geometric design and was laid in the same local technique as in the case of the Second Cathedral (EC.II). While there is little specific

chronological evidence for the rebuilding of the earlier Mosaic Church, the floor mosaic goes a long way in suggesting a likely date in the second half of the 7th century.

Yet another important feature was the four-column western portico with a wider central intercolumnar space. A portico in front of the western facade is presented by the Church of the Prophets, Apostles and Martyrs in Gerasa and all things considered, there is reason to believe that the Gerasan structure influenced to a considerable extent the way in which the Mosaic Church in Dongola was rebuilt. It, too, had a central cruciform layout of the naos and four architecturally distinguished corner rooms. If the newly introduced mosaic floor and the uniqueness of the architectural design are anything to go by, central authorities must have had some say in the rebuilding. In the functional sense, the interpretation of this church remains open. On the one hand, it was furnished with a baptismal pool, but on the other hand, it may have been connected initially with the presumably royal rock-cut tombs found in the vicinity.

Fragment of a floor mosaic from the Second Mosaic Church (MC.II)



NEW TYPE OF CHURCH

The second half of the 9th century continued to be a highly creative period in church building in Dongola and likely in the region around it as well. Important buildings were erected, three in Dongola — the Pillar Church (PC) on the western platform running along the river bank near the north harbor, Building V (B.V) within the royal complex on the Citadel and Church D (ED) on the northern outskirts of Dongola, interpreted as a monastery church — and one, known as the Church of Mariankudda and possibly a monastic church, on the north kom in Hambukol. Lower Church III in Banganarti also had a similar plan. All three buildings in Dongola demonstrated a similar cross-over-rectangle design with projecting transept wings, resembling the plan of the Panaghia Church in Skripou in Greece, which dates from 873/4 (Rodley

1994; Krautheimer 1981: 330). It is difficult to say whether a connection existed between the two types of churches, but an original contribution of Makurian architects to church architecture, contemporary with the Byzantine inscribed-cross churches of the Macedonian dynasty, is quite probable, harmonizing well with the specifically Dongolese creativity manifested by the new type of cathedral (RC.I) and commemorative building (CC).

PILLAR CHURCH (PC)

The Pillar Church is a medium-sized building, 16 m by 15 m, built on exposed ground, on an artificial platform formed by the leveling of residential architecture (Godlewski 1996: 116–120; 1998: 132–133). It was made of red brick, including bricks of special shape

Central and eastern part of the Pillar Church (PC)

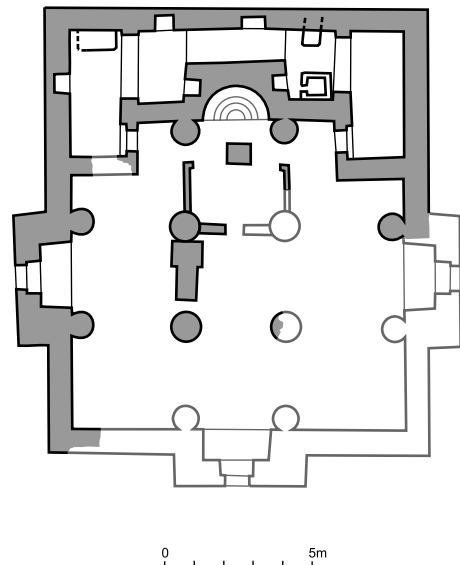




Sanctuary of the Pillar Church (PC)

for the construction of round pillars and pilasters. The plan was of the cross-over-rectangle type with projecting north and south arms. Entrances led through each arm, as in the cruciform buildings CC and B.III (see page 76). The four-pillared naos had very prominent round pilasters projecting from the side walls, and was probably domed over the central bay. In the eastern part, on either side of the apse, there were *pastophories* in the shape of a reversed "L", much like those in the Third Cathedral (RC.I), with entrances in the side walls of the naos. An eastern corridor connected the *pastophories* behind the apse. The western part of the church is missing. There was a *synthronon* in the apse and masonry chancel posts separating the eastern part of the naos with the masonry altar placed centrally in the bema. The pulpit was traditionally located by the northeastern pillar. A table altar stood by the east wall of the prothesis and in the north part of the

Pillar Church (PC)



diakonikon an oven for baking the Eucharist bread was set against the apse wall, although it is not clear whether it had been built there originally or was added later. The dating of the Pillar Church is not definite, but it is likely to be no later than the second half of the 9th century. It was almost certainly built before the Third Cathedral was rebuilt.

KING'S CHURCH (B.V = BUILDING V)

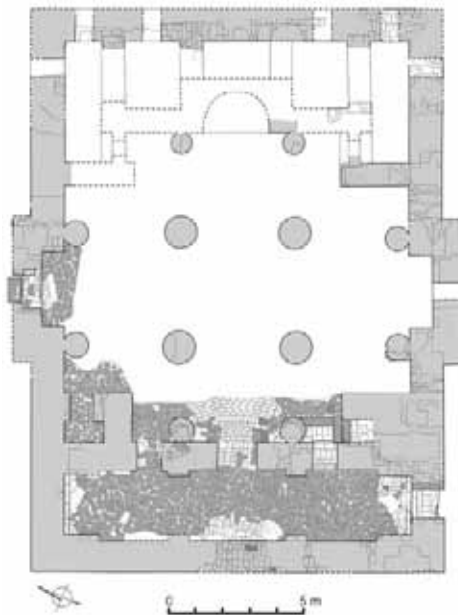
The structure erected to the south of the commemorative building B.III.1 (see pages 35ff.) within the Royal Complex on the Citadel, occupied a high stone platform intended presumably to compensate for the uneven original rock surface in this part of the citadel. The walking level inside Building V was 1.80 m higher than the floor inside the commemorative monument and the "Palace of Ioannes".



The King's Church is a medium-sized building, 24 m by 15 m, made of red brick, including bricks of special shape for the construction of round pillars and pilasters. The plan was of a cross-over-rectangle type with a dome and projecting north and south arms.

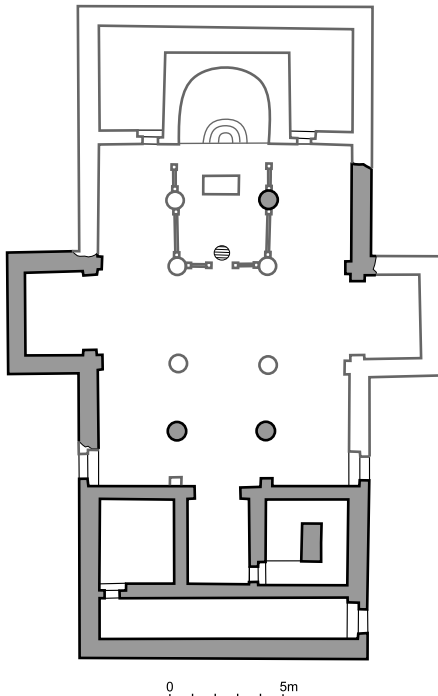
Excavations in the western and north-western part of this substantial church

King's Church (B.V)



building uncovered the robbed out west wall and western part of the north wall. The brick from this part of the structure was salvaged sometime in the 19th and 20th century, but the walls in the southern and eastern parts of the building still rise to a height of 3.60 m. The floor in the narthex and the northwestern part of the naos was made of broken sandstone slabs. The narthex was a narrow space filling the whole width of the building, separated from the naos by a wall with three doorways under stone arcades. It was entered from the south, through a doorway faced with sandstone blocks, well dressed and with sharp edges. Another entrance led directly into the building through a central doorway installed in the north wall. The walls of the narthex were coated with lime plaster; fragmentary wall paintings have been preserved on these walls.

Church of Mariankudda in Hambukol



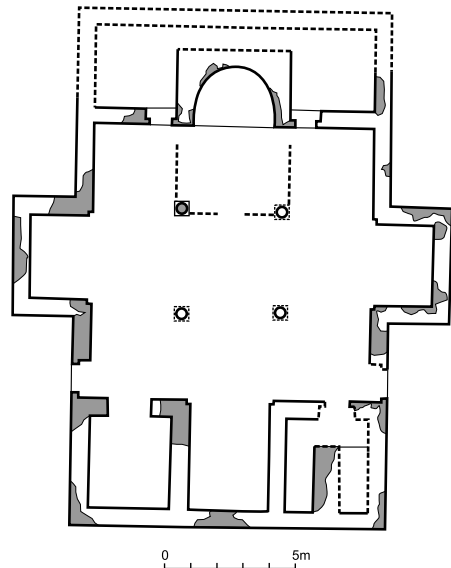
A staircase in the southwestern part of the naos was accessible from the naos as well as from the narthex, being located just inside the southern of the three passages between the naos and narthex.

Murals and inscriptions, written in Greek and Old Nubian, have been recorded on the well preserved walls of the naos. The excavations of the naos and eastern part of the church will be possible under condition that restoration of the murals be conserved simultaneously.

CHURCH D (DC)

Church D was built probably at the same time on the northern outskirts of Dongola, on top of an earlier commemorative chapel (EDC). It was constructed of stone blocks and brick, on a cross-over-rectangle plan, with two projecting arms on the north and south (Dobrowolski 1991). It was a building that combined rather harmoniously a new type of central building with the traditional basilica of elongated proportions (19.20 m

Church D (DC)



by 16.20 m). There were two entrances in the western end of the building, one leading from the north and the other from the south. The square naos with four granite columns of squat proportions was reminiscent of the Throne Hall in Dongola and was also covered with a wooden roof, which emphasized its cruciform layout, and had what was most probably wooden dome in the central bay. The eastern part of the church had the traditional *pastophories* connected by an eastern corridor, accessible through doors at the front of the apse. The west end was tripartite and had a staircase in the south-western corner room. Not much remains of the liturgical furniture, but the apse most certainly had a *synthronon*, since the altar was located in the eastern end of the naos, likely behind a screen.

LATE CHURCHES

Of the several other churches built in Dongola in the Late Period, three have been investigated thoroughly. These are the Northwest Church (NWC), the Tower Church (TC) and the North Church (NC). The fourth, Church F, was not fully excavated.

The period was much less creative in Dongola than the building booms of the 8th and 11th century. Dongolan buildings became smaller as did Makurian churches in general (Adams 1965; Gartkiewicz 1980). They were built of mud brick, suggesting limited financial means, and started taking on the characteristics of civil architecture. The latter, meanwhile, began to take on stature, as indicated by the residence in Hambukol near Dongola (Grzymski, Anderson 2001: 15–77). Nevertheless, late Dongolan churches were still characterized by a variety of forms, each built according to a different plan, as well as a connection to local forms, most visible in the Northwest Church (NWC). The Upper Church in Banganarti was exceptional — in form, size and in plan (Żurawski 2004). It was most probably a royal court foundation from the end of the 11th century.

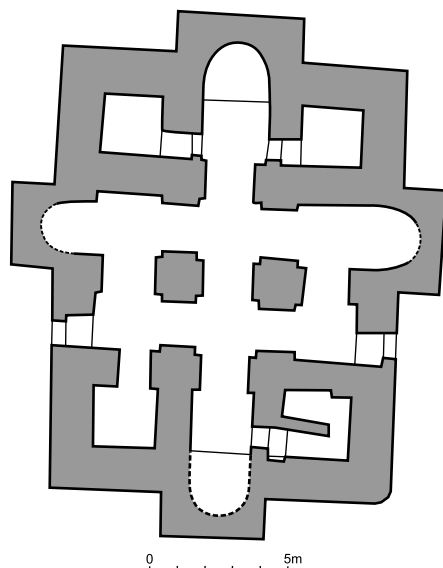
CHURCH AT HAMBUKOL

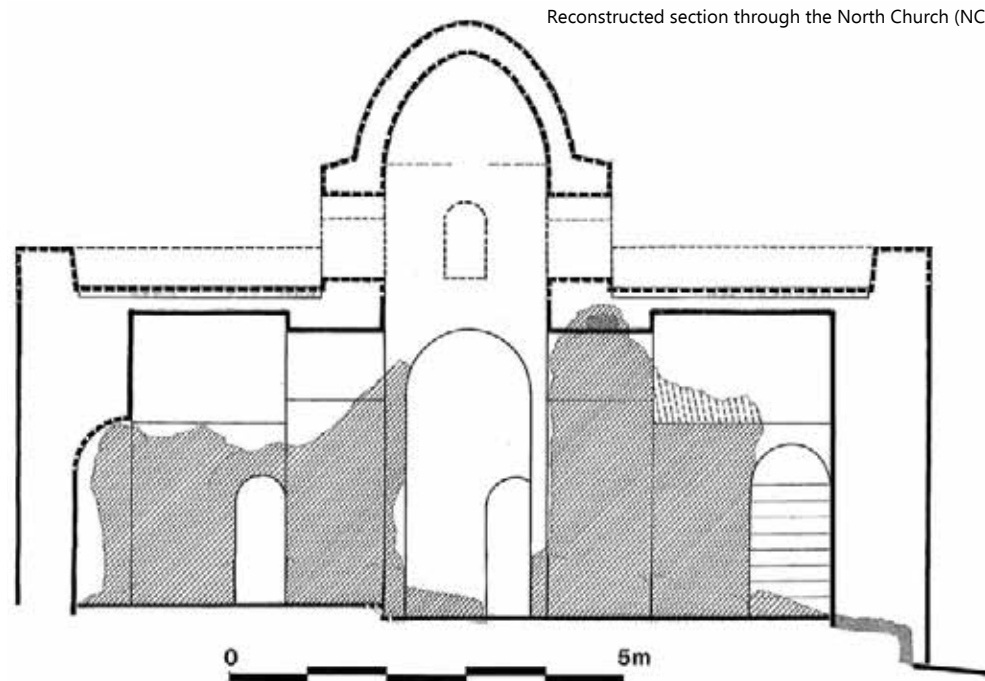
One of the most important churches of the late 9th century in Makuria was the edifice raised at Hambukol, 5 km north of Dongola (Anderson 1999: 73–74). It was founded probably by the tetrarch Mariankudda, who died in AD 887, and whose funerary stela was placed in the floor of the entrance to the sanctuary (Łajtar 2003a: 81–93). Built on a central, cross-over-rectangle plan, with projecting north and south arms, it was even more elongated than the other churches. The transept was of the same width as the nave and was probably domed in the center. Two rows of four round pillars divided the naos. The tripartite eastern end held a staircase in the southwestern room and was extended by a narrow external narthex with an entrance from the south.

NORTHWEST CHURCH (NWC)

The Northwest Church was built on a cross-over-rectangle plan with four arms projecting from the facades (Jakobielski, Medeksza

Northwest Church (NWC)





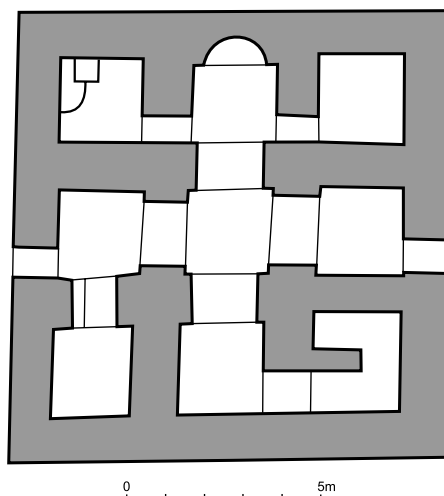
1990). The thick walls and two massive cross pillars in the naos differed markedly from 9th century designs. The traditional side entrances from the north and south led into a very constricted naos with two cross-shaped pillars, two side apses, and most likely a third, western apse on the main building axis. The fourth apse in the east followed a traditional design with lateral *pastophories*, the one difference being that they were now made accessible from the sanctuary. The altar screen, probably in the form of a *templon*, has not survived. The pulpit was traditionally located north of the screen. A staircase in the southwestern corner chamber, together with the massive walls, suggested emporia of some sort. The existence of four apses inside the church correlated well with a passage in the biography of the Coptic patriarch Christodoulos (1047–1094) (Vantini 1975: OSN 213), speaking of delegations of bishops being sent to Makuria and Ethiopia to establish relations (Munro-Hay 1998: 32, 150). During one such mission, the Coptic bishops blessed four sanctuaries in a newly built church. While implying that the NWC church was the building in question, the report also draws attention to a new phenomenon in Makurian religious architecture, that is, the appearance of *parekklesia* (side chapels). This new trend was well documented in the Upper Church in Baganarti (Żurawski 2004). Stefan Jakobielski dated the NWC church to the 12th century and this dating seems to be correct overall, although pushing the time back to the 1060s–1070s, when the visit of the above-mentioned bishops took place, is also reasonable. The design of the eastern end with *pastophories* accessible from the sanctuary appeared earlier at a small church in Sonqi Tino (Fanfoni 1979), where a portrait of King Georgios III was preserved, dating the building to the second half of the 10th century. A similar type of church in the form of a cross-over-rectangle and with all four arms projecting is the small building

from Tamit, called the Church of Angels (Monneret de Villard 1935: 154; Bresciani 1964: 35; Grossmann 1982: 81–82). The side entrances to this church in the north and south arms relate it to Dongolan-type churches of the Late Period, and not the CC and CB structures, but the proposed dating to the 13th century (Adams 1965: 117) is decidedly too late. It would be more correct to link the construction of the Church of Angels in Tamit with the close of the 12th century. The earlier date in the 9th century (Grossmann 1982: 82) cannot be upheld in view of the way in which the *pastophories* communicate with the sanctuary, which cannot be dated earlier than the second half of the 10th century.

NORTH CHURCH (NC)

The North Church of Dongola (Godlewski 1990) with its massive walls is like a building planned as a cross-in-square. The constricted space inside it, the eastern sacristies accessible from the sanctuary and the general massiveness of the structure relate it to the NWC church, but even more so to the churches at Serre (Mileham 1910: 40–45; Godlewski 1996:

North Church (NC)





Interior of the Tower Church (TC)

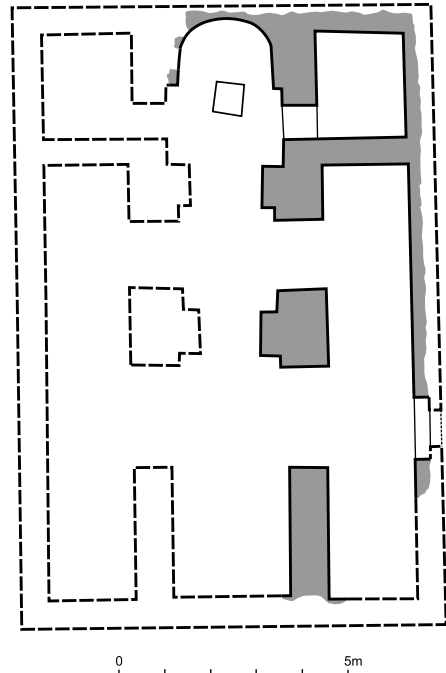
43). A staircase in the southwestern chamber and the massive walls are again testimony to emporia of some kind. The central part of the naos undoubtedly was domed, although it is difficult to resist the impression that there was a number of domes at different levels.

The date of construction in the 13th century is quite plausible, although the archaeological evidence is limited. The North Church seems to be later than the Northwest Church.

TOWER CHURCH (TC)

The Tower Church from the second half of the 14th century (Godlewski 1996) is probably one of the latest projects executed in Dongola. It was built on top of a ruined tower, extending in part onto the fortifications to the northwest. It is a domed basilica typical of the latest period in Makuria, likely with one entrance from the south, reflecting the approach from the city. The three-aisled naos was set off by masonry pilasters bearing the weight of a dome above the eastern part of the nave. The apse in the east end had

Tower Church (TC)



lateral sacristies communicating with the sanctuary. A masonry altar was located in the open space of the apse.

SECOND CRUCIFORM CHURCH (CC.II)

The Second Cruciform Church also belongs in this latest period of church building in Dongola, although it is difficult to speak of a new structure in this case. The original Cruciform Church was destroyed during the second Mamluk raid on Makuria in 1286 and it had to be adapted hastily to serve liturgical needs. Earlier structures inside it were made use of to reinforce the supports of the central dome by the eastern *triforium*. The central dome, however, had been destroyed and the debris had to be removed. The entrance from the west was blocked up and a keystone bearing a monogram of King Georgios I(?) appeared centrally in the arch; it must have been taken from one of the earlier entrance arches. The entrances in the north and south arms were narrowed and a square vestibule added earlier in front of the south door was left unchanged. The east end of the naos underwent the most extensive alteration. In front of the portico, between the bases of which the original *synthronon* still stood, a massive *ciborium* was built, its dome supported on four corner pillars. An altar was placed in the center of the *ciborium*. On the west side, the *ciborium* was attached to the older walls, which limited the east end of the naos on the east, in front of the eastern portico. It was a kind of sanctuary screen, with a centrally placed *templon*, of which the only trace is the position of the posts. The existence of a roof over this part of the building remains an open question.

CHURCH B.III.2

After the political situation had stabilized in Dongola, presumably in the first half of the 14th century, the commemorative building (B.III.1, see page 35) was transformed into a small church. The entrances in the eastern, northern and western arms were blocked,

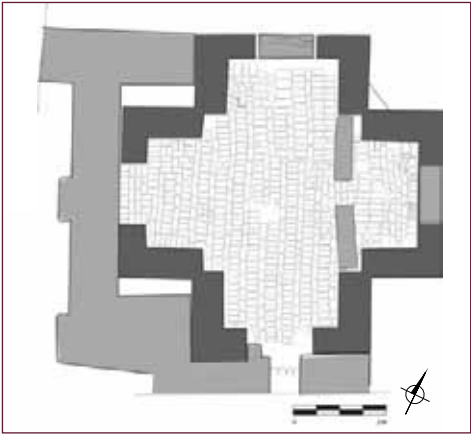
Keystone with a monogram of (the King) Georgios, reused in the west wall of the Second Cruciform Church (CC.II)



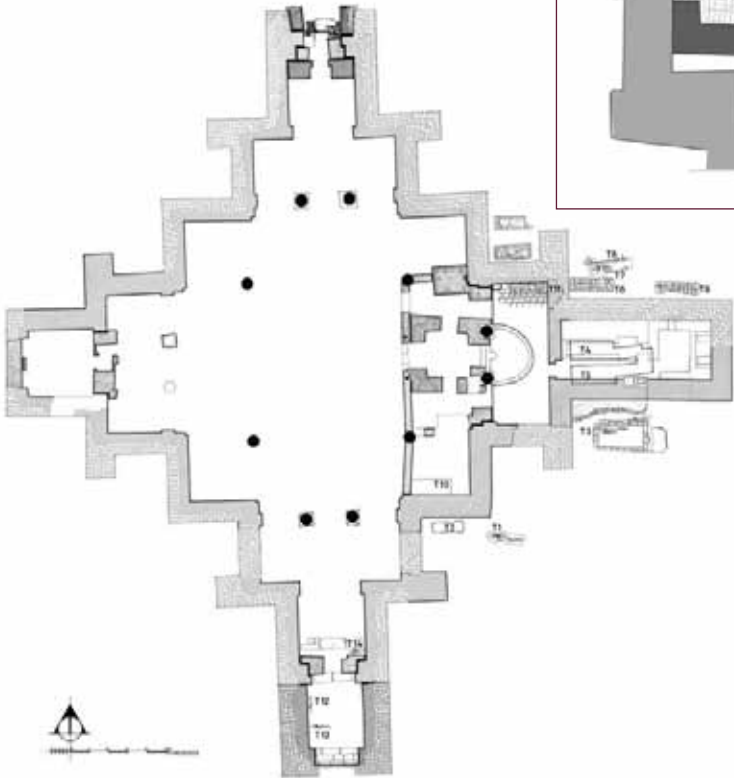


College of Apostles and Bishop of Dongola, fragmentary murals from Church B.III.2 on the citadel

Second Cruciform Church (CC.II)



Church B.III.2 (Site SWN)





Bishop of Dongola,
detail of mural on the opposite page

leaving only one door from the south. The floor level was raised by 40 cm and a new brick paving was introduced. Just in front of the passage from the central space to the eastern arcade a high altar screen was constructed, providing only a narrow entrance to the sanctuary. The interior was coated with a new mud plaster and paintings typical of church decoration. A fragmentary college of apostles has been preserved in the sanctuary, including a portrait depiction of a bishop of Dongola. The characteristic headgear of the priest, topped by a cross with semicircular arms, is also known from

the Rivergate Church at Faras and the Monastery on Kom H in Old Dongola.

Remnants of a Nativity scene were preserved north of the altar screen.

The church remained in use presumably until the fall of Christianity in Dongola. After a while the floor was covered with a thick layer of windblown sand and the interior used by the later inhabitants of the citadel as storage and household space.

Eastern arm of Church B.III.2 with narrowed entrance
and fragmentary late murals on the wall





MONASTERY OF ST ANTHONY THE GREAT

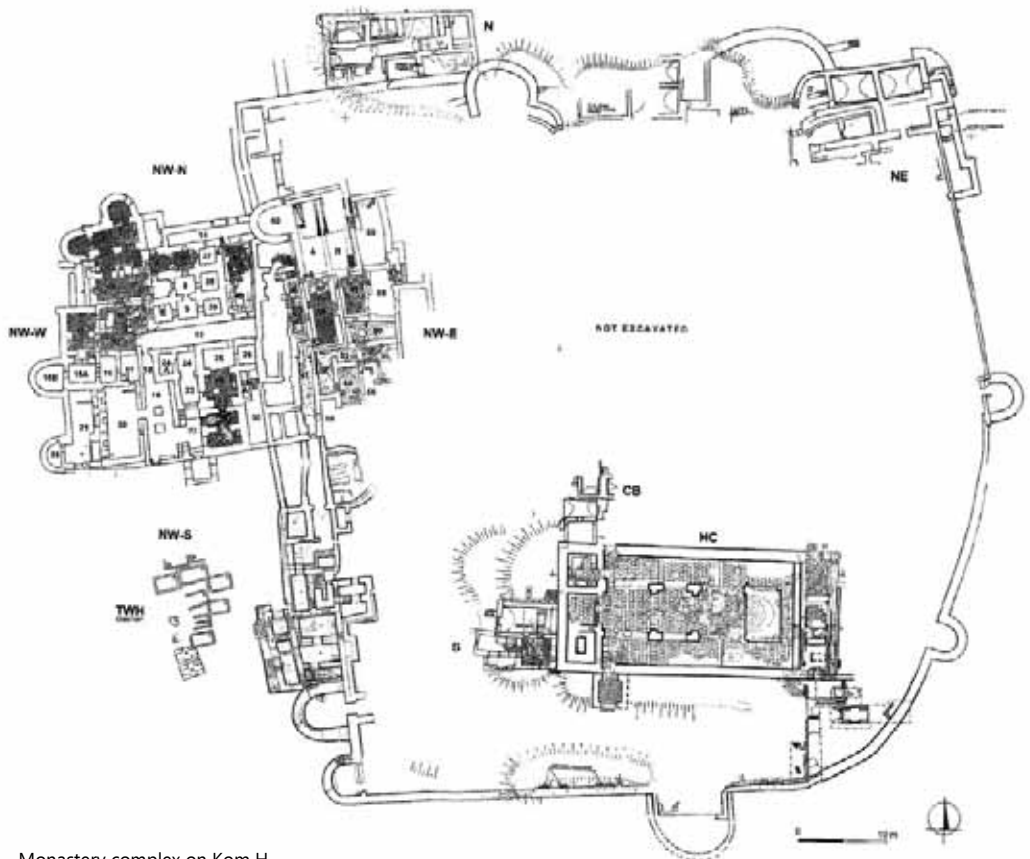


Monastery complex on Kom H in 2001; Northwest Annex at top

The monastery on Kom H, referred to in topic literature also as the Monastery of the Holy Trinity (Jakobielski 2008), stood at the western edge of the city's burial grounds, about 1.5 km northeast of the Citadel. It was established by one of the first bishops of Dongola, most likely already in the 6th century. A dedication to St Anthony the Great is recorded on the funerary stela of Archbishop Georgios (AD 1113), while the dedication to the Holy Trinity is evidenced in extensive epigraphic material coming from monastic contexts, but referring rather to a church, very likely a cathedral. The well researched monastery at Pachoras (Qasr el Wizz), believed to be founded by Bishop Aetios (Godlewski 2013b), is a close

parallel to the monastic complex at Dongola and it cannot be excluded that it was actually patterned on it, just as the Cathedral of Aetios shares many features with the First Cathedral from Dongola.

The Monastery of St Anthony the Great in Dongola originally comprised a church on a three-aisled basilical plan with central tower, a building (S) situated west of the church and a cell compound in the north-western part of the monastery, all surrounded by an enclosure wall. Economic operations of the monastery were concentrated in the northwestern part of the complex (Żurawski 1994). The church and sanctuary of a monk Anna are the only parts of the monastic compound to be excavated so far.



Monastery complex on Kom H

The monastery also had an extensive complex of buildings in the northwestern part of the monastery, the so-called Northwest Annex, which was already outside the walls and which presumably served the needs of pilgrims. Following rebuilding and enlargement in the 11th century, it also acquired a commemorative function. The annex has been excavated and interim reports have been published. It consisted of a set of rooms of a religious and administrative nature, repeatedly enlarged, combined with a mausoleum of Dongolan bishops incorporated in the northern part. Its interpretation as a *xenodochion*, proposed by Bogdan Żurawski (1999) and supported by Stefan Jakobielski (2001b) and Piotr Scholz (2001), needs to be justified more fully in research, but even at this stage it raises serious doubts. Without prejudging the issue, a commemorative function of the Annex is quite evident to the present author, especially when taken in connection with the commemorative church of King Zacharias V and the burial place of Archbishop Georgios (+1113) and the presumed bishops of the 12th and 13th century interred in three crypts inside the annex.

Another set of rooms, identified as a Southwest Annex, was located outside the monastery wall to the south of the Northwest complex (Jakobielski, Martens-Czarnecka 2008). It is much smaller and was furnished with some exceptional paintings (Martens-Czarnecka 2011). A functional interpretation has proved difficult to establish.

MONASTIC CHURCH (HC)

The monastery church, the exploration of which has been completed (Gazda 2008; Godlewski 2013), turned out to be a three-aisled columnar basilica of rather long proportions, furnished with a central tower in the nave rising from four stone pillars. It seems to have been founded in the middle of the 6th century (Bagińska 2008: 370, Fig. 5a–g).

None of the other currently known churches from Makuria represents this type, which was modeled on late 5th and 6th century Byzantine structures (e.g., El-Alahan in Anatolia, Krautheimer 1981: 258–260). At the same time, the basilica features a characteristic tripartite design of the eastern and western ends typical of Dongolan church architecture in the 6th and 7th centuries,



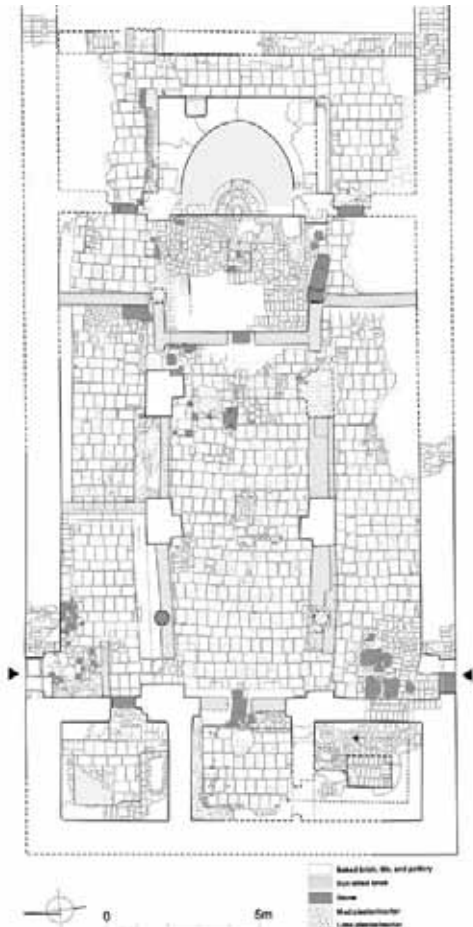
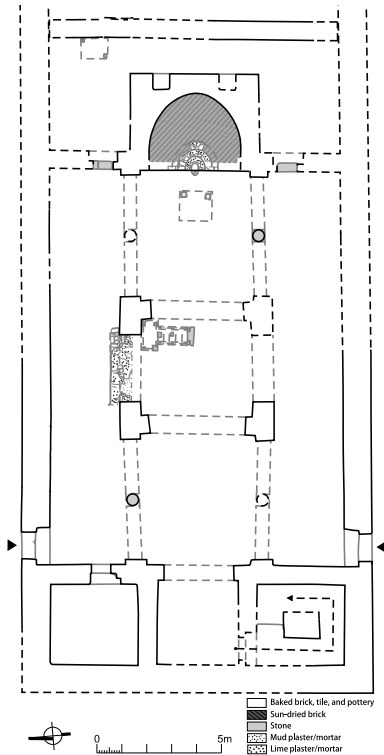
Monastic Church (HC), view toward the western end

further characterized by twin entrances from the north and south in the western part. The staircase in the southwestern unit must have led up to the emporia, which were supported on the columns standing east and west of the central tower. A *synthronon* filled the apse behind the sanctuary, which occupied a spot in the eastern end of the nave, although the position of the original altar screen has proved impossible to trace. An altar stood in the prothesis (northeastern unit) by the east wall, and the pulpit was located in the nave, by the northeastern pillar. Its position at right angles to the pillar is again a feature not encountered in other Dongolan church complexes.

The eastern part of the church, behind the apse, was turned into a place for burials, similarly as in the monastery church at Qasr el Wizz. Graves were also noted in the sanctuary itself, including the tomb of

Joseph Bishop of Syene, who died in AD 668 (Jakobielski, van der Vliet 2011).

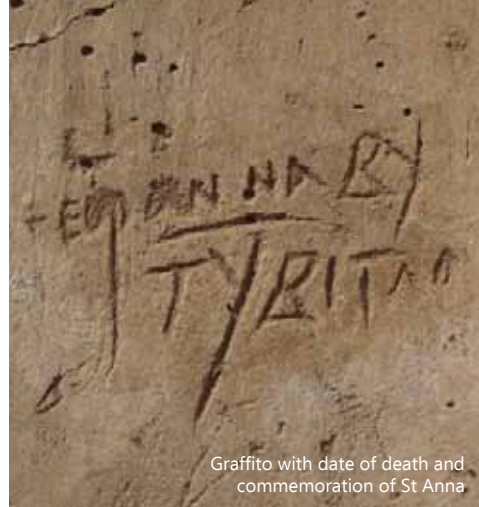
In the Late Period the church interior was rebuilt, screening of the sanctuary so that the only entrance was from the nave. The aisles were separated from the nave by masonry partition walls constructed between the columns and central stone pillars. Murals appeared on the new walls in the northwestern part of the naos; these are relatively well preserved in the northern aisle, which was set off by partition walls. The connection between the rebuilding of the church naos and the functioning of the set-off parts could not be determined (Gazda 2010).



Monastic Church (HC): reconstruction of the original plan (left) and the plan of the building in the latest phase

SANCTUARY OF SAINT ANNA

Excavations in 1990 by Stefan Jakobielski (1993: 106–107) did not establish the original function of this structure and it was not until 2010, when a comprehensive investigation of the architecture and graffiti was undertaken, that Unit S (H.B.II) was identified as a small building composed of a monk's cell and oratory. The cell belonged to a single individual who was most likely not a monk of the Dongolan monastery and who appears to have been greatly esteemed in Makurian society for his piety. After his death he was buried in the small oratory and the building as a whole was rebuilt into a small religious unit, a kind of mausoleum that remained open to monks and visitors to the monas-



Graffito with date of death and commemoration of St Anna



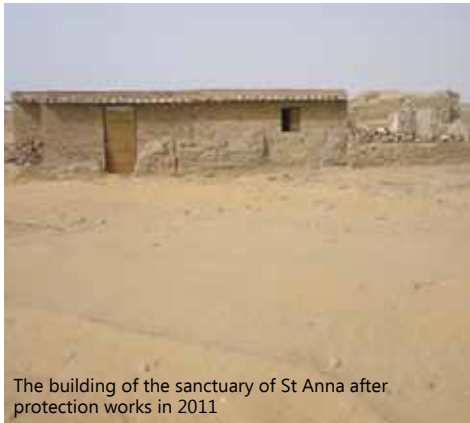
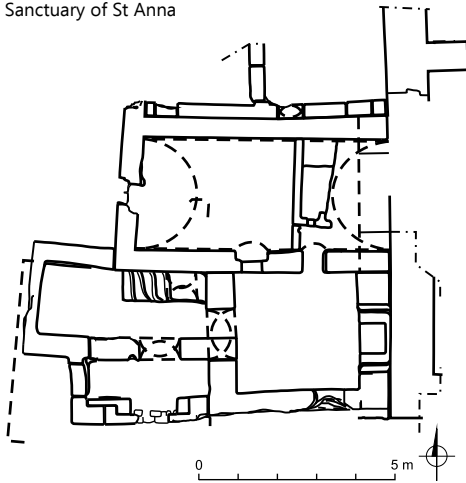
Altar in the sanctuary of St Anna in the monastery complex

tery alike. Numerous graffiti on the walls of the mausoleum, demonstrate that he came to be considered by the local community, but presumably also by the Church of Makuria, as a saint. His name, as preserved in a few graffiti, was ANNA. In the Old Nubian language the name was both masculine and feminine. One of the graffiti gives what looks like the date of the festival of this saint, the first Makurian saint to be identified in local sources. 10 Tybi (January 6) was at the same time the date of his death. This small building adjoining the monastery church was visited frequently, as indicated by numerous

wall graffiti, while the well preserved altar in the old oratory and the liturgical furnishings confirmed that saint Anna was venerated until the final abandonment of the Dongolan monastery.

A few drawings, small murals and graffiti representing saints of the Byzantine (Eastern) church — St Menas, St Philotheos and St Theodor Stratelatos killing a serpent, were executed on the original plaster coat on the cell walls. The religious “privacy” of these small icons is beyond doubt and it is admissible that they were made by Anna himself. The presence of St Philotheos (ODB III.1663) could be additional proof that Anna’s path to sainthood was not through the monastic ranks. The other saints in question were not monks either, but suffered a martyr’s death as common soldiers.

Sanctuary of St Anna



The building of the sanctuary of St Anna after protection works in 2011





Archangel Gabriel painted on the east wall of the Church of Georgios (Building III) of the Northwest Annex in the monastery complex on Kom H

NORTHWEST ANNEX (H.NW)

The Northwest Annex to the Monastery on Kom H was a highly complex structure that underwent repeated rebuilding and enlargement. Stefan Jakobielski (2001b) reconstructed the chronological development of the complex from the 10th through the 13th century, based on the surviving architectural evidence and a preliminary analysis of the numerous inscriptions and murals on the walls. Understanding the building from a functional point of view requires further extensive study, but even so, it is possible to distinguish separate structures that were eventually combined in the course of successive episodes of rebuilding into a single complex of evidently commemorative nature. The present author proposes to distinguish the following complexes that were raised separately forming in effect the Northwest Annex (they are presented here in chronological order):

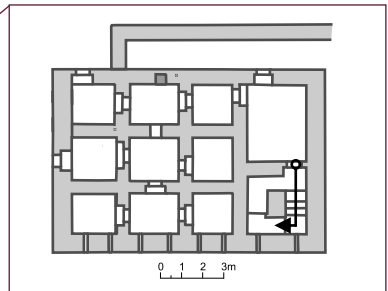
♦ BUILDING I – Nearly square structure composed of 11 or 12 rooms, a kind of keep, surely of considerable height, although only the ground floor has been preserved. Foundation date cannot be established, but it must have been constructed before the 10th century.

♦ BUILDING II – Located to the south of Building I, separated by a narrow passage. Difficult to interpret. Jakobielski suggested a habitational function for this suite of rooms.

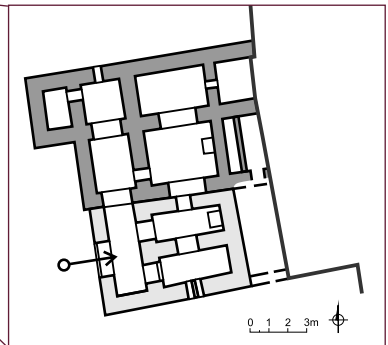
♦ CHURCH OF GEORGIOS (B.III) – Building II extended to include new chambers. Founded by the priest Georgios when he was *archistylites*, that is before 1062 when he was anointed bishop of Dongola. Judging by the new form of the painted wall decoration in the sanctuary, depicting Christ in blessing in the upper part and, below the foundation



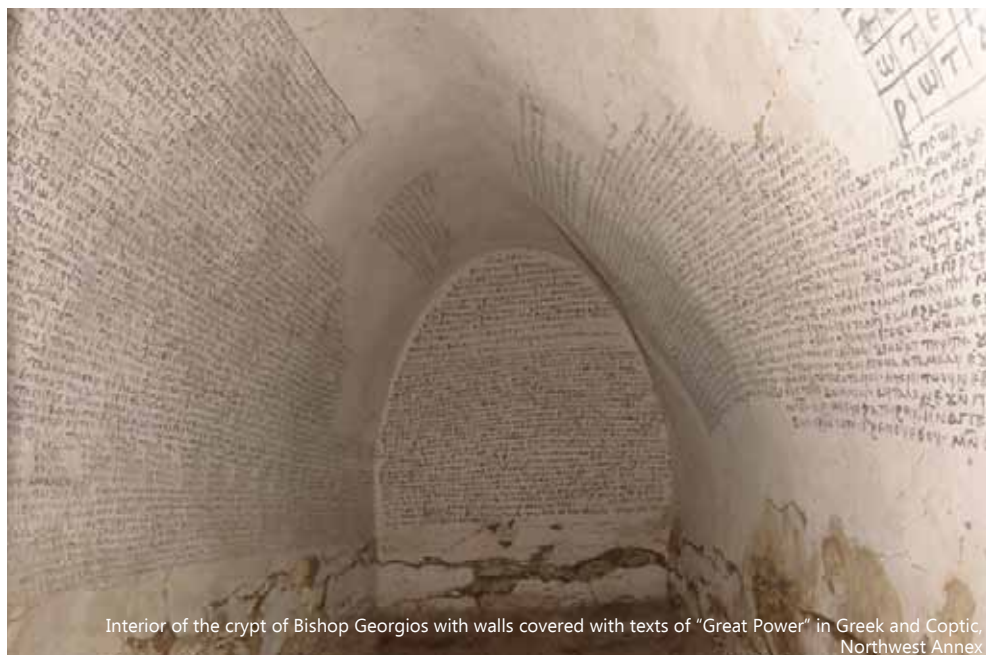
Northwest Annex: plan marking all the constituent parts of the complex



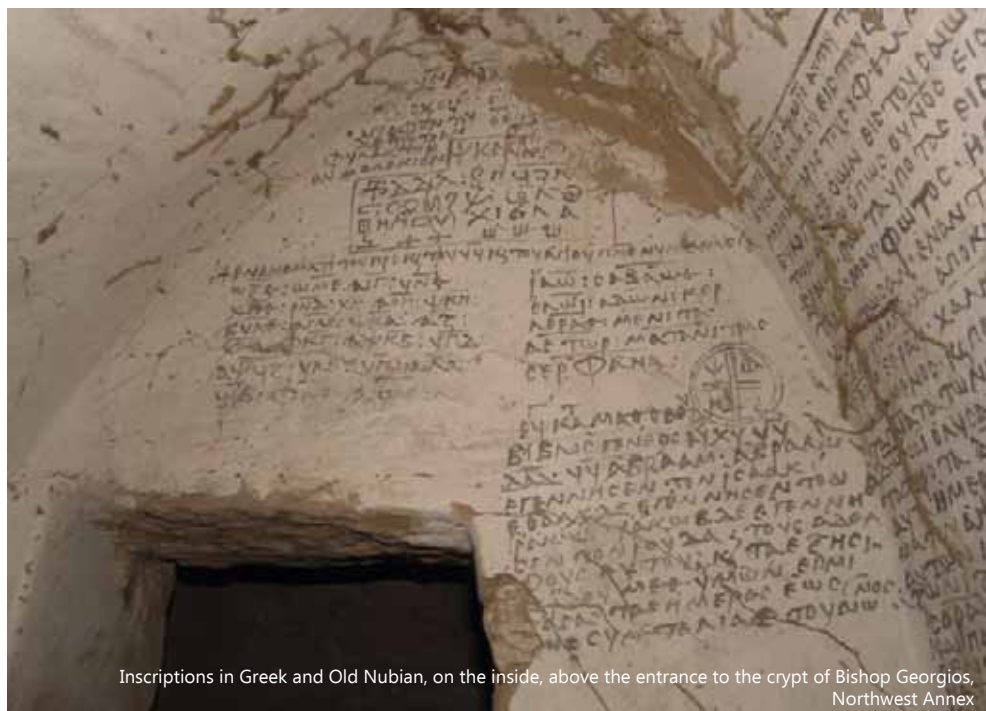
Building I



Building III (Church of Georgios)



Interior of the crypt of Bishop Georgios with walls covered with texts of "Great Power" in Greek and Coptic, Northwest Annex



Inscriptions in Greek and Old Nubian, on the inside, above the entrance to the crypt of Bishop Georgios, Northwest Annex

inscription, an Archangel with the college of apostles protecting a royal figure, only partly preserved and presumed to represent King Zacharias V, Georgios' father, after his death in 1057, this building may be considered as a commemorative church. The murals on the walls of this complex are so evidently liturgical in character, of a kind typically executed in Makurian churches, that the functional identification seems extremely plausible (D. Zielińska, personal communication). The decoration of this sanctuary finds parallels in the decoration of the apses of the only slightly later dated Upper Church in Banganarti (Żurawski 2008; Godlewski 2006).

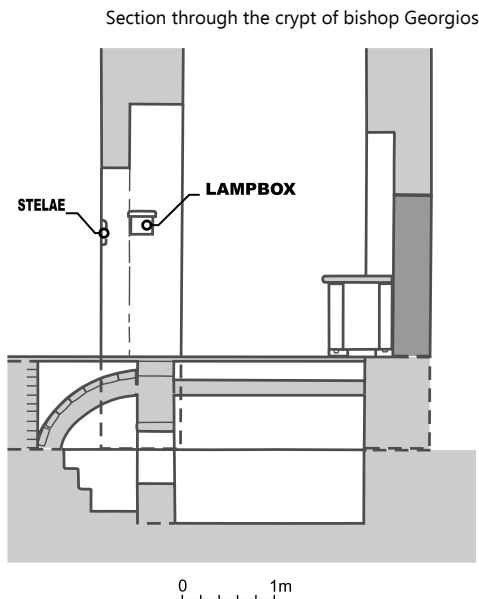
♦ CRYPT OF GEORGIOS – Built before his death in 1113 in the western entrance vestibule to Building I. Georgios was buried in this crypt, probably as the second of the two earliest burials, but it is not known who was the first man buried there (Godlewski, Mahler, Czaja-Szewczak 2012). He could have been Georgios's brother. The inside walls were covered with several texts of "Great Power", connected mainly with the

death of Mary: the prayer by the Virgin Mary (*Oratio Mariae ad Bartos*), an excerpt from an encomium on the life of the Virgin, and excerpt from a homily on the Dormition of the Virgin, as well as the verses of the four Gospels written in Greek and Coptic by a certain Ioannes. The inscriptions of the crypt were executed as a phylactery against weakness (Łajtar, van der Vliet 2012).

♦ COMMEMORATIVE COMPLEX (MAUSOLEUM OF BISHOPS) – Once two more crypts had been constructed by the northwestern corner of Building I, but surely still in the first half of the 12th century, a commemorative complex with two sanctuaries was erected over these crypts. Altogether 18 bishops of Dongola, including Georgios, and his brother?, were buried in the tombs between the 12th and 14th centuries (Godlewski 2013a).

This suite of chambers incorporated into the Northwest Annex can be referred to as a bishops' mausoleum. This part, which occupies the northwestern end of the Annex and demonstrates evident liturgical function, was connected with three funerary crypts (nos T.26–T.28) containing communal burials. The complex was created by adapting the existing architecture of Building I (rooms 4, 5 and 7) and adding new units (Nos 1, 2 and 3). From a functional point of view, it was definitely a single complex, but it appears to have been built in two stages at the very least. The three crypts can be presumed to have been in use simultaneously from at least 1113, the year that Archbishop Georgios died and was interred in the crypt prepared for him (T.28), through the second half of the 14th century. The number of burials, nineteen in total, indicates that the crypts remained in use for about 250–300 years. Successive burials were made alternatively or according to the wishes of the individual. The burial chambers were easily accessible throughout this time.

Chambers 1 and 3 were used undoubtedly as a mausoleum with crypts T.26 and



T.27. The eastern of the two rooms (No. 3) acted as a sanctuary with an altar set against the east wall. Room 1 to the west was a kind of naos, separated from the sanctuary by an altar screen, a kind of *templum*, built of brick. The arched entrance to the sanctuary had relief pilasters in the reveals and a crowning tympanum. A pulpit erected of sandstone blocks stood under an arcade to the right of the altar screen. The openings of the

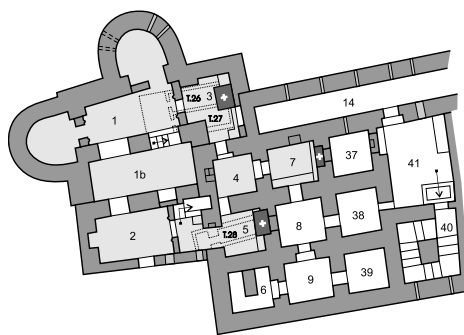
funerary shafts leading to the crypts were located inside the naos, in front of the altar screen. The right side of the screen bears the impression of a funerary stela that was removed at some point.

Chambers 2 and 5 constituted a mausoleum connected with crypt T.28. The eastern of the two rooms (No. 5) contained an altar, set up in the blocked passage to a neighboring room. The eastern end of chamber 2 was set apart by an altar screen that had a centrally positioned door with plastic decoration in the form of pilasters and a partly preserved tympanum. The pulpit was placed on the left, just beyond the entrance to the sanctuary. Next to it, immured in the east wall, was the funerary stela of Archbishop Georgios.

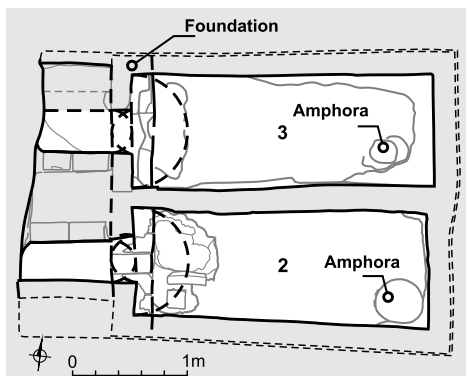


Silk shroud covering a body interred in crypt 2 of the Mausoleum of Bishops

Mausoleum of bishops in the Northwest Annex



Crypts 2 and 3 of the Mausoleum of bishops in the Northwest Annex



The only entrance to both commemorative chapels was in the south wall of chamber 2, which acted as a naos.

The two sanctuaries (rooms 3 and 5) communicated through chamber 4 with

Two wooden pectoral crosses from the bishops' crypts



Fragment of textile, wool and gold thread, from the bishops' crypts



the prothesis furnished with an altar in room 7. Above the altar, there was a mural depicting Christ with a chalice and next to the representation, the text in Greek of four prayers said during the presanctified liturgy.

A key issue is determining the status of the persons interred in the three crypts. In the case of T.28, there is no doubt that it was prepared for Georgios and that the texts of "Great Power" inscribed on its walls may have been his personal choice. Georgios was a man of exceptional status in the Church of Makuria, but presumably also at the royal court, as suggested by the epithets on his funerary stela (Łajtar 2002; Godlewski 2013). In view of his social position, it is unlikely that the other men interred with him in the crypt later were not also bishops or archbishops. Crypts T.26 and T.27, which would have to be earlier than the commemorative building, considering the structural logic of the complex, may have been used as burials for bishops as well. The founder of the crypts and the entire architectural framing for these tombs was likely to have been commemorated in the lost funerary stela that was once immured in the altar screen. A similar mausoleum, interring in a single crypt a number of bishops from the 11th and 12th centuries, was preserved in the Cathedral of Petros in Pachoras (Godlewski 2006b). There, however, the funerary stelae of all the interred bishops were immured into the wall above the entrance to the crypt, while the three commemorative chapels were definitely more modest in appearance. At Pachoras, as well as at Dongola, grave furnishings included oil lamps, *qullae* and amphorae. This appears to concern bishops foremost, as confirmed by the bishops' tombs of the 11th–14th century located east of the Cathedral in Pachoras.

◆ CHAPEL OF THE ARCHANGEL MICHAEL

– The latest addition, a narrow passage originally separating Buildings I and II; roofed over sometime in the 12th/13th century and changed into a sanctuary with richly painted

Archangel Michael crowned by the Holy Trinity,
painting on the east wall of the Chapel of the Archangel Michael in the Northwest Annex



walls. A monumental depiction of Archangel Michael, crowned as commander of a host of angels by the Makurite Holy Trinity in the form of a triple representation of Christ, appeared on the east wall of this sanctuary. A representation of Christ with the Twelve Apostles was later added on the bottom part of the walls. Murals on the north and south side walls depicted Mary, the Makurite Holy Trinity with cherubim, a Biblical narrative telling the story of Balaam, saints, including Saint Menas, and a representation of a bishop(?) of Dongola. One of the masterpieces of Makurite painting from the turn of the 12th century was preserved in fragments on the south wall in the western end of the sanctuary. It depicted a nameless King's Mother protected by the Holy Trinity (the three faces of Christ after conservation are now on display at the National Museum in Khartum). A monumental depiction of Three Youths in a Fiery Furnace can be seen by the southern entrance to the chapel (Martens-Czarnecka 2011).

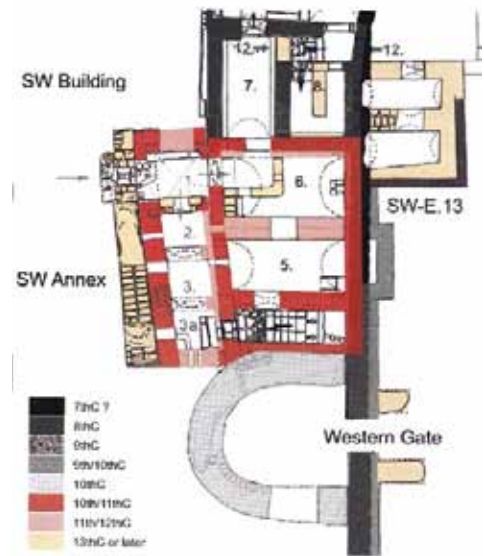
SOUTHWEST ANNEX (H.SW.B.I)

A small complex (7.85 m x 8.50 m) built of mud brick, added to the west face of the monastery wall, next to the south tower (entrance to the southwestern court of the monastery), in the end of the 10th or in the 11th century. It consisted of six chambers, which were entered through a vaulted vestibule with a door in the northwestern corner. The vestibule was connected to a western passage and three chambers in a row, all perpendicular to the passage. The southern of these chambers was rebuilt to hold a staircase with steps made of sandstone blocks (Jakobielski, Martens-Czarnecka 2008: 326–328).

The narrow chambers were covered with barrel vaults. The interiors were coated with plaster and painted. Some of the murals are quite exceptional. Two depictions of a Nursing Virgin were found on the jambs of the entrance to chamber 4, the one on

the southern jamb being additionally shown as spinning. There are no parallels for such a form of the image of the *Virgo lactans*. Another representation of a standing Mary and Child was located on the east wall in Room 5. Next to it, on the north wall, there was a multi-figure genre scene showing dancers with musical instruments, some of them wearing ethnic masks (see page 94). This ludic scene with African iconographic elements and Arabic elements of dress is unparalleled in Makurite painting as much in terms of the iconography as style, as well as the dynamics of the dancing individuals, who appear to be accompanied by sung verses recorded on the wall in Old Nubian. The north wall in room 6 bears a narrative scene with successive episodes shown around the main representation which shows two men seated on beds inside a room and concluding negotiations, presumably regarding the purchase of a bound female slave standing between them (Martens-Czarnecka 2011) (see page 95).

Southwest Annex



MURAL MASTERPIECES

More than a hundred murals in different state of preservation have been uncovered so far inside the chambers of the Northwest and Southwest Annexes (Martens-Czarnecka 2011). Some of these murals are truly exceptional, from an iconographic, as well as artistic point of view. These wall paintings are dated to the Late Period in general (12th–13th century). Most of the paintings were

found in three functional complexes. Two of these have been identified as a church founded by Bishop Georgios and a chapel of the Archangel Michael founded most probably by a King's Mother, whose portrait in the protection of the Holy Trinity of the Makurite type was painted in the western part of the chapel.

The paintings from the Southwest Annex, including the exceptional genre scenes with extraordinary iconography that has not been recorded hitherto in Makuria outside the monastery on Kom H, are difficult to interpret as a whole and require broader iconographic studies. It would also help the interpretation, if the function of the annex in the monastic compound on Kom H could be established more precisely.

Christ healing a Blind Man at the Pool of Siloam, mural from the Northwest Annex



St Joseph, from a Nativity scene in the Northwest Annex





Archangel Gabriel with sword, mural above the entrance to the Southwest Annex



Virgin Galaktotrophousa spinning yarn, mural from the Southwest Annex



Virgin Mary in local dress, painting from the Southwest Annex

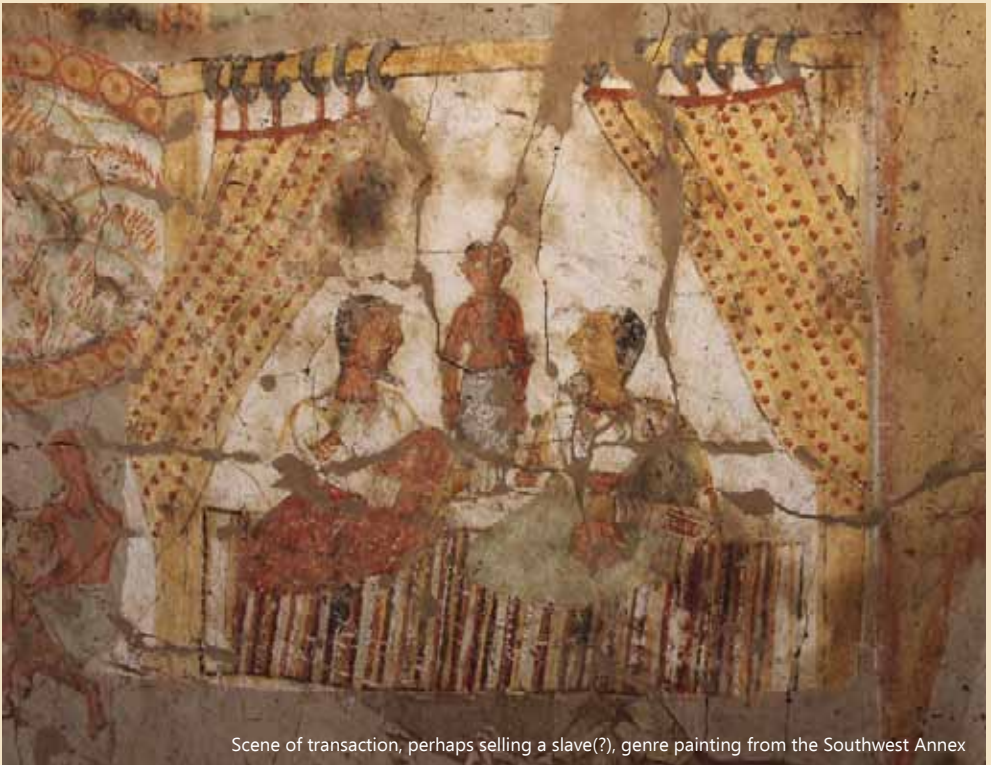


Dance scene with men dressed in local attire, some in cowry-studded masks and playing instruments, genre painting from the Southwest Annex

Baptism of Christ,
mural from the Northwest Annex



Makurian Holy Trinity with Four Living Creatures,
mural from the Northwest Annex



Scene of transaction, perhaps selling a slave(?), genre painting from the Southwest Annex

HOUSES

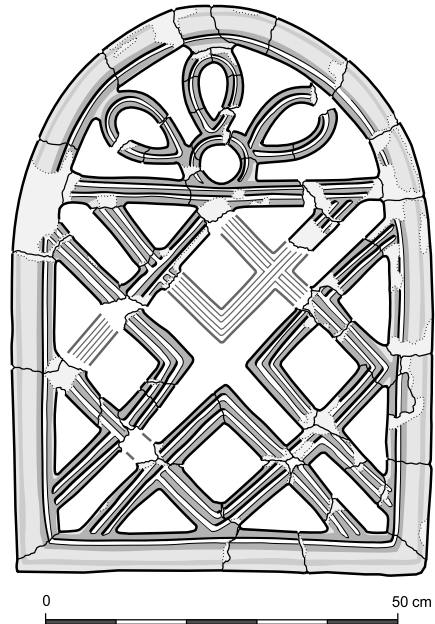


Staircase inside House A.106

Private houses were uncovered inside the fortifications, in the northwestern corner of the citadel (House A.106), as well as on the northern outskirts of the extended town (Houses A, B and PCH.1), where they formed a regular urban network. These were extensive and well-planned complexes, built of mud brick, with a ground-floor area of 100–150 m². The total utilitarian space once the upper floors were added (but without the roof terraces which these houses were furnished with) was about 200–300 m². All the excavated houses proved to have toilets with ceramic lavatory pans. Some of these interiors were decorated with murals and there was even one bathroom with two pools for bathing and a furnace for heating water.

The four houses presented here were built in the times of Early Makuria and are dated to the period of spontaneous architectural development, which occurred in the capital in the 7th and 8th century. Despite having open courtyards, the houses on the northern fringes of the town were of undoubtedly urban character without their own home economic base. Installations in the courtyards, such as furnaces for heating water and bread ovens (see page 105), supported ordinary everyday household functions. No grain silos or pens for domestic animals were recorded. The owners were undoubtedly high-ranking members of local society. The fill of the house on the citadel yielded amphorae tagged with the names of a bishop, archimandrite and archpresbyter; in the houses to the north of the town, a stela of the eparch Petros of Nobadia was discovered, as well as murals depicting figures in a royal crown.

The houses in Dongola were used for long periods of time, until the 13th century. They were refurbished and adapted repeatedly, undergoing alterations of the layout and slow deterioration of standards. In the late period, they were inhabited undoubtedly by poor families.



Terracotta window grille from House 106

A town as developed as Dongola must have also incorporated semi-permanent settlement made of reeds and wood, but so far no such remains have been found in excavation. The location of a few small churches in the northern part of the agglomeration, already outside the district occupied by masonry houses, indicates that they had served a population residing in the outlying suburbs of the town. Masu'd of Alep, envoy to the King Moise in 1175, mentioned seeing architecture of this kind (Vantini 1975: OSN 370).

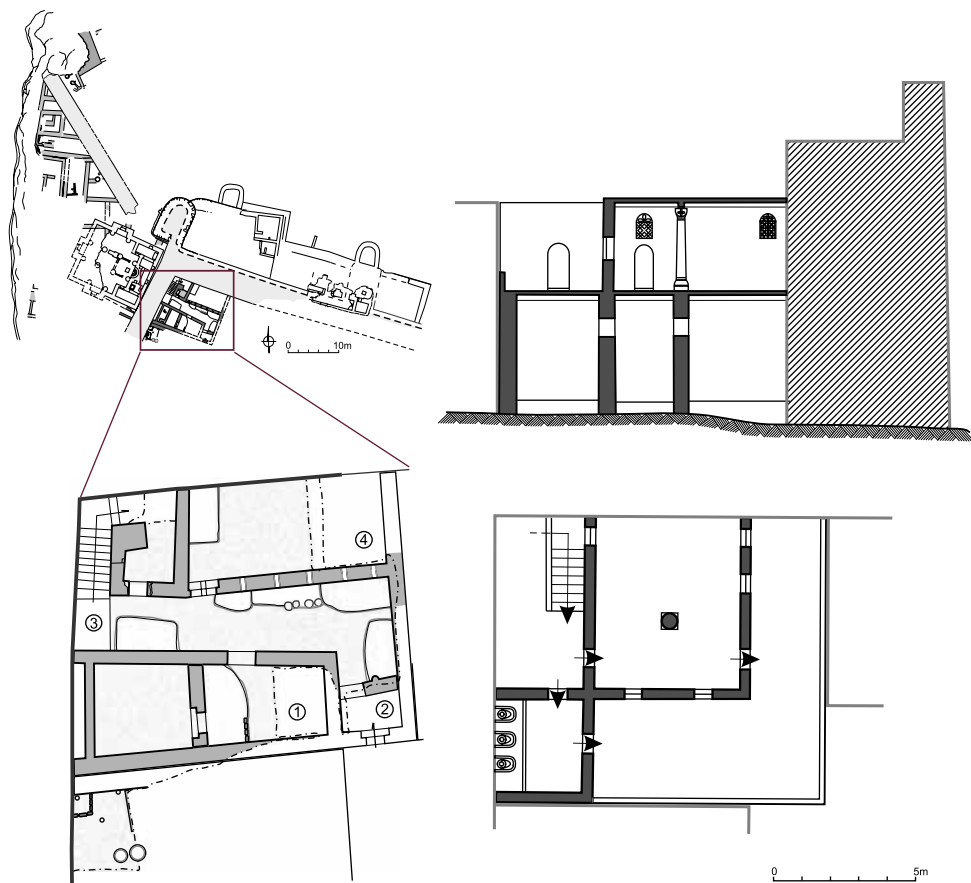
HOUSE A.106

This almost square building (10 m by 11.40 m) was erected against the inside of the rampart wall in the northwestern corner of the citadel, one in a row of buildings standing against the northern and western curtain of the massive defense walls. The house was accessible from a circuit street running inside the citadel (Godlewski 2000: 197–202; 2002b: 214–216).

The ground plan of House A.106 consisted of four interconnected rooms: a long and narrow L-shaped corridor (2) leading from the entrance to a staircase in the northwestern corner (3), but opening also onto two big rooms (1 and 4), one on the north and another on the south, the latter containing a narrow space that was set apart in the western end of the room and which served as the depository of toilet facilities on the upper floor. Evidence of wooden ceilings, in the form of sockets for beams cut into the curtain wall, was observed in room 4. The height of ground-floor rooms could thus be reconstructed at

about 3.60 m. The south wall of this room also preserved the lower sections of six slit windows, each 16 cm wide, about 60 cm high, and located about 2.50 m above walking level. The entrance to the northern room, 0.81 cm wide and 1.90 m high, was crowned with finely worked wooden beams. Similar slit windows must have existed in the south wall of the corridor, which was preserved in much worse condition. The door to room 1 was about one meter wide. A flight of steps, 1.20 m wide and constructed of red brick, led to the upper floor. Walls were finely plastered and whitewashed. A fragmentarily preserved mural could be seen on the wall west of the

House A.106, plans of the ground and first floors, and reconstructed section; location of House A.106 inside the fortifications



door to room 4, but since no broken plaster fragments were found in the fill anywhere in the excavated area, it is highly unlikely that the interior of House A.106 was decorated with paintings.

The only evidence of an upper floor belonging to this structure are big sections of wall lying by the house entrance, a sandstone column base and several dozen fragments of ceramic window grilles found in the fill. Accordingly, it is to be assumed that the upper floor interiors had been finely plastered and repeatedly whitewashed, and lighted through big windows screened with ceramic grilles. The function of the upper floor rooms and indeed their layout are the subject of a theoretical reconstruction, but it is certain that a toilet had been located in the southwestern part, complete with depository in the form of a narrow compartment on the ground floor by the curtain wall. A big official hall with wooden ceiling supported



Amphora of local production, bearing an address in Greek: "*archipresbiteros Psate*"

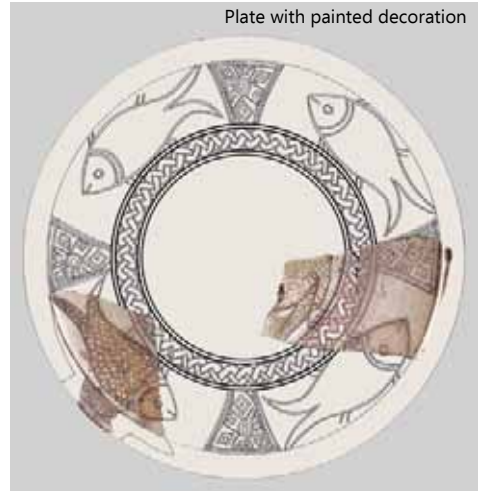
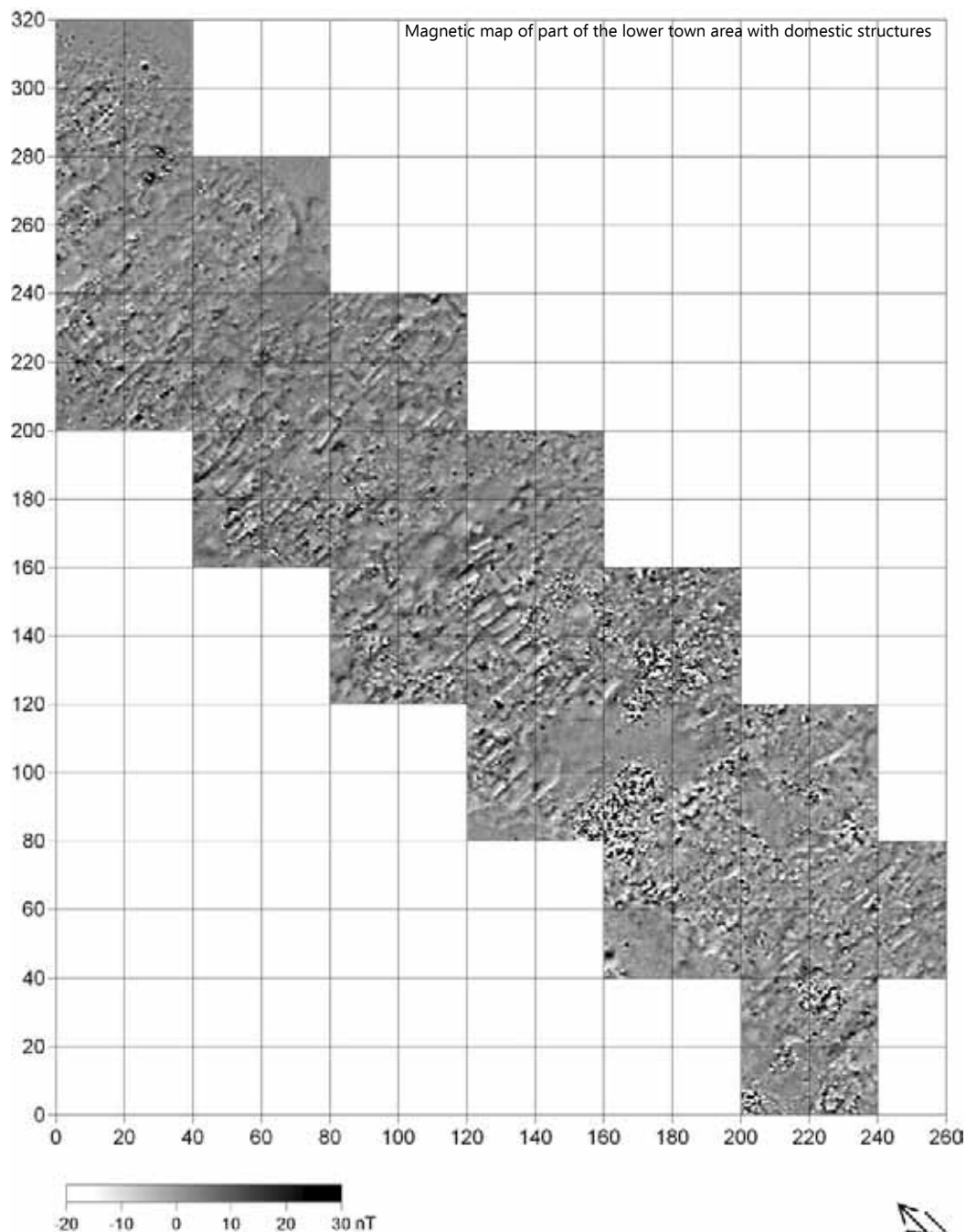


Plate with painted decoration

on a central column may have occupied the northern part of the first floor. It was probably equipped with terraces on the east and south sides, as only then would it have been possible to have big windows with grilles in the walls of this room. At least five such grilles must have existed in the upper floor walls. Their form and decoration is differentiated, but they seem to have met the same technical requirements: height: 85 cm, width: 60 cm, thickness 4–5 cm. Most of the grilles were rectangular in shape, but at least one had a semicircular top. A sandstone balustrade presumably secured the edges of the terrace from the side of the circuit street; two pieces of such a balustrade were recorded during the excavations.

House A.106 was erected on the ruins of earlier architecture from the 6th century. It is dated on the grounds of the tableware fragments discovered in the toilet depository. Red-ware plates and flat bowls, sometimes with simple white painted decoration on the bottom inside, dated the first period of use to the mid 7th century. Window grilles, similar in execution, form and decoration to the grilles from the Church of the Granite Columns (RC.I), also speak in favor of dating the foundation of this house to the first half of the 7th century.



HOUSE PCH.1

The house in question with walls standing 2.50 m high, covered 135 m² of habitable area and some 80 m² of service courtyards adjoining the complex on the north and west. The western courtyard was not cleared completely and may be even larger. The house was built in an open area, free of structures of any kind, and so constituted presumably a freestanding building on the northern outskirts of the urban agglomeration. The houses abutting PCH.1 on the south and east were built at a later date. Houses A and B located to the north on the other side of the street should also be considered as later than this structure.

It underwent numerous alterations during its existence and was used for a long time, inevitably resulting in various modifications being introduced, at least on the ground floor (Godlewski 1991a).

The house's plan was rectangular, measuring 14.60 m by 9.20 m. Its outer walls were thicker (54 cm) than the inner partition walls (34 cm), but both kinds were well constructed of mud brick. The main entrance to the house was at the southern end of the west wall. It led to a spacious rectangular vestibule (2.90 m by 8.60 m), which served as a major passage inside the building. It is from here that the staircase and two rooms adjoining it on the east could be reached by means of two doorways. On the eastern side of the vestibule, there were three small rectangular rooms set at right angles to the vestibule; two of them, 3 and 4, were accessible from the vestibule, while room 2 could be reached from room 3. This latter room measured 2.20 m by 4.30 m; a narrow space at the east end served as the depository of toilet facilities located on the upper floor. The rooms, about 3.00 m high under a flat wooden ceiling, were lighted by slit windows (12–16 cm wide and about 60 cm high) located in the outer and inner walls. All the rooms of the ground floor were carefully plastered and whitewashed.



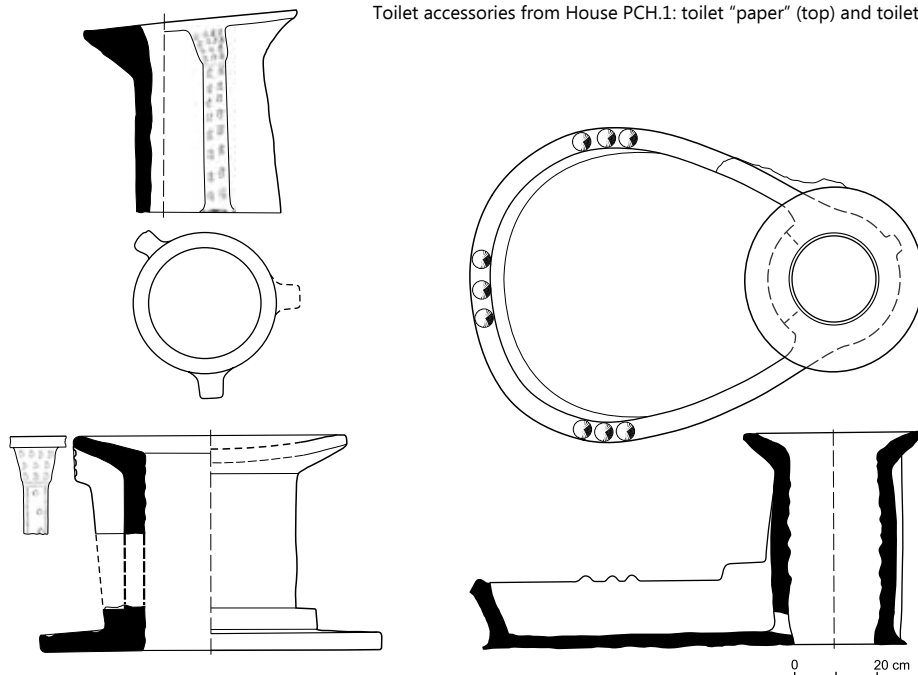
Aerial view of the northern part of the town agglomeration, arrow indicates excavated houses A, B and PCH.1

The entrance to the staircase lay in the north wall of the vestibule. The stairs, supported on vaults, were built of red brick. Two flights of steps and the first landing have survived; of the second landing there is only a part, preserved as a 'ghost' impression above the destroyed vault of the passage beneath the stairs. The corridor led to the northeastern part of the house, which was composed of two inter-connected, rectangular rooms set parallel to the staircase. The western of these two had an additional exit into the northern courtyard.

The staircase constituted indirect evidence of an upper floor, otherwise confirmed by various elements like fragments of terracotta window grilles and pieces of lime plaster of much finer quality than that noted on the walls of the ground floor, retrieved from the debris filling the rooms. The layout



Toilet accessories from House PCH.1: toilet "paper" (top) and toilet seats



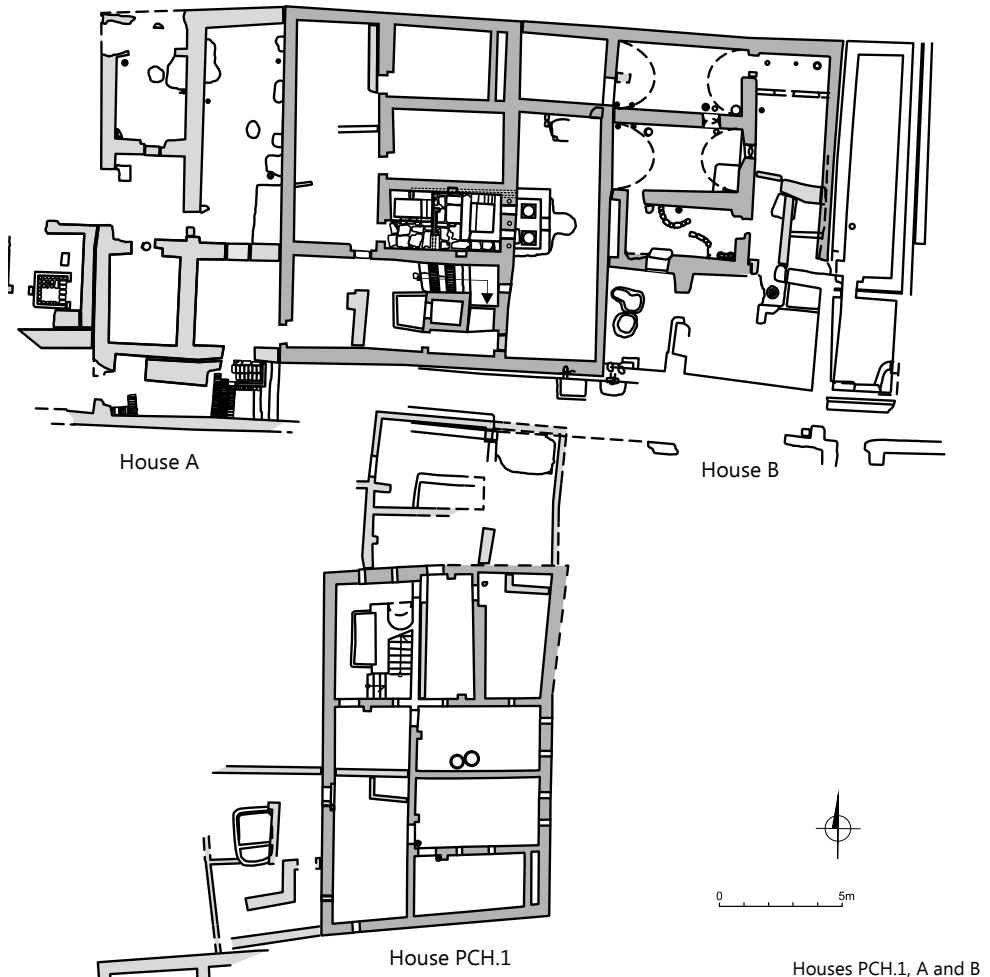
of this upper floor is not known, but logically, it need not have been much different from the ground floor. The rooms of the upper floor featured fine wall plastering and were fitted with much larger windows screened with terracotta grilles.

HOUSE A

A narrow street, 2.30 m in width, separated the enclosure of the northern courtyard of House PCH.1 from two houses A and B located to the northeast of it. The two were built practically at one time, virtually as twin

structures, and shared a courtyard for a long time. House A, to the west, undoubtedly had more luxurious facilities and featured mural decoration (Godlewski 1982; Łaptaś 1999; Martens-Czarnecka 2001: 253–259). Both houses were repeatedly enlarged and modified. A number of rooms were added to House A on its western side, changing the character of the complex and its functionality in the 12th and 13th centuries.

The original mud-brick structure was rectangular, 14.30 m by 9.50 m, its facade turned to the west with an entrance at the

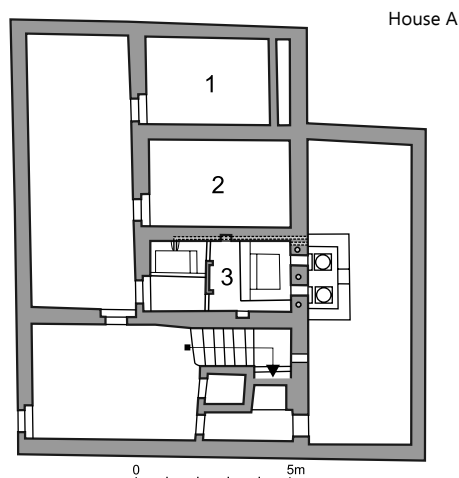


southwestern corner. On the east side there was a rectangular courtyard. Five rooms on the ground floor included a large vestibule in the southern part of the house, combined at the east end with a staircase leading to the upper floor and a passage under the steps to the eastern corridor.

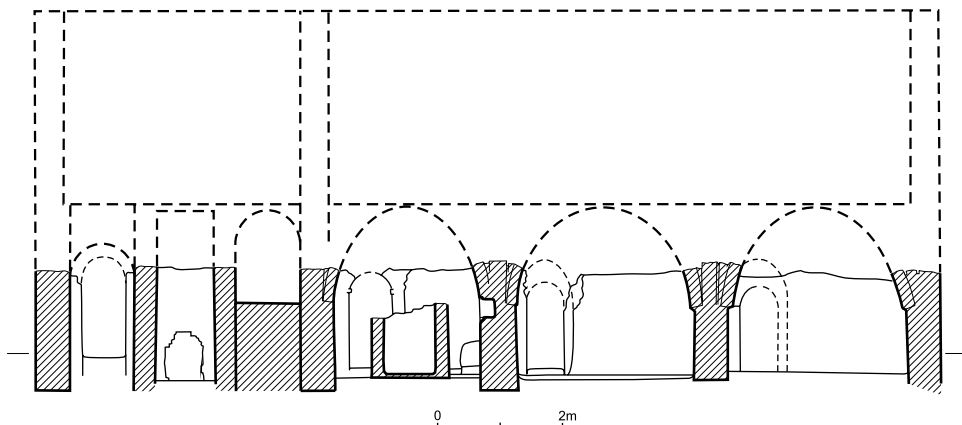
Sandstone jambs of the entrance to the northern part of the house were noted in the north wall of the vestibule. The part thus entered consisted of a long hall and three smaller rectangular rooms set at right angles and reached from it. The northeastern hall was slightly smaller than the rest, because the eastern part was separated with a transversal wall, forming the depository of a toilet on the upper floor. All rooms except for the vestibule had barrel vaults. The staircase, too, rested on vaults. The vestibule was probably two floors high. Some of the rooms were lighted by small external windows. All the inner doorways had stone arches resting on stone jambs.

Room 3 adjacent to the staircase on the north was thoroughly rebuilt soon after the original construction. A narrow wall with a shallow arched niche on the east side divided it into two. Two arched doors by the side walls gave passage from one part to the other. Both of these units were furnished with pools set against the east and north

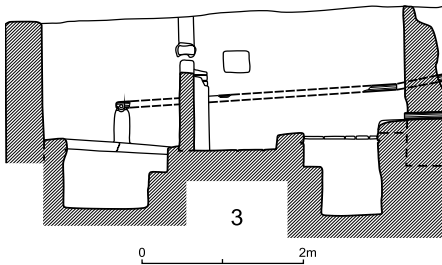
walls. The pools were faced with stone and coated with waterproof plaster. Each had a step facilitating access. The floor of the room was paved with irregularly cut stone slabs. A terracotta pipe ran along the north wall, supplying the pools with water from a tank set up above a furnace built against the outer wall in the eastern courtyard. Three vertical terracotta pipes in the east wall acted as flues bringing warm air to the rooms with pools and the upper-floor hall above it.



Reconstructed section through House A



Bathroom of House A with preserved water installation in the north wall; close-up of the tap in the pipe



The furnace in the eastern courtyard was a rectangular structure with two round pillars inside it, presumably supporting the water tank. The bottom part of the furnace, with an opening that could be opened and closed, presumably served as a hearth. The vertical pipes in the east wall of the room with pools was connected with it. Thus, room 3 may

be said to have been a bathroom with two pools for bathing, filled with hot water from the outside tank set atop the furnace.

An upper floor in House A is confirmed by the staircase and by the positioning of the toilet depository in room 1, as well as ceramic flues supplying warm air to room 3. The layout must have resembled that of the ground floor. A toilet connected with the depository, identified on the ground floor, can be situated in its northeastern part, and a heated room in the middle of the eastern side; the latter could have been a bedroom or official hall, presumably with a wooden ceiling supported on a stone column. Indeed, the entire upper floor had wooden ceilings. A presumed roof terrace would have been accessible from the staircase.

All the ground-floor rooms of House A were given a fine mud-plaster and lime-sand-plaster coating. Murals decorating the walls of the house were preserved most fully in the bathroom, as well as in the vestibule and western chamber. No traces of wall painting were in evidence in rooms 1 and 2.

The surviving murals took on the form of a continuous frieze running at the point of the springing of the vaults. The frieze consisted of a horizontal band of floral decoration (vestibule) or else a geometric guilloche with



Bread oven from House PCH.1

Murals from the bathroom in House A



Victorious Christ on the wall between the tanks



crosses depicted above it (mostly surviving only in the bottom parts). A rich figural decoration was recorded in the eastern end of the bathroom. In the niche of the partition wall, there was a monumental representation of Christ in Triumph, trampling a serpent, lion and basilisk, in illustration of Psalm 90:13. A legend identified the figure as *Sol Victis*. A golden background filled the entire niche, which not only had a masonry frame, but was further accentuated with a painted guilloche on this frame. A floral composition with two tonda appeared above the arcades of the lateral passages. One tondo was filled with a text of St John Gospel, the other held a fragmentarily preserved bust of a man, most likely a saint. On the north wall, a partly presented scene depicted two archangels standing side by side. On the opposite, south wall, the artist had painted two standing figures of holy warriors, presumably Teodore Stratelatos and Merkurios, slaying the apostate emperor. The east wall with two windows bore a floral decoration consisting of large flower buds in the corners of the room and a guilloche under the window sills (Martens-Czarnecka 2001: 253–259).

The repertory of paintings discovered in House A has led most experts to consider a liturgical function for this room, despite the obvious indications provided by the bathing facilities. The niche with the Christ mural was venerated even after the house had been abandoned, as indicated by late oil lamps that were left even on top of the sand dune penetrating into the interior of the room.

All paintings were taken off the walls of the house and were transferred, after conservation, to the collection of the National Museum in Khartoum.

HOUSE B

Rectangular house B in the eastern part of the complex appears as a virtual mirror reflection of House A. The entrance was in the east facade. There were six rooms on the ground floor. A vestibule on the south side

of the structure opened into a very damaged western staircase. In the north end, there was a very big eastern chamber opening into three smaller units set perpendicularly to it. The courtyard between houses A and B was entered from the northern of these rooms. Chamber next to the staircase was smaller, having a toilet depository arranged in the back of it. Vaults, only partly preserved, covered the entire northern end of the house. In the south, there is no evidence of ceilings, perhaps there was a wooden ceiling above this chamber, which could have been higher than the rest, as in the southern end of House A. It is likely that House B was enlarged at some point when additional rooms were added in the eastern part.

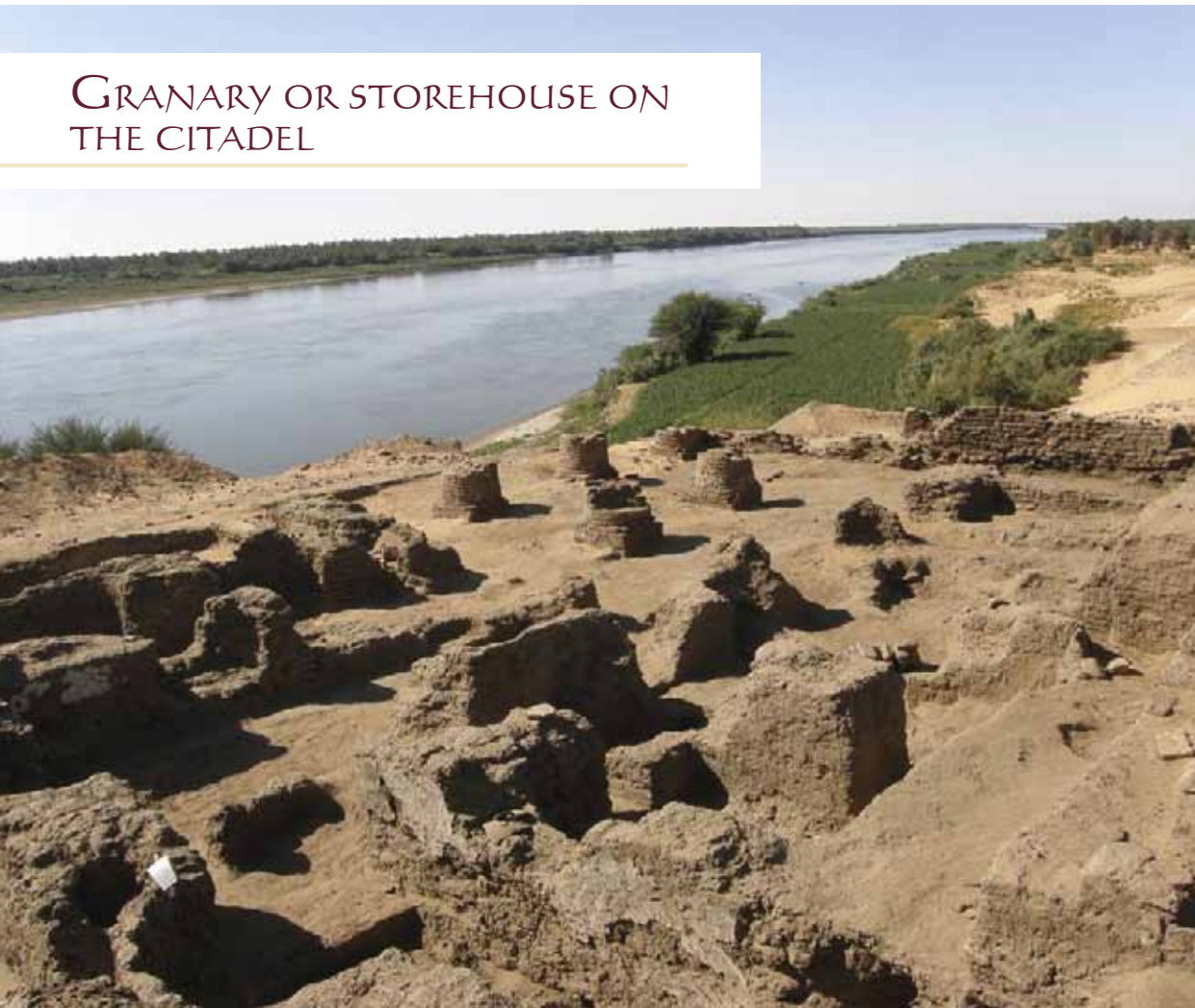
Again, there is no evidence of an upper floor, except indirect proof like the toilet depository and the staircase.

The interior was given a plaster coating and it is very likely that it was painted. The evidence is modest to the utmost: a few pieces of plaster with color polychromy found in the fill of the rooms. They could have come from the upper floor. The best preserved piece is a fragment of a small composition depicting a figure dressed in a royal crown with horns.



Fragmentary image of a royal crown, mural from House B

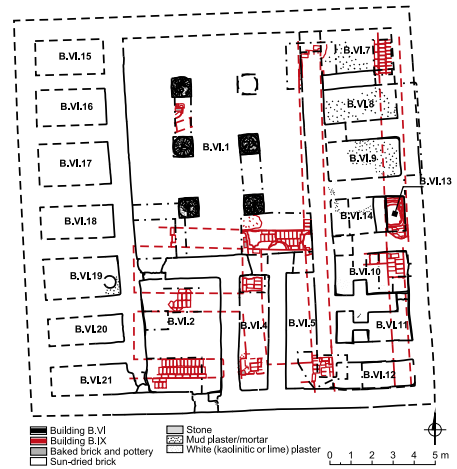
GRANARY OR STOREHOUSE ON THE CITADEL



Storehouse or granary on the citadel (B.VI)

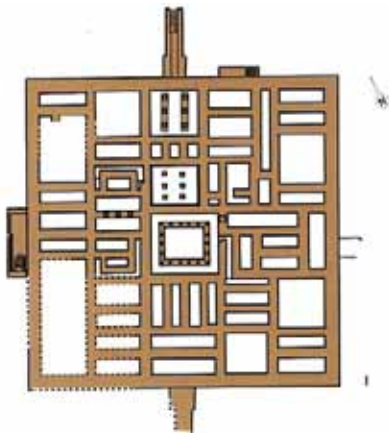
A large mud-brick building was located in the northwestern part of the Citadel (Site C). It comprised a central hall with six round pillars and rows of narrow rooms on opposite sides. The south side was occupied by a set of similarly narrow rooms and an entrance vestibule. The north part of the building was destroyed. The walls of the rooms bear no remains of plaster, as well as no evidence of floors, either inside the central hall or inside the narrow rooms. The structure was erected in the 12th century on the ruins of earlier architecture, which has yet to be explored and identified. The interpretation of Building VI and its furnishings is still pending, but it could have been a storehouse, as suggested by the many narrow rooms, the location of the building near a river harbor and analogous layout as some Meroitic buildings, referred to as "palaces", which were erected from the 1st century BC through the 3rd century AD. Such structures are known from Gebel Barkal, Meroe and Wad Ben Naga.

Structures along parallel lines are known also from Graeco-Roman Egypt, from Karanis and Tebtynis in the Fayum, where they have been interpreted as granaries. In this context it merits note that in the Late Period (12th-14th century) the ruined and rubble-filled houses in the northwestern part of the citadel and the area just south of the



Storehouse or granary (Building VI) with underlying remains of an earlier Building IX

Pillar Church were occupied by large, deep siloses. The features were excavated into the rubble and the inside walls were rendered with a thick coat of mud. No remains of the food kept in these siloses were discovered in the five excavated structures. The location of these features near Building VI and next to the bend in the Nile, which is interpreted as a potential commercial harbor on the river, permits a provisional interpretation of the northwestern part of the citadel as the location of storeroom facilities serving the river harbor in the Late Period, that is, in the 12th through the 14th centuries.



Architectural parallels: Meroe in Nubia (left) and Karanis in Egypt (right)

An aerial photograph of a desert landscape. In the upper left, there is a small cluster of buildings and some greenery. The rest of the image shows a vast, arid plain with numerous small, circular mounds (tumuli) scattered across it. A dirt road or path winds through the landscape. In the bottom right corner, there is a caption.

CEMETERIES

Tumulus cemetery in El Ghaddar

Two rock-cut tombs are to be found on the southeastern fringes of the modern village of El Ghaddar, just 2.5 km away from the Citadel. The rocky rise is not extensive in size and its surface has been heavily eroded. Avast tumulus necropolis of post-Meroitic date extended close-by to the northeast, in the direction of Gebel Ghaddar.

ROCK-CUT TOMBS

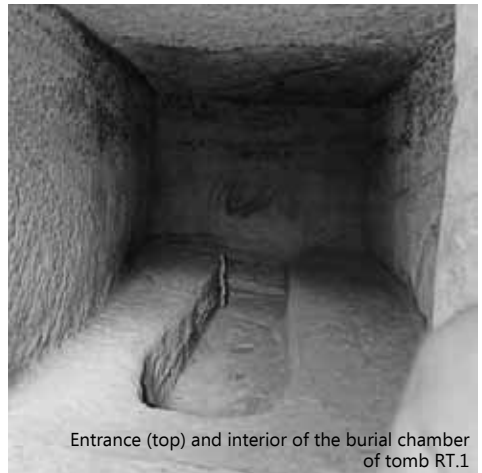
Discovered by local inhabitants, the tombs were first explored in 1948, but no records of these investigations were kept. The tombs were cleared once more in 1971 and again in 1981. Of the burials and potential tomb equipment nothing is known except for a note in the NCAM archives, describing the finding of "fragments of bone and an earthenware lamp of about 13 cm in diameter" inside RT.1 (Jakobielski 1982a).

The two tombs were quite evidently solitary in this location, cut into the soft sandstone and devoid of the accompanying superstructures, which have been eroded completely or, had they been raised of stone blocks, dismantled to salvage the building material. The tombs themselves are just 8 m apart. They are furnished with burial shafts and a wide staircase leading to the burial chamber from the west.

The layout leaves no doubt as to the Christian attribution of the tombs. The two are similar, but not identical, with a carved cross decorating the lintel on the facade of RT.1 and burial niches of anthropomorphic shape cut in the floor, leaving a rounded place for the head oriented to the west. Tomb RT.2 with its two crypts finds a close parallel in a masonry tomb located beneath the apse of the Commemorative Building BX, although there the shaft entrance was placed on the east side for purely practical reasons.

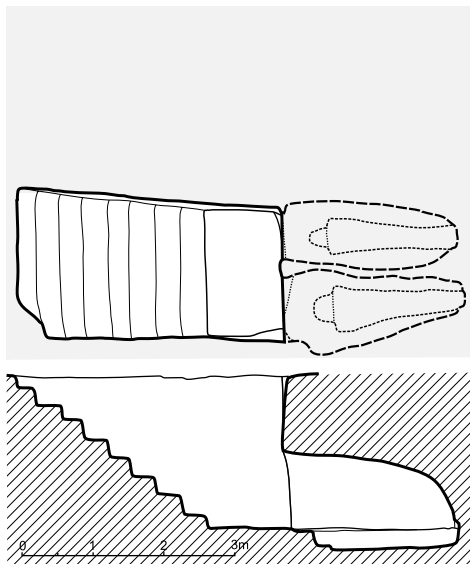
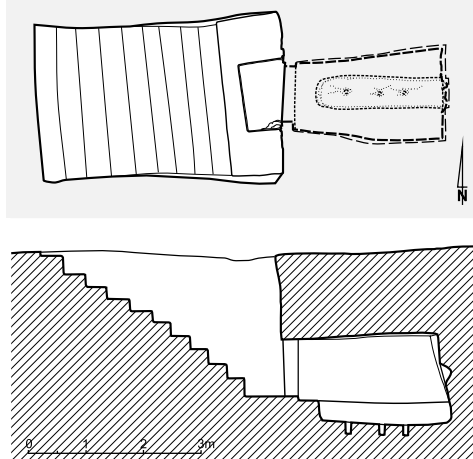
The only clue for dating is based on the lintel decoration from the facade of RT.1. No monumental tombs of a similar kind have ever been found in Dongola and not a single fragment of a funerary stela belonging to

a Makurian king has been found so far. Surely, the royal graves are still to be discovered, perhaps somewhere in the vaults of the church structures on the Citadel. On the other hand, considering the monumental aspect of the rock tombs and their localization near the tumulus cemetery and not far from the Citadel, one could suggest that they had been made for the rulers of Makuria, who had already moved their seat to a freshly constructed fortress on the citadel, but had

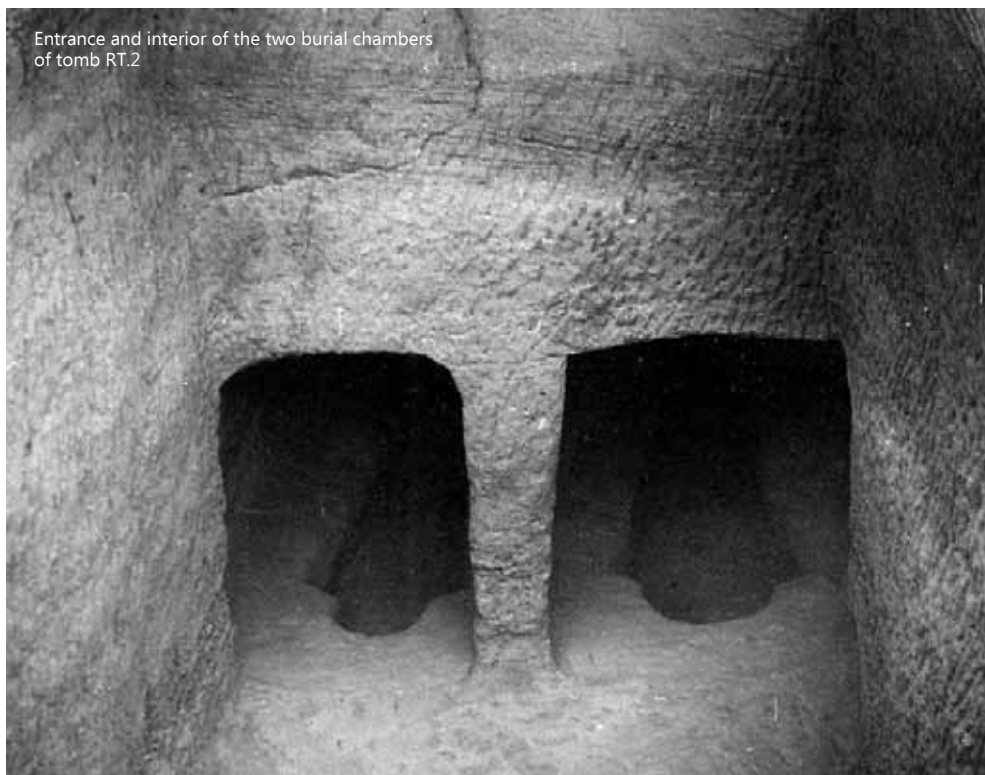


Entrance (top) and interior of the burial chamber of tomb RT.1

Rock-cut tombs RT.1 (left) and RT.2



Entrance and interior of the two burial chambers of tomb RT.2



still retained the age-old Nubian tradition of being buried away from their residence.

The architecture of the tombs is also telling. The stepped shafts descend directly into the burial chambers, as called for in the well-documented Kushite tradition well preserved on the late Southern Cemetery at Gebel Barkal, e.g., tombs Bar.16–17; 19; 21–25 (Dunham 1957: 100–106), not to mention examples of post-Meroitic date from Ballaña, among others. Unlike the tombs from Nuri and Meroe, however, there are no offering chambers in Dongola and this absence could be explained by a change of ritual imposed by the adoption of new religious norms. In the Christian tradition, the dead did not need to be furnished with any tomb equipment or burial offerings.

The heavily eroded rock surface above and around the tombs lends no suggestion as to the appearance of the superstructures. A tumulus form is rather out of the question. It may have been a kind of stone structure within an enclosure wall. The crypts of the BX structure were associated with a large church building, whereas the much later Christian tomb superstructures of the 9th and 10th centuries took the shape of small monolithic buildings with a central dome set up over the grave.

TOMB RT.1

The shaft is rectangular, 4 m long, 2.70 m wide and 2.65 m deep. It contained a rock-cut staircase of 11 steps, which were as wide as the shaft. The entrance to the burial chamber, 0.96 m by 0.94 m, was positioned centrally in the east wall. The facade was decorated with carved reveals and had a smoothed lintel, in the center of which there was a cross inscribed in a circle, measuring 30 cm in diameter. A small niche, presumably for an oil lamp, was cut into the wall face to the right of the entrance.

The rectangular burial chamber (2.60 m long, 1.20–1.50 m wide, 1.05–1.25 m high)

had a cross inscribed in a tondo, set in a niche decorating the east wall. The cross is heavily damaged. A rectangular burial niche with rounded western end was cut into the floor of the chamber. It was 2.22 m long, 0.52 m wide and 0.34 m deep. Three vertical holes 6 cm across and 20 cm deep were cut into the floor of this specific form of coffin.

There is no evidence of how the entrance to the burial chamber was closed; it may have been sealed with a wall of bricks.

TOMB RT.2

A rectangular shaft, measuring 3.75 m in length, 1.75–2.00 m in width and 2.10 m in height, was furnished with a nine-step staircase cut into the rock to the full width of the shaft. Two plain entrances opened in the east wall, giving access to two burial chambers. The northern one was slightly wider — 0.86 m to 0.68 m of the southern one. Both were 1.06 m high.

The northern chamber was 0.96 m wide and 2.40 m long, the height being 1.08 m at the beginning. Towards the back of the chamber it narrowed both in width and in height to form a small niche at the end. The burial niche cut in the floor was of anthropomorphic shape, 1.98 m long and a maximum 0.52 m wide, carved to a depth of 0.34 m. In the rounded western end there appeared to be a 'pillow' under the head.

The southern chamber was very much like the northern one in shape (1.48 m long by 1.10 m wide, 1.05 m high) and it was also furnished with an anthropomorphic niche cut into the floor, 2.10 m long and a maximum 0.58 m wide, the depth being the same 0.34 m.

Both entrances to the burial chambers may have been sealed with fired-brick walls. Some pieces of red brick bearing traces of mud mortar used for bonding, were discovered in the fill. The entrances, however, yielded no evidence of any kind of blocking.

TUMULUS CEMETERY

The cemeteries of the town spread along the desert edge east of the agglomeration for about 4 km. The oldest part was in the north, near Gebel Ghaddar, where the tumulus tombs of the 5th and 6th century were located (El-Tayeb 1994; Godlewski, Kociankowska-Bożek 2010). The center, in the general area of the monastery, was composed of Christian graves dating from

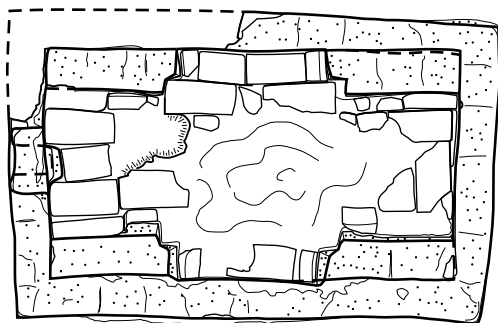
the 6th through the 14th century (Żurawski 1997a; 1999). Unfortunately, these structures are not easily recognizable on the ground surface. The southern end of the cemetery field with the characteristic *qubbās* can be linked with the period from the 15th century through modern times. The oldest Muslim burials from the 14th–15th century must have been near the Mosque, where rock-cut tombs have been revealed in the eroded rock surface. The modern Muslim cemetery partly overlies Christian burials.

CHRISTIAN BURIALS

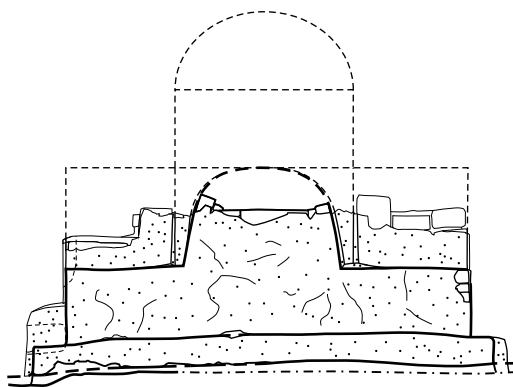
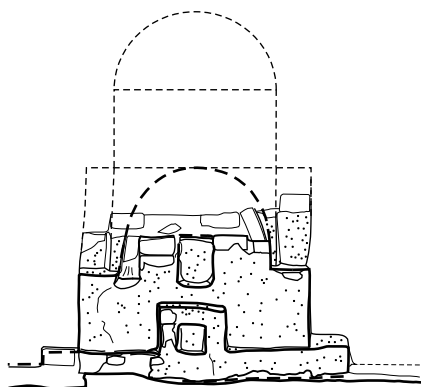
Christian graves were positioned also around the churches and cathedrals, as well as in crypts inside church interiors. Most of the burial chambers were square brick-built shafts that gave access to the underground chamber from the west. Burials were usually single, although communal graves are also known, especially in the neighborhood of the monastery, and rather from a late period, that is, from the 11th through 13th centuries. The tombs near the monastery are usually interpreted as monks' graves, although it has proved impossible so far to identify characteristics for distinguishing lay burials from monastic ones.

The surviving funerary monuments present a considerable variety of form, a catalogue of these from the cemetery of Dongola was published by A. Łajtar (2011). The brick tomb superstructures can be rectangular and plastered, or they can be cruciform in shape with barrel-shaped arms, or finally, they can be cruciform in plan with a dome or cylinder in the center. Each of these plastered superstructures had a place in the west front for fixing a funerary stela, below which there was usually a small square niche or box intended for an oil lamp. Ceramic crosses could have topped such tombs, but none have been discovered in place. Extensive excavations of the necropolis surface, covering an area of more than a dozen square meters, have demon-





Reconstruction of the tomb superstructure THNW 7



Tomb superstructure THNW 7, seen from the west



Tombstone of Paulos, eparch of Nobadia

strated care in arranging the tombs in regular rows. Thus, it cannot be excluded that the cemetery of Dongola had a topographical layout of its own with tombs appearing in rows and regular access paths. There is no doubt that visits of relatives to the cemetery were regular.

GENERAL REMARKS

A few of the tombs investigated so far appear to have been exceptional. Their underground part is unique and it can only be presumed that the architectural appearance of the now lost superstructure was not typical or mediocre in the least. Suffice it to mention a large tumulus tomb surrounded by numerous rectangular Christian graves raised of brick; the rock tombs with monumental staircase leading to a burial chamber from the west, interpreted as royal burials; the

two crypts under the apse of Building X (BX), interpreted as the tombs of the apostles of Makuria (see pages 7, 40–41, 64); the grand tomb of a woman by the south wall of the east arm of the Cruciform Church and finally, the mausoleum of bishops in the Northwest Annex of the monastery (see pages 87ff). In the last mentioned case, the funerary crypt of Archbishop Georgios, who died in 1113, holds a special position because of the exceptional redaction of texts of “Great Power”, inscribed in ink on the plastered walls and vault (Łajtar, van der Vliet 2012).

An interesting phenomenon is constituted by the appearance in Dongola of commemorative monuments directly connected with the crypts and the individuals buried there. The oldest chapel of this kind was established in the mid 9th century in the

Tombstone of Staurosafa, died 1057



eastern arm of the Cruciform Church (CC). It was separated out as a whole and furnished with a *synthronon*, altar and large funerary monument in the form of a big cross mounted in the chapel floor, above one of the crypts of the mid 6th century, which are to be connected with Building BX. The long veneration of the two men buried in the crypts, lasting uninterrupted from the mid 6th century through the end of the 14th, has given rise to the idea that there were the burials of the “apostles” of Makuria.

In the 11th century or at the beginning of the 12th century at the latest, an elaborate mausoleum with two chapels and a shared prothesis was established for bishops in the Northwest Annex of the Monastery of St Anthony the Great (see Mausoleum of bishops, page 87). The issue awaits a detailed discussion in the light of similar complexes known from the Cathedral of Petros in Pachoras and from the church at Banganarti.

Tombstone of Joseph, bishop of Syene

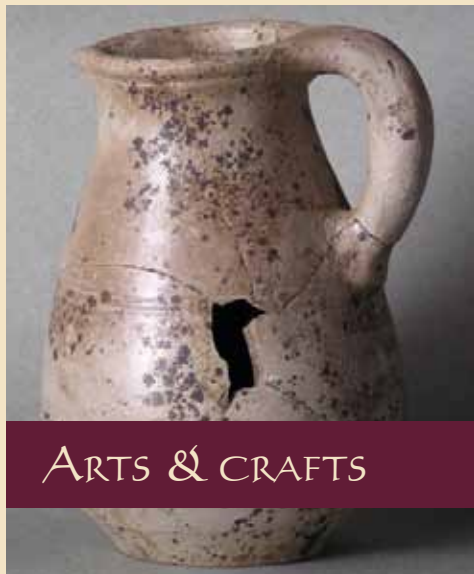


Tombstone of Archbishop Georgios, died AD 1113, found in the bishop's crypt

FUNERARY STELAE

An overwhelming majority of the funerary stelae from Dongola was written in Greek (Łajtar 1997; 2001). No more than a few have been preserved that are actually in Coptic and they usually belonged to monks. One exceptional tombstone was that of Joseph, bishop of Syene (Jakobielski, van der Vliet 2011).

No early Arab stelae are known, but this is hardly surprising, considering that Muslims did not appear in Dongola in significant numbers before the end of the 13th century. Earlier residents of the Muslim faith would have been reduced to passing merchants and diplomats.



ARTS & CRAFTS

An urban agglomeration as big as Dongola and featuring buildings that were monumental, even if on a local scale, could not have gone without throngs of craftsmen and artisans of all kinds working for the building industry – brickmakers, lime producers, stonecutters, masons, carpenters and plasterers. This was especially true of the period from the 8th through the 12th century. The effects of their work can be seen in the excavated material.



Red brick used for vaults



Wedge-shaped red bricks used for pillars



Sandstone blocks in the construction of the Northwestern Tower

BUILDERS AND ARCHITECTS

Up for evaluation are the talents of local architects, capable of a creative combining of borrowed patterns, especially in religious architecture, with local building tradition and creative architectural designing, the highpoint of which was Dongola's own cross-over-rectangle plan, used in a number of churches and cathedrals.

The absence of written documents and sources precludes our understanding of the inner mechanisms of this group of artisans. Nor are we in a position to know what the status of these skilled workers was in Makurian society. Remains of makeshift workshops were recorded in the southeastern part of Building X, where containers for mixing lime were discovered. These must have been used when constructing Building X.



Sandstone blocks in the south entrance to the "Palace of Ioannes"



Capital of grey granite from the naos of the Third Cathedral (RC.I)



Keystone of sandstone from the Citadel (B.V?)



Part of the frame of an altar screen, probably 6th-7th century

Surely, however, most of the workshops involved in the building industry must have been located outside the town. Stonecutters must have worked in the quarries supplying broken stone for the fortifications on the Citadel and sandstone blocks for the palaces, such as the facades of Building B.1 and the Throne Hall, as well as other structures that have not been excavated but which can be assumed from the preserved loose blocks originating from arcades and walls. Architectural elements of granite, such as column shafts, capitals and bases, must have been prepared in the immediate neighborhood of deposits of pink and grey granite. To facilitate assembly of thus prepared elements, individual pieces were identified with Greek letters carved into hidden structural planes (Gartkiewicz 1990: 185–203; Ryl-Preibisz 2001).

Brick-making, both mud brick and red brick, also took place outside the town, either



Bases and shafts of grey granite and basalt from the north portico of the First Cruciform Church (CC.I)

on the islands or in the Letti Basin, where access to Nile silt and water was easy. Brick production was geared to needs, the size of bricks being determined by the massiveness of the walls under construction and their shape and technical parameters conditioned by their place in the construction, be it pillar, arcade or vault.

A rounded evaluation of the building industry in Dongola and the role of artisans in this industry requires separate study, but even now there is every reason to believe that these craftsmen, working primarily on commission for members of the royal court and the bishopric, presented very high qualifications.

It is to be expected that the everyday as well as luxurious needs of the court, clergy and ordinary inhabitants of the town were supplied by numerous workshops in town. They also supplied a wider populace with the required goods, very likely forming the basis of a lively trade exchange. There is no archaeological evidence for a variety of crafts that were surely represented: textile producers, leatherworkers, jewelers, artisans processing ivory, goldsmiths and metalworkers. We can speak of iron-smelting, pottery workshops, and to some extent of glass production.

IRON-SMELTING

Two circular mud-brick structures filled with gravel were located on the platform construction in the northwestern part of the citadel, outside the rampart that cut off the platform on the north and in the vicinity of the tower on the rock. Both were on bedrock level, a meter away from one another. Of the northern one, only a few centimeters have been preserved above bedrock. Its plan, however, is clear. It was a round structure, slightly flattened on the east where there was a 15 cm wide opening. Its maximum outer diameter ranged between 78 cm and 85 cm. Outside the opening in the eastern wall, a channel 70 cm long was hollowed in the bedrock, matching the opening in width;

around it the surface of the rock was clearly intentionally worked as a depression some 42 cm by 82 cm. Remaining presumably in some connection with this arrangement were three holes made in bedrock, one on each side of the depression (diam. 14–24 cm, depth 7–12 cm). Iron ore and charcoal filled the structure and formed a small mound nearby; the insignificant size of this mound suggests that it was connected with this one furnace only.

The southern furnace was also a round structure with a diameter of roughly 80–95 cm and slightly flattened eastern side. It was in much better condition than the northern one, although only the southeastern part of

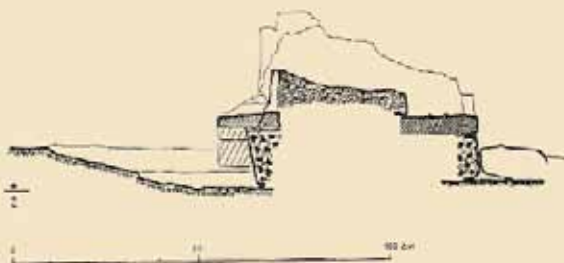
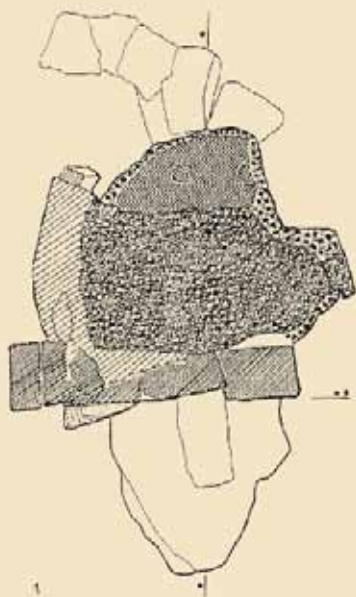




Medalions with human busts impressed in sheet metal, 6th century



its wall has been preserved. The structure consisted of mud bricks set on end directly on bedrock; what has survived is some 40 cm high. On the east, there was an opening in the structure some 9 cm wide and 14.5 cm high. Outside, a channel 40 cm long was hollowed out in the rock, matching in width the narrow opening in the furnace. Along the same line but further to the east, there was a hole in the rock, 12 cm across and



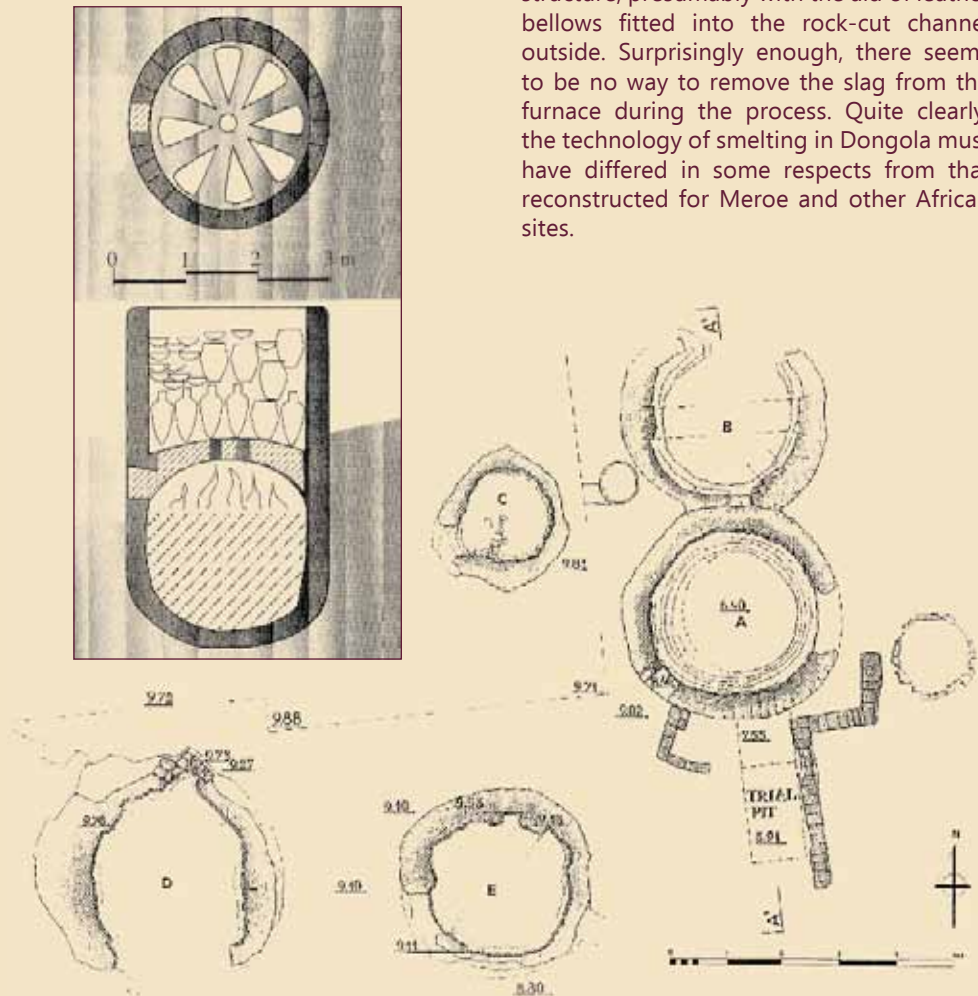
Three examples of iron-smelting furnaces

14 cm deep. This furnace was also filled with alternating layers of iron ore and charcoal. It would appear that the smelting process in this structure had been abandoned at an early stage.

A ^{14}C dating of the charcoal from the southern furnace placed the last smelting process in the very beginning of the 6th century (AD 510), making them later than the furnaces uncovered in Meroe (Shinnie, Kense 1982; Tylecote 1982). A preliminary

chemical analysis by Thilo Rheren of the iron produced in the southern furnace demonstrated that the sample contained about 60% iron and about 30% silicon plus some trace elements, which were not determined.

From the functional point of view, the Dongolan structures appeared exceedingly simple. Apparently, they were intended for a single process, being dismantled each time to remove the melt. Oxygen was provided through the opening in the eastern side of structure, presumably with the aid of leather bellows fitted into the rock-cut channel outside. Surprisingly enough, there seems to be no way to remove the slag from the furnace during the process. Quite clearly, the technology of smelting in Dongola must have differed in some respects from that reconstructed for Meroe and other African sites.



Pottery kilns on Site R; inset left, reconstruction of a kiln



Bronze censer, 11th-12th century,
with impressed medallions

PAINTERS

There were also true artists among the artisans employed in the arts and crafts in Dongola. For one thing, all the sacral buildings and many official and residential edifices were decorated with murals, mostly of a religious nature, but portraits and purely ornamental examples of painting have also been preserved. The most numerous set of murals, dated from the Late period, survives on the walls of the monastery and in the monastic annexes (Martens-Czarnecka 2011). The earliest of these date from the 11th century, but painting was known in Dongola already in the middle of the 6th century. The oldest baptismal fonts, one of which is in the Old Church and the other in the First Cathedral (EC.I), feature imitations of marble revetment painted on the plaster. The dado from the commemorative monument B.III.1 on the Citadel is similar in character. This cruciform building from the beginning of the second half of the 7th century had excellent lime plastering and truly professional painting. Who the painter or painters were, we will never know, but they applied the tempera technique and a rich palette, suggesting perhaps that they had come from outside Makuria. Considering, however, that the next two coatings of plaster and successive layers

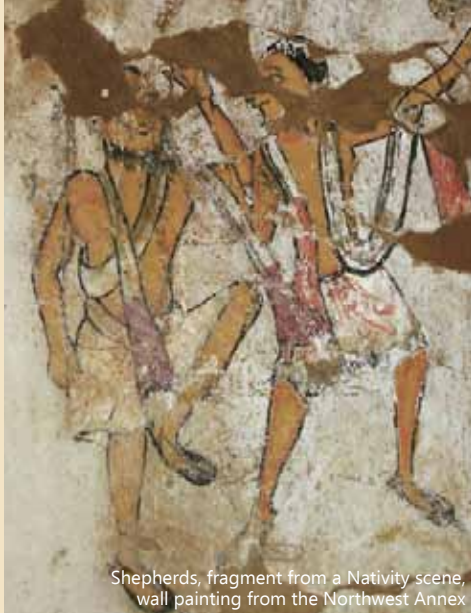
of painting are even finer from the technical point of view, we are entitled to harbor the opinion that the painters actually represented a talented local atelier with a long tradition of working for the royal court.

A characteristic of the color palette of the oldest paintings indicated, according to D. Zielińska, that the color range appeared to be virtually unlimited: yellow, both warm and cold, ochre from vivid warm oranges through sienna and umber to violets of a warm and cold (pink) shades, as well as blues, emerald green and olive hues. The preserved fragments clearly demonstrated the use of pigment mixed on a palette during painting in order to obtain the exact shade desired at any given moment (Zielińska 2004).

Laboratory analyses by I. Zadrożna (Godlewski 2004a: 214–215) identified egg yolk and nut oil as binders. A. Nowicka's

Examples of wall painting on lime plaster, Commemorative Building (B.III.1)





Shepherds, fragment from a Nativity scene, wall painting from the Northwest Annex



Apostles, fragment of a College of Apostles from the Northwest Annex



Three Youths in a Fiery Furnace, wall painting from the Northwest Annex

examination of the pigments (Godlewski 2004a: 211–213) determined that Egyptian blue, iron oxide red, lampblack mixed with charcoal black, earth green and iron oxide yellow were used.

The murals from Building III.1 were executed on three successive plaster coats, over a period broadly believed to last about 350–400 years. Despite this, the plaster, examined under laboratory conditions by I. Koss, remained the same lime plaster with gypsum as microcrystalline binder. The second plaster coating, which was also used for the stuccowork, contained calcite beside gypsum as the microcrystalline binder (Godlewski 2004a: 208–210).

The time span represented by the interior decoration of the commemorative monument on the Citadel leaves no doubt that the Dongolan workshops maintained the quality of their work, using the best materials and exhibiting the highest professionalism when decorating important structures. It should be noted that the Cathedral of Paulos in Pachoras was not counted among buildings of special significance and it is more than likely that the royal workshops from Dongola would not have been asked to work in it. On the other hand, the recently discovered murals from the Lower Church in Banganarti were executed in all likelihood by painters of comparable class. Laboratory analysis, once they are done, will either confirm or refute this opinion.

MOSAICISTS AND FLOOR-MAKERS

Mosaic floors decorated the Second Cathedral (EC.II) and the Second Mosaic Church (Żurawski 2012: 154–155, Fig. 15). An examination of the technology applied in their making points to a local workshop operating in Dongola in the second half of the 7th century. Both consisted of natural desert stones, white and black, small-sized and bedded in mud on earlier pavements that had been laid of irregularly broken slabs of stone. This ensured the mosaic

floors considerable stability. The mortar was too weak, however, and the floors required constant repairs, marring frequently the original geometrical design. The surviving Dongolan mosaic pavements are a good example of the aspirations of local artisans and local founders of new building projects to imitate models and patterns observed in distant lands, primarily Egypt and Palestine (Godlewski 2011)

It seems, however, that mosaics failed to gain popularity among Nubian elites and most of the floors in the churches and palaces were made of ceramic tiles or bricks laid in herring-bone patterns on a bedding of sand. Good examples of a pavement of this kind are a 6th century floor from Building IV in the southwestern corner of the Citadel and the floor of the Monastic Church (HC) on Kom H.

Pavements of stone slabs bedded in sand were also in use in the first Cathedral and in the Mosaic Church. In Building V on the Citadel, stone slabs were laid in lime mortar.



Mosaic floor from the Church of the Stone Pavement (Cathedral II)

WINDOW GRILLE MAKERS

Most of the windows in the churches, palaces and storeyed private houses had screens in the form of stone or ceramic window grilles. The reasons for this were both functional and aesthetic.

Sandstone grilles are seldom found and they are usually very fragmented. Whatever pieces have been recorded from the excavations in Dongola do not sustain a fuller characteristic of the workshops engaged in their manufacture.

Ceramic grilles, on the other hand, are more than abundant. While the conditions of their deposition explain their mostly fragmentary nature, there are still some better preserved examples (from House A.106 on the Citadel, for example, and from the Third Cathedral (RC.1)) that are either

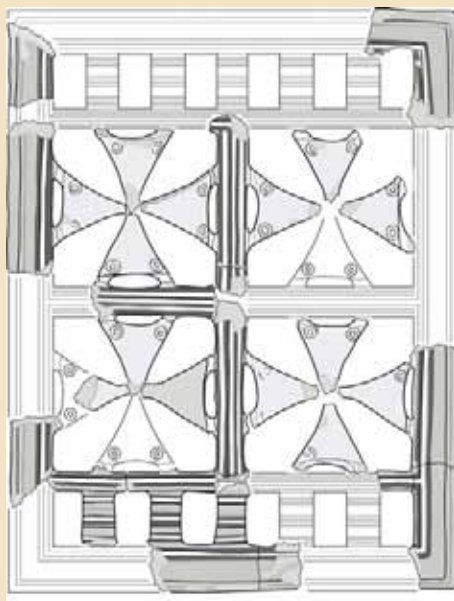
whole or easily reconstructed (Gartkiewicz 1990: 202–211). The grilles from the monastery are also interesting as a set. It seems that ceramic grilles were produced in local workshops, in the town and in the monastery perhaps, meeting the specific requirements of particular window openings. The openwork ornament of the grilles was mostly based on a cross design or else they were geometrical. Figural representations were also quite popular, as were fish, birds and animals. The inside of the grilles was well finished, smoothed and carved, and painted often with elaborate shading. Virtually no two grilles are alike, such was the individual treatment accorded these fine products of the local crafts.

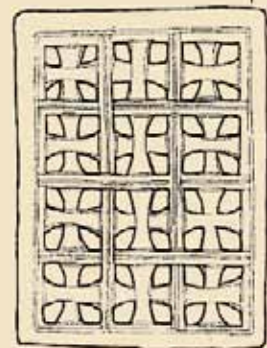
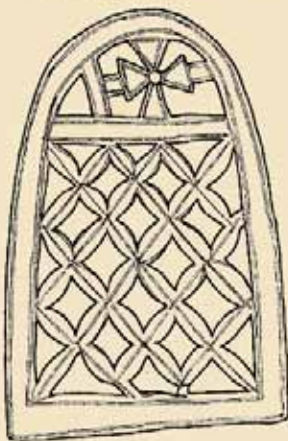
Naturally, the industry produced just as many, if not more, standard grilles, made to specification, technically correct but with no ornamental flairs, mostly with a simple openwork pattern of circles. Stucco grilles with glass window panes are a rarity.

Terracotta window grille fragment from House A.106



Terracotta window grille from House A.106





0 0,5 m

Terracotta window grille fragments: top left, from the Pillar Church; top right, from the Monastery; below, selection from the Third Cathedral

POTTERS

An extensive district of pottery kilns (Site R) was found in the northwestern part of the town, west of the permanent settlement and fronting the river. Excavations combined with magnetic prospection confirmed at least 12 pottery kilns operating in Dongola between the 6th and 12th–13th centuries. A study of a few of these kilns by Krzysztof Pluskota has determined the technical parameters of this unusually dynamic production (Pluskota 1990; 1991; 2001). The products included tableware — luxury products, as well as common wares, mainly amphorae and water jars (*qawwadis*). Significantly, the production of these particular workshops did not include window grilles, which were an exceedingly common element of sacral and civil architecture, or any kind of sanitary installations, like ceramic pipes and lavatory pans, which have been found both in houses on the site and in the monastery.

Dongola became an important pottery production center already in the beginnings of the 6th century. Early Makurian tableware has been recorded in the tumulus tombs. These were chiefly wheelmade bowls and cups, which originally were produced outside Dongola and which developed into the typically Dongolan small, thin-walled

bowls, both red and white, ornamented with a simple engraved, impressed or painted decoration. New forms included plates, big bowls and bottles, which were imitations of the so-called Aswan Ware of Late Antiquity. Excavations on stratified sites (CC, NW and SWN) have yielded 6th-century tableware

Early pottery (bowls, bottle) produced in Dongola, first half of the 7th century



Terracotta oil lamp, 6th/7th century



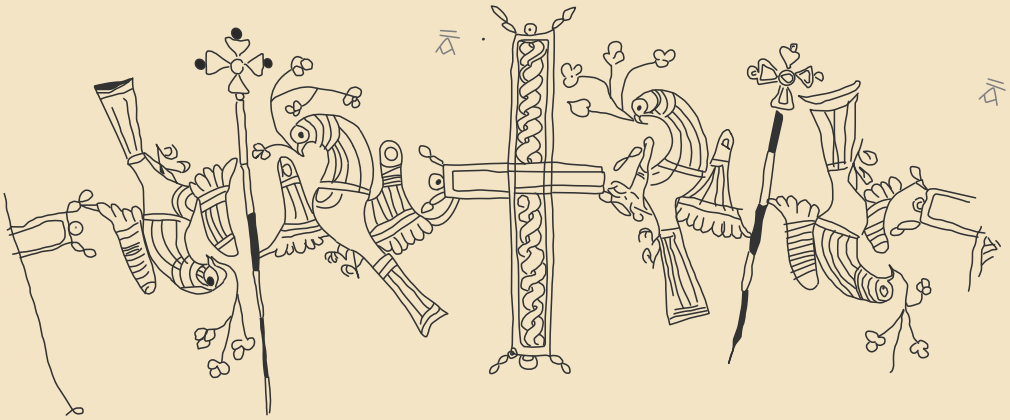
from the oldest private dwellings in the northwestern corner of the fortifications, from the platform construction in this area and House A.111, underlying House A.106, followed by products of the 7th century recovered from the fill of the toilet depositories in House A.106 and Building I. Some of the oldest examples of tableware, mostly

thin-walled bowls, originated from archaeological fill preceding the construction of the Old Church and Building X.

Of particular historical importance is a set of amphorae imported from Aswan, Middle Egypt (LR 7), the Mareotis region and even Palestine, found in the fill of the toilet depository in Building I, "Palace of Ioannes"

Early pottery (fineware bowls) produced in Dongola, first half of the 7th century



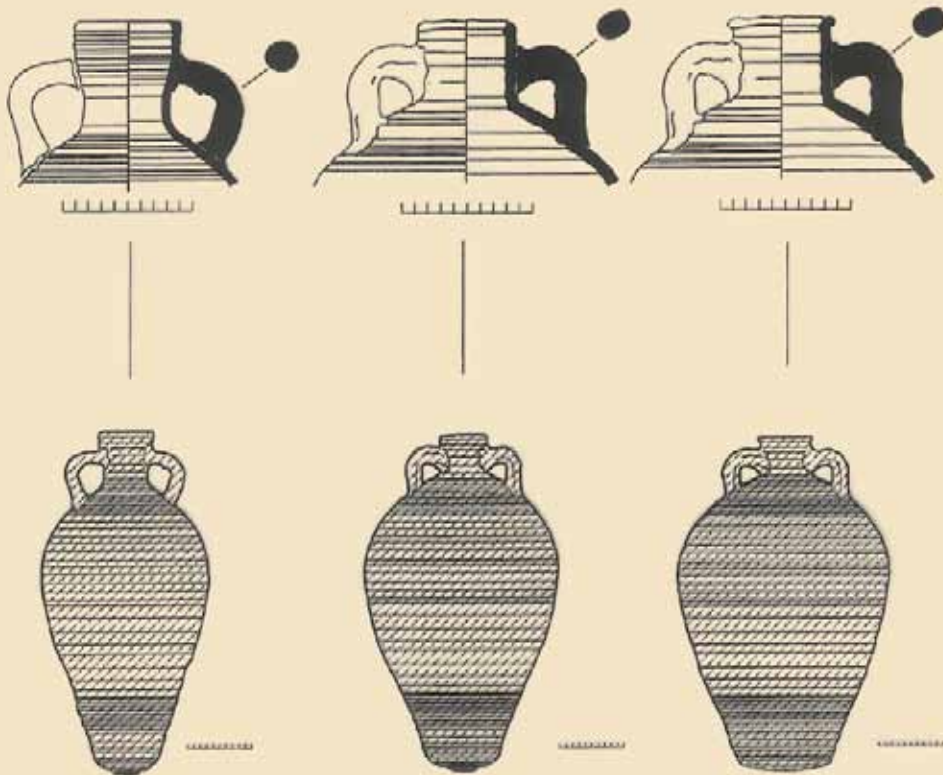


Bowl decorated with a painted frieze,
7th–8th century

(Danys-Lasek 2012). Accompanying the amphorae were numerous mud stoppers (more than 100) used to seal amphorae. These mud stoppers bore rectangular and circular stamps with inscriptions. Vessels imitating Aswan amphorae started being produced locally in the beginning of the 7th century. The red amphorae without impregnations were quickly adapted in the 7th century to serve local needs; their capacity was later increased, making them more bulging in shape. Presumably already in the 8th century, they started to be "tagged", bearing the names of individuals

to whom they, or rather the wine in them, was supposed to be delivered. The wine was either locally produced or supplied within the quotas set down in the *baqt* peace treaty signed with the Caliphate in the middle of the 7th century. Excavators found amphorae "addressed" to Bishop Maria and the archmandrites Michael Psate and Silvanos in House A.106.

Interestingly, the production output of the pottery workshops in Dongola was sufficiently big and varied to make imports negligible in number, at least in the archaeological record excavated so far.



Different types of amphorae (7th–9th century)

GLASS PRODUCERS

Glass products are not very abundant in the archaeological record from Dongola: mostly cups, lamps, plates, open forms, found as small shards that seldom permit the full form to be reconstructed. No glass slag or workshops have been observed, thus the prevailing opinion was that whatever rare glass vessels were found on the site, they must have been traded in from distant Egypt. Small bottles were certainly used as packaging for fragrance and cosmetic oils that were imported to Dongola.

Excavations in room 15 of Building I in the southwestern part of the citadel (Site SWN) brought to light a lump of glass characterized by a high clearness and a few pieces of low-quality products that could have been made by little-skilled artisans. These objects were dated by the archaeological context to the first half of the 7th century. The glass lump indicates that pure glass in the form of lumps was brought to Dongola from the far-off

specialized workshops of Egypt. It was heated on the spot and retooled into vessels. The examples of glass products from Building I should be considered as waste from such a workshop working for the needs of the court.

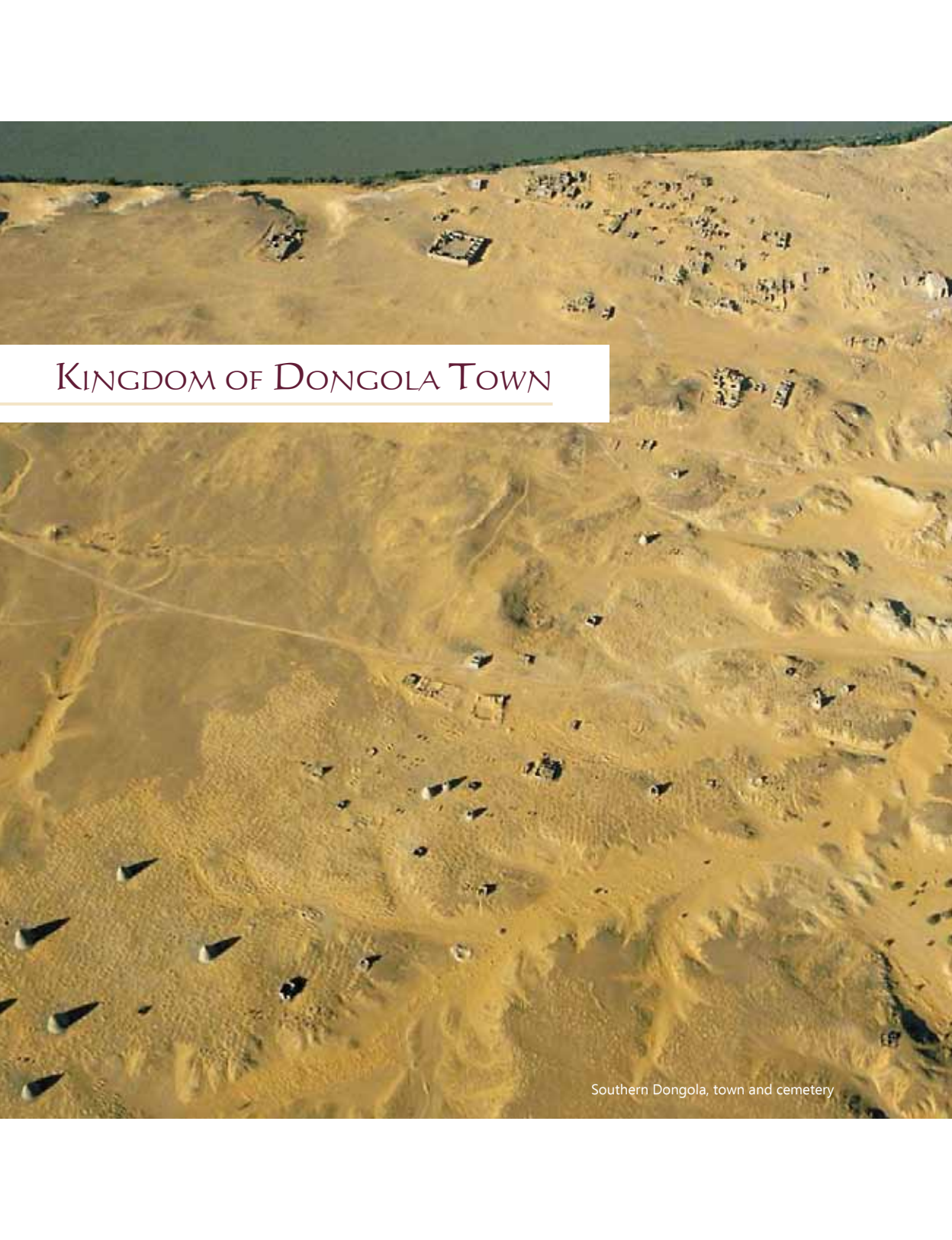
Lump of raw glass



Glass fragments from unit B.I.37



Broken stems of glass lamps

An aerial photograph of the Kingdom of Dongola ruins in Sudan. The image shows a vast, arid landscape with numerous stone ruins, including walls, foundations, and small structures. In the foreground, there are several large, conical mounds of earth, likely tombs or storage pits. The background shows a flat, sandy plain extending to a distant horizon under a clear sky.

KINGDOM OF DONGOLA TOWN

Southern Dongola, town and cemetery

At the close of the 13th century, during yet another war with the Mamluks of Egypt, Dongola suffered heavy damages. Several of the most prestigious buildings — the Cruciform Church, Throne Hall, “Palace of Ioannes” (Building I) and Church B.III — lay in ruins or needed serious rebuilding. The entire northern part of the agglomeration was abandoned and the population number dropped substantially in effect of a series of deportations. Despite the unfavorable situation, an effort was made to pick up the pieces and continue life as usual.

The fallen dome and porticoes of the Cruciform Church (CC.I) were cleared away and a large *ciborium* with altar was built in the central courtyard, restoring worship in the most important religious edifice of the kingdom. The weakened structure of the Throne Hall was thoroughly rebuilt, giving it an outer casing wall, partly filling in the ground floor and renovating the upper floor. Building I also had the ground floor rooms filled in with rubble in order to create a stable platform for an adapted version of the first floor chambers, leaving the staircase still functional. The commemorative monument B.III.1 was changed into a small church.

Despite these efforts, the decline of the town could not be stopped. In 1317, the restored Throne Hall was transformed into a mosque. Dynastic conflicts and threat from raiding Banu Jad tribes forced the royal court to abandon the city in 1364 and move northward to Gebel Adda and Qasr Ibrim in search of a safe haven. This was the end of Dongola as capital of Makuria.

Yet Dongola remained an important center of power. The Kingdom of Dongola Town was created in the 14th century. One of the first to rule this local kingdom was Paper, who left his name in graffiti on the walls of the ruined Upper Church in Banganarti. His inscriptions are the first evidence of a new kingdom upholding the old traditions (Łajtar 2003b). Priests remained in the town, as did most likely also the Bishop of Dongola. One of the last bishops was portrayed in the apse of a small church that was built into the commemorative monument on the Citadel (B.III.2, see page 75). The Fourth Cathedral continued to function, as did a few other churches, including the North Church, the Tower Church and the Pillar Church. There is nothing to disprove the continued existence of the monastery on Kom H. Thus, for the

Qubbas in the Muslim cemetery



first time in Dongola history, a mosque and churches were operational in the city at the same time.

The social make-up of the residents changed substantially. The influx of new inhabitants was considerable and the changes are best exemplified by the new forms of houses appearing in the 15th century in the settlement by the south wall of the Cathedral and inside the destroyed Cruciform Church, on the Citadel and adjoining Building I. These were small structures consisting of two rooms with no upper floors with a flat roof and they became the standard for the next two centuries. The new residence of the king of Dongola Town was raised in the northeastern part of the Citadel, which did not lose its importance as a defensive point, hence the extensive repairs and even enlargement of the walls observed

in the northwestern part of the circuit. In the second half of the 16th century, Dongola ultimately became one of several small kingdoms subordinated to the Funj sultans, who finally settled their border with Osman Egypt on the Third Nile Cataract.

At the close of the 17th century, the Citadel was finally abandoned. On the vast plateau that stretches south of the citadel, a new settlement was built and new mud-brick defenses were raised to the east and south of the new houses. The dating of these extensive fortifications is not clear, perhaps they were built already in the 16th–17th century, to protect the residents as much as their herds of horses and cattle.

The picturesque *qubbas* of the period were gathered in the southernmost part of the town cemeteries, to the east of the long wall.

Frédéric Cailliaud's drawing of the Mosque in Dongola, 1821



MOSQUE

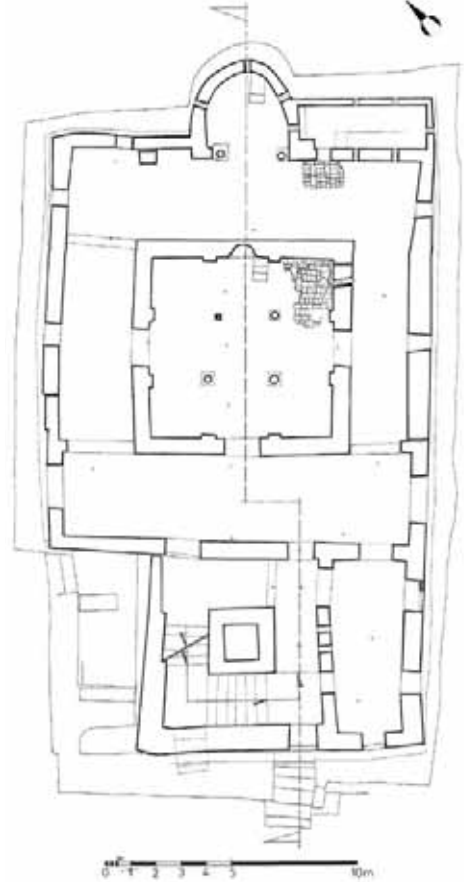
A fortunately preserved foundation stela informs that the Throne Hall of the Kings of Makuria was turned into a mosque in 1317. Abdalla Barshambu, a member of the royal family educated in Cairo, paid with his life for this change, but no one after that dared to revoke the decision and return the building to its former function. The Mamluk Sultan in Cairo stood behind the new foundation.

The building had already been rebuilt at the close of the 13th century. Now, only the central square hall on the first floor was turned into a prayer room, with a *mihrab* being carved in the east wall and a *mimbar* erected next to it. A minaret was constructed in the northwestern corner, next to the exit from the staircase. The surrounding upper-floor corridors were also altered with a coating of plaster being introduced to cover up the old paintings. The porticoes could have been replaced by big windows and the roof modified already during the recent rebuilding. The same staircase led to the prayer room as before to the ceremonial hall.

Foundation stela of the mosque, 1317



First floor of the Mosque Building



A thorough alteration of the ground floor started with more than 1.50 m of rubble being thrown in as backfill of the chambers. Windows that had lighted particular rooms were now recut as passages between different parts of the building. Entrance was through the southern door, although strict evidence for this is lacking. Arab sources reported that the ground floor was used by pilgrims on their way to Mecca. A *mihrab* was found carved into the east wall of the central hall, exactly 1.50 m above the original walking level, that is, on the level of the rubble fill.

HOUSES IN SITE CC AND NEXT TO THE FOURTH CATHEDRAL

Excavations revealed three successive levels of new housing in the area of the ruined and abandoned Cruciform Church (CC) and between it and the Fourth Cathedral, especially by the southern wall of the latter, which became at the same time part of the rampart protecting this new district from the north. The oldest houses made use of standing walls, their foundations resting on a layer of rubble about 75 cm thick, overlying the original pavements. Later houses were founded already 1.50–2.00 m above the floors of the Cruciform Church. These houses were extensive complexes of small two-room units, grouped around a shared courtyard. This characteristic topography suggests family relations between the residents; particular houses were built successively

around a common courtyard as the needs of a growing family demanded.

The four houses (K, R, M and N), which are the oldest in the northern area of the Cruciform Church, were dated to the 15th century. Even using standing church walls, they managed to present a new type of private building consisting of a courtyard fronting a bicameral unit without an upper floor and with a flat roof. House N was a fully developed example of this type. It was constructed of red brick salvaged from the ruins of the church and it encompassed an area of approximately 36 m². The wood-and-reed roof rested on the walls and on a palm-tree post standing in the center of the bigger room. The entrance was from a courtyard in the south, through a passage (*tuddiq*)



Houses in and over the ruins of the Cruciform Church (CC)





Egyptian-style glazed plate, 16th–17th century

screened off with a perpendicular wall, into a big square room (approx. 26.50 m²) with beaten floor and whitewashed walls. This room was furnished with a number of brick-cased structures filled with sand and with a beaten clay surface, standing by the south and north walls of the room — places for sleeping and sitting. Traces of a hearth and cooking pots were recorded next to the central post. A door by the east wall led to a narrow room in the back of the first one, 1.10 m wide and measuring 5.60 m² in area. In other houses, this second room often contained storage pottery.

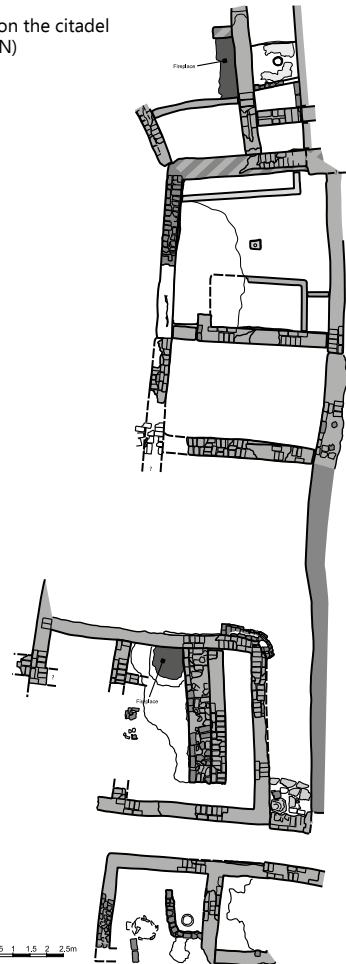
Houses M and K presented a very similar layout and furniture, indicating that they followed a standard adopted for new housing in Dongola. House R was bigger presumably only because it had adapted the west arm of the Cruciform Church and was thus determined by still standing elements of architecture.

HOUSES OF THE 17TH CENTURY

Architecture of the 17th century was recorded over large parts of the ruined and sand-covered ancient Dongola. For the most part, it drew little on the older urban remains. The northern part of the new Dongola has been investigated in the area overlying the

Cruciform Church and by the south wall of the Fourth Cathedral, which, as stated above, became part of the new ramparts in this part of the town. The Citadel, still a fortified stronghold of importance, was built over entirely at this time, as was the district stretching from the Citadel to the Mosque, south of the rocky ridge joining the two. The southern extent of this new town has not been established, but it is not to be excluded that the thick southeastern wall of mud brick, discovered in 1988, actually originated from the 17th century.

Houses on the citadel
(site SWN)



Ruins of a bigger complex traditionally referred to as the “Palace of the Mek of Dongola” can be seen on top of the citadel. Preliminary surveys have shown it to be a complex structure, probably not built according to one design, but nicely reflecting contemporary house building traditions in Dongola. It is as if it was a monumental version of the typical Dongolan house of the period.

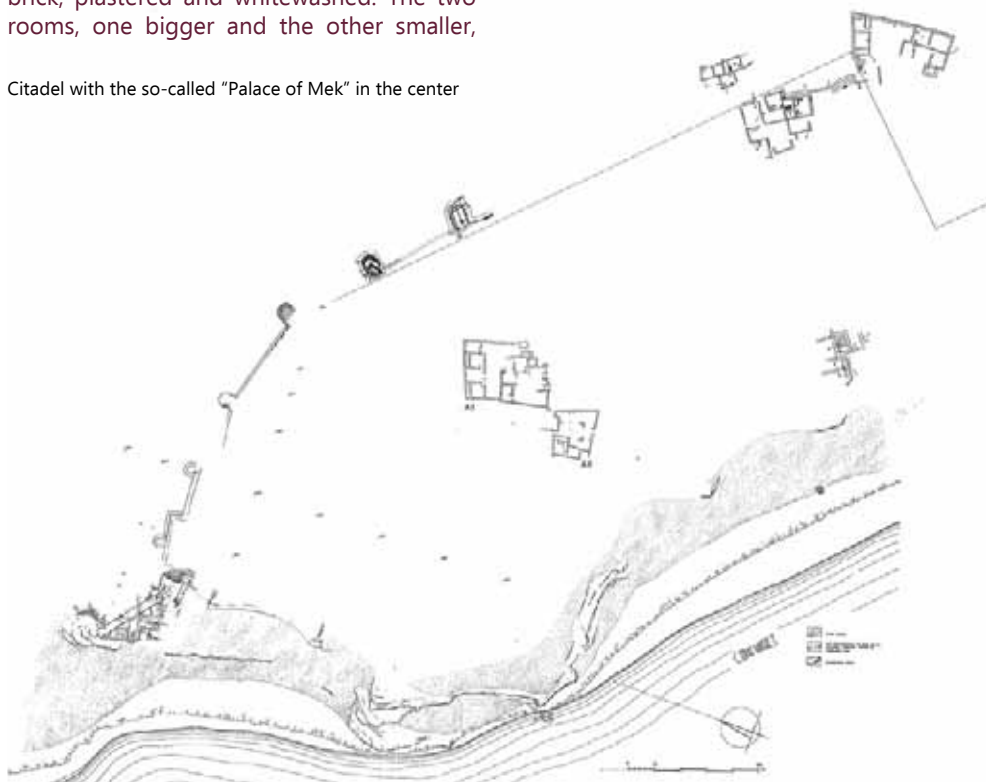
Apart from the Mosque and “Palace of the Mek”, several houses representing completely uniform layouts and architectural form were identified on the SWN site on the citadel (H.1; H.10–13). They have been dated to the latest period of habitation in the 16th–17th century. The type of house is very conservative: a two-room unit with courtyard in front, which first appeared in the 15th century. The houses were built of mud brick, plastered and whitewashed. The two rooms, one bigger and the other smaller,

were interconnected. Standard furniture of the bigger of the rooms consisted of two or three low bench-like structures lining the walls and a developed platform that was located usually just inside the door. Rooms were usually not higher than 2.50 m and had small triangular windows pierced in the walls. The flat roofs were too weak to support activity, hence no steps anywhere. Fronting the entrance was a courtyard, which was usually shared by a few neighboring houses.

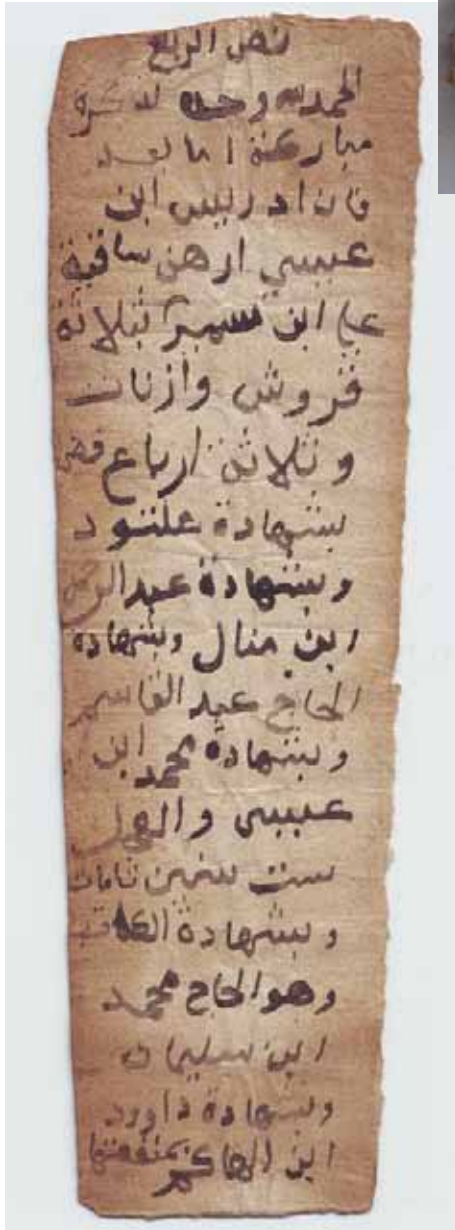
THE FAMILY ARCHIVE

In the fill of the mastaba in house H.1 on the citadel, inside a small cooking pot were four packets containing documents written in Arabic on paper. All four were deeds of sale of plots of land with waterwheels (*saqiya*) (Godlewski 2010: 324–326).

Citadel with the so-called “Palace of Mek” in the center



Family archive from House H.1 on the Citadel:
center, wrapped and tied bundle and two of
the paper documents after unfolding



ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ANM</i>	<i>Archéologie du Nil Moyen</i> (Lille)
<i>CRIPeL</i>	<i>Cahiers de recherches de l'Institut de papyrologie et égyptologie de Lille</i> (Lille)
<i>GAMAR</i>	<i>Gdańsk Archaeological Museum African Reports</i> (Gdańsk)
<i>JJP</i>	<i>Journal of Juristic Papyrology</i> (Warsaw)
<i>ODB</i>	<i>The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i> I-III, New York: Oxford University Press, 1st ed. 1991
<i>OLA</i>	<i>Orientalia Lovanensia analecta</i> (Leuven)
<i>PAM</i>	<i>Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean</i> (Warsaw)

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صالة العرش في القصر الملكي إلى مسجد (أنظر مملكة مدينة دنقلا). بعدها هجر البلاط الملكي في دنقلا في عام 1364م. وبما أنه لم يعد في مقدور حكام المغرة السيطرة على القبائل الصحراوية، فكان أن بسطت هذه القبائل نفوذها على الأجزاء الجنوبية من المملكة حتى منطقة بطن الحجر.

رغما عن كل ذلك ظلت دنقلا مركزا على قدر من الأهمية. وبمرور الزمن إنتشرت مبان سكنية في منطقة القلعة وبين أنقاض الكاتدرائية وكنيسة الصليب. عكس معمار هذه المباني تقاليد مختلفة عن ما هو مألوف في المنطقة، ربما كانت مرتبطة بتغيرات عرقية و إجتماعية حدثت في دنقلا خلال القرن الخامس عشر. كانت دنقلا حتى القرن التاسع عشر مقرا لحكام إقتصر نفوذ سلطتهم على مملكة صغيرة خاضعة لسلطين دولة الفونج. إنتقلت المنطقة السكنية جنوبا و إلى جوار الجامع الذي ظل في موضعه في الطابق العلوي في القصر الملكي القديم. كذلك برزت في المدافن القديمة مجموعة من قباب مميزة لشيوخ من رجال الدين المحليين (أنظر المدافن). يبدو أن أسبابا إقتصادية قد أدت لهجر الموقع في نهاية القرن التاسع عشر، إلا أن المسجد الذي أخذ في التصدع لم يزل يؤدي وظيفته حتى عام 1969م حين أغلق نهائيا، ومن ثم أصبح الآن صرحا تاريخيا هاما.

الأديرة في زمن ما بين القرنين الحادي عشر والثاني عشر. على أن هذا المبنى ما انفك يستعصي على الفهم، فكل ما يمكن أن يقال عنه حتى اليوم، هو أنه قد تعرض عدة مرات للعديد من عمليات التحوير والتجديد. وقد كان يؤدي وظيفتين؛ إحداهما دينية و الأخرى مقر إقامة غطت جدرانه كثافة الرسومات (Martens-Czarnecka 2011) . اليوم تمثل هذه المجموعة شهادة قوية لفن الرسوم الجدارية في دنقلا في الفترة المتأخرة، الذي ينطوي على توجه جديد مثير للإهتمام. يصور هذا التوجه عليه القوم في المملكة الذين من المحتمل أنهم أفراد العائلة الملكية وهم داخل هيكل صغير تحت حماية ملاك بصحبة الرُسل. إن هذا النمط الجديد في التصوير الرسمي، تبدى لأول مرة في النصف الثاني من القرن الحادي عشر، حيث أنه قد إرتبط بجرس (1031-1113) رئيس الدير الذي أصبح فيما بعد أسقف دنقلا (Lajtar 2000) .

شيد الأسقف جرس مقبرته وهيكل أعلى قبو مدفني يقع ضمن ملحق الدير. غطت جدران هذا القبو مجموعة مخطوطات فريدة كتبت باللغتين الإغريقية والقبطية، جميعها ذات طابع ديني و سحري. هذا وقد حوى القبو أيضا رفات الأسقف الذي خلف جرس. إن دنقلا أواخر القرنين الثاني عشر والثالث عشر قد إستمرت في النمو. إلا أنه على إثر الخلاف مع الأيوبيين في عام 1172م و إلغاء إتفاقية البقظ، بدأت المغرة تواجه تحديات جديدة، إقتصادية وعسكرية. خلافا للتحصينات في مدن المغرة الأخرى فإن تحصينات دنقلا الدفاعية قد جرت صيانتها وتوسيعها. كما تم أيضا تشييد عدد من الكنائس في الطرف الشمالي من المنطقة السكنية.

شهد الربع الأخير من القرن الثالث عشر ختام مراحل المأساة. حيث أن مغامرة الملك داود (David) وحملته الغير محسوبة العواقب على ميناء عيذاب في البحر الأحمر و مدينة أسون، قد أثارت نقمة المماليك و دفعتهم للإنتقام . ثم قضى الأمر بهجوم السلطان بيبرس و إحتلاله لدنقلا. ومن بعد إستمرت مصر في التدخل في شئون المغرة، مثال لذلك دعمها لعديد المطالبين بالعرش في دنقلا. و في نهاية القرن الثالث عشر تعرضت المباني الرئيسية في دنقلا للتدمير، كما لقيت كنيسة الصليب (Cruciform Church) عين المصير أيضا، إلا أن الكنائس الصغيرة ظلت قيد الخدمة. و بحلول عام 1317م تحولت

شكل صليب (Cruciform Church) في موضع البازيليكة المقببة (أنظر الكاتدرانيات). وهي قد كانت أضخم مبنى في كل المملكة. علت الجزء الأوسط من المبنى الذي ربطته بالأذرع أروقة ذات عمد، قبة ربما كان إرتفاعها حوالي 28 مترا من أرض الكنيسة. وقد حوى الذراع الشرقي للمبنى هيكل أقيم على قبو رُسُل المغرة. أصبحت هذه الكنيسة رمزا للمملكة و مصدر فخر لحكامها إلى أن هُدمت خلال الحرب مع المماليك في أواخر القرن الثالث عشر.

في القرن التاسع شُيد قصر جديد على مرتفع صخري يقع شرق القلعة (أنظر صالة العرش). صُممت في طابقه العلوي صالة العرش و شرفة على السطح (terrace) كان الوصول إليها يتم عبر درج صرحي، فتجعل الناظر منها إلى النهر والمدينة يحبس أنفاسه من روعة المشهد. إلى ذلك قد كست الرسومات الجدارية حوائط الدرج و صالة العرش. إن فكرة المعمار البيزنطي قد عبرت بشكل كامل عن تأثر حكام المغرة و مدى إرتباطهم بالتقاليد البيزنطية.

على ضفة النهر ومباشرة أسفل الحد الغربي للتحصينات أقيمت أيضا في القرن التاسع عشر كنيسة صغيرة لكنها على جانب كبير من الأهمية، وقد عُرفت بإسم كنيسة الأعمدة (أنظر الكنائس). تتألف الخارطة المركزية لهذه الكنيسة من صليب يُشكل في المجل مستطيلا. إن فكرة هذا المخطط تسلط الضوء مرة أخرى على المقدرات الخلافة التي يتميز بها الوسط المعماري في دنقلا.

بلغت دنقلا في الفترة ما بين القرن التاسع والحادي عشر قمة التطور. حوالي القرن الثالث عشر (1200) كتب الراهب المصري أبو المكارم (OSN 326) واصفا المدينة بالعبارات التالية: " هنا عرش الملك. إنها مدينة كبيرة على ضفة النيل المبارك، بها كنائس كثيرة ومنازل كبيرة وطرق فسيحة. منزل الملك سامق، تعلوه قباب عديدة مُشيدة بالطوب الأحمر." علاوة على ذلك فقد تميزت دنقلا بمجمعات معمارية هامة تقع خارج المدينة. ففي الخلاء و على بعد حوالي 1500 متر في إتجاه الشمال الشرقي من القلعة ينتصب دير كبير، يُفترض أن نشأته تُنسب لأول أساقفة دنقلا (أنظر الأديرة). حاليا تنتظم الحفريات الأثرية بشكل رئيسي في الملحق الشمالي الغربي الذي أقيم بالقرب من مجمع

وقد أصبح هذا المبنى نموذجا للكاتدرائية التي شيدها في فرص الأسقف بولس Paulos في عام 707 (Godlewski 2006a).

كذلك شهدت فترة حكم قاليدوروت Qalidurut مولد مبنى على شكل صليب (Cruciform structure) تعلوه قبة في الوسط و له مدخل في كل من أذرعه الأربعة، وذلك أمام الواجهة الجنوبية للقصر الملكي في الجزء الجنوبي الغربي للقلعة. إن اللوحات الجدارية التي بقيت منها فقط بعض الأجزاء، لهي شاهد على نوعية الزخارف الداخلية للمبنى الذي لابد أنه كان صرحا فريدا أقيم لتخليد ذكرى أولئك الذين قضوا دفاعا عن دنقلا (أنظر النُصُب التذكارية).

لم تكن دنقلا في القرنين السادس و السابع فقط مجرد قلعة و مجمع كاتدرائيات. ففي إتجاه الشمال إمتدت لمسافة تقدر بأطول من الكيلومتر، منطقة سكنية رحبة الإتساع. كانت كل المساكن فيها ذات طوابق. وقد تراوحت مساحاتها بين مائة و مائة وعشرين مترا مربعا (أنظر المساكن). كما تميزت جميعها بمخطط عملي. فقد كان بها نظام حمامات و أجزاء مخصصة للسكن في الطابق العلوي، بنوافذ كبيرة عليها شباك فخارية، وصلات بأعمدة تفتح على سطوح محاطة بدرابزين مصنوع من الحجر. و كان بالطابق الأرضي في المنزل A حمام به فرن لتسخين المياه التي تنساب عبر أنابيب لتصب في حوضين معدان للإستحمام، بينما يدور الهواء الساخن عبر قنوات هوائية مصممة في الجدران لتدفئة المنزل. زينت حوائط الحمام رسومات للمسيح المنتصر بجانب الملائكة و القديسين المحاربين و ذلك إضافة إلى دوائر بها رسوم لأشخاص أو مخطوطات (tondo) كذلك كست الجدران رموز مختلفة وزخارف نباتية. كما تكرر إستعمال الأفاريز و الرموز و الموضوعات النباتية في الزخارف التي رُسمت على جدران الغرف الأخرى في الطابق الأرضي.

إن أكثر المباني التي تعتبر نموذجا مثاليا في دنقلا و رمزا للمملكة، هي تلك التي شُيدت في القرن التاسع (Godlewski 2002) وذلك في عهد زكرياس (Augustus) Zacharias و جرجس (Caesar) Georgios اللذان حكما المغرة معا مدة عشرون عاما (835-856). بعد عودة الملك جرجس من بغداد عام 836 شُيدت كنيسة

الوسطى و مريوط، وكذلك الجرار المستوردة من فلسطين و شمال أفريقيا، قد تم إكتشافها في قصر يوانس (Ioannes) بالقلعة. إن جميع هذه المنتجات المستوردة تشهد بعمق الروابط التجارية بين البلدين. كما أن الإتصالات مع أسقف الإسكندرية الخلقيدوني (Chalcedonian) قد أدى سريعا إلى تأسيس أبرشيات جديدة في المغرة، الأمر الذي قاد بدوره إلى تطور سريع للكنيسة في المملكة.

في منتصف القرن السابع أحكمت الجيوش العربية حصارا حول القلعة إلا أنها لم تفلح في إسقاطها. إن إتفاقية السلام أو البقط التي كانت عبارة عن مواصلة لعلاقات سابقة مع مصر البيزنطية و التي وقعها الملك قاليدوروت (Qalidurut) مع حاكم مصر عبد الله بن أبي السرح، قد نظمت علاقات المغرة السياسية و الإقتصادية مع الخلافة للخمسمنة وعشرين سنة القادمة. المعلوم أن المدينة لم تُقهر رغما عن أن الكاتدرائية قد هُدمت، وأن الأبنية الواقعة شمال التحصينات قد نالت نصيبها من التخریب.

في ظل حكم قاليدوروت (Qalidurut) و وريثه زكرياس Zacharias أعيد بناء ما خُرب من أبنية، ومن ثم أضحت المدينة تتطور بشكل متناسق. فدُعمت التحصينات ببرج ضخم أقيم على سطح صخري عال يشرف على النهر (أنظر التحصينات). و قد أستخدمت في بناء أساسات هذا البرج أعمدة و تيجان من الجرانيت الوردی، كان مصدرها هو خرائب الكاتدرائية الأولى. أما الكاتدرائية نفسها فقد أعيد بناؤها لتصبح بازيليكة بخمسة أجنحة، تعلوها قبة (EC.II)، رُفعت هي وسقف المبنى على ركائز. وقد زينت أرض الجزء المخصص للكهنة (presbytery) بفسيفساء نُظمت في أشكال هندسية صُنعت من حصی صحراوية ملونة.

قبل حلول نهاية القرن السابع شُيد مجمع جديد. فقد بُنيت كنيسة الأعمدة الجرانيتية مكان الكنيسة القديمة. فأضحت صرحا دنقلاويا فريدا، مزج بين عناصر المخطط المركزي – الذي يتألف من جناحين ينتهيان عند المحراب و يتقاطعان في الوسط – و العناصر و الصفات النمطية للبازيليكة التي هي قدس الأقداس ذو الأعمدة (columnar naos) و مبنى التعميد (narthex) (أنظر الكاتدرائيات). أحيط قدس الأقداس في الكاتدرائية الجديدة بملاحق جانبية لتؤدي فيها مختلف الشعائر الدينية (pastophoria, baptistery).

المقام على شكل الصليب - إستوجبت إقامتهما استغلال الأرض الفضاء إلى الشمال من القلعة (أنظر القلعة).

من الراجح أن المبشرين الذين كانت مهمتهم تنصير المغرة، قد قدموا من القسطنطينية. و أن أول الكنائس في دنقلا كانت عناصرها تشترك في الشبه إلى حد بعيد مع معمار الكنائس في فلسطين و سوريا. خلال فترة السبعينات من القرن السادس تأسست أبرشية في دنقلا. في موضع المبنى X الذي غمرته مياه فيضان نيلي جارف، أقيمت كاتدرائية؛ EC1 بازليكية الأعمدة، ذات الأجنحة الخمس، التي أطلق عليها الأثريون إسم كنيسة الأرضية المعبدة بالحجر (أنظر الكاتدرائيات). أما سقفها الخشبي فقد رفع على أعمدة من حجر الجرانيت الوردي اللون. شكلت كل من حجرات الكهنة الداخلية (pastophoria) و الرواق الملحق بها الذي يمتد خلف المحراب وحدة متجانسة في الطرف الشرقي للمبنى. و هنالك درابزين حجري يحجب المحراب و المذبح الذي يوجد في الناحية الشرقية للجناح. علاوة على ذلك هنالك أيضا مصاطب مشيدة في المحراب. كما ضم المبنى الجديد هذا قبوين يقعان أسفل المحراب، كانا في الأصل بعض من المبنى التذكاري. حوى هذان القبوان رفات رجلين يفترض أنهما كانا رُسل المملكة.

هنالك إعتقاد سائد أنه حتى قبل نهاية القرن السادس الميلادي، أن أحد أول أساقفة دنقلا المدعو مرقس (Merkurios) - إن وثقنا في صحة التوقيع المخطوط على حجر العقد في أحد القناطر الداخلية - هو من أسس دير في الخلاء الشرقي، على بعد 1.5 كيلومتر من القلعة. الكنيسة وهي بازليكا بثلاثة أجنحة وبرج في الوسط تدعمه أربعة أعمدة حجرية وهي تمثل الجزء الوحيد من المنشأة الأصلية الذي جرى فيه التنقيب. و كما تفيد اللوحة الجنائزية (شاهد القبر) للأسقف جرجس (Georgios) الذي كان أيضا رئيسا للدير من العام 1113، المكتشفة في الملحق الشمالي الغربي، إلى الغرب من المجمع، أن الدير كان مكرسا لأنطوني الأكبر.

شهدت نهاية القرن السادس ضم دولة نوباتيا وتوحيدها مع دولة المغرة، بدأ أصبحت المغرة في القرن السابع في إتصال مباشر مع مصر البيزنطية. وعليه فإن العديد من اللقى المتمثلة في الجرار المصرية المنتجة في معامل الفخار في أسوان و مصر

تاريخ المدينة (هـ 4 - 10)

دنقلا العجوز (بالنوبية تُقفل و بالعربية دنقلا) كانت من بين أهم مراكز مملكة المغرة في العصور الوسطى (Godlewski 2004). قامت المدينة على صخرة عالية تطل على الضفة الشرقية للنيل، في منتصف الطريق بين الشلالين الثالث و الرابع، محتلة الطرف الجنوبي لحوض لتي الذي شكل قاعدة إقتصادية للمدينة. خلافا لفرضيات سابقة لبعض علماء الدراسات المصرية الذين إعتبروا أن أهمية المدينة قد تجلت حتى في العصر النبتي، فإنه قد تبين الآن أن المدينة لم تؤسس إلا في نهاية القرن الخامس الميلادي. والراجح أن مؤسسها كان أول ملوك المغرة. و هو الذي شيد قلعة ضخمة في موضع يبعد عن المراكز الدينية لمملكة كوش السابقة (مملكة نبتة)، لكنها تقع في قلب المملكة الجديدة (أنظر خريطة المغرة المبكرة). كما شُيدت فيها قلاع ضخمة من الطوب اللبن وكتل من الحجر الرملي الحديدي.

إن هذا الموقع السكني الجديد هو واحد ضمن سلسلة من المواقع منيعة التحصين التي يبدو أن حكام المغرة قد قرروا إقامتها على إمتداد ضفة النهر. وعلى ما يبدو فإن الهدف منها كان إجتماعيا - إقتصاديا، أكثر منه عسكريا. حيث المفترض أن الفكرة تتلخص في تعميق تأثير أساليب التمدن البيزنطية. و عليه فقد أصبحت قلعة دنقلا مركز للسلطة يحوي قصرا ملكيا و مبان عامة و مكان لتجميع الموارد الإقتصادية.

من المحتمل أن القبر المنحوت في الصخر الذي يقع في الفضاء شمال المدينة قرب الحد الجنوبي لمدفان جبل الغدار، كان يضم رفات أول حاكم أقام في دنقلا. اليوم لم يبق شيئا من هذا القبر سوى غرفتي الدفن اللتان يمكن النزول إليهما عبر درج عريض ينحدر من إتجاه الغرب.

تزامنا مع التحول إلى الديانة المسيحية في منتصف القرن السادس الميلادي برز تحد جديد للنمو العمراني. فالقلعة التي لا بد أنها كانت آهلة بالسكان منذ بداية القرن السادس، لم يعد فيها موطع يتسع لكل الكنائس التي كان المبشرون و حكام المغرة يزعمون إقامتها. لذا فإن المعابد الجديدة - كالكنيسة القديمة ثلاثية الأجنحة و المبنى X التذكاري

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