

SUDAN & NUBIA

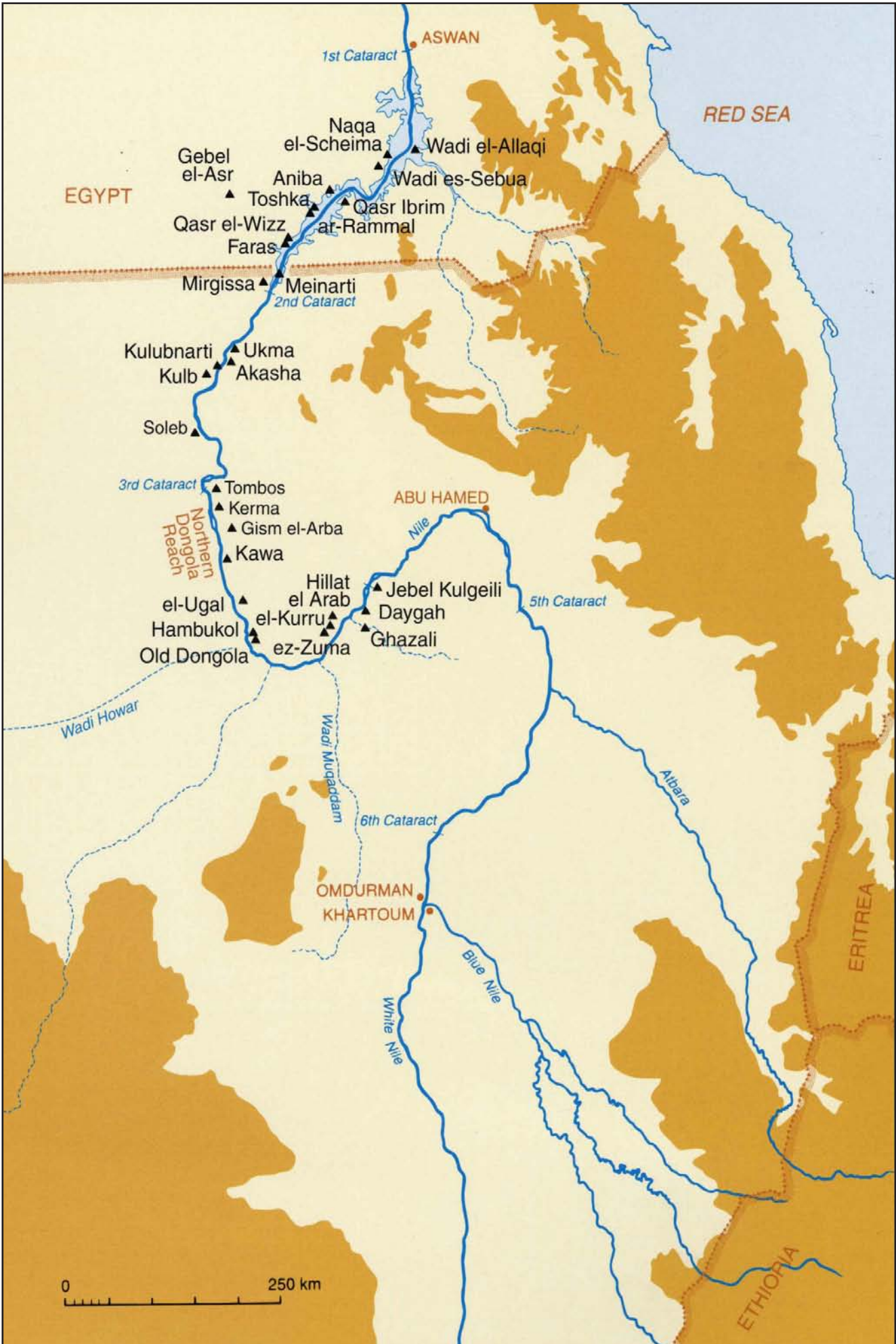
The Sudan Archaeological Research Society



Bulletin No. 3

1999





SUDAN & NUBIA

The Sudan Archaeological Research Society



Bulletin No. 3 1999

Contents

Introduction

Vivian Davies 1

Reports

Written in Bone: Daily Living during the Kerma Period
Margaret Judd 2

Remote Sensing of Palaeochannels in the Northern
Dongola Reach of the Nile
Richard Treves, Mark Macklin
and Jamie Woodward 8

Some Rural Settlements at Gism el-Arba in the
Northern Dongola Reach
Brigitte Gratien 10

Survey and Excavation at the Ancient Pharaonic
Gneiss Quarrying Site of Gebel el-Asr, Lower Nubia
Ian Shaw and Elizabeth Bloxam 13

Ancient Stone Quarries at the Third and Fourth
Nile Cataracts, Northern Sudan
James Harrell 21

A New Statue of the Kushite Period
Karen Wardley and Vivian Davies 28

Two New Kingdom Tombs at Napata
Irene Vincentelli 30

The Napato-Meroitic Remains at Kerma
Salah Eldin Mohammed Ahmed 39

A New Hilltop Cemetery and Temple of the Meroitic
and Post-Meroitic Period at Qasr Ibrim
John Alexander 47

Two Seasons in the Fourth Cataract Region.
Preliminary Results
Abdel Rahman Ali Mohammed
and Kabashy Hussein 60

Monastic Lifestyles of the Nubian Desert: Seeking
the Mysterious Monks of Makuria
Julie Anderson 71

An Early 20th Century Egyptologist in the Sudan:
the Travels of F. W. Green
Isabella Welsby Sjöström 84

Miscellaneous 88

Front Cover: Temple of Amenophis III at Soleb visited by
F. W. Green in 1909 (Photo D. A. Welsby).

Introduction

As the contents of this year's issue clearly demonstrate, *Sudan & Nubia* goes from strength to strength with a developing international profile. The Society's own work in the Dongola Reach is represented by two papers; the first, based on the analysis of human remains, provides fascinating insights into living conditions during the Kerma Period (Judd); the second outlines progress on the continuing research into the geomorphology of the region (Treves *et al.*). A complementary project, carried out in the same region by a French Expedition, has among other things identified a rare native settlement dating to the period of Egyptian conquest (reported on by Gratien). At Kerma itself, exciting new work, uncovering remains of the Napatan and Meroitic Periods, is dramatically extending the history of the site (Salah Ahmed), while of equal importance historically are the results from Hillat el-Arab (near Gebel Barkal), a cemetery with elite burials of the New Kingdom and very earliest Kushite Period (Vincentelli). Research into quarrying and stones receives fresh impetus from work at Gebel El-Asr in Lower Nubia (Shaw and Bloxam) and in Tombos and Daygah at the Third and Fourth Cataracts respectively (Harrell). Surveys in the latter region, threatened by a new dam, are confirming its great archaeological potential (Abdel Rahman and Kabashy Hussein). Among other possibilities, sites in the Abu Hamed Reach can be expected to shed important new light on Nubian monasticism, until recently a neglected subject (Julie Anderson). Further north, Qasr Ibrim, which has long been partially submerged, continues to repay the Egypt Exploration Society's commitment under difficult circumstances (John Alexander). Far from the Nile Valley, museum basements can also be a source of significant 'discoveries' (Wardley and Davies), as may unpublished archival material and archaeological diaries (Welsby Sjöström).

During the course of the year, SARS suffered a serious blow with the passing of its distinguished President, Sir Lawrence Kirwan. Larry was a source of encouragement, support and inspiration for us all. We salute his memory and his contribution to Sudanese and Nubian archaeology (see Obituary, by Harry Smith). We also regret the loss of Prof. Jack Plumley, a specialist in Christian Nubia, who for many years directed the EES excavations at Qasr Ibrim (see Obituary, by John Alexander).

Monastic Lifestyles of the Nubian Desert: Seeking the Mysterious Monks of Makuria

Julie Anderson

Introduction

A 10th century Arab traveller Ibn Selim al-Aswani described the region north of Dongola, capital of Makuria, as an area of 'about thirty villages, with beautiful buildings, churches and monasteries, many palm-trees, vines, gardens, cultivated fields and broad pastures on which one can see camels' (Vantini 1975, 606). Further to the south, Soba, capital of the Nubian kingdom of Alwa was said to have 'fine buildings (*abniya husan*) and large monasteries (*dur*), churches rich with gold and gardens' (Vantini 1975, 613). This conjures up a very romantic picture of Upper Nubia and the Northern Sudan. A little later during the 12th century, Abu Salah the Armenian noted that 'the first place in the province (*bilad*) of Mukurrah (Muqurrah) is the monastery (*dayr*) called that of *Safanuf*, king of Nubia' (Vantini 1975, 324). Later he mentions by name the monasteries of Michael, *Quzma*, *Daira*, Saint Sinuthius, Abu Jaras and Ansun (Vantini 1975, 324-7, 336).

Nubian monasticism had been a topic little explored within contemporary Nubian studies until recently. There are few documented archaeological remains of monasteries in Nubia and fewer still which have been adequately excavated and published. Archaeological and literary sources can be described as fragmentary at best. Several questions need to be addressed, the first being, 'Where are all the monasteries?' The 10th century Persian geographical treatise, the *Hudud al-'alam*, recorded 12,000 monks in the district of Tari. Although this number is thought to be exaggerated (Vantini 1975, 174; 1981, 54) it still remains a large and as yet unaccounted-for population.¹

Two types of monastic remains have been noted in Nubia: those of solitary hermits (Anchorites) and the ruins of monastic communities. Anchorite cells have been tentatively identified at Toshka East (Simpson 1963, 19-20; Monneret de Villard 1935, 121-122), in the Wadi el Allaqi (Firth 1927, 111), Faras West and Naga el-Scheima (Jeuté 1994, 60) in Lower Nubia and ez-Zuma in Upper Nubia (Monneret de Villard 1935, 251). The basic anchorite arrangement seems to have been a single room with one entrance and there appears to be a marked preference for reusing earlier tombs or caves, perhaps because unlike a mud-brick building they were not labour intensive and little actual construction was required by the monk. Interiors were

clearly modified to accommodate the residence of an individual, sometimes with the addition of ledges cut in the rock as found at ez-Zuma and Toshka, and to provide a more pious Christian environment. The most famous example is the Anchorite's grotto discovered near Faras West. It was a New Kingdom Pharaonic tomb that had been converted into a single monk's cell or chapel. It was covered with painted Coptic texts, among them the beginning of the four gospels and a prayer. These texts identify the former inhabitant as Theophilus. He describes himself as "this least of monks who wrote these writings on my dwelling" and dates his inscriptions to AD 731 (Adams 1977, 487; Griffith 1927, 81-91). Many anchorites in the Judean desert and in Egypt maintained some sort of connection with a parent monastic institution and received visitors.² The close proximity of the Anchorite's grotto to the Faras West settlement may indicate a similar relationship. If such relationships did exist, then monasteries may be found in the vicinity of some of these hermit dwellings. This is a subject which future research needs to address.

When distinguishing a monastic community, a major difficulty encountered has been the tendency of excavators, surveyors and travellers to "identify as a monastery almost any nucleated village site" (Adams 1977, 478). A second assumption is also at work. "Churches and houses were often built in close proximity, but the church was never in actual contact with secular buildings. It might however be adjoined by satellite chapels, a clerical residence, or a monastic establishment" (Adams 1977, 478). While on the surface this assumption seems logical, evidence has not been presented which would either prove or disprove it. Examination of structures contiguous with Nubian churches has been limited, as the investigation has frequently focused on the church itself. The predisposition towards the assumption that many mounds are monasteries has been further propagated by the failure thus far to identify the actual remains of more than one, or possibly two, at Ghazali (Colour Plates XXXIII and XXXIV) and Meinarti, of the six Nubian monasteries named by Abu Salih (Evetts and Butler 1895, 260-74).³ Monasteries, though most remain unconfirmed, have been reported in approximately 50 locations.⁴ In several instances initial impressions by early travellers or local

² This is illustrated in several sayings of the Egyptian Desert Fathers. For example, "a brother from Abba Poemen's neighbourhood left to go to another country one day. There he met an anchorite. The latter was very charitable and many came to see him" (Ward 1975, 167).

³ The monastery of Abu Jaras (Vantini 1981, 232-34) is believed to be in the vicinity of Faras based on a comparison between historical sources and inscriptions from Faras (Griffith 1925, 264-65; Jeuté 1994, 62-3). Monasteries were reported by Ibn Selim al-Aswani in the area of Safad Baqal. This region is identified as south of the Third Cataract (Jeuté 1994, 71; Vantini 1975, 606). Recent discoveries of possible monasteries at Hambukol and Old Dongola may be among those referred to by Ibn Selim.

⁴ These locations are as follows: Ain Farah, Akasha [21-N-11], Argin (Dêr el Bohl/Bollor), Ar-Rammal, Attab, Biga, Buhen, Debeira West

¹ It has been suggested that the Tari area refers to Ghazali, based on its geographic position in the Wadi Abu Dom, a well traversed desert road (Jeuté 1994, 78; Shinnie and Chittick 1961, 7-8).



legends have been disproved by more detailed research or through site excavation. Naga el Scheima, for example, was initially believed to be a monastery prior to detailed excavations conducted there during the UNESCO campaign.⁵

As few sites in Nubia have been positively identified as monasteries, the characteristics of a specifically Nubian monastery (i.e., generalized architectural plans and developmental sequence) remain a mystery and the range of monastic variations practised uncertain. There is much unresolved debate concerning the nature and affiliations of the early church in Nobatia and Makuria. It is possible that a Byzantine model for monasticism rather than an Egyptian one may be more applicable in some parts of Nubia. "The earliest hierarchical organization in Nubia, the names used by the Nubians, the names of the Saints to whom there was great devotion in Nubia, all these show a much closer connection with the Byzantine church than with the Coptic church in Egypt" (Monneret de Villard 1938, 61-2). However, the difficulty with this argument is that "whatever its early character may have been, the Nubian church was essentially Monophysite and Coptic after the seventh century" (Adams 1977, 446). Both Byzantine and Coptic influences may be seen in various architectural elements and artefacts, sometimes at the same site.

Among Egyptian, Syrian and Judean monasteries of the Byzantine period, two types of communities could be distinguished, the coenobium and the laura. In the Judean desert, coenobia were further divided into those constructed near memorial churches and those built upon the ruins of fortresses (Hirschfeld 1992, 18). Architectural elements present differed depending on the type of monastery.

⁴ ... [24-R-1, -59, -60], El Ugal, Faras West (Western Palace, Christian potteries, North Monastery, South Monastery), Fantau, Gamanarti, Gemai West (Qasr 'Antawu/ Deyr Solleh/ Deir Solleh), Gendal Irki, Gergetti Island, Ghazali, Hambukol (North Kom), Karmel, Kashasha, Koka, Kulb [21-R-3], Kulubnarti [21-S-10], el Laqiya, Marcos Island, Matuge Island (Geziret Thêt Matuga), Mediq [22.54.N./32/35/E.], Meinarti Island, Old Dongola (Kom H, Kom D site DM, Kom K?), Philae, Qasr Ibrim, Qasr El-Wizz, Sagiet el 'Abd, Selima Oasis, Semna West, Sinada, Soba East, Tafa, Tamit, Tangassi, Ukma [21-N-7, -9], Hillet el-Bib, Faras West [21-E-22] (anchorite dwelling), Naga el Scheima (4 anchorite cells), Toshka East (anchorite dwelling), ez-Zuma (anchorite dwelling), Wadi el Allaqi (anchorite dwelling?). Of the sites listed above no physical evidence whatsoever has been found at Buhen, Fantau, Gergetti Island, Karmel, Koka, Tafa, and Tangassi that would suggest a monastery was ever present at these sites. The function of the buildings at Argin, Biga, Gemai West, Kashasha, Matuge Island, and Mediq remains uncertain as details concerning these structures are lacking. This may change in future as more information is discovered or published. It has been suggested that Kashasha was a monastery based upon finds of Classic Christian ceramics, an enclosure wall and the presence of a large Christian cemetery in the vicinity (Vila 1977, 112). Sagiet el 'Abd was similarly identified as a monastery because of the enclosure wall and finds of Greek graffiti (Vila 1978, 36-8).

⁵ Monneret de Villard refers to Naga el Scheima as a monastery (1935, 76-8). For the site report of the UNESCO excavations at Naga el Scheima see Bietak and Schwarz 1987.

'A laura is a community of monks who live in separate cells, spend most of the week in solitude, and assemble on Saturdays and Sundays for communal prayer and to receive provisions for the following week. It consists of two elements, a core, which includes a church and service buildings, and the monks' cells. ... At least two buildings could be found in the centre of each laura, a church and a bakery' (Hirschfeld 1992, 18-9).

Typically lauras occupied large areas (ranging between 30,000 and 1,200,000m²) and could be surrounded by an enclosure wall or were geographically separated from the profane world by topographic features. Monks' cells were dispersed around the enclosure separated from both the church and bakery areas (Hirschfeld 1992, 31-3).

In contrast, a coenobium is 'a monastery in which monks live a communal life, with a daily routine of communal prayer, work, and meals' (Hirschfeld 1992, 33). They were smaller, more compact than the lauras and, within Egypt and the Judean desert, portions of these monasteries were two storeys high. Some covered an area of only 225m². Contained within an enclosure wall were a church, a refectory, kitchen, work or service area, and monks' cells. The internal structures were interconnected but the cells were separate from the common areas. Entry into the enclosure was via a gate that often opened into a courtyard. The habitation area was located away from the entrance. Tombs of monks, the most important being that of the founder, were associated with both lauras and coenobia (Hirschfeld 1992, 46-9).

Nubian Monasteries

Within Nubia, only four monasteries can be securely identified. These include Qasr el-Wizz, Old Dongola monastery DM, Old Dongola *Kom* H, and Ghazali, although Ar-Rammal, el-Ugal, Hambukol North *Kom* and Meinarti were probably also monasteries (Figs 1-4).⁶ All appear to be of the coenobitic type and were perhaps associated with memorial churches. Cemeteries were directly connected to all of the monasteries and, with the exception of Ghazali, were located near the church.

Of these, Qasr el-Wizz is the most completely investigated; consequently analyses of Nubian monasteries have tended to rely heavily upon information derived from this site.⁷ The earliest date from Ghazali is AD 999 and most ceramics placed occupation of the site firmly in the Classic Christian period between the 10th and 11th centuries AD (Shinnie and Chittick 1961, 25). Qasr el-Wizz was similarly occupied during the Classic Christian phase. Based

⁶ These sites are located as follows: Ar-Rammal (22.24.N./31.46.E.), Ghazali (18.26.N./31.56.E.), Hambukol (18.15.N./30.44.E.), Meinarti (21.51.N./31.15.E.), Old Dongola (18.14.N./30.45.E.), Qasr el Wizz (21.13.N./31.29.E.), El Ugal (18.46.N./30.02.E.).

⁷ Cf. Scanlon 1970; 1972. Ghazali was also published but unfortunately excavations there could not be completed.

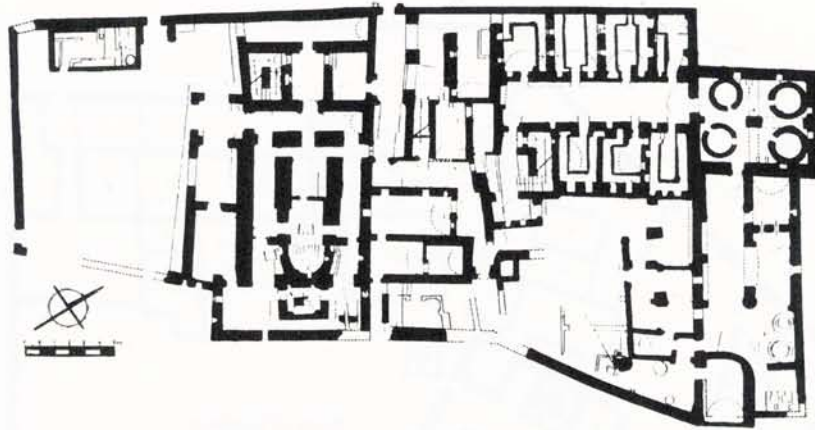


Figure 1. Plan of Qasr el-Wizz (after Scanlon 1972, fig.1).

upon material from these sites it has been thought that "Nubian monasticism, such as it was, seems to have reached its fullest flowering in the Classic Christian period and to have declined rapidly thereafter" (Adams 1977, 480); however, in the light of new evidence from Old Dongola and Hambukol, this may not be entirely correct. Monasteries were apparently founded earlier and prospered much longer than previously suspected.

Both monasteries identified at Old Dongola were constructed during the Early Christian period. This may indicate that several monasteries were established in the Early Christian phase and played a larger role in Early Christian society than previously suspected. Ceramics from Old Dongola *Kom H* and monastery DM show that both were in existence during the 7th century A.D. and that monastery DM was particularly flourishing.⁸ Żurawski suggests that "the early monks' communities could have played an important role in Nubia's conversion to Christianity. The official hagiographical story of the conversion of the *Maccurita* ... is not adequately reflected in archaeological data hitherto collected. It seems much more plausible that the first Christians in Nubia were monks not official emissaries" (Żurawski 1994, 322). The early dates of these monasteries add support to Żurawski's statements. The "full flower" of monasticism seen during the Classic Christian period may be a reflection of the stability and material wealth accumulated by an already well-established monastic institution.

The Old Dongola *Kom H* monastery was enlarged between the 8th and 10th century AD. It was not abandoned until the 15th century AD and expansion of the facilities, even beyond the enclosure wall, continued through the 13th century AD (Jakobielski 1995, 86; Żurawski 1994, 339). As the *Kom H* monastery continued to grow and thrive well into the Late Christian period, the perceived decline of Nubian monasticism after the Classic Christian period may not be as absolute as previously believed. The identification of more Nubian monasteries should shed greater light on

this issue as well as increase the sample size.

Excavations at Hambukol, North Kom

It is against this backdrop that the Royal Ontario Museum Expedition to Nubia,⁹ under the direction of Dr. K. Grzymski, began excavation of the North Kom at Hambukol. Located between the Third and Fourth Cataracts of the Nile, Hambukol is roughly 7km north of Old Dongola and can be considered a suburb of the Makurian capital. The mound was originally thought promising due to its isolated location on the northern edge of the site and to the dense concentration of high quality red-brick detritus, thick granular white-plaster fragments and numerous amphorae sherds scattered across the surface. The mound is oval, measuring about 80m north-south, 150m east-west and standing between 3 and 3.5m above the surrounding ground surface at a height of roughly 243m a.s.l.

The Church

Beneath a dense layer of red-brick and mud-brick rubble lay a large three-aisled red-brick church, with two square transepts, one protruding north and the other south, remains of four sandstone columns, a stairwell and a *narthex* (Fig. 5, Colour Plate XXXV). The main axis of the building is east-west and it covers an area of approximately 25 x 35m. It shares a number of structural affinities with churches at Old Dongola, notably the columns in the Mosaic Church on Kom E and the transepts in Church EDC in the Kom D monastery (Dobrowolski 1991; Żurawski 1995). The entire structure was extremely opulent and well constructed with walls over a metre thick in some parts. When viewed from the outside, as a result of the inclusion of crushed brick in the thick cement-like plaster used on the exterior, the church would have appeared pink in colour.

The interior was covered with a thick white plaster frequently with graffiti scratched upon it. One example

⁸ For information concerning the development and dating of the church at Dongola DM see Dobrowolski 1991.

⁹ The Royal Ontario Museum Expedition to Nubia is an archaeological mission of the Department of Near Eastern and Asian Civilizations, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada.

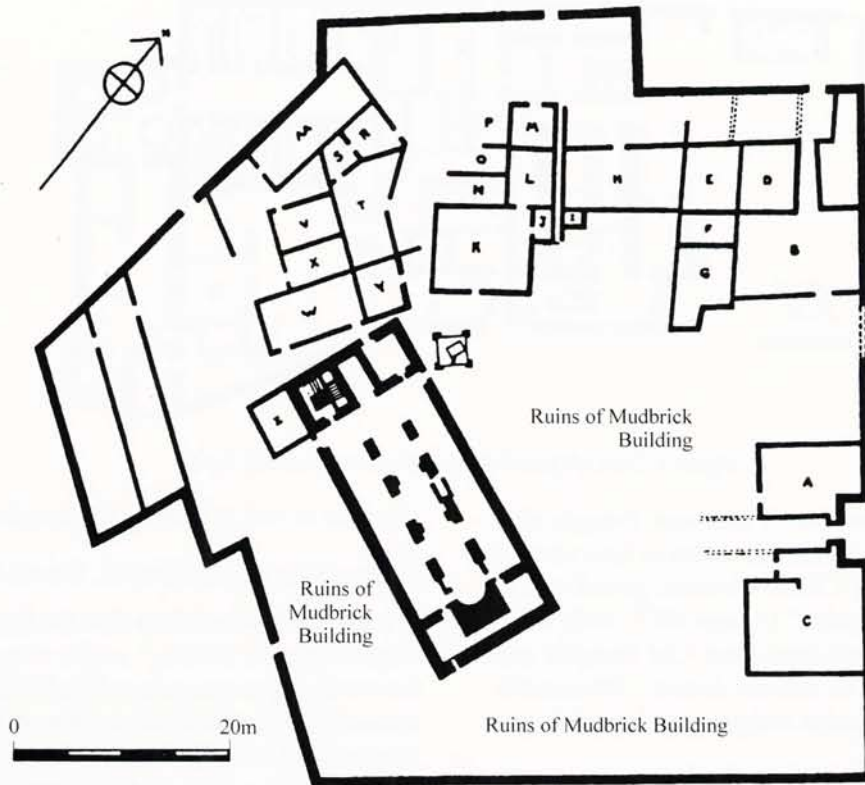


Figure 2. Plan of Ghazali (after Shinnie and Chittick 1961, 11, fig. 2).

depicted an individual wearing a crown. Several graffiti were inscribed on a wall located near the southern entrance. Many of these are analogous to graffiti found at Soba, particularly numbers 297 to 300 (Jakobielski 1991, 292). Traces of red and black wall paintings were also found on the plaster.

Two monograms inscribed upon a sandstone threshold may commemorate the individuals who founded the structure. At Faras, monograms of Bishops Pilatos and Paulos, dating to the late 7th and early 8th centuries AD, were similarly carved on stone architectural elements (Jakobielski 1972, 206). Several architectural components were made of stone. Sandstone arches with decorated keystones probably framed the entrances to the transepts. Similar arches preserved intact were found both in Kom H at Old Dongola and in the Ghazali church. One column capital is something of an enigma, being too small to have crowned one of the large sandstone columns separating the central aisle from the two outer ones. It is possible that an upper choir level was supported by smaller columns.

Columns were constructed of sandstone drum segments later reinforced by an exterior mud-brick casing. Corners of the original red-brick church were marked with large dressed sandstone blocks. These had often been robbed out. Much of the structure was robbed for building material. For example, later squatters on the site had reused one of the ferricrete sandstone posts from the iconostasis as a threshold. Large robber pits were found in the area of the apse, along the central aisle and in the south-east corner of the excavation.

Fortunately, some of the original black and white pebble mosaic flooring of the apse was still intact around the edge of the robber pit. A *terminus post-quem* for one phase of brick removal was provided by a pair of Ottoman coins, dated to Islamic year 1263 (AD 1857) found at the bottom of a pit.

A round marble plaque was set in the pavement before the apse, then later broken (Colour Plate XXXVI). A plaque discovered in the Cathedral of Brick Pillars at Old Dongola was set into the pavement in a similar manner (Gartkiewicz 1990, 302, pl. 177a). The North Kom inscription has a diameter of 660mm, is filled with 28 incised lines of Greek and includes a date late in the 9th century. Mariankouda, *tetrarchos* of Nubia, a previously unknown administrative title, is the individual mentioned in the text. Presumably there were four positions of this type but their actual function or role in the government remains a mystery. It seems likely that Mariankouda was buried in a crypt somewhere within the church, most probably in the area to the east of the plaque, as this region was extensively pitted.

The early church was modified by the addition of massive mud-brick walls sandwiched up against the interior of the original red-brick walls. Columns were reinforced and encased in mud brick. These new walls were roughly 800mm wide and founded on the red-brick pavements of the first church. Mud plaster was spread over the earlier floors. These walls served to make the church interior much smaller in area during the second phase. The north transept was particularly well preserved with the mud-brick wall of the

secondary building period and the red-brick wall and irregular redbrick pavement of the original transept still clearly visible. Remnants of a mud-brick pulpit, constructed against a sandstone column, were uncovered between the baptistry and the *haikal*.

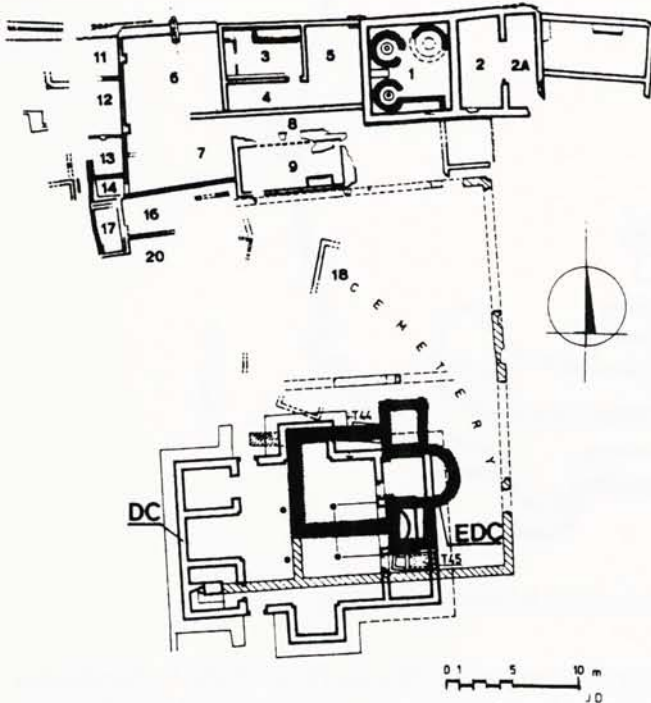


Figure 3. Plan of Old Dongola monastery DM (after Jeuté 1994, 73, fig. 7).

Finds and Ceramics

In the baptistry, south of the *haikal*, an oval ceramic baptistry tank belonging to the later mud-brick phase was discovered *in situ*. It is 1 m in length and stands roughly 450 mm high. An invocation to John the Baptist was painted in black around the rim interior and within the tank were two raised crosses, one at either end, and two lightly painted pentagrams. A similar tank was discovered at Soba East though not *in situ* (Welsby and Daniels 1991, 32, pl. 4). The irregular nature of the brick flooring beneath and around the baptistry installation suggests that an earlier baptistry belonging to the first church may lie below. Based upon churches of analogous date, the earlier baptistry is probably 'keyhole'-shaped and sunk beneath the level of the floor (cf. Godlewski 1978a; 1978b; 1979). This has yet to be investigated. A ceramic chalice and inscribed sandstone cross were also recovered from the debris in the vicinity of the baptistry. Thus far, this cross is a unique find.

Ceramic analysis suggests that the church dates between the 8th and 9th centuries AD. Pot sherds are almost exclusively wheel-made and originate from large containers such as amphorae and *qadus*. An enormous quantity of finely

ribbed Aswan ware amphorae, designated U2 in W. Adams' Christian ceramic typology (Adams 1986), and locally manufactured imitations were recovered. According to Adams they date between AD 550 and 850. Other ceramic finds of interest include a single sherd of Alwa ware, a few Islamic fayumi ware sherds, numerous small lamps and fragments of ceramic window grills. Window grill fragments have been found in the Cathedral at Faras, the Church of the Granite Columns at Old Dongola, building D at Soba East, Ghazali and Abdullah Nirqi (Welsby 1992, 177).

A fragment of an *aeolipile* came from the vicinity of the north transept, a seemingly unusual find for a church. *Aeolipiles* are ornately decorated, enigmatic conical pottery objects whose appearance and size resembles that of a modern hand grenade and whose function is much debated. Firing occurred at a high temperature. Their fabric is extremely dense and waterproof. Recent studies of this type of vessel by E. Keall of the Royal Ontario Museum suggest that it may have been a water container for a waterpipe used for the smoking of hallucinogens such as hashish; however, other suggestions have included perfume flask, fire bombs, wine or beer vessel, and mercury container (Ådahl 1997; Ghouchani and Adle 1992; Keall 1993).

The Associated Cemeteries

The church is enclosed on three sides by an extensive cemetery of white-plastered tombs. Graves are orientated parallel to the church axis and are either simple rectangular mastabas or cruciform shaped. The largest tomb, located against the southeast wall of the church, was constructed partially on top of an earlier tomb preserving the Greek funerary *stela* of the earlier tomb *in situ*. Unfortunately the name of this person is not preserved; however it appears to belong to a man who died in his early thirties. A smaller cruciform tomb in the vicinity also had a Greek *stela* preserved *in situ*. It belonged to an individual named Merki. An initial study of the grammar used in the stele suggests that Merki may have been a woman; however, this could be a simple grammatical mistake (T Hägg, pers. com.). The osteological analysis of Merki is pending. If this is in fact a monastic cemetery, Merki may raise several interesting gender issues regarding the occupancy of the monastery.

The Monastic Complex

In 1997, we began excavation of the mud-brick structures adjoining and to the south-west of the church and uncovered the first real evidence suggesting that North Kom contained the remains of a monastic complex. A thick mud-brick wall, against which several windowless storage rooms were built, was uncovered running along the north side of the church and terminating in a round bastion. This may be part of an enclosure wall. The enclosure wall surrounding the Kom H monastery at Old Dongola is equipped with similar bastions and windowless rooms (Fig. 4).

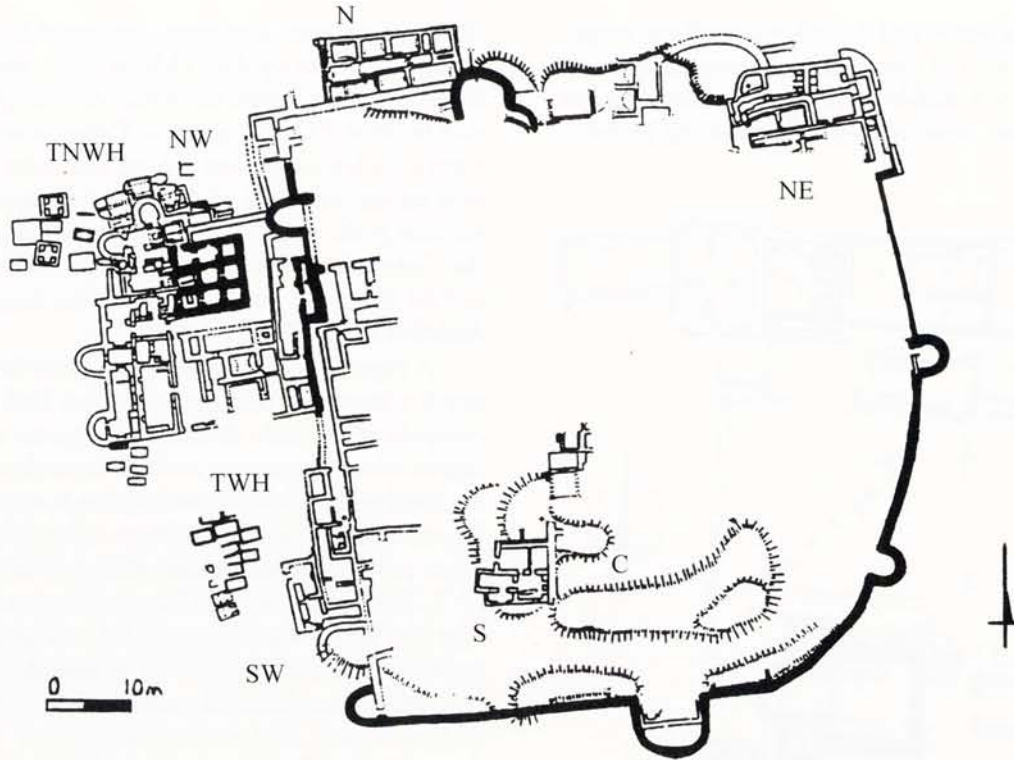


Figure 4. Plan of Old Dongola Kom H monastery (after Jakobielski 1996, 104).

Enclosure Wall

It has frequently been stated that the walls surrounding a Nubian monastery had no defensive capability and were built to maintain the separation between the secular world and the sacred world of the monks (Adams 1977, 479; Jeuté 1994, 93-4). There is some evidence to the contrary suggesting that enclosure walls of the earlier monasteries may not have been constructed merely to create an atmosphere of religious isolation (Table 1). During its earliest and latest phases, the outer wall of the Dongola *Kom H* monastery had a fortified appearance. The earliest enclosure walls measured 1.5m thick, were constructed of mudbricks and had rounded external corners. In some areas they were reinforced and the thickness doubled. Preservation of the structure was sufficient to show that rooms along the enclosure wall lacked exterior windows. A girdle wall with a thickness that ranged between 1.5 and 3m seems somewhat excessive for the singular purpose of ensuring religious seclusion. Actual round bastion compartments were added during the Late Christian period and some rooms filled with debris and sealed (phase IV, 12th - 13th centuries AD) (Żurawski 1994, 333-5). By comparison, enclosure walls surrounding Late Period (9th century AD) monasteries in Egypt constructed for defensive purposes ranged between 1 and 3m thick and were

2m thick on average (Walters 1974, 79-80).¹⁰ Fortification of the early monasteries was likely a necessity. The Blemmyes were warring with the Nobatae in Lower Nubia plus Silko, the Nobatae ruler, states "I harried the land of the peoples who live to the south of the Nobadae, because they had picked a quarrel with me" (Vantini 1981, 31). The biography of Isaac, the Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria (AD 686-689/692), also documents strife between the kingdoms of Makuria and Nobatia during the 7th century AD prior to their unification. It states:

'the king of Makuria sent some delegates to the archbishop with letters to inform him how the bishops had decreased in number ... since they were not allowed, according to the order of the king of Maurotonia [Nobatia], to make the journey as long as peace was not made with him. In fact, there were two kings reigning over that land, both Christians, but there was no peace between them' (Vantini 1975, 36).

It is notable that thus far one entry gate into the Early Christian *Kom H* monastery has been located while three of the four sides of the structure have been surveyed. This suggests that access was more restricted than in the later Classic Christian monasteries of Ghazali and Qasr el-Wizz. There were at least three entrances into Qasr el Wizz (Fig. 1); one main gate, another to the service area and possibly a third from the river. Ghazali has one primary entrance (Colour Plate XXXVII) and four secondary openings enabling access to the interior from most directions (Fig. 2). Construction of

¹⁰ These monasteries include St. Anthony, St. Paul, Abu Makar, Anaba Bishoi, Deir es Suryani, Deir el Baramus and Anba Hadra (Walters 1974, 79-80).

Table 1. Comparison of Enclosure Walls around Nubian Monasteries.

Monastery	Date	Enclosure Wall thickness	Bastions	No. of Entrances
Dongola DM	Early (7th c AD)	c. 800mm stone and mud-brick construction	no?	Unknown
Dongola Kom H	Early (7th c AD)	1.5 m, up to 3m in some places, <i>kurba</i> bricks used	Round corners	One known
	Classic	Storerooms against exterior of enclosure wall	as above	Two open into rooms 1, 2 NE corner
	Late (abandoned 15th c AD)	Perimeter walls strengthened. Rooms filled with debris and sealed. An additional skin of red brick added to enclosure wall.	yes	Unknown, previous entrances sealed
Ghazali	Classic (c. 10th -11th c AD)	c. 1m thick, stone construction	no	5 entrances
Qasr el-Wizz	Early - Late (AD 850-950 to AD 1200)	500- 750mm thick, stone construction	no	At least three entrances

the monasteries at Ghazali and Qasr el-Wizz post-date those at Old Dongola and Hambukol, thus their enclosure walls and entrances probably reflect the more peaceful era of their initial construction, the late Early Christian and Classic Christian phases. Notably, Classic Christian settlements also lacked enclosure walls and during that period Early Christian enclosure walls surrounding settlements were not refurbished and were allowed to decay. Of the modifications made to the *Kom H* monastery during the Classic Christian period, none seem to have augmented its defensive nature. Characteristics of Nubian monastic enclosure walls are shown in Table 1.

There is little information upon which to base an analysis of monastic perimeter walls during the Late Christian period. From the evidence available, it appears that during this period of instability some monasteries may have been fortified or perhaps a place of refuge such as a 'castle house' constructed, as are found in Late Christian settlements such as Serra East and Kulubnarti (cf. Adams 1994b). Neither Ghazali nor Qasr el-Wizz display any evidence of having ever been fortified and access to these monasteries, though in some cases indirect, was easily achieved. Their enclosure walls were thinner than those around the monasteries constructed earlier at Dongola and Hambukol. The perimeter wall at Qasr el-Wizz varied in thickness between approximately 500 and 750mm. It is possible that the effort required to make the thin walls surrounding Qasr el-Wizz and possibly Ghazali a defensible thickness and to strengthen or seal their numerous entrances may have been judged too great or perhaps the inhabitants too few to justify the labour, thus the sites were abandoned.

The Kitchen, Refectory and Service areas

In addition to the enclosure wall, part of the monastic complex was excavated southwest of the North Kom church (Colour Plate XXXVIII). It consists of a mud-brick core of nine cubic domed rooms with arched doorways, white-plastered interiors and red-brick floors. It measures approximately 8 x 8m. Interestingly enough, a wooden key was found near one entrance to this complex. The only known parallel for this type of structure is found in site NW of the Kom H monastery at Old Dongola, dated by the excavators to sometime prior to the 11th century AD. Its function is uncertain (Jakobielski 1997, 161). The function of many rooms within these monasteries remains unknown and must be inferred by room contents when reported and their location in relation to other structures (Jeuté 1994, 93).

A latrine and cesspit were added to the southern edge of the core structure and a toilet seat was among the finds from this area. This location is downwind from the majority of buildings on the mound. Sherds and ash had been used for soakage in the cesspit.

A barrel-vaulted kitchen was added to the west side of the core structure. It contained the remains of a cooking installation and the walls were extensively charred. Unlike the church, ceramics from this room were utilitarian, consisting of potstands, cooking pots, bowls and flat plates or *doka*. The apparent lack of an actual oven within this room does not pose a problem for its identification as a kitchen. Many modern Nubian kitchens lack an oven and cooking is conducted over small fires. The production of the staple unleavened bread (*kisra*) does not require an oven as it is

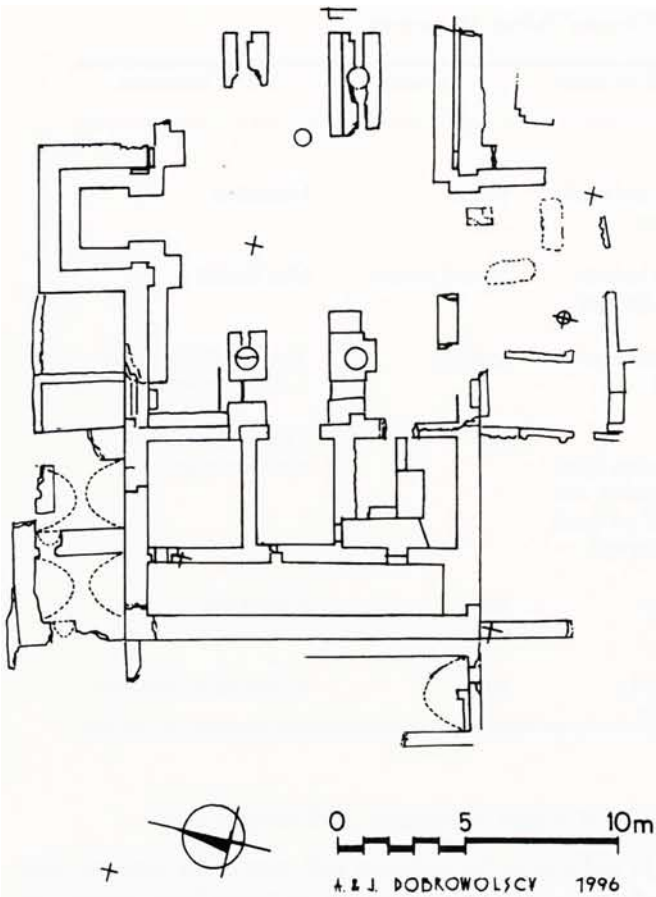


Figure 5. Plan of Hambukol, North Kom church.

cooked on a flat plate supported over a fire. Notably, two storage silos, similar in appearance to modern silos, were discovered just outside this room. At Ghazali, room J was

similarly identified as the kitchen based upon its proximity to the refectory and extensive burning on its walls. Kitchen and service areas have also been found at Old Dongola *Kom* H (north-east unit) and Qasr el-Wizz (II-T and II-R). A refectory area could be distinguished at Qasr el-Wizz (II-A and possibly M-P), Ghazali (rooms K and L) (Colour Plate XXXIX), and in Old Dongola DM (room 1). One still remains to be discovered at Hambukol. Characteristics of these areas are shown in Table 2.

Characteristics common to Nubian refectories seem to include several circular benches, roughly 2m in diameter possibly with a pot or food stand in the centre situated in a large room, usually with domed or vaulted roofing, and a closely associated kitchen and church. Traces of three benches of this type (inner diameter c. 1.8m) were found in Old Dongola DM and remains of a small podium or stand, possibly to hold a communal bowl or platter, was found in the centre of two of these (Jeuté 1994, 72). Six circular brick benches were set in the floor of room K and an unspecified number were found in room L at Ghazali.

The relationship between the location of the refectory and the church was important because “in the coenobia, in which communal prayer and communal meals constituted the heart of the life, the refectory generally stood near the church building” (Hirschfeld 1992, 191). Prayer, instruction and religious offices frequently preceded or followed a communal meal. All of the Nubian refectories identified thus far were located within a short walking distance of the church.

Population Estimates

Scanlon estimated that five or six monks could fit ‘comfortably’ around the dining benches in Qasr el-Wizz room II-A,

Table 2. Dimensions of Refectories and Kitchens in Nubian Monasteries

Monastery	Refectory Dimensions	Entrance Location	No. of benches and diameter	Refectory to Church distance	Relation of Kitchen to Refectory
Dongola DM	c. 7 x 6m (42 m sq.)	?	3 benches c. 1.8m dia.	c. 24 - 27m	?
Dongola Kom H	unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown	Kitchen in NE corner, possibly room 3?
Ghazali (rooms K & L)	K = 9 x 8m (72 m sq.)	2 entrances - north to L, south to exterior	6 benches c. 2m dia	c. 17m	room J - adjacent
	L = 4 x 5m (20 m sq.)	south to K	max. of 2 c. 2m dia	c. 34m through K	room J - adjacent
Qasr el-Wizz (II-A & M-P)	II-A = 6 x 7m (42 m sq.)	2 entrances - sse to II-T, sw to II-B cell-block corridor	4 benches 1.5 to 1.8m	c. 25m	II - T - 10 metres away down hall L
	M-P = 13 x 6m (78 m sq.)	2 entrances - ne to II-R, se to church corridor	none identified, max. 8 benches possible	c. 10m	II - R - adjacent (identified as a bakery)

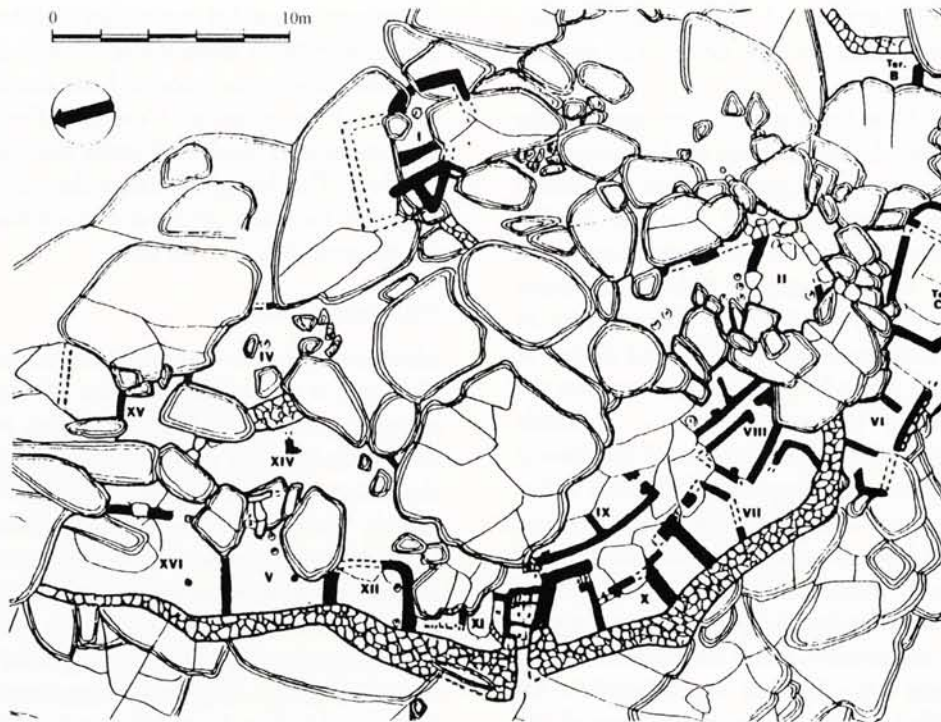


Figure 6. Post-Classic settlement at Kulubnarti [21-S-10] (after Adams 1994a, 204, map 5.3).

and consequently estimated that this monastic community may have numbered between 20 and 24 individuals (Scanlon 1972, 21). If room M-P served as a refectory with eight benches as he suggested, then the monastic occupancy could have been greater, possibly reaching 48 persons. If the same criteria are applied to Ghazali and Dongola DM, the first may have had a community of 36 to 48 persons and the second 18; however, Scanlon's population estimate may be low. Experiments conducted by the author, using a circle with a diameter of 1.8m and a circumference of 5.7m, demonstrated that up to eight adults could sit closely around the perimeter. When the circle was enlarged to a diameter of 2m and a corresponding circumference of 6.3m, there was sufficient space for nine adults to be seated within it albeit somewhat cosily. Analysis of monastic literature from the Early Coptic Church reveals the ascetic nature of their beliefs and the desire to achieve spirituality through the mortification of the flesh, thus the pursuit of comfort cannot necessarily be regarded as a high priority.

The ascetic approach to life, that monks were encouraged to follow, may be summed up by one of the sayings of John the Dwarf, a 4th-5th century AD Egyptian monk and priest: Abba John said,

'I think it best that a man should have a little bit of all the virtues. Therefore, get up early every day and acquire the beginning of every virtue and every commandment of God. Use great patience, with fear and long-suffering, in the love of God, with all the fervour of your soul and body. Exercise great humility, bear with interior distress ... Renounce

everything material and that which is of the flesh. Live by the cross, in warfare, in poverty of spirit, in voluntary spiritual asceticism, in fasting, penitence and tears, in discernment, in purity of soul ... Persevere in keeping vigil, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, and in sufferings. Shut yourself in a tomb as though you were already dead, so that at all times you will think death is near.

(Ward 1984, 92)

Population estimates have assumed that all inhabitants partook of the daily meal simultaneously; however, according to Egypt sources this may not be the case. "At the end of the century (4th century AD) according to Palladius, the daily meal began at midday, but there were later sittings for the more ascetic ... a closer study of the evidence suggests this rather than a single meal for the whole community" (Chitty 1966, 25). Examination of the rule of Pachomius and the early Greek sources from Egypt show that there were two formal meal times, one at midday and the other "after an office in the Synaxis at or about the ninth hour" (Chitty 1966, 42, n.79). Clearly, not all monks chose to partake of both meals.

'Origenist monks, having stayed with Pachomius until the ninth hour, refuse the offer of a meal, ... Pachomius is described as entering with the brethren for the prayers, then, when they are completed, ... remaining himself in the Synaxis and extending his prayers'. (Chitty 1966, 42, n.79)

Again, this might suggest that the Nubian monastic communities were larger than previously imagined since it was



not necessary that all members be seated at every meal. Monastic communities could even be double the population previously estimated.¹²

There is little likelihood that the Nubian communities supported monastic populations as large as those found in the Judean desert or in much of Egypt, but then the general population of Nubia was also smaller.¹³ For example, the refectory in the Judean Monastery of Martyrius covered an area of 318m² and in the monastery of Khirbet Makhrum 143m² (Hirschfeld 1992, 191). Within the refectory of Martyrius an upper floor provided an additional 200m² of space. Hirschfeld states that while it is difficult to learn the exact number of monks, "it is probable that ... hundreds could be served" (1992, 193). The number of inhabitants living in the larger Judean monasteries is estimated at between 100 and 400 persons with an average of 150 persons, that of the mid-sized ones around 50 individuals and the smallest monasteries 20 monks (Hirschfeld 1992, 78-9). Egyptian refectories were similarly large, usually rectangular and, like the Judean monasteries, meals were often taken at long, rectangular tables rather than on round benches. Of two refectories identified at Sakkara, one had an area of 231 m², the other of 200 m² (Walters 1974, 100). Round benches have been found at St. Simeon's, Aswan, in one room at Sakkara and in the modified Pharaonic temple at Athribis (Wannina) in middle Egypt.¹⁴ In monasteries of the Wadi Natrun and the Red Sea area, rectangular tables were used (Walters 1974, 99-100). The use of round benches for communal meals may have been cultural preference specific to Nubia and parts of Egypt, particularly southern Egypt.

During the 1998 season, we uncovered an enigmatic room (Room R) with a round mud-brick table in the centre and two mastabas connected to it at right angles (Colour Plate XL). Access to this room was restricted and the only entrance a door at the end of a long featureless corridor. Initially it was thought that this might be a refectory; however, the presence of a rectangular mud platform with an attached hearth and a drainage channel running around it in the southeast corner of the room suggested otherwise. The room had been kept extremely clean. Few sherds and no faunal remains were recovered. Sieving and flotation analysis also yielded little. The absence of floral remains, particularly grape or date seeds found elsewhere on site, and the friable nature of the mud platform served to eliminate the possibility of a winepress. The room had been repeatedly plastered giving

¹² Present day field labourers in the Northern Sudan often consume only one major meal per day so it is not unreasonable to assume that Christian monks living under similar environmental conditions would have been able to do likewise.

¹³ Trigger estimated that the population of Christian Nubia numbered around 50,000 persons (Trigger 1965, 162, 166). In comparison, during the 3rd-4th centuries AD the population of the Egyptian city of Hermopolis is estimated at between 25,000 and 50,000 individuals (Bagnall 1993, 53).

¹⁴ The author observed the benches at Athribis in 1990.

the corners a rounded appearance and the walls had slumped and 'run' making them wider at the base than at the top. Circular impressions from jar bases dotted the floor and the surface of the mastabas. Curiously, fire-cracked and blackened rocks were discovered inside the room and just outside the door. This has given rise to the current hypothesis that the room may have served as a steam bath. Currently, there are no analogous Nubian sites.

Monastic Cells

Monastic cells have not yet been discovered on the North Kom and a general examination of the available material concerning cells in Nubian monasteries reveals a lack of hard data. Cells have not yet been found at Dongola Kom H and those discovered at Dongola DM and Ghazali were only tentatively identified by the excavators. Therefore, current information may not be truly representative of most Nubian monasteries and certainly is not statistically significant. The data reveals no consistent cell size or shape. Materials used in their construction mirror those used in their associated monasteries, e.g., rough stone, mud brick, and mud plaster. It is probable that characteristics of a cell included niches in the walls for storage of goods, benches (*mastabas*) lining the walls for sleeping and sitting, and possibly prayer niches. These traits are common to cells in several Egyptian monasteries, including St. Simeon's, Aswan. The cells in Qasr el-Wizz and Dongola DM also displayed most of these elements (Table 3).

The cellblock found at Qasr el-Wizz is the most thoroughly documented to date. There, the lower storey of the cellblock (II-C, D, E, F, I, J, K) consisted of seven, quadrilateral rooms with several niches in the walls and a bench running around the room perimeter presumably for sitting and sleeping. Most cells were vaulted. Based upon finds of painted plaster fragments, they may have been decorated with wall paintings although none were found *in situ* (Scanlon 1972, 31). This is not improbable as many wall paintings have been discovered in Dongola Kom H and decorated cells are known from Cellia and Esna in Egypt (Martens-Czarnecka 1997, 211-225; Walters 1974, 105-7).

Additional cells at Qasr el-Wizz appear to have been located on an upper floor, although architectural remains there were scant. Eight cells, equal in size to those on the ground floor, could have occupied the second storey (Scanlon 1972, 16-7). It has been debated whether there were enough cells to accommodate the number of inhabitants estimated based upon refectory seating arrangements. Scanlon calculated that 15 monks could be housed, one per cell, with seven on the ground floor and eight on the upper story (1972, 16-7). He concluded that cells for the remaining monks were not detected due to the poor condition of much of the monastery's remains. However, Jeuté has noted that the arrangement of one monk per cell would only need to apply to one cell (II-F) which was small and contained only one bench. Benches within other cells could have held two or three

Table 3. Characteristics of Nubian Monastic Cells

Monastery	Cell Dimensions	Bench	Wall Niche	Door
Dongola DM				
Room 3	5.5 x 3.5 m (19.3 m sq.)	yes	unknown	possibly
Room 9	7.5 x 3.3 m (25 m sq.)	yes	unknown	possibly
Dongola Kom H	Cells or Dormitories have not yet been identified.			
Ghazali				
Room X	c. 6 x 3 m (c. 18 m sq.)	unknown	unknown	unknown
Room V	c. 6 x 3.5 m (c. 21 m sq.)	unknown	unknown	unknown
Room AA	c. 12 x 4 m (c. 48 m sq.)	unknown	unknown	unknown
Qasr el-Wizz				
II-C, D, E, F, I, J, K and 2nd storey, through II-H	c. 3-4 x 2-3 metres (II-F = c. 8 m sq.) (II-D = c. 11 m sq.)	All - yes	All - yes	no? No door sockets located

monks per room and, therefore, the initial refectory estimate of 20 to 24 inhabitants could easily be met. Additional support for the presence of two to three individuals in a cell is found in Aswan where 'St. Simeon's monastery probably provided accommodation for three in a cell, in accordance with the rule of Pachomius' (Jeuté 1994, 92). If all of the cells, excluding II-F, were double occupancy then up to 29 individuals could be housed, a number larger than previously estimated, and they could be accommodated in the refectory as discussed above.

The amount of space allotted to the inhabitant(s) of the Qasr el-Wizz cells ranged between roughly 8m² in the smallest cell to 11m² in the larger cells. Cells in St. Simeon's, Aswan, covered on average 18m² and as mentioned above were probably occupied by three persons (Walters 1974, fig.xxiv). This would give an individual 6m² of space under full occupancy. It is then not beyond possibility that two individuals could occupy 11m² of space as is found at Qasr el-Wizz. Some smaller cells in the Judean desert monasteries (i.e., Khirbet et-Tina) allotted a monk an area of about 7m² (Hirschfeld 1992, 177).

Discussions of cell occupancy have assumed that all monks were housed in cells but in coenobitic Judean monasteries of the Byzantine period this was not so. 'The two arrangements [monks residing in separate cells and in common dormitories] seem to have coexisted, at least in the coenobia of the Judean Desert. ... Ordinary monks of the community at Khirbet ed-Deir lived in dormitories in the upper part of the monastery' (Hirschfeld 1992, 177). This living arrangement was dictated by the Justinian Codex, a code pertaining to monastic life created by the Emperor Justinian (6th century AD) (Hirschfeld 1992, 94, 177). Perhaps the search in Nubia for monastic living quarters should be expanded beyond small cells and cellblocks in future.

Notably none of the cells at Qasr el-Wizz seemed equipped with a door and low benches lined the cell block corridor. It is possible that ordinary monks or initiates slept on these *mastabas* while older more experienced monks occupied cells. If this is the case then six or seven more persons could be accommodated. Room AA at Ghazali may also fall into this category, as it is much larger than a cell, yet occupation debris was found there.

Nubian Laura

Thus far, we are unable to resolve the disparity between the large, though perhaps exaggerated, numbers of Nubian monks and monasteries reported in textual references with the sparse archaeological remains. In searching for Nubian monasteries, archaeologists have traditionally looked for characteristics typical of a coenobitic monastery and all of the monasteries discussed above, including North Kom, are coenobitic in nature. However, if many Nubian monasteries were in fact lauras, then some coenobitic characteristics would be absent. This may have led to the misidentification of some sites and the actual number of Nubian monasteries may be greater than previously believed. It has been surmised that several walled communities in the *Batn el Hajar*, including Akasha (21-N-11), Kulb (21-R-3), Kulubnarti (21-S-10) and two sites at Ukma (21-N-7, -9) were monasteries (Adams 1977, 479).¹⁵ Typically buildings enclosed within the aforementioned compounds were irregular in shape, utilized rocky outcrops in their construction and were made of mud brick and stone. Structures could incorporate the enclosure wall or share their walls with a neighbouring

¹⁵ These sites are located as follows: Akasha [21-N-11] (21.06.N./30.42.E.), Kulb [21-R-3] (21.03.N./30.39.E.), Kulubnarti [21-S-10] (21.04.N./30.40.E.), Ukma [21-N-7] (21.08.N./30.41.E.), and Ukma [21-N-9] (21.09.N./30.40.E.).



building. Individual buildings had between one and four chambers and were usually quadrilateral in shape. Ceramic finds date most of these sites to the Classic Christian period. Kulb, for example, appears to have been occupied from AD 800 to 1000. Finds from Kulb include manuscript fragments and Greek graffiti (Monneret de Villard 1935, 234-5). One might expect a higher level of literacy in a monastic community as compared to the general population. Adams has suggested that the presence of an enclosure wall of Classic Christian date, geographic location and the internal site arrangements preclude these settlements from either military or agricultural functions thus leaving the only option as monastic (1977, 479).

Although little data are available concerning these sites, they all appear to lack some basic elements found in a coenobitic monastery. No identifiable refectories have been located. Churches were found near Kulb and Akasha but apparently were not located in the vicinity of the other sites although surveyors may have overlooked them. It is possible that these settlements were *lauras*. The girdle walls, scattered dispersion of rooms within the enclosures, absence of refectories, and isolated location in the *Batn el Hajar* region are fully in keeping with the characteristics of a *laura* as described above. While the apparent lack of a church at some settlements is troubling, within a *laura* monks were required to meet for communal prayer one or two days per week, much less than those in coenobitic monasteries, thus a nearby church or communal prayer room may have been sufficient.

Unlike many settlements in the *Batn el Hajar*, Kulubnarti (21-S-10) is well documented. It was a small settlement situated on a terraced, rocky outcrop overlooking the river. This outcrop was situated on the east part of the island away from the closest riverbank. In times of high Nile this peak became an island thus geographically isolating it even further. Over 17 structures were spread across the upper and middle terraces, most of which were on a level designated terrace D. A drystone retaining wall, 1m thick, reinforced and enclosed this terrace. Access to the community was through a gate in the middle of the terrace and part of a doorpost and socket were found *in situ* (Adams 1994a, 206). A winding path led up from the base of the hill granting indirect access to the community. Irregular-shaped brick rooms lined the length of the terrace and most were single rooms that opened on to a long corridor (Adams 1994a, 197-211).

Rooms arranged closely together, such as houses X (4 rooms), VII (3 rooms) and VIII (2 rooms), may indicate a cell with an associated prayer chapel or perhaps accommodation for a novice monk or disciple (Fig. 6). The *lauras* at Cellia, Egypt, were self-contained and consisted of a prayer area (oratory), a magazine and an area for sitting or sleeping (Walters 1974, 104). Examination of other Egyptian *lauras* including Saqqara and Dêr al Dik shows that the number of rooms per monk varied but most had two or three rooms just as at Kulubnarti. The distribution and number of rooms

appeared to depend on the space available (Walters 1974, 108).

The functional requirements of a *laura* are met by the Kulubnarti community. Many storage vessels, some buried within the floors, were recovered from the rooms at Kulubnarti (Adams 1994a, 209). Ovens were discovered in houses XIII, XII, and VIII, and *mastabas* in houses X, XI, and VII (Adams 1994a, 209). No room identifiable as a refectory was discovered and no church was directly associated with the settlement; however, a Classic Christian church was found on the west bank opposite the island and a Christian cemetery (21-R-2) was associated with it. No settlement of Classic Christian date was found near this church. Taken together, the stone enclosure wall, isolated geographic location, indirect access, distribution of rooms within the community, baking facilities, church access and comparisons with known Egyptian *lauras*, suggest that Kulubnarti was a *laura*.

Conclusions

Clearly, many questions remain to be answered largely because there are few well-excavated and documented monastic sites in Nubia. Present speculations regarding numbers of monks and features intrinsic to monasteries are based upon an extremely small sample that may not truly represent the whole and are impossible to confirm. If the current definition of monasticism in Nubia is broadened to accommodate the possibility of *lauras*, then more monasteries may be positively identified. The isolated rocky areas in the Abu Hamed Reach are certainly regions to be carefully examined further with this possibility in mind. Once the development and characteristics of Nubian monasticism and range of monastic practices have been better defined through detailed survey and excavation, then the purposes for which the monasteries were founded and the question of monastic livelihoods need to be addressed. The monasteries must have had some means of supporting themselves. Examination of the geographic locations of the various monasteries may offer some clues as to their functions and method of support. All monasteries securely identified thus far were coenobitic. With the exception of Ghazali, they were located in the vicinity of towns and were essentially urban in nature. If monasteries were engaged in providing practical services such as legal or medical knowledge, secretarial services or producing bulky goods such as cloth or ceramics, then an urban location would be preferable. An "urban site [would] ... enable monks to enter a market economy and yet did not undermine their seclusion within the convent" (Butler 1993, 81). The monastic remains unearthed thus far at Hambukol North Kom are promising, but require further work and clarification. It is only through ongoing excavations that more light will be shed on the practices and characteristics of Nubian monasticism, the position of monasteries in the local economy and perhaps even their part in the conversion of Nubia to Christianity.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful for the support, advice and comments of J. Boddy, K. Grzymalski, S. Jakobielski and N. B. Millet on an earlier version of this paper and have benefited from discussions with S. J. Blitz and A. Giambone, particularly during our excavation of the North Kom monastery. Thanks are also due M. Zach for generously sharing his photographs of Ghazali and of Christian sites in the Abu Hamed Reach.

Bibliography

- Ådahl, K. 1997. 'Seven Sphero-conical Vessels in Stockholm', *Medelhavsmuseet* 30, 55-72.
- Adams, W. 1977. *Nubia Corridor to Africa*. London-Princeton.
- Adams, W. 1986. *Ceramic Industries of Medieval Nubia*. Parts I, II. Lexington.
- Adams, W. 1994a. *Kulubnarti I. The Architectural Remains*. Lexington.
- Adams, W. 1994b. 'Castle-Houses of Late Medieval Nubia', *Archéologie du Nil Moyen* 6, 11-46.
- Bagnall, R. 1993. *Egypt in Late Antiquity*. Princeton.
- Bietak, M and Schwarz, M. 1987. *Nag' El-Scheima*. Teil I. Wien.
- Butler, L. 1993. 'The Archaeology of Urban Monasteries in Britain', *Advances in Monastic Archaeology*. Bar British series 227. Oxford, 79-86.
- Chitty, D. 1966. *The Desert A City*. New York.
- Dobrowolski, J. 1991. 'The First Church at Site 'D' in Old Dongola (Sudan)', *Archéologie du Nil Moyen* 5, 29-40.
- Evetts, B. and Butler, A. (ed. & trans.) 1895. *The Churches and Monasteries of Egypt and Some Neighbouring Countries attributed to Abu Salih the Armenian*. Oxford.
- Firth, C. 1927. *The Archaeological Survey of Nubia, Report for 1910-1911*. Cairo.
- Gartkiewicz, P. 1990. *The Cathedral in Old Dongola and Its Antecedents*. Warsaw.
- Ghouchani, A. and C. Adle 1992. 'A Sphero-Conical Vessel as Fuqqa'a, or a Gourd for 'Beer'', *Muqarnas* 9, 72-92.
- Godlewski W. 1978a. 'Le Baptistère de la 'Vieille Église' à Dongola.' *Études et Travaux* 10, 364-74.
- Godlewski, W. 1978b. 'Le Baptistère de l'Église au Dallage de Pierre à Dongola.' *Études et Travaux* 11, 140-50.
- Godlewski, W. 1979. *Faras VI, Les baptistères Nubiens*. Varsovie.
- Griffith, F. Ll. 1925. 'Pakhoras - Bakharas - Faras in Geography and History', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 11, 264-65.
- Griffith, F. Ll. 1927. 'Oxford Excavations in Nubia.' *Liverpool Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology* 14, 57-115.
- Hirschfeld, Y. 1992. *The Judean Desert Monasteries in the Byzantine Period*. New Haven and London.
- Jakobielski, S. 1972. *A History of the Bishopric of Pachoras on the Basis of the Coptic Inscriptions. Faras III*. Warsaw.
- Jakobielski, S. 1991. 'The inscriptions, ostraca and graffiti', in Welsby and Daniels 1991, 274-296.
- Jakobielski, S. 1995. 'Old Dongola 1993/94', *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* VI, 84-92.
- Jakobielski, S. 1996. 'Monastery 1995', *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* VII, 103-113.
- Jakobielski, S. 1997. 'Kom H, Site NW', *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* VIII, 161-168.
- Jeuté, P. 1994. 'Monasteries in Nubia - An Open Issue', *Nubica* III/I, 59-97.
- Keall, E. 1993. 'One Man's Mede is Another Man's Persian; One Man's Coconut is another Man's Grenade', *Muqarnas* 10, 275-85.
- Martens-Czarnecka, M. 1997. 'New Mural Paintings from Old Dongola', *CRIPEL* 17, 211-225.
- Monneret de Villard, U. 1935. *La Nubia Medioevale*. vol I. Cairo.
- Monneret de Villard, U. 1938. *Storia della Nubia Cristiana*. Roma.
- Scanlon, G. 1970. 'Excavations at Kasr El-Wizz: A Preliminary Report', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 56, 29-57.
- Scanlon, G. 1972. 'Excavations at Kasr El-Wizz: A Preliminary Report II', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 58, 7-41.
- Shinnie, P. and N. Chittick 1961. *Ghazali - A Monastery in the Northern Sudan*. Sudan Antiquities Service Occasional Papers no. 5. Khartoum.
- Simpson, W. 1963. *Heka-Nefer and the Dynastic Material from Toshka and Arminna*. New Haven and Philadelphia.
- Trigger, B. 1965. *History and Settlement in Lower Nubia*. Yale University Publications in Anthropology. No. 69. Boston.
- Vantini, G. 1975. *Oriental Sources Concerning Nubia*. Heidelberg and Warsaw.
- Vantini, G. 1981. *Christianity in the Sudan*. Bologna.
- Vila, A. 1977. *La Prospection Archéologique de la vallée du Nil au Sud de la Cataracte de Dal*. fasc. 5. Paris.
- Vila, A. 1978. *La Prospection Archéologique de la vallée du Nil au Sud de la Cataracte de Dal*. fasc. 9. Paris.
- Ward, B. 1975. *The Wisdom of the Desert Fathers*. Oxford.
- Ward, B. 1984. *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*. London and Oxford.
- Walters, C. 1974. *Monastic Archaeology in Egypt*. Warminster.
- Welsby, D. A. 1992. 'Windows in Medieval Nubia: The Evidence from Soba East', *The Antiquaries Journal* 72, 174-178.
- Welsby, D. A. and C. M. Daniels 1991. *Soba: Archaeological research at a medieval capital on the Blue Nile*. London.
- Żurawski, B. 1994. 'The Service Area in North-Eastern Corner of the Monastery on Kom H in Old Dongola. A Preliminary Report', *Nubica* III/1, 319-360.
- Żurawski, B. 1995. 'Old Dongola. The Mosaic Church (Kom E) 1993/94', *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* VI, 98-108.



Plate XXXIII. Ghazali. General view of the monastery and the Wadi Abu Dom
(Photo D. A. Welsby).



Plate XXXIV. Ghazali. The church (Photo D. A. Welsby).

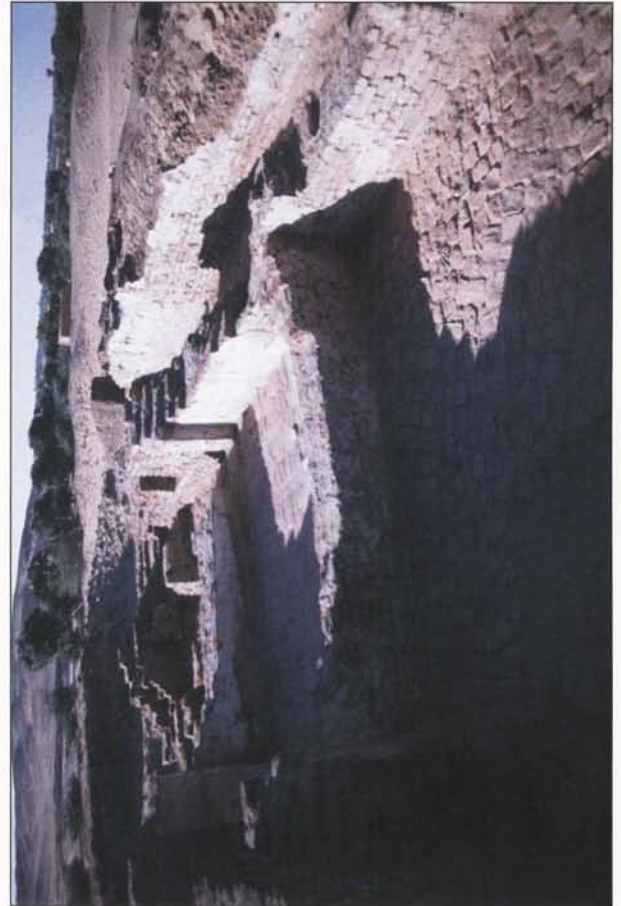


Plate XXXV. Hambukol. Narthex and three aisles of North Kom church, facing south west.

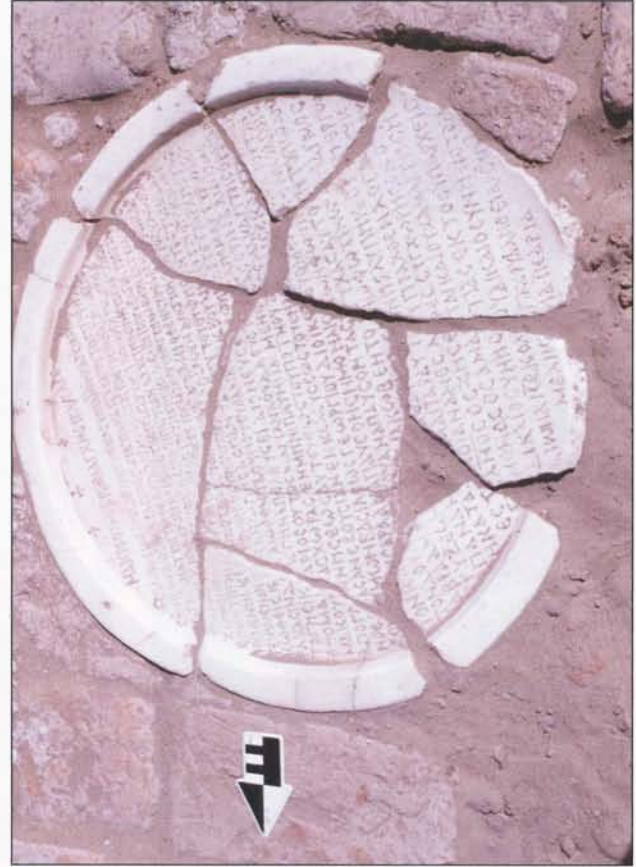


Plate XXXVI. Hambukol. Marble plaque of Mariankouda.

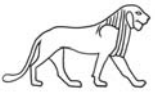


Plate XXXVII. Ghazali. The main entrance (Photo D. A. Welsby).

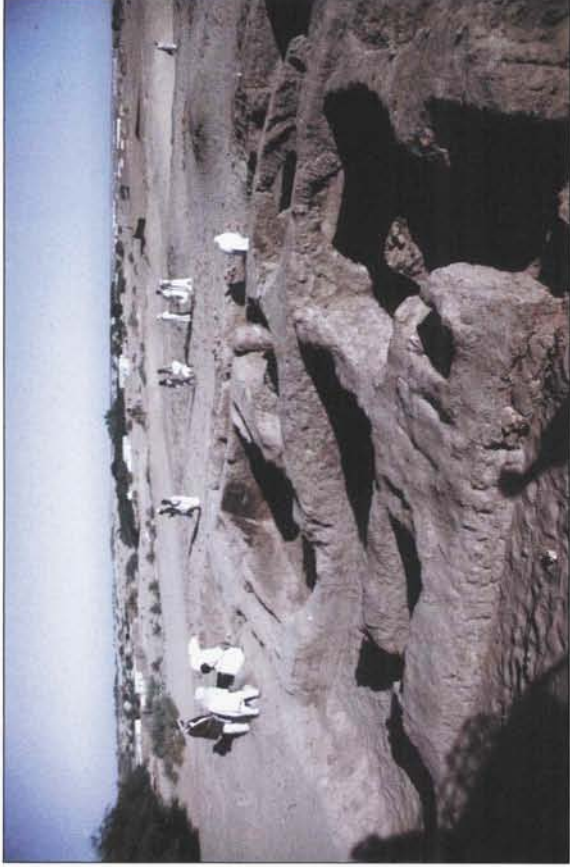


Plate XXXVIII. Hambukol. Monastic structures at North Kom, Hambukol, facing north.



Plate XXXIX. Ghazali. Room L in the refectory area (Photo D. A. Welsby).



Plate XL. Hambukol. Mud-brick table, benches and mud platform in Room R, North Kom monastery.