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FIVE GRAVE-STELAE FROM
SUDANESE NUBIA

BY

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(Preliminary report)

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

by

ROSTISLAV HOLTHOER

The discovery was made on a large Christian cemetery of the Qoddivillage, situated in the territory of Dibeira-East. This cemetery is determined as site 178 of the concession of the Scandinavian Joint Expedition to Nubia. This concession runs along the eastern bank of the Nile and covers the territory between the Sudano-Egyptian border, in the north and the Gemaiplain, about 50 kms (kilometres) south of this border.

The cemetery itself is situated about 0.5 km east of the modern Nileshore, in the NWpart of the large Komanganaplain, opposite the ruins of the Christian town of Dibeira-West (Birbet Hamam), excavated by the Ghana University Expedition (see map 1).

The exact shape and the full extent of site 178 was determined by trial excavations. It is lance-shaped and runs from a modern Muslim cemetery, situated near the mosque of Qoddi, in the south, to the remains of the old Qoddihospital, about 300 metres to the NNW from the above-mentioned mosque. The cemetery, occupied by site 178, whose breadth is about 40 mts, seems to follow the

same territory as the old village of Qoddi occupied before the great inundation of the year 1946, which destroyed it. The mud-bricks of the ruined buildings of this village, contain a large number of Christian potsherds, which are also found in large quantities on the ground all over the territory of site 178.

Due to the shortage of time it was impossible to extend the excavations to cover the whole cemetery. The area to be excavated was thus limited to the most southern part of it, i.e. to the territory close to the Muslim cemetery. Here, two large vault-graves were already excavated by Gustaf Donner, during the archaeological survey in 1961.

During the present excavations, carried out in February-March 1963, 26 new graves were discovered. They include 16 Christian (Nos. 178: 3—6, 9—11, 13—15 and 21—26), 3(?) Muslim (Nos. 178: 7, 12 and 19?) and 7 vault-graves (Nos. 178: 1—2, 8, 16—18 and 19?).

The Christian graves

consist of a rectangular burial-pit, or shaft of varying dimensions and depth. They are dug in a hard-packed layer of agate-pebble gravel and oriented in a WNW-ESE direction. Each one contained a human skeleton, placed on its back in a stretched position, the hands crossed upon the pelvis. The head of the deceased was lying on a small »cushion», made of soft sand, in the WNW part of the shaft. The body of the deceased was always placed in a niche, which runs along the NNE wall of the burial-pit. In one case this niche is separated from the shaft by means of mud-bricks, which possibly proves a Muslim influence.

According to the Christian custom, no sepulchral gifts were given to the dead in connection with the burial ceremonies. Only in two cases were such gifts found in the shaft, in one case a large Byzantine amphora, placed close to the skeleton and in the other case the bottom-part of a dish, containing datestones, lying near the head of the deceased.

The Christian graves on this site often have a rectangular super-

structure made of one layer of mud-bricks, placed on the burial-pit after it was filled with sand. The mud-bricks are also placed on the ground around the shaft, thus making a frame. The central part of this frame, and the space between the mud-bricks is always filled with Christian potsherds, in some cases evidently crushed to serve this purpose. Christian potsherds were also found in the upper layers of the burial-pits, even in graves without a mud-brick superstructure.

In one case a foetus, lying in the usual position, was found buried in a bottom-fragment of a Byzantine amphora.

All the Christian pottery found on site 178, indicates an early stage of Christian occupation.

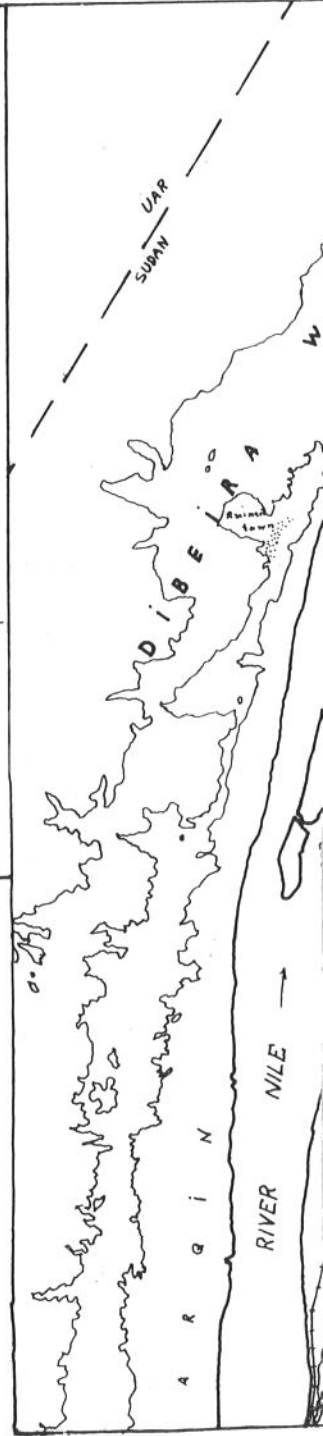
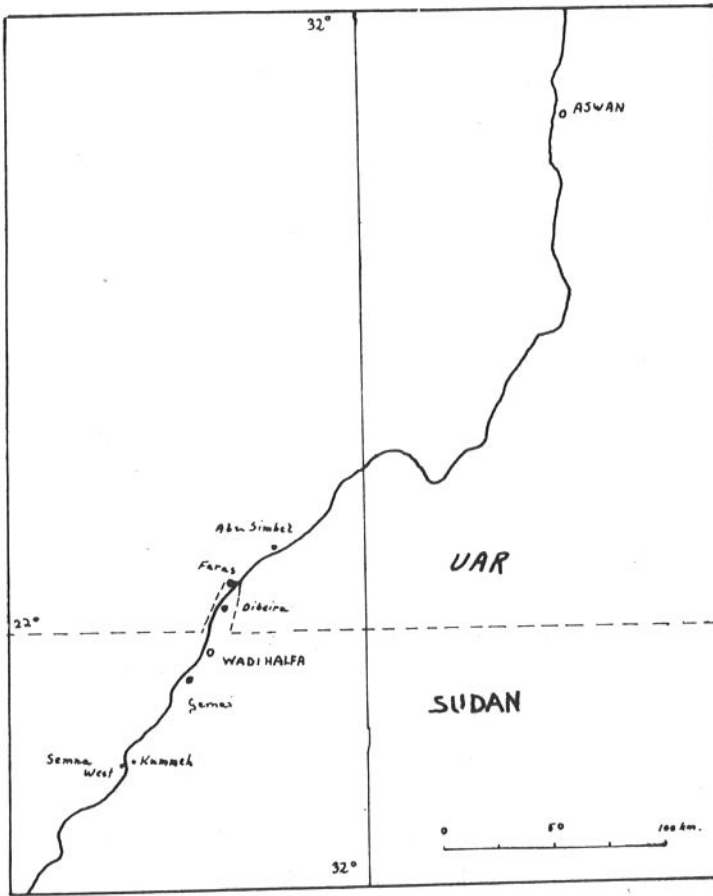
The Muslim graves

are in construction similar to the Christian ones. The burial-pit, however, runs from north to south and the niche is situated along the eastern wall of the shaft. It always contained a human skeleton, lying in a horizontal position on its right side, with its head to the south and the face turned towards the east. The niche and the burial were separated from the burial-pit by means of diagonally placed mud-bricks. Graves of a similar kind were found, e.g., in the year 1962 at the Muslim cemetery of Hillet Krouki, situated about 1.5 kms to the NE of site 178. Large, white slabs of sandstone are, however, used here instead of mudbricks (see map 1).

It is certain that the Muslim graves of site 178 are of later date than at least some Christian graves. This statement is proved by the fact that the Muslim grave 178: 12 is partly dug into the Christian graves 178: 13 and 14, being perpendicular to them.

The vault-graves

are in construction very similar to the modern fellahs' houses of the Egyptian Nubia. They are built of mud-bricks and consist of two parallel walls, between which there is a »leaning» vault erected on a pectangular foundation.



LEGEND:

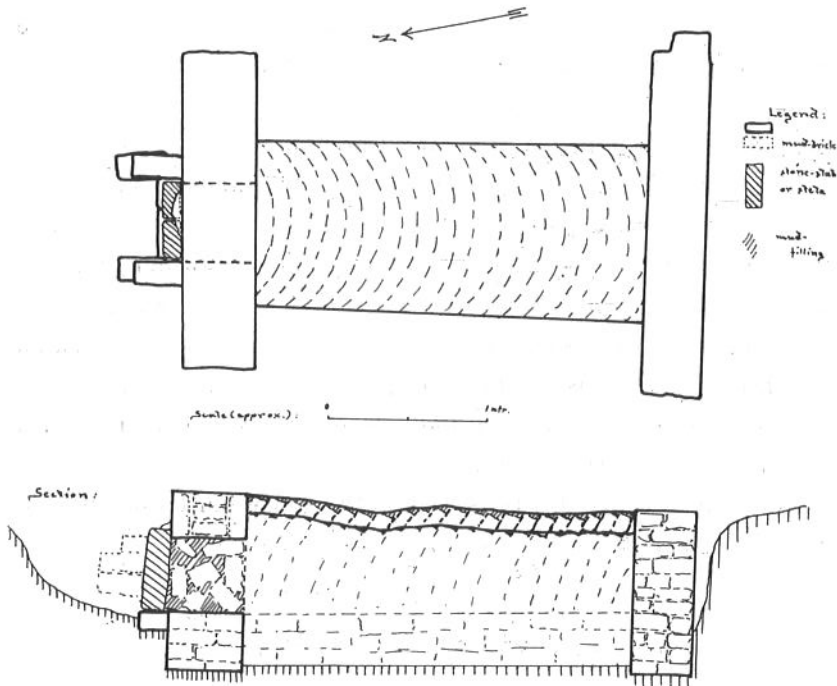
- : Border
- ++++ : Railroad
- o : Towns and villages
- x : Hill-summits
- ⊙ : Historical remains

The graves of this type are oriented in a N-Sdirection with the walls in the northern and in the southern ends. All (including those excavated in the year 1961) are built in wide pits, dug in hard-packed pebble-gravel. The pits were filled with sand after the completion of the vault-grave. In some cases a rectangular mud-brick superstructure, of which only remains were found, was erected to indicate the position of the grave.

The two graves, investigated in the year 1961, contained only one burial each, while all the others were used for several burials. The bodies are usually well preserved, some naked, some wrapped in a cloth, lying in different positions. All the deceased were, however, buried with their heads to the south and their faces turned towards the east. Except for one finger-ring, made of iron (from the grave 178: 1/1961) and small quantities of rough and badly burned potsherds, no objects were found inside these graves.

The fact that the bodies, even if they are well preserved, are still in a different state of preservation, proves that they were not entombed at the same time.

The entrance to these graves is usually situated in the northern wall. This vaulted doorway was found to be filled with mud-bricks and clay-filling. This sealing was covered, from the outside, by one or two well-hewn stoneslabs (see map 2). In some cases parts of buildings as, e.g., the top of a Christian pillar (in the grave 178: 2/1962) and a fragment of a stone-threshold (in the grave 178: 2/1963) were used. In four cases, in the graves 178: 8 and 16—18, a gravestone was used to serve the same purpose. The stelae are inscribed in Greek and in Kufic-Arabic. They were usually with the inscribed side inwards and turned upside down. Only the stela 178: 17: 1, of white sand-stone, painted red and inscribed in Greek, was placed as it should be, i.e. with the inscribed side outwards (see fig. 00). A large well hewn limestoneslab was placed upon it to cover the whole doorway. In the grave 178: 18, two stelae, one inscribed in Greek (178: 18: 1) and one in Kufic-Arabic (178: 18: 2) were found closing the same doorway. In the graves 178: 8 and 16 only one stela, in one case Christian (178: 8: 8:), in another case Muslim (178:



Map 2. A sketch showing the construction of a vault-grave.

16: 2), together with an unscribed ston slab were used for the same purpose.

Due to the fact that the graves in which the stelae were discovered contain 5—11 burials each, while the stelae are dedicated to only one person, it seems evident that the stelae do not relate to the respective graves. They have thus been used together with the above mentioned building parts, as door-sealings only, due to their suitable shape, specially in this case where the graves had to be reopened each time a new burial was entombed. The position of the stelae proves the same fact.

The origin of these stelae is unknown, but one is inclined to believe that they derive from one of the great Christian sites as, e.g., the cities of Dibeira-West and Faras-West, situated not too far away from site 178.

The position of the burials is similar to that used by the Muslims,

but the construction of these vault-graves does not, however, prove them to be Muslim. Because of their orientation they cannot be considered as Christian, even if similar graves but with different orientation were found at, e.g., the Christian cemetery of Biga in the Egyptian Nubia. The measurements of the mud-bricks (30—33 × 18—20 × 8 cms), used in the vault-graves are exactly the same as in those bricks used in the Christian and in the Muslim graves of site 178. This fact proves at least some kind of a consistency. The Christian potsherds, usually much eroded, are found in the Christian mud-bricks as well as in the vault-gravebricks. In the latter case they are, however, mixed with rough and thick potsherds, which do not occur in Christian archaeological remains.

The Christian potsherds as well as the stelae must thus be considered as »termini post quos».

II. THE ARABIAN STELAE

by

ARMAS SALONEN

The two Arabian stelae found in graves No. 16 and No. 18 are interesting because of their dates. They offer early evidence of the penetration of Islam into Nubia, the first dating from Hiġra year 388 = A.D. 998, the second from H 367 = A.D. 977.

The Kufic script of both is not very clear and what we believe we can see from the Photograph and the hand copies made by R. Holthoer at the spot is as follows.

Stela No. 178: 16: 2

bismillāhi r-raḥmāni

r-raḥīm tabāraka lladī in

šā'a ġa'ala laka ḥairan min

ḡālīka ġannātin taġr-

5. *ī min taḥtihā l-anhāru*

wa-yağ'al laka quṣūr-
an hādā qabru Maḥmūdīn
 *makīn*

10. *as-sabtu li-awwalī yaumīn*
mīn ramaḍāna sanata tamā-
nīn wa-tamānīna wa-
talā [tīmī'atīn]

السبع: فلما أوفى
 أوفى حرمنا راحة
 ساء حرك حرمنا
 ذلك حيا لم
 من قبلها إلا بهار ٥
 و جعل كك
 ألبسهم و
 ه س م ك ب
 سد و لم قد به
 التسعة و ليوم ١٥
 ه ر ص ر س م ي
 با و ر

Notes: The Qur'ān passage from line 3 on is quoted from Surah 25, 11.

Line 7: The name of the person buried in the grave, *qabru*, is partially illegible. However, it begins with Maḥmūd.

Line 10: *as-sabtu* »Saturday« in the H-year 388 is actually Saturday August 27th, A.D. 998.

Stela No. 178: 18: 2

bismillāhi r-rahmāni r-rahīm
qul huwa llāhu aḥad allāhu
ṣ-ṣamad lam yalid wa-lam yūlad wa-lam
yakun lahū kwf wāḥid hādā

5. qabru

rahmatu llāhi 'alaihī wa-magfīratuhū
wa-riḍwānukū 'alaihī . . .

.

min ṣafarin sanata sab'in wa-sittīna wa-talā-

10. [*tīmī'atīn*]

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

قُلْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ اَحَدٌ

لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ

لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهٗ كُفُوًا وَّحَدًّا

۵ قُلْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ اَحَدٌ

رَحْمَةً لِّهٖ كَلِمَةٌ عَلِيمٌ وَمَلَأَ كُرْسِيَهٗ

وَرُحُوۡتِهٖ كَلِمَةٌ تُوۡلِيۡ سُوۡرَۃً

كَسُوۡرًا وَّحَمَلَهَا

وَيُحِیۡ مَوۡتًا وَّيَمِیۡتًا

۱۰ قُلْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ اَحَدٌ

وَلَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ



Photograph of stela No. 178: 18: 2.

Notes: The Qur'ān passage from line 2 on is from Surah 112. It has, however, in line 4 *kuf* pro *kufu'an* and *wāḥid* pro *aḥad*.

Line 5: The name of the person to whom the stela was erected is illegible.

III. THE GREEK STELAE

by

HENRIK ZILLIACUS

The two inscriptions excavated, dated 1070 AD. and 1159 AD. respectively, make an important addition to the increasing number of Greek Christian epitaphs on *stelae* found in various localities of Nubia. Since the texts published by LEFEBVRE in his *Recueil des inscriptions grecques-chrétiennes d'Égypte* (1907) the number of similar inscriptions recorded has reached considerable proportions, although many of them are very fragmentary and are available only in papers and publications rather difficult of access. Here I give reference only

to the relevant Greek texts re-edited in PREISIGKE's *Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten* (SB) and the *Supplementum epigraphicum Graecum* (SEG). They are: SB 4949 (753 AD.), SB 5716 (1172 AD.), SB 6035 (1181 AD.), SB 7190 = SEG VIII 864, SB 7428 (858 AD.) = SEG VIII 871, SB 7429 = SEG VIII 872, SB 7430 = SEG VIII 873, SB 7431 = SEG VIII 874, SB 7432 (1080 AD.), SB 8235 = SEG VIII 875, SB 8237 = SEG VIII 865, SB 8238 = SEG VIII 866, SB 8239, SB 8240 = SEG VIII 868, SB 8241 = SEG VIII 869, SB 8727, SB 8728 (692 AD.), SB 8731, SB 8740 (707 AD.), SB 8763 (1157 AD.), SB 8765 (1181 AD.). As regards more recent publications, mention may be made of O. G. S. CRAWFORD, *Castles and Churches in the Middle Nile Region* (Sudan Antiquities Service, Occasional Papers No 2, 1961), in which M. F. LAMING MACADAM publishes 7 Greek and Coptic fragments (pp. 41—47); and P. L. SHINNIE—H. N. CHITTICK, *A Monastery in the Northern Sudan* (Sudan Antiquities Service, Occasional Papers No 5, 1961), 79 grave *stelae* (mostly fragmentary) in Greek and Coptic published in collaboration with J. W. B. BARNES (pp. 69—111).

Our two epitaphs, both of them in a remarkably good state of preservation, are written in Greek, which in Nubia maintained its position, alongside Coptic, as the language of the liturgy, inherited from Byzantium. But the Greek language of the texts is faulty and debased, influenced by Coptic and Nubian spelling and pronunciation, and does not, of course, justify any conclusions as to the development of living Greek. Evidently the stone-cutters or engravers of Nubia did not possess any real command of Greek. Following a stereotyped tradition they copied old patterns in a rather mechanical way, though admittedly with certain variations.

Most of the epitaphs from Nubia, above all the Greek ones, are based on an euchologic prayer, still in use in the Orthodox sphere (in the Armenian, Ethiopic, Slavonic and Greek Churches). For this *euchologia* cf. e.g. S. de RICCI in the *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions & Belles-Lettres* 1909 (pp. 153—161) and C. M. KAUFMANN, *Handbuch der altchristlichen Epigraphik*, 1917 (pp. 145 ff.) The wording of this euchology is subject to certain variations, as

shown by de Ricci in his table of variants (pp. 156—160), but the main body of the prayer is fairly consistent in all comparable texts. All of them contain the formula about resting in the bosom of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, which is also found in some Latin inscriptions (de Rossi, ICVR I p. XXXVI *quiescere in sinus Abrahae, Isaac et Iacob* etc.).

The inscriptions described here are dated, as was customary in that period, according to the era of Martyrs (era of Diocletian beginning with the year 284 AD.).

Inscription No 1.

This stele is in an entirely perfect state of preservation and contains the epitaph of a certain *Staurophorus*, written in Greek but with some Coptic elements intermingled (lines 8?, 24, 27, 28). The social status or profession of the deceased is not clear. Provided l. 8 is intended to be written in Greek we could think of him as an admiral (ΝΑΥΑΡΧ?), but this is far from being established. The Greek language of our text shows a number of mistakes, notably in the length of the vowels (cf. 2 τὸν, 10 τὸπω, 32 τὸν οὐ(ρα)νὸν), and certain contaminations in the use of the cases (cf. 22/23 ἀνάπανσοι(-σις) τῆν ψυχὴν τὸν δούλον σου), but on the whole it is fairly correct. Abbreviations do not occur, contractions are marked by a horizontal stroke (cf. 1 ᾠς, 2 ᾠς, πνατων, 21 κε, 26 ποι, 27 πνς) and so are the figures (29 ἦ, 30 ᾠπς). With the exception of ll. 2 and 21 the copula καί is represented throughout by the sigla ϛ. The separation of words is now and then made by a distinguishing dot (.). Sometimes interpunctuation is indicated by a colon (:), according to the Nubian system. The Greek letters are regular and the reading does not offer any difficulties.

Text

Height 44 cm., breadth 24 cm.

- ΙΣ Ο ΧΣ̄ ΧΠ̄Θ ΜΑΡΙΑ ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ
 Ω † Ο ΘΣ̄ ΤΟΝ ΠΝΑΤΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΠΑΣΗΣ Ν̄
 ΣΑΡΚΟΣ Ο ΤΟΝ ΘΑΤΟΝ ΚΑΤΑΡΓΗ
 ΣΑΣ ῥ ΤΟΝ ΑΔΗΝ ΚΑΤΑΠΑΘΗΣΑΣ
 5 ῥ ΖΩΗΝ ΤΩ ΚΟΣΜΩ ΧΑΡΙΣΑΜΕ
 ΝΟΣ ΑΝΑΠΑΥΣΟΝ ΤΗΝ ΨΥΧΗΝ
 ΤΟΥ ΔΟΥΛΟΥ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΦΟΡΟΥ
 ΜΕ ΙΣ̄ ΝΑΥΑΧΡ ΝΟΒ ΝΑΥ ΕΠΤΑΧΩΡΑ
 ΕΝ ΚΟΛΠΟΙΣ ΑΒΡΑΑΜ ῥ ΙΣΑΑΚ
 10 ῥ ΙΑΚΩΒ ΕΝ ΤΩΠΩ ΦΩΤΙΝΩ ΕΝ
 ΤΩΠΩ ΑΝΑΨΥΞΕΩΣ ΕΝΘΑ ΑΠΕΣ
 ΔΡΑ ΟΔΗΝΗ ῥ ΛΥΠΗ ῥ ΣΤΕΝΑΓΜΟΣ
 ΠΑΝ ΑΜΑΡΤΗΜΑ ΠΑΡ ΑΥΤΟΥ ΠΡΑΧ
 ΘΕΝ ΛΟΓΩ Η ΕΡΓΩ Η ΚΑΤΑ ΔΙΑ
 15 ΝΟΙΑΝ ΩΣ ΜΟΝΟΣ ΩΣ ΑΓΑΘΟΣ
 ῥ ΦΙΛΑΝΟΣ · ΣΥΓΧΩΡΗΣΟΝ ΟΤΙ
 ΟΥΚ ΕΣΤΙΝ ΑΝΟΣ · ΟΣ ΖΗΣΕΤΑΙ ῥ ΟΥΚ
 ΑΜΑΡΤΗΣΕΙ ΣΥ ΓΑΡ ΜΟΝΟΣ ΑΜΑΡ
 ΤΗΑΣ ΕΚΤΟΣ ΥΠΑΡΧΕΙΣ ῥ ΔΙΚΑΙ
 20 ΟΣΥΝΗ ΣΟΥ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗ · ΕΙΣ
 ΤΟΝ ΑΙΩΝΑ · ΚΕ̄ ΚΑΙ Ο ΛΟΓΟ ΣΟΥ
 ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ ΣΥ ΓΑΡ ΟΙ ΑΝΑΠΑΥΣΟΙ
 ΤΗΝ ΨΥΧΗΝ ΤΟΝ ΔΟΥΛΟΥ ΣΟΥ.
 ΣΤΑΥΡΟΦΟΡΟΥ ΕΧΩ^Ν ΣΕΥΗΡΟΣ
 25 ΔΗΠΠΕΔΩ · ῥ ΣΥ ΤΗΝ ΔΟΞΑ
 ΑΝΑΜΕΛΠΩΜΕ · ΤΟΥ ΠΡῙ ῥ ΤΟΥ ΥῩ
 ῥ · ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΠΝΣ̄ ΑΜΗΝ : ΕΝΤΑΥ
 ΜΤΟΝ Μ̄ ΜΟΥ : ΤΗ ΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΗ :
 ΗΜΕΡΑ·ΧΟΙΑΚ·Η̄·ΑΠΟ ΜΑΡΤ ·
 30 ΣΠΨ̄ ΗΜΕΡΑ ΑΥΤΟΥ· Ϙ̄ : ΧΕ̄
 ΑΝΑΠΑΥΣΟΝ ΕΙΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑΝ Ν̄
 · ΤΟΝ ΟΥΝΟΝ̄ ΓΕΝΟΙΤΟ ΑΜΗ

Ἰ(ησοῦ)ς ὁ Χ(ριστό)ς, (Μιχαῆλ), Μαρία παρθένος.
 Ω † ὁ Θε(εὸ)ς τῶν πν(ευμ)άτων καὶ πάσης Ν
 σαρκὸς, ὁ τὸν θάνατον καταργή-
 σας (καὶ) τὸν Ἄδην καταπατήσας,
 5 (καὶ) ζωὴν τῷ κόσμῳ χαρισάμε-
 νος, ἀνάπαυσον τὴν ψυχὴν
 τοῦ δούλου Σταυροφόρου
 ΜΕ ΙΒ̄ ΝΑΥΑ^ΧΡ ΝΟ^Β ΝΑΥ ΕΠΤΑΧΩΡΑ
 ἐν κόλποις Ἀβραὰμ (καὶ) Ἰσαὰκ
 10 (καὶ) Ἰακώβ, ἐν τόπῳ φωτινῶ, ἐν
 τόπῳ ἀναψύξεως, ἐνθα ἀπέσ-
 δρα ὀδύνη (καὶ) λύπη (καὶ) στεναγμός.
 πᾶν ἁμάρτημα παρ' αὐτοῦ πραχ-
 θὲν λόγῳ ἢ ἔργῳ ἢ κατὰ διά-
 15 νοιαν, ὡς μόνος ὡς ἀγαθὸς
 (καὶ) φιλάν(θρωπ)ος, συγχώρησον, ὅτι
 οὐκ ἔστιν ἄν(θρωπ)ος ὃς ζήσεται (καὶ) οὐκ
 ἁμαρτήσῃ σὺ γὰρ μόνος ἁμαρ-
 τήας ἐκτὸς ὑπάρχεις (καὶ) δικαι-
 20 οσύνη σου δικαιοσύνη εἰς
 τὸν αἰῶνα, Κ(ύρι)ε, καὶ ὁ λόγο(ς) σου
 ἀλήθεια. σὺ γὰρ οἱ ἀνάπαυσοι
 τὴν ψυχὴν τὸν δούλου σου
 Σταυροφόρου ΕΧΩ^Ν ΣΕΥΗΡΟΣ
 25 ΔΠΠΕΔΩ. (καὶ) σ(ο)ῦ τὴν δόξα(ν)
 ἀναμέλωμε(ν) τοῦ πα(τρ)ι(καὶ) τοῦ υ(ι)οῦ
 (καὶ) τοῦ ἁγίου πν(εύματο)ς. ἀμήν. ΕΝΤΑΥ
 ΜΤΟΝ Μ ΜΟΥ τῆ παρασκευῆ
 ἡμέρα Χοιὰκ ἢ ἀπὸ μαρτ(ύρων)
 30 ψπς ἡμέρα αὐτοῦ Φ. Χ(ριστ)ε
 ἀνάπαυσον εἰς βασιλείαν{ν}
 τῶν οὐ(ρα)νῶν. γένοιτο. ἀμή(ν).

1. ις, χς, χπθ̄ 2. θς, 1. τῶν 4. et pass. ζ = καί 10. 1. τόπω
 11. 1. τόπω 11/12. 1. ἀπέδρα 12. 1. ὀδύνη 16. φιλανος 17. ανος
 18/19. 1. ἁμαρτίας 21. κε 22/23. 1. σὺ γὰρ εἰ ἀνάπαυσις τῆς ψυχῆς
 τοῦ δούλου σου 26. πρι 1. πατρός, υν̄ 27. πνς 29. μαρτ 32 1. τῶν,
 ουνῶν 1. οὐρανῶν.

T r a n s l a t i o n

Jesus Christ, Michael, Mary the Virgin.

O God of souls and of all flesh, who didst overcome death and trample down Hell and gavest life to the world, rest the soul of thy servant Staurophorus in the bosom of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, in a place of light, in a place of refreshment, whence pain and sorrow and groaning have fled. Every sin committed by him in word or deed or in intention forgive him, as thou alone art good and benevolent to mankind, because there is no man who shall live and not sin. For thou alone art free from sin and thy justice is a justice for ever, Lord, and thy word is the truth. For thou art the rest of the soul of thy servant Staurophorus and let us praise in song the glory of thee, the father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen. The day he fell asleep in death was Friday the 8th of Choiak in the year 786 from the Martyrs, the day of his lifetime the 90th (year). Christ, rest him in the kingdom of the heavens. May it be so. Amen.

C o m m e n t a r y

1. In the opening line or invocation the name of Michael is written in the form of a numerical code in which the number values of the letters are added up and the sum then written with its letter values: $\mu = 40$, $\iota = 10$, $\chi = 600$, $\alpha = 1$, $\eta = 8$, $\lambda = 30$, $689 = \chi\pi\theta$. This system occurs very often in the Nubian graffiti as shown by SHINNIE — CHITRICK *op.cit.* p. 95. Cf. the common writing of $\acute{\alpha}\mu\acute{\iota}\gamma$ with the letters $\rho\theta = 99$. The invocation of Michael is remarkably common in Nubian texts. As for the epithet $\pi\alpha\rho\theta\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ for Maria it is unusual in invocations of this sort.

2. The first line of the context is often framed in the epitaphs by the apocalyptic letters $A - \Omega$ or $\Omega - A$. The N in the right margin of our inscription is enigmatic and possibly the result of an error. It is more likely to be a miswriting for A than $N = NIKA$ or some other mystical value.

7. The name of the deceased, *Staurophorus*, seems to be an *addendum lexicis onomasticis*.

8. The line is apparently written in Coptic. If not, we could possibly read (in Greek) the title *ναβάροχης*, cf. the same title in GRIFFITH, *Christian Documents from Nubia*, Proc. of the British Academy, 1928, p. 139 (graffito) and the geographical names *Nobatia* and *Pachora*.

15. Omitted are the words *ἀνες*, *ἄφες*, belonging to a fuller version of the euchology. On the other hand *ὡς μόνος* is found as an addition to the normal scheme only in LEFEBVRE N. 665, cf. de RICCI op.cit. p. 157.

22 f. Read: *σὸ γὰρ εἰ ἀνάπανσις τῆς ψυχῆς τοῦ δούλου* or, possibly: *σὸ γὰρ εἰ ἀναπαύσων τὴν ψυχὴν κτλ.*

24. *EXΩΝ ΣΕΥΗΡΟΣ* is hard to understand if not Coptic. Cf. SEG VIII 872, 20 *KOMATIEXΩN* in an exactly similar connection.

25 f. Note the confusion between the genitive and the dative cases.

26 f. *ENTAY MTON M̄ MOY*, Coptic = "(the day) in which he fell asleep in death".

30. The year 786 of the Diocletian era is the equivalent of the year 1070 AD. *ἡμέρα αὐτοῦ*: a contortion of the life-time of the deceased, showing that the engraver had a very poor grasp of the actual content. Cf. the set formula e.g. in SB 7432 (1080 AD.) 23 f. *ἔτι* (= *ἔτη*) *τῆς ζωῆς αὐτοῦ ἡμέρα ξι*.

Inscription No 2

The second stele contains the epitaph of a bishop named *Martyrophorus* (in the text *Martyriphorus*). The Greek is more garbled than in the first one and some omissions show quite clearly that the engraver did not understand Greek himself. Contractions are generally made in the same way as in No 1. As regards interpunctuation we note that far more use is made of distinguishing dots.

Text

Height 33 cm. Breadth 30 cm.

† ΙΣ Ο Χ̄Σ ΧΠΘ ΜΑΡΙΑ
 † Θ̄Θ̄Σ ΤΩ Π̄ΝΑΤΟΝ ΚΑ ΠΑΣΙΣ ΣΑΡ
 ΚΟΣ Ο ΤΟΝ·ΘΑΝΑΤΟΝ ΚΑΤΑΡΓΗΣΑΣ
 ΚΑΙ ΤΟΝ ΑΔΗΝ·ΚΑΙ ΖΩΗΝ·ΤΟΥ ΚΟΣ
 5 ΜΟΥ·ΧΑΡΙΣΑΜΕΝΟΣ·ΑΝΑΠΑΥΣΟΝ·ΤΗΝ
 ΨΥΧΗ ΤΟΝ ΔΟΥΛΟΝ ΣΟΥ ΜΑΡΤΥΡ̄ΟΣ ΕΠΙΣ
 ΚΟΠΟΣ·ῩΣ ΠΩΔΕΣΙ ῩΣ ΜΑΡΙΑΨ Α ΕΝ ΚΟΛ
 ΠΟΙΣ·ΑΒΡΑΜ· ̄ ΕΙΣΑΑΚ· ̄ ΕΙΑΚΩΒ·ΕΝ
 ΤΩΠΩ· ΦΩΤΙΝΩ·ΕΝ ΤΩΠΩ·ΧΛΟΙ ΕΝ
 10 ΤΩΠΩ·ΑΝΑΨΥΞΕΩΣ·ΕΝΘ ΑΠΕΔΡΑ Ο
 ΔΙΝΗ· ̄ ΛΥΠΙ· ̄ ΣΤΕΝΑΓΜΟΣ·ΠΑΝ ΑΜΑΡ
 ΤΗΜΑ·ΠΑΡ ΑΥΤΟΥ·ΠΡΑΧΘΕΝ ΛΟΓΩ Η ΕΡ
 ΓΩ·Η ΚΑΤΑ ΔΙΑΝΟΙΑΝ ΟΣ·ΜΟΝΟΣ·ΩΣ ΑΓΑΘΟΣ
 ̄ ΦΙΛΑΝΟΣ· ΣΥΝΧΩΡΙΣΟΝ·ΟΤΙ ΟΥΚ ΕΣΤΙ
 15 Ν ΑΝΘ̄Σ·ΟΣ ΖΗΣΕΤΑΙ· ̄ ΟΥΚ ΑΜΑΡΤΗΣΕΙ·
 ΣΥ ΓΑΡ·ΜΟΝΟΣ·ΑΜΑΡΤΗΑΣ ΕΚΤΟΣ·ΥΠΑΡ
 ΧΕΙΣ·ΔΙ ̄ ΟΣΥΝΗ·Σ ΔΙ ̄ ΟΣΥΝΗ ΣΟΥ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΝ
 ΑΙΩΝΑ Κ̄Ε Ο ΛΟΓΟ ΣΟΥ ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ ΣΥ ΓΑΡ ΕΙ ΑΝΑ
 ΠΑΥΣΟΙ ΤΗΝ ΨΥΧΗ·ΤΟΝ ΔΟΥΛΟΝ ΣΟΥ ΜΑΡ
 20 ΤΥΡΙΦΟΡΟΥ·ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ ῩΣ ΜΑΡΙΑ^Α
 ΣΟΥ ΤΗΝ ΔΟΞΑΝ ΑΝΑΜΕΛΠΟΜΕΝ ΤΟΥ Π̄ΤΡ̄
 ΑΠΟ ΜΑΡ Ω̄Ο̄ Ε ΛΟ ΜΕΧΕΙΡ Α ῙΣ Γ Λ̄Ο ΑΝΑ
 ΠΑΥΣΟ Η ΜΕΡΑ Τ̄Ρ Β ΜΟΑΡΙ Σ̄Δ

† Ἰ(ησοῦ)ς ὁ Χ(ριστός), (Μιχαήλ), Μαρία.

† Θ(εὸ)ς τῶ(ν) πνευμάτων κα(ὶ) πάσις σαρκός, ὁ τὸν θάνατον καταργήσας

καὶ τὸν Ἄδην καὶ ζωὴν τοῦ κόσ-

5 μου χαρισάμενος, ἀνάπαισον τὴν

ψυχὴ(ν) τὸν δοῦλόν σου Μαρτυρο(φόρος) ἐπίσ-

κοπος υ(ἰ)ὸς ΠΩΔΕΣΙ υ(ἰ)ὸς ΜαριάΨ α ἐν κόλ-

ποῖς ᾽Αβραάμ (καὶ) Εἰσαάκ (καὶ) Εἰακώβ, ἐν
 τόπω φωτινῶ, ἐν τόπω χλοί(ας), ἐν
 10 τόπω ἀναφύξεως, ἐνθ' ἀπέδρα ὁ-
 δίνῃ (καὶ) λύπῃ (καὶ) στεναγμός. πᾶν ἁμάρ-
 τημα παρ' αὐτοῦ πραχθὲν λόγῳ ἢ ἔρ-
 γῳ ἢ κατὰ διάνοιαν, ὃς μόνος ὡς ἀγαθός
 (καὶ) φιλάν(θρωπ)ος, συγχώρισον, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστι-
 15 ν ἄν(θρωπ)ος ὃς ζήσεται (καὶ) οὐκ ἁμαρτήσει
 σὺ γὰρ μόνος ἁμαρτίας ἐκτὸς ὑπάρ-
 χεις. δι(καί)οσύνη σ(ου) δι(καί)οσύνη σου εἰς τὸν
 αἰῶνα, Κ(ύρι)ε, ὁ λόγο(ς) σου ἀλήθεια. σὺ γὰρ εἶ ἀνά-
 παυσοι τὴν ψυχὴν τὸν δοῦλόν σου Μαρ-
 20 τυροφόρου ἐπίσκοπος υ(ιὸ)ς Μαριάψα (καὶ)
 σοῦ τὴν δόξα(ν) ἀναμέλομεν τοῦ π(α)τρ(ός).
 ἀπὸ μαρτ(ύρων) ὠδὲ ΛΟ Μεχεῖρ ἀ' ἸΣ Γ ΛΟ ἀνά-
 παυσο(ν) ἡμέρα ἸΡ Β ΜΟΑΡΙ ΣΔ.

1. ις, ᾱς, χπιθ 2. ὄος, πᾶτον, l. πάσης 6. l. τοῦ δούλου, Μαρτυροῦς
 6/7. l. ἐπισκόπον 7. l. υἱοῦ 8. l. ᾽Αβραάμ, 4 = καί, l. ᾽Ισαάκ,
 ᾽Ιακώβ 9. l. τόπω 10. l. τόπω 10/11. l. ὁδύνη, λέπη 14. l. συγχώρησον
 16. l. ἁμαρτίας 17. δι(καί)οσύνη 18/19. l. ἀνάπαυσις τῆς ψυχῆς τοῦ
 δούλου 19/20 l. Μαρτυροφόρου.

Translation

Jesus Christ, Michael, Maria.

O God of souls and of all flesh, who didst overcome death and
 trample down Hell and gavest life to the world, rest the soul of thy
 servant Martyrophorus, the bishop, son of Podesi(?), son of Mariasha,
 in the bosom of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, in a place of light,
 in a place of green shoots, in a place of refreshment, whence pain and
 sorrow and groaning have fled. Every sin committed by him in
 word or deed or in intention forgive him, as thou alone art good and
 benevolent to mankind, because there is no man who shall live and
 not sin. For thou alone art free from sin. Thy justice is thy justice

for ever, Lord, thy word is truth. For thou art the rest of the soul of thy servant the Bishop Martyrophorus, son of Mariasha, and thy glory we praise in song (and that) of the Father. In the year 875 from the Martyrs the 1st of Mecheir rest him the day.

C o m m e n t a r y

4. The word *καταπατήσας* is omitted.

6. The Bishop *Martyrophorus* is not known to us from other sources.

7. Provided *Podesi* is the father's name we note that both of the parents are mentioned. This seems to be an *unicum* in the Nubian inscriptions, but cf. l. 20.

9. *ἐν τόπω γλοί(ας)*, an addition to the normal scheme, is found in a few comparable inscriptions, cf. de RICCI op.cit. p. 157. The writing of the latter word has in all texts offered great difficulties.

17. *διήσοσση*. The use of the abbreviation sign within a word seems to indicate that the writer hardly understood what he was engraving.

20. Note that only the mother's name is mentioned in the final clause of the euchology.

21. The sentence remains incomplete since mention of the Son and the Holy Ghost is left out. Omissions and misunderstandings like this show quite clearly that the inscription was made without any knowledge of Greek.

22. The year 875 after the Martyrs is the equivalent of 1159 AD. *AO* is the temporal postposition in Nubian, but the meaning of the following letters (date?) is not clear.

23. The end of the line remains unintelligible. Is *Moari* a corrupted form of the Arabic month name *Moharrem* or of the Coptic *MQIP* = Mecheir? Or is it the Coptic equivalent of *γένειτο*?

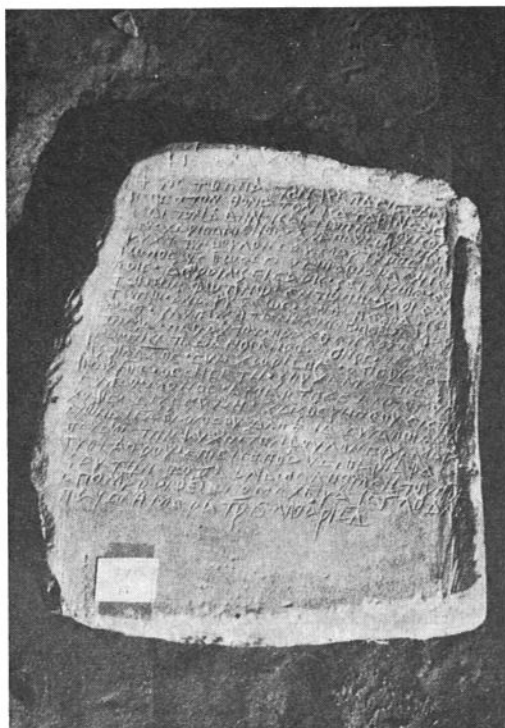
Graffito

In addition to the inscriptions we are publishing a graffito, 26.5 × 48 cm. The Nubian graffiti, generally scratched on pottery, contain names and sometimes titles. The names spelt out in regular writing do not offer any very great difficulties. Bigger problems are presented by the numerous monogrammatic writings, especially when they are parts of clumsy pictures or drawings, as in our case. For the interpretation of such monograms, or rather the great difficulties in reading them cf. SHINNIE—CHITTICK *op.cit.* p. 95 and the specimens on pp. 96—111.

Our graffito could be read as ΔΕΣΠΟΤΕΥΣΕΤΑ[Ι] ΕΓΩ ΑΒΡΑΜ but the last word and the resolutions of the monograms remain unclear. Note that the second *A* in ΑΒΡΑΜ coincides with the feet of the right figure.



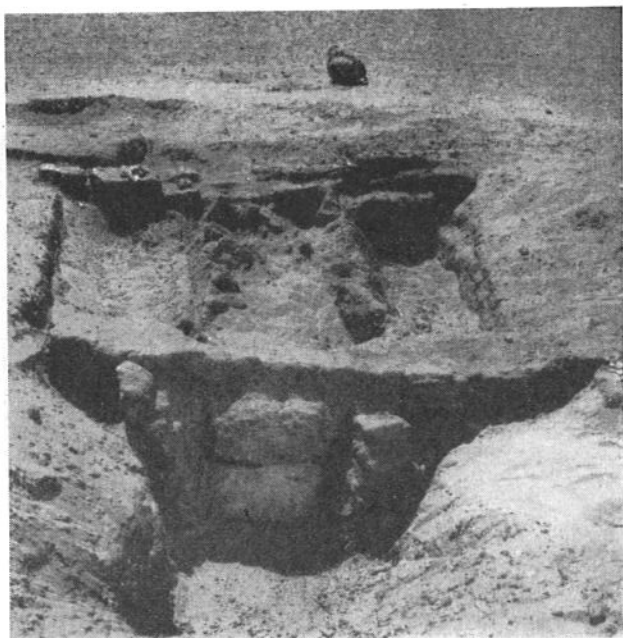
1. The Greek stela from Grave no. 178 : 8.



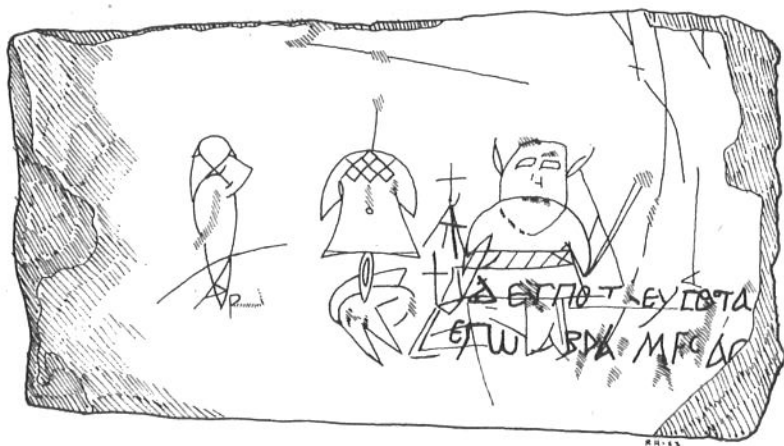
2. The Greek stela from Grave no. 178 : 18.



3. Contents of the Grave no. 178 : 2. Note the preservation of the corpses.



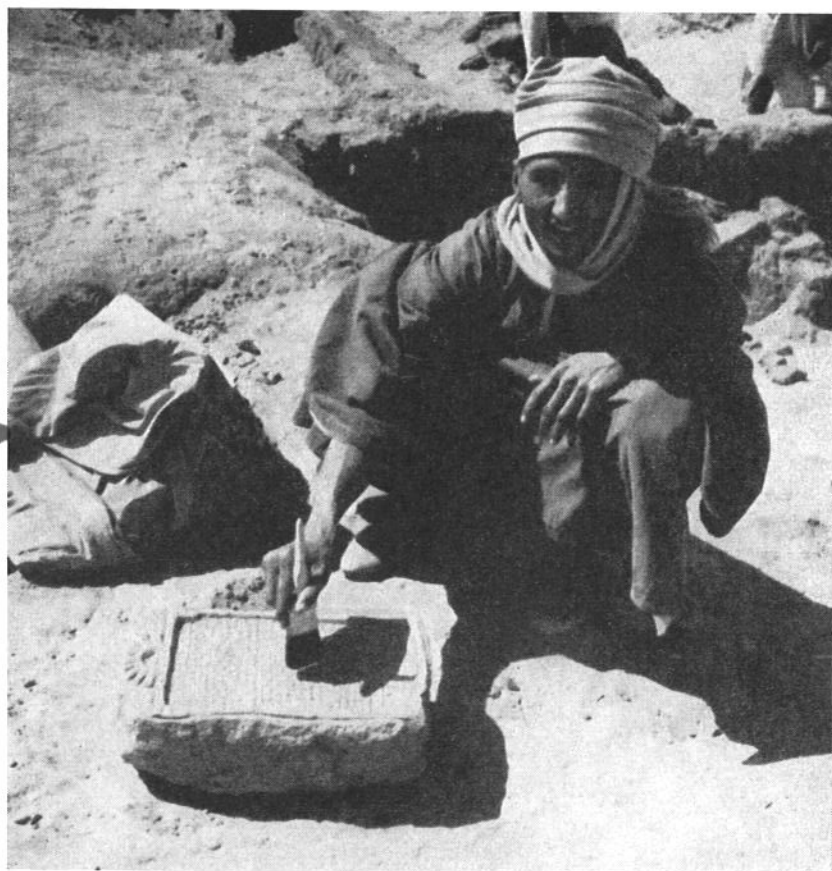
4. General view of a vault grave ,178 : 17.



5. The Greek (?) stela from Grave no. 178 : 17.



6. A view showing the position of the stela in Grave no. 176 : 17.



7. A Qufti cleaning the stela from Grave no. 178 : 8.

