

The wall paintings from the Monastery on Kom H in Dongola, Nubia III, Dongola III, PAM Monographs 3

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The volume presents 144 wall paintings from a medieval monastery complex discovered in Dongola, the capital of the Christian Nubian kingdom of Makuria in existence from the 6th through the 14th centuries. Excavations by archaeologists from the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of the University of Warsaw have uncovered to date only a small percent of the building annexes of this monastery, but these have produced an important set of painted wall decorations, contributing extensively to the study of iconography and style of medieval Nubian mural painting from its heyday (the 11th and 12th centuries in particular). Meriting special interest are compositions that are unparalleled so far in Nubia as well as beyond: ritual dance by figures wearing ethnically African masks and scenes of preparations for burial. Scholars as well as amateurs of Nubian wall-painting art will find in this volume an excellent review of murals from a closed and well dated complex. A multimedia catalogue (on DVD) permits a study of the entire assemblage according to different keys: by location in the monastery, by theme and by chronological attribution. The catalogue accompanies a synthetic analysis of the painting iconography and style in book form, which brings together the results of Małgorzata Martens-Czarnecka's lifetime scholarship on the wall paintings in Dongola and her deep knowledge of medieval Nubian wall painting in general. Scholars are thus given not only insight into this scholar's extensive work on the subject, but are provided with the possibility of comparing wall painting from a major urban center with murals executed in provincial Nubian centers at an analogous time.

The book has been produced under the scientific mentorship of two institutions involved in the exploration and interpretation of this complex, the Polish Center of Mediterranean Archaeology of the University of Warsaw (PCMA UW) and the Institute of Ancient and Oriental Cultures (formerly the Research Center for Mediterranean Archaeology) of the Polish Academy of Sciences.