

An aerial photograph of the Monastery of St Anthony the Great ruins in the desert. The image shows a large, complex of ancient stone structures, including a central church with a prominent dome and several smaller buildings. The ruins are surrounded by a vast, arid landscape with scattered rocks and sand dunes. A few small figures of people are visible near the central structure, providing a sense of scale. The overall scene is one of historical significance and archaeological discovery.

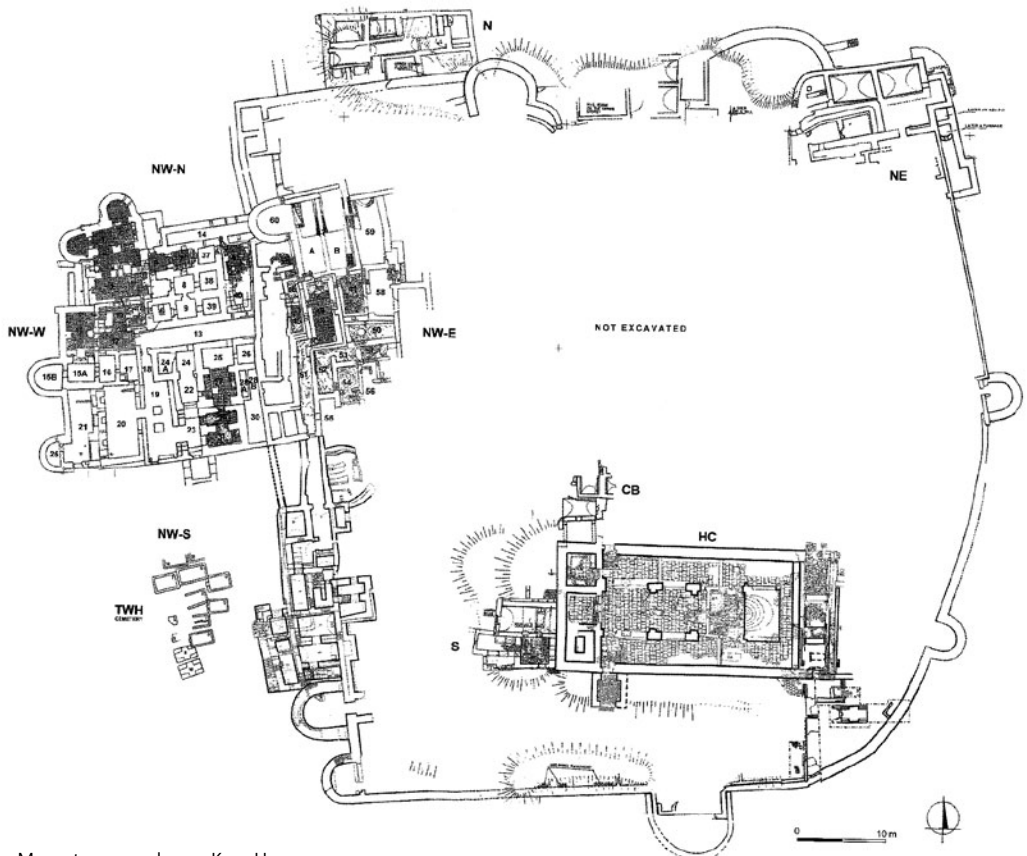
MONASTERY OF ST ANTHONY THE GREAT

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

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

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

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



Monastery complex on Kom H

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

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

MONASTIC CHURCH (HC)

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

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



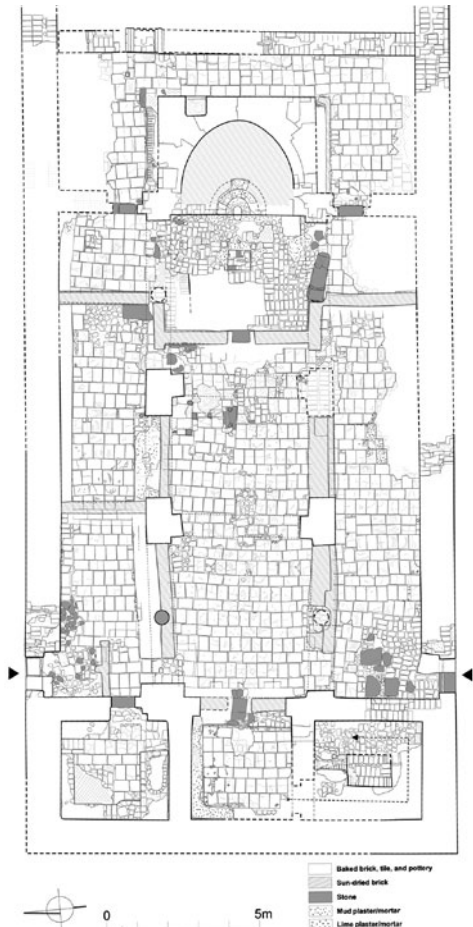
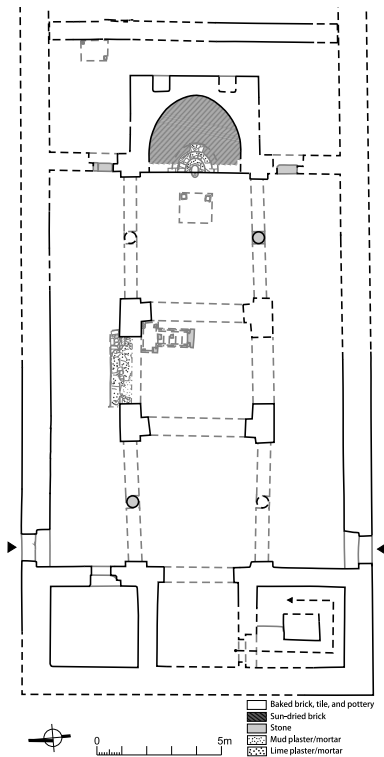
Monastic Church (HC); view toward the western end

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

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

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

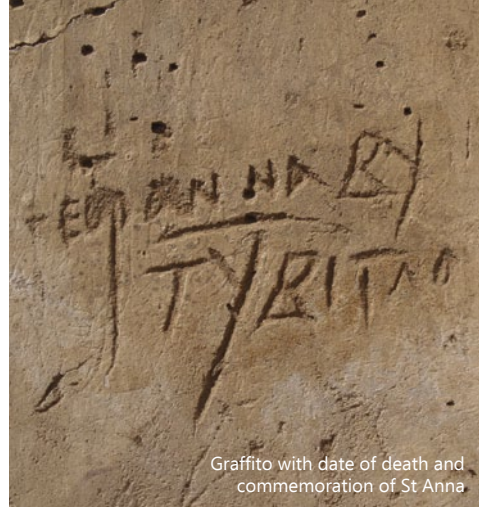
In the Late Period the church interior was rebuilt, screening of the sanctuary so that the only entrance was from the nave. The aisles were separated from the nave by masonry partition walls constructed between the columns and central stone pillars. Murals appeared on the new walls in the northwestern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



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

SANCTUARY OF SAINT ANNA

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



Altar in the sanctuary of St Anna in the monastery complex

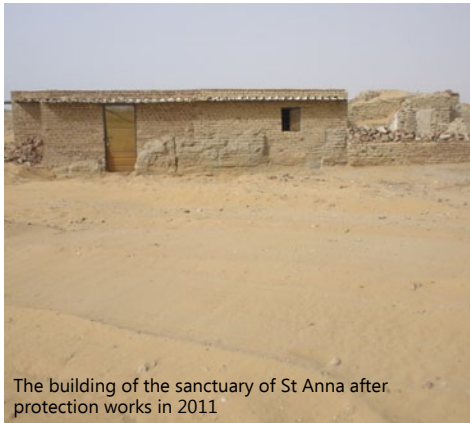
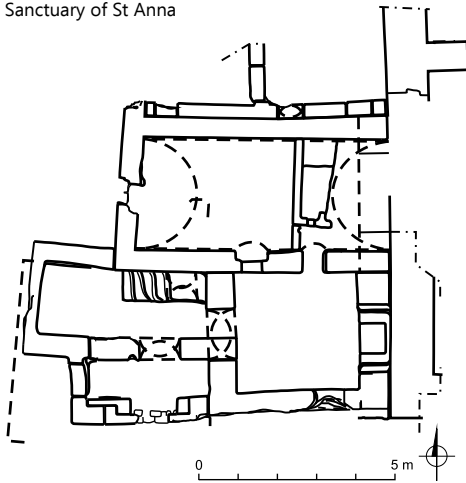


tery alike. Numerous graffiti on the walls of the mausoleum, demonstrate that he came to be considered by the local community, but presumably also by the Church of Makuria, as a saint. His name, as preserved in a few graffiti, was ANNA. In the Old Nubian language the name was both masculine and feminine.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

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

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

Sanctuary of St Anna



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



Unidentified figure, fragmentary mural from the sanctuary of St Anna



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

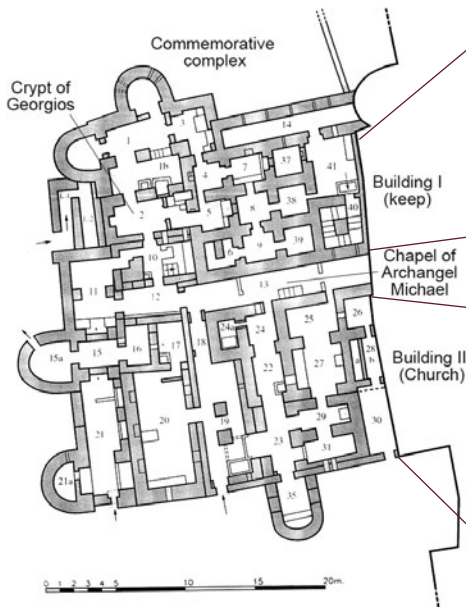
NORTHWEST ANNEX (H.NW)

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

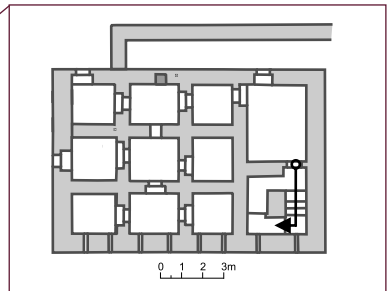
♦ BUILDING I – Nearly square structure composed of 11 or 12 rooms, a kind of keep, surely of considerable height, although only the ground floor has been preserved. Foundation date cannot be established, but it must have been constructed before the 10th century.

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

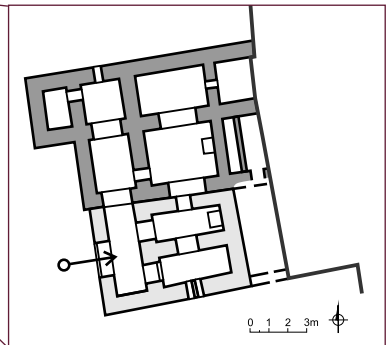
♦ CHURCH OF GEORGIOS (B.III) – Building II extended to include new chambers. Founded by the priest Georgios when he was *archistylites*, that is before 1062 when he was anointed bishop of Dongola. Judging by the new form of the painted wall decoration in the sanctuary, depicting Christ in blessing in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



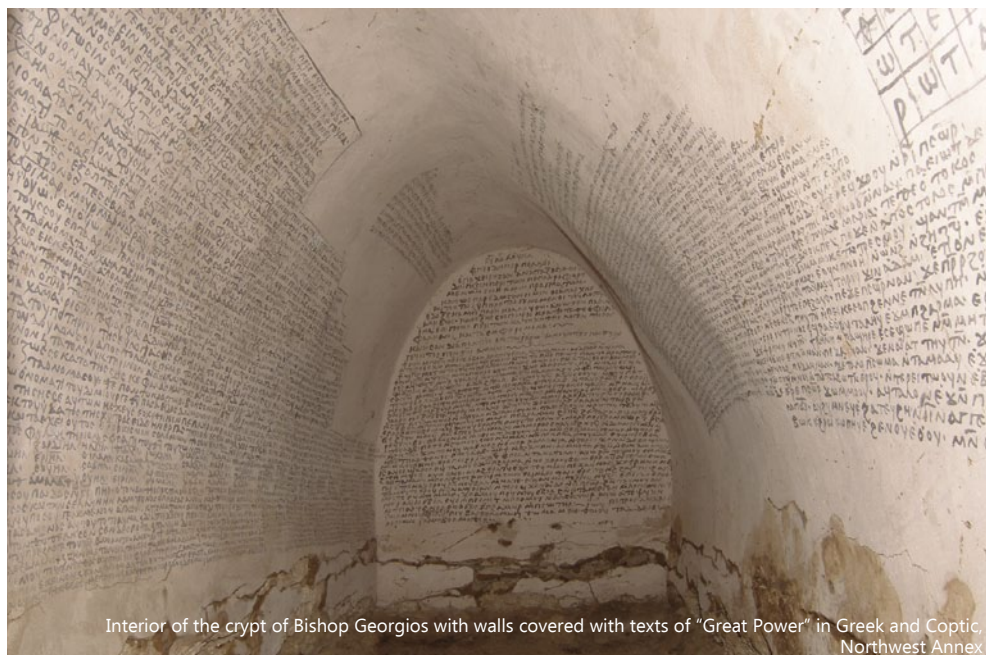
Northwest Annex: plan marking all the constituent parts of the complex



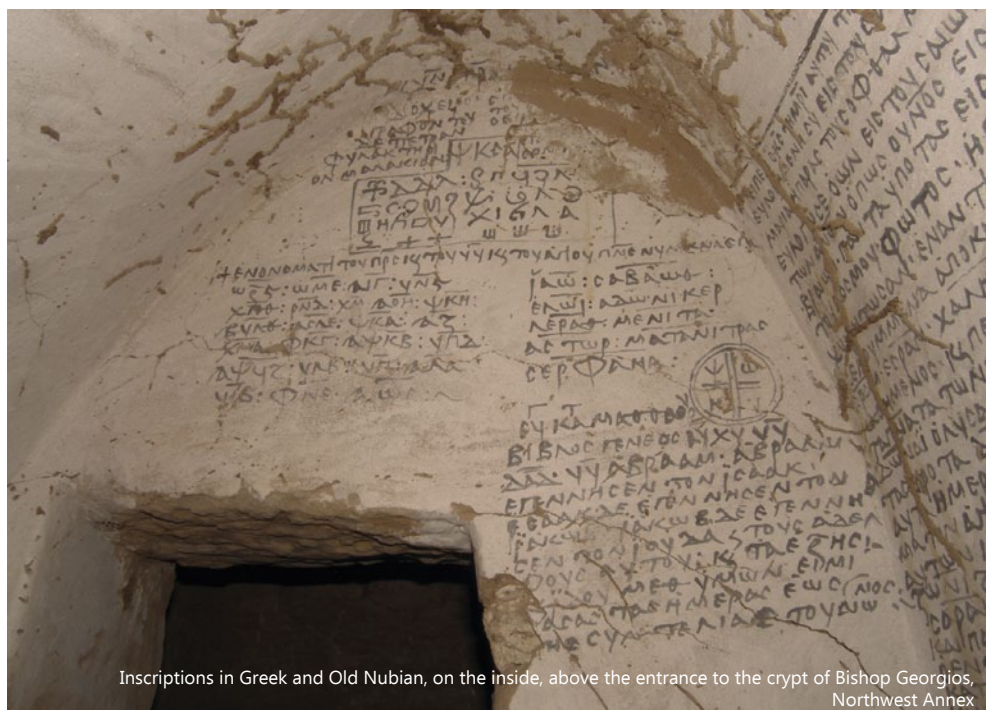
Building I



Building III (Church of Georgios)



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



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

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

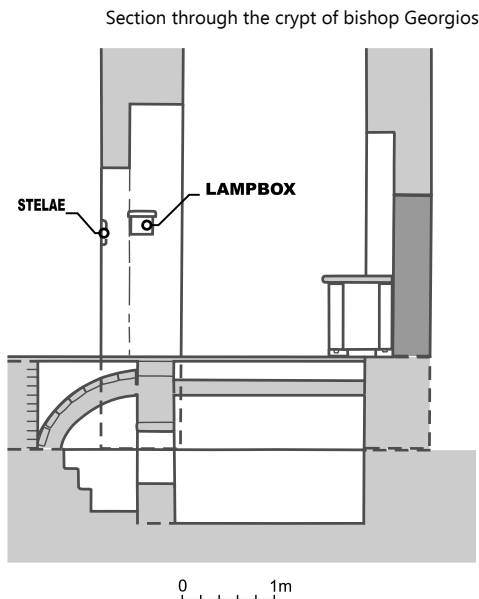
♦ CRYPT OF GEORGIOS – Built before his death in 1113 in the western entrance vestibule to Building I. Georgios was buried in this crypt, probably as the second of the two earliest burials, but it is not known who was the first man buried there (Godlewski, Mahler, Czaja-Szewczak 2012). He could have been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

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

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

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

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



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

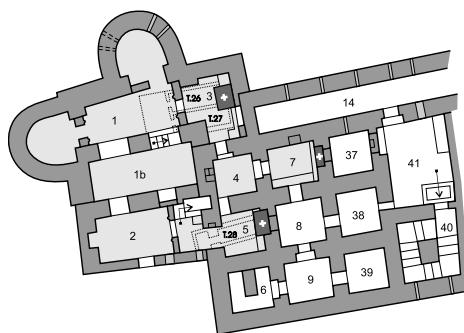
funerary shafts leading to the crypts were located inside the naos, in front of the altar screen. The right side of the screen bears the impression of a funerary stela that was removed at some point.

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

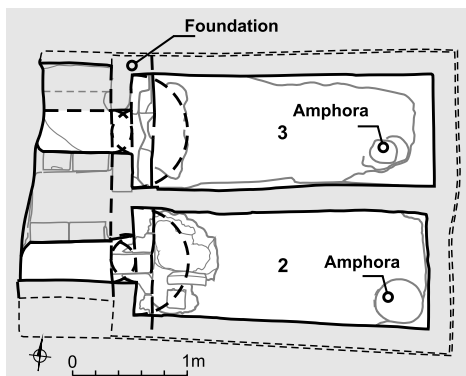


Silk shroud covering a body interred in crypt 2 of the Mausoleum of Bishops

Mausoleum of bishops in the Northwest Annex



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



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

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

Two wooden pectoral crosses from the bishops' crypts



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



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

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

◆ CHAPEL OF THE ARCHANGEL MICHAEL

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

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



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

SOUTHWEST ANNEX (H.SW.B.I)

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

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

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

