

# Epitaph of Staurosaña († 1057), granddaughter (?) of a king Zakharias, found in Dongola\*

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*The paper offers the edition of a Greek epitaph discovered recently by the Polish Mission in the citadel of Dongola. It was found in a church (B.V) adjoining a spacious building of residential character, perhaps a royal palace (B.I). The epitaph dating from AD 1054 commemorates a person with the name Staurosaña (Graeco-Nubian formation meaning “Cross lives”) who is presented in this epitaph as grandchild of a king with the name Zakharias. The latter is probably a previously unattested king from the dynasty that ruled over Makuria in the 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century, unless one identifies him with that Zakharias who sat on the throne in Dongola in 960s. The epitaph occurred in a secondary context but it is quite certain that Sataurosaña was buried somewhere in the church B.V or its immediate vicinity within the royal quarter of Dongola.*

During the 2012 season of work by the Polish Archaeological Mission in Dongola, the capital of the Christian Nubian Kingdom of Makuria, an interesting epigraphic discovery was made. It is the epitaph of a certain Staurosaña, deceased AD 1057, who is styled as a granddaughter (or a grandson?) of a king with the name Zakharias. Funerary inscriptions commemorating rulers of Makuria and members of their families are extremely rare,<sup>1</sup> which alone makes

the epitaph of Staurosaña worthy of a separate publication. Additionally, the epitaph under consideration may cast light on the political history of Makuria in the 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century, especially on the question of throne succession in Dongola.

The epitaph was discovered inserted, the script to the top, in the floor of the naos of the church B.V, immediately behind the entrance leading from the narthex and to the right of it. The church in question is found to the south of a spacious building of residential character, perhaps a royal palace (B.I), and a small cruciform building of commemorative character, which was turned into a church at a later stage of its existence (B.III). All three buildings apparently formed a representative complex connected with the Makurian state and royalty, situated more or less in the centre of the western, Nile-turned side of the citadel of Dongola.<sup>2</sup> The church came into existence apparently not later than in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Its floor, made of stone slabs, is the original one, even if it, especially in the narthex, was repaired extensively with bricks. For obvious reasons the plaque with Staurosaña's epitaph dating to the mid-11<sup>th</sup> century cannot be an element of this original floor.<sup>3</sup> When

\* I would like to thank Włodzimierz Godlewski, the Director of the Polish Archaeological Mission to Dongola, for his invitation to publish this interesting inscription. I am also obliged to him for all necessary information about the find, the photo of the object, and the discussion of various subjects connected with the text. I also thank Grzegorz Ochała for assistance, and Giovanni Ruffini for correcting my English.

1 The only royal Makurian epitaph we know for sure is that of the king Georgios “IV” who died in AD 1157. The bilingual Greek-Old Nubian text is inscribed on a round offering tray found in Wadi Natrun in Lower Egypt. For a new publication of the epitaph, which supplants the older ones, see van Gerven Oei 2011. An epitaph found in Banganarti, ten kilometres to the south of Dongola, may commemorate a king with the name David, but the reading of the word βασιλεύς and the name of the deceased are not certain. For the publication of the inscription, see Łajtar 2003a, 169-175. King Georgios “I” is mentioned in the prayer for the deceased of the epitaph of Mariankouda, a tetrarch of Makuria (died AD 887), found in Hambukol, several kilometres to the north of Dongola; however, this epitaph essentially commemorates the tetrarch and not the king. For the publication of Mariankouda's epitaph, see Łajtar 2003b, no. 18. A brother of this latter Georgios and son of king Zakharias “I” with the name Ioannes (died AD 883) is commemorated in an epitaph found in the cathedral of Dongola. For the publication of the epitaph, see Łajtar 2003b, no. 21. Another epitaph from Dongola, dating from the 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century, may commemorate a member of the royal family. The deceased is a certain Maria [ - - - ]λίς,

perhaps [βασι]λίς, “queen”. For the publication of the epitaph, see Łajtar 2003b, no. 25. An epitaph of a king David (10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century) is known from Soba, the capital of the kingdom of Alwa. The find-spot indicates that the deceased was a king of Alwa and not Makuria. For the publication of the epitaph of king David, see Łajtar 2003b, no. 79.

2 For the complex and its interpretation, see reports from the archaeological work by Włodzimierz Godlewski, the Director of the excavations, published annually in the periodical Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean starting with volume 13 (2002). See further Godlewski 2010, 75-79.

3 Włodzimierz Godlewski's personal communication.

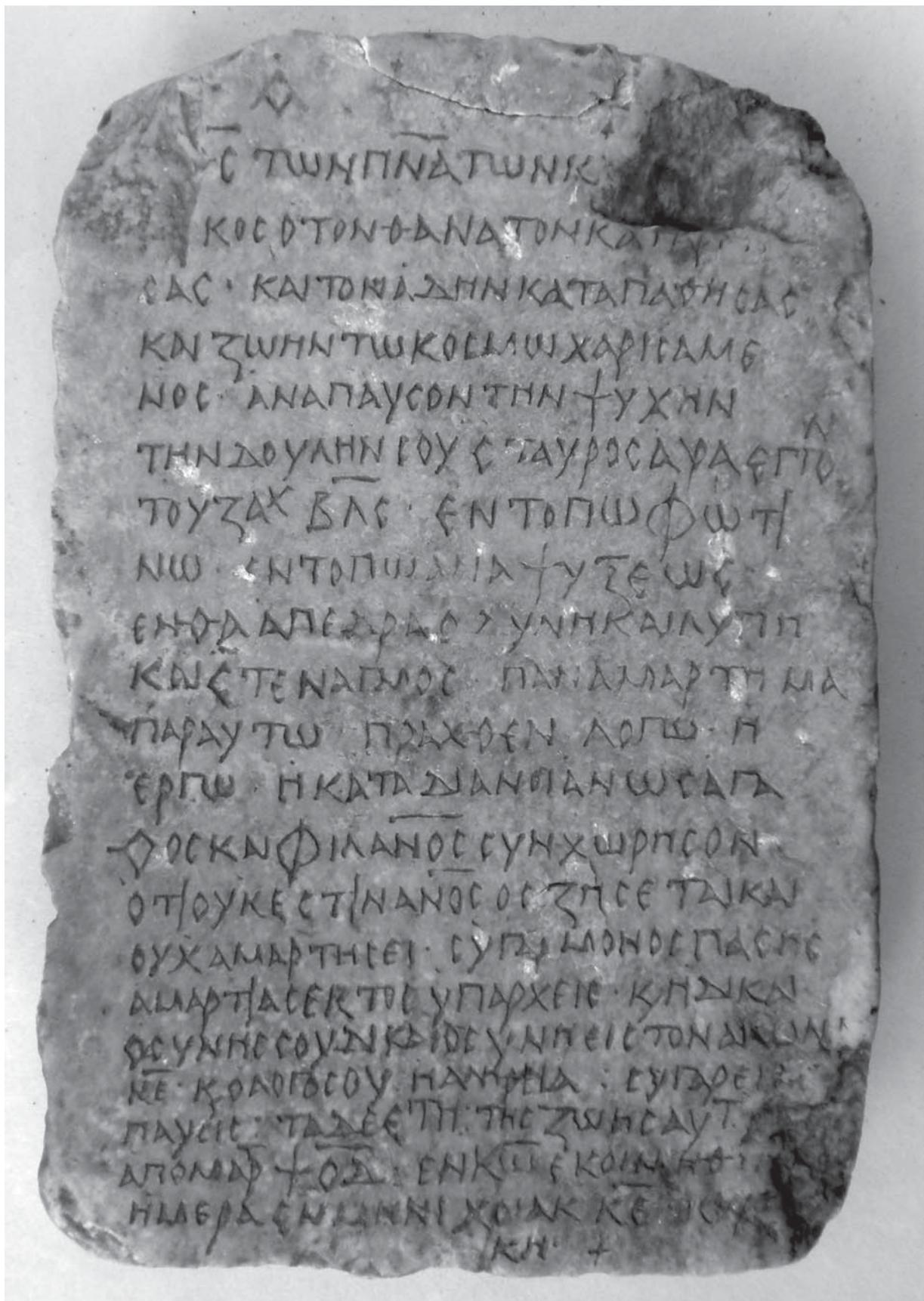


Fig. 1: The epitaph of Staurosafa. Photo: Włodzimierz Godlewski, Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology Archives

it was inserted in the place where it was found is difficult to say; for some considerations, see below.

The text of the epitaph is inscribed on a rectangular plaque of gray marble, slightly round at the top. The plaque is almost completely preserved. Small damage to the surface occurs in both top corners and in the lower right-hand one. A fresh split of the upper edge has been put into its original place. The plaque measures 40 cm in height, 26.5 cm in width, and 6.2 cm in thickness (Fig. 1). The front surface is carefully worked out and polished, the side surfaces are cut off obliquely towards the bottom, and the bottom was left unworked. The inscription is carved without guidelines, however quite carefully, with the script forming even lines. In the lower part, letters become smaller and more tightly placed in order to fit the entire text of the inscription on the plaque. Generally the height of letters varies between 0.7 cm (η in ἀμαρτήσῃ) and 2.0 cm (ϕ). Letters α ω α in line one assume the form of round epigraphic majuscules (note α with broken bar), and for the rest of the inscription the so-called Nubian-type majuscules are used. *Nomina sacra* occur in their common forms. Also the word β(ασι)λ(έω)ς in line 8 was recorded as if it were a *nomen sacrum*. Words are occasionally abbreviated through suspension with the last preserved letter shifted to mark the abbreviation. καί is normally recorded in *scriptio plena*; only two times (ll. 17 and 19) it occurs in an abbreviated form with κ crossed by an oblique stroke. Vowels in the initial position (quite regularly) and in the accentuated one (occasionally) are provided with a dot above them. Dots occur also above the initial c in the proper name ἐταγροῦσα (l. 7) and the word ἐστεναγμος (l. 11), undoubtedly to mark the prothetic /i/ added by Nubian speakers in front of the consonant cluster /st/.<sup>4</sup> The words are occasionally separated by dots in the middle of lines height. Towards the end of the inscription, in lines 19-21, this function is served by a colon. In the word συγχώρησον (line 14), ω was probably corrected from ω. The Greek of the epitaph is quite decent, especially for the standards of the language as occurring in Nubian sources. One observes only several graphic variants, mostly recording a contemporary pronunciation, and the use of accusative instead of genitive as an attribute after ἀνάπαυσον τὴν ψυχὴν, a phenomenon common in Nubian epitaphs in Greek.

The inscription can be transcribed as follows:

†     ἄ     †     ὦ     †     [ἄ]  
 [† ὀ] θ(εὸ)ς τῶν πν(ευμά)των καὶ [πάσης]  
 [σα]ρκὸς ὃ τὸν θάνατον καταργή-  
 4 σας • καὶ τὸν Ἄδην καταπαθήσας  
 καὶ ζωὴν τῷ κόσμῳ χαρισάμε-  
 νος, ἀνάπαυσον τὴν ψυχὴν  
 τὴν δούλην σου ἐταγροῦσα ἐγγόν(ης)  
 8 τοῦ Ζαχ(αρίου) β(ασι)λ(έω)ς • ἐν τόπῳ φωτι-  
 νῷ • ἐν τόπῳ ἀναψύξεως  
 ἔνθα ἀπέδρα ὀδύνη καὶ λύπη  
 καὶ στεναγμός • πᾶν ἀμάρτημα  
 12 παρ' αὐτῷ πραχθὲν λόγῳ • ἢ  
 ἔργῳ ἢ κατὰ διάνοιαν ὡς ἀγα-  
 θὸς καὶ φιλάν(θρωπ)ος συγχώρησον  
 ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἄν(θρωπ)ος (ὅς) ζήσεται καὶ  
 16 οὐχ ἄμαρτήσῃ· σὺ γὰρ μόνος πάσης  
 ἀμαρτίας ἐκτὸς ὑπάρχεις • κ(αὶ) ἡ δικαι-  
 οσύνης σου δικαιοσύνη εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα,  
 κ(ύρι)ε, κ(αὶ) ὁ λόγος σου ἡ ἀλήθεια :  
 σὺ γὰρ εἶ (ἦ) ἀν[ά]-  
 20 παυσις : τὰ δὲ ἔτη : τῆς ζωῆς αὐτ(ῆς) [ 1-2 ]·  
 ἀπὸ μαρτ(ύρων) ψῶδ : ἐν κ(υρίῳ) ἐκοιμήθη  
 ἡμέρα ἐν μηνὶ Χοϊάκ κῆ • Κυρι[α]-  
 κῆ. †

2. ο]θ̄ | πν̄ἄτ̄ων || 4. ἄΔΗΝ || 6. ἀναπαυσον || 7. εγτο<sup>n</sup> || 8. ζα<sup>x</sup> β̄ς || 10. ἀπεδρα || 11. ἐστεναγμος || 12-13. ἠεργω || 13. ἠκαταδιανοιᾶν || 13-14. ἀγαθος || 14. φιλᾶνος || 15. ὅτι | ἀνος || 16. ογχαμαρτησει | σϋ || 17. ὑπαρχεις || 17-18. κ̄ἠδικαιοσύνη || 19. κῆ | κ̄, | ἠαληθεια || 20. ἐτη | αγ<sup>t</sup> || 21. ἀπομαρ<sup>t</sup> | κῶ || 22. ἡμερα | κῆ  
 4. καταπατήσας || 7. τῆς δούλης || 8-9. φωτεινῷ || 12. παρ' αὐτοῦ (for παρ' αὐτῆς, but see commentary) || 14. συγχώρησον || 17-18. δικαιοσύνη || 19. λόγος σου

*Alpha, omega, alpha. God of the spirits and all flesh, You who have defeated death and trodden down Hades and given life to the world, rest the soul of Your servant Staurosaña, granddaughter (?) of the King Zacharias, in a shining place, in a place of refreshment, whence pain and grief and lamentation have fled away. As the only good one and loving mankind forgive every sin committed by him (sic) in word or in deed or in thought for there is not a man who would live and would not sin. For only You are outside sin and Your justice is justice forever, O Lord, and Your word is truth. For You are the rest (and the resurrection of Your servant). And the years of her life (were) [ - - - ]. She fell asleep in the Lord (in the year) from the martyrs 774, in the month of Khoiak (day) 25 [= 21 December 1057], on Sunday.*

4 For a commentary, see below.

We are dealing with an epitaph composed with the prayer for the dead starting with the words ὁ θεὸς τῶν πνευμάτων καὶ πάσης σαρκός, common for a large group of Greek epitaphs originating throughout the entire Nubian territory and dating from the period between the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> and the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>5</sup> Apart from some textual peculiarities, which are not unparalleled however (see below), and the high rank of the commemorated person, the epitaph fits the characteristics of the entire group.

The most striking element of the epitaph from the textual point of view is the lack of the request for the soul of the deceased to rest in the bosom of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, which should occur at the beginning of the supplicatory part of the prayer, immediately after the presentation of the deceased (here in line 8). This is strange, as the request in question is the most characteristic element of Nubian funerary prayers of all types. However strange, this lack may be observed in several further Nubian epitaphs with the prayer ὁ θεὸς τῶν πνευμάτων καὶ πάσης σαρκός. The list includes: the epitaph of an unknown provenance commemorating a man and his wife (?) Elisabeth,<sup>6</sup> the epitaph of one I(e)sous also of unknown provenance,<sup>7</sup> and the epitaph of a woman Angelosko from Sheikh Arab Hag near Dongola.<sup>8</sup> The request for the soul of the deceased to rest in the bosom of the Patriarchs is also missing in the epitaph of a certain Christina coming from Meroe, in which the prayer for the dead is modeled on the prayer ὁ θεὸς τῶν πνευμάτων καὶ πάσης σαρκός.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps the lack of the request in question is a sign of existence of a separate textual tradition of the prayer ὁ θεὸς τῶν πνευμάτων καὶ πάσης σαρκός in this part of Nubia where these epitaphs came to light. In view of the fact that two (out of four) epitaphs with this textual peculiarity come from the Dongola area one can tentatively ascribe this textual tradition to the Makurian capital and its sphere of influence.

Another textual trait worthy of a remark is the way in which the prayer closes (lines 19-20). In its full form, the prayer has the statement σὺ γὰρ εἶ ἡ ἀνάπαυσις καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις introducing the second presentation of the deceased, after which there follows the doxology. Here the doxology and the pre-

sentation of the deceased are omitted altogether, and the introductory statement is reduced to its initial words. This finds comparison in three other epitaphs from Dongola: those of Kel, daughter of Osk() (died AD 785),<sup>10</sup> Archbishop Georgios (died AD 1113),<sup>11</sup> and an unknown person buried in the cemetery to the north of Kom H (probably 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>12</sup> One should note that these three epitaphs, although deprived of the words καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις and of the doxology, do however have the presentation of the deceased.

A few words of commentary shall be devoted to the dating lemma (lines 21-23). In the present state, it is corrupted, probably by the inadvertence of the editor of the inscription or the stonemason who incorrectly placed the word ἡμέρα.<sup>13</sup> The correct reading should be: ἐκοιμήθη ἐν κυρίῳ ἐν μηνὶ Χοϊάκ κϛ, ἡμέρα Κυρι[α]κῆ. This reading has been adopted in the translation.

The epitaph commemorates a person with the name Staurosāna, or rather Istaurosāna, as is indicated by the dot over the initial c, which undoubtedly records the prothetic /i/ added by Nubian speakers before a Greek loan-word to facilitate the pronunciation of the consonant cluster /st/.<sup>14</sup> As far as I can see this name has been attested for the first time here. It belongs to a larger group of Nubian and Graeco-Nubian names compound with the verb ἀψ-, “to live”, containing also such names as: ἰσογσαφα, μαρ(ι)αφα, μιλαφα, μογσαφα, τοσκαφα. The name σταγροσαφα can be analyzed as: σταγρος-αψ-α with σταγρος- being a Greek loan-word for “cross” and -α a predicative formant,<sup>15</sup> and translated “the Cross

5 For these epitaphs, see most recently Łajtar 2003b, introduction, xxi-xxiii; see also Łajtar 1996, with the most complete list of the epitaphs, which needs updating however, and Łajtar 2006, 114-123, with a reconstruction of a local tradition among these epitaphs.

6 Łajtar 2003b, no. 80.

7 Łajtar 2003b, no. 81.

8 Editio princeps: Crowfoot 1927, 228-229, no. 2; reprinted as: SB IV 7429; SEG VIII 872; Tibiletti Bruno 1962, no. 2.

9 Łajtar 2003b, no. 30.

10 Łajtar 2003b, no. 20.

11 Łajtar 2002.

12 Łajtar 2011, 55-58, no. 4.

13 He might have initially wanted to write ἐκοιμήθη ἐν κυρίῳ ἡμέρα Κυριακῆ, but dropped this idea after writing ἡμέρα and continued with the indication of the month day, which normally precedes the indication of the weekday in Nubian epitaphs. It should be observed that weekdays rarely occur in texts generated by Nubian Christian culture, including grave inscriptions; for a collection of evidence and a discussion, see Ochała 2011, 327-343.

14 The custom of adding the prothetic /i/ in front of Greek loan-words starting with consonant clusters is well attested in Nubian Greek. It mainly affects the clusters with /t/, /k/, and /r/ as the second element, especially /st/ (as here). For a discussion, see Łajtar 2003b, no. 3, commentary to line 8. Note that a dot occurs over the initial c also in the word στεναγμός in line 11, which presupposes the pronunciation /istenagmos/. The use of a dot over a letter to mark /i/ in Greek texts from Nubia is due to the influence exerted by literacy in Old Nubian, which uses it along with a dash in this function; cf. Browne 2002, 12, § 1.3.

15 Browne 2002, 36, § 3.6.4.

lives". The sex of the deceased is uncertain. The name alone is not an indicator as names, because of the lack of gender in Nubian, could have been borne by both sexes in Christian Nubia. Equally ambiguous is the term for "grandchild" in line 7. It was recorded in an abbreviated form, without a morphological ending that could have pointed out the sex. The female form τὴν δούλην in line 7 suggests that the deceased was a woman, however, this suggestion should be taken with much caution. Masculine and feminine, especially among the pronouns, are notoriously exchanged with one another in Nubian Greek under the influence of Nubian language, which, as already mentioned above, has no grammatical gender. This is especially true for the use of male forms with relation to women but the phenomenon also works in the opposite direction.<sup>16</sup> As far as our case is concerned, it could have been facilitated by the context: the word immediately preceding τὴν δούλην also stands in the singular feminine accusative (τὴν ψυχὴν). It should be observed that the pronoun referring to the deceased in line 12 apparently is masculine and not feminine (αὐτῶ = αὐτοῦ). Having in mind all these ambiguities I call the deceased "granddaughter (?) of king Zakharias" only for the sake of convenience and underscore that "grandson (?) of king Zakharias" is equally possible.

The dead Staurosaña is presented in her (his) epitaph as a grandchild of a king with the name Zakharias. This presentation is somewhat anomalous as deceased persons are normally identified on grave monuments by their individual names and the names of their parents, mostly father, in all human cultures including the Nubian Christian culture. Giving the name of a family member other than the father as a point of reference is rare. As far as Christian Nubia is concerned, I am aware of only two epitaphs displaying this phenomenon in addition to Staurosaña's. The first of them, coming from Faras, commemorates a woman named Doulista (died AD 1183) who is styled the mother of a bishop (name not indicated), probably the then bishop of Faras.<sup>17</sup> The second,

originating from Ghazali, records a priest named Ioannes who is called the nephew of a bishop (name not indicated), no doubt the bishop officiating in the see to which Ghazali belonged.<sup>18</sup> In both cases, the reasons behind mentioning, in the presentation of the deceased, a person other than his/her father – respectively the son and uncle – is obvious: these persons, bishops at that, had a high social status, definitely higher than the parents of the deceased had, and probably the highest in the local community. Demonstrating familial ties with these persons fulfilled a double role: a descriptive and honorific one. A similar situation must have occurred in the case of our Staurosaña. For her (his) relatives who ordered the preparation of her (his) epitaph but also for the inhabitants of Makuria who were able to read the inscription, she (he) was primarily the grandchild of the king of Makuria and not daughter (son) of her (his) father, who was definitely a man of a lesser rank than the king even if he belonged to the royal family. Perhaps Staurosaña was a grandchild of King Zakharias on maternal side, but this must not be a necessary assumption.

The identity of King Zakharias mentioned as grandfather of Staurosaña is a little bit puzzling. Zakharias and Georgios recur as names of kings of the dynasty that ruled in Dongola between the first half of the 9<sup>th</sup> and, apparently, the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>19</sup> Three kings with this name are attested without any doubt. The first of them (Zakharias "I"), the actual founder of the dynasty, reigned in the second quarter of the 9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>20</sup> The second one

by van der Vliet (2007).

16 See examples collected in the indices to Łajtar 2003b, 258, and Łajtar and van der Vliet 2010, 322, s.v. "masculine for feminine".

17 The epitaph under consideration was the first Nubian inscription in Greek known to the scholarly world. It was presented in 1820 in Colasucia near Faras to the Italian aristocrat Carlo Vidua and brought by him to Europe. Now it is kept in Museo Egizio in Turin. From the extremely rich bibliography of the inscription one may cite: Lefebvre 1907, no. 636; SB V 8728; Tibiletti Bruno 1962, no. 8; Kubińska 1974, 42–44, no. 10. Until quite recently the inscription passed for the epitaph of Tamer, a bishop of Faras. Its actual owner was established a few years ago

18 Published by Donadoni 1986, 224–226, with photo on p. 229, no. 2. The editor princeps read the presentation of the deceased (lines 9–10) in the following way: Ἰωάννην πρεσβύτερον (καὶ) τὸν τοῦ ἐπισκόπου Ave νιό(ν), "Ioannes, priest, and son of Bishop Ane". The correct reading Ἰωάννην πρεσβύτερον (καὶ) τὸν τοῦ ἐπισκόπου ἀνεψιό(ν), "Ioannes, priest, and nephew of the bishop", was established by Łajtar 2001b, 184–186. The epitaph can be dated to 8<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> century on palaeographic grounds.

19 For Makuria under the rule of this so-called "Zakharias' dynasty", see Godlewski 2002; 2008, 277. Godlewski's studies replace previous works on the subject, including Monneret de Villard 1938, 102–130, and Munro-Hay 1982–1983, 103–112.

20 For him, see Godlewski 2002, 76–83. The only internal source that mentions him without any doubt is the epitaph of his son Ioannes (died AD 883) found in the cathedral of Dongola (see n. 1). Almost everything that we know about him comes from external sources of Egyptian provenance. On the basis of these sources it is assumed that Zakharias "I" could have been a usurper on the throne in Dongola. The beginning of his rule is dated by Godlewski to AD 835. Earlier scholars preferred a date around AD 822. He might have died ca. AD 856 as shown by Jakobielski

(Zakharias “II”), most probably a great-grandson of the first, ascended the throne in Dongola either in AD 915 or 920, and was still alive in AD 930, as is demonstrated by the foundation inscription of the church on the south slope in Faras.<sup>21</sup> The third (Zakharias “III”), either the son or a grandson of the former, started his reign in AD 961/2 and was already dead by AD 969 as another king with the name Georgios, perhaps his son, is on record for this year.<sup>22</sup> The question arises if Zakharias from our inscription can be identified with Zakharias “III”<sup>23</sup> or is another, the fourth king of this name, not yet attested in our sources. With so little data at hand neither of the two possibilities listed above can a priori be ruled out. The possibilities could have been narrowed if we had known Staurosaña’s age at death. The lower the age of the deceased the higher the possibility that her (or his) grandfather Zakharias was not Zakharias “III”. Unfortunately the stone surface at the end of line 20 containing the number is chipped away. The left-hand edge of the chipping may follow an oblique stroke of a triangular letter like Δ (= 1), Δ (= 4) or λ (= 30); however, this is more a guess than a true observation. Despite the lack of clear premises one can however risk some suppositions. One gets the impression that king Zakharias, grandfather of the deceased, was a living person at the moment of her (his) death and not someone who was dead for nearly one hundred years. Were he not alive, he would have been designated with the epithet “of the blessed memory”, Greek μακάριος, customarily given to the dead in Nubia and elsewhere in Oriental Christian culture. This would give following reading of lines 6-8 of the inscription: ἀνάπαυσον

1972 93-96, on the basis of an inscription from Faras which seems to mention year 12 of his son Georgios “I” coinciding with year 584 of the Era of Diocletian.

- 21 For him, see Godlewski 2002, 88-90. He is mentioned in two internal sources: the foundation inscription of the church on the south slope in Faras dating to AD 930 (van der Vliet 2003, no. 2), and the protocol of a legal document in Coptic found in Qasr Ibrim dating to AD 925 (unpublished; the publication is under preparation by Joost L. Hagen). Both sources indicate the regnal year of the king, which however give different dates of his ascension to the throne.
- 22 The year 961/2 as the beginning of his reign can be established thanks to a commemorative dipinto in Coptic written on a wall of Deir Anba Hadra (St. Simeon Monastery) near Aswan. For this dipinto, see Dijkstra and van der Vliet 2003. Włodzimierz Godlewski (personal communication) is of the opinion that Zakharias “III” started his reign already ca. AD 940 and “year one” falling on AD 961/2 as given in the Aswan graffito refers only to his rule over Upper Egypt.
- 23 Zakharias “I” and Zakharias “II” are excluded for biological reasons.

τὴν ψυχὴν τὴν δούλην σου ἐταγροσάφα ἐγγόν(ης) τοῦ μακαρίου Ζαχ(αρίου) β(ασι)λ(έω)ς. Assuming that Zakharias from our inscription was a living person at the death of Staurosaña one has to conclude that he is a new king. The list of Makurian kings of the 11<sup>th</sup> century is very lacunose, showing a gap exactly in the middle of the century, large enough for Zakharias. The last known king prior to the gap is Stephanos. He is mentioned in the protocol of a legal document of AD 1027 discovered in the 1960s during archaeological excavations carried out by the mission of the American Research Center in Egypt in Gebel Adda.<sup>24</sup> The first king known by name after the gap is Georgios. He occurs in the protocol of a Coptic document found by the mission of the Egypt Exploration Society in Qasr Ibrim and dating from 1071/2.<sup>25</sup> One does not know whether Zakharias was an immediate successor of Stephanos and the immediate predecessor of Georgios, or another king (or kings) intervened.<sup>26</sup> It is also impossible to state what, if any, were the familial relations between these

24 The document remains unpublished. It was briefly mentioned by Millet 1967, 59. Stephanos from the Gebel Adda document probably is identical with that Stephanos who is mentioned in a graffito on the rocks of the Sai island as a contemporary of the local bishop Iesou; for this graffito, see Łajtar 2001a. A Coptic epitaph once in the Sudan Museum in Khartoum and now lost indicates that a bishop of Sai with the name Iesou died AD 1054; cf. van der Vliet 2003, no. 27. Assuming that Iesou from the graffito and Iesou from the epitaph is the same person, one can tentatively extend the reign of Stephanos into the 1030s-1040s.

25 Note that the protocol is the only surviving element of the document. The find was never published properly. It was shortly presented and discussed in Plumley 1981. Its publication is being prepared by Joost L. Hagen.

26 The question of Zakharias’ successorship is especially unclear. We already know that Georgios was king in AD 1071/2 as attested by the Coptic document from Qasr Ibrim. More or less in the same time the throne in Dongola was occupied by Salomon, who, before AD 1079, abdicated to live an ascetic life in a monastery as indicated by the History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria (Vantini 1975, 215) and Abu el-Makarrim, earlier known as Abu Salih (Vantini 1975, 331-332). The History of the Patriarchs (Vantini 1975, 215) further informs us that the successor of Solomon was his nephew Georgios, who in turn was succeeded, before AD 1089, by Basil. Is Georgios from the Qasr Ibrim document the same person as Georgios mentioned by Abu el-Makarrim as the successor of Solomon? If yes, the sequence of rulers in Dongola in the third quarter of the 11<sup>th</sup> century would be: Zakharias-Solomon-Georgios. If not, Zakharias would have been followed by the Georgios known from the Qasr Ibrim document who in turn was succeeded by Solomon after whom came the Georgios mentioned by Abu el-Makarrim. The first possibility, with only one Georgios, seems more probable to me. It was adopted in Ruffini 2012, 247. Also Włodzimierz Godlewski (personal communication) is in favour of it.

three kings. In this context it is worthy to remember that Zakharias and Georgios were names that passed down from father to son in the Makurian royal family of the 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century. This may suggest that our Zakharias and Georgios from the Qasr Ibrim document were directly related to one another in familial terms.

Yet another question should be discussed in connection with Staurosaña's epitaph, namely that of its placement. It is known that prominent members of Makurian society were sometimes buried within churches with the epitaphs inserted in the floors over their graves. The best known example of this practice is the grave of Ioannes, son of Zakharias "I", protodomestikos and eparch τῶν Γαδηρῶν, situated under the floor of the baptistery of the cathedral of Dongola and provided with an epitaph in Greek.<sup>27</sup> No grave was detected under the epitaph of Staurosaña however. This can be interpreted in two ways: either (1) the epitaph of Staurosaña was separated from her (his) grave, located somewhere in the nearest vicinity,<sup>28</sup> or (2) it was inserted in the floor of the church in secondary use. Włodzimierz Godlewski observed that the placement of the epitaph is probably not accidental,<sup>29</sup> which may speak for the first possibility. Even if the second possibility is correct, one has to assume that Staurosaña's burial place must have been rather near, as it is difficult to imagine that the plaque was transported from far away, e.g. from one of the necropoleis encircling the citadel of Dongola, to be inserted in the floor of the church B.V. Where exactly the grave of Staurosaña was is difficult to say at this stage of archaeological research. Anyway it seems that she (he) was buried, possibly along with other members of the royal Makurian family, within or near the representative complex consisting of the palace B.I, the commemorative building B.III and the church B.V.

27 For the grave, see Dzierżykraj-Rogalski and Jakobielski 1975; Gartkiewicz 1990, 258-259, with figs. 149, 150. The epitaph is published as Łajtar 2003b, no. 21. Recently Włodzimierz Godlewski (personal communication) put forward the hypothesis that Ioannes was not the occupant of the tomb and that his stela was inserted secondarily in the place where it was discovered.

28 Such was the case of the round marble tray inscribed with the epitaph of Mariankouda, tetrarch of Makuria, that was found inserted in the floor of the church in Hambukol, in front of the sanctuary. As no grave was found beneath, one has to assume that Mariankouda was buried not in the church but in the surrounding cemetery. For the Mariankouda's epitaph, see Łajtar 2003b, no. 18.

29 Personal communication. According to Godlewski the epitaph was inserted so that it could have been regarded by a person entering the naos from the narthex.

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# EIN FORSCHERLEBEN ZWISCHEN DEN WELTEN

ZUM 80. GEBURTSTAG VON STEFFEN WENIG

HERAUSGEGEBEN VON

ANGELIKA LOHWASSER & PAWEL WOLF



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TITELBILD: Säulenbasis mit Löwe, Große Anlage von Musawwarat es Sufra, Raum 108  
(Foto: Claudia Näser)

FRONTISPIZ: Der Jubilar im Garten seines Hauses in Berlin-Karow  
(Foto: Jane Humphris, Bildbearbeitung: Frank Joachim)

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# DANK

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