

Erich Dinkler (Hrsg.): *Kunst und Geschichte Nubiens in christlicher Zeit, Ergebnisse und Probleme auf Grund der jüngsten Ausgrabungen*. Recklinghausen (Aurel Bongers) 1971. 390 S., geb. DM 180.-.

Christian Nubia is a unique historical phenomenon. For nearly a thousand years, from circa 500-1500 A. D. the narrow band of fertile territory on each side of the Nile extending from Aswan to Khartoum sustained a vigorous Christian population who defied Moslem armies and Beduin raiders, and have left behind an artistic heritage that excites the wonder of scholars to-day.

The finely produced volume with magnificent illustrations edited by Professor Erich Dinkler is the result of an international conference held in the Villa Hügel at Essen in September 1969, which was devoted mainly to discussing the significance of the artistic treasures discovered by Professor Michalowski and his colleagues at Faras. In the present volume while Faras continues to dominate the scene, the scope of the twenty-five contributions by archaeologists and historians of art from Europe and the United States has been widened. It now includes the whole field of Nubian art, religion and history, while a number of new archaeological excavations undertaken in the years 1964-69 have been reported. The editor's aim has been to combine contributions on general themes with special studies in the wide context of Nubian religious, artistic and social history, and from the resulting discussions to establish what are the main outstanding problems still to be settled by further excavations.

The task ambitiously conceived in a context of world-wide co-operation among scholars has been brilliantly fulfilled. Here and there the critic might plead for greater brevity (there was surely no need to include a lecturer's statement that he was ending „to leave more room for discussion“), or for greater co-ordination of the work of the different contributors. The parallelism for instance, between the architectural remains from the great church at Q'asr Ibrim (Plates 74-77) and those from Old Dongola (Plates 130-133) deserve to be brought to the readers' attention. In general, however, particularly in the choice of illustrations and the preparations of plans and overlays, the editorial work deserves the highest praise. The publication is a landmark in the study of Nubian civilisation.

Apart from discussion of individual sites, the main themes are introduced in Professor Michalowski's opening paper, "Open Problems of Nubian Art and Culture in the light of the discoveries at Faras". That "for 500 years Faras (Pachoras) was the main artistic centre of northern Nubia" can hardly be doubted, but from what directions, asks Michalowski, came the inspiration of the three main stages of style and craftsmanship that can be discerned in the frescoes at Faras? Was it possible also, to discern a change of religious allegiance by the Kingdom of Nobatia from Monophysitism to Chalcedon with the enthronement of Bishop Joannes about A. D. 1000? What were the respective roles of the Coptic, Old Nubian and Greek languages in the Nubian kingdoms, and finally, how could various problems of chronology, for instance regarding the introduction of Christianity and the typology of the churches, be solved?

The formative influences on Nubian art are discussed in an important contribution from Professor Kurt Weitzmann, ("Some remarks on the sources of the fresco paintings of the Cathedral of Faras"). Weitzmann demonstrates convincingly that the "violet style" typical of the early period, 8th-9th century frescoes, are paralleled closely by the Bawit frescoes (6th/7th century), and that differences in detail "cannot obscure the general impression that this phase of fresco painting is a direct offshoot of Coptic art" (p. 327). This result finds additional confirmation from J. M. Plumley's finely illustrated account of the sculpture and carved woodwork found at Q'asr Ibrim. Much of this is contemporary with the building of the church probably late 7th-early 8th century, and "was influenced by Coptic art forms" (p. 133). This is true, in particular, of a fine sandstone stele representing a dove with outspread tail, similar examples of which have been found at Luxor and Armant. In the later periods of Nubian history, however, including the climax-

centuries of Nubian artistic achievement circa 950–1150, direct Coptic influence seems to have been less evident, and was replaced by that of other centres such as Palestine or even the Byzantine empire itself. Weitzmann concludes carefully "that Nubia's art was not produced in isolation but that it reflects in each phase the same general trends that can be observed in neighbouring Egypt as well as in Syria-Palestine" (p. 335). While it is not easy to see how the latter area could have become a major influence even during the Byzantine reconquest of northern Syria (957–1084), the increasing presence of non-Coptic influences on Nubian painting and sculpture seems an established fact from the tenth century onwards.

Michalowski's suggestion of a return to Nubian Chalcedonian (Melkite) allegiance circa 1000 A. D. is less well founded. Dr. P. van Moorsel demonstrates convincingly ("Die stillende Gottesmutter und die Monophysiten") that the principal evidence for this, namely the appearance of the cult of Maria Galaktotrophusa at Faras at this time need not imply a change to Melkite allegiance. The fresco emphasises Mary as *Theotokos* rather than the human nature of Christ, and indeed, the representation of the Galaktotrophusa can be traced through the Gnosticising *Proto-evangelium of James* into Coptic and Syrian Monophysite homiletic and liturgical work. In this respect the story of the cult of Maria Galaktotrophusa in the east seems to follow closely on that of the Assumption of the Virgin. Michalowski's further arguments based on the use of the formula *Τὸ Ἐυχολόγιον μέγα* on the Greek stelae of some of the Faras bishops, and Bishop Marianos' (1005–1037) title of "Orthodox bishop" can also be explained differently. The grave formula is found also with Coptic burials, while "Orthodox" was the normal attribute claimed by the patriarchs of Alexandria from Dioscorus I onwards and was used by the Monophysite chroniclers to describe clergy their own faith. An additional point originally made by W. Y. Adams and discussed here by Martin Krause, „Zur Kirchen- und Theologiegeschichte Nubiens“, is that Eutydhios the Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria 933–940 claimed that Nubia was Melkite until 77 years after the Arab conquest of Egypt (i. e. until 718/19). This date, however, coincides roughly with the absorption of the kingdom of Makuria which had originally been Chalcedonian into Nobatia under King Merkurios. On the whole, excavations have confirmed the truth of John of Ephesus' account of the definitive conversion of the Nubian kingdoms to Christianity in the sixth century. As a result, Nobatia and Alwah adopted Monophysitism while the middle kingdom of Makuria opted for about a century for Chalcedon. There is no firm evidence for subsequent change to Chalcedon in the united kingdom of Nobatia-Makuria.

While reversion to Chalcedonian orthodoxy by the Nubians seems improbable, there is little doubt that Byzantine influence made itself felt increasingly in the organisation of the central and provincial administration and in the language and liturgy of the Nubian Church. The reports on individual sites included in this work throw much light on the relationship between Coptic, Greek and Old Nubian. Adams' account on the University of Kentucky's excavations at Kulubnarti (p. 141–155) records the existence of Greek texts roughly carved on door lintels, and indicating therefore a popular knowledge of that language. Dr. Detlef G. Müller reports the use of Coptic in a legal document dated to circa 1000 A. D. from Kulb (p. 245–55) and in his contribution on "Some remarks on Faras Inscriptions" Dr. Stefan Jakobielski points out that while Coptic texts are always in correct Coptic, those in Greek are often corrupted by Nubian terms. Greek and Nubian seem to be much more interchangeable and familiar languages. His conclusion that "Coptic was treated as the official language imposed by the adopted ecclesiastical rite" (p. 31) needs some elaboration. At Q'asr Ibrim Coptic was the language of the great Consecration Scroll for Bishop Timotheos dated 1372 and was used in Biblical texts and some homiletic texts (such as the fine illuminated Coptic MS of John Chrysostom's *Homily on the Four living Beasts*, found by the reviewer in 1964), but the more normal liturgical languages were either Nubian or Greek, and Nubian was used in private correspondence. Coptic indeed may have played much the same role in Nubia as Latin played in the sub-Roman Britain of Gildas, a

literary language used for some ecclesiastical purposes but not the spoken language of the people. As demonstrated by the leather scrolls probably of the reign of King Joel (circa 1420) found at Q'asr Ibrim (See the reviewer's report in *Akten des VII. Internationalen Kongresses für Christliche Archäologie*, Trier 5-11 September, 1965 (pub. Roma 1968), p. 537-8) by the end of the Christian era Nubian has also become the language of the administration. Even so, one cannot afford to be dogmatic. The example of Christian North Africa with Berber, Punic and Latin in use at the same time, or of second-century A. D. Palestine with family archives including letters in Greek, Nabataean and Aramaic (See *Palestine Exploration Journal* xii, 1962, p. 235 ff. and 258 ff.) argues against the view that the presence of one language in a particular setting automatically excluded the use of others.

Of the contributions on individual sites, notable are those of Donadoni on the church at Sonqui Tino, Vercoutter on the three sites of Akhsa, Mirgissa and Sai, Schneider on the most rewarding excavation of Abdallah Nirqi just north of Abu Simbel, Hintze on Musawwarat es Sufra (excellent overlays) and the new Polish excavations at Dongola, where the large church is revealing itself as in many ways similar in size, architecture and date to the cathedral at Q'asr Ibrim. Finally, the Kentucky University excavations at Kulubnarti in 1969 provide further much needed evidence for conditions in the transition period between Christian and Moslem Nubia. The final Christian phase on this site, as at Meinarti, Sunnarti, Q'asr Ibrim and elsewhere, was characterised by the heavily fortified watchtower. These towers together with what appear to be mountain refuges on Gebel Sahaba explored by the Scandanavian expedition (p. 219-240) point to the Beduin marauder as the decisive enemy of the Christian civilization.

The concluding article, (another finely illustrated contribution), by Bruce G. Trigger moves away from Christianity to problems of Nubian landsettlement. The sites of Toshka and Arminna provide type sites where settlement can be traced from Meroitic to late Christian times, and those who would see war and invasion as the agents of migration and dispersion of populations are reminded that flood, disease and drought can be equally powerful influences on human ecology. Trigger's criticisms, however, that the excavation programmes have not been problem-oriented (p. 347) and that archaeologists failed to explore the settlement patterns of major sites such as Faras and Q'asr Ibrim (p. 378) are not well-founded. At Faras the Polish team succeeded in the herculean task of disengaging the churches and their murals and have gone a long way towards establishing a demography of the earliest Christian population. More could hardly be asked in the time available. At Q'asr Ibrim the excavators were confronted by different problems. Standing 210 feet above the Nile in 1964 the site will be preserved even after the filling up of Lake Nasser. This is true also of Gebel Adda. The need therefore is for relatively slow and careful work undertaken over a period of years. The value of both sites as a means of checking results elsewhere will increase greatly in the future, and a settlement plan of much of the area under excavation will emerge automatically.

More to the point is the criticism made by Martin Krause that, "von dem reichen, in Q'asr Ibrim und Gebel Adda ausgegrabenen Quellenmaterial gibt es z. Z. leider nur kurze Hinweise" (p. 72). On whatever grounds, the lack of adequate interim reports on Q'asr Ibrim of the type published by Michalowski in *Kush* for Faras has been a serious hindrance to scholars. Almost every topic discussed in this publication except murals would have benefitted from further publication of the discoveries from that site. Unfortunate too, is the fact that Plumley's contribution in the work under review contains mistakes which affect the readers's interpretation of the history of the site. The mosque, for instance, represents the final phase of the occupation of the cathedral and was separated from the floor of the latter by an average of 1.50 m. of occupation earth which included at least three levels of domestic occupation (See Freund, *Akten*, p. 533-4). It would be unwise to date it as early as the 16th century and thereby indicate that the cathedral was almost at once converted by the Bosnians into a mosque (p. 130). Similarly, the statement

that until then there was no "intensive occupation of the fortress area" needs modification (p. 129). One of the main features of the site is the apparent alternation between wholly religious and mixed religious and secular settlement. The crowded Meroitic dwellings with their wall paintings on the north side of the church and the X-group houses on the south side provide evidence for the latter type, while from the 11th century Christian houses covered the whole area of the great forecourt of the Meroitic temple before these gave way probably in the 14th century to a watch-tower and magazines.

Nubian archaeology is a continuing saga. Like the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Nubian discoveries could hardly have been exploited so fully but for the foundations laid by the patient, piecemeal work of previous generations of scholars. Without Monneret de Villard, without Emery and Kirwan's excavation of the Royal Tombs at Q'stul and Ballana, and above all the work of the Sudan Antiquities Service up to 1956, the present generation of researchers would have lacked essential guides for their endeavours. The outlining of Nubian social structures, religion, language, church, pottery types had, however, become established by them and the vast international undertaking resulting in the exploration of scores of sites could build its results on sure foundations. This debt needs always to be acknowledged. Professor Dinkler's masterly publication, however, marks a new stage in the study of Christian Nubia. Its inspiration points the way forward to even greater discoveries in the future.

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André-Jean Festugière: *Vie de Théodore de Sykéôn*. I: Texte grec; II: Traduction, Commentaire et Appendice (= *Subsidia Hagiographica*, No. 48). Brüssel (Société des Bollandistes) 1970. Bd. 1: XXXVI, 171 S., Bd. 2: 312 S., kart.

Nach der Ausgabe der *Vita Symeons des Styliten des Jüngeren* von P. van den Ven (Subs. hag. 32, I 1962, II 1970; vgl. *Byz. Z.* 56 [1963] 348–350 und 65 [1971] 90–92 liegt hier ein weiteres vormetaphrastisches Heiligenleben aus der 1. Hälfte des 7. Jh. in einer Ausgabe vor, die sich nach Anlage und Durchführung ebenfalls kaum übertreffen läßt. Auch für diese *Vita* gilt dasselbe, was schon zur *Stylitenvita* gesagt wurde, daß alle Vorarbeiten, die in BHG 1957, Nr. 1748 genannt werden, durch das vorliegende Werk so weit überholt werden, daß man praktisch von einer *editio princeps* reden muß.

Wollte man bisher das religiöse Klima dieser Zeit studieren, die sich, von den dogmatischen Streitigkeiten ermüdet, den Werken der praktischen Frömmigkeit zugewandt hatte, dann war man – nicht nur in Seminarübungen – auf H. Gelzers Ausgabe „*Leontios von Neapolis, Leben des heiligen Johannes des Barmherzigen, Erzbischofs von Alexandrien*“, Freiburg-Leipzig 1893, angewiesen, die in ihrer Anlage (Einleitung, krit. Text, kommentierende Anmerkungen, Schriftstellen-, Namens- und Wörterverzeichnis, Grammatisches) bereits weitgehend dieselben Ansprüche zu erfüllen versuchte wie diese *Viten*, die darüber hinaus noch französische Übersetzungen bieten. Die *Vita* des heiligen Narren Symeon von demselben Leontios von Neapolis wurde erst in den letzten Jahren in einer vorzüglichen Ausgabe erschlossen: L. Rydén, Stockholm-Göteborg-Uppsala 1963 und 1970.

Der dogmengeschichtlich interessierte Leser wird hier freilich wenig finden, was er ernst nehmen könnte, denn diese Zeit hat ähnlich wie die unsere auch die Dogmatik nicht mehr ganz ernst genommen. Was man jedoch unabhängig vom eigenen Standpunkt an diesen frühbyzantinischen Heiligenleben ernst nehmen muß, sind die vielfältigen Erkenntnisse, die sich daraus für die historische Geographie und Medizin und die Volkskunde dieser Zeit gewinnen lassen. Hier werden oft Orte, Wege, Krankheiten und andere Dinge erwähnt oder in Exkursen ausführlich beschrieben, die ein ernstzunehmender Autor schon damals übergang, weil sie ihm nicht „fein“ genug und außerdem seinen Zeitgenossen so gut vertraut waren, daß man davon nicht reden mochte. Solche Stellen zum Reden zu bringen und in größere Zusammen-