

# The winter seasons of 2013 and 2014 in the Ghazali monastery

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**Abstract:** The article reports on archaeological and conservation work carried out by the expedition of the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology University of Warsaw in cooperation with the Sudanese National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums in two consecutive seasons in the winter of 2013 and 2014. The excavations focused on the southeastern part of the site. They led to the discovery of a second monastic church (South Church) adjoining the church (North Church) known from Peter Shinnie's work at the site, as well as a sanitary complex consisting of latrines and associated rooms located along the east wall of the monastery. Building material from the South Church, textual and pottery finds recovered during the two seasons, as well as conservation of the wall plaster preserved in the North Church are reported in this article.

**Keywords:** medieval Nubia, Makuria, Ghazali, Christianity, monastery, inscriptions, pottery, conservation, building materials, King Basil of Makuria, St Onnophrios, ecclesiastical architecture

The present report covers two seasons of work by the joint Polish–Sudanese Ghazali Archaeological Site Presentation Project, carried out under the auspices of the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology University of Warsaw. Archaeological exploration at the site resulted in the

discovery of a new church and a complex of latrines. Building materials used in the new church were examined. Conservation measures were applied in order to protect the wall plastering of the main church. The report also includes brief descriptions of the textual and pottery finds.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

In 2013, to improve the tourist itineraries at the site, stone debris dumped by earlier excavators inside the monastery, to the south and east of the North

Church, was removed. According to Peter Shinnie's sketch plan, ruins of sun-dried brick structures were to be expected there (Shinnie and Chittick 1961: 11).

Sandstone ashlars and pieces of shattered granite columns were scattered in the area directly east of the southern entrance to the North Church. Windblown sand formed the topsoil here, concealing a meter-thick shapeless mass of sun-dried brick rubble which spread over the whole area. The mud had become tightly packed due to water absorption, making the excavation of such a mass quite a novel thing in the Bayuda desert.

The excavations revealed remains of a church built almost entirely of sun-dried bricks. The South Church [*Fig. 1*], as it was designated to distinguish it from the main church of the monastery, now consequently referred to as the North Church, abuts the southern wall of the latter building. It is an almost equilateral trapezoid, 14.90 m long on the north side, 14.72 m on the south side and 6.46 m and 8.95 m along the west and east sides respectively. The outer sun-dried brick walls (for dimensions, see below) are 0.70 m thick. Four massive pillars were

constructed in place of the intended north wall; they were attached to the southern face of the south wall of the older church. These pillars measured (from west to east): the L-shaped pillar, comprising the northern part of the west wall of the church: 1.10 m (E–W axis) by 1.45 m (N–S axis); the second one (T-shaped): 2.10 m (E–W axis) by 1.12–1.26 m (N–S axis); the third: 1.60 m (E–W axis) by 0.80 m (N–S axis); and the last one (also T-shaped), separating the naos from the NE Room, 1.74 m (E–W axis) by 1.30–1.41 m (N–S axis). As for the spans between the pillars, they were unequal and measured (in the above order): 2.17 m, 1.63 m, 1.67 m and 2.20 m in length, respectively. The other walls of the South Church were also built of sun-dried brick. They were heavily damaged by rainfall long before being excavated.

Three entrances led into the church: one in the south wall, giving access directly to the naos, and two in the west wall of the building [*Fig. 2*]. The south entrance was 1.10 m wide on the outside, broadening

#### Team

*Dates of work:* 10 January–21 February 2013; 7 January–31 March 2014

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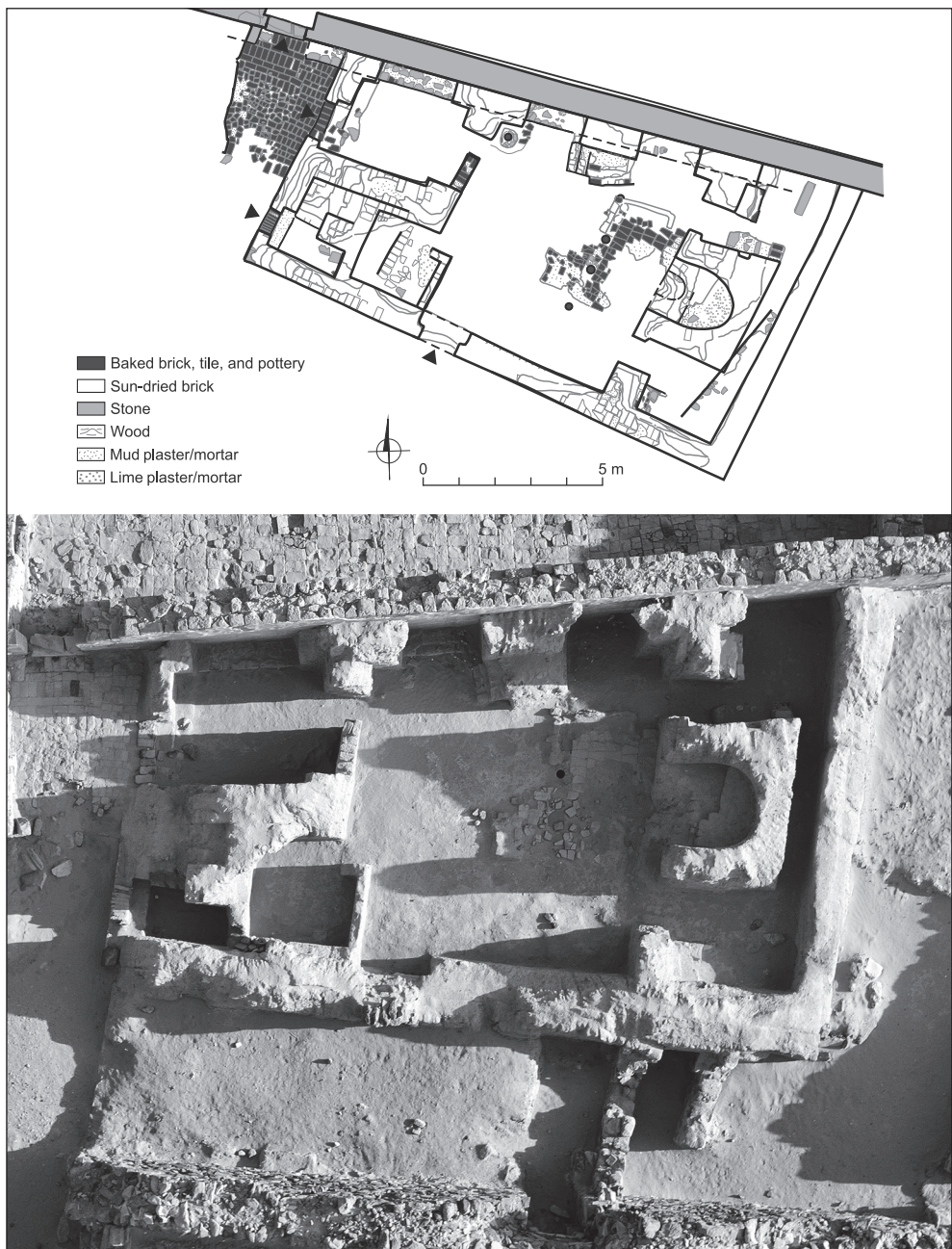
*Ceramologist:* Małgorzata Korzeniowska (2014; National Museum in Warsaw)

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*Fig. 1. South Church: plan and aerial view  
(G.A.S.P. Project/plan S. Maslak; photo M. Bogacki)*



to 1.47 m on the inside, which indicates that the door must have been locked from the inside. The southwestern entrance opened into a staircase (SW Room) which led in turn to the roof of the church. Like the south entrance, it was wider inside (1.14 m), and much narrower on the outside (0.66 m). The stairs started directly to the north of the entrance, mounted north and then turned east. The width of each step was 0.80 m. The second entrance from the west opened into the northwestern room of the church (NW Room). It broadened from 1.09 m to 1.43 m, like the south and southwestern entrances. The NW Room measured 2.98 m (N–S axis) by 3.14 m (E–W axis). Two pillars formed the northern corners of this room.

The northwestern pillar originally was a cuboid with its longer side abutting the south wall of the North Church. The next pillar to the east comprised the northern jamb of an open passage, 1.65 m wide, between the NW Room and the naos of the church. A thin partition wall of baked brick, which later separated the NW Room from the naos, reduced the width of this passage to 0.60 m. Another room was cut from the naos area to the east of the SW Room (staircase). Only in this shape did the South Church meet the acknowledged standards of Makurian ecclesiastical architecture based on the tripartite division of the western part of the church. This new room was separated from the naos by a partition wall of sun-dried brick.



*Fig. 2. South Church: view from the west with the wall with two entrances in the foreground (G.A.S.P. Project/photo A. Obluski)*



The wall was 1.66 m long (N–S axis). The passage at its northern end was 0.46 m wide. The room was almost square in plan, measuring 2.09 m (N–S axis) by 2.12 m (E–W axis).

Showing no division into three separate spaces, the naos appeared to be unorthodox for Makurian architecture. It was 6.57 m wide on the west side and 7.40 m on the east side, while its E–W axis reached 6.08 m in length. A three-stepped ambo abutted the southern face of the third pillar (from the west). The ambo was 0.79 m (N–S axis) wide and 1.84 m (E–W axis) long. Further to the southeast there were the remains of a wall, the thickness of which was one brick width, separating the naos from the *hierateion*. A narrow, 0.47 m wide, passage was left between this unit and the northwestern corner of the apse. The distance between this thin wall and the ambo was just 0.33 m and thus the passage there seemed to be impractical and for occasional use alone. The communication with the NE Room of the church was possible through a passage (corridor) behind the apse. A ceramic pipe fragment in the northwestern corner of the naos served as a stand for a holy water font.

The *hierateion* measured 2.22 m (E–W) by approximately 3.70 m (N–S) [Fig. 3]. It comprised an area set off from the eastern part of the naos and included also the apse. At first, it was separated from the naos by a wooden screen, fixed to vertical wooden posts socketed in pots sunk in the floor; then it was replaced with the above mentioned thin partition wall of sun-dried brick. The floor of the *hierateion* was paved with trapezoidal ceramic tiles (for dimensions, see below). The apse, 1.63 m wide at its opening and 2.13 m deep, was

filled with a poorly preserved *synthronon* of sun-dried brick. The floor immediately in front of the apse was severely destroyed. The altar also was not preserved.

The apse was flanked to the south and north by two auxiliary rooms. The NE Room was entered from the west by a 0.90 m wide passage and from the southeast through a corridor behind the apse [Fig. 4], yet another typical Makurian church feature. The room itself was 2.40 m (N–S) and 2.53 m (E–W) in size. A structure with a flat top was preserved against the east face of the pillar in the northwestern corner of the room. It was constructed of stones and brick, both baked and sun-dried, bonded in mud mortar. There was also a small shallow niche in the south wall of the room, 0.31 m wide and 0.14 m deep. At the bottom of the east end of the said south wall were the remains of a structure of baked brick, likely a bench. The passage behind the apse, connecting the NE Room with the SE one, was 0.66 m wide. The SE Room was also accessible via a passage, 0.83 m wide, placed in its northwestern corner. The room was 1.94 m (N–S) wide and 2.37 m (E–W) long. Fragments of a structure of unknown function survived against the south wall. It was built of stones bonded in mud mortar.

With regard to the South Church, its most intriguing aspect is the roofing. The maximum width of the church (6.13 m) is too long to be spanned with a simple timber roof. An almost square (6.08 m by 6.13 m) naos may have been domed similarly to the church at Kulb (Deichmann and Grossmann 1988: 47–53) [Fig. 5]. A huge stone, possibly supporting such a dome over the naos, was found in the NE Room.



*Fig. 3. Hierateion in the South Church, view from the west  
(G.A.S.P. Project/photo A. Obluski)*



*Fig. 4. Hierateion in the South Church, looking north  
(G.A.S.P. Project/photo A. Obluski)*

Several organic samples retrieved at the foundation level of the South Church, as well as those from the uppermost occupation layer from the passage between the South Church and the south outer wall of the monastery, were collected for radiocarbon dating analysis. The walls of the South Church were built on a leveled layer of crushed baked brick and lime plaster fragments originating from the upper parts of the walls of the North Church. These walls must have been altered when the new roofing over the North Church was introduced.

As for the dating of the monastery, the first radiocarbon dating results point to the late 7th century as the time of construction. The date of the latest C<sup>14</sup> sample, obtained from the uppermost occupation layers at Ghazali, was in the third quarter of the 13th century. Thus, the monastery of Ghazali was in use for over 600 years, from the late 7th to the late 13th century.

A passage between the South Church and the southern outer wall of the

monastery was also excavated in the 2013 season. Arches were traced against the faces of the longer walls. Remains of a water draining installation were found against the said southern outer wall. Two courtyards were identified in the southeastern corner of the monastery. Room 2, which served as a latrine, was entered from the eastern one of the courtyards (Room 1). The facility consisted of a toilet seat on an elevated platform with steps to access it. The sewage channel ran along the west face of the eastern monastic wall.

In 2014, the poorly preserved central part of the monastery was cleared in its entirety, removing several piles of stones and other debris dumped there during excavations in the 1950s. An area of approximately 400 m<sup>2</sup> was opened thus for excavation. The eastern part of this area was examined, further work being postponed to another season due to a scarcity of funds in 2014. Access to the walls of the North Church was ensured in order for the restoration team to conclude its work on protection of the wall plastering.

Excavations in the worst preserved part of the monastery, next to the eastern outer wall, revealed a row of latrines aligned with the wall [Fig. 6]. The whole complex, 14.44 m long, included about ten separate latrines. Some six of them, comprising the southern part of the complex, are believed to be the oldest. Room 8 further to the south of this complex had a floor coated with hydraulic plaster. The interconnected Rooms 3, 5 and 8 may have functioned as a bathing complex. A new set of four latrines, added to the older southern part of the latrine complex, was bordered to the north by another complex, presumably for bathing (Rooms 18–21); it occupied

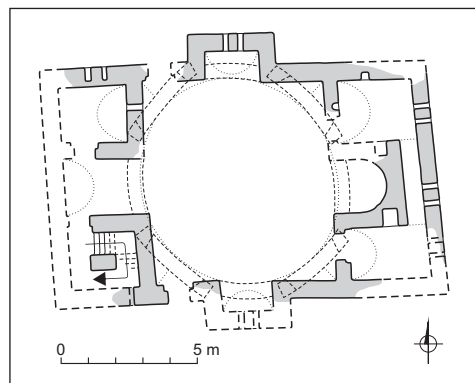


Fig. 5. Plan of the church at Kulb for comparison of roofing strategies (Drawing S. Mašlak after Deichmann and Grossmann 1988: Fig. 25)



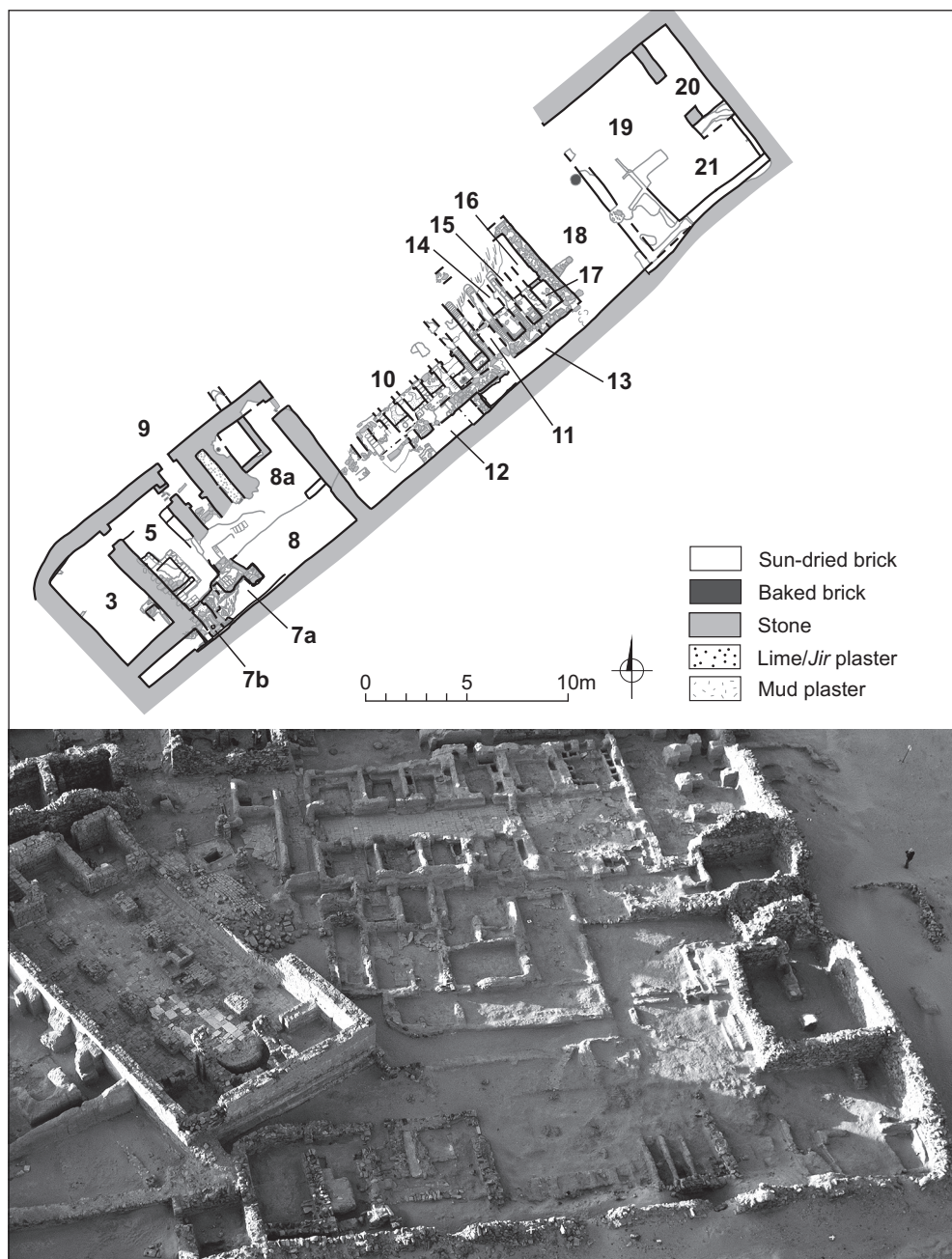


Fig. 6. Latrines by the east outer wall of the monastery: top, plan; bottom, aerial view from the east, row of latrines in the foreground, North Church at left (G.A.S.P. Project/plan S. Maślak; photo M. Bogacki)

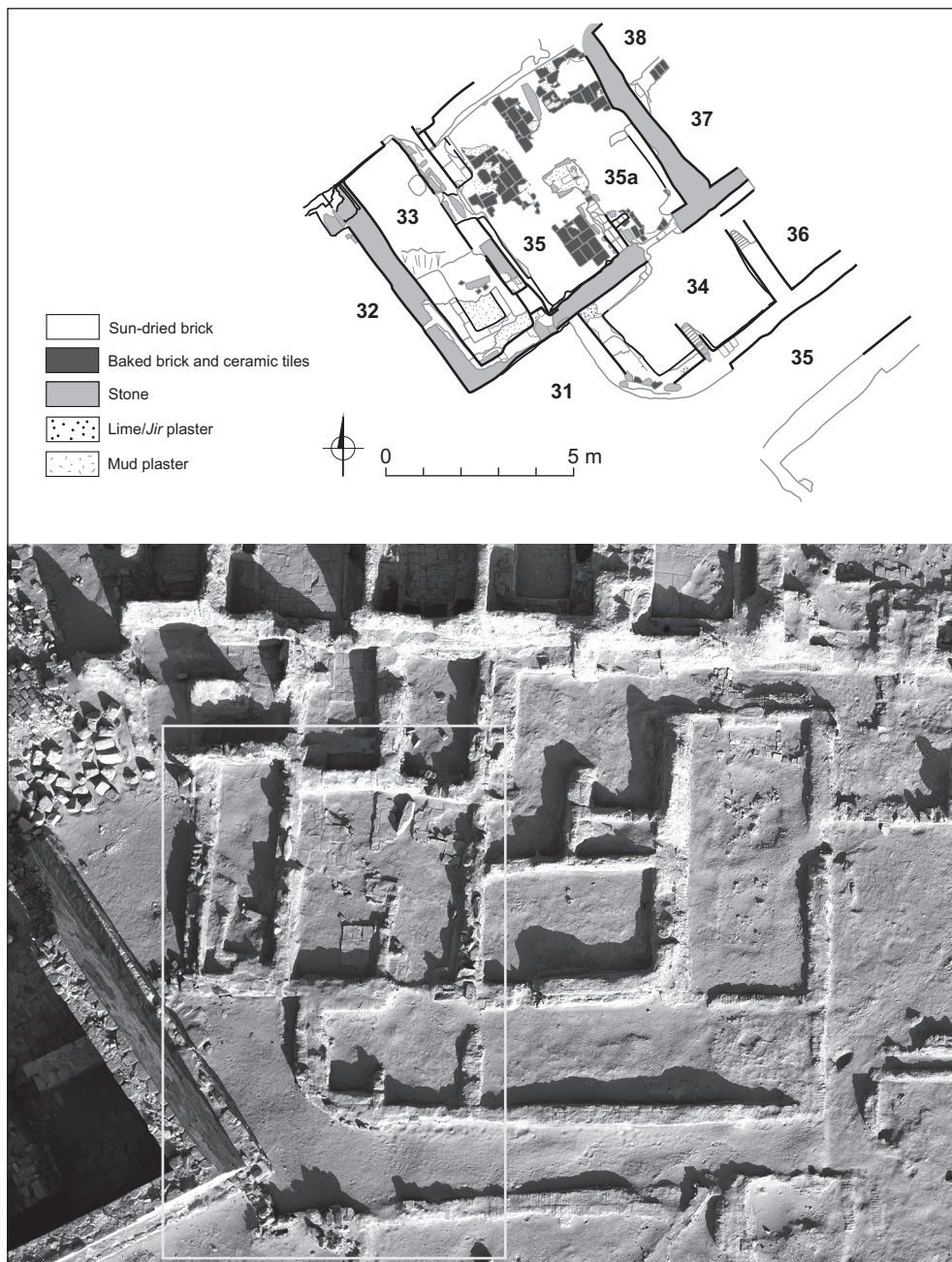


Fig. 7. Rooms located directly to the north of the North Church: top, plan; bottom, aerial view, South Church at left (G.A.S.P. Project/plan S. Mašlak; photo M. Bogacki)

the entire northeastern corner of the monastery precinct.

Each latrine, approximately 1.50 m long, occupied the eastern end of an elongated room, which was about 7.80 m long and 0.80 m wide, and was entered from the west. A doorway with a threshold and lateral jambs set off each cubicle, which had a kind of raised platform at the eastern end, equipped with sanitary installations, of which only fragmentary pipes and some other ceramic parts have survived.

The area alongside the eastern outer wall of the monastery and in the southeastern corner of the precinct was severely denuded. The recorded archaeological remains consist mostly of the lowest brick courses, excluding any possibility of reconstructing the theoretical height of the walls. However, since these walls were mostly one brick-length thick, it is unlikely that they were more than 3 m high.

In one of the very last phases of the monastic community existence at Ghazali, three new latrines were added to Rooms 5 and 8 on their eastern sides. They were constructed right above a sewage channel running along the western face of the outer eastern wall of the monastery from Room 2 northward to Room 17.

A group of seven rooms with walls of sun-dried brick was uncovered in the area directly to the north of the North Church [*Fig. 7*]. The orientation of these walls followed that of the buildings in the northern part of the monastery. The newly discovered walls were poorly preserved, none higher than 0.75 m above floor level at present. The rooms were interconnected and bore evidence of at least two phases of construction and occupation. These rooms probably mark one of the latest phases of occupation of the monastery since they were added to the monastic dormitory and overbuilt the monastic northern courtyard.

## BUILDING MATERIALS FROM THE SOUTH CHURCH

Unlike the North Church, the South Church was built almost completely of sun-dried brick.

The central pillar of the staircase, the steps and the south wall of the church were constructed of light gray-beige sun-dried brick (36–37 cm x 18–19 cm x 6.0–6.5 cm) containing substantial amounts of sand and chaff. The dimensions of sun-dried bricks from other parts of the church cannot be determined for the most part owing to their poor state of preservation. The walls of the apse were built of light gray-beige bricks with gravel, fine sand and a huge amount of chaff present in the matrix. These bricks were 6 cm thick, wider

than 17 cm, and longer than 35 cm. The east wall of the church was constructed of bricks of the same thickness (6 cm) and with the same inclusions (gravel, chaff). Bricks from other structures inside the church (e.g., the arcades) are of the same color and composition. The sun-dried brick from a thin partition wall separating the nave from the small room east of the staircase was made of light gray-beige clay with extensive sand and gravel but no chaff. Although the partition wall was certainly later than the rest of the church, the bricks hardly differ in size (32.5 cm x unknown width x 6.5 cm; 35–36 cm x unknown width x 7.0–7.5 cm).



The contours of the sun-dried bricks in walls abutting the South Church to the south are very blurred, the only exception being a fragment of wall at the southeastern outer corner of the Church. Here the bricks were 33(?) cm x 18 cm x 7.5–8.0 cm, and were made of light gray-beige clay mixed with substantial amounts of small gravel and lime(?) as indicated by the numerous white particles in the matrix. Some chaff and a few potsherds were added as well.

The structures made of baked brick did not belong to the original building phase of the South Church. The threshold in the entrance to the staircase from the west consisted of baked bricks of uniform size (35.0–36.5 cm x 15–18 cm x 6–7 cm, except for one example: 33 cm x 16 cm x 7–8 cm). They were fired red and dark red-purple. Imperfect in shape (or damaged in the firing process), they contained much chaff as suggested by the numerous cracks and voids left by the burnt-off vegetal component.

Baked bricks in the threshold of the western entrance to the northwestern room (NW Room) of the church were fired dark red-purple with edges and/or parts of surfaces vitrified to black. Like the bricks mentioned above, these bricks were also roughly shaped, displaying multiple cracks and voids left by the burnt-off vegetal component. Dimensions vary between 31 cm and 35.5 cm in length, 15.5 cm and 17 cm in width, and 5–7 cm in thickness. One brick, measuring 33 cm x 16 cm x 6.0–6.5 cm, appears to be the product of another workshop, being light red-whitish in color, well-shaped with no cracks and voids, with an extensive sand and small-gravel filler. Two types of bricks, i.e., well-shaped sandy bricks (31–33 cm x 15 cm x 6.5–7.0 cm) and roughly made

ones with vitrified edges (32–34 cm x 15.5–16.5 cm x 7–8 cm) were also used in a thin partition wall separating the NW Room from the nave, suggesting the same time horizon for the construction of both the threshold and the partition wall. All these bricks were certainly reused. They may have come from two different structures.

In the ambo, both types were in use: purple-gray with vitrified parts and chaff component (34.5 cm x 15 cm x 7 cm) and the sandy type (33 cm x more than 15 cm x 6.5–7.0 cm). An unidentified structure abutting the easternmost pillar was built of various baked bricks (e.g., 33 cm x 16.5 cm x 7.5–8.0 cm with traces of lime mortar; 32 cm x 17 cm x 6 cm; 33 cm x 16.5 cm x 6 cm).

Ceramic pots were sunk into the floor to serve as sockets for the beams probably carrying a wooden screen separating the nave from the *hierateion*. Only one of these remained complete. As the diameter of its inner rim was 18.5 cm, a beam of this size should be expected here. The pot had a depth of 0.34 m. The *hierateion* floor was paved with trapezoidal ceramic tiles. They were fired dark red-purple and were heavy with chaff. All the tiles were of uniform size, being 3–4 cm thick, 20.5–22.0 cm wide at one edge and 11.5–12.0 cm at the other, and 33.5–34.5 cm long.

The pavement in front of the south entrance to the North Church and the west entrance to the South Church demonstrates a diversity of baked brick/tile sizes. In its northwestern corner, two types of bricks were found. The first one included bricks fired dark red-purple with black vitrified edges, displaying multiple cracks and voids left by burnt-off chaff (30.5–31.0 cm x 16–17 cm x 7 cm; 32 cm x 13–

14 cm x 6.5 cm). Bricks of the other type were fired red, well-shaped, with chaff and coarse gravel, and a very micaceous matrix (32–33 cm x 15.5–17.0 cm x 6 cm). Tiles similar in quality to the second type were laid in front of the entrance to the South Church. They were fired red, sometimes smoked (but not vitrified), well-shaped, with extensive amounts of sand and gravel (28 cm x 14.5 cm x unknown thickness; 22.5–23.0 cm x 13–14 cm x 4 cm). The southwestern part of the pavement was made of fragmented baked brick of coarser type. Some baked bricks, both full-sized and broken, bore traces of light gray lime mortar, which should be considered as remains of a pavement coating.

Wall faces inside the church were neatly coated with hard plaster made of light gray-beige clay with much sand but no visible addition of lime. The plastered wall surfaces were whitewashed. The bricks making the floor were treated with equal

care; in a small room between the staircase and the nave, they were coated with a thin layer of light gray-beige clay, which was whitewashed as well.

The bricks in the South Church, both sun-dried and baked, were mortared in light gray-beige clay with much sand. Potsherds and pebbles were occasionally inserted into the joints.

Sandstone ashlar (about 0.25 m high) formed a foundation below the west wall of the South Church; they were likely brought from the dismantled sections of the North Church. A similar stone block, visible in the western face of the apse, may have come from the same demolition.

Wooden elements have survived purely by chance. Among them there is a wooden beam (palm?), replacing partly a course of bricks at the bottom of the northern face of the south church wall.

## CONSERVATION

The restoration of the main church of the monastery was prioritized in the 2014 season. Activities were rudimentary but extensive, aimed at consolidating fragile wall plastering of the North Church with numerous graffiti on it. Benches around the building, as well as traces of wall paintings inside it, were restored as well. The results were more than satisfactory at this stage, but for full protection it is necessary still to reconstruct in part the tops of the church walls and cap them with waterproof mortar. The joints between the stones should be filled with such mortar as well. Intervention is needed on the pavement of the church.

Thin layers of mud and dust were removed from the plastering using clean

water, soft sponges and brushes. In the case of persistent dirt, 2% CONTRAD 2000 for regular dirt, and a 20% ammonium carbonate solution in water for salt or gypsum re-crystallization were used with a 30% ethanol solution or pure ethanol and acetone (Calaforra-Rzepka 2014). Plaster consolidation was accomplished in three different ways depending on the state of degradation. In the case of weak surfaces, the first step after cleaning was to impregnate them with lime water applied with sprayers or brushes. Some of the borders needed consolidation with a 10% PRIMAL AC-33 solution in water and ethanol. To facilitate resin penetration the edges were soaked with a 30% ethanol solution in water before conso-

lidation. The powdery mortar was consolidated with a 5% solution of lime casein in water receded by the use of a 30% ethanol solution. This procedure was repeated several times depending on the disintegration of the mortar. Hollows in between the plaster and the construction support were filled with PRIMAL AC-33 (1:5 in water), LEDAN TB1 (1:2 in water) injections or with liquid lime mortar. The detached edges and some gaps

were filled with lime mortar modified with white cement. Two recipes were used depending on the nature of the original material: 1. Slaked lime, white cement, sand (1:1:4); 2. Slaked lime, white cement, calcium carbonate, sand (1:1:1:4). Powdery whitewash was consolidated with lime water adding a 30% ethanol solution. Flaking or powdered paint layers were consolidated with a 5% ammonium casein solution.

## EPIGRAPHIC RESEARCH

Epigraphic research constituted an integral part of the mission's activities in the 2013 and 2014 seasons. Several inscriptions had been discovered already in 2012 (for a preliminary assessment, see Ochała in Obluski et al. 2015: 439–440), yet the abundance of epigraphic finds during the subsequent campaigns came as a surprise, confirming the site's great research potential.

The Ghazali epigraphic record from the 2013 and 2014 excavations can be divided into three general categories: wall inscriptions, funerary stelae, and inscriptions on pottery. Finds from each category were documented on site and studied.

Numerous wall inscriptions (graffiti) and drawings incised on the walls of the monastic church (North Church) were already noted by Peter Shinnie and Neville Chittick in the 1950s, but no documentation or even description was produced at that time (Shinnie and Chittick 1961: 10). One possible reason for this is that the inscriptions are extremely difficult to study. They were executed in a material that is quite hard to write upon, namely the lime plaster lining the walls of the building. This resulted in relatively

shallow incisions, visible only at certain hours of the day when the sun falls at a certain angle or with the help of a strong side light. Moreover, the plaster is poorly preserved; it is heavily eroded and covered with numerous cuts, apparently executed intentionally, which makes it difficult to distinguish letters from accidental shapes [Fig. 8]. Recording and a preliminary study of the graffiti were carried out in the 2013 season. The conservation work undertaken during the next campaign, which included cleaning the plaster on the outer façade of the North Church, may reveal further, so far unnoticed texts, which, however, will not be known until the next season.

All of the inscriptions documented in 2013 were found on the outer façade of the church, where the lime plaster was extensively preserved. One can imagine that the walls inside the church were also covered with inscriptions, but only small portions of the plaster there have survived. Only one poorly preserved and unidentifiable inscription was discovered on the east wall of the passage behind the apse. In total, 87 graffiti were identified, of which 47 are located on the west wall, 29 on the south, and five on the north



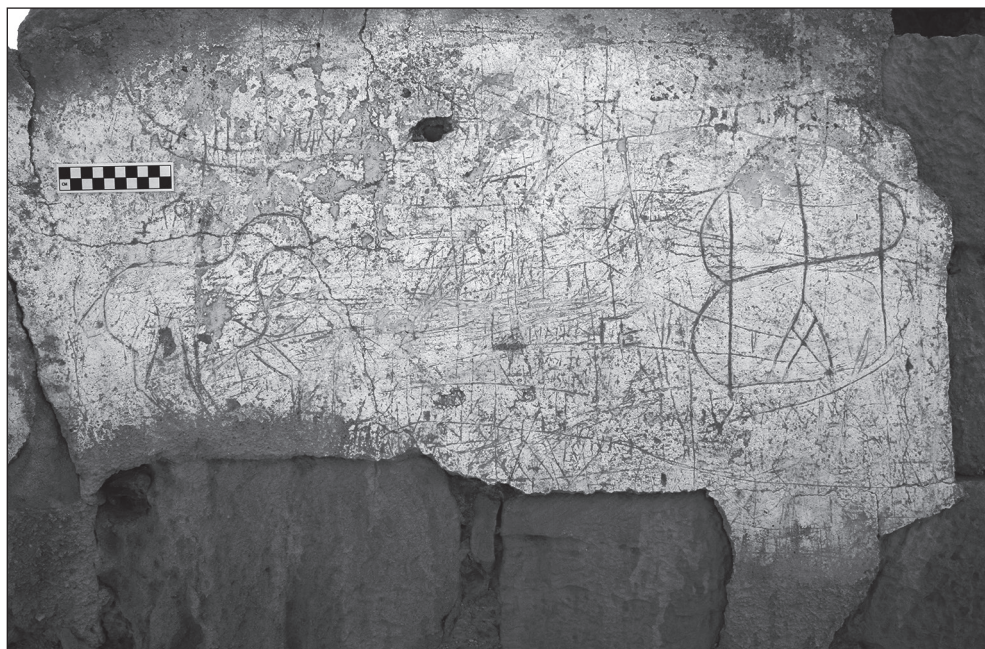


Fig. 8. Fragment of the outer façade of the west wall of the North Church before conservation  
(G.A.S.P. Project/photo G. Ochala)



Fig. 9. Inscription of Iakob, deacon, son of King Basil (GN.II.01)  
(G.A.S.P. Project/photo G. Ochala)

one; to this one should add six inscriptions found on loose stone blocks apparently from the north wall. Differences in the number of inscriptions on particular walls undoubtedly result from the state of preservation of these walls (e.g., the north wall is completely dismantled in its central and western parts) and/or their accessibility.

As said above, the state of preservation of plaster seriously hinders the identification of most of the inscriptions: it is impossible to recognize the character of the texts, not to say their language. In 38 cases, it was possible to decipher the text, permitting a preliminary classification of the graffiti. The inscriptions can be divided into the following categories:

- sacred names, including those of Jesus Christ, Mary, archangels, and St Onnophrios (18 examples),
- visitors' inscriptions (15 examples),
- acclamations and invocations (four examples),
- liturgical prayer (one example).

The above should be supplemented with eight instances of monograms, so far undeciphered, which may be names of saints or laymen.

The most interesting texts identified so far are the prayer *Agnus Dei* in Greek (Inv. No. GS.21), preserved on the south wall of the church (see also Obluski and Ochala 2016: 72, Fig. 5), and the inscription left by a certain Iakob, deacon, son of King Basil (GN.II.01) [Fig. 9], discovered on a loose stone block, most

probably originally from the north wall (see also Obluski and Ochala 2016: 74, 76). The content of these inscriptions, interesting as it is (the former is the only example of *Agnus Dei* known from Nubia and the latter contains a rare mention of a royal family member), is not their only point of interest. It is prospects of a more precise dating that make them so attractive. Among the Ghazali epigraphic sources, most notably the wall inscriptions, they are the only ones the date of which can be established beyond a broad dating of the existence of the whole monastic complex to the 7th–13th century. The ending of the *Agnus Dei* prayer was originally covered by a massive pilaster in the north aisle of the South Church. This means that the inscription was executed before the secondary church was erected some time in the 10th century. And Iakob's inscription can be dated by the mention of the king's name: two reigning Basils are known in the history of Makuria, one from the 11th century and the other from the turn of the 12th century.<sup>1</sup> It is impossible, of course, to assert which of the two Basils is meant, as this would require more circumstantial evidence, but we know at least that the inscription cannot be earlier than the 11th century.

Among the wholly legible and comprehensible graffiti one should mention a list of archangels accompanied by a cross on a stand inscribed with the initials of the Four Living Creatures (north wall, GN.03) (Obluski and Ochala 2016: 73–74, Fig. 6) and an inscription consisting

<sup>1</sup> The former is attested only in the *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*, the latter in several legal documents from Qasr Ibrim and Nauri (Obluski and Ochala 2016 followed an old opinion that the document from Nauri should be dated to the 11th century, but recent research by Bartosz Wojciechowski [personal communication] has shown that the king at stake in Nauri and Qasr Ibrim is the same one who reigned at the end of the 12th and beginning of 13th century; see now Ochala forthcoming).

of the name of Archangel Ourouel repeated four times, arranged in the form of a cross, with the first letter of the name being the central point of the cross (west wall, GW.47) (Obluski and Ochala 2016: 74).

Funerary stelae are quite easy to study on the whole. Even though most of them are preserved in tiny fragments, it is quite often possible to recognize their language (Greek or Coptic) or even the funerary formula employed. The Polish excavations have added 20 specimens<sup>2</sup> to the 135 monuments of this kind discovered at or attributed to Ghazali (see Obluski and Ochala 2016: 69, for bibliography). All those, discovered by the Polish mission, come from secondary contexts; some of them were apparently reused for various repair works in the monastery, for example in the pavement of the church or in the east wall of the entire complex. Numerous small fragments were found in the fill of the South Church as well as in other monastic rooms, indicating that they were used as debris to fill in the empty space between the vault and the floor above.

Among the Ghazali stelae uncovered so far by the Polish mission there are 13 terracotta ones and eight made of sandstone. Their language is either Coptic, found in 11 cases, or Greek identified in three cases; seven pieces are too fragmentary for the language to be recognized.<sup>3</sup>

Several discoveries in this category deserve mention here. The best preserved examples of funerary stelae found so far by the Polish mission in Ghazali are two almost complete sandstone slabs, both inscribed in Coptic and found near the east monastic wall. They were apparently reused for repairing this section of the wall and because of that the texts are quite worn out and illegible in some places. Fortunately, since the crucial parts of the inscriptions have survived, it is possible to learn that each of them commemorates the death of a monk: 'o[ur brother Io]hannes, the monk' (G.13.057) [*Fig. 10*] and 'our blessed brother [---]' (G.13.038) (see Obluski and Ochala 2016: 70, Fig. 4 [G.13.038], for a more detailed description).

A fragmentary sandstone funerary stela discovered in the fill of the South Church (G.13.013+014+015) is worth mentioning here not because of its content, but because it most probably complements the fragment found by Shinnie and Chittick in the 1950s 'outside monastery to north' (Shinnie and Chittick 1961: 85, No. 56).<sup>4</sup> The two pieces form the bottom part of an epitaph with the Coptic formula  $\text{ⲉⲩⲉⲱⲛⲉ ⲉⲩⲉⲱⲛⲉ}$ , 'amen, may it happen, may it happen'. Two other fragments come from the upper part of the stone and cannot be matched either with the bottom part or with each other. They are ascribed to the

<sup>2</sup> The actual number of fragments found by the Polish mission is 21, but three pieces (G.13.013+014+015) most probably belong to the same stela as a fragment found by Shinnie and Chittick (1961: 85 [No. 56]) and republished by Van der Vliet 2003: No. 50. The number includes three stelae found in 2012, for which see Ochala in Obluski et al. 2015: 439–440.

<sup>3</sup> The linguistic situation at Ghazali, with a surprisingly strong position of Coptic, has been a matter of debate since the beginning of the 20th century (see Junker 1925: 145–146; Shinnie 1974: 44; van der Vliet 2003: 104). For the most recent analysis on the grounds of new discoveries, see Ochala 2016: 1273–1283.

<sup>4</sup> The fragment is now stored in the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum (Inv. No. SNM 11272) and was republished by Jacques van der Vliet (2003: No. 50).





*Fig. 10. Epitaph of Ioannes, monk (G.13.057)  
(G.A.S.P. Project/photo G. Ochala)*

same object on account of the color of the material as well as the thickness of the slab (7.0–7.5 cm).<sup>5</sup> The stela should be counted among the most popular type of epitaphs from Ghazali, the ones opening with the ‘Through the providence of God’ formula, attested in both Coptic and Greek.<sup>6</sup> This discovery clearly demonstrates the extensive disturbance of archaeological contexts in Ghazali,<sup>7</sup> simultaneously giving hope for more correlations between old finds and new finds in the future.

The final category to be presented here, inscriptions on pottery, is by far the most abundant among the epigraphic finds from Ghazali. In the 2013 and 2014 seasons, the total number of vessels with traces of writing on them was 307 (for an overview

of material from the 2013 season, see Obluski and Ochała 2016: 76, Fig. 7). They supplement the 136 already known examples (published in Monneret de Villard 1935: 256, Fig. 232.1–7; Shinnie and Chittick 1961: 64, 95–99, Figs 33–44; Lethmayer and Zach 1986: 141–143, Figs 1–16), making up the biggest, to the best of our knowledge, collection of this kind recognized from all of the Nile Valley. As the excavations have covered so far roughly a third of the monastery, one expects that the number of finds in this category in the following campaigns will be at least doubled, if not tripled.

The distribution of the finds in the excavated area is uneven: while most of the units yielded at least several inscribed fragments, only a handful of contexts contained a substantial number of such objects. The most abundant were: room 13 (30 pieces), rooms 4 and 18 (29 pieces each), the South Church (27 pieces), room 8 (20 pieces), room 20 (18 pieces), and rooms 19 and 22 (17 pieces each). This most probably results from the state

*Table 1. Percentage share of potsherds with inscriptions in the total count of pottery from the units*

Unit	Inscriptions on pottery	Diagnostic fragments total recorded	Percentage
13	30	204	15%
4	29	247	12%
18	29	391	7.5%
South Church	27	240	11%
8	20	331	6%
20	18	312	6%
19	17	324	5%
22	17	215	8%

*Table 2. Techniques of executing inscriptions on the pottery from Ghazali*

Technique	Fine ware	Coarse ware	Total
Scratched after firing	189	62	251
Painted	1?	26	27
Incised before firing	—	29	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>307</b>

<sup>5</sup> The recorded thickness of the fragment from the Khartoum museum is 9 cm, but it is assumed to be the maximum thickness recorded near the outer edge.

<sup>6</sup> For this type of epitaphs, see generally, van der Vliet 2011: 215–220. Our example is unusual in that the text apparently contains *ⲧⲉⲡⲣⲟⲛⲟⲓⲁ*, ‘providence’, in line 1, and *ⲧⲕⲉⲗⲉⲅⲓⲥ*, ‘command’, in line 2. While both nouns are interchangeable in this type of formula (‘through the providence/command of God’), they never occur side by side in the same text.

<sup>7</sup> This disturbance is most probably the effect of monks’ at work already in the Middle Ages, not modern (pseudo-) archaeological digging.

of preservation of the architecture in the eastern and central parts of the monastery: all these rooms, apart from the South Church, adjoin the eastern monastic wall and are therefore relatively well preserved. The rooms in the central part (31–49) are preserved only on the walking level or slightly above it, and as such they have yielded a small number of finds in general.

While the number of finds in this category is certainly high in absolute terms, it is still rather insignificant when compared with the overall number of pottery fragments unearthed in Ghazali. The 307 inscribed pieces constitute only 13.5% of the total number of 2,264 registered diagnostic fragments. The share of sherds with inscriptions in the total count from any given unit is shown in *Table 1*.

The contexts of these finds are largely, if not entirely, secondary (pottery sherds appear to have been used as filler in building construction) and it is not infrequent to find joining pieces of one vessel in two or more different rooms. Thus, tempting as it is, the inscribed pots cannot be used to tell us anything about the function of particular rooms and spaces. However, although the inscribed pieces of pottery have little archaeological value, they still can shed some light on the lifestyle of the

community. Naturally, nothing final can be said until the excavation is completed, but even so, some provisional conclusions with regard to the form and contents of the inscriptions can be reached.

Of the 307 pieces found by the Polish mission 190 were executed on fine ware (mostly bowls and plates), the remaining 117 on different types of coarse ware (bottles, amphorae, beer jars, storage jars). Three inscription techniques have been identified: scratching after firing, painting, and incising before firing. A rule of thumb is that inscriptions on fine ware are exclusively scratched after firing while those on coarse ware represent all three techniques. Scratching after firing is thus common to both categories of vessels, while painting and incising before firing have so far been attested only for coarse ware [*Table 2*].

As for contents, the inscriptions can be divided into three major categories:

- owners' inscriptions (112),<sup>8</sup>
- names of divine beings/saints (40),
- names (33).<sup>9</sup>

There is also one example of an acclamation in the form of the ⲙⲟⲣ trigram [*Fig. 11:a*].<sup>10</sup> The remaining 121 specimens have all been classified as unidentified due to either their fragmentary state of

<sup>8</sup> Tentatively included here are the actual signatures of owners of particular pots as well as inscriptions on coarse vessels, mainly amphorae and bottles, that could have served as addresses identifying the receivers of commodities transported in such vessels. A precise distinction between various functions of such texts will require a detailed study of the whole collection once the excavations have been completed.

<sup>9</sup> Meaning all names that could be equally of an individual as of a saint/divine being (like Raphael and Abraham), as well as undeciphered monograms, undoubtedly representing a proper name, but of unknown character.

<sup>10</sup> This is most probably a variant of the more common ⲙⲁⲩⲧ trigram, itself being a variant of the well-known Christian trigram ⲙⲁⲩⲧ. They both should most probably be understood as acronyms of Greek phrases Μ(αρία) Χ(ριστὸν) Γ(εννᾶ) and Χ(ριστὸν) Μ(αρία) Γ(εννᾶ), respectively, both meaning 'Mary begets Christ' (see Tsakos 2015 for a summary of scholarship, with literature, and a discussion of Nubian instances of ⲙⲁⲩⲧ). Provided that this interpretation is correct, the present example should be analyzed as an acronym standing for the phrase Μ(αρία) Θ(εὸν) Γ(εννᾶ), 'Mary begets God'. It seems that two more examples of this version of the trigram can be identified in the material gathered by Shinnie and Chittick (1961: Figs 34.27, 34.23). According to Adam Łajtar (personal communication), several instances of this trigram on pottery fragments were discovered also in the monastery on Kom H at Dongola.

preservation or difficulties in deciphering and/or interpreting their contents. The latter case is best represented by a group of inscriptions consisting of single letters of the Graeco-Coptic alphabet: an *alpha* (14 instances), a *theta* (seven instances), and a *djandja* (four instances). There are a few instances of two letters occurring jointly on one vessel: an *alpha* and a *theta* or a *theta* and a *djandja*. The meaning of these inscriptions escapes modern learning.

The most interesting in this collection are the owners' inscriptions because they provide some basic information about the residents of the monastery. We learn their names and occasionally their functions. The proper names on pots from Ghazali occur in three forms: in *scriptio plena*, as abbreviations (by suspension or contraction), and as monograms. The most popular name, attested so far in the material discovered by the Polish mission, Ioannes, is found in nine certain examples (abbreviated as  $\overline{\text{IOWY}}$  or as a monogram) and in 18 uncertain ones (abbreviated as  $\overline{\text{IOW}}$  or  $\overline{\text{IOWN}}$ , which can be interpreted as either Ioannes or Ionas). The second popular name is Baptistes with seven instances (abbreviated as  $\overline{\text{BAP}}$ ),<sup>11</sup> then Ekklesiastes (abbreviated as  $\overline{\text{EKKL}}$  [Fig. 11:b]) and Kyriakos (occurring in *scriptio plena*, abbreviated as  $\overline{\text{KYPI}}$  or  $\overline{\text{KY}}$  or as a monogram), both with four instances. Other names are attested as well, although singularly; these are, for example, Theodoros, Thomas, Samuel, Simon, Antonios, and Philotheos. It is tempting to consider the names occurring in identical or very similar

forms (like Baptistes or Ekklesiastes) as belonging to the same person, but until a precise chronology of the pottery from Ghazali has been established enabling us to compare the forms of vessels bearing those inscriptions, such identifications must remain provisional.

Among the functions and titles mentioned in the owners' inscriptions from Ghazali, the one that is the most frequent is that of a priest, always noted in the form of the  $\overline{\text{PI}}$  symbol. It has been attested so far in 26 examples, but in most of them the symbol is the only surviving part of the text. Only a handful of priests from Ghazali is known by name: Baptistes [Fig. 11:c], Antonios, Dauid(?), and Ioannes/Ionas. Apart from the priests, there are four attestations of deacons, but only one with a name, that of a certain Iesou. Three persons are identified by the monastic title *abba*: Markos, Chael [Fig. 11:d], and Iesou. Finally, there are 17 attestations of the abbreviation  $\overline{\text{AP}}\text{'X'}$ , which appears to be a designation of function, but its exact meaning is uncertain. Unfortunately, almost all the attestations are fragmentary. In three cases only it occurs in combination with other elements: twice with a proper name and the symbol for the priest, once only with the symbol for the priest. It could, thus, stand for 'archpriest'. However, instead of the expected  $\overline{\text{AP}}\text{'X'}$  $\overline{\text{PI}}$ , standing plainly for  $\overline{\text{APX}}(\text{I})\overline{\text{PIP}}(\text{EBCYTPPOC})$ , the two elements appear in the reverse order ( $\overline{\text{PI}}$   $\overline{\text{AP}}\text{'X'}$ ), which obscures this interpretation.<sup>12</sup> Otherwise,  $\overline{\text{AP}}\text{'X'}$  could be interpreted as a separate title, for example, 'archimandrite', or another function of

<sup>11</sup> Interpretation proposed already by Barnes for two instances of this abbreviation, in Shinnie and Chittick 1961: 96 (Nos 30 and 31).

<sup>12</sup> See, however, Jakobielski 2010: 72, Fig. 6, where the combination  $\overline{\text{PI}}$   $\overline{\text{AP}}\text{'X'}$  found on an amphora from Dongola is interpreted as 'archpriest' without any reservations.





Fig. 11. Selected owners' inscriptions (from top):  
 a – MΘΓ trigram (Inv. No. 4603);  
 b – inscription of Ekklesiastes (Inv. No. 14); c – inscription of Baptistes, priest (Inv. No. 22); d – inscription of abba Chael (Inv. No. 5837) (G.A.S.P. Project/photos G. Ochala)

superior rank beginning with the prefix 'arch-'.<sup>13</sup>

Inscribing sacred names on pottery and other objects probably had an apotropaic function. In Ghazali, as everywhere in Christian Nubia, the most popular name warding off evil forces was that of the Archangel Michael. It could be written down in *scriptio plena*, abbreviated, as a numerical cryptogram XΠΘ, or in the form of various monograms. It has been attested so far, in one form or another, on 30 vessels from Ghazali. Other names identified so far include Jesus Christ found on six pots, Emmanuel on four, Archangel Gabriel and Mary on one pot each.

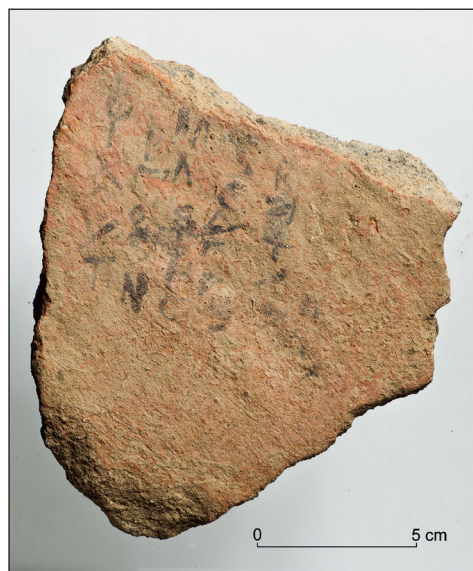


Fig. 12. Terracotta plaque with the Coptic alphabet written on it in black ink (G.13.051) (G.A.S.P. Project/photo M. Bogacki)

<sup>13</sup> Barnes, in Shinnie and Chittick 1961: 98 (No. 70), Fig. 37.70, suggested that the abbreviation be resolved as ἀρχ(ων), but the meaning in combination with a proper name and the symbol for a priest is uncertain.

The last object to be presented here is one of a kind among the Ghazali epigraphic finds. It is a piece of a terracotta plaque of irregular shape and measuring roughly 16 cm by 13 cm without any original margin (G.13.051) [Fig. 12]. On one of its sides there are the letters of the Coptic alphabet put down in black ink by an apparently inexperienced or unskilled scribe. The alphabet is in reverse order: it starts with an *omega* in the upper left corner and continues in five columns to the right until an *alpha* is reached at the end

of the last column. Then the scribe added a set of Coptic letters, but in no apparent order. The other side of the plaque bears another rendering of the alphabet executed by the same scribe. This time it is in the right order, starting with an *alpha* in the upper left corner, but apparently incomplete (the last recognizable sign is a *nu* at the end of the third column). Judging by the character of the inscription as well as by the clumsiness of the letters, this must have been a school exercise, executed at an early stage of education.

## POTTERY

Excavations in the southern and central part of the Ghazali monastery enclosure in the 2013 and 2014 seasons yielded a vast amount of pottery fragments. The area of the South Church and the adjoining passage, Rooms 1 through 22, abutting the southeastern part of the enclosure wall and the rooms directly north of the North Church, produced in total over 25,000 pottery sherds. Of these, 1004 and 1260 sherds were recorded in respective seasons.

All the potsherds from each level/room of the monastery enclosure were collected and sorted by category: diagnostic fragments, meaning rims, bases, handles, decorated sherds and all the fragments with monograms and inscriptions, and non-diagnostic sherds, which were counted before being discarded. The diagnostic fragments were sorted by type, fabric and decoration following Shinnie's vessel typology and clay classes developed for the Ghazali site (Shinnie and Chittick 1961: 30–51). The typology and fabric classes need to be improved and developed in order to cover the apparent insufficiencies

of the existing classification system. All diagnostics were numbered and inventoried, and selected ones were drawn as well as photographed.

The ceramics were both hand- and wheel-made, the latter being predominant. Smoothing prior to firing was the most common method of surface treatment. Some of the jars, mostly utility ware, bear no signs of surface treatment. A large number of vessels, including handmade cooking jars and large, globular bottles (beer jars), was covered with a layer of red slip, either on the entire surface or on the upper part of the body (neck, rim).

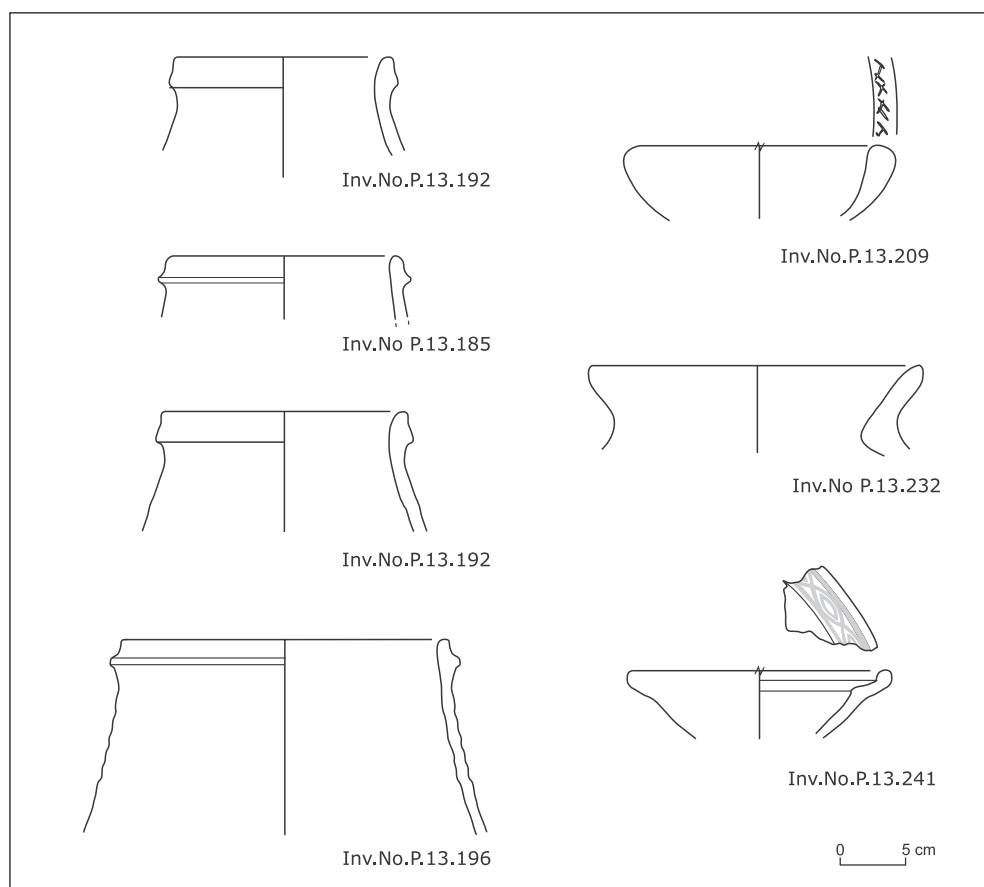
The repertoire of vessel types was extensive, comprising mostly utility vessels: *qawadis*, *dokat* and cooking pots. These represented about 25% of all the diagnostic fragments recovered from every context. The abovementioned pot types were made of Nile clay with a considerable amount of organic material and mica. Among the other types small bowls, both with plain and footed bases, were the most numerous. The "ledge-rim" type plates were also frequent. There was a significant number

of vessels with straight walls and a ridge outside, slightly below the rim, painted with decoration on the outside, below the rim and below the ridge. Vessels of these types belong to Shinnie's Class I in terms of ware classification having homogenous, light beige, light grey or pinkish clay with no organic material (Shinnie 1961: 30–31). The surface was covered with white or cream slip as a rule and some of the vessels, apart from those with painted decoration, were incised or stamped as well. Their

surface was in some cases polished, resulting in a lustrous surface.

A significant number of sherds bears monograms and inscriptions. These were executed mostly on the fine wares, usually bowls and "ledge-rim" plates, but can be also found on the coarser pottery, mostly on the necks and on the inside surface of rims of the bottles and "beer jars" (see the discussion above and *Fig. 11*).

Clearing Room 8, situated southeast of the North Church, produced the greater



*Fig. 13. Pottery vessels from Room 8 (9th–11th century)  
(G.A.S.P. Project/drawing M. Korzeniowska)*



part of the pottery fragments collected, yielding about 30% of the total season yield in 2013. The repertoire of vessel types was not extensive, comprising mostly *qawadis* and cooking ware. The least numerous were handmade vessels made of Nile silt fabric, *dokat* and cooking pots, both with rounded bases, having rough, mat- and basket-impressed decoration on the exterior of the surface as a result of the manufacturing process. There is abundant ethnoarchaeological evidence for this way

of pottery forming throughout the region (Tobert 1984: 143; Phillips 2010: 263). All of the *dokat* fragments had the top of the rim decorated with incised crossing lines and burnished interiors. Globular cooking pots were characterized by a short, flaring rim. Only a few fragments of table ware were recovered including a number of inscribed ones. These were mainly large plates and bowls, also with footed bases. Some of these fragments were decorated with painted or incised ornament. The

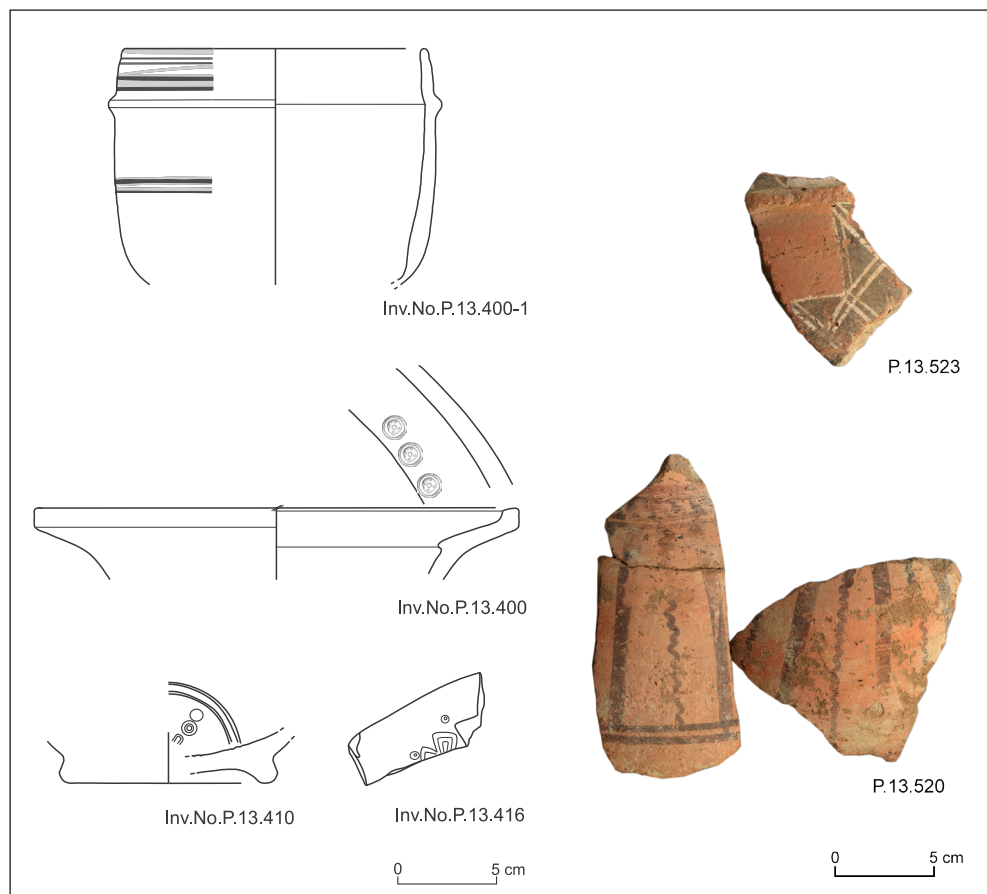


Fig. 14. Pottery vessels from the South Church: left, tableware; at right, 10th–13th century pottery from the upper fill of the church (G.A.S.P. Project/drawing and photo M. Korzeniowska)

material is chronologically diverse and represents mostly Classic and early stages of Late Christian wares of Adams' style N.IV (9th–11th century) and N.V (11th–13th century) (Adams 1986: 245–247) [Fig. 13].

The second most numerous group of pottery fragments (about 25%) during the 2013 season came from the clearing of the South Church. Most of the assemblage was constituted of non-diagnostic sherds, mostly of coarse ware, mainly fragments of, again, *qawadis*, *dokat* and cooking pots. Undiagnostic, but characteristic were the fragments of amphorae with slightly ribbed walls, made of a hard, medium-dense and light red fabric representing early Dongola production (Pluskota 2005: 227–228). Tableware was represented mostly by bowls with slightly rounded as well as footed bases (the latter with walls bent slightly below the rim), a few fragments of plates with a ledge rim and some fragments of vases with a ridge below the rim [Fig. 14: P.13.400-1, P.13.400]. Most of the recovered fragments bear painted decoration; stamped decoration of a stylized cross placed on the inside surface of the bowls and plates was also present. [Fig. 14: P.13.410, P.13.416]. The fill of the South Church produced the only complete vessel of the season: a rather unremarkable small handmade cup with rounded base. The vessel is burnt on the inside, with signs of burning visible also on the rim and right below it on the outside surface, suggesting its use as a lamp.

Given their location in the fill of the church, as well as their size and homogeneity along with their heavily fragmented character, these sherds may have been in secondary use as building material for the South Church vaults.

Dating of the pottery from the floor level also corresponds to the rebuilding of the North Church and the raising of the South Church associated with that rebuilding. The pottery from the upper fill of the church is more diverse chronologically, ranging from the 10th through the 13th century [Fig. 14: P.13.520, P.13.523].

The rest of the ceramic material came from the surface cleaning of the area directly adjacent to the southeastern outer wall of the North Church. As the material was collected from the topmost layers, it was of little significance as a dating factor.

Almost half of the pottery assemblage recovered from Room 2 comprised utility vessels: cooking pots, *dokat* and *qawadis*. The “ledge-rim” plates predominated in the tableware category. Some bore no



Fig. 15. Potsherds from Room 2: later Early Christian to Classic Christian (G.A.S.P. Project/photo M. Korzeniowska)

decoration, others were decorated in the ledge area with stamped ornaments consisting of small concentric circles on the ledge, incised bands in the form of wavy lines and incised decoration in the form of a flower on the ledge and on the inside surface. All these motifs are characteristic of Adams' N.III style (Adams 1986: 307) [Fig. 15: P.13.627, P.13.665]. Small red-ware bowls were also present, as well as a pilgrim flask representing the Classic Christian Adams style IV.A (Adams 1986: 245–246). The form and decoration indicates a date from the later Early Christian to the Classic Christian period [Fig. 15: P.13.685].

Chronologically mixed material came from Room 30. A statistically large number of *qawadis* fragments was accompanied by some early Christian examples, including the rim of a large pot with a wavy ornament right below the rim. A similar motif was noted on a jar from the early Christian period found in Old Dongola (Pluskota 1990: 329). A handmade bottle of a beer

jar type with a wide flaring rim, thick, red slip on the inside and outside surface, and burnished surface is another example. This type of bottle was recorded at many early Christian sites and can be dated to the end of the 6th/beginning of the 7th century AD (Adams 1986: 423–424) [Fig. 16: P.13.14, P.13.8].

Of nearly 2000 potsherds gathered in the 2014 season a little over 400 were diagnostic fragments. They were collected

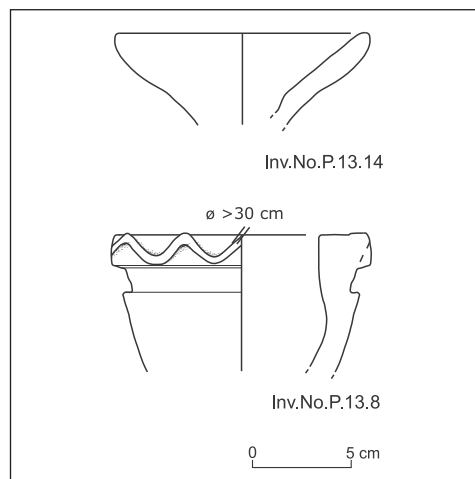


Fig. 16. Pottery vessels from Room 30 (G.A.S.P. Project/drawing M. Korzeniowska)

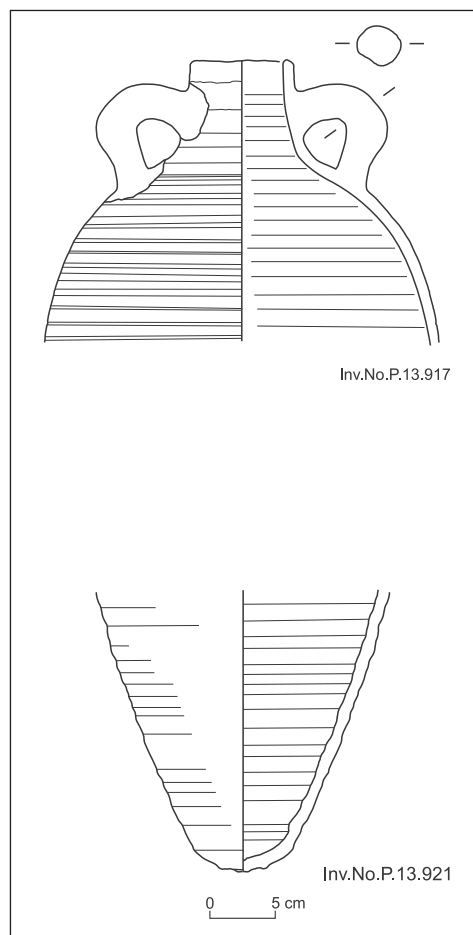
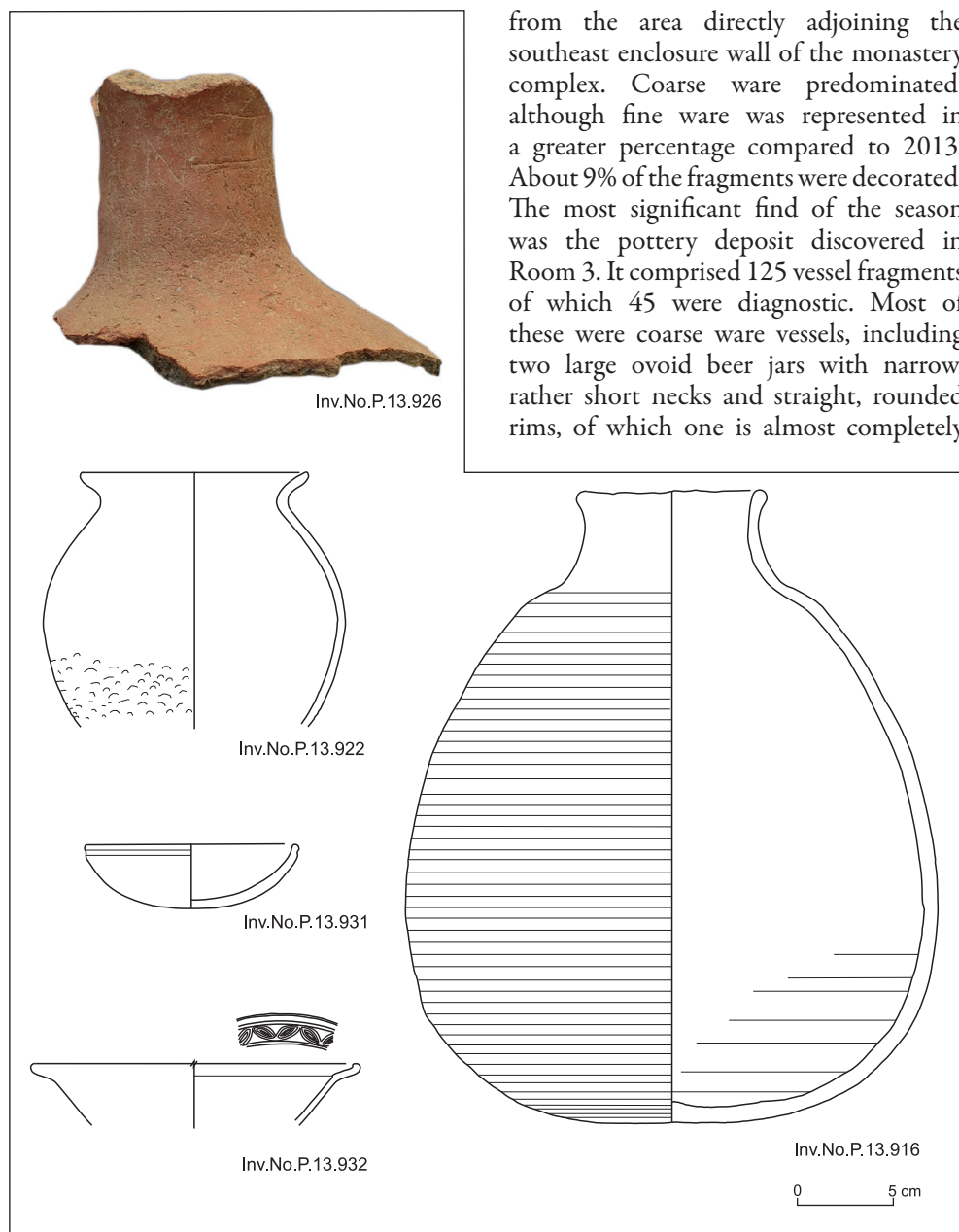


Fig. 17. Amphorae of Dongolan type (G.A.S.P. Project/drawing M. Korzeniowska)





from the area directly adjoining the southeast enclosure wall of the monastery complex. Coarse ware predominated, although fine ware was represented in a greater percentage compared to 2013. About 9% of the fragments were decorated. The most significant find of the season was the pottery deposit discovered in Room 3. It comprised 125 vessel fragments of which 45 were diagnostic. Most of these were coarse ware vessels, including two large ovoid beer jars with narrow, rather short necks and straight, rounded rims, of which one is almost completely

Fig. 18. Pottery deposit from Room 3: handmade cooking pot P.13.922, bowl P.13.931 and plate P.13.932; beer jar P.13.916, jar P.13.926 (G.A.S.P. Project/drawing and photo M. Korzeniowska)

preserved [Fig. 18: P.13.916]. There were also four diagnostic amphora fragments in this set, representing early Dongolan production and belonging to types A and B [Fig. 17: P.13.917, P.13.921], dated by Krzysztof Pluskota to the late 6th/early

7th century AD (Pluskota 2005: 229–230). One of the amphorae bears a yellow painted monogram on its shoulder. A large handmade cooking pot with red slip and shallow mat impression on the outside surface and a neck of an early handmade



Fig. 19. Bottle necks and a possible lid from Room 4 (G.A.S.P. Project/photo M. Korzeniowska)

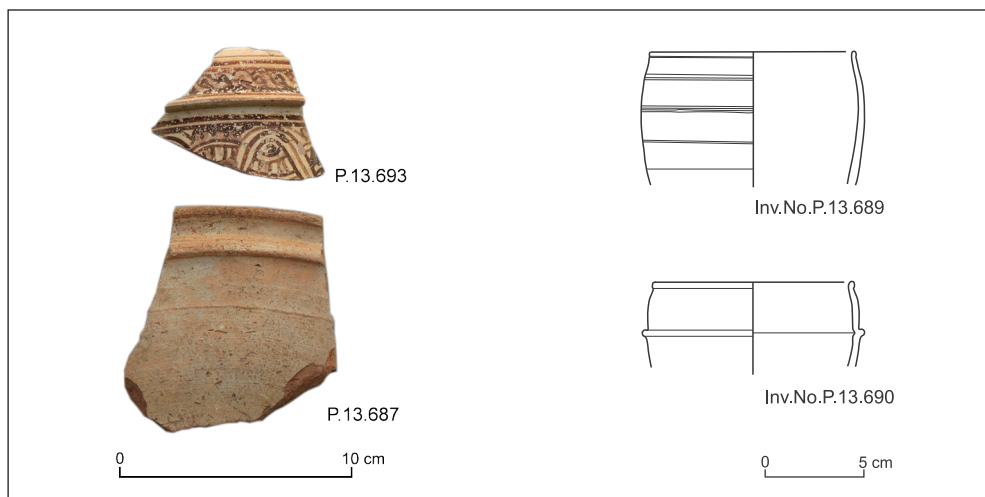


Fig. 20. Pottery fragments from Rooms 7A (tableware) and 10 (G.A.S.P. Project/drawing and photo M. Korzeniowska)

beer jar were present as well [Fig. 18: P.13.922 and P.13.926]. Only a few sherds represented tableware and only one of those had painted decoration. It was a large plate, with a ledged rim and thick red slip complemented with a brown-painted ledge bearing a leaf frieze executed in yellow paint. In addition there were two small

bowls and two bases of, probably, plates. The bowl was made of red clay with a large amount of mica and covered with red slip [see Fig. 18: P.13.931, P.13.932].

Clearing of the area directly adjoining the southeast enclosure wall of the monastery complex (Room 13) revealed a large concentration of pottery sherds, of

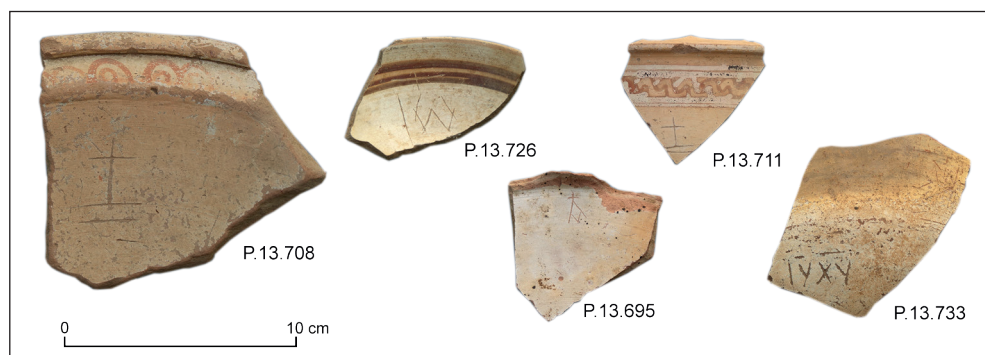


Fig. 21. Vessel fragments with post-firing graffiti from Rooms 11, 17 and 18 (G.A.S.P. Project/photo M. Korzeniowska)



Fig. 22. Jar fragments from Rooms A and C (G.A.S.P. Project/photo M. Korzeniowska)



which 218 were diagnostic fragments. The concentration of the material in a relatively small area and its apparent chronological diversity suggested that it came from Shinnie's pottery dump and as such it is of little dating significance.

A very interesting set came from Room 4. In the upper layers of the fill the predominant forms were *dokat*, cooking pots and *qawadis*. In the lower layers, probably associated with the foundation of the monastery, sherds were few but characteristic: relatively small, reusable fragments with smooth edges. The most probable function is that they were lids cut and smoothed from broken jar fragments, used with globular bottles featuring rather long, cylindrical necks and flaring rim. They were all handmade and some of them decorated with painted vertical and horizontal stripes on the necks and rims. Judging by their shape and decoration, the fragments may date to the end of the 6th/ beginning of the 7th century AD [*Fig. 19*: P.13.745, P.13.746a, P.13.746b].

Thin-walled table vessels fragments, very fragmented, predominated in the pottery assemblages from Rooms 7a, 10, 11, 17 and 18 at their top levels, although they were not very abundant. The vessels were made of desert clay and covered with a thin layer of cream slip. Three specimens from Room 7a: one cup and two vessels with ridge below rim, bore painted, Classic

Christian decoration on the outside [*Fig. 20*: P.13.687, P.13.693, P.13.689, P.13.690]. A fragment from Room 7a representing Shinnie's C-type footed bowl (Shinnie and Chittick 1961: 33), another of a base of a small bowl from Room 10, a fragment of a plate with ledge rim and painted decoration on the ledge from Room 11, one fragment of a vessel with external ridge below the rim found in the upper fill of Room 17 and two bowl fragments from Room 18 bore post-firing graffiti [*Fig. 21*: P.13.695, P.13.708, P.13.711, P.13.726, P.13.733].

Interesting ceramic material came from two rooms directly adjoining the entrance to the monastery enclosure. Room A at floor level produced a large number of sherds from large bottles, some of them with monograms executed in wet clay before firing [*Fig. 22*]. The jars were probably used for storing liquids, wine for example. Room C, opposite Room A, yielded almost 200 diagnostic pottery fragments, mostly parts of cooking pots followed by *dokat*, *qawadis* and storage jars. The latter, recovered *in situ*, were sunk into the floor and served probably as jars for storing grain. At this point, it seems possible that these two rooms served as a storage area or a place where food was prepared. A few fragments of black and polished Soba ware came from this unit as well.

## RECAPITULATION

The 2013 and 2014 archaeological seasons (respectively, second and third) at Ghazali resulted in surprising discoveries: a second monastic church and the largest set of latrines known from Nubia so far.

Thanks to the generous help of Prof. Angelika Lohwasser the conservation team preserved the plaster covering the walls of the North Church with numerous graffiti and scratched drawings. The

most interesting texts identified so far are the *Agnus Dei* prayer in Greek, preserved on the south wall of the church, and the inscription left by a certain Iakob, deacon, son of King Basil.

The repertoire of vessel types recovered at the site was very extensive, comprising mostly utility vessels: *qawadis*, *dokat* and

cooking pots. Abundant were also potsherds with monograms and inscriptions containing mostly holy names. They were executed mostly on fine ware pottery, usually bowls and “ledge-rim” plates, but can be found also on the coarser pottery, mostly on the necks and on the inside surface of rims of bottles and “beer jars”.

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