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I ŚREDNIOWIECZNA.  
ARCHEOLOGIA POLSKI

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ŚRÓDZIEMNOMORSKA  
I POZAEUROPEJSKA



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# ŚWIATOWIT

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RECENZJA: DARIUSZ BŁASZCZYK, DĄBRÓWKA STĘPNIOWSKA (RED.), *POCHÓWKI  
W GROBACH KOMOROWYCH NA ZIEMIACH POLSKICH W OKRESIE WCZESNEGO  
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VOL. XVIII, WARSZAWA 2016, 175 STRON, 93 ILUSTRACJE, 3 TABELE ..... 415

DOROTA DZIERZBICKA, WŁODZIMIERZ GODLEWSKI

## DONGOLA, SUDAN – SEASON 2015–2016

The works of the Mission of the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw, were conducted on the site from 9<sup>th</sup> November 2015 till 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016, within the frame of two Qatar–Sudan Archaeological Projects (QSAP), nos. 10 and 31. In the area of the Citadel, excavations and conservation works were conducted on two sites: the fortifications and the complex of royal buildings (SWN.B.I–B.IV and B.V). On Kom H, the excavation of the Monastery of St Anthony continued in Courtyard A and in the so-called Central Building on the northern side of the monastic church. Some restoration works were undertaken in the Mosque Building, in the staircase and on the western terrace of the building.<sup>1</sup>

## The Citadel

### Fortifications

The season's activities were a continuation of the works conducted in the previous season, their aim being to unearth the original curtain wall of the fortifications between the towers NE and N.2 over the length of 35 m (cf. GODLEWSKI 2015). The entire stretch of the curtain wall between the towers NE and N.2, with a face built of irregular stone blocks and preserved to the height of over 8.0 m, was unearthed during this season. The works consisted in removal of a ca. 4-metre high sand dune and a Funj Period facing wall covering the original 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> c. wall. Tower NE was well preserved and reached the height of 8.3 m (**Fig. 1**), while Tower N.2 was partly destroyed, most likely in the 13<sup>th</sup> c., and rebuilt in mud brick during the Funj Period. Relics of the original tower were unearthed.



## The SWN Site

### Palace of Ioannes (SWN.B.I) and its vicinity

Some work was conducted in the area of the Palace of Ioannes I (dated to the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> c.). Damaged fragments of walls in its northern and southern façades were repaired. Works along the southern façade of the palace (SWN.B.I) brought to light a part of a baked-brick

<sup>1</sup> The staff of the Mission included: prof. Włodzimierz Godlewski, archaeologist (IA UW); dr. Dorota Dzierzbicka, archaeologist (IA UW); prof. Adam Łajtar, epigraphist (IA UW); prof. Tomasz Derda, papyrologist (IA UW); dr. Romuald Tarczewski, architect (Wrocław University of Technology); dr. Dobrochna Zielińska, archaeologist (IA UW); Katarzyna Danys, ceramologist (PCMA UW); Urszula Kusz, restorer;

Maciej Karpiński, restorer; Szymon Lenarczyk, archaeologist (UW); Agata Deptuła, archaeologist (UW); Agnieszka Ryś, archaeologist; Maciej Wyżgoł, archaeologist; Mateusz Reklajtis, student (IA UW). The National Corporation of Antiquities and Museums (NCAM), Sudan, was represented by Mr Alsamani Ezeldeen Kara and Mr Abubakr Abdelrahman Adam Abdalla.



Fig. 1. Citadel. The curtain wall of fortifications with the tower NE (photo by W. Godlewski, PCMA archive).

Ryc. 1. Fragment fortyfikacji dongolańskiej cytadeli, kurtyna i baszta NE (fot. W. Godlewski, archiwum CAŚ).

pavement of an earlier building (SWN.B.IV), whose function has yet to be determined. Building SWN.B.IV is dated to the mid-6<sup>th</sup> c.

A layer of occupational refuse ca. 4.5 m in thickness located between the palace and the Church of Archangel Raphael was also excavated. The scarce pottery recovered from the layer suggests a dating between the late 13<sup>th</sup> or early 14<sup>th</sup> c. and the 17<sup>th</sup> c. Dwellings dated to the late 17<sup>th</sup> c. stand on top of the layer.

### Church of Archangel Raphael (SWN.B.V)

Throughout the campaign, intensive excavation and conservation works were conducted inside the Church of Archangel Raphael, which had been protected with a new roof in early February 2015 after the destruction of the previous one by hurricane-force winds in the summer of 2014. During this season, the works in the church focused on the central and southern parts of the naos, as well as on the interior of the *diakonikon* (Fig. 2, 3).





Fig. 2. Citadel. The naos of the Church of Archangel Raphael (SWN.B.V) during exploration (photo by W. Godlewski, PCMA archive).  
Ryc. 2. Cytadela. Kościół Archaniola Rafała (SWN.B.V). Wnętrze w trakcie badań (fot. W. Godlewski, archiwum CAŚ).



Fig. 3. Citadel. The naos of the Church of Archangel Raphael, the view from the west (photo by M. Reklajtis, PCMA archive).  
Ryc. 3. Cytadela. Naos kościoła Archaniola Rafała, widok od zachodu (fot. M. Reklajtis, archiwum CAŚ).



The pace of excavation was set by parallel conservation works, the objective of which was to secure the murals brought to light on the pillars, pilasters, and walls in these parts of the church. A total of 32 painted compositions and over 20 inscriptions (legends and texts accompanying the scenes, written almost exclusively in Greek) were uncovered. The state of preservation of the paintings varied widely. The unearthed representations include figures of archangels, primarily Raphael (Fig. 4) and Michael, several laypersons and saints, as well as narrative scenes, such as the Three Youths in the fiery furnace. The dating of the murals has not yet been determined precisely, but they were most likely executed in the late 8<sup>th</sup> c. and later. The representations discovered in the *diakonikon* include figures of Aaron, an archbishop of the Makurian Church, St John the Baptist, St Stephanos (?), and one unidentified person.

Among the commemorative inscriptions, one text stands out. It is located on the western pilaster supporting an arch between two parts of the southern *pastophorium* (*diakonikon*). The eight-line text preceded by the Alpha and Omega symbols commemorates a local synod of the Makurian Church organized during the reign of King Ioannes by the local bishop Aaron. The synod was attended by Ioannou, bishop of Pachoras (designated as *metropolites*), NN, bishop of Upper Ounger, Chael, bishop of Sai, Mena, bishop of Phrim, Markou(?), bishop of Kourte, and three other bishops with the names Mena, Chris[---] and Ignatios, whose sees' names did not preserve in the text. The bishops gathered on a Wednesday in the month of Choiak (November/December) and spent a week together "making fruitful use of spiritual guidance" and "enjoying it".<sup>2</sup> The inscription is of great historical value. It testifies to



Fig. 4. Citadel. The naos of the Church of Archangel Raphael, the painting of Archangel Raphael, the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> c. (photo by W. Godlewski, PCMA archive).

Ryc. 4. Cytadela. Naos kościoła Archaniła Rafaela, malowidło przedstawiające Archaniła Rafaela, koniec VIII wieku (fot. W. Godlewski, archiwum CAŚ).

<sup>2</sup> The text was read and translated by Adam Łajtar and Tomasz Derda.



Fig. 5. Citadel. The naos of the Church of Archangel Raphael and the base of a statue reused in the pulpit, *in situ*, granite (photo by M. Reklajtis, PCMA archive).

Ryc. 5. Cytadela. Naos kościoła Archaniola Rafaela, granitowa baza posągu użyta w konstrukcji ambony (*in situ*), (fot. M. Reklajtis, archiwum CAŚ).

the fact that Makurian bishops convened occasionally to discuss matters related to their bishoprics. More importantly, it mirrors the organization of the Makurian Church at a certain moment, probably the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> c. (AD 801–804). It mentions as many as six bishoprics; to five previously well-attested sees (Kourte, Phrim, Pachoras, Sai, Dongola) it adds one more in Upper Ounger, a locality unknown from elsewhere. The inscription also attests to the particular position of the bishop of Pachoras, who is listed first and is designated as *metropolites*.

Another inscription, located on the eastern wall of the sanctuary, to the south of the apse, contains a religious fragment, a kind of a hymn composed in a sophisticated manner. The structure of the composition can be recognized in the (relatively) best-preserved section (lines 10–29). The basis for the composition was Ode 8 that according to Daniel was sung by three Hebrews in the fiery furnace. Originally transmitted in the Book of Daniel (3, 51–88), it eventually became an independent piece, Ode 8, 52–88 in the collection of nine odes usually attached to the Book of Psalms.<sup>3</sup>

The works in the central part of the naos, between the northern pillars, brought to light a pulpit incorporating two blocks that had originated from a Kushite temple. The blocks, which were preserved *in situ*, rested on a brick platform and on two short granite columns (Fig. 5). One of the blocks, which had been part of the temple sanctuary,

measured  $2.2 \times 1.28$  m and up to 40 cm in height, and served as stairs leading up to the pulpit. The stairs consisted of 8 steps, each 5 cm high. Resting on a granite column and on top of the stairs was a large granite block measuring  $0.98 \times 0.56 \times 0.27$  m. It was slightly shifted from its original position as the upper surface of the pulpit. The block is a base of a statue of a Kushite ruler, most likely Taharqa (no inscription permitting identification is present), covered on three sides with bas-reliefs depicting captives with serrated cartouches giving names of conquered cities and vanquished tribes. One side bears representations of nine figures of Asians, and the other seven representations (the corner is broken off) of female (?) figures (Africans?), also accompanied by cartouches. The front side of the block carries a partly damaged symbol of the union between the two lands. The block seems to be of a significant historical value.

## Site B

### Houses of the Funj Period

Some houses of the Late Funj Period were excavated to the north of the Citadel's fortifications and on the eastern side of the Cruciform Building. Pottery and objects of daily use uncovered inside the houses were characteristic for the last stage of occupation of Dongola outside the Citadel. This stage is dated to the late 17<sup>th</sup> c.

<sup>3</sup> The information kindly provided by Adam Łajtar and Tomasz Derda.



### The Mosque – Former Throne Hall

Broadly-based construction works were conducted in the stairwell and on the roof over the western part of the building. The objectives were to rebuild the upper part of the damaged staircase, to protect the western part of the building, and to reconstruct the roof terrace, which is to be accessible to tourists visiting the mosque. The terrace offers a spectacular view of the city ruins and the surrounding landscape on both banks of the Nile. The first stage was carried out in the autumn 2015. In January 2016, the second stage of technically difficult construction works – building six steps in the upper part of the staircase – was completed. A small room constituting a roof over the staircase and providing access to the terrace is still under construction.

### The monastery of St Anthony on Kom H

#### Courtyard A

Courtyard A, located within the limits of the monastic enclosure, to the east of the Gatehouse for

Monks, is a complex multiphase area with relics of numerous free-standing structures. It is dated to the late 12<sup>th</sup> – early 14<sup>th</sup> c. by ceramic evidence (late and terminal Christian pottery). The courtyard was an industrial and service area occupied by structures used most likely for storage, food processing, and keeping livestock. It presumably served the users of the buildings located to the north. This open space was also accessed from the Gatehouse (and from the outside) through a passageway in its southwest corner.

Excavations in this part of the monastery were a continuation of the works conducted in November/December 2014. The excavated area was expanded to the north and west to cover the courtyard in its entirety. The area under investigation in 2015 measured ca. 20 m along the N-S and ca. 16 m along the E-W axis, and contained structures preserved to the height of over 2.3 m (Fig. 6).

The courtyard showed evidence of multiple phases of use. In the earliest, the courtyard area was limited to the southern ca. 10 metres of the monastic enclosure, while the northern part was occupied by a part of a building



Fig. 6. Kom H. The aerial view of the monastery – the church, Central Building, Western Building, and Courtyard A (photo by S. Lenarczyk, PCMA archive).

Ryc. 6. Klasztor na komie H, widok z góry – kościół, budowla centralna, budowla zachodnia i zabudowa na dziedzińcu A (fot. S. Lenarczyk, archiwum CAŚ).



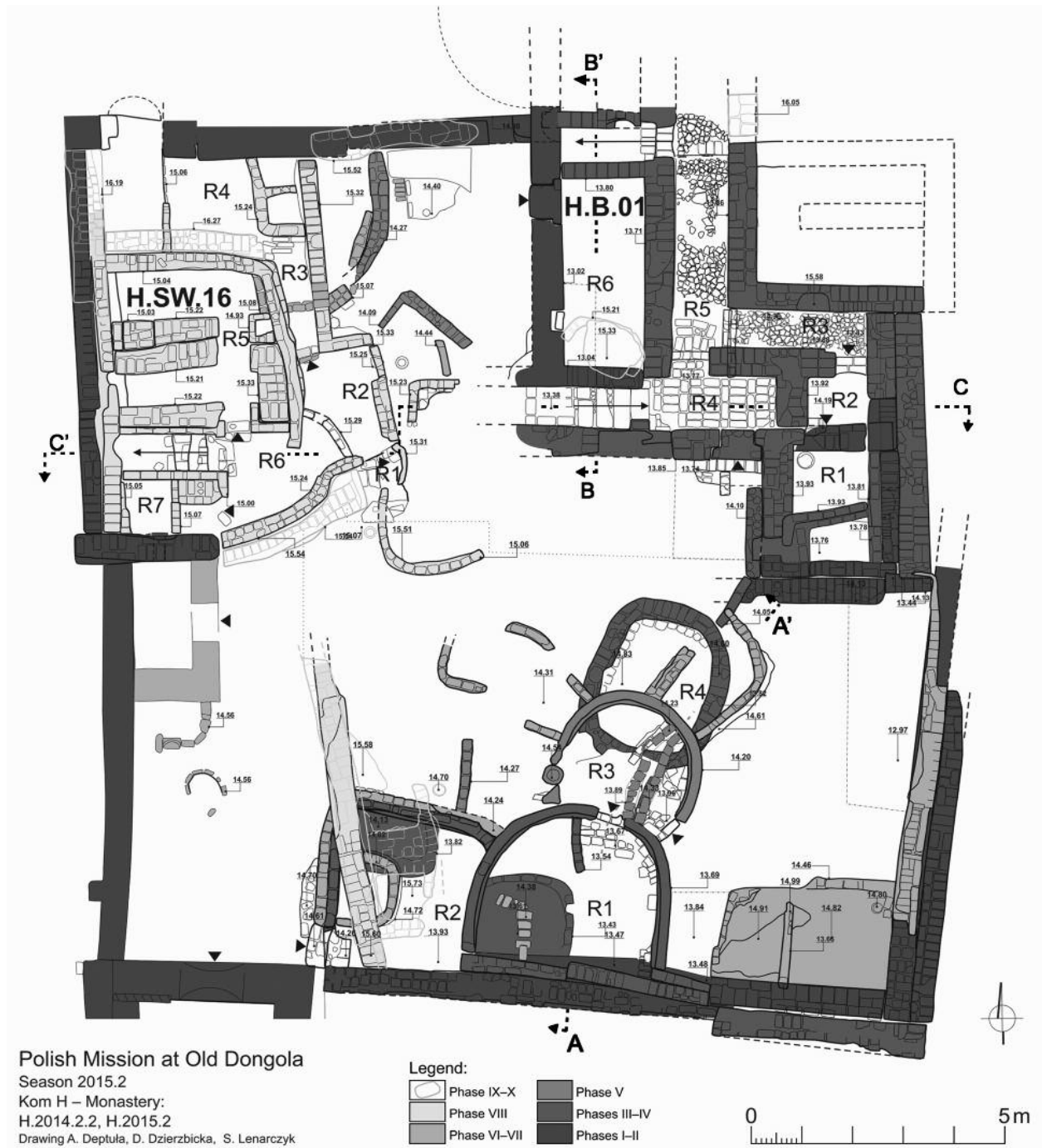


Fig. 7. Kom H. Monastery. The plan of Courtyard A (compiled by A. Deptuła, D. Dzierzbicka, S. Lenarczyk, PCMA archive).

Ryc. 7. Klasztor, zabudowa na dziedzińcu A. Plan (oprac. A. Deptuła, D. Dzierzbicka, S. Lenarczyk, archiwum CAŚ).

(H.B.01), which also extended further to the north (outside the area under investigation). The excavated rooms had stone and brick pavements and bore evidence of structural changes connected with several phases, the latest of which was unearthed. In this phase, the rooms constituted a service area of the building; a doorway in the southern wall opened on the courtyard, which supposedly (according to the extant relics) was at the time used for cooking, storage, and food processing. Stone stairs led to a lower walking level in the south, and brick stairs gave access to an upper floor in the north (Fig. 7, 8).

In an intermediate phase of occupation of the investigated area, the walls of the building H.B.01 were levelled and the rooms were filled with rubble. From that time onwards, the space has been an open area. Meanwhile, the southern part of the courtyard was occupied by several rooms, structures, and working areas constructed in different periods.

The latest structures within the investigated area are preserved in the north-western quadrant, along the east wall of the Gatehouse. They were preliminarily investigated in the past as spaces SW-E.14–16 (JAKOBIELSKI 2010:

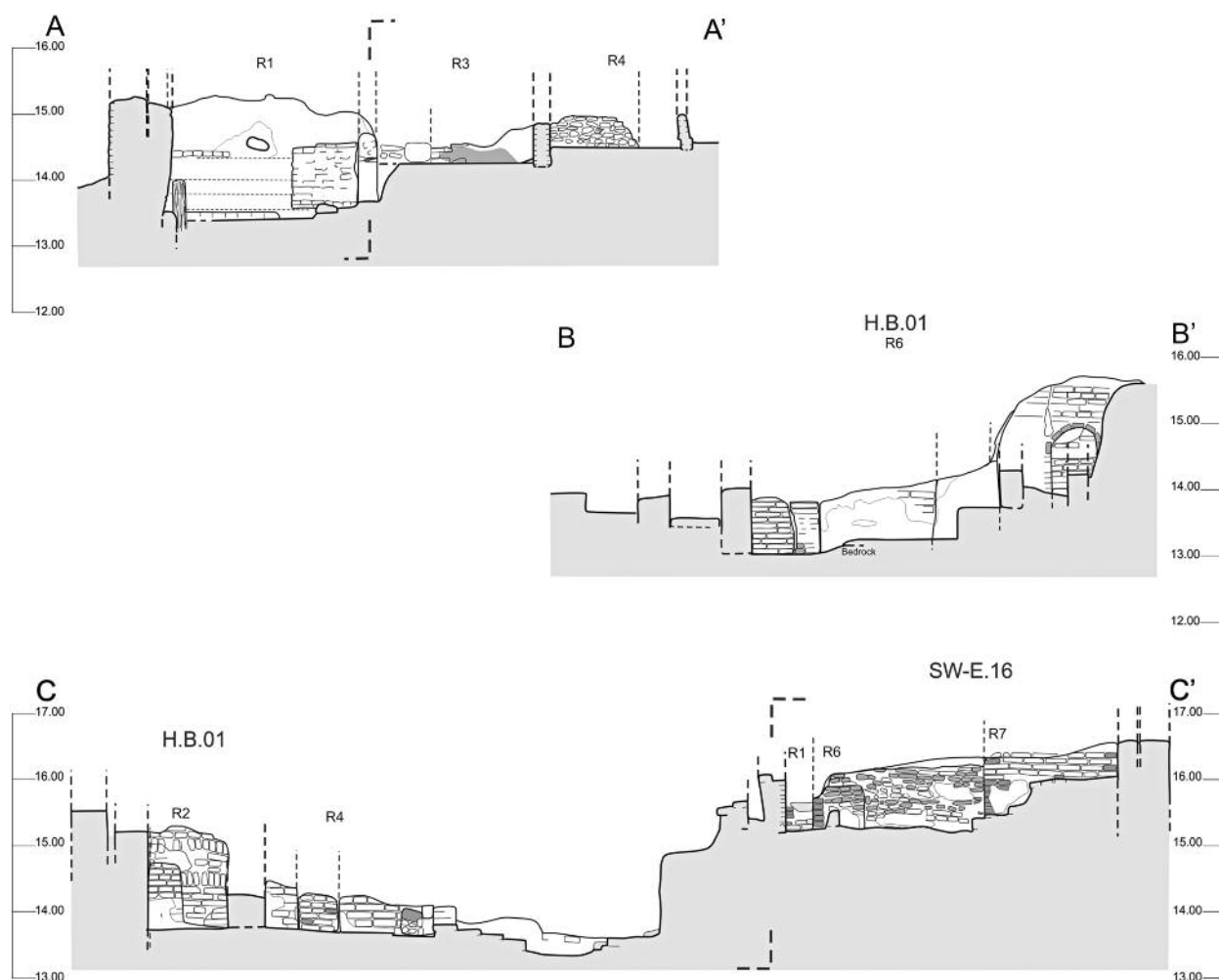


Fig. 8. Kom H. Monastery, cross-sections of Courtyard A, H.B.01, and SW-E.16 (photo by PCMA archive). Top: NS cross-section looking W, Bottom: WE cross-section looking S (compiled by A. Deptuła, D. Dzierzbicka, S. Lenarczyk, PCMA archive).

Ryc. 8. Klasztor. Przekroje struktur na dziedzińcu A, H.B.01 i SW-E.16 – góra: przekrój NS, widok na W; dół: przekrój WE, widok na S. (oprac. A. Deptuła, D. Dzierzbicka, S. Lenarczyk, archiwum CAŚ).

69–90, esp. 83). This season's excavations in SW-E.16 revealed that the building initially consisted of a room entered from the south. Adjacent to the room on the south was a stairway leading west, and along its eastern wall there was a corridor connecting the courtyard in the south with a cooking and storage area to the north. In a later phase, four buttress walls were built inside the room, possibly to support a sturdier and heavier roof.

### Monastic Church (Church of Merkurios ?)

Additional works were carried out in the sanctuary of the monastic church dated to the mid-6<sup>th</sup> c. Relics of the original sandstone altar screen were uncovered and the sanctuary was protected by supplementing the pavement in this area with new floor tiles.

### Central Building

The Central Building, which was partly unearthed during the previous season, was the subject of detailed

studies aimed at determining its original appearance and plan. It underwent numerous structural alterations in the later phases of its occupation. Progress was made, but the work has to continue. It became evident in December 2015 that the building is of a fairly early date (6<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> c.) and its function, which changed with the passage of time, was originally representative. A partly-preserved arch of the western entrance, built of limestone blocks, was brought to light, and a representation of an angel painted on lime plaster was partly exposed in one of the rooms (CB.6). On the basis of iconographic traits of the facial features, the painting can be dated to the 7<sup>th</sup> c. It is one of the oldest murals hitherto uncovered in Dongola and there is no doubt that it was executed by a master's hand. It can be counted among the masterpieces of Makurian painting (Fig. 9). One wall painting removed from the Central Building was relocated to the south-western part of the church, to the set of rooms that had been reconstructed and prepared to serve as an exhibition space for murals

Fig. 9. Kom H. Monastery, Central Building (the room CB.6). The painting of an archangel, fragment, the early 7<sup>th</sup> c. (photo by W. Godlewski, PCMA archive).

Ryc. 9. Klasztor. Budowla Centralna, Fragment malowidła w pomieszczeniu CB.6, wczesny VII wiek (fot. W. Godlewski, archiwum CAŚ).



transferred there from the church in the last season. The painting on lime plaster is a fragmentary representation of Christ (?) or a saint dated to an early period (7<sup>th</sup> c. ?) with additional younger figures of Nubian monks depicted on the face of the earlier painting. The wall face also carries a date – 1484 – carved in the plaster. It is the latest date found in the monastery, indicating that it most probably remained in operation in this period.

#### **Cemetery outside the monastic complex (H.SW.T)**

An accidentally discovered tomb (T.2015.3) with a demolished superstructure but preserved crypt was provisionally investigated. It was found to contain burials of several individuals. The walls of the crypt bore Coptic texts carved in mud plaster, most likely the four Gospels written in an abbreviated form. The tomb was not excavated.

#### **Site preservation**

##### **Facilities for visitors**

A small pavilion was built by the shield wall protecting the site against encroaching sand. It houses an exhibition of posters providing full information on Dongola's monuments uncovered by the Mission.

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Recent publications on the Dongola excavations and current reports are available online: [www.pcma.uw.edu.pl](http://www.pcma.uw.edu.pl)

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## DONGOLA, SUDAN – SEZON 2015–2016

Misja Centrum Archeologii Śródziemnomorskiej UW kontynuowała jesienią 2015 i zimą 2016 roku badania w Dongoli, stolicy królestwa Makurii, na terenie Cytadeli, w klasztorze oraz prowadziła prace konserwatorskie w Meczecie, pierwotnie w budowlę z salą tronową królów makuryckich. Obok odsłaniania fortyfikacji Cytadeli zachowanych do wysokości ponad ośmiu metrów, z kamiennym licem, prowadzono prace wykopaliskowe i konserwatorskie we wnętrzu królewskiego kościoła archaniola Rafała zbudowanego w końcu VIII wieku. W jego wnętrzu odsłonięto liczne, dobrze zachowane malowidła oraz

teksty greckie, z których najważniejszym jest „protokół” z tygodniowego posiedzenia synodu biskupów makuryckich pod przewodnictwem króla Joannesa II i arcybiskupa Aarona.

Na terenie klasztoru prowadzono badania na dziedzińcu A z kilkufazową zabudową o charakterze gospodarczym, oraz na terenie kościoła, w jego sanktuarium, i we wnętrzu budowli centralnej ułożonej po północnej stronie kościoła. W jednym z pomieszczeń budowli centralnej odsłonięto najstarsze malowidło w Dongoli datowane na początek VII wieku.