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CHRONOLOGY : THE BLEMMYES IN  
LOWER NUBIA

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in Lower Nubia \*

Disregarding here the question of the ethnic identity of the princes and aristocrats buried in the necropoleis of Qustul and Ballana,<sup>1</sup> discussions about Blemmy presence in Lower Nubia revolve around two basic problems. The first is the problem of the archaeological remains,<sup>2</sup> the second problem concerns the definition of the social and economic structure established by Blemmy settlers in the Dodekaschoinos. More extensive efforts to reconstruct Blemmy society and culture were undertaken by Monneret de Villard,<sup>3</sup> Th. Papadopoulos<sup>4</sup> and recently by R. Updegraff.<sup>5</sup> Monneret de Villard believed that the use of Byzantine Egyptian administrative titles and the survival of the temple organization in the Dodekaschoinos follow from an organic adaption of Egyptian models, however, he did not try to give a scholastic definition of the social structure established by the nomadic tribes settled in the Nile valley. Papadopoulos represents a contrary opinion: according to him the Blemmyes

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The original version of this paper was written in 1980 for the "Studi in Onore di Ugo Monneret de Villard", Vol. II, Rome. In the meantime important studies were published about the Blemmyes and related problems and made the thorough revision of the original inevitable. Dr Loretta del Francia, editor of the "Studi", has kindly allowed me to distribute a pre-publication of the revised

"had never constituted a compact political entity, but  
only tribes or tribal groups of greater or lesser importance"<sup>6</sup>  
whereas "temporary Blemmyan political entities" pretended  
the status of a kingdom but "the kingdom in question has  
not as yet overcome the tribal status."<sup>7</sup> As argument he uses  
also the titles *γύλαρχος* and *ὑπογύλαρχος* appearing  
in connection with the Blemmyes in the narrative of Olympiod-  
orus<sup>8</sup> and later in the Gebelen documents /see below/,  
maintaining that they signify "tribal chief" and "deputy chief".<sup>9</sup>  
However, as observed also by Updegraff,<sup>9</sup> same titles may  
express the foederate status of their owners, too. It seems  
that the actual significance of these titles and of the  
further official titles and expressions concerning Blemmyes  
in our sources cannot be defined unless we know their actual  
context. Monneret de Villard and Papadopoulos do not deal  
with the question of the time needed for the development  
of the Blemmy institutions serving the settled society:  
they obviously believed that the Blemmyes lived for centuries  
in the valley. Also Updegraff maintains that the Blemmyes  
possessed a part of the Lower Nubian Nile valley for two  
centuries and draws the picture of "a relatively sophisticated  
Blemmy state"<sup>10</sup> that emerged around the middle of the 4th century  
A. D., i. e. after the end of Meroe, on the basis of

the Kharamadoye inscription in Kalabsha<sup>11</sup> marking the first  
Blemmy settlement in Lower Nubia still prior to the end of<sup>12</sup>  
Meroe, further on the basis of Olympiodorus' narrative,<sup>13</sup>  
of Greek inscriptions in Talmis and Kalabsha,<sup>14</sup> of the  
Gebelen documents, the Phonen letter etc. He even arrives  
at following conclusion: "the Blemmyes did develop an  
organized political entity which did behave as a "historical  
nation!"<sup>15</sup> Similar conclusions can be found in recent papers  
of V. Christides<sup>16</sup> and H. Belçaguy.<sup>17</sup> Albeit much less  
explicitly, also W. Y. Adams supports above reconstructions<sup>18</sup>  
when writing in his standard history of Nubia about a long  
period of Blemmy settlement in Lower Nubia.

As opposed to the views represented by the authors  
mentioned so far, Sir Laurence Kirwan reviews written and  
archaeological evidences in a recent paper in order to<sup>19</sup>  
demonstrate a short Blemmy occupation of the Dodekaschoinos.  
The main results of the fascinating paper can be summarized  
as follows: 1/ the withdrawal of the Roman frontier from<sup>20</sup>  
Hiera Sycaminos to Elephantine "brought the Blemmyes, after  
an interlude when Meroe filled the gap, into Lower Nubia as  
Roman foederates"; 2/ Around 421, i.e. the visit of Olympiod-  
orus, the Blemmy foederates held military stations at  
Elephantine, Taphis /Tafa/, Talmis /Kalabsha/, Primis /Qasr

Ibrim/, Phoenikon /El-Lageita, an oasis some 30 kms to the south-east of Coptos/ and Chiris /unidentified/. However, they did not occupy these positions for a very long period. Kirwan does not propose a chronology, he merely remarks that "according to the Notitia Dignitatum ... which for the Eastern Empire dates c. 408, there were Roman troops at Phoenikon at that time. There was also a Roman garnison at Parenbole /Dabod/ in Lower Nubia".<sup>21</sup> Thus the post quem must be around 408. To this date further to the question of the Parenbole garrison I return below. 3/ The campaign of Silko, King of the Noubades recorded in the Kalabsha inscription<sup>22</sup> is to be dated to the period between Olympiodorus' visit and "... c. 450, the date of the Treaty of Philae /recorded by Priscus/", for it is unlikely "later than ... the approximate date of their /i.e. of the Noubadians and Blemmyes/ joint raids on the frontier and on the Thebaid recorded in the Leiden papyrus /425-450/ and in Besa's life of the archimandrite Shenute."<sup>23</sup> 4/ Silko's campaign is, as shown also by the letter of Phonen, only an episode of the Blemmyan occupation of the Dodekaschoinos: "It looks very much as if Rome played some part in Silko's victory ... It seems ... that Procopius may be right in saying that both peoples, Blemmyes and Noubades, had been Roman federates,

and continued to be down to his own day." <sup>24</sup> 5/ The royal  
necropoleis at Qustul and Ballana are to be attributed to  
the Noubades, thus they cannot represent the culture of the  
Blemmyes settled in the valley. <sup>25</sup> 6/ Both historical and  
archaeological evidence suggest that the date of the Lower  
Nubian Ballana Culture - previously called in literature  
X-Group culture <sup>26</sup> - is 350-500 at the outside. <sup>27</sup>

Kirwan's results established beyond doubt a sufficient  
basis for researches concerning social and economic structure  
of the Blemmyes in Lower Nubia: for it is evident that such  
researches cannot be carried out as long as we are ignorant  
of the chronological framework as well as of the political  
factors determining the fate of the people in question.  
For the latter Kirwan's statements about their foederate  
status in certain periods are of importance and explain in a  
more plausible manner the traces of Byzantine institutions in  
Blemmy documents than earlier speculation about genuine develop-  
ment within the Blemmyan "state". Nevertheless, a new survey of  
the data concerning Blemmy presence in late antique Nubia seems  
to be necessary, since there are numerous data neglected by  
Kirwan further there are sources the interpretation of which by  
Kirwan and/or other experts of Nubian history requires  
reinterpretation or correction. Finally some recent papers have  
presented new source material and questions were asked that  
cannot be answered with the help of earlier literature.

The date of the end of Meroe

Until the late 1960-ies, when Haycock<sup>28</sup> and Hintze<sup>29</sup> introduced somewhat later dates, the generally accepted date for the end of Meroe, i.e. for the final collapse of the kingdom both in the South and the North, moved<sup>30</sup> between 320 A.D. and the middle of the fourth century<sup>31</sup> A.D. All datings were based on the "inner evidences" provided by Reisner's pyramid chronology established on the basis of data concerning family relations within the Napatan and Meroitic dynasties further of archaeological features of the burials and of finds made therein and finally on the basis of independent historical data. However, for the late Meroitic period Reisner's chronology is - in lack of data of said types - highly hypothetical: we possess e.g. only one independent datum for a late Meroitic ruler, this is King Teqorideamani, owner of pyramid Beg. N. 28, who is mentioned in a demotic inscription at Philae written in<sup>32</sup> 253 A.D. In 1967 Haycock began to argue for an altered chronology using Meroitic and demotic inscriptions from Lower Nubia, while in same year Hintze published a re-examination of the only external evidence concerning directly the end<sup>33</sup> of Meroe, the inscription DAE 11 of King <sup>C</sup>Ezānā of Axum. Hintze demonstrated that the text does not speak about a total destruction of Meroe either by the Noba or by <sup>C</sup>Ezānā



himself. Thus the question of the fall of the Meroitic kingdom became in a way even more dependent on the dating and interpretation of the <sup>C</sup>Ezānā inscription. However, as to the dating of the inscription, Hintze did not undertake the critical analysis of the data underlying the traditional dating of the Axumite ruler to around 330-350.<sup>34</sup>

An attempt to provide a further more or less independent evidence was undertaken in 1974 by this writer.<sup>35</sup> I have found that two local-made silver bracelets from one of the pyramids at Begarawiyah West<sup>36</sup> are close imitations of late antique bracelets; the original models, made presumably of gold and manufactured either in a Constantinopolitan or in an Egyptian workshop are, as analogies demonstrate,<sup>37</sup> fairly securely datable to the 360-ies or even to the early 370-ies. Thus the deceased of Beg. W. 130 must have been buried not earlier than the 360-ies. In this way this tomb, which belongs to the latest burials in the Western Cemetery,<sup>38</sup> seems to prove the assumption according to which the Meroitic aristocracy was neither physically, nor politically eliminated at this time i.e. decades after the traditional date of the end of Meroe. The jewels found in Beg. W. 130 are linked with Lower Nubia in a particular manner.

Jewels belonging to the same set were discovered in the  
earth filling of tumulus Qustul 14 /a ring/<sup>39</sup> and on the  
arms of the queen buried under tumulus Ballana 47 /two  
bracelets/<sup>40</sup>. In the earth of the tumulus Qustul 14  
also a small bronze coin of Valens /364-378/ was  
found.<sup>41</sup> Accordingly, this burial seems to date from  
the years around 378. This dating is corroborated by the  
internal chronology of the Qustul cemetery.<sup>42</sup>

As mentioned above, the re-examination of <sup>C</sup>Ezānā's  
great inscription in Ge'ez led Hintze to a convincing  
argument against the view in which it was the Axumite  
conquest described in this text that has brought about  
the final destruction of the Meroitic kingdom. However,  
important questions remained open or only partly solved.  
First of all: to what extent was Meroe destroyed by the  
Noba with whom <sup>C</sup>Ezānā fought; further: in which form did  
survive the territories not yet captured by them but  
actually attacked by <sup>C</sup>Ezānā? Another basic question is  
the date of the inscription. As to the first problem,  
Hintze suggested that the northern part of the Island of  
Meroe was the Meroitic kingdom at this time. This territory  
included the capital, Meroe City, which Hintze identifies  
with the city of 'Alwa besieged by <sup>C</sup>Ezānā. The inscription

says the following /I quote Littmann's German translation /:  
 "ich kam zu den Kāsū, indem ich sie bekämpfte und zu  
 Gefangenen machte bei der Vereinigung der Ströme Sēdā  
 und Takkazē. Und am Tage nach meiner Ankunft schickte [ich]  
 ins Feld die Truppe Mahazā und die Truppe Harā und damawa  
 und falha und sera' /?/ den Sēdā aufwärts [gegen?] die  
 Städte aus Mauerwerk und aus Stroh; es hiessen ihre Städte  
 aus Mauerwerk 'Alwa, 1, Darō, 1." /lines 28-32/. Thus there  
 was first a battle against the Meroites /Kāsū/ at the  
 junction of the Nile with the Atbara i.e. almost 100 kms  
 to the north from Meroe City, which was followed by an expedition  
 southwards along the Nile whereby the cities of Alwā  
 and Darō were - as the wording implies - besieged, but not  
 totally destroyed. Darō, the And(a)ro of the Juba itinerary  
 and the <sup>45</sup>Δαρο of Klaudios Ptolemaios, is, according to  
<sup>46</sup>Priese, identical with to-day Sa<sup>V</sup> dinab. Alwā cannot be  
 identical with Meroe City, as supposed by Hintze, <sup>47</sup>because  
 the expedition proceeds from the north /junction of Sēdā and  
 Takkazē/ to the south "den Sēdā aufwärts" thus the route cannot  
 be 'Alwa → Darō: as stressed by Littmann, <sup>48</sup>Kirwan <sup>49</sup>and  
<sup>50</sup>Hintze himself, all routes described in DAE 11 are  
 geographically precise. Moreover, if 'Alwa is the capital,  
 one would expect the mention of this fact, moreover, mention  
 of the king residing there. About the further actions <sup>C</sup>Ezānā

says the following: "Und danach schickte ich die Truppe Halēn und die Truppe Lakēn /?/ und die Truppe Sabarāt und falha /?/ und serā' /?/ den Sēdā abwärts {gegen?} die Städte der Nōbā aus Stroh, 4, Negūs, 1; die Städte der Kāsū aus Mauerwerk, die die Nōbā weggenommen hatten, waren Tabītō /?/, 1, Fertōtī, 1,... Und ich errichtete einen Thron bei der Vereinigung der Ströme Sēdā und Takkazē, gegenüber der Stadt aus Mauerwerk, die auf /?/ dieser Halbinsel liegt." /lines 34-40/. To sum up the entire expedition: <sup>c</sup>Ezānā's army pursued the Noba from the junction of the rivers Atbara and Takkazē /from the ford of Kemalkē/ through the Butana, for they did not observe their treaty with Axum and attacked several peoples of the borderland and mistreated Axumite envoys. The Noba were defeated and their settlements on the Gezira destroyed. Then the army moved northwards; a number of detachments are sent against the Meroites who are then defeated at the junction of the Nile and the Atbara. After this an expedition is sent against the cities called Alwā - which is to be identified <sup>51</sup> with a settlement at the junction of the two rivers: El Moqren, the Al{a}be of Juba [=Abale/ and the <sup>Oppa</sup> of Klaudios Ptolemaios, and Daro. The next action is directed against the Nōbā i.e. against cities north of the Nile Atbara junction which formerly belonged to the Meroites but are

now occupied by the Nōbā. All these manouvres seem to avoid the northern part of the Island of Meroe; it is thus rather likely that the remainders of the Meroitic kingdom still existing at the time of <sup>C</sup>Ezānā's campaign were left untouched and continued to exist in some form also after the campaign, although not only the Nōbā, but also the Kāsū had to suffer defeats from the Axumite army.

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DAE 11 - as stated already by Dillmann - was in all probability written after <sup>C</sup>Ezānā's conversion. The monotheistic formulae used in the text do not indicate, however, the king's Christian faith as a fact beyond any doubt, unless we do not put them against the backgrounds of the pagan ideology extensively stressed in his earlier inscriptions - a feature clearly absent in DAE 11. Disregarding Altheim and Stiehl's repeated attempts to upset the chronology of 3rd to 6th century Axum, <sup>53</sup> we are now in the fortunate position of having a masterly analysis <sup>54</sup> of the circumstances of <sup>C</sup>Ezānā's conversion by Dihle of which we can learn more about the date of this event.

Namely, we know from the Apologia ad Constantium <sup>55</sup> imperatorem of Athanasius the text of a letter written by Constantius II to Aizanas and Sazanas, *ῥύπερροι* of Axum. The emperor asks them to send Frumentius from

Axum to Alexandria in order to consecrate him again by the Arian bishop Georgios, for he was originally ordained by Athanasios who wasn't Arian /the emperor was supporter of the Arianists/. The letter could not have been written before the third exile of Athanasios /356-361/ since the letter mentions bishop Georgios, and not Gregorios, of Alexandria /Gregorios: 339-345; Georgios: 356-362/.<sup>56</sup>

The letter clearly shows that the tyrannoi of Axum were at this time not Christians. Aizanas and Sazanas are addressed by the emperor as ἀδελφοὶ τιμωτάτοι. According to the literature this means that Aizanas and Sazanas were brothers, however, the formula may also refer to the fact that the emperor estimated the tyrannoi of Axum high enough to turn to them with the highly courteous diplomatic formula used only in the correspondence with the kings of Persia.<sup>57</sup> Thus it is not certain that the most precious brothers of the emperor were also brothers of each other, for mentions in later inscriptions of <sup>C</sup>Ezānā of his brothers Sazanas and Hadehan may equally have the same titulatory meaning.

Aizanas - who is, needless to say, identical with the <sup>C</sup>Ezānā of the inscriptions<sup>58</sup> - and Sazanas /who is identical with the Σαζανᾶς of DAE 4 and the Se<sup>C</sup>azānā of DAE 7/ are tyrannoi around 361; it is certainly

not mistaken to suppose that the title tyrannos in the letter of Constantius II resp. in the text of Athanasius is not the equivalent of the titles βασιλεύς or βασιλεὺς βασιλέων appearing in Greek, Ge'ez and/or Ethiopian in <sup>C</sup>Ezānā's inscriptions from DAE 9 onwards, even if we know that both official language and literary Greek of the 4th century tends to reserve βασιλεὺς for the emperor and to use ῥήξ, φύλαρχος, ἡγεμὼν, ἄρχοι<sup>59</sup> when speaking about foreign rulers. It seems that some time after ca. 361 <sup>C</sup>Ezānā became "king of kings" of Axum, while Sazanas remained "Unterkönig" what was designed by Athanasius as tyrannos. As demonstrated by his early inscriptions DAE 9, 4-6-7 and the new inscriptions found at Geza Agumai/Axum,<sup>60</sup> <sup>C</sup>Ezānā was pagan during the first period of his reign, furthermore, this period could not have been very short for these inscriptions attest at least two successive expeditions of considerable importance and probably also length in time. He converted only after these inscriptions were erected; thus Dihle's opinion, according to which DAE 11 was written around 370 A. D., is very plausible.

Let us now turn to the documents of earlier conflicts between Axum and Meroe. They are fragments of Greek inscriptions unearthed in Meroe City and attest one or perhaps two success-

ful military actions against the capital of the late Meroitic kingdom. The first, better preserved fragment was found in the early years of this century<sup>61</sup> and became widely known after the editio princeps<sup>62</sup> by Sayce whose defective reading - after having suffered further mistreatments by Altheim and Stiehl<sup>63</sup> - was recently replaced by the new readings of Bingen<sup>64</sup> and Hägg<sup>65</sup>. The second, smaller, fragment was discovered in the surroundings of temple KC 102 /along the processional road leading to the Temple of Amun/ by Shinnie<sup>66</sup> and published by Hägg<sup>67</sup>. The Sayce inscription tells about a king of Axum and Himyar who, after having pillaged territories, taken prisoners and/or hostages, pursued a fleeing king of Meroe /?/, issued a tribute to be paid by the latter /?/ and dedicated a statue to Ares.<sup>68</sup> In Hägg's translation:<sup>69</sup>

- 1 [I, N.N., King] of Axum and Himyar ...
- 2 [son of the invincible god] Ares. When [the people of...] disputed ...
- 3 ... I conveyed from ...
- 4 ... and I pillaged the ...
- 5 ... having arrived here ...
- 6 ... is produced, and another /alternative: [women] of noble birth, and another/
- 7 ... together with the king as far as ...



8 ... most /things/ in the ...

9 ... generals and children ...

10 ... I went against [them?] at once ...

11 ... I shall /?/ to you ...

12 ... subject to pay tribute ...

13 ... a bronze [statue?]

14 ... 21 /alternative: 24/ ...

The Shinnie fragment is much more damaged. From the preserved part Hagg concluded that the inscription originally belonged to a throne erected as a gift to Ares. His translation is:

1 ... of Ares ...

2 - 4 ?

5 ... having arrived here I sat down

6 ... giving [as a recompense?]

7 ... [to Ares] this throne.

The wording of the last lines stands obviously very close to the Adulitana II, the inscription of an unknown third century A. D. Axumite king copied by Kosmas Indicopleustes in Adulis. How convenient it ever would be, to connect the two fragmentary inscriptions with an earlier campaign of <sup>c</sup>Ezānā, I better refrain from such a hypothesis, the more so, that <sup>c</sup>Ezānā seems to have inherited not only

the title "king of the Bega" which already appears in the titulature of the king of the Adulitana II, but also the title "king of the Kāsū": this latter appears in the titulature of his earliest known inscription, DAE 9, which seems to have been erected shortly after his ascension to the throne. In a recent article S. Ya. Bersina tried to persuade us that the Sayce inscription was erected by <sup>73</sup> <sup>C</sup>Ezānā. Her opinion is supported by following reading of the first two lines of the fragment:

- 1 βασιλεὺς ἁξω]μειτῶν καὶ ὁμηριτῶν  
2 ἁπλ]ξ ἰεῶ[εις ἀντιδικήσας με...

i.e. in Bersina's translation /I have slightly altered the title of the king in the sense of the traditional translations/<sup>74</sup>:

1 ... king of Axum and Himyar ...

2 ... [I] immediately attack those who rivalled me ...

This reading is, however, not tenable: even the photograph published in Bersina's article <sup>75</sup> shows unambiguously that the only possible reading of the beginning of line 2 is ἁ]ρεως. It is thus not necessary to alter the readings and interpretation<sup>76</sup> presented before by Bingen and Hägg. I prefer to maintain that date and author of the two fragments from Meroe City are unknown; it is rather likely, that they attest one or more Axumite conquests of Meroe City by one or two Axumite kings from whom <sup>C</sup>Ezānā inherited the title "king of the Kāsū".

Unfortunately, it is unknown, whether are the Adulitana  
II recording Axumite expeditions against the Bega of the  
borderland between Axum and Meroe; the fragments of  
Axumite triumphal inscriptions unearthed at Meroe City;  
further <sup>C</sup>Ezānā's inscriptions speaking about newer  
wars against the Bega, this time more or less clearly  
foederates of Axum; and finally the inscriptions of the  
same ruler <sup>77</sup> giving an account of his expeditions against  
the Noba, who occupy a good part of what formerly was the  
Meroitic kingdom and against the Kāsū i.e. the Meroites,  
documents of one and the same political process -  
and if yes, what was the cause of this process and  
what where its details like. <sup>78</sup> Recently Stanley Burstein  
published a very stimulating paper dealing with the Sayce  
inscription. <sup>79</sup> He draws our attention on the chronological  
structure of its text and arrives at the conclusion that  
the inscription did not mark the destruction of Meroe  
City: a destruction mentioned in line 4 occurred before  
the author of the inscription arrives at Meroe. Similarly  
to Hägg, also Burstein believes that the king of line 7  
is a king of Meroe, furthermore, he supposes that this  
king resp. the Meroitic kingdom survived the war in question.  
The question, "how then is the continued existence of  
Meroitic kings to be reconciled with such an obvious act

of sovereignty as the erection of a victory stele at Meroe and Ezana's use of the title king of Kasu before his campaign against the Noba"<sup>80</sup> can be answered, according to Burstein, with following fascinating hypothesis: the last kings of Meroe were Axumite vassals, which would then explain "Ezana's campaign against the Noba, ... the bitter fighting between him and the Kasu who, according to his titular, were already his subjects. Could it be that the Kasu had exploited the disruption of Axumite authority in the area caused by the bellicose actions of the Noba to escape their vassal status? if so, then it would have been their refusal to return to their former status that provoked Ezana's devastating attack."<sup>81</sup> However attractive this hypothesis is, we cannot entirely discard the possibility that the importance of the Axumite triumphal inscriptions in Meroe City is smaller than we put it: for while they unanimously attest one or two Axumite conquests, there are no proofs that they were not smashed into pieces after the ensuing re-conquests of the city by the Meroites. But Burstein's hypothesis inspires a further hypothesis that could solve at least partly the problem, how did the Noba come into the possession of Meroitic territory before 'Ezānā's expedition and also the problem of the

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seemingly peaceful transition from late Meroitic into post-Meroitic /which means to a great extent "early Noba"/, so strikingly demonstrated e.g. in the cemeteries at Meroe City.<sup>82</sup> Namely, is it not possible that a part of the Noba tribes were accepted as "foederates" by the Meroitic kingdom in the final phase of its existence and were settled initially in this quality on Meroitic territory?

Finally a few sentences on the Greek inscription<sup>83</sup> found in 1969 in Axum. It is the inscription of a Christian king of Axum, of Himyar, of Reeidan, of Saba, of Sileel, of the Kāsū, of the Bega, of Tiamo; who is of the tribe of Bisi Halene and is son of Ella-<sup>C</sup>Amida. The Greek text seems to be the introduction of a longer narrative in Sabaean on the other side of the stone. This latter part of the text<sup>84</sup> is unfortunately very damaged. The Greek part tells about an expedition against the Noba who have attacked the Mangartha, the Hasā, the Atiaditai and the Barya. The campaign is launched on the 8th day of the month of Māgābit, a Saturday. The editio princeps states that Māgābit 8, corresponding with Pachons 8, is equal with the 4th of March of the Julian calendar and<sup>85</sup> it fell on a Saturday in 349, 355 and 360 A. D. However, it must be added that also other such years during the later part of the 4th and in the 5th century can equally be proposed. At any rate, the date proposals of the editio princeps are

all pointless, for the conversion of the first Christian king of Axum cannot be dated earlier than 361. Thus, in lack of cross-references, the date Māgābit 8, Saturday, cannot help us any further for the time being.

The scholars dealing with the inscription, including the authors of the editio princeps who were in a position to be able to study the original stone, ascribed it to <sup>c</sup>Ezānā, moreover, they regarded the text as the Greek version of DAE 11. They were led astray by the titulature and especially by the notion *υἱὸς τοῦ Ἑλληναμίδα*, son of Ella-<sup>c</sup>Amida, so much so that they did not worry about the king's name which is not <sup>86</sup><sup>c</sup>Ezānā! The partly damaged name consists of six letters, of these only three are clearly legible: the first and the two last letters, while the second letter is quite well traceable. What can be established is AΓ..AC, i.e. something what by no means can be read as "a somewhat strange form" of a name which we know in these forms: <sup>87</sup>Ἀεῖσανᾶς, <sup>88</sup>Ἀῖσανᾶς, <sup>89</sup>Ἀῖσανᾶς and <sup>90</sup>HZANA. It must be admitted that Caquot noticed this difficulty, but choose a very simple solution writing that "la deuxième lettre ne paraît pas être un sigma, car tous les sigma de l'inscription sont lunaires. L'inscription ne présentant pas d'autres zêta, nous optons pour la lecture que recommandant les autres inscriptions."<sup>91</sup> Another difficulty, equally brushed

silently aside, is the appearance of the Atiaditai among the peoples asking for Axumite help against the Noba. It would be difficult to explain, why don't they figure in any of the variants resp. translations of the text of DAE 11?

Thus the identity of the actual king of the inscription cannot be determined by the simple "hypothesis" saying that we have here an "unusual" orthography of the name <sup>C</sup>Ezānā. Still, the father of this king is identical with the father of <sup>C</sup>Ezānā. Thus the ruler of the new Greek inscription is brother of <sup>C</sup>Ezānā. There are evidences for two brothers of <sup>C</sup>Ezānā /in case if we regard the expression "brother" of his inscriptions in the sense of family relationship and not as title/: Σαῖαζαῖς and Ἀδῆγαῖ.<sup>92</sup> But their names are unfitting. We also know of a certain 'GZ who erected an inscription relating to irrigation works in Ge'ez.<sup>94</sup> This inscription seems both paleographically and from the point of view of its language to be close to <sup>C</sup>Ezānā's DAE 7.<sup>95</sup> The Greek ΑΓ..ΑC is perhaps equivalent of the Ethiopian name 'GZ but of course it does not mean that the two persons have anything in common. Only so much seems rather certain that ΑΓ..ΑC was son of Ella-<sup>C</sup>Amida, thus brother and successor /judging from the style of his inscription, immediate successor/ of <sup>C</sup>Ezānā who still had difficulties with the Noba and who, when defeating them, erected an inscription copying almost word by

word an inscription about a campaign against the Noba of his predecessor. The only difference between the two campaigns is the appearance of a newer victim of the Noba, this may perhaps be interpreted as a sign of the further extension of the Noba since <sup>c</sup>Ezānā's days.

AT..AC does not mention Meroe; it is likely that at his time the Meroitic kingdom did not exist any more. Although the present stand of the knowledge of the Axumite mints<sup>96</sup> allows quite a few hypothesises, I am convinced that the<sup>97</sup> Axumite coin found recently by Shinnie at Meroe City cannot be brought into connection with 4th century Axumite activities reaching the capital. The coin was dated by its publisher to, the middle of the 4th century A.D. but in fact it must be considerably later than this date. Its obverse shows a royal bust and the inscription BACIΛEYC; the reverse a "Maltese" cross within wreath and with the inscription TOYTO APEΞETH XQPA running around. The cross appeared for the first time on coin on obverses of mints of Theodosius II<sup>98</sup> /408-450/ which means that no Axumite coin imitating this particular Byzantine obverse type could have been issued before the end of the first quarter of the 5th century.



- 2 -

The chronology of the Blemmy occupation of the  
Dodekaschoinos

99

Since the monograph of Updegraff presents a collection of the data concerning the entire history of the Blemmyes /Eg. blhm; medieval/Arabic/modern Bega, Bedja/and known in 1978, further since also Desanges included into his masterly analysis of the classical sources on Nubia <sup>100</sup> those concerning the Blemmyes, I shall concentrate here on data relevant for the special purpose of this paper. I must warn the reader, that I am not going to give a history of the Blemmyes in late antiquity: this study deals only with the chronological framework for such a history.

Being interested in the date of the Blemmy occupation of northern Lower Nubia it seems necessary to summarize the main events in this area during the 3rd and 4th centuries. As it is well-known, the Land of the Twelve Schoinoi from Syene/Aswan to Hiera Sycaminos/Maharraqa belonged since the Treaty of Samos established between Rome and Meroe in winter 21/20 B.C. <sup>101</sup> to Egypt. Being inhabited mainly by "Ethiopians" i.e. by non-Egyptians and having special traditions of great antiquity, the Dodekaschoinos had a special sort of administration in which the personnel of the mighty temples of Isis resp. of Thoth of

Dakka played a great role. It seems that it was the administration of these temples that rendered a constantly growing Meroitic political influence possible from the mid-second century on. <sup>102</sup> Egyptian military presence ceases around the middle of the third century in the Dodekaschoinos. In a series of studies I have tried to collect data in favour of a hypothesis according to which the territory was also politically under Meroitic <sup>103</sup> supremacy ca. between 240/41 and 248/9, but this <sup>104</sup> hypothesis is not generally accepted. Nevertheless, <sup>105</sup> demotic <sup>106</sup> and Greek inscriptions made in Philae and other sanctuaries of the Dodekaschoinos in and around 253 A.D. and 260 A.D. further the Meroitic inscriptions made <sup>107</sup> around 265 in the Meroitic Chamber in the Temple of Isis at Philae rather unambiguously suggest that after the middle of the century the temples of the territory were under joint Egyptian-Meroitic control, which, evidently enough, cannot be interpreted as a "condominium" but more likely as a status quo in which the territory belongs nominally still to Egypt, but in fact all important positions are held by the priesthood of said temples and this priesthood is Meroitic and/or governed de facto by Meroe. The withdrawal of the Roman frontier from Hiera Sycaminos to Syene i.e. the <sup>108</sup> abandonment of the Dodekaschoinos by Diocletian in 298

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was doubtlessly a consequence of this status quo but was also  
preceeded by a series of troubles which are - in a more or  
less reliable way - documented in our sources. Some  
data interpreted usually in this way are, however, to be  
discarded: so e.g. the demotic proskynema Ph. 252.<sup>109</sup>

From this adoration text we learn that a certain Jeho,  
fleet admiral, arrived on December 7. 273 A.D. from  
Alexandria in Bigga, where he attended the Choiak festival  
further that he embarked on December 24 of same year in  
order to sail back to Alexandria, or perhaps to Memphis.

Connecting the inscription with a remark of the SHA<sup>110</sup>

Griffith interpreted the proskynema as reference to a war  
against the Blemmyes.<sup>111</sup> With some reservations Updegraff

shares Griffith's view.<sup>112</sup> Jeho does not hint at any official motif

of his visit; but regarding the date and the length thereof,  
further the mention of his participation at the ceremonies,  
it is quite obvious that his visit was a short pilgrimage  
to the sacred place of Osiris and Isis and that the inscription  
itself is nothing more than a proskynema. Also the passage  
from the SHA connected to Jeho's visit is more than suspicious.

It mentions an alleged alliance of the Egyptian usurper  
Firmus with the Blemmyes. In reality, however, this Firmus  
did not exist and there was no revolt in Egypt in these years  
which could cause the action of Jeho's fleet.<sup>113</sup>

Of similar value is another remark in the SHA about the Blemmyes being expelled by Probus from Coptos and Ptolemais in 279/80. There is behind this passage, however, a source which, according to J. Schwartz,<sup>114</sup> seems to be quite reliable: this is the Panegyricus Maximini<sup>115</sup> delivered by Mamertinus in summer 291 in Gallia. It refers of course to more recent events. Mamertinus tells about a war between Ethiopians and Blemmyes who were engaged in mortal struggle with each other. This must have been a conflict of some importance between Meroe and the Blemmyes. We do not know whether there was any direct connection between this Meroitic-Blemmyan conflict and the conflict in 296 or 297 which also caused Roman intervention and seems to have ended with a defeat of both Meroitic and Blemmy armed forces: namely, the Panegyricus Constantini /delivered<sup>116</sup> on March 1. 297 / says following: "trophaea Nilica sub quibus Aethiops et Indus intremuit" where Indus means Blemmy. The victory of Diocletian over the Blemmyes was obviously a rather important event for Egyptian inner policy for it was worth to commemorate with terracotta statuettes representing the emperor killing a Blemmy warrior issued for the benefit of the Egyptian public.<sup>117</sup>

The official explanation of the withdrawal of the frontier to Syene is preserved in Procopius' Persian War, written

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before 545 and published in 551. Although the reasons of  
the withdrawal as put by Procopius are obviously more or  
less clever distortions of the realities fabricated by

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imperial propaganda, they were taken seriously in  
Nubian studies, so much so, that the fact remained unnoticed  
that the Roman evacuation of the Dodekaschoinos is evidently  
equal with a Meroitic expansion. Since I have discussed

120  
this topic elsewhere, here I only remark that it was the  
Meroitic kingdom that had to collide after 298 with all  
Blemmy attempts to get a foothold in Lower Nubia: Meroe moreover  
could now hardly avoid to be mixed up in some way with  
Blemmyan actions directed against Egyptian territory.

s  
It seems that the Egyptian military concentration recorded  
121  
in 322 in Syene/Aswan has its reason both in necessity  
d  
of border defence against Meroe and in threats of Blemmy raids.

y.  
Towards the end of the reign of Constantine a comes rei  
122  
militaris was in charge of the limes in the Upper Thebaid.

At this time the Blemmyes reappear in a quite interesting  
123  
manner. Eusebius in his Life of Constantine makes mention  
of the arrival of Ethiopian i.e. Meroitic and Blemmy envoys  
at the court. The embassy came to the emperor in all probability  
on the occasion of his tricennalia in 336 A.D. It is rather  
probable, that the appearance of the Meroitic and Blemmy envoys  
at the same time was not accidental, but it is unknown,

what kind of relationship existed in this moment between the two peoples. As to the reason and outcome of the homage paid by the Blemmyes to the emperor, we can get a glimpse from the petition of redress of Flavius Abinnaeus, a cavalry officer from the Fayoum.<sup>124</sup> He relates: "I was posted ... at Diospolis in the province of Upper Thebaid. [After] thirty-three [years of service] I was directed ... to conduct refugees of the people of the Blemmyes to ... Constantinople ... they were presented [to the emperors] whereupon ... being instructed to conduct the said envoys to their own country, I spent with them a period of three years." Although it seems that the envoys mentioned here are not identical with those mentioned by Eusebius, for Fl. Abinnaeus speaks about 337 or 338 and the following three years, still, it can be supposed that the envoys of 336 or 337 realized or restaured an agreement which could have been initiated by the envoys of 336. Taking the principles of the African policy of the sons of Constantine into account,<sup>125</sup> it seems very probable that under Constantine a foedus was concluded with a group of Blemmyes /who were perhaps in a foederate relation also with Meroe and did not belong to that organization of Blemmy tribes which constantly raided both Meroe and the Upper Thebaid/; which foedus

resulted two years later - after a delay caused perhaps  
by Constantine's death - in the delegation of Flavius  
126  
Abinnaeus as Roman praefect to said Blemmy group.

Fl. Abinnaeus stayed three years long after 337 or  
338 in the country of these Blemmyes. Where was this  
127  
country? In Updegraff's opinion in Lower Nubia proper.  
It was certainly not there. Besides overexerting the more  
than laconic narrative of the cavalry officer, Updegraff  
128  
refers also to the Vita Prima of Pachomius, namely  
ed to a passage mentioning a Blemmy attack some time before  
346. However, he must admit that the Vita Prima /together  
with the other Vitae of Pachomios/ was written only after  
390 and geographical descriptions refer in it to the time  
129  
of the writing. Moreover, the Arabic Vita which has a  
prominent place among the Vitae as to reliability, speaks  
in the relevant section about an attack of the Barbarians,  
and this may also mean other pagans /Meroites or Noubadians/.  
But against a country of the Blemmyes in the Nile valley  
speaks unambiguously enough a remark in Book XIV of  
130  
Ammianus Marcellinus. Although the passage deals with  
events of the year 354 A.D., it refers probably to the  
years between 371-378, i.e. to the period of the travels  
131  
of the historian in Egypt. It describes the territory  
inhabited by the Saracens i.e. Nabateans and in this context

localises the Blemmyes in the Eastern Desert between Nile and Red Sea, while the Nile valley south from Elephantine resp. the cataracts belongs according to him to Meroe. <sup>132</sup> Ammianus' description is corroborated <sup>133</sup> also by the Vita Senutii from which we can conclude that around 370 the king of the Blemmyes dwelled in the Eastern Desert.

The years around 370 witness of course extensive and fearful Blemmy activities. In eastern direction they manage a raid as far as the monastery of Raitha on the Sinai peninsula. <sup>134</sup> In the same year i.e. in 373 A.D. they turn up also in Lower Nubia. The demotic inscription Ph. 371 records that "in the year named the ble/?/.w attacked the nwbe.w ... In the year named the sky-boat of Isis was far away for two years, and it reached the Abaton." <sup>135</sup> A recent reading of the difficult and badly damaged inscription has proposed instead of nwbe.w 'Hbe.w, suggesting thus that the Blemmyes attacked the city of El Hibe in the Great Oasis, and not the Nubians. <sup>13</sup> Not being able to decide, which reading is the correct one, I merely remark that without having a foothold in the Nile valley the Blemmyes hardly could manage a raid as far as the Great Oasis, for which they had to cross either Meroitic or Egyptian territory. Ph. 371 represents more likely a document of the attempts of the Blemmyes at



the seizure of the Dodekaschoinos in the years after the fall  
of the Meroitic rule. In a few years we find them in the possession

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of the territory. In 395/6 Epiphanius writes: "Mons autem, de quo nunc nobis sermo est, tunc Romanis erat subditus. Smaragdinum vero sic vocatur naturaliter insula modica, ex adverso sita Beronicae, in qua portus est Indiae dirigens ad Thebaidam, quae a continenti terra Thebaica distat unius diei cursu, cum est navigium prosperum, hoc est milibus octoginta. Contigua est autem Beronice, quae sic appellatur, regioni Elephantinae nec non et Telmi, quae nunc a Blemys obtinetur. Corruerunt autem montis huius metalla suntque metalla alia in ipsorum barbarie Blemyorum iuxta Telmeos in montibus constituta, quae nunc effodientes barbari smaragdos incidunt."

Does the nunc mean that the territory south from Elephantine and around Talmis/Kalabsha came into Blemmy possession together with the emerald mines of the Eastern Desert in the very time of the writing? There are at least two independent sources which render it probable that the conquest of the Dodekaschoinos did not occur long before 395/6. The first is the evidence of  
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the Notitia Dignitatum. We learn from the ND or., the final  
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draft of which was redacted between July 392 and May 394, that the southernmost Egyptian garrison is stationed at Syene and that the frontier area is provided with considerable forces. We learn furthermore from the ND that there was  
140  
a detachment of the ala VIII Palmyrenorum stationed at Phoenikon. Since Phoenikon is situated at the junction of the desert roads to Leukos Limen and Berenice, it is evident that Epiphanius' remark means also the Blemmy possession of Phoenikon i.e. the evacuation of the Roman force.

It must be mentioned here that according to  
141 142  
Desanges and Kirwan there was at the time of the

redaction of the ND or. a Roman garrison with detachments of the Legio II Traiana at Parembolē/Dabod in the Dodekaschoinos, south from Syene. However, it seems that the Parembolē of the ND or. <sup>143</sup> is with Parembolē-Nicopolis <sup>144</sup> near to Alexandria identical.

The second evidence is rendered by a poem of Claudius Claudianus, which locates in a description of the course of the river Nile the Blemmyes between Meroe and the cataract region at Syene: the river "errat <sup>145</sup> per Meroen Blemmyasque feros atramque Syenem."

Claudianus, a native of Alexandria, went to live in Rome in 394 where he published his first Latin poem in <sup>146</sup> the early months of 395. Towards the end of his life, i.e. before 404, he returned to Egypt in order to get married there. It is very unlikely that the verse in question reflects information gathered before his moving to Rome, since it was written during, or after the <sup>147</sup> wedding trip. To these two sources we can add a group of less exact Egyptian sources: the <sup>148</sup> Historia Monachorum which makes a series of small remarks on Lower Nubia. One of these is made on "Ethiopians" ravaging the area of Syene/Aswan. A further remark is given into the mouth of the monk Mark who lives in the cataract region: "there is a race to the east of us and the south-we

of our city. He is called Anouba and is in great straits."

Another passage describes a Blemmy raid introduced with the words "the demons made a raid in the valley",<sup>150</sup> making thus unambiguous that the invaders dwell in the Eastern Desert.

All these remarks are only indirectly dated. As noticed

<sup>151</sup>by Kirwan, the relevant section of the Historia alludes to a Mark who was bishop of Philae. Mark was probably a contemporary of the patriarch Athanasius /328-373/; the Historia mentions furthermore a bishop Pseleusios who was consecrated by the patriarch Timotheos I /380-385/.

The nunc of Epiphanius, if confronted with the evidence of the ND or. and with Claudius' verse and put into the context of the narratives about increasing Blemmy activity around and after the 370-ies, means thus that the Blemmyes have conquered the Dodekaschoinos and the strategically important zone of the Eastern Desert between Meroe and Egypt after 393-394 and before 395-396, i.e. the occupation occurred while Epiphanius worked on his treaty de XII gemmis. Evidently enough, precise information about the actual possessor of the emerald mines in the region of Phoenikon-Berenice was by no means unimportant for the author working on a treatise dealing with precious stones, in which he displays his knowledge of the actual world, although he starts it with Aaron's ornaments.

Although not very clearly, both the above quoted demotic graffito in Philae written in 373 /Ph. 371/ and the Historia Monachorum hint at the fact that the Blemmyes had to conquer the Dodekaschoinos from a people called sometimes summarily Ethiopians, in most cases Noubades or Anouba. The successor state of Meroe in Lower Nubia - a state of which we know almost nothing in the period around 370-400, except of the archaeological remains unearthed in a royal necropolis /Qustul/ and at some other, better datable, sites <sup>152</sup> - was perhaps ruled by the Noubades; moreover, also the bulk of the population of late Meroitic Lower Nubia must have been Nubian-speaking. Nevertheless, the princes of the successor state regarded themselves as heirs to Meroe. But evidently enough, the consequences of the territorial losses were to be felt also quite independently from political identity and tradition of territorial integrity.

An interesting interlude deserves here mention. We learn from a demotic graffito written in 394 in Philae /Ph. 436/ that at this time there were priests in the Temple of Isis who regarded it proper to pay homage to Mandulis, a deity specially worshipped by the Blemmyes and associated with the Blemmyes - who were just in these days ravaging

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the neighbourhood. The inscription and the relief which is accompanied by the graffito are the only late antique relics of the Mandulis cult at Philae: the Temple of Mandulis, attested in the 2nd century B.C.,<sup>155</sup> was now, presumably already for centuries, out of function. What is the background of this curious devotion? Was it motivated by political conviction challenged by the concentration of Roman military force in the area? Did this priest hope that a Blemmy victory over the Romans improves the situation in Upper Egypt? or we better see in him a figure of the pagan resistance - a figure similar to those whom we encounter in later years: haters of Rome and of Christendom who did not shrink back even from using the Blemmyes as tools.

In the following I discuss the data concerning the Blemmy occupation in the valley. They are - with a few exceptions - very difficult to connect with exact points in time. Most of them are floating in the decades around the visit of Olympiodorus in the land of the Blemmyes which occurred between ca. 418-421 and the middle years of the century. To begin with the most "exhaustive" narrative,<sup>156</sup> we learn from Olympiodorus of Thebes, that the Blemmyes possessed the cities of Taphis/Tafa, Talmis/Kalabsha and Prima in the valley, altogether a stretch of five days'

journey from Philae, further Phoenikon/El Laqeita and Chiris /?/ in the region of the emerald mines in the Eastern Desert. Prima is usually identified with Qasr Ibrim /Pidema of Juba, Pindi/mis/ or Primis /?/ of Bion, Primi of the itinerary of the Petronius-expedition,  
157  
Meroitic Pedeme /, but Olympiodorus' definition of the geographical position of this place is very confusing:

"...they took me as far as Talmis itself so as to investigate also those regions which extend for a distance of five days' /journey/ from Philae as far as Prima, which was at one time the first city in the Thebaid when entering from the land of the barbarians. For this reason the Romans called it Latin Prima, i.e. "First". As Qasr Ibrim lies some 100 kms south from the southern border of the Dodekaschoinos, it is hard to believe that there could have been a legend in the 5th century maintaining that this place was the first city "in the Thebaid" /!/ north from some barbarian land. It is also unlikely that Olympiodorus could have heard something in this context about the Roman occupation of Qasr Ibrim some four and a half centuries ago. Desanges hints at the possibility that Olympiodorus'

Prima is the *Πρωτη* of Agatarchides/Photius, a name  
158  
given to Qurta /mod./, the Corte of the Itin. Ant.,  
159

which was the first Roman city when one crossed at  
Hiera Sycaminos the Egyptian border/before 298 A.D./  
It is thus rather likely, that the country of the  
Blemmyes did not include Qasr Ibrim.

Olympiodorus says following about the motif of his  
visit: "during his sojourn at Thebes and Syene on account  
of /his/ historical research, there arose a desire  
/among/ the phylarchs and prophets of the barbarians around  
Talmis i.e. the Blemmyans to meet him; and it was his reputation  
that motivated them to this." Although Olympiodorus  
enjoyed a great reputation - Hierocles, a philosopher,  
dedicated to him a treaty on Providence and Fate  
saying that Olympiodorus "attached many great barbarian  
peoples to the Roman Empire" -, still, it is hard to  
believe that his reputation won mainly by his visit to  
the Huns in 412 could have reached the Blemmyes,  
whose knowledge of world affairs hardly went beyond  
matters in Egypt. It is much more likely that he was  
sent to the Blemmyes in diplomatic mission by the  
eastern court. Both scheme and outcome of his mission  
are unknown. Kirwan's hypothesis, that at the time of his  
visit the Blemmyes were foederates of Rome, is attractive,  
but improbable, for in this case Olympiodorus would have  
formulated his account in a different way.

It is perhaps the title phylarchos that influences research in favour of the hypothesis proposed by Kirwan:  
<sup>165</sup>  
it may refer to chiefs of federate barbarian groups. But in this case I prefer the meaning "tribal chief", the more so that all cases when we hear of Blemmy phylarchoi, as far as we can judge it, concern men whose quality do not suggest the very special meaning of /foederate/ chief.

Two Greek inscriptions refer to the religiosity of the Blemmyes in the decades around Olympiodorus' visit. The better known text is to be found in the Temple of Mandulis in Kalabsha <sup>166</sup> /now in New Kalabsha/ and records the appointment of *κλίνάρχος* of three religious societies in Talmis/Kalabsha by an unnamed king in the official time of the phylarchos Phoinoin /which must have been pronounced as Phonen/, Gamatiphant the prophet and Menruchem, *δημοκλινάρχος*. The religious societies bear names of indigenous deities, as shown recently in an interesting paper by Tomas Hägg: <sup>167</sup> *σύροδος Ἀβερε, σύροδος Χοπαρ, σύροδος Μαρδης*. <sup>168</sup> It seems that the societies are organized in a similar way as related societies in Egypt, it is thus not improbable that in spite of the indigenous cults to which they belong, they have their roots in the religious life of Talmis before the Blemmy occupation.



169

The second inscription is in the temple of Taphis/Tafa.

It records the donation of a stoa to the indigenous deity

Amati /ΑΜΑΤΙ/ by the <sup>170</sup> *κλύνερχος συν(όδου) Αματι*. The text

also refers to a society of the god *Σεβάλ*, who is a form

<sup>171</sup> of the Egyptian Chonsu. This inscription seems to reflect same Blemmyan continuation of originally Egyptian cult

organizations and religious customs as the Kalabsha inscription.

Unfortunately, we do not know more about the deities referred

to in them, and cannot tell, whether did also these deities

have their Egyptian cult forms and places already earlier

/in the form as the cult of Mandulis was established

mainly for the benefit of the Blemmyes and perhaps also of the

Noubadians first in the Ptolemaic period in Philae <sup>172</sup> and

then by the Roman emperors in Kalabsha/, or were they

imported into the temples of the Dodekaschoinos resp.

into the cult life of the inhabitants of Kalabsha and Taphis

only after the Blemmy conquest around 395/6.

The well-known appeal of Appion /known from an imperial

<sup>173</sup> rescript /, bishop of Syene, Contra Syene and Elephantine

was written some time between 425 and 450 and addressed to

Theodosius II. Pleading that the dux and comes of the Upper

Thebaid may order the troops under his command to protect

the churches of Syene, Contra Syene and Elephantine, their

properties and the Christians living at these places where there

<sup>174</sup> are no troops stationed, for they stand defenceless against

the barbarian Blemmyes and Annoubades. It would be a speculation

to connect the bishop's plea with devastating raids  
noticed around 440 by Egyptian monks,<sup>175</sup> but even if we  
do not point out direct connection between one particular  
raid and the letter, Appion doubtlessly gives an evidence  
of what could perhaps be called general neglect of the  
military protection against the southern barbarians. The  
answer of the emperor is not preserved, but it was  
probably generous, for the fragment of the answer in  
the own handwriting of the emperor preserved on the  
rescript starts with the words bene valere te cupimus.<sup>176</sup>  
<sup>177</sup>  
P. Grossmann suggests that the late antique army barracks  
built in the temenos of the Temple of Chnum at Elephantine  
are to be interpreted as answer of the emperor on Appion's  
plea. Unfortunately, we are unable to form a judgement on  
the history of the detachment of the cohors prima felix  
Theodosiana stationed in 392-394 at Elephantine<sup>178</sup> and to  
tell why was this garrison evacuated at the time of  
Appion.

The new feature in the Blemmy raids is their compliance  
with the Noubades or Annoubades: a striking development,  
the promoters of which are entirely obscure - at least, our  
sources are silent in this respect. It was perhaps common  
interest in the worship of the Isis of Philae that has brought  
about the conclusion of a cooperation, or Noubadian interest  
(also beyond interest in the free access to the goddess) in

free communication of whatever kind with Egypt via the  
Blemmyan Dodekaschoinos. But what the promoters ever were,  
this compliance must have meant for Egypt a suddenly increasing  
threat to security. The Noubadians committed themselves  
for a rather long period of several decades to plundering.

The royal tombs of Qustul<sup>179</sup> yielded numerous objects of  
Egyptian or even Constantinopolitan origin, as the jewelled  
harnesses,<sup>180</sup> bracelets and rings,<sup>181</sup> inlaid woodwork,<sup>182</sup>  
silver ewers,<sup>183</sup> etc., but these, if not acquired by commerce,<sup>184</sup>  
seem to be presents sent to foederates. The later  
cemetery of Ballana<sup>185</sup> shows, at least in case of burials  
of the first half of the 5th century, a different  
picture, for here the foreign objects are obviously parts  
of booties. So e.g. the items of a church treasure that  
could not have been received as presents: a reliquary,<sup>186</sup>  
a silver censer,<sup>187</sup> liturgical spoons,<sup>188</sup> embossed  
silver dishes,<sup>189</sup> several candelabra.<sup>190</sup> All these objects  
must have belonged to an Upper Egyptian church and date from<sup>191</sup>  
the period around the turn of the 4th and 5th centuries.

The Noubadian raids, if we take the liberty to date them on  
the basis of these /and other, here disregarded/ objects in  
the tombs, start around the first and second decades of the 5th  
century and in this way they can also be connected with  
the mentions of raids in Palladius' Historia Lausiaca.<sup>192</sup>

It is worth to note that Palladius speaks about Ethiopians!

By the middle of the century the joint Blemmyan-Noubadian undertakings in Egypt must have become intolerable. Towards the end of 452 A.D. Roman forces were sent against them and the combined army of the two peoples is defeated at a place unknown for us. We possess information about the defeat and the treaty following it through Jordanes and Priscus. The first gives a very short description of the events remarking that "Novades Blemmyesque Ethiopia prolapsos per Forum Alexandrinae urbis procuratorem  
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sedavit et pepulit a finibus Romanorum." Priscus' description is longer - and he was probably also an  
194 195  
eyewitness to the events. He relates: "The Blemmyans and the Noubadae, having been defeated by the Romans, sent a delegation to Maximinus from both peoples, wishing to enter into a peace treaty. And they proposed that this be observed so long as Maximinus remained in the country of the Thebans. When he refused to enter into a treaty for such a short period, they said they would not take up arms for the rest of his life. But as he would not accept even the second proposal of the embassy, they made a treaty for one hundred years. In this it was agreed that the Roman prisoners be released without ransom /regardless of/ whether they have been captured during this or during any other attack, that the animals carried off at that time be returned

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and that the compensation for their expenses be paid; further that the well born among them be handed over as hostages to guarantee the treaty, and that their crossing to the temple of Isis be unhindered in accordance with the ancient law, Egyptians having charge of the river boat in which the statue of the goddess is placed and ferried across the river. For at a stated time the barbarians bring the statue to their own country and, after having consulted it, return it safely to the island. <sup>196</sup> Therefore Maximinus decided that it was appropriate that the text of the compact be ratified in the temple of Philae. Some /people/ were sent. Also present were those of the Blemmyans and of the Noubadae who were to conclude the treaty on the island. After the terms of the agreement had been committed to writing and the hostages had been handed over - they were children of the ex-despots and former sub-despots /tyrannos; hypo-tyrannos/, something that had never before happened in this war, for never had children of Noubadae and of Blemmyans been hostages with the Romans - it turned out that Maximinus fell into precarious health and died. When the barbarians got word of Maximinus' death, they took away their hostages by force and overran the country." As the narrative refers to Maximinus' death, the treaty must have been concluded and broken in 453 A.D.: for after Maximinus' death

Priscus went to Alexandria where he witnessed the religious  
rioting of 453,<sup>197</sup> and came into close contact with the  
Florus whom we met in Jordanes' remark. The differences  
between the narratives of Jordanes and Priscus - i.e. the  
exclusive mention of Florus by the first; of Maximinus  
by the second author - could arise some doubts as to the  
identity of the defeat described by Jordanes with the war  
described by Priscus.<sup>198</sup> However, we know that a considerable  
part of Jordanes' Romana comes from Priscus, so e.g. in all  
probability also § 333 goes back on Priscus' lost *Ἱστορία*.<sup>199</sup>  
The uncertainties about Florus' and Maximinus' identity  
do not weaken the evidence. Florus was, according to  
Jordanes, procurator urbis; Seeck identified him with a  
comes rei militaris<sup>200</sup> i.e. with a military governor of the  
city. Maximinus bears no title, although the proposal of  
the barbarians concerning a treaty for the time of his stay  
in the Thebaid renders it probable that he was there in some  
official quality with fixed /?/ term. In sources of these  
times there appear two personalities bearing the name Maximinus  
both could theoretically have been employers of Priscus.  
Literature generally prefers Maximinus, a military dignity  
to Maximinus, a magister scrinii<sup>201</sup> working on the preparations  
of the Theodosian Code. He is first attested as ambassador  
of the emperor to Attila in 449; in 450 as commander of an

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expedition against the rebellious Zeno in Isauria;

in November of same year speaks Pope Leo in a letter

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about a comes Maximinus. Still, it is unclear,

in what quality did Maximinus act in Philae? and, I would

add, it is unclear, too, whether is the ambassador in the

court of Attila identical in fact with the leader

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of the expedition against Zeno? Blockley supposes

that Maximinus was sent to the Egyptian frontier to

negotiate a peace, i.e. as a diplomat. This means,

that he arrived after Florus defeated the army of the

allied barbarians. This reconstruction of the events

can be regarded as corresponding with the lost narrative

of Priscus which we know only from the scattered fragments

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in Konstantinos Porphyrogennetos, Jordanes resp.

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Evagrius. However, it is disturbing that it is by

no means certain that our Maximinus is really a professional

diplomat. The above mentioned detail in Priscus' narrative

suggests that he was already in office in the Thebaid:

now, in order to be able to negotiate a peace treaty,

he must have been holding the office of the dux of the

207

Thebaid.

More important than the question of Maximinus' identity is the chain of events described by Priscus: joint raids - taking prisoners and rich booty in Upper Egypt - of the

Blemmyes living in the Dodekaschoinos and of the Noubadians living south from the Dodekaschoinos; their defeat by Florus in ca. 452; a peace treaty concluded in Philae by Maximinus in 452 or 453; death of Maximinus in 453 causing the automatic expiration of the peace treaty /according to the ideology of both partners!/ and the immediate Blemmyan-Noubadian attack in order to take back the hostages. It is worth noticing that Priscus' narrative does not make a foedus between the barbarians and Rome likely. On the other hand, however, the treaty granted free access to the Temple of Isis what is to be regarded as a great concession in the time of the repeated prohibitions directed against the maintenance of pagan cults. We do not know, whether was the raid after Maximinus' death followed still by further raids or not; the fragment of a Greek heroic Blemmyomachia in mid-fifth century style<sup>200</sup> praising a victorious general of the name Germanus may refer to a defeat suffered after 453 as well as to an episode of the conflicts in 452. The situation is perhaps to be characterized by the fact that the Temple of Isis remained open and accessible to the barbarians till ca. 535-538 A.D., when Justinian finally ordered to close<sup>209</sup> the Philae temples.

When trying to understand the connections between Egypt, the Blemmyes and the Noubadians in the first half



of the fifth century, we must be aware of the fact that the Blemmyes and the Noubadians were not living within the boundaries of centralized kingdoms. In the first half of the fourth century Fl. Abinnaeus speaks about secessionist tribes among the Blemmyes which could be persuaded to serve Constantinople. The situation could remain similar also in later times. Certain Blemmyan tribes lived in the Dodekaschoinos, while the bulk of the tribes remained in the territory between the Nile and the Red Sea Hills, this also may have caused differentiation and a variety of attitudes towards Egypt. As to the Noubadians, we must bear in mind that also this notion may have different meanings in the sources. There were Noubadians living as Meroitic subjects in Lower Nubia until the 360-ies or 370-ies and they were certainly Meroiticized to a considerable extent. There were perhaps such Noubadian groups living in the Dodekaschoinos already before 298; after 298 this territory was settled then more densely with Meroitic subjects of Noubadian ethnicity. <sup>210</sup> A new wave of Noubadians - probably less Meroiticized, or not Meroiticized at all - arrived in Lower Nubia after the fall of Meroe. During the following century Lower Nubia south from the Dodekaschoinos was occupied by these people which were only by their name homogeneous: it is probable, that in fact they constituted both in time and geographically several political entities and displayed different sympathies and antipathies. While the sources in the first half of the

fifth century speak about Noubadian raids in Egypt, and in the royal tombs of Ballana we find signs of these or other raids, further south there seem to exist at the same time at least two foederate Noubadian chiefdoms. An alabastre largitio dish made in the periode<sup>211</sup> between 400 and 450 unearthed in a princely tumulus at Gammai; further two metall bowls with the bust of a<sup>212</sup> mid-fifth century emperor on one of them from a tomb at Ermenne are typical objects presented to a foederate<sup>213</sup> of medium rank. Although it cannot be entirely excluded, that these objects originate from a booty, I am convinced that they are the same for what we would take them if found in another barbarian neighbour country of the empire: namely the vessels in which the barbarian chiefs received the money subsidy.

The remaining documents to be commented on may - at least indirectly - be brought into connection with the setback suffered in 452. They are documents of extraordinary importance and of extraordinary amiguity. The Silko inscription as well as the letter of Phonen and the Tantani correspondence provide us with a richness of informations but also with perplexing puzzles.

<sup>214</sup>  
The Silko inscription tells following:

"I am Silko, King of the Noubades and of all the Ethiopians. I went to Talmis and Taphis twice. I fought with the Blemmyes, and God gave me the victory with the third time. I conquered in turn; I made myself master of their cities. I encamped with my troops for the first time. I conquered them, and they beseech me. I made peace with them, and they made an oath to me by their gods. I trusted to their oath because they were honorable men. I went up to the upper part of my /land/. When I became king, I did not at all follow other kings but /went/ as the chief one before them. The people who contend with me, I do not permit them to settle down in their land, unless they esteem me and beseech /me/. I am a lion for the Lower Country, and for the Upper Country I am a bear. I fought with the Blemmyes from Prim to Telelis once. And the other Upper Noubades I ravaged their lands since they contended with me. I do not permit them to set themselves in the shade but outside under the sun. And they cannot drink water in their house. Those who resist me, I carry off from women their children." So much is clear, that after two unsuccessful campaigns Silko defeated the Blemmyes, conquered their cities between Prim /probably Qasr Ibrim; but see the doubts expressed in connection with the name above in the discussion of Olyimpiodorus' Prima/ and

Telelis /unidentified, perhaps in the region of the first cataract?/ including Taphis/Tafa and Talmis/Kalabsha; further that he made a peace treaty with them, taking the oath of the Blemmyes. Silko also fought against the "upper Noubades" whom we may perhaps identify with Noubadian groups in alliance with the Blemmyes - i.e. with those Noubadians whom we saw above in the sources concerning raids in Egypt and the expedition of Florus and Maximianus. The question, whether was Silko a Christian, is here not relevant.  
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The Silko inscription was usually taken for an indication of the final expulsion of the Blemmyes from the Dodeka-  
216 schoinos, but recently Kirwan 217 and Updegraff 218 argued for a different interpretation. Now the second document, 219 Phonen's letter, makes the revision of previous opinions necessary. Before turning to its discussion, I call the reader's attention on the fact that Phonen's letter is later, than the Silko inscription, and Kirwan's opinion, according to which Silko did not put an end to the Blemmy occupation, results from the imprecise preliminary information he possessed about the chronological implications in the text of Phonen.

The letter was sent by Phonen, King of the Blemmyes /βασιλεὺς βλεμνύων/ to Aburni, King of the Noubades /βασιλεὺς Νουβάδων/. The letter does not leave any doubt as to the fact that Aburni is the successor of Silko and Phonen

is identical with the opponent of King Silko of the Silko inscr.  
Phonen urges Aburni to restore peace under rather clearly  
outlined conditions and recalls the preliminaries, saying  
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thus: "As you wrote to me thus, I want us to have  
concord between each other ... I welcomed it /?/ utterly.  
If you wish, let you and I remain honestly in our houses.  
For first indeed Silko conquered and took Talmis, but today  
you have conquered and taken Talmis, first Silko took and  
kept us off our lands, but today you have conquered and  
taken Talmis; first Silko spoke thus, Give me sheep and  
cattle and camels in plenty /?/, so that your lands may be  
returned, and I gave them all and he spurned and restrained  
us. And I wrote to Eienei for the sake of peace and sent  
ambassadors under truce and he [i.e. Silko] spurned and  
murdered the chieftain and prince and took prisoner the  
prophets on the site of Phontauu... And indeed because of  
the actions of Silko by which he spurned Eienei - for this  
reason - I was grieved and came down and made war. Yet the  
words of Silko and Eienei have passed away. Are we, perhaps,  
to take up with each other the position of Eienei and Silko?  
No! For now I and you, as a brother and as an elder /brother/,  
shall share a good time with each other. Go up out of our  
land and send the gods to the temple ... and you sent me word  
about silver and sheep and camels. We found these and I have

sent them to you. Go up out of my land and give us our own possessions and gods..../And/I shall keep good peace with you. But be sure that, if you forbid us our lands and gods, we cannot stand by and allow everything to perish. And indeed the war is not for your lands; the war is for our lands."

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Scholars dealing with the letter unanimously stress the difficulties of its translation. Indeed, all important sections could be translated at least in two contradictory ways, rendering thus at least two entirely different reconstructions of the events possible. 222 It seems to me that the right explanation for the particularly bad Greek was found by Tomas Hägg who supposed that the confused and confusing use of personal endings /which actually causes the contradictory explanations of the contents/ is the consequence of the cooperation of Phonen, who knew well what he wanted to say but spoke a Pidgin Greek, and of a scribe for whom the story was obscure but who wrote a good Greek and tried to be consequent with the endings - as far as he thought to understand Phonen's 223 initiative. This hypothesis allows us to look for a coherent story in the letter. The story seems to be about Silko, King of the Noubadians, taking - as also indicated in his Kalabsha inscription - Talmis and other

places from Phonen and concluding afterwards a peace treaty with him. It seems that the treaty was understood by Phonen as enabling him to come back into the possession of the cities captured by Silko. But in spite of the tribute sent by Phonen, Silko remained in the cities, whereas Phonen sent ambassadors to him. Silko murdered them, including a phylarchos /tribal chief, in Rea's translation chieftain/ and a hypotyranos /sub-despot, in Rea's translation prince/. In the ensuing war Silko's successor, Aburni "conquered" Talmis and other places.

The first question inevitably is about the "importance" of the letter, i.e. whether can it be interpreted as a proof for the final Noubadian possession of the Dodekaschoinos resp. for the final expulsion of the Blemmyes? Evidently enough, the text is an evidence for events that occurred before its writing, but there are still external arguments that may lend to it a certain "finality". These are two inscriptions in Kalabsha: we have dealt with both of them above. The Silko inscription is a triumphal inscription accompanied by a representation of the victorious Noubadian king <sup>224</sup> written on a distinguished piece of wall in the Great Court of the Temple of Mandulis. It is rather natural to imagine, that this inscription cannot remain intact in case if the Blemmyes re-conquer Kalabsha. This argument is in a somewhat strange way corroborated by the second inscription:

this inscription in the Talmis temple about the appointment of klynarchoi was made under Phonen when he was still a phylarchos and suggests, that Phonen was well aware of the significance of the erection of inscriptions in temples and especially in this particular temple. Consequently, it would seem logical that if Phonen, as king, could return to Kalabsha, he would certainly not leave uneffaced the triumphal inscription of his enemy, relating just the victory over him.

Since the conflicts between Silko, Aburni and Phonen concerned the ownership of the Dodekaschoinos, the question is, whether are the Silko inscription and the letter of Phonen to be dated before, or after 452/3, rather irrelevant. Prior to Maximinus' treaty Blemmyes and Noubadians appear as allies, but it is now not improbable, that it was just a side-effect of the treaty and of the ensuing difficulties that alienated the two peoples from each other. It is furthermore well imaginable, that this did not happen without Roman intervention.

The Phonen letter was found together with three other papyri written in Sa<sup>c</sup>idic Coptic, by different persons, but the recipient is the same in each case: a certain Tantani, described in the largest letter as Tantani, ΠΕΦΥΛΑΡΧΟΣ ΜΙΣΘΕΝΟC ΝΝΑΝΟΥΒΑ, i.e. phylarchos of the nation of those who belong to Nouba /or to the Anouba/.<sup>225</sup> In another letter<sup>226</sup> he is addressed ΠΧΟΕΙC ΝΝΟΥΒΑ, Lord of the Nouba, but this latter does not mean in my opinion a similar



career as that of Phonen from phylarchos to basileüs.

The longest letter is written by an Egyptian officer, Viventius, who describes himself as the "devoted tribune, who has been placed over all the soldiers who are in the limiton of Egypt".<sup>227</sup> This letter seems to be part of a

correspondence dealing with the preparations of a treaty<sup>228</sup> between Tantani and Egypt, but we cannot say more about the contents of this obviously extremely important text before its publication. Certain details in it strongly suggest a mid-fifth century dating, it is thus tempting to bring Tantani's correspondence into connection either with the events of 452-453, or with the situation immediately after the - broken - peace treaty between the Blemmyes and the Noubadians on the one hand, and Egypt on the other. It is perhaps not without significance, that the Tantani correspondence does not contain any hints at Blemmyes.

Although only hypothetically, above considerations suggest that the Blemmyes have lost the Dodekaschoinos shortly after 453 A.D. In the first half of the 6th century they lived already for a longer time outside of the valley, as Procopius' description suggests. The historian makes an excursion on events in and around Philae when mentioning Justinian's intention to win the Aethiopians i.e. Axum and the Homerites as allies against Persia.<sup>229</sup> In 1, 19 27-37<sup>230</sup> of his De Bello Persico he relates:

"From the city of Auxomis to the Egyptian border of the Roman Empire, where the city known as Elephantine is situated, is a journey of thirty days ... Among the many peoples settled there are the Blemmyes and the Nobatai, very populous tribes. But the Blemmyes inhabit the interior of this country, while the Nobatai possess the lands on either side of the River Nile. ... Diocletian persuaded those barbarians /i.e. the Nobatai/, to migrate from their own haunts and to settle on either side of the Nile, promising to present them with great cities and with a large territory, markedly better than that which they formerly inhabited. In this way he supposed they would stop harassing the territories around Oasis and also, taking possession of the land which was given to them, probably drive off the Blemmyes and the other barbarians, since the land was /now/ their own. This pleased the Nobatai, and they made the migration very quickly indeed in the way Diocletian had commanded them. So they took possession of both the Roman cities and all the country on both sides of the river beyond the city of Elephantine. Then this emperor decreed that there be given both to them and to the Blemmyes each year a stated amount of gold on the condition that they no longer plunder Roman territory. Although they have been receiving this right down to my day, none the less they continue to overrun the places

in those parts. ... These barbarians retained the sanctuaries in Philae right down to my day, but the Emperor Justinian decided to pull them down. Accordingly Narses, ... who was in command of the troops here, pulled down the sanctuaries on the emperor's orders, held the priests under guard and sent the images to Byzantium."

Not all details of the description are equally precise. The origin of the Noubadian settlement in the Dodekaschoinos may partly go back to Diocletian's frontier withdrawal, but the people hardly has arrived here from territories west from the Nile, they rather came from Lower Nubia where they were Meroitic subjects, similarly, as they must have been Meroitic subjects after 298 in the Dodekaschoinos. Although it cannot be doubted on the basis of evidences, it is not quite certain that the formal foedus between Diocletian, the Noubadians and the Blemmyes as described by Procopius did really exist: it is also possible, that Procopius projected later developments back into the time of the frontier withdrawal. Diocletian's scheme to use the Noubadians against the Blemmyes is not improbable in itself, but also this detail makes the impression as if Procopius would in fact write about more recent - perhaps mid-fifth century - reasons and circumstances of the maintenance of the pagan cults in Philae.

The Gebelen documents

These documents were presumably found on the small island of Gebelen some 25 English miles south of Thebes. 231  
The thirteen documents - all written on a material what appears to be gazelle /?/ skin - are in Greek /nine pieces/ and in Coptic with Greek insertions /four pieces/, and belonged to the same archive. The homogeneity of the collection is indicated by following reasons: a/ five of the nine loan texts in the collection involve the same lender; b/ four of the above-mentioned five loans are written by the scribe Sansnos, one further loan by the scribe Dioscoros; c/ three further loans were written again by Sansnos, one by the scribe Agathon. The documents were recently arranged into a chronological sequence on the basis of the indiction datings and the indications consisted in the texts themselves by Tomas Hägg; here I reproduce 232  
his list and then I go to a short discussion of the contents of the individual texts on the basis of the new edition and translation prepared by T. Eide, T. Hägg 233  
and R. H. Pierce.

No. 1. BKU III 350, scribe Sansnos, 9th Ind., Thoth 29

No. 2. BKU III 361, scribe Sansnos, ? Ind., Epeiph 29

No. 3. BKU III 359, scribe Sansnos, undated

No. 4. SB III 6258, scribe Agathon, 11th Ind., Athyr 23

No. 5. SB X 10554, scribe Agathon, 13th Ind., Mecheir 23

No. 6. SB III 6257, scribe Sansnos, 1st Ind., Phaophi 24

No. 7. SB X 10553, scribe Dioscoros, undated

No. 8. SB III 6259, scribe Sansnos, 2nd Ind., Epeiph 13

No. 9. P. Köln ägypt. 13, scribe Agathon, 2nd Ind.,

Phamenoth 15

No. 10. SB X 10552, scribe Sansnos, 4th Ind., Phapophi 5 /?/

No. 11. BGU III 796, scribe Sansnos, ? Ind., Pharmouthi 17

No. 12. BGU III 795, scribe Sansnos, 5th /?/ Ind.,

Pharmouthi 18

No. 13. BGU III 797, scribe Sansnos, ? Ind., Thoth 11.

A short summary of the contents of the individual documents is presented here in order to give an idea of the structure of the dealings fixed in these texts; literature refers usually somewhat biassed to one or another feature of the legal practice of the Blemmyes:

234

No. 1. Coptic and Greek. Donation and manumission:

Kharafrik, son of ?, donates his mother a female slave. In the second part of the document the same mother manumits the two children of her son by above female slave. These two children are obliged to dwell in the house of the manumittor and serve her as free persons. Among the witnesses figure Khaias, phylarchos and Osien, hypotyranos.

235

No. 2. Coptic and Greek. Acknowledgement of debt.

Debtors Phant and his daughter Trempyoh. The debt is secured by agricultural land belonging to the debtors /antichretic loan<sup>236</sup> /. While the debtors are Egyptians /according to their name/, the lender - whose name is not preserved - was probably Blemmyan.

237

No. 3. Coptic and Greek. Acknowledgement of debt.

Debtor Sulien, son of Wanaktikuta; lender Phant. The antichretic loan is secured by a tavern /symposion/ in the locality Tune.

238

No. 4. Greek. Royal disposition. The most noble

king /*ἐπιφανέστατος βασιλεύς*/ Pokatimne entrusts the administration of the island Tamsir, also called Tanare, to the priest<sup>\*</sup> /*ἱερεὺς* / Poae, who is addressed as most well-born /*εὐγενέστατος*/.

239

No. 5. Greek. Acknowledgement of debt. Debtor Sulien,

son of Wanaktikuta /see No. 3/, lender Phant, son of the priest Kirbeeitak. The debt is secured by two female slaves.

240

No. 6. Greek. Royal disposition. Kharakhen, King of

the Blemmyes /*βασιλεύς τῶν βλεμύων*/ entrusts the administration of the island Tanare /see No. 4/ to his /three or

241

two ?/ children, adding: "And no one is ordered to

hinder you. But if the Romans make difficulties /and/ do not

hand over the customary /dues/ /*συνήθειαι*/, the phylarchos

shall not be hindered, nor the hypotyranos, from seizing the Romans until /they/ pay the customary /dues/ for my island." Witnesses are Laize, domesticus and Tiutikna, domesticus.

242

No. 7. Greek. Acknowledgement of debts /two distinct receipts/. Debtors name is not preserved; lender is Ose.

Ose is addressed as well-born /εὐγενής/.

243

No. 8. Greek. Acknowledgement of debt. Debtor Argon, son of Laize, silversmith; lender Noaymek.

244

No. 9. Coptic and Greek. Royal disposition. According to the editio princeps the document records that King

245

Barachia reconfirms his previous order to the woman Amnas

246

to remain in the komerkion after having been manumitted, further obliges her to serve him also as a free person.

Since Weber's translation is corrected at several places by

Elde, Hägg and Pierce, I reproduce here their new trans-

lation: "Barachia, the king of the nation of the Blemmyes

/πρρρ ἀπρρρρρρρ ρρρρρρρρρρρρ/, I write to Amnas, her

whose Christian name is Sophia: I order you to remain in the

komerkion under /= which belongs to?/ the /= your?/ fathers

in the way that everyone is and to be, yourself, as a free

person. It is not permitted for anyone to pass by there

ever; for when I ascended the throne after King Kharakhen,

I myself ordered you to be in the komerkion in a town /†MH/;

for no one should hinder /you/ there. And I assent to the document; /for/ it was at my command that Agathon, the scribe, wrote this document." Witnesses: King Barakhia /1/; Tata, phylarchos; Elsoeit, ~~Hypotyranos~~; Eutieka; Prekam; Hatika; Laize; Kaet; Noupika, phylarchos; in the closing formula stands: "at the command of the most glorious /εὐδοξοτάτος / King Barakhia."

247

No. 10. Greek. Acknowledgement of debt. Debtor Osian, lender Ose /see Nos 7, 11, 12, 13/.

248

No. 11. Greek. Acknowledgement of debt. Debtor Sle, lender Ose, who is addressed here /as also in Nos 12 and 13/ as phylarchos, tribal chief.

249

No. 12. Greek. Acknowledgement of debt. Debtor and lender as in No. 11.

250

No. 13. Greek. Acknowledgement of debt. Lender Ose /see Nos 10, 11, 12/, debtors Tusikia and Hadetak/./.

From the dispositions of Pokatimne /No. 4/ and of Khara-khen /No. 6/ we learn that the administration of the island Tanare - which is perhaps identical with the island of Gebelen, if we trust the data on the provenance - was conferred by Blemmyan kings upon different Blemmyan persons: in the first case upon a pagan priest, in the second upon the sons of the king; furthermore, we learn the important fact that there lived on the island non-Blemmyan persons, who are defined as Romans, i.e. Egyptians, in Kharaken's letter.



be,  
ands:  
In case of the declining of the payment of the "customary /due/" the Romans can be taken into custody by the Blemmyan tribal chief, phylarchos, and sub-despot, hypotyrannos, on royal order. The customary due i.e. tax is designated with the word *συνήθεια* in decree No. 6. The word reveals that the matter here was the payment of gratuities which belonged into the complicated taxation system of Byzantine Egypt and, as a custom, they were not every year imposed. 251

The expression appears only in exceptional cases before the sixth century, but it will be frequently used to designate the obligatory gratuities to be paid to different dignities and bureaucrats in the first third of the sixth century. 252

In his eighth Novel Justinian regularizes the various synetheia to be paid to different officials /A.D. 535/, and the system will be improved then in Edict xiii. 253

The circumstance that the Blemmyan administrators of the island were empowered to arrest the Egyptian inhabitants of Tanare who declined to pay the synetheia renders it probable that the Blemmy king possessed unlimited power - at least as far as civil administration is concerned - on a part of Egyptian territory. The form of tax collecting etc. referred to in the documents makes the Blemmy king appear similar to Byzantine Egyptian landowners authorized to exert autopragia. 254 The papyri of the first half of the 6th century

inform us in great detail about this taxation praxis<sup>255</sup> of the large estates in Egypt. Furthermore, both the acknowledgements of debt and the manumissions documented in the Gebelen texts reflect dealings in typically Egyptian form - it is rather uncertain, whether details that appear unusual, are results of a mixed Egyptian-Blemmyan legal practice, or are they to be ascribed to the obscurity<sup>256</sup> of some texts or to their fragmentary preservation. Especially interesting are in this respect the antichretic<sup>256</sup> loans documented in Nos 2, 3 and perhaps in No. 5, further the manumissio after which the slave, now as a free person, remains in the household of the former owner and<sup>257</sup> is obliged to work also in these conditions.

What is, then, the political situation mirrored by the Gebelen dossier? The island is, beyond doubt, in Egypt and within Egyptian law. The notion "Romans" of No. 6. refers to the Egyptian citizenship of these "subjects" of the Blemmyan king. How can a King of the Blemmyes be able to exert the power visualized in this decree and in the other documents? The only explanation lies in that kind of foedus which was coupled with the granting of land within the empire.

As to the date of the granting of the ownership of the island of Tanare to the Blemmyes, a further hypothesis can be offered. The donation might have been one of the

side-effects of the expulsion of the Blemmyes from the Dodekaschoinos; however, we must be aware of the above-mentioned fact that the Blemmy tribes did not live in a centralistic state, thus the Blemmyan foederates settled within Egypt and obliged to do military service must not be identical with the tribes expelled from the valley by the Noubadians, who started with the organization of a modernized kingdom around the middle of the 5th century. In this way the common mention of Blemmyan and Noubadian soldiers in a source from the first third of the sixth century does not contradict to the Blemmyan foederate settlement in Upper Egypt. Namely, according to the Acta Arethae et Sociorum<sup>258</sup> Justin promised around 524 the king<sup>c</sup> Ella Asbeha of Axum to send an army of Blemmyans and Noubadians via Coptos and Berenice, in order to help the king to fight the Himyarite ruler Dhū-Nuwās.<sup>259</sup> It is rather tempting to suppose that the legend knows about a Blemmyan foederate settlement like Tanare/Temsir - we may perhaps add, that there were at the same time also Noubadians in Byzantine service, but we do not know so much about them as about their Blemmyan colleagues.

The date of the foederate settlement of Tanare/Temsir is obvious also on another account. The majority of the Blemmyans figuring in the Gebelen documents is still pagan;

the case of Sophia /No. 9/ seems to be rather isolated and occurs towards the end of the period covered by the documents. Although paganism and heresies among barbarian foederates were in the early sixth century still officially tolerated, as the CJ I, 5,12 from A.D. 527 attests, paganism within a closed Christian-pagan community is something different: the CJ grants this particular freedom of conscience to soldiers. It is very doubtful, whether a mixed pagan-Christian settlement or settlement group as Tanare/Temsir could exist also after the closing of the Philae sanctuaries in 535-538. On the other hand, the question can be asked also the other way round: how was it possible, that the pagan temples of Philae, which were maintained according to Procopius only for the benefit of the Blemmyes and the Noubadians, could be closed finally <sup>260</sup> by Justinian around 535? although the closing of the temples had to be carried out by a general, isn't it somewhat surprizing, that it did not cause any trouble that would have been big enough to be mentioned by the historian? Or is it more likely, to take into consideration the case of Sophia on the one hand, and the fact on the other, that the Noubadians were rather soon to embrace Christianity - and suppose, that the time was in every respect ripe, to close the Philae temples?

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Notes

- 1 In the original publication of the necropoleis - Emery /1938/ - the excavator identified them as Blemmyes.  
He maintained also later the identification of the entire X-Group Culture of Lower Nubia with the Blemmyes: W. B. Emery: Egypt in Nubia. London 1965 244f. Emery's collaborator in the original publication, L. P. Kirwan, did not share the excavator's view, cp. Kirwan /1937/ and /1982/; for the literature on the problem see Updegraff /1978/ 195ff.; see also Adams' paper on the ethnic history of the Kushite territories resp. borderland: W. Y. Adams: Kush and the Peoples of Northeast Africa. Meroitica 5 /1979/.  
Disregarding a few exceptions, recent literature interprets the burials as graves of the princes of the Noubades.
- 2 Cp. Adams /1977/ 42o and Updegraff /1978/ 195ff. For archaeological finds to be connected with the Blemmyes see esp. H. Ricke et al.: Ausgrabungen von Khor-Dehmit bis Bet el-Wali. Chicago 1967.
- 3 Monneret de Villard /1938/ 24-6o.
- 4 Papadopoulos /1966/ 9-4o.
- 5 Updegraff /1978/ 177-195.
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- 7 Ibid.

- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Updegraff /1978/ 181.
- 10 Updegraff /1978/ 182ff.
- 11 REM oo94. - This long Meroitic inscription in the Temple of Mandulis at Kalabsha seems to record military /?/ events under the rule of king Kharamadoye. On the basis of the allegedly Blemmyan name type /Khara-/ and of the circumstance that this name does not occur in the royal necropolis at Begarawiyah, the king was interpreted as Lower Nubian ruler of the post-Meroitic periode and dated accordingly, see N. B. Millet: Meroitic Nubia. Ph. D. diss. Yale Univ. Univ. Microfilms, Ann Arbor 1968 2o7f. Although the hypothesis is rather probable, it has several weak points; first of all because we are unable to date Meroitic inscriptions on independent grounds.
- 12 In more detail see below.
- 13 SB 5o99 /Tafa/, SB 8697 /Talmis/Kalabsha/.
- 14 In more detail see below.
- 15 Updegraff /1978/ 179.
- 16 Christides /198o/ 134ff., /1982/ 15f.
- 17 H. Belçaguy: Some Remarks on the Documents Concerning the Blemmyes and the X-Group Culture. Meroitica 6 /1982/ 228-231.

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- 20 Put by Kirwan erroneously in the years 296/7. For the correct dating in the year 298 see L. Castiglione: Diocletianus und die Blemmyes. ZÄS 96 /1970/ 90-103; A. K. Bowman: Papyri and Roman Imperial History 1960-1975. JRS 66 /1976/ 153-173, 159.
- 21 For this garrison see below.
- 22 Original publication: H. Gauthier: Le temple de Kalabchah I. Le Caire 1911 204f., detailed discussion: J. Kraus: Die Anfänge des Christentums in Nubien. Mödling b. Wien 1930 100ff.; see recently Updegraff /1978/ 140ff.
- 23 In more detail about this source see Kirwan /1937/ 71ff.
- 24 On Procopius see below in more detail.
- 25 See note 1 above.
- 26 For the archaeological and historical terminology see W. Y. Adams: Post-Pharaonic Nubia in the Light of Archaeology II. JEA 51 /1965/ 160-178; id.: Continuity and Change in Nubian Cultural History. SNR 48 /1967/ 1-32; I. Hofmann: Die Kulturen des Niltals von Aswan bis Sennar. Hamburg 1967 passim.
- 27 I cannot discuss here the problems connected with the low upper limit of this dating: in this way there is a more than 50 years long interval between the "end" on the Ballana Culture and the first signs of Christian Nubian culture.

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legedly

- 28 B. G. Haycock: The Later Phases of Meroitic Civilization. JEA 53 /1967/ 107-120, 114.
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- 30 S. Wenig: Bemerkungen zur Chronologie des Reiches von Meroe. MIO 13 /1967/ 1-44, 43f.
- 31 G. A. Reisner: The Meroitic Kingdom of Ethiopia: A Chronological Outline. JEA 9 /1923/ 34-79, 157-160, 76; D. Dunham: Royal Tombs at Meroe and Barkal. RCK IV. Boston 1957 7; F. Hintze: Studien zur meroitischen Chronologie und zu den Opfertafeln aus den Pyramiden von Meroe. Abh. Dt. Akad. Wiss. Berlin, Kl. f. Sprachen, Literatur u. Kunst 1959/2 32; cp. also I. Hofmann: Beiträge zur meroitischen Chronologie. Studia Instituti Anthropos 31. St. Augustin b. Bonn 1978 186 /she does not give, however, exact year dates/.
- 32 Ph. 416, F. Ll. Griffith: Catalogue of the Demotic Graffiti of the Dodekaschoenus I. Oxford 1937 114ff.
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- 34 Hintze /1967/.
- 35 Török /1974/.
- 36 D. Dunham: The West and South Cemeteries at Meroe. RCK V. Boston 1963 171ff., figs 126 and 127.

- 37 Cp. also L. Török: The Art of the Ballana Culture and Its Relation to Late Antique Art. Proceedings of the Symposium Held in Conjunction with the Exhibition: Africa in Antiquity, Brooklyn. Meroitica 5 /1979/ 85-100.
- 38 My dating of the analogies of the Meroe West Cemetery bracelets /see below/ was accepted by S. Wenig, in: Africa in Antiquity. The Arts of Ancient Nubia and the Sudan II. The Catalogue. Brooklyn 1978 104 but, curiously enough, was rejected in the case of the exemplars from the south, with the tautological argument: "we know that [the] conclusion is historically impossible because Pyramid W. 130 at Meroe is earlier than the burials in B. 47 and Q. 14."
- 39 Emery /1938/ I. No. 60, p. 197, II. Pl. 42/D.
- 40 Emery /1938/ I. Nos 20, 21, pp. 188ff., II. Pl. 40.
- 41 Emery /1938/ I 49, reg. no. 14-85, not illustrated.
- 42 L. Török: The Chronology of the Qustul and Ballana Cemeteries. Paper presented at the 5th International Symposium of the Society for Nubian Studies, September 1982, Heidelberg, in print.
- 43 DAE II, Littmann /1913/ 32ff.
- 44 Priese /1984/ 496.
- 45 Klandios Ptolemaios, Geogr., I, 7ff., 4, 7f.
- 46 Priese /1984/ 496.
- 47 Hintze /1967/.

- 48 Littmann /1913/ 39.
- 49 Kirwan /1972/ 463.
- 50 Hintze /1967/.
- 51 Priese /1984/ 496.
- 52 Quoted by Littmann /1913/ 35.
- 53 F. Altheim - R. Stiehl: Die Datierung des Königs <sup>c</sup>Ezānā von Aksūm. *Klio* 39 /1961/ 234-248; id.: Die Araber in der Alten Welt IV. Berlin 1967 503ff.; V/2. Berlin 1969 539ff.; id.: Christentum am Roten Meer I. Berlin 1971 412ff.; id.: Die neue griechische Inschrift <sup>c</sup>Ezānās von Aksūm. *Klio* 58 /1976/ 471-479.
- 54 Dihle /1965/ 36-64.
- 55 Ed. J. M. Szymusiak: Sources chrétiennes vol. 56 p. 121 = Migne PG 31, 25 636f.
- 56 J. Maspero: Histoire des Patriarches d'Alexandrie. Paris 1923; cp. J. Lecuyer: La succession des eveques d'Alexandrie aux premiers siècles. Bulletin de litterature ecclésiastique 70 /1969/ 81-99.
- 57 On the meaning of the title tyrannos in the letter of Constantius see Dihle /1965/ 52f., on the use of the title in diplomatic connections and in literature of the period see Helm /1979/ 363f., note 47.
- 58 Cp. Dihle /1965/ 51ff.



- 59 See note 57.
- 60 Bernard /1982/ 106f. /Greek/. The Semitic and the Ge<sup>C</sup>ez inscriptions found at same site are, to my knowledge, still unpublished.
- 61 A. H. Sayce: Second Interim Report on the Excavations at Meroe in Ethiopia. II. The Historical Results. LAAA 4 /1912/ 53-65.
- 62 A. H. Sayce: A Greek Inscription of a King /?/ of Axum Found at Meroe. PSBA 31 /1909/ 189-190.
- 63 F. Altheim - R. Stiehl: Die Datierung des Königs <sup>C</sup>Ezānā von Aksūm. Klio 39 /1961/ 234-238; id.: Die neue griechische Inschrift <sup>C</sup>Ezānās von Aksūm. Klio 58 /1976/ 471-479.
- 64 J. Bingen in: Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum 24 /1969/ No. 1246.
- 65 Hägg /1984,2/ 436f.
- 66 Sudan National Museum 24841.
- 67 Hägg /1984,2/ 436.
- 68 Reconstructed on the basis of the parallel expression in DAE 4, see Hägg /1984,2/ 439. This corresponds very well with the structure of the text - contrary to Bersina's translation /see note 73/ who brings the word "bronze" into connection with the word for tribute in the previous line. However, the tribute does not stand in the context which is supposed here by Bersina, see Hägg /1984,2/ loc. cit.

69 Hägg /1984,2/ 436.

70 Ibid.

71 Kosmas Indicopleustes 105 D /ed. Wolska-Conus/.

72 The dating of the inscription is unsolved so far. For the views cp. L. P. Kirwan: The Christian Topography and the Kingdom of Axum. The Geographical Journal 138 /1972/ 166-177, 175.

73 S. Ya. Bersina: An Inscription of a King of Axumites and Himyarites from Meroe. MNL 23 /1984/ 1-9.

74 She writes "basileus of Axo[mites and Homerite]s".

75 Ibid. p. 9.

76 See notes 64f. above.

77 I cannot share Altheim and Stiehl's views about two <sup>c</sup>Ezānās. Cp. note 53.

78 Comprehensive historical reconstructions were offered by different authors; these are reviewed by Updegraff /1978/ 63ff., 114ff. It must be stressed, however, that following circumstances do not allow more, than hypotheses: the date of the Adulitana II is unknown; the historical relations between Axum and the Noba and Axum and the Bega/Blemmyes are almost entirely unknown.

79 Burstein /1984/.

80 Ibid. 221.

81 Loc. cit.

82 See the cemetery material published /and labelled erroneously as pre-Meroitic resp. Meroitic/ by Garstang in J. Garstang -

- 83 F. Anfray - A. Caquot - P. Nautin: Une nouvelle inscription grecque d'Ézana, roi d'Axoum. Journal des Savants 1970 260-274.
- 84 R. Schneider: Trois nouvelles inscriptions royales d'Axoum. Studi Etiopici. Atti del Quattro Congresso Internazionale etc. Roma 1972, in: Acc. Naz. dei Lincei No. 191 Quaderno I. Roma 1974 767-786, 767ff.
- 85 Op. cit. /note 83/ 260ff.
- 86 I am grateful to Prof. Tomas Hägg who noticed for the first time that the reading of the editio princeps is defective and allowed me to refer to his discovery.
- 87 E.g. DAE 4.
- 88 Athanasios, Apol., 29, ed. Szymusiak p. 121.
- 89 DAE 10, 11.
- 90 On the coins. For these see Dinkler /1977/ 129ff.
- 91 Op. cit. /note 83/ 266 ad line 6.
- 92 See DAE 8, 9 /both reconstructed affiliation parts/, 10, 11 /well preserved/.
- 93 DAE 4, 6, 7.
- 94 DAE 34.
- 95 Littmann /1913/ 61f.
- 96 Cp. Dinkler /1977/ 129ff.
- 97 P. L. Shinnie - R. Bradley: The Capital of Kush 1. Meroitica 4 /1980/ 185 and fig. 76.

- 98 G. Bruck, Atti del VI. Congresso Internazionale di Archeologia Cristiana. Ravenna 1962. Roma 1965 521-526; for the coin unearthed in Meroe City see A. Anzani: Corpus delle monete axumite. Rivista Italiana di numismatica e Scienze Affini 39 /1926/ 49-110, Nos 44-79.
- 99 Updegraff /1978/ 1off.
- 100 Desanges /1978/ passim.
- 101 Plin., N. H., VI, 181f., Strabon, XVII, 1,54, Cassius Dio, LIV, 5, 4-6, Res Gestae Divi Augusti, 26, 5; on the interpretation of these sources see Hintze op. cit. /note 31 above/ 2off.; diverging views: I. Hofmann: Der Feldzug des C. Petronius nach Nubien und seine Bedeutung für die meroitische Chronologie. Agypten und Kusch. Schriften zur Gesch. u. Kultur des Alten Orients 13. Berlin 1977 189-205; Török /n. d., 1/ 27ff.
- 102 The sources see in more detail in Török /1977/ 91ff.; Török /1980/ 82f.
- 103 See note 102, somewhat improved version of the reconstruction: Török /n. d., 1/ 13ff., 3off.
- 104 It was criticized by I. Hofmann in several papers, see first of all: Die Helfer des Kaisers Decius gegen die Blemmyer. GM 50 /1981/ 29-37, further by A. Burkhardt: Die Graffiti von Meroiten im Dodekaschoinos. Meroitica 8 /forthcoming/. I am grateful to Dr. Burkhardt for allowing me to read her work in manuscript. To their criticisms, which are in part entirely justified, I shall return in another paper.

- 105 See Dak. 30 and Ph. 417 and cp. Ph. 254, 256, 257, 410;  
for the interpretation of these inscriptions cp.  
- also contra the criticisms mentioned in note 104 -  
Török /1984/ 59ff.
- 106 Bernand /1969/ No. 180 /Tamis/, No. 181 /Abratoeis/.
- 107 F. Ll. Griffith: Meroitic Inscriptions II. Napata to  
Philae and Miscellaneous. London 1912 Pls. XVIIIff.;  
REM 0097-0111; L. Török: Two Meroitic Studies: The Meroitic  
Chamber in Philae and the Administration of Nubia in  
the 1st to 3rd centuries A.D. Oikuméné 2 /1978/ 217-237;  
id.: Remarks on the Meroitic Chamber in Philae. in:  
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- 108 For the date see the literature cited in note 20.
- 109 Griffith /1938/ 83ff.
- 110 SHA, Aurel., 33,4; 41,10; Quadr. tyr., 3,3.
- 111 First Griffith /1938/ 83.
- 112 Updegraff /1978/ 62f.
- 113 On the alleged revolt see esp. Bowman op. cit. /note 20/  
158.
- 114 J. Schwartz: L'Égypte à la fin du III<sup>e</sup> siècle p. C. et  
son historiographie. Bull. Fac. des Lettres de Strasbourg  
46 /1967/ 300ff.
- 115 Paneg. lat. iii /11/ 17,4 /ed. Galletier/ pp. 65ff.

- 116 Paneg. lat. iv /8/ 5,2 /ed. Gallettier/ p. 85.
- 117 The only known exemplar was identified by L. Castiglione  
op. cit. /note 20/.
- 118 Procopius, De Bello Persico, 1,19, 27-37, ed. Haury &  
Wirth; rev. ed. and translation: Eide - Hagg - Pierce  
/1980/ 3ff.
- 119 Cp. W. Ensslin: Zur Ostpolitik des Kaisers Diokletian.  
Sitzungsber. d. Bayr. Akad. Wiss., Phil.-hist. Abt.  
1942 Heft 1 55.
- 120 Török /1977/ 46ff., /1980/ 85f. - Cp. also L. Török:  
Bemerkungen zum Problem der "römischen" Gräberfelder  
von Sayala /Nubien/. Acta Arch. Hung. 30 /1978/ 431-435.
- 121 Pap. Vindobon. 25838 = SB I. 4223.
- 122 Bell et al. /1962/ 5f.; cp. Hoffmann /1970/ 132 note  
44.
- 123 Eusebius, VC, IV, 7 /ed. Heikel/.
- 124 Bell et al. /1962/ No. 1, p. 5f.
- 125 Cp. Jones /1966/ 214f.
- 126 Cp. R. Grosse: Römische Militärgeschichte von Gallienus  
bis zum Beginn der byzantinischen Themenverfassung.  
Berlin 1920 8off.
- 127 Updegraff /1978/ 95.
- 128 Scti Pachomii Vitae Graecae /ed. Festugière/ p. 203;  
/ed. Halkin/ pp. 57f.

- 129 E. Amélineau: Monuments pour servir à l'histoire de l'Égypte chrétienne au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle. Ann. Mus. Guimet 17 /1889/ 436.
- 130 Ammianus Marcellinus, XIV, 4,3.
- 131 O. Seeck: Ammianus Marcellinus in: PWRE I/2 1845ff.; cp. Amm. Marcell., XVII, 4,6; XXII, 15,1; 24,16f.
- 132 Cp. E. A. Thompson: The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus. Cambridge 1947 121ff.
- 133 G. Zoega: Catalogus codicum Copticorum manu scriptorum... Romae 1810, repr. ed. New York 1973 36f.
- 134 Desanges /1972/ 32ff.
- 135 Griffith /1938/ 105.
- 136 Reading of Edda Bresciani, quoted in Desanges /1972/ 32.
- 137 Epiphanius, De XII Gemmis rat., § 244, PG XLIII 337; for the Georgian, Armenian and Coptic Versions see R. P. Blake - H. De Vis: Epiphanius De Gemmis. The Old Georgian Version and the Fragments of the Armenian Version. The Coptic-Sahidic Fragments. London 1934 108f., 199, revised ed. and translation of all versions: Eide - Hagg - Pierce /1980/ 8-15.
- 138 ND or. 31,35; 65.
- 139 For the dating of the ND or. see recently Hoffmann /1969/ 52f., 519; cp. J. H. Ward, Latomus 33 /1974/ 397ff.

- 140 ND or. 31,49 /Foenicionis/. For the localization see Itin. Anton., 172,2 /Poeniconon/; Desanges /1978/ 351 note 263.
- 141 Desanges /1978/ 365 note 343.
- 142 Kirwan /1982/ 198.
- 143 ND or. XXVIII,19.
- 144 Cp. E. Ritterling: Legio in: PWRE VI/2 1489f.: the toponym Parembolē in connection with the Legio II Traiana signifies in the sources Nicopolis where this legio between the 2nd and 5th centuries A.D. was stationed. On the other hand it is also true, that in a number of ostraca the identity Dabod=Parembolē is attested, which led H. Kees: Parembolē in: PWRE XVIII/4 1455f. to the statement that this latter place was the garrison listed in ND or. XXVIII,19. He must add, however, that also the Luxor garrison further places in the Aphroditopolite nome and in the Fayoum were called Parembolē. For the localization must the context in the ND as decisive argument be interpreted: Parembolē is listed in or. XXVIII as garrison under the comes limitis Aegypti and among the units stationed at the north-western border, and not in or. XXXI among the units under the command of the dux Thebaidos in the Theban - southern - region.



- 145 Claudianus, *carm. min.*, XXVIII /ed. Platnauer/ II.  
232f.
- 146 M. Fuhrmann: Claudianus in: *Der kleine Pauly* 12o2ff.;  
cp. also Vollmer: Claudius Claudianus in: *PWRE* III/2  
2652-266o 2653.
- 147 *PWRE* III/2 2653.
- 148 Ed. Festugière 9f.; cp. Rufinus, PL XXI 392.
- 149 Transl. by Budge, see Kirwan /1937/ 79.
- 150 Kirwan /1937/ 79.
- 151 Ibid.
- 152 The problems of the dating of Ballana age settlements  
and finds cannot be discussed here, I can only refer to  
some summary treatments of the archaeology of the period  
in Lower Nubia: Hofmann op. cit. /note 26/; Adams /1977/  
393ff.; Updegraff /1978/ 195ff.; cp. further Török  
op. cit. /note 37/; id.: Late Antique Nubia. An Archaeol-  
ogical and Art Historical Survey. Mitt. Arch. Inst.  
/Budapest/ 12/13 /1982/83/ /in print/.
- 153 For the problem see W. Y. Adams: Meroitic North and  
South. A Study in Cultural Contrasts. *Meroitica* 2 /1976/  
11-25, 21ff.; id.: op. cit. /note 1/.
- 154 Kirwan /1937/ 76 speaks erroneously about the inscription  
as Ph. 412 and as recording the erection of a shrine.
- 155 Bernand /1969/ No. 12bis.

- 156 Photius, Bibl., 62a,9-26, fragment 1,37, rev. ed. and translation: Eide - Hägg - Pierce /1979/ 6-8; cp. also Blockley /1981/ 27ff., 107ff.
- 157 Priese /1984/ 488.
- 158 Desanges /1978/ 34of.
- 159 Priese /1984/ 487.
- 160 Photius, Bibl., 214.
- 161 Cp. Blockley /1981/ 27.
- 162 Cp. Blockley /1981/ 27f.
- 163 Ibid.
- 164 This does not mean, nevertheless, that the Blemmyan inhabitants of the valley were never in the status of the foederates.
- 165 The title phylarchos is used by Olympiodorus doubtlessly in same sense as it was generally used in the literature of his times. Olympiodorus himself /fragm. 3, 35.18/ calls Alarich and Valia phylarchoi. For the use of the title see also the data quoted by Helm /1979/ 363f. note 47.
- 166 SB V 8697; U. Wilcken, AfP 1 /1900-1901/ 412ff.; Hägg /1984,1/ 101-103.
- 167 See note 166.
- 168 Ibid.; for the synodoi in Egypt see M. San Nicolò: Agyptisches Vereinswesen zur Zeit der Ptolemäer und Römer.<sup>2</sup> II. München 1972, esp. 78.

- 169 SB I 5099.
- 170 Hägg /1984,1/ 104f.
- 171 K. F. W. Schmidt, Göttinger Gelehrte Anzeigen 187 /1925/  
23 note 1, quoted by Hägg /1984,1/ 104.
- 172 The monuments of the Mandulis cult are shortly reviewed  
by Updegraff /1978/ 19off.
- 173 B. Faas: Studien zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der  
römischen Kaiserurkunde. Archiv f. Urkundenforsch.  
1 /1908/ 185-272 188ff.; F. Dölger: Regesten der Kaiser-  
urkunden des oströmischen Reiches von 565 bis 1453 I.  
München-Berlin 1924 xi; id.: Facsimiles byzantinischer  
Kaiserurkunden. München 1931 No. 1; F. Dölger - J. Kara-  
yannopoulos: Byzantinische Urkundenlehre I. Die Kaiser-  
urkunden. Hdb. d. Altertumswiss. XIII 3.1.1. München  
1968 31f., 147. - Leiden Pap. Z, for the editio princeps  
see U. Wilcken: Grundzüge und Chrestomathie der Papyrus-  
kunde I. 1. repr. ed. Hildesheim 1963 74f.
- 174 This detail is not mentioned in literature, see Kirwan  
/1937/ 81; Updegraff /1978/ 110. - Around 392-394 following  
units were stationed here according to the ND or. XXXI:  
milites miliarenses, Syene /35/, coh. I felix Theodos-  
iana apud Elephantinem /64/, coh. V Suentium, Suene  
/Syene/ /65/. /ed. Seeck/ 64ff.

- 175 See Updegraff /1978/ 107ff.
- 176 Hunger - Karayannopoulos op. cit. /note 173/ No. 1,  
147, Taf. 1.
- 177 P. Grossmann: Elephantine II. Kirche und spätantike  
Hausanlagen im Chnumtempelhof. Mainz 1980 26ff.
- 178 Cp. Hoffmann /1969/ 22f.
- 179 Emery /1938/, cp. Török op. cit. /note 42/.
- 180 Qustul 3.
- 181 E. g. the finds from Q. 14, see in more detail Török  
/1974/.
- 182 Qustul 14.
- 183 Qustul 3, Emery /1938/ II Pl. 65/E; Qustul 2, ibid. Pl. 64.
- 184 Cp. my op. cit. /note 42/.
- 185 For the chronology see ibid.
- 186 Emery /1938/ II Pl. 68, from Ballana 3. - A detailed study  
of the reliquary by present writer is since 1979 in  
press in the forthcoming Festschrift F. W. Deichmann.
- 187 Cp. Török op. cit. /note 37/ 9of.
- 188 Ibid.
- 189 Ibid.
- 190 Emery /1938/ II Pls 98f.
- 191 For the dating see my works quoted in notes 37 and 42.
- 192 Ed. Butler 2,95.

- 193 Jordanes, Romana, § 333 /ed. Mommsen/.
- 194 W. Ensslin: Priscus 35 in: PWRE XXIII/1 9f.; H. Hunger:  
Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner I.  
Handbuch d. Altertumswiss. XII. 5.1. München 1978  
282ff.
- 195 Transl. by Eide - Hagg - Pierce /1979/ 11.
- 196 Cp. also Updegraff /1978/ 187f.
- 197 Fragment 21; Priscus in Alexandria: Evagrius, H. E.,  
2,5 = Priscus fragm. 22; on the relation of Evagrius  
to Priscus see Blockley /1981/ 114f.
- 198 Kirwan /1937/ 82f. writes e.g. about a treaty signed in  
A.D. 453 /?/ with Florus and another signed previously  
with Maximinus in A.D. 451 /?/.
- 199 Cp. Blockley /1981/ 114; note 9 p. 165.
- 200 O. Seeck: Florus 6 in: PWRE VI/2 2761.
- 201 Blockley /1981/ 48.
- 202 Joh. Antioch., fragm. 199,1; E. A. Thompson: A History  
of Attila and the Huns. Oxford 1948 221.
- 203 Leo, Ep., 75, cp. Thompson op. cit. /note 202/ loc. cit.
- 204 Blockley /1981/ 48.
- 205 Excerpta de legationibus /ed. de Boor/ pp. 583ff.=fragm. 21.
- 206 Jordanes, Rom., § 333 = Evagrius, H. E., 2,5 = Priscus,  
fragm. 22.= Nicephorus Callistus, H. E., 15,8.

- 207 For the rights in diplomatic matters of the dux /Thebaidos/ see Helm /1979/ 338f.; for Maximinus see further W. Ensslin: Maximinus und sein Begleiter der Historiker Priskos. BnJ 5 /1926/27/ 1-9; cp. id.: Priscus 35 in: PWRE XXIII/1 9f.
- 208 Berliner Klassikertexte V, 1, 11,1; cp. E. Livrea: Chi è l'autore della Blemmyomachia? Prometheus 2 /1976/ 97-123. According to Livrea the author was Olympiodorus; this attribution is not very probable. -  
L. Stern: Fragmente eines griechisch-ägyptischen Epos. ZAS 19 /1881/ 30-75 connected the Blemmyomachia with the war in 452; Kirwan /1937/ suggested a similar attribution /pp. 80f./.
- 209 For the dating see P. Nautin: La conversion du temple de Philae en église chrétienne. Cah. Arch. 17 /1967/ 1-43.
- 210 Cp. note 153.
- 211 F. W. Deichmann: Eine alabasterne Largitionsschale aus Nubien. Tortulae. Studien zu altchristlichen und byzantinischen Monumenten. Ed. W. N. Schumacher. RQ Suppl., Heft 30. Freiburg/Breisgau 1966 65-76.
- 212 The bust is very schematically rendered, attempts at an identification would be adventurous.
- 213 H. Junker: Ermenne. Bericht über die Ausgrabungen der Akad. d. Wiss. in Wien... 1911/12. Denkschr. d. Akad. d. Wiss. Wien, Phil.-hist. Kl. 67. Wien 1926 Pl. XII/143.

- 214 I give here the English translation of Updegraff  
/1978/ 14of.
- 215 The branches of the old discussion are reviewed by  
Updegraff /1978/ 141ff. If even Silko was not  
Christian - for his Christianity cannot be attested  
unambiguously enough on the basis of the text -,  
the writer of the inscription must have been Christian,  
as indicated by the words "I am a lion for the Lower  
Country, and for the Upper Country I am a bear"  
occurring in I, Sam. 17,34; 36 and Amos 5,19, as  
already observed by R. Lepsius: Die griechische  
Inscription des nubischen Königs Silko. Hermes 10  
/1876/ 129-144. - For the language of the inscription see  
recently Hägg /1984,1/.
- 216 E. g. Monneret de Villard /1938/ 56.
- 217 Kirwan /1982/ 199.
- 218 Updegraff /1978/ 14off.
- 219 Editio princeps by T. C. Skeat in Skeat et al. /1977/  
159ff., Pl. XXVII; rev. edition and translation by  
Rea /1979/; cp. recently Hägg /1984,1/ 109-112.
- 220 Rea /1979/ 151.
- 221 See note 219, cp. further Plumley /1982/.
- 222 The translation of Skeat /1977/ allows just a contrary  
course of events to reconstruct than the translation  
of Rea /1979/.

- 223 Hägg /1984,1/ 111.
- 224 The best analysis of the representation is to be found in Castiglione op. cit. /note 20/.
- 225 Plumley /1982/ 219.
- 226 Ibid. 220.
- 227 Ibid. 219f.
- 228 Through the kindness of Prof. Plumley I had access to the ms. of his paper on the Tantani correspondence with photos, transcriptions and translations of the letters.
- 229 Procopius, De Bello Persico, 1, 19, 1.
- 230 Eide- Hägg - Pierce /1980/ 5ff.
- 231 Communication of Sir Laurence Kirwan.
- 232 Hägg /1984,1/ 106.
- 233 Greek, Latin and Coptic Sources for Nubian History /III/, to be published in STB 6 /forthcoming/. I am greatly indebted to the authors for their kindness allowing me to use their work already in ms. form.
- 234 Satzinger /1968/ 131.
- 235 Satzinger in BKU III. 361.
- 236 Cp. R. Taubenschlag: The Law of Greco-Roman Egypt in the Light of the Papyri, 332 B.C. - 640 A.D.<sup>2</sup> Warszawa 1955 286ff., and Eide - Hägg - Pierce ms. cit. /note 233/.



- 237 Cp. note 233.
- 238 Krall /1898/ No. II.
- 239 Satzinger /1968/ 131.
- 240 Krall /1898/ No. I.
- 241 Reading uncertain, see ms. cit. /note 233/.
- 242 Satzinger /1968/ 128ff.
- 243 Krall /1898/ No. III.
- 244 Weber /1980/ 114ff.
- 245 see note 244.
- 246 The meaning of the word komerktion, commercium, is not clear. According to Weber /1980/ it signifies here "trading place" i.e. a place, a settlement of some sort. As pointed out by the authors of the ms. quoted in note 233, in Byzantine Greek the word kom/m/erkion is used for trade generally and for customs, taxes specifically.
- 247 Satzinger /1968/ 127f.
- 248 C. Wessely: Studien zur Paläographie und Papyruskunde III. Leipzig 1904 No. 130.
- 249 Ibid. No. 129.
- 250 Ibid. No. 131.
- 251 Johnson - West /1949/ 289ff.
- 252 Ibid.
- 253 M. Gelzer, AfP V 353ff.

- 254 Johnson - West /1949/ passim, E. R. Hardy: The Large Estates of Byzantine Egypt. New York 1931; H. I. Bell: Egypt from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest. Oxford 1956 124f.
- 255 See the examples collected by Hardy op. cit. /note 254/.
- 256 See note 236.
- 257 Cp. E. Seidl: Rechtsgeschichte Ägyptens als römischer Provinz. München 1973 135.
- 258 Ed. Carpentier, Antwerp 1643 X 743; Greek version: J. F. Boissonade: Anecdota Graeca e Codicibus Regiis V. Paris 1833 42f.; see also Kirwan /1937/ 87; Monneret de Villard /1938/ 57, both date the story in the reign of Justinian. - V. Christides: Occupation of South Arabia in the Acts of Gregentius /circa 520/. Annales d'Éthiopie 9 /1972/ 115-146 and Christides /1980/ 136 further Updegraff /1978/ 146 date it in the time of Justinian. The latter attribution is supported also by G. L. Huxley: On the Greek Martyrium of the Negrantes. Proceed. Royal Academy 80 /1980/ 3-55.
- 259 Christides /1980/ 136.
- 260 Cp. Jones /1966/ 323ff.