

Exit Bishop Tamer – the Sequel A New Edition of the Epitaph of Papsine *alias* Doulista (*DBMNT* 78)

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Abstract: Re-edition of a twelfth-century epitaph in Greek (Turin, Museo Egizio, Cat. 7142), formerly attributed to a bishop of Faras in Nubia. In addition to presenting a new text, based on autopsy, the article discusses the ownership of the monument and advocates a new understanding of the linguistic and textual form of the epitaph.

Keywords: Nubia, Faras, Greek, bishops, women, alignment, centonisation

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In a paper published in 2007, I proposed a new reading for the owner's names on a Greek funerary stela from Nubia, now in Turin, that had hitherto been attributed by most scholars to a bishop of Faras, allegedly called Tamer, but actually appeared to belong to a woman, Papsine Doulista.¹ In a footnote to the article, I remarked: A re-edition based on a study of the original stone is a desideratum. Thanks to the kindness and hospitality of the staff of the Museo Egizio in Turin, I had the opportunity to examine the stone by autopsy, outside of its showcase, in October 2018. As a result, I am able to bring to an end what felt like a job left unfinished and present here the full text of a monument that is one of the latest funerary stelae from Christian Nubia and highlights the prominent role of women in Nubian elite culture. The present paper does not repeat observations already made in the 2007 article, which was primarily concerned with the names and titles of the owner of the stela. Instead, after briefly reverting to the question of ownership, it proposes a new approach to the linguistic and textual form of the epitaph, with the principal aim of stimulating future discussion.

The stela Turin, Museo Egizio, Cat. 7142 was acquired in 1820 by the Italian explorer Carlo Vidua, Count of Conzano (1785–1830), at a 'parvus locus' near Faras, called

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¹ Van der Vliet 2007; reprinted in Van der Vliet 2018: 341–345.

Colasucia.² This was one of several hamlets scattered over the historical urban site of Faras in modern times, situated just south of the citadel by Francis Ll. Griffith, who renders its name as Kolasûča.³ Immediately west of Kolasûča, at Nabindiffi, Griffith located a Hathor temple and a church with adjacent burial grounds.⁴ At the same place, Vidua acquired a much earlier funerary stela of another woman, Kouseimeia (*DBMNT* 80, now Turin, Museo Egizio, Cat. 7141), discarding several others that were less complete. One of the latter may have been the fragmentary epitaph collected at the spot by Richard Lepsius in 1843, again a woman's stela in Greek, now in Berlin (*DBMNT* 488).⁵ The present stone's Faras provenance is confirmed by the text of lines 19–20 and one may speculate – as indeed Stefan Jakobielski did earlier – whether the church of Saint Michael mentioned in line 20 might not be the church at Nabindiffi described by Griffith.⁶

The stela is a sandstone slab measuring $43 \times 24 \times 8.5$ cm, basically complete apart from some marginal chips and occasional surface damage; two worn spots cause minor loss of text in lines 5–7 (**Fig. 1**). A narrow raised rim surrounds the epigraphic field at the top and both sides. At the top, the text proper is preceded by a decorative headline, which is followed by twenty-seven lines of incised Greek text, not very carefully ruled; the lower margin is left blank. For its general aspect, the monument may be compared to the stelae of Bishop Martyrophoros, discovered at Debeira, near Faras (*DBMNT* 5, of AD 1159),⁷ of a woman Eikkir, from Ashkeit (*DBMNT* 6, twelfth century),⁸ and several other more or less contemporaneous stelae.

The script represents a compact and fairly regular, only slightly sloping, uncial, inscribed by a single practiced hand that undoubtedly belonged to a professional scribe. It very closely resembles the script of the Faras epitaph of Bishop Isou (Jesus, *DBMNT* 3, of AD 1169). The reading is occasionally hampered by the tiny size of the lettering and the grainy surface of the stone, which has lost much of its freshness through handling and wear. For lack of space, the final letters of lines 16, 19, 22–24 and 26 are wholly or partly written in the inner slope of the rim, without affecting their legibility; word breaks are usually logical.

² Vidua 1826: 22; on Vidua's visit of the site, see additionally Griffith 1925: 262; 1927: 92–93; Dewachter 1971: 180, 184–185. Among the vast literature about Vidua, Coaloa 2009 could not be consulted.

³ Griffith 1921: 1–2; cf. the map in Griffith 1927: Pl. LXXX. Kolasûča/Colasucia does not figure in Salvoldi, Geus 2017.

⁴ On the antiquities of Nabindiffi, see: Griffith 1921: 84–89; 1926: 62–63, Pls XXXIX–XLI; 1927: 92–93; cf. LD V, 182–181; Mileham 1910: 25; Monneret de Villard 1935: 197, Fig. 188; Michałowski 1962: 10, under no. 24-E-20 (with some further bibliography, provided by W.Y. Adams). The site was apparently not investigated during more recent archaeological campaigns in the area; cf. Adams 2005: 26.

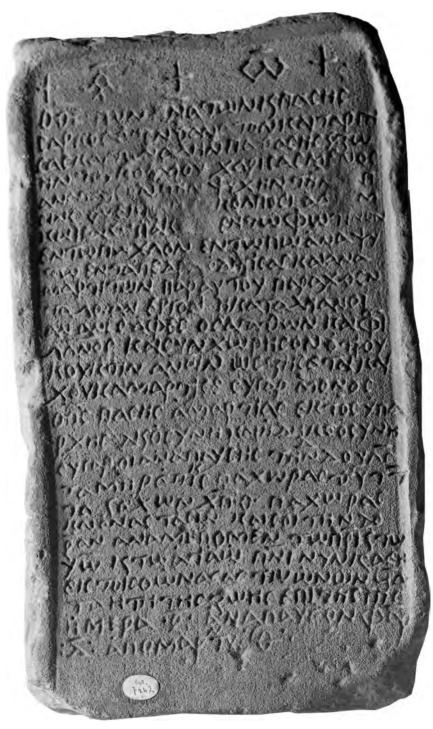
⁵ The epitaph is Lefebvre 1907: no. 634, but see the superior text in Junker 1925: 117–120, with a photo facing p. 112, which shows that the owner's name in line 6 is to be read as ϊμοογον̄[τλ], Iesousinta, or a similar Nubian formation.

⁶ Jakobielski 1972: 166–167 and 189.

⁷ Łajtar 2003: no. 6.

⁸ Łajtar 2003: no. 7.

⁹ Łajtar 2003: no. 3.



1. Funerary stela of Papsine Doulista, Faras (© Museo Egizio, Turin).

The scribe's orthographic habits conform to the standards of medieval Nubian epigraphy. In an inconsistent way, syllabic vowels are marked by supralinear dots (once, in line 12, a stroke) and *iotas* by diaereses. The numerals in lines 26–27 are set off by colons. Punctuation cannot always be distinguished from pits in the stone, however. The *shwas* in the Nubian names of lines 18–20 are rendered by short supralinear strokes, conventional abbreviations by long strokes, dashes or raised letters; the group $\kappa \omega$ can be written in full, with kappa-*cum*-slash (κ) or as an ampersand (κ). Only very rarely small blanks between phrases suggest a form of word or clause division.

Since the interest of the inscription only barely resides in the contents of its entirely formulaic prayer, but rather in the details of its textual and linguistic form, below a diplomatic transcript in uncials is presented firstly, reproducing the sparse word and clause division of the original and adopting the line numbers of the edition of Lefebvre. A reading text then offers a partly normalised rendering in minuscules. This is followed by a double apparatus (one orthographic and another one for *variae lectiones*) and a concise line-by-line commentary that mainly deals with questionable readings and orthography. Since the text has been reproduced quite often, a full apparatus giving all *variae lectiones* would become very cumbersome. Below, only the *variae lectiones* of Carlo Vidua himself (tagged Vid.) and Gustave Lefebvre (Lef.), who both studied the stone by autopsy, are recorded in the apparatus, as well as those of the more recent editions by Maria Grazia Tibiletti Bruno (TB) and Jadwiga Kubińska (Kub.), who had photos at their disposal. All other editions of the text depend directly or indirectly on the readings of either Vidua or Lefebvre. Also the bibliography below is a selective one, excluding bare mentions.

Editions after the stone (or a photo of the stone): Vidua 1826: 22–23, Pl. XXII, 1 (diplomatic transcript in uncials); Lefebvre 1907: no. 636; Tibiletti Bruno 1964: no. 8; Kubińska 1974: 42–45, no. 10, Fig. 11.

Other editions: *CIG* IV, 9121 (Adolf Kirchhoff, after Vidua); Blant 1878: xxIII–xxvI (after Vidua); Revillout 1885: 19–22, no. 25 (after Vidua); Weißbrodt 1905–1906: 5, no. II (after Vidua; cf. 9 and 22–25, on the date in line 27); Leclercq 1907: cols 1529–1530 (after Vidua); de Ricci 1909: 153–161 (no. 1, after Lefebvre); Kaufmann 1917: 147–148 (after Leclercq 1907); *SB* V, 8728 (Friedrich Bilabel, after Lefebvre); Jakobielski 1972: 205 (after *SB* V, with a discussion at 166–167).

Cf. Letronne 1828: 14, reprinted in Letronne 1883: 263 (on the date in line 27); Fabretti 1888: 312, no. 7142 (brief description); Griffith 1925: 262 (on the provenance and the names and titles in lines 19–20); Griffith 1927: 92–93 (on the provenance); Tibiletti Bruno 1963: 499–500 and *passim* (textual and linguistic form); Jakobielski 1966: 156–157 (brief discussion, superseded by Jakobielski 1972: 166–167); Hagedorn 1976: 185 (on the owner);

¹⁰ Lefebvre 1907: no. 636.

Bagnall, Worp 1986: 353–354 (on the date in line 27); Leospo 1987: 44, Pl. XV (brief description with photo); Donadoni, Curto, Donadoni Roveri 1990: 233–234 (on Vidua, with photo of the stone); Łajtar 1994: 201–203 (on the titles in lines 19–20); Van der Vliet 2007 (reprinted in Van der Vliet 2018: 341–345; on the names and titles in lines 5–6 and 18–20); Łajtar 2014: 225 (about the title 'mother of the bishop' in line 19); Jakobielski *et al.* 2017: 406, 446 (on the historical context).

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Faras, 30 March 1184

[diplomatic transcript]

 $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}$

- 4. нитоукосмоу харісасмєнос анапаусонтни ухнитни 'д' [п] ап сіне өү'г'єпіс уейколпосі авр[а] м кайсак закю[в] ентюфотінон
- 8. εντωπωχλον εντωπωλνα[†]Υ τω εντάπεδρα όδημεισασκαίανα *νας*. μαρτίτων παράγτος παράχθεν ταλογάν έργον ηκαταδήμανοι *νας*.
- 12. αν ανισάφες οςαγαφων καιδι λανος καισγνχωρηςονότιος κογκτιν ανών ωσζηςεταικαι χογκαμαρτίσε σύγαρ μονός *vac*.
- ООО ПАСИС АМАРТІАС ЄКТОСУПА РХИС ДІЗОСУМИКАЛЬДИКЕОСУМИ СУГАРОІАМАПАУСИС ТИМ'Д'ДОУАС ТАМПРЕПІС'Қ'ПАХШРАСӨУ'Г'ТТ
- 20. τα νέχωναπο παχώρας vac. καιάναςταςιν καισοίτηναο vac. ξαν αναμέ λ'πομέν τωπρίστω γω κτωάγια πιν νγνκαέμ
- 24. вістоісофиасастфонфи $\overline{q\theta}$ та нтитисинс впітисінс нибра $\overline{\xi}$: апапаусонфар $\overline{\xi}$: апомарту'и': $\overline{\xi}$ 0: vac.

[normalised text]

- + \(\bar{\lambda}\) + \(\overline{\pi}\) + \(\delta\) \(\delta\) \(\ta\) \(\epsi\) \(\ta\) \(\epsi\) \(\ta\) \(\epsi\) \(\delta\) \
- ἡν τοῦ κόσμου χαρισά (σ) μενος,
 ἀνάπαυσον τὴν ψυχὴν τὴν 'δ(ούλην σου)' [Π] απ-σινε θυ'γ' (ατρὸς) ἐπισκ(όπου) ἐγ κόλποσι 'Αβρ[ὰ]μ καὶ 'Ισὰκ (καὶ) 'Ιακώ[β], ἐν τώ<πω> φωτινον,
- 8. ἐν τώπῳ χλόν, ἐν τώπῳ ἀναψύ<ξεως>, τώ<πῳ> ἔντ' ἀπέδρα ὁδηγίσας καὶ ἀναμάρτιτων <τὰ> παρ' αὐτοῦ παραχθέντα λόγαν, ἔργον ἢ κατὰ δηάνοι-
- 12. αν, ἄνις, ἄφες, ὁς ἀγαθὼν καὶ φιλάν(θρωπ)ος καὶ συνχώρησον, ὅτι οὐκ {οὐκ} <ἔσ>τιν ἄν(θρωπ)ων ὡς ζήσεται καὶ {χ}οὐκ ἁμαρτίσε· σὸ γὰρ μόνος,
- 16. ὁ θ(εὸ)ς, πάσης ἁμαρτίας ἐκτὸς ὑπάρχης, δι(και)οσύνη καὶ ἡ δηκεοσύνη· σὺ γὰρ οἶ ἀνάπαυσης τὴν 'δ(ούλην σου)' Δουλστα μη(τ)ρ(ὸς) ἐπισ'κ'(όπου) Παχωρας, θυ'γ'(ατρὸς) Ττ̄-
- τα (καὶ) ἔχων (Μιχαήλ) Παχωρας,
 καὶ ἀνάστασιν, καὶ σοὶ τὴν δό ξαν ἀναμέ'λ'πομεν, τῷ π(ατ)ρὶ (καὶ) τῷ
 υ(ἱ)ῷ κ(αὶ) τῷ ἀγί{α}ῳ πν(εύματ)ι, νῦν κ(αὶ) ἀεἡ,
- 24. εἰς τοὶς ὀῶνας {ας} τῶ<ν> ἄνων, (ἀμήν).
 τὰ ἤτη τῆς ζωῆς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς,
 ἡμέρα : ξ΄ : ἀνάπαυσον. Φαρ(μοῦθι)
 : δ΄ : ἀπὸ μαρτύ(ρω)ν : ϡ΄ :
- 3. των: read τον | παθάσης: read πατήσας || 4. τοῦ κόσμου: read τῷ κόσμῷ || 5. τὴν δ(ούλην σου)': read τῆς δούλης σου || 6. κόλποσι: read κόλποις | Ἀβρ[α]μ: read Ἀβραὰμ || 7. Ἰσὰκ: read Ἰσαὰκ | φωτινον: read φωτεινῷ || 8. χλόν: read χλόης || 9. ἔντ': read ἔνθ' | δδηγίσας: read δδηγήσας || 9–10. ἀνα|μάρτιτων: read ἀναμάρτητος || 10. παρ' αὐτοῦ: read παρ' αὐτῆς || 10–11. παραχθέν|τα: read πραχθέντα || 11. λόγαν: read λόγῷ | ἔργον: read ἔργῷ || 11–12. δηάνοι|αν: read διάνοι|αν || 12. ἄνις: read ἄνες | ὁς ἀγαθὼν: read ὡς ἀγαθὸς || 13. συνχώρησον: read συγχώρησον || 14. ἄν(θρωπ)ων ὡς: read ἄνθρωπος ὸς || 15. {χ}οὐκ ἀμαρτίσε: read οὐχ ἁμαρτήσει || 16–17: ὑπά|ρχης: read ὑπάρχεις || 17. δηκεοσύνη: read δικαιοσύνη || 18. οἶ ἀνάπαυσης: read εἶ ἀνάπαυσις | τὴν 'δ(ούλην σου)': read τῆς δούλης σου || 20. ἔχων: see comm. || 21. ἀνάστασιν: read ἀνάστασις || 23. ἀεὴ: read ἀεὶ || 24. τοὶς ὁῶνας {ας}: read τοὺς αἰῶνας {ας}| ὄνων: read αἰώνων || 25. ἤτη: read ἔτη.

3. (καί): s stone, κ Vid. || 4. χαρισά (σ) μενος: χαρισάμενος Lef., Kub. || 5–6. τὴν 'δ(ούλην σου)' $[\Pi]$ απ|σινε θυ')' (ατρὸς) ἐπισκ(όπου) ἐν: την' Δ' . . Π (ιιι . . . ϵ . . . Vid., την [...]π|σιν σου εν [.....] Lef., τὴν δ[. . . .] π |σίν σου ἐν τ[....] ΤΒ, Kub. || 6. ᾿Αβρ[ὰ]μ: Αβ[ραα]μ Lef., Λ [βραὰ]μ Vid., TB, Kub. || 7. (καὶ) Ἰακώ[β]: [και]ιακ[ωΒ] Vid., [κ(αι)] Ιακ[ωβ] Lef., TB, $[\kappa(\alpha)]$ Ίακ $[\phi]$ Kub. || 8. χλόν: κλοη Vid. || 8–9. ἀναψύ<ξεως> | τώ<πω>: αναψυ|τω Vid., Lef., ἀναψύ [ξεως] ΤΒ, Κub. || 9-10. ἀνα |μάρτιτων: ἀνα |μάριτων Κub. || 11. λόγαν: λοαν Vid., λόγω Lef., TB, Kub. | 13. συνχώρησον: συνκώρησον Vid., Lef., TB, Kub. || 13-14. ὅτι οὐ|κ {οὐκ} <ἔσ>τιν: οτιογ|κογιστια Vid., ὅτι οὔ|κουν τις ΤΒ, ὅτ' οὔ|κουν τις Kub. || 17. δι(και)οσύνη: Δκοςγημ Vid. || 18–19. τὴν δ(ούλην σου) Δουλσ|τα μη(τ)ρ(ὸς) ἐπισ`κ'(όπου): την Δ'ογλζ|τωμηρεπις'κ' Vid., την δ δουλ(ην) σ(ου) | ταμηρ επϊσ(κοπου) Lef., τὴν 'δ' δοῦλ(ον) σ̄(ου) | Ταμὴρ ἐπίσ'κ'(οπον) ΤΒ, τὴν δοῦλ(ον) σ̄(ου) | Ταμὴρ ἐπΐσ[κ](οπον) Kub. || 19–20. θυ γ (ατρὸς) Ττ|τα (καὶ) ἔχων: θῦττ|τασοχων Vid., Lef., ΤΒ, θῦτι | Τασοχων Kub. || 21-22. δό|ξαν: Δο|ραν Vid. || 22. ἀναμέλ/πομεν: ἀναμέπομεν Vid., Lef., TB, Kub. $|\Pi(\alpha\tau)\rho$ ί (καί): πρκ Vid., $\pi(\alpha\tau)\rho$ (ί) κ(αί) Kub. ||24. τ $\hat{\omega}$ <ν> $\tilde{\omega}$ νων: τωωνωνων Vid. | (ἀμήν): q̄o stone, ς̄Δ Vid., q̄a Lef., TB, qa Kub. || 25. ἤτη: нтн stone, нтн Vid. | first τῆς: τῆς: Lef., Kub. | 26. : ξ' :: : o': Vid., Lef., TB, Kub. | Φαρ(μοῦθι): Φ $\overline{\Phi}$ stone, φαρ Vid. || 27. : \aleph' :: : $\nu\theta'$: Lef., TB, om. Kub. (see comm.)

+ Alpha + Omega +

God of the spirits and all flesh, you who have annihilated death and trodden down Hades and granted life (4) to the world, give rest to your servant Papsine, the bishop's daughter, in the bosom of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, in a radiant place, (8) in a place of verdure, in a place of refreshment, a place whence have fled away – having guided (her), and (being) free from sin, what (sins) she committed in word, deed or by intention (12), remit and absolve, being good and loving mankind, and forgive, for there is no human being who will live and not sin. For you alone, (16) God, exist beyond all sin, justice and justice. For you are the rest of your servant Doulista, mother of the bishop of Faras, daughter of Titta (20) and owner (of the church) of Michael in Faras, and the resurrection, and to you we sing glory – to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and always, (24) forever and ever. Amen.

The years of (her) life upon earth, (her) life-span: 60. Give rest! Pharmouthi 4, (year) since the Martyrs 900.

[top] The *alpha* is actually a broken-bar symmetric A with curled up ends.

- 2–3. The intrusive *iota* in $\kappa\alpha\{\iota\}\tau\alpha\rho\gamma\dot{\eta}|\sigma\alpha\varsigma$ is difficult to explain. It may have crept in under the influence of the repeated $\kappa\alpha\dot{\iota}$ in the opening lines of the prayer.
- 3. $\pi\alpha\theta$ άσης is most likely a case of vowel metathesis; for the θ/τ swap, see: Tibiletti Bruno 1963: 521; Łajtar 2003: 256. As the text gives good sense, there is no reason to correct the simplex, $\pi\alpha\tau$ ήσας (from $\pi\alpha\tau$ έω, Lampe (Ed.) 1961: 1050a), into the more habitual κατα $\pi\alpha\tau$ ήσας. As was observed by Tibiletti Bruno 1963: 499, the simplex occurs likewise

in the same phrase in Tibiletti Bruno 1964: no. 6, line 3 (AD 1006, provenance unknown), and Tibiletti Bruno 1964: no. 17, line 5 (date lost, from northern Makuria).

- 4. τοῦ κόσμου: *genitivus pro dativo*, rather than a phonetic ου/ω swap; see: Tibiletti Bruno 1963: 523; Łajtar 2003: 258 and 255 (under oυ for ω). The stone's clear χαρισάσμενος can perhaps be explained as a visual or aural rime with παθάσης (for πατήσας) in the line above (πατήσας χαρισασ-).
- 5. τὴν δ(ούλην σου)': undoubtedly the most common instance of accusativus pro genitivo in Nubian funerary inscriptions, for which see: Łajtar 2003: no. 3, ad line 6. Similarly below in line 18.
- 5–6. The final ϵ in the stone's $[\pi]$ α π |cm ϵ is only faintly visible and could as well be an o or even a c (though not an α). As the proper name Papsine or Papasine is well attested, the present reading is preferred.
- 6. In the group emicken, the dotted letters are in a damaged spot and very faint, but the reading of the abbreviated title is not doubtful (it reappears in a slightly different form in line 19). The writing $\kappa \acute{o}\lambda \pi o \sigma \iota$ is surprising and perhaps due to confusion with third declension plural datives ending in - $\sigma \iota$. In the name ${}^2A\beta \rho [\grave{\alpha}]\mu$, the lacuna leaves space for only one character.
- 7. The abbreviation for και in the stone's "icaκ "βιακφ[Β] looks strange; similarly in line 20. In both instances, one may hesitate between a weakly drawn κ or a space or high point plus ampersand. For the diplomatic text, the last option has been favoured. For the omission by haplography in 'ev τω<πω> φωτινῶν, see Łajtar 2003: no. 81, ad line 7, who lists a whole series of Nubian occurrences. The final -ôv represents an accusativus $pro\ dativo$ (cf. Tibiletti Bruno 1963: 522–523, and here line 11: λόγαν, 'epγον) rather than the insertion of an intervocalic consonant ny.
- 8. In χλόν for χλόην, we have an *accusativus pro genitivo*, which is common enough, with loss of the second, unaccented vowel. The textually very similar Faras epitaph of a priest Bartholomew (AD 1181, see below) offers exactly the same reading (Tibiletti Bruno 1964: no. 7, line 7, prints χλῶν, but the photo shows a relatively clear χλόν).
- 9. In the stone's $\tau \omega$, the leg of the τ is weakly drawn, but its reading is not really in doubt. Since this group cannot be part of what precedes in line 8, it is best interpreted as the truncated word $\tau \dot{\omega} < \tau \dot{\omega} >$, copied from line 7 and introduced here as a rappel of the antecedent of the following relative clause. For the θ/τ swap in $\xi v \tau$ ', see above, line 3.
- 9–10. For the group ὁδηγίσας καὶ ἀνα|μάρτιτων, see: Tibiletti Bruno 1963: 499, and my commentary below. The form ἀνα|μάρτιτων for ἀναμάρτητος is best explained as an

accusativus pro nominativo with o/ω swap; similarly ἀγαθὼν, for ἀγαθὸς, in line 12, and ἄν(θρωπ)ων, for ἄνθρωπος, in line 14; cf. Tibiletti Bruno 1963: 523–524.

- 10. The emendation $\langle \tau \dot{\alpha} \rangle$ is vouchsafed by the identical phrase in the very similar Faras epitaph of a priest Bartholomew, Tibiletti Bruno 1964: no. 7, line 9. Here, $\tau \dot{\alpha}$ probably dropped out under the influence of the preceding ending $\tau \omega$. The shape of the present phrase of lines 9–11 undoubtedly reflects the influence of similar phrases with $\dot{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\dot{\eta}\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$ in the plural (see the commentary below). The wrong gender selection in $\pi\alpha\rho$ αὐτοῦ, for $\pi\alpha\rho$ αὐτῆς, is extremely common; cf. Tibiletti Bruno 1963: 521–522; Łajtar 2003: no. 7, ad line 13. The first alpha in $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\chi\theta\dot{\epsilon}\nu|\tau\alpha$ is an anaptyctic vowel; see: Gignac 1976: 311–312, and further Łajtar, Twardecki 2003: no. 109, lines 13–14, and Łajtar, Van der Vliet 2010: no. 22, lines 15–16, both with commentary.
- 11. Gustave Lefebvre (1907: no. 636, *ad loc*.) believed that the mason corrected his earlier λογαν into λογω. Although it is possible that an attempt at such a correction has been made, the *prima facie* reading is λογαν, not λογω. The word end seems slightly blurred, though, and Vidua, while reading λοαν, noted: 'litterae (...) non satis distinctae'. The *alpha* in λόγαν may be due to an anticipating rime with διάνοιαν later in the same phrase. Both λόγαν/λόγον and ἔργον represent an *accusativus pro dativo*, which is frequent in the present context; see: Tibiletti Bruno 1963: 500, 522–523; Łajtar 2006: 120.
- 11–12. The stone has Δημανοίαν (δηάνοιαν), rather than Διανοίαν, as one might be inclined to read.
- 12. ἄνις for ἄνες is an instance of vowel dissimilation; cf. Tibiletti Bruno 1963: 500. On this penitential formula in Nubian funerary epigraphy, see Tibiletti Bruno 1963: 498, and in particular Łajtar 2003: no. 3, ad line 9; to the latter's bibliography can be added: Wade 2005 (reference due to Adam Łajtar). For the ending of ἀγαθὼν here and ἄν(θρωπ)ων in line 14, compare ἀναμάρτιτων in lines. 9–10.
- 13. For the fairly frequent orthography συνχώρησον, see: Łajtar 2003: 256.
- 13–14. The fourth character of the stone's κογκτιν is an unambiguous κ, not the group ις, as was tentatively proposed by Lefebvre 1907: no. 636, in a note *ad loc*. (not in his text); Vidua prints κογιστιν in his transcript, but hesitates whether not κογκτιν should be read. Yet, even if Lefebvre's tentative reading (following Vidua's) ογ|κογιςτιν, for οὐ|κ {οὐ} <ἔσ>τιν, cannot be accepted, it seems not unlikely that the omission of the first syllable of ἔστιν was triggered by the visual similarity κ ιc. For ἴστιν = ἔστιν in Nubian Greek, see: Łajtar 2010: 761. However, the Faras epitaph of the priest Bartholomew, Tibiletti Bruno 1964: no. 7, also appears to have a double οὖκ here, followed by an indubitable ἔστιν. Combining the museum photo with Griffith's transcript of the text (see below, footnote 21), it is possible to read: οτιογκογ|κεστινανρος, i.e. ὅτι οὖκ {οὐ|κ} ἔστιν ἄν(θρωπ)ος (the final

letters very uncertain). Tibiletti Bruno 1964: no. 7, lines 12–13, renders the same phrase as ὅτι οὕκου|[ν τ]ις ἔστιν ἀθ[ρώπων] (sic), an interpretation that apparently informed Tibiletti Bruno's reading of the present passage as ὅτι οὕ|κουν τις ἀν(θρώπ)ων. Neither reading is warranted, though, and the repeated οὖκ in both instances remains enigmatic.

- 15. In the text's $\{\chi\}$ oùk the loss of the positional aspiration in the end, though not uncommon here (see: Łajtar 2003: 257), is compensated by a hypercorrect thickening of the aspiration at the beginning of the word (> χ).
- 17. The drastically reduced phrase δι(και)οσύνη καὶ ἡ δηκεοσύνη with its typical word order (for habitual καὶ ἡ δικαιοσύνη σου δικαιοσύνη εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, etc.) was noted by Łajtar 2003: 30, in four other twelfth-century epitaphs from the Faras region, for which see below. The otherwise very similar epitaph of the priest Bartholomew, Tibiletti Bruno 1964: no. 7, lines 15–16, seems to be phrased differently, but is heavily damaged here.
- 18–19. For the name Doulista, see now: Ruffini 2014: 118, ad no. 72, recto line 5.
- 19–20. As was surmised by Van der Vliet 2007: 189–191 (in the reprint in Van der Vliet 2018: 343–344), $T\bar{\tau}|\tau\alpha$ (Titta) must be the mother's name; also the Titta in the account Ruffini 2014: no. 72, recto line 10, is a woman.
- 20. On the ampersand in the stone's τα σέχων, see above *ad* line 7. For invariable ἔχων, expressing ownership of a church, first deciphered here in Łajtar 1994: 201–203, see Łajtar, Van der Vliet 1998, where the present text is cited at 49, no. 9 (in the reprint in Van der Vliet 2018: 356–357). For the possible identification of the Faras church of Saint Michael, see the introductory paragraphs.
- 21. The word ἀνάστασιν shows an *accusativus pro nominativo* (cf. Tibiletti Bruno 1963: 523), while the corresponding ἀνάπαυσης (line 18, for ἀνάπαυσης) is in the correct nominative. The same occurs in Łajtar 2003: no. 19, lines 19–21. Yet also ἀνάπαυσης may be found in the accusative, e.g. in Tibiletti Bruno 1964: no. 16 (= Bernand 1992: no. 115), line 19 (Meinarti, AD 1181; cf. Łajtar 2006: 117).
- 22. The λ added above the π in the stone's aname' λ' π omen is small and rather shallow, but indubitable. It is apparently a scribal correction.

given here. Rather than a doubtful *dativus pro accusativo*, which is not reflected in $\delta \hat{\omega} \nu \alpha \varsigma$, $\tau o \hat{\iota} \varsigma$ for $\tau o \hat{\iota} \varsigma$ may be a mason's error, as ι and υ are very similar in shape. In spite of the doubts of previous editors, the Θ at the end of the line, in the stone's $\overline{q}\Theta$, is fully certain, even though partly written in the rim.

25. The stone has a clear stroke above the Γ in entrucrect, which was already noted by Vidua in his *editio princeps*, but is difficult to account for.

26. The numeral giving the age of the deceased clearly reads \mathbf{z} , not $\mathbf{\bar{o}}$. Doulista died at sixty, not seventy. Previous editors have been misled by the roundish shape of the Nubian \mathbf{z} , which is habitually written as $\mathbf{\bar{e}}$ (similarly in $\mathbf{\delta \acute{o}}|\mathbf{\bar{\xi}}\alpha\mathbf{v}$, lines 21–22). The first colon appears to lack a dot. Given the position of $\mathbf{\dot{\alpha}}\mathbf{v}\dot{\alpha}\pi\alpha\upsilon\sigma\upsilon$, preceding the date of demise, one might feel inclined to correct into e.g. $\mathbf{\dot{\alpha}}\mathbf{v}\boldsymbol{\epsilon}\pi\alpha\dot{\upsilon}\boldsymbol{\sigma}\alpha\tau\upsilon$, 'she went to rest (on)'. As the brief final prayer 'Give rest!' is a standard element in epitaphs of this class, this is not a preferable option, however; for discussion, see: Łajtar 2003: no. 2, *ad* line 11.

27. The way of abbreviating $\mu\alpha\rho\tau\dot{o}(\rho\omega)v$ is uncommon; compare the table in Ochała 2011: 69. The reading of the year date is entirely certain. The numeral used for 900 on the stone is no longer the ancient *sampi*, however, but a sign based upon the digit θ (9), with a curl or circle wholly or partly surrounding it. Its shape here is perhaps best described as a ligature connecting a raised ζ-like curl with the cross bar of a θ . The same shape can be observed in the legal document Ruffini 2014: no. 70a, line 1 (dated AM 997/AD 1280), which confirms the reading proposed on the basis of Vidua's approximate rendering by Bagnall, Worp 1986: 353–354. In Tibiletti Bruno 1964: no. 12, line 22, of AD 1243, the sign takes the form of a θ within a full circle; see: Robert 1936: Pl. XLI, and Łajtar 1993. The γ read below the line by Lefebvre (1907: no. 636, *ad loc*.) is a phantom: the first colon is positioned rather low and beneath only a damaged spot in the stone is to be seen.

Francis L1. Griffith was the first to observe, in 1925, that the owner of the stela was not a bishop, but a female relative of a bishop, correctly identifying the abbreviation in the end of line 19 as the word $\theta\nu\gamma\acute{\alpha}\tau\eta\rho$, 'daughter'.¹¹ While the present re-edition confirms Griffith's observation as well as the more exact readings proposed by me in 2007, ¹² it does not solve the main problem raised by the epitaph, to wit the differences between the two naming lemmas, the first in lines 5–6, where the deceased is called Papsine, a bishop's daughter, and the second in lines 18–20, where she is named as Doulista, a bishop's mother and daughter of one Titta, apparently her mother.

In my earlier paper,¹³ I proposed a solution that assigns a double name to the single owner of the stela, who then would be at the same time daughter and mother of a bishop.

¹¹ Griffith 1925: 262; cf. Griffith 1927: 92–93, and Hagedorn 1976: 185.

¹² Van der Vliet 2007: 186–187.

¹³ Van der Vliet 2007: 189-190.

This is probably still the most economical interpretation of the evidence, in particular since in lines 19–20 only the mother of Doulista is identified and not her father, most likely since the father had already been mentioned in line 6. Double names, moreover, were not uncommon in medieval Nubia. ¹⁴ Yet two alternative solutions may be briefly considered, neither of them conclusive, however.

The first would be to assume an error. The scribe may have copied the text from a *Vorlage* that had a name filled in and forgot, in one of the two instances where the name of the deceased is demanded, to change the name. If this scenario would apply, it is *a priori* likely that the second entry, in lines 18–20, with the name Doulista, belongs to the actual owner of the stela: this part of the epitaph contains fuller biographic data and is followed – after the concluding doxology – by information about the age of the deceased and the day of her death. As these final lines are strongly focused on the person of the deceased, it is less likely that a mistaken identity could slip in inadvertently here than in the much briefer reference of lines 5–6. If this scenario would prove to be correct, Papsine and Doulista would be two distinct persons, who would both be members of a family that produced bishops, perhaps even the same family, since both women probably used the same workshop for their epitaphs. Their degree of kinship cannot be ascertained, however. The father of Papsine may not even have been a bishop of Faras, since no diocese is mentioned in line 6.

Postulating an error is admittedly unattractive and therefore another alternative may seem more viable. ¹⁵ This starts from the assumption that the bishops mentioned in lines 6 and 19 respectively are one and the same person. Papsine would then be the daughter of the single bishop N.N., Doulista her grandmother, the mother of her father, and Titta, the third woman mentioned in the epitaph, her great-grandmother. According to this scenario, we would have to assume that Papsine died at an early age, perhaps at the same time as her grandmother, and that her name was included in the commemorative prayer for the latter without taking the trouble of entering further details about the girl or young woman Papsine. As there is some other evidence in Nubian epitaphs for the practice of introducing secondary commemorations, this possibility cannot be ruled out here. ¹⁶ It produces a pedigree covering four generations with a single unknown bishop in the centre, but otherwise dominated by women.

Whether or not she should be distinguished from another woman or girl by name of Papsine, there can be no doubt whatever that Doulista was the mother of a bishop of Faras. Her son must have been a successor to Bishop Isou of Faras, whose epitaph survives and who died, according to Adam Łajtar's entirely plausible calculation, in 1169 at age 88, after an episcopate of 45 years. The Since Doulista was born in or around 1124, her son – even

¹⁴ See, for some examples, Łajtar 2003: 63.

¹⁵ Suggested to me by Adam Łajtar.

¹⁶ Thus the epitaph of a high official Mariankouda, Łajtar 2003: no. 18, from Hambukol, introduces the commemoration of a recently(?) deceased King George. Given the formal introduction of this secondary commemoration and the very specific hierarchical relationship between the two persons, the analogy is far from compelling, however.

¹⁷ See: Łajtar 2003: 24–25.

if very brilliant or well connected – can hardly have become a bishop in 1169. He is more likely to have been Isou's second successor. Regrettably, the help of the Faras list of bishops fails us here, since it ends precisely with Isou, and even Isou's funerary stela is the last in the series of Faras bishop's stelae to survive. 18 The habit of marking a tomb with an epitaph inscribed in stone, inherited from antiquity, died in Nubia around the year 1200 or soon after.¹⁹ The epitaph of Papsine *alias* Doulista (or perhaps simply Doulista), therefore, belongs together with a number of similar monuments to the latest of its kind: stone slabs, sometimes nicely sculpted, inscribed in Greek with elaborate versions of the prayer that opens with the characteristic invocation 'God of the spirits and all flesh', most of them dating to the eleventh-twelfth centuries and commemorating the clerical and administrative elite of the country. In the present case, a number of textual features shared with other epitaphs, identified by Maria Grazia Tibiletti Bruno and Adam Łajtar, allow us to link the Turin stela to several other stelae, probably all originating from the Faras region. Tibiletti Bruno drew attention to the striking similarities of the present stela with the epitaph of a priest called Bartholomew, of AD 1181 (DBMNT 79),²⁰ unearthed by Griffith in the Riverside Church at Faras.²¹ As Łajtar observed, the truncated 'justice formula' of our line 17, δι(και)οσύνη καὶ ἡ δηκεοσύνη, occurs in a more or less identical form in four other twelfth-century epitaphs from Faras or its close vicinity.²² These are DBMNT 3, the epitaph of Bishop Isou, of AD 1169, from the Cathedral area, ²³ DBMNT 81, a fragment without date, found on the Faras citadel²⁴ and *DBMNT* 5, the epitaph of a Bishop Martyrophoros, of AD 1159, discovered at Debeira, near Faras²⁵ as well as *DBMNT* 91, the stela of a priest Marianos, dated AD 1157, of uncertain provenance.²⁶ Their quite distinctive common features suggest that all of these six stelae, from a single region and a limited period in the latter half of the twelfth century, may connect with a common Faras milieu, most likely an episcopal scriptorium or a cathedral school. As was already noted above, the script of the Turin stone closely resembles that of the stela of Bishop Isou, the most recent surviving bishop's stela from Faras.

¹⁸ See the necessarily sketchy remarks about the last bishops of Faras, still counting with a fictitious Bishop Tamer, in Godlewski 1995, with at 114–115 a brief discussion of a Bishop Aron (II) of Faras, the sender of the letter Browne 1991: no. 57, who must have belonged to this general period; for Bishop Aron, see now: Jakobielski *et al.* 2017: 203–206, cf. 443–446.

¹⁹ Cf. Łajtar, Van der Vliet 2011: 52–53.

²⁰ Tibiletti Bruno 1964: no. 7.

²¹ In Tibiletti Bruno 1963: 499–500; cf. the line-by-line commentary above. The epitaph of Bartholomew is now British Museum EA 1600, for which the museum website provides a decent photo. See: Griffith 1926: 84–85, no. 13, who offers a diplomatic transcript on Pl. LXIII (cf. LXII, 3); the latest edition is Kubińska 1974: 45–46, no. 11. A renewed study of the much damaged original might be rewarding, but requires autopsy; in any case, Griffith's reading of the owner's name as Parthenios must be discarded.

²² In Łajtar 2003: 30.

²³ Łajtar 2003: no. 3

²⁴ Łajtar 2003: no. 4.

²⁵ Łajtar 2003: no. 6.

²⁶ Tibiletti Bruno 1964: no. 9 = Lefebvre 1907: no. 564.

While reproducing a familiar text, the present epitaph is an interesting witness to late Nubian 'grécité'. Two aspects are of particular interest in this respect: the textual form of the epitaph and its linguistic form.²⁷ Both were discussed already in 1963 by Maria Grazia Tibiletti Bruno.²⁸ In spite of several pertinent remarks, she basically judged the text by the standards of competence: the author had poor knowledge of Greek and produced a corrupt version of the prayer that he intended to write. Here, on both scores, an entirely different point of view is taken.

Anyone reading the text even superficially cannot be but struck by the number of errors against normative Greek grammar. The errors are of two kinds, excluding unsystematic slips. Those that concern phonology are all well attested and can easily be related to developments within post-classical Greek: the loss of formerly distinctive vowel quality (ε/η, $o/ov/\omega$), the confusion of /e/-sounds ($\alpha v/\epsilon$) and /i/-sounds (commonly subsumed under the term iotacism).²⁹ The morphological features are more striking, for these are almost all limited to declension errors in the nominal/pronominal domain. In our text, hardly errors against the much more complicated system of verbal conjugation are found, except such as were motivated by phonological shifts.³⁰ By contrast, nearly all nouns and adjectives have an incorrect case marking (duly noted in the line-by-line commentary above). The phenomenon is widely attested in medieval Nubia and cannot be plausibly explained by changes in post-classical Greek itself (most notably, the loss of the dative and the loss of the final ny in all but some specific positions). Neither can it be properly described as 'the collapse of the declension system' in late Nubian Greek.³¹ As the present text shows, its author was clearly aware of the existence of the case-marking system as such and of the importance of case endings and their variety, including the obsolete dative. He does not simplify the system nor does he omit case endings where they should be used. In other words, we are dealing with an author who knew the formal repertoire of the Greek declension system, but had problems in selecting the appropriate form, demanded by the grammatical context.

The phenomenon in question is probably best explained as a language contact phenomenon, since the first language of the scribe was undoubtedly Nubian, not Greek.³² A largely similar situation can be observed in Greek contracts from Ptolemaic Egypt, drafted by Upper-Egyptian scribes who knew Greek very well but had Egyptian as their first language and were prone precisely to selecting wrong case endings.³³ In both Ptolemaic Egypt and medieval Nubia, we are dealing not so much with a collapsed system, as with the

²⁷ The following brief remarks, with their focus on the present epitaph, do not pretend to replace the expert discussions of this class of documents by Adam Łajtar, in particular Łajtar 1996 and 2003: XXI–XXIII.

²⁸ Tibiletti Bruno 1963: 499–500.

²⁹ For the shifts in question, it suffices to refer to Gignac 1976 and, specifically for Nubia, the lists by Maria Grazia Tibiletti Bruno and Adam Łajtar, quoted in the line-by-line commentary above.

³⁰ But see the remarks in Łajtar 2010: 760, on verbal conjugation in even later Nubian *graffiti*.

³¹ A characterisation first used in Łajtar 2010: 760.

³² Lajtar, Ochała forthcoming, propose a similar though somewhat different explanation. I thank Adam Lajtar for sharing a preprint of their essay with me.

³³ Studied in Vierros 2012.

interference of first languages that had different types of alignment. Alignment can be briefly defined as 'the way in which (...) pragmatic and semantic units map onto morphosyntactic ones'.³⁴ The term subsumes the way in which semantic units, predicates with their arguments, are actually realised in a given language in terms of the formal marking of the respective constituents and their mutual ordering. Whereas Greek offers a classic example of alignment of the nominative-accusative type, including the morphological passive that goes with it, neither Demotic-Coptic Egyptian nor Nubian adhere to this type and actually lack both morphological case and a morphological passive. In other words, they have different strategies for argument expression within a clause than Greek. How this difference worked out systematically in the Greek material from Nubia remains a rewarding subject for further research.

Both the Ptolemaic contracts and the Nubian funerary prayers were highly formulaic texts. Errors in case marking did not impair the comprehension and the validity of the texts for their intended audiences. They are foremost the problem of modern editors, who feel the need to rectify a perfectly understandable text. The intelligibility of our text, too, was guaranteed by its entirely formulaic character even when, as is the case here, the text of the prayer shows unique variant readings. The most interesting of these readings are undoubtedly found in lines 9–10, where the habitual expressions ἔνθ' ἀπέδρα ὀδύνη καὶ λύπη (etc.), '(a place) whence pain and grief (etc.) have fled away', and πᾶν ἁμάρτημα παρ' αὐτῆς πραχθέν, 'every sin by her committed', are partly replaced by the quite different expressions ὁδηγίσας καὶ ἀναμάρτητος), which while addressing God characterise him as providing guidance and being free from sin.

While it can be argued that the insertion of these epithets disrupts the structure of the traditional 'God of the spirits' prayer, there is no doubt that they do make good sense in the given context. Instead of corruptions, they offer variations on a familiar pattern and remain entirely within the scope of a prayer that precisely asks for God's guidance for the deceased (lines 5–9) and emphasises divine freedom from sin (lines 15–17). Moreover, their insertion is clearly inspired by kindred liturgical prayers. The single other instance of the word ἀναμάρτητος in Nubian funerary epigraphy known to date, in the Faras stela of Iesousinta(?), occurs precisely in a briefer variant of the present prayer of lines 9–17. The entire clause of our lines 9–11, including the plural $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\chi\theta\acute{e}\nu\tau\alpha$ ($\pi\rho\alpha\chi\theta\acute{e}\nu\tau\alpha$), shows the influence of similar formulae asking for forgiveness where the word for sin occurs in the plural (ἀμαρτήματα), such as the prayer DBMNT 806, from Khandaq, lines 14–16 (with the commentary of the editor, quoting the appropriate liturgical models).

³⁴ Hengeveld, Mackenzie 2008: 316. The references and much of the argument in this paragraph owe much to discussion with Ewa D. Zakrzewska.

³⁵ Cf. the conclusion of Vierros 2012: 222–223.

³⁶ As was surmised already by Tibiletti Bruno 1963: 499.

 $^{^{37}}$ For this stela and its provenance, see footnote 5 above; Junker's generally plausible reconstruction of the text has been followed. For ἀναμάρτητος, 'free from sin', as an epithet of God, see: Lampe (Ed.) 1961: 112a-b.

³⁸ Łajtar 2003: no. 16.

Likewise, the verb ὁδηγέω occurs in at least two other Nubian epitaphs. The monument of a woman Marianta, dated AD 1051 (*DBMNT* 672, from Qasr Ibrim),³⁹ bears an additional prayer on the rim of the stela that twice uses this very verb in reference to God's guidance of the deceased: *the Lord shall guide you onto the waters of life* < . . . >, *your* (read: his) *good Spirit shall guide you into the land of the living* (etc.) (lines 26–27). Both ritual formulae, which contain echoes of Rv 7:17 and Ps 142:10 respectively, must have had their place in the Nubian funerary liturgy. This assumption is confirmed by the stela of a man Joase from Kor, of AD 1163 (*DBMNT* 10),⁴⁰ where, in line 16, in a similar way as in the Turin stela, a form of the verb ὁδηγέω slips in in the formula about God's justice (here line 17), adding a notion of divine guidance.⁴¹

The readings observed in the Turin stela (and also in the stela of Joase), 42 were quite likely actuated by notable features, formal or intrinsic, of the familiar prayer text. Thus, we may assume, $\delta\delta$ óvη καὶ gave rise to $\delta\delta$ ηγίσας, by a purely formal assonance. At the same time they are not random errors, but meaningful variants, creating a new and intelligible text on the basis of liturgical formulae. The principle at work is one that is best characterised as 'centonisation', composing a patchwork text by combining set phrases. Both the reception of the text by the audience and its production by the author are the outcome of a process of remembering and combining standard formulae. In other words, a text like the present epitaph is not the more or less successful reproduction of an immutable model, but a mnemonic device, to be read as a series of 'tags' activating the recollection of familiar prayers from the funerary liturgy. Terms like 'standard text' or *textus receptus* are in this context better avoided.

To sum up, the present re-edition of the former 'Tamer epitaph', in addition to making the stela's owner ten years younger, confirms earlier assumptions about her identity⁴⁵ and the date of her death.⁴⁶ It challenges, moreover, previous judgments of the epitaph as reproducing a corrupt text, conceived in corrupt Greek. Instead, it reveals the competence of Nubian scribes fully conversant with their liturgical tradition.

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³⁹ Łajtar, Van der Vliet 2010: no. 57.

⁴⁰ Łajtar 2003: no. 12.

⁴¹ Already the latest editor, Adam Łajtar, in his commentary, made the link to the Turin stela.

⁴² Łajtar 2003: no. 12.

⁴³ Thus already Tibiletti Bruno 1963: 499.

⁴⁴ Van der Vliet 2011: 197–201 (in the reprint in Van der Vliet 2018: 402–404), where the different prayer sections of two otherwise very similar Coptic stelae from Qasr Ibrim are compared.

⁴⁵ Van der Vliet 2007.

⁴⁶ Bagnall, Worp 1986.

from the generous comments and incisive criticisms of Ewa D. Zakrzewska (University of Amsterdam) and Adam Łajtar (University of Warsaw).

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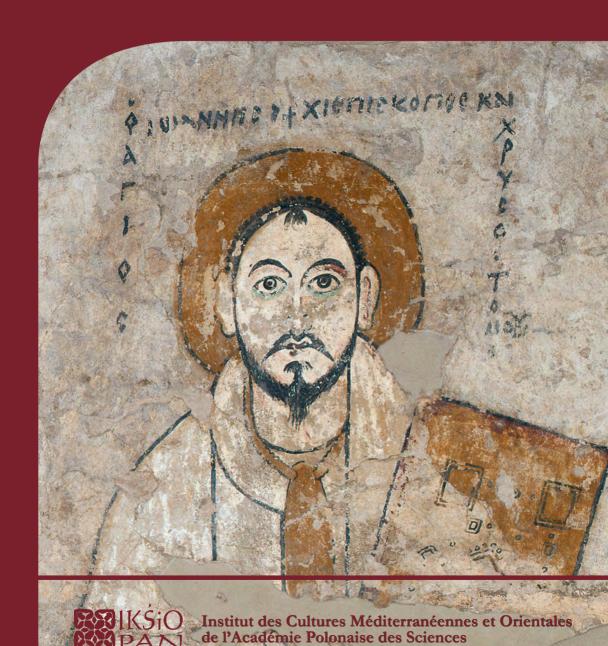
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