

BRITISH MUSEUM PUBLICATIONS ON EGYPT AND SUDAN 1

THE FOURTH CATARACT AND BEYOND

Proceedings of the 12th International Conference for Nubian Studies

edited by

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PEETERS
LEUVEN – PARIS – WALPOLE, MA
2014

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FROM BITS AND PIECES. A CORPUS OF MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPTS FROM THE HUMBOLDT UNIVERSITY (H.U.N.E.) CONCESSION IN THE FOURTH NILE CATARACT

CLAUDIA NÄSER AND ALEXANDROS TSAKOS

In 2007, the Humboldt University Nubian Expedition excavated a church on the island of Sur above the Fourth Nile Cataract, within the scope of the Merowe Dam Archaeological Salvage Project. The church, SR022.A, was part of a larger site at the northern tip of Sur, which had first been recorded in 2004 and turned out to be the largest medieval site within the concession area.¹ Its surface appearance, however, was much disturbed, and individual components as well as its overall extent were hard to determine. The rubble heap of the church was flanked by cemetery areas on two sides.² On the gentle slope towards the river, obscure traces of occupation and scant architectural remains showed at the surface. Several points suggest that SR022 may have been a monastic complex – which would be the first and only one recognised in the Fourth Cataract.

The drafting of a site plan was postponed to the 2006 field season, when extensive surface clearing and test excavations would have provided a better insight into the general layout of the site. In that season, however, H.U.N.E. had to leave the Fourth Cataract without being able to work due to the request of the Manasir.³ When, one year later, in 2007, favourable circumstances allowed us to return to the site, we decided to immediately turn to the excavation of its main feature, the church, and postpone all other activities. The conflicts with the Manasir again prevented a planned final season in 2008 and thus any further work that might have clarified open questions as that of the general nature of SR022.

SR022.A is the largest church recorded in the Fourth Cataract. Although some wall sections in the south-western part of the building are missing, the cross-shaped layout with dimensions of roughly 17 x 15m is clearly recognizable (Figure 1).⁴ SR022.A was built of mud brick; of the original painted wall decorations only

scant remains survived. A special feature is the oblong sacristy behind the sanctuary, which was accessible from the south-eastern corner room. The preliminary analysis of the architecture and the pottery indicate that the church dates from Classic Christian times, possibly the 10th century AD.⁵

Among the rich finds from SR022.A was a corpus of medieval manuscripts. Though greatly fragmented, it represents the most important find of textual material from medieval Nubia in the last decades. Previous to its discovery, similar manuscripts were only known from Lower Nubia, and no comparable discovery has been made in the last 40 years elsewhere in the Middle Nile Valley. The find came from the rear part of the church, namely the area of the oblong sacristy, where it was dispersed close to the modern surface in a layer

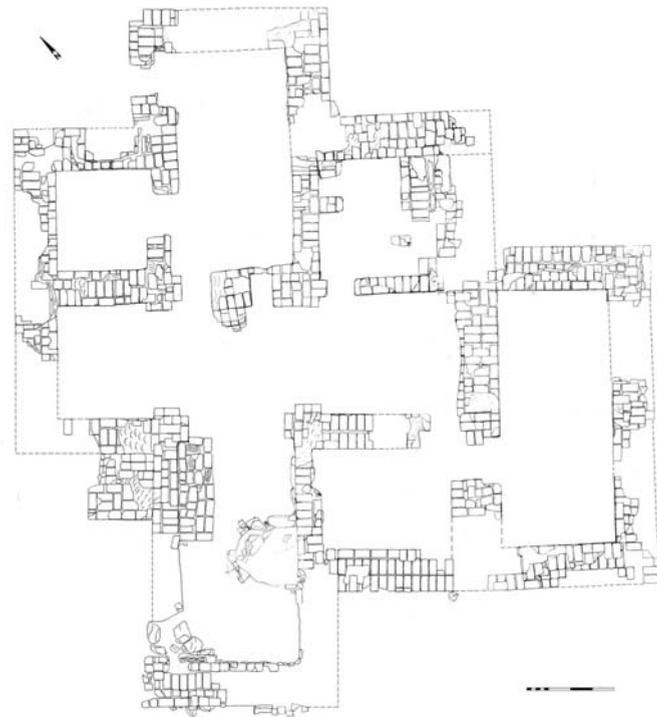


Figure 1. Ground-plan of church SR022.A (recording and drawing: Daniela Billig, H.U.N.E.).

¹ See Näser 2004, 127-128; 2005, 85-86.

² From one of them, a fragment of a terracotta grave stela was collected; see Näser 2004, 128, fig. 12; 2005, 85-86, fig. 12 and Tsakos 2007, 241-243.

³ See Näser and Kleinitz 2010; Kleinitz and Näser 2011.

⁴ For a preliminary description see Billig 2007; 2008; cf. also Näser 2007, 44-45; 2008, 77.

⁵ See Billig 2007; 2008; Näser 2007, 44-45; 2008, 78; Pluskota 2008 on the pottery finds. A detailed publication of the entire complex is currently being prepared by Daniela Billig as part of her PhD research.

of loose wind-blown sand, which apparently represented the filling of a sub-recent disturbance. Through a grant of the Packard Humanities Institute (PHI) it was possible to bring a specialist restorer from Berlin to Khartoum at short notice in summer 2007 in order to undertake emergency treatment on the find and prepare it for transportation. Subsequently, all fragments were sent to Berlin, where they underwent extensive conservation measures, again enabled by a generous grant of the Packard Humanities Institute.⁶

The exact volume of the manuscript find from SR022.A is hard to quantify. The preserved fragments amount to several hundred, but they include many tiny bits and pieces. What we can say at the present stage of research is that the corpus comprises five major components:

- The first constitute texts on parchment. Altogether some 110 fragments from different documents are preserved. They were probably all in Greek. The most impressive one is an almost complete page from a codex, which carries a Greek text on both sides (SR022.A/177 text 110; Plate 8). While most other fragments also seem to derive from codices, some are written in cursive handwriting, which also indicates the presence of secular documents. The find from Sur represents the second largest corpus of Greek manuscripts, after Qasr Ibrim, and contains the widest variety of Greek texts reported from medieval Nubia so far.⁷

- The second major component of the corpus is several hundred fragments of book bindings. Many of them preserve extensive decoration. Most common are blind-tooled lines and blind stamping in a multitude of designs (Plate 1). Further decoration techniques include a specific kind of weaving, with the surface of the leather being cut into strips, through which leather bands were woven (Plate 2). Less common is cut-out openwork, backed with red leather (Plate 2). Several



Plate 1. Part of a book binding with blind-tooling and stamping (SR022.A/154.1).



Plate 2. Part of a book binding with cut-out openwork, backed with red leather, and the remains of a woven decoration at the right margin (SR022.A/51.1).

⁶ We are also very grateful to our colleagues of the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums who greatly facilitated the handling of the find in Khartoum and generously consented to it being taken to Berlin for conservation and study. The conservation program was conducted by Myriam Krutzsch (Egyptian Museum and Papyrus Collection, Berlin/Germany), Patricia Engel (European Research Centre for Book and Paper Conservation-Restoration, Horn/Austria) and Sophie Geiseler (Berlin). We would like to acknowledge our gratitude to all of them as well as to Daniela Billig, who directed the excavation of the church SR022.A and the recovery of the find. While the study of the material is still very much work in progress, it is also an intrinsically collaborative effort.

⁷ For the Greek manuscripts from Qasr Ibrim see Frend and Muirehead 1976.

fragments were identified as parts of book bags. As medieval codices are rarely preserved with their original bindings and packings, this material makes a very interesting and valuable contribution to our database.

- A third component of the find constitute small leather amulets and cases. They are also adorned with blind-tooled lines and stamps (Plate 3). At least one piece seems still to contain a small metal plaque (Plate 4). As its casing is intact, a closer investigation of the content will have to be accomplished by X-ray and other non-destructive methods.



Plate 3. Amulet or pen-case (SR022.A/445).

- The corpus also comprises numerous leather cords and strands, including braided and knotted pieces. They probably all derive from book bindings, cases or amulets. More enigmatic are several tubes sewn from red leather stripes (Plate 5).

- The last element of the corpus consists of inscribed leather sheets. Most of them are very fragmented, but



Plate 4. Amulet (SR022.A/35.A).



Plate 5. Tubes sewn from red leather stripes (SR022.A/552).

two specimens are comparatively well preserved. Both carry texts in Old Nubian. One of them had originally been folded into a rod from both ends (SR022.A/25; Plate 6). After conservation treatment and a meticulous documentation the folding was opened, revealing a substantial text in Old Nubian (Plate 7). The second



Plate 6. Folded leather sheet with a text in Old Nubian: find condition (SR022.A/25).

specimen had been folded into a neat package. The specific form of the folding suggests that it contains a magical text.⁸

After the completion of the conservation treatment, we now set about a comprehensive study of the corpus. Next to philological and palaeographic analyses, this will also entail investigations in the material properties of the find as well as codicological research and the study of the socio-cultural context of the corpus. When completed, these investigations should considerably enlarge our knowledge of literacy, the craft of book

⁸ We owe this insight to the unique experience of Myriam Krutzsch.



Plate 7. Leather sheet SR022.A/25 during unfolding.

binding, the role of religious writings and the use of amulets in rural communities of medieval Nubia.⁹

In order to illustrate the scope of the material, first results of the study of some of the Greek texts on parchment will be presented in the following part of this paper.

THE TEXTS

The largest Greek text of the corpus is, as mentioned above, SR022.A/177 text 110.¹⁰ This was collated with fragments nos 108 and 109 during conservation, resulting in an almost complete page of an obviously very fine manuscript (Plate 8). Its text is written with black mix ink; the decorated initials are filled with red colour. Red colour was also used for the decoration of the interior of the lobes of the letter “Φ”. With the help of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG)¹¹ the content of the page could be identified as part of the second section of the second homily on penitence (CPG 4333.2; MPG 49, 283-292)¹² by John Chrysostom (AD 349-407). This part of the homily refers to the reprobation of David by Nathan after the shameful events between David and Bathsheba, as narrated in the Second Book of Samuel, chapters 11 and 12.

⁹ The full publication of these studies is planned to be part of the final reports of the Humboldt University Nubian Expedition to the Fourth Nile Cataract in *Meroitica*.

¹⁰ Previous mentions of this manuscript are in Näser 2007, 44-45, fig. 5; 2008, 77-78, fig. 5; Billig 2007, 94, fig. 22; 2008, 111; Tsakos 2009, 6.

¹¹ See <http://www.tlg.uci.edu>.

¹² These abbreviations mean: *C*(lavis) *S*(criptorum) *G*(raecorum) and *M*(igne) *P*(atrologia) *G*(raeca).



Plate 8. Leaf of parchment with the second section of the second homily on penitence by John Chrysostom (SR022.A/177 text 110).

This content is not without interest, since it identifies a Chrysostomian homily, which is linked to the conflicts of John as Bishop of Constantinople (AD 398-407) with Empress Aelia Eudoxia (AD 395-404), wife of Arcadius.¹³ These conflicts led to John's deposition and death in exile, but also guaranteed his exaltation as a martyr of an unjust ruler. Such a view about the end of his life was particularly important in Egypt, where Eudoxia was held responsible for all the troubles that had set John as Bishop of Constantinople and Theophilus as Patriarch of Alexandria (AD 385-412) in opposing camps.¹⁴ She was thus made the scapegoat in a conflict that could otherwise have compromised the sanctity of John Chrysostom for the Coptic Church, which would naturally look favourably to one of the

¹³ These links are based on the reference in the third section of the homily in question to Jezebel, wife of King Ahab (1 Kings, 16:29-22:40). This biblical figure had been used by Chrysostom as a parallel to Eudoxia's misbehaviours. According to Chrysostom's main biographer, Palladius (Discourse, Dialogue 8), "the crime of high treason was the insult he had given the empress, according to the synod's report, in having called her Jezebel" (translation by Kelly 1995, 228).

¹⁴ For a full discussion of Chrysostom's life see Kelly 1995.

first patriarchs on the throne of Alexandria, soon to become the see of the Monophysite Church of Egypt.

It is in this context that we should evaluate the existence of Chrysostomian works in both Egypt and Nubia. There must have been particular circles in the Egyptian Church who supported the propagation of works of the early fathers of the Eastern Church in order to enrich the Christian culture of their environment, but also direct it towards specific spiritual, ecclesiastic, hierarchic and diplomatic choices. Since church dignitaries undoubtedly played a major role in both the internal and the external affairs of the Makurian state, successful communication between the Coptic and the Nubian Churches would have furthered the political aims shared by them. Especially after the conquest of Egypt by the expanding Islamic caliphate (AD 641), the Coptic Church found itself in a state of captivity in its own land. With the doctrinal issues separating it from the Byzantine Empire, the only address the Copts could turn to for support and protection was the Kingdom of Makuria, united with the Kingdom of Nobadia at latest since the early 7th century (Godlewski 2004, 58-61). Diplomatic moves based on a common religious language and shared doctrines would have been vital for keeping alive the hopes of the Egyptians for a liberation from the Muslim overlords and the re-establishment of Egyptian sovereignty.¹⁵

PALAEOGRAPHY

With such a historical background to appreciate the significance of the Chrysostomian text identified in the Sur codex, one may wonder what is to be gained from a more in-depth analysis of the manuscript itself. Let us first consider the issue of palaeography, an area of study, which has not yet been developed for Nubian texts, except for a few isolated remarks.¹⁶ The particular observation of interest here concerns the various occurrences of a decorated form of the letter “Φ” with a red ink fill in its lobes.¹⁷ This form does not appear, to our knowledge, outside the Nile Valley. Its presence in the text from Sur suggests the production of this manuscript in either a Nubian or an Egyptian milieu.

¹⁵ These ideas will be developed further in the PhD thesis of Alexandros Tsakos.

¹⁶ E.g. Griffith 1913, 41; Frend 1986, 66; 1987, 90; 1989, 94; Browne 1981, 19; 1983, 78; 1984, 19-20; 1998, 1.

¹⁷ A complete list and interpretation will be presented in the PhD thesis of Alexandros Tsakos.

The same should apply to all fragments with similar palaeography, and indeed there is one more fragment from Sur that preserves exactly the same rendering (fragment 6, Plate 9).



Plate 9. Flesh side of parchment fragment SR022.A/177 text 6 with decorated “Φ”.

Further letters from fragment 6, like the “Π” with its top stroke not protruding above the vertical ones, or the combination of “T” and “I”, with the latter attached to the right end of the horizontal antenna of the former, do not only link fragment 6 to the same tradition as the restored pages of fragments 108/109/110, but also to the same scribe. His hand can easily be identified by a detailed comparison of letters like “A”, “Δ”, “H”, “Θ”, “M”, “Ξ”, “Y”, which occur in the same forms also on fragments 1, 7, 22, 44 and 53.

These observations can be related to palaeographic corpora based upon general data from early Byzantine and Coptic manuscript production, or specific collections with particular interest for our region, like the latest textual finds from the Sinai.¹⁸ A combination of data from these sources places the writing of the Sur manuscripts somewhere between the Alexandrian and the Biblical script and perhaps closer to an Upright Pointed Majuscule. Its specific execution suggests a dating of our manuscripts in the 9th or 10th century AD. This date is corroborated by the existence of decorated initials and the selective use of diacritical marks, particularly breathings, upon vowels.¹⁹

¹⁸ Cavallo and Maehler 1987; Cramer 1964; Nicolopoulos *et al.* 1999.

¹⁹ See Brubaker 1991, 41; Cavallo and Maehler 1987, 2. A full palaeographic analysis of the Greek manuscripts from Sur will

Closer examination of the manuscript tradition of the Chrysostomian homilies shows that the earliest manuscripts known to contain CPG 4333.2, which is also present in the text of 108/109/100, date from the 10th century AD.²⁰ This means that at the present state of knowledge, the manuscript from Sur, as a product of a scriptorium in Egypt or Nubia, is the earliest attested source for this specific homily, making it particularly valuable for patristic studies.

THE BOOK

Based upon the TLG and palaeographic observations, further fragments, namely 1, 6, 7, 22, 44, and 53, of the Sur corpus could be grouped together and traced to a single textual source. They all come from the second section of the first homily on the title of the 50th Psalm, attributed again to John Chrysostom as one of the *spuria* of his *opera* (CPG 4544; MPG 55, 565-588; de Aldama 1965, 294). The subject of this homily, which is now for the first time evidenced from Nubia, is none other than the penitence expressed in the 50th Psalm by David after he had been confronted by the prophet Nathan for his adultery with Bathsheba i.e., the same subject as that of the second homily on penitence identified on leaf 108/109/110.

The importance of this identification is not restricted to the addition of another homily to the *Corpus Chrysostomicum Nubianum* or to the identification of a coherent group of sermons written by the same scribe somewhere along the Nile. Without minimizing these aspects, there is a further point of interest, related to issues of codicology. Arranging the six fragments under investigation “inside” the text of the *editio princeps* of the homily in question and subsequently adjusting this in order to fit its text to the surviving fragments, reveals that they all come from the same leaf (Figure 2). Now, this leaf as reconstructed on the basis of the six preserved fragments has characteristics very similar to leaf 108/109/110. They both contain texts of 24 to 29 lines with 25 to 35 letters per line. The page with the homily on the title of the 50th Psalm has slightly less lines and fewer letters in each line, but since there is no strict uniformity of margins on the

pages of an individual codex²¹ it seems likely that both leaves, and thus both homilies, come from the same “book”. A point corroborating this suggestion is that among 89 attestations of CPG 4333 and 52 attestations of CPG 4544, eleven concern codices where both homilies are bound together. In fact, in most of these cases, the two homilies appear in direct succession or with the second homily on Psalm 50 (CPG 4545) in between.²² With the dating suggested above, fragments 1, 6, 7, 22, 44, 53, 108, 109 and 110 discussed here might have belonged to the oldest known codex assembling Chrysostomian homilies, of which CPG 4333 and CPG 4544 were part.

CONCLUSIONS

Finally, it is worth considering whether the significance of these manuscripts for the Nubian Church in general and for site SR022.A in particular can be discerned. The manuscripts in question were found at a church of the Classic Christian Period, which had apparently been used well into the later periods of the Christian era.²³ Though we do not know when the manuscripts had reached Sur, we know that they were there when the church SR022.A went out of use. In view of the dating of the manuscripts themselves, as proposed above, this means that ecclesiastic and/or state authorities had preciously kept them for several centuries, even into a time when Old Nubian had apparently supplanted Greek and Coptic in both literary and documentary usage (Ochała 2011, 348). It is also uncertain, whether texts as the homilies testified in the manuscripts from SR022.A had actually been used in liturgical practice, or had rather been destined for religious learning and contemplation – in the latter case, the Sur corpus should be connected to a center of literacy and faith, such as a monastery might have been. We know far too little about religious practice and the use of religious writings in the Nubian church and its various congregations to decide whether the presence of a codex with Chrysostomian homilies in a rural community, far away from the known religious centers of the periods in question, is representative or an exceptional constellation. This, we can only learn from further

be developed in the PhD thesis of Alexandros Tsakos.

²⁰ This investigation was carried out with the help of the database PINAKES (<http://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr/>) developed by the Institute for the Research and History of Texts (I.R.H.T.) at the National Centre for Scientific Research (C.N.R.S.) in Paris, France.

²¹ See Turner 1977, 22-23.

²² These statistics are produced from the PINAKES database.

²³ See above p. 977 with note 5. For a preliminary assessment of the use life of SR022.A on the basis of the ceramic evidence see Pluskota 2008.

<p>ΣΤΕΦΑΝΩΘΕΝΤΑ. ΟΥ ΓΑΡ ΔΕΙΚΝΥΜΙ ΑΥΤΟΝ ΚΕΙΜΕΝΟΝ ΕΝ ΤΩ ΠΤΩΜΑΤΙ ΜΟΝΟΝ, ΑΛΛΑ ΚΑΙ ΕΓΕΡΘΕΝΤΑ, ΙΝΑ ΕΚΑΤΕΡΩΘΕΝ ΣΥ ΚΕΡΔΑΝΗΣ, ΙΝΑ, ΟΤΑΝ ΑΜΑΡΤΗΣ, ΜΗ ΑΠΟΓΝΩΣ ΑΛΛΑ ΠΑΡΑΥΤΑ ΕΠΙ ΤΗΝ ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΝ ΔΡΑΜΗΣ. ΜΗΔΕ ΕΙΠΗΣ ΠΡΟΣ ΕΑΥΤΟΝ: ΟΙΜΜΟΙ ΟΙΜΜΟΙ ΑΠΩΛΟΜΗΝ, ΕΜΟΙΧΕΥΣΑ, ΕΠΟΡΝΕΥΣΑ. ΕΧΕΙΣ ΓΑΡ ΣΩΤΗΡΙΑΣ ΛΙΜΕΝΑ ΔΙΑΚΡΟΥΟΜΕΝΟΝ ΑΜΑΡΤΙΑΝ. ΟΤΑΝ ΙΔΗΣ ΤΟΝ ΤΟΙΟΥΤΟΝ ΔΕΞΑΜΕΝΟΝ ΤΡΑΥΜΑΤΑ ΚΑΙ ΔΙΑΣΠΑΡΑΤΤΟΜΕΝΟΝ, ΕΥΘΕΩΣ ΕΠΙ ΤΗΝ ΜΕΤΑΝΟΙΑΝ ΤΡΕΧΕ, ΚΑΙ ΠΑΡΡΗΣΙΑ ΖΟΥ ΔΑΚΡΥΩΝ ΠΗΓΑΣ ΕΚΧΕΩΝ. ΙΝΑ ΔΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΚΕΙΝΟΥ ΜΕΤΑΝΟΙΑΣ ΑΚΡΙΒΕΣΤΕΡΟΝ ΤΗΝ ΕΑΥΤΟΥ ΣΩΤΗΡΙΑΝ ΜΑΘΗΣ ΟΙΟΝ ΤΙ ΛΕΓΩ: ΠΟΛΛΟΙ ΠΟΛΛΑΚΙΣ Κ' ΑΝΔΡΕΣ Κ' ΓΥΝΑΙΚΕΣ ΠΕΡΙΕΠΕΣΟΝ ΧΑΛΕΠΩ ΝΟΣΗΜΑΤΙ, ΚΑΙ ΑΝΙΑΤΩ, ΔΑΚΡΥΑ ΕΞΕΧΥΘΗ, ΦΑΡΜΑΚΑ ΕΔΑΠΑΝΗΘΗ ΚΑΙ ΙΑΤΡΙΚΗ ΤΕΧΝΗ ΗΠΟΡΗΣΕΝ ΚΑΛΛΟΣ ΑΝΗΛΩΘΗ, ΤΟ ΣΩΜΑ ΑΠΗΓΟΡΕΥΤΑΙ. ΠΕΡΙΕΡΧΕΤΑΙ ΛΟΙΠΟΝ Η ΓΥΝΗ ΛΕΓΟΥΣΑ ΠΟΥ ΑΠΕΛΘΩ; ΤΙ ΠΟΙΗΣΩ;</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">Fragment 22</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">Fragment 1</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">Fragment 44</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">Fragment 7</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">Fragment 6</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">Fragment 53</div>	<p>ΧΡΗΜΑΤΑ ΑΝΗΛΩΣΑ ΙΑΤΡΟΥΣ ΕΚΑΛΕΣΑ ΦΑΡΜΑΚΑ ΑΝΗΛΩΘΗ ΜΕΝΕΙ ΤΟ ΝΟΣΗΜΑ ΟΥΚ ΙΑΘΕΙ ΤΟ ΕΛΚΟΣ ΠΟΛΛΑΚΙΣ ΣΥΝΕΒΗ ΤΙΝΑ ΤΩΝ ΕΠΙΣΚΕΙΠΤΟΜΕΝΩΝ ΕΙΠΕΙΝ ΚΑΤΩ ΤΟΙΟΥΤΩ ΠΑΘΕΙ ΠΕΡΙΕΠΕΣΟΝ ΚΑΙ Ο ΔΕΙΝΑ Ή Ο ΔΕΙΝΑ ΠΕΡΙΕΘΗΚΑΝ ΜΟΙ ΦΑΡΜΑΚΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΑΠΗΛΛΑΞΑΝ ΜΕ ΤΗΣ ΟΔΥΝΗΣ ΕΙΤΑ ΠΑΡΑΚΑΛΕΙ ΔΕΙΞΟΝ ΜΟΙ ΤΗΝ ΓΥΝΑΙΚΑ ΑΠΕΛΘΕ ΕΠΙ ΣΤΕΝΩΠ(ΟΝ) ΟΥΤΩ ΚΑΙ ΝΥΝ, ΕΠΕΙΔΗ ΕΜΟΙΧΕΥΣΕ Κ' ΦΟΝΟΝ ΕΠΟΙΗΣΕ, ΤΟ ΕΛΚΟΣ ΧΑΛΕΠΟΝ. ΔΕΙΚΝΥΜΙ ΣΟΙ ΠΩΣ ΕΘΕΡΑΠΕΥΘΗ ΚΑΙ ΠΟΙΟΝ ΦΑΡΜΑΚΟΝ ΕΠΕΘΗΚΕΝ. ΚΑΙ ΟΥ ΛΕΓΩ: ΑΠΕΛΘΕ ΕΠΙ ΤΟΝ ΣΤΕΝΩΠΟΝ, ΕΡΩΤΗΣΟΝ ΤΟΝΔΕ Ή ΤΗΝΔΕ. ΟΥ ΧΡΕΙΑ ΚΑΜΑΤΟΥ ΟΥ ΧΡΕΙΑ ΠΟΝΟΥ ΟΥΤΕ ΥΠΕΡΒΗΝΑΙ ΠΡΟΘΥΡΩΝ ΣΕ ΑΝΑΓΚΑΙΟΝ ΑΛΛΑ ΕΝΤΑΥΘΑ ΕΣΤΩΤΑ ΔΕΞΑΣΘΑΙ ΤΟ ΦΑΡΜΑΚΟΝ ΜΟΝΟΝ ΠΡΟΣΕΧΕ ΤΟΙΣ ΛΕΓΟΜΕΝΟΙΣ ΑΝΑΓΚΗ ΓΑΡ ΕΙΣ ΑΡΧΗΝ ΤΟΝ ΛΟΓΟΝ ΑΓΓΕΙΝ, ΚΑΙ ΤΟΝ ΧΡΟΝΟΝ ΕΙΠΕΙΝ, ΚΑΘ' ΟΝ ΗΜΑΡΤΕΝ, ΚΑΙ ΤΟΝ ΤΟΠΟΝ, ΚΑΙ ΤΟ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΟΝ, ΚΑΙ ΤΗΝ ΜΕΤΑΝΟΙΑΝ, ΚΑΙ ΤΗΝ</p>
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Figure 2. The part of the second section of the first homily on the title of the 50th Psalm by John Chrysostom, as reconstructed on the basis of fragments SR022.A/177 texts 1, 6, 7, 22, 44 and 53.

investigations of medieval sites throughout Nubia producing comparable characteristics and comparable finds. For the time being, even with severe constraints in terms of contextual data, the manuscripts from Sur show that John Chrysostom was known in Nubia not only from Coptic and Old Nubian sources,²⁴ but that his works were transmitted and read, if not preached, in Greek as well. Further work on the Sur find will broaden our understanding of this point as well as produce rare insights into many other aspects of Nubian literacy, the role of religious writings, amuletic objects and the equipment of churches in rural Nubia.

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²⁴ For these see Browne 1984; 1988; Plumley and Browne 1988, 40-47; text no. 10, pls 9-10; Hagen 2007.

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